
DARLINGTON: A TOWN ON THE MOVE

**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 inform Members of the proposed initial revenue expenditure during 2004/09 associated with this initiative, which is funded by the Department for Transport through its Sustainable Travel Town initiative.

Information and Analysis

2. Members will be aware of the Council's successful bid to be a Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town earlier this year. After a detailed selection process, the Council is one of three towns and cities that were selected to be demonstration towns, (along with Peterborough and Worcester). The Council has been allocated £3.24 million by the Department for Transport in revenue funding to support the initiatives outlined in its bid proposal. The funding is currently scheduled for allocation as follows:-
 - (a) 2004/05 - £400,000
 - (b) 2005/06 - £810,000
 - (c) 2006/07 - £782,000
 - (d) 2007/08 - £794,000
 - (e) 2008/09 - £454,000.
3. The Council's bid was considered and approved by Cabinet on 6 January 2004.
4. The Council's bid sets out our plans to research, refine and implement a range of measures that will help all who travel around the town to make a difference in Darlington. Making this difference to travel conditions is a key component of ensuring the success of the Economic Regeneration Strategy for the Borough. The £3.24 million revenue funding will complement existing spending by the Council through the Local Transport Plan and spending by other organisations such as local bus companies.
5. The immediate next steps in the delivery of the 'A Town On The Move' initiative, are as follows:-
 - (a) to appoint a contractor to undertake the baseline research into travel behaviour and patterns;

- (b) to appoint project staff;
- (c) to appoint a contractor to undertake the ongoing research into travel behaviour and patterns; and
- (d) to organise a transport summit, scheduled for winter 2004/05.

Baseline Research

- 6. A contractor needs to be appointed urgently to meet the timescales of the Department for Transport to undertake:-
 - (a) a comprehensive survey of personal travel behaviour, potential for change, attitudes and perceptions to support awareness-raising activities, project decision-making and other local planning measures;
 - (b) to evaluate the effects on travel behaviour, attitudes and perceptions before any changes in behaviour arising from specific interventions occur.
- 7. The success of three local authorities in achieving Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town status creates a unique opportunity to co-ordinate this research across all the urban areas involved. Such joint working is being promoted by the funding body (the Department for Transport) and should ensure consistency in the survey methodology (and thus a high level of comparability in the data emerging from each town/city) and better value for money overall. These will contribute to the aiding the Council share best practice with other organisations throughout the life of the 'A Town On The Move' initiative. It is the recommendation of your officers that a contractor is sought who is capable of working for all the three local authorities on an individual basis.

Project Staff

- 8. The Council is in the process of securing the necessary professional staff to help it deliver a project of this prestige and status. It is expected that all postholders will be in place by Autumn 2004.

Continuing Research

- 9. A key part of the Council's bid was that all actions undertaken would be evidence based, and that the effects of these actions would be carefully monitored and reviewed. To support this need and to provide consistency between all the demonstration towns, it is proposed that all three Councils jointly procure a contractor who can undertake research into travel behaviour (changing opinions, travel habits etc.) and provide a specialist service for individualised travel plans over the remainder of the project term (approximately 4 years). It is envisaged that one of the three local authorities would act as the lead for the others in contractual terms, but that each local authority would have a contractor's project manager based in their offices to ensure an immediate response and close partnership working in the delivery of the contract. The contract would be issued under European tendering procedures due to its size.

Transport Summit

10. The Council's bid proposed a summit where the evidence collected in the baseline research, would be used to set the detail for the delivery of the initiative. As well as involving partners, community groups and others, it was considered useful to invite a few leading industry specialists to advise on the merits of any particular course of action and to suggest actions based on their previous experiences. Given the timescales for the baseline research and analysis, it is likely that this event would occur in early 2005. The 'A Town On The Move' initiative would be formally launched to the public at this time.

Costs

11. The bid budget for the work outlined above is as follows:-
 - (a) baseline research (year 1) - £120,000
 - (b) project staff (years 1 to 5) - £325,000
 - (c) continuing research (years 2 to 5) - £210,000
 - (d) Communications Strategy (years 1 to 5) - £485,000.
12. This equates to a spend of £334,500 in 2004/05, and £214,500 in following years (ie well within the allocated total budget). This will all be totally funded by the Department for Transport grant.

Outcome of Consultation

13. Darlington's 'A Town On The Move' proposal is supported by a wide range of organisations, community groups and individuals

Legal Implications

14. 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

15. 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

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

Decision Deadline

17. The issues contained within this report are for information only, but are in accordance with Council policy.

Recommendation

18. It is recommended that Members note the proposed expenditure set out in this report to deliver the Council's proposals for the 'A Town On The Move' initiative.

Reasons

19. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons :-
- (a) To enable the background research and initial project outputs to occur within the timescale set by the Department for Transport.
 - (b) To permit partnership working with the Council's fellow Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns.
 - (c) To enable the Council to maximise the amount of external funding available to help residents of the Borough.

John Buxton
Director of Development and Environment

Background Papers

'A Town on the Move', Darlington Borough Council bid document
Offer letter from Department for Transport
'A Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town' report of Director of D & E to
Cabinet 6 January 2004

Simon Houldsworth : Extension 2701
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