

**NEW LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP3)
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is an important County-wide document which sets out transport policies and programmes for several years ahead. The current LTP is the second Cambridgeshire LTP and covers the period 2006 - 2011.
- 1.2 The County Council is required to produce a third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for the period from April 2011. The new plan must be in place by 31st March 2011 and, as part of its formulation, the County Council is required to consult District Councils and other key stakeholders.
- 1.3 LTP3 consists of two parts:
 1. Policies and Strategy
 2. Implementation Plan

2. LTP3 POLICIES AND STRATEGY

- 2.1 As an initial stage of LTP3 development, the County Council carried out consultation between January and July 2010. This resulted in a low response rate (0.5%), but those who responded identified improvements to public transport infrastructure and improving roads as the most important transport improvements for LTP3.
- 2.2 Following public consultation, the County Council have developed the Policies and Strategy of LTP3. Appendix A contains the Executive Summary to the LTP3 Policies and Strategy document. HDC officers have been consulted as part of this process and have contributed to the final documents.

3. LTP3 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- 3.1 The development of the Implementation Plan has been delayed by the late announcement (13 December) of the level of transport capital grants. Although the level of maintenance funding has not been greatly reduced, the funding for new ("integrated transport") schemes is about

half the level of the last 5 years. Appendix B contains the Executive Summary to the LTP3 Implementation Plan document.

- 3.3 Appendix C summarises the County's draft programme for 2011/12. The draft programme keeps maintenance funding at near 2010/11 levels, but the Integrated Transport Block is about half of 2010/11 allocation levels. Programme funding is likely to stay at this greatly reduced level, as set out in the following table:

| Programme Area | Av. funding 2006/07 – 10/11 | LTP3 funding | | Indicative funding | | Av. cut from LTP2 |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | |
| Integrated Transport | £8.431M | £3.805 M | £4.059 M | £4.059 M | £5.707 M | -48% |
| Maintenance | £11.658M | £10.712 M | £10.695 M | £10.801 M | £10.104 M | -9% |
| Total | £20.089M | £14.517 M | £14.754 M | £14.860 M | £15.811 M | -25% |

4. IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The LTP is the County Council's major source of maintenance and general transport funding. The major reductions in the Integrated Transport funding described above will impact significantly upon the County's ability to deliver improved transport infrastructure, both generally and in Huntingdonshire. These reductions follow on from the withdrawal of over £2m of funding from Cambridgeshire's Integrated Transport allocation, as part of the Government's emergency budget of June 2010.
- 4.2 The loss of Government funding for transport schemes will be compounded by HDC's financial position. Over the past 10 years, the Council has included significant capital funding for transport related projects in its Medium Term Plan. This has delivered well in excess of £2M of District Council funded transport benefits for Huntingdonshire. For LTP3, however, the Council's draft budget does not provide such financial support. The Council will thus be wholly dependent on funding from external sources, principally from the much reduced Government allocations and development related funding.
- 4.3 In responding to the proposed LTP3, it is recommended that the Council's main comment is to express concern at the greatly reduced level of Integrated Block funding. In view of this, we would encourage the County Council to pursue all possible alternative sources of funding, including from the recently announced Local Sustainable Transport Fund.
- 4.4 In addition to commenting upon the proposals, we are required to provide a Huntingdonshire District Council Statement for inclusion in

the LTP3 Appendices. A draft statement is attached, as Appendix D. This statement reflects the current funding difficulties, as well as ongoing concerns about delays in implementing schemes

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet recommend to Council that:

- i) The Council supports the Huntingdonshire District Statement for inclusion in LTP3, as set out in Appendix D of this report. and forwards this to the County Council
- ii) Expresses regret to the County Council about the greatly reduced overall funding for LTP3, but encourages the County Council to pursue all possible alternative sources of funding, including from the recently announced Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

LTP 2 – 2006-2011

LTP3 Executive Summaries (Appendices A and B of this report)

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Appendix A

LTP3 Policies and Strategy Executive Summary

This is Cambridgeshire's Third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) and covers the period 2011-2026.

