
OVERVIEW OF TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work that have been undertaken under the Transport Portfolio:
 - (a) **Second Local Transport Plan Expenditure 2008/11** – At the meeting of Cabinet held on 18 March, 2008, funding received from the Second Local Transport Plan, Road Safety Grant and Cycling England was released, to undertake a programme of schemes derived from the Council’s Second Local Transport Plan, to tackle congestion, improve accessibility, improve travel safety, support economic growth and contribute to health and climate change objectives. The longer term objectives contained within the Plan, will help make travel by sustainable travel modes more attractive, in order to encourage behavioural change begun by Local Motion, which is a long term solution to congestion and accessibility, whilst at the same time tackling junctions and pinch-points where delays can be reduced.
 - (b) **Southend Avenue Area Residents’ Parking Scheme – Consideration of Objections** – The objections received in respect of the Southend Avenue Area Residents’ Parking Scheme were set aside, and approval given to the introduction of the scheme, without the sections of Grange Road from Nos. 163 to 189 and 58 to 62. It was agreed that further investigations be undertaken to consider the issues and objections in the Grange Road area with the potential to progress a second order at a later date.
 - (c) **Proposed European Funding Bid Under the North West Europe Interreg Programme** – Approval was given to the Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration), in consultation with myself, to pursue the submission of an Interreg bid, which would allow this Council to participate in a trans-national project in an area in which Darlington has extensive experience and a demonstrable track record. It was envisaged that involvement in the project would enhance the economic, environmental and social well-being of the Borough. It would also sustain and enhance the work of the nationally-recognised, groundbreaking work of the Local Motion Team and promote sustainable development and transport, contributing to the ‘Greener Darlington’ outcomes contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Interegg funding bid was submitted to North West Europe funding programme on the 6 May 2008. There are ten partners from six countries involved in the proposed project. We should be informed on the outcome of the bid in mid July.
 - (d) **Supported Bus Service Contract** – Approval was given to the procurement of a supported bus network in the Borough of Darlington in response to proposals by Arriva North East for a new commercially operated bus network for Darlington.

(e) **Chesnut Street Car Park** – Chesnut Street Car Park has now been refurbished as a formal long stay pay and display car park, accommodating 109 cars. There is a separate area which will accommodate six lorries or coaches. The car park includes the following improvements:

- (i) Resurfacing and full space marking.
- (ii) New lighting scheme.
- (iii) New signage and ticket machine.
- (iv) Improved pedestrian access to Lodge Street.
- (v) Improved pedestrian route and signage to town centre.
- (vi) Full CCTV coverage.
- (vii) Motorcycle parking area.

This improved long stay car park should cater for commuters and other long stay visitors to the town centre as well as students and staff of and visitors to Darlington College.

(f) **School Travel Plans -**

- (i) Eight schools submitted School Travel Plans in March 2008 for approval by the Department for Transport/Department for Children Skills and Families. The schools are; Carmel Technology College, Hurworth Maths and Computing College, Hurworth Primary School, High Coniscliffe Primary, Holy Family Primary, St John's Primary, Firthmoor Primary and the Phoenix Centre (Pupil Referral Unit).

If formally approved the schools will each receive a grant from central government of between £5,000 - £10,000 (dependent upon number of pupils attending the school).

It is expected that a further eight schools will have completed Travel Plans by March 2009.

- (ii) Resources are currently being developed for the May Medal Motion campaign. It will be named the 'Book Maze Adventure' in support of 2008 The National Year of Reading. The campaign will be launched on Monday 19 May 2008 at Crown Street Library.
- (iii) The final draft of an annual school review named 'Schools on the Move' is almost ready. This document will provide an overview of the work that has been done in Darlington schools to promote sustainable travel to school. Our aim is to

distribute this to parents of all primary school children in the town.

- (iv) A new Bike It Officer began on 21 April 2008 and will continue to work with 12 schools in the Borough over the next academic year. Initial areas of work include delivery of cycle maintenance classes in schools and the Tour D'Afrique cycling to school incentive scheme.

