

1 INTRODUCTION

Continuity, Consolidation And Planning For Growth

- 1.1 This is the second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) for the Luton Dunstable Houghton Regis conurbation, which covers the period 2006-2011. The LTP2 builds upon the excellent progress made during the first LTP (LTP1) period and in summary is structured around three broad themes.
- 1.2 The first theme is to deliver the existing commitments resulting from work undertaken during the LTP1 period, in particular to develop and implement the three committed major transport schemes (East Luton Corridor, Translink and Luton Town Centre Transport Scheme) together with the new Midland Road car park that facilitates the latter two schemes and to continue the good work of the established strategies relating to road safety and highway maintenance. The LTP2 remains focused upon the principles established during the LTP1 period, in particular:
- the emphasis on travel by sustainable modes;
 - the need to integrate transport with other policy areas; and
 - to work in partnership with key stakeholders to develop and deliver the local transport strategy.

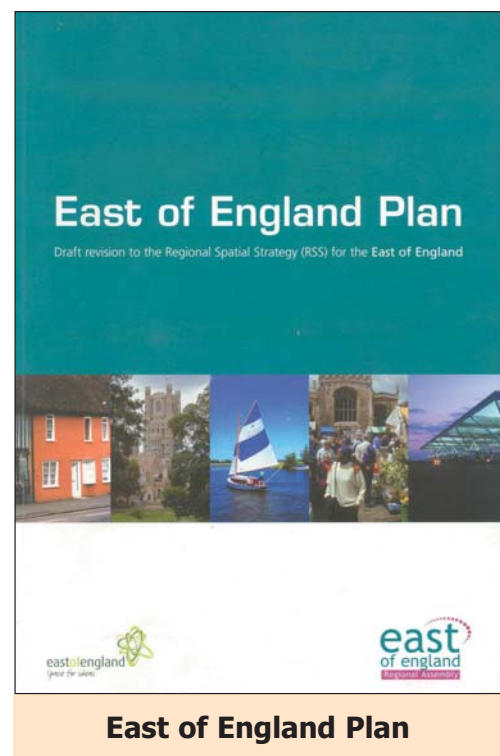
These three issues are discussed further at the end of this chapter.



Artists impression of proposed new bus station in Station Road, Luton

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- 1.3 The second theme is to consolidate the current position over the life of the LTP2. During the LTP1 period there have been a number of significant policy and national guidance changes that have impacted on some of the strategy areas developed in the first LTP. We have also carefully monitored our performance during the LTP1 period and have a better understanding of the effectiveness of different approaches to tackling transport related problems. Hence, this LTP2 builds upon the successes of LTP1 and reflects the changing policy environment, by demonstrating closer linkages between transport and a much wider range of local policies and strategies, including the Corporate and Community Plans of the conurbation's councils, together with their other economic, environmental and social policies that impact on quality of life. This has necessitated the strengthening of existing partnerships and the development of new ones.
- 1.4 The third theme is to set the scene for the longer-term growth of the area. The draft East of England Plan sets down the regional transport strategy for the area and together with the Milton Keynes/South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy identifies strategic transport infrastructure on which the growth of Luton Dunstable and Houghton Regis is predicated. Some of these schemes, including the widening of the M1 and the Dunstable Northern bypass, are expected to be completed towards the end of the LTP2 period. However, whilst construction of the Thameslink Programme (formerly Thameslink 2000) and Luton Northern bypass may start towards the end of the LTP2 period, it is not expected these schemes will be completed until after 2011.
- 1.5 The three towns are part of the wider Luton Dunstable Houghton Regis and Leighton Linlade Growth Area, one of six Growth Areas within the Milton Keynes / South Midlands (MK/SM) sub region. The vision and objectives of this LTP2, together with the strategy that flows from these, begins to bring together regional and local planning in a coherent way. This is a pre-requisite to achieving the aim of joint working to enable us to plan and manage the implementation of the Luton Dunstable Houghton Regis and Leighton Linlade Growth Area.



