

Informal Scrutiny Workshop for Environment and Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Local Transport Plan LTP3

Friday 8 October 2010 Hove Town Hall Council Chamber

Councillors Present: Ian Davey, Tony Janio, Pete West, Warren Morgan, Ann Norman

Apologies: Melanie Davis, Pat Drake, David Smart

1. Councillor Warren Morgan, Chairman of ECSOSC welcomed everyone to the workshop.
2. The Assistant Director: Sustainable Transport (Mark Prior) said that despite new national and local governance arrangements, it was still a statutory requirement for Authorities to have a LTP3 in place by 1 April 2011. In addition to working with Overview and Scrutiny the Team was liaising with the LSP Transport Partnership to achieve this. Transport is of key importance to many aspects of City life and the plan that would cover 15 years required careful planning and management.
3. The Sustainable Transport Division is very experienced, had much practice and knowledge after developing both provisional and final versions of each of LTP1 and LTP2 and was working to build and improve on LTP2. Scrutiny members' questions would play a key part in contributing towards the consultation on LTP3 that was due in 2 or 3 weeks.
4. The format of the meeting would be: a presentation in four sessions by Head of Transport Strategy & Projects (Andrew Renaut). The Powerpoint presentation was handed out.

A) Strategy Development

LTP3 allowed for greater flexibility by Local Authorities than earlier plans and this fitted with the national 'Localism' agenda. There was intended to be a focus via LTPs for local people for local areas.

The Government Policy Document 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System' was still valid and there has been an indication that the Coalition government will adopt the same high-level goals in the short term but may review and renew them.

The intention is to develop a long-term LTP strategy up to the same time horizon as the LDF Core Strategy – i.e. 2026.

Transport is a means to an end, enabling people to go to work, enjoy the City, go shopping etc; a balance has to be struck between needs and demands on the transport networks.

In addition to linking with current and developing Plans and Strategies across the City (eg the Sustainable Community Strategy), LTP3 will also reflect the council's

new priorities of Place, People and Communities as part of the Strategic Commissioning model.

B) Delivery Plan

Additional flexibility in developing LTP3 includes Local Authorities deciding on their own investment plans. 5 Years was considered too long and 1 year gave inadequate time to effect change. Therefore a 3-year timeframe is proposed for the Delivery Plan. The two funding blocks are expected to remain for integrated transport and maintenance.

The City has much 'hidden' infrastructure eg Kings Road arches, which require significant investment to maintain and strengthen. Street lighting also requires investment to improve lighting efficiency and to replace unsafe columns, partly funded via the LTP.

Data that will be available by the end of March 2011 will inform a Transport Asset Management Plan to provide an inventory and cost of assets such as details of road surfaces and conditions, signs, lines and structures and assess maintenance requirements. This will inform future work programmes and possibly investment levels.

The benefits of having an 'Intelligent Transport System' [ITS] can be seen (on request) in BHCC's compact traffic control centre in Bartholomew House. Using cameras, CCTV, GPS systems and computer technology helps to keep the City moving and involves working with the Police and bus companies to monitor traffic conditions in the City.

c) Performance and Monitoring

It is not yet known how performance and monitoring of outcomes will be addressed within LTP3. The combination of greater flexibility for local authorities and potential further changes in government monitoring frameworks eg the LAA has resulted in some uncertainty at present.

Regarding government funding levels, there have already been in-year grant reductions during 2010/11 which will affect investment programmes. The level of future years' LTP3 investment cannot be determined until after the Comprehensive Spending Review [CSR] (announcement expected on 20 October). This will also be dependent on the level of information published, in terms of allocations to councils for particular service areas. The government is also currently consulting on the formulae it may use to calculate those levels of funding.

D) Funding Options

Because funding levels are unknown at this stage it is planned to develop a delivery programme for the published LTP3 that has some detail for Year 1, and establishes principles for years 2 and 3. More detail will become available in the next 3- 6 months.

It is not expected that there will any additional funding made available for the network maintenance programme following the severe winter weather in 2009-2010. However, an additional £150,000 capital funding was received from the government to address some problems. Schemes to maintain the network will be considered and prioritised in line with existing inspection regimes.

5. Outcomes from this workshop would be taken into account as part of the consultation on the LTP3 document. More detailed consideration of the draft Plan would be part of a second OSC workshop in January 2011; the scrutiny officer would find a suitable date. All ECSOSC would be circulated with a copy of the PowerPoint presentation and notes of the meeting, and given the opportunity to ask further questions.

6. At the end of the workshop Councillor Warren Morgan thanked the Head of Transport Strategy & Projects for an interesting presentation and the opportunity to ask questions.

7. Issues raised by Members (In italics) and initial replies

A) Within the Council's Commissioning model it is important to know how Strategy and Delivery will interface.

Transport Strategy would remain with Mark Prior; Delivery would be via Gillian Marston (Head of the new City Infrastructure Delivery Unit) and include Highway Maintenance and Parking Operations. Some aspects of scheme concept and design, and other Projects involve commissioning and delivery roles, and would require further consideration as to where they were placed in the new structure.

