

# Cheshire East Council

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## Environment & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>17 September 2018</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Frank Jordan, Executive Director of Place
<b>Subject/Title:</b>	Local Transport Plan – Consultation Feedback
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Don Stockton – Environment

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines outcomes and progress following the consultation for the updated Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Cheshire East. The updated LTP will provide a policy framework for transport across the Borough and guide investment in the local transport network. From the 1<sup>st</sup> May to 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018 the updated LTP went through a public consultation, as agreed at Cabinet in March 2018. This report outlines the key outcomes from the consultation.
- 1.2 The LTP profiles transport and infrastructure needs within the Borough also proposes actions necessary at the local level in respect of sub-regional, regional and national infrastructure programme where these relate to the Borough. Key examples of this include: HS2; Highways England and Network Rail investment programmes; and Transport for the North and Midlands Connect investment programmes.
- 1.3 The LTP strategy and associated Local Area Profiles were published for a period of public consultation, which commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018. The consultation sought the views of residents and stakeholders on the strategic framework for local transport, to inform further development of both the strategy and associated delivery plans.
- 1.4 The approach to community engagement was informed by the Council's best practice guidance from the Corporate Research and Consultation Team.
- 1.5 The consultation overlapped with a consultation being held jointly with Stockport Borough Council on an update of the South East Manchester Multi-modal Strategy (SEMMMS), from the 21<sup>st</sup> May to the 16<sup>th</sup> July. The outcomes of the consultation will inform production of a fully updated LTP for Cheshire East, which will be considered at Cabinet and then Council in January 2019.

- 1.6 The consultation was publicised through the Cheshire East Council website, direct emailing, information brochures, press releases and questionnaires. The questionnaires could be filled out online and also hard copies were available at libraries in key service centres and information points (14 locations). Brochures were also available and posters displayed at these locations. Town and Parish Councils were emailed at the beginning of the consultation and ahead of their local drop-in event. The consultation was also publicised through social media such as Facebook and Twitter through the Cheshire East Council and Travel Cheshire accounts. The tweets from both Twitter accounts had a total of 60,718 impressions. Two all member briefings have also been undertaken.
- 1.7 Twelve drop-in sessions were also held throughout Cheshire East, a total of 195 people attended. Paper copies of the questionnaire and brochure were made available at these events. Staff were also in attendance to answer questions on the strategy. Additional posters were distributed at local shops, information points and bus stops on the day of the drop-in events. Appendix 1 details further the consultation materials distributed and contacts emailed.
- 1.8 A total of 261 responses were received by close of the consultation. A further 37 responses were sent in via e-mail and 16 other responses were received (including letters, a petition and enquiry forms).
- 1.9 The demographic analysis shows the representation of who responded to the consultation. Officers reached out to equality champions within the Council to seek forums and groups to contact and engage with during the consultation. Bus users were well engaged in the consultation, as half of respondents said their main mode of travel through Cheshire East was bus. Despite engagement with the Youth Support Service, responses from those aged 16-24 were limited, accounting for 2% of responses. However, the LTP has drawn on the consultation and feedback from the SMOTS strategy. Over 65s accounted for 45% of responses.
- 1.10 The new LTP4 strategy has developed a comprehensive set of actions to address the strategic transport challenges for Cheshire East, namely:
- Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity
  - Ensuring accessibility to services
  - Protecting and improving our environment
  - Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity
  - Maintaining and managing our network assets
  - Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness
- The majority of the respondents agreed with all the challenges listed above (78% of more agreed with each challenge).
- 1.11 Key themes from consultation feedback include:
- Buses – reliability/efficiency, lack of services and cuts

- Poor punctuality of rail services
- Pollution and air quality
- Congestion and traffic problems
- Car Parking for access to services
- Integration of SEMMMS and LTP
- Integrated modes of Travel
- Road Maintenance
- Importance of sustainable travel

1.12 The Consultation Summary Report is provided (as Appendix 1) which details the responses to the consultation further. In addition, a high level summary of the key responses to themes raised during the consultation is provided at Appendix 2. It is expected that these will be fully developed during finalisation of the LTP for Cabinet.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny committee is recommended to:

- 2.1.1 Note the outcomes of the consultation to be updated in the LTP Strategy for Cheshire East.
- 2.1.2 Agree any comments that the Committee wishes to make known to Cabinet when this matter is considered.

## **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1. Following the LTP consultation, the response to the consultation should be taken into account in a revision of the LTP Strategy.
- 3.2. It is therefore important to test the fairness of the Council's approach by way of consultation on any changes which would have the effect of withdrawing existing benefits or advantages available to its residents. Such consultation should involve those directly affected by such changes together with the relevant representative groups. The responses to the consultation need to be conscientiously taken into account when Cabinet makes any future decisions on the Local Transport Plan.

## **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1. There is no statutory duty to consult on proposals to change the way in which a local authority carries out its duties but there is an expectation enshrined in case law that any local authority making decisions affecting the public will do so fairly and in a way that cannot be said to be an abuse of power.

