

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Effective public participation and consultation is an essential part of the LTP preparation. A genuinely inclusive approach to public involvement is required if the LTP is to have the widespread local support necessary to deliver the change in travel patterns needed to achieve a more sustainable transport system.

1.2 During the development of the LTP, the County Council carried out a comprehensive participation exercise and worked with a wide range of people, groups and organisations. This equipped the County Council with a clear sense of local priorities helping it produce an LTP which should command general and widespread support and contain strategies and action plans to tackle the problems causing local people the most concern.

1.3 This process of participation is divided into four sections in this appendix:

- participation prior to the preparation of the provisional LTP;
- participation during the preparation of the provisional LTP;
- participation during the development of the full LTP;
- participation to be carried out following the full LTP.

PARTICIPATION PRIOR TO THE PREPARATION OF THE PROVISIONAL LTP

1.4 A number of participation exercises were already being undertaken prior to the introduction of LTPs and the lessons learnt from them, particularly with regard to the transport elements, were used to develop the transportation objectives and strategies for the provisional LTP.

Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Consultation Draft Structure Plan

1.5 The Consultation Draft Structure Plan went through an extensive consultation exercise in late 1998.

1.6 The Plan attracted some 2,800 comments from over 450 respondents. Transport was a prevalent topic, with 368 comments directly related to the transport chapter and a large number of comments indirectly related to the impact of transport on other areas of the Plan.

Leicestershire's Local Agenda 21 - An Action Plan for a Better Leicestershire

1.7 'A better Leicestershire' is an initiative of the Forum for A Better Leicestershire (FABLE), which brings together representatives of the business, environmental and academic organisations, the County Council, public bodies and local groups. The forum was charged with the task of producing a Local Agenda 21 and has produced an action plan which sets out a vision of what life for people of Leicestershire could be like 20 to 30 years from now. The action plan was developed through widespread consultation over four years.

1.8 The consultation exercise highlighted that transport was not only a concern in its own right but had definite links and consequences for many other areas of concern.

1.9 The consultations for FABLE identified a wide variety of interest groups including organisations with an important role in the development of the strategy for the LTP. These existing contact groups were utilised as far as possible to ensure that the consultation for the full LTP reached the widest audience possible.

Local Plans

1.10 All of the Districts in Leicestershire have completed their Local Plan public inquiries and the County Council is closely involved in the Local Plan process, particularly in its capacity as Highway Authority. The County Council provided advice and guidance to the Districts on all highways and transportation issues and as a result the

County Council has been made aware of the local issues of concern.

Rural Strategy for Leicestershire

1.11 The County Council approved a Rural Strategy and Action Programme in 1995 following consultation with a wide range of agencies with an interest in the rural areas of the county.

1.12 With regard to the transport sector, two key areas were highlighted: the need for increased and improved transport facilities and the need to minimise the adverse impacts of traffic in rural areas.

PARTICIPATION DURING THE PREPARATION OF THE PROVISIONAL LTP

1.13 Even though the timescale for the provisional LTP was very constrained a considerable amount of consultation took place both within the County Council and with the key organisations. In particular there was:

- continuous dialogue with all of the District Councils and other key organisations;
- a land-use and transportation awareness seminar for all Members of the County Council;
- a Stakeholders seminar to inform both the Structure Plan review and the LTP development;
- District and County Council officer and Member symposiums;
- cross border liaison meetings with the adjoining authorities to address common areas of interest and potential problems;
- dialogue with a wide variety of existing working groups and forums;
- a series of meetings in various areas of the county in association with Transport 2000;
- correspondence with around 50 key organisations inviting them to contribute to

the development of the emerging LTP strategy.

1.14 In identifying the key organisations to be involved the County Council had regard to the far reaching consequences of transportation policy and the diverse nature of those with a specific interest in the transport debate. The key organisations included:

- all District Councils and adjacent County Councils (Officers and Members);
- Rural Community Council and Association of Parish Councils;
- groups representing disabled people and others with particular transport needs;
- environmental groups;
- transport user groups;
- public transport operators;
- business community;
- freight groups / organisations;
- police;
- education;
- Health Authority;
- GOEM;
- Highways Agency.

1.15 In addition to the direct consultation with outside bodies and groups, the County Council set up a Member working party to specifically consider the integration of land-use planning and transportation, to ensure that the policies in the LTP and the Structure Plan were coherent, complementary and fully integrated.

PARTICIPATION DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FULL LTP

1.16 The public participation exercise carried out following submission of the provisional LTP and prior to the full LTP adhered to the principles for effective participation. There was early involvement which was interactive, inclusive, continuous, open and with effective feedback to participants.

