NORTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its second Local Transport Plan 2006/07-2010/11 (LTP2), Nottinghamshire County Council is committed to building on the success of its achievements in the first Plan (LTP). The Council is also committed to regular monitoring and review of its strategies to embrace change and build on innovation to create a fresh, up to date approach to transport planning.

The Council's transport vision seeks to establish **sustainable communities** in,

"a county that has:

* *excellent links with the national transport network*
* *a first class public transport system that is accessible to all*
* *vibrant towns and villages that are sustainable, safe, accessible and attractive to the local community and business investment*
* *sustainable environmental and land use policies that improve the quality of town centres and encourage cycling and walking*
* *and a well maintained and efficiently managed road network that supports community and business needs".*

Over the first Plan period the Council was consistently highly rated for its achievements against its targets (as reported in the Annual Progress Reports) and was awarded Centre of Excellence and Beacon Status for its work in the fields of Access and Mobility, Integrated Transport Planning and Local Transport Delivery. As a result of its involvement in these initiatives and its willingness to learn from the work of other highly-rated authorities, the Council has been able to take on board best practice advice as well as disseminating best practice to other local authorities.

Of particular value in the development of the LTP2, has been a close examination of the impact of strategies and measures in the first Plan.

Strategy development

The introduction of Mobility Management Action Areas (MMAA) in the first LTP signalled the start of a new, holistic and inclusive approach to local transport planning, where schemes covering the whole range of transport modes were developed together as a complementary package through widespread consultation with local communities. The success of the MMAA studies programme has reinforced the Council's belief that this is the way forward, and this area of work has been expanded to embrace a wider economic, social and environmental context, as well as being linked to new accessibility planning techniques. The MMAA programme will therefore be taken forward into LTP2 (under the title of Local Accessibility Transport Studies (LATS)) as it has been the catalyst for much high-quality work and has achieved success in engaging local stakeholders and members of the public in the transport planning process.

The increased profile of transport within the community – partly as a result of the improved public consultation, but also as a result of much national transport debate - has raised expectations, particularly amongst rural parish councils. The 'Rural Schemes' programme has proved particularly popular with parishes and resulted in an increased demand for transport improvements in the area's villages. Work will continue to identify specific rural issues, including through the introduction of LATS in smaller rural towns and villages.

Bus Quality Partnerships have proved successful in the Greater Nottingham Plan area, and this model has now been introduced in North Nottinghamshire and will play an important part in shaping the LTP2 programme of measures.

The continued broad investment in road safety work programmes has produced significant casualty reductions, although results in some areas are still disappointing. In response the Council has completely reviewed its current road safety strategy to make it robust enough to meet the Government's 2010 targets.

Although the Council has been extremely successful in encouraging employers to introduce travel plans and has led this process by example, it has reviewed the current process on value for money terms and will be re-launching the initiative to reflect a change of direction, ready for LTP2.

The success achieved in the regeneration of the Mansfield area to date has come at a price in that the area has seen significant increases in traffic levels (greatly in excess of those across the rest of the plan area). This highlights the care needed to integrate regeneration with the desired congestion reduction and air quality measures needed over the second Plan period. Clearly, targets need to be set that reflect this growth in prosperity and jobs, and these have been more fully defined and developed in the second LTP.

Integration with wider aims

The Council has looked very carefully at how LTP2 strategy could help to support the wider agenda in North Nottinghamshire. The Council's Community Strategy highlights priorities of **safer and stronger**, **healthier**, **learning and earning**, **cleaner and greener** and **travel and access**, and these needs are particularly relevant in the Plan area. The diversity of the county however, has led to the sub-division of the Plan area into four distinct geographical zones – Worksop and its hinterlands, Retford and its hinterlands, Newark and its hinterlands and Ashfield/Mansfield – to reflect differing needs. The four national shared priorities of **accessibility, congestion, safety and air quality**, together with three local priorities of **regeneration, quality of life and making best use**, have been used to provide the right level of emphasis for each of the sub-areas.

The Council has been able to secure significant amounts of additional funding from other sources to match fund the LTP to provide wider benefits; for example schemes that improve the environment as well as providing transport benefits. This partnership working has usually also included working with community groups to maximise local 'buy in' to the schemes. External funding has been levered in from the Sub Regional Strategic Partnership (SSP), Waste Recycling Environmental Limited (WREN), developers, local businesses and East Midlands Develoment Agency (emda), and demonstrates the integrated approach developed by this process. It is intended that this work will be extended in LTP2 as part of the LATS programme.

