

---

**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) **Local Transport Programme Plan Expenditure 2005/06** – Cabinet approved the release of capital funds associated with the proposed works to be carried out in the 2005/06 financial year under the Local Transport Plan programme. Contained within the settlement of £3.062 million for 2005/06 was extra funding of £0.928 million due to the good performance of the Council in relation to the Transport Plan
  - (b) **Objection to Road Hump Advertised Under Section 90A of the Highways Act 1980** – Cabinet set aside the objection received in respect of a proposed road hump advertised under Section 90A of the Highways Act 1980 as part of the 20 mph zone in the Prior Street, Cockerton Green and Newton Lane area. The scheme was introduced following a petition and requests from residents and pupils of the two primary schools in the area and subsequent accident investigations.
  - (c) **Bus Shelter CCTV** - Solar powered CCTV and lighting has been installed in 20 rural bus shelters. New information boards have been installed to accommodate timetable information and other notices. Work is continuing to solve minor problems with the system. Ten sites have been installed in the urban area with CCTV cabinets and lighting and there is evidence that these have helped to reduce anti social behaviour in the shelters where the units are present.
  - (d) **Darlington Cycle Forum** - The forum met on Tuesday 26th April in the Town Hall. Around twenty people attended again, including council officers, a police representative and the Tees Valley Sustrans officer. It was a highly productive session with members being invited to draw on maps where they would like to see new routes developed and locations they perceived as danger spots. This information will be used to develop the Cycling Action Plan.
  - (e) **North East Cycle Benchmarking** – Darlington hosted the last round of the Benchmarking programme, with officers attending from authorities across the North East and Cumbria. A review of the cycle network was undertaken with much positive comment, but also many areas being identified where more work is needed. All attending officers were enthusiastic about the Town on the Move project, but felt that it must be matched by investment in high quality facilities.

- (f) **Argos Travel Plan** – Argos (Distribution Centre, Faverdale East Business Park), through their consultants Burks Green, has now had its Green Travel Plan approved as part of its planning permission. This plan is a tailored package of measures to help the organisation manage its travel needs by promoting more sustainable travel choices and reducing reliance on the car. The measures involve the employment by the company of a Travel Coordinator to promote such measures as car sharing initiatives, provision of good cycle and motor cycle parking, bus service information etc. The firm has won awards for the implementation of Travel Plan at their distribution facility in Barton, Staffordshire.
- (g) **Bus Vouchers for Staff** – The Transport Policy section has recently negotiated the purchase of a supply of single discounted Arriva journey vouchers, initially to allow for bus travel between Hopetown House and the Town Hall and vice versa. The vouchers can be used by staff carrying out Council business during the working week. The vouchers will avoid staff paying out money for fares and having to claim it back at a later date and as a result should encourage staff to consider using the bus for this and other similar short journeys. The intention is to roll out this experiment across departments, as part of the review of the Council's Travel Plan, to encourage similar journeys to be made across the town, thus avoiding unnecessary single car trips.
- (h) **Launch of Sky Express** – A new express shuttle bus link known as the Sky Express has been launched by the owners of Durham Tees Valley Airport (Peel Holdings). The bus will travel throughout the day on a half hourly basis and will travel from Darlington Bank Top Station to Feethams and then direct to DTVA via Yarm Road. Other than the stop in the Town Centre, it will not stop en route. The Council have facilitated this service by organising the construction of a bus turning circle on the covered station forecourt. It is hoped that the service will help to increase the numbers of passengers accessing the airport by public transport and the provision of the service is a key part of the Travel Plan which is currently under discussion as part of the airport expansion plans.
- (i) **Hospital Sign up for Bike Week** - Both Darlington Memorial Hospital and West Park hospital have agreed to take part in National Bike Week (11–19 June) which is partially aimed at encouraging people to try cycling to work. They have both agreed to promote the event in conjunction with the Borough Council, and are to provide incentives (free breakfasts) for participants and record the numbers of staff who take part.
- (j) **Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report** - The first draft has been completed and forwarded to GONE for initial feedback. Excellent progress has been made towards achieving targets, all the LTP funding allocation was spent and major progress has been achieved on delivering schemes on the ground.
- (k) **Accessibility Strategy** - The Framework Accessibility Strategy, which has to be submitted alongside the Second LTP, is in early draft stage. Darlington Partnership has agreed that accessibility planning is a key issue for the Partnership and the approach is an excellent way of promoting social inclusion and achieving the objectives of the Partnership. Darlington Partnership has agreed to add accessibility planning to its list

of five cross cutting issues that each themed group has to address during the year ahead.

(l) **Individualised Travel Marketing** - Steer Davies Gleave have been appointed to deliver the town wide programme of Individualised Travel Marketing. The first phase of the programme involves all households in the North West sector of the town, and started in the Harrowgate Hill area on 2 May. The Town on the Move – ITM team are based in the Imperial Centre, Grange Road, Darlington, Tel 0800 45 49 810, email [darlingtononthemove@sdgworld.net](mailto:darlingtononthemove@sdgworld.net) . Nine local people have been recruited to deliver this programme of work between May–August.

(m) **Information Provision – Public Transport, Walking and Cycling** - Stop specific timetables have been placed at most urban bus stops with an available timetable case, approximately 65% of all stops. An ongoing programme of works will see a further 100 timetable cases and timetables installed by August.

A revised town wide bus guide is being prepared, with separate maps showing daytime, evening and Sunday services, and local area walking and cycling guides for the Harrowgate Hill, North Road and Cockerton areas.

Work has recently been completed on the erection of direction signs on the cycle network, covering routes in the Branksome, Cockerton and North Road areas.

