CHAPTER 3 : LOCAL APPROACH

Summary

Building on the wider analysis in Chapter 1 and the context described in chapter 2, this chapter continues by setting out the approach to delivery that we are using to achieve a better quality of life for local people. The chapter describes the strategic, corporate and partnership approaches to delivery and their transport implications.

Key Messages

- the Council is committed to working with Darlington Partnership and others to achieve outcomes benefiting quality of life and economic regeneration.

- the Shared Priority for Quality of Life is a key issue that this Plan needs to achieve.

- A corporate approach will be taken to maintain, and if possible, improve accessibility.

- the successes and lessons learnt from the delivery of the first Local Transport Plan have been incorporated into the development of this Plan.

1   Transport has a key role to play for everyone, whether it is travelling to work or school, for shopping or leisure activities or to access key services such as healthcare or finance. How, where and when transport is provided can have much broader consequences on peoples' quality of life. As improving quality of life for all is a key aim of both the Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan, as well as being a Government shared priority, it is important to understand how the business planning process of the Council and partner organisations, impacts on Quality of Life and its transport implications.

Darlington Partnership

2   In Darlington, the Council works closely with **Darlington Partnership** (the local strategic partnership made up of key organisations serving local people). The Partnership's overall plan is the Community Strategy, "Where Quality Comes to Life", which establishes the key local priorities for Darlington and provides structures for delivering against those priorities. The strategy is directed towards realising the vision for Darlington as:

- An area creating and sharing prosperity;

- A location for learning, achievement and leisure;

- A place for living safely and well; and

- A high quality environment with excellent communication links.

3   The strategy pursues a sustainable future for Darlington through an integrated approach that balances economic, social and environmental well-being.   **Figure 3.1** illustrates this approach.   Whilst the Transport Strategy and Local Transport Plan are directly linked to the strategy theme of 'Developing an Effective Transport System', the integrated approach to planning and delivery recognises the Plan's contribution across all the themes. **Figure 3.3** illustrates the structure of the Darlington Partnership, created to facilitate delivery of the strategy and the integrated planning required across the eight strategy themes to deliver sustainable outcomes.

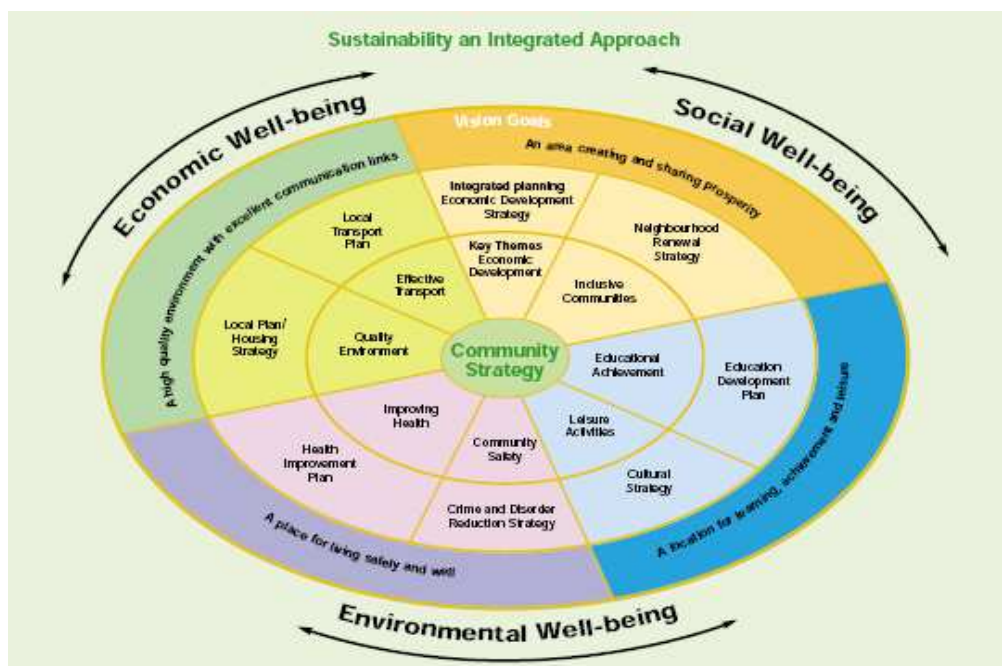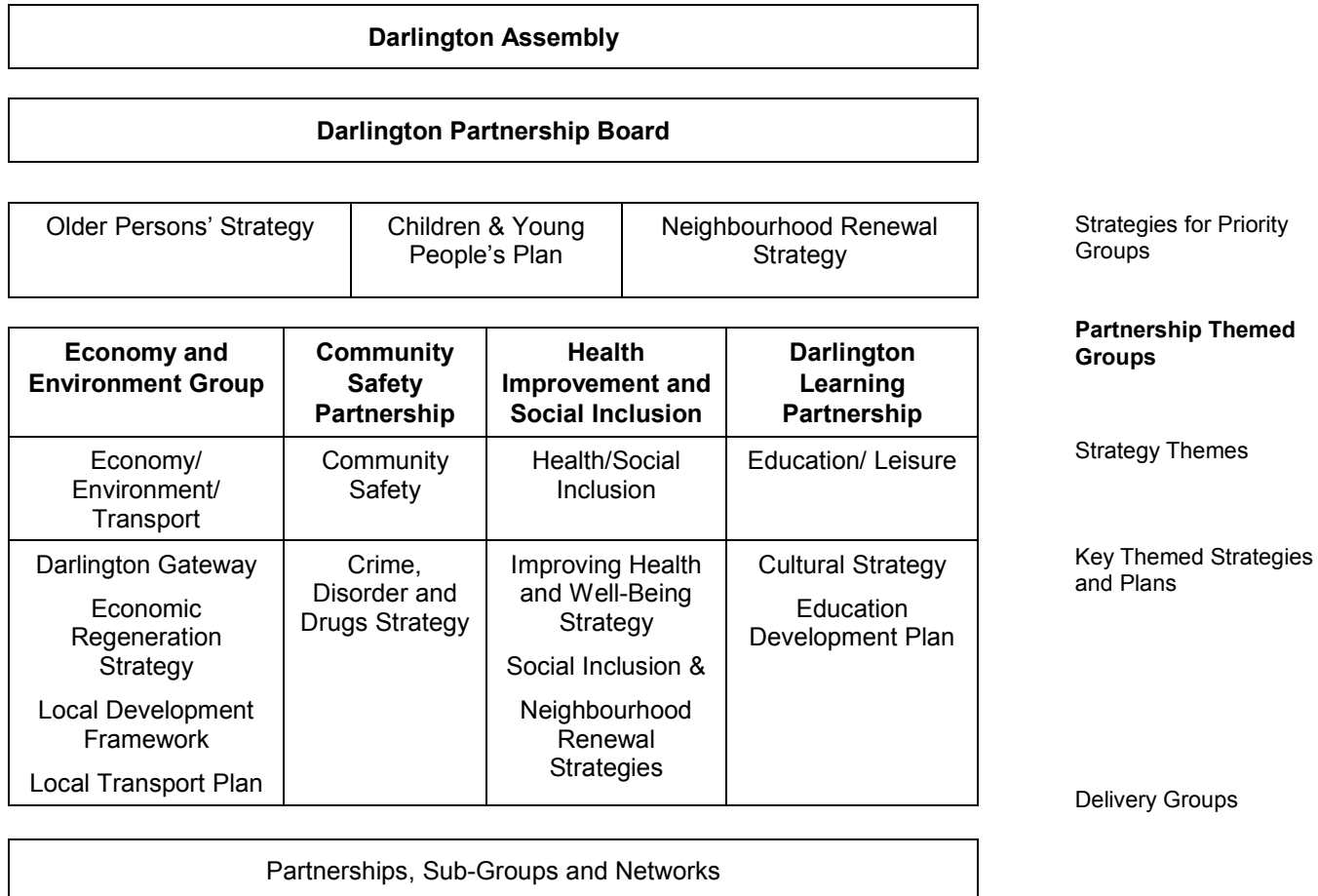**Figure 3.1 Darlington Partnership's Approach to Planning**

