

CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER COUNCIL

LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The purpose of preparing a Strategic Environmental Assessment is to encourage improved integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of transport plans and policies.

1.1.2 The EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive became part of UK law in 2004 and applies to a wide range of plans and programmes, which includes Local Transport Plans (LTP) and by extension, any successor strategies intended for this subject area. The legislation requires that the environmental effects of LTP policy and programmes need to be assessed, and measures to prevent, reduce or offset adverse environmental impacts be established. This is also a task of “environment proofing” the transport strategy, conducted independently of the main LTP development task, but in parallel with it, which should aid the process of strategy preparation.

1.1.3 The SEA regulations require the preparation of a Scoping Report which sets out the context for the SEA, to be prepared in consultation with three statutory bodies (English Heritage, English Nature and the Environment Agency). Following the appraisal process, the outcomes of the SEA must be presented in an Environment Report, to be consulted on alongside the draft LTP.

1.1.4 The purpose of this Scoping Report is to set out the methodology that will be used in appraising the environmental effects of the LTP3. The scoping exercise has included an update to the extensive baseline information gathering and monitoring undertaken for LTP2 and more recently in support of the Borough Council's preparatory rounds of LTP and LDF consultation.

1.2. The SEA Scoping Report

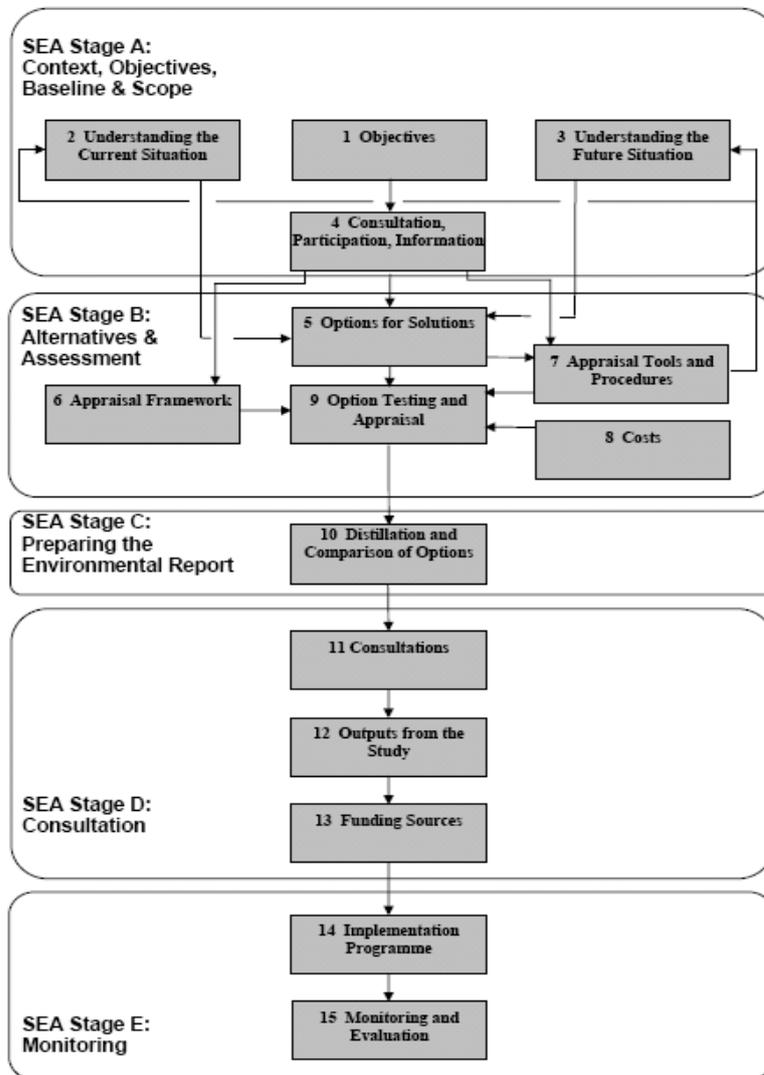
1.2.1 The SEA is part of the wider set of appraisals constituting the Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Transport Plan. There will also be Equality Impact, Health Impact and Habitats Regulations Assessments

1.2.2 The structure of the SEA process is set out in figure 1 below. Stage A is the initial scoping stage undertaken here and four elements are included within this:

- The LTP process
- Setting out the SEA objectives
- Understanding the current (baseline) situation
- Understanding the future (forecast) situation
- Recognising key parallel strategies
- Carrying out consultation on the above

The objectives and analysis are set out from section 3 of this report onwards.

