

Melton Borough Council

Statement in Support of Leicestershire County Council Local Transport Plan Submission - July 2000

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Melton Borough Council welcomed the fresh approach to transportation policy brought about through the publication of the Government's Transport White Paper in July 1998. The underlying principles of integration across all modes of transport and between land use and transportation planning are long-standing aspirations of the authority and should support more sustainable travel choices and reduce the need to travel.
- 1.2 Since the publication of Leicestershire County Council's Provisional Local Transport Plan in 1999, Melton has made significant progress towards developing a Transport Plan for the Borough. The Plan will be designed to be consistent with, and complementary to, the County Council's Local Transport Plan, whilst at the same time representing the transport needs of the communities within the Borough. Melton Borough Council has worked in partnership with the County Council to undertake the preparatory work necessary to develop the Borough Plan and feed into the Local Transport Plan. An ongoing partnership approach will be fundamental to translating the strategies set out in the Plans into meaningful actions which can be delivered within the Borough to provide real benefits to the communities.

2 Melton's Transport Responsibilities

- 2.1 As a Borough Council, Melton has only limited responsibility and resources for transportation. Nevertheless, the authority recognises its role in listening to public concern on transport issues and representing views through dialogue with the County Council and other relevant organisations. Also, the Borough Council can influence local transport and travel patterns through the Statutory Local Plan, by direct and indirect investment and through other service policies.

Engaging the Public

- 2.2 As a complementary exercise to the County Council's public participation process, Melton Borough Council has engaged a broad cross-section of the local community in a series of Focus Group discussions on transport issues.
- 2.3 These discussions facilitated a more detailed and in-depth examination of local views on transport issues and were effective in helping to understand the underlying reasons for the attitudes towards transport held by members of the public.
- 2.4 Outputs from the discussions have been used by both the Borough Council and the County Council in developing the Area Strategy for Melton as outlined in the Local Transport Plan. Also, the records of the

Focus Groups will form the basis of the development of the Borough Transport Plan and will feed into the preparation of the new Local Plan.

The Borough Transport Plan

- 2.5 The Borough Transport Plan for Melton will be developed on a 'bottom up' basis drawing heavily upon the information collected through the Focus Group meetings and the County Council's public participation exercise. The Plan will look forward for at least five years and encompass all modes of transport including walking, cycling and motorcycling, buses, taxis, voluntary service transport and the private car.
- 2.6 Rural issues will be an important consideration in developing the Plan. The particular concerns of the rural communities include accessibility to public transport, the condition of roads, environmental impacts of HGVs and traffic speeds. In the town centre, key issues include through traffic (particularly HGVs), impact of major developments, the cycle network and parking.
- 2.7 In order to assist in the evaluation of alternative transport strategies, the Borough is developing a model of the highway network around Melton Mowbray. The model will also provide a common basis on which to assess anticipated new development proposals.

3 Traffic Problems in the Borough

- 3.1 Output from the Focus Group has confirmed Melton Borough Council's observations that congestion in Melton becomes unacceptably high at peak hours and for longer periods on market days. This has a detrimental effect on the environment, substantially reduces the reliability of buses, and causes loss of revenue for businesses both local and nationally. The public is also particularly concerned by excessive traffic speeds, not only in heavily pedestrianised areas of the town but outside schools and through rural villages.
- 3.2 The Borough continues to have a commitment to pursue short term solutions including traffic management and control schemes, bus priority and pedestrian facilities.
- 3.3 In the longer term, both the Borough's residents and commerce are mindful that a bypass may be the only solution to the problems faced by all forms of transportation/movement in the town centre.

4 Transport Strategy Development at the Borough Level

- 4.1 Melton Borough Council has actively developed a range of local transport strategy initiatives in recent years. In developing these initiatives, the authority has endeavoured to build upon the County-wide transport strategy set by Leicestershire County Council. A Transport Working party has been established and has assisted in the development of transport strategy initiatives in the following areas:

- Parking Management;

- Cycling;
- Walking and Pedestrianisation;
- Bus Travel;
- Taxis/Private Hire Vehicles;
- Traffic Calming.

