
**SUBMISSION OF A BID TO THE EU FOR FUNDING FOR THE ‘CONNECT’
PROJECT**

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio

Responsible Director – Richard Alty, Director of Place

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise Cabinet Members of an opportunity to participate in a trans-national project, CONNECT, and to seek approval to be a partner in a bid for Interreg funding.

Summary

2. Darlington has been a partner in the successful “Boosting Advanced Public Transport Systems” – BAPTS project which has been funded from the European Union’s North West Europe Interreg IVB programme. This project ends in December 2011.
3. Darlington has had initial discussion with its European project partners on another proposal which will be submitted by Bielefeld, as Lead Partner, in October 2011. This proposal has the potential to deliver against the outcomes in the Third Local Transport Plan and would interlink with the proposals in the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) bid which has already been submitted to the Department for Transport (report also on the agenda for this meeting). This proposal will enable Darlington to secure additional funding to develop solutions that may have wider benefits for other parts of the Council and its partners, in particular in the use of technology to achieve greater involvement in consultation and planning; and improving travel options for target groups such as disabled people.
4. The three proposed main strands of the proposal are:
 - (a) Connecting people through the use of new media in order to increase participation in urban development and transport planning;
 - (b) Connecting places for those walking and cycling; and
 - (c) Connecting travellers through inclusive mobility solutions.
5. In addition the partners would be ‘connected’, sharing best practice and developing joint strategies.

6. Darlington has identified a number of potential ideas that could be developed as part of this proposal:
 - (a) Connecting people – utilising new media in order to assist planning for real exercises for the development of the Town Centre Fringe to enable more people to take part in the development of the urban area; using new media (and European best practice) to engage people in the development of North Road Station; and developing ‘Talking Together’ citizen engagement to widen community involvement in spatial and transport planning.
 - (b) Connecting places – working with local people to undertake community audits to better understand how small scale local improvements can encourage higher levels of walking and cycling; exploring the feasibility of operating mobility scooter hire/loan schemes in community hubs in order to access local facilities.
 - (c) Connecting travellers – feasibility study and pilot project to deliver a community based, user-led accessible taxi service; extending the individualised travel marketing and travel awareness programme to specific target groups such as those living in rural areas and disabled people.
7. Darlington’s element of the bid will be written within the existing agreed MTFP. The bid will be submitted after the outcome of the LSTF bid has been announced and therefore match funding will be confirmed. Costs of delivering the bid in terms of staff resources will be recovered through the grant funding.
8. Subject to Cabinet approval the next stage is to develop the work packages into feasible, deliverable, sustainable, affordable solutions and identify how they can deliver against wider outcomes across the Local Strategic Partnership including health, inclusion, community cohesion, safety and economic development.

Recommendation

9. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Members agree that Darlington can continue to work with other EU partners to develop the project and Interreg funding bid further, as set out in this report.
 - (b) Members delegate the authority to agree the detail of the proposal to the Assistant Director for Policy and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member with the Portfolio for Transport.

Reasons

10. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) To build upon the existing success of the BAPTS project and the strong partnership working across other EU cities in terms of driving forward innovative projects to support and promote sustainable transport solutions; and to seek additional funding to maximise the benefits of transport investment across the Borough. The bid will use existing committed funding from the MTFP and additional funding from third parties.
 - (b) To ensure that the timescales for the bidding process can be met.

Richard Alty
Director of Place

Background Papers

Project Proposal – CONNECT

18 March 2008 Cabinet – Proposed European Funding Bid under the North West Europe Interreg Programme

7 October Cabinet Interreg project – release of funding

Sue Dobson: Extension 2277

S17 Crime and Disorder	Crime and disorder implications have been taken into account in the preparation of the Third Local Transport Plan, which this proposal forms part.
Health and Well Being	The proposal includes a focus on promoting healthy travel choices and seeks to improve the environment. It specifically identifies investments to improve accessibility for disabled people.
Carbon Impact	The bid seeks to encourage more sustainable travel, both by travel behaviour and urban design, so will contribute to reducing carbon emissions from transport.
Diversity	The bid seeks to enable everyone to be able to travel to access employment, healthcare and other services, and particularly notes the needs of older people and people with disabilities.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	The bid does not change the Council's Policy Framework and seeks to deliver the outcomes set out in the Third Local Transport plan; and is in line with the MTFP.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	One Darlington: Perfectly Placed has set the wider context for the development of the proposal.
Efficiency	The proposal seeks to work in partnership with European partners and reduce costs where possible through joint research/development and sharing best practice.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Context

