
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 Car Club** – As part of the Local Motion sustainable travel demonstration town project, Cabinet approved the establishment of a car club in Darlington. The purpose of the car club is to allow residents to have access to a car without having to own one and without having to pay the costs associated with car ownership.
 - (b) **Second Local Transport Plan – Revised Expenditure 2006/07** – Cabinet approved to vary the proposed expenditure of the 2006/07 budget for the Second Local Transport Plan, in order to bring forward a scheme which would help meet the objectives of the Plan. The scheme at Greenbank Road/Woodland Road traffic lights would help traffic congestion and would be beneficial to all road users.
 - (c) **Second Local Transport Plan 2006/11 – Tees Valley Initiatives** – Approval was given to the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (TVJSU), to act on behalf of this Council and other authorities in the sub-region, to develop and submit a Major Scheme Business Case for the Tees Valley Bus Network Review to the Department of Transport and the Government Office for the North East at the end of September 2006. The aim of the Review is primarily to enhance access to local centres and key attractors.

In addition to the Review, work on two other sub-regional transport initiatives is continuing, namely the Tees Valley Metro and joint working with the Highways Agency to address development issues affecting the trunk road network.
 - (d) **Second Local Transport Plan – Delivery Report** – The First Local Transport Plan Delivery Report was presented to Government Office for the North East (GONE) and Department for Transport (DfT) on the 31 July 2006. The assessment on this and the Second Local Transport Plan is due at the end of the year.
 - (e) **Cycling Demonstration Town Project:**
 - (i) **Survey Results** – Data from our regular town centre cordon count is showing a dramatic increase in the number of cycle trips in and out of the town centre. Using an April 2004 baseline of 612 cycle trips, our most recent count has shown an 82% increase in cycle trips. The July 2006 twelve-hour count has also shown a 20% increase in the number of pedestrians crossing the town centre cordon, against a baseline figure of 25,100 recorded pedestrian movements in June 2004.

- (ii) **Automatic Cycle Counts** – At present we collect data from six automatic cycle counters placed around the Borough, which are located on sections of traffic free cycle path. We are currently expanding the number of automatic counters so that they more accurately reflect the total number of cycle trips in Darlington. With the exception of March 2006, combined monthly totals for our cycle counter sites have shown an increase since 2004. The latest data for June 2006 shows a 14% increase on the number of recorded cycle trips on June 2004.
- (iii) **Ring Road Cycle Route** – This is the first phase of a scheme to link the Town Centre with Bank Top Train Station via the recently improved Leadyard Bridge. Ward Councillors and other interested parties have been consulted on this scheme and we are now dealing with concerns that were raised through this process.

(f) **Darlington College:**

- (i) **Travel Plans** – The Travel Plan for Darlington College is now approved. Local Motion and Stagecoach staff attended the enrolment days for the full-time students (16-18 years) and the enrolment for part-time students. Students were offered advice with regard to bus travel and information was available with regard to walking and cycling routes to the college. Local Motion staff took the opportunity to sign up interested people to the Local Motion campaign.

New bus stop arrangements and crossing points outside the site seemed to be working well and undercover cycle stands were being well used for cycles and motorised two wheelers.

The model of the proposed new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the East Coast main line is being displayed at the College.

- (ii) **Haughton Road Cycle Route** – Initial design ideas are being developed for a cycle route from the College site into Darlington town centre via the Toucan and bridge into Priestgate. The route will incorporate improved bus stops and pedestrian crossing points as well as the cycle route.
 - (iii) **Proposed Residents' Parking Schemes – Darlington College** – Detailed design of the scheme is underway to manage potential parking displacement from the new Darlington College. Consultation is due to commence.
 - (iv) **Haughton Road Cycle/Footbridge** – Outline design completed and planning application submitted.
- (g) **Business Travel Summit** – Following on from the success of the Local Motion Employers Bike Challenge, it has been decided to hold an Employers Travel Plan Summit at Morrison's Business Training Centre on Thursday, 5 October 2006 10.30 am to 1.00 pm, including free buffet lunch. The purpose of the summit is to identify common travel/transport problems and identify opportunities for improvements. This might include joint employer/Council sponsored initiatives such

as purchase of discounted travel tickets, car sharing, car clubs, improved facilities for cyclists etc.

- (h) **Park and Ride** – Expressions of interest have now been sought from transport consultants for the production of a study to assess the feasibility of introducing a Park & Ride scheme in Darlington to tackle traffic congestion. Submissions need to be returned by the 15 September 2006 and it should then be possible to choose three consultants who would be short-listed and interviewed. The successful firm will then be formally instructed at the beginning of October with a view to completing the study by the end of the year. The results will be presented to Members for consideration in the Spring of 2007.
- (i) **Transport for Health** – The County Durham and Darlington Transport for Health Partnership arranged an event on the 21 September 2006 for transport and health professionals to discuss travel plans, improving public health through travel choices and integration of community transport.
- (j) **Tees Valley Access to Education, Training and Employment** – The first meeting of this partnership has been organised by Middlesbrough Council for the 19 October 2006. The aim is to bring together transport specialists and providers of education and training opportunities across the Tees Valley to explore barriers to accessing education and training opportunities. An initial workshop in January 2006 identified some key issues to be investigated and solutions developed. Transport Policy and Education Development Officers will attend from Darlington Borough Council and Darlington College have been asked to send a representative. The work of the Partnership will be integrated with the 14-19 Trust and other groups as appropriate.
- (k) **A66/A67 Morton Palms Roundabout Improvement** – A report was submitted to Cabinet on the 12 September 2006 for the release of funding for improvements associated with the Morton Palms development. This work, to be carried out by the Highways Agency, will begin shortly and will help to relieve congestion by adding a dedicated left-turn lane from the A66 onto Yarm Road and re-configuring the roundabout.
- (l) **Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor** – Tenders have been invited from the Select List of Contractors with a return date of the 13 October 2006.
- (m) **Highway Maintenance Works** - One highway maintenance scheme is about to commence; one is ongoing and three have recently been completed.
- (n) **‘Let’s Get Cracking’** – Delivery of the programme of works is now well under way and residents of areas where schemes have been carried out have been asked to complete a satisfaction survey. These surveys are now beginning to be returned and so far the vast majority are satisfied with the work carried out.

