

**EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL:-  
ENSURING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION  
IN THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION**

Draft

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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Transport does not exist in its own right. It provides the circulation system around which the social and economic life of an urban area can flow. To be truly effective, it has to be at the centre of a community's demands and aspirations, meeting their needs in the most effective and sustainable manner.
- 1.2 Whilst improvements to public transport are essential for the sustainable development of our cities, 'conventional' public transport is not generally able to provide the level of service to support dispersed employment patterns. A new concept of public transport is required to ensure equal access to all to jobs and training.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The increasing effects of unconstrained car growth in urban areas is now well documented and understood; growing evidence of health and respiratory problems amongst city residents through which traffic flows, the division of communities by major transport infrastructure and the degradation of the visual environment. A range of initiatives are now proposed or being implemented to deal with some of these problems and public transport clearly has a role to play in assisting modal shift from the car. For the moment, however, in many urban areas and despite investment, there has been a continuing decline in public transport usage.
- 2.2 There is much less clarity on the effects of transport provision on those that do not have the choice to make between the car and other modes, however. There remain large numbers of citizens who, through economic circumstances, age, infirmity or choice, are not car users.
- 2.3 Their economic opportunity and lifestyle are under threat because of society's increasing overall dependency upon the car; job opportunities are increasingly only available in dispersed locations, often with 24 hour shift working and hospitals are centralised away from easily served public transport corridors. Due to overall falling demand, public transport services become less frequent, unreliable and costly. At the same time, many local shops and other facilities, such as Post Offices are closed adding to further demands to travel that can impose real barriers to those most dependent. A 'transport poverty' is created and social exclusion based upon the citizens' neighbourhood becomes likely.
- 2.4 The effects of this isolation are beginning to be quantified. Research in Liverpool suggests that some residents 'save up' trips in order to incur less travel cost. Their access to good quality, fresh and cheaper food is limited.

Unexpected trip requirements to health care or chemist may prove a financial burden. Travel horizons to search for jobs or training may be severely restricted, due to a lack of good travel information or lack of 'life experience' beyond the immediate environment. Such isolation can have other effects; research similar to that found in France suggests increasing tendencies to anti-social behaviour against the public transport network. In addition, the costs and time of using the public transport network may militate against taking up job training or other opportunities.

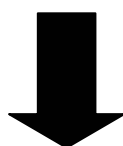
- 2.5 Faced with a multitude of problems that can bear down on the community, such as poor housing, crime, education and health, transport as a problem area may not be expected to feature. However, transport as a barrier runs across many of these other problem areas, exacerbating their effect and creating feelings of isolation.

### 3. **Finding Solutions**

- 3.1 If social exclusion is to be addressed, a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approach, with transport as a key partner, needs to be forged, in order to fund new solutions to changing transport demands.
- 3.2 Figure 1 illustrates that whilst the issues currently being addressed as problems caused by transport are different from those identified as 'social' problems, the solution may be the same.

Figure 1

<b>The Transport Agenda</b>	<b>The Social Agenda</b>
Rising car ownership	Declining public transport
Congestion	Loss of local shopping
Pollution	Dispersed economic development
Community severance	Centralising health facilities
Safety	Increased cost of transport
Costs	
<b>Leads To:</b>	
The need to reduce the requirement to travel	Social exclusion



<b>Common Responses</b>
<p>Better land use, regeneration, and transport integration</p> <p>Multi-agency Partnerships</p> <p>Increased public transport provision/public transport/taxi/ community transport</p> <p>Mobility management.</p> <p>Car share/home delivery</p> <p>Calming/restraint in residential areas</p> <p>Localised facilities</p>

#### 4. **The Merseyside Approach**

- 4.1 The Liverpool City region known as Merseyside is centred around the City of Liverpool. Public transport provision for the area is co-ordinated by Merseytravel, which is the operating name of the Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority and Executive. The organisation covers the five Local Authority areas in Merseyside and is controlled by 18 Councillors from across the area.
- 4.2 The majority of bus and rail services are provided by commercial transport operators, which presents a number of problems in attempting to provide integrated transport in the UK outside London.

