

Title of report: Local Transport Plan

Meeting: Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Wednesday 15 January 2025

Report by: Senior Transport Planning Officer, Head of Transport and Access Services

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To set out the progress to date on the development of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP) and seek comments from scrutiny.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the progress to date on the Local Transport Plan, and to make any recommendations to Cabinet as they see fit.**

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options. Local Transport Plans are a statutory requirement under the Transport Act 2000 (as amended under the Local Transport Act 2008) and will be the key strategy document to access transport funding for the county. Not having a Local Transport Plan (LTP) would not be acceptable to the Department for Transport (DfT), and limit the ability of the authority to secure external funding towards transport infrastructure.
2. The current Herefordshire LTP was produced in 2016 and, subject to periodic updates, has a lifespan to 2031. It has, however, not been fully reviewed since 2016. Since this time, there have been significant changes in travel patterns and many of the schemes have been delivered. The DfT also provided funding to update the LTPs available to Local Authorities. A new LTP that reflects current policy and trends is likely to ensure the authority is better placed

to secure external funding (which makes up the majority of funding for new projects) compared to continuing with an older LTP that was produced under the priorities of a previous national government.

Key considerations

3. Cabinet has previously considered proposals for developing the new Local Transport Plan at a meeting of 2 March 2023. A report was also brought to Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee on 8 November 2023. The recommendations from that scrutiny meeting are provided in **Appendix A**.
4. Transport has a huge impact on people's lives, quality of place and the economy. An accessible and reliable transport network helps to make places more attractive for people to live, work, visit and do business.
5. The new Herefordshire LTP will set out the Council's policy and strategy for all aspects of transport and how its approach to maintenance and improving transport will help to achieve local priorities.
6. The LTP also includes a short term delivery plan highlighting some of the interventions to help achieve this strategy. The action plan will contain a wide range of interventions, ranging from new highways to support growth, walking and cycling improvements and railway station improvements.
7. Work is also underway to develop a countywide Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan (LCWWIP). This will identify more detailed network plans and priorities for active travel, in a similar way that the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) sets out proposals for buses.
8. The emerging LCWWIP, adopted BSIP and EV strategy have all been considered in developing the draft LTP, and will form part of a suite of daughter documents to the overarching LTP.

Funding

9. Delivery of the LTP is dependent on funding. The majority of funding for new transport interventions comes from external sources, including new development and grant funding from the DfT or other transport bodies.
10. The new LTP is being developed at a time when land-use allocations are being developed through the Local Plan, and potential updates to local housing requirements are being set by national government.
11. Close integration of planning and transport is critical to ensuring new development is appropriately planned and supported by transport infrastructure that enable people to access services, and protects the operation of the existing network. Aligning the emerging Local Plan and draft LTP will help in securing and delivering the required infrastructure.
12. External funding streams tend to be variable, traditionally announced with short timescales and targeted at certain transport modes. It is therefore essential that the LTP sets out proposals for all aspects of Herefordshire's transport ambitions, from major road proposals, to locally led improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling, so that the county has evidence based measures for which it can seek future funding opportunities.

LTP Structure

13. The LTP will cover the whole of Herefordshire. In doing so, it will need to recognise the different, but interlinked transport needs of communities in different parts of the county. This is reflected by creating a place based LTP, which sets out strategies for each of the following:
 - a. The Transport Network, including maintenance of the network, measures that apply across the whole of Herefordshire, and linkages with partner organisations such as National Highways, rail industry and neighbouring authorities.
 - b. Rural Herefordshire and the Market Towns, accounting for 95% of the area of Herefordshire and two thirds of the populations
 - c. Hereford city, the largest urban area and focal point for services and growth.
14. The objectives for the LTP set out below, were consulted on in Spring 2024 and all were supported or strongly supported by 90% of respondents.
 - a. Supporting a thriving and prosperous economy
 - b. Enabling healthy behaviours and improving wellbeing
 - c. Tackling climate change and protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment
 - d. Improving accessibility and inclusivity
 - e. Improving transport safety and security
15. The place based strategies have been developed around a set of objectives that will deliver the local priorities for Herefordshire.

