

## **Section 5.8a**

# **Title: Draft 1 Local Transport Links & Interconnectivity**

### **1.1 Overview**

Information to inform this section of the wellbeing assessment has been drawn from the former South East Wales Transport Alliance's Outline of the Regional Transport Plan published in November 2011.

In terms of ensuring engagement remains central to the Wellbeing Assessment results from Phase 1 of the Blaenau Gwent We Want Engagement Programme has also been referenced within this report.

To date there was no information relating to transport links & interconnectivity available from the Local Government Data Unit at a Gwent level.

### **Story behind the data**

#### **1.2 The transport system**

More than two thirds of private journeys are by car, up from about a half in 1990. The road system across South East Wales can be seen as a hierarchy, with motorways and trunk roads being like the main arteries of the system, but local roads are more important to many people in their everyday lives.

In broad terms roads in South East Wales carry 3 times as much traffic and are 3 times in worse condition than roads elsewhere in Wales. This is highlighted below in Table 1: Residual life of A roads.

**Table 1 : Residual life of A roads**

	< 0 years	0-4 years	4-19 years	>19 years
Bridgend	9%	7%	21%	63%
Blaenau Gwent	14%	2%	5%	78%
Caerphily	10%	3%	15%	72%
Cardiff	17%	10%	27%	48%
Merthyr Tydfil	3%	4%	18%	75%
Monmouthshire	27%	4%	11%	58%
Newport	13%	2%	20%	65%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	11%	9%	22%	56%
Torfaen	6%	4%	13%	77%
Vale of Glamorgan	8%	9%	13%	57%

Source: Condition survey data supplied by local authorities

### 1.3 Access

A survey conducted by South East Wales Transport Alliance asked public transport users the question “do you live within half a mile of a bus or train station?”<sup>1</sup>

In Blaenau Gwent, buses (84% of replies) were much more accessible to people’s homes rather than trains (0% of replies).

**Table 2: SEWTA Survey 2005**

	Bus	Train
Distance to bus or train	Under ½ mile	Under ½ mile
Bridgend	84	0
Blaenau Gwent	88	17
Caerphily	90	8
Cardiff	93	23
Merthyr Tydfil	90	11
Monmouthshire	71	8
Newport	89	5
Rhondda Cynon Taf	84	25
Torfaen	94	6
Vale of Glamorgan	81	32

Source: SEWTA Survey 2005

<sup>1</sup> The sample is not entirely typical of the whole population.

## 1.4 Affordability

### Car Ownership

As outlined in the table below a significant percentage of households in Blaenau Gwent do not own a car or a van, which is above the Wales average. The percentage of households who own two or more cars / vans is also below the Wales average:

**Table 3: Car Ownership**

<b>Car Ownership</b>	<b>Blaenau Gwent</b>	<b>Wales</b>
<b>Households with:</b>		
No car / van	<b>29.0%</b>	22.9%
1 car / van	43.8%	43.0%
2+ car / vans	<b>27.3%</b>	34.1%
All cars / vans in the area	32, 478	1,597,823

Even in households, with low income levels (3rd decile) (1<sup>st</sup> decile being the poorest of households to 10<sup>th</sup> decile being the richest of households), almost 60% have access to a car. 29% of people living in Blaenau Gwent do not own a car. The most severe problems created by low car ownership are very much concentrated amongst the poorest in society.

Transport expenditure in rich households is proportionately much higher than it is in poor households. The richest 10% of households spend £142 per week on transport, 15% of their total expenditure. This is only slightly less than the total expenditure on all items of the poorest 10% of households, who spend about £13 each week on transport, that is 9% of their total expenditure. Of 12 areas of expenditure (food, housing etc.) transport is first among the richest 10% of households but only fifth among the poorest 10%.

### Concessionary transport schemes

Concessionary transport schemes available to people living in the area includes:

Disability Bus Pass scheme (also available to people who are aged 60 years and over) which offers free travel on local buses.

Dial A Ride – a community transport scheme provided by Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations, which is delivered by volunteers. The service helps people with mobility issues, and community groups living in the area, remain independent and stay well connected. The service covers transporting people to shops, friends and families, hospital and doctor appointments and other social activities. The service is mainly run by volunteers.

