

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Draft Local Transport Plan 2027-2043

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Draft Environmental Report Summary

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1. Introduction

Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) is currently preparing a new Local Transport Plan (LTP) which will set out the long-term goal, strategy, and policies for improving transport in Gloucestershire over the next 15-20 years.

As part of the process of LTP preparation, WSP has been appointed by GCC to assist with undertaking a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SEA is being undertaken in accordance with The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations'). It assesses the likely environmental effects of the plan and identifies ways in which adverse effects can be avoided, minimised or mitigated and how any positive effects can be enhanced.

2. SEA of the LTP

In line with requirements, the SEA process has sought to identify, describe and evaluate the significant effects of the LTP and reasonable alternatives. This has been done by identifying the likely changes to the baseline conditions as a result of implementing the LTP and the reasonable alternatives to it. These changes are described (where possible) in terms of scale, the timescale over which they could occur, whether the effects would be temporary or permanent, positive or negative, likely or unlikely, frequent or rare. Where numerical information was not available, the appraisal has been based on professional judgement and with reference to relevant legislation, regulations and policy. More specifically, in undertaking the appraisal, consideration has been given to:

- baseline information including and key issues;
- the likely activities and potential sources of effects associated with the construction and operation of transport infrastructure;
- the regulatory framework; and
- the SEA objectives and guide questions.

The vision, outcomes, 12 objectives, 52 policies and proposed schemes that comprise the Draft LTP as well as the LTPs reasonable alternatives, have been assessed against the SEA objectives on a topic-by-topic basis to identify likely significant environmental, social and economic effects using an appraisal matrix.

The 12 assessment objectives are listed below:

- **Population:** To increase the inclusivity, capacity and connectivity of the transportation network to support future demographic changes for the population.
- **Human Health and Wellbeing:** To protect and enhance both physical and mental health and wellbeing through better access to public transport, services, facilities, places that benefit health, supporting active travel and encouraging healthy lifestyles.
- **Economy and Employment:** To provide greater connectivity across Gloucestershire to support key sectors, attract inward investment and support economic success.
- **Community Safety:** To promote safe transport through reducing accidents, improving safety and reducing crime across the transport network.

- **Biodiversity:** To protect and enhance habitats, species and valuable ecological networks that contribute to ecosystem functionality and contribute to environmental and biodiversity net gain and nature recovery.
- **Landscape and Townscape:** To protect and enhance townscapes and landscapes of natural, historic, and visual importance, including the rural environment and town centres.
- **Historic Environment:** To protect and enhance the historic environment and the significance of its component heritage assets (designated and non-designated) including contributions to their significance from setting and group value.
- **Water Environment:** To reduce the risk and vulnerability from, and increase resilience to, flooding, and to maintain and enhance water quality by reducing levels of pollution from the transport network.
- **Air Quality and Noise:** To reduce air and noise pollution from the transport network.
- **Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases:** To ensure the transport network is resilient to the effects of climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the local transport network.
- **Land Use, Geology and Soils:** To ensure the efficient use of land and that valuable land, soils and geology is protected.
- **Material Assets:** To reduce the amount of waste produced, promote sustainable use of resources, and ensure that critical infrastructure is protected, enhanced and increased to meet the demands of the population now and in the future.

3. Assessment of the LTP

The LTP is a long-term strategy, comprised of the LTP vision, outcomes, 12 objectives, 52 policies and proposed schemes.

An assessment of each aspect of the plan has been carried out against the SEA framework. The findings of the assessment of the plan as a whole are summarised below. The full assessment of the LTP vision, outcomes, 12 objectives, 52 policies and proposed schemes will be presented in the draft Environmental Report.

Summary assessment of the plan as a whole

The SEA Regulations require that the cumulative effects of the LTP as a whole are considered when identifying likely significant effects.

The assessment identified significant positive effects against SEA objectives relating to Population, Human Health, and Community Safety due to the LTPs commitment to improving connectivity, access, and safety on the transport network as well as objectives and policies that promote active travel. Minor positive effects were identified against SEA objectives relating to the Economy and Employment, the Water Environment, Air Quality and Noise, Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases related to improved transport connectivity and a modal shift to sustainable and active travel that will likely improve access to employment and reduce pollution from the transport network.

Mixed minor positive and minor negative effects were identified against SEA objectives relating to Biodiversity, Landscape and Townscape, and Historic Environment largely due to minor improvements from better connectivity and reduced pollution, alongside potential negative

effects due to construction and disturbance to these assets. Overall neutral effects were identified for Land Use, Geology and Soils and Material Assets.

No significant negative effects were identified.

Summary assessment of the LTP in conjunction with other plans

The SEA Regulations require that the cumulative effects of the LTP in conjunction with other plans and programmes (inter-plan) are assessed.

