

Swindon Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan 2020/21

Cabinet

Date: 22nd April 2020

Author: Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment
Head of Highways and Transport

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The report seeks approval for the adoption of the Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan for 2020/21 and for the Local Transport Plan Capital Programme budget apportionment for 2020/21.
- 1.2 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is the principal means of delivering the Council's transport programme. It is the statutory document that contains the transport policies and programmes of the local transport authority. It is listed in Article 4 of the Council Constitution as a key document in forming the policy framework for the Council and it is subject to an annual report to the Cabinet in order to ensure transparency in the apportionment of the funding and aid the delivery of the programme.
- 1.3 The Local Transport Plan is the transport delivery plan for the wider strategic objectives of the Council. It supports and is consistent with the Vision for Swindon and the Council's planning policies; in particular the Local Plan and Central Area Action Plan. The Local Transport Plan has a key role in implementing the Corporate Plan's priorities and objectives, particularly in relation to the Vision for Swindon priorities.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Implementation Plan for 2020/21.
- 2.2 Approve the Local Transport Plan Capital Programme budget categories and total spend of £4.104 million for 2020/21, as detailed in Tables 1 to 7 of the Implementation Plan attached as Appendix 3.
- 2.3 Authorise the Head of Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment to:
 - 2.3.1 Prioritise schemes in accordance with Vision for Swindon priorities,
 - 2.3.2 Approve scheme progression in accordance with the updated Protocol (attached as Appendix 2 and originally approved by the Cabinet in July 2010),

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- 2.3.3 Amend the Protocol to reflect changing job titles, organisational restructuring and improved input from and visibility to members
- 2.3.4 Vary allocations between different budget categories,
- 2.3.5 Approve variations in scheme costs,
- 2.3.6 Add/substitute schemes, provided expenditure is contained within the approved total budget,
- 2.3.7 Add additional schemes to the 2020/21 programme subject to receipt of the Pothole Action Fund allocation for 2020/21
- 2.3.8 Progress delivery of the Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund schemes as set out in paragraph 3.18, including match funding of up to £0.97m of existing approvals within the capital programme, subject to a satisfactory review of the grant Terms & Conditions which have not yet been received by the Council
- 2.4 Authorise the Head of Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment, to develop and submit a bid / bids during 2020/21 for relevant funding opportunities launched by Government, or other funding agencies, for transport schemes that will benefit Swindon and which are in accordance with Vision for Swindon priorities.
- 2.5 Agree to continue with the Highways and Transport Minor Works Requests process set out in Appendix 4.
- 2.6 Note progress on the review and refresh of the Local Transport Plan 3 document.

3. Detail

Transport Strategic Overview

- 3.1 The current Local Transport Plan (LTP3) was approved by Cabinet on 9th March 2011 and by Council on 14th April 2011 (Cabinet Minute 94, 2010/11 and Council Minute 134 2010/11 refer). It sets out an overarching strategy document (covering the period 2011 to 2026) supported by nine thematic Supplementary Documents and an Implementation Plan.
- 3.2 The Local Transport Plan - LTP3 - is the delivery plan for the Council's wider Transport Strategy and supports and is consistent with the Council's planning policies; in particular the Local Plan and Central Area Action Plan as well as priorities around air quality, the local environment and quality of life.
- 3.3 A copy of the full Local Transport Plan Strategy document and supplementary documents is available on the Council's website. A summary document setting out the headline policies is included as Appendix 1.

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- 3.4 Transport patterns, demand and growth within Swindon have progressed significantly since 2011. Hence a review of the Council's transport strategy is required to tie in with these changes and also the Local Plan Review which is currently in progress. As indicated in the LTP Implementation Plan report considered by Cabinet on 20 March 2019 the existing LTP3 document is currently being reviewed and refreshed. Work is also underway on updating a number of other strategic plans which sit within the context of the LTP. These include the plans covering Road Safety and Network Management. Work around the review of the Town Centre Movement Strategy will be complete during 2020. This is the subject of a separate report to Cabinet.
- 3.5 An Implementation Plan is produced for each year, with indicative information for the following two years (a rolling three year programme) and is subject to annual approval by Cabinet.

