

Introduction

This is Cambridgeshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the period from 2006–2011. As with our previous Local Transport Plans it has been written in partnership with the district councils within the county, all of whom have a vital role to play in achieving our shared aims for transport. This LTP takes the strategies and programmes contained within our interim LTP, produced in 2003 and brings them up to date to conform to revised government guidance on LTPs.

Our LTP sets out how we will use the amount of money allocated to us by government for transport to deliver an improved transport system and, within the limits of the funding available, help to meet the government's Shared Priorities for Transport of improving accessibility, better air quality, tackling congestion and safer roads, and our additional objectives of meeting the needs of the economy and of our growing population, and maintaining an efficient transport network.

The issues

Cambridgeshire is experiencing an unprecedented level of growth that has already transformed Cambridge itself from a market town to a world beating centre of technology. The county, and especially the Cambridge Sub-Region, is at the centre of the UK's high tech, research and education industries. Government is keen to see the success that these industries have experienced continue, and to help facilitate this we have accepted the need for a huge amount of new housing in the area. Around 57,400 new households are planned for the county by 2016, 47,500 of which are in the Cambridge Sub-Region. Our land use policies contained in the Structure Plan set out ways in which this unprecedented scale of development can be delivered in a sustainable way, concentrating growth on Cambridge, the market towns and a new town, to be called Northstowe, to the north west of Cambridge. Concentrated development provides us with the opportunity to more easily provide high quality public transport and to ensure that these new developments provide accessible jobs and services, thus reducing the need to travel. It is the role of our transport strategy to ensure that these opportunities are fully exploited.

Despite the phenomenal economic success of the county, and especially of the Cambridge Sub-Region, there remain issues of social exclusion that must be addressed. This is true both in the more rural parts of the county, where distance to services is often a problem and in Cambridge and the market towns, where the ease with which people can access services can be an issue for certain groups. While improving transport is by no means the only measure needed to address these issues, it has an important role to play in helping to do so by ensuring that key services are as accessible as possible.

Meeting these challenges will not be easy and we will only be able to do this if our land use and transport strategies continue to be closely linked. To this end, we have modelled the proposed development growth to establish what essential transport measures need to be introduced if sustainable growth is to be achieved. The results of this modelling are contained within our Long-Term Transport Strategy. The findings confirm the conclusions of earlier work commissioned from independent consultants in showing that we will need over £1 billion of additional transport investment over the next 15 years to meet the transport needs arising from the rate of growth in the number of households. We are confident that our transport strategy, if delivered, can meet these needs and that our LTP will play a full part in helping to achieve this.

Our aims and objectives

The aim of both our transport and our land use strategies is to maintain and improve the quality of life and quality of environment in Cambridgeshire. We will balance the protection and enhancement of the unique character of the Cambridgeshire with the growth of the local economy. This LTP contributes to this by setting out how we will meet the Government's Shared Priorities for Transport of improving safety, accessibility and air quality and reducing congestion.

Accessibility

Accessibility is a key issue across the county. In all areas, the ease with which people can access services can be a problem, but in rural areas the distance to services will typically make these problems more severe. Transport has a key role in improving accessibility, but we can only do so in partnership with other organisations. To this end, we have developed an accessibility strategy, gaining the commitment of key partners to take forward a prioritised agenda of improvements. The appendices to this LTP include our first Accessibility Action Plan, which sets out how we will seek to improve Accessibility in two of our nine identified priority areas.

Air Quality

We will minimise the impact transport has on air quality through the promotion of sustainable transport and will look to address those areas where air quality becomes an issue through a range of transport interventions. In Cambridgeshire, there is a danger that pollution caused by traffic may exceed acceptable levels on some of the trunk roads, which are beyond our direct control. This is especially likely given the planned rate of growth

envisaged within the draft Regional Spatial Strategy, particularly along the A14 corridor. Where the growth in traffic along the trunk roads threatens air quality targets, we will continue to work with the Highways Agency and with neighbouring transport authorities to develop appropriate solutions.

Congestion

Increasing congestion caused by the rise in population in the fastest growing area in the country could threaten economic prosperity and is already having a negative effect on the A14 and in the towns and cities in the Cambridge Sub-Region. If we do not tackle congestion we will not be able to meet the strategic aspirations of the Regional Spatial Strategy to sustainably accommodate significant extra growth, while the impact on our internationally renowned industries could be detrimental to national priority given to promoting them.

We therefore take congestion very seriously indeed and have produced a Long-Term Transport Strategy that looks in detail at the effects of growth on the transport network in the county, setting out the measures we must introduce to tackle both existing and future congestion. This LTP forms a vital part of this strategy.

Safety

Transport has a key role to play in creating safer environments. We aim to address existing safety problems on the county's transport network and design in safety to new developments. We also seek to address safety issues for particular modes of transport where safety is an issue. Transport improvements can also play a key part in improving community safety and in helping to address problems of accessibility caused by safety concerns and we are working with our key partners to address this important area.

We have a good record in reducing the numbers of people killed or seriously injured on Cambridgeshire's roads and will continue to work to reduce this further. The planned large-scale growth in population will increase the challenges to us in this respect but we are confident that we can continue to meet our ambitious targets.

