



Shropshire Local Transport Plan 3

Evidence Base

Part 2: Stakeholder Views and Consultation

February 2011

1. National highways and transport (NHT) public satisfaction survey 2009

The 2009 NHT public satisfaction survey helps us to understand the views of local people about a wide range of highways and transport issues. The survey was conducted by Ipsos Mori and was based on a statistically valid 1,061 postal surveys. As the same survey was completed in 76 English local authorities the data can be used to compare satisfaction levels in Shropshire with those in other similar authority areas.

In Shropshire the aspects of highways and transport considered to be most important to local people were safer roads, highway condition and pavements, followed by local buses. The aspect for which satisfaction levels were lowest was highway condition, over 40% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with this aspect. Street lighting was the area of greatest satisfaction, with over 60% satisfied.

In general, residents within the Shrewsbury area are more satisfied with highways and transportation services than those in more rural areas.

Figure 2.1 NHT Shropshire residents' satisfaction levels with highways and transport

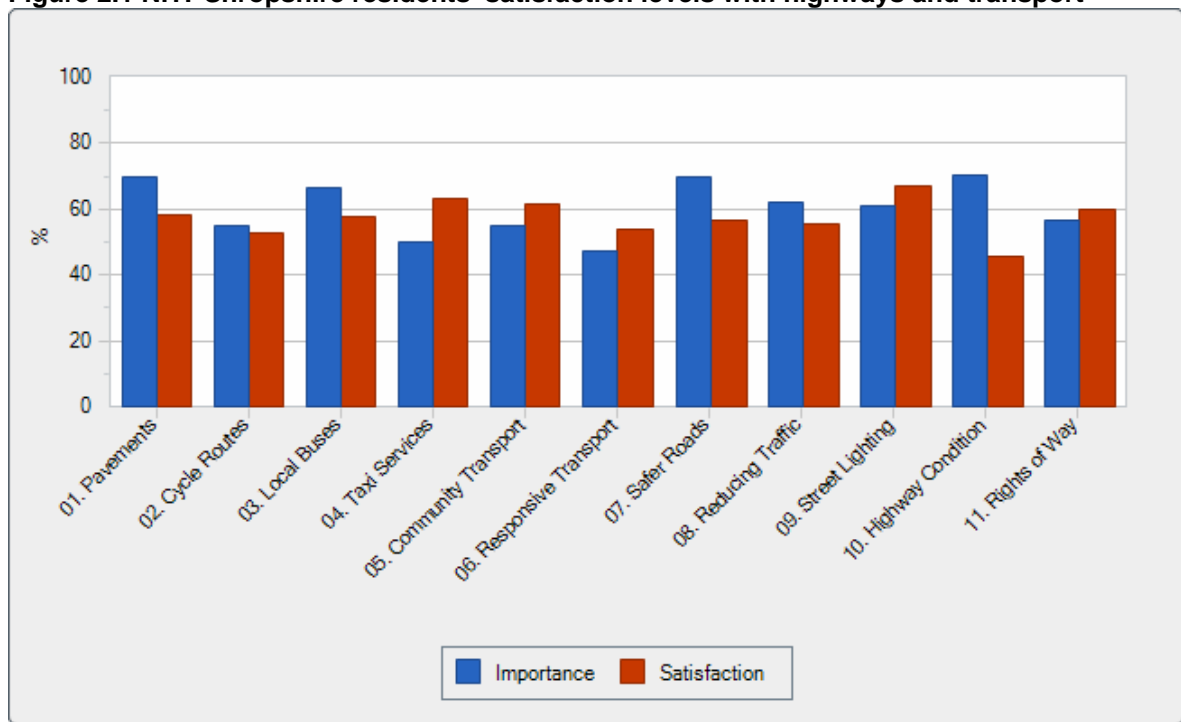


Figure 2.2 NHT Shropshire residents' satisfaction levels with highways and transport

