
OVERVIEW OF TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work that have been undertaken under the Transport Portfolio:
 - (a) **Taxis in the Town Centre** – At the meeting of Cabinet held on 18 September 2007, Members were advised of the results of the monitoring exercise undertaken on the experimental traffic regulation order to improve taxi access to and egress from the Town Centre. As there were no remaining objections to the experimental order and no outstanding issues identified in the monitoring exercise to prevent the order being made permanent, Cabinet agreed that the experimental order be made permanent.
 - (b) **Proposed Changes to Hackney Carriage Stands – Result of Consultation** – As part of the Pedestrian Heart project, a review of the hackney carriage stand allocation in the town centre was undertaken. A number of changes to the stands were proposed and advertised to which a number of objections were received. After considering the results of the public consultation exercise, Cabinet agreed to appoint the hackney carriage stands, as advertised, in East Row and Bondgate, and to advertise, and give notice to the Chief Constable, of a proposed evening hackney carriage stand in Barnard Street.
 - (c) **Cycling Demonstration Town -**
 - (i) Two further schemes have been implemented during the summer:
 - The traffic signals at McMullen Road/Haughton Road junction have been upgraded and a new crossing created to assist pedestrians and cyclists wishing to travel straight on from McMullen Road to the route alongside the River Skerne (Rockwell Nature Reserve) in the Springfield area. The scheme includes cycle facilities on Haughton Road.
 - Improvements have been introduced on Whessoe Road to reduce the speed of traffic travelling northwards near North Park. This assists cyclists (and pedestrians) wishing to cross Whessoe Road from North Park onto Elmtree Street and beyond onto Honeypot Lane. Elmtree Street has been resurfaced and new light fittings have been ordered and delivered. Clearance has now been given by Network Rail to fix the lights on the under-side of the bridge and this work should take place towards the end of September/beginning of October. The new footbridge/cyclebridge that will provide a new link across the East Coast Main Line alongside Haughton Road is now under construction and should be complete by February 2008. The bridge will then be transported to Darlington for

installation. The connecting pedestrian and cycle routes either side are now complete.

- (ii) The plans for the pedestrian/cycle route alongside the River Skerne between Mill Lane and Stockton Road were approved. Further consultation with local residents will be undertaken by Groundwork.
 - (iii) Results of the public consultation event held in July for cycle improvements in Abbey Road/Duke Street are now being turned into design proposals. This will provide links to existing cycle routes on Nunnery Lane and Cemetery Lane. Proposals to upgrade the puffin crossing on Carmel Road North at the junction with Nunnery Lane and Millbank Road are also out to consultation.
 - (iv) John Grimshaw, Chief Executive of Sustrans and a Cycling England Board member visited Darlington to review the schemes that have been implemented over the last 12 months. He was impressed with both the quality of design and the build quality. This was followed by a visit from Philip Darnton, Chair of the Cycling England Board and Councillor Dave Merrett, a York City Councillor and Cycling England Board Member. They were impressed by the progress being made and indicated that further funding may be available beyond the end of the project in 2008, subject to the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement on 17 October 2007.
- (d) **Public Transport** - Further details have been released from the Department for Transport regarding the new Concessionary fares scheme for introduction on Tuesday 1 April 2008. This will provide free off peak travel on local bus services in England. Darlington Borough Council is working with the other Tees Valley authorities to jointly purchase the smart card passes. Revised guidance for accessing eligibility will be issued later this year by the Department for Transport. A national campaign to inform people about the new scheme will be supported locally with information and guidance provided through as many means as possible, including voluntary organisations such as Growing Older in Darlington (GOLD) and Darlington Association on Disability (DAD).
- (e) **Car Parking** - The Office of Fair Trading approved the takeover of Stagecoach in Darlington by Arriva with effect from Sunday 26 August 2007. All services will continue to operate in the short term until Arriva implement a revised network and timetable. Arriva have committed to work with Darlington Borough Council and a review of the supported bus network will have to be undertaken.
- (f) **Pay By Phone** - The new Pay by Phone service operated by Verrus was launched in Darlington Borough Council car parks on the 3 September 2007. The new system enables car park users to pay for their car parking using their mobile phone. New signs have been put in the car parks which display all of the car parking information including charging, hours of operation, the car park charter and the Pay by Phone service. Usage of the system will be monitored. In the second week of operation there were 81 transactions using the new system, which Verrus advise is an encouraging start.

