

**CABINET – 20 JULY 2021****DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERIM
MELTON MOWBRAY TRANSPORT STRATEGY****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the outcome of the engagement on the draft interim Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy (MMTS) and to seek approval to adopt the Interim MMTS.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that:
 - (a) The responses to the engagement, on the draft Interim Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy (MMTS) as set out in paragraphs 44 to 71 and Appendix A to this report, and the proposed revisions made to the Interim MMTS as a consequence, be noted;
 - (b) The revised Interim MMTS and Summary MMTS attached to this report as Appendices B and C respectively be approved.

Reason for Recommendations

3. Significant traffic congestion in the town of Melton Mowbray has affected the lives of its residents, the efficiency of its businesses and its ability to grow. An MMTS remains vital to addressing the town's existing traffic problems and supporting its continued growth, and in achieving wider objectives, including in respect of the environment.
4. There is a Government requirement to submit an MMTS alongside the Full Business Case for the North and East Melton Mowbray Distributor Road (NE MMDR) scheme in Autumn 2021. Notwithstanding this, it is important to note that the interim strategy incorporates the MMDR in its entirety (i.e. the northern, eastern and southern sections), as well as the wider measures that will be needed to support the MMDR's delivery. Subsequent references within this report to "MMDR" refer to the distributor road in its broadest sense (i.e. northern, eastern and southern), whereas references to "NE MMDR" refer specifically to the north and east MMDR scheme.
5. Engagement with stakeholders is an important part of the process for developing new strategies. It helps to ensure that the Authority takes account of customer

expectations and delivers the most appropriate service levels, consistent with the budget available.

6. The Interim MMTS will help provide a transparent framework for determining decisions on transport priorities, ensure co-ordination of investment, support the Borough Council's Local Plan and build on work undertaken jointly with Melton Borough Council during the preparation of the Local Plan.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

7. The Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee was consulted on the draft Interim MMTS on 4 March 2021. Its views are set out in paragraphs 67 to 68 of this report.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. Supporting the economy of market towns and rural Leicestershire is a priority of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership's (LLEP) Strategic Economic Plan, which was considered by the Cabinet in March 2014.
9. The Enabling Growth Action Plan, approved by the Cabinet in March 2015, identifies supporting the development of market towns for employment land as a priority activity for the County Council. It includes a specific action to work with Melton Borough Council to plan for the future growth of Melton Mowbray.
10. The third Leicestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP3), approved by the County Council in March 2011, contains six strategic transport goals. Goal 1 is to have a transport system that supports a prosperous economy and provides successfully for population growth. The LTP3 sets out the County Council's approach to achieving this, namely, to improve the management of the road network and continuing to address congestion issues.
11. The LTP3 Implementation Plan (2015/16), approved by the Cabinet in March 2015, contains an action to take forward work to identify and cost a preferred scheme to address Melton Mowbray's transport problems.
12. In September 2015 the Cabinet considered the development of a MMTS. The report explained why it was necessary to develop a Strategy, advised the Cabinet of the outcomes of transport studies and set out proposals for taking forward the development and eventual delivery of a MMTS. The Cabinet agreed inter alia:
 - that the strategic growth of Melton Mowbray be supported in principle;
 - that the Council as Highway Authority would accept a proportionate and reasonable deterioration in traffic conditions in Melton Mowbray as a result of developments being permitted prior to full completion of the MMDR, on the condition that such developments were contributing to the delivery of the MMDR and wider Strategy.
13. In May 2016 the Cabinet considered a report concerning proposals for the development and eventual delivery of the MMTS, which included plans for the MMDR. It agreed inter alia continuation of the development of the MMTS and authorised the Director of Environment and Transport to undertake the necessary

consultations and negotiations as required to enable the definition of a preferred route for the NE MMDR.

14. In December 2017 Cabinet considered a report concerning the NE MMDR Proposals and Outline Business Case (OBC). The Cabinet agreed that OBC should be submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) to seek funding for the NE MMDR scheme through the Government's Large Local Major Transport Schemes Fund ('Large Local Majors'). As part of this decision, it also agreed to authorise all of the subsequent work and other commitments required to progress the scheme in the event of a successful outcome to the Large Local Majors bid. The preparation and adoption of the Interim MMTS is needed to support the planned submission of the NE MMDR Full Business Case to the DfT in Autumn 2021 and is therefore pursuant to the commitments made in December 2017.
15. The MMTS will also support the delivery of the County Council's new Cycling and Walking Strategy, which is separately due to be considered at this meeting.

