
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.

Parking Strategy

2. We have approved the Darlington Parking Strategy 2014-2026 following extensive public consultation throughout September and October. Organisations representing particular interests were also contacted directly including DAD, Age UK, Distinct Darlington, Town Centre Board and Bus and Coach Operators.
3. The Parking Strategy reflects the local, national and global changes affecting parking which have occurred since the previous strategy was published.
4. The Parking Strategy also provides a clear set of objectives and actions aimed at addressing parking issues in the Borough.
5. Actions being progressed in the short term include plans to implement parking contingency measures to mitigate against loss of parking due to the Department for Education (DfE) office and Cinema development at Feethams. Officers have also reviewed the system for issuing parking permits to trades people operating within the Town Centre and residents parking zones and I anticipate being able to agree a new scheme before next Council.
6. Proposals for contingency parking measures include possibilities of a temporary two-storey parking deck on Beaumont Street East car park, re-surfacing of Park Place West car park, bringing an area of the car park which had been used by the Police back into public use, and working with Darlington College to develop the option of operating a Saturday Park and Ride during the Christmas shopping period service from the College car park.

Opportunity to Bid to Local Sustainable Transport Fund

7. We have submitted a bid to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF2015/16) as part of a Tees Valley wide proposal. In late December the Department for Transport (DfT) announced the opportunity for local authorities to bid for revenue funding to be used to promote the use of sustainable transport in 2015/16 and the deadline for bids was 31 March 2014.
8. The Director of Economic Growth, following consultation with me, has been given delegated authority to agree the detailed elements of the funding bid prior to

submission to the Department for Transport by Tees Valley Unlimited. The total Tees Valley package would cost £2.753m, with a bid to DfT for £1.267m and local contribution of £1.486m.

9. The Bid comprised three packages – the first to promote sustainable transport for inter-urban journeys to access employment, particularly focusing on public transport with support from Arriva and Northern Rail. If successful this would see improvements to bus services from Darlington to Richmond/Catterick, Darlington to Barnard Castle, Darlington to Stockton/Middlesbrough and Darlington to Bishop Auckland/Crook. The second package focuses on sustainable transport for local trips, especially walking and cycling to access employment and training and supporting the local economy by using local shops and services. This would also support the public health agenda through promoting more active travel. The third package focuses on the marketing, communications and information required to help people make those travel choices.

Inner Ring Road/Stonebridge Junction Project

10. The scheme to remodel the Stonebridge Inner Ring Road commenced in February. The scheme which is funded by Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement Project, involves removing the existing roundabout and replacing with a traffic signal controlled junction.
11. 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. The scheme will be particularly beneficial in accommodating additional traffic associated with developments such as the cinema and the DfE building.
12. The scheme is being constructed on a phased approach with a total of nine phases having been identified. We have taken this approach to minimise traffic disruption and to maintain alternative pedestrian and cycle routes through the construction period. Traffic management will be in place throughout the project and will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is both safe and serviceable.
13. The works around Freemans Place roundabout are now substantially complete. Statutory Undertakers (gas, water, electric etc) have been carrying out work to protect their equipment prior to the road being widened. This will continue into the Summer months with BT and Northern Gas Networks being the main services involved.

A67 Carlbury Banks Landslip

14. 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 is required to provide a local contribution of £0.875m, with Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL) also contributing £0.595m to the scheme.

