

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL
REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (PUBLIC PROTECTION, PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE)

HERTFORDSHIRE'S LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN – PUBLIC CONSULTATION

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Hertfordshire County Council as local transport authority is required by law to prepare and periodically review a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the county, setting out its longer term transport aspirations, key transport policies and strategic transport projects. An LTP is also a basis for transport investment decisions. The current Local Transport Plan (LTP3) covers the period from 2011 to 2031. The County Council proposes to adopt a new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) and has previously carried out initial consultation under the heading 'Transport Vision 2050'. The initial consultation was the subject of a report to Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel on 1st December 2016, where the Panel agreed to make a number of observations on the Plan.
- 1.2 Following the earlier consultation a full draft Local Transport Plan has now been published for further public consultation. The consultation started on 31st October 2017 and will run until 23rd January 2018. An informal presentation on the Plan was made to members by County Council officers on 14th December prior to the Panel meeting that evening. This report updates the Panel on the content of the draft Plan and the timetable intended for its adoption. The report also recommends that a number of comments be made concerning aspects of the Plan which are of direct interest to this Council.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel notes the contents of this report and agrees that the key points detailed in the Suggested Responses section below, together with any additional points agreed by the Panel, be included in this Council's response to the current consultation. The Panel agrees that the Head of Planning be given delegated powers to agree any minor alterations to finalise the Council's response following consultation with the Executive Member for Planning, Housing and Community.

3 Explanation

Introduction and the Local Transport Plan

- 3.1 The draft Local Transport Plan (LTP4) has 115 pages and is structured into eight substantive sections comprising background to the Plan, challenges and drivers of change, themes and objectives, policies and principles, major schemes and implementation, funding and monitoring. The document sets out how transport can help deliver a positive future vision of Hertfordshire, focused around the **themes** of 'people, place and prosperity'. It is intended to deliver a blended approach of improvements in highways, passenger transport, walking and cycling whilst managing a transition away from a focus on highway capacity improvements. This

latter intent is due to environmental and funding constraints on the building of new and enhanced roads and an acknowledgement that technological advances are likely to enable significant change in the way in which movement takes place around the county.

- 3.2 The LTP uses the 'people, place and prosperity' themes to establish a series of nine **objectives** such as to 'Improve accessibility between employers and their labour markets' and to 'Make journeys and their impact safer and healthier'. There are also four guiding **principles** to be applied to delivering on these objectives, which are 'Integration of land use and transport planning', 'Application and adoption of technology', 'Cost effective delivery and maintenance' and 'Modal shift and encouraging active travel'.
- 3.3 In addition to the LTP document itself, there will be a range of 'daughter documents' dealing with different aspects of transport within the county, including for example an Active Travel Strategy (covering walking and cycling), an Intalink Bus Strategy (dealing with bus connectivity), a Road Safety Strategy, and a new type of plan called a Growth and Transport Plan. The Growth and Transport Plans for different parts of the county will take the overall strategy and vision of the LTP and apply them to produce more detailed proposals for physical and policy interventions. Welwyn Hatfield sits within the area to be covered by the South Central Growth and Transport Plan on which work has commenced and is scheduled to continue through 2018.
- 3.4 The LTP sits within a wider policy context and has links to a range of policy documents, including for example the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Local Plans across Hertfordshire, the County Council's Corporate Plan, the Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and investment strategies of other bodies such as the Department for Transport and rail companies.

Challenges and Opportunities

- 3.5 The key challenges identified to transport in Hertfordshire up to 2031 and beyond include a predicted 21% (252,000 person) increase in the county's population by 2039, leading to an increased demand for travel, and how best transport can support economic growth and assist in tackling health issues. As far as can be seen these challenges will need to be addressed against a background of pressures on public spending.
- 3.6 Growth and regeneration plans for parts of the county will also be linked to a growing demand for travel. These plans are set against a backdrop of the Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP's) Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) which identifies the A1(M) and East Coast Mainline corridor running through Welwyn Hatfield as critical to growth. The A414 east-west corridor is also emerging as central to long term growth plans for the county. Important in this context is the work of the Hatfield Renewal Partnership in seeking to promote regeneration in Hatfield. The Partnership has recently commissioned and published a Hatfield 2030+ transport strategy, and the LTP acknowledges that this strategy will provide opportunities to improve the transport system in and around the town.
- 3.7 Evidence is available of declining activity rates in the general population and this constitutes a challenge to be addressed through providing more opportunities and encouragement for walking and cycling. More engagement in active travel is seen as potentially reducing costs to health services.
- 3.8 The LTP notes that revenue funding for areas such as bus service support has been particularly squeezed since the financial crisis of 2008 and this is a potential

challenge in seeking to address public concerns over bus services. The LTP quotes evidence that 19% of people believe that bus service provision is a major issue relating to transport in Hertfordshire.

