

## Cheltenham Borough Council

### Cabinet - 8th March 2005

## Response to consultation on draft Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan 2006/07-2010/11 (LTP2)

### Report of the Deputy (Built Environment & Democracy)

#### 1. Executive Summary and recommendation

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's response to the County Council's draft second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) for Gloucestershire. When approved later this year, the policies and strategies in LTP2 will shape decision making in local transport over the next five years, from 2006/07 to 2010/11. A full set of documents is available for inspection in the Members Room at the Municipal Offices and online at [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ltp](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ltp).
- 1.2 The County Council is currently consulting with all districts and key transport and community stakeholders and is seeking comments by 11<sup>th</sup> March 2005. Feedback from discussion on LTP2 at Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> February will be raised as a verbal update to this report by the Deputy at the Cabinet meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March.
- 1.3 In July 2005 LTP2 will be submitted to the Government Office of the South West (GOSW) for approval, with the approved Plan taking effect from April 2006.
- 1.4 I therefore recommend that Cabinet:
- 1.4.1 **support the objectives and strategies in the draft Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan 2006/07-2010/11 subject to the changes identified in Appendix A of this report and drawing particular attention to:**
- **its support for the early implementation of a park and ride site at Uckington on the Tewkesbury Road corridor and extra capacity at the Arle Court site;**
  - **its concern at the absence of proposals for park and ride services along the congested A46 Shurdington Road corridor following the completion of the A417/419 and in anticipation of new development at Brockworth;**
  - **the urgent need to make the introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement in Cheltenham a priority, without which policies to manage demand and implement the Traffic Management Act will be seriously**

**compromised.**

## **1.5 Summary of implications**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>1.5.1 Financial</b>  | None directly arising from this report.   |
| <b>1.5.2 Legal</b>  | None directly arising from this report.   |
| <b>1.5.3 Human Resources</b>                                      | None directly arising from this report.   |
| <b>1.5.4 Equal opportunities, social justice and anti-poverty</b> | The policies in the LTP support schemes to improve road safety, reduce car dependency and social exclusion and improve access to transport, especially alternatives to the car. |
| <b>1.5.5 Environmental</b>  | The policies in the LTP support an integrated transport programme and sustainable development.  |

## **1.6 Links to Business Plan and Corporate Objectives**

- 1.6.1 LTP2 will set out the policy framework for transport and highway services which the Council, through its agency agreement with the County Council and as local planning authority, will be better able to support five of its six corporate priorities and its organisational priority to provide high standards of service. Of most direct relevance are those corporate objectives *to reduce reliance on the private car and increase the proportion of trips made by public transport, cycling and walking* and to *protect and improve the environment of Cheltenham and ensure that the organisation becomes more sustainable.*

## **1.7 Statement on Risk**

- 1.7.1 Through its highways agency agreement the Council will assist the County Council with implementation of the LTP2, earning fees to offset its costs. Highway programme performance is reviewed annually by the Government Office of the South West (GOSW). Failure to achieve the targets and objectives in the plan could result in up to 25% less funding in a following year. Later in 2005 the County Council will receive a five year indicative funding allocation from GOSW. This is expected to be similar to existing funding levels.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) supersedes the current LTP (2000/01-2005/06) setting out transport policies and strategies aimed at improving the social, economic and environmental well being of the county over the next five years. The County Council has spent much of the past year working with county and district Members, officers and stakeholders, including local strategic partnerships, to develop the draft LTP2. Through this process they have developed this vision for transport in the county:

*To enable people in Gloucestershire to enjoy real choices of ways to travel where there are viable alternatives to the car and be provided with high quality access to services on a safe and efficient transport network.*

- 2.2 In November 2004 the County Council gave a presentation on LTP2 to the Cheltenham Strategic Partnership (CSP). In early February an LTP2 workshop was held for CSP stakeholders, members of the Business Partnership and Sustainability Panel. I have sought to incorporate their comments in Appendix A of this report.
- 2.3 With transport policies in local plans required to conform to the Local Transport Plan and all major transport investment decisions shaped by its policies this is an important opportunity to help shape the transport strategy which the council, as highways agent, will be responsible for implementing in Cheltenham.

