

# APPENDIX H

## Strategic Environmental Assessment

### Introduction

H.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Leicestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP) was carried out by the Environmental Action Team in the Community Services Department of Leicestershire County Council. The team involved have endeavoured to maintain a simple approach to the SEA and to focus on outputs rather than processes.

H.2 This is the second Leicestershire LTP, which sets out the strategies, targets and spending programmes for transport for the five years from 2006/07 to 2010/11. The objectives of the Provisional LTP are:

- Tackling congestion
- Improving access to facilities
- Reducing road casualties
- Improving air quality
- Reducing the impact of traffic
- Manage transport assets.

### Methodology

H.3 In order to focus on the priority issues raised by the implementation of the LTP, a scoping exercise was carried out to establish the current state of the Leicestershire environment, to identify environmental objectives of existing plans and programmes and to determine the existing problems in the area.

H.4 Within this context, the team then assessed the effects of the transport alternatives against the identified environmental objectives. This assessment coupled with other considerations informed the choice of options included in the Provisional LTP.

H.5 Further detailed assessment of each of the plan options against environmental objectives was completed including consideration of how other plans and policies could affect the outcomes.

H.6 Mitigation has been recommended for any negative effects that were identified and for significant effects, a monitoring framework has been proposed.

### Environmental Assessment of the LTP's Longer Term Strategy

H.7 The LTP's Longer Term Strategy sets out five themes:

- Providing the right transport conditions to help economic growth
- Improving access to facilities for all
- Reducing transport's impact on the environment
- Keeping transport safe

- Making sure that our highway assets are properly maintained and renewed for the long term.

H.8 An assessment of the long term strategy's themes and outline plans was completed against the environmental objectives of the SEA. Under each of the theme headings are a number of measures, such as developing bus services under helping economic growth. In summary, the assessment highlighted the general reliance on the provision of infrastructure and measures to deliver sustainable travel without incentives or penalties to effect behavioural change.

H.9 The assumption that the completion of the Leicester Outer Ring Road and a number of bypasses will reduce congestion and traffic's adverse effect on the local environment requires further investigation. It is recommended that a detailed assessment of these and other alternatives is completed before these schemes are pursued.

### Alternatives to the plan measures

H.10 The Provisional LTP includes several alternatives that were considered for tackling congestion, although significant road building was ruled out due to negative environmental implications. Options that were not taken forward include:

- Road User Charging and Workplace Parking Levies
- Park and Ride services outside Central Leicestershire
- Further Rail Stations on the Local Rail Network
- Ivanhoe Stage 2
- Statutory Bus Quality Partnership and Quality Bus Contracts
- Trams in Central Leicestershire.

H.11 All of these options will not be progressed during this LTP period as they do not currently represent value for money in terms of the improvements they offer. However, in most cases these options have not been abandoned completely and they are likely to be reconsidered in the future subject to national and local policy development.

H.12 The LTP includes three proposals for significant development including:

- Earl Shilton Bypass
- Loughborough Integrated Transport Scheme
- Leicester Park and Ride.

H.13 Planning for and consultation on the Earl Shilton Bypass has been ongoing since the mid-1980s and alternatives have been considered during this period. The scheme has been subject to a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment and has also received planning approval. It has therefore only been given cursory attention in the SEA to avoid duplication.

H.14 The Loughborough Integrated Transport Scheme will be subject to a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment. As the scheme is still under development it presents problems for evaluation at this stage; however a broad assessment has been made where possible to influence the final scheme.

H.15 Traffic modelling has shown that park and ride is the most effective way to reduce car use and therefore congestion on radial routes in to Leicester. A review of potential park and ride sites is underway and will have a major bearing on the environmental effects of this proposal.

## Findings and recommendations

H.16 Due to the nature of the majority of the proposals contained in the LTP, few significant effects on the environment have been identified. Environmental Impact Assessments are required for the major scheme proposals and should identify and mitigate negative effects.

H.17 Based on the key findings of the SEA of the LTP, the recommendations are:

- Environmental objectives should be integrated into the Transport Asset Management Plan Review
- Information on the quality of roadside verges for nature conservation should be gathered and monitored
- The use of recycled materials and the reuse and recycling of waste should be maximised in transport works wherever possible
- Good quality buses, managed efficiently are essential to avoid air quality impacts of modal shift
- Scheme design which is sensitive to biodiversity, landscape character and the historic environment is essential to avoid deterioration of local heritage
- Early consultation with environmental experts should be incorporated in all schemes
- Continued monitoring of air quality across the County is essential. A deterioration below national objectives could require remedial action during the plan period
- Further emphasis on marketing and promotion of sustainable travel in Leicestershire are required to affect behaviour and increase the use of new and existing infrastructure. Budget allocations for this work should be detailed in the LTP.

## Monitoring

H.18 In order to examine the plan's performance against priority environmental objectives and to allow remedial action, the following monitoring framework is suggested:

- Continue to monitor air quality across the County to ensure that targets are not exceeded and that no new Air Quality Management Areas are declared
- Pay particular attention to air quality along the proposed Inner Relief Road in Loughborough in case of a shift of town centre pollution, especially from the High Street
- Establish baseline data for the quality and quantity of roadside verges with value for nature conservation and monitor their condition throughout the plan period
- Collect information on the disposal of waste from street lighting renewal and transport maintenance
- Collect information on the use of recycled materials in street lighting renewal and transport maintenance.

## **Influencing the final LTP**

H.19 The Environmental Report has been produced to coincide with the Provisional LTP for public consultation. It includes recommendations for the implementation of the final plan, which will be considered along with consultation responses.