The Cabinet

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REPORT

Cllr D Brown Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport

CONSULTATION ON THE SECOND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN – RESPONSE BY SALISBURY DISTRICT COUNCIL

1. **Purpose of the report**

    1.1 To recommend responses to Wiltshire County Council's current consultation on the second Local Transport Plan.

2. **Background**

    2.1 The current Local Transport Plan (LTP1) expires at the end of March 2006 and a new one (LTP2) must be put in its place. The County Council must submit a provisional version of LTP2 by the end of July 2005 and a final version by the end of March 2006.

    2.2 The County Council is currently carrying out a consultation exercise to inform the preparation of the provisional LTP2 and all members of the District Council have received a copy of the consultation document *Provisional Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2006/07 – 2010/11: Consultation Issues Paper – April 2005*. The consultation document sets out the context in which LTP2 must be prepared and seeks answers to specific questions about its potential priorities, objectives and content.

    2.3 In view of the close interest the District Council takes in transportation matters and the history of partnership working with the County Council over LTP1, particularly in respect of the implementation of the Salisbury Transportation Plan, it is important that the District Council should respond to the consultation exercise.

3. **Response to the Consultation Document**

    3.1 Suggested responses to the 16 specific questions posed by the consultation document are set out in Appendix 1.

4. **The Implications of LTP2 for Salisbury District**

    4.1 LTP2 will be substantially different from LTP1. Whereas LTP1 involved the reasonably straightforward identification of transport problems and the making of bids for funding to pay for solutions, LTP2 is about regarding transportation as an integral part of a wider agenda. In the Government's terms, improvements and innovation in local transportation should be seen as mechanisms in the delivery of sustainable improvements in economic performance, social inclusion and a better quality of life.

Improvements to local transportation are no longer to be viewed as ends in their own right.

4.2 Most of the funding to be made available to the County Council under LTP2 will be calculated on the basis of pre-determined formulae. Some additional funding will be allocated for the quality of the submission and its proposals, but the amount of money will be very modest. Indeed, for Salisbury and its district one of the key differences between LTP1 and LTP2 will be the significantly lower level of funding that is made available. Over its 5 year term, LTP1 will have delivered an average of nearly £5 million a year to the Salisbury urban area in the form of capital funding for the non-road elements of the Salisbury Transportation Plan. In contrast, only about £4 million has been available for the remainder of the County. Under LTP2, perhaps £4 - £5 million will be available to be shared within the whole County, including Salisbury District.

4.3 Under LTP1, investing large sums of money in major projects – park and ride and the Intelligent Transport System, for example – was accepted as a response to local traffic problems. Under LTP2 this is expressly ruled out, the Government advising local authorities to "make best use of existing infrastructure" and to "avoid focussing on capital investment at the expense of other innovative solutions". Moreover, "the targets that authorities set in their plans should be on the basis of <u>no new major schemes beyond those currently provisionally or fully approved</u>" (the Government's emphasis). In response, the Wiltshire County Council Cabinet resolved on 19th November 2004 that the County Council should not incorporate bids for any additional major road schemes as part of the LTP2 submission. This position would allow the Brunel Link/Harnham Relief Road to proceed, but could prevent, say, the substantial improvement of Southampton Road in the next five years.

4.4 Instead, the Government's advice is now to regard transportation as an integral part of a wider agenda. In this light, this Council's future programme for transportation improvements will have significantly stronger linkages with community planning, the proposed vision for Salisbury and the development of the Local Development Framework. Salisbury's role in a regional and sub-regional context and the economic vitality of the city and the district will also be more important influences on the transportation agenda.

4.5 The consequence of this new attitude will be the requirement of a more holistic approach and a focus on how improvements in transportation could achieve positive outcomes across the whole of the District Council's own corporate agenda and those of its partner organisations. Transport is, for example, one of the priorities identified by the Strategic Alliance. Changes to the role, staffing and operation of the Salisbury Joint Transportation Team, recently agreed by the District Council, anticipate the integration of transportation into a wider agenda and no further revisions to the joint working arrangements are likely to be needed in the short to medium-term.

