

CABINET – 15 SEPTEMBER 2009

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 3 OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Report by Head of Transport

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to inform members of the results of the consultation on the draft objectives for the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and seek a decision from the Cabinet on the prioritisation of those objectives. This report will also inform members of the environmental criteria that will be used for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the LTP and sets out the stages of developing the SEA. Copies of the background documents have been placed on deposit in the Members' Resource Centre.
2. Oxfordshire County Council is required to produce a LTP by April 2011 in order to meet the requirements of the Transport Act 2000 (amended by the Local Transport Act 2008). The third LTP (LTP3) will be a document that will help shape Oxfordshire for the long term, with a 20 year horizon rather than 5 years as in previous LTPs. This will bring it in line with the Sustainable Community Strategy, '*Oxfordshire 2030*', and give some headroom beyond the 2026 regional planning horizon.
3. The plan will focus on attracting and supporting economic investment and growth and delivering transport infrastructure and services to tackle congestion and improve quality of life, in addition to responding to the council's strategic objectives of the economy, community, climate change and reducing deprivation.
4. It was acknowledged at an early stage that needs and priorities vary across the county and this has resulted in a proposed approach which breaks the county down into four types of settlement, as indicated in Annex 1. The four types of settlement are; Oxford (shown in red in the annex), larger towns (Banbury, Bicester, Witney, Abingdon, Didcot, Wantage and Grove), market towns (Chipping Norton, Kidlington, Carterton, Faringdon, Wallingford, Henley-on-Thames, Chinnor and Thame) and rural Oxfordshire.
5. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is being developed for LTP3 and the consideration of equality and diversity issues will be built into every stage of the development process.

6. There is a need to develop goals and objectives for LTP3 to help to guide the plan and for these to come from a combination of national ('Developing a Sustainable Transport System'), regional (South East Plan) and local (Oxfordshire's Corporate Plan and the Sustainable Community Strategy) visions and goals. Taking these into account the following local transport goals have been Developed for LTP3:
- To support the local economy and the growth and competitiveness of the county
 - To make it easier to get around the county and improve access to jobs and services for all by offering real choice
 - To reduce the impact of transport on the environment and help tackle climate change
 - To promote healthy, safe and sustainable travel

Proposed Plan Objectives

7. Following the setting of the transport goals, the next stage in the process of developing LTP3 is to set objectives. A set of ten draft objectives were developed in consultation with Members, CCMT and the Transport Management Team. These objectives are currently out to stakeholder consultation and have been considered by a series of specially convened public focus groups.
8. At the time of writing consultation on the draft objectives was still taking place. All parish councils and identified stakeholders (see Annex 2) were advised of the consultation and invited to take part. In addition briefing sessions were held for stakeholders and eight public focus groups were undertaken across the county to reflect the four types of settlement described in paragraph four. The draft report from the focus group sessions will be available in the Members' Resource Centre (the final report will also be available before the meeting). An extract from the draft report can be seen in Annex 3 which gives a summary on how the groups prioritised the objectives.
9. The consultation period will end on 4 September and an update of the consultation responses will be provided at the meeting. As of Monday 24th August, 49 responses had been received.
10. Annex 4 contains the list of ten objectives prioritised into a suggested order for each of the settlement types. This list is based, in the first instance, on the results obtained in the focus groups. These have been adjusted to ensure that there are the same number of objectives rated each as high, medium or low in each settlement type (this is necessary to use this list for scheme prioritisation purposes). A final adjustment was made for logical consistency, to ensure that the priority was the same in all settlement types or that the priority increased or decreased steadily with settlement size. The results of this appear to be sound although there are some perhaps unexpected outcomes:

- Reducing casualties has a lower priority across the county than has been generally given in our recent transport strategies
- Promoting cycling and walking has a high priority in all the settlement types across the county
- Journey reliability has a low priority across the county (probably because delegates saw a high degree of correlation between congestion and reliability).

Any responses from the wider consultation which affect the objectives and their relative priority then these will be reported at the meeting.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

