

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date of meeting:** 26 September 2024

**By:** Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

**Title:** East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) 2024-2050

**Purpose:** To approve the draft East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 strategy, Investment Plan and other supporting documents

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), Investment Plan and supporting documents to support and deliver transport infrastructure across the county, ahead of this being presented to Full Council on 8 October 2024.**
  - (2) Note the further work planned beyond the adoption of LTP4, as outlined in paragraphs 2.13 – 2.16.**
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## 1 Background

### Local Transport Plan Context

1.1 Under the Transport Act 2000, Local Transport Authorities are required to have a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for their geographical area. The overall purpose of this is to set out the strategy and policy framework for transport, alongside enabling the transport, economic, social, and environmental challenges, and opportunities to be identified, whilst identifying the transport investment priorities; and establishing how to manage, maintain and improve the transport network.

1.2 The current East Sussex Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) was adopted in May 2011 and covers the period 2011 to 2026. It is supported by a series of five-year implementation plans which set out the intentions for transport investment for this period of time.

1.3 The requirement to update LTP3 has been influenced by several major changes in Government policy and priorities at a national, sub-national and local level. These include greater emphasis on the need to decarbonise transport; economic recovery following the Covid 19 pandemic, greater emphasis and integration of health and wellbeing policy, and the need to align with the Transport for the South East's (TfSE) Transport Strategy and Strategic Investment Plan.

1.4 The Department for Transport had initially proposed to issue updated Local Transport Plan guidance to local authorities in spring 2023. However, the publication of the draft guidance was continually delayed and has yet to be published. In lieu of the published draft guidance, DfT continued to urge local authorities to progress the review and update of their LTPs and provided local authorities with a strong indication of the likely contents. Prior to the public and stakeholder consultation, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) officers met with the DfT to discuss our draft LTP4 and they confirmed that the plan aligned with the draft guidance.

1.5 From a transport planning perspective, there has been an increased emphasis on the need to move away from 'planning for vehicles' towards planning for 'people and places', which is referred to as a 'decide and provide' approach. LTP4 has embraced this approach by developing

a preferred vision of the future alongside a strategy to work towards the delivery of, whilst enabling the management of uncertainty about the future.

1.6 Importantly this approach provides flexibility. Whilst the preferred vision will stay constant, the strategy and accompanying policies and measures can be adjusted or adapted to manage any uncertainties and changes wider Government policy on transport that arise during the plan period. This is critical when considering, for example, the newly elected government has identified five emerging strategic priorities for transport - rail reform (and the establishment of Great British Railways, which will bring rail infrastructure improvements and the delivery of services together), improving and expanding bus services, transforming infrastructure, making transport greener, and integrating transport networks of active travel measures.

1.7 This approach will enable us to adapt the East Sussex LTP4 strategy and investment plan to take account of any policy changes and the availability of new funding streams that are brought forward over the life of the plan.

## **2 Supporting information**

2.1 The process to develop LTP4 involves three key project stages:

- Stage 1 -Scoping (Completed – August 2022 - December 2022)
- Stage 2 - Strategy Development (Completed - January 2023 – September 2024)
- Stage 3 - Delivery (October 2024 onwards)

2.2 We are currently in the final phase of Stage 2 and propose to move to Stage 3 subject to LTP4 being adopted. Given the longevity of LTP4 (2024-2050), it will be important that it is treated as a live document. Therefore, the Strategy will continue to be reviewed, updated and monitored periodically to take account of changes in priorities and policies at a national, sub-national and local level as outlined in paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7, and the availability of funding.

### Strategy Development (Stage 2) update

2.3 Following the Stage 2 public and stakeholder consultation undertaken between late November 2023 and late February 2024, we have reviewed all of the consultation feedback received from over 1,000 engagements, developed draft responses to these comments and identified where LTP4 needs updating.

2.4 We have continued to work closely with officers and key external stakeholders on proposed updates to the plan to ensure that the LTP strategy reflects partners emerging strategies and plans (e.g. District and Borough Local Plans, the East Sussex Prosperity Strategy, etc.).

2.5 The LTP4 Member Reference Group, comprising members of the Place Scrutiny Committee, have been engaged throughout the Strategy's development, The proposed updates to the draft final LTP4 were presented to the cross-party Reference Group in late June 2024, and a summary of the final changes in early September 2024 as part of the governance process for LTP4's adoption.