Figure 3.2 Darlington Partnership (LSP) Structure

Darlington Assembly

Darlington Partnership Board

Older Persons' Strategy	Children & Young People's Plan	Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy	Strategies for Priority Groups

Economy and Environment Group	Community Safety Partnership	Health Improvement and Social Inclusion	Darlington Learning Partnership	Partnership Themed Groups
Economy/ Environment/ Transport	Community Safety	Health/Social Inclusion	Education/ Leisure	Strategy Themes
Darlington Gateway Economic Regeneration Strategy Local Development Framework Local Transport Plan	Crime, Disorder and Drugs Strategy	Improving Health and Well-Being Strategy Social Inclusion & Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies	Cultural Strategy Education Development Plan	Key Themed Strategies and Plans Delivery Groups

Partnerships, Sub-Groups and Networks

4   Through the Community Strategy, Darlington Partnership established priorities for improving quality of life in Darlington.

Priority Areas	Priority Groups
Improving the local economy	Children and young people
Raising educational achievement	Older people
Promoting inclusive communities	Those living in the most deprived wards

5   All strategies and programmes developed through the partnership are tested against these priorities. The Transport Strategy and the Local Transport Plan have been designed to address local transport needs in a way that balances and marries the national shared priorities for local government with these key local priorities.

6   The impact of the implementation of the Local Transport Plan on the Quality of Life for the people who live, work and visit Darlington will be measured through the monitoring of the indicators in the Community Strategy. The aim is to minimise any negatives impacts and maximise the positive impacts, in particular achieved through tackling congestion and promoting sustainable travel choices. This includes fewer transport related noise problems, reducing the harmful impact of traffic emissions, enhanced personal security, healthier communities and the creation of people-friendly public spaces through the involvement of the Urban Design Champion in designing highway schemes.

7   Many of the strategies developed by the Partnership and its Themed Groups are already taking into account transport implications, particularly when transport is viewed in terms of accessibility rather than as transport itself. They also reflect our communities' response to wider issues such as the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998.

8   For instance the Crime, Disorder and Drugs Strategy whilst primarily being a strategy to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour, impacts directly on peoples ability or desire to travel. People that perceive that it is too dangerous to be outside at night (or in the day) will not travel by any mode of transport and cannot take an active role in their community. This needs to be tackled on two levels. The first is to address real safety issues in partnership with the Police, Community Wardens, the CCTV Centre, Bus Operators, Designers, Architects, Developers and Planners to make sure it is safe to travel and move around a community. The second is to address perceptions of danger and fear of crime through schools, community organisations and the media.

9   The role for the Local Transport Plan in delivering the Community Strategy and its daughter strategies is to:

- Improve health and build healthier communities through the Travel Safety Strategy and promoting active travel.

- Support economic development and employment through the integration of land use and accessibility planning; improvements to rail and bus services between Darlington and its neighbouring authorities; further improvements to the town centre; and sensitive demand management measures.

- Improve public spaces and provide better streetscapes through careful design of new highway schemes including 20mph zones; maintenance and cleansing of highway assets; use of appropriate materials; reducing the amount of street clutter; providing high quality public transport infrastructure; and integrating the footpath and cycle network with urban green spaces, recreational spaces and rural Rights of Way.

- Tackle climate change and potential negative environmental impacts through measures to tackle congestion and improve air quality. Use technology when appropriate to reduce potential environmental impacts such as solar powered lighting, low emission vehicles and Variable Messaging Signs.

- Tackle safety concerns through the implementation of the Travel Safety Strategy and Speed Management Strategy.

- Improve access to leisure facilities, schools and colleges and employment opportunities.

- Target improvements to those most in need, especially children and young people, older people and those in the most deprived wards.

Local Area Agreement

10   Darlington's Local Area Agreement (LAA) is our response to the Government initiative to promote partnership working through a three year agreement between itself and the local area that sets out local priorities. The local area is jointly represented by the Council and the local strategic partnership. Darlington's LAA provides the opportunity to work differently in

partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people, that would not otherwise be achieved within the three year timescale. Called **'Young People – Our Future'**, the agreement also involves Schools, Colleges and other relevant organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors and aims to help every child fulfil their potential. All partners are re-examining how they work with young people to ensure that all children and young people are able to take advantage of a wide range of opportunities and make a valuable contribution to their community.

11   This is a major opportunity to ensure that transport is not a barrier for young people. This means tackling limited travel horizons, addressing concerns around safety, the perceived and real costs of travel, the health impacts of travel and reducing the need to travel through better planning of service delivery across all organisations. Transport initiatives are in 3 of the 4 themes – Healthier Communities, Safer Stronger Communities and Economic Development and Enterprise.

12   Transport is involved in the healthier communities theme, promoting active travel, in particular for the journey to school. Being involved in the development of the Local Area Agreement is providing wide reaching opportunities to work with Children's Services, in this case to ensure that transport needs are interwoven into the Children and Young People's Plan, as well as other related strategies.

13   Transport is also in the Safer Stranger Communities block seeking to improve safety and perceptions of safety, in particular for young people cycling and walking.

14   In Economic Development and Enterprise the cost of travel has been identified as a potential barrier for those aged 16-19 accessing education and training opportunities. It is proposed to establish a half fare travel scheme to address this issue and improve stay on rates at age 16.