5. **Additional Responses to Wiltshire County Council**

5.1 In addition to the suggested answers to the specific questions raised in the consultation document, what other comments would it be appropriate to convey to the County Council? Perhaps the most important would be to suggest that the current Salisbury Transportation Plan should not be abandoned because the funding is about to be reduced substantially. Some funding from the present LTP – for the Petersfinger park and ride development – is ring-fenced for expenditure after March

2006, but that is all. Clearly the Salisbury Transport Plan will need to be reviewed and redrafted to take account of the new financial situation (this needs to be done in any event), but it will not be possible to simply stop dead. The current Salisbury Transportation Plan rests heavily on the manipulation of parking controls to achieve demand management. To continue to be successful in addressing the inexorable increase in traffic, and to safeguard the revenue position, it will be necessary to extend parking controls into new residential areas and funding will be required. The ability to provide additional capacity at key park and ride sites, such as the Beehive, should also be safeguarded. Some other areas that have been relatively neglected in recent years, such as provision for cycling and walking, also require attention.

5.2   From discussion with members, it is clear that much of the Government's emphasis on the need to integrate transport into a wider social and economic agenda will be supported. There is a need to enhance rural transport, particularly for younger age groups, in order to improve access to shops, education and other services. Within Salisbury and the larger settlements, there is likely to be increasing pressure to create traffic calmed or traffic free residential environments, requiring not only physical measures, but also the application of new Traffic Regulation Orders. The school run is already the subject of much debate and finding a 'solution' to this major contributor to morning peak hour congestion will continue to be the focus of attention.

5.3   Finally, the problems not solved by the Salisbury Transport Plan – congestion on the A36 Southampton Road and the plight of residents living on the A36 through the Wylye Valley – will remain a priority. Whilst funding for major schemes to address these problems may not be available for the foreseeable future, the Government's guidance acknowledges that scheme development will continue for possible submission at a later date. The abandonment of the Wylye Valley Relief Road, in particular, prompts the need to look for alternative solutions.

7.   Recommendation

7.1   It is recommended that:

(a)   the suggested responses to the specific questions asked in the document *Provisional Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2006/07 – 2010/11: Consultation Issues Paper – April 2005* set out in Appendix 1 to this report be endorsed;

(b)   in addition, Wiltshire County Council be requested to take account of the need to include within its provisional Local Transport Plan the following matters –

- the maintenance and continued development of the Salisbury Transport Plan. Measures such as the creation of additional residents' parking zones and other parking restrictions, the expansion of park and ride sites and improved cycling and walking facilities are likely to be required;
- the improvement of rural transport;
- traffic reduction in sensitive parts of Salisbury and the larger settlements of the district;
- reducing traffic associated with the school run;
- the improvement of A36 Southampton Road; and
- providing alternative measures to improve traffic and environmental conditions and safety on the A36 through the Wylye Valley villages.

8. **Implications:**

- **Financial**   **:** None in relation to this report.

- **Legal**   : None in relation to this report.

- **Human Rights**   **:** None in relation to this report.

- **Personnel**   **:** None in relation to this report.

- **Community Safety** **:** None in relation to this report.

- **Environmental**   **:** None in relation to this report.

- **Council's Core Values** : Excellent service, Thriving economy, Protecting the environment.

- **Wards Affected**   **:** All

SUGGESTED RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS ASKED IN THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT *PROVISIONAL WILTSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2006/07 – 2010/11: CONSULTATION ISSUES PAPER – APRIL 2005.*

Question 1: *Which of the four transport shared priorities:*

- *Tackling congestion*
- *Delivering accessibility*
- *Safer roads*
- *Better air quality*

do you consider the most important? And the least important?

All of these priorities are inter-linked and it is very difficult to choose amongst them. If it is necessary to choose one as the most important it should be delivering accessibility, as this holds a key to social inclusion. It is not possible to select the least important priority.

Question 2: The document sets out a series of objectives relevant to transport drawn from various national, regional and local plans and strategies. Question 2 asks, *Do these objectives adequately cover all the key aspects that you would like to see the Wiltshire LTP address? Which objectives do you feel are missing?*

The objectives appear to set out a comprehensive framework for the new LTP.

Question 3: The document briefly describes current problems and opportunities affecting transport, as well as a review of progress made in addressing transport issues. Question 3 asks, *Do you agree that the problems and opportunities outlined above broadly reflect the situation in Wiltshire? What other significant problems and opportunities are there? What are your top four transport priorities?*

The future economic viability of Salisbury will depend upon the adequacy of local transportation infrastructure. Problems are already being experienced with the Churchfields Industrial Estate. Adequate investment in roads and other infrastructure will be essential. The top four priorities were dealt with in response to Question 1.

Question 4: The document contains a table that compares the current LTP1 strategy with that proposed for LTP2. Question 4 asks, *Are the LTP1 investment priorities still relevant? Which, if any, would you change? Are there other issues which should be included?*

The LTP1 investment priorities remain relevant and comprehensive.