1.17 The participation process commenced soon after submission of the provisional LTP in order to give local people, groups and organisations the maximum opportunity to contribute to the development of the full LTP.

1.18 The purpose of the exercise was to:

- enable the public, groups and organisations to review the proposals included in the provisional LTP;
- ascertain the level of support for those proposals;
- offer the opportunity for them to influence the development of the Area Strategies and Implementations Programmes to be included in the full LTP.

1.19 The participation exercise involved:

LTP distribution

1.20 About 1000 copies of the provisional LTP were forwarded to a wide variety of groups and organisations and to many members of the public. In the interests of seeking comments and views, the vast majority were issued free of charge. It was available in a different format if desired, for example in large type or Braille. It was also available in every library in the LTP area.

Local Transport Seminars and Questionnaire

1.21 At the end of 1999, a series of local transport seminars was hosted by the District Councils. A large number of people attended from a wide range of organisations. The approach to the seminars was as informal as possible in order to achieve a two-way open and honest debate. Most seminars included workshops covering the key areas of transport provision.

1.22 The aim of the seminars was:

- to establish the level of support for the aim, objectives and strategies in the provisional LTP;
- to identify the key local issues and problems;

- to determine local priorities for action.

1.23 The seminars were held in the main centres of each Area Strategy and in each of the County Towns. Whilst choosing venues, the access requirements for disabled people were considered.

1.24 The seminars were very well received by delegates and proved successful in imparting information, receiving effective feedback and achieving a two-way dialogue.

1.25 The seminar attendees were asked to complete a questionnaire asking them to make a number of detailed responses to transport issues.

Posters & Leaflets and Exhibition Boards

1.26 In order to disseminate information, raise general awareness of transport and travel issues and as a mechanism to seek the views, comments and aspirations of local people a series of posters, a set of publicity boards and a consultation leaflet were produced.

1.27 The leaflets and posters were displayed and distributed widely including at many post offices, libraries and Parish Council venues. It was also put on the County Councils website. It was available in different formats upon request, for example in large type and Braille, and multiple copies were produced in tape format for the Leicestershire Visually Impaired Council upon their request.

1.28 The publicity boards were displayed as a free-standing exhibition at each of the seminars and at most of the District Council offices during the period of public participation. They were also used at the launch of Charnwood Borough Council's Agenda 21. The boards were reproduced as A3 size colour posters and displayed at all the District Council offices for a significant period of time.

Use of the Media

1.29 Local papers and radio were used as much as possible to raise awareness of the issues which needed to be addressed in developing the LTP strategy.

Letters and Comments

1.30 As a result of all of the above a large number of comments were received and considered during the development LTP Strategies and Action Plans.

District Council Involvement

1.31 The District and Borough Councils have an important role to play in the delivery of many areas of the LTP strategy and have been actively involved in all stages of the LTP process. In Appendix A are the statements from them which set out their commitment to the LTP and how they are proposing to ensure its effective implementation.

Ongoing participation mechanisms

1.32 The County Council already has many effective mechanisms and forums for discussing transport and travel and other issues with the local community and specific groups and organisations. The opportunity to build on them was taken to raise awareness of transport and travel issues and to allow the opportunity for debate and feedback on the LTP. That ongoing consultation and participation has fed into the development of the LTP and will continue throughout the life of the Plan.

1.33 Examples of some of the organisations are shown below:

- District and Parish Councils
- Groups representing cyclists and pedestrians
- Environmental Groups
- Groups representing disabled people and others with particular transport needs
- Public Transport Operators
- Transport Business Partnership and Freight Quality Partnership
- Business Community
- Leicestershire Constabulary
- Educational establishments
- Health Authority
- GOEM
- Highways Agency
- Leicestershire and Rutland Air Quality Forum
- Countywide Forum for Liaison with Builders and Developers
- Leicester and Leicestershire Motorcycle Forum
- East Midlands Parking Group
- Leicestershire Partnership for Safer Communities

Leicestershire Rural Strategy Review Seminar

1.34 The Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) has developed a Rural Strategy and Action Plan for Leicestershire. This was launched at the first annual conference in 1996. This document has been reviewed in the light of actions and experience over the last four years, and the new Consultation Draft of the Rural Strategy and Action Plan was launched at the Leicestershire Rural Partnership's Annual Conference in June 2000. The LTP and the LRP Rural Strategy have been developed in parallel and the participation process for the LRP Rural Strategy has informed the development of the LTP strategy.

KEY FINDINGS

1.35 The main results, which are a culmination of findings from all aspects of this stage of the process have been used in the development of the LTP and are outlined below. Many more detailed comments relevant to particular areas within the County were also received and these have been used in the development of the Areas Strategies and commented upon in the relevant section of the LTP where appropriate.

