
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) **Proposed Residents' Parking Schemes -**

- (i) **Stanhope Area Residents' Parking Scheme – Secondary Traffic Order** – The objections received to the publication of the secondary traffic order in relation to the Stanhope Area Residents' Parking Scheme, which was advertised between 14 September and 9 October, 2006, were considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 5 December, 2006. The objections to the Secondary Traffic Order were set aside and it was agreed that the proposals, as advertised, be implemented.
- (ii) **Borough Road - East Mount Road & Hundens Lane Area** – Consultation was completed just before Christmas and the feedback is currently being analysed.
- (iii) **Southend Avenue** – Consultation is underway and will extend through January.

(b) **Local Transport Capital Settlement 2007/08** - On 18 December the local transport funding allocations for Darlington were announced by Government Office North East. The funding allocations for the integrated transport block are:

2007/08 £m	2008/09 £m	2009/10 £m	2010/11 £m	Total £m
1.682	1.624	1.582	1.534	£6.422

The 2007/08 allocation is the previously published planning guideline with an uplift of 15.5% (3% because of the Second Local Transport Plan being assessed as 'good' and a further uplift of 12.5% because of the 'excellent' delivery of the First Local Transport Plan [2001-2006]). Darlington was the best performer in the north-east region.

There have been other changes made to published planning guidelines for 2008/09 to 2010/11. This results in a total of £6.422m being available to Darlington over the next four years compared to the previously published figure of £5.814m.

The capital highway maintenance funding allocation for Darlington for 2007/08 is **£1.281m**, all of which is formula funding. This compares to £1.125m in 2006/07.

(c) **Local Transport Plan assessment** - Each of the 82 English highway authorities submitted their Second Local Transport Plans in March 2006 and they have been

assessed as excellent, good, fair or weak. Darlington's Plan has been assessed as being 'good'. The good classification means that a standard of transport planning equivalent to the top end of last years 'promising' category has been evidenced and the Final Plan represents a major advance on last year's Provisional Plan. This has resulted in an additional 3% funding for 2007/08.

Each of the 82 English highway authorities submitted their 5 year Delivery Reports in July 2006, detailing the delivery of the First Local Transport Plan and they have been assessed as excellent, very good, good, or satisfactory. In Darlington, delivery was assessed as 'excellent'. Particular areas of strength include road safety, the journey to school and parking. The focus on physical measures to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, coupled with extensive targeted education, training and publicity has helped to meet road safety targets, whilst delivering local targets to increase cycling and walking across the borough. There is a clear commitment to making a difference to the school journey, and our approach to cycle training is particularly robust. Partnership working is a strength. This has resulted in an additional 12.5% funding for 2007/08.

As the following table illustrates Darlington has achieved the best results in the North East, and is one of the top performing highway authorities nationally.

2LTP and Delivery Reports – 2007/08 Settlement

Authority	2LTP	Delivery Report	% Funding Increase
Darlington	Good	Excellent	15.5
Durham	Good	Good	3
Gateshead	Good	Very good	3
Hartlepool	Good	Very good	3
Middlesbrough	Good	Good	3
Newcastle	Good	Very good	3
North Tyneside	Good	Very good	3
Northumberland	Fair	Good	0
Redcar & Cleveland	Good	Good	3
South Tyneside	Good	Very good	3
Stockton	Fair	Very good	0
Sunderland	Good	Very good	3
T&W PTA	Good	Very good	3

- (d) **Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor** - Transport Minister Gillian Merron granted funding approval for the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor on 18 December. The announcement gives the Final Approval for the scheme and confirms the Department

for Transport's contribution of £12.040m towards the cost of the scheme. The first payment of £3m will be made in February 2007. The works will be carried out by Birse Civils Limited.

(e) Cycling Demonstration Town -

- (i) The improvement works to the footpath from Feethams to Leadyard Bridge are underway, providing pedestrian and cycling facilities, which will link to a new toucan crossing, replacing the existing light controlled crossing on St Cuthbert's Way. This Second Radial Route provides a cycle route from Bank Top station to the town centre. Design work is nearing completion on a scheme that will improve cycle access from the town centre to South Park, which will use the new crossing facilities mentioned above.
- (ii) Initial work has started on providing dropped crossings on the Third Radial Route, enabling cycle access from Russell Street via a toucan crossing to East Street. This will link to a cycle route on Valley Street next year.
- (iii) Work will start on Phase 4 of the McMullen Road cycle route in January. This will complete the route from Yarm Road to Haughton Road. Improved cycle and pedestrian crossing facilities will be provided at the Haughton Road junction when these lights are upgraded.
- (iv) A toucan crossing will be provided on North Road linking the cycle route on Askrigg Road and Zetland Street. This work will be completed by the end of March 2007. It will improve access to North Park and the Black Path cycle route, as well as the cycle route alongside the River Skerne. Initial designs for a crossing of Whessoe Road on the other side of North Park will be completed ready for consultation by the end of March 2007.
- (v) Mill Lane to Stockton Road Cycle Route – Flood risk is being undertaken and then the scheme will be resubmitted for planning permission.

(f) Public Transport -

- (i) The formal Darlington Strategic Quality Bus Partnership (DSQBP) agreement has been prepared to be considered by Cabinet on 16 January 2007 and then by the DSQBP.
- (ii) The annual bus punctuality surveys required by the DfT are being undertaken jointly by bus operator's staff and agency staff managed by Darlington Borough Council on 16, 17 & 18 January 2007. This involves 19 staff recording a minimum of 5000 observations at 18 locations in order to assess bus punctuality for the LTP5 indicator as required as part of the second Local Transport Plan.
- (iii) Tenders for the provision of local bus services to replace contracts which were awarded in May 2005, have been issued with a closing date of 1 February 2007.

- (iv) Improved, more comprehensive information is being installed at town centre bus stops as the new shelters are being erected as part of the Pedestrian Heart scheme.
- (g) **Individualised Travel Marketing (ITM)** - Team Local Motion (Steer Davies Gleave staff based in the Imperial Centre) are working on next year's ITM resources. This will include two new community guides – one covering the Mowden & Hummersknott area, the other Bank Top, Lascelles and Firthmoor. They have also helped out with some of the School Travel Planning work, assisting with the completion of travel surveys at Mowden Juniors, Hurworth Primary and Firthmoor Primary.
- (h) **School Travel Plans and Bike It Programme -**
- (i) The new School Travel Plan Officer, Nick Butler, started in January 2007.
- (ii) Interviews for a Darlington Bike It Officer took place in December; the post holder will be employed by Sustrans, though will be based with the Transport Policy team. The proposed start date is February 2007 and it is planned that he/she will work with ten Darlington schools over their first 12 months in post. This will permit Darlington to expand this successful work in local schools.
- (i) **Local Motion Newsletter** - The next Local Motion newsletter will be issued in early January 2007, this will include a 'New Years' challenge competition, with clues located on four walking routes into the town centre.
- (j) **Car Club** - We have requested tenders for setting up a Darlington car club, with a closing date of 19 January 2007. It is proposed to interview short listed organisations in early February.
- (k) **Local Motion Journey Planner** - Technical problems have been resolved and we plan to launch the Local Motion Darlington Journey Planner in February.
URL: <http://www.dothelocalmotion.co.uk/journeyplanner>. This will give local people up to date bus times, with detail of walk times. We plan to add real time running information at a later date.
- (l) **Travel Plan Builder Site** – The Employer Travel Plan builder website is now in operation. The site provides organisations with guidance and a step-by-step procedure for developing a workplace travel plan. It is also possible for a nominated officer (most likely the workplace travel plan officer) to monitor use of the site and the progress that organisations are making on the development of their travel plans.
URL: <http://www.darlingtontravelplans.co.uk>
- (m) **Marketing and Events Programme -**
- (i) Plans for 2007 include a launch of the 2007 Local Motion campaign (a 10,000 steps challenge provisionally scheduled for the 13 May 2007); a Festival of Cycling schedules for Sunday 17 June 2007 based in South Park plus a programme of ten guided cycle rides. We will also be working with the

Countryside team on marketing a 'Green Fayre' in April 2007.

(ii) Other activities planned include:

- School Medal Motion campaigns in May and October 2007;
- Business Cycle challenge in June 2007; and
- Most Sustainable Travel Family competition for European Mobility week in September 2007.

(n) **LocalMotion Progress** – A training day was held for Members on 13 December 2006 setting out the role of LocalMotion in tackling key issues in Darlington such as traffic congestion, the economy, health and the environment enhancing the effect of the Second Local Transport Plan. Funded entirely by the Department for Transport, this prestige initiative seeks, amongst other things, to provide local people with travel information so that they can choose how they want to travel.

The LocalMotion team will be contacting all 40,000 households in the Borough offering travel information relevant to each individual over 3 years. In 2006, over 70% took up the offer with 4,000 households subsequently joining the supporters club.

(i) Ongoing surveys show that:

- local people are particularly motivated about their health and the cost of travel;
- there was a 6% reduction in car mileage between 2004 and 2005;
- fewer trips were made by car (2004 to 2005) – down 3% for drivers and 14% for passengers;
- there were increases in local people walking or cycling (14% increase in cycling 2004-2006 throughout the town);
- there was a reduction in primary school children being driven to school alone (down 7% since 2005 with more car sharing and cycling);
- there was a reduction in secondary age school children being driven to school alone (down 3.5% since 2005 with more car sharing and cycling).

