

Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive

5 April 2016

Local Transport Plan 4

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This report relates to a Key Decision

Purpose of this report

1. To highlight the need for a new Local Transport Plan.
2. Propose a new strategic approach for investment in transport.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. approve the production of a new Local Transport Plan;
2. endorse the vision and objectives of the new Plan; and
3. support the timetable for its production and adoption.

Overview and Scrutiny Comments / Recommendations

3. This item has not gone to Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, as the individual elements of the Local Transport Plan are developed over the course of the next 18 months, Overview and Scrutiny will be engaged accordingly.

Background

4. The Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Central Bedfordshire sets out a strategic framework for investment in local transport. It is a statutory requirement for all highways authorities to have an LTP in place and it has been the vehicle through which Central Government fund local transport schemes since 2000.

5. The current LTP (LTP3) was adopted in April 2011 and so is 5 years old. Previous LTPs (LTP1 & LTP2), which were produced by the County Council, had 5 year timeframes and whilst there is no statutory requirement for us to replace the LTP at this point in time, there are a number of factors which point towards it being in need of review.
6. This report details the need for the production of a new Local Transport Plan, the vision and objectives it proposes to work towards, and the structure and processes through which these will be achieved.

Why produce a new Plan?

7. There have been a number of changes since the adoption of LTP3 which need to be reflected in a new strategic approach to investing in transport across the authority. Table 1 below summaries these key drivers for change.

Table 1: Drivers for Change

Change	National	Local
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in Government Policy (May 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in local priorities following the election in May 2015
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for funding via SEM LEP • Autumn Statement (November 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTP funding settlement announced (July 2014) • Emerging Community Infrastructure Levy
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing role of LEPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five Year Plan (2015)
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of Highways England (2015) • Funding of East-West Rail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the Woodside Link & A5-M1 (Spring 2017) • New major scheme priorities identified.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Local Plan (2017/18)
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDP growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net growth in jobs

8. In addition to the above, it is a priority of the authority to produce a Passenger Transport Strategy and a new Parking Strategy in the near future. These are being produced at present, will be completed ahead of the final LTP and will be incorporated into that Plan. However, they cannot come forward without a review of the strategic context within which they will sit, hence commencement of work towards a new LTP.

New Focus to the LTP

9. The current LTP3 has 10 objectives and 11 Local Area Transport Plans (LATPs) through which funding is allocated and within which these objectives are sought to be achieved. It is felt that on reflection this does not provide a focused enough direction or targeted investment programme.
10. It also adopted a more bottom up as opposed to top down approach to determining scheme priorities and whilst welcomed by many, it was not structured in a way which could maximise the ability of transport to contribute towards the wider strategic objectives of the authority.
11. Therefore it is proposed to focus the new LTP4 on delivering sustainable growth as the single most predominant issue facing the authority. Sustainable growth forms the basis to the Government's economic policy and is key to securing the future prosperity of Central Bedfordshire.
12. Given this focus, there are three broad areas through which transport can contribute to facilitating growth, and these three areas are intended to form the objectives of the Plan. They relate to:
 - a. Capacity,
 - b. Connectivity, and
 - c. Communities.

Objective 1: Capacity – Provide the transport capacity to facilitate growth

13. New development will increase pressures on the transport network and the demand to travel in the local area. Providing new capacity and making better use of the existing capacity will allow the authority to absorb this increase and accommodate additional trips, to enable development to come forward and minimise the impact on existing residents.

Objective 2: Connectivity – Improve connectivity to jobs and services

14. Connected communities which can readily access the new jobs and opportunities provided by growth ensure that all local residents can realise the benefits associated with new investment in an area. Improved connectivity also helps to give business a competitive advantage and embed sustainability into the growth agenda.

Objective 3: Communities – Create safe and attractive communities

15. Safe, attractive and inclusive communities are places in which people want to live and businesses want to invest.

Through the creation of more civilised streets, reducing the impact of traffic and improving safety and personal security, transport investment can help create communities and preserve a local environment that draws in external investment.

16. Each of these objectives also encapsulate the wider benefits of investing in transport improvements such as improved health and wellbeing, environmental improvements, better air quality and improved quality of life.
17. They will be supported by a series of targets and indicators, and where possible these will be the same as those adopted at the start of LTP3, to ensure continuity in monitoring and enable us to identify trends over a longer period of time.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities

18. The proposed objectives of the LTP align with the six priorities contained within the Five Year Plan, as approved by Executive Committee in October 2015. Table 2 below highlights the inter-relationship between the priorities and objectives.