Resource Implications

16. Development of the MMTS continues to be funded from the Highways and Transport Capital Programme, as approved as part of the 2021-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy and as noted by the Cabinet in March 2021.
17. Separate reports to the Cabinet have set out the implications associated with the development and delivery of the MMDR. Further updates on that project will be brought to the Cabinet as necessary.
18. Aside from the costs of the MMDR, it is probable that to fully implement an MMTS (i.e. to deliver all the proposed measures that it will likely embrace) will run to several tens of millions of pounds. Just over £14m of developer contributions have so far been secured towards the delivery of the MMDR and other transport measures in the town.
19. However, given the wider financial pressures on the Council, beyond that, delivery of the MMTS will be dependent on continuing to seek to secure funding from other sources, including from third parties (e.g. developers through the planning system – not just from the Sustainable Neighbourhoods, but from other developments as they come forward, e.g. the Manufacturing Zones) and public funds (e.g. Government funding (bidding) opportunities). There is very little funding available in the most recently approved Highways and Transport Capital Programme to materially contribute towards MMTS delivery, i.e. beyond funding for its development and costs associated with delivery of the MMDR.
20. A robust supporting evidence base is essential to these processes and having an MMTS in place should help to unlock these funding opportunities.
21. The cost of the Interim MMTS engagement exercise was funded from within the existing Environment and Transport revenue budget.
22. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted on the content of this report.

Legal Implications

23. The Interim MMTS would support the Authority's responsibilities as Local Transport Authority.
24. The Director of Law and Governance has been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

Mr. J. T. Orson JP CC
Mrs. P. Posnett MBE CC
Mr. M. Frisby CC
Mr. B. Lovegrove CC

Officers to Contact

Ann Carruthers - Director
Environment and Transport
Tel: (0116) 305 7000
Email: ann.carruthers@leics.gov.uk

Janna Walker - Acting Assistant Director, Development and Growth
Environment and Transport
Tel: (0116) 305 0785
Email: janna.walker@leics.gov.uk

PART B**Background**

25. Despite previous investments in highway improvements, Melton Mowbray continues to experience some significant traffic congestion problems. Evidence highlights that further significant housing and economic growth in the town is likely to exacerbate these problems. As a result, a significant and coordinated investment in new transportation measures is required to enable the town's future growth.
26. In September 2015, the County Council committed to the development of the MMTS, to provide a basis for future transport investment to support Melton Borough Council's (then-emerging) Local Plan to 2036. The Plan is now adopted and provides for significant housing (over 3,500 new homes by 2036) and employment growth (at least 80ha) in and around the town. The Plan also embeds the delivery of that growth with the development and delivery of an MMTS (including the MMDR). Additionally, there are plans for four Manufacturing Zones, which taken together with the Local Plan allocation would provide for around 160ha of employment.

The continued importance of having an MMTS

27. The development, adoption and delivery of an MMTS remains important for a number of reasons, including:
- supporting a number of national and local priorities, including air quality, the environment, carbon, economic growth, housing and health. The MMTS will play a fundamental role in influencing the future development of transport interventions in Melton Mowbray,
 - that the MMDR alone is not sufficient to support Melton Mowbray's planned growth – evidence shows that it needs to form part of a wider package of complementary measures if the town is to grow successfully and wider objectives are to be achieved, including environmental,
 - that it will provide a clear framework for development and delivery of other measures – without such either there is a significant risk that those measures will not be delivered, or they will be delivered in a reactive, inefficient and uncoordinated way that fails to maximise the value of currently planned and future investments; and
 - that it will provide an evidenced-based platform that strengthens the Authority's position in continuing to secure developer contributions towards the delivery of the MMDR and wider measures and on which to take-up future Government bidding opportunities (where it is affordable for the Authority to do so).
28. Without an MMTS, there is a risk that it will not be possible to keep short-term deterioration in traffic conditions within the town to proportionate and reasonable levels (as agreed by the Cabinet in 2015). If this were to occur, economic growth and recovery could be undermined; the delivery of wider goals and objectives, including environmental, could likewise be undermined.
29. Notwithstanding the reasons set out above, there is a requirement by Government

that a Strategy is submitted alongside the Full Business Case for the NE MMDR. Any failure to do so might undermine that case, in turn potentially putting at risk the near £50m Large Local Majors funding previously earmarked by Government towards the delivery of that project.

