

Leicestershire County Council

Enabling Travel Choice Strategy Explanatory Paper

Note: This is not the Enabling Travel Choice Strategy (ETCS). Instead, this paper sets out information to help people to respond to a consultation exercise that will be used, amongst other things, to help to shape the ETCS. Please see the Introduction for more information.

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1. Introduction

1.1. What is the purpose of this paper?

1.1.1. This paper explains our (the County Council as the Local Transport Authority) initial proposals for an Enabling Travel Choice Strategy (ETCS). It sets out:

- Why we are preparing an ETCS.
- How it relates to our Local Transport Plan.
- What it will cover in respect of our areas of our work and means (modes) of travel.
- Draft key 'policy positions'. (Subject to the consultation exercise's outcomes these will be developed into a draft set of full policies.)
- The next steps beyond this consultation.

1.1.2. We are at an early stage in the development of an ETCS. So, this is **not the ETCS**. The words and phrases used in this paper may not reflect those which will be used eventually in the ETCS. This applies especially to the draft 'policy positions' and the future wording of full policies.

1.1.3. A 'The Big Travel Survey' exercise is being held in November and December 2025. A draft ETCS (amongst other things) will be informed by responses to that exercise.

1.1.4. This paper is intended to set out information that is helpful to people giving us their thoughts and comments on our proposals for an ETCS.

1.2. Paper structure

1.2.1. The rest of this paper is structured as follows:

- Part 2 – explains why we are preparing an ETCS.
- Part 3 – sets out how the ETCS relates to our [Local Transport Plan \(LTP4\)](#).
- Part 4 – explains what the ETCS is proposed to cover in principle.
- Part 5 – sets out draft key 'policy positions'.
- Part 6 – sets out the next steps.

2. Why are we preparing an ETCS?

2.1. Delivering ‘sustainable development’ is at the heart of national planning policy. It has been since 2012. Despite this, [evidence](#) shows that people living in new housing developments still continue to rely the most on cars for their travel.

2.2. To try to change this, in 2024 national policy was revised to require a ‘vision led’ approach to be taken to planning for new development. This is how the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) describes a vision-led approach:

‘...an approach to transport planning based on setting outcomes for a development based on achieving well-designed, sustainable and popular places, and providing the transport solutions to deliver those outcomes as opposed to predicting future demand to provide capacity (often referred to as ‘predict and provide’).’

2.3. We support a vision-led approach in principle. We have said that unless as a society we change our behaviours and expectations there will be limits on the extent to which the travel demand impacts of population growth can be mitigated.

2.4. A key reason we are preparing an ETCS is to respond to the NPPF vision-led requirement. We intend it to help to provide clarity about what a vision-led approach means to us and how we will expect it to be achieved in practice as new developments, such as new homes, are planned for and delivered across Leicestershire.

2.5. The ETCS will be a countywide strategy that will sit over our range of other strategies¹. It will focus on how we can help to enable communities, current and future, to have improved access to daily services and facilities. This includes workplaces, schools, higher education, healthcare, shops, and leisure facilities. It will also seek to enable access to local labour pools for existing and new businesses.

2.6. This also reflects the Department for Transport’s (DfT) vision for the proposed Integrated National Transport Strategy, which is to:

‘put people who use transport and their needs at its heart; and

empower local leaders to deliver integrated transport solutions that meet the needs of their local communities.’

2.7. Another key reason we are preparing an ETCS is to support the delivery of our [LTP4 Core Document \(LTP4 CD\)](#) Core Themes and Policies. For example, enabling travel choice can deliver health and environmental benefits. It can also benefit businesses by helping to reduce traffic queues and delays, thus reducing delays to the movement of materials and goods.

¹ We have lots of polices plans and strategies that deal with certain means (modes) of travel. These include our [Cycling and Walking Strategy](#); our Passenger Transport [Policy](#) and [Strategy](#); and our Network Management [Policy and Strategy](#) and [Plan](#).

3. The ETCS and our Local Transport Plan

3.1. What is a Local Transport Plan (LTP)?

3.1.1. By law LTAs must prepare an LTP. LTPs help to promote transport as an enabler to deliver on economic, environmental and social objectives by planning for transport solutions to help people and goods travel around.