The Plan is split in to two main parts; this first part is the Policies and Strategy, which sets out the Plan's objectives, problems and challenges, the strategy to meet the challenges, and the indicators and targets we will use to monitor our performance.

The second part is the Implementation Plan, which is essentially a business plan detailing how we will deliver the LTP3 Strategy. It details our programmes for the delivery of transport improvements to the networks managed by the County Council, and also for the day-to-day management and maintenance of the network. It sets out the schemes and measures we expect to deliver in the first year of the Plan in detail, and sets out the processes by which future years' programmes will be developed.

The LTP demonstrates how our policies and plans for transport will contribute towards the County Council's vision – Creating communities where people want to live and work: now and in the future. While we must have a vision for the future, we must also be realistic and recognise that we do not have the resources to deliver all of the measures we would wish to over the lifetime of the Plan. Indeed, given the current economic climate, our ability to implement schemes in the short-term may be particularly limited, although we will try and be innovative in the way that we use funds that are available. In this respect, it is important that the LTP sets the policy framework that leaves us well prepared to take advantage of opportunities that may occur to bring in additional or alternative funding and resources.

As a flexible and dynamic document, the LTP Strategy will be updated to reflect changes in the wider local and national policy context as and when needed, and the Implementation Plan will be updated on an annual basis.

As with our previous Plans, this LTP3 has been produced in partnership with Cambridge City Council and the district councils of East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire. We have had a strong working relationship for many years and have been very successful in bringing together the planning and transport responsibilities of these authorities, to ensure an integrated approach to the challenges.

LTP3 seeks to address existing transport challenges as well as setting out the policies and strategies to ensure that planned large-scale development can take place in the county in a sustainable way. In addition to working with Cambridge City and the District Councils, our Strategy and Implementation Plan have also been informed by public and stakeholder consultation, so that these documents reflect local people's views and concerns.

This LTP has been produced during a period of significant change, particularly in terms of the regional planning framework and tough financial climate. However, the County Council is committed to its overarching vision – Creating communities where people want to live and work: now and in the future - and this is reflected in this LTP by mirroring the County Council's Strategic Objectives as the core objectives of LTP3.

Objectives and challenges

The County Council's Strategic Objectives, which form the objectives of this LTP, are:

- (a) Enabling people to thrive, achieve their potential and improve quality of life
- (b) Supporting and protecting vulnerable people
- (c) Managing and delivering the growth and development of sustainable communities
- (d) Promoting improved skills levels and economic prosperity across the county, helping people into jobs and encouraging enterprise
- (e) Meeting the challenges of climate change and enhancing the natural environment

In response to Government's priorities – the economy and climate change – and the views expressed locally in our public and stakeholder consultation, relatively greater importance will be placed on Objectives 3, 4 and 5 in this LTP. We recognise that for transport to contribute to the achievement of the County Council's Strategic Objectives there is a need for input from all Council departments and partnerships. The strategy will need to strike a balance between enabling economic growth and tackling climate change.

Key among the issues affecting Cambridgeshire is the large-scale growth planned across the county, with the associated pressure on the transport network and the environment, and the risks of increased congestion and carbon emissions and worsening air quality. In parallel, many rural areas of the county continue to suffer from poor access to key services and leisure facilities and the risk of social exclusion. We have translated the issues and problems related to each of the objectives, into a set of eight challenges for transport, under which, we have set out our strategy for addressing them. The challenges and summarised strategies are:

Challenge 1: Improving the reliability of journey times by managing demand for road space and maximising the capacity and efficiency of the existing network

We will continue to investigate the potential for demand management measures using the experience we have already gained within the county where these can help to improve conditions for sustainable modes of transport and maximising the capacity of the network. Furthermore, we will support measures which encourage the transfer of more freight onto rail and continue to work with freight operators to promote the use of the most appropriate routes for road freight, particularly where that is passing through the county.

Challenge 2: Reducing the length of the commute and the need to travel by private car

Our transport strategy supports the development strategy for Cambridgeshire by aiming to reduce the need to travel and by providing sustainable travel options for new developments. We will focus on securing school, workplace and residential travel plans and support and encourage employers to adopt smarter choices measures to help reduce the need to travel. We will also support and encourage journey planning tools to improve information available for journeys by sustainable modes.

