
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) **The Second Local Transport Plan** was submitted to Government Office North East and the Department for Transport at the end of July. Initial feedback will be received during October or November.
 - (b) **Travel Plans:**
 - (i) **Argos** - Implementation commenced on their travel plan at their new facility at Faverdale. They have appointed a travel plan coordinator to work with the Council to implement the Plan. Two new bus stops have been constructed on Rotary Way to serve the site (bus shelters are on order) and pedestrian links have been completed from the bus stops to the pedestrian access to the site. A new cycle route from the site through the High Grange estate to West Auckland Road via Faverdale Road will be completed by mid September.
 - (ii) **Celectron Ltd, Trinity Court, Faverdale** - Travel plan completed.
 - (iii) **The Imperial Centre** - Draft travel plan produced.
 - (iv) **Morton Palms Travel Plan** – Whessoe will be adopting the Travel Plan when they move to Morton Palms in October. A lunchtime travel event was arranged at Hopetown House on 6th September to enable Whessoe staff to ask questions about their travel options to the site.
 - (c) **Council Travel Plan** – A questionnaire was circulated to all staff with the August pay slips to collect data on how staff travel to work. An article also appeared in the Flyer to promote the travel plan and associated questionnaire, which was also available as an on-line form. Results will be available later in the year and will be used to develop the Council Travel Plan.
 - (d) **Public Transport Seminar** – An event was held for officers and Members to discuss ways in which to increase the use of public transport in Darlington. The event involved the local bus operators and further data from the travel behaviour research.
 - (e) **Pedestrian Heart** – Following the substantial completion of the enabling works the first major changes in the town centre will take place on 18 September when the new bus stop locations come into use. All bus services that use the town centre will be affected. A huge amount of preparatory work has been undertaken with the bus

operators and other partners to ensure that bus users are able to locate the new bus departure points with relative ease. This work has included:

- (i) Updating the Naptan database to ensure that Traveline and the on-line journey planners are using the up to date timetables, stops and routes.
 - (ii) Production of new Omnitimes stop specific timetables for town centre stops and all bus stops within the Borough that have timetable cases. Timetables will be put out in the town centre on 18 September and the rest will be installed during the following few days.
 - (iii) Design and production of information posters to be installed in town centre bus stops in advance of the changes; four page article in September's Town Crier; and 10,000 leaflets distributed to the Tourist Information Centre, Library, Town Hall, local town centre businesses and on street.
 - (iv) Members of staff available near the new bus stops before and after the changes to inform bus users about the changes and direct them to the most appropriate bus stops for their journey.
 - (v) Events are arranged for the week following the changes to celebrate the start of the Pedestrian Heart works. These includes the promotion of walking, cycling and using public transport.
- (f) **Bus Pass renewal** – All residents with existing pre-paid bus passes and taxi vouchers have been contacted by letter explaining their options for the next 6 months. The passes and vouchers, which come into effect from 1 October 2005, have also been explained in detail in the Town Crier.
- (g) **Cycling Demonstration Town** – Darlington has been short-listed for possible support as a Cycling Demonstration Town, which would provide additional funding. Representatives of the Board of Cycling England will visit Darlington, and the seven other short-listed towns and one London Borough, in September and October to make their final assessment.
- (h) **Cycle Route to Heighington** – A signed route from Newton Lane to Heighington has been completed.
- (i) **Cycle Events:**
- (i) The Pedal Power bike events programme has been completed. Feedback from participants has been very positive and attendance levels have been higher than in previous years. The programme will be reviewed and a new programme developed for 2006 in collaboration with the Countryside, Road Safety, and Events Teams, and in consultation with the Cycle Forum.
 - (ii) Cycle events organised with local schools in partnership with the Sustrans Bike It! Initiative have been a great success. Cycle to School Week attracted large

numbers of cyclists in the three participating schools and it is hoped to expand this initiative next year to more schools when Cycle to School Week becomes a national event in 2006.

