

# Cabinet

9 September 2021

## Local Transport Plan Refresh

### Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the outcomes of the formal consultation and Citizens' Panel processes that took place in the first half of 2021.
- 2) Approves in principle the adoption of a flexible and easily updatable suite of LTP documents and authorises the Strategic Director for Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transport & Planning, to determine the most suitable structure of documents for this purpose to inform the next phase of consultation.
- 3) Approves the drafting of Local Transport Plan 4 using the four key themes consulted upon as the basis for the document and authorises the Strategic Director for Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Transport & Planning, to approve materials for public consultation at the earliest opportunity in 2021.

## 1. Executive Summary

1.1 The County Council has under way a project to refresh its Local Transport Plan.

1.2 In accordance with Cabinet's decision in October 2020 issues and opportunities surrounding transport in Warwickshire have been developed and refined into four "Key Themes" which are intended to form the basis of the next Local Transport Plan. The key themes are as follows:

1.2.1 Environment - Transportation emissions are one of the biggest contributors to climate change. It is creating poor air quality which can damage health. We want to put the environment at the heart of our decision making in order to achieve the government's targets around emissions and to address the climate emergency declared by WCC

1.2.2 Wellbeing - Transport can have a significant impact on people's mental and physical health; having good transport options can help link a community, promoting the happiness and wellbeing of everyone living and working there. We think our transport plan should consider how to

keep people safe and secure whilst travelling and provide people with swift and convenient ways to get together.

1.2.3 Economy - As we look to bounce back from the pandemic, we consider that transport infrastructure is key to stimulating the local economy and facilitating the smooth operation of businesses. Our transport plan will play a vital role in attracting investment into Warwickshire and creating jobs for local people. There will be a clear focus on driving sustainable and inclusive economic growth, productivity and prosperity within the LTP.

1.2.4 Place - A sense of place is a unique collection of qualities and characteristics, including visual, cultural, social, and environmental that make up a location. In our case, Warwickshire is made up of a wide variety of rural and urban places from villages to market towns that all have unique characteristics. Transport choices in Warwickshire should support high quality places throughout the County, reflecting the specific requirements of those places in line with their different characteristics and needs.

- 1.3 The proposed Key Themes were discussed with key stakeholders at both officer and elected member level as part of the refinement process. The Member Working Group formed at the instruction of Cabinet in October 2020 played a key role in this process.
- 1.4 These Key Themes have been subjected to formal consultation between January and March 2021 and considered by a “Citizens’ Panel” of Warwickshire residents.
- 1.5 Warwickshire County Council wishes to present its next Local Transport Plan as a strategic and agile document that is easily accessible and able to stay as relevant as possible through timely revisions.
- 1.6 To maintain an agile LTP, officers wish to further investigate what documents should form a “core” LTP as defined by legislation and what may be considered supporting documentation with less arduous revision processes.
- 1.7 The project team wish to present the findings of the consultation processes to Cabinet and seek approval to appoint relevant managers to draft proposed LTP documents in accordance with the four key themes.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 The project will be funded from existing revenue budgets.
- 2.2 The funding, deliverability and suitability of individual transport schemes will be addressed in the LTP itself and in supporting documents such as action plans and monitoring programmes.

### 3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 The Local Transport Plan sets out the County Council's policies and strategies for maintaining and developing the transport network within Warwickshire and for interacting with wider regional, sub-regional, national and international transport connectivity. The document is also a material consideration within the planning process and has a role in defining infrastructure requirements to support housing and employment growth.
- 3.2 The document therefore has significant scope to aid the County Council in its efforts to address the climate emergency by driving decarbonisation in both public and private modes of transport whilst also contributing to the achievement of the Council's wider plans and objectives. The new plan will be accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment (assuming no change in legislation).