- 4.2 **Parking Management** The authority has developed parking standards for Melton Mowbray which are consistent with the need to achieve a reduction in the use of the private motor car, but also seek to maintain a level of parking provision complementary to the economic health of the town centre. At the same time, the Borough's pricing strategy for Melton Mowbray's car parks is designed to encourage parking in cheaper long-stay car parks on the periphery of the town centre, thereby helping to reduce traffic congestion and releasing space for service users and through traffic.
- 4.3 Looking to the future, Melton will seek to follow guidance on maximum parking standards provided in the new PPG 13 "Transport" which is scheduled to be published in autumn 2000. The Borough will work, in partnership with Leicestershire County Council and neighbouring authorities, to achieve consistency of standards wherever possible.
- 4.4 **Cycling** Melton Borough Council, through its local cycle forum, is developing proposals for a Borough cycling network. In addition, the authority has developed a cycle parking policy for new developments which seeks to make provision for a minimum of 10% of employees/visitors to a site.
- 4.5 The Borough Transport Plan will develop local strategies to address the road safety and cycle security issues, in particular to encourage more cycling trips to school. These were key concerns raised by participants of the Focus Groups.
- 4.6 **Walking and Pedestrianisation** Melton Borough Council supports the initiatives promoted by local school head teachers and colleagues which have led to a pilot scheme of walking buses which encourage more children to walk to school. This scheme has been supported by opening up thoroughfares to take footpaths away from main roads.
- 4.7 The Borough intends to strengthen the links with schools to support such initiatives to reduce the number of cars in the vicinity of schools, thus resolving some of the problems of congestion. It is acknowledged that walking to school has benefits for the longer term health of the children. The Borough has invested in pedestrianisation of the town centre and pedestrian crossing facilities to address the increasing problems of severance caused by high volumes of through traffic.
- 4.8 There are six sites in Melton Mowbray identified by the public as being particularly dangerous for crossing. The Borough has a commitment to prioritising the remedial measures for investment as appropriate.
- 4.9 The public concerns for narrow or non-existent pavements for village school access will be placed on the agenda.

4.10 **Bus Travel** Melton Borough Council is keen to see bus travel developed as a realistic alternative for existing car users and as a quality service for more people who have no choice, particularly for those living in the rural areas. A high proportion of existing car users say that they would use public transport more regularly if good quality services – were available.

4.11 The issues concerning the public include:

- passenger information;
- security and weather protection;
- frequency of service;
- reliability of service;
- cleanliness of buses;
- passenger comfort.

4.12 Private operators clearly have difficulty in establishing new services, and partnership working with local authorities and local communities is essential if bus travel is to be improved. Our first priority would be to see radical improvements in basic infrastructure – the improvement of facilities so that the public would recognise buses as valued public services. Our second priority would be to disseminate widely full information on availability and timing of buses.

4.13 In response to issues raised through the Focus Groups, the Borough Council will seek to work with Leicestershire County Council to identify opportunities to extend the geographical coverage of the bus and train services to improve access and service level to both town and rural residents. In particular, Melton will pursue:

- improved public transport interchange with existing Melton bus and tram services to Leicester, Nottingham, Grantham, Gingham and Oakham;
- due consideration of establishing rural 'hubs' on existing/new direct service routes to towns and cities promoting bus/cycle interchange and park and ride;
- a review of the siting of rail and bus stops and service frequency of existing services with a view to better matching public transport user needs for all trip purposes, leisure, education, employment, shopping, hospital and doctor appointments;
- assessment of the specific needs of the disabled and senior citizens;
- an investigation of the possibilities for interchange between school bus services by adjustments in timetables;
- improved co-operation between public transport information providers and to facilitate better dissemination of up-to-date information;
- to establish, through further consultation, where to target limited resources to address problems of:
 - i) security of cars and cycles left at railway stations,
 - ii) the public arriving at poorly-lit and unmanned stations,
 - iii) children walking to/from bus stops and travelling without seat belts on public transport services,
 - iv) availability and maintenance of bus shelters,
 - v) vandalism and quality of buses.

