



THE GREATER NOTTINGHAM TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Category: Workshop

In case of a workshop: Economic community

Name: Steve Calvert

Organisation: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Country: U.K.

E-mail address: steve.calvert@nottsc.gov.uk

THE GREATER NOTTINGHAM TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

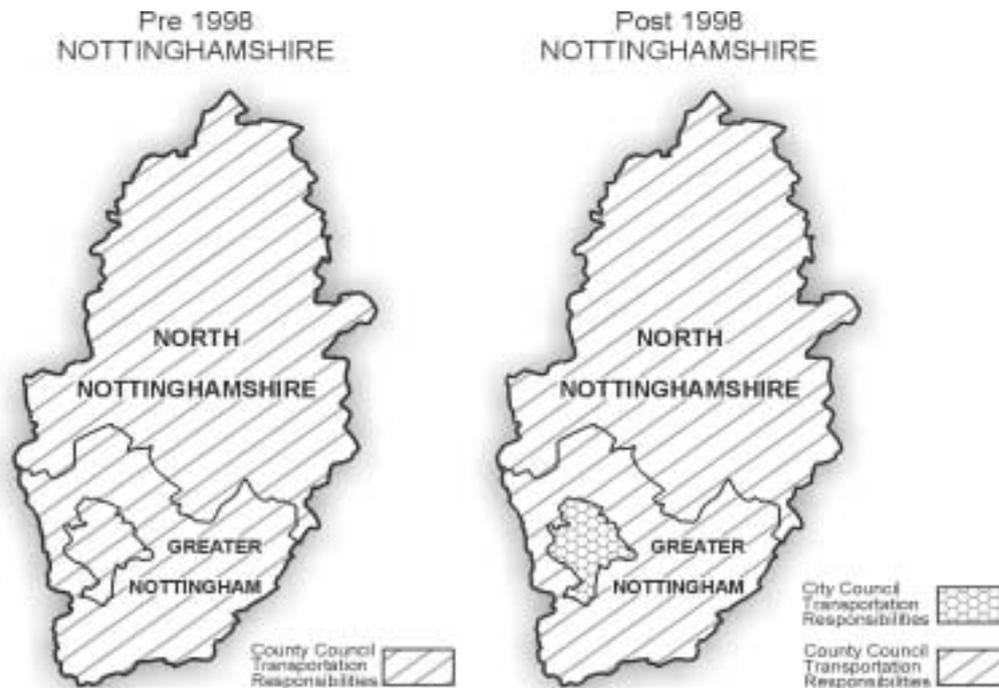
1. Introduction

There are a wide range of public-private sector partnerships established in Nottinghamshire with very different levels of cohesion and influence covering a variety of social, economic and environmental issues. Some are of a temporary nature, only established for the lifetime of a specific project while others are much more long lasting but with a wide remit and limited influence. The Greater Nottingham Transport Partnership (GNTP) seeks to be permanent in nature, to influence a wide range of transportation activities but to focus on those in which it can really make a difference. The aim of the GNTP is “to create a dynamic conurbation where people and goods flow speedily and economically”.

2. The Administration of Greater Nottingham

Between 1974 and 1998 Nottinghamshire County Council had responsibility for the provision of strategic services such as social care, education and all local strategic transportation activities in the geographical area of Nottinghamshire. This covers a population of just over one million, divided into eight districts, each with a separate administrative area providing less strategic services such as housing, waste collection and street cleaning. Among the eight districts was Nottingham City Council (population 300,000) with a boundary making up the core of the Greater Nottingham conurbation (population 600,000), which also included three suburban districts each with a population of around 100,000.

Map of Nottinghamshire



In 1998, the UK Government implemented a reorganisation of local government responsibilities throughout England. The main change in Nottinghamshire was the transfer of strategic responsibilities (including local transportation) from the County Council to Nottingham City Council. However whilst there was a statutory responsibility for the land use planning of the Greater Nottingham area to be shared jointly by the County Council and City Council, there were no such arrangements established for joint transportation planning or the provision of transport services.

In 1999 all local authorities with responsibilities for transportation were required to prepare five year Local Transport Plans (LTPs). Very importantly, in Nottinghamshire, the City and

County Councils agreed to prepare a joint LTP, recognising the importance of a united approach to transportation planning over the whole of the conurbation area. There were only five such joint LTPs prepared throughout England, all of which had to be submitted to Government in July 2000.

3. Emergence of the Nottingham Transport Partnership

Co-incidental with the requirement to prepare LTPs was the provision of powers by the UK Government to local authorities to raise funds for transportation activities through local charging schemes. Such schemes could contribute to the mobility management policies of local authorities while raising additional funding to improve public transport systems. Two specific charging mechanisms were proposed, one relating to road user charges on entering urban areas, the other to a levy on the provision of private car parking within urban areas. The Government encouraged local authorities to consider the introduction of such measures within their areas and confirmed that the money raised could be “ring-fenced” for local transport improvements. Nottingham City Council was one of about twenty local authorities in England to join the Government’s Charging Development Partnership and to investigate further the local implications of introducing a charging scheme, in this case a workplace parking levy. Nottinghamshire County Council did not consider such a levy was appropriate for the suburban area under its administration but recognised that the special circumstances of the “core” of the conurbation could merit the consideration of some charging scheme.

In early 2000 the City Council established a Nottingham Transport Partnership with the local business community comprising of no more than 10 persons and with majority representation from the business community. The Partnership included representatives from some of the major employers in the City who were also members of the very successful Nottingham Commuter Planners Club. These companies already had a firm grounding in the mobility management approach to local transport planning and were therefore committed to the integrated transport strategies being developed for the Greater Nottingham area in its LTP.