### 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The proposed “Four Key Themes” have engendered broad support from stakeholders after consultation with all interested parties. The themes identified in the Consultation Brochure attached as **Appendix A** align well with the County Council’s corporate objectives and wider regional and national objectives and can be integrated with other relevant plans and strategies.
- 4.2 A formal consultation into the suitability of the four key themes in **Appendix A** took place between January and March 2021. This took the form of a survey questionnaire on <https://ask.warwickshire.gov.uk/>. The survey was also available as a paper copy and in alternative formats and languages on request.
- 4.3 In total, 758 respondents completed the survey.
  - 4.3.1 There was a general high level of agreement for the inclusion of each of the four key themes in developing LTP4:
  - 4.3.2 In terms of agreement (either agreed or strongly agreed):
    - 4.3.2.1 94.9% (n=719) agreed with the inclusion of environment as a theme,
    - 4.3.2.2 75.6% (n=573) agreed with the inclusion of the theme of economy,
    - 4.3.2.3 79.2% (n=600) agreed with the inclusion of the theme of place, and;
    - 4.3.2.4 87.5% (n=663) agreed with the inclusion of the theme of wellbeing
- 4.4 Respondents expressed broad support for the inclusion of each of the four key themes presented - Environment, Economy, Place, and Wellbeing.
- 4.5 The environment theme emerged as being the theme that respondents supported most and when asked were more likely to prioritise over other

themes, this was followed by the theme of wellbeing.

- 4.6 There was significant consistency in the issues raised by respondents, both between questions and across respondent groups. There was also considerable repetition in the main issues, challenges and solutions raised in response to different questions, with some clear areas emerging, both in addition to, and in relation to, the four main themes presented. These were:
  - 4.6.1 Improving active travel facilities for walking and cycling to support active lifestyles and contribute to improvements in the environment.
  - 4.6.2 General improvements in/encouragement to use sustainable (public) transport
  - 4.6.3 Planning to reduce the reliance on private cars and to enable electrification
  - 4.6.4 Environmental concerns relating to road layout and traffic (e.g. congestion, air/noise pollution, climate change, loss of habitat, and green spaces)
  - 4.6.5 Recognising the importance of transport on quality of life (particularly mental health and physical wellbeing) and for access to health and wellbeing services (e.g. doctors, medical centres)
  - 4.6.6 Concerns around the pressures of housing developments and/or increasing populations on the existing road network(s)
  - 4.6.7 The long-term impact(s) of the COVID-19 pandemic on transport and the existing transport network including changing travel patterns, home-working and an increase in online shopping
- 4.7 It was clear that the majority of respondents had not used or referred to the current local transport plan (LTP3) before and the reason for this was mainly due to those respondents not being aware of it.
- 4.8 Going forward to ensure LTP4 is more visible and accessible respondents provided responses on how the plan should be presented and promoted, and where it should be made available. The main suggestions were:
  - 4.8.1 A simple, clear and easy to understand plan with graphics/images
  - 4.8.2 A summarised version of the plan.
  - 4.8.3 Available on-line, and as a hard copy on request and in key public places
  - 4.8.4 Promoted via social media; local groups, networks and organisations; the local press; door-to door leafleting; posters; and websites.

- 4.9 Considering equalities issues and impacts is also key to ensuring the LTP is beneficial to everyone. The main areas raised by respondents were:
- 4.9.1 Consideration of people with disabilities
  - 4.9.2 Accessibility for vulnerable and isolated groups with a particular focus on affordability of transport
  - 4.9.3 Consideration of all age groups from school-aged children to older citizens
  - 4.9.4 Consideration of other/non-vehicle road users (e.g. pedestrians, cyclists)
- 4.10 With regard to process, the need to consult with stakeholders and the general public (from a range of different backgrounds) and to provide clear and accessible information as the LTP4 progresses was reiterated. As was collaborative working with stakeholders locally, regionally and nationally
- 4.11 The responses to the formal public consultation that took place in the first quarter of 2021 are summarised in **Appendix B** and reported in more detail in **Appendix C**.
- 4.12 To complement the findings of the survey based formal consultation officers also commissioned a “Citizens Panel” of Warwickshire residents to consider the proposed key themes in some detail and provide recommendations.
- 4.13 The panel of 29 residents was ethnographically and demographically representative of the population of Warwickshire as well as being representative of the range of travel behaviours exhibited by our residents.
- 4.14 Panellists were not familiar with Local Transport Plans at the beginning of the process. They were provided with background material to research the subject further and then discussed what they considered to be the priorities linked to travel in Warwickshire in facilitated discussions.
- 4.15 Panellists’ views towards travel and transport in Warwickshire are rooted in their experience as users of these services and residents of the county. For most, their initial ‘vision’ for what the LTP should seek to achieve was therefore focused on changes which would have an immediate personal benefit i.e. reducing congestion, a faster / better connected bus network, and ensuring public transport was safe, clean and affordable.
- 4.16 The Local Transport Plan was generally seen as comprehensive and spoke to the issues that mattered to them. It was felt to cover a lot of ground (and areas which Panellists had not linked to transport before) and to be well thought through. Beyond considering the cost of services to users, participants struggled to identify additional themes or sub-themes. However, many also criticised the Plan for being too broad, and felt that achieving in all

areas would be difficult under funding constraints.