Quality of Life Actions

15   The Department for Transport defines Quality of Life issues as follows:

- Healthier Communities

- Sustainable and Prosperous Communities

- Quality of Public Spaces and Better Streetscapes

- Climate Change and Environmental Noise

- Landscape and Biodiversity

Healthier Communities

16   The Local Transport Plan has a role to play in both reducing the negative impact of transport, in particular in terms of road traffic accident casualties, and promoting the health benefits of active travel and access to health and leisure services, green space and fresh food.

17   The most obvious link between health and transport is the impact of road accidents. Whilst good progress has been made during the first Local Transport Plan to reduce casualties there is much more to be done. For the Second Plan the Road Safety Strategy has been broadened to look at all aspects of safety when travelling. The Travel Safety Strategy is in **Annex 13**.

18   The Primary Care Trust has developed a number of strategies to tackle health problems associated with a lack of exercise, in particular the Childhood Obesity Strategy. There is a key role to play for Active Travel, incorporating walking and cycling (and to a lesser extent using public transport and motorcycling) into everyday travel patterns to increase the amount of exercise that people undertake. The Plan can support this not only through walking and cycling, but also the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (**Annex 9**) and school and workplace travel plans.

19   There also needs to be recognition of the fact that transport can have a negative impact on mental health. Congestion, speeding traffic, fear of crime, lack of suitable transport can increase people's isolation and severance from the community resulting in stress, depression and other serious mental health issues. Improvements to street lighting, cleansing and maintenance, road safety and the streetscape can encourage people to walk or cycle and access local services and opportunities for employment, shopping or just to meet friends. Suitable transport for those with a disability or impaired mobility also needs to be available.

20   Congestion and potential associated poor air quality can aggravate health problems such as asthma and other respiratory conditions. Recent evidence supports the view that air quality is better for those walking and cycling and is worse in vehicles, particularly those that are on the road for a long period of time.

21   An Accessibility Checklist (**Annex 12**) has been developed to evaluate
      planning and policy proposals. This will be used to promote good access to
      health care facilities as well as leisure and fresh food outlets.

22   Building healthier communities will be achieved through partnership working
      with Darlington Primary Care Trust and other organisations. The Council
      and the County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust are
      jointly funding a travel coordinator post at the Memorial Hospital to
      implement the Hospital's travel plan and address other transport and
      access issues for staff, patients and visitors. Improved access to the local
      hospitals and the implications of developments in health care service
      delivery will be discussed at the County Durham and Darlington Transport
      for Health Partnership.

23   A Health Impact Assessment was undertaken on the Provisional Local
      Transport Plan. The main conclusions of the screening exercise were as
      follows:

      •   Overall the majority of the proposals were judged to have a beneficial
            impact on the health of local people.

      •   The majority of proposals would contribute to a reduction in health
            inequalities, if applied in a targeted way.

      •   Access to health services and impact on health policy were split
            between having a positive impact on access to health services and
            'unlikely to have an effect' on access.

      •   The emphasis on increasing the range of travel opportunities for
            people with disabilities was welcomed as a key element of increasing
            social inclusion and supporting people back to work.

      •   Much will depend on *how* a policy is implemented. If this is done in a
            population based way, with no account taken of issues such as who
            would benefit most, then the result will be that, whilst the overall health
            of the population may increase, the gap in inequalities will grow.

24   Following the analysis of the results, a further meeting then identified some
      key themes and made recommendations on subjects that could be taken
      forward to the scoping stage. They were:

      •   Investigate the link between implementing area-wide 20mph speed
            limits and potential impact on increasing numbers of people walking
            and cycling in such areas.

- Impact of a targeted approach to implementing area-wide approach workplace travel plans with specific reference to links to helping people back into work.

25 Transport measures that will have a positive impact on Healthier Communities:

- Traffic calming and other road safety measures

- Pedestrian and cycle training

- Walking and cycling infrastructure to be new, improved and well maintained.

- Accessible public transport, including taxis

- Improved street lighting and other security features

- School travel plans and Healthy Schools Initiative (led by Children's Services, DBC)

- Workplace travel plans and Healthy Workplace Initiative (led by Primary Care Trust)

Sustainable and Prosperous Communities

26 Darlington has been successful in attracting new companies to the region and has growing expertise in the logistics, warehousing and distribution sector, high value-added service sector industries as well as mixed use developments providing sustainable communities, combining residential developments with offices, schools, retail, health and leisure.

27 Transport has a key role to play, recognised in the regeneration strategy as 'accessibility'. Darlington is easily accessible by road, rail and air and the town is compact, so potentially enabling the majority of trips within the Borough to be made on foot, by bike or by public transport.

28 The Local Transport Plan needs to ensure that access to the Borough from surrounding areas remains good. This includes the construction of the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor, improvements to the A66(T),

improved local rail access and improved bus services to key employment sites through the Tees Valley Bus Network Review. Access from the rural communities in the Borough to employment and training opportunities also needs to be considered.

29   Developments in the Borough also need to be sustainable and accessibility planning must be used to ensure that sustainable travel to the site is a priority. There are close links between the Local Transport Plan and the core strategy of the Local Development Framework, to promote sustainable development.

30   Transport also has a role in delivering the Tourism Strategy. Two of the National Cycle Network Routes are planned to cross the Borough and these provide excellent opportunities to promote cycling as a tourist activity either for day visitors or those staying in the area for longer. Darlington is a Cycling Demonstration Town and this will encourage cyclists from out of the area to visit.

31   Darlington also needs to capitalise on the public transport links that can assist travellers to or from the Borough, in particular the Sky Express bus service that links the town centre to the main line rail station and the Airport.

32   Transport implications for Sustainable and Prosperous Communities are:-

- Enabling economic regeneration through the A66(T) Tees Valley Gateway Study and implementation of the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor.

- Cycling, walking and public transport designed in to all new developments, through developer agreements covering both revenue and capital finance.

- Supporting mixed use developments such as Central Park to reduce the need to travel.

- Helping public transport improve access to jobs locally and outside the Borough, including links to the Tees Valley through the Tees Valley Bus Network Review.

- Promoting sustainable tourism through the extension of the cycle and walking network.

Quality of Public Spaces and Better Streetscapes

33   Darlington has already recognised the importance of its public spaces on the quality of life for people in Darlington and is developing an Open Spaces Strategy that recognises the importance of these spaces whether they be urban streets or green spaces.

34   The Council has recruited an urban designer to champion design across the Borough. His role is to create places for people, a humane environment that facilitates social interaction, ease of movement and opportunity for all. He will be working with officers from across the authority and with partners and private companies to achieve well designed places, spaces and streets through the following means:

- Natural surveillance, use and population – attractive places are filled with people, which displaces and discourages anti-social behaviour.

- Spiritual uplift and a sense of well-being – use of materials, planting and space helps to create an environment that engages and attracts.

- Appropriate infrastructure – the use of lighting, CCTV, accessibility measures and signs allow for the understanding of, and the feeling of safety in, an environment.

