

Report to: Executive Committee
Date: 5th July 2005
Report of: Executive Member for Environment and Transport
Subject: District Council Response to the County Durham Local Transport Plan (LTP 2)
Wards: All

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is firstly to agree a response and feed into the consultation process of the formulation of LTP2. Secondly, to seek approval of the Executive to support the response attached to this report (appendix 1) and to provide an opportunity for members to contribute to the draft plan.

2. Consultation

2.1 In preparing this report officer's from Planning and Development Control, Regeneration and Partnerships and East Durham Business Service, the Director of Regeneration and Development and the Executive Members for Regeneration.

2.2 In relation to the LTP2 process and formulation the following consultations have taken place: -

- Initial consultation on the aims, objectives and priorities within LTP 2 with the District Council (refer to Executive report, Local Transport Plan 2 – Consultation, 18th May 2004)
- Outline of the consultation process upon the LTP 2 draft document to the Executive of East Durham Local Strategic Partnership, April 1st 2005.
- Public consultation upon the draft LTP document at Shotton Hall, on the evening of 5th April 2005.
- Leaflet drop across the District via the 'Countywide' newsletter.
- Feed back session to the East Durham LSP forum in relation to the outcome of the public consultation period, 13th May 2005.

Throughout this period liaison with the Transport Working Group (Sub Group of the Environment Implementation Group of East Durham LSP) has taken place.

The aim of the response is to highlight the main issues that arise from the document and a local context for potential future infrastructure investment in transport priorities.

3. Background

3.1 This will be the second Local Transport Plan for County Durham for the 5-year period from 2006 to 2011. The LTP 2 is effectively a means of outlining capital investment into transport infrastructure throughout County Durham for the period of the life of the plan. Durham County Council is preparing it in partnership with local organisations including the County's seven District councils together with the main operators and providers of transport. It is required to comply, as far as possible, with Government Guidance on the Preparation of Local Transport Plans, issued in July 2004. The effect of this is that the content of the document is somewhat prescriptive in the way it develops.

3.2 Following on from the first Local Transport Plan (LTP1), the plan sets out a strategy for the continuing development of transport, together with further proposals it is intended to implement over the next 5 years. It is important to realise that the plan should look beyond this period and as far ahead as the Strategic Vision would provide. LTP2 therefore seeks to continue to tackle the current problems and the future challenges for

transport in County Durham.

- 3.3 The Plan looks to further develop the integration of the transport system that will meet the social and economic needs of people while offering protection of the environment and the situation that faces everyone in relation to climate change. The proposals within the Plan will also be directed to improving the accessibility of people without access to a car and looks to invest in the public transport system that many residents depend on. The aim is to establish a public transport system that offers reliability, is attractive and easy to use and meets the requirements of the traveling public. One other primary aim is to improve the quality of life and the health of people in County Durham. Clearly transport is a major influence on these issues and by planning to do the right things at this stage a real difference can be made.
- 3.4 The plan ultimately needs to help deliver the priorities for transport that we share with the Government, as well as accessibility and public transport and the general quality of life and health. LTP2 will also aim to support issues of congestion, road safety and air quality.
- 3.5 The submission of the draft plan aims to secure in the region of £78 million pounds for the Transport priorities of County Durham. These are indicative allocations and have been sub divided into £29million for the integrated transport block and major schemes (new / innovative capital improvement schemes) and £49million for maintenance. The deadline for the submission of the draft plan to Regional Government Office is July 2005. Final allocations for 2006/7 and indicative allocations for future years (to be within 75% of allocation) will be issued in December 05 to inform the final / agreed version of the plan prior to the plan period.
- 3.6 The process does allow for an uplift in resources depending on how well the plan is brought forward within the draft submission process (i.e. prior to December 2005).
- 3.7 The LTP 2 guidance (2004) states clearly the requirement for the transport authority to work closely with established Local Strategic Partnerships in establishing its plans and align their planning process with that of Local Community Strategies. This has manifested itself in the County Durham Plan as having 8 local area programmes (one for each LSP area as well as one for Durham City). The attached consultation response is expected to inform this section in particular.

4 **Position Statement**

The LTP2 document has been continually under development for some time and the content has been increasing in its detail. However, there is no full publicly available up to date draft at this time and comments in this section are as accurate as the information that has been available.

4.1 **Purpose**

LTP2 will set out the transport aims and objectives for County Durham and the strategies that are to be pursued over the five - year period, within the context of the long term Vision for the County. LTP2 draws on national, regional and local guidance. To comply with this guidance, LTP2 addresses National Shared Priorities that are shared with the Government:

- Access to jobs and services.
- Reduced problems of congestion.
- Improved public transport.
- Reduced problems of air quality.
- Improved safety.

There is a further local priority for:

Improved quality of life and health.

LTP2 needs to reflect the wider objectives and policies for developing the North East, and therefore it has to fit in with the regional policies and strategies. In this respect, there are 3 key documents that will influence the new Plan: -

The Regional Spatial Strategy, The Regional Transport Strategy and The Northern Way Growth Strategy.

As well as the national & regional influences, LTP2 also needs to reflect other local strategies:

- County Durham Economic Strategy.
- Community Strategies.
- Renaissance Initiative.
- Urban & Rural.
- County Durham Environment Strategy.
- Tourism Strategy.
- Public Realm Strategy.

4.2 Aims and Objectives

The Transport Challenge is to develop an integrated transport system to enable the residents of County Durham residents better access to jobs, leisure and services throughout the county and beyond. The aims and objectives have been derived in order to meet the shared priorities and address the local problems identified within County Durham.

Aims

- To build liveable streets and neighbourhoods.
- To protect the environment.
- To bring about equality & social inclusion through better accessibility.
- To instil a culture of safety.
- To fulfil the transport role in the delivery and support of a vibrant and efficient economy.
- To contribute to the improvement of peoples' health and access to health services.

Objectives

- Deal effectively with road congestion.
- Protect and improve the quality of the environment in the County's towns and villages.
- Improve young people's access to a wide range of opportunities.
- Raise the level of satisfaction of residents with their local area as a place to live.
- Reduce fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Ensure new housing is sustainable.

- Tackle climate change by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases from transport resources.
- Sustain and enhance the quality of the County's biodiversity and landscape.
- Reduce waste by increasing the recycling and re-use of materials in the construction and maintenance of the highway network.
- Improve access to the local services through a sustainable, integrated transport system.
- Increase access to rural areas and to major links in the County.
- Develop a network of "Community Hubs" easily accessible to the whole community by sustainable transport.
- Raise the level of satisfaction for users of public transport.
- Assert a level of understanding amongst all travellers of their personal responsibilities regarding conduct and safety.
- Improve highway safety for all users.
- Increase the number of businesses with broadband internet access.
- Improve access by patients, employees & visitors to health service sites through a sustainable, integrated transport system.
- Increase the numbers of people using buses, walking and cycling.
- Improve accessibility to GP's and primary health care professionals.
- improve air quality by reducing traffic.

4.3 Delivery Programme

LTP2 will be delivered on an area basis in liaison with the Local Strategic Partnerships and area programmes will be developed to ensure a local focus on spending. The Government has established a new Transport Innovation Fund to support additional innovative measures put forward by authorities. It is being targeted at things like better public transport, greater modal shift and more road pricing. This provides the potential to boost our provisional allocations through this new fund.

Furthermore, bids can be made separately for major schemes (which are those where costs would exceed £5million) that are deemed essential to the transport strategy. However, there is unlikely to be any government funding for such schemes before 2008 and approval is given only if strict value for money and environmental criteria can be met.

The 5-year implementation programme is being drawn up using guideline allocations to evolve a realistic and deliverable range of schemes and measures.

Over the full Plan period, it is envisaged that about **52%** of the integrated transport block capital resources will be **directed towards projects aimed at better accessibility and the improvement of public transport**. It is planned to allocate about **18%** towards the **reduction of accidents and increasing road safety**. About **20%** will support programmes designed to enhance the **quality of life, standard of health and make better places for people to live**. Some **8%** will be spent on **reducing road congestion** with the balance of **2%** dealing with issues of air quality and climate change.

At this stage it is anticipated that spending on the **maintenance and improvement of all classes of road** would account for about **42%** of the maintenance block allocation with a further **19%** being spent on footways. Up to **30%**, would provide for the essential

maintenance of the bridge stock and works to the **remaining quota of highway structures, still to be strengthened** under the outstanding programme carried over from LTP1. The balance of the allocation of **9%** would fund the continuing **Integrated Route Management programme** and some **minor highway improvement schemes**, selected to deal with locations where congestion or road safety is an issue.

During the Plan period, the Transport Asset Management Plan will become increasingly influential in the way that spending on maintenance and integrated transport schemes is prioritised. This change in approach, implementing asset management principles, will help to ensure best value for money.

4.4 County Wide and Area Programmes

The budgeting for some schemes and measures are more effectively dealt with by considering the outcomes at a more strategic, county-wide level – for example maintenance of the highway network or the Safer Routes to Schools programme. However, others will originate and be more appropriately considered at a local level – the need for walking and cycling or disabled access improvements for example.

4.5 The Allocation Process

One of the issues brought up during public consultation was in relation to how the capital funding would be allocated over the 7 LSP areas and the need to address the particular problems of the rural areas.

In response to this, the integrated block has been top-sliced by 10%, to provide funding for those parts of the County that are defined as rural. Of the 7 areas, only Chester le Street has no rural content while clearly the two Dales areas of Wear Valley and Teesdale are predominantly rural with lesser proportions in the remainder. On this basis, the rural dimension allocation is shared as follows:

LSP Area	Percentage share of Rural Dimension
Chester le Street	Nil
City of Durham	5%
Easington	8%
Sedgefield	8%
Derwentside	14%
Wear Valley	30%
Teesdale	35%

The County - wide programme is then assembled with those selected areas of expenditure that are more strategic and which need to be decided on a whole county basis. The balance remaining from the planning guideline after the rural dimension and the County programme total expenditure have been set is the amount to be made available to fund the Area programmes.

This figure is then split between all 7 areas on the basis of the following equally weighted factors:

- population
- extent of deprived wards as measured through the SOA index value

LSP Area	Population	Measure of Deprivation Average Super Output Area (SOA) score
Chester le Street	11%	21.41
Derwentside	17%	28.22
City of Durham	18%	18.51
Easington	19%	41.75
Sedgefield	18%	29.06
Teesdale	5%	16.42
Wear Valley	12%	32.57

The calculated share of the Area Residue will then be then summed with the area share of the Rural Dimension to provide the available funding for each individual LSP area programme.

4.6 Major Schemes

As with LTP1, we feel there is a need for some major schemes within the next five years if we are to achieve the objectives of this new Plan. The cost threshold for a scheme to be classed as a major is £5million. The funding required for approved major scheme proposals is provided by the Government, separately from the block allocations for integrated transport and maintenance described above. Bearing in mind the government's financial commitments for ongoing schemes nationally, indications at this stage point to no funding being available for new major schemes before 2008 at the earliest.

Furthermore, before awarding funding approval to any proposals, the Department for Transport (DfT) will seek to ensure that only those schemes that look likely to deliver the best value for money are prioritised for funding. The draft plan does outline that the East Durham Link Road remains a priority and features within its content. Indeed considerations are being undertaken to accelerate the delivery of the scheme and it has been outlined to Regional Government Office that the scheme is the County Councils current highway priority.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial

It is not considered that there will be any direct financial implications to the council as a result of the LTP 2 document other than those mentioned in the report. Financial implications may arise during the implementation of the plan as schemes arise and investment requirements become clear.

5.2 Legal

It is not considered that there are any legal implications not otherwise referenced in the report.

5.3 Policy

It is not considered that there is any policy implications not otherwise referenced in the report.

5.4 **Risk**

A risk assessment has been completed and the necessary actions required to manage the identified risks will be implemented.

5.5 **Communications**

It is not considered that there is any communications implications not otherwise referenced in the report.

6. **Corporate Implications**

6.1 **Corporate Plan and Priorities**

The implementation of this proposal will see a positive contribution to a number of the Council's corporate priorities, as contained in the Corporate Plan 2004-05. It will directly support the priority of 'Better Transport' in a strategic context for the period 2006-2011.

6.2 **Service Plan**

The plan and associated partnerships directly relates to the objectives of the Regeneration & Partnerships section, as contained within the Service Unit work plan. In particular 'maximise the impact of neighbourhood renewal', 'develop policy to address socio-economic problems', 'facilitate partnerships in delivering projects that deliver change' and 'support the continuous development of the LSP'.

6.3 **Equality and Diversity**

The plan will need to demonstrate it clearly addresses equality and diversity issues within the scrutiny process undertaken by Government Office.

6.4 **E-Government**

It is not considered that there are any direct E-Government implications not otherwise referenced in the report.

6.5 **Sustainability**

The plan has strategic fit with the Council's Local Agenda 21 Strategy under the key theme of 'transport' and the draft LTP plan has been required to produce a Strategic Environmental Assessment for the County as part of the process.

6.6 **Crime and Disorder**

It is considered that there will be no implications on crime and disorder not otherwise referenced in the report.

7 **Recommendations**

The Executive considers agreement to the draft response (attached) to the draft LTP 2 document and provides comment to be included as appropriate.

