1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform the Executive of the development of the third North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan (LTP3) and seek their approval of the Plan.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Members will be aware that under the Transport Act 2000 (amended by the Local Transport Act 2008) all transport authorities in England are required to produce and maintain a Local Transport Plan. Following the election in May 2010 the Department for Transport (DfT) reaffirmed this requirement.

2.2 The first North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan (LTP1) covered the period 2001 - 2006 with LTP2 covering the period April 2006 to March 2011. In accordance with the statutory requirement to produce and maintain an LTP the County Council is required to adopt a new plan (LTP3) to replace LTP2 before 31 March 2011.

2.3 This report will set out the following details:

Section 3 – Government Guidance for LTP3

Section 4 – A summary of Phase 1 public engagement and the production of the Consultation Draft LTP3

Section 5 – A summary of Phase 2 public engagement and the production of the draft final LTP3

Section 6 – The implications of the October 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review

Section 7 – The draft final Local Transport Plan 3 for North Yorkshire for member approval
3.0 GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE ON LTP3

3.1 Draft guidance on LTP3 was published by the Government in December 2008 with final guidance being published in July 2009. Both the draft and final guidance set out some key changes from the approach adopted for LTP2. Brief details of these are given below.

- New flexibilities to enable the preparation of a Plan which best meets the needs of individual areas rather than being prescriptive of what should be included.
- Removes the need to produce a new plan every five years by providing flexibility to update and renew the plan as and when appropriate for the local area.
- Removes the requirement to have a separate Bus Strategy.
- Removes the reward funding for good performance. Members will recall that as a result of our ‘Excellent’ performance on LTP1 delivery and LTP2 planning we received a 25% uplift on our annual Integrated Transport Capital Block.
- Removes the ‘assessment’ of LTP’s by the Government, sets the LTP as a local plan to meet local needs.
- Removes mandatory LTP indicators though still expects LTP’s to adopt appropriate National Indicators (NI’s).

3.2 Preparatory work for the third North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan commenced early in 2009. Following the May 2010 General Election and the change in Government, both nationally and locally there was some concern expressed about the timing of LTP3. Representations were also made by some transport authorities to the coalition government seeking a delay in the requirement to approve LTP3 until their policy on transport was made clear and the future funding allocations are announced.

3.3 In response to these concerns in August 2010 the Department for Transport wrote to all local transport authorities setting out the position of the new coalition Government on Local Transport Plans. In this letter they stated:

- The statutory requirement to produce a new LTP3 by April 2011 remains.
The process of reviewing LTP delivery with Government Offices has been removed and the DfT will no longer require progress reports or reviews.

That the DaSTS Goals are no longer government policy and that the key overarching policies highlighted by ministers are 'ones which help grow the economy and help tackle carbon emissions, while not neglecting other important priorities, including road safety, affordability, accessibility, and people’s health and well being'.

That ‘LTPs are a vital tool to ensure that the right decisions are made about transport investment and services.’

3.4 Based on the above it is clear that it is necessary to adopt a new LTP by April 2011. Additionally whilst the DaSTS goals have been removed the new Governments overarching policies for transport are not substantially different. It was therefore felt appropriate to continue with the development of LTP3 with a view to it being adopted by the County Council at your meeting on 15 December 2010. This will enable the County Council and partners a period of 3 months to allow setting up of new procedures and practices before LTP3 becomes fully operational in April 2011.

4.0 PHASE 1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

4.1 In line with best practice it was agreed by the Executive Members for Business and Environmental Services to carry out 2 phases of public engagement and consultation. Phase 1 was intended to establish the views of the public and stakeholders on what they thought the key transport related issues facing North Yorkshire were. Phase 2 was intended to present to the public and stakeholders a Consultation Draft LTP3, taking on board the responses from phase 1.

4.2 The first phase of LTP3 consultation was carried out between July and October 2009. This consisted primarily of a short questionnaire survey which asked for priorities to be attributed to the five DaSTS (Delivering a Sustainable Transport System) goals (see 3.1 above) and then also asked for consideration to be given to the way in which these goals could be delivered.

