

WTF94
FOR DECISION
WARD(S): TOWN WARDS

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

10 July 2007

WINCHESTER TOWN ACCESS PLAN

REPORT OF HEAD OF ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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RECENT REFERENCES:

WTF 82 - Winchester Access Plan – 22 November 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report sets out the intended process to be followed and progress made so far on the development of an Access Plan for Winchester.

Members are now being consulted on a number of discussion papers; a core element of the emerging plan is the Introduction and Context paper which focuses on a number of the elements from the Town Forum's Vision for Winchester.

Following on from the current consultation and study process a draft plan will be published towards the end of the year, which will be used as the basis for wider consultation among stakeholders and interested parties.

The Forum is being asked to comment on the process being used to develop the Plan and to consider if it wishes to raise any specific issues. The Forum will be consulted on the draft plan later this year. The approval of the Plan during 2008 will be sought from Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Forum notes the report and considers making comments on the recommended process to develop the Plan or on specific aspects of the Plan.

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DETAIL:

1 Background

- a) A recent report to the Town Forum (WTF 82 Winchester Access Plan) considered the development of an Access Plan for Winchester 'city'. Stating that the plan will cover all types of transport into and out of the city and will be produced jointly with Hampshire County Council as part of the implementation of the Local Transport plan. The Plan will also look at transport and access issues within the 'city' and will be an opportunity to review current arrangements, policies and practices and help to secure any resources needed to deliver identified improvements.
- b) The scope of the plan will be wide covering parking policy, public transport, traffic management, air quality management, walking, cycling, future development and access to key services including employment, shops, leisure, education and health.
- c) The process was launched by a joint Hampshire County and Winchester City Council Members Seminar in January and this was followed by a second seminar in June.

2 Progress and Process

- a) At the first seminar Members of both Authorities had the chance to give their views on the Vision, Policies and Schemes they envisaged to be part of the Access Plan.
- b) As a result of the seminar, an Introduction & Context paper (appendix 1) was written and circulated to the members in advance of the second seminar. The Introduction and Context paper was drafted to reflect the considerable overlap with the Vision for Winchester as drafted by the Town Forum.
- c) At the same time a number of 'discussion' papers were drafted by officers on a number of key Issues, including Parking, Traffic Management and Accessibility
- d) The second seminar featured presentations on a number of the 'discussion' papers, the purpose of which was to prompt member discussion and feedback in order to inform the development of the draft plan.
- e) The second seminar also featured a presentation by consultant Ben Hamilton-Baille on the 'Shared Space' concept and how this could apply to

some areas of Winchester. The presentation was very well received and more work is currently being undertaken on the subject

- f) There is a consultation period for Members to comment on the discussion papers, after which time officers from both authorities, with consultants where appropriate, will undertake more work and associated studies as part of the production of the draft Access Plan.
- g) The future timescale is expected to :
 - Present draft Access Plan to Members at end of the year
 - Undertake Stakeholder and Public Consultation in new year
 - Consideration of results and further Study work by end of March 2008
 - Present Draft Plan to Members for approval June 2008.

3 Consultation

A full programme of consultation is yet to be determined, though as a minimum this will include Key stakeholders, the LSP, Winchester Town Forum, Winchester Trust, Cycle Working Group, Key Employers and Parishes on hinterland

4 Future Forum Involvement

At this stage it is anticipated that a report will be taken to the January 2008 meeting of the forum on the draft plan, with an aim to have circulated copies to the forum members prior to that meeting.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

5 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 5.1 The Access Plan will help to deliver the Corporate Strategy in relation to economic objectives, safer and more inclusive communities and safeguarding our high quality environment. It will also specifically help to deliver the over vision for Winchester.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The main resource implications will be in relation to officer time which will be built into business plans.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Local Transport Plan March 2006

APPENDICES:

- 1. Winchester Town Access Plan – “Introduction & Context” - draft May 2007

Introduction & Context

Welcome to the Winchester Town Access Plan. This plan is the first of a number of plans set to be developed for a number of settlements in Hampshire; these will be able to feed into the urban master planning process by providing more specific programmes of schemes and transport initiatives by treating smaller, local areas.

As most services and facilities are located in urban areas and town centre locations it is here that improving access is likely to achieve the significant benefits for the greatest number of people.

Access Plans will concentrate on identifying local issues of poor accessibility and seek to deliver improvements. They will be informed by local knowledge of problems and issues, the results of local community street audits and an assessment of need.

The strategy in this plan needs to reflect those strategies already developed and agreed in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Hampshire. LTP Transport strategies are based at a number of different levels and timescales, the Winchester Town Access Plan belongs within the Central Hampshire Transport Strategy Area, one of four area strategies covering Hampshire, the others being Solent, New Forest, and North Hampshire. Within the Hampshire LTP there is the overarching strategy of **Reduce** the need to travel, **Manage** the travel demands that we do have, and **Invest** in new infrastructure, facilities and services only when prudent to do so.

