
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. Civil Parking Enforcement was successfully implemented on the 31 December 2010. A press release and article in the Town Crier were published prior to the implementation date to advise residents of the changes in parking enforcement.
3. There has been a significant improvement in terms of compliance with the restrictions which has resulted in a substantial reduction in the number of vehicles illegally parked. After an initial flurry, the number of tickets being issued has reduced. This is normal and we continue to monitor and review how and when staff are deployed.
4. There has been an upsurge in requests for a review of some sections of waiting restrictions and Officers are working their way through these.

Highway and Bridge Design Schemes

5. **Middleton-One-Row Retaining Wall Reinstatement** – Tenders for the site work are to be returned by 4th February 2011.
6. **Polam Lane Footbridge** – The Contractor is on site. Works are expected to be completed by the end of February 2011.
7. **Chesnut Street Bridge** – Design of bridge repairs are nearing completion with a view to works being carried out during 2011-2012.
8. **North Road Bus Priority** – A pre-qualification exercise has been commenced to produce a shortlist of interested contractors. The exercise will complete on 11th March, 2011.

Highway Maintenance Schemes

9. Recently Completed Scheme:

Judith Close, Heighington – footway refurbishment.
10. Ongoing Schemes:

- (a) Whinfield Road (Salters Lane North playing field to Whinbush Way) – footway refurbishment.
- (b) Claremont Road (north side) – footway refurbishment.
- (c) Fenby Avenue – verge hardening.

11. Schemes Due to Commence:

- (a) Heron Drive – footway refurbishment.
- (b) Eastmount Road Phase 4 – footway refurbishment.
- (c) Parkside (Clifton Road to school boundary south side) – verge hardening.
- (d) Morpeth Avenue – verge hardening.

Winter/Adverse Weather Repairs – Permanent Resurfacing Works

12. Recently Completed Schemes:

- (a) Avon Road, Hurworth.
- (b) Littlebeck Drive.
- (c) Winchester Way.
- (d) Lakeside.
- (e) Nunnery Lane.
- (f) Emley Moor Road.
- (g) Abbey Road and Dale Road, Sadberge.
- (h) Church Lane, Middleton St George.
- (i) Riverside Way, Great Burdon.
- (j) A6072 Shildon Road, Redworth.

Highway Network Management Schemes

- 13. **Whinfield Road Pedestrian and Cycleway Improvement** – This scheme, which involves remodelling of the Whinfield Road/Whinbush Way junction, improved crossing points and provision for cyclists, commenced on 4th January 2011 and is scheduled for completion in March.
- 14. **The Square, Middleton St George** – A scheme to redesign the existing junction to provide a roundabout is programmed to be complete in March 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.

15. **Gurney Pease Footway Improvements** – Improvements to the pedestrian links to this school are due for completion in February 2011. This involves improving crossing points and resurfacing a well used rear lane.
16. **Skerne Park, Cockerton and Corporation Road School Access Improvements** – A programme of constructing dropped kerbs around these schools is due for completion in March 2011. Parents had expressed a view that the improvements were required through the various School Travel Plans.

Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives

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

(a) Cyclist Activities

- (i) Bikeability level three training finished in February at Carmel College which means all training is now complete for this financial year. Nearly 100 pupils now have skills to ride on busy roads and safely undertake cycle journeys especially to and from school.
- (ii) Bikeability level two is currently being delivered to 169 children in three primary schools. This will complete level two cycle training for this financial year which means 646 children will have the necessary skills to ride safely on quiet roads.
- (iii) In addition eight young adults have also received training in this quarter bringing the total for the whole financial year to 14.

(b) Pedestrian Training

- (i) Our pedestrian training programme continued in six primary schools. Over three hundred parents valued this training and signed up their children to take part in the scheme. Consequently this means 95 per cent of year 1, 2 and 3 children will be safer on our roads.

(c) School Activities

- (i) This year's campaign for the "In the Can" film competition is underway with several educational establishments interested in representing Darlington in the national competition. The closing date is 30 April 2011.
- (ii) The Ghost Street Programme was planned for another two of Darlington's secondary schools.
- (iii) This year's Theatre in Education Tour of "Chicken" was scheduled for the first half the week beginning 14 February for year 7 pupils in five of our secondary schools. It is always a popular event for teachers and pupils and receives good

reviews about its effectiveness.