Why an Interim Strategy at this time?

30. There are two key reasons why only an Interim Strategy has been drafted at this time -
1. *Impacts of COVID-19*
31. It is too early to have anywhere near sufficient evidence to understand what the potential longer-term societal and economic impacts of the pandemic might be. Whilst it would be inappropriate to abandon or radically alter *strategic* policies and strategies at such a time, conversely for lower order policies and strategies, such as ones relating to particular areas or places, it might be more appropriate to allow for a degree of flexibility.
32. Such is the case with the MMTS; putting in place an interim document will provide an appropriate framework that reflects and fulfils the reasons for needing a Strategy, as set out in the section above, whilst providing a framework that gives a degree of flexibility to tune the balance of measures to be provided in the light of, inter alia, further emerging evidence of the pandemic's impacts. (It is important to emphasise that COVID-19 does not alter the fundamental case for the MMDR; its provision is essential to opening up areas of land for housing and employment growth and it will provide for people to travel by a number of modes and for the movement of goods and delivery of services.)
2. *Town centre regeneration*
33. Melton Borough Council has ambitions to improve the attractiveness and quality of the town centre environment. Preliminary work to inform the development of an MMTS included traffic modelling of various conceptual options for changes to the capacity of town centre roads (including Norman Way and Wilton Road). This modelling has shown that traffic conditions in the town centre are sensitive to significant changes (2036 scenario), with queues and significant delays forecast to result from even (relatively) minor capacity reductions.
34. Any future plans for regenerating the town centre (including the development of any possible masterplans proposing changes to the layout of the town centre) could well have a fundamental impact on how traffic behaves in Melton Mowbray. It will also determine the scope for potential enhancements to walking, cycling and passenger transport facilities across the town centre. It is therefore critical that the development of the MMTS is informed by any such plans.
35. Additionally, proposals for the Manufacturing Zones in and around the town have yet to be drawn-up in any detail and work is ongoing on masterplans for the northern and southern Sustainable Neighbourhoods; the outcomes of this work too will influence the content of the MMTS.
36. Putting place an interim MMTS will allow further time to understand ambitions for

the town centre and to finalise proposals/masterplans for key development sites in and around the town.

37. In addition, the interim MMTS provides for the Authority to develop and put in places its responses to the Government's step change in policy towards cycling and walking, and towards road passenger transport ('buses'). For example, the Council is currently adopting a new Cycling and Walking Strategy (CaWS). The full MMTS will be developed in the light of the approved CaWS and of the Council's response to the National Bus Strategy.

Overview of draft Interim Strategy

38. The interim MMTS document is more limited in scope than a full transport strategy and is not a long-term replacement for the full MMTS. Nonetheless, once approved the interim document should be treated as the MMTS, until a final version is put in place. It is intended that the Interim MMTS will be submitted to Government with the NE MMDR Full Business Case (Autumn 2021).
39. Once the Borough Council's plans for regenerating the town centre are shared, further work, including additional modelling and development of options for changes to the configuration and capacity of town centre roads, will be undertaken.
40. Notwithstanding paragraph 38, the draft interim MMTS is a comprehensive, sizeable, evidence-based document that draws together a wide range of information about the town and about traffic and transport conditions. It provides the basis for future transport investment in Melton Mowbray, supporting Melton's Local Plan and maximising opportunities to enable Melton Mowbray's economic growth and to deliver on wider objectives, including environmental. The Interim MMTS provides a road map for completing the full MMTS.
41. In brief summary, the draft interim document (Appendix B) sets out:
- a description of the area, providing an overview of the town;
 - the purpose of the Strategy, explaining why it is being developed and some of the benefits in doing so;
 - details of traffic and transport, including a general summary of traffic conditions in the town;
 - description of issues and challenges, including five key themes:
 1. Growth
 2. Environment
 3. Access to opportunities
 4. Health and wellbeing
 5. Funding.
42. It also provides a framework for the approach to be taken to addressing issues, including:
- conceptual proposals for improving the walking and cycling network across the town;
 - suggestions for improving the attractiveness of passenger transport provision in the town, including the possibility for a 'bus hub' (mini-bus station);

