

Local Transport Plan 3 Vision and Issues Consultation 18th January 2010 and 12th March 2010

A Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory document which includes a local authority's transport strategies, policies and implementation programme. Herefordshire Council's existing LTP expires on the 31st March 2011. The council is required under the Local Transport Act 2008 to have an adopted LTP in place by the 1st April 2011.

The LTP3 Vision and Issues Consultation invited public opinion on the proposed Vision for Transport within Herefordshire before requesting the prioritisation of a range of locally recognised transport issues. Responses to this consultation will be used to develop the Council's long term strategy for transportation. There will be further opportunity for public comment on the emerging LTP3 strategy during the summer 2010.

LTP3 will cover the same time period as the council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2011 to 2026) and it is essential for the future growth of the county that both strategy documents compliment each other.

The LTP3 consultation exercise yielded a total of 342 responses, a return rate of 7.6%. The results are therefore not statistically robust, but provide a useful insight into public opinion towards transportation within the county.

Analysis of Results

Question 1) Do you agree with our vision?

72% of respondents agreed with the proposed LTP vision. Of the remaining 28% not agreeing 15% disagreed and the remaining 13% failed to answer the question.

Where respondents disagreed with the vision their comments varied but the general themes suggested that the vision itself is too vague; unrealistic; meaningless; unqualified; woolly; unclear; too unspecific; too wide-ranging; dull; uninspiring; anodyne; weak and generalised.

These comments will be considered and the vision reviewed during the drafting of the LTP3 strategy.

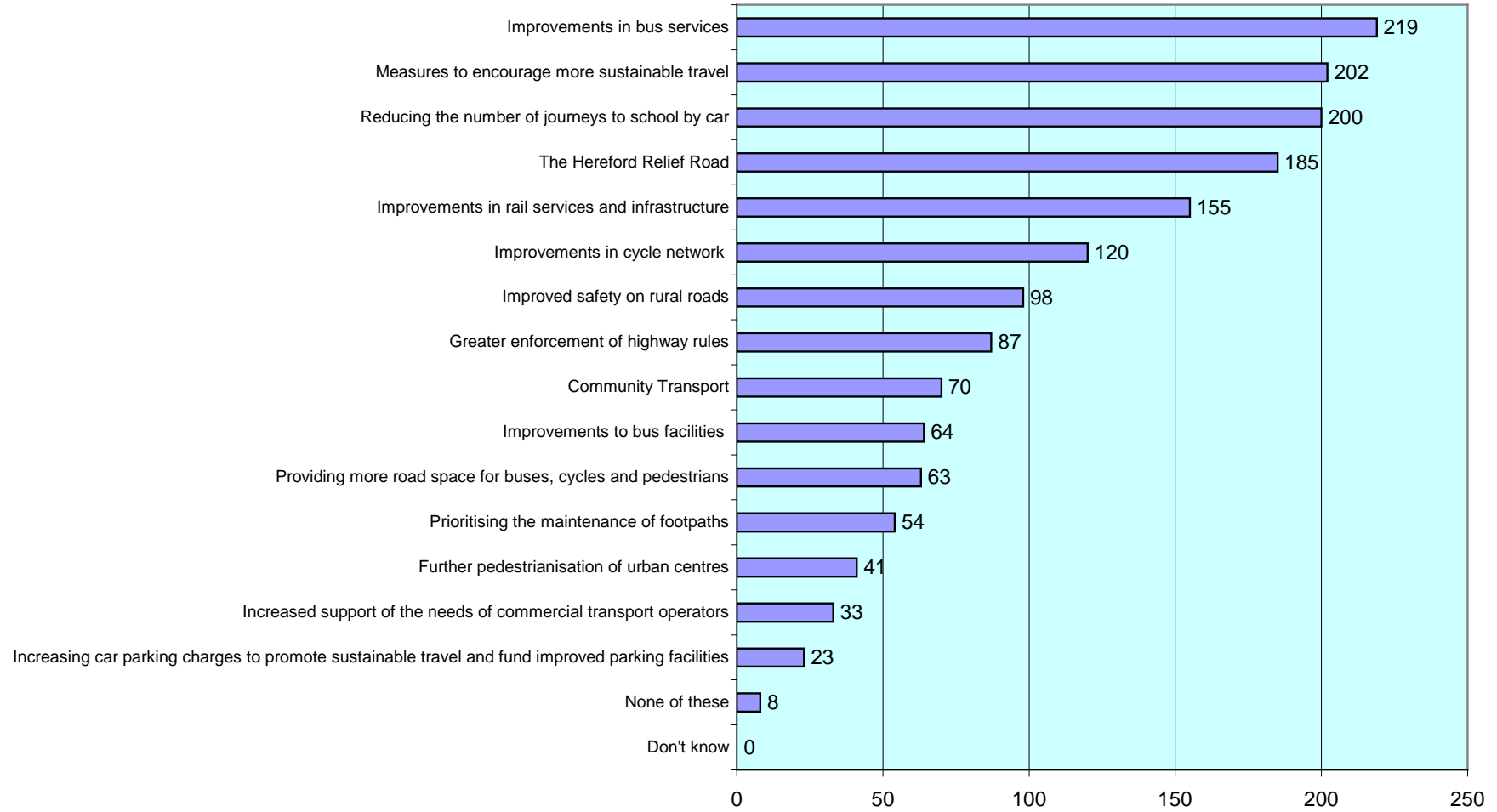
Question 2) Thinking generally, which issues identified within the table provided would you say are the most important priorities for improving transport within Herefordshire? Please tick up to five boxes only