### Updates to the LTP and supporting documents following consultation

#### *LTP4 Strategy*

2.6 In response to the consultation outcomes the following changes to the draft Strategy document have been undertaken:

- relocated and strengthened the reference to the 'decide and provide' approach, as referred to in paragraph 1.5, that is set out in the strategy;
- improved references to inclusive engagement and communication, outlining the critical importance of this from the outset, at the early stages of scheme design through to scheme delivery;
- improved references relating to different non-motorised users (people walking, wheeling and cycling, equestrian users);

- strengthened references regarding the opportunities for travel behaviour change initiatives alongside the delivery of transport infrastructure, subject to the availability of funding;
- improved references to accessing healthcare;
- highlighted that the opportunities for infrastructure and service improvements, specifically for active travel and buses, will be included as part of the review of the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP);
- strengthened the references to sustainable development and links to the current review of District and Borough Council's Local Plans;
- reviewed highway maintenance and links to active travel;
- strengthened references to coastal management and flooding and links to transport infrastructure; and
- Strengthened reference to biodiversity net gain and the local nature recovery strategy.

### *Supporting documents*

2.7 In relation to the supporting assessments, the Equalities Impact Assessment has been strengthened with evidence from local residents and protected characteristic groups to enable the use of the LTP4 EqIA by teams developing transport infrastructure measures and services. We are not proposing to make any changes to the Integrated Impact Assessment, Health Impact Assessment and Habitats Impact Assessment as these will be required to be reviewed throughout the delivery of LTP4.

2.8 As outlined in paragraph 1.6 the new government has provided an early indication of their transport priorities. This is alongside other policies which transport will align to, including the development of an industrial strategy and a 10 year infrastructure plan as well as updates to national planning policy to ensure the planning system meets the needs of a modern economy. The draft LTP4 Strategy has been updated to reflect these emerging policy areas, alongside the County's Economic Prosperity Strategy considered elsewhere on the agenda and is included in Appendix 1.

### *LTP4 Investment Plan*

2.9 To support the delivery of the LTP4 Strategy the following updates to the draft LTP4 Implementation Plan have been made:

- amended the name from 'Implementation Plan' to 'Investment Plan' to indicate that the plan is largely unfunded, but importantly to demonstrate our ambition particularly to government and other funding providers in relation to the opportunities for scheme delivery as and when funding becomes available. This also aligns with terminology used by Transport for the South East (TfSE) with the 'Strategic Investment Plan' which supports their Transport Strategy. From a public and stakeholder perspective, it will also support with managing expectations on the delivery of the plan, as it will clearly set out the opportunities for scheme delivery subject to either the County Council and/or our partners securing funding;
- highlights that the LTP4 is an aspirational strategy that will be used to secure investment as outlined above (but needs to demonstrate ambition to help secure funding);
- to manage expectations around deliverability of the plan, strengthened references to the availability of funding (especially in the current financial climate) and that the plan is subject to the ability of ESCC internal teams and external partners to work collaboratively to seek and secure external funding;
- strengthened the text focussed on scheme scale (i.e. localised measures or strategic schemes) and likely types of funding that will be required to be secured;
- strengthened explanation of the roles and responsibilities in delivering the plan, with a separate section related to this;

- included new sub section covering engagement and consultation to demonstrate the approaches that may be required to bring schemes forward that align with a stronger policy context relating to the decarbonisation of transport;
- included new sub section on the proposed governance of the LTP4 in terms of the management of the delivery and the continued collaborative engagement with officers and stakeholders who have supported the development of LTP4;
- rename the monitoring and evaluation section to 'measuring success' to potentially include specific indicators to enable the future monitoring of the plan's success. We have not included targets in the plan as the achievement of any such targets is subject to the level of funding being secured and available; and
- expanded the forward timescales of the Investment Plan to indicate short-, medium- and longer-term timescales for the study, develop and deliver stages of schemes identified in the Investment Plan.

2.10 We have also liaised with other local authorities in the south-east to benchmark, learn and understand how others have developed their LTP's Investment Plan's alongside consultants Steer and apply this learning to the development of a robust LTP4 Investment Plan for the county. This benchmarking has helped inform several of the updates reflected above. A copy of the draft final LTP4 Investment Plan is included in Appendix 2.

#### Document accessibility

2.11 The finalised version of the LTP4 Strategy, Investment Plan and accompanying documents will be accessible and web-based documents available through the East Sussex County Council website. This approach will be applied to all modal strategies developed, where feasible.

#### Further work

##### *Carbon Assessment of LTP4*

2.12 A high level carbon assessment was undertaken as part of the scenario planning exercise used to develop the draft LTP4 strategy. The carbon assessment of the 'preferred future' scenario indicated that there would be a significant contribution towards achieving net zero transport. The Department for Transport's baseline forecasts are for a 50% reduction on 2019 levels; the East Sussex LTP4 'preferred future' forecast identified a further 19% to 30% reduction on the Department for Transport's forecasts.