11. The LTP needs to comply with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. SEA is defined as a procedure comprising:
 - Preparing an environmental report on the likely effects of a draft plan or programme;
 - Carrying out consultation on both the plan and environmental report;
 - Taking the environmental report into account in decision making;
 - Preparing a statement showing how this was carried out.
12. Halcrow, our transport planning consultants, are undertaking the SEA work on our behalf. They have prepared a draft scoping report for the SEA which was consulted on from 20 July to 21 August 2009. The purpose of the scoping report was to enable consultees to form a view on the scope for assessment and the level of detail to be included in the SEA Environmental Report which will accompany the final version of LTP3. The scoping report provides details on relevant environmental baseline data, consideration of other plans and programmes of relevance and an outline assessment methodology.
13. The four stages of the SEA assessment and the environmental assessment criteria, against which the LTP will be assessed, are shown in Annex 5.
14. There were three statutory consultees for the SEA Scoping Report; Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage. In addition to the statutory consultees, all parish councils and identified stakeholders (Annex 2) were also advised of the consultation and invited to take part.
15. At the close of consultation fourteen responses had been received. At the time of writing these responses were being analysed by Halcrow and an update will be provided at the meeting. The consultation responses are available in the Members' Resource Centre. Once the consultation responses have been analysed and reflected in a final version of the scoping report it will be made available on the County Council's website.

16. A Habitats Regulation Assessment is also required to be undertaken on plans or projects that will have a significant effect on Natura 2000, or 'international' sites (so called due to their international legislative protection). At this stage a preliminary screening report has been undertaken to broadly assess how LTP3 may impact on such areas in Oxfordshire. A more detailed report will be produced at a later stage in the development of LTP3, once more information on the potential programme of improvements is available.

Financial and Staff Implications

17. A team has been established to oversee the development of LTP3, drawn from existing staff within Environment & Economy. In addition existing staff resources from within the Transport Service and the wider county council have been identified as having a contributory role in the development process.
18. Halcrow has been commissioned to undertake the work required for the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Habitats Regulation Assessment. Their costs are being met from within existing budgets.
19. There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

Risks

20. It is important that the approved sets of objectives are considered to be appropriate and the correct set in order to avoid the risk of developing policies and a programme of improvements that are not supported at a later stage. This risk has been mitigated by involving stakeholders at this early stage and convening public focus groups specifically to input to the priority given to the objectives.
21. There is a risk of raising expectations that improvements will be delivered against all objectives for each of the four settlement types. It will be important to explain how the objectives will be used to prioritise the improvements programme once that stage in the development is reached.

RECOMMENDATION

22. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
 - (a) **approve the prioritisation of the objectives for each of the four types of settlement as set out in the report, subject to consideration of the views of the Growth & Infrastructure Committee; and that the Head of Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Growth & Infrastructure and Transport Implementation be authorised to make any necessary changes; and**

(b) note the consultation undertaken on the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

STEVE HOWELL
Head of Transport
Environment & Economy

Background papers: Discussion Note 1: Agreeing the Objectives, July 2009

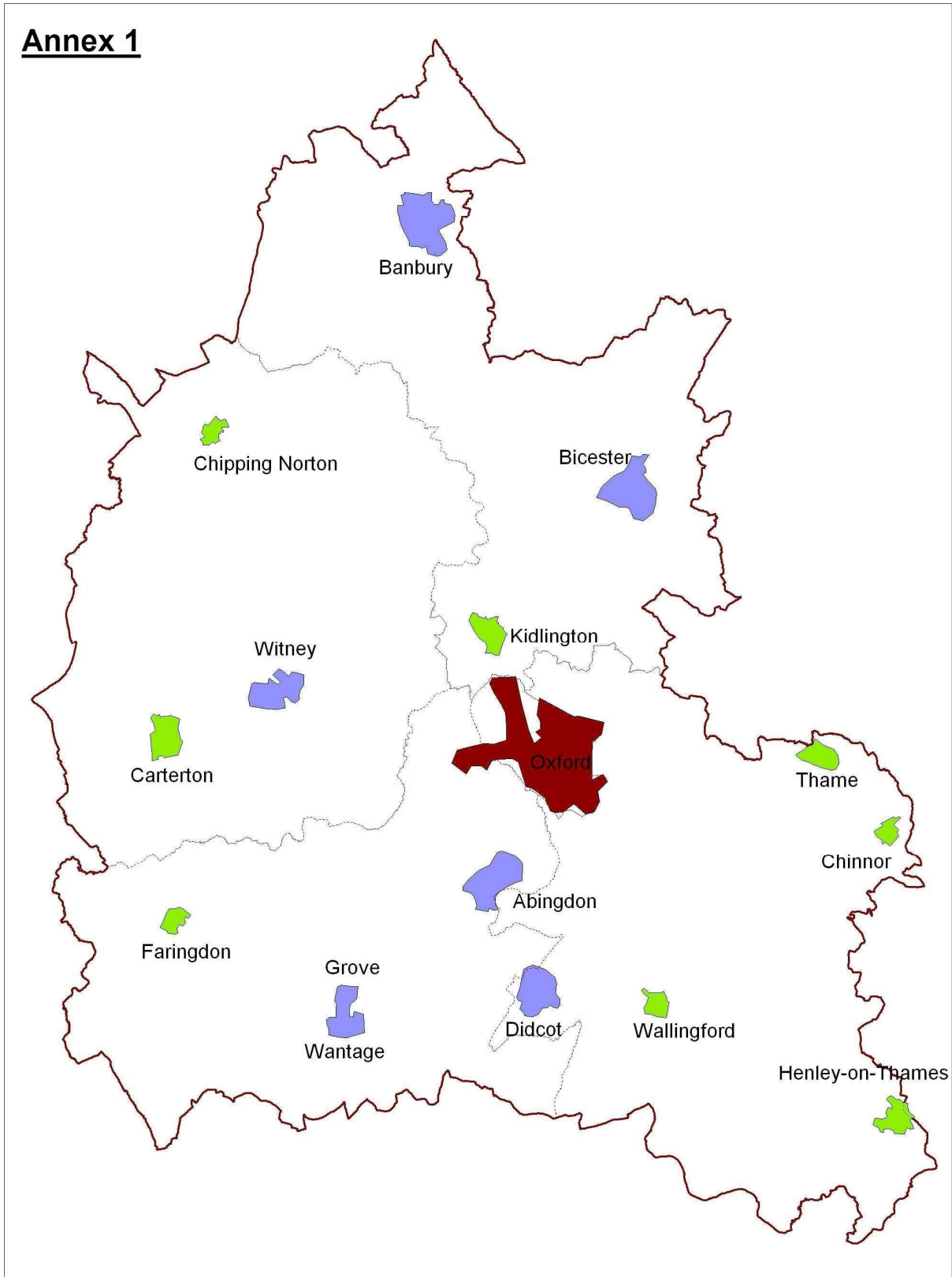
- Strategic Environmental Assessment, Draft Scoping Report, July 2009, Halcrow
- Habitats Regulations Assessment – Study to Inform Appropriate Assessment (Preliminary Scoping Report), July 2009, Halcrow
- Consultation on the Local Transport Plan draft objectives, Draft Focus Group Report, August 2009, Steer Davies Gleave.

