

## **Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Wednesday 22 March 2023**

### **Staffordshire Local Transport Plan**

#### **Recommendations**

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Note the emerging guidance from the Department for Transport (DfT) for the development of Local Transport Plans (LTP).
- b. Note that the purpose of the LTP is to act as a high-level business case that is used to bid for, prioritise, and allocate all future local transport funding, as well as supporting the development of local plans.
- c. Review and comment on the approach being proposed for the new LTP and offer feedback for consideration before the project starts in earnest. In particular, the Committee is asked to consider whether the approach aligns with the Government's priority to decarbonise the transport network, noting that future funding for transport will depend on delivering quantifiable carbon reductions.

**Local Member Interest:** N/A

#### **Report of Councillor David Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

#### **Report**

##### **Background**

1. As a Highway Authority, the Council is required to produce an LTP under the Transport Act 2008. This will be Staffordshire's fourth LTP since they were introduced in 2000. Recognising the pressure that highway authorities are currently facing, DfT has given the Council £178,000 to facilitate the LTP's preparation.
2. An LTP sets out a highway authority's vision for Staffordshire's transport system, together with the policies, plans and programmes of schemes to deliver that vision. It comprises two parts:
  - a. a long-term strategy document that describes the authority's vision, policies and metrics to gauge success and overall performance, covering all applicable modes of transport and areas of transport policy.

- b. a shorter-term delivery plan that includes an ambitious, balanced and costed programme of schemes.
3. Staffordshire's current LTP incorporates Integrated Transport Strategies for each district and borough. These are useful tools when liaising with the district and borough councils as they reflect the specific transport challenges and opportunities in their area. Whilst the LTP has not been updated since 2011, all the Integrated Transport Strategies have been updated between 2013 and 2018.
4. An LTP has two distinct purposes and audiences. It is:
  - a. A strategic business case for future funding, which will be assessed by DfT.
  - b. A public document that will be read by interested individuals and stakeholders and seeks to encourage partnership working towards shared goals and behavioural change.
5. Staffordshire's current LTP does not reflect the current challenges facing the Council. For example:
  - a. Climate and the environment: Transport is the largest contributor to UK domestic greenhouse gas emissions (27%). The Council recognises the importance of keeping global temperatures below a 1.5°C rise, halt the deterioration of the natural environment, and counter the negative impacts associated with these on residents and businesses.
  - b. New economic strategies: National and local economic policy has changed since the production of the last LTP. New policies focus on levelling up, town centres, higher paid, higher skilled jobs, strategic corridors and green growth. The LTP will be an important enabler for our local economic ambitions.
  - c. Planning best practice: New best practice for transport planning, reflected in national policy is moving away from predicting future traffic growth and providing for it, towards a more integrated, vision-led approach.
  - d. New technology: Technologies are providing new forms of transport, alternatives to physical travel, new platforms for innovation, and new techniques to engage with and collect data from transport users.
  - e. National transport policy and targets: There have been several significant changes to transport and spatial planning policy since 2011 and these focus on delivering sustainability and planning for people and places, rather than motor vehicles.
  - f. Post pandemic, economic recovery and cost-of-living: Travel patterns and behaviour have changed over recent years and the Council needs to ensure that the right choices are made but not at the expense of accessibility.

- g. The implementation of HS2: Staffordshire is affected by two phases of HS2. The Council seeks to get the best deal for Staffordshire in terms of mitigation, compensation for residents, economic benefits and improved connectivity.
6. The LTP needs to support the Council's outcome priorities, which are that the people of Staffordshire will:
- a. have access to more good jobs and share the benefit of economic growth.
  - b. live in thriving and sustainable communities.
  - c. be healthier and independent for longer.

