

**CABINET
8 MARCH 2022**

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

**Responsible Cabinet Member –
Councillor Andy Keir, Local Services Portfolio**

**Responsible Director –
Dave Winstanley, Group Director of Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides Members with an annual update on highways and transport from a regional and local perspective. It outlines delivery, performance and public satisfaction in 2021/22 and seeks approval for the 2022/23 programme, including the release of funding. It also provides an update on the Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan and the Darlington Transport Plan.

Summary

2. Changes in travel behaviour have been one of the very visible impacts we have continued to face during 2021/22 as a result of Covid-19 and the bus and rail industry have seen significant impact which will have ongoing issues moving into recovery phases.
3. The challenges continue and as we have already seen, vehicle traffic levels are quick to recover. The increase in online shopping and home deliveries which in turn increases the number of vans and lorries onto our roads is unlikely to abate. This is balanced with many people continuing to work from home and a move to more agile working combining home and office work. There is already recognition that the transport sector will need to work hard to increase bus and rail services back to full capacity and encourage passengers back on to them.
4. There has been good progress on the delivery and development of the transport capital programme including working in partnership with TVCA to deliver elements of the strategic transport plan.
5. There is a focus by the Department for Transport on progressing the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and the Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP). Darlington has started the delivery of one of two priority schemes in the LCWIP with the creation of phase one of a cycling route on Woodland Road. The BSIP has been submitted and progress is being made on the Enhanced Bus Partnership.

6. Details of the Performance Indicators are set out in the report. These reflect the challenges being faced by public transport and a continuing requirement to invest in the maintenance of the highway asset, with an increasing issue on the condition of footways.
7. Policy development has continued. A Transport Strategy for the Borough, Town Centre Transport Plan and Parking Strategy are in development and will be brought to Scrutiny for consideration. A revised Travel Plan Policy is included in this report to ensure that high quality travel plans and personalised travel planning can be delivered as an integral part of the Planning Process, in particular on large scale housing developments.

Recommendations

8. It is recommended that:
 - (a) Members note the progress in delivering the Local Transport Plan and agree to release £0.893m Integrated Transport Block and £2.175m Highway Maintenance Funding, subject to confirmation by TVCA and the Department for Transport, to deliver the 2022/23 transport programme;
 - (b) Members approve the release of monies subject to Department for Transport and Tees Valley Combined Authority confirmation, to deliver the Tees Valley Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), specifically Phase 2 of the Woodland Road scheme; to deliver elements of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP); and to deliver other schemes as detailed in the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Business Case;
 - (c) Members approve the Travel Plan Guidance, with measures funded from section 106 agreements;
 - (d) Members agree to be party to the Tees Valley Enhanced Bus Partnership, which is presently a shell agreement with no direct obligations on formation. The detail of obligations being added over time and subject to individual considerations and approvals;
 - (e) Members delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Highways and Capital Projects in consultation with the Portfolio holder and legal team to engage through the bus partnership governance structure and agree further detail in relation to any priority, which has implications on the highway network, subject to confirmation of funding and satisfactory completion of the necessary statutory processes.

Reasons

9. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) To continue to deliver Darlington's Transport Strategy as set out in the Third Local Transport Plan and to maximise the opportunities to maintain the highway asset for the benefit of all road users;
 - (b) To deliver the LCWIP and BSIP in line with Government guidance;

- (c) To ensure that high quality travel plans are submitted and then implemented as part of the planning process in order to minimise the traffic impact of residential and non-residential development, and secure better quality development in Darlington; and
- (d) Coronavirus continues to impact on bus services in terms of patronage, service delivery and operational timetabling. These impacts coupled with uncertainty around the potential funding to support the delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) has made the process more challenging. It therefore needs to be recognised that the BSIP and EP need to be fluid and will be adapted as there is more certainty, particularly around the funding allocation.
- (e) Enhanced Partnerships or other formal arrangements with Bus operators are required in the future to secure Funding from Government as part of the Government Policy direction to Improve Public Transport.