(g) Individualised Travel Marketing -

- (i) The three year individualised travel-marketing programme is now complete. During the period May - September 2007, the Team Local Motion travel advisors have contacted 14,000 households and spoken to around 11,000 residents. 72% of residents spoken to on the doorstep have taken one or more Local Motion travel resources and more than 6,000 have signed up to the Local Motion club. This brings the total number of households signed up to Local Motion to more than 10,400.
- (ii) As in previous years Steer Davies Gleave (the consultants contracted to implement the individualised travel marketing) has completed a customer satisfaction survey. The results show that 99% of participating households rate customer service as good or very good; 91% said the quality of travel information was good or very good; and 97% rate the accuracy of travel information as good or very good. Copies of the customer satisfaction report are available on request.
- (h) Travel Behaviour Research 2007 -** Socialdata is conducting the interim travel behaviour research for 2007, over the period mid September to mid October 2007. Socialdata are contracted to survey a sample of a minimum of 1000 residents living in the area visited by the Team Local Motion travel advisors in 2007, plus a second sample of 500 residents living in the area visited by the travel advisors in 2005.
- (i) School Travel Plans - Medal Motion -** Building on this summer's successful Medal Motion campaign a further Medal Motion event will take place in October. This time the campaign is themed around travel to different countries, with participating schools being encouraged to hold themed events during the two week campaign. For example a 'Chinese Dragon' walking bus to Cockerton Primary School. As previously, there will be whole school and individual pupil prizes for those travelling by a sustainable mode.
- (j) Cycle/Pedestrian Training Evaluation -** In July 4,500 evaluation survey forms were sent to parents of all year 1, 2, 3 and 6 pupils, asking for feedback on pedestrian and cycling training. 11% (408) of the pedestrian and 8% (95) of the cycle surveys were returned. 81.7% of respondents cited road safety training as very important in terms of reducing the risk of accident to pedestrians and cyclists; 82.2% also cited that 20 mph zones outside of school are very important; 83% and 90% said that road safety training had improved their child's ability as a pedestrian or cyclist respectively. Interestingly almost 70% of respondents thought that road safety training should be funded by Council Tax once Local Motion funding has ended. Parents appear to be more willing to contribute to the costs of cycle training than to the costs of pedestrian training. The most important findings showed that 98% of respondents felt that every child in Darlington should receive pedestrian training and 96% said that all pupils should receive cycle training.
- (k) Sustainable Travel to School Strategy -** A new duty within the Education (School Information) Regulations 2002, amended with effect from 1 June 2007, requires Local Authorities to publish a Sustainable Travel to School strategy on their website by 31 August each year. Given the extremely short timescale Darlington has published a

draft strategy. It is proposed that this will be reviewed and updated following consultation with stakeholders and service providers. The policies and actions adopted within the draft Sustainable Travel to School strategy have been drawn from existing policy documents on which the Council has consulted widely, in particular the policies and actions taken from the School Travel Strategy adopted as part of the Local Transport Plan 2006-2011.

- (l) **Local Motion Newsletter** - From 17-22 September 2007, Local Motion club members and Darlington businesses were invited to participate in 'Smarter Choices Week', a campaign to get residents and employees to choose to walk, cycle, car share or take the bus in place of using the car for at least one journey during the week. Participants registering their journey were then entered into a prize draw.

The latest Local Motion newsletter was sent to the 10,000 Local Motion club members in early September. The newsletter carried news on the 'Smarter Choices Week' campaign.

- (m) **Police Bicycles** - Local Motion has helped Durham Constabulary buy nine bikes and equipment for police officers. The bikes allow officers to cover larger areas than they would be able to on foot.
- (n) **Requests for Information/Visits** - The Local Motion project is receiving a considerable amount of interest from Officers at other Local Authorities and government agencies. Requests for information have been received from the Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly and numerous local authorities.

In July we hosted a full day visit with representatives from the London Borough of Sutton and Transport for London. This was to advise them on setting up a Smarter Travel Choices project in Sutton., which is being funded by Transport for London.

- (o) **Local Motion Individualised Travel Marketing Seminar** - On 26 September 2007 Darlington is hosting a seminar on the Local Motion project, primarily focusing on the delivery and outcomes from our three year programme of individualised travel marketing, during which the Team Local Motion travel advisors have contacted every household in the town and spoken on the doorstep to approximately 30,000 householders.

The seminar on the 26, which is being organised by Steer Davies Gleave, is an opportunity to look in depth at the delivery of a large scale social marketing programme, to meet and question some of the operational staff involved and to join a debate on the future of such programmes in delivering economic, health, environmental and social inclusion objectives.

- (p) **West Auckland Road/Greenbank Road/Portland Place Junction Improvement** - Work complete

- (q) **Bondgate Roundabout and St Augustine's Way Improvement** - Construction commenced.
- (r) **McMullen Road/Haughton Road Signals Upgrade** - Work has commenced.
- (s) **Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor** - Work on the A66 between Little Burdon roundabout and the junction with the main works is progressing well. Surfacing of the new large roundabout is due to begin before the end of September and traffic management changes will take place throughout October to allow completion of the central island. There will be one complete road closure overnight at the end of September to allow movement of an overhead power line but otherwise traffic will always have a lane available in both directions until completion at the end of November, when all traffic cones will be removed.

Strengthening of the Arnold Road underpass is in progress and the road is generally at formation level throughout its length. The Lingfield Beck culvert is nearing completion and two of the balancing ponds at Red Hall nature reserve are finished.

(t) **Highway Maintenance Schemes -**

(i) **Recently Completed Schemes -**

- A167 Burtree Lane to Coatham Mundeville Phase 3 - footway and carriageway resurfacing.
- B6280 Parkgate Phase 2 - footway refurbishment.
- Winston Street Car Park - entrance re-profiling.
- Goodison Way - channel line re-profiling outside garages.
- A6072 Coatsay Moor Lane - carriageway edge strengthening.

(ii) **Ongoing Schemes -**

- Hundens Lane Phase 2 - footway refurbishment.
- C40a Burtree Lane, Burtree to Whessoe Road - carriageway edge strengthening.
- C40a Burtree Lane A1M Bridge - safety barrier renewal.

(iii) **Schemes Due to Commence -**

- Ketton Avenue - footway refurbishment.

(u) **Traffic Management and Road Safety Schemes –**

- (i) **Borough Road, East Mount Road & Hundens Lane Area Residents' Parking Schemes** – The legal orders have been advertised for the Eastmount Road and Hundens Lane Schemes. Objections to the schemes are being reported to Cabinet in October. There is further advertising to be carried out in connection with the Borough Road scheme and if objections are received they will be reported to a future Cabinet meeting.
- (ii) **Southend Avenue Residents' Parking Scheme** - The responses have been analysed and a meeting arranged with Ward Councillors and the Portfolio holder to discuss the results and update the project plan.
- (iii) **Neasham Road Area Residents' Parking Scheme** - Surveys have been undertaken and the results analysed. A scheme has been designed and consultation is programmed.
- (iv) **Pay by Phone** – the signing changes for the new system were completed for the implementation date of September.
- (v) **Road Casualty Reduction Strategy** - In partnership with Durham County Council and Durham Constabulary, work is ongoing to produce a strategy for reducing vehicle related casualties.
- (vi) **Urban 20 mph Zones** – Schemes for five areas: Bank Top, Lascelles, Corporation Road, Red Hall and Oakwood Drive, have been developed and the legal orders advertised. All residents have been notified of the next stages in the process.
- (vii) **A68 Local Safety Scheme** - A feasibility study has been carried out to identify causation factors and potential engineering solutions. The proposals are now being developed for wider consultation with a view to implementing a scheme in this financial year.
- (viii) **The Oval** – Detailed discussion and planning is taking place with the developers to manage the impact on the highway network during the construction period.
- (ix) **Firthmoor Traffic Calming** – Phase 5 of this traffic calming scheme covering Estoril Road South, Firthmoor Crescent, Hewitson Road South, Ingleby Moor Crescent, Lanethorpe Crescent and Marston Moor Road, is programmed to start construction during week commencing 24 September 2007. The residents have been advised of the proposed start date.
- (x) **Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement** – Preliminary pre-consultation designs have been undertaken for inclusion in the Tees Valley submission. A substantial body of work has been completed in line with the very tight bid timetable for 45 schemes ranging in cost from £2,000 to £2.1M and totalling £8.9M. Designs were required to allow progression into the bidding process and satisfy the DfT that Darlington's concepts for bus infrastructure improvements were sufficiently advanced. A widescale consultation programme will be carried as part of the

