

DARLINGTON TRANSPORT FORUM

6th June, 2005

PRESENT – The Mayor and Councillor S. J. Jones.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Harker, Hartley, Lewis Ruck and Wallis.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor F.S. Robson.

Officers in Attendance – The Assistant Director of Development and Regeneration, and the Transport Policy Manager, within the Development and Environment Department.

Representing Outside Organisations –

Alzheimers Disease Society –

J.P Rodwell

ARRIVA North East Limited –

T. Batty and T. Stevens

Darlington Association on Disability –

G. Pybus

Darlington MENCAP –

M. Richardson

Darlington Senior Citizens' Association –

A. Christian and P. Eastwood

Durham Constabulary –

M. Straughmier

Durham Tees Valley Airport –

G. Smith

Guide Dogss for the Blind –

J. Robson

Middleton St. George Parish Council –

C. Sirrell

Motorcycle Action Group –

C. Wooff

Stagecoach North East –

D. Elphee

Independent Representatives -

K. Fridd

1. CHAIR – IT WAS AGREED – That the Mayor, Councillor S. Robson, be appointed Chair of this Forum for this meeting only.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

3. DARLINGTON’S SECOND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN – THE KEY ISSUES – Pursuant to Minute 56(a)/Apr/05, the Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) briefing Members of the Forum on the key issues underlying the future of transport investment in Darlington and seeking comments on the contents of Darlington’s Transport Strategy and how it is to be delivered through the Second Local Transport Plan during the period April 2006 to March 2011. A summary of the guidance produced by the Department of Transport in respect of the production and implementation of Local Transport Plans was appended to the submitted report.

The submitted report outlined the background to the production of the Plan; the shared priorities; the expectations of the Government in respect of the Plan; local issues; lessons from the first Local Transport Plan; the consultation and research undertaken; views of the local people; current travel patterns; future changes affecting travel patterns; key issues; objectives of the Transport Strategy; and the choices available for the best way forward in delivering the strategy.

Particular references were made to the Accessibility Strategy and to the categories of the schemes to be delivered between 2006 and 2011, including travelling to work; doing business in Darlington; going to School or College; shopping for food and goods; leisure and recreation; and access to health services and caring for others.

References were also made to monitoring delivery of the Plan; consultation; resources required; and the implications for Corporate Delivery.

A copy of the ‘Town on the Move’ News was circulated at the meeting.

During discussion a number of issues were raised, including, the problems encountered at the Houghton Road/Salters Lane and the Gladstone Street/North Road junctions; and cycling within the Town Centre; the need for more wheel chair accessible buses and taxis; the lack of pedestrian crossing points in the Town Centre; the need to promote and make reference to tourism in the Plan; and the inclusion of the villages in the Plan.

A representative from Arriva stated that eight new low floor wheel chair accessible buses had been purchased; the ‘Corridors of Certainty’ needed to be accelerated; outlined the importance of the strategy and the importance to the company of predictability of journey times; and questioned where the town saw itself in cross boundary terms.

In response to the issues raised, the Assistant Director, Development and Regeneration, stated that the study undertaken had identified a number of problem areas in respect of traffic congestion; the issue of cycling in the Town Centre would be reviewed following six months after the implementation of the Pedestrian Heart Scheme; the transport links to the villages would be considered as part of the Accessibility Strategy; and although the cross-boundary flows were greater with Durham than Tees Valley, both were important.

IT WAS AGREED – That the approach in respect of the second Local Transport Plan, as detailed in the submitted report, be supported.