



Local Transport Plan

Environmental Statement

DEC 2010

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1. Introduction

1.1 As part of the process for writing a Local Transport Plan an Environmental Statement must be produced on the finalisation of the plan or programme.

1.2 The Environmental Statement should explain:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Local Transport Plan;
- How the sustainability appraisal report (environmental report) has been taken into account;
- How public consultation responses have been taken into account;
- Why the policies have been adopted rather than the others considered; and
- How the significant environmental effects of implementing the policies will be monitored.

1.3 Cheshire East's Local Transport Plan sets out a 15 year transport strategy for the borough (2011-2026). The LTP has been developed around the seven priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) to illustrate how transport contributes to the achievement of wider aspirations for the area.

The SCS thematic areas are:

- Ensure a sustainable future
- Create conditions for business growth
- Drive out the causes of poor health
- Nurture strong communities
- Support out children and young people
- Prepare for an increasingly older population
- Unlock the potential of our towns

1.4 The LTP document consists of two elements:

- The Strategy Document sets out the long-term objectives and priorities for transport in Cheshire East for the next 15 years. It reflects and support the vision and objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and the Local Development Framework (LDF).
- A series of Implementation Plans which will set out the programme of initiatives that are required to implement the strategy over subsequent years. The first implementation plan covers the period 2011-2015.

1.5 Sustainability Appraisal encapsulates the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation, 2004, (which seeks to implement European Union Directive 2001/42/EC – Assessment of the Effect of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, commonly known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive), which places an obligation on the Council to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment on land use and spatial plans including transport plans.

- 1.6 The requirement to conduct an SEA, for the LTP is reiterated within the Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008.
- 1.7 If the LTP is likely to have a significant impact on a European Site (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and listed RAMSAR sites) the plan must be subject to an appropriate assessment and statutory bodies consulted.
- 1.8 The process by which the Sustainability Appraisal is performed is outlined in the European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive).
- 1.9 The consideration of “Human Health” is a legal requirement of the SEA Directive and the DfT Guidance on Local Transport Plans (2009) which states “HIA is an integral part of a SEA to identify and inform health issues in Plans”.

2. Key Environmental Bodies

- 2.1 Throughout the process of undertaking a Sustainability Appraisal of the LTP, three key bodies are required to be consulted – the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England. The consultation on the Cheshire East LTP: Sustainability Appraisal Report was run in accordance with Article 5 (4) of the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC. Comments from these bodies have shaped the Sustainability Appraisal and have influenced the assessment of the Policies comprising the LTP.

3. Integrating Environmental Considerations into the LTP

- 3.1 Baseline environmental information was used to identify key sustainability issues and objectives for the Cheshire East. The predicted effects of LTP policies and priorities were then examined against each of the sustainability objectives. Potential effects were quantified where possible, with relevant detail provided, including timescale of effect, significance, geographical scale etc.
- 3.2 The assessment found the effects of LTP policies to be largely positive, with a neutral or positive impact noted for most of the policies. No significant negative sustainability effects were found for any aspect of LTP policy. This finding applies to all areas of assessment - SEA, HIA, EqIA, and HRA.
- 3.3 A small number of policies were noted to have an “uncertain” impact in relation to the biodiversity, habits and geology objective and the heritage and landscape objective.
- 3.4 Within regard to combined effects, policies within the “business growth” theme had the most uncertain effect on sustainability objectives. Individually, policy B4 “Network Improvement” had the most uncertain effects of all policies.

- 3.5 Where “uncertain” effects were identified, appropriate suggestions for mitigating potential effects have been made. Mitigation proposals included equal prioritisation for business and sustainability themes, the need for careful monitoring of proposed implementation schemes and ensuring that all new infrastructure proposals are subject to detailed environmental impact assessment.

4. Taking the Environmental Report into Account

Issues and Policy Options

- 4.1 Workshops with stakeholders and council Members, and consultation with the general public and local area partnership was used to develop and appraise LTP policies and priority options in the context of the sustainability objectives. The LTP needs to help deliver the priorities of the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) – as such the discussions were based on the themes of the SCS.
- 4.2 The issues identified in scoping stage of the Sustainability Appraisal helped participants and officers develop and appraise policy proposals that would both support the sustainability objectives and deliver the aspirations of the SCS.

Preferred Options / LTP Priorities

- 4.3 Various priority options were discussed and the preferred approach was to prioritise a package of policies to:
- Ensure a sustainable future
 - Create conditions for business growth
- 4.4 Stakeholders and council members were involved in detailed discussions to identify priorities and the need to balance Cheshire East’s economic future (for social and community needs) with the need to protect and enhance the environment were considered to be of paramount importance. As such, the preferred approach is to direct future investment in transport towards the policies and interventions which support these priority areas to help grow the economy and tackle carbon emissions. This does not mean that the needs of the other thematic areas will be neglected – rather they will be supported by targeted aspects of the adopted policy solutions, which have a wide sphere of influence in other areas (e.g. the sustainability policies that encourage cycling will also support health improvement and improve accessibility).

5. Public Consultation

- 5.1 LTP preparation was subject to wide ranging community engagement, including integrated public consultation with the SCS, a stakeholder workshop, Local Area Partnerships questionnaire and analysis of existing town and parish plans. In addition, two Member workshops were held to develop and prioritise the draft policies for public consultation.

- 5.2 The public consultation ran for six weeks from the 19th October through to 28th November 2010. The consultation was notified in the press, included on the Cheshire East Council website, distributed to libraries and information centres in hard-copy, and known potential respondents contacted by email. Reminder emails and a second press notification were issued to encourage a greater number of respondents. Council staff also attended a number of community participation events in tandem with the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation to distribute questionnaires and discuss issues within the LTP.
- 5.3 A total of 232 respondents completed the survey, and the responses were largely positive towards suggested policies and priorities.

