
KICKSTART

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To explain the Kickstart funding bid for public transport services and to seek agreement from the Cabinet to implement the Council's scheme for service 1, 1b should the funding bid be successful.

Summary

2. Kickstart, which is funded by the DfT, provides pump-priming funding to new bus services, or bus service enhancements. It is targeted at schemes that have the potential to become successful (commercially viable) but which initially might be rather marginal in commercial terms and require some financial help to start them off, or which are currently marginal schemes that with some extra support could be made more successful. Our bid is the proposed extension of Arriva's service 1,1b which will:
 - (a) Create direct public transport links to employment opportunities at Lingfield Point in the east of Darlington and to Faverdale in the west of Darlington.
 - (b) Create direct public transport links to Darlington College from Red Hall, which is in the top 5% most deprived areas in the country as well as for students in County Durham. The bid supports the Sustainable Community Strategy, under the Aspiring Darlington theme, in its aims to increase participation rates in post 16 education and making sure that aspiration, attainment and life chances are not dependent on where people live, their economic circumstances or any other factors that might cause them to be disadvantaged. This service will also provide access to Teesside University, which is proposed to be developed on the site adjacent to the College providing opportunities for higher education to local people.
 - (c) Create direct public transport links to the Memorial Hospital in Darlington and Bishop Auckland General Hospital for residents in Red Hall and the Lingfield ward. This is particularly significant in light of the reconfiguration of services provided by the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust under the 'Seizing the Future' programme. This service will potentially reduce the requirement for Patient Transport Service transport provided by North East Ambulance Service in some cases.

- (d) Reduce car trips, particularly to Lingfield Point and to Darlington College, contributing to the achievement of their travel plans and building on the success of Darlington's sustainable travel demonstration town project, Local Motion, which has achieved a 9% reduction in car trips since 2004.
- (e) Tackle traffic congestion and reduce carbon emissions from vehicle traffic through the provision of suitable alternatives to the car.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that:-

Subject to the funding bid being successful, authorise the Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport to:

- (a) secure a contract with Arriva for the enhanced service provision;
- (b) agree to the release of funding to be provided by Marchday Group PLC (Lingfield Point) to implement two bus stops with shelters and real time displays within Lingfield Point.

Reasons

4. It is recommended that the Kickstart proposal be supported for the following reasons:

- (a) The introduction of a cross town route, from the east of the town to the west, will provide improved accessibility by bus to education (Darlington College), and employment opportunities (Lingfield Point Business Park and town centre). In addition it provides improved accessibility in the opposite direction for residents of Red Hall and Lingfield to education (Darlington College and The Sixth Form College), health (Memorial Hospital in Darlington and Bishop Auckland General Hospital) and employment (Faverdale and destinations in County Durham) therefore encouraging social inclusion.
- (b) The service supports the outcomes of Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy in particular in improving access to services, supporting economic growth and reducing carbon emissions.
- (c) It will contribute to 'locking in' the benefits of the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor, which was built to tackle traffic congestion and to enable Darlington to achieve its plans for economic regeneration in the area in keeping with the Government's wider transport objectives.
- (d) To help the sustainable regeneration of Lingfield Point by introducing a local bus service, that would bring people from across the urban area of Darlington as well as from further afield in County Durham.

- (e) I will prove to be an attractive alternative to the car and to achieve growth in bus passengers numbers in order for the service to be commercially viable at the end of the Kickstart funding period.

Background Papers

Gill Hutchinson Extension x2761

Richard Alty **Assistant Chief Executive – Regeneration**

S17 Crime and Disorder	The new buses will be equipped with CCTV.
Health and Well Being	Work to encourage sustainable travel helps contribute to the health and well being of residents.
Sustainability	This bid is in keeping with Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy in particular improving access to services, supporting economic growth and reducing carbon emissions.
Diversity	Not applicable.
Wards Affected	Faverdale, Cockerton East, Cockerton West, Pierremont, College, Northgate, Central and Lingfield
Groups Affected	Residents in affected Wards, Bus Users, Employees Lingfield Point, those accessing Hospital Services, Darlington College and the future Teesside University.
Budget and Policy Framework	No budget implications. LTP funding required for crossing point and footpath, but within the existing public transport improvement programme.
Key Decision	Yes
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Contributes to the Sustainable Transport Network work strand in the Greener theme.
Efficiency	No direct impacts on Council Efficiency.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. Kickstart requires local authorities and operators to consider jointly which route, or network, enhancements will contribute most to transport objectives, offer the strongest potential for patronage growth, and be sustainable with assured funding and viability over the longer term. Kickstart also involves both the Local Authority and bus operator partners contributing to the investment required on an agreed basis, which will be explicitly set out in the bid to the DfT.
6. A bid was submitted under delegated powers, at short notice to meet the timescales of the bid. This was done in liaison with the portfolio Member for Transport. Initial consideration was given to three possible schemes, which were:
 - (a) Service 1, 1b – extension to Darlington College and Lingfield Point.
 - (b) Service 12 – merge with Service 20 (Teesside) to provide a through link from Darlington-Stockton/Middlesbrough via Durham Tees Valley Airport.
 - (c) Service X66 – increase frequency to every 20 minutes (currently every 30 minutes).
7. These were analysed further against previous research, customer feedback, potential cost/benefits and projected patronage figures. It was concluded that the option to extend the service 1,1b provided the greatest cost/benefits, meeting a number of objectives. Option 2 has since been introduced by combining the commercial Arriva service 12 and the supported Stockton Borough Council service 20, so that the service operates from Neasham to Middlesbrough as the service 20.
8. Arriva have agreed to pilot “m-ticketing” that uses mobile phone technology to purchase tickets. The ‘m-ticket’ offers bus users a fast, secure, and convenient way to purchase their tickets before they even get to the bus stop. It is anticipated from work undertaken to date that this will be a popular option for students and people travelling to work, as they utilise their mobile phones for a wide range of services already. This will be a precursor to investment in other smart media. Darlington Borough Council is a partner in the North East Smarter Ticketing Initiative, a consortium of all the NE Local Authorities working to introduce smart public transport ticketing to the North East by 2011. In Darlington we plan to act as one of the first pilot areas to introduce the Smart ticketing, part funding the pilot through our involvement in the Interreg IVB funded programme, 'Boosting Advanced Public Transport Systems'. We are sharing best practise with the other BAPTS partners, in particular three cities with more experience of Smart ticketing Eindhoven, Lille and Frankfurt.

The Kickstart Bid

9. The Kickstart funding is essentially gap funding over the period 2009/10 to 2011/2012. The Kickstart bid can only provide revenue funding direct to the bus operator that is the funding gap between income and expenditure for operating the service. Arriva have calculated that this would be £138,101 over the three years of the pilot service and this is the amount sought in the bid.

10. The extended route will require some capital works to provide new bus shelters. Marchday Group PLC, the owners of Lingfield Point have committed £15,000 towards the provision of bus stops within their estate for two new bus stops, shelters and real time information equipment. The Council has already programmed and secured funding over the life of the Kickstart funding period that can assist in the provision of bus shelters on the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor, improved real time information services and marketing and promotion. This is through the Local Transport Plan (£30,000) European Regional Development Fund (£34,000) and the Joint Strategy Unit (£10,000). There is therefore no additional financial commitment required by the Council over and above existing agreed programmes and budgets.

Outcome of Consultation

11. As part of the bus network review which took place in the autumn of 2007 and market research carried out by Arriva North East identified that 20% of people want to make a journey which is beyond the town centre. In a survey conducted by the DfT in the Office for National Statistics 2002, into people's attitudes to local bus services, regular users were asked what they liked about the bus services they used. The most frequently mentioned attribute was the fact that it was a direct route to where they wanted to go (43%); with value for money the five most mentioned attribute (22%). Market Research was undertaken as part of the review of supported bus services in Darlington in 2008. As part of this research face to face interviews were carried out by a market research company using a sample of passengers using supported bus service journeys and this showed that 45% (195) of those interviewed used the bus to go to work. A self-completion questionnaire showed that 46% (434) needed to make a journey in order to get to a health appointment.
12. County Durham and Darlington Transport for Health Steering Group has identified that residents in some parts of Darlington will be worse off when some health services are relocated to Bishop Auckland Hospital as there are poor public transport links. This service will enable residents in Lingfield and Red Hall to travel directly to both the memorial Hospital in Darlington and the hospital in Bishop Auckland. Lingfield Point has held a number of consultation events to show their plans for the site and feedback has included the need to limit the number of cars to the site to further enhance sustainable travel options.
13. The current service 1,1b operates from Tow Law via Bishop Auckland and a number of villages, to Darlington town centre. The enhancement is the extension of this service from the town centre to Lingfield Point, via Haughton Road and the recently opened Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor (**Appendix 1**). The service currently operates from Monday to Sunday, and the enhancement will operate Monday to Saturday, on a half hourly frequency.
14. New bus stops (initially two) will be created including shelters and a real time display which will be erected within Lingfield Point, funded by Lingfield Point. A new footpath will be installed from the existing bus stop location on the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor to Coombe Drive (Red Hall Estate) and a new bus shelter will be erected at this stop, so that the enhanced service is accessible by potential passengers living on the Red Hall Estate. This would be funded through the Local Transport Plan. Real time equipment will also be erected at the town centre bus stop served by the service 1,1b and at Darlington College, funded through DBC's apportionment of the Tees Valley's funding for real time.

Major improvements to the junction layout on West Auckland/Woodland Road are planned in order to improve the punctuality/reliability of this service, funded through the Tees Valley Major Scheme Bid for Bus Network Improvements.

Risks

15. The main risk to the Council is that there is no certainty that extended service 1, 1b would become commercially viable following the kick start pilot. Should this occur there is likely to be pressure on the Council to support the service. The risk is reduce by the following analysis:
16. Arriva North East predict that the extension will become commercially viable after the Kickstart funding period, based on Arriva's commercial experience of similar projects including previous Kickstart schemes in other areas. A joined up and effective marketing strategy will be employed by Arriva North East, DBC and Lingfield Point that will ensure the profile of the service is raised at key stages both prior to and post introduction of the extension to the service, which will help to secure increased patronage. The funding is in place for the marketing and promotion during the period 2009 to 2012. It is anticipated that Section 106 agreements to be negotiated in association with developments at Lingfield Point and Durham Cathedral Land for Sustainable Transport Measures, including personalised travel marketing for staff and new householders will continue to provide resources for promotion and marketing beyond 2012.
17. The number of passengers travelling to and from Lingfield Point will increase as the number of employers at the site rises over the next three years. There is currently approximately 2,000 staff on site, and an effective marketing strategy will be employed, aided by DBC's Local Motion initiative, to encourage a modal shift from car use. In addition it is proposed to develop 1250 houses on the site which will create travel demand between the site and the town centre to access retail and leisure facilities. Darlington College will attract more students as in 2011 it is proposed that Teesside University's new campus will be operational alongside the College, at Central Park. DBC's Workplace Travel Plan Officer will work closely in conjunction with Lingfield Point, Darlington Hospital, the College and the new University to actively promote sustainable travel options through effective Travel Plans.
18. Arriva are currently undertaking a pilot study in Yorkshire and Kent of the 'm-ticket', which utilises mobile phones to purchase day, weekly and four weekly tickets and this experience and learning will be brought to the project.