
PROVISION OF TRAFFIC SIGNAL SERVICES

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio

Responsible Director - Richard Alty, Director of Place

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek permission from Council to waive contract procedure rules and enter into a service contract “partnership” with Middlesbrough Borough Council for the provision of Traffic Signal services.

Summary

2. Darlington has numerous traffic signal controlled junctions and pedestrian crossings. The maintenance and improvement of this equipment has been provided under contract by Newcastle City Council in the past.
3. A partnership agreement has recently been developed between Middlesbrough and Newcastle that provides a regional traffic signals service. The recently formed regional service arrangements have resulted in cause for review of this arrangement and consideration of whether or not it is more efficient and effective to enter into a partnership with Middlesbrough. Agreements are already in place for Middlesbrough to provide these services for Stockton, Hartlepool and Redcar and Cleveland. The benefits are primarily:-
 - (a) Middlesbrough already provides services for the other Tees Valley authorities resulting in further economies of scale and resilience if Darlington joins the service.
 - (b) The Tees Valley Bus Network Initiative (TVBNI) will deliver significant investment in Urban Traffic Control (UTC) and Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) systems. Darlington will realise benefits if aligned with development being undertaken by MBC as part of the TVBNI project.
 - (c) The arrangements with Middlesbrough will help the development of traffic management strategies to assist the Traffic Managers in each authority to discharge their duties under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and maximise the investment from the TVBNI project.

- (d) The geographical proximity to the Middlesbrough business unit will make it more effective and efficient in terms of response to faults.
 - (e) The governance requirements of the shared service aligns with existing Tees Valley Management arrangements and will provide assurance that the agreement provides 'control' that allows Darlington and all authorities concerned sufficient influence.
4. If Council approve the shared service arrangement the powers will be delegated to Middlesbrough Borough Council under the Local Government Act to carry out functions for the maintenance and management of Traffic Signal Services and the Director of Resources authorised to enter into a service contract with Middlesbrough Borough Council and serve notice on Newcastle City Council.
5. Once operational the day to day operational management of the service will be the responsibility of Middlesbrough Borough Council subject to overarching governance arrangements enabling Darlington Borough Council to control and influence the service and ensure required service levels are met and maintained.

Recommendations

6. It is recommended that :-
- (a) Council waives contract procedure and approves development of the service contract "partnership" arrangement with Middlesbrough Borough Council for the provision of Traffic Signal Services.
 - (b) Powers are delegated to Middlesbrough Borough Council under the Local Government Act to carry out functions for the maintenance and management of Traffic Signal Services.
 - (c) Council authorises the Director of Resources to terminate the contract with Newcastle City Council and to enter into a service contract with Middlesbrough Borough Council.

Reason

7. To ensure the efficient and continued operation of statutory duties to manage and maintain traffic signals and enable the necessary contractual arrangements to be put in place.

Richard Alty
Director of Place

Background Papers

- (i) Report Cabinet 3 November 2009 – Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement.

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cc

S17 Crime and Disorder	None
Health and Well Being	None
Carbon Impact	It is not envisaged there will be any negative impact on carbon. The service will seek to reduce Carbon by using modern technology when replacing equipment.
Diversity	The proposed arrangements will have a neutral or positive impact on diversity. The service will seek to improve features for mobility and visually impaired users when replacing equipment.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's Budget or Policy Framework.
Key Decision	This is not an Executive decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an Executive decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The report does not adversely impact on the strategy.
Efficiency	The proposed arrangements will help to ensure the efficient and continued operation of statutory duties to maintain traffic signals.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. Darlington has 17 traffic signal controlled junctions and 47 pedestrian crossings. The maintenance and improvement of this equipment has been provided under contract by Newcastle City Council in the past.
9. A partnership agreement has recently been developed between Middlesbrough and Newcastle that provides a regional traffic signals service. A business unit and control room is provided within each Council. This provides the following benefits:
 - (a) Business continuity resilience by having the ability to use the two control centres to switch between systems should issues be encountered in either base.
 - (b) Sharing of skills to deliver the business needs for each partner authority. For example, Newcastle has a skill base in traffic signal modelling that Middlesbrough call upon for their clients.
 - (c) For geographic reasons the region can be served better from two bases providing a quicker and more efficient response.
10. Darlington traffic signal maintenance has historically been provided by Newcastle City Council. However, the recently formed regional service arrangements have resulted in a review of this arrangement.
11. Agreements are already in place for Middlesbrough to provide these services for Stockton, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland. There are advantages for Darlington in joining with the other Tees Valley Authorities and entering into an agreement with Middlesbrough for the provision of the services for the Tees Valley. The benefits are primarily:-
 - (a) Middlesbrough already provides services for the other Tees Valley authorities resulting in further economies of scale and resilience if Darlington joins the service.
 - (b) The Tees Valley Bus Network Initiative (TVBNI) will deliver significant investment in Urban Traffic Control (UTC) and Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC). Darlington will realise benefits if aligned with development being undertaken by MBC as part of the TVBNI project.
 - (i) Urban Traffic Control (UTC) is a term used to describe the technique of co-ordinating traffic signals, normally through a centrally located computer. Areas, where signals are relatively close together and traffic flows are high, lend themselves to co-ordination as benefits are achieved by progressing platoons of traffic in an organised fashion. Systems used to co-ordinate the traffic signals by the Council are called SCOOT and MOVA.
 - (ii) Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) is systems that are designed to allow the different applications used within modern traffic management systems to communicate and share information with each other. This allows previously disparate data from multiple sources such as bus stop real time information,

