



AGENDA ITEM:

**Planning Committee: 22 May
2008
Cabinet 17: June 2008**

Report of: Executive Manager Planning & Development Services

Relevant Portfolio Holder: To be confirmed

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**SUBJECT: Use of Commuted Sums for Enhanced Transport Provision in
Skelmersdale/Up Holland**

The following wards are affected: Ashurst; Birch Green; Digmaor; Moorside;
Skelmersdale North; Skelmersdale South; Tanhouse; and Up Holland

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To consider how the commuted sums received or due to be received from Section 106 Agreements for accessing sites by alternative means of transport to the car should be used.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

- 2.1 That Cabinet be recommended to approve the use of commuted sums of £51,550 from the Metier Site Phase 1, £25,000 for Proctor Gamble and £5,000 from KRM, Pimbo Lane to create the three cycle/pedestrian routes as set out in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

- 3.1 That, subject to 2.1 above, the use of relevant Section 106 commuted Sums be used as set out in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2.
- 3.2 That delegated authority be given to the Executive Managers for Planning & Development Services and Regeneration & Estates, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to agree the final designs and appoint contractors for the three schemes set out in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2.

- 3.3 That a contribution from Section 106 monies towards the creation of a demand responsive bus service in Skelmersdale be approved in principle subject to receipt of a full Business Plan that assures the long term viability and sustainability of such a service and subject to no higher priorities for Skelmersdale being identified in the forthcoming LSP Transport Study. The size of the contribution to be agreed at a later date; to be minimised by securing funding from other sources and to be within the amount received at the time.
- 3.4 That a further report be brought back to Cabinet in respect of the demand responsive bus service when more details are available.
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4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Under Policy GD.2 of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan developers of large scale development may be required to provide contributions towards the enhancement of transport provisions, including cycling and pedestrian facilities and the improvement of public transport.
- 4.2 Over the past few years the Council has received some monies and has signed legal agreements which will result in additional money being received if the development approved takes place. As each agreement requires both parties to agree they are all worded slightly differently and become payable at different times. Some are very specific about how the money should be used whereas others are very general. The more recent agreements allow more flexibility within the terms of the delegation given to create such agreements. A summary of the sums received and those due in the future for developments in Skelmersdale and Up Holland are set out in Appendix 1. The use of sums received in other areas will be reported to Cabinet when they become available.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 At the time of writing the report £300,593 had been received. Of this £5418 has been paid to support the Skelmersdale Demand Responsive Scheme (the Roundabout Bus), which ceased operating in May 2005 when grant aid was terminated despite patronage increasing. A further £343,111 is due in the future if the approved developments take place. It is also likely that sums will be received in the future as development takes place in other parts of Skelmersdale and Up Holland.
- 5.2 A scheme to introduce a new demand responsive bus service into Skelmersdale is currently being prepared by a group of local community stakeholders in conjunction with Lancashire County Council. A Business Plan prepared by external consultants is currently under consideration. This plan proposes 3 demand responsive vehicles running at peak times and 2 vehicles at non-peak times. It would link all residential areas to employment areas and the town centre. It could also provide a service to Ormskirk Hospital and Burscough

Employment Area from Skelmersdale. The report envisages that the system will be self financing after 5 years but it will need a subsidy of £500,000 in the first five years beginning with about £200,000 in year 1 reducing gradually to £37,000 in year 5. It is hoped that employers and Skelmersdale College will contribute in future years. Further scrutiny of the Business Plan is required but the early indications are that it is feasible. A District wide study of transport provision in West Lancashire has just been completed for the Local Strategic Partnership and the Business Plan will need to address the recommendations arising from this study.

- 5.3 With regard to the provision of improved cycling and pedestrian facilities, the feasibility of providing a cycleway and footpath link to White Moss Business Park from the bus stop on Railway Road in Skelmersdale is being considered in consultation with Lancashire County Council. The estimated cost is £80,000 to £90,000. Although limited funding is available from the Investing in Business (IiB) Inspire Project and the County Council, there is a shortfall of approximately £50,000 to £60,000. In order to be able to use the contribution from Inspire and Lancashire County Council the works must be completed and the monies defrayed by the end of March 2009.
- 5.4 Lancashire County Council recognise that cycling facilities to and within Pimbo Industrial Estate are in need of improvement in order to encourage more people to cycle to work. Ideally it is hoped that eventually there will be a cycle route around the edge of the estate and links to individual premises within the estate.

6.0 ISSUES

- 6.1 It is essential that any monies used comply with the terms of the legal agreements. In some cases the requirements are quite specific eg. the provision of improved cycle and pedestrian links to the Proctor and Gamble site in Pimbo. In other cases, however, there is flexibility to determine whether improvements should be made to public transport systems or other alternatives to the car, such as cycleway and footpaths.
- 6.2 The availability of Section 106 monies provides a good basis for seeking match funding from LCC and other sources.

7.0 PROPOSALS

- 7.1 It is proposed that priority is given to providing the footpath and cycle link to White Moss Business Park, as there is match funding available within a short timescale. The £51,550 S106 monies from the first phase of the Metier Site at White Moss should be used to fund this with contributions from Inspire and LCC.
- 7.2 In addition specific schemes will be drawn up by LCC in consultation with WLDC to improve cycling and walking to the Proctor & Gamble; and the KRM sites with a view to using the S106 money along with Inspire and LCC funding to make the links as attractive as possible to users. This S106 money will consist of £25,000

in connection with the Proctor & Gamble development and £5,000 in connection with the KRM Site.

- 7.3 Discussions are ongoing with representatives of LCC to determine the need for public transport improvements. In particular the lack of bus penetration into the three main industrial estates at Pimbo, Gillibrands and Stanley is being examined. To deal with this issue the provision of a demand responsive bus service is under consideration. The preliminary cost of providing such a service is £500,000 for the first five years.
- 7.4 It may take some time to get the demand responsive bus service running and further work will be necessary to ensure that it is viable and sustainable into the future. There will be the opportunity to obtain money via future development proposals in Skelmersdale such as the town centre proposals and other housing development in the north of the town but the timing of such contributions are unknown and should not be relied upon. At this moment in time there is a total of £213,625 available and a likelihood that a total of £436,736 could be made available in the future. However there are other types of transport that the Council may feel deserve more priority. I will report back to Cabinet once the scheme has been worked up in more detail and I have a clearer idea of the amount of money available.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 8.1 Alternative transport provision is designed to encourage more people to use modes of transport other than the car for their journeys. This can help to assist in reducing carbon emissions and promoting healthier lifestyles. Developing Integrated Transport is a priority project in the West Lancashire Sustainable Community Strategy.

9.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 All the funding for the recommended schemes will be provided by the commuted sums, the NWDA via the Inspire Project and Lancashire County Council.

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 There is a risk that delays could result in funding being lost and money having to be repaid. This risk will be managed by giving priority to the NWDA funded schemes and to using S106 money within the legally binding timescales set out in Appendix 1. There is also a risk that the demand responsive bus service may not be sustainable in the long term. This is being addressed through a robust testing of the business plan for the scheme.

11.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 It makes sense to use the commuted sums as match funding with other sources of finance and therefore priority need to be given to those three cycle/pedestrian routes using Inspire funding which must be defrayed by March 2009.
- 11.2 The proposed demand responsive service in Skelmersdale would replace a highly valued service that was discontinued in 2005. It should assist people in accessing jobs and services without the need to travel by car. However the financial aspects of the scheme require close scrutiny and therefore, at this stage it is proposed that the Council agree in principle to contribute a substantial amount towards the scheme subject to being satisfied that the service will be viable and sustainable in the long term. A further report will be submitted once the scheme has been properly costed and a full business case can be considered.
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Equality Impact Assessment

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Section 106 Agreements – Skelmersdale Contributions to Alternative Transport.
- Appendix 2 Proposed Use of Commuted Sums for Alternative Transport Schemes in Skelmersdale/Up Holland