Consultation

LTP2 was drawn up around a core of effective partnership and participation with the community. The County Council has remained engaged throughout the first LTP period through stakeholder meetings and the 'Mobility Management Action Areas'. The results from this ongoing consultation have been invaluable in developing the new LATS process as well as supporting the general development of the LTP2. A number of different methods have been utilised; liaising with key partners and representative groups, using key forums such as the Local Strategic Partnerships, 'grass-root' attitudinal surveys and wider County Council 'quality of life' research. These have all influenced the Council's thinking on strategy development as well as scheme formulation. The identification of four sub-areas in North Nottinghamshire as well as the prioritisation of the objectives within the Plan is the manifestation of this work. Consultation with the public and stakeholders has also helped develop the programme of integrated transport measures within the Plan, and the Provisional LTP2 has been used for further consultation with stakeholders and the public in the development of this final Plan.

Consultation will be a continuous process used to inform the development of strategy, measures and priorities. Involvement in the local strategic partnerships will continue throughout the Plan period and the LATS programme will be used to engage with local communities to help identify local integrated measures.

Value for money

Over the course of the first LTP period the County Council has delivered over two thousand schemes with varying levels of complexity. LTP capital funding has been supplemented with non-LTP capital, revenue and external funding sources. Each year the Council has managed its budgets with great care and efficiency to deliver the full planned LTP programme, through effective project management and risk management, to maximise the benefits to the residents of Nottinghamshire and to contribute to the Government's transport agenda. This process has been helped by long-term external partnering arrangements to ensure adequate resources are available. Through this process the County Council has been able to deliver a substantial number of measures to help travellers using all modes of transport and to help people across all sectors of society. Highlighted below are some examples of the types of schemes that the Council has been able to deliver:

- Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route
- Cartergate pedestrianisation scheme
- A60 bus lane
- A611 bus priority measures
- Rainworth By-pass complementary measures
- Southwell Town Centre improvements
- Improvements to Chesterfield Canal
- Coddington cycle links
- Village gateway treatments
- Safety camera initiative, and
- Meden Valley environmental improvements.

Problems, opportunities and strategy

North Nottinghamshire is a diverse area, but in strategic planning terms has two central and important themes which shape the format of the Plan - the need for social, economic and environmental REGENERATION within town centres and the RURAL nature of much of the area. In addition to the traditional methods of data collection, work has been undertaken to analyse the background trends influencing both actual travel and the need to travel within the Plan area through accessibility planning techniques and these will be developed during the Plan period.

The transport objectives for the Plan Area have been developed from four sources:

- The objectives in the first North Notts LTP
- The objectives in the Regional Transport Strategy
- The Government's shared priorities for Transport
- The views of Stakeholders and the local community on the draft objectives and priorities arising from consultation.

The agreed shared priorities of **accessibility, congestion, safety and air quality**, together with three local priorities of **regeneration, quality of life and making best use,** have been identified for the Plan area. The problems, opportunities and strategy to deal with these priorities is explained more fully below.

Accessibility

The Council's vision, objectives and forward plan for improving accessibility offer a unique opportunity to link to the wider goals of the LTP and to direct appropriate resources where they are needed. The policies and plans contained within it – including public transport, cycling, walking strategies and promotion of travel options - directly affect people's ability to reach a range of facilities and opportunities.

The goal that opportunities and benefits should be available to everyone is a cornerstone of the transport strategy for North Nottinghamshire, as well as one of the shared priorities of national government and local transport authorities. The Accessibility Strategy works towards this goal, building on the work of the accessibility partnership in identifying key priorities. To further inform the proposed strategy the accessibility implications of LTP strategies and policies, such as the Bus Strategy, Rights of Way Improvement Plan and 'Smarter Choices' strategy have been considered.

One of the main strengths of this LTP2 is the much greater focus given to understanding the need to travel. Through the new accessibility planning procedures, the County Council has investigated access to Government's four key destinations - **education and training, employment, food & essential services and health**. The County Council and its partners also decided to consider access to **leisure and cultural destinations** as part of this process.

A wider reference group was established to consider and endorse the accessibility priorities to be addressed during the LTP2 period. A steering group, representative of the five core themes, was then established to drive the development of the strategy. As part of the process a series of consultation workshops have been undertaken to gain the benefit of the constituent partner organisations' experience and understanding of their clients' needs. These established the 'who, what, why, when, where, and how' of the priority issues, which were then prioritised with three or four key issues in each area. Mapping and data analysis, for example using DfT's Accession software were then undertaken to inform the process further.

In addition to the possible efficiencies identified by partners through the assessment of needs and priorities process, a number of opportunities for pooling and making more effective use of existing resources in order to achieve joint accessibility goals have emerged.

