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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.

### Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement

2. Government funding for the Tees Valley Bus Network Initiative (TVBNI) scheme was granted on 26 March 2010. The Department for Transport (DfT) will invest up to £7.9m in physical improvements to key road junctions in the Borough to help improve traffic conditions for all, including bus users. The improvements will also see more bus lanes being provided along with changes to traffic signal timings; all designed to minimise traffic congestion and make bus travel an attractive choice. In addition, the DfT will contribute to improvements to selected bus stops and to a programme of smarter travel choices, based on the successful Local Motion work carried out since 2004.
3. One of the early improvements will be made at the junction of North and Whessoe Roads where the current staggered double junction layout will be replaced by a more efficient single junction incorporating a new road link beside the Bishop Auckland railway line. Implementation of the whole initiative is scheduled to start in 2010/11 following agreement on the fine detail of the DfT grant.

### Highway & Bridge Design Schemes

4. **North Road Cycle Route Mayfair Road to Bensham Road** – This scheme was completed in April.
5. **Great Burdon to Sadberge Cycle Route** – This scheme is now complete, together with the signing of the circular route. A further scheme linking this section to crossings at Stockton Road roundabout is now being developed.
6. **Neasham Road Toucan** – This scheme is complete and operating successfully.
7. **Blackwell Lane to Harewood Terrace Cycle Link** - This scheme was completed in April.
8. **Middleton One Row Retaining Wall Reinstatement** – The site investigation works were completed and factual report prepared. Design work is progressing. The Project Management Team is now involved in drawing together all aspects of the scheme ready for procurement.
9. **Hutton Avenue Footbridge** – Design concepts and ecology strategy now established. This scheme has now been handed over to the Project Management Team for procurement to be organised.

10. **Polam Lane Footbridge** – The final design issue regarding the historic parapet has been resolved allowing the Listed Building application to be submitted shortly.

### **Highway Maintenance Schemes**

11. Recently Completed Schemes:

- (a) East Mount Road Phase 2 – footway refurbishment.

12. Ongoing Schemes:

- (a) Carriageway Slurry Sealing resurfacing at various sites throughout the Borough: Galloway/Annadale/Tayside, Shetland Drive Estate, Princess Road, Havelock Street, Southend Place, Melsonby Crescent, Baydale Road, Florence Street, Rosedale Crescent, Cotherstone Moor Drive, Teal Road, Wilton Drive and Westfield Drive/Osborne Close.
  - (b) Eastbourne Cycleway – Rydal Road, rear of Dodmire School – renewal of tactile paving and centreline.

13. Schemes Due to Commence -

- (a) Sadberge, Church Row – provision of kerbed channel across junction.
  - (b) Westmoreland Street/Whessoe Road junction – footway refurbishment.
  - (c) Laburnum Road – verge hardening.
  - (d) Victoria Road – Railway Station to St Cuthbert’s Way – footway crossing point refurbishment.

### **Impact of Adverse Weather**

14. The impact of adverse weather on the condition of the highway network has been assessed and a programme of remedial works developed.

### **Traffic Management Schemes**

15. **Green Lane Resurfacing** – The scheme was completed before Easter and provides a much improved surface. Bollards have been installed at three locations to stop unauthorised vehicles entering the area whilst demountable signs enable access for authorised users.
16. **South Park Footpath/Cycleway Link** – A new footpath and cycle link from Henderson Street to Bedford Street was completed in March. The path has been well received by residents and the “friends of South Park” group and all in all is a good addition to the existing network of paths within the park. The path will also link Henderson Street with the renewed Polam Lane Bridge which is expected to be complete by late Summer.
17. **Hackney Carriage Rank Review** – A consultation has recently been carried out on the Hackney Carriage Rank Review. All hackney carriage licence holders and statutory groups such as Police and DAD have been consulted on proposed changes to taxi ranks in and

around the town centre. The review arose from comments made through the Darlington Hackney Carriage and Taxi Group and the proposed changes have been reported to this group on a regular basis. Consultation closed on the 26 March 2010 and the responses are currently being analysed.

