

ANNEX 14: Performance Management

Introduction

It is important that the achievement of outcomes and the delivery of schemes are managed in an effective manner. Schemes must be delivered on time and to budget and to those ends we have established a programme control system to ensure this.

Performance Management

In order to effectively manage our delivery of schemes across our transport function it has been necessary to re-evaluate and enhance our existing procedures for performance management. It has been split into 4 distinct categories:

- **Project Management.** It is important to deliver schemes on time, ensuring that the overall programme is delivered as planned.
- **Financial Control.** The budgets allocated to discreet schemes and the overall budget for our Local Transport Plan need to be monitored to guarantee that there is sufficient finances available to deliver the stated benefits.
- **Performance Analysis.** The schemes and Local Transport Plan as a whole have specific targets to be met. Performance against these targets must be monitored.
- **Performance Review.** The overall contribution to corporate, Community Strategy, regional and national outcomes must be assessed and reported.

Project Management

Darlington Borough Council has clearly defined corporate project management structures and procedures for very large projects. These are used on major developments and highway schemes, or where a number of parties are involved.

A similar approach is being developed for smaller scale projects in order to ensure delivery to time and budget, and to provide a framework for risk management.

The aim is to:

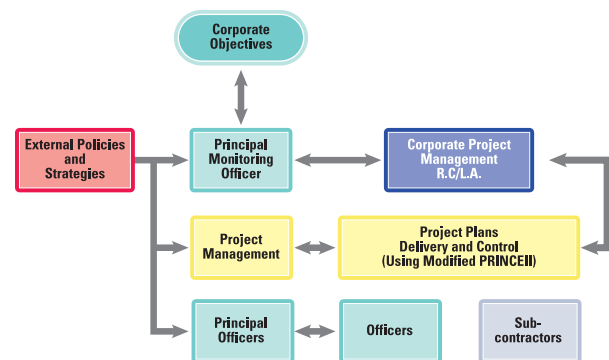
- Clearly define the project in relation to Local Transport Plan objectives and targets.
- Establish realistic timescales.

- Highlight potential risks to implementation.
- Improve project cost information and for this to be integrated into proposed financial controls.
- Provide feedback on project progress on a monthly basis.
- Enhance the documentation for all projects.

Project management requires clearly defined procedures and reporting structure. The Principal Monitoring Officer collates the project management information on a monthly basis and progress is discussed at monthly meetings involving the Chief Engineer, Transport Policy Manager and Principal Officers.

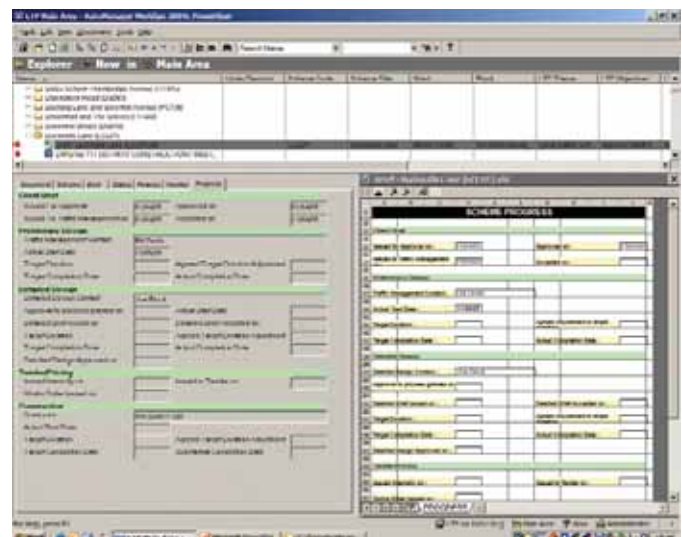
(Figure 1)

Figure 1



A robust documentation and control system, based on Elstree Computing Ltd (ECL) Programme Control Software, will be in place from April 2006. (Figure 2.) To maintain our philosophy of low impact monitoring the system is limited to the following work flow documents: Project Brief, Project Inception Document, Project Plan, Project Quality Plan, Work Package and End Project Report. This builds on the Project Briefs that have been used for project management purposes for the 2005/06 financial year.

Figure 2 A page from the ECL programme control software



This system is designed to be simple to fill in but detailed enough to provide the necessary information. It will include target and budget information to provide information for financial control and performance analysis.

Financial Control

A new set of financial controls and procedures were developed from October 2004 onwards and were implemented in April 2005, following the appointment of the Principal Monitoring Officer in Transport Policy. Financial control is based on the following competencies:

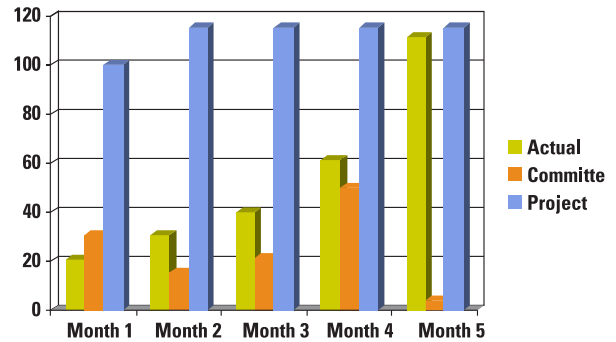
- Budgets set at the beginning of the financial year to achieve targets (scheme delivery and outcomes) and for individual projects/schemes must be realistic and well thought out. The rationale for budgets must be based on sound analysis and empirical evidence.
- Planned and actual expenditure will be monitored on an ongoing basis. Financial control will be proactive, seeking to identify budgets that are at risk.
- Projected variances in spend will be identified and appropriate actions put in place to ensure that targets are still met, through effective project management.
- Regular communication between Principal Officers responsible for budgets and the Monitoring Officer on actual and committed expenditure, and planned/anticipated spend during the financial year.

Financial control is now a key strength of the Local Transport Plan delivery as was recognised in the Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report for 2004/05. These procedures enable proactive monitoring of the local transport funding, but also additional funding streams such as developer contributions, Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town, Cycling England and revenue funding. Accurate financial control is particularly important where funding is being used for matched funding purposes with other funding streams.

Major changes to financial control included:

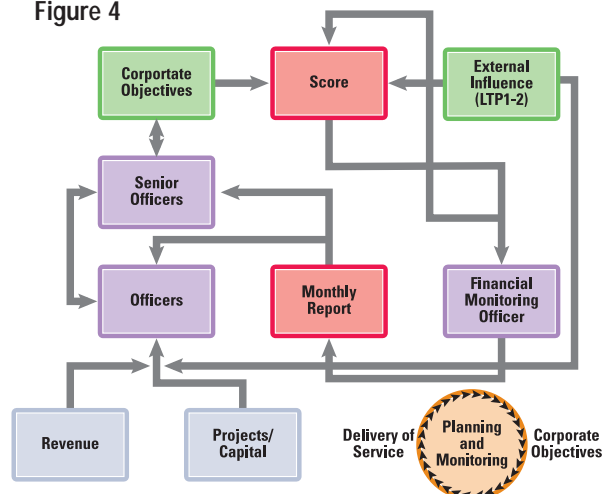
- In setting budgets the sums awarded are ranked in accordance with SCORE system of Multi-Criteria Analysis and weighted in importance accordingly. SCORE is to be integrated with the ECL System to apply SCORE before a Project Brief is generated.
- Existing procedures have been modified to include monthly report from Approving/Senior officers to the Principal Monitoring Officer. This data is collated into a single document produced by the ECL System, which details 3 column accounting for each budget; Actual, Committed and Projected. (Figure 3) In addition project management and performance data is included to demonstrate progress against delivery and performance targets.

Figure 3 Column accounting



- In addition to the single monthly report, financial data is integrated into project management documentation. This is to ensure that at all stages of the project, officers are aware of the financial constraints and targets.
- The Principal Monitoring Officer reports project and revenue performance to senior officers and budget holders on a monthly basis, and highlights 'at risk' budgets. (Figure 4)
- The Principal Monitoring Officer works with project officers to analyse 'at risk' budgets and analyse projected spend in relation to outcomes and targets. Proactive financial control underpins project management and performance.
- There is single officer responsibility for the Transport Group capital finances starting from April 2006.
- Capital Budget codes have been reduced in number and reflect reporting requirements for Department for Transport.
- All budgets have been shut down between financial years. This is to prevent the carry over of expenditure from one financial year to the next. Where carry over is unavoidable then the system is robust enough to identify such expenditure in order for any necessary actions to take place.

Figure 4



Performance Analysis

Project management and financial control have been radically improved over the last eighteen months with a dedicated resource and new procedures in place. This same rigorous approach is now being applied to monitoring performance, in particular progress towards achieving key targets and indicators.

A set of core competencies have been identified that the performance monitoring and analysis must adhere to, as follows:

- Set realistic, challenging but achievable targets and be prepared to change them if parameters change e.g. funding reduces or increases, commercially available public transport services change significantly or costs of transport change significantly.
- Set clear, realistic and easily measurable indicators. In a small unitary authority the relative cost of collecting data can be high and therefore indicators should be selected that either use existing data or data that can be collected cost effectively.
- Clear written procedures must be in place for data collection, for continuous monitoring, regular surveys or ad hoc surveys or research. This must include robust recording and analysis procedures, to ensure reliability of the collected data and to enable repeat surveys.
- Collated data should be regularly checked against historical data in order to establish trends and reliability.
- Collated data, results and trends must be fed back to principal officers to facilitate an understanding at project level of progress and performance. This should inform project management and scheme implementation if appropriate.
- Where the data collection and analysis indicates a divergence from planned performance, the indicator or target must be flagged to senior officers as being 'at risk'. A recovery plan must be devised and implemented through project management.
- Integrate performance data and analysis throughout the programme control process.

One of the main issues for data collection and monitoring is that Darlington already collects a huge amount of data across a wide range of departments and teams for a variety of purposes. The aim during the delivery of the Second Local Transport plan is to coordinate the collection and analysis of the data and make it easily available to anyone who needs it.

Ongoing or regular data collection includes:

- Permanent traffic counters
- Permanent cycle counters

- Bus patronage statistics
- STATS 19 data
- Highway Condition Surveys
- Highway Safety Surveys
- Street lighting patrol surveys
- Rights of Way surveys
- Shopmobility and Ring a Ride statistics
- Annual pedestrian and cycle counts
- Parking – bi-annual surveys of on-street car park usage and footfall
- Car park usage statistics from the Variable Messaging System
- Travel to school annual survey
- Bus punctuality surveys
- Vehicle run time studies
- Vehicle speed surveys from SpeedVisor units

In addition, Darlington has undertaken extensive travel behaviour research through the Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town initiative. This has provided a benchmark for how people travel in Darlington, what influences behaviour and identifies the potential for changes in behaviour. This has enabled Darlington to set more realistic targets and indicators in the Second Local Transport Plan, as well as providing information to other parts of the local authority for planning purposes.

For the Second Local Transport Plan targets and indicators have been set that are challenging but realistic. They are based on robust evidence and recognise potential risks. The targets dovetail and support agreed strategic and corporate objectives.

Well-defined procedures for all monitoring activities will be in place for April 2006. This will include the dissemination of evidence to key officers.

The Principal Monitoring Officer will work with other officers to ensure that effective risk management is in place.

Local Transport Plan targets and indicators will increasingly be integrated into other corporate and strategic plans, recognising the importance of transport, in particular accessibility, to the delivery of many diverse strategies. Transport targets appear in the Local Area Agreement, Children and Young People's Plan and Community Strategy.

Targets and indicators are included in project documentation. There will be feedback programme control using financial and project reporting procedures and documentation.

Performance Review

The Local Transport Plan is itself assessed by the Department for Transport and Government Office North East, and as such the targets, evidence base, justification of trajectories, risk identification and risk management are verified as being credible and achievable. This ensures that the start point of the Plan is robust.

The Local Transport Plan has a built-in performance review mechanism in the Annual Progress Report. Guidance from the Department for Transport indicates that reporting will change to every two years from 2006. However it is anticipated that in Darlington a Performance Review report will be produced to provide an annual focus for reporting the performance of the Plan itself and the delivery of schemes during that period. This will satisfy the following requirements:

- To inform Cabinet of performance and also request the release of funds on an annual basis.
- To provide information into the Community Strategy Action Plan and Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan.
- To inform key stakeholders, partners and local residents on progress to date.
- To use as a basis for further consultation and discussion if implementation plans are to change in order to achieve targets.

On a quarterly basis there is an assessment of progress against targets, conducted by Darlington Borough Council at a corporate level. The information is fed into the Borough's Performance Plus monitoring software which generates an assessment of the Borough's performance overall. This software is used not only by the Council but also key partners such as those involved in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. It is also used to report performance on the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and the Extended Schools initiative. It will also be fundamental in monitoring performance for the Local Area Agreement to be implemented from April 2006 and is excellent tool to link performance to agreed outcomes.

In addition to the monitoring specifically in place to measure progress against targets, there is a much wider data collection and analysis role that is being developed between Transport Policy and Consultancy (Highways). For example there will be a link between the ECL System and the Asset Management Plan software.

A wide range of individuals and teams gathers a great deal of data across the Authority and its partners. It is important that this information is collated and analysed and used to inform the delivery programme, in turn achieving the outcomes of the Plan.

Darlington is already very evidence led in its approach to implementing schemes. It also has an excellent record in

engagement with local people on the design of schemes in their community. However with ever increasing levels of data, analysis and research available it is important that all evidence is considered in decision-making.

The Soicaldata research has provided invaluable data, providing new and sometimes unexpected evidence for how and why people travel and what is required to make them change the way that they travel. This in turn informs the Local Transport Plan delivery programme.

Collecting and analysing data will inform the type and design of intervention that is proposed and implemented in order to achieve a specific outcome. However by adding additional information the type of intervention proposed may change or the design of the intervention may change.

Programme development

The implementation programme for the Local Transport Plan has been developed in light of current information. However ongoing research may highlight new information that impacts on the implementation of the programme, whilst achieving the same outcomes.

The following are just some areas that will provide valuable evidence for programme development over the coming months and years:

- Further Socialdata research as part of the Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town initiative. This will include the results of travel behaviour surveys with 1500 individuals (1000 from the Individualised Travel Marketing areas and 500 from a control group) in the Autumns of 2005, 2006 and 2007. A repeat of the comprehensive survey undertaken in 2004 with a stratified sample of over 4000 individuals will be repeated in 2008.
- Annual bus user surveys from bus operators
- Phase 2 of the Congestion Study due in Spring 2006. This is modelling existing traffic flow and creating a paramics model detailing junction congestion.
- Ring a ride review, due to report in Summer 2006
- Park and Ride feasibility study to be undertaken in 2006. However a stated preference survey has taken place to calibrate the multi-modal model, the results of which are encouraging.
- Quarterly Citizens Panel
- Annual Community Survey
- Travel to school annual survey undertaken in January each year
- Pedestrian and cycle audits undertaken on an area basis
- Land use decisions and section 106 agreements
- Punctuality information from the bus real time information system, which goes live in 2006.

Programme Implementation

As individual programmes are implemented evidence is used to decide upon the most appropriate intervention and the design of that intervention. This evidence may be related to a specific area or mode of transport. This information is already gathered but needs to be fed into the implementation programme on an ongoing basis. It includes:

- Highway Asset Management data such as road condition data, public concerns, criminal disorder issues
- STATS 19 road casualty data
- Detailed travel to school information and potential for change
- Travel plan travel surveys with employers
- Bus satisfaction surveys
- Punctuality Improvement Partnership bus punctuality surveys
- Information from the Individualised Travel Marketing initiative
- Run time surveys and automatic traffic counter data

Example

A programme to deliver safety outcomes outside a school, may be achieved through engineering measures, education, training or enforcement. Whilst STATS 19 data from the Police may not suggest that there is a safety issue, the school travel plan may highlight a perception of safety as being a major issue caused by or contributing to increased levels of car traffic near the school gate. The travel plan may also highlight the fact that children and parents wish to cycle to school, but are deterred from doing so by the real or perceived danger of cycling in amongst cars. Taking into account the different evidence a Safe Route to School could be designed that both encourages cycling by providing a safe environment in which to do so, and deterring parked cars at the school gate through education and enforcement.

Next steps

As the Second Local Transport Plan is implemented there are ways in which monitoring can continue to improve to ensure that the Plan outcomes are achieved and that customer satisfaction with scheme delivery remains high.

It has taken 12 months to gain an in-depth understanding of the Socialdata research that was undertaken in 2004, as the information that was gathered was so extensive. Drilling down in to the data to get specific data sets on for example 16-19 year olds, provides invaluable information to inform programme delivery. It is important over the coming months that this data is exploited to ensure that it helps to achieve outcomes and enable realistic targets to be set. The ongoing research must be used in the same way to identify trends in travel behaviour over the medium term.

Greater analysis of STATS 19 data is required to identify trends

and the potential underlying causes of accidents. Additional resource has been identified to undertake this work in 2006/07. A quarterly review of specific targets that are 'at risk' or showing poor performance trends will be undertaken and an annual review produced. As Darlington has a good road safety record with small numbers of casualties it is important to continuously review small fluctuations in performance. For instance there has been a worrying trend in the numbers of accidents involving motorcycles.

The Asset Management Plan is a tool to ensure that the assets of the highway authority are managed effectively and efficiently. Information from the monitoring of asset condition should be fed into programme development and delivery. This provides an opportunity for cost efficiencies through better coordination of maintenance programmes and integrated block programmes.

Darlington implements its Traffic Management duty through its Traffic Manager, appointed in November 2004 under the Traffic Management Act 2004. This is a developing role which will help give early warning of and address key issues and matters that have an adverse effect on the operation of all parts of the highway network.

Reporting of performance

Progress on project management, financial control, performance analysis and review is reported on a regular basis to:

- Highways and Transportation (H&T) monthly meeting at which Cabinet Member for H&T meets senior officers to discuss progress.
- Departmental Management Team meetings
- The Transport Forum on a quarterly basis.
- Cycle Forum, which meets quarterly.
- Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit on an annual basis for the annual monitoring report as well as ad hoc requests
- Corporate Finance on a monthly basis
- Best Value Performance Plan annually and Corporate monitoring quarterly through Performance Plus.

Scrutiny

The implementation of the Local Transport Plan and associated transport schemes are also subject to scrutiny by a number of scrutiny committees:

- Social Affairs and Health
- Environment
- Resources
- Public Protection and Community Partnerships

