Information/Discussion Paper

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 19th August 2019

Cheltenham Transport Connectivity Study

This note contains information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed.

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

1.1 The Committee wishes to consider Systra's study of Cheltenham's transport connectivity before it is presented to Cabinet.

2. Summary of the Issue

2.1 The Council's corporate action plan for 2018-19 committed to commissioning a study to put in place a borough-wide transport plan with a focus on modal shift, accessibility and bus connectivity.

2.2 The corporate plan for 2019-23 reaffirmed that a new Cheltenham transport plan will be developed.

2.3 The Cheltenham transport plan will form part of Cheltenham Borough Council's contribution to Gloucestershire County Council's review of the countywide Local Transport Plan.

2.4 In order to deliver the plan, Systra, a company with a fifty year background in UK mobility and mass transit schemes, was engaged. Its brief was to produce a transport vision and mode-based strategies including key deliverables and costed proposals with measurable benefits aligned with the Council's Place Vision.

3. Summary of evidence/information

3.1 The development of the transport connectivity strategy has been undertaken with support from a wide range of stakeholders at two major workshops.

3.2 Stakeholders present included over 40 leaders from community, transport, business, educational, health, accessibility, local authority and parish organisations. The initial workshop focussed on agreeing outcomes for the strategy, the second on determining elements of a delivery plan.

3.3 Alongside these events, two further workshops were held with invitations to all members from CBC, local parish council members, GCC members with Cheltenham constituencies and the GCC Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning. The content of the member workshops paralleled the stakeholder workshops.

3.4 A paper on the study was discussed at the Overview & Scrutiny meeting on 3rd June 2019. The committee requested an opportunity to consider the final report.

3.5 The report proposes a series of desired outcomes:

- The design of streets and transport infrastructure enhances the character and distinctiveness of Cheltenham.

- The way people move around Cheltenham enhances and does not harm health and wellbeing

- Cheltenham has a strong cycling and walking culture and people of all ages and abilities enjoy moving slowly, walking and cycling for all types of journeys.

- Public Transport is high quality and convenient and people of all ages and abilities can use it and choose to use it.

- The environmental impact of transport in Cheltenham is continually reduced.

- New development is fully integrated into the town and growth in travel demand is accommodated without increases in congestion.

3.6 To deliver these outcomes, the report proposes six cross-cutting programmes:

- Enhanced strategic connections to other urban areas as well as within the Central Severn Vale

- Designing 'liveable' Cheltenham streets

- Cycle Cheltways – a primary high quality branded cycle network

- A network of interchanges encouraging switching between all modes of transport

- Behaviour Change programmes, encouraging people to use more active and sustainable transport modes

- Applying technology to meet transport challenges

    Full details can be found in Systra's report 'Connecting Cheltenham' which is included in the agenda pack.

3.7 Systra presented its conclusions to a member seminar on 7th August 2019. Comments made at the seminar are set out in section 4 below and will be considered for inclusion in Systra's report alongside comments from Overview and Scrutiny.

3.8 GCC's draft consultation document for the countywide Local Transport Plan is timetabled to go to its scrutiny committee in September, followed by GCC Cabinet in December ahead of public consultation in spring 2020. Feedback from CBC to GCC's draft documents has been based on the proposals made in the Systra study.

4. Member Seminar – comments and questions from members

4.1 Climate Emergency

- The study needs to give more emphasis to the declared climate emergency, Cheltenham's aspirations have moved on significantly around climate change (several members made this point)

4.2   Funding

- How can our vision be funded?
- Need to vigorously pursue sources of funding:
  - £150m GCC Roads Budget
  - Cheltenham's on-street parking revenue
- In order to tackle climate change the cost to deliver infrastructure needs to be accepted.
- Transport infrastructure will not be delivered without funding.

4.3   Scope

- The study is not specific to Cheltenham, lack of understanding of the issues in Cheltenham, needs more Cheltenham examples.
- The study doesn't consider lifestyle issues facing working parents.
- The study needs a stronger emphasis on safety from abuse and assault.
- Cheltenham needs to think about growth based upon the principles of sustainable development.
- No mention of powered two wheelers.

