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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.

**Interreg Project – Release of Funding**

2. It is pleasing to note that, following the submission of a bid under the ‘Boosting Advanced Public Transport Systems’ (BAPTS) programme in May 2008, this Council has been informed that its application has been conditionally approved and provisionally allocated 0.763m Euros of Interreg, European Regional Development Funding. This funding will be used to deliver the four work packages detailed in the bid with a total estimated cost of 1.705m Euros with the aim of raising the profile of Darlington within Europe and the European Commission. The balance of the funding will be provided through match funding by the Council and its partners.
3. Darlington has hosted the first formal meeting of the BAPTS partnership. From 3 to 5 November 2008 24 staff from seven of the partner cities came to Darlington for the meeting. As well as discussing the technical and administrative details of the programme, this was an opportunity to inform our partners about Darlington’s work to improve our transport network and to encourage sustainable travel. This included a presentation by pupils from Hurworth Secondary school; on work they have been doing with Living Streets to encourage walking.
4. A number of the delegates visited Bank Top Station to meet staff from National Express and learn about proposals to improve access and information within the Station, others took part in a short cycle tour during which they met the head teacher at Heathfield School and visited Cummins Engineering to learn about the work on their travel plan and on improving the health of the workforce. Delegates were complementary about work being done by the Council and about the town centre.
5. In addition to discussion on the delivery of the specific work programmes within each partner town or city, there was an opportunity to discuss the transnational elements of the programme, within which there is potential to use some of the core budget (administered by the lead partner, Bielefeld) to fund activities such as two four month student placements, one two week staff exchanges and an event for politicians from each of the partners.

**Highway Winter Maintenance Operational Plan 2008/09**

6. The Highway Winter Maintenance Operational Plan 2008/09 was considered by Cabinet, at its meeting held on 4 November 2008. The Plan has been reviewed to ensure it was up to date and to investigate any potential efficiency in its operation, focussing on changing the type of product used to treat the road and reviewing the pre-salting routes to ensure all roads treated met the criteria in the plan. Approval was given to change the type of product used

but Cabinet requested further work on the route review.

### **Highway Design Schemes**

7. The works at Southend Avenue Park are substantially complete. The conversion of the Puffin Crossing to a Toucan, together with the connecting cycleways, provide cycle links between Blackwell Lane, Polam Lane and West Street.
8. The consultation period for proposed alterations to Haughton Road/Stockton Road between Barton Street and Whinfield Road is now closed and the results have been analysed and considered. Findings will be communicated to the public during November.
9. Work to install a new controlled crossing (puffin) on Crown Street, close to the junction with Priestgate, commenced in October. The crossing should be operational by mid November.
10. Work to complete the Yarm Road (Morton Palms) segregated cycleway/footway commenced on 10 November 2008 and is scheduled for completion by mid December. These additional works were initially delayed by a land ownership issue. This will effectively complete the Morton Palms Radial Route.
11. A planning application is pending for the John Street shared use cycleway/footway link. There are still outstanding land ownership issues to be resolved prior to constructions starting and the Property and Estates Division are in negotiations with land owners.
12. Cycle route signage for the Mowden and Hummersknot radial cycle routes will be erected in November and December.
13. Middleton-One-Row Slope Stability - Outline design continuing.

### **Bridgework Schemes**

14. Neasham Bridge – Parapet protection study ongoing.

### **Highway Maintenance Schemes**

15. Recently Completed Schemes:
  - (a) South View, Brafferton – carriageway and footway refurbishment.
  - (b) A67 – Morton Palms A66 Roundabout – Middleton St George C52 Junction – eastbound carriageway deep patching.
  - (c) C38 Sadberge to Middleton St George – carriageway deep patching.
  - (d) Westfield Drive, Hurworth Phase 5 – footway refurbishment.
16. Ongoing Schemes:
  - (a) Valley Street – carriageway resurfacing.
  - (b) C38 – Hurworth to Neasham Footway/Cycleway – drainage installation.
  - (c) The Fairway – Footway refurbishment (evens side).

## 17. Schemes Due to Commence

- (a) A167 Burtree Lane to Coatham Mundeville Phase 4 – carriageway resurfacing.
- (b) Denton Hall Road – carriageway resurfacing.
- (c) C34a – C38 Great Stainton to C37 – carriageway deep patching.

## Traffic Management Schemes

- 18. A review of traffic arrangements within Middleton St. George is currently underway with a final report expected by mid to late November. The purpose of the report is to address concerns raised by the Parish Council, the Police and individuals so that a comprehensive traffic management plan for the Village, can be developed.
- 19. A review of the hackney carriage ranks within the Town Centre is underway in light of concerns from the taxi trade. The review will balance the needs of the taxi trade with the needs of businesses, bus operators, pedestrians and other important groups such as DAD, to try to ensure that the most appropriate solution, for all groups, is arrived at.

## Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives

- 20. A number of initiatives have been instigated, including the following:

### (a) Cyclist Training Activities

- (i) Level 3 Bikeability training has begun at Hummerknott School after the half term break in the autumn.
- (ii) Carmel School has been invited and agreed for their students to take part in the New Year. The school has officially opened their new bicycle store and representatives from the Road Safety Team were invited to attend.

### (b) Pedestrian Training Activities

- (i) Holy Family School has asked to be included in this year's pedestrian training. Consent forms have been sent out and training begins week commencing 3 November 2008.
- (ii) A recruitment drive was launched in October to replace those who had left the training pool. When the paperwork and necessary checks are completed training will take place to enable the new instructors to be ready for work in 2009.

### (c) Road Safety Poetry Days

- (i) All the planned poetry days mentioned in the previous report have been completed. A total of six schools took up the offer for this year.

### (d) Stepping Out

- (i) A new revised revamped publication of the "Stepping Out" booklet has been recently launched by the Region's Road Safety Officers. It is intended to be a shared book with lots of helpful advice and teaching points for carers of young children interspersed between hundreds of lovely illustrations which are

extremely attractive and child friendly.

- (ii) The new revised publication of the “Stepping Out” booklet has begun to be distributed to pre school children as part of the “People Who Help Us” presentations. 37 children at Ferndene Nursery, 30 children at Heighington Playgroup and 25 children at Learning Together were the first children in Darlington to benefit from the booklet from this superb resource for keeping young children safe on our roads.

**(e) Primary School Work**

- (i) Heathfield primary school invited the Road Safety Officer to make a presentation for Key Stage 1 children. Talking about a topical theme for this time of year the subject of being safe and being seen was tackled. At the end of the assembly teachers were given worksheets, stickers and posters to give out to the children to take home.
- (ii) Work is in progress to address the congestion problem around Holy Family and Cockerton primary Schools. A plan for tackling the issues has been discussed with the aim of putting it into place as soon as other agencies and the primary schools are able to implement the details.

**(f) Theatre in Education (TIE)**

- (i) The first of this academic year’s was completed in October. Pills Thrills and Automobiles was hosted by Darlington College and Carmel School. Both establishments have been very supportive of this play since being introduced to the Borough. As the topic material centres on drug driving the play is reserved as suitable viewing for students above year 11.
- (ii) In conjunction with the Fire Service following a successful partnership last year there was an extraction exercise after the workshop where a volunteer was asked to pretend to be a victim in a crashed car and cut out of the wreckage.
- (iii) Too Much Punch for Judy, another TIE project, toured the Borough in November. This play (also based on a true story) was timetabled into the curriculum for Longfield, Eastbourne, Hurworth, Carmel and Hummersknott Schools for the year 11 students.
- (iv) As there was not a 100% take up this year (by all eligible establishments with year 11 students) a special showcase performance was planned for the evening of Tuesday 11 November. This special event was hosted in the Fire Station and was made available to all Councillors and Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) and other specially invited guests.

**(g) Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM)**

- (i) The Road safety officer was asked to present the topic of Road safety in Darlington to the local branch meeting of the IAM. The topic concentrated on Education, Training and Publicity (ETP) and members were given a High visibility “See Me” bag full of a plethora of various leaflets, posters and other literature which the Council’s Road safety team distribute in normal day to day

work.

