

# AREA TRANSPORT STRATEGIES: GUIDANCE NOTE

## 1. Introduction and Background

- a) The Council's current transport strategy – as set out in the first Local Stockton-on-Tees Transport Plan – is Borough-wide. The targets and indicators set in the Plan and monitored through Annual Progress Reports are also Borough-wide in nature, with the exception of the targets relating to the Road Traffic Reduction Act, which relate specifically to the Thornaby and Yarm cordons.
- b) Whilst this approach has been reasonably effective to date, there is a growing recognition (enshrined in the guidance produced by the Department for Transport for the preparation of the second round of Local Transport Plans) that a 'one size fits all' approach is not necessarily the best way to address all transport-related issues, and that intervention at the appropriate level is the most effective way forward. Although more strategic issues – for example air travel and long-distance journeys via road and rail – should be handled at a regional or sub-regional level, many aspects of local transport provision are best dealt with at the local level. Moreover, the polycentric nature of the Borough, which comprises a number of separate town centres surrounded by a largely rural hinterland, means that the relative importance of different issues will vary from area to area: for instance, whilst traffic congestion is a key issue in Yarm and Ingleby Barwick, the same does not apply to Billingham.
- c) For this reason, it is proposed to adopt a hierarchical approach to the development of the transport strategies to be included in the second Local Transport Plan (LTP2). This will involve the development of a number of area-based transport strategies, all of which will feed into an overarching transport strategy for the Borough. This overarching strategy will, in turn, link directly to the North East Regional Spatial Strategy, together with any strategies – for example public transport, accessibility and congestion – that may be developed at the sub-regional level for inclusion in LTP2. This Guidance Note sets out a framework for the development of Area Transport Strategies within the Borough.
- d) Key to the success of this area-based approach will be effective consultation with local transport stakeholders. A suggested mechanism for this process is, therefore, set out in this Guidance Note, together with a list of potential stakeholders.

## 2. Area Boundaries

- a) It is proposed to develop four area strategies, based on the four Area Boards of the Local Strategic Partnership (Stockton Renaissance). The geographical areas covered by the four Boards are illustrated below.



- b) The principal urban (and rural) centres covered by each of the Board areas are:

**Billingham** Billingham (The Clarences, Wolviston and Wynyard).

**Central** Stockton and Norton (Carlton, Redmarshall, Stillington, Thorpe Thewles and Whitton).

**Eastern** Thornaby and Ingleby Barwick (Hilton and Maltby).

**Western** Yarm and Eaglescliffe/Egglecliffe (Aislaby, Elton, Kirklevington and Long Newton).

- c) There are two key reasons behind the decision to adopt this approach. Firstly, it demonstrates a clear link between the development of transport policy and the Local Strategic Partnership and, hence, the evidence of corporate commitment to development of the second Local Transport Plan required by the Department for

Transport. Secondly, and more pragmatically, the development of four Area Strategies is the maximum that can be reasonably be resourced within the available timescale.

### **3. Scope of Area-Based Strategies**

a) As outlined in the Introduction to this note, the scope of the Strategies will be dictated by the issues that are best dealt with at a local level. This suggests that the Strategies should encompass the following:

- Bus Infrastructure Schemes, including low floor bus stops, bus laybys and shelters and bus priority measures (e.g. bus lanes and bus priority at junctions);
- Other Local Public Transport Issues (e.g. local rail and taxis).
- Local Safety Schemes;
- Traffic Calming & Speed Reduction Measures;
- Safer Routes to School Schemes;
- Cycle Routes and Cycle Facilities;
- Walking Routes and Pedestrian Crossing Facilities;
- Local Freight Issues (e.g. HGV routes in urban areas);
- Traffic Management Schemes (e.g. waiting restrictions, residents' parking schemes);
- Local Highway and Footpath Maintenance issues; and
- Schemes of a more strategic nature.

However, this list is not exhaustive and it is likely that other issues of local importance will emerge during the consultation process within each area.

### **4. Stakeholders**

a) It is proposed that the development of each Area Transport Strategy should be overseen by a Steering Group, comprising the members of the Area Partnership Board plus the following invitees:

- Ward Councillors and relevant Geographical Cabinet Member;
- Parish/Town Councils (one representative from each);
- Formally constituted Residents' Groups (one representative from each);
- Interest Groups (e.g. Stockton Pedestrians Group, Stockton Blind Peoples' Voice and local cycling groups) (one representative from each);
- Local Schools (one representative);
- Older Persons' Representative (one representative);
- Young Persons' Representative (one representative);
- Road Safety Fora (one representative);
- North East Chamber of Commerce (Stockton Group) (one representative);
- Bus operators and other relevant service providers (one representative from each);
- Stockton-on-Tees Taxi Quality Partnership (one representative);
- Stockton-on-Tees Freight Quality Partnership (one representative); and
- Cleveland Police (one representative at senior level).

A total membership of 20 to 25 is envisaged for each of the four Steering Groups.

- b) Although the press will not be formally invited to meetings of the Steering Groups, they will be admitted to observe proceedings upon request.

## **5. Consultation Process**

- a) The following procedure is suggested for each area:

i) Initial Stakeholder Meeting

- Introduction.
- Presentation by Council Officers, summarising the context within which the Area Strategies are being developed (i.e. Local Transport Plan Guidance, funding constraints, issues outside the Council's control).
- Whiteboard – local transport issues, as perceived by stakeholders.
- Analysis of main issues identified during the whiteboard session.
- Whiteboard – possible solutions to these issues.
- Summing up and conclusions.

ii) Follow-Up Stakeholder Workshop

- Introduction.
- Reminder of outcome of Initial Stakeholder Meeting.
- Council position on issues and solutions identified during Initial Stakeholder Meeting, talking into account compatibility with national and regional transport policy, available funding and analysis of risks associated with delivery/non-delivery.
- Draft Strategy Proposal.
- Stakeholders' views on proposed Draft Strategy.

iii) Public Consultation Exercise

- Public exhibition, staffed by Council officers.
- Page on Council website.
- Media coverage (local television, 'Stockton News', 'Evening Gazette', 'Northern Echo', local community newsletters/magazines etc.).
- Public feedback actively encouraged.

iv) Publish Final Strategy

- Including Implementation Plan and monitoring regime.

v) Secure Approval from Full Renaissance Board

## **6. Ownership of the Strategy Development Process**

- a) Whilst the Council will guide the process, it is crucial that ownership of the Area Strategies rests with the Steering Groups. Facilitation of the process will be of key importance to the success of this approach and, for this reason, all officers involved in the development of the Area Strategies should receive appropriate training beforehand.

## **7. Allocation of Capital and Revenue Funding**

- a) Once complete, the schemes and initiatives identified within the four Area Strategies will form the basis of the Council's capital programme over the five-year period of the second Local Transport Plan. As, based on the Council's Provisional Planning Guidelines issued by the Department for Transport in December 2004, the number of contending schemes is likely to be greater than the budget available to deliver them, appropriate criteria against which these schemes can be prioritised will need to be agreed beforehand.
- b) Consideration will also need to be given to how priorities emerging from the Area Strategies will influence the allocation of revenue funding over the same period. This will be particularly important in the case of any proposed improvements to bus services or highway maintenance issues.

## **8. Approval Process and Timescale**

### **a) Framework for Strategy Development**

- i) Following approval by Stockton Renaissance on 15 February 2005, the proposed framework for the development of Area Transport Strategies will be reported to the four Area Partnership Boards. Any feedback from the Area Boards will be reported to the meeting of the full Renaissance Board on 12 April 2005, where a decision on the final form of the framework will be made.

### **b) Area Transport Strategies**

- i) The overarching objective is to complete work on all four Area Strategies by December 2005. This will allow political approval to be secured prior to submission of the Full Second Local Transport Plan on 31 March 2006. It will, however, be important to demonstrate to the Department for Transport that significant progress has been made prior to submission of the Provisional Plan on 29 July 2005, and the timescale for the development of the Strategies will need to be tailored accordingly.
- ii) Once complete, and endorsed by the relevant Area Steering Group, each of the Area Strategies will be reported to the full Renaissance Board for approval. The full Board will also be responsible for resolving any disputes should it not prove possible to achieve consensus at Area Steering Group level.

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