- 3.9 Under Challenges and Opportunities the LTP acknowledges that in the last 15 years there has been negligible reduction in car use in the county and limited modal shift to bus, rail, walking and cycling as a means of travel. The Plan notes that there remains considerable potential for modal shift, with over a quarter of commuters travelling less than five miles to their place of work and 43% travelling less than ten miles.
- 3.10 The LTP acknowledges however that investment in improved provision for sustainable transport modes will not be sufficient on its own to change existing travel behaviour. Investment will need to be accompanied by constraints on the amount of car parking at destinations. This is clearly one of the more controversial components of the strategy advocated by the LTP. It acknowledges that LTP4 needs to go further in its efforts to tackle congestion and constrain traffic growth than previous LTPs, in what is a more challenging funding environment.

Drivers of change

- 3.11 Under this section, the LTP considers the impact of changes in land use planning (including different spatial strategies for growth, such as increasing housing densities and planning for new settlements), socio-economic factors (such as an ageing population), technological change (new fuels, autonomous vehicles), political context and environmental factors (air quality and climate change measures) on planning for transport. Using these variables, the alignment of potential LTP interventions has been tested against a set of plausible future scenarios for Hertfordshire.
- 3.12 The evidence base accompanying the LTP gives more details of the scenario testing exercise. The Plan states that a number of types of intervention could be considered as more resilient to future uncertainty. These are the introduction of new demand management mechanisms, the use of active travel schemes (particularly in urban areas) and investment in bus priority infrastructure.

Themes, Objectives and Principles

- 3.13 This section of the LTP returns to the themes, objectives and principles outlined in the introductory sections and explores each of the objectives in more detail, identifying key issues to be addressed in targeting those objectives. For example under the 'Prosperity' linked objective to 'Improve accessibility between employers and their labour markets' one of the issues to be addressed is 'High car mode share for commuting trips, even for intra-urban commutes, with inadequacies in passenger transport, walking and cycling provision.' Under 'Place', the objective 'Enhance the vitality and quality of town centres' has a number of transport issues associated with it, including 'A number of towns in need of renewal and regeneration, and transport plays a role in improving urban environment.' Under 'People', the objective to 'Make journeys and their impact safer and healthier' is linked to several issues including 'Air quality, noise and harmful emissions from transport a factor in poor health and premature death.'
- 3.14 This section of the Plan also provides some expansion and description for the four principles referred to at 3.2 above.

Policies and Activities

- 3.15 This is the most substantial section of the LTP document at 50 pages and sets out 23 policies to guide the delivery of transport measures by the County Council. A figure is included at the end of the section which shows how the policies align with the Plan's objectives and principles discussed above.
- 3.16 Policy 1 is headed 'Transport User Hierarchy' and is a new approach to the LTP which sets the scene for the other policies. It details that the County Council, in the design and development of transport schemes and strategies, will consider in the following order:
- Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel
 - Vulnerable road user needs (such as those of pedestrians and cyclists);
 - Passenger transport user needs
 - Powered two wheeler user needs (mopeds and motorbikes)
 - Other motor vehicle user needs

This LTP is a growth-orientated plan, making the explicit statement that it should be a feature of transport strategies to support the growth outlined in district and borough local plans. By considering the opportunities to reduce travel demand and the needs of more sustainable forms of transport first, they are not overlooked and are fully considered at an early stage in the strategy development.

- 3.17 Linking this approach to the land use planning system by another proposed key policy (Policy 2), the LTP states that it is essential that at the very earliest stages of land use development options consideration, the implications and potential transport opportunities are fully appreciated, and serve to guide decision making. Conversely, the major transport schemes outlined in the LTP are seen as presenting 'opportunities for additional land use development to be supported, in excess of current Local Plan allocations.'
- 3.18 The next key are covered by the proposed LTP policies (policies 3 and 4) is that of 'Travel Plans and Behaviour Change', coupled with 'Demand Management'. Central to LTP4 is the need to bring about modal shift from the car to more sustainable modes. This entails encouragement to changes in behaviour through the travel planning process coupled, significantly, with restrictions on the availability of car parking. Proposed Policy 4 of the LTP includes the statement that 'The county council will work with the district and borough councils and other key stakeholders to develop locally appropriate strategies'. Such strategies are likely to include charging regimes for both on-street and off-street parking, also potentially for workplace parking. Proposals should align or be part of local parking policies so that decisions on parking standards and provision complement efforts to reduce demand for car use. Critically, the LTP suggests that, for reasons of obtaining value for money, those areas that progress demand management schemes should be prioritised for sustainable travel investment.
- 3.19 Following detailed policies (5 and 6) on 'Development Management' and 'Accessibility', the LTP addresses Active Travel through Policy 7 (Walking) and Policy 8 (Cycling). Policy 9 addresses Buses and contains a key element of focusing investment in bus priority measures on a 'Core Bus Network' within the county. From a Welwyn Hatfield perspective, this core network includes links between Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City and onward routes to Stevenage,

Hertford and St Albans. It does not however include links to the southern villages of the borough or southwards towards Potters Bar. The Buses policy is designed to take account of changing procurement arrangements for services under the Bus Services Act 2017, partnership working (such as through the Intalink Quality Partnership) and improving the attractiveness of bus travel as an option.

