

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### Introduction and overview

1.1 This is the second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) for the County of Leicestershire, covering the period 2006/07 to 2010/11. It sets out our transport strategy for the County, which is based on a thorough review of transport needs and details a five year implementation programme.

1.2 This introductory chapter describes in outline how LTP2 has been developed, the lessons learnt from our first LTP (LTP1) and the corporate context for the Plan. It then indicates the contents of the remaining chapters.

1.3 The Transport Act 2000 requires most local transport authorities in England to produce and implement a Local Transport Plan (LTP) which takes account of statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Transport. The LTP process aims to encourage high quality transport planning and effective delivery of local transport proposals, and to define the basis for monitoring transport performance. Our first LTP, for 2001/02 to 2005/06, included an integrated transport strategy and a bid to central government for funding for local transport improvements. We have produced an Annual Progress Report each year, setting out how LTP money is being spent and what we are achieving with it.

1.4 Each year we gained further experience of what was working well, what was working not so well and what we needed to do to ensure we delivered our transport improvements efficiently and effectively and so remained on track to achieve the targets we had set ourselves. As a result, our most recent, fourth Annual Progress Report was rated 'excellent' by the Department for Transport (DfT). Leicestershire County Council is also rated an excellent (4 star) authority by the Government in its Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

1.5 We submitted a Provisional LTP2 in July 2005. This was rated 'promising' by DfT but there were a number of areas identified where improvements could be made. We have taken the opportunity in the development of the final LTP not only to address these areas, but also to introduce many more improvements to ensure we are fully explaining what we are doing and why, and to take every opportunity to ensure we use the most cost effective measures to achieve our objectives.

1.6 This final LTP has also been developed based on feedback received from the DfT, Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM) as well as from extensive consultation with our stakeholders and the public. Since submission of the Provisional LTP2 we have also progressed work on finalising our accessibility strategy, developing our network management role, and developing a rights of way improvement plan and a transport asset management plan, all of which are reported here. The LTP also includes an updated work programme and revised targets and indicators, based on the 2006/07 settlement and financial planning guidelines for the remaining years.



### About Leicestershire

1.7 Leicestershire is a diverse county in the centre of England. It rings the City of Leicester and borders with the counties of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Rutland. Our population is a little over 600,000 and the county covers an area of about 2,000 square kilometres, across seven districts. We have exceptional transport links to the rest of the country - London is just over an hour away by train and there are extensive road networks including the M1, M69, M42 and the A14. Nottingham East Midlands Airport (NEMA) lies in the north of the county and Birmingham airport to the west, providing flights to a wide range of destinations. NEMA is also one of the UK's major freight airports. Figure 1.1 shows a plan of Leicestershire.

1.8 Leicestershire is predominantly rural, but has a number of county towns and suburban communities, many of which have a history dating back 1,000 years. We have many heritage sites, both natural and built, reflecting different aspects of our history.



1.9 We host the National Forest, which includes Charnwood Forest and pockets of ancient woodland. Other recognisable landscapes include the Soar and Wreake Valleys, High Leicestershire, the Leicestershire Vales and the Wolds. The numerous parks and open spaces in the county are well used and valued by local people, and consultation for Leicestershire's Cultural Strategy revealed that the majority of Leicestershire residents were proud of the rural beauty of the area, and felt that the county's open spaces offered scope for reflection.

1.10 One of Leicestershire's key strengths is its central location and strong communications network, providing easy access to the rest of the UK and beyond. We have a diverse economy, which is generally robust and prosperous and the second largest in the East Midlands. Our gross domestic product per head is also the second highest in the region. Traditionally, the Leicestershire economy has tended to perform slightly better than other areas of the UK during any downturn in the economic cycle. Due in part to Leicestershire's relative prosperity, it has more traffic in terms of vehicle kilometres travelled per head of population than Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, the two other shire counties in the East Midlands Three Cities sub-area. Despite this, Leicestershire has experienced less traffic growth than the other two counties during LTP1.

