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New Local Transport Plan finalised

More than 100 stakeholders have gathered for the official launch of Merseyside's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3).

Running from 1 April, LTP3 aims to deliver a transport network that will support sustainable economic growth, cut carbon emissions and help people in Merseyside to lead healthier lives.

Representatives from organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors were invited to its launch at the Hilton, Liverpool on 24 March. Delegates heard from Alan Stilwell from the Merseyside Transport Partnership (MTP) on the agreed vision and goals for LTP3, as well as details of both long and short term implementation plans.

Preparations for LTP3 have been ongoing for a number of months and, as well as extensive research and forecasting, the final strategy is based on feedback from two public and stakeholder consultations that were held last year.

The plan has also taken into consideration the Coalition Government's priorities for transport and, with funding streams still to be confirmed, is flexible so as to take advantage of future opportunities for the region.

The Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) will have overall responsibility for the delivery of

LTP3, and the final plan was approved by the Authority on 17th March.

MTP has prepared the plan on behalf of the ITA. The MTP Chair, Neil Scales, said: "A great deal of work has gone into preparing LTP3 and I'd like to thank all those who took the time to share their views with us as part of the consultation process.

"As we now look to put LTP3 into action, we will be working with a number of organisations to deliver our proposed strategy and the strong relationships that we have already built with the likes of health and business bodies will be a sound basis for us to move forward.

"The strategy laid out in LTP3 is key to the future success of Merseyside and the document will be used by both the Liverpool City Region and Local Enterprise Partnership to confirm priorities. We will continue to review our approach as the Coalition Government's funding and policy stance becomes clearer. Our immediate focus will be on integrating transport into Local Development Frameworks, with the rising price of oil also a key issue that we must continue to factor into our work."

Visit www.transportmerseyside.org to download LTP3 from 1st April or call **0151 330 1294** to request a paper copy.

Forecast figures updated

Consultation has been at the heart of preparations for Merseyside's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) and MTP has sought feedback from a wide range of stakeholders throughout the process.

Following last year's Spending Review, the strategy has also had to reflect the significant cuts in transport funding as well as the likely impact on jobs.

To reflect this, LTP3 reiterated the need for a clear focus on the role transport can play in creating the right conditions for sustainable economic growth. As oil prices continue to rise, LTP3 will also focus on providing a clean, low emission transport system which is resilient to changes to climate and oil availability.

Forecast figures, which look at what MTP expects Merseyside's transport network to look like in 2014 and 2024, have also been updated to take into account predictions for the region's ongoing housing and employment needs. The forecasts also factor in major developments that are expected, such as Liverpool and Wirral Waters.

This latest data suggests that the impact of highway traffic growth in the short term could prove to be less of an issue than MTP had previously thought and suggests that the strategy laid out in LTP3 will reduce highway growth and increase public transport usage.

The Local Sustainable Transport Fund

The Merseyside Local Transport Plan partnership welcomes the government's commitment to the new Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). This is a £560 million fund over four financial years (2011/12 – 2014/15), which local transport authorities in England, outside London, are able to bid into.

The aim of the fund is to support local transport initiatives that support economic growth and reduce carbon emissions, meaning that a wide range of sustainable transport and travel awareness measures will, hopefully, be eligible.

The partners recognise that this fund will be a very important opportunity to add value to the measures that will be taken forward within the new Local Transport Plan (LTP), especially in view of the fact that two thirds of the new funding will be revenue funding, so will complement the capital funding that the LTP provides for the delivery of infrastructure.

Bids for LSTF can fall into two main categories – major bids, costing up to £50 million, and small scale bids, of up to £5 million. The deadline for expressions of interest for major bids is 6 June, with funding becoming available in 2012, if successful. For small-scale bids, the deadline is April 18, and if successful, funding will become available from June 2011.

