

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2006/07 – 2010/11

Long Term Strategy - Revised Cycling Strategy

Sustainability Appraisal

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1. Purpose Of Sustainability Appraisal

The County Council has investigated the legislation around Strategic Environmental Assessments and is confident that the County Council does not have to undertake the full SEA assessment process for policy changes/revisions. The revised cycling strategy is a minor amendment to the overall LTP, and is building upon a policy/strategy that has already gone through the full SEA process. However, the County Council does still need to undertake a sustainability appraisal (under the EMS banner), to show that the new strategy is an improvement on the published policy.

A sustainability appraisal process involves looking ahead and making judgements about the environmental, social and economic consequences of implementing strategies, policies and action plans, as well as the broader aims and objectives they serve. The appraisal also provides an opportunity to reassess any element of the Plan which raises sustainability concerns and the ability to modify the Plan/policy/strategy where appropriate before it is finally agreed.

The process of sustainability appraisal is undertaken before a policy/strategy has been adopted; to not only highlight any sustainability implications, but also identify remedial measures where appropriate as well as raising issues for consideration at the policy/strategy's next point of review.

This report details the processes involved with the sustainability appraisal of the revised cycling strategy, and the findings and outcomes from this assessment.

2. Developing the Cycling Strategy

The Cycling Strategy forms part of the Local Transport Plan 2006/07-2010/11 Long Term Strategy document (published in March 2006). This document was subject to the full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process in 2005/06, and included a previous version of the cycling policy. The new cycling strategy is a revision to the adopted policy and is more prescriptive in terms of policy statements, providing more detail on how Hertfordshire County Council will implement the cycling strategy. Its primary purpose is to encourage more people to cycle more often, and involve and support other stakeholders in doing the same. As the County Council is only revising policy it is not necessary to undertake the SEA process again, but carrying out a sustainability appraisal on the new cycling strategy would be sufficient.

A sustainability appraisal involves looking ahead and making judgements about the environmental, social and economic consequences of the proposed strategy, and provides an opportunity at the development stage to modify the strategy and make it as suitable as possible. A sustainability appraisal was carried out on the first Local Transport Plan 2001/02-2005/06 and so a set of sustainability objectives has already been established (which are still current), which have been used to assess the proposed cycling strategy.

The cycling strategy has a range of audiences: the general public, cycling interest groups, developers and their agents and other key stakeholders as well as those elected members and officers of the county, districts and boroughs who will be involved in the implementation of the strategy.

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The strategy is also supported by the following documents;

- A digest of additional national, regional and local policies relating to cycling or to which increased levels of cycling can make a contribution;
- A bibliography of relevant design guidance documents;
- Guidance on the creation of a cycle-friendly environment;
- Cycling monitoring guidance.

The Cycling Strategy does not contain programmes for project delivery as these are the roles of the area and town transport plans, supported by the cycling strategies of a number of individual district councils along with the strategic County network.

Timetable

The revised Cycling Strategy was drafted in 2006 with the aid of stakeholders represented by the Hertfordshire Cycle Forum. The sustainability appraisal was undertaken in November 2006 (see Appendix 1). The draft revised Cycling Strategy was then presented to the Highways & Transport Panel in February 2007 and subsequently adopted. Section 4 shows how the sustainability appraisal influenced the development of the revised strategy.

The revised Cycling Strategy will be made available on the County Council's website (www.hertsdirect.org/ltp) and incorporated into the revision of the LTP2 Long Term Strategy document, which is being undertaken in Spring/Summer 2007.

3. Appraisal Framework

The appraisal framework is designed to assist in the analysis of three closely linked issues:

- the strategies' impact on sustainability issues,
- the degree of (in)compatibility between strategies, and
- their effects on the achievement of the LTP Objectives.

The framework table (Appendix 1) is topped with a reference heading of the specific strategy appraisal under appraisal, together with a guide to the symbols employed as shorthand within the body of the appraisal. These symbols serve two purposes; to indicate the nature of the strategy's impact on the sustainability checklist and, to indicate the degree of compatibility between the strategy and the rest of the LTP strategies. To keep the appraisal of a manageable size and the table simple to read a small gradation of effects and corresponding symbols were employed, namely:

- | | |
|----|--|
| 4 | Indicates a positive sustainability effect or strong compatibility with the other LTP strategies |
| P+ | Indicates a potentially positive sustainability effect or slight compatibility with other LTP strategies |
| μ | Indicates relatively little or no sustainability effect or overlap with other LTP strategies |
| P- | Indicates a potentially negative sustainability effect or slight incompatibility with other LTP strategies |
| 7 | Indicates a negative sustainability effect or strong incompatibility with the other LTP strategies |

The left side of the table is devoted to appraising the strategy against the sustainability checklist and can be considered as the 'effects appraisal'. The 'effects

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appraisal' appraises the various effects of a policy on a set of sustainability criteria (checklist) and grades that affect on the scale outlined above. The first column contains the sustainability checklist in full. The middle column considers if the strategy holds any beneficial, uncertain or adverse effects for sustainability. This is adjoined by a column, which contains explanatory text to detail the effect where necessary.

