

**TITLE OF REPORT: HITCHIN URBAN TRANSPORT PLAN**

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, HOUSING AND ENTERPRISE

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress with the Hitchin Urban Transport Plan (UTP) and seeks the Area Committee's endorsement of the final UTP.

**2. FORWARD PLAN**

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation related to a decision in the Forward Plan.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The draft UTP was developed via stakeholder workshops, the Member Steering Group and data collection and analysis by consultant AECOM.
- 3.2 Public consultation on the draft took place between 6<sup>th</sup> September and 15<sup>th</sup> October 2010. The Area Committee received a report on the draft UTP at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2010.
- 3.3 Two manned exhibitions took place in Hitchin during the consultation period and the draft UTP was also made available online and at various other unmanned locations. A leaflet and questionnaire on the draft was also circulated in the Comet.
- 3.4 107 people visited the manned exhibitions and 290 responses were received to the leaflet/questionnaire distribution. Various other letters and emails were also received by the consultant.
- 3.5 Comments received on the draft were analysed and the final UTP was presented to the Officer and Member Steering Groups on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010. The Member Steering Group requested that the Area Committee receives this report on progress and to endorse the final plan.
- 3.6 At the time this report was drafted a copy of the final UTP is scheduled to be available at <http://www.hertsdirect.org/envroads/roadstrans/transplan/tcatp08/tcatp/hitchinurbantransplan/>

## 4. ISSUES

- 4.1 Appendix A summarises the comments received during and just after the consultation event. This includes whether the draft UTP has been amended in light of specific comments.
- 4.2 Appendix B is the presentation given to the recent Officer and Member Steering Groups. It summarises the main issues arising from the consultation and how the draft UTP will be amended. The Committee's attention is drawn to the 'Main Consultation Issues'.
- 4.3 The recent Member Steering Group considered the draft and post consultation response and the issues set out in Appendix B. The following bullet points summarise the Member Steering Group's views:
- Section 8.3 'Localism' has been added to the main report to discuss the bearing that this may have on the UTP going forward;
  - Reference has been made to 'Local funding sources' such as councillor discretionary funds within the funding mechanisms section;
  - The Willow Lane right turn ban scheme has been updated to include the need for a physical measures;
  - The A505 / A602 junction improvements scheme has been revised to indicate that a phased approach will be taken, starting with minor improvements at the A505/A602 and A602 roundabouts to mitigate background traffic growth, before assessing whether the signalisation of the Pirton Road roundabout is still required;
  - The Paynes Park scheme (ref: HM20) has been updated with a section on 'non-motorised users' acknowledging the problems of severance for pedestrians and cyclists caused by the gyratory and discusses options such as introducing shared space or realigning the carriageway- the aim to improve pedestrian/cyclist access and priority in the vicinity of Paynes Park has been included as a longer term consideration for the town;
  - Also, the Pirton Road speed investigation scheme ref: (HM33.29) has been updated in light of the traffic survey results you sent through, indicating that the current data does provide the justification for an intervention. It is, however, recommended that the location remains in the medium term scheme HM33 as a location which is perceived to have speeding issues and may need to be examined further at a later date.
- 4.4 The UTP is now mainly focussed on the short to medium term (i.e. up to five years). The Member Steering Group gave clear guidance that the focus of the UTP and likely limited resources should be on schemes that promoted local access and town centre improvements.
- 4.5 On the assumption that there will be significantly less funding available to deliver UTP projects in forthcoming years, the Steering Group also considered it important to make the best use of a variety of funding sources (i.e. LTP, S106, GAF being three current sources). Closer partnership working will be required and scheme purposes will need to be more flexible to achieve the most outcomes from the least resource.
- 4.6 With regards to the longer term, the background modelling work that was undertaken to inform the UTP remains in place and robust. Once local land use planning progresses this modelling work could be re-visited to assess the transport implications for Hitchin.

4.7 The next steps for the UTP are set out in Appendix B but are as follows:

- Report to Highways Joint Members Panel – 31st January 2011
- Report to HCC Highways & Transport Panel – 15th March 2011
- Endorsement by HCC Executive Member for Transport

4.8 The Committee's views are welcomed on the final UTP or any of the comments raised during and post consultation. Any comments will be forwarded to HCC for their consideration as part of the process set out in 4.7. Given the consultation opportunities the Area Committee is advised that there is very limited opportunity for additions or changes to the UTP at this late stage.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None arising from this report.

## **6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None arising from this report. The Council will need to consider whether it wishes to contribute towards UTP schemes on a scheme by scheme basis. This may include Area Committee or Ward Councillor discretionary budgets if appropriate.

## **7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None other than officer time preparing this report.

## **8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS**

8.1 None considered necessary for this report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That the Area Committee endorses the final Hitchin Urban Transport Plan and any final comments on it are forwarded to HCC by the Transport Policy Officer.

## **10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 To assist the formal endorsement process of the UTP following a lengthy development and consultation process.

## **11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

11.1 None relevant to this report.

## **12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 Appendix A – Hitchin UTP consultation comments log
- 12.2 Appendix B – Presentation of final UTP to Officer and Member Steering Groups 1/12/10

## **13. CONTACT OFFICERS**

- 13.1 Simon Young, Transport Policy Officer  
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## **14. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Draft Hitchin Urban Transport Plan  
<http://www.hertsdirect.org/envroads/roadstrans/transplan/tcatp08/tcatp/hitchinurbantransplan/>