

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

## **REPORT TO: Environment & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee**

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**Date of Meeting:** Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2011  
**Report of:** Strategic Director – Places  
**Subject/Title:** Local Transport Plan – Strategy & Draft Implementation Plan  
**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Jamie Macrae & Cllr Rod Menlove

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### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 This paper outlines the proposed changes to the Local Transport Plan (LTP) strategy as a result of public consultation and sets out the draft implementation plan, which will be aligned with the Government's four year spending review period (April 2011 to March 2015).
- 1.2 The draft implementation plan contains details of the initiatives which will be delivered in order to meet the objectives and priorities for transport set out in the 15 year LTP strategy. A four week period of public consultation on the draft implementation plan began on the 18<sup>th</sup> January and runs until the 16<sup>th</sup> February.

### **2.0 Decision Requested**

- 2.1 Comment on the changes to the final LTP strategy which have been agreed by Cabinet as a result of the first phase of public consultation in October/November (see Appendix 2).
- 2.2 Comment on the draft LTP implementation plan as part of the second phase of public consultation which is currently underway (see Appendix 1).

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 The transport priorities reflect wider aspirations for the area contained within the SCS and Corporate Plan, as well as emerging corporate objectives within the Local Development Framework (LDF), Economic Development Strategy and Climate Change Strategy.
- 3.2 Future investment in highways and transport will be directed towards the policies and interventions which support the priority themes of "Ensure a Sustainable Future" and "Create Conditions for Business Growth".

### **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 All

## **5.0 Local Ward Members**

5.1 All

## **6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health**

6.1 The LTP is a statutory document that must be prepared by the Council by April 2011. It will be supported by a combined Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a Health Impact Assessment (HIA), and an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA). The LTP supports wider climate change objectives in terms of mitigation and adaptation.

## **7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)**

7.1 Traditionally LTP funding has been linked to the quality and delivery of the plan. However, in future the funding settlement will not be linked to performance and will be significantly reduced.

## **8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

8.1 Under the Transport Act 2000 as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008, the LTP is a statutory document that must be prepared by all local transport authorities in England. Cheshire East Council is a local transport authority. LTPs must contain policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within their area, and proposals for implementation of those policies. The legislation also sets out provisions for taking into account Government guidance on environment and climate change, and for making the final plan available for inspection by the public.

## **9.0 Risk Management**

9.1 The first phase of public consultation on the strategy (during October/November) was extended by one week and a simplified alternative on-line survey form created to compensate for minor technical issues with the interactive consultation portal in the first week of consultation period. 230 individual responses to the consultation were received.

9.3 The financial challenges during the first implementation plan period underline the need to make tough decisions about how funding will be allocated, manage expectation and plan delivery carefully over the next four years. Reductions in funding may also impact on our ability to deliver against performance indicators.

9.4 Other challenges include the need to effectively manage the transition from current in-house provision of highway services to an external contractor, whilst maintaining service provision. Further challenges include the extremely difficult economic climate, as well as meeting the needs of an

increasingly ageing population and the imperative to adapt and respond to climate change.

- 9.5 LTP guidance makes clear that the overall quality and delivery of an authority's LTP will be taken into account by the DfT in decisions on bids for challenge funding and/or major projects. It is therefore vital that Cheshire East is able to demonstrate how the strategy has been translated into delivery through the implementation plan, in line with local priorities representing the highest possible value for money.

## 10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 Cheshire East's Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out a 15 year transport strategy for the borough (2011-2026), which relates directly to the SCS priorities for action. The SCS thematic areas are:

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

### LTP Strategy – Consultation Response

- 10.2 The public consultation respondents endorsed the high-level priorities for the LTP strategy to “ensure a sustainable future” and “create conditions for business growth” [60% agreed with these priorities, 30% disagreed and 10% neither agreed nor disagreed.]
- 10.3 When prompted to express an alternative priority, “ensure a sustainable future” and “nurturing strong communities” were the highest placed alternatives.
- 10.4 ***It is proposed that no changes are made to the high-level priorities taken through to the final LTP.***
- 10.5 Within the sustainability theme, the majority of respondents agreed with the proposed priority policies [50% agreed, 41% disagreed and 9% neither agreed nor disagreed]. However, over a fifth (21%) of respondents would like to see the cycling policy prioritised within the final plan.
- 10.6 ***It is proposed that the cycling policy is added as a priority within the sustainability theme of the final LTP*** resulting in the following priority policies:
- Policy S1: Spatial Planning – Seek to minimise the future need to travel through a strategic approach in the Local Development Framework that focuses most new development in locations where there is a good range of housing, jobs, shops and services already accessible by public transport, cycling and walking.

- Policy S3: Public Transport (Service Levels & Reliability) – Work with passenger transport operators to explore improvements to service levels and reliability.
- Policy S4: Public Transport (Integration & Facilities) – Work with passenger transport providers to improve public transport integration and facilities.
- Policy S8: Cycling – Work with stakeholders to improve facilities for cycling so that it is attractive for shorter journeys.