Challenge 3: Making sustainable modes of transport a viable and attractive alternative to the private car

Countywide, we will continue to push forward in making sustainable modes of transport more attractive by continuing to develop sustainable networks for walking and cycling, making it easier for people to change between modes of transport and working with bus operators to provide high quality bus services. In addition, our aim is to improve the environment and safety for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, in accordance with our user hierarchy and focus on raising awareness of the transport choices available, including the health and environmental benefits of cycling and walking. This will include work with local planning authorities to ensure provision for sustainable modes that form an integral part of new developments.

Challenge 4: Future-proofing our maintenance strategy and new transport infrastructure to cope with the effects of climate change

To address these issues our strategy will use a risk management approach to help determine priority areas for adapting to climate change. We have developed an adaptation action plan to set out how we will meet our objectives. We will take account of the projected impacts of climate change at the scheme design stage, make use of emerging technologies as they become available and build new infrastructure to the latest standards for withstanding the impacts of climate change.

Challenge 5: Ensuring people – especially those at risk of social exclusion – can access the services they need within reasonable time, cost and effort wherever they live in the county

Our strategy focuses on access to key services for our communities to the nearest main service centre, e.g. large village or market town. We will consider the whole journey, including the interaction between different modes of transport and aiming to provide suitable transport provision for necessary journeys, whilst also recognising the importance of car borne access in many of our rural areas. We will continue to support the development and work of community transport schemes as well as investigating alternative forms of public transport where traditional bus services do not meet community needs. This will include work with service providers to be innovative in the way services are delivered locally recognising that it is not simply about providing a transport service but as much about where and how the service is provided based on need.

Challenge 6: Addressing the main causes of road accidents in Cambridgeshire

To continue to reduce casualties our strategy will focus on education, training and publicity to improve road user behaviour, particularly targeting young drivers and riders, users of rural roads and children. In addition, we will progress our programme of measures aimed at reducing casualties at accident cluster sites that will give the highest casualty reduction and work with the police and other agencies through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Road Safety Partnership.

Challenge 7: Protecting and enhancing the natural environment by minimising the environmental impact of transport

Our strategy to protect and enhance the environment will focus on working with the district councils to reduce levels of air pollution in order to meet national objectives. This will be achieved through managing and reducing vehicle emissions and encouraging increased usage of sustainable modes of transport. Additional demand management measures will also be investigated where appropriate in order to manage car use and we will investigate the use of new technologies as they become available. Environmental issues such as protecting biodiversity and impacts on the landscape will be considered at the design stage of transport projects and we will

support the provision of green infrastructure. Furthermore, we will reduce carbon emissions through a programme of smarter choices measures, improvements to sustainable travel options and the management of car use.

Challenge 8: Influencing national and local decisions on land-use and transport planning that impact on routes through Cambridgeshire

We will reflect national policies in our local plans, policies and strategies and continue to lobby for rail improvements as well as improvements to the trunk road network, including the A14.

While aiming to address all the challenges we have identified, the main focus of our strategy will be on measures and initiatives that maintain and enhance the economy and also those that tackle climate change. This reflects both the outcomes from public and stakeholder consultation as well as the direction of national transport policy. The strategy recognises the tensions between enabling economic growth and tackling climate change, and will aim to balance the two objectives.

Monitoring and performance

Monitoring the effectiveness of our Strategy and Implementation Plan is a key part of our LTP. We want to ensure that the delivery of our Plan is as effective as possible and is providing value for money, and therefore have a robust monitoring framework of indicators and targets to check our progress towards delivering our strategy and achieving our objectives. The indicators we have chosen reflect the issues which are most important to Cambridgeshire while at the same time enabling us to compare our progress against other local authorities in the country.