B) How are LTPs now intended to be judged?

There will still need to be some communication with the government but as the GOSE is being abolished, it is not clear yet how this arrangement will work. The South East Plan has also been abolished. It is anticipated that performance monitoring will be devolved directly to Authorities.

C) Can the LTP3 change for instance after an election?

Yes – the flexibility provided by government means that the LTP3 can be reviewed at a council's discretion, within existing democratic decision-making processes. Consultation is not mandatory but this is one reason why it is highly recommended.

D) With the aspiration to increase job opportunities locally and enable the transport network to accommodate these in the future, is there adequate data on existing commuting by rail?

Our current information is based on census and other travel/transport data that is shared by other transport operators. We are currently collecting more transport data to help build the council's new transport model, which will also help inform the development of the new LTP.

E) What will be the impact on the transport network with the advent of the South Downs National Park which covers between 30 – 40% of the area of Brighton & Hove?

The council will need to take full account of the NP designation within its LTP3 and ensure that access to it and within is improved. A National Park Management Plan will set out a long-term vision and a shorter-term action plan for how the objectives for a National Park should be fulfilled through sustainable development. It will set the framework for activities pursued within a National Park, including transport. Local transport authorities responsible for transport in National Parks and AONBs will want to consider how their LTP relates to these Plans.

F) The 'Equality of Opportunity' map seems to show levels of deprivation in some wards that could be misleading

The information presented was taken from existing mapping which it is acknowledged could be misleading. It is expected that this material will be reviewed to improve presentation.

G) How is the Noise Action Plan being progressed? Plus – would like to make clear that the impact of noise and air pollution refers to people, their quality of life and communities

The council's Environmental Health Team are taking the lead locally, but data is supplied by the government's DEFRA. It is expected that the approach to tackling noise sources and issues locally will mirror the way in which air quality is now managed.

H) What is the Bus Information Duty? Also, would like bus maps to be made more easily available, especially for visitors new to the area (especially at the Old Steine). (Some other cities thought to have more/better available bus leaflets/information)

Under the Transport Act 2000 (s139–141), local transport authorities have a duty to work with bus operators to determine what local bus information should be made available to the public, and the way in which it should be made available. It should include information about bus routes, timetabling of services, fares (including concessionary fares), facilities for disabled passengers, connections with other public transport services, and any other information the authority deems appropriate in relation to its area. As part of this process, the authority should consult with local user representatives and the traffic commissioner. Where appropriate, a local transport authority should work with other authorities to carry out this duty. The LTP could set out an authority's approach to meeting this duty.

It may be possible to provide bus maps on an information board near the Pavilion, as the listed shelters cannot accommodate information boards like new ones.

I) The city council has been named the Transport Local Authority of the Year 2010-2011 in the National Transport Awards. We should acknowledge this success has been achieved through delivering LTP2 and build on that.

Agreed. Fundamental changes to the overall approach to developing and delivering transport schemes are not anticipated, but some changes will be required to ensure that current local and government goals and priorities are taken into account and consultation will focus on those.

J) The Vision Statement should clarify that 'accessible' includes 'affordable' and make reference to economic implications.

Noted

K) What are the links with the Sustainable Community Strategy?

The government expects that LTP3s will reflect and be consistent with SCSs. A significant amount of work has been done with the LSP Transport Partnership in developing the Transport chapter of the SCS and the strategic framework for the LTP3, including a number of workshops.

L) The document should clarify that 'extreme occurrences' include severe weather, natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other emergencies

Agreed. The Plan should identify how it expects to address the challenge of making the city's transport network more resilient to different scenarios, taking into account people's safety security and health.

M) What do we know about commercial traffic – eg lorries bringing in goods from outside the area?

Some information is not up to date or is not available. We hope to have a new transport planning model in place by March 2011. We are about to embark on a significant programme of data collection that will help fill some of the gaps in our knowledge.

For the future, strategic planning policies as set out in the LDF Core Strategy will guide/determine where new commercial development goes. Servicing and delivery arrangements will be an integrated part of any proposals.

N) 'Tackling Climate Change' is a false aspiration implying that Brighton and Hove can do something that in fact we cannot achieve. Our goals need to be achievable or people will not take them seriously.

Alternative wording such as 'reducing carbon emissions' or other options can be included.

O) In referring to 'disadvantaged' people, the document should clarify that 'disadvantaged' extends to people with poor transport opportunities. Residents outside the central areas may have less access to public transport and therefore may tend to use their cars more.

Agreed - 'transport poverty' is a phrase often used to describe such circumstances. Households/people dependent on their car can become isolated if access to that vehicle is no longer available eg some older people. Bringing services closer to a local area can have a benefit by reducing travel requirements and transport planning can incorporate this. What is meant by 'disadvantaged' in this sense could be included in the supporting information to this objective.

P) There should be more dialogue with bus providers and communities regarding areas perceived as affluent and where bus services are limited or non-existent. Residents in some of these areas (eg Hangleton) may generally be older and/or non-car owners and would use a bus service if it were provided.

