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## **DISTRICT TRANSPORT STRATEGY (Min 126/00)**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1. This report outlines the results of the public consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the draft District Transport Strategy and seeks approval for several amendments to the strategy document and to the details of the five year action plan. The preparation of a Local transport Plan is a statutory requirement for the County Council; as part of the plan preparation process, the County requires that each district prepares a District Transport Strategy to be incorporated into the final Transport Plan.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The draft District Strategy was considered by the Transportation Sub-Committee on 6 January 2000 and it was agreed that a public consultation exercise be undertaken before the final version of the strategy was agreed. Details of the responses to the consultation are outlined in this report. To avoid reprinting the strategy in full, Members are requested to bring their existing copy to the meeting. The proposed five-year action plan to be incorporated in the strategy is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

### **3 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

- 3.1 The Draft District Transport Strategy was circulated to a long list of organisations with an interest in the district, Parish Council's and adjacent local authorities. Copies of the document were placed in the District's libraries for inspection and a press release resulted in a short article appearing in the local press.
- 3.2 At the time of drafting the report, a total of 15 responses had been received. These are summarised in Appendix 2. Any further responses received will be reported at the meeting.
- 3.3 **Alterations to the Strategy**
- 3.3.1 It is considered that the key issues identified by the respondents have, in the main, been adequately covered in the strategy document. However, several changes are proposed to the document.
- 3.3.2 Section 1 (page 6), paragraph 2 after the second sentence add: It has also been developed having regard to the Local Transport Plan being formulated by Southend on Sea Borough Council in partnership with the local community and transport operators. Rochford District Council has been an active partner in this process.'

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- 3.3.3 The last sentence of paragraph 4 on page 6 be replaced by: The Local Transport Plan for Essex will replace the South East Essex Package as it relates to Castle Point Borough and the Rochford District, whilst for the Southend area a separate Local Transport Plan is being developed by the Southend on Sea Borough Council.
- 3.3.4 Section 4.3 At the end of the paragraph dealing with pollution and air quality it is proposed to add: The adoption of vehicles using alternative and sustainable fuel sources may also have an impact on levels of air pollution, though such a shift is only likely to take place over a long period of time.
- 3.3.5 Section 4.3 Amend the first sentence of the second paragraph of the section dealing with traffic intrusion and environmental damage to read: There is no doubt that roads such as Ashingdon Road and Greensward Lane continue to give cause for concern.
- 3.3.6 Section 4.5 At the end of the second paragraph dealing with quality bus partnerships add: The Council will also seek to explore the value of innovative schemes to make buses more flexible and better related to residential areas within the district.
- 3.3.7 Section 4.5 Following the second paragraph dealing with strategic public transport deficiencies add a new paragraph as follows: As the redevelopment of the Airport progresses it offers the potential to function as a wider integrated passenger transport facility. It will be important that such potential is realised in order to ensure that the Airport is fully integrated into the local transportation network so that its business and other opportunities are available to as wide a cross-section of the local business community as possible. Rochford District Council will work closely with the Airport Operators, Southend Borough Council, transport operators and other interest groups to develop an Airport Access Strategy.
- 3.3.8 Section 4.5 Add an additional paragraphs to refer to proposals for the improvement of road links to the MOD land at Foulness and New Ranges as follows: Road Links - There are likely to be major development opportunities on Ministry of Defence land declared surplus to requirements at Shoeburyness in the eastern periphery of the neighbouring Southend Borough, together with the non-defence related development on Foulness Island and other MOD land within Rochford. Redevelopment and new non-defence related development has the potential to play a crucial role in the regeneration of the local economy in South East Essex.

Whilst there is potential for achieving rail links, due to the peripheral location and relative isolation of the area, rail alone may not on its own provide the ingredients necessary for successful redevelopment. Improvements to the highway network may also need to be considered

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if the full commercial potential of the area is to be realised. To achieve this the Provisional Southend Local Transport Plan identifies the potential to improve the highway from Parsons Corner in Shoeburyness to serve the Ministry of Defence land, subject to a closer examination of the likely requirements and to discussions with Rochford District and Essex County Council.

Rochford District Council supports the principle of improved access to the MOD land in the interests of improving the local economy. However, any new access is likely to cross open countryside within the District and before any indication can be given that such a road might be acceptable, a close examination will be required of the detailed design and safeguards concerning the protection of the Green Belt.'

3.3.9 Section 4.6 At the end of the paragraph dealing with travel to work and education add: Other options that will be considered include the development of green commuter plans and car sharing schemes.

3.3.10 Section 4.8 Replace the first paragraph under network management for congested networks with the following: Good communication links to the national road and rail network are essential to the viability of the local economy. Recent local economic studies have all identified accessibility and transportation problems as a major barrier to new investment in the area. Improved accessibility will therefore be vital to the regeneration of the District and SouthEast Essex as a whole.

The importance of the major east-west corridor of movement between London and SouthEast Essex to the regeneration of the area is recognised in emerging Regional Planning Guidance, which identifies it as a regional priority for study. With the railways, roads and river running in parallel, and the London Southend Airport complementing the business opportunities of London City Airport, it provides one of the greatest opportunities in the region for developing an integrated rail, road, and river policy to deliver significant modal shift and improved accessibility.

Whilst the Local Planning Authority supports the development of a multi-modal study, it would be opposed in principle to a road based solution which entailed the development of an outer bypass through the District in the interests of preserving both the quality of life and the Green Belt environment of the District. However, a local bypass for Rochford would be supported.

#### **4 FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN**

4.1 The outline action plan included in the draft strategy document has now been developed into a five year action plan (see Appendix 1).

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- 4.2 Members will see that the plan is divided into two sections dealing with the urban and the rural parts of the district. The figures included in the plan are best estimates of the cost of undertaking the various initiatives.
- 4.3 It is intended that the action plan will be submitted to the County as this Council's programme for transport improvements in the district over the next five years. Further reports will be brought to Members following the publication of the final version of the Local Transport Plan and the County Council's deliberations on the specific budget allocations to each district.
- 4.4 Inevitably, there is likely to be a need for decisions to be made about the prioritisation of the various elements of the plan once details of the financial settlement is known.

## **5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council's adopted Crime and Disorder Strategy includes a priority for the reduction of traffic speeds in the district. Various elements of the proposed transport strategy have implications for crime and disorder in the district including, safer routes to school, improved street lighting and so on.

## **6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The transport strategy deals with a wide variety of issues that are designed to influence the environment in the district by, for example, reducing traffic congestion, improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and reducing levels of air pollution.

## **7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The intent of the transport strategy and five year action plan is to bid for resources from the County Council's Local Transport Block grant from Government. Depending on funds, the implementation of agreed schemes would be undertaken by County Highways on behalf of the district.

## **9 RECOMMENDATION**

- 9.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES:**

That, subject to amendments by Members, the draft District Transport Strategy and five-year action plan be adopted and submitted to Essex County Council for inclusion in the Local Transport Plan. (HCPI)

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**Background Papers:**

None

For further information please contact Shaun Scrutton on 01702 318100