

**HITCHIN URBAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

For Members information the report presented to the Hertfordshire Highways Joint Member Panel on 21 April 2008 and an extract from the draft minutes are presented on the following pages.

The NHDC Transport Policy Officer will be present at the meeting to take questions on process and seek nominations from the Committee for the three Hitchin Committee members (Councillor Joan Kirby is the Labour Group nomination).

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## **TITLE OF REPORT: HITCHIN URBAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

REPORT OF THE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Panel of the transport planning process being adopted for the development of the new Hitchin Urban Transportation Plan.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The original Hitchin Transport Plan was published in 1998 having been developed in conjunction with the community led Hitchin Vision initiative. As a result, a number of community based environmental and traffic management schemes have been successfully introduced. However, the plan is not suitable for meeting the current and emerging funding opportunities and transport pressures.
- 2.2 The Northern Hertfordshire Area Transport Plan is the overarching strategy document to cover all the towns in northern Hertfordshire; this document was adopted in November 2004. Hitchin is the second of the five towns to have commenced the development of a new Urban Transportation Plan.
- 2.3 The Regional Spatial Strategy is likely to be published in spring 2008, which will provide added impetus to the known pressures for development west of Stevenage and for the East of Luton proposals. In recognition of this, NHDC has included a proposal for an A505 corridor study within its GAF3 programme.
- 2.4 There are a number of complex interactions between transport and land use within the town to be considered in developing the Local Development Framework, particularly around providing improved access for the Cadwell Lane and station areas. NHDC had made a successful GAF bid in a previous round for improving access to the Cadwell Lane area, but was unable to find and implement a feasible solution within the very tight timeframe set by the GAF programme. (Growth Area Fund round 3). The Growth Areas are one of the measures that the Government has established to tackle housing supply in the wider South East. The Sustainable Communities Plan established a Growth Areas fund to support Growth Areas in making a quick start on "early wins" housing sites, and to lay the foundations of large scale future growth).
- 2.5 Feasibility studies for the East Coast Mainline railway, including the 'Hitchin flyover', are gaining pace. It would be timely to make the best of such opportunities but also to mitigate any threats that these proposals may present.
- 2.6 All of the above factors suggest that HCC and NHDC need to work closely together and, as soon as possible, jointly commission the development of a single transportation plan for Hitchin including proposals that address strategic movements in the A505 corridor.
- 2.7 The process in which this plan is being developed is discussed further below in item 3 and is shown in Appendix A.

### **3. PROCESS TO BE FOLLOWED**

- 3.1 As shown in Appendix A, the approach comprises the following core elements:
- 3.2 Officer Steering Group (OSG) – multi disciplinary officer group to oversee the process and agree local urban plan objectives.
- 3.3 Data and policy review, and analysis – a detailed review of all available data sources and previously undertaken work to identify problems and issues within the highway and public transport networks, plus a detailed review of all relevant policy and strategy documents which inform the later development of transportation solutions within the area. This will include a review of the 1998 transportation plan. The data review will be undertaken by HCC and handed over to the consultant. The review of the policy documents and the transportation plan will be undertaken by the consultant.
- 3.4 Joint Member Panel (JMP) – will receive and endorse the recommendations of the OSG considering both local and county level issues as well as agreeing the framework for programme delivery.
- 3.5 Member Working Group (MWG) - the JMP will be asked to recommend six local members to represent the town. The frequency of meetings at the milestones will be agreed. This is where Members will be updated on the plan's progress and it will be an opportunity for Members to make suggestions. This working group will endorse recommendations of the OSG.
- 3.6 Wider Stakeholder Group (WSG) – a wide ranging stakeholder group to provide detailed inputs and opinions with regard to the problems and issues faced in the areas under consideration and the development of possible solutions, work being undertaken in independently facilitated workshop environments. This will involve local members namely county, district and town councillors.
- 3.7 Interventions – development of both "hard" and "soft" measures, informed directly by the policy and data review as well as the Wider Stakeholder Group developed solutions.
- 3.8 Sifting of measures – the sifting of measures against national and local agreed objectives as well as against environmental, feasibility and funding considerations.
- 3.9 Public information exercise - a series of public exhibitions at easily accessible locations within the Plan area to allow the public to view and discuss the proposed Urban Plan. The following options are suggested:
  - A weekday afternoon / evening session (2pm to 9pm)
  - A weekend (Saturday 10.00am to 4pm)
- 3.10 Presentation of findings – to both the Wider Stakeholder Group and then the public through a consultation process.
- 3.11 Development of the Plan – informed by the review, workshop and public consultation.

