

EXECUTIVE

DATE: 30 MARCH 2009

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION ON DRAFT GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL TRANSPORT PLANS

REPORT BY: HEAD OF ENGINEERING & TRANSPORTATION

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IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	✓	STAFFING
EQUALITIES	✓	COMMUNITY SAFETY
FINANCIAL	✓	RISKS

OTHER

CONSULTATIONS:

COUNCILLORS CONSULTED -Councillors Simmons, Davis and Worlding

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CONSULTED -No

STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED All local highway authorities responsible for producing Local Transport Plans, and other interested parties are invited to respond by the Department for Transport

OTHERS CONSULTED Joint Committee

WARDS AFFECTED: All

LEAD EXECUTIVE MEMBER(S): Councillors Davis and Worlding

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Executive is recommended to:
 - i) agree to the proposed process for production of the third LTP as set out in the draft Guidance published by the Department for Transport.

- ii) **welcome the proposals for a policy handbook containing a bibliography of relevant policy documents and guidance**

BACKGROUND

- 2 The Transport Act 2000 introduced a statutory requirement for local transport authorities to produce Local Transport Plans (LTPs) every five years and to keep it under review. The first and second LTPs for Luton Dunstable and Houghton Regis covering the periods 2001-06 and 2006-11 were based on that statutory framework, together with detailed guidance on the content of the document.
- 3 The changing nature of the relationship between central and local government in the last 2-3 years has focussed on the Local Area Agreement and the Sustainable Communities Strategy. It is clear that the LTP will have a much stronger relationship with these documents, and that in developing them greater consideration will need to be given to the role that transport plays in the wider policy framework.
- 4 On 18 December 2008, the Department for Transport (DfT) published draft statutory Guidance to support local transport authorities in producing subsequent LTPs. The draft Guidance, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008, applies to all local transport authorities outside of London required to produce a LTP. The draft Guidance applies to all subsequent LTPs and has effect until further guidance is produced.
- 5 Responses to the draft Guidance need to be submitted to the DfT by 9 April 2009, following which a summary of responses, including the next steps, will be published at www.dft.gov.uk.
- 6 This report summarises the main statutory and policy changes affecting subsequent LTPs, and how those changes could impact on the format of any subsequent LTP that includes Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis.

REPORT

- 7 Transport is not a means to an end in itself, but the means by which the local community can access the services it needs. Transport is a vital factor in building sustainable local communities, and contributes to the achievement of wider policy objectives such as stronger and safer communities, healthier children and young people, equality and social inclusion, sustainability and better local economies.
- 8 The changes to the strategic policy framework for Local Transport Plans summarised in Chapters 2 & 3 of the draft guidance originate broadly from two sources, namely:
 - the Local Transport Act of 2008, which came into force on 9 February 2009

- other changes to the policy framework which have either already come into force or will do so in the next few months

9 The main Statutory and Policy changes affecting the LTPs can be summarised as:

- A requirement for LTPs to contain both policies and implementation plans. These may be included in a single document, or as separate documents. In either case, a clear distinction is needed between the strategy/policy framework and the implementation plan, and the statutory duties apply to the whole Plan.
- LTPs don't have to be replaced every five years, and if transport authorities decide to produce separate documents, the timescales for each can be different.
- There is no longer a requirement to produce a separate bus strategy. However the 2008 Act gives local authorities greater powers to influence the provision of local bus services including Voluntary Partnership Agreements with more than one operator, allowing Quality Partnership Schemes to cover minimum frequencies and maximum fares, removing the need for DfT to approve Quality Contract Schemes, changes to Community transport schemes and powers to subsidise improvements in the standard of local bus services.
- A Duty for transport authorities to consult the Highways Agency, Network Rail, local train and bus operators, public transport user groups and any other people they consider fit such as environmental organisations.
- An obligation to have regard to the needs of older people and people with mobility difficulties in developing and implementing LTPs
- Amendments on the legislation covering workplace charging levies or road user charging schemes
- A requirement to have regard to Government Guidance and policies on the environment, including in particular Climate Change mitigation and adaptation. The contribution from transport will depend on the cost of action to reduce emissions compared to that of taking action elsewhere. However the DfT encourages Transport authorities to develop strategies and implementation plans that mitigate climate change by developing sustainable transport systems, facilitating behaviour change and reducing the need to travel.
- Strategies and implementation plans should be based on realistic levels of funding likely to be available. Members should note that the second round of Regional Funding Advice includes Integrated Transport and Maintenance allocations up to 2018/19 (RFA)