11. In May 2008 a funding bid with the title “Boosting Advanced Public Transport Systems” – BAPTS was submitted to the EU Interreg IVB programme. The bid was successful and Darlington and its 9 partners were awarded ERDF funding across four work packages. This project comes to an end in December 2011. Further information can be found in **Appendix 2**.
12. A number of the BAPTS partners are now working on the development of a new project. The lead partner would remain as Bielefeld (Germany) and the partners are Lille (France), Gent and Liege in Belgium, National Transport Authority in Ireland and Southend in the UK. In addition there would be other local partners such as public transport operators.

Interreg Funding

13. Interreg IVB NWE is a financial instrument of the European Union's Cohesion Policy. It funds projects which support transnational cooperation. The aim is to find innovative ways to make the most of territorial assets and tackle shared problems of Member States, regions and other authorities.
14. From 2007 to 2013 - the programme will invest from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) into the economic, environmental, social and territorial future of North West Europe (NWE). To this end, the Programme seeks organisations that are resolute in their ambition to contribute to a cohesive and sustainable territorial development of North West Europe.
15. Projects should aim to produce transnational partnerships which can enhance the region's capacity to innovate and facilitate the development of knowledge-based activities. Preference will be given to projects which can develop cross-sectoral synergies and facilitate the creation, demonstration and above all, the application of knowledge.
16. The four priorities of this programme are Innovation, Environmental Challenges, Connectivity and Strong & prosperous Communities. The Connect Project would be under the Connectivity priority which in total receives 27% of the €334m budget (€89m). At present, 60% of the budget for this priority is committed – leaving a total of €36m still left to commit.

Development of the proposal

17. Rupprecht Consult (RC), the management consultants that have project managed the BAPTS project, were approached through the Joint Technical Secretariat at the European Union, to initiate a new project based on their proven track record of developing and project managing successful transport related Interreg projects.
18. RC approached the existing partners and invited them to initial project development sessions at which they could present their organisations/cities strategic priorities and future

activities. RC then reviewed these to identify any common priorities that could form the basis of a new project within the remit of Interreg.

19. The initial paper (**Appendix 1**) identifies the outline of the proposals and has support in principle from Southend-on Sea (UK), Dublin (Ireland), Lille (France), Liege (Belgium), Bielefeld (Germany) and new partner Gent (Belgium). RC is now leading on the development of a bid, with Bielefeld as the Lead Partner. A timescale with key milestones has been developed to ensure that the fully costed bid can be submitted on time (7 October 2011).

Project proposal

20. The new project is entitled CONNECT – Connecting people, creating inclusive and sustainable cities in Northwest Europe.
21. The three main strands of the proposal are:
 - (a) Connecting people through the use of new media in order to increase participation in urban development and transport planning;
 - (b) Connecting places for those walking and cycling; and
 - (c) Connecting travellers through inclusive mobility solutions.
22. In addition the partners would be ‘connected’, sharing best practice and developing joint strategies.
23. These strands would support the achievement of the outcomes set out in the Third Local Transport Plan, as well as those in the Sustainable Community Strategy. There are potential wider benefits for other parts of the Council as well as other organisations in both Darlington and potentially the wider Tees Valley, for instance developing technology solutions to engage more people in consultation and planning of infrastructure and services; and identifying how technology could potentially improve travel options for target groups such as disabled people or those living in rural areas.
24. As the proposals are developed, it is proposed that they will be agreed by the Assistant Director for Policy and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member with the Portfolio for Transport.

Next steps

25. The next stage, subject to Cabinet approval, is for the detail of the bid including the technical specifications, consultation and budget to be developed by Darlington for inclusion in the overall proposal. The lead partner and project consultant will coordinate the drafting of the proposal. This work must be completed by 30 September 2011.
26. The total eligible cost is expected to be 12-14 million Euros, with the ERDF element being 6-7 million Euros. Darlington’s element of the proposal will have to include match funding. Only projects that have identified sources of funding will be included in the bid and therefore this bid is reliant, in part, on the Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid being successful (see separate item on this Cabinet agenda).

