

HEREFORDSHIRE PROVISIONAL LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2006/7 TO 2010/11

Report By: **DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT**

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider the draft Herefordshire Provisional Local Transport Plan 2006/7 - 2010/11 and enable Members to make comments for consideration by Cabinet.

Financial Implications

2. None as a result of this report. However, the Local Transport Plan (LTP) will be submitted to Government and the quality of the Plan will contribute to overall funding available for Highways and Transportation capital on future years spend. Current indications from Government are that this will be in the region of £11M per year and approximately £55M over the whole period (excluding major/exceptional scheme bids). LTP policy also has an influence on a range of revenue programmes including highway maintenance and supported bus services.

Background

About the LTP

3. The second Local Transport Plan will constitute the Council's transportation policies and strategy for the five year period 2006/7 to 2010/11. It will include a costed programme of transport improvement schemes for the period which have been developed with the aim of delivering key outcomes including improved accessibility, safer roads, reduced congestion and a safeguarded environment. This is Herefordshire's second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) and will follow on from the first LTP which covers the period 2000/1 – 2005/6.
4. A copy of the Executive Summary for the draft Local Transport Plan 2006/7 to 2010/11 is provided at Appendix 1 to this report and a copy of the current draft of the full plan has been placed in the Members' Room and can also be viewed on the Council's website at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/ltp.
5. A Provisional Local Transport Plan must be submitted to Government by 29 July 2005 and the Council will have the opportunity to make further revisions and submit a finalised Local Transport Plan by 31 March 2006.

Achieving the core objectives of the first LTP

6. We have made good progress in working towards the core objectives of the first LTP and this has been recognised in the award of Centre of Excellence in Local Transport Delivery status. Our progress in working towards the objectives is summarised below:

- ***Support access to services in urban and rural areas***

We have invested in a number of important public transport initiatives which have improved both urban and rural access. Key schemes include

- the introduction of 50 new low floor buses;
- refurbished bus stations in Hereford and Leominster;
- improvements at Leominster rail station; and
- an ongoing programme of upgrading stops to enable full access.

Overall bus patronage has increased by over 500,000 from 2001/2 to 2003/4 and bus user satisfaction has increased from 47% to 61%. We have also seen a 30% increase in rail use at local stations (from a 1999 base).

We have also supported Community Transport provision throughout the County and have worked closely with the Herefordshire Rural Transport Partnership. to develop projects which meet local needs and the needs of specific user groups such as the elderly, young people and people with physical and mental disabilities. Over 45,000 journeys using community transport are supported each year providing people with door to door access to key services such as shops, health facilities, leisure and employment.

Effective maintenance of the highway network has also been very important to maintaining access for County residents and longer distance travellers. The extent of the asset is significant – over 3000km of publicly maintained highway, nearly 700 bridges and 13,000 street lights. In 2003/4 we carried out of 210km of highway maintenance schemes and 130 bridges received maintenance treatment.

- ***Create a safe environment and support healthy lifestyles***

Our targeted road safety improvements schemes, speed management programme and a comprehensive programme of road safety education, training and publicity working with schools and local communities have brought significant improvements in road safety across the County resulting in a 43% reduction in the most serious casualties (from 1994-98 average to 2004). Serious road traffic casualties amongst children have also been reduced from an annual average of 21 (1994-98) to below 10 for the past four years (2001-04).

In addition to tackling road safety accidents we have also continued to make improvements for pedestrians and cyclists, enabling the promotion of more active lifestyles and reducing reliance on the car. Pedestrian improvements include new controlled crossings, dropped kerbs and rural footway schemes. We have developed the cycle network with on and off-road routes, advanced stop lines at signalised junctions and a comprehensive programme of cycle parking provision at key destinations. We have also signed the long distance National Byway route through County between Leominster and Ledbury. Cycling levels have increased by 13% (from 2001/2 to 2003/4) and monitoring of pedestrian movements across in Hereford City Centre have increased by 48% from 1999/2000 to 2003/4.

We have now assisted over 40 schools in developing School Travel Plans and have made good progress in halting the trend for more and more children to be driven to school and have seen a slight increase in walking and cycling. Key schemes which we have implemented to help support sustainable transport on school journeys include 20mph zones, new footway links, parents waiting areas, improved cycle parking and new signal controlled crossings.

- ***Support sustainable economic growth and support the vitality and viability of urban and rural centres***

Implementation of the Local Transport Plan strategy has played an important role in supporting sustainable economic growth within the County particularly through support for sustainable transport modes such as public transport, walking and cycling. We have provided direct assistance to local businesses and employees through a programme of behavioural change initiatives which help demonstrate how each business/employee can reduce their transport impacts.

Key initiatives include:

- establishment of the www.twoshare.co.uk car sharing database;
- provision of promotional material including the Hereford mini map which identifies the City's sustainable transport infrastructure; and
- establishment of the Business Travel Fund which provides small levels of funding to assist businesses implementing Travel Plans.

So far, over 30 businesses have been supported in their development of travel plans and over 14% (4,387) of employees in Hereford City are now covered by a travel plan.

We have delivered several important infrastructure projects which have facilitated more efficient traffic movements around the County and help support the viability of urban and rural settlements:

- Leominster Industrial Estate Access Road;
- replacement of the bridge at Bridge Sollers;
- reconstruction of the Bromyard Station Railway Bridge; and
- the upgrading of 2.5km of the A4103 Roman Road.