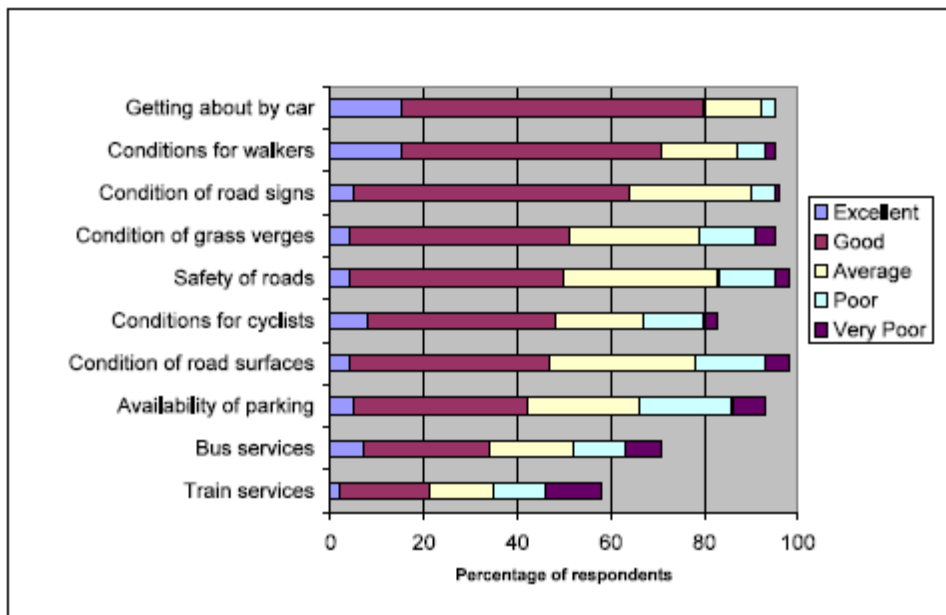


2. Shropshire's Peoples Panel

The Shropshire People's Panel Survey undertaken for Shropshire County Council in 2004 contained some useful information about residents' transport perceptions and concerns which will still be valid.

The survey asked respondents how they rated existing transport infrastructure.

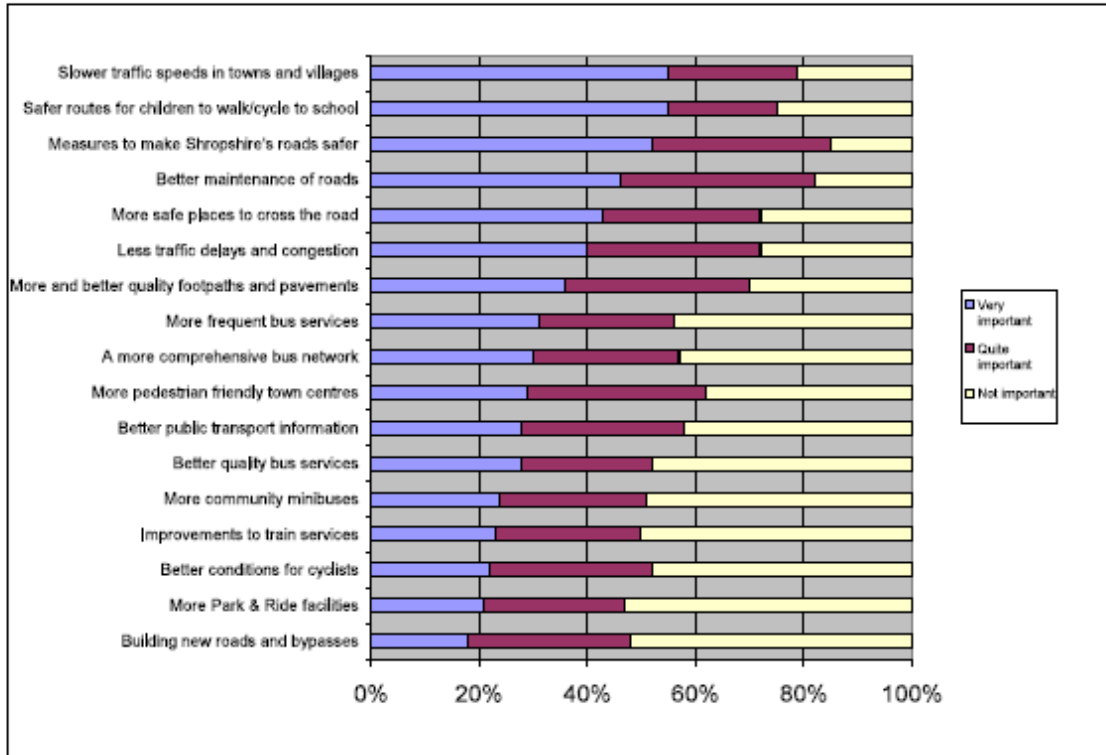
Figure 3.1 People's perceptions of transport infrastructure



