

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15 NOVEMBER 2011

CHAIRMAN OF PARKING AND TRANSPORT TASK AND FINISH GROUP

5. EAST HERTS PARKING AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2012/22 TASK AND FINISH GROUP INTERIM REPORT

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To inform the Committee of progress towards completion of the Council's Parking and Transport Strategy.
- To invite the Committee to consider and comment on the early findings of the Task and Finish Group.

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR DECISION:</u> that	
(A)	The work undertaken and planned be noted; and
(B)	The Committee comments on the early findings of the Task and Finish Group.

1.0 Background

1.1 As the highway authority, Hertfordshire County Council leads on the formulation of strategy and policy in respect of public transport and highways issues. As the parking authority for the district East Herts Council leads on the formulation of strategy and policy in respect of its off-street car parks. As the planning authority, East Herts must have regard to planning policy guidance in the areas of parking and transport when making planning decisions.

2.0 Report

2.1 East Herts Council does not as yet possess a single document that could be regarded as a comprehensive parking and transport strategy although possible elements, such the Council's parking enforcement guidelines and car park charging policies have been agreed by Members and are in force. Development of the Council's off-street parking arrangements and approach to on-

street parking management has therefore been reached largely on an ad-hoc, 'needs' basis.

2.2 In the light of the above the Council regards it as timely to prepare a comprehensive Parking and Transport Strategy, initially to cover the period 2012/22. The last eighteen months have been concerned with consultation and researching national, regional and local statute, regulations and policy. The period between November 2011 and March 2012 will be dedicated to finalising the Strategy, with adoption by the Council expected in Spring 2012.

2.3 Hertfordshire County Council has a statutory duty to prepare a local transport plan for the county. The most recent plan, LTP3, was issued in 2011 and covers the period 2011-2031. "Daughter" documents to LTP3 include Urban Transport Plans, again prepared by the County Council. It is appropriate for the East Herts strategy to be congruent with the County Council plan; therefore the former will align with the five statutory goals of LTP3 as follows:

- Tackling Climate Change
- Supporting Economic Growth
- Promoting Equality of Opportunity
- Contributing to Better Safety, Security and Health
- Improving Quality of Life

2.4 The consultation phase of the development of East Herts Council's strategy has been extensive. At the end of 2010 East Herts conducted a survey of its residents through its "Link" magazine. Approximately 700 responses were received. The results of the main survey questions are attached as **Essential Reference Paper B**.

2.5 Comments were also sought at a round of Community Voice meetings in late 2011 and although a limited range and number of comments were received, consideration of these has been built into the process. A round of initial consultative meetings with Town Councils was also held at this time.

3.0 Work of the Task and Finish Group

3.1 A review of progress during the summer of 2011 found that a large number/range of issues and desired outcomes had been identified during the consultation and research phase. It was recognised there are clear tensions between many and that in an

environment of financial constraint a process of prioritisation would be needed if the strategy was to provide Members with an informed framework for decision making.

- 3.2 Members therefore established a Task and Finish Group to shape the final stages of the strategy's development; in particular by identifying areas where further work was needed to weigh and agree local priorities from the many desirable (and sometimes conflicting) outcomes identified by residents, traders, Members and others.
- 3.2 As part of the process of developing a local strategy to meet local needs, the Task and Finish Group agreed to canvass the views of key representatives of the district's towns and rural communities. The Group committed to seek the views of a range of groups and individuals, such as traders, voluntary organisations and town and parish councils. The Terms of reference of the Group are provided as **Essential Reference Paper C**.
- 3.3 To this end a round of focus groups was held from late September onwards, with the final meeting in Ware scheduled for 2 November. (A verbal report on the Ware meeting will be given at the Committee). The delegates at each meeting were invited by the appropriate Member on the Task and Finish Group, who also co-chaired the meeting in their town. Attendees were invited to debate the outcomes already identified, contribute any of their own as yet not identified and then prioritise four or five that they considered were key to the needs of their town or community.
- 3.4 At the request of the Task and Finish Group, officers have also sent a questionnaire to all parish councils in East Herts, again asking them to identify and prioritise the key parking and transportation outcomes for their communities. A number of responses have been received; however it has not been possible to report on findings in time for this report
- 3.5 This report offers a summary of feedback arising from the above processes and offers preliminary findings arising from work undertaken so far, which Members may find of assistance - not least during the current, budget setting process.
- 3.6 While no two responses have been identical, some desired outcomes, albeit with different emphasis, featured as a priority in a number of responses:

- Promotion of the economic wellbeing of our towns and villages.
- Improved road safety for all users.
- Improved public transport accessibility.

With such outcomes prioritised for each main town and our rural communities the strategy will outline a number of policy options and discuss the suitability of each in the context of some identified 'first principles' such as whether it is the service user should pay, whether we should be discouraging the use of private transport for a range of reasons and whether surpluses from parking income, where these exist, should be ring-fenced for certain purposes.

3.7 A summary of the ranked outcomes from each focus group meeting is attached as **Essential Reference Paper D**.

3.8 The final stage in this process will be the preparation of the final strategy document which will be submitted to the Environment Scrutiny Committee on 13 March 2012 and from there to the Executive and finally full Council

4.0 Implications/Consultations

4.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found in **Essential Reference Paper A**.

Background Papers

1. HCC Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3).
2. HCC Urban Transport Plans.
3. Results of "Link" survey 2010.
4. Results of consultation meetings September/October/November 2011.
5. Results of consultation with Parish Councils September/October 2011.

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

<p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives</p>	<p>Promoting prosperity and well-being; providing access and opportunities <i>Enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.</i></p> <p>Fit for purpose, services fit for you <i>Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.</i></p> <p>Pride in East Herts <i>Improving standards of the built neighbourhood and environmental management in our towns and villages.</i></p> <p>Shaping now, shaping the future <i>Safeguard and enhance our unique mix of rural and urban communities, ensuring sustainable, economic and social opportunities including the continuation of effective development control and other measures.</i></p> <p>Leading the way, working together <i>Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.</i></p>
<p>Consultation:</p>	<p>As will be noted from the main body of the report, extensive consultation has been undertaken during the preparation of the Parking and Transport Strategy.</p>
<p>Legal:</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Financial:</p>	<p>An important aspect of this Strategy will be identification and prioritisation of desirable outcomes for the development of transportation and parking in East Herts for the period 2012/22, enabling the formulation of policies to underpin this development.</p> <p>Delivery of these outcomes is likely to involve capital and/or revenue expenditure; however this will be a strategy document and will not seek to explore this aspect in depth. Officers would expect to bring forward costed proposals through the MTFP process in respect of any proposed development that carries capital or revenue implications.</p>
<p>Human Resource:</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Risk Management:</p>	<p>N/A</p>