The partnership's bid is being led by Merseytravel, through a Steering Group with representation from Merseyside's districts. In addition, a wider stakeholder group has been identified, given the importance of wider organisations, together with voluntary and charitable bodies, and the private sector having a clear involvement in the development and delivery of bids.

Ideas are currently being identified and prioritised ahead of the first bid deadline of 18 April, which include the promotion of cycling, measures that help to improve access to work, to education and to training, travel planning, and improved travel information provision.

For further information, please contact Huw Jenkins on **0151 330 1110** or Barbara Wade on **0151 330 1852**.

Districts confirm funding priorities for transport

Merseyside's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) will help the Liverpool City Region (LCR) to grow economically, whilst cutting the region's carbon footprint and supporting the health sector in promoting more active lifestyles.

Both long and short term strategies have been set out to help achieve these aims and each of the partners behind the Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) have outlined how they will put these into action.

Long term, the strategy focuses on targeted improvements to public transport; making maximum use of new technology; encouraging more cycling and walking; ensuring transport is considered at planning stage as part of Local Development Frameworks and collaborating with partner organisations to pool resources.

At a local level, the local authorities and Merseytravel have indicated how their transport funding will be prioritised over the next three years.

Highlights include a particular focus on maintaining the existing network, improving road safety and encouraging more people to cycle and walk. Smartcards will be expanded across Merseyside to make it easier for people to travel by public transport and MTP is also working with the taxi sector to increase its role in providing essential services.

Mark Dowd, Chair of the ITA, said: "It will of course be critical to monitor and review our progress and we will continue to produce an annual report for stakeholders. This will help us to change course and financial allocations to meet shortfalls in performance, ensuring money stays within the sector, as well as justifying new bids for funding."



Electric taxi at a Taxi Demonstration Day



Creating a more sustainable transport future

As part of Climate Week (21-27 March), Merseyside Transport Partnership (MTP) is hosting a Dragon's Den-inspired event which will see organisations pitch their ideas for a sustainable transport system.

Those taking part in the session include Mott Macdonald, the Low Emission Strategies Partnership, Organic Power, and the Energy Saving Trust who will pitch their ideas to a panel of dragons, Chaired by Professor John Whitelegg of John Moores University, on 24 March, including the Chamber of Commerce, ARUP, Friends of the Earth and Liverpool PCT.

The event is part of MTP's continuing commitment to reducing emissions, which is clearly reflected in LTP3. The six authorities of the Liverpool City Region and Merseytravel first joined forces to develop a Low Emission Strategy (LES) a year ago, with the aim of reducing transport emissions and complementing other sustainable transport measures.

The delivery of the LES is a priority in LTP3 and has led to organisations including CB Richard Ellis, Q Park, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Heptron, Aintree and Liverpool University Hospitals, the University of Liverpool and ACC Liverpool collaborating with local authorities to actively pursue opportunities to bring an electric vehicle charging point network to the region.

In addition, through the LES Merseytravel has been exploring whether financial contributions from new developments can be used to fund low emission buses. The partnership is also working with taxi drivers and operators to improve the environmental standard of fleets.

The successful Taxi Demonstration Day hosted by the group last year has prompted a trial of the Kleen and Green Fuel Energy System in taxi vehicles. The technology, which can be retrofitted to petrol and diesel vehicles, will reduce fuel consumption and save taxi drivers money as well as reducing emissions of harmful pollutants. This project is being funded by a cash prize that the MTP Partnership won at the Northwest Climate Leaders Awards.

Taxi drivers interested in the trial should email john.smith@merseytravel.gov.uk or call 0151 330 1307.

Online journey planner to encourage green travel on days out

Tourists and people living in Merseyside will be able to plan more sustainable trips to visitor attractions across the region, with the help of a new online journey planner.

Developed by TravelWise, visitor attractions are invited to download the "widget" for use on their own websites. Potential visitors to those attractions wanting to consider an alternative to the car, such as public transport, walking or cycling, can then use the tool to see the options available to them.



