

Title of report: New Herefordshire Local Transport Plan

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: Thursday 2 March 2023

Report by: Cabinet Member - Infrastructure and Transport;

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

The report seeks agreement to the approach to the development and delivery of the new Local Transport Plan, including the anticipated timeline. Delegated authority for operational decisions is sought to assist with the timely delivery of the Local Transport Plan.

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- a) approves the draft timescale for producing the new Local Transport Plan and**
- b) notes the proposals for developing the new Local Transport Plan and**

- c) agrees to delegate the authority to take operational decisions during stages 1 to 4 as set out in the report associated with the development of the Local Transport Plan to the Service Director for Transport and Highways in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure.**

Alternative options

1. Local Transport Plans (LTPs) are a statutory requirement under the Transport Act 2000. There are no alternatives to producing a LTP that would be acceptable to the Department for Transport (DfT), and the LTP is expected to be the main route for transport funding in the future.

Key considerations

2. The LTP is the key strategic transport plan for Herefordshire, setting out a long term vision for transport investment in order to achieve economic, environmental, health and social ambitions of the council. LTPs have, for many years, been the key document for capital funding for the Council, with settlements usually having three elements: the maintenance block, the integrated transport block and, more recently, potholes funding. The current plan was adopted in 2016 and has a lifespan to 2031, but has not been reviewed since it was adopted.
3. LTPs are seen as the primary tool for the Department for Transport (DfT) to encourage and support local authorities to achieve new, challenging targets and ambitions for transport. Nationally, the government wants to see drastic reductions to the carbon emissions of transport in the journey towards net zero, requiring a step change in active travel (walking and cycling) for everyday journeys, the use of public transport and the roll out of infrastructure to support electric vehicles (EV).
4. Government's direction aligns well with the aspirations of the council as demonstrated through key initiatives such as the declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, the adoption of an ambitious carbon management plan and the step change in travel mode choice set out in the Hereford City Masterplan (HCMP). Work is also currently underway to produce the county's first Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) that will provide a strategic, prioritised plan in support of improving levels of active travel across Herefordshire.
5. Successive UK Governments have adopted increasingly ambitious carbon targets into UK law, committing to achieving net-zero by 2050. Reflecting this, the DfT stated in their 2021 Decarbonising Transport Plan that future local transport funding will become conditional upon demonstrating how emissions will be reduced across a portfolio of transport investments through LTPs. LTPs are therefore set to become much more important than they have been in recent years, and they will have a significant impact on the levels and types of funding that the council receives in future.
6. DfT guidance for producing the new LTP has been expected for many months but is now anticipated by the spring of 2023, with a deadline for submission expected to be at the end of March 2024. Future years' funding is expected to depend on performance against the plan's outcomes, especially in the areas of decarbonisation, asset management, EV infrastructure roll out and take up of active travel and public transport.
7. The new LTP will come at an opportune time for the council to set out the broad transport strategy to support its ambitions for the emerging Local Plan and the Big Economic Plan. It will also provide a funding and implementation framework for the transport aspirations of the HCMP alongside the emerging proposals for the Eastern River Crossing and Link Road (ERiC).