(g) Workplace Travel Planning -

- (i) The Workplace Travel Plan Officer has been working closely with the management of Cummins on updating their travel plan, including updating objectives and introducing indicators to monitor the effectiveness of measures which are being implemented. Cummins have identified the need for additional cycle parking and will be working with the Council on various other initiatives including staff information sessions and cycling schemes.
 - (ii) The Highways Agency have employed transport consultancy JMP to undertake a study examining the feasibility of creating an area travel plan which covers the businesses based at Lingfield Point and have approached the Council as a partner in this initiative. The Councils Workplace Travel Plan Officer is already working with the Student Loans Company which will be relocating from Mowden Hall to Lingfield Point later this year.
 - (iii) Following contact from the management of the Independent Safeguarding Authority, a new government body which is relocating from Mowden Hall to Morton Palms, the Travel Plan officer has delivered information sessions advising staff of the travel options available.
- (h) Local Motion Conference – April 2008** – The Local Motion Conference held on the 2 April 2008 attracted over 100 participants, including transport professionals from throughout the UK. A conference brochure and presentations from the event can be viewed on the Local Motion website at <http://www.dothelocalmotion.co.uk/WhatIsLocalMotion.htm>
- (i) **Concessionary Fares** – The new scheme is available to anyone who is 60 or over, or eligible disabled. It enables these people to free off-peak travel on local buses anywhere in England.

Whilst it is the Council's responsibility to manage and administer the concessionary travel scheme, the Department for Transport (DfT) approved smartcard producer Fujitsu let us down. All information was submitted to Fujitsu on time to ensure that passes were delivered before the 1 April 2008. Late issue of bus passes by Fujitsu has happened across England and officers have responded to a Department for Transport questionnaire asking for more detail about Fujitsu's poor performance; both in Darlington and elsewhere.

In the meantime, officers have worked with other Councils in the north east to ensure that Darlington residents are able to travel using their old passes until the end of May

throughout the north east region. Residents may also travel nationwide until October with a temporary paper pass used in conjunction with their old pass.

Smartcard bus passes have now been distributed to all users, unless they have recently told us of a change of details such as a new address, or that their pass has not arrived and is lost in the post.

- (j) **Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor** – The project remains on target for summer this year, with the finish date likely to be June. The critical path involves reconstruction works to part of Haughton Road and time required at the end of the programme for work on McMullen Road, which will be carried out under traffic lights when works are complete on Haughton Road.

The project is generally progressing well with kerbing and drainage nearly complete. Street lighting and safety fencing are currently being installed, as are the permanent traffic signals. Farm accesses have been surfaced leaving only the McMullen Road area without surfacing and this is programmed to be carried out towards the end of the works. Topsoiling is in progress as is the creation of the nature reserve.

Delays on Haughton Road may carry on until the end of May but every effort will be made to keep these to a minimum.

(k) **Highway Design Schemes -**

- (i) **Smithfield Road Underpass** – Shuttle traffic signals have been added to the recent works which upgraded the footway, carriageway and lighting to the underpass. The scheme removes significant safety and comfort issues for cyclists on this important cycle route into and out of the town centre.
- (ii) **Willow Road/Hollyhurst Roundabout** – Work is nearing completion on improvements at this roundabout which are intended to aid cyclists by controlling vehicle speeds and removing confusing road markings. Consultation with Darlington Association on Disability resulted in improved pedestrian crossing facilities being developed.
- (iii) **Whinfield Road/Stockton Road New Toucan** – New signals have been installed to replace the existing uncontrolled refuge just to the west of the roundabout. As well as the improvement to general pedestrian movements, the crossing will encourage cycling to and from the local schools and enhance leisure cycling to the north of the town.
- (iv) **Carmel Road/Nunnery Lane Toucan Upgrade** – Upgrade works are nearing completion to allow cyclists on this main east-west cycling route to take advantage of the existing signalised crossing. An innovative porous construction is being used for the new cycle links on the Nunnery Lane side of the junction to protect the root systems of the existing mature trees. A new combined bollard/shared use sign is to be substituted for the normal pole mounted signs to reduce

visual intrusion.