Conclusion

Our LTP3 Strategy and Implementation Plan set out how we will help to address existing transport related problems and meet the transport needs of the large-scale development planned for the county. It is important that our strategy provides the right balance between being aspirational, and outlining what we want to achieve against a backdrop, in the shorter term at least, of significantly less funding than during previous LTP periods whilst still being able to respond to the changing environment as and when needed .

As such, our LTP3 is a flexible and dynamic suite of documents which will respond to the changing environment, as and when needed. This LTP aims to provide maximum value for money through close partnership working, by closely integrating our Strategy and Implementation Plan and by monitoring our performance against indicators relevant to local communities.

Appendix B

LTP3 Implementation Plan Executive Summary

This Implementation Plan is the second of the two core documents in the suite of documents that make up the Third Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan (LTP3). It shows how the Implementation Plan fits in with and draws from the LTP Policies and Strategy, and from policy guidance, key objectives and more detailed local strategies.

As the mechanism for managing our delivery of the whole LTP, the Implementation Plan is essentially a business plan detailing how we will deliver the LTP Strategy. It details our programmes for the delivery of transport improvements to the networks managed by the County Council, and also for the day-to-day management and maintenance of the network. It sets out the schemes and measures we expect to deliver over the first year of the plan in detail, and sets out the processes by which future years' programmes will be developed.

The Transport Capital Programme for 2011/12 focuses on the delivery of improvements to the transport network in Cambridgeshire, and the undertaking of major maintenance schemes. The types of measures that are funded from this programme include:

- Traffic calming schemes
- Pedestrian crossings
- Major road maintenance and structural maintenance schemes
- Cycleway schemes
- Junction improvements
- Major schemes (e.g. Guided Busway, Papworth Everard Bypass)

The Transport Revenue Programme for 2011/12 focuses on the day-to-day management and maintenance of the local transport network in Cambridgeshire. The types of measures that are funded from this programme include:

- Routine ongoing minor maintenance (e.g. pothole filling, gully emptying, grass cutting)
- Road safety education
- Winter maintenance
- Travel planning with schools and businesses
- Supported bus services / concessionary bus fares
- School crossing patrols

Funding levels for at least the first four years of this plan will be extremely challenging, with cuts to core funding of around 25% from levels seen over the period of the second Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan (LTP2). There are new opportunities such as the Regional Growth Fund and the Sustainable Transport Fund, but these are bidding funds, and cannot be relied upon to supplement our reduced core budgets.

The significant challenges that the current funding environment brings therefore requires the County Council and its partners to review not only the scope of the programmes that can be delivered, but also the organisational structures that deliver them.

We have therefore set out the process which we will undertake through 2011 to develop the detailed programme for 2012/13 onwards. A detailed programme looking a year ahead will be maintained, along with a less detailed programme setting out the expected expenditure in programme areas of the following 3-4 years. Both will be

updated on an annual basis, to ensure that the Implementation Plan remains aligned with our District Councils' Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and the needs of partner delivery agencies, local stakeholders and the public.

The 2011/12 programme addresses the views of stakeholders and communities by reflecting their views on our LTP objectives and priority areas. For future years, work will be undertaken in 2011 to consider areas or programmes where decision making on priorities and schemes can be devolved to a more local level, but also to identify those areas where it will remain critical to maintain the strategic overview needed to ensure the safe and effective operation of the transport network.

Effective programme management and monitoring of performance is essential if the best possible outcomes are to be achieved from available resources, particularly in times when funding and resources are reducing. Cambridgeshire County Council seeks to ensure that the management of its transport programmes is effective and appropriate, and is accountable to Members of the Council, the Council's partners and the wider community in Cambridgeshire.

