



Report to Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee

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Topic: **'Provide information on schemes to improve the road network and encourage sustainable transport in Bucks.'**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper provides an overview of the current work underway to develop schemes to improve the road network and encourage sustainable transport. It also explains how the transport planning and town planning functions work together to secure the future transport network needs of Buckinghamshire. The Council is dependent mainly on external funding (primarily grants and s106 agreements) to secure improvements to both the highway network and to introduce measures to improve bus provision or support walking and cycling. External grant funding is normally limited to a particular type of scheme e.g. Pinch-point funding and this limits the type of schemes that the Council can progress.
- 1.2 The paper sets out the role of transport planning, how schemes are identified and how they are delivered.
- 1.3 This paper gives examples of the variety of transport schemes currently under development and outline future plans to further enhance this work going forward.

2. Main content of report

What is transport planning and how does it work with town planning to secure transport improvements?

- 2.1 This area of activity contributes to the corporate priorities relating to "Increasing Prosperity" and "Protecting our Environment". In relation to "Increasing Prosperity" the key aims are to address connectivity and tackle congestion as well as putting in place the infrastructure that is needed to enable and mitigate growth and support the

Buckinghamshire economy. Bidding for external funding and the delivery of highway schemes are identified as priorities for the Planning, Growth and Sustainability Directorate.

- 2.2 Transport planning also supports the “Protecting our Environment” corporate priority. In particular this is through encouraging a shift to environmentally transport in support of the Council’s actions to address climate change. The installation of EV charging points is an identified priority.
- 2.3 Buckinghamshire is the statutory transport planning authority. This means that it needs to evaluate and consider what the future transport needs of the area will be (how travel demand will change over time) and what measures will be needed to accommodate the changing travel demand. Buckinghamshire currently uses a technical transport planning approach called “Predict and Provide”. The Council deploys transport modelling to forecast the impact of known growth or individual developments on the highway network. This is also used to test different potential mitigations to assess what measures are then needed to reduce the impact of new development.
- 2.4 Buckinghamshire has an adopted Local Transport Plan (2016) which sets out high level policies and transport network aspirations. This recognises that Buckinghamshire has one of the highest levels of emissions per head in the South East. This is likely to relate to the county’s relative affluence and semi-rural nature (with high levels of car use and above average journey distances - 87% of households have access to one or more cars; this is higher than the average for the South East (82%) and significantly higher than the national average of 74%). From this, LTP4 recommends that we ‘need to secure road, rail, bus, walking, cycling and other essential infrastructure to meet the current and future needs of our residents’.
- 2.5 The Council has recently adopted a Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy 2021. Carbon emissions are a key focus for the Council and local transport contributes 26% of Buckinghamshire’s carbon emissions. In order to meet our carbon targets of achieving net zero carbon emissions for Buckinghamshire as a whole by 2050 we will need to make the transport system as sustainable as possible. This is likely to be a key focus of the next Local Transport Plan.
- 2.6 Transport planning and town planning work together on the development of local plans and this was the case for all the local plan work undertaken by the legacy councils, leading up to the adoption of the Wycombe Local Plan and the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. There are strict rules about the transport infrastructure that can be included within local plans, as it is necessary to demonstrate that the infrastructure is both needed as well as being deliverable. There has to be very robust evidence to support the inclusion of any infrastructure listed in local plan policies. For example, in

the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Policy T3 sets out the critical infrastructure needed to support the planned growth.

Delivery of transport schemes

- 2.7 There are three main ways that improvements (not maintenance) to our transport network are funded and delivered. Virtually all improvements to our highway network, bus services to new developments and enlarging our Active Travel network are externally funded, either through government grants, s106 negotiations or CIL contributions. Frequently, projects depend on a mixture of funding before they are ready for delivery.
- 2.8 A significant amount of the current transport measures delivered across Buckinghamshire are secured through development sites (either directly through developers or via Section 106 funding contributions). It is therefore essential that local policy enables officers to secure adequate infrastructure and services to meet requirements.
- 2.9 Transport improvements are usually identified through the following methods:
- a) They are identified through the development of transport strategies and studies which can include local plan evidence e.g. Countywide modelling to support Wycombe Local Plan.
 - b) They are identified through the planning application process as mitigation for the development using detailed transport assessments e.g. Pinewood, Iver
 - c) Requests for improvements, including from local members, residents. Community Boards, which fit with broader policy objectives e.g. Marlow Active Travel scheme.
- 2.10 Transport schemes in Buckinghamshire are normally delivered in one of three ways:
- a) The Council leads, promotes the scheme and secures or bids for funding, e.g. The A40, London Road corridor improvements implemented between 2019 and 2021 which were mainly funded by National Productivity Investment Fund and Local Transport Body funding.
 - b) The Council negotiates improvements within the boundary of a development site or new access points e.g. new link roads in Kingsbrook, Aylesbury.
 - c) The Council negotiates either a s106 contribution or agrees for a developer to carry out off-site improvements e.g. the changes on Gatehouse Road carried out as part of the development of the new Sainsbury's store.
- 2.11 The Council has been progressing a number of major road improvement schemes, most of which are under the Leader Portfolio (and so under the remit of the Growth,