Table 2: Relationship between LTP4 Objectives and the Five Year Plan

5 Year Plan Priorities	LTP4 Objectives		
	Capacity	Connectivity	Communities
Enhancing Central Bedfordshire	✓	✓	✓
Delivering great residents services	✓	✓	✓
Improving education and skills		✓	
Protecting the vulnerable and promoting well being		✓	✓
Creating stronger communities	✓	✓	✓
An efficient and responsive council	✓	✓	✓

Proposed Structure

19. Given the vision and objectives of the Plan, it is proposed to develop a series of strategies which will sit alongside a concise overarching LTP as highlighted below:



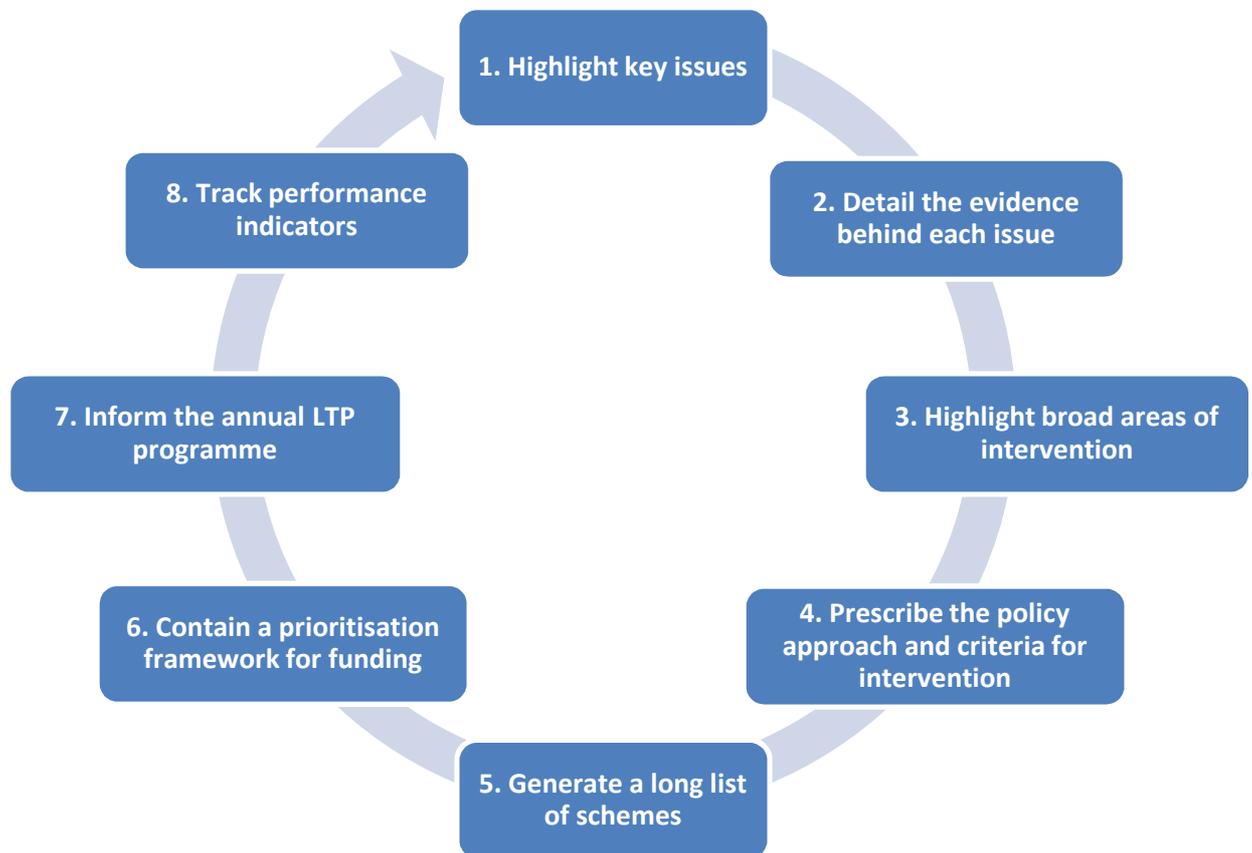
20. Table 3 highlights the potential ability of each strategy to contribute towards the proposed objectives of the LTP. A series of additional documents will also be produced to understand the wider implications of the Plan including a Highways Asset Management Plan, an Equalities Impact Assessment and a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Table 3: Relationship between Strategies and Objectives

Strategy	LTP4 Objectives		
	Capacity	Connectivity	Communities
Highways	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓
Passenger Transport	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Public Transport	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓

Strategy	LTP4 Objectives		
	Capacity	Connectivity	Communities
Active Travel	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
SMOTS ¹	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Smarter Choices	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Parking	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Road Safety	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓

21. Within the overarching context of the LTP each strategy will:



22. This process will form a sound and robust evidence base to justify investment, ensure value for money and provide effective schemes on the ground that will contribute towards the overarching objectives of the LTP and the priorities within the Five Year Plan.