### 4.3 Merseyside - Background Information

#### 4.3.1 Urban System Boundaries and Zones

Merseyside is a large metropolitan area located in the North West of England. The area of study is referred to as a 'city region'. The Merseyside city-region is dominated by the City of Liverpool, which is located on the north bank of the River Mersey and is the historical centre with administrative and commercial services on the city and regional levels, vital to the economy of Merseyside. The ability of Liverpool City Centre to influence and regenerate the wider Merseyside economy is explicitly recognised by the North West Development Agency and is identified as one of the only two NWDA regeneration priority areas in the North West of England. Liverpool accommodates the region's main higher educational, social and cultural institutions and substantial investment is taking place in the city centre in the construction of high quality residential development.

4.3.2 In addition to Liverpool, there are four other Local Authorities in Merseyside: Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and the Wirral. Excluding the Wirral, these areas are contained within a conurbation more than 20km in diameter. The River Mersey forms an important barrier between the two parts of the metropolitan area which are connected by two car tunnels and a rail link and the Mersey Ferries.

4.3.3 Traditionally, industrial activities were centred on the docks, situated along the River Mersey but these have since declined. The decline of these industries has provided opportunities for regeneration of the port area.

4.3.4 Merseyside has a population of 1.4m and of this population, 450,000 live in Liverpool. It is one of the UK's most densely populated regions which equates to approximately 8.7 people per acre, compared to one person per acre for Great Britain as a whole. The population on Merseyside decreased by 6.2% during the period 1981 - 1995. Figure 2 below gives an overview of the spread of the population over the different parts of the city-region:

4.3.5 In addition to this, Liverpool also accommodates the region's two major universities and a large University College, which together total a student population of over 50,000, mostly concentrated in the immediate area of the city centre.

4.3.6 The population of Merseyside (as derived from the 1991 Census) comprises 47.5% and 52.5% males and females respectively. Merseyside has a relatively young population, with over 40% under the age of 30. 21% of the population is over the age of 60 and this is predicted to rise to 23% in 2016. Overall, however, the local population is expected to continue to decline.

4.3.7 Merseyside has suffered decline for many years, resulting in problems severe enough for it to remain an Objective One region under the 2000-06 Structural Fund Programme. 1996 figures

indicate that the Merseyside GDP per head was 73.1% of the EU average (below 75% is the eligibility criteria for Objective One status). Merseyside has, therefore, been granted Objective One status by the EU for a second period, and over £800m has been allocated to support the 2000-2006 programme. The region faces unique problems (in UK terms) of managing a regenerating economy in a sustainable way, whereby economic growth can be enabled without placing undue strains on the transport network and without contributing to environmental decline.

- 4.3.8 Merseyside has a resident workforce of 625,000 and in addition to those workers who reside in Merseyside, commuters travelling into the region, create a pool of skilled labour. The number of unemployment claimants in Merseyside has risen from 86,755 in January 1991 to 96,973 in March 1993. This represents an increase of 1.8%.
- 4.3.9 There are over 26,000 companies in Merseyside, employing 475,000 workers. 19.4% of Merseyside's workforce are employed in manufacturing industries. 75.1% of Merseyside's workforce are employed in service industries.
- 4.3.10 The density of the Merseyside region is approximately 30.4/km<sup>2</sup> (given that there are 1.4m inhabitants and there are roughly 0.5m working places and a student population of 50,000 and the area for Merseyside is 641km<sup>2</sup>).