This approach is set against a national situation where congestion continues to increase, as does economic activity and car ownership. In towns such as Winchester there are more vehicles than capacity, more people trying to park at desired locations and a constant pressure on parking spaces. This results in congestion, air quality problems which in turn reflect on the quality of life for residents and the built environment.

Where we have come from?

The Winchester Movement and Access Plan - WMAP

The original Winchester Movement and Access Plan (WMAP) was a Ten Year Plan developed in the early 1990's and adopted to cover the period from 1994 to 2004. At the time of development the WMAP went through extensive public and member consultation to ensure that its aims and objectives were widely supported. At that time, the central scheme of the WMAP was the provision of Park and Ride facilities around the city.

WMAP made significant progress in the implementation of its programme, the following examples illustrate the varied range of initiatives being pursued: The introduction and subsequent expansion of park and ride at Bar End; Enhancements to High Street and Jewry; Improvements to passenger transport information; improvements to the network of cycle routes; the provision of air quality monitoring and information dissemination; the creation and expansion of a Controlled Parking Zone; Shopmobility; bus priority; School and business travel plans and a range of traffic management measures to favors of pedestrians and cyclists, slow traffic, reduce accidents and rationalise traffic movements.

Winchester – Where are we now?

Winchester experiences the classic problems of an ancient city centre: The historic core is characterised by narrow ancient streets and footways, with very limited room for increasing provision for any road users, while trying to cope with the effects of current levels of traffic.

As the county town of Hampshire, Winchester faces a number of factors which combine to give it traffic levels and problems far beyond that which would normally be expected for a town of its size.

The proximity to the strategic road network influences travel patterns with connections to the Solent urban area and a rail station providing fast services to London Waterloo and Weymouth and local services to the Solent area. There is a sharp contrast between the levels of in and out-commuting for Winchester, which experiences a net in-commuting of work trips of around 10,000 per day. The high level of commuting is dominated by the heavy influx from the south Hampshire area.

The traffic levels entering the town have remained fairly stable since the early 1990s, this is a remarkable achievement considering the increases experienced elsewhere and the development pressures placed on the town, development policies have resulted in much infill development in the town which continues to increase pressure on road space and car parking. Future development in the City, both minor and major sites, has an important bearing on this Plan. The need to reflect car ownership levels in parking standards is a key issue. The Silverhill development offers a great opportunity to improve the Lower High Street and The Broadway and will provide a new Bus Station.

Ongoing traffic growth within Hampshire and south-east England continues to cause problems on the surrounding Trunk Roads, locally the M3 and A34(T) around Winchester both experience heavy traffic flows. Accidents or other incidents on these routes can badly affect the surrounding local road network as traffic seeks alternative routes, in particular congestion on the M3 at junction 9 can adversely effect the operation of the local road network within the city.

Levels of cycling seem to be recovering and the percentage of those who walk for short trips is higher than the national average. Surveys of the level of cycling around the town centre (as indicated by cycles parked in a number of locations) continue to increase:

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Max number of cycles parked	145	159	186	189	202

Trips to schools, by sustainable modes, reflect the national situation and hence offer an area for improvement. Access to the railway station particularly in relation to car parking continues to be an issue. Conditions for cyclists and pedestrians could be enhanced in order to encourage these important forms of transport.

The city council continues to control a significant proportion of on and off-street car parking. The residents parking scheme seeks to manage the limited supply of on-street car parking, There are also concerns in relation to the amount of parking provided in relation to new development. The supply and pricing of off street car parking is a major factor in determining how people travel into the City.

On Street – P&D	135 spaces
Off Street – short stay	1098 spaces
Off Street – long stay	1865 spaces
Park & Ride	785 spaces
Controlled - Residents' (central area)	365 spaces (estimated)
Private Non Residential	3000 (estimated)

The park and ride service at Barfield's and St Catherine's work well and are popular with visitors and workers. These are nearing capacity and work on the South of Winchester Park and Ride is progressing well. The new scheme and the associated strategy for bus routing and marketing will be an important aspect of this plan.

Most bus services within the city operate on a commercial basis, with promising increases in patronage in response to measures introduced through Quality Bus Partnerships. Other improvements have included the remodelled interchange at the rail station and the large extension to the existing park and ride site at St Catherine's, Bar End.

A statutory Air Quality Management Area has been declared for the central area of the town and an Air Quality Action Plan has been produced, the Action Plan forms an integral part of the Access Plan.

Winchester is undoubtedly a fantastic place but there are clearly aspects which could be better. It copes with millions of visitors a year, has a high level of economic activity and major employers and attractions, which for a town of its size is quite remarkable.

