



Local Transport Plan Tyne and Wear



LTP2 Progress Report
2006-11



In the second Local Transport Plan for Tyne and Wear, covering the period between April 2006 and March 2011, we wrote that: “Delivering improved transport provision will be a major factor in achieving sustainable economic growth”.

The local economy has grown strongly over the last two years and the transport schemes delivered during LTP1, together with those that have come on stream during the first two years of LTP2, have undoubtedly contributed to that growth. The challenge for the immediate future will be to weather-proof our transport systems against the effects of global recession and to maintain levels of investment at a time when the housing market downturn and the lack of available credit are likely to sharply reduce levels of private sector and developer contributions.

In periods of economic difficulty, good transport links become more, not less, important. The investment in transport infrastructure that we have delivered will serve us well in maintaining our economic base and helping those who have lost their jobs to find new employment.

The six partners in the LTP have co-operated closely in the last two years to introduce the many improvements that are fully detailed in this report. These include a showpiece new bus station for Eldon Square, a new Metro station at Simonside, the new Felling Bypass bus lane in Gateshead, the rebuilt bus station at Washington Galleries and North Tyneside’s stylish new “Cobalt Clipper” bus service. These prestige projects are underpinned by continuing progress on improving bus stops, pedestrian and cycle routes in local neighbourhoods.

The common theme in all our measures, large or small, is the desire to make travelling around the region – particularly using sustainable modes – easier, safer and more reliable. The result has been welcome growth in bus and Metro patronage as well as increased cycle use.

Improvements to scheduled public transport services have been matched by continued investment in more flexible provision, including LinkUp, TaxiLink, taxibus services and the growing role of community transport. Work continues to address air quality issues in some locations, with a major public awareness programme planned for 2009, whilst we have launched a successful new multi-media road safety communication and education campaign focused on young drivers, motorcyclists, fleet drivers and PSV vehicles.

Perhaps the most important developments for Tyne and Wear’s transport network came with three major announcements in the summer of 2008. The government signalled its support for the £350 million Metro Re-Invigoration programme over the next 10 years and also gave backing to Sunderland City Council’s £98m scheme to build a new four lane bridge over the River Wear, an important element in the ongoing Sunderland arc regeneration programme. Finally, there was Nexus’s submission of plans for £15.3 million of improvements in the region’s bus network, subject to government approval, to include two major new park-and-ride facilities, the first bus-based park-and-ride schemes in Tyne and Wear.

Local government, or even national governments, have limited powers to influence the global economy. However, to quote Louis Pasteur, “Chance favours the prepared mind”. By continuing to invest in high-quality, sustainable transport infrastructure, we can assist this region through the economic downturn and equip us for prosperity when better times return. I commend this report to you.

**Councillor James Blackburn
Chair of Tyne and Wear Joint
Lead Members (Transport)**

This document sets out how Tyne and Wear is implementing the policies set out in the second Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006-11. It explains what we have delivered in the first two years of the LTP and what our aspirations are for the remaining period. Several case studies give examples of actual schemes that have been put in place to address LTP objectives and throughout we emphasise positive achievements that are helping to put in place a safer, more accessible, more sustainable transport system for Tyne and Wear. The aspirations set out in LTP2 were bold and far-reaching in scope – we believe this document provides evidence that these have been matched by a positive and dynamic programme of delivery.

Background to Tyne and Wear

Tyne and Wear is part of a city-region situated in the North East of England, encompassing an urban core, plus a more rural hinterland stretching into County Durham and Northumberland.

It is a vibrant and varied area combining a wide variety of landscapes, all informed by the region's rich industrial heritage. The five districts making up Tyne and Wear are Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland and the LTP is drawn up by the above five districts plus Nexus, the Passenger Transport Executive.

Tyne and Wear's Transport Network

The region's two main trunk roads, the A1 and the A19, are managed by the Highways Agency. Public transport comprises the Tyne and Wear Metro system, an extensive bus network, the North Shields to South Shields cross-Tyne ferry and local rail services to the MetroCentre and Sunderland.

At most times of the day, the road network is relatively uncongested, although there are localised congestion problems on the Tyne bridges, around the MetroCentre and the Western Bypass, the Silverlink junction in North Tyneside and the present Tyne Tunnel.

Since 2006, a number of important schemes have been implemented to reduce congestion and assist economic regeneration, including the Southern Radial Route in Sunderland, the new Eldon Square bus station in Newcastle and the widening of the Felling Bypass in Gateshead to facilitate a new bus lane. There has also been substantial private sector investment in the local bus fleet, with bus companies having spent £26m on new vehicles since 2006.

Future plans include the beginning of the re-energisation of the Metro system, a major bus corridor improvement programme, including Tyne and Wear's first bus-based park and ride sites, a new bridge across the river Wear and the opening of the New Tyne Crossing in 2012. Nexus are presently consulting on an updated Bus Strategy that aims to build on recent growth in bus patronage and take advantage of the new opportunities offered by the Local Transport Act.

As well as new projects, all districts in Tyne and Wear have been developing Network Management Plans to ensure that traffic flows on the existing network are handled in the most expeditious way possible; more details of these are provided in Chapter 2. The potential for a region-wide Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) system is also being examined.

For long-distance travel to and from the region, the major gateways are Newcastle Central Station and Newcastle International Airport. LTP Partners are working closely with operators to improve access to these key destinations and to ensure that they provide a welcoming introduction to the region. Work is also ongoing to ensure that the region participates in major new developments that could assist the economy and communication links – such as a potential north-south high speed rail line.

Major investment programmes of the kind listed above are also being complemented by measures to encourage walking and cycling, to promote more livable local communities through Home Zones and speed restraint plans, and to develop more efficient and sustainable freight distribution by means of Tyne and Wear's award-winning Freight Partnership.

Issues and Challenges Facing Tyne and Wear

As a compact geographical area with a strong sense of regional identity, Tyne and Wear has enjoyed some success over recent years in regenerating the local economy and promoting tourism growth. The region does, however, suffer from historic economic weakness which has led to a long-standing problem with population out-migration. Today, the area is home to a population of 1,083,200 or 463,000 households; approximately 43% of the population in the North East region.

This economic weakness results in relatively high levels of unemployment and inactivity compared to other regions of the UK and a number of social and health problems; Tyne and Wear lags behind national indicators for higher educational achievement, ill-health and obesity. Although these problems have a variety of interlocking causes, in drawing up LTP2 the Plan Partners



were determined to play their part in addressing them, hence the high priority given to improving transport links to employment, healthcare and educational sites.

The Second Local Transport Plan and the Shared Priorities for Transport

Following on from the above, the LTP2 emphasised the need for a more holistic approach to developing a sustainable transport system, embracing improvements to all modes of travel and stressing the need for closer integration between transport and land use. The LTP Partners' vision for Tyne and Wear was of:

“an area where all residents have better access to a more prosperous, safer, healthier and more sustainable lifestyle in a more attractive environment”

LTP2 sets out four key shared priorities agreed between local and central government, these being:

- congestion
- accessibility
- road safety
- air quality

Our strategies for addressing each of the above are set out in detail in four LTP daughter documents and are summarised in Chapters 2 to 5 of this report, as described below.

Congestion

Reducing congestion in Tyne and Wear is fundamental to the regional economy and the quality of life. Traffic-choked roads are frustrating for users, bad for business, slow down public transport and worsen air quality. The Congestion Reduction Plan, first published early in 2007 and updated simultaneously with this document, sets out a detailed, holistic strategy for addressing the issue in this region, focusing on the 16 key strategic corridors that we monitor.

Amongst the toolkit of measures deployed along these corridors are engineering and road safety interventions (such as traffic management improvements), better public transport, walking and cycling routes, supplemented by a range of 'softer' travel planning measures which are co-ordinated by district travel plan officers, working in partnership with Tyne and Wear's newly-instituted Smarter Choices Team.

As well as new initiatives, it is also important to make optimum use of the region's transport infrastructure. Since January 2005, this has entailed a statutory duty to minimise congestion and disruption to the movement of traffic as far as is possible. Full details of how the region will be meeting its Network Management Duty are set out in Chapter 2, whilst a full copy of the Road Network Hierarchies can be found in Appendix E.

Alongside our work to improve passenger transport, Tyne and Wear has also been proactively pursuing initiatives that promote safe and sustainable freight distribution, to the benefit of hauliers, local authorities and the wider public. Chapter 2 sets out the measures progressed by the Tyne and Wear Freight Partnership, whose proven record in delivering tangible actions has resulted in the winning of two national awards this year.



Accessibility

High levels of accessibility are crucial to allowing people to participate fully in modern life and to reach essential services. Restricted accessibility can contribute to social exclusion. This document outlines the actions we have taken – and are preparing to take – to improve accessibility as part of the LTP2. These actions are set out in more detail in the Tyne and Wear Accessibility Delivery Plan, published in spring 2008.

There are also linkages between accessibility and other shared priorities and regional goals. Improving accessibility for everyone, and especially non-drivers, should help to improve air quality, curb congestion and reduce obesity, contributing to our public health goals.

In modern Britain, it is often assumed that car ownership is the norm. However, in poorer neighbourhoods, this is rarely the case. For example, in one area of the Teams ward in Gateshead, 69% of residents do not own a car. Our accessibility objectives are focused on improving walking, cycling and public transport provision, and are monitored using access to three key services:

- access to education (closest secondary school)
- access to health (closest hospital)
- access to employment (based on four key employment sites – listed in Chapter 3)

This document sets out the measures we have taken to improve accessibility, based around what are often referred to as “The Five ‘A’s of Accessibility”, these being:

- accessibility
- availability
- affordability
- awareness
- acceptability

Although considerable work is taking place to improve accessibility at a regional, sub-regional or local level, these initiatives are not always joined up. Our strategy therefore places a high priority on sharing good practice, working in partnership with stakeholders and the third sector and striving to hear from “hard to reach” bodies and the socially disadvantaged.



Road Safety

LTP Partners are proud of our record in recent years at achieving casualty reduction. Nevertheless, we cannot afford to be complacent, recognising that, of all our shared priorities, road safety is the one with the most potential to shatter lives. A high and continuing priority is therefore given to analysing how we can reduce casualties on our road network, focusing particularly on vulnerable road users who are disproportionately represented in accident statistics, such as children, pedestrians, young drivers and motorcycle riders. Other key priorities are

- Promoting safety through developing local partnerships
- Reducing excess and inappropriate speed

Our goals are summarised in Chapter 4 of this report and are fully detailed in Tyne and Wear's Road Safety Delivery Plan. They represent a local response to the Government's road safety strategy "Tomorrow's Roads - Safer For Everyone", published in March 2000, which set

excellent record in casualty reduction. During the remainder of LTP2 and beyond, we will continue to work on the "Three 'E's of Road Safety", Engineering, Enforcement and Education – but with a growing emphasis on the latter due to a recognition that, on many routes, we have reached the limit of what can be achieved through engineering measures.

What is now needed is a cultural change in patterns of road use, beyond areas of improved engineering or enforcement, with the aim of ensuring that road users engage in better, safer driving, not because external influences force them to but because they want to. Chapter 4 gives details of our road respect programme, a multi-media campaign developed in co-operation with the local press and Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative (NSRI).

These regionwide measures are complemented by a number of local initiatives, such as Home Zones, Safer Routes to School schemes and speed management campaigns, such as Newcastle's "Twenty's Plenty" programme in residential areas.

Partnership working is of great importance in reaching our goals and close liaison takes place with the NSRI, which includes representatives from Northumbria Police, the Highways Agency and the emergency services. Work is also taking place in conjunction with the motorcycle community to address the relatively high level of accidents involving motorcycle users. Focus group research suggests that conventional road safety messages are perceived negatively by riders who see risk as an essential element of their pursuit, and therefore emphasis is placed on ways of enhancing skills and addressing rider concerns, with the content driven by the community themselves.

Air Quality

Clean air is every citizen's right but there are challenges in delivering that ideal as vehicular traffic continues to increase. A high and growing level of importance is attached to the issue of improving air quality across Tyne and Wear, and Chapter 5 sets out the actions taken to improve air quality which have come about during the existence of LTP2.

Full details of our air quality strategy can be found in the Tyne and Wear Air Quality Delivery Plan, published during 2008. The plan seeks to improve air quality across Tyne and Wear as a whole, but with a particular focus on locations with identified problems which have been declared as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). This plan complements the measures



out a framework for delivering further improvements in road safety over the next decade and established new long term 10 year casualty reduction targets to be achieved by 2010.

Understanding the causes of accidents in Tyne and Wear and providing successful safety schemes in conjunction with education, training and marketing have been key to achieving our



already outlined in the Newcastle City Centre Air Quality Action Plan, which was integrated into LTP2.

The key issue raised by the plan is the need for an emphasis on action and a clear goal that we must, wherever possible, prevent further areas in Tyne and Wear from becoming AQMAs – areas where air quality levels are in exceedences of national air quality objectives. Present AQMAs are listed in Chapter 5, the most prominent being the Newcastle city centre AQMA, which also includes Jesmond and the Quayside.

The need is not for more monitoring, since Tyne and Wear authorities presently operate a very comprehensive monitoring regime with several receptor sites in each authority, but instead for tangible actions to ameliorate the problem. We therefore set out realistic, efficient and reliable air quality solutions which incorporate the promotion of alternative modes, better management of the existing highway network, planning, emissions management and information and education.

The latter is particularly important, given that air quality may not be as well understood as the other shared priorities and its effects are often, literally, invisible. A major public awareness campaign, planned to begin in the first quarter of 2009, will therefore seek to inform the public and key decision-makers about the scale of the challenge and the urgency for action, seeking to inculcate a sense of shared ownership for the problem and outlining how individuals can improve matters.

Close liaison also takes place with other strategic policies and delivery teams for input into cross-cutting measures that will benefit air quality.

These include:

- the Smarter Choices Team
- the Tyne and Wear Congestion Reduction Plan
- the Tyne and Wear Accessibility Delivery Plan
- UTMC

- Scope MOBILITY
- iTRACE
- the Tyne and Wear Freight Partnership
- local planning departments and Environmental Health Officers

Management and Performance

The region, and the UK, seem likely to face severe economic difficulties for the immediate future. This makes it even more crucial to ensure that our substantial investment in the local transport infrastructure is well-spent, carefully-targeted and delivers results – whilst routes which have not benefitted from new investment still need to be managed in a way that optimises traffic flow and contributes to delivery of our shared priorities.

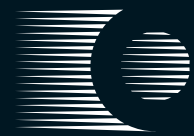
Chapter 6 of this document details our performance against targets, how we manage our transportation assets to best effect, how scheme delivery is monitored and what mechanisms are in hand to evaluate and comprehensively manage and mitigate risk.

Summary

In conclusion, this document sets out how we have addressed the region's transport challenges during the first two years of LTP2 and how we plan to do so in the years up to 2011 – focusing in particular on delivery against our agreed shared priorities. A series of case studies illustrate how strategic goals have been converted into tangible actions that benefit all categories of transport user in Tyne and Wear – ranging from bridge maintenance to better bus stations, from speed management programmes to improved cycle routes.

We are pleased with our record of delivery, optimistic about the improvements that our future programmes will provide and look forward to taking advantage of the new opportunities and powers provided by the Local Transport Act, so as to better meet the aspirations of the citizens we serve.





LTP TYNE AND WEAR

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