#### 4.4 Travel on Merseyside

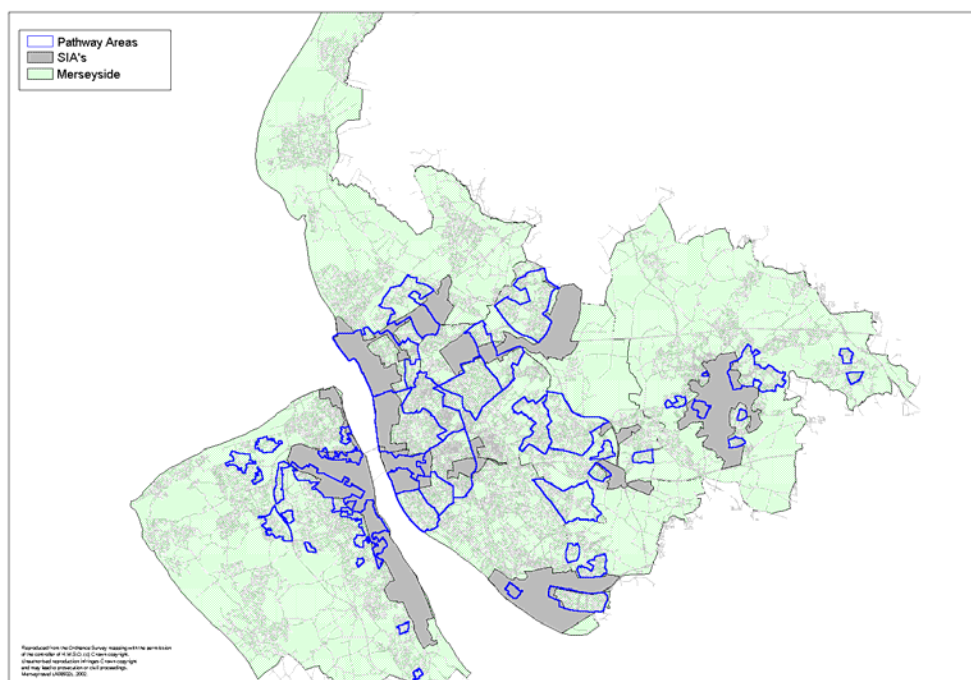
- 4.4.1 At present the road network in Merseyside does not experience network wide congestion, although there is localised congestion in the peak period on some of the major arterial routes in Liverpool and at certain parts of the busier local centres outside Liverpool. Projections indicate that growth in total traffic from 1996 have been calculated as 15.6% by 2006 and 24.1% by 2011.
- 4.4.2 Across Merseyside the following trends have been identified:-
  - (i) increasing car ownership;
  - (ii) increasing dependence on the car;
  - (iii) increase in the number of trips, while trip length has remained constant;
  - (iv) declining bus patronage; and
  - (v) increasing relative costs of transport.

- 4.4.3 At the time of the last County-wide Travel Survey in 1996, car travel accounted for 52% of total journeys in Merseyside compared to 46% in 1988. Walking accounted for 25% (29% in 1988) of all journeys, with public transport (buses and trains) accounting for 17% (19% in 1988).
- 4.4.4 In addition to the increase in car use, the average trip rate per day has increased 10% since 1988, to a 1996 level of 2.7 trips, and whilst trip rates for walking and bus have fallen, they have increased for car driver and car passenger. The overall increase in trip rates has previously been seen as a positive improvement, reflecting increasing economic growth and prosperity. The LTP states that in recognising the need to travel however, it is important to ensure that any increase is not due to more trips made out of necessity, ie as local choice for schools, shops, employment and health facilities becomes more restricted.
- 4.4.5 In 1996 an average of 41% of Merseyside households did not have access to a car.
- 4.4.6 The local bus network is actually operated by 40 private operators linking the district centres in the city-region and long distance services. In 1998, 84% of services were operated commercially with 16% supported by Merseytravel, the Passenger Transport Executive.