### **Supported Bus Service Review**

21. Evidence about the need for existing supported bus services, and about the travel needs of residents who do not have a bus service, has been collected as part of a process leading to the provision of new long term contracts that complement the commercial bus network provided by Arriva.
22. Evidence was collected through:
  - (a) Face to face interviews on supported bus service journeys.
  - (b) A questionnaire available from the Town Hall, the Tourist Information Centre and online for anyone not surveyed on bus who wishes to supply evidence about their travel needs. This questionnaire has also been mailed to Parish Council/Meeting Clerks and Councillors. The questionnaire (and the review) has been publicised on bus, in the Darlington Advertiser and in the Northern Echo. It was also sent to local residents upon request.
  - (c) Ticket machine data.
  - (d) Feedback received as a result of the changes to the local bus network on 20 July 2008.
23. A Talking Together event will be held on Thursday, 20 November 2008 where local people can hear the evidence collected and debate what the Council could do in response to it. A summary will be posted on the Council's website for those who are unable to make the meeting.

### **School Travel Planning**

24. Darlington's annual hands-up travel to school survey took place on Wednesday 24 September. The results have revealed that 6.1% of pupils in the town now cycle to school, a six fold increase on 2004/05 levels. Walking to school now stands at 53.6%, bus 11.2%, car (alone) 23.1% and car share 5.7%.
25. On 8 October eight students from Hurworth and Branksome schools joined experts from across the world attending the prestigious Walk21 conference in Barcelona. At the conference the Darlington students joined up with seven students from a Barcelona School to present their findings (including a short film of walking to school in Darlington) on walking and why they like to travel independently to their schools. The materials that were presented and the students' blog can be viewed at [www.stepup.org.uk](http://www.stepup.org.uk). The students are now editing videos taken of the conference and these will be published on the website in the near future.

### **Work Place Travel Plans**

26. Due to demand being placed on existing cycle parking Cummins and Darlington College are installing additional cycle parking which will provide parking for more than 50 bikes. Saks Accounting is installing new cycle parking which will accommodate eight bikes. Travel advice sessions for staff have been scheduled for the Student Loans Company based at Lingfield Point. Contact has also been made with the Independent Safeguarding

Authority at Morton Palms who have also showed interest in developing a travel plan.

### **Station Travel Plan**

27. Work has started on gathering information for the Station Travel Plan; this includes a survey at the station of passengers and an audit of existing facilities and signage.

### **Travel Information**

#### **Self Guided Cycle Rides**

28. A new series of self guided cycle ride leaflets for Darlington is now available in local libraries and at Darlington Tourist Information Centre. They are provided in a handy wallet and the four rides have been designed as an easy introduction to cycling, encouraging people of all ages and abilities to explore their local area by bike. They will also help local residents to get fit and active in a fun way. Each ride takes about 30 minutes. The leaflets provide directions and maps of picturesque cycle journeys on four routes across Darlington, including:
  - (a) Brinkburn Local Nature Reserve and West Park
  - (b) Cemetery Lane and Nunnery Lane
  - (c) River Skerne via Rockwell Nature Reserve
  - (d) Whinfield and Skertingham Community Woodland
29. The leaflets were launched on 8 October 2008 at an event attended by Andy Scott, Darlington Council's Cabinet Member for Health and Leisure and also by Kate Singlehurst and Anna Hickson from Age Concern. Rides are being promoted by Age Concern and the Primary Care Trust via GP referrals.

### **Bus Information**

30. To coincide with changes to the bus network on 26 October 2008, new timetables were placed in all of the affected stops on the night of the 25 October. A new bus map has also been published and distributed.

### **Cycling England Visit**

31. On 11 and 12 November 2008 members of the Cycling England Board visited Darlington to discuss progress on actions raised in August 2007. The Board members took part in a cycle ride around the town and visited a Bike It school to watch an assembly led by the Bike It Officer and a cycle instructor. They also visited a school to see Bikeability cycle training taking place.

### **Cycling Town Funding**

32. In October a funding agreement was signed by Darlington Borough Council with the Department for Transport, for the Department for Transport, to continue funding the Cycling Demonstration Town project for a further two and a half years. This funding will be used to continue improving the cycle network in Darlington and providing events and information to encourage residents to consider cycling as a mode of transport.

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