- Protection of the heritage environment – retaining and building on the locally distinctive archetypes of the past creating a sense of identity and place, in particular concepts of streets, squares and boulevards.

35   These guiding principles are being applied in the Pedestrian Heart scheme, the pedestrianisation of the town centre, which is creating space that is attractive, safe, friendly and a focus for activity at the heart of the town.

36   A new approach to cycle infrastructure design is also being developed as part of the Cycling Demonstration Town project. Engineering design, materials, lighting, surveillance and signs are being considered, as well as recognising best practice from the UK and further afield. These designs will also take account of whole life costs to ensure that future maintenance costs are minimised.

37   Darlington has recognised the importance of making people feel safe whilst they are outside, especially during the hours of darkness. To this end the Authority has made major investments in a CCTV system in the town centre as well as cameras in car parks on buses and, on a trial basis, at a few

selected bus stops. Encouraging more people to walk and cycle will help to address the perceptions of safety and fear of crime.

38   It is also important to ensure that public spaces and highway land is cleaned and maintained. Litter, graffiti, overgrown vegetation, broken and damaged infrastructure (bins, bollards, paving slabs, bus shelters and so on) are always an issue raised by residents. Two major initiatives are already underway to tackle these problems:

- Street Scene is a Leading Edge project to re-engineer street cleansing and some elements of maintenance into area-based teams.

- 'Lets Get Cracking' is an initiative to spend £2.5m on maintenance schemes of the Council's own resources (through Prudential Borrowing), as prioritised from suggestions made by members of the public.

39   Transport measures that will have a positive impact on Quality of Public Spaces and Better Streetscapes:

- Design of highway network and assets

- Maintenance and cleansing

- 20mph zones and HomeZone guiding principles

- Design guidance for cycling

- Public transport infrastructure

- Effective and innovative use of lighting

- Reducing street clutter

- Use of appropriate materials

- Integration of pedestrians and cyclists

Climate Change and Environmental Noise

40   Darlington's Community Strategy makes clear reference to working towards sustainable development and specifically to combating climate change. Through signing the Darlington Climate Change Declaration, Darlington has committed to tackling the problems related to climate change and act locally to deliver and contribute to the UK Climate Change Programme. Much progress is already being made in Darlington in tackling this global issue at the local level, but much more remains to be done.

41   The vision that Darlington Partnership aims to fulfil through this strategy (and associated action plan) is:

- Darlington's community will be protected from climate change.

42   This vision will be met, so far as it is within the power and ability of the Partnership, through the following objectives:

- Reducing the emission of gases that are causing climate change.

- Ensuring that we adapt to the level of climate change that is already occurring.

- Measuring the effectiveness of our actions and revising and developing further actions to ensure we continue to be effective.

- Raising awareness throughout Darlington of the impacts of climate change and the measures available to reduce the impact of our daily activities on the environment.

43   Carbon emissions are the primary transport contributor to climate change, and whilst transport is not the biggest contributor, it is the fastest growing one, as levels of car ownership and car usage continue to grow. The impact of increased traffic also increases noise pollution (and indeed light pollution).

44   Darlington's sustainable travel demonstration initiative encourages residents, and visitors to walk, cycle, use public transport or car share wherever possible when making a journey in and around Darlington. The project aims to reduce car driver trips by 10%. This would reduce the number of car trips by 11,000 trips per day or over 4 million car trips per year. This would help to reduce harmful transport emissions significantly.

45   During 2005 a fleet of more than 200 Darlington Council vehicles was switched to locally produced biodiesel fuel, in addition to several vehicles that already run on LPG. All of the Council's diesel engines are now using biodiesel, which is a blend of mineral oil, ultra low sulphur diesel and plant oils. The fuel was first tried in February 2005 and proved such a success that it has now been extended to all of the Council's diesel fleet. The fuel costs the same as diesel, but helps to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants. It also more cost effective and efficient as it produces more miles to the gallon.

46   At a local level air quality is not yet a serious issue, but if congestion continues to increase this may change. Air quality will continue to be monitored.

47   Levels of noise from transport are seen as a serious problem for about 10% of residents and a further 20% feel noise is a problem but not a serious issue.

48   Transport measures that will have a positive impact on Climate Change and Environmental Noise:

- Reducing numbers of car trips by 10%.

- Increasing levels of cycling and walking.

- Low emission vehicles, including fleet vehicles, taxis and buses.

- Encouraging the use of Bio-fuels, especially in buses and Council vehicles.

- Maintaining traffic flow to reduce air quality hotspots, e.g. bus priority.

- Enforcement – encouraging switching off engines when waiting outside schools.

Landscape and Biodiversity

49   In Darlington's core strategy preferred options paper for the Local Development Framework (our land use strategy), it is stated that 'there is a growing awareness and appreciation of the contribution the natural environment, including sub regionally important natural sites and landscape features, make to our quality of life and to our achieving sustainability.'

50   This recognition is leading to the protection and enhancement through the planning process, of diverse bio-diverse landscapes that provide public access to quality countryside on their doorsteps. Preserving and enhancing such sites, creating them when opportunities arise and establishing multi user green access routes to help link these sites, are principle tenets of the umbrella Open Spaces Strategy as well as central themes to the Draft Countryside Strategy and the Statement of Action of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

51   This policy has already led to the creation of over 150 hectares of new Community Woodland, 7 new Local Nature Reserves and several kilometres of new green transport links within the urban area.

52   Transport measures that will have a positive impact on Landscape and Biodiversity:

- Green transport links, in particular as part of new developments

- Extension of the cycle and walking network to existing woodlands, which will reduce dependency on the car and the impact on the landscape

- The Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor, whilst being a major road scheme, is also creating a green corridor from Darlington eastwards to Stockton along the old line of the Stockton Darlington railway (National Route 14).

- A second crossing of the A66(T) is being planned with Sustrans and the Highways Agency to the south of the town for pedestrians and cycles, providing access to rural green space.

- Support the strategies to promote 'active travel' through the ongoing development of walking and cycling routes, cycle parking, and walking and cycling events.

- Work with the PCT and Acute Trust of plans for land use, in particular to ensure that residents can access services.

- Work with health sector partners in the development and implementation of actions to improve accessibility to health service facilities locally and regionally.

- Develop and implement a Travel Safety Strategy that reduces the levels of accidents on our transport network and thus reduce costs for the NHS. In particular through cycle training, local safety schemes, 20mph zones, education and promotion and enforcement in partnership with the Police.

- Assist the health sector in developing and implementing their travel plans.

Darlington – A 'Leading Edge' Authority

53   In addition to strategic approaches that involve external partners, the Council is continuing to develop its corporate planning process, through its "Leading Edge" programme that builds on its 'Excellent' status in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. This focuses on achieving more efficient services, increased value for money, effective procurement and excellent service performance. It takes account of the requirements coming out of the Gershon Review and is built around 16 projects that will identify ways of re-engineering and delivering services and using assets to achieve excellence and efficiency.