Risks

27. Darlington's element of the bid will be written within the existing agreed MTFP. The bid will be submitted after the outcome of the LSTF bid has been announced and therefore match funding will be confirmed. Costs of delivering the bid in terms of staff resources will be recovered through the grant funding.
28. Staff time will be spent on developing Darlington's element of the bid but this will be minimised through the involvement of RC to project manage the bid process; Bielefeld taking the Lead Partner role; and utilising much of the work that has already been done on the Third Local Transport Plan and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid.
29. Through the BAPTS project we have developed robust systems and procedures in order to project manage Interreg projects – that meet the strict EU requirements in terms of audit requirements, claims procedures and reporting mechanisms back to the lead partners/JTS. These are in place already and the new project would be able to make use of these with little resource implications

Outcome of Consultation

30. The ideas that have been developed to date for this proposal have in part come from the extensive consultation undertaken to develop the Third Local Transport Plan (Council 10 March 2011) and the recent Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid (submitted 15 April 2011).
31. This consultation identified the following issues:
 - (a) the need to improve the experience of travelling by bus and by local train,
 - (b) the need to provide travel choices for disabled people,
 - (c) the need to include the rural population,
 - (d) the need to make sure that traffic congestion does not hinder economic activity, and
 - (e) the need to reduce the current inequalities in the health of local people
32. As the proposal is developed there will be further consultation with organisations with direct involvement in the proposals including Town Centre Fringe project team, Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership, Northern Rail, Network Rail, Darlington Association on Disability, eVOLution and Tees Valley Rural Community Council. In addition other organisations will be consulted on the wider benefits such as the Greener Theme Group.

Project Proposal

CONNECT – Connecting people, creating inclusive and sustainable cities in Northwest Europe

Connecting citizens through new media to participate in community development and transport planning ▪ Connecting city destinations by walking and cycling

▪ Connecting citizens through inclusive mobility solutions.



INTERREG IVB

Summary

Creating connections is the basic function of transport. However, citizens demand more and better connectivity, expect to be consulted before new mobility solutions are implemented, while also being more and more willing to accept restrictions on non-sustainable transport means. At the same time, recent technologies provide opportunities to meet these demands and at the same time provide services more efficiently and more user-friendly.

The CONNECT Project will be a showcase in Northwest Europe to connect citizens better with local government and to enable them to participate directly in planning and decision making for major infrastructure. In CONNECT cities, walking and cycling are increasingly accepted as serious alternatives to motorised transport- and as the most environmentally friendly modes. In planning and operation of such services new information and communication technologies play increasingly an enabling role. CONNECT cities actively want to create more inclusive communities for all citizens by connecting them better. This will mean to reduce physical barriers in public transport and urban space (for temporarily or permanently mobility-impaired citizens), supporting all citizens, especially migrants to make use of all forms of sustainable mobility (public transport, cycling, shared vehicles).

The CONNECT Project will use new technologies and social communication campaigns to put people in the centre of policy making, creating more inclusive and sustainable cities, with well-connected citizens – for the benefit of Northwest Europe. On the technological side, interactive “web 2.0” and mobile applications will be available to inform travellers on travel options throughout their multimodal journey and to help them in booking and accessing other value-added services, e.g. renting of (electric) bikes, car sharing, public transport, community transport services. Visualisation techniques and social media applications will connect citizens (e.g. in discussion fora and with local government) and will enable them to participate on a well-informed basis in decision processes. Technology-based communication will be complemented by communication campaigns, as well as personal communication (directly via meetings etc.) to achieve a strong “human profile” for all project activities. CONNECT will be a community-centred project and will also involve social enterprises.

The CONNECT Project proposal will be submitted to the INTERREG IVB Northwest Europe (NWE) programme under Priority 3.3 (innovative approaches to the use of ICT in order to improve connectivity) in its next call ending on 7 Oct 2011.

