
OVERVIEW OF TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO

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

2. The following schemes are being delivered through Local Sustainable Transport funding:
 - (a) **Central Park Cycleway/Footway Link** – The scheme to provide a footway/cycleway linking Teesside University and Darlington College to Yarm Road and Darlington Station is now complete.
 - (b) **A67 Footway Improvement** - Work to widen and resurface the footway on the north side of A67 between the A66 and Middleton St George is complete. Passively safe lighting columns have recently been erected. These columns crumple in a controlled manner if vehicles hit them reducing the risk of serious injury.
 - (c) **Springfield Dropped Kerbs** – Dropped kerbs are being provided in a number of locations within the Springfield/Salters Lane area to assist residents with mobility issues and parents with push chairs to access bus services and other important services such as local shops and schools.
 - (d) **Springfield Service 9 Bus Stops** – New bus stops with raised platforms have been provided in Hutton Avenue, Wylam Avenue, Martindale Road and Salters Lane South. These provide level access for residents with mobility issues and parents with push chairs.
 - (e) **North Road Station** - The waiting facilities and access into North Road Station have been approved. This was carried out in partnership with the station manager and Network Rail and included additional pedestrian signage to the station and Head of Steam museum from the Town Centre.

Highway Maintenance Schemes

3. Recently Completed Schemes:
 - (a) 2012 Annual Carriageway Micro Asphaltting Programme
 - (b) Hewitson Road South – footway and verge refurbishment
 - (c) Borough Road – back lane resurfacing
 - (d) A167 Beaumont Hill – carriageway resurfacing

- (e) Langdale Road – footway resurfacing
- (f) Edgecombe Drive – carriageway resurfacing
- (g) C40 Burtree Lane – carriageway resurfacing
- (h) A167 Croft Road – carriageway resurfacing

4. Ongoing Schemes:

- (a) 2013 Annual Carriageway Micro Asphaltting Programme

5. Schemes Due to Commence:

- (a) 2013 Annual Surfacing Dressing Programme
- (b) A67 Low Goosepool – carriageway resurfacing
- (c) B6279 Staindrop Road – carriageway resurfacing
- (d) C34a Lime Lane – carriageway deep patching
- (e) A167 North Road – carriageway resurfacing
- (f) A68 Woodlands Road – carriageway deep patching and resurfacing
- (g) A1150 Whinfield Road – carriage resurfacing
- (h) C55 John Street – carriageway resurfacing
- (i) A67 Carmel Road South – carriageway retexturing

Cycle City Ambition Grant

6. The Department for Transport (DfT) announced the Cycle City Ambition Grant in March 2013, inviting cities involved in both the first and second wave of City Deals, to bid for a Cycle City Ambition Grant to support the first two years of a transformational long-term cycling strategy. The DfT anticipated awarding approximately £10m to 3 cities. The Tees Valley was eligible to bid. Darlington and Middlesbrough Councils developed a joint bid, with the Darlington element focused on expanding 20mph zones across residential areas of the borough in a phased approach. The bid was for £1.5m. The DfT have yet to make the announcement.

Public Transport

7. Norman Baker MP and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (with responsibility for local transport) visited the Tees Valley on the morning of 19 June 2013. During his visit he witnessed the ceremonial signing of the Tees Valley Punctuality Improvement Partnership (PIP) in Stockton Old Town Hall. The PIP was signed by all five Tees Valley Authorities and the area's three major bus companies (Arriva, Go North East and Stagecoach). The PIP agreement commits the bus operators and local authorities to work together to deliver improvements to bus punctuality. It is envisaged that the Tees Valley Bus Network Initiative (TVBNI) Project Board will become the PIP Board once the TVBNI project comes to an end in April 2015.
8. Following the signing of the PIP agreement, the Minister travelled to Darlington to see some of the projects being implemented by the LSTF and TVBNI projects. Specifically he was shown the junction improvement at North Road; the LSTF funded improvements to North Road Station; a Local Motion school transition event

in progress with Northwood Primary School which helps young people make the transition from primary to secondary school in a sustainable way; and finally the Minister was taken to the town centre where he launched Arriva's new premium 'Sapphire' service, which will operate on the No. 7 service between Darlington and Durham. For the duration of his visit the Minister was transported around on one of Arriva's new gas buses, 11 of which operate in Darlington.

Local Sustainable Transport Fund

9. The Department for Transport has published the first annual report for the projects funded from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund which was launched in 2011. Darlington is included in the report. A copy of the Report can be found on the Council website.
10. On 11 and 12 June, pupils from nine Darlington primary schools took part in Transition training. The training is aimed at year six pupils that will be moving to secondary school in September and teaches them about the various options of travel available to them. The training was well received by both the pupils and the teachers that attended. All schools have been given Transition booklets for all of their year six pupils and also a DVD which covers all modes of transport and also a section on each of the Darlington secondary schools. The DVD has been produced by members of the Sustainable Transport Team and features current year six pupils and some year seven pupils that took part in Transition training last year.
11. The first phase of the Community Audits conducted by Groundwork North East has now been completed, covering the following wards; Heighington, Cockerton East, Cockerton West, Faverdale, Mowden, Park East and Pierremont. The reports will now be analysed and discussions held around taking forward actions from the reports.
12. The Individualised Travel Marketing team has continued to deliver tailored travel information and advice to residents across Newton Aycliffe and Shildon as part of the contract with Durham County Council. The team will be moving to deliver in Darlington from 6 August and will be targeting Lingfield, Central, North Road, Harrowgate Hill and Sadberge and Whessoe wards until 31 October 2013.
13. Improvements have started to North Road Rail Station to make it more pleasant for the travelling public. A new shelter is being installed on the platform with lighting and perch seating as well as CCTV and a new PA system. On the approach to the station platform from North Road a new guardrail is being installed, the street lighting is being upgraded to LED lights, the trees and vegetation have been thinned out and a new paved area created, all to improve both personal security and enhance the environment. New signs and information have also been installed to help people find the station and plan their journeys. Later this year Network Rail will install a 'Harrington Hump' to raise the height of the platform to help people access the trains. Bishop Trains have been approved as 'Station Adopters' and will work with Northern Rail, Network Rail and the Council to further improve and maintain the station environment.

Tees Valley Metro

14. The first phase of improvement work at Dinsdale Station in Middleton St George has been completed. This has included the installation of new shelters with seating and CCTV; new DDA compliant signs; improved information to advise customers which platform to use for trains westbound to Darlington and Bishop Auckland and eastbound to Middlesbrough, Thornaby and Redcar; CCTV cameras on the platforms; a new PA system with audio loop to make customer announcements; and electronic display screens to advise customers of the 'next train' information and departure times. A further phase of improvement to the platform access ramps will be carried out later in the year as part of the Network Rail freight project to replace the road-over-rail bridge. The introduction of the half hourly timetable in May 2013 further improves the rail service for residents of Middleton St George and the surrounding area. Patronage at the station has increased 230 per cent over the last five years to over 32,000 passenger trips.

Local Pinch Point Funding Bid 'Bridging the Economy'

15. The Council made an application to the Department for Transport's (DfT) Local Pinch Point Fund in February (tranche 2 round). The bid was for funding to accelerate the structural maintenance programme for six key bridges within the town centre fringe over the River Skerne from Russell Street Bridge in the north to Victoria Road Bridge in the south. The bid was seen as an ideal way of avoiding any further traffic restrictions being placed upon the bridges that may impact on the local economy, residents and people using the town centre especially given the financial pressures facing the Council at the moment.
16. The DfT published the results of the tranche 2 round on 31 May 2013. Unfortunately, the Council's bid was unsuccessful and officers have requested feedback from the DfT about its decision not to make an award to Darlington.
17. Going forward, existing funding identified from the Local Transport Plan for the repair of Stonebridge means that essential maintenance of this key bridge serving core bus routes will be implemented later in 2013/14. However, funding for the other bridges still remains to be identified, either from future Local Transport Plan budgets or from other sources. The delay in carrying out the necessary repairs may mean that the condition of the bridges deteriorate to the point that additional maintenance would be required.

Local Major Scheme Funding

18. In early 2012, the Department for Transport (DfT) issued a consultation on proposals to devolve Local Major Transport Funding to LEPs. This principle was welcomed in the Tees Valley with the consultation response expressing the desire for funding to be devolved directly to TVU.
19. The next key stage of the process involved the submission of the Tees Valley Local Major Scheme Assurance Framework to the DfT at the end of February 2013. The Assurance Framework outlines the current governance arrangements for the LEP and proposed that the Leadership Board will act as the Tees Valley's Local

Transport Board (LTB). The Board will be required to take the final decisions on scheme priority/management and whilst all Members will participate in steering the process, only the local authority Leaders and Mayors will be able to take funding decisions. This is to meet explicit recommendations on democratic accountability as set out by the DfT in the guidance.

20. Schemes identified through transport modelling work and put forward by the five local authorities have been sifted by cost, requirement period, deliverability and value for money. This sifting process has ensured that each of the schemes taken forward meets the constraints of the funding available, its four year delivery period (2015-19) and the DfT requirements for the use of the funding. The A66/Yarm Road junction is one of the schemes that has been identified as a potential improvement scheme, through grade separation.
21. The business case for each of these schemes will be developed over the next year and independent approval of each of the business cases will be obtained before a final decision upon which of the schemes should be funded is made by the LTB in 2015. To accommodate any changes in priorities, an annual review will be undertaken of which developments are likely to be coming forward and which schemes will be required to facilitate them.
22. It is important to note that the delivery of schemes using Local Major funding is only one part of the wider transport picture in the Tees Valley. Significant investment either has or is currently being delivered or planned right across the Tees Valley's transport network through the Highways Agency's Pinch Point programme, through the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement scheme and at rail stations through Tees Valley Metro Phase 1 and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.
23. The new franchises to be sought for the East Coast, Northern and Trans-Pennine Express rail services, together with Network Rail investment plans, provide opportunities for important rail ambitions to be achieved. The Chief Executive is leading an ANEC Rail Group to ensure that strong submissions are made into these opportunities. The Council is also working with the East Coast Mainline Authorities group, similarly to ensure that the strongest case possible is made for rail investment to benefit Darlington and Tees Valley.

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Transport Portfolio