These documents will be placed on deposit in the Members' Resource Centre.

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Annex 1



Amenity Groups

Banbury Civic Society
British Horse Society
British Waterways
Bus Users UK/British Motorcyclists Federation (Ox & Bucks)
Campaign For Better Transport
CTC
Culham Bicycle Users Group (CuBUG)
Cyclox
Friends of Abingdon
Harwell Bicycle Users Group (HarBUG)
Henley Society
Institute of Advance Motorists
Oxford Civic Society
Oxford Fieldpaths Society
Oxford Pedestrian Association
Oxford Preservation Trust
Oxfordshire Council for Voluntary Action
Oxfordshire Sports Partnership Core Team
Ramblers' Association (Oxon)
Sustrans
Tourism South East (Tourist Board)

Business Groups

AEA Technology (AEAT)
Banbury Business Park
Bicester Vision
BMW
EDF Energy
Freight Transport Association (FTA)
MEPC
NSL
Oxford Science Park
Oxfordshire Chamber of Commerce (Elected Council)
Oxfordshire Chamber of Commerce (Employed Staff)
Road Haulage Association (RHA)
ROX/Oxfordshire High Street Association
Thames Water
UKAEA
UNIPART Group
Value Retail

Environmental Groups

Berks Bucks Oxon Wildlife Trust
British Red Cross
Chilterns Conservation Board (AONB)
Cotswolds Conservation Board (AONB)
Country Land & Business Association (SE Region)
CPRE
English Heritage

Environment Agency
Friends of the Earth
National Farmers Union (South East Office)
Natural England
North Wessex Downs (AONB)
Oxfordshire Countryside Access Forum
Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum
Thames & Chiltern Regional Office, National Trust
Transition Oxford
UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP)

Public Transport

Arriva and the Shires (Aylesbury)
Arriva the Shires
Cherwell Rail User Group
Chiltern Railways
City of Oxford Licensed Taxicab Association COLTA
Cotswold Line Promotion Group
Cross County Trains Ltd
First Great Western
Grayline
Heyfordian
National Express
Network Rail
Oxford Bus Company
Oxford City Council Taxi Licensing
Oxford-Bicester Action Group
Passenger Focus
Public Transport Representative (PTR)
Railfuture, Thames Valley Branch
RH Transport
Stagecoach in Oxfordshire
Thames Travel
Whites Coaches
Worhs Coaches
Wrexham, Shropshire & Marylebone Railway Company Ltd