The right side of the table - the 'compatibility appraisal' - is devoted to appraising whether or not a particular policy in a plan is compatible with all the other policies in it. All the policies in the LTP2 Long Term Strategy are listed in the first column. The degree of compatibility is identified in the middle column and graded according to the above scale. The final column provides explanatory text where necessary.

At the bottom of the table, a summary appraisal provides commentary relating to the effects and consequences of the strategies' implementation, which are considered to be adverse or uncertain, or where incompatibility between policies has been identified.

4. Summary of Findings

The sustainability appraisal assessment has shown that overall the proposed cycling strategy broadly supports the sustainability objectives, however, there were a number of potential conflicts which are discussed below.

Impacts on Landscape, Open Spaces and Habitats

New or extended routes (requiring the provision of new hard surfaces) could potentially conflict with the sustainability objectives for enhancing and improving quality of landscape and open spaces, and increasing and improving wildlife habitats. This would especially apply to routes in rural areas. However, when assessing new routes or choosing the best measures to encourage cycling the use of the 'hierarchy of provision' should minimise such potential conflicts by retaining cyclists on-carriageway. The strategy could benefit by mentioning the environmental benefits that the 'hierarchy of provision' would provide.

Impacts on Resources

The proposed cycling strategy should recognise that there could be a potential conflict with the Highway Network Maintenance policy in that the maintenance of new and existing infrastructure and facilities would have resource implications. The strategy as it stands does not show any specific commitment to reducing the quantity of raw materials used, or the encouragement of renewables.

Other Issues

There is a potential conflict with the sustainability objective to reduce polluting nuisances, as street lighting provided for safety reasons for cyclists could contribute to an increase in light pollution. However this is offset by the modal shift away from the car which could reduce noise pollution.

The strategy may benefit by highlighting the safety implications around the shared use of bridlepaths by cyclists and horses.

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The Cycling Strategy will not be subject to further environmental appraisal until the development of LTP3, unless further revisions to the strategy are required before this time. The implementation of individual cycling schemes would require assessment through the Environmental Management System (EMS), which is carried out routinely within the scheme delivery process.

Cycling Strategy Development – Summary of Changes.

There are no changes that have been made to the draft cycling strategy. This decision was taken as a result of the following reasons:

- All individual cycling schemes that are developed through the emerging Urban Transport Plans and through existing forums and mechanisms will all need an environmental assessment carried out as part of the EMS when being developed through Hertfordshire Highways.
- All schemes will also be subject to a safety Audit which will highlight issues that are likely to be raised with regards to shared use cycle routes.
- There are implications on resources with regards to raw materials being used. However, cycle routes and tracks are normally established on existing routes or on established rights of way as indicated in section 5.2 of the Highways & Transport Panel Paper and therefore reducing the amount of raw materials needed.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment annual monitoring process should pick up the issues highlighted by the sustainability appraisal, and if any are found to be having a detrimental effect, appropriate mitigation will be carried out through this process.

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APPENDIX 1 – Appraisal Table

Strategy Analysis Table: Cycling Strategy

Ref.	LTP2 2006/07-2010/11 Long Term Strategy – Revised Autumn 2006			
Key	μ	No significant effect/overlap	p-	Potentially Negative Relationship
	p+	Potentially Positive Relationship	g	Incompatibility
	4	Compatibility		

Impacts Appraisal		Commentary	
Resources	Reduce energy consumption and improve efficiency of use	4	An increase in cycling and a modal shift away from using the car will mean a reduction in the use of fuel.
	Reduce water consumption and improve efficiency of use	μ	
	Reduce quantities of raw materials used, encourage use of renewable resources and ensuring sustainability of source.	p-	Not specifically highlighted in policy, but the 'hierarchy of provision' promotion on carriageway routes should mean that fewer resources are required as fewer new routes/tracks are created.
	Enhance and improve quality of landscape and open space	p-	The revised strategy is based upon the 'hierarchy of provision' where cyclists should be retained on carriageway rather than creating new segregated cycle routes off-road. In rural areas there is the assumption that new routes would be on-road or on existing rights of way.
Pollution	Improve air quality and reduce CO ² emissions	4	Encouraging a modal shift to cycling rather than the car, will reduce pollution.
	Improve water quality	μ	
	Improve land and soil quality	μ	
	Reduce polluting nuisances – light pollution, noise pollution	P-/+	Potential increase in cycle route safety lighting, but a modal shift away from the car will reduce road related noise pollution.
	Reduce quantities of waste requiring disposal	μ	
Biodiversity	Increase numbers and improve quality of wildlife habitat	P-	Route extensions may impact on wildlife habitats in rural areas.
	Increase number of species	μ	
	Improve access to natural environment	4	New and improved infrastructure in rural areas and relevant promotion and marketing should improve access for all.
Built Envir.	Improve quality and preserve historic buildings and sites	μ	