Results from the consultation are provided in the LTP Priorities Table. The top five priorities for transport are:

1. Improvements in bus services
2. Measures to encourage sustainable travel
3. Reducing the number of car journeys to school
4. The Hereford Relief Road
5. Improvements in rail services and infrastructure

Increasing car parking charges to finance sustainable transport improvements featured bottom of the list. .

LTP 3 Consultation - Priorities Table



The results identified within the priorities table will be used to inform the direction of the LTP3 strategy and implementation plan.

General comments

In addition to the formal questions asked within the consultation document a number of informal comments were received. All these comments received will be considered when producing the LTP3 Strategy and the related Transport Policy Statements. The main themes of these comments included:

- Car Journeys
- Design
- The Hereford Relief Road, market towns relief roads and other new roads
- Public Transport, including bus travel, rail travel and park and ride
- Walking and Cycling
- Economics
- HGVs
- Car Parking
- Congestion
- Carbon reduction
- Road Safety
- Maintenance

Car journeys

There were two points of view which were clearly demonstrated:

- a. In a rural county car use is high because it is financially unsustainable to provide network coverage for the whole county with conventional public transport, and without a car rural isolation occurs
- b. That the local transport plan is too dominated by the car and not enough emphasis is given on actually reducing/penalising the use of car transport where other choices are available.

Clearly the Local Transport Plan needs to address these two points of view, by developing different ways of working to provide public transport/community transport that will be attractive enough to encourage people to leave their cars at home, and also by making walking and cycling more attractive, whilst acknowledging that car ownership is unlikely to diminish, and, indeed, is likely to increase during the lifetime of the plan.

Design

There were a number of issues that surfaced within this theme:

- a. The importance of design with regard to our ageing population – consideration must be provided to mobility scooters, wheelchairs etc; together with others with mobility problems such as mothers with pushchairs etc. A recurring example was the subway at Victoria Street in central Hereford which has steps, but no ramp and an alternative very short crossing time for pedestrians to get across the busy A49.
- b. Pedestrianisation along Newmarket Street/Blueschool Street, in central Hereford as part of the Edgar Street Grid development

- c. Congestion around Barr's Court Road/College Road/Newtown Road in Hereford.

The Hereford Relief Road and the Link Road/Other new roads

Despite the strong support for Hereford Relief Road by the majority of respondents, there is a minority which are strongly opposed to its development. Reasons cited include the confusion in Council policy, with the Council embracing a low carbon future whilst promoting road development, the loss of land for food production and impact of the road on a highly environmentally sensitive environment.

