Divisions Affected - All

CABINET - 19 JANAURY 2021

LOCAL TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY PLAN: VISION DOCUMENT

Report by CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) **note progress on the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and the timetable leading to Plan adoption set out in Annex 1;**

(b) **endorse the content of the Vision Document in Annex 1, and the supporting engagement summary and baseline evidence base documents in Annex 2 and 3 as the basis for public consultation, commencing in February 2021 for a period of 6 weeks; and**

(c) **delegate the decision on the graphical format of the final Vision Document to the Corporate Director for Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport.**

Executive Summary

1.   This report updates Cabinet on development of the new Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan- called the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. Specifically, it outlines the context and key points included in a proposed Vision Document (**Annex 1**), on which it is proposed to undertake public consultation. It also includes a summary of the engagement exercise undertaken in Spring 2020 (**Annex 2**), and a summary of key evidence that has been reviewed to support development of the Vision. (**Annex 3**) The Cabinet are asked to endorse these 3 documents as basis for public consultation commencing in February 2021.

Introduction

2.   This report gives context to development of the new Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), specifically the proposed Vision Document (**Annex 1**). The Cabinet are asked to endorse this, alongside reports on the engagement exercise in Spring 2020 (**Annex 2**) and baseline evidence (**Annex 3**) as the basis of a 6 week public consultation to be held in February/ March 2021. The scrutiny and performance committee will review the Vision Document on 14th January, and key points noted will be reported back to Cabinet in the form of an addenda. Further context to development of the LTCP and an outline of key points within the Vision Document is given below.

Context to development of the new LTCP

3.   The current Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) was adopted by the Council in 2016. It has provided a strategic transport policy framework for Oxfordshire over the last few years. It has also supported bids for significant transport scheme funding, such as the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal schemes, and development of recent district Local Plans.

4.   However, recent national and local policy development, not to mention the change in transport use arising from COVID-19, means that the time has come to look again at our strategic Oxfordshire transport policy framework and set this out in a new Local Transport Plan. This includes the need to focus on new and emerging corporate priorities, including delivering on our commitment to enabling a zero carbon Oxfordshire by 2050, promoting healthy place-shaping by designing healthy behaviours into the way places are planned and services delivered, and reflecting the Council's Equalities, diversity and inclusion framework.

5.   In particular, the following key policy developments are seen as key considerations influencing our new LTCP and have been carefully considered in the work undertaken to date:

(a)   Central Government commitments to de-carbonise our economy by 2050, with strategic priorities for Transport set out in the document, 'Decarbonising Transport: setting the challenge,' [1]and reflected at a local level in the Council's recent published Climate Action Framework proposals[2]

(b)   The importance of promoting active travel modes of transport, as reflected at a national level by the 'Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking' strategy, and at a local level in development of our Active Travel Programme, in particular Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCIWPs, with 2 plans now endorsed by Cabinet, and at least 2 further in progress)[3]

(c)   The push towards full high-quality digital gigabit and/or full fibre connectivity for all, as reflected in the Oxfordshire Digital Strategy and at a national level in the 'Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review.'[4]

(d)   The proposals to grow the Oxfordshire Economy as set out in the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy in July 2019 (and followed by the Investment Plan in August 2020)[5]

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[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creating-the-transport-decarbonisation-plan
[2] https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/energy-and-climate-change/what-we-are-doing
[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england
[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-telecoms-infrastructure-review
[5] https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/lis

(e)   The development of a Transport Strategy for England's Economic Heartland, as well as evidence and policy work progressing on the OxCam Arc, including the recently published economic prospectus[6]

(f)   The need to look again at public transport operations and networks in the context of impacts of Covid and changes in bus and train commercial operations, taking into account the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study (which is nearing completion) and imminent publication of a National Bus Strategy

(g)   The planning for major additional development in Oxfordshire, as set out to the mid-2030s in district local plans (and their supporting documents including their Infrastructure Delivery Plans), and for 2050 in the proposed Oxfordshire-wide Joint Spatial Plan (OP2050)

(h)   The proposals being drawn-up via the Growth Board for developing an Oxfordshire-wide strategic vision, a draft of which is currently out to consultation.[7]

6.   Many of these strategies and workstreams have been carefully considered in the LTCP development to date and will continue to be important as they further develop. For example, it will be important to understand how the full LTCP and its policies can be aligned and help deliver the Oxfordshire Vision desired outcomes should they be agreed by all Oxfordshire Growth Board partners following the current engagement period.

