



4 Assessment of Strategic Options

4.1 Introduction

As part of the development of the local transport plan three strategic options were developed. This chapter sets out what the options were and why they were identified and presents a comparison of the significant environmental effects of each option. The effect of each LTP option are compared to the baseline and to each other. The preferred LTP is also set out.

4.2 Strategic Alternatives

4.2.1 Three strategy options were developed for the LTP. These were based on which priorities were to be addressed by the plan. The first option focused on this priorities which consultation highlighted were of most importance to the people of Shropshire. The second option focused on addressing all four of the Government's key priorities, and the third option aimed to also address a range of other quality of life issues.

4.2.2 The environmental effect of the three strategic LTP options have been assessed and compared to a do-nothing option.

4.2.3 The options are further outlined below. Details of the measures included in each option are provided in Table 1.

The Do-Nothing Option

4.2.4 The do-nothing option is assumed to be what would happen if no LTP was prepared and therefore there were no transport policy changes and no new capital infrastructure. This option assumes that the local subsidised bus network would remain the same, a limited range of road safety education, training and publicity activities would continue as would the concessionary travel scheme, minor road maintenance schemes and winter maintenance (gritting and snow clearance) would continue at current levels (but major schemes which are now covered by capital monies would cease). The only new capital schemes that would go ahead (e.g. road improvements, cycle ways, bus route improvements, town centre enhancements) would be those on trunk roads and a few minor schemes associated with new developments.

4.2.5 The three alternative strategy options that were identified as strategic were:

Option 1: Safety and Accessibility

4.2.6 This option focuses exclusively on the objectives of safety and accessibility. Early consultation identified these as being the two highest transport priorities of the public. This option assumes that all resources are channeled into improving road safety for all road users, and increasing accessibility; through both improving access by car, improved public transport infrastructure and services, and some limited facilities for walking and cycling.

Option 2: Safety, Accessibility, Congestion and Air Quality

4.2.7 This option focuses on the Government's four current priorities for transport. It assumes that in addition to the actions outlined above for Option 1 some measures are also taken to tackle congestion in town centres, and improve air quality in the existing AQMA's. Measures would include traffic management measures to redirect traffic away from congested areas and AQMAs and improve traffic flow, and measures such as park and ride to reduce the number of car trips in urban areas.



Option 3: Safety, Accessibility, Congestion and Air Quality + Quality of Life Issues

4.2.8 This option combines the priorities identified by the Government and by the people of Shropshire and includes further objectives in terms of quality of life. All issues covered in the previous options will be included within option 3 and additional measures and policies put in place to ensure other quality of life issues are met

4.3 Significant Environmental Effects of Alternatives

4.3.1 For each of the three LTP strategic alternatives the likely impacts on each facet of the environment has been predicted and assessed for its significance. The changes that are likely to occur in each scenario have been assessed in terms of their magnitude, the time period over which they will occur, whether they are permanent or temporary, positive or negative, probable or improbable, frequent or rare, and whether there are cumulative and/or synergistic effects.

4.3.2 In order to determine if the impacts are significant or not consideration has been made to the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to ⁽¹⁾

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
- the cumulative nature of the effects;
- the transboundary nature of the effects;
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage (e.g. does it affect designated areas or other sensitive areas such as wildlife corridors);
 - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values (e.g. how close the baseline -current and likely future - is to exceeding any relevant standards);
 - intensive land-use (e.g. does the plan facilitate new areas of development);
- the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

4.3.3 Options that pose no significant effect were described as having "no effect". The predicted significant environmental effects of the LTP strategy options were compared to the likely baseline evolution without the plan; and qualified using the seven-point scale set out in .

4.3.4 Detailed worksheets were completed recording the results of the assessment of the strategy options against each criteria based on a number of the factors outlined above. These worksheets can be found in .

1 Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects - based DfT SEA guidance and on the SEA Directive, Annex II

4.3.5 A summary of the results of this assessment is provided in table Table 4.1

Table 4.1 Summary of the predicted significant environmental effects of LTP strategy options

SEA topic	Shropshire SEA Objective	Without LTP	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Local air quality	To reduce air pollution in line with National Air Quality Objectives	Slightly beneficial	Neutral	Moderately beneficial	Moderately beneficial
Greenhouse gases	To reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Moderately adverse	Strongly adverse	Strongly adverse	Slightly adverse
Landscape	To protect and enhance the character of the landscape and minimise adverse development in particularly sensitive areas	Slightly adverse	Moderately adverse	Moderately adverse	Moderately beneficial
Townscape and heritage	To protect, conserve and enhance the region's diverse historic environment and manage change in such a way that respects local character and distinctiveness and improves the public realm	Slightly adverse	Moderately adverse	Neutral	Moderately beneficial
Biodiversity (flora & fauna)	To maintain and enhance the populations and natural ranges of species and the quality and extent of wildlife habitats and ecosystems in Shropshire	Slightly adverse	Moderately adverse	Moderately adverse	Slightly beneficial
Soil and geology	To protect and improve soil quality and soil retention	No significant impacts	No significant impacts	No significant impacts	No significant impacts
Water resources, quality and flooding	To mitigate potentially adverse effects from new or extended development on water quality and water resources, and minimise the susceptibility of land use activities to flooding	Slightly adverse	Moderately adverse	Moderately adverse	Slightly adverse
Human health and population - noise	To minimise noise levels	Slightly adverse	Moderately adverse	Neutral	Slightly beneficial
Human health and population - physical fitness	To protect and enhance human health	Moderately adverse	Moderately adverse	Slightly beneficial	Moderately beneficial



SEA topic	Shropshire SEA Objective	Without LTP	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Human health and population - accidents	To reduce death and serious injury from accidents	Neutral	Moderately beneficial	Moderately beneficial	Moderately beneficial
Human health and population - security	To reduce the fear of crime	Moderately adverse	Moderately adverse	Slightly beneficial	Slightly beneficial
Human health and population – accessibility	To enhance access to essential services	Neutral	Moderately beneficial	Moderately beneficial	Moderately beneficial
Material assets	To maximise efficient use of materials and greater use of recycled and waste materials	Slightly adverse	Moderately adverse	Moderately adverse	Slightly beneficial

In accordance with the DfT's Full Guidance on Local Transport Plans Second Edition (2004), new major scheme proposals were developed and presented separately from the LTP. As such, specific potential major schemes were not assessed in the strategic options assessment.

4.4 Preferred Option

4.4.1 It is clear from Table 4.1 that the LTP Strategic Option 3 has the most positive impact on the environment. This option already contains a balance of all four of shared priorities for transport and therefore has a strong focus on encouraging more sustainable travel. It also, in order to address the the 'quality of life' issues, has a number of mitigation measures as an integral part of the strategy. It contains a number of polices and actions designed to ensure that transport improvements are undertaken in a way which is more sensitive to all aspects of the environment.

4.4.2 For these reasons option three was considered to be the best approach for Shropshire as achieving our environmental aims are a top priority. It has been chosen as the preferred LTP strategy option.

