
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) **Highway Winter Maintenance Operational Plan 2007/08** – At the meeting of Cabinet held on 4th October, 2007, approval was given to the continued use of the existing Highway Winter Maintenance Operational Plan for the coming winter 2007/08, to ensure that as far as reasonably practicable, the safe passage along the highways located within the Borough is not endangered by snow or ice.
 - (b) **Residents' Parking Schemes -**
 - (i) **Eastmount Road and Hundens Lane Area – Consideration of Objections** – Cabinet considered the objections received to the publication of the traffic regulation orders in relation to two Residents' Parking Schemes in the area surrounding Darlington College. Six letters of objection were received to the scheme and Members agreed that those objections be set aside and the proposals be implemented as advertised.
 - (ii) **Borough Road Area Residents' Parking Scheme** – The legal orders have been advertised for the Borough Road scheme. Objections to the scheme are being reported to Cabinet in December. The Hundens Lane and Eastmount Road schemes are being prepared for implementation.
 - (iii) **Southend Avenue Residents' Parking Scheme** - A meeting has taken place with Ward Councillors and a scheme has been agreed. Information for residents is being prepared and a legal order will be advertised.
 - (iv) **Bank Top Area Residents' Parking Scheme** - A scheme has been designed and consultation is programmed.
 - (c) **Darlington Rights of Way Improvement Plan – Adoption** – The Rights of Way Improvement Plan, produced as a result of an extensive consultation process whereby the residents of Darlington were asked for their views and desires, was adopted by Cabinet, at its meeting held on 16th October, 2007. The Plan is a requirement of the Rights of Way Act 2000 and it will improve Darlington's Rights of Way network, in order to contribute to health, quality of life, social inclusion and sustainability objectives.
 - (d) **Tees Valley Metro** – Authority was given by Cabinet, for this Council to enter into negotiations with the other four Tees Valley Boroughs, to provide a combined local

funding contribution of ten per cent, of the capital cost, towards the Tees Valley Metro. The implementation of the Metro will deliver a step change in sub-regional public transport across the Tees Valley, providing a high frequency, high quality service and a 21st Century metropolitan public transport system.

- (e) **Commencement of the Oval Development** – A report detailing a number of actions to compensate for the temporary loss of car parking, whilst the new multi-storey car park is being built, as part of the Oval Development, on the Kendrew Street surface car parks, was approved. The proposals facilitated the funding of alternative long stay town centre parking provision and provision of alternative travel advice to motorists to ensure that the economy of the Town Centre is supported by the provision of adequate car parking. Detailed discussion and planning is taking place with developers in relation to design and programme. Utility diversions have been coordinated to ensure minimum disruption on St Augustine's Way.
- (f) **20 mph Zones Proposed for Bank Top, Lascelles, Red Hall, Corporation Road and Oakwood Areas – Consideration of Objections** – The objections received, following the advertising of notices in relation to the introduction of a number of 20 mph zones and traffic calming features within a number of areas within the Borough, were considered and set aside by Cabinet at its meeting held on 13th November, 2007.
- (g) **Ullswater Avenue Footpath Crime Prevention Closure** – After consideration of a report on the crime and anti-social behaviour issues associated with a footpath at Ullswater Avenue, it was agreed by Members, that the evidence was not strong enough to justify either a Special Extinguishment Order or a Gating Order at this particular time. However, it was agreed that crime and anti-social behaviour in the area continue to be monitored to identify any changes in pattern and volume to ensure appropriate is taken and that the Council develops a policy in relation to Gating Orders and Footpath Closures, for the purposes of crime prevention.
- (h) **Cycling Demonstration Town** - The Signing Strategy has been developed during October and November and one of the seven key radial routes has been fully designed and is ready to be implemented. This route will now form the basis for the design principles for all other signed routes in the town and detailed design work will begin on the other six radial routes in December.

A public consultation event took place on 31 October 2007 at Dodmire Junior School. The event was publicised to all parents of children at the school and local residents. Those who attended were asked to comment on improvements to the Smithfield Road underpass and also any general improvements that could be made to Neasham Road for pedestrians and cyclists.

On 21 November 2007 a Cycling Demonstration Town conference was held at the NEC in Birmingham. All six Cycling Demonstration Towns attended the event and ran workshops to share best practice and progress that has been made during the project. Prior to the conference a breakfast meeting was held with the Rosie Winterton, Minister of State for the Department for Transport and both the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport attended this meeting.

- (i) **Council Travel Plan** - Following on from staff focus group sessions that were held in September and October, the results of these sessions were collated and potential solutions to resolve car parking issues were drawn from them. A Steering Group meeting was held to discuss the issues that had been raised and to agree a way forward for the Council to tackle these problems.
- (j) **Travel Behaviour Research 2007** - Socialdata have completed the interim travel behaviour research for 2007. They were 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. Results from the survey will be available in March 2007.
- (k) **School Travel Plans - Medal Motion -**
 - (i) 13 of the 16 schools yet to have a School Travel Plan are now actively engaged in developing one. Work is continuing with these schools and with the other 22 schools that already have plans in place.
 - (ii) The BikeIT project is now working with 8 schools, all of which are seeing an increase in the number of pupils cycling. In November we also had a visit from the Czech Republic version of Sustrans to see how the school travel message is delivered in Darlington schools.
 - (iii) An after-school cycle maintenance course programme has now been written and trials of the course have just been completed at Cockerton CE VA Primary School. Three more pilots are due to take place in the coming weeks before the course is offered to all Primary schools.
 - (iv) In September our annual hands-up survey took place. Early analysis shows that cycling to school has increased from 4% to 4.4%. The results show that 54.2% of pupils walk to school, 11.9% travel by bus, 24.2% travel by car, 5.1% car share and 0.2% travel by 'other' modes.
 - (v) The October Medal Motion campaign has been the most successful yet with one third of Primary-aged pupils returning completed passports. Overall pupils accumulated 31,143 miles of sustainable travel.
- (l) **Car Sharing Campaign** - Local Motion has teamed up with TFM radio to promote the Journeyshare website. The campaign, which is running from November through to mid January (with a 2 week break over Christmas), includes radio advertising, podcasts available to view on the TFM website and a car sticker campaign, with prizes for drivers spotted displaying the stickers.
- (m) **Bus Map** - A new Darlington bus map has been distributed to all households in the Borough, along with a survey gathering data on residents' current travel behaviour and asking for information on journeys they would like to take by bus if a suitable service was available.

- (n) **Local Motion Consultation** - A questionnaire has been sent to the 10,400 Local Motion club members asking for their views on the Local Motion project. Members have also been invited to a consultation event, taking place on 15 November 2007 at Central Hall. Findings from the survey and event will be included in the Local Motion enquiry group report.
- (o) **Requests for Information/Visits** - The Welsh Assembly have asked for an officer to give evidence on the Local Motion project to their Sustainability Committee on 22 November 2007.
- (p) **Pay by Phone** - The Pay by Phone service was launched on 3 September 2007. It is available in 17 long and short stay car parks throughout the town. New signage has been installed in car parks, incorporating instructions on how to use the Pay by Phone service. After seven weeks of the scheme, 898 payments have been made, with the Town Hall and Park Lane car parks being the most used. The level of usage is progressing according to expectations.
- (q) **Bondgate Roundabout and St Augustine's Way Improvement** - Construction completed.
- (r) **Smithfield Underpass** - Footway and carriageway resurfacing commenced.
- (s) **Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor** - Work on the A66 section of the project will be substantially complete by Christmas, apart from the footbridge across the road, which will be lowered into place during a single overnight road closure in the spring.

The main part of the work from the A66 to Haughton Road is on programme for completion in summer next year. Structural strengthening of Arnold Road underpass and the Lingfield Beck culvert is finished and the road formation is in place over the full length of the work.

The next major operation that will affect the public is the creation of the new junction with Haughton Road. Preparation work for this is now in progress but the main part of it will take place early next year. During the work at this junction, disruption and inconvenience to the travelling public is inevitable although every effort is being made to minimise the problems.