- 4.14 Rural public transport is an issue which affects residents for a large part of the district. This includes travel to several outlying towns and cities, including Melton Mowbray. A Vale Transport Group comprising community groups, individuals, parish representatives and district and County Councils has been established to look at ways of improving public transport in the Vale of Belvoir. Initially established to look at evening travel for young people across a wide area, the group has evolved as both a focus group and catalyst. Current work includes one-to-one surveys with every resident in over 15 villages. Clearer views on developing services are already apparent.
- 4.15 Bus services in the town of Melton Mowbray are largely provided by two larger local operators. Contact does take place on an ad hoc basis but it is felt that much more could be done if more regular communication took place. Additional resources would be required to support this including contributions towards maintenance and minor improvements of facilities.
- 4.16 Melton Borough Council would wish to see powers of Regulation for local authorities to ensure the co-ordination of services setting of requirements for the siting and provision of basic infrastructure, monitoring of services and the setting of targets (with penalties) for bus operators.

4.17 Taxis/Private Hire Vehicles

- 4.18 Melton Borough Council has, for a number of years, met with local taxi and private hire operators and the police to discuss matters of mutual interest including service standards and provision, licensing and traffic management. At the suggestion of the Council, Melton Taxi Association was formed providing a self-regulating body and regular meetings with members of the Association has seen improved co-operation between Associate Members and improved operating standards. Examples of these include the production of an Association Code of Practice setting driver standards and a dress code, driver training and the provision of a new town centre taxi rank proximate to a local bus terminus.
- 4.19 Taxis and private hire vehicles are considered by the Council to be an under-valued but essential part of the public transport system providing essential services to under-privileged groups and to children. In the rural area of Melton, they provide a particularly important service to those people without cars, the elderly, for example, since other forms of transport are simply not available.
- 4.20 Melton Borough Council is interested to see this form of public transport developed and improved to a much greater degree.

4.21 Traffic Calming

- 4.22 In response to mounting evidence of need and demands for traffic calming to address excessive vehicle speeds, supplied by Parish Councils and individuals, the Council carried out an assessment of the number and nature of individual problem sites within the Borough. This 1998 assessment also identified capital requirements for delivering traffic

calming schemes. The assessment was made based on environmental criteria, mainly pedestrian movements where there was a high perception of safety risk ("Accidents waiting to happen"). Road traffic accidents were purposely not included in the programme assessment but used as a comparison. A distinction was made between traffic calming needs in villages and Melton Mowbray town. Subsequently, the Council approved lists of schemes for inclusion in its capital programme, totalling around £1m, the value reflecting the extent of public concern.

- 4.23 The Borough Council's significant commitment includes investment in traffic calming measures, more speed limit signs, and speed cameras to facilitate enforcement. Due consideration to reducing speeds to 20mph will also be given to all roads in the vicinity of schools.
- 4.24 The subject of traffic calming continues to be a major transport issue with the public and particularly with Parish Councils. It consistently comes top of consultation meeting agendas/topics. Further evidence gathered through the Borough Transport Plan Focus Groups significantly supports the need for a shift in funding priority towards traffic calming schemes through the transport budgets.
- 4.25 The Council strongly supports investment in well designed environmental traffic calming schemes which minimise impact for local residents and have the full support of the police.

5 Air Quality

- 5.1 In support of the National Air Quality Strategy, Melton Council is currently carrying out a verified assessment of air quality. Targets relating to transport generated pollutants are set out in the strategy together with information on how the Council is working with others to assess and reduce pollution. Monitoring and modelling is currently being carried out on urban traffic for the Council by Leeds University Institute for Transport Studies.
- 5.2 The Council in particular is looking at reducing nitrogen dioxide and particulates levels through traffic management and at source by reducing the demand for car travel through transport policies.