(d) Out of School Activities

- (i) The road safety team provided all brownie, guides and cub scouts with a copy of the latest road safety activity books which will help them with their badges. Also included in the delivery were copies of the leaders' guidance notes on how to use the packs to the best advantage.
- (ii) The road safety officer was invited to a series of six evening events in the YMCA to give presentations for Darlington's Young Carers. The events were interactive and used latest game technology and the web to make road safety learning a bit of fun.

(e) Employee Driver Vision Checks

- (i) Road Safety Staff continued to promote the important message about needing good eyesight for safer driving in a joint venture with various health professionals at The Beehive at Lingfield Point.

School Travel Plans

18. The national Change4Life campaign's new initiative - The Great Swapathon - is a New Year activity to help families make small changes to eat well, move more and live longer. The School Travel Plan Officer organised 'Darlington Does the Great Swapathon' applying the national campaign to the journey to school. In the 1980s just 16 per cent of children and young people travelled to school by car - that figure for Darlington now stands at 25 per cent. As such, families were encouraged to swap 2011 for the 1980s by returning to active and sustainable forms of travel to school on 28th January. A major event was held at Alderman Leach Primary School which included three organised walks for families to walk to school from the surrounding neighbourhoods. Children and adults alike dressed in their best 1980's gear. Excellent results were achieved when comparing travel data with the annual travel to school survey undertaken in September 2010, including:
- (a) St George's CE Aided Primary achieved a 23.3 per cent increase in walking.
 - (b) Walking levels at Mowden Junior School increased from 37.8 per cent to 59.1 per cent and it achieved a 38.4 per cent reduction in car use from 40.6 per cent to 28.8 per cent.
 - (c) Northwood Primary School car trips fell by 35 per cent from 36.8 per cent to 23.9 per cent - walking levels increased from 53.4 per cent to 66.3 per cent.
 - (d) Alderman Leach Primary School saw car use fall by 53.5 per cent, from 44.9 per cent to 20.9 per cent. 79.1 per cent of pupils travelled to school by sustainable modes, on a normal day this figure is usually 55.1 per cent.
19. The Medal Motion project working with schools will continue to maximise the opportunities for more sustainable travel, including building upon the support for events such as the Swapathon to help people make longer lasting decisions about their travel habits.

Public Transport

20. The Rail Minister designated the Bishop Line between Darlington and Bishop Auckland as a community rail service on 13 January 2011. Designation enables train companies to work more closely with community rail partnerships to better design services to meet local need. The Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership is a partnership between Darlington Borough Council, Durham County Council, rail industry, rail users and other interested parties. The Partnership has appointed an Officer who is seeking to improve the service and the quality of the stations along the line to encourage even more people to use the service. A number of stations have been adopted by local groups or businesses, who are now implementing a series of improvements and a website is under development to promote the service and the towns and villages along the route

Third Local Transport Plan (LTP)

21. Cabinet recommended for approval the final version of Darlington's Third Local Transport Plan which contains transport policies for the period 2011-2026. This is being considered at this Council meeting.
22. There is a need to have a Transport Plan in place by April 2011, in line with section 109(2) of the Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Plan 2008.
23. Guidance issued by the Department for Transport (DfT) set out the national policy framework for the development of the LTP and advised authorities to follow the process recommended by The Eddington Transport Study to develop an effective strategy and decide priorities for implementation.
24. The development and content of the Plan follows extensive consultation with local people and stakeholders, and examination by the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee. In developing and monitoring the Plan, a number of statutory assessments have been undertaken, forming an integral part of the decision making process and final content of the Plan.
25. The Implementation Plan is being considered by Cabinet (8th March 2011), following agreement of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (3rd March 2011).

Local Sustainable Transport Fund

26. A bid is being developed to submit to the DfT to secure funding to implement a range of transport initiatives to support the local economy and reduce the carbon emission from transport. The bid will build on the highly successful Local Motion travel behaviour programme and the Cycling Demonstration Town project, which together achieved a significant increase in walking and cycling as well as reducing car driver trips. The bid will focus on changing travel choices for short trips within the Borough (expanding the programme to include rural areas and promoting walking, cycling and public transport) as well as inter-urban trips, particularly on the key corridors of North Road and West Auckland Road (promoting the Bishop Line, bus services and car sharing). Other initiatives may include car clubs, community transport and the promotion of electric vehicles.

Tees Valley Metro

27. Tees Valley Metro Phase 1A has been submitted as a project by Tees Valley Unlimited to the Regional Growth Fund. The scheme would include new pedestrian facilities at Bank Top Station including a new footbridge and improved access from Neasham Road, with enhancements to the public realm and facilities for bus passengers.

**Councillor David Lyonette
Transport Portfolio**