4.3 Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to all County Council Members, all Town and Parish Councils and Meetings, the Chief Executives of the North Yorkshire District Councils and National Park Authorities, as well as Chief Executives of neighbouring authorities. The questionnaire was also posted or emailed to over 300 stakeholder groups representing a wide range of interests across the county. Additionally press releases in the mainstream press and in the August and September 2009 editions of the NY Times advised members of the public of how they could receive a copy of the questionnaire and also of the LTP3 web page, which was developed on the County Council’s website.
4.4 In total 922 surveys were distributed to stakeholders across North Yorkshire of which 225 were returned representing a response rate of 25%. This is a relatively good response rate for a consultation of this type on strategic issues. In total 713 responses were received (i.e. 488 questionnaires were received from the wider public). A more detailed breakdown of the phase 1 response rates is shown below:

- Parish Councils – 152 responses out of 626 consulted
- Other stakeholders – 73 responses out of 296 consulted
- Public – 488 responses

Full details of the analysis of the responses is available on the LTP page of the NYCC website in the Phase 1 Consultation Feedback Report or on request from the Transport and Land Use Strategy Team, Business and Environmental Services by telephoning 0845 872 73 74.

4.5 The key element of the phase 1 consultation was to establish stakeholder views on what the priorities for LTP3 should be. Question 1 (Thinking about the future, please rank the objectives in order of which you think are the most important?) of the consultation covered this issue.

4.6 In general terms there was strong support for economy, accessibility, safety and quality of life, whilst protecting the environment was seen as slightly less important. Whilst the economy objective was ranked first by the highest number of respondents this was still only approximately 25% of the total. All five objectives identified in the questionnaire were seen by stakeholders as being important and we therefore adopted them all as the key objectives for the Consultation Draft LTP 3 with no specific priority order being proposed. The Objectives included in the Consultation Draft LTP3 are:

- supporting flourishing local economies by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks and services (local economies)
- reducing the impact of transport on the natural and built environment and tackling climate change (environment and climate change)
- improving transport safety and security and promoting healthier travel (safety and healthier travel)
- promoting greater equality of opportunity for all by improving people’s access to all necessary services (access to services)
- ensuring transport helps improve quality of life for all (quality of life)

4.7 The results of the questions seeking public views on how we could deliver the above objectives were also considered in preparing the Consultation Draft LTP3. Further details are included in the Phase 1 Consultation Feedback Report.
4.8 In developing the Consultation Draft LTP3 it was clear that the available funding for the period of LTP3 would be significantly less than was available for LTP2. The indication from Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber was that an overall 50% cut (from approx £32m p.a. to £16m p.a.) in capital funding was a realistic scenario. Initial indications from announcements made in the Comprehensive Spending Review (see section 6) are a little more optimistic. Notwithstanding the above it is clear that in LTP3 we need to ensure that we make the best possible use of our resources. The consultation draft LTP3 therefore proposed the adoption of a hierarchy of ‘Manage, Maintain, Improve’. This recognises the fact that we have statutory duties for network ‘Management’ and highway ‘Maintenance’ but generally (excluding some elements of road safety) only powers to ‘Improve’ the network. This is regarded as a key concept for both the allocation of resources and in identifying alternative solutions to transport issues. It was therefore an important part of the Phase 2 Public Engagement.

5.0 PHASE 2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

5.1 As stated above a Consultation Draft LTP3 was produced taking into account the results of the phase 1 consultation and engagement, government guidance and wider transport policy issues. A copy of the Consultation Draft (and a Summary) is on the County Councils website or is available on request.

5.2 Phase 2 consultation and engagement included:

- A letter or e mail to all 922 stakeholders included in phase 1 consultation.
- Where contact details were available a letter or e mail to all respondents to phase 1.
- Press releases in the local media and the NY Times
- Seven public exhibitions one held in each of the seven North Yorkshire Districts.
- Five focus groups of people who expressed an interest in further involvement as part of phase 1 consultation.
- Attendance and engagement with specific representative groups such as the North Yorkshire Youth Council and the North Yorkshire Older Persons Conference.
- The availability of all consultation material on the North Yorkshire LTP web pages.
- Reports to all seven County Council Area Committees and the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5.3 The engagement was based around a questionnaire which consisted of 6 open questions to help guide the format of consultees’ responses. The questions asked were:
Q1) Do you understand what the LTP3 is trying to achieve?

Q2) Do you agree that the proposed objectives and priorities we have suggested are about right?

Q3) Broadly, what do you think will be the three main challenges for transport in North Yorkshire in the next five to ten years?

Q4) Do you think the types of solution we are proposing are the right ones to help achieve our objectives and priorities?

Q5) Are there any other types of solution you think we should consider?

Q6) Do you agree with our proposal that we should spend more on the management and maintenance of the existing network and services as a higher priority than making transport improvements?