## 1.5 Regional Transport Developments

The following list outlines regional developments which are being considered as part of a strategic, joined-up and collaborative approach towards improving the accessibility, availability, infrastructure and quality of Transport Links & Interconnectivity across South East Wales. The programmes look to achieve social, economic, environmental outcomes using a long-term approach, which will lead to positive impacts being realised in areas such as Blaenau Gwent:

- South East Wales City Deal<sup>2</sup>;
- Regional Transport Consortia (Wales Transport Strategy)<sup>3</sup>;
- South East Wales Metro Project<sup>4</sup>
- Welsh Government Active Travel Act – Integrated Network Mapping to improve walking and cycling routes<sup>5</sup>

This report notes that further research and analysis will become available over the life course of these strategic, large scale developments, of which, this can be used to support further analytical work around Transport Links and Interconnectivity for the Blaenau Gwent area.

## 1.6 Transport Links & Connectivity Assets

Below web links will be added ASAP.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://gov.wales/newsroom/finance1/2016/160315-city-deal/?lang=en>

<sup>3</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/transport/planning-strategies/?lang=en>

<sup>4</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/transport/public/metro/?lang=en>

<sup>5</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/transport/walking-cycling/activetravelact/?lang=en> & <http://gov.wales/topics/transport/walking-cycling/activetravelact/active-travel-board/?lang=en>

The following list highlights some of the existing Transport Links and Connectivity assets within the Blaenau Gwent area:

- Regional rail development project (Ebbw Vale Valley Line development)
- Heads of the Valleys A465 Dualling
- Walking Trails - Ebbw Fach; Iron Makers; Nye Bevan; Tyleri

## 1.7 Changing levels in traffic (future trends)

SEWTA's Regional Public Transport Opinion Survey provides estimates of different modes of transport used. The sample is known to be biased towards public transport users but shows the relative importance between use of bus and rail to car and walking.

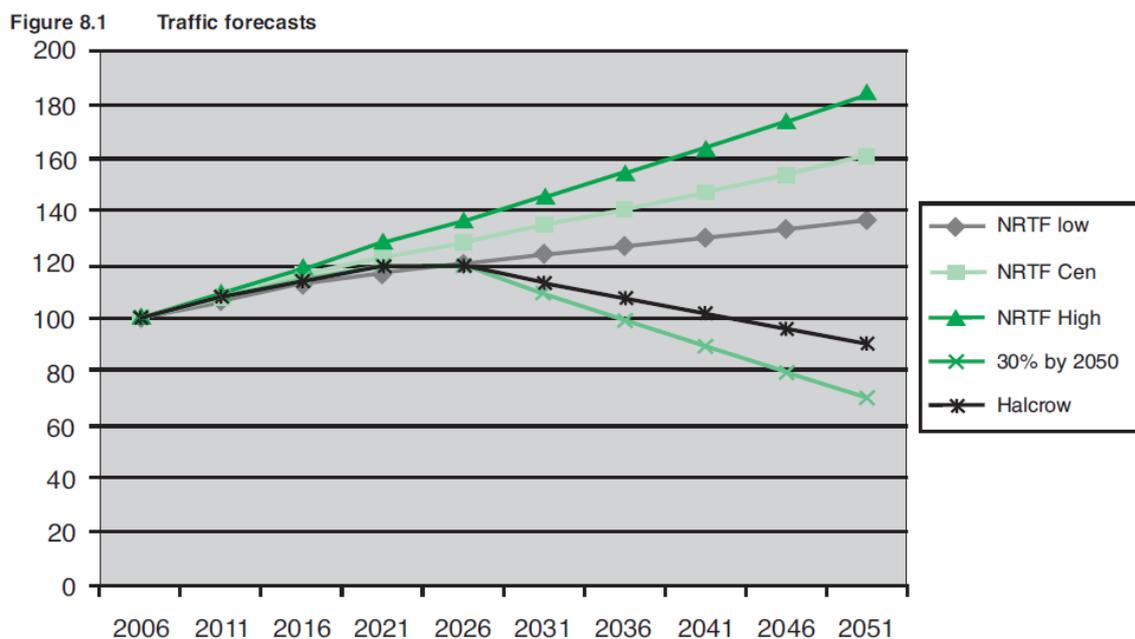
**Table 4 – Mode split of transport**

All purposes mode	Car	Bus	Train	Cycle	Walk
Bridgend	52	22	4	2	20
Blaenau Gwent	50	23	13	2	13
Caerphilly	46	27	10	3	15
Cardiff	38	22	11	8	22
Merthyr Tydfil	51	29	4	2	14
Monmouthshire	60	12	9	4	15
Newport	47	29	6	1	16
Rhondda Cynon Taf	43	24	11	2	20
Torfaen	44	31	7	2	15
Vale of Glamorgan	50	17	15	3	15

## Table 5 – Traffic forecasts

The National Road Traffic Forecasts provides estimates of future traffic levels up to 2031, the South East Wales Regional Transport Plan extends this forecast to 2051. Future traffic levels provide information can help determine expected rates of congestion (which has an estimated £600m cost to the economy across Wales each year) in relation to a unavoidable growth in traffic.

