

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Friday, 20 January 2017, County Hall, Worcester - 10.00 am

		Minutes
Present:		Mr P A Tuthill (Chairman), Mr G J Vickery (Vice Chairman), Mr A T Amos, Mr A A J Adams, Ms P Agar, Mr M E Jenkins, Mr T A Muir and Mr J W R Thomas
Also attended:		Dr K A Pollock, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure Mrs E B Tucker Nigel Hudson (Head of Strategy and Infrastructure), Andy Baker (Transport Planning & Commissioning Manager), Martin Rowe (Transport Strategy Team Leader) and Emma James (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)
Available Papers		The members had before them: A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated); B. Presentation handouts for item 5 (circulated at the Meeting) C. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 November 2016 (previously circulated). (Copies of documents A and B will be attached to the signed Minutes).
261	Apologies and Welcome	The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. No apologies had been received.
262	Declarations of Interest and of any Party Whip	None.
263	Public Participation	None.
264	Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting	The Minutes of the meeting on 23 November 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
265	Local Transport Plan 2017-2030	In attendance for this item were:

(LTP4)

Nigel Hudson, Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy
Andy Baker, Transport Planning and Commissioning Manager
Martin Rowe, Transport Strategy Team Leader
Cllr Ken Pollock, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure

A presentation had been prepared, to update the Panel on the draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Worcestershire (2017-2030), which Cabinet had given the go ahead for consultation on 15 December 2016, following pre-consultation exercises with County Council local members, district councils and parish councils and the Cabinet over the period June to September 2016. The consultation, which would end on 17 March, before the Council's election purdah period, would include all six district councils, parish councillors and roadshows. It was planned to resubmit updated plans to Cabinet in June 2017, with the aim of formal adoption by full Council in July.

To date, the Evesham public participation event had been the busiest.

The LTP was a strategic, high level statutory document, which all local authorities are required to produce, deliver and maintain under the Transport Act 2000 and the Local Transport Act 2008.

The refreshed Plan would pick up the considerable changes over the past few years, including major political, social and economic change, the Council's growth ambitions and the district councils' local development plans. Crucially, the LTP was also used to support the Council's key business cases going forward.

Pre-consultation headlines included congestion, walking and cycling improvements, town centre/parking improvements, speed limits, junctions, air quality, HGV/Freight and rat running. Feedback to date had been included in the draft document, grouped into four main categories – 'to be included', 'already addressed', 'referred to stakeholders' or 'unable to include, with reasons provided' – the latter category referring to areas where the Council needed to work with others, for example bus services.

The consultation would include transport policies, local transport plans (North East Worcestershire, South Worcestershire, Wyre Forest), the Network Management

Plan and two environmental screening assessments.

Transport Policies showed how the Council dealt with:

- Transport engagement – councillor/stakeholder and consultation planning
- Public realm – management and maintenance
- Cycle infrastructure- maintenance/lighting/infrastructure, cycle routes/parking/signage
- Integrated passenger transport – bus stop infrastructure, subsidies, bus services, rail
- Transport and air quality – dealing with and monitoring air quality management areas (six out of ten were borderline)
- Motorcycling – a big growth area amongst 18-25 year olds
- Climate change – reducing vehicle emissions, asset resilience

The overarching aim and objectives of the Worcestershire Network Management Plan were to achieve the most efficient use of Worcestershire's transport network assets to deliver consistently reliable journey times, reduced direct and indirect costs and improved road safety.

The Network Management Plan brought together all the policies, standards and procedures associated with transport network demand management into one document.

In recognition that transport networks had a finite capacity, and that increasing capacity was extremely expensive, there was a targeted investment approach into the following three areas:

Transport technology

There were opportunities to manage network demand and tackle congestion and support growth. Examples included modern intelligent traffic signals and availability of dynamic travel information through a variety of media.

Travel choice

The rail network had significant potential to accommodate and support planned growth – requiring significant investment to provide services of a quality expected by a 21st century passenger. For example, gated stations would be more efficient and enable valuable data collection.

Investment in high quality, continuous corridors for active

travel modes, such as cycling and walking, would also benefit public health. Improvements to the public realm in urban areas would help by providing attractive environments and realistic travel choices for shorter trips.

Capacity enhancement

This was the most expensive of the three areas.

Suitable business cases could be identified to support investment. Wherever possible the Council would aim to fund and deliver capacity enhancements at key pinch points to support development growth, address poor air quality issues and tackle congestion.