6 Crime and Disorder

- 6.1 The Melton Crime and Disorder Partnership produced a Community Safety Strategy in March 1999 setting out its aims and objectives for the three year period to 2002. Seven strategic priorities were set out, two of which relate transport issues.
- 6.2 Priority C seeks to reduce the incidence of criminal damage and vandalism. For users of public car parks this is important. Theft of vehicles and theft of goods from vehicles is the highest crime rate locally and policies outline in the County Local Transport Plan will help to reduce this level of crime.
- 6.3 Planned extensions of existing town centre CCTV system and relocation of the present Police Station, including the CCTV operations room, to a

town centre site necessitates a review of public car park security and monitoring arrangements. Additionally, it is intended that all four town centre short-stay and four rim long-stay car parks will achieve "Secured Car Park Status" by the end of the plan period.

- 6.4 Priority E seeks to improve road safety by reducing the number of road traffic accidents through the identification of known accident black spots, improving the availability of information relating to accidents, safe routes to schools, traffic calming schemes, monitoring of traffic speeds and campaigning to increase the number of cyclists wearing protective headgear. The County LTP strategy fully supports this objective.

7 Green Travel Plans

- 7.1 The production of a green travel plan for the Council's own officers and members is seen as an important statement to show a lead to local employers and organisations. An employee travel survey has been carried out which indicated limited scope for change due to lack of available public transport and travel distance. Areas of potential to be considered in the plan period include secure cycle accommodation and home-working.
- 7.2 Larger employers and organisations (including schools) will be encouraged to develop their own green travel plans with support from Council officers. Car parking policies and pricing strategy will be used to give incentives for communities to use other forms of transport to the car.

8 Travel Awareness

- 8.1 This is considered to be an issue of significance in influencing travel patterns and behaviour, especially information on public transport services. Availability of local train, bus and taxi services is being developed for inclusion in the Council's internet site (www.melton.gov.uk) to see the distribution of all available travel information to every household in the Borough on a regular basis and consistency in dates for change and access different service modes.

9 School Travel

- 9.1 There is such a dramatic difference in traffic density during and out of school term times that the potential to improve the local environment is striking. Such travel is often associated with parental lifestyle which means finding opportunities for change is more problematic. The Council is successful in seeking to establish three walking buses in collaboration with local primary schools and to provide better, more secure pedestrian facilities and cycle routes. It plans also to carry out research into parental behaviour and to find opportunities for change.

10 Freight and Rail Transport

- 10.1 The Council is concerned over the impact of larger heavy vehicles on rural roads. Visible deterioration in surface quality and edge damage has ensuring road safety implications and further marginalises people in rural

areas. There appears to be no corresponding increase in road maintenance funding.

- 10.2 The Council would wish to see controls by matching class of vehicle to class of highway to protect the existing network in the longer term.
- 10.3 Railways are seen as the only realistic alternative to roads for the movement of freight and Melton wishes to encourage the transfer of freight to rail and improvement and expansion of rail services generally.
- 10.4 The Council will seek to safeguard and maintain existing railway stations and infrastructure such as the link to the former Asfordby coal mine site and also the protect as far as possible disused railway routes for possible future rail redevelopment.
- 10.5 Consideration will also be given to the need for and improvement of access to primary rail and road routes such as the A1, M1, and East Coast Main Line.
- 10.6 Recently a Freight Quality Partnership has been established between Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, Rutland and Melton Borough Council. Melton represents the interests of the Districts within the Partnership.

