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**OVERVIEW OF TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO**

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1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work that have been undertaken under the Transport Portfolio:

(a) **Supported Bus Service Contracts** – Quotations were sought for four low floor bus service contracts:

- (i) Service 16 from the town centre to Mowden and Newton Aycliffe;
- (ii) Service 19 from the town centre to Faverdale and West Park;
- (iii) Service 20 from Neasham to the town centre and Carmel Road North; and
- (iv) two bus services under one contract - Service 17 from the town centre to Sadberge and Stillington and Service 18 from the town centre to Dinsdale and Sadberge.
- (v) The successful operator was Arriva North East.
- (vi) The contracts will commence on 20 July 2008 to coincide with the new commercial bus network launch date.

(b) **Commercial Bus Network**

- (i) Officers have continued to make sure that Arriva deliver on the promises set out in their Memorandum of Understanding with the Council in the process of creating a new bus network for Darlington. The process has included extensive consultation and has resulted in a network that should better meet the needs of bus users. Arriva are intending to use 35 new, low floor, buses on the network with a marketing programme to encourage use, based around five branded core routes. Route branded service leaflets will be sent to households along these routes. A bus map showing the complete network of services and individual service leaflets which consist of the timetable and route map will be made widely available.

Arriva, Local Motion staff and the Council are working together to market the new bus services being launches on 20 July 2008. This includes:

- Changing all of the bus stop timetables.

- Changing bus stop flags.
- Distribution of timetable leaflets to households.
- Distribution of timetables and a bus map at events and in the town centre.
- Staff giving out information in the town centre on market days through July and August.
- Staff working in the town centre every day through the week beginning 21 July.
- Information and advertising in the Town Crier and on buses.
- Information sessions for specific groups, for example Age Concern, GOLD, DAD.
- Events in the town centre during the week beginning 13 July 2008.

Local Motion Travel Advisors – We have employed four travel advisors to work over the summer months. They will be working in the town centre on market days, at events and will assist with activities taking place at work places and colleges.

- (c) **Concessionary Travel Scheme** – A letter will be sent to every bus pass holder, if Cabinet agrees on 8 July 2008 to change the scheme, which would mean pass holders would be able to travel for free every day and at anytime within Darlington Borough; and anywhere in England from 09:30 to 23:00 Monday to Friday and all day on weekends and Bank Holidays.

(d) **Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor**

- (i) Good progress is being made throughout the scheme. The footpaths and cycleways are being completed throughout the works along with the timber edgings to footpaths in the nature reserve followed up with stone. The islands in the middle of the road at the Lingfield Point spur and the Great Park junctions have been block-paved and are awaiting their final surfacing.
- (ii) Traffic has now been switched onto the temporary running surface on McMullen Road and work is now progressing on the off-line section of McMullen Road.
- (iii) The Council's street lighting section has removed three columns which were in the new road construction and have set back another column to behind the new kerb line. Temporary tower lighting has been provided to cover the removed lighting columns.
- (iv) Good progress is being made on Houghton Road with guardrails having been installed, block paving laid and other street furniture in the process of being

installed.

- (v) Haughton Road is on programme to be open to traffic without traffic lights for the end of June and the current programme shows the new road being open to traffic by August.
  - (vi) The Stage 3 Safety Audit commenced week beginning 23 June on the A66 stretch between Little Burdon and the new roundabout.
  - (vii) A meeting has been held with the landscaping sub-contractor to get a quotation for carrying out the landscaping works during the planting session. The intention is for the seeding to be carried out in September with all of the preparatory works being carried out before then, whilst the road is open to traffic.
  - (viii) Officials from the Department for Transport are visiting the site on the 2 July 2008 and suitable transport has been arranged to show them around the site.
- (e) **Highway Design Schemes** – the following schemes have been completed:
- (i) Smithfield Road Underpass.
  - (ii) Willow Road/Hollyhurst Roundabout.
  - (iii) Whinfield Road/Stockton Road New Toucan.
  - (iv) Carmel Road/Nunnery Lane Toucan Upgrade.
- (f) **Bridgework Schemes** -
- (i) **Haughton Road Cycle/Footbridge** – Bridge fabrication continues with expected delivery October 2008.
  - (ii) **Town Centre Subway Refurbishment** – Outline design continuing.
- (g) **Highway Maintenance Schemes** -
- (i) **Recently Completed Schemes** -
    - Kielder Drive – footway refurbishment.
    - Yarm Road (both sides) – Teal Road to Lynton Gardens – refurbishment of footway and hardening or protection of existing verges.
    - Hundens Lane Academy entrance – realignment of entrance.
    - Abbey Road Nos 321/329 – relaying of footway to resolve ponding issues.

- C51 Norton Back Lane – Sadberge to boundary – carriageway strengthening.
- Princess Road Nos 9 to 30 – renewal of existing footway.
- Falmer Road – Residential Home – entrance refurbishment.
- Pensbury Street – footpath refurbishment.
- Hollyhurst Road – footpath refurbishment.
- Roundhill Road, Hurworth from No 2 to Neasham Road – new electricity supply.

(ii) **Schemes Commenced -**

- Millbank Road outside Nos 12-14 – footway and kerbing refurbishment.
- Albatross Way front and rear of Nos 39-79 – footway refurbishment.
- Grange Road/Victoria Road roundabout – carriageway patching /resurfacing.
- North Road Aldam Street to Shildon Street – footway refurbishment.

(h) **Traffic Management Schemes**

- (i) **Southend Avenue Residents' Parking Scheme** – The scheme is being prepared for implementation in August/September.
  - (ii) **20 mph Zones** – The traffic calming aspects of the 20mph zone at Bank Top commenced in June 2008.
  - (iii) **Bank Top Residents' Parking Scheme** – Residents are being consulted about a scheme in the area
  - (iv) **Haughton Village** – Feasibility work undertaken with consultation programmed for July.
- (i) **Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives** – A number of initiatives have been instigated, included the following:
- (i) **Cycling Activities**
    - A new Cyclist Training Instructor was appointed and was trained along with all the other successful candidates, who are currently shadowing

existing instructors prior to commencing training in the September term.

- The road safety team supported the Darlington Cycling festival and Bikeathon on the 15 June in South Park.
- On the 29 June, the team participated in, and offered practical fun exercises to promote our Bikeability programme in the Tees Valley Cycling Festival in Middlesbrough.
- The Bikeability programme in Darlington's primary schools was fully booked for the summer term.
- A pilot project at Abbey Junior School is being tried to establish whether offering Level 3 before the children transfer to secondary school will increase the numbers being trained and/or cycling to secondary school.

**(ii) Theatre in Education**

- A new Theatre in Education production called 'Footsteps The Movie' was performed for the first time in the North of England in July. It was trialed in four schools in Darlington. All teachers were enthusiastic about the new initiative.

**(iii) Pre-school Activities**

- Two presentations were requested for Dodmire and Firthmoor's Children's Centres. Both were very well attended and the Road Safety Officer has been requested to return to repeat the valuable messages for both children and parents.

**(iv) Safety Carousel**

- The annual safety carousel was once again held in Darlington Fire Station. This year it was visited by The Mayor. As usual, all the Year 6 children attending had an action, fun-filled morning or afternoon and visited several scenarios which gave valuable safety information.
- The Road Safety Team undertook to highlight the importance of wearing seatbelts to save lives.
- Children and teachers were given lots of free items to take away to reinforce the valuable messages delivered in the session.

**(v) Transition Campaign**

- Due to national statistics which show children are at most risk of becoming a pedestrian casualty in their first year of secondary school, the

road safety team distributed 'Making ~Choices' comics for children and a companion Guide for Parents.

- This annual campaign is supported by the primary schools who distribute the materials to their Year 6 children.

(vi) **Foster Carers' Meeting**

- A presentation was requested to highlight the importance of road safety for foster carers and their children during the half-term period.

(vii) **Women's Driving Event**

- The Road Safety Officer attended an event at Sherwood's Car Showroom to support the safety of women drivers by providing free road safety items and various informative literature. The event was very well attended.

(j) **Cycling Festival** - The annual Darlington Festival of Cycling took place on Sunday 15 June in South Park. The festival included the Big Bikeathon in aid of Leukaemia research and displays from Team Extreme, a BMX and skateboard team. The event was well attended and visitors to the festival were able to try out many different types of bikes including a wide range of children's bikes brought along by the Darlington Toy Library. Around 150 children took part in the Big Bikeathon and many more people attended the festival throughout the day.

(k) **Tour of Britain** - It was announced on 4 April that Stage 6 of this year's Tour of Britain will start in Darlington on 12 September. The stage will begin at around 10:00 and will start in the town centre and then head North and finish in Gateshead. Planning is underway to provide other activities on the day including a bike try out session and other activities for visitors to the town centre. Local schools will also be involved and will be taking part in inter-school challenges on the day.

(l) **School Travel Plans, Bike IT & Medal Motion**

- (i) Eight schools submitted School Travel Plans (STP) in March 2008 for approval by the DfT/DCSF. Carmel, Firthmoor, High Coniscliffe, Holy Family, Hurworth Primary, Hurworth School, Phoenix Centre and St John's all completed their travel plan taking the number of STPs to 30 out of 45 local authority and private schools in the Borough.
- (ii) Nine local authority schools are yet to submit STPs but eight of those have already begun working on plans. It is expected that a further eight schools will have completed STPs by March 2009.
- (iii) We are publishing our first annual School Travel Plan review document 'Schools in Motion'. This document will provide an overview of the work that has been done in Darlington schools to promote sustainable travel to school. It will be distributed to the parents of all Primary School children in the town within the

next couple of weeks.