LTP Emerging Strategy

16. **The Transport Network**, including roads and public transport, facilities movement and access to services and facilities throughout Herefordshire and beyond. The majority of travel is made on the highway network. This includes by car, bus, coach, and freight vehicles, as well as people walking, wheeling and cycling.
17. Most of the transport network is maintained by Herefordshire Council, including 3,200 kilometres of local highways. The A49, A40 and M50 form part of the Strategic Road Network, maintained by National Highways. In addition, the railway lines and four rail stations in Herefordshire are operated and maintained by train operating companies and Network Rail.
18. Priorities for the Transport Network include:
 - a. Continue to prioritise maintenance on A & B classified routes. These are the routes with the highest levels of movement and utilised by freight and public transport vehicles
 - b. Reduce the environmental impacts of maintenance, including update and renewal of streetlights and traffic signals, and considering carbon in procurement
 - c. Create site specific access strategies for major new developments, helping to secure necessary infrastructure and providing clarity to developers
 - d. New area wide approach to travel planning in large developments
 - e. Work with operators to support the efficient movement of freight, minimise impact of freight on the transport network and support more sustainable delivery methods

- f. Improving road safety, through continuing educational campaigns for vulnerable road users and targets measures at locations with a history of collisions
19. **Market towns and rural areas** account for 70% of the county's population. The Herefordshire countryside has a key role in the economy, supporting a variety of jobs both directly and indirectly through rural supply chains, and the high quality landscape in an attraction for leisure, recreation and the wider tourism sector
20. Across rural areas services are more widely spread, resulting in longer travel distances. Transport choices are also more limited, with lower population density, making commercially viable public transport challenging outside of routes between the largest settlements. As there has been a lack of intervention in rural areas, there tends to be a high dependency on private car travel.
21. The focus of the strategy for Market Towns and Rural areas includes the following:
 - a. Improving the attractiveness of local centres for pedestrians, hospitality businesses and support hosting of community and seasonal events
 - b. Identify infrastructure to support significant development at Leominster and Ross-on-Wye, including Leominster southern link road and high quality active travel links between new developments, town centres, railway station and educational sites.
 - c. Hub and spoke/hub and ride focus for public transport. With bus stop and service infrastructure to lock-in recent BSIP funded enhancements to provide hourly/express bus services between the market towns and Hereford city, whilst also improving access to Ledbury railway station, and access and parking at a redeveloped Leominster station forecourt.
 - d. Promotion of electric vehicle charging facilities, including targeted provision in service centres and encouraging Peer-to-Peer charging.
 - e. Identify and deliver community priorities for quieter lanes for local walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding.
22. **Hereford city** is the largest settlement and main retail, employments and administrative centre for Herefordshire. The city centre is a hub for service and retail industries and there are a number of large employment sites in and on the edge of the city.
23. With rail, bus and other services within a short distance by walking or cycling, residents of Hereford city benefit from the greatest amount of travel choice. This is reflected in the lowest levels of car use in the county, and almost half of residents who work in the city commute by foot, cycling or public transport.
24. Approximately 30,000 people travel into the city from surrounding towns and rural areas within Herefordshire and neighbouring counties such as Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Powys. The majority of this travel is by car. While some trips from market towns (approximately 25% of commutes from market towns into Hereford are made sustainably), private car accounts for the vast majority of trips from rural areas.
25. The focus of the strategy for Hereford includes the following:
 - a. Infrastructure to support new development, including new highway links around the city and sustainable transport infrastructure
 - b. Improving the attractiveness of city centre streets to create nicer places to visit, stay and spend time, supporting the local economy
 - c. Developing a network of walking, wheeling and cycling routes to encourage journeys that start and end in Hereford city to be made by active travel.

