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Foreword

This document is Northumberland County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) for 2011 to 2026. It sets out the Council's vision, aims and objectives for transport over this period.

The Transport Act 2000 made it a statutory requirement for Local Transport Authorities to produce LTPs. The Local Transport Act 2008 retains this requirement but provides greater flexibilities in how LTPs are developed and reviewed. It also advised that there should be a clear distinction between what is a strategy and what is an implementation plan.

This document is the LTP Strategy. It sets out what the Council wants to achieve over the period 2011 to 2026 and includes long-term aspirations for transport. The Implementation Plan is a separate document which sets out short term measures to be implemented over a four year period.

The LTP Strategy takes account of comments made during the public consultation held between November 2010 and January 2010. A summary of consultation responses and action taken can be found on the County Council's website at www.northumberland.gov.uk

The LTP has been developed in partnership with local stakeholders and reflects and informs Council priorities for communities, housing, health, the economy, planning and climate change. In this way the LTP contributes towards wider policy aims and objectives.

The LTP Strategy includes:

- A set of objectives that represent the Council's vision for transport.
- An analysis of 'Key Issues'.
- A long term strategy to address the key issues and deliver the objectives.

The LTP Implementation Plan (separate document) includes:

- A four year programme of schemes and policy measures
- A set of targets and indicators that can be used to monitor progress in delivering the LTP objectives

Central Government guidance sets out the national policy framework and includes five national transport goals which provide overarching priorities for LTPs. The goals are:

- Support Economic Growth
- Reduce Carbon Emissions
- Promote Equality of Opportunity
- Contribute to Better Safety, Security & Health
- Improve Quality of Life and a Healthy Natural Environment

This LTP sets out Northumberland's transport strategy in the context of these national goals.

Foreword

1 Introduction

This chapter:

- introduces Northumberland's third Local Transport Plan;

- sets out the structure of the document;

- describes how we have developed and appraised the Plan; and

- outlines the goals, challenges and objectives on which the LTP has been based.

1.1 Background

1.1   This document is the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 (LTP3) for Northumberland and has been produced by Northumberland County Council in accordance with the Transport Act 2008. This Plan covers the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2026 and will replace the second LTP (LTP2), which expires at the end of March 2011.

1.2   The Plan describes how Northumberland County Council and its partners will develop and maintain a sustainable local transport system that is resilient and responsive to changing needs, promotes sustainable economic growth, minimises the environmental impact of travel, improves health and addresses social exclusion for residents, businesses and visitors.

1.3   It identifies the broad issues for transport in Northumberland, identifies a strategy for addressing them and sets out a programme of transport improvements to be delivered over the next three years and longer term. These improvements will contribute towards delivering the Government's goals for transport and achieving the long term vision for Northumberland.

1.4   The local transport strategy builds on the success of the second LTP, with a new focus on delivering the national goals for transport, contributing to the aims of the Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy and reflecting local needs, local land use plans, economic development and climate change priorities.

1.5   The Plan is complementary to the Tyne & Wear City Region Transport Strategy which covers a wider geographic area including South East Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and Durham.

1.6   The transport strategy and implementation plan have been developed through effective consultation and involvement with people and organisations across the County. This partnership working will be maintained to deliver a wide range of transport improvements over the next three years and beyond.

Structure of the LTP

1 Introduction

1.7   The Government's 'Guidance on Local Transport Plans (July 2009)' sets out the requirements and provides advice to help local authorities produce the third LTP. This Plan has been prepared in accordance with this guidance and is set out in three main parts.

Part 1 - Context and Issues

1.8   Sets the context for Northumberland's Third Local Transport Plan.

1.9   Chapter 1 sets out the structure of the document and describes how we have developed and appraised the Plan. Chapter 2 places the LTP in the wider policy context and identifies the key issues facing Northumberland and their implications for transport. Chapter 3 provides a profile of Northumberland today, describes the existing transport infrastructure, explains existing travel patterns and identifies the emerging challenges for transport. Chapter 4 then examines the wider issues that are expected to change the context for travel in Northumberland and the transport implications of these trends.

Part 2 - Northumberland Transport Strategy

1.10   Describes the Transport Strategy that will address the challenges and contribute towards achieving the Northumberland Vision.

1.11   Chapter 5 sets out the vision for Northumberland and explains how the transport strategy will contribute through a series of strategic goals and draft objectives. The key challenges that must be addressed for the transport network to support the vision are also provided together with Northumberland's strategic approach to delivery. Chapters 6 to 10 describes how the LTP will achieve our local goals for supporting economic growth, reducing carbon emissions, improving access to services, providing safer and healthier travel and improving quality of life. For each goal, the key transport issues are set out together with a summary of what the Council and partners will do over the next three years and longer term.

Part 3 - Implementation Plan (separate document)

1.12   Published as a separate document, provides an integrated programme of improvements planned to be delivered by the Council and its partners over the period 2011/12 to 2013/14. It sets out the funding expected to be available from available sources and allocations against themes. A monitoring framework how we will assess our progress in delivering improvements to our transport related objectives and explains our approach to identifying and managing the key risks in delivering our targets.

Part 4 - Rights of Way Improvement Plan (separate document)

1.13   Local transport authorities are required to produce and maintain a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) under the Countryside Act 2000. The County Council's RoWIP sets out a ten year strategy (2007 to 2017) for the management of the public rights of way network. Because the RoWIP is a current strategy and continues to address the future priorities for managing rights of way the County Council has decided not to fully integrate the LTP and RoWIP. Instead, the RoWIP is a

complementary document to the LTP and the policies, priorities and actions it contains will inform transport and access related issues, particularly in relation to active travel.

Developing the Third LTP

Government Guidance

1.14   The Council has taken a fresh look at the policies and implementation proposals in developing the LTP. The following recommended process has been used to develop an effective strategy and decide priorities for implementation:

- **Clarify Goals** - Framework informed by the national goals and challenges, the relevant regional objectives and local goals.
- **Specify Problems or Challenges** - Identification of problems and opportunities on the basis of clear evidence and data and consideration of which priorities to address.
- **Generate Options** - Consideration of a wide range of options for meeting the challenges.
- **Appraise Transport Options** - Appraisal, prioritisation and packaging of options to maximise benefits to corporate objectives.
- **Select Preferred Options** - Final options based on results of option appraisal and assessment of affordability, deliverability and risk.

1.15   The guidance also sets out the national transport goals that provide the over-arching priorities for Northumberland's third LTP. The national transport goals are as follows:

- Support Economic Growth;

- Reduce Carbon Emissions;

- Promote Equality of Opportunity;

- Contribute to Better Safety, Security and Health; and

- Improve Quality of Life and Healthy Natural Environment.

1.16   The importance of these national transport goals and the related network challenges for Northumberland was assessed by considering available evidence, including having regard for local strategic objectives and priorities as contained in Northumberland's emerging Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Development Framework (LDF).

Consultation and Involvement

1.17   Whilst the County Council is the lead organisation in preparing the LTP, the Plan is intended to deliver improvements that will contribute towards achieving a sustainable local transport system for residents, businesses and visitors. In preparing this Plan, the Council identified what transport stakeholders, users and the wider

public consider are the main transport related issues in the county and their future needs and aspirations in the County. To assist in the preparation of the Plan, the Council is carried out three main phases of engagement and consultation.

1.18   Firstly, a paper entitled 'LTP3: Identifying the Issues' - was prepared in January 2010. This helped to identify which of the national goals and challenges are important for Northumberland and also where there is a link to Sustainable Community Strategy objectives. Key stakeholders representing a broad range of transport users and operators were involved.

1.19   The key issues from the consultation included:

- recognition of the rural nature of the county and the particular challenges that it presents, including accessibility, public transport provision and protecting the natural environment;

- the need for sensitive solutions to transport problems in historic market towns;

- existing traffic congestion on the highway network;

- implications of new housing developments on the existing transport infrastructure;

- cross-boundary issues concerning commuter traffic; and

- concern over damage caused by freight traffic to rural roads.

1.20   Secondly, workshops were held with Members and invited stakeholders. These presented the problems and opportunities identified from the evidence, proposed goals and objectives and generated options for meeting the challenges.

1.21   All comments and responses to the issues paper and workshops were considered in the development of the draft LTP, which was then subject to public consultation. The main issues that arose from the consultation included:

- The need for strong links between the LTP and the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Development Framework;
- The importance of transports role in supporting the local economy;
- The need to reduce carbon emissions and promote sustainable and active travel;
- The need to ensure the transport network is made resilient to the effects of climate change;
- The importance of the natural and historic environment and the need to protect it from transport development;
- Maintenance is a priority, particularly for cyclists;
- Recognition of the role of public rights of way as part of the transport network, particularly for active travel.

1.22   The comments and responses received during consultation have been taken into account and have informed the final LTP strategy and implementation plan.

Strategy Evaluation and Appraisal

Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.23 Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programs Regulations (2004) it is a statutory requirement to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) during the preparation of the LTP. The SEA is a process by which the likely significant environmental effects of a plan are tested as an integral part of plan preparation.

1.24 The purpose of the SEA Directive is 'to provide a high level of protection to the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development'. The SEA process was carried out alongside the development of the LTP and has provided information on the likely environmental impacts of a number of different potential strategy options designed to address the LTP objectives.

Health Impact Assessment

1.25 Consideration of 'Human Health' is a legal requirement in a SEA and a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is an integral part of a SEA to identify and inform health issues in Plans. The HIA has been carried out in accordance with existing national guidance published by the Department of Health. The HIA report is included in the final SEA document.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

1.26 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Habitats Regulations) require the Council to carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) if the LTP is likely to have a significant effect on existing and proposed sites. These sites include Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and listed Ramsar sites.

1.27 The HRA was undertaken in a stage by stage approach alongside the development of the Plan. Where significant adverse effects were identified, alternative options, avoidance and mitigation measures are recommended to prevent the LTP from having a detrimental effect.

Equalities, Inclusion and the Equality Act

1.28 The Council recognises that transport needs to be inclusive and wherever reasonable, available to all members of the community. This Plan has been developed to ensure that the Council fulfils the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. All policies and measures take due account of the needs of all members of the community and is implicit in everything we do.

1 Introduction

Building on Our Success

1.29 The second LTP (LTP2) for Northumberland was produced in July 2006 and covers the period 2006 to 2011. Through this Plan, the Council secured capital funding totalling nearly £100million to invest in transport improvements and highway maintenance across the County. The overall aim for LTP2 was:

'To create and maintain a safe, sustainable, efficient and integrated transport system which maximises accessibility, minimises the adverse effects of traffic on the environment and communities and facilitates the development of a strong economy and community'.

1.30 The aims and objectives for LTP2 are provided in Figure 1.2 below. Good progress has been made towards this aim over the past five years through delivery of schemes and initiatives to address a wide range of problems. These successes have built a strong foundation on which the County's new long-term transport strategy and third LTP have been built.

Figure 1.1 – LTP2 Aims and Objectives

To be inserted...

Key Achievements

1.31 We have established a good record for scheme delivery during the period of the second LTP, consistently spending our allocated capital funding and delivering the planned projects both on time and budget. Some of the key schemes and initiatives that have been delivered over the second LTP period include:

- Construction of the Pegswood Bypass Major Scheme to improve connections between Morpeth and Ashington;

- Improvements to Berwick, Prudhoe, Alnmouth and Stocksfield railway stations including improved car parking, interchange and level access;

- Provision of real time passenger information along the Tyne Valley at key bus stops in Prudhoe, Corbridge and Hexham;

- Construction of a new bus station in Morpeth as part of a major town centre development;

- Funding for new accessible vehicles for community transport providers;

- Completion of Coast and Castle cycle route between Alnmouth and Warkworth and the A1 to Holy Island;

- Partnership working with Sustrans to secure funding totalling nearly £3million towards improving walking and cycling links and encouraging active travel in Blyth, Bedlington and Ashington;

- Pedestrian improvements in town centre shopping areas in Berwick and Hexham;

- Setting up of journey scheduling system for community transport providers;

- Launch of car club schemes at Wylam and Prudhoe;

- Launch of Northumberland Car Share Website;

- Delivery of Safer Routes to School projects linked to School Travel Plans across the County;

- Launch of training schemes for motorcyclists and elderly drivers;

- Implementation of local safety schemes at high risk sites including A1068 near Cramlington; and

- Delivering Bikeability cycle training to over 2,500 children each year across the County.

The Difference Made

1.32 Good planning and programming has enabled us to deliver the best possible results for the funding made available, make progress towards addressing our transport problems and contribute towards the aims and objectives of the second LTP. This is demonstrated by delivering outputs and outcomes for a wide range of performance indicators including:

- Improved road safety with a 28% reduction in all road users killed and seriously injured, 55% reduction in children KSI and a 24% reduction in slight injuries;

- More people using rail services;

- Increase in the number of cycling trips;

- Travel plans adopted at 100% of primary schools across Northumberland;

- Increasing the proportion of children who are walking and cycling to school;

- Maintaining the condition of the principal road network and public rights of way; and

- Improved management of our transport assets including roads, bridges and streetlights.

1 Introduction

2. Wider Issues

This chapter:

- places the Local Transport Plan in the wider context of Northumberland, the Tyne & Wear City Region, North East Region and the national picture.

2.1 National Policy Influences

The Local Transport Act 2008

2.1 The Transport Act 2000 introduced a statutory requirement for local transport authorities to produce a Local Transport Plan (LTP) every five years and to keep it under review. The Local transport Act 2008 retains the statutory requirement, but provides greater flexibilities in how LTPs are developed and reviewed. The LTP:

- Can be reviewed as required by the local transport authority and not necessarily every five years as with the first two LTPs;

- Will need to include a distinct long-term strategy with details of transport objectives and approaches; and

- Should provide details of a shorter duration implementation plan showing how the long-term strategy will be delivered over a three to five year period.

2.2 A clear distinction between what is strategy and what is implementation plan is advised. The 2008 Act also removed the requirement to produce a separate bus strategy. Bus measures are instead integrated into the core LTP strategy and implementation plan.

Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS)

2.3 In 2007 the Government outlined its approach to long-term transport planning in Towards a Sustainable Transport System (TaSTS), which was published in response to the Eddington Transport Study and the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change. These challenged existing practices and perceptions in a number of ways. Eddington argued that economic prosperity relies on a transport system that functions well, and that the impact of transport measures should be measured across a range of social, economic and environmental outcomes. The Stern Review emphasised the costs of not adapting to the inevitable consequences of climate change and concluded that the benefits of early action considerably outweigh the costs.

2.4 Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS) (DfT 2008) explains how the Government is putting this into action and sets out five goals for transport, focusing on the challenge of delivering strong economic growth while at the same time reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These goals take full account of transport's wider impact on climate change, health, quality of life and the natural environment. The goals are:

- To support national economic competitiveness and sustainable growth by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks;

- To reduce transport's emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcome of tackling climate change;

- To contribute to better safety, security and health and longer life expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport, and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health;

- To promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society; and

- To improve quality of life for transport users and non-transport users, and to promote a health natural environment.

2.5   As part of the DaSTS process, the National Networks study programme has been commissioned by DfT to examine some of the most pressing transport problems in England at the present time. This takes account of the key role that transport plays in helping to deliver economic competitiveness and regeneration, environmental improvements and wider social benefits. The one study of particular relevance to Northumberland is the 'Access to Tyne & Wear City Region Study', which addresses a series of challenges within the City Region and its environments. The study has recently been extended to include the A1 north of Newcastle.

2.6   Alongside the programme of National Networks studies, DfT has also made funding available to the English Regions to undertake further studies of transport priorities in their areas. In the North East of England this programme has been led by ONE North East in close co-operation with a range of regional transport partners. Of these studies, of particular relevance to Northumberland are:

- A study of Strategic Connections in the North East, examining transport network deficiencies and the case for transport investment to links between the City Regions in the North East, and links to other Regions in the UK;

- A study of Rural Transport Issues that examines through case studies (including a case study of the Berwick area) the particular transport challenges faced by rural communities in the North East, and measures that can help to tackle these challenges.

Climate Change Act 2008

2.7   The Climate Change Act 2008 requires greenhouse gas emissions in the UK to be reduced by at least 80% on 1990 levels by 2050 and 34% on 1990 levels by 2020. With the transport sector representing 21% of total UK domestic greenhouse gas emissions, action to move towards a low carbon transport system is a key component in meeting these obligations. The Government's strategy "Low Carbon Transport: A Greener Future" (DfT July 2009) acknowledges the scale of the challenge for transport and sets out the actions the DfT is taking.

2.8   Local authorities are important in leading change, influencing journey patterns and promoting more sustainable choices.   The DfT encourages local authorities to develop LTPs that take significant steps towards mitigating climate change, by encouraging the development of sustainable transport systems, facilitating behaviour change and reducing the need to travel.

2.9   In addition to measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, local authorities must put in place measures to improve the resilience of local transport to the impacts of climate change, such as flooding and deterioration of roads, in line with the Government's Adapting to Climate Change Programme.

2.2 Regional Policy Influences

Regional Spatial Strategy

2.10   Although the Regional Spatial Strategies are being revoked under coalition Government policy, there is still a need to ensure that land use and local transport plans are mutually consistent, and deliver the most effective and sustainable development for their area.   There are four themes underlying the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East;

- Delivering economic prosperity and growth;

- Creating sustainable communities;

- Conserving and enhancing the built and natural environment of the region together with its heritage and culture; and

- Improving connectivity within and beyond the region.

2.11   In line with these key themes, the RSS contains the following transport policies which are relevant to the LTP:

- International Gateways - including development of infrastructure at ports, including the Port of Blyth.

- Regional Transport Corridors - improving sustainable access and efficient movement on regional transport corridors including the A1/East Coast Main Line and A69/Tyne Valley Rail Line.

- Regional Public Transport Provision - encouraging increased bus travel.

- Strategic Public Transport Hubs - development of interchanges, including access to them by walking and cycling.

- Demand Management Measures - to address congestion, environmental and safety issues.

- Parking & Travel Plans - seeking to minimise parking provision and ensuring travel plans are prepared for all major developments.

- Accessibility Within & Between City Regions - improved access by public transport.

- Accessibility in Rural Areas - improving public transport, including demand responsive transport and community rail development.

- Sustainable Freight Distribution - supporting the development of rail freight and prioritising road freight alongside public transport.

Regional Economic Strategy

2.12   The Regional Economic Strategy recognises the role that transport has to play in the strengthening of the regional economy and recommends that transport investment is designed to support increased economic activity, business competitiveness and sustainable communities. With this in mind, the strategy outlines a number of challenges which need to be met with the core theme underlying these challenges being connectivity. A number of priorities for investment have been identified, including improvements to the A1, a key strategic link for Northumberland.

2.13   Northumberland's economy cannot be divorced from that of Tyneside - almost a third (28%) of the workforce commute to Tyne and Wear on a daily basis. Therefore, developing the region's economy must focus on both the connections within Northumberland but also beyond the region's boundary, in particular south to Tyne & Wear.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

2.14   Local Enterprise Partnerships are part of proposals to replace the current Regional Development Agencies, including One North East. Northumberland County Council has collaborated with the local authorities of Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland and the local businesses community to develop a proposal for a LEP. The proposal was submitted to government in December 2010 and was approved on 13th January 2011.

2.15   In line with Government policy, the North Eastern Local Enterprise Partnership is designed to bring together the two councils and businesses on an equal footing and with one voice in order to provide strategic leadership in across North Tyneside and Northumberland and create the right environment for business success and economic growth.

2.16   The LEP proposal approved by Government sets out a vision for the LEP area to become Europe's premier location for low carbon, sustainable, knowledge-based private sector growth and jobs. To achieve this vision, partners identified that the LEP should focus on four strategic economic priorities:

- Supporting enterprise and private sector business growth

- Building on key economic strengths

- Improving skills and performance

- Strengthening transport, connectivity and infrastructure

2.17 At the time of writing, partners are moving towards forming the LEP Board and establishing the partnership on the basis of core operating principles.

2.18 The North East has also submitted a complimentary proposal to Government for a North East Economic Partnership – a more strategic economic development body that would reflect the distinctive economic circumstances and potential of the North East area. This partnership would provide appropriate support to enable LEP delivery and the realisation of national economic priorities in the North East.

Health and Well-being

2.19 In February 2008 Public Health North East published *Better Health, Fairer Health: A Strategy for 21st Century health and well-being in the North East of England.* It aims to make the health of the region the best of any in the country over the next 25 years. Its actions are informed by the following vision:

"The North East will have the best and fairest health and well-being, and will be recognised for its outstanding and sustainable quality of life."

2.20 The strategy sets out the following transport-related actions:

- We will lobby for cycle lanes to be given 'double yellow line' status to prevent their obstruction by parked vehicles; and for the norm in road building within the region to be the development of separate cycle lanes alongside motor vehicle provision.
- We will work to establish measures for assessing cost-effectiveness of road and traffic schemes that allocate values in accordance with health and well-being objectives, removing the current tilt toward car usage in assessments. We will lobby for these considerations to be built into national decision-making.
- We will address the ways in which costs and benefits of new traffic schemes and other urban design issues are calculated to remove biases and perverse incentives that obstruct shifting priority to walking, cycling and public transport.
- We will develop regional targets to increase walking, cycling and use of public transport, and will work to ensure that....high priority is given to developments that increase these modes and discourage car usage.

2.21 Under the key theme of "Obesity, Diet and Exercise" the strategy sets out a vision for the North East population to be the most physically active in the country, both in its activities of daily living and in its recreational choices.

2.3 Tyne & Wear City Region Policy Influences

Tyne & Wear City Region Transport Strategy

2.22 The Tyne and Wear City Region spans a wide geographical area, encompassing the five local authority districts that make-up Tyne and Wear (Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland, South Tyneside and North Tyneside) as well as northern Durham and southern parts of Northumberland, both of which have close economic and commuter ties to Tyne and Wear.

2.23 A new Tyne and Wear City Region Transport Strategy will set out the role that transport will play in driving long-term economic growth for the Tyne and Wear City Region, ensuring it cements its status as a great place to live, work and visit. It will highlight how important it is to have good cross-boundary transport links that will help businesses to grow and flourish, attract investment and enable a greater number of people access to jobs and services. Working closely with local authorities and the private sector, the Transport Strategy will focus on making better use of existing transport infrastructure and assets. It will also identify specific improvements, across all modes of travel from road to rail, sea to air that will be required to help deliver a vision of sustainable economic growth and prosperity for the whole of the Tyne and Wear City Region.

2.24 The City Region Transport Strategy will complement the Northumberland Local Transport Plan as well as the Plans that are also being developed for Tyne & Wear and Durham. These plans will set out, in detail, the priorities for transport improvements for communities at a local, district-specific level.

2.4 Local Policy Influences

Sustainable Community Strategy

2.25 Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS) are key long-term planning documents for improving the quality of life and services in a local area. Northumberland articulates its ambition and vision through the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). The current SCS vision is:

"To make Northumberland a place that is resilient for the future."

2.26 Emerging work on the new SCS is establishing what is distinctive about Northumberland and how thematic areas can contribute to maintaining and improving the environmental, community, economic and social well being of communities. Seven 'Big Partnership Issues' have been identified. These focus on outcomes, are cross-cutting and overlap with each other. On this basis, every organisation can contribute to most, if not all, issues. The seven issues are:

- Making climate change work to our advantage;

- Creating sustainable communities;

- Re-balancing our prosperity;

- Giving everyone a voice and influence;

- Supporting our young people into adulthood;

- Providing healthy lifestyle choice;

- Delivering services differently.

2.27 The Local Transport Plan will be central to achieving the aims of the SCS by assisting in:

- Responding to climate change by offering alternatives to the private car;

- Providing a transport network that can withstand the projected changes in weather caused by climate change;

- Helping to create sustainable communities by affording safe and quality access to key services;

- Providing access for all to a range of education and employment opportunities and supporting the aims of the Economic Strategy;

- Supporting vulnerable people; and

- Helping to provide healthy lifestyle choices through enabling and promoting of active travel.

Council Plan

2.28 The County Council recognises that we are 'Stronger Together' and has set out themes to provide the focus for organisational development and transformation in its corporate plan. These themes are:

- Leading locally – respecting local identity, recognising that one size does not fit all and that we must work with local people to develop local services;

- Embracing unity – unifying as one but recognising, valuing and respecting differences, celebrating pride and integration; and

- Looking outwards – being open, without walls and boundaries, a learning organisation that works in partnership, visionary and a champion of aspiration and ambitions.

2.29 Northumberland's communities are very diverse both in terms of demography and geography. The local transport strategy must be able to provide flexible solutions to meet local goals and objectives by understanding the differing needs of the many stakeholders and implementing the strategy through involvement and consultation with local communities.

Development Plans

2.30   Northumberland County Council recognises that land use planning is an integral part of the transport policy framework which can contribute towards improving access to services by reducing the need, and distance, to travel and supporting more sustainable travel choices.

2.31   In 2004 the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act brought about changes to the Development Plan System. Under the new system, Local Plans are being gradually replaced by the Local Development Framework (LDF). At present the statutory Development Plan is made up of a variety of documents including "saved" Local Plan policies and adopted local development documents covering parts of the unitary council area. These have been brought together in the Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework.