- ***Protect and enhance the natural and built environment***

In addition to supporting sustainable transport modes, as summarised above, which has enabled us to protect the environment from un-restrained traffic growth we have also taken all opportunities to incorporate enhancement as part of schemes where possible. Examples include:

- reconstruction of the bridge in Ewyas Harold which incorporated a bypass route for otters and the upgraded A4103 Roman Road which has incorporated badger underpasses;
- the highway verge maintenance regime has been modified to reduce the extent of the verge which is cut, ensuring safe visibility is maintained at junctions and protected verges are cut by hand;
- townscape enhancements have been achieved through the use of more attractive materials, improved signing and lining and the replacement of damaged materials as key elements of the refurbishment of Leominster Bus Station and Hereford Country Bus Station; and
- the Eign Gate refurbishment scheme in Hereford which will make a significant improvement to the city centre environment and improve the attractiveness of Eign Gate as a retailing location.

The LTP2 Strategy

7. The second LTP strategy marks a continuation of that developed and implemented for the first LTP which has resulted in the Council being awarded Centre of Excellence in Local Transport Delivery status. The development of the strategy has been informed by a number of studies which have been carried out to develop key areas of policy:

- Hereford Transport Review – this enabled a complete review of the transport strategy for the City and recommended a long term strategy which looks as far forward as 2031
 - Hereford Park and Ride Study – the study assessed feasibility of developing two sites, one to the north and one to the south of the City, and adjacent to the A49
 - North West Herefordshire HGV Study – this has identified the need for traffic management improvements in several rural communities in the north west of the County where HGV levels are having a detrimental impact on quality of life.
8. The provisional LTP2 has also had to take into account developing areas of national transport policy. Policy statements are included for the following:
- Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan;
 - Accessibility Planning;
 - Bus and Community Transport Strategy which includes an Information Strategy;
 - Transport Asset Management Plan; and
 - Network Management Duty
9. The priorities for investment are set out in four investment strategies:
- Hereford Transport Strategy (which includes Hereford City and adjoining parishes);
 - Rural Herefordshire Transport Strategy;
 - Road Safety Strategy; and
 - Maintaining the Transport Network.
10. The Major Scheme priorities are:
1. Implement the Rotherwas Access Road scheme by 2008;
 2. To develop proposals and submit a major scheme bid for the A49 Ross Road to A465 Abergavenny Road link 2008-11. This scheme will incorporate further assessment of the Hereford Outer Relief Road and will need to be coordinated with a review of the County's land use planning policies for the period after the current Unitary Development Plan;
 3. Continue to monitor traffic levels and HGV movements through the North West Herefordshire communities (Eardisley, Pembridge, Lyonshall and Shobdon) to ascertain if a road scheme would be justified for the period beyond LTP2; and
 4. To support an extension to the Ledbury Bypass to be funded through private developer contributions and linked to the Unitary Development Plan's proposals for employment land allocations.
11. Government has indicated that authorities may also make separate Exceptional Scheme Bids for schemes which cost up to £5M if they can demonstrate that the scheme is

innovative and could develop best practice for other authorities to follow. The LTP will include proposals for an Exceptional Scheme Bid for the Hereford Intelligent Transport System. More work will be needed to develop the bid which will consider the introduction of new IT systems for Hereford City which will provide us with better control of traffic signals, enable bus priority at signals, provide real time information for car drivers and bus users and real time information on car parking spaces and can assist in enabling the emergency services attending incidents. A package of applications of this type could enable more efficient use of the City's existing transport network and could help tackle air quality problems related to the A49 trunk road.

The Executive Summary at Appendix 1 provides additional details about the key proposals included in these four investment strategies.

Consultation and Involvement

12. A seminar for all Members to help with the review of the first LTP was held in February 2004 and a second seminar to outline the key elements of LTP2 to Members was held on 30 March, 2005. Members were also able to comment on major scheme priorities. Members' views have been considered in preparing the Provisional LTP.
13. Comprehensive consultation has been conducted during the autumn of 2004 when all households received an informative leaflet explaining the need to review the LTP and a questionnaire was provided allowing residents to make comments on their priorities. Presentations were also given to all Local Area Forums and the feedback was also encouraged through the website. Extensive consultation and involvement has also been carried out with stakeholders through the Herefordshire Partnership Transport Ambition Group and sub groups including the Herefordshire Cycle Forum, Bus Operators Forum and Pedestrian Access Forum.

What happens next

14. The Provisional Plan will be further revised taking into account comments from this Committee and to ensure that it fully addresses all aspects of Government guidance prior to submission in July.
15. The Provisional Plan will be considered by Cabinet and then by Full Council as part of the Council's Policy Framework.
16. After submission of the Plan in July, Government will undertake a detailed assessment which will be published late in 2005 at which time the financial settlement will also be announced. The Council will then have the opportunity to revise its strategy and delivery programme in accordance with the confirmed funding guideline and this will be dealt with in the revised submission in March 2006.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT;

- (a) Members note the content of this report.**
- (b) Make comments for the consideration of the Director of Environment and the Cabinet Member for Highways and**

Transportation when finalising the Provisional Local Transport Plan 2006/7 – 2010/11.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Appendix 1: Final draft Provisional Local Transport Plan 2006/7 – 2010/11 Executive Summary
- Final draft Provisional Local Transport Plan 2006/7 – 2010/11 (Hard copy in the Members' Room and available on the website – www.herefordshire.gov.uk/ltp)