There are also a number of people who supported the proposed relief road for Leominster and a few who want the Ledbury by-pass completed.

Public Transport

Park and Ride

Although Park and Ride was not mentioned explicitly on the consultation there is clearly some support for Park and Ride to operate throughout the year, not just at Christmas. There was some acknowledgement that it may be difficult without dedicated bus lanes, and that the A49 Trunk Road may prove to be a sticking point.

There was also a suggestion that Council and PCT employees should use a Park and Ride scheme to get to work given that they are the largest employers and would make the most impact on the traffic.

Buses

Improvement to bus services is top of the list of priorities. Other comments include a desire for greater bus subsidies (as fares are seen to be quite expensive); an increase in the frequency; free public transport for 16-17 year olds; improvements to school bus services; integration between bus and rail services; electronic information about bus arrivals; linkages between different bus services at rural transport hubs; links with Community Transport schemes and an increase in the number of bus lanes.

Railways

Improvements in rail services featured fifth in the list of priorities with comments concerning re-opening of old stations (particularly Pontrilas, Rotherwas and Moreton-on-Lugg); dual tracking of the line between Hereford and Malvern; re-opening of old railways lines; opening of new railway stations at the city boundary; using railways for freight transportation to take HGVs off the road; increasing the number of carriages on the trains and increasing the frequency and the coverage of the trains.

Walking and Cycling

There is clearly a will for more walking and cycling in the county with measures to encourage more sustainable travel such as walking and cycling coming second in the ranking. However, common themes that emerged from the consultation include:

- a. Better facilities for cyclists and pedestrians
- b. Development of cycle routes in the city
- c. More and better cycle parking in the city and market towns

- d. A properly integrated, interconnected and funded cycle lane scheme
- e. Examples of poor cycling options in the city, including one-way streets, lack of traffic crossings, traffic signal times too short for cyclists etc.

Economics

There was concern expressed about the lack of money available to carry out potential schemes; lack of employment due to industry eschewing the city due to the poor road links and the necessity of balancing economic growth whilst maintaining the beauty and uniqueness of Herefordshire.

HGVs

The most common themes around HGVs were in relation to reducing the numbers and size of HGVs on minor country lanes.

Car Parking

As can be seen from the table of priorities, increasing car parking charges was ranked bottom of the list of priorities with only 23 people in favour. Indeed, those who commented on car parking in Hereford wanted more and cheaper car parking, close to the city centre in order to ensure people continue to visit the city.

There were a couple of comments from Ledbury concerning Bye Street (which should be made short stay instead of long stay) and Bridge Street being made long-stay (not free) and the fact that St Katherine's car park is virtually empty most days.

In the next consultation we need to be explicit about why we want to increase car parking charges, what this will do to promote sustainable travel and park & ride and the options that we are giving people to encourage them not to travel by car.

Congestion

There was acknowledgement that congestion is a problem in Hereford city, with some suggestions to alleviate this including:

- a. Better signposting of the Rotherwas and Roman Roads to encourage HGVs to use them
- b. Encouragement of use of the internet for grocery shopping
- c. Encouraging off-peak/staggered working hours, especially by large employers such as the Council and the PCT
- d. Peak hour closure of rat runs
- e. Use of P&R schemes for council/PCT employees
- f. Better traffic lights – peak time at Belmont and Tesco roundabouts

Carbon Reduction

Although there was only one comment under this heading – the need to meet the dual challenges of reducing carbon emissions and recognising the need to conserve our diminishing supplies of oil – it is clear that the LTP needs to address this issue as transport contributes approximately one third of CO2 emissions in Herefordshire.

Road Safety

Speed was a common theme with suggestions of 20 mph within Hereford Ring Road, maximum of 50 mph on all A roads and 40 mph on all B roads; enforcement of speed limits in villages by the use of fixed and mobile speed cameras etc. However, there was also a request to remove all speed bumps.

Maintenance

Suggestions on this ranged from the highly technical to the more basic – repair the roads. There was a general concern throughout about the state of repair of the roads and a desire for better road maintenance on the major and minor roads. There was also a plea for repair and maintenance of footways.