(l) **Bridgework Schemes -**

- (i) **Haughton Road Cycle/Footbridge** – Bridge delivery date delayed until September 2008.
- (ii) **Town Centre Subway Refurbishment** – Commenced outline design.
- (iii) **Baydale Beck Bridge Maintenance** – Commenced outline design.

(m) **Highway Maintenance Schemes -**

(i) **Recently Completed Schemes -**

- A68 West Auckland Road Phase 2 – Bates Avenue to Brinkburn Avenue – carriageway and footway resurfacing.
- School Aycliffe Lane – widening of vehicle access to NHS Trust properties, kerbing and resurfacing.
- Oban Court – resurfacing of footway to Whinbush Way.
- Blackwell Close (all) – refurbishment of footway.
- Whitby Way – Rosedale Crescent to No 33 – hardening of existing grass verges.
- Finchale Crescent (all) – hardening or protection of existing grass verges.

(ii) **Ongoing Schemes -**

- Yarm Road (both sides) – Teal Road to Lynton Gardens – refurbishment of footway and hardening or protection of existing verges.
- Hundens Lane Academy entrance – realignment of entrance.
- Abbey Road Nos 321/329 – relaying of footway to resolve ponding issues.

(iii) **Schemes Due to Commence**

- C51 Norton Back Lane – Sadberge to boundary – carriageway strengthening.
- Princess Road Nos 9 to 30 – renewal of existing footway.

- Falmer Road – Residential Home – entrance refurbishment.
- B6275 Piercebridge to Royal Oak Phase 3 Royal Oak to Bolam Lane Junction – carriageway strengthening.

(n) **Traffic Management Schemes**

- (i) **Borough Road Area Residents' Parking Scheme** – The scheme is being prepared for implementation starting the 19 May 2008.
- (ii) **Southend Avenue Residents' Parking Scheme** – The scheme is being prepared for implementation in July/August 2008.
- (iii) **20mph Zones** – The traffic calming aspects of the 20mph zone at Lascelles have been completed with Corporation Road 20mph zone now in progress. Bank Top 20mph zone will be commencing in May 2008. Signage for all completed schemes to be implemented in due course.

(o) **Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives** – A number of initiatives have been instigated, including the following:

(i) **Young Drivers**

- Copies of a new glossy magazine were distributed to students in Carmel RC Technology College, Darlington College and Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College. The magazine, called 'First Car' is designed to appeal to young people and contains lots of road safety information about buying cars, insurance, improving driving skills and learning to drive.

(ii) **Female Drivers**

- To support the Highways Agency's campaign for safer roads, the road safety team distributed approximately 800 copies of a super glossy magazine called 'HI'. This is designed specifically to appeal to women's driving issues.

(iii) **School Activities**

- Following pedestrian training in Years 1, 2 and 3 in Reid Street, a request was made for a general road safety leaflet which could be taken home to parents of ALL children attending the school. A special leaflet was designed and given to the school for distribution during the second half of the term.

(iv) **Bikeability Cycle Training**

- Following a recruitment campaign, four new cycle training instructors were offered casual posts within the pool. Subject to the necessary checks

being carried out, these instructors will be able to undergo training and shadowing in preparation for work beginning in September.

- In line with suggestions by Bikeability, a trial programme of introducing level three to year six pupils in Abbey Junior School has been accepted by the Head Teacher. The idea is to give the students a boost to level two training (undertaken a few months ago) which may help parents decide if their children will be competent to ride to their new secondary school in September.

(v) **Instructor Training**

- Darlington's Instructor Training Provider Centre won the contract to train thirty North Tyneside Instructors to National Standards which will enable them to deliver their forthcoming Bikeability Courses.
- The courses detailed above are in addition to the programmed ongoing timetable.

(vi) **Pedestrian Training**

- Pedestrian training is now well established within Darlington primary schools. This school year to date, 21 schools have participated with a further eight planned to take part before the end of the school year.
- In total, approximately 3,000 children will have received appropriate lessons by the end of July.

Cabinet Member with Transport Portfolio