Economy and efficiency

Sustaining and developing the local economy is a key strand of both our land use and transport policies and is also an essential element of the draft Regional Spatial Strategy. Effective maintenance of the transport network has a vital role to play in this, not only in supporting economic growth and regeneration but also in meeting our other key priorities, especially those for safety and congestion.

Delivery and value for money

Value for money is key to how we plan and deliver local transport in Cambridgeshire. In delivering the measures set out within this Local Transport Plan we aim to achieve the best possible outcomes from the funding available. Value for money can be achieved through the prioritisation of schemes within our programme and through the efficient planning and delivery of these schemes. This ensures we are investing public money sensibly. Delivering value for money ensures we are effectively addressing the transport problems faced in Cambridgeshire. Other ways in which we can achieve value for money include the following.

- Setting stretching targets to ensure we are achieving measurable outcomes
- Using revenue funding to support capital investment
- Achieving added value from road safety schemes which often involve road maintenance and can encourage modal shift
- Focussing our investment on the achievement of the Shared Priorities for Transport and LTP objectives
- Developing a Transport Asset Management Plan to make the most efficient use of both existing and new assets

Consultation on our LTP

We consulted heavily on our overall strategy in 2003, ensuring that the public were fully involved in considering possible alternatives.

Our programme of extensive consultation included:

- Distribution of 240,000 leaflets and questionnaires to households throughout Cambridgeshire
- Engaging with the public through 19 separate staffed roadshow exhibitions
- Unstaffed static exhibitions at over 40 venues
- A programmed media strategy to raise awareness of the key transport issues faced by the county
- Consultation targeted at groups who traditionally have been difficult to reach. For example, consultation for young people including visits to schools and engaging with the County's Youth Parliament Members
- Innovative consultation techniques including extensive use of the internet and mobile phone texting for responses and comments
- A series of meetings with Parish Councils and key stakeholders.

The key results of this consultation were:

- Over 85% support for the overall aims of the LTP
- Over 90% for the objectives contained within the LTP
- High levels of support for the programme of measures contained within the LTP, including 90% support for our proposals to improve public transport

Having secured support for our overall aims, strategy and objectives, we have built upon this in taking forward this LTP to look at the best ways of delivering our transport objectives in partnership with key stakeholders. In particular, we have worked extensively with groups and organisations to develop our accessibility strategy, as set out in **Appendix 4** and with public transport operators to take forward our ambitious programme to reduce congestion.

- Working in partnership to achieve greater benefit to all parties and draw in additional funding
- Using new technology to more effectively plan and manage improvements to the transport network
- Increased funding for 'soft' measures that are proven to have greater cost benefit than many physical improvements
- Delivering major schemes that offer best value for money, according to the New Approach to Transport Appraisal criteria

Why a new LTP?

Because of the pressures peculiar to Cambridgeshire – in particular the very fast rate of growth in housing and in the economy that we are facing – we took the decision in 2003 to produce a second LTP earlier than was strictly necessary. This interim LTP was to run from 2004–11 and gave us the opportunity to do two key things:

- We updated and reviewed our entire transport strategy to ensure that it was completely integrated with our Structure Plan, which had been produced shortly before the LTP was completed.
- We fundamentally reviewed all of our transport policies and strategies to make sure that they were best fitted to what the county most needed. In doing this, we carried out extensive consultation with the public and with key stakeholders to make sure that our strategy was widely understood and supported.

As a result, we had an LTP that was closely integrated with our land use policies. This remains very important for Cambridgeshire.

Our interim LTP has now been updated to meet new government guidance on second LTPs. This guidance is different to that on which our interim LTP was based in a number of important ways:

- Our interim LTP, in keeping with the requirements of the time, was a bidding document to government for funding based upon the needs of the area, which in the case of Cambridgeshire, experiencing as it is a very rapid level of growth, are very considerable. We are now required to set out in broad terms how we will spend a specific sum of money allocated to us by government – called a “planning guideline” – and cannot include in our LTP schemes where funding has not been specifically identified.
- We need to relate the delivery of our programme to trajectories, which show how our programme will help to meet the ambitious but realistic targets that we have set ourselves.
- The new guidance specifies the need for a number of new plans and strategies, including an accessibility strategy, a Rights of Way Improvement Plan, a Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Transport Asset Management Plan. These are now incorporated into this LTP.

Despite these changes, our overall strategy as set out in Chapter 4 remains the same, having been developed in 2003 when we fundamentally reviewed our transport strategies to make sure that they best met the needs of the county.

The LTP as part of our Long-Term Transport Strategy

As an area experiencing very significant levels of growth, the levels of funding required to meet the needs of the county are much greater than those that will be allocated through the “planning guidelines” and the way in which this additional funding will be obtained cannot be absolutely identified at this time. Since Government requirements for the LTP specifically state that only those schemes for which funding has been identified should be included in the LTP, these wider issues can no longer be included in our second LTP. The failure to include certain key schemes in our transport strategy would jeopardise the possibility of obtaining them, as, for example, agreements with developers for funding are often negotiated on the basis that they are an accepted and approved part of our strategy.

To this end, and with the approval of the Government Office for the East of England, who sit on the steering group, we have chosen to produce a more detailed Long-Term Transport Strategy than is required from Government guidelines. This strategy is available online at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/lts

Combined, the Long-Term Transport Strategy and the LTP will provide a solid basis for us to continue to deliver successfully in meeting our transport objectives.