- 3.20 Further policies of the LTP relate to Rail (Policy 10) and Airports (Policy 11), followed by a series of policies covering different aspects of highways; Network Management (Policy 12), New Roads and Junctions (Policy 13), Climate Change Network Resilience (Policy 14), Speed Management (Policy 15) and Freight and Logistics (Policy 16).
- 3.21 Two policies (17 and 18) cover safety and security on the roads and for different types of transport, while a group of policies deals with environmental impacts, including Emissions Reduction (policy 19), Air Quality (Policy 20) and Environment (Policy 21). The Environment policy seeks to minimise impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure on the natural, built and historic environments and open spaces, also to minimise visual intrusion from signage, light pollution and noise, wherever practical. This Council's Environmental Health team is considering these policy areas and formulating comments to form part of the response to the LTP consultation; an oral update will be given at the Panel meeting.
- 3.22 The final two policies deal with Asset Management and the development of Growth and Transport Plans (GTPs) as described in 3.3 above. Policy 23 states that the GTPs will be informed by, and help to inform, local plans and Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs) which are prepared by the district and borough councils.

Major Schemes and Corridor Commentary

- 3.23 An important section of the LTP is concerned with the identification of major schemes in the context of sub-regional movement corridors which pass through Hertfordshire. The two corridors of particular interest to Welwyn Hatfield are the London-Stevenage-Peterborough corridor encompassing the A1(M) and East Coast Main Line, and Hemel Hempstead & Watford-St Albans-Harlow corridor focused around the A414 and A405.
- 3.24 Within the first of these corridors key proposals are working with Highways England on delivering the A1(M) Smart Motorway Scheme from Junction 6 to Junction 8 by 2020 and seeking East Coast Main Line service improvements enabled by implementation of High Speed 2 Phase 2 which could include additional long-distance stopping services at Stevenage and increased frequency and capacity of services from Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield.
- 3.25 In the east-west corridor one of the main scheme priorities is to bring about a significant improvement in inter-urban passenger transport connectivity through implementation of a bus rapid transit scheme and Sustainable Travel Town projects. An A414 corridor strategy will also investigate potential for key junction improvements, particularly at and around A1(M) Junctions 3 and 4.
- 3.26 Key major schemes at the concept stage are detailed in this section, developing the list of major schemes proposed in the Transport Vision 2050 document. These include Sustainable Travel Towns (now including Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City), Cycle Infrastructure Improvement Towns (also including Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City) and the A414 Bus Rapid Transit link from Hemel Hempstead to Welwyn Garden City, with possible future extension to Hertford and Harlow.

- 3.27 The Sustainable Travel Towns scheme entails delivery of comprehensive packages of measures aimed at achieving modal shift. These packages could include new cycling, walking and passenger transport infrastructure in combination with 'soft' initiatives such as travel planning and marketing. Travel demand management would also be considered. Sustainable Travel Towns are also seen as providing the potential for higher density and car-free development, giving a link to land use planning. Scheme details will be included in the Growth and Transport Plans discussed above.
- 3.28 The Cycle Infrastructure Towns scheme would provide improved cycling infrastructure in the identified towns as well as safety and promotional support for cycling. Scheme details would again be included in the Growth and Transport Plans, and in the Active Travel Strategy.
- 3.29 The Bus Rapid Transit scheme, incorporating dedicated bus-ways, bus lanes and bus priority signals, could potentially also serve park and ride sites on the edges of the towns it serves. Of the other schemes affecting different parts of the county, the proposal for a new A414 by-pass of Hertford, either to the north or the south of the town on a route to be agreed, could also have implications for traffic flows through Welwyn Hatfield and at the A1(M) intersections, and would form a major part of the A414 corridor strategy referred to at 3.25 above.

