
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) **Tees Valley Connect in Darlington** – At the meeting of Cabinet held on 5th June, 2007, approval was given to including a number of schemes in a bid to the Department for Transport, and to the release of funding for consultation and design for the Tees Valley Connect bus improvement project, should the bid be successful. The Tees Valley Connect Project seeks to provide the basis for improved bus services throughout the area that will encourage, and then support sustainably, the economic regeneration plans set out in the Tees Valley City Region Development Programme.
 - (b) **Public Transport -**
 - (i) New contracts for supported bus services started on 1 July 2007. This includes Service 11, a new service to provide 3 additional services per day linking Whinfield, Red Hall, Morton Park and Broadway.
 - (ii) New timetables, incorporating all the recent changes to the bus service network were placed at stops on 1 July. At the same time temporary ‘No Smoking’ notices were placed in shelters that do not comply with the new No Smoking legislation. Due to the huge demand for notices, suppliers of the permanent notices have been unable to provide stickers in time. As soon as these arrive they will be placed in shelters throughout the Borough.
 - (c) **West Auckland Road/Greenbank Road/Portland Place Junction Improvement -** Work substantially complete.
 - (d) **“Let’s Get Cracking”** - 4 schemes are ongoing.
 - (e) **Highway Maintenance Schemes** - 5 schemes about to commence.
 - (f) **Traffic Management and Road Safety Schemes -**
 - (i) **Borough Road - East Mount Road & Hundens Lane Area Residents’ Parking Scheme** - The legal orders have been prepared and programmed to be advertised July 2007. This will be preceded by an update letter to all residents.
 - (ii) **Southend Avenue Residents’ Parking Scheme** - The consultation responses are being analysed and the project plan will be reviewed accordingly.

- (iii) **Neasham Road Area Residents' Parking Zone** - Surveys have been undertaken and the results analysed. A scheme has been designed which will be the subject of public consultation.
 - (iv) **Urban 20 mph Zones** - Issues arising from the consultation have been investigated and an "issues report" is being produced, along with a strategy on the way forward for the six schemes involved.
 - (v) **A68 Local Safety Scheme** - Feasibility work has been undertaken to identify causation factors and potential engineering solutions. Once drafts are finalised a consultation exercise will be carried out.
- (g) **Car Parking** -
- (i) Signs have been designed and ordered for the new Pay By Phone service which will come into operation in the Autumn in the majority of town centre car parks.
- (h) **Local Motion** -
- (i) **Individualised Travel Marketing** -

Team Local Motion started this year's programme of individualised travel marketing in late May. Their most recent implementation report shows that up to 15 June they had attempted to contact 2,864 households, and that 1,829 (64%) households have requested travel information and/or signed up as Local Motion club members. As in previous years the most popular resources are on walking (24%), followed by cycling (16.2%) and bus information (16.1%).

During half term week Local Motion publicised a half term/half price offer on the child Local Mover multioperator weekly bus ticket. This was publicised prior to half term through schools and with advertising on Alpha FM. Data on the uptake of the tickets will be collected.
 - (ii) **Step Up Challenge** -

In May 130 residents took part in a 10,000 step walk. 12 of the walk participants were then selected to take part in an active lifestyle challenge, over a 12-week period from mid-June to early September. The 12 participants have received an initial health check and an active lifestyle diary. They are now attending a weekly personal training session at the Dolphin Centre and will have further health checks at week 6 and at the end of the programme. It is our intention to publicise the benefits of an active lifestyle using video footage of the participants.
 - (iii) **Walking Route Map** -

A new walking map showing walking times between key public buildings in central Darlington is to be launched during the week beginning 16 July. The

maps will be distributed free to central Darlington based Council and Health Service staff.

(i) School Travel Plans -

- (i) 26 of the 30 Primaries in Darlington took part in the Medal Motion campaign, which for the first time was run as a themed campaign, this time with pupils being challenged to 'Travel through space'. Completed travel passports have been sent back by 1,500 pupils, with particularly high levels of participation at Holy Family and Heathfield Primary Schools - 80% and 64% respectively. Medal Motion offers a number of prizes for schools and pupils, this year Holy Family have won a day of activities delivered by 'Mad Science' (contracted to NASA to deliver space themed educational activities), Heathfield have won an Alpha FM School disco. Pupils from Abbey Juniors and Hurworth Primary have won the opportunity to design their own training shoes.

(j) Cycling Demonstration Town -

- (i) The regional launch of Bikeability, the new national cycle training standard, took place at St Augustine's School on 29 June 2007. Darlington offers Bikeability courses to all primary schools in the borough and 55% of eligible children take part. Local Motion provides funding to enable the training to be offered for free to school children (and adults) and a full evaluation of the training is due to take place during the Summer.
- (ii) During the first quarter of 2007/08 Cycling England funding was used to complete the cycle route through South Park and upgrade of the route alongside the Skerne in the Springfield area. Nunnery Lane has also been resurfaced using LTP and developer contribution funding.
- (iii) Designs for schemes alongside Grange Road, the upgrade of a puffin crossing to a toucan crossing on Carmel Road North, an improved crossing point on Whessoe Road and upgrade of the McMullen Road/Haughton Road junction have gone out for consultation. A public consultation event was held on 5 July at Abbey Infants' School for local people to comment on the schemes, as well as provide ideas for future improvements in the area to encourage even greater levels of cycling.
- (iv) A varied programme of events was arranged for Bike Week (17-24 June). The Cycling Festival in South Park included BMX displays, a variety bikes for people to try out, bike themed art activities, a range of stalls and toddler bikes provided by Darlington Toy Library. A guided ride to Walworth was well attended, as was a screening of Belleville Rendezvous in Darlington Arts Centre. Michael Hutchinson, a professional cyclist and author, worked with local children in the library and did a literary talk in the evening.

- (v) A new cycle map has been produced and is available in local libraries, Darlington Information and council buildings.

(k) **Bike It -**

- (i) The Bike It programme, which aims to encourage pupils to cycle to school, has recently been launched at three schools, Cockerton Primary, Whinfield Primary and Corporation Road Primary. With a fourth school, St Georges, due to launch Bike It on 11 July. Despite poor weather, participation in the launch events has been high, with almost 50% of pupils at Cockerton Primary cycling to school, 147 at Whinfield and 60 at Corporation Road.

Bike It initiatives are also taking place at Mowden Juniors, where children are taking part in a 'virtual bike race' with a school in Brighton & Hove, and at Hummersknott Secondary where the Bike It Officer has organised guided cycle rides for year 6 pupils due to start at Hummersnott in September.

- (l) **Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives -** A number of initiatives have been instigated, including the following:

(i) **Cycle Training Activities -**

- On 1 May the Cycle Training Standards Board recognised Darlington as a Scheme Provider for the newly launched national Bikeability programme. The Borough is the first authority in the region (north of York) to receive this accolade. Bikeability aims to ensure that those that cycle, such as those cycling to school, receive the necessary training to make sure that they do so safely and responsibly. The Bikeability programme and the Bike It programme mentioned previously are, therefore, complimentary.
- As mentioned earlier on Friday 29 June the Borough hosted the official Bikeability launch for the region at St Augustine's School. The children from this primary school (one of seven taking part in cycle training during the current half term) will be the first to receive the new national standard badges and official awards.
- The Cyclist Instructor Training Centre is going from strength to strength. With the advent of Bikeability launch we are training many other authorities' instructors and have increased our training programme to deliver one course per month to accommodate the increase in business.

(ii) **Pedestrian Training -**

- During the last academic year 90% of schools took part in the pedestrian training programme. The three schools that were unable to take part this year (High Coniscliffe, Abbey Juniors and Holy Family) have all signed up for the training in September.

(iii) **School Work -**

- Road Safety staff participated in the largest safety event for all Darlington's year six children at the Safety Carousel. This multi-agency event takes place in the fire station every year and is very well supported by schools. It tackles a wide range of day to day safety issues with the road safety message concentrating on wearing seat belts in a car.
- Another important primary school campaign also aimed at year six pupils was the transition campaign. School children are at the greatest risk of being injured as a pedestrian during the first year at secondary school. To try to prevent this, special comics containing important road safety messages were distributed to the children. Parents of these children were also given a purpose written booklet offering advice for this vulnerable period of their child's life.
- The Road Safety Officer took part in the Asda organised annual walking bus world record attempt with the local Whinfield Primary School. Early indications are that the previous year's record has been broken.

(iv) **Road Safety in the Community -**

- The Road Safety Officer, in conjunction with the Driving Standards Agency, organised a road safety promotion for the University of the Third Age (U3A).

(m) **Bridgework Schemes -**

- (i) **Little Stainton Bridge** - Construction ongoing.
- (ii) **Barmpton Bridge** - Construction commenced 14 May 2007.
- (iii) **Central House Retaining Wall** - Works nearing completion.
- (iv) **Haughton Road Cycle/Footbridge** - Fabrication of superstructure to commence in September with work on site to commence in October.
- (v) **St John's Church Retaining Wall** - Works commenced.

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