#### 4.5 The Local Transport Plan and the Objective One Programme

- 4.5.1 LTPs are drawn up by Local and Passenger Transport Authorities in order to set out integrated transport policy. They focus on five overarching objectives relating to the environment, safety, the economy, accessibility and integration (both in terms of all forms of transport and with the land use planning system). The Merseyside LTP therefore provides the local response to these overarching Government objectives by setting the Plan in the context of the wider Merseyside regeneration initiatives which are targeting improvements in a wide range of policy areas such as environmental improvements, job creation and training initiatives, social inclusion initiatives and health.

## Map 1



- 4.5.2 In addition, the Government's 10 Year Transport Plan has set out a longer term national programme for transport to the year 2010. The Plan intends to offer a more stable climate for investment in transport for the public and private sectors.
- 4.5.3 The LTP is set within the wider policy context of the European Spatial Development Perspective. The Objective One Single Programming Document sets the framework for the regeneration programme over a seven year time scale. The European funding is targeted towards the 38 designated 'Pathway Areas' which are particular areas of social need within Merseyside along with a series of new focal points for employment initiatives, the Strategic Investment Areas (SIAs). Map 1 illustrates this.
- 4.5.4 Over the past twenty years the economy of Merseyside has undergone a period of decline and change, posing substantial challenges to businesses, the public sector and local communities. Merseyside is one of the poorest urban areas in the UK with local communities. Merseyside is one of the poorest urban areas in the UK with local economic activity rates, below average business survival rates, very high levels of unemployment and long term unemployment, low domestic incomes and educational and skill levels well below those of the North West region. Partly due to the lack of employment opportunities, Merseyside's resident population has continued to decline.

4.5.5 It is the overriding objective of the Objective One Programme to reverse this decline. Consequently, the need for regeneration - new developments, job creation, training and education - has been the core focus of the Objective One Single Programming Document (SPD) which sets the framework for the regeneration programme over the next seven years.

4.5.6 This states:-

***‘To ensure that residents and communities have maximum potential to access the economic and employment benefits generated in the Strategic Grant areas’.***

4.5.7 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) has its own complementary, Vision Statement:-

***‘The aim of the Plan is to develop a fully integrated and sustainable transport network for Merseyside, which supports economic, social and environmental regeneration and ensures good access for all in the community’.***

4.5.8 The overriding objective of the city-region is to create jobs and aspire to full employment. This overrides everything and is caveated in the objectives of sustainable development. Regeneration is the driving force of the objectives then the land use systems and then transport. The SPD makes constant reference to the transport system to support regeneration.

4.5.9 The LTP has been developed to play a complementary role to the wider aims of the Objective One programme to regenerate Merseyside. The first five year programme in particular, presents a major opportunity to co-ordinate transport investment to achieve the regeneration vision for Merseyside. Much work has occurred in Merseyside to set out a land use planning context for the LTP.

4.5.10 Figure 2 lists the four main objectives of the LTP, alongside the most directly related quantified targets. It also gives an indication of the political weight attached to these objectives. Effectively, regeneration is the main priority and often no thought is given to transport or land use, the UDP as it is overridden for regeneration.

Figure 2: Land Use and Transport Objectives

	<b>Qualitative</b>
<b>Policy Objective 1</b>	To ensure transport supports sustainable economic development and regeneration
<b>Policy Objective 2</b>	To moderate the upward trend in car use and secure a shift to more sustainable forms of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport
<b>Policy Objective 3</b>	To secure the most efficient and effective use of the existing transport network
<b>Policy Objective 4</b>	To enhance the quality of life of those who live and work in, and visit Merseyside

#### 4.6 Linking the Transport and Social Agendas

4.6.1 The UK Government's Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) have recently published a report, 'Making the Links - Transport and Social Exclusion', which has provided a comprehensive examination of the links between transport provision and social exclusion. They identify social exclusion as:-

'a short-hand term for what can happen when people in areas suffer from a concoction of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown'.

They highlight access to work and training as a major contributor to social exclusion.