Transport Schemes

The Panel was shown maps to indicate strategic transport schemes, and the detail involved for each area. Martin Rowe, Transport Strategy Team Leader summarised each, including transport telematics, area transport strategies, major road schemes, rail station improvements, game change employment sites, junction review/enhancements, housing developments, public realm schemes, parking schemes, bus interchange and active travel networks.

Main discussion points

- Some Panel members felt that considering the timespan to 2030, the document could have been more forward thinking and aspirational, rather than focusing on current issues, however other members felt that although ambition was appreciated, the priority should be to better manage what was currently in place.
- The Vice Chair raised several areas where he felt more creative solutions could feature, including potential for electric and driverless cars, tramways, streamlining roads away from inherited 19th century infrastructure, better rail capacity and ensuring new routes stopped in Worcestershire, more visionary parking and bus schemes, and speed limit enforcements in residential areas.
- Responding to these points, the officers advised that the degree of longer term planning had been subject to discussion within the Directorate, was acknowledged and would be reported back. It was pointed out that the agreed LTP could continue to be added to throughout its duration.
- The Cabinet Member with Responsibility (CMR) pointed out the need for practicality; there was a

long way to go before technology such as driverless cars would make a real impact, although it was possible to offer incentives.

- Officers advised that some schemes related to infrastructure and were designed to mitigate the effects of future development. Tramways had been considered for Redditch, but the level of investment required limited scope to major cities. Regarding transport networks, it was easier to expand existing networks rather than bring in new ones, and full Council commitment would be needed to support any significant investments. Parking issues and speed limits tended to be localised, which was why they did not feature more prominently.
- Partnership working was a significant feature of the draft Plan, and acknowledged to mean slow progress at times, however the CMR pointed out that partnership working was a reality, which also brought benefits.
- Meetings with key personnel from bus operators were starting, where it was hoped to discuss future visions for services – this was an example of where the Council needed to work in partnership *with* others, rather than direct them.
- Officers were aware of progress of a Bus Services Bill, and were considering what the Council could do, and how to encourage bus companies.
- Although not part of the West Midlands Regional Government, Officers and the CMR had active involvement through other channels, for example Midlands Connect and the National Infrastructure Commission.
- The Transport Planning and Commissioning Manager foresaw a lot of improvements coming through as part of the new West Midlands rail franchise from October and felt there would be merit in waiting to see what emerged from this process.
- A member was keen to pursue replacement and electrification of bus fleets over the LTP period.
- Members were keen for Worcestershire's rail capacity to be maximised, including use of Worcester Parkway Station, faster journey times from Worcester to London and dualling of the Cotswold Line.
- Safety concerns about the A46 from Stratford to Evesham were highlighted, particularly in light of development in that area. Local members were frustrated that funding was not available for dualling at the current time, however the Transport

Planning and Commissioning manager would look at any options to improve safety in the short-term.

- It was important that infrastructure capacity kept pace with housing developments across Worcestershire.
- Officers advised that from the consultation meetings so far, comments from Redditch about the A38 had been the most passionate, also the A46 in Evesham. The response in Bromsgrove had been mixed, with desire for a longer-term vision and transport connectivity, especially to Birmingham.
- Officers would look into scope for partnership communication to tackle the need to divert heavy goods vehicles (HGV) away from bridges in the Evesham area.
- The need for quality, lit footpaths and cycle ways was highlighted, and a member was aware of particular use in his area of Wychavon by foreign workers during hours of darkness – Officers referred to plans for a number of active travel corridors.
- Looking at Worcester, members raised issues around parking capacity to cope with more development, congestion, pollution, rat running and use of real time bus indicators – which gave timetable, rather than updated information. Panel members who were also Worcester City Councillors were encouraged to keep highlighting the value of transport discussions between the district and county council, for example to inform development and priorities for the town's rail stations and for tourism.
- Increasing the use of community transport, such as minibuses in rural areas had been discussed with the previous Cabinet Member, however, this appeared inconsistent in different areas of Worcestershire, and Officers would look into this.

In Summary, the Chairman felt the LTP4 document was well prepared, well structured, interesting and reflected a great deal of work. He highlighted the need to publicise the remaining district council consultation dates, and to inform county councillors about the consultation review 'sweep up' session.

Overall, he felt that the Panel was broadly content and supportive of the strategies and schemes set out in the draft Local Transport Plan document, aside from some queries about how long implementation would take. Therefore, a formal Panel response to the consultation

would not be necessary. The Vice-Chairman was keen for his comments on the overall level of aspiration over the 2017-2030 timespan to be noted.

Regarding future work, the Chairman was keen for a further update on value for money of the BT Broadband contract, and Highways Development Management Processes.

The meeting ended at 12.20 pm

Chairman