

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

PLACES ADVISORY PANEL

Date of meeting: Tuesday 16th December 2008
Report of: Interim Strategic Director, Places
Title: Local Transport Plan Progress Report 2008

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This paper has been prepared to allow Members of the Cheshire East Council Places Advisory Panel to consider and comment on Cheshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP) Progress Report for 2008. It also seeks views on emerging issues that may need to be considered during the remainder of the plan period. A short summary setting out details of the LTP process is attached as Appendix One.

2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1 That the LTP Progress Report be noted;
- 2.2 To seek any comments on the issues contained in the document; and
- 2.3 To identify and comment on any specific issues that may need to be addressed during the last two years of the current LTP strategy.

3.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

- 3.1 None.

4.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

- 4.1 The LTP is the basis for allocating significant levels of capital and revenue expenditure on transport priorities. The disaggregation of the current LTP budget will be confirmed shortly.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 None.

6.0 Risk Assessment

- 6.1 The LTP Progress Report contains a full risk assessment in Section Two.

7.0 Background

- 7.1 Cheshire's current LTP was published in March 2006. It set out the County Council's objectives and plans for taking forward transport priorities between 2006 and 2011 together with an outline delivery programme. It also included a comprehensive set of mandatory and local performance indicators and targets. An accompanying note outlining the LTP process has been prepared and is attached as Appendix One. A summary of the main issues contained in the full Progress Report has also been prepared and will be circulated with this paper.
- 7.2 Performance is normally assessed on an annual basis by the Department for Transport (DfT), assisted by the Government Office for the North West (GONW). Specific reporting requirements vary from year to year. Based on the evidence submitted, an assessment of progress is made by the DfT which is usually published in December each year as part of the annual LTP capital settlement.
- 7.3 This year a detailed progress report was prepared that covered the first two years of the current LTP period. The DfT published guidance in November 2007 which outlined the main themes and a checklist of issues that were required to be addressed in the new progress report.
- 7.4 In a marked difference to previous years the DfT saw the preparation of this new progress report as part of a constructive and open relationship between a local authority and its Government Office. This required work to be taken forward in partnership, involving regular meetings with GONW representatives as the report was compiled.
- 7.5 The Progress Report was approved by the County Council's Executive Member for Highways and Transportation on 7 October. This was then followed by a formal meeting with the GONW on 14 October to discuss the Report and the overall strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the delivery of the LTP. The outcome of this meeting will be set out in a formal written response from GONW which will summarise the key issues reviewed at the meeting and outline any areas for attention in the future. This will be published in December 2008.

FORMAT OF THE PROGRESS REPORT

- 7.6 Based on the DfT guidance, an initial framework was produced at the start of the year and agreed as the basis for taking forward work with GONW. The key issues addressed include:
- Transport's contribution to wider objectives;
 - Tackling congestion and the network management duty;
 - Delivery accessibility;
 - Safer Roads;
 - Better air quality;
 - Asset Management;
 - Use of resources; and
 - Local priorities.

- 7.7 In addition, the report includes a detailed risk assessment on the further development of the LTP up to 2011. This was required to consider potential changes to the assumptions on which the LTP was based and identify what plans for mitigating risks or exploiting opportunities are being considered for the remainder of the LTP2 period. Additional information set out in the Progress Report included details on the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan has been incorporated into the LTP and details of overall progress towards mandatory and local performance indicators. This includes commentary on how the LTP has been integrated into the new Local Area Agreement (LAA) performance framework. It also identifies a number of performance indicators that County Council no longer plans to report against due to the new LAA and as a direct result of local government re-organisation.