LTP Implementation Plan

- 3.6 At its meeting on 20th February 2020, Council approved the Capital Programme budget for 2020/21, (draft Minute 20, 2019/20 refers). This includes details of the overall Local Transport Plan grant funding for 2020/21 of £4,104k.
- 3.7 Allocation to both Maintenance and Integrated Schemes is detailed in Appendix 3.
- 3.8 The proposed Highways and Transport programme has therefore been developed within this total funding to ensure no further borrowing is required which would require a subsequent increase in debt charges.
- 3.9 The draft Implementation Plan for the period 2020/21 is included as Appendix 3, which sets out the proposed breakdown of the overall Highways and Transport capital budget across the different expenditure categories. In the absence of any firm funding notification beyond 2020/21 only an indicative allocation is shown for 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- 3.10 Individual schemes within the expenditure categories are authorised by the Head of Highways and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment in accordance with the protocol first approved by Cabinet in July 2010 (Cabinet Minute 23, 2010/11 refers).
- 3.11 The latest version of the Protocol is included as Appendix 2. The Protocol will be further revised to reflect changing job titles, amendments arising from service efficiency driven re-organisations and improved input from and visibility to members. Schemes will be selected from the pool of schemes in each category up to the value of the available budget. Network deterioration and reprioritisation of schemes may create some changes in year and to future indicative programmes. It remains key to the Council's asset driven funding approach that

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maintenance schemes continue to be selected on a needs led basis in line with the Asset Management Strategy.

Highway Maintenance

- 3.12 The Council is committed to the asset management principles set out in the Code of Practice (CoP), “Well Managed Highway Infrastructure” that came into being in October 2018. The Code’s aim is to deliver a more efficient and effective approach to the management of highway infrastructure assets through longer term planning and ensuring that standards are defined and achievable for available budgets. The individual asset allocations set out in Appendix 3 are influenced by a range of factors including the Performance Management Framework, a comprehensive review of asset data, consideration of lifecycle planning scenarios and customer feedback, in support of the Highway Asset Management Strategy approved by Cabinet in October 2015 and reviewed and updated in 2018. The programme is also developed in awareness of the wider ongoing programme of highway infrastructure schemes on the network.
- 3.13 The overall public satisfaction score for highways maintenance from the 2019 public satisfaction survey is the same as the national average of 51% and slightly improved from 2018 (49%).
- 3.14 Members should note that the Council’s capital grant settlement includes the maximum amount for authorities rated Level 3 through the DfT’s Local Highways Maintenance Incentive Fund. Level 3 is the highest level that an authority can achieve and ensures maximum grant funding is received from DfT. The authority has improved its asset management approach in recent years and maintained its Level 3 status since 2018. The DfT annual self-assessment questionnaire on which the bandings are based was submitted on 28th February 2020.
- 3.15 Indicative settlements received from government are adjusted in Swindon to reflect a greater emphasis on maintaining network condition. Appendix 3 tables 2 and 3 indicate the changes. Whilst the reactive element of network maintenance (repairing small potholes) is funded through revenue, there is scope for capital funding to contribute to routine maintenance through capitalised major patching support.
- 3.16 The DfT’s Pothole Action Fund remains in place until 2020/21 and it is anticipated that a similar allocation to that received in 2019/20 (£139k) would be provided to the Council when funding announcements are released at the start of the new financial year. Any amount would expect to be allocated in year through delegated authority to the Head of Highways and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment.
- 3.17 The Council has approved a separate £7.2m project for the conversion of all street lights to LED. Work on site is due to commence imminently. A contribution

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from the street lighting allocation in Table 4 will be used to replace defective concrete or steel lamp columns as part of the conversion programme.

- 3.18 On 2nd March 2020 the Department for Transport (DfT) named Swindon Borough Council as one of 32 local authorities, which are set to benefit from £93.4m from the Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund. The grant funding, which totals £4.85m, cannot be used for ongoing repairs such as potholes. However, it will be used to carry out 21 major repairs on roads to the east of the town including significant repairs to Marlborough Road, the A361 Highworth Road, Queens Drive, Drakes Way and Oxford Road. Traffic signals will be upgraded at key junctions including at the Coate Water roundabout, the Great Western Hospital junction of the A4259 Marlborough Road, and the Frobisher Drive and New College junctions of Queens Drive. A significant proportion of the funding will also be spent on repairing and improving bridges and subways in Eldene, Dorcan and Covingham. This will involve waterproofing repairs and upgrading the cycleways within the underpasses. Some of the funding will be used to decommission two subways, including the one at Marlborough Road close to the Coate Water roundabout, which is prone to flooding. In addition to the £4.85m grant funding, the Challenge Fund project will be match funded by up to £0.97m of existing approvals in the capital programme. The grant terms and conditions have not yet been received by the Council. They will be reviewed and approved by the Head of Highways and Transport prior to starting the work programme.

Integrated Schemes

- 3.19 Appendix 3, table 7 sets out the range of Integrated scheme headings (i.e. all those other than maintenance schemes) for 2020/21. In addition to the LTP programme there are schemes funded in whole or part by S106 developer contributions and Local Growth Fund relating to cycling, walking, public transport and traffic management.
- 3.20 In most cases it is not possible to list the exact schemes that will be completed as most are subject to a range of delivery risks and this allows the risks to the overall program to be managed effectively. Many involve consultation with the public, councillors and statutory bodies. Some require planning consent or are linked to other developments. Schemes that cannot be delivered in 2020/21 are likely to be carried forward to future years.

