

**West of England Partnership  
Joint Transport Executive Members Meeting  
22 January 2009**

**Consultation on Local Transport Plan 3 Guidance**

**Purpose of report**

1. To consider the implications and provide views on draft guidance issued by the Department for Transport (DfT) in December 2008.

**Background**

2. The Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP) covers the period 2006 to 2011. The draft guidance will support the preparation of the next Plan. The aim is to “enable every authority to prepare a Plan which best meets its own individual needs.”
3. The Local Transport Act 2008 retains the statutory requirement to produce and review Local Transport Plans.

**Key Elements of the New Guidance**

4. These are:
  - Plan must contain policies (strategy) and implementation plans (delivery).
  - No fixed time period for Plan (unlike current JLTP 2006 to 2011). Existing Plan can be replaced before but no later than April 2011.
  - Strategy element could look forward ten to twenty years with three year implementation plan. Up to local authorities to decide.
  - Plan must link to Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Area Agreements (LAA), Multi Area Agreements (MAA), Local Development Frameworks, Regional Strategies and the Local Government Performance Framework.
  - JLTP does not need to reflect local authority boundaries and could cover travel to work area.
  - Four transport shared priorities of the current JLTP replaced with five key goals: tackle climate change; support economic growth; promote equality of opportunity; contribute to better safety, security and health; and improve quality of life.
  - Authorities encouraged to “take a fresh look” at policies and implementation proposals.
  - Priorities for implementation should follow Eddington’s five step process: clarify goals; identify challenges and problems; generate options; appraise options, select options and decide priorities; and deliver the agreed strategy.

- Wide range of options should be considered. Packages of options and not just individual schemes should be compared.
- Plan should ensure value for money, affordability, and deliverability and be based on realistic estimates of likely funding.
- Buses a key element of the Plan where new powers in the Local Transport Act “provide a real opportunity for local authorities in partnership with operators to bring improvements to local bus services.”
- Plan expected to include Network Management Duty, Transport Asset Management Plan, Air Quality Action Plan, Rights of Way Improvement Plan, freight, maintenance and quality management systems.
- National Indicators (NI) should be used to assess the impacts of the Plan with additional local targets if required by the local authority.
- Strategies to mitigate climate change and reduce greenhouse gases required. Government strategy on climate change expected Summer 2009.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment all required.
- Consultation on draft Plan needs to be innovative. Public transport user groups included as statutory consultee.
- Plan must be kept under review.
- Currently no performance funding and no formal assessment of the Plan. But the DfT will take into account the “overall quality” of the Plan and its delivery where this is relevant to its decisions.
- Government Office for the South West to support development and review of Plan with annual review meeting. Bi-annual with Audit Commission and senior local authority officers where Plan will be examined as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment process.

## **Comment**

5. Whilst the draft guidance aims to give authorities greater flexibility to produce a Plan which best meets its individual needs it remains quite prescriptive particularly in relation to developing options and assessment requirements.
6. The Plan no longer needs to keep to the five year periods of previous Plans. The guidance, however, is confusing with a myriad of different timescales to link the Plan to with three year local government funding settlements, ten year Regional Funding Allocations, five yearly climate change assessments, three year Local Area Agreements, twenty year regional strategies and the bi-annual meetings with the Audit Commission.

7. Given the levels of likely funding it is open to question whether the additional work required to test a wide range of options and undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment is fully justified.
8. The use of all transport and transport related National Indicators to assess the impact of Plans could conflict with the transport priorities already identified through the LAA and MAA. Should the Plan be driven by all the relevant National Indicators or just the LAA and MAA ones?
9. There will be no formal assessment of the Plan but it is clear that the Department for Transport and the Audit Commission will be monitoring performance. How the DfT will assess the “overall quality” of the Plan and then use it in its decision making is left vague.

### **Consultation Questions**

10. The DfT particularly welcomes comments in response to the following questions:
  - Is it clear what is required of local authorities in producing an LTP, bearing in mind the changing nature of the relationship between central and local government as discussed in the guidance?
  - Does the guidance strike the right balance between brevity and giving support to authorities in developing plans?
  - Does the approach to the Policy Handbook work, including having a web based version that can be updated?
  - Is guidance clear and understandable to a non-transport audience?
11. Consultation closes on 9 April 2009.

### **Recommendation**

Executive Members views on the draft guidance are sought.

Officer presenting the report: James White, West of England Partnership

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