
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. **Haughton Road Corridor Works** – This scheme was completed in early September. The Puffin crossing at the Highland Laddie has now been upgraded.
3. **Middleton One Row Retaining Wall** – The preliminary design is complete and the procurement of the works is being investigated. The scheme will incorporate the localised repair of the carriageway in the vicinity of the wall.
4. **Polam Lane Bridge** – Detailed design is underway with a view to submitting a listed building consent for the refurbishment of this bridge.
5. **Hutton Lane Bridge** – Feasibility is underway to consider the replacement of this bridge that forms part of the Skerne restoration pedestrian and cycle route.
6. **Town Centre Underpasses** – As assessment is currently being undertaken to determine the extent of works required to improve existing handrails and surfacing within the Inner Ring Road's five underpasses. Detailed design work will then be carried out and cost estimates produced. Works will be prioritised and carried out over a two year period, including additional handrailing to bring the underpasses up to Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance.

Highway Maintenance Schemes

7. Recently Completed Schemes:
 - (a) A67 Elm Ridge Roundabout – carriageway resurfacing.
 - (b) A67 Piercebridge to High Coniscliffe Phase 1 – carriageway resurfacing.
 - (c) Albatross Way Phase 2 – Teal Road to Heron Drive (evens side) – footway refurbishment.
 - (d) Prior Street – resurfacing of Stooperdale junction and Newton Lane mini roundabout.
 - (e) The Headlands Phase 3 – resurfacing of road from 35 to Hummersknott Avenue and refurbishment of both footways from Chiltern Close and Treelands to Hummersknott Avenue.

- (f) A67 Yarm Road – Farmhouse Public House to A66 Roundabout – carriageway deep patching.
 - (g) C38 Whessoe Road – Burtree Lane Junction towards town – carriageway resurfacing.
8. Ongoing Schemes:
- (a) A167 North Road - Aldam Street to Katherine Street – new footway scheme.
 - (b) C180 Geneva Road – Cemetery Gates to Darwin Grove – footway/verge and carriageway works.
9. Schemes Due to Commence:
- (a) C34A Lime Lane – kerbing, draining and deep patching works.
 - (b) B6280 Yarm Road – Lynton Gardens to Geneva Road – footway scheme.
 - (c) B6279 Freemans Place between East Mount Road and Borough Road Junctions – resurfacing scheme.

Traffic Management Schemes

10. Work on the Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) project continues apace. This will confer powers on the Council to enforce a range of on-street parking and loading restrictions. The review of traffic regulation orders is nearing completion and the new orders will be advertised in the coming weeks. The refreshing of lining and signing has commenced and will continue over the next month or so. The application was submitted in July 2009 and we are awaiting feedback from the Department for Transport (DfT). A commencement date cannot be provided at this time until the DfT provide their feedback.
11. The 2008 Casualty Review has recently been published and includes 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. The report is available on the Council's website.
12. The review of the hackney carriage ranks within the Town Centre is reaching a conclusion. A consultation exercise has recently been carried out 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.
13. A review of traffic and highway issues in Middleton St George was completed in March 2009. A consultation exercise, including a Talking Together event, was carried out in July to ask for residents views on the report findings. A total of 106 replies were received and these are currently being analysed.

14. Works to introduce a 20mph zone in the Harris Street area are substantially complete. The scheme will ultimately extend the existing Firthmoor 20mph zone up to Yarm Road and will involve the construction of a number of speed cushions and two table top raised junctions. The scheme also provides safer access to St Teresa's RC Primary School. The one remaining item to be completed is the legal process to extend the 20mph zone. This will be completed as part of the CPE project.
15. A similar scheme to improve safety around Dodmire School has been delayed due to an objection to the road hump notification which was considered by Cabinet on 8 September 2009. Work on the project will commence towards the end of September if the objection is set aside. The works were originally due to take place during the school holidays to avoid any conflict with school traffic but the objection has delayed this. If the scheme does go ahead the works immediately outside the school will be programmed for school half term.
16. Residents of Geneva Road have recently been consulted 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. The consultation responses are currently being analysed.

Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives

17. A number of initiatives have been instigated, including the following:
 - (a) **Cyclist Training Activities** - Cycle training is currently being offered to all primary schools within the Borough. The training is offered to Year 5 or 6 children
 - (b) **Pedestrian Training Activities** - The successful pedestrian training programme which is offered to Year 1 or 2 children has commenced. Schools are now beginning to regularly have 100% take up of places and it is unusual if numbers fall below the 90% level in any particular school.

School Travel Planning and Bike It

18. Eight further schools now have School Travel Plans that have been approved at the national standard. Those schools are Springfield Primary, Beaumont Hill Technology College, Haughton Community School, Corporation Road Primary, Dodmire School, Gurney Pease Primary, Mowden Infant and Reid Street Primary. This will bring a further £47,490 in capital grants for schools to implement their STPs. There are now nine schools remaining in order for Darlington to meet 100% coverage of School Travel Plans, four of which are already engaged.
19. The design of Sustainable Travel Zone maps for all of the Borough's schools is now complete and they will be launched at schools in the new academic year. The maps show 15-minute walking and cycling zones around the schools in an effort to highlight that travelling sustainably does not take a long time. On the reverse of the maps are 5-minute walking zones around schools with a request to parents who have to drive to school to walk the final distance to school.

20. At the start of the year all schools received their Modeshift STAR (School Travel Accredited and Recognised) School Travel Plan Accreditation scheme folders. This is a new national scheme intended to maintain the interest of schools in implementing their travel plans. Eleven schools, a third of those with existing STPs, have submitted applications and are awaiting accreditation.
21. The WoW (Walk on Wednesday/One a Week) scheme will be extended to all Primary schools in clusters A, B, C and D after funds were agreed by Children's Services who will provide extended services funding to pay for the scheme
22. **Bike Club Officer** – Bike Club will provide a range of activities designed to complement the existing schools work including Bike It and School Travel Plans. It offers cycling opportunities during the extended school day and outside the school gates. The Bike Club Officer covering the Darlington and York area took up the post on 21 September and will be based with the Transport Policy team at The Beehive.

Cycle Demonstration Town

23. Discussions are on-going with the Highways Agency with regard to developing and improving a shared footway and cycleway route from Sadberge to Great Burdon roundabout including a link under the A66 (utilising a farm access underpass) to link to the footway/cycleway on the east side of the A66 that was developed as part of the DETC and ultimately to the overbridge that forms part of National Cycle Network 14 (NCN14).
24. A scheme to improve Green Lane is currently under consideration. This will be likely to involve improvements to the surface of the path and improved drainage. Particular consideration will be given to access control to enable legitimate access eg Network Rail personnel or contractors, whilst inhibiting unlawful access including stolen cars.
25. **Cycling Festival** – On the 5 July 2009 the annual Darlington Cycling Festival was held in South Park. The event was well attended and residents were able to take part in a bike try out roadshow, find out information about cycling in Darlington and watch a BMX stunt team in action. Forward plans for next years Cycling Festival are already under way.
26. **Tour of Britain** – The Tour of Britain Stage Two start took place in Darlington on Sunday, 13 September 2009. The ride was led out of Darlington town centre by an all female group including members of the Beauty and the Bike project and also Council staff.
27. **Cycling England DVD** – A DVD has been created by Cycling England to highlight the work of the first six Cycling Demonstration Towns. The DVD will be shown at the next joint meeting of the Cycling Towns on the 6 October 2009.

Workplace Travel Plans

28. The workplace cycle challenge took place between 22 June and 12 July 2009. The challenge, which was run by CTC Challenge for Change, encouraged employees of Darlington businesses to cycle for at least 10 minutes at least once during the challenge period. 368 people from 33 businesses took part in the challenge, registering a total of 24,405 miles cycled in 2,418 trips.

29. DBC is working with various organisations on producing travel plans. St Teresa's Hospice and Infoserve have carried out staff travel surveys ahead of producing plans while County Durham and Darlington Primary Care Trust has, in conjunction with DBC and Durham City Council, produced a draft travel plan which will be finalised later this year.
30. Transport Policy has continued to provide transport input into planning applications involving workplaces, Teesside University's applications for both a new site at Central Park and moving into Eastbourne school, Darlington Borough Council's Depot relocation and new buildings at Darlington Memorial Hospital.

Supported Bus Services

31. **Supported Bus Contracts** - Tenders have been received for long term contracts to replace the six temporary contracts and for two new contracts. Four of the contracts have been awarded and four will be going to Cabinet on 8 September 2009 given that alternative timetables have been received for those contracts. Cabinet will decide which contracts to award. The supported services will take effect from 1 November 2009 and work is underway to ensure bus stops are in place for Glebe/Laburnum/Mayfair Road.
32. **Promotion of Services 16 and 19** - Supported service timetables for the services 16 and 19 were delivered to every household along their route in Darlington. Patronage for all supported services is monitored and it is hoped that an increase in passenger numbers will result from the promotion.
33. **Multi Operator Ticket** - Discussions are currently taking place regarding a Multi Operator Ticket Scheme. This would enable anyone who needs to make journeys on both Scarlet Band and Arriva services, to purchase one weekly ticket, which could be used throughout the Borough. It is hoped that the scheme can be introduced in November once agreement on the schemes terms and conditions has been reached with the operators.

Tees Valley Metro

34. Work has continued to assess the feasibility of an improved train service between Darlington and Saltburn, with improved or new station facilities to support future regeneration proposals. The project has reached stage 3 out of an 8 stage process used by Network Rail and delivery of Phase 1 has been accepted as a regional funding priority by the Interim Regional Transport Board (IRTB). In terms of Darlington Borough, this could mean that £9.4m is spent at Darlington Station in 2009/12 (the work would include changes to Darlington South Railway Junction) and £5m to Durham Tees Valley Airport in 2010/12.
35. The next step is to prepare detailed designs for the project before submitting a final business case to the IRTB and the Department for Transport in 2010.
36. Funding for Phases 2 & 3 of the project has yet to be identified.

Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement

37. Work has continued to prepare the final business case seeking funding approval from the Department for Transport, following their decision to grant programme entry status to the project in June. If approval is given, then a total of £9.2m could be spent in the Borough on the delivery of physical improvements to the road network including a new junction at North and Whessoe Roads to reduce traffic congestion. In addition, further funds would be used to improve bus stops along several roads, provide real time information and to deliver a package of travel behaviour actions based on Darlington's pioneering experience of the LocalMotion initiative. The investment could be made over the calendar years 2010-2013.
38. Part of the remaining work is to complete negotiations with local bus operators over the terms of the proposed Statutory Bus Quality Partnerships, whereby operators commit to standards of vehicles and operational behaviour in return for improved facilities and protection from competition from other operators who have not signed the Partnership Agreement.

Community Rail Officer

39. Robert Whitehouse has been appointed to the post of Community Rail Officer and will commence post in early September. Robert will be carrying out the work of the Heritage Line Community Rail Partnership and helping to achieve the vision for the line.

Councillor David Lyonette
Cabinet Member with Transport Portfolio