An accessibility partnership has been established that has identified, through workshops, a programmed series of agreed priorities to tackle over the five-year period. This programme will be framed in terms of the themes, local geographical areas, and sections of the population that are to be prioritised for joint working. These triggered 'Local Accessibility Assessments' resulting in specific 'Local Accessibility Action Plans' (LAAPs). LAAPs have been drawn up across a range of services resulting in a detailed strategy to address accessibility problems and opportunities. These will contribute to the Local Accessibility Transport Studies programme for LTP2.

Safer Roads

Analysis of the current situation regarding safety within the transport network in Nottinghamshire identifies four key areas of concern; motorcycles, children, speed on rural roads, and work related journeys. Opportunities to work towards achieving the 2010 targets for casualty reduction are closely linked with wider objectives in the County Council's transport strategy. Measures to address these specific points and more general issues of road safety are varied and include a mix of education, enforcement and engineering measures as well as encouragement of road users to adopt more sensible/smarter travel behaviour.

The County Council's road safety strategy reflects wider LTP2 objectives by including travel awareness initiatives within its remit. This arrangement has proved extremely successful in delivering road safety education, training and publicity whilst encouraging walking and cycling and developing travel plans at schools to reduce congestion. The road safety strategy is contained within the County Council's Cross Service Road Safety Improvement Plan (2003-2010) which was drawn up in consultation with an extensive range of internal and external bodies, and is regularly reviewed to ensure its effectiveness.

This area of work cascades into three key streams; casualty reduction, accident prevention and changing people's travel behaviour. The strategy identifies a range of measures to address these specific issues including partnership working, investment, education, analysis of accident data and speed management.

Quality of life

North Nottinghamshire is a diverse area, with a predominately rural aspect to the east and more urbanised area in the west, which still displays the industrial legacy of intensive coal mining. In these areas the industrial past has not only affected the environment of many communities, but has also impacted on their social and economic stability.

Many factors ranging across the spectrum of social, economic and environmental concerns influence the perception of 'quality of life'. Elements that contribute to quality of life are social needs, needs of disabled people, education, health, physical environment and crime and fear of crime. The key strategy areas to address these issues include; prioritising the areas of need, integrating with other initiatives to add value and raising awareness and opportunity for the community to value and preserve their environment.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan details the opportunities it offers to improve the quality of life, such as accessibility, health and recreation.

Congestion

Each of the four sub-areas of North Nottinghamshire has been investigated for evidence of congestion. Results suggest that current levels are unlikely to be detrimental to the health or economic well-being of the whole Plan area now or in the near future. Congestion has an impact on several of the LTP's other priorities, such as improving air quality and health, regeneration, quality of life and making best use of the existing network (particularly in relation to the Network Management Duty). It is therefore essential that current levels of traffic are managed effectively and that congestion does not become a problem in the future. As such, the strategy for congestion will focus on continued monitoring of the situation and the provision of both demand-side solutions and supply side solutions to restrain traffic growth. To address the issue of potential congestion, a mix of awareness raising measures will be used along with proactive network management to encourage modal shift, reduce the need to travel and reduce traffic growth. This pro-active approach to congestion management will hopefully prevent increasing traffic volumes to significantly worsen causing significant congestion issues. Resources will continue to be targeted at reducing congestion at known hot-spots, particularly where it is known that this congestion also has a detrimental impact on public transport services. The Council believes therefore, that whilst traffic volume targets have been set, setting specific congestion reduction targets will not provide any appreciable benefit.

Air quality

The County Council's strategy for assessing, monitoring and managing air quality is detailed within the partnership document 'Nottinghamshire Air Quality Strategy', produced in 2001 by the multi-sector Nottinghamshire Environmental Protection Working Group. It identifies the need to reduce air pollution by encouraging alternative travel modes and promoting sustainable development through the Local Transport Plan and development plan processes. Work is currently underway to update and review the strategy and a full assessment of the air quality and factors which affect it will be published later in 2006.

Air quality in the Plan area is expected to remain within national objectives but will continue to be assessed and monitored as necessary. It is recognised that Air Quality is closely linked to the congestion theme, and as such the Air Quality Strategy will also include the promotion of cleaner vehicles and 'smarter choices' directed at modal shift and reducing the need to travel.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been carried out on the impacts of LTP2 and local air quality, climate factors and other environmental factors are all considered and appraised in the SEA. The SEA summarises predicted significant impacts and has been subject to significant consultation, following which several changes have been made to it.

