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**Local Transport Plan
and Transit 15**

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Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a brief overview of the Local Transport Plan and Transit 15 and their current position.

Background

- 2 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory document originally introduced by the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2001, with the third and current plan, LTP3, coming into effect from April 2011. The Plan sets out the authority's policies and objectives for the improvement of all modes of transport.
- 3 Transit 15 is a scheme conceived under LTP2 whereby Government funding of £5 million through the Regional Allocation Fund, was made available to adopt a corridor approach for bus priority schemes.

Local Transport Plan

- 4 Although previous LTPs have had a fixed five year life span, at the introduction of the third plan, this timescale was removed allowing authorities to state the duration of their Plan. For our LTP, no end date was set allowing focus on a replacement when it is deemed necessary to update.
- 5 In the guidance for the preparation of Local Transport Plans, the DfT set out National Transport Goals and associated challenges/objectives for which it was expected that individual LTPs would reflect these as their overarching priorities.
- 6 As suggested, these national goals were adopted for the Durham LTP. However they were worded more appropriately as a local interpretation to link with other council priorities. The goals and objectives adopted are:
 - A Stronger Economy through Regeneration
 - Maintain or improve reliability and predictability of journey times on key routes for business, commuting and freight.
 - Improve connectivity and access to labour markets of key business centres.

- Deliver transport improvements required to support sustainable housing provision.
- Ensure local transport networks are resistant and adaptable to shocks such as economic shocks, adverse weather, accidents, attacks and impacts of climate change.
- Reduce Our Carbon Output
 - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Safer & Healthier Travel
 - Reduce the risk of death or injury from accidents.
 - Reduce the costs to health of transport including air quality impacts.
 - Improve health by encouraging and enabling physically active travel.
 - Reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour on transport networks.
- Better Accessibility to Services
 - Ensure disadvantaged people in deprived or remote areas can access employment opportunities, key services, social networks and goods.
- Improve Quality of Life and a Healthy Natural Environment
 - Reduce numbers of people and dwellings exposed to high levels of transport noise.
 - Minimise impacts of transport on natural environment, heritage and landscape.
 - Improve the whole journey experience for transport users.
 - Enhance quality of life by improving accessibility to key services, social networks, goods and places.
 - Integrate transport into streetscapes and connections between neighbourhoods.

7 For County Durham, the five national transport goals were complemented by a sixth – Maintenance of the Transport Asset to reflect the importance of the existing highway network.

8 The Local Transport Plan 3 was written to align with the Sustainable Community Strategy, Regeneration Statement and County Durham Plan Core Strategy. In line with these other strategies and council priorities, the goals were prioritised:

A Stronger Economy through Regeneration is considered to be the top priority. However, given the intrinsic role and reliance of transport infrastructure in supporting economic activity, means that **Maintain the Transport Asset** must be considered the second priority goal. Sustainable growth without irreversible and increasing damage to the environment is something we have to strive for and **Reduction of Carbon Output** therefore is considered to be the third priority goal. The remaining goals of **Better Accessibility, Safer & Healthier Travel, Improving Quality of Life & a Healthy Natural Environment** are each considered to have equal ranking.

9 Therefore, it follows that prioritisation of the goals in this order also determines the relative importance of the objectives for LTP3 or at least until the point at which the Plan is next reviewed.

- 10 There are also 36 policies contained within LTP3 to support the delivery of the goals and objectives. Details of how these policies align with the goals and objectives are shown in Appendix 2 and 3.

Local Transport Plan Delivery

- 11 To deliver these goals and objectives, in line with the funding streams from the DfT, the LTP is split into two areas:

- Integrated Transport Block (RED) - looking to improve transport infrastructure and promote more sustainable means of travel.
- Maintenance Block (Neighbourhood Services) - maintaining the existing infrastructure.

- 12 The Integrated Transport Block programme is split into three areas:

- Sustainable Travel – this contains the majority of schemes in the programme and covers a diverse range of topics:
 - **Bus infrastructure** – improvements to physical elements of bus stops including bus shelters, bus markings, raised access kerbs and access to bus stops.
 - **Bus Priority** – Reallocation of road space for bus lanes, re-phasing of traffic signals, bus gates and other similar improvements to support the running of bus services. Until 2015/16, this has been prioritised and funded by Transit 15.
 - **Casualty reduction** – Engineering works, undertaken as part of the programme of Accident investigation and Prevention (AIP) centre around remedial measures in line with the Casualty Reduction Strategy. These works are delivered as a mix of area, route, specific sites and mass action initiatives.
 - **Demand management** - Demand responsive budget, linked with civil parking enforcement, where issues arising require the provision of new road markings, signage, bollards or other related measures along with their required TROs. There is also the need to ensure signs and markings are appropriate for their locations.
 - **Taxi infrastructure** – improvements to taxi facilities, waiting areas and signage.
 - **Workplace travel planning & attitudinal change** – looking at attitude change through publicising the importance of reducing dependence on the private car and encouraging the use of alternative modes of transport, especially for journeys that are made on a regular basis and those of a shorter distance. This will be done in parallel with appropriate infrastructure improvements which will play their part in demonstrating that alternatives to the car can be easy and attractive, this is currently being carried by supporting our LSTF projects.
 - **Community transport** – support to the community transport sector in the provision of vehicles supporting communities and bringing greater accessibility to people.
 - **Public transport information** – improvements to timetable provision, travel information and real-time displays to ensure the public have accurate information available to them.

- **Driver information/UTMC** - Providing reliable information for drivers can assist the movement of traffic by enabling better informed decision-making by the drivers themselves. Introduction of a UTMC database in County Durham will be of considerable benefit in helping to provide reliable journey times, reduce congestion and assist people in making more sustainable travel choices.
 - **Air quality and noise** – support for the monitoring of air quality issues in the AQMAs
 - **Electric vehicle infrastructure** – supporting the use of electric vehicles by the provision of charging points throughout the county.
 - **Walking and cycling** – developing and improving the pedestrian and cycling networks to make these sustainable modes of transport more attractive and accessible for all. This has a direct link to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and Cycling Strategy.
 - **Rail infrastructure** – improvements to rail stations and access to them
 - **Local accessibility** – access improvements to existing local routes.
- Economic/Transport Corridors – these schemes involve the improvement of the main freight and commuter routes across the county by removing or reducing delay points. These tend to be the bigger more expensive schemes and can lead to the requirement of additional capital funding for schemes developed that are beyond the scope of LTP funding to deliver.

13 Schemes currently being developed or recently completed include:

- A167 Sunderland Bridge Roundabout,
- Transit 15,
- A167/A693 Northlands Roundabout Improvements
- Durham Western Relief Road,
- Belmont Business Park Junction Improvements
- A693 Pelton/Perkinsville Junction Improvements

14 The introduction of cycling super routes also comes under this stream where we are looking to provide core cycle routes through the county. The initial corridor, where some infrastructure is already in place, is the A167 which forms part of the proposed Great North Cycleway (Blyth to Darlington). Due to the scale of this scheme and the limited funding available each year, new sections of this route will be completed in stages.

- Whole-Town Approach – this element focuses on the twelve main settlements in the county in line with the Regeneration Statement and looks at a range of schemes to address localised transport issues.

15 The Maintenance Block is split into three areas:

- Highways Maintenance
- Bridge Maintenance
- Street Lighting

Local Transport Plan Funding

- 16 The DfT provides capital grant funding via two formula based block allocations of Integrated Transport Block (ITB) and Maintenance Block.
- 17 At the start of LTP3 the ITB funding allocation was significantly reduced across the country and the impact for DCC was a previous annual allocation of around £6million was reduced to £2.984million and has remained around the £3million mark since.
- 18 The Maintenance Block allocation was £11.212million at the start of LTP3 at and has reduced each year.

Year	Maintenance Block (million)	Integrated Transport Block (million)
1 – 2011/12	11.212	2.984
2 – 2012/13	10.679	3.183
3 – 2013/14	10.132	3.183
4 – 2014/15	9.780	4.475

- 19 This year (Year 4) the ITB was to increase whilst the maintenance block continued to be reduced. However, following discussions between Neighbourhood Services and RED, it was felt that a better reflection of council priorities would be achieved by diverting the additional IT Block funding into Highway Maintenance.
- 20 In addition to this, due to various adverse weather events, the DfT also provided additional Highways Maintenance funding over 2013/14 and 2014/15. This has resulted in the following allocations.

Year	Maintenance Block (million)	Integrated Transport Block (million)
3 – 2013/14	11.968	3.183
4 – 2014/15	12.079	3.183

- 21 Although central government has increased the transport funding allocation nationally for the fifth year (2015/16), as this is to be 'top-sliced' to form the Local Growth Scheme fund, local authorities will in fact see a further reduction to their ITB funding. For Durham County Council the indicative figure is £2.566million.

Other Funding

- 22 Improvement schemes of a greater scale (such as roundabouts or new bus stations) are generally outside the scope of LTP capital funding and require support from other sources.
- 23 The Transit 15 project was enabled with additional DfT funding. The Council's capital programme is funding Sunderland Bridge Roundabout scheme. We have also been awarded Office for Low Emission Vehicle (OLEV) funding to introduce further electric vehicle charging points at County Council offices.

- 24 Nationally, there has now been four tranches of Local Pinch Point Funding made available by the DfT. We were successful in securing funding from Tranche 2 to relieve congestion at A1 (M) Junction 63 and Picktree Lane Roundabouts in Chester-le-Street.
- 25 In addition to this capital funding support, we currently have two Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) projects underway utilising revenue funding from the DfT. The LocalMotion (promoting sustainable travel in the south of the county) and Walk to School Outreach (promoting walking in schools by Living Streets) projects are due to finish in March 2015. However, bids have been submitted for further LSTF funding in 2015/16 with decisions expected in July.

The Future of the LTP

- 26 The creation of the North East Combined Authority (NECA) covering the LA7 area from April 2014 has seen the legal status of 'Local Transport Authority' transfer from the County Council to the new Authority. As a result the statutory powers previously held by the County Council were transferred to the NECA. While most of these powers have been delegated back to the respective local authorities, NECA will oversee the delivery of transport functions for Durham County Council along with the other six local authorities.
- 27 Although a definite timeline or structure is not yet in place, it is expected that the NECA will have a new Strategic Local Transport Plan in place to cover the whole combined authority area supported by separate delivery plans covering individual authorities. It is hoped to develop a draft Combined Authority Local Transport Plan in 2014-15 with consultation and formal adoption of the plan in 2015-16. These timescales fit well with the need to refresh our current LTP.

Transit 15

- 28 The project is to improve the journey experience for passengers along key commuting routes and making travelling by bus more attractive for commuters.
- 29 Following assessment and liaison with the bus operators, the corridors identified were between Durham City and Birtley, Bishop Auckland, Consett, Coxhoe, Crook, Sherburn, Stanley.
- 30 Transit 15 has continued to build on past public transport investment by Durham County Council and operators, in bus stations, bus stops, real-time information, bus priority and new vehicles and service development by:
- Reducing journey times and improving reliability for bus users through removal of known delay points on the network.
 - Enhanced personal safety for bus users by improving the waiting environment at bus stops and ensuring that they are not obstructed by indiscriminate parking.

- Tackling congestion on the highway network by bringing about a shift in travel choice from the private car to bus.
 - Moving towards a 15 minute bus service frequency on key routes through partnership with Arriva and Go North East.
- 31 The project as a whole has taken longer than was initially envisaged, mostly due to the level of consultation that has been involved with most schemes. This has also led to some schemes not progressing and being removed from the programme.
- 32 However, schemes that have been successfully completed include:
- A693 Stanley Roundabout – filter lanes to enter/exit bus station road
 - C57 Lanchester Junction – widening of junction mouth to reduce queues
 - A691/C62 Kaysburn Roundabout - Improving the approaches to the roundabout to provide more capacity
 - New Inn Traffic Signals – widening of lanes and junction to improve manoeuvres
 - North Road/B6532 Durham – bus stop replacements and repositioning.
 - A177 Durham High School – widening road to provide access turn lane
 - A167 Barley Mow Roundabout – widening of road to increase lanes
 - A167/B6288 Croxdale Roundabout – provision of bus only lane
 - Bus shelter improvements – renewing bus shelters along the corridors
- 33 A scheme to improve Northlands Roundabout, Chester-le-Street, is currently under construction. This scheme, which involves the re-modelling of the roundabout and introduction of traffic signals, is also an Economic/Transport Corridor scheme and the last currently planned fully Transit 15 funded scheme to be constructed.
- 34 Transit 15 will also be supporting the development of Durham Bus Station being the focal point of the corridors.
- 35 Other schemes initially identified that have not taken place due to consultation or other delays, may still go ahead under LTP or other funding.

Recommendations

- 36 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment upon the information provided during the presentation of this report.

Background Papers

Local Transport Plan 3 – Transport Strategy (April 2011)
 Local Transport Plan 3 – Delivery Strategy (April 2011)
 Local Transport Plan 3 – Appendices (April 2011)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – The budget for LTP3 in 2014-15 is £3.183m. Transit 15 had a total project budget of £5m

Staffing – None.

Risk – None

Equality and Diversity – Schemes within each project take into consideration equality and diversity

Accommodation – None

Crime and Disorder – Schemes within each project seek to discourage antisocial behaviour through their design.

Human Rights - None

Consultation – Consultation is carried out on individual schemes

Procurement - None

Disability Discrimination Act – It is ensured that people with disabilities are considered in the design of individual schemes.

Legal Implications – None

