

Submission to Cabinet7th February 2020

From Max Hunt CC, the Labour Spokesperson

**Item 9: Leicester and Leicestershire
Strategic Transport Priorities 2020 to 2050**

This is an ambitious document offering many challenges needing action to resolve. It is welcome news to read that the County is at last intending to deliver a new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) which will reflect many of the changes in outlook since the ageing LTP3. Given the thirty-year horizon the Plan relies on the Vision provided by the Strategic Growth Plan (LLSGP), but that stops short when it comes to local transport and indeed climate change.

We look forward to the Consultation when it takes place but meantime have the following concerns.

Growth of Traffic to 2050

It is difficult to see how policy can be developed without planning for, or estimating, future levels of transport year by year. Within the medium term of the Plan conventional (IC) cars and vans may begin to be replaced by cheaper electric vehicles (EVs) but if so this will increase both ownership and use of cars and vans. So it is not clear in the Plan how this plan intends to manage traffic growth in the county in a sustainable way.

Transport Options to 2050

There is a false assumption that technology alone, typically EV cars and vans, will deliver the necessary carbon reductions and clean air. On present plans and given a replacement cycle of 12 to 18 years, IC vehicles will still be on the road by 2040. There is still no alternative solution for HGVs. Furthermore, because Carbon in the atmosphere continues to have a warming effect for many years, the more CO₂ that is emitted within the first part of the Plan, say up to 2025, the more severe action will be needed to reduce emissions in the later years to catch up.

That is why some demand management is an increasing requirement of transport policy but is difficult to detect this in the County's plans. Even in the long term there are no measures to advantage buses, integrated rail and bus, or to favour multi-occupancy vehicles. Nor is there any consideration of how central government measures, more free public transport perhaps, may affect the Plan within the medium term.

The most significant demand side innovation within the Plan is, of course, the City's **workplace parking levy** and this will have the greatest effect on the county towns and parishes surrounding the city. These peripheral towns and parishes are usually those within a 30 minute off peak bus ride of the city centre. They include those identified in the City and County joint Connecting Leicester project (in blue on para 4.12), those in yellow in para 5.18 and others. Paragraph 5.12 presents another list of peripheral urban parishes.

Travel Around Leicester (Theme 2)

So, given the logic of Connecting Leicester and the Transforming Cities project, the second theme **Travel around Leicester** should logically include the peripheral towns and parishes. Connecting Leicester includes at least 500,000 residents of which over 100,000 live in the county. These, however are lumped into as "Other Urban Areas" in Theme 4 together with other County Towns with quite different travel patterns. As a result the effect of City policies and the travel needs of those towns and urban parishes are not given sufficient weight. The LTP2 2006-11, incidentally, addressed the central Leicestershire area as one community in transport terms despite their administrative arrangements.

Predominantly Rural Leicestershire (Theme 3)

The third theme is largely applicable to the "predominantly rural" areas of the county. Excluding the county towns and urban areas, these cover about 275,000 people. There is not much on offer for these rural areas, though to some extent this is managed with the new Leicestershire Passenger Transport Strategy and the preference away from growth in rural locations in the LLSGP.

On the other hand, the theme overlooks the transport 'micro-climates' that exist and the opportunities presented in either our county towns or the periphery of Leicester.

Travel within and around County Towns (theme 4)

Unfortunately, this Plan does nothing for our county towns which are bearing the majority of growth in the LLSGP, nor much for the towns and parishes around the city who will pay for workplace parking levy. Traffic growth into several of our county towns is now causing significant congestion at peak times and threatening air quality. In addition, access around our town shopping centres is neglected as all development is focused on major roads on the periphery.

The proposal to '*carry out studies into each of the county towns to identify their individual challenges, opportunities, and needs*' is welcome but no substitute for action but none are cited. Having analysed traffic in detail around SUEs and embarked on multi-million pound projects in Melton, Loughborough, Coalville, and Hinckley, many people may ask why we don't already know what is needed.

Encouragement is proposed as the way to increase the use of passenger transport but incentives are what is really required, including more appropriate infrastructure. It seems that the best that county towns can expect are '*small scale highway improvements*'.

Note: The document describes the whole administrative county as 'predominantly rural'. This is an important statement because it conditions the way we plan transport.

In 5.14 (Theme 3) the Plan states:

Approximately 1 million people live in Leicester and Leicestershire (680,000 in the county), spread over an area of approximately 832 square miles. Of these, just under 50% are spread across the county towns, villages, and isolated rural settlements that surround the Leicester City area. Outside of the city, population density is just 860 people per square mile.

Based on the 2018 Population estimates, and identifying the City Fringe according to the Connect Leicester use of 30 minute bus ride, the split is something like:

City	355,218	37%
Rural County	276,467	29%
County Towns	216,030	22%
County/City Fringe	119,901	12%
City & County	967,616	

The point here is that the needs of the four areas have very different travel needs.

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