What is the LTP for Leicestershire (LTP4)?

3.1.2. Our full LTP4 consists of several parts:



(Image of the parts of the full LTP4 for Leicestershire)

3.1.3. Its development began in late 2021 and it is being phased.

Phase 1 – Completed

3.1.4. We developed and published our LTP4 CD. This is a high-level document that, amongst other things, sets out a strategic vision for transport across the County. It also includes five Core Themes and six Core Policies.

Phase 2 – Underway

3.1.5. This includes to develop and to implement a series of Focused Strategies, of which the ETCS is one. They will explain in more detail (than the LTP4 CD) our work in a particular area, for example our work to enable travel choice.

Phase 3 – At Early Stages

3.1.6. We will develop our LTP4 monitoring and review processes. Also, our approach to looking ahead to a post-2050 vision for transport to ensure that our LTP4 and transport solutions can adapt to any changing circumstances.

3.2. The ETCS's relationship with Multi-Modal Area Investment Plans (MMAIPs)

- 3.2.1. The ETCS will be countywide, whilst the MMAIPs will focus on particular areas of the County.
- 3.2.2. Their development and implementation will be driven by, amongst other things, the Core Policies in the LTP4 CD and in the Focused Strategies, such as the ETCS.
- 3.2.3. MMAIPs will summarise the issues that people living in areas face in reaching the services and facilities that they need and will build up the detail of the actions for us to undertake in particular areas.
- 3.2.4. As communities and businesses across Leicestershire vary in nature, it is likely that their priorities in respect of access to services and facilities, and labour pools, will also differ. This has implications for the contents of the MMAIPs, in particular for the types and priorities of solutions to enable choices of travel.

4. Overview of the proposed ETCS

4.1. What areas of our work will the ETCS Cover?

4.1.1. The ETCS will cover two key areas of our work:

- a) How we will work with existing communities:
 - i) To understand more about them and any travel barriers that they face in seeking to access services and facilities in their daily lives. This will include not just transport issues, but wider matters such as health, inequalities, levels of deprivation, and educational achievement; and
 - ii) To seek to enable people living in those communities to have realistic travel choices to access services and facilities. Sometimes, this might be a transport solution, such as building a new footway or cycleway, improving the capacity of a junction, or providing a new 'bus' service. Or sometimes, it might be about bringing a service or facility closer to a community. For example, a new doctors surgery built as part of a new housing estate, which would mean people already living in the area then have a choice to walk to a surgery rather than having to drive to one that is much further away.
- b) How we will seek to work with district councils and borough councils (who are Local Planning Authorities) and developers, such as house builders:
 - i) To deliver new places where residents have direct access to services and facilities as part of the development; and/or
 - ii) Are provided with a realistic and genuine choice of transport options to travel to services and facilities in the local area.

4.2. What means (modes) of travel will the ETCS cover?

4.2.1. Leicestershire is a mixture of differing places. It includes rural areas, villages, towns, and places adjoining Leicester. It is therefore not possible to impose a one-size-fits-all approach to enabling travel choice across the County.

4.2.2. So, through the ETCS, we will seek to identify realistic transport solutions, prioritising those modes of travel that are most relevant for communities and places, both existing and planned for the future. In some cases, the only realistic choice will be travel by car. The ETCS will therefore embrace all appropriate and relevant modes of travel, not just 'sustainable' travel.

4.2.3. To enable travel choice the ETCS will not embrace solely improving existing roads or building new things (known as capital funded solutions) but also measures to help to educate about and promote travel choice opportunities (known as revenue funded solutions), like support for a new 'bus' services or travel education and training.

5. ETCS draft key ‘policy positions’

- 5.1. The ETCS is at an early stage in its development. However, we intend it to contain a set of policies to provide a clear framework within which we will work. To inform their development, we have prepared six draft key ‘policy positions’; the Council’s Cabinet has approved them for the purposes of initial consultation. Subject to the outcomes of the consultation, they will be turned into a set of draft full policies to be included in a draft of the ETCS (on which we will undertake further consultation).

