Covering Introduction

Cheltenham Borough Councils formal response to:

Gloucestershire County Council's draft next Local Transport Plan (LTP3)

Executive Summary:

Gloucestershire County Council has prepared, in draft, its next Local Transport Plan (LTP3). This outlines how transport will be delivered in Gloucestershire between April 2011 and 2026. Its principles and policies can broadly be divided into 2 areas (1) maintenance and (2) integrated transport. The County Council has a statutory duty to prepare this Plan.

Initial consultation took during the winter 2010; This initial consultation was very general in nature with no specific proposals to comment on.

The Plan is broken down into 4 main themes with the aim to deliver:

1.   A greener, healthier Gloucestershire;

2.   A sustainable economic growth;

3.   A safer secure transport system; and

4.   Good access to services.

Draft LTP3 has been considered; the covering introduction and schedule of representations is provided at Appendix 1.

1.0   SCHEDULE OF REPRESENTATIONS

1.1   A detailed schedule of representations is provided at Appendix 1. Broadly the representations cover 3 areas:

1.   Context and format of LTP3

a.   LTP3 has been set within development requirements of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West. Following the revocation of this strategy by the Government, LTP3 needs to be reviewed. It is inappropriate to base a statutory plan on a context that is no longer relevant.

b.   The vision of LTP3 needs further work. It does not provide a clear context to explain what will be achieved by 2026 or provide a clear position on modal shift. Localisation needs to have a clear focus; it should clearly reflect the localism agenda.

c.   Accept that over the lifetime of LTP3 there will be fewer resources available to invest in transport schemes and interventions across Gloucestershire. It is therefore important that clear priorities are set out within the plan. The priorities need to take into account current financial constraints whilst ensuring that project/ schemes are prioritised where

existing funding streams are available such as Section 106 funds.

d.   LTP3 needs to be more concise. There is a total 95 policies within the plan, but many are simply statements of support for activities undertaken by District Councils. The purpose of each policy needs to be considered, together with how each policy will be monitored. Given that LTP3 will be a material consideration in the consideration of planning applications it is essential that policies are clear and the expected outcome is understood and accepted. This further enhances the need to deliver under the localism agenda.

e.   Links should be clearly made to the emerging Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy.

2.   Integrated transport

a.   It is evident, particularly in the short term (2011- 2014) that resource hungry schemes will not be brought forward; the emphasis within this period set out in LTP3 is maintenance. Accepting that maintenance is important, this is nonetheless a missed opportunity to focus on schemes that will lead to cultural change – addressing transport behaviours and encouraging modal shift through localised solutions and investment in education/awareness.

b.   In a period of fewer resources it is important that in the County Council as Highway Authority seeks innovative delivery mechanisms for highway projects and that it fully explores opportunities to deliver projects jointly with other bodies and districts in a manner which meets joint objectives. Draft LTP3 does not fully explore these opportunities. This is a missed opportunity.

c.   In order to meet design quality objectives, the Government advocates the establishment of highway design and implementation teams which are multi-disciplinary and cross-organisational and the adoption of a "Quality Audit" approach to ensure delivery of a range of transport, environmental, aesthetic and safety objectives. Draft LTP3 fails to embrace this approach, despite mentions of partnership working. This is a missed opportunity.

d.   LTP3 needs to be clear on park and ride strategy, explaining future role as a transport hub and how this will deliver a sustainable integrated transport solution.

e.   LTP3 needs to clearly set out how communities will be engaged in proposals to develop park and ride schemes.

f.   LTP3 should make the commitment to continue the Gloucestershire Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Phase I and II have been completed, but funding and officer resource to complete phase III is currently uncertain. This resource needs to be identified

3.   Specific issues relating to Cheltenham Borough

a.   The Cheltenham Development Taskforce (formerly known as Civic Pride) should be included as a project within LTP3.

b.   LTP3 should be more explicit about how actions relating to Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) will be delivered and how highway projects might help with delivery as part of a co-ordinated response to problems.

c.   Transport related polices to promote sustainable economic growth needs to be defined in terms that relates to Cheltenham's needs, with clear benchmarking against national indicators.

d.   The County Council's own modelling of projected traffic growth, carried out for the Cheltenham Development Taskforce, suggests a significant increase in traffic in and around Cheltenham by 2026. It also suggests that many road junctions in Cheltenham are likely to become severely overloaded. New development will add to the pressure. LTP3 should include a clear strategy for dealing with these problems, whether in the form of road improvements, traffic management or public transport strategies.

e.   Managing the impact of freight transport is a critical factor in preserving the fabric of Cheltenham historic buildings and streetscapes.
The management of the current and projected flows of HGV's that use primary and trunk route network needs to be more fully considered in LTP3, particularly with a view to protecting minor roads and environmentally sensitive streetscapes from the impact of heavy vehicles.

f.   LTPs needs to identify the locations of Brockworth, Elmbridge, Uckington and West of Severn Park and Ride sites and show how local communities can engage at an early stage and what alternative models should be explored.

g.   Consultation was undertaken during 2009/10 on the emerging Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (JCS). This resulted in both broad and detailed comments from stakeholders and members of the public on transport issues. This information has been provided to Gloucestershire County Council. This should also be used to help inform LTP3.

h.   A greater emphasis needed on the role of community transport.

i.   LTP3 needs to acknowledge the opportunities for a range of localised and shared transport schemes, including car clubs, shuttle buses and community transport options. This needs to be linked to local employer, community and other defined groups with structure and mechanisms enabling working together in delivering sustainable transport choices and solutions.

Background Papers: Draft Gloucestershire's Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2026

Contact Officer: Owen Parry, Head of Integrated Transport & Sustainability
Cheltenham Borough Council
01242 77 4640   owen.parry@cheltenham.gov.uk

Appendices: 1 – Cheltenham Borough Council's response to LTP3