

COMMITTEE: LUTON WEST

DATE: 13TH OCTOBER 2004

SUBJECT: LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

REPORT BY: Head of Engineering and Transportation

CONTACT OFFICER: Keith Dove 01582 547211

IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	COMMUNITY SAFETY
EQUALITIES	ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL	CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING	OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: All

PURPOSE

1. To report the receipt of a petition signed by 38 residents of Sycamore Close and Chestnut Avenue.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. Luton West Area Committee is recommended to
 1. **Note any transport matters that they feel should be included in the second LTP.**

BACKGROUND

3. The first Luton Dunstable Local Transport Plan (LTP) was submitted to the Government in July 2000, and covers the period between April 2001 and the end of March 2006. In the July of each intervening year, Luton Borough Council has submitted an Annual Progress Report, together with various strategies for buses, walking, parking and cycling.
4. The Government requires local authorities to produce a new LTP by the end of July 2005 covering the period 2006-2011. The Government has only just published its draft guidance on how to produce the new LTPs – and it may revise this later in the autumn – so this leaves us very little time to ensure that

our LTP meets the new (and much altered) specifications. The draft guidance can be viewed on the Department for Transport's website dft.gov.uk (click on Local Transport, then Consultation Papers).

REPORT

The scope and nature of the Draft LTP guidance

5. Briefly, the guidance has five main emphases:

Shared Priorities

Local authorities must direct their efforts to making progress in four priority areas which have been agreed between the Local Government Association and central Government. These are: reducing congestion, improving access to key facilities for all groups of people, improving safety and improving air quality. Authorities must designate performance indicators to measure improvements in these four areas. (Note that sustainability is not a shared priority, though it is mentioned elsewhere in the guidance. Improved facilities for sustainable transport are subsumed under all four priorities).

Accessibility planning

The need to undertake accessibility planning arose out of the 2003 publication by the Social Exclusion Unit, "Making the Connections". Authorities must develop policies to enable all groups of people, and disadvantaged groups in particular, to reach key facilities such as schools, colleges, health care, workplaces and food shops. The policies may include "soft" measures such as subsidised transport as well as new roads, cycle tracks or public transport links. The Government will provide authorities with software to measure accessibility and monitor attempts at improving it, although it is not yet clear when it will become available.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

This arises out of a European Union Directive which requires all plans to be accompanied by an assessment of what their environmental implications will be. We will have to produce a draft environmental assessment of the LTP for consultation, probably in early 2005.

Partnership working

The guidance lays great emphasis on joined-up thinking, both within an authority and between the authority and other bodies such as health care trusts and the employment service. The idea is that transport is a means of improving provision of other services or the quality of life, and these improvements will only come about if all the bodies concerned with providing these services are involved.

Value for money

There is a shift in emphasis from not merely providing infrastructure to ensuring that it is used as effectively as possible. There is also less guarantee that major schemes (costing over £5 million) will receive the same amount of funding as in 2001-06, in part because some of the major schemes included within the first LTP submission have not yet been implemented.

6. The new LTP, unlike the first one, will not be a bidding document. This autumn, the Government will announce "guideline" sums which it expects to make available to each authority for both integrated transport and for highway

maintenance. In December 2005, after it has scrutinised the new LTP's, the Government will increase the authority's guideline amount for integrated transport in the light of the quality of its LTP. Authorities are expected to set out implementation statements setting out the number of schemes, of each type, which they expect to deliver each year, taking into account the money which they expect to have available.

7. The draft guidance also indicates that consultation has an important role to play. The intention would be to use the same overall approach as used with the first LTP, with two rounds of a cycle of consultation and evaluation. During the first stage of consultation this Autumn we will gather views about our programmes of transport improvements already completed or in progress, including our walking, parking, cycling and bus strategies. We will also ask for people's opinions of possible options for tackling transport problems. On this basis we will then develop those options which appear to merit more detailed consideration. In the second stage of the consultation in early Spring 2005 we will ask for people's and organisations' opinions on those options. At this stage, too, we will seek views on the environmental implications of these options as outlined in the Strategic Environmental Assessment.
8. The precise details of the consultation methods to be used at each stage are still evolving. The intention would be to make presentations on the LTP to local Area Committees in Luton, together with meetings of South Bedfordshire District Council and relevant Town and Parish Councils, the Luton Assembly and groups representing different sections of the community. The Local Transport Forum will also have an important role to play as its members are familiar with transport issues which extend over the whole conurbation, and it is intended to refresh the Membership of the Forum. It is also intended that at least one round of Consultation will be carried out with the joint Citizens Panel for the area.
9. A draft timetable for the two stages of consultation and other key strands of work related to producing the second LTP is found at Appendix A.

The extent of coverage of the second LTP

10. The first Local Transport Plan only covered Luton, Dunstable, and Houghton Regis. However, the Milton Keynes – South Midlands Sub-regional Strategy proposes major urban expansion in the Luton-Dunstable area. The recent MKSM Panel Report does not specify exactly where this development should take place, although it indicates that the area should be extended to include Leighton Buzzard. That report also indicates that the basic infrastructure, including transport links, needs to be built by about 2011 to allow the main urban expansion to go ahead. It also highlights congestion as a major problem that needs to be tackled. The new LTP will have to deal with these issues.
11. However, by virtue of the fact that the MKSM growth area strategy is part of the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan, these development areas will need to be well served by sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling, and public transport as set out in Government Policy, in addition to further highway infrastructure. At a recent meeting of MKSM Transportation and Planning Group it was indicated that joint working on Local Transport Plans should include the endorsement of such sustainable principles of planning and transport for the growth areas, and indicate a willingness to build upon existing joint working arrangements, as this would be looked upon very favourably by the DfT. On this basis it is therefore suggested that joint working

on this year's LTP should include the whole of the Growth Area in the vicinity of the Luton Dunstable area.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

12. None

APPENDIX

13. Appendix A attached summarises the consultation timetable for the second LTP and other associated areas of work.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D

14. There are no background papers relating to this report.