
**DURHAM AND DARLINGTON TRANSPORT FOR HEALTH PARTNERSHIP:
JOINT WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

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

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

Purpose of Report

1. This report updates Members regarding the developing Durham and Darlington Transport for Health Partnership, sets out the priorities for action, and seeks a commitment from the Council to embrace and support the work of the group.

Information and Analysis

Background

2. In November 2001, the Audit Commission published '*Going Places*', a first review of the role and expenditure of the health, education and social services sectors on transport. The prime conclusions of the Audit Commission were that:
 - (a) More integrated transport arrangements across health, education and social services were essential to achieve 'best value' outcomes.
 - (b) Integration will provide safe, effective, user-focused transport that gives fair access to vital public services.
3. By 2003, the Government's Social Exclusion Unit had sharpened up this thinking by providing evidence of the negative and positive impacts of transport systems on social exclusion. These were drawn together in the Unit's report, '*Making the Connections*'. The report highlighted the significant number of people who miss, turn down or choose not to seek healthcare because of transport problems.
4. The Audit Commission has shown that a proportion of people using Patient Transport Service (PTS) do not need specialist transport, they could get to hospital by other means. At the same time, PTS is not available to people accessing primary care, which is at odds with the moves towards a primary care-led NHS.
5. In County Durham and Darlington, transport initiatives have been targeted at tackling social exclusion. However, access to healthcare is also a major issue. In the review of acute services ('*Access, Choice and Sustainability*'), transport and access emerged as one of the major concerns of local people. As a consequence, over the last 2 years the two local authorities (Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council) have been developing closer links with the health sector. A joint stakeholder workshop was held in

August 2002, which led to a successful Rural Bus Challenge bid ('A Healthy Response') to the Department for Transport. A number of projects have since been established to tackle some of the transport issues, including the development of the County Durham Travel Response Centre.

6. A further workshop was held in September 2003, and the need for a longer-term, strategic approach to transport for health was identified. In response to this, a joint NHS/local authority group has been meeting monthly to gain understanding between the sectors and to develop Terms of Reference and an Action Plan, in order to take forward an integrated approach to transport and accessibility. The timing of this is excellent, linking to the modernisation of the NHS through the Darzi (the vehicle for modernising the NHS in County Durham and Darlington) recommendations and NHS Plan, and the work associated with the formulation of the new Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011 by July 2005.

Current Position

7. The aim of the group, therefore, is to achieve full integration of policies and service provision in respect of transport. The group will become formally known as the '*Durham and Darlington Transport for Health Partnership*'. A draft Action Plan is currently being formulated, with a number of key objectives as its focus:
 - (a) to develop a dynamic and effective partnership;
 - (b) to develop integrated health and transport strategies;
 - (c) to develop integrated transport services;
 - (d) to achieve ease of access to healthcare;
 - (e) to promote healthy lifestyles, improved safety and sustainable travel;
 - (f) to understand needs more fully, in order to inform wider plans and projects;
 - (g) to raise the profile of health and transport links and the Partnership;
 - (h) to be at the forefront of specific transport project development.
8. Within the work plan will be a number of fundamental themes which the Partnership will pursue with priority:
 - (a) *Local Transport Plan* – To work with Darlington Borough Council officers on the formulation of the Plan, particularly in respect of sections on access to healthcare. This will set the scene, provide the evidence of need and the agenda for investment in transport that both enables people to access healthcare and to remain healthy and independent in their homes.
 - (b) *Modernisation of NHS Transport* – This will be an entire review of eligibility criteria, patient bookings systems (and potential links to County Durham's Travel Response Centre), Hospital Travel Costs Scheme and the procedures in place for commissioning specialist transport services.

- (c) *Travel Planning for NHS organisations* – This will involve working to develop and implement robust Travel Plans, as well as giving closer attention to the travel and transport implications of any relocation of NHS services.
- (d) *Investment Strategy* – Once a programme of action has been researched, costs will need to be identified and business cases developed, which will include a funding strategy.

Options

- 9. There is clearly a significant move towards encouraging closer links between health and transport. Local Transport Plan guidance to be published in Summer 2004 will require it. Meanwhile, a recently-published report by the NHS Development Agency, *‘Improving patient access to health services: a national review and case studies of current approaches’*, promotes joint working.
- 10. The Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee is currently reviewing the way in which patients in the Borough are transported to both health and social care settings and will develop links with the Partnership to ensure that the best solutions are developed for the residents of Darlington.
- 11. It will be vital for closer links to be promoted in County Durham and Darlington, both at strategic and operational levels.
- 12. At an operational level there has been progress made between Darlington Borough Council and the Health Trusts.
- 13. The planned relocation of the County Durham & Darlington Priority Services NHS Trust from the Pierremont Unit to West Park has provided an opportunity to review transport and a travel plan has been developed for staff, patients and visitors.
- 14. The Primary Care Trust is working with Darlington Borough Council to develop health walks, walk-in health facilities and a travel plan.
- 15. County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust is working with Darlington Borough Council on the development and implementation of a transport strategy for the Trust including a travel plan for the Memorial Hospital site and a review of the car parking provision. A Travel and Transport Steering Group has been established and the Terms of Reference have been approved by the Trust’s Executive Directors.
- 16. All three NHS Trusts supported Darlington’s sustainable travel demonstration town bid and will be actively involved in its implementation.
- 17. There is a need to further strengthen the strategic links and management and as a first step it would be appropriate to develop a Strategic Transport for Health Management Group for the Partnership. This should consist of Director of Development and Environment, Director of Social Services, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and Cabinet Member for Social Services from Darlington Borough Council, with Chief Executives and Non Executive Director Representatives drawn from the six primary care trusts. Similar working arrangements have been agreed with Durham County Council through a similar cabinet report. This Group would oversee the work programme of the Transport for Health

partnership and would probably meet on a six monthly basis.

18. The Partnership will be launched at a 'Transport for Health' Stakeholder Event in Durham on Monday 18 October.

Outcome of Consultation

19. All members of the Durham and Darlington Transport for Health Partnership have been consulted and approve the development of a Strategic Management Group.

Legal Implications

20. 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

21. 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

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

Decision Deadline

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

Recommendation

24. It is recommended that the Strategic Transport for Health Management Group is established, with senior representatives from Darlington Borough Council. This should consist of Director of Development and Environment, Director of Social Services, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and Cabinet Member for Social Services from Darlington Borough Council.

Reasons

25. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) Access to health facilities will form an integral part of the next Local Transport Plan and this group will help to shape the Plan.

- (b) To ensure that Darlington residents can access the most appropriate health care facilities both within the Borough and in the wider County Durham and Darlington NHS Trust area.

John Buxton
Director of Development and Environment

Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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