



HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SUBMISSION IN SUPPORT OF LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN JULY 2000

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council is very pleased to submit a statement supporting the Local Transport Plan. The Council has been closely involved in the preparation of the Plan and is fully committed to future working with the County Council and other partners to address the full range of transportation issues which are of increasing concern to the general public. The Borough Council will be involved with the implementation of the Local Transport Plan through its role as Local Planning Authority, through its other service responsibilities and through its Highways Agency agreement with the County Council which gives it a wide range of highway responsibilities within the most urban part of the Borough.

2.0 Participation

- 2.1** As well as attending continuing officer meetings regarding the LTP the Borough Council have organised a public meeting with an open invitation to allow views on Transportation issues to be expressed. Those attending split into workshops to consider the following;
- 1) The promotion of alternatives to the car – Public Transport, Cycling and Walking.
 - 2) Managing Travel Demand and Managing the Network – School Travel Plans, Green Travel Plans, Parking Management.
 - 3) Rural issues – improving access, the impact of traffic and the rural community.
- The outcome of these discussions along with questionnaires submitted to the Highway Authority must influence the preparation of the Leicestershire LTP with focus on the need to overcome the existing Transportation problems that exist particularly in Hinckley and Earl Shilton.

3.0 The Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan

- 3.1** The Borough Council expects to adopt the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan during the summer 2000. The Plan sets out detailed policies and proposals for the use of land within the Borough for the period to 2006. Strategic Objective 5 of the Plan is:

"To reduce the growth in energy use through energy efficiency in new development and by reducing transport movements."

- 3.2** The Local Plan and the Local Transport Plan are complementary. The locational strategy of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that major new development takes place in locations where alternative means of transport to the car are available. Where major new developments take place they are required to be designed to accommodate public transport and to provide pedestrian and cycle links. Parking policies in the Plan now seek to impose maximum levels of parking for new developments rather than minimum standards as previously applied, and allow for a lower provision where sites are served by a realistic choice of transport modes, i.e. in town centres or close to bus routes. The Plan also includes standards for motor and pedal cycle parking provision.

- 3.3** Regarding the larger development sites, there were significant changes between the deposit draft and the final proposals with sites alongside the A5 being favoured by the Local Plan Inspector. Highways Agency have now designed a package of measures to address safety and freight problems on the A5 and these will be part financed by contributions from adjacent site developments.
- 3.4** Early reviews of the next round of Local Plans will be starting in 2001 with the new plan expected to be in place by 2006. In view of the lack of available sites to accommodate further development there will be pressure for the Earl Shilton By- Pass along with residential and industrial developments to be pursued. There is a clear need for detailed design work for the Earl Shilton By-Pass to have been carried out by the Highway Authority in readiness for the evolving Local Plan. In the absence of a bypass it is difficult to see how local residents would be encouraged to use alternatives to the motor car. The numbers and size of freight running through Earl Shilton on the A47 is threatening and dangerous to pedestrians, cyclists and other road users. The community is split by vehicular traffic, the safety record is poor and locals report the pollution creates difficulties for those working, living or walking alongside the A47.

4.0 Cycling

- 4.1** The Council is working closely with the County Council to develop an integrated strategy to address the transportation needs of the Borough. The Borough Council has been particularly active in the preparation of a cycle network plan for the urban area. A steering group of interested parties has been established and, advised by Sustrans, a network plan has been drawn up. The Plan includes:-

- Safe routes to school, including off-carriageway cycle routes and toucan crossings
- Radial routes linking the main centres of population
- 20 mph zones
- Links between housing areas, concentrations of employment, shops, leisure facilities, public transport interchanges and the countryside.

- 4.2** An extensive public consultation exercise took place during the Summer 1999 with exhibitions arranged throughout the urban area including: the Borough Council Offices, libraries, High Schools, Community Colleges and several local shopping centres. Numerous representations were received and taken into consideration before the final Hinckley Area Cycle Network Plan was approved by the Borough Council for use as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

- 4.3** The Borough Council is looking to extend the preparation of the Hinckley Network plan to cover the whole area (i.e. the rural part of the District) with work programmed to commence mid summer 2000.

- 4.4** Whilst acknowledging there are several potential sources of funding available for cycling initiatives, preparation of the Network Plan should help shape certain priorities in the LTP context.

