DARLINGTON TRANSPORT FORUM
18th May, 2004

PRESENT - Councillor Wallis (in the Chair); Councillors S.J. Jones, S. Robson and Ruck. (4)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Flowers and Stamford-Bewlay

APOLOGIES - Councillor Hartley and Councillor McEwan. (3)

ABSENT –

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

Representing Outside Organisations –

Alzheimers Disease Society –
J.P. Rodwell

ARRIVA North East Limited –
L. Esnouf

Darlington Association on Disability –
G. Pybus

Darlington Taxi Owners Association 1996 –
A. Leighton and A.J. Brown

Darlington Residents Panel –
K. Miller

Darlington MENCAP –
M. Richardson

Darlington Senior Citizens Association –
A. Christian, L. Wood and P. Eastwood

Darlington Police –
Sgt. T. Kelly

Durham Police –
M. Straugheir

Growing Older Living in Darlington (GOLD) –

Green Bus –
R. Cranmer
28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

29. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Forum held on 20th January, 2004.

IT WAS AGREED – That with the amendment of Minute 24(c) to refer to Darlington Disability Access Interest Group the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

30. CCTV ON BUSES – Simon Houldsworth, Transport Policy Manager, Darlington Borough Council, updated members of the Forum on the progress made in the implementation of CCTV on 69 buses in Darlington on a ‘match funding’ basis, and the benefits that CCTV would have on passenger safety.

Liz Esnouf, ARRIVA North East thanked the Council for its contribution to the CCTV on 48 ARRIVA buses, which it was reported, had been installed at the end of March, 2004. It was noted that since installation the CCTV had been used as evidence to support police investigations following 3 incidents of vandalism involving buses, and that a full-time CCTV controller had been appointed. It was also reported that CCTV would enable ARRIVA to look objectively at driver standards and would also improve both actual and perceived passenger safety.

Richard Cranmer, Green Bus reiterated the comments made on behalf of ARRIVA, and reported that the installation of 13 CCTV on Green buses had made covering night shifts less problematic and safer for drivers.

Discussion ensued on plans for the installation of CCTV cameras into both rural and urban bus shelters, and representatives of Darlington Taxi Owners Association welcomed the opportunity to discuss the possibilities for CCTV in taxis and taxi ranks.
31. SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL DEMONSTRATION TOWN – DARLINGTON – A TOWN ON THE MOVE – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) informing members of the Forum of Darlington’s award of Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town status for a period of five years.

It was reported that further updates on the plans and proposals for the £3.24 million revenue support would be brought back to the Forum once further discussion had been held with the Department for Transport, and members of the Forum were encouraged to participate fully in the consultation process, as it was noted that the project would benefit greatly from involvement of partners throughout the planning, delivery and monitoring of the project.

IT WAS AGREED – That the report be noted.

32. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN EXPENDITURE 2004/05 – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) informing members of the Forum on the proposed capital expenditure during 2004/05 under the Local Transport Plan.

Discussion ensued on the settlement for 2004/05 of £3.746 million, and the additional provisional allocation of £4.193 million, and it was reported that this award would be split into the categories of integrated transport, maintenance, the Tees Valley bus passenger real time information system and Darlington eastern transport corridor.

Further to questions raised by members of the Forum, public concern over the condition of some of the Town’s non-principal roads and footpaths was noted, following which, it was reported that the Council was in the process of signing the local Public Service Agreement (PSA) which would enable £1 million to be spent on improvements to non-principal classified and unclassified roads, and that the money would be targeted on roads identified as a result of road condition surveys undertaken by the Council.

Further discussion ensued on transport links between Darlington train station and Teesside Airport and it was noted that a briefing paper discussing this issue would be brought to the next meeting of the Forum; and further updates on the progress of the Local Transport Plan would also be periodically reported to the Forum.

IT WAS AGREED – That the report be noted.

33. CYCLING AND SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN UPDATE – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) updating members of the Forum on the recent works to implement the cycling element of the Local Transport Plan and the Cycling Strategy.

It was reported that a revised schedule of cycle/pedestrian signing had been produced for Darlington’s cycle network and that the signs would be installed by the end of the summer; that a cycle map had been produced which included a good cycling code, which pursuant to Minute 24(1)/Jan/04, addressed the issue of cycling on pavements.
Members of the Forum were also advised of the success of the Cycle Forum, held on 5th March, 2004 and it was noted that an appointment to the position of school travel plan officer had recently been made.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the report be noted.

**34. TOWN CENTRE PARKING** – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) consulting members of the Forum on proposed changes to the management of town centre parking in Darlington and the consultation process undertaken, together with an outline of the responses received.

Discussion ensued on the consultation process undertaken, and it was reported that a total of 650 consultation letters had been sent to frontagers in the affected streets and that direct written consultation had been carried out on the properties directly affected by the proposals. It was also noted that the police, other organisations and the general public, had been informed and invited to comment on the proposals via statutory notices in the press and an article in the Town Crier.

It was reported that this issue had been considered by a joint meeting of the Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 13th May, 2004, following which, Members had suggested a change in the proposed charge from £1 an hour and 50p per half hour, to 80p and hour and 40p per half hour in line with the rates in other car parks across the Town Centre.

Following issues raised by members of the Forum, discussion also ensued on issues of policing the proposals; the need for the scheme to be fair and equitable in allowing access for carers and visitors, while remaining practical and enforceable; and a request for the provision of motorcycle parking to be maintained.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the views of the Forum be noted.

**35. QUESTIONS** – Gordon Pybus, DAD requested clarification on reports that ARRIVA buses had stopped picking up passengers outside Crown Street Library and Lis Enouf of ARRIVA agreed to look into these concerns and report back to Gordon Pybus accordingly.

Following a question from Richard Cramner, Green Bus it was also reported that the new bus timetable would appear in the next edition of the Town Crier and that the bus map would follow in the July or August edition.