

**THIS INFORMATION NTE HAD BEEN PREPARED FOR THE HITCHIN COMMITTEE TO
CONSIDER AT THE MEETING DUE TO BE HELD ON 10 MARCH 2020**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: NHDC TRANSPORT PROJECTS UPDATE

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR REGULATORY

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this information note is to provide Councillor's with an update on the current transport projects that the Council is currently involved with.

2. STEPS TO DATE

- 2.1 This note has been written at the request of Members on the Hitchin Area Committee to provide an update on the Council's current transport projects.

3. INFORMATION TO NOTE

- 3.1 Currently officers in the Strategic Planning Team are involved with the following transport projects:

- Drafting NHDC's first EV (Electric Vehicle) Charging Strategy.

It is intended that this will cover all aspects of EV charging, with a view to supporting the roll-out of additional EV charging units, both on-street and off-street to promote and encourage the take up of EV's both local residents and businesses, as well as encouraging visitors to the District who have EV's. The aim is to address the Council's Climate Change Strategy by providing improvements to air quality.

First draft is due for completion in June/July 2020.

- Drafting NHDC's first LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan).

This is a DfT initiative that encourages all local authorities to draft an LCWIP, with a view to identifying routes for future investment and improvement, to encourage the growth in both modes, especially for local journeys. When completed, it essentially will form an evidence document of agreed improvements to the cycling and walking network in the District, with identified schemes that will be prioritised as and when funding opportunities become available.

The Council is looking to work with representative walking and cycling groups in the local community to help facilitate the project. Work has already started in Royston and Letchworth. Any interested parties can contact Daniel Washington, Transport Policy Officer at the District Council.

The First draft is due for completion by March 2021, which will then be the subject of wider public consultation.

- **Transport Forum**

A Transport Forum has been established, with the initial meeting being held in November 2019, and future meetings to be held quarterly. The Forum is hosted by NHDC, the purpose of which is to enable representative groups and organisations within the District, to engage together in a constructive and relevant manner to discuss transport topics; to consider joint responses to consultations and contribute to joint letters of support with regard specific issues, and to invite and receive presentations as requested from lead organisations on passenger transport and active travel.

The next meeting of the Forum will be on 9 March 2020 at 7:30pm in the Council Chamber at the NHDC Offices in Letchworth. The topic for discussion will be around the rail network in Hertfordshire, with presentations from HCC and Govia Thameslink on the updated draft HCC Rail Strategy that is currently out for consultation, on the potential for a community rail partnership in the District.

- **90/91 and 127 Bus Service Project**

Working with colleagues in the public transport team's at Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire County Council's respectively and local Cllr's at North Hertfordshire District Council, HCC, CCC and South Cambridgeshire District Council, a proposal is being developed to combine the existing bus services:

Using the current resources, the intension is to combine the 90/91 & 127 to create a new Letchworth – Royston service via Ashwell, the Mordens, Litlington and Bassingbourn; in addition the 202 would be extended to serve both Guilden Modern & Steeple Morden and Ashwell & Morden Station, (continuing as a commuter service). This will provide residents in the Mordens with a new bus service to/from the Station as well as Ashwell. For Cambridgeshire residents and passengers in the villages served there will be no change of route or loss of service, instead they will have the added opportunity to travel to destinations in North Hertfordshire including Ashwell, Baldock and Letchworth, the latter enabling onward connections to Stevenage and Luton. Equally it will provide new direct connections for residents and passengers in Hertfordshire to the villages served in Cambridgeshire.

NHDC will be contributing funding towards the design and production of bespoke timetable leaflet and publicity to be distributed at key information points throughout the routes, to raise the profile of the new services and travel opportunities, as well as information on saver tickets available in Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire.

The new services are due to launch in July 2020.

- **HCC Intalink Enhanced Partnership**

Due to formally launch in April 2020, using the new powers made available by the 2017 Local Buses Act, the Enhanced Partnership is a ten year agreement, (subject to a five year review) to provide a step change in the current Intalink Public Transport Partnership, that NHDC is formally a partner of. Originally established in 1999 the Intalink Partnership is a unique collaboration between local authorities and bus and train operators in Hertfordshire. By pooling resources and ideas, the partnership is improving customer information on bus and rail services in Hertfordshire.

As part of the Enhanced Partnership, HCC is committed to investing in bus priority measures in three towns per annum. NHDC are currently working with HCC to champion Hitchin for inclusion for improvements during the planned 2021-22 works programme.

Ongoing

- **DfT Better Deal for Bus Users funding competition**

The DfT recently announced several new funding opportunities to improve bus services, currently two of these funding opportunities available to local authorities in Hertfordshire including:

- Rural Mobility Fund
- All-Electric Bus Town

The Rural Mobility fund is to provide funding for a DRT (Demand Responsive Transport) scheme, to improve public transport for rural communities.

The All-Electric Bus Town fund is to enable a whole town to be able to convert all the local buses to electric vehicles.

The Public Transport Team at HCC has indicated that they will co-ordinate any bids from local authorities in Hertfordshire. Currently NHDC officers are preparing bids for both funding opportunities, the former in partnership with several neighbouring local authorities, the latter solely as a bid from NHDC for Hitchin. Bids must be submitted by the end of April 2020, with an announcement by the DfT on those shortlisted for phase 2 to be announced in May 2020.

Ongoing

- **Responding to Consultations**

Officers are regularly responding to regular consultations, providing a response where required from NHDC.

Recent consultations have included:

- Intalink Enhanced Partnership
- Luton Airport Expansion
- North Central Hertfordshire Growth and Transport Plan
- HCC Rail Strategy
- Greater Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Local Transport Plan
- Dacorum Borough Council Parking Strategy
- England's Economic Heartland Transport Strategy
- OLEV Electric vehicle chargepoints in residential and non-residential buildings

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Councillors will be kept updated on progress on each of these developments this can be either by a separate Information Note or through the Community Development officer's report.

5. APPENDICES

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 6.1 Strategic Planning
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7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Not applicable.