

Report to Cabinet Member for Transportation

Decision to be taken on or after 13 March 2017

**Decision can normally be implemented at least
3 working days after decision has been signed.**

**Cabinet Member Report No. T05.17
(Member Services will fill this information in)**

Title:	Aylesbury Transport Strategy
Date:	3 March 2017
Author:	[Joan Hancox]
Contact officer:	Rebecca Dengler Tel: 01296 383902
Local members affected:	Aston Clinton & Berton; Aylesbury East; Aylesbury North; Aylesbury North West; Aylesbury South East; Aylesbury South West; Aylesbury West; Stone and Waddesdon; Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville;

For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444

Summary

Since early 2016 Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC), in partnership with Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) and other stakeholders, have been developing a Transport Strategy that supports planned growth in Aylesbury up to 2033.

The Aylesbury Transport Strategy (ATS) was developed to support the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP). The growth aspirations set out in the VALP will impact existing and future transport requirements in Aylesbury. The aim of the ATS is to understand the growth requirements and propose transport measures that help to mitigate against the collective impact of the growth. The development of this Strategy is an approach discussed and agreed with the Cabinet Member for Transportation and is one of many supporting documents for Local Transport Plan 4.

In order to gain the views of the public and other stakeholders on the draft ATS, a formal consultation was undertaken from 18th November 2016 to 3rd January 2017. The feedback received has helped inform the plan and ensure it meets the needs of the town's people and businesses.

Recommendation

The 'Aylesbury Transport Strategy' is adopted as Aylesbury's recognised Transport Strategy.

The approval of any minor amendments to the Strategy is delegated to the Director of Growth & Strategy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transportation.

Any decision to review the Strategy before 2033 is delegated to the Cabinet Member for Transportation.

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

1. This section of the report sets out the reasons for the decision and it is divided into three subsections; the first setting out the role of the Strategy; the second outlining the Strategy proposals; and the third summarising the consultation that informed the Strategy's development.

The role of the Strategy

2. BCC is the Strategic Transport Authority and as such is responsible for developing and producing Transport Strategies as part of the county's transport policy framework.
 - 2.1 The ATS aligns with corporate commitments set out in BCC's Strategic Plan (2015-2017). The Strategy ensures Aylesbury continues to be thriving and attractive during a period of unprecedented growth.
 - 2.2 The aspirations set out in the Strategy vary from hard infrastructure proposals that help to improve the transport system, to improvements in sustainable transport opportunities. This holistic approach to improving the network ensures residents have a range of travel choices.
 - 2.3 If adopted, The ATS will feed into the VALP submission version, which AVDC plan to take to their Cabinet in early April 2017. The ATS is designed to form part of the evidence base for emerging VALP strategies.

The Strategy proposed

3. The Strategy has six objectives which were inspired by relevant national, regional and local level policies and existing transport issues in Aylesbury. The objectives are designed to guide development of the strategy, including the assessment of the suitability of potential transport improvements.
 - Improve transport connectivity and accessibility within Aylesbury Town.
 - Improve accessibility to other urban centre and new growth areas outside Aylesbury.
 - Improve journey time reliability.

- Contribute to improved air quality by minimising the growth in traffic levels and congestion.
 - Reduce the risk of death or injury on the transport network.
 - Make it easier and more attractive to travel by active travel and public transport modes.
- 3.1 The Strategy then assesses Issues and Opportunities for three key transport categories: A SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was used to appraise the town's existing transport conditions which have helped generate ideas around transport improvements.
- 3.2 Transport Improvements are separated into 5 geographical sectors including the town centre. Recommended improvements are listed as schemes with an accompanying description of the work required.

The Consultation that informed the proposed Strategy

4. The draft ATS underwent formal consultation from the 18th November 2016 – 3rd January 2017 with 241 responding to either the Buckingham Transport Strategy (BTS) or ATS, or both. The consultation successfully engaged various stakeholders (including Members, District Councils, Town Councils, Parish Councils, businesses and other organisations) via an online questionnaire. This consultation allowed BCC to understand what people thought of the draft Strategy. A consultation analysis report summarises the proposed changes to the ATS as a result of consulting, and is included in the appendix.
- 4.1 79% of respondents either 'tended to agree' or 'agreed in part' with the objectives of the ATS. These statistics demonstrate that most people who completed the survey share, at least in part, the transport aspirations BCC has for Aylesbury.
- 4.2 The feedback suggested a range of ideas and improvements, some of which have been helpful in refining the ATS and ensuring that it is fit for purpose. As many of the responses received about the ATS were positive, there were few changes to make with regards to the schemes proposed or objectives of the Strategy. Improvements made to the proposed ATS based on the findings include:
- Oxford-Cambridge Expressway – a new position inserted into the Strategy that makes it clear that whilst there may be benefit connecting the A418 west and east of the town (to the north) it's too early in the process of the Oxford-Cambridge expressway to include details within the ATS.
 - Purpose of the Link Roads – new text added to clarify the role and purpose of the Link Roads outside the town centre.
 - Aylesbury Garden Town Status – Aylesbury's new Garden Town Status has been reflected in the Strategy.
 - Rights of way changes – new maps produced to reflect changes to rights of way information.
 - More detail on phasing / implementation – detail was added with regards to how the strategy was intended to be actioned.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

5. Alternate Option A: Do nothing; Aylesbury does not adopt a dedicated Transport Strategy.

- 5.1 In this option Aylesbury continues to grow without a 'Plan' and recent history has seen growth take place with infrastructure demands being recognised at the point of application. This has led to localised growth taking place without the benefit of a Strategy to address the infrastructure needs of the town as a whole.
- 5.2 This reactive approach based on mitigation of individual developments is unsatisfactory and risks missing opportunities to secure comprehensive solutions. The absence of a Strategy will mean identified transport schemes will fail to take advantage of Government/LEP growth funds/bids etc.
- 5.3 This option is not recommended.

