

Title of report: Objectives for New Herefordshire Local Transport Plan

Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 28 March 2024
Cabinet member:	Philip Price, Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
Report by:	Corporate Director, Economy and Environment
Report author:	Head of Transport and Access Services

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 the approval of the objectives that will inform the development of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP) and assist in the identification of the measures and initiatives in the implementation plan. In addition, attention is brought to a revised timeline for the production and adoption of the LTP following revised guidance from the Department for Transport (DfT).

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) Cabinet approves the objectives (as set out at para 19) for the new Local Transport Plan as recommended in the report and**
- b) Cabinet notes changes to the DfT's anticipated timetable (as set out at paras. 9 and 10) for producing the new Local Transport Plan.**

Alternative options

1. Local Transport Plans are a statutory requirement under the Transport Act 2008 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. Herefordshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a policy framework and statutory document that sets out how the council intends to plan, manage and deliver transport across the county in order to achieve its economic, environmental, health and social ambitions. A new LTP is required as the current strategy; adopted in 2016, has not been reviewed since its adoption, There have been a number of changes to government legislation as well as updates to key national policies since that time, which should be reflected in the new strategy.
3. The LTP will cover the whole of Herefordshire, linking in with neighbouring authorities' and partner's networks, and is comprised of an overarching strategy document and an implementation plan. The implementation plan will include short, medium and long-term costed programmes which could include a wide range of transport improvements, from new highway infrastructure to support growth and tackle congestion or safety problems, to improvements to local bus services and enhancing rail facilities.
4. 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 is intrinsically linked to the council's emerging Local Plan (sometimes referred to as the Core Strategy) , as they both strongly influence one another. For example, investment in transport is required when planning for new housing development and land use, and the location and design of these will have an impact on travel patterns and the new infrastructure needed to support them.
5. Once adopted, the strategy will enable the council to access future transport funding for the county. Department for Transport (DfT) has indicated that future local transport settlements will be dependent on performance against targets set out 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).
6. It is also anticipated 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 Major Roads Network fund, Large Local Majors Fund, the Levelling Up Fund or Active Travel England funds will all fail if the projects 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 such as the emerging New Road Strategy for Hereford through to local accessibility improvement plans.

7. The LTP will be a key document for the Council to work much more closely with Midlands Connect, the sub-national transport body. Given recent announcements about funding for rail network improvements to support a stronger rail connectivity, and hence better access for Herefordshire residents and business to jobs, training and new markets, the LTP needs to position Herefordshire as positive, ambitious and with a growth mindset, to enable this high level of partnership working.
8. The DfT's LTP guidance is no longer expected to be released within the previously anticipated timeframes and local authorities have been advised to follow current Government policies in developing LTPs.. With carbon reduction being sought by Government across all policy areas, LTPs are expected to be a key tool to encourage and support local authorities to achieve new, challenging targets and ambitions for transport. Nationally, significant reductions in the carbon emissions of transport will necessitate a step change in the adoption of sustainable travel, public transport, alternative fuels, new technology and changing travel habits.

Programme and Work to Date

9. Cabinet has previously approved a broad programme that would meet the DfT's deadline of 31 March 2024. This was always a challenging programme, especially as the DfT's guidance for the LTP and for Quantified Carbon Reduction (QCR, an important element in developing the LTP) had been delayed from the intended release date of autumn 2022.
10. The DfT has recently acknowledged that it is unlikely to issue LTP guidance in the foreseeable future. While an exact timetable for publishing LTPs remains unclear, the DfT is encouraging local authorities to work towards completing LTP submissions by summer/autumn 2024.
11. Consultants WSP have now been working with the council on a four stage programme since late 2022 to develop the new LTP. The company is also engaged by DfT to write both the LTP and QCR guidance and, in the continued absence of the DfT's guidance, this policy experience is a great benefit to the Council. The four work stages are outlined in Appendix A
12. A number of work packages have been completed to date. As part of the Stage 1 baseline data collection, a number of key issues and challenges have been identified, which along with a range of other evidence that has been collated, has helped to inform the draft LTP objectives. The headline challenges are outlined below, however, more detailed background evidence can be found in the 'LTP Background and Context' document provided in Appendix B:
 - a. **Population** – 45% of the population live in rural areas, of whom 27% are aged 65 or over and 17% are under 18. Parts of Hereford are identified as being within the 10-20% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally.
 - b. **Economy** – wages in Herefordshire are around 15% lower than England as a whole. While the largest employment site at Rotherwas is located on the south east edge of Hereford, several other major employers are located in rural areas suggesting that transport and travel is a substantial cost for many households.
 - c. **Carbon emissions** – the transport sector is estimated to generate 26% of Herefordshire's total carbon emissions, causing global heating. 88% of these transport emissions are estimated to be from trips which start, end or are made entirely in the county.
 - d. **Health** – nearly one quarter of Herefordshire's residents are physically inactive. Physical inactivity is known to increase the risk of a number of health conditions including obesity, cardiovascular disease, cancer and dementia