54   The Accessibility Checklist that has been developed **(Annex 12)** will be used in these Leading Edge projects to ensure that service delivery and land use is linked directly to how people will access services, with the support of the Corporate Management Team.

Corporate Priorities

55   The overall direction for Darlington set by the Community Strategy centres on strengthening the local economy and securing sustainable gains in prosperity, whilst ensuring that all residents can share in and enjoy that prosperity, and that the barriers to social inclusion are removed. Corporate

strategies and plans support this vision. The Corporate Planning Network[1] have helped develop the Second Local Transport Plan ensuring that the transport implications of Council plans and policies are understood and vice versa.

56   The Corporate Objectives set out in the Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan and their transport implications are:

Objective	Description	Transport implications
Shaping a better Darlington	Each service/strategy must identify how it specifically contributes to the Community Strategy.	Deliver outcomes that support the Community Strategy goals.
Providing excellent services	Each service/strategy needs to identify how it can become/remain excellent.	Set targets that are stretching but realistic.
Putting the customer first	Each service/strategy needs to be clear on who its customers are, what the service looks like to them and how excellent customer satisfaction can be achieved/maintained.	Use ongoing consultation with key user groups and stakeholders to ensure that services and schemes meet customer needs.
Ensuring access for all	All services/strategies need to be able to demonstrate that they are working to reduce inequality gaps.	Use accessibility planning and the results of the health impact assessment to improve access, in particular for those in most need.

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[1] The Corporate Planning Network is officer group co-ordinating strategic business planning across all aspects of the Council.

Enhancing our capacity to improve	Each service/strategy must ensure that it is being delivered with appropriate standards of financial management, human resource management etc.	Use the performance management framework and budget optimisation software (part of the Transport Asset Management Plan) for financial management, performance analysis and review.

57   As described in chapter 4, the accessibility checklist is being used in forthcoming corporate decision making.

Corporate issues - Land Use

58   The Local Development Framework is under development to deliver the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy locally (chapter 1). The vision of its core strategy can be summarised as follows:

- Darlington will continue to be the physical and economic gateway to North East England;

- Population growth will be accommodated on unused and underused land and buildings in the existing urban area;

- Darlington will continue to develop its own unique identity deriving from the quality of its historic, open space and environmental resources and the design and sustainability of new developments;

- The rural environment will be protected from major development and accessible green space will be created on the urban fringe; and

- Darlington will be a place where sustainable development happens.

59   The spatial approach for Darlington is to develop sites that consolidate the existing urban area, although some edge of town development is inevitable in order to achieve wider objectives.

60   The land use implications of the economic regeneration strategy described below will form a major part of the Local Development Framework. These include major new employment sites at Faverdale, Morton Palms, Morton

Park, Central Park and the Town Centre. All these sites have different accessibility issues, which will need to be addressed through this Plan.

61   The role for the Local Transport Plan in delivering the Local Development Framework and vice versa is to:

> • Ensure that accessibility is a key criterion when considering land use decisions through the accessibility checklist, in order to maintain or improve access to key services and encourage travel by sustainable transport.
>
> • Place an emphasis on the transport requirements of new developments in all stages of the planning process, for example being part of the masterplanning process for Central Park.
>
> • Design in safety and security through the provision of high quality walking, cycling and public transport links. The town centre Commercial Street development will incorporate these design issues, building upon those applied in the Pedestrian Heart scheme;
>
> • Consider all sustainable travel modes in the development of site proposals, in order to minimise the detrimental impact of traffic levels on the environment and economy. Again, Central Park is a prime example, being adjacent to two Corridors of Certainty and Darlington Railway Station.
>
> • All new developments incorporate good design and are well connected to its surroundings.
>
> • Maintain and enhance local neighbourhoods. The West Park development includes a countryside park with an integral cycle route, that have benefits for the adjacent neighbourhoods.

Corporate issues - Housing

62   The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy indicates that 5300 new dwellings should be provided in Darlington in the period 2004-2021. (The Council is currently challenging this figure). The existing dwelling commitments figure is 2979. Almost all new development in the next five years will be on previously developed land within the urban area on sites with good accessibility by all modes to local facilities and employment (84% in

2004/05). The agreed strategy for the new Local Development Framework will not allocate any greenfield nor edge of urban area sites, so that new housing will increase the density of the urban area and help promote options for travel by sustainable modes.

63 The exception is the edge of town development at West Park, which is already under construction, but here there is a clear travel plan building in bus, walking and cycling options from the start and the site includes a primary school, pub, countryside park, shop and primary health care facility, reducing the need to travel.

64 The role for the Local Transport Plan (and Local Development Framework) in delivering these housing proposals is to:

- Ensure that proposals for housing developments are considered with accessibility by all transport modes as a key requirement. Good links from developments to key destinations for access to health, food, employment and education must be maintained or improved, in particular for those without a car;

- Residential areas should be designed to a high quality specification and this must include a high quality streetscape. Attention to safety and security is paramount in particular to encourage walking and cycling. These principles have been applied at West Park.

- Walking and cycling routes within new housing developments must link to planned or existing networks and provide links to key destinations. New developments should not create severance for existing residents, as this impairs access to key destinations. An example is the residential development of the existing Mowden Rugby Club, that will see improvements to the cycle network on the urban rural fringe.

- Travel plans for residential developments will be developed, in line with national best practice. We have just requested such a travel plan, as part of a pre-application planning inquiry for a redevelopment of an office site on Brinkburn Road.

Support developers who wish to develop no car or reduced parking standards on housing developments in areas that are very accessible by other modes of transport. Such a development has already occurred at the junction of Coniscliffe Road and West Street on the edge of the town centre.

Corporate issues - Employment and Regeneration

65   Regeneration and the creation of jobs is a key issue for the Tees Valley
      authorities and this is tackled in Darlington through the Economic
      Regeneration Strategy and its subordinate Darlington Gateway
      Development Framework. This strategy is now being implemented with
      some key sites being completed and marketed. In addition economic
      deprivation is being tackled through programmes to support people into
      employment.

66   A new study is underway into how the Darlington Gateway Development
      Framework can be taken forward to facilitate sustainable economic growth.
      The study will provide detailed analysis of opportunities available to
      Darlington both now and in the future, and identify a strategy and action
      plan for maximising them through both physical and non-physical support.
      The purpose of the study will be to provide the Council with the appropriate
      evidence base and strategic justification to prioritise and implement major
      regeneration projects over the next five to ten years.

67   Darlington Council is working with partners to invest in the infrastructure
      required to attract high quality, well-paid jobs to Darlington to counter the
      low-wage local economy; reduce the unemployment gap between the most
      prosperous and the most deprived wards; and enhance the
      competitiveness and attraction of the town centre.