The Overall Strategy

1.36 The overall aim and objectives of the provisional LTP were generally favourably received and were supported in over 80% of the questionnaires.

1.37 It was evident from the seminars that more needs to be done to make people aware of how much traffic is predicted to grow by and

the impact that could have, particularly on increased congestion. Nonetheless, following the seminars, the questionnaires showed that only 10% of the respondents thought that traffic growth was not a problem.

Area Strategy Approach

1.38 The Area Strategy approach was favourably received although Melton Borough Council thought there should be a strategy to cover the whole of the Borough and there was a suggestion that there should be a strategy to cover the whole of the National Forest (including Staffordshire and Derbyshire).

Public Transport

1.39 Concerns about the existing bus services featured strongly throughout the LTP area. There was a wide appreciation of the lack of powers available to local authorities to influence bus services and many people felt that more powers and funding would be required to make a significant difference. From a range of options in the seminar questionnaire, improved frequency and integration feature as the highest priority and bus lanes the lowest priority.

1.40 There was support for more community transport and many communities expressed a desire to be more involved in developing transport provision and services to meet their local needs. It was felt that there could be better co-ordination of the existing services and vehicles.

1.41 There was support for the Ivanhoe Line rail proposals and criticism of the lack of progress to date.

Park and Ride

1.42 It was widely felt that more park and ride services should be provided around the Leicester urban area. Although the opportunities elsewhere were considered to be negligible, there was some support for park and ride provision for Loughborough.

Road Improvement and New Roads

1.43 Despite the fact that the majority of those attending the seminars used cars, there

was no general support for more road building and over half the people completing the questionnaire agreed, or agreed strongly, that building more roads is not a solution to the problems of congestion and pollution.

1.44 There was still support for bypasses as the only viable solution to traffic problems in some of the county towns and suggestions that road building should not be ruled out for the smaller villages which experience heavy through traffic. A number of people suggested that bypasses to Melton, Kegworth, Earl Shilton, Rearsby and Lutterworth would be beneficial to those communities. Concern was also expressed about the need to remove through traffic from the A6 in Loughborough.

Speed Management and Traffic Calming

1.45 There was considerable concern about excessive speeds, mainly in rural areas. Support for traffic calming schemes, however, was mixed with criticism of some schemes but praise for others.

Funding

1.46 A commonly held view was that present levels of funding are insufficient but there was little or no enthusiasm for the introduction of road-user charging or workplace parking levies. There was a widely held view that the motorist already pays enough in taxation and more of that should be invested in transport and that the problems were not sufficiently great to warrant the introduction of road-user charging or workplace parking levies as a demand management tool.

Demand Management

1.47 There was strong support for the 'softer' demand management measures (particularly School Travel Plans and, to a lesser extent, Business Travel Plans for major businesses).

1.48 There was a widely held view that the Government should take a stronger lead with regard to travel awareness campaigns to seek the change in culture thought necessary for the LTP strategy to be effective.

1.49 The role of parking management to encourage the use of alternatives to the car had a more mixed reception. Whilst there was general acceptance that it was important to manage parking to influence travel behaviour (over 70% of the questionnaires showed agreement with this), there was little enthusiasm for strong measures to be taken and a widely held view that the 'carrots' should come before, and be seen to more than offset the 'sticks'. The need for all Districts to move forward together to avoid detrimentally affecting the competitive position of the county towns was a common concern.

Cycling and Walking

1.50 There was support for more measures to assist walking and cycling and a recognition that this could be linked to routes to school. There was general concern regarding the current inadequacy of cycle facilities but walking and cycling improvements did not rate as highly as other aspects of the strategy in the questionnaires.

Freight

1.51 There was concern that more should be done to take freight off the roads.

Integration with Land Use Planning

1.52 New developments were a significant concern, particularly with regard to further development around Junction 24 and Hinckley. Views were expressed that the planning system should be strengthened and that local authorities should have more powers to seek contributions to mitigate the impact of developments.

PARTICIPATION TO BE CARRIED OUT FOLLOWING THE FULL LTP

1.53 Public participation on the LTP will continue throughout the life of the Plan. The LTP itself and summaries of it will be made widely available. Liaison and consultation regarding the implementation of individual strategies will continue with interested parties and relevant groups and organisations and the County Council will continue to work closely

with District Councils, particularly on the application of parking strategies.

1.54 The County Council is currently reviewing and developing its corporate consultation structures to provide a comprehensive and effective approach to community consultations. Opportunities can be taken when these are in place to seek views on transport provision as the LTP proposals are implemented.