

Executive Report



Report of Head of Planning

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Wards affected: All

To: EXECUTIVE

DATE: 7 January 2010

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Report No. 86/10

Oxfordshire local transport plan (LTP3)

Recommendations

That Oxfordshire County Council be informed that Vale of White Horse District Council;

- (a) welcomes publication of this local transport plan (LTP3)
- (b) notes the general objectives and policies
- (c) requires that the Abingdon Area strategy includes under 'Highway and Traffic Management' a strategy sub section committing the county council to work with the district and town councils to investigate how the case for the completion of the A34 Lodge Hill junction can be advanced
- (d) requires the following bullet point should be added to paragraph 14.34 of the Abingdon Area strategy: "Investigate Marcham Road/Colwell Drive/Drayton Road/Ock Street junction improvements"
- (e) supports the Science Vale UK strategy of establishing a transport network that supports economic development and growth and requires that the strategy confirms that the necessary transport infrastructure will be implemented as the County Council's top priority
- (f) requires that the Science Vale UK strategy includes under 'Area Wide Strategy' additional strategy sub sections:
 - commits the county council to channel, as a top priority, available funding to the provision of the Harwell Strategic and Field Link Roads and the Wantage Eastern Link Road, which will directly benefit the immediate Science Vale UK area and Oxfordshire economies,
 - commits the county council to complement the provision of these strategic highway schemes with improvements to the A338 and A417
- (g) recognises the potential long term benefits from investment in strategic rail links but wishes the county council to ensure the top priorities are given to investment in Oxfordshire strategic highways schemes that will bring direct and more immediate benefits to the Oxfordshire economy, much of which is through the growth of Science Vale UK
- (h) is disappointed that in the Rural Areas strategy, protection of the line of the Marcham bypass is only on the basis that it may be necessary to allow development in adjacent areas and the bypass would be expected to be funded by this development and that the County Council gives no commitment to working with other bodies to prioritise the delivery of this scheme.
- (i) supports the inclusion in the Corridor Strategies of management systems to improve operation of the network, proposals for new rail stations and work to improve the containment of settlements.

(j) Notes that the paragraph numbering in chapter 27 is in places incorrect and missing.

Purpose of Report

1. To summarise the county council's approach in its local transport plan (LTP3) to transport developments across the county in the period to 2030 and to highlight the main implications for the Vale.

Strategic Objectives

2. The purpose of LTP3 is to help the County Council facilitate the delivery of development and priority transport schemes. This will help meet the council's objectives of meeting people's needs for housing, supporting a vibrant economy, and managing our business effectively.

Background

3. The LTP3 covers the period to 2030. The county council will use the agreed LTP3 to facilitate the delivery of development and priority transport schemes. The LTP3 is structured in two main sections; 'Transport in Oxfordshire' policies and 'Area Strategies'
4. Transport in Oxfordshire covers ten subjects and sets out the relevant policies and supporting text. The general policies reflect the current difficulties in funding, give a higher priority to maintaining rather than improving the network, seek to meet the requirements of the county's economy while protecting the environment, give priority to seeking external funding for improvements to access to Oxford and within Science Vale UK, support sustainable travel, support good design and full consultation. The subsequent sections reflect the nine transport objectives. These deal variously with highway maintenance, congestion, road safety, improving accessibility, supporting development, carbon reduction, reducing the environmental impact of travel, public transport and cycling and walking.
5. There are fifteen area strategies including strategies for Abingdon, Science Vale UK – which includes Didcot, Wantage and Grove Faringdon and the Rural Areas. Each strategy sets out the challenges and the strategy details.

Abingdon

6. The section on Abingdon notes, among other things, that town centre improvements were implemented between 2006 and 2010 and have helped to reduce pollution, that the town's layout can be a barrier to movement, that there are pockets of deprivation with poor accessibility to public transport and that there are significant traffic delays at key junctions during peak times.
7. This section also notes a strong local desire to construct an all movement junction on the A34 at Lodge Hill junction but that the County Council had interpreted the traffic modelling as showing that this scheme had 'limited' benefits which would make it difficult to attract central government funding. Modelling

seeks to simulate what future traffic flows might be by making assumptions about route choices, modal split and distribution. The council considers that because of the variables involved, further analysis should be undertaken of the modelling results to ensure that all the possible benefits can be properly understood.

