

Tameside MBC + Greater Manchester PTE

Review based on

- *meeting 9 March 2004 @ Ashton-under-Lyne*
 - *John Eley - LSP Coordinator, Tameside MBC*
 - *Phil Calverley - Engineering Development Manager, Tameside MBC*
- *meeting 10 March 2004 @ Manchester*
 - *Moira Percy - Community Strategy Manager, Greater Manchester PTE*
- *information on Web sites*
 - *Tameside MBC - www.tameside.gov.uk*
 - *Greater Manchester PTE - www.gmpte.gov.uk*
- *published documents as referenced*
- *other material as supplied*
- *follow-up telephone / email contacts with officers*

Tameside has also featured as a case study for the national LSPs evaluation research, and a particular review was made of its approach to transport in relation to the community strategy.

Tameside MBC is one of the ten metropolitan boroughs within Greater Manchester. The conurbation itself has a total population of 2,482,000 (2001), with 1,040,000 households. Tameside lies on the east side of the conurbation, has a total population of 213,000 (2001), 90,000 households, and has significant areas of deprivation and disadvantage (resulting from major loss of industry over recent decades). The Tameside Strategic Partnership was established in 1999, under the auspices of the Borough Council, who provides the administrative staffing. The partnership board has 29 representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. It is supported by eight strategic partnerships (forums) responsible for taking forward the actions developed from the strategy; there is a formal partnership agreement between the Board and each forum.

The first Community Strategy¹ was produced in 2000, following consultation with citizen groups. This established eight main priority areas for action:

- Lifelong learning
- Local Economy
- Transport
- Environment
- Health and Social Care
- Homes
- Crime and Disorder
- Community

For each of these a programme of actions was defined. The results of actions in these priority areas were set out outcomes in the monitoring report Two Years On².

¹ Tameside MBC (2000) Community Strategy 2000-2003 Tameside MBC, Ashton-under-Lyne

² Tameside MBC (2002) Community Strategy 2000-2003 'Two Years On' Tameside MBC, Ashton-under-Lyne

To move forward the strategy a widespread community consultation³ was carried out in 2002 (carried out by MORI). This led to a new Community Strategy⁴. This has six main themes:

- Supportive Communities
- A Safe Environment
- A Prosperous Society
- A Learning Community
- A Healthy Population
- An Attractive Borough

For these six themes there are 25 key measures, reflecting topics raised in the consultation. These are defined in the partnership agreements between the Partnership Board and the strategic partnerships, and form the basis for actions by the partners.

The main focus of the 2002 consultation (which was recognized as a good practice model) was to rank the existing eight priority themes. In this transport was rated as the lowest in order of concern. Nonetheless it was widely seen as an issue of widespread importance to all the other themes, and thus it was decided to treat it as a cross cutting theme. Transport has emerged from business surveys as a significant problem area which needs attention. It has also emerged as an issue from various local citizens' panels.

The two defined policy aims are

- to halve the number of people who are killed or seriously injured on Tameside's roads by 2007/8 (A Safe Environment)
- to increase bus use within Tameside (An Attractive Borough)

However, transport policy within the Community Strategy is not just about more buses (important though these are). Tameside has a generally good bus network offering wide coverage of most urban areas. The principal objective is 'to produce a quality alternative to the car', which is linked to specific targets in three aspects

- improve highway safety
- improve road conditions
- reduce the impact of traffic in town centres and residential areas.

These targets are fed into the business plan of Tameside's transport division, and thus form an important factor in determining their work programme for the year; including work on joint activities with the PTE over public transport. In this way the community strategy does have an important role in determining action on transport (and other fields), in terms of action at several levels: Greater Manchester, Tameside, local neighbourhoods. The Borough Council management has established firm processes for ensuring this. It is backed up by the strong involvement of Borough Council members on the Tameside Partnership. Relevant Borough Council officers are in this closely involved with the Partnership's activities.

These aims relate closely to the principles in the Greater Manchester LTP and thus achieving them ties in with preparation of the next LTP. There are in fact two main strands of action in ensuring they are properly recognized and acted on in the next LTP.

³ MORI (2003) Tameside Community Strategy 2003-2006 - 2002 Consultation Results Tameside MBC, Ashton-under-Lyne

⁴ Tameside MBC (2003) Community Strategy 2003-2006 Tameside MBC, Ashton-under-Lyne

- There already exists a Greater Manchester Steering Group for the LTP, representing the PTE and all the metropolitan borough councils. This coordinates the input from all of these and guides a joint action team within the PTE which does the actual work (this team includes staff on permanent secondment from the boroughs). The Steering Group will continue to have a key role.
- A joint Greater Manchester Strategic Forum is now being established, representing all the boroughs and other agencies (i.e. a Greater Manchester LSP). This will receive input from the ten borough partnerships and establish theme groups. This is likely to include a transport theme group. The chairman of the LTP Steering Group will play an important role on this.