project plan.

- (xi) **Branksome Safer Route to School** – Consultation has commenced on a scheme to improve the link from a footpath to a shared cycle/pedestrian link between Staindrop Road and Cockerton Green. The scheme involves widening the existing route and the provision of a new bridge.
- (v) **Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives** - A number of initiatives have been instigated, including the following:
- (i) **Cycling Activities** -
- The school cyclist training programme began at the beginning of September.
 - Another Cyclist Instructor Training Course was held at the end of September and bookings for further courses have also been made until the end of the year.
 - A fun cycling/training session was organised in partnership with the Sure Start organisation as part of the holiday programme with certificates and free cycle promotional items given to the children under 11 years of age who attended the half day activity.
- (ii) **Pedestrian Training** -
- Four schools are taking part in the pedestrian training programme for the first half term of the new academic year. High Coniscliffe (a new school to the programme) has achieved a 100% participation in year 1, 2 & 3 children. Mowden, Whinfield and St John's also have a take up of more than 90% with more than 400 children being enrolled by their parents/ carers.
- (iii) **Road Safety in the Community** -
- A presentation was given for the members of the Growing Older Living in Darlington (GOLD) organisation. As senior members of our society are often more vulnerable on the roads, this presentation was an important way of giving road safety help and advice.
- (iv) **People Who Help Us Presentation** -
- With the start of the new academic year bookings are now coming in for the nursery/reception People Who Help Us presentations, with one already having taken place at Faverdale.
- (v) **Motorcycle Campaign**

- The Road safety Section has participated in a national campaign backed by the Department for Transport which aims to prevent casualties by making motorcyclists aware of the biker friendly website:
www.handleitorloseit.com
- Part of the website has a facility for enabling motorcyclists to Email road defects directly to the Council.
- Approximately 2,000 postcards promoting the scheme were distributed between bike shops and the test centre in Darlington. Additionally, details of this important campaign designed to save lives and help reduce casualties, was sent to 656 registered motorcyclists in the Town.

(vi) **Wise Drive -**

- Road Safety Staff have supported the annual Wise Drive event held at Police Headquarters in Durham. The event is made available to all schools and colleges in the force area who have pupils in year 11, and any college student.
- Each establishment can send a group of up to ten students to this intensive and emotive pre driver event. Feedback for the whole event, from previous years, has been excellent and the Road Safety team will continue to support Wise Drive as long as it is well received from the students and teachers.

(vii) **Child Car Restraints -**

- In partnership with the North-eastern branch of the Local Authorities Road Safety Officers' Association (LARSOA), Darlington has funded and helped promote through posters to schools, playgroups and nurseries, the launch of a new website which aims to give help and support for parents on fitting and using child car restraints. The address is
www.protectchildnortheast.co.uk
- At the beginning of the term the Road Safety Officer organised publicity to mark the anniversary of the new child car seat legislation, which was introduced last September. The event involved Gurney Pease Primary School and was sponsored by Halfords.

(w) **Bridgework Schemes -**

- (i) **Little Stainton Bridge** - Programme adjusted to accommodate works by Northumbrian Water. Phase 2 to commence 24 September 2007.
- (ii) **Barmpton Bridge** - Substantially complete on programme.

- (iii) **Central House Retaining Wall** - Works substantially complete.
- (iv) **Haughton Road Cycle/Footbridge** - On programme to commence fabrication of superstructure in September with work on site commencing in October.
- (v) **St John's Church Retaining Wall** - Works completed on programme.

Councillor David Lyonette
Cabinet Member with Transport Portfolio