The graph below also outlines the changes in traffic levels, but also highlights the reduction in traffic levels required in order to produce a substantial reduction in carbon emissions from traffic.



Research suggests it is not practical to provide for continued unlimited traffic growth partly because of its environmental consequences but also because we it is too costly to redevelop road infrastructure on the scale needed to meet the demand for increased traffic.

SEWTA says that whilst technology improvements will contribute most to reduce carbon emissions, the need to reduce road traffic levels in absolute terms remains.

Changes in modes of transport will be key in supporting the reduction in carbon emissions, with increased use of cycling and walking being fundamental in a) reducing traffic levels and b) reducing carbon emissions.

## What we know from engagement



During Phase 1 of the Blaenau Gwent We Want Engagement programme numerous engagement activities and events were undertaken throughout the borough to gather people's views around the following key areas:

- Citizen values, aspirations and priorities;
- Citizen needs – insight into the needs they and their communities encounter within daily life and what the best solutions may be and
- Citizen assets – what people can and already contribute themselves such as self-care, citizen and community action and volunteering.

Views were captured via a questionnaire, which was also made readily available through a variety of channels including Public Services Boards partner representatives' websites and social media (for example, Blaenau Gwent We Want Facebook page) etc.

Furthermore, links to an online questionnaire were also distributed to the Blaenau Gwent Citizen Panel, a panel of Blaenau Gwent residents who voluntarily agree to get involved and take part in partnership engagement activities.

Questions put to residents included:-

- Q1. What do you think is special about Blaenau Gwent?
- Q2. What things are important to you to live well and enjoy life?
- Q3. What would make Blaenau Gwent a better place?
- Q4. What can you do to help make Blaenau Gwent a better place?

Approximately 1,000 residents were participated during Phase 1 of the Blaenau Gwent We Want Engagement Programme.

Key concerns raised by people regarding Local Transport Links & Interconnectivity included:

## AVAILABILITY

Public transport timetabling needs to be better aligned to work time patterns, along with increased connective places of employment

## ACCESSIBILITY

More community transport (schemes to help older people be able to attend doctor and hospital appointments)

Need for better links between existing public transport services (buses and trains)

## QUALITY

Need for better quality roads, bus stops and more reliable and efficient public transport services

More opportunities for walking and cycling

Need for better connectivity with areas outside of Blaenau Gwent (for example, Cardiff and London)

Better parking facilities

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### What we know from existing research

To date the research base for this sub section has centred on South East Wales Transport Alliance Regional Transport Plan and data from AECOM Baseline Economic Analysis for South East Wales published in

2015. It also includes feedback from Phase 1 of the “Blaenau Gwent We Want” engagement work.

Further work research and analysis will be undertaken dependant on the direction given by the public service board on priorities following its 21 March 2017 meeting.

### ***What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent***

Transport and interconnectivity are really important aspects for Blaenau Gwent residents to be able to live well and enjoy life.

Whilst Transport and Interconnectivity was not an area identified as part of the common data set developed and agreed by the Local Government Data Unit at a Gwent level. Transport and Interconnectivity was noted as being an important area of concern for people who participated in Phase 1 of the Blaenau Gwent We Want Engagement Programme.

In relation to Transport and Interconnectivity participants gave insight into what they felt would make Blaenau Gwent a better place now and in the future, as follows:

- More synergy between existing public transport services (for example, buses and trains);
- Need for better integration of public transport services with places of employment and work times;
- More community transport schemes to support those most vulnerable (including older people);
- Better interconnectivity with areas outside of Blaenau Gwent (for example, Cardiff and London);
- Improvements in interchange facilities;
- Need for more opportunities for walking and cycling.

The majority of research relating to Transport and Interconnectivity is available at either a National, or Regional level. This is due to the number of significant, strategic, large scale developments planned to be implemented across either a National, or Regional footprint, with the aim of achieving long-term social, economic and environmental outcomes

which will look to have a positive impact on areas such as Blaenau Gwent.

However, there are large gaps in research and information available at the local level on Transport Links and Interconnectivity, which can provide a systematic examination of the concerns raised by people through the Blaenau Gwent We Want Engagement Programme.

It is proposed that should the Public Services Board wish to examine this area further, then research and analysis should be taken forward which explores Transport Links & Interconnectivity at the Blaenau Gwent level. And that research undertaken considers not only the existing needs of the community, but also gives regard to future supply and demand trends (for example, more community transport schemes may be required to support Blaenau Gwent's ageing population) etc.