(o) **Variable Messaging Signing Progress** –

(i) A new electronic sign has been erected on Stonebridge which allows for three lines of script containing 16 characters per line. The sign is currently displaying a static message 'Welcome to the town centre', with ability to display other messages, eg 'Don't drink and drive' etc. Once the relevant software has been

rewritten in January, the sign will be able to provide advice and instructions to drivers to reflect changing car park usage to direct drivers away from car parks that are full and towards car parks with available spaces.

- (ii) Power has now been connected to the vehicle counters at the Cornmill car park and the numbers of spaces available are now being displayed on the VMS signs on the approaches to the town centre. There are now a total of six VMS signs in and around the town centre.
- (p) **A66/A67 Morton Palms Roundabout Improvement** – Site work commenced on the 23 October 2006 and is now completed.
- (q) **West Auckland Road/Greenbank Road/Portland Place Junction Improvement** – Detailed design is nearing completion. Consultation about to commence for a start of construction in February/March 2007.
- (r) **Highway Maintenance Works** – 5 schemes have recently been completed.
- (s) **‘Let’s Get Cracking’** - 10 schemes are about to commence; 9 are ongoing and 7 have recently been completed.
- (t) **Traffic Management and Road Safety Schemes** -
 - (i) **Taxis in Town Centre Experiment** – the monitoring exercise is complete and a report is being prepared.
 - (ii) **Sadberge Village** - Work is being programmed to introduce the advertised scheme.
 - (iii) **Middleton St George** – Safer Routes to School Scheme comprising traffic calming and a junction improvement scheme commenced in January this year.
 - (iv) **Low Middleton** – Signing and lining improvements are being programmed for implementation in February/March 2007.
 - (v) **Firthmoor Phase 5 Traffic Calming** – Consultation complete and there are some outstanding objections which will be reported to Cabinet in January.
 - (vi) **McMullen Road Cycleway** – Phase IV - Coombe Drive to Haughton Road due to start in January.
 - (vii) **Whinfield Area Safer Routes to School** – Residents’ concerns have been addressed and the scheme is proceeding in a revised format.
 - (viii) **Branksome Safer Routes to School** – Preliminary design ongoing.
 - (ix) **20 mph Zones** – 20 - mph zones were introduced on Darrowby Drive and Harrowgate Hill Estates. Consultation in six areas within the town took place

before Christmas and feedback is currently being analysed. The six areas are:

- Eastbourne
 - Coombe Drive
 - Fitzwilliam Drive
 - Oakwood Drive
 - Lascelles
 - Corporation Road
- (x) **Darlington Football Club Residents' Parking Scheme** – Design and preparation ongoing. Awaiting completion of the Section 106 Agreement before final details can be confirmed.
- (xi) **Longfield Road** – Traffic management works have commenced.
- (xii) **Residents' Parking Zones Review** – The consultations and research have been completed. An action plan will be formulated and findings summarised and reported back to residents via the Town Crier.
- (xiii) **A167 Coatham Mundeville** – Construction works are programmed to commence early February.
- (xiv) **Speed Management Strategy** – Work is underway to revise the strategy, which is produced in partnership with Durham County Council and Durham Constabulary. Its aim is to address both excess and inappropriate speed to reduce casualties.
- (u) **Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives** – A number of initiatives have been instigated, including the following:
- (i) **Cycle Training Activities** -
 - Hummersknott School's level three training was completed before Christmas with more than fifty year seven pupils receiving this advanced training.
 - (ii) **Pedestrian Training** -
 - The pedestrian training programme, for the second half of the Autumn term was completed in Heighington, Cockerton, Mowden & Skerne Park schools. This term 136 year 1 children have received a bronze certificate,

148 silver and 97 gold on completion of their respective courses.

(iii) **Conspicuity Campaign -**

- 10,000 Merry Christmas 'Be Safe Be Seen' badges were distributed to nursery and all primary schools in Darlington to remind children about keeping safe, especially in poor weather/lighting conditions.
- St Bede's & Whinfield Primary Schools invited the Road Safety Officer to present special assemblies on the same theme to complement the multi-agency safety event hosted in the area. Florescent and reflective stickers were given to all children afterwards.

(iv) **Darlington Road Safety Guide**

- 4,000 copies of Darlington's third free annual Road Safety Guides were delivered the week before Christmas. This year the main topic concentrated on children's road safety. The Mayor will host the launch of the Guide on the 22 January at a coffee morning.

(v) **Bridgework Schemes -**

- (i) **Little Stainton Bridge** – Construction due to start February 2007.
- (ii) **Barmpton Bridge** – Due to go to tender January 2007.
- (iii) **Great Burdon Bridge** – Contract awarded. Due to start February 2007.
- (iv) **Central House Retaining Wall** – Contract awarded. Due to start February 2007.
- (v) **Haughton Road Cycle/Footbridge** – Tender assessment currently being carried out.

Councillor Nick Wallis
Cabinet Member with Highways and Transport Portfolio