
SECOND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN EXPENDITURE 2008-2011

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio

Responsible Director - Richard Alty, Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)

Purpose of Report

1. To seek release of funding of the 2008/11 settlement for the Second Local Transport Plan, the Road Safety Grant and Cycling England funding

Information and Analysis

Context

2. Council approved the Second Local Transport Plan (2LTP) and associated provisional budget on 23 March 2006. This delivery budget was based on the indicative allocations given by Government for the period 2006 to 2011, prioritised by the objectives identified in the Plan.
3. The Department for Transport (DfT) has now allocated £8.933m for the period April 2008 to March 2011, split between maintenance (£4.193m) and integrated transport actions (£4.740m). Reward funding was included in the 2006 settlement, in recognition of the assessment of the 2LTP (“good”) and the “excellent” mark for its work delivering the first Local Transport Plan where it achieved eight out of the nine targets that were set in that Plan. This reward funding equates to £382,000 of the £4.740m for the remaining 3-year period of the 2LTP.
4. The DfT will also continue to pay Specific Road Safety Grant (RSG). This capital funding has been confirmed as £112,367 over the period 2008-2011. In addition £505,027 Specific Road Safety Grant (Revenue) has been allocated to Darlington for the same period. A provisional programme for this funding was included as part of the 2LTP to address both real and perceived travel safety issues.
5. Work is continuing to enhance the benefits from schemes delivered through the 2LTP, using funding provided by Cycling England (£1.5m) and DfT grant for Local Motion (£3.24m). Darlington is the only place in the UK to successfully bid for inclusion in both of these prestigious programmes.
6. The objectives of the Council’s Second Local Transport Plan are:

- (a) To provide the framework for sustainable development of new and existing businesses, housing and services in Darlington.
 - (b) To improve access to employment and education, particularly for those without access to a private car, those with a disability and those that have greatest need.
 - (c) To tackle traffic congestion on key corridors and its potential impact on the economy and environment by making the most effective use of the transport network.
 - (d) To improve travel safety and security for all by addressing the real and perceived risks.
 - (e) To provide and promote travel choices to all, in particular to reduce the proportion of car driver trips.
 - (f) To improve the health of the community through increasing levels of sustainable travel and improving access to health, leisure and fresh food.
7. In essence, the Plan embodies a medium/long-term strategy for achieving these transport objectives and an interim shorter-term strategy. In the longer term, the only way to facilitate economic growth, whilst retaining good accessibility for all and avoiding traffic congestion increases, is to encourage greater use of sustainable travel modes (public transport, walking and cycling). There are many examples of economically successful places with less reliance on the car. However, achieving this behavioural change will require long-term concerted action (along the lines of Local Motion), and crucially require better quality sustainable mode alternatives (e.g. better public transport through the Tees Valley Bus Network Initiative, Tees Valley Metro and investment in the bus network). These things will not happen quickly.
8. In the shorter term, to avoid increasing congestion becoming a problem whilst the long-term solution is achieved, physical works are required to ensure that the most is made of the road network. This will be through addressing pinch-points, improvements to junctions, traffic management and other actions.
9. The need for both types of action is illustrated by trends in traffic counts. Data from the automatic traffic counters point to the conclusion that the number of car trips generated from within the urban area has declined, (2.45% reduction in the annual average daily traffic flow crossing the inner cordon between 2004/05 and 2006/07). This is in contrast to data from traffic counters located on the edge of the urban area, that are showing increases in traffic over the same period (2.49% increase in average daily traffic flow crossing the outer cordon) at levels close to those forecast by the national traffic model¹. This reflects the success of Local Motion and related work in encouraging Darlington people to make 9% fewer car trips. This is producing fewer trips by car and less traffic within the town, but traffic from outside the Borough is still increasing. The proposals for the next stage of Local Motion would begin to tackle this, for example

¹ TEMPRO National Traffic forecast growth in car trips (2004 – 2007) 2.2%

through the Interreg bid set out in a separate report on this agenda.

