

Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2026

Consultation plan



March 2010

the knot unites



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local transport authorities in England are required to produce a Local Transport Plan (LTP) under the Transport Act 2000 (as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008).
- 1.2 In July 2009, the Department for Transport (DfT) issued guidance relating to the production of the next (and third) round of LTPs, which all local transport authorities (outside of London) are required to publish by April 2011. This guidance included suggestions on how best to consult.

2. Purpose of this Plan

- 2.1 This document sets out how we plan to engage with Staffordshire's residents, businesses and visitors, and the Council's stakeholders, to ensure that all those who wish to influence the LTP are given a genuine opportunity to do so. It also sets out how we plan to respond to any comments we receive and how we will assess the success of the consultation methods we have adopted.
- 2.2 This document refers to external consultation only i.e. consultation with people and organisations outside of Staffordshire County Council. The consultation timetable found in Appendix E sets out when we plan to undertake external and internal LTP consultation.

3. What is consultation?

- 3.1 The Consultation Institute describes consultation as:

“the dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, and normally with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action”

- 3.1 The Institute identifies five stages to the consultation process. In summary, these are:

- Designing – planning effective consultation
- Targeting – selecting your audience
- Methods – capturing people's views
- Feedback – keeping consultees informed
- Influencing – making the decision on whether to incorporate views

4. Staffordshire's next LTP

- 4.1 It is envisaged that Staffordshire's next LTP will be a far-reaching document that will impact upon the lives of all of Staffordshire's residents, its visitors and businesses. It will set out the County Council's policies, strategies, objectives and targets for improving transport in Staffordshire up to 2026. It will cover all modes of transport (including walking, cycling, public transport, rail, car based travel and freight), the management and maintenance of the highway network, and the relationships between transport and wider



policy issues such as the economy, environment and social inclusion. As a result, the opportunity to participate in the LTP's development will interest a broad range of people and organisations.

4.2 It is proposed that the next LTP will be in two parts.

A Strategy Plan will:

- Cover a period of 15 years, updated every 3 years.
- Contain policies and set out clearly what we want to achieve through a number of 'transport packages'.
- Take account of the different challenges faced in service delivery in Staffordshire's urban and rural areas.
- Take account of the different challenges faced in areas of the county where travel patterns suggest a significant pull to areas outside of the county such as Stoke-on-Trent and the West Midlands conurbation.
- Inform the further development of area-wide transport strategies and specific transport strategies, such as walking and cycling.

An Implementation Plan will:

- Cover a period of 3 years; detailed for the first year and general for years 2 and 3.
- Be updated annually.
- Be a business plan for implementing the 'transport packages' set out in the Strategy Plan and will include a funded programme of transport improvements, targets, performance management and risk assessment.
- Provide an update on Major Scheme proposals, including Brinsford Park and Ride, Stafford Western Access Improvements, and Burton-Swadlincote Regeneration Corridor.

4.3 Staffordshire's next LTP will integrate a number of supporting plans and duties, and these are listed in Appendix A. Many of these will have already gone through their own consultation processes and it is not considered necessary to undertake extra consultation on these via the LTP's consultation exercises. Instead, we will consult on whether we have satisfactorily integrated these plans and duties into the LTP.

4.4 Staffordshire's next LTP will also need to go through a number of statutory assessments regarding its impact on the environment, personal health, and equal opportunities. Sections 6 and 8 set out in more detail what these assessments are and how we plan to consult on them.

5. Requirements to consult on the LTP

5.1 The DfT suggest that in developing and implementing LTPs, opportunities for stakeholder and public consultation should be considered at various stages, using a variety of techniques as a means of reaching and involving a wide range of people and



organisations. They also suggest that where appropriate, public consultation should extend to visitors to an area, the people that work there and hard to reach and disability groups.

5.2 LTPs are seen as a vital tool to help local transport authorities' work with their stakeholders to strengthen their place-shaping role and their service delivery. In preparing the next round of LTPs, local authorities are accountable to their communities for their quality and for ensuring their effective delivery. This suggests that local transport authorities need to produce LTPs that reflect their communities' needs, and the best way of achieving this is through effective engagement with residents, businesses and stakeholders.