Dave Winstanley
Group Director of Services

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Sue Dobson : Extension 6207

S17 Crime and Disorder	Crime and disorder implications were considered in the preparation of the Third Local Transport Plan and will be considered in the development and delivery of specific transport schemes or measures.
Health and Wellbeing	Health and wellbeing implications have been considered in the preparation of the Third Local Transport Plan and its implementation. The transport strategy seeks to achieve better health and longer life expectancy for everyone by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness from transport and by providing travel options to keep people active and independent. This will be reviewed as part of the development of the next Darlington Transport Plan.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	Carbon emissions and their impact have been considered in the preparation of the Third Local Transport Plan and its implementation. The transport programme seeks to reduce carbon emissions from transport through a shift towards electric and hydrogen vehicles from petrol and diesel. The programme also seeks to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and mass public transport, as well as seeking ways to reduce the need to travel or travel shorter distances. Highway design, construction and asset management all seek to minimise the impact of transport through flood risk management, Sustainable Urban Drainage, recycling highway materials, low energy lighting (LED), low energy processes and electric fleet vehicles.
Diversity	Multi-strand Equalities and Disability Impact Assessments were undertaken in the preparation of the Third Local Transport Plan. The Plan seeks to achieve a fairer society by enabling people to access jobs, education, training, health, food and green spaces; and to achieve a better quality of life for all by improving the journey experience and minimising the negative impacts of transport such as noise, air pollution and accidents on the natural environment, heritage, landscape and people. This same approach will be applied in the development of the next Darlington Transport Plan. As highway schemes have an impact on the built environment, disability groups are consulted to ensure the needs of disabled people are considered.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	There are no proposals that impact on specific groups.

<p>Budget and Policy Framework</p>	<p>This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.</p> <p>The Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan was adopted by TVCA Cabinet on 31/01/2020 as the Local Transport Plan for the Tees Valley including the constituent local authorities. A new Darlington Transport Plan will be developed during 2022 (delayed from 2020) which will set out local priorities and will provide an overarching policy framework for other subsidiary documents such as the Asset Management Plan and Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This will also form part of the policy framework once it has been approved by Cabinet and adopted by Council.</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>This is a Key Decision</p>
<p>Urgent Decision</p>	<p>This is not an Urgent Decision</p>
<p>Council Plan</p>	<p>The report demonstrates how the transport programme is supporting delivery of the key actions in the Council Plan, namely reviewing and delivering a revised parking strategy and working with TVCA to deliver improved transport links within Darlington and the Tees Valley.</p>
<p>Efficiency</p>	<p>The Transport Strategy seeks to implement schemes that demonstrate value for money and/or deliver the greatest outcomes at a local level. An evidence-based approach is used to identify schemes that have higher benefit cost ratios, reduce maintenance liabilities and/or seek to reduce revenue costs. Maintaining the highway network will reduce traffic disruption in the longer term and improve network management. Vehicle delay has a negative impact on the economy, including logistics and freight.</p>
<p>Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers</p>	<p>This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers</p>

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Tees Valley

10. As part of Spending Review 2021, it was announced that TVCA had an indicative capital allocation of £310m from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) for the five-year period from 2022/23 to 2026/27. TVCA in discussion with the 5 local authorities submitted in January a programme business case to the Department for Transport (DfT) setting out how this funding would be spent on delivering Tees Valley transport priorities. A final decision on the funding settlement is expected from DfT in March 2022. The Department have clarified that this funding is for sustainable modes of transport and not for new road building schemes. This includes the Local Transport Plan funding that Darlington receives for highway maintenance and integrated transport schemes. The Council is working on indicative amounts for the 2022/23 programme that have yet to be confirmed.
11. During 2021/22 the impact of covid-19 pandemic has continued to have an impact on transport and travel, both in terms of the trips that are made and the mode of transport that people choose. With lockdowns and restrictions continuously being imposed and lifted by government, a new 'normal' has not yet been established. Working from home and agile working and on-line shopping and 'shopping local' continue, to varying degrees. There are particular issues with rail and bus patronage, which have still not recovered to pre-pandemic levels.
12. Since the first national lockdown in March 2020, the government has provided financial support to the bus sector to ensure the continued provision of services despite significantly reduced passenger numbers. This recovery funding was intended to support the bus sector return to financial sustainability.
13. In March 2021, the Government published *Bus Back Better: national bus strategy for England*. The strategy sets out the long-term vision and opportunity to deliver better bus services for passengers across England.
14. There are two requirements that must be met, to be eligible for potential future funding to support bus provision:
 - (a) Submit a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) by 31 October 2021. The BSIP should set out a vision for delivering a step-change in bus services. A local public and wider stakeholder engagement process was undertaken during the development of the BSIP to inform priorities and this targeted both users and potential users of bus services. The Tees Valley BSIP was published in accordance with the deadline; and
 - (b) Implement an Enhanced Partnership (EP), which is a statutory agreement between TVCA, the five Tees Valley local authorities and the Tees Valley bus operators. The EP is made up of two parts: the EP plan, which mirrors the content of the BSIP; and the EP Scheme where the detailed requirements and actions for services and infrastructure in the area are set out specifically. The original deadline was for submission of the final scheme to the Government by 31 March 2022, but this has

