

Council Business Committee

Response to the Draft Local Transport Plan for Lancashire 2011 - 2021 13th January 2011

Report of Head of Regeneration and Policy

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the draft Local Transport Plan for Lancashire which sets out a Strategy and Priorities for transport across the County between 2011-2021.

For Members to agree a series of comments which will be submitted as a formal response to the consultation exercise on the Local Transport Plan.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the comments raised in Section 5 of this Report are submitted to Lancashire County Council as a formal response from the City Council.**
- (2) That officers keep Members informed of the progress of the Local Transport Plan and report back upon the publication of a final strategy document.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Transport Plan is prepared by the responsible highways authority, in this case Lancashire County Council. The Plan sets out a series of strategic transport priorities for the County, along with a number of schemes which will assist in achieving these priorities. The Plan should last over a 10 year period at which point it should be reviewed.
- 1.2 Work has been ongoing on preparation of this strategy throughout 2010, during the summer County Council officers requested comments from local authority officers suggesting potential schemes that should be considered within the Transport Plan, a copy of this response is attached to Appendix A of this report.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 The Local Transport Plan sets out the County Council's transport priorities over the next ten year period between 2011 and 2021, these priorities include:
 - Improving access into areas of Economic Growth and Regeneration;

- Providing better access to Education and Employment;
- Improving People's Quality of Life and wellbeing;
- Improving the Safety of our Streets for our most vulnerable residents;
- Providing safe, reliable, convenient and affordable transport alternatives to the car;
- Maintaining the County Council Assets;
- Reducing Carbon Emissions and its effects.

2.2 As part of the documentation received a list of suggested schemes for the Lancaster District area has been provided. This provides a list of transport schemes, relating to public transport improvements, road improvement schemes, improvements to road safety, cycling and walking schemes and parking improvements. This list was produced through the informal discussions that took place over the summer. This provides only a list of 'suggested' schemes and there is no formal commitment from the County Council to implement all schemes that have been suggested. A list of these schemes is attached to appendix B of this report.

Key Priorities for the Local Transport Plan

Access to Economic Growth

2.3 The County Council recognise the importance of the North West's economy and the role that Lancashire plays in the region and that capacity exists to generate substantial further growth and new jobs, in particular to our locality Lancaster Science Park is recognised as a site of strategic importance.

The LTP recognises that the County's key strengths and opportunities lie in the following industries:

- The Energy and Renewable / Environmental Sectors
- Advanced Manufacturing and Aerospace
- The Service Sector
- The Visitor Economy

2.4 Through the LTP, the County Council will seek to reduce congestion and increase road capacity to support the growth of key economic centres, such as Lancaster, and the development of strategic sites and regeneration of town centres, such as Morecambe.

2.5 Work will also be undertaken, in partnership with public transport operators to reduce journey times to strategic sites and deliver improved public transport infrastructure, providing improved interchanges and Park & Ride facilities for main urban centres, such as Lancaster.

2.6 The LTP will look to improve access to major ports, such as Heysham, as part of delivering the 'Energy Coast' and will seek to promote sustainable travel options to important centres and visitor destinations.

Access to Education

2.7 The LTP recognises that sustained economic growth in parts of Lancashire have brought greater prosperity and job opportunities, whilst great opportunities exist in the region for education and training for highly skilled jobs. However, these opportunities and benefits are not available to all.

2.8 Ensuring that employment, training and education opportunities are available

to all members of the community will be a key challenge to address. Improving transport linkages between areas which are disadvantaged and the key areas of economic growth will be very important in terms of delivering sustainable communities.

- 2.9 The County Council, through the LTP, will seek to provide affordable public transport to disadvantaged and isolated communities. Further work will also take place in partnership with transport operators to ensure that public transport networks are more joined up and coherent. The County Council will also work with local authorities and developers to influence locations for major new development and secure appropriate improvements to the transport network to serve new development.

Improving Quality of Life and Wellbeing

- 2.10 The County Council acknowledges that across Lancashire people can be disadvantaged because of where they live and/or their personal circumstances. An effective transport network is seen as a key element in the improvement to quality of life, providing access and choice to education, work, lifestyle and other essential services.

- 2.11 The County Council seek to improve people's quality of life and wellbeing through the following ways:

- Reduce the impacts of traffic noise and pollution;
- Provide better accessibility to fresh produce, health provision and social and leisure opportunities;
- Ensure the transport needs for older people is met;
- Improve accessibility for rural communities; and
- Seek to expand the networks of cycle and footways.

- 2.12 Areas of focus for these proposals include urban areas of Lancaster and Morecambe, Lancaster particularly in relation to air quality issues.