5.3 There are a number of legislative requirements for local transport authorities to consult on their LTPs, including:

- The Transport Act 2000 (as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008) places a duty on local transport authorities, when formulating policies and plans such as the LTP, to formally consult with:
 - Bus operators;
 - Rail operators;
 - Public transport user groups;
 - In the case of county councils and district councils;
 - Regional Development Agencies;
 - Highways Agency, and
 - Any other people considered appropriate.
- The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 require local transport authorities to involve residents in local decision-making and service provision.
- The Transport Act 2008 requires local transport authorities to have regard to the needs of disabled people, both in developing and implementing LTPs.

6. What other documents will we be required to consult upon?

6.1 In addition to the LTP document itself, local transport authorities are also required to undertake a number of statutory assessments that will form an integral part of the LTP. These are:

- Habitats Regulations Assessment;
- Health Impact Assessment;
- Equality Impact Assessment, and
- Strategic Environmental Assessment.

6.2 Section 8 sets out how we plan to consult on these statutory assessments.



7. Who, when and how are we going to consult?

- 7.1 The type and amount of consultation we propose to undertake will vary depending upon the plan/assessment being considered, the stage that it is at in its development and who the target audience is.
- 7.2 The following section sets out what and how we are currently consulting on with regards to transport policy in Staffordshire, and what consultation methods we are proposing for Staffordshire's next LTP and its supporting plans and duties.

Active Consultation Campaigns

- 7.3 **Building Blocks Campaign** – This Campaign was launched on 26th August 2009 and will run until 23rd October 2009. It aims to help the general public understand the transport and highway services provided by the County Council, along with asking them their opinions on what they see are the main transport issues and goals for Staffordshire in years to come. A questionnaire has been designed and is available to download from a bespoke website (www.stack-up.info) or from the County Council's website. Hard copies are also available on request. Appendix B provides more details of the Building Blocks Campaign.
- 7.4 **Long Term Transport Strategy** – Consultation on this draft Strategy commenced on 21st August 2009 and runs until 23rd October 2009. It aims to inform County Council officers, members, partners, and the general public of our ambition for Staffordshire's transport network in 2026 and beyond. The consultation, which is open to the general public and stakeholders, seeks responses to eight specific questions. A copy of the Strategy is available at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/transportplanning/localtransportplan/strategy/ Hard copies are available on request.

Proposed Consultation Campaigns

- 7.5 **Make drafts available for comment** – Letters and e-mails will inform potential respondents of where draft versions of the LTP (and statutory assessments) can be found (or where hard copies can be obtained). This will take place throughout 2010 but mainly between September and November 2010 when the final draft of the LTP and its statutory assessments will be out to formal consultation. Appendix C sets out the current list of stakeholders we plan to consult with at this stage of LTP development. However, changes are likely to be made to this list as the LTP develops. Those members of the public who said that they would be interested in receiving further information about the LTP (though the Building Blocks Campaign questionnaire) will also receive correspondences.
- 7.6 We are aware of a number of shortcomings in the process set out above (7.5). For example, potential participants:
- may feel that they have not influenced the draft;



- tend not to be representative;
- have insufficient time or resources to respond to the consultation; and
- may have a lack of confidence in the consultation process adopted.

7.7 Because of this, we have tried to develop other consultation techniques as set out below.

7.8 **Dedicated LTP webpage** - A dedicated LTP webpage would be the simplest and most effective way of communicating with a large number of stakeholders and members of the public. It would have its own Uniform Resource Locator (global address of a document on the World Wide Web). Examples to be investigated are:

- www.ltp.co.com/org/info/net
- www.staffsltp.co.com/org/info/net
- www.staffs-ltp.co.com/org/info/net
- www.localtransportplan.co.com/org/info/net
- www.ltpportal.co.com/org/info/net
- www.ltp-portal.co.com/org/info/net
- www.staffslpportal.co.com/org/info/net
- www.staffs-ltp-portal.co.com/org/info/net

7.9 The webpage, which could be marketed as the 'LTP Portal', could contain all relevant information on the progress of the emerging LTP, including current consultations and events, press releases, news bulletins, opinion polls, competitions, old and current versions of documents, an LTP forum/chat room etc. The Portal could be a one-stop shop for the emerging LTP. The Portal could be created now, followed by a short marketing period. It is the intention to have the site up and running by the end of October 2009 and that it should exist until the LTP is published in April 2011.