2.32   The LDF and Sustainable Communities Strategy together provide the overarching strategic policy framework for Northumberland, including the LTP. The Local Development Scheme provides the programme management overview for the LDF and sets out the content and timetable for the production of new planning policy documents. The LDF can include the following

- **Development plan Documents (DPDs) –** includes the Core Strategy DPD; the Northumberland Delivery DPD and the Berwick Eastern Arc area action Plan;
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)-** provide greater detail on the policies in DPDs;
- **Statement of Community Involvement** – sets out how the Council will involve people and organisations in developing new planning policies and documents.
- **Annual Monitoring Report –** provides information on the progress being madewith the LDF and how well current policies are working in practice.

2.33   The preparation of the Northumberland Core Strategy DPD has started and the document will set out a strategic vision and a spatial strategy for sustainable development as well as protecting and enhancing Northumberland's high quality environment. During 2011 the priority will be to develop and consult on issues and options and to then identify preferred policy approaches. Adoption of the DPD will be during 2013.

2.34   Work has also started on the preparation of the Berwick Eastern Arc Area Action Plan. This will provide the planning framework for strategic development and regeneration within the town of Berwick upon Tweed.

2.35   A separate LDF exists for Northumberland National Park. Its Core Strategy, adopted in 2009, sets out the overall spatial planning strategy for the National Park to 2024.

Economic Strategy

2.36   Northumberland's Economic Strategy (2010–2015) sets out the need to enable a resilient and sustainable future for businesses, people and places, which capitalises on our unique environment. The vision of the Economic Strategy is:

   'To secure opportunities for residents and businesses in a resilient economy'.

2.37   To achieve this we will:

- Become a Low Carbon Economy - develop innovation through specialisms at the forefront of the renewables sector; and apply low carbon technologies to our mixed economy, guided by principles of sustainability and underpinned by a skilled labour market.

- Create the Conditions for Sustainable Growth - provide the conditions in our communities to retain and attract people and businesses through regeneration and economic development. Improve housing, transport and communications infrastructure. Develop efficient and effective partnerships which integrate customer-focussed service delivery.

- Support Resilient and Diverse Sectors - provide facilities and support to the business community and develop new opportunities in niche areas of the private sector. Secure efficient and effective working practices in the public and voluntary and community sectors.

- Enable Inclusion and Enterprise - secure equality of opportunity; tackle poverty and its causes, and support a mixed economy by integrating skills, enterprise, health and employability activities.

2.38 The LTP will help deliver the Economic Strategy by implementing and supporting the transport improvements it identifies as necessary to improve connectivity both within the county and further afield. This is an essential part of its objective to: *create and maintain a connected, sustainable, collaborative, efficient and integrated economy.* The ways in which the LTP will support the economy are described in Chapter 6.

Housing Strategy

2.39 Northumberland County Council is a housing authority with a statutory duty to identify housing need and publish a housing strategy to meet those needs. The Northumberland Housing Strategy will be an Interim Strategy in 2010 to be updated following the adoption of the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) and Economic Strategy, subsequently informing the Local Development Framework (LDF).

2.40 The strategy is focused around five objectives:

- Rejuvenating the existing housing stock;

- Providing choice through the type and mix of new housing;

- Improving and maintaining existing housing; and

- Addressing specific community and social needs.

- Reducing the impact of climate change

2.41 With the focus of these objectives being on housing stock and reducing the impact of climate change, there is a close correlation with the intended outcomes of the Local Transport Plan.

2 Wider Issues

Local Investment Plan

2.42   The Local Investment Plan is designed to help to deliver core local and regional objectives and programmes for delivery of housing, regeneration and new development. The Plan has been prepared as a result of the single conversation between Northumberland County Council, Homes and Communities Agency" (HCA) and key stakeholders.

2.43   The term Single Conversation refers to its comprehensive coverage – including the full range of housing, infrastructure, regeneration and community activities that are within its scope. It helps to:

- Bridge local ambition and national targets

- Achieve their vision through a shared investment agreement

- Agree and secure local delivery

- Achieve positive outcomes for people and places.

2.44   The Plan considers what the Council's and HCA's shared investment priorities are, and how we make the best use of resources. Some resources are dependent upon Government making them available, and the plan needs to be flexible to respond to changing Government priorities and to strategic opportunities.

2.45   The Investment Plan will lead to an Investment Agreement. It will be reviewed and refreshed as we develop our response to emerging issues and as the context which impacts on investment changes.

2.46   The Local Investment Plan will allow the HCA and Northumberland County Council (NCC) to contribute to the delivery of strategic goals to:

- Deliver sustainable economic growth in Northumberland and in doing so contribute to regional competitiveness.

- Deliver sustainable, well designed housing that meets needs and aspirations, utilising industry mechanisms as appropriate including proactively promoting the use of renewable technologies and creating.

- Ensure that regeneration and housing are delivered to high standards which improve the publi realm and protect and enhance the natural environment.

- Improve the quality of existing homes in all sectors.

- Narrow the poverty gap in Northumberland through opportunities for the local labour market to access training and jobs that are created.

- Promote economic and social well being for residents and businesses.

2.47   Spatially this includes:

- Place shaping of the whole county sensitive to the needs of its diverse communities and to support sustainable economic growth.

- Delivering complex area based regeneration schemes in Berwick, Blyth and Ashington.

- Accelerating the delivery of housing growth in the South East of the county and our market towns.

- Tackling affordability issues and taking forward the principles of 'The living working countryside' in more rural areas.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan

2.48   The duty for all local highway authorities to prepare a Rights of Way Improvement Plan for their area was set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000.

2.49   The Northumberland Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) was prepared in 2007 and identifies the Council's strategic objectives, policies and actions for the management and improvement of the rights of way network through to 2017. It is a statutory document and complements the LTP by helping to ensure that improvements to rights of way can contribute to wider transport objectives in the County.

2.50   The vision is to manage and maintain a public rights of way network in Northumberland which:

"Enables the public's use of rights of way for recreation and purposeful journeys as well as promoting wider countryside access and contributing to the social and economic well being of residents of the county and the health and enjoyment of its local communities and visitors."

2.51   The RoWIP recognises that rights of way not only provide opportunities for recreation but also form an integral part of the highway network by providing safe and accessible routes to work, schools and local services. In combination with the main highway network rights of way can contribute to the delivery of sustainable transport solutions in Northumberland which help enhance the quality of life of the County's residents. This was recognised in the Council's previous LTP and has continued relevance for LTP3 with its emphasis on sustainable and active travel.

2.52   Northumberland has an extensive and varied network of public rights of way which provides:

- Opportunities for physical, recreational and sporting activity.
- Opportunities to enhance personal well being and health.
- Access to services, school and work without using a car.
- Support for the tourism industry and local businesses.
- A local educational and cultural resource.

2.53 As an integral part of the wider transport network, public rights of way can help deliver the LTP goals by providing opportunities for sustainable and active travel, helping to achieve modal shift, improving health and reducing carbon emissions.

National Park and AONB Management Plans

2.54 National Park Management Plans set out a long term vision and a shorter term action plan for how the objectives for a National Park should be fullfilled through sustainable development. They set out a framework for activities pursued within a National Park, including transport. AONB Management Plans are similar.

2.55 Management Plans for Northumberland National Park, the North Pennies AONB and Northumberland Coast AONB set out a vision and framework to guide the future of each area to 2014. They contain a number of transport related objectives designed to increase the use of sustainable transport and reduce the impact of transport on the environment.

Corridor of Opportunity – South East Northumberland Growth Point

2.56 South East Northumberland achieved Growth Point status in July 2008. A programme of Development was then prepared to set out how the Growth Point Partnership's growth ambitions might be realised. Growth Point status was a commitment between Government and the Growth Point Partnership to increase the level of housing provision in the sub region and accelerate its delivery. However it is not solely about housing numbers; it is also about:

- Improving the quality of the housing and the design of new development;

- Widening housing choice;

- Providing "greener" housing (the Housing Green Paper agenda); and

- Improving the quality of life for local people.

2.57 The vision for the South East Northumberland Growth Point states that:

"Our vision is to create a strengthened network of sustainable communities in South East Northumberland's Corridor of Opportunity through broadening the range and improving the quality of housing, regenerating town centres, and supporting new economic enterprise and employment"

2.58 The Growth Point area comprises the whole of the former districts of Blyth Valley and Wansbeck and extends northwards into the former Rural Coalfield area and westward to include the market town of Morpeth. Its main settlements are Ashington, Blyth, Cramlington and Morpeth.

2.59 The Government has indicated that there will be no further rounds of the Growth Fund but remains committed to new housing growth, as evidenced by the introduction of the proposed New Homes Bonus to incentivise the delivery of new housing. The County Council similarly remains committed to new housing growth in South East Northumberland.

2.60 It is up to the County Council to determine an appropriate scale, location and phasing of new residential development. The Growth Point Programme of Development remains our long term vision and general statement of intent regarding new housing growth in South East Northumberland albeit with some amendments to housing priorities to reflect new circumstances. The scale, location and phasing of development will statutorily be determined through the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents.

2.61 Providing an efficient and sustainable transport network will be essential to facilitating the successful delivery of the Growth Point programme. A Transport and Access Study has been commissioned to enable wider choices for residents of the new developments. The proposed Morpeth Northern Bypass is critical to the realisation of housing and employment growth ambitions in the North Morpeth Growth Area.

Climate Change

2.62 Evidence published by the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) clearly demonstrates that the net effect of human activity over the last 250 years has been one of warming, particularly over the last 50 years. In order to address this challenge, individuals, organisations and governments need to assess their impact on the causes of climate change, where possible mitigate their effects and when necessary adapt to changes in climate. The County Council has signed the Nottingham Declaration on climate change which provides a context and approach for considering action to address climate change issues.

2.63 One of the key deliverables of the Nottingham Declaration is the preparation and implementation of a Council Action Plan which seeks to progressively address the causes and impacts of climate change. This plan was produced in 2010 and is set in the context of "The Heat is On", the strategic framework for climate change planning in Northumberland. The purpose of the document is to encourage partners to put in place measures to address the causes and implications of climate change in Northumberland, by mainstreaming climate change planning within their own core business.

2.64 The Climate Change Action Plan sets out what climate change could mean for Northumberland, the need for action by the County Council and the policy it has adopted. It identifies individual actions at a strategic level which are supported by more detailed actions contained in Council Service Plans. This LTP will help deliver the ambitions for climate change by future proofing transport needs and providing a planned approach to delivering a reduction in carbon emissions from transport, in line with national recommendations.

The Covenant of Mayors

2.65 The Covenant of Mayors is a commitment by towns and cities across Europe to achieve a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2020. The County Council, along with all other local authorities in the North East, signed the Covenant in January 2009. Signatories are required to produce a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP), which sets out how the Authority will meet its carbon reduction target by 2020. The

SEAP will include actions related to transport and mobility. The County Council has committed itself to a 20.5% reduction in CO_2 emissions from a 2005 baseline, which equates to a 34% reduction on 1990 levels.

3. Northumberland Today

This chapter:

- provides an analysis of the demographic, socio-economic trends and wider economic and environmental characteristics of Northumberland today;

- describes the existing transport infrastructure;

- explains existing travel patterns and connectivity; and

- identifies a number of emerging challenges for transport.

Introduction

3.1 Northumberland is the most northerly and least populated county in England. It is essentially a rural county with expansive open countryside in the north and west and a more populated area in the south east. It is bounded to the north by Scotland, to the west by Cumbria and to the south by Tyneside and Durham. The County's coastline is 133 miles in length with ports at Blyth, Amble and Berwick. There is a National Park, two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty including the North Pennines and the Northumberland Coast and Hadrian's Wall is a World Heritage Site. The key statistics for Northumberland are summarised in Table 3.1 below.

Theme	Statistics
Population	Northumberland has a resident population of 311,000 (in 2008). Population has increased by 4% over the past 27 years, mostly due to migration. Density of population is lower than the national average. The age distribution is older than the rest of the UK. Low proportion of working age residents.
Economy	Broad based economy with reliance on the service sector. Over 80% of businesses employ less than 5 staff. The public sector is the biggest employer with over 42,000 people working in public administration, health, education and social care. Unemployment is lower than the national average, but varies across the County. Tourism is one of Northumberland's most important industries, directly employing over 12,000 people.

Theme	Statistics
Society	Northumberland is ranked as the 87th most deprived authority in England.
	There are areas of chronic deprivation in the south east of the county and more localised deprivation elsewhere.
	Educational attainment is good with only 12% of residents not having any qualifications, similar to the national average.
	Car ownership is slightly higher than the national average.
	Health is generally similar to the England average and better than the North East region.
Environment	Air quality is very good, except for transport related problems in Blyth.
	Northumberland Coast and North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
	Hadrian's Wall designated as a World Heritage Site.
	Heritage Coast, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas, National Nature Reserves and other protected features.
	Outstanding archaeology and cultural heritage including listed buildings, scheduled monuments and conservation areas.
	Northumberland National Park.
	Considered the most tranquil county in England and has the darkest skies.

Table 3.1. Key Statistics

Population

3.2   Although home to almost 311,000 people, nobody lives in a settlement with more than 35,500 residents. The total resident population has increased overall by 4% from 1971 to 2008 as a result of net inward migration. There are however spatial variations, with Berwick-upon-Tweed having a 3% decline and Alnwick area having an 8% increase since 1990. Projections indicate that the overall population will increase by 1.7% over the next 15 years.

3.3 The density of population is much lower than the rest of the country with an average of 0.61 people per hectare. However, there are spatial variations with the north and west of the county having a population density of 0.3 people per hectare compared to the south east having a population density of 9.77 people per hectare.

3.4 The number of households is expected to increase by 4.5% to 2026, even higher than the growth in population. The main reasons are more working age people living alone and improving mortality rates leading to a greater number of older people, more of whom living alone.

Figure 3.1 Northumberland Area

3.5 The age distribution is older than that of England and Wales with 27% of residents aged over 60 years old. The population is set to get older, with people over 55 making up a much higher proportion of the total population in 2021 than they did in 2006. This change will be particularly marked in rural areas. The County is predicted to have a higher proportion of over 85s than the English average. This will place additional strain on the county's infrastructure as more people require health and social care on a regular basis.
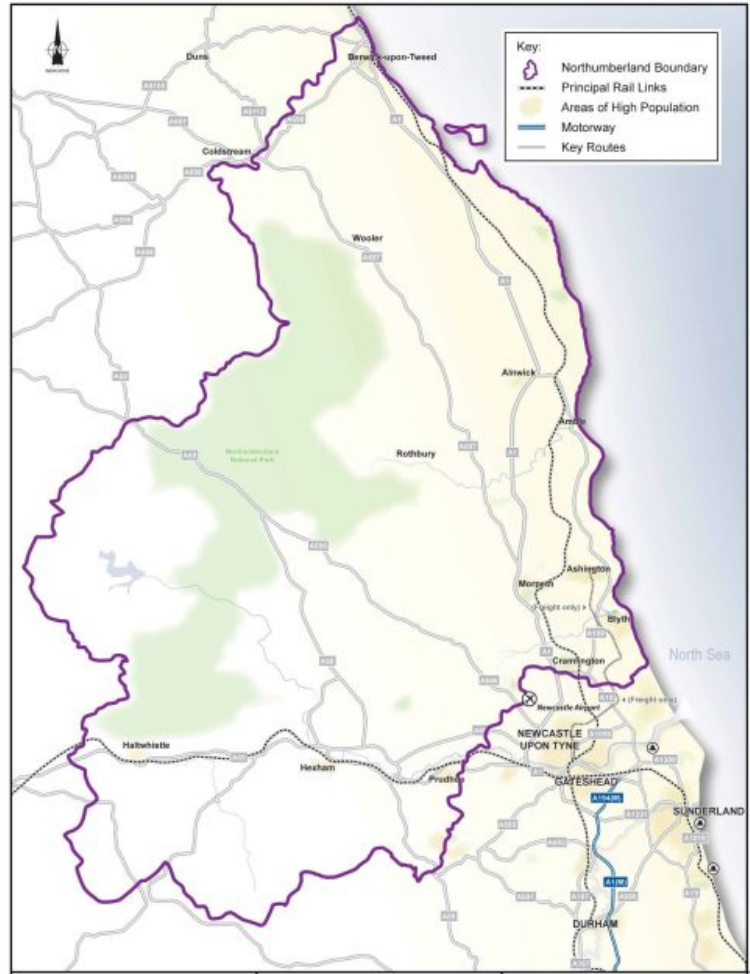
Emerging Challenges

The population of Northumberland is increasing, particularly in rural areas such as Alnwick and the Tyne Valley. This will put increased pressure on the transport network between these areas and urban centres.

The population density in Northumberland is low. This means that key services and facilities may not be commercially viable in some locations which leads to an increased need to travel.

The number of households in Northumberland is forecast to increase. These new households must be located where sustainable travel options and good access to services are available.

Northumberland has a high, and increasing, proportion of elderly residents compared to the national and regional averages. This will lead to a need for transport to health facilities and hospitals as well as additional funding for concessionary travel.

Economy

3.6   Northumberland's economic base has seen radical change over the last 30 years. The last traces of a once substantial deep coal mining industry have disappeared and the agricultural workforce has continued to downsize. The county now has a broader based economy, with jobs created in service sectors. The public sector is now the largest employer in the County with tourism, leisure and retail also offsetting the loss of traditional industries. Forestry is a significant industry and is more important to the economy of Northumberland than it is to any other county in England, producing around 500,000 tonnes of timber per year. This is likely to increase by up to 10% on current levels by 2020. One in three people are employed in the various sub-sectors of health and social work, education, public administration and defence. However, employment in the public sector is expected to contract substantially over the next five years as part of the Governments deficit reduction programme. This presents Northumberland with challenges in re-balancing its economy.

3.7   Northumberland's economy is intrinsically linked to that of Tyneside. Whilst a total of 28% of the workforce commute to Tyne and Wear, the county also benefits from in-migration, both for work and for the culture, leisure and tourism opportunities on offer.

3.8   Despite this, overall economic performance is poor. Disposable income levels are significantly lower than both the regional and national equivalents. Unemployment is consistent with the national level, but the average wage is significantly lower. This is because many of the available local jobs are part time, seasonal or unskilled.

3.9   Tourism makes a significant contribution to the Northumberland economy, accounting for approximately 11% of employment in the county. However, the Regional Visitor Survey 2008 showed that 83% of visitors to Northumberland arrive by private car. Tourism is a growth industry, which therefore has the potential to increase traffic

levels unless public transport connections are improved. Market Town Welcome Surveys in 2009 identified that traffic management and congestion issues are visitor concerns in key attractor towns. It is recognised that many visitors prefer the independence that car use brings, therefore, these issues must be addressed.

3.10 The County Council's Economic Strategy 20010-15 states that *"connectivity in the county must improve, enabling economic growth through access to work, commerce, education and services."* There is a need to support Northumberland's economic competitiveness by developing internal connectivity and linking Northumberland into domestic and global networks. This includes improved connections to air and sea ports as well as improvements outside the county which will benefit residents and businesses given our interdependencies with neighbouring areas.

Emerging Challenges

The working age population of Northumberland is greater than the number of jobs in the area. Some of these people who want to work must therefore commute to neighbouring authorities. This contributes to congestion and air quality issues both in Northumberland and the neighbouring authorities.

There is an emphasis on employment growth within Tyne and Wear. Northumberland must therefore seek to provide more employment within the county in order to reduce the need to travel to work.

The majority of tourists who visit Northumberland use the private car for access to the area and to get around throughout their stay. There is a need to protect tourist attractions by promoting sustainable access and managing car use.

There is a need to improve connectivity in the county, enabling economic growth through access to work, commerce, education and services.

Society

3.11 Some of the principal difficulties facing Northumberland relate to its large geographical area, dispersed population and remote communities in the rural north and west. Over 49% of Northumberland is classed as being rural and represents 151,503 of the population. This low population density and long travel distances make providing and accessing key services especially by public transport extremely difficult. Barriers to housing and services are a particular concern in these rural areas.

3.12 Deprivation is chronic is parts of the county. Whilst Northumberland is ranked the 87th most deprived county / unitary authority in England (where 1 = most deprived, 149 = least deprived), the south east of the county has significant concentrations of people living in deprivation. Of Northumberland's resident population, 7.5% (23,345 people) live in areas (Super Output Areas) in the 10% most deprived areas nationally. Of those, one fifth (21% or 4,923 people) are between 0 – 15 years old. Nine per cent of all Northumberland's children aged between 0-15 live in the 10% most deprived areas in England.

3.13 The Department of Health Northumberland Health Profile 2010 reports that overall, the health of people in Northumberland is generally similar to the England average. However, inequalities exist in terms of life expectancy. For men living in the most deprived areas, life expectancy is eight years lower than the English average. For women the difference is five years lower.

3.14 The extent of adults with no qualifications at county level is just above the national average (2001 Census). As with young people, this varies considerably, with over 40% of adults having no qualifications in the South East, while the West area has fewer than 20% of adults with no qualifications.

3.15 Higher skills levels are also an issue. Just 18% of Northumberland residents are qualified to NVQ Level 4 or above compared to the national average of 28.7%. Provisional figures for 2009/10 show that 53.5% of pupils achieved at least five GCSEs, grade A* to C including English and Maths. This level of attainment is consistent with the national (England) level. The number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) varies considerably. The county average was 7.3% compared to 12% in the South East, (Nov 2009-Jan 2010 average).

3.16 Whilst Northumberland as a whole has a higher employment rate than the North East Region and Great Britain, employment rates within parts of the county are varied, and rates are generally lowest in the south east. It is a stark reflection of Northumberland's economy that the proportion of working age people claiming out of work benefits ranges from between 3.9% (Stocksfield with Mickley, west Northumberland) to 44.2% (Croft in Blyth, south east Northumberland).

3.17 On this basis, the reality for residents is that there are stark contrasts. Communities in some parts of the county are among the 'most deprived' in England. These are located mainly in the urban south east but there are smaller pockets of multiple deprivation elsewhere. Other communities, broadly clustered around the transport corridors with easy access to Tyneside, are among the 'most affluent'.

3.18 Research shows that the number of households with a car in the county is set to increase by just up to 5% over the LTP period. This could have implications for the viability of public transport services, as well as the effects of increased traffic and carbon emissions. The challenge will be to encourage new car owners to continue to make use of alternative forms of travel.

Emerging Challenges

Car ownership in Northumberland is forecast to increase, particularly in rural areas. This has implications for the commercial viability of public transport and modal share in the future.

Environment

3.19 The Strategic Environmental Assessment of the LTP identified the following environmental considerations:

- Mainly rural County with some densely populated and urban areas.

- High quality environment of international importance in landscape, heritage and biodiversity e.g. Northumberland National Park.
- Large proportions of Northumberland are designated areas of nature conservation importance (International to Local level designations).
- Diverse landscape, large proportions of which are of very high quality (AONB).
- Rich and diverse cultural heritage.
- Total CO_2 emissions in Northumberland have increased between 2005 and 2007.
- CO_2 emissions from road transport in the North East are set to increase.
- Designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Blyth Town centre.

Carbon Emissions and Air Quality

3.20   Northumberland is committed to reducing carbon emissions and this is reflected in its endorsement of the Covenant of Mayors. Whilst transport is not the only sector where reductions can be made, it was identified in the Stern Review as being the market sector with the fastest growing carbon emissions.

3.21   There are differences in emissions across the county. In 2007 the former Wansbeck area had the lowest levels of emissions per head of population at 1.16 tonnes. This area has the lowest car ownership in the county which highlights the fact that the predicted increase in car ownership could have a negative effect on emissions. The Berwick and Tynedale areas had the highest emissions. Both of these areas are rural where public transport is often not viable and the need to travel is often increased.

3.22   In 2004, Blyth Town Centre was declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to an excessive level of particulates in the air. Since then, monitoring has shown that the levels of particulates are now lower than the acceptable standard. Whilst there are no other AQMAs at the current time, a site on Cowpen Road in Blyth has shown levels of Nitrous Oxide (N_2O) which are above the acceptable level. The monitoring tubes for this site are located close to main routes into Blyth as well as a set of traffic signals which generates stationary traffic. It is therefore likely that the high level of N_2O is related to traffic. The situation will continue to be monitored by the County Council as part of its Air Quality duties. Elsewhere in the county air quality is generally good. The challenge is to maintain this despite rising car ownership.

3.23   The North East England Greenhouse Gas Emissions Baselines and Trajectories Study (SUSTAINE/AEA/2009), suggests that, unless preventative measures are taken now, by 2050 CO_2 emissions in the region will be 1% higher than the 1990 baseline. Through the Covenant of Mayors the County Council is committed to a 34% reduction in CO_2 emissions from the 1990 baseline.

Natural and Historic Environment

3.24   Northumberland has an outstanding natural and historic environment. It includes a National Park, two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a World Heritage Site, is home to protected species and habitats, protected nature conservation sites and has a wealth of historic buildings and monuments. These qualities are also a visitor attraction, and are therefore very important to the local economy. A key challenge

is to ensure that this environment is not adversely affected by traffic and transport developments. The Strategic Environmental Assessment contains further details on the local environment, the potential impacts of the LTP and how these can be mitigated or avoided.

Emerging Challenges

Northumberland is committed to reducing carbon emissions by 2020, however CO_2 emissions from road transport in the North East are forecast to increase.

The need to maintain the current good air quality in the county and ensure it is not put at risk by transport emissions.