The Partnership was set up after a delegation from the Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce and large businesses met the City Council about the proposed Workplace Parking Levy. The business representatives oppose the levy, but agreed to work with the City Council on developing a vision for improved transport in the City. Nevertheless the Government provided the City Council with an annual budget to develop its WPL proposal and some of this funding was used to develop the work of the Partnership.

In 2000 the Partnership commissioned three important research projects:

- (i) A “Structures” study of the current working arrangements of the Partnership.
- (ii) A scoping study to identify a marketing strategy for the Greater Nottingham Local Transport Plan.
- (iii) A study of the Business Impacts of Road User Charging and Workplace Parking Levy.

4. Greater Nottingham Transport Partnership

The “Structures” study involved interviews with key elected members and officers, transport operators, major employers and the private sector. It reviewed the present arrangements for the development of new transport infrastructure and passenger services and considered whether they were sufficient to deliver the LTP effectively. It explored good practice relating to management structures both in the UK and abroad. It identified a number of alternative scenarios with an assessment of their relative merits, advantages and disadvantages.

It concluded that the NTP contributes to well informed decision making, provides good public/private sector communications and has the support of Central Government. However, it proposed two developments to the current arrangements. Firstly it should have a remit for the whole of the Greater Nottingham area, consistent with the Local Transport Plan and secondly it should have a stronger advisory role with clearer responsibilities.

As a result of the Consultant's review of working arrangements a new partnership was established building on the strengths of the earlier partnership but to cover the wider Greater Nottingham area. This required an input from the County Council to match that of the City Council. The first meeting of the new Greater Nottingham Transport Partnership took place in July 2001 at which it agreed that its role should be as follows:

- (a) To be a strong advisory organisation that carries out research, marketing, publicity, consultation, bidding for external funding and lobbying government.
- (b) To be concerned with policy rather than implementation helping the development, review and prioritisation of the LTP.
- (c) To seek a fair balance between representing a wide range of interests while focussing on specific issues. This is achieved by having a "core" membership of around 20 involving the local authorities and the business sector (equal numbers of each but under a Chair selected from within the business community) which meets every 6 weeks and a wider forum including transport operators, broader business interests and environmental groups which meets 6 monthly.
- (d) To be consulted on all relevant reports on strategic transport issues that are to be considered by the City and County Councils.
- (e) To advise on the establishment of new organisational structures in the Greater Nottingham area which have a significant impact on local transportation activities.

5. Current activities

The GNTP has been established for less than a year but has already made a major impact on transport activities in the area. While it has had the advantage of two years of development as the Nottingham Transport Partnership, it has now been able to take full advantage of its wider remit. It has continued to develop the work that was initiated by the NTP particularly regarding the marketing strategy for the LTP.

It has now implemented the first phase of its marketing strategy for the Greater Nottingham LTP. This is seen as an essential element in building consensus between the public and private sectors. It has been too easy in the past for the local authorities to assume a comprehensive understanding of the transport strategy and for the local business community to oppose any measures which could be seen to have short term negative impacts on the accessibility of private cars and lorries. The GNTP has therefore focussed its marketing strategy on communicating the vision for the integrated movement of people and goods in the area over the next twenty years. In particular it emphasises that accessibility to jobs, shops and other services in the City and district centres can only be maximised by major improvements to public transport infrastructure and services. This is based on the LTP strategy and the objectives and transport targets included within it.

The GNTP held the first meeting of its wider Forum in December 2001 with over 350 employers and representations from other interested groups at which it launched its "Big Wheel" vision. This was extremely well received and is also available as a 15 minute presentation on CD-Rom and on the GNTP website.

The GNTP is also exercising an important lobbying role in influencing the investment programmes of national and regional agencies. In the U.K. investment in the motorway and trunk road network is undertaken by the Highways Agency while the rail infrastructure is the responsibility of train operators, Railtrack and the Strategic Rail Authority. At a recent meeting of the GNTP, representatives from all three agencies from the rail industry were invited to outline their investment programmes which would impact on the Greater Nottingham area and to listen to the views of GNTP members on the need for greater priority for the local projects.

There are a range of other activities being undertaken by GNTP which make up a varied and challenging work programme. These include mobility management initiatives such as:

- Smartcard strategy to identify the most effective means of achieving integrated ticketing for all transport modes. This includes consideration of setting up an independent company to progress the work and relate it to mobility management centres and interchanges.
- Flexible Working Demonstration Project by major employers in the Greater Nottingham areas to reduce commuter journeys to work.
- Travel Vouchers and Taxation pilot project to consider ways that employers can encourage employees to use sustainable modes of transport within current national taxation system or with changes to the system itself.
- “TransACT”, an innovative grant scheme to provide financial assistance to small and medium sized companies in Nottinghamshire to develop and implement their Travel Plans. Grants come in two phases, firstly for consultancy purposes and secondly for expenditure on infrastructure projects. The local Chamber of Commerce and Industry not only promotes the scheme but assists with the administration and consultancy advice.
- Feasibility Study into alternative road user charging schemes.

6. Progress so far

The success of the Greater Nottingham LTP is monitored annually against a range of transport targets including modal change from car to bus, reduction in road accident levels, increased cycle usage and improved bus and rail punctuality. The GNTP has an advising role to play in meeting these objectives and can recommend broad changes in policy which could lead to earlier achievement of the targets.

It is still “early days” for the GNTP but with the sound base of two years as the NTP and a clear definition of its role and responsibilities it is now in a strong position to make a real difference to transport planning in Greater Nottingham.