### LTP1 achievements

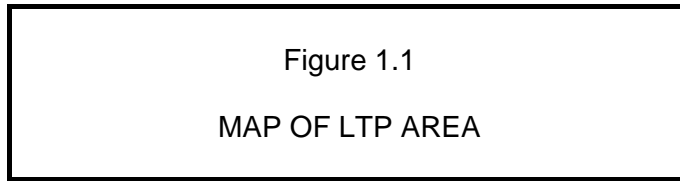
1.11 Preparation of LTP2 has taken place in the final year of LTP1 and builds on its successes. So far, between 2000/01 and 2004/05, we have:

- Spent over £12m of LTP capital money implementing a wide range of integrated transport schemes such as bus, cycle and pedestrian improvements, road safety and town centre improvements
- Completed two major schemes, the A511 Ashby Bypass and A607 Rearsby Bypass
- Spent over £32m of LTP capital money on road, footway and bridge maintenance schemes
- Invested over £19m of County Council revenue money on key transport services such as bus revenue support and urban traffic management and control development

- Invested over £50m of County Council revenue money in highway maintenance
- Used the Government's Rural Bus Grant, Rural Bus Challenge, Kickstart and Real Time Bus Information Challenge to help support a network of high quality inter-urban low floor bus services and the provision of real time bus information
- Used the Government's Rural Transport Partnership Fund to support innovative rural transport services
- Worked with partners to deliver a wide range of improvements, for example:
  - With the City Council in delivering improved Urban Traffic Management and Control systems, bus corridor improvements and the safety camera scheme through the Road Safety Partnership
  - With the district councils in delivering comprehensive concessionary travel and bus infrastructure improvements
  - With Sustrans in delivering major improvements to our cycle networks
  - With the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership and the National Forest in delivering rights of way improvements
  - With developers in delivering many additions to the transport network, including the Epinal Way Extension in Loughborough.

1.12 As a result of this investment and our improved monitoring procedures we have been successful in meeting, or being on track to deliver, nearly all of our LTP1 targets. Over the last four years our Annual Progress Reports have contained some notable achievements including:

- A reduction of 24% in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road collisions, including a 50% reduction in pedestrian and cyclist casualties and a reduction of 73% in the number of child casualties, which is the biggest reduction of any shire authority
- Excellent progress in improving bus access, particularly in rural areas, with the final target of 95% of people served by an hourly daytime service reached in October 2004, understood to be the highest of any shire authority
- An increase of 60% from 1.72m to 2.75m in just two years in the number of journeys made per year on County Council contract bus services
- An increase of 17% from 1494 to 1750 in just two years in the number of journeys made per week using complementary public transport services for disabled people
- A near doubling to 45% of the bus fleet with low floors for level access and faster boarding
- An increase from 10 to 77 of schools with approved school travel plans, with 25% of all Leicestershire schools having adopted school travel plans by 2004
- 81% of schools provided with road safety services and nearly 60% of year 6 pupils (10/11 year olds) receiving cycle training
- 96% of pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people
- The substantial completion of the countywide lorry control plan highlighted as best practice in the Rural White Paper
- A reduction in principal road carriageway requiring strengthening from 21.5% to 11.3%.



1.13 As a result of this, and our effective spending and scheme delivery, we secured an ‘excellent’ verdict from the DfT for our fourth Annual Progress Report.

### The challenge for transport

1.14 LTP1 achievements have taken place during a time in Leicestershire when:

- The number of dwellings has increased by 17,000 between 2000 and 2005 (Annual Residential Land Monitoring Report March 2005)
- Traffic has grown by 7.9% (Department for Transport National Road Traffic Survey 2004)
- 83% of households have at least 1 car available (2001 Census data)
- 71% of journeys to work are made by car (2001 Census data).

1.15 However, 42% of Leicestershire residents travel less than 5km to their place of work (2001 Census data) and this offers scope to encourage further transfer to more sustainable modes of transport. The challenge we face is to deliver efficient and safe transport access whilst at the same time minimising environmental damage, all in the context of a growing economy and increasing demand for travel.

1.16 For Leicestershire this means:

- Tackling congestion
- Improving access to facilities
- Reducing the number and severity of road accident casualties
- Providing better air quality
- Reducing the impact of traffic
- Maintaining all our transport assets in good condition.