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

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

- (a) **Pedestrian Training** – Pedestrian training is continuing its success story and is now a respected event in most schools' activities.
- (b) **Cyclist Training Activities** -
  - (i) To celebrate the installation of the new bike sheds at St Bede's, the road safety team worked in partnership with Sustrans, Durham Constabulary and the school in a whole school cycle fun day.
  - (ii) All organisations contributed with different activities which included cycle security, bike maintenance, cyclist training and cycle road safety.
  - (iii) The school's big annual sponsored walk turned into sponsored cycle ride raising funds for the school.
  - (iv) Level two Bikeability training started its main season after Easter.
- (c) **School Activities** -
  - (i) Before Easter, the Road Safety Team distributed lollipops and stickers to all primary schools.
  - (ii) The resources were offered at no charge to road safety teams throughout the country as a residual resource from the Texaco's Hector's Home Road Safety Project.
  - (iii) Year 8 secondary school pupils in the Borough have been introduced to 'Ghost Street'. At the end of each presentation of Ghost Street a road safety mug plus a stick of chalk was given to each pupil. They were asked to design a slogan or message on the mug for their peers to promote future road safety.
  - (iv) After the presentation in Branksome to the year 8 pupils, the head teachers of years 9 and 10 asked for the same presentation as it had been so effective and well received by teachers as well as pupils.
  - (v) This year's Poetry Day campaign was started on the 21 April 2010. Six schools bought into the campaign: Bishopton, Yarm @ Raventhorpe, Corporation Road, Holy Family, Cockerton and St John's.

**(d) Older Residents' Activities -**

- (i) Following two previous successful events involving free driver vision screening tests, Age Concern requested another event to be held in Summerhouse.
- (ii) As in previous exercises on completion of the test residents were given a free high visibility shopping bag and advice on how to drive safer for longer.

**(e) Motorcycling Activities -**

- (i) Partnership work is continuing for a regional publicity and training campaign which is scheduled for the beginning of this year's motorcycling activities. Partners involved are from all local authorities in the North Eastern region of Road Safety GB.
- (ii) Stickers and posters have been distributed to local bike shops and training organisations which have been introduced as free resources for a national motorcycling campaign.

**Workplace Travel Planning**

- 19. A workplace travel survey will be undertaken in May 2010. The survey will aim to get as many employees of Darlington businesses as possible to respond, giving an idea of the travel habits/patterns of journeys to and from work.
- 20. Following the success of the Workplace Cycle Challenge which was run in June and July 2009 by CTC Challenge for Change, a 2010 challenge has been commissioned. The challenge will run from 5<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> July and will again be delivered by CTC Challenge for Change. Building on the 2009 challenge the 2010 challenge will aim to involve 30 Darlington organisations and between 400 and 800 individual participants.
- 21. A workplace bus challenge is being planned for May 2010. The challenge, which will involve five of Darlington's largest employers, will aim to get as many staff as possible trying the bus for the journey to work at least once in the two week challenge period. Arriva have agreed to provide 20 free weekly bus tickets for each participating organisation as well as prizes for individuals and organisations.
- 22. A secure, covered cycle shed capable of accommodating 80 cycles has been installed at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College. The shed has been funded through additional funding from Cycling England with the assistance of the transport policy team.

**School Travel Plans**

- 23. Five schools have submitted School Travel Plans (STPs) for approval by the DCFS. This takes the total number of STPs in Darlington to 41 out of 45 and means that all local authority schools now have a STP in place. The schools are; George Dent Nursery, Borough Road Nursery, St Bede's RC VA Primary, St Aidan's CE Academy and The Bridge.
- 24. The Sustainable Travel Zone maps launch took place at Heathfield School on Wednesday 31 March 2010. All schools now have these maps which aim to encourage parents to park

further away from the school and to walk for at least the final five minutes of the journey to school. Around 200 pupils and parents took part in a 'March to School' event, significantly reducing school gate congestion that morning from traffic around the school. Heathfield School head teacher, Nick Blackburn has given his support to promoting the travel zone concept through a regular programme of events.

25. The School Travel Plan Officer and Sustrans Bike It Officer have been working with the police to launch a 'Lock It or Lose' it campaign. Pupils have had their cycles registered and tagged with microdots.
26. In March the Transport Policy team attended the Council of School Council's meeting that represents all secondary schools and colleges in Darlington to consult the young people on their priorities for the third local transport plan.
27. On the 26 March 2010 pupils taking part in the two Dodmire School walking trains helped to launch the new toucan crossing on Neasham Road.
28. New cycle parking facilities have been opened at St Bede's RC VA Primary.
29. Early results from the annual school census indicate that car driver trips to school have dropped a further 4% from 21.3% in 2008/09 to 20.4 in 2009/10. Official statistics however will not be released until August.

### **Local Transport Plan**

30. A Strategic Environmental Assessment for the draft scoping report for the 3LTP has been undertaken and consultation with statutory consultees closed on the 6 April 2010. The comments received will be considered in the production of the final scoping report.

**Councillor David Lyonette  
Transport Portfolio**