The Structure Of The LTP2

- 1.6 The document is structured in accordance with Figure 1.1. From the outset, we believe it is important to articulate this approach as it is fundamental to the inclusive and holistic outcomes that the LTP2 will deliver. In particular, the diagram seeks to differentiate between the long-term 2020 Local Transport Strategy (which sets out a 15 year vision for the conurbation) and the second Local Transport Plan (which is a set of policies, implementation programmes and targets relevant for the 2006-2011 period). Following this Introduction, Chapter 2 summarises the background transport, environmental and socio-economic conditions that have influenced the LTP2 strategy.
- 1.7 Chapter 3 reviews the recent national, regional and local policy documents that have informed the LTP2 process, and in particular demonstrates how the integration of land use and transport planning supports more sustainable travel choices and reduces the need to travel, as well as how transport integrates with other policies for education, health, wealth creation and equality. This should ensure that transportation makes an effective contribution to the development of a more inclusive society so that all people will have better access to housing, jobs, education and other facilities, and subsequently a better quality of life.
- 1.8 Chapter 4 summarises the long-term vision and transport strategy, in essence demonstrating how the policy environment, background conditions, and public involvement have shaped the transport strategy for the conurbation to the year 2020. This sets the framework and direction for the next five years work covered by the LTP2 period.
- 1.9 Chapters 5 to 15 refer to the specific issues directly relevant to the LTP2 period, setting out what will be achieved between 2006-2011, and how far we will have moved towards our vision for 2020 reported in the transport strategy.
- 1.10 Chapter 5 summarises the public and stakeholder involvement in preparing the Provisional and Full LTP2 documents, and how these views have helped shape the objectives and strategy. Similarly, Chapter 6 demonstrates how the consultation with statutory and local stakeholders with an interest in the environment, has influenced the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the second Local Transport Plan. The SEA findings indicate in particular how transport integrates with the local environment, enabling people to choose more sustainable ways of getting about and reducing the environmental impacts of traffic congestion, together with the development of policies to minimise the impact of new transport schemes on the environment.
- 1.11 Chapter 7 defines the objectives, enabling us to benchmark our performance closely during



Typical traffic congestion in Legrave Road, Luton

the LTP2 period. Chapter 8 sets out the broad principles of the LTP2 strategy and summarises the progress that we expect to make in implementing various elements of the long-term strategy during the next five years. It also explains the shared priorities for transport, and the key themes associated with the LTP2 period. This is followed in Chapters 9 to 13 with the detailed policy programmes associated with the LTP2 strategy themes.

- 1.12 Chapter 14 presents a summary implementation programme, and the document concludes in Chapter 15 with a review of the targets and indicators including an assessment of how the reporting of these will inform progress towards our objectives. Chapter 15 only summarises the core (mandatory) and local indicators and therefore it is important to refer to Appendix F when reading this chapter. Chapter 16 summarises the approach to risk management.

Emphasis On Sustainable Transport

- 1.13 The planning and engineering services of the three councils who produced this LTP have in the past developed separate modal strategies and policies to promote, encourage and support more sustainable travel choices and reduce the need to travel. This LTP2 recognises the similarities between the separate strategies and begins to bring these together in a coherent way as a prerequisite to achieving the aim of joint working. Further details of these modal strategies are contained within Chapter 8.