## 3. Policy & Targets

- 3.1 LTP2 sets out the government's four new 'shared priorities' agreed with the Local Government Association (LGA):
- to manage **congestion**;
  - to improve the **safety** of all travellers;
  - to contribute to an efficient **economy**;
  - to promote **accessibility**, especially for those without a car.
- 3.2 All strategies must contribute to these priorities, with progress measured against targets and reported on an annual basis to the Government Office. The County Council has added 'Quality of life' and 'Other local issues' as new shared priorities to reflect community strategies. Members' views have been sought as to which specific issues they wish to see included under these headings.
- 3.3 To develop realistic strategies for LTP2 the County Council has reviewed performance during the first LTP to identify the most effective strategies. It has also used 2001 census data and carried out extensive traffic modelling to develop a better understanding of existing travel patterns and to predict the effects of future development and traffic generation, particularly on the urban areas of Cheltenham and Gloucester.

- 3.4 Target setting, which is still underway, will include targets from the first LTP, mandatory LTP2 targets and a handful of local targets. Progress will be measured in terms of outcomes (e.g. numbers of passengers carried on public transport) rather than outputs (e.g. number of bus shelters erected).
- 3.5 Members and residents who have submitted local transport suggestions for the Integrated Transport division's 'Request List' will be aware that the likelihood of receiving funding and approval is highly dependent upon demonstrating that the proposals support LTP objectives and targets. With demand for transport investment outstripping the funds and resources available this requirement will be strengthened in order to achieve value for money and prioritise those schemes with greatest public benefit.

#### **4. Severn Vale Strategy and Major Scheme Bid**

- 4.1 Where issues apply to the whole county, county-wide strategies are proposed. e.g. Air Quality, Community Safety, Highway Maintenance. However to reflect the significant differences within the county it has been divided into three areas, each with its own locally relevant transport strategies: West of Severn (Forest of Dean), Severn Vale (Stroud, Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury) and Cotswolds.
- 4.2 Experience from the first LTP has shown that trip containment (the proportion of trips which start and end in the same town) has been highest in the urban areas of the Severn Vale. In Cheltenham this figure is over 70%, which is very encouraging. These areas have also seen the most success in reducing demand for car use and encouraging walking, cycling and public transport trips. In the longer term the Regional Transport Strategy and Structure Plan identify the Principal Urban Areas of Cheltenham and Gloucester as centres for additional housing and employment.
- 4.3 Traffic modelling of development proposals in the Structure Plan up to 2016 has predicted a significant increase in congestion on the network between 2003 and 2011, with traffic at unmanageable levels by 2016. Whilst congestion and delays in Cheltenham are expected to worsen noticeably over this period, the effect on Gloucester is predicted to be more widespread and harmful. With the introduction of the Traffic Management Act in 2004 highway authorities are required to manage congestion to prevent it from damaging the local economies and reducing the effectiveness of public transport. Consequently there is greater emphasis in LTP2 on tackling transport issues in the urban areas of the Severn Vale, particularly in Cheltenham and Gloucester.
- 4.4 Within the Severn Vale the County Council is proposing a public transport led strategy of investment in Integrated Transport Schemes and a Major Scheme Bid aimed at reducing congestion on the A40 north and east of Gloucester with new park and ride sites at Linton and Elmbridge Court. The Government Office has advised that LTP2 targets should not depend upon the Major Scheme being approved; if it is approved funds will not be available until 2008.
- 4.5 The key objectives of the Severn Vale strategy are:
  - 4.5.1 improved and new park and ride sites for Cheltenham and Gloucester – e.g. a new site at Uckington, expansion of Arle Court and further investigations for park and ride on the A46 Shurdington Road corridor;