7.10 The front page of the web site would need careful design to ensure that it is eye catching. The Communications Team will be able to assist with this. The remainder of the site could be written and maintained by the Policy Team. Any questions put to the public would need to have a specific focus although they should also be given an opportunity to leave general comments.

7.11 **Social networking sites** - These are becoming increasingly popular as consultation tools. The County Council already has pages on YouTube, Flickr and Twitter and these could include information about the emerging LTP. YouTube is probably not a suitable media as it relies on video clips rather than the written word, although there may be advantages to using Twitter and Flickr (which is a photo site). The benefit of social networking sites is that they tend to attract a younger audience. The use of these sites needs to be investigated further.

7.12 **Photo competition** - Entitled, 'Transport in Staffordshire - The Good, The Bad and The Ugly'. Cash prizes could be given to winners in different age categories and we could use the photos in the final LTP document. We could also use the contact details it generates to undertake the conventional written consultation as outlined in 7.5. This is likely to take



place between April and June 2010. The ability to text a photo entry needs to be investigated.

- 7.13 **Staffordshire Youth Action Council** – The Council advises the County Council on service provision; it gives young people a voice, a chance to express their opinions and a chance to be heard. Transport is a top priority for YAK and we will be attending their “Speak-Out Conference” in November 2009. DSD officers will help to run three focus groups to discuss transport issues. Consideration will be given to having a display available at the conference where cycle maps, road safety leaflets and other sustainable travel information, and promotional material will be available.
- 7.14 Every school council in the County has representatives at District Forums, which can also be asked to debate transport in Staffordshire. In addition this, they are an opportunity to get all schools involved in the photo competition. Liaison with the County Council’s Consultation Officer is required to progress this.
- 7.15 **Residents Magazine** – Staffordshire County Council has a magazine, called Your Staffordshire, which is distributed to all households and businesses several times per year. It has a print-run of 388,000 and it is estimated to have an audience of 1 million people. Borough and District Councils within the authority area also produce similar magazines. It may be possible, with the support of the Council’s Communications team, to put LTP information/surveys into these magazines.
- 7.16 **Staffordshire People’s Panel** – meets three times a year in February, June and October. Focus groups are also arranged five times per year. Topic areas/questions could be put to the people’s panel for debate. The County Council’s Consultation Officer is able to arrange this, as well as analyse the results and produce a report. Possible topic areas to put to the focus groups include freight, public transport, maintenance, congestion and road safety.
- 7.17 **Regional LTP Officers Group** - Comprising LTP officers from all authorities within the Shire counties of the West Midlands Region, the Group will meet to discuss LTP developments and cross boundary issues. The frequency and ongoing agenda items have yet to be decided.
- 7.18 **Government Office for the West Midlands** - Meetings will be held on a quarterly basis to discuss LTP progress.
- 7.19 **Stakeholder Consultation** - We are proposing to hold a number of ‘physical’ events that coincide with key stages of LTP development, such as:

It is the intention that the first event will look at the following subject areas:

- Clarifying the goals of transport policy - theoretically this has already been consulted upon in the Long-Term Transport Strategy but it should be repeated (i.e. re-packaged) at an LTP/SEA Visioning Event in late 2009 or early 2010;



- Specifying the challenges to be addressed - theoretically this has already been consulted upon in the Long-Term Transport Strategy but it should be repeated (i.e. re-packaged) at an LTP/SEA Visioning Event in late 2009 or early 2010:
- LTP option generation and linkages between the LTP and SEA.

The second stakeholder event will take place between September and November 2010. The purpose of this will be to launch and encourage participation in the consultation on the draft LTP.

7.20 It is likely that these will be stakeholder only events. If they are considered appropriate, then we will need to determine:

- agenda/format;
- presenters/facilitators;
- attendees;
- venue; and
- publicity.

