

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting26th November 2009

1. Title of Item/Report

Tees Valley Transport Consultation

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that followed on from the Cabinet report "Tees Valley Transport Schemes" from 3rd September and 9th September 2009 respectively. It informed Members of the consultation mechanisms proposed for the projects discussed in the previous report, namely, the East Billingham Transport Corridor, the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements and the Tees Valley Metro and asks Members to endorse these mechanisms.

It was explained that Officers had been utilising the existing consultation networks with Town & Parish Councils and other community stakeholders through the Area Transport Strategy process. The last round of meetings were held late September and early October. These networks would continue to be updated on a regular basis.

An appendix to the report showed the range of consultation proposed for the Tees Valley major transport schemes with associated timescales.

The East Billingham Transport Corridor (EBTC) was highlighted in the Council's Second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) as a major scheme to address the volume of HGV's (in particular tankers carrying hazardous chemicals) passing through residential areas of Billingham on route to the industrial areas to the east of the town.

Consultation for the original options report was carried out in 2004/05. This exercise sought views from the statutory consultees on several possible route options.

More recently, engagement with key stakeholders had taken place through Billingham Town Council meetings, a series of Ward Member Briefings and through the Northern Area Transport Strategy Steering Group meetings.

The proposed alignment of the EBTC was in the vicinity of the RSPB

Saltholme Reserve and the medieval village of Cowpen Bewley and, as such, a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) would be needed to ensure the design and construction of the road had minimal adverse impact on the surroundings and that mitigation measures were in place. As part of this process a consultation would take place with the statutory consultees including the landowners, Natural England, RSPB and the Environment Agency.

As the EIA process would ultimately determine the route that the new road will take, wider public consultation will need to follow part of this process.

It was hoped that a formal planning application will be submitted around March 2010. This would be subject to the standard 21 day consultation period.

This scheme was approved entry into the DfT's Local Authority Major Schemes Programme (Programme Entry) on the 23 June 2009. On granting this approval, the DfT set out the conditions that must be satisfied following Programme Entry and further work that would be required to gain the required Full Approval.

The further work required includes further modelling work on a small number of individual schemes, confirming the Stockton Infrastructure Register, obtaining contractor prices for Year 1 schemes and processing and implementing any Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) required for Year 1 schemes. TRO's would be advertised on site and in the local press and would be subject to the statutory 21 day notice period, during which time any objections could be made. TRO's would be processed by the Corporate Director of Law and Democracy and they would receive any objections submitted.

Once this additional work was complete, a revised Major Scheme Business Case would be submitted to the DfT in a bid to gain Full Approval. It was anticipated that this Business Case would be signed off by the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements Project Board at their meeting on 6 November 2009 and submitted to the DfT the same day.

The DfT had suggested that they would require around 6 weeks to review the revised Business Case so a decision would be expected before Christmas 2009. Subject to approval being granted, works 'on the ground' should commence early in 2010 (Year 1), with completion of the scheme as a whole envisaged by the end of 2012 (Year 3).

Consultation had been ongoing throughout the development of this

scheme and had become more significant in the past few weeks. Leaflets were available in community facilities throughout the Borough containing information on the overall project and details of "Year 1" schemes. The same information was available on the Council's website and comments had been invited. Information on the scheme had also been provided in issues of Stockton News and the Evening Gazette.

A member briefing note detailing Year 1 schemes had been circulated to all Councillors on 23 October 2009. This was produced to ensure Councillors remained fully briefed on scheme progress and details of implementation works planned.

Local consultation would take place for the individual schemes within the project; indeed, this had already happened for the largest Year 1 scheme, improvements on Mandale Triangle.

Phase 1 of Metro (estimated cost £35m), scheduled for implementation between 2009 and 2012, includes the following elements:

New Platforms at Darlington and Middlesbrough Stations;
Relocation of Stations at Durham Tees Valley Airport and Wilton;
Station improvements at Eaglescliffe, Thornaby and Hartlepool;
A new station at James Cook University Hospital; and
Refurbished trains with higher levels of passenger quality and comfort than that currently used operating four times an hour between Darlington and Saltburn during the day.

In terms of elements proposed within the Borough; the improvements to Eaglescliffe and Thornaby Stations were scheduled for implementation during 2010/11 and would consist of upgrades to the current station buildings at both locations, a new footbridge with DDA lifts at Eaglescliffe and a contribution to a new footbridge and DDA lifts at Thornaby.

As an investment project on Network Rail land; the Metro project had to be assessed through Network Rail's Guide to Railway Investment Projects (GRIP). This project management system had 8 stages with stage 6 being the construction stage. Currently, the majority of the component parts of the Metro project were at GRIP3. There was a need to undertake a GRIP4 feasibility study at a cost of £1.25 million, to be obtained through the RFA programme, to prepare more detailed designs, confirm feasibility and refine cost estimates. The GRIP4 process would also include applications for planning permission where required and involves public consultation on the detail of station improvements. This information would also be added to the Council's website.

It was anticipated that the GRIP4 process would take a maximum of 12 months meaning that any decision about whether to proceed further would be taken in summer 2010. In parallel to the engineering feasibility work contained in GRIP4, the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (JSU) and train operator, Northern Rail, would lead on work to refine the benefits expected from phase 1 in terms of improved reliability, estimated increases in passengers and improved accessibility.

A leaflet providing information on Tees Valley Transport Schemes was being developed by the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit on behalf of Tees Valley Unlimited. This would be circulated and would invite comments on the proposals.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the consultation mechanisms for the East Billingham Transport Corridor, the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements and the Tees Valley Metro.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To agree the procedure for complying with the requirements of the legislation following the consultation which has taken place.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Coleman declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of the item entitled Tees Valley Transportation Consultation

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

Proper Officer
30 November 2009