Figure 1: SEA Process Stages



Source: WebTAG unit 2.11 (Dept for Transport)

2. The Local Transport Strategy process

2.1 Scope of the plan

2.1.1 LTP3 is a statutory document bringing together all aspects of transport planning and policy in the Borough. Because transport issues are relevant to many aspects of community life on a daily basis, the LTP is a major policy reference setting out the Council's standpoint and forward view in working with the community on service delivery and is integrated with the approach of the Council's Corporate Plan, Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).

2.1.2 The final LTP3 document will consist of two elements, the Integrated Transport Strategy and the Implementation Plan:

- The Integrated Transport Strategy will set out the long-term objectives and priorities for transport in Cheshire West & Chester for the period 2011 - 2026. This both derives from and supports the vision and objectives of West Cheshire's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- The Implementation Plan sets out the programme of initiatives and proposed expenditure needed to implement the strategy during the next 3 years.

2.1.2 The longer term strategy is more significant in SEA terms, so subsequent references in this document will be to the 'transport strategy' rather than LTP3.

2.1.4 The transport strategy encompasses actions framed by the five national transport goals, plus one important local goal (asset management). The total scope of the plan is therefore extensive and is underpinned by legislative requirements in many areas. The overall picture is summarised in the following table.

Table 1: Transport Strategy goals

Transport goals (<i>and national transport challenges</i>)	Legislative background
<i>Supporting economic growth</i>	
Network (highway) operation & congestion reduction	Network Management Duty
Supporting sustainable regeneration and accessibility	Planning Policy Statements
Network resilience planning	Climate Change Act
<i>Climate change</i>	
Promoting sustainable transport	DaSTS
Reducing the need to travel	DaSTS
Climate change adaptation	Climate Change Act
<i>Promoting equality of opportunity</i>	
Sustainable modes of travel strategy	DaSTS
PROW network	ROWIP
Equality Impact Assessment	Equality Act & EqIA Regulations
<i>Contributing to safety, security and better health</i>	
Road safety improvement programmes	Highways Acts
Air quality and noise	EU Directive
Promoting healthier lifestyles	DaSTS
Addressing crime and fear of crime	
<i>Improving quality of life and a healthy environment</i>	
Action plans for noise	EU Directive
Habitats Regulation Assessment	EU Directive
Biodiversity planning	EU Directive
Design Standards	Planning Policy statements
<i>Managing and maintaining transport assets</i>	
Network (highway) operation & congestion reduction. Transport asset management (maintenance and renewal)	Highways Acts Network Management Duty

2.1.5 As part of the strategy's development, a series of topic papers have been prepared guided by the structure shown above, which summarise the baseline position, trends and future challenges for each of the goals and set out the results of public consultation.

2.2 Local transport strategy options

2.2.1 Department for Transport guidance on conducting a SEA of transport strategies recommends that the Scoping Report includes details of the different overall options for the strategy that have been considered and that these should be evaluated in the SEA. These options are best seen as 'solutions' or 'directions of travel' to deliver the transport strategy over the course of time.

2.2.2 In this case it has not been possible to include details of these options as ones appropriate to current conditions have not been determined. The strategy development process so far has focussed on identifying public views and identifying the future transport challenges facing the Borough, which precedes development of delivery solutions.

2.2.3 Transport strategies typically look at three generic approaches, which were used in developing the LTP2 in Cheshire:

- Alternative 1: Maintaining the status quo
- Alternative 2: Being responsive (to other plans and programmes)
- Alternative 3: Being proactive (encompassing Alternative 1 and 2 measures)

2.2.4 In practice, the scope for producing alternative transport strategy approaches at this stage is limited by the strategy format advised in the preparation guidance and by current economic conditions. Previously the LTP was a single integrated policy framework and funding mechanism to address future challenges and resourcing the solutions. Consideration of alternative ways of addressing the problems was a natural by-product of this approach.

