

# Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 2

## *Environmental Statement*

Prepared for Worcestershire County Council

March 2006

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### Introduction

This document has been prepared as an Environmental Statement as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2) 2006-2011. A full version of the Environmental Report and the LTP2 is available on the Worcestershire County Council (WCC) website: <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/ltp>.

Consultants Halcrow were appointed to undertake the SEA on behalf of Worcester County Council.

### Local Transport Plan 2

The purpose of a local transport plan is to provide local authorities with the opportunity to produce comprehensive integrated transport strategies covering all forms of surface transport. The Worcestershire LTP2 is intended to last for a period of 5 years from 2006-2011.

The vision of the Worcestershire LTP2 is to support the diversity and character of the County by delivering an efficient, safe and fair transport system that meets the needs of all travellers and allows the easy movement of goods. This Environmental Statement demonstrates how the assessment of environment effects has been incorporated into the plan in consultation with the relevant bodies.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

Transport Plans are the subject of SEA according to the EU Directive (42/2001/EC) on the assessment of effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. SEA is the process of protecting the environment and promoting sustainability. SEA is the formal assessment of plans and programmes and covers a wide range of sectors including transportation, land use development, energy, industry and agriculture but to name a few. SEA is an overarching procedure which seeks to integrate environment assessment at every stage of the decision making process.

The SEA process started in November 2004. To meet the requirements of the SEA Directive the environmental assessment has been undertaken in parallel with the transport plan preparation, with critical interfaces occurring at key stages. Table 1 shows the five stages of the SEA methodology used throughout this SEA.

Table 1: The five stages of SEA

	SEA stages
A	Setting the context and objectives, establishing the Baseline and deciding on the scope.
B	Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects.
C	Preparing the Environmental Report.
D	Consulting on the draft plan and the Environmental Report.
E	Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan on the environment.

The initial stage of the project was to gain an understanding of the existing ‘environmental baseline’ of the County and the existing programmes and plans which are relevant to the LTP2. Using the baseline, and in consultation with the consultees, 16 SEA objectives were identified relating to the “*likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, [and] landscape*”, as required by the SEA Directive.

All policies proposed in the Provisional LTP2 were assessed against the SEA Objectives as well as the ‘business as usual’ alternative and their effects evaluated. Proposed policies which had the potential to cause adverse impacts on the environment were identified and subjected to a further, more detailed assessment of potential impacts. This was carried out using a comprehensive assessment matrix. The matrices assess the potential effects of these policies on the SEA objectives, and focus on probability, duration, frequency, permanence, magnitude, geographic extent and significance of effect. The Environmental Report also contains an assessment of cumulative, secondary and synergistic effects.

The Environmental Report suggests possible mitigation measures and indicates how the LTP2 could maximise positive impacts on the environment. Table 2 below shows the recommended changes to the LTP2 as a result of the SEA findings, together with WCC details of whether or not the LTP2 has been amended. If a recommendation has not been incorporated, the reasoning behind the decision is given.

As required by DfT and ODPM SEA Guidance, consultation on the Environment Report was undertaken alongside consultation on the provisional LTP2. As part of the consultation process the Environmental Report was sent to the four statutory consultees (English Nature, English Heritage, Countryside Agency and Environment Agency) as well as to twelve relevant non-statutory consultees for comment. It was also made available at Council offices within the County and on the WCC website. Consultation responses and suggested WCC responses are set out in Appendix 1 below.

## The Environmental Report

The Environmental Report is a key output of SEA. It is a document required by the SEA Directive as part of an environmental assessment, which identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan. This Environmental Statement sets out how the findings and recommendations in the Environmental Report have been included in and affected the LTP2.

## The Environmental Statement

This Environmental Statement has been prepared in line with DfT (2004) and ODPM guidelines (2005) and conforms to the SEA Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC). The Directive says:

*“...when a plan or programme is adopted, the [environmental] authorities... [and] the public ... are informed and the following items [shall be] made available to those so informed: (a) the plan or programme as adopted, (b) a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme.... [including] the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with, and (c) the measures decided concerning monitoring” (Article 9(1)).*

In response to the requirements of the Directive this Environmental Statement includes:

- Changes to the plan in response to information in the Environmental Report;
- Ways in which responses to consultation have been taken into account;
- Reasons for choosing the preferred option, and why other reasonable alternatives were rejected; and
- Suggested monitoring proposals.

## Changes to the LTP2 in Response to the Environmental Report

The SEA process has influenced the LTP2 considerably and indeed a major objective of the overall LTP2 strategy is to safeguard and improve Worcestershire’s environment through a package of measures that seek to reduce the impact of transportation upon the local and global environment. These include the promotion of modal shift away from car dependency through measures such as Travel Plans, improvement of passenger transport and better walking and cycle networks. They also include better traffic management to reduce traffic congestion, and accessibility planning to ensure that new developments are located so as to minimise travel demand and car use. The Asset Management Plan will also develop better maintenance techniques to minimise the use of natural resources and promote recycling of materials where possible.