11 The Local Plan and Development Control

- 11.1 The Melton Local Plan was adopted on 23 June 1999. The Plan is in conformity with the approved Leicestershire Structure Plan which concentrates new development in the main urban areas of the county and along "Transport Choice Corridors".
- 11.2 The overall strategy of the Melton Local plan concentrates major new development in and around Melton Mowbray, which is the main urban area in the Borough. In pursuing its strategic policy for the location of development, the Local Plan seeks to reduce the need to travel and encourages the development of brownfield sites and other sites that are accessible by means of transport other than the motor car.
- 11.3 The Local Plan includes proposals for new footpaths and cycleways and policies that safeguard realistic highway improvements, redundant railway lines and land for a new railway station.
- 11.4 The Council intends to undertake an early review of the Melton Local Plan. Central to the strategy of the review will be the need to promote a sustainable development through the land use planning system and the integration of transport and land use policies.
- 11.5 The Council is also active in producing development briefs for all of the major housing and employment sites allocated in the Local Plan. The briefs specify in detail the facilities and infrastructure required to provide for and encourage access by sustainable modes of transport.
- 11.6 The Council pursues the implementation of the Local Plan policies through the development control process where the use of planning

conditions and agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act are imposed to ensure the provision of transport facilities and infrastructure that is set out in Local Plan policies and development briefs.

12 Implementation Programme

12.1 Melton Borough Council's commitment to local transport issues is reflected through its active involvement across a wide range of transport issues and through its implementation programme. Although a very small local authority with corresponding resources, it has made a significant commitment by commissioning a Borough Transport Plan. This transport plan is being developed in partnership with the ITS University of Leeds, consultants MVA Ltd and the County Council to:

- determine local needs and priorities by engaging the public.
- develop a traffic model for the town of Melton Mowbray which can be used to examine options for change.

12.2 This proposal was initiated to:

- directly influence the Local Transport Plan and identify what is in the best interests of both the residents and visitors;
- aid the review of Melton Local Plan (commenced in 1999).

12.3 The Borough Transport Plan will deal with key issues such as:

- school travel;
- car parking.

For the town of Melton Mowbray:

- town centre traffic management;
- through traffic;
- impact of 5 major development sites;
- traffic calming;
- cycling network;
- heavy goods vehicles.

For the rural area:

- traffic calming;
- accessibility and access to services;
- maintenance of rural roads.

The Borough Council Capital Programme

12.4 Melton Borough Council's commitment to local transport issues is reflected in its implementation programme for capital schemes as summarised in the Table overleaf.

Table 12.1 Melton Borough Council Capital Programme for Transport Schemes 1999-2004

Scheme	Total Scheme Cost (£000)	1999/200 0 Total Estimate (£000)	2000/01 Total Estimate (£000)	2001/02 Total Estimate (£000)	2002/03 Total Estimate (£000)	2003/04 Total Estimate (£000)
<u>Town Centre Refurbishment Schemes</u>						
Sherrard St Footpath Imps	30	0	0	0	30	0
Wilton Terrace/Wilton Place Imps	125	118	0	0	0	0
Church Terrace Enhancements	20	0	0	0	20	0
Windsor St Env Imps	75	0	0	0	75	0
Town Improvements (1998-99) – Pedestrian Zone Entry/Exit treatment	20	0	20	0	0	0
Market Place Enhancements (Phase 2)	260	0	260	0	0	0
Burton Road Bridge Lighting	19	19	0	0	0	0
<u>Car Park Schemes</u>						
Car Parks – Mill Street Env Imps	15	0	0	15	0	0
Chapel St Car Park Env Imps	20	0	0	20	0	0
Car Park Ticket Machine Replacement	40	0	0	40	0	0
Thorpe End Pay & Display Car Park	61	0	61	0	0	0
Wilton Road Car Park and Bus Station Redevelopment	80	0	0	80	0	0
Environmental Car Parking Scheme – Plungar	10	0	10	0	0	0
<u>Miscellaneous Schemes</u>						
Cycle Facilities	100	0	85	0	0	0
Environmental Enhancements with Traffic Calming	1005	0	90	300	615	0
Borough Transport Plan	40	40	0	0	0	0
<u>Melton Country Park Schemes</u>						
MCP Cycle Routes Construction	25	25	0	0	0	0
<u>Other General Expenses Schemes</u>						
CCTV System – Phase 2	250	0	100	150	0	0