
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.

Civil Parking Enforcement

2. The Council has been given a commencement date for the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) from the Department for Transport of 31 December 2010. This is not an ideal date to introduce the powers. However, if the Council had not accepted the date there was a risk the start could have been delayed by months.
3. Arrangements are being made to make the necessary changes to computer equipment and car park signs as soon as reasonably practicable during this period to allow enforcement to begin early in January 2011.
4. During the week commencing the 13 December 2010 the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers (formerly Parking Attendants) issued warning notices to any motorists that they find contravening the regulations as part of a warning and informing exercise. Publicity was also undertaken during the week via the Council's website and the press to advise of the new powers being introduced.
5. For the first four weeks following the commencement of Civil Parking Enforcement officers will work in pairs when patrolling the new contraventions to ensure consistency of approach and familiarisation with the new regime. A measured, responsive approach will be taken in respect of the new contraventions with targeting initially of problem areas.

Highway & Bridge Design Schemes

6. **Middleton-One-Row Retaining Wall Reinstatement** – Tenders to be issued on 17 December 2010.
7. **Polam Lane Footbridge** – Contractor on site. Works expected to be completed by 15 February 2011.
8. **Chesnut Street Bridge** – Design of bridge repairs progressing with a view to works being carried out during 2011-2012.
9. **Whinfield Road/Whinbush Way Study** – Consultation exercise completed on 6 December with public support. Engagement report ready for approval. Work programmed to begin early January 2011.

10. **North Road Bus Priority** – Listed Building consent application being developed for submission with Planning Application in the New Year.

Highway Maintenance Schemes

11. Recently Completed Schemes:

- (a) Victoria Road, Railway Station to St Cuthbert's Way – footway crossing point refurbishment.
- (b) Scotts Terrace (Scotts Terrace to Lawson Street) - back lane refurbishment.
- (c) A167 North Road Footway Phase 5 (Thompson Street Northwards East side) – footway refurbishment.
- (d) Freemans Place (Ring Road roundabout to pedestrian crossing north of Russell Street) – carriageway resurfacing.

12. Ongoing Schemes:

- (a) Whinfield Road (Salters Lane North playing field to Whinbush Way) - footway Refurbishment

13. Schemes Due to Commence:

- (a) Judith Close, Heighington – footway refurbishment.

Winter/Adverse Weather Repairs – Permanent Resurfacing Works

14. Recently Completed Schemes:

- (a) Staindrop Road
- (b) Edinburgh Drive
- (c) Longfield Road/Whessoe Road

15. Ongoing Schemes:

- (a) Avon Road, Hurworth
- (b) Littlebeck Drive
- (c) Winchester Way
- (d) Lakeside.

16. Schemes Due to Commence:

- (a) Nunnery Lane.

- (b) Emley Moor Road
- (c) Abbey Road and Dale Road, Sadberge
- (d) Church Lane, Middleton St George
- (e) Riverside Way, Great Burdon
- (f) A6072 Shildon Road, Redworth

Traffic Management Schemes

17. **Raised Bus Platforms** – Raised bus platforms are being constructed in Abbey Road and Woodland Road to provide residents with mobility issues level access to buses. This is funded from a developer contribution.
18. **The Square, Middleton St George** – A scheme to redesign the existing junction to provide a roundabout is programmed to be complete in February 2011. The scheme arose from a Talking Together consultation process with residents and local ward members. Residents have reported that there are significant road safety issues with the current junction. It is to be funded from a mixture of developer contribution and Local Transport Plan funding.
19. **Carmel Road Safer Route to School** – A scheme to improve pedestrian and cycle links within the school was completed in November 2010.
20. **Gurney Pease Footway Improvements** - Improvements to the pedestrian links to this school are due for completion in January. This involved improving crossing points and resurfacing a well used rear lane.
21. **Safer Routes to School** - Public consultation packs have been sent out to residents and Ward Councillors for the following schemes:
 - (a) Northwood Primary School 20mph zone.
 - (b) Heathfield 20 mph zone.
 - (c) Reid Street 20mph zone.
22. **Hummersknot School Cycleway and Footway Links** – A scheme to improve pedestrian cycleway links from Cemetery Lane and along Edinburgh Drive was submitted for planning approval in September 2010. Officers carried out a consultation exercise with local residents as part of the statement of community engagement process. Almost all of those responding to the consultation objected and a decision was therefore made to withdraw the application and not progress the scheme.
23. **Skerne Park, Cockerton and Corporation Road School Access Improvements** - A programme of constructing dropped kerbs around these schools is due for completion in January 2010. Parents had expressed a view that the improvements were required through the various School Travel Plans.

Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives

24. A number of initiatives have been instigated, including the following:
- (a) **Cyclist Activities** – Weather permitting, Bikeability training continued in the Autumn term.
 - (b) **Pedestrian Training** – The pedestrian training programme continued to develop children's life skills in four primary schools.
 - (c) **School Activities** – The Road Safety Officer was invited to Heathfield Primary School to deliver an assembly to Key Stage 1 pupils. A general theme of road safety was delivered by a slide show depicting Go Stop road safety signs.
 - (d) **School Crossing Patrol Christmas Activity** – All School Crossing Patrols were given some Christmas badges to hand out to any children crossing with them for the week beginning 13 December.
 - (e) **Christmas Drink Drive Campaign** –
 - (i) Road Safety staff continued to promote messages about drinking and driving. The campaign started in Darlington College and continued in other venues throughout Darlington.
 - (ii) Two key messages centred on a giant unit calculator wheel and a guess the unit quiz. Mini unit calculators were given out for all who visited the stands.

School Travel Plans

25. School Travel Planning sessions have been taking place with year 5 and 6 pupils at Mount Pleasant Primary Schools. Pupils have been creating posters and campaigns to promote sustainable and active travel to school to the rest of the school community.
26. Northwood Primary School has completed a full review of its School Travel Plan that was originally developed in March 2006. The new plan looks to improve levels of sustainable travel now that the new school building is occupied.
27. We will be swapping Friday 21 January 2011 for the 1980s as part of the national Change4Life campaign 'The Great Swapathon'. Data indicates that in the mid-1980's just 16% of children and young people travelled to school by car. The figure for Darlington now stands at 25%. At the start of 2011 we will be encouraging all families in Darlington to turn back the clock by swapping 2011 for the 1980s and encouraging as many people as possible to travel to school in a sustainable and active way.
28. A competition has been launched in all secondary schools to 'Design a Hoodie'. This is a joint initiative between Darlington's School Travel Plan Officer, Sustrans and Darlovelo. The student who produces the best design will be presented with a bike and a hoodie made up with their design. 100 hoodies will be produced, which will be used as prizes for other activities in schools.

Public Transport

29. A review of all bus timetable information held on the Omnitimes system has been completed to ensure that it is correct. A full set of stop-specific timetables has been printed and put out at every bus stop and 120 new timetable cases have been put out at stops where cases have been damaged or vandalised.
30. The current 21,596 concessionary fares bus passes expire on the 31 March 2011. New passes will be printed on the 1 February 2011 by Fujitsu and sent direct to home addresses. The passes will be 8k desfire smartcards, which will have the North East Smartcard Ticketing Initiative (NESTI) logo on the reverse. Initially they will be used as flash passes in the same way as current passes. Once smartcard readers are installed on board buses and the NESTI goes live in Darlington in 2011, the cards will be used as smartcards. Information about the reissue of bus passes will be made widely available through posters on buses during January, posters at bus stops in the town centre and at key locations throughout the town in January, and an advert in the Town Crier and Northern Echo in February. The Contact Centre, GOLD, Age UK, DAD, and talking newspaper will be briefed to handle any enquiries.

Third Local Transport Plan (LTP)

31. The final stage of consultation has been completed in the development of the Third Local Transport Plan. Following the announcement of funding in December, the Plan was considered by Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee. The Draft Plan, including the long term Transport Strategy and short term Implementation Plan, will be presented to Cabinet in February 2011.

Local Sustainable Transport Fund

32. Preparatory work is being undertaken to support a possible bid to this recently announced fund. The fund has a total value of £560M over four years and would give this Council and partners the opportunity to realise the increasing potential for a sustainable transport network across the whole Borough that supports the economy, reduces carbon emissions and helps people be healthy. Any bid would draw upon the experience and knowledge of the Council from the Local Motion and Cycling Demonstration Town projects. The detailed guidance for the fund is expected in January 2011 with the first opportunity to bid being by Easter.

Tees Valley Metro

33. Network Rail's GRIP4 process was completed for technical designs for a new station at Durham Tees Valley Airport and new platforms at Bank Top Station. Due to the prevailing economic conditions and review of public spending there is unlikely to be any Major Scheme funding in the foreseeable future for the new Durham Tees Valley Airport Station or the Bank Top platforms. However, the Tees Valley LEP has supported an application for Regional Growth Fund for a reduced first phase of Metro that includes environmental and access improvements to Bank Top Station.

Winter Maintenance

34. Members will be aware that during late November 2010 and December the Borough experienced significant inclement weather. In this regard gritting of all the Council's priority network was undertaken on 100 occasions with some 3,372 tonnes of rock salt being utilised. Since commencement of the winter period on 4 October 2010 to 11 January 2011 gritting operations of the priority network have been undertaken 117 times using a total of 3,781 tonnes of rock salt.
35. The total of amount of rock salt used as of 11 January 2011 (including gritting of footpaths, car parks and the replenishment of grit bins) is 4,641 tonnes.
36. In relation to stock levels of rock salt the Council, in conjunction with other North East local authorities are procuring additional rock salt from abroad which is expected to be delivered late January 2011. Due to other smaller amounts of rock salt delivered as at 11 January 2011 the Council has not had to reduce the amount of network being treated however the decision not to replenish grit bins was implemented. The Council was well prepared: the stock at the beginning of the winter was greater than the amount used in the whole of last winter.

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Transport Portfolio