### **National Guidance**

7. There are five priority outcomes for transport outlined within DfT's Outcome Delivery Plan (DfT, 2022). The three that are most relevant for LTPs are:
- a. Grow and level up the economy - Improve connectivity across the UK and grow the economy by enhancing the transport network, on time and on budget.
  - b. Improve transport for the user - Improve transport users' experience, ensuring that the network is safe, reliable, and inclusive.
  - c. Reduce environmental impacts - Tackle climate change and biodiversity loss and improve air quality by decarbonising transport.
8. DfT published draft guidance on the LTP in September 2022 and the Council is awaiting the publication of the final guidance. Ongoing engagement with DfT suggests that LTPs need to focus on:
- a. Planning transport for people and place, which prioritises active and sustainable travel, while also recognising the importance of private vehicle journeys where appropriate.
  - b. Transport being an enabler of housing and commercial growth, and LTPs being a core part of spatial, energy, health and digital access planning.
  - c. Decarbonising transport, setting out a clear and ambitious response to the climate emergency and meeting net zero by 2050. Delivering quantifiable carbon reductions must become a fundamental part of local transport planning and funding. Government funding for transport will now be dependent on the LTP delivering quantifiable carbon reductions.
  - d. Improving transport for the user, ensuring that the network is safe, reliable and inclusive.

## **Proposed Approach**

9. Much of what the Council already does to maintain, enhance and support the operation of the county's transport system will remain relevant in the new LTP. However, reacting to the challenges above will require a change in how transport is delivered in Staffordshire and it will require everyone - local authorities, residents, visitors and businesses - to think and act differently. For example, meeting DfT's target for half of all journeys in towns to be walked or cycled by 2030 will involve district and borough councils developing neighbourhoods where residents can meet their everyday needs within a short walk or cycle.
10. The LTP requires a step change in the Council's approach to transport planning with greater emphasis on schemes that support modal shift and manage the demand for road space. The LTP will also need to recognise the nature of Staffordshire – its rurality, type and location of employment opportunities, etc. – which will require the Council and (its partners) to be ambitious and courageous in their decision-making.
11. Staffordshire's LTP will cover the period up to 2050. This is the date when all sectors of the UK economy, including the transport sector, must be net zero. The LTP will be reviewed at regular intervals in between, keeping pace with local planning processes, the electoral cycle, new research and advances in technology. The implementation plan will cover a period of 5 years.
12. The LTP will be based around:
  - a. A vision that describes what Staffordshire, and in particular its transport system, will look like in 2050. The Council will then plan for the vision rather than forecast traffic growth and plan for that.
  - b. Guiding principles that provide the 'rules' for how things will be done and how the Council wants stakeholders and residents to do things.
  - c. Transport-related objectives will be established. Under these will lie outcomes that reflect the national, sub-national and local policy context, including the challenges faced by the Council and drivers for change.
  - d. Policies and investment areas will describe how the LTP's vision will be delivered.
  - e. A roadmap to 2050, setting out how the Council will prioritise, fund and deliver transport interventions and monitor progress.
13. The vision will be a high level, strategic ambition for Staffordshire's transport system. There will be two sub-visions, one for Staffordshire's towns and one for its rural areas. The sub-visions could be presented as a graphic showing the future street scene. There will be a long transition period in which the Council (and the district/borough councils) put the

correct balance of measures in place to enable people to make the switch to more sustainable modes of travel (e.g. planning for 20-minute neighbourhoods, superfast broadband, EV charging points, bus services, foot/cycle ways, etc). Delivering these measures will take decades.

14. Guiding principles are 'statements of intent', enabling the Council to make the right decisions in terms of delivering the LTP's vision.

a. **Guiding Principle 1: Provide a transport system that promotes high quality, prosperous places and puts people first.** The LTP must move away from planning for vehicles to planning for people and places, supporting high quality and prosperous places and putting the needs of people first. For example, Staffordshire's strategic routes need to be designed for the efficient movement of freight and people to support national and sub-national economies. Whereas urban centres, residential areas and other community places need to be designed to prioritise and encourage active and shared transport, in a way that creates better places to live, work, and visit.

b. **Guiding Principle 2: Significantly reduce dependency on combustion engine vehicles.** There is no plausible path to transport decarbonisation without major reductions in transport emissions. As such, the Council needs to adopt an 'Avoid-Shift-Improve' approach into its transport policy and decision-making.

c. Avoid is where the number and length of trips is reduced by improving land use and travel planning and levels of digital connectivity; Shift is where people are encouraged to use more sustainable modes of travel such as electric vehicles, public transport, walking, cycling and e-bikes; and improve is where the energy efficiency of vehicles and the operational efficiency of roads is improved through advances in technology.



