

# Cabinet

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## REPORT

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Cllr D Brown Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport

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### The Future of the Salisbury Joint Transportation Team

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The report recommends that the Salisbury Joint Transportation Team (SJTT) should continue beyond the end of the current Local Transport Plan (LTP) period in 2006 and suggests what its role should be. The Salisbury Joint Transportation Committee and the Cabinets of both SDC and WCC will consider the report.
2. Salisbury is unusual in having a joint team of County (7) and District (3) officers, whose main role is the implementation of the Salisbury Transportation Plan (STP). The Salisbury Joint Transportation Committee manages the work of the team. Changes within the team and the end of the current Local Transport Plan period in March 2006 prompt consideration of the future of the SJTT.
3. The report suggests that the SJTT should be kept in place, for the following reasons:
  - Transportation will continue to be a key local political priority;
  - The immediate response of a locally based team to transportation issues is beneficial to residents and politicians alike;
  - The SJTT has an unusually diverse range of expertise and is regarded as a centre of excellence;
  - The SJTT has particular skills in engaging with the public and key local interest groups;
  - The officer team and joint Committee are tangible examples of successful partnership working;
  - Having embarked on the STP, it will not now be possible to 'turn it off'. The revenue commitment of SDC to park and ride and other components of the STP will require the continued, active involvement of WCC in on-street parking demand management;
  - S106 developer contributions, achieved through SDC's development control process, will become increasingly significant to WCC's capital funding of transportation schemes.
4. The SJTT would be likely to have a different role in the future. Its remit would have a wider geographical spread and would include tasks currently undertaken from County Hall. Basing services locally would have advantages in terms of familiarity with local conditions, speed of response and accessibility to decision makers. Cost savings would be possible. A table of potential tasks is included in the report.
5. A further report is proposed on the financial implications. It is recommended that the Cabinet approves in principle the continued existence of the Salisbury Joint Transportation Team, subject to the consideration of a further report on the financial implications.

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## **The Future of the Salisbury Joint Transportation Team**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend that the Salisbury Joint Transportation Team (SJTT) should continue beyond the end of the current Local Transport Plan (LTP) period in 2006 and to suggest what its role should be.

### **2. Process**

- 2.1 This report was presented to the Salisbury Transportation Plan Joint Committee and its recommendations were approved in principle. The report will also be presented to the Cabinets of both Salisbury District Council and Wiltshire County Council. If approval is given in principle, further reports will then be prepared on the detailed financial implications of the proposed changes.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 Joint working between Salisbury District Council (SDC) and Wiltshire County Council (WCC) on transportation matters began in the mid 1990s in response to the findings of three earlier consultants' studies and increasing public concern about the growth in traffic in the city. Early attention was focussed on traffic management and improving the environment for shoppers and other city centre pedestrians. A programme of enhancement work was implemented over a number of years, largely funded by the District Council. Schemes included the pedestrianisation and enhancement of Queen Street and High Street and enhancement works in the Market Place.
- 3.2 To facilitate its involvement, the District Council employed its first transportation planner, who produced a transportation plan for Salisbury. This document advanced the need to constrain the use of the private motor car and invest in alternatives such as public transport, walking and cycling. There was close liaison with County officers and together they reported to a joint working group of District and County members. This group was without executive powers and recommendations were made to parent committees at both authorities.
- 3.3 In 1997, the new Labour government cancelled proposals to build an A36 bypass of Salisbury and instead established a multi-modal study of Salisbury's traffic problem. The study was overseen by a working group comprising officers from SDC, WCC, Government Office for the South-West (GOSW) and the Highways Agency. The outcome was the Salisbury Transportation Plan.

3.4 Early implementation of measures arising first out of SDC's original transportation plan and later the Salisbury Transportation Plan was funded by the District and County Councils, with the lion's share being met by SDC. Submissions to government for Local Transport Plan funding were made in 1998 and 1999 when small amounts of money were released. However, it was not until the completion and adoption of the Salisbury Transport Plan that a significant amount of funding was made available. In December 2000 the Government confirmed that £13.7 million was to be made available over a period of 5 years for the implementation of the non-road elements of the plan was released, with the Harnham Relief Road and Brunel Link Road provisionally accepted for funding. Following lengthy negotiations, in early 2004 a further £8.228 million was released. The money was intended to fund the major elements of the transportation plan, mainly the implementation of four more park and ride sites, and the government made it clear that no additional funding would be made available for the current Salisbury Transport Plan.