6. Key Changes to the LTP from the SA and Consultation process

- 6.1 The main areas where the Sustainability Appraisal and the consultation process has influenced and changed the LTP include:
- Development of a series of recommended sustainable LTP objectives and policy areas.
 - Providing the evidence to support a balanced approach to “business growth” and “a sustainable future” by identifying these themes as joint priorities.
 - Raising the priority of cycling as an effective means to deliver sustainability and LTP objectives.
 - Clarifying the wording of LTP Objective 6 (Environment) to include specific reference to “natural” environment and explicit inclusion of environmental assets (biodiversity, geodiversity, soils and protected landscapes).
 - Other minor modifications to the LTP to ensure greater emphasis on environmental themes – including a definition of green infrastructure, greater reference to the Peak District National Park, bio-diversity, agricultural land, public rights of way, canals, green belt and sustainable access to green space.
- 6.2 These changes to the final LTP were re-appraised and no significant negative effects were found. All “uncertain” effects from the draft LTP appraisal remained valid and monitoring “uncertain” effects will be an important aspect of future implementation plans.

7. Monitoring of the Sustainability Appraisal and LTP

- 7.1 Monitoring will take place following the adoption of the LTP. Monitoring will include identification of any unforeseen adverse effects, to enable the appropriate remedial action to be taken. The Sustainability Appraisal

monitoring will be integrated into the monitoring undertaken for the LTP and the LDF Core Strategy.

- 7.2 The indicators to be used to monitor the LTP may be influenced by forthcoming statements from the Government regarding the number of indicators that are to be monitored either centrally or at local authority level.
- 7.3 Achievable targets will be set, where possible, early in the first implementation plan period when the implications of future funding and monitoring regimes are known. Full details of the Sustainability Appraisal monitoring framework are included in the Sustainability Appraisal Report (Revised Dec 2010).

Table 7-1: Outline Sustainability Appraisal Monitoring Framework

	Objective	Indicator
1	To protect and enhance biodiversity, habitats and important geological features including soil and water resources; with particular care to sites designated internationally, nationally, regionally and locally.	Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats; Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites; or Sites of Biological Importance, damaged/lost as a result of transport planning decisions.
2	To prevent inappropriate transport infrastructure on floodplains and guard against increased risk of flooding.	Increase in flood risk as a result of new transport infrastructure.
3	To minimise the need to travel by car and facilitate integrated forms of sustainable transport.	Mode of travel for journey to school – Children travelling to school, mode of travel used (former NI 198)
		Accessibility level – Housing built within 30 minutes public transport of key services
		Cycle routes and facilities – Public overall satisfaction with cycle routes and facilities.
		Commercial viability of bus services – % of supported bus services that become commercially viable.
4	To protect and enhance the quality, integrity and distinctiveness of the area's heritage, landscapes and townscapes, through high quality transport planning and design.	Transport initiatives impacting on heritage listings (listed buildings, SAMs, historic parks and gardens etc), landscapes and public realm.
5	To minimise the level of noise, water, soil and air pollution from transport and reduce the borough's transport contribution to climate change.	Annual mean air quality in Air Quality Management Areas
		Per capita CO2 emissions in the local authority area (% reduction) (NI 186) Planning to adapt to climate change (NI 188)
6	To reduce the consumption of natural resources, protect and optimise utilisation of green infrastructure.	Policies to encourage recycled and renewable materials in transport infrastructure and facilities Initiatives that minimise the need to own/use of private vehicles and/or encourage community sharing of transport resources
		Transport initiatives that protect and optimise utilisation of green infrastructure.
7	To minimise the requirement for energy use, promote energy efficiency, and increase the use of energy from renewable sources for transport and transport related assets.	Investment in low energy/renewable source street lighting and signing.
		Fuel efficiency of council and public transport fleet vehicles.

	Objective	Indicator
		Travel plans for new and existing development
8	To promote high quality building/layout design that supports transport sustainability.	Facilities and quality design for walking, cycling and car share provided. Pedestrian and cycle connectivity and linkages to public transport.
9	To support and increase the vitality and viability of town and local centres.	Bus service satisfaction – public overall satisfaction with local bus services. Rail patronage – footfall at railway stations. Ease of access to key services (all people)
10	Achieving the interconnected objectives of establishing a sustainable, competitive local economy and improving access to skills, knowledge and employment both in rural and urban areas.	Access to key services (employment). Impact of bus support criteria in relation to access to employment.
11	To create a safe environment to live in and reduce fear of crime.	Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents (former NI 047) Feelings of safety and security on public transport.
12	To enhance and promote the quality of life, health and social inclusion of all residents in the borough.	Healthy life expectancy at 65 (former NI 137) Participation in “active travel” modes Access to key services (healthcare).
13	To maintain and enhance access to formal and informal cultural, leisure and recreational facilities and improve access to the countryside.	Initiatives to improve access to access to formal and informal cultural, leisure and recreational facilities and improve access to the countryside

8. Links to LTP Documents

- Final Local Transport Plan Strategy Document:
[http:.....](#)
- Implementation Plan (2011-2015)
[http:.....](#)
- Revised Sustainability Appraisal Report (Dec 2010):
[http:.....](#)
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report:
<http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/LTP%20-%20Sustainability%20Appraisal%20Scoping%20Report.pdf>
- LTP Baseline Data Report:
<http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/LTPBaselineDataReport2010.pdf>