Health and Education

Age Concern Oxfordshire/Help The Aged
Area Health Authority
County Older Peoples Panel
Disability Action Group (Oxford University Students' Union)
Disabled Drivers Association (Mobilse)
Disabled Ramblers
Equalities and Diversity Team
Experts in Epidemology and Public Health
Guides Post Trust
Headway
Henley-on-Thames Access Group
Mencap
My Life My Choice (Learning Difficulties)

Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS Trust
OAB (Oxon Association Blind)
Oxford and District Sport and Recreation Association for Disabled People (OXSRAD)
Oxford Brookes University
Oxford Brookes University (Student Union)
Oxford City Access Forum
Oxfordshire Council of Disabled People (OCDP)
Oxfordshire Dyslexia Association
Oxfordshire Learning Disability Trust (Ridgeway Partnership)
Oxfordshire MIND
Oxfordshire Primary Headteachers Association
Oxfordshire Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust
Oxfordshire Association of Special School Headteachers
Primary Care Trust (PCT)
Secondary School's Headteacher Association
Social Inclusion Reference Group (SIRG)
The Oxford Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre
Transport For All (TFA)
Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford
University of Oxford
Vale Open Access Group
Wallingford Access Group

Organisations involved in Local Government

Carter Jonas (for Ministry of Defence)
Defence Estates South
Highways Agency
Integrated Youth Service
Jobcentre Plus
Ministry of Defence
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC)
Oxfordshire Fire Service
Oxfordshire Governors' Association
Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC)
Oxfordshire Youth Parliament
Participation and Play Team
Play Partnership
South Central Ambulance Service
Thames Valley Police

Local Authorities

Oxford City Council
Cherwell District Council
West Oxfordshire District Council
South Oxfordshire District Council
Vale of White Horse District Council
Oxford Strategic Partnership
Cherwell Community Planning Partnership
West Oxfordshire Strategic Partnership
South Oxfordshire Partnership
Vale Strategic Partnership

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Oxfordshire Partnership - Children's Trust
Oxfordshire Partnership - Environment and Waste Partnership
Oxfordshire Partnership - Health and Well Being Partnership
Oxfordshire Partnership - Oxfordshire Economic Partnership
Oxfordshire Partnership - Safer Communities Partnership
Oxfordshire Partnership - Social and Community Services
Oxfordshire Partnership - Spatial Planning and infrastructure Partnership
Oxfordshire Partnership - Stronger Communities Partnership

Extract from "*Consultation on the Local Transport Plan draft objectives, Draft Focus Group Report*", Steer Davies Gleave, August 2009.

Prioritising the objectives

- 3.36 Group members were asked to individually prioritise the objectives, selecting up to five priorities. They were also asked to allocate a nominal amount of transport 'spend' (£100) across their priorities, before discussing them within the group.
- 3.37 Some participants explained that they had found it difficult to prioritise the objectives, partly because of the 'overlap' between some of them but also because so many seemed equally important. The additional task of distributing an imaginary budget further challenged participants and often resulted in a slightly different outcome for the group. For example, promoting cycling and walking may have had the highest number of 'priority votes' in a group but the option might have received less 'funding' than 'reducing congestion'.
- 3.38 Table 3-1 shows the most commonly selected priority objectives – selected by at least four of the people within each group. It shows that the different areas prioritised different combinations of objectives, but there were common ones which ran across the focus groups:
- * Seven groups (all but Oxford) prioritised the objective to improve the condition of local roads, including resilience to flooding;
 - * Seven groups (all but the rural areas) prioritised the objective to reduce congestion;
 - * Five groups (all but Banbury & Bicester, market towns around Witney and rural areas) prioritised the objective to develop high quality public transport on main routes;
 - * Five groups (all but Abingdon, Witney and Wantage & Didcot) prioritised the objective to promote and support cycling and walking for local journeys, recreation and health; and
 - * None of the groups prioritised the objective to make journey times more reliable.

TABLE 3-1 PRIORITY OBJECTIVES

| Objective | Identified as a priority by four or more people in the groups undertaken by residents of: | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------|----------|--------|------------------|---|---|--------------------------|
| | Oxford | Banbury & Bicester | Abingdon | Witney | Wantage & Didcot | Smaller towns: Chipping Norton, Carterton, Kidlington & Faringdon | Smaller towns: Thame, Chinnor, Wallingford & Henley | Rural areas and villages |
| A: Improve the condition of local roads, including resilience to flooding | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| B: Reduce congestion | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | |
| C: Make journey times more reliable | | | | | | | | |
| D: Reduce casualties & the dangers associated with travel | | Y | | | | | Y | |
| E: Improve accessibility for all to jobs, goods, services & leisure | Y | | | | Y | | Y | |
| F: Secure infrastructure & services to support development | | Y | Y | Y | | | | Y |
| G: Reduce carbon emissions from transport | Y | | | | | Y | | |
| H: Improve air quality & enhance the street environment | | Y | | Y | | | | |
| I: Develop & increase the use of high quality, welcoming public transport on main routes | Y | | Y | Y | Y | | Y | |
| J: Promote & support cycling & walking for local journeys, recreation & health | Y | Y | | | | Y | Y | Y |

