
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.

Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement

2. The Council and its partners submitted the final business case to the Department for Transport (DfT) in November. The DfT are now considering our application and expect to make a decision about funding in late January 2010. Preparatory design work is currently being undertaken so that schemes scheduled for year 1 of the project can be delivered as soon as is possible after funding has been secured. These preparations include getting ready for a Talking Together event on 20 January 2010 where schemes within the project will be presented to the public for their views and comments. The business case calls for investment worth over £9.203m within the Borough that benefits all users, especially those using local bus services and is part of the Council's three pronged strategy to tackle traffic congestion.

Highway & Bridge Design Schemes

3. **North Road Cycle Route Mayfair Road to Bensham Road** - This scheme forms part of the Harrowgate Hill radial cycle route and is currently out to public consultation.
4. **Great Burdon to Sadberge Cycle Route** - A scheme to improve footpath and cycleway links to Sadberge has recently been completed on the section from Sadberge Village to Beacon Hill. The section from A66 Little Burdon roundabout towards Great Burdon is due to be improved in January.
5. **Neasham Road Toucan** - This scheme is linked to the recently completed Dodmire safer route school scheme and will provide a signal controlled crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists across Neasham Road close to its junction with Aysgarth Road. This crossing forms a part of the Morton Palms cycle route and will provide safe access for children attending Dodmire School and local residents accessing local services such as the health clinic, shops and bus stops. Work will commence towards the end of January.
6. **Polam Lane Footbridge** - Design on a scheme to upgrade Polam Lane footbridge has been on-going for a number of weeks to enable a Listed Building application to be submitted early in the New Year. Temporary protective measures were put in place a number of years ago due to structural concerns. The design will retain a number of original features to ensure that the bridge is in fitting with the conservation area.
7. **Principal Bridge Inspections** - All of the Darlington Borough Council's structures are currently being inspected as required by DfT to assess which structures are in need of

further detailed investigation and possible remedial works.

Highway Maintenance Schemes

8. Recently Completed Schemes:

- (a) B6280 Yarm Road - Lynton Gardens to Geneva Road - footway scheme.
- (b) B6280 Yarm Road - Cummins Pedestrian Crossing to Morton Palms roundabout - carriageway resurfacing.
- (c) C34A Lime Lane - kerbing, draining and deep patching works.
- (d) Princess Road - remainder of street - footway refurbishment.
- (e) B6279 Houghton Road - Freemans Place to Railway Bridge - carriageway resurfacing.

9. Schemes Due to Commence:

- (a) Eastmount Road Phase 2 - Footway refurbishment.

Traffic Management Schemes

- 10. **Dodmire Safer route to school** - This scheme is complete and provides traffic calming features on a number of roads around Dodmire School. Pupils, parents and staff had identified the need for work to be done as part of the school travel plan.
- 11. **Dropped kerbs** - The annual programme to provide dropped crossings for people with mobility problems is complete. The programme cost £20,000 and provided approximately 40 separate dropped kerb installations.
- 12. **A167 Croft Road lining works** - A scheme to improve the safety record on this road by improving the cats eyes and refreshing road markings was completed in November.
- 13. **Whessoe Road refuge works** - A scheme to improve the conspicuity of a pedestrian refuge on Whessoe Road was recently completed. The scheme was introduced due to an on-going problem of the existing refuge being struck by vehicles. A “splitter” island was introduced in advance of the refuge and the existing signing and lining was improved.
- 14. **Green Lane resurfacing** - Works to improve the surface of Green Lane commenced in January. The scheme will provide a sealed surface and improve drainage. This scheme should be completed by March 2010.
- 15. **South Park Footpath/Cycleway Link** - Construction on a footway/cycleway link within the park is due to commence in January. This will link the Henderson Street and Bedford Street entrances and was the subject of a successful planning application.
- 16. **Longfield School 20mph Zone consultation.** Residents of properties adjacent to the proposed scheme have been consulted on a proposal to implement a school 20mph zone along the school frontage. The scheme incorporates two sets of speed cushions and raised platforms at the existing designated crossing points. The scheme originated from concerns

from pupils and expressed in the school travel plan. The scheme is intended to improve safety and encourage more pupils to walk or cycle to school thus reducing traffic and parking congestion.

17. **Fitzwilliam Drive/Leyburn Road Junction Improvement.** Consultation on a scheme to alter the junction arrangement was carried out to determine support for the changes. The scheme will replace the existing mini roundabout with a crossroads junction and will provide two additional sets of road humps. The scheme has been implemented to address residents concerns regarding through traffic using Leyburn Road and delays to Fitzwilliam Drive residents.
18. **Town Centre Pedestrian Guardrails.** An initial assessment of the extent of guardrail around the Inner Ring Road has been carried out in conjunction with the Police to determine whether some sections were superfluous to requirements. This resulted in the removal of approximately 300m of railings. Further consideration is being given to the remaining sections.
19. **The Haughton cycle route** was recently signed as part of the on-going programme of signing all of our complete strategic cycle routes.

Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives

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

- (a) **Pedestrian Training** - In November Darlington's Pedestrian Training scheme reached a landmark 10,000th child trained. The young girl, Eleanor Wake was a pupil at Heighington Primary School. The communications organised a photo shoot and the manager of Marks and Spencer donated twenty pounds in gift vouchers as a gesture of good will for this little girl.
- (b) **Cyclist Training Activities** -
 - (i) Level 3 of the Bikeability programme finished at Hummersknott and started at Carmel School.
 - (ii) Three new instructors were recruited and underwent a three day training course in order for them to begin work in the new year.
- (c) **School Activities** -
 - (i) In the penultimate week of term all Darlington's primary school children were given a fictional book appropriate to their key stage as the Christmas safety campaign. Both books told a lovely story with important road safety themes running throughout.
 - (ii) Key stage 1's book was a new publication by Sandwell Road Safety Team called "The Green Man".
 - (iii) Key stage 2 pupils were given a copy of Dick King Smith's book "The Hodgeheg".

- (iv) Heathfield primary school offered to host a photo shoot of the books being delivered by the Department of transport's life sized character of a hedgehog.
 - (v) Hurworth Primary School invited the Road Safety Officer to speak to the children about being safe and being seen. This was to enhance the pedestrian training which most children had just received.
- (d) Older Residents' Activities -**
- (i) The Road safety staff supported Darlington Borough Council's GOLD's event at the football stadium to repeat the successful format of the tea dance held in the market square in August.
 - (ii) In addition to being on hand to give out appropriate leaflets and offer general road safety help and advice to members of the public we offered a free driver vision screening test.
 - (iii) On completion of the test residents were given a free high visibility shopping bag. Quite a few residents were advised to visit their opticians to establish if a professional test indicated the need for a change in corrective lenses to enable their vision to be better in terms of road safety.
- (e) ISO 9001** - The Road safety team is pleased to end the year with accredited status of ISO 9001.
- (f) Child Car Restraint Checks** - Working in partnership with A-one Integrated Highway Services Child car restraint checks are taking place on the first Thursday in each month at ASDA supermarket car park. Normally two out of three seats need some adjustment for the seats to be safe.

School Travel Planning

21. All of the remaining local authority schools that are yet to complete a School Travel Plan are now engaged in developing one. March 2010 is the final opportunity for schools to secure grant funding (approximately £5,000 primary/£10,000 secondary) from the Department for Children, Schools and Families on completion of an approved School Travel Plan.
22. Contact has been made with the Borough's four Independent Schools with regards to their School Travel Plans. Polam Hall School and Yarm at Raventhorpe School have expressed an interest in developing their plans. Although the DCSF have set a target for local authorities to secure a travel plan for all its schools including independent schools there is no obligation or financial incentive for these schools to complete travel plans.
23. In the Spring term we will be launching Sustainable Travel Zone maps for all of the Borough's schools. The maps show 15-minute walking and cycling zones around schools in an effort to highlight that travelling sustainably need not take much time.
24. The Medal Motion 'Race to the South Pole' campaign took place in October, returns from each participating school are currently being analysed. Early indications show that over half of all pupils targeted have returned details on their journey to school. That is over

4,500 primary school pupils.

25. The CTC has launched a new 'Bike Club' small grant scheme with up to £2000 available to local clubs and organisations to help them set up a 'Bike Club'. The Darlington and York Bike Club Officer, Patrick Carr, has made contact with several groups and young people's clubs in Darlington and aims to have set up a minimum of two Bike Clubs by March 2010.
26. The Sustrans Bike It Officer has been running a series of Bike It Breakfasts and Brighter Biker Days at Darlington Schools including Longfield Secondary School, St Teresa's, Holy Family, St Johns & Alderman Leach Primary Schools. The Brighter Biker days aim to combine an element of fun with messages about safer cycling, particularly in the darker winter months.
27. A Sustrans Beauty and the Bike project has started at Carmel Secondary School involving the Body Shop and Darlington College in work with ten year 7 girls promoting 'looking good, feeling good.' None of the girls currently cycle to school.
28. Cycle maintenance classes have been taking place at Carmel Secondary School and at the Education Village; this is open to all year 7-11 pupils, though mainly year 7 and 8 pupils have taken part.
29. The Darlington Media Group 'Beauty and the Bike Film' which received funding from the Council through Local Motion and DOSH has been awarded the national 'Modeshift' award for best cycling project involving schools.

Workplace Travel Plans

30. A planning application has been submitted for the secure cycle shed which is to be installed (through funding from the workplace travel plan budget) at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College. This will accommodate up to 80 cycles.
31. County Durham and Darlington Primary Care Trust are producing a travel plan. Following advice from the workplace travel plan officer, working with Durham County Council's travel plan officer, targets for increased levels of walking, cycling, bus use and car sharing have been included in the plan which is due for management sign off in February/March 2010.
32. Following the success of the Workplace Cycle Challenge which was run in June and July by CTC Challenge for Change, additional funding has been secured from Cycling England to run a second Cycle Challenge in 2010.
33. The workplace travel plan officer is now chairing the Darlington Investors in Health Steering group. It is anticipated that the scheme will be officially launched in early 2010.
34. Ahead of the Department for Children Schools and Families' move to a new office in the centre of Darlington the workplace travel plan officer has started working with staff currently based at Mowden Hall to promote different ways of travel to work. The DCSF have agreed to launch a scheme enabling staff to purchase annual season tickets for bus travel through a regular deduction from their monthly salary.