Where do we want to go? – A Vision & Supporting Strategies

This new plan, the Winchester Town Access Plan (WTAP) needs to build upon and take forward the ideas and objectives of the original WMAP. It is testament to the forward thinking embodied in the original WMAP that the policies developed and adopted then, are still largely applicable today.

Over time what has become clear is that there is no panacea for Winchester's traffic problems, and an all-embracing holistic approach is at the heart of the solution. To this end, we need to continue to build on our partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders in order to reflect and address the many facets of transport and access in Winchester.

Town Forum - Vision for Winchester

A Vision for Winchester Town has recently been developed by Winchester's Town Forum - a cross-party group of City Councillors representing town wards. The Vision is intended to set out aspirations for Winchester Town's future, and describe the sort of place we seek to become. It is not a strategy or an action plan, rather it seeks to capture the shared ambitions of Winchester's residents, and to challenge the City Council and others to help realise those ambitions

It is based on discussions the Forum has hosted in recent years about various aspects of Winchester life and comments have been sought from a number of bodies, including the City of Winchester Trust, the Winchester Residents Association and the Chamber of Commerce. Notwithstanding that dialogue, not all will agree with the Vision, but it does provide a concrete starting point from which to debate alternatives.

A key role of the Forum and the Vision is to encourage those bodies that have a role in shaping the Town's future through their policies, spending programmes and service delivery, to see the Vision as an important statement of the priorities the Town would like to see them pursue.

The Vision for Winchester Town considers aspirations for Winchester's future under eight themes, one of which is improving transport, access and air quality. For each of these themes the vision tries to capture the aspirations for the town's future which have been voiced at public meetings or in the wider debate that takes place in all sorts of meetings, in the press and elsewhere.

In respect to **Improving transport, access and air quality** the Vision as developed by the Town Forum is set:

Improving transport, access and air quality

Our goal is to reduce pollution and improve access by managing traffic well and providing real choice between modes of transport.

Some see Winchester as congested. It is not. The town certainly draws in traffic, which brings workers, visitors and shoppers. We will not be anti-car but we need to balance between ease of access and the economic gain that brings with the protection of our environment and the town's ambience – keeping the town centre a pleasant place for residents and visitors.

The answer lies in providing choice - good quality public transport, park and ride schemes, alternative means of getting around town, well maintained and signposted car parks, safe walking and cycling routes, traffic calming and championing excellent public spaces with good design and quality. But we also need to recognise that the many people will continue to need to use cars for business or leisure.

In recent years we have seen a number of initiatives: expanding the Park and Ride site to take 780 vehicles and reduced city centre congestion; improving the High Street and Jewry Street by reducing traffic speeds and improving the pedestrian environment; and greatly improving the interchange between buses, taxis, trains, pedestrians and cyclists at Winchester Station. The Forum will continue to press those responsible for transport management to provide real alternatives to the car so we can begin to tackle the twin problems of pollution and congestion.

To improve access and reduce pollution we will:

- *promote choice and variety in the ways people come to the city;*
- *seek to reduce the need to travel by ensuring more services and facilities are provided locally;*
- *manage car parks to balance the need of residents, visitors and businesses;*
- *further expand park and ride, making it a more attractive option for visitors and workers;*
- *promote improvements to parking at Winchester station and establish better links to and from the station, particularly from outlying areas;*
- *reduce levels of congestion and manage traffic to reduce vehicle emissions and improve air quality;*
- *provide a new high quality bus station with good links to the suburbs and rural areas;*
- *establish more, safer and convenient walking and cycling routes;*
- *promote improvements in public and community transport;*
- *promote workplace and school travel plans;*
- *reduce street clutter and champion well designed and managed streets.*

But the Forum's Vision is not just about improving access and pollution – it's about making Winchester a better place to be. In this respect there are a number of other **Themes** within the Vision document which are important to make reference to in the Access Plan, as delivery of some of their **Objectives** will affect, and be affected by, the Access Plan. These **Themes** and their relevant **Objectives** are:

Caring about our history, heritage and setting;

- *create exciting new public spaces: a space for activity and performance at the Cultural Centre in Jewry Street, a new public area to host markets and events outside the Guildhall and a new town square in the Silver Hill development;*
- *enhance the quality of our public spaces: parks, streets and squares, and bring them to life with entertainment and activity.*

Encouraging people to do business here;

- *promote a transport system which meets the needs of all, balancing ease of access with the need to protect our environment;*

Creating a green and environmentally friendly city;

- *improve the pedestrian environment and gateways into the town;*
- *remove street clutter to enhance the town's appearance;*
- *Encourage the use of public transport to reduce space lost to the car;*

How do we want to get there? - Objectives and Key Issues

In respect to the setting of objectives of the Access Plan for Winchester it is suggested that we adopt those already identified within the Forum's vision as these correlate well with the issues identified at the first Members seminar to discuss the Winchester Town Access Plan.