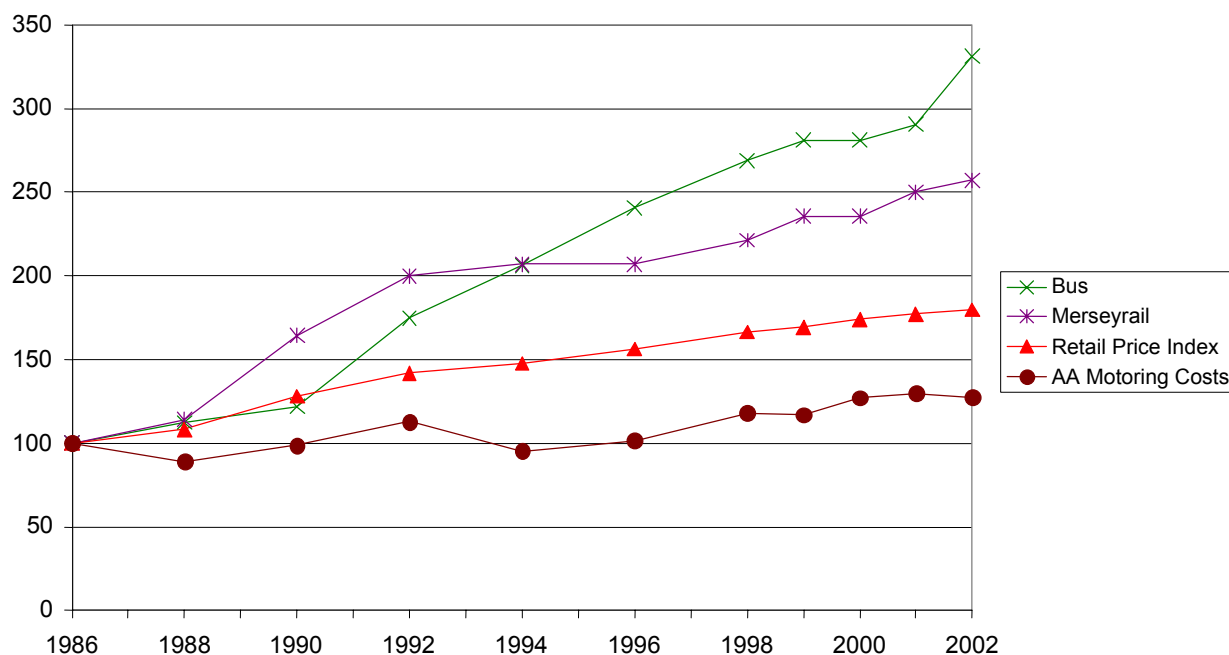
4.6.2 Merseytravel has as its goal:-

***'to ensure quality of travel opportunity for all'***.

4.6.3 To enable this to happen an Access Plan is being developed, as outlined in Figure 3. This paper is concerned particularly with issues of access to work and training.

Figure 4

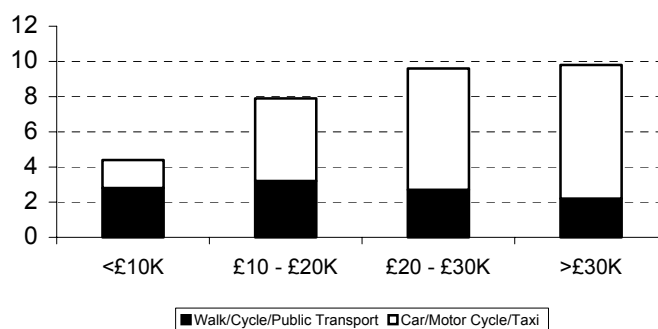
Trends in Public Transport Fares, Motoring Costs and the Retail Price Index



Sources: Merseytravel Annual Passenger Services Monitor, AA Technical

4.6.4 There are particular problems of ensuring the success of this project due to the deregulated bus industry in the UK. Nevertheless, because the bus is so important for the targeted communities, it is vital that new approaches are developed to provide new journey opportunities.

