

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Environment
Date:	29 June 2010
Title:	Winchester Town Access Plan – Consultation Draft
Reference:	1555
Report From:	Director of Environment

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. This report presents the Draft Winchester Town Access Plan (Access Plan) and sets out a shared vision for how access to facilities and services within the town will be improved. This report provides an update on the progress being made on the preparation of the Access Plan.

1.2. The Access Plan has been developed jointly by Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council. It is an important element in defining what kind of place Winchester is and connects directly with the Local Transport Plan.

1.3. This paper seeks to:

- provide background information on the emerging Town Access Plan for Winchester and summarise the current stage of the project
- set out the way the Access Plan will improve accessibility both to and from Winchester, for both leisure and commuting trips
- summarise the work already done in terms of community involvement as well as a number of relevant strategies and Members' views
- provide information on available funding for taking the Access Plan forward and future steps.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 sets out the role of Access Plans and how they will guide the longer term vision and strategies covering all modes of transport within larger settlements such as Winchester.
- 2.2. Winchester was selected as one of a number of settlements in Hampshire to benefit from a Town Access Plan due to a number of factors that combine to give it traffic levels and problems far beyond that which would normally be associated with a town of its size.
- 2.3. An Air Quality Management Area has been declared in the town centre, which places a responsibility on the City Council to take appropriate action to reduce the levels of pollutants.
- 2.4. The Action Plan that forms part of the Access Plan sets out the way forward in terms of actual projects to take forward. The schemes from the Action Plan will seek funding through the Transport Contributions Policy, which defines transport improvement schemes that will help to justify contributions from local developers.
- 2.5. Schemes from the 'Action Plan' have been prioritised through stakeholder engagement. The areas considered were passenger transport, cycling, walking, smarter choices and intelligent transport systems (ITS). The Road Network and Traffic Management studies will also feed into this process to inform work that will further reduce congestion, improve accessibility and improve the air quality in the city centre.
- 2.6. The Access Plan reflects and supports other strategies, plans and policies already in place regarding the town and access, including the Town Forum's vision.
- 2.7. The key aims of the Access Plan are:
 - to ensure that the vitality and resilience of the local economy is strengthened by planning for movement and access which is economically and environmentally sustainable
 - to lead a transition to low-carbon modes of travel, including low-emission private and commercial vehicles as well as public transport, cycling and walking
 - to reduce the negative effects of transport on residential neighbourhoods and the town's historic environment, particularly in relation to air quality and the safety of pedestrians and cyclists
 - to enhance the social and cultural wellbeing of Winchester by providing access for all.
- 2.8. In order to achieve the aims of the Access Plan action is required in key areas. These are identified as eight strategic priorities:

1. Promote self-containment to reduce the need to travel;
 2. Improve local cycling and walking infrastructure for functional and leisure trips;
 3. Provide carefully planned car parking to meet economic need;
 4. Reduce the negative impact of vehicle movements in residential areas;
 5. Promote 'A high-quality public realm that is available to all users' where this is appropriate;
 6. Promote the purchase and use of low-emission vehicles;
 7. Invest for maximum benefit from public transport; and
 8. Use new development as an opportunity to set standards that support the Access Plan.
- 2.9. This will be a starting-point from which to improve accessibility in Winchester and will help to guide funding and resources.
- 2.10. Whilst traffic levels have remained fairly stable since the 1990s, infill development in the town has brought additional pressures in terms of car parking and available road space. It is therefore important that future development (both minor and major) is used to significantly influence how the town develops in terms of accessibility.
- 2.11. The current one-way system has been scrutinised along with other proposals including a 'shared space' concept at a number of locations. The report, by Mott Gifford, entitled "Road Network and Traffic Management Study" was received in January 2009 and is included as a background document to the Winchester Town Access Plan.
- 2.12. A stage 2 Road Network and Traffic Management Study is currently being commissioned to provide more detail on the recommendations coming out of the first study and subsequent Member consultation.
- 2.13. The development of the Access Plan has been informed through consultation and evidence gathering. In January and June 2007 joint Members seminars were held. In March 2008 public consultation took place to help inform the development of the draft Access Plan.
- 2.14. In April 2009 Mott Gifford gave a presentation on the findings of the 'Road Network and Traffic Management Study' (Stage 1) to Members from both Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council. The emerging priorities and strategies from these consultations and studies have helped to set the way forward for Winchester in terms of meeting the aims and priorities of the Access Plan listed above.

