

Cabinet

15 June 2016



**Draft Durham City Sustainable
Transport Strategy 2016-2033**

**Report of Corporate Management Team
Ian Thompson, Corporate Director Regeneration and Economic
Development
Councillor Neil Foster, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic
Regeneration**

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is for Members to agree the draft Durham City Sustainable Transport Strategy 2016–2033 (the draft Strategy) for public consultation.
2. This Strategy will inform the preparation of the new local plan but will form only part of the evidence base relating to transport. Other work will be undertaken as the local plan progresses which will identify what transport infrastructure is required to meet the needs of future development.

Background

3. The draft Strategy represents an important opportunity to initiate a step change in the provision of sustainable transport in the city at a time when there is the opportunity to shape the future development of Durham given that both a local plan for County Durham and a neighbourhood plan for Durham City are being prepared.
4. The report sets out how investing in all our modes of transport and creating better spaces can provide real economic, health and environmental benefits for the city and its residents. The draft Strategy is aligned with the 'thriving Durham City' theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy as it seeks to improve accessibility to the city centre for all transport modes.
5. Durham City has a traffic congestion issue, particularly at peak hours. The draft Strategy sets out the short and long term transport policy approach for delivering transport projects in the city.

Content of the Draft Durham City Sustainable Transport Strategy

6. The Council has history regarding implementing measures to support sustainable transport use, being the first location in the country to implement a congestion charge in 2002. More recently, the opening of Park and Ride sites serving three of the key radial routes into the city, which complement good

local bus services, means that bus services in Durham City are one of the strengths of the city's transport network.

7. Durham is a relatively small, compact city. This does mean that it lends itself to the promotion of sustainable modes of travel, including those that keep us active such as walking and cycling. Census data from 2011 shows that 36% of people living in Durham City walk to and from work. However, the principal challenge in providing enhanced support for walking, high quality public transport, and in encouraging a step change in cycling, is space. At present, all modes often compete for the same spaces, whether it is in the historic attractive narrow streets of the Peninsula, on busy heavily trafficked roads, or on shared use paths across the city.
8. Durham City, including its conservation area, is a busy environment that experiences very high volumes of traffic particularly at rush hour and school run times. This has a crucial influence on the physical environment and the area's character and appearance.
9. This Strategy is specifically related to achieving a more sustainable transport network in the city. More general improvements to the highway network relating to issues of congestion will be considered in other evidence documents relating to the County Durham Plan. The draft Strategy identifies the following locations for investment in infrastructure:
 - Improvements to the existing city centre transport infrastructure;
 - Pedestrians improvements linking the University to the city centre;
 - Missing links for sustainable modes in and across main roads and junctions in Aykley Heads, Sniperley, Framwelgate Moor and Newton Hall;
 - Reducing congestion by making appropriate improvements for all transport modes in Gilesgate, Dragonville, Carville and Belmont.
10. Management of the demand to travel by car on the journey to work, and to school, during peak hours, is one of the principal opportunities within Durham City, and a key element of the draft Strategy. The encouragement of the use of sustainable alternatives to the car, promoting long term changes in travel behaviour is necessary. The draft Strategy sets out four core activities:
 - Employer Travel Planning – using a partnership approach to monitor and support Travel Plan measures;
 - School Travel Planning - including Bike-ability and Pedestrian training;
 - Residential Travel Planning – to include promotional activities with new residents;
 - Umbrella Marketing - to include a project brand and website;
11. The long term strategy for the city centre is however, dependent on the ability to provide more space for people travelling on foot, by bike and bus and where there are barriers to direct continuous routes, those barriers need to be addressed. The best way to achieve this would be an additional crossing of the River Wear which would provide an alternative to Milburngate Bridge and

therefore remove vehicular traffic and congestion from the city centre. A longstanding proposal for this additional crossing as part of a Northern Relief Road was identified in both the City of Durham Local Plan and the previous iteration of the County Durham Plan.

12. A new crossing would remove through traffic (potentially 35-40% of all traffic) and provide the opportunity to re-prioritise space on Milburngate Bridge by reducing the number of car lanes on the Bridge from four to two, making this route less attractive for through trips but making it easier for those people wanting to access the city centre and the economic opportunities including employment, shopping and tourism. It will also create significant air quality benefits by removing unnecessary slow moving and standing traffic including heavy goods vehicles from the city addressing the principal cause of the increased Nitrogen Dioxide levels that resulted in the designation of the Air Quality Management Area.
13. The draft Strategy identifies a range of improvements across the city some of which will require more work on the detail. Projects will be delivered in line with the availability of funding. Opportunities to utilise third party (potentially developer) funding should also be embraced where possible. New development must also be designed in a way that maximises opportunities for sustainable modes of transport.

Stakeholder Involvement

14. Two stakeholder events and a specific two-week consultation exercise have been undertaken to ensure a broad partnership approach to drafting the strategy and setting the vision. In addition, a number of one to one meetings were held with key stakeholders and a 'Vox Pop' exercise, where a number of people were interviewed for their opinions, at the beginning of the project. The key stakeholders included Durham University, the Cathedral, the University Hospital, Durham City Business Improvement District, the Passport Office and the City of Durham Trust. Stakeholder comments have informed the draft Strategy. A full schedule of all stakeholder comments will be prepared following this consultation.

Next Steps

15. The draft Durham City Sustainable Transport Strategy will be published for a six week formal consultation in conjunction with the consultation on the Issues and Options of the County Durham Plan. Following consideration of responses and the making of any modifications, if these are minor in nature, it is proposed that the final strategy would be agreed by the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development.
16. Following adoption of the draft Strategy, the council will proceed with Action Plans to develop the draft Strategy into a sustainable transport programme for demand management (behavioural change) measures and infrastructure interventions.

17. A partnership will be formed with the academic and business stakeholders who form the key destinations (and landowners) in the city. They will monitor the progress of the resultant Travel and Action Plans.

Recommendations

18. Members are recommended to:
 - a. Agree the draft Durham City Sustainable Transport Strategy for full public consultation.
 - b. Agree that any minor modifications to the draft Strategy following consultation and approval of the final Strategy are delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development.

Contact: Mike Allum Tel: 03000 261906

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance –

There are no direct financial implications for the draft Strategy, however projects identified within the forthcoming Action Plan will be subject to funding availability from regional and national sources and the Council's capital programme. These range in scale from a new relief road costing many millions to educational changes which have minimal cost. Value for money appraisals will be undertaken as required.

Staffing –

To be delivered with existing resources.

Risk –

No risks in the consultation of the draft strategy but a full risk assessment will be carried out as part of the Action Plan.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty –

Equality and diversity groups have already been contacted as part of stakeholder consultation. An EQIA assessment has been carried out as part of the Strategy.

Accommodation –

None

Crime and Disorder –

None

Human Rights –

None

Consultation –

Paragraph 14 of the report includes details of consultation undertaken to date. A six week public consultation will now be carried out across Durham City.

Procurement –

None

Disability Issues –

None

Legal Implications –

None