- e. **Environment** – there are currently two Air Quality Management Areas in the county due to poor air quality, which has a negative impact on human health and the natural environment.
 - f. **Access to alternative travel options** - the vast majority of Herefordshire residents travel to work by car (79%), although the proportion of residents who commute using active travel measures at 18% is higher than the national average.
13. Another key deliverable to date, is the 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 likely policy interventions that may be necessary to achieve net zero outcomes.
14. More detailed information on the carbon baseline assessment is provided in Appendix C. It should be noted that figures quoted below are for the total carbon emissions by category of trip length, not the proportion of emissions solely within Herefordshire from these trips.
- 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) 2% of transport emissions are from trips fewer than 5 miles in length. These are the passenger journeys that are considered to be easier to shift to alternative modes such as walking and cycling. While emissions savings would be 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.
15. The limitations of the model mean it is not possible to currently identify the proportion of emissions from these journeys that are solely within Herefordshire. This means that active travel may have a greater role to play in reducing transport carbon emissions in the county than these percentages suggest. However, it should be recognised that measures to address medium and longer distance trips will still have by far the greatest overall impact on reducing transport carbon emissions in the county.
16. In parallel, a number of supporting strategies are planned or underway that will be essential for the delivery of the LTP. These include the New Road Strategy for Hereford, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for the county, a new Electric Vehicle (EV) strategy and a review of the Highway Maintenance Plan (HMP). The draft Hereford City Masterplan sets out a detailed vision for the city, and its transport elements will sit within the overarching LTP.

Objectives

17. The new LTP will support a number of key strategies and plans for Herefordshire, including the County Plan, the Big Economic Plan, the Local Plan and the Hereford City Masterplan. The needs of these strategies, together with the carbon emissions modelling and learning from the current LTP, has helped to develop a draft set of objectives.
18. Cabinet's approval of these objectives is sought before significant further progress on the next stages of LTP development can be made. Once the objectives have been agreed, stage 3 work can progress (see Appendix A) to develop a long list of interventions and undertake a high-level option appraisal to assist in identifying the better-performing options. This will be a key step in preparing an implementation plan as a key element of the LTP.
19. The recommended objectives are set out below:
 - I. **Supporting a thriving and prosperous economy** – by creating a sustainable, reliable and integrated transport network that includes investing in new infrastructure, improving access to new housing, employment land, facilities and services, education and training.
 - II. **Enabling healthy behaviours and improving wellbeing** – by providing the right facilities and environment for a wide range of travel modes (including walking, wheeling, cycling, bus, community transport and rail) to increase readily-available transport choices for everyday journeys.
 - III. **Tackling climate change and protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment** – by creating a transport system offering viable low emission options for most journeys, by influencing the way in which we travel, the way we make decisions and deliver transport options.
 - IV. **Improving accessibility and inclusivity** – by ensuring that the transport system is accessible and understandable to everyone, and making the most of improved digital connectivity.
 - V. **Improving transport safety and security** – by reducing the negative impacts of transport on people, ensuring our communities are safe, perceived as safe, and more pleasant places to live.

Community Impact

20. 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 to public transport support. As such, the LTP will have a key role in delivering the forthcoming Council Plan priorities and the ambitions of the new delivery plan.