Supported Bus Services

35. Four tenders for which alternative timetables were received were considered by Cabinet on 8 September 2009 and subsequently contracts for the alternative timetables were awarded.
36. The supported services which included a new bus service to Glebe/Laburnum/Mayfair Road came into effect on 1 November 2009. Temporary bus stops have been erected for the new service ahead of permanent stops.

Communications

37. An updated bus map has been printed and distributed to public outlets throughout the Borough.
38. The winter edition of the Local Motion newsletter has been sent to residents throughout the Borough.

Bank Top Station

39. In November management of the Station transferred to a subsidiary company set up by the Department for Transport 'East Coast'. Operational personnel, including the Station manager, have transferred to East Coast. This has provided some continuity with respect to the implementation of partnership working on improvements to the Station and surrounding area. Initiatives still being progressed include installation of new cycle parking and a plan to provide local travel information posters at key locations within the Station.

Community Rail Partnership

40. The Community Rail Partnership has agreed the Action Plan which forms the application to the Minister for Transport for either service or line designation (at the discretion of the Minister). Once this process is complete the line will become a formal Community Rail service/line and will enable the Community Rail Partnership to access small amounts of funding to improve and promote the line.
41. The Council on behalf of the Heritage Line Community Rail Partnership have appointed a market research company to undertake research amongst users of the Darlington to Bishop Auckland Heritage Line. In addition the company will gather evidence from non users of the line in all locations along the length of the line. This information will be used to evidence funding applications to implement the Community Rail Partnership's action plan and to shape future marketing campaigns.

Tees Valley Metro

42. The next stage of the development of the Tees Valley Metro, known as GRIP 4, has been commissioned. This involves a new Metro platform at Bank Top Station and a new station at Durham Tees Valley Airport. This work is being managed by the Joint Strategy Unit and funded through the Department for Transport. It is anticipated that this work will be complete in the summer of 2010. In addition consultants have been appointed to review the impact of the potential changes to the car park resulting from the proposed new platform. This will include options for the car parks and wider transport links to ensure that everyone can access the new platform whether they arrive on foot, by bike, bus or taxi or are being

dropped off as a car passenger. This work is being funded from Single Programme funding approved by Cabinet in January.

Cycling Demonstration Town Project

43. Cycling England Board Members have visited Darlington. John Grimshaw has visited to inspect the cycle network infrastructure and Philip Darnton, Chair of Cycling England, has visited to discuss progress to date and the final year's programme. Their feedback will be used to finalise the programme. Cycling England are pleased to see that some of the ideas that we have developed locally are now being implemented in other parts of the Tees Valley via the Tees Valley Sustrans Officer and the Local Authority Cycling Officers Group, including self guided ride leaflets and workplace cycle challenges.

Visit by Transport Minister Sadiq Khan on 19th November

44. Transport Minister Sadiq Khan spent a day in Darlington on 19 November, during which he travelled by bus as a 'mystery shopper', met Students at Darlington College, took part in a discussion with representatives of older and younger bus passengers, listened to a presentation on Local Motion and the Cycling Demonstration Town projects and visited Cummins to learn about their commitment to achieving the criteria for the Cycle to Work Guarantee scheme. The Minister's visit was an opportunity to showcase Darlington's work on sustainable travel and to highlight key issues Darlington faces in delivering a high quality transport system. During his visit the Minister updated his 'Twitter' page on his experiences in Darlington, comments he made include:

'Just had another really good experience on a Darlington bus. Really helpful & friendly bus driver'.

'Just had a fantastic session with older & younger passenger user groups. Came up with some fantastic ideas'.

Première of Beauty and the Bike

45. Beauty and the Bike, a film exploring the barriers to young women cycling in Darlington was premiered at the Arts Centre on 9 December. The Arts Centre theatre was full to capacity for the 52 minute film which has been produced by Darlington Media Group with funding support from the Council, through Local Motion and 'DOSH', plus a European grant. The film includes footage in Darlington, in Bremen (where cycling is a major part of everyday transport), interviews with the young women, politicians and a traffic engineer. Conclusions were that all of the young women enjoyed cycling; some of them expressed a feeling of liberation from the need to rely on parents for transport. But that to get more girls and women to cycle it had to be seen as stylish, that safety from traffic was a big issue, particularly the behaviour of drivers towards cyclists, and that cycle infrastructure needed to improve. An 8 –minute version of the film can be seen on the Darlington Experiment website, by the end of December it had been viewed 28,000 times on You-tube.

**Councillor David Lyonette
Transport Portfolio**