2.2.5 Present guidance divorces the (short term) funding aspects from the longer-term strategy, thus leading the strategy element towards reflecting future needs in close alignment with other strategies, particularly the LDF, while leaving funding issues to be handled separately. The economic context is a further constraint, limiting the extent of interventions that can be promoted through the transport strategy. This is likely to be the financial context for at least the present Parliament running through to 2015. The situation beyond that point is not possible to forecast with any degree of confidence.

2.2.6 Therefore, the policy background suggests the transport strategy is mainly concerned with being responsive to other plans (i.e. alternative 2) while the practicalities of resources may limit the amount of action open to the authority in the short term, either proactively or in maintaining the status quo.

2.2.7 The Council has been developing its local transport strategy since late 2009, with consultation on a draft plan intended during the autumn/winter of 2010. The transport strategy and implementation plans must be in place by the end of March 2011.

2.2.8 The six goals noted in section 2.1 have also been used to assist in selecting the SEA objectives. This is explained in more detail below.

3. Setting the SEA Objectives

3.1 Background

3.1.1 To select suitable SEA evaluation objectives, it is necessary to determine the way in which a local transport strategy is likely to have an impact on the environment. This is a matter that is now well understood, with experience built up over the LTP/NATA era from 2000 onwards.

3.1.2 The reference aspects to consider when setting objectives can be derived from the categories of environmental impact originally identified in the SEA Directive. These cover impacts to a variety of receptors, as follows:

- Biodiversity
- Population
- Human health
- Fauna and flora
- Soil
- Water
- Air
- Climatic factors,
- Material assets
- Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage,
- Landscape

3.1.3 Most of the effects covered are the result of human activity upon the external environment; however the 'population' effects are different. The DfT's "*Practical Guide to the SEA Directive*" suggests in this case the focus should be on improving the opportunities for healthy living and addressing crime and the fear of crime.

3.1.4 From the same guidance, the subject of 'material assets' may be construed as a catch-all for anything in the natural and built environment not covered elsewhere. Based on this understanding, the list of SEA receptors can be restructured along NATA lines.

Table 2: Environment Impact Groups

	Environmental impact: reference groups
	<i>Impacts on the natural environment</i>
1	Air Quality
2	Noise
3	Greenhouse gas emission
4	Water quality
5	Biodiversity
6	Landscape
	<i>Impacts on the built environment</i>
7	Townscapes
8	Heritage
9	Design quality (new interventions)
	<i>Quality of Life impacts</i>
10	Health, social inclusion and fear of crime issues

11	Accessibility to facilities
12	Affordability of transport

3.2 Updating the SEA Objectives

3.2.1 The DaSTS goals have been used to structure the Council's approach and to that end a series of supporting topic papers have been prepared illustrating the main impacts the transport strategy is likely to have, including those relevant to the environment.

3.2.2 Having said this however, in considering possible new SEA objectives it is clear that the Cheshire West & Chester authority is not starting from a clean sheet of paper. It has inherited the SEA objectives of the predecessor authority's LTP2 process.

3.2.3 Therefore, rather than commencing from scratch, an evaluation of the previous objectives is set out below, comparing their suitability with the current position.

Table 3: LTP2 SEA Objectives

	SEA Objective (from LTP2)	Consistency with reference groups	Recommendation
1	Will the plan reduce transport impacts upon biodiversity	●●●	Carry over to new strategy
2	Will the plan reduce transport impact upon air quality	●●●	Carry over to new strategy
3	Will the plan minimise transport noise and vibration impacts	●●●	Carry over to new strategy
4	Will the plan encourage adoption of healthier lifestyles	●●●	Can carry over, but definition of objective in need of clarification
5	Will the plan improve road safety	●●●	Can carry over, but definition of objective in need of clarification
6	Will the plan reduce the level of transport related crime & improve perceptions of safety	●●●	Can carry over, but definition of objective in need of clarification
7	Will the plan improve sustainable accessibility	●●	Can carry over, but clarify definition of accessibility
8	Will the plan reduce transport's impact on water resources	●●●	Carry over to new strategy
9	Will the plan reduce transport's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions	●●●	Carry over to new strategy
10	Will the plan help to preserve the natural landscape	●●	Can carry over, but definition of objective in need of clarification
11	Will the plan help to preserve the built environment & cultural assets	●●	Can carry over, but definition of objective in need of clarification
12	Does the plan promote integration of transport and	●	Not a direct environmental impact of

	land uses		the plan
	SEA Objective (from LTP2)	Consistency	Recommendation
13	Will the plan support the economy through good access by all modes	●	Consider environmental rationale for this objective
14	Will the plan support social regeneration through improving accessibility	●●	Can carry over, but clarify definition of accessibility