- (j) **Cycle Loan Scheme** - A new scheme for staff and members of the public has been launched to enable a bike to be loaned for a short period of time. This is in response to feedback from the Individualised Travel Marketing programme as respondents wanted to try cycling in Darlington but did not want to spend a lot of money on a bike first. This scheme will enable them to try cycling first before investing in a bike and will be promoted by the hospital, which already runs a scheme for staff to buy a bike through their payroll at a discount and by twelve monthly payments.
- (k) **Cycle map and journey planner** – A new cycle map has been produced for Darlington following an extensive audit of the cycle and road network. It has been produced in a format that will be replicated across the Tees Valley and packs of maps will be made available to promote cycling across the sub region. The Department for Transport is using the information to develop an on-line cycle journey planner. This will be piloted in Darlington during September and October with members of the public and Council staff. This will be then be used as the template to develop a national cycle journey planner.
- (l) **Individualised Travel Marketing** – Steer Davies Gleave has completed the first phase. Two members of staff will now be able to use their travel marketing skills for other projects and discussions are underway to offer the ITM programme to staff at the Memorial Hospital. If this is successful it will be extended to other employers who are developing travel plans.
- (m) **Greenlink Courier Service** – The six week pilot project has been a success and the service is now operating commercially, undertaking deliveries for several departments within the Council. The service is now seeking to expand to provide courier services to other companies and organisations in Darlington.
- (n) **North Road Corridor of Certainty** – North Road Bus Lanes traffic signing and lining scheme is nearing completion.
- (o) **Yarm Road Corridor of Certainty** – Remaining works on Parkgate, including upgraded and realigned Puffin crossing near the Civic Theatre, which were postponed until completion of the roadworks on the Ring Road, have recommenced. Completion is programmed for the end of October.
- (p) **Central Park Northern Access** – Detailed design and preparation of contract documents are ongoing by our framework partners Capita Symonds. The roadworks, which are being funded by One North East, are programmed to commence on site at the end of November this year.
- (q) **A66/A67 Morton Palms Roundabout Improvement** – Design and preparation of contract documents are ongoing by Bullen Consultants. The works are to be carried out

by A-One and are programmed to commence at the end of September this year.

(r) **Highway Maintenance Works** – various schemes are ongoing/due to commence/have commenced/have been carried out since the last report.

(i) The following schemes are ongoing:

- A68 West Auckland Road – deep patching.
- A167 Grange Road – footpath and carriageway resurfacing.
- A68 West Auckland Road, Spring Court South – footpath and carriageway surfacing.

(ii) The following schemes are due to commence:

- B6279 Houghton Road, McMullen Road to Devonshire Road – footpath and carriageway surfacing.
- B6280 Carmel Road North – drainage works.
- St John's Crescent (Back Lane) – patching works.
- A167 Beaumont Hill/Harrowgate Village - footpath and carriageway resurfacing.

(iii) The following schemes have been completed:

- Gladstone Street Phase 3 – 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.
- B6279 Houghton Road – deep patching.

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

(i) Ongoing works to provide dropped crossings for disabled persons at various locations in the town centre. The programme of works has been developed in conjunction with Darlington Association on Disability.

- (ii) Works for the final phase of the Newton Lane/Prior Street traffic calming/20 mph zone – civils works substantially complete.
 - (iii) Construction of the traffic calming scheme on Coombe Drive well advanced.
 - (iv) Consultations for Firthmoor traffic calming Stages 3 and 4 are in progress.
 - (v) Argos cycleway/refuge/bus platforms works are nearing completion.
 - (vi) Sadberge Gateway Scheme – consultation ongoing.
 - (vii) Heighington Gateway/Safer Routes to School Scheme – detailed design substantially completed.
- (t) **Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives** – a number of initiatives have been instigated including the following:
- (i) **Cycle Training Activities -**
 - Darlington has been assessed as an accredited cycle instructor training provider. After a few minor changes to our course we will be nationally recognised as an instructor training centre. Any students (in house or external clients) we train will be eligible for inclusion on a national database of registered cycle trainers.
 - Two further instructors have been accepted for the pool of cycle trainers. This will give us more flexibility to increase the courses we currently provide.
 - The school academic year ended in July with over 600 children being trained in the basic on-road cycle training course. This is our highest total so far by around 100.
 - The first full year of a pilot advanced cycle training course at Hummersknott Comprehensive has been completed. This was designed to give the children confidence when cycling in moderate to heavy traffic. It is anticipated that this, combined with improved cycle storage facilities, will increase the numbers of students cycling to and from school.
 - (ii) **School Activities -**
 - The Road Safety Officer in conjunction with the British School of Motoring (BSM) Roadshow attended Eastbourne Comprehensive School to provide the older students with an introduction to learning to drive.

(iii) Nursery Education -

- The ongoing resources, “People Who Help Us” and “Hold my Hand” programmes are continuing in Borough and private nursery establishments.

(iv) Older Residents -

- The Road Safety Team in conjunction with Age Concern are arranging a campaign for the darker nights for older residents. The campaign involves the distribution of low cost high visibility “See Me” shopping bags and is part of a Northern Region Road Safety Initiative.

(v) Pedestrian Training -

- A team of pedestrian trainers is being set up to deliver pedestrian training in primary schools as part of the “Town On The Move” project.

(vi) Walk to School -

- Once again Darlington Borough Council has been the lead authority in the region and has designed and produced material for the forthcoming Walk To School Week (WTSW), due to take place 3-7 October 2005.
- This year the campaign will have an environmental theme and the Countryside Team and Tees Forest are also actively working on the project.

(u) Bridgework Schemes:

- (i) A167 Oxneyfield Bridge – substantially complete.
- (ii) Little Stainton Bridge – detailed design ongoing.
- (iii) Bishopton Bridge – detailed design ongoing.
- (iv) Barmpton Bridge – consultation ongoing.
- (v) Leadyard Bridge – detailed design of major maintenance work, including deck replacement, is ongoing.

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