Additionally, we propose to undertake an online consultation with external stakeholders sometime between February and March 2010 to obtain views upon the LTP option appraisal process.

7.21 **LTP Launch Event** - Whilst it's not 'true' LTP consultation, an LTP launch event will maintain channels of communication between the Council and key stakeholders. It will also allow the Council to show stakeholders that it has taken on board their comments in the LTP. This event will either take place immediately before or after the publication of the LTP, around 1st April 2011.

8. Who, when and how are we going to consult on the statutory assessments?

8.1 In addition to LTP consultations, and as described in Section 6, we are required to undertake a number of statutory assessments that will form an integral part of the LTP. Each of these will need to go through some form of consultation and how we plan to do this is set out below.

8.2 **Habitats Regulations Assessment** - Regulation 48(3) of the Habitats Regulations states that we must consult Natural England and have regard to any representations made by them during the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). We plan to contact with Natural England on two separate occasions (during October and November 2009, and September and November 2010). The first occasion will take the form of a formal contact/meeting and the second occasion will take the form of a written report. We have yet to decide whether we should also take this report out to wider stakeholders and the general public.



- 8.3 **Health Impact Assessment** - A Health Impact Assessment can be defined as a combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, programme or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population. It is designed to inform and influence plan-making and to reduce health inequalities.
- 8.4 Consultation on the Health Impact Assessment will involve stakeholders who represent people with health and mobility problems. They will be involved in:
- A half day event/workshop on 26th November 2009 to complete the assessment toolkit.
 - A follow-up event to discuss how the LTP can promote health and healthy lifestyles, and how the Council and stakeholders can mitigate against any negative impacts of the LTP.
- 8.5 The following groups/organisations will also be contacted to obtain their views on the toolkit:
- North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone
 - West Midlands Ambulance Service
 - A hospital patient group
 - The AA/RAC
 - Penkridge Community Transport
 - Equalities and Diversity Officer, SCC (Becky Murphy)
- 8.6 It is important to recognise that the Health Impact Assessment and the LTP are iterative processes i.e. their development run parallel to each other. Thus the LTP should be able to respond if a potential negative impact on health is identified as a result of LTP implementation. Conversely, any positive impact on health as a result of LTP implementation should be celebrated.
- 8.7 **Equality Impact Assessment** - An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is a tool for identifying whether an organisation's policies, functions or activities have the potential to negatively (or positively) impact on a particular group within the population. This group may be defined on the basis of their gender, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, disability, age, where they live, etc.
- 8.8 The lead officers for carrying out the EQIA will be Nicola Swinnerton (Transport Policy Manager) and Pam Rushton (Head of Corporate Services & Communications, DSD Equalities Group (Chair)). They will be supported by a wider working group, which will mainly comprise members of the Staffordshire Public Access Network (SPAN) but also involve members who represent agendas outside what would be considered a 'traditional' equality issue. For example, groups on low-incomes, suffering rural isolation, living in areas of deprivation, or having limiting long-term illness or mental health issues.
- 8.9 From an early stage in the LTP process, the working group will meet regularly. It will discuss EQIA/LTP progress, provide guidance and feedback on the developing LTP and its impacts on groups within the population that are prone to social exclusion. Members of



SPAN will be able to provide an independent perspective on a wide range of experiences, as well as the challenges facing different groups in Staffordshire when using the transport network.

