

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1 The Provisional Second Local Transport Plan sets out how transport investment and other actions will be implemented from 2006/7 to 2010/11 to contribute to the long-term vision for Darlington, to sub-regional and regional objectives and to national shared priorities.
- 2 The Plan is based on the indicative budget set by the Department for Transport (DfT) and follows DfT Guidance on Local Transport Plans. Darlington has additional resources as one of three demonstration towns nationally in the DfT's Sustainable Travel Town project. The use of these complementary resources is being planned in an integrated way, to maximise the benefits of both.
- 3 A comprehensive and systematic planning process has been carried out to arrive at a programme of actions for the next five years and associated targets. (This is described in the Introduction). Darlington has amongst the best data on travel patterns of any UK transport authority. There has been widescale community participation and stakeholder involvement. International experts have advised on solutions which are appropriate to Darlington in the light of researched best practice. The planning process is rooted in the national shared priorities.
- 4 Darlington is one of five local authorities working together to achieve a shared future vision for the Tees Valley, within the context of the regional strategies for North East England. Chapter 1 describes the shared objectives to deliver the Tees Valley Vision, maximise accessibility, promote bus use, restrain car usage, invest in the local rail network, manage demand and tackle congestion in a way consistent with regeneration priorities, meet road safety and social inclusion targets, minimise air quality impacts, and enhance quality of life.
- 5 An analysis of local strategies, travel patterns, travel behaviour and consultations (in Chapter 2) demonstrates that:
 - Darlington is a compact market town, well served by national and regional transport links. Quality of life and accessibility for all are seen as key drivers in promoting economic prosperity, which is the

top priority for all partners;

- In national terms Darlington has lower than average levels of car ownership and relatively high levels of bus patronage. There is evidence that increasing affluence for Darlington particularly could result in substantial increases in car travel and traffic unless alternatives are planned for and promoted, and appropriate demand management pursued;
- Promoting accessibility from deprived wards and for key population groups will help achieve social inclusion and economic targets;
- Reducing road traffic congestion, improving actual and perceived road safety (particularly for pedestrians and cyclists), improving accessibility for specific groups and purposes, and managing demand, transport networks and car parking are key challenges for the Plan, to support the economy;
- Darlington residents would like to see emphasis placed upon improving infrastructure for the three sustainable travel modes (walking, cycling and bus), as well as improving the effectiveness of the existing network;
- The outcomes achieved through Darlington's first Local Transport Plan provide a strong base from which to build;
- Darlington's Excellent record of partnership working and integrated planning, together with the Council's Leading Edge approaches to procurement will ensure that transport objectives are integrated into and achieved through other service planning – and that transport planning helps to achieve other, broader objectives;
- A Town on The Move, the national Sustainable Travel Town demonstration project enables Darlington to implement a wide range of solutions to transport problems in an integrated way, with a better prospect of achieving outcomes through best value-for-money approaches.

6 Based on the national shared priorities, the regional and local analysis, and the longer-term Transport Strategy for Darlington, Chapter 3 sets the

objectives for this Plan as:

- (a) To provide the framework for sustainable development of new and existing businesses, housing and services in Darlington;
- (b) To improve access to employment and education, particularly for those without access to a private car, those with a disability and those that have greatest need;
- (c) To tackle traffic congestion on key corridors and its potential affects on the economy and environment by making the most effective use of the transport network;
- (d) To improve travel safety and security for all by addressing the real and perceived risks;
- (e) To provide and promote travel choices to all, in particular to reduce the proportion of car driver trips;
- (f) To improve the health of the community through increasing levels of sustainable travel and improving access to health, leisure and fresh food.

7 Key strategic choices for the Plan are that:

- accessibility to local facilities should be the focus of what is being delivered through the Plan;
- traffic congestion should be tackled by a combination of alternatives to the car, physical improvements at key junctions, with the strong and appropriate demand management measures already in place;
- those Town on the Move 'smarter travel choice' measures currently being implemented with Department for Transport funding which prove to be successful should be continued in years 4 & 5 of the Plan; and
- the mix of schemes and initiatives delivered should include a focus

on encouraging more public transport use and more cycling with associated benefits for walking.

8 A delivery ethos and mechanisms have been established (in Chapter 4) for:

- achieving best value-for-money through innovative procurement and systematic analysis of programmes;
- making the most of our long-established and effective array of partnership working;
- monitoring and programme control;
- continual consultation on scheme delivery as well as on strategies and programmes;
- taking into account environmental and health impacts.

9 With a focus on the reasons why people travel, a set of actions are described in Chapter 5 to improve:

- travelling to work;
- doing business in Darlington;
- going to school or college;
- shopping for food and goods;
- leisure and recreation; and
- access to health services and caring for others.

10. Multi-criteria assessment has been used to show how best value for money can be achieved, selecting which actions best achieve objectives and required outcomes. A broad indicative programme for the five years of this Plan has been set on this basis, including assessing the possibility of introducing Park & Ride. A more detailed indicative programme for the first year of the Plan (chapter 5) includes actions to tackle traffic congestion through the Corridor of Certainty programme, to create 20 mph zones in all residential streets and to improve the condition of the highway network including 8 footway maintenance schemes.
11. The detailed travel behaviour research shows that there is real potential for 56 % of car trips within Darlington to switch to sustainable modes. Achieving a step change in travel behaviour requires investment at European best practice levels. The final Plan, to be prepared in 2006, will demonstrate how an additional allocation of about £1.25 million would create improvements for pedestrians, increase bus and cycle usage.
12. The key outcome indicators and targets for the Plan (set out in Chapter 6) will be:
 - an accessibility indicator and target to be set in the light of a full Accessibility Strategy to be completed by March 2006;
 - 25% of all trips in Darlington being made on foot (compared with 22% currently);
 - a 7% increase in public transport patronage from 2003/4 to 2010/11;
 - 37% of trips being made by a car driver (compared with 41% currently);
 - cycling increasing from 1% of all trips in Darlington to 3%;
 - an increase from 68% to 74% of the share of journeys to school made by sustainable modes;
 - traffic growth at peak periods restrained to 3% over the period, with a reduction in peak period traffic generated by local trips by Darlington residents. ;
 - a target for area-wide traffic flows;

- improvements in road safety resulting in 20% fewer killed and seriously injured accidents by 2010 compared with 2004, and a 50% reduction for children compared with the 1994-98 average;
 - a bus punctuality target agreed with bus operators;
 - improvements in road maintenance conditions.
13. Darlington is a compact town with an existing pattern of sustainable travel behaviour and increasing traffic congestion. It has the potential for excellent accessibility and the aim of the Plan is to improve accessibility by all modes, with a focus on sustainable means of travel (public transport, walking and cycling), but also bringing forward specific proposals to tackle traffic congestion, deal with parking issues, further improve road safety, contribute to social inclusion for different groups and enhance quality of life. It is a plan to promote travel choice, backed up by strong and appropriate demand management measures.
14. The top priority in the Community Strategy for Darlington, agreed by all partners, is to enhance the economy. Darlington's Economic Regeneration Strategy relies on two special characteristics working in conjunction with each other; Darlington's quality of life and its accessibility. The Transport Plan, aimed at improving accessibility in a sustainable way and enhancing quality of life, is therefore a key contributory factor in the shared, long-term vision for the Borough.