

To: City Executive Board

Date: 8 December 2010

Item No: 11

Report of: Head of City Development

Title of Report: Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To agree a response to the draft Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 3

Key decision? No

Executive lead member: Councillor Colin Cook

Policy Framework:

Improving the local environment, economy and quality of life
Tackling climate change and promoting sustainable environmental resource management
Regeneration Framework.

Recommendation(s): Endorse the draft response attached as Appendix 2 and authorise the Head of City Development to send to Oxfordshire County Council as the formal response of Oxford City Council

Appendices

Appendix 1 Risk register

Appendix 2 Draft response to Oxfordshire LTP3

1. Background

1.1 Oxfordshire County Council are statutorily bound to producing a Local Transport Plan (LTP) periodically for their administrative area. This has, in the past, been an important document in that it set out broad spending allocations on transport projects, and had delivery targets that were monitored year-on-year. The LTP therefore provided important information on transport infrastructure expected to be delivered over a five-year period.

1.2 The current LTP, 'LTP2', expires in March 2011. The County Council have therefore been preparing a new LTP3. However, unlike previous LTPs, the

new one will cover a much longer period and provide a higher level strategic steer to decisions made on transport. The intention was that it would also set out a short-term spending programme covering a 3-5 year period.

1.3 Since the Government announced significant spending cuts in the public sector, the scope of the LTP3 has been significantly reduced to focus solely on longer-term strategy. The reason given is that there will be very little capital funding for projects available from Government in the short-term, hence any costed programme would probably not be delivered.

1.4 In particular, members will wish to note that the Government has announced the withdrawal of provisional funding for the Access to Oxford project, in the wake of the Comprehensive Spending Review. It is hoped that some funding will still be available through a future bid by the emerging Local Enterprise Partnership for a Regional Growth Fund allocation or alternative funding sources yet to be determined

2. LTP3 document structure

2.1 The draft document has been published electronically on the County Council's website¹. Hard copies have been printed and placed in the Members' Common Room. The Strategy consists of 27 detailed chapters, published as separate documents. Some of these set out policies and detail on the nine LTP3 objectives, whilst the rest set out area specific strategies for Oxford, the towns, and a chapter covering rural areas. There is also a Summary Document that also includes the policies, and a shortened version of the text in each of the detailed chapters.

3. Draft response to LTP3 – Executive Summary

3.1 The full draft response suggested is set out in Appendix 2. Included in this covering report is a summary, mainly in bullet form, of the key points that are proposed.

Context

3.2 Key points made in the draft response to this section are: To set out the context of the Core Strategy, which expresses in spatial terms the priorities of the City Council. Particular reference is made to the City Council's approach to supporting City-wide movement, based principally around improving the attractiveness of walking, cycling and public transport.

Main LTP3 Document (Chapters 1-12):

3.3 Key points made in the draft response to this section are:

- A general point that the policies in LTP3 are not especially helpful in steering future decision-making, given their general nature and lack of

¹ http://myconsultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/inovem/consult.ti/transport_ltp3_2011/listdocuments

prioritisation or strategy for implementation. Concern is expressed that the responsibilities of the County Council as local transport authority are in places confused with the responsibilities of the district councils as local planning authorities

- A general point that the omission of a Strategic Environmental Assessment report has resulted in a lack of quantifiable objectives that can be applied to scheme options and assessed against sustainability criteria.

3.4 The prioritisation in Oxford of improving walking and cycling, developing public transport, and reducing congestion are supported. Key specific principles that the draft response suggest can be supported in principle are:

- partnership work to manage flood risk (in relation to roads)
- Urban Traffic Management Control, to manage congestion and encouraging sustainable travel
- promote of safer speeds and speed reduction measures
- identify and improve accessibility by public transport to employment and services (on condition that socially excluded communities are mentioned)
- promote inclusive use of waterways and towpaths
- promote sustainable and low carbon forms of travel (on condition that there is stronger reference to partnership working)
- joint work with City Council to identify electric vehicle charging points
- reduce environmental impacts of transport, e.g. air quality
- improve public realm and de-clutter streets
- take into account the needs of vulnerable users such as the disabled
- public transport strategies – Premium Routes, improved ticketing, improved emissions standards and more bus priority
- further development of Park and Ride including ‘remote’ sites
- Bus Quality Agreement to rationalise bus frequency on some routes in Oxford
- encourage greater levels of cycling through improving facilities, infrastructure and more responsible cycling
- measures to support cycling e.g. public realm improvements, improved signage, innovative highways design.

3.5 Key specific aspects to which it is suggested objection is raised are:

- omits to refer to partnership working with district council on several issues, e.g. integrated parking policy, carbon reduction
- no explicit recognition of the role of taxis and hackney carriages in helping to reduce car use
- Chapter 8 – Supporting Development goes beyond the scope of County Council as local transport authority and therefore needs substantial redrafting in consultation with district authorities
- blanket requirement seeking planning contributions from development toward all modes of transport
- document should refer to the Oxford City Centre Streetscene Manual

- omits commitment to progressing remote park and ride (i.e. new park and ride sites further away from Oxford)
- document should recognise need for further joint working to improve coach access to Oxford City centre
- omits reference to Evergreen 3 and East West Rail in rail strategy section
- document should explicitly adopt the road user hierarchy (which prioritises pedestrians, then cyclists, then public transport)
- document should commit County Council to preparing walking and cycling strategies
- object to revoking the concept of a 'dual cycle network' and replacing with 'safe appropriate and attractive routes for the majority of cyclists'
- lack of baseline information on congestion, carbon reduction and reducing the environmental impact of travel.