10. The programme proposed in this report therefore continues the programme agreed in the Local Transport Plan. It has a mixture of actions designed to support the long-term behavioural change required to tackle traffic congestion, together with a series of actions which will alleviate traffic pinch-points in the meantime.

Delivery in 2007/08

11. The Council has continued to deliver 2LTP schemes that tackle traffic congestion whilst providing the basis for sustainably supporting the needs of local people, business and the environment. Schemes include:
 - (a) The A68 route action plan has been developed in partnership with the Police and five 20mph zones have been designed and consulted on, and implementation is underway. A Safer Route to School has also been developed in partnership with the Countryside team to provide a safe walking and cycling route to both Branksome School and Cockerton Primary School, as well as creating access to Cocker Beck Local Nature Reserve.
 - (b) Completion of the Pedestrian Heart Scheme.
 - (c) The building of the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor and associated work on the A66 is well underway with completion due in Summer 2008.
 - (d) Schemes to improve traffic flows, including Woodland Road/Greenbank Road signals, associated markings on Bondgate and St Augustine's Way and completion of Houghton Road/McMullen Road signals.
 - (e) The implementation of Bank Top Resident Parking Zones, any amendments required to existing Zones and the introduction of the Park and Pay By Phone service in all Council car parks.
 - (f) Further development of the pedestrian and cycle network and associated improvements for including schemes on Whessoe Road, Smithfield Road, Nunnery Lane, Carmel Road and Willow Road; as well as a refurbishment of the scheme alongside the River Skerne at Rockwell Nature Reserve. Cycle parking has been provided at seven schools, including Branksome, Longfield and Whinfield.
 - (g) Hail and ride bus services in Firthmoor were converted to bus stops, with raised kerbs, bus stop flags and timetable information. The first phase of renewing or providing bus stop markings and signs was implemented in advance of Civil Parking Enforcement.
 - (h) Improvements for the disabled, including dropped crossings at various locations in the Borough and new equipment for the Shopmobility service.

- (i) Maintenance schemes have been carried, including a major scheme on A167 Burtree lane – Coatham Mundeville which includes footway improvements and noise reducing surfacing and a carriageway maintenance scheme on A68 West Auckland Road.
12. The Council has been given flexibility within the 2LTP settlements to programme spend over more than one financial year. This is proving beneficial in that design and consultation can occur in year 1 of a scheme, with delivery on the ground scheduled for year 2, thus making the scheme less vulnerable to unexpected delays. However, despite such programming, a few schemes scheduled for delivery in 2007/08 have been delayed due to a variety of reasons. Since they are still relevant to the Council's objectives for the 2LTP they will be delivered in future years. The schemes are:
- (a) Bank Top Residents' Parking Zone – consultation is underway, and subject to objections, will be completed in 2008/09.
 - (b) Town Centre 20 mph zone - delivery of scheme now scheduled for 2008/09 following the completion of construction works for Pedestrian Heart, subject to consultation with the Police.
 - (c) Delivery of bus stop improvements were put on hold in 2007/08 as Arriva announced their takeover of Stagecoach and their proposals to review the commercial bus network in Darlington (due for completion in July 2008). Design work on a wide range of schemes, from major junction improvements such as Whessoe Road/North Road (B&Q By Pass) to verge hardening in various locations, was undertaken as part of the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement bid.
 - (d) A walking and cycling scheme to provide improved, safe access to the town centre via Grange Road was delayed due to objections. Two new options are now being considered for delivery in 2008/09, subject to a Disability Impact Assessment.

Proposals for 2008/11

13. As described above, the 2LTP sets out the Council's objectives for transport in delivering co-ordinated responses to key issues of concern. These include traffic congestion, supporting the local economy, tackling anti-social behaviour and helping young people. In line with Department for Transport guidance Darlington Borough Council will produce a 2LTP Progress Report during 2008. This will review progress in meeting objectives and targets during the first two years of the plan, and to consider any opportunities or threats to the effective delivery of the remainder of the plan. This should identify any risks to delivery and any mitigating actions required.
14. The proposals for 2008/11 include schemes that also seek to support the forthcoming new Sustainable Community Strategy and complement other actions taken by the Council. As described in paragraphs 6 to 10, a combination is proposed of actions to support long-term behavioural change with actions to alleviate congestion problems in the meantime.

15. It is also recommended that the Council continues to focus on achieving the core targets that it has set itself, since these form a key part of the Government's assessment of its performance and funding.
16. The proposed spend for 2008/11 is shown in **Appendix 1**. This programme has been developed from the draft programme in the 2LTP. A key action in 2008/9 will be a comprehensive study of the Inner Ring Road, which can take into account the observed effects on traffic of the DETC. This will lead to a series of schemes, mainly to improve the functioning of junctions in inner Darlington.
17. The programme includes contributions to works to improve traffic flows on key radial routes, e.g. through Cockerton/West Auckland Road and North Road. These complement works to be funded by the Tees Valley Bus Network Initiative bid agreed by Cabinet last month. The DETC should produce traffic reduction on Yarm Road and Haughton Road, and the programme includes for complementary works on Haughton Road to maximise the benefits of these reductions.
18. In order to tackle traffic coming into Darlington from outside the Borough, more emphasis is to be given to travel plan work with companies, and a budget allocation is proposed for works arising from these.
19. Highway and Bridge maintenance schemes are determined from analysis of annual surveys, which measure current condition against nationally set standards. Additional information is used to determine the detail of the programme, such as accident data for local safety schemes and school travel plan information to identify Safer Routes to School, cycle parking and 20mph zones. The programme provides for a town centre 20mph scheme, school 20mph schemes and street lighting schemes which provide personal safety.
20. The proposed spend from the 2LTP allocation complements the Council's proposed actions using Cycling England and other capital funds, as well as those it undertakes using revenue monies (e.g. LocalMotion, Road Safety Grant and Council funding). These various actions are designed to work together contributing to the objectives of the Transport Strategy being realised through the Second Local Transport Plan. Of particular note are the year one schemes forming part of the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement (TVBNI) major scheme bid to Government. If approved by the Government, then delivery on the ground is scheduled for 2008/09.
21. Funding for the Cycling Demonstration Town (CDT) project was due to end in October 2008 with a final funding instalment of £280,000 allocated to the project in 2008/09. However the Transport Secretary, Ruth Kelly, has recently announced a record £140m investment in cycling over the next 3 years. In response Cycling England have committed to funding Darlington and the other 5 CDTs for a further 3 years. Darlington will receive a further £1.22m. match funding, in addition to the existing allocation for 2008/09, giving a total sum of £1.5m match funding during the period 2008/2011. This is subject to Cycling England agreeing the strategy and programme outlined in **Appendix 2**. The match funding will be provided from a number of sources including schemes in the Second Local Transport Plan, Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Action

Plan (for schemes identified in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, adopted by Council in October 2007) and developer contributions.

22. The Department for Transport has also confirmed a further 3 years of Specific Road Safety Grant funding. This will be used to further improve the road safety record for Darlington as well as addressing perceptions of safety for all road users. The 2LTP identified 'improving travel safety and security for all by addressing the real and perceived risks' as a key objective and the Travel Safety Strategy (Appendix 13, 2LTP) details key actions, such as implementing 20mph zones, cycle and pedestrian training and local safety schemes. Proposals for this funding can be found in **Appendix 3**.
23. As agreed by Members last year, it would be helpful if variations to the timing of implementation of the agreed programme continue to be delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration) in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport within the schemes set out in this report. This approach permits flexibility and effective use of resources by allowing amendments to be made quickly should unexpected opportunities or difficulties occur that would be best met by a change to the published work programme. A delay of three months each time would be incurred if any variation to the programme was referred to Cabinet for individual approval. Examples of such a scenario would be unexpected delays to a scheme, due to the need to review design decisions in light of consultation responses or difficulties in acquiring any land required. This could mean bringing forward the implementation of another, more easily implemented scheme to meet spending budgets or match funding requirements.
24. It is proposed that updates on the delivery of the agreed programme are reported to Cabinet in the quarterly capital monitoring reports. Substantial changes in the programme, such as a significant new scheme not listed in this report would be brought to Cabinet for consideration of relative priorities and approval of a revised programme. Cabinet would also need to consider any new programme that is recommended in response to the review of delivery contained in the forthcoming 2008 Progress Report described in paragraph 13.

Outcome of Consultation

25. As outlined in previous reports, there has been extensive consultation on the principles, ethos and detail of the 2LTP. A summary of this may be found in Annexes 1 & 2 of the Plan; available on the Council's website at www.darlington.gov.uk/transport/transport+policy/transport+policy.htm. Further work has also been undertaken since, both in terms of specific scheme design and in terms of strategic direction. Comment from all concerned has informed the Plan and the recommendation of specific actions to be undertaken through it.

Conclusion

26. The programmes set out in this report are part of a comprehensive programme of actions, derived from the Council's Second Local Transport Plan, to tackle congestion, improve accessibility, improve travel safety, support economic growth, and contribute to health and climate change objectives. They have both a long-term and a shorter-term focus. In

the longer term they will help to make travel by sustainable travel modes more attractive, to encourage the behavioural change, begun by Local Motion, which is the only long-term solution to congestion and accessibility. In the meantime, substantial investment is proposed in making the most effective use of the existing road network by removing pinch-points and junction improvements.

27. The programmes, with past works, address all the main road corridors. Yarm Road and Haughton Road will benefit from traffic reductions due to the Eastern Transport Corridor, and complementary works on Haughton Road are proposed in this programme. On North Road the Whessoe Road junction (through the Tees Valley scheme) and related works, together with the ability to link all traffic lights, will achieve substantial benefits. Similarly works to the Cockerton junctions (through the Tees Valley scheme) will assist West Auckland Road/Woodlands Road. A major study of the Inner Ring Road (in the light of the DETC) will lead to recommendations for junction improvements around the inner area.
28. Substantial programmes of maintenance and road safety works are also proposed, targeted at identified needs.

Legal Implications

29. 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

30. 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.
31. The programme includes actions designed to improve travel security, both real and perceived, in general and specifically including secure car parking, street lighting improvements and safer routes to school.

Council Policy Framework

32. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework, as set out in the Second Local Transport Plan and underlying Transport Strategy.

Decision Deadline

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

Key Decisions

34. How the 2LTP funds are used is a key decision, since this has a significant effect on residents and businesses of all Wards in the Borough.

Recommendations

35. It is recommended that Members approve:
- (a) the release of the £8.933m settlement from the Second Local Transport Plan for 2008-11, for expenditure broken down across financial years as detailed in Appendix 1 of this report;
 - (b) the release of £112,367 capital and £505,027 revenue Specific Road Safety Grant, for expenditure broken down across financial years as detailed in appendix 3 of this report; and
 - (c) the release of £986,500 capital and £513,500 revenue matched funding from Cycling England, (subject to their approval of the strategy and programme) for expenditure broken down across financial years as detailed in appendix 2 of this report.
 - (d) the delegation of variations to the implementation of the agreed list of schemes set out in Appendix 1 of this report, to the Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration) in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport.

Reason

36. The recommendations are supported to ensure that the most effective use is made of the settlements for 2008/11 by permitting a timely start to be made on the full programme of works.

Richard Alty
Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)

Background Papers

- (i) 2LTP Settlement letter from GONE, 27 November 2007.
- (ii) Cycling Demonstration Town funding letter from Cycling England, 1 February 2008.
- (iii) Tees Valley Bus Network Initiative report to Cabinet 12 February 2008.

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