15. The works are being delivered in three phases with the first phase, a two week closure for NWL to locate and inspect their water mains, having been completed in February 2014.
16. Phase 2 is due to start in May 2014 and will last approximately four months. There are two large Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL) mains located underneath the road. Each carries water supplies into Darlington and beyond. These pipes need to be diverted out of the road so that the unstable road can be repaired without risking water supply. One kilometre of new pipeline and major works within the road at the points the pipes are diverted. There are major works required in the road to connect and divert these pipes, means there will be very little road left whilst these excavations and diversions are undertaken. Unfortunately, this means the road has to be closed and the works will take approximately four months.
17. Phase 3 is currently programmed to commence in October 2014 and will last approximately six months. This will involve the main stabilisation works to the embankment, which will need to be undertaken from the top of the embankment. The technique is likely to be soil nailing. The road will be used as the point where the drilling equipment is lowered down the embankment to do the works. There will be little road space left making it impossible to work safely and allow traffic along the A67.
18. The A67 will therefore be closed upon commencement of NWL's works in May 2014 and will remain closed until April/May 2015. The diversion route will be the B6275, B6279 Staindrop Road, B6280 Carmel Rd North and A67 Coniscliffe Road and vice versa. This is the same route that was in place when the landslip occurred in 2013. The extent of the works will mean Durham Lane will not be open. The use of this road will only be for residents to gain access to their properties from Ulnaby Lane. Ulnaby Lane will remain open. NWL and DBC will endeavour to maintain pedestrian and cycle access along the A67 through the site, Durham Lane and the Public Right of Way that runs along the base of the embankment.
19. The road closure will affect the route of the service 75/76 bus. Service 75 will operate once per hour from Barnard Castle diverted between Staindrop and Darlington via Ingleton; omitting Winston and Gainford. Service 76 will also operate once per hour on its normal route except for the diversion to omit the section through High Coniscliffe to Darlington Town Centre. A shuttle bus will operate between High Coniscliffe and the Town Centre.
20. Officers have held consultation events in High Coniscliffe and Gainford to explain the nature of the works, the length of time the road will be closed and what alternative arrangements in terms of diversion routes and what public transport will be available. This follows on from similar meetings held in 2013 when the landslip was initially identified and the road closed.
21. There is a Carlbury landslip webpage on the Council's website which is updated regularly. There is also an opportunity for members of the public to provide comments or ask questions through a monitored email address.

Town Centre Car Parks

22. We have started to implement the Car Parking Strategy. A number of car parks were resurfaced in 2013 including Commercial Street East, Kendrew Street and Archer Street. We are proposing to resurface Commercial Street West car park in May 2014. These works are timed to be complete prior to the cinema development commencing, which will of course result in the loss of the former bus depot temporary car park.

Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements

23. The Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements (TVNBI) programme of bus stop improvements continues to be rolled out across the town on core bus routes. New bus shelters are being installed in Branksome and along the A167 North Road. The next area to benefit from improvements will be Springfield.
24. Following the installation of the new TVBNI bus stop flags at all bus stops, design options for new Town Centre bus stop flags are being developed to include improvements for visually impaired people.

Safer Routes to School schemes

25. A section of highway verge has recently been surfaced to provide approximately 20 car parking spaces for parents of children attending Harrowgate Hill Primary school. The School has opened a rear access on to North Park which will enable children a more direct route from areas to the south of the Park around Westmoreland Street as well as serving this new road side parking on Whessoe Road.
26. We also propose to introduce a one way system in the back lane that leads to the school to improve road safety. We have consulted affected residents and there was a majority in favour. The requisite legal order for the one way system was advertised in local press and has received an objection which will have been considered by Cabinet in April 2014.

Highway Maintenance Schemes

27. There are no recently completed schemes:
28. Brankin Road – footway refurbishment is ongoing.
29. Schemes due to commence:
 - (a) B6275 Station Road – Patching/reconstruction (prior to A67 Carlbury slip Road closure);
 - (b) B6279 Staindrop Road – Patching/reconstruction (prior to A67 Carlbury slip Road closure); and
 - (c) Faverdale/Faverdale North – Junction resurfacing

School Travel Plans

30. The MEGA Motion campaign is in its final term. Throughout the campaign around 2700 Darlington primary age pupils have won bronze awards, 1500 have won silver awards and the first pupils won gold awards on 2 May. The campaign will run for another four weeks and then the final numbers will be collated and prizes given out to pupils and schools.

Workplace Travel Plans

31. Members of the Local Motion team attended the recent DL Business Expo at The Northern Echo Arena. The aim of attending the event was to engage with businesses about how their staff travel both whilst at work and on the way to and from work. The Local Motion team will be working with the businesses that attended the Expo to engage with their workforce and encourage their staff to try other modes of transport.