      •   A substantial new shopping development is planned for the town
           centre, together with the Pedestrian Heart improvements. These will
           create additional employment opportunities in construction and
           retailing as well as enhance the vitality of the town centre, key to the
           continuing success of Darlington to attract major employers to the
           Borough.

      •   Major office development is taking place at two locations. The first, at
           Morton Palms on the edge of the urban area near the A66(T)and
           adjacent to other large employers in the service and manufacturing
           sectors, already has its first tenant. The second is at Central Park
           near the rail station and the town centre and is part of a major mixed
           use development that includes Darlington College which will open at
           its new site in September 2006.

      •   New industrial and warehousing development is taking place at
           Faverdale to take advantage of sites near the A1(M). Argos has
           recently opened its northern distribution centre on this site and will
           eventually employ 700 people.

- A substantial increase in flights from Durham Tees Valley Airport, and potential new business park development, will increase travel to the Airport.

68 Major employment opportunities are being proposed in neighbouring areas, that will potentially attract more people from Darlington to travel outside of the Borough for work, and alter the pattern of such trips. Development proposals such as the Stockton-Middlesbrough Initiative will add to existing work flows, where currently about 33% of outbound trips are to the Teesside conurbation (2001 census). These changes will present opportunities to improve inter-urban bus and rail services to help all Darlington residents access these employment opportunities and this is being addressed through partnership with the Tees Valley authorities. One of the objectives of the A66(T) Tees Valley Gateway Study is to improve access to Darlington and to the rest of the Tees Valley by the dualling of this road. The importance of achieving this output has been recognised by the Interim Regional Transport Board in its recommendations to Government in 2006.

69 The role for the Local Transport Plan in delivering these employment and regeneration proposals is to:

- Work with the Tees Valley local authorities on the bus network review to ensure that key development sites outside of the Borough are accessible by those who do not have a car and that key development sites in Darlington are accessible by public transport from outside the Borough (including County Durham and North Yorkshire). This review should also include rail travel.

- Work with the Highways Agency to ensure that the A66(T) and A1(M) corridors develop in line with regeneration strategies for the region. In addition work with the Highways Agency to reduce the severance that the A66(T) creates in particular with villages to the south and east of the town.

- Build the proposed Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor to help to regenerate Darlington through the opening up of additional development land. It would also reduce traffic congestion in other key development areas on Yarm Road and remove heavy traffic from Haughton Green. Consequential bus priority measures on both the new and adjacent roads would also improve bus journeys for those travelling into Darlington from the east (Tees Valley).

- Use travel plans to ensure that all travel options are considered and greater provision is made for those travelling by more sustainable modes. Improving access to employment assists with recruitment and retention. Darlington is a Cycling Demonstration Town and will be working directly with employers through travel plans and indirectly with employers through joint working with the Primary Care Trust on their Healthy Workforce Strategy to increase levels of cycling.

- Support Durham Tees Valley Airport in its expansion plans and work with them to seek improvements to strategic road and rail networks.

- Support the tourism strategy in particular through the development of cycling routes in rural areas in partnership with Sustrans and improvements to North Road Rail Station to support the further development of the Darlington Railway Museum and rail heritage and the embryonic Community Rail Partnership.

- Support the Countryside Strategy to ensure that as green space is developed it is accessible.

- In order to maintain the vitality of the town centre short stay car parking must be available and managed to ensure that the use of spaces is maximised.

- The town centre should be accessible by all modes and safe routes should be developed for those walking and cycling or arriving by bus. The needs of disabled people must be considered.

- Promote sites adjacent to the A1(M) and A66(T) to ensure freight traffic will be able to access sites easily without having a negative impact on local residents.

Corporate issues - Adult Services

70   The Government's Green Paper 'Independence, Wellbeing and Choice' sets out the vision for the future of social care for adults in England. The aim is to have person centred care, promoting independence and choice for older people and maintaining vulnerable people in their own communities.

71   In Darlington this is being formalised through an integration of services between the Primary Care Trust and the Council, with the emphasis on wellbeing, not just health and welfare. The extension of direct payments and increased choice will see more people manage their own care

packages, including managing their own transport arrangements.

72   A rationalisation of learning disability day services is also underway. The change will see services being delivered from small units across the town, rather than from one large central site. People will have to travel to different places for different activities.

73   There are also moves to ensure more older people are able to stay in their own homes. New low level preventative services are to be developed to support this, such as befriending schemes in local communities. Extra Care schemes (very sheltered housing) are being developed at 3 sites to offer additional support.

74   The role for the Local Transport Plan in delivering these adult services proposals is to:

- Improved access to public transport and facilities, including accessible taxis, low floor buses and pedestrian improvements.

- Provide bus services to Extra Care schemes at Dalkeith House, Tees Grange Avenue; Oban Court, Whinfield and Rosemary Court, Fenby Avenue.

- Support the movement of people throughout the day, in smaller accessible vehicles.

- Encourage door to door care for in-house transport provision.

- Help ensure that the assessment and management of care packages encourage independence and greater use of public transport.

Corporate issues - Children's Services

75   Significant re-organisation is taking place in how services are delivered to children and young people. A new Children's Services directorate came into existence in April 2005, bringing together education, children's social services and primary care. This new focus on young people will be supported by the Local Area Agreement 'Young People – Our Future' in

April 2006.

76   The Children and Young People's Plan, is currently under development and will be implemented in April 2006. It is based around the 5 themes of 'Every Child Matters' and the role of transport is being considered in terms of being healthy, staying safe, achieving economic well-being and enjoying and achieving.

77   A Youth Strategy is also being developed, specifically to address young peoples' access to leisure services, a key issue identified by consultation. Raising educational attainment is a key driver of the Community Strategy but there is recognition that children and young people have a huge role to play outside their schools in their local communities. Improving access to sport, leisure, arts, health services, training and employment are all key to ensure that children and young people can fulfil their potential.

78   The many factors being addressed in order to raise educational attainment and narrow the attainment gap include major investment in new educational buildings, and the re-organisation of schools into clusters to strengthen the linkages between schools and the communities they serve. One such is the combination of Beaumont Hill Special School, Springfield Primary School and Haughton Comprehensive School into an Education Village, offering primary, secondary and special needs education on one site. The Village, which opened in Spring 2006, is the first of its type in the UK and will have a marked effect on local travel behaviour, not patterns. This is because only one of the schools, Beaumont Hill, is moving a significant distance and the majority of these pupils arrive by bus. We expect behaviour to change as pupils take advantage of new and improved facilities for walking and cycling.

79   There is a proposed major reorganisation of secondary education in the south east of the town with the closure of two schools and the development of a new academy on a new site, starting in 2008/09. There are no plans to close or merge any other school during the Second Local Transport Plan period. In parallel, reorganisation of Primary Schools has been completed.