3. Finance

- 3.1. Funding for the printing of the draft report has already been secured through Hampshire County Council. Winchester City Council has also offered to contribute towards the costs of printing and exhibitions.
- 3.2. Implementation of the schemes will be through agreed budget and developer contributions held and forthcoming. It is noted that the current financial climate and uncertainty as to the future of the planning system mean that there are likely to be substantial delays in commencing some schemes.
- 3.3. The Town Access Plan will have a coordinating role for the financing of schemes.

4. Future direction

- 4.1. The public will be consulted on the draft Winchester Town Access Plan during the Summer of 2010.
- 4.2. Following the public consultation, the Town Access Plan will be adopted by both authorities and will be used to inform decisions on developer contributions as well as mitigation measures. Each scheme will also be the subject of local consultation prior to any implementation.
- 4.3. The Transportation Contributions Policy (TCP) for Winchester will be updated to reflect the role taken on by the adoption of the Town Access Plan. Currently the TCP includes all schemes seeking developer funding in the Winchester District. However, the responsibility for Developer Contribution collection will be removed from the TCP process once the Town Access Plan is adopted.
- 4.4. The document will be used to determine the allocation of funds sought from developers by Development Control Officers as well as Highway Officers from Hampshire County Council and Winchester District Council. Developers will also use the document when assessing the amount of financial contribution likely to be sought by the authorities when mitigating development for the Winchester town area and what those funds will seek to provide. It will also be coordinated with other investment programmes.
- 4.5. The document will help to guide future development of the town in terms of improving accessibility, providing better traffic management and therefore reducing congestion and improving air quality.
- 4.6. The Town Access Plan will be monitored by the County Council and City Council on a regular basis. The progress of the Plan and those schemes implemented will be reported to Council Members. Outstanding issues will be reviewed and new priorities added as necessary.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. That the Draft Winchester Town Access Plan be approved as a basis for consultation, subject to the support of Winchester City Council.
- 5.2 That the Director of Environment be authorised, if necessary, to make minor revisions to take into account the views of Winchester City Council.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

Draft Winchester Town Access Plan

Hampshire Highways East, Bar End, Winchester

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1. Statement one: The short-term minimum required to meet this action:

The Winchester Town Access Plan has a duty to ensure that its recommendations provide fair and equal access to the town centre regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, mobility and social and geographic inclusion (e.g. people on low incomes and those living in areas with poor transport links such as rural villages). Preparing the recommendations involved assessing the local population and understanding the varied access needs.

1.2. Statement two: Longer term minimum required to meet this action:

The Winchester Town Access Plan has a duty to ensure that it reflects the access needs of the local community. Developing the plan involved carrying out community street audits with local members and residents to identify the character of the local community and its varied access needs. The results from these audits and information from a range of strategies (Walking, cycling, smarter choices, passenger transport and ITS) helped to produce the recommendations. These aim to provide fair and equal access to the town centre regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, mobility and social and geographic inclusion (e.g. people on low incomes and those living in areas with poor transport links such as rural villages).

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. Not Applicable.

3. Climate Change:

a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

- The Town Access Plan will seek to improve accessibility in Winchester and therefore increase the opportunities for use of more sustainable modes of transport than the motorised vehicle.

b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

- The Town Access Plan supports the need to adapt to climate change by looking to promote and support a move towards more sustainable modes of transport. In particular by improving walking and cycle routes within the town centre and looking to remove the 'dead miles' due to the one way system it is hoped that congestion will be reduced and air quality improved.