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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.

**A67 Carlbury Banks Landslip**

2. The Council received good news in December 2013 when it was announced that we had been successful in bidding for £2.445m from the Government's Pinch Point Fund. The Council are required to provide a local contribution of £0.875m, with Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL) also contributing £0.595m to the scheme.
3. The money means that plans can now be finalised to start work on a permanent solution to the two active landslips that have caused the A67, Low Carlbury, High Coniscliffe/Piercebridge road to be closed and then partially closed since February 2013.
4. The announcement will bring to an end months of uncertainty about the situation that has seen more than 8,000 road users face delays to their journey each day, disruption to bus services to rural areas and problems for nearby businesses. The A67 is the main route linking Darlington to Barnard Castle and Teesdale.
5. The extent of the work needed to provide a permanent solution was identified earlier this year after detailed geo-technical explorations. These showed that a 387m stretch of the embankment was unstable and in need of being stabilised.
6. NWL propose to carry out further investigation work in February 2014. This will necessitate the closure of the A67 for a period of approximately two weeks as they unearth and carry out a detailed inspection of their pipes at the locations where they are to be diverted. A signed diversion route will be in place along Staindrop Road. The service 75/76 will be diverted along this route with a temporary taxi bus being provided for residents of High Coniscliffe, Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent. NWL have indicated that the works will be carried out seven days a week to reduce the length of time that the road needs to be closed.
7. Detailed work is now in development to plan how this complex problem will be solved. This will mean some further disruption during the construction period but will secure long term certainty of this key route. Work will start in earnest in May 2014 when NWL begin to permanently divert the water mains. The main slope stabilisation works are programmed to commence in October 2014 with a completion date around April/May 2015. A detailed programme will be available in

the next few months, once a contractor has been appointed. We will provide further updates as the works commence.

### **Dinsdale Bridge**

8. The replacement of the railway bridge at Dinsdale Station in Middleton St George, by Network Rail, is due for completion by 25 January 2014. This work is part of a Network Rail project to enable larger freight containers to be transported by rail from Teesport to the rest of the UK.
9. The remaining work to be completed at Dinsdale station as part of the station improvements project is being programmed by Carillion (Network Rail's contractor) and Vextrix (Northern Rail's contractor) for early 2014 to fit in with the ongoing work on the replacement of Dinsdale Station Bridge. This includes the removal of conifer trees alongside each platform and improvement of the ramps down to each platform to include the installation of handrails alongside each ramp.

### **Proposed Waiting Restrictions Chapel Street, Middleton St George**

10. Cabinet considered objections that had been received in response to proposed changes to Traffic Regulation Orders in Chapel Street Middleton St George. Following residents' comments changes were made to the proposed Orders and subsequently implemented.

### **Stonebridge Junction Proposal**

11. A scheme to remodel the Stonebridge Inner Ring Road junction has been developed as part of the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement Project. The scheme involves removing the existing roundabout and replacing with a traffic signal controlled junction.
12. The proposals form part of the longer term vision for delivery of the Town Centre Fringe Regeneration including improving pedestrian connections across the ring road and the aspiration to create a pleasant riverside walk along the banks of the River Skerne as it passes through the town and help create opportunities for improved flood defences.
13. Work is programmed to commence in March 2014 and should be substantially complete by the beginning of December 2014.

### **Highway Maintenance Schemes**

14. Recently completed schemes:
  - (a) A1150 Salters Lane North – carriageway patching;
  - (b) C55 John Street – carriageway resurfacing;
  - (c) B6280 Carmel Road North – carriageway patching;
  - (d) Hewitson Road South – carriageway reconstruction and surfacing;
  - (e) A68 Burtree – carriageway resurfacing; and
  - (f) A67 Carmel Road South – carriageway retexturing.

15. Schemes due to commence:

(a) Brankin Road – footway refurbishment.

### **Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement Project (TVBNI) Connect Tees Valley**

16. The 2013 Christmas Campaign 'Connecting you this Christmas', has featured outdoor advertising encouraging people to use the bus for festive journeys - such as shopping, attending parties and pantomimes etc. For the first time 48 sheet (billboard) advertising has been trialled on key commuter routes in the Tees Valley, as this should have a high impact on car commuters. Adverts have also appeared on bus rears, bus sides, bus shelters and in rail stations to target rail users who may be more susceptible to the 'use the bus' message.
17. The Campaign also featured a short viral video that showed Santa experiencing difficulties getting around on his sleigh (pesky and uncooperative reindeer, lack of parking spaces etc.), Santa ended up using the bus to get around over the Christmas period. Additional funding from the Durham Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) projects was levered in to part fund the viral video and increased the amount of advertising space purchased in the Darlington area.
18. The Stockton pilot activity for direct Marketing/Telemarketing activity has been judged to have been a success by all partners in the project, so the project is being rolled out to more TVBNI routes. The activity has commenced in Darlington and is initially focusing on the North Road corridor and the new Sapphire service, complementing other marketing activities being carried out by Arriva. The Direct Marketing project involves issuing free day tickets to people living along TVBNI routes and following up with a phone call offering a free weekly ticket. The project aims to target non-bus users of fare paying age. Initial results from the pilot suggest that for every £1 spent on the project, a further £6 will be generated through the fares paid on additional journeys undertaken by people who have been convinced to try the bus. As the project is rolled out further analysis will be carried out to ensure the project continues to deliver good value for money and encourages more people to use the bus.
19. New design bus stop flags have been installed at all Darlington's bus stops, funded from TVBNI and featuring the Connect Tees Valley branding.