Appendix C

Draft LTP3 Programme, 2011/12

| Integrated Transport Block Programme Area | LTP3 funding (£000's) |
|---|-----------------------|
|---|-----------------------|

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Countywide programmes | |
| Accessibility Works | 31 |
| Air Quality Monitoring | 15 |
| Civil Parking Enforcement | 200 |
| Cycleway Improvements (countywide) | 120 |
| Jointly Funded Minor Improvements | 200 |
| Major Roadworks | 90 |
| Major Scheme Development | 100 |
| New Footpaths / Rural Pedestrian Improvements | 50 |
| Safety Schemes (Small and Medium size) | 250 |
| Speed Management | 76 |
| Strategy Development | 100 |
| Cambridge and the Market Towns | |
| Cambridge Access Strategy | 180 |
| Market Town Transport Strategy schemes | 500 |
| Major Project - St Neots Cycle Bridge | 500 |
| Bus Infrastructure - Huntingdon | 50 |
| Smarter Travel Management | |
| HCV Routing | 40 |
| Personalised Travel Plan | 55 |
| Travel for Work | 40 |
| Safer Routes to School | 100 |
| Traveline development | 15 |
| Guided Busway Contribution | 1,000 |
| Integrated Transport Block Total | 3,712 |

| Maintenance Block Programme Area | LTP3 funding (£000's) |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Carriageway / Footway Maintenance | |
| Carriageway maintenance – Non Principal | |
| Carriageway maintenance – Principal | 7,161 |
| Footway Maintenance and Cycle Paths | |
| Rights of Way | 140 |
| Street Lighting | 140 |
| Structural Maintenance | |
| Strengthening of Bridges to carry 40 tonne loading | |
| Structural Maintenance of existing highway structures | 2,448 |
| Traffic Management | |
| Traffic Signal Replacement | 600 |
| Integrated Highways Management Centre | 179 |
| Real Time Passenger Information | 137 |
| Maintenance Block Total | 10,805 |

LTP3 – Huntingdonshire District Council Statement

Introduction

Transport remains a key issue for this Council. Huntingdonshire, as part of the Cambridge Sub-Region, is an area that continues to experience major housing and economic growth. This places demands on transport infrastructure and several major developments require major transport infrastructure improvements to proceed. This is particularly the case in the A14 and A428 corridors

This Council has been an active partner in the delivery of previous LTPs and in the preparation of the new LTP. We intend to remain as active a partner as possible in delivering the policies and action plans of the new LTP across Huntingdonshire. However, our ability to do this will be severely constrained by ongoing local government funding issues. Despite this, we will continue to support the provision of travel choice and the reduction of social exclusion, together with transport related improvements to the environment and local economy.

We will continue to work with a range of partners, including Cambridgeshire County Council, to deliver benefits throughout Huntingdonshire, subject to available resources. We will also continue to participate in the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership and to pursue the Community Plan transport objectives, which are:

- Comprehensive, affordable, safe public transport services
- Improved road safety
- Reduced congestion
- Improved access

Key Issues

Funding

We have included significant capital funding for transport related projects in this Council's Medium Term Plan over the past 10 years. This has been in addition to funding from County and other partners and, for the period 2006-2011, has delivered in excess of £2M of District Council funded transport related expenditure for the benefit of Huntingdonshire. For this new LTP, however, we will not be able to deliver a similar programme to support the aims and objectives of the Plan. We will thus be wholly dependent on funding from external sources, principally Government and development related funding.

Prioritisation

In view of the severe funding constraints, there needs to be clear prioritisation of how LTP3 funding will be allocated. We would advocate the following approach:

- Priority should be given to distributing LTP funding throughout Cambridgeshire, according to need. Spending should be spread across the County, particularly in and around market towns which are experiencing significant growth, rather than just concentrating expenditure in growth areas around Cambridge.

- The application of a modal hierarchy, which gives priority to sustainable modes, in line with *Manual for Streets* and *Cambridgeshire Design Guide* principles. This should include prioritising revenue expenditure, particularly for maintenance, – e.g by giving priority to bus stop, footway and cycleway maintenance, including winter maintenance.
- Balancing the amount allocated for revenue expenditure (e.g. road maintenance, public transport subsidy) with commitments to major capital expenditure. Although capital investment is necessary, this should not starve revenue funding, particularly for highway maintenance.

In setting priorities, there should be full consideration of the area specific transport needs of Huntingdonshire, including:

- Access to strategic centres such as Cambridge, Peterborough and Bedford, particularly along on the A14 and A428 corridors.
- Sustainable transport within, to, and between market towns.
- Rural transport improvements to improve the accessibility of specific areas - a different approach (and priority) may be needed for more and less prosperous areas of the District.