C. Resource implications

- 6.0 The work on the proposed ATS is now complete. Not progressing with the proposed Strategy or developing an alternative replacement plan will have significant resource implications.
- 6.1 Once implemented the Strategy will add no additional resource implications. The Strategy identifies new opportunities and transport schemes to meet its objectives, how these will be delivered or source of funding will be the subject of separate discussions when appropriate. This will provide strong evidence and guidance for officers within both BCC and AVDC to help secure the requirements within the ATS, ultimately reducing resource required as the background work is complete.

D. Value for Money (VfM) Self Assessment

- 7.0 The ATS imposes no direct costs, other than officer time allocated in existing business plans. It is therefore difficult to provide a quantitative assessment.
- 7.1 It is worth nothing that whilst the report is unable to forecast the savings in economic terms, it's clear that the Strategy will have a positive impact on the economy via strategic forward planning.
- 7.2 Developing the Strategy prior to future growth will mean costs are minimised and incurred only at the most appropriate point. Effective consultation will help ensure the plan is fit for purpose, reducing the risk of correcting errors which will have resource implications.
- 7.3 The Strategy is designed to be flexible; to make certain it can be used at the optimum time as opposed to producing strategies with a short lifespan. The Strategy is designed to work for residents, and unlock the growth potential which should stimulate the local economy. Overall the plan should yield returns far greater than the investment required to develop it.

E. Legal implications

8. No legal implications have been identified.

F. Property implications

9. No property implications have been identified.

G. Other implications/issues

10. A number of policies have informed the ATS, including those at a local and national level. These include the aspirations of three key planning documents from Aylesbury Vale District (AVDC), the VALP, The Aylesbury Town Centre Improvement Plan and the Greater Aylesbury Garden Town bid.

10.1 Within the study area there is a population of circa 129,000 inhabitants. There are approximately 62,000 jobs in the area, primarily concentrated in the town centre and along the A41 to the West. Private vehicles are the primary mode of transport and car ownership is high amongst residents.

10.2 The VALP identifies Aylesbury as playing a substantial and critical role in delivering growth for the district and the rest of Buckinghamshire. The town has recently been awarded government backing as a Garden Town and will be the focus for:

- Some 15,000 new market and affordable housing;
- New investment in economic activity and regeneration;
- New retail and employment development;
- Prioritising investment in multi-modal transport infrastructure; and
- Health, education and community infrastructure, open space and recreation, and emergency and public services

10.3 Aylesbury is a focal point of Buckinghamshire's road network. The town is connected to the wider highway network via the A41, A418 and A413 and only the A4157 currently provides an internal semi-circular road around the north of the town.

H. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

11. A presentation took place at the Aylesbury Garden Town workshop on the 9th September, supported by Councillor Tett, Councillor Irwin and Councillor Glover.

11.1 County Councillors from the Greater Aylesbury area were invited to briefing sessions on 10th October to discuss the ATS. Even though not all attended, they were all offered follow-up briefing sessions.

11.2 A presentation took place at the Aylesbury Town Council Planning Committee on the 21st of November. They were generally in agreement with the draft Strategy and consultation plan.

- 11.3 A formal consultation ran from the 18th November 2016 – 3rd January 2017. There were 241 responses to the online survey and 17 email responses. The largest proportions of responses were from the 35-54 age category and there was a low response from the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups with 15 responses, a 13% share of the total.
- 11.4 The consultation was promoted using a range of materials and methods:
- On the BCC homepage
 - A programme of BCC Facebook and Twitter messages
 - In libraries
 - Contacting known stakeholders directly by email (including Members, District Councils, Town Councils, Parish Councils, transport interest groups)
- 11.5 Consultation feedback showed respondents either agreed in full or in part with the Strategy's high level objectives (79%).
- 11.6 Consultation feedback showed that the majority of respondents either agreed in full or in part with the transport proposals in each sector of the Town:
- 69% of respondents supported Town Centre improvements, either in full or in part.
 - 67% of respondents supported transport improvements in Sector 1, either in full or in part.
 - 60% of respondents supported transport improvements in Sector 2, either in full or in part.
 - 62% of respondents supported transport improvements in Sector 3, either in full or in part.
 - 63% of respondents supported transport improvements in Sector 4, either in full or in part.

I. Communication issues

12. Councillors will be informed of the decision by Members' Services. The ATS will be published on the Council's website.
- 12.1 Those without internet access can use Buckinghamshire's libraries to access the Strategy. BCC libraries provide internet access and support in using the internet.

J. Progress Monitoring

13. If adopted, no significant additional work will be required on the ATS. The effectiveness of the ATS will be monitored by the review processes set out in section K below.

K. Review

14. The ATS is intended to determine the overall direction of transport infrastructure to support the VALP's planned growth up to 2033. The implementation plan and scheme to support the Strategy will rely partly on available funding sources and phasing of developments in the study area. This will help to establish the timescale on which the ATS should be reviewed. The recommendation made above is that the decision to review the Plan before 2033 is delegated to the Cabinet Member for Transportation.
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Background Papers

15. A number of background papers form appendices to this report

- The Aylesbury Transport Strategy
 - The Aylesbury Transport Strategy Summary
 - The Aylesbury Transport Strategy consultation analysis
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Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Member Services Team by 5.00pm on 10 March 2017. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343), or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk