

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING & THE
ECONOMY CABINET PANEL
THURSDAY, 5 JULY 2018 AT 10:00AM**

Agenda Item No.

10

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT SOUTH WEST HERTS
GROWTH & TRANSPORT PLAN**

Report of the Chief Executive

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Executive Member: Derrick Ashley, Growth, Infrastructure, Planning and the Economy

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To present the Draft South West Herts Growth & Transport Plan and conclusions of the supporting Strategic Environmental Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment to the Cabinet Panel for consideration.

2. Summary

2.1 The South West Herts Growth & Transport Plan (SWH GTP) is the first of a new suite of spatial transport strategies being developed for areas in Hertfordshire. The Growth & Transport Plans propose objectives and packages of transport interventions that seek to support economic growth, housing and jobs whilst promoting quality of life and environmental objectives. The Growth & Transport Plans translate Local Transport Plan policy to local areas, and are driven by evidence and an understanding of the main challenges for transport and growth within the plan area.

2.2 The SWH GTP mainly covers Hemel Hempstead and Watford, and their interactions with St Albans and other settlements including Rickmansworth, Harpenden, Luton and Bushey.

2.3 The plan itself consists of a portfolio of documents. The main Prospectus document presents the proposed packages of schemes and projects, along with a summary of the plan objectives, challenges and process, and scheme appraisal matrices as appendices. A number of supporting papers and Evidence Packs for Hemel Hempstead, St Albans and the Watford Area comprise the rest of the portfolio. The Draft Prospectus is available on the HCC Collaboration

pages¹ and two paper copies are available in the Members' Lounge for reference. A Consultation Summary is included as Appendix A.

- 2.4 The SWH GTP has been developed by Hertfordshire County Council supported by AECOM and in partnership with the district and borough councils (Dacorum, Watford, Three Rivers, St Albans and Hertsmere). Workshops have been held during the development process with the local County Councillors, relevant Executive Members and district council Portfolio Holders for Planning and Transport to inform the SWH GTP. The plan has also been presented at the Highway Liaison Meetings in Three Rivers, Watford and Dacorum.
- 2.5 The SWH GTP began development in 2016 and had been developed based on the presumption that the Metropolitan Line Extension (MLX) would be delivered as planned. However as a result of uncertainties due to funding and risk management arising in relation to that project in late 2017, the development and consultation on the plan was put on hold. Further to discussion with the Local Planning Authorities and the ongoing development of Local Plans, it was agreed the SWH GTP should be amended to reflect the current uncertainties in relation to MLX and go to public consultation to enable an up-to-date transport strategy to be in place to support the process.
- 2.6 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken of the SWH GTP. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is underway and due to be completed imminently. The EqIA Report and SEA Report will be included alongside the draft SWH GTP documents for public consultation.
- 2.7 The draft SWH GTP is now ready to go to public consultation. A draft Consultation Communications Strategy has been produced and is presented as Appendix B. An eight-week public consultation is planned from mid-July to mid-September
- 2.8 The views of stakeholders and the public and the findings of the SEA and EqIA will be taken into account in the finalisation of the SWH GTP. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, it is planned to bring for consideration by this Cabinet Panel a final SWH GTP for adoption by Cabinet Autumn 2018.
- 2.9 It is proposed that historic Urban Transport Plans and Area Transport Plans within the area covered by the SWH GTP will be superseded on its adoption. This includes:
 - South West Herts Transport Plan 2008
 - West Herts Transport Plan 2007
 - Hemel Hempstead Urban Transport Plan 2009

¹ [https://hertscc365.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/Sites/intranet-DraftSouthWestHertsGrowthTransportPlan/Shared%20Documents/SWH%20GTP%20Prospectus/South%20West%20Herts%20GTP%20-%20Prospectus%20\(June%202018\).pdf?csf=1](https://hertscc365.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/Sites/intranet-DraftSouthWestHertsGrowthTransportPlan/Shared%20Documents/SWH%20GTP%20Prospectus/South%20West%20Herts%20GTP%20-%20Prospectus%20(June%202018).pdf?csf=1)

