
SECOND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN – REVISED EXPENDITURE 2006/07

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Nick Wallis, Highways and Transport Portfolio

Responsible Director – John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment

Purpose of Report

1. To approve variations to the proposed expenditure of the 2006/07 budget for the Second Local Transport Plan.

Information and Analysis

2. Members approved the Second Local Transport Plan (2LTP) budget for 2006/7 on 4 April 2006. This budget was based on the allocation received from Government (£2.769 million) and on the delivery priorities identified at that time.
3. However, since April, it has become apparent that it is possible to bring forward a scheme which will help to meet the objectives of the Plan. A scheme at Greenbank Road traffic lights (Woodland Road) will help to tackle traffic congestion and is beneficial to all road users. It is felt that it is desirable for this work to be undertaken this financial year, rather than as scheduled from 2008, due to the impact on the operation of the ring road and on local bus services. Preliminary design work has been undertaken in the past and thus it is possible to achieve the delivery of this scheme before April 2007.
4. Greenbank Road traffic lights currently operate in four stages (Woodland Road, Greenbank Road, Portland Place and pedestrian). The staggered nature of the side roads of this junction means that it is impractical for both minor roads to run together. Furthermore the present pedestrian crossings are wide and the resultant pedestrian crossing time is longer than it would be if the crossing distances were reduced. The proposed design solution therefore involves altering the kerb lines such that the road widths are narrowed, thus leading to shorter average crossing times for pedestrians and greater operating efficiency of the junction. To further enhance the smooth running of the junction the phasing of the signals is being reviewed as part of the detailed design with the aim of achieving faster transit times.
5. Such a rearrangement of the geometry of the junction will also allow for the provision of facilities for cyclists, thus directly connecting the north west of the town to the south, along Larchfield Street.

6. In order to expedite movement for bus services, it is also proposed that the westbound nearside lane of St. Augustine's Way is reserved for buses and general traffic turning left into Bondgate. This formalises the way in which motorists use St. Augustine's Way at the moment. In this proposal, buses would be permitted to turn right from the nearside lane via the means of a bus lane on the roundabout to the Four Riggs bus stop.
7. In proposing this variation to budget, it is acknowledged that other schemes will not be able to be delivered in this financial year. These schemes are the provision of further bus lanes along sections of North Road and the signalisation of the Wensleydale Road/North Road junction. There is also a consequence of a slight reduction in the overall 2LTP contribution to walking and cycling schemes; but this loss can be made up by drawing down unclaimed match funding from Cycling England, thus having no effect on scheme delivery.
8. Progress on the provision of bus lanes along selected sections of North Road has been slower than anticipated, due to detailed highway design issues. It was always envisaged that bus lanes would be implemented in stages and it is felt that detailed consideration of these further stages should be re-scheduled to ensure that the most effective design is achieved. In the meantime, it is felt that the priority should be given to the Greenbank Road junction/St. Augustine's Way scheme described above.
9. Further investigatory work has shown that it is possible to achieve the operation of the SCOOT system (which links traffic lights to improve traffic flow) along North Road with the current junction layout at Wensleydale Road. However, changes to the junction geometry are seen as desirable and it is thus proposed to consider funding these in the future. In the meantime, it is proposed to bring forward the Corridor of Certainty scheme to convert the existing crossing at Askrigg Street to a Toucan - thus providing part of a future link between Rise Carr/west Darlington and the River Skerne Cycle Route.

Outcome of Consultation

10. Local bus operators have been consulted on the principle of a restricted traffic lane along St. Augustine's Way, following on from their request for assistance, and strongly feel it will benefit bus operation and bus passengers. Cycling England and the Darlington Cycle Forum has also discussed the cycle schemes listed in this report, and are supportive.

Legal Implications

11. 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

12. 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

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

Decision Deadline

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

Key Decisions

15. This is a key decision because it affects more than one Ward.

Recommendation

16. It is recommended that Members agree the variation in spend outlined in **Appendix 1** of this report.

Reasons

17. The recommendation is supported on the basis of bringing forward a scheme for tackling traffic congestion, and maximising the Council's match funding opportunities.

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

Background Papers

- (i) Darlington's Second Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011
- (ii) Cabinet report, 4 April 2006 Darlington's Second Local Transport Plan Budget 2006/07

Simon Houldsworth: Extension 2701
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Variation to Second Local Transport Plan Budget 2006/07

Action and Intervention	Proposed Budget £000s	notes
Add		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenbank Road traffic light improvement and St. Augustine's Way traffic management works. 	112	Greenbank Road traffic lights originally scheduled for 2007/08 to 2008/09
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Askrigg Street Toucan 	20	Part of Safer Route to School.
Delete		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Road Bus Priority 	75	Outstanding highway design issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wensleydale Road/North Road junction improvement 	50	Minor junction improvements still potentially desirable. Improvements being made to adjacent Askrigg Street Pelican
Amend		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking & cycling schemes 	-7	Ability to replace funding through Cycling England programme.
Outturn variation	0	