

Stockton-on-Tees

Local Transport Plan, 2006 to 2011

Transport Asset Management Plan Progress Report

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This Report details the Council's progress to date in developing its Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP).

The Government expects local authorities to contribute to the delivery of efficient public services and avoid the unproductive use of public funds, for example through Gershon efficiency savings and the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) Programme. The Department for Transport (DfT) believes that local authorities could deliver better value for money by seeking efficiencies in their maintenance programmes, with the resultant savings used to fund other projects. There are several potential ways of achieving these efficiencies, one of which is the development of an effective TAMP.

The County Surveyors' Society defines asset management as 'a strategic approach that identifies the optimal allocation of resources for the management, operation, preservation and enhancement of the highway infrastructure to meet the needs of current and future customers'. The Council recognises and supports the drive to introduce asset management as the way forward for the maintenance of the authority's most valuable asset – the highway network.

Chapter 2: Context

Overview

This Chapter summarises the national, sub-regional and local context within which the TAMP is being developed.

National Context

At national level, the ability of a local authority to provide and cost accurate asset management information will inform and enable Central Government to prioritise its own spending needs.

The aim of Central Government to address the national highway maintenance backlog within its 10-year plan is commendable. Stockton supports this policy and continues to invest the vital additional funding necessary to target its own backlog and achieve the national aims. An effective TAMP is seen as a crucial tool in the efficient tackling of the maintenance backlog.

It is recognised that the Gershon Report has set out the need to drive efficiencies in all areas. In terms of asset management there is a commitment to achieving these savings through the best use of available resources.

Sub-Regional Context

Despite the unitary status of the authorities within the Tees Valley sub-region, all five have embraced and accepted the principle that 'economies of scale' can be achieved by the use of combined resources.

In the spirit of asset management, a number of initiatives have been instigated or undertaken to good effect. Not the least of these has been the formation of the Tees Valley Asset Management Working Group, which meets on a regular basis with a view to developing a generic TAMP and other associated policy documents. Stockton is hosting and leading the working group developing these strategic documents.

In terms of Highway Maintenance, a further example of close co-operation and pooling of resources has been the creation of the Tees Valley Condition Survey Consortium. All of the authorities within the sub-region have their condition surveys carried out by the same contractors in order to reap the benefit of discounted rates and comparability of results.

Middlesbrough Council has taken the lead role in the procurement of a five-year 'Condition Survey Contract'. This has resulted in the appointment of Data Collection Limited (DCL) as the Tees Valley's condition survey contractor. At the inaugural meeting between the Tees Valley Engineers and DCL there were positive contributions from all parties. DCL has indicated that the 'certainty' of five years' working with the Tees Valley Authorities will enable investment and development of technology for mutual benefit: for example, there are proposals to produce common Tees Valley BVPIs, to enable the five Authorities to compare and benchmark against regional results. This partnership approach is already resulting in Gershon efficiencies and the widespread adoption of good practice.

It is through the continuance of initiatives such as these that true economies and efficiencies will be achieved.

Local Context

At a local level, a good TAMP will assist in identifying the most cost-effective time to carry out maintenance works in an objective and justifiable way on the Council's most valuable asset – the highway network.

Highway maintenance has many varying aspects in relation to asset management. Assets include everything from roads and footpaths to street lighting and road markings. Highway users have their own perception of the assets and they judge the standard of maintenance accordingly.

Stockton places a high priority on the needs of its customers and users. We take pride in achieving high standards of maintenance whilst ensuring the effective use of funding.

To assess our levels of service, we use internal systems and national indicators to monitor the overall condition of the network, as illustrated in Table 2.1. We also ask the public what is important to them and where they believe improvements can be made.

undertaken to assess whether or not our policy on footway maintenance is perceived as successful in terms of public opinion.

Ref.	Financial Year			
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
BVPI 223 (Principal Road Condition)	7% (Deflectograph)	0.00% (CVI)	1.44% (CVI)	25.73% (TTS)
BVPI 224a (Non- Principal Classified Road Condition)	37.47% (CVI)	6.11% (CVI)	15.42% (CVI)	14.55% (CVI)
BVPI 224b (Unclassified Road Condition)	5.19% (CVI)	1.69% (CVI)	15.51% (CVI)	6.03% (CVI)
BVPI 187 (Footway Condition)	N/A	27.91% (DVI)	26.90% (CVI)	28.25% (DVI)

Table 2.1: BVPI Returns, 2001/02 to 2004/05

For instance, the data used in calculating the national indicator for footway condition (**BVPI 187**) is analysed to prioritise maintenance works on Category 1, 1a and 2 footways. To complement this, MORI and 'Viewpoint' surveys are

Survey	Issue	Year	
		2002	2004
MORI	Condition of roads	+11%	+6%
	Condition of footpaths	-1%	-4%
Viewpoint	Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied with the Borough's roads	Not Recorded	+17%

Table 2.2: Net Satisfaction with the Borough's Roads and Footpaths

As Table 2.2 shows, these surveys revealed a net drop in customer satisfaction with the condition of footways between 2002 and 2004. To this end, it has been recognised that increased maintenance funding is required, not only to arrest the deterioration in footpath condition but also to increase levels of public satisfaction. A three-year programme for implementing these works has, therefore, been agreed.

One of the difficulties experienced by other Highway Authorities is the number of diverse software packages used for the purposes of service delivery. For Stockton, the long-term vision has always been for an integrated highway maintenance management system, as documented in previous Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Reports (LTP APRs). Stockton has committed itself to working in partnership with its current software supplier, Exor, to enable the true potential of asset management to be realised.

Chapter 3: Strategic Issues

Overview

As stated in [Chapter 2](#), the Council is working closely with its neighbouring unitary authorities in the Tees Valley to ensure a consistent approach to the principles of asset management. In this respect, a working group has been established to develop both a **Highway Network Management Plan** and a **TAMP**.

Detail

The members of the working group have, in partnership with Opus International Consultants (UK) Ltd, begun to review their highway assets to determine the extent of the information that they already possess: more details can be found in [Chapter 4](#). Once this initial stage has been completed, a project plan will be implemented in accordance with the guidance provided in the County Surveyors' Society's 'Framework for Highway Asset Management'. It is accepted that each authority is at a different stage with respect to inventory and data collection.

The scope of the project includes:

- Establishing a robust inventory of the asset (noting any gaps in knowledge/information) with an action plan to develop and maintain the inventory;
- Developing a system for the collection and updating of asset information;
- Establishing the condition of the asset (including closing any gaps in knowledge);
- Establishing a valuation of the asset (methodology and actual value);
- Establishing the desired state of the asset, including asset optimisation;
- Establishing the gap between the existing and desired state of the asset, together with the cost of closing the gap and priorities for improvement;
- Developing an implementation plan to bridge the gap, with timescale, costs and responsibilities;
- Developing information and performance management systems to support the TAMP; and
- Determining whether or not there should be a single database/system for asset management/inventory.

It is proposed that the TAMP will initially cover the following priority assets maintained by the Councils:

- Carriageways;
- Footways & Cycleways;
- Public Rights of Way;
- Bridges and Structures;
- Street Lighting, including signing and bollards;
- Verges, Trees & Hedgerows;
- Safety Fences & Pedestrian Guard rails;
- Road Markings, Lines and Studs;
- Traffic Signals;
- Bus Shelters & Bus Stops;
- Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) displays;
- Traffic Data;
- Highway drainage systems; and
- Any other highway assets.

It is intended that the assets will be valued on a replacement cost basis. The use of replacement cost has several advantages:

- It provides a current cost value;
- The costs of maintaining the asset can be compared with the cost of replacement in real terms;
- It can be easily updated;
- Calculations over whole asset life provide meaningful results; and
- It provides an objective evaluation.

The initial focus of the TAMP has concentrated on highways because it has been based on the framework published by the County Surveyors' Society, which includes highway only. It is intended that the plan will evolve to encompass wider transportation issues, possibly with the aid of further guidance from Central Government and examples of best practice elsewhere in the country.

Chapter 4: Process and Timetable for Delivery of the Transport Asset Management Plan

For the past four years, condition surveys have been used nationally to determine values for common Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs) designed to monitor the condition of the highway network. In [Chapter 2](#), we looked at these national core indicators and the survey information that we have received over this period.

The BVPs have formed part of the evidence used to determine our programme of maintenance schemes. However, it is acknowledged that this approach is more about asset maintenance than true asset management, and that the PIs have a limited relevance at local level.

The first step towards successful management of the highway network is the commissioning of UKPMS. To date, extensive work has been undertaken in transforming our highway network to a format suitable for loading into UKPMS software and creating a database. This preparatory work is substantially completed and the next phase – loading the network – is expected to start in the near future.

One of the constraints in delivering asset management is the development of the appropriate software by the handful of experts in the field. As discussed, Exor is the preferred supplier for Stockton's needs. Exor is working in conjunction with Chris Britton Consultancy Ltd (CBC) and Opus International Consultants (UK) Ltd (Opus) to act as development partners, and the production of Asset Valuation Modules has already commenced.

It has to be accepted that asset management is a step up from asset maintenance – it is about working SMARTER. In order to work smarter, we must have accurate network information and the asset register must be kept up-to-date.

In terms of progressing towards a true asset management system, a project plan has been mapped to reflect the strategy set out in [Chapter 3](#). Initially, and as reported in last year's LTP APR, the plan was a simple time-line graph with the aim of meeting the delivery of an asset management system within the Government's suggested target of 18 months to two years (see [Figure 4.1](#)).

There have been significant positive developments since this timeline was produced. The Tees Valley Group considered options to maintain the impetus towards the development of the joint TAMP and sought presentations from two recognised consultants in the field of asset management, namely Opus and CBC.

Appointment of Consultant

Following these presentations, Opus was appointed as the Group's preferred partner. There were two key reasons for this decision:

1. Opus has national and worldwide experience in this field; and
2. Opus is facilitating similar projects for North Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland County Councils, and the Group felt that a wider North Eastern regional group would deliver additional benefits in the longer term.

Gap Analysis

Whilst working together, the members of the Tees Valley Group acknowledge that, in most instances, there are differences in their data sets and levels of information. It has, therefore, been agreed that progress will be maintained by each authority undertaking its own gap analysis. For Stockton, this will entail reviewing current practice and data held against the recommendations contained within the new Codes of Practice for:

- Well-maintained Highways;
- Highway Structures; and
- Well-lit Highways.

Delivery Programme

Opus has agreed to a condensed, but intensive programme of workshops in order to facilitate delivery of the TAMP. These workshops will cover six topics, as illustrated below:

Workshop		Programme
No.	Theme	
1	Familiarisation	February 2006
2	Document Structure and Data Needs	Mid-March 2006
3	Lifecycle Planning and Whole Life Costing	Mid-April 2006
4	Levels of Service and Performance Reporting	Mid/End June 2006
5	Process Evaluation and Risk Management	September 2006
6	Forward Work Programme and Asset Valuation	October 2006

The final TAMP is due to be published in December 2006 – **six months earlier than the original programme** – as illustrated in [Figure 4.2](#).