80   There are plans to introduce extended schools, with secondary schools acting as hubs in each quadrant of the town, opening from 8.00am until midnight. This will have significant issues for accessibility. There are also initial discussions around how the vocational curriculum can be delivered and the impact of schools working in clusters.

81   Darlington College is moving to Central Park, to the east of the town centre from its current location. As a major attractor of trips, the College has a significant effect on travel patterns in the Borough. In preparation for its move, the College is developing a travel plan, which the Council is assisting through this Plan by the financial support for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the East Coast main Line adjacent to the site. We are also improving Haughton Road for pedestrians and cyclists, in partnership with Cycling England (chapter 4). The other major provider of further education, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form is also embarking on the process of developing a travel plan to address accessibility issues.

82   The role for the Local Transport Plan and Children's Services Strategies in delivering these children's services proposals is to:

- Ensure that decisions about land use and service delivery consider accessibility for children and young people in particular the availability and cost of bus services.

- Continue to develop Safe Routes to school in partnership with schools and the Police.

- Continue to roll out the travel plan strategy to all schools and colleges.

- Establish a Youth Cycle Forum to ensure that young people have a direct involvement in the development of the cycle network.

- Continue to monitor road safety targets and possible links to child deprivation to ensure that resources are carefully targeted to reduce casualties.

Corporate issue - Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Renewal

83   Social inclusion is a key goal of much of Darlington Partnership's work, but the focus is a shared Social Inclusion Strategy that aims to narrow the inequalities gap, build community confidence and improve access to services for 12 groups of people specifically at risk of deprivation, discrimination and disadvantage.

84   Community partnerships have been created in each of the 11 most deprived wards. The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy provides a focus for the Council and others to work with the partnerships to tackle the combinations of factors – economic, social and environmental – that lead to deprivation.

85   The role for the Local Transport Plan in delivering social inclusion is to:

- Through the Council's close relationship with Darlington Association on Disability and other partners, ensure that people with physical and sensory impairments can travel to select destinations safely and conveniently on foot or by wheelchair.

- Ensure that information about access opportunities for people with various disabilities are well publicised, both for their benefit and for the benefit of businesses and service providers.

- Work with bus operators and other partners to provide public transport (or other forms of transport, such as community transport or taxis) for older people, young people, those in the targeted deprived wards and other groups with economic disadvantage, at times, on routes and at a cost to meet specific needs to access services, shopping, work and leisure.

- Promote and invest in all available transport modes including cycling, walking and public transport to ensure that choices are available to all people, in particular those who do not have access to a car.

Corporate issue – Crime and Disorder

86   We are committed to improving local people's quality of life through action to tackle crime and disorder issues. The Darlington Community Safety Partnership, of which Darlington Borough Council is a key partner, has set a number of key priorities for 2005-2008, set in response to audit findings, involvement of the community and Government's Public Service Agreements.

87   Crime levels have increased between 2001 and 2004. Residents stated that anti-social behaviour gives them most cause for concern (21% if respondents) followed by house burglary and neighbourhood nuisance. Vehicle crime and litter/graffiti both scored 10%.

88   There are a number of objectives and targets that are directly relevant to this Plan. In particular reducing vehicle crime and the theft of pedal cycles. The Council has invested a great of funding in the town centre CCTV network and Park Mark status for all main car parks, which has successfully reduced car crime in these areas. The numbers of pedal cycles being stolen is increasing. This will be addressed as part of the Cycling Strategy through the provision of more secure cycle parking and a joint approach with the Police on education. Safe legal cycling will also be promoted in conjunction with the Cycle Forum.

89   Another key objective is 'to reduce the level of anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in Darlington'. This type of behaviour dissuades people from leaving their homes, particularly in the evening, especially for walking, cycling or public transport trips. This has a direct impact on whether people choose to make journeys and may reduce people's ability to access services or opportunities for education or leisure. By addressing anti-social behaviour and addressing safety concerns through initiatives such as CCTV on buses, improved lighting and better designed public spaces, the numbers of people walking and cycling will increase creating 'safety in numbers'.

90   Motorcyclists riding dangerously and causing nuisance also generate a great deal of complaint. This is a particular issue when motorcycles are ridden in parks and open spaces as it deters other users from enjoying the facilities. A joint approach between the Police and Council wardens working with local residents is tackling this issue through high profile education and enforcement.

- With the introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement, the Council will adopt a new management approach to the issue of obstructive car parking that breaches parking regulations.
- Through the travel safety strategy, the Local Transport Plan will address both actual safety and perceived fear of crime. This will continue the work carried out to date, such as the fitting of CCTV cameras to local buses.
- Interventions through the Plan will be audited to ensure that their design does not encourage or facilitate criminal or disorderly behaviour. We plan to use the services of the Urban Design Officer in achieving this action.
- We will continue to work with particular groups over issues directly relevant to them. For example, we will continue to work with the Darlington Cycle Forum to encourage good practice by cyclists.

The First Local Transport Plan

91   Darlington's first Local Transport Plan published in 2001, was an extensive document that laid the framework for the next five years of transport improvements in Darlington. It was assessed as "above average" in terms of its vision and associated objectives. It contributed to our success in winning Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town status in 2004 and Cycling Demonstration Town in 2005.

Performance

92   Although delivery of the first Local Transport Plan is not yet complete, evidence collected through the monitoring process shows that the Council has achieved its targets on several core indicators. For example, road condition values have moved from the bottom to the top quartile through concerted investment and focus. Equally, user satisfaction with local bus services continues to improve, as does road safety (which is already at a high level). The most significant target not achieved is the Best Value Performance Indicator on bus patronage, which has declined against a planned increase.

Table 3.3 - Core indicators

Core Target	Achievement	Comment
Road condition	Yes	From bottom quartile to top quartile through concerted investment and focus of resources.
No. of bus passenger journeys	No	Patronage continues to decline, albeit from a high level, despite investment from Council. Need for focus on smart travel choice measures.
Bus satisfaction	Yes	Continues to improve, with low fares and frequent bus services on most routes.
Cycling trips	Yes	Numbers of cycling trips recorded at a town centre cordon have risen slightly.

KSIs all	Yes	Focus on road safety - engineering, education and enforcement
KSIs children	Yes	Focus on road safety - engineering, education and enforcement
Rural access to bus service	Yes	Requires further analysis as part of accessibility planning.

93 Whilst the actions undertaken to date have achieved much, three issues remain of importance in addition to bus patronage; traffic congestion, road safety and management of parking supply. Although, traffic congestion is not as severe as in other places nationwide, 97% of local people thought that it had worsened in recent years.

94 Increasing traffic levels in Darlington are a reflection of a perceived lack of realistic alternatives, despite the performance of existing demand management measures. Given the views of local people, it is clear that more needs to be done to promote travel choice and improve network capacity by all modes; to ensure that local people understand the realities of the alternatives, whilst continuing with the clear demand management measures already in place under the Strategy.