The need to ensure that Northumberland's natural and historic environment is protected and enhanced.

Existing Transport Infrastructure

Key Statistics

3.25   The current transport network of Northumberland includes the following assets:

- 377km of 'A' roads

- 641km of 'B' roads

- 1,526km of 'C' roads

- 2,502km of unclassified roads

- 2,276km of footways

- 5,078km of public rights of way

- 1,460 road bridges

- 43,750 lighting columns

- 45,772 highway signs

- 336 traffic signals

- 6 bus stations

- 3,842 bus stops

- 17 railway stations

Strategic Transport Links

3.26 Within and close to Northumberland are a number of transport links which, as well as being important to Northumberland are of regional and national importance. In most cases, these links of the transport network are not in the direct control of the County Council and our influence on them is limited. However, these strategic networks have a significant impact on the County.

Strategic Roads

3.27 Trunk roads are the main strategic routes in the UK. They are managed by the Highways Agency on behalf of the Department for Transport. In addition to carrying local traffic, these roads provide longer distance trips passing through the County. This network of strategic roads provide the main links between Northumberland, adjacent areas and the rest of the UK and are especially important to the economic vitality of the County. The trunk road network in Northumberland consists of the following routes:

- A1 - running south to north through the County from London to Edinburgh

- A69 - from the A1 in Newcastle to Carlisle in Cumbria

- A19 – from Teesside to the A1 at Seaton Burn via the Tyne Tunnel

3.28 Whilst most traffic is long distance en-route to and from Scotland and Cumbria, particularly for freight and tourists, the trunk roads are also extensively used by local traffic and for commuting between settlements and into Newcastle. In particular, the A1 at the MetroCentre and north of Newcastle experiences significant congestion during peak periods.

3.29 Most of the road freight traffic originating in Northumberland is destined for Tyne & Wear and Scotland and uses the A1 to get there. Much of the A1 to the north of Morpeth is single carriageway, restricting HGVs to a 40mph speed limit. On a regional level, freight originating in Northumberland accounts for 12% of regional freight movement, suggesting that it is vital to the economy of the North East.

Passenger Rail

3.30 Within Northumberland there are a number of rail routes providing both local and longer distance services. These are shown in Table 3.3. This includes the East Coast Mainline (ECML) between London and Edinburgh, the Tyne Valley Line between Newcastle and Carlisle and the freight-only Ashington, Blyth & Tyne line.

Route	2002-03	2007-08	% change
Tyne Valley Line	691,446	867,077	+25.4%
East Coast Main Line	591,697	877,715	+48.3%
Combined	1,283,143	1,744,792	+36%

Table 3.2. Passenger Rail Usage

3.31 The main passenger rail operators serving Northumberland are:

- East Coast – limited stop, long distance services to Scotland, the Midlands and London and the South East, using the ECML, calling at Morpeth, Alnmouth and Berwick.

- Cross Country Trains – limited stop, long distance services to Yorkshire, the Midlands, the South East and South West using the ECML, calling at Morpeth, Alnmouth and Berwick.

- Northern Rail – local stopping services on the ECML between Newcastle and Chathill, and the Tyne Valley Line between Newcastle and Carlisle.

Alnmouth Station

3.32 Rail travel is essential to the economic viability of the local economy. The main issue faced by the County is the very limited number of stops on the longer distance services which prevents travellers making local journeys. In addition, many of the local services are also operating at capacity with continuing increasing demands for travel. The need for increased parking at rail stations is also an important to encourage modal shift from road to rail.

Rail Freight

3.33 The rail freight network in Northumberland is centred on the East Coast Mainline (ECML), the Tyne Valley Line and the Ashington, Blyth & Tyne line which is currently freight only and links the south east of the county to Newcastle via Benton junction. The potential for rail freight growth in Northumberland is limited by the available facilities and operational issues. Rail Utilisation Strategies (RUS) in the North East outline the two track section of the ECML through Northumberland as a capacity constraint on the network. Rail freight growth on the Tyne Valley Line is constrained by the number of passenger services and the existence of manual signalling which leads to operational constraints. The Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line is a freight only line which serves the Port of Blyth and Rio Tinto Alcan. Capacity and signalling issues have been identified, in part due to the presence of single track sections.

Local Transport Links

3.34 The County Council is the Highway and Transport Authority for all non trunk roads in the county and currently has 5,046km of carriageways, 1,460 bridges and over 5,078km of public rights of way network.

3.35 Principal roads include the A189 Spine Road linking the A19(T) to Ashington, as well as the A697 further north and the A68/A696 in the west. These routes provide important links for local traffic to centres of employment, education, leisure and shopping.

3.36 The County is also well placed for road access to and from Newcastle International Airport, which gives access for personal, business and freight movements to National, European and International destinations.

3.37 Northumberland also has three ports at Berwick, Amble and Blyth. The Port of Blyth handles around 1.5 million tonnes of cargo each year while the Port of Berwick handles around 150,000 tonnes. Both ports are net importers and have available capacity to accommodate an increase in trade. The port at Amble is used mainly for fishing and leisure sailing. Constraints on the transport network for onward transport from the ports have been cited as a limit on potential

Port of Blyth

growth, particularly for the Port of Blyth, where the developing renewable energy sector is likely to require improved transport infrastructure. As congestion at southern ports increases, there will be an increased emphasis on the use of northern ports. It is therefore essential that road and rail connections to the ports are improved. The Port of Blyth is an important factor in the transition to becoming a low carbon economy, as it is a focus for development of renewable energy.

3.38 In addition to numerous freight movements on the strategic road and rail networks, mineral extraction, forestry and agriculture generate large numbers of freight movements in Northumberland. However, because of their location in rural areas, there are specific problems associated with their movements, notably their impact on road surfaces. As the local economy develops, new freight movement patterns may develop, which our transport networks must be flexible enough to accommodate.

3.39 A comprehensive bus network also provides for local journeys between the main towns, inter-urban express services to Newcastle and long-distance coach services.

3.40 Four National Cycle Network (NCN) routes pass through the County including Coast and Castles (Tynemouth to Berwick), Hadrian's Cycleway (east to west alongside Hadrian's Wall), Pennine Cycleway (South Tyne to Berwick) and the Reivers Cycle Route (Tynemouth to Whitehaven via Kielder). This network provides important links for leisure, recreation and commuting journeys and an important attractor of tourists to the area. The majority of local cycle route networks are in the south east and provide opportunities to access local jobs, schools and other facilities.

3.41 Active travel is also facilitated by the network of public rights of way. This network is a valuable resource which supports and enables the County Council and partners to promote healthy lifestyles, leisure and tourism. Detailed policies and actions to manage the public rights of way network are set out in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Emerging Challenges

An important destination for freight originating in Northumberland is Tyne and Wear. This is contributing to traffic congestion on the key approaches to Tyne and Wear.

The A1 is a key route for freight being transported through Northumberland. This route is predominantly single carriageway. This will have implications on journey time reliability for other road users.

Constraints on the transport network for onward transport of freight have been cited as a limitation for the potential growth in Northumberland ports, particularly at the Port of Blyth.

There are operational and capacity issues on the rail freight network in Northumberland which will restrict the potential for growth in the rail freight sector.

The local transport network must be able to accommodate future changes in freight movements as the local economy develops.

Travel Patterns

Travel to Work

3.42   Analysis of journey to work data from the 2001 Census shows that Northumberland has a net outflow of commuter trips, with most travelling to Newcastle and North Tyneside. This proportion has increased significantly over the past 30 years from 23% in 1981 to nearly 33% in 2001.

3.43   The majority of commuter movements to jobs within Northumberland are internal within each former district, although there are also some significant movements between the former districts in the south east.

3.44   The data also shows that 21% of the population live within 2km of their workplace and an additional 11% are within 5km. However, there are more people travelling 10-30km than the regional and national averages.

3.45   Good transport links to important sources of employment in Tyne & Wear are essential for the local economy. Links to Yorkshire, the North West and Scotland are also important. However, congestion and unreliability of journeys on links between these areas could adversely affect the economy of Northumberland.

Mode of Travel

3.46 The 2001 Census found that a total of 67% of Northumberland residents travel to work by car, compared to the national average of 61%. Public transport usage is low with only 6% of commuters travelling by bus and 1% by train. Non-motorised transport accounts for 13% of journeys to work, with 11% walking and 2% cycling. This data is shown in Figure 3.2.
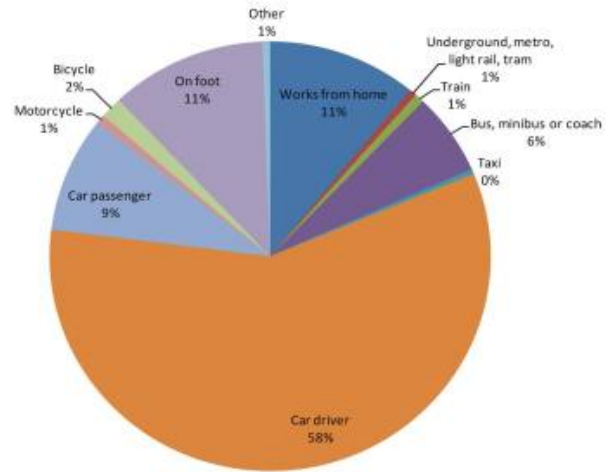

Fig 3.2 Mode Share of Journeys to Work (2001 Census)

3.47 Notably, the proportion of residents who work at home (11%) is higher than the national average (9%). Working from home removes trips from the network, releasing capacity for other users. Improved communications such as broadband provision are key to encouraging greater home working as a means of reducing the need to travel.

3.48 However, there are spatial variations across the County. Use of the car and public transport is greatest from the former districts of Blyth Valley, Castle Morpeth and Wansbeck. In contrast, Berwick shows the highest proportion of people who walk to work (20%) as a consequence of the compact nature of the town and the fact that most job opportunities are located near to where people live. Working from home is lowest in Blyth Valley and Wansbeck.

3.49 Comparison between the 1991 and 2001 census surveys shows that commuting by car had increased, public transport had declined and working from home had increased. These trends are expected to be maintained with the results of the 2011 Census.

3.50 The Census data also shows that 21% of the population of Northumberland live within 2km of their workplace. IHT guidance suggests that 2km is an acceptable distance for walking and 5km is acceptable for cycling.

Emerging Challenges

Private motor car usage in Northumberland is higher than the national average, contributing to congestion and air quality issues and carbon emissions. There is therefore a need to achieve modal shift to more sustainable travel.

Public transport usage in Northumberland is lower than the national average. Increased use of public transport will contribute to the achievement of the LTP objectives.

32% of commuter trips in Northumberland are under 5km in distance yet only 14% are undertaken by using non-motorised forms of transport. Increased use of non-motorised transport could contribute to both transport, health and climate change objectives.

Due to the rural nature of the county people in Northumberland travel longer distances to work compared to regional and national figures. There is often no alternative to the private car for these trips.

There is an outflow of commuters from Northumberland into Tyne & Wear. Congestion is already an issue on the strategic road network into Tyne & Wear.

Transport Problems

Highway Congestion

3.51   With the exception of a few key links, highway congestion is not considered to be a real problem in Northumberland. Congestion levels do need to be monitored, however, to ensure that the projected increase in car ownership does not mean it becomes a problem in future.

Congestion on the approach to Telford Bridge, Morpeth

3.52   An assessment of congestion on the road network shows that congestion occurs at the following locations:

- A197 Telford Bridge, Morpeth;

- A193 Cowpen Road, Blyth;

- A1061 South Newsham Roundabout to Laverock Hall Roundabout;

- A1/A19(T) Seaton Burn; and

- A19(T)/A189 Moor Farm.

3.53   Market Town Welcome Visitor Surveys carried out in 2009 identified traffic congestion and traffic management issues are a concern for visitors in Market Towns which are key visitor attractions. Whilst sustainable travel options for visitors are important,

it is recognised that the visitors who come to Northumberland tend to prefer the independence that car use brings. Given the importance of tourism to the local economy, it is essential that these issues are addressed in order to provide a quality visitor experience.

3.54   Highway congestion also has an impact on the operation of bus services. It can lead to unreliable journey times which will see buses being viewed as a less favourable mode of transport. Discussions with bus operators has provided a list of locations congestion causes delays to services (see LTP3 evidence base page 37).

Emerging Challenge

There is a need to address local areas of highway congestion where this will help to improve the operation and reliability of the transport network, particularly for public transport services.

Public Transport Overcrowding

3.55   Overcrowding on public transport reduces is attractiveness, impacts on reliability and restricts future growth in passenger numbers. Rail overcrowding data for services between Northumberland and Tyne & Wear shows that some services are operating significantly above capacity. There are also some services which, whilst not currently operating above capacity, are cause for concern. In order to attract more passengers onto rail services, capacity issues must be addressed.

Emerging Challenge

Overcrowding is a problem on the rail network in Northumberland in peak periods. An increase in capacity is essential to encourage modal shift.

Road Safety

Casualty Trends

3.56   Comparing actual casualties in 2009 against the 1994-98 baseline demonstrates that Northumberland has made excellent progress towards meeting the national targets for casualty reduction. All road user KSI had reduced by 28%, child KSI had reduced by 55% and slight injuries had reduced by 24%.

3.57   However, performance against the target for all road users KSI has not been maintained. The target trajectory was on track in 2007, at -36%, but is above the trajectory for 2008 and 2009. If this continues, the national target for a 40% reduction will not be achieved. However, data shows that increases in recent years have been largely on trunk roads rather than county roads.

3.58   Table 3.3 below shows Northumberland's performance against the national targets for casualty reduction to be achieved by 2010.

Year	All Road Users KSI	Children KSI	Slight Injuries per 100mv/km
1994-98 average	261	31	59
2010 target	156 (-40%)	15.5 (-50%)	53 (-10%)
2009 actual	186	14	45*
2009 change from 1994-98 average	-28%	-55%	-24%

Table 3.3. Casualty Reduction Progress Against National Targets

*2008 figures used as 2009 data unavailable

Road User Groups

3.59 The total casualties by different road user groups are provided in Table 3.4 below. Casualties for all road users, except motorcyclists, have decreased compared to the 1994-98 baseline. Car occupant casualties have reduced by 13.3%, pedestrian casualties have reduced by 51.2% and pedal cyclist casualties have reduced by 32.6%.

Road User Group	1994-98 Average	2006	2007	2008	2009	% change
Car drivers	685	700	711	713	677	-1.2%
Car passengers	432	389	343	325	311	-28%
All car occupants	1,117	1,089	1,055	1,038	965	-13.4%
Child pedestrians	78	65	44	23	28	-64.1%
Adult pedestrians	92	76	62	75	55	-40.2%
All pedestrians	170	111	106	98	83	-51.2%
Child pedal cyclists	33	18	22	17	13	-60.6%
Adult pedal cyclists	53	36	37	50	45	-15.1%
All cyclists	86	54	59	67	58	-32.6%
Motorcyclists	71	131	109	111	94	+33.4%
Others	162	103	106	132	123	-24%
Total	**1,606**	**1,488**	**1,436**	**1,466**	**1,346**	**-13.7%**

Table 3.4. Casualties by Road User Group

3.60 Motorcyclist casualties have decreased in recent years and are similar to the national average. In 2009 motorcyclists accounted for 7% of all Northumberland casualties compared to 9% nationally. However, casualties have remained above the 1994-98 average. Whilst it is accepted that this may be due to an increase in the number of motorcyclists on the road and weather, the Council does not consider this to be acceptable and will continue with education and awareness campaigns.

3.61 A further issue facing Northumberland is the number of road accidents involving young drivers and this is something which must also be addressed during LTP3. In 2009, 16-29 year old car drivers accounted for 56% of all recorded casualties amongst this group. A number of hazards on Northumberland's rural roads are contributing to these statistics including slow moving vehicles, narrower roads, hills, bends and blind corners. Many young drivers do not have the experience to deal with these hazards, especially when travelling at speed. This is a particular problem amongst young male drivers with passengers who can distract the driver or encourage them to drive in a more risky manner.

Location of Accidents

3.62 Most fatal accidents happened on the trunk road network, A roads and urban areas, particularly South East Northumberland. Serious accidents are similar to fatal accidents, with other concentrations in smaller urban areas of Hexham, Alnwick and Berwick. Slight injury accidents are spread over a wide spatial area, with concentrations along key routes and areas of higher population density.

3.63 Table 3.5 shows the number of accidents by road type. The evidence demonstrates that the greatest number of accidents occur on the A road network. In 2009, 74% of these were on A roads where the speed limit was 50mph or greater.

Road Class	All casualties %	Casualties			
		Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
Trunk Roads	16%	5	28	184	217
A	38%	3	63	440	506
B	20%	6	37	231	274
C	14%	3	26	158	187
Unclassified	12%	1	16	146	163
Total	100%	18	170	1159	1347

Table 3.5. Casualties by Road Type (2009)

Emerging Challenges

To continue to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in on Northumberland's roads.

To reduce the proportion of road casualties in Northumberland involving motorcyclists.

To reduce the proportion of young drivers involved in accidents on Northumberland's roads.

Accessibility to Services

People

3.64　As is characteristic of many rural areas, Northumberland has an increasing proportion of elderly residents in relation to its younger and economically active generations. A number of factors have contributed to the increasing proportion of elderly residents in Northumberland:

- People are living longer;

- Migration of youth to urban areas in search of employment and affordable housing; and

- Influx of retirees to rural areas in search of a tranquil lifestyle.

3.65　The higher proportion of elderly residents will lead to an increasing need for transport provision to health care facilities and hospitals with many elderly residents not having access to a private car. With hospitals aimed at treating specific illnesses increasingly located outside of the county, cross-boundary transport is an important consideration which needs to be addressed.

3.66　In terms of health, the Department of Health Profile 2010 reports that overall, the health of people in Northumberland is generally similar to the English average and levels of deprivation are lower than average. However, health problems are greatest in areas of the county where social and economic deprivation are higher. This is particularly so in the south east. As a separate issue, as discussed previously, Northumberland has a high proportion of elderly residents. It is these residents that are most likely to be prone to illness; therefore, it is essential that health facilities are easily accessible. Analysis shows that 19% of the population of Northumberland cannot access a GP's surgery within 15 minutes by public transport, while 59% cannot get there within an 800 metre walk.

3.67　Forecast trends in population growth have been extracted from transport planning software and show the population of Northumberland is expected to increase during the period of the plan at a slower rate than the national average. The growth in the over 65's age bracket is, at just under 20%, significantly higher than the regional

and national figures. This suggests that the accessibility needs of the elderly population will continue to be a concern in future years. The increased cost of providing concessionary travel is also something which must be considered.

3.68 A separate issue contributing to accessibility issues in Northumberland is the levels of deprivation in the urban south east corner of Northumberland as identified in the index of multiple deprivation. It is widely accepted that there is a strong link between accessibility to key services and facilities and social exclusion. In an area where car ownership levels are the lowest in the county and below the regional and national averages, there is an increased reliance on public transport, walking and cycling. Whilst there is a strong network of buses in South East Northumberland, accessibility needs to consider the social issues behind transport provision. Of particular issue to South East Northumberland is the time it takes to travel into the neighbouring authorities of Tyne & Wear, a key source of employment for residents of Northumberland, and the cost associated with these journeys. For example, public transport journey times from Blyth and Ashington to Newcastle City Centre can take in excess of 40 minutes with a weekly bus pass costing between £15 and £20.

Place

3.69 One of the biggest issues facing Northumberland is the rural nature of the county. With sparse population settlements meaning key services are often not commercially viable outside of the main urban centres, there is an increasing need to travel within the county. In addition, many leisure and tourist attractors are located in rural areas. Public transport however does not always facilitate these journeys at a cost and speed that is considered acceptable and as a consequence, the population of Northumberland is becoming increasingly reliant on the private car. With the population of rural areas of Alnwick and Berwick-upon Tweed forecast to increase at a faster rate than the Northumberland average, accessibility from rural areas is something which needs to be addressed.

Emerging Challenges

Public transport options do not meet the needs of all residents of Northumberland. A lack of available services, long journeys and high costs mean that public transport is not a viable option for many people. This is likely to lead to increased use of the private motor car as well as contributing to social exclusion.

Opportunities to access services using non-motorised transport are not always adequate or available.

Emerging Challenges for Transport

Issues	Emerging Challenges for Transport
Population	

Issues	Emerging Challenges for Transport
Low population density. Continued overall increase in resident population Increase in the number of households at a higher rate than the population. High and increasing proportion of elderly residents, particularly in rural areas Low and reducing proportion of working age residents ·	The population of Northumberland is increasing, particularly in rural areas such as Alnwick and the Tyne Valley. This will put increased pressure on the transport network between these areas and urban centres. The population density in Northumberland is low. This means that key services and facilities may not be commercially viable in some locations which leads to an increased need to travel. The number of households in Northumberland is forecast to increase. These new households must be located where sustainable travel options and good access to services are available. Northumberland has a high, and increasing, proportion of elderly residents compared to the national and regional averages. This will lead to a need for transport to health facilities and hospitals as well as additional funding for concessionary travel.
Economy	
Low overall unemployment rate, but variations High unemployment in South East Northumberland Large proportion of the economy is based in the public sector and on tourism Growth in employment is expected to be focused outside of Northumberland in Tyne & Wear Need to improve connectivity, both within the county and beyond, to support the local economy	The working age population of Northumberland is greater than the number of jobs in the area. Some of these people who want to work must therefore commute to neighbouring authorities. This can contribute to congestion and air quality issues both in Northumberland and the neighbouring authorities. There is an emphasis on employment growth within Tyne and Wear. Northumberland must therefore seek to provide more employment within the county in order to reduce the need to travel to work. The majority of tourists who visit Northumberland use the private car for access to the area and to get around throughout their stay. There is a need to protect tourist attractions by promoting sustainable access and managing car use.

Issues	Emerging Challenges for Transport
	There is a need to improve connectivity in the county, enabling economic growth through access to work, commerce, education and services.
Society	
Some urban areas categorised as extremely disadvantaged with low income levels, high unemployment, poor health and disability impacting on their life opportunities Barriers to services and facilities an issue in some rural areas Local isolation in some areas High overall levels of car ownership, which is forecast to increase Low levels of car ownership in South East Northumberland and Berwick	Car ownership in Northumberland is forecast to increase, particularly in rural areas. This has implications for the commercial viability of public transport and modal share in the future.
Environment	
CO_2 emissions per capita from road transport in Northumberland higher than regional and national average Covenant of Mayors commits Northumberland to ambitious emissions targets Former Air Quality Management Area designated in Blyth Greenhouse gas emissions forecast to increase Outstanding natural and historic environment, including protected sites/landscapes that require sensitive solutions to transport development.	Northumberland is committed to reducing carbon emissions by 2020, however CO_2 emissions from road transport in the North East are forecast to increase. The need to maintain the current good air quality in the county and ensure it is not put at risk by transport emissions. The need to ensure that Northumberland's natural and historic environment is protected and enhanced.
Transport Networks	

3 Northumberland Today

Issues	Emerging Challenges for Transport
Extensive highway network with 5,080 km of roads spread across the county	An important destination for freight originating in Northumberland is Tyne and Wear. This is contributing to traffic congestion on the key approaches to Tyne and Wear.
Trunk road network comprising A1 and A69	The A1 is a key route for freight being transported through Northumberland. This route is predominantly single carriageway. This will have implications on journey time reliability for other road users.
East Coast Main Line and Tyne Valley rail networks	
Newcastle International Airport	Constraints on the transport network for onward transport of freight have been cited as a limitation for the potential growth in Northumberland ports, particularly at the Port of Blyth.
Ports of Blyth and Berwick strategically positioned for increased trade and development.	
Comprehensive bus network serving main towns and villages and providing links with Tyne & Wear	There are operational and capacity issues on the rail freight network in Northumberland which will restrict the potential for growth in the rail freight sector.
	The local transport network must be able to accommodate future changes in freight movements as the local economy develops.

Travel Patterns

Significant outflow of commuters from Northumberland to Tyne & Wear	Private motor car usage in Northumberland is higher than the national average. This contributes to congestion and air quality issues.
Car dependency for short journeys	
Car use for commuter trips is higher than the national average at 67% of journeys	Public transport usage in Northumberland is lower than the national average. Increased use of public transport will contribute to the achievement of the LTP objectives.
Public transport use for commuter trips lower than national average	
Tyne and Wear is an important destination for bus journeys originating in South East Northumberland	32% of commuter trips in Northumberland are under 5km in distance yet only 13% are undertaken by using non-motorised forms of transport. Increased use of non-motorised transport could contribute to both transport and health objectives.
Low levels of walking and cycling for commuter trips in line with national average	

Issues	Emerging Challenges for Transport
Longer average distances to work Majority of freight movements in Northumberland are by road with the most important destination for freight originating in Northumberland being Tyne and Wear	Due to the rural nature of the county people in Northumberland travel longer distances to work compared to regional and national figures. There is often no alternative to the private car for these trips. There is an outflow of commuters from Northumberland into Tyne & Wear. Congestion is already an issue on the strategic road network into Tyne & Wear.
Transport Problems	
Congestion Reliability of local bus services Overcrowding on rail services to/from Newcastle High casualty rates for young drivers and motorcyclists Poor accessibility by bus services from rural areas Accessibility to services by non-motorised transport	There is a need to address local areas of highway congestion where this will help to improve the operation and reliability of the transport network, particularly for public transport services. Overcrowding is a problem on the rail network in Northumberland in peak periods. An increase in capacity is essential to encourage modal shift. To continue to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in on Northumberland's roads. To reduce the proportion of road casualties in Northumberland involving motorcyclists. To reduce the proportion of young drivers involved in accidents on Northumberland's roads. Public transport options do not meet the needs of all residents of Northumberland. A lack of available services, timely journeys and high costs mean that public transport is not a viable option for many people. This is likely to lead to increased use of the private motor car as well as contributing to social exclusion. Opportunities to access services using non-motorised transport are not always adequate or available.