## **5. Background**

- 5.1. The current LTP3, as published in 2011, was intended to be a framework for strategic transport planning in Cheshire East. The plan was prepared at a

time when Government foresaw limited investment in local transport infrastructure, especially major projects, leading to the Cheshire East LTP3 being outdated. There is a need to update the LTP to reflect the Council's accelerated investment in transport infrastructure across Cheshire East, in the context of a new Local Plan spatial strategy to ensure that the Council maintains a document that is robust and relevant to local priorities.

5.2. The Council has set out a clear vision and strategy for jobs-led economic growth in the new Local Plan. Successful delivery of this growth will require a comprehensive and integrated approach to improvements in local transport provision across the Borough, through development of both transport infrastructure and transport services. The LTP brings together strategies for all modes of transport to ensure there is a coherent approach to meeting the Council's wider objectives for the economy, environment and society throughout Cheshire East.

5.3. Local transport provision needs to be considered in the context of a number of recent and emerging changes that have potential impacts on Cheshire East, including;

- Cheshire East Council's refreshed corporate objectives and adoption of the principles of 'Quality of Place' as a key driver of strategy.
- Further progress on the new Local Plan which defines a forward-looking spatial strategy for the Borough and has subject to a favourable Planning Inspectors report.
- Development of a number of specific local transport strategies, including the new Cheshire East Cycling Strategy and Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy.
- Development of new infrastructure programmes by Highways England and Network Rail.
- Emerging evidence and strategy at the sub national level under the auspices of both Transport for the North and Midlands Connect.
- On-going work at the regional level to develop the Strategic Economic Plan and support this through LEP-wide strategies for rail and strategic road investment in both infrastructure and services.
- Progress on neighbouring authorities spatial and economic strategies, notably the new Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, with implications for the north of the Borough and the need for an update to the South East Manchester Multi Modal Study.
- New legislation in the Buses Act 2017, which conveys new powers to Local Transport Authorities for Enhanced Quality Partnerships.
- Adoption of Neighbourhood Plans within Cheshire East, which help to define local expectations and concerns regarding transport provision, including local parking issues.
- The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy requires the Council to increase revenue and increase value for money.
- Long term plan led programmes such as HS2 and the Constellation Partnership growth strategy.
- Government's new Clean Air Zones Framework.

- Impacts and opportunities relating to innovative technology through the wider adoption of smart solutions.
  - The requirements for active lifestyles, accessibility and wellbeing of an ageing population.
  - A need to support businesses in Cheshire East to promote sustainable transport and manage travel demands by car, thus reducing the pressures on parking.
- 5.4. All of these considerations raise potential implications and opportunities for local transport within Cheshire East. In order to ensure that the Council has a clear, evidence-based position on these matters there is a need for them to be considered as part of the refreshed Local Transport Plan.
- 5.5. There has been active engagement with Town and Parish Councils representing the key local service centres throughout the Borough. This has informed preparation of a set of Local Area Profiles which detail specific transport challenges and opportunities for each locality. These profiles have been produced through close cooperation with relevant Neighbourhood Planning groups to draw on relevant evidence and knowledge in Town/Parish Councils, Cheshire East Ward Councillors and residents/stakeholders in local communities. This approach to each of the local services centres is consistent in the proposed High Level Parking Strategy, and town parking studies will be prepared for all 11 local centres during the early years of the LTP strategy. It is considered that the 2018/19 priorities for completion of parking studies, based upon evidence of manifest parking pressures, include Sandbach and Wilmslow.
- 5.6. The Local Transport Plan will be a statutory document maintained by Cheshire East Council in its role as the Local Transport Authority. The 8-week consultation period included:
- Borough-wide circulation of consultation materials through libraries, customer contact centres and other key venues
  - Web-based consultation questionnaires to enable feedback on the draft document
  - Staffed drop-in sessions for face-to-face discussion in each of the 12 main towns and local service centres.
  - Media releases, including social media, to publicise the consultation.

## **6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members**

- 6.1. All Wards in Cheshire East

## **7. Implications of Recommendation**

- 7.1. **Policy Implications**

- 7.1.1. An updated Local Transport Plan will ensure that the Council maintains a current statement of Local Transport Strategy in accordance with its responsibilities as the Local Transport Authority.
- 7.1.2. Development of the LTP4 has been undertaken to ensure there is a consistent policy-fit with all relevant adopted and emerging local policies including: Education Travel Policy; 'Sustainable Modes of Travel to School' strategy; and car parking strategy.
- 7.1.3. A public consultation has been undertaken in order to understand public and stakeholder opinions on the LTP. Feedback will inform updates to the LTP strategy before going to Cabinet.