It is recognised that investment in improved transport facilities will inevitably result in some schemes that will have some form of environmental impact. Where this is the case, a full Environmental Impact Assessment will be required. Under circumstances where a project falls outside of the EIA Regulations (SI 1999, No 293) the design of new transport infrastructure will incorporate sustainable design principles as a matter of course.

The following policies summarise how the County Council, through the LTP2 strategy, will seek to achieve the SEA objectives.

Policy SEA1: Where new transport infrastructure is required to implement the LTP2 strategy, schemes will be designed using sustainable design and construction principles, and an Environmental Impact Assessment will be produced for larger schemes.

Policy SEA2: Where transport schemes are implemented, every effort will be made to meet the following environmental objectives:

- Maintain and enhance Worcestershire's biodiversity, flora and fauna;
- Maintain and enhance landscape character;
- Protect and improve the water resource;
- Reduce flood risk;
- Maintain and improve air quality;
- Encourage energy efficiency and reduce contributions to climate change;
- Conserve and enhance the historic and cultural environment;
- Support the sustainable extraction, re-use and re-cycling of minerals and aggregates;
- Encourage the re-cycling of waste and use of renewable resources;
- Minimise the impact of transport schemes upon the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Policy SEA3: The Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) will set out how the County Council will seek to meet the environmental objectives listed in Policy SEA2 when delivering highways maintenance works across the County. Consultation will be undertaken with relevant organisations when developing the TAMP to ensure that these objectives are met as closely as possible.

## Consultation Responses

Sixteen consultation responses were received during the Environmental Report consultation, which ran from the 24<sup>th</sup> October to the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2005. Comments were received from:

- English Nature;
- English Heritage;
- Malvern Hills District Council;
- Redditch Borough Council;

- Worcestershire Wildlife Trust;
- Cotswolds AONB;
- Malvern Hills AONB;
- White Ladies Aston Parish Meeting;
- Private individual - John Devlin;
- Spetchley Parish;
- Cofton Hackett Parish Council;
- Dodford with Grafton Parish Council;
- Drakes Broughton and Wadborough with Pirton Parish Council;
- Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council;
- Norton-Juxta-Kempsey Parish Council; and
- Bretforton Parish Council.

All consultation comments received were carefully considered by Worcestershire County Council and the Environmental consultants and the Environmental Report was updated where appropriate.

Comments received were helpful and generally complimentary. The consultation comments were varied but can be summarised into three main groups as follows:

- Comments, particularly those from the Statutory Consultees centred around the baseline data with updated figures and more recent information sources.
- Many of the comments, particularly those from the Parish Councils highlighted local environmental issues, concerns and desires, such as concerns over congestion at the Pinvin cross-roads and the associated environmental impacts of this.
- Other comments were based around more general environmental issues suggesting best practice and mitigation measures, such as requesting that the SEA recommend the use of low noise road surfaces.

The comments received and the WCC responses to them are detailed in the Environmental Report. Comments referring to the LTP2 and not to the SEA but received as part of the SEA Environmental Report consultation were passed on the County Council for inclusion in the LTP2 consultation.

The updated version of the Environmental Report, incorporating consultation comments where appropriate, has been republished alongside this Environmental Statement, available to view on the WCC website.

## Preferred Alternative Selection

The selection of the preferred alternatives was carried out during the Scoping stage through the use of preliminary assessment matrices. These matrices provided a broad

understanding of the potential environmental impacts, both adverse and beneficial, of the various options. Selection of preferred alternatives was then carried out through a steering group meeting comprised of representatives of Worcestershire County Council and the environmental consultants.

In order to fulfil the requirements of the SEA Directive and to ensure the LTP2 provided benefits to the environment, these options were then appraised against the ‘business as usual’ alternative, i.e. the continuation of the policies within the preceding LTP. This process revealed which policies were likely to have an adverse impact on the SEA objectives and required more detailed appraisal. Fourteen out of the 101 LTP2 policies were assessed using detailed assessment matrices which considered both the adverse and beneficial impacts on the SEA objectives in terms of probability, duration, frequency, permanence, magnitude, geographic extent and significance of effects. Suggested mitigation measures were suggested for each policy assessed in this way in order to minimise the environmental impact of the plan.

### Suggested Monitoring Proposals

The monitoring requirements typically associated with the SEA process are recognised as placing heavy demands on authorities with SEA responsibilities. For this reason, the proposed monitoring framework should focus on those aspects of the environment that are likely to be negatively impacted upon, or where the impact is uncertain. Due to the theoretical nature of many of the LTP2 policies, however, this is not always easily identifiable. Instead, the proposed monitoring programme aims to give a flavour of progress against each objective. Nonetheless, it will be possible (and may be necessary) to amend the proposed framework in accordance with, for example, the information requirements of Environmental Impact Assessments related to the LTP2 or unanticipated negative effects.

