

Highways Committee

9 February 2011



Transit 15

**Responses to public consultation for
A177 Durham High School Junction
Modifications and North Road Durham
Bus Stop Modifications**

**Report of Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Regeneration and
Economic Development**

**Councillor Neil Foster, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Regeneration
and Economic Development**

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide members with feedback on consultations with the public for two Transit 15 schemes involving changes to the existing road layout:

- A177 Durham High School Junction Modifications
- North Road Durham Bus Stop Modifications

1.2 Similar reports presented subsequently to this Committee will address other Transit 15 schemes as and when consultations have been completed or associated orders have been published.

2.0 T15 Background

2.1 Transit 15 (T15) is the major public transport project to be implemented during the final year of the current local transport plan, LTP2 and the early years of the successor plan, LTP3. Completion of all of the planned schemes comprising the project would see reduced delays and improved reliability for bus services on seven key bus corridors across the county. A number of schemes have already been completed as part of T15.

2.2 The January 2010 report to this Committee set out the extent of subsequent reporting on the Transit 15 project, the intention of which is to keep members informed on progress of what is a significant and much-needed £5million+ investment in the bus network and to ensure members are kept well informed on progress across the whole project. The January report also indicated that the outcome of public consultations, as well as objections to Traffic Regulation Orders associated with Transit 15 schemes, would be brought to the attention of the Committee.

3.0 Scheme Background - A177 Durham High School Junction Modifications

- 3.1 This scheme is located on the Durham to Bishop Auckland transport corridor adjacent to Durham High School on the A177. Queues occur in the northbound direction and traffic can tail back onto the A167 at the Cock of the North Roundabout and beyond, causing congestion and significant delay, in addition to presenting a road safety hazard.
- 3.2 In order to facilitate reliable bus services and help all vehicles, it is proposed to improve the layout of the road at Durham High School in order to increase the length of the stacking lane for northbound vehicles accessing the school by turning right. The existing short stacking lane is insufficient to hold all right turning vehicles, resulting in the queue blocking the straight ahead lane and causing tailbacks in the northbound direction. The proposal includes localised widening to accommodate improved bus stop locations and a revised pedestrian refuge location in the A177.
- 3.3 A consultation letter and plan of the proposals were first sent to statutory consultees and delivered to residents on 30th September 2009. Comments were received from a number of the residents, Durham Constabulary and North East Ambulance. In the light of the comments, further refinement of the proposals was developed and a revised consultation exercise was undertaken, commencing on 19 August 2010. Consultation letters were issued to 60 local residents and others, including local members and the Portfolio Holder, bus companies, Durham Constabulary, North East Ambulance Service, Fire Brigade, City of Durham Trust and Durham High School.

4.0 Responses to Consultation

- 4.1 Ten responses have been received to the second consultation, 9 from individual members of the public, and one from Durham Constabulary.
- 4.2 Six respondents commented on the proposed relocation of the existing bus stop, further comments were about the pedestrian refuge proposal, right turning vehicles into St.Oswald's Drive, northbound and southbound bus shelters and a general "waste of money" comment. One supportive respondent suggested the school was not doing enough to encourage pupils to travel to school by bus rather than by car. Durham Constabulary supported the proposal, although making points about the road markings, footway alignment and a school warning sign.
- 4.3 All of the comments raised by respondents, including Durham Constabulary, were answered. *Relocation of the northbound bus shelter attracted most comments. Respondents were told that relocation to the south was necessary to accommodate a refuge to aid pedestrian safety in crossing the A177. Relocation of the existing refuge further to the north was to provide a sufficient stacking length for right turning vehicles so that the through lane would avoid being obstructed.*
- 4.4 As members of the Transit 15 Working Group, both Arriva and Go North East support the proposals.

5 Scheme Background - North Road Durham Bus Stop Modifications

- 5.1 The scheme is located along North Road in Durham City, on the Durham to Birtley transport corridor and involves changed layouts at two bus stops - the bus stop outside St Leonards Catholic School for buses leaving the city and the city bound bus stop outside County Hall (Dryburn Road). Both of these layout changes would reduce delays to bus services.
- 5.2 Consultation letters were issued on the 17 November 2010 to 17 local residents and others, including local members and the Portfolio Holder, bus companies, Durham Constabulary, North East Ambulance Service, Fire Brigade, City of Durham Trust and St Leonards School.

6 Responses to Consultation

- 6.1 By the closing date of the consultation a single response from one adjacent resident had been received.

This respondent challenged:

- 1) The safety of the proposal in that there would be less standing space at the bus stop, children would be waiting closer to the road and passing traffic and the sight line onto North Road for traffic emerging from the school would be obstructed.
- 2) Increased congestion for northbound traffic leading to obstruction of the pedestrian crossing.
- 3) The fact that there would be any improvement in time saved or safety as a result of buses standing in the traffic lane, rather than a layby.
- 4) Effect on access from the road to the White Cottage and on utility apparatus by siting the relocated bus stop over it
- 5) Benefit of relocating bus stop on Dryburn Road (County Hall) on to the carriageway.

Other comments from the respondent (relating to the countywide bus network) included the reintroduction of bus conductors, revising all timetables, revising all bus routes and better "combined system linkage".

The relevant points raised by the respondent to the specific consultation were answered by letter of 23 December 2010:

- 1) *New guardrail would prevent pedestrians straying on to the carriageway, the paved standing area near the proposed bus stop would be enlarged and the sight line would only be obstructed for emerging traffic for a very short period. In addition most traffic emerging from the school at the time would be coaches and their drivers' higher views would not be obstructed by waiting child pedestrians.*
- 2) *The proposed bus stop can accommodate two buses at any one time and still allow following vehicles to overtake in the outside lane. Currently queuing vehicles allow a gap for pedestrians at the crossing.*
- 3) *The proposed layout provides easier and safer movements for buses leaving the bus stop.*

- 4) *Access to White Cottage and the cycleway would be accommodated with a replacement access point and the bus shelter would be located to avoid any utility apparatus requiring access.*
- 5) *The bus box on Dryburn Road would accommodate two buses but if a bus wishes to pass the stop it simply pulls into the offside lane to do so.*

The other general comments were sent to the Passenger Transport section for a separate reply to the resident. No further response to the letter has been received from the resident to date.

- 6.2 As members of the Transit 15 Working Group, both Arriva and Go North East support the proposals.

7.0 Local Member Consultation

Local members have been consulted and have raised no objections to either of the two schemes.

8.0 Recommendations

A177 Durham High School Junction Modifications

Having considered the objections, members are recommended to endorse the proposal.

North Road B6532 Durham Bus Stop Modifications

Having considered the objections, members are recommended to endorse the proposal.

Background Papers

LTP2, the current Local Transport Plan for 2006-2011

Report to Highways Committee on 15 January 2010 item no 7

Public consultation information note

Consultee letters and responses record file

Copies of correspondence have been placed in the Members Resource Centre.

Contact: Harris Harvey Tel: 0191 383 3459

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

Estimated scheme costs A177 Durham High School Junction Modifications - £155,000, North Road Durham Bus Stop Modifications - £72,000. Scheme costs to be met from the £5million Transit 15 budget which is already in place from an uplift in the LTP2 Integrated Transport Block from the Regional Funding Allocation confirmed by the Department for Transport in January 2010.

Staffing

None

Equality and Diversity

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and disorder

None

Sustainability

The objectives of the T15 project (as sent out in the public consultation information note) seek to maintain core ridership and improve the attractiveness of buses as an alternative mode of transport in preference to the car for people who have a practical travel choice. Achievement of the objectives through implementation of the project is more sustainable.

Human rights

None

Localities and Rurality

As detailed in the report.

Young people

Improving the attractiveness and reliability of public transport may influence some young people at an early age as to travel choice and lifestyle. It is recognised that there is heavy reliance on bus travel by young people.

Consultation

As detailed in the report

Health

Achieving the objectives of the T15 project as outlined in the public consultation information note would result in modal shift from car use to public transport for people, with some corresponding health benefits associated with walking to and from the bus stop.

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