
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.

Harrowgate Hill School One Way System

2. The final phase of the Harrowgate School safe route to school scheme was completed in August. This involved implementation of the one way system through the back lane off Thompson Street West, which forms the main access to the school.

Inner Ring Road/Stonebridge Junction Project

3. 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.
4. The scheme is being constructed on a phased approach with a total of nine phases having been identified. This approach has been taken 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.
5. The newly realigned dual carriageway sections are nearing completion and work is now focusing around the Parkgate/Stonebridge junction. Work is currently on programme to be substantially complete by the end of November, though some works will inevitably need to be completed after that date. A date for the switch on of the traffic signal controlled junction has not yet been set.
6. We continue to provide updates through the press and on the website and through social media. We have had some positive feedback from businesses regarding the phased approach we have taken and specifically the way in which it has limited levels of disruption.

A67 Carlbury Banks Landslip

7. Phase 2 commenced on 2 June 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, which means there will be very little road left whilst these excavations and diversions are undertaken. Unfortunately, this means the road has to be closed.
8. Phase 3 was due to commence late September 2014 with NWL allowing Graham Construction, the contractor for the Design and Build of the stabilisation works, access to the works area. Planning approval was sought in August 2014. We have completed the land purchase and the Geotechnical design was also submitted in August 2014 for independent approval. Footway works to cut back the vegetation along the A67 have been programmed. It is not clear at this stage to what extent a footway will be maintained adjacent to the works, i.e. to link Piercebridge with High Coniscliffe. This does however remain a priority for the Council and we will seek to maintain the footway link, in agreement with the contractor, subject to safety considerations relating to the adjacent construction works.
9. We continue to provide updates through the press, on the website and through social media, along with letters to local residents, business and Councillors. Local Councillors have been proactive in communicating any changes and updates to directly affected residents. Their assistance is greatly appreciated.

Highway Maintenance Schemes

10. Recently completed schemes:

- (a) A67/A1150 North Road / Salters Lane Roundabout (resurfacing)
- (b) A167 Croft Rd - Resurfacing
- (c) Stillington Road – Surfacing Dressing
- (d) C37 through Bishopton Village
- (e) (C49) Redmarshall Road – Surfacing Dressing
- (f) Neasham Hill – Surfacing Dressing

11. Ongoing schemes:

- (a) Fenby Avenue – Carriageway Reconstruction and Resurfacing
- (b) B6280 – Carmel Road North - Footway Micro Asphalt
- (c) C38 – Station Road, Middleton St George
- (d) C54 – The Front, Hill Rise, Archer Road, The Oaklands, Middleton One Row
- (e) Unc – Pinewood Crescent, Heighington
- (f) A67 - The Green, High Coniscliffe
- (g) C39 - School Aycliffe Lane, School Aycliffe
- (h) Unc – Balmoral Road, Atholl Close, Cullen Close, Glamis Road

- (i) C51 – Norton Road, Sadberge
- (j) Unc – Town Farm Close, Bishopston

12. Schemes due to commence:

- (a) A67 Yarm Rd (A66 – Farmhouse Pub) – Carriageway Reconstruction
- (b) Burtree Lane Phase 2 – Carriageway Resurfacing
- (c) Hewitson Road South Phase 2 - Carriageway Reconstruction and Resurfacing

Local Sustainable Transport Fund

13. The Department for Transport (DfT) has announced the 44 successful bids from the 89 received for the National LSTF 2015/16 revenue competition. This included the bid from the Tees Valley local authorities entitled 'Connect Tees Valley' which builds on the excellent work already being delivered through Local Motion in Darlington; Tees Valley Bus Network Initiative (TVBNI) across the Tees Valley in particular for increasing the use of public transport; and other small scale initiatives in local authorities which utilise sustainable transport to access jobs, improve health or support the local economy. The total package cost is £2.753m, with £1.267m from DfT and local contributions of £1.486m from a range of partners. Darlington will be responsible for delivering the Individualised Travel Marketing programme and marketing campaigns across the Tees Valley, as well as delivering programmes for schools, walking and cycling.
14. Local Motion's Big Summer has promoted walking and cycling to local people during the schools holidays. Team Local Motion has attended events such as the Tea Dance in the Market Square, organised a very popular Bee Walk in South Park in conjunction with Friends of the Earth, arranged informal 'giveaway' events in local supermarkets and run a schools writing competition. The Campaign concluded with the MEGA festival in the Market Square in August, providing a free family fun day to learn more about sustainable transport. The campaign has been supported by social media updates and case studies of local people. Monitoring data is being used to supplement the stories to demonstrate that cycling levels are on the increase.
15. The initial travel behaviour research which was undertaken by AECOM in autumn 2011 will be repeated in 2014, as per the original LSTF bid and contract, starting with field work in October. The research will include travel diaries from 4000 households and 400 interviews across the borough.
16. The DfT has appointed TRL (Transport Consultants) to undertake some longitudinal research into the impact of the Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town projects. TRL is working with officers in the three 'smarter choices' towns – Darlington, Peterborough and Worcester – to collate quantitative data such as cycle cordon counts, bus patronage and travel to school modal splits. TTR (Transport Consultant) has been appointed to undertake qualitative data collection through interviews with key staff at each of the local authorities. The report will investigate and evaluate the impact of the Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town projects over ten years (2004-2014), with varying amounts of funding being available in each of the three towns after the initial DfT funding. It will also consider the impact

of the recession and then economic recovery; the local context such as wider policy decisions, changes in employment opportunities, and health programmes; and well transport specific interventions such as infrastructure schemes, investment in new public transport vehicles and new technology. A report will be available in Spring 2015.

