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**LOCAL MOTION TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR RESEARCH**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Richard Alty, Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide details of household travel research undertaken as part of the monitoring programme for Local Motion, Darlington's Sustainable Travel Demonstration town project.
2. To seek agreement to the waiving of the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules to enable the 2008 programme of travel research to be completed using an identical methodology to that used for the baseline travel research in 2004.

**Summary**

3. In April 2004, Darlington was selected together with Peterborough and Worcester by the Department for Transport as one of three sustainable travel demonstration towns. This secured Darlington £3.24m revenue funding over 5 years to implement a comprehensive package of 'Smarter Choices' measures encouraging modal shift from car trips to walking, cycling and public transport.

**Background**

4. As detailed in Darlington's bid to the Department for Transport the initial phase of the project involved detailed baseline research into travel behaviour and attitudes to different travel modes. The bid also included a commitment to carry out interim travel surveys and a repeat of the 'baseline' travel survey in 2008.
5. In accordance with the Council's procurement policies a competitive tendering process was used to select and appoint a contractor to complete the research.
6. Based on the criteria listed in **Table 1**, on 29 July 2004 the Council's Tender Panel approved the appointment of Sustrans/Socialdata.
7. Two Council Officers and a Department for Transport statistician independently evaluated each of the tenders on the basis of 70% quality and 30% cost.
8. In 2004 the view from the Department for Transport was that Socialdata's experience, expertise and methodology was considerably better than that of the other of the eight consultants tendering for the 2004 survey.

9. With more than 30 years experience Socialdata are an internationally recognised authority on mobility behaviour. Its travel survey methodology was originally developed for the German transport ministry during the 1970s and has since been used widely in national and international travel surveys in Europe, Australia and North America. The methodology, the New KONTIV design, is especially suited to research on travel behaviour.
10. The two other sustainable travel demonstration towns, Peterborough and Worcester, also appointed Sustrans/Socialdata to carry out a baseline travel survey.

**Table 1**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating (Maximum)</b>
Previous experience of undertaking travel behaviour research to recognised industry standards	20
Technical references and expertise	20
Ability to deliver within specified time periods	20
Sustainability of sample size and methodology	20
Response rates from household surveys previously undertaken	10
Project management ability	5
Demonstrable ability to present results effectively using various media (reports/presentations/literature)	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

11. Following a random stratified sampling procedure a net sample of 4,269 residents took part in the 2004 travel research.
12. 406 residents also took part in a detailed interview survey, exploring attitudes to travel and the potential to change travel behaviour. Key outcomes from this research were:
  - (a) Baseline data used to evaluate the effects on travel behaviour, attitudes and perceptions of the project, including changes in behaviour arising from specific interventions, notably individualised travel marketing.
  - (b) A comprehensive database on existing personal travel behaviour.
  - (c) Information on the potential for change, attitudes and perceptions to travel modes.
13. The baseline survey cost £116,000; this included a 5% discount, as with all three sustainable travel towns opting to employ Sustrans/Socialdata they were able to streamline some of their data analysis costs.
14. Since 2004 Sustrans/Socialdata have completed three smaller travel surveys involving 1,500 Darlington residents each time.

15. It is proposed that the 2008 travel research is timed so as to take place during the same weeks of the year as the 2004 survey.
16. A repeat of the 2008 travel survey using Sustrans/Socialdata as the contractor will cost up to a maximum of £128,000, though as in 2004 if Peterborough and Worcester also contract Sustrans/Socialdata for the survey there will be a discount. 100% of the cost of this is met by the Department for Transport sustainable travel town funding.
17. On the basis that the proposed 2008 travel research is an important element of Darlington's sustainable travel town project, and that it is essential to ensure that the same methodology is used for this survey as was used for the 2004 survey, it is deemed appropriate to negotiate a contract with Sustrans/Socialdata to undertake this work.
18. Key reasons for making this recommendation are:
  - (a) Socialdata's reputation as a leading, credible, authority on mobility research, employing a well-trying self-administered mail back format coupled with motivation by post and telephone trademarked the New KONTIV design. With an exceptionally high average response rate for a random survey. (The 2004 survey averaged a 59% response).
  - (b) The need to reduce to a minimum any variations between the method employed for the 2004 and 2008 travel surveys. For example changes in survey methodology such as the wording of questions, the type of approach made to householders and the statistical techniques used to ensure that the survey sample is representative of the whole community could all impact on the survey findings. Use of an alternative methodology would prejudice the comparability of the results with those from the 2004 survey, not only in Darlington, but also to the Department for Transport (Peterborough & Worcester also use the New KONTIV survey design).
  - (c) There is no possibility of appointing any other contractor who is able to use the New KONTIV design since it is solely supplied by Socialdata.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

19. The Officer responsible for overseeing the Department for Transport's management of the sustainable travel demonstration towns has indicated that the Department for Transport would like to see the exact same methodology used for the 2008 survey as for the baseline survey in 2004.
20. The Department for Transport have also requested that an independent audit is carried out on the survey. Professor Bonsall at Leeds University Institute of Transport Studies has been identified as an auditor.

### **Legal Implications**

21. 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**

22. 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**

23. The issues contained within this report are required to be considered by Council.

### **Conclusion**

24. As a sustainable travel demonstration town Darlington has benefited from additional revenue funding to implement a programme of 'Smarter Choices' transport measures encouraging Darlington residents to walk, cycle, car share or use public transport more often.
25. Darlington's bid to the Department for Transport for Sustainable Travel Town Status set out how we planned to monitor the travel behaviour of Darlington's residents. This included two large household surveys, one in 2004 and a second survey towards the end of the five-year project in the autumn of 2008.

### **Recommendation**

26. It is recommended that:
  - (a) Members delegate power to the Assistant Chief Executive to negotiate a contract with Sustrans/Socialdata to carry out the 2008 programme of travel research as detailed in this report.
  - (b) The Council's Contract Procedure Rules be waived accordingly.

### **Reasons**

27. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons:
  - (a) The need to reduce to a minimum any variations between the method employed for the 2004 and 2008 travel surveys.
  - (b) The importance of the 2008 survey, not just to Darlington, but also to the Department for Transport and transport planning and other policy makers throughout the UK.

**Richard Alty,  
Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)**

## **Background Papers**

- (i) Travel behaviour research 2004 tender documents.
- (ii) Report to Tender Panel 29th July 2004.
- (iii) Darlington – Creating a Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town, 2004 bid document to the Department for Transport.

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