- 4.5.2 high frequency (10 minute) turn-up-and-go bus services on the core urban bus networks and 30 minute frequencies on inter-urban bus routes;
  - 4.5.3 bus priority on key radial routes whilst minimising adverse effects on other traffic and improved passenger facilities;
  - 4.5.4 a parking and demand management policy which dissuades people from taking their cars into urban centres and favours bus travel, cycling and walking;
  - 4.5.5 a centrally managed traffic network allowing proactive management to reduce congestion and the effects of incidents, giving buses priority where appropriate;
  - 4.5.6 traffic management and information systems to reduce congestion for the benefit of all transport users;
  - 4.5.7 a development control policy and other travel planning measures that support sustainable travel and secure contributions to improve travel choice in the local area;
  - 4.5.8 provision of enhanced and new rail stations within Principal Urban Areas where a business case can be made (eg a Parkway Station near Elmbridge Court, possibly combined with park and ride); and
  - 4.5.9 measures to support freight and industry, which reduce the impact of lorries on communities and the environment and encourage rail freight.
- 4.6 This emphasis on public transport will require effective partnership working over a long term: commercial public transport providers will need to invest in higher frequency public transport services, and local authorities implementing bus priority measures and policies to manage car use. The County Council's preference is to enter into further Quality Bus Partnerships with operators, along the lines of the QBP agreed with Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Stagecoach which has seen significant passenger growth following investment in new vehicles on service 94. It also envisages greater use of national 'kick-start' funds and local development contributions to fund higher frequencies on existing routes until they become commercially viable.
- 4.7 Implementing the Severn Vale strategy will also require a higher share of Gloucestershire's integrated transport funds to be allocated to the urban areas than has been the case to date. If the Major Scheme Bid is unsuccessful and is to proceed at a reduced rate with funding from the Integrated Transport allocation then this share may have to increase further.

## 5. Specific technical comments on draft LTP2

- 5.1 On the whole there is much to support in this draft plan however there are a few areas where improvements or a change of emphasis could be made. The full set of technical comments on draft LTP2 document and its appendices is set out in Appendix A of this report. In brief the key comments and changes sought are:
- 5.1.1 **Targets** – more local targets required as county-wide targets mask progress made in urban areas to limit traffic growth and increase levels of walking, cycling and public transport. Make these more challenging and include a target for limiting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport.

- 5.1.2 **Major Scheme Bid** – if this is unsuccessful what is the fall back position?  
Cheltenham's economy and the success of LTP2 depend on implementing transport schemes to address growing congestion in Cheltenham. If integrated transport funds for Cheltenham are top-sliced to fund costly major scheme projects in Gloucester then LTP2 is unlikely to deliver the step change in public transport and other improvements needed to address congestion in the borough. In this event additional funds should be drawn from areas outside the Central Severn Vale.
- 5.1.3 **Quality of life & other issues** – LTP2 needs to be more flexible to reflect government best practice urging authorities to create high quality public spaces and streets. The large conservation area and street trees which are a hallmark of Cheltenham are also attributes which encourage people to cycle and walk. Traffic engineering needs to accommodate and reflect this emphasis on quality.
- 5.1.4 **Bus strategy** – the core bus service network must provide high frequency services across more of the Cheltenham network if it is to be socially inclusive and reduce car dependency. Addressing these issues will significantly ease the introduction of demand management in future. Whilst public transport has potential for growth in Cheltenham the Severn Vale strategy should give more recognition to, and reflect, the high levels of walking and cycling in the borough.
- 5.1.5 **Park and Ride** – We are pleased to note the funding and priority for a new site at Uckington, which will need to be sensitively designed due to its Green Belt location, and for the expansion of Arle Court. However we strongly recommend that park and ride along the A46 corridor be implemented before LTP3 in order to tackle existing and future congestion here. The inclusion of firm proposals within LTP2 would help with securing funding contributions from development and reducing the cost to the taxpayer.
- 5.1.6 **Parking policy** – Greater priority and urgency needs to be given to decriminalising parking enforcement in Cheltenham and Gloucester if the shortage of parking enforcement is not going to seriously compromise the strategies in LTP2 and implementation of the Traffic Management Act. We have serious concerns about the possibility of a workplace parking levy and its appropriateness during the LTP2 plan period in the absence of a more consistent regional approach.
- 5.1.7 **Gloucestershire Parkway** – concern about the long term viability of Cheltenham Spa station and accessibility to Intercity services for people not living on the A40 corridor especially as it is Virgin's stated preference to serve only one station in the area.
- 5.2 The Council would also like to see improved infrastructure to support the role of Gloucestershire Airport in improving regional transport links for local businesses.

---

<b>Background Papers</b>	Draft Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan 2006/07-2010/11
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Philip Williams, Assistant Director Integrated Transport, 01242 264141, <a href="mailto:philip.williams@cheltenham.gov.uk">philip.williams@cheltenham.gov.uk</a>
<b>Accountability</b>	Deputy (Built Environment & Democracy)

