

## **COUNCIL – 8 SEPTEMBER 2015**

# **CONNECTING OXFORDSHIRE: LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2015 – 2031**

### **Report by Director for Environment & Economy**

#### **Introduction**

1. Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031 (LTP4) was approved by Cabinet on 21 July 2015 and recommended for adoption by Full Council at its meeting in September 2015. This report confirms the changes that have subsequently been made.
2. Connecting Oxfordshire, our new Local Transport Plan has been developed over the past 18 months, in response to the rapidly changing national and local growth, economic development, infrastructure planning and funding agendas. The aim has been to develop a comprehensive policy and strategy framework to maximise opportunities for Oxfordshire, building on the success over the past two years on City Deal and other initiatives, and complement the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and supporting documents.
3. Development of the Plan has followed on from the Connecting Oxfordshire roadshows held across the County last summer and has been informed by the feedback received from those events. This included a specific consultation exercise covering Goals, Objectives and Policies. It has been further developed in close partnership with internal and external Stakeholders, including the LEP, District Councils and Members. A full public and Stakeholder consultation on the draft Plan was undertaken in spring 2015.
4. The 16 year timescale of the Plan gives major benefits in terms of providing a transport strategy that covers the period of the district councils' Local Plans and allows for long term planning of major infrastructure.
5. The Plan has been designed as a living document, to be regularly updated as significant changes take place, for example as District Council Local Plans come forward and our growth town/locality strategies are updated. It will also directly inform our Strategic Infrastructure Plan, being developed alongside the update of the SEP this autumn, as part of our commitment to planning Oxfordshire's growth.
6. Connecting Oxfordshire provides the transport policy framework for Oxfordshire's transport schemes over the lifetime of LTP4, within which proposals for specific schemes can come forward for investigation, development, consultation and approval, including, for example, the proposal for Oxford's Outer Park & Rides.

7. LTP4 replaces LTP3 that was adopted as Council policy on 5 April 2011 and its subsequently approved revision on 10 July 2012.

### **Revisions since July 2015 Cabinet**

8. A variety of views and comments were stated at the Cabinet meeting by Members, stakeholders and organisations and others have been received since the Cabinet report was published. Some referred to the comments submitted by the public rather than the LTP4 documents themselves. A summary of these are provided below, followed by suggested proposals to update the documents:

9. **Absence of a Rail Strategy:**

The addendum to Cabinet outlined our strategic priorities and ambition for rail investment in Oxfordshire. Extensive consultation took place on the 2012 Strategy and work to revise this is substantially complete. The updated Strategy is proposed to be finalised this autumn, for stakeholder consultation and further consideration/amendment, before being submitted for approval as part of the LTP4 update in spring 2016.

10. **Bus strategy / (lack of) bus subsidy:**

Given the current consultation on supported bus services, a number of concerns were raised about subsidised services being withdrawn, conflicting with the LTP4 aspiration to reduce car use. This is a particular concern for places that are receiving more housing. A separate consultation is underway on supported transport:

(<https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/stconsultation/consultationHome>), which runs until 14 September 2015. It is anticipated this will be taken to Cabinet in the autumn. Once the outcome of this is known, LTP4 can be updated accordingly. In the meantime, liaison with the Supported Transport Project team is taking place to ensure consistent messages are given.

11. **Green Belt and Outer Park & Rides:**

This was covered extensively at Cabinet. Specific proposals and schemes are subject to planning, consultation and further study work. This will be done through the Park & Ride study, programmed to begin in September, after LTP4 adoption at Full Council. As part of this study, officers will engage with local parishes and stakeholder groups to ensure conversations take place as proposals are shaped.

We will ensure our spatial planning and post Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) work aligns with this, including incorporating and taking into account the outcomes of the Oxford Green Belt Study this autumn.

12. **Scale of investment in / commitment to cycling:**

Asides from the bidding success we have had in recent years to secure funding for cycling initiatives, the perception is the council doesn't invest much in cycling, with a request for at least 5% of the transport programme to be spent on cycling. There is more that we can be doing with our messages on this – nearly every transport improvement scheme that we implement across

the county will have a cycling improvement element to it. Officers will look into undertaking some work to quantify this. In the past, there have been member champions for different modes

13. In terms of more investment in cycling, officers will progress the actions in the Implementation Plan outlined in the Cycle Strategy, including:
  - Development, funding and construction of Cycle Premium Routes (CPR), and Cycle Super Routes, as outlined in the Oxford Transport Strategy;
  - Improve cycle/public transport door-to-door journeys;
  - Identification of maintenance priorities.
  
14. **Freight Strategy:**  
Following July Cabinet, the recommendation records:
  
15. RESOLVED: to approve Connecting Oxfordshire and to RECOMMEND it for adoption by Full Council at its meeting in September 2015 subject to the amendment that HGV controls in Burford, Henley and Chipping Norton will be prioritised when funding is available
  
16. The proposed text in the Freight Strategy will subsequently change from:
 

*Paragraph 17: Subject to resources, we will consider environmental weight restrictions across the County, particularly areas which are subject to significant levels of HGV traffic. This will focus on places which currently do not have any restrictions in force such as Burford, Chipping Norton, Woodstock and Henley-on-Thames, and other areas, such as Watlington, which do have them in force but where HGV traffic may be worsening problems of air quality, economic function and environmental amenity.*

**To:** *Subject to resources, we will consider environmental weight restrictions across the County, particularly areas which are subject to significant levels of HGV traffic. This will prioritise Burford, Chipping Norton and Henley-on-Thames, when funding is available.*
  
17. **Science Transit Strategy:**  
There are a number of ideas for projects that have been included in the 'Science Transit Strategy' that have yet to be scoped out and funding agreed upon to be delivered by 2035. Some of the later projects specifically assigned under the Science Transit have been removed from the document. These will be reinstated in later versions of the document, once more tangible detail of actual delivery is known.
  
18. **Other Sections:**  
Minor adjustments have been made to other chapters and plans in LTP4.

## **Financial and Staff Implications**

19. Capital scheme proposals in the Plan will create future capital commitments, albeit that these will be subject to funding being available from Government and other sources. Capital commitments would also lead to revenue budget pressures and when developing projects schemes for approval, their full costs including revenue funding required to support them will need to be made explicit as part of business case submissions. Some changes have been made to reduce the commitment of the Council to revenue funded interventions, to ensure that the Council does not overcommit resources and manages expectations on what it can afford in the increasingly challenging financial climate. Progress of proposals will be dependent on the availability of funding and form part of the annual service & resource planning process.

## **Equalities Implications**

20. A separate Service & Community Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is appended as Annex 5. Whilst this does not raise any significant concerns, it refers to the need for more bespoke assessments of individual programmes and proposals.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

21. **Council is RECOMMENDED to**
- (a) adopt Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031 (LTP4) as council policy; and**
  - (b) instruct the Deputy Director of Environment and Economy (Strategy & Infrastructure Planning), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to keep the document under review and to make any necessary changes, subject to any such changes being reported to County Council for approval within 12 months.**

## **SUE SCANE**

Director for Environment & Economy

Background papers: None

Annexes:

Annex 1: Consultation summary

Annex 2: Consultation detailed responses – amended since July Cabinet

Annex 3: Final LTP4 Chapters – Volumes 1 – 4

Annex 4: Strategic Environmental Assessment + Appendices A-F

Annex 5: Service & Community Impact Assessment

Contact Officer: John Disley, Policy & Strategy Manager. Tel: 01865 810460  
August 2015