The PTE has a seat on the main Tameside Partnership Board but is often not represented at meetings. This is of concern to Tameside MBC, especially as some important transport topics are sometimes raised; the Board includes some senior Council members and four representatives of borough businesses, who are also sometimes interested in addressing transport. However, the PTE's view is that the Board covers only items of principle, and thus attendance is not a good use of PTE manager time, especially as Greater Manchester has ten boroughs in all. This increases the importance for Tameside Partnership of feeding its priorities and policies into the Greater Manchester Strategic Forum, where the PTE will be involved. The PTE similarly considers this Forum to have a vital role in bringing community planning and transport development together, and hopes to play an important role on the transport theme group at least.

Funding for transport action in the borough comes from a number of sources, some of them determined by definition of a number of Neighbourhood Renewal areas, and hence the availability of NRF grants. Some other grant sources, e.g. Dealing with disadvantage, have also been used primarily for NRF areas, and the Borough has also gained from the South East Manchester Multi Modal Study, funding for whose urban projects is now emerging, and from a Home Zones grant. The total amount from all of these amounts to about £5 million in a year (SEMMS £2.6 million annually for three years, one Home Zone grant £¾ million, DaD £1 million). The PTE is able to provide far larger funds for main public transport projects in the borough, which currently include bus and rail station upgrading and a quality bus corridor. Tameside MBC also place considerable importance on the intended Metrolink extension, which is assessed as likely to enable the priorities of the community strategy to be more effectively met.

Both transport and environmental policies within the community strategy relate to development planning: currently the UDP, in future the LDF. The Tameside Partnership Board is looking to establish a sustainable development forum to take forward environmental issues. The LTP reflects the current UDP aims of sustainability.

There is recognition by the Tameside Partnership that partnerships continue to change. The previous LSPs research has itself had benefits, in drawing to the Partnership's attention aspects where it should change, including in terms of how it handles transport: This led to a Transport Audit⁵ in mid 2003 (carried out by consultants Faber Maunsell). This had five key objectives, focused around establishing transport need (for travel within Tameside and to centres outside), define the existing transport supply, considering best practice and issues, and recommending solutions. The results of this

⁵ Faber Maunsell (2003) Transport Audit for Tameside Tameside MBC, Ashton-under-Lyne

substantial study amplify the transport needs within the community strategy's six key priorities and are being taken forward within the context of the LTP (in the processes indicated above).

For Greater Manchester PTE the LSPs in its ten boroughs are very important. However, although most LSPs invite the PTE to be represented, not all do so. The form of invitation varies: some present an invitation to be on the board, others on the transport theme group. The PTE faces serious pressures on officers' time, and thus prefers to be involved with the transport theme groups; the widely ranging discussions of the LSP boards means that for a director or senior manager to attend them would be for the most part a waste of time. In any case there are many other partnerships and forums within Greater Manchester, quite a lot with significant transport coverage, and PTE management need to make the most effective use of what these bodies have to contribute to development of transport, at all levels. As it is, a lot of time is spent at local community meetings dealing with local issues.

All the Greater Manchester LSPs approach their priority themes and their activities in different ways. The priorities for transport are not all derived on the same basis. A lot depends which bodies are most engaged with an LSP over the period of developing the community strategy. Quite often active stakeholders and groups are also involved in other forums on transport, and thus the same issues and priorities are raised. On occasions these local groups have gained support for unrealistic proposals (e.g. levels and routings for bus services which are never likely to meet any real needs); this raises expectations and then creates loss of interest in the processes when the proposal is not implemented in any way.

The PTE considers that understanding needs at borough and local level is very important to carrying out its functions effectively. It seeks to maximize its cooperation with the boroughs over transport needs, to be proactive wherever possible, but also to recognize that the borough councils are also jointly responsible for the LTP. This is done not only through the Steering Group for the LTP development but in having a jointly staffed LTP team. The bus strategy evolved in recent years has been developed in close liaison with the borough councils, with priority given to their more disadvantaged areas; that has led to various forms of service provision, primarily enhanced conventional routes, but also coordinated flexible minibuses and similar systems.

The PTE expects to address accessibility planning for the next LTP in the same way, making full use of all the borough councils' issues and information, in which their LSPs play an important role. It considers that accessibility planning forms a valuable process, and the software designed for it is very useful. However, it does have one concern: the software reflects only bus routes in its resource base, whereas the PTE and borough councils make substantial use of supported taxis and similar initiatives in some disadvantaged areas off main routes, and the much improved accessibility created by these cannot be reflected in the model's results.

The PTE's planning division follows land use developments and other processes across Greater Manchester in order to identify in advance possible requirements for changes in services to meet new travel patterns. The PTE also works closely with boroughs over their UDPs, so that future spatial planning strategies can be structured to minimize the

need to travel, especially through focusing development on those areas where it can best be served by public transport.