3.2.4 There is a high degree of consistency between the LTP2 SEA objectives and the requirements of the Directive, which makes it possible to roll them forward for the new transport planning era in most cases. Exceptions occur in three instances:

- Where there is a need for clarification identified in the above;
- Consistency of the SEA objectives with the transport strategy goals; and,
- Where the practicalities of monitoring suggest adopting a particular approach.

3.2.5 In respect of the adoption of healthier lifestyles, the previous objective saw this in terms of these activities:

- Reduce obesity and heart disease
- Educating people to walk to school
- Children walking and cycling to school

3.2.6 The main impacts of the transport strategy are understood to come about through promoting more walking and cycling as modes of transport for all uses, particularly commuting and travelling to school. These must, therefore, be the focus in this case. The matter of accessibility to green spaces is, as the description states, primarily about accessibility and not health.

3.2.7 In respect of road safety, the Council has previously followed a prescriptive, statistics-based approach focused on casualty reduction, as required by Government. The previous objective saw this in terms of the following:

- Improve attractiveness of local environment
- Safety for walkers and cyclists
- Designing for reduced speed
- Design out crime
- Improve public waiting facilities, CCTV and lighting
- Traffic calming measures

3.2.8 These are output measures, which may or may not have an impact on casualty reduction, therefore, it is suggested that continuing to concentrate on the figures is the right way to judge the outcome.

3.2.9 In respect of addressing fear of crime and the true level of transport related crime, the following actions were considered important:

- Designing for reduced crime
- Bus stop/station design
- Links with police to enforce schemes

3.2.10 As with road safety, the importance of the outcomes is paramount and the main statistical measures of concern are crimes against the person associated with the transport system and perception (fear) of this.

3.2.11 From the list of former SEA objectives in table 3, promoting integration and land use does not correspond very well with the SEA impact groups. It is not that the intention is unsuitable, but it is general in nature and cannot readily be translated into a measurable outcome. It is therefore proposed to discontinue this objective.

3.2.12 Issues of definition also occur in respect of accessibility. The concept of 'sustainable accessibility' appears in the general sense, in support of economic activity and finally in addressing social exclusion. Rationalisation is, therefore, proposed.

3.2.13 The accessibility indicators can be made more concise by referring to how the accessibility concept has been used in transport strategies up to now. The well-understood principle is to determine how easily services and employment can be accessed by different communities / populations, and datasets are already prepared centrally to enable analysis. This measure addresses both issues of access to facilities and social inclusion aspects.

3.2.14 Consideration of how easy it is to reach commercial centres is conceptually different from the more widely accepted social definition of accessibility, being more of an economic assessment. It is, therefore, proposed not to consider this item further within the SEA.

3.2.15 Finally, clarification is suggested in respect of what the impact on landscapes and built environments means in practice. The idea of preservation is key, with the intention that the impacts of transport activities should not degrade these environments any more than they have been already.

3.2.16 Greater focus can be brought to this subject by considering what the transport strategy would do to bring about "preservation". In practice this would amount to:

- Mitigation measures applying to new construction schemes
- Features retro-fitted to existing infrastructure
- Diversions of traffic to avoid sensitive areas
- Environmental restrictions and
- Development of new technology

3.2.17 One further assessment measure is the coincidence of actions with classified sensitive landscapes, townscapes and heritage features.

3.2.18 A recent addition to the NATA scheme appraisal methodology is the category of Personal Affordability of transport. The intention of the WebTAG analysis is a quantitative calculation of changes in transport costs in areas of social deprivation; it may be complex, but it is also possible to carry this out on a checklist-based qualitative manner. This type of analysis may be considered as which complements accessibility assessment and strengthens the approach to quality of life issues.

