

# **Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**27 February 2020**

## **Transport policy and activity – Overview and progress**



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### **Report of Geoff Paul, Interim Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services**

#### **Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

#### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on transport policy at different geographical scales and how that impacts on the transport functions of Durham County Council.
- 2 The presentation also addresses ongoing and future transport activities within Durham, sets out some of the challenges and opportunities that currently exist within the transport agenda and progress made since the previous report to committee in December 2018.

#### **Executive summary**

- 3 Members will recall that in December 2018 the committee received a report and presentation which provided an: overview of transport policy at national, sub-national, regional and local level; governance of regional transport and funding streams; the role of DCC in delivering infrastructure and Local Transport Plan 3 and challenges and opportunities.
- 4 When considering the committee's future work programme it was agreed by members that they would receive a further progress update on transport. This report will highlight any changes since the overview report to the committee in December 2018 and any opportunities in relation to sustainable transport including any activity undertaken in relation to the charging infrastructure for electric vehicles in the county.

- 5 The presentation will provide members with an update on transport policy and activity at the different geographical scales.

## **Recommendations**

- 6 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment upon the information provided in the report and during the presentation.
- 7 That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the refresh of the committee's work programme for 2020/21 receives a further progress report on transport policy and activity.

## **Background**

- 8 Members will recall that the committee has previously received reports in relation to transport activity and it was agreed by members at the June 2019 meeting that a further progress update would be included in the 2019/2020 work programme. In addition, as elements of transport falls within the remit of the Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC it was suggested that members of this committee are invited to attend the meeting where the progress report is to be considered.
- 9 Arrangements have been made for Peter Ollivere, Principal Policy Officer and Craig MacLennan, Section Manager Transport and Infrastructure, Regeneration and Local Services to attend the meeting on the 27 February 2020 to provide a presentation focusing on:
  - Update on transport policy developments at national, sub-national, regional and local level
  - Regional transport activity and funding streams
  - DCC delivering infrastructure – now and in the future
  - Local Transport Plan 3, ongoing delivery
  - Update on sustainable transport and electric vehicles

A copy of the presentation is attached as appendix 2.

## **Overview of Transport Policy**

- 10 Transport policy operates at different geographical scales. The UK Industrial Strategy focuses on transport delivering growth and increasing productivity alongside the grand challenges of clean growth and future mobility. Delivering growth is also a key objective of sub-national policy; and Transport for the North's (TfN) Strategic Transport

Plan aims to use transport as a tool to re-balance the economy of the UK by joining up areas of economic activity in the North of England.

- 11 At the regional level, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and the emerging Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) aim to deliver more and better jobs and boost productivity of the North East. The Joint Transport Committee are leading the development of a North East Transport Plan (NETP) which will integrate transport with the economic agenda and spatial planning. The NETP will replace this councils existing Local Transport Plan 3.
- 12 At every geographical level, the importance of transport assisting in delivery of economic growth is obvious. However, over the past twelve months there has been a significant shift in emphasis towards clean growth, decarbonising transport and tackling the impact on climate change and air quality.
- 13 The emerging key objectives for the North East Transport Plan will be framed around the following themes:
  - Contributing to the North East becoming carbon neutral
  - Reducing social inequality and grow the North East's economy
  - Improving people's health
  - Making sustainable transport the first choice
  - Improving safety and security of transport

### **Governance of regional transport and funding**

- 14 The Joint Transport Committee (JTC) provides strategic leadership on the transport agenda for North of the Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) and North East Combined Authority (NECA).
- 15 The regional transport team (now known as 'Transport North East') on behalf of the JTC, are developing a Strategic Transport Plan for the region. They are also coordinating regional discussions around the future of Bus and Local Rail in the region.
- 16 Whilst the JTC and NECA continues to be the statutory transport authority for County Durham, many of the passenger transport functions, such as the contracting of secured local bus services and management of concessionary fares, are delegated back to the County Council. In addition, the JTC constituent councils continue to be responsible for the development and delivery of local infrastructure schemes.
- 17 Most of the government's transport funding is directed through either the LEP or via the JTC/Combined Authorities; and in many cases the views of Transport for the North are being sought by government as

part of the assessment of proposals. It is therefore important that we continue to play our part in influencing the regional, sub national and national transport agendas to ensure that the transport needs of the county are recognised, and appropriate levels of funding secured.

## **DCC - Delivering transport infrastructure**

- 18 Whilst strategic transport policy may sit with the JTC, the delivery of transport projects, highways improvements and our capital scheme programme remains the responsibility of this council. The second half of the presentation focuses on both capital and revenue-based work that address transport challenges in County Durham.
- 19 The Council have had a policy in Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) of opening up access to employment opportunities along economic corridors and this has been successful. The presentation highlights examples of recent, ongoing and future infrastructure work in the county including at Integra 61 and Hawthorne Enterprise Zone where the council are at various stages of delivery.
- 20 The council are also improving access to employment opportunities for residents in East Durham with the construction of Horden Rail Station; while the Aykley Heads employment site is supported by transport improvements across Durham City in the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan.
- 21 Transport infrastructure is also an important aspect of planning for housing growth with examples in Newton Aycliffe and Seaham/South Sunderland.
- 22 Beyond the large-scale capital investment, LTP3 set the policy for a multitude of revenue-based transport functions including improving public transport information, travel behaviour programmes, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, parking management and casualty reduction activities.

## **Current challenges**

- 23 Surface transport currently accounts for 23% of UK greenhouse gas emissions; and transport emissions are reducing more slowly than other sectors. The council's recently adopted Climate Emergency Response Action Plan highlights transport as a key area for action. In addition, air quality continues to be monitored in parts of Durham City highlighted by the designated Air Quality Management Area.
- 24 The Council continues to develop work around supporting electric vehicles (EV's) and recently hosted a national event in Bishop Auckland aimed at encouraging take up of EVs across business fleets. This work

includes looking at decarbonising the council's own fleet, as vehicles come up for renewal.

- 25 We have also been awarded £263,000 (as part of a wider joint bid with partners across County Durham and Cumbria) for a project to increase the take up of electric vehicles in rural locations. The funding will support local communities to install electric vehicle charge points in some of our rural towns and villages, in areas where there is limited off-street parking available and little commercial interest in providing EV infrastructure.
- 26 In addition to encouraging the take up of low carbon vehicles, the council continues to support sustainable transport choices of walking cycling and public transport.

### **Main implications**

- 27 The key message for members to note are:
- The focus on transport as an enabler of economic growth now sits firmly alongside the environmental aspect of reducing the impact of transport on climate change and air quality.
  - The council continue to explore funding opportunities for infrastructure delivery.
  - There are both challenges and opportunities around the take up of electric vehicles and the encouragement of more sustainable transport.

### **Conclusion**

- 28 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment upon the information provided in the report and presentation.

### **Background papers**

- None

### **Other useful documents**

- None

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

This report is for information only.

### **Finance**

Not applicable

### **Consultation**

Not applicable

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

Not applicable

### **Human Rights**

Not applicable

### **Climate Change**

Reducing the impact of transport on climate change is a major policy objective.

### **Crime and Disorder**

Improving safety and security of transport is a key objective of regional and local transport policy.

### **Staffing**

Not applicable

### **Accommodation**

Not applicable

### **Risk**

Not applicable

### **Procurement**

Not applicable