(o) **Traffic Management and Road Safety Schemes:**

- (i) **Proposed Residents' Parking Scheme – Stanhope Road Area** – The detailed design has been completed and the implementation stage is due to commence imminently. The secondary orders to deal with objections will be advertised shortly.
- (ii) **Taxis in Bus Lane Experiment** – monitoring ongoing.
- (iii) **Sadberge Village** – The traffic scheme has been implemented but is awaiting completion of the legal orders to allow modifications to the speed limits on the approach to the Village.
- (iv) **Middleton St George** – School 20 mph, speed limit alterations, gateways and waiting restrictions – consultation has resulted in delays with additional investigation requests, including 400 signature petition. Investigation and design work ongoing to address the issues.
- (v) **Low Middleton** – Low cost signing and lining improvements being designed.
- (vi) **Firthmoor Phase 5 Traffic Calming** – Consultation substantially complete, currently reviewing and resolving issues raised through the consultation exercise.
- (vii) **McMullen Road Cycleway** – Design underway to complete the final link to Haughton Road.
- (viii) **Mill Lane to Stockton Road Cyclepath** – A planning application has been submitted and consultation is being undertaken as part of the planning process.
- (ix) **Whinfield Area Safer Routes to School** – Residents' concerns to be addressed.
- (x) **Decriminalised Parking Enforcement** – Feasibility and preparatory work continuing.
- (xi) **Darlington Football Club Residents' Parking Scheme** – Design and preparation in progress to extend the residents' parking scheme. Consideration will also be given as to how the scheme can be amended to cater for the recent planning approval that allows events to be held at the Stadium.
- (xii) **Longfield Road** – The resurfacing of Longfield Road has provided the opportunity to review the road markings fronting the school. A revised scheme has been consulted upon and we are reviewing comments received.
- (xiii) **Heighington Car Park and Traffic Management** – Now substantially complete. The project has been a joint venture between the Parish Council, the school and Darlington Borough Council, aimed at improving safety around the school traffic issues.

- (xiv) **A167 Coatham Mundeville** – A safety scheme has been designed to address a road traffic accident problem on the A167 in the vicinity of Coatham Mundeville. Consultation is planned for September.
- (p) **Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives** – A number of initiatives have been instigated, including the following:
- (i) **Cycle Training Activities**
- In mid July a further cyclist instructor training course was held in Darlington and five students, three from Darlington Borough Council and two from Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, all successfully reached the required standard to enable them to teach cycling training to National Standards.
 - DBC now has 23 qualified instructors working on a casual basis.
 - Eleven schools commenced level 2 (basic on-road) cycle training in the new academic year and Harrogate Hill Primary School entered the training programme for the first time in September.
- (ii) **Nursery Education** – Literature on the new legislation for child car restraints has been distributed to all Borough and private nurseries with a request that the information is passed on to parents (see iv below).
- (iii) **Pedestrian Training**
- Children from four primary schools in Darlington started their pedestrian training courses.
 - Three new pedestrian trainers have been employed by the Council to join the team on a casual basis bringing the total trainers to 24.
- (iv) **New Legislation on Child Car Restraints**
- From the 18 September 2006 the law changed to require all children under the age of twelve (or 135 cm in height) to be correctly restrained when travelling in cars.
 - To get across the information about these important changes a campaign was launched and 10,000 parents targeted using the press and other publications. Also, every primary school child was given a booklet to take home to parents.
 - In conjunction with other members of the North East Regions Local Authorities Road Safety Officers' Association (LAROSA), Darlington

helped to finance a local radio campaign regarding the changes.

(v) **Heighington Primary School**

- After a new car park and crossing facilities were constructed at Heighington Primary School, the Road Safety Officer gave three presentations to the children to help keep them safe and raise awareness of the new changes.
- Fluorescent and reflective stickers were also distributed to encourage children to look at a road safety website and learn more about general road safety.
- A competition was organised to ask children to produce four posters to remind children leaving the school grounds to cross carefully. The four winning poster designs will be produced professionally and attached to the school fence as a permanent reminder about how to safely cross the road.

(q) **Bridgework Schemes:**

- (i) **Little Stainton Bridge** – Land entry confirmation awaited.
- (ii) **Barmpton Bridge** – Tender list agreed.
- (iii) **Leadyard Bridge** – Works completed.
- (iv) **Great Burdon Bridge** – Tender list agreed.
- (v) **Central House Retaining Wall** – Tender list agreed.
- (vi) **Haughton Road Cycle/Footbridge** – See (f) (iv).

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Cabinet Member with Highways and Transport Portfolio