

**Cumbria Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026:
Consultation on Core Strategy**

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillors Cath Giel and Geoff Blackwell
LEAD OFFICER: Julie Betteridge
REPORT AUTHOR: John Hughes

Jonathan Smith the County Council's officer responsible for the Local Transport Plan will be attending the meeting to give a short presentation and take questions. All councillors have been invited to attend.

WHAT BENEFITS WILL THESE PROPOSALS BRING TO COPELAND

RESIDENTS: The Transport Plan is a key document governing investment in transport infrastructure and services and how this can be aligned with other policy priorities and partnership working.

WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE EXECUTIVE? In absence of a Members' Transport Working Group it is essential to create a space for debating the Borough's transport requirements at this critical time.

RECOMMENDATION: That the bullet points set out in section 3 below be reported back to Cumbria CC as this Council's response to the consultation along with any further comments made at the Executive's meeting.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The County Council is the Transport Authority for Cumbria and has a statutory obligation to prepare a Local Transport Plan (LTP). A new LTP is required for the period 2011 – 2026 and this must reflect the developing national and regional policy contexts for transport as well as supporting the new Single Community Strategy for Cumbria currently in preparation. There is a need to deal with issues in relation to climate change, the differing needs of urban and rural communities and other matters such as health, safety and security. Of major significance, too, are the requirements of Britain's Energy Coast programme, the Council's own Local Development Framework and the development of the Copeland Community Strategy.

- 1.2 The first stage of production is a consultation on a draft Core Strategy which sets the direction of travel for the 15 year plan period: “A Route Map to Long Term Prosperity” incorporating a Vision, objectives and proposed outcomes. It is intended that the Strategy will be reviewed and refreshed in 2016 when it will be rolled on to cover the period to 2031. The Strategy will be supported by a 3 year implementation plan which is a detailed programme of investment in transport improvements. This is to be the subject of a separate consultation exercise and will be reviewed every year.
- 1.3 The 28 page consultation draft is available for comment until 3rd September.

2. THE DRAFT STRATEGY

- 2.1 The document sets out a number of issues which are significant for Cumbria i.e. the difficulties created by its geography, the scattered communities, migration patterns (the ‘ageing’ population) and the need to tackle patterns of deprivation and spark regeneration initiatives. It looks at goals for transport suggested by the last government’s policy statement “Delivering a Sustainable Transport System” (2009), the work on the Regional Strategy RS2010 and the priorities suggested by the existing Cumbria Community Strategy. It also reviews some of the concerns already expressed by individuals and groups as regards transport problems plus the opportunities for transport improvements to play a leading part in tackling climate change and assisting economic growth and a move to healthier lifestyles. It emphasises the point that new public sector funding constraints will severely impact on the County over the next 5 years and that hard decisions will have to be made about the priorities for investment.
- 2.2 From this discussion the County Council puts forward a Vision and schedule of priorities and outcomes for the Strategy. These are set out in Appendix 1 of this report. One of the priorities is Achieving a Sustainable and Prosperous Economy and Appendix 1 also includes lists of strategic interventions and improvement schemes to assist the work of the 4 Cumbria Delivery Boards. These are reproduced in full so that Members can see the relative size of the work programmes envisaged by the County Council.

3. COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT

3.1 The following points are recommended as a response from the Council on the draft strategy:

- Major Projects/Community Benefits
Given the importance to West Cumbria of the possible New Nuclear Power developments (and other potential major energy-related development) we would have expected to see greater priority and coverage of transport investment as part of the **infrastructure requirements**. We would also expect this to include reference to the potential community benefits packages as part of s.106 or other legal agreements with developers.
- BECWC Programme
There should be a closer correlation between the list of strategic schemes in the LTP and the latest transport projects set out in the Britain's Energy Coast Board Papers (i.e. **Energy Coast Masterplan**). There should also be a higher priority accorded the **Whitehaven Eastern Relief Road** (A595 Bypass).
- Cycleway Network
The **West Cumbria Cycleway Network** is an unparalleled resource in the County for journeys to work and school, for tourism and to fulfil objectives for increasing healthy lifestyles. We would expect to see the County Council prioritising it for investment in maintenance even if extensions might have to be put on hold. The County must give more commitment to supporting the Copeland/Allerdale/County/Sustrans partnership to ensure the network survives – afterall, elsewhere in the country County Councils have to bear the whole cost of cycleway upkeep and wardening.
- Cumbria Coastal Railway
The twin objectives as regards sustainability and regeneration mean that the LTP Strategy needs to focus on the **Coastal Railway**. A programme of improvements is required to increase use for passenger and freight traffic and ensure it approaches its tourism potential. There is no reference to the current Community Rail Partnership in the draft and if this is to be discontinued there needs to be some other arrangement to drive things forward.

- Environmental Standards
We welcome the County Council's statements about maintaining high standards of **design and materials** especially in designated streetscapes. However, we do not feel that this is currently happening in the Copeland area – Whitehaven town centre is an Outstanding Conservation Area but there are large areas of “make-do and mend” and poor road markings.
- Community Transport
There is a need to encourage new community transport initiatives especially in the rural areas if public transport subsidies are likely to be spread more thinly. This is an area of policy where the County Council could work closely with the new **Locality teams**. It could include a number of other self-help schemes e.g. voluntary wardening and maintenance of public footpaths.
- Planning Liaison
The Strategy does make reference to the need for close working with the local authorities producing Local Development Frameworks but there should be some specific policies as regards the production of **Travel Plans**, infrastructure investment by developers and special treatments like Home Zones in residential areas amongst others.

4. LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Transport is generally not a Council function. This report is a response to consultation and there are no resource implications directly

5. PROJECT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 Again, no direct implications

6. MEASURABLE OUTCOMES OR OUTPUTS

- 6.1 None from Council response

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Extracts from Local Transport Plan Draft Core Strategy

List of Background Documents:

Local Transport Plan Draft Core Strategy – hard copy available in the Members' Room