3.5 The Local Transport Plan extends to the end of 2005/2006, although the implementation of one park and ride site is scheduled to take place later. The implementation of further measures (possible improvements to Southampton Road, for example) would require new capital funding from government. Revenue funding for transportation measures (notably park and ride) comes from the District Council's car parking account.

#### **4. The Salisbury Joint Transportation Team**

4.1 The present joint SDC/WCC transportation team was created in 2001. Its size, composition and the range of expertise now within it reflect the scale, scope and complexity of the diverse projects with which it deals. The team has ten members, three from the District Council and seven from the County. The team leader is a District Council employee, although this post is currently vacant.

4.2 The work of the SJTT is managed by the Salisbury Transportation Plan Joint Committee. Unlike earlier arrangements, this committee has full executive powers to make decisions affecting the Salisbury Transport Plan. The committee has twelve members and a rotating chairmanship that passes between the two authorities on an annual basis.

#### **5. The Future**

5.1 The end of the current LTP 5 year period in March 2006, and the recent departure of the team leader, prompt consideration of the future of the SJTT. More fundamentally, it will soon be necessary for the two Councils to determine what should be the scope and nature of transportation planning and implementation in Salisbury District in the future and how this can be best delivered. Whilst the County Council is the highway authority and has no statutory need to continue the current joint working arrangements, there are factors that suggest that a continuation of some form of joint working would have advantages for both Councils.

5.2 For both Councils, transportation will continue to be one of the highest political priorities. The SJTT provides a local focus for resolving transportation problems and it is one with which the public increasingly identifies. Without it, dealing with, for example, future parking problems at St Osmond's School, rat running through Quidhampton or traffic issues on Bemerton Heath would be a lot more difficult to resolve. The immediate response of a locally based team has obvious advantages for residents and politicians alike.

5.3 The SJTT has built up an unusually diverse range of expertise and is now regarded as a centre of excellence in many areas. This expertise relates to technical issues such as major scheme implementation (park and ride) and the innovative use of IT technology (ITS) and

has been disseminated to a wider audience through conference presentations and visits to Salisbury by representatives of other local authorities. In the eyes of GOSW it is a 'demonstration project' and whilst this is beneficial, particularly for WCC, it also represents a need for on-going commitment.

- 5.4 More importantly, perhaps, the SJTT has also developed considerable skills in the 'softer' areas of relationship building and communication with the general public and particular user groups. Much of the success of potentially unpopular innovations like Decriminalised Parking Enforcement has been due to the patient and sensitive work undertaken by the SJTT in informing and consulting with initially hostile individuals and groups. Thus, the team has worked with city centre businesses over changes to parking in general and specifically the introduction of on-street charges. It has liaised with residents' groups and arrived at acceptable solutions to their parking problems (including the introduction of charges!) and it has held lengthy discussions with groups representing disabled drivers and reached agreement on wide-ranging changes to disabled parking provision in the city. These and other successes would not have been possible without the consultation skills that have been developed in the SJTT and are not likely to have been as successful if conducted by officers based elsewhere in the County.
- 5.5 In many ways, this amalgam of skills results from the combination of officers drawn from diverse District and County Council backgrounds, as their technical expertise and awareness of customer needs inevitably varies. The success of the SJTT has been largely due to the positive interaction of individual team members to produce desired outcomes. It is one of the very few examples of partnership working that has a tangible track record and it is a model for other partnership initiatives to follow.
- 5.6 Although the current LTP period ends in 2006, the transportation 'issue' will not disappear at the same time. Despite attempts through the Salisbury Transport Plan to reduce the growth in traffic, vehicle use will continue to rise in the future, with associated problems of congestion, air pollution and reduction in environmental quality. Specific hotspots, like Southampton Road, will need to be addressed. To meet public expectations, the two authorities will need to respond to new problems with new initiatives.
- 5.7 Moreover, having embarked on the Salisbury Transport Plan, it will not be possible to simply 'turn it off'. The transport plan is a combination of capital schemes and the on-going management of car parking, be it in car parks, on-street or at park and ride sites. By 2006 the District Council will be left in charge of 3 or possibly 4 park and ride sites. Its annual revenue commitment to these projects will be around £1 million. The scale of this commitment alone suggests the need for an agreement by both authorities to a continuation of joint working.
- 5.8 The District Council will need to operate the park and ride sites in a cost effective and efficient manner and to do so will require further extensions of demand management measures, such as residents' parking zones. This need will grow as car parking charges are increased. Whilst further price rises will be needed to pay for park and ride and other measures, they will tend to encourage more and more motorists to try to avoid parking in a charged space. Control over parking demand is essential to the District Council's future revenue stream. It will also underpin the Council's ability to release city centre car parks for alternative development. The continuation of some form of joint working on transportation matters, or at least the District Council's ability to influence the transportation agenda in a meaningful way, is therefore vital. An inability to be effective in this area would not only threaten the District Council's revenue position, but could undermine its potential capital position as well. The future regeneration of the city centre and the credibility of the District Council could be at stake.

- 5.9 The District Council therefore needs the on-going commitment of the County Council to implement measures as required. This commitment will also extend to financial (capital) support as well, albeit at much lower levels than at present. The financial equation cuts both ways, however, as an increasing proportion of funding available for capital projects will come from developers' S106 contributions. These are controlled by the District Council, but will assist the County Council considerably in fulfilling its capital programme. With suitable changes being made to planning policy in early versions of the District Council's new Local Development Framework, developer contributions to transportation could become a major source of funding.

## **6. The future role of the SJTT**

- 6.1 The activities of the team (and the number and type of team members required) would be bound to change in response to lower levels of funding and the possible absence of major new projects. On the other hand, it would also be desirable for the team to have a more district-wide remit, rather than concentrating on Salisbury and Wilton, as at present, and, perhaps, to take on new roles. From the County Council's perspective, there is an increasing recognition that tasks currently performed from County Hall would be better undertaken at the local level. For example, the movement of specialist officers from Trowbridge to Salisbury would allow highway development control advice to the SDC Planning Office to be provided locally. There would be considerable advantages in such a development in terms of familiarity with local conditions and policy, speed of response and accessibility to decision makers. The overall cost of the service could also be reduced.
- 6.2 With these considerations in mind, a list of potential tasks to be carried out in the future by the SJTT is set out in Table 1.
- 6.3 The list implies potentially different working arrangements and a changed structure within the SJTT. Staff responsible for some of the roles could, for example, report to different managers at County Hall. However, all of the roles mentioned could be sustainable in the long-term if SDC and WCC financial support for transportation in Salisbury District were maintained. As mentioned above, it would also be important to ensure that developers' S106 contributions were optimised. This would provide on-going financial support to the work of the SJTT, and would also serve to legitimise SDC's continued involvement in transportation planning and scheme delivery.
- 6.4 It would be necessary to use SJTT resources more flexibly and to consider whether and how SDC staff could be used on county-wide projects. Nevertheless, the SJTT has shown that it can be adaptable in the face of new challenges and there has, to date, been a political willingness to break down demarcation barriers and work in partnership. The effectiveness of the present team owes much to the balance of planning and highway engineering skills within its ranks. To date, all of the District Council staff within the team have been planners and they have added significantly to the breadth of capability within the team.