It is important to engage with communities and transport operators and other key partners but there are practical difficulties. For example, available locations for the new generation of combined GP practices may not be as accessible by public transport, walking and cycling as existing locations, for some people.

Q) Would like the Plan to include details of what is meant by personal safety and security and the distinction between them. Perhaps refer to fear or risk of personal injury and reducing vulnerability.

Noted.

R) Suggest the concept of 'Respect' for all transport users and 'sharing the road' is introduced in the plan and in publicity to encourage responsible behaviour by all; try to change attitudes and reputations.

Parking, excessive driver speed and cycling on the pavement not only breaks the law but is irresponsible. New Road is a good example of how a safer culture and changes in behaviour can be brought about by practical means but publicity is important too.

S) Some areas already have better access to the South Downs eg Hangleton benefits from two bridges. Some junctions need improvement partly due to the volume of cars but also to the road layout as they act as barriers to access; eg walking from the City to the South Downs via Ladies Mile Road junction over the A27.

Breeze up to the Downs bus services are good examples of existing initiatives to provide sustainable access to the South Down at Devil's Dyke and Ditchling Beacon.

T) The footpath to the Football Stadium should provide better access for pedestrians.

Most bridges over the A27 are the responsibility of the Highways Agency who could consider opportunities to improve this route in their investment plans.

U) For lorry deliveries would like to see single delivery reception area eg in the Sussex County Hospital redevelopment, all deliveries will go to a single building.

This type of facility does operate elsewhere and this type of consolidation can be developed eg through the proposed Freight Management Plan. Shoreham Harbour is the main source/destination for HGV movements in the city, in addition to supermarket and other retail outlets.

V) How can road space be prioritised for the more sustainable types of transport such as walking, cycles, taxis and buses?

To do this needs space, which is a challenge for a City like Brighton & Hove.

W) Could sea transport be used eg from Newhaven to Shoreham?

As the Highway Authority, the city council is responsible for roads and would therefore look to others for a sea-based system that could reduce demand on land-based transport. There are locations such as Shoreham Harbour, the Marina and Newhaven that could accommodate sea-borne traffic.

X) Journey-On website is a good way to plan travel. What is its usage rate and are the number of new users increasing? Will it continue? Also e-communications are improving all the time that could help reduce travel needs.

Journey On works well. It is another good example of a new development by the city council, especially the journey planner, and we hope is one that others will follow. It evolved from the city transport website and has been expanded to include for instance car park availability and use, real time bus information and bespoke journey planners. We are also targeting travel information at households or individuals, providing personalised travel planning have a growing workplace travel plan network and travel plans in every school. These are all important parts of the overall investment, combined with practical measures on the ground.

Usage of the site will be checked and information provided. TBC*

(*Journey On receives around 17,000 hits per month)

Y) Real-time bus information is very helpful. But there needs to be maps on all the bus stops. Other Cities have leaflets on buses more widely available. Bus information should link with city information and also integrated with train network. Better information boards are needed especially for visitors.

This could be done by the council in partnership with the bus operators. The council has recently been judged as having the highest satisfaction levels for public transport information in the country.

Z) Would like to see better ticketing arrangements between local buses, Network Rail and train operating companies

Plusbus is working well in the city and Brighton & Hove Buses is developing a Smart Card initiative.

AA) What is happening with Park and Ride?

The LDF Core Strategy refers to the need to provide 3-5 sites around the city. Investigation work, building on what has previously been researched, has been undertaken and the findings are under discussion.

AB) Some reinstated surfaces after road works seem to wear better than others eg during severe winter weather.

The council has clear processes to manage reinstatement and we control and supervise contractors' work on the public highway.

AC) What plans are there for complete surfacing rather than repair?

The TAMP will help inform this programme, but road conditions are monitored regularly and investment prioritised according. Parts of the A259 are high on the priority listing.

AD) What priority is there for investment in walking networks, regarding safety, running surfaces and surfaces for pushchairs and wheelchairs?

Footway conditions are monitored regularly and maintenance is coordinated. Pavement conditions can be badly affected by vehicle overrun. Verges can also be damaged and need to be maintained for safety of pedestrians. Pedestrian access can be hampered by obstructions. This relates back to the issue of responsible driving behaviour.

AE) I have heard the council provides tree stumps at a charge of £50 to prevent parking on verges.

This was not a familiar practice to those officers present. [It has subsequently been confirmed that this is correct].

AF) When will the National Indicator Set [NIS] be known?

The future of the NIS is under review by government. There are 3 transport-related indicators in the current BHCC LAA which ends in 2011. [On 14 October the Secretary of State for CLG announced the replacement of the NIS].

AG) How is it that some other Authorities are further ahead in their consultation programme on LTP3?

In BHCC, there has been positive engagement with the newly formed LSP Transport Partnership which has focused on developing the LTP3. Significant changes have occurred in government policy and organisational structures since the election in May 2010 and there have been requests nationally for the LTP process to be delayed. Some authorities have had to remodel their draft versions of LTPs because of the government policy changes. National funding levels, soon to be announced, will help remove some of the uncertainty involved in developing and finalising LTPs.

