

REPORT TO THE COUNCIL MEETING OF 11 JULY 2011

Status: For information
Title: Core Strategy DPD - Market Harborough Transport Evidence
Originator: Stephen Pointer, Policy Manager
Where from: LDF Task Panel
Where to next:

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform members of the broad content of a transport assessment using the Leicester and Leicestershire Integrated Transport Model (LLITM) of Market Harborough as supporting evidence to inform the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD)

2 Recommendations:

- 2.1 **That the Council recognises the transportation situation in Market Harborough outlined in the Report;**
- 2.2 **That the Council expresses commitment to work with the County Council as local transport authority to support the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures in and around Market Harborough over the period to 2026 in association with development proposals as set out the Core Strategy DPD.**

3 Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 The Council's proposals for growth in and around Market Harborough have been underpinned by transport evidence using the new Leicester and Leicestershire Integrated Transport Model and a further assessment was completed in May 2011. The Transport Authority has confirmed by letter its support for the Council undertaking this work to an agreed brief.
- 3.2 The further transport assessment
1. helps understand the transport implications of proposed housing and employment development for Market Harborough; and
 2. tests the effects of alternative packages of transport measures to accompany proposed development.

- 3.4 The transport assessment has now been published as an Evidence document to the Examination and its conclusions will be discussed at the forthcoming Hearing.
- 3.5 In order to respond to questions from the Inspector and statements from other participants (particularly the County Council as Local Transport Authority) regarding the transport implications of the proposed Strategy, Council officers may need to consider changes to policy 13 for Market Harborough or the Infrastructure Schedule (Appendix 2) which reflect some of the issues outlined in paragraphs 5.9 and 5.10 below.

4 Impact on Communities

- 4.1 The Core Strategy forms a long term planning document to express how the objectives and aspirations of the Council, statutory agencies and the local community will be reflected in the future shape and development of Harborough District.

5 Key Facts

- 5.1 In 2009 the Council commissioned Arups (jointly with Oadby and Wigston Borough Council) to undertake a district-wide Strategic Transport Assessment of alternative options for the distribution of development in the district as evidence to assist in the consideration of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.
- 5.2 At the time it was not possible to examine in detail the potential scale of transport impacts of which could result from alternative development scenarios at Market Harborough, owing to the lack of transport evidence.
- 5.3 Discussion with the County Council in December 2009 indicated that the emerging Leicester and Leicestershire Integrated Transport Model (LLITM) expected to be available in 2010 would provide up to date localised base data and an early opportunity to use the new model in a relatively compact area such as Market Harborough. The Council decided to defer final decisions on its Core Strategy until this work could be undertaken during the summer of 2010 using emerging elements of the Leicestershire Transport Model.
- 5.4 Following evidence concerning residual housing requirements and land availability being updated in June 2010 alternative development scenarios have been tested using LLITM
 - a) In August 2010 when the LLITM preliminary highway base data became available for use, development scenarios were tested and a report was prepared by Harborough District in conjunction with Leicestershire County Council as owners of the model. The final document and related material can be viewed [here](#).

b) In January 2011 when the full LLITM became available for use, the Council commissioned LCC as owners of the model, to test development scenarios to complete the evidence gathering for the Core Spatial Strategy to assess:

- the impact of future development on traffic movement in Market Harborough taking into account forecast growth in traffic movements by 2026
- alternative packages of transport interventions to help control the impact of development growth over this period.

The study was commissioned from LCC as owner of the LLITM and carried out by AECOM as one of its framework consultants, who wrote the final report. The Project Report was sent by LCC on May 11 and a meeting to discuss the report was held with LCC on May 13. Following comments on the report sent to LCC during week commencing May 16, a revised Report (v6) was issued to the Council during week commencing May 23rd. Details of the development options tested and the alternative mitigation packages are contained in Appendix 1.

5.5 The revised report (v6) and Project Brief can be downloaded and viewed [here](#). A printed copy of the Report is also available to view in the Members Room. Officers of the District and County Councils have met to discuss the outcomes of the report for the Core Strategy. These would appear to be as follows:

- a) In line with findings of wider work to explore the transportation impacts of population growth, it would seem that traffic conditions in Market Harborough may be considerably worse in 2026 in comparison with the situation in 2008 (LLITM base year) even without further housing growth.
- b) In comparison with what the situation in 2026 might be, the impacts of a direction of growth to the north-west of the town that might accommodate 1000 dwellings +200 elsewhere in Market Harborough (option 1) are relatively small.
- c) If there were to be a direction of growth to the north and west of the town that might accommodate 1500 dwellings+200 elsewhere in Market Harborough (options 3 and 3a), the broad traffic impacts on the town would not appear to be too dissimilar from the impacts of option 1.
- d) The results for development option 3a, which includes a link road as part of the modelled development to the north and west of the town (i.e. 1500 dwellings), but without any further measures, would appear to show overall traffic benefits in the town, but these are modest in comparison with changes between 2008 and 2026.
- e) In terms of mitigating measures:
 - neither the public transport improvements in Mitigation Package 1 nor 2 would appear to make a noticeable difference in terms of modal share;

- walking and cycling (active travel) measures do seem to bring some small percentage benefits in terms of modal split;
- regardless of the development scenario, and notwithstanding the comment above regarding public transport, Mitigation Package 2 would appear to have the most notable *overall benefits* for the town in terms of total vehicle distance; vehicle delays; vehicle queues; and vehicle speeds – *but*, looking behind those headline benefits:
 - ◊ making St. Mary's Road one-way east (out) bound would appear to:
 1. put considerably more pressure on Springfield Street and its junction with Northampton Road, but would also appear to make the most dramatic difference in terms of reducing some traffic flows through the heart of the town (i.e. The Square);
 2. causes traffic to divert around the north of the town through Great Bowden, with impacts also in north-eastern areas of the town, e.g. along Burnmill Road;
 - ◊ a link road around the north-west edge of the town, between the B6047 and A4304, would appear to:
 1. Have mixed impacts in terms of traffic levels in the town, but in the vast majority of cases would not appear to bring about any further significant traffic reductions over and above the changes that would appear to arise from the tested St. Mary's Road changes
 2. Draw yet more traffic through Great Bowden (as it loops over the town), but would appear to limit the negative impacts of making St. Mary's Road one way in north-eastern parts of the town;
 3. Possibly have some benefits for rural routes to the north-west of the town;
 - ◊ it is not possible to discern what effects any reductions (assumed purely for testing purposes only) in long-stay car parking might have; and
- set against a modelled increase in CO₂ levels between 2008 and the 2026 core, some of the tested options/mitigation packages show reductions in CO₂ levels but none would appear to be capable of returning CO₂ output to 2008 levels, let alone fulfilling the requirements of the Climate Change Act.

5.6 The overall Core Strategy evidence suggests that there are no other, more viable directions of growth in Market Harborough than that to the North West. The LLITM modelling work provides the more robust evidence base requested by the County Council, albeit it does not point towards a neat and easy transportation solution (the issues which need to be considered further); and the modelling work has looked at the benefits of more sustainable measures and has helped to identify their potential impacts.

- 5.7 The results for development option 3a (including the link road but without any further measures) would appear to show overall traffic benefits for the town, but these are modest in comparison with traffic changes between 2008 and 2026. It appears that in terms of provision of 1000 dwellings, the provision of a link road cannot be justified as essential infrastructure
- 5.8 Modelling results appear to indicate that a link road could have some benefits in terms of reducing the impacts of the tested suggestion of making St. Mary's Road one-way east (out) bound, both within areas of the town and on rural routes to the north-west. Whatever traffic management measures might be applied in the town, a link road would provide an extra link to the relatively limited local road network.
- 5.9 The tested suggestion of making St. Mary's Road one way east (out) bound would appear to have the most significant impact on traffic flows at the heart of the town (i.e. The Square), but would have wider impacts, hence the need for it to be considered as part of a package that would need to be developed further; this seems likely whatever traffic management measures are considered in the town. Keeping open the provision of a link road to the north west of the town would be one part of a possible package; achieving significant improvements to the Springfield Street/Northampton Street/Welland Park Road junction would likely need to be another; and measures to minimise what would appear to be the potential for additional traffic to travel through Great Bowden would appear to be another.
- 5.10 It would appear that recognition of the transportation situation by the Council combined with a clearly expressed commitment to work with the Transport Authority to deal with the transportation issues and safeguard provision for future transport improvements across the town is needed. The package of transportation measures required in and around the town is likely to be complex, costly and challenging to deliver but the Core Strategy DPD and associated Infrastructure Schedule provides the key statutory planning framework for these to be defined and delivered in the period to 2026.

6 Legal Issues

- 6.1 None arising from this report

7 Resource Issues

- 7.1 The costs of the evidence gathering is provided for through Housing and Planning Delivery Grant received in years 2007/8- 2009/10.