Sustainable Development

A key role for the LTP is to address the transport needs of major development areas in Huntingdonshire and elsewhere. There is currently uncertainty about the future shape of strategic land-use planning, but we will base our strategic land use plans on our Local Development Framework Core Strategy, which was adopted in 2009. A central theme of the Core Strategy is the pursuit of sustainable development (Policy CS1), which includes linking land-use and transport planning and the need to improve access and modal choice for all.

The Core Strategy emphasises the need for contributions to transport (and other) infrastructure requirements (Policy CS10). With reducing Government funding, future transport funding may need to increasingly come from development. We will thus work in conjunction with the County Council and continue to secure as high a level of developer contributions as possible through initiatives such as Market Town Transport Strategies and other approved transport related initiatives where there is development-related impact. In support of this, we intend to pursue the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy as a basis for contributions, as well as considering wider application of area transport plans to outside Cambridge in order to give extra weight to these processes.

At a more detailed level, we welcome the support within LTP3 to *Manual for Streets* principles, including support for a modal hierarchy. With support from the County, we will require developers to design around *Manual for Streets* principles and will judge proposed designs on the basis of those principles. In support of this we will continue to make travel planning (encouraging walking, cycling and public transport use) a requirement of major development.

A14 Corridor

We are extremely disappointed that the proposed A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton highway improvement scheme was deleted from the National Roads Programme in the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review. This scheme remains crucial to Huntingdonshire as well as the wider region and the rest of the country given its national and European strategic importance.

We are working closely with partners, including the County Council, other District Councils and the emerging Local Enterprise Partnership, to encourage the Department for Transport to initiate a study focussed on finding an affordable solution. As partners to this process the Council will need to look to have a much stronger statement of what will be done to promote improvements, including investigating alternative means of funding and delivery. There also needs to be urgent consideration of the impact on the corridor between Huntingdon and Cambridge and, particularly within Huntingdon and St. Ives (and elsewhere) if the scheme does not go ahead, including the future of the Huntingdon viaduct, the loss of development potential and air quality implications.

Huntingdon to Cambridge Guided Bus

It is to be hoped that the current impasse in the opening of the guided part of the route will be resolved in the near future.

We have worked with the County Council to try and get improvements on the unguided (Huntingdon to St Ives) section but, apart from the successful bus priorities and resultant improved services between Huntingdon rail and bus stations, there have been no effective improvements. The routeing and stopping difficulties within St Ives have not yet been addressed. We are 'slightly encouraged' that priority measures remain in the plan between Huntingdon and St. Ives following representations from this Council, despite the scheme being a casualty of recent budget cuts. We remain concerned that without wider routeing issues being addressed, the effectiveness of the Busway between St. Ives and Cambridge will be prejudiced and fail to attract new passengers who otherwise may have travelled along the A14.

Bus Services

Good bus services are essential to Huntingdonshire to ensure accessibility and social inclusion. We will continue to secure improvements to bus services through development, and as Local Planning Authority, will not approve major developments unless there is a high standard of bus provision. We have been committed to improving bus infrastructure, and have contributed £30K per annum to bus shelters. This increased to £100K in 2010/11. From 2011 onwards we will not be able to do this and so will look to the County and other sources for funding.

We would like to see Quality Bus Partnerships / Contracts in Huntingdonshire and continue to press the County Council on this matter. It is particularly disappointing that, despite all the assurances that much would happen as a result of LTP2, very little has actually been delivered within the District. By using these, the County can secure improvements in vehicle quality and service frequency from operators by agreeing, in return, to implement on-street bus priority and bus stop improvements measures. This seems to be supported in the new LTP, but it is not stated where this will be promoted – only "as appropriate". We wish to see a much more definite approach, which includes firm proposals for Huntingdonshire services. In particular, we wish to see real time passenger information at all our bus stops. Some stops have this facility, but the roll-out has been far too infrequent and stalled and also subject to recent budget cuts. We wish to see a programme reinstated in Huntingdonshire so that all our bus stops are provided with real time information in the near future.

