

**INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
25 SEPTEMBER 2018**

PART I

**PROPOSED RESPONSE TO HCC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT GROWTH AND
TRANSPORT PLAN FOR SOUTHWEST HERTFORDSHIRE (DCES)**

1 Summary

- 1.1 The Hertfordshire County Council (hereon cited as 'HCC') has consulted publicly on its proposed South West Hertfordshire Growth and Transport Plan. This Plan is intended to set the specific schemes that will be investigated by the County Council in its role as local Highway Authority. HCC says that *the South West Herts Growth & Transport Plan (GTP) is a new transport strategy to help direct and plan transport improvements and investment in South West Hertfordshire, developed in line with forecast development to 2031.*
- 1.2 This report provides the background to the plan, an assessment of schemes proposed in the District along with comment already received from local Councillors and District teams, although the timing of the issue of the consultation during the holiday period has precluded comments from various Councillors whose keen interest in the Plan is well known. The Committee is asked to consider the detail in this report and to authorise an informal Officer response to the County Council.

2 Details

- 2.1 The Growth and Transport Plan is described by the County Council as "a spatial transport plan developed in partnership with key stakeholders for the purpose of applying Local Transport Plan policies and objectives to a growth-focused area; assembling robust evidence to identify and justify packages of schemes and actions; and aligning these packages/actions to growth objectives and quality of life priorities to maximise funding opportunities and deliver positive change".
- 2.2 The District Council was consulted by email on the 23 July 2018 and subsequently received hard copy deposit documents on the 21 August 2018. Officer meetings had been held where the GTP was discussed in parts, always in the context of new development, with the Local Plans team but there was no formal engagement with the District Council on the GTP before the 23 July 2018 in terms of the specific schemes. Various copies of draft GTPs had been circulated but the actual consultation date was not provided (even at an officer meeting less than two weeks prior to the consultation where this date was requested).
- 2.3 The various teams at Three Rivers have been asked for comments as has every Ward Councillor. These are summarised at Appendix 3.
- 2.4 Some relevant Officer comments included:
- 2.5 Issues with consultation period, which was issued at short notice and appeared intended to be over a holiday period (contrary to guidance); lack of formal prior consultation on schemes proposed on Three Rivers-owned land.
- 2.6 Economic & Sustainable Development Service (Local Plans section) support the South Oxhey-Holywell cycle and bus link; the Park and Ride facility is encouraged subject to the capacity of motor access to Kings Langley station being sufficient.

- 2.7 A specific concern is the closure of Kings Langley station; SM3 has been identified as performing poorly in the assessment, so the potential impacts of this intervention, if implemented, require attention. Kings Langley is a Secondary Centre in the Three Rivers District and the existing train station provides an accessible and sustainable facility for its residents. The closure of Kings Langley is quoted at a cost range of £2.5-5m in Appendix A; future funding should not be directed towards the loss of existing facilities but instead should be used to enhance them in all circumstances.
- 2.8 The downgrade of the A405 must not proceed in isolation... the other interventions of PK4 would not be sufficient in addressing vehicular congestion issues along the A405 due to their focus on pedestrian, cycle and rail modes of travel.

Assessment of specific schemes

- 2.9 The GTP does not cover the whole district; the published boundary omits the District to the north and west of the M25 motorway (although some schemes are referenced, as shown below, in those areas). Settlements affected include:

Abbots Langley (Packages 4 & 6)
 Bedmond (Package 6)
 Carpenders Park (Package 8)
 Chorleywood (Package 9)
 Croxley Green (Package 9)
 Kings Langley (Packages 1 & 6)
 Leavesden (Packages 4 & 6)
 Northwood (Package 8)
 Eastbury, Oxhey and Moor Park (Packages 5 & 8)
 Rickmansworth (Package 9)
 South Oxhey (Packages 4 & 8)

- 2.10 There is little reference to Chorleywood or the rural area around Chorleywood North, or Maple Cross. The strategy is heavily focussed on the urban areas of Hemel Hempstead, Watford and St. Albans and to some extent on the corridors between them.
- 2.11 Five of the Packages (4, 5, 6, 8 and 9) of the total nine packages will affect the Three Rivers District, as set out on p.15 of the consultation document. These include:

2.12 Package 4 – St Albans - Watford Corridor

To maximise the potential of the existing Abbey Line as a rail route by enhancing onward connections into St Albans City,

To transform the parallel A405 into a multi-modal road by diverting strategic traffic onto the motorway network, freeing up space for more local journeys by bus, bike or by car. The package consists of:

- The introduction of a new St Albans South Public Transport Hub
- Additional slips at M25 J21 to allow all movements between the M25 and M1, and streetscape improvements along the A405 at Bricket Wood.
- Enhanced cycling facilities along the A405 linking St Albans and Leavesden.