Minor Works Requests

- 3.21 In addition to the approved annual programme of works Highways and Transport also receives a number of requests from Ward Members for minor works in their areas – usually arising from contact with local residents. In the previous LTP Implementation Plan report considered by Cabinet in March 2019 (Cabinet Minute 73, 2018/19 refers) Members agreed to continue with the annual Minor

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Works Request process on the same basis as set out at the Highways event for Councillors, which took place in September 2017.

- 3.22 To provide greater clarity and transparency for this process the details are set out in a briefing included with this report as Appendix 4.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The production of a Local Transport Plan is a statutory requirement for each local transport authority in England. Failing to produce and maintain a Local Transport Plan is not therefore an option. It is listed in Article 4 of the Council Constitution as a key document in forming the policy framework for the Council.
- 4.2 It is intended that LTP3 will be reviewed and refreshed during its life. There is therefore the option to review and refresh elements of the plan as appropriate.
- 4.3 An Implementation Plan associated with the statutory requirement for the Local Transport Plan is therefore also needed. Consistent with previous approaches an Implementation Plan has been prepared for 2020/21. The 2020/21 plan is presented to members at this time in order to maximise delivery time within year. Proposals for 2021/22 are expected to be brought forward in March 2021.
- 4.4 Alternative options to individual schemes within the Implementation Plan can be considered at the initial Business Case preparation stage. In so doing, there is a necessity to co-ordinate works with other supportive funding streams and strategic plans. Whilst, through consultation, specific schemes may change or be replaced the fundamental principles of delivering the Local Transport Plan Strategy approved by the Cabinet will be maintained.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The funding for the current proposed programme is met from LTP grant funding.
- 5.2 The Local Transport Plan Strategy document sets out the policy background for establishing the transport spending priorities of the Council to 2026. The overall Highways and Transport budget is subject to separate annual approval by Cabinet as part of the Council's overall Capital programme.
- 5.3 The Implementation Plan sets out a pool of schemes. The Local Transport Plan does not necessarily commit the Council itself to funding proposals contained within it. This will largely be dependent on the outcome of the funding settlements from central government and the availability of developer contributions and other grants and awards.
- 5.4 Contracts for works and services in the programme are procured in accordance with Council Standing Orders.

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Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.5 The content of this report will not have a direct implication on human rights issues and it is believed to be compatible with Convention Rights.
- 5.6 There are no direct legal issues arising from the report. The production and adoption of the Local Transport Plan is a statutory duty covered by the Local Transport Act 2000 as amended by Part 2 of the Local Transport Act 2008. Local Highway Authorities have a duty of care under the Highways Act to maintain highways maintainable at the public expense.

Climate Change Impact

- 5.7 The proposals would not bring a change in service delivery and Officers believe that there is no expected effect on the Council's carbon footprint.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.8 A Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessment and Health Impact Assessment have been carried out in accordance with legislative requirements. Consultation has taken place with the appropriate LTP statutory consultees. A Rural Supplementary document was produced as part of LTP3.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.9 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) was completed for the overarching LTP Strategy in 2011. The DIA was reviewed and updated for 2015. This included a detailed analysis of the 2011 Census data. The conclusions were that:
- 5.9.1 Some equality groups have significantly lower levels of car ownership than the population generally and will therefore have different transport issues (eg more reliance on public transport, walking and cycling),
- 5.9.2 Caution should be used in applying "Swindon-wide" average figures for equality groups on a local basis, and
- 5.9.3 The concentration of certain groups into distinct parts of Swindon will mean that transport issues unique to those communities (e.g. non car ownership, reliance on public transport, concern over safety on-street at night) will be particularly emphasised in those areas
- 5.10 As a result transport officers planning and designing services and schemes for local areas should consider the detailed demographic data for those areas to ensure that particular and unique issues for any equality groups strongly represented locally are identified at an early stage. Locality based decision making over scheme prioritisation may provide an opportunity to address particular equality group issues at a local level.

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5.11 This DIA is available from the report author.

Risk Management

5.12 A risk register is maintained for the overall LTP programme.

6. Consultees

6.1 The Corporate Director of Finance and Assets (s151 officer) and Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

7.1 None

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1: LTP3 Strategy Summary

8.2 Appendix 2: Protocol for approving capital funded schemes

8.3 Appendix 3: LTP3 Implementation Plan 2020/21 – 2022/23

8.4 Appendix 4: Minor Works Requests process

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme

9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme for March 2020.