- 2.10 The objectives and overall direction of the draft SWH GTP do not depart significantly from those of the South West Herts Transport Plan 2008, the West Herts Transport Plan 2007 or the Hemel Hempstead Urban Transport Plan 2009. However the draft SWH GTP focuses at a more strategic level, takes a different approach to understanding the underlying causes of transport issues and proposes packages of complementary schemes more than localised interventions, recognising the particular challenges of planned growth in this part of the county.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That the Cabinet Panel considers the draft South West Herts Growth & Transport Plan Prospectus, the draft South West Herts Growth & Transport Plan Consultation Summary (Appendix A), the draft Consultation Communication Strategy (Appendix B) and Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix C).
- 3.2 The Cabinet Panel is invited to comment on the content of the draft SWH GTP Prospectus, the draft Consultation Summary and the draft Consultation Communication Strategy.
- 3.3 The Cabinet Panel is asked to note that it is intended to hold an eight-week public consultation on the South West Herts Growth & Transport Plan from mid-July 2018.

4. Background

- 4.1 The County Council has recently adopted a new Local Transport Plan, which sets the overarching transport policy for the county. The Local Transport Plan 4 sets foundations for a more balanced approach to transport in the county, with a new transport user hierarchy, enhanced public transport connectivity and a shift towards sustainable modes in the interest of a creating a more resilient transport network for the future.
- 4.2 The County as a whole is anticipating significant housing and employment growth over the coming decades, as per the districts' Local Plans. In the south-west of Hertfordshire², the current adopted local plans would see an estimated 32,000 new homes and 42,000 new jobs to 2031. All of the south-west Herts local planning authorities are at the early stages of their Local Plan reviews to 2036, and it is expected that even higher growth levels will result.
- 4.3 In the past Urban Transport Plans have been developed for individual towns or particular urban areas, mainly proposing relatively local, small-scale improvements to the highway network. However this approach

² Watford Borough, Three Rivers District, Dacorum Borough, Hertsmere Borough and St Albans City & District.

does not allow for a strategic approach or consideration of wider challenges for transport across areas which see high levels of movement and predominant travel demand patterns. A new approach to spatial transport planning is justified to better respond to and support the County and districts' growth objectives, and recognising the new direction of Local Transport Plan 4 and wider County Council policy framework.

- 4.4 The SWH GTP is ambitious and is intended to work alongside the districts' Local Plans to establish a plan for transport infrastructure improvements at key locations and corridors. The SWH GTP is seen as a tool to support bids for external funding and to guide liaison and dialogue with transport partners including Highways England and Network Rail, which would be prerequisite for the delivery of some of the schemes proposed.

5. The SWH GTP main proposals

- 5.1 The plan sets the following objectives:

- A) Support sustainable economic growth and regeneration in South West Hertfordshire by improving connectivity, primarily for walking, cycling and passenger transport
- B) Ensure new infrastructure and streets are resilient to changing environmental conditions
- C) Improve accessibility and network resilience, by providing a greater choice of attractive, integrated alternatives to the private car
- D) Improve public health and quality of life, through encouraging and enabling active travel and reducing transport-generated air and noise pollution
- E) Encourage vibrant communities by integrating streets, enhancing walking and cycling networks and improving the natural and built environment
- F) Improve safety and perception of safety and security risks by providing high quality and safe facilities for walking, cycling and PT users.
- G) Seek to reduce transport related emissions by embracing new technologies and encouraging sustainable travel modes

- 5.2 These objectives encompass a variety of topics and desired outcomes that are pertinent to the Local Transport Plan, Local Plans and the County Council's corporate policy framework:

- Improved connectivity between places
- Increased modal choice – more attractive alternatives to the car
- Enhanced accessibility to key locations
- Reduced congestion

- Reduced air pollution
- An increased sense of place
- Improved quality of life
- Improved health

5.3 The draft SWH GTP proposes 9 Packages comprising multiple interventions, including some more significant schemes and smaller scale projects focusing on particular locations. Different potential approaches are presented for some of the scheme concepts, generally with a preferred approach indicated based on the performance of the approach relative to the plan’s objectives. It is envisaged that the maximum benefit sought by the SWH GTP will be achieved only if all of the interventions within a Package are implemented. The packages of schemes and projects are summarised in Table 1 and further detail is available in section 6 of the SWH GTP Prospectus and in the Consultation Summary (Appendix A).