- ideas for the comprehensive reclassification and re-signing of roads in the town to complement the MMDR, with the general intention of reducing the classification (status) of roads through the town and encouraging as much traffic as is possible to use the MMDR; and
- proposals for re-routing lorry movements post opening of MMDR, with the general intention of rationalising the number of routes that lorries are permitted to use and maximising their use of the MMDR.

43. Additionally, it also sets out draft policies that are intended to strengthen the Authority's position in:

- seeking to safeguard the delivery of and future functioning of the MMDR; and
- securing further developer contributions towards the delivery of the MMDR and wider Strategy measures.

Engagement

Overview of the exercise

44. The public engagement on the draft Interim MMTS opened on 20 January 2021 and closed on 7 March 2021 (just over six weeks). This early engagement was an important stage in developing the Interim MMTS.
45. There was targeted engagement with residents, key stakeholders e.g. businesses, passenger transport providers, landowners, developers, local action groups, Public Health England, and emergency services.
46. The engagement materials included the draft summary version of the interim MMTS document, along with an online survey and an interactive online forum called 'Confers'. Through use of maps, the Confers forum encouraged people to provide more detailed, location specific responses, which will also be valuable in respect of future programme and scheme development. The materials were published on the "have your say" section of Leicestershire County Council's website and on the Leicestershire Confers Portal, with hard copies of documents available on request; ad-hoc responses were accepted via a dedicated email address and by post.
47. The engagement featured prominently in the 21 January edition of the Melton Times and this was supplemented by advertising the engagement through social media (Twitter and Facebook) and stakeholder networks. In addition, posters advertising the engagement were placed in locations that were likely to still receive relatively high levels of footfall, such as supermarkets and COVID-19 vaccination centres. To ensure that the engagement was COVID-19 compliant no public exhibitions were held.
48. The engagement document set out the key aspects of the Interim Strategy (paragraphs 1.1 to 1.11 of Appendix A). The purpose of this engagement was to gather opinions on the early ideas and options that were explored in the draft, to help inform the early development of the interim MMTS. The specific aims of the engagement were to:
- establish the level of public support for the Strategy;

- gain a further understanding of travel behaviour and transport issues in the town;
 - inform the overall approach that the Council was proposing to take in the Strategy to addressing the traffic and transport issues and also in seeking to influence peoples' travel habits;
 - inform the further development of proposals for re-routeing of traffic in the town post MMDR opening, including lorry movements; and
 - inform the further development of the proposed policies.
49. Although part of the overall Strategy, consultations on the MMDR have been, and will continue to be, undertaken separately. As such they were out of scope of the MMTS engagement. Nevertheless, strong overall support was expressed for the continuation of the MMDR scheme during the interim MMTS engagement exercise.
50. The evidence base that underpins the development of the Interim MMTS has been jointly developed with Melton Borough Council through work on its Local Plan. The Borough Council is also represented on the Project Board overseeing the delivery of the NE MMDR and in that role had preliminary input to the development of the draft interim MMTS document. Officers continued to engage with the Borough Council through the engagement process, to help inform the final draft of the interim document.
51. The Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the draft Interim MMTS on 4 March 2021, as part of the engagement process.
52. Subject to approval of the Interim MMTS, it is intended that further engagement will be undertaken on the full MMTS, as its development is taken forward.