8. The LTP will be a countywide strategic transport plan covering the whole of Herefordshire, linking with neighbouring authorities' and partners' transport networks where appropriate. In doing so, it will recognise the rural nature of the county and its unique characteristics, equally reflecting the separate but interlinked transport and development needs of Hereford, the market towns and rural villages and communities.
9. In November 2022, consultants WSP were appointed to develop the new Herefordshire LTP. In the continued absence of DfT guidance for LTPs and with a tight deadline, WSP's experience in drafting government transport policy has proved important in making a prompt start on work while minimising the risk of wasted effort. It is proposed to use a four stage delivery programme as set out below; at the time of writing the report the timescales are indicative and a more detailed programme will be produced following completion of the stage 1 work.
10. **Stage 1 – completion by March 2023.** This will focus on providing a comprehensive baseline and carbon emissions forecast, with the forecasts reflecting both the current and future plans of the council and the influence of UK-wide interventions such as accelerated electric vehicle uptake. At this point it is expected to be able to report on the scale of the challenge, the pace of change required and identify the range of policy measures may be necessary to achieve net zero outcomes.
11. **Stage 2 – April to May 2023.** Using the information generated in Stage 1 and the learning and experience from the current LTP, this is the opportunity to develop and confirm the vision and objectives for the LTP. This will include the setting of draft targets for different aspects of the LTP which will be refined during subsequent stages.
12. **Stage 3 – June to September 2023.** This will comprise developing a long list of interventions and undertaking a high-level option appraisal to assist in sifting out the poorer performing options. This process will include carbon impact as a core part of the appraisal, along with other environmental and transport aspects. Stakeholder engagement is expected towards the end of this stage, seeking views on the appraisal and the selection of the better performing options to be taken forward as an implementation programme to Stage 4.
13. **Stage 4 – October 2023 to January 2024.** This will include the appraisal of the implementation plan (ie projects, programmes, interventions and policy options, including the quantified carbon impact) which will be supported by a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to track the implementation and success of the LTP in meeting its targets.
14. Despite the delay to issuing LTP guidance, the submission date for the plan has not been revised and is still expected to be 31 March 2024.
15. The long term, countywide perspective of the LTP means it will provide the overarching financial and strategic context for current transport proposals such as those in the HCMP. As future local transport funding will be conditional upon demonstrating how emissions will be reduced across a portfolio of transport investments, the contribution of HCMP initiatives will need to be clearly understood.
16. As a minimum the LTP will need to robustly demonstrate the likely impact of its policies and programmes on transport emissions against the forecast impact of continuing business as usual. If the council wishes to be seen as a top performing highway authority (and noting the proposed link to future funding) it will be encouraged to investigate this in more detail.

Community impact

17. The County Plan's Delivery Plan 2022-23 makes specific reference to delivering the Hereford Transport Strategy and the HCMP. The LTP both complements and supports the HCMP as set out in this report. Together, these initiatives will support the following objectives:

EN2 1 - Improve and extend active travel options throughout the county:

EN2.2 - Continue to deliver and extend the Choose How You Move sustainable and active travel programme to increase levels of walking and cycling.

EN2.4 - Explore feasibility for the development of a cycle super highway.

CO0.1 - Improve the overall mental and physical health and wellbeing of residents of all ages with a more diverse and increased level of support that helps people to make healthy food and lifestyle choices.

CO0.3 - Implement capital highway maintenance projects.

CO0.4 – deliver the asset management plan to improve road conditions across the county.

EC2.4 - Continue to support development of the Hereford Enterprise Zone.

Environmental Impact

16. Progressing the transport proposals identified in this report will support the council's priorities in relation to protecting the environment and reducing carbon emissions to address the declared climate emergency.
17. The LTP will include a strategic environmental assessment as part of its development. Analysis of the current carbon baseline and the assessment of work programmes and measures that will deliver carbon reductions will identify the carbon impact of future transport proposals.
18. In particular the LTP will deliver the following success measures in the County Plan.
- Reduce the council's carbon emissions
 - Work in partnership with others to reduce county carbon emissions
 - Improve the air quality within Herefordshire
 - Increase the number of short distance trips being done by sustainable modes of travel – walking, cycling, public transport

Equality duty

19. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

20. The LTP will include an equality impact assessment to inform and influence its development.

Resource implications

21. In March 2022 the DfT awarded the council a grant of £178,571 in capacity funding to support work on the LTP.
22. In November 2022 WSP consultants were commissioned to develop the new Herefordshire LTP for a cost of £240,000. These project costs will be met from £178,571 of capability funding from the DfT and £62,000 from the £1,490,000 agreed by Cabinet on 24 June 2021 to progress the Hereford Transport Strategy.
23. The development costs of future capital schemes funded through the LTP will be covered by the capital budgets assigned to those schemes.

Revenue or Capital cost of project (indicate R or C)	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Consultancy Fees (R)	44	196	0	0	240
TOTAL	44	196	0	0	240

Funding streams (indicate whether base budget / external / grant / capital borrowing)	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
DfT Capacity Grant (R)	0	178	0	0	178
One Off Revenue Funds (R)	44	18	0	0	62
TOTAL	44	196	0	0	240

Legal implications

24. The Transport Act 2000 (TA 2000) places a duty on the council as the Local Transport Authority to publish statutory plans known as Local Transport Plans or LTPs.
25. (1) Each local transport authority must:

(a) develop policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within their area, and

(b) carry out their functions so as to implement those policies.