Table 1. Summary of SWH GTP scheme Packages

Package 1 – Hemel Hempstead East-West Corridor	
Aim	To form an east-west, cross-town, multi-modal corridor which facilitates attractive and convenient journeys on foot, by bike, by bus and also by car between Hemel Hempstead railway station, the Town Centre, Jarman Park and Maylands industrial area.
Main aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the A414 into a public transport and cycling/walking corridor, improving both connectivity along and across the key route. • Improving access to the M1 through the provision of an additional junction and enhancements to Hemel’s existing junction. • The reorganisation of road space in the Apsley/Two Waters area to facilitate an improved streetscape
Package 2 – Maylands (Hemel Hempstead)	
Aim	To provide improved access to the Maylands industrial area from both within Hemel Hempstead and outside of the town by all modes of transport.
Main aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of an East Hemel Hempstead Multi-modal Transport Interchange serving the Maylands and Enterprise Zone developments. • Improving access to the M1 through the provision of an additional junction and enhancements to Hemel’s existing junction. • A new spine road serving East Hemel Hempstead urban extension and Maylands alongside a series of cycling improvements to improve connectivity across the proposed developments.
Package 3 – Hemel Hempstead-Luton Corridor	
Aim	To improve connectivity between Hemel Hempstead and Luton by car and by public transport and limit the impact of rat-running traffic on roads within Harpenden and nearby country lanes.
Main aspects	• The introduction of an East Hemel Hempstead Multi-modal Transport Interchange serving the Maylands and Enterprise Zone

	<p>developments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving access to the M1 through the provision of an additional junction and enhancements to Hemel's existing junction. • Enhanced bus and coach services between Luton and Maylands/Hemel Hempstead alongside streetscape and sustainable transport improvements in Harpenden.
Package 4 – St Albans-Watford Corridor	
Aim	To maximise the potential of the existing Abbey Line as a rail route by enhancing onward connections into St Albans City, and to transform the parallel A405 into a multi-modal road by diverting strategic traffic onto the motorway network, freeing up space for more local journeys by bus, bike or by car.
Main aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of a new St Albans South Public Transport Hub, including a new station on the Abbey Line, direct bus services to St Albans City Station, and a transfer point between local and interurban buses. • Additional slips at M25 J21 to allow all movements between the M25 and M1, and streetscape improvements along the A405 at Bricket Wood. • Enhanced cycling facilities along the A405 linking St Albans and Leavesden.
Package 5 – Watford Western Gateway	
Aim	To improve access to Watford Western Gateway business park through the enhancement of sustainable transport links.
Main aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new southern access into Watford Western Gateway Business Parks area for cyclists and buses only. • Making use of the disused railway alignment in West Watford to enable sustainable and mass transit transport opportunities • The introduction of a new bus- and cycle-only link across the River Colne linking South Oxhey and the Business Parks Area. • Enhanced cycleways and facilities from the area around the edge of Watford town centre to Watford Junction.
Package 6 – Watford-Hemel Hempstead Corridor	
Aim	To promote journeys between Watford and Hemel Hempstead by train and by bus, and to discourage journeys by car on inappropriate routes.
Main aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to M25 J20, bus priority along the A41, and enhanced interurban bus services between Hemel Hempstead and Watford • Enhanced cycleways and facilities along the Grand Union Canal Towpath and the A411 from Hemel Hempstead to Watford town centre. • Watford Junction and Town Centre public realm enhancements.
Package 7 – Watford Central	
Aim	To reduce traffic congestion in Watford town centre by enhancing infrastructure which benefits journeys made on foot, by bicycle and by bus, and provide new route options for traffic which avoid busy urban roads.