Table 3.6. Issues, Trends & Emerging Challenges for Transport

4. Changing Context for Travel

This chapter:

- examines the wider issues that are expected to change the context for travel in Northumberland;

- considers future trends affecting services and facilities; and

- assesses the transport implications of these trends.

4.1 Economic Growth and Regeneration

North Northumberland

4.1 North Northumberland includes a wide expanse of hills and moorland bordered by outlying uplands and a low-lying coastline. It includes the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and much of the coastline has been designated a Heritage Coast. It also includes part of Northumberland National Park, including the Cheviot Hills. The quality of the landscape and historic market towns are a major tourist attraction. The main towns lie on or near the A1 and East Coast Main Line, while there are smaller settlements on the coast and along the main river valleys. The northern part of the area has strong links to Edinburgh and South Scotland. The southern part is in the City Commuter Housing market and is part of the Tyne & Wear City Region. The principal towns are Morpeth, Alnwick and Berwick. These act as local service centres and are important to the local economy.

Berwick

4.2 Berwick-upon-Tweed is England's most northerly town, located on the A1 and East Coast Main Line, around 60 miles south of Edinburgh. Recent developments include the construction of a new supermarket at East Ord. Future development site and key development opportunities include:

- careful restoration and enhancement of the historic town of Berwick to create a vibrant, mixed use centre;

- creation of a marina, retaining commercial activity in Tweedmouth, encouraging mixed use and developing meaningful public access to an attractive riverfront;

- concentration of larger leisure and recreational development in Upper Tweedmouth to create a distinct quarter containing essential community uses unable to be accommodated in the town centre or areas of conservation; and

- development of housing, community and educational uses in Spittal Point to support local services, provide greater housing choice and re-establish Spittal as sustainable place to live.

4.3 The Berwick Town Eastern Arc Area Action Plan (AAP) will set out the spatial planning framework for the consolidation of the town's role as a rural service centre and give detailed policy guidance across the identified regeneration sites. It will also identify a portfolio of delivery mechanisms for each site and set out policies to address issues concerning traffic and transport, and the protection and enhancement of the area's cultural and heritage assets in the natural and built environments. This will strengthen its role as a market town and rural service centre and improve its economic competitiveness through tourism and improving the quality of development and managing change sensitively rather than increasing the quantum of development.

Alnwick

4.4 Alnwick town is situated in Northumberland on the edge of the A1, with Newcastle upon Tyne 30 miles to the south and Berwick-upon-Tweed 30 miles to the north. Recent developments have included new housing in the town centre, major retail development adjacent to the A1, Cawledge Business Park as well as Alnwick Garden & Castle which is the most visited attraction in Northumberland. Future development site and key development opportunities include:

- housing development St Michael's Square;

- continued development of Cawledge Business Park; and

- re-development of brownfield sites.

Amble

4.5 The town of Amble is situated at the mouth of the River Coquet, 9 miles south of Alnwick and has a population of over 6,000. Recent developments have seen the reclamation of former opencast mining and the coal staiths together with re-development of the harbour including a marina, quayside improvements, promenade and town square. The development of the Industrial estate has supported maritime associated trades. Future development opportunities include:

- housing developments to south of the town.

Northumberland Coast

4.6 As well as Berwick and Amble, the Northumberland Coast also includes smaller coastal villages such as Walkworth, Alnmouth, Beadnell, Seahouses and Bamburgh. Tourism provides the main employment for the area, bringing a significant number of visitors, particularly during the summer months. Much of the area has been designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast and includes a number of important nature conservation sites. Future development opportunities include:

- development of a holiday village in Beadnell;

- additional leisure facilities and employment opportunities near Druridge Bay on former Stobswood Opencast Site.

4.7   The transport implications of these developments will be carefully considered, given the sensitive nature and potential detrimental impact of additional car borne tourist traffic.

Morpeth

4.8   Morpeth is situated in the valley of the River Wansbeck, around 15 miles north of Newcastle upon Tyne; it has a population of 13,600 people. The market town is the administrative centre for the County and serves the outlying rural areas. The town is a popular residential location, where there is pressure for additional housing. The priority is to improve connectivity with South East Northumberland and to increase the development of affordable and market housing within Morpeth and surrounding areas to help deliver the Growth Point. Recent developments include the major retail development at Sanderson Arcade incorporating a new bus station, extensions to car parks and a pedestrianised area. Future development site and key development opportunities include:

- major brownfield mixed-use development of St Georges Hospital site situated to the north of Morpeth by English Partnerships. Requires construction of the Morpeth Northern By-pass (MNB);

- Fairmoor is identified as a site to attract major high quality employment developments. Also requires the construction of Morpeth Northern Bypass; and

- major retail development on the town centre brownfield site at Dark Lane.

South East Northumberland

4.9   The South East area is the smallest of the three areas in Northumberland but contains almost half the population. It has a population density of 951 people per km^2, more than 20 times the figure of the North and West areas. It forms the Urban Northumberland Housing Market Area, including the three main towns of Ashington, Blyth and Cramlington. Ashington and Blyth have witnessed major industrial decline in recent times and are now areas with high levels of deprivation and a priority for regeneration. Cramlington was developed as a "new town" in the 1960;s and has grown steadily since. Whilst the area has seen significant redevelopment over the past 10 years, including the development of retail and leisure facilities, employment sites and major housing developments, it still faces challenges which can be addressed by further re-development of key locations. Despite its urban nature, the area contains areas countryside consisting mainly of farmland. There are also a number of Country Parks and nature conservation sites. There are significant heritage assets, notably Seaton Delaval Hall, which has recently been opened as a visitor

attraction by the National Trust. The visitor economy has seen significant development in recent years with the redevelopment of Woodhorn Museum, near Ashington, and a maritime museum is being developed in Newbiggin-by-the-Sea.

Ashington

4.10   Ashington is one of the largest settlements in South East Northumberland, with a population of 27,000 people. Located centrally on the north bank of the river Wansbeck, Ashington acts a service settlement for the surrounding rural area. The regeneration of Ashington Town Centre is one of the County Council's strategic priorities and a planning policy framework has been put in place through the 'Ashington Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document', adopted in 2010. Future development site and key development opportunities include:

- development of Northumberland Learning Park, following relocation of the existing college and re-development of the site for residential use;

- retail led development of the North East Quadrant of the town centre, including re-location of the existing bus depot, construction of eastern relief road, pedestrianisation of Lintonville Terrace and provision of a new bus station facility;

- development of Ashwood Business Park adjacent to the A189; and

- major eastwards extension to existing residential development within the settlement boundary that will significantly widen housing choice.

Blyth

4.11   Located on the coast at the mouth of the River Blyth, the town is the largest in South East Northumberland with over 35,000 people. Formerly a mining settlement exporting coal, the town was seriously affected when its principal industries went into decline. It has undergone much regeneration since the early 1990s, including development of the Keel Row Shopping Centre which has helped to revitalise the town centre and development of the National Renewable Energy Centre (NaREC) national centre for research into offshore wind and marine turbine development. The market place has also recently been re-developed, Blyth Riverside Park has been re-branded and new housing development has happened in South Shore with associated improvements to the Quayside which has been transformed into an open space with walkways and sculptures. The town lies adjacent to the Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area and the Northumberland Shore SSSI.

4.12   The county has significant assets in the area around the Blyth Estuary and Cambois peninsula which form part of Northumberland's approach to transition to a low carbon economy. These assets are concentrated in the Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone (BEREZ), a long-established employment and energy production location. BEREZ is recognised as strategic opportunity and key development location at the heart of Northumberland's transition to a low carbon economy and low carbon living, providing a strategic focus for low carbon activity . It is home to the UK's National

Renewable Energy Centre and is ideally placed with its marine engineering skills base, enhanced by Northumberland College's emergence as a leading provider of low carbon skills training and qualifications.

4.13 The deep water Port of Blyth with quayside and near estuary strategic employment development sites is well placed to support the supply chain engaged in the Crown Estates' Round 3 programme for offshore wind regeneration which include Dogger Bank off the North East coastline, the largest of the nine offshore sites designated by Government, and is ideally positioned to provide the logistical support for such a major project. The port facilities will also enable large-scale imports required to meet the county's potential for heat and power generation from biomass. Local infrastructure improvements to better link strategic employment sites with heavy lift quayside facilities may be required to support future private sector manufacturing decisions.

4.14 BEREZ has already attracted international and UK companies in the offshore wind industry and with NaREC being set to become the largest wind and marine physical test base in the world by late 2011, the area is well positioned to drive the low carbon transition of Northumberland's economy. "

Future development site and key development opportunities include:

- ambitious plans to relocate the Port of Blyth to the northern bank of the estuary and release land for commercial and residential development on Blyth Riverside. The mixed-use riverside development includes Bates Colliery, South Harbour, Commissioner's Quay, and Wimbourne Quay;

- improvements to Blyth town centre, including re-development of the existing bus station site for retail and commercial use and new Morrisons store development;

- development of the port for the manufacture of offshore wind turbines. Requires improvements to the existing highway from East Sleekburn to Battleship Wharf to enable the movement of heavy and wide loads; and

- environmental improvements in the Cambois area creating employment opportunities.

Bedlington

4.15 Bedlington is situated on river Blyth and has a population of 15,400. Recent developments include the reclamation of collieries within the environs of the town for leisure and housing developments to the west and north and industrial estates including Jubilee and Bomarsund and the establishment of Earth Balance ecology project. Future development opportunities include:

- Bedlington Townscape Heritage Initiative; and

- Bedlington 'gap site' enterprise centre development scheme in partnership with Tesco.

Cresswell, Ellington, Linton & Lynemouth (CELL)

4.16   This area is the most northern locality in South East Northumberland. As former coal mining communities, the area has undergone extensive remediation since the closure of the last colliery in 2005. The challenges of rural location and significant economic and housing issues stress the need to re-define the settlements, to be clearer about their future role and how this can be delivered. Priority will be given to the need to balance housing markets and address poor housing conditions as well as remediation of contaminated sites. Future development opportunities include:

- community facilities and employment opportunities in Lynemouth;

- redevelopment of the former Ellington Colliery to create a 'network village' including residential, work-space and employment; and

- reclamation of Lynemouth Bay to remove the effects of sea dumping of colliery waste which has returned this stretch of coast from industrial marred landscape.

Cramlington

4.17   Cramlington is the second largest town in South East Northumberland with a population of nearly 29,000 people. First developed in the 1960's as a 'New Town Extension', the town has a strong industrial base with major pharmaceutical and chemical companies, supply warehouses and prestige business parks. Like Blyth, the town serves as a dormitory settlement in the wider Tyne & Wear City Region. The town has excellent transport links, being located near to the A1 and A19(T) as well as having a rail station on the East Coast Main Line. Recent developments include the expansion of the Manor Walks shopping centre. Future development site and key development opportunities include:

- West Hartford Business Park to the north of Cramlington;

- South West Sector development that will provide a major urban extension to complete the original plan for the 'New Town' of Cramlington. Requires a new highway access with the A1068;

- Possible development of a specialist Emergency Care Hospital at Klondyke, adjacent to the A189.

- Major new tourist attraction planned to the west - Northumberlandia will take place after the restoration of the Shotton opencast, creating a new country park.

West Northumberland

4.18   The area enjoys a spectacular environment which includes a major part of the Northumberland National Park and the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Kielder Forest, Kielder Water, Hadrian's Wall and a substantial part of the

River Tyne catchment. The agriculture, forestry and tourism industries are significant to this part of Northumberland and the high quality of the environment also makes the area a very attractive place in which to both live and work.

4.19 A large proportion of the Area's population is concentrated within a narrow communications belt stretching across the area and focusing on the A69 trunk road linking the A1 corridor in the East with the M6 in the West, and the Tyne Valley railway line which links the regional capital of Newcastle upon Tyne with Carlisle.

4.20 Ambitions are for a successful and diverse economy where the traditional rural industries of farming, forestry and mineral extraction still have an important place but amongst a broad range of business activity. The focus for much activity will always be the main service centres within the area. These centres must be supported as key drivers of the rural economy, with their ability for attracting in-migrants to the region, as destinations for day visitors, and as local service centres for the populations and businesses of their rural hinterlands. However, it is also critical that the benefits of this support are felt throughout West Northumberland and that additional opportunities are generated across the area.

Hexham

4.21 Hexham is the largest town in Tynedale with a population of over 15,000 people. It is situated about 22 miles west of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, near to the north and south Tyne rivers. Recent developments have included a new swimming pool, major supermarket developments and the construction of a new hospital. Future development site and key development opportunities include:

- development of the current bus station site for retail and leisure use. This would require the re-location of the bus station to a new site;

- retail developments at Hexham railway station;

- Hexham East Regeneration Scheme; and

- Hexham Abbey visitor centre.

Prudhoe

4.22 The market town of Prudhoe lies on the south bank of the river Tyne and has a population of just under 12,000 people. Recent developments have included reclamation of the colliery and former industrial sites, major housing developments, development of the country park and the interchange at Prudhoe railway station. There is further potential for physical economic growth, with future development opportunities including:

- new supermarket, residential units, office accommodation and public amenity space in the town centre. These developments would make a significant change to the Prudhoe Town Centre offer;

- re-development of Prudhoe Hospital;

- development of land at Low Prudhoe for industrial business use; and

- development and delivery of Digital Media Centre.

Ponteland

4.23 The town of Ponteland situated 8 miles north-west of Newcastle upon Tyne and has a population of just over 11,000. The population growth is attributed to the development of adjacent Darras Hall and more recently a number of small new estates and residential developments around the original village centre. Recent developments include a new supermarket, leisure centre, Meadowfield Industrial Estate and health centre. Future development opportunities include:

- re-development of Northumbria Police Headquarters for housing;

- redevelopment of Merton Way shopping area.

Haltwhistle

4.24 The small market town is situated 16 miles west of Hexham with a population of over 3,800. The town markets itself as 'Centre of Britain' to the many tourists visiting the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and Northumberland National Park. The Haltwhistle conservation area extends from the railway station through the core of the historic town centre to Haltwhistle Burn in the east to the National Park Boundary. Previous development has focused on reclamation of the former colliery, brickworks and town gas works as well as the opencast mining and quarrying activities. New business units and industrial estates have been developed to the south of the town. Future development opportunities include:

- Hadrian Tourism Site.

Hadrian's Wall

4.25 Hadrian's Wall is a stone and timber fortification built by the Roman Empire across the width of northern England. Begun in AD 122, during the rule of emperor Hadrian, it was the first of two fortifications built across Great Britain. A significant portion of the wall still exists, particularly the mid-section, and for much of its length the wall can be followed on foot by Hadrian's Wall Path or by cycle on National Cycle Route 72. It is the most popular tourist attraction in Northern England, where it is often known simply as the Roman Wall, or the Wall. It was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987. English Heritage, a government organisation in charge of managing the historic environment of England, describes it as "the most important monument built by the Romans in Britain".

Kielder Water & Forest Park

4.26 Home to northern Europe's largest man-made lake and England's largest forest, Kielder Water & Forest Park is one of Northumberland's best attractions. It is the setting for people to enjoy nature, water sports, fishing, exploring, walking and

cycling. It includes purpose-built trails including forest walks, multi-user trails and dedicated mountain bike tracks. Facilities include visitor centres, accommodation, birds of prey centre and observatory. The Campaign to Protect Rural England calls the "most tranquil spot in the country". This remoteness also means that the majority of visitors get there by private car.

4.27   Kielder Forest is also a commercial timber producer with a significant number of heavy goods vehicles using local roads. It is the UK's largest commercial forest producing over 10% of the UK's timber and accounts for almost 50% of the North East region's forest resource.

North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

4.28   At 1983 km2 the North Pennies AONB is the second largest in England, covering parts of Northumberland, County Durham, Cumbria and North Yorkshire. It contains a nationally important landscape of dales and moorlands and is a European and Global Geopark, in recognition of its geological heritage. 50% of the AONB is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and there are many important species of flora and fauna. The area has a remoteness and tranquillity unrivalled in England.

4.29   The vast majority of visitors to the North Pennines arrive by car. There is scope to encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport to get around, though the cross boundary issues in the area can present a challenge. The AONB Partnership has produced 'Guidance for the Management and Maintenance of Roads' which is intended to help transport authorities have regard for the AONB designation, so that the area is not adversely affected by roads and the roadside environment.

4.2 Health Care

4.30   The need to improve access to health care for patients, reduce the incidence of patients failing to attend appointments and reduce waiting times for treatment are the major driving forces behind health delivery. The main ways in which the health sector is addressing these issues is through the devolution of health services from main hospitals to local health centres, centralisation of health care services to create clinical centres of excellence and increasing the choice for GP's and patients to make decisions on where patients can attend to receive secondary treatment. These changes to the provision of health care services often have a direct impact on people's future travel demands and the transport requirements that need to be in place.

4.31   Whilst these proposals can provide transport benefits by reducing the need for patients to travel to hospitals for routine treatment, centralisation of facilities can also be detrimental for some patients whose local GP practice has closed and re-located. It is therefore essential for the council to work in partnership with the health sector to ensure that proposed health care developments are accessible and that journeys to the new developments are facilitated.

4.32   Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is currently proposing to develop a new Specialist Emergency Care Hospital near Cramlington. This development is part of a programme to rationalise the acute health care services in Northumberland

and North Tyneside. Taking account of the distribution of the population in there current catchment, the Trust has concluded that the ideal location for the proposed emergency centre would be at or close to the conjunction of the A1, A19 and the A189 (the Moor Farm roundabout) making transit from all existing sites and more remote locations a reasonable proposition.

4.33   Under the proposals, all emergency operations for patients from North and South East Northumberland and North Tyneside would be carried out at the new hospital. The need for better transport between the two sites is clearly an important consideration and is being considered as part of the application for planning consent. The County Council has supported Nexus in the development of improved public transport to the new site.

4.34   Better public transport for staff and visitors is just one aspect. There are also implications for the movements of medical supplies and the transfer of patients by ambulance. As solutions are developed, Northumberland County Council will continue to work with Nexus and the hospital trust to monitor the proposals impact of accessibility to the new hospital site.

4.35   An important part of the health agenda is the encouragement of healthier, more physically active lifestyles. The County Council will work in partnership with the health sector to deliver the Physical Activity Strategy for Northumberland. The LTP and RoWIP can support this by ensuring that some resources and activity are aligned to initiatives and projects which enable and encourage more physical activity through walking and cycling. The transport role in delivering health improvements in the County is through continued partnership working with the health sector to develop and implement actions to improve accessibility to existing health care facilities, ensure proposed new health care developments are accessible and encourage walking and cycling as part of active lifestyles.

4.3 Education and Training

4.36   The Children's Act 2004 has influenced the way that education services are delivered by requiring local authorities to promote co-operation between itself and its partners to deliver the national outcomes. These outcomes are:

- Being Healthy;

- Staying Safe;

- Enjoying and Achieving;

- Making a Positive Contribution; and

- Achieving Economic Well-being.

4.37   The Northumberland Children and Young Peoples' Plan (2008 to 2011) has been prepared to co-ordinate the priorities from the five national outcomes and ensure that systems are in place to enable services to be delivered efficiently to improve the lives of all children, young people and their families.

4.38   Transport can make a significant contribution to the national outcomes, improving health by promoting more physically active lifestyles and reducing child injuries, improving safety by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and achieving economic wellbeing by improving access to schools and colleges that will increase engagement in education, training and employment.

4.39   Schools are also being given increased rights to choose to operate independently from the Local Education Authority. This would enable schools to provide their own transport arrangements and result in an adverse impact on the existing centralised school travel commissioning arrangements. The increasing choice agenda has also enabled parents to determine which primary or secondary school they wish their children to attend. This has led to some schools operating at capacity with other schools having surplus places.

4.40   Parents that have chosen to send their children to schools further than the nearest suitable school are not entitled to free school transport and must make their own travel arrangements. For some of these journeys, there is often no public transport option available which has resulted in an increasing number of children being taken to school by car. This has resulted in increasing traffic congestion and parking problems around schools.

4.41   The low level of basic and key skills is a major barrier preventing local residents obtaining employment and contributes towards inequality, disadvantage and social exclusion. The low level of basic and key skills of the local workforce is also a major issue for businesses already based, or considering investing in some parts of Northumberland.

4.42   Improving access to education and training is one of the main strands of the local accessibility strategy. The transport role in meeting education needs in the county is through joint working with schools and the council's Department of Children's Services to mitigate the travel impact of changes to the location and size of schools, assisting schools in developing travel plans and tackling problems of road safety on routes to school. The way that council transport services are provided is currently being reviewed to ensure more effective service delivery and efficient use of vehicles.

4.4 Energy

4.43   Energy is one of the fundamental requirements for economic growth and demand has continued to increase in line with population and economic development. Fossil fuels have been the fuel of choice throughout the 20th century. There is now considerable debate as to whether we are approaching peak global oil and gas production. Some estimates predict that the production of oil will peak in the next 2 to 3 years, whilst demand will continue to increase by a further 33% by 2030. This scenario would result in a significant increase in the price of energy, suppressing economic growth and exacerbating unemployment.

4.44   With reduced supply and increasing demand, energy security is becoming an increasingly important driver for change. Combined with the impact of fossil fuels on climate change, this is creating a drive for low carbon alternatives. Greater land areas are expected to be devoted to bio-mass and coal is expected to play a renewed

role, in the short to medium term. Other sources of renewable energy and improvements in battery technology are expected to increase rapidly. Despite these advances, our reliance on fossil fuels is likely still to predominate.

4.45   The scarcity and cost of energy is expected to drive energy efficiency across all industries and change many aspects of our established ways of life. Transport is expected to be particularly impacted. For Northumberland this could mean:

- Inability of people to afford to drive their car to access the services and facilities that they need, particularly affecting rural and deprived communities;

- Contraction of commercial bus services to core routes during the days and times of most demand and place pressure on the Council's revenue budget to support services;

- Development of a new coal fired power station in Blyth, with coal being transported by road, rail and/or sea;

- Development of bio-mass, which will require rail and ship facilities and could result in heavy vehicles impacting on the local road network;

- People moving closer to job opportunities;

- Development of industries related to renewable generation, including wind and photovoltaic;

- More people walking and cycling;

- Need for further rail electrification.

- More electric vehicles and demand for charging facilities; and

- Demand by people for more sustainable car use, including car share and car clubs.

Local Issues & Trends	Implications for Transport
Economic Growth & Regeneration	
Priorities for regeneration focused in areas of deprivation including Ashington and Blyth	Increasing demand for travel to employment opportunities, many of which are outside of the County
Growth Point plans for significant housing development at key locations across South east Northumberland	Opportunities for provision of new bus station and coach parking facilities as an integral part of new developments
Anticipated future growth in tourism at key attractions as well as in towns and smaller settlements	Increasing need to provide and promote sustainable travel for tourism

Local Issues & Trends	Implications for Transport
Expansion of development of existing business parks Additional investment planned for major tourist destinations including Hadrian's Wall and Kielder Forest	More dispersed travel patterns across the County and beyond Need to manage increased demands for travel in a sustainable way Increasing levels of car ownership and use
Health Care	
Development of specialist centres of clinical excellence Local authority control of primary health care Increasing choice for GP's and patients to make decisions on where they attend to receive secondary treatment	Patients, and their visitors, have to travel further for more specialised hospital based care Increased opportunity for co-ordinating programmes for active travel into health promotion initiatives Increased opportunity for co-ordinating improvements for access to health care Increasing demand for travel and on transport requirements
Education and Transport	
Increasing choice agenda for parents on where their children attend school Amalgamation of schools onto single sites More children staying on at school Increased uptake of further education courses Increased number of training opportunities outside the County Increasing length of journeys	Increased demand for travel to education and training sites across Northumberland as well as further affield to the borders and Tyne & Wear Increased level of car use for school transport Increased need to work in partnership to co-ordinate services for children Need to review the way that council transport is provided to adapt to a more efficient method of service delivery and vehicle utilisation Possible adverse impact on the efficiency of school transport provision if schools decide to provide their own services
Energy	
Increased demand on energy resources Reduced growth in supply of energy	Difficult for people to afford to drive their car Contraction of commercial bus service networks

Local Issues & Trends	Implications for Transport
Increased cost of fuel oil Development of industries related to renewable technology Increased use of electric vehicles/trains More people walking and cycling for local journeys	Increased role for bio-mass leading to greater rail and ship usage and potentially a greater number of heavy vehicles using the rural road network Increased demand for electric vehicle charging points Need to 'de-carbonise' energy-related transport, for example, by increased use of local ports to import coal/biomass, instead of road transport from ports further afield. Greater investment required in walking & cycling routes

Table 4.1. Local Issues, Trends & Implications for Transport

Part Two

Transport Strategy for Northumberland

This section of the Plan sets out how Northumberland's Transport Strategy translates to a set of objectives and implementation programme over the 15 year period of the LTP. It sets the strategic framework and provides five thematic strategies, one for each of our goals for transport, which describe how the strategy will deliver our priorities over the next three years as well as the longer term.

This section includes:

Chapter 5 Vision, Goals and Objectives

Chapter 6 Supporting Economic Growth

Chapter 7 Reducing Carbon Emissions

Chapter 8 Safer and Healthier Travel

Chapter 9 Improving Access to Services

Chapter 10 Quality of Life

5. Vision, Goals and Objectives

This chapter:

- sets out a vision for Northumberland and how the transport network will contribute through a series of strategic goals and draft objectives;

- outlines the key challenges that must be addressed for the transport network to support the needs of people, businesses and visitors in Northumberland;

- provides Northumberland's strategic approach to delivery; and

- explains how the strategy has been evaluated and appraised.

5.1 Vision

5.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) provides the overarching strategic policy framework for Northumberland. The current SCS was developed by the Northumberland Strategic Partnership in 2010. The strategy describes what life in Northumberland should be like by 2021 and explains what partners will collectively need to do to deliver this vision.

5.2 The Local Transport Plan will ensure that transport helps to meet the needs of people in Northumberland. The Goals and Objectives for the LTP are therefore based on supporting and contributing towards the following SCS vision:

"To make Northumberland a place that is resilient for the future."

5.2 Goals for Transport

5.3 This LTP seeks to build on the success of the previous Plans and takes account of the national regional and local policy context and stakeholder engagement, as well as having due regard to our legal duties as the local Highway Authority. The goals describe what we are trying to achieve to tackle the key challenges and form the basis of the LTP.

5.4 We want our transport system to:

- Support Northumberland's economic competitiveness and sustainable growth by delivering reliable, resilient and efficient transport networks

- Minimise the environmental impact of transport by reducing carbon emissions and addressing the challenge of climate change

- Promote greater equality of opportunity by improving peoples' access to services and facilities

- Improve transport safety and security and promote and enable healthier travel

- Ensure that transport helps to improve quality of life for residents, employers and visitors, and protects and enhances the local environment

5.3 Key Challenges

5.5 The previous chapters have demonstrated the significant economic, social, environmental and transport challenges that Northumberland faces and placed them in the context of a transport network that is not delivering for some users, particularly during peak periods. These challenges have emerged from the wealth of evidence gathered in the 'LTP3 Evidence Base' report and summarised in this Plan.

5.6 Some of the challenges however, are repetitions, or have significant overlaps. It has therefore been necessary to rationalise these challenges before prioritising them and using them to inform the LTP Objectives. Table 5.1 below rationalises the emerging challenges to encapsulate the key problems on Northumberland's current and future transport network that must be tackled if we are to achieve the objectives of the Transport Strategy.

Issue	Rationalised Challenge
Accessibility	Accessibility to services and facilities using public transport and active travel in Northumberland is an issue. This is caused by the dispersed nature of the population and existing barriers to travel. The problem will be exacerbated in the coming years with an increase in the population of rural areas, increases in the cost of fuel and an increase in the proportion of elderly residents who are often more reliant on accessibility by public transport.
Mode Share	Northumberland has above average levels of car use for short journeys, many of which could be undertaken by walking and cycling. Encouraging behaviour change to more active travel would contribute to both transport and health objectives.
Economy	There are insufficient jobs in Northumberland to accommodate the working age population. This is likely to continue in the future with employment growth being centred on Tyne & Wear. As a consequence, many residents have to commute into Tyne & Wear for work purposes. This can be difficult for people without access to a car with lengthy and costly bus journeys and limited access to rail. Increased car trips contribute to congestion on the transport network both in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear, and an increase in carbon emissions.

There is a need to improve connectivity in the county, enabling economic growth through access to work, commerce, education and services. |
| Local Congestion | There are localised issues of congestion on the transport network in Northumberland. This is impacting on the operation of the highway |

Issue	Rationalised Challenge
	network and public transport journey times and reliability. The problem could be exacerbated in the future with a growth in population.
Regional Congestion	There is an important economic connection between Northumberland and Tyne and Wear. Congestion is an issue on the highway network on the approaches into Tyne and Wear. This could inhibit the ability of Northumberland to grow economically.
Freight	The A1 is a key route for freight transport originating in and travelling within Northumberland. For much of this route, the A1 is single carriageway and slow HGV speeds can cause delay to other drivers. Operational and capacity issues with the road, rail and shipping freight networks restrict the potential for modal shift. Emerging supply chains with new freight transport needs may create new movement patterns which our infrastructure must accommodate.
Road Safety	Road safety is an issue in Northumberland with the local Council unlikely to reach its target of a 40% reduction in KSI incidents by 2010. Attention needs to be focussed on reducing the impact of motorised traffic on streetscapes in urban and rural areas. We also need to focus on improving safety for vulnerable road users.
Tourism	The majority of tourists who visit Northumberland use the car to access the region and throughout their stay. This is partly because of a lack of provision and awareness of alternative transport options and facilities, but also because visitors prefer the independence that private car use brings.
Climate Change	CO_2 emissions in Northumberland from road transport per head of population are higher than the regional and national figures. This is likely to increase in the future if action is not taken now. This will have implications for climate change within the local and wider area.
Maintenance	There is an extensive network of highways, public rights of way and bridges to maintain and continued network performance is threatened by more frequent severe weather events and restricted revenue and capital budgets.
Environment	There is a need to ensure that the natural and historic environment is protected from the impact of transport and wherever possible is enhanced through transport development.

Table 5.1. Rationalised Challenges

5.4 Draft Objectives

5.7 The following LTP Objectives explain how we will achieve our goals and move towards our vision. These objectives will focus the local transport programmes and policies in addressing the identified challenges and build upon the schemes and

initiatives delivered throughout the previous LTP. Each objective is shown below under the goal for transport supported most, although all the objectives support each of the goals to some extent.

Support Economic Growth

- Improve the performance of existing transport networks in those places that show signs of increasing congestion and unreliability

- Extend the reach of existing networks where it is needed to meet growing demand

- Strengthen our networks against the effects of climate change and extreme weather events

Reducing Carbon Emissions

- Deliver sustainable low carbon travel choices

Improving Access to Services

- Improve transport connections to key services and facilities

Safer and Healthier Travel

- Improve safety of the transport network, particularly for vulnerable road users

- Enable and encourage more physically active and healthy travel

Quality of Life

- Improve transport connections within and between communities

- Provide better access to the natural environment

- Improve the integration of transport into streetscapes

- Protect the natural environment, heritage and landscape

- Protect the fabric of historic town centres

5.8 These objectives have also been developed and tested through consultation and involvement of members and local stakeholders in the development of the LTP, through which they have received a high level of support.

5 Vision, Goals & Objectives

Transport Goals	Objectives	Key Outcome Indicators
Supporting Economic Growth Support Northumberland's economic competitiveness and growth by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks	Improve the performance of existing transport networks in those places that show signs of increasing congestion and unreliability Extend the reach of existing networks where it is needed to meet growing demand	Condition of principal roads (NI 168) Condition of non-principal roads (NI 169) Access to employment by public transport (NI 176)
Reducing Carbon Emissions Minimise the environmental impact of transport by reducing carbon emissions and addressing the challenge of climate change	Deliver sustainable low carbon travel choices Strengthen our networks against the effects of climate change and extreme weather events	Mode share of journeys to school (NI 198) Cycling trips Local bus service patronage (NI 177) Climate Change (NI 186)
Safer and Healthier Travel Improve transport safety and security and promote healthier travel	Improve safety of the transport network, particularly for vulnerable road user Enable and encourage more physically active and healthy travel	Number of people KSI (NI 47) Number of children KSI (NI 48) Number of motorcyclists KSI
Improving Access to Services Promote greater equality of opportunity by improving peoples' access to services	Improve transport connections to key services and facilities	Access to key services by public transport, walking & cycling (NI 175)
Quality of Life Ensure that transport helps to improve quality of life for residents, employers and visitors	Improve transport connections within and between communities	The SEA and the RoWIP will provide the monitoring

Transport Goals	Objectives	Key Outcome Indicators
	Provide better access to the natural environment Improve the integration of transport into streetscapes Protect the natural environment, heritage and landscape Protect the fabric of historic town centres	programme for the environmental objectives.

Table 5.2. Relationship between LTP Goals, Objectives & Indicators

5.5 Strategic Approach to Delivery

5.9 Following the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the funding available for the implementation of the LTP is expected to be significantly less than for previous years. The County Council will make the best and most cost effective means of achieving the LTP objectives with the funding made available. The strategic approach that will guide the local transport strategy is built around a hierarchy of action under three delivery packages.

Managing and Maintaining the Existing Transport Networks

5.10 Our first priority is to manage and maintain the transport networks and services to ensure the greatest transport benefits from the existing infrastructure. This includes traffic management to maximise the efficiency the existing network for the benefit of all users including:

- Better co-ordination of road works to reduce congestion and delays to journeys;

- Measures to improve the resilience of the networks;

- Managing parking on the road to reduce obstructions and congestion; and

- Engineering schemes to address outstanding road traffic accident 'hot-spots'.

5.11 It also includes routine and preventative maintenance of the transport network including:

- Making sure roads and bridges are in a good state of repair;

- Maintenance of footways, cycle routes and public rights of way to encourage active travel; and

- Providing financial support for a network of public transport services where they are not commercially viable.

- Ensuring the transport network is made resilient to the predicted effects of climate change.

Influencing Demand for Travel

5.12 Our second priority is to influence demand for travel on the transport network. This comprises interventions to encourage modal shift onto more sustainable modes such as:

- Encouraging and enabling people to use sustainable, low carbon travel;

- Road safety education, training and publicity;

- Car sharing and car club schemes;

- Promotion of electric vehicles;

- Promoting school, workplace and visitor travel planning;

- Better interchange between bus and rail services;

- Enhancing and promoting the walking and cycling network;

- More car parking capacity at railway stations;

- Travel awareness and marketing campaigns for both residents and visitors;

- Improved broadband network coverage;

- Providing services closer to where people live; and

- Integrating land use and transport planning to reduce the need to travel.

Improving Network Capacity

5.13 Finally, our third priority is to improve network capacity to reduce existing congestion and accommodate future growth. This will be achieved by providing appropriate new infrastructure or services where funding allows. It includes:

- Increasing the capacity of road links and junctions where necessary to address congestion or safety problems;

- Development of a core network of bus routes with high frequency services and infrastructure improvements;

- Development of a network of cycling and walking routes, including public rights of way; and

- Investment in rail stations and services.

5.14 The LTP Implementation Plan outlines the packages of interventions that have been formed around the three strategic delivery themes. An approach that mixes the best elements of each package is likely to be the most appropriate way to meet the objectives and goals for transport and address the identified challenges.

5.6 Strategy Evaluation and Appraisal

5.15 Northumberland's long term transport strategy and LTP has been evaluated and appraised to ensure that it supports the wider policy context, assesses and mitigates the environmental impacts, takes account of opinions of stakeholders and delivers the best possible value for money.

Supporting the Policy Context

5.16 The LTP has been developed to support the wider planning and policy context at the national, regional and local level. It reflects the Government's National Goals for Transport and the Tyne & Wear City Region Transport Strategy. At the local level, the plan supports the Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy and local strategies for Climate Change, Housing, the Economy, Public Rights of Way, the National Park and AONBs. The LTP also supports and will influence the emerging spatial planning strategy, the Local Development Framework.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

5.17 In accordance with the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the environmental impacts of the LTP have been assessed through Strategic Environmental Assessment. The objectives of the SEA Directive are *"to provide a high level of protection to the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development"*. These objectives have been integrated into the relevant UK SEA Regulations.

5.18 The five main requirements of the SEA Regulations are:

1. Preparation of an Environmental Report;

2. Consultation;

3. Taking the results of the environmental report and consultation into account in decision making;

4. Providing information on the decision making; and

5. Monitoring.

5.19 SEA is an iterative process and the SEA has been carried out in conjunction with the preparation of the LTP3 to ensure any adverse effects of the plan on the environment have been identified, avoided and mitigated at the earliest opportunity. The Environmental Report presents the findings of the SEA and is available as a separate document. It concluded that provided that the recommended mitigation measures are implemented and additional assessments are undertaken where required, there should be no significant adverse residual effects on the environment, with only one intervention assessed as having a residual negative effect from the potential increased use of energy from increased amounts of home working. However, this intervention also has beneficial effects resulting from the reduced the need to travel and the associated benefits this has on air quality, climate, noise, and human health. Overall, the residual beneficial effects of the LTP3 far outweigh the negative residual effects.

5.20 In addition to the SEA, a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) have been undertaken alongside the preparation of the LTP and have informed its development.

Consultation and Involvement

5.21 The influence of consultation and involvement has been made at almost every aspect of developing the LTP. This includes identifying problems and issues, prioritising interventions and shaping strategic level priorities, objectives and strategies.

Delivering Value for Money

5.22 The allocations for the Implementation Plan have been determined in accordance with the goals for transport and reflect the identification of transport problems and opportunities.

5.7 Addressing our Challenges for Transport

5.23 A thematic strategy has been developed for each of our goals for transport. For each strategy, the key issues facing the County and the proposed interventions that are relevant to addressing the challenges are presented. Details of the key activities and initiatives that are planned to be delivered over the next three years and the longer term are provided. The delivery of these actions, in partnership with a wide range of other organisations, will bring about local improvements that will contribute towards Northumberland's long term vision.

6. Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth

This chapter:

- describes the importance of transport in supporting Northumberland's continued sustainable economic growth and prosperity;

- sets out the key transport issues;

- explains what the Council and partners will do to improve the performance of the existing transport network as well as extending the reach of the network where it is needed to meet growing demand;

- explains what the Council will do to ensure the transport network is resilient to the effects of climate change.

Context

6.1 'A good transport network is important in sustaining economic success. The transport system links people to jobs, delivers products to markets, underpins supply chains and logistics networks and is the lifeblood of domestic and international trade.' (The Eddington Transport Study 2006)

6.2 Good transport links can help support sustainable economic growth. This is particularly important to the UK at a time when the country is recovering from recession. The Government recognises the role that transport has to play in the economy and it is for this reason that the economy is central to the national goals for transport.

6.3 The economy of Northumberland has undergone significant changes in the last 30 years. There has been a decline in the number of jobs in manufacturing and agricultural sectors, although productivity and output is increasing. These sectors therefore still form an integral part of the local economy, however, the area is now heavily dependent on the service industries. Tourism and the public sector are particularly important to Northumberland and account for just under 12% and 33% of employment in Northumberland respectively. The transport network has a key role in helping to re-balance the local economy as the public sector contracts. Tourism is a growing industry in the county and care must be taken to ensure that the natural and historic environment, which is the main tourist attractor, is protected from any transport impacts.

6.4 The link between transport and the economy is an important one. Transport plays a critical role in the success of our local economy as it is the means by which people access employment and training, and is the means by which goods and services are transported between areas of supply and areas of demand. The local transport network needs improved external connections, both national and global, to help grow businesses by strengthening the capacity for export-led growth and through supply chains, as set out in the Economic Strategy. Transport to employment sites,

town centres and tourist attractions is essential to the local economy. If this movement is not possible, or is slow or in some way impeded, then it impacts upon the performance of the economy. The North East Local Enterprise Partnership has identified "*Strengthening Transport, Connectivity and Infrastructure*" as one of its strategic economic priorities. It is therefore essential that if sustainable economic growth and competitiveness is to be encouraged within Northumberland, an efficient and sustainable transport network is in place.

Key Issues

6.5   The analysis of the evidence has led us to identify the following key transport issues affecting sustainable economic growth and competitiveness in Northumberland:

- Changing patterns of employment with people needing to travel to work in Tyne & Wear, significantly adding to journey time and cost;

- Unreliability of journeys due to existing congestion at key points on the highway network, and forecast to get significantly worse;

- Overcrowding on the rail network in peak periods affecting the comfort of journeys;

- Operational and capacity issues on the freight transport network;

- Limited network coverage of local bus services for rural communities impacting on the ability of residents to access services and meet the needs of tourists; and

- Inadequate coach parking facilities in town centres, impacting on the number of tourists.

- The likely increase in extreme weather events will could disrupt the transport network.

Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth - SWOT Analysis
Strengths
Trunk road network (A1, A69 and A19) provides good road links into, out of and through the County
East Coast Main Line provides intercity rail services to main towns of Morpeth, Alnmouth and Berwick-upon-Tweed as well as local stopping services.
Tyne Valley Line with local stopping rail services.
Comprehensive local bus network in urban areas with cross boundary services to the Borders, Durham and Tyne & Wear.
Ports at Blyth, Amble and Berwick.

Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth - SWOT Analysis
Availability of land along the A189 corridor for housing and employment development. Developing visitor economy attracted by the natural and historic environment. Congestion is not a problem, apart from a few localised instances.
Weaknesses
Single carriageway sections of the A1 north of Morpeth causing delays and unreliable journeys. Significant congestion on strategic road links to Tyne & Wear, particularly on the A1 north of Newcastle and Gateshead Western Bypass causing delays and unreliable journeys. Congestion on local road links on the approaches to Blyth and Morpeth. Lack of available bus services in rural areas. Lack of jobs in the local area, resulting in the need to travel long distance to employment. Overcrowding on rail services to/from Newcastle during peak times. Infrastructure improvements are required to attract investment at employment sites. Reliance on road-based freight transport.
Opportunities
South East Northumberland Growth Point, key employment sites and BEREZ. Regeneration at Berwick-upon-Tweed. Continued economic development of town centres including Hexham, Morpeth, Ashington, Berwick and Blyth. Continued economic development at Cramlington. Improvements to the strategic road network including A1 north of Morpeth and junction improvements with the A1/A19(T) and A19(T)/A189. Improvements to the local road network including Morpeth Northern Bypass. Local stopping rail services on the East Coast Main Line between Newcastle and Edinburgh. Increased use of rail freight, particularly on the Ashington, Blyth & Tyne line, associated with the Post of Blyth.

6 Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth

Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth - SWOT Analysis
Threats
Continued employment growth focused in Tyne & Wear. Congestion on strategic road links could adversely affect the economy of Northumberland. Lack of infrastructure improvements threatens investment at employment sites. Increase in population in rural areas, placing pressure on the transport network. Increasing levels of car ownership and use and development of car dependent lifestyles. Traffic growth resulting from new developments. Severe weather events impacting on the condition of the highway network. Potential for transport development to affect the local environment, making it less attractive to visitors and affecting the visitor economy.

Strategy for Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth

6.6   From the analysis of evidence and consultation with members and local stakeholders, the economic goal for transport is to deliver reliable and efficient networks. To meet this goal, Northumberland will prioritise action to improve those parts of the transport system that show signs of increasing congestion, vulnerability and unreliability as well as extending the reach of existing networks where it is needed to meet growing demand. The focus for this action will be targeted at congested and growing urban areas, inter-urban corridors and supporting sustainable tourism.

Our Goal is to:

- Support Northumberland's economic competitiveness and sustainable growth by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks

Our Objectives are to:

- Improve the performance of existing transport networks in those places that show signs of increasing congestion, vulnerability and unreliability

- Extend the reach of existing networks where it is needed to meet growing demand

- Strengthen our Networks Against the Impacts of Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events

6.7 Many of the interventions for objectives identified in Reducing Carbon Emissions (Chapter 7), Improving Access to Services (Chapter 8) and Safer and Healthier Travel (Chapter 9) will also contribute towards Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth. This includes encouraging more sustainable travel, improving road safety and improving access to employment and key services.

6.8 The evidence base has demonstrated that Northumberland is already well connected in terms of it's transport network. The following objective has therefore been set for the period of LTP3:

> **Improve the Performance of Existing Transport Networks in those Places that Show Signs of Increasing Congestion, Vulnerability and Unreliability**

6.9 The Council recognises the essential role of motorised traffic and the need to ensure the existing highway network is working efficiently without causing unnecessary delays to those travelling on it.

Managing and Maintaining the Network

Network Management

6.10 Northumberland's Network Management Plan delivers a co-ordinated, planned and effective response to avoid, reduce and minimise congestion or disruption on the road network across the County. The plan identifies causes of congestion and disruption including traffic growth, road works and events. A hierarchy for highway management has been agreed and supplemented by network hierarchies for individual modes of travel. The following interventions will continue to be delivered to manage the network:

- Analyse and rank existing and emerging congestion 'hot-spots';

- Co-ordination of road works by utilities, the council and other neighbouring authorities;

- Establish civil enforcement of traffic regulation orders to maintain traffic flow;

- Carry out effective abnormal loads management;

- Explore opportunities for enforcement of moving traffic offences in conjunction with the police; and

- Work in partnership with neighbouring authorities, the highways agency and others to co-ordinate planned works.

6.11 There are numerous events which affect highway movement. This includes the regular County Show at Corbridge as well as occasional military parades and cycle race events. This requires careful planning to avoid unnecessary congestion, compliance with health & safety and that all legal and traffic management procedures are adhered to.

6.12 The movement of abnormal loads can also cause delay to other road users without careful planning. Large or heavy loads are moved outside of peak hours wherever possible to minimise disruption. All routes are checked to ensure that they are wide enough to accommodate the load, bridges are capable of supporting the weight, there are no overhead obstructions and that no road works are taking place.

6.13 Good, clear direction signage is also important in helping people reach their destination by the most direct route. This is particularly important for freight traffic as well as tourists visiting the County. The lack of appropriate signage is a particular concern that has been identified through consultation in the development of the third LTP. A strategy will be developed to prioritise improvements over the period of the next three years. Signage improvements will be designed sensitively, so that they integrate well into the local environment, particularly in protected landscapes. In some instances, existing signage may need to be removed.

6.14 The Council is considering implementing Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) early in 2011/12. This change would enable the Council to improve control of all parking provision with the benefits of enhanced road safety, reduced obstructive parking, improved accessibility by public transport, businesses and other road users and improved traffic movement. Traffic Regulation Orders are currently being reviewed out prior to a business case being prepared and submitted to the Government for approval. The new Northumberland Parking Strategy, also currently being prepared, will support the application process.

Transport Asset Management

6.15 The effective and efficient maintenance of our local transport assets is integral to our overall transport strategy and makes a significant contribution towards delivering our goals for transport. Transport asset management forms a significant part of our programme, accounting for nearly 90% of the annual expenditure on transport totalling over £27million each year. This includes the maintenance of carriageways, structures, footways, cycle tracks, public rights of way, street lighting and traffic signals.

6.16 Central to our asset management approach is the delivery of a Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) for the County. The TAMP sets out how we will maintain the network to satisfy the demands placed upon it. The whole process of asset management is underpinned by lifecycle planning and the asset register. This register provides the core data to inform the decision making and valuation processes for all asset groups. The asset groups are based on key functions of the network rather than current management practices.

6.17 Lifecycle plans have been developed for asset groups. They document how a particular asset, or group of assets, will be managed through its life and identify both current and future needs in terms of anticipated works and funding. The lifecycle plans are based around the processes described in the TAMP and as such each of the lifecycle plans is in effect a mini asset management plan for the asset group. Individual Lifecycle Plans have been developed for carriageways, structures, lighting, footways, drainage, landscaping, traffic management and safety fences. Service Levels have also been developed to better align services with stakeholder

requirements. Levels have been set for safety, serviceability, sustainability and customer services. An indicator is used for each service level to assess whether the performance is excellent, good, fair or poor.

Public Rights of Way

6.18 The County Council has a duty to maintain public rights of way. The criteria for managing and maintaining the public rights of way network are set out in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Increasing Network Capacity

6.19 Congestion in not a major problem in Northumberland at the present time. However, a number of junctions on both the strategic and local road network are already operating at or near to capacity, particularly during peak periods. As traffic flows increase, the resulting congestion is expected to affect a much larger part of the road network, affecting the reliability of bus services and deterring sustainable forms of transport. These problems of congestion need to be addressed to improve the economic vitality of the area whist also contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions and improving quality of life.

6.20 Whilst the priority is to make the best use of our existing network, the Council recognises the need to increase the capacity of the highway network at selected links and junctions where congestion is already a problem and set to get worse. This ranges from small junctions improvement schemes, corridor improvements as well as upgrading single carriageways to dual carriageway standard. These schemes will reduce unnecessary delays to road users and support continued economic growth and regeneration.

A19(T) Junction Improvements

6.21 The A19(T) is a key strategic link for South East Northumberland to Tyne & Wear and the region. The Council will support the Highways Agency in the implementation of schemes which will enhance the efficiency of this route. A number of junction improvements have been recommended to reduce problems of traffic congestion at key junctions. Those junctions which would significantly benefit Northumberland are the A19(T) Moor Farm and the A19(T) Seaton Burn. Whilst improvement works have been undertaken in recent years at these junctions, longer term measures are needed to accommodate the increase in traffic which is expected with the completion of the New Tyne Tunnel in 2011.