Figure 5



4.6.5 The impacts of this are illustrated by Figure 3 which shows the trends in travel costs, together with some of the major impacts. It clearly shows that bus users, who are generally amongst the lowest earners, have suffered the largest transport cost rises.

- 4.6.6 Merseytravel believes that, its starting point must be a commitment to genuine engagement with the community to understand their needs and aspirations. At Merseytravel, we have pioneered the Community Links Team, which has at its heart the commitment to *'work with the community on transport issues that affect their lives'*.
- 4.6.7 Figure 4 shows that the impact of this is to depress the ability of this sector of the community to make journeys. It can be clearly seen that those on the lowest incomes make the fewest trips.
- 4.6.8 Over the last twelve months Merseytravel has undertaken a fundamental and wide ranging review of current as well as future transport needs of residents living in the 38 Pathways areas cross Merseyside together with an assessment of requirements with seven SIAs. (The City Centre has not been included in this exercise at this stage).
- 4.6.9 This review has been undertaken in two stages:-
- (a) critical assessment of the existing public transport network serving each of the 38 Pathways areas and the seven Strategic Investment Areas; and
  - (b) a series of specific market research studies which were commissioned to:-
    - (i) quantify the current and future demand for travel as well as barriers preventing Pathways residents accessing new training and employment opportunities being created as part of the regeneration of the area; and
    - (ii) make appropriate recommendations for improvements.

#### 4.7 Transport Needs of Pathways Residents

- 4.7.1 In partnership with the Merseyside Health Action Zone, Merseytravel commissioned the Merseyside Pathways Transport Accessibility Study in March 2001. The study was divided into a number of key phases:-
- (a) comprehensive household travel surveys;
  - (b) consultation sessions with key stakeholders (including Pathways Partnerships, Regeneration Agencies, Health Sector and transport operators);
  - (c) critical audit of existing public transport networks and infrastructure to identify gaps in the network or current service provision;
  - (d) critical examination of health provision for Pathways residents; and
  - (e) development of a comprehensive transport improvement plan for Pathways residents.

4.7.2 The results of this extensive research have been used to develop an Action Plan for Pathways areas, as a support to the Local Transport Plan, and in particular the commitment to support the Objective One Programme. This is the Breakthrough report.

4.7.3 Breakthrough

The report lists a range of transport and accessibility improvement initiatives based around the following key themes:-

- (a) enable employers to recruit and retain a higher proportion of their workforce from Pathways areas;
- (b) enabling post 16 year old students to have access to the right training opportunities;
- (c) enabling the unemployed and those wishing to re-enter the labour market with ease; and
- (d) once in employment ensure that employees have good access to high quality sustainable travel choices.

