

Draft Taunton Transport Strategy ‘Connecting our Garden Town’.

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Cabinet Member: John Woodman

Division and Local Member: All

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report seeks the views of the Scrutiny Committee on the draft Taunton Transport Strategy ‘Connecting our Garden Town’. The document was commissioned by TDBC (Taunton Dean Borough Council) in partnership with Somerset County Council (SCC) and prepared by consultants WSP.
- 1.2. The document links to the 2016-2020 Somerset County Plan Visions of:
 - More jobs, homes and local co-operation
 - Better heath, roads and rail.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1. The Committees are asked to consider and comment on the document prior to a period of public consultation and subsequent consideration by the Executive Portfolio Holders at TDBC and SCC.

3. Background

- 3.1. The report provides a vision for transport in Taunton and brings together investment plans and proposals from the County and Taunton Borough Councils, along with other organisations who are involved in, fund or provide transport services. The Strategy is about moving around the town itself and the connections from the town to a wider region. It covers all transport modes and a range of supporting measures.
- 3.2. It demonstrates recent progress and showcases the breadth of achievable but ambitious proposals which will be brought forward over the next 20 years. It acts as a clear evidence of the direction Taunton wants to take in respect of transport, mobility and quality of life.
- 3.3. It is specific to Taunton and its hinterland and tailored to the particular issues, changes and challenges that the town is facing over the next 20 years. For example:
 - The development of three urban extensions;
 - Town centre developments;
 - New roads that will change the way people access the town; and
 - Advances in technology

3.4 The document has been prepared using a wide range of existing evidence and data referred to through the document. No new studies have been undertaken at this stage.

3.5 The document outlines a series of proposals and policies grouped into six strategic topics:

- Roads and streets,
- Parking and park & ride
- Active travel (walking and cycling)
- Bus and coach travel
- Rail, and
- Smarter business and smarter living.

3.6 The 12 key objectives of the Vision are:

- Provide a range of transport interventions that support economic growth, improve productivity and delivery of new garden communities,
- Pursue new technology solutions wherever possible,
- Improve health outcomes by enabling more walking and cycling (particularly capitalising on the town's green corridors), improving air quality and reducing road casualties,
- Create better streets and places for people,
- Ensure the needs of different groups are met such as older people, younger people and people with disabilities,
- Improve connectivity to and within the town and provide good access to services,
- Ensure existing highways and transport networks operate reliably and efficiently with minimal disruption,
- Ensure people are better informed about travel choices,
- Influence and manage demands on the transport system and on the highway network in particular, including reducing the need to travel by car,
- Increase the capacity of highways and transport networks,
- Minimise the adverse impacts of transport (such as noise and severance) on communities, and
- Tackle cause and effects of climate change.

3.7 The key outcomes of the proposals are:

- Safer roads
- Develop a special status as a walking and cycling town,
- Less car use per head of population,
- Enhanced rail connections to the rest of the UK and continued strong growth in rail use,
- Levels of cycling journeys doubled,
- Good air quality for the whole town,
- Congestion held at today's levels at key problem junctions,
- Less traffic in Taunton town centre,
- All residents of our new garden communities to be within walking distance of main bus corridors and have easy access onto a core walking and cycling network serving the town.

4. Consultations undertaken

- 4.1.** A number of consultation exercises took place to inform the creation of the document including:
- A joint TDBC/SCC Members Sponsoring Group
 - A joint TDBC/SCC Officer Client Steering Group
 - A joint TDBC/SCC Officer Reference Group
 - Taunton Economic Advisory Board – to advise on the scope and process and provide stakeholder feedback and input
 - A Stakeholder event in March 2017
- 4.2.** It is intended to undertake a web-based public consultation of the document in February 2018.

5. Implications

- 5.1.** The financial implications of delivering the vision and outcomes described within the document are fairly complex and are described within the document (Appendix 1, Annex B).
- 5.2.** Should a mandate be given to proceed with the implementation, a full Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out for individual schemes as required and are drawn up and developed in more details.
- 5.3.** Community safety should be improved as safer roads is a key transport outcomes described within the document.

6. Background papers

- 6.1.** Appendix 1 - Taunton: Connecting Our Garden Town.

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author