Partners

The major actors in the project will be cities from almost all NWE countries, supported by their local public transport operators and other organisations. Currently the following cities are part of the consortium:

- x City of Bielefeld/ Germany (lead partner) with moBiel (public transport operator as sub-partner)
- x Lille Metropole/ France
- x City of Gent/ Belgium
- x City of Liège/ Belgium
- x Darlington Borough Council/ United Kingdom
- x Southend Borough Council and Essex County Council (sub-partner)/ United Kingdom

- x National Transport Authority/ Ireland
- x additional city from Germany and/ or The Netherlands

Project activities

The CONNECT Project will centre around three themes:

- x Connected citizens – ICT and new media for active participation in urban development
- x Connected cities – Walking, cycling, sharing: “soft” modes for strong cities
- x Connected travellers – Inclusive mobility for all
- x Connected NWE - Sharing lessons and developing joint strategies across NWE

[further specify themes]

WP1 - Connected citizens – ICT and new media for active participation in urban development

Urban planning is a complex process and the direct involvement of citizens and other stakeholders (e.g. shopkeepers) increases the risk but also the long-term success of new policy and infrastructure developments. CONNECT will apply an innovative combination of personal and technology-assisted information and dialogue. Interactive Internet (“web 2.0”) and social media, as well as visualisation techniques (“planning for real”) will be applied as essential part of communication campaigns in the partner cities. Associations of stakeholders as well as individual citizens will be involved in shaping the development of major new projects. New technology tools will help to provide information continuously at a high level of effectiveness and will support efficient communication among all stakeholders.

CONNECT will develop an inclusive communication strategy in order to involve various target groups in an adequate and balanced way, e.g. (young) digital natives, people who are not regular IT users, older people, migrants, shopkeepers, institutional stakeholders etc.

By creating ownership among citizens, the local councils expect to improve quality, acceptance and ultimately ensure success of innovative policies and new investment projects.

[introduce common themes in cities]

The following investments and activities are planned: [to be reviewed/ further specified, please]

Partner	Investments/ Activities
Bielefeld	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x Citizen participation in planning new tram line to Heepen (based on potentially controversial routing options identified in feasibility study) x Stakeholder and citizen consultation to define redevelopment options for the major traffic node in the city (Jahnplatz) x Freight Roundtable: stakeholder consultation for freight traffic re-routing
Darlington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x Town-Centre-Fringe –planning for real x North Station infrastructure planning x “Talking together” citizen engagement
Dublin area / NTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x Community and citizen engagement and communication for major planning processes (City Centre Planning/ Strategy Implementation Plan/ Strategic Traffic Management Plan [check]); incl. micro simulation, visualisation tools
Gent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x Strategic walking plan: development with strong consultation, walkability audit, online route planner, signage, promotion strategy

Liège	X	Developing “calm zones” in cooperation with citizens (ensuring mobility and deliveries, but increasing attractiveness and safety)
Lille Metropole	X	Metropolitan accessibility planning with stakeholders [??? see also WP3 below]
Southend/ Essex County	X	[community planning?]

WP2 - Connected cities – Walking, cycling, sharing: soft modes for strong cities

Walking and cycling are increasingly considered as “serious” modes of travel – both from an urban mobility policy perspective as well as by individual travellers. However, perceptions need to be addressed (e.g. travel times are often overestimated) as well as many physical improvements are required.

[introduce common themes in cities]

The following investments and activities are planned: [to be reviewed/ further specified, please]

Partner	Investments/ Activities
Bielefeld	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X Safety, mobility and cycling training for girls and women of migrant origin (various languages, mobility and culture) X Communicating sustainable mobility with social media and web 2.0 tools (target-group-specific marketing) X Mobile apps for public transport and shared/ rented vehicles X Re-connecting the castle with its city on foot and by special public transport X Promoting safe, short-distance cycling (model campaigns for cycling to school) X E-bikes for Bielefeld: renting, charging, maintaining, promoting
Darlington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X Community audits/ Community hubs X Shopmobility in local areas X Rental (e-)bikes and “plugged in places” *?+
Dublin area / NTA	X
Gent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X Model bicycle point in the historic centre: secure parking, storage for shopping, special services e.g. repairs by social enterprise, e-bike-and other special bike renting X E-bike strategy for Gent: charging, renting, promoting, integration with other modes X Leisure mobility planning (shopping, cultural events, tourism - by sustainable mode)
Liège	X “City for bikes and pedestrians” – Intermodality, bike rental and parking promotion, refurbishing public space for improved accessibility and walk-
Lille Metropole	X Self-service cycling network (intermodal connections, different business models for renting, e-bikes, antitheft devices, parking, promotion campaigns)
Southend/	X Active citizens and social enterprise: promotion, marketing, training C y-

CONNECT Project Proposal to the INT ERREG IVB North West Europe (NWE) Programme

Essex County	cleSouthend/ WalkSouthend, incl. voluntary sector and local communities
	x Electric bikes?: “Plugged in Places” “Evalu8” *?
	x Activetravel planning and “Move easy”: TravelSmart-based personalised travel planning assisted by voluntary services

WP3 - Connected travellers – Inclusive mobility for all

Transport services and infrastructures too often have been designed with the middle -aged, middle-class commuter in mind. However, a large proportion of travellers has “special needs” of some kind, at least at certain points in time (e.g; being “mobility impaired” due to heavy luggage)

- x Northwest Europe is highly challenged by demographic change. Changes in ageing patterns in NWE will result in higher car-based mobility, unless active ageing and sustainable mobility are actively promoted. [add urban-rural issues]
- x Northwest Europe has the highest proportion of inhabitants with non-native background [add figure]. For various reasons, this often leads to social exclusion or non-sustainable mobility behaviour.
- x Improving accessibility of transport systems for ageing and mobility impaired travellers is more than meeting a social need: lower barriers increase comfort, safety and quality for all, and thereby increase attractiveness and use of public transport

CONNECT will develop inclusion strategies for these target groups by developing more accessible mainstream or special (public) transport services, improving awareness and practical know-how among the target groups of using sustainable transport modes

[introduce common themes in cities]

The following investments and activities are planned: [to be reviewed/ further specified, please]

Partner	Investments/ Activities
Bielefeld	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x Mobility training for disabled and older travellers/ Communicating barrier-free mobility to stakeholders x Promoting electric bike renting to specific target groups x Developing models for barrier-free tram and bus stations x Mobility management for a large community of disabled (von-Bodenschwingsche Anstalten)
Darlington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x Accessible transport (community-based, user-led taxi service) x Individualised marketing and travel awareness for specific target groups (rural areas)
Dublin area / NTA	x [Promoting social cohesion and improving accessibility (rural areas?)]
Gent	x Individualised marketing and travel awareness for older people, migrants, new citizens, mobility consulting for specific target groups
Liège	x
Lille Metropole	x Door-to-door accessibility for public transport in the metropolitan region (barrier-free access to public places and services)
Southend/ Essex County	x Web-based travel planning portal [target groups?]

WP4 - Connected NWE – Sharing lessons and developing joint strategies

The following activities are planned .

[to be further specified, when common themes are clearer .]

Expected cost

Total eligible cost: 12 – 14 million Euro / ERDF Grant: 6 – 7 million Euro.

Contact

For further information about this project proposal please contact:

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Boosting Advanced Public Transport Systems

1. In May 2008 a funding bid with the title “Boosting Advanced Public Transport Systems” – BAPTS was submitted to the EU Interreg IVB programme. The project includes 9 partners covering six countries with a total value of Euro 16.028m which translates to £13.031m (at the rate of 1.23 Euro/£ in October 2008). The bid was successful and Darlington was awarded ERDF funding across four work packages with a total estimated cost of 1.215m Euros. The balance of funding being provided through match funding by the Council and its partners.
2. The four work packages are:
 - a. Multi-modality and interoperability - Work on an enhanced development framework, with additional funding to develop a better understanding of the implications of spatial planning policies on planning for transport. This will assist in the production of the Local Development Framework. (Connections Report delivered)
 - b. Integrated Mobility Planning - The development and implementation of measures improving access to Bank Top Station, particularly for sustainable travel modes, as well as the needs of car users. (smart card controlled secure cycle parking delivered; motorcycle parking delivered; improvements to pedestrian access delivered)
 - c. Marketing and Mobility Awareness - The delivery of an integrated package of travel marketing and information. (Local Motion programme ongoing, including Medal Motion in schools)
 - d. Intelligent Transport Systems - Work on developing a smart card for use on public transport, as an access control for secure cycle parking and employer parking. (Concessionary bus passes issued as smart cards and smart card readers installed on Arriva buses – system to go live in November 2011).
3. This project comes to an end in December 2011.