

Cheshire East Council

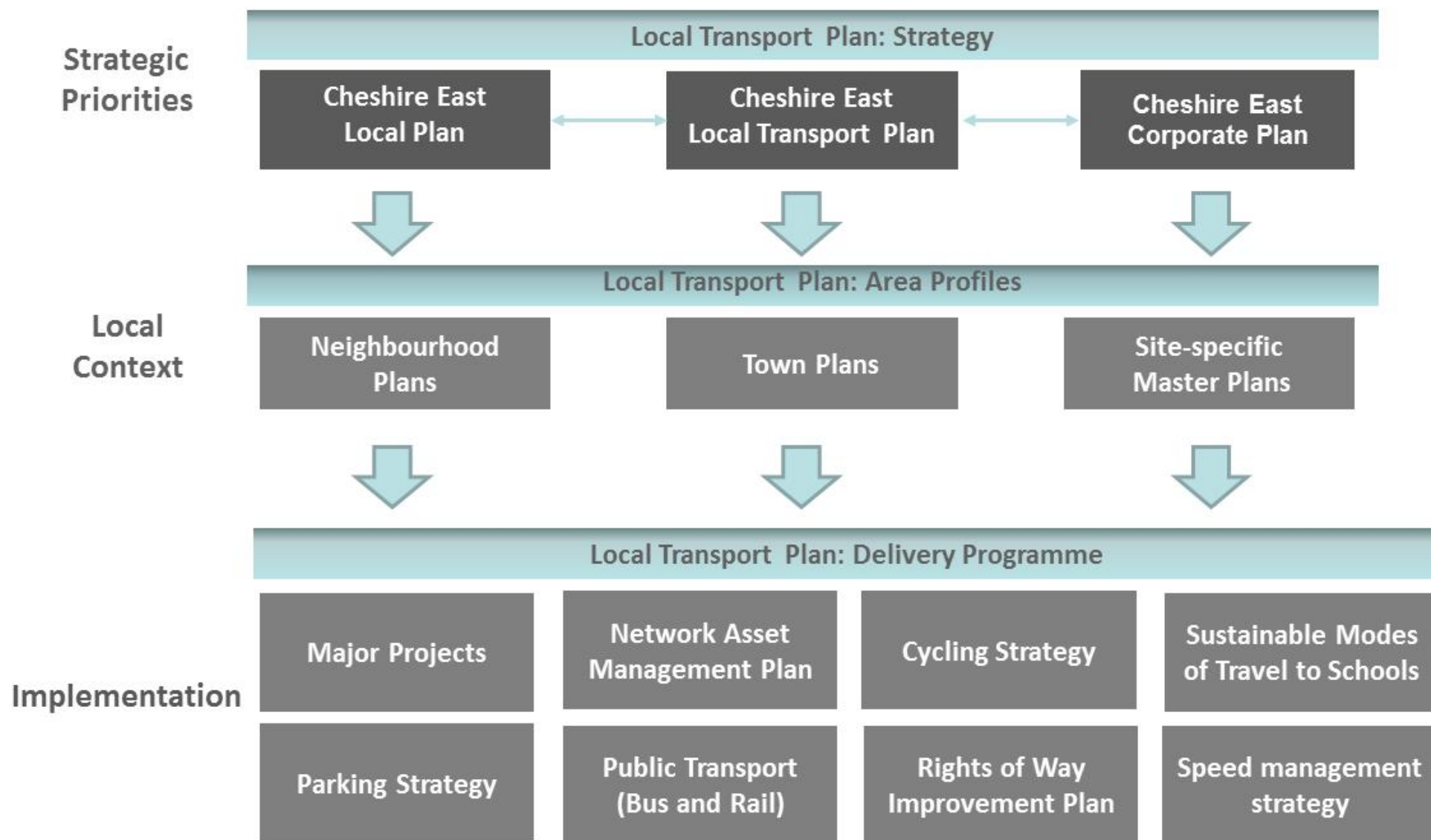
Environment & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting:	12 February 2018
Report of:	Frank Jordan, Executive Director of Place
Subject/Title:	Local Transport Plan Refresh
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Don Stockton – Environment