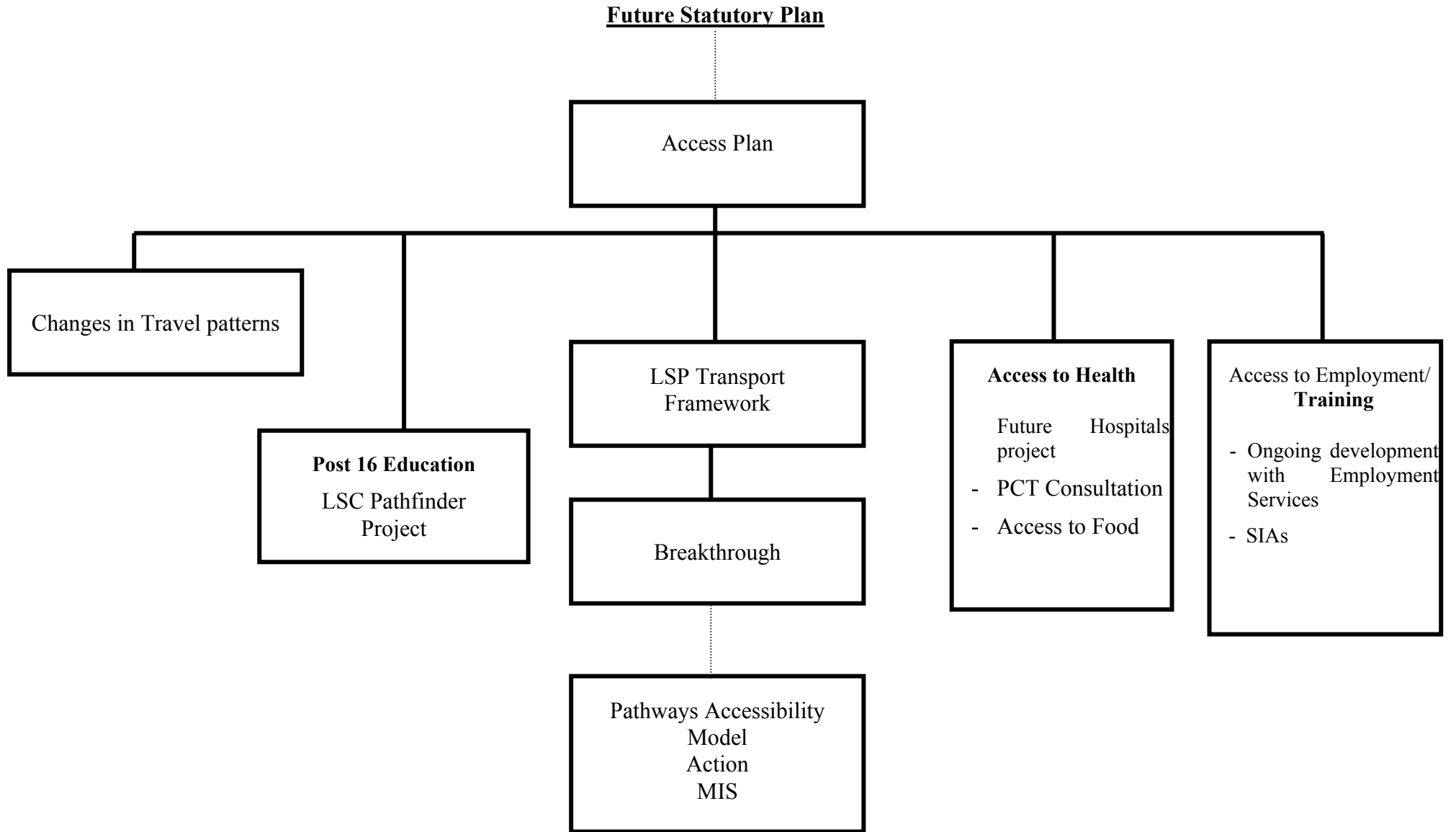
4.7.4 In particular, '*Breakthrough*' aims to break down transport barriers for the following groups within each of the Pathways areas:-

- (a) young adults aged 16-19 years of age;
- (b) adult job seekers (especially the long term unemployed);
- (c) lone parents;
- (d) women;
- (e) ethnic minorities;
- (f) people with physical or learning disabilities, poor short-term health or chronic health problems; and
- (g) older people.

4.7.5 For Merseytravel the key issues for consideration are:-

- (i) Commercial bus fares within Pathways areas ARE too high and require a range of ticketing initiatives to ease the cost burden.
- (ii) Access to the current range of reduced rate tickets in Pathways areas is generally good but there are some areas where new outlets are needed.
- (iii) Information provision within Pathways areas IS poor and requires attention. It should be noted however, that the forthcoming web-based journey planner offers a major breakthrough (in information provision) and discussions are ongoing with IT about how to achieve this.

**FIGURE 3**



- (iv) New bus services are required to ensure access to jobs, training and other job opportunities and will be subject to new bids for UBC.
- (v) Linked with this is the need for continuing support and co-operation with the Community Transport Sector.
- (vi) Greater co-operation and integration between Merseytravel and community based organisations is required to ensure full access to information and ticketing, as well as providing a focus to assess continuing transport demands.