Implementation, Funding and Monitoring

- 3.30 LTP4 is programmed to be adopted by the County Council in 2018, following any final revisions to take account of the responses to the current consultation. A short final section in the draft LTP details that its daughter documents, particularly the Growth and Transport Plans to be finalised between 2018 and 2020, will provide development of the corridor interventions and major schemes. Interventions will be detailed in an annually-updated Implementation Plan. A monitoring report will also be published annually to update on progress with strategy delivery and key performance indicators.
- 3.31 The availability of funding to meet the LTP's aspirations will obviously be critical. The LTP looks at the background to both revenue and capital funding and notes the tight restrictions on revenue funding in particular. It is acknowledged that maximising government grants for infrastructure maintenance will be important, as will making the services more efficient and exploring the potential for new or increased funding services.
- 3.32 Alternative funding sources are also considered, including government major scheme and grant funding, developers' contributions through CIL and Section 106, local Growth Deal or other LEP funding, and business rates. Innovative sources such as sponsorship and crowd funding may also need to be explored.

4 Suggested Responses

- 4.1 The County Council is inviting responses to the LTP4 consultation either using an online form at <https://surveys.hertfordshire.gov.uk/s/ltp4consultation/> or via email. It is recommended that this Council responds through an email, to incorporate the following comments:
- 4.2 Support for the overall themes, objectives and principles of the draft LTP4 document, as discussed above;
- 4.3 Support for the Transport User Hierarchy approach contained in Policy 1 of the draft LTP since it addresses concerns about making travel as sustainable as possible, helping to make walking and cycling more attractive via suitable options and

preserving the environment while dealing with the increased demand for travel in a way that contributes least to congestion;

- 4.4 Support for encouraging active travel, including in connection with green infrastructure (for example as part of this Council's Green Corridor proposals which are being developed alongside the Local Plan);
- 4.5 Concerning demand management measures, parking restraint and parking charges there needs to be close working between this Council and the County Council to take account of local circumstances and aspirations, for example in the context of Hatfield 2030+ and regeneration of Hatfield town centre. Restrictive parking measures need to be carefully thought through and related to the rate of progress in developing genuinely sustainable transport alternatives;
- 4.6 Support for Growth and Transport Plans, including joint working with the County Council to support delivery of sustainable transport measures to serve growth as identified in the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan and the Local Plans of neighbouring authorities, also to deliver on the Hatfield 2030+ transport strategy objectives/interventions;
- 4.7 Concern that adequate infrastructure and support needs to be provided to bus services, not just within towns but also in rural areas where those (particularly older or less-physically able) residents without access to a car are substantially disadvantaged. In this context the proposed retrenchment to a 'core bus network' could have negative implications. There is a need for more joined-up planning between the County Council, other local authorities and bus operators, also to maximise opportunities afforded by rail interchange;
- 4.8 Welcome the policy approach to Emissions Reduction and Air Quality (Environmental Health comments and suggestions to be reported orally);
- 4.9 Support for inclusion of Hatfield and WGC as Sustainable Travel Towns, rectifying their omission from the Transport Vision 2050 document. Support for inclusion of Hatfield and WGC as Cycle Infrastructure Improvement Towns;
- 4.10 Support for the east-west bus rapid transit scheme. This Council welcomes the opportunity to work in partnership with the County Council and potential operators when considering route/interchange points/locations of infrastructure. This Council also wishes to point to the opportunities potentially available in Hatfield for such a route, in conjunction with Hatfield 2030+ initiatives, and the importance of a suitable link between Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City;
- 4.11 Welcome the implementation of the smart motorway scheme between Junctions 6 and 8 of the A1(M). There will be a need for this Council and the County Council to work together through the Growth and Transport Plan to ensure suitable provision for local traffic/other modes on parallel routes;
- 4.12 Members are invited to consider additional comments which they may wish to make following their own consideration of the draft LTP.

5 Legal Implication(s)

- 5.1 The County Council is required by law to publish a Local Transport Plan under the provisions of the Transport Act 2000 as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008. There are no legal implications for this Council in responding to this consultation.

6 Financial Implication(s)

6.1 There are no financial implications arising as a direct result of responding to this consultation.

7 Risk Management Implications

7.1 There are no risk implications arising from responding to this consultation.

8 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

8.1 There are no security and terrorism implications as a direct result of responding to this consultation.

9 Procurement Implication(s)

9.1 There are no procurement implications arising as a direct result of responding to this consultation.

10 Climate Change Implication(s)

10.1 There are no direct climate change implications from responding to this consultation. The implementation of the Local Transport Plan itself will have an impact on climate change through influencing the level of emissions arising from vehicle journeys.

11 Policy Implication(s)

11.1 The policies in the Local Transport Plan and the major schemes it identifies affecting Welwyn Hatfield will have implications for the implementation of the Council's own Local Plan policies.

12 Link to Corporate Priorities

12.1 The Local Transport Plan effectively links to three of this Council's corporate priorities; to maintain a safe and healthy community, to protect and enhance the environment, and to help build a strong local economy.

13 Equality and Diversity

13.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out, as this report concerns the Council's response to a consultation document only.

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