

**Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Executive Director (Development Services)**

Report to:	<b>Cllr W Webb - Executive Councillor Highways and Transport</b>
Date:	<b>06 December 2010</b>
Subject:	<b>3rd Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan</b>
Decision Reference:	<b>01793</b>
Key decision?	<b>Yes</b>

**Summary:**

The current statutory Local Transport Plan (LTP) expires on 31 March 2011 and a new 3rd LTP must be in place by then.

However, due to the change in national government earlier this year, there is uncertainty around future national transport strategy and likely levels of funding for transport.

It is therefore proposed to produce a 'light touch' 3rd LTP which rolls forward the current LTP2 policies and strategies for a maximum of 2 years. This period will then be used to undertake a more fundamental review of local transport policies in the light of further information expected from central government, particularly in respect of funding levels.

**Recommendation(s):**

That the 'light touch' approach to producing the 3rd Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan outlined in this report is adopted.

**Alternatives Considered:**

**Reasons for Recommendation:**

To comply with the statutory duty to have the 3rd Local Transport Plan in place by 1 April 2011

**1. Background**

**General**

- 1.1 The current 2<sup>nd</sup> Local Transport Plans (LTP2) cover the period through to 31 March 2011. As a statutory document under the Transport Act 2008, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Local Transport Plans (LTP3) must be adopted by 1 April 2011. Local authorities are now able to decide on the time span of their LTP3 themselves (previous LTPs had been fixed at 5 years).

- 1.2 However, since the publication of guidance on 3<sup>rd</sup> LTPs by DfT last year, there has been a change of national government which has made progress in developing LTP3 difficult.

### **Current Issues**

- 1.3 Verbal confirmation that the LTP process would continue was not received until mid-July and at the time of writing, no further guidance had been published.
- 1.4 Hence there are 2 specific problems:
- the lack of a national transport policy framework within which to develop LTP3, and
  - no clear guidance on likely future levels of transport funding for local authorities.
- 1.4 The previous administration had started work towards a new transport white paper under the banner of DaSTS (Delivering a Sustainable Transport System) and had also produced a short discussion paper outlining a possible way forward in larger cities and towns (The Future of Urban Transport). It is understood that this work has been halted, but to date no further guidance has been issued. Hence there is currently no overarching policy framework within which to set LTP3.
- 1.5 For LTP2, DfT gave each authority funding allocations for the Integrated Transport and Maintenance capital blocks which informed the development of the LTP. However, DfT have indicated that block funding allocations for 2011/12 onwards will not be forthcoming until after the ongoing national Comprehensive Spending Review due to report in October this year. It is anticipated that at the same time, the future of Regional Funding Allocations (which have previously been the method of securing funding for major transport schemes) will also be clarified, along with likely future levels of revenue funding for all areas of local authority spending. Bearing in mind the current economic climate and the reductions in funding for transport already made by central government for 2010/11, it is likely that the available funding from central government will be substantially below that received during recent years.
- 1.6 Consequently, it is proving difficult to prepare LTP3. This has been the subject of discussions at a national level, including via ADEPT (formerly the County Surveyors Society). Some authorities have continued with consultation with stakeholders and the public, based primarily around the key goals and objectives outlined in DaSTS. In Lincolnshire, the concern has been to not raise false expectations about future plans for transport in the county at this stage. However, due to the statutory nature of the document, there is still a need to have some form of LTP3 in place by 1 April 2011.

### **Proposed Lincolnshire Approach**

- 1.7 In order to comply with the statutory requirement, it is proposed to produce a 'light touch' LTP3 which will in effect simply roll forward existing LTP2 strategies for a maximum of a further 2 years. This will allow time to consider future national announcements on transport policy and funding

whilst preparing what will become LTP4. It is understood that some other local authorities are considering a similar approach.

- 1.8 Consequently, there is not expected to be any detailed consultation on Lincolnshire's LTP3 at this stage, other than to inform partners and the public of the proposed approach. Should further information be forthcoming from central government quickly, then it may be possible to undertake some consultation on what this means for Lincolnshire early in 2011, possibly alongside the publication of LTP3. This consultation will then assist in developing LTP4. Although LTP3 is anticipated to cover 2 years (2011/12 and 2012/13), it may be possible to publish LTP4 in April 2012 if guidance is received soon enough.

## **2. Conclusion**

- 2.1 In view of the current lack of vital information needed to prepare the next LTP3, a 'light touch' approach will be taken by rolling forward the current LTP2 strategies for a maximum of 2 years. This will allow a full review to be carried out for LTP4 once national guidance on policies and funding are available.

### **3. Legal Comments:**

There is a statutory requirement for the next LTP to be in place by April 2011. The recommendation accords with this requirement. The decision is therefore lawful and within the remit of the Executive Councillor provided he has the delegated authority of the Leader.

### **4. Resource Comments:**

Approval of this report enables a "light touch" LTP3 for Lincolnshire to be written and does not have any financial consequences.

Lincolnshire receives funding for expenditure on the highway network through allocations made via the LTP process, currently, this funding is a mixture of supported borrowing and grant. However, the actual method of calculation and in what form the funding is received is currently under review, this, therefore, may change in the future.

## **5. Consultation**

### **a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?**

n/a

### **b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?**

Yes

### **c) Scrutiny Comments**

Highways, Transport and Technology Scrutiny Committee were consulted on 13 September and were supportive of the proposed approach.

**d) Policy Proofing Actions Required**

Not applicable.

**6. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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