

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Environment & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: Tuesday 23rd November 2010
Report of: Strategic Director – Places
Subject/Title: Draft Local Transport Plan Strategy Consultation
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Jamie Macrae

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This paper outlines the draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) strategy setting out the proposed priorities for transport. The strategy is directly linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and shows how transport contributes to the achievement of wider ambitions for the area. A five week period of public consultation on the draft strategy began on the 19th October 2010.

2.0 Decision Requested

- 2.1 Comment requested on the proposed thematic priorities for the LTP strategy released for public consultation – “ensure a sustainable future” and “create conditions for business growth”.
- 2.2 Comment on the priority policies under each theme and make suggestions for alternative priorities if necessary.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The draft strategy and proposed priorities reflect the outputs from earlier stakeholder and Member consultation. The transport priorities also 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. This consultation represents the final opportunity to influence strategic priorities for transport.

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 is supported by a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a Health Impact Assessment (HIA), Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA), 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 direct funding settlement will not be linked to performance and will be significantly reduced. The quality of an areas LTP may be taken into consideration in 'bidding' for other sources of Government Funding – for example the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

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 financial challenges of the coming years require the need to address hard questions of priority, manage expectations and plan delivery carefully. Other challenges include the extremely difficult economic climate, meeting the needs of an ageing population and the imperative to adapt and respond to climate change.
- 9.2 It is also recognised that a 5 week public consultation period is shorter than recommended. However, extensive engagement has already been undertaken including stakeholder and Member workshops and LAP questionnaire. The timescales have been driven by the committee cycle to ensure Full Council sign off before the end of March 2011.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 Cheshire East's draft 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 causes of poor health
- Nurture strong communities
- Support our children and young people
- Prepare for an increasingly older population
- Unlock the potential of our towns

10.2 The LTP has been subject to wide ranging community engagement, including integrated public consultation with the SCS, a stakeholder workshop, LAP questionnaire and analysis of existing town and parish plans. In addition, two Member workshops have been held to prioritise the transport challenges and policies within each theme, as well as the relative priorities across all the thematic areas.

10.3 Through stakeholder and Member consultation, there are two clear priorities for the LTP strategy – “ensure a sustainable future” and “create conditions for business growth”.

10.4 It is proposed that future investment in transport will be directed 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. needs of young and older people).

10.5 In addition, within each thematic area indicative priority policies have been identified for public consultation and are set out below. The policies within the sustainability and business growth themes are ‘core’ policies – others are ‘complementary’ and will be taken forward where resources allow, where they reflect community priorities and/or development aspirations.

10.6 The challenges for “unlocking the potential of towns” are unique to each place and will be addressed within a series of transport frameworks for principal towns and key service centres (as defined by the LDF) to be developed post-April 2011. Working with the LAPs, town & parish councils and community & voluntary groups will facilitate a better understanding of transport and accessibility needs at a local level. The aim will be to enable local communities to determine local interpretation of the LTP, and enable detailed exploration of tailored localised solutions.

10.7 The LTP will remain a live document supporting continuous improvement in the planning and delivery of services with a focus on achieving greater outcomes more efficiently, with fully engaged communities. As new national and local policies, strategies and priorities emerge and new challenges are identified, the strategy and associated daughter documents will be reviewed and updated. The daughter documents include the Transport Asset Management Plan, Network Management Plan, Passenger Transport Strategy, Rights of Way Improvement Plan and Road Safety Strategy.

Indicative Priority Policies

- 10.8 Within each thematic area, indicative priority policies have been identified for public consultation. As the challenges for young people and older people are cross-cutting, they have been included within the theme of “nurturing strong communities”. The challenges for “unlocking the potential of towns” will be addressed within a series of transport frameworks (detailed above).
- 10.9 To ensure a **sustainable future**, the following ‘core’ policies have been identified as indicative priorities:
- Public Transport (Service Levels & Reliability) – Work with passenger transport operators (bus, rail, community transport & taxis) to explore improvements to service levels and reliability.
 - Public Transport (Integration & Facilities) – Work with passenger transport providers (bus, rail and community transport) to improve public transport integration and facilities.
 - Spatial Planning – Seek to minimise the future need to travel through a strategy in the Local Development Framework that focuses most new developments in larger settlements where there is a good range of housing, jobs, shops and services already accessible by public transport, cycling and walking.
- 10.10 To create conditions for **business growth**, the following ‘core’ policies have been identified as indicative priorities:
- Maintenance – Adopt a robust and efficient approach to maintenance to minimise deterioration in the highway network and associated infrastructure assets (e.g. lighting, street furniture etc.)
 - 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.
 - 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.
- 10.11 Within the **health** thematic area, a number of ‘complementary’ policies have been identified as indicative priorities and will be taken forward where resources allow. These are:
- 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.
 - Promotion of Active Travel and Healthy Activities – Work in partnership to promote walking, cycling and horse riding as active travel options and healthy activities.
 - Road Safety (Engineering) – Improve road safety through highway design improvements at collision blackspots.

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. Road safety issues were a key issue of concern within town and parish plans across the borough.

10.13 Within the **stronger communities**, **young people** and **older people** thematic areas, a number of 'complementary' policies have been identified as indicative priorities and will be taken forward where resources allow. These are:

- Community – Work in partnership with local communities to support community led solutions that improve accessibility to key services (employment, education, health, shopping and leisure).
- 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.
- Access for all – Consider the diverse range of needs concerning disabled people and other groups who experience difficulties using the transport system.

11.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

11.1 The LTP strategy and first implementation plan must be prepared by the Council by April 2011. The 15 year strategy will be supported by rolling three-year implementation plans to allocate resources and prioritise key transport measures.

12.0 Access to Information

12.1 The consultation summary of the Draft LTP is attached.

12.2 Other background papers relating to this report, including the Sustainability Appraisal, can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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