Avoid



Shift



Improve

d. The ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars in 2030 and lorries by 2040, as well as the expected growth in electric vehicles, may still not be enough to meet the Government's net zero target by 2050. Evidence suggests that immediate and significant action is needed to avoid travel and increase levels of walking and cycling. Furthermore, local councils need to support the transition to electric vehicles by working with the charging infrastructure providers to get more charging points installed. Until more electric vehicles are purchased, Staffordshire does not yet represent a viable proposition for them.

15. Examples of the type of objectives, outcomes, policies and investment areas that the LTP may include are:

<b>Objectives</b> (define what the Council is seeking to achieve)	<b>Reduce environmental impacts</b>	<b>Grow and level up the economy</b>	<b>Improve transport for the user</b>
<b>Linking SCC Priority Outcome</b> (SCC want everyone in Staffordshire to....)	Live in thriving and sustainable communities	Have access to more good jobs and share the benefit of economic growth	Be healthier and independent for longer
<b>Outcomes</b> (reflect the policy context, the challenges facing the Council and the drivers for change)	<p>Reduced transport related carbon emissions to net zero by 2050</p> <p>A transport network that is resilient to climate change, extreme weather, incidents and major disruptive events</p> <p>Improved air quality and less noise disturbance from transport</p> <p>A transport network that protects and enhances our natural and historic environments, resulting in an overall net environmental gain</p>	<p>Improved connectivity across the county and growth in the economy by enhancing the transport network, on time and on budget</p> <p>A connected economy, creating successful places, ensuring Staffordshire continues to prosper whilst reducing its emissions</p> <p>Sustainable housing and employment growth, and regeneration that positively supports the LTP's vision</p>	<p>Improved transport users' experience by creating a network that is safe, reliable and inclusive</p> <p>A network that promotes active travel and active lifestyles to improve our health and wellbeing</p> <p>A transport system that provides more equitable access to services, opportunities and life chances delivering improved quality of life for all in Staffordshire</p>
<b>Policies/ investment areas</b> (determine how the Council will deliver all aspects of the LTP)	<p>Digital connectivity (A)</p> <p>Promoting zero emission vehicles (S)</p> <p>Protecting the environment (A &amp; S)</p> <p>Public/shared transport (S)</p> <p>Supporting behavioural change (S)</p>	<p>Planning for place (A)</p> <p>Demand management for goods vehicles (I)</p> <p>Demand management for cars (I)</p>	<p>Efficient network management (I)</p> <p>Active travel/personal mobility (S)</p>

(A) Avoid, (S) Shift, (I) Improve

## Proposed Governance

16.A Project Board will support the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and Project Manager (PM) in providing overall direction and management of the LTP's delivery. Members of the Board will include the Cabinet Member for Highways and senior managers from Business and Enterprise, Highways and the Built County, Public Health, etc. They will represent their sector, raising their concerns and promoting their interests, ensuring their colleagues' support the LTP's preparation, and make decisions based on the LTP's guiding principles.

17. An internal project team, comprising officers with appropriate and complementary professional, technical and specialist skills, will assist the PM to prepare a successful LTP by:
- carrying out elements (within their technical expertise) of the project they are tasked with to the required level of quality and to timescales
  - advising the PM of any risks that may affect the project's objectives and supporting the risk reduction process.
18. An external working group, comprising organisations with appropriate and complementary professional, technical or specialist knowledge, will be created. It will act as a critical friend, steering and supporting the PM in preparing a successful LTP. It will advise the PM of any risks that may arise if certain policies and schemes are pursued whilst taking a pragmatic view, considering Staffordshire's characteristics and looking at the LTP in the round.