## The corporate context for LTP2

### The Community Strategy

1.17 Transport is of course a means to an end and, as such, is a key theme running through our corporate priorities. The Leicestershire Community Strategy was produced in July 2003 and reviewed for 2004/05. It aims to develop:

**A vibrant and thriving county in which to live, work and play, where people have access to quality services and which looks to the future by maximising opportunities for its young people.**

1.18 Leicestershire people have identified their priorities for delivering this vision, with transport improvements well to the fore. Priorities for urgent improvement include tackling traffic congestion and lowering the level of crime. Other high priorities include road safety, the condition of roads and pavements, access to health services, public transport and cleanliness of streets. Further details of the Community Strategy are given in Chapter 2.

## The Medium Term Corporate Strategy

1.19 Our Medium Term Corporate Strategy sets out the County Council's plans, taking account of the Community Strategy. The Medium Term Corporate Strategy aims:

**To listen to the views of Leicestershire people and, by working with them, ensure they enjoy the quality of life which they expect: to live in a County which is safe, healthy, attractive and prosperous.**

1.20 The strategy is being delivered through six corporate objectives, three of which have a direct link with delivery of the LTP. These are:

- Creating a better transport system
- Working with partners to deliver quality and responsive services
- Seeking a safer county.

1.21 Progress towards the objectives in the Medium Term Corporate Strategy is reported annually through the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP). Further details on our Medium Term Corporate Strategy are given in Chapter 2.

## How LTP2 has been developed

### Consultation and participation

1.22 LTP2 has built on the work of LTP1. We produced a draft strategy during 2004, based on guidance from government, corporate priorities and the results of stakeholder consultation over recent years. We consulted on the draft strategy in the autumn and winter of 2004 and refined it for inclusion in the Provisional LTP2 submitted in July 2005. Further consultation was carried out in the autumn and winter of 2005 on the Provisional LTP and the associated Strategic Environmental Assessment.



We have developed the final LTP based

on comments from this consultation, from DfT and GOEM, and through further engagement with a number of our other stakeholders, including:

- The City Council with respect to Central Leicestershire
- District councils – letters of support are contained in Appendix A
- Bus operators, the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership, Primary Care Trusts, the Highways Agency and the rail bodies
- Accessibility strategy partners as part of the Accessibility Forum
- Statutory bodies associated with the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

1.23 The results of our consultation are described in more detail in Chapter 2.

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## Joint working with Leicester City Council

1.24 Joint working with Leicester City Council is vital, given the strong interdependence between the city and the surrounding county urban area. Effective operational liaison is necessary for all areas of our work. Over and above this, joint planning and programming is vital if we are to be truly effective in providing attractive alternatives to the car aimed at tackling congestion, in providing improved access to facilities and in improving air quality. This Plan, which is comprehensive for Leicestershire, shows how we manage this joint planning and programming. The Central Leicestershire LTP, which is comprehensive for Leicester, also details the same planning processes and investment programmes for all of urban Central Leicestershire. Chapters 4 to 9 give more detail.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.25 It is important that the environmental implications of all our capital and revenue measures are fully assessed. We therefore carried out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of our proposals as the Provisional LTP was developed and we consulted on the report alongside the consultation on the Provisional LTP. In this way we could ensure that environmental objectives were fully integrated with our proposals. Further details are given in Chapter 3, which outlines the main recommendations from the SEA and the recommendations from the statutory environmental bodies, all of which have been incorporated into the LTP. We also carry out separate environmental impact assessments for our major projects.

## Equality Impact Assessment

1.26 The County Council is committed to equality in service provision and we have begun the process of completing equality impact assessments of plans and services. We have a long-established and structured approach to dealing with disability equality issues, including specific staff training and service analysis. We have taken equality issues fully into consideration during the development of the LTP and further information on our Corporate Equality Plan is given in Chapter 2.

## Comprehensive Performance Assessment

1.27 The County Council has been assessed as an excellent authority in the Government's Comprehensive Performance Assessment. As such we are not required to produce an LTP. However, we have chosen to do so in order to provide a greater level of information to our stakeholders and to compete for extra government funding which is open only to authorities which do complete LTPs.

## Structure of LTP2

1.28 The structure of the LTP is shown in Figure 1.2, which illustrates in outline how we have developed the LTP, the main contents of each chapter and the key influences on it.

Figure 1.2 Structure of the Local Transport Plan

