

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CABINET
MONDAY, 18 MARCH 2019 AT 2.00PM**

Agenda Item
No.

5

ADOPTION OF THE SOUTH WEST HERTS GROWTH & TRANSPORT PLAN

Report of the Director of Environment & Infrastructure

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

1. Purpose of report

To seek Cabinet approval of the revised South West Herts Growth & Transport Plan as a supporting document for the Local Transport Plan 4.

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, and which will be supporting documents of the Local Transport Plan (LTP4). 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 marked up with amendments made as a result of the

consultation is available on the Council's Collaboration pages¹ and a paper copy is available in the Members' Lounge for reference. A list of the significant changes to the draft consultation version is included as Appendix B to this report.

- 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 Hertsmer). Workshops were held during the plan development process with the local county councillors, relevant Executive Members and district council Portfolio Holders for Planning and Transport to inform the draft SWH GTP. The draft Plan was subject to an eight-week public consultation in 2018. A summary of the consultation outcomes is provided as Appendix A to this report. The consultation feedback from stakeholders and the public has led to changes being proposed to the Plan, which are detailed in Appendix B to this report.
- 2.5 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken of the SWH GTP. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has also been completed. The EqIA Report and draft SEA Report were published alongside the draft SWH GTP documents for public consultation. A copy of the EqIA is at Appendix C to this report and a copy of the SEA Report is available in the Members' Lounge for reference.
- 2.6 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
- 2.7 It is proposed to retain the following plans and strategies, which the South West Herts GTP does not directly replace, until they are superseded by a revised or alternative equivalent strategy or plan:
- South West Herts Cycle Strategy 2013
 - Tring, Berkhamsted & Northchurch UTP 2013
- 2.8 The Local Planning Authorities in South West Herts are in the early stages of preparing a Joint Strategic Plan and individual Local Plans, which are expected to reflect the Government's targets for housing delivery. As such a review of this South West Herts Growth & Transport

¹ <https://hertsc365.sharepoint.com/Sites/intranet-DraftSouthWestHertsGrowthTransportPlan/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2FSites%2Fintranet%2DDraftSouthWestHertsGrowthTransportPlan%2FShared%20Documents%2FSWH%20GTP%20Prospectus&FolderCTID=0x010100EC3406C202E4497181665C11E646D3A3004929C698538F0747B2B5BA734ECAE2CC&View=%7BB429C938%2DD367%2D46F9%2D9DC2%2DD1F25A635645%7D>

Plan is likely to be undertaken within the next few years to ensure it remains an appropriate transport strategy for the area and aligns to future growth scenarios.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Growth, Infrastructure, Planning & the Economy Cabinet Panel will consider a report on this item of business at its meeting on 12 March 2019. The Panel will be invited to recommend to Cabinet that Cabinet adopts the revised South West Herts Growth & Transport Plan as a supporting document to the Local Transport Plan 4.
- 3.2 The Cabinet Panel's recommendations to Cabinet will be reported orally at the Cabinet meeting and circulated to Members in the Order of Business sheet.

4. Background

- 4.1 The County Council adopted a new Local Transport Plan in 2018, which sets the overarching transport policy for the county. 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 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 Hertfordshire, 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. The authorities are also in the early stages of developing a Joint Strategic Plan.
- 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, a new approach to spatial transport planning is justified to better respond to the transport challenges across this growth area and support the county's and districts' growth objectives, and reflect 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. Public Consultation

- 5.1 Public consultation on the draft SWH GTP took place between July and September 2018. The public consultation attracted 2,900 online responses, along with 430 emailed responses. The majority of responses focused around Hemel Hempstead and a number of scheme concepts in the Boxmoor, Apsley and Two Waters area. Fewer than 150 responses were received for each of the other packages. There was one response that related to the Equalities Impact Assessment, and no comments were received about the Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 5.2 Representations were received from Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans District Council, Three Rivers District Council, and Watford Borough Council among the key stakeholders. Responses were also received from *inter alia* Transport for London, Highways England, Buckinghamshire County Council, several Parish Councils, some local bus operators and local transport campaign groups. Historic England was the only Environmental Body to respond to the consultation.
- 5.3 A summary report of the consultation responses is provided at Appendix A.