2.13 Package 5 – Western Gateway (Watford & Croxley Business Parks)

(Stated to affect Northwood, Eastbury, Oxhey and Moor Park as well as Carpenders Park)

To improve access to Watford & Croxley business parks through the enhancement of sustainable transport links. The package consists of:

- A new southern access into Watford & Croxley Business Parks area for cyclists and buses only.
- Making use of the disused railway alignment in West Watford to enable sustainable and mass transit transport opportunities (former Croxley Rail Link/MLX route)
- The introduction of a new bus- and cycle-only link across the River Colne linking South Oxhey and the Business Parks Area. (scheme reference SM12b)

2.14 Package 6 – Watford - Hemel Hempstead Corridor

(Stated to affect Abbots Langley, Leavesden, Kings Langley and Bedmond)

To promote journeys between Watford and Hemel Hempstead by train and by bus, and to discourage journeys by car on inappropriate routes. The package consists of:

- Improvements to M25 J20, bus priority along the A41, and enhanced interurban bus services between Hemel Hempstead and Watford.
- Enhanced cycleways and facilities along the Grand Union Canal Towpath and the A411 from Hemel Hempstead to Watford town centre.
- Watford Junction and Town Centre public realm enhancements.

2.15 Package 8 – Watford South

(Stated to affect Northwood, Eastbury, Oxhey and Moor Park, South Oxhey and Carpenders Park)

To enhance the attractiveness of journeys by bike and bus in southern Watford, and facilitate more appropriate route options for traffic which avoid Bushey Arches. The package consists of:

- Enhanced bus priority infrastructure and services through Bushey and Carpenders Park.
- Cycling links in Oxhey, Carpenders Park, and Bushey.
- The introduction of slips at M1 Junction 4 to allow all movements between the M1 and A41 alongside a Park and Ride facility at M1 Junction 5.

2.16 Package 9 – Rickmansworth

(Stated to affect Rickmansworth and Chorleywood)

To enhance the attractiveness of journeys to Rickmansworth railway station and access to the Ebury Way (towards Watford) on foot and by bike. The package consists of:

- A new southern access into Watford & Croxley Business Parks area for cyclists and buses only.
- Enhanced cycleways and facilities towards Rickmansworth railway station and town centre.

- 2.17 These packages comprise various schemes as set out by package. Each scheme has been assessed as set out in the summary at Appendix B, which taken with comments from the specialist teams and local Councillors will contribute towards the informal officer response to this consultation.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

Options

- 3.1 The District Council can opt to either:
- 3.2 Return a response to be agreed by the Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with Lead Members, or
- 3.3 Return no response at this time, with the intention to respond when further detail becomes available.

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no specific legal risks associated with any comments returned to HCC as it is an external organisation that sets its own policies.
- 4.2 However, there could be legal implications to the District Council if the GTP includes proposals that interfere with policies or assets controlled by the District Council, as this could affect existing legal duties or commitments. It is therefore recommended that the District Council requires further consultation on any such proposals prior to any formal acceptance by HCC of the GTP; or requires that any such are removed from the GTP.

5 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 5.1 Relevance

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	No – This response is to a policy document proposed by an external body.
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	No

6 **There are no Staffing Implications, Environmental Implications, Community Safety Implications, Public Health implications, or Customer Services Centre Implications, Communications and Website Implications or Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications.**

7 Recommendation

- 7.1 That the committee agrees:
- 7.2 A) to authorise the Director of Community Services and Environment to return a response to be agreed with the Lead Member for Transport along with a copy of this report, to HCC as the formal TRDC response to the GTP consultation.

That public access to the report be immediate.

Report prepared by: P. Simons, Senior Transport Planner, Regulatory Services

Data Quality

Data sources: HCC GTP

Data checked by: P. Simons, Senior Transport Planner

Data rating: Tick

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	
3	High	x

Background Papers

8 **None.**

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

9 **Appendix A – Full Member and Officer responses to HCC GTP.**

10 **Appendix B – Summary of potential effects of proposals on Three Rivers District.**