## LTP Development

19. DfT has said that it wants the new LTP to be published in Spring 2024. It's unclear whether this deadline is final because DfT has not yet issued its final guidance on preparing LTPs.
20. Work has started to develop the LTP in anticipation of the publication of the final guidance and officers are looking to create a Project Board and internal project team imminently.
21. The proposed phases for developing the LTP are:

Phase	Name	Overview
1	Review of 2011 LTP	Did it achieve what it set out to do?
2	Project set up	Set up the project's governance arrangements
3	Initiate & Plan	Undertake a policy review, drivers for change, design principles, milestones, deliverables, risks, assumptions, issues, dependences, CSFs and constraints (e.g. cost, time, resources and quality)
4	Case for change	Gather, analyse and model data to support case for change, giving scenarios for different options, including 'do nothing'
5	Vision & objectives	What kind of transport system do we want? Articulate a compelling and comprehensive picture of how things should be, and could be, in the future. Establish guiding principles, objectives and prepare a theory of change logic map.
6	Strategy development	Generate a long-list of interventions, working alongside stakeholders. Consider national, regional, and local policy objectives, an understanding of the local area, and its existing and future challenges and opportunities. Consider all modes, all areas/needs, themes, users, purposes, avoiding travel.
7	Implementation Plan & monitoring and evaluation regime	Reduce long-list by considering uncertainty, deliverability, affordability, etc. and create an ambitious but realistic programme. Include schemes that are aspirational even if funding is unknown. Establish a monitoring regime, using SMART targets, and an evaluation regime.
8	Closing the project	Secure Cabinet approval for the LTP, publish and evaluate the project with the Project Board and Project Team.

22. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and the Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy will be updated and appended to the LTP. Other documents that will form part of the LTP are quantifiable carbon analysis and an Integrated Impact Assessment, which comprises environmental, habitats regulations, health, and equalities assessments. Staffordshire's eight District Integrated Transport Strategies will also be updated and published alongside the LTP.
23. To complement the LTP, consideration will be given to whether more specific, themed-based strategies are developed, including freight, rail, rights of way, digital connectivity, air quality, congestion, zero emissions, green/blue infrastructure, maintenance/asset management, parking, road safety, and shared mobility.

### **Proposed Engagement**

24. The Transport Act 2000 (as amended) requires the Council to consult on their LTP strategy document. However, engagement should be undertaken throughout the development of the LTP and should not be confined to any one phase.
25. A website (Engagement HQ), dedicated to engaging with stakeholders and communities, will be launched at the beginning of the project once agreement from the Project Board has been given. It will include themed based discussion forums, polls and surveys, consultations, message boards, and an option to request community feedback and ideas by plotting them on a map. The website will have both a public facing element and an internal element for County Councillors and Officers.
26. The LTP must consider the transport needs of all sectors of the community, business, and services, as well as the impacts of transport on these groups. Consultation responses need to be reflective of the population and transport users as a whole. This means that the Council will need to target a wide audience, including people and groups who do not usually engage, to gain diverse perspectives. In addition to the website, the Council will consider hosting working groups, forums and drop-in sessions.

### **Link to other Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

27. Future papers, updating members on the development of the LTP, can be presented to the Committee if this were something that members would like.
28. The LTP will be signed off by Cabinet before it is published.

## **Community Impact Assessment**

29. Transport is an important part of everyone's well-being and quality of life, but it may not be experienced equally by everyone. People's transport and access needs will depend upon numerous factors, including age, gender, disability, health, education, ethnicity, income, family structure, and occupation.
30. A Community Impact Assessment has been produced and is provided in Appendix 1. The main benefits provided by the development of the LTP is that the Council must have involve and consult people with protected characteristics in the development and implementation of the LTP. Several existing umbrella groups that work with people with a range of impairments will be a useful point of contact to establish local needs and a network of contacts.

## **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Community Impact Assessment

### **Contact Details**

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