The majority of respondents considered that current conditions for getting about by car (80%) and conditions for walkers (70%) were excellent or good. However, only around half of respondents considered that the current safety of roads, condition of roads and conditions for cyclists were excellent or good. Just over 40% of respondents considered that availability of parking was excellent or good. Public transport was rated most poorly, with a rating of excellent or good from only 35% of respondents for bus services and only 20% for train services.

The survey also asked people which transport improvements were most important to themselves and their families.

Figure 3.2 People's opinion of required transport improvements



The majority of respondents identified measures to improve safety as the highest priorities, followed by better road maintenance, reduced traffic delays and better provision for pedestrians. Measures to improve public transport and cycling were considered to be important by fewer people, presumably because these modes are used by a smaller sector of the population. Building new roads and bypasses obtained least support.

Other aspects of the LTP2 consultation programme repeatedly highlighted the strong public concerns about danger from traffic, particularly due to high vehicle speeds. When bus users were questioned, aspirations for better public transport services, particularly in rural areas, also came over very strongly.

3. Spotlight on Shropshire consultation event

The Shropshire Business Board and Shropshire Council hosted a consultation evening on 22 March 2010 with more than 60 Shropshire businesses debating the key issues that affect the county's economy.

Attendees participated in facilitated workshops where they were able to share their views on the state of the Shropshire economy. Businesses also had the opportunity to highlight any challenges they are currently facing and to bring to light any major obstacles that are restricting their ability to grow.

Overall the major advantages of operating a business in Shropshire emerged as:

- High quality of life for residents and workers
- Central location – easy access to suppliers and customers
- Landscape and scenery – a pleasant environment
- Safety – lack of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Captive workforce – easier to retain staff
- Plenty of room to expand businesses

However, the key disadvantages highlighted were:

- Lack of high level jobs
- Sparseness of population which makes it more difficult and more expensive to provide services
- Lack of a "Shropshire brand" (although the Muller advertising campaign has been a tremendous help)
- Lack of suitable labour especially for certain positions
- Shropshire has an image of being "remote".

Most businesses that had chosen to locate to Shropshire are small, and many are lifestyle businesses whose owners have relocated to Shropshire to enjoy a better quality of life. However, many businesses have their origins in Shropshire (because of family ties for example) and this is the main reason why they are based here.

Specific sectors mentioned as making a significant contribution to the Shropshire economy included tourism (although more could be made of this) and construction (due to the many ancillary companies that rely on the construction industry for business).

Specific issues raised in the transport & infrastructure discussion group were:

- A general consensus that most employees drive to work – very little use is made of public transport. Some walk if they live close enough.
- Because of the large volume of employees travelling to work by car, providing adequate amounts of car parking spaces is often a problem for some businesses.
- Most considered it to be easy commuting to work in Shropshire by car.
- Several larger employees have "cycle to work" schemes and are investing quite heavily in these. However, others are unsure as to what schemes are actually on offer.
- Public transport is a problem for those working shifts (this has particular relevance for manufacturers/care/hospitality sectors).
- There is an inadequate service to business parks (especially Battlefield). A shuttle service or hop-on/hop-off bus could make a huge difference in the up-take of public transport amongst workers and would also help to ease the pressure on parking

availability which is becoming increasingly common on the business parks. The possibility of a train station at Battlefield was suggested.

- The direct rail service to London is beneficial but too slow (though reasonable in terms of cost). However, lack of parking at Shrewsbury station/infrequency of services means that many travel by car (if not all the way to London then to Wolverhampton, Stafford, Birmingham International, Worcester or Crewe depending on where based).
- The trains can sometimes be unreliable and it is seen as a “safe bet” to travel by car.
- Most businesses felt that the road network is generally good, but would like to see:
 - Improvements to trunk roads (e.g. A5, A49)
 - M54 link to M6 toll
- Most businesses are in favour of the North West Relief Road even if they don't expect their own business to benefit directly. The benefits the road could potentially bring to Shrewsbury town centre are widely acknowledged.