Infrastructure and Housing Committee). Schemes currently at the design stage include:

- a) Abbey Barn Lane improvements to facilitate development of Abbey Barn North housing site – being progressed with Housing Infrastructure Funding and in the Council’s capital programme.
- b) Princes Risborough Southern Road Link – to enable Princes Risborough expansion - being progressed with Housing Infrastructure Funding and will be subject to a planning application.
- c) South West Link through Aylesbury. A policy requirement of housing site AGT2 South-west Aylesbury. Included in an outline planning application for the site and being led by the developer.
- d) Stoke Mandeville Relief Road (being progressed by HS2 Ltd).
- e) South East Aylesbury Link Road.
- f) Southern Link Road – included within the Hampden Fields planning permission.
- g) Eastern Link Road (S) – included within the Woodlands planning application.
- h) Eastern Link Road (N) – partly built and open and included in the Kingsbrook development.

How are transport measures funded?

2.12 As noted above, a significant amount of transport schemes across Buckinghamshire are either delivered by developers or funded through Section 106 agreements.

2.13 Developer funding contributions are secured by Buckinghamshire Council, to support and enable the delivery of a range of transport related infrastructure required to make developments acceptable in planning terms across Buckinghamshire. In the case of transport, Section 106 funds are secured for a variety of transport infrastructure and measures including:

- Bus Stop Improvements – new and improved bus shelters and passenger information.
- Bus Services – improvements to existing bus service frequency and capacity, new community bus services.
- Highways Improvements – new and improved crossing points and traffic calming measures.
- Active Travel Improvements – new and improved walking and cycling routes and Public Rights of Way upgrades.

- 2.14 Developer funding contributions are almost always ring-fenced to facilitate delivery of a specific scheme or piece of infrastructure in a particular location based on the impacts of the development that is providing the funding contribution. Developer funding contributions assist in mitigating against this impact and encourage sustainable transport within the community.
- 2.15 Schemes are also secured through developers via Section 278 agreements where the developers are responsible for delivering the works themselves. This ensures that full schemes are delivered, and any costs incurred are covered by the developers, which removes the financial risk to the Council.
- 2.16 External funding is secured through external Government grants, for example through the Department for Transport (DfT). At the moment DfT are concentrating on three types of funding:
- a) Major Road Network – this is an agreed network of strategic local roads and funding is available for significant improvements including missing links.
 - b) Buses – we submitted our Bus Service Improvement Plan at the end of October which including a funding proposal to improve our bus services. An announcement is expected before the end of March. Urban areas are likely to see the majority of the funding.
 - c) Active Travel – DfT is running yearly calls for proposals. So far, we have received just over £2.2m and are using it in 22/23 to implement the Emerald Way improvements in Aylesbury. We expect an announcement on our bid to “Tranche 3” before the end of March 2022.
- 2.17 In addition, we will be bidding for additional funding to install more electric vehicle charging infrastructure in our car parks later in 2022.

Examples of Highway and Sustainable Transport Schemes

- 2.18 The following section will provide examples of some of the highway and sustainable transport schemes that have been either been developed or had feasibility work completed in recent years. This will help to highlight the extent of work which is being undertaken to secure highway and sustainable transport schemes for Buckinghamshire, predominantly through external funding.
- 2.19 *Active Travel Fund – tranches 1 and 2 (DfT annual funding)*

The first tranche of the ‘Emergency’ Active Travel Fund (ATF) was announced during the pandemic, primarily focussed on introducing temporary or trial schemes (encouraging reallocation of road space during a time when there were fewer vehicles on the roads) to enable more local journeys to be made on foot or by bike. The temporary measures trialled through these schemes included point closures

(restricting through traffic to create a safer space for cyclist/pedestrians), road closures (to allow cycling/walking only), shared use paths and segregated cycle lanes. Two of the trial schemes (Southcourt, Aylesbury and Marlow) have been out to statutory consultation and are currently being considered whether to be made permanent.

Funding from tranche 2 of the ATF (2021/22) is being used to upgrade the existing Emerald Way cycle route in Aylesbury to create an improved link between the new Haydon Hill route (which links off the Waddesdon Greenway) into Aylesbury town centre. This project will include additional tree planting and form part of the wider Platinum Jubilee programme.

