

# Title of report: **New Herefordshire Local Transport Plan**

**Meeting: Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee**

**Meeting date: Wednesday 8 November 2023**

**Report by: Interim Head of Transportation and Parking**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards)

## **Purpose**

The report sets out the progress to date on the development of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP) and seeks comments and recommendations from scrutiny that Cabinet may include as part of its considerations of the new LTP vision and objectives.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) The scrutiny committee is asked to note progress to date on the development of the Local Transport Plan and to offer any comments or recommendations on the Plan's priorities.**

## **Alternative options**

1. Local Transport Plans are a statutory requirement under the Transport Act 2000 and will be the key strategy document to access transport funding for the county. There are no alternatives that would be acceptable to the Department for Transport (DfT).

## **Key considerations**

2. Cabinet has previously considered proposals for developing the new Local Transport Plan at its meeting on 2 March 2023. The plan will form the key strategic transport plan for the county, setting out long term proposals for transport investment in order to achieve economic, environmental, health and social ambitions of the Council.

3. The new Herefordshire LTP will establish the Council's policy and strategy framework for local transport and travel, providing plans for the progression, development, management and maintenance of the county's highway and transport systems.
4. The resulting implementation plan will contain a short-, medium-, and long-term costed programme. Measures could include a wide range of transport improvements, from new highway infrastructure to support growth or tackle safety problems, to improvements to local bus services or pedestrian facilities.
5. LTPs have, for many years, been the primary document for setting out transport investment plans for the Council. Annual capital settlements usually have four elements: the maintenance block, the integrated transport block, the maintenance incentive fund and, more recently, potholes funding. The current plan was adopted in 2016 and has a lifespan to 2031, but has not been fully reviewed since.
6. The DfT has indicated that future local transport funding settlements will be dependent on performance against targets set in the LTP. This is likely to require the Council to demonstrate reductions in transport carbon emissions and progress in the areas of active travel (walking and cycling), the use of public transport and the roll out of infrastructure to support electric vehicles (EV). This anticipated emphasis on performance-related settlements suggests that LTPs and their targets are to become much more relevant to funding levels than they have been in recent years.
7. It is also expected that successful bids for transport funding for individual projects and programmes will be dependent on those proposals forming an integral part of the LTP. This is likely to be the case, whatever the source of the funding. Access to funding sources such as the Large Local Majors Fund, the Levelling Up Fund or Active Travel England funds may fail if the projects being bid for do not feature in the LTP. It is therefore essential that the LTP is an all-encompassing plan that covers every aspect of Herefordshire's transport ambitions, from major road proposals to local traffic management plans.
8. DfT guidance for the preparation of new LTPs and the associated Quantifiable Carbon Reduction (QCR) had been expected in the autumn of 2022. The DfT has been unable to commit to a date for the release of either guidance, and has relaxed its previous LTP submission deadline from March 2024 to a much looser "summer" 2024. Future years' funding is still expected to depend on performance against the plan's outcomes.
9. The new LTP comes at an opportune time for the Council to support wider ambitions such as the Big Economic Plan and the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy. In particular, the LTP's development is intrinsically linked with the emerging Local Plan, setting the broad transport strategy and investment plans that will provide support for future housing allocations, land use plans and the wider economy. This will include creating the road and transport network to accommodate changing travel patterns and traffic levels associated with future land uses.
10. The LTP will cover the whole of Herefordshire, linking with neighbouring authorities and partners' networks such as National Highways where appropriate. In doing so, it will need to recognise the rural nature of the county and its unique characteristics, with different approaches reflecting the separate but interlinked transport needs of Hereford, the five market towns and rural villages and communities.
11. It is almost two years since the Department for Transport (DfT) produced its report "Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain". At the time, the UK was a climate leader by being the first major economy to set legally binding carbon budgets. The UK was the first major economy to legislate to end its contribution to climate change.
12. By law the UK's emissions must be net zero by 2050. The Government's commitment to net zero is driven by the need to limit global warming to below 2°C and preferably to 1.5°C.
13. Herefordshire Council declared a climate emergency on 8 March 2019 after a unanimous resolution, and its commitment was renewed by full Council on 28 July 2023. Following two

previous carbon management plans, in 2020 the Council published its “Pathway to Carbon Neutral” Carbon Management Plan 2020/21-2025/26, with the target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