If we accept that the objectives identified in the Vision are the appropriate key issues to address in delivering the vision, then it is appropriate that the core of this Plan is focussed on addressing those key issues, which can be categorised as:

- a strategy for Parking and Park & Ride – **Parking and Park & Ride**
- a traffic management plan including freight deliveries – **Traffic Management**
- enhanced accessibility including better cycling and walking provision - **Accessibility**
- a framework for school and business travel - **Smarter Choices**
- a strategy for public transport including buses and rail – **Public Transport**

Each of these key issues represents a core component of the WTAP and the delivery of the strategy set out for each issue will assist in the delivery of the Access plan and the Vision for Winchester.

How the WTAP fits within other policies and strategies

The WTAP should support existing and forthcoming plans policies and strategies relevant to the town and access. The following documents contain access and transport information, or ways in which we are trying to improve such issues.

- Winchester City Council's Community and Corporate Strategies
- Winchester City Council's Air Quality Action Plan
- Winchester's Local Development Framework
- Winchester District Local Plan
- Hampshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 2006-2011

The WTAP is being developed so that it reflects the content of these other plans and strategies and looks to deliver their goals in as much as they relate to transport.

The most significant of these documents in relation to transport and access is the current Local Transport Plan; this is because the LTP provides the framework for the allocation of financial resources which will fund many of the measures and initiatives identified in the development of the Access Plan.

Hampshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 2006-11

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) covers the period from 2006 to 2011, setting out the County Council's transport strategy for the next five years. The strategy is rooted in a thorough examination of current and future problems and opportunities. It is also firmly set within the context of emerging regional and national policies.

The overall vision for the Hampshire Local Transport Plan is of a transport strategy that:

“Enhances quality of life and economic prosperity by connecting people, communities, employment, goods, services and amenities.”

This overarching vision is derived from the policies and aspirations of a large number of bodies, including: Hampshire County Council's Corporate Strategy; eleven district councils; the Hampshire Strategic Partnership; District Local Strategic Partnerships within Hampshire; Neighbouring authorities; the emerging Regional Transport Strategy, Regional Spatial Strategy; Regional Economic Strategy and Government policy documents; the Hampshire Economic Partnership; ongoing consultation exercises with Hampshire residents and key organisations

The main objectives of the LTP are:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • To increase accessibility | • To improve air quality |
| • To promote safety | • To support wider quality of life objectives |
| • To reduce the impact and effect of congestion | • To encourage value for money and efficient asset management |
| • To widen travel choice | |

These objectives will be achieved by a balanced strategy that seeks to meet the needs of all residents. The strategy includes measures to tackle existing and future problems. It aims to improve all modes of transport to provide a wider choice for the public. It balances the need to protect the environment with the need for mobility.

The core philosophy of the LTP is that transport problems should be addressed by a process to **reduce, manage and invest**. Wherever possible, problems should be tackled or reduced at source - for example, tackling congestion by reducing the need for unnecessary journeys. If this approach is not sufficient on its own, transport should be improved by managing the existing networks to make best use of current road and public transport infrastructure. If neither of these approaches fully address the problems then investment may additionally be needed to provide new services or infrastructure.

The LTP sets out the role of Access Plans, which will be developed to guide the longer term vision and strategies, covering all modes, within the larger settlements. These will link into and be influenced by the evolving Local Development Frameworks and Community Strategies through the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). This will reflect the fact that accessibility is in many cases more related to land use than transport and that improving accessibility can also be achieved through changing the supply or method by which services are delivered.

Long Term Strategy for Winchester as set out in the LTP

The figure.... illustrates the long-term transport strategy for Winchester City as set out in the Local Transport Plan for Hampshire. This is in support of the travel demands that will arise in Winchester over the LTP2 period (2006-2011) and beyond. The long-term strategy for Winchester focuses on improving accessibility and air quality, reducing the level of traffic in the city centre and localised congestion.

The main elements of the strategy as follows:

- Further develop the park and ride strategy together with associated priority measures for buses, traffic management measures and a phased relocation of long stay parking from the city centre to park and ride sites. The construction of a new park and ride site in south Winchester within this local transport plan period is the next stage of the strategy.
- Provide additional Quality Bus Partnerships and bus priority measures on key radial routes into the city
- Press the Highways Agency for safety and capacity improvements at M3 junction 9
- Improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists in the city centre
- Contribute to improvements in air quality as part of the AQAP in central Winchester
- Improve bus and rail interchange facilities including the proposal to redevelop the bus station at Silver Hill in central Winchester
- City centre improvements including car parking Variable Message Signing, car parking management and a review of traffic circulation options.
- To ensure that any new developments in the Access Plan area are only brought forward with due consideration of the aspirations and objectives of the strategy