A193 Cowpen Road Corridor, Blyth

6.22 The A193 Cowpen Road corridor already experiences significant traffic congestion and unreliability during peak periods. The main bottleneck is the Coniston Road/Tynedale Drive signalised junction and the section between this and the junction with the A189 Spine Road. These problems are set to significantly worse with the construction of new homes and commercial developments in Blyth. This could affect the continued economic growth and prosperity of Blyth and South East Northumberland as a whole. Considerable network interventions are required to accommodate this traffic and to allow the continued growth and regeneration of the town. In the short term, capacity improvements to the A193 Cowpen Road are

required to allow the town to grow and develop. In the longer term, more radical measures would be required such as the construction of a new link road to the A189 Spine Road.

A189 to Battleship Wharf

6.23 The development of wind turbine technology at Battleship Wharf is currently constrained by restrictions on the existing highway network from the A189 to the site. Improvements are currently being designed and external funding sought to facilitate the development.

Telford Bridge, Morpeth

6.24 Whilst it is the Council's aspiration to see a bypass created north of Morpeth which would significantly improve congestion at the Telford Bridge, it is also recognised that there is no committed funding for this scheme at present. The Council is therefore working closely with developers to ensure that measures to mitigate against the impact of development traffic are included as part of any development proposal. Where developments are likely to be significant generators of traffic, travel plans will be required as a component of any planning permission. Travel plans are discussed in greater detail in the Reducing Carbon Emissions chapter of the plan.

Improving Local Bus Travel

6.25 Bus travel is the main mode of public transport in Northumberland, accounting for 6% of all journeys to work in 2001. The economic use of road space and ability to carry large numbers of passengers means that bus travel can play a significant role in managing the forecast increase in traffic growth and improving access to key services and facilities in urban areas. The provision of frequent and reliable bus services and high quality facilities is essential for encouraging motorists out of their cars. However, the dispersed nature of population in the rural parts of the County mean that local bus services are often not commercially viable. More innovative and flexible services need to be developed to provide the transport connections that these communities need.

Blyth Bus Station

6.26 Recognising the role that buses can play in providing a cost-effective solution to meet the goals for transport, a separate bus strategy framework has been developed as an integral part of the third LTP. This new bus strategy will replace the previous strategy included as part of Northumberland's second LTP. The framework will be developed into a final bus strategy after consultation and involvement with relevant local authorities and organisations representing operators and users of bus services. The vision of the new bus strategy is:

'To develop and maintain an integrated local bus network, ensuring that residents can access the services and facilities that they need from convenient, safe and attractive bus services, infrastructure and facilities.'

6.27 The principle elements of the new bus strategy to be implemented in partnership with local bus operators over the period of the third LTP include:

- Develop a strong relationship with bus operators to address issues relating to the operation of bus services in Northumberland;

- Development of a core network of frequent bus services on major corridors between settlements;

- Support for a supplementary network of non-commercial but socially necessary services to improve transport links to the core network and for rural areas;

- Support for local community door-to-door bus services where people do not have access to, or are unable to use, local bus services;

- Improve the quality and coverage of printed travel information in a range of formats;

- Review the provision of timetable displays at bus stops with priority given to bus stations, key town and village centre stops and core bus routes;

- Deliver real time passenger information in main settlements along the Tyne Valley, Berwick and South East Northumberland where funding allows;

- Marketing of bus travel to residents, businesses and visitors with a focus on inter-urban corridors and tourist journey needs;

- Provision of a broad range of appropriately priced and flexible tickets including Smart Cards and PlusBus rail tickets;

- Improved customer care through helpful drivers and staff;

- Upgrade bus stop infrastructure including bus stop poles and flags, timetable information displays and raised kerbs to project an image of high quality standards;

- Develop new/improved bus station facilities in Hexham, Ashington and Blyth

- Improved vehicle standards with increased number of accessible and low emission vehicles;

- Improved interchange between bus and rail services; and

- Improved reliability of bus services by tackling parts of the road network that suffer congestion and delay.

- Improved foot and cycle links to bus stations and stops and cycle storage at interchanges.

Improving Rail Travel

6.28 Rail travel will have an increasingly important role to play in tackling congestion and supporting Northumberland's sustainable economic growth and prosperity. Although rail travel accounted for only 1% of journeys to work in 2001, rail patronage has grown considerably over the period of the second LTP. The combined annual number of rail journeys to and from stations in Northumberland was 1,845,024 in 2008/09. Despite this growth, there are some fundamental issues with current rail services and stations that are preventing rail from maximising it's full potential. The Council will need to focus its efforts on addressing these issues during the third LTP.

6.29 The County Council is committed to addressing rail issues in Northumberland through improved partnership working with a wide range of stakeholders. These include rail passengers and representative organisations, the Department for Transport, local authorities and regional partners, Network Rail, rail operators and regulatory bodies.

6.30 The County Council is a member of the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership covering the Newcastle to Carlisle line, and has provided financial and technical support to the Partnership. This includes a number of small capital projects aimed at improving passenger information along the Tyne Valley Line. Community Rail Partnerships have been very successful in promoting the development of local and rural lines in all parts of the country. The Department for Transport encourages Community Rail Partnership as a cost effective way of increasing patronage on rural lines.

6.31 Whilst Northumberland has good rail network, the limited stopping services on the ECML prevents many journeys being made. The council will continue to work with rail operators, rail user groups and government to secure additional local stopping services and additional carriages. This will facilitate easier travel between local stations within Northumberland as well as reduce overcrowding on trains between Newcastle and Northumberland in peak hours.

High demand for parking at Morpeth Station

6.32 Whilst the Council has delivered schemes to improve the interchange between rail and bus services at Berwick, Hexham and Prudhoe railway stations, facilities at these and other stations need to be improved.

6.33 The lack of available car parking at stations is severely restricting passenger growth. This is a particular problem at stations on the ECML at Berwick, Morpeth and Cramlington. Indiscriminate parking of cars is also affecting local communities as well as the reliable operation of local bus services.

6.34 As well as improving rail services and facilities at stations, we also need to work with the rail operators so that people are aware of the services on offer. The rail operators will be encouraged to provide more passenger assistance personnel, fast ticketing machines, interactive journey planners and improved vehicle quality.

6.35 Recognising the role that rail travel can play in providing a cost-effective solution to meet the goals for transport, a separate rail strategy framework has been developed as an integral part of the third LTP. This framework will be developed into a final rail strategy after consultation and involvement with relevant local authorities and organisations representing operators and users of rail services. The vision of the new rail strategy is:

'To develop and maintain an integrated rail network, ensuring that residents, businesses and tourists can access the destinations they need from convenient, safe and attractive rail services, infrastructure and facilities.'

6.36 The principle elements of the new rail strategy to be implemented in partnership with Network Rail and local rail operators over the period of the third LTP include:

- Improved inter-city and local stopping services on the ECML, including evenly spaced services during the day as well as early morning, evening and weekend services

- Improved station facilities including passenger information, fast ticket machines, bus interchange and level access.

- Increased capacity of trains to reduce overcrowding during peak periods

- Marketing of rail services to residents, business and visitors

- Improved interchange between rail, bus and taxi services

- Improved capacity and quality of station car parks

- Proposed re-opening of the rail station at Belford to serve local communities and improve access for tourists

- Improved foot and cycle links to stations and cycle storage at stations

- Re-opening the Ashington, Blyth & Tyne line to passenger services.

Improving Facilities for Coach Travel

6.37 The Council will work with coach operators, the Confederation of Passenger Transport and representatives of the tourism industries to increase and improve coach facilities in Northumberland in the locations where they are desired. Priority will be given to town centre locations including Berwick, Morpeth, Hexham and Alnwick.

Improving Walking and Cycling

6.38 Walking and cycling can offer a real alternative to both the car and public transport for both residents and tourists in Northumberland and encouragement of this mode will be pursued. In terms of tourism, the Rights of Way network is a vital part of the visitor offer, outdoor activities being one of the main attractions, and is an essential element identified in the Area Tourism Masterplan. A partnership led by the Glendale

Gateway Trust to establish cycle hubs in the market towns of Wooler and Haltwhistle has already commenced and the Council will work with the Trust to assess the opportunity for developing similar schemes in known tourism destinations across the County. Improving walking and cycling is addressed further in Chapter 8 - Safer & Healthier Travel.

Freight

6.39 The Council is already a member of the Tyne & Wear Freight Quality Partnership and will look to widen the scheme to cover Northumberland. This will involve a partnership between the Council and transport operators to try and tackle the issues around freight. It will be a voice through which sustainable modes of freight can be promoted in an attempt to encourage a modal shift from road freight transport. It is a means by which other freight schemes can be advertised and endorsed including resource sharing and freight consolidation. The freight transport network, including road, rail and sea, must be sufficiently flexible to respond to changing demands as new supply chains emerge.

6.40 Whilst the priority of the third LTP is to make the best use of the existing transport network, the Council also recognises that there is a need to extend the reach of the network to address existing problems and to meet growing demand. This leads us to the second objective for Supporting Economic Growth which is to:

> **Extend the Reach of Existing Networks where it is Needed to meet Growing Demand**

6.41 The evidence base showed that there are insufficient jobs in Northumberland to accommodate the working age population with many people required to commute into Tyne & Wear. This is likely to increase in the future with economic growth likely to be focused on the City Region. Despite this, inter-urban connections to Tyne & Wear are limited and can be time consuming and costly. People are increasingly reliant on the private car to access employment and this is leading to congestion on the key approaches into Tyne & Wear.

6.42 As the local economy develops, freight movements in the county are likely to change as new industries grow and supply chains emerge. This may require new or improved infrastructure.

South East Northumberland Public Transport Corridor

6.43 The South East Northumberland Public Transport Corridor aims to improve public transport services and infrastructure along the inter-urban corridor between South East Northumberland and the Tyne and Wear City-Region. The key urban areas of development will be linked by direct passenger rail services on the existing Ashington, Blyth & Tyne rail freight line. These services will be integrated with the local bus networks, Tyne & Wear Metro network at Northumberland Park and pedestrian and cycle routes at new or refurbished station interchanges. Facilities will be provided for bus interchange, park and ride, passenger waiting, passenger information and appropriate access for all. The line will also be integrated with the Stephenson Link to improve access jobs in North Tyneside.

Former Ashington Station

6.44 The proposals will support the Growth Point by developing a more integrated sustainable transport infrastructure. It would reduce congestion on the key approaches into Tyne & Wear, particularly the A189 Spine Road, the A19(T) and the Tyne Tunnel, as people become less reliant on their cars. It is also likely to encourage sustainable economic development, housing and regeneration in South East Northumberland with more people and businesses moving into the area knowing that there is a good connection with Newcastle City Centre. In addition to economic benefits, there are also positive impacts on the other goals to Reduce Carbon Emissions, Improve Access to Services and Improve Quality of Life.

6.45 The scheme has advantages over other re-opening schemes nationally as the line is already used and fully operational and some of the stations such as Ashington and Bedlington are virtually untouched. Improvements would however have to be made to overcome capacity and signalling issues on the line and provide additional stations where facilities are currently not available.

Morpeth Northern Bypass

6.46 The construction of a strategic link connecting the A1 to south east Northumberland has long been an aim of the County Council. Phase 1 of the project, the Pegswood Bypass, was completed in 2007. Morpeth Northern Bypass is the western section of the link road, linking the A1 to the A197 west of Pegswood. The objectives of the Morpeth Northern Bypass are:

- To complete the strategic link to the former coalfield areas in south east Northumberland.
- To improve accessibility to the A1 trunk road, avoiding routed through Morpeth and reducing congestion in the town centre.
- To facilitate significant housing and business development by opening up land to the north of Morpeth for development. This is a priority for the Local Development Framework.

6.47 A bid to secure funding for the bypass was submitted to the DfT in 2008. Following the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010, the County Council confirmed that the scheme was still a priority and, in January 2011, was informed that the scheme would be retained in the national programme. A final bid will be submitted by September 2011. It is also intended to seek planning permission in the summer of 2011.

Blyth Central Link Road

6.48 The Council will continue to progress proposals for the Blyth Central Link Road during the period of LTP3 which would see a new link being created between Rotary Way and a new junction on the A189 Spine Road. This would help ease congestion in the Blyth area particularly on the A1061 and Cowpen Road. It is anticipated that a new road link in this location will support proposals for the development of Blyth, the Growth Point sites and the BEREZ.

A1 Improvements

6.49 The evidence base has identified the unreliability of road journeys to Scotland and the importance of upgrading the A1 to dual carriageway standard throughout Northumberland. The current arrangement of mainly single carriageway road is impacting on the ability of Northumberland to reach its economic potential. A fully dualled A1 throughout Northumberland would improve journey time reliability for all road users whilst improving efficiency for freight transport. Consultation is currently ongoing by the Government to decide whether the road should be categorised as a road of national importance which the Council will fully support.

The A1 near Felton

6.50 The Council will undertake the following actions during LTP3:

- Support the ongoing DaSTS study;

- Lobby for the road to be categorised as a road of national importance; and

- Support the immediate upgrading of short sections of the A1 from Morpeth–Felton and Adderstone–Belford to dual carriageway standard.

Inter-modal Freight Transport

6.51 The rail and shipping freight networks are also important to the freight economy in Northumberland and their importance will increase in the coming years as the emphasis on sustainable freight transport increases. As LTP3 progresses towards 2026, the Council wants to ensure that active measures are being taken to encourage a modal shift from road freight transport to rail or sea.

6.52 Encouraging a modal shift from road freight to rail or sea will require significant capital investment to the road, rail and shipping transport networks. The Blyth Central Link Road and the Ashington, Blyth & Tyne rail line will be influential factors in encouraging a modal shift to shipping by easing congestion on the approach into the Port of Blyth. Improvements to the transport network may also be required for the development of low carbon industries at the Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone.

Economic Strategy Priorities for Transport

6.53 The County Council's Economic Strategy 2010-15 states that *"connectivity in the county must improve, enabling economic growth through access to work, commerce, education and services."* There is a need to support Northumberland's economic competitiveness by developing internal connectivity and linking Northumberland into domestic and global networks. This includes improved connections to air and sea ports as well as improvements outside the county which will benefit residents and businesses given our interdependencies with neighbouring areas.

6.54 The Economic Strategy sets out priorities for investment in the strategic transport network, in order to increase connectivity in the county. These priorities mirror those of the LTP and are set out below:

- Upgrading the A1 to dual carriageway standard.
- Constructing the Morpeth Northern Bypass.
- Further improvements to the A19(T) junctions.
- Seeking further improvements to the A69(T).
- Re-introducing passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth & Tyne rail line.
- Maintaining and seeking enhancements to existing rail services.
- Enhancing connectivity through development of air and sea ports.
- Enhancing accessibility in rural communities, including community transport initiatives.
- Development and promotion of sustainable transport opportunities which reduce reliance on motor vehicles, including: walking, cycling, local bus services and effective travel planning.

Network Resilience

6.55 Transport networks are vulnerable to the effects of extreme weather and, in order to safeguard business prosperity, it is essential that the county's transport infrastructure is made resilient to the predicted effects of climate change. Guidance on Local Transport Plans states that: *"it is important that local authorities put in place measures to improve the resilience of local transport to the impacts of climate change, such as flooding and deterioration of roads, in line with the Government's Adapting to Climate Change Programme."* Whilst it important to be forward thinking and take action now to minimise the impact of climate change in the future, the recent floods and severe winter weather demonstrate that Northumberland could already be experiencing its effects. This leads us to the following objective:

> **Strengthen our Networks Against the Impacts of Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events**

6.56 The Climate Change Strategy for Northumberland stressed the need for the Local Transport Plan to recognise the implications that climate change will have on Northumberland's transport system. It outlined a number of measures for how we can mitigate against the impacts of climate change and, subject to the availability of funding, these will be implemented throughout the period of LTP3.

Highway Infrastructure

Capital Programme to Strengthen Infrastructure

6.57 The Council will work to identify those locations where previous bad weather events have damaged and weakened bridges and key infrastructure and implement works to alleviate the problems. Drainage systems will be examined and improved so that infrastructure can better withstand intense rainfall in the future.

Flood damage at Ingram

Maintenance and Resurfacing of Roads

6.58 Regular inspections and maintenance of roads will be undertaken to ensure that problems are identified and rectified when they occur. The Council will continue to grit the roads in winter time and will try to ensure that sufficient levels of grit are available to cope with extreme events. Whilst it would not be possible for the Council to grit every road in the County, the 'Highways in Winter' leaflet which details the roads which are routinely gritted will be kept up to date and be readily available. The Council will also identify those locations where road surfaces may be vulnerable to surface melting in times of high temperatures.

Hard Surfacing and Improved Drainage on Footpaths and Cycle Tracks

6.59 To ensure that the residents of Northumberland can still walk or cycle during heavy rainfall events, the Council will look to install hard surfacing on key footpaths and cycle tracks which are known to be vulnerable in bad weather. Drainage systems in these locations will also be improved to limit the amount of surface water on key routes, and to prevent flash flooding. Sensitive design will ensure these measures do not adversely impact on wildlife or the character of rural footpaths.

The Natural Environment

6.60 Transport infrastructure can help the natural environment adapt to climate change through measures such as sustainable drainage, carbon storage, water conservation and biodiversity in verges. Good design and appropriate management can therefore achieve benefits for both the natural environment and network resilience.

Our Priorities

Our Goal is to:
• Support Northumberland's economic competitiveness and sustainable growth by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks

Our Objectives are to:
• Improve the performance of existing transport networks in those places that show signs of increasing congestion and unreliability
• Extend the reach of existing networks where it is needed to meet growing demand
• Strengthen our Networks Against the Impacts of Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events

We will implement the following Actions:
• Progress consideration of plans to implement Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) as an option for Northumberland.
• Maintain the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP).
• Implement the Network Management Duty to minimise congestion.
• Give priority to improving roads that are at capacity.
• Review and implement improvements to public transport infrastructure.
• Work with local rail operators, Network Rail and the DfT to improve rail services.
• Lobby for increased capacity of train services to Newcastle.
• Support Network Rail to deliver access for all improvements at local railway stations.
• Review coach parking facilities in town centres and include improvements, as appropriate, in a prioritised programme of schemes.
• Support provision of cycle hubs at Wooler & Haltwhistle.
• Review the highway signage strategy and deliver improvements as part of a prioritised programme of schemes.
• Investigate the provision of additional car parking at Berwick railway station.
• Investigate funding to construct a new railway station at Belford.
• Undertake design and investigate funding to deliver improvements to the A193 Cowpen Road corridor.
• Lobby for improvements to be made on the A19(T) at Seaton Burn and Moor Farm junctions.
• Investigate the development of a major scheme business case for the SE Northumberland Public Transport Corridor.
• Continue to progress a major scheme bid to construct the Morpeth Northern Bypass.
• Continue to lobby for the A1 to be improved to dual carriageway standard.
• Investigate the development of a major scheme business case for Blyth Central Link Road.
• Lobby for improvements to the East Coast Main Line railway.

- Assess and improve the condition of highway and rights of way infrastructure as part of a prioritised programme of schemes.
- Support the implementation of initiatives which will increase the value of walking and cycling tourism to the local economy.

7. Reducing Carbon Emissions

This chapter:

- describes the importance of minimising the future environmental impact of transport as well as addressing some of the impacts from the past

- sets out the key transport issues in relation to carbon emissions; and

- explains what the Council and partners will do to deliver sustainable, low-carbon travel choices

Context

7.1 Climate change is one of the most pressing environmental concerns of today's society. It is a natural phenomenon whereby normal changes in the Earth's atmospheric composition bring about a change in the climate; this can take place over many tens, hundreds or thousands of years. The importance of climate change however, has increased in recent years with research suggesting that human activity is exacerbating the process.

7.2 Greenhouse gas emissions have been identified as a major cause of climate change. Whilst greenhouse gases exist naturally in the earth's atmosphere, the actions of mankind are altering the balance of these gases which is affecting the regulation of surface temperatures, leading to global warming and increased frequency of extreme weather events. Increasing levels of Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) in the atmosphere are considered to be the primary source of global warming. Scientists warn that unless action is taken now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, our local environment will continue to be degraded by the speeding up of climate change.

7.3 The Stern Review issued in 2007 emphasised the pressing need to address the environmental and economic consequences of climate change in the UK. This review identified transport as one of the market sectors where attention should be focused since it is the fastest growing source of emissions. It is for this reason that reducing carbon emissions to tackle climate change is a key component of Northumberland's third Local Transport Plan.

Key Issues

7.4 The following key issues have been identified in relation to carbon emissions in Northumberland:

- Carbon emissions from road transport per head of population in Northumberland are higher than the regional and national figures, and increasing year on year

- Increasing levels of car ownership, use and dependency are set to make air quality, already poor in areas in South East Northumberland, significantly worse

- Extreme weather events have already caused significant damage to local communities and transport infrastructure and the incidence of these is predicted to increase.

- Tourists are reliant on the private car to get to Northumberland and travel around, contributing further to CO_2 emissions.

Reducing Carbon Emissions
Strengths
• Northumberland is committed to reduce carbon emissions and has signed the voluntary 'Covenant of Mayors' agreement and the Nottingham Declaration. • There is an increasing public awareness of climate change issues.
Weaknesess
• The transport sector has the fastest growing carbon emissions • Average carbon emissions from transport per head of population are higher in Northumberland than the regional and national figures • The rural nature of the County means that residents rely on the private car to access key services • Working age population is greater than the number of jobs in the area resulting in commuting long distances to neighbouring authorities • Reliance on the private car by tourists to get to their accommodation and travel around • Significant outflow of commuters from Northumberland to Tyne & Wear • Significant proportion of working population who use the car to get to work • Localised issues of congestion, particularly in urban areas during peak times including Cowpen Road, Blyth and Telford Bridge, Morpeth • Public transport usage is lower than the national average
Opportunities
• Technological improvements to reduce vehicle emissions • Low carbon technology e.g. electric vehicle charging points project • Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone

Reducing Carbon Emissions
• Promoting sustainability by influencing the location of development through the planning system   • Promoting greater active travel.   • Public rights of way network.
Threats
• Carbon emissions from transport are forecast to increase   • Increasing levels of car ownership and use

Strategy for Reducing Carbon Emissions

7.5   From the analysis of evidence and consultation with members and local stakeholders, the goal for reducing carbon emissions is to minimise the environmental impact of transport. To meet this goal, Northumberland will work in partnership with other organisations to encourage and enable more sustainable travel choices and to strengthen our networks against the impacts of climate change.

> Our Goal is to:
>
> • Minimise the environmental impact of transport by reducing carbon emissions and addressing the challenge of climate change
>
> Our Objective is to:
>
> • Deliver sustainable low carbon travel choices

7.6   The evidence shows that Northumberland is already experiencing the effects of climate change with extreme weather events predicted to become more frequent. Northumberland is however being proactive in tackling climate change and is committed to reducing carbon emissions by 2020 in accordance with the Climate Change Act 2008. To ensure that this target is met, Northumberland has also developed its own climate change strategy entitled 'The Heat is On'.

7.7   Greenhouse gas emissions have been identified as a major cause of climate change with transport being identified as a sector where reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, particularly CO_2 emissions, can be made. The objective relating to climate change is therefore as follows:

7 Reducing Carbon Emissions

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Deliver Sustainable Low Carbon Travel Choices

</div>

7.8 The most effective way to achieve a reduction in CO_2 emissions from road transport is to increase the proportion of sustainable low carbon travel. This will require the adoption and implementation of a wide range of sustainable travel initiatives. Sustainable travel is about providing for the transport needs of an area through a package pf measures which promote attractive transport alternatives such as walking, cycling, public transport and sustainable car use. This package is then held together by a clear and strong brand with supportive marketing. The approach takes account of the travel choices that people make and seeks to influence those choices.

7.9 A study commissioned by the DfT entitled 'Making Smarter Choices Work' suggested that the high intensity application of travel planning techniques can results in peak period congestion reduction of over 20%. The evidence suggested that the most effective way of reducing congestion is through a package of measures that change existing travel behaviour. Benefits not only include reduction in congestion, sustainable travel choices can improve quality of life, improve air quality, have health benefits and carbon savings. If planned effectively, sustainable travel packages can also be low in cost, have shorter lead in times and be generally flexible to implement.

7.10 The typical measures that can be used to form a sustainable travel package include travel planning, promoting public transport services, active travel choices, influencing the demand for travel, marketing and branding and promoting sustainable car use.

Travel Planning

Workplace Travel Plans

7.11 A workplace travel plan is a written document setting out a series of measures to reduce car use and promote sustainable travel by employees on the journey to work. Over the period of the next LTP, the council's travel planning officers will continue to work closely with developers and major employers to increase the uptake of travel plans. Opportunities include:

- Continue to secure travel plans for all new developments meeting thresholds set out in the Transport Assessment Guidance.

- Improve the quality of travel plans through the development of a Supplementary Planning Document.

- Consider charging developers for travel plan evaluation services and where appropriate seek to secure financial support for sustainable travel measures through section 106 agreements.

- Improve monitoring systems of these travel plans and consider investing in travel planning software.

- Continue to implement the council's own travel plan, focusing on a package of measures developed inline with the Carbon Management Plan.

- Provide advice and support for the development of voluntary travel plans, particular emphasis will be placed around developing travel plans for employers involved in the Blyth Active Travel Town project. (more detail on Blyth Active Travel town is in Chapter 8)

School Travel Plans

7.12 Over the past 20 years the proportion of children travelling to school by car has almost doubled, yet many live close enough to school to walk. This change in travel habits has a negative effect on the environment and the health of young people.