4.7.6 This suggests continuing resource commitments for Merseytravel. These are quantified in the Breakthrough report and it can be noted that the main sources identified are:-

- (i) new bus services and supporting services.
- (ii) ‘bending’ mainstream programmes, particularly with Information and ticketing to provide better levels of service in Pathways areas;
- (iii) continuing support to Pathways, through the Pathways Transport Group and elsewhere. In this regard the future so far to fill the Partnership Push is proving a hindrance; and
- (iv) continuing support for the Community Transport sector, with which progress to a more progressive and pro-active role is proving slower than anticipated.

#### 4.8 Job Link

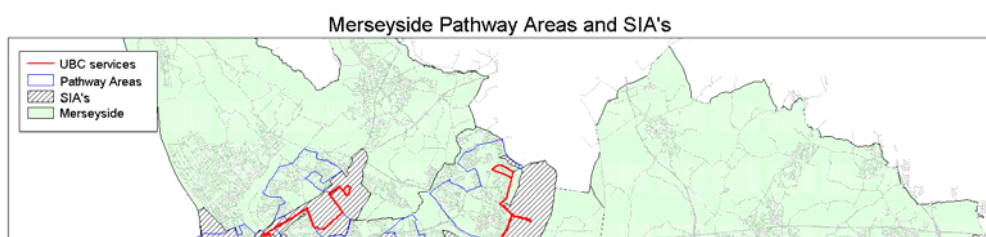
4.8.1 As a result of this research Merseytravel were able to bid for the new Government Urban Bus Challenge (UBC) Fund, which was specifically designed to provide new funding to address issues to social exclusion and creating new journey opportunities for work and training.

4.8.2 Map 2 shows the first network of services designed to link Pathways areas and Strategic Investment Areas.

4.8.3 The buses operate on a number of fixed routes and are timetabled to meet specific shift start and end times. Over the remainder of the day, the vehicles are available on a demand responsive basis providing transport for clients referred to the scheme from Employment Services, Action Teams and other key agencies such as Job, Enterprise and Training Centres to employment and training opportunities.

4.8.4 Particularly encouraging has been the continuation to funding the service from non-transport agencies, such as Regeneration Partnership.

#### Map 2



- 4.8.5 For the majority of respondents bus services are the main means of getting to and from work and they are reliant on the times the services run and their reliability. The Job Link service has so far proven that it is reliable and with the Demand Responsive part of the service will give residents the chance to take up employment that is out of core working hours, at weekends and take up overtime opportunities.
- 4.8.6 It was recognised by respondents that the service had made their current jobs more secure as they are now getting there on time and it is also giving the potential for some people to look for new jobs further afield.
- 4.8.7 The employment agencies were very aware of the demand responsive service and have started making good use of the service to take people to interviews and then to ensure people can get to the jobs they are placing them in, if there is no scheduled service available. The staff from the agencies who book the Demand Responsive Trips have found that they can usually get the trips they want and have found the booking staff at Merseytravel very helpful and efficient.
- 4.8.8 Recently, further funding has been secured, taking total investment in the Job Link service to €6.7m.

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Job Link is one example of a specific initiative designed to improve access to jobs and training, for citizens living in socially deprived areas. It has arisen from a commitment to ensure that public transport plays a full part with the social and economic regeneration of the region.
- 5.2 It is based equally on a commitment to fully engage and consult with the local community and to attempt to meet their aspirations. It is a positive response to meet the issues of social exclusion that can arise from poor public transport provision.
- 5.3 In the UK the integration of transport and the wider social agenda is made more difficult by the deregulated bus industry and franchised rail system. This calls for an innovative and flexible approach.
- 5.4 Provision of services such as Job Link, although clearly being important are, however, essentially short term solutions. The long term solutions, ie in rural areas, better integration of land use, regeneration and transport planning.