

Place Select Committee
Review of Area Transport Strategy
Outline Scope

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Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

Improvements to the highway network supports all of the Council's four policy principles:

- Protect the vulnerable – delivering schemes such as traffic calming to improve road safety help protect the vulnerable such as the elderly, young children and the mobility impaired.
- Create economic prosperity – improvements to the highway network can provide better access for individuals to jobs, education and training opportunities, improving people's economic prosperity and opportunities.
- Tackle inequality – delivering improvements to the public right of way, footway or cycle networks can assist people to access jobs and education.
- Help people to be healthier – most people use the transport network on a daily basis, whether to get to work, to an educational establishment, for a health appointment, to go shopping, to enjoy leisure pursuits, or to get to a social engagement, therefore improvements funded via the ATS process help develop, support and maintain strong & healthy communities.

What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?

The Area Transport Strategy (ATS) scheme allows the community an opportunity to influence where a proportion of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's limited funding for improvements to the highway is targeted. Four Borough-wide ATS groups were established to introduce public involvement in the selection of highway and transport schemes, and a budget was identified from the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) allocation to fund projects on an annual basis.

Over time, the process has been developed by Officers to try and ensure the most appropriate schemes are selected and funded from a single budget rather than split between areas. However, concerns still exist as to whether the scheme provides value-for-money for all, especially at a time when there are growing pressures on funding allocations and resources have to be carefully prioritised. In addition, it can create a demand for services and projects that cannot always be satisfied, and can be a more staff intensive process for the delivery of projects than other expenditure methodologies.

This review aims to examine the current ATS scheme and, through an assessment of this and previous year's ATS rounds, establish if it is fit for purpose, inclusive, and allows the public to have the appropriate level of influence, while being an efficient and effective process.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

- ATS concept – where did it come from; why was it brought in; what did it aim to achieve?
- ATS process – how does the scheme work; how has this developed over time; Terms of Reference / membership (who decides); individual ATS group boundaries; how much is allocated from the Council’s Local Transport Plan funding (has this changed over time); how are decisions reached in terms of what proposals are selected (is this fair / partial); is this consistent across the four ATS groups, Officer time / resource required (inc. potential efficiencies if done differently)?
- Community involvement – how is this facilitated; what are the benefits of community input; is the level of public influence effective and balanced; how aware are the community re. ATS?
- Is ATS a cost-effective process for involving the community in the decision-making process and is it achieving its aim? Are there alternative cost-effective ways of achieving the aims of the ATS?
- Do other Local Authorities involve the community in the selection of highway and transport schemes, and if so, how?
- How many and what types of projects are proposed; who are they being proposed by; what has been spent in recent years as a percentage of the overall budget, and on which geographical areas; any themes in terms of what is not funded?
- Decision-making balance – criteria for choosing to support a project/s from all those proposed; cost-benefit (less, more costly projects versus more, less costly).
- ATS meetings – who is involved; how are meetings managed (inc. papers issued)?
- How / what schemes would be delivered if the funding was used for core LTP work; what would not?
- How much has been spent on feasibility studies?
- Are schemes funded through other budgets (e.g. CPB) – how / where?
- External funding opportunities.
- Views of ATS stakeholders – is the scheme effective and efficient; is it well managed?

Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

Cabinet, Council, ATS stakeholders, public.

Expected duration of review and key milestones:

4 months (reporting to Cabinet in January 2020)

What information do we need?

Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):

- ATS funding, Terms of Reference, membership, individual group boundaries.
- Projects funded / not funded.

New information:

- Reflections on recent round of ATS group meetings.

Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)

What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?

<p>Local Authority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ATS origins and details of scheme. ➤ Mapping of what has been funded in recent years and where. ➤ Other funding opportunities / avenues.
<p>ATS Facilitators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Locality Forums (Chairs of ATS groups) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Management of ATS meetings. ➤ Facilitation of community involvement.
<p>ATS Stakeholders, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Town and Parish Councils ○ Residents' Groups ○ Voluntary & Community Sector 	<p>} Views on the ATS scheme – appropriate voice and influence, effectiveness of the process, etc.</p>
<p>How will this information be gathered? (eg. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)</p>	
<p>Committee meetings, reports, Member reflection on recent ATS group meetings, Member and ATS Stakeholder survey.</p>	
<p>How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?</p>	
<p>Committee meetings, information submissions.</p>	
<p>How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?</p>	
<p>The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. This review will be mindful of these factors.</p>	
<p>How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?</p>	
<p><u>Stockton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Summary 2018/19)</u>: A high proportion of Stockton-on-Tees resident's travel by private car. This is leading to many people leading a sedentary lifestyle.</p>	
<p>In order to encourage transport choice and improve everyday physical activity levels through active travel there is a need to facilitate and create increased opportunities for all to use walking and cycling to access education, employment and services.</p>	
<p><u>Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023</u>: All people in Stockton-on-Tees live in healthy places and sustainable communities – be connected and live in friendly and supportive communities; live safely and be protected from harm.</p>	
<p>Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:</p>	
<p>To ascertain whether the ATS process is efficient and effective in giving the community an opportunity to influence highway improvements and expenditure while representing and ensuring value for money. If necessary, determine any ways that this could be enhanced or facilitated in a different way for the benefit of all ATS stakeholders.</p>	

Project Plan

Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	June 2019	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	03.07.19	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Agree Project Plan	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee	15.07.19	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Determine whether Communications Plan needed	TBC	Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence	Background Briefing Local Authority ATS Stakeholders	15.07.19 21.10.19	Select Committee
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	25.11.19 (informal)	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	November 2019	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	04.12.19	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report	Approval of final report by Committee	16.12.19	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee	Consideration of report	21.01.20	Executive Scrutiny Committee
Report to Cabinet/Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	23.01.20	Cabinet / Approving Body