95 Road safety is still an issue, despite the good progress made (the number of all accidents being 7% ahead of target and child fatal/serious accidents being 37% ahead of target). This is to be more of a perceived issue, with local people perceiving a different situation to that which actually applies – 53% thought that there was a relatively high risk for pedestrians for instance, and 82% thought that there was a high risk of a traffic accident when cycling.

96 Surveys of town centre businesses show how important they believe car parking supply is to the prosperity of the town centre, particularly with regard to the large number of shoppers coming into the town from the surrounding area.

97 The supply of parking spaces is therefore an important issue, particularly around key destinations in the town centre and at locations such as the main railway station. This is a reflection of conflict between the needs of local residents and other road users; for example at Darlington Railway Station where a 7% increase in rail patronage in 2005 over the previous

year (4.5% growth since 2001) has brought with it more demand for car parking near the Station, which has had some impact on neighbouring residential areas. Such an issue about overspill parking is also associated with the town centre and has contributed to the need for a study (now in progress) to assess the effects of Darlington's first Residents Parking Zones. Residents' Parking is now increasingly being coupled with the issues surrounding Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE), whereby the Council assumes responsibility for enforcing parking restrictions on road from the Police. We intend to apply for DPE powers in 2006 for implementation in 2007.

What Went Less Well?

98   There is recognition that not everything went well during the delivery of the First Local Transport Plan, in particular on delivery during the first 3 years of the Plan, for example:

- Delivery of complex schemes, in particular the Corridors of Certainty strategy, was slow.

- Consultation on major schemes was limited to those directly affected, rather than opening up consultation to a wider public who would also benefit from the scheme.

- There were unforeseen cost increases on some schemes, in particular when schemes were changed as a result of consultation.

- Revenue and capital spends were not integrated in all cases.

- Budget allocated across almost 20 strategies meant that too many schemes and initiatives were planned with insufficient overall budget. More focus and linkage between budgets

- Perceptions about transport and travel options were not addressed despite physical improvements to the transport network.

99   These weaknesses were addressed during 2004, in particular issues around staffing levels, programme control and monitoring. The Audit Commission inspected Transport Services in September 2004 and judged the service to be 'fair' with 'excellent prospects for improvement'.

100 As previously described in chapter 2, bus patronage followed the national trends by declining, albeit to a level still double the national average (to 12% trips locally). This decline was despite significant investments in new

infrastructure during the lifetime of the first Plan and reflects both increasing car ownership (thus use) and a poor perception of buses by non-users as a means of travel. It also reflects the increasing numbers of potential concessionary fare passholders who have a choice of travel modes, including a private car. In some ways, this output was the worst performing indicator in the first local transport plan and the most intractable to make positive progress upon.

101 We have planned, and already are starting to deliver, a series of co-ordinated improvements to tackle the implications of this trend; both in terms of increasing traffic levels, quality of life and accessibility. These interventions are jointly funded from Local Transport Plan, Council and sustainable demonstration town sources. As outlined in later chapters, we believe that this mix of marketing (sustainable towns), physical improvements (to both bus and street environment) and operational support (concessionary fares and supported bus services) will contribute to stabilise the decline in trips and eventually encourage more use.

Lessons Learnt

102 The success of the first Local Transport Plan has come from:

- the use of programme control techniques to keep projects on time and within budget;

- consistent and rigorous attention to detail, from all involved; and

- good quality communication of the issues involved with partners and the public, so avoiding where possible, unrealistic expectations.

103 We plan to improve delivery of transport schemes further by:

- On major schemes, the consultation process is covering a wide constituency, since the schemes have a Borough wide impact, not just in the immediate area of the scheme itself. This consultation will not revisit the strategies and policies of the Local Transport Plan; rather it will address the detail.

- Clear policy briefs are being produced for each scheme, outlining the policy reasons and requirements for the scheme and detailing clear lines of responsibility both for delivery and evaluation.

- We are working to consolidate formal relationships with some partner organisations, especially local bus operators. This is helping create a situation where the efforts of both parties are coordinated and therefore generate greater benefits than would have otherwise been the case. The development of a Quality Bus Partnership at the time of writing is seen as a key step in ensuring that coherent use is made of joint resources in order to maximize the benefits and achieve higher bus use.

- In addition to safety audits undertaken on highway schemes, cycle audits will also take place, in line with our status as Cycling Demonstration Town.

- Active management of data and budget optimisation techniques for maintenance schemes to ensure that condition targets are met and value for money is achieved.

- Targeting additional funding for maintenance and improvements in areas that are requested by the general public through schemes such as 'Lets Get Cracking', £2.5m of additional funding over 2 years.

- The introduction of StreetScene, a realignment of some Highways activities with Community Services on geographic areas to promote improvements to the local environment and greater community involvement.

104 A number of successful bids for additional funding from the Department of Transport have been made during the First Local Transport Plan such as Rural Bus Challenge; Urban Bus Challenge; Sustrans Links to Schools Programme; Homezone Challenge; Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town and Cycling Demonstration Town. These mostly display the delivery characteristics that typify the successful implementation of infrastructure schemes. We are conscious of the difficulty that these types of investment are relatively short term and that some travel habits, such as more bus use, take a longer period of sustained investment to achieve the desired outcomes. One example of this is our proposal in chapter 5, to continue the funding of successful sustainable town initiatives after 2009.

Implications from LTP1

105 It is therefore important that the Second Local Transport Plan:

- Delivers schemes that tackle traffic congestion, by all methods.

- Continues to fund actions that further improve the area's good road safety record.

- Makes good progress on providing physical and smarter travel choice measures to help bus passengers, recognising that it will take sustained investment to alter existing trends in patronage.

- Continues to participate in the provision of solutions to issues surrounding parking supply for town centre users, residents' and users of facilities such as the Railway Station.

- Uses all available evidence and data for programme design and delivery.

- Is delivered via an effective programme control process that continually reviews and where necessary improves our delivery procedures, and continues to ensure that schemes are realistic and contribute to achieving outcome objectives.

Summary

106 In summary, therefore, the key transport issues arising from this overview of the broad vision for Darlington, and the way in which it is being translated into physical and service development, include:

- **Inclusion of transport initiatives and targets in the Local Area Agreement and the ongoing development of the Accessibility Checklist for policy development and service delivery.**

- **Reducing road traffic congestion, improving actual and perceived road safety (particularly for pedestrians and cyclists), maintaining or preferably improving accessibility for specific groups and purposes, and managing transport networks and car parking to support the economy are key challenges for the Plan.**

- **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, but more work is required on encouraging bus use as detailed in the proposed programme for the Second Local Transport Plan.**

- **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. This initiative is complemented by our Cycling Demonstration Town status.**

- **The Plan will aim to maximise the positive impacts of transport on the Quality of Life.**