- (t) **Road Casualty Reduction Strategy** - In partnership with Durham County Council and Durham Constabulary, work is continuing to produce a strategy for reducing vehicle related casualties.
- (u) **A68 Local Safety Scheme** - The proposals are being developed for wider consultation with a view to implementing a scheme in this financial year.
- (v) **Firthmoor Traffic Calming** The traffic calming scheme has been implemented.
- (w) **Branksome Safer Route to School** – Final discussions with consultees are underway before the scheme moves into the implementation stage.

(x) Bridgework Schemes -

- (i) Little Stainton Bridge** - Phase 2 works underway.
- (ii) Barmpton Bridge** - Works complete.
- (iii) Central House Retaining Wall** - Works complete.
- (iv) Haughton Road Cycle/Footbridge** - Fabrication of superstructure underway.

(y) Highway Maintenance Schemes -

(i) Recently Completed 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.

(ii) Ongoing Schemes -

- C34a Lodge Lane - carriageway edge strengthening.
- Ketton Avenue - footway refurbishment.
- The Headlands - footway Refurbishment.
- Marina Road Back Lane - carriageway resurfacing.

(iii) Schemes Due to Commence -

- A68 West Auckland Road Phase 2 - Bates Avenue to Brinkburn Avenue - carriageway and footway resurfacing.
- B6280/C182 - Yarm Road/McMullen Road Roundabout - resurfacing.
- Kielder Drive - footway refurbishment.
- North Rise - verge hardening.
- A1150 Salters Lane North - Harrowgate Hill Club to 103 Kingsway - footway refurbishment.
- C182 Thompson Street East - No 37 to Davison Road - carriageway/footway refurbishment.

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

(i) **Road Safety Week -**

- National Road Safety week took place during the week commencing 6 November 2007. A range of activities involved including:
 - A brake reaction test exercise undertaken for Territorial Army (TA) personnel during the first half of Road Safety Week.
 - Road safety training and advice at two Sure Start centres involving child car restraint checks & seat belt wearing, general road safety activities and advice to parents and carers.

(ii) **Bright Sparks Campaign -**

- A multi – agency campaign to help newsagents’ delivery staff (and other cyclists) be seen during the winter months was launched at the end of October 2007. It was initiated by The Police Community Support Officers (PCSO’s) and co-ordinated by the road safety team. Durham Constabulary, The Northern Echo and The National Federation of Retail Newsagents (NFRN) were involved, along with financial sponsors Sherwoods.
- Newsagents were given, free of charge, a set of bicycle lights and very high visibility stickers to be attached to the bicycle/delivery bags. The newsagent to be responsible for their maintenance.
- Advanced cycle training was also offered by the road safety cyclist team with a free goody bag provided to those who were trained.
- The Northern Echo to do a follow up article to remind all cyclists about the importance of being seen during the dark nights.

(iii) **School Activities -**

- People Who Help Us presentations are continuing for Nurseries and reception classes.
- Resource packs have been delivered to all (Primary and Secondary) schools to help staff integrate Road Safety into their curriculums.
- All Head Teachers of primary schools have been asked to include an important message in their next newsletter reminding parents that children should get out of cars on the footpath side of the car rather than into the road.

(iv) **Cycling Activities -**

- Bikeability Level 3 has begun at Hummersknott School for the new Year 7 intake with around 35 applications for training for the coming term.

(v) **Pedestrian Training**

- Skerne Park, Heighington, Mowden Infants and Abbey Junior schools are taking part in the current pedestrian training programme.

(vi) **Theatre in Education -**

- The Road Safety Team has arranged for the return of two popular Theatre In Education Plays. Both are aimed at students aged 15 years and above.
 - Too Much Punch For Judy deals with drink driving issues.
 - ‘Pills Thrills and deals with the dangers and consequences of drug taking and driving.

Both are recognised as excellent ways of getting important messages to students.

Councillor David Lyonette
Cabinet Member with Transport Portfolio