

18 March 2019

ITEM: 6

Local Development Plan Task Force

Developing the Transport Evidence Base

This report is Public

Introduction

This Report sets out the key transport issues which will need to be considered by the plan-making process and provides an overview of the transport technical work which will be undertaken to support the preparation of a robust and deliverable Local Plan.

1. Background

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2018) requires that all Local Plans should be based on an up-to-date evidence base. In terms of transport related issues, detailed guidance on the nature and scope of the technical work needed to ensure that the Local Plan is both sound and deliverable is set out set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)(July 2018).
- 1.2 The Guidance states that a robust transport evidence base can facilitate approval of the Local Plan and reduce costs and delays to the delivery of new development, thereby reducing the cost burden on public and private sectors. The PPG also requires that the transport evidence base should identify the opportunities for encouraging a shift to more sustainable transport usage, where reasonable to do so; and highlight the infrastructure requirements for inclusion in infrastructure spending plans linked to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Section 106 provisions and other funding sources.
- 1.3 A robust evidence base will enable an assessment of the transport impacts of both existing development as well as that proposed, and can inform sustainable approaches to transport at a plan-making level. This will include consideration of viability and deliverability.
- 1.4 The PPG advises that a robust assessment will establish evidence that may be useful in:
 - Improving the sustainability of transport provision
 - Enhancing accessibility
 - Creating choice amongst different modes of transport
 - Improving health and well-being
 - Supporting economic vitality

- Improving public understanding of the transport implications of development
- Enabling other highway and transport authorities/service providers to support and deliver the transport infrastructure identified in the Local Plan
- Supporting local shops and the high street through improved accessibility and the provision of safe and convenient car-parking.

1.5 The PPG identifies a number of generic key issues which should be considered in developing a transport evidence base. These include the need to:

- Assess the existing situation and likely generation of trips over time by all modes and the impact on the locality in economic, social and environmental terms
- Assess the opportunities to support a pattern of development that, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport
- Highlight and promote opportunities to reduce the need for travel and where appropriate identify opportunities to prioritise the use of alternative modes in both existing and new development locations
- Consider the cumulative impacts of existing and proposed development on transport networks
- Assess the quality and capacity of transport infrastructure and its ability to meet forecast demands
- Identify the short, medium and long-term transport proposals across all modes

1.6 The outcome of this work could include assessing where alternative allocations or mitigation measures would improve the sustainability, viability and deliverability of proposed land allocations (including individual sites) provided these are compliant with national policy as a whole.

1.7 The Guidance states that an assessment of the transport implications should be undertaken at a number of stages in the preparation of a Local Plan:

- As part of the initial evidence base in terms of issues and opportunities
- As part of options testing
- As part of the preparation of the final submission

The last of these stages should highlight the scale of and priorities for investment requirements and support infrastructure spending plans. Like sustainability appraisal, it will be an iterative process and become more

refined and detailed as the plan-making process progresses through to development of a “preferred option”.

1.8 The starting point in development the transport evidence base is generally the preparation of a baseline study which identifies the “state of the network” across all modes of travel. The following list indicates the key aspects that should be addressed in the transport assessment. This list is not exhaustive, and the PPG notes that there may be additional issues that are important to consider locally.

- All current transport issues as they affect all modes and freight covering, for example, accessibility, congestion, mobility, safety, pollution, affordability, carbon reduction across the whole Plan area and, within relevant areas of the Plan, including existing settlements and proposed broad areas for development or specific land allocations
- The potential options to address the issues identified and any gaps in the networks in the short, medium and longer term covering, for example, accessibility, congestion, mobility, safety, pollution, carbon reduction
- The locations of proposed land allocations and areas/corridors of development and potential options for the provision of sustainable transport and transport networks to serve them
- Solutions to support a pattern of development that, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport
- The scope and options for maximising travel planning and behavioral change
- Accessibility of transport nodes such as rail/bus stations to facilitate integrated solutions.

1.9 The PPG advises that the transport assessment should be produced at a Local Plan level in partnership with all relevant transport and planning authorities, transport providers and key stakeholders, for example, the Local Economic Partnership. It may be appropriate for the transport assessment to cover an area wider than the Local Plan at least initially given the size of some travel to work areas (This would be similar to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment or Economic Needs Assessment). This process should help identify any potential measures that may be required to mitigate negative impacts.