Policy Position 1: Working to understand communities’ needs

- 5.2. We hold much evidence about the state and operation of the highways and transport networks in Leicestershire. But with the adoption of the LTP4 CD and creation of the ETCS, it is necessary to broaden our knowledge. So, the ETCS will state that we should work with a range of partners (which could include health and education):
- a) To understand Leicestershire’s communities, including in respect of their health, economic circumstances/levels of deprivation and educational attainment.
 - b) To enable travel choice (including to bring services closer to people so that they can choose to walk or cycle) and help to tackle barriers so as to enable easier or better access to health care, jobs or educational opportunities, for example.
- 5.3. However, we need to be realistic about what we can achieve for communities; we will need to manage expectations. So, the ETCS will be built around understanding and seeking to address communities’ **needs** rather than *wants*.

Policy Position 2: Working through the Local Plan process

- 5.4. Local Plans set out proposals for meeting the future homes and jobs needs of an area, including to allocate sufficient land to meet such needs. They are at the heart of the national planning system.
- 5.5. In Leicestershire Local Plans are currently prepared by the district and borough councils. It is important that we work with them so that future places of living and working are truly connected to existing places, services and facilities and labour pools. So, the ETCS will set out how we will seek to work with those councils:
- a) To ensure that Local Plan evidence bases are robust and include the current levels of accessibility to services and facilities.
 - b) To ensure that the council responsible for the development of the Local Plan demonstrates how it has responded to the evidence:
 - i) To justify the selection of proposed site allocations.

- ii) Through the development of the Plan's policy framework, especially to provide a clear and strong framework that requires new developments to be truly connected to existing communities and the wider area.
 - c) To ensure that where there are groups of proposed sites or sites that are proposed to be allocated along key transport corridors (such as main roads) that the Local Plan sets out, including through policies, how:
 - i) The master-planning of the sites is to be coordinated to promote the delivery of new services and facilities; and
 - ii) The cumulative transport impacts are to be addressed, including in respect of securing developer contributions to deliver transport solutions to address the cumulative impacts.
- 5.6. The ETCS will make clear that we will no longer consider a Local Plan to accord with national planning policy where for example:
- a) The spatial strategy is being justified as 'sustainable' simply by virtue of proposed site allocations' geographic locations.
 - b) The existing transport choices for proposed allocation sites fail to provide appropriate, suitable, and safe access to services and facilities that future occupiers are most likely to require to access in their daily lives.
 - c) It fails to provide a sufficiently clear and strong policy framework to require and guide developers to bring forward proposals for enabling and improving transport choices as part of the overall 'visions' for their sites.

Policy Position 3: Working with Local Planning Authorities and developers through the planning application process

- 5.7. It is important for us to understand how Local Plan policies are being translated into reality in respect of site-specific development proposals and planning applications. The ETCS will set out that we will expect developers:
- a) To provide a clear vision for a site (**'Place Vision'**). A 'Place Vision' is essential as it dictates the site's economic and societal relationships with the 'outside world'. In turn, this is essential to inform the development of a mapped **'Transport Vision'** for a place.
 - b) To demonstrate how the Place and Transport Visions will be delivered in practice (how they are validated) over the lifetime of a development. This includes to improve inadequate existing transport provision (such as to improve an existing cycleway or footway) where that is essential and necessary to validate the Visions.
 - c) To prepare a **'Monitoring and Management Strategy'**, against which the delivery of the Visions will be tracked over the lifetime of a development.

- 5.8. The ETCS will move away from a focus of undertaking assessments that simply look at a proposed development's peak hour traffic impacts. (Albeit, that is still likely to be an important consideration.) Instead, it will set out that a more wholistic, vision-led approach is required. One based around an understanding of needs of future communities to access services and facilities and identifying transport solutions that are of an appropriate, suitable and safe standard to fulfil those needs. Likewise an understanding of future businesses to access suitable skilled pools of labour.

Policy Position 4: Piloting new and innovative ideas

- 5.9. Whilst we have piloted transport solutions - such as the initial 'Fox Connect' service and School Streets - we are keen to take steps to be more proactive in the light of the LTP4 CD Core Themes and Policies.
- 5.10. The ETCS will set out that we will take opportunities to pilot, trial and learn where new or innovative solutions are identified that would meet a community's or business' identified needs.

