Leicestershire County Council

CABINET – 24 MARCH 2026

DELIVERING THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP4) 2025-2040 ENABLING TRAVEL CHOICE STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is:

    a) To advise the Cabinet of the outcomes of the initial consultation that was undertaken to inform the development of the Enabling Travel Choice Strategy (ETCS), which forms part of the Council's full Local Transport Plan 2025-2040 (LTP4).

    b) To seek the Cabinet's approval to undertake a further consultation on the draft ETCS document (as shown in appendix A), which is explained in Part B of this report.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:

    a) The work undertaken to date on the development of the Enabling Travel Choice Strategy (ETCS) and the outcomes of the initial consultation held to inform its development be noted;

    b) The draft ETCS document, attached as Appendix A to this report, be approved for consultation;

    c) A twelve-week consultation on the draft ETCS document be undertaken;

    d) Subject to the outcomes of the consultation, the Director of Environment and Transport, in accordance with the Council's Constitution:

        i. Following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Highways, Transport & Waste, the Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Public Health, Law and Governance, undertake further work to prepare a final version of the ETCS;

    ii. Submit a further report to the Cabinet in Autumn 2026, seeking approval of the final version of the ETCS.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. The ETCS is being prepared as part of the Council's full LTP4.

4. The twelve-week public consultation exercise will seek the views and perspective of local communities, partners and stakeholders to inform the development of the final version of the ETCS.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, it is intended that a twelve-week consultation exercise on the draft ETCS document will take place from mid-April 2026 (post Easter) to early July 2026.

6. The Highways, Transport and Waste Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a report at its meeting on 4 June 2026 as part of the consultation.

7. Following the completion of the consultation, it is intended that a report will be presented to the Cabinet in Autumn 2026 to highlight the consultation outcomes and present the final ETCS document for approval.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. The LTP4 Core Document was approved by the Cabinet on 22 November 2024 and subsequently by the County Council on 2 July 2025.

9. On 28 October 2025, the Cabinet noted the work that had been undertaken to date on the development of the ETCS and the three pilot Multi Modal Area Investment Plans (MMAIPS), for Market Harborough, Hinckley, and South-east Leicestershire. The Cabinet approved an eight-week initial consultation exercise to inform the development of the ETCS and of the three pilot MMAIPS.

Resource Implications

10. The development of the LTP4 is being funded from existing Departmental budgets. A total of £375,000 has been allocated in the Department's Advanced Design Budget for 2026/27 to 2029/30. Alongside this, the Department for Transport (DfT) provided funding of approximately £179,000 for the development of the LTP4.

11. The LTP4 is a key document that informs the development of the Council's transport programmes, including the allocation of funding awarded to the Council by the Department for Transport. It also provides the basis for funding submissions. Furthermore, it provides a basis for seeking to secure developer

contributions through the development management (planning application) process.

12. The delivery of transport solutions under the ETCS (and through the MMAIPs) will be subject to the availability of funding, including as appropriate through future reviews of the Council's Medium Team Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the development of future Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme.

13. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Public Health, Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Legal Implications

14. As set out in the October 2025 Cabinet report, it is intended that the ETCS will set out the policies that deal with planning matters, relating to the development of Local Plans (presently prepared by the district councils in Leicestershire) and to the planning application process.

15. It should be noted that the ETCS will operate as part of the Council's wider transport policy framework and will not form part of the statutory development plan. The Strategy will instead proivde guidance to inform the Council's engagement with the plan-making and development management processes.

16. The planning system is governed by a complex suite of legislation, regulation and guidance, and it will be necessary for the ETCS to be lawful in this regard. To ensure this, independent, external counsel advice has been sought. The independent counsel's advice has informed the preparation of the draft document. The advice itself is legally privileged and therefore not disclosed within this report.

17. Before the creation of the Public Health, Law and Governance Department, the previous Director of Law and Governance has been involved with the work to develop the ETCS.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

18. This report will be circulated to all Members.

Officers to Contact

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

Janna Walker
Assistant Director, Development and Growth
Tel: (0116) 305 7215

Email: Janna.Walker@leics.gov.uk

PART B

Background

19. The Local Transport Plan Core Document 2025-2040 was approved by the County Council on 2 July 2025. It includes a commitment to develop focused strategies, of which the ETCS is one.

20. The report to the Cabinet in October 2025 provided a detailed overview of the ETCS. To summarise, the ETCS will:

    a) Be a County-wide strategy covering all modes (means) of travel.
    b) Set out how the County Council, as the Local Transport Authority, will seek to enable people to make informed travel choices and provide opportunities for people to travel by all appropriate and relevant modes, in particular to work with:
       i. Existing communities to understand them and the travel barriers they face in seeking to access the societal and economic services and facilities (such as education, healthcare and places of work) that they need as part of their daily lives.
       ii. Existing businesses to understand any travel barriers faced by them or their employees and to enable them to have realistic travel choices.
       iii. The district councils as the preparer of Local Plans and determiner of planning applications;
       iv. The 'development industry' (including, landowners, developers, such as house builders, planning consultants and agents) to deliver new places that provide new services and facilities and/or are well connected by a choice of transport to services and facilities in the 'surrounding world'.

21. The ETCS will contain a set of policies to provide a framework within which the Council will seek to work. To inform their ultimate development, at its meeting in October 2025, the Cabinet approved an initial set of draft key 'policy positions' for the purposes of the initial consultation. They cover:

    a) Working to understand communities' needs.
    b) Working with the district councils through the Local Plan development process.
    c) Working with the district councils (as the Local Planning Authorities) and site promoters through the planning application process.
    d) Piloting new and innovative ideas.
    e) Considering what represents 'value for money'.
    f) Facilitating delivery of safe and suitable infrastructure that supports community needs.

22. In October 2025, the Cabinet also gave its approval to undertake an initial consultation exercise to inform the development of the ETCS and of the MMAIPs for the three pilot areas.

23. An overview of this initial consultation and a summary of its outcomes are set out in the next section of this report. This focuses on how they pertain to the ETCS, as a separate report will be brought to the Cabinet in due course in respect to MMAIPs and their development.

Initial Consultation

Overview

24. The initial nine-week consultation took place from 4 November 2025 to 11 January 2026.

25. In the interests of efficiency, the exercise was designed to cover the development of both the ETCS and the pilot MMAIPs. It was branded as 'The Big Travel Survey' (BTS), focusing on communities and business across the County.

26. The partners and stakeholders that were engaged included health bodies, education bodies, parish, town and district councils, and the 'development industry'.

27. The consultation consisted of a mix of online surveys; online tools for people to map their journeys (Social Pinpoint); and face-to-face events, including for the public and the 'development industry'. It was promoted through the media, the Council's social channels, regular officer liaison meetings (including with the district councils), and Leicestershire Matters.

Summary of initial survey outcomes

Development Industry

28. Direct engagement was undertaken with the 'development industry', including at a workshop held at County Hall on 4 November 2025. A very limited number of industry representatives attended the workshop, where following a presentation, they had the opportunity to discuss the proposed ETCS and were provided with an email address to provide comments.

29. It was hoped that the 'development industry' would provide views on the key 'policy positions' relating to planning matters. However, no such industry consultation responses were received.

District Councils

30. The district council Planning Officers were advised of the consultation through regular liaison meetings and by emails.

31. It was hoped also that the district councils would provide their views on the key 'policy positions' relating to planning matters. However, no such consultation responses were received.

Communities

32. There was a total of 1,003 survey responses. 915 were Leicestershire residents, 26 were visitors, 13 were Councillors and 7 were businesses or service providers.

33. Across all journeys and journey purposes, the main modes of transport are car/van 65% (2,882), Walking 16% (707), Bus 12% (517), Cycling 3% (133), Train 2% (71), Other 1% (64) and Taxi 1% (45).

34. Across age groups, the under 35-year-olds are the least car dependent; with youth relying heavily on the bus. From 45+ years old, car use jumps. Older adults still use the car but rely on walking and buses more. Walking is well used across all ages, reflecting use for accessing outdoor/green spaces, and local services such as healthcare (23% across all ages).

35. Students use the bus most by far at 77%, with those retired second most at 29%. Full and part-time employees use the car most at 84% and 83% respectively, with retired people second most again at 80%.

36. The most significant barrier which prevents people from accessing local services, opportunities and places they cannot currently access is public transport issues, affecting 87% (202) of responses to this question.

37. The results suggest that women experience greater barriers to transport than men across all modes and journey purposes.

38. The main mode of transport that people would want to use if barriers were removed was responded to as follows: Bus is most preferred at 62% (139 respondents), followed by private vehicle at 31% (70), Walking and Cycling both at 10% (22), Taxi and Cycling at 4% (8), and Other at 2% (5).

Businesses and service providers

39. There was a limited number of responses from this stakeholder group, and as such, caution has been used in drawing granular insight from the small sample size. Nevertheless, general themes of responses are of value.

40. Reponses were received across the following types of organisation: the Public Sector, Government & Non-Profit bodies, Education & Training, and Health, Social Care & Emergency Services.

41. The size of organisations ranged from 1 – 250+ staff members.

42. The top five barriers that staff faced when commuting were:

a) Public transport issues.
b) Personal safety concerns.
c) Limited parking availability for motor vehicles.
d) Journey took too long.
e) High cost of travel; Distance or location too far; and Poor cycling infrastructure.

43. This was also reflected in the top barriers/issues their staff/personnel face when travelling to other locations.

44. 71% of organisations confirmed that their customers/service users face challenges visiting their business/organisation, citing a lack of available parking, parking constraints (time/fees) and limited bus connectivity.

45. 29% of organisations confirmed that their suppliers faced challenges delivering to their business/organisation, citing poor parking behaviour limiting access to parking, no parking being available, and local parking restrictions.

46. 57% of organisations felt that travel choice and access currently impacts their businesses/organisations' growth, or that it will in the future, citing a lack of local parking, pickup/drop facilities and poor public transport connectivity as concerns.

47. 86% of organisations confirmed that their business/organisation or personnel need to travel to other locations (such as for meetings, training, services).

48. More than half of organisations confirmed that the following would make travel and access easier for their business/organisation and staff/personnel:

a) Better parking and electric vehicle (EV) facilities (such as secure cycle racks, car/van/motorcycle parking, EV charging).
b) Better road infrastructure (such as reduced congestion and improved junctions).
c) Improved walking and cycling infrastructure (such as safer pavements, cycle lanes, lighting, crossings).
d) Lower travel costs (such as cheaper fares, fuel discounts, parking).
e) Personal safety improvements (such as lighting and CCTV at stops and routes).

49. To aid further analysis, the survey results have been mapped: the descriptive information provided by respondents about where they start their journeys and where they end them has been mapped (the data is anonymised, so that it is not possible to identify a particular individual's travel behaviours).

50. An example of what the mapping of the survey results looks like is shown in Appendix B. The red lines represent real journeys that respondents have said they are making, with the thicker the density of the lines the greater the number

of journeys that are being made between the places; so, the City of Leicester and the main 'county towns' stand out as 'hot spots' of journey activity, which is not surprising given the range of services and facilities that they variously offer.

51. Caution should be exercised in drawing any particular granular conclusions from, or about, the patterns shown in Appendix B, because the data has not yet been processed to a sufficient extent to enable definitive conclusions to be made. Also, relative to the population of Leicester and Leicestershire (in excess of one million as at the time of the 2021 Census) the survey sample size is very small.

52. Nevertheless, Appendix B serves to demonstrate that the ability to map survey results in this way could provide useful evidence to inform the future planning of, for example, passenger transport provision or wider provision of other types of services (such as by identifying where bringing a service or facility closure to a particular community can reduce the need to make longer distance journeys). A key message is that if more people respond to future rounds of the 'Big Travel Survey' consultation, the more reliable and robust the data will become for decision making, when considered alongside other transport data.

Summary of Social Pinpoint Map outcome

53. Social Pinpoint is a tool which, amongst other things, allows users to provide map-based (geographic) information. In this case, it provided BTS respondees with the ability to highlight where they started a journey and the destination(s). Those taking part in the BTS had the opportunity to provide information via Social Pinpoint.

54. There were 188 posts from 36 contributors.

55. Across all journey purposes:

    a) How people travelled: Car/van: 56.9% (107); Walk/wheel: 17.6% (33); Bus: 14.9% (28); Cycle/scooter: 7.4% (14).
    b) Journey difficulty: Easy (no issues): 60.1% (113); Average (some issues): 35.1% (66); Difficult (lots of issues): 4.8% (9).

56. Whilst the sample size was low, and the results should be treated accordingly, the insights nevertheless suggest that education, employment and retail related trips show some of the highest journey issues, suggesting targeted interventions (such as safer school streets, reliable peak hour buses, walking/cycling links to schools, workplaces and retail) could improve travel most.

Section Conclusions

57. The initial consultation focused on a better understanding of how people travel, where to and why, and what travel barriers they face.

58. The outcomes highlight that there are extant patterns to barriers across journey purposes and modes used. The themes of the responses confirms the purpose in-principle of the ETCS – which is to help enable communities, current and future, to have improved access to the societal and economic services and facilities that they might need to use as part of their daily lives. They further confirm the need for the ETCS to provide an overarching policy framework to guide future work to identify and develop proposals to help improve travel choice and access to the key services and opportunities for people.

59. The outcomes of the initial consultation exercise will continue to be used to develop and deliver the ETCS, when it is approved. The outcomes will also be used to inform the development of the three pilot MMAIPs and the associated investments, which will be the subject of a future separate report.

Draft ETCS document

60. The draft ETCS document reflects the outcomes of the initial consultation; the legal advice that was received; and through the involvement of not just transport officers, but those who are involved with public health and strategic planning.

61. Flowing from the key 'policy positions', the draft ETCS document contains 15 draft policies, which are split as follows:

    a) Four overarching policies that:
        i. Covers a 'one size does not fit all' approach and provides for an approach that prioritises enabling travel choices that are most relevant to places, existing and future, as they differ across Leicestershire.
        ii. Deals with 'value for money' considerations.
        iii. Provides for a criteria-based approach to considering proposals that do not comply fully with the recognised design standards but nevertheless would otherwise be safe and provide betterment.
        iv. Deals with the piloting of new or innovative solutions.
    b) Three that cover working with existing communities and businesses to understand them and any travel barriers that they face.
    c) Eight that deal with new communities and places, including through Local Plan making and the development management (planning application) processes.

62. The policies are followed by supporting text that provides for their justification.

Proposed Consultation on draft ETCS document

63. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, a twelve-week public consultation will be undertaken between April and July 2026, timed to avoid Easter and the school holidays. It will seek the views of local communities, partners and stakeholders

on the draft ETCS document. It will take the form of an online survey available via the Council's website (with alternative formats that are available on request).

64. The consultation will be open to all residents, businesses, organisations, and other key stakeholders, such as the district councils as the local planning authorities and the 'development industry'. It will be promoted in similar ways to the initial consultation. The consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's consultation principles and relevant statutory duties.

65. As part of the consultation, the draft document will be presented to the Highways, Transport and Waste Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its views on 4 June 2026.

66. The outcomes from the consultation will inform the development of the final draft document which, subject to the outcomes of the consultation, will be presented to the Cabinet for approval in Autumn 2026.

Conclusions

67. The outcome of the initial consultation provides additional evidence (weight) as to why the ETCS is needed and as to its purpose in-principle.

68. The ETCS will provide the Council with a Countywide strategy to guide its work on seeking to enable communities, existing and new, to access the services and facilities that they may need as part of their daily lives, providing a genuine and realistic choice of travel and also helping businesses to access pools of labour.

69. The ETCS will have significant implications for the district councils in preparing the Local Plans and for parties that are looking to promote new developments. However, the intended outcomes of the ETCS and its implementation is such that these implications are considered to be reasonable and appropriate:

    a) In the context of national policy and the requirement to deliver sustainable development via a vision-led approach;
    b) In order to bring about positive change for the benefit of current and future Leicestershire communities and businesses.

70. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, consultation on the draft ETCS document will be undertaken between April and July 2026 to inform the development of the final ETCS document. Once prepared, the final ETCS document will be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration and approval.

Equality Implications

71. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) screening was first undertaken in 2021 at the inception stage of the LTP4 project, which identified a neutral impact. A full EHRIA was produced in October 2021.

72. A refreshed Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken in 2024, as part of the LTP4 Core Document's development. This helped to shape the final document, and was presented to the Cabinet in November 2024.

73. Equality implications will continue to be considered as the ETCS is developed. The outcomes of the consultation exercise will also inform the ongoing consideration of equality impacts as the Strategy is refined.

Human Rights Implications

74. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Other Implications and Impact Assessments

Health Implications

75. In agreement with Public Health, a high-level Health Impact Assessment of the LTP4 Core Document was undertaken in April 2024; it identified a positive impact.

76. For the ETCS, an initial health impact assessment has been drafted and will be updated as the development of the ETCS progresses. Subject to the outcome of this, the need for a full assessment will be considered, and completed if it is appropriate.

77. The consultation on the draft ETCS document will provide opportunities to gather further information that will inform the ongoing assessment of health implications. These opportunities are likely to include seeking to understand communities' access to health service needs, seeking data about the health of communities, and to understand the extent to which enabling active travel in an area might be an appropriate solution to helping communities to better access services and facilities.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

78. A high-level Strategic Environmental Assessment was undertaken in April 2024 on the LTP4 Core Document. A full assessment was presented to the Cabinet in November 2024.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 22 November 2024 – Local Transport Plan (LTP4) – Outcome of Consultation and Approval of Core Document
https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7511&Ver=4

Report to the County Council on 2 July 2025 – Local Transport Plan 4
https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=7859&Ver=4

A Local Transport Plan for Leicestershire – Core Document 2025-2040:
https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/LTP4-Core-Document-2025-2040_0.pdf

Report to the Cabinet on 28 October 2025 – Delivering the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) 2026-2040
https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7880&Ver=4

<u>Appendix</u>

A – Draft Enabling Travel Choice Strategy
B – Example Mapped Survey Results

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