The online journey planner has been built as part of the Green Transport Plans project which has been part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The project has involved the TravelWise team working with a number of the most popular attractions in Merseyside to overcome issues such as car park overcrowding.

TravelWise has helped a number of attractions, including Tate Liverpool, National Wildflower Centre, Floral Pavilion and Splashworld, communicate how best to reach their sites via public transport, walking or cycling, thereby enhancing sites' existing marketing activity and potentially increasing visitor numbers.

The project has also focused on cycling, providing bike maintenance sessions at sites across Merseyside and also running a series of guided bike rides.

Visitor attractions interested in including the online journey planner on their own websites can visit www.letstravelwise.org/application for more details.





Government cash boost for cycle training in Merseyside schools

Merseyside will retain its status as home of the largest schools' cycle training scheme in the UK after being awarded £420,000 in government funding to continue its Bikeability programme.

The cash boost comes from the Department for Transport's (DfT) dedicated cycle training fund and will ensure the continuation of Bikeability in Merseyside despite the abolition of Cycling England, who established the scheme five years ago. It will ensure that schools can offer cycle training to an additional 10,500 Year 5 and 6 pupils from April 2011.

Since Bikeability replaced the defunct cycling proficiency test in 2006, 43,000 children have been through the scheme in Merseyside. Run locally through TravelWise, it enables pupils in Years 5 and 6 to take part in coaching sessions that suit their ability, starting with basic cycling and balancing skills and progressing to on-road training.

Steve Holcroft, Vice Chair of Merseyside Transport Partnership, said: "As the provision of a dedicated budget makes clear, encouraging more people to cycle more often is high on the government's agenda. By clearly demonstrating our strong commitment to delivering cycling initiatives during LTP2, we are delighted to have attracted more funding to Merseyside. Continuing the Bikeability cycle training programme will enable us to continue to equip more children with the vital skills they need to cycle confidently and safely."

Hundreds in Merseyside employed thanks to cycle scheme

Hundreds of Merseyside residents have overcome transport barriers to gain employment through cycle loan initiative WorkWise Wheels, widening the potential workforce available to businesses.

WorkWise Wheels is co-ordinated by Merseytravel on behalf of Merseyside Transport Partnership (MTP) and, since it was established in 2007, almost 500 bikes have been given to people in areas where there is limited public transport options, helping them to work in companies otherwise out of reach. This equates to more than treble the number of people assisted than originally anticipated.

Bikes have been given out to eligible applicants throughout the five Merseyside districts. WorkWise Wheels is not only enabling people to access employment, but also helping them remain in their jobs and removing transport barriers longer term as three months after receiving a bike, 85% were still working.

Maresa Molloy of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, said: "The scheme has not only helped people get to places of work they wouldn't have ordinarily been able to access, but has also ensured they travel there sustainably. By widening the workforce available to businesses, we have also helped employers overcome recruitment and retention issues.

"Cycling has a real role to play in providing cheap and sustainable transport opportunities to address wider issues such as unemployment, health and climate change."

Merseyside's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) will build on the success of WorkWise as a key initiative to help meet the goal of ensuring equality of travel.

New walking and cycling link for Liverpool

A new East-West link for pedestrians and cyclists will be constructed in Liverpool this year, as part of a national project to enable more people to make their everyday journeys on foot or by bike.

Charity Sustrans is working with Liverpool City Council and British Waterways to provide a new link from Everton Park, high above the city, to the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, linking to Stanley Locks.

New toucan crossings across major arterial roads and traffic calming on Prince Edwin Street will make it safer and easier for people to get across Liverpool. The route will also link to other open spaces and routes, linking communities across the city.

The project is being funded in part by the Big Lottery Fund, who awarded Sustrans £50million for their Connect2 project, providing new everyday walking and cycling links in communities across the UK. Other funding is coming from Liverpool City Council and British Waterways.

For more information, visit www.sustrans.org.uk/connect2

The Merseyside Transport Partnership



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