Transport issues were also raised as part of other topics of discussion

- In relation to problems of declining market towns - problems parking and the cost of parking were considered to be deterring shoppers
- In relation to becoming greener - reliance on cars was considered a barrier to being greener– greater use of public transport is not an option for most businesses (although they encourage walk and cycle to work schemes as well as car sharing). Smart cars are too expensive so are not economically viable

4. Shropshire LTP3 stakeholder consultation event

An LTP3 stakeholder consultation event was held on 9 September 2010. The aim of the event was to gather the views of a range of stakeholders on the key issues to be addressed by the new LTP; and to identify and prioritise relevant actions.

114 people attended from a wide range of organisations, including Shropshire Council, parish and town councils and many public and voluntary sector organisations.

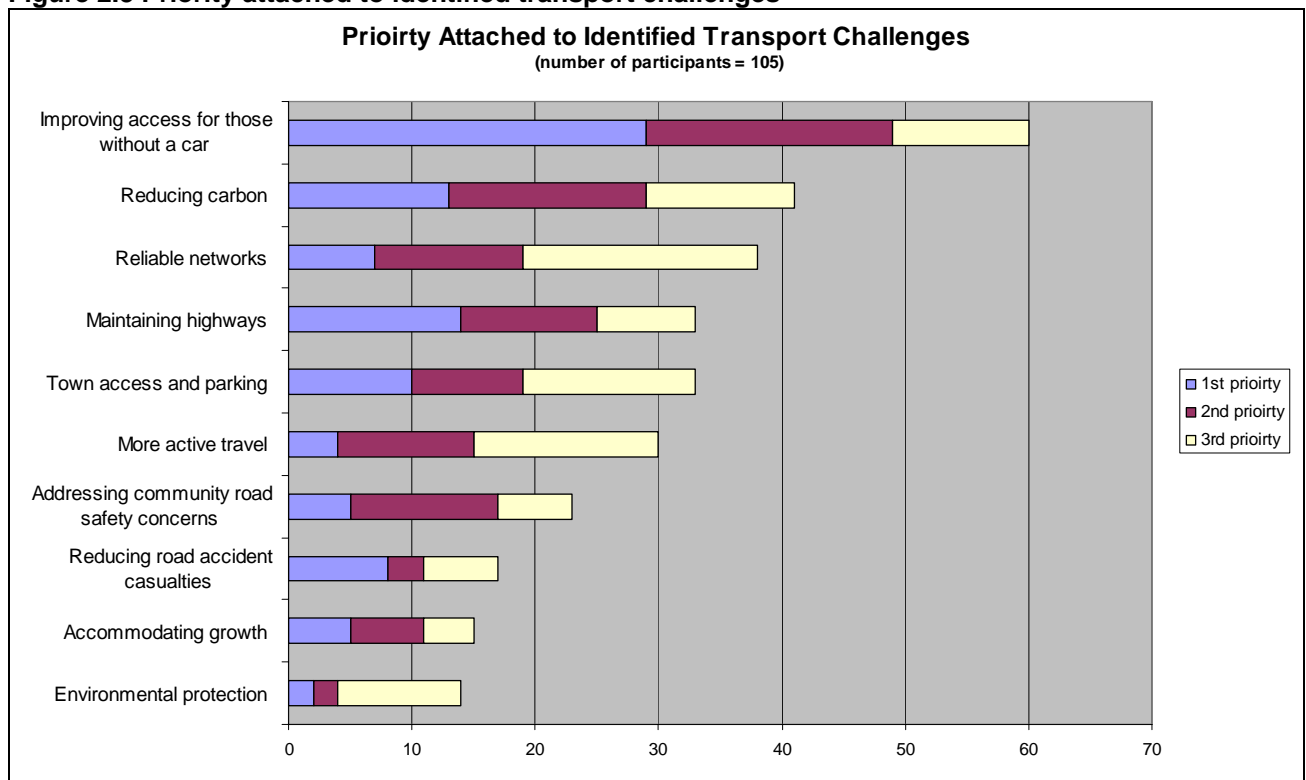
Attendees were asked to choose from a list of identified challenges, which they considered to be the highest priority to address. They also attended two separate workgroups covering 8 different challenge areas, to suggest and prioritise interventions.

