

Transport Innovation in an Historic City

A Demand Management Proposal for Durham City by Durham County Council



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INTRODUCTION BY KEN MANTON, LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

I am delighted to introduce the following submission by the County Council for funding from the new Transport Innovation Fund. With this submission I believe we are sharing the Government's view that we must extract full benefit from our existing Highway Network in the face of potentially rising demand. With continuing regional development and planned growth it is essential that we examine new ways to ensure that we can continue to offer predictable journey times across our area of influence and maintain the viability of the City Centre.

Congestion on our roads is a complex problem which will require a range of measures if it is to be tackled successfully, including improvements in public transport as well as measures to get more capacity out of network. However, changing public attitudes and perception also needs innovation and leadership.

Durham County Council has demonstrated that we lack neither. Although the current congestion charge in Durham City Centre may only cover a relatively small area, it was still the first to be introduced within the UK, preceding London by 5 months. This highly successful project has been recognised nationally and internationally, not just for being first and unique, but also for delivering results. A traffic reduction of 85% combined with a pedestrian increase of 10% can leave little room to doubt its success.

We are convinced that establishing good practice is not enough in its own right and are determined to share our successes and failures with others and similarly learn from their experience. The Transport Innovation Fund offers an excellent opportunity for the County Council to push the boundaries of transport policy forward again and allow local authorities to lead by example. Whilst some local authorities may be



content to watch and learn from others, we are keen to show how strong political support together with meaningful local engagement can produce real innovation and change.

Finally, no matter how much effort and modelling we undertake to explain our proposals, we need to tackle head on the issues of why people travel and how we can bring benefits to their quality of life. In joining as part of the Transport Innovation Fund it will be essential that we gain public acceptance that real benefits can be achieved and that further congestion charging is not simply about increasing revenue funding. Instead we should aim to demonstrate that charging could be the essential tool that allows us to produce a truly efficient and inclusive transport network and allows continued quality of life. Our success in delivering innovation and controversial schemes has already demonstrated our ability to achieve these aims.



KEN MANTON

**Leader
Durham County Council**



SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL

We believe there are strong reasons why Durham City should be identified as suitable for TIF support. Finding answers to increasing traffic congestion resulting from Durham's success as a centre of employment, a tourist destination and favoured residential area is of great importance regionally and locally. It will also be of importance nationally if the lesson learned can be translated into action in other historic towns and cities.

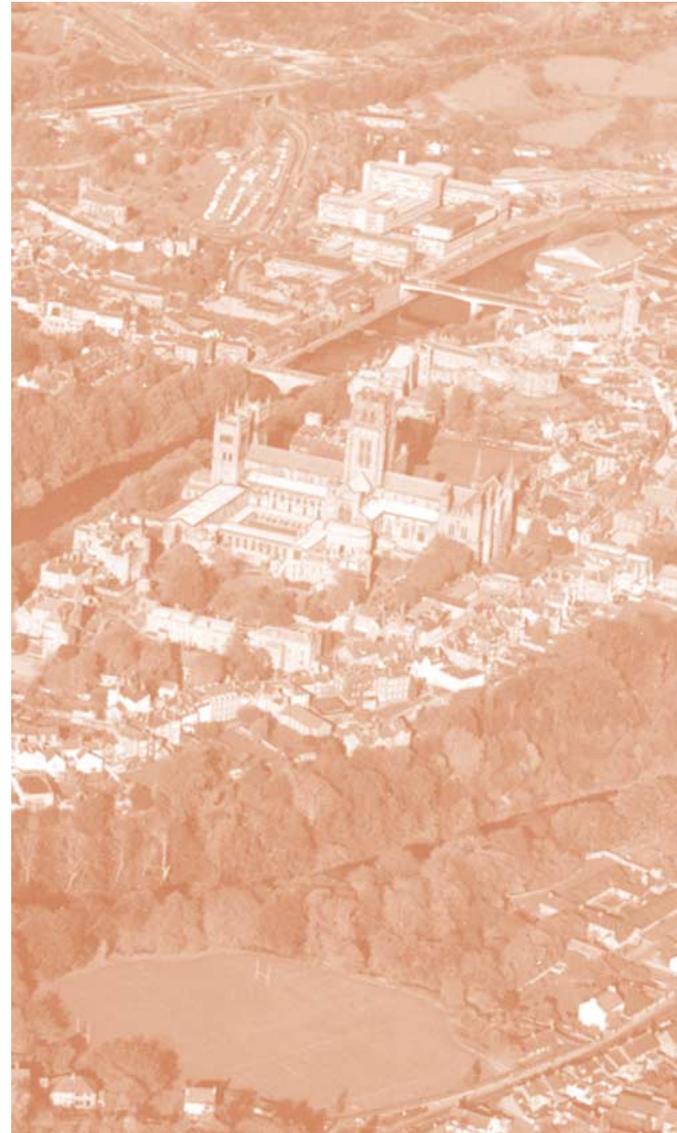
The reasons why we believe Durham can deliver are:

- **Innovation:** We have already experienced the benefits of leading the way in bringing in the first road-charging scheme in the UK. We are following up by building three Park and Ride sites on the outskirts of Durham. The opening of three sites at the same time in December is also a first and demonstrates a strong commitment to continuing innovation.
- **Sharing Best Practice:** The great interest in the Saddler Street charging scheme has brought this Authority into contact with many others that are considering similar schemes. We believe that Durham City, with best practice already embedded, is well suited to showing how travel needs can be met without harm to sensitive historic environments.



- **Political Support:** To introduce changes to travel patterns that impact on individual choice requires political resolve. The County and City Councils and their partners have demonstrated commitment to change and will do so again. Introducing further radical solutions will be greatly assisted by studies which help demonstrate the benefits. The wide range of supporters we can rely on this work is shown on the final page of this submission.

Durham County Council is committed to a new Vision for Durham City. An innovative, inclusive and ultimately successful bid for TIF support will be invaluable in the realisation of that future and could become a turning point for managing traffic in historic towns throughout the country.







DURHAM CITY IN ITS CONTEXT

Durham City has a unique character and contains many fine buildings and is famous for the quality of its architecture and townscape. The Norman Cathedral and Castle in their spectacular setting on the Peninsular above the banks of the River Wear are acknowledged as being of international importance by their designation as a World Heritage Site. The quality of the landscape surrounding the City Centre afford it a unique setting amongst the historic Cities of England and it has become a major tourist attraction (more than 500,000 visitors a year) and an attractive place in which to live and work.

The City contains a very high proportion of total District employment, including many major national and regional employers. It has remained a centre of economic activity in an area blighted by the decline of traditional industries such

as mining. It is an educational centre containing Durham University (12,000 students) and a number of major colleges and secondary schools serving the district and region. The City itself has some 38,000 residents (excluding students), with a further 42,000 in the small towns and villages of the surrounding district.

Following the implementation of major road building in Durham City during the late 1970s land use patterns have hardly changed. As the towns and cities around changed significantly, Durham generally remained the same and the problems of an old established City Centre in the late twentieth century compounded year on year -access and parking, the requirements of modern retailers, changing expectations of tourists, the needs and demands of students, the implications of a burgeoning evening economy, a City divided by significant traffic routes.



The City has benefited from the successful introduction of a series of integrated transport improvements following the Durham City Travel Study undertaken in 1997. However, much more needs to be done to increase the City's regional significance as emphasised in the Regional Spatial, economic and Transport Strategy and the Northern Way Initiative. Delivery of innovation in transport has been well established through the Country's first ever congestion charge scheme and the unique way in which parking controls and park and ride have been combined into a joint demand management model and financial package.

A New Vision for Durham City

In recognition of the City's unrealised potential Durham County and City Councils, One North East, The University of Durham and the Chapter of the Cathedral have joined forces to prepare a vision to guide the future of Durham City Centre over the next 15 years.

The City Centre could undergo significant change during this period. The vision will help make sure that this change will make the city centre a better place for its citizens and its visitors. Its proposals will guide the preparation of a new Development Framework for the City Centre about to be drafted.

The new framework will take about two years to prepare, and will need the participation of the public throughout this period to ensure that the plan reflects the genuine concerns and needs of local people. This bid for Transport



Innovation Funding will be central to the process of participation and will help shape the way in which transport services can be delivered as part of an overall strategy for improvement.

The vision for Durham requires strategies for each of the main activities that take place in the City Centre, strategies rooted in deliverability but aspirational in terms of the potential transformation of the appearance and performance of the City Centre. Each is a statement of potential and of intention.

The strategies are the key means by which the vision can be brought into being and include;

- A strategy for Reshaping the City Centre.
- A strategy for Shopping.
- A strategy for City Centre Employment.
- A strategy for Leisure, Entertainment and Tourist Development.
- A strategy for Residential Development.

- A strategy for Iconic Development.
- A strategy “Modern Jewels” related to river development.
- A strategy for Illuminating the City Centre.
- A strategy for Walking.
- A strategy Traffic and Transport.

The timing of the comprehensive Visioning exercise and the way in which it has been undertaken gives Durham City a unique opportunity to take best advantage of the Transport Innovation Fund.





TRANSPORT STRATEGY IN ACTION

The Durham Transport Strategy emerges as a natural consequence of the problems and constraints analysed as part of the Visioning exercise. Whilst traffic problems are largely confined to the peak periods, the infrastructure necessary to cope with this demand and limited opportunities to increase capacity places constraints on the City throughout the day.

The objectives for improving transport and accessibility is therefore twofold;

- To significantly reduce the amount of the through traffic using the A690 thus creating capacity for more significant changes to the balance of vehicular and pedestrian needs and providing major improvements to the environment in the City Centre
- To provide better alternatives to the private car and examine further restrictions or disincentives to its use.

The disincentives and restrictions on car use are to include;

- The re-designation of on-street parking from long stay to short stay.
- The allocation of more road space for pedestrians, cyclists and buses.
- Traffic management measures to discourage travel in the City Centre.
- Examination of the potential to extend the existing congestion charge.

The alternatives will include:

- Further improvements to the quality and amenity of journeys by foot and cycle.
- Improved, more accessible and reliable bus services.
- Maximise fully the potential created by Park and Ride.
- Modernised Bus and Rail Stations.
- Improved taxi services.
- Alternative route(s) for traffic that has no need to enter the City Centre.



With the introduction of the Park and Ride sites the implementation of the short and medium term measures identified in the Durham City Travel Study (1997) will have been completed. However some areas of demand remain relatively unrestricted within the City. In particular access to a significant amount of Private Non Residential (PNR) parking and the use of the City Centre by through traffic, helps to undermine traditional transport solutions.

The next stage will be to perhaps move on from the “soft options” of parking control and Park and Ride and consider the possible introduction of a wider congestion charge. Although there are numerous difficulties to delivering an effective demand management model it is believed that a successful demonstration in Durham City could be readily applied to numerous other City Centres of the Country.





TRANSPORT INNOVATION THROUGH TIF

In producing a demand management transport solution it is crucial that the underlying principles of the Durham City Vision are met and that any reduction in congestion helps promote wider economic growth, social inclusion and environmental objectives. The challenge will now be to combine effective demand management, including the consideration of further road user charging, with the provision of appropriate alternative infrastructure and public transport improvements. The balanced implementation of such a combination of measures will provide improved accessibility by public transport and other modes than the car by reducing congestion whilst maintaining the vitality and viability of the City Centre.

With the City being the hub of the public transport network in the County, such improvements will also be fundamental

to delivering better accessibility over a much wider area than the City Centre itself.

Consequently, a combination of demand management and infrastructure improvements are necessary to cope with future transport demands and maintain the viability of the City where road space is at a premium. However, as well as tackling congestion the environment and the street-scene in the City Centre will be significantly improved and better facilities made available for pedestrians and cyclists. Such measures will also provide substantial improvements in accessibility for a much wider area of the local transport networks, assisting the delivery of economic growth, social inclusion and improved environmental objectives.

The future development and sustainability of Durham City and the wider area of the County will be dependent upon the implementation of



a carefully balanced and deliverable package of measures. The County Council has already fully demonstrated its ability and commitment to delivering challenging policies, including the only road user charging scheme to be implemented outside London.

Fundamental to the implementation of these policies has been both the commitment of Members and the ability of the authority to undertake effective and meaningful public consultation.

A strategy for the future development of Durham City has already been outlined in Section 5.7 of the Local Transport Plan 2 based broadly on the principles outlined above. Whilst the proposals would generally meet the category for an individual smaller town or historic city, it is anticipated that the accessibility improvements created would have an impact and bring benefits across a much larger geographic area. As has already been demonstrated by the interest being shown in the road charging initiative

implemented in the City, it is considered that by undertaking further innovative measures the City would be an exemplar for other similar areas throughout the UK and abroad.

The elements of the bid that will ensure that it can be ultimately delivered include:

- A practical and deliverable package of measures would have to be developed and the County Council has already successfully demonstrated its ability to both formulate practice proposals and ensure their delivery within a demanding timescale.
- Public acceptability of the schemes is already being canvassed through a consultation being undertaken in connection with the development of a future vision for the City.



- By creating improvements for public transport in conjunction with alternatives for the car it is considered that a more equitable distribution of impacts will be achieved.
- Significant capital investment may be required to provide infrastructure improvements in conjunction with demand management initiatives. However, charging income and the creation of a more attractive and commercially viable public transport system would create a more financially sustainable system
- By incorporating a charging regime, the proposals would be meeting both local and regional objectives by controlling car use where capacity constraint is inevitable to manage demand effectively.
- The problems that have to be resolved have already been clearly identified by previous studies, although further analysis is necessary to develop the various elements of the proposals in more detail.





The County Council has a comprehensive traffic model for the City and its environs that has already been successfully used to develop the schemes that have already been delivered. Whilst this 'Paramics' software has proved to be reasonably reliable, a detailed re-calibration of the model is essential if it is to be used to confidently predict the outcomes of demand restraint measures and the provision of additional infrastructure.

DEVELOPING THE OUTCOMES

Funding from the Transport Innovation Fund will be used to establish the feasibility of implementing one of two demand management models being;

- The implementation of a point charge on the A690 through road with traffic potentially being diverted onto improved infrastructure; or
- Introduction of an increased cordon charge with a reliance on improved Park and Ride and public transport.

Both options present challenges in terms of offering sustainable alternatives to all sectors of society especially in an area which mixes travel to health, employment, education and a popular tourist centre with a significant flow of through traffic. It will also be necessary to consider the need for any associated infrastructure improvements. This is set against a backdrop of a historic road network which has severe constraints and limitations. However, if these obstacles can be addressed then a demonstration project will have been produced which will be an exemplar of benefit to a large number of towns and small cities through the UK.

The modelling and consultation element of the proposal will allow us to review whether a viable and practical scheme can be developed and explain which of the two options could bring about the greatest benefits to the people of Durham. As a national model it will be essential that we gain public acceptance that real benefits can be achieved and that further congestion charging is not simply about increasing revenue funding.

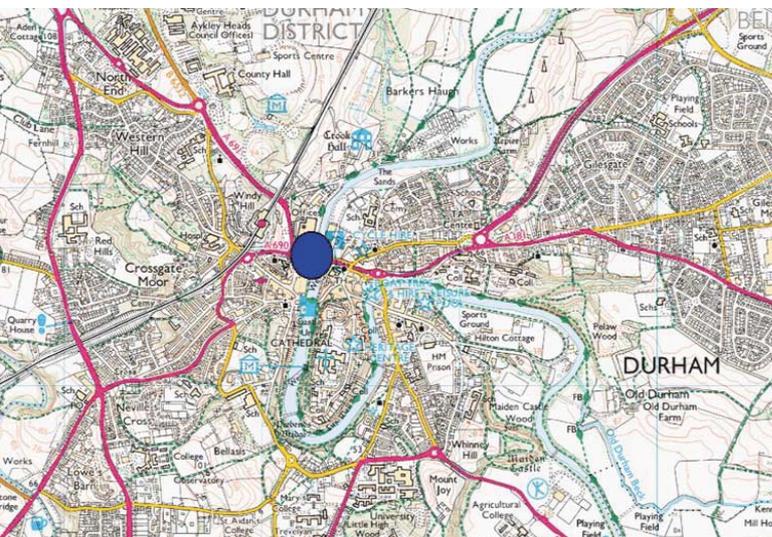
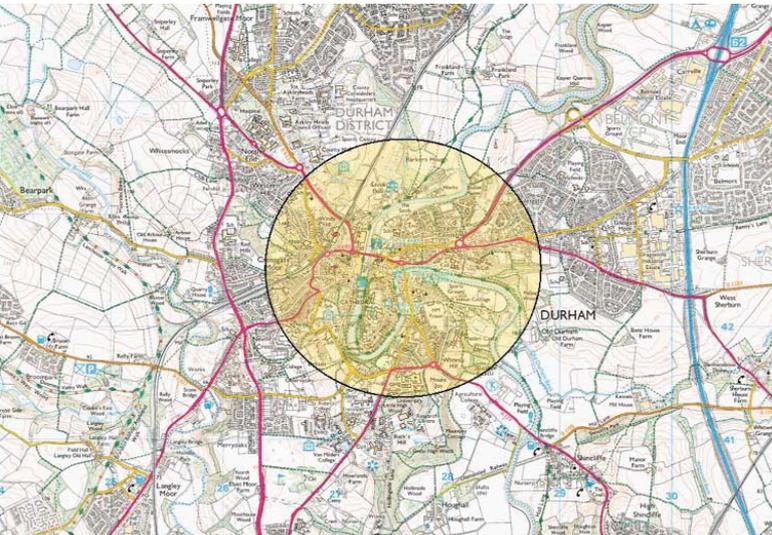


USE OF FUNDING

In order to help inform a decision on how to proceed with a successful demand management model two areas of information gathering need to be addressed. Firstly we will need to produce an updated model of the current travel patterns of people in and around Durham City. This will help to determine the effects of the two charging options and evaluate additional infrastructure requirements. However, we also need to directly engage with all groups who use transport around the City to determine the effects of charging, especially in relation to social inclusion.

Pump-priming funding is, therefore, being sought:

- To undertake data collection especially in relation to the reasons to travel.
- To upgrade the traffic model and complete the traffic impact and environmental assessments for the alternative demand restraint and infrastructure strategies.





- To undertake a more detailed consultation and public opinion survey to determine the acceptability of the proposals.
- To investigate the practicality of implementing road user charging on the through road and/or introducing an increased cordon scheme in the City together with an evaluation of the technology available.

The funding profile envisaged can be summarised as:

	2005/06 £	2006/07 £	2007/08 £
TIF	50,000	200,000	50,000
DCC	50,000	200,000	50,000

Such preliminary work is essential in order to substantiate the viability of the proposed measures and provide support for them through the public consultation procedures. Only by implementing these proposals will the development of the vision for the City be achieved by the provision of a balanced infrastructure and improved accessibility.

The total funding package of £600,000 would be split as follows;

Data collection	£250,000
Consultation and opinion surveys	£90,000
Modelling and option testing	£190,000
Technology evaluation and trial	£70,000





MONITORING AND FEEDBACK

We are convinced that establishing good practice is not enough in its own right and are determined to share our successes and failures with others and similarly learn from their experience. We have achieved this in a number of ways from supporting professional institutions to giving evidence through the scrutiny process to other highway authorities. More specific examples are the ways in which we have shared our experiences of introducing the Country's first congestion charge in Durham City. To date, we have spoken at over 20 conferences on the subject both in the United Kingdom as well as other European Union States and have hosted numerous formal visits ranging from neighbouring local authority members to consular visits from Malta and Japanese academics.

We firmly believe that front line services are best improved if all parts of the authority are willing to debate the issues

of the day and share in best practice. The County Council has clearly demonstrated its ability to deliver innovation and controversial projects with the full commitment and support of both Members and officers. We currently actively seek out opportunities for dialogue whether this is giving evidence to a Parliamentary Select Committee or providing briefing materials for the technical press. The attitude of the authority and its proactive approach to dealing with the media has been recognised nationally in a recent study undertaken by the LGA.

All of the information gathered will be readily shared with both the DfT and any other interested body to allow the national debate on demand management to be progressed. We already have a strong and supportive relationship with the Government Office for the North East and look forward to regular contact and feedback as part of this process.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The inclusion of the strategic vision for Durham City in LTP2 demonstrates that we are keen to engage at an early stage with as wide an audience as possible.

The aspirations of how a congestion charge may operate have already been the subject of debate at the LTP Partnership Forum and whilst all members may not be able to support every part of the proposal, all are keen to see the possible alternative explored further.

As a two tier authority we benefit from the continued partnership and support of the City Council who are keen to see this proposal succeed. Through the guidance of the Durham Vision exercise the City Council will have a key role to play in tacking the bid forward.

However, partnership is not simply about intentions but also about past success.

In Durham City we have introduced an entire package of transport measures including congestion charging, parking controls and now Park and Ride, within a very short space of time. This has been completed with support from both stakeholder groups and the public in and around the City.

If successful with this bid we will continue to be supported by the Durham City Transport Steering group who have helped guide policy development and project implementation throughout the City over the past 5 years. This active groups enjoys the representation of all major employers and stakeholders in the City including the Chapter of Durham Cathedral, Durham University, Chamber of Trade, Durham City Forum and the local Police as well as both City and County Councils.



TIMESCALE

Both of the scenarios included within this bid introduce an element of charging and a mechanism needs to be put in place to allow this to be successfully introduced. We may also need to construct significant infrastructure improvements prior to any charge being implemented. It would, therefore, be the case that if we are successful with a subsequent substantive bid for Transport Innovation Funding then it is likely that a scheme could be delivered in 2010/2011.

CONTACTS

For further information contact:



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