14. Transport is the largest contributor to UK domestic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, responsible for 31% of the total (2019). In the same year, transport in Herefordshire represented around 26% of total emissions. This lower proportional share in the county reflects higher emissions in sectors such as agriculture, which represented 37% (nationally this sector accounts for 12%).
15. Carbon quantification is now being sought by Government across all policy areas. LTPs are therefore seen by the DfT as a key tool to encourage and support local authorities to achieve new, challenging targets and ambitions for transport on the journey to net zero. Nationally, this will require significant reductions in the carbon emissions of transport, necessitating a step change in the adoption of sustainable travel, alternative fuels, new technology and changing travel habits.
16. Reducing carbon emissions is not, however, a challenge for the LTP alone. The DfT expects there to be a strong alignment between the LTP and the Local Plan, recognising the key role that place-shaping can also have in reducing the need for travel and in promoting sustainable transport options.
17. The DfT’s anticipated guidance is expected to standardise an evidence-led carbon approach to LTP development and the reporting of LTPs’ carbon impacts.

#### Programme

18. In November 2022, consultants WSP were appointed to develop the new Herefordshire LTP. In the continued absence of DfT guidance for LTPs, 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 and resources.
19. A four stage plan is being followed that comprises:
  - Stage 1** – a comprehensive baseline and carbon emissions forecast for the county, taking on board local and national plans and interventions. This will identify the scale of the challenge and the pace of change required in order to reach the national target of net zero for transport by 2050.
  - Stage 2** –develop and confirm the objectives for the LTP.
  - Stage 3** – establish draft targets for different aspects of the LTP (which will be refined during subsequent stages), develop a menu of types of interventions and undertake a high-level option appraisal to assist in sifting out the poorer performing options. This 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.
  - Stage 4** – the appraisal of the Implementation Plan (i.e. 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.
20. The DfT has acknowledged that it has still to set dates for consultation with local authorities on draft guidance or for the subsequent issue of the final guidance. It has therefore accepted that the original submission deadline of March 2024 is no longer achievable and the DfT is encouraging local authorities to work towards completing LTPs by summer 2024.

## Work to Date

21. A number of work packages have been completed that effectively deliver stage 1 and make progress towards stage 2 and starting stage 3 of the four stage plan above.
22. Perhaps the most important deliverable has been an extensive carbon emissions modelling exercise that has established a baseline and carbon emissions forecast for all transport in Herefordshire. The forecasts reflect both the current and future pathways for the council and the influence of UK-wide interventions such as accelerated electric vehicle uptake. This has identified the scale of the challenge to decarbonise transport, the pace of change required and suggested a range of policy interventions that may be necessary to achieve net zero outcomes.
23. Alongside the carbon modelling work, preparation of the LTP includes gathering information on the wider context of the plan. This is an extensive area of work that includes highlights such as:
  - a) Herefordshire is a sparsely populated county, with an older than average population and with 95% of the county classed as rural.
  - b) Levels of car ownership are higher than the UK average.
  - c) There are direct but slow and infrequent rail services to major conurbations. Many bus routes radiate into/out of Hereford and are hourly or two hourly at best.
  - d) At 18%, the proportion of residents who walk or cycle to work is higher than UK average of 14%. In Hereford this rises to 26% while the average for the market towns is 21%.
  - e) Fewer than 2% of travel to work journeys are made by public transport compared with the national average of 11%.
24. The headlines from the carbon modelling output includes:
  - a) 88% of overall transport emissions are from trips either starting, ending or being made entirely within Herefordshire. Of these, 30% are generated from journeys entirely within the county.
  - b) Only 2% of transport emissions are from trips fewer than 5 miles in length. These are the passenger journeys that are considered to be the easiest to shift to alternative modes such as walking and cycling. While emissions savings are relatively small, there are wider benefits from such a switch, such as reduced congestion, and improved physical health and mental wellbeing.
  - c) 7% of emissions are from trips of 5 to 10 miles in length. A shift to alternative low carbon modes is achievable, but emissions savings are still relatively modest.
  - d) 50% of emissions are attributed to journeys of between 10 and 50 miles: while more challenging to address, these lie within the remit of the LTP
  - e) 41% of emissions are for trips greater than 50 miles and will rely heavily on partnership working to decarbonise.
25. It is clear from the above data that simply switching passenger journeys from the car to walking, cycling and public transport will have a limited, albeit beneficial, impact on transport carbon emissions. However, as identified above, switching these journeys from the car to walking and cycling will have other significant benefits. If the Government's target of net zero by 2050 is to be achieved, the LTP will need to comprise a broad mix of measures aimed at all sectors of personal and business transport.
26. Using the carbon emissions modelling and the learning from the current LTP, a draft set of objectives has been developed, and Cabinet's approval will be necessary before significant further progress on the next stages of LTP development can be progressed. Stage 2 is an important step that will define the direction and focus of the LTP's strategy. As such, the plan's objectives will influence the type and balance of interventions in the implementation programme for future investment.

