

Lincolnshire Transport Plan 5

Response from Lincolnshire Independents November 2021

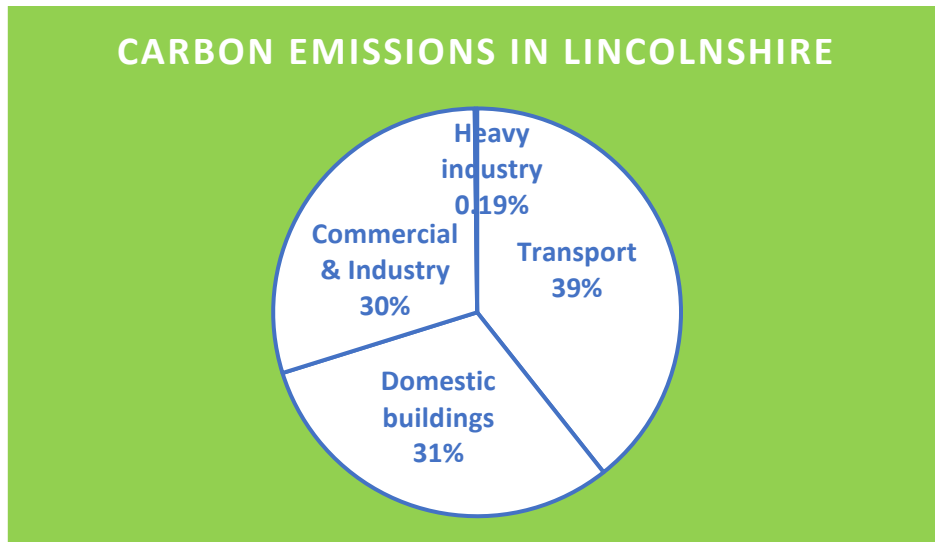


Economic growth that encourages further traffic is counter-productive and is not the primary objective of our communities. COP26 has established that the current decade is critical. New fossil fuel vehicles will still be on sale until 2030. There is no alternative but to *reduce* traffic as a matter of urgency.

Why this Transport Plan matters

The UK hosted the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change revealed the latest figures of worsening human impact on the planet. The world agreed objective is to keep global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees to avoid huge economic and human disaster, with massive climate migration as heavily populated, low-lying cities and whole countries become uninhabitable due to increased extremes in weather events. At the same time, most of Lincolnshire's breadbasket of England is likely to be inundated with seawater as the costs of sea defences become unsustainable.

In Lincolnshire, we have the national commitment to net zero by 2050 for the County Council who are planning to reduce Council emissions by over 60% by 2030. North Kesteven has a higher target of net zero of 2030 for the whole district covered by District Council, calculated at a total of £1.45bn including all partners. (Anthesis Study about to be published) “Nationally, Councils themselves contribute 1.5% of emissions, but influence 30%, so multi-level agreements set out in the Glasgow Pact are vital.



Although globally transport contributes 21% of emissions, in Lincolnshire, transport contributes the largest portion, 39% of total CO2 emissions. (1.46m tonnes/yr) Transport related carbon emissions have hardly changed in the past fifteen years to 2018. (Page 27) Vans have increased by 70% since 2000. Even with Covid, there was a national reduction in emissions of 6%, while the required reduction in North Kesteven is 13.7% every year.

There is a significant increase in use of vehicles (30%) and a decrease in bus patronage almost the same amount over the past decade.

This Transport Plan has a key role to play in reducing the emissions of our County.

The UK is only 60% self-sufficient in food and cannot rely on imports being carbon neutral. Agriculture and Tourism are two major sources of income in Lincolnshire. Both will be negatively affected by a significant drive towards “growth” and the resulting traffic. The green uncluttered food producing county is under direct threat from any schemes. The attraction of Lincolnshire, its USP, is the open rural nature of our countryside dotted with historic market towns and villages. We should not build our policies on destroying this economic and social asset.

Almost nothing arrives nor leaves this planet. We sit in our own waste, whether it is carbon dioxide, methane, plastic, batteries or nuclear waste. We are aiming for a circular economy, which means no waste, as everything is reused. This should be included in the principles applied to the LTP5.

Key Recommendations

1. The primary aim of the LTP5 should be tackling climate change and thus improving quality of life.

Economic growth may well be a product of changing our approach but should not be the objective. We should actively seek to avoid all damaging activity to find the best safe solution. For example, how can we justify as yet unplanned new road building projects unless their mitigation in full can be identified and costed to net zero? Can we afford the carbon emissions of fulfilling the stated aim of building 100,000 new dwellings and 950 hectares of new industry in Lincolnshire by 2031?