Main aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant public realm enhancements on Watford Ring Road. • Truncation of the Watford Ring Road and a new bus- and cycle-only link bridge at Colonial Way. • The introduction of slips at M1 Junction 4 to allow all movements between the M1 and A41, alongside a Park and Ride facility at M1 Junction 5.
Package 8 – Watford South	
Aim	To enhance the attractiveness of journeys by bike and bus in southern Watford, and provide new route options for traffic which avoid Bushey Arches.
Main aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced bus priority infrastructure and services through Bushey and Carpenders Park. • Cycling links in Oxhey, Carpenders Park, and Bushey. • The introduction of slips at M1 Junction 4 to allow all movements between the M1 and A41 alongside a Park and Ride facility at M1 Junction 5.
Package 9 – Rickmansworth	
Aim	To enhance the attractiveness of journeys to Rickmansworth railway station and access to the Ebury Way (towards Watford) on foot and by bike.
Main aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new southern access into Watford Western Gateway Business Parks area for cyclists and buses only. • Enhanced cycleways and facilities towards Rickmansworth railway station and town centre.

- 5.4 An indicative sequence for delivery of the individual schemes and projects is presented in the SWH GTP Prospectus.
- 5.5 The SWH GTP seeks to provide a flexible decision making framework to guide scheme investment and prioritisation and it should evolve in response to changing factors and new information. The interventions are defined at a conceptual level of detail and therefore more detailed work will be needed and may reveal important changes to interventions, or alternative interventions, which could also achieve the same aim and goals. Likewise unknown factors and uncertainties will influence implementation. A periodic update of the SWH GTP is likely to be needed to respond to changing factors and evolving growth and transport challenges and opportunities.

6. Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 6.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment is being undertaken to support the SWH GTP. The SEA is to help the county council to understand the potential environmental, social and economic impacts of the SWH GTP and its proposals, including cumulative and synergistic effects, so adjustments can be incorporated into the plan.
- 6.2 A SEA Report will be completed and made available to the public and stakeholders during the consultation to help them consider and respond

to the plan. The SEA findings and recommendations will be taken into account in the finalisation of the SWH GTP.

7. Next steps and public consultation

- 7.1 Subject to consideration of the Cabinet Panel's comments on the draft SWH GTP, the draft Consultation Summary and the draft Consultation Communication Strategy, public consultation on the draft South West Herts Growth & Transport Plan and accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment will commence in mid-July 2018 for a period of 8 weeks.
- 7.2 Stakeholders and the public will be invited to respond to the consultation online, with the opportunity to respond instead by email or by post. The documents including a Consultation Summary document (Appendix A) will be available online, with an accompanying online survey. Printed copies will also be made available in local libraries in the area directly affected by proposals in the draft SWH GTP.
- 7.3 The consultation will be promoted to stakeholders, the general public and particular groups and advocacy organisations (including those identified in the EqlA) by a variety of channels including email, the Hertfordshire County Council website, social media, local newspapers and notice boards in libraries.
- 7.4 A consultation report will be produced based on analysis of consultation responses.
- 7.5 The views of stakeholders and the public and the findings of the SEA and EqlA will be taken into account in the finalisation of the SWH GTP. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, it is planned to bring for consideration by the GIPE Cabinet Panel a final draft SWH GTP to recommend to Cabinet for adoption in November.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The financial cost of the consultation exercise on the draft SWH GTP will be met from existing budgets.
- 8.2 The proposals of the draft SWH GTP will require significant investment over a long period. This investment will come from a variety of sources and progress on implementing the proposals will be programmed within resources that become available. The SWH GTP is intended to help the county council and its partners to work cooperatively and jointly to bring forward proposed schemes, combine resources and to support funding bids to external agencies.

9. Equalities Implications

- 9.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equality implications of the decision that they are making.
- 9.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 9.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the County Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 9.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and this is included at Appendix C.

Supporting documents

- Appendix A – Draft South West Herts GTP Consultation Summary
- Appendix B – Draft Consultation Communication Strategy
- Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment