

**WARDS: ALL**

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 12**

**DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE – 31ST MARCH 2005**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

**1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To inform and update Committee of policy and legislative influences on the development of a traffic management strategy.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Capital funding for transport purposes is secured via the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP), which is developed and monitored with our West Midland partners.

- 2.2 The LTP is a policy document adopted by the local transport authorities in accordance with the Transport Act 2000. The new 2005 LTP to be submitted summer of this year must set out strategy objectives and targets and an investment programme that is focused on the transport shared priority as well as quality of life. The transport shared priority (TSP) is one of several priorities agreed between national and local governments and focuses on the delivery of better public services and a reduction in traffic demand by the introduction of more sustainable modes of travel. Matters relating to the 4 themes of the TSP include:-

- \* Tackling congestion
- \* Delivering improved accessibility
- \* Improving Road Safety
- \* Producing better air quality

- 2.3 Furthermore the 2005 LTP will set out how we aim to deal with existing problems created by demand for travel and, in particular, the effects of the ever increasing demand for use of the car. It will also help towards ensuring that future decisions of action across a range of Authorities and organisations do not create future travel problems.

- 2.4 The LTP clearly sets out the policy framework for the development of any traffic management strategy upon which there would be a need for extensive

consultation, as undoubtedly it will impact on travel and transport which is something that is essential to every aspect of everyone's lives.

- 2.5 Whilst a provisional scoping for a traffic management strategy has been completed, its progression has in a way been hindered by the Traffic Management Act 2004 – Network Management and this is summarised as follows;

Aim of the Act - to tackle congestion and reducing disruption by

- \* Proactive management of the existing highway network
- \* Better co-ordination and management of planned works, i.e. minor improvements/maintenance and other activities, i.e. events, parades, etc., and temporary road closures.
- \* More effective powers and sanctions over “utilities” street works
- \* Wider civil enforcement powers for traffic contraventions, i.e., decriminalised parking.

What the Act Means and Outcomes, For Local Highway Authorities

- \* Extra powers to manage the network and a new duty
- \* Better managed roads – making the most of the existing network
- \* More rigorous regime for street works but with parity
- \* Complementing other investments and programmes by national, local government and others, i.e., developers
- \* Better operating road networks with less disruption and less congestion
- \* Quicker and more reliable journeys for all road users
- \* Less disturbance and pollution for communities
- \* Effective partnership between stakeholders to bring it all together

Network Management Duty

- 1 It is the duty of every local traffic Authority to manage their road network with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable, having regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives;

- a) Securing the expeditious movement of all traffic on the Authority's road network
- b) Facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another Authority is the traffic Authority.

NB But not at the expense of an Authority's road safety objectives.

2. The action which the Authority may take in performing that duty includes, in particular, any action which they consider will contribute to securing;

- a) The more efficient use of their road network
- b) The avoidance, elimination or reduction of road congestion or other disruption to the movement of traffic on their road network or a road network for which another Authority is the traffic Authority

and may involve the exercise of any powers to regulate or co-ordinate the use of any road (or part of a road) in the road network (whether or not the power was conferred on them in their capacity as a traffic Authority)

NB: The Act specifically states that the term of “traffic” includes pedestrians and cyclists

### Traffic Managers

- \* Every Authority must have one
- \* Act not specific about precise role or seniority
- \* But must be effective and have a respected professional opinion

### Other Requirements

- \* Identify causes of congestion/disruption – now and in the future
- \* Consider action
- \* Different policies/objectives for different roads (traffic management strategy)
- \* Monitor and evaluate arrangements
- \* Keep them under review

### Annexe of Good Practice

- \* Identifying and managing different road types
- \* Managing and monitoring the road network
- \* Identifying locations where congestion occurs
- \* Co-ordination and direction of work
- \* Planned events
- \* Managing incidents
- \* Making the best use of technology
- \* Managing parking and other regulations – and enforcement
- \* Accommodation essential service traffic
- \* Regular reviews of the network
- \* Consultation on the provision of information

### Objective of the Act in Summary – To Facilitate Better Management of the Highway Network:

- \* Congestion and pollution is reduced
- \* Business can operate more efficiently through the more reliable movement of goods and services supporting regeneration
- \* People are able to access their destinations more easily, saving time and money
- \* Public transport can operate more easily, potentially relieving congestion on the road by maximising the use of the existing network
- \* More is made of the investment already made in the existing highway infrastructure reducing the need for more radical solutions to congestion

2.6 Again, the principles and objectives of the Act falls in line with the LTP aims and objectives and as such will significantly influence the development of any future

traffic management strategy. Responsibilities have now been established for the development of a traffic management strategy for the Borough which will clearly embrace local centres including Netherton. Funding has also been secured to progress decriminalised parking enforcement and the responsibilities of the TMA which will form an active part of the strategy development.

- 2.7 It should also be noted that the use of major highway infrastructure schemes including bypasses as a tool to theoretically reduce congestion, which do not satisfy or meet current government policy are unlikely to attract support or indeed funding.

With specific reference to the former Netherton Bypass utilising Withymoor Basin, this was abandoned in 1977 and in the intervening period much of the old alignment has been re-designated. This includes, in particular, land adjacent to Netherton Park and the Dudley No.2 Canal Basin, community adjacent Halesowen Road now known as Withymoor Island. Much of the abandoned alignment now represents either valuable linear open space and “sites of importance for nature conservation” or key industrial areas. As such, any proposals counter to these designation/policies would be unlikely to be supported.

### **3.0 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 That this Area Committee notes the contents of this report.

### **4.0 FINANCE**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications at this time arising from the proposals of this report.

### **5.0 LAW**

- 5.1 The Council will deal with the traffic management strategy under a range of relevant legislation including the Highways Act 1980, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Traffic Management Act 2004.

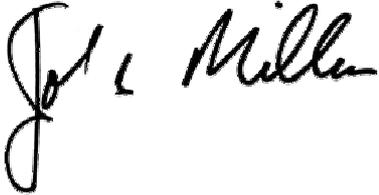
- 5.2 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

### **6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- 6.1 This report accords with the policies of the Council on equal opportunities.

**7.0        RECOMMENDATION**

7.1        That the proposals set out in section 3.0 of this report be agreed.



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**J. B. MILLAR – DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

Contact Officer:     G.E. Isherwood  
                                 Head of Traffic and Road Safety   Ext.5459

**Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-**