However, “supporting economic growth” is still identified as the key objective, driven by the *ambitions* of the Greater Lincolnshire Economic Partnership, with Quality of life and Impact on the Environment as subsidiary. This is both dangerous and damaging to our communities.

There is recognition of the importance of quality of life for residents, (Theme 6). This is supported in the goal; “Safer communities and streets rather than movement of traffic.” (2.2.1).

Particularly in the current climate emergency, we cannot forever grow. We need to pursue quality of life in balance where our needs coincide with available resources. The economic growth ambition should be replaced by the more inclusive “Improved wellbeing of all our citizens”.

Thus theme 6 becomes incorporated in the primary aim in theme 1.

2. Include clear ambition to reduce the impact of traffic in communities

This plan needs to address the biggest problem facing our communities; the increase in speeding traffic and a disproportionate increase in vans and lorries. This is calculated in LTP5 as a 30% increase in traffic in the past ten years, higher than the East Midlands and England. Lorry traffic has returned to pre-Covid levels, with vans and cars close behind.

A concerted effort to reduce and slow traffic through villages and urban communities needs to be seriously tackled and funded. An assessment of lorry movements is needed, to review what changes could reasonably be made. Planning must include a priority of reducing the need to travel, with local facilities within fifteen minutes active travel.

A much bigger proportion of road finance should be spent on cycle paths, not only for the benefit of cyclists, walkers and mobility vehicles, but also to enable a better flow on the roads.

This also requires considerably improved road maintenance as it is the edges where cyclists are severely at risk. 80% of Lincs roads are Class C or unclassified and need to be better maintained.

To reduce the wear and thus the need for maintenance, designation of “quiet lanes” should be included, encouraging more lanes for cyclists and walkers. These strategic non-motorised traffic lanes also reduce the need to build some cycle paths. There are many across the county which could be brought into play. Protecting country lanes from unnecessary damaging vehicle use is essential to avoid continual damage to wildlife and escalating repair costs.

3. Include an objective to eliminate damaging air quality in Lincolnshire and provide safe routes for active travel to facilities within 15 minutes.

It cannot be right that we are poisoning the air our children breathe. Some schools in Lincoln have had to reduce the time children spend in the playground, as the air damages their lungs. Time travelling to and from school or playing at home is not even counted. If we want children and adults to walk or cycle, we must have safe routes and clean air. All basic facilities need to be within fifteen minutes of active travel (Walking or cycling).

The Transport Plan points out in objective 4c;

“Most major urban air pollutants are known to have harmful effects at low levels on vegetation including arable crops. These concentrations are below those known to have a direct impact on human health. WHO” (Sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and Ozone) and

“The prevalence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is significantly higher in Lincolnshire than the national and regional averages.”

We need to reduce the levels of harmful emissions to below that damaging to human health.

We would support clean air zones as part of a *package of measures*, including electric charging points. On its own, it may just make living in those areas more expensive for people who need cars to get to work.

There needs to be clarity on where the electricity is coming from. If it is from a fossil fuel power, then the emissions are not saved. Hydrogen is a useful means of storing energy from erratic renewable sources, but if it is made using fossil fuels, then clearly the emissions still occur.

4. Include Natural Capital and Biodiversity

The Sustainability Assessment points out the cumulative negative impact of the Local Plans on noise, biodiversity, cultural heritage, landscape and townscape and soils, air quality, greenhouse gases, water resources and flooding in Lincolnshire. (page 46) There is nothing in the Transport Plan to mitigate these impacts.

Further, under “Biodiversity and Natural Capital” on page 47 of the Sustainability Assessment, it points to “potential for cumulative loss, damage or fragmentation of statutory and non-statutory wildlife sites and habitats if multiple developments were to come forward. Although it is assumed that protected species would be mitigated at a project level, there are wider impacts on biodiversity. Net gain over multiple development plans may be difficult to achieve, however, the commitment of East West Rail to biodiversity net gain could set a precedent for future developments within the region and Lincolnshire. This could have some beneficial cumulative effects on biodiversity. There is also a potential for deterioration in quality, and severance/loss of connectivity of ecosystems and green infrastructure, with consequent reductions in ecosystem service provision. This may be particularly prevalent where there is development from a number of sources”

Mitigations for these need to be itemised, their impact on helping us reach our goals calculated and costed.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment table 5.2 (p32) compares this policy to the last (2013) LTP4, *not* compared to the impact on the environment. It also considers whether the policies have a

positive impact. It does not tell us whether they would be effective in *overcoming* the damaging impacts of increasing traffic. That is what people want to know.

5. Need to demonstrate how this “growth” is going to meet our targets of net zero.

There is an assumption of increasing traffic and heavy goods transportation (page 60-64). This Transport Plan suggests mitigations for each of the increasing impacts of transportation (Page 78 to 86).

