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INTRODUCTION

2.1 In framing the Objectives of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) consideration has to be given to Leicestershire's national and regional context, and to the objectives of the County Council in other related strategies that are influenced by transport provision. This chapter, therefore, reviews policy in all these areas and, from these, identifies an overall Aim for the LTP and Primary Objectives to achieve the Aim. The Aim and Primary Objectives form the framework for the development of the LTP.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

2.2 In the past, Governments have sought to accommodate increasing car growth. In 1989 the Government published two documents: "National Road Traffic Forecasts" which forecast that traffic could increase by up to 142% by 2025, and "Roads for Prosperity" which outlined an extensive, and costly, improvement programme for motorways and Trunk Roads.

2.3 During the early 1990's most of the proposals set out in "Roads for Prosperity" were abandoned. Following several influential reports on the adverse environmental and social impacts of traffic growth the Government initiated a debate on the future shape and direction of transport policy.

2.4 In July 1998, following extensive consultation, the Government published the Transport White Paper, "A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone" and, following this, a number of further documents expanding on the White Paper's proposals.

2.5 The White Paper aims to achieve a better, more integrated transport system to tackle the twin problems of congestion and pollution. Whilst the Government accepts that the car will remain important to the mobility of many people, it is seeking to reduce the need to travel and to encourage greater use of alternatives to the car.

2.6 The Government's five objectives as set out in the Transport White Paper are:

- ❑ to protect and enhance the built and natural **environment**;
- ❑ to improve **safety** for all travellers;
- ❑ to contribute to an efficient **economy** and to support sustainable economic growth in appropriate locations;
- ❑ to promote **accessibility** to everyday facilities for all, especially those without a car;
- ❑ to promote the **integration** of all forms of transport and land use planning, leading to a better, more efficient transport system.

2.7 The Government has a key role in terms of legislation, taxation and spending priorities. These have a direct influence on Local Authorities' powers to act and on their own revenue raising and spending priorities. The Government's priorities also influence bodies such as Railtrack and the Highways Agency, which can have a major impact on the local transport network.

2.8 Transport is also affected by a range of Government policies outside the transport sector, such as health, economic development, law enforcement, land use planning and education.

2.9 It is clear that if the transport problems are to be addressed, then not only must LTPs be consistent and compatible with Government objectives, but all areas of central and local Government policy must support the move towards a more sustainable transport system.

2.10 The Government published the Transport Bill at the end of 1999, and during its subsequent passage through Parliament a number of amendments have been proposed. It is envisaged that the Bill will become law in late 2000.

2.11 The Transport Bill, however, aims to provide a safer, more integrated and better quality transport system. It currently contains measures to:

- ❑ require Local Authorities to develop a Bus Strategy and give them a range of new powers to improve local bus services, ticketing and information;
- ❑ make the preparation of LTPs by Local Authorities a statutory requirement;

- enable Local Authorities to introduce road user charges or a levy on parking at the workplace to tackle congestion and pollution;
- require Local Authorities to offer concessionary fares at half price, or better, for pensioners;
- establish the Strategic Rail Authority that will be given duties to promote rail use and plan the development of the rail system.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

2.12 The Government is promoting a more regional approach to government, and there are three key bodies currently involved in the development of regional policies in the East Midlands which have an impact on transport:

- the East Midlands Regional Local Government Association (EMRLGA);
- the East Midlands Development Agency (emda);
- the East Midlands Regional Assembly.

2.13 The EMRLGA's Planning Forum has been preparing Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) for the East Midlands. A consultation draft was published in November 1998, followed by an Examination Draft in November 1999. The latter was considered at a regional Public Examination held in June 2000.

2.14 The RPG sets out a strategy for sustainable development. The transport chapter of the Examination Draft RPG also constitutes the Interim Regional Transport Strategy, and was prepared by a Transport Task Group of the East Midlands Regional Assembly (see below). The overall aim with respect to transportation, communications and infrastructure is to ensure the full integration of transport and land use planning, and to steer new development to more sustainable locations which reduce the need to travel and enable journeys to be made by the more sustainable means of transport. Supporting policies are aimed at encouraging walking, cycling and public transport and reducing the need to travel by car, particularly car commuting.

2.15 The East Midlands Development Agency issued its regional economic strategy 'Prosperity through People' in October 1999. It aims to establish the East Midlands as one of Europe's top 20 regions, with a vibrant economy, healthy, safe, diverse and inclusive communities, and a quality environment. It believes there is a need to promote a step change in economic performance with challenging targets of sustainable growth, whilst accepting that there will be a need to give equal attention to the social and environmental fabric of the region.

2.16 The strategy refers to ensuring that the East Midlands has the highest quality transport infrastructure, supports investment in integrated LTPs (both in the region's main cities and in rural areas) and in rail transport, and seeks an integrated approach to the delivery of rural transport support. East Midlands Development Agency has followed the strategy with consultations on a number of action plans.

2.17 The Regional Assembly has begun the process of preparing an Integrated Regional Strategy to ensure complementary and consistent regional strategies. With respect to transport it is setting as an objective the enhancement of the region's infrastructure by maximising transport choice. The Assembly has established a Transport Task Group, with responsibility for preparing a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). An Interim RTS was published as part of the Regional Planning Guidance published in November 1999. It is expected that the final RTS will be published towards the end of 2001.

2.18 The Interim RTS provides a framework for:

- an integrated approach;
- travel demand management;
- travel education;
- infrastructure and service enhancement;
- freight transport;
- air transport;
- communications technology.

2.19 The LTP has been developed to be consistent with the framework and approach adopted in the Interim RTS, particularly in the overall aim of ensuring land use and transport

planning are fully integrated. It also ensures that the measures planned will reduce the need for travel by private car, provide for the needs of more vulnerable road users, and improve the quality and quantity of public transport provision.

COUNTY COUNCIL CONTEXT

STRUCTURE PLAN

2.20 The Structure Plan sets out the context for all strategic land use planning and transport provision.

2.21 The current Structure Plan was adopted by the County Council in 1994 and covers its former administrative area, which includes Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland. It sets the framework for the period up to 2006 within which District Councils have prepared their Local Plans.

2.22 Over the last few years the County Council, and the two Unitary Authorities of Leicester City and Rutland, have been working together to review the Structure Plan to cover the period up to 2016. The review of the Structure Plan has been influenced by changes in national policy and a general drive for more sustainable development.

2.23 A key role for the Structure Plan is to determine the level of new development and to set out policies for the distribution and general location of that development, although the identification of specific sites is a role of District Council Local Plans. The Deposit Draft Structure Plan places a significant emphasis on urban concentration with respect to new development, focusing the majority within or adjoining the main urban areas.

2.24 This pattern of new development will:

- minimise the use of greenfield land and its impact on the countryside;
- reduce the need to travel;
- increase opportunities to walk, cycle and use public transport for local trips.

2.25 The Structure Plan contains a number of specific policies relating to transport. Accessibility and Transport Policy 1, which deals with priorities, states that integrated and sustainable transport will be further developed in order to:

- improve road safety and the environment and contribute to improving the quality of life;
- minimise the need to travel;
- maximise people's accessibility to facilities, services, opportunities and resources;
- support the local economy.

2.26 It also proposes that cycling and walking will be given the highest priority, followed by public transport, which in turn will be given greater priority than other road users. It also states that travel demand management measures will be introduced in order to help meet the objectives of this policy.

2.27 The Deposit Draft of the Structure Plan was placed on deposit in May 2000. To assist in preparing the Deposit Draft, and to ensure that planning and transport are considered jointly in determining the direction of the LTP, the County Council held a Land Use and Transportation Stakeholders Seminar in May 1999. This considered the key relationships between land use and transportation and in particular the need for more sustainable transport provision to accommodate the urban concentration policies.

LOCAL AGENDA 21

2.28 All participants at the conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1991 (The Earth Summit) made a commitment to develop transport systems which are safer, more cost effective, more efficient and less polluting. Agenda 21 was agreed as an international "Action Plan" for sustainable development, calling for action at all levels.

2.29 Leicestershire's Local Agenda 21 is set out in an action plan "Ways Forward For A Better Leicestershire, Our Actions – Our Future", which was launched in 1998. The Plan was produced for the Forum for a Better Leicestershire (FABLE) with support from Environ, a local environmental charity, and the County Council. The vision it sets out is supported by action plans that detail the measures that can be taken to achieve a more

sustainable quality of life in the future. The vision and action plans were developed through widespread consultation over four years and drawn from individuals, community groups, businesses, public bodies and local authorities.

2.30 In relation to transport provision, by 2020 it is proposed to cut by half pollution from traffic in Leicestershire compared to 1995 levels, whilst maintaining access to services and facilities for businesses and individuals. This would be achieved by:

- reducing the need to travel through strongly enforced land use planning and other measures;
- reducing journey length and decreasing the use of the private car;
- promoting walking, cycling and public transport;
- encouraging more responsible car use;
- reducing the impact of freight.

2.31 Implementation of the plan will be by companies, groups and organisations making a pledge to meet certain aspects of it. The plan is also to be reviewed and updated throughout its life. It is clear, however, that a significant shift in resources will be required if the transport objectives are to be met.

CENTRAL LEICESTERSHIRE LTP

2.32 In the development of the objectives for this LTP it is necessary to be mindful of the objectives set out for the Central Leicestershire LTP, which build upon the objectives contained in the Central Leicestershire Transport Policies and Programme Package. These were informed by the Central Leicestershire Strategic Transport Studies (CALTRANS) which included extensive public participation. More recent participation for the LTP has confirmed that the objectives are appropriate.

RURAL STRATEGY FOR LEICESTERSHIRE

2.33 The Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) approved a Rural Strategy and Action Programme in 1996, following responses

from a wide range of agencies with an interest in the rural areas of the County.

2.34 Since the publication of the Rural Strategy, the Countryside Agency has produced two strategy documents concerning the future of the countryside: Tomorrow's Countryside – 2020 Vision, 1999 and an Interim Planning Policy, Planning for Quality of Life in Rural England, 1999. The aim of these documents, within the transport sector, is to provide “transport that serves people without destroying the environment”. Other elements seek to:

- maintain the diverse character of the countryside;
- have prosperous and inclusive communities;
- create and maintain economic opportunity and enterprise;
- provide recreational access for local people and visitors.

2.35 These also have transport implications that need to be considered to ensure the effective implementation of these elements.

2.36 The Rural Strategy has been under review within a similar timescale to that of the LTP, and the two processes have, of necessity, proceeded in parallel, so that as the policies in the two documents evolved, developments in one were reflected in the other as far as possible. The Consultation Draft of the revised Leicestershire Rural Strategy and Action Plan was launched at the fifth Leicestershire Rural Partnership Annual Conference in June 2000.

2.37 For the majority of those living in rural areas the car is and will remain the most important form of travel. However, it is clear that public and community transport services will require significant improvement if they are to provide an acceptable level of service to those without access to a car.

2.38 There are several other wider transport issues which either directly or indirectly affect rural life. These are dealt with throughout the LTP and are brought together under the Rural Areas and County Towns in Chapter 5e.

2

Primary Transport Objectives

THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

2.39 Following the establishment of a Cabinet Administration, the County Council has adopted a corporate aim and six objectives which guide and influence all aspects of its services.

2.40 The aim states that:

"We are committed to maintaining and enhancing the Quality of Life"

2.41 The six corporate objectives are:

- advancing lifelong learning;
- building a healthy community;
- protecting and enhancing the environment;
- improving economic well being;
- promoting better government of Leicestershire;
- reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

2.42 Transport provision and improvements have a role to play in all of these.

AIM AND PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

2.43 In order to put these national, regional and county objectives and policies into effect, and to ensure that LTP contributes to achieving local and national objectives, an overall Aim and a series of Primary Objectives have been identified (Figure 2.1).

2.44 Though strongly influenced by the five Government overarching objectives of the New Deal for Transport White Paper, they have been carefully considered and interpreted in the context of Leicestershire as a predominantly rural county. It is particularly important that those in rural areas without access to a car are not unnecessarily disadvantaged, and there will be an emphasis on this aspect within the Accessibility Primary Objective.

Figure 2.1 – Aim and Primary Objectives of the LTP

AIM

To achieve a transport system for Leicestershire which meets the requirements for access and economic development in a way which seeks continuous improvement in sustainability and people's quality of life.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Accessibility

To improve access to everyday facilities, including employment, education, shopping, leisure and health care, for all sections of the community, but particularly for those who do not have access to a car.

Economic development

To support the local economy and accommodate economic growth in sustainable locations.

Health

To improve health through improvements in air quality and encouragement of more walking and cycling as means of exercise.

Safety

To improve safety and security for all travellers.

Environment

To reduce the adverse impact of traffic on people and on the natural and built environment.

Integration

To improve integration within and between travel modes, and ensure the transport system supports the wider objectives of the County Council and other service providers.