recently been amended to submission of a draft scheme by the end of April 2022. Government will advise on the new date for submission of the final scheme.

15. The BSIP and EP have been structured around a five-point delivery plan:
 - (a) **Decarbonisation** – one of the first regions in the UK to have an entirely zero emission local bus fleet;
 - (b) **Fares** – simpler fares and targeted promotions to drive passenger growth;
 - (c) **Customer experience** – putting the needs of customers at the heart of service delivery and improving information provision with one brand identity;
 - (d) **Infrastructure** – new infrastructure investment to prioritise bus on core corridors and improve passenger experience; and
 - (e) **Network** – a collaborative approach focused on core corridors and integration with the Tees Flex on-demand bus service.
16. It should be noted that the delivery of much of this five-point plan is dependent on securing revenue funding from government and it is understood that details of the indicative funding to support delivery of the BSIP will be provided by February 2022. The government has made it clear that should an area not implement an EP scheme, then future funding to both the Tees Valley Combined Authority, as local transport authority, and local bus operators could potentially be withheld.
17. It is important to understand that TVCA is party to the agreement as the local transport authority and the five Tees Valley local authorities in their capacity as local highway authorities. An officer governance structure has been established, involving TVCA, the five Tees Valley local authorities and bus operators, to oversee the work and updates have been provided to the TVCA Transport Committee.
18. Coronavirus continues to impact on bus services in terms of patronage, service delivery and operational timetabling. These impacts coupled with uncertainty around the potential funding to support the delivery of the BSIP has made the process more challenging. It therefore needs to be recognised that the BSIP and EP need to be fluid and will be adapted as there is more certainty, particularly around the funding allocation.
19. In recognition of this challenge, the EP is in the form of a 'shell' agreement, which sets out the high-level priorities. There are no direct obligations on TVCA, the Tees Valley local authorities or bus operators at this stage. The EP Plan includes a bespoke variation mechanism, which enables further detail to be added at the appropriate point in time.
20. The bus sector across the Country has been supported by funding from both Government and Local Authorities over the last few years.
21. As a new normal is established it will bring challenges to the bus sector and partnership work will be required to try and encourage patronage levels to return to pre-covid levels to try and protect services.

Darlington

22. Work has continued on drafting Darlington's Transport Strategy, Darlington town centre transport plan and a revised parking strategy. These will be presented to Scrutiny before public consultation. The framework for consultation agreed by Cabinet in March 2020 has not changed.
23. The Planning Obligations - Supplementary Planning Document, 2013 sets out the Council's approach to securing planning obligations as part of the planning process. If the Local Plan is adopted the Planning Obligations SPD will require a review. National guidance has changed significantly in relation to many policy areas including transport, climate change, drainage and biodiversity.
24. Darlington's Travel Plan policy which forms part of the Supplementary Planning Document, needs revising in the short term in order to achieve good quality development. A draft policy is attached at **Appendix A**. This sets out:
 - (a) What travel plans are and why we ask for them;
 - (b) Types of travel plan;
 - (c) When a travel plan is required – thresholds for travel plan submissions;
 - (d) The process of submitting a travel plan:
 - (i) Modeshift registration;
 - (ii) Required standards;
 - (e) How we evaluate travel plan submissions; and
 - (f) Obligations – fees, bonds, and conditions
25. The funding element can be secured through the existing section 106 process. The policy will be integrated into the Tees Valley Design Guide along with other updates on Cycle Infrastructure Design (based on Local Transport Note 1/20) and Electric Vehicle Charging Points.