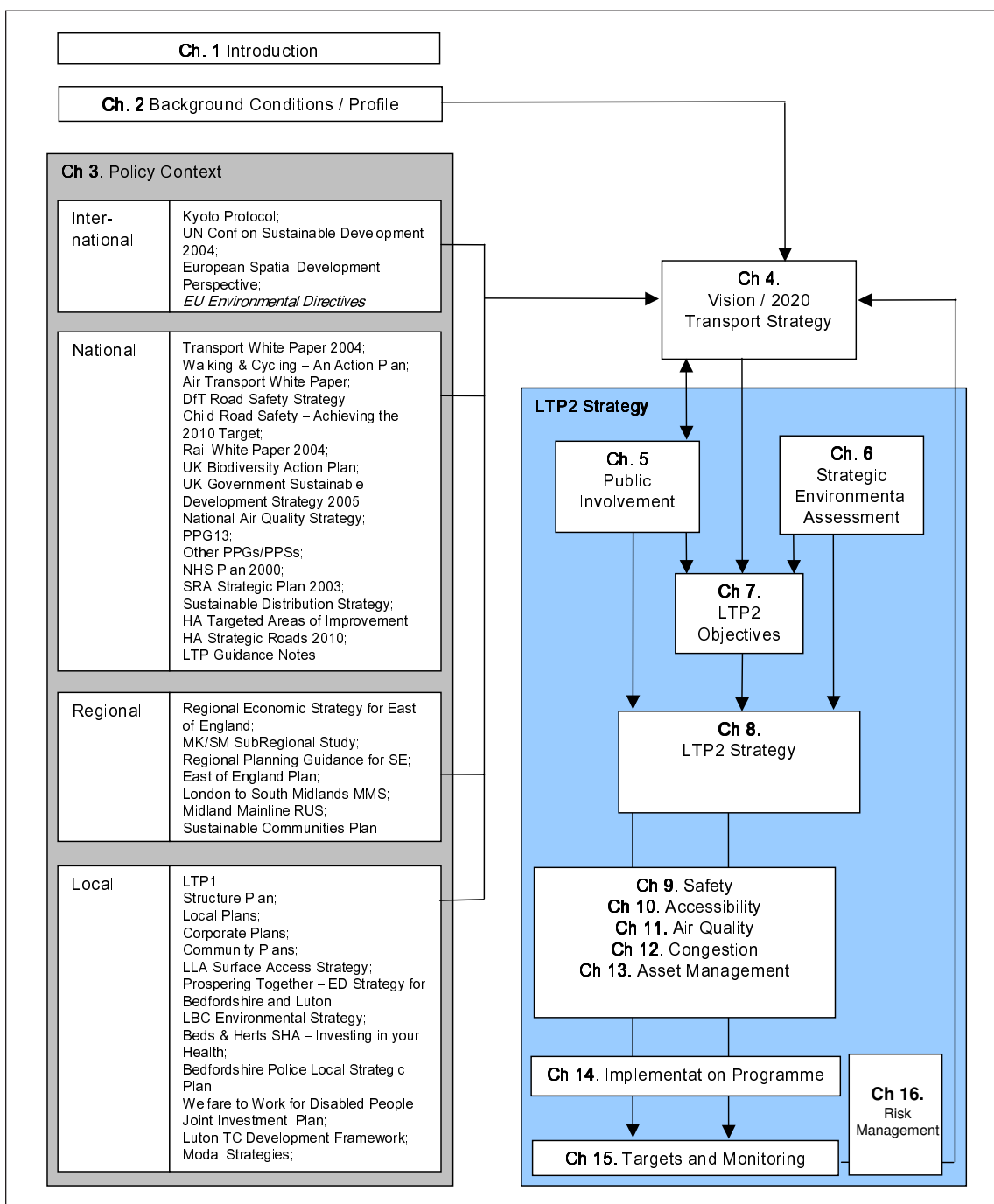


Figure 1.1 Local Transport Plan 2 Structure

1.14 In accordance with the principles of PPG13, the transport hierarchy places priority for consideration and spending on sustainable transport modes. The transport hierarchy remains as in the LTP1, in the following order:

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- Public transport
- Walking
- Cycling
- Freight access
- Taxis
- Powered two wheelers (P2W's)
- Private hire vehicles (PHV's)
- Cars and through traffic

1.15 The rationale for ranking taxis above P2W's is that taxis are seen as providing a public transport function and are permitted to use most of our bus lanes, whereas P2W's are not accorded any special treatment other than free parking in some locations. Taxis are also ranked above PHV's because they are required by licensing regulations to be wheelchair accessible, whereas PHV's are not.

Integrating Transport With Other Policy Areas

1.16 In addition to the integration within and between different types of transport, exemplified by the common basis for the modal and themed strategies described above, the other forms of integration which lie at the heart of the LTP, include:

- Integration with the local environment.
- Integration with land use planning at a national, regional and local level.
- Integration with policies for education, health, wealth creation and equality.

1.17 The first of these (integration with the local environment) is considered throughout the document, but is covered particularly in Chapter 6, which summarises the Strategic Environmental Assessment that has been developed in parallel to the LTP2. The SEA is also available as a separately bound document from the respective authorities.

1.18 The last two of these (integration with land use planning at a national, regional and local level, and integration with other policies for education, health, wealth creation and equality) are considered specifically in Chapter 3, with relevant details also summarised in Chapters 9 to 13.

Consultation And Developing Partnerships

1.19 To deliver an effective programme of transport and associated environmental improvements requires cross sector support both within and between the councils as well as partnerships with external organisations. The partnerships within and between the councils have taken two

forms. At a strategic level, these partnerships extend beyond the boundary of the conurbation. In recognition of the influence of the East of England regional plan and the MK/SM Growth Area, this LTP2 is supported by regional partners.

- 1.20 We have set up a Joint Planning and Transportation Committee (JPTC) to ensure that the requirements to meet the increasing demands imposed by the status of Luton Dunstable Houghton Regis and Leighton Linlade as a Growth Area are considered in a properly integrated way. The JPTC has been set up in advance of any formal Local Delivery Vehicle to enable Members to steer early work in developing the Local Development Framework for the Growth Area, which will form the basis of the overall land use and transport strategy for Luton and southern Bedfordshire. We are therefore working closely together with senior officers and Executive Members from all three councils forming a Steering Group to provide guidance on the structure and content of the LTP2, and working groups of transportation planners engineers and environmental specialists from the councils responsible for preparing each of the chapters on the shared priority areas. The overall structure of these working arrangements is illustrated in Figure 1.2. Further information on the partnerships with external organisations that are being developed for the LTP2 are contained within each of the chapters on the shared priorities.

