

Accessibility Planning - Case Study

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Beacon Theme | Sustainable energy |
| Authority name | High Peak Borough Council |
| Case Study title | Accessibility planning |

Overview

Identifying where public transport services should be provided to serve the greatest number of users and thereby reduce the number of cars on the road and associated Co2 emissions is a key requirement of any Transport Authority. District Councils do not have a direct responsibility for delivery of public transport services but they do have an interest in local air quality, accessibility to public transport, economic development and the implications of transport on the local environment.

Accession software has been developed according to specifications from the Department of Transport to help local authorities with accessibility planning, a core requirement of the second local transport plan.

The software was developed to change the approach to social exclusion and as a tool to help local authorities to develop travel plans, to examine education transport, policy research, strategic studies and to provide information for the planning application process.

The new system aims to help local authorities bring together transport, land use and socio-economic information to evaluate accessibility of jobs, health, education and air quality.

The results of this process depend upon the quality of the information that is put into the system initially. This involves working with partners in many organisations throughout the authority's region. High Peak Borough Council has developed a GIS based approach to identifying transport accessibility problems. This approach has proved valuable in that it uses accurate and realistic information about transport accessibility that is not always available from accession mapping data.

Accession will read data in Microsoft Access 2000 and must be provided in this format by relevant partners such as local Primary Care Trusts, public transport units for timetable data, Jobcentre plus, Local Education Authorities, social services and land use planners.

The software will run on standard PCs. It will work with most GIS formats and includes functions such as layer control. Accession will also read Ordnance Survey of Great Britain's Mastermap data.

Objectives

The project aims to demonstrate improvements in delivery of sustainable transport through the accessibility planning process and that this could be complimented by 'on the ground' data to help prioritise resources and improve the data set in use.

The project also aims to reduce the number of vehicle journeys by encouraging a modal shift towards public transport and thereby reducing Co2 emissions from cars.

Methodology

High Peak Borough Council piloted a GIS based approach to mapping transport accessibility in the South of the Borough. The visual representation of this information has helped to highlight areas of significant inaccessibility and aims to contribute towards the development of the County Council Local Transport Plan.

The Accession software addresses issues such as travel time, cost and distance mapping and it uses digital road networks, public transport timetable data and flexible on-demand transport. This level of detail in the input data results in a comprehensive map of services that would be difficult to achieve through other methods.

However, with the software in its infancy there are significant teething problems. There are difficulties with mapping large buildings such as hospitals and private roads are not recognised by the software.

The software is free for certain local authorities with the responsibility of developing local transport plans. Accession can generally be used with existing software and maps can be printed using office printers.

In comparison to accession, the High Peak approach uses locally sourced transport information and checks that this is accurate and reflects real and current accessibility issues.

Outcomes

The project will help to identify opportunities to reduce dependency upon the car and to provide improved access to public transport.

The High Peak system provides local authorities with an extremely good visual representation of accessibility to services in great detail. These maps can then be used by the public transport unit, along with most other local authority departments, to compliment service provision to the more excluded areas.

The software was designed to help with the second local transport plan process and once the mapping has been completed it should provide much of the data needed to inform these plans.

Positive learning points

The initiative demonstrated the benefit of district council partnership work with a county council in relation to developing solutions to local transport accessibility and air quality issues.

Contact details

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Name | Bill Purvis |
| Address | High Peak Borough Council, Town Hall, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 6EL |
| Telephone | 01298 28480 |
| Email | billp@highpeak.gov.uk |