
OVERVIEW OF HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work that have been undertaken under the Highways and Transport Portfolio :-
 - (a) **Darlington – A Town on the Move**
 - (i) In competition with 54 towns, Darlington is only one of three towns to have been selected by the Department for Transport as a 'Showcase Transport Town'.
 - (ii) In securing this high profile project Darlington will receive £3.24 Million in revenue funding over the next five years to implement an intensive programme of measures to help tackle traffic congestion, an aim which contributes strongly to the Community Strategy's objectives for economic regeneration.
 - (iii) Our vision for this project is that it will widen travel choice, help to create a safe and accessible environment and contribute to the development of a flourishing local economy.
 - (b) **Darlington Transport Forum and Town Centre Forum – Joint Meeting** – I chaired a joint meeting of the Darlington Transport Forum and the Town Centre Forum held on 17th March, 2004. The meeting was arranged to consult and inform Members on the revised arrangements for the Town Centre 'Pedestrian Heart'. A presentation was given to the meeting by the Consultants for the scheme on those revisions together with the work undertaken to date. Members of the Environment Scrutiny Committee and the Town Centre Board were also invited to the meeting.
 - (c) **Local Transport Plan Expenditure 2004/05** – Cabinet approved the release of capital funds associated with proposed works to be undertaken in the 2004/05 financial year under the Local Transport Plan Programme. The settlement for 2004/05 was for the sum of £3.746m with an additional provisional allocation of £4.193m. It was pleasing to note that £0.194m of the settlement received was extra funding due to the good performance of the Council in relation to the Local Transport Plan with the total award being split into a number of areas including maintenance work and integrated transport work.
 - (d) **Shopmobility Service Level Agreement** – An extension to the current Shopmobility Service Level Agreement until 31st March, 2006, was approved by Cabinet. The extension to the contract to enable the successful Shopmobility Service to continue to provide accessible transport in and around the town centre to local residents.

(e) **Travel Awareness**

- (i) The Tees Valley Travel Awareness campaign pilot project was implemented in Darlington during February and March. The aim was to pose the question 'do you really need to take your car everywhere?' and encourage people to consider more sustainable modes of transport for short journeys.
- (ii) Telephone research was undertaken with 500 respondents, 100 from each of the 5 Tees Valley authority areas to determine travel behaviour and attitudes towards various modes of transport.
- (iii) The pilot involved a 4-week campaign on Alpha radio; a 1-week campaign on Tyne Tees TV south transmitter; 10,000 leaflets delivered direct to households; a viral email sent to 5000 email addresses; and a website.
- (iv) The pilot was followed up by 2 focus group sessions, one for Darlington residents and the other for residents from across the Tees Valley. These provided additional research into both attitudes to transport modes and the effectiveness of the marketing campaign.
- (v) Those Darlington residents that returned the reply element of the leaflet are to be sent details of guided walks and other events organised by the Countryside Team. Those that stated an interest in health walks will be invited by the Primary Care Trust to the launch of the Darlington Doorstep Walks on 29 May.
- (vi) Following the successful pilot plans are well underway for the promotion of Bike Week in June.

(f) **Pateley Moor Crescent Homezone** - Construction works on the Pateley Moor Home Zone are on schedule and should be complete by mid - June.

(g) **Safer Routes to School**

- (i) The Council has recruited a School Travel Plan Officer, to work closely with schools on the development of School Travel Plans and the implementation of Safer Routes to School initiatives. She will take up the post in September.
- (ii) Three of the borough's schools have been selected for a 'Schools and Skills' project co-ordinated by sustainable transport charity Sustrans. These are Dodmire Juniors, Heathfield and St John's Primary.
- (iii) By 31st March 2004 five schools had submitted a completed travel plan and are eligible for a DFES grant (approximately £5000 per school).

(h) **Cycle Network**

- (i) Work is nearing completion on the construction of 2 km of pedestrian / cycle path on the former Barnard Castle Rail Line west of West Auckland Road.