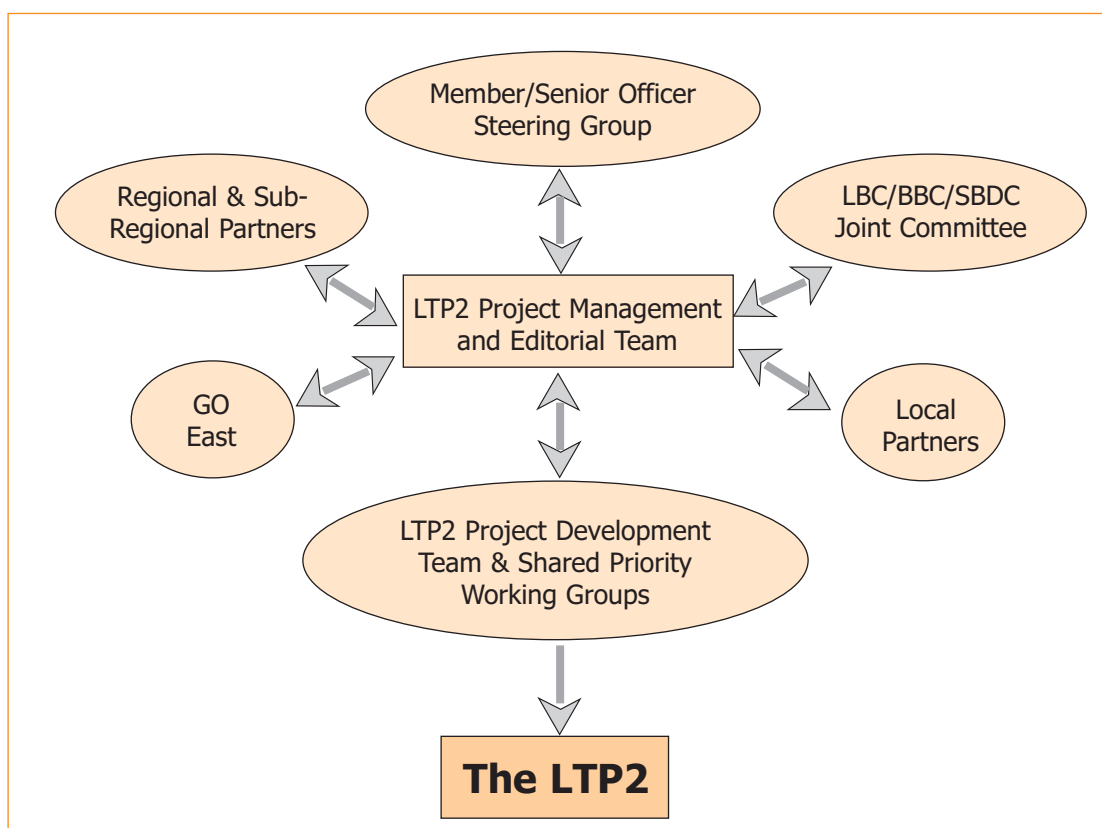


Figure 1.2 LTP2 Officer Steering Group/Working Group arrangements

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1.21 The Luton-Dunstable Local Transport Forum was set up to guide the development of the first LTP. Key stakeholders on the Forum, together with working groups of the Local Strategic Partnership, were consulted on a draft of the LTP2 in June 2005, and also on the provisional plan in the Autumn. The Forum will continue to have an important role to play in developing transport policy. The Forum consists of representatives of transport user groups (e.g. motoring, rail passenger, cycling, and pedestrian organisations), transport infrastructure providers and operators (e.g. Thameslink, London Luton Airport and Arriva), environmental organisations (e.g. Environment Agency, Council for the Protection of Rural England, Friends of the Earth, Chilterns Conservation Board) and the local business community. To understand the problems experienced by particular groups of people such as young people, the elderly and mobility impaired, these groups are represented on the Transport Forum. We also actively engage with many of these individual interest groups in a series of forums (e.g. the cycling forum, bus users group, the disability forum and the elderly peoples forum) as they have an important role to play in both developing modal strategies and implementing transport schemes and initiatives.