7.13 School travel plans provide an opportunity to implement a wide range of measures to reduce car use and promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport on the school journey. School travel plans are one way of redressing the balance to encourage children to want to travel to school more sustainably and persuade parents that it is the best option.

7.14 Now the government target for all schools to have a travel plan is largely achieved, the challenge is to keep the momentum going. The Council must continue to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport for the school journey in line with the statutory duty set out in the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy.

- Continue to monitor and review existing school travel plans.

- Ensure school travel plans are developed for any new school builds and sustainable transport options are considered throughout the planning and development stages.

- Provide schools with a range of sustainable travel initiatives throughout the school year.

7.15 Further information about the school travel strategy's can be found in the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy, which sets out the County Council's commitment to encouraging sustainable travel choices for the journey to school.

Residential Travel Plans

7.16 A residential travel plan is a package of measures designed to reduce car use originating from new housing by supporting alternative and sustainable forms of transport alongside reducing the need to travel in the first place. Evidence suggests that as people change their lifestyle, such as moving home, they are more likely to be amenable to suggestions of alternatives to using the car.

- The Council will continue to request residential travel plans for new developments, alongside physical measures such as improved access to public transport and improved cycle and pedestrian links.

- Ensure that a high quality travel plan is developed and ensure residential travel plans are monitored and reviewed.

- As a minimum, travel information (ideally through Personalised Travel Planning) should be offered to all residents within new developments. Car club vehicles should also be available from the outset where it is feasible to introduce the scheme.

- Where appropriate, request that developers consider including facilities for the charging of electric vehicles as part of the development, or contribute to off-site facilities.

- Secure funding to provide travel centres in major development sites points in Northumberland, including Blyth & Cramlington.

Active Travel Choices

7.17 Walking and cycling are viable alternatives to the private motorcar for short journeys less than 5km in length. The evidence base for Northumberland identified a large proportion of commuter journeys which were within this distance and currently undertaken using the car. The journey to school is also likely to be a journey which can be undertaken on foot or by cycling. Increased levels of walking and cycling will be encouraged by making improvements to existing local footways, cycle tracks and public rights of way and identifying locations where cycle paths are desired in order to achieve a more connected network. Issues of security on cycle paths and footways will also be considered with additional lighting installed where necessary. Where road safety is a concern, the council will also consider the installation of pedestrian and toucan crossings.

Influencing Demand

7.18 Evidence has also demonstrated that tele-working and tele-conferencing can reduce the need to travel. We will promote tele-working and tele-conferencing to council staff and other employers as part of workplace travel planning and provide advice on how to use Communication Technology.

Marketing and Branding

Travel Awareness Campaigns

7.19 Travel Awareness campaigns can increase peoples' understanding of the problems caused by traffic growth and encourage people to think about their own travel behaviour. Over the next LTP period the Council will develop a smarter choices brand as well as delivering a wide range of smarter travel awareness measures using a wide range of media. Planned initiatives include:

- Develop a brand and use the brand for a range of sustainable travel activities, events and promotional campaigns

- Maximising the benefits to be gained by linking the campaign to specific infrastructure improvements, such as new cycle routes or improved and more accessible walking routes, and national travel awareness campaigns

- Continue to promote cycling and walking through working with partners such as the charity sector, interest groups, Police and employers

- Working in partnership with the health sector to communicate campaign measures about the health impacts of increasing car use and the health benefits of walking and cycling

- Ensure advances in technology are utilised to promote alternatives to driving and provide practical travel information

- Promote public transport as an alternative to the car as active travel can form a key part of the journey

- Promote sustainable forms of transportation, such as walking and cycling, as an attractive mode of transport for tourist and leisure activities

Sustainable Car Use

Car Sharing Schemes

7.20 Car sharing has the potential to significantly reduce the level of single person trips. Northumberland's internet based car sharing scheme (www.northumberlandcarshare.com) was launched during 2007 and currently has 550 members. Initiatives to be delivered over the next LTP period include:

- Promoting the scheme to major employers, schools and organisations as well as rural villages and community groups; and

- Encouraging people to join the scheme through innovative measures.

Car Club Schemes

7.21 Car clubs offer financial savings for low mileage users and families considering buying a second car. Members pay for how much they use the car and this reduces the temptation to use the car for unnecessary short journeys.

7.22 There are currently two car club vehicles in Northumberland, one in Wylam and one recently launched in Prudhoe. It is hoped that by extending this scheme it could help improve accessibility issues for families without a car and reduce dependency on the car for shorter journeys. Initiatives to be developed over the period of the next LTP include:

- Car clubs to be expanded over the County to meet demand. The authorities will continue to develop partnership working with the car club operators, local employers and developers to maximise the benefits of the scheme; and

- The Council will look to source a pool of car club vehicles to use for business purposes and to be offered for use to local communities when not required by the Council.

Low Carbon Vehicles

7.23   Electric vehicles offer significant environmental benefits compared to existing internal combustion engine vehicles. They produce no tailpipe emissions and research suggests using the current UK power mix, electric vehicles could realise up to a 40% benefit in carbon dioxide savings compared to a typical petrol family car. Larger emission reduction's can be realised over time if the UK moves to lower carbon sources of power generation.

7.24   The Council is currently supporting a region wide project called 'Plugged in Places' to install over 1,000 electric charging points in the North East over the next two years. These points will be installed on streets, in car parks, at residential and commercial locations and at retail and leisure facilities.

7.25   Over the next LTP period the Council will deliver the following actions continue to support the use of low carbon vehicles:

- Ensure that a network of electric vehicle charging points is set up to encourage the take-up of electric vehicles;

- Increase the number of low carbon vehicles in the Council's own fleet;

- Where appropriate, ensure electric vehicle charging points are provided at new residential and commercial developments within the County; and

- Where possible, support further advances in new car technology such as bio-fuels and hydrogen powered vehicles.

Our Priorities

7.26   The key actions to be delivered over the next three years and the longer term to meet our goal and objectives for reducing carbon emissions are outlined below.

Our Goal is to:
• Minimise the environmental impact of transport by reducing carbon emissions and addressing the challenge of climate change
Our Objectives are to:
• Deliver sustainable low carbon travel choices

We will implement the following actions:

- Continue to implement the Council's own travel plan as an integral part of the Carbon Management Plan;

- Provide support and guidance to schools and work places in developing and delivering travel plans;

- Promote the development of travel centres in major residential development sites;

- Promote sustainable travel choices such as walking, cycling and public transport;

- Promote tele-working and tele-conferencing within the County Council and as part of other work place travel plans;

- Promote sustainable travel as a viable mode for tourist journeys and travel to major events;

- Promote the Northumberland car sharing scheme to a wide audience;

- Monitor and assess the benefits of the existing car clubs and investigate promoting similar schemes across the county;

- Progress proposals for provision of charging points for electric vehicles;

- Investigate provision of a pool of car clubvehicles for use by the Council and wider community.

- Improve and enhance the traffic free rights of way network around urban areas to increase the use of sustainable transport for accessing work, schools and services.

8. Safer and Healthier Travel

This chapter:

- describes the importance of improving the overall safety of the transport system;

- sets out the key transport issues for road safety;

- explains what the Council and partners will do to improve the safety of the transport network, particularly for vulnerable road users,

- explains what the Council and partners will do to enable and promote more physically active and healthy travel.

Context

8.1 The safety, security and health of the residents of Northumberland is of the utmost importance to Northumberland County Council and it is recognised that transport can play a big role in affecting this. Any road casualty is regrettable and Northumberland County Council is committed to reducing accident rates across the County. Excellent progress was made in reducing road casualties throughout the period of LTP2 and this is something the Council intends to continue with throughout the period of this plan. Not only will a reduction in the number of road casualties in Northumberland benefit the individuals involved, it will also have positive impacts on the economy and society of Northumberland which are undoubtedly affected by any road accident. A reduction in the number of road casualties in Northumberland will be monitored against targets set in the new national road safety strategy which is due to be implemented in 2011.

8.2 Better safety, security and health however, is about more than just improving road safety. It is also about encouraging residents and visitors to use modes of transport which can benefit their health through more active travel such as walking and cycling. Promoting sustainable modes of travel can also help reduce air pollution and combat the occurrence of respiratory illnesses triggered by poor levels of air quality, such as asthma. The 2010 Health Profile of Northumberland (Dept of Health), showed that levels of obesity amongst both adults and children in Northumberland is similar to the national average. Levels of physical activity amongst children are above the national average. An increase in active travel can address obesity issues and ensure that children retain their current good level of physical activity into adulthood.

Key Issues

8.3 The analysis of the evidence has led us to identify the following key issues:

- Reducing the number of road deaths and serious injuries, which have fallen at a slower rate than slight injuries;

- Reducing pedestrian and cyclist casualties in our urban areas – particularly in deprived communities;

- Protecting children, young and old people, who are over represented in the casualty statistics;

- Protecting motorcyclists, who represent 7% of all casualties, but 22% of all killed and serious injuries;

- Safety on rural roads - particularly for young male drivers;

- Poor road user behaviour, where inappropriate speed, drink driving and use of mobile telephones whilst driving remain a problem; and

- Poor health of some residents, particularly in deprived communities

Safer and Healthier Travel - SWOT Analysis
Strengths
• Significant reduction in the number of people killed, seriously and slightly injured in road traffic accidents
• Reduction in the number of car occupant, pedestrian and cyclist casualties
• Success in tackling high risk accident sites over previous years
• Strong partnership working with other organisations, in particular Northumbria Police, Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service, Highways Agency and SureStart
• Successful Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative to enforce speed limits
• Joint working with other North East local authorities through Road Safety GB
• Successful Northumberland County Council road safety education and training programmes
• School travel plans in the majority of schools promoting active travel
• The % of physically active children is above the national average
Weaknesess
• Over representation of vulnerable road user groups as road accident casualties
• High level of motorcyclists killed or seriously injured
• Personal safety fears for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly in urban areas causing accessibility barriers
• Younger and older drivers disproportionately involved in road traffic accidents
• Perceived road danger rural villages

Safer and Healthier Travel - SWOT Analysis

- Poor health of people, particularly in deprived communities of South East Northumberland

- Increasing sedentary lifestyles that are dependent on the private car

- Rat-running of traffic on residential roads to avoid traffic congestion

- High traffic volumes and speeds, particularly in urban areas causing community severance and accessibility barriers

- Deterioration in the condition of the local road and public rights of way network, particularly in rural areas

Opportunities

- Education activities to influence driver behaviour and improve skills of all road users

- Engineering schemes prevent collisions and reduce the levels of impact and severity of injury

- Enforcement of speed limits through Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative

- Enforcement of traffic regulation orders using powers through Decriminalised Parking

- Improved asset management of the transport network

- Improved accessibility of the rights of way network

- Development, maintenance and improvement of off-road cycling and walking networks

- Increasing pedestrian and cycling trips through travel planning initiatives

- Co-ordinating resources through effective partnership working
- Blyth Active Travel Town project

Threats

- Relatively small number of casualties can result in significant year-to-year variations

- Increasing levels of car ownership and use

- Increasing levels of traffic congestion, particularly in urban areas

Safer and Healthier Travel - SWOT Analysis

- Increasing older driver population with associated increased accident risk

- Random nature of accidents that are expensive to treat

Strategy for Safer and Healthier Travel

8.4 From the analysis of evidence and consultation with members and local stakeholders, our goal is to improve transport safety and promote healthier travel. To meet this goal, we will improve safety of the transport network and encourage more physically active and healthy travel on the highway, rights of way and cycle route networks. The strategic priorities for the strategy are to reduce casualties for vulnerable road users and those disproportionately involved in accidents and increasing the level of walking and cycling in the county.

Goal

- Improve transport safety and security and promote healthier travel

Objectives

- Improve safety of the transport network, particularly for vulnerable road users

- Enable and encourage more physically active and healthy travel

8.5 This section of the plan sets out the strategy adopted to address the issues relating to better safety, security and health set out in the evidence base for Northumberland. It identifies what the Council and its partners will do to achieve the objectives for improving road safety and encouraging more active and healthy travel.

Improve Safety of the Transport Network, Particularly for Vulnerable Road Users

8.6 The road safety strategy included in the previous LTP delivered improvements based around the traditional three E's – Engineering, Education and Enforcement. The evidence demonstrates that this approach has successfully reduced the number of casualties across the County. However, analysis indicates that accidents are becoming less concentrated and increasing dispersed across the County's road network. Accident sites are becoming harder to identify and treat in a cost effective way.

8.7 There is therefore an increasing need to target road user behaviour so that that people use the network in a safer way. This requires a new approach that focuses on influencing and improving road user behaviour through education, encouragement and enforcement initiatives with a focus on groups and behaviours disproportionately involved in accidents. Whilst highway engineering measures will still be used to treat accident clusters and support the safer routes to school programme, directing resources to influence road user behaviour will ensure the best value for money.

Safer for Children

8.8 The Council is committed to working in partnership with other organisations and agencies to further reduce the number of child casualties in the County and is a major focus of our road safety programme. Programmes aimed at reducing child casualties include school travel plans, safer routes to school, traffic calming measures and providing road safety education and training from an early age. All of these programmes are integrated to maximise the benefits to be gained.

8.9 The Safer Routes to School (SR2S) initiative is an important part of our approach which aims to create a safer environment to enable children to travel safely to and from school by walking and cycling. The SR2S programme is linked to the School Travel Plan programme. In order to achieve this, the council is working to improve conditions on the main walking and cycling routes into schools.

8.10 Highway infrastructure improvements are delivered to support the programme. This includes the introduction or school safety zones, pedestrian crossings, traffic calming, parking restrictions and cycle routes. To reduce the speed of traffic, mobile speed activated signs and used as well as the introduction of 20mph speed limits.

8.11 The Councils Road Safety Unit has also increased the range and quality of road safety education, training and publicity delivered to schools across Northumberland. Primary school children will continue to be the focus for education and training. Year 3 children in South East Northumberland will continue to benefit from a practical pedestrian training scheme. Year 5 and 6 children will continue to receive the Bikeability cycle training. Other age groups will benefit from road safety awareness courses focusing on in-car, bus and pedestrian safety. Secondary school children will be targeted with general road safety campaigns. Sixth Form and Colleges of Further Education will be the focus of pre-driver education to instil responsible driving attitudes.

Safer Drivers

8.12 The Council will continue to support and promote measures to reduce road casualties arising from driver behaviour. Education and training measures will be used, targeted on groups more likely to be involved in accidents including young people and the elderly. Initiatives will include presentations aimed at younger and inexperienced drivers, driver improvement courses to minor offenders and 'Older Driving Days' to improve the confidence and safety of elderly drivers. The Council will also support local, regional and national campaigns to reduce the number of casualties caused by drink, drugs and fatigue in partnership with other agencies.

Safer Infrastructure

8.13 The Council will continue to make the existing transport network as safe as possible by maintaining the highway to safe standard as well as identifying and treating accident problem sites. An annual Road Casualty Review will provide a focus for analysing and targeting particular areas of concern on a geographical basis and by road user group. Initiatives to be delivered over the period of the third LTP include targeting the remaining accident 'hot spots' with engineering treatments, particularly on the primary network and in rural villages and urban towns, as well as providing speed humps, pedestrian crossings, 20mph speed limits and shared spaces as appropriate.

Safer Speeds

8.14 It is recognised that excessive and/or inappropriate speed can be a significant contributory factor in the number and severity of road traffic casualties. Speed will be managed by engineering measures to physically reduce vehicle speed, education to raise drivers' awareness of the dangers of inappropriate speed and enforcement of speed limits. The County Council is a partner in the Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative. This operates speed enforcement cameras at locations with a history of personal injury accidents.

Safer Vehicles

8.15 The Council will promote the importance of vehicle maintenance and continue to set a good example to other road users. We will also continue to advise parents on the correct fitting of child seats and support campaigns concerning the wearing of seat belts.

Safer Motorcycling

8.16 Although motorcyclists account for only 1% of the road user population in Northumberland, they represented 22% of the County's killed and seriously injured casualties in 2009. Over half of these casualties live outside of Northumberland. The Council recognises the benefits of increasing motorcycle use in terms of improving accessibility and reducing carbon emissions, but is mindful of the increased risk of motorcycling compared to other modes.

8.17 To ensure that an increase in motorcycle use would not give rise to a disproportionate rise in casualties, the Council will continue to work in partnership with Northumbria Police, the Highways Agency, local motorcycling groups and health services to deliver schemes to reduce the vulnerability of motorcyclists and the risk they pose to other road users.

8.18 The focus of these initiatives is to improve the skills and behaviour of riders, raise awareness of motorcyclists by other road users and highway maintenance targeted at popular routes. The Council will continue to deliver post-test training for newly qualified as well as more experienced riders. ExpertRider is a pilot scheme which has offered experienced riders the chance to undertake practical on-road training with police trained motorcycle instructors. The Council will assess the success of the scheme and secure funding for future years.

Safer Pedestrians, Cyclists and Horse Riders

8.19 The Council is committed to reducing the number of vulnerable road users involved in accidents and is a key part of our strategy for promoting the use of walking and cycling for short journeys to improve accessibility to services and the health of the population. We need to make the highway a safer place for people to walk and ride. Initiatives to be delivered over the period of the third LTP will focus on the targeting of traffic calming with a focus on protecting vulnerable road users and improving crossing conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. School Safety Zones and 20mph limits will make it easier to cross roads. Improvements to the public rights of way network will provide greater opportunities for safer travel away from vehicular traffic.

Better Enforcement

8.20 The Council will continue to support the enforcement of the road traffic law by Northumbria Police, especially in the key areas of excessive vehicle speed, driving whilst impaired through drink, drugs or fatigue and seat belts. Seat belt usage will be promoted through enforcement, education and publicity campaigns. Awareness of the dangers of driving whilst impaired through drink, drugs or fatigue will also be raised through publicity campaigns and training courses. Targeted enforcement of drink drive offences and using mobile telephones will also be carried out. The Council will enforce traffic regulation orders to free up congestion and to ensure that dangerous parking practices are eliminated

Promoting Safer Road Use

8.21 The Council will strive to alter attitudes and behaviour, and create a climate where people understand and accept road safety messages, by carrying out publicity campaigns. National and regional campaigns will be supported through press releases, local events and activities. Particular emphasis will be given to the priority areas of speed, child road safety, drink and drug driving and driver fatigue. Support will also be given to campaigns on motorcycling, mobile telephones, pedestrian, cyclist and novice driver safety and company car drivers. Road safety campaigns will be integrated with Police enforcement initiatives where appropriate.

8.22 The Council will also continue to support the work of advanced driving groups such as the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). These organisations provide advice on driver training to all local organisations who wish to improve the driving standards of their employees. This not only reduces the risk of accident to the employee but also increases their awareness of other road users. Efficient driving techniques can also help to reduce carbon emissions.

Active Travel

8.23 Encouraging active travel is a means by which we can improve the health of our residents whilst meeting the transport objectives of reducing carbon emissions. The County Council is committed to ensuring the infrastructure is in place to facilitate active travel, particularly for shorter trips which can replace the private car. The active travel objective is therefore as follows:

Enable and Encourage More, Physically Active and Healthy Travel

8.24 There are a number of schemes which are ongoing or being considered for implementation in Northumberland in an effort to encourage active travel. These schemes are set out in detail below.

Deliver the Sustrans' Connect2 Project

8.25 In 2007 Sustrans competed with four other contenders in a national public TV vote and succeeded in securing £50 million from the Big Lottery Fund's 'Living Landmarks: The Peoples' Millions' Programme to deliver projects that would benefit communities, people and places.

8.26 The Sustrans' initiative is 'Connect2: People, Places and Pride' which consists of 79 schemes nationwide. The aim is to connect people and places that have previously suffered because of their separation or would benefit from a new connection. It is also hoped that the schemes will change the way people think about their local area so that walking and cycling become more accepted options for everyday journeys. The entire Connect2 Project is very much community orientated with much emphasis placed on involving local groups, schools and organisations.

8.27 Funding was originally allocated for two individual schemes in Northumberland; The Bedlington to Cramlington Walking/Cycling Routes Connection (£750k) and the Blyth River Estuary Crossing (£600k) which included proposals to re-introduce a ferry service in Blyth. However, following an extensive feasibility study, it was determined that the ferry proposal could not be supported. Sustrans negotiated with the BIG Lottery and put forward a revised proposal combing the major elements of each of the two schemes to create one more comprehensive scheme incorporating Blyth, Bedlington and Cramlington.

8.28 The full extent of the project will see new and improved walking/cycling routes connecting three towns and introducing attractive links within each of the towns making it quicker and easier to get to work, schools and local amenities, on foot or by bike. A core component of the cycle route will also form part of the North Sea Cycle Route (Coast & Castles Route).

Deliver the Links to School Project

8.29 The Connect2 project is also being supported by funding from the Government's 'Links to School' project. Funding totalling over £1.61million has been awarded to improve cycling and walking links to schools in Blyth and Bedlington. This is being matched by Sustrans Connect2 funding as well as the Council's Growth Point and LTP capital funding.

Deliver the Blyth Active Travel Scheme

8.30 Encouraging sustainable low carbon travel are key aspects of both the Connect2 and Links to School projects. This is a particular focus in Blyth which is part of a major initiative to create the UK's first Active Travel Town. This scheme is being led by Sustrans and aims to help residents lead more healthy and active lifestyles. The scheme promotes a range of activities including health walks, cycle rides, bike maintenance sessions and special events. The Council will investigate the opportunities of securing additional funding to deliver similar schemes throughout Northumberland during the period of LTP3.

8.31 The Council's contribution towards the Connect2, Links to School and Active Travel projects will form the vast majority of it's LTP expenditure on cycling over the period 2011/12 to 2013/14.

Promote Walking

8.32 Walking has an important role to play in tackling congestion, especially in urban areas. Walking is an environmentally friendly form of transport that offers a viable alternative to the car for short journeys. Encouraging more people to walk for some of these shorter journeys more often is essential to tackling congestion. Walking also has the potential to contribute towards all of the local goals for transport and all quality of life issues.

8.33 It can enhance accessibility by providing for an alternative and affordable mode of transport for those who do not have access to a car as well as improving local air quality by encouraging a non-polluting mode of transport. Walking also provides an opportunity to undertake regular exercise and can have significant benefits to health as well as creating sustainable communities.

8.34 We need to provide good quality and safer facilities for pedestrians to encourage walking as a mode of transport and reduce dependency on the car. Throughout the period of the first and second LTP, significant efforts have been made to improve walking facilities. This includes improvements to public rights of way, dropped kerbs and tactile paving, new or improved crossing facilities, footway maintenance and promotion of walking through the workplace and school travel plan programmes.

8.35 Issues identified through consultation have demonstrated that further improvements are still required. In particular, the need to address poor pedestrian linkages in our town centres caused by separation of key areas by roads with high traffic volumes. Issues were also highlighted for the mobility impaired including narrow footways, lack of dropped kerbs and obstacles that prevent physical access.

8.36 There is an opportunity to deliver improvements on a 'whole route' basis to create a network of accessible and safe walking routes that connect into facilities and link communities. The walking improvements to be delivered through the period of the LTP include:

- Identifying a core network of convenient, accessible and safe walking routes that connect into facilities and link communities;

- Ensuring footways and rights of way are accessible to people with disabilities and those with young children through the provision of dropped kerbs, tactile paving and safe crossings;

- Improving and maintaining effective directional signing along pedestrian routes;

- Providing improved street lighting and crossing points;

- Ensuring that safe and convenient pedestrian footways are included as part of new developments, including links to existing networks and public rights of way;

- Ensuring that adopted footways and public rights of way are adequately maintained;

- Improving accessibility of the public rights of way network for all; and

- Promoting walking as a healthy and sustainable alternative to the private car through the development of workplace and school travel plans.

Promote Cycling

8.37   Significant development of the on-road and off-road cycle route network has taken place in Northumberland over the past 10 years. This has focused on the development of strategic cycle routes in partnership with Sustrans and neighbouring authorities as part of the National Cycle Route Network, on and off-road road routes, advanced stop lines at junctions, cycle parking, toucan crossings and promotional campaigns.

8.38   Monitoring of cycle flows across counter sites has indicated a steady increase in the levels of cycling in the County. Consultation has identified a number of priorities to improve facilities for cyclists and encourage greater use. These include improving the maintenance of existing cycle routes, providing higher quality facilities, making greater use of the existing highway network, reducing road danger and improved publicity and marketing.

8.39   A new Northumberland Cycling Strategy is currently being developed as an integral part of the third LTP. The principal elements of the new cycling strategy to be implemented include:

- Identifying a core cycle route network that meets the needs of all cyclists, provides an advantage over car traffic, takes full account of road safety and security and is visible and high quality;

- Providing high quality cycle parking at key destinations, rail stations and as part of new developments that is well-sited and signed;

- Providing consistent and high quality cycle route signage to create a clear 'mental map" of the cycle route network;

- Marketing and promotion of cycling in partnership with cycle retailers and the health sector;

- Development of cycle hubs to support cycle tourism and leisure use;

- Road safety measures including driver education, reducing vehicle speeds and improving cyclist conspicuity at junctions;

- Providing practical on-road cycle training for children to the national Bikeability standard;

- Linking with public transport including cycle routes to and from railway stations and secure parking facilities;

- Ensuring high quality cycle accessibility as part of new development including connections to the cycle network, cycle parking and workplace travel plans;

- School travel planning to actively encourage cycling to school through delivery of school travel plan strategy. Includes working with schools to identify safe routes and secure cycle parking;

- Workplace travel planning to identify barriers to cycling and deliver improvements. Cycling to be fully considered in all submitted workplace travel plans;

- Cycle route maintenance of off-road and on-road routes;

- Cycle route audit and review to ensure that cycling and highway schemes meet the needs of cyclists;

- Providing cycle route maps on online information.