3.3 Compatibility of SEA Objectives and Transport Strategy goals

3.3.1 The previous SEA objectives looked to have a high degree of overlap with the current Transport Strategy goals. This is to be expected, as the starting point for both is a similar set of reference objectives, albeit those for transport have changed in some details, reflecting changes in the national Government's position.

3.3.2 Summarising the points made above, the resulting proposed list of objectives is shown below. Under the headline objective lie clearly discernible sub-objectives which are important when monitoring is considered.

Table 4: Proposed SEA objectives

	Proposed Transport Strategy SEA Headline objectives	Sub-Objectives
1	Will the strategy reduce transport impacts on biodiversity	Flora, Fauna and Biodiversity impacts
2	Will the strategy reduce transport's impact on air quality	Transport-related pollutant emissions (NO _x , PM ₁₀) and AQMA progress
3	Will the strategy minimise transport noise and vibration impacts	Numbers affected by location; tranquillity mapping
4	Will the strategy encourage healthier lifestyles	Mortality by cause; rates of physical activity; rates of walk & cycle use
5	Will the strategy improve road safety	Casualties by population and location categories
6	Will the strategy help to reduce the level of transport related crime and improve perceptions of safety	Affected persons by location; perception categories
7	Will the strategy enhance accessibility to key services	Travel time and cost of access to range of key services, by location.
8	Will the strategy reduced transport's impact on water resources	Impact of new schemes; impact of resilience measures
9	Will the strategy reduce transport's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions	Transport related CO ₂ figures; rate of change and trajectory
10	Does the strategy help to preserve the natural landscape	Impact of new schemes; impact of mitigation measures
11	Does the strategy help to preserve the built environment and cultural assets	Impact of new schemes; mitigation designs; location of development
12	Does the strategy help in the creation of places, spaces and buildings that work well, wear well and look well	Accessibility; public perceptions; location of new development

3.4 Internal compatibility of SEA Objectives

3.4.1 DfT guidance suggests using a compatibility matrix to test the internal compatibility of the SEA objectives. Therefore a second matrix is provided in figure 2. A commentary on the thinking behind the questioned compatibility or possible incompatible of these objectives is provided in the key commentary table.

Figure 2: Internal compatibility of proposed SEA objectives

	Biodiversity	Air Quality	Noise	Healthy Lifestyle	Road Safety	Transport crime	Accessibility	Water environment	9 Greenhouse gas	Landscape	Built environment	Design
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1												
2	√											
3	√	?										
4	√	√	√									
5	-	-	-	X								
6	-	-	-	?	?							
7	?	√	√	√	?	?						
8	√	?	√	-	-	-	-					
9	√	√	√	√	-	-	?	-				
10	√	?	-	-	-	-	-	√	-			
11	√	√	√	√	X	?	?	√	√	√		
12	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	?	√	

√: positive compatibility
?: unknown
X: potentially incompatible
-: not relevant

Key - table commentary

Cell ref	
1.7	Supporting a diverse ecosystem and promoting accessibility depends on approvals and planning standards
2.3	Action to improve traffic related air quality problems may displace local noise intrusion to other areas
2.10	Action to improve traffic related air quality problems may displace traffic to sensitive landscape areas
3.4	Possible linkage between lower noise exposure and better health
3.12	Depends on approvals and planning standards
4.5	Increase in sustainable modes use results in more vulnerable road users being present; accident rates could increase
4.6	Increase in sustainable mode use could place more persons at risk dependent on design standards for walk, cycle & public transport
5.6	As per 4.6
5.7	Depends on approvals and planning standards

5.11	Safety infrastructure may not be compatible with high quality streetscape
6.7	As per 4.6
7.9	Dependent on planning standards and approvals
7.11	Dependent on planning standards and approvals
10.12	Dependent on planning standards and approvals

3.4.2 Note that potential incompatibility or does not mean that the objectives should not be selected, only that there are some potential outcomes which could act against desired outcomes sought by other objectives. Mostly, potential instances of this are marked '?' where it is assumed that the development of planning policy will avoid the negative potential.