OVERALL PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES

- 7.8 Over £180 million has been spent on transport activities in Cheshire during the last two years. This represents a major investment in addressing transport priorities and objectives. This includes £39 million of LTP capital funding and £142 million of the Authority's revenue expenditure. Key outcomes include:

- **Tackling congestion** – Levels of traffic growth have been restrained in Cheshire and its main urban areas; the DfT have rated the approach to Network Management Duty as excellent as part of a national assessment; and good progress continues to be made to encourage the use of workplace and school travel plans.
- **Safer roads** – Road deaths and serious injuries have fallen by over 44% from the national 1994/98 baseline; Over 32 Local Safety Schemes have been completed which are anticipated to save 208 collisions and 289 casualties over the next three years; and a new Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership has been established.
- **Delivering accessibility** – After a period of decline bus patronage has increased significantly during the last two years; a successful bid for "Kickstart" funding has improved local bus services to Leighton Hospital; and the current Accessibility Strategy has been the subject of a detailed review and consultation exercise to help inform priorities for the new unitary authorities.
- **Improving air quality** – Air quality has been successfully integrated into the LTP process; and measures to support Air Quality Action Plans have been included in a number of local area delivery programmes.
- **Improving the condition of our roads** – Over 170 highway maintenance schemes have been completed resulting in over 37 km of Cheshire's highway network being improved; four major and 197 minor bridge maintenance schemes have been completed; and current network condition targets remain on track to be achieved.

- 7.9 As a result:

- Seven out of eight LTP Best Value Performance Indicators are on track. BVPI 104 (satisfaction with bus services) is not on track. This is largely attributed to a change in data collection methodology; and
- Three out of five mandatory LTP indicators have either been achieved or are on track. LTP3 (cycling) and LTP4 (usual mode of travel to school) are not on track.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION AND EMERGING ISSUES

- 7.10 As part of a detailed risk assessment, the Progress Report has examined the impact of LGR in Cheshire on the LTP process. The Progress Report is seen as an important document to help inform and support early thinking on the future development of the LTP by the new unitary authorities. This will be crucial to provide continuity and a degree of consistency for the ongoing delivery of the current LTP strategy up to 2011.
- 7.11 In parallel to this, it is expected that the DfT will issue guidance next year setting out the format for the new round of LTPs which will need to be introduced by 2011. The Progress Report, therefore, provides a useful starting point to begin the debate that will ultimately lead to the preparation of a new transport strategy for Cheshire East over the next two years.
- 7.12 Other emerging issues are likely to have a significant impact on how future transport priorities will be determined in the years to come. These include the Government's own thinking on transport priorities (Towards a Sustainable Transport System) which is expected to be published in 2009. Full details are set out in Appendix One.

ENGAGING WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

- 7.13 The guidance stressed that the preparation of the Progress Report offered an opportunity for engagement with key delivery partners and stakeholders not least, the Local Strategic Partnership.
- 7.14 In response, the draft Progress Report was shared with a number of partners in order to seek their views and comments on Cheshire's achievements to date and receive feedback on where possible improvements could be made in the future. Feedback from these sessions is set out as an annex to the main report.

NEXT STEPS

- 7.15 Copies of the Progress Report and the summary document have been distributed to stakeholders and the wider community. The report has also been placed on the County Council's website.
- 7.16 It is expected that the letter setting out GONW's formal response to the progress report will be published by the end of the year. This will be shared with Members of the Shadow Authorities in the early new year. At the same time

draft guidance for the new LTP will be issued for consultation and this will be the subject of a further paper to this Board to begin the debate on the preparation of LTP3.

8.0 Day One, Year One and Term One Issues

- 8.1 The immediate issue for Day One is to ensure that there is a continuity of service delivery.
- 8.2 During 2009/10 LTP performance will need to be monitored and work will begin to prepare a new LTP for Cheshire East. This will require close links to parallel work to prepare a new Local Development Framework.
- 8.3 By Term One a further progress report will need to be prepared for LTP2 and a new transport strategy (LTP3) will need to have been completed and approved.

9.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 9.1 The LTP is a statutory document. Its continued delivery will have a direct influence on key corporate objectives and will help meet a number of key performance indicators that are included in the Local Area Agreement.

For further information:

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Background Documents:

LTP Progress Report 2008

Local Transport Plan Briefing Note

Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011