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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.

**Highway & Bridge Design Schemes**

2. The works at West Street are nearing completion and will complete the Southend Avenue Park part of the Blackwell radial cycle route.
3. Works to complete the Yarm Road (Morton Palms) segregated cycleway/footway are now complete. This scheme forms part of the Morton Palms radial cycle route.
4. Consultation is ongoing on two Toucan crossings at North Road/Lowson Street (conversion from Puffin) and Neasham Road (new installation) and has commenced for a new Toucan on McMullen Road near Lingfield Way.
5. Middleton One Row Slope Stability – Further site investigation work has been carried out and the design is being finalised.
6. Houghton Road Corridor Improvement – Following analysis of the comments received from the public a revised scheme has been drawn up. Further comments from the Ward Councillors are now being incorporated into the drawings and report and these will be made available to the public on the Council’s website.
7. Cycle route signage for Hummersknott radial cycle route has been erected. Design work has commenced on 4 of the remaining 5 routes and the signs will be erected in March/April 2009.
8. A scheme to replace the existing road humps in Skerne Park with speed cushions has commenced and is scheduled to be complete by early April 2009. This work will enable Arriva’s new “easy access” low floor buses to serve this area of the Town.

**Highway Maintenance Schemes**

9. Recently Completed Schemes:
  - (a) B6072 Coatsay Moor Lane - drainage works – new gullies, manholes and associated pipework prior to resurfacing (resurfacing to commence mid May 2009).
  - (b) C38 – Hurworth to Neasham Footway/Cycleway – drainage installation.

10. Ongoing Schemes:

- (a) Valley Street – carriageway resurfacing (delayed until January 2009 due to weather conditions). Resurfacing due to commence 8 March 2009.
- (b) Thompson Street East – Footway refurbishment - opposite Post Office.
- (c) Ribble Drive – Verge hardening – around Ribble Court residential home.
- (d) A167 Burtree Lane to Coatham Mundeville Phase 4 – carriageway resurfacing.

11. Schemes Due to Commence:

- (a) Corbridge Avenue – Verge Hardening – whole street.
- (b) Baytree Avenue – Verge hardening – whole street

**Traffic Management Schemes**

- 12. Preparatory work has commenced on the Civil Parking Enforcement Project, which will confer powers on the Council to enforce a range of on-street parking and loading restrictions. Consideration is being given to the legal documentation and a review of all existing on-street signing and lining is being carried so that the existing traffic orders can be consolidated. A consultation exercise will be carried out between February and May 2009 to gauge the views of residents and stakeholders.
- 13. The draft Network Management Plan was presented to Cabinet on 3 February 2009. The report sought approval of the draft Traffic Management Plan and associated Appendices that included designation of traffic sensitive streets, the network management hierarchy and pairing of roads. The report also sought approval for delegated powers to be granted to the Director of Community Services and his/her nominated officers to carry out all the powers and duties under the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 and the Traffic Management Act 2004 where deemed appropriate and necessary.
- 14. The draft Network Management Plan now requires further development. Areas to be developed on which work has already started include contingency planning for incidents on the major roads in Darlington; preparation of agreements for cross boundary working with Stockton/Durham/North Yorkshire LTA's; establishing the "Darlington Network Management Strategy Group"; and reviewing all activities that can affect the network such as skips or scaffolding.
- 15. The 2008 Casualty Review will be produced by early April. The initial findings are very good and indicate that 2008 showed the lowest number of road traffic casualties on record.
- 16. 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 and a response to the proposals has been received with a number of suggested revisions. These will be incorporated into a report, which will be finalised and go out to wider consultation in March 2009
- 17. A review of traffic and highway issues in Middleton St George will be complete by the end of March 2009.

18. 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. Works are programmed to commence on 16 March 2009 and will last for six weeks

### **Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives**

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

**(a) Cyclist Training Activities**

- (i) Another BIKEABILITY course for St John Ambulance staff was organised and successfully completed in February.
- (ii) All Level 3 training at Carmel School has been completed. 31 pupils have received this training.
- (iii) Five pupils who had not previously completed Level 2 were given the training to enable them to progress to Level 3.

**(b) Pedestrian Training Activities**

- (i) A total of four new instructors have been trained and have completed shadowing activities. They will now be ready to train their own children after the spring half term.

**(c) Theatre in Education**

- (i) This year's performances of 'Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?' toured five secondary schools during the week beginning 9 February 2009.
- (ii) This year's pupils were given a friendly logo bug character to take home with the message 'Don't be a Chicken, Stop Look and Listen' reinforcing one of the play's main messages.

**(d) Holiday Activities**

- (i) Sure Start in McNay Street was the venue for a spring half term holiday event organised by the staff for parents and local children. Road Safety was pleased to be part of the programme and helped with a presentation, activities for children and provided lots of free items for the children and parents to take home.

**(e) BTEC in Driving Science**

- (i) In advance of potential new legislation regarding learner and newly qualified drivers a new national qualification has been introduced for young people. Darlington Borough Council will be piloting this course on behalf of all Local Road Safety Officers' Authorities in the North Eastern region.
- (ii) The course will be organised through the student e-learning facility in Darlington College and supported by local driving instructors.

- (iii) A training day for Driving Instructors was held on the 27 February. A total of 15 instructors volunteered to take part.
  - (iv) Students from Darlington College will begin their programme at the end of the academic year if all goes according to plan.
- (f) **Instructor Training Programme**
- (i) A new course was designed by the Council as a result of an enquiry for training for leaders of guided rides. This course was initiated by North Yorkshire NHS who wished to have appropriate training for their leaders who would not be suitable candidates for the BIKEABILITY Instructor Training Course.
  - (ii) Leaders from two centres, Hawes and Thirsk, were trained in their own areas.

### **Interreg Project – Partnership Agreement/Launch Event/Website**

- 20. In partnership with colleagues in Planning Services a Brief has been drafted to complete a connections study looking at Darlington's Transport Strategy, proposals within the emerging LDF Core Strategy and how they might impact on requirements for the future provision of transport infrastructure.

### **School Travel Planning**

- 21. We are on track to complete eight further School Travel Plans by the end of March. This will release grant funding from the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) for the individual schools to spend on infrastructure supporting sustainable travel.

### **Station Travel Plan**

- 22. The Station Travel Plan Steering Group met on the 24 February to discuss the draft Station Travel Plan. The next step is to agree a draft to be sent to the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) in early March. A report will subsequently be taken to Cabinet.

### **Council Travel Plan**

- 23. A range of schemes are being implemented as part of the Council Travel Plan. Bus tickets for staff use on work journeys have been introduced at the main Council buildings to make it easier for staff to make work journeys by modes other than the car. A Communications Strategy for the Council Travel Plan will be launched in April 2009.

### **Teencard**

- 24. Council Officers have continued to visit schools and colleges in the Borough to promote the Arriva Teencard – a ticket giving discounted travel on Arriva bus services during weekday evenings, at weekends and after 9.00am during most school holidays. This is in response to comments from young people about the cost of bus travel. The application process has been streamlined to make it as easy as possible for young people to buy a ticket – they can do so in person with the need to complete an application form with a photograph and send it off to Arriva as was the case before.

25. The partnership with Arriva has already seen 460 pupils signing up for the card, compared with the 80 beforehand. Arriva have already detected an increase in usage of the ticket by 40-50% and expect usage to further increase as more young people get the ticket. The Council is providing financial support from 'The DOSH' fund to further reduce the price of the ticket to £1 from £2 discounted rate offered by Arriva. It is also helping with the processing of applications (this 'in kind' help was instrumental in Arriva being able to reduce the price to £2 from the usual £5).

### **Cycle Demonstration Town**

26. A launch of a bicycle sharing scheme for Darlington took place in the town centre on Saturday, 14 February 2009 contributing to the Council's work to tackle traffic congestion through the promotion of alternative means of travel to the car.
27. Velodarlo makes stylish Dutch City Bikes available for use by Darlington residents for a small weekly charge. The scheme has grown out of Darlington Media Group's Beauty and the Bike project and girls from the group helped to raise the grants needed to fund Velodarlo. At the launch, the girls from Beauty and the Bike modelled clothing from local fashion boutique Leggs.
28. Run jointly by the Darlington Cycling Campaign and Local Motion, the town centre event promoted the fact that you can look fashionable and stylish whilst cycling. This issue has been raised as one reason why more people do not cycle, thus reducing the pressure on the road network and so tackling traffic congestion. Encouraging cycling also helps in delivering the health agenda.
29. Local Motion promoted the event under the banner of *Love Yourself – Love Cycling* and the *Love Yourself* theme will be used to promote other forms of sustainable travel throughout the year such as walking and public transport. Brand awareness of Local Motion is high; the 2008 Community Survey found that 74.9% recognised the logo.

### **Rights of Way Improvement Plan**

30. Darlington's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) has been nominated in two categories in Natural England's Rights of Way Improvement Plan Awards; for best consultation/community involvement and also best integration with the Local Transport Plan. The awards ceremony, hosted by Natural England and Nicholas Crane, will be held in Leicester on the 19 March 2009.

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