27. In parallel, a number of supporting strategies are planned or underway that will be essential for the delivery of the LTP.
28. Work is under way for a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for the county that will produce a prioritised plan for walking and cycling investment. Without a LCWIP access to significant funds through Active Travel England is considered highly unlikely.
29. Similarly, a new Electric Vehicle (EV) strategy is being prepared that will set out the council's plans for EV infrastructure and provide a foundation for external funding opportunities. A review of the Highway Maintenance Plan (HMP) is expected and should establish the priorities and policies for the repair and maintenance of the highway network.
30. The draft Hereford City Masterplan set out a detailed vision for the city. Transport proposals that would come under the LTP underpin the five themes of movement; communities and culture; economy and opportunities; landscape and wildlife; places and spaces.

### Developing Priorities and Objectives

31. In developing priorities and objectives for the new LTP, analysis of 17 other authorities' LTPs shows that a number of headline themes are represented. The authorities included in the review represented a wide range of locations and circumstances, from sparse rural counties like Cornwall and Cumbria, through Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, to city or metropolitan authorities such as Greater Manchester and the West Midlands.
32. In order of popularity the themes are:
  - a) Economy and growth – this was found in every LTP reviewed
  - b) Public health
  - c) Safety
  - d) Carbon/climate emergency
  - e) Environment
  - f) Inclusivity/accessibility
  - g) Quality of life/community
  - h) Transport network
  - i) Future innovation
  - j) Reduce the need to travel – included in only two of the 17 LTPs reviewed
33. Some of the authorities refer to guiding principles that underlie everything delivered through the LTP:
  - a) Engagement and partnership working.
  - b) Making best use of limited capacity – both resources and network.
  - c) Environmental and ecological protection.
  - d) Streets for people philosophy, and a modal hierarchy.
  - e) Planning for different geographies e.g. localities or areas within an authority.
  - f) Planning for an uncertain future.
34. In addition, the new LTP will need to support a number of key strategies and plans for Herefordshire, including the Big Economic Plan 2050, the Local Plan 2021-2041 and the Hereford City Masterplan. The LTP will seek to deliver the transport interventions and initiatives that are identified by these strategies and plans, and its priorities will therefore need to be developed with this in mind.

35. An avoid-shift-improve principle is a commonly adopted approach to reduce transport carbon emissions, and applies just as equally to the Local Plan as it does to the LTP:
- Avoid – reduce the need to travel and the distance people travel, e.g. home working or spatial planning.
  - Shift – reduce car use and encourage a shift towards public transport and active travel modes.
  - Improve – improve transport modes through investment and technological innovation, e.g. alternative fuels
36. Six broad themes emerged from the analysis outlined above that could form the basis of the new LTP's objectives. These are, in no particular order:
- Supporting a thriving and prosperous economy.
  - Enabling healthy behaviours and improving well-being.
  - Tackling climate change.
  - Protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment.
  - Improving accessibility and inclusivity.
  - Improving transport safety and security.
37. The scrutiny committee is therefore invited to provide comments and recommendations that Cabinet may consider as part of the development of the new objectives before consideration of the LTP by full Council in 2024.

### **Community impact**

38. The Local Transport Plan will establish the county's future transport strategy and will form the framework for funding bids for a variety of transport investments, from new highway schemes to active travel packages. As such, the LTP has a key role in delivering the Council's priorities and the ambitions of the new delivery plan.

### **Environmental impact**

39. 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 Council's declared climate emergency.
40. 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.

### **Equality duty**

41. 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.

42. The LTP will include an equality impact assessment to inform and influence its development.
43. When consulting with the public and/or stakeholders, the Council will ensure that it meets its Public Sector Equality Duty by following its comprehensive internal guidance.

### Resource implications

44. There is a budget of £240,000, mostly made up of DfT capacity and capability grant but also supplemented by the Council's own revenue funds.

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)	30	210	0	0	240
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>240</b>

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)	30	148	0	0	178
One Off Revenue Funds (R)	0	62	0	0	62
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>240</b>

### Legal implications

45. Under s.108 Transport Act 2000 as amended, imposes a mandatory statutory obligation on Herefordshire Council as the Local Transport Authority, to have a Local Transport Policy. S.109 of this act, requires the Council to review and maintain up-to-date existing Local Transport Plan when appropriate, to provide a strategic framework for planning and delivery of improvements in local transport provision. It must develop and implement policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within Herefordshire Council.
46. "Transport" includes transport to meet the needs of people living, working, visiting or travelling through Herefordshire Council, the transportation of freight and facilities and services for pedestrians.
47. In developing and implementing its LTP policies, the Council must have regard to the transport needs of disabled persons and of persons who are elderly or have mobility problems. Development of the new LTP will need to be in accordance with statutory and legal requirements for Community Engagement, Equalities Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Appraisal.
48. Adopting the LTP will ensure that the Council maintains a current statement of Local Transport Strategy in accordance with its responsibilities as the Local Transport Authority. Development of the LTP will ensure there is a consistent policy-fit with all relevant adopted and emerging local policies, alongside the Core Development Plan for Herefordshire Council.
49. The responses to the consultation need to be taken into account when Council makes any decisions whether to modify or replace the Local Transport Plan."

## Risk management

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

Risk	Mitigation
Insufficient capacity and/or expertise to simultaneously progress the LTP and other transport projects to meet imposed deadlines.	The report identifies the engagement of specialist consultants WSP 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 Project Management Office (PMO).
Work has started on the LTP before DfT guidance is issued which may result in abortive work or require a change in scope once the guidance has been issued.	WSP are an experienced transportation consultancy that has been drafting the DfT guidance on the LTP and QCR. 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.
It is likely that public and stakeholder consultation for the LTP will overlap with that of the Local Plan and other transportation projects, running the risk of confusion or consultation fatigue for partners, stakeholders and the public.	The development of these key strategies and plans is being coordinated so that the interrelationships between the various elements is fully understood.

## Consultees

51. 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 emerging Local Plan and other key strategic plans under development at the same time.

## Appendices

None

## Background papers

None identified.

## Report reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Governance	John Coleman	Date 29/08/2023
Finance	Wendy Pickering	Date 07/09/2023
Legal	Sean O'Connor	Date 24/08/2023
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 24/08/2023
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 22/08/2023
Procurement	Carrie Deeley	Date 01/09/2023
Risk	Kevin Lloyd	Date 24/08/2023

Approved by	Ross Cook	Date 30/10/2023
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## **Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.**

DfT	Department for Transport
EV	Electric Vehicles
HCMP	Hereford City Masterplan
LTP	Local Transport Plan
PMO	Project Management Office
QCR	Quantifiable Carbon Reduction