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines progress against producing an 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. Work in 2017 has produced an evidence base and vision statement for LTP, as agreed at Cabinet on 12 September 2017. This report outlines an updated draft Local Transport strategy, which is now proposed for public consultation.
- 1.2 The Local Transport Plan provides a framework for a set of thematic transport strategies and wider policies affecting local transport provision in Cheshire East. The draft LTP (as at Appendix 2 to this report) brings these together in a coherent multi-modal framework taking account of the local circumstances arising in Cheshire East. In particular, the LTP preparation has been cognisant of emerging work on; a 'Sustainable Modes of Travel to School' strategy, an updated high-level Car Parking strategy (Appendix 4), Education Travel Policy, the Bus Service Review and the adoption of an updated spatial framework in the Local Plan. The relationship between the LTP and these supporting strategies is summarised in the diagram at Figure 1 below.
- 1.3 The Council's Highways service currently manages and maintains over 2,670kms of carriageway, 40,000 street lights and over 1,400 bridges. This infrastructure is managed through the Council's Highways Investment Programme and is an excellent example of our evidence-led approach to transport asset maintenance. The LTP considers how to continue maintaining, managing and improving our transport infrastructure as effectively as possible to maximise the level-of-service they provide in meeting the travel needs of the borough.

Figure 1: Policy Framework of Cheshire East Local Transport Plan and Supporting Strategies



- 1.4 Although the LTP primarily profiles transport and infrastructure needs within the Borough, the strategy 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.
- 1.5 In parallel with development of the LTP, the Council has been working collaboratively with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council and Transport for Greater Manchester to update the South East Manchester Multimodal Strategy (SEMMMS – see Appendix 3). The original SEMMMS strategy, published in 2001, outlined a 20 year transport plan for the South East Manchester area, incorporating neighbouring areas in East Cheshire. Significant progress has been made in delivering the original strategy (including delivery of A6MARR and complementary measures) but this now needs to be updated alongside the new LTP, and reflect the emerging development proposals of the Greater Manchester Spatial Strategy and adopted CEC Local Plan.
- 1.6 The new LTP4 strategy has developed a comprehensive set of actions to address the strategic transport challenges for Cheshire East as defined in the Vision document approved by Cabinet on 12th September 2017, namely:
- **Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity** – transport investment will be central to keep our economy moving and achieving the sustainable growth set out in the Local Plan. The Council will seek to ensure timely provision of infrastructure to support development. We also need to plan now to capitalise on major growth opportunities associated with a future HS2 Hub in Crewe and the wider Constellation Partnership.
 - **Ensuring accessibility to services** – the transport network plays a role in creating sustainable communities with access to vital facilities and services as well as friends and family. The transport network must support these everyday journeys and deliver not just in our larger towns but also for our smaller towns, villages, and rural communities.
 - **Protecting and improving our environment** – with a growing population and existing impacts of transport on local air quality and noise we need to plan for alternative technology and sustainable travel to mitigate these impacts.
 - **Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity** – the transport network can play a key role in promoting health and physical activity. If current trends in Cheshire East, where a higher proportion of adults are overweight than nationally, are to be reversed then the Council must promote physical activity.

- **Maintaining and managing our network assets** – ensuring the transport network performs efficiently and is well maintained is vital to both connectivity and safety. Reduced Council budgets combined with a greater number of transport network users and an increased incidence of extreme weather events is likely to make maintaining the transport network and ensuring its resilience more difficult in the future.
- **Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness** – in the coming years there will continue to be challenges and opportunities relating to how we manage and fund our transport network. The Council will work with central government and other partners to identify how priority transport infrastructure is maintained, how excellent transport and local government services are provided and how new infrastructure is delivered and paid for. The Council has a history of successfully securing significant external funding to invest in transport infrastructure and services. There will be a need to continue this excellent track record if the Council is to deliver the transport network that will support the growth targeted for Cheshire East.

- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 Subject to approval by Cabinet, it is proposed that the updated Local Transport Plan strategy, the associated Local Area Profiles and the 'issues and options' elements of the SEMMMS strategy be published for public consultation, commencing in February 2018. This consultation will seek 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. The outcomes of consultation will inform production of a fully updated Local Transport Plan for Cheshire East, which is expected to be available for consideration at Cabinet and Council in Autumn 2018. Feedback received on the SEMMMS strategy will be used, alongside the ongoing traffic modelling work to help prioritise a set of future SEMMMS transport schemes. This final strategy will be consulted on in Summer 2018.
- 1.9 This joint LTP and SEMMMS public consultation will seek views on:

- The overall strategic approach required to meet the transport challenges facing the Borough, as informed by our analysis of the evidence base;
- Investment priorities considered to be necessary as part of a 5-year LTP Delivery Plan, which will be prepared following this consultation and updated annually to inform the Council's annual programmes of transport investment;
- The 'Issues and Options' elements of the SEMMMS strategy to address future transport challenges in North of the Borough;
- The challenges & issues that have been identified for each of the principal towns and key service centres in the Borough, plus any key projects or initiatives that are considered important to address issues including (but not limited to): congestion in local centres; parking issues; traffic speeds; accessibility by walking, cycling and bus travel; conditions of carriageways and footways; and rail connections.

