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**DARLINGTON – A CYCLING DEMONSTRATION TOWN**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor Nick Wallis,  
Highways and Transport Portfolio**

**Responsible Director(s) - John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To request approval for the acceptance of additional capital funding from Cycling England to help develop Darlington's cycle network.

**Information and Analysis**

2. Cycling England is a new national body set up to plan and co-ordinate the development of cycling across the country. It was launched by the Minister for Local Transport in March 2005 and replaces the previous National Cycling Strategy Board. Cycling England is supported by a Government Group comprising several government Departments, including those covering health, education, planning and sport, as well as transport.
3. In July Cycling England announced that £7.5 Million had been made available for up to five 'Cycling Demonstration Towns', that is around £1.5 Million for each town, to be spent over the period October 2005 to 31 March 2008. Local authorities were invited to submit a bid by the 8th August for this funding.
4. The main thrust of Darlington's bid for this funding was that the additional monies would accelerate the development of a high quality network of routes for cyclists and that this very much complemented the work being carried out through the Town on the Move initiative to promote all sustainable travel modes.
5. The bid highlighted:
  - (a) The potential for increasing levels of cycling identified by the Travel Behaviour Research completed during the autumn of 2004.
  - (b) Recent success in encouraging greater levels of cycling amongst school children, notably at Dodmire Juniors, Heathfield and Alderman Leach Primary Schools and Hummersknott Secondary.
  - (c) The support of Darlington Partnership and key organisations including the Primary Care Trust and Surestart, both encouraging staff to cycle for short journeys.

- (d) Potential schemes (listed in No 6 below), many of which it would be difficult to achieve without the Cycling England funding and which would significantly benefit cyclists and pedestrians.

### ***Potential Schemes***

- 6. Schemes that the additional funding could help deliver include:
  - (a) New grade separated cycle and pedestrian crossings of the East Coast rail line and A66 trunk road.
  - (b) High quality secure cycle parking in the town centre, schools, Bank Top and North Road rail stations and at district shopping centres.
  - (c) More local cycle and pedestrian links to schools, the town centre and to local shopping facilities, including the link between the Skerne Valley cycle route and the town centre..
  - (d) Much better signing of the cycle network.

### ***Match Funding***

- 7. In applying for this funding Darlington's bid document made it clear that only pre-existing provisional (Second Local Transport Plan) or fully approved monies allocated to cycling would be used as match funding. This ensures that expenditure on other travel modes remains unaffected – indeed a number of the proposed schemes will have significant benefits for pedestrians.

### ***Funding Award***

- 8. Darlington was one of eight towns to be short-listed and on the 4 October 2004 hosted a half-day visit from the selection panel. Subsequently the Council has been awarded £1.5m.

### ***Outcome of Consultation***

- 9. Several Stakeholders involved with cycling in Darlington were consulted, including Darlington Partnership, the Darlington Cycle Forum and the Cycle Action Group. All concerned felt that it was a great opportunity to improve cycling (and pedestrian) facilities for people in Darlington.

### ***Legal Implications***

- 10. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

## **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

11. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

## **Council Policy Framework**

12. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework

## **Decision Deadline**

13. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter

## **Recommendation**

14. It is recommended that:
- (a) Members release the sum of £1.5m, awarded by Cycling England for the development of Darlington's cycle network.
  - (b) The delivery of schemes through the Cycling England funding award be integrated with the implementation of Darlington's Second Local Transport Plan and Darlington: A Town on the Move.

## **Reasons**

15. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
- (a) To support the Council's transport objectives, as set out in the Local Transport Plan.
  - (b) To accelerate the development of the cycling network in Darlington.

**John Buxton**  
**Director of Development and Environment**

## **Background Papers**

Offer letter from Cycling England.

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CC