Progress on delivery in 2021/22

26. The following section outlines the capital and revenue investment in transport in Darlington over the last 12 months:
 - (a) The major improvement programme for Darlington Station has made significant progress. Design of the Gateways East and West are being progressed by the Council and these are currently in detailed design stage (RIBA 4). Planning permission for Gateway East was granted in September 2021 and planning approval and listed building consent for Gateway West in October 2021. Planning approval for a temporary car park on the former cattle market site was granted on 14 January 2022. Construction of the temporary car park and the demolition of properties the Council and TVCA have already acquired will begin in Spring 2022. In January 2021 Cabinet resolved to make a Compulsory Purchase Order to assemble land for the Darlington Station Improvements Scheme. A Public Inquiry into the CPO was held by the Planning Inspectorate 18 -21 January 2022. The construction of the Gateway schemes

will begin following conclusion of the CPO process in September 2022, and anticipated to complete in Spring 2024. Network Rail continue to progress their designs for track, platforms, new station fit out, overbridge and existing station enhancements. The full business case will be submitted by TVCA to the Department of Transport in Spring 2022 with a decision to deliver anticipated in Summer 2022.

- (b) Darlington Northern Link Road remains a Strategic priority for both Tees Valley Combined Authority and the Council. We have continued to work together to try and secure appropriate funding from Government for this strategic link road. Many funding options have been and will continue to be explored.
- (c) The 'Rethinking Victoria Road' scheme was completed. This included new traffic signals at the junction with Clifton Road and Park Place to improve the pedestrian crossing facilities; a 20mph speed limit and traffic calming; widened footways; improvements to the cycle route via Back House Street; and new street trees and landscaping. Following feedback from residents the bus stop that was removed has been reinstated in Park Place and additional bollards have been ordered to prevent illegal obstructive parking on the footways;
- (d) Work started in November 2021 on the first phase of the West Park to Darlington town centre walking and cycling scheme. This is one of the priority routes in the Tees Valley Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and is being funded from Department for Transport's Active Travel and Transforming City Fund monies. The stepped cycle lane will separate cyclists from pedestrians as well as provide segregation from vehicles. The section of the route on Duke Street received objections and was redesigned to better meet the needs of local businesses. However, following further consultation and dialogue, 3 objections were received to the final design. A Public Inquiry will therefore be held in March 2022 to try to resolve the issues so that a scheme can be implemented. Consultation on the second phase of the scheme from Hollyhurst Road junction to the roundabout junction with Staindrop Road took place in January and February 2022, with a business case submitted to TVCA for funding in February 2022. It is anticipated that work on the second phase will start in the summer 2022 following completion of phase 1.
- (e) Winton Street West car park was reopened to the public in May 2021 providing additional parking near Duke Street and Skinnergate.
- (f) Initial design work has been completed on two major schemes on Woodland Road – firstly changing the mini roundabout in Cockerton to a roundabout with a new cycle link along the A68, pedestrian improvements and changes to the landscaping; and secondly changing the 2 mini roundabouts at the junctions of Woodland Road/Staindrop Road/Carmel Road North to two roundabouts with pedestrian and cycle improvements. Public consultation has taken place in January and February 2022 and the next stage is to review the designs in light of the comments. Subject to the completion of consultation and design reviews, the next stage will be further consultation and consideration of the submission of planning applications.
- (g) A programme of dropped kerbs has been implemented to assist residents with mobility issues including along Outram Street and Charles Street;

