

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Environment & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting:	24 March 2010
Report of:	Caroline Simpson, Head of Regeneration
Subject/Title:	Developing the Borough's next Local Transport Plan
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Jamie Macrae

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the progress made to date in developing the Council's next Local Transport Plan (LTP3)
- 1.2 It also provides an early assessment of the emerging issues from the ongoing public and stakeholder engagement process and seeks member direction on key questions posed in 11.12, 11.13 and 11.15
- 1.3 Finally, this report then examines the next steps in the process to develop our Local Transport Plan

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Scrutiny Committee notes the progress made to date in developing the Council's next Local Transport Plan and provide comment on the emerging issues and next steps as outlined in **Section 11** of the report.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To seek guidance from Members on the key issues and choices facing the developing LTP strategy.

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 Sustainability Appraisal that will combine the outputs of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a Health Impact Assessment (HIA), and an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA).

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 7.1 None

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 8.1 None

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 9.1 The process set out in this paper complies with the process and statutory timescale required in the LTP guidance.

10.0 Risk Management

- 10.1 Process is now on the critical path- any delays in the process could risk lack of integration between the Community Strategy (CS), Local Development Framework (LDF) and LTP

11.0 Background and Options

Background

- 11.1 The Local Transport Plan (LTP3) is a statutory core plan of the Council and must be prepared by April 2011. The quality of the LTP will be taken into consideration when assessing the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) of the Authority. Further background to the requirements of the LTP3 can be found in the report taken to this committee on the 20th January 2010. The key points are repeated in **Annex A**.
- 11.2 The Community Strategy will set the overall vision and priorities for the area for the next 15 years. It is essential that our Local Transport Plan supports and reflects the wider community aspirations. We anticipate having an early indication of these priorities in April

Progress to Date

- 11.3 The LTP team have been part of the public and partner consultation to develop the Community Strategy, this has provided the opportunity to consider how transportation will contribute to the vision for Cheshire East and support delivery of the emerging priorities in each thematic area. A list of events completed to date is included at **Annex B**
- 11.4 Completed the scoping stage of the Sustainability Appraisal report. This will shortly be shared with the key environmental bodies and other relevant stakeholders. This will be used later in the process to check the environmental, health, equality, social and economic credentials of our LTP Strategy.
- 11.5 Continued to gather evidence for the Transport Baseline to inform our LTP Strategy – including analysing the results from an IPSOS MORI survey that collected data on public satisfaction levels with highways and transportation services in Cheshire East.
- 11.6 Worked closely with colleagues developing the LDF to ensure that our Local Transport Plan provides robust support for emerging spatial plans.
- 11.7 Worked closely with colleagues developing the Community Strategy to raise the profile of Transport and ensure key stakeholders are aware of the supporting role transport plans in a wide range of other initiatives.
- 11.8 Developed the process for Member submitted transport schemes “Ward Lists” – key issues and improvements to the process will feed into the development work for LTP3

Emerging Issues and Feedback

- 11.9 A wide range of feedback has been received, the common themes, backed up by the findings of the IPSOS MORI survey are:
 - A)** Maintenance of our roads and footpaths.
 - B)** The importance of ‘sustainable’ development, the importance of ensuring that the transport implications of developments are fully delivered and that ‘Travel Plans’ are enforced “with teeth”.
 - C)** The requirement for flexible / innovative transport solutions in rural areas.
 - D)** A more integrated transport network (walking, road, bus, rail, etc) and a need to reduce car dependency. Need to improve public transport connectivity between Market Towns in the Borough, as well as improving access to Manchester.

E) Tackle congestion ‘hotspots’

F) The need to tackle rural accessibility in innovative ways – local solutions to local priorities.

- 11.10 A full assessment of the results of our engagement will be undertaken when the process is completed
- 11.11 The expectation, backed up with ‘leaks’ from key contacts at the Department for Transport is that central Government investment in Transport funding will reduce. The scale of this reduction is as yet unknown, and to an extent will depend on the outcome of the General Election. The range of reduction we have been told to expect is in the range of 15% to 40%
- 11.12 Given this scenario **what are the merits of prioritising our key challenges as set out in 11.9 and what, if appropriate, should form any priority order?**
- 11.13 As part of our Transport Baseline work, we have been trying to understand what the evidence says about how Cheshire East ‘joins up’ – to this end we have examined the ‘journey to work’ trips made between the key centres of the Borough. This is shown in **Annex C. How closely does this match Member perceptions of the situation in terms of which service centres have the strongest connections and dependencies?**
- 11.14 It is inevitable that with such a large Borough and clear in the emerging feedback to date that a ‘one size fits all’ approach to Transport Strategy may not be the most appropriate approach. It is considered that, though there should be overarching strategies at a high level – their might be merit in ‘breaking down’ the Borough into areas or themes for assessing what our detailed policies should be. This approach would support the way that Government proposes to run funding bids in the future on an ‘area basis’ (Urban Challenge fund)
- 11.15 If we are to proceed down this route we need to break down the area into a manageable number of sub areas – but also attempt to join areas that have a common feel or are similar in some way. Our proposal, for discussion, to manage this is to split the Borough into Large Town Centres, Medium Town Centres, Market Towns and Villages / Rural areas. Using national definitions, population data and previous County Structure plan information we have placed settlements / areas into one of the four categories. This list is attached in **Annex D – what views do members have on this approach and have we got the right places in the right categories?**

The Next Steps

11.16 The proposed timetable for developing and engaging on the LTP3 is included at **Annex E** to the report. Key points to note are:

A) The LTP guidance contains a list of mandatory consultees (such as transport providers) that we must engage with as we develop our plans. To facilitate this we propose to hold a transport workshop in early May. We propose to frame this event around “transport themes” and invite a wider audience than the guidance prescribes as a minimum. These themes and broad groupings of stakeholders are attached at **Annex F**

B) We propose to hold a Members workshop event, most likely in late Summer 2010 to share progress made to date and allow Member comment on the emerging Strategy

11.17 As the LTP3 is a “Policy Framework Document”, there is a mandatory process to follow in terms of seeking Member approval. The requirement to have our new LTP plan in place by April 1st 2011 dictates that we seek Member comment and approval as follows:

A) LTP Strategy to Cabinet (18th October 2010) – this will seek approval that the plan is at a suitable stage of readiness for inviting wider public comment

B) LTP Strategy to Cabinet (20th December 2010) – seeking member decision on any amendments required as a result of public comment

C) LTP Strategy as agreed by Cabinet to go before Full Council for approval (24th February 2012)

11.18 It is proposed to bring regular updates to the Environment & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee and to seek direction and advice in addition to the policy framework process described above.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

12.1 The Local Transport Plan will have to be in place for 1st April 2011, the strategy element running for a period of up to 15 years and the implementation plan for a 3 year period.

13.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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