Public Transport

32. Catch the Bus week (28 April to 4 May) was a national campaign run by Greener Journeys which aimed to get people to switch just one a journey a week from the private car to the bus. To support this national initiative, Connect Tees Valley and Local Motion worked closely with the areas two main bus operators, Arriva and Stagecoach, on a tongue in cheek campaign termed 'Don't break a bus drivers heart'.
33. The campaign was promoted on bus rears, bus shelters, billboards and online and was supported by a series of radio adverts targeted at the drive time commuter periods. The driver featured on the adverts was selected through a competition held with local bus drivers from each operator. Catch the bus week itself was launched using a local street dance troupe who performed a specially choreographed routine in Darlington Town Centre at Joseph Pease Place on Friday 25 April (and in Middlesbrough Town Centre on 26 April).
34. The campaign encouraged behaviour change and sign posted people to a special landing page on the Connect Tees Valley website (makeabusdriversmile.com) where people could find sufficient information to enable them to try the bus for a day. Funding for the campaign was from the TVBNI Marketing budget and the Darlington and Durham LSTF projects.
35. As part of the asset management plan an audit of all bus stops has started. This will inform on-going improvements such as providing raised kerbs and new poles. In addition it will enable the Connect Tees Valley team to optimise the size of timetables for legibility, once new software has been installed and tested.

Local Sustainable Transport Fund

36. The 2014 Individualised Travel Marketing programme has started and visited Hummersknott, College, Park West and Park East Wards between the months of

March and May. After the first two ITM Wards, we had an overall 'contact rate' (percentage of residents we have made contact with in each Ward) of 52.6 per cent and a 'participant rate' (percentage of residents that have taken part in a conversation with a Travel Advisor) of 38.9 per cent. This compares to a 'contact rate' of 44.3 per cent and a 'participant rate' of 35.3 per cent in 2013.

37. The 2014 Local Motion Community Audits have begun and will this year visit Hummersknott, College, Park West, Bank Top, Lascelles, Eastbourne and Hurworth. The audits review the physical environment to establish if there are any barriers to walking and secondly investigate current behaviours and attitudes to walking. The Groundwork team will deliver a range of community engagement activities including Ward walk-arounds, taster activities and focus groups. Residents are also encouraged to take part in a Community Audit survey which is available online and in hard copy.
38. Team Local Motion was invited to make a presentation at the Transport Scotland: Smarter Choices Smarter Places networking event in Falkirk in March. The presentation focussed on the learning from the Local Motion project ten years on from the initial Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town funding.
39. Following the success of the Local Motion Winter Walks Programme, the Sports Development Team delivered Walk Leader Training to residents on 7 March. These residents are now walk leader volunteers and are delivering walks each week, promoted by Local Motion and Sports Development. It is hoped that this can be expanded as more volunteers are recruited through the community audits.

Strategic Transport Network Rail

40. Work is nearing completion on the East Coast Mainline (ECML) business case, which is being prepared through the work of the consortium of local authorities located along the route of the line (the East Coast Mainline Authorities – ECMA). The draft business case contains positive headlines, from a Tees Valley perspective, regarding the value of the ECML to all economies on it and in its wider catchment, the need to address historic under-investment in the line, the importance of Darlington as one of the seven key nodes on the ECML outside London and the need to address capacity issues at Darlington, plus the need to enhance service frequencies both on and linking to the ECML route. The draft report will be shared with the three companies bidding for East Coast franchise, East Coast Trains Ltd (First Group plc); Keolis/Eurostar East Coast Limited and Inter City Railways Limited (Stagecoach Transport Holdings Limited and Virgin Holdings Limited).
41. Along with ECMA, TVU and ANEC we are making the case to franchise bidders that there should (at least) be no detriment to the number of trains stopping in Darlington, even if there are additional services to Middlesbrough.

Councillor David Lyonette
Transport Portfolio