(n) **Community Street Audits** - Four ‘Living Streets’ Community Street audits took place in March. A report on the audits was presented to participants and Council Officers at the Dolphin Centre on the evening of the 16 May 2005.

(o) **Travel Awareness Marketing** - A number of general marketing campaigns timed to coincide with the Town on the Move summit have now run their course. They included advertising on buses, bus shelters, car park tickets and Alpha FM. Town on the Move is considering engaging a specialist marketing agency to advise on the development of a marketing strategy and it is anticipated that the Strategy will be in place by July.

(p) **Green Courier Service** - In January ‘ Company of Cyclists’ carried out an audit of the Council’s procedures for the distribution of internal mail. It concluded that there was scope for significant reductions in the use of staff time and private vehicles through the introduction of an emission free (cycle and electric vehicle) courier service. This service, which is expected to operate on a commercial basis, is to be piloted over seven weeks starting in late May. The courier vehicles will be branded with Town on the Move advertising.

(q) **School Travel Plans** - Six schools completed a Travel Plan before the end of March (making them eligible for a DFES grant, £5000 for a Primary and £10,000 for a Secondary School). This brings the total number of schools with a Travel plan to 11 (28% of Darlington’s Schools).

(r) **Bike It Initiative – National Bike Week** - More than 300 pupils from three Primary Schools (Dodmire, Heathfield and St Teresa’s) cycled to school during National Bike to School Week, 18–22 April. These three schools have been taking part in the

National Bike It initiative coordinated by Sustrans and supported in Darlington by the School Travel Plan Officer. Notably Heathfield School, where over 150 pupils cycled, were second only to a school in York in terms of numbers of pupils. Following on from this success they have requested further cycle parking to accommodate the 35–40 pupils now cycling every day

- (s) **Hurworth to Neasham Footway/Cycleway** – Scheme nearing completion.
- (t) **North Road Corridor of Certainty** -
  - (i) Northgate Bus Bay Scheme – work substantially complete.
  - (ii) North Road Bus Lanes – traffic signing and lining scheme being finalised for introduction of bus lanes at the end of June.
- (u) **Yarm Road Corridor of Certainty** -
  - (i) Engineering works on Parkgate from Neasham Road to Hargreave Terrace now complete.
  - (ii) Remaining works on Parkgate, including upgraded and realigned Puffin crossing which were postponed until completion of Ring Road Utility diversion works are about to recommence.
- (v) **Other Schemes**
  - (i) Carmel Road North Toucan – works complete.
- (w) **Highway Maintenance Works** – various schemes are due to commence/have commenced/have been carried out since the last report.
  - (i) The following schemes have been commenced/are due to commence:
    - Holly Street – footpath works.
    - Gladstone Street Phase 3 – footpath works.
    - Archer Street – footpath works.
    - Tees Grange Avenue – footpath works.
    - Westfield Drive, Hurworth – footpath works.
    - C39 Walworth Gate to Walworth Castle – carriageway edge reconstruction.

- C39 Walworth Castle to B6279 – carriageway edge reconstruction and drainage.
  - Shakespeare Road – carriageway patching.
  - Wordsworth Road – carriageway patching.
- (ii) The following schemes have been completed:
- Unc Denton – drainage works.
  - C182 Thompson Street East – carriageway resurfacing.

**(x) Traffic Management & Road Safety Schemes:**

- (i) Ongoing works to provide dropped crossings for disabled persons at various locations in the town centre.
- (ii) Desmond Way cycle route works have been substantially completed.
- (iii) The first and second phases of the Newton Lane/Prior Street traffic calming/20 mph zone scheme have been completed. Phase 3 is anticipated to start in early June.
- (iv) Consultations for traffic calming on Coombe Drive are ongoing.
- (v) Consultations for Firthmoor traffic calming Stages 3 and 4 are ongoing.

**(y) Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives** – a number of initiatives have been instigated including the following:

- (i) Cycle Training Activities -
  - Darlington Borough Council has taken the lead in delivering Instructor Cycle Training in the North East. One of our trainers is about to become the first accredited cycle instructor trainer provider who can deliver the new national standard for on road cycle training.
  - As an accredited trainer provider, Darlington has agreed to lead the region's Local Authorities Road Safety Officers Association (LARSOA) cycle focus group and help other authorities introduce the new national standard for on road cycle training.

(ii) Classroom Activities -

- Two schools have requested the cycle helmet assembly provided by the Road Safety Team. Hopefully, with the onset of warmer weather and increased cycle activities, other schools will take up this annual offer.
- In conjunction with the commercial firm 'Pro Truck', the road safety officer assisted with the delivery of truck safety for many infant pupils. Most schools took up the offer of a visit by pro truck's staff and the child attractive trucks.

(iii) Nursery Education -

- The ongoing resources, 'People Who Help Us' and 'Hold my Hand' programmes are continuing to be provided in Borough and private nursery establishments.

(iv) General Road Safety -

- New ROSPA booklet – 'Road Safety : An Elected Member's Guide' circulated to all Members.

**(z) Bridgework Schemes:**

- (i) A167 Oxneyfield Bridge – construction underway.
- (ii) Bates Avenue Stage 2 – works complete.
- (iii) Little Stainton Bridge – detailed design ongoing.
- (iv) Bishopton Bridge – further detailed analysis has shown that bridge strengthening work is not required.
- (v) Barmpton Bridge – consultation ongoing.
- (vi) Leadyard Bridge –detailed design of major maintenance work, including deck replacement, in progress.

**Councillor Nick Wallis**  
**Cabinet Member with Highways and Transport Portfolio**