

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN**  
**STATEMENT BY SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

This is the third Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) produced as a result of the continuing partnership between the Cambridgeshire local authorities.

The Council recognises that the scope of the new LTP is constrained by the reduced level of Government funding available, and it therefore cannot fully address all the transport measures that people desire and sometimes require in order to continue to enjoy a high quality of life, facilitate new development and sustain the local economy.

As a result, the challenge for this LTP will be one of finding alternative sources of funding, including developer funding, and deliverable schemes which have an impact. There is already an established culture of co-operation between the Councils in Cambridgeshire, particularly the three Councils in the Cambridge Area, on all transport modes. The Coalition Government's 'Big Society' agenda and Localism Bill present new opportunities through extended partnership working at the local level, which must be fully explored. Local people will be able to become more actively involved in planning and delivering transport in their area.

The LTP will help with the delivery of the Council's vision describing our long-term aspirations for service delivery:

*To make South Cambridgeshire a safe and healthy place where residents are proud to live, and where there will be opportunities for employment, enterprise and world-leading innovation. We will be a listening Council, providing a voice for rural life and first-class services accessible to all.*

This will be achieved through the following five strategic aims:

- Committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all
- Ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for you and your family
- Making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live
- Assisting provision of local jobs for you and your family
- Providing a voice for rural life

## **1. THE AREA**

1.1 South Cambridgeshire is a predominantly rural district entirely surrounding the City of Cambridge, with villages ranging in size from small hamlets to Sawston, which has around 8,000 people. The district also includes parts of the urban fringe of Cambridge, notably to the north and at Cherry Hinton.

Cambridge is the natural focus, although villages towards the periphery of the district look beyond its boundaries to the surrounding ring of market towns, such as Royston and Haverhill. Nevertheless, Cambridge is the sub-regional centre, and access to it is of great importance.

- 1.2 A number of strategic routes run through the district, both north / south and east / west, reflecting the strategic importance of Cambridge in the region. These routes include the M11, A14 and A428 and the London / Ely / Kings Lynn railway.
- 1.3 In many parts of the district public transport is good, especially along the main roads or 'corridors'. However, there are several villages where access to a bus or train service is poor or absent - only 6 villages are served by a railway station, for example. This, coupled with the rural nature of the district, means that many people feel isolated within and from their communities. Accessing appropriate transport for essential and social journeys is challenging for many people, including the elderly and infirm, disabled, parents with young families and those who don't drive, including children and young people. The possible withdrawal of subsidies for marginal rural bus services could have a major impact on accessibility for smaller communities unless new services come forward to take their place. The LTP Rural Transport Strategy will be crucial as a starting point for addressing the transport needs of these people in the rural area.

## **2. POLICY BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) contains a number of plans ([www.scambs.gov.uk/ldf](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/ldf)). The Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) was adopted in 2006 and sets out the strategy for the district for the period to 2016 and beyond. The Council has adopted two further DPDs and four Area Action Plans, the last of which was adopted in January 2010. 13 Supplementary Planning Documents provide further guidance on the implementation of these policies.
- 2.2 In the past much of the housing development has been focused on the villages and towns beyond the city. Whilst there has been employment growth elsewhere, Cambridge has remained the dominant centre of employment. As demand has outstripped the supply of housing close to Cambridge, people have located further from Cambridge increasing commuter flows through the district.
- 2.3 The LDF provides for most of the new development in the district to take place on the edge of Cambridge, including on the north western, eastern and southern fringes, and in a new town near to Longstanton and Oakington, known as Northstowe. Developments in these locations will maximise opportunities to reduce the need to travel, and provide modal choice by public transport, cycling and walking.

- 2.4 The district has higher than county average levels of car ownership, particularly for the number of households with 2 or more cars, 41.2% compared to 33.8% countywide (2001 Census). The district is also characterised by a high level of commuting and congestion on a number of strategic routes. Although travel by non-car modes will be encouraged in the new development areas, the high level of development being planned will mean that traffic will continue to increase.
- 2.5 The LDF plans for an almost 40% increase in housing development between 1999 and 2016. Whilst the recent economic downturn has resulted in a decline in house building, as the economy recovers housebuilding is expected to return to pre-recession levels by 2014. In addition, most of the major development sites, on the edge of Cambridge and at Northstowe, are reliant upon the A14 improvements to increase capacity of the road in order to accommodate the growth. However, the Highways Agency's proposed A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Improvement Scheme, upgrading the road to three lanes, will not now happen as proposed and new measures to increase capacity are being explored by the Department for Transport.
- 2.6 In the meantime the Council is working with the Councils in the Cambridge area and the Highways Agency to explore other ways of facilitating additional growth in advance of any A14 improvements. The LTP Cambridge Area Transport Strategy will also have a crucial role to play in accommodating additional growth in a sustainable way without harm to the economy and environment.
- 2.7 The Council is beginning a review of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPDs in 2011 and may need to consider new housing allocations to make up for delays in housebuilding on sites affected by the delay in improving the A14.

### **3. LAND-USE & TRANSPORT POLICIES**

- 3.1 The policy is to locate the majority of development in sustainable locations close to existing employment and services, or where there is an opportunity to improve local services. This will minimise the need to travel and facilitate modal choice for new and existing residents through the provision of new infrastructure and public transport services.
- 3.2 The Area Action Plans detail the transport objectives and policies applying to the major developments. Cambridge East will be served by a rapid transit system, providing dedicated public transport to key destinations in the city. Development in the Cambridge Southern Fringe will be within easy walking distance of Trumpington Park and Ride site, and The Busway. Like Cambridge East, development in the North West of Cambridge will seek to achieve a modal share of no more than 40% of trips by car. The new town of Northstowe will develop to an ultimate size of up to 10,000 dwellings, together with associated community facilities and services, and some employment provision. The Busway will directly serve the new town, with a dedicated local

busway through the heart of the new development, providing High Quality Public Transport.

- 3.3 In the rest of the district the Council's transport objectives and policies are set out in the Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD: [www.scams.gov.uk/ldf/dcpoliciesdpd](http://www.scams.gov.uk/ldf/dcpoliciesdpd).
- 3.4 The transport issues vary across the district. The population of the growth areas is likely to be younger and economically active, often with families who themselves need transport. Conversely, the population of the rural areas is likely to become older and issues of isolation and accessibility risk becoming increasingly prevalent. It must also be recognised that for some journeys and for many people in the rural area no alternative is possible and the car will remain indispensable. Therefore it is important to provide alternatives to the car before further traffic restraint is applied.
- 3.5 However, the Council recognises that whilst it is difficult to reduce traffic levels in the area because of continuing development, subject to reductions in public expenditure over coming years there may be scope to increase the proportion of journeys undertaken by more sustainable forms of transport. The Council will seek to secure Travel Plans through Section 106 agreements, together with contributions towards mitigating the impact of the trips generated by new development through the adopted Cambridge Corridor Area Transport Plans and a Community Infrastructure Levy. The existing Corridor Area Transport Plans have provided a useful approach to securing developer contributions, which complement LTP funding. These Plans are currently being reviewed as part of the Cambridge Area Transport Strategy.

## **6. PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT**

- 6.1 In a rural district commercial public transport services are very often not viable without significant levels of subsidy and tend to provide a very limited service frequency. Given the current funding situation, many rural bus services may therefore be in jeopardy without intervention.
- 6.2 Therefore the Council supports the creation of rural interchanges at key locations along the main corridors served with higher frequency bus services, which may help increase patronage on these services and improve their viability. There is already evidence that people are cycling to bus stops, for example along the former A428. Provision of infrastructure such as cycle parking, a shelter, seating and real time information would enable people from nearby villages to walk, cycle, use community transport or be dropped off at a bus stop in order to interchange with a high frequency bus service.
- 6.3 Community Transport was one of the Council's objectives in 2009/10, and this led to the production of a Community Transport Strategy (CTS) with the aim of complementing conventional means of transport in order to aid independent living, increase access to services and reduce rural isolation, which particularly affects the elderly and young people. The CTS is

supported by an Evidence Base and Action Plan, which provide the first steps towards a more comprehensive approach to the improvement of transport services within South Cambridgeshire.

- 6.4 The objectives of the CTS are to understand the level of need for community transport within the district; developing capacity, self-sufficiency and environmental sustainability of service providers to meet the need; and to enable easy access to community transport. Community transport delivery must be linked to and integrated with public transport policy to help 'plug the gaps', therefore it is crucial for the Council to continue to work with partners in order to manage change effectively.
- 6.5 The Council would also like to explore the provision of Demand Responsive Travel, whereby people can ring a central number and ask to travel the same day to their destination. This would provide greater flexibility in public transport services to the most isolated communities to travel when they want or need to, rather than when the service is provided. Experience elsewhere shows it can offer a cost effective means of providing a better public transport service to people in rural areas compared to subsidising conventional buses. When funding can be found the Council would support a major expansion of Community Transport services in South Cambridgeshire. In the meantime, the Council would support a pilot project to investigate the feasibility, potentially using Community Transport services. Demand Responsive Travel may also have a role in providing access to rural interchanges from poorer served villages.
- 6.6 As Community Transport is becoming increasingly important to 'plug the gaps' in public transport it is important to the Council that every opportunity is taken to extend the discretionary element of the Concessionary Fares Scheme to allow Concessionary Bus Passes to be used on Community Transport services, particularly in those areas where there are no public transport alternatives.
- 6.7 With Cambridge the focus of many trips by public transport it is important that bus journey times into and interchange within the city are improved, to help minimise journey times, and improve journey reliability and ease of access. Congestion along the radial routes approaching Cambridge as well as in and around the city centre, including the large number of buses utilising the Drummer Street area, is currently a problem that is impacting on the overall quality of bus services. The LTP Cambridge Area Transport Strategy will be crucial to addressing these issues.
- 6.8 The Council supports the development of an interchange at Chesterton which will substantially improve accessibility for residents living to the north of the city to rail and bus services without the need to travel into the city centre or railway station.

## **7. CYCLING**

- 7.1 In June 2008 South Cambridgeshire District Council became a partner in the Cycle Cambridge project, working with Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridge City Council, utilising £3.6m of funding (match funded) to improve cycling in Cambridge and within a 5-6mile radius, which includes the necklace villages in South Cambridgeshire.
- 7.2 Much progress has been made to date on several routes in South Cambridgeshire, and other infrastructure measures including the implementation of cycle parking at primary schools and village locations, the launch of Cycling Sorted, an online mapping system that will allow the public to plot onto digital maps their suggested locations for cycle parking and minor improvements to cycleways. In addition, many soft measures have been carried out, including Bikeability training in primary schools and for adults, and various marketing and promotion events. The results are already visible, with completed routes already well used.
- 7.3 The route between Cottenham, Histon and Impington into Cambridge is already heavily used. However, the A14 junction can be seen as a barrier to some less accomplished or confident cyclists. As a result there may be a high level of latent demand, particularly for children accessing schools in the area. Therefore the Council commissioned a study to establish what improvements to the junction are feasible. Improvements to this junction, through the installation of cycle crossings on the slip roads, will be delivered as part of the Cycle Cambridge programme.
- 7.4 The network of routes from South Cambs to the city is now well developed. However, it is important that routes are considered in their entirety as the standard of the network as a whole is critical to whether people choose to cycle. At present many cycle paths 'stop short' of desired destinations, such as the city centre, with cyclists directed onto roads where they have to compete with vehicles, often at busy bottlenecks or junctions, or they face longer, circuitous routes. The Council would like future funding on cycleways focussed on addressing these gaps in the network.

## **8. ROAD & RAIL FREIGHT**

- 8.1 As outlined in paragraph 1.2, a number of strategic routes run through the district, resulting in considerable freight traffic on roads through the district. The Council therefore supports the Felixstowe to Nuneaton (F2N) rail improvements to increase capacity between the east coast ports and the midlands and beyond. Removing freight from the roads will help reduce congestion on strategic routes, particularly the A14, improve road safety and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by around three-quarters, all to the benefit of local communities living in villages close to these routes.
- 8.2 Changes in legislation and standards require HCV drivers to take regular rest breaks. However, there is insufficient secure serviced parking provision at present, leading to the use of industrial and residential areas for overnight stops. This has caused much local concern from the local communities

affected, for example at Histon, Impington and Bar Hill. As well as undermining the amenity of the highway, lorry parking in residential areas also raises environmental health issues, particularly when drivers are taking overnight stops in areas where there are no public amenities available.

- 8.3 The Department for Transport (DfT) Strategy for Lorry Parking in England was published in November 2009, outlining the Department's Strategic Objectives and Action Plan. As part of this work the DfT undertook a survey as part of a Lorry Parking Audit Study in June 2010. Therefore slow progress is being made, however it is imperative that the Cambridgeshire authorities continue to press for a comprehensive national approach.
- 8.4 A substantial amount of new development is planned in the district which will require the transportation of building materials, thus further increasing the movement of lorries through the district. The Council is working with the County Council and developers to ensure freight traffic utilises the most appropriate routes to minimise impact on communities. The Council is also seeking the inclusion of a routing strategy in the County Council's Minerals and Waste Core Strategy.

South Cambridgeshire District Council fully supports the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan.

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