



ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 5 NOVEMBER 2020

NETWORK MANAGEMENT PLAN REFRESH

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Purpose of Report

1. A presentation (Appendix A) will be given to the Committee by the Director, to provide an overview of the County Council's proposed refreshed Network Management Plan (NMP).

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Council's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3), which was approved by the County Council on 23 March 2011, placed a strong emphasis on supporting the economy, making the best use of the existing network and maximising the benefits and value for money of investments. The refreshed NMP is a key document to help the Authority deliver its LTP3.
3. The Council's Environment Strategy 2018-2030, which was approved by Cabinet on 6 July 2018, includes aims to reduce the environmental impacts of travel and transport. Leicestershire County Council's Environmental Strategy 2018-2030 includes specific targets to reduce the environmental impacts of travel and transport. A poorly functioning, congested road network can have a negative impact on the environment. Through maintaining an holistic approach to the management of our network, the delivery of our refreshed NMP will help to address the environmental impact of transport, including noise, air quality and carbon reduction.
4. On 15 May 2019, the County Council declared a climate emergency and committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 for its own operations, to work with others and to lobby government to make the wider 2030 target possible. The refreshed NMP continues to embrace the promotion of sustainable modes of travel not only as a means to effectively manage our network but also to help to decarbonise transport.
5. The Council's revised Strategic Plan (agreed by the County Council on 8 July 2020), supported by the Council's Enabling Growth Plan, outlines the Council's five key outcomes for 2018 to 2022. It is recognised that the Plan will need to be revisited at an appropriate point in the future, once the longer-term transport impact of the Coronavirus pandemic becomes known. By effectively managing the road network through a continued holistic approach, the Authority aims to: provide more consistent, predictable and reliable journeys for the movement of people and goods, thereby supporting the delivery of new homes and jobs; improve safety and accessibility for all road users, helping to promote healthier

and less polluting (including carbon) modes of travel. The refreshed NMP thereby supports delivery of all five of the Strategic Plan's strategic outcomes:

- **Strong Economy:** Leicestershire's economic prosperity benefits everyone and supports resilient, clean growth.
- **Wellbeing and Opportunity:** The people of Leicestershire live in a healthy environment and have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing.
- **Keeping people safe:** People in Leicestershire are safe and protected from harm.
- **Great Communities:** Leicestershire communities are thriving and integrated places where people help and support each other and take pride in their local area.
- **Affordable and Quality Homes:** Leicestershire has a choice of quality, sustainable homes that people can afford.

6. The Council's current NMP (2014-2026) was considered by the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2014 and approved by the Cabinet in April 2014.

Background

7. The Authority has a legal obligation (the 'network management duty') to manage its road network. The transport network is under strain and the Council continues to face numerous challenges. These challenges can negatively affect the smooth operation and performance of the highway network.
8. Managing the road network is vital to the future prosperity of Leicestershire. The transport system has a key role to play in helping local economic prosperity and growth. Given the impact of congestion on the environment and economy, a strategic approach is required, one which considers the causes of congestion, the impacts, the challenges and the possible solutions.
9. It is likely that government's legal commitments on climate change and its plans to decarbonise transport may result in changes to the 'network management duty' and associated legislation. There is likely to be a lot of change in these areas over the coming years and our network management policies will need to be sufficiently agile to account for this, particularly those that are in relation to the environment and climate change
10. National legislation remains largely unchanged. However, a range of new and emerging challenges mean that it is now appropriate to refresh the County Councils current NMP.
11. Furthermore, it is important to reflect the latest work the County Council and its partners are undertaking in support of network management, i.e. around managing road works (through the Council's Highway Permit Scheme), events, parking, encouraging sustainable travel and dealing with unplanned incidents.

Network Management Framework

12. As part of the refresh the document will also be restructured, to align the approach taken with similar policy documents in other areas of responsibility covered by the Council's Environment and Transport department, i.e. asset

management and passenger transport. The refresh will therefore be carried out in a structured way, with the development of separate high-level policy and strategy documents which provide the direction and principles for the delivery of a more detailed operational level plan.