7.   Another important area for consideration in development of the full LTCP is the influence of digital technology, and in particular how this can help improve connectivity in a wider sense through:

(a)   Reducing unnecessary travel, such as through enabling home working;

(b)   Developing more efficient and effective transport choices, such as shared or autonomous transport modes of travel; and

(c)   Improving the management of freight and goods.

8.   As the new LTCP will influence and have impacts on how all residents of Oxfordshire travel and live their lives, it is important that we have good levels of engagement and consultation as it is developed. The cross-party Transport Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) have meet several times in 2020 and provided political steer to development of the LTCP, with County locality meetings also having been kept up to date, most recently in Autumn 2020. A Stakeholder Steering Group has also helped develop the LTCP work to date.

9.   In terms of public consultation, this has already started with an engagement exercise undertaken in Spring of this year, and it is planned that 2 further consultations are now undertaken, linked to the following 2 stages of development:

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[6] http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Pages/transport-strategyconsult.aspx,
 https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7378/oxford-cambridge_arc_economic_prospectus
[7] https://www.oxfordshireopenthought.org/strategic-vision

a.   *Stage 1:* Development of the draft LTCP vision and headline outcomes, planned for consultation in Feb/March 2021.

b.   *Stage 2:* Development of the full LTCP including updated vision and objectives following consultation, area strategies and policies, and updated strategies, e.g. for Active & Heathy Travel and public transport. It is proposed that this would be complete in draft for Cabinet to agree for statutory consultation in Autumn 2021.

Proposed Vision Document

10.   The proposed LCTP Vision Document, which will form the basis of the Stage 1 consultation, is shown in **Annex 1**. In summary this includes the following sections:

- *What does this document do?* This sets out the approach to developing the LTCP, and the wider strategic/ policy context.
- *The Challenge* This section gives some context to the challenges associated with planning for transport to 2050.
- *Vision* This section outlines the proposed LTCP Vision, including giving context to this vision.
- *Key Themes* The section outlines the key themes that are seen as underpinning development of the LTCP, including the outcomes we hope to deliver, as well as the proposed key policy focus areas and measurables for the LTCP.
- *Next Steps* This gives a summary of the proposed LTCP timeline development

11.   The key sections of the document are considered to be the proposed vision, and the proposed themes and outcomes which the LTCP is hoping to achieve. These are set out below for ease of reference:

Draft Vision:

"Our Local Transport Plan Vision is for a net-zero Oxfordshire Transport system that enables the county to thrive as one of the world's leading innovation economies, whilst supporting clean growth, protecting our rich and varied natural and historic environment and being better for health and well-being, social inclusivity and education.

Our Plan sets out to achieve this by reducing the need to travel, securing high quality gigabit connectivity, and by discouraging unnecessary individual private vehicle use through making active travel, public and shared transport the natural first choice."

Draft Proposed Themes and Outcomes:

Theme	Outcome
Environment	Sustainable communities that are resilient to Climate Change, enhance the natural environment, improve biodiversity and are supported by our zero-carbon transport network.
Health	Improved health and wellbeing and reduced health inequalities enabled through active and healthy lifestyles and inclusive, safe and resilient communities.
Place Shaping	Sustainable and resilient communities which provide healthy places for people and a high-quality environment capitalising upon the exceptional quality of life, vibrant economy and dynamic communities of our county.
Productivity	A world leading business base that is sustainable, has created new jobs, products and careers for all communities and is supported by an effective, zero-carbon transport network
Connectivity	Communities are digitally connected, innovative technologies are supported and there is improved connectivity and mobility, across the county, enabling greater choice and seamless interchange between sustainable modes.

12. A number of proposed policy focus areas are also included which it is proposed will form the basis of development the full LTCP. Further detail on what will be included under these proposed areas is given in the Vision Document, but in summary these are:

(a)   Active and Healthy Travel- including LCWIPs and a transport user hierarchy
(b)   Public Transport- including Park and Ride and mobility hubs
(c)   Air Quality- including Clean Air/Zero Emission Zones
(d)   Road Safety – including for equestrians and motorcycles
(e)   Healthy Place Shaping- including low traffic neighbourhoods and Healthy Streets
(f)   Innovation- including micro-mobility and shared mobility
(g)   Freight- including management of road/rail freight and freight consolidation
(h)   Digital Connectivity- including gigabit speed and full fibre rollout
(i)   Regional Connectivity- including links to EEH/ OxCam Arc strategies
(j)   Local Connectivity- including area strategies and rural transport
(k)   Network and Congestion Management - including demand and parking management

