

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member - Environment
Date:	5 April 2011
Title:	Ringwood Town Access Plan Adoption
Reference:	2512
Report From:	Director of Environment

Contact name: Hannah Baker

Tel: 02380 427601

Email: hannah.baker@hants.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to present the Ringwood Town Access Plan (TAP) for adoption by Hampshire County Council. The Plan has recently been adopted by New Forest District Council.

1.2. This paper seeks to provide:

- background information on the Ringwood Town Access Plan;
- information on how the document will be used; and
- information on how the document will be monitored and updated.

1.3 A draft TAP was approved for consultation at the Executive Member for Environment's Decision Day on 14 October 2010. Consultation was undertaken from 18 October until 30 November 2010 and a summary of consultations is included at background paper 1 and a proposed final draft incorporating suggested revisions in background paper 2.

2. Contextual information

2.1. The third Local Transport Plan (2011-31), gives a high level strategic vision for transport in Hampshire and provides the context for the delivery of more detailed transport policies. Town Access Plans, which were originally presented as a policy tool in the second LTP remain an important mechanism in the LTP3 for helping to secure and prioritise transport improvements at the local level. It is also the intention that District Statements are developed, which will cover whole districts, encompassing the TAP and non-TAP areas. District Statements will be vital in encompassing the TAPs but also

addressing the lack of detailed local transport policy outside of the TAP areas.

- 2.2. Ringwood is a historic market town lying on the western fringes of the New Forest National Park, crossed from East to West by the A31. It is well connected by road to a number of cities including Bournemouth and Southampton. There are, however, a number of accessibility improvements that are required within the town itself.
- 2.3. The Ringwood Town Access Plan has therefore been developed to identify the barriers to access for walking and cycling, traffic, and public and community transport. The TAP provides a number of Action Plans which present schemes that can be provided to assist with new development and securing contributions from developers' from future development; this does not preclude funding from any other source from also being sought.
- 2.4. The objectives of the Ringwood TAP are to:
 - enhance the quality of the town centre public realm and to underpin its function as an important retail centre;
 - enhance the public realm, streetscape and ease of movement in and around the town;
 - ensure the town centre remains an important location for retail and employment and leisure by creating good access to and within it; and
 - develop the transportation network to accommodate future development requirements.
- 2.5. The identification of schemes, presented in the Action Plans, has been undertaken in conjunction with local members and stakeholders. Local groups in Ringwood with an interest in access, mobility and transport, and the quality of the environment, were invited to participate in a workshop to discuss issues for inclusion. Participants included the Chamber of Trade, students and teachers and the New Forest Access for All Forum.
- 2.6. The draft Ringwood TAP has recently been subject to public consultation. This followed approval for the draft plan in October 2010. The key schemes identified within the Ringwood TAP focus on improving the town centre, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, and integrating new development with the town through focusing on important pedestrian corridors to the town centre.
- 2.7. A number of comments from members of the public and stakeholders were received. The schedule of comments received and responses to such are presented as background paper 1. The most notable were relating to the need for environmental and access improvements to the High Street and Market Place shopping areas and the need to consider whether through-

traffic should be maintained via West Street onto the A31, passing through the town centre.

- 2.8. The amendments and final draft were considered and agreed by the TAP steering group which is chaired by the County Councillor.
- 2.9. The Ringwood TAP has consequently been amended to reflect the comments received to present a final document as background paper 2. New Forest District Council's Cabinet has now approved the document for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.

3. Finance

- 3.1. The Action Plan schedules contained within the Ringwood TAP will be used to primarily direct developer funding, secured through the development control planning process, to the most appropriate improvement scheme for the town and development. It may also assist in bidding for other funds, where the opportunity arises.
- 3.2. The TAP refers to the adopted Hampshire County Council Transport Contributions Policy which sets out the financial requirements arising from new development.
- 3.3. The TAP has the potential to act as a bidding document for funds available through third parties such as cycle organisations for example.

4. Performance

- 4.1. The development of the Ringwood TAP and proposed adoption will enable Hampshire County Council's and New Forest District Council's Development Planning Teams to utilise the measures contained within the Action Plans to negotiate with developers to secure a transportation contribution and thereby reduce the risk of adverse appeal decisions based upon lack of evidence or need for the proposed measure.
- 4.2. The measures identified in the Action Plans were principally developed from the former Ringwood Walking and Cycling Strategy (2004) and a series of Community Street Audits and Stakeholder Workshops. The TAP also reflects some of the key points highlighted in the Ringwood Town Plan. The measures also support national objectives as outlined in the recent White Paper 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System'.

5. Future Direction

- 5.1. The Ringwood TAP will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure the schemes within the Action Plans are consistent with the objectives of the TAP and meet local and national transportation and accessibility objectives.

- 5.2. Monitoring of the schemes implemented through the TAP will be undertaken to ensure the schemes meet the needs of the town and the development. This might be in the form of surveys (speed, flow, pedestrians/cyclists) or through community feedback primarily sought from the Town Council.
- 5.3. The TAP will be submitted to the New Forest Highways Hampshire Action Teams for information.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. That the Ringwood Town Access Plan be adopted by Hampshire County Council as a basis for local transport policy and to support the evidence base for negotiating developers' contributions and other sources of funding towards transportation and accessibility improvements.
- 6.2. That the Director of Environment be given delegated authority to periodically update the specific projects in the Ringwood Town Access Plan in consultation with the local Member, New Forest District Council, Ringwood Town Council and the Executive Member for Environment.

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):	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u> Ringwood Town Access Plan – Consultation Draft	<u>Reference</u> 1946	<u>Date</u> 14.10.2010
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	

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.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
Ringwood Town Access Plan	Hampshire Highways West, Totton

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

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

The Ringwood TAP 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 (eg people on low income and those living in areas of the town with the poorest transport links). 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 Ringwood TAP 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 councillors, residents and members of the New Forest Access for All Forum to identify its varied access needs. The results from these audits and information from a range of strategies (roads and traffic, parking control and management, walking and cycling, public and community transport, and smarter choices) and helped to produce recommendations for the schemes included in the Ringwood TAP. 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 (eg people on low income and those living in areas of the town with the poorest transport links).

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. Schemes that provide enhanced or new lighting and increased public and cycling activity within the public realm could have a beneficial impact on reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. They could create fewer areas with secluded outlooks and poor urban design, reducing the potential for such behaviour.

3. Climate Change:

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

The Ringwood TAP will seek to improve accessibility 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 Ringwood TAP 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 further improve public transport facilities such bus interchange area and facilities.