
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.

Highway Design Schemes

2. The works at Southend Avenue Park and Grange Road roundabout are substantially complete. The remaining works on West Street will be carried out in January 2009. This scheme forms part of the Blackwell radial cycle route.
3. Work to install a new controlled crossing (puffin) on Crown Street, close to the junction with Priestgate was completed in October. The scheme provides for safer crossing of Crown Street and will be of particular benefit to shoppers using the Cornmill multi-storey car park.
4. Work to complete the Yarm Road (Morton Palms) segregated cycleway/footway commenced on 10 November 2008 and will be completed in January. Close liaison with Cleveland Bridge will be needed to allow their delivery vehicles to access the site during the works. This scheme forms part of the Morton Palms radial cycle route.
5. Cycle route signage for Hummersknott radial cycle route has commenced and those for the Mowden Route will be erected in January 2009.
6. Consultation has commenced on two Toucan crossings at North Road/Lowson Street (conversion from Puffin) and Neasham Road (new installation). Consultation has also commenced on two proposed school 20mph schemes; one at Dodmire School, Rydal Road and the other at St. Teresas School, Harris Street.
7. A scheme to replace the existing road humps in Skerne Park with speed cushions is scheduled to commence in February 2009. This work will enable Arriva's new "easy access" low floor buses to serve this area of the Town. The existing humps are not appropriate for this type of bus and would be likely to cause them to ground on the hump.

Highway Maintenance Schemes

8. Recently Completed Schemes:
 - (a) Denton Hall Road – carriageway resurfacing.
 - (b) C34a – C38 Great Stainton to C37 Bishopton – carriageway deep patching.
 - (c) The Fairway – Footway refurbishment (evens side).

9. Ongoing Schemes:

- (a) Valley Street – carriageway resurfacing (delayed until January 2009 due to weather conditions).
- (b) C38 – Hurworth to Neasham Footway/Cycleway – drainage installation.
- (c) B6072 Coatsy Moor Lane - drainage works – new gullies, manholes and associated pipework prior to resurfacing.

10. Schemes Due to Commence

- (a) A167 Burtree Lane to Coatham Mundeville Phase 4 – carriageway resurfacing.

Traffic Management Schemes

- 11. A review of the hackney carriage ranks within the Town Centre is underway in light of concerns from the taxi trade. A number of options have been presented to the taxi trade for comment and were generally well received. A letter has been received from the Darlington Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Group with a number of suggested revisions. These will be incorporated into the report, which will be finalised and go out to wider consultation in January 2009.
- 12. A scheme to improve the road safety record of the section of the A68 north of the A1(M) has been developed. This involves the closure of all the central reserve gaps on this section of the road to address highway safety issues. The gap closures required a traffic regulation order in order to prohibit driving and this has been published and advertised. A number of objections were received and these have been considered by the January Cabinet.

Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives

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

(a) Cyclist Training Activities

- (i) Longfield School has joined the Level 3 Bikeability training programme as a result of new safety initiatives in the school.
- (ii) Bike maintenance classes have been held after bicycle checks were conducted in the second half of the autumn term in conjunction with (i) above.
- (iii) Carmel School has begun this current years Level 3 Bikeability training. This will be ongoing until all pupils who volunteered to progress their Level 2 training taken in the primary school, receive their individual two-hour personalised training programme.

(b) Pedestrian Training Activities

- (i) Following the recruitment drive in October, four new trainers were appointed to the existing pool.
- (ii) The induction, training and shadowing for the new trainers at the beginning of 2009 should ensure adequate staff to organise the rota for maximum efficiency

in the forthcoming year.

(c) Primary School Work

- (i) Heathfield Primary School invited the Road Safety Officer to make a presentation for the remaining pupils (Key Stage 2 children) who were given the same information on the theme of being safe and being seen in a more advanced form for their ages.
- (ii) The Road Safety Team's Christmas project for primary school children was the message from Santa to 'Stop Look and Listen before crossing the road'. The message was written on 10,000 Santa 'logo bugs' which were ordered specifically for this purpose.

(d) Theatre in Education (TIE)

- (i) Quantum Theatre's programme 'What If It Rains?' was sponsored by the 3M Company to deliver a play to schools, selected by Darlington's Road Safety Team, who were nominated to be in receipt of free high visibility jackets. This 3M programme is in its third year and has already benefitted hundreds of Darlington's pupils.

(e) Rainbows

- (i) The Road Safety Officer was asked to visit the Mowden Rainbow group in December. Keeping to a seasonal and topical theme the girls (all aged below seven years of age) were asked to make Christmas cards with a Road Safety message. Materials were left with the leaders to follow up the evening's activity and ask the girls to do a Road Safety Calendar in the hope the messages will continue throughout the year.

(f) Department of Transport Evaluation (DfT)

- (i) Faber Maunsell has been commissioned by the DfT to evaluate road safety policies and procedures across England. Darlington Borough Council has agreed to participate in the long term study commencing with the first batch of interviews being held at the beginning of January.

(g) Instructor Training Activities

- (i) A special course was timetabled by North Tyneside to jointly benefit nine trainees from both the requesting host authority and neighbouring South Tyneside. Unfortunately due to bad weather this was the first time a course had been abandoned mid programme. The remainder of the course was rescheduled for warmer weather in March.

Supported Bus Service Review

14. Tenders for supported bus services, as agreed by Cabinet, were sent out on Monday 15 December. Prices must be returned by 26 January 2009. Two Scrutiny Task and Finish Meetings have been arranged for January and February to examine in more detail the evidence, including ticket machine data, on board bus surveys, questionnaires and the

tender prices. Recommendations will be made to Cabinet in February.

Interreg Project – Partnership Agreement/Launch Event/Website

15. Detailed negotiations have been taking place over the wording of the BAPTS (Boosting Advanced Public Transport Systems) partnership agreement. The lead partner Bielefeld, has confirmed that 12 May 2009 will be the date for the launch of the ‘BAPTS’ project. A website has been launched for the project; this features some information on each of the project partners. It can be viewed at <http://www.bapts.eu/>
16. The lead partner Bielefeld, has confirmed that 12 May 2009 will be the date for the launch of the ‘BAPTS’ project. This event will take place in Bielefeld and will be open to both politicians and officers from the partner towns and cities. Any travel expenses will be covered by the Interreg funding
17. A website has been launched for the project; this features some information on each of the project partners. It can be viewed at <http://www.bapts.eu/>

School Travel Planning

18. Darlington’s bi-annual Medal Motion campaign took place in October. Themed around the ‘Tour of Britain’ primary age pupils were asked to complete and submit travel diaries covering two school weeks. 3,800 diaries were returned, a 67% increase on the previous campaign.
19. Eight schools are working on completing a travel plan by 31 March 2009. These are Mowden Infants, Corporation Road, Gurney Pease, Springfield, St Bedes RC, Raventhorpe School and at the Education Village campus Beaumont Hill Technical College and Haughton Secondary School.
20. Residents, schools and Ward Members are being consulted on two proposed Safer Routes to School Schemes. These are for Dodmire Infant and Junior Schools and St Teresa’s RC Primary School.
21. Officers have been working with staff from Arriva North East to sell ‘Teen cards’ at Darlington College, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form and at Carmel RC Technology College. The cards, which usually cost £5, are being sold in the schools and colleges for £1. Using the card young people can travel off-peak within the Borough for a maximum fare of 50 pence. So far 236 cards have been sold.

Work Place Travel Plans

22. Supported by a £9,500 work place travel plan grant funded through the Local Transport Plan, Cummins Engineering have installed additional cycle parking for their employees.
23. City and Northern, developers for Morton Palms, has commissioned consultants White Young Green to produce a travel plan for the site. Officers have received a draft plan and are in the process of preparing comments to feed back to City and Northern.
24. The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) has registered on the Local Motion Travel Plan builder website and is now working on developing a travel plan.

Station Travel Plan

25. Data from a passenger at Bank Top Station, received in early December has provided some useful baseline information on travel to/from the Station, for example, when asked:
- (a) ‘Where have you just come from/where are you going to?’
71% had travelled from home, 13% from work and 16% from another destination.
 - (b) ‘What is the main purpose of your journey today?’
18% said commuting, 13% said they were travelling on company business, 29% said they were visiting friends/relatives. Other reasons for travelling were shopping, education, personal business and leisure.
 - (c) ‘How did/will you travel to/from this station today?’
7% arrived by car alone, another 4% car shared, 32% were dropped off/picked up by car, 20% walked, 13% arrived by bus and 11% by taxi.
26. The surveys were conducted between 7:00 – 19:00 hours over three week days and two Saturdays.

Travel Information

27. The 2008 Community Survey asked residents about their awareness of the Local Motion brand, where they had seen advertising and if they knew what Local Motion initiative was about. 74.9% of respondents stated that they recognised the Local Motion Logo, this is a small increase on the 68.9% figure recorded in 2007.
28. When asked the question ‘What do you think Local Motion is about?’ the principal suggestions referred to first by most respondents was that is about ‘encouraging walking’ (21.7% of respondents in the 2008 survey) and encouraging public transport use (18.5%). Including all responses given these percentages rise to 38.7% and 31.9% respectively. ‘Encouraging Cycling’ (4.1% first response, and 17.3% of all responses) and ‘reducing car trips’ (4.4% first and 14.6% of all responses) were the next most mentioned aspects of the Local Motion initiative.

Cycle Demonstration Town

29. Work has begun on expanding the current range of self guided ride leaflets. The initial set of four have proved to be popular and these will be expanded by providing additional urban routes and adding four rural routes. These will be published in the spring and will form part of a marketing campaign to encourage residents to cycle.

Councillor David Lyonette
Cabinet Member with Transport Portfolio