Strategic Compatibility		Commentary	
2.1 South West Hertfordshire	4	The cycling strategy will be delivered through the area plans and individual urban transportation plans.	
2.2 Lea Valley	4		
2.3 Mid Hertfordshire	4		
2.4 Northern Hertfordshire	4		
2.5 Eastern Hertfordshire	4		
2.6 West Hertfordshire	4		
3.1 Highway Network Maintenance	P-	Some resource implications.	
3.2 Bridges	μ		
3.3 Passenger Transport	P+	Through improved access to interchanges by the provision of cycling parking i.e. at railway stations.	
4.1 Safety	4		
4.2 STAG Programme	4		
4.3 Rural Transport	4		
4.4 Cycling			

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Impacts Appraisal		Commentary	
	Improve integration with land use policy to Increase sustainable land use	4	Working with districts/boroughs and developers around new developments.
	Enhance quality of urban environment	P+	On-carriageway routes should minimise the amount of new infrastructure needed i.e. signs, tarmac laid. Any development would need to be in-keeping with the existing townscape/landscape character.
	Enhance quality of rural environment	P+	
	Improve public safety and reduce crime	P+	Reviews of cycle parking at major destinations and other likely destinations, and a programme to implement secure cycle parking should reduce bicycle related crime. The 'hierarchy of provision' retaining cyclists on-carriageway positions cyclists where drivers expect them and so should improve cyclist safety. This also means less conflict with pedestrians.
Transport	Increasing efficiency, attractiveness, reliability and use of public transport	P+	Should increase access to public transport, through integration with public transport interchanges.
	Improve transport safety	P+	The 'hierarchy of provision' retaining cyclists on-carriageway positions cyclists where drivers expect them and so should improve cyclist safety. This also means less conflict with pedestrians.
	Increasing attractiveness of walking and cycling	4	
	Reducing the number and length of car journeys	4	If comprehensive and integrated cycle routes are delivered within urban, rural and interurban areas.
	Reducing the number and length of lorry journeys	μ	
	Reducing the need for staff transport	μ	
Economy Social Inclusion	Increase number of jobs	μ	
	Increase support for local and community businesses	μ	
	Improve equality of opportunity in the labour market	μ	
	Increase opportunities for home and flexible working	μ	
Social	Increase the range of and amount of new services and resources for disadvantaged groups	μ	
	Improve and increase access by disadvantaged groups to existing services in the community	P+	If cycling is made more attractive to use than the car.
	Improve and increase access by disadvantaged groups to County Hall services	μ	

Strategic Compatibility		Commentary	
4.5 Urban Plans	4		
5.1 Taxis	μ		
5.2 Walking	4	The new 'hierarchy of provision' recommending on-carriageway routes should reduce conflict with pedestrians.	
5.3 Powered Two-Wheelers	μ		
5.4 Parking	4		
5.5 Integration with Development Plans	4		
5.6 Company Travel Plans	4		
5.7 Travel Awareness	4		
5.8 Airports	4	Surface access strategies.	
5.9 Social Inclusion	4		
5.10 Air Pollution & Noise	4		
5.11 Transport Issues for Disabled People	μ		
5.12 Sustainable Distribution	μ		
5.13 Horses	P-	Shared use of bridlepaths may have safety implications	
5.14 Health	4		
5.15 Road Hierarchy and Network Development	μ		
5.16 Road Traffic Reduction	4		

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Impacts Appraisal		Commentary	
Encourage community empowerment	P+	The Hertfordshire Cycling Forum was involved in the development of the policy. Local stakeholders are involved in the development of all local cycle networks, individual schemes and audits/assessments.	
Increase Partnership and Consultative Working Practices	4	With local stakeholders, district/borough councils and other wider agencies and service areas.	
Improve educational and vocational training facilities and opportunities	P+	May possibly improve people's opportunities for training with improved access and choices of sustainable travel.	
Improve mental and physical health of people living in the community	4	If delivery of the strategy and promotion of cycling is successful, the cycling target will be met, and so more people will be cycling improving their physical and mental health.	
Increase awareness of healthy lifestyles and increase participation in Health Improvement Programmes.	4	Through promotion and marketing of cycling.	

Strategic Compatibility		Commentary
5.17 Reduction of Travel Need and Car Usage	4	
5.18 Networks and Facilities for Non-motorised Transport and Passenger Transport	4	
5.19 Car Parking	4	
5.20 Primary Routes and Through Traffic	μ	
5.21 Highway Improvements other than to Primary Routes	4	
5.22 New Roads	μ	
5.23 Traffic and Road Safety Implications of Development Proposals	4	
5.24 Freight	μ	
5.25 Rail and Water Freight Depots	μ	

Cycling Strategy:

The revised cycling strategy has a number of potential conflicts with both the sustainability objectives and other LTP2 policies. New or extended routes could impact on the quality of the landscape and open spaces (especially in rural areas), and as a consequence impact on local habitats and wildlife. The strategy should also recognise that there could be a potential conflict with the Highway Network Maintenance policy in that the maintenance of new and existing infrastructure and facilities would have resource implications. The strategy as it stands does not show any specific commitment to reducing the quantity of raw materials used, or the encouragement of renewables.

The strategy may benefit by highlighting the safety implications around the shared use of bridlepaths by cyclists and horses. Street lighting provided for safety reasons could also contribute to an increase in light pollution.