- (h) Bus stop improvements have been carried out in Heighington, School Aycliffe, Harrowgate Hill turning circle, Parkside, Hurworth, Middleton St George and Whessoe Road. Many of these stops have been relocated in order to provide raised kerbs to improve access for passengers to bus services. Bus shelters have been provided at two stops that serve Amazon which the company has funded.
 - (i) Safer Routes to School schemes have been designed for Hurworth Primary School and Mount Pleasant Primary School (schemes on Newton Lane and Whitby Way). The schemes incorporate 20mph speed limits, traffic calming and improved pedestrian crossing points to improve safety outside of these schools. Consultation with local residents is complete and the schemes will be constructed in 2022 mainly during school holidays to minimise disruption.
 - (j) A bridge design has been commissioned for the next section of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) walking and cycling route in Middleton St George which will replace an existing bridge over Goosepool Beck. This will then be included in a planning application to create the route from where it currently ends on Yarm Road near the roundabout with Woolsington Drive to Yarm Road near the airport roundabout. In addition Darlington, Stockton and Durham Councils have agreed to fund a new Development Officer to lead and coordinate the creation of the 26 mile walking and cycling route along the alignment of the S&DR in time for the bicentenary in 2025.
 - (k) 4,490 potholes have been reported and repaired up until the end of December 2021, significantly more than in the same period in 2020/21 (3,165). A greater emphasis is now being placed on preventing potholes and the Pothole Fund has also been used to target surfacing works. A programme of Micro Asphaltting works has been carried out on unclassified roads in 50 residential streets (listed on the Council website).
 - (l) It is now possible to report highway defects digitally through the Report It portal. This feature went live in June 2021 and 880 defects were reported via this method up until the end of December 2021.
 - (m) A programme of maintenance schemes was carried out including A167 Merrybent, Heighington By Pass, Tornado Way and Victoria Embankment. An innovative approach to using recycled materials was implemented on schemes on the road between Sadberge and Middleton St George and Hewitson Road in Darlington. This had environmental benefits as well as minimising disruption to local residents as the work was completed more quickly as waste material was not transported off site.
 - (n) A new design has been developed for the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme to incorporate the new Darlington Borough Council branding. This will be used for all new bus passes. Old passes will still be valid for up to 5 years and will not be replaced.
27. In addition to the Darlington Council transport programme we have worked in partnership with TVCA to develop transport initiatives that benefit Darlington residents:

- (a) A new contract has been awarded to continue the W2W scheme, an all-electric fleet of mopeds, leased to people so that they can access training and employment opportunities when there are no alternatives such as public transport;
- (b) The Tees Flex service has been expanded to include the rural western part of Darlington borough which is not served by public transport;
- (c) Whole Route Improvement Plans have been produced for 9 bus corridors across the Tees Valley to identify options to improve bus reliability and punctuality. In Darlington this includes the bus routes Darlington to Durham, Darlington to Middlesbrough and Branksome to Red Hall. The next stage is to develop a programme with timescales, costs and detailed designs; and
- (d) A contract has been awarded by TVCA to install Electric Vehicle Charging Points in car parks in Darlington to facilitate the uptake of electric cars, taxis and vans.

Proposed delivery in 2022/23

- 28. A programme of highway maintenance schemes will be delivered including structural maintenance of highways (roads and footways) and bridges. The programme is based on condition data. Details are included in **Appendix B**.
- 29. The transport programme comprises a programme of schemes to manage and improve the highway network funded from the Integrated Transport Block. The programme consists of small-scale schemes to address road safety, network and speed management, parking and sustainable travel. Details are included in Appendix B.
- 30. 20mph schemes have been designed for Hurworth Primary School and Mount Pleasant Primary School (schemes on Newton Lane and Whitby Way) and these will be constructed in 2022. Design is now underway on 20mph schemes for Reid Street Primary School, St Bede's Catholic Primary School, St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School and Federation of Abbey Schools (schemes on Abbey Road and Cleveland Terrace). Consultation will take place in 2022 with the schools and local residents and subject to support the schemes will be programmed for implementation.
- 31. TVCA worked with the five local authorities to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Subsequently the Department for Transport announced the Active Travel Fund as a mechanism to start delivering the LCWIPs. Darlington was allocated £1.702m to deliver the first phase of the West Park to town centre walking and cycling route, with new segregated cycle lanes on Woodland Road. Work started on site in November 2021 and will continue until Autumn 2022. Transforming Cities Fund monies has been secured in principle for the next phase from Hollyhurst Road junction to Deneside Road and consultation has taken place. £1.7m of funding is currently allocated to the scheme and a bid will be submitted to TVCA Assurance Framework to secure the funding.
- 32. Darlington Northern Link Road remains a Strategic priority. We will continue to work together with TVCA to try and secure appropriate funding from Government for this strategic link road. Many funding options have been and will continue to be explored.