2. Developing the Thurrock Local Plan Transport Evidence Base

2.1 Consistent with the approach set out in guidance, the Council has begun the process of developing the Local Plan transport evidence base. The key outputs and deliverables which will come from this work will include:

- Thurrock Local Plan – Transport Baseline Study (Commissioned)
- Thurrock Vision for Movement & Transport Strategy
- Strategic Development Areas (Housing/Employment/Town Centres) – Transport Access Strategies
- Strategic Transport Model/Local Area Transport Models
- Freight Strategy
- Car Parking Strategy
- Establishment of Transport Providers Reference Group.

2.2 At this stage of the plan-making process the only piece of transport technical work which has been formally commissioned is the Thurrock Local Plan - Transport Baseline Report. The purpose of this Study will be to identify the key capacity constraints, challenges and opportunities facing the Borough's transport networks and to critically consider their ability to support the future development of Thurrock. The study will also need to identify a package of strategic and local interventions to add further capacity and/ or mitigate the transport or environmental impacts of growth for further investigation and testing through the plan-making process. In addition to the matters set out in paragraph 1.8 above, the consultants appointed to undertake this work (Peter Brett Associates) have been asked to consider the following local issues:

- The capacity of Borough's road, rail and other transport networks to support future growth and development at a strategic and local level
- The interventions required to provide additional transport capacity, including the phasing and funding of their delivery to support sustainable growth
- The need for and opportunities available improve rail capacity and service frequency for passenger and freight services
- The need to deal with the ongoing problems of severance and public safety arising from the significant number of rail crossing sin the Borough
- The need for passenger improvements at the Borough's principal railway stations
- The economic, environmental and transport implications of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing
- The opportunities available to improve local transport connectivity to support growth or mitigate the environmental or other impacts of any decision by Government to proceed with the construction of the Lower Thames Crossing.
- The need to address the environmental and/or transport impacts of HGV movements in the Borough including the need for more/better lorry-parking facilities

- The need for and opportunities available to secure improved, convenient and affordable access to the Borough's existing and future strategic housing, employment and town centre growth locations, including for example Purfleet, Lakeside, Grays, Tilbury and London Gateway/Thames Enterprise Park.
- The need for and opportunities available to provide appropriate infrastructure to support and promote the use of new transport technologies including electric cars.
- Need to deal with the cumulative impact of an increasing demand for travel in terms of air quality and the opportunities to reduce the need to travel by car through the promotion of sustainable transport choices and the co-location of high travel generators next to strategic public transport hubs and or as part of mixed housing and employment developments.

2.3 Alongside the preparation of the Transport Baseline Study, the Council will need to work with landowners, developers, transport stakeholders and local communities to develop Transport Access Strategies to support the master planning and infrastructure planning processes associated with the possible development and regeneration of strategic development locations including for example, possible garden communities and major employment centres such as Lakeside, Grays, and London Gateway and Thames Enterprise Park. In all instances the emphasis will be on improving accessibility by sustainable transport modes to reduce people's reliance and use of the car. However, it should also be recognised that it may also be necessary to re-imagine Thurrock's road network to provide better road access and reduce the impacts of congestion and poor air quality on existing communities through the re-routing of vehicles away from residential areas or town centres.

2.4 Both the Baseline Report and the Local Transport Access Strategies will help inform the preparation of a Thurrock Vision for Movement and Transport Strategy which will set out an overarching strategy for the implementation of a range of transport, infrastructure and policy interventions required to support the delivery of the Local Plan and the Councils wider vision and place-making aspirations for Thurrock. Work on developing the transport evidence base will also include the need to develop separate but related freight and car parking strategies which will also help inform the production of the Vision for Movement and Transport Strategy.

2.5 The Vision for Movement and Transport Strategy will also identify key infrastructure priorities and the responsibilities and programme for their delivery and it is proposed to set up a Transport Providers Reference Group as a means of bringing the key service providers and infrastructure delivery partners together to develop a joined up approach to support the delivery of an effective and integrated transport strategy.

2.6 As work on the plan progresses it is intended to model the effectiveness of alternative spatial strategies based on different scales and distributions of development and the implementation of a range of different transport packages and interventions. This will help identify the most appropriate,

effective and deliverable transport interventions required to deliver future growth and the development of the final submission version of the Local Plan. The modelling work will also help identify and develop an effective approach to managing down the impacts of travel and congestion on the local and strategic road network which will contribute towards improving air quality across the Borough.

- 3.** Work on the preparation of the transport evidence base is at an early stage. The views of the Taskforce on the approach and scope and nature of the work outlined in this Report and, specifically, the range of activities listed in paragraph 2.2 above, would be welcomed. As work advances on the Baseline Study it is proposed to invite the Council's consultants to attend a future meeting of the Taskforce to present their emerging findings and conclusions to Members for their consideration.