

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

Monday, 10th September 2007

Report by Head of Sustainable Transport

Cabinet Member with responsibility for Environment: Councillor Ben Smith

Subject: Transport Strategy for Growth

Advice: That cabinet adopt the Transport Strategy for Growth (which forms Appendix 2 of this report) as Council policy.

1. Intended Outcome

1.1 As the County's highway and transport authority, the County Council needs to identify the improvements necessary to accommodate sustainably the growth outlined in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy. This report seeks approval for documents which will inform the preparation of the Core Spatial Strategies for West Northamptonshire and (particularly, at this stage) North Northamptonshire. It also includes reference to other documents in slightly earlier stages of production so that a clear view of the evolving Transport Strategy for Growth can be obtained. The report also seeks to identify some of the further stages in strategy development that need to be carried out by the Council.

2. Relevant Council Strategic Goal and Priority

2.1 The Medium Term Plan vision is 'one organisation focussed on customers and community leadership'. The proposals in this report will help to achieve the following strategic goals and priorities:

Medium Term Plan and Strategic Goals		Council Priority
Communities	A safer, freer and more prosperous County	Roads and footpaths are better maintained and a modernised strategic road network is developed.
	A cleaner and greener county	The built, natural and public environment is better developed and maintained.

3. Background

3.1 The Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy, published in March 2005, set out major plans for growth up to 2021. In Northamptonshire, approximately 101,000 dwellings and 81,000 new jobs are proposed. The majority of this growth will be directed towards the larger urban areas, including Northampton, Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough, Daventry and Towcester.

3.2 The Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan was published in March 2006 and acknowledges the need to ensure that necessary infrastructure requirements are in place

prior to the completion of developments. As well as roads, this includes facilities for walking, cycling and public transport to link new developments to existing facilities, based on actual need. This will ensure that people have a range of alternative options available to them, in order to maximise modal shift from the car.

- 3.3 The Local Transport Plan highlighted the need to develop a Transport Strategy for Growth to examine in more detail the longer term transport impacts of the growth proposals. Two area-wide transport models were established – one for the North Northamptonshire and one for West Northamptonshire. The West Northamptonshire model was a development of the existing Northampton traffic model. The models have been used to test development options provided by the Joint Planning Units.
- 3.4 Historically, car traffic in the county has grown much faster than the national rate. The capacity of the road network to absorb additional traffic is quite limited. The growth proposed in the Sub-Regional Strategy is likely to lead to traffic growth rates of up to 50% in the period to 2021. This can only be accommodated if there is a substantial shift away from travel by the private car.
- 3.5 To meet the requirements of the growth agenda, a Transport Strategy Framework has been established to look at how transport impacts on key objectives such as the economy and jobs growth, social impacts and housing delivery. Together with information on scheme need and deliverability, this has been used to draw up a prioritised list of transport interventions outside the main towns.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Following approval of the draft Transport Strategy for Growth as the basis for consultation on 8th January, consultation ran from 15th February to 29th June, having been extended to allow more time for feedback. A range of stakeholders including district/borough and parish councils, county and district/borough councillors, transport operators and user groups and developers were contacted and asked to provide feedback on the draft strategy documents, which were made available on the County Council's website. In addition a series of workshop events were organised where it was possible for council officers and stakeholders to discuss the content of the strategy documents in some detail.
- 4.2 As a result of the consultation, a number of key changes have been made to the strategy document:
 - The suite of lengthy draft documents has been drawn together into a single strategy document of more modest length (forming Appendix 2 to this report). This not only provides a more succinct document, but by omitting much of the detail of possible future schemes, concentrates on those areas which should be properly adopted as transport policy, leaving the detail of individual schemes to be determined on an individual basis at a later date.
 - Following discussions with borough and district councils, it has been agreed to omit many of the detailed proposals for growth towns which can be better considered as part of the creation of Area Action Plans drawn up by the borough and district councils for individual areas.
 - It was recognised that by concentrating on measures for the main growth towns, the previous strategy documents failed to adequately address the smaller towns

and rural areas. The strategy has therefore being amended by including some guidance on how growth itself should be accommodated in smaller towns or villages, and by providing policy on the mitigation of the effects of traffic growth in rural areas.

- Some changes to the list of prioritised schemes, (detailed in Appendix 2 of the draft Transport Strategy for Growth).
- Segregated parking no longer being included as a requirement.

4.3 By the time the consultation got underway, the Design Guide for Residential Developments had already been overtaken by the publication of the new Manual for Streets by the Department for Transport, Department for Communities and Local Government and Welsh Assembly Government. It was the overwhelming view of consultees that the Design Guide needed to be rewritten in line with the new guidance in Manual for Streets. The Design Guide is not being brought back to cabinet for approval at this time, but will be the subject of further work with stakeholders and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, with the intention of bringing new guidance to cabinet for approval early in 2008.

4.4 Developers also made many detailed and constructive comments in relation to how they would deal with the Transport Strategy for Growth as part of their transport assessments. These matters will be incorporated in new guidance which will be brought to cabinet for approval early in 2008.