5.4 In total we received a total of 537 responses consisting of 382 questionnaires and 155 other written or verbal responses. This included 75 from Parish Councils in North Yorkshire. In general there was a high level of agreement with the approach and content of the Consultation Draft LTP3 including the proposal for a Manage, Maintain and Improve hierarchy. There were however a small number of responses which suggested changes or weaknesses with the consultation draft. Most of these were concerned with 3 recurring themes. These were:

- The need to address accessibility in rural areas
- That the LTP should have more emphasis on Public Transport (Bus, Community Transport and Rail)
- The need to give full consideration of environmental issues (including carbon) especially through better promotion and provision for alternatives (walking and cycling).

A summary of the consultation response was reported to the Executive Members for Business and Environmental Services on 27 September and 3 November 2010 and to the Transport Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 September 2010. A copy of this summary is available on request together with further details of the consultation responses.

5.5 In addition to the three key themes raised through the consultation there was some support from stakeholder groups and the Area Committees for the concept of Local Transport Partnerships to engage with District, Town and Parish Councils, Stakeholders and Transport Users. However, there was also some concern that these should not overlap existing engagement forums or detract from the work of the Area Committees. Officers will therefore investigate these proposals in more detail in light of these comments and a further report on the proposals will be presented to the Transport Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Members for BES early in 2011.
5.6 All consultation responses have been considered and where appropriate changes incorporated into the draft final LTP3. Whilst it should be noted that the three recurring themes identified above were only identified by a small number of respondents (typically 20-30 representing approximately 5% of the total) it is worthwhile highlighting how these have been addressed in the draft final LTP3. Details are given below:

**The need to address accessibility in rural areas** - Access to services (accessibility) is one of the key objectives identified in LTP3. Rural accessibility is recognised as being one of the major transport related issues in North Yorkshire given its predominately rural nature. The draft final LTP3 includes an Access to Services appendix which sets out our approach in much greater detail. Additionally officers have ensured that the final LTP3 clearly states that this is a high priority for the County Council and sets out how we will seek to address the issues in the shorter term recognising the current funding constraints and in the longer term should more funding become available. The draft final LTP also includes a commitment to seek funding to address rural access to services from the recently announced Local Sustainable Transport Fund (see section 6).

**The LTP should have more emphasis on Public Transport (Bus, Community Transport and Rail)** – It is recognised that LTP3 concentrates on road / highway based transport and especially those areas where the County Council has direct powers, responsibilities or a significant influence. This is intentional as the LTP is intended primarily to be a plan that the County Council and partners can deliver. Notwithstanding the above, further details of the County Council approach to public transport (including rail) issues have been included in the draft final LTP3. However it must be recognised that the County Council and local partners have few direct powers on public transport and our influence on rail services and infrastructure is limited.

**The need to give full consideration of environmental issues (including carbon) especially through better promotion and provision for alternatives (walking and cycling).** – Environment and climate change is one of the key objectives of LTP3 and the Consultation Draft sets out the County Councils approach to achieving this objective. The draft final LTP3 includes an Environment and Climate Change appendix which sets out our approach in much greater detail. It must however be recognised that in the shorter term severe funding constraints will mean that the majority of LTP funding will need to be utilised to maintain the existing highway network and that funding for new provision for pedestrians and cyclists is likely to be very limited. We will pursue, where appropriate, developer funding for these types of measures as part of the planning process for new developments. We will however continue to promote alternative modes of travel and should greater funding become available seek to improve provision for sustainable transport modes.
6.0 IMPLICATIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW (CSR)

6.1 As previously stated the Consultation Draft LTP3 was based around a funding assumption of a 50% cut in funding when compared to the allocation for 2010/2011 (the final year of LTP2). This was based on the best available advice from Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber.

6.2 Immediately following the CSR announcement on 20 October 2010 the Department for Transport issued a press release setting out details of National allocations for various transport funding streams. Table 1 below provides the relevant figures for local government transport capital funding. This information is drawn directly from Annex G of the DfT press release.

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Table 1 - DfT Capital Budgets 2011-2015

6.3 The sections below provide a short commentary on each of the funding streams included in Table 1.

Local Sustainable Transport Fund
This is a new funding stream that as well as providing the indicated £210m in capital also provides £350m revenue both over the next 4 years. This funding is available for Local Transport authorities in England through a bidding process. Further details are expected from the DfT before the end of the current year. Officers are currently considering options for potential bids into this fund including potential bids to support rural access to services.