13. Each section of the Vision Document includes a number of questions, intended to seek feedback to inform development of the full LTCP document. It is also planned that the consultation includes publishing a report on the results of the engagement undertaken earlier this year, so that the public and stakeholders can see how this has helped influence our work to date on the LTCP. This is

given in **Annex 2**. A summary of background evidence is given in the Vision document, with a full report on evidence also proposed to be included in the consultation (**Annex 3).** This identifies key information that will need to be considered carefully as the new LTCP is developed, such as the environmental and health impacts of transport and the rural nature of much of the County.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

14.   The County Council's corporate plan, 2019-22 includes a vision based on the 3 elements of 'Thriving People,' 'Thriving Communities,' and 'Thriving Economy.' This workstream fits well with the 'Thriving Economy' part of the vision, "We support a thriving local economy by improving transport links to create jobs and homes for the future.' In particular, the LTCP will set out priorities for transport improvements that link with economic development, as well as delivery of new sustainable communities. It also fits with elements of the 'Thriving Communities' vision, given the relationship between transport investment, quality of life, health and the environment. The County Council Climate Action Framework, endorsed by Cabinet in October 2020, specifically notes the need to 'deliver a Local Transport and Connectivity Plan supporting a zero-carbon ambition.'[8]

15.   Development and delivery of the LTCP will also help with the County Council Covid recovery strategy, 'Restart-Recover-Renew', in particular the longer-term priorities for post-Covid transport planning. This includes promotion of sustainable modes of transport, better planning for public transport improvements, and achieving net-zero carbon emissions. With its focus on supporting healthy place shaping, it also fits well with the Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2018-23), as agreed in March 2019.

Financial Implications

16.   The LTCP Vision Document cost has been largely produced by staff within the Infrastructure Strategy and Policy Team, and hence covered by the staffing budget in this area. In addition, approximately £35k has been identified within the team budget to fund consultants to undertake an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) that is needed to support development and delivery of the full LTCP. The full LTCP document will be produced with input of staff from across the Planning and Place directorate and OCC.

Comments checked by:

Rob Finlayson, Finance Business Partner

Legal Implications

17.   The full LTCP will be a statutory Local Transport Plan. The requirement for local transport authorities to produce a Local Transport Plan is set out in the

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[8] https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/energy-and-climate-change/what-we-are-doing

Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008. Under the 2008 act, Local Authorities may replace their plans as they see fit. Once the new LTCP is adopted by the County Council, it will replace the current Local Transport Plan, adopted in 2016.

18.   The Local Transport Acts also require local transport authorities undertake a certain level of consultation when developing policies and plans. It is considered that this will be met by the proposed Vision Document consultation, as well as the planned full consultation on the LTCP later in Winter 2021/22.

Comments checked by:

Jennifer Crouch, Principal Solicitor (Environment Team)

Staff Implications

19.   Development of the Vision Document and proposed consultation is being undertaken largely by officer resource in the Infrastructure Strategy and Policy Team within the Planning and Place Directorate. Officers from this team will continue to project manage development of the full LTCP, as well as the consultants currently being procured to undertake the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA).

20.   Development of the full LTCP document in 2021 will also require input from across the Planning and Place Directorate and the Council, including Public Health and Wellbeing, Trading Standards, Community Operations, and Adult and Children's Services An OCC Officer Task and Finish Group has been set up and it is expected that many of the officers on this group will contribute significantly as the identified policy focus areas are developed, including drafting relevant parts of the document. Their in-depth knowledge in different areas will also be important to ensure cross-cutting priorities are acted upon, including understanding areas that can be strengthened compared with the existing Local Transport Plan.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

21.   We are undertaking significant engagement and consultation exercises as we develop the LTCP. These are set out in more detail in the consultations section below. In a wider sense the key outcomes as set out in the Vision Document are very much about supporting all communities in Oxfordshire to thrive. However, to ensure that we assess this in a fair and thorough manner, an equalities impact assessment will be undertaken (as part of the wider Integrated Sustainability Appraisal) alongside development of the LTCP. This will ensure that any equality matters are identified and acted upon appropriately as the full LTCP is developed, in line with the recently endorsed County Council 'Including Everyone Equalities Framework' (which replaces the previous framework focused on undertaking an SCIA).

Sustainability Implications

22. As noted above, development of the new LTCP will be an important part of delivering the new County Council Climate Action Framework. The draft vision and outcomes proposed for the LTCP set out the need to de-carbonise the transport network across the Oxfordshire to 2050, as well as protecting our national environment and biodiversity. It is proposed that this supported by policies that promote investment in measures and schemes to help achieve this, including on active and healthy travel, public transport, healthy place shaping and digital connectivity. The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) which will be developed alongside the full LTCP will ensure that strategic Environmental and Health impacts of policies are measured and assessed in a systematic way.

