CABINET
3 NOVEMBER 2009

ITEM NO. .....

RELEASE OF CAPITAL FUNDS FOR TRANSPORT ASSET MANAGEMENT

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio

Responsible Director - Cliff Brown, Director of Community Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To request the release of capital funds for the enhancement of existing specialist systems associated with the development of the Transport Asset Management Plan.

Summary

2. Darlington Borough Council is developing a Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP), which is a framework for an integrated approach to managing the Borough's transport and highway assets.

3. One of the key drivers for the development and adoption of the TAMP is to improve value for money and effectiveness in managing the highway network. Knowledge of the various elements of the transport infrastructure, their lifecycles and the comparative risks is essential management information required by the Council as the Highway Authority. This enables the consideration of adopting particular budget strategies for each of the assets allowing the effects of increases or decreases of resource to be assessed objectively and hence ensuring best use of resources.

4. The highway and transport asset is one of the largest physical assets the Council is responsible for as Highway Authority. Whilst not yet completed the TAMP will provide a value for the asset. Working estimates put the value in the region of £750m, excluding land value. However, this will be refined as the plan is developed.

5. The Department for Transport announced in July 2008 that it was making available £23M to assist local authorities in England with developing their asset management capability for their highway assets. The Department for Transport issued guidance to local authorities in 2008 on how to bid for this and Darlington were successful in securing £19,400 Capital and £50,000 Revenue funds for 2008/09 and £18,100 Capital funding for 2009/10. Confirmation of the funding was received in February 2009.

6. A specialist ICT system is already in place to assist in managing the asset. The data collection is approximately 90% complete but there are some gaps in the asset register mainly new housing estates and back lanes. In addition there are rural highway drainage systems which need to be recorded.

7. There is a need to be able to efficiently and effectively complete the data collection and then subsequently update the asset as modifications are made. The release of the capital funding will allow for the enhancement of the existing system with field computer equipment and other asset management equipment, systems and services. A breakdown of the proposed spend is shown in **Appendix 1**.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that Members approve the release of £37,500 Capital funding as detailed in the report.

Reason

9. The recommendation is supported to aid development of the TAMP and to improve value for money and effectiveness in managing the highway network.

Cliff Brown
Director of Community Services

Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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S17 Crime and Disorder	No impact
Health and Well Being	The provision of a complete highway asset register will enable the effective prioritisation of highway maintenance works, maintaining road safety and assisting in promoting sustainable travel.
Sustainability	The provision of a complete highway asset register will enable the effective prioritisation of highway maintenance works and ensure that they are carried out at the optimum time gaining the maximum life out of the highway.
Diversity	No impact
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	The report requests release of funds from the successful bid from the DfT. It does not affect the Policy Framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not considered an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Maintaining highways contribute to the Safer Darlington theme for all types of road user. Well maintained highways contribute to the Greener Darlington theme as they encourage walking and cycling and may reduce car emissions.
Efficiency	Knowledge of the various elements of the transport infrastructure, their lifecycles and the comparative risks is essential management information required by the Council as the Highway Authority. This enables the consideration of adopting particular budget strategies for each of the assets allowing the effects of increases or decreases of resource to be assessed objectively and hence ensuring best use of resources.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

10. The Council is developing a Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP), which is a framework for an integrated approach to managing the Borough's transport and highway assets.

11. The County Surveyors' Society (CSS) document "Framework for Asset Management" provides a useful definition of the process as applied to transport networks: *"Asset management is a strategic approach that identifies the optimal allocation of resources for the management, operation, preservation and enhancement of the highway infrastructure to meet the needs of current and future customers."*

12. One of the key drivers for the development and adoption of the TAMP is to improve value for money and effectiveness in managing the highway network. Knowledge of the various elements of the transport infrastructure, their lifecycles and the comparative risks is essential management information required by the Council as the Highway Authority. This enables the consideration of adopting particular budget strategies for each of the assets allowing the effects of increases or decreases of resource to be assessed objectively and hence ensuring best use of resources.

13. As the Highway Authority Darlington Borough Council is responsible for managing the assets associated with the highway network. This includes:

Asset	Units	Total	Asset	Units	Total
Lighting columns	No	12,800	Signalised junctions	No	18
Ped crossings	No	45	Ill signs & bollards	No	1,666
Trees	No	4,138	Safety Fence	Lin m	4,148
Seats	No	153	Bollards	No	4,741
Bus stop shelters	No	183	Bus stops no shelter	No	428
A roads (bituminous)	Sq m	663,453	B roads (bituminous)	Sq m	270,405
C roads (bituminous)	Sq m	1,024,521	Unc roads (bituminous)	Sq m	1,531,052
Unc roads (concrete)	Sq m	22,892	Footway (bituminous)	Sq m	457,452
Footway (concrete)	Sq m	11,398	Footway (block paved)	Sq m	24,620
Footway (flagstones)	Sq m	676,666	Carriageway gullies	No	16,502
Paved verge (bituminous)	Sq m	14,556	Paved verge (concrete)	Sq m	4,115
Paved verge (block paved)	Sq m	15,084	Paved verge (flagstone)	Sq m	3,397
Ped guard rail (steel)	Lin m	8,039	Ped guard rail (concrete)	Lin m	58
Ped guard rail (wood)	Lin m	591	Kerbstone	Lin m	689,981

14. Whilst not yet completed the TAMP will provide a value for the asset, which is currently estimated to be in the region of £750M, excluding land value.

15. The Department for Transport announced in July 2008 that it was making available £23M to assist local authorities in England with developing their asset management capability for their highway assets. The Department for Transport issued guidance to local authorities in 2008 on how to bid for this and Darlington were successful in securing £19,400 Capital and £50,000 Revenue funds for 2008/09 and £18,100 Capital funding for 2009/10. Confirmation of the funding was received in February 2009. Given the late notification of funding the grant, including the revenue funding, has been built into the MTFP for 2009/10. The revenue is being used to cover staff costs in collecting and processing the data and any additional specialist training.

16. A specialist ICT system is already in place to assist in managing the asset. The data collection is approximately 90% complete but there are some gaps in the asset register mainly new housing estates and back lanes. In addition there are rural highway drainage systems which need to be recorded.

17. There is a need to be able to efficiently and effectively complete the data collection and then subsequently update the asset as modifications are made.

18. The release of the capital funding will allow for the purchase of field computers which will enable completion of the highway asset data and the continual update of the asset management database. The computers are installed with up to date mapping and GPS software to allow the quick and accurate collection of data and are fully compatible with existing systems.

19. Processing of inventory and condition information requires efficient computer hardware to allow the processing of the information. An audit of the existing hardware has identified computers that need replacing, which the grant will fund.

20. Visual inspections of street lights are conducted at night using two personnel and a van to record condition on a small PDA computer. The inspections are driven which can cause difficulties recording the information on a small device. It is proposed to purchase a Tablet Computer with a larger screen to try and eliminate this problem.

21. Although manholes and gullies are largely visible on the surface, specialist drainage services will be required to pressure jet systems so that the size and condition of the system can be recorded. This activity will assist with our contingency work on flood and surface water management.

22. It is proposed to renumber some of the lighting asset to allow for a unique number on each item across the Borough. This will provide more accurate information to allow customers to report faults but also improve response to faults.

23. The release of the capital funding will allow for the enhancement of the existing system with field computer equipment and other asset management equipment, systems and services. A breakdown of the proposed spend is shown in **Appendix 1**.

Appendix 1

Breakdown of Proposed Capital Expenditure

Equipment or Services	Amount
Field Computers and Software. Highway Inspectors/ Technicians will be trained and charged with collecting this data	8,000
Desktop Computers to update existing hardware for the use of the inspectors in processing condition data	8,000
Street Lighting Tablet Computer (Condition Data)	3,500
Street Lighting Asset Re-numbering	12,500
Symology – ICT Specialist to commission bolt-on elements to existing system.	2,500
Specialist Drainage Services (Jetting & Camera)	3,000
Total	£37,500