Integrated Transport Block Allocations

17. The Council has received confirmation from the Department for Transport of its Integrated Transport Block allocations for 2015-2021. The Council has been allocated £886,000 in each of the financial years. This represents a reduction of 13.5 per cent from previous allocations. Cabinet will consider in January 2015 the next local transport plan and therefore the spending priorities for this allocation.

Public Transport

18. The next marketing campaign for 'travel by bus' is now underway. Great Days Out, (www.greatdaysout.org.uk) funded from TVBNI and LSTF, promotes leisure and tourism destinations in the Tees Valley and Durham and beyond, with over 60 attractions taking part. The campaign is being promoted via TFM and Magic radio stations, outdoor and digital marketing. The campaign is also being promoted via the social media of TFM and participating attractions. Up to the end of July the website had over 6,000 unique visits. The aim of the campaign is to encourage people to get out and about over the summer using public transport. Attractions are offering discounts and special offers to those arriving by public transport. A linked campaign using the same website 'Snap Up the Good Stuff' is targeting young people with promotion through secondary schools.
19. Planning is underway with the bus operators for the Christmas campaign which will include working with a homeless charity. It will promote travelling by bus for Christmas shopping and leisure and will have a retro feel to the creative element of the campaign.
20. The direct marketing campaign which has promoted bus services to a target group of households within 400m of a TVBNI bus route within each of the five Tees Valley local authority areas has been completed. The results of the campaign in terms of engagement, impact and behaviour change will be reported to all partners on 1 October.
21. The quality and success of the marketing campaigns that have been run as part of the TVBNI project have been recognised by the transport industry. Connect Tees Valley Marketing and Information Team, which comprises representatives from across the Tees Valley local authorities and the bus operators, has been shortlisted for 'Excellence in Travel Information and Marketing' at the National Transport Awards. The TVBNI project has been shortlisted for the 'Transport Team/Partnership of the Year' category at the same awards. The results will be announced in October.

Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership (CRP)

22. The Bishop Line CRP is investigating the possibility to reinstate the hourly service between Darlington and Bishop Auckland. Although patronage along the line is growing (e.g. an additional 10,000 trips at North Road Station in 2013/14 compared to 2011/12), an hourly service is only operated at peak times. A request has been made to Northern Rail to determine the cost of increasing the frequency during the off peak times from two hourly to hourly.
23. In addition a piece of independent market research has been commissioned to determine the potential additional patronage created by the additional frequency (and capacity) amongst existing and non-users of the Darlington to Bishop Auckland rail service. The development of Hitachi and the recently announced University Technical College which will open in Newton Aycliffe in 2016, provide new potential rail passenger markets.

Rail North – TransPennine Express (TPE) and Northern Rail Franchises

24. In partnership with Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU) the Council has responded to government consultation on the specification to be provided to the short listed bidders for the next (TPE) and Northern rail franchises.
25. TPE and Northern Rail services operate out of Darlington Station. TPE services provide an important strategic link to York, Leeds, Manchester including Manchester airport. Northern Rail provide the local services connecting Darlington to Thornaby, Middlesbrough, Redcar and the rest of the Tees Valley, also to Newton Aycliffe, Shildon and Bishop Auckland.
26. Good transport links, including rail are vital in facilitating Economic Growth, key points we have made in the response to government on the TPE and Northern Rail franchises include:
 - (a) The strategic importance of Darlington Station, and through our plans to enhance the Station the opportunity to substantially improve local rail connectivity.
 - (b) The significant growth we have seen in rail patronage in recent years, and potential given the right investment for even greater growth in passengers.
 - (c) The poor quality of trains on local services and the urgent need to replace the existing 'Pacer' units with trains which meet modern standards.
 - (d) The importance of introducing common service wide smart ticketing technology right across the rail network, and in the North east for this to be integrated with the roll-out of the North East Smart Ticketing Initiative (NESTI).
 - (e) That staff have a vital role in providing a human interface at Stations and would not support proposals to reduce staffing numbers.

27. The government's consultation paper makes reference to the franchise bidders setting out how they will establish a North East Business Unit, with responsibility for delivering real and meaningful local influence over the delivery of local rail services. This is welcomed, though the detail on how an appropriately-devolved level of franchise management would work has yet to be defined.

Rail North Partnership

28. The Rail North Partnership is an association of 30 Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) in the North of England, with all LTAs covered by Northern and Transpennine Express (TPE) franchises eligible for membership.
29. The Leader and the Chief Executive have represented the Council in working with colleagues from the other LTAs on influencing proposals for the governance of the partnership, these include establishment of three bodies:
- (a) An Association of Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) consisting of 30 LTAs in the North and governed by a Leaders' Committee.
 - (b) A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) being a company limited by guarantee to be called Rail North Ltd (RNL).
 - (c) A Joint Venture (JV) body or partnership established under arrangements between Department for Transport (DfT) and RNL.
30. Objectives of the Rail North Partnership are to:
- (a) To promote and improve rail services in the Rail North area.
 - (b) To campaign for devolution of responsibility for the Northern and TPE franchises to Northern LTAs and RNL.
 - (c) To provide political leadership and oversight of RNL.
 - (d) To develop, approve revise and oversee implementation of the long-term rail strategy.

Strategic Highway Network

31. Officers recently met with the Highways Agency (HA) to review plans for investment in Darlington's Strategic Road network. HA has agreed to commission a series of studies looking at options for improving access onto/reducing congestion on key sections of the A66 and A1.
32. The Highway's Agency (HA) have a proposal to improve cycle and pedestrian access from Blackwell to Stapleton.
33. The proposed scheme will include off road provision from Blackwell Lane, widening of the footway on Blackwell bridge to create shared use cycle/pedestrian path and at grade crossing of A66, with central island. As part of the scheme the HA will also resurface the junction of Blackwell Lane with A66.

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Transport Portfolio