

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date:	16 July 2019
Title:	Basingstoke Transport Strategy
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the consultation process and comments received relating to the publication of the Basingstoke Transport Strategy.
2. The report will also seek approval of the amended document, including its outlined implementation plan as the final and adopted Basingstoke Transport Strategy.

Recommendations

3. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment notes the findings of the recent consultation, outlined in this report, and formally approves the Basingstoke Transport Strategy.
4. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment authorises work on the next stage of scheme planning and development work, subject to securing financial resources to complete such work, including a contribution from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
5. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment approves the interim policy position as a basis for highways development control.

Executive Summary

6. On 13 March 2018, the Executive Member for Environment and Transport agreed to develop a new Basingstoke Transport strategy framework and authorised officers to undertake local engagement based on the principles and approach outlined in the report. Since then, the County Council, in partnership with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and with support of the EM3 LEP, has developed a robust evidence base and transport analysis, and undertaken extensive local consultation and engagement on the emerging plan.
7. Having undertaken this work and taken into account the results of technical exercises to inform the evidence base (transport modelling) and consultation feedback, this report seeks to agree the Basingstoke Transport Strategy. It also

makes it clear what resources will be required to begin developing and delivering the proposals within it.

Contextual information

8. The evidence base and other traffic modelling of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's Local Plan has showed that post 2029 the current highway network will not be able to provide the capacity required for long term growth. A 'step change' in transport provision will be required to complement the infrastructure already in place and optimise use of the highway network. Page 11 of the Transport Strategy document (Appendix 1) outlines transport trends and issues that support this prognosis. Principally, longer journey times and increased congestion present the need for a new Transport strategy to provide strategic guidance for the future. In addition, the County Council's recent declaration of a Climate Emergency recognises the need to consider and where possible to address environmental issues in all its activity, and the Basingstoke Transport Strategy lays emphasis on improving levels of walking, cycling, and public transport use, which will play a key role in Hampshire's contribution to the national carbon reduction and air quality improvement targets.
9. The Transport Strategy covers the main urban area (the largest urban area in North Hampshire) and radial routes (A33, A339, A340, A30), and seeks to identify key major infrastructure improvements, either for further assessment or delivery. It only covers individual themes and schemes of a strategic nature. Rural transport issues are not individual to Basingstoke and will be the subject of future strategy work on a wider geographical basis.
10. The process for developing this Transport Strategy has followed a number of stages. Initially this involved establishing a clear view of what outcomes were most important through a transport workshop in June 2017 where elected members were asked to talk about the problems and issues with transport and access within the urban area. This provided clarification and corroboration of many of the problems with the town and urban area which allowed officers to prepare a set of priorities and themes on which to develop a draft Transport Strategy.
11. At the same time as engagement was undertaken, an extensive evidence base was collated which included data on the population, journey patterns, and future traffic and economic trends. This has helped to explain some of the issues and reasons for suggesting certain priorities and themes for the Transport Strategy. A full public consultation and specific stakeholder engagement was carried out from November 2018 to the end January 2019.
12. The Transport Strategy itself is relatively concise in nature in order that it remains strategic and easy to understand for what is a fairly complex subject, involving additional issues such as the economy, environment and demographics. As such it seeks to establish a 'strategy framework' within which much more detailed work can now follow.
13. The strategy is required to respond to current and future transport needs and to enable the town to manage growth effectively. Modelling work undertaken for the current local plan shows that by 2029, and with the continuation of existing travel behaviours and patterns, the highways network would fail to offer an acceptable level of service to customers. As there are limited options to

increase highway capacity beyond those already delivered or planned, it has been concluded that a “step change” approach to transport is needed. Without such a change, it is predicted that there would be increasing levels of congestion, poor network reliability, and associated negative environmental and social impacts.