4.4   Gloucestershire County Council / Local Transport Plan (LTP)

- Have GCC been engaged throughout preparation of this strategy? What was their reaction to it?
- What are the timelines for the LTP?

4.5   Data

- What is the average car journey distance in Cheltenham? There is a big opportunity to focus on reducing 'in-Cheltenham' car use.
- What does 'travel to work' include? What % of all journeys is travel to work?
- Short journey car share map – situation is likely to deteriorate given West Cheltenham development. Are hot spots linked to park & ride/GCHQ/Kingsditch?

4.6   Walking and Slow Modes

- Biggest barrier to walking is safety in hours of darkness.
- Do slow modes include wheelchairs? Challenge is lack of dropped kerbs. Pavements are a particular problem for walking/wheelchair use.
- Does 'transport' include walking?

4.7   Cycling

- Do not like 'Cycle Cheltways' label.
- Need to link into GCC cycling strategy - is there duplication? Need CBC/GCC to be aligned (several members made this point).
- Cycle lanes and tracks need to be suitable.
- Affordability and security of bikes - can we facilitate an affordable cycle hire network?
- Cycling infrastructure isn't designed for speed.
- There is more than 1 type of cyclist. Serious cyclists want to stay on the highway – though this may depend on design, e.g. it's possible to give cycle lanes priority. Issue is on infrastructure where side streets / tree roots etc interfere.
- Drivers ignore bike lanes at junctions (e.g. PE Way junctions with side roads)

4.8   Cars

- Travel to work – thinking needs to incorporate parents taking children to school and then going on to work.
- A parking strategy needs to be part of this work and is part of the approach to sustainable transport. Need to disrupt commuter parking. Need to deal with people from outside Cheltenham coming into town.
- PE Way – impacted by car traffic rather than HGVs.
- Fix traffic light sequencing - currently doesn't reinforce efficient movement on key routes.

4.9   Targets

- What is the logic behind the choice of targets?
- Shouldn't we be targeting increased % share of walking?
- Are vision zero targets sensible? (Members views on this issue were split – some felt a long term aspiration of zero is beneficial, others not)
- Like measurable targets - are there targets that could also be applied for air quality and safety?

4.10   Strategic Connections

- Needs to reference Gloucester / Cheltenham mass transit (in addition to cycle links).
- Has Royal Town Planning Institute work and how it relates to 2nd and 3rd tier cities been looked at? This could have a significant impact on Cheltenham as people move away from major cities. Would be helpful to be looked at in terms of rail enhancements.
- Timings of local trains do not work e.g. Ashchurch/Worcester. Service frequency and availability of stations within wider geography needs to improve.

4.11   Liveable Streets

- How have the characteristics of liveable streets been derived? They don't seem to mesh with the practical concerns of residents.
- School streets need to be referenced - Cheltenham likely to be getting the first one in Gloucestershire.
- Are 'home zones' included in liveable streets?
- New estates need footpaths, should be able to reject applications which don't provide them.

4.12   Interchange and Public Transport

- Does interchange mean park and ride?
- The need to change buses in town centre and make radial journeys is a limitation.
- Affordability is a big issue for families – given structure of public transport charges compared with private car.
- Need to be thinking innovatively about the costs to users of public transport, Gottingen bus pricing used as an example
- Is an extension of the Gloucestershire / Warwickshire steam railway included?

4.13   Behaviour Change

- Often we come up with a strategy, but on implementation we find we do not have full

buy-in, practicalities lead to protest.
- There needs to be a change in public attitude if things are going to change.
- Seats have been removed from pocket parks because residents don't want them outside their own homes.

5. Next Steps - possible next steps for the committee to consider e.g. potential witnesses, further report, site visit etc.

5.1 Comments from the Committee will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting in October 2019.

Background Papers	None
Contact Officer	Ken Dale, Interim Townscape Manager, 01242 264389, ken.dale@cheltenham.gov.uk
Accountability	Councillor Andrew McKinlay, Cabinet Member Development and Safety
Scrutiny Function	Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Last updated 09 August 2019