8. The strategy includes improving facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists, working with local bus companies to improve services, such as promoting Radley station as a rail facility for Abingdon with a service connection and encouraging people to make fewer car trips and to use lower emission vehicles.

Science Vale UK

9. Science Vale UK includes Didcot, Wantage and Grove and is the national science and innovation centre for the UK. It includes a world class concentration of cutting edge research and new technology businesses. LTP3 recognises that the importance of the area to the national economy and in delivering housing growth needs to be supported by infrastructure investment as set out in the County/Halcrow Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport study (SCOTS).
10. Science Vale UK's growing success has meant the A34 and some key gateway locations are experiencing congestion. In recent years there has been an increasing use of minor roads to avoid congestion to the detriment of local environments.
11. Reference is also made to the plans for an Upper Thames Reservoir, noting that the need for it is yet to be proved. Concerns are expressed, if the scheme were to progress, with regard to the impact on the surrounding network from construction traffic and leisure use trip generation
12. The strategy for the area seeks to establish and provide a funding framework for a transport network that supports economic investment and growth. LTP3 notes that in the Science Vale UK area there are plans for approximately 18,000 dwellings and 12,000 jobs by 2026. While the SCOTS study acknowledges the importance of ensuring there is sufficient capacity on the highway network, LTP3 must underline this importance by making the implementation of the improvements to the highway network a top priority. LTP3 also includes measures to improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, to improve public bus services and to increase awareness of and influence travel behaviour to reduce car use and to promote walking and cycling.

Faringdon

13. The strategy at Faringdon is to improve walking and cycling routes and to improve bus services.

Rural Oxfordshire

14. The proposed approach is in two parts; an overall strategy for the rural areas and specific corridor strategies.
15. The overall rural strategy notes there is currently a good country bus network but most services need funding support to run. Better use needs to be made of these services. Rail coverage is uneven but this can be improved by improving

access to rail stations. The line of the Marcham bypass is currently protected but the large part of its funding would be expected from adjacent development. Improvements to the rights of way network will be sought.

Corridor Strategies

16. Reference is made here only to those that affect the Vale.
17. The A34 around Oxford has a strategic and a local role. Congestion is a problem in a number of locations and it also 'catches' local buses. New Park and Ride sites could help relieve pressure on the A34. Increased rail use, and reference is made to the proximity of Radley station to Abingdon, offers opportunities to intercept local trips and remove trips from the road network.
18. Modelling shows that traffic using the A420 is likely to increase significantly, as Grove, Wantage, Faringdon and Swindon grow. A new station at Grove may offer opportunities to relieve pressure on the A420 (and A338) if it were to be constructed.
19. The corridor strategies includes measures that, among other things, improve operation of the network, implement capacity improvements at selected junctions, work with local bus companies to improve bus services, promote Park and Ride, promote travel by train and proposals to open new stations, encourage people to make fewer trips by car and, where possible, walk, cycle and use public transport and more efficient lower emissions vehicles and improve the containment of settlements so residents can work and live in the same settlement.

Options

20. This report is about the county council's transport plan and transport issues that are important to this council and to which this council will wish to respond. This report enables consideration of what this response might be, not consideration of different options.

Financial Implications

21. LTP3 will help the County Council determine its highways' investment programme as funding becomes available. Within the Vale there are a number of highway schemes which the council would wish to see implemented. Support by the council for LTP3 and these schemes may help secure early and significant financial contributions to these schemes..

Legal Implications

22. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report

Risks

23. If the council does not respond to this draft Local Transport Plan, it may mislead the county council into thinking that a lower priority can be attached to those parts of the strategy which apply to the Vale. There could be a risk that the

implementation of those parts of the strategy which apply to the Vale might be delayed

Other implications

24. None

Conclusion

9. Executive should consider this report and pass its comments on to the county council.

Background Papers

- Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP3)
http://myconsultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/inovem/consult.ti/transport_ltp3_2011/listdocuments