3.5 Monitoring considerations

3.5.1 The scoping process involves taking the above consideration of where the transport strategy is likely to make an environmental impact and from this develops a monitoring strategy based on an understanding of the way the transport strategy works in practice to effect change. The fundamentals are as follows: -

- The strategy's intervention mechanisms:-
 - Promoting beneficial activities over the longer term;
 - Providing policy support to external proposals generating improvements and opposition to those which do not; and,
 - Providing policy support for all Council actions in the transport field;
- These indirect mechanisms are paralleled by income prioritisation and bidding, so progress against the objectives will be dependent on the funding-related plans and the rate of external action;

3.5.2 The long-term character of the transport strategy plan also suggests what classes of outcome are likely. These factors are relevant to the nature of monitoring to be carried out to support the SEA. The principle of SMART measurement is important, so that as far as possible, monitoring should use indicators that are:

- Specific (to the objective);
- Measurable (not qualitative only);
- Achievable;
- Relevant; and,
- Time-based (with a trajectory and end point in mind).

3.5.3 It will be necessary to refine the list of monitoring activities to set up specific indicators and targets if necessary. The process of developing transport strategy indicators is itself taking place presently, therefore in the interests of providing a simple and economical set of SEA / transport strategy indicators and data gathering processes, further work on this aspect has been harmonised with the development of the overall performance monitoring regime and will be reported on in the SEA Stage C, Environmental Report.

4. The environmental baseline

4.1 Baseline data

4.1.1 It is necessary to identify the main environmental issues that may be addressed by policies and measures included in the local transport strategy.

4.1.2 The main information sources for this baseline picture are:

- the Integrated Transport Strategy Baseline Report;
- the report on transport strategy responses generated by first phase public consultation in 2009/10.
- the transport strategy topic papers; and,
- the draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report for the Local Development Framework.

4.1.3 The information from these reports is not reproduced in full here, but the key matters for the transport strategy are highlighted in the two tables below.

Table 5: Summary of main environmental issues

	Key Issues
1	There are a number of significant internationally important sites and a wide variety of other sensitive sites for ecology. Protection of their conservation will be needed through the plan development process

2	There are air quality problems due to transport in Chester and Ellesmere Port, with exceedence of the NO ₂ annual mean.
3	There are significant noise dispersal problems around the motorway and trunk road network, particularly affecting Ellesmere Port and Chester. Intrusive rail noise is more confined, to a corridor around the west coast main line in Winsford and Northwich.
4	Proportion of the population with a limiting long term illness = 12.4%, lower than the national average, but may be increasing. Proportions of commuters using walk or cycle (healthy) modes is relatively low (15%) although this varies widely, with 20% figure for Chester, 8.8% in the 'rural west' area
5	The numbers of killed and injured on West Cheshire's roads has fallen consistently since 2000: it is currently forecast that performance is on track to met specific targets for reducing the numbers of people killed and injured and slight injuries by 2010.
6	91.8% of people describe their Quality of Life as Quite Good or Very Good. However 62% residents felt worried or very worried about being a victim of crime. Perception is a major issue for Cheshire West & Chester
7	Proportions with no access by public transport for work vary from 0% in Ellesmere Port to 7% in the former Vale Royal Borough. Accessibility data demonstrates that in terms of access to services rural areas are disadvantaged compared to urban areas.
8	Quality of Rivers in the North West has improved - 92% are rated as good or fair. Recently the best improvement has been in urban areas. However water quality in CW&C is no better than this, with the former Ellesmere Port scoring lowest.
8	There are 8,246 properties location in Flood Zones 2 and 3, vulnerable to climate change. Infrastructure in this area will be similarly affected.
9	CW&C produces higher per capita CO ₂ emissions than national average, both overall and for transport
10	There are number of sensitive rural locations across the Borough, including 20 "landscape character" areas (in Cheshire as a whole). 42% of the CW&C area is designated as Green Belt. Pressures arise from traffic growth and increase in tourism to the area.
11	96 Conservation Areas in Cheshire West & Chester. 25 of these are as recorded as being at risk by English Heritage. Planning action requires transport input.
12	Intended planning targets for new dwellings to meet Code for Sustainable Homes being developed. This does not include transport aspects – further consideration may be needed.