Key findings and priorities

Transport challenges

Delegates were given a list of transport challenges; they were asked to identify the three that they considered to be the highest priority to address. The results are in the graph below. The highest priority by a significant margin was ‘Improving access for those without a car’, with 60% of delegates identifying this as a priority.

Figure 2.3 Priority attached to identified transport challenges



Transport interventions

A large number of potential transport interventions were identified by the workgroups. At lunch time each participant was given four dots to put by the interventions they supported the most. The four interventions that received the highest support (number of dots) were:

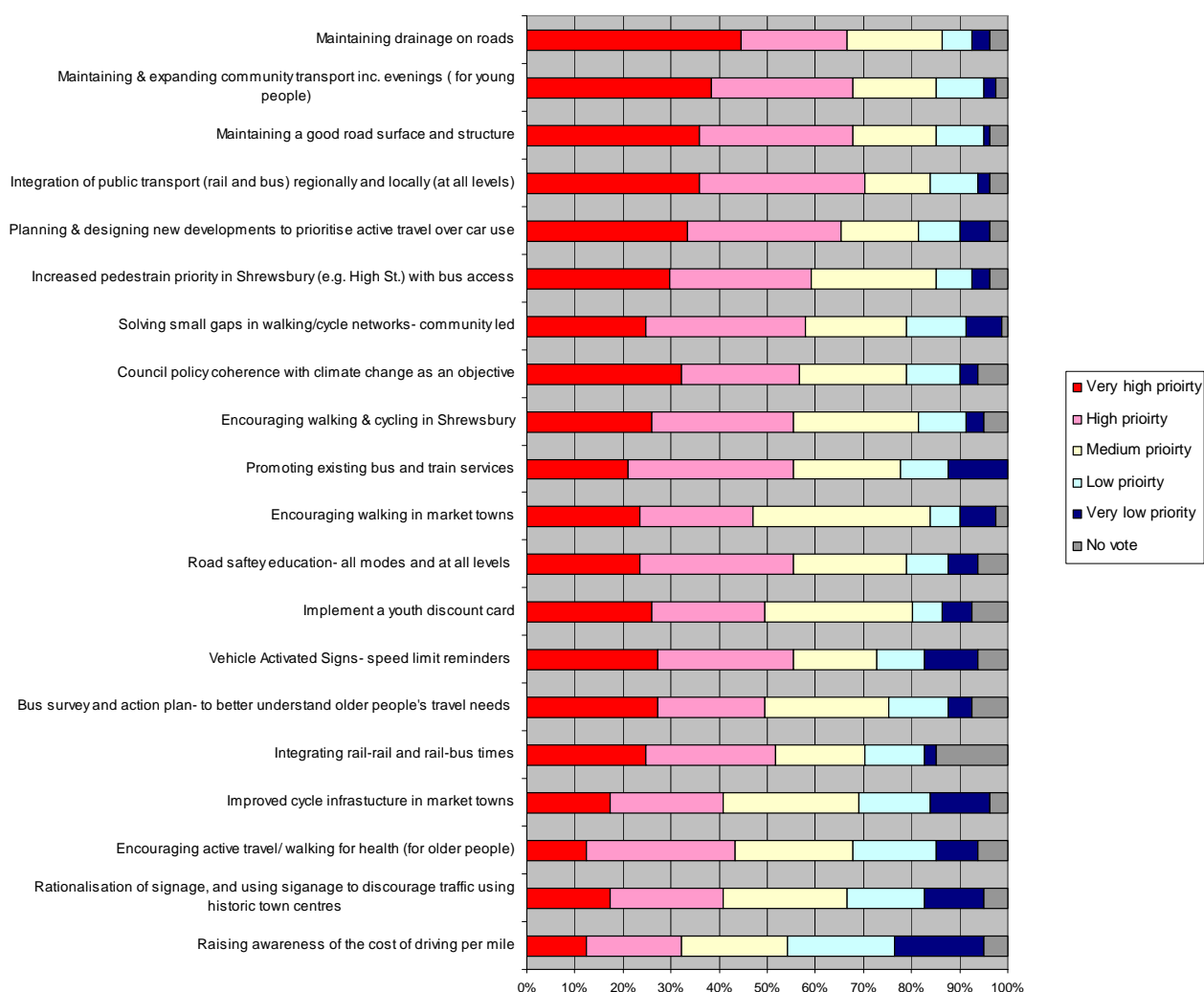
- Greater number of evening local bus services (13)
- Extend Shropshire Link into evenings (work with CT groups to help deliver) (12)
- Maintaining a good highway surface (for safety) (12)
- Supporting communities to identify & develop walking/cycling opportunities, routes & solutions (12)

