

**DARLINGTON TRANSPORT FORUM**

24th January, 2005

**PRESENT** - Councillor Wallis (in the Chair); Councillors S. J. Jones, Harker, Lewis, S. Robson.

**APOLOGIES** - Councillors Hartley and Ruck.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillor F.S. Robson.

**ABSENT** -

**Officers in attendance** – The Assistant Director of Development and Regeneration and the Transport Policy Manager.

**Representing Outside Organisations** –

**Alzheimers Disease Society**

J. P. Rodwell

**ARRIVA North East Limited** –

T. Batty and K. Poskett

**Darlington Association on Disability** –

G. Pybus

**Darlington Talking Newspaper** –

C. Anderson

**Darlington MENCAP** –

M. Richardson

**Darlington Senior Citizens Association** –

A Christian

**Durham Police**

M. Straugheir

**Growing Older Living in Darlington (GOLD)**

A. Christian, P. Eastwood, B. Hoy, K. Frid and D. Marriner

**Green Bus**

R. Cranmer

**Low Dinsdale Parish Council**

T. O'Neil

**Middleton St. George Parish Council**

C. Sirrell

**Motorcycle Action Group**

S. Hill

**National Association of Providers of Activities for Older People (NAPA) –**

Michael Whitaker

**National Council of Women -**

P. Dore and P. Eastwood

**North East Assembly –**

C. Blackburn

**Rail Future -**

C. Hawkes

**Stagecoach North East –**

D. Elphee

**Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit –**

I. MacGregor

**45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

**46. MINUTES** – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Forum held on 11th October, 2004.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

**47. MATTERS ARISING – (a) Darlington Station Bus/Rail Interchange** – Pursuant to Minute 43/Oct/04 it was reported that additional work at the turning head would be undertaken to install a length of pedestrian guardrail and a dropped kerb at the turning circle. It was reported that the Council's contractors would carry out this work as soon as possible

**(b) Bus Stop outside McDonalds** – Pursuant to Minute 44/Oct/04, Gordon Pybus referred to the continuing problem of buses stopping at the wrong side of the bus stop outside McDonalds and obscuring the dropped kerb. The bus operators present at the meeting agreed to take the issue away and report back to Gordon outside the meeting.

**48. A66 – TEES VALLEY GATEWAY STUDY** – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) briefing members of the Forum on the proposals put forward by the A66 Tees Valley Gateway Study to alleviate the potential constraint to economic development imposed by the single carriageway section of the A66 linking Tees Valley to the motorway network.

Colin Blackburn, North East Assembly, gave a verbal summary of the Study.

Colin Blackburn, North East Assembly gave a verbal summary of the Study, following which, discussion ensued on the Executive Summary (also previously circulated) and the preferred scheme, which would involve dualling from the existing dual carriageway section east of

Darlington to the A66/A67 junction with Yarm Road. It was noted that the remaining section to the A66 would remain a single carriageway, with the possibility for junction improvements and at a cost of approximately £52 million, this solution was highlighted as the option with the greatest cost benefit ratio as well as being both deliverable and able to accommodate traffic growth estimates to the year 2025. It was noted that this option would also prevent the Highways Agency from directing refusal of planning permission for the new development. Several members of the Forum felt that full dualling of the A66 would ultimately be necessary and should be the aim.

It was reported that the consultation process would continue until 4th February, 2005, following which, a final report would be presented to Government with the aim of achieving a place in funding programmes.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the position be noted.

**49. DARLINGTON – A TOWN ON THE MOVE – UPDATE** – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) updating members of the Forum on the progress made towards the development of the Darlington – A Town on the Move strategy in delivering an effective travel network for Darlington.

Discussion ensued on the evidence-based approach used to better understand the travel behaviour and attitudes to travel of Darlington's residents, the results of which would be available at the end of February 2005. Particular reference was also made to the forthcoming Travel Summit on 15th and 16th March, 2005, to which all regular attendees of the Transport Forum would be invited, and the work in progress on a number of other initiatives as part of the Town on the Move project including, individualised travel marketing; travel information; pedestrian and cycle training; school travel plans and the national walk to school week campaign.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the position be noted.

**50. SPENDING FACILITIES FOR MOTORCYCLES IN THE CURRENT LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP)** – Steve Hill, Motorcycle Action Group, raised a question in respect of facilities for motorcycle parking in the town centre. It was noted that following a delay due to the expectation that development was about to proceed at Commercial Street, the Council aimed to install motorcycle stands in 5 locations before the end of this financial year. Officers agreed to provide a progress report to the next meeting of this Forum.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the position be noted.

**51. WEST PARK HOSPITAL TRAVEL PLAN** – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) advising members of the Forum on transport arrangements to the new West Park Hospital.

It was reported that a half hourly bus service from West Park to the town centre was in operation and that the recently launched multi-operator weekly ticket would enable staff to buy a weekly ticket that could be used for all journeys to the site. Reference was also made to the good cycle links; provision of good quality, covered cycle parking just outside the entrance to the main building; the leaflet produced by the Council in collaboration with County Durham and Darlington Priority Services NHS Trust which would be sent out with appointment letters

explaining how to reach the new hospital site; and the monitoring of travel patterns and ongoing work on individualised travel planning with the Trust.

Further to questions raised by members of the Forum discussion ensued on the need for information targeted at those who were visually impaired; possibilities for a park and ride scheme between hospitals; and the reduction of accessible parking bays as a result of reduced car parking capacity.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That the position be noted.

(b) That further updates on the development of transport arrangements to West Park Hospital be brought to the Forum.

**52. DARLINGTON'S SECOND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN** – With the prior approval of the Chair to the matter being treated as urgent to agree the involvement of the Forum in the preparation of the Second Local Transport Plan at the earliest opportunity, the Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) briefing members of the Forum on the process for the preparation of both the provisional and full second Local Transport Plans for Darlington in 2005 and 2006. The report also included a summary of the stakeholder consultation, conducted in the latter part of 2004, to aid the development of the second Local Transport Plan (2LTP) (also previously circulated).

The context of the 2LTP in terms of national policy and shared priorities of congestion, accessibility, air quality and road safety was discussed and the need to evaluate and the effects of the first transport plan was highlighted.

Discussion ensued on public consultation, which would include information and a questionnaire in the March issue of the Town Crier and invites to experts and key stakeholders to attend the Town on the Move Summit on 15th and 16th March, 2005. Particular reference was made to the key issue of tackling congestion and it was noted that a congestion study had been commissioned to identify the problems and best possible solutions. Members of the Forum were also invited to share their local knowledge of congestion 'hot spots' after the meeting.

Members of the Forum were advised that in addition to these consultation events a further report would be brought to the April meeting of the Forum, so that it could consider and make recommendations on the 2LTP before it was considered by the Environment Scrutiny Committee and forwarded on to Cabinet and Council.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That the position be noted.

(b) That a further report on the 2LTP be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum.

**53. QUESTIONS** – Kenneth Frid, GOLD advised the Forum on the difficulties caused by the new traffic lights on the Great North Road to the number 23 bus in turning right into Mayfair Road, however, representatives from ARRIVA advised that no complaints or incidents had been reported, and that the potential for delays caused by the traffic lights had been timetabled into the service.

Discussion also ensued on the bus stop requested by residents of the new Bourne Avenue development and following a delay, it was reported that this would now be in place by the end of March 2005.

The issue of decriminalisation of on-street parking was also discussed and it was noted that reviewing the traffic regulation orders would be an 18-month to 2-year process but was a high priority for the Council.

The issue of concessionary fares and taxi vouchers was also discussed and it was agreed that an item on this issue be added to the next agenda of the Forum.