5. Policy Position 5: Considering what represents 'value for money'

- 5.11. We must continue to make best use of our own budgets. Also of the funding that we receive from external sources, such as from the Government.
- 5.12. However, the Government is proposing to amend national guidance for the development of business cases (bids) for public funding of projects and as to how it considers whether to fund bids². The proposals would see a lesser emphasis on a project's monetary benefits and greater emphasis on its wider benefits. (An example set out in the proposals is to achieve growth in household incomes by building more homes and improving transport connectivity.)
- 5.13. Given this, the ETCS will set out that in considering what represents 'value for money', we will not just consider how much a transport solution costs (but that will still be important), but what other benefits it might deliver in tackling wider identified issues, like:
- a) Enabling active travel to address health issues.
 - b) Helping to tackle environmental issues (such as poor air quality).
 - c) Addressing inequality or social exclusion or providing for the needs of those in the community who are more vulnerable.

Policy Position 6: Facilitating efficient delivery of safe and suitable infrastructure that supports community need

- 5.14. The design of road schemes is informed by national and local design standards. This includes schemes ranging from cycle lanes, footways and crossings through to complex junctions, bridges, and large distributor roads.

² [Green Book Review 2025: Findings and actions.](#)

- 5.15. Design standards aid the consistent delivery of safe and suitable schemes. They are outlined in an array of guidance, including our own [Leicestershire Highway Design Guide](#) and in Government publications; they include the [Design Manual for Roads and Bridges](#); the [Manual for Streets](#); and Local Transport Notes, including [LTN 1/20 \(Cycle infrastructure design\)](#).
- 5.16. National standards allow ‘departures’ from standards to be considered and provided for as an inclusive part of a design process. Scope to allow for them is a principal element of enabling the successful delivery of safe and effective schemes. It gives an ability to overcome location specific constraints. It also enables innovation to be included in a scheme which brings about a betterment in what it might otherwise offer and achieve.
- 5.17. Departures often relate to improvements to existing roads, where there can be greater constraints. For example, seeking to provide a new cycleway along an existing road fronted by houses would be more difficult than doing so on an area of open land proposed to be developed for, say, housing.
- 5.18. Departures can vary in their nature and scale, with corresponding levels of risks. Minimising departures is important to minimising risks. But, that should not be a reason to stifle innovation or hinder the delivery of a scheme that would otherwise provide a betterment in provision for the communities that need it and will ultimately use it.
- 5.19. Thus, the ETCS will adopt a positive approach to departures. It will set out that we will work with scheme promoters and other partners, such as Local Planning Authorities, to reach acceptance of a scheme that involves either improving existing or providing new transport solutions, provided that their design and delivery meets a set of criteria and objectives. These could include, for example, where a scheme that is being proposed:
- a) Supports the delivery of our LPT4, including its Core Themes and Policies.
 - b) Aligns with the ETCS policies (as eventually finalised).
 - c) Aligns with a Local Plan, Place Vision and Transport Vision (as applicable).
 - d) Is considered safe, as demonstrated by a road safety audit.
 - e) Is innovative in its design and/or delivery approach.
 - f) Does not place us at an unacceptable risk in terms of legal, financial or reputational liability
 - g) Would not represent a contradiction to a reasonable duty of care.
 - h) Duly considers network resilience and maintenance.
 - i) Provides a betterment that is in the best interests of communities and businesses by supporting positive outcomes.

6. Summary of next steps

- 6.1. We will review the outcomes we receive as part of 'The Big Travel Survey' and use them to develop a draft of the ETCS, including to turn the draft 'policy positions' into full draft policies. The outcomes will also be used to inform development of MMAIPs.
- 6.2. The outcomes and drafts of the ETCS and MMAIPs will be presented to future meetings of the Council's Cabinet for consideration and approval to undertake further consultations on the drafts.
- 6.3. At the end of those further consultations, the Council's Cabinet will be asked to approve final versions of the ETCS and of the MMAIPs.