Engagement Responses - Overview

53. The survey asked a number of key questions and provided an opportunity to provide an expanded response for each one. There was also an opportunity for respondees to make further comments through the Confers online forum.
54. A total of 162 responses were received (117 survey responses and 43 Confers forum responses). Not all respondents answered every question.
55. A summary of the 117 survey responses shows the following:
- a) 72 (61%) expressed dissatisfaction with current traffic and transport conditions and infrastructure within the town. The most common reason cited for this concerned levels of traffic congestion, however a wide range of other issues were also raised, with significant numbers in particular relating to poor quality cycling and walking infrastructure and limited public transport.
 - b) 95 (81%) agreed with the need for a transport strategy for the town.
 - c) 74 (66%) agreed with the key issues and themes identified in the strategy.
 - d) High levels of support for all the proposed schemes and policies included within the interim strategy:
 - 66 (58%) agreed with the proposals to reclassify and renumber roads across

- the town and 95 (84%) agreed with the proposals to introduce additional HGV restrictions within the town following completion of the MMDR.
- 89 (82%) and 84 (76%) respectively agreed with the proposed policies to protect the MMDR's design (*Policy 1*) and alignment (*Policy 2*) from inappropriate future development.
 - 79 (73%) agreed with the proposed policies relating to the development and delivery of the full MMTS (*Policy 3*) and securing financial contributions towards the MMDR and wider MMTS (*Policy 4*).
- e) High levels of support for most of the proposed workstreams for developing the full strategy (with the exception of workstreams 1 and 2, as discussed separately under point (f) below):
- 68 (58%) agreed with the emerging proposals to make cycling and walking (and other non-motorised forms of travel) around the town safer and more attractive (*Workstream 3*).
 - 73 (64%) agreed with the emerging proposals and principles for improving the town's road passenger network and bus infrastructure (*Workstreams 4, 5 and 6*).
 - 94 (81%) agreed with the emerging proposals to improve rail services and accessibility at Melton Mowbray Railway Station (*Workstreams 7 and 8*).
 - 68 (61%) supported exploring potential changes to parking in the town centre (*Workstream 9*)
 - 82 (71%) supported exploring opportunities to improve facilities for charging electric vehicles across the town (*Workstream 10*)
 - 72 (62%) supported developing a programme of activity to change travel behaviours in Melton (*Workstream 11*)
- f) Less support for proposed Workstreams 1 and 2:
- 69 (59%) disagreed with the emerging proposals for Workstream 1. Based on the accompanying comments received, this appeared to be overwhelmingly a response to the specific suggested idea of converting the central ring road to a one-way system, as opposed to the broader principle of making changes to the central ring road or the broad aims/aspirations that this idea was seeking to achieve. This is discussed in more detail in paragraph 63 below.
 - 51 (43%) agreed with the emerging proposals for converting Mill Street, Regent Street and Brook Street to one-way eastbound running (*Workstream 2*), as opposed to 36 (32%) who disagreed and 29 (25%) who did not express a clear opinion or didn't know. A key theme from the accompanying comments was a desire to see more evidence about what the suggested one-way idea would achieve and/or how it would operate in conjunction with wider emerging options for the central ring road (i.e. *Workstream 1*). This is discussed in more detail in paragraph 63 below.

Proposed responses to issues raised during the engagement

56. **General approach:** In line with the County Council's normal procedures, it is not

proposed to provide bespoke, individual responses to each individual or body that made a comment. Rather, as usual, comments have been grouped together into key issues/themes.

57. **Response to key issues/themes:** Appendix A provides a comprehensive summary of the key issues/themes raised during the engagement and the proposed responses; in some cases, the response has been to make changes to the draft interim MMTS. Those changes are included in the revised draft MMTS document and summary document attached as Appendix B and C.
58. Notwithstanding Appendix A, there are several key issues/themes of particular note that it is considered worthy of covering in the main body of this report, as described in the following paragraphs, 59 to 66.

Issue raised: The interim strategy should include a clearer long-term vision and principles for developing the full strategy

Response: The reasons for which we have developed the interim MMTS are set out in paragraphs 30 to 37 of this report, including key uncertainties that are likely to have significant implications for the content of the full strategy. These uncertainties mean it would be both very challenging and potentially counterproductive to set out a fully formed vision for the full strategy at this time. It is instead considered most appropriate to allow for a degree of flexibility within the interim strategy in respect of the future parameters for developing the full strategy (which the County Council intends to progress as soon as it becomes practicable to do so).

However, within the updated interim strategy we have sought to more clearly define the key issues that the proposed full strategy workstreams will seek to address, as well as explicitly set out ‘key principles’ for the revised workstream to explore potential changes to the central ring road/town centre highway network..