### **Local Sustainable Transport Fund**

20. Building on the success of the Local Motion and Connect Tees Valley Christmas campaign, Local Motion launched its New Year Challenge campaign on 1 January. The campaign encouraged people to try out new and more sustainable modes transport at a time when they were more open to breaking old habits and making new resolutions. A new challenge was announced every day in January via the Council's Facebook page. Challenges include taking the bus for a week, taking a 30 minute walk with the family and trying out some of the guided cycle rides in Darlington. The campaign has been promoted through radio commercials, social media and a print advert appeared in the January edition of Darlington Together.

21. Work is continuing with Star Radio until the end of January to improve Local Motion brand awareness and increase engagement on the Local Motion Facebook page. The campaign has been running since July and the numbers of 'likes' to our page has increased by over 900. The content being shared by Local Motion focuses on being active outdoors and as part of this we provided updates on events in the area, walking and cycling routes, and facts about how walking and cycling can help you stay fit.
22. We are using our commercial airtime allocation with Star Radio to promote cycling safety in winter. The 'Be seen. Be safe' adverts are designed to highlight the importance of being visible in the winter months and we are encouraging people to share pictures of best practice with us via our Facebook page.
23. Scooter training has started to Darlington primary schools with the first school receiving training being High Coniscliffe. This was to address a growing trend in scooting to school. Scooting is both fun and a sustainable way to travel to school and help keep cars away from the school gates. The programme will be fully rolled out to the other schools in the New Year with two further schools booked in and others to confirm.
24. The Darlington Local Motion Watt Bike Competition was held in late November and three schools participated with Carmel College being crowned champions. Darlington will host the area finals where three Darlington schools will face three Durham schools to be crowned Local Motion area champions. The Watt Bikes encourage cycling and physical exercise in schools as many want to challenge their peers in mini competitions.
25. New maps and destination directories have been installed at town centre bus stops to help passengers find the correct bus stop for their bus service.

### **Multi-Storey Car Park**

26. Work on the design of the new 650 space multi storey car park is progressing as programmed. Further ground investigations are scheduled for late January which will involve part closure of the Beaumont Street North car park. Subject to planning approval, (planning application scheduled for late February), construction works are scheduled to commence in May 2014. The car park is being designed so as to provide a small office and reception unit for shop mobility which will be accessible from Beaumont Street and from within the car park. The car park is scheduled to open in early summer 2015; this will be in advance of completion of the Cinema and Leisure complex.

### **Strategic Transport Network – Rail**

27. Darlington has taken a leading role within the East Coast Mainline Authorities (ECMA); a consortium of local authorities and Scottish Regional Transport Partnerships who are working together to build an economic case for increased support and investment in the East Coast Main Line (ECML). For Darlington this would mean major investment in upgrading facilities at Darlington Bank Top

Station.

28. Given that Government is considering plans to invest £43 billion in HS2, and the current 'East Coast' franchise is out for tender, the consortium believes that the time is right to pitch the economic case for the ECML to the Department for Transport and the rail industry.
29. The consortium is gathering evidence about the importance of the route and its contribution to the economy to determine what is needed to make sure it can facilitate economic growth in the future. The Consortium is holding a series of stakeholder events for the business community along the route of the ECML.
30. The North East stakeholder event took place at Newcastle Civic Centre on 24 January with attendance from business leaders and politicians from throughout the region.
31. Darlington took an exhibition to the event, showcasing development and opportunities for economic growth associated with access to the ECML at Bank Top Station, the Public Sector hub at Feethams, Biologics and Innovation Centres on Central Park.
32. Supported by experts in the rail industry the Consortium plan to submit a business case to government in March 2014.

### **Town Centre Parking**

33. The Town Centre parking promotion 'free after three' ran from 7-24 December with retailers opening late during that period.

### **East Coast Mainline Train Services**

34. The Government will this year be looking for a new company to run the East Coast Mainline train services between London and Edinburgh. To support this Passenger Voice are wanting to hear from as many people as possible on their experience of using the service and what improvements they would like to see. The link to the survey is:  
<http://email.passengerfocus.org.uk/passengerfocus/lz.aspx?p1=0525372S637209&CC=&p=0>
35. We know that a lot of people from Darlington regularly use this train service so we wanted to make sure you had an opportunity to influence what companies bidding for the contract are going to offer.

**Councillor David Lyonette  
Transport Portfolio**