Similar to the assessment of the plan as a whole the assessment of the LTP in conjunction with other plans identified significant positive effects against Population, Human Health and Wellbeing, Community Safety and Air Quality and Noise, due to alignment of visions and objectives between plans to improve connectivity, safety and wellbeing and reduce pollution. Some minor negative effects were identified against these objectives, due to the potential for construction activities to compound and create disturbance and connectivity issues, however these are minor due to the temporary nature of construction works.

Minor positive effects were identified against Material Assets due to plans seeking to utilise recycled and recyclable materials, contributing to a circular economy and meeting net zero targets. Mixed minor positive and negative effects were identified against the remaining SEA objectives, due to some alignment between the plans having cumulative positive effects, as well as temporary negative effects due to compounding construction activity.

4. Assessment of Alternatives

The SEA Regulations require an assessment of the plan, and its reasonable alternatives, taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan. The assessment of the alternatives does not need to take into account all possible alternatives, only those that are realistic.

Five reasonable alternatives to the preferred approach have been assessed, in line with the requirements of the SEA Regulations. These are:

- **Business as Usual (BAU) Scenario:** No change from the current level of intervention.
- **Scenario 1 – Delivering wellbeing:** High priority given to improving connectivity, resilience and sustainable and active travel as well as contributing to a high quality built environment and safety on the transport network.
- **Scenario 2 – Economic growth:** High priority given to economic benefits such as movement of goods, new development, digital connections, improving journey times and reliability. Reduced focus on the environment and community wellbeing.
- **Scenario 3 – Environmental focus:** High priority given to improving connectivity, reducing pollution and promoting sustainable and active travel as well as contributing to a decarbonisation, high quality natural and built environment. Reduced focus on the economy and community wellbeing.
- **Scenario 4 – Overlapping challenges:** High priority given to supporting new development, some contribution to a more sustainable and inclusive transport network. No environmental or biodiversity focus.
- **Vision scenario – The LTP:** High priority given to connectivity, the environment and community wellbeing. A focus to improve the inclusivity and safety of the transport network,

promote sustainable and active travel, contribute to high quality natural and built environment, decarbonisation and improve connectivity across Gloucestershire.

Significant positive effects (with minor negative effects) were identified for several scenarios, with Scenario 1 – Delivering Wellbeing, Scenario 3 – Environmental Focus and the Vision Scenario being assessed as significant positive effects against many of the SEA objectives, including Population, Human Health and Wellbeing, Biodiversity, and Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases. Largely due to the high priority given to improving connectivity, resilience, decarbonisation and sustainable and active travel as well as contributing to a high quality built and natural environment in these Scenarios. Scenario 1 and the Vision Scenario also had significant positive effects identified against Economy and Employment and Community Safety due to connectivity, inclusion, safety and access improvements.

All scenarios were identified as having either a minor or significant positive effect against Community Safety. This is due to all scenarios considering some level of safety improvement to the transport network.

Mixed minor positive and minor negative effects were identified for most of the Scenarios against the other SEA objectives. Largely due to a focus on some improvements such as better connectivity associated with Scenario 2– Economic growth, alongside potential negative effects due to construction and/or a lack of focus on other important sustainability considerations, particularly for Scenario 4 – Overlapping challenges. However, no significant negative effects were identified.

The detailed assessment of the alternative scenarios will be presented in the draft Environmental Report.

Whilst the Scenarios represent reasonable alternatives to the Preferred Approach, they have not been selected. This is primarily because the Preferred Approach optimises the potential benefits of the LTP with regard to the expected, and realistic funding for implementing the policies and interventions in the plan.

The BAU Scenario is unlikely to have a significant positive or negative effect against any of the SEA Objectives. This scenario may result in the least cost plan; however, this may not result in the best outcomes for the community, and likely would not have a significant positive impact on reaching the LTP's objectives.

Scenario 1 is likely to have a significant positive effect on the Population, Economy & Employment, Human Health, Community Safety, Biodiversity, and Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases SEA objectives. Whilst this alternative scenario may result in significant positive effects, it does not give any priority to delivering a better and more efficient travel experience, making travel-users more informed, making travel behaviours more sustainable, or decarbonising transport which are presented in the Vision Scenario.

Scenario 2 is likely to have a significant positive effect on the Economy & Employment SEA objective. Whilst this alternative scenario may result in a significant positive effect on this objective, it does not give the same level of priority to natural environment or local community outcomes as the Vision Scenario.

Scenario 3 is likely to have a significant positive effect on the Population, Human Health, Biodiversity, and Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases SEA objectives. Whilst this alternative scenario may result in significant positive effects, it does not give any priority to delivering a

better and more efficient travel experience, making travel-users more informed, supporting new development, and making travel safer and more secure, among other things.

Scenario 4 is unlikely to have a significant positive or negative effect against any of the SEA Objectives. A minor positive effect has been identified for the Community Safety SEA Objective; however, this is uncertain. This scenario may result in less cost than some other scenarios; however, this may not result in the best outcomes for the community or environment, and likely would not have a significant positive impact on reaching the LTP's objectives.

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