Oxford

High:

- Reduce congestion
- Develop and increase the use of high quality, welcoming public transport on main routes
- Promote and support cycling and walking for local journeys, recreation and health

Medium:

- Improve the condition of local roads and footways, including resilience to flooding
- Secure infrastructure and services to support development
- Reduce carbon emissions from transport
- Improve air quality and enhance the street environment

Low:

- Make journey times more reliable
- Reduce casualties and the dangers associated with travel
- Improve accessibility for all to jobs, goods, services and leisure

Larger towns

High:

- Reduce congestion
- Develop and increase the use of high quality, welcoming public transport on main routes
- Promote and support cycling and walking for local journeys, recreation and health

Medium:

- Improve the condition of local roads and footways, including resilience to flooding
- Secure infrastructure and services to support development
- Reduce carbon emissions from transport
- Improve air quality and enhance the street environment

Low:

- Make journey times more reliable
- Reduce casualties and the dangers associated with travel
- Improve accessibility for all to jobs, goods, services and leisure

Market Towns

High:

- Improve the condition of local roads and footways, including resilience to flooding
- Reduce congestion
- Promote and support cycling and walking for local journeys, recreation and health

Medium:

- Improve accessibility for all to jobs, goods, services and leisure
- Secure infrastructure and services to support development
- Reduce carbon emissions from transport
- Develop and increase the use of high quality, welcoming public transport on main routes

Low:

- Make journey times more reliable
- Reduce casualties and the dangers associated with travel
- Improve air quality and enhance the street environment

Rural Areas

High:

- Improve the condition of local roads and footways, including resilience to flooding
- Improve accessibility for all to jobs, goods, services and leisure
- Promote and support cycling and walking for local journeys, recreation and health

Medium:

- Reduce casualties and the dangers associated with travel
- Secure infrastructure and services to support development
- Reduce carbon emissions from transport
- Develop and increase the use of high quality, welcoming public transport on main routes

Low:

- Reduce congestion
- Make journey times more reliable
- Improve air quality and enhance the street environment

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| | Oxford | Larger Towns | Market Towns | Rural Oxfordshire |
|---|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Improve the condition of local roads and footways, including resilience to flooding | Medium | Medium | High | High |
| Reduce congestion | High | High | High | Low |
| Make journey times more reliable | Low | Low | Low | Low |
| Reduce casualties and the dangers associated with travel | Low | Low | Low | Medium |
| Improve accessibility for all to jobs, goods, services and leisure | Low | Low | Medium | High |

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| | | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Secure infrastructure and services to support development | Medium | Medium | Medium | Medium |
| Reduce carbon emissions from transport | Medium | Medium | Medium | Medium |
| Improve air quality and enhance the street environment | Medium | Medium | Low | Low |
| Develop and increase the use of high quality, welcoming public transport on main routes | High | High | Medium | Medium |
| Promote and support cycling and walking for local journeys, recreation and health | High | High | High | High |

The key stages of the SEA process are outlined below¹:

| | |
|---------|--|
| Stage A | Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the Scope |
| Stage B | Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects |
| Stage C | Preparing the Environmental Report |
| Stage D | Consulting on the draft programme and the Environmental Report |
| Stage E | Monitor the significant effects of implementing the plan or programme on the Environment |

Environmental Assessment Criteria

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| ++ Major Positive | The option would be significantly beneficial to the SEA objective by resolving an existing environmental issue and/or maximising opportunities for environmental enhancement. |
| + Minor Positive | The option would be partially beneficial to the SEA objective by contributing to resolving an existing environmental issue and/or offering opportunity for some environmental enhancement. |
| N Neutral | The option would not significantly affect the SEA objective. |
| ? Uncertain | There is insufficient detail available on the option or the baseline situation in order to assess how significantly the SEA objective would be affected by the option. |
| x Minor Negative | The option would partly undermine the SEA objective by contributing to an environmental problem and/or partially undermine opportunities for environmental enhancement. |
| xx Major Negative | The option would severely undermine the SEA objective by contributing to an environmental problem and/or undermining opportunities for environmental enhancement. |

¹ Based on SEA guidance issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, September 2005, *A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*.