Risk Management

23. The following risks and mitigation have been identified associated with development to the LTCP:

    Risk: That the LTCP will not be delivered to time/ budget
    Mitigation: There is now a full-time post in the Infrastructure Policy and Strategy Team to project manage development of the LTCP. In addition, an Officer Task and Finish Group with officers from across the organisation has been set up and they will be key in taking forward and delivering the full LTCP. Consultants are currently being engaged to undertake the ISA needed to support the plan, and there will be a need to ensure careful management of this work to fit with required timescales/ budget available.

    Risk: That the LTCP does not have wider stakeholder, Cllr and public input as it develops
    Mitigation: One engagement process has already been undertaken, which has helped in development of the proposed Vision Document, with 2 further consultation exercises planned. It also planned to continue meeting with the LTCP Stakeholder Group and the Transport Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) to ensure they provide wider stakeholder and political steer as the more detailed LTCP is developed. Local County members are being engaged on strategy progress, including through locality meetings, and further more detailed discussions will be needed, particularly in development of updated area strategies

    Risk: Uncertainty around the outcome of the County Council elections, May 2021
    Mitigation: Officers have been working with the cross-party Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) in development of the LTCP which should help with political consensus following the election whatever the make-up of the council. We also recognise the need to work with any new local members after June 2021 to develop the more detailed LTCP, including area-based policies.

Consultations

Public Consultation to date

24.   An engagement exercise was undertaken in Spring 2020, with the public and stakeholders asked to comment on a series of topic papers focused around different transport and connectivity topics. A report on this engagement is planned to be published alongside the LTCP Vision Document, and this is given in **Annex 2** of this report. Some key messages arising out of the engagement exercise are also given in the draft Vision Document.

County Councillor Engagement

25.   Engagement with County Councillors to date has been through the cross-party Transport Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) and Locality Meetings.

26.   Transport CAG have provided political steer to development of the LTCP work to date, including the engagement exercise in Spring 2020, and development of the draft vision and outcomes.

27.   Locality meetings were given an update on LTCP progress, including key messages from the stakeholder engagement, and proposed next steps at their Autumn meetings. It will be important that we engage again with locality meetings, particularly as the area strategies and more detailed policies are developed for the full LTCP. It is expected that this will be done in early summer 2021 once the structure and scope of more detailed work is developed.

28.   The Performance Scrutiny Committee have also asked to review development of the LTCP to date and will therefore be considering the draft vision, engagement and evidence base documents at their meeting on 14th January 2021. Any feedback or comments from this meeting will be given to the Cabinet.

Stakeholder Engagement

29.   An LTCP Stakeholder Group has helped develop the LTCP to this point, including helping to shape the draft vision and proposed outcomes. The Steering Group includes representatives from transport operators, transport user groups, the Local Enterprise Partnership, and the key employers of Oxford University and Oxford Brookes.

30.   It will also be important for the LTCP to be developed and informed by wider strategy development and engagement/ consultation, including on the proposed Oxfordshire Vision (currently out to engagement itself) and Oxfordshire Plan 2050, as well as the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy. We have already commenced liaison with the officers undertaking this work to review alignment on matters such as measurables, and it will be important that full LTCP reflects and where relevant aligns with further development of these Growth Board initiated workstreams.

Planned Consultation

31.   It is planned that the following consultation exercises are undertaken as part of the LTCP from now:

    a.   Consultation on the LTCP Vision Document (**Annex 1)**. Once approved, it is planned that the graphic design for this is finalised, and consultation is undertaken through use of our consultation portal for a period of 6 weeks, commencing in February 2021.

    b.   Statutory consultation on the full LTCP, expected to be undertaken later in 2021.

32.   It is recognised that there is a need to review engaging with harder to reach groups as part of these consultation exercises in line with the Council commitment to equal opportunities as set out in the Council's 'Including Everyone Equalities Framework,' particularly Goal 4,'our services use good data and engage with users to plan and meet their diverse needs.'

33.   Prior to COVID-19 restrictions being in place, a workshop was undertaken with young people on the VOXY (Voice of the Oxfordshire Youth) panel to help understand their views and needs from a transport perspective. It is planned to build on this to look at how other opportunities, including virtual engagement, can be undertaken with other groups on development of the full LTCP.

JASON RUSSELL
Corporate Director Communities

Annex: **Annex 1:** Vision Document
                                    Annex 2: Engagement Report
                                    Annex 3: Baseline Report

Background papers/ documents: Nil

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