We also support the use of Quality Bus Partnerships to ensure that public transport operators use increasingly 'clean' fleets. We thus welcome the proposed inclusion of Huntingdonshire in the Quality Bus Partnership to ensure minimum emission criteria for all Public Service Vehicles, as well as targets for ongoing improvements in emissions which also assists wider, joint air quality objectives.

Walking and Cycling

We have been a proactive and significant partner in working with the County to design and implement walking and cycling improvements over the past ten plus years. We value the cycling improvements that have been implemented over these years and have been pleased to provide direction and contribute £100K per annum to improvements from our Safe Cycle Route budget to support their introduction. Unfortunately, as a result of HDC budget cuts, this funding will no longer be available from 2011 onwards. Additionally, if any of the £300K currently in the cycle budget for 2010/11 that remains uncommitted this year (2010/11) will also not be carried forward.

LTP funding for walking and cycling schemes not associated with development will thus be essential in the future. We particularly need financial commitment to implementing the "Connect 2" network in St Neots, including a new cycle bridge across the Great Ouse, and to improving key routes to schools, together with key Market town and rural routes. This will support the financial commitment to the bridge, including the capital contribution to that scheme by this Council in excess of £500K in 2010/11.

Market Town Transport Strategies

The District Council has worked closely with the County Council and other partners to develop and implement market town transport strategies (MTTS) for Huntingdon and Godmanchester, St Ives, St Neots and, most recently, Ramsey.

We value highly and are proud of what has been achieved through this joint working as well as funding and would want the strategies to continue to be given a high priority in any future allocation of resources, particularly because of their contribution to improving sustainable modes. We thus welcome the County's commitment to the strategies, and their ongoing review, as an essential part of the LTP Implementation Plan.

A particular priority is the West of Town Centre Link Road in Huntingdon, that was included in the first MTTS approved in 2003, which unlocks vital town centre development and improves accessibility. This scheme is largely being funded from a combination of Housing Growth Fund and from development, although the County Council has agreed to forward fund in advance of developer funds being realised. Subsequent repayment will therefore be a joint priority from relevant developments in the area.

The Council has contributed financially, through its Capital programme, to the implementation of these strategies. We will no longer be able to do this for the foreseeable future, due to funding constraints. Additionally, the Council's Projects team have undertaken the design and contract work on a number of schemes in St. Neots and Huntingdon & Godmanchester. The Council's ability to continue to provide

that staffing commitment will be subject to available resources but we would look to do that as far as practicably possible given the high quality, cost-effective partnership service that has been achieved to date.

Rural Strategy

Huntingdonshire is a largely rural in character and we welcome the LTP commitment to developing and implementing a Rural Transport Strategy. The Council's Medium Term Objectives include reducing economic deprivation and supporting rural communities. This includes supporting the use of public transport, including taxis, to enable people who are disadvantaged by location to gain access to employment, leisure and other essential services.

We would thus be very willing to work with the County Council to develop and implement a Rural Transport Strategy which will cover all rural parts of the county whose transport needs are not covered by the market town transport strategies. If this is to supersede the LTP2 Accessibility Strategy, we are strongly of the view that there should be a clear commitment and timescale for producing the Rural Strategy. This is required in addition to the draft Rural Strategy produced by Cambridgeshire Acre, since we have serious misgivings about the deliverability and realism of this strategy and a number of its objectives that while being 'worthy' are completely unrealistic and undeliverable.

We particularly support priority to community transport, and welcome the LTP commitment to "continue the annual funding support for Community Transport Schemes". We would like this to be a ring fenced commitment, in view of the vulnerability of this budget to future cuts. Without it, a rural transport strategy is likely to be ineffective. Currently, we support four existing schemes in the form of revenue support grants in excess of £75K in total per annum that covers such matters as staff resources, professional advice and the running of core services. At the time of writing this Statement, this funding remains in place in our Draft Budget for 2011 onwards and is a vital element in the maintenance of this service but a variety of other funding sources, including via the LTP, will however remain essential.