Question 5: *What, if any, additional revisions would you make to the LTP2 Core Strategy Components? Have other important aspects been missed? Are the contributions to the shared priorities correct?*

No additions are proposed. The contributions to the shared priorities appear correct.

Question 6: *Which of the four accessibility planning areas (jobs, health care, learning and food shops) should have the highest priority? What particular accessibility problems are you aware of in Wiltshire related to the above four areas? Are there other areas which should also be considered?*

It is not possible to prioritise as each of the areas is important and priorities will vary according to place and circumstance. Accessibility issues are particularly acute in the rural parts of Salisbury district.

Question 7: The document sets out two aims and four objectives for public transport. Question 7 asks, *Do you agree with these objectives? Do they adequately reflect the contribution that public transport should make towards meeting the aims of the Council's wider transport strategy?*

The objectives are agreed. They appear to reflect adequately the contribution that public transport should make towards meeting the aims of the Council's wider transport strategy.

Question 8: The document describes a public transport strategy based around a range of activities that are applicable to a greater or lesser extent in differing geographical areas. Question 8 asks, *Do you agree with the public transport strategy and the priorities it sets? Are there any other elements that you think should be included?*

The public transport strategy appears realistic and is agreed. There are no other elements that should be included.

Question 9: *The Road Safety Strategy covers Education, Enforcement and Engineering. Which do you consider is the most effective in improving the safety of Wiltshire's roads and the least effective?*

Without access to road safety data it is difficult to answer this question. Speed and driver behaviour are the key causes of traffic accidents and so education and enforcement might perhaps be the most effective means of addressing the issue. Anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that this is not the case, however.

Question 10: *Is there more that the County Council could do as part of an air quality strategy to reduce transport related emissions?*

Recent reductions in transport emissions resulting from the development of more efficient engines are now being jeopardised by the production of bigger and more luxurious vehicles. Most car buyers are either unaware or uncaring about the impact of their vehicles on the environment. The County Council could perhaps consider the use of publicity to inform motorists about the pollution caused by their vehicles.

Question 11: *Do you think congestion is a problem in Wiltshire? If you think that it is a problem, where is the worst congestion and when does it occur? What measures do you favour to tackle the congestion you experience?*

Congestion is relative and it is the case that the experience in Wiltshire is significantly less than in some of the major conurbations, for example. However, there is a congestion problem in and around Salisbury. This is mainly concentrated in the weekday morning and evening peak periods, but is becoming increasingly common at weekends and during holiday periods. Short of major road construction to move traffic away from the city, the continued development of measures contained in the Salisbury Transport Plan must be a priority. The school run is also a major contributor to morning peak hour problems and improved and cheaper public transport and the encouragement of walking and cycling should be priorities.

Question 12: The document lists seven "other quality of life issues" and asks, *Which of the Other Quality of Life Issues are important to you? Are there others that we should also consider?*

All of the issues are important. The intrusion of traffic into public areas or private environments has an unsettling effect upon people so that 'comfort and a sense of personal wellbeing' could be added to the list.

Question 13: *Are there any changes we could make to highways maintenance in order to improve road safety?*

In the normal course of events, highway defects can have a disproportionate impact on walkers and cyclists. Improved attention to footway irregularities and small potholes could reduce the distress and injuries suffered by members of these groups.

Question 14: *What more can be done to promote cycling and walking?*

Better education about the health and environmental benefits of cycling and walking. Better, segregated facilities and restricting motor vehicles from using minor routes, particularly those designated as, for example, part of the Wiltshire Cycleway.

Question 15: The document describes work done by the Freight Quality Partnership in progressing 10 Wiltshire Freight Strategy policies. Question 15 asks, *Do any of the Freight Strategy policies need to be revised? If so, what revisions should be made? What other policies should be considered?*

The policies of the Freight Strategy appear to be an adequate response to the problems caused by heavy goods vehicles.

Question 16: *What can be done to encourage a greater take up of voluntary travel plans? How much emphasis should be placed on 'smarter choices' in the second Wiltshire LTP? Which 'smarter choice' measures should we concentrate on?*

Travel planning is only likely to be effective when combined with other measures that have an effect upon driver behaviour. Salisbury District Council has recently offered to work with business interests in Salisbury to try and mitigate the impact of planned increases in long-stay parking charges on their employees. In doing so, the Council will be seeking a commitment to the development of travel plans within the organisations concerned. It is hoped that this comprehensive approach will be more effective in reducing traffic than would the implementation of individual measures in isolation.