

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....7th September 2006

1. Title of Item/Report

Second Stockton-on-Tees Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 : Major Scheme Bids and Tees Valley Initiatives

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet considered a report that sought approval for the submission of a Major Scheme Business Case for the Tees Valley Bus Network Review to the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Government Office for the North East (GO-NE), and outlined the current position regarding two other emerging sub-regional transport initiatives – the Tees Valley Metro and joint working with the Highways Agency to address development issues affecting the trunk road network. Finally, the Report set out the current position regarding the East Billingham Transport Corridor, and sought approval for the proposed way forward.

Members noted that a recent review of the operation of the Tees Valley bus network recommended a new approach based on the adoption of a stable, hierarchical network and the development of high demand and high quality links to key centres.

Details of the preferred scheme were being finalised in partnership with the other Local Authorities within the sub-region, the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (TVJSU) and the principal bus operators. The Major Scheme bid would be focused on the Super Core and Core Routes, which offered the most attractive alternative to the car and, consequently, the greatest potential for modal shift. By securing the stability of the commercially operated network, the Major Scheme would allow the Council and its partners to take a long-term approach to the development of the tertiary network, thereby ensuring that revenue support for socially necessary bus services was allocated as cost-effectively as possible and that Community Transport's contribution to enhancing local accessibility was maximised. An appendix to the report set out the elements of the Major Scheme bid in more detail.

The Secretary of State for Transport had confirmed that Tees Valley Bus Network Review had been included in an 'Indicative List' of schemes to be progressed to a stage sufficient to allow construction to start during

the period between 2009/10 and 2015/16. However, it was hoped that this timetable could be brought forward, particularly as some of the schemes identified for funding within the region over the next three years were still at a relatively early stage of development.

Although the scheme had, provisionally, been allocated regional funding totalling £33 million, this funding was dependent on all statutory powers being secured and the submission of a supporting Major Scheme Business Case, produced in line with DfT requirements, that demonstrated that it would provide sufficient value for money. Officers from the TVJSU, which was leading on the preparation of the Business Case, had met with representatives of the DfT and GO-NE on 1 August 2006 to confirm that the current proposals meet the criteria for Major Scheme funding and to agree the format for the final submission.

It was recommended that the TVJSU should complete the preparation of the Major Scheme Business Case on behalf of the Council and the other scheme partners, and that it be submitted to GO-NE and the DfT on 29 September 2006.

Cabinet noted other emerging issues that related to two sub-regional transport initiatives that were being developed, namely the Tees Valley Metro and joint working with the Highways Agency to address development issues affecting the trunk road network.

Members were informed that the Tees Valley Metro aimed to enhance access to local centres and key attractors, proposals had been developed by Tees Valley Regeneration for a high quality, fast and reliable sub-regional transport system – the Tees Valley Metro – to assist regeneration and help to avoid the transport problems that would otherwise arise as economic activity gathered pace. Members were informed of the key benefits of the proposals.

The proposals would be worked up into an outline business case during the autumn of 2006, with the intention to work in partnership with DfT and Network Rail to develop the proposals further, both in terms of the Metro and in relation to wider heavy rail issues within the Tees Valley. A key part of this work would be the added value in addressing passenger and freight demand in the long term within the Tees Valley, particularly the anticipated growth of Teesport and the rise in GVA that this would bring.

Members were also informed of Joint Working with the Highways Agency to address Development Issues affecting the Trunk Road network.

Members noted that the TVJSU – acting on behalf of the five Local Authorities – was currently working with the Highways Agency to improve

the approach to future development proposals on the trunk road network.

Cabinet were informed that one of the key issues to emerge from the 'Mid-Term Review' of the First Local Transport Plan (LTP), carried out in 2003, was the number of heavy goods vehicles (in particular tankers carrying hazardous chemicals) using routes through residential areas of Billingham and The Clarences. This issue was subsequently highlighted by the Stockton-on-Tees Freight Quality Partnership, as well as emerging as a priority for action within the Billingham Area Transport Strategy, which forms an integral part of the Second LTP.

An initial feasibility study, carried out by the Council's partner consultant Arup early in 2004, confirmed that there were no existing alternative routes away from residential areas and that the most appropriate solution was the construction of a new road linking A1046 Haverton Hill Road and A1185 Seal Sands Link Road to the east of Billingham. This route was, accordingly, named the East Billingham Transport Corridor.

More detailed work, by Arup, to identify and develop preferred route options commenced in April 2004. A two-stage process was adopted, firstly to narrow the 11 initial route options down to five, and then – following an appraisal of the highway, transportation, environmental, economic and geotechnical issues associated with each option – down to two potential routes. Those alignments were costed at between £17.2 and £17.9 million, with associated Cost:Benefit Ratios (based on a coarse assessment) of between 3.8 and 4.

Like the Tees Valley Bus Network Review, the East Billingham Transport Corridor was assessed in late 2005/early 2006 as part of the Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) process. However, unlike the Bus Network Review, the scheme did not emerge as a priority for funding during the period up to and including 2015/16. For this reason, discussions had been held with GO-NE to investigate alternative ways of funding the scheme over that period.

Although GO-NE had confirmed that the prospects for funding of either of the identified route options through the RFA process were poor, there may be potential for delivering at least part of the scheme through a phased approach, with construction of the northern section – providing a direct route between A1185 Seal Sands Link Road and the industrial areas to the east of Billingham, and valued at between £2-3 million – identified as the first priority. As there was no formal bidding process for Major Schemes costing less than £5 million, GO-NE had agreed to raise this issue directly with the DfT.

It was recommended that the Corporate Director for Development and Neighbourhood Services be authorised to continue to work in partnership with GO-NE to investigate the potential for delivering the scheme on a phased basis.

RESOLVED that

1. the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit – acting on behalf of the Council and its partner authorities in the sub-region – be authorised to develop and submit a Major Scheme Business Case for the Tees Valley Bus Network Review to the Department for Transport and the Government Office for the North East at the end of September 2006.
2. Members note the current position regarding the proposed Tees Valley Metro and joint working with the Highways Agency to address development issues affecting the trunk road network.
3. the Corporate Director for Development and Neighbourhood Services be authorised to work in partnership with the Government Office for the North East to investigate the potential for delivering the East Billingham Transport Corridor on a phased basis.

3. Reasons for the Decision

Approval of the recommendations will:

- a) Allow the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit to complete the preparation of the Major Scheme Business Case for the Tees Valley Bus Network Review on behalf of the Council and the other scheme partners, and to submit it to the Government Office for the North East and the Department for Transport by the end of September 2006;
- b) Allow the Council to continue to work in partnership with the Government Office for the North East to investigate the potential for delivering the East Billingham Transport Corridor on a phased basis; and
- c) Ensure that Members are fully informed about the progress made to date with regard to the Tees Valley Metro and joint working with the Highways Agency to address development issues affecting the trunk road network within the sub-region.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

By not later than Midnight on Friday 15th September 2006

Proper Officer  
11 September 2006