33. A bid for a series of improvements along the A68 was submitted to DfT in January 2020 to the Pinch Point Fund. In February 2021 DfT advised that the Pinch Point Funding had been moved into the Levelling Up Fund and Councils were invited to submit the scheme to that fund. Darlington Council is currently developing a bid to that Fund. Other funding opportunities are being pursued including delivering elements of the scheme through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement as the A68 is both a bus and cycle corridor. Consultation is taking place on the first elements of this scheme, namely the roundabouts in Cockerton and Woodland Road/Staindrop Road/Carmel Road. Subject to the completion of consultation and design reviews, the next stage will be further consultation and consideration of the submission of planning applications.
34. The Access Fund which has funded travel behaviour change programmes in the Tees Valley for the last 4 years has been replaced by the Capability Fund. Initial funding has been awarded until March 2022 and an announcement of future funding is awaited. Darlington delivers a programme of Personalised Travel Planning across the Tees Valley, working with housing developers, employers, colleges and Employment Hubs to support people in travelling sustainably. The team provides support and information to enable people to access public transport, TeesFlex, W2W and car sharing, as well as cycling for local utility trips. Darlington also delivers the public transport marketing programme in collaboration with the Connect Tees Valley team in Stockton. The Active Travel programme which was delivered in Darlington has now moved to TVCA.
35. Whole Route Improvement Plans - Optioneering Reports have been produced for 3 bus service corridors in Darlington – Branksome to Red Hall, Darlington to Durham and Darlington to Middlesbrough. These have been used to inform the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Business Case that has been submitted to Government by TVCA for a five-year funding deal. Once funding is awarded a programme will be agreed to develop the options to detailed highway designs and then construction. This capital programme will link to other elements in the CRSTS programme and Bus Service Improvement Plan, managed through the Enhanced Partnership with bus operators.
36. TVCA is working with the highway authorities to procure a new supplier of bus shelters across the Tees Valley, ensuring that we continue to cleanse, inspect and maintain bus shelters and invest in new shelters at existing and new locations.
37. TVCA has awarded a contract for the installation, maintenance and management of Electric Vehicle Charging Points in car parks including car parks in and around Darlington town centre. These will be installed in 2022.
38. Durham, Darlington and Stockton Councils are jointly funding the appointment of an Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) Development Officer to progress the delivery of the 26 mile S&DR Walking and Cycling route for the bicentenary celebrations in 2025.

Performance

39. During the year monitoring information is collected and used to monitor how the transport system is operating and being used by the public. This data informs the asset management programme and plans for speed and traffic management, as well as informing discussions with stakeholders including bus and rail operators and the Police. In 2021/22 transport continued to be affected by Government guidance for covid 19

restrictions which in turn impacted how people were able or chose to travel. The data is set out in **Appendix C** and the headline results are:

- (a) Walking trips into the town centre fell by 50% during 2020/21 compared to the pre-pandemic levels but are currently on track to recover to approximately 75%. The reduction reflects the ongoing guidance to work from home, with significantly less office workers travelling to the town centre, as well as the reduction in retail footfall.
- (b) The cycling data is mixed. The automatic counters across the town show a possible decline on previous years as of December 2021 but the latest quarterly count of cycling into and out of the town centre show that cycling levels have recovered to pre-pandemic levels.
- (c) Bus patronage has inevitably reduced due to covid restrictions limiting bus capacity; covid infections reducing driver availability (and thus reductions in service frequency); people having less reasons to travel due to people working from home, home delivery, children studying at home; and vulnerable people continuing to shield and limit contact with others. The number of trips has fallen from 5.5million in 2019/20 to less than 2million estimated for 2021/22. Trips by people using a concessionary bus pass have also remained lower than normal (down by 50%). Bus reliability continues to be an issue due to driver availability.
- (d) Rail patronage has followed a similar pattern to bus patronage with a reduction of 45% on pre pandemic levels, and there continues to be issues with driver availability with associated impacts on services.
- (e) Vehicle traffic levels reduced significantly during the lockdown in early 2021 to 30% of normal levels. Traffic levels have recovered and are forecast to be at near normal levels by the end of the financial year. Part of this is fuelled by a reticence amongst some people to share their journey with others either on public transport or in car. It is too early to say whether this is a permanent trend; it is hoped that people will start to car share and use public transport in greater numbers.
- (f) The road safety statistics show a continuing reduction in casualties on a three year rolling average. However the number of seriously injured remains stubbornly high in relation to previous years (there were no fatalities) at 38 of which 4 were children. Of the 142 casualties, 90 were car occupants and 24 were pedestrians. During early 2021 lockdown rules were in place and therefore traffic levels were lower and young people were not travelling to school. This reduced the road traffic risk. As lockdown restrictions lifted traffic levels increased again but casualties overall have remained low.
- (g) The road condition data shows that the structural maintenance programme continues to keep the % of principal and non-principal roads requiring interventions at low levels. However the condition of footways is getting worse with almost 20% being structurally unsound. In 2021/22 three footways schemes have been completed in Heighington, Hurworth and Clifton Road in Darlington. More schemes will be identified in 2022/23.

Public Satisfaction

40. Each year Darlington takes part in the National Highways and Transport Network Public Satisfaction Survey. In 2021/22 overall satisfaction was down from 55% to 53%. Whilst the reduction in satisfaction is disappointing it reflects the national trend. In summary 128 of the indicators were above the national average and 33 were below average; 51 of the indicators were improving compared to the previous year and 105 were reducing. Due to the impact of covid restrictions on people's ability to travel and the transport options that have been available, people's views have been distorted. For instance the results for public transport show a significant decrease reflecting the reductions in capacity (i.e. less seats available due to social distancing) and changing timetables, very often at short notice due to driver availability. This has an impact on the availability of public transport information and consequently satisfaction has fallen. Further details are available in Appendix C.

Financial Implications

41. Transport funding from central government is allocated to TVCA. To provide more certainty around funding levels and priorities, TVCA submitted its City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Programme Business Case on 31 January 2022. This is a 5 year programme (2022-2027) to deliver the strategic transport plan and the transport priorities for the Tees Valley. The total programme is for £310m as set out in **Table 1**. The £82.890m for 'local highway authority consolidated funding' is funding to deliver highway maintenance and Integrated Transport schemes in the local authority areas and replaces Local Transport Plan funding previously allocated directly to the local authorities. The Department for Transport is currently assessing the programme business cases with a view to making recommendations to ministers on CRSTS funding settlements in the coming weeks. TVCA should expect to receive a funding settlement letter in March. Darlington Council should then receive a funding agreement from TVCA allocating funding for 5 years to deliver the local highway maintenance programme and integrated transport priorities.

Table 1

Summary of programme costs	
Investment Package	Cost (£ million)
Making cycling & walking the natural choice for shorter journeys	£47.900
Transforming the Tees Valley rail system	£86.500
A shared commitment with the operators to transform the Tees Valley bus services and grow passenger numbers	£46.210
Positioning the Tees Valley at the forefront of decarbonising transport	£33.000
Putting the Tees Valley at the heart of the digital transport revolution	£10.000
Ensuring everyone can access opportunity	£3.500
Local highway authority consolidated funding	£82.890
TOTAL	£310.000

42. Based on the information provided so far, it is anticipated that the funding that Darlington will receive from TVCA subject to the assurance process is as follows:

Funding source	Basis of allocation	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000
LTP Highway Maintenance / CRSTS	Formulaic	964	2175
Maintenance Incentive Fund / CRSTS	Performance	241*	
Pothole and Challenge Fund, DfT	Formulaic	969	
LTP Integrated Transport Block / CRSTS	Formulaic	893	893
Active Travel Fund (LCWIP Phase 1)	TVCA programme, following successful bid to DfT	300	Increased to 1402** (includes contingency of £262k)
TCF (LCWIP Phase 2)	TVCA programme, following successful bid to DfT		1700
Total		3,367	6,170

* Subject to assessment of maintenance questionnaire by DfT

** Initial budget allocation of £905k in 2021/22 was increased to £1,702K following detailed design

Legal Implications

43. There is a statutory duty for a transport authority to have a Local Transport Plan. Darlington currently has a Third Local Transport Plan 2011-2026, adopted by Council on 10 March 2011 as part of the Council's policy framework.

44. The statutory duty for the Local Transport Plan has now moved to Tees Valley Combined Authority as part of the devolution deal. TVCA has produced a Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan to fulfil this duty, which was approved by TVCA Cabinet on 31 January 2020.
45. The five constituent local authorities have been asked to produce a Local Implementation Plan. This will demonstrate how each highway authority will support the delivery of the Strategic Transport Plan at a local level but will also set out local priorities, policies and actions. Once completed the Darlington Transport Plan will need to be adopted as part of the Councils policy framework. It will draw together other local policies on parking, asset management, traffic management, Rights of Way Improvement Plan, and link to other corporate plans, including the Council Plan 2020-23.
46. The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society pursuant to which the Council is subject to the 'Public Sector Equality Duty'. This requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. This is relevant in the context of transport policy making, where for example the change or cessation of services may disproportionately impact protected characteristic groups. The Council will observe its Public Sector Equality Duty in policy and schemes relating to transport.

Estates and Property Advice

47. The highway maintenance programme will be works within the adopted highway and does not require corporate landlord advice. Any modifications to the adopted highway will be notified to the highway asset management team.
48. Any individual scheme that involves a land requirement outside of the adopted highway, whether that be Council owned land or land in third party ownership, will involve the Estates Team to negotiate land acquisition or other legal agreement. If a scheme cannot be implemented within the adopted highway or permitted rights the required planning permission will be sought at an early stage in the process.
49. The Woodland Road roundabout and Cockerton roundabout schemes both require planning permission and Estates and Legal advice has been sought on land and property issues associated with those schemes.

Procurement Advice

50. All procurement activity will be in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Where a suitable framework is available for a procurement this will be used in the first instance. Applications to Tees Valley Combined Authority for funding will be subject to a robust due diligence process which includes procurement, legal and value for money. All procurements will be in line with the requirements of any subsequent grant funding agreements from TVCA or any other funder.
51. TVCA has undertaken a number of procurements some of which require call off contracts by Darlington Borough Council to deliver programmes at a local level. Procurement and

legal advice will be provided to ensure that Darlington Council procurement procedure rules are adhered to.

Equalities Considerations

52. As the Darlington Transport Plan is developed and consulted on, equalities will be a key consideration. The equalities impact of individual schemes and policies is considered as they are developed. As most of the work programme involves changes to the physical environment the main impacts that are considered relate to disabilities, including mobility, visual and hearing impairments and learning disabilities. Regular meetings are held with Darlington Association on Disability and other advisory groups such as RNIB and Guide Dogs are involved for specific issues.

Consultation

53. No consultation has been undertaken for this report.
54. Consultation continues on individual schemes including the 20mph schemes at school sites, changes to individual bus stops, the Woodland Road walking and cycling route and the major schemes at Woodland Road roundabout and Cockerton roundabout.
55. Consultation will be undertaken for the draft Darlington Transport Plan, Town Centre Transport Plan and Parking Strategy following consideration by Scrutiny.

Outcome of Consultation

56. Responses to individual consultations are used to propose final scheme designs and are agreed under delegated authority.
57. The Local Transport Plan was presented at the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee on 17 February 2022. The deadline for production of this report prevented comments of the Scrutiny Committee being included.