buses, cameras, car parks, traffic signals, air quality monitoring stations and meteorological data, to be amalgamated into a central console or database. The idea behind UTMC is to maximise road network potential to create a more robust and intelligent system that can be used to meet current and future management requirements.

- (c) The arrangements with Middlesbrough will help the development of traffic management strategies to assist the Traffic Managers in each authority to discharge their duties under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and maximise the investment from the TVBNI project.
- (d) The geographical proximity to the Middlesbrough business unit will make it more effective and efficient in terms of response to faults.
- (e) The governance requirements of the shared service aligns with existing Tees Valley Management arrangements and will provide assurance that the agreement provides 'control' that allows Darlington and all authorities concerned sufficient influence.

Finance & Legal

- 12. The proposed shared services agreement is advised to be compliant with relevant requirements set out in case law. The principle is that where a number of authorities are joining together to provide a joint service then such arrangement is exempt from the procurement requirements of EU procurement law. The proposal being put forward meets the tests required to satisfy this exemption; in particular there is no profit element in the costs, it is a statutory function to maintain traffic signals and Darlington Borough Council will exercise a sufficient level of control over the shared service by means of an agreed governance structure.
- 13. The provisional costs put forward by Middlesbrough Borough Council are based on the existing formulas used to calculate costs for the other Tees Valley authorities. The costs for the provision of the maintenance service are provisionally in the region of £61k, which is around 11% of the cost of the total service. This is within existing budget provisions. Any design and implementation elements of new facilities would be over and above this cost and will be priced as individual new pieces of work and funded through specific project budgets.
- 14. The service agreement is in development and the following provisions are expected to be provided by Middlesbrough Borough Council:-
 - (a) Design and implementation of new traffic signals and pedestrian crossings.
 - (b) Maintenance of existing equipment.
 - (c) Provision of 24 hour, 365 days a year call out to ensure damaged installations are attended.
 - (d) The development and management of the 'Urban Traffic Management and Control System' ('the UTMC System').

- (e) Procurement and implementation of new on street and control centre equipment linked to the UTMC system.
 - (f) Maintenance and operation of UTMC and UTC systems.
 - (g) Development of traffic management strategies to assist the traffic managers in each authority to discharge their duties under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and consequent enactment.
15. If Council approve the shared service arrangement the powers will be delegated to Middlesbrough Borough Council under Section 19 of the Local Government Act to carry out functions for the maintenance and management of Traffic Signal Services and the Director of Resources authorised to enter into a service contract with Middlesbrough Borough Council and serve notice on Newcastle City Council.
16. Once operational the day to day operational management of the service will be the responsibility of Middlesbrough Borough Council, subject to overarching governance arrangements enabling Darlington Borough Council to control and influence the service to ensure required service levels are met and maintained.
17. The development and performance of the service will be undertaken by a group of officers representing each authority forming a Board tasked with considering the development and performance of the service. The Board will be formed of the Senior Officers from each authority responsible for the service. The Board will consider the development and performance of the service through the following mechanisms:-
- (a) An annual report will be prepared by Middlesbrough Council that outlines performance in the previous year and sets out the actions and budget proposals for the following year.
 - (b) Performance will be monitored quarterly.
 - (c) Any proposed reductions or enhancements to the service shall be presented to the Board with the necessary supporting business case for consideration and approval prior to implementation.
18. The term of the agreement will be until March 2013 and thereafter will continue from year to year unless terminated. Termination can be immediate on default or subject to 12 months notice where the terminating party wishes to leave the arrangement.

Outcome of Consultation

19. The development of these proposals has been undertaken in consultation with Middlesbrough and Newcastle Councils.