

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE 20 JULY 1999

NOTE: Full copies of the report mentioned below have been sent to all members of the Environment Committee and other members who have requested it. Any queries on this report to: Joan Blake, Room 222, County Secretary's Department, County Hall, Hertford. (Tel: 01992 555560)

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

In July 1998 the government published a White Paper setting out its commitment to improve the integration of transport and making local highway authorities responsible for the preparation and submission of a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for their area. The LTP, which replaces the annual submission of a Transport Policies and Programmes (TPP) document, will set out a five-year programme of improvements within the context of objectives and long-term strategy and will, from July 2000, only need to be submitted in full every five years.

The Plan covers all modes of transport and requires much wider participation and consultation than the TPP; production has been co-ordinated by the Transport Panel.

There are five key elements to the Plan:-

- objectives
- problems and opportunities
- strategies
- programmes
- performance indicators and monitoring

The overall strategy will be implemented through a programme of schemes and measures in four categories:-

(i) Area plans

It is intended to produce six area plans across the county, building on the existing approach. Four new plans will be developed in mid, northern, west and eastern Hertfordshire and the two existing plans for south west Herts and Lea Valley will be rolled forward.

(ii) Maintaining existing service levels

The programme of works to maintain existing service levels covers carriageway maintenance, bridge maintenance and passenger transport services.

(iii) Countywide themes

The programme of countywide themes includes:

- Safety - local safety schemes, road safety education
- Local Educational Access Route Network (LEARN) to provide safer journeys to schools
- Cycling - to promote cycling as an alternative to the car
- Passenger transport infrastructure - to provide high quality services for bus and train users
- Rural
- Urban plans

(iv) Major projects

Firm detailed bids for two major projects (i.e. those costing more than £5 million) are included - Croxley Rail Link and Baldock Bypass. Further consultation is being undertaken on the Central Herts Passenger Transit System and a decision on the way forward will be incorporated in the July 2000 submission.

The LTP includes a bid to the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) to help finance these programmes. The total bid for 2000/01 is £23.581 million. The settlement announcement from DETR is expected in mid December 1999 and will be reported to Environment Committee in January 2000.

Following agreement by the Transport Panel, the draft Plan was widely issued for consultation in May 1999. In response to issues raised during the consultation process by the North Herts Highways Partnership and others, the Transport Panel were requested to urgently review the County Council's speed strategy and come forward with a revision to secure speed reduction in rural villages and other residential areas.

In approving the draft Plan, the committee requested the government to pass all revenue gained nationally from transport taxes and duties raised from road users, for investment in transport schemes to support an integrated transport system. They also asked the Secretary of State to award Hertfordshire a grant at least equivalent to the level payable to other comparable south-east authorities.

New DETR funding for the wider use of speed cameras was welcomed and a bid submitted for Hertfordshire to be one of six pilot authorities to test the practicality of using a proportion of the fines from fixed penalties to help fund increased camera activity.

A programme of further consultation commenced in September to help develop the full Local Transport Plan, which will be submitted to the DETR in July 2000. The development will be guided by the Transport Panel which will meet on a monthly basis to May 2000, and the resulting draft full Local Transport Plan will be reported to Environment Committee for final approval.

Jane Pitman
Chairman
County Hall, Hertford
20 July 1999