14. There are a number of priorities the transport strategy seeks to address. These are outlined below:
 - Priority A: Supporting housing, employment growth and vibrancy;
 - Priority B: supporting high quality of life for people who live in, work in and visit Basingstoke; and
 - Priority C: supporting inclusive and accessible communities.
15. It should also be noted that in addressing congestion, and facilitating modal shift to more sustainable travel choices such as walking, cycling, and public transport, the Transport Strategy places the environment and particularly carbon reduction and air quality improvement at the core of its proposals.
16. In order to support the key priorities set out above, it will be important that the transport strategy delivers certain outputs relating to transport and travel such as increasing the use of public transport, walking and cycling, and minimising the overall growth in car travel. Other important outputs are being able to maintain journey times and reliability on key routes and providing higher levels of accessibility to jobs and services. At this stage, the outputs will be measured against initial targets that have been set out in section seven of the transport strategy.
17. In order to achieve the key priorities and outcomes, a number of strategy themes have been set. These include:
 - Improving access to and within the town centre for all modes;
 - Integrating new developments with well-planned transport choices;
 - Mass Rapid Transit (MRT): providing a step change in the quality of local public transport, specifically a high quality/high volume urban public transport system, using priority highway and technology infrastructure, for example bus based;
 - Developing priority strategic walking and cycling corridors;
 - Managing journey times and reliability on key routes;
 - Maintaining Basingstoke’s strong strategic transport connections; and
 - Future proofing of the transport network.
18. Consequently, to deliver the themes listed above as well as the proposals in the Local Plan and other major development sites, it will be necessary to progress a number of key projects. These are highlighted in the strategy (page 34) and summarised in the table below, along with a brief description and key points at which these are referred to in the strategy.

Theme	Summary of Projects/Study work components	TS Page
Tacking key town centre issues:	Work to focus on improving linkages between the town centre / Basing View / Eastrop Park for the Mass Rapid Transport (MRT), pedestrians and cyclists and reducing congestion and delay at the Eastrop roundabout. To be coordinated with other town centre master planning and re-development opportunities including a new and improved bus/rail interchange. Will need to be coordinated with a new town centre parking strategy.	19/20
Initial roll out of an early phase of MRT network:	Creation of a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) public transport corridors with priority or dedicated lanes, high-quality vehicles with 'turn-up-and-go' frequencies using low emission vehicles and scope to be adapted as technology evolves, such as autonomous vehicles. Initial phase to focus on a corridor from Manydown North, leisure park, rail station, town centre and Basing View.	16/17
Integrated corridor improvements	Consider targeted highway improvements, strategic cycle routes, smart traffic management and planning further MRT routes beyond the initial priority.	26
Transport infrastructure to support Manydown	Support key developer projects surrounding walking/cycling routes from the site and influencing the use of public transport from the outset of the development in line with the MRT vision	21

19. It should be noted that Hampshire County Council has also embarked on preparing a microsimulation traffic model of the town centre including the development of a package of measures, designed to meet the future access needs of the area. The work models how traffic would flow and what improvements could be offered, and will need to be supplemented by more detailed scheme development on individual components (e.g. the specific requirements of each MRT corridor and junction improvements within the town), including costings.
20. Alongside the strategy document, a 'prospectus' style document outlining the MRT vision for Basingstoke has been prepared, to explain more about how this could function, where the routes are intended to run and the type of supporting infrastructure required. This is provided in Appendix 2 for information.
21. The transport strategy recognises in section six that transport infrastructure takes some time to be designed and delivered and that the local plan review is the mechanism for consideration of longer-term development needs. However, this section highlights what kind of issues need to be considered in the future,

such as routing options for strategic traffic flows, infrastructure provided by organisations such as Network Rail and Highways England, and future expansion of the MRT network.