59. **Issue raised: Objection to the inclusion or perceived over-emphasis of “growth” as a key theme**

Response: The principle of growth across the town has already been established through the adopted Melton Local Plan. The MMTS is integral to the delivery of the adopted Local Plan (as set out through policies IN1 and IN3 of the Plan) and will ensure that transport investments to support/mitigate the impacts of planned growth are maximised and coordinated. In this context, an MMTS that fails to acknowledge or address the transport implications of growth would not prevent growth from happening altogether; conversely, it is likely to result in a piecemeal, developer-led approach to investment that does not support growth to the same extent or result in the same level of wider benefits to the town (in terms of existing issues and the other themes identified through the strategy evidence base).

60. **Issue raised: Insufficient emphasis on fighting climate change and decarbonising the town’s transport system.**

Response: Climate change and the need for decarbonisation of Melton Mowbray’s transport system feature prominently within the Interim Strategy’s evidence base and key issues under *Theme 2: Environment*. The traffic relief provided by the

MMDR and other measures proposed through the Interim Strategy will be crucial to encourage increased walking, cycling and passenger transport use (and conversely reduce private car use) for short journeys within the town. This includes creating opportunities to improve walking, cycling and passenger transport facilities, such as the planned walking and cycling facility running alongside the MMDR, which will boost orbital walking and cycling connections around the town.

Notwithstanding this, the full MMTS will provide a comprehensive response to the challenge of decarbonising the town's transport system, as demonstrated by the range of proposed workstreams set out within chapter 5 of the interim strategy dedicated to exploring opportunities to boost walking, cycling and passenger transport use as well as supporting the 'electrification' of road transport. Indeed, a key benefit of preparing the Interim MMTS at this stage is that it provides more time and flexibility for currently emerging/insufficiently mature zero-carbon transport technologies and Government guidance to be considered as part of the full Strategy. With this in mind, the scope of proposed Workstream 9 has been widened since the conclusion of the engagement exercise to incorporate exploration of emerging and future transport technologies in a broad sense (i.e. as opposed to focussing specifically on electric car charging infrastructure as previously).

61. Issue raised: The MMDR scheme isn't being delivered quickly enough.

Response: The Interim MMTS affirms the County Council's commitment towards the delivery of the MMDR, the principle of which was established through the adopted Melton Local Plan (as set out through policies IN1 and IN3 of the Plan). However, the detailed processes and timescales for delivering the MMDR are well beyond the scope of the Interim MMTS.

Notwithstanding this, it is important to note that major road schemes on the scale of the MMDR typically take up to 10 years from initial conception to prepare for construction, due to the wide range and complexity of work that must be undertaken, statutory procedures that must be followed and issues that must be addressed in order to reach 'shovel-ready' stage, crucially including the need to secure external (Government and/or developer) funding.

In this regard, the MMDR scheme has progressed significantly faster than might have been anticipated, with the North and East sections (NE MMDR) having provisionally secured funding through the Department for Transport's (DfT) Large Local Major Transport Schemes Fund, with a full business case for the NE MMDR scheme currently being prepared for submission to the DfT in Autumn 2021 for final approval. If confirmed, the Government will provide £49.5m towards the scheme's delivery, with the remainder of the scheme's costs being met by developer contributions secured and forward funded by Leicestershire County Council and Melton Borough Council. This will in turn enable construction of the NE MMDR to commence in Spring 2022, with the scheme expected to open in 2024.

As a key supporting document for the NE MMDR full business case, an approved Interim MMTS will maximise the likelihood of final DfT approval for the NE MMDR scheme and its subsequent delivery in accordance with the above timescales.

62. Issue raised: Object to the idea of converting the central ring road to a one-way system (as suggested through workstream 1)

Response: The idea of converting the central ring road to a one-way system emerged from early conceptual work to explore how radical it might be possible to be (i.e. ‘test the boundaries’) in making changes to the highway network in and around the town centre to support regeneration (albeit based on the limited information available at the time about likely regeneration proposals and aspirations) and increased walking and cycling. The key principles underpinning this work, as well as the other options considered and reasons these were discounted prior to the engagement on the draft Interim Strategy, are set out within Chapter 5 of the Interim MMTS document.

The early conceptual work suggested that, in principle, the idea of converting the central ring road to a one-way system had the potential to facilitate regeneration and increased walking and cycling without causing unacceptable worsening of traffic conditions within the town (unlike all the other options considered). However, it was recognised that the radical changes to traffic routing that would arise from this idea would also have potential drawbacks (e.g. in terms of increased journey times and traffic volumes on certain roads) and that there was a need to seek wider public and stakeholder views on the overall concept before committing any additional resource to further exploring and developing it into a more detailed proposal.

Taken as a whole, the feedback received during the engagement in response to the idea of converting the central ring road to a one-way system idea suggests that there is currently little enthusiasm for such radical changes to the routing of traffic within the town (either amongst the public or key stakeholders including Melton Borough Council or Melton BID). When considered alongside the other, discounted options, this feedback points towards a more incremental approach, avoiding the need for any major reductions to traffic capacity and/or changes to traffic routing within the town centre, as the most appropriate avenue for further investigation during the next stages of work. The Interim MMTS document has correspondingly been updated to reflect this.

63. **Issue raised: Query the purpose/benefits of the idea of converting Mill Street/Regent Street/Brook Street to one-way (eastbound only) running, and how this idea would interact with wider transport proposals for the town centre (including the idea of converting the central ring road to a one-way system – as discussed above)**

Response: Based on the responses received during the engagement to the idea of converting Mill Street, Regent Street and Brook Street to one-way running, there appears to be merit to evaluating this concept further during the next stage of work. However, we acknowledge that more evidence is needed to understand the specific benefits (or otherwise) of this idea and how it would interact/work in conjunction with any wider proposals for the town centre before deciding on whether or not it should be included in the full MMTS. In reflection of this second point, the Interim MMTS document has been updated to combine the previously separate central ring road and Mill Street/Regent Street/Brook Street workstreams into a single workstream for the overall town centre highway network.

64. **Issue raised: The strategy should consider additional cycling and walking improvements (specific comments covered a range of suggestions including**

better links to existing public rights of way and surrounding villages, or seeking to increase use/improve public access to old railway lines, open spaces and waterways)

Response: Suggestions received during the engagement on this topic will be considered during subsequent work to develop the Melton Mowbray Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP; as proposed through Workstream 2). The proposed cycling and walking network will be updated to incorporate suggested changes or additions where evidence supports this.

65. **Issue raised: The strategy should also consider more localised traffic issues within the town**

Response: An extra proposed workstream has been added to Chapter 5 of the interim strategy document confirming our intention to address residual local traffic management issues in and around the town (such as ‘rat running’ on residential roads and minor country lanes, speeding, or problems associated with on-street parking). The specific locations and issues to be explored through this workstream will be informed by feedback and evidence from members of the public and key stakeholders, including comments and suggestions received during the public engagement exercise held between January and March 2021.

66. **Issue raised: What evidence gathering and/or assessments have been undertaken to inform the inclusion of the potential scheme ideas set out within the proposed workstreams?**

Response: The potential scheme ideas set out in Chapter 5 of the *interim* MMTS document have been developed from evidence gathered over a number of years and/or wider policies and priorities. Additionally, the options considered to date for the central ring road (through Workstream 1) have been informed by initial conceptual design and modelling to help understand the implications of these options on traffic network performance and routeing. Summaries of all this evidence have been provided in the interim MMTS document.

All the scheme ideas set out in Chapter 5 of the revised Interim MMTS document will need to be explored and assessed further in more detail, informed by the responses to the engagement as well as any wider emerging evidence and policies. The approval of the interim MMTS, including the future workstreams, will provide a foundation for this further work.

Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments

67. On 4 March 2021 the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the draft interim MMTS, as part of the engagement exercise. It was resolved that the views of the Committee would be included in the report presented to Cabinet on the ‘final’ version of the Interim MMTS.

68. The Committee raised a number of points, which are set out below:

- Members noted Cabinet’s decision (2015) to accept a ‘proportionate and reasonable’ deterioration in traffic conditions on the condition that the growth

pressure were to be for a limited period pending the completion of the MMDR. The development of the Melton Transport Strategy alongside other interim measures were aimed at resolving traffic deterioration within Melton.

- Members agreed that it was reasonable, in light of Covid-19, to begin with an interim Transport Strategy, on the basis that this would further allow for consideration of the ambitions for the town centre, areas of key development in and around the town as well as addressing issues post-Covid. The Committee also supported the aspirations set out within the engagement document to provide a long-term vision for the delivery of future improvements to Melton's transport network, while making Melton more attractive for pedestrians, cyclists, local residents and visitors.
- The Committee supported the creation of an Interim Transport Strategy for Melton Mowbray.

Non-survey responses and more detailed 'specific' comments

69. In addition to the formal survey responses received, a total of 14 responses to the engagement were made via the project mailbox MMTS@leics.gov.uk.
70. Whilst the engagement sought people's views on the draft interim MMTS, many of the responses received outside of the engagement contained comments about specific development and infrastructure proposals and schemes, some of which the County Council is responsible for, but many promoted by others.
71. Whatever source such specific comments were received by, they fall outside the remit of this engagement. However, where appropriate, detailed comments will be considered by the relevant scheme/development/plan lead, as they are taken forward.

Conclusions

72. The Interim MMTS is a high-level strategic document that sets out transport aspirations to meet the challenge of economic and housing growth in Melton Mowbray. More detail about specific schemes, initiatives and development etc. sits beneath the Strategy.
73. Whilst work on COVID-19 transport recovery continues, it is not possible to predict its longer-term impact on transport use and on wider societal behaviours. As knowledge and understanding progress, the interim and final MMTS will reflect this evidence.
74. There are no fundamental reasons to abandon and/or pause the development of the Interim MMTS as a result of the responses received from the public engagement. However, as a result of the engagement, amendments have been made to the document to seek to clarify or address certain points.
75. It is currently intended that the Interim MMTS will be replaced by the full MMTS at an appropriate time. However, it is likely that minor amendments will be required to the Interim MMTS in the intervening period, for example, to respond to changes in legislation.

76. The publication of the Interim MMTS is just a starting point. The County Council will continue to work with stakeholders and partners to develop and deliver the highways and transportation and other infrastructure measures required to enable Melton's long-term growth within the wider financial constraints of the Authority.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

77. The Equality Act 2010 requires the Authority to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity between different protected groups.
78. Melton Borough Council's Local Plan (2011-2036) states that the Borough's population is ageing, to such an extent that if trends continue unchecked, there will be an increase in deaths over births in the Borough by 2036.
79. One of the aims of the MMTS is to improve accessibility for all ages, including older people. The County Council will continue to take an evidence-based approach to ensure that funds are focussed where they can provide the most benefit and continue to monitor the effectiveness of this approach.
80. The MMTS will facilitate the provision of transport improvements that will assist the local economy and facilitate sustainable, safe and healthy communities. It will do this by tackling congestion on our roads and encouraging walking, cycling and the use of passenger transport. Beneficiaries of the MMTS include all network users e.g. pedestrians, cyclists, drivers and passenger transport users.
81. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) screening has been completed. This identified an overall neutral/positive impact from the interim MMTS. A full EHRIA was not therefore required.
82. The Strategy and schemes will continue to be developed, focussing on providing the greatest benefit. Potentially there could be an impact on older people and those who live in isolated areas. The Council will seek to ensure that specific infrastructure and services are planned effectively, including possible alternative methods of transport and/or priority for specific groups, to make certain that any negative impacts are considered, and infrastructure and services are planned effectively.
83. As the MMTS is a high-level strategic document, mitigation of any adverse impacts upon individuals or community groups will also fall to subsequent statutory plans, primarily the Local Plan prepared by Melton Borough Council.
84. If appropriate, separate Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments will be completed as specific schemes are developed.

Environmental Impact

85. The interim MMTS outlines the high-level environmental challenges that are faced in developing transport priorities in Melton. Schemes will be informed by the

Council's Environment Strategy, Carbon Reduction Road Map, Strategic Plan and national policies, ensuring that environmental and climate change commitments are an integral part of proposals.

86. If appropriate, an Environmental Impact Assessment will be completed as specific schemes are developed.

Background Papers

Cabinet - 11 September 2015 – development of a Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=4230&Ver=4>

Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 4 March 2021 –
Development of a Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1044&MId=6393&Ver=4>

Appendices

Appendix A – Engagement summary and response

Appendix B – Revised draft Interim MMTS

Appendix C – Revised draft Summary MMTS

This page is intentionally left blank