- 8.10 Similar to the Health Impact Assessment, the EQIA and the LTP are iterative processes. Thus the LTP should be able to respond if a potential negative impact on an equality issue is identified as a result of LTP implementation. Conversely, any positive impact on an equality issue as a result of LTP implementation can be celebrated.
- 8.11 During September and November 2010, a draft EQIA report will go out to consultation, which will coincide with the LTPs main consultation period. We have yet to decide whether we should send this report to wider stakeholders only or also include the general public.
- 8.12 **Strategic Environmental Assessment** - European legislation requires that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) be undertaken of all LTPs. We need to ensure that the SEA forms an integral part of developing (and later delivering) the LTP. An SEA has five stages and consultation will need to take place during some of these stages.
- 8.13 Again the SEA and LTP processes are iterative i.e. their development runs parallel to each other.
- 8.14 We plan to engage with stakeholders early in the SEA process, probably at an LTP3/SEA Visioning Event in late 2009 or early 2010. At the event we will present:
- An initial draft of SEA objectives;
 - A preliminary list of plans and programmes that would be reviewed;
 - An indication of the key sustainability themes; and
 - An early outline of the contents of the LTP with the possible concepts that would be used to form the reasonable alternatives.
- 8.15 Further consultation is likely to take the form of a small number of internal meetings, followed by two written reports. Dialogue with environmental colleagues within Development Services will be ongoing throughout the period of LTP development. These will provide a steer to the LTP's SEA.
- 8.16 Consultation on the two written reports (Scoping and Environmental Reports) will take place during March and April 2010, and September and November 2010, respectively.
- 8.17 We will seek feedback on the SEA's (Scoping and Environmental) reports from the SEA's statutory consultees - Environment Agency, Natural England, and English Heritage - together with Staffordshire's district and borough councils, Staffordshire's neighbouring authorities, regional bodies, and other partners, such as the Highways Agency. Members of the general public will not be encouraged but will not be excluded from participating in the SEA consultation process.



9. How can we demonstrate that we are offering a genuine opportunity for people to influence the LTP?

9.1 Consultees need to know that we have listened to their views and where feasible, included their suggestions (or elements of them) into the LTP.

9.2 It is proposed that following each key piece of consultation (LTP's 4 stages set out in 7.14, the EQIA, the Health Impact Assessment, the SEA's Scoping and Environmental Reports, and the HRA), and at the end of the entire LTP process, we undertake an evaluation exercise. Consultees will want to know the results of the consultation itself, what decision was made as a result of their input, and they will want to be able to see how we have used their views in coming to a decision. We propose to do this in a transparent, three phase process:

- Output - This is a record of what consultees said and it is needed to inform the decision making process that follows. It will be put into a database that will be available to all consultees via a Notice of Decision (NOD) - see 9.3.
- Outcome - When the decision has been made following consultation, this too will be communicated to all consultees via the NOD (see 9.3).
- Reconciliation - Consultees need to know who is taking the decision about what is included in the LTP. They should also be provided with a brief explanation of the issues addressed in coming to a decision and the reasons why a particular choice was made. This will be included in the NOD (see 9.3).

9.3 A NOD will be produced to complete the consultation process. It will be in the form of a written statement or a short report that notifies consultees of the Council's position on each of the major issues raised in the consultation and, where the Council's decision conflicts with the views of consultees, the Council's reasons and any proposed mitigation.

10. Evaluation

10.1 It is good practice that any major communication project such as a consultation on the LTP, and supporting plans and duties, is evaluated. Evaluation helps to:

- find out what worked, what did not and why;
- increase learning and improve future practice;
- assess whether involving the public contributes to improved services, actions or decision-making; and
- judge whether a consultation was cost-effective in terms of time and resources.

10.2 Evaluation needs to:

- involve a decision audit - how the views of consultees affected decisions or action?;
- review the consultation process - the extent to which plan timescales, budgets and project objectives were met, to which the intended audience took part, whether the



methods were effective, and whether there is anything that we would do differently;
and

- assess participant satisfaction – the general satisfaction of consultees with the process.

10.3 The main question we need to be able to answer is ‘has anything changed as a result of the consultation?’ We should be able to demonstrate that:

- we got the information we wanted;
- we used the views obtained;
- the consultation has led to some identifiable change in the LTP’s policies or actions;
and
- the consultation has changed the relationship between Staffordshire County Council and its consultees, residents and stakeholders.

10.4 Appendix D sets out the proposed evaluation checklist we plan to conduct after the lunch of the LTP in April 2011.

11. Next steps

1. Charles Soutar to seek political approval of relevant Cabinet Members (Robert Marshall and Mike Maryon), via Director of Development Services.
2. Establish resource costs.
3. Establish consultation timetable.
4. Agree the best way to consult with visitors to Staffordshire.
5. Expand upon, develop and agree on the methods of consultation for the LTP and statutory assessments.
6. Agree responsible officers/working relationships for each method.



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