### **4 PROGRAMME**

- 4.1 Currently it is anticipated the plan will be developed over a 12 – 15 months period commencing 1 April 2008. A tender process to undertake the development of the project will be undertaken and a consultant will be selected to progress the plan by Mid July.

- 4.2 Provisional milestones will be agreed with the Consultant to incorporate meeting dates for the JMP. An update will be provided at the October JMP meeting where the selected consultant and provisional milestone dates will be advised.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None

## **6. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 All projects on the Integrated Work Programme will be funded by HCC from budgets allocated to Hertfordshire Highways, North Herts area and the human resource will be supplied by Hertfordshire Highways.

## **7. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS**

- 7.1 None to date. However external organisation and Ward Members will be invited to form part of the Wider Stakeholders Group during the public consultation exercise. Further consultation will take place as the plan progresses as outlined in items 3.5, 3.6 and 3.9.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 Members are asked to endorse the process being adopted for the development of the Hitchin Urban Transportation Plan.
- 8.2 The JMP is requested to recommend six members who will form part of the Members Working Group (MWG) at its meeting to be held on 23 June 2008. This working group will be maintained throughout the life of the project.

## **9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 To gain endorsement of the process for developing the Hitchin Urban Transportation Plan.
- 9.2 To allow the JMP to propose the names of the members who will serve as part of the Members Working Group during the development of the Hitchin Urban Transportation Plan.

## **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 Appendix A: Hitchin Baldock Urban Transport Plan Development Process

## **11. CONTACT OFFICERS**

- 11.1 Roxanne Glaud - Strategy Development Manager, Hertfordshire Highways

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 None.

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## NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP – JOINT MEMBER PANEL

Meeting held at the Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City  
at 7.30 p.m. on Monday, 21 April 2008

### *Extract from draft minutes*

#### **50. HITCHIN URBAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

The Strategy Development Manager for Hertfordshire Highways (SDM) advised the JMP that the original Hitchin Transport Plan published in 1998 was no longer suitable for meeting current and emerging funding opportunities and transport pressures of which the Cadwell Lane access, East Coast Mainline 'hitchin flyover' the A505 corridor and access issues at Hitchin station were the main examples. The SDM confirmed to the JMP that the North Hertfordshire Area Transport Plan was adopted in November 2004 and that Hitchin was the second of the five towns to have commenced the development of a new Urban Transportation Plan.

The SDM reminded the JMP that there were a number of complex interactions between transport and land use within Hitchin that should be considered in the development of the Local Development Framework and that NHDC had made applications for Growth Areas Fund particularly in the need to address strategic movements in the A505 corridor met by the development of a single transportation plan for Hitchin.

The SDM referred the JMP to Section 3 and Appendix A to the report which detailed the core elements of the process for this urban transport plan and that the formation of an Officer Steering Group, Member Working Group and Wider Stakeholder Group together with the support and review of proposals by JMP were critical to the successful development of a Hitchin Urban Transportation Plan.

The JMP noted that the Officer Steering Group would present its findings at both local and county levels and well as the framework for programme delivery for approval to the JMP. The JMP were also pleased to note that there would be a public information and consultation exercise on the proposed urban plan with follow up presentations to the Wider Stakeholder Group and the public, with development of the Hitchin Urban Transportation Plan by review, workshop and public consultation. The plan would be developed over 12 – 15 months with a start date of 1 April 2008 with consultants appointed to progress the plan by mid July 2008, and provisional milestones set that would coincide with the JMP meeting schedule advised at the meeting of the JMP scheduled for 13 October 2008.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the proposed process for the development of the Hitchin Urban Transportation Plan as presented at Appendix A be agreed;
- (2) That the composition of the Member Working Party be as follows:  
County Councillor David Billing;  
County Councillor N. Brook  
County Councillor R.A.C. Thake  
and one District Councillor from each political group of the NHDC Hitchin Area Committee formed at Annual Council on 15 May 2008;
- (3) That the final composition of the Members Working Group be confirmed at the next meeting of the JMP to be held on 23 June 2008;
- (4) That the Members Working Group be maintained throughout the life of the project to formulate the Hitchin Urban Transportation Plan.

#### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

To allow the formation of a Member Working Group that would formulate the Hitchin Urban Transportation Plan.

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