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**OVERVIEW OF TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO**

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**Purpose of Report**

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

**Network Management Schemes**

**East Row Taxi Rank**

2. The works were completed at the start of December and involved the narrowing of the existing three car rank to ensure that it is used correctly, provision of a new five car feeder rank to provide additional capacity, additional loading facilities and a new level access route across East Row. The layout seems to be working well with the majority of drivers adhering to the new restrictions. Taxis had previously double and triple parked, blocking the nearby disabled bays and, on occasions, drove across footways to access and egress the rank.

**Redhall Bus Stop Improvements**

3. These works are funded from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). The construction of raised bus platforms and associated footway works on Coombe Drive is complete and four new bus shelters have been erected to replace existing shelters that have been the subject of vandalism in the past. The new shelters are designed to be less susceptible to damage. The construction of a footpath link across the green space between Coombe Drive and the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor will commence in January 2013.

**Haughton Road Cycleway/Footway Link**

4. The existing footway linking Haughton Road with the new Hutton Avenue footbridge is currently under construction. The link to Hutton Avenue will be widened and reconstructed in February 2013. The Hutton Avenue Bridge was opened in November 2012.

**Central Park Cycleway/Footway**

5. A planning application has been submitted for the construction of a new 3m wide path from Teesside University, within Central Park to Peel Street off Yarm Road. The path will provide an improved access between the University, Darlington College, Darlington Station and the Town Centre.

## **Skerne Park Bus Stop Improvements**

6. A scheme to install five new bus stops with raised platforms and provide three existing stops with raised platforms is due for completion on 11 January 2013. The bus service 14 has been registered to stop at the stops. The service has previously operated on a hail and ride basis. A series of dropped crossing points will also be provided to enable residents with mobility issues and parents with pushchairs to access buses via the raised platforms. This scheme was funded by the Tees Valley Bus Network Initiative (TVBNI).

## **Springfield Bus Stop Improvement**

7. Officers consulted residents on the proposed replacement of the existing hail and ride services 6 and 9. Conversion of the service 6 route has been placed on hold.
8. Stop locations on Wylam Avenue, Martindale Road and Hutton Avenue (near Bamburgh Place) will go ahead on the service 9 route as there were no objections from frontagers to these stops. Further consultation is taking place on a proposed stop location on Salters Lane South. Dropped kerbs are also proposed in the Springfield area to complement the raised platforms and as the result of a community audit. This scheme is funded from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF).

## **Highway Maintenance Schemes**

9. Recently Completed Schemes:
  - (a) A167 Burtree Lane to Coatham Mundeville Phase 6 – Ketton Farm to 12 Durham Road – carriageway and footway refurbishment.
  - (b) B6280 Yarm Road – carriageway resurfacing.
  - (c) Feethams – carriageway deep patching.
  - (d) Coombe Drive/Goodison Way Junction – resurfacing.
  - (e) C39 Walworth Gate – carriageway deep patching.
  - (f) Low Moor Road – carriageway reconstruction.
  - (g) Friars Pardon, Hurworth – footway refurbishment.
  - (h) Claremont Road – footway refurbishment.
10. Ongoing Schemes - Annual Carriageway Slurry Sealing Programme (on hold).
11. Schemes Due to Commence:
  - (a) Feethams – carriageway deep patching.

- (b) Firthmoor Estate – Cushion Replacement on Bus Route.
- (c) Glebe Road – footway refurbishment.

### **Workplace Travel Plans**

- 12. Following a successful event at Lingfield Point to assist AMEC staff relocating to the site with their travel and transport plans, a follow up information day is planned for 13 February 2013.
- 13. The Darlington Borough Council Employee Travel Plan survey has been completed with over 650 responses from staff which are currently being analysed. Some actions in the plan are starting to be delivered and a full Travel Plan is expected by March 2013.

### **Public Transport**

- 14. Following the award of grant funding to eVOLution for its accessible community bus service, service 16/16A came into operation on 2 January 2013. EVOLution submitted a bid on behalf of the West End Partnership to support the introduction of a bus service to meet the needs of people in the West End of Darlington. The service is being operated by Scarlet Band and also provides a service to residents in Glebe Road, Mayfair Road and Laburnum Road. The funding was provided by the Department for Transport through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and Community Transport Grant, as well as a small amount of funding from the Council's Commissioning Grant.
- 15. Also on 2 January Central Coaches launched service 116 operating between Heighington and Newton Aycliffe.
- 16. As part of the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements Marketing programme a 'Get the Bus Friday' promotional campaign is being developed targeting commuters. This will be rolled out in February and March.
- 17. The fieldwork around Passenger Satisfaction surveys in Darlington and the Tees Valley was delayed slightly due to the bad weather (floods and snow). Passenger focus has committed to come to Darlington in February in order to present the findings of this year's surveys.

### **Local Sustainable Transport Fund**

- 18. The new MEGA Motion campaign launched at the start of the November half term. MEGA Motion aims to encourage young people and families to achieve their 'Sixty Active Minutes' (SAM) whilst on the journey to school. It is all about leaving the car behind for the school run for just one day a week – MEGA Fridays. Pupils and their families may choose to walk, cycle, scoot or use public transport. Every time a pupil takes part in a MEGA Friday, they will earn MEGA Minutes which will go towards earning their Bronze, Silver and Gold MEGA rewards. More information can be found at [www.megamotion.co.uk](http://www.megamotion.co.uk) MEGA Friday walks were held at Whinfield Primary School in December, led by Jack (and the Beanstalk) and Willy

Wonka in January. The Dolphin Centre/Leisure Services Team has also launched their MEGA Fun Activity programme starring SAM. Pupils can get certificates and stickers for taking part in activities that contribute to their 'Sixty Active Minutes'.

19. The 10 January 2013 saw the official opening of Bike Stop in Skinnergate. The scheme is operated by First Stop, and provides a bike recycling scheme where people can donate unwanted bikes (in any condition) to the shop. Volunteers and First Stop clients then recycle the bikes to bring them to a good condition so that they can be sold in the shop. The first few weeks of operation have been a huge success with large numbers of bikes donated and sold, but more importantly providing real opportunities for local people to share their skills and knowledge, and ultimately to support people into training and employment. Bike Stop has been supported from various sources including a great deal of free time and materials from volunteers and £15k funding each year for three years from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.
20. Following its cancellation in November due to flooding, the Secondary Schools' Watt Bike Competition took place on 15 January 2013 at St Aidan's Church of England Academy with six of the seven Darlington secondary schools participating.
21. Following successful pilot projects, a tendering process was carried out to appoint a contractor to implement Community Audits over the next two years. The tenders were evaluated in November and the contract was awarded to Groundwork. Groundwork will work in all Wards in Darlington over the next two years and carry out walkability audits with local residents. As part of the contract Groundwork will also lead walks in the areas that it is working in. A small budget is also available to carry out physical improvements in each of the areas, such as additional dropped kerbs, footpath improvements etc but it is also hoped to get local people involved in improving their area to encourage them to walk more.
22. In response to local residents' requests, the travel advisors are developing printed walking routes for local areas. Starting with the Red Hall area the routes will be collated and distributed along with other Local Motion information.
23. Work is underway to install real time displays along West Auckland Road and Woodland Road.
24. Plans have been developed to improve the entrance to North Road Station, including the removal of undergrowth, an additional light and new signs and information. As patronage is increasing at the Station it is hoped that this trend will continue as more people realise it is an operational Station. Discussions are on-going with Network Rail and Northern Rail to install an improved shelter on the platform in addition to the real time information display which will be installed in March 2013.

**Councillor David Lyonette**  
**Transport Portfolio**