6. Significant Changes

- 6.1 A full list is provided at Appendix B of the significant changes proposed to be made to the draft South West Herts GTP.
- 6.2 Key changes include:
- Removing all references to schemes that had been excluded at an early stage, to be clear that these are not part of the strategy. This includes SM3a&b (Closures of Apsley or Kings Langley Stations), SM33 (Hemel Hempstead South Station) and SM9 (Converting Nickey Line to Public Transport route)
 - Deleting the following scheme proposals: PR67 - Fishery Road cycle and bus only; PR14 - Filtered permeability measures at Lawn Lane arm of Plough Roundabout; PR95 - Maylands central car park; SM11 - Public transport links south of Watford (aspirations to be incorporated in another scheme)
 - Some rewording of scheme names and of scheme descriptions to focus on outcomes
 - Amendment of schemes to bring them into alignment with the draft A414 Corridor Strategy
 - Addition of new schemes: study of alternative options to the Met Line Extension; study of traffic flows and sustainable transport

options on road network around Bushey Arches; Ebury Way improvements scheme; new group of smaller projects aiming to aid connectivity to station from potential growth area north of Batford.

6.3 In addition, minor changes will be made to the text of the Prospectus as required to aid structure and readability.

7. The SWH GTP main proposals

7.1 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, built and historic 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

7.2 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

7.3 The draft SWH GTP proposes 9 Packages of schemes and projects. Different potential approaches are presented for some of the scheme concepts, generally with a preferred approach indicated - this selection

is based on the performance of the approach assessed against the plan's objectives. It is envisaged that greater benefit will be achieved if more of the interventions within a Package are implemented.

- 7.4 The packages of schemes and projects are summarised in Table 1. Further detail is available in section 6 of the SWH GTP Prospectus, noting the proposed changes to the schemes and packages as listed in Appendix B.

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"> • Converting the A414 into a multi-modal transport corridor that better facilitates walking, cycling and buses alongside private vehicles, and improving connectivity both along and across the key route - potentially enabled by a future Mass Rapid Transit system. • 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 environment for walking and cycling
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	<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. • Exploring 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 and the Watford and Croxley business parks through the enhancement of sustainable transport links.
Main aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new southern access into the Watford Western Gateway business parks area for cyclists and buses only, and enhancements of the Ebury Way for walking and cycling. • Making use of the disused railway alignment in West Watford to enable sustainable and mass transit transport opportunities, informed by a study of options • 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 linking the Western Gateway area 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 and improvements to movement and permeability for sustainable modes on Watford Ring Road. • Improved walking and cycling environment on routes to Watford Junction Station and a new foot, cycle and bus 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 areas to the south of Watford, and facilitate more appropriate route options for traffic which avoid Bushey Arches.
Main aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring enhanced bus priority infrastructure and services through Bushey and Carpenders Park. • Cycling links in Oxhey, South 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. • Review of traffic and sustainable transport options on local road network around Bushey Arches
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 the Watford Western Gateway Business Parks area for cyclists and buses only. • Enhanced cycleways and facilities towards Rickmansworth railway station and town centre. • Enhancements of the Ebury Way for walking and cycling

- 7.5 An indicative sequence for delivery of the individual schemes and projects is presented in the SWH GTP Prospectus.
- 7.6 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.

8. Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 8.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (“SEA”) was 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.

- 8.2 The draft SEA Report was made available to the public and stakeholders during the consultation to help them consider and respond to the plan. The draft SEA findings and recommendations have been taken into account in the finalisation of the SWH GTP. A final SEA Report will be published with the final SWH GTP prospectus.

9. Next steps and policy implications

- 9.1 Subject to agreement by Cabinet, the changes proposed to the South West Herts GTP will be made and a final version of the South West Herts GTP will be produced and will be published on hertfordshire.gov.uk as the adopted version.
- 9.2 The final South West Herts GTP will be the adopted transport strategy for this area, and will be used to inform the work and decisions of the County Council alongside the Local Transport Plan and its other supporting documents.
- 9.3 The South West Herts GTP would supersede and replace:
- South West Herts Transport Plan 2008
 - West Herts Transport Plan 2007
 - Hemel Hempstead Urban Transport Plan 2009
- 9.4 For the avoidance of doubt, the following County Council strategies will be retained until such a time that they are revised or themselves replaced by an alternative equivalent:
- South West Herts Cycle Strategy 2013
 - Tring, Northchurch & Berkhamsted Urban Transport Plan 2013

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1 The financial cost of finalising the SWH GTP will be met from existing budgets.
- 10.2 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.

11. Equalities Implications

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 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.
- 11.3 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.
- 11.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and this is attached at Appendix C to this report.

Background Information

Footnote to Draft South West Herts Growth Transport Plan