2.20 *Waddesdon Greenway (Cycle Rail Fund – external DfT bid)*

Rural active travel links can have significant benefits in terms of linking communities to employment, education, amenities, and rail/bus stations for onward travel. The Waddesdon Greenway was delivered in recent years, connecting Waddesdon Manor (village) to Aylesbury Vale Parkway rail station (and onward connectivity to the wider Aylesbury cycling/walking network). It is a 4km rural route away from the road, providing a safe and attractive active travel option which is proving to be extremely successful not only for travel but also for leisure and recreation. The scheme was funded through an external grant (including maintenance for the first 10 years), and over 160,000 trips were made on the route in 2020.

2.21 *Pedestrian Crossing facilities (S106 funding)*

Pedestrian crossings are important to enable people feel safe and encourage walking and cycling for day-to-day journeys. A number of crossing schemes have recently been delivered through S106 developer contributions which have helped to enable safer routes to schools as well as providing important facilities for the wider community. For example, in 2021 signal-controlled crossings were implemented on the A413 in Padbury connecting with the Buckingham to Winslow cycleway; and on Chartridge Lane in Chesham to facilitate safe crossing to the Chiltern Hills Academy. S106 funds also enabled delivery of a raised table zebra crossing in Stokenchurch on the B482 (providing additional protection with the raised table encouraging slower speed).

2.22 *Active Travel Feasibility Work (S106 funding)*

For some larger scale projects, it is difficult to justify full funding from individual development sites (due to the size and impact of development). Consequently, contributions are obtained from developers for progressing feasibility work which will help to inform future funding bids or pooled developer contributions to enable delivery. Examples of current active travel projects (or Greenways) that are being progressed through the feasibility phase using developer funding are Buckingham to Silverstone, and High Wycombe to Bourne End. Due to the scale of these projects

(requiring land acquisition, planning consent etc.) it can take many years to progress them to a stage where funding bids can be submitted for implementation.

2.23 *Freight*

The Council has a specific amount of capital funding to implement its Freight Strategy. The first area-based approach to managing HGV's is currently planned in the Ivinghoe area and has been through the statutory consultation. Depending on approval to proceed, the scheme should be implemented in the autumn. Feasibility work is being undertaken around Waddesdon and Buckingham on potential measures in those areas.

2.24 *Aylesbury Bus Station*

Options for improving or moving Aylesbury bus station are also being investigated as part of the wider regeneration plans for Aylesbury town centre.

2.25 *Demand Responsive Transport*

The Council has been awarded funding to run two demand responsive transport trials, one around High Wycombe and the other around Aylesbury. The services are expected to start in the summer and run for several years to establish whether there will be sufficient demand to keep them running.

2.26 *Financial information*

The table below sets out the funding recently secured for Active Travel and highway schemes

Source	Funding Secured	Scheme Allocations
Department for Transport Active Travel Fund Tranche 1 and 2	£1.86M	Emergency Active Travel schemes in Haddenham, Marlow, High Wycombe and Aylesbury. Emerald Way Improvements, Aylesbury – active travel route between Haydon Hill and Aylesbury town centre.
Department for Transport funding via Sustrans	£0.03M	Final works for the Haydon Hill extension to the Waddesdon Greenway.
Section 106 Developer Contributions	£3.02M	A combination of highways and cycleway schemes (including traffic calming, bus stops, pedestrian crossings, active travel links etc.) All funding is secured with associated

Source	Funding Secured	Scheme Allocations
		conditions on what it can be spent on and will be local to the specific development site.
Demand Responsive Transport trial	£1.75M	Funding to support 2 trials of bus-based demand responsive transport in High Wycombe and Aylesbury
TOTAL	£6.66M	

Table 1: Examples of funding secured towards transport improvements

2.27 *More Strategic Aspirations*

In addition to the smaller scale schemes noted above, the Council is currently progressing with more strategic projects in order to support wider connectivity. In terms of roads, strategic connectivity priorities were identified in LTP4 and work is underway on developing studies to identify what improvements might be required to inform future funding bids. For active travel, the Council is working with partner organisations such as Sustrans on the aspirational Buckinghamshire Greenway which will provide a high-quality active travel link from Uxbridge to Brackley (passing through and therefore providing connectivity for key settlements including Amersham, Great Missenden, Aylesbury, and Buckingham).

3. Next steps and review

- 3.1 Work around developing a pipeline of priority infrastructure schemes for Buckinghamshire will be further progressed. This will be used to inform future external funding bids, with the prioritisation criteria needing to be flexible to ensure that schemes meet relevant bid requirements.
- 3.2 Resource within the Transport Strategy Team is currently limited so only a handful of schemes can be designed and costed at a time.