

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Housing Environmental and Economic Development

Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee: 8 June 2011

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Council - Local Transport Strategy Update 2007 - 2010

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to report on the success of the Council's second local transport strategy 2007 - 2010 and to seek approval to develop a third local transport strategy for the next 10 years.

2. Background

- 2.1** West Dunbartonshire's Local Transport Strategy 2007 -2010 (LTS) set out the transport vision and objectives of the Council and provided a three-year action plan for meeting local challenges and needs.
- 2.2** The introduction of Regional Transport Strategies (RTS) and Scotland's first ever National Transport Strategy (NTS) increased the importance of developing a robust and relevant LTS that would influence and complement transport initiatives at the regional and national level.
- 2.3** Following the adoption of this LTS, the Council worked towards the delivery of the vision and objectives, and at the end of the LTS lifespan, we have made steady progress towards the delivery of these objectives as detailed in the attached appendix - Local transport action plan 2007 -2010 update report.
- 2.4** The LTS needed to face up to tough and uncomfortable realities. The biggest challenge was the transport sector's ever-increasing contribution to carbon dioxide emissions, which is fuelling global climate change.
- 2.5** A further challenge to be faced was effective public engagement. West Dunbartonshire Council has been at the forefront of behaviour change for example, with the Travelling Green Project, and the development of its own Travel Plan. New approaches and methods still continue to be developed. However, the dichotomy of society's continued and growing demand for mobility and apparent desire for investment in road infrastructure versus an approach based on behaviour change and sustainability, could not be ignored.

- 2.6** Three main options were considered with respect to transportation choices. We could pursue a do-minimum approach to our transport policy. This fails to respond not only to climate change issues, but also the wider sustainability agenda. This is likely to result in the Council falling behind the national agenda, not being able to influence national policy, and most likely falling foul of potential future European Union (EU) imposed penalties to achieve national carbon dioxide emissions targets. The parallel with EU imposed penalties for failing to achieve waste recycling targets is clear and apparent. The do-minimum approach appears to be a short-termist approach, focussed on attempting to maximise economic growth, reliant on others to address problems, but which is more susceptible to peaks in oil prices and carbon reduction penalties.
- 2.7** A second approach would be to concentrate attention and funding on either car-based options or public transport options. However, this would not be sustainable.
- 2.8** A third approach would be to adopt a best practice methodology to travel behaviour change, whilst restraining additional growth in traffic, and strongly supporting technological shifts to a low-carbon economy. Such an approach is a long-term approach, based on the principles of community and social welfare, local / global environmental quality, whilst seeking to support sustainable economic growth. Due to the immediacy of the action required, it was considered that such an approach would attract significant funding support and incentives.

With the issues of climate change, energy supply, personal mobility and accessibility, and sustainability rapidly gaining importance at national and European levels, this strategy is a key opportunity to influence the direction of regional and national transport policy.

- 2.9** The transport vision for the LTS was to provide all citizens of West Dunbartonshire with a genuine choice of transport which fulfils their needs and provides sustainable, high quality transport opportunities for work, healthcare and leisure.
- 2.10** The following objectives were established within the LTS:
- to promote economic growth by working in partnership with stakeholders to manage, maintain and improve access to transport services, and construct new infrastructure where appropriate
 - to protect and improve our environment and health
 - to improve integration for all transport users and between all transport modes
 - to widen accessibility and tackle social inclusion by increasing the opportunities of remote and disadvantaged people to reach more readily the transport network and lifeline services
 - to meet all national road safety targets and to continuously improve the safety and security of all people making journeys

- to maintain the transport network to a high and safe standard based on Asset Management principles