Natural environment

Built environment

Quality of life

Table 6: General demographic, transport and land use issues

	Key Issues
	Ageing population (40% increase of 65-84 to 2026)
	Gradual decline in 0-15 age group

	Population increased by 4.7% over 16 years
	Average household size dropping, whilst the total population grows. This increases the demand for houses in the Borough.
	30 Lower layer Super Output Areas fall into the 20% most deprived areas in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2007). Blacon and Overleigh wards ranked in the 1% most deprived in England.
	For employment, Central & Westminster ward ranked in the 2% most deprived in England. Blacon ward ranked in the 4% most deprived and Winsford South & West ranked in the 4% most deprived
	Despite the areas of deprivation, the local economy is relatively strong and diverse, featuring a number of large employers. Unemployment is below the national average.
	Declining Trend in number of houses completed: 2003-04 = 1,062 2007-08 = 707
	The identified need for affordable housing (1,244 per year) is approximately 5.5 times the current annual rate of completion.
	80% of new housing planned to use brownfield land.
	Employment land resource is constrained by a small number of large allocations, land reserved for specialist uses or expansion land. CW&C total in April 2008 = 529.77ha
	Car ownership increased by 6.2% between the 1991 and 2001 census
	Higher than (national) average reliance on car based mobility
	Lower than average use of sustainable modes
	High rates of in-and-out commuting
	Significant forecast growth in road traffic (> 18%) and network stress to 2026
	Significant number of large prospective development concentrations to be taken through the LDF process

Demography

Transport

Land Use

5. Forecasting and the effects of the Local Transport Plan

5.1.1 The SEA regulations require the state of the environment with and without the plan to be investigated to produce the future reference baseline and “with strategy” scenarios. Further information is required to produce these forecasts as the assessment process takes place. The purpose of this Scoping Report is to highlight

the likely areas of impact and provide an opportunity for consultees to identify any omissions or suggest further areas for investigation.

5.1.2 At a time of considerable reform in the manner of service provision, it is not certain exactly how the present transport functions and responsibilities of Councils may alter or how the details may change. It is assumed that irrespective of structural or organisational change, these will still need to be discharged by Authorities in some way or other. These continuing transport responsibilities of the Borough Council are considered to be as summarised below.

Table 7: Future baseline assumptions

Baseline Council Transport Functions
Mandatory transport strategies, policies and implementation plans
Transport scheme development and planning
Transport and performance monitoring and evaluation
Highways network management
Traffic signals operation and maintenance
Regulation of street works
Highway and structures asset maintenance
Overall road safety responsibility
Accident investigation
Street lighting provision
Parking policies and management
Air quality management area duties
Noise directive management
Off-highway transport planning and provision
School travel planning, provision and management
Smarter choices planning and implementation
Support for socially-necessary public transport provisions
Passenger transport infrastructure provision, management and maintenance
ROWIP management and development
Environmental monitoring
Licensing
Highway estate management (adoptions / searches etc)
Network Development Control
Mandatory Local Development Plan with implications for transport and dedicated content
Other adopted plans and strategies
Major developments will go ahead if approved
LDF Core Strategy and DPDs will be developed and adopted
Schemes of other Agencies will go ahead if dedicated scheme funding lines are developed independently of the local transport strategy.
Funding
The Council will manage transport funds received and prioritise expenditure
Bids for transport initiatives will be prepared and submitted from time to time

5.1.3 The likely impacts the plan will have are intended to be captured through objective (outcome) monitoring as described above. The scope of these impacts is cross referenced against the proposed monitoring system in the table below. The aim will be to develop a dedicated survey against each identified outcome.

