

**ST. NEOTS MARKET TOWN TRANSPORT STRATEGY
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the new St Neots Market Town Transport Strategy which forms part of the County Council Local Transport Plan (LTP). The Strategy contains a number of schemes for implementation within the town over the next five years as and when funding becomes available. The schemes are aimed both at improving transport within the town now and to provide a basis for dealing with increased pressure on the network from development in the future.
- 1.2 Market Town Transport Strategies are an integral part of the LTP. Within the District the first strategy was produced for St. Neots during 2000, Huntingdon and Godmanchester in 2003 with St. Ives following in 2007. A first strategy for Ramsey is now being developed with adoption planned for early 2010. Given the time that has now elapsed, a review for St. Neots has been undertaken
- 1.3 This report sets out the issues tackled by the strategy and the schemes designed to address them. It also summarises the public consultation exercise carried out during 2007 and the results of the questionnaire survey undertaken at that time.
- 1.4 The strategy was endorsed by the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee (Hunts AJC) at its meeting of 10th March 2008 and approved by the County Council Cabinet on 9th September 2008.

2. THE NEW STRATEGY

- 2.1 The new strategy is the result of work to review progress in delivering the first strategy, and to look again at the key transport issues facing the town in the light of progress. As with the first strategy, it identifies transport schemes to address the needs of the town.
- 2.2 The programme has been prioritised to give an indication of the possible timescale for delivery of individual measures. The schemes included and their priority order reflects the views obtained through the public consultation exercise, an assessment of deliverability and the views of local Members through both a Member steering group and the Hunts Area Joint Committee (AJC).

- 2.3 The strategy and programme of schemes included are consistent with the aims and objectives of the County Council's LTP 2006-11 and the delivery of the strategy is aimed to contribute towards the economic vitality, viability and well-being of the town.
- 2.4 The delivery of measures in the strategy will contribute towards achieving national and local transport targets including road traffic accident statistics and casualties, local bus passenger journeys, children travelling to school, cycling trips, air quality and travel trends. Improved transport provision and measures to manage traffic should also assist in addressing wider objectives such as reducing social exclusion, community development and promoting health.

3. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 3.1 A comprehensive consultation exercise was carried out in June/July 2007. Leaflets and questionnaires were distributed to all households and businesses in St Neots as well as surrounding villages. The consultation exercise also included a public exhibition, stakeholder consultation and use of the Internet and local press to publicise the strategy review.
- 3.2 387 questionnaires were returned. All of the strategy proposals received generally high levels of support from the respondents. Table 1 below shows the schemes in order of support shown.

Rank	Scheme	Percentage of respondents who Strongly support or Support
1	Bus route and map information	92
2	Road Safety and Traffic management measures	88
3	Pedestrian/cycle network	84
4	Real Time Passenger information (RTPI)	81
5	Cycle Racks	79
6	Southern Cycle Bridge	79
7	Integration of RTPI with train timetable information	79

- 3.3 Respondents were also asked to prioritise the schemes for funding. Analysis of the results of this question revealed that most respondents prioritised the road safety and traffic management schemes over other areas of the strategy.
- 3.4 In addition, many who responded identified the lack of bus layover space in the Market Square as a significant problem in terms of both congestion and air quality. While the strategy does not include detailed proposals to address this issue it acknowledges that a further study to

look at potential solutions is needed. It also suggests that this should be led by consideration of what measures are needed to deal with the air quality issues in the town centre as part of the Air Quality Action Plan.

- 3.5 The Member steering group considered the results of the consultation together with officers from the County and District Council's. As a result, an addition was made to the strategy to include the provision of new format bus timetable information for display at bus stops in the town.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Following approval of the strategy by the County Council, it was adopted as policy as part of the Local Transport Plan 2006-11. Schemes within the strategy are being considered for inclusion in the Capital Programme for 2009/10 onwards as part of the Market Towns Transport Strategy programme. This will include partnership funding from the District Council's Medium Term Plan and the use of emerging S.106 funding, particularly from Love's Farm. Based on the expected level of funding, the Huntingdonshire AJC will be presented with an annual programme of works for their approval.
- 4.2 The new strategy looks at transport issues facing the town now and runs until 2011. However, it will be reviewed and will evolve as necessary in the intervening period to take account of emerging pressures, such as the likelihood of significant additional development in the period of the new Huntingdonshire Local Development framework.
- 4.3 Transport modelling has been commissioned by the District and County Council's, with support from the Highways Agency, to quantify the impact of traffic growth and possible development scenarios around St Neots on the transport network in the town, and on the A1 and A428. This work will assist in informing the recommendations that the District Council will need to make on the location of future development in Huntingdonshire, and will aid the assessment of what new transport infrastructure will be needed to provide for the transport demand arising from development. It will also aid the County Council and the Highways Agency, as highway authorities for the local and trunk road networks respectively, in their planning of transport infrastructure and services on the wider network.
- 4.4 Faber Maunsell are undertaking this work under the umbrella of the District Council's contract with EDAW for consultancy advice on the Local Development Framework.
- 4.5 The package of measures within the strategy including the town centre signalling improvements and cycle and pedestrian network would potentially, if implemented, result in a reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions from road transport in the St Neots area. This would be in

line with Local Transport Plan targets and national objectives, and those of the District Council's own Environment Strategy.

4.6 A copy of the Strategy and Action Plan is attached at Annex A.

5. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended;

i) That Cabinet approve and adopt the strategy as part of the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006-11.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Local Transport Plan 2006-11

St Neots Market Town Transport Strategy – 2001 to 2006

Hunts Traffic Management Area Joint Committee Report - 10 March 2008

County Council Cabinet Report – 9 September 2008

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