10.7 Within the business growth theme, there was general support for the proposed priority policies [49% agreed, 32% disagreed and 19% neither agreed nor disagreed]. However, when prompted to express an alternative priority, “Network Improvement” was the highest placed alternative [chosen by 18% of respondents].

10.8 The “Network Improvement” policy was discussed in detail by Members in the earlier workshops alongside the “Enabling Development” and “Network Management” policies. The discussion centred on the need to utilise limited budgets on creating new infrastructure where this would “unlock potential” and enable new development to deliver economic growth, while making the most of existing infrastructure. Given the financial implications of “Network Improvement” and current budget constraints, it is considered that there would need to be compelling public opposition to the original priorities put forward to justify change in priorities.

10.9 The consultation also identified a measure of support for Policy B1 Strategic Partnerships for economic growth [selected by 20% of respondents]. Since work on the draft LTP has been completed, the need to work in partnership with others has been further highlighted by the successful bid to create the Cheshire & Warrington Local Economic Partnership (LEP). Support for such partnership working will be crucial in delivering the Council’s economic and regeneration priorities.

10.10 ***It is proposed that the policy on Strategic Partnerships is added as a priority within the business growth theme of the final LTP*** resulting in the following priority policies:

- Policy B1: Strategic Partnerships for Economic Growth – Work with neighbouring authorities, appropriate regional/sub-regional organisations, public transport operators and providers to enhance cross-boundary and strategic investment opportunities in transport.
- Policy B2: Enabling Development – Seek to enable appropriate new development by supporting transport infrastructure, regeneration and/or behaviour change initiatives that will mitigate the potential impact of development proposals.
- Policy B3: Network Management – Effectively manage the highway network to reduce the level of delay and provide for the needs of all road users including pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
- Policy B8: Maintenance – Adopt a robust and efficient approach to maintenance to minimise deterioration in the highway network and associated infrastructure assets

- 10.11 Within the health theme, there was general support for the proposed priority policies [56% agreed, 34% disagreed and 11% neither agreed nor disagreed]. However, the consultation did show a mixed response to prioritising the type of road safety intervention most appropriate – the policies of “Road Safety (Education)”, “Road Safety (Enforcement)” and Road Safety (Engineering) all received similar levels of support.
- 10.12 A Road Safety Strategy is currently being developed for Cheshire East. This will identify the key road safety challenges in the borough and will examine the most effective measures to reduce casualties on the road network. This may result in re-assessment of policies in relation to this evidence.
- 10.13 In the interim, ***it is proposed that there is no change made to the priorities for health*** listed below.
- Policy H2: Promotion of Active Travel and Healthy Activities – Work in partnership to promote walking, cycling and horse riding as active travel options and healthy activities.
  - Policy H3: Public Rights of Way & Green Infrastructure – Protect and enhance public rights of way and transport related green infrastructure and will endeavour to create new links where beneficial for health or access to green spaces.
  - Policy H8: Road Safety (Engineering) – Improve road safety through highway design improvements at collision blackspots.
- 10.14 Within the stronger communities, young people and older people thematic areas, respondents expressed strong support for the proposed priority policies [73% agreed, 17% disagreed and 9% neither agreed nor disagreed].
- 10.15 ***It is proposed that there is no change made to the priorities within the stronger communities, young people and older people theme*** listed below.
- Policy C1: Community – Work in partnership with local communities to support community led solutions that improve accessibility to key services.
  - Policy C2: Accessibility of Services – Work with partner organisations and local communities to make key services easier to access with a particular focus on disadvantaged groups and areas, including people living in rural areas, older people, young people and those without access to a car.
  - Policy C3: Access for all – Consider the diverse range of needs concerning disabled people and other groups who experience difficulties using the transport system.
- 10.16 Finally the consultation found strong support for the proposed approach of producing transport frameworks for our towns. These frameworks will interpret borough wide policies at a more local level and will be undertaken in conjunction with the LDF team.

#### Draft Implementation Plan

- 10.17 Cheshire East's first LTP implementation plan will cover a four year period from April 2011 until March 2015, in line with the Government's spending

review period. The draft implementation plan contains details of the initiatives which will be delivered in order to meet the objectives and priorities for transport set out in the 15 year strategy.

- 10.18 A draft implementation plan is attached as Appendix 1 illustrating how staff and financial resources are proposed to be allocated in line with the priority policies listed above. Appendix 1 also includes a draft set of performance indicators to record our achievement against the plan. The majority of the proposed indicators will be monitored through the National Highway & Transportation (NHT) survey undertaken by Ipsos Mori on an annual basis reducing the level of local data collection.
- 10.24 The implementation plan includes bidding for additional Government funding through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (£560m), which intends to support packages of low cost, high value measures that support economic growth and reduce carbon emissions in local communities. Work is underway to prepare an ambitious bid for Cheshire East.

## **11.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues**

- 11.1 The LTP is a statutory document that must be prepared by the Council by April 2011, including a 15 year strategy and a four year implementation plan.

## **12.0 Access to Information**

- 12.1 The Sustainability Appraisal Report incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a Health Impact Assessment (HIA), and an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) can be viewed in the Members Room.
- 12.2 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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