Environmental Impact

21. 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.
22. 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

23. 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.

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

25. 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

26. The approved budget for the delivery of the LTP is £240,000. Expenditure incurred to date of £140,000 is analysed below with further expenditure of £100,000 estimated in 2024/25.

27. The expenditure is funded by DfT capacity grant of £178,000 received in 2022/23 and a revenue funding allocation of £62,000 approved in 2022/23.

28. At 31 March 2024, the balance of grant to be applied against future expenditure is £38,000 and the balance of revenue funding is £62,000; currently held in reserves for allocation in 2024/25.

Revenue cost of project	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
	Actual	Actual	Estimated	
Consultancy Fees (R)	30	110	100	240
TOTAL	30	110	100	240

Approved funding sources	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
	Actual	Actual	Estimated	
DfT Capacity Grant	178	-	-	178
Revenue budget allocation	62	-	-	62
TOTAL	240	-	-	240

Application of funding	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
	Actual	Actual	Estimated	
DfT Capacity Grant (R)	30	110	38	178
Revenue budget allocation	-	-	62	62
TOTAL	30	110	100	240

Legal Implications

29. 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.
30. "Transport" includes transport to meet the needs of people living, working, visiting or travelling through Herefordshire Council, the transportation of freight and facilities & services for pedestrians.
31. 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.
32. 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.
33. Members must be fully aware of 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 carefully consider the content of any Equality Impact Assessments produced by officers. It is essential that a robust meaningful consultation process is exercised, and an Equality Impact Assessment is completed for the LTP, to ensure that the needs and impacts on all residents are understood, especially individuals or groups with identified protected characteristics under s. 149 of the Equality Act 2010 as amended.
34. The responses to the consultation need to be taken into account when Cabinet makes any decisions on the Local Transport Plan.

Risk management

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

Risk	Mitigation
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<p>Insufficient capacity and/or expertise to simultaneously progress the LTP and other transport projects to meet imposed deadlines.</p>	<p>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).</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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. In line with current advice on the delayed release of formal guidance, a review of current Government policies and strategies will inform the next stages of LTP development.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>The development of these key strategies and plans is being coordinated so that the interrelationships between the various elements is fully understood. A public engagement exercise is being run alongside the draft Local Plan consultation that will start on 25th March 2024. Further public consultation on the LTP is expected later in 2024.</p>

Consultees

36. The development of the LTP will involve consultation with a number of stakeholders. A consultation plan will be prepared and coordinated with plans for consultation for the emerging Local Plan.
37. The Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the LTP objectives at its meeting on 8 November 2023. A number of recommendations were made that are attached in Appendix D. A Political Group Consultation was undertaken on 14 March 2024 and the key outcomes are set out below in Appendix E
38. An engagement exercise will be launched on March 25th to run alongside the Local Plan consultation. Stakeholders and the public will be involved through on-line surveys and roadshow events to understand priorities for improving transport. The completed survey data will help to shape the draft details of the plan before public consultation on the proposals in the summer.

Appendices

The appendices attached to this report are:

Appendix A - Four Stage Work Programme

Appendix B – Background and Context

Appendix C – Carbon Baseline Assessment

Appendix D - Recommendations from the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee on 8th November 2023

Appendix E – Political Group Consultation responses

Background papers

None identified

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Governance	John Coleman	Date 21/03/2024
Finance	Louise Devlin	Date 22/03/2024
Legal	Georgina Coley	Date 21/03/2024
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 21/03/2024
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 21/03/2024
Procurement	Lee Robertson	Date 21/03/2024
Risk	Kevin Lloyd	Date 25/05/2023
Approved by	Ross Cook	Date 22/03/2024

Please include a 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	Quantified Carbon Reduction

Appendix for Objectives for New Herefordshire Local Transport Plan (see attached documents)

Appendix A – Four Stage Work Programme
Appendix B – Background and Context
Appendix C – Carbon Baseline Assessment

Appendix D – Recommendations from the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee on 8th
November 2023
Appendix E – Political Group consultation comments