- d. Expansion of shared transport, growing the bike network and introducing car share clubs.
 - e. Delivery of the transport hub at Hereford railway station, and aspirations to enhance longer distance services including regular two-hourly services between London and Hereford
26. The draft LTP has been created through extensive engagement with internal and external stakeholders, focusing on those who deliver the strategy (i.e. transport operators and neighbouring authorities)
27. Following completion of a period of engagement through Autumn 2024, the LTP is being revised in liaison with officers across the council to work towards a draft LTP early in 2025.
28. The main area for further development is dependent on emerging development proposals in the Local Plan. It is expected there will be a significant increase in housing requirements, with greater clarity on this expected in January 2025.
29. There are also a range of statutory assessments, including a Habitat Screening, Health Impact Assessment, and Strategic Environmental Appraisal that will be undertaken on the draft LTP.
30. It is intended that a draft LTP and SEA will be produced by Spring 2025, ready for public consultation.
31. The scrutiny committee is invited to provide comments and recommendations that Cabinet may consider as part of the development of the draft LTP, before approval of the draft LTP for public consultation.

Community impact

32. 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.
33. Specifically, the key objective in the Council's Delivery Plan (2024/25) to develop Herefordshire as a place for growth, prosperity and communities to thrive includes the commitment, this financial year, to deliver a new Local Transport Plan.

Environmental Impact

34. The LTP will include a Strategic Environmental Appraisal 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

35. 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.
36. The new draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) seeks to support a thriving and prosperous economy, improve health and wellbeing, reduce carbon emissions and support communities to be safer and better connected.
37. While the LTP strategy is still in development, the needs of a range of different users and protected characteristics have been considered throughout the development of the draft LTP to this point. This includes the use of local evidence of transport trends, information on the variations in travel behaviours between people belonging to different genders, age groups, income quintiles and mobility statuses.
38. The LTP sets out a range of interventions which will provide well integrated, accessible, and inclusive transport options for residents and visitors across the county. Much of the investment, for example to improve walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, public transport and air quality would be expected to particularly enhance equality of opportunity across a wide range of groups.
39. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken alongside the completion of a draft LTP, and further changes raised through the EIA and consultation with the public and range of stakeholders will help to further shape and refine the strategy to ensure it supports the needs of all residents of Herefordshire.
40. 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

41. 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
TOTAL	30	210	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)	30	148	0	0	178
One Off Revenue Funds (R)	0	62	0	0	62
TOTAL	30	210	0	0	240

Legal implications

42. The remit of the scrutiny committee is set out in part 3 section 4 of the constitution and the role of the scrutiny committee is set out in part 2 article 6 of the constitution.
43. The Local Government Act 2000 requires the council to deliver the scrutiny function.

Risk management

44. 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.
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.
LTP may be affected by changes that need to be made to Reg 18 and the Local Plan due to new central government ambitions.	Postponement of the draft LTP until end of financial year allows HC to await outcome of NPPF and consider impact on LTP requirements and timescales.
Delivery is slower than anticipated	The development of the plan will be kept under close review. Any potential slippage and the impact on progress alongside mitigating actions will be reported routinely to the cabinet member at the regular cabinet member portfolio meetings.

Consultees

45. The development of the LTP will involve consultation with a number of stakeholders. A consultation plan will be prepared in due course and coordinated with the emerging Local Plan consultations where possible.

Appendices

Appendix A- Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee Recommendations (2 March 2023)

Background papers

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published		
Governance	John Coleman	Date 18/12/2024
Finance	Wendy Pickering	Date 19/12/2024
Legal	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Communications	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 19/12/2024
Procurement	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Risk	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Approved by	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.

[Note: Please remember to overwrite or delete the guidance highlighted in grey]

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

BSIP- Bus Service Improvement Plan

DfT- Department for Transport

EIA- Equality Impact Assessment

EV- Electric Vehicles

HIA- Health Impact Assessment

LCWWIP- Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan

LTP- Local Transport Plan

SEA- Strategic Environmental Assessment