The approach to community engagement will be informed by the Council's best practice guidance from the Corporate Research and Consultation Team. The proposed Engagement Plan for this exercise is appended to this report (see Appendix 1). As outlined in the Engagement Plan, the various transport themed consultations running concurrently in early 2018 will be linked together through coordinated communications and ensuring staff attending LTP consultation drop-in events are able to answer questions regarding other consultations including: Transport for the North; SEMMMS etc.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny committee is recommended to:

- 2.1.1 Note the proposals for public consultation on an updated Local Transport Plan strategy for Cheshire East.
- 2.1.2 Agree any comments that the Committee wishes to present to the Cabinet when this matter is considered on 6th March 2018.
- 2.1.3 Note that the results of the consultation and any proposed changes to the Local Transport Plan will be reported to the Committee in June 2018.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. The existing Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 for Cheshire East was prepared at a time pre-dating the Council's current planning framework, as defined in the new Local Plan. It also reflects a period when there were severe constraints on the Department for Transport's funding for major infrastructure projects and block funding allocations to local authorities.

Hence a number of potential major projects within Cheshire East are inadequately profiled in the current document. In this regard, the current Local Transport Plan is no longer fit-for-purpose as a planning framework for local transport throughout Cheshire East. Therefore, the time is right for a review and refresh of this document to ensure that the Council maintains a document that is robust and relevant to local priorities.

- 3.2. Likewise the original SEMMMS Strategy is now over 20 years old. In order to properly plan for key 'cross boundary' transport challenges in the future this work must be updated to take account of the schemes delivered by the original SEMMMS strategy and the context of new and emerging development pressures.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. As the LTP is a statutory document, no options other than to update it were considered. The proposed approach is considered to be a timely and proportionate means of fulfilling this requirement.

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 our LTP to reflect the Council's accelerated investment in transport infrastructure across Cheshire East, in the context of a new Local Plan spatial strategy. This paper outlines the proposed approach to preparing an updated LTP.
- 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. A new LTP will bring 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 a refreshed Local Transport Plan.
- 5.5. The Local Transport Plan will be a statutory document maintained by Cheshire East Council in its role as the Local Transport Authority. To inform development of the Plan, it is vital to engage the public and stakeholders in consultation on the proposed approach. At this stage of development, a 8-week consultation period is expected to include:
- Borough-wide circulation of consultation materials through libraries, customer contact centres and other key venues e.g. transport interchanges.
 - 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.

The approach to consultation will ensure there is, as far as possible, coordination of events and key messages with other related public consultation activities including SEMMMS.

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. Updating the 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.

7.2. 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.

7.2.6. It should be noted that breach of a duty to consult would risk the Council being subjected to legal challenge by way of judicial review.

7.2.7. Any Consultation must be conducted with adherence to the following:

(a) the consultation must take place at a time when the proposals are still at a formative stage;

(b) the proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response;

(c) adequate time must be given for consideration and response;

(d) the product of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising the proposals.

7.3. Financial Implications

7.3.1. A costed programme for the necessary tasks is prepared. The LTP4 is being prepared over financial years 2016/17 to 2018/19. The costs for producing a new LTP4 are estimated to be approximately £200,000. This excludes any internal recharges for staff time to support the process and the value of such recharges is still to be confirmed. The costs of this are fully funded from within the Strategic Infrastructure budget.

7.3.2. The refresh of the SEMMMS strategy is being funded from the monies earmarked by Transport for Greater Manchester towards 'cross boundary studies'. As such there will be no direct impact on the Council's budgets for this element of the work.

7.3.3. 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 exercise 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.

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 will need to be 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 reports on the following matters relating to production of the updated LTP;

- February 2018 – Approach to public consultation and engagement
- June 2018 – Results of public consultation and amendments to the LTP
- September 2018 – Finalising the LTP for adoption by Council.

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. Monthly project highlight reports are prepared for the Project Management Office. A project risk register is maintained detailing mitigation measures.

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

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Engagement Plan

Appendix 2 - Draft Local Transport Plan

Appendix 3 - South East Manchester Multimodal Strategy (SEMMMS)

Appendix 4 - High-level Car Parking Strategy