Table 8: Future baseline impacts

SEA outcome areas	Primary outcome	Supporting outcome	
(Ecology) Flora, Fauna and Biodiversity impacts	Green	Red	
(Air Quality) Transport-related pollutant emissions and AQMA progress	Green	Yellow	
(Noise) Numbers affected by location; tranquillity mapping	Green	Red	Yellow
(Healthy lifestyle) Rates of physical activity; rates of walk & cycle use	Yellow		
(Road Safety) Casualties by population and location categories	Yellow	Red	
(Road Safety) Affected persons by location; perception categories	Yellow	Red	
(Accessibility) Travel time & cost of access to key services, by location.	Yellow	Red	
(Water environment) Impact of new schemes; impact of resilience measures	Green	Red	
(Greenhouse gases) Transport related CO ₂ figures; rate of change and trajectory	Green	Yellow	
(Landscape) Impact of new schemes; impact of mitigation measures	Green		
(Built environment) Impact of capital schemes; Service-based measures	Red	Yellow	Green
(Design of new development) Accessibility; public perception; location of development	Red	Yellow	Green

Receptor impacts
Natural environment
Built environment
Quality of Life

6. Parallel Strategies

6.1.1 A number of parallel assessment processes relating to the local transport strategy are occurring at approximately the same time as the SEA. These are noted below.

6.1.2 There is a close relationship between these subject matters, which sometimes leads to them being combined into a single Sustainability Assessment report. In this case they are being developed independently, but with as far as possible, use of integrated data sets and with recognition of the cross-cutting influence that transport has over all three areas.

6.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

6.2.1 Legal protection for habitats and species of European importance is provided by the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), which covers a series of defined habitats and species of flora and fauna. This is transposed into UK law and the operative legislation requires that any plan or programme that is likely to have a significant impact on European site/s is subject to a Habitat Regulations Assessment. The plan-making body must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site(s) of their plan, before it comes into effect.

6.2.2 Cheshire West & Chester is commencing preparation of an HRA screening assessment to determine if a full assessment will be required and this is intended to be available in autumn 2010.

6.3 Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

6.3.1 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment of their local transport strategies. This intended to illustrate how the strategy can affect different groups in society, which is therefore closely related to the themes of social inclusion and accessibility.

6.3.1 Work will commence on preparing the EqIA in autumn 2010.

6.4 Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

6.4.1 The consideration of health impacts is a requirement of the SEA Directive and the DfT Guidance on Local Transport Plans (2009) states that an “HIA is an integral part of a SEA to identify and inform health issues in Plans”.

6.4.2 However the scope of HIAs for the LTP is subject to some uncertainty as the topic is potentially very broad, with the need for a diverse range of supporting evidence and targeted consultation with stakeholders. It is also clear that many effects of the plan may generate health impacts as a secondary effect of an action or policy. Additionally, the linkages between subjects may not be clear, for instance poor air quality is understood to have a health impact, but this is not a simple “cause and effect” function, but the complex interaction of climate, environment and human physiology.

Primary health impacts

- Health through physical activity
- Safety
- Social equality / demographic aspects
- Accessibility

Secondary health effects

- Air quality and noise
- Quality of life

- Climate change

6.4.3 The proposed SEA objectives are able to cover the primary impacts, but how potential secondary effects can be captured will require more consideration. In consequence, it is proposed that a screening review be carried out to consider this matter in more detail, commencing later this year.

7. Consultation on the Scoping Report

7.1.1 The final stage of the Scoping Report involves consultation with the statutory consultees in England:

- Environment Agency
- English Heritage
- Natural England

7.1.2 The purpose of consultation is to permit consideration on whether they consider the assessment is correctly focussed on the key issues, on the appropriateness of the supporting data and proposed objectives and indicators.

7.1.3 We are seeking comments on the issues raised by the report. The document will be circulated for consultation in August 2010.

7.1.4 To assist respondents, the following guide questions are suggested. Consultees should not feel constrained by these and the Authority encourages as broad a response as possible. All comments are welcome and will receive full consideration.

Questions for consultees
Are there any further plans, strategies and policies relevant to the assessment which should be mentioned in this Scoping Report
Are there any further items of baseline information relevant to the assessment which should be included in the Scoping Report?
Are the issues raised considered relevant to the Cheshire West & Chester Local Transport Plan and if not, what others should be included?
Is the overall scope of the assessment acceptable?
Is the proposed level of assessment detail acceptable?

Reponses should be sent to:

Jamie Matthews
 Transport Policy and Planning Team
 Planning & Transportation Service
 Cheshire West and Chester Council
 Backford Hall
 Chester
 CH1 6EA

Tel: 01244 973595