Our Priorities

8.40 The key actions to be delivered over the next three years and the longer term to meet our goal and objectives for supporting Safety, Security and Health are outlined below.

Our Goal is to:
- Improve transport safety and security and promote healthier travel
Our Objectives are to:
- Improve safety of the transport network, particularly for vulnerable road users
- Enable and encourage more physically active and healthy travel
We will implement the following actions:
- Improve safety on main pedestrian and cycle routes as part of a prioritised programme of schemes.
- Review the effectiveness of 20mph zones outside schools and roll out across the county as appropriate.

- Continue to apply for funding to deliver *Bikeability* cycle training to children at schools across the county.

- Deliver road safety campaigns to school children.

- Investigate funding to deliver 'Older Driving Days' in partnership with ADAPT.

- Complete an annual road safety casualty review to analyse and target areas of concern.

- Implement a programme of local safety schemes as part of a prioritised programme.

- Deliver advice on the fitting of car seats in partnership with SureStart.

- Investigate funding to deliver training that will improve the skills and confidence of motorcyclists.

- Support the enforcement of road traffic law by Northumbria Police.

- Progress consideration of Civil Parking Enforcement.

- Support the work of advanced driving and riding groups.

- Deliver Connect2 in partnership with Sustrans.

- Support the delivery of Blyth Active Travel Town.

- Promote walking and cycling.

- Improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists as part of a prioritised programme of schemes.

9. Improving Access to Services

This chapter:

- describes how the local transport plan will improve the ability of people to get to where they need at reasonable cost, time and ease

- sets out the County's key accessibility issues based on analysis and consultation

- explains what the Council and partners will do to reduce the barriers that are preventing people access the services and facilities they need as well as reducing the need and distance for people to travel

Context

9.1 Equal opportunities should be available to every resident of Northumberland regardless of their age, sex, residential location, income or disability. Providing access to transport is an important component of equality of opportunity as it permits access to key services including employment, education, health and leisure services and recreation. Social exclusion is closely linked to an inability to access these services and this is an issue the Council wants to address throughout the period of LTP3.

9.2 There are a number of tools which are available to the Council in order to assess accessibility in Northumberland. These include Accession, an accessibility planning software tool which produces assessments and maps of accessibility to a range of different destinations, and online journey planning resources. Assessing accessibility to key services and facilities however is about more than just identifying whether the services and infrastructure is in place, it is about understanding the social issues which underpin transport. Issues to consider include the place where people live, the quality, connectivity and affordability of transport services as well as personal circumstances including age, wealth and disability.

Key Issues

9.3 The analysis of the evidence has led us to identify the following key issues:

- Access to services for rural communities is difficult due to the distance needed to travel and the time it takes;

- Ageing population is forecast to increase in the future;

- Dispersed nature of settlements and low population density often means that services, facilities and public transport are not commercially viable; and

- Social deprivation in the south east corner of Northumberland is leading to social exclusion.

9 Improving Access to Services

Improving Access to Services - SWOT Analysis
Strengths
• Comprehensive local bus network connecting main settlements • Range of community transport providers across the County • Concessionary fares for the elderly and disabled to travel free of charge on local bus services
Weaknesses
• Population density of Northumberland is low • Rural isolation in some parts of Northumberland • Low levels of car ownership • Dissatisfaction with the availability of local bus services • Inadequate rail services from some stations to local, regional and national destinations • Inadequate coverage and quality of information on local bus services • High cost of public transport • Problems on some parts of the public rights of way network, such as missing links and path obstructions
Opportunities
• Widening travel choice by sustainable modes of transport • Widening travel horizons through emerging new technologies for providing travel information • Improving the reliability of travel for bus passengers • Increasing personal safety and security in and around transport • Increasing accessibility for the mobility impaired • Reducing the cost of travel for young people, the elderly and low income households • Reducing the need to travel through the location of new development and provision of services • Enhancements to the public rights of way network.

Improving Access to Services - SWOT Analysis
Threats
- Increase in population in rural areas   - Increase in the number of households   - Increasing proportion of elderly residents, leading to need for travel to health care and additional funding for concessionary travel   - Withdrawal of commercial bus services   - Increasing cost of subsidising non-commercial bus socially necessary bus services   - Changes to local rail services   - Deterioration in the condition of the local road and public rights of way network

Strategy for Improving Access to Services

9.4   From the analysis of evidence and consultation with members and local stakeholders, our goal is to improve peoples' access to necessary services. To meet this goal, we will work in partnership with other organisations to make it easier for people to travel to the services that they need. This includes widening travel choice, increasing access for the mobility impaired and reducing the cost of travel. It also includes reducing the need to travel through the integration of transport planning and development, and investigating alternative ways of providing services.

Goal

- Promote greater equality of opportunity by improving peoples' access to services

Objectives

- Improve transport connections to key services and facilities

9.5   Integration of the planning system between transport and development will be by far the most beneficial way to improve access to key services and facilities by reducing the need to travel. Whilst this is something the Council will look to encourage going forward, many services and facilities are already established and the Council needs to ensure the equality of opportunity for all residents of Northumberland by improving access to these existing sites.

9.6 As it cannot be assumed that people have access to a private car, an emphasis needs to be placed on improved access through the use of public transport. This leads us to the following objective:

> **Improve transport connections to key services and facilities**

9.7 There are a number of general accessibility issues that impact on the travelling public. These include the availability and cost of transport, quality of travel information, personal safety and security and physical accessibility for the mobility impaired.

Widening Travel Choice

9.8 For shorter journeys this means providing for and encouraging walking and cycling. For longer journeys, it is necessary to improve the availability of bus services by offering a wider choice of more attractive and reliable services linking where people live to where they need to travel. For journeys outside of Northumberland, it is necessary to integrate local rail and express bus services with other local transport modes and services.

9.9 Many of the schemes which can widen travel choice using public transport have already been mentioned when discussing access to employment in the economic competitiveness section. Rather than repeat these strategies in this section, it should be accepted that the same strategies will also be adopted for Access to Services and mutual benefits obtained. Those schemes which were considered in the economic competitiveness section include:

- Reopening of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line to passenger services;

- More local services on the Tyne Valley and East Coast Main Line rail networks;

- Greater car parking facilities at train stations.

9.10 Whilst the schemes mentioned previously will be influential in improving access to key services and facilities, it is not just about those schemes which will benefit the local economy. Access to services which can significantly impact on quality of life also needs to be considered. Access to leisure facilities which is a key component of quality of life is generally required on an evening or a weekend as well as during the day. For this reason, in addition to the schemes mentioned above, the Council will also seek to improve accessibility outside of the peak hours through improved demand responsive services operated by the community transport sector.

9.11 One of the biggest issues facing Northumberland is the rural nature of the County. Low population densities in these areas are meaning key services and facilities, including public transport, are not commercially viable. As a result, those people who do not have access to a private car are being excluded from mainstream society.

9.12 Community transport will play a key role in improving access to rural areas during the period of LTP3. It offers a service to work, learning, health and jobs which is otherwise unavailable. Whilst community transport is generally run by the voluntary sector on a 'not for profit' basis, the Council strongly supports these schemes and is on hand to offer assistance and advice where possible. A number of schemes are already in place in the Northumberland area.

9.13 Green Light to Work is a scheme ran by Adapt, a community services provider in the North East, which is designed to help unemployed people in rural Northumberland access employment or training opportunities. If a person is unable to access a secured employment or training opportunity because they do not have their own private means of transport and public transport is not available, they are loaned a scooter or car at an affordable price. This should give the user the chance to save up the available money to purchase their own means of transport at the end of the lease period. This scheme has been rolled out across the County following the success of the 'Wheels to Work' scheme which was piloted in South East Northumberland and Tynedale.

9.14 A number of demand responsive schemes are available throughout Northumberland which are open to any person who is classified as rurally isolated. The scheme, also ran by Adapt, is available for all journey purposes and can be booked as late as noon prior to the day of travel.

9.15 Access to public transport is not just a problem in rural areas. People living in socially deprived areas that do not have access to a private car are becoming increasingly isolated from society because of high transport costs and lengthy journey times. People with mobility issues, particularly elderly residents, are also becoming increasingly isolated because they often struggle to access the services that are available.

Reducing the Cost of Travel

9.16 We need to make travel more affordable, particularly for young people, the elderly and low income households who do not have access to a car. This includes developing and promoting awareness of integrated ticketing and travel concession schemes, travel vouchers and subsidised door-to-door transport.

9.17 The Council will continue to work with public transport operators to address the availability of tickets which are on offer. The availability of weekly passes, season tickets and multi-modal passes can substantially reduce the cost of daily travel on public transport. The integration of fares with neighbouring authorities will also be sought so that travel between Northumberland and Tyne & Wear is made easier. The implementation of smart card ticketing, due to be implemented across the North East during the period of the plan, means that fare integration is a realistic goal.

9.18 The Council already offers concessionary bus passes to elderly and disabled residents which are above the statutory minimum requirement. People over the age of 60 can use their concessionary pass on services from 9.00am onwards whilst disabled passes can be used at any time of day.

9.19   Whilst the Council has no control over fare setting on public transport, discussions will continue with public transport operators to identify any opportunities for fare reduction, particularly where public transport costs to key destinations are considered to be extremely high.

Improving Travel Information

9.20   As well as providing transport opportunities to access services and facilities, people also need to be aware and understand the travel options available to them. Improving the quality, content, provision and accessibility of public transport, walking and cycling information is an essential part that contributes towards widening travel horizons as well as making the best use of our existing assets.

9.21   Travel information will be improved by creating a better partnership with the local bus operators and the Council. The Council is already working with Go North East to develop a real time passenger information system for the Tyne Valley. Funding has recently been secured as part of a planning agreement to develop real time displays in Berwick.

Increasing Accessibility for the Mobility Impaired

9.22   We need to make it easier for people who are mobility impaired to use public transport and go out on foot. This includes improving the design of the pedestrian environment and improving public transport services and infrastructure.

9.23   The implementation of raised bus access kerbs enables people with mobility problems to be able to use public transport. The introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement in 2011/12 will enable bus stop-clearways to be more effectively enforced and buses to stop flush with the kerb.

9.24   Across a wider area, capital funding through the first and second LTP has been used to improve the accessibility of pedestrian crossing points by providing tactile crossings and formal crossing points such as toucans and zebras.

9.25   For those people unable to travel independently, community transport providers provide a range of door to door demand responsive services.

9.26   The need for audible announcements on local bus services has also been identified by the Northumberland Visually Impaired Group. The opportunity and cost for this scheme will be explored by the Council.

9.27   Plans are also in place to improve accessibility to rail services. As part of the Government's 'Access for All' programme, Alnmouth and Morpeth railway stations have been identified as priority stations for the provision of an obstacle free accessible route. The improvements are due to be implemented between 2012 and 2015.

9.28   Access arrangements at Morpeth and Alnmouth rail stations will be improved with the installation of lifts and increased numbers of car parking spaces will be provided at Cramlington, Morpeth and Alnmouth railway stations.

Increasing Personal Safety and Security

9.29   The Council will work with public transport operators to improve the safety of our residents on board public transport services. Measures to improve station and stop security will also be implemented with well lit areas, seating and waiting facilities and CCTV where possible.

9.30   Whilst a lack of evidence means that issues relating to perceptions of safety are not covered in the evidence base, the Council recognises that this can also be a substantial barrier to accessing public transport and is therefore committed to tackling the problem during LTP3.

Reducing the need to travel

9.31   We need to influence the physical location of services to make them closer to where people live and work and make improvements to the way that services are delivered.

9.32   Northumberland is committed to policies of sustainable development that reduce the need to travel, reduce reliance on the private car and encourage alternative forms of transport. Planning policies support the location of major traffic generating development within the existing urban centres where access by public transport is best.   With regard to new residential developments, such as the major urban extension planned for Cramlington South West Sector, the council is working with developers to ensure that the site is accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. The continued development of travel plans at schools, workplaces and council offices will also reduce the need to travel.

9.33   The Council is also working in partnership to ensure that accessibility planning is considered at all stages of the South East Northumberland Growth Point developments. This provides an opportunity to create sustainable communities that are closely integrated to existing town centres. The provision of high quality walking, cycling and bus service links incorporated as an integral part of the developments will ensure that the need to travel by car is reduced.

9.34   In the longer-term, the Council's emerging Local Development Framework will assist in reducing the need to travel by supporting new development in accessible locations. Sites identified as having the potential for development will be identified to assess whether they are accessible before being promoted as suitable for development. Where sites are not in accessible locations, the provision of adequate bus, walking and cycling links will be secured through planning agreements.

9.35   Influencing the way that services are provided can also minimise the need for people to travel. Where appropriate, the provision of local facilities could reduce the need and distance for people to travel and remove a potential barrier, especially for people who have limited mobility.

Our Priorities

9.36   The key actions to be delivered over the next three years and the longer term to meet our goal and objectives for improving access to services are outlined below.

Our Goal is to:

9 Improving Access to Services

- Promote greater equality of opportunity by improving peoples' access to services

Our Objectives are to:

- Improve transport connections to key services and facilities

We will implement the following actions:

- Develop a core network of walking and cycling routes as part of a prioritised programme of schemes.

- Improve and enhance the traffic-free rights of way network around urban areas to provide access to services.

- Investigate options for provision of door-to-door transport for people who do not have access to, or are unable to use, regular public transport.

- Work with partners to progress provision of real time passenger information at key locations in Northumberland.

- Improve the quality and coverage of travel information.

- Adapt the existing transport network to improve access for mobility impaired people as part of a prioritised programme of schemes.

- Ensure the needs of mobility impaired people are taken into account in the design of all new transport schemes.

- Investigate the opportunity for audible announcements on local bus services.

- Identify the opportunity for multi-operator ticketing and promote smart cards across the county.

- Support new development in accessible locations.

- Assess gaps in key services in deprived and isolated areas and develop local accessibility action plans.

- Progress agreements with developers to provide infrastructure for improved access.

10 Quality of Life

This chapter:

* describes how the Local Transport Plan will benefit people's quality of life

Context

10.1 In many respects quality of life in Northumberland is considered to be good. There is good air quality and there are no widespread problems of congestion. The area benefits from a high quality natural environment including a National Park and two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has a diversity of landscape character ranging from uplands, river valleys, the coast, agricultural and urban landscapes. It also contains many protected nature conservation sites and species. The county also has a rich historic environment, including listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and Hadrian's Wall World Heritage site.

10.2 In 2006 the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) ranked Northumberland as the most tranquil county in England. Tranquillity is a quality that is appreciated and valued by both residents and visitors alike. One in three respondents to the National Park Visitor Survey in 2007 stated that tranquillity was the "thing they liked best" about the National Park. The CPRE also produced night blight maps in 1993 and 2000, which indicated that the National Park has the darkest skies in the region. However, the intervening time between surveys indicated that light pollution is encroaching into parts of the rural area.

10.3 Future transport provision must ensure that these qualities are not eroded. In fact, one of the greatest challenges in addressing quality of life in Northumberland is ensuring that the County maintains its high quality environment when coupled with an increase in travel demand, especially from unsustainable modes of transport.

10.4 Enhancing the built environment can also bring significant benefits to a person's quality of life, especially in a built up urban area. Sensitive transport schemes can enhance the cultural heritage of historic town centres, improving the local environment and encouraging tourism. Whilst many of the improvements may lie outside the realm of transport, transport can have a crucial role in enhancing the built environment by implementing and improving links that reduce segregation, improve road safety, remove vehicular traffic and encourage local residents to become more active.

10.5 Despite the recognition that quality of life in Northumberland is generally good, there are areas of concern which need to be addressed. South East Northumberland contains some of the most deprived areas in England. Problems include high levels of unemployment, low income, ill health and low educational attainment; all of which contribute significantly to the quality of life agenda. Ensuring that the population of these areas has good access to services will significantly enhance quality of life.

It cannot be assumed that access can be obtained by private car and good public transport options need to be available at a cost that people on the lowest incomes can afford.

10.6 In contrast, north and west Northumberland contain some of the wealthiest communities in England but struggle with access to key services and facilities due to a limited public transport network. This is leading to an increased reliance on the private motor car which can have a knock on impact on carbon emissions and air quality and the illnesses associated with this.

10.7 However, not everybody has access to the car with rural communities in Northumberland having an increasingly ageing population. A lack of public transport services means that in many instances the elderly population are being increasingly excluded from mainstream society.

10.8 A separate issue facing rural areas is the high cost of housing associated with increased demand with many people viewing rural areas as a desirable place to live. This is driving younger generations, who are struggling to get onto the housing market, into urban areas in search of affordable housing. This is doing little to help the commercial viability of public transport in rural areas as it is both the younger and older generations who are often reliant on these services.

Key Issues

10.9 The main issues which were identified are as follows:

- Increasing demand for travel by unsustainable forms of transport will impact on Northumberland's current quality of life standards;

- Deprivation in areas of South East Northumberland impacts on quality of life and peoples' life chances;

- Limited availability of transport options for people without access to a car;

- The need to protect the natural and historic environment from the impacts of transport development;

- Lack of integration of transport infrastructure into the natural and built environment.

Strategy for Quality of Life

10.10 From the analysis of evidence and consultation with members and local stakeholders, our goal is to ensure that transport helps to improve the quality of life for all. To meet this goal, we will work in partnership with other organisations to integrate transport with other schemes and initiatives to improve streetscapes and the urban environment.

Goal

- Sustain and improve transports contribution to the quality of people's lives

Objectives

- Improve transport connections within and between communities.

- Provide better access to the natural environment

- Improve the integration of transport into streetscapes

- Protect the natural environment, heritage and landscape

- Protect the fabric of historic town centres

Improve transport connections within and between communities

THIS SECTION TO BE ADDED

Provide better access to the natural environment

10.11 More environmentally sustainable forms of access to the natural environment can deliver a range of benefits for people, the environment and the economy. The ability to access the countryside for recreation provides the opportunity to engage in activities such as walking and cycling, with resultant benefits for health and well-being, while access for visitors is important for the local economy. Providing opportunities to access the countryside by sustainable transport can reduce the impact of traffic on the environment and provide access for those without a car. The public rights of way network has a key role to play in facilitating sustainable access.

10.12 The Rights of Way Improvement Plan states that the majority of residents most value the rights of way which are near to their homes, while paths to the main countryside attractions and the promoted medium and long distance routes are important to visitors. The Use and Demand Survey (2003) found that 60% of resident households regularly use the rights of way network, the most popular activity being walking. Investment is necessary to improve access by foot, horse and cycle from urban areas and to reduce conflict with vehicles. A number of Parish Councils have highlighted that they have relatively limited opportunities for walking in their local area because of small or incomplete rights of way networks. Relatively minor

enhancements to the network through the provision of missing links, infrastructure improvements or permissive access could significantly enhance opportunities for local recreation.

10.13 Better promotion of the public transport system as a means of accessing popular areas for walking would also benefit users and help protect the environment from the impact of private cars. There is potential for further promotion of public transport services, particularly along the Northumberland Coast and in the North Pennines. The Hadrian's Wall Bus and Train Trail leaflets, which promote walks linked to Tyne Valley rail stations, provide good examples of the promotion of access to the countryside by public transport.

10.14 Visitors to the countryside, many of whom use the rights of way network for all or part of their visit, make an important contribution to the local economy through spending. A study into the economic value of the North East's protected landscapes found that visitors to the Northumberland Coast and National Park contribute around £115 million per annum to the local economy. The County Council will continue to support the implementation of initiatives which will increase the value of walking and cycling tourism to the economy of Northumberland.

10.15 People obtain information about recreational opportunities in the countryside from a range of sources including word of mouth, published guides, Ordnance Survey maps and the internet. 74% of respondents to the Use and Demand Survey stated they relied on local knowledge for their awareness of local access opportunities. However, many potential users have a low level of knowledge of their local countryside. A survey in 2003 of young parents in Sure Start areas within south east Northumberland highlighted that many did not know where to take their children to enjoy the outdoors other than their local park. Enabling those groups who rarely visit the countryside to enjoy this resource requires information provision and promotion, as well as infrastructure improvements. The County Council will improve the knowledge potential users have about recreational opportunities in the countryside, making use of the internet and other media, and will continue to work with partners to ensure new promoted routes fulfil their maximum recreational and tourism potential.

10.16 Further details about access to the countryside and relevant policies can be found in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Improve the integration of transport into streetscapes

10.17 Poorly conceived and executed transport schemes which show little respect for the character and appearance of their locality can adversely affect quality of life. The Council takes all reasonable steps to ensure that transport schemes positively enhance the surroundings, protecting the environment and improving quality of life.

10.18 In more deprived areas, the benefits of working with other agencies to improve the local environment are even more pronounced. In areas where there is low demand for housing, for example, enhancing the built environment contributes to the creation of sustainable communities.

Protect the natural environment, heritage and landscape

10.19 In progressing transport proposals, consideration must be given to potential impacts on landscape character, biodiversity, geodiversity, soils, air quality and noise pollution (loss of tranquillity) as well as impacts on the built environment, particularly in historic town centres and conservation areas. There is a need to ensure the highest level of protection for designated landscapes, habitats, sites, species, listed buildings and scheduled monuments. Decisions made about transport proposals should safeguard these important assets, recognising the contribution they make to the quality of life in the county, and their importance in attracting visitors.

10.20 As well as reducing and avoiding impacts on the environment, transport schemes can also provide opportunities for enhancement, such as habitat restoration and creation, environmentally friendly verge management or the removal, reduction or improved design of signs and lighting. Both AONBs in the county have produced design guides for transport infrastructure that aim to ensure that signage, engineering measures and lighting are implemented in a sensitive manner that does not erode the aesthetic and special nature of rural communities.

10.21 The National Park and AONB Management Plans contain objectives designed to reduce the adverse effects of transport on their environments. The County Council will work with the National Park Authority and AONB Partnerships to implement these objectives, and will ensure that the design process takes into account the need for sensitive solutions in rural areas and conservation areas.

10.22 Similarly, the Hadrian's Wall Management Plan 2008-14 contains policies designed to increase sustainable transport access to the World Heritage Site and manage the use of private cars. The County Council supports the Hadrian's Wall Bus, which runs from April to October between Newcastle and Carlisle, calling at all the Forts and Museums along the wall. The County Council will also work with Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd, to promote and enhance Hadrian's Cycleway.

Protect the fabric of historic town centres

10.23 A number of the county's towns and villages are designated as Conservation Areas and the County Council has worked with other agencies to ensure that proposals in these areas are of a high quality, utilising natural materials wherever possible.

10.24 The County Council will continue to work in partnership to ensure that all highways and transport schemes will positively enhance the built environment and improve conditions for residents and visitors. This includes consideration of 'shared space' schemes which can enhance an area through reducing the impact of traffic and removing intrusive features such as road markings and signs.

10.25 Whilst objectives have been set for improving the quality of life in Northumberland, an improved quality of life will also be met through all of the other the objectives outlined for the goals for Supporting Local Economies, Reducing Carbon Emissions, Safer and Healthier Travel and Improving Access to Services. The following section therefore gives a brief overview of the key policies from previous chapters which will impact on the quality of life agenda.

- Improving access to jobs through improved public transport options will increase employment opportunities and enable people to gain a higher standard of living;

- Reducing carbon emissions through encouraging sustainable modes of transport will improve air quality and reduce the occurrence of respiratory illnesses;

- Taking measures now to mitigate against the impact of climate change will reduce the likelihood of people being affected by extreme weather events;

- Improving road safety and reducing casualties will increase access to opportunities and improve quality of life;

- Promoting active travel will have significant benefits to a person's health and will reduce the likeliness of serious illness including obesity, diabetes and heart disease;

- Improving access to key services and facilities through improved transport options for all residents of Northumberland will have a big impact on social inclusion and will prevent people becoming isolated from mainstream society.

Our Priorities

10.26 In addition to the actions outlined in the previous chapters, further actions to meet our goal and objectives for improving Quality of Life are set out below:

Our Goal is:
• Sustain and improve transports contribution to the quality of people's lives.
Our Objectives are:
• Improve transport connections within and between communities.
• Provide better access to the natural environment.
• Improve the integration of transport into streetscapes.
• Protect the natural environment, heritage and landscape.
• Protect the fabric of historic town centres.
We will implement the following actions:

- Provide improved transport connections through a prioritised programme of schemes.
- Consider the principles outlined in the Government's 'Design Manual for Streets 2' for new highway infrastructure schemes as appropriate.
- Minimise the effects of new transport schemes on the natural and built environment.
- Give priority to sustainable transport modes in historic town centres to reduce the detrimental effects of vehicular traffic.
- Identify and implement improvements to the rights of way network which will enhance its role in providing for the recreational, health and transport requirements of all Northumberland's residents and visitors.
- Enhance the range, type and accessibility of information available about Northumberland's rights of way network for local people and visitors.
- Promote the use of the existing public transport network to assist exploration of the countryside.