22. Of note is the inclusion of references to potential relief or distributor roads to the east and west of the town, which are mentioned in a non-site specific manner and which are included to recognise that longer-term improvements will be needed to deal with strategic traffic in the future. These types of long-term measure will be considered through corridor studies between Basingstoke - Reading and Basingstoke-Newbury respectively in partnership with neighbouring authorities and within other specific studies.
23. The document highlights funding opportunities and provides commentary on how the actions contained in the strategy will be measured to understand what success looks like. However, it should be noted that until these actions are confirmed and understood in more detail, it is challenging to attach a specific target to these.
24. The strategy includes an action plan covering the next three years in some detail, and beyond this it is indicative. The action plan categorises types of improvements needed and sets out the relative priorities of what is most needed and in what order. There is still much detail to be worked up on the schemes and projects within it. It also sets out what complementary work is required to support it, such as the development of a town centre parking strategy to work in tandem with the public transport improvements.
25. The Transport Strategy proposes to combine resources available to both authorities, both in budget and staff time, to make best use of what is available to the public sector. This will allow the strategy and action plan to include a number of schemes that appear deliverable and affordable in the short term and which would complement the broader aims of the strategy and yet have no critical dependencies. The schemes in this category are largely the identified A30 corridor improvements for Brighton Hill roundabout and the A340 Thornycroft roundabout.
26. **Wider Transport Policy Context**
27. As referred to in paragraph 21 regarding the Basingstoke to Reading transport corridor, the Council has already engaged with neighbouring highway and planning authorities on the remit of study work and formed a working party. This includes both the Enterprise M3 and Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnerships and represents the Council's commitment to joint working with the local and adjacent LEPs which has to date gone well. The intention is to use the outcomes of the study work to assist and influence Transport for the South East in their upcoming work on the Major Route Network corridor studies.
28. Additionally, in the wider transport context, the Enterprise M3 LEP have already produced a Strategic Economic Plan which sets out ambitious plans for an average of 4 per cent growth per year driven particularly through innovation in an advanced, knowledge based, digital economy. The emerging Local Industrial Strategy will act as the Strategic Economic Plan's investment and action plan. It

is key that transport plays a major role in the Industrial Strategy and takes account of the comprehensive evidence base and themes of the Basingstoke Transport Strategy in order to address the wider economic goals of the region.

29. Interim MRT Safeguarding Policy

30. Given the importance of the environmental, economic and community benefits the MRT could bring to the local and wider area, it is vitally important to protect the opportunities to deliver the network in the short term, prior to the conclusion of the formal Local Plan review. MRT in Basingstoke is proposed to play a major role in the Councils' transport contribution to help address the global Climate Change challenges in terms of reducing carbon emissions by 2050 by providing a realistic alternative way of travelling to the private car.
31. There will be the opportunity to prepare detailed safeguarding plans of required land parcels to include in the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan review process in order to present formal land safeguardings in the form of planning policies. However, while the technical work on the MRT requirements continues to progress and the Local Plan review timetable proceeds, the two authorities are expected to take steps to ensure that decisions on planning applications do not prejudice the ability to introduce the necessary infrastructure to support the delivery of a comprehensive MRT network.
32. It is suggested that as an interim policy, the Highway Authority should adopt the following and that it be shared with development control, passenger transport and highway managers for their use:
33. 'As outlined in the Basingstoke Transport Strategy, Mass Rapid Transit for Basingstoke document (Appendix 2), the County Council will use the indicative MRT routes as a material consideration in planning application responses and in planning any other infrastructure to ensure the deliverability of the MRT network'.

Finance

34. Very few of the measures identified in the strategy have funding in place. The strategy is intended to help the County Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council prioritise local resources and bid for external funding, both for the development of schemes and their implementation. The current funding horizon is particularly uncertain, as the current Government spending review cycle is due to end soon and another about to start. However, opportunities will arise, and the County and Borough Council's track record of accessing funding is good, particularly where there are well developed strategies and plans in place. Of particular benefit to Basingstoke is the Enterprise Zone status of the Basing View business park where there is the potential for the EM3 LEP to re-invest some of the retained business rates into local infrastructure that supports the economic priorities of the area.
35. The first step in the process of implementing the Transport Strategy requires the action plan identified in the strategy to be resourced to allow detailed planning to take place on prioritised schemes and projects. Scheme development work

identified in the action plan is currently estimated at approximately £1m over the next three years which includes financial support to update the existing North Hampshire Transport Model. The County Council has recently agreed its own revenue funding to undertake this work from the 2019-20 revenue budget via the normal budget setting processes. The rest of the funding is made up from MCHLG Capacity funding and a modest contribution from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.