- 4.17 The themes of 'Wellbeing' and 'Environment' emerged early on as being of highest priority to Panellists. They were able to easily make the connection to transport and could understand the personal relevance. The pandemic has brought issues relating to 'Wellbeing' to the fore, making this theme feel important and relatable. Meanwhile, the 'Environment' theme was also seen to have significant personal implications as well as being a major long-term challenge in which changes to travel can make a difference.
- 4.18 'Economy' and 'Place' were harder to grasp and the link with personal transport use felt less intuitive, meaning they resonated less well. For example, it was difficult to relate broad economic concepts like 'productivity and competitiveness' with supporting local jobs and high streets, which is a more tangible concern for Panellists. Similarly, though thriving communities or preventing isolation did feel important to Panellists, 'Place' struggled to stand out as a unique theme.
- 4.19 There are some ongoing tensions between Panellists' desire for the LTP to put the environment at the heart of decision-making, and the expectation that there will be limited inconvenience to users. There is clear support for prioritising the environment in future investments, with the caveat that panellists expect genuinely attractive / accessible public and active transport options, which are introduced gradually enough that no one feels constrained or limited to one form of transport.
- 4.20 The Citizens' Panel process and the recommendations of the panel are explained in more detail in **Appendix D**.
- 4.21 Short videos of some of the panellists discussing the process and their experiences can be found in **Appendix E**.

#### **URL**

**<https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/3e9465f4-c548-469f-96db-9dc5e02248a1?list=studio>**

- 4.22 Subject to approval from Cabinet officers will now seek to draft LTP documents reflecting the four key themes as suggested and widely supported through both methods of consultation. Further consideration will be given to the relative priorities of the themes as expressed through the consultation responses and how this can be reflected in the proposed draft, though all four themes will permeate the entire LTP.
- 4.23 Feedback from the Citizens' Panel in particular will allow officers to consider how to communicate the importance of certain aspects of the LTP and key themes which were less well understood by the panellists but still considered important, for example the economic importance of transport.

- 4.24 The Local Transport Plan is adopted by Warwickshire County Council under the Transport Act 2000. Experience with previous LTPs has demonstrated that it is difficult to keep the plan up to date when action plans and geographically specific documents have to go through the full process of adopting a new LTP to be updated.
- 4.25 Feedback from the consultation has highlighted “deliverability” as a key aspect of the LTP. In order to ensure that strategy flows through to deliverable interventions that achieve our aims it is proposed to create a “modular” LTP that defines subject specific strategies, leading to geographically specific action plans and monitoring plans.
- 4.26 Officers are exploring the best configuration of documents to ensure that the Council complies with all legal requirements whilst keeping the next LTP as up to date, relevant and deliverable as possible. Section 108 of the 2000 Act requires that the plan must contain our policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport and our proposals for the implementation of those policies. However, this does leave scope for more detailed matters to be dealt with by way of modular supporting documents.
- 4.27 An example of a structure that could achieve this is included in **Appendix F**. The suitability of this structure will be refined as necessary as we move through the drafting process.

## **5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps**

- 5.1 Anticipated timescales for this project are as follows,
- 5.1.1 Drafting of new LTP documents – September – November 2021
  - 5.1.2 Preparation of LTP documents for public consultation – November – December 2021
  - 5.1.3 Formal public consultation of draft LTP – Early 2022
  - 5.1.4 Present consultation responses to Cabinet and Full Council – Mid 2022
  - 5.1.5 Adopt new LTP at Full Council – Mid 2022

## **Appendices**

1. Appendix A Key Themes brochure
2. Appendix B Formal consultation “dashboards”
3. Appendix C Formal consultation report
4. Appendix D Citizens’ Panel process and recommendations
5. [Appendix E Citizens’ Panel “Vox pops”](#) **Please note this is a video link. Either click on the link or copy and paste the following URL.**

<https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/3e9465f4-c548-469f-96db-9dc5e02248a1?list=studio>

6. Appendix F Indicative LTP structure

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Local Member(s): n/a

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