

# Report to Cabinet Member for Transportation

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**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. T06.17  
(Member Services will fill this information in)**

**Title:** Buckingham Transport Strategy

**Date:** 3 March 2017

**Author:** Joan Hancox

**Contact officer:** Jessica Everett Tel: 01296 383976

**Local members affected:** Buckingham East; Buckingham West; Winslow;

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

## Summary

Since June 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 the town up to 2033.

The Buckingham Transport Strategy (BTS) 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 Buckingham. The aim of the BTS is to understand 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 BTS, a formal consultation was undertaken from 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016 to 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2017. The feedback

received has helped inform the plan and ensure it meets the needs of the town's people and businesses.

## **Recommendation**

**That the Cabinet Member for Transportation AGREES the 'Buckingham Transport Strategy' as Buckingham's recognised Transport Strategy.**

**That 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.**

**That any review of the Strategy before 2033 is agreed by 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 BTS aligns with corporate commitments set out in BCC's Strategic Plan (2015-2017). The Strategy ensures Buckingham 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 BTS will feed into the VALP submission version, which AVDC plan to take to their Cabinet in early February 2017. The BTS 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 policy with reference to existing plans such as the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Strategy's objectives are the following:
  - Make it easier and more attractive to travel by active travel and public transport in particular within Buckingham.
  - Improve transport access and movement in the town centre.
  - Improve accessibility into Buckingham and to other urban centres / new growth areas.
  - Improve journey time reliability.
  - Minimise the impact of future growth on traffic levels, congestion and air quality.

- Reduce the risk of death or injury on the transport network

- 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 divided into three categories: Highways, Public Transport and Walking/Cycling. Recommended improvements are listed as schemes with an accompanying description of the work required.

### **The consultation that informed the proposed Strategy**

4. The draft BTS underwent formal consultation from the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016 – 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 with 241 responding to either the BTS or Aylesbury Transport Strategy (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 BTS as a result of consulting, and is included as appendix 3.
- 4.1 93% of respondents either 'tended to agree' or 'agreed in part' with the objectives of the BTS. These statistics demonstrate that most people who completed the survey share, at least in part, the transport aspirations BCC has for Buckingham.
- 4.2 The feedback suggested a range of ideas and improvements, some of which have been helpful in refining the BTS and ensuring it's fit for purpose. As many of the responses received about the BTS were positive, there were few changes to make with regards to the schemes proposed or objectives of the Strategy. Improvements made to the proposed BTS based on the findings include:
- Oxford-Cambridge Expressway – a new position inserted into the Strategy that makes it clear that despite potential improvements to the A421, it's too early in the process of the Oxford – Cambridge expressway to include detail within the BTS.
  - Local Transport Plan 4 – objectives have been updated to show how each BTS objective fits with the policies in LTP4.
  - Maps requiring update – new maps produced to reflect Lace Hill development and changes to rights of way information.

### **B. Other options available, and their pros and cons**

5. Alternative Option A: Do nothing; Buckingham does not adopt a dedicated Transport Strategy.
- 5.1 In this option Buckingham continues to grow without a 'Plan' and recent history has seen growth take place with infrastructure demands being recognised at the point of application/pre 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 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 BTS 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 BTS, ultimately reducing resource required as the background work is complete.

### **D. Value for Money (VfM) Self-Assessment**

7.0 The BTS 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. Advice has been sought from property services, and no property implications have been identified.

### **G. Other implications/issues**

10. With a current population of over 12,000 residents, the transport network is already under pressure, promoted growth across the district, including the A421 corridor will impact on the towns' network.
- 10.1 The timing of this strategy aligns with the town's recently adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan (Oct 15) VALP (summer 17) and Buckingham County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (April 16).
- 10.2 In addition to permitted development, Buckingham plans to grow by over 1,000 dwellings, made up of new homes, University accommodation and employment land. A dedicated Transport Strategy would ensure growth happens effectively.
- 10.3 Although it's too early in the process of the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway development to include detail within the BTS. It should be noted that improvements in the towns transport should support wider east-west connectivity proposals which may include A421 improvements.

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

11. The Councillor representing Winslow was briefed on the 14<sup>th</sup> November and supported the strategy.
- 11.1 Councillors representing Buckingham East and Buckingham West were briefed on the 15<sup>th</sup> November. Councillors supported the strategy and were keen to contribute to its development.
- 11.2 Councillors representing Buckingham East and Buckingham West were briefed further on the 21st November 2016 at a Town Council meeting. Buckingham Town Council raised some concerns around the plan, mainly regarding the summary documents. The majority of those comments were resolved in the full strategy document.
- 11.3 A formal consultation ran from the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016 – 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 website 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 50% of respondents agreed with the Strategy's high level objectives.
- 11.6 Consultation feedback showed that the majority of respondents either agreed in full or in part with the transport proposals:
  - 75% of respondents supported BTS Highway proposals, either in full or in part.
  - 82% of respondents supported BTS Public Transport proposals, either in full or in part.

- 89% of respondents supported BTS Walking / Cycling proposals, either in full or in part.

## **I. Communication issues**

12. Councillors will be informed of the decision by Member Services. The BTS 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 BTS. The effectiveness of the BTS will be monitored by the review processes set out in section K below.

## **K. Review**

14. The BTS 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 BTS 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 Buckingham Transport Strategy Summary – Appendix 1
- The Buckingham Transport Strategy – Appendix 2
- The Buckingham Transport Strategy consultation report – Appendix 3

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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](mailto:democracy@buckscc.gov.uk)*