5.0 Implementation Programmes

- 5.1** A Quality Bus Partnership has been established with the Borough and County Council and local bus operators. The Partnership has been proactive in pursuing several initiatives including:

- Bus Priorities - improving reliability of services, consideration has been given to the introduction of bus priority at signal controlled junctions using technology available

elsewhere in the County (real-time information). Route priorities for this project are established but no funds have been made available.

- Improved Customer Information - real time information systems at the bus stops (part of the above system) and a detailed timetable booklet is due to be distributed door to door throughout the urban part of the Borough in the near future.
- Customer attitude surveys.
- Network-wide and rail/bus tickets.
- Preparation of a new contract to secure the renewal of bus shelters within the area.
- Provision of revised town centre interchange facilities with the Borough Council entering into a partnership with a private sector retailer to deliver the redevelopment of the bus station and surrounding area.

5.2 Regent Street forms part of Hinckley's principal shopping area but is segregated by the busy B590. Following extensive participation events the Borough Council along with the County Council are actively pursuing a town centre environmental enhancement scheme. Traffic surveys have been carried out throughout the town and improvement options are currently being drawn up to make the area safer and favour pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. Several signal controlled junctions around the town will require modification to ensure safe use bearing in mind it is intended that the work in Regent Street will result in traffic being displaced as a result of pedestrians being given preferential treatment. Consultation work on detailed proposals is due to commence later this year.

5.3 The Council has played an active role in partnership with the Police and others. These have drawn up a Crime and Disorder Strategy for the Borough and we are now seeking to implement it. A Community Safety Officer is employed to address the strategy with transport related issues such as road safety, CCTV and street lighting included. Road safety will be addressed by an action group working particularly with local schools, whilst the existing CCTV scheme covering Hinckley Town Centre is being extended to Earl Shilton shortly. A programme of footpath and car park security lighting schemes is being implemented. The objective of this work is to encourage pedestrians and cyclists to use local facilities by addressing safety concerns and the fear of crime. The footpaths are often alternatives to heavily trafficked highways and encourage short journeys by pedestrians and cyclists and the overarching objectives of the LTP featured in establishing the priority ranking for schemes to be pursued.

5.4 The Council has an active implementation programme of School Safety Schemes which improve driver awareness of a school, reducing vehicle speeds and improving facilities for pedestrians. The low cost schemes previously pursued have provided a benefit to pedestrians but the speed of traffic has not been significantly affected. The Council is also increasingly successful in gaining contributions from developers to provide traffic calming and road safety schemes in conjunction with new development proposals.

6.0 Parking Issues

6.1 The Borough Council fully appreciates the need to implement appropriate parking policies as part of an overall integrated transport policy to reduce the use of the private car and encourage alternative forms of transport. The Borough Council is involved through its role as local planning authority and considers development proposals in the light of the policies outlined in Section 3 above.

6.2 The Council operates a number of town centre off-street car parks that are subject to a finely tuned charging regime to ensure their most efficient use. The location of the car parks has been carefully considered to concentrate short-term car parking close to the town centre

shops and to restrict long term car parking to relatively inconvenient locations further afield. Regular enforcement ensures an efficient turnover of spaces and thus the maximum benefit to the town centre. The last charging review introduced significant increases for long term parking in the short stay car parks to discourage car borne commuters.

6.3 The Borough Council is involved in the regulation of on street parking within the agency area by use of Traffic Regulation Orders. These are applied as and when necessary to control on-street parking in the interests of safety, the free flow of traffic and to prevent long term parking close to the town centre.

6.4 Close to Hinckley town centre there are significant areas of residential development with no off-street parking provision. There is competition to park on street in these areas, with residents often suffering. In order to address this problem, the Borough Council are pursuing experimental Traffic Regulation Orders to provide residents only or shared parking in roads close to the town centre. Depending on the success of these experiments, the Council will wish to extend these restricted zones around the town centre thus exerting further pressure on car borne commuters.

7.0 Taxis

7.1 The Borough Council employs a Licensing Enforcement Officer who ensures all new and existing drivers as well as Hackney Carriages and private hire vehicles are rigorously vetted and inspected to ensure the public is guaranteed a high standard. Vehicle emission tests are to a higher standard than MOT inspection also particular attention is paid to details such as the trim/comfort of the vehicle. Recognising the potential for taxi's to reduce on street parking problems the Borough Council have recently introduced a dedicated taxi rank close to the town centre where limited waiting previously occurred.

8.0 Shopmobility

8.1 Following the formation of a public, private, voluntary sector partnership a shopmobility scheme is due to become established during early summer 2000. It is envisaged that this scheme will be greatly beneficial assisting the disabled gaining access to a large area within the town centre although addition footway work and carriageway crossings will be necessary to broaden the accessible area.

9.0 Climate Change and Air Quality

9.1 The Council is in the process of reviewing its air quality as required by the Environment Act 1995 and has identified road traffic as a significant source of air quality problems in the area. Assessments have been made which indicate that the annual mean for Nitrogen Dioxide may exceed the air quality objective of 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for 2005 in a number of locations adjacent to the M1, A5 and A50.

9.2 Further detailed modelling has been carried out and continuous monitoring to validate the model is to be commenced in the near future in conjunction with Leicester City Council and several other District Councils to determine whether Air Quality Management Areas will need to be declared. Consultation, especially with the Highway Authority and Highway Agency will continue across the County with the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Air Quality Forum considering measures to reduce air pollution on the problem routes.

10.0 Passenger Rail Development

10.1 Rural Issues. This Council adds its support to the local public view that rural public transport services are poor and additional funds are needed especially in the Coalfields Regeneration areas. The potential for rail services has been established but progress is slow. There are no existing passenger rail links in the rural area where stage 2 (Leicester to Burton) of the Ivanhoe Line is proposed. Extension of the existing Ivanhoe line from Loughborough to Leicester to Nuneaton could be vital to future increases in employment as well as realising tourism opportunities relating to the National Forest

10.2 Urban Issues. The Office of Passenger Rail Franchising (OPRAF) have been made aware that any potential for future increases in services stopping at Hinckley Station must be explored. There is a need to invest in Hinckley Railway station and further promote transport links especially cycle-rail and bus-rail journeys. The Council and many people in the area recognise the lack of real alternative to the motor car and hopefully future investment in passenger rail initiatives will result in some of these problems being overcome.

11.0 Green Travel Plans and Travel Awareness

11.1 The Borough Council recognises the importance of leading by example and is keen, therefore, to reduce the environmental impacts that result from staff travel. A staff travel survey has recently been carried out following which the Council’s Environmental Co-ordinator has prepared a programme of Internal Environmental Management initiatives. Transport issues include; targets to minimise the levels of mileage whilst on Council business, assist in the purchase of pool cycles, promote car share, raise awareness of emission of CO2, establish the possibilities for car share schemes. When negotiating with developers pursuing large employment proposals the Council now insists on the preparation and subsequent implementation of a Green Travel Plan.

11.2 The Council supports the “Travelwise” campaign and are developing links with schools and businesses to encourage them to improve their environmental management. As activities in this area develop opportunities to promote green travel will increase. The Council's Environmental Co-ordinator actively supports and promotes national awareness raising initiatives such as Walk to School Week and National Car Free Day.

12.0 Borough Council Funding

12.1 The Council's commitment to addressing transportation issues is clearly demonstrated by a substantial capital programme as shown in the following table:

	2000/2001 (approved)	2001/2002 (provisional)	2002/2003 (provisional)
Sustainable Transport Initiatives	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
School Safety Schemes	£60,000	£40,000	£40,000
Regent St. (Pedestrian Preference)	-	£60,000	£180,000
Pedestrian Direction Signs	-	£20,000	-
Footway Extensions	£17,500	£15,000	-
Lighting Schemes	£35,000	£15,000	£15,000
Environmental Improvement Schemes	£38,000	£40,000	£40,000
CCTV - Earl Shilton/Barwell	£131,100	-	-
CCTV Hot Spots : Mobile Camera	£36,900		
Totals:	£323,500	£195,000	£280,000

13.0 Summary and Conclusion

- 13.1** It is hoped that this statement demonstrates the active support of the Borough Council for the preparation and implementation of the Local Transport Plan. The Council has been disappointed in the past that despite its large urban area, financial support for transportation initiatives within the Borough has been limited. The Council is looking to the new Local Transport Plan system to deliver a fairer distribution of resources that can be used to achieve a more sustainable transport system in accordance with Government policy. The Council fully recognises its responsibilities to achieve this objective.