

Town Access Plan for Ringwood

Notes of an Introductory Session held on 14th August 2008

Present: Hannah Baker, HCC
Dominic McGrath, HCC
Peter Savidge, HCC
Nick Hunt, NFDC
Jo Stannard, RTC
Cllr Nigel Clarke

What is a TAP?

- Town Access Plans have their origins in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006-2011.
- The purpose of a TAP is to set out a strategy which is a shared vision for how access to facilities and services within a town will be improved.
- Such facilities and services include health, education, employment, retail, places of worship, cultural facilities, leisure facilities, and access to open spaces.
- The TAP can be used to direct funding in a way that responds to the accessibility needs of Ringwood's community – developer contributions, capital, other agencies, grants etc.

Why do we need a TAP?

- To help focus the identification and implementation of accessibility needs and measures in a town – formulates a planning tool.

How do we start?

- Establish the 'Town' area
- In order to develop a TAP the existing levels of accessibility and barriers and obstacles to access and movement within the town need to be established.
- Can be achieved by Community Street Audits, referring to previous strategies (Walking and Cycling strategy, Town Plan), reviewing public transport facilities and future planned development, and receiving information on existing access and travel conditions.
- Ensure that all areas and groups within the community are able to have their say in how they need to access facilities and services equitably.

Typical barriers to access

- All towns are different but an example of typical barriers to access are demonstrated below:

Lack of appropriate facilities	A variety of facilities are required to assist and facilitate access, such as dropped kerbs for those with mobility difficulties or children's buggies, or a direct bus service from origin to destination or a surfaced path for those walking to work/school.
Physical barriers	These will vary from large scale barriers such as a main road, dual carriageway, railway or river, to small scale such as steps or uneven surfaces for those with buggies, cycles or mobility difficulties.
Road Safety	The perceived risks associated with walking and cycling can deter people from using these modes. High levels of traffic and high traffic speeds and a lack of safe facilities, e.g. cycle lanes and pedestrian crossings, often lead to safety concerns and prevent people from travelling or encourage them to use cars.
Security	Fears over personal security are shaped by factors as such as lighting and the overlooking of paths by buildings and the wider community, levels of crime and perceived threats. Concerns over personal security can act as deterrent for using certain routes and travelling in the evening and at night for public transport, walking and cycling. This can encourage people to resort to using private cars or prevent them from undertaking particular journeys completely.
Information & awareness	The availability of information about alternative modes is key when deciding how to travel. Signage, the availability of public transport timetables, real time information and route planning offer choice and confidence when making a journey.
Cost	Cost is often a barrier to the use of motorised forms of transport, including the car and sometimes public transport.

Objective of the TAP

- Develop appropriate measures to accommodate any planned and future development (within and adjacent to the town)
- Encourage a greater use of more sustainable means of transport.
- Improve personal safety, especially for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Encourage healthier and more active lifestyles.
- Reduce the severance caused by the A31.
- Encourage the development of a town wide network of cycle AND walking facilities.
- Recognise and respond to the needs of those with limited or impaired mobility.
- Ensure the town centre remains an important location for retail, employment and leisure; and

- Enhance and protect the character and environment of Ringwood.

The Way Forward

It is anticipated that the process to develop a TAP for Ringwood will take approximately one year.

A Steering Group will be established to include those people at this meeting plus Cllr Treleven and one additional Town Councillor. Representatives from other departments/organisations, such as public transport, development control, HCC estates and Safer Routes to Schools will be invited to attend relevant meetings of the Steering Group.

A Members workshop will be held so that all councillors are involved in the planning stages, and there will also be public consultation.

The first meeting of the Steering Group, to be held on 1st October, will take the form of a brainstorming session, gathering together all the relevant existing data, establishing what further information is required and determining the extent of community involvement.