Major Schemes
On 26 October the DfT made an announcement on the outcome of their review of Major Transport Schemes. The scheme for the A684 Bedale Aiskew Leeming Bar Bypass was not in the 'Supported Pool' but is included in the 'Development Pool' of 22 schemes competing for £600m of funding. These are schemes which the DfT feel they need to re-examine and update the evidence to ensure that the schemes are being compared on a level playing field basis before making final decisions on which can be supported. Decisions on the future of these schemes are expected by the end of 2011. We are currently awaiting further details from the DfT on what additional information is required for schemes in this pool.
Maintenance
Based on the above figures the expected 50% reduction in the maintenance block has not been imposed. The latest available figures show an approximate 7.5% cut in year 1 increasing to a 19% cut by year 4.

Integrated Transport
Based on the figures in the table there appears to be a 33% cut in IT allocations in year 1. However the quoted 2010/11 figure of £450m is actually post the 25% in year cut. The original figure was £602m. This therefore represents the expected 50% cut. However the allocations do rise again by year 4.

Overall Maintenance and Integrated Transport
This approach is broadly in line with the coalition governments approach taken for the 2010/11 in year 25% cuts which cut integrated transport but protected maintenance. Allocation of both maintenance and integrated transport block funding to individual transport authorities is purely on a formulaic basis. Whilst there are possible minor potential changes proposed for these formulas these are likely to have a small positive impact for NYCC allocations. It is therefore a fair assumption that the NYCC allocations will broadly follow the national trends.

6.4 Based on this latest information it is likely that the total NYCC allocation for 2011/12 would be of the order of £25m compared to the original 2010/11 allocation of £31.7m. Members will however also be aware of the 1% increase in the public sector borrowing rate also announced in the CSR. The majority of local transport funding for NYCC is in the form of borrowing approvals however, DfT has recently consulted on the possibility of transport funding being provided through grant in future although confirmation of the outcome of this consultation is still awaited.

6.5 DfT have also confirmed that there is no longer any provision for specific Road Safety Grant and that in line with a number of ring fenced grants this funding stream is being wrapped up into the wider local government settlement and allocated by formula. In recent years this grant has provided the County Council and its 95 Alive partners with an opportunity greatly to expand casualty reduction work throughout North Yorkshire, it is clear that funding for road safety activity, in-particular education, training and publicity, will reduce significantly. Once local financial settlements are known following the recent Comprehensive Spending Review, it will be necessary to review our activity relative to the available funding.

6.6 Whilst the above funding is potentially more positive that originally expected we cannot be certain of our actual allocations until December this year. The draft final LTP3 therefore retains the 50% cut scenario but also includes planning assumptions based on the £25m allocation identified above. Following the publication of the actual allocations further reports on the implications for LTP3 will be provided to the Executive Members for BES and the Executive.
7.0 DRAFT FINAL LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 3

7.1 Please find attached for your consideration the draft final LTP3. In line with the current guidance, this is a strategic document which sets out what we want to achieve in North Yorkshire through transport and how we hope to achieve it. Like LTP2 it does not include a list of specific schemes and initiatives but sets out how we will identify and prioritise them throughout the LTP3 period. Subject to the government's announcements on funding allocations it is intended to continue to provide details of specific schemes through a rolling two year programme. Unlike LTP2 which was heavily influenced by the need to meet the very prescriptive government guidance, LTP3 concentrates on the key issues for North Yorkshire and is not intended to be a comprehensive policy document setting out all of the County Council’s transport policies.

7.2 Part 1 of the LTP comprises of the Local Transport Strategy.

- Chapter 1 gives a geographic, demographic and political background to transport in North Yorkshire. This is essentially the same as LTP2 updated with latest available data.
- Chapter 2 sets out the LTP’s vision, which is shared with the Sustainable Community Strategy, the proposed LTP objectives of local economies, environment and climate change, safety and healthier travel, access to services and quality of life and the commitment to the Manage, Maintain, Improve hierarchy.
- Chapters 3 to 7 provide further details of each of the 5 Objectives proposed for LTP3. These are supported by a series of more detailed appendices.
- Chapter 8 identifies and highlights some key links between the 5 Objectives to demonstrate that they will not be considered in isolation.
- Chapter 9 sets out our strategy for delivery of the Objectives including our approach to delivery of schemes and initiatives, namely the process of PROBLEM ⇒ SOLUTION ⇒ PRIORITISE ⇒ DELIVER ⇒ MONITOR.