Regeneration

An overview of the economic structure and performance of North Nottinghamshire suggests that the county has a moderate sized economy, which recently has shown little evidence of growth. The outfall from Nottinghamshire's declining industrial heritage, particularly past reliance on mining and textiles, continues to hamper economic activity. While business creation rates are on a par with national levels, the proportion of these which are in the knowledge driven sectors is low. The legacy of the decline in the traditional industries is still prevalent, with higher skills and some basic skills in short supply.

There are considerable local variances; however, in general the legacy of our industrial heritage has resulted in an inadequate infrastructure, a lack of quality serviced sites for new growth opportunities, poor communications to serve them and low numbers of 'leading edge' small and medium sized enterprises to move the economy forward. These problems require an integrated strategy approach to identify opportunities to develop modern, efficient communications infrastructure.

Although progress has been made to bring unemployment rates down to match national figures, the quality of these new jobs has been low with a prevalence of low value industries choosing to invest in these areas. On the positive side, in terms of transport much progress has been made in recent years to improve the accessibility of the west of the county.

The LTP2 transport strategy will support regeneration in the following three main areas. Firstly, it will provide access to education, further education, skills training and employment zones. Secondly, it will help create employment sites and economically vibrant and attractive towns and villages. And thirdly, it will provide support for local partnerships to create integrated 'Action Plans'.

Local empowerment will also be supported by giving ownership of local transport strategies to affected communities through LATS.

Making best use of existing assets

The highway network is a key community asset and is central to the integrated movement strategies contributing to the delivery of wider economic, social and environmental objectives. These principles are incorporated into a network management regime with the following core objectives; Network Safety, Network Serviceability and Network Sustainability.

Central to the County Council's objective to deliver a safer, improved network service for all road users is the strategy to develop and implement a Transport Asset Management Plan which will consider the methods employed to assess the highway network's condition and will detail the policies in place to maintain it, parking control powers available through Decriminalised Parking Enforcement, the opportunity to reduce trip lengths through development control functions and the powers and duties inherent in the Network Management Duty.

These are particularly relevant in how they can add value to the other LTP policies by concentrating on making better use of existing highways rather than relying on increased provision.

Five year programme

The table below details the funding allocations available in North Nottinghamshire based on the planning guidelines provided by the DfT and the 2006/07 settlement, and makes no assumption of funding for anything other than currently committed schemes.

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Integrated Transport Measures	£4.390m	£3.850m	£4.106m	£4.377m	£4.777m
Maintenance	£5.853m	£5.867m	£6.161m	£6.469m	£6.792m
Total	£10.243m	£9.717m	£10.267m	£10.846m	£11.569m

Table 1 Indicative funding allocations

Provisional outline resource allocations for different types of measures have been set out for the five year plan period based on the above allocations. As part of this process the Council have also set out the number of planned schemes to be delivered during the Plan period, based on projected expenditure for such schemes. A balanced mix of schemes has been developed to help deliver the LTP2 objectives. This includes a number of significant schemes, such as Retford Bus Station.

Major schemes

In addition to the funding allocations identified above, the Council submitted bids for two major schemes in July 2005, Mansfield Public Transport Interchange and Pleasley By-pass. The Council is currently considering a further bid for Kelham By-pass and, if a satisfactory case can be made, the Council will consider submitting a bid for this project at a later date.

Mansfield Public Transport Interchange

The objective of this scheme is to provide a high quality bus interchange, physically linked to Mansfield rail station and located only 170m from the heart of Mansfield town centre. It will incorporate a tourism information bureau, shops and other facilities. The scheme meets all seven of the shared and local priorities and is included in the preferred package of schemes for the first five years as part of the East Midlands Regional Assembly's advice to Government as part of the Regional Funding Allocations.

Pleasley By-pass

The key objective of this scheme is regeneration, completing proposed improvements to the Strategic Road Network in Mansfield. It involves the construction of 1.5km of new road which will by-pass Pleasley, allowing the existing road to be traffic calmed and bringing community environmental benefits in Pleasley Hill. The scheme meets most of the shared and local priorities.

Targets and Trajectories

A range of challenging and ambitious, but realistic and achievable targets and trajectories have been developed to help monitor the delivery of all the Plan's objectives. Local indicators have been developed in addition to the mandatory targets set by DfT. Two mandatory targets relating to bus services are being stretched. The Council will also regularly monitor and review all of the targets to ensure that strategies are effectively achieving them.

Appendices

Appendix A consists of DfT required finance forms. Appendix B details each of the mandatory and local targets within the Plan. It contains a definition of each target, gives trajectories (including historical trends where this is available), and the rationale behind the targets. Appendix B also details the actions required by stakeholders and the Council in delivering each of the targets (including how the targets, and strategies to deliver them, will be monitored and reviewed), as well as identifying risks to delivering each target and how these will be managed.