2.13 Since then, work has been undertaken by several sub national transport bodies, including TfSE, to develop a Carbon Assessment Tool for local authorities to use to assess the carbon impacts on specific schemes and scheme types in their LTPs and Investment Plan's. The assessment tool was made available in August 2024 for use by local authorities. Officers are now reviewing the Carbon Assessment Playbook, before confirming an approach to the carbon assessment of LTP4. Therefore, a further detailed carbon assessment of the LTP and its specific schemes and scheme types will need to be undertaken after the adoption of LTP4.

##### *LTP4 Scheme Prioritisation Framework*

2.14 A framework to assess transport schemes for inclusion in the Council's annual capital programme of local transport improvements was developed as part of LTP3. This scheme prioritisation framework is currently being reviewed and updated to reflect the themes in the LTP4 Strategy. This will be tested over the next 6 to 9 months prior to bringing into effect to inform the development of the 2026/27 capital programme of local transport improvements.

##### *Governance – delivery of LTP4*

2.15 As outlined in paragraph 2.2, given the longevity of the plan we are proposing that LTP4 is managed as a live document. Partnership working is a critical approach underpinning the plan as responsibility for the delivery of the LTP rests not just with the County Council but with multiple organisations. It is proposed that the relationships with internal officers and partners established

throughout the LTP co-development process will be maintained and enhanced in order to support the ongoing delivery of the plan.

### *Modal Strategies*

2.16 Further work is also being undertaken to either review or develop a series of mode specific strategies supporting the LTP4 which will provide a greater granularity to the policies and schemes included in the plan:

- Rail Strategy – updated draft strategy being finalised with key stakeholders and a public/stakeholder consultation is proposed after local elections in May 2025;
- Freight Strategy – new draft being finalised with key stakeholders and a public/stakeholder consultation is proposed after local elections in May 2025;
- Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) – An update on the BSIP progress was submitted to the Department for Transport in June 2024;
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – Work on updating this strategy will start in September 2024, with a public/stakeholder consultation is anticipated in summer/autumn 2025;
- Electric Vehicle Strategy – A draft strategy was developed to support the recently successful Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding application to enable on-street charge points to be delivered in the county.

### *Adoption of LTP4*

2.17 Subject to Cabinet's approval of the draft final LTP4, Investment Plan and supporting documents, it will be considered for adoption at Full Council on 8 October 2024. Once the LTP4 has been adopted, we will share a copy of the final plan with DfT.

2.18 Should the government subsequently issue guidance on LTPs, we will review the plan against this guidance and agree with the DfT any identified updates required to our plan.

## **3 Conclusion and recommendations**

3.1 Local Transport Authorities are required to have a Local Transport Plan (LTP) in place which sets the strategy and policy framework for transport across their geography. The East Sussex LTP4, which will cover the period 2024 to 2050, will ensure that we have an up-to-date LTP that is reflective of current national, sub national and local policy, which will place us in a stronger position to seek future funding.

3.2 Over the last two years, significant progress has been made in developing, consulting upon and finalising a robust transport strategy for the county which, following the outcomes of stakeholder engagement and public consultation undertaken between 27 November 2023 and 25 February 2024, for the most part has been supported. The changes made to the draft final LTP4 strategy and Investment Plan in response to the public and stakeholder consultation are set out in paragraphs 2.6 and 2.9 respectively. We have also received cross party consensus on the draft final plan through ongoing engagement with the LTP4 Member Reference Group comprising members of Place Scrutiny Committee.

3.3 In view of the approach that we have used in developing the plan and the flexibility that this provides, we have been able to demonstrate that the plan can adapt easily to align to future changes in transport policy, including the emerging policy areas being proposed by the newly elected government and potential future funding streams.

3.4 With the longevity of the plan covering a 25-year period, and that the delivery of the plan does not wholly rest with the County Council but also with key stakeholders, we have set out the need to monitor the plan more closely. This will involve continuing with the successful relationships and collaboration developed with both internal officers and external partners during the development of the Plan, and specifically to maximise the opportunities to secure funding and enable scheme delivery.

3.5 Cabinet is recommended to approve the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 ahead of this being presented to the Full Council meeting on 8 October 2024 and to note the further work required to support LTP4, as outlined in paragraphs 2.13 – 2.16.

**RUPERT CLUBB**

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Appendix 1 – draft final LTP4 Strategy

Appendix 2 – draft final LTP4 Investment Plan