Improving the Safety of our Streets

- 2.13 The County Council will continue to make travel safe for all road users through the improvement to infrastructure of residential streets, public realm and through educating and raising awareness of all vulnerable road users. Work will continue on rolling out 20mph schemes across residential areas and work with communities to implement appropriate speed limits. There will also be a range of education initiatives created to raise awareness, both for drivers and vulnerable groups such as children regarding highway safety.

Providing Alternatives to the Private Car

- 2.13 Walking, cycling and travel by bus and rail will all play a significant role in Lancashire's future transport system. In order for this to be the case, services and infrastructure that promote such alternatives to private car must be seen as safe and reliable. They must prove to be affordable and they must be convenient to fit in with modern day expectations. The County Council will seek to do the following things:

- Work with public transport operators to invest in new public transport services and ensure that existing services are clean, well maintained and reliable;
- Provide discount schemes for young people;

- Work to introduce new smartcard technology which can be used both within and outside Lancashire;
- Develop the role of local rail services; and
- Provide safe and convenient new infrastructure for walking and cycling.

2.14 Providing alternatives to the private car are seen as particularly important in key congested areas such as Lancaster.

Further Priorities

2.15 Other priorities exist within the local transport plan, such as the maintenance of existing assets and routes within the County which could have localised impacts across the District but aim to ensure a safe and high quality road network.

2.16 A further cross cutting theme which runs through all the priorities is the need to cut carbon emissions and assist in the mitigation of climate change. Lowering the need for people to use their cars and providing greater opportunities for people to use sustainable alternatives, through the use of public transport or by cycling or walking.

Issues

2.17 The general priorities set within the strategy document address many of the key issues of sustainability and promoting alternatives to the car. All such priorities should be applauded. However, it is felt there is a significant gap in the strategy in relation to providing improved and enhanced accessibility for vulnerable members of the community, particularly in relation to the provision for people with disabilities.

2.18 The structure of the strategy document is through the creation of 7 priorities, as outlined in paragraph 2.1 of this report. However, the document provides little guidance on what schemes will come forward in the Lancaster District area to achieve these priorities. It is felt that the document could include further clarity on what key transport projects should be developed through the life of this Local Transport Plan.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 The Draft Local Transport Plan for Lancashire is the third review of the document which Lancashire County Council has undertaken and is now available for consultation. This six week consultation period commenced on 26th November 2010 and concludes on the 14th January 2011. The consultation documents include a strategy document, a list of suggested schemes a list of comments received via the informal consultation that took place with local authority officers over the summer. The full documentation for the Local Transport Plan is available at the Lancashire County Council website at <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=5489&pageid=29612&e=e>

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: To formally respond to the County Council with the comments provided in Section 5 of this report	Option 2: To formally respond to the County Council with any other comments.	Option 3: To provide no comment to the consultation exercise.
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Advantages	That the views and opinions of the City Council are duly considered in the consultation process.	That the views and opinions of the City Council are duly considered in the consultation process.	No Advantages.
Disadvantages	That whilst we will submit comments on the document there is no guarantee that these comments will be included.	That whilst we will submit comments on the document there is no guarantee that these comments will be included.	That the views / opinion of the City will not be taken into account in the LTP process.
Risks	The finalised LTP may not be revised in light of the comments received from the City Council.	The finalised LTP may not be revised in light of the comments received from the City Council.	The finalised LTP may not be revised in light of the comments received from the City Council.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 It is recommended that the City Council submit a response to the consultation exercise raising the following points:

- That the Strategy document should better take account of accessibility for people with disabilities, both in existing forms of transport and new infrastructure projects.
- That the Strategy document should clarify which projects will be delivered, and how they will be delivered to achieve the priorities of the Transport Plan.
- Whilst the priorities of the Strategy document are considered acceptable in principle there is a lack of local distinctiveness.

5.2 It is recommended that the formal response document is submitted from the City Council and due consideration is given to any comments provided as the County Council continue to prepare a finalised version of the Local Transport Plan.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

The delivery of the Local Development Framework meets many of the priorities set out with the Sustainable Community Strategy for Lancaster 2008-11, particularly in terms of enhancing economic development, protecting the local environment and safety.

Achieving sustainable development through enhanced transport linkages will also assist in achieving the Council's Corporate Vision of "Promoting city, coast and countryside, securing a safe and prosperous community that's proud of its natural and cultural assets and provides lasting opportunities for all" and its associated priorities.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising directly from the report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Local Transport Plan will promote the implementation of transport schemes across the County. This will lead to opportunities for investment in transport within the Lancaster District area. It may also result in the opportunity for the District Council to contribute to the implementation of transport scheme through future budgetary decisions or through securing monies through new development.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

No known resource implications for Human Resources

Information Services:

No known resource implications for Information Services

Property:

No known resource implications for Property Services

Open Spaces:

No known resource implications for Open Space

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comment to make.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comment to make.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2021: A Draft Strategy for Lancashire. (November 2010)

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