- (iv) We are currently in the process of reviewing and consulting on the Sustainable Travel to School Strategy with colleagues in Children's Services and Community Services. As part of this we will be publishing a summary document on school travel, this will be available free to parents and children.

**(m) Safer Routes to School**

- (i) Cycle parking is being installed at seven schools around the Borough. When complete there will be an additional 330 cycle parking spaces for pupils.
- (ii) Five Safer Routes to School projects are being considered within the 2008/9 programme of work. A final decision on which schemes are progressed this year will be based upon their impact on safety, increasing levels of sustainable travel and on the outcome of consultation with schools and residents directly affected by the schemes.

**(n) Promotional Activities**

- (i) The Medal Motion ran from 19–23 May, themed as a Book Maze Adventure in association with the National Year of Reading. During the week we launched our new character – Max. 2,300 travel diaries were returned by pupils.
  - (ii) 13 schools have signed up for a Tour of Britain 'Adopt a Team' event. We will be working with these schools in the last few weeks of term and the first two weeks after the school summer holidays to create flags and banners to help launch the Darlington stage.
  - (iii) Two walking trains are now established at Cockerton and Dodmire Infants. Walking trains are also being set up at Heathfield, St Teresa's, Abbey Juniors and Abbey Infants.
  - (iv) A School Travel Plan Awards Ceremony is to be held to reward and celebrate the success of schools submitting travel plans this year. Medal Motion and 5 Million Step Challenge Trophy winners have also been invited.
- (o) **Monitoring** – This will repeat pedestrian training and Bikeability evaluation that was carried out last year. Surveys will be sent to all parents of Years 1, 2 and 3 children and all those that had the opportunity to take part in Bikeability.

**(p) Bike It**

- (i) A new Bike It Officer, Claire Grantham, started on 21 April 2008. Claire will be working with 12 schools in the Borough over the coming term. These will be reviewed at the end of the Autumn term with a view to reducing levels of support for six schools and commencing more intensive work with six additional

schools.

(ii) Recent areas of Bike It work have included:

- Meeting and building relationships with existing partner schools.
- Delivery of a national Tour D’Afrique cycle to school incentive scheme (five Darlington Primary Schools are taking part).
- Working with a School Cycle Council (Y7) to plan and deliver a bespoke cycle to school incentive scheme for a secondary school.
- Working with Primary Schools and one Secondary School to deliver cycle maintenance sessions (in partnership with the road safety team).
- Running a Bike Day as part of Healthy Week at St John’s Primary. 95 students (50%) cycled to school to receive their free Bike It Breakfast. All Y4, Y5 and Y6 students took part in ‘hands on’ sessions on repairing punctures. Y1 took part in a session on staying safe while cycling.

(iii) Work planned for the remainder of the school summer term includes:

- A Bike Week at Corporation Road Primary School.
- Planning meetings at the Education Village, Longfield School and Cockerton Church of England Primary to ensure an active start to the Autumn Term.
- ‘Hands up’ mode of travel to school surveys in all Bike It schools.
- Helping to plan school involvement in the Tour of Britain.

**(q) Local Motion Marketing, Media Coverage and Advertising**

(i) Recent press coverage includes:

- A piece about the results achieved from the Local Motion campaign within the Northern Echo green ‘Eco’ edition which ran across the north east region to coincide with World Environment Day.
- Coverage within the Northern Echo and Evening Gazette of the Council’s partnership working with businesses on the work place travel plans and on working with Arriva regarding the new bus routes.
- A recent article in the Guardian newspaper on Cycling Demonstration towns used Darlington as an example of a successful campaign.



- Coverage of the Medal Motion Campaign within Schools, the new ‘Max’ Medal Motion character, the Darlington Cycling Festival, National Bike Week, the Pedal Power events and the Tour of Britain.
- (ii) Advertising includes:
- Local Motion advertisements promoting car sharing and walking in the Town Crier, Darlington college student magazine, Northern Echo Leisure Guide, Sports Development booklet and the Primary Times magazine.
  - Other Town Crier advertisements include the Cycling Festival, Medal Motion campaign and the Tour of Britain.
  - Building on the recent billboard advertising, a new bus campaign has been developed and launched featuring two bus rears with generic messages promoting Local Motion, which will run for 52 weeks. This is supplemented by three ‘burst’ campaigns, which run throughout the rest of 2008 featuring bus side panels reinforcing the cost saving, health benefits and environmental improvement benefits of the Local Motion campaign. These burst campaigns include bus interior panels which advertise the positive results already achieved within the Borough from the Local Motion Campaign and encourage more people to get involved.

**Councillor David Lyonette**  
**Cabinet Member with Transport Portfolio**