

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE MEETING OF 23 April 2012

Meeting: Executive
Date: 23 April 2012
Subject: A Strategy for the A5 2011-2026
Report of: Stephen Pointer, Policy Manager,
Housing, Planning and Infrastructure
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Ackerley
Status: Implementation

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement to the adoption of the A5 Strategy, which covers the A5 from the A449 Gailey (Staffordshire) to the A45 Weedon (Northamptonshire) on the edge of Harborough District

2 Recommendation:

- 2.1 That Members consider and adopt the attached Strategy and accompanying Action Plan, as a formal evidence base to underpin and inform the development of Local Development Frameworks and Local Transport Plans and Policy, to inform negotiations with developments and to support any potential bids for infrastructure funding.
- 2.2 That the Portfolio Holder (Planning, Housing and Infrastructure) is appointed to represent the Council on the A5 Joint Member Transport Partnership,

3 Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 The A5 provides a long distance strategic route between London and Holyhead, which travels through large parts of southern and central England via this District. The corridor provides a key artery of movement which supports and provides access to economic activity and growth.
- 3.2 In recent years, there has been growing concern from Local Planning Authorities in the East and West Midlands regarding the performance and future role of the A5. This has led to the establishment of the A5 Transport Partnership Group with representation drawn from Local Government and the Highway Agency covering 15 Local Authority areas.

- 3.3 The Strategy covers a 62 mile section of the A5 from Gailey in Staffordshire to Weedon in Northamptonshire, via Leicestershire and Warwickshire. Existing traffic levels along certain parts of the route are heavy throughout the day, particularly around Cannock, Lichfield, Tamworth, Nuneaton/Hinckley and Magna Park. Without suitable investment, planned housing and employment growth along this section of the A5 will exacerbate these conditions, as well as create new pressure points.

A5 Transport Partnership Group

- 3.4 Three years ago, an informal partnership was formed comprising Local Authority representatives, the respective Regional Government offices, the Regional Development agencies and Highway Authorities covering the stretch of A5 covered within the Strategy. Leicestershire County Council as transport authority has represented the District Councils interests on the Group. The key purpose of the group was to:
- raise awareness of the importance of the increase in economic role of the A5;
 - collaborate and effectively plan for growth impacts affecting the A5;
 - make the case for future investment on improvements to tackle key congestion issues;
 - develop a Strategy based around these principles.
- 3.5 A clear economic case exists for ensuring key parts of the A5 are improved and effectively maintained. This is linked to the significant new housing and employment development that is being planned and identified in the relevant Core Strategies in place along the corridor covered by this Strategy.
- 3.6 In order to ensure the A5 as a strategic corridor remains very much on the radar of all key agencies within the Strategy area and Government, it is proposed that a Joint Member Partnership Group is established to meet twice yearly to oversee the delivery of the Strategy and Action Plans and review as necessary. It is envisaged this Group will also have the opportunity to consider current and emerging issues along the A5, linked to congestion, maintenance and growth.

4 Impact on Communities

- 4.1 The A5 corridor affects Lutterworth and smaller communities in the far west of the District together with the major business community of Magna Park. It forms a border of the District but is an important national route.

5 Key Facts

- 5.1 The key objectives of the Strategy are as follows:

1. To ensure that the A5 is fit for purpose in terms of its capacity and safety both now and in the future;

2. To allow the A5 to play its full and proper role in supporting and facilitating economic activity in growth at a national and local level;
 3. To promote and facilitate access to leisure and tourism within the area covered by the Strategy;
 4. To assist in identifying the priority improvements along the A5 corridor that are needed to facilitate and enable growth, reduce congestion, improvement air quality and deliver a sustainable transport system; and
 5. To reduce, where possible, the impact of traffic on communities along the A5.
- 5.2 The Strategy provides a single evidence base which sets out the known challenges and future opportunities on the A5. It is intended that the Strategy will be used to support the preparation of policy documents such as Local Development Frameworks and Local Transport Plans, inform discussions with Developers regarding transport assessments and contributions towards transport mitigation measures, and assist bids for securing funding towards improvement the A5.
- 5.3 The Action Plan which forms part of the Strategy has been prepared in the context of the current pressures on funding which are faced by both central and local government and the ever increasing pressure for further development in this corridor.
- 5.4 The Council has taken a watching brief on the joint agency work to facilitate the production of this Strategy rather than have direct involvement. Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council have taken the lead on it due to the historic, existing and projected pressures on the stretch of the A5 which passes through the Borough. The recent announcement by government of the award of Regional Growth Funds for the upgrade of part of the A5 to support economic growth in the Borough linked to securing the delivery of the new £300M MIRA Technology Park, has brought the importance of the A5 very much into focus.
- 5.5 It is considered important for this Council to support partnership arrangements for overseeing the delivery and review of the A5 Strategy to ensure the Council can deliver its own plans and sustain effective transport provision for residents, employees and visitors.
- 5.6 In September 2011, a draft Strategy for the A5 was launched to key local authority Member Transport Leads and local M.P's for consideration, attended by the Portfolio Holder Councillor Ackerley. Workshops were held at the Atkins building in Hinckley and feedback from this event has helped inform the production of this Strategy. Adoption of the A5 Strategy will help assist local authorities to work with Local Enterprise Partnerships along the A5 to support economic growth and effectively and consistently manage the implications of that growth in transport terms.

6 Legal Issues

- 6.1 There are no implications.

7 Resource Issues

7.1 None apart from travel expenses to the Partnership Meetings.

8 Equality Impact Assessment Implications/Outcomes

8.1 There are none arising directly out of this report

9 Impact on the Organisation

9.1 Improved partnership working with other authorities along the A5 Corridor

10 Community Safety Implications

10.1 The Strategy addresses matters of highway safety as referred to in Statement T2 on page 41 of the Strategy.

11 Carbon Management Implications

11.1 Directing HGV traffic to make better use of the A5 could help reduce air pollution and carbon emissions in Lutterworth. Better lorry routing is identified in the South West Leicestershire HGV movements assessment

12 Risk Management Implications

12.1 None

13 Consultation

13.1 The Strategy was subject to consultation at an event in Hinckley in September.

14. Options Considered

14.1 Not to respond or report to members –. Not selected owing to the need to present to members of the Executive and obtain formal Council support to the A5 Strategy which will be then shared with the wider group of authorities.

15. Background Papers

The A5 Strategy is attached as an Appendix.

Previous report(s): None

Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure: N

Ward Members Notified: N