Appraisal and prioritisation of interventions

In the afternoon workgroups were asked to undertake an appraisal of the most popular interventions proposed in the morning sessions. The appraisal process involved considering the deliverability, scale, acceptability, cost and benefits of the proposed intervention and taking these into consideration determining the level of priority that should be attached to the proposed action.

At the end of the appraisal process each workgroup was asked to feedback to the conference their two highest priority interventions. All delegates then voted on the level of priority they thought each intervention should have. The results of the voting are provided in the graph below where the interventions have been ranked in an overall order of priority. The total number of people voting was 81.

Figure 2.4 Views on prioritised actions from afternoon workshops



The five interventions which were considered to be of the highest overall priority were:

- Maintaining drainage on roads
- Maintaining & expanding community transport (inc. evenings)(for young people)
- Maintaining a good road surface and structure
- Integration of public transport (rail and bus) regionally and locally (at all levels)
- Planning & designing new developments to prioritise active travel over car use

Summary and conclusions

Taking into account the feedback provided throughout the day it is clear that improvement to **public transport** was the predominate concern of the majority of conference delegates. The key public transport improvements requested included more services in the evenings and weekends, to enable social activities by younger and older people and better serve shift work; better co-ordination and integration of both transport services and also information about services; more support for community transport, smaller buses and a youth discount card to address the relatively high cost of public transport for young people.

Road maintenance was also considered to be important and in the final voting maintaining good drainage and a good surface and structure were identified as two of the top three overall priorities.

Reducing carbon was recognised as a key challenge to address. The need for a coherent policy on climate change was identified, and the role of public transport, particularly in making longer journeys, was identified as part of the solution.

Enabling more **cycling and walking** was identified as being an important for all areas of the county to encourage healthy lifestyles, improve access and encourage tourism. The need for continuous routes to make it safer and easier to cycle and walk was recognised; and there was strong support for giving walking and cycling infrastructure much higher priority in new developments; and for empowering and enabling local community led improvements to facilities.

Achieving **reliable road and rail networks** was identified as one of the top three challenges to address. However, relatively little emphasis was placed on this during the remainder of the day indicating that in many areas reliability is not a significant problem. Improving the reliability of train and bus services was highlighted as important and also tackling congestion in Shrewsbury town centre.

Good **access to towns by car and car parking** was considered important, but was not identified as a top priority. Improved but reduced signage and measures to keep through traffic out of town centres were considered to be important.

Road safety was surprisingly considered to be a relatively low priority. Interventions supported included more vehicle activated speed limit signs, more 20mph zones and road safety education for all users.

A more detailed report on the findings of this consultation event is available at <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/traveltransport.nsf/open/2A79133CD32676E98025709E002EEF2B>.

5. Shropshire youth consultation

A consultation session was held on 17 November 2010 with representatives from the Shropshire Youth Parliament and Shropshire Speak Out Group. There were 8 young people present ranging in ages from 14 to 19 years. During the consultation session the young people were asked:

- about their travel habits
- to identify their travel and transport related problems and concerns
- to identify and discuss the viability of solutions

Travel habits

The young people were asked about how they normally travelled particularly for their main regular journey to school/college/work; as this was likely to influence their problems and solutions. Most used the bus to get to school/college, the two oldest drove and one walked. None of the young people regularly cycled. The young people lived in a variety of locations across Shropshire, providing a good spread of transport experiences.