**TABLE 1: POSSIBLE FUTURE ROLES FOR THE SJTT**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Current responsibility</b>	<b>Proposed responsibility</b>
<b>Transportation planning</b>		
Monitoring of STP	WCC	SJTT
Marketing of STP	Not done	SJTT
Writing of APRs	WCC	SJTT
Preparation of LTP submission (Salisbury component)	WCC	SJTT
Strategy development and review	SJTT	SJTT
Input to LDFs	SJTT/WCC	SJTT
<b>Scheme Implementation</b>		
STP funded schemes	SJTT/WCC	SJTT/WCC
Local traffic management	SJTT/WCC	SJTT
Traffic Orders (legal process)	WCC	WCC
Cycling/walking in STP area	SJTT	SJTT
Cycling/walking outside STP area	WCC	SJTT
Bus priority in STP area	SJTT	SJTT
Bus priority outside STP area	Not done	SJTT
Park and ride	SJTT/WCC	SJTT/WCC
Demand management	SJTT/WCC	SJTT
Southampton Road	WCC	SJTT/WCC
City centre enhancement	SJTT	SJTT
<b>Working with partners and the community</b>	SJTT	SJTT
<b>Cycle Liaison Panel</b>	SJTT	SJTT
<b>Walking Forum</b>	SJTT	SJTT
<b>Disabled access and parking</b>	SJTT	SJTT
<b>Bus Quality Partnership</b>	WCC/SDC	WCC/SDC
<b>Freight Quality Partnership</b>	WCC/SDC	WCC/SDC
<b>Development Control</b>		
Regarding STP	SJTT	SJTT
SDC transport advice on planning applications	SJTT	SJTT
WCC transport advice on planning applications	WCC	SJTT

<b>Travel Advice</b>		
Workplace travel plans	WCC	SJTT
School travel plans	WCC	WCC
<b>ITS Matters</b>		
UTC management	WCC	WCC (within SJTT)
RTPI development	WCC	SJTT
RTIG participation	SJTT	SJTT
AIM User Group	SJTT	SJTT
<b>District-wide responsibilities</b>		
Community planning	WCC	SJTT
Traffic management	WCC/SJTT	SJTT
Accessibility improvements	WCC/SJTT	WCC/SJTT
Road safety	WCC	WCC/ SJTT

## 7. Financial implications

- 7.1 In the recommendation that follows, Members are invited to approve in principle the continued existence of the SJTT. Changes in the cost profile of the team (both positive and negative) would be likely to arise and a second report on the financial implications will be prepared if approval in principle is given. In particular, it might be the case that additional costs would accrue to SDC, where enhanced level of service resulted in task areas currently performed by WCC.

## 8. Conclusion

- 8.1 In summary, there will be an on-going need for both Councils to meet public expectation and continue with a programme of local transportation measures. Whilst the relationship between the two authorities may need adjustment to take account of changing circumstances, it will remain one where mutual support will be required and where mutual benefit can be derived. Focussing this commitment on a locally based team of officers drawn from both Councils and reporting to a joint committee has a favourable track record and there appears little reason to make fundamental changes to the current arrangements.
- 8.2 There also appears to be the potential to build upon the current arrangements and expand the team's activities into the rest of south Wiltshire and to undertake functions locally that are currently conducted from Trowbridge. The transfer of some tasks to the SJTT could result in the provision of an enhanced level of service, compared both to the current situation and to the experience in other Districts. In this situation it might be appropriate for SDC to contribute to the cost of providing the service. If the principle of continuing with the SJTT is accepted, a further report will be presented, quantifying and seeking agreement to any transfer of costs.

## 9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended
- (a) that the Cabinet approves in principle the continued existence of the Salisbury Joint Transportation Team after the completion of the current Local Transport Plan programme, with the amended remit as set out in Table I of this report;

- (b) that this decision is subject to the consideration of a further report on the financial implications of the proposals.

10. **Implications:**

- **Financial** : None at this stage. If the recommendation made in this report is approved, a further report on the financial implications will be submitted.
- **Legal** : The recommendations made in this report would require a change to the terms of reference of the Salisbury Transportation Plan Joint Committee.
- **Human Rights** : None at this stage.
- **Personnel** : None at this stage.
- **Community Safety**: None at this stage.
- **Environmental** : None at this stage.

11. **Council's Core Values:** Providing excellent service; Promoting a thriving economy; Being environmentally conscientious; Wanting to be an open, learning Council and a willing partner.

12. **Wards Affected:** All.