
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 & Bridge Design Schemes

2. Further site investigation work has been carried out at Middleton One Row to identify appropriate remedial works to improve the stability of the slope down to the River Tees. The detailed design is currently being finalised. Work is programmed to commence in Summer 2009 after Northumbrian Water have completed works in the area.
3. Works have commenced on the Haughton Road Corridor Improvement following a detailed and extensive consultation exercise. The scheme is intended to “lock in” the benefits of the DETC by providing greater priority to residents of the area through junction and controlled crossing point improvements. Works are expected to last 10 weeks.
4. Cycle route signage for the Mowden and Morton Park radial cycle route has been erected. Design work has been completed on the Blackwell route and work will soon commence on designing the Haughton route.
5. A scheme to replace the existing road humps in Skerne Park with speed cushions has now been completed. Arriva has indicated that they will use their new “easy access” low floor buses to serve this area of the Town.
6. A new toucan controlled crossing was implemented on McMullen Road, as the result of requests from parents and employees from the Lingfield Point estate.

Highway Maintenance Schemes

7. Recently Completed 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.
 - (e) Corbridge Crescent – Verge Hardening – whole street.
 - (f) Baytree Avenue – Verge hardening – whole street.

8. Ongoing Schemes:

- (a) C52 Yarm Road – Bridge House to Oak Tree – carriageway patching.

9. Schemes Due to Commence:

- (a) A6072 Coatsay Moor Lane – Heighington Junction to Swan House Roundabout – reconstruction and resurfacing.
- (b) Unc Auckland Avenue Phase 3 – odd side 25-71 – footway refurbishment.
- (c) Unc Barnes Road Phase 2 – 22 - Mowden Hall Entrance and 33-65 – footway refurbishment.

Traffic Management Schemes

- 10. Preparatory work is underway for the Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) 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. Work has also commenced on the business case for the project, including looking at the IT systems needed to carry out the enforcement duties. A consultation exercise has commenced including an article in the Town Crier, an e-forum that allows residents to ask questions and make comments on the proposals and a Talking Together event held on 22 April 2009. Meetings have also been held with important stakeholder groups such as the Town Centre Board and disability groups in order that their requirements can be fully considered. A further report to Cabinet will be considered on 2 June 2009.
- 11. Work on the draft Network Management Plan continues with a focus on contingency planning for incidents on the major roads in Darlington. Work has also commenced on preparation of agreements for cross boundary working with Stockton/Durham/North Yorkshire Local Traffic Authorities; establishing the “Darlington Network Management Strategy Group”; and reviewing all activities that can affect the network such as skips or scaffolding.
- 12. The 2008 Casualty Review will be produced by early May and will include analysis of all reported road traffic casualties within Darlington. The initial findings are very good with the Council on track to meet our 2010 road casualty targets of a 40% reduction in fatal and seriously injured casualties and a 50% reduction in children killed or seriously injured. In addition, the overall number of casualties in 2008 fell to an all time low of 346 casualties; a 23% reduction compared to the 1994-98 baseline.
- 13. A review of the hackney carriage ranks within the Town Centre is reaching a conclusion. The review findings are being consulted upon to gain the views of important groups such as the Town Centre Board, disability groups and the Police. The taxi trade have had an opportunity to express views on the initial draft of the report and their formal views will be requested prior to the matter being considered further.
- 14. A review of traffic and highway issues in Middleton St George was completed by the end of March 2009. The review produced a number of recommendations which will be considered through the normal processes for prioritising service requests. Consideration will be given to the role that developer contributions may have in delivering these improvements. A consultation exercise will be carried out with residents to ask for their

views on the report findings.

15. A scheme to improve the road safety record of the section of the A68 north of the A1(M) has been completed. This involved the closure of all the central reserve gaps on this section of the road to address highway safety issues. The scheme was identified as a high priority due to the high incidence and severity of casualties on this section of the road, particularly at the Burtree Lane junction.
16. A footpath and cycleway improvement scheme, linking Arnold Road to Haughton Road, was completed in April 2009. The scheme provided improved pedestrian and cycle links for local residents and school children.
17. Scheme consultation exercises for St. Teresa's school 20mph scheme, Dodmire School safer route to school scheme and Lawson Street toucan crossing have been completed. Comments will be considered prior to a decision being made on whether the schemes will progress to the construction phase. Consultation is due to commence on the findings of the C180 Geneva Road Feasibility study, which considered the accident history and speed profile of the road. The report recommends improvements to the Harris Street/Geneva Road junction.

Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives

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

(a) Cyclist Training Activities

- (i) A recruitment drive, to appoint an extra two instructors, to replace instructors leaving the casual pool was necessary to ensure the planned programme for September will go ahead with adequate staffing.

(b) Pedestrian Training Activities

- (i) Preparations for the summer term's courses have indicated a very high number of children enrolling on the pedestrian training courses.
- (ii) Schools are now beginning to regularly have 100% take up of places and it is unusual if numbers fall below the 90% level.

(c) School Activities

- (i) Before schools closed for the Easter break when the majority of children would be starting to get their bikes out for the summer, two activities were offered to promote safer cycling.
- (ii) An alternative egg decorating competition was offered to all primary schools to find the best decorated cycle helmet. Each year group was offered a prize of a chocolate Easter egg.
- (iii) To complement the competition schools were offered an assembly encouraging children to wear cycle helmets. This programme will be ongoing for the remainder of the summer term.

(d) Community Activities

- (i) Darlington Borough Council's Growing Older in Darlington (GOLD) organisation held a community safety event in the town centre to promote all aspects of safety for the older members of our community. The road safety team supported the event by taking along road safety displays, leaflets and several free promotional items advising people about tips for keeping safe whilst out and about.

School Travel Planning

19. Eight schools have submitted School Travel Plans for approval by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)/Department for Transport (DfT): Mowden Infants, Gurney Pease Primary, Reid Street Primary, Dodmire School, Corporation Road Primary and the Education Village including Springfield Primary, Beaumont Hill Technology College and Haughton Community School. Approval is expected in mid-July which will release grant funding from the DCSF for the individual schools to spend on infrastructure supporting sustainable travel.
20. Schools have received their evidence folders for the new national School Travel Plan accreditation scheme 'Sustainable Travel Accredited & Recognised' which was launched in Darlington in January. The deadline for school applications to be accredited is 12 June 2009.

Workplace Travel Plans

21. We continue to work with various Darlington businesses, ranging from larger employers (e.g. Cummins, Darlington College, Primary and Acute Health Trusts) to smaller businesses (e.g. Saks Accounting) on travel planning. A Borough wide workplace travel survey is due to take place at the end of April. It is anticipated the survey will be repeated annually in order that we can obtain comparative data showing workplace travel trends.
22. CTC Challenge for Change have been contracted to run a workplace cycle challenge in Darlington businesses. The challenge, which will run in late June early July, aims to increase cycling levels amongst employees of Darlington businesses over a two week period and will involve at least 500 participants from around 30 businesses. Following the challenge period CTC Challenge for Change will provide us with extensive data on the travel patterns of the businesses involved.

Cycle Demonstration Town

23. Works to improve National Cycle Network Route 14 have been carried out from the new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the A66 to Middleton St George. Other works have included upgrades to the Black Path in Faverdale and upgrades to the access to Cemetery Lane and Nunnery Lane. Policy briefs have been written for the 2009/10 cycle schemes.
24. A further four self guided cycle ride leaflets will be published in May and made available via GP surgeries as well as the Town Hall, Libraries and the Information Centre.

Supported Bus Services

25. As a result of a competitive tender process some operators of supported bus services are changing from 3 May 2009. This process has followed an extensive period of evidence

gathering and discussion with bus users and others, about what complete bus services or individual journeys were needed, at times and to places not served by Arriva. Supported bus service journeys run in the early morning, during the evening and on Sundays, although there are four all day routes. There will be a new bus service on Sundays to West Park Hospital, a bus service through Blackwell replacing one that was withdrawn last year and a continuation of the service through Brafferton. Prices are currently being sought for a bus service to the Glebe Road area of the town and an evening service from Harrowgate Hill to Whinfield. Timetables at bus stops will be updated the night before the changes and will be available from the Information Centre in the Dolphin Centre.

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Cabinet Member with Transport Portfolio