8. Equality Implications

- 8.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed that covers both the process of preparing the Core Strategy and the policies of the Core Strategy..

9 Impact on the Organisation

9.1 The Core Strategy and its associated evidence demonstrates the Council is fulfilling its role in place- shaping and community leadership. Its future decision making will be aided by the adoption of this Strategy

10 Community Safety Implications

10.1 The Core Spatial Strategy incorporates policies which seek to ensure safe places and helps reduce crime, the fear of crime and anti social behaviour.

11. Carbon Management Implications

11.1 The Core Strategy contains specific policies to deal with Climate Change and has been subject to an independent Sustainability Appraisal

12. Risk Management Implications

12.1 The evidence described is fundamental to the soundness of the Core Strategy.

13 Consultation

13.1 Officers of Leicestershire County Council

13.2 Participants in Matter 2 (Market Harborough) at the Core Strategy Examination Hearing are aware of the publication of the LLITM report,

14 Options Considered

14.1 Not to report on this matter to Council. Given the importance of the issue to the Core Strategy it has been considered important to ensure all members

15 Background Papers

15.1 [LLITM Market Harborough Transport Evidence](#) (printed copy available in the Members Room)

Previous report(s): Report to Council - 27 September 2010

Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure: N

Ward Members Notified: N

APPENDIX

Growth Scenario Assumptions

There are a number of network changes that have been made to the core networks as defined above. These network changes differ by growth scenario, and are as follows:

- Option 1: the development will load onto two locations on Leicester Road (B6047), one at the existing roundabout to the south of Gallow Field Road and Leicester Lane, and the other at a new priority junction north of The Woodlands. These two access points provide a route through the additional development in order to allow public transport to serve the development directly.
- Option 3: this is as Option 1 but with an additional access point to the development from the south via Lubenham Hill (A4304). This is a new junction, and is again assumed to be a priority junction with a dedicated right-turn lane for westbound traffic on Lubenham Hill entering the development. There is no through-route linking Leicester Road (B6047) and Lubenham Hill (A4304) in this option.
- Option 3a: this is similar to Option 3 but there is a new link through the development from Lubenham Hill to the northern access point on Leicester Road that is available to all traffic. With the introduction of this through route, the junction on Lubenham Hill has been changed from a priority junction to a roundabout.

Mitigation Scenario Assumptions

There are two levels of mitigation tested as part of this study, each of which contains a number of schemes affecting different aspects of the model. These mitigation measures have been modelled as follows:

□ Mitigation 1:

- o Increase in service frequency for bus route 44. In the core scenario this bus service has an hourly frequency in all modelled time periods. This has been increased in frequency within Mitigation 1 to provide a half-hourly service. Together with bus service X3, which has a half-hourly service in the core scenario, this provides a bus service between the development and the town centre with a 15-minute frequency.

- o Improvements to the cycling and walking network. LLITM contains a representation of active mode (walking and cycling) demand. It should be recognised that the active mode demand and network has not been calibrated or validated.

- o Smarter Choices Initiatives: the core scenario already contains a calibrated effect of Smarter Choices in 2016 across the county, and these initiatives are assumed to be additional to those initiatives. The funding for these Smarter Choices initiatives has been assumed to be of a similar level, pro rata, to that for Leicester City in the 2016 Smarter Choices. The target changes for the Market Harborough Smarter Choices are therefore:

- a 5% reduction in car commuting vehicles to Market Harborough, including a 1.5% reduction in car passengers, due to workplace travel plans
- a 3% reduction in car education vehicles to Market Harborough, including a 0.9% reduction in car passengers, due to school travel plans
- a 0.4% reduction in total car drivers from Market Harborough as a result of targeted marketing

□ **Mitigation 2:**

o St Mary's Road between The Square and Kettering Road was changed to a one-way link in the eastbound direction. The westbound direction is still available to bus services, and the signal timings at the junction of St Mary's Road and The Square were amended to give more priority to the north-south movements.

o A 7.5 tonne limit has been placed on Welland Park Road for the links that represent this road. This methodology allows access for large goods vehicles to the zone that loads onto Welland Park Road, but does not allow through traffic.

o The X3 bus service between Market Harborough and Leicester has a 30-minutely service in the core scenario. This has been increased to a 15-minute frequency as part of Mitigation 2.

o A 25% reduction in the number of long-stay parking spaces in Market Harborough. LLITM does contain a parking model; however this applies only in central Leicester City and Loughborough. It was not possible to develop and calibrate a parking model for Market Harborough in the required project timescales, so an alternative method has been applied and is described in the Report