

COUNCIL
24 NOVEMBER 2022

**DARLINGTON TRANSPORT PLAN,
DARLINGTON TOWN CENTRE TRANSPORT PLAN
AND DARLINGTON PARKING STRATEGY**

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Andy Keir, Local Services Portfolio

Responsible Director – Dave Winstanley, Group Director of Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. For members to consider the adoption of the Darlington Transport Plan, Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan and Parking Strategy following the consultation process.

Summary

2. The Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan (STP) 2020-2030 was developed by Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) in partnership with all Tees Valley local authorities. The strategy was published in 2020 and sets out the strategic direction for transport in the Tees Valley. The STP is supported by other strategies developed by TVCA including the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the Tees Valley Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).
3. The Darlington Transport Strategy sets out how the priorities set out in the STP will be delivered in Darlington. It takes account of local priorities and sets a delivery framework to ensure that these priorities are delivered.
4. Cabinet approved the Darlington Transport Plan framework on 9 March 2021, as a basis for consulting the public and other stakeholders on our key transport objectives and priorities.
5. The Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan will support the Town Centre Strategy 2019-2030 and the Towns Fund Investment Plan. Good quality transport into and within the town centre is important to support the transformation, growth and management of movement within the town centre and will help to make it a more attractive place to live, work and visit.
6. The Darlington Parking Strategy sets out a framework for the provision and control of parking within the borough in order to meet the aspirations of the Darlington Transport Strategy and the Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan.

7. Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee considered all three plans on 25 August 2022.
8. Cabinet considered all three plans on 8 November 2022.
9. The plans were consulted on and in terms of responses, there were 34 responses to the Darlington Transport Strategy, 14 responses to the Darlington Parking Strategy and no responses to Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan. The responses were broadly in support of our approach and no changes were made to the documents as a result of consultation.

Recommendation

10. It is recommended that Council approves and agrees adoption of the Darlington Transport Strategy, Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan, and Darlington Parking Strategy into the policy framework.

Reasons

11. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) To provide a strategic framework to support growth in Darlington through the provision of improved transport infrastructure and promote sustainable transport initiatives.
 - (b) To support the Town Centre Strategy by improving transport links into, and reducing the impact of traffic travelling through the Town Centre in order to help it be a place where people will want to continue visiting, shopping, working and living in.

Dave Winstanley
Group Director of Services

Background Papers

- (i) Cabinet – 9 March 2021 - Item 7a Local Transport Plan
- (ii) Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee 25 August 2022 - Item 6, Darlington Transport Plans and Parking Strategy
- (iii) Cabinet – 8 November 2022 – Item 7(a)

S17 Crime and Disorder	The policy documents are not considered to have any material implications on crime and disorder.
Health and Wellbeing	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.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	The Transport Strategy seeks to tackle climate change through quantified reductions in greenhouse gas emission from transport. The programme includes schemes to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport.
Diversity	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.
Budget and Policy Framework	The Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan (STP) has been adopted by TVCA Cabinet as the Local Transport Plan for the Tees Valley including the constituent local authorities. The Darlington Transport Plan and supporting strategies sets out the policies and actions to deliver Darlington's element of the STP. This will form part of the policy framework subject to approval by Cabinet and adoption by Council.
Key Decision	This is not an executive decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an executive decision.
Council Plan	Darlington Transport Plan will support economic growth through the delivery of planned sustainable transport solutions to enable people to access employment and other important services in an efficient manner.
Efficiency	The Transport Plan 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.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

12. Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) are the transport authority for the Tees Valley region. They are required to produce a transport strategy for the area and published their Strategic Transport Plan (STP) in 2020 after a period of consultation. The document sets the transport priorities for the Tees Valley.
13. It was agreed that the constituent Local Authorities would develop their own transport strategy and implementation plan to support delivery of the STP and to capture local priorities and issues. Darlington Transport Strategy has been developed to address these regional and local priorities whilst contributing to national and international priorities such as carbon reduction and climate change.
14. The framework for the Darlington Transport Strategy was approved by Cabinet in March 2021. This framework has been developed into a full strategy and consultation has taken place with the public and other key stakeholders. In addition, two supporting documents have been developed, Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan and Darlington Parking Strategy. Both documents were also the subject of consultation.
15. The transport strategy has a number of objectives:
 - (a) Reduce transport's impact on the environment and support health and wellbeing.
 - (b) Improve safety for all road users.
 - (c) Connect people with job and training opportunities and link communities.
 - (d) Support a revitalised and transformed Darlington town centre.
 - (e) Maintain and effectively manage a resilient transport system.
16. In addition, we have also developed the Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan to support the Town Centre Strategy 2019-2030 and the Towns Fund Investment Plan. It sets out how transport can help deliver the new focus set out in the Town Centre Plan.
17. Darlington Parking Strategy sets out a framework for the provision and control of parking within the borough in order to meet the aspirations of the Darlington Transport Strategy and the Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan.
18. A consultation on the above documents has taken place from 9 August to 9 September 2022. Full versions of the strategies and plans were published including summary documents to make them as accessible as possible. The documents are listed below:
 - (a) Darlington Transport Plan (**Appendix 1**)
 - (b) Darlington Transport Strategy Summary Document (**Appendix 2**)
 - (c) Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan (**Appendix 3**)
 - (d) Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan Summary Document (**Appendix 4**)
 - (e) Darlington Parking Strategy (**Appendix 5**)
 - (f) Darlington Parking Strategy Summary Document (**Appendix 6**)

19. The consultation process included electronic versions of the strategies and plan, and printed documents that were available from the Town Hall, Crown Steet Library and Cockerton Library. The printed documents were also available on request. Press releases and Facebook posts were also used to promote the consultation and specific groups were contacted. Full details of the consultation are provided below. Details of the responses are provided at **Appendix 7** and **8**.

Financial Implications

20. The documents will enable the Council to prioritise annual funding such as the Local Transport Plan Integrated and Maintenance blocks as well as support bids for national and regional funding from programmes such as Levelling Up Fund and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.

Legal Implications

21. 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. 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.
22. The five constituent local authorities have been asked to produce a "Local Implementation Plan". This demonstrates 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. The Darlington Transport Strategy will be considered by Council to be adopted as part of the Council's 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.
23. 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

24. 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.

25. 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.
26. 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

27. 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.
28. 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.

Consultation

29. A consultation process has taken place from 9 August to 9 September 2022. The consultation process was available online and in paper format either from the town hall, Crown Street Library and Cockerton Library, copies were also available upon request to be sent via post. There were no paper responses received for this consultation. The online responses received were as follows:
 - (a) Darlington Transport Strategy - 34 responses
 - (b) Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan - 0 responses
 - (c) Parking Strategy - 14 responses
30. Details of the responses are provided at Appendix 7 and 8.
31. In terms of Darlington Transport Strategy, maintain roads and footpaths and reduce the number of road traffic collisions had the highest level of support from those responding. Improvements for bus passengers and pedestrians had the strongest support. All measures had more respondents supporting them than opposing them.

32. In terms of the Parking strategy there was strong support for all measures. Improve signage and continue to provide more flexible ways to pay for parking had the highest level of support but again all measures had had more respondents supporting them than opposing them.
33. There were no responses to the consultation on the Town Centre Transport Plan.

Outcome of Consultation

34. As detailed in the information above there is support for Darlington Transport Plan, Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan and Parking Strategy. From the information received there appears to be support for the plans and we consequently do not propose any changes to the documents.

Equalities Considerations

35. Equalities is a key consideration of the Darlington Transport Strategy and supporting documents. 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.