Members may especially want to give consideration to the Key Issues and Potential Interventions identified for each of the Objectives (Chapters 3 to 7)

7.3 Part 2 of the LTP comprises of our approach to delivering the plan for the next 5 years.

- Chapter 10 identifies the two possible funding scenarios for LTP3. An addendum to this chapter may be necessary when the government announce funding allocations following the Comprehensive Spending Review.
- Chapter 11 highlights and summarises many of the County Council policies and practices relating to transport. This is intended to give readers an overview and provide answers to some Frequently Asked Questions.
Chapter 12 describes how the County Council identifies transport related problems with Chapter 13 setting out our approach to selecting the most appropriate solution. This chapter explains how the Manage, Maintain, Improve hierarchy will be applied.

Chapter 14 explains our approach to maintenance, bridge and improvement scheme prioritisation and programming. The approach to maintenance and bridge scheme prioritisation remains essentially the same as in LTP2. With regards to changes to the prioritisation system for improvement schemes, as was the case with LTP2 it is proposed that the principles are adopted as part of LTP3, but that the specific details are considered and adopted by Members as part of the implementation of the Plan. This approach means the details of the prioritisation system can therefore be more easily reviewed and adapted to take account of changing circumstances and funding.

Chapter 15 describes some of our key partnerships necessary to the delivery of LTP3.

Chapter 16 sets out the performance management regime for LTP3. This identifies Key Performance Indicators which we propose for LTP3 but until further details of funding allocations are available we cannot identify targets for these Indicators. It is possible that an addendum to this chapter may be necessary when the government announce actual funding allocations following the Comprehensive Spending Review.

8.0 THE NEXT STEPS

8.1 Subject to its approval by the Executive and County Council LTP3 will become County Council policy with effect from 1 April 2011. Notwithstanding this the implications of the funding cuts are already upon us. Many of the practices embedded in LTP3 (such as the use of the Manage, Maintain, Improve hierarchy to prioritise funding) are already being used. However, the period between adoption of the plan and April 2011 will be used to embed the new policies and practices in LTP3 so that full implementation can commence with effect from 1 April 2011.

8.2 As previously stated LTP3 does not need to be submitted to the DfT or Government office for any assessment or scoring. In line with this new status as a local policy document, and taking into account the current funding constraints, it is proposed that the final draft LTP3 approved by Members be subject to some basic reformatting and design work (carried out in house by NYCC staff) and that it be published on the County Councils web site with a limited number of paper copies available on request.
8.3 For previous LTPs the government have required annual progress reports to be submitted to them for scoring or assessment. This is no longer a requirement for LTP3 however it is proposed to continue to produce a concise progress report for publication on the County Council website following the end of each financial year. This will highlight some of the main schemes implemented and achievements of the previous year as well as providing a regular report of progress against any indicators and targets adopted for LTP3.

8.4 Additionally, as with previous LTPs, it is proposed that the County Council conduct a light touch mid term review and update of LTP3 working with stakeholders and partners to identify any necessary changes. This review will be carried out during year 3 of its implementation (2013/14) or at some other time should circumstances require it.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 A series of Equality Impact Assessments were carried out to assess any differential impacts on different groups of the population. Details of these have been published on the County Councils website.

9.2 In summary the Equalities Impact Assessments found that there was no adverse impact on any of the six statutory groups of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age arising from the adoption of LTP3. The assessment further found that in many cases the policies and practices embedded within LTP3 were specifically intended to redress inequalities, especially those related to age and deprivation.

9.3 Notwithstanding the above the Equalities Impact Assessment relates to the adoption of LTP3 and there may be cases where specific schemes and initiatives will require separate Equalities Impact Assessments as and when they are implemented.

10.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Based on the best available knowledge the financial implications of LTP3 are set out within the document. A fuller assessment of the financial implications will be necessary following the government announcement of the capital settlements for LTP3 which is currently expected in December 2010.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The adoption of LTP3 before 1 April 2011 will fulfil the requirements of the Transport Act 2000 (amended by the Local Transport Act 2008) for the County Council as local transport authority to produce and maintain a Local Transport Plan.
12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 It is recommended that the Executive:

i) Recommend the draft third North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan (2011 – 2016) to the County Council for adoption.

ii) Approve the next steps for the publication of LTP3 and on going progress reporting as set out in section 8 of this report.

DAVID BOWE
Corporate Director, Business and Environmental Services

Background Documents to Support this Report:

LTP 3 Phase 1 Consultation Feedback Report
Summary of Phase 2 Consultation Responses

Author of Report: Andrew Bainbridge