However, the impact of each action on helping us reach our carbon emissions and the costings are not calculated. This is a plan with no price tag, nor any certainty of achievement and therefore lacks credibility in the public eye.

This plan makes a long list of suggestions to resolve the increasing emissions arising from the economic ambition expressed in the Lincolnshire Economic Partnership (page 87 to 102). Nowhere is the point about reducing travel. That needs to be included. If everything you need on a weekly basis was within fifteen minutes of active travel, the roads could be nearly empty of cars.

The Plan still needs to examine the increasing transport requirements from the objective of building 100,000 new dwellings by 2035 in Greater Lincolnshire. Also not included is tackling the current emissions, which we also need to bring down to net zero by 2030 in North Kesteven and 2050 in Lincolnshire as a whole.

Conclusion

This Lincolnshire Transport plan needs to demonstrate how it will comply with the objectives set by the Government for the Country and by our Councils. The key objectives are reduction of carbon emissions, greenhouse gases and pollutants as well as enhancing nature and biodiversity, which is barely addressed at all.

We need to see exactly how this plan helps us achieve the targets of net zero emissions by 2050 for Lincolnshire and 2030 for North Kesteven. That means putting a price tag on the plan. We need to see the impact of each action, the cost and an idea of where the money is coming from – taking a budgeting approach. We need to be able to see an annual reduction in emissions matching the plan and recognising that every increment makes a difference.

This is a significant decade as we already see damaging consequences of our actions. “Loss and damage” included in the Glasgow Climate Pact puts responsibility on us for damage caused, even on the other side of the world. The looming costs and increasing immigration to our shrinking country must be squarely faced and transport holds a significant part of the solution. By 2030 most of the traffic is still expected to be running on diesel and petrol hence we can only meet our obligations on carbon by having a primary policy to *reduce* traffic substantially. The LTP5 needs to recognise this goal at the outset and to calculate how our shared objective of reducing the need for travel and reducing emissions is to be achieved in the current decade. We do not believe that the “growth” policy (defined as the key objective) has any place in this plan until we have solved the difficult challenges, much of it created by transport, of the immediate climate emergency.

References

1. Lincolnshire County Council Transport Plan 5 Consultation
<https://www.letstalk.lincolnshire.gov.uk/12244/widgets/34960/documents/18513>
2. [Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal](https://www.letstalk.lincolnshire.gov.uk/12244/widgets/34960/documents/18550)
<https://www.letstalk.lincolnshire.gov.uk/12244/widgets/34960/documents/18550>
3. The UK hosted the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 31 October – 13 November 2021. <https://ukcop26.org/>
4. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change presented their sixth assessment report in 2021 <https://www.ipcc.ch>
5. Glasgow Pact November 2021 Including paragraph 88 where Local and Regional governments are specifically listed.
https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2021_L16_adv.pdf
6. Lincolnshire County Council's Green Masterplan
<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/greenmasterplan>
7. Lincolnshire County Council's Carbon Management Plan produced by the Carbon Trust in 2018 to cover the period of 2018-2023. If the ten projects were fully implemented, it would make a saving of 61.7% of emissions by the Council at a cost of £5m on a payback of 28 years. (Page 18-20) Further proposals are listed, but not costed nor their impact calculated.
8. Not included is any attempt to consider the emissions from the Council's decisions, nor responsibility for influencing partners to reduce emissions.
[file:///C:/Users/Overtonmarianne/Dropbox/My%20PC%20\(Mariannehome\)/Downloads/Lincolnshire Carbon Management Plan 2018 23.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Overtonmarianne/Dropbox/My%20PC%20(Mariannehome)/Downloads/Lincolnshire%20Carbon%20Management%20Plan%202018%2023.pdf)
Summarised [here](#).
9. Sources of Emissions, globally and by country, have been calculated by the Environmental Protection Agency <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-data>
10. Tyndall Centre calculates each Local Authorities' carbon budget <https://tyndall.ac.uk/>
11. LGA Knowledge Hub on Climate Change <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/climate-change>

Lincolnshire Independents

Lincolnshire Independents are a group of Independent Councillors and supporters who are keen to base decisions on looking objectively at the facts of the matter and support residents.

Lincolnshire Independents have studied the plan, discussed and met to agree our response. The working group was led by rural Councillor C Peter Overton and Cllr Robert Oates of Sleaford, with significant contributions from other members of the group.

They also contributed comments via scrutiny at North Kesteven District Council in November. Cllr Marianne Overton MBE is also the Spokesperson on the Lincolnshire County Council Shadow cabinet.