10 Under the Comprehensive Area Assessment, which replaces the Comprehensive Performance Assessment from 2009, all transport authorities will be required to produce a Plan which best meets its own individual needs. The DfT will therefore no longer formally assess LTPs, or require submission of interim LTP reports including monitoring of mandatory targets. Performance reviews will be carried out through the Local Area Agreement (LAA) process. However it will be necessary to ensure that work of developing and implementing the LTP accords with the selection of improvement priorities in

the LAA, and set out the impact of the LTP on National Indicators, including those which are non transport specific, but where transport is a key ingredient of successful delivery. Transport authorities will be able to set additional targets and indicators where this is helpful in securing effective delivery.

- 11 In addition to consistency with the national and regional strategy/policy background, together with the linkages between the LTP and the LAA, the draft Guidance indicates that the LTP should be consistent with the local strategic objectives as outlined in their Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) and closely aligned with the Local Development Framework (LDF). This will require close engagement with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).
- 12 Where authorities prepare a joint LTP it will be necessary to ensure consistency with the SCS and LAA of the individual contributing local authorities. Each of the authorities will need to assure themselves that the plans for delivery of their LTP and LAA are consistent and will work together to achieve a jointly agreed target.
- 13 The first two bullet points in paragraph 2.3 above indicate that, if Local Authorities decide to produce separate Strategy and Implementation documents for subsequent LTPs, the timescales covered by each of these documents does not need to be the same. The Luton and southern Bedfordshire Local Development Framework (LDF) includes housing and employment allocations up to 2031, and there is a requirement for Strategic Housing Land Allocations to cover the period up to 2026. For consistency with the LDF the preferred approach should be, irrespective of the spatial coverage of future LTPs, for the LTP Strategy document to cover the period up to 2026 or 2031 with LTP Implementation Plan to be produced ever five years.
- 14 In the context of the wider policy framework of subsequent Local Transport Plans, the Committee is recommended to agree to the proposed changes as set out in the draft Guidance published by the Department for Transport. The Committee is also recommended to welcome the proposals for a policy hand book containing a bibliography of relevant policy documents and guidance.
- 15 Chapter 4 of the draft guidance summarises the proposed steps in developing and delivering Local Transport Plans. This part of this report summarises the implications of this, together with the changes in the policy framework that will need to be considered in developing and delivering the third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) including Luton and the surrounding area.
- 16 The precise coverage of the LTP3 will be an issue that will need to be considered by Luton Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council. The report to the Joint Committee on 20 March set out five options for the spatial coverage of subsequent LTPs covering the Luton Dunstable Houghton Regis area, together with the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. These are summarised in Appendix A to this report. The views of the Joint Committee on these options will be reported verbally to the meeting of the Borough Councils Executive.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 17 The need to undertake Equalities impact assessments (EIA) will be considered as the third LTP is developed. Agreed by Environment & Regeneration's Equalities Coordinator on 10 March 2009.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 18 Each of the schemes being promoted by the Luton Borough or Central Bedfordshire Unitary Authorities will need to progress through the various stages of the Government's funding approvals process. It will also need to be ensured that the business case for these schemes is robust enough to ensure ongoing funding approval. These implications were agreed by the Borough Council's Environment and Regeneration Finance Manager on 11 March 2009.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 19 There are no legal implications to be considered by this Committee. Agreed by John Secker, Luton Borough Council Legal Services, on 10 March 2009.

OPTIONS

- 20 It is a statutory requirement to produce a Local Transport Plan. The various options for the spatial coverage of the next LTP that incorporates Luton Dunstable and Houghton Regis are summarised in Appendix A. These are being considered by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 20 March 2009.

APPENDICES

Appendix A- Options for spatial context of subsequent LTPs

Appendix B- Consultation on LTP3 Guidance, Department for Transport, December 2008

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDIX B

Consultation on LTP3 Guidance, Department for Transport, December 2008