## **7.2. Legal Implications**

- 7.2.1. As the statutory Local Transport Authority the Council is required to maintain an up-to-date Local Transport Plan that provides a strategic framework for planning and delivery of improvements in local transport provision.
- 7.2.2. Development of the new Local Transport Plan will need to be in accordance with statutory and legal requirements for Community Engagement, Equalities Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Appraisal.
- 7.2.3. Members must be fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered, the equalities implications of the decisions they are taking. This will ensure that there is proper appreciation of any potential impact of any decision on the Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum, this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equality Impact Assessments produced by officers.
- 7.2.4. There is no statutory duty to consult on proposals to change the way in which a local authority carries out its duties but there is an expectation enshrined in case law that any local authority making decisions affecting the public will do so fairly and in a way that cannot be said to be an abuse of power.
- 7.2.5. It is therefore important to test the fairness of the Council's approach by way of consultation on any changes which would have the effect of withdrawing existing benefits or advantages available to its residents. Such consultation should involve those directly affected by such changes together with the relevant representative groups. The responses to the consultation will need to be conscientiously taken into account when Cabinet makes any future decisions on the Local Transport Plan.

## **7.3. Financial Implications**

- 7.3.1. There are no direct financial implications of the Committees consideration of this report.

7.3.2. Upon completion and adoption by the Council, the LTP4 will provide a policy framework to inform the annual capital programme for transport. The LTP4 will be implemented utilising applicable funding from a range of sources including: LTP Integrated Transport Block funding; Community Infrastructure Levy; Section 106 & 278; the Council's capital and revenue programmes, one-off funding programmes and external funding.

#### **7.4. Equality Implications**

7.4.1. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for the LTP to ensure that the needs and impacts on all residents are understood, especially individuals or groups with identified protected characteristics. This will be an evolving document until adoption of the LTP4. The document will be updated following the consultation to incorporate comments from all residents.

7.4.2. The Equalities Impact Assessment notes that the LTP4 has been designed to support delivery of the Council's outcomes stated in the 2016 Corporate Plan, which aim to achieve the best outcomes for all local residents.

7.4.3. The LTP4 strategy provides a strategic framework for a range of schemes and investment for the future. As such future work will be conducted to implement schemes and investment programmes. Further Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken for specific schemes and investment programmes as they come forward.

#### **7.5. Rural Community Implications**

7.5.1. 57% of the Cheshire East highway network is classed as rural serving over half of our population. The quality and availability of the rural transport network is vital to the local economy, not just in rural areas. Rural transport provision needs to take account of the needs of rural residents and visitors, enabling rural areas to be well-connected to services and opportunities. The extent of rural connectivity has a direct impact on the Borough's overall 'Quality of Place'.

7.5.2. The LTP includes detailed consideration of transport issues in rural areas throughout the Borough. In principal, the policy objectives and issues highlighted in the Plan apply throughout the Borough, including all of our rural areas. However, it is also recognised that there can be specific challenges that are of heightened importance in rural areas. Consideration of these is aided by the place-based approach to the planning process. This has put greater emphasis on how our key towns act as service centres which must be accessible to residents of rural areas. As part of the place-based approach, we have prepared a specific Local Area Profile within the plan focussing on the challenges and opportunities arising in our Rural Areas. This section of the LTP will also be updated with feedback from the consultation.

## **7.6. Human Resources Implications**

7.6.1. None

## **7.7. Health and Wellbeing Implications**

7.7.1. The LTP4 considers the impact of transport on issues affecting public health, most notably Air Quality and the contribution that Active Travel – walking and cycling – can make to health & wellbeing. The Plan is coordinated with the Council's wider strategic approaches to addressing public health outcomes. Officers from the Public Health service are engaged in production of the strategy. The LTP4 also proposes actions to improve accessibility to services (particularly health services) in the context of an ageing and rural population.

## **7.8. Implications for Children and Young People**

7.8.1. Specific transport issues relating to children and young people are incorporated into the LTP4. Strategy development has taken full account of the Council's current work on a new draft Compulsory School Age Education Travel Policy and the emerging Sustainable Modes of Travel to Schools (SMOTS) strategy.

## **7.9. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Implications**

7.9.1. The Local Transport Plan update is relevant to the work programme of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is proposed that the Scrutiny Committee is requested to consider a report on the final LTP Strategy for adoption by the Council in early 2019.

## **7.10. Other Implications (Please Specify)**

7.10.1. None

## **8. Risk Management**

8.1. A Project Board has been established chaired by the Director of Infrastructure and Highways to ensure appropriate project governance and strategic direction.

8.2. Officer steering groups from both the Place and the People Directorates have been convened to inform the production of the new LTP. This approach ensures that relationships with policies in other service areas are fully understood.

## **9. Access to Information**

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

Documents are held on file at:  
\\ourcheshire.cccusers.com\East\LTPEast\LTP Rewrite 2017\Briefing  
Notes

## **10. Contact Information**

Contact details for this report are as follows:

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### **List of Appendices**

**Appendix 1 – Consultation Report**  
**Appendix 2 – Consultation Summary**