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The need to limit the environmental impact of transport was a key concern and objective for the LTS to address. Social exclusion; peripherality; lack of accessibility to employment, health, higher education and leisure facilities; availability and affordability of public transport; are other key concerns which were addressed within the LTS.
- 3.2** The LTS supported the sustainable land use vision established in the Structure and Local Plans recognising that land use in conjunction with sustainable development control policies, were key elements of a sustainable local transport policy.
- 3.3** The incorporation of an overall strategy to promote best practice in the adoption of sustainable travel behaviour was the most essential element of the strategy. The Council continue to be involved in the Travelling Green project, and are currently pursuing a number of initiatives to encourage more sustainable travel behaviour, which make it one of the lead authorities in this work. For example, West Dunbartonshire Council has implementing its own Travel Plan for employees, encourages car-sharing and supports the Safer Routes to Schools initiative. Opportunities to reduce business travel using information and communications technology (ICT) are also being considered. However, much more work needs to be done in conjunction with our community and public transport providers. Looking forward, the proposed third LTS will include a greater emphasis on accessibility planning.
- 3.4** Walking is the most sustainable transport mode and accordingly West Dunbartonshire Council supported and developed a range of strategies to increase walking both for travel to work, and for recreational purposes. Going forward, we will develop a Walking Action Plan that will establish and then implement measures that reflect the primary importance of walking in our daily lives for work and leisure purposes.
- 3.5** Similar to walking, cycling is a sustainable, low cost, and healthy mode of travel. Accordingly the Council has increased levels of cycling and improved the safety of cycle provision throughout the area through our cycling and walking strategy 2005.
- 3.6** We have continued to support Strathclyde Partnership for Transport in their responsibilities to provide bus and rail transport management services to the Council. Opportunities exist to use technology to further improve public transport e.g. Streamline, along quality bus corridors, integrated ticketing and quality partnerships. The proposed LTS will place further emphasis on these initiatives.

- 3.7** Local freight is heavily dependent on the road network. There appears to be opportunity to reduce the environmental impact of the freight routes through development of effective rail freight services and infrastructure, the proposed LTS will continue to support this opportunity.
- 3.8** There are some 350km of local roads maintained by West Dunbartonshire Council and approximately 200 bridges and associated structures. These have an estimated value of around £520m and it is vital that this asset is maintained effectively and efficiently. In order to assist in the management of maintenance regimes of our roads, the Council will continue to undertake carriageway, footway and structural inspection. This will be complemented by a Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP), which is currently being developed and will be introduced in 2011 to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of existing road management and maintenance regimes. Winter maintenance, the maintenance of structures, verges and carriageway maintenance are other responsibilities of the Council. During the course of this LTS, we have sought to optimise the efficiency of these operations and those of the road network itself.
- 3.9** West Dunbartonshire Council is fully committed to the improvement of road safety as detailed in our current Road Safety Plan. The development and introduction of traffic calming schemes has received strong public support. West Dunbartonshire Council has therefore continued to maintain an annual programme of traffic calming schemes and will seek to promote the Home Zones approach during the period of the third LTS. We will also continue to assist in schools and the wider community to deliver road safety training and education and will develop innovative and interesting ways of delivering this vital work.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues associated with this report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** Financial support for any measures which may be recommended or required in the future local transport strategy will be sought as and when required, utilising external funding wherever available.

6 Risk Analysis

- 6.1** The Council in its statutory capacity as the Roads Authority is responsible for managing, maintaining and for reducing road casualties through improving road safety (i.e. engineering, training, education and publicity). There is a risk that we do not meet the required targets through either external factors (outwith our control) or internal factors - for example reduced availability of suitably qualified and experienced staff / specialist advisors, or inadequate funding for essential road improvement measures. It is assumed however that current resource allocation will be maintained going forward and this will minimise the risk to the Council.

7. Equalities, Health & Humans Rights Impact Assessment (EIA)

7.1 No significant issues were identified in a screening for potential equality impact of this policy.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Significant progress in many key areas has been achieved but there is much more to be done and this will have to be undertaken within a more challenging resource context. The proposed third LTS for the next 10 years will build on the success of the previous two LTS's utilising our own strengths and support from partnering organisations and agencies and the wider community to shape the local environment, and lives of people living, working and visiting or travelling through West Dunbartonshire

8.2 The Committee is requested note the significant progress in the many key areas of transportation related issues identified within the local transport strategy 2007 - 2010 and to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to undertake the necessary consultation with interested parties and then to publish the local transport strategy 2011 -2020.

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Date: 10 May 2011

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Appendix: Local transport action plan 2007 -2010 update report

Background Papers: None

Ward Affected: All