¹ SMOTS – Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy

23. A summary of each the content of each strategy is set out in Table 4.

Table 4: Content of Strategies

Strategy	Key Issues	Inter-dependencies	Date for Adoption
Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congestion • Missing links in the network • Inappropriate routing of traffic • Severance • Movement of freight • Air quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Model • Local Plan • Highways Asset Management Plan • Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn 2017
Passenger Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidised public transport • Home to school transport • Community transport • Fleet operations and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School expansion programme • SMOTS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn 2016
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Interchanges • Information • Services • Ticketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Model • Passenger Transport Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2017
Active Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging walking and cycling • Enabling healthier lifestyles • Addressing safety concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure Strategy • Health Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn 2016

Strategy	Key Issues	Inter-dependencies	Date for Adoption
SMOTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe access to schools • Sustainable access to schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School expansion programme • Passenger Transport Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn 2016
Smarter Choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel Choices • Travel Plans • Promotions, marketing and information • Car sharing and car clubs • Electric charging points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging “Access Fund” from Central Government • Legacy LSTF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2017
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of parking • Inappropriate and inconsiderate parking • Management and enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passenger Transport Strategy • Highways Strategy • Design Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn 2016
Road Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual and perceived safety concerns • Engineering • Education • Enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways Strategy • SMOTS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn 2017

Funding – Local Schemes

24. The authority receives an annual allocation of capital funding associated with the LTP which is £1.365M for the next 4 years. This funds a programme of relatively small scale improvement schemes each year.
25. The Integrated Transport Block (ITB) funding as it is referred to by Central Government is also utilised locally to support the Rural Match Fund (RMF) process which levers in additional transport contributions from local town and parish councils.
26. The amount Central Bedfordshire Council will receive in the coming years was provided in July 2014 and is detailed in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Funding associated with the LTP

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
£1.365m	£1.365m	£1.365m	£1.365m

Funding – Major Schemes

27. In addition the new LTP will provide the evidence and policy basis upon which to bid for major scheme funding (projects worth over £5m) from Central Government and the Local Economic Partnership (SEM LEP).
28. Central Bedfordshire Council has been extremely successful in recent years in securing funding for large scale transport projects including:
 - Luton to Dunstable Busway (in partnership with Luton)
 - A5 to M1 Link (in partnership with Highways England and developers)
 - Woodside Link
 - A421 Dualling
 - M1 to A6 Link (indicative allocation)
 - Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF)
 - Leighton Linlade Cycle Town Project
29. A new LTP4 will ensure that the authority remains competitive in an increasingly difficult financial climate.

Timeframe for Adoption

30. It is proposed that LTP4 is in place by late 2017 or early 2018 to align with the adoption of the new Local Plan. Member endorsement of the vision, objectives and framework of the Plan will enable this process to commence.

31. The component strategies will be produced over the next 18 month period to enable the full consideration of each individual documents by members, the public and other stakeholders alike, whilst also providing sufficient time to develop the evidence bases to set their direction, and factor in all of the many interdependencies. The indicative timeframe is set out in Table 6.

Table 6: Timetable for Adoption

Date	Milestone
April 2016	Approval of Vision, Objectives and Structure of LTP4
Autumn 2016	Adoption of SMOTS Strategy
	Adoption of Passenger Transport Strategy
	Adoption of Parking Strategy
	Adoption of Active Travel Strategy
Spring 2017	Adoption of Smarter Choices Strategy
	Adoption of Public Transport Strategy
Autumn 2017	Adoption of Road Safety Strategy
	Adoption of Highways Strategy
	Member Approval of Final LTP4

Council Priorities

32. The Local Transport Plan is an important tool in helping to deliver the Council's priorities, and this has been drawn out in the above report. Either directly or indirectly it facilitates:
- Enhancing local communities.
 - Improving access to education and training.
 - Promoting health and well being.
 - Providing better infrastructure.
 - Enabling great universal services (in terms of transport services), and
 - Contributes towards achieving value for money through taking an evidenced based, data-led approach to transport investment.

Legal Implications

33. None

Financial Implications

34. The authority receives £1.365M as an annual capital settlement from Central Government for spend associated with the Local Transport Plan. This is detailed in the Medium Term Financial Plan.
35. From 2016/17 onwards the way this funding is allocated is proposed to reflect the new structure of the LTP, with contributions aligning with the respective strategies which comprise the Plan. These will be agreed with members on an annual basis as part of the wider Highways Capital Programme.

Equalities Implications

36. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) will be produced as a background document to the LTP and the individual strategies it will contain. The EIA for the current LTP focused on the importance of providing realistic travel choice and alternatives to the car to enable access to training and opportunities, particularly for those in more deprived areas with less disposable income or access to a car.

Sustainability Implications

37. The Plan will bring forward sustainable transport measures and ensure that the new development is accessible by a choice of means of transport to reduce reliance on the car.
38. The LTP will be supported by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (as was produced for LTP3), which will detail the implications of the proposed approach to investment the Plan contains, in terms of issues associated with noise, air quality, health, bio-diversity, climate change, landscape and cultural heritage.

Risk Management

39. Updating the Local Transport Plan will mitigate the risks of:
 - Failing to deliver the Council's priorities
 - Failing to address the national and local drivers for change, as outlined in this report
 - Failing to discharge statutory responsibilities, and
 - Reputational damage, arising from not addressing community needs.

Conclusion and Next Steps

40. Subject to the approval of the Executive, work will commence on the production of the new Local Transport Plan on the framework and to the timescales set out within this report.

41. Once in place it will supplement the Local Plan to provide a strategic, integrated long term vision for facilitating growth within the authority. It will detail the short, medium and long term investments in transport that will be required to provide the capacity for growth, ensure connectivity to jobs and opportunities, and create safe and attractive communities where people want to live and businesses want to invest.

Appendices

None