

Delivery in 2022/23

Active Travel

1. Progress continued on the West Park to Darlington town centre walking and cycling scheme, which is one of the priority routes in the Tees Valley Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. The first phase of the route extends along Woodland Road from the Hollyhurst Road junction eastwards and then via Outram Street to Duke Street. Construction of the first section on Woodland Road, from the Hollyhurst Road to Outram Street junction, completed in October 2022.
2. Following a Public Inquiry in March 2022, which considered objections relating to Duke Street, the Inspector concluded that the proposed alterations could go ahead. However, due to due to inflationary pressures hitting the construction industry and the cost of raw materials, it was felt sensible to pause to review options with the funders before proceeding. It is hoped that the scheme can progress in the early part of 2023.

Road Safety

3. We have erected the first tranche of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) in locations where we have received speed complaints and where vehicle speeds are high. Eight SIDs have been erected to date and funding has been allocated for a further two tranches. The SIDs will be located on roads with a speed limit of 30mph or 40mph and will be prioritised based on traffic speeds and accidents.
4. Following consultation, Safer Routes to School schemes have been installed at 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.

Bus

5. Raised kerbs have been installed at bus stops in several locations in Mowden and also in Heighington and Middleton St George to aid low floor easy access. Two new bus stops have also been installed on the service 3 route in Mowden, converting hail and ride to fixed bus stop use, which aims to improve bus punctuality and improve passenger safety.

Rail

6. Darlington Borough Council is working with TVCA, Network Rail, LNER and a range of other partners to improve Darlington Railway Station and the immediate area. Over the next three years, work to the station will increase rail capacity, provide much-improved station facilities, improve access and safety; and also regenerate this part of the town. The required land was largely assembled by agreement with the final properties secured by Compulsory Purchase Order in September 2022. The raft of improvements planned will improve capacity on the wider Tees Valley rail network and create better access to the East Coast Main Line, further enhancing regional connectivity. Buildings are being cleared to make way for an extension to the station, with the old and new sites linked by a bridge joining the historic train shed with the modern facility.

7. Funded through CRSTS, the Tees Valley Station Enhancement Programme sets out to review opportunities to improve passenger experience and deliver enhancements at and around stations in the Tees Valley, with the aim of integrating stations more effectively into the local transport system. Following initial engagement, high-level masterplans have been developed by TVCA, for North Road and Dinsdale stations. Work is underway to further develop the masterplans, through more detailed engagement. Improvement works at North Road station will be coordinated with RHQ project delivery.

Road

8. Darlington Northern Link Road remains a strategic priority for both Tees Valley Combined Authority and the Council. We continue to work together to try and secure appropriate funding from Government for this strategic link road.
9. Detailed design is nearing completion on schemes to improve Cockerton, Woodland Road and Carmel Road/Staindrop Road roundabouