



PRESS RELEASE

September 5, 2006

Transport project champions Integrated Transport Units

A NATIONAL transport efficiency champion has revealed that local authorities could make individual savings of up to £1million a year by changing the way they run their public transport operations.

The savings have been highlighted in a report into local authority public transport provision that has been commissioned by the North West Centre of Excellence (NWCE).

Garth Goddard, NWCE Transport Programme Director, will be revealing the results of the report at a conference of local authority transport heads from across England that will take place at The Barbican Centre in London on September 20.

The NWCE has been appointed by the DCLG to lead a nation-wide examination of local authority public transport provision, and the report has looked at the benefits of local authorities adopting an integrated transport unit (ITU) to meet its transport requirements.

The report, backed by the DoT and the DfES, highlights the fact that Nottinghamshire County Council took the decision to implement an ITU after a review of their public transport provision had revealed total benefits from

improved planning, procurement and regular service reviews of between £490,000 and £630,000 a year.

Worcestershire County Council, reveals the report, has realised financial benefits of around £1 million over three years through better planning and procurement practices of its ITU.

The report concludes that local authorities who are continuing to undertake their various passenger transport responsibilities in separate functional units should 'give serious consideration' to the creation of an integrated transport unit.

Garth Goddard commented: "Nationally, the local authority public transport bill stands at £2 billion a year and we are aiming to support local authorities in their bid to achieve annual savings in the region of £150 million.

"Evidence reveals that, by fully integrating their passenger transport functions, local authorities will have more focussed, professional staff, more efficient staff utilisation, better service planning and packaging of external contracts, better in-house fleet utilisation and greater flexibility to respond to changing policy scenarios."

And he added: "The business case for moving to an ITU depends, principally, on the balance of benefits and costs associated with establishing and operating such a unit. This report aims to provide clear direction to local authorities with regard to the efficiency gains achievable through an ITU.

"It also looks, in more detail, at the benefits and costs of moving to an ITU, the concept of such a unit, implementation issues and organisational variants and operational arrangements."

ENDS

Notes for Editors

The nine regional centres of excellence are the lead change agencies for local government efficiency. They are supporting councils to secure millions of pounds in efficiencies that are being reinvested in better front-line services. Uniquely placed to bring councils together, they are run by local government, bring additional capacity and are results focused.

Copies of the full report, prepared by Integrated Transport Planning Ltd, will be available on the NWCE web site at www.nwce.gov.uk

Garth Goddard is available for interview and can be contacted on 01244 602900

Issued on behalf of the North West Centre of Excellence by:

Celia Poole

0161 342 3432

077409 30072