13. The result will be a network management framework that consists of a Network Management Policy and Strategy that sets out the Council's high-level principles, objectives and approach while the Network Management Plan will describe how the network is managed in practice. Together both documents provide a steer for the delivery of the Council's day-to-day network management activities.
14. The appendix provides an overview of the proposed content of the documents and the key policies and supporting principles which are divided into four main themes:-
 - Understanding the Network and its usage
 - Planning and development management
 - Highway management
 - Traffic Demand Management
15. The documents refresh the existing NMP to allow it remains fit for the future without radically changing the approach to network management.
16. The framework will play an important element in the delivery of Leicestershire's LTP. It not only contributes to the delivery of local goals but will enable the Authority to meet its network management duty and contribute to delivering national objectives. It's role in helping to to manage Leicestershire's road network, is vital to the future prosperity of Leicestershire. Given the impact of congestion on the economy the framework provides a strategic approach, one that considers the causes of congestion, the impacts, the challenges and the possible solutions.
17. It will enable the Authority to take a holistic approach to network management in Leicestershire. This will help to deliver positive outcomes for the environment, Leicestershire's local economy and quality of life for the people who live, work and travel through Leicestershire.
18. The refreshed network management framework is closely aligned to other developing policy and strategy documents across Environment and Transport services. It will require regular review and sense-checking while these documents are in development. Thereafter, it will be considered for review within five years, or earlier if there are significant changes in legislation, local circumstances, national policy or guidance that affects network management.
19. This will ensure that the refreshed network management framework continues to reflect changes to national legislation, guidance and priorities and that any changes to local policies and new procedures and developments are reflected in the document.

Consultation

20. An authority-wide approach has been taken to the development of the refreshed network management framework. Those service areas within the Council's

Environment and Transport department, whose day-to-day business impacts on the operation, performance and development of the road network have assisted with its development.

21. Additional focused engagement with external parties (including district councils, the police, bus operators and statutory undertakers) has also been carried out to ensure the content is refined to reflect views of key partners and stakeholders.

Resource Implications

22. The review of the Council's NMP will support the savings required from the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This will ensure that the council can maximise opportunities to deliver efficiencies and be flexible in adapting to changes in future budgets.
23. Preparation of the refreshed network management framework has been funded from within Environment and Transport Department budgets.
24. Delivery of the actions and activities set out in the refreshed network management framework, will continue to be funded from within existing Environment and Transport departmental budgets

Timetable for Decisions

25. The Committee is asked for its views on the approach being taken to refresh the County Council's Network Management Plan.
26. The draft network management framework (the Network Management Policy and Strategy and separate Network Management Plan documents) will be circulated to Committee members as part of Cabinet papers, giving an opportunity to provide written comments to Cabinet.
27. The draft network management framework will be considered by the Cabinet on 15th December. The comments of the Committee will be reported to the Cabinet.
28. Subject to approval by Cabinet, it is intended that the refreshed network management framework will be published at the end of December 2020.

Background Papers

Cabinet - 1 April 2014 – Network Management Plan 2014-2026

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=3989#AI37760>

Cabinet – 18 September 2020 – MTFS latest position

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5997&Ver=4>

Cabinet – 24 March 2020 – E&T 2021 Highways Capital Programme

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5993&Ver=4>

Leicestershire County Council current NMP (2014 - 2026)

http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2017/1/5/network_management_pan.pdf

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

29. None

Equality and Human Rights Implications

30. The County Council has made a range of commitments to promote equality and diversity, and to reduce disadvantages and inequalities of opportunity. The aim of the refreshed network management framework is to set out the Authority's approach to how the network in Leicestershire is managed, maintained and improved.
31. A poorly functioning, congested and/or unsafe network could have a negative impact on the environment, economy, health and quality of life. This could affect health, earning ability, reduce access to life opportunities (such as healthcare, education and training) and could lead to social isolation.
32. The refreshed network management framework focusses on those areas that are most in need and will provide the greatest benefits. Transport solutions that could help to address issues will help all users of the network, including the protected characteristics.
33. The review of the NMP provides an opportunity to describe the positive work the Authority carries out that supports network management and the wider environmental agenda. As far as possible, our approach to network management will focus on making the best use of our existing road network and reducing unnecessary demand on it, through reducing the need to travel and promoting walking, cycling and passenger transport alternatives.
34. Where relevant an appropriate environmental impact assessment will be completed as specific proposals are developed.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

35. Working with key partners, such as neighbouring authorities and Highways England, will be increasingly important in seeking to provide a better managed network in Leicestershire

Appendices

Appendix A - PowerPoint presentation on the refreshed network management framework

Officers to Contact

Ann Carruthers
Director, Environment and Transport

Telephone: (0116) 305 7000

Email: Ann.Carruthers@leics.gov.uk

Ian Vears

Assistant Director, Environment and Transport

Telephone: (0116) 305 7966

Email: Ian.Vears@leics.gov.uk