
DARLINGTON'S SECOND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

**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. To approve the final version of Darlington's Second Local Transport Plan, covering transport investment from 2006 until 2011.

Information and Analysis

2. Members' approved the Provisional Second Local Transport Plan at a meeting of Council on 21 July 2005. In the Plan, the potential for realising Darlington's capability for excellent accessibility by all means of travel was recognised, with the aim of improving quality of life, tackling traffic congestion and supporting Darlington's economy.
3. The Department for Transport (DfT) assessed the provisional plan as "promising", saying that it reflected the wider context, whilst having an evidenced based analysis of the problems, opportunities and key choices concerning transport in Darlington. In their analysis, the Department suggested improvements and these have been incorporated into the final document presented here. Informal advice indicates that the DfT have every expectation that the final document will be of a quality to attract reward funding
4. The changes in the **attached Plan** from the Provisional Plan mainly reflect DfT comments. The main changes are:
 - (a) splitting a long chapter describing Darlington's transport issues into two, so that the nature of transport patterns and what the Plan aims to do as a result is more clearly conveyed (chapter 2 and 3);
 - (b) a clearer explanation of how the Plan relates to other corporate strategies, and vice versa, particularly explaining how the Council will take transport implications into account in non-transport strategies (chapters 2, 3, 4 and 6);
 - (c) further analyses of accessibility (chapters 2, 3 and 6);
 - (d) revisions to targets in the light of further information and analysis (chapter 7);
 - (e) further explanation of how the Plan relates to Government policy (chapters 4 and 8);

(f) a revised joint Tees Valley chapter (chapter 1).

5. The DfT also announced the new financial planning guidelines for the plan period, excluding maintenance monies (which are dealt with separately). These are as follows:

£M	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Total
Darlington	1.644	1.456	1.457	1.454	1.447	7.458

6. These guidelines are lower than the original ones used in the preparation of the provisional plan and, as a consequence, the proposed investment programme has had to be altered. The DfT are proposing to give reward funding to those plans they feel are of merit – up to 12.5% if the 2006/07 settlement system is reused next year. This means that it is valuable to gain as much reward funding as possible, through addressing Government objectives, to get back to near the levels of investment identified in the Provisional Plan.
7. The Council is in the unique position nationally of being host to both a sustainable town and a Cycling England initiative. On current plans, these programmes will add £3,304,300 of funding over the plan period and will do much to help the Council achieve its corporate objectives to improve local peoples' quality of life.
8. The document attached to this report comprises the main texts only for ease of use. Figures, plans and annexes will be virtually identical to those in the Provisional Plan, with alterations as required to support the new main texts written in response to the DfT's comments. The final Plan must be submitted to DfT on 31 March 2006.

Outcome of Consultation

9. As outlined in the report to Council and in the Provisional Plan, there has been extensive consultation on the principles, ethos and detail of the Second Local Transport Plan. Further work has been undertaken since, especially with the Darlington Transport Forum and the Highways Agency. A report of DfT's comments on the Provisional Plan was considered by the Transport Forum at their meeting on 6 February 2006, and suggestions for further reference to motorcycling have been included in the Plan.

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 proposed approval of the Second Local Transport Plan contained within this report represents change to Council policy and need to be considered by Council.

Decision Deadline

13. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter. However, a decision of Council is required by 31 March 2006 to meet the Government's deadline.

Key Decisions

14. The Second Local Transport Plan is a key decision since it affects all people in the Borough.

Recommendation

- (a) It is recommended that Council approve the Second Local Transport Plan.

Reason

- (b) The recommendation is supported by the need to submit the Second Local Transport Plan by 31 March 2006, giving guidance to the Council's intentions for transport spending and actions between 2006/07 to 2010/11.

John Buxton
Director of Development and Environment

Background Papers

- (i) Department for Transport, Full Guidance on Local Transport Plans, December 2004
- (ii) Department for Transport, Settlement Letter, 14 December 2005.

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