

# East Lothian Council - Preparation of an Updated Local Transport Strategy

## Issues paper

### Introduction

The Current Local Transport Strategy (LTS) was published in 2001 and now needs to be updated in order to reflect the changes that have occurred since then and the revised policies of the Council.

Transport has become fundamental to the maintenance of today's lifestyle whether it is for personal work or leisure or for the delivery of the goods and services necessary to sustain this lifestyle. The Council's Contract with the People calls for a sensible transport strategy to acknowledge the variety of options that must be in place to address these requirements. Similarly, the Council's Corporate Plan states that a sensible transport strategy is not simply about choosing between and developing different modes of travel but must also consider ways of reducing the overall need for travel.

The proposed vision for the strategy is:

"East Lothian will have well-connected communities with increased use of sustainable transport modes to access services and amenities."

This is based on National Outcome 10 in the Council's Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) as submitted to the Scottish Government. The SOA sets out a number of indicators which will be measured over time to check if the outcome is being achieved.

The personal freedoms offered by the car are recognised but the downside to these are the increasing levels of traffic congestion being experienced and, until alternative technologies become widespread, the problem of exhaust emissions. Promotion of the use of alternative modes will be pursued together with more responsible use of the car. Land-use planning policies will be used to locate new developments so as to reduce the overall need to travel.

### The OBJECTIVES of the Strategy

- to deliver a more attractive and safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists;
- to reduce the overall dependence on the car and the environmental impact of traffic;
- to promote the availability and use of more sustainable means of travel;
- to locate new development to reduce the need to travel;
- to maximise accessibility for all and reduce social exclusion; and
- to promote integration and interchange between different means of travel.

## Policy Context

In recent years, National and Regional Transport Strategies (NTS & RTS) have been published which cover the major strategic transport and travel issues. The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR - December 2008) outlines the Scottish Government's priorities for the next 20 years. In East Lothian these include: improvements in rail services between Edinburgh and Dunbar (Project 13), improvements to the A1 corridor to the national border (Project 5) and proposals for a Park & Ride site near Tranent (Project 8). Scottish Planning Policy (SPP, the Government's planning policy document) sets out a hierarchy of transport modes based on walking, cycling, public transport use and finally the private car. This hierarchy should be used when designing new developments and also when upgrading existing infrastructure and is reflected in the Council's "Design Standards for New Housing Areas" document and the Scottish Government's new "Designing Streets" policy document. The emphasis now is on well-connected layouts, including Home Zones, which will provide an attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists and reduce the dominance of the car.

The RTS sets out a programme of policies and measures to accommodate the forecast growth in the South of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran) area by providing a transport system which will allow the economy to function efficiently without adversely affecting the environment, primarily through improvements to public transport.

While the updated LTS will take into account these higher level strategies in setting the Council's own transport objectives and aspirations, it will mainly concentrate on those functions which the Council has direct control over, including:

- management and maintenance of the local road network, including associated bridges, structures and lighting columns;
- traffic management;
- road safety;
- car parking, both on and off-street (excluding private car parks);
- the links between land-use and transport planning;
- supported bus services including demand responsive transport options; and
- the issuing of permits for operations on the public road.

The Council is not responsible for the provision of commercial bus and rail services but it attempts to influence the operators through lobbying and discussion. The A1 is a trunk road and as such is the responsibility of Transport Scotland, the agency set up to oversee the safe and efficient running of Scotland's trunk road and rail network.

It will still be necessary to lobby external bodies (such as the Scottish Government and its agencies and transport operators) and negotiate with developers in order to progress the Council's aspirations and improvements to transport provision within the Council area. Having a current LTS setting out these objectives and aspirations will help facilitate discussions about service improvements with these bodies.

## Background and current situation

East Lothian lies immediately to the east of the City of Edinburgh on the coastal plain between the Lammermuir Hills and the Firth of Forth. While it is one of the smaller Scottish local authorities, it nevertheless has one of the fastest rates of population growth. East Lothian's population of 96,830 (GROS 2009 mid-year estimate) is forecast to continue growing for the foreseeable future. The East Lothian Local Plan 2008 has allocated land for 4,800 houses in six core development areas to address the housing land requirements of the Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan 2015.

The major east coast Anglo-Scottish transport corridor of the A1 Trunk Road and East Coast Main railway Line (ECML) passes through the county and acts as a major passenger and freight artery for national, regional & local traffic. East Lothian's proximity to the major employment opportunities in Edinburgh, its road and rail accessibility and its environmental quality continue to make it an attractive area in which to live. However, the relative lack of local employment opportunities results in 47% of the East Lothian working population commuting out on a daily basis (2001 census).

The A1 Trunk Road corridor is now approaching capacity in places, for example at Old Craighall Junction. Transport Scotland has concerns at the likely implications of further traffic growth in this corridor, including the effects of the development proposed in the East Lothian Local Plan 2008, without corresponding capacity increases in the network.

The Council's Transportation Division is responsible for the management and maintenance of 912km of public roads, 321 bridges and culverts and some 16,000 street lighting columns.

In addition to ELC, there are a number of other organisations responsible for delivering transport in East Lothian and beyond which the Council lobbies on a regular basis for improvements:

- Scottish Government Policy matters, funding
- Transport Scotland Government agency responsible for transport including the rail and trunk road networks and sustainable travel
- Network rail Responsible for maintaining the national rail network
- Train operators Responsible for running services – ScotRail, East Coast Trains, Cross Country, freight operators
- Bus operators National, regional and local services - First, Lothian Buses and smaller, local operators
- SEStran Regional Transport Partnership covering south east

## Scotland, responsible for preparing and delivering the Regional Transport Strategy

The Council has recently raised a number of issues with the Scottish Government regarding public transport provision including:

- co-ordination between competing bus operators with regard to timetable preparation;
- better integration of bus and rail timetables;
- wider use of multi-modal/multi-operator ticketing;
- over provision of bus services on some corridors and sparsity or lack of service on others;
- fair, realistic pricing mechanisms;
- longer periods of notice regarding reduction or cancellation of bus services; and
- need for regular stopping trains between Edinburgh and Dunbar.

The response from Scottish Ministers suggests that the current legislative regime for buses is adequate for its intended purpose. When the Council has an updated LTS setting out its transport objectives and aspirations, it will then be in a position to determine what policy tools would best achieve these aims. With regard to local rail services some progress has been made but services still fall far short of what is required. A further need is for cross-Edinburgh services to cater for the high volume of east to west commuting movements

### **Consultation**

This paper seeks your views on the priorities, scope and content of the revised Local Transport Strategy (LTS) taking into account the Council's responsibilities. A consultation questionnaire can be seen online at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/lts](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/lts) together with the current LTS and this Issues paper.

The questionnaire is designed to be completed online, however, if you require a paper copy or have any other questions, please contact [LTS@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:LTS@eastlothian.gov.uk).

Written comments can be sent to:

Paul Ince  
Senior Transportation Policy Officer  
John Muir House  
HADDINGTON  
EH41 3HA