Oxford Area Strategy (Chapter 13)

3.6 The draft LTP3 proposes a strategy for Oxford that focuses on improving access to two broad areas of the City: the City Centre (including the West End and University Science Area), and the 'Eastern Arc', which is shown in Figure 1 as the Headington, Barton/Risinghurst, Cowley/Temple Cowley, Littlemore, Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys (including the Oxford Science Park). These areas are recognised as accommodating much of the employment and housing growth planned in Oxford over the next 15 years, including the Barton extension of around 1,000 homes.

3.7 The main measures proposed are:

- deliver a form of high quality "rapid transit" (e.g. light rail or guided trolleybus) serving park and ride sites and housing and employment in the Eastern Arc (possible future extensions to Abingdon, Witney & Bicester)
- reduce availability of car parking in the Eastern Arc
- tackle congestion at key Ring Road junctions
- improve walking and cycling access to local centres
- improve City centre access by sustainable modes
- improve non-car cross-centre journeys and pedestrian connectivity
- improve City centre air quality, and
- reduce private car use to the University Science Area
- improvements to the pedestrian network to be investigated, particularly City centre public realm improvements and walking links to orbital route bus stops (or to rapid transit stops)
- investigate specific improvements to the cycle network (including new bridge at Jackdaw Lane/Eastwick Farm)
- investigate 'cycle expressway' network, which could involve more car parking restrictions on some city roads to facilitate cycling
- develop a City centre cycle hub.

3.8 Key points made in the draft response to this section are:

- overall support in principle for measures proposed and focus on the Eastern Arc and City centre

- strongly support principle of rapid transit idea, but LTP3 should qualify this by making clear aspirational nature of scheme at current time (to avoid false expectation of delivery in the short- or medium-term)
- suggest more emphasis on improving existing bus route infrastructure in Eastern Arc as an interim measure (i.e. the 'orbital' bus routes)
- object to proposed reduction in staff parking in Eastern Arc unless it is brought forward as a deliverable package of measures (this in any case would be highly dependent on cooperation of private employers)
- support accessibility improvements to district centres
- request more specific and positive reference to Access to Oxford measures such as northern and southern approaches improvements
- section on Traffic Management to refer to workplace parking charging instead of congestion charging, on the basis this will be more deliverable
- add improvement to Seacourt, Redbridge and Peartree Park and Ride sites as additional measures (Thornhill expansion is already included)
- strategies for cycling and walking supported, but should be backed up with a commitment to producing walking and cycling strategies to guide future decision-making
- seek clarity in LTP3 on overall concept for taking forward cycle network development, i.e. more detail of 'cycle expressway' concept and what implications there will be arising from removal of the 'dual network' concept
- request addition of cycle scheme: new cycle and footbridge across Thames at Oxpens
- support in principle for bus strategy, but request that it includes longer-term aim to extend orbital bus routes to Northern Gateway
- seek explicit reference to the Low Emissions Strategy.

4. Climate change / environmental impact

4.1 The points raised in the draft response to the LTP3 are drafted within the corporate policy framework of tackling climate change and promoting sustainable environmental resource management. As such, our response supports prioritisation of sustainable modes of travel, particularly walking and cycling which are virtually carbon-free and emission-free forms of transport. The response also supports demand management measures such as a workplace parking charge. If implemented, our recommended changes, generally supporting the even greater prioritisation and commitment to implementation of such measures, would have a positive impact on climate change and the environment.

5. Equalities impact

5.1 The draft response supports improvements to accessing employment and services, highlighting the need to prioritise such improvements for socially excluded communities. The response, if implemented, is considered to have a generally positive impact on equalities.

6. Financial implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications with regards the City Council's core budget. The draft response comments on the appropriateness of the County Council seeking certain developer contributions towards transport improvements on a blanket basis; if heeded, this would have a potentially positive impact on the viability of the City Council seeking planning contributions for other projects, e.g. affordable housing, regeneration.

7. Legal implications

7.1 No legal implications are envisaged.

8. Level of Risk

8.1 There are no significant risks arising. See risk register (Appendix 1).

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List of background papers: Draft Local Transport Plan 3

Version number: 4

Item 14 Appendix 1 Risk register

Risk ID	Risk						Corporate Objective	Gross Risk		Residual Risk		Current Risk		Owner	Date Risk Reviewed	Proximity of Risk (Projects/Contracts Only)
Category -000- Service Area Code	Risk Title	Opportunity /Threat	Risk Description	Risk Cause	Consequence	Date raised	1 to 6	I	P	I	P	I	P			
CEB-001-CD	Working relations	T	Impact on working relations between members or officers	Points of criticism may impact on relationships thus on partnership working	Less influence in future through informal input	3 Nov 2010	3,5	2	1	2	1	2	1	Michael Crofton-Briggs	3 Nov 2010	