36. Schemes identified in the strategy for delivery in the short term will be added to the existing highway capital programme following the outcome of scheme design and consultation work (e.g. Brighton Hill roundabout improvements). The financial implications of scheme delivery will be covered in other reports and project appraisals.
37. The advancement of this strategy and action plan will be dependent on collaborative working, as it is in part intended to mitigate future development. It may be possible to secure some improvements when development schemes come forward via S278, S106, or Community Infrastructure Levy funds, (the latter collected by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council), subject to proposals meeting the requirements of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations.

Consultation and Equalities

38. No impact on people with protected characteristics has been identified from this decision, but any transport schemes that arise as an outcome from the Transport Strategy would be subject to their own Equalities Impact Assessment as they come forward.
39. The draft Transport Strategy: 'emerging strategy framework' was prepared and published for consultation in November 2018 to end January 2019. Alongside an on-line publication and questionnaire, the consultation was publicised in the local press and in social media as well as being published in the Basingstoke and Deane Today (Borough Council residents' magazine) which was distributed to every household in the Borough. A stakeholder event was held for the local business community in January 2019 at the Ark conference centre where the transport and access needs of the business sector were explored.
40. During the consultation, 257 individual responses were received, consisting of:
 - 224 from individuals;
 - 14 from an organisation, group or business;
 - Four from Parish Councils;
 - Specific comments from Highways England, transport operators, and two of the local MPs; and
 - In addition, 20 local interest groups and businesses and transport operators attended the half-day workshop at the Ark conference centre in early January to consider the strategy and their ambitions in the future.

41. The bullet points below summarise the main views expressed:

- Overall, 71% of respondents said the proposals in the Transport Strategy would have a positive impact on them, ranging from improvements to quality of life to less reliance on the private car;
- 91% of respondents supported the three priorities of the strategy with the vast majority confirming they were 'very important' to them;
- When asked for further priorities, of those who responded, 34% said that a more reliable bus service would provide a realistic alternative to the car;
- Similarly, 23% of respondents when asked about further priorities for Basingstoke suggested that environmental issues such as improving air pollution needed more attention in the transport strategy;
- On the 7 specific transport themes, all of the measures received support/agreement levels, ranging from 75% to 87%;
- The step change in quality of public transport in the form of the MRT received high levels of support with respondents saying that the proposals could bring about improvements to services and journey times (88%);
- Most respondents recognised the need for early planning to support the town beyond 2029, and ensuring that opportunities to future proof are not missed, such as those afforded by the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT); and
- Whilst the majority of comments were positive, the main area of concern was around poor public transport provision in rural areas.

42. A more detailed summary of the responses received is provided in Appendix 3 along with the changes that have been made to the Transport Strategy to address the concerns and issues raised. A copy of the Consultation Key Findings Report is set out in Appendix 4.

43. The consultation highlighted a desire for more integrated transport and land use planning, particularly surrounding the development of housing sites and identifying land requirement for infrastructure in the future. The joint development and adoption of the Transport Strategy at the early stage of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's embarking on Local Plan work means that the strategy outcomes and measures in it will inform and influence the Local Plan and other key local projects such as the Town Centre Strategy and the Horizon 2050 Vision.

44. It is also worth noting the support of the EM3 LEP in developing the Transport Strategy, particularly in helping identify the travel and access needs of the business community.

45. It is anticipated that Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council will give its agreement to the Transport Strategy at its Cabinet meeting on 9th July 2019 and full Council on 18th July 2019, recognising the powers that Hampshire County Council as Highway Authority have in relation to adopting and implementing the strategy. The briefings to date on the Transport Strategy and its adoption report have been received well.

Appendices

- 1: Transport Strategy*
- 2. Mass Rapid Transit for Basingstoke*
- 3. Summary of consultation comments and responses*
- 4. Consultation Key Findings Report*

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u> Executive Member for Environment and Transport: Basingstoke Transport Update http://democracy.hants.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=170&MId=441	<u>Date</u> 13 th March 2018
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

No impact on people with protected characteristics has been identified from this decision, but any transport schemes that arise as an outcome from the Transport Strategy would be subject to their own Equalities Impact Assessment as they come forward.