- (ii) Work is complete on the upgrading of the Rydal Road to Melsonby Crescent cycle path.
- (i) **Monitoring** - The Council has recently installed 32 new traffic counters and 5 cycle counters. These will provide continuous traffic data on principal roads and cycle paths.
- (j) **Cameras on Buses** – Work has just been completed fitting just over 60% of the local bus fleet in Darlington with CCTV cameras. Buses operated by Arriva, Green Bus and Stagecoach have been so fitted using 50% match funding from the Local Transport Plan. Initial evidence suggests that the cameras are already bringing benefits in terms of improved security and lower rates of accident claim.
- (k) **Bus Service 19** – On 5 May I met with local residents, Councillor Haszeldine and a representative from Green Bus, together with officers of the Council, to discuss concerns over the operation of Service 19 in the Broadway.
- (l) **North Road Corridor of Certainty**
- (i) Traffic Orders being progressed for Fitzwilliam Drive Traffic Calming, Holwick Road Closure and Thompson Street improvements.
- (ii) Fitzwilliam Drive Toucan - Installation works nearing completion.
- (m) **Yarm Road Corridor of Certainty**
- (i) Hundens Lane Traffic Signal Upgrade - construction nearing completion.
- (ii) Neasham Road/St John's Crescent - Conversion of Zebra to Puffin Crossing - construction nearing completion.
- (n) **Highway Maintenance Works** - Various schemes are due to commence/have commenced/been carried out since the last report:
- (i) **The following schemes have been commenced/are due to commence:**
- C180 Geneva Road Phase 1 - carriageway surfacing.
 - Westfield Drive Phase 2 - footpath works.
 - C46 Great Burdon to Great Stainton - drainage works.
 - A Roads - deep patching.
 - C144 Low Dinsdale - patching.
 - Unc Belgrave Terrace - carriageway works.
 - B to Unc Roads - deep patching.
 - Unc Auckland Oval - footpath works.
 - Unc Ridgeway Phase 5 - footpath works.
 - B6280 Carmel Road South - footpath works.
 - Unc Spring Court - footpath works.
 - Unc The Rise - footpath works.
 - Unc Victoria Road - footpath works.

- C181 Hundens Lane - footpath works.
- Unc Glastone Street - footpath works.
- A167 North Road - Raby Street to Peabody Street - footpath works.
- Unc Kingsway - footpath works.
- A167 Grange Road Phase 3 - kerbing/footpaths/carriageway strengthening.
- Unc Kielder Drive/Meldon Close - footpath works.
- Swan House roundabout - carriageway resurfacing.

(ii) **The following schemes have been completed:**

- A68 Swan House to Burtree Phase 4.
- C55 Brinkburn Road Auckland Avenue to Brinkburn Drive - carriageway surfacing.
- Unc Ridgeway - footpath works.
- Unc - Chesnut Street - footpath works.
- Unc Milbank Road - footpath works.
- Unc Valley Street - footpath works.
- Unc Fenby Avenue entrance - carriageway surfacing.
- Unc Cleveland Terrace - carriageway surfacing.
- Unc The Broadway - carriageway surfacing.
- Unc Ridsdale Street - carriageway surfacing.
- B6279 Summerhouse - carriageway surfacing

(o) **Traffic Management and Road Safety Schemes:**

- (i) The second phase of road safety improvements on Brinkburn Road has been completed.
- (ii) Road safety improvements on the A68 at Faverdale approaching Burtree interchange have been completed.
- (iii) Phase 1 of traffic calming works on Firthmoor Estate are nearing completion.
- (iv) Work on the Rydal Road/Melsonby Crescent cycleway is nearing completion.
- (v) Harris Street to Salters Lane cycleway/footway is due to commence.
- (vi) Detailed design of experimental proposals for closing Back Yarm Road between Peel Street and Wesley Street commenced.
- (vii) Works are ongoing in providing dropped crossings for disabled persons at various locations in the town centre.
- (viii) Traffic calming measures on Newton Lane outside Mount Pleasant Primary School are due to commence.

- (ix) Road safety improvements on the C34a Great Stainton to Aycliffe road are due to commence.
- (x) Dropped kerbs and footway widening in Hopelands, Heighington is complete.
- (p) **Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives** - A number of initiatives have been instigated including the following:
- (i) The cycle training instructors have carried out two pilot testing days for child car restraints. The first was held in conjunction with 'Sure Start' and the second for Council employees. In both instances the vast majority of seats needed some adjustment.
- The programme will now be extended to the public on a monthly basis and the first is due to take place on Thursday 24 June at the ASDA supermarket between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm.
- (ii) The road safety team now has its own web site to publicise its road safety resources and to further the cause of casualty reduction, especially in schools.
- (iii) Members were given a conducted tour of the road safety resources room during the recent Members' Training Day held in Hopetown House.
- (iv) Cycle theory lessons have been given in Corporation Road Primary and other road safety lessons have been given to children in St John's Primary and Harrogate Hill Infant schools.
- (v) A temporary road safety support officer's post is being introduced been advertised to support the on road cycle training programme and future pedestrian training.
- (q) **Bridgework Schemes:**
- (i) A1150 Salters Lane Bridge - protection works ongoing.
- (ii) Polam Lane Bridge - width restriction in place. Quotes have been invited for temporary strengthening options.
- (iii) Design ongoing for:
- Unc Bates Avenue Bridge
 - U55/9 White House Bridge - Inviting quotes for work.
 - A167 Oxneyfield Bridge
 - C46 Little Stainton Bridge
- (iv) Preliminary investigation for C37 Bishopton Bridge Strengthening.

Councillor Nick Wallis

Cabinet Member with Highways and Transport Portfolio