(2) In subsection (1), “transport” means:

(a) the transport required to meet the needs of persons living or working in the authority's area, or visiting or travelling through that area, and

(b) the transport required for the transportation of freight;
and includes facilities and services for pedestrians.

(2ZA) Each local transport authority whose area is in England must:

(a) in developing policies in accordance with subsection (1)(a), and

(b) in carrying out their functions in accordance with subsection (1)(b), comply with the duties set out in subsection (2ZB).

(2ZB) The duties are:

(a) to take into account any policies announced by Her Majesty's government, and

(b) to have regard to any guidance issued for the purposes of this paragraph by the Secretary of State, with respect to mitigation of, or adaptation to, climate change or otherwise with respect to the protection or improvement of the environment.

(3A) Each local transport authority whose area is in Wales must prepare a document to be known as the local transport plan containing:

(a) their policies under subsection (1)(a), and

(b) their policies under subsection (2A).

(3B) A local transport authority whose area is in England must, in complying with the duty under subsection (1)(b), have regard to the proposals contained in their plan.

26. S109 of the LTA further provides that :

(1) A local transport authority whose area is in England must keep their local transport plan under review and alter it if they consider it appropriate to do so.

(2) The authority may replace their plan as they think fit.

Section 109 also sets out the requirements for consultation in connection with the Local Transport Plan.

Risk management

27. The following risks and mitigation proposals have been identified.

Risk	Mitigation
Insufficient capacity and/or expertise to simultaneously progress the HCMP, LTP and ERiC projects to meet imposed deadlines.	The report identifies the commissioning of specialist consultants to provide specific technical expertise in a timely manner. This will assist in-house staff to manage and direct the overall project plan and individual work packages. Project management support will be provided by the PMO.

Starting work on the LTP before DfT guidance is issued may result in abortive work or require a change in scope once it is issued.	WSP are an experienced transportation consultancy that has been drafting the DfT guidance on the LTP and transport decarbonisation. Starting work ahead of the guidance and with this knowledge also means that more time will be available for consultation and consideration of the details and initiatives to be included in the final LTP.
A number of major pieces of work are being developed on a similar timeframe, including the City Masterplan, the LTP, ERiC and the Local Plan. This runs the risk of confusion or consultation fatigue for partners, stakeholders and the public.	The development of these key strategies and plans will be coordinated through a single communications and engagement strategy so that the interrelationships between the various elements is fully understood.
Reputational risk of non-delivery.	The report sets out how external resources have been procured in order to boost capacity and capability of the project teams. Resources from the PMO will provide project management resources to help deliver projects on time and to budget.
The expected requirement for only a draft LTP to be submitted by the deadline of 31 March 2024 runs the risk of insufficient Cabinet approval.	A programme of engagement of Cabinet and elected members will be produced for appropriate stages of LTP development and to allow approval by the deadline.

Consultees

28. The development of the LTP will involve consultation with a number of stakeholders. A consultation plan will be prepared in the early stages of the project and coordinated with plans for consultation for the HCMP, ERiC, the emerging Local Plan and other key strategic plans under development at the same time.
29. Political Group Consultation took place on 31 January 2023 and the following key points were raised:
 - a) That countywide connectivity was essential between Hereford, the market towns, villages and rural areas.
 - b) That consideration should also be given to the role that alternative technologies such as drones and alternative fuels such as biodiesel can make towards decarbonising transport.

Appendices

None.

Background papers

None identified.

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published

Governance	John Coleman	Date 30/01/2023
Finance	Louise Devlin	Date 24/01/2023
Legal	Sharon Bennet-Matthews	Date 31/01/2023
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 24/01/2023
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 01/02/2023
Procurement	Lee Robertson	Date 24/01/2023
Risk	Kevin Lloyd	Date 25/01/2023

Approved by Ross Cook, Corporate Director of Economy and Environment
Date 02/02/2023

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

DfT	Department for Transport
ERiC	Eastern River Crossing and Link Road
EV	Electric Vehicles
HC	Herefordshire Council
HCMP	Hereford City Masterplan
LTP	Local Transport Plan