4.5 A full consultation report is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

5. Proposal

5.1 The cabinet is asked to approve the Transport Strategy for Growth as Council policy.

5.2 The strategy begins by setting out the background to growth and the scale of the challenge in transport terms. Modal shift (encouraging people to use alternatives to car) is vital to accommodating the growth effectively. Targets of 20% modal shift for major new developments in the larger towns and 5% for existing areas are specified. The strategy sets out how smarter travel choices and improvements to public transport, walking and cycling networks will be an important part of achieving this.

5.3 Despite these challenging modal shift targets, there will still be a very considerable growth in car traffic. The strategy therefore also sets out a series of road improvements, together with measures to mitigate the effects of traffic growth on local communities. The strategy concludes by discussing the methods of funding of these proposals and setting out an overall investment plan for the period to 2031.

5.4 The need for a Transport Strategy for Growth was set out in the Local Transport Plan approved by full Council in February 2006, to provide more detailed policies in relation to growth. As such, the strategy is considered to be a 'daughter document' of the Local Transport Plan, and forms part of the Council's overall transport policies.

6. Timetable for Implementation

6.1 The main purposes of the Transport Strategy for Growth are:

- *To provide guidance to the local planning authorities in drawing up their Local Development Frameworks;*
- *To set out an investment plan which will inform the North and West Northamptonshire Spatial Investment Plans and form the basis for bids for third party funding.*

6.2 The draft policies have already informed the preparation of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy, and subject to adoption by cabinet, the approved Transport Strategy for Growth is expected to support the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit's case at the Examination in Public into the Core Spatial Strategy which starts in October.

6.3 The Transport Strategy for Growth will also inform the preparation of the West Northamptonshire core Spatial Strategy and other planning documents. A similar scheme prioritisation framework is also being used to prepare a list of prioritised schemes for the whole Milton Keynes & South Midlands sub-region.

6.4 The Council is currently working with North Northants Development Company and the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation to submit bids for Growth Area Funding by 1st October 2007. The County Council will also be submitting bids to the Community Infrastructure Fund by a deadline to be set by the Department for Transport.

6.5 As set out in sections 4.3 and 4.4 above, cabinet will be asked to approve a new Design Guide for Residential Estates and Guidance on Transport Assessments, or equivalent document(s) early in 2008.

7. Alternative Options Considered

7.1 A significant number of alternative options were considered in developing the various strategies. Some of these are referenced in the strategies. Schemes were rejected for a variety of reasons such as:

- Not meeting strategic objectives;
- Not being deliverable;
- Not being affordable;
- Having an excessive environmental impact; and
- Having no justification in terms of need.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications of this report. Although the strategies include a number of schemes and proposals which will need significant levels of funding, this is a strategic report and possible sources of funding still need to be examined as part of the further development of the strategies.
- 8.2 Officers are currently working with North Northamptonshire Development Company and West Northants Development Corporation to prepare bids for the next round of Growth Area Funding. In addition, government ministers have announced that there will be a further round of the transport-related Community Infrastructure Fund, although no further details are yet available. Authority to spend any successful bids to these or other third-party funding sources will be sought via the Medium Term Capital Plan.
- 8.3 The overall investment programme identified in the strategy should also form a useful element in assessing the Council's long-term budgetary needs.

9. Risk Management

- 9.1 Risks associated with the proposals in this report are the uncertainty around whether the proposals contained therein will actually deliver the required objectives. Mitigating that risk is one reason that an objective-based and an analytical assessment have been used to prioritise the measures included. Further mitigation will come from continuing to review the measures in light of any proposed growth, and also monitoring the effectiveness of such measures as are implemented.
- 9.2 The risk associated with are not carrying out the proposals is that the Core Spatial Strategies would be prepared without transport input. This would almost certainly result in the transport system becoming considerably more congested than would otherwise be the case.

10. List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Consultation Report

Appendix 2: Draft Transport Strategy for Growth

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Background Papers:	Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan 2006/07-2010/11 Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy Cabinet Report 8 January 2007 Agenda Item No. A1
Is this report proposing a key decision is taken?	NO
If yes, is the decision in the Forward Plan?	YES
Is this report proposing an amendment to the budget and/or policy and framework?	NO – but as the Transport Strategy for Growth sits below/within the Local Transport Plan, it proposes the formulation of a policy within the policy framework, which is the

	responsibility of the Cabinet.
Have the financial implications been cleared by the strategic finance manager (SFM)?	N/A
Has the report been cleared by the relevant Director?	YES Name of Director: Danny Brennan
Has the relevant Cabinet Member been consulted?	YES/NO Name of Cabinet Member: Ben Smith
Have any legal implications been cleared by Legal Services?	NA
Has an Equalities Impact Assessment been carried out in relation to this report?	NO
Environmental implications:	The Core Spatial Strategies will be the subject of an environmental assessment. Environmental assessment will also be required for many of the individual schemes proposed at later parts of their development
Human Rights implications:	None apparent
Constituency Interest:	Countywide