Transport problems

Buses

Most of the key problems identified related to bus travel, most of the young people had fairly negative attitudes to the bus services they had experienced. Issues included:

Services

- Lack of bus services in very rural areas
- Reliability and punctuality
- Timing of services

Cost

- Driving is considered to be cheaper.
- Bus fares are expensive and inconsistent.
- Cost precludes travelling for part-time jobs.
- Student bus pass restricted to evenings and mornings.

Comfort

- Overcrowding on buses at school/college times
- Feeling uncomfortable/ intimidated on buses
- Attitudes of bus drivers
- Poor cleanliness of buses

Information

- Understanding information and timetables and availability of information

Trains

- Expensive
- Overcrowded
- Intimidation from some groups e.g. football fans
- Leaving early
- Understanding information and timetables and availability of information

Car travel

- Cost of parking
- Issue of Shrewsbury sixth form students parking in residential areas.
- Objections to introduction of parking charges in market towns

Cycling

- Way too dangerous, wouldn't cycle in dark
- Missed out on cycle training
- Trying to promote cycling for girls at college in winter; would be better in summer
- Only cycle on pavements
- Cycling not practical for work

Possible solutions

*Suggestions marked with an asterisk were identified as the highest priority.

Bus

- *Free travel or reduced fares for those in full time education. Extension of the student bus pass for use on holidays, weekends and other times of day
- *Improved frequency and reliability
- *Extend Shropshire Link service to provide an evening and weekend service
- More bus lanes and bus priority
- Smaller buses
- More buses at peak
- Shropshire Link available on more days per week
- More bus stops with flags to increase confidence of users and promote to the local community that there is a bus service
- Better shelters have information at shelters
- More promotion of Shropshire Link
- More bus services to local market towns (not just Shrewsbury)

Rail

- More CCTV
- Better information on station platforms including real time information

General public transport

- *Travel training for young people - understanding timetables; and clearer information
- Better linking of bus and train times

Walking

- Better pedestrian routes to stations
- Provide a crossing over busy roads to schools

Car

- Discounts for sixth form students in town car parks

Other

- Promote mopeds

Highest priority

The issue identified at the highest overall priority **was free or reduced cost travel for those in full time education**

5. Local consultation

To understand local transport issues and aspirations The LTP development has linked closely with the work on developing Place Plans for the Local Development Framework.

The transport related issues and aspirations of local communities have been identified through a package of processes including:

- Reviews of existing parish plans
- Consultation with local town and parish councils
- Community toolkit events. - The Community Toolkit involves a local event, which is a facilitated group discussion, resulting in a snapshot in time to assess how well a community is working. It considers how sustainable the community is as a place to live, work and play. It also considers what support or development it might need to be more resilient in the future.
- Direct correspondence and service requests from public and councillors

Local aspirations are summarised in the draft Implementation Plan

6. Swot analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shropshire is perceived as a good place to run a business because it has a pleasant, safe environment with high quality of life and a captive workforce. • Shropshire’s road network is perceived as generally good, getting about by car is considered to be good, and reliability was not emphasised as a general problem during consultation. • Most people drive to work and it is perceived as easy to travel by car in Shropshire. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% dissatisfied with highway condition and maintenance highlighted as key issue by stakeholders. • Lack of high level jobs within county and lack of suitable labour for some sectors. • Sparseness of population makes it difficult to provide services. • Public transport services are perceived be good by less than 30% or residents. • Bus services are not frequently available on evenings/ weekends. This means that public transport is not viable option for shift workers accessing employment of young people accessing leisure. • Poor integration of bus and rail services. • Lack of public transport services in rural areas. • Public transport fares are expensive and inconsistent. This expense limits the use of public transport to access part time work.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several large employers offer cycle to work schemes. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of parking may deter shopping in market towns.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of cycling and walking could encourage more tourism. • Planning and designing new developments offers opportunity to prioritise active travel. • More use of community/ voluntary organisations. For example to provide community transport; minor improvements to walking and cycling network; promotion of active travel. • More coherent policy with Council with a carbon reduction/climate change objective. • Provision of better public transport information may help promote modal shift. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on car is barrier to Shropshire becoming greener. • Most predominant concern of stakeholders and young people consultation is public transport enhancements which would require significant revenue investment. • Young people perceive driving as cheaper option to bus travel. • Cycling perceived as dangerous and impractical by young people.
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