*Table 3: Suggested monitoring framework*

Objective / Effect to be Monitored	Indicator / information Required	Data Source	Repetition	Trigger for Remedial Action	Possible Action
1: Maintain and enhance Worcestershire's biodiversity, flora and fauna	Condition of SSSIs	English Nature	Annual	Percentage of Sites classified as 'Unfavourable and declining' exceeds 10%	Review management, seek funding for improvement, ensure nearby development is appropriate.
2: Maintain and enhance landscape character	Land use in Worcestershire (from Character maps)	State of Environment Report, Worcestershire Partnership	Annual	Urban land use exceeds agreed percentage	Review land use policies, seek to preserve / replace certain character types
3: Protect and improve the water resource and reduce flood risk	Biochemical quality of water bodies and courses	Environment Agency	Annual	Misses regional target	Tighten pollution control, clamp down on incidents, pursue remediation measures
	Percentage of new development in flood plain	Environment Agency	Annual	Misses regional target	Review land use policies, research alternative siting for new developments

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4: Maintain and improve air quality	Nitrogen dioxide levels (micrograms per cubic metre) at AQMAs	WCC	Annual	Misses regional targets	Promote cleaner fuels and technologies, imposes driving restrictions and / or congestion charging
	Congestion – journey times (A4440 southern link road, Worcester, Worcester city centre, Kidderminster, Stourport, A38 Bromsgrove, Evesham)	WCC	2008/09	Congestion and journey times increasing.	Consider traffic management options to relieve congestion.
5: Encourage energy efficiency and reduce contributions to climate change	CO <sub>2</sub> emissions	WCC (NRTS), NAEI, Defra	Annual	Increases above LTP2 target level	Expand renewable energy production, see point 4 above
	Road traffic vehicle kilometres	WCC (NRTS)	Annual	Increasing traffic levels	Reduce the need to travel by car
	Mode share of journeys to school (car share, public transport, walking and cycling)	WCC	Annual	Mode share does not increase	Increase promotion of sustainable travel to school
6: Conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic and cultural environment	Percentage of conservation areas lost or damaged	WCC	Annual	Exceeds 2% per annum	Taking preventative measures
7: Reduce crime and promote community safety	Percentage of residents who feel safe	ONS / census / British Crime Survey	Bi-annual	Falls below agreed level	Address crime, fear of crime, street lighting, etc
8: Reduce poverty and social exclusion, promote a strong community and encourage accessibility to services	Access to employment – Percentage of working population within 60 minutes (by public transport) of a major employment site (am peak period)	WCC	Annual	Falls below LTP2 target level	Improve accessibility (more services, better links)
	Proportion of bus fleet that are low floor	WCC	Annual	Proportion falls	Increase procurement of low floor buses
9: Encourage buoyant and sustainable tourism industry, including access to countryside	Ease of use of rights of way	WCC	Annual	Footway condition is deemed to be deteriorating	Improve existing network

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10: Promote, support and sustain healthy people, their lifestyles and communities they live in	Number of cycling trips	WCC	Annual	Number of trips falling	Provide cycle facilities and promote cycling.
	Access to healthcare – Percentage of people within 60 minutes (by public transport) of a hospital	WCC	Annual	Falls below LTP2 target level	Improve accessibility to hospitals
	Percentage of children walking or cycling to school	WCC	Annual	Reducing levels	Promote health benefits and provide facilities to encourage walking and cycling through School Travel Plan
	Total killed or seriously injured casualties	WCC	Annual	Increasing incidence of fatal or seriously injured casualties	Consider traffic management options in 'accident blackspots'
11: Encourage economic growth that does not compromise future generations, and improve access to employment	Number of employers that have adopted a travel plan	WCC	Annual	Falls below LTP2 target level	Increased promotion of employer travel plans
	Proportion of the workforce that works in organisations that are committed to developing a travel plan				
12: Ensure the appropriate use of previously developed land and buildings	Percentage of new development on previously developed land	WCC	Annual	Falls below agreed level	Favour brownfield sites when planning new transport infrastructure
13: Support the sustainable extraction, re-use and recycling of minerals and aggregates	Percentage of transport infrastructure materials coming from recycled sources	HA / WCC	Annual	Falls below agreed level	Impose restrictions on developers
14: Manage waste according to waste hierarchy, encourage recycling and use of renewable resources	Means of waste transportation	WCC	Annual	Road transportation exceeds agreed level	Encourage use of canal network, expand regional processing capacity
15: Promote sustainable design and construction	Percentage of new transport facilities built to BREEAM or other sustainable standards	WCC	Bi-Annual	Falls below agreed level	Impose restrictions on developers, renovate existing facilities to better standards
16: Maintain the best and most versatile agricultural land	Percentage loss of land classified Grade 1 to 3a	WCC / Defra	Annual	Exceeds agreed level	Seek to minimise new transport developments that destroy high grade land