

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

Local Transport Plans (LTPs) are a core part of the Government's proposals for achieving an integrated transport system to tackle the problems of congestion and pollution. The LTP enables local Highway Authorities to set out their strategies for delivering integrated transport locally. It is also a mechanism for local authorities to bid to central Government for capital funds for transport improvements and maintenance

This document is Leicestershire County Council's LTP. It replaces the provisional LTP submitted to Government in July 1999 and has two main aims:

- it sets out the vision for the plan area and the transport proposals to achieve that vision with a programme for the next five years until 2005/06;
- it is the County Council's bid to central Government to fund the capital programme for transport improvements and maintenance.

The LTP shifts the emphasis in transport provision to encourage greater use of public transport, walking and cycling. This LTP seeks real improvements in the quality of all of these to offer people a genuine and sustainable choice of transport.

There are two LTPs that cover the Leicestershire County Council administrative area (see Figure 1.1):

- the Central Leicestershire LTP. This has been prepared as a separate document jointly by the County and City Councils and includes those settlements within Leicestershire that rely mainly on Leicester for many of their employment and service opportunities;
- the Leicestershire County LTP. This document covers the majority of the County that lies outside of the Central Leicestershire LTP area.

In developing this LTP, a review of local transport provision has been undertaken to reflect Government objectives. Whilst in many

instances existing strategies are largely consistent with Government's integrated transport policies, the review has led to a number of changes which have been included in the Plan.

In recognition of the importance of improving and providing sustainable local transport, the County Council employed the Babbie Group as consultant to assist in the review of local transport provision and in the production of the LTP.

PARTICIPATION

An inclusive approach to public involvement is essential if the LTP is to have the widespread local support required to deliver the necessary changes to achieve a more balanced and sustainable transport system. Effective public participation and consultation have, therefore, been an essential part of the LTP development.

Even though the timescale for the provisional LTP was constrained, a notable amount of consultation was undertaken prior to its production. However, for the development of the full LTP the County Council has carried out a comprehensive participation exercise and worked with a wide range of people, groups and organisations.

The participation exercise enabled the public and local organisations to review the proposals included in the provisional LTP, ascertain the level of support for those proposals, and offer the opportunity for them to influence the development of the Area Strategies and Implementation Programmes to be included in the full LTP.

This gave the County Council a clear sense of local priorities in order to produce an LTP that would command widespread support and contain strategies and action plans to tackle the problems causing local people the most concern.

Appendix B provides a full summary of the participation process from prior to the provisional LTP, through to the present. It details the results of the participation exercise and gives an indication of ongoing participation following publication of the Plan.

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The participation exercise showed quite widespread and general support for the proposals contained in the provisional LTP.

There was, however, little support for the introduction of new charges on motorists, even though there was an acceptance that more money was needed to fund transport improvements. Concerns were expressed about the role of parking management in a rural county like Leicestershire. In particular there was a widespread view that parking restraint policies could adversely affect the vitality of town centres and that they should only be implemented after significant transport improvements had taken place.

The main changes in emphasis in the LTP strategy following participation are:

- ❑ a greater focus on town centre improvements to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres;
- ❑ an increased emphasis on Quality Bus Partnerships to address concerns about the quality of bus services;
- ❑ a greater priority on tackling the problems caused by the journey to school;
- ❑ the strengthening of partnership working with the District Councils to develop further and implement the parking strategies.

The District Councils, as key stakeholders and active participants in the LTP, have been fully involved in all stages of the LTP process from the development of the provisional LTP through to the full LTP. They also assisted greatly in the participation process.

SCOPE OF THE LTP

The LTP provides the framework for assessing the transport problems facing Leicestershire and developing a range of Objectives and an Overarching Strategy to tackle those problems. County wide Action Plans have been developed to deliver the Overarching Strategy; more detailed Area Strategies and a five year Implementation Programme give form to the delivery of the Action Plans.

In framing the Objectives consideration has been given to the national and regional context and the objectives of the County Council in other related strategies that influence, or are influenced by, transport provision.

To assist in the delivery of the five year plan a number of Targets are set against a range of Performance Indicators which will be monitored during the period of the Plan. Figure 1.3 in Chapter 1 shows how these various aspects relate to one another.

AIM AND PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

The following Aim and Primary Objectives have been set for 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 a means of exercise.

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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.

Integration, whilst a Primary Objective in its own right, is a common theme running throughout all of the Primary Objectives and the whole of the LTP.

THE OVERARCHING STRATEGY

The LTP strategy has been developed from a review of existing strategies, building on and modifying them where appropriate or necessary by taking account of findings from the participation exercise. The Overarching Strategy combines a number of wide ranging but related transport measures, including:

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- a range of measures to improve local bus, rail and community transport services including improved interchange facilities, information and service co-ordination.

Walking/Cycling

- measures to increase the amount of walking and cycling as alternatives to using the car.

Network Management

- measures to improve the network to concentrate traffic movements and growth

onto the safest and most suitable roads and efficiently to maintain the network.

Road Safety

- measures to improve personal security and to improve road safety through a programme of local safety schemes, road safety education and speed management.

Travel Management

- measures to encourage alternatives to the car, including the development of a school travel strategy, travel awareness campaigns, business travel plans and management of car parking.

Town Centres

- measures to develop and implement improvement schemes for the centres of the county towns which will enhance the attractiveness and viability of the town centres.

Disability Improvements

- measures to remove barriers to the free movement of disabled people.

Freight

- measures to encourage sustainable distribution and to minimise the impact of lorries.

Land Use Planning

- the use of land-use planning controls to secure sustainable development patterns in the future and direct new major development to locations that maximise the opportunities for travel by means other than the car.

AREA STRATEGIES

Within the overall context of the measures proposed in the Overarching Strategy, a number of Area Strategies have been developed which will allow the differing needs and problems of those areas to be reflected in

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the LTP in the most appropriate way. The areas are:

Loughborough, Shepshed and Soar Valley

- based on the previous Loughborough – Shepshed transport package but extended to meet the Central Leicestershire Area to include the villages in the Soar Valley.

Hinckley and Earl Shilton

- there are particular issues regarding the pressure for development and the need for improvements to the A5 corridor and for a bypass to Earl Shilton and a need for complementary strategies with Warwickshire.

National Forest

- there are particular issues surrounding the old coalfield area in and around Coalville, Ashby Woulds and the National Forest and there is a need for complementary strategies with Derbyshire and Staffordshire on the A511 corridor.

Castle Donington and Kegworth

- there have been and will continue to be development pressures in this area and there is a need to ensure sustainable access to the airport and its surrounding area. There are also strong links to Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and the trunk road network.

Rural Areas and County Towns

- large parts of Leicestershire are rural in character. The Area Strategy will enable programmes to be developed to address the particular problems facing those areas and the particular needs of the county towns within an overall policy framework.

FUNDING / IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME

The Government's three year comprehensive spending review in 1998 provided for a significant increase in local transport expenditure, particularly by 2001/02 when funds are expected to be about 40% higher than in 2000/01 and 60% higher than in 1999/2000. The LTP has been prepared on the basis that a significant proportion of that increase will be allocated by central Government to shire counties like Leicestershire where there has been severe under-funding of transport improvements over recent years.

The bid for funds has been made in two parts:-

- a core programme, based on a realistic assessment of the level of funds which could be made available in light of the 1998 comprehensive spending review;
- a further programme of work should the Government increase spending on local transport above the levels set in the 1998 review.

The core programme is set out in Table 6.1 and seeks:

- an increase in funds for minor transport improvements of about 80% in 2001/02 compared with 2000/01 targeted at improvements to alternatives to the car, road safety and a programme of town centre improvements;
- an increase in funds for maintenance of about 35% in 2001/02 compared with 2000/01, the increase to be focussed on tackling the backlog of carriageway strengthening;
- no further increase in real terms for 2002/03 - 2005/06;
- funding approval to start construction on one major (over £5 million) scheme - the A47 Earl Shilton Bypass.

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The further programme of work set out in Table 6.2 seeks:

- ❑ a further increase of 45% for minor transport improvements over the five year period;
- ❑ a further increases of 25% for maintenance to more effectively tackle the backlog of carriageway strengthening and to tackle the backlog of bridge maintenance;
- ❑ funds to tackle the backlog of repairs to and replacement of corroded and defective street lighting columns.

MONITORING DELIVERY OF THE LTP

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS, TARGETS AND MONITORING:

Possibly the most challenging aspect of integrated transport will be the ability to quantify what happens to travel behaviour as a result of the LTP. Whilst national travel statistics give an invaluable insight into many aspects of transport, they cannot be disaggregated to show the local position such as in the LTP area.

The LTP therefore needs to include a range of Performance Indicators and Targets which can be used to assess whether the LTP is delivering the stated objectives. Monitoring of the indicators will be carried out throughout the plan period and annual progress reports prepared. Monitoring will be undertaken at a number of levels:

- ❑ monitoring of a small number of Headline Indicators which directly measure outcomes and outputs in a number of key areas;
- ❑ detailed monitoring of the Action Plans to ensure the strategy is implemented as intended;
- ❑ general monitoring of travel patterns and traffic growth through the periodic application travel diaries and comprehensive traffic data collection.

Targets have been set for all the Headline Indicators, using outcomes wherever possible. Principal among these are Targets which seek to:

- ❑ increase bus travel;
- ❑ increase cycling;
- ❑ reduce car journeys to school;
- ❑ increase walking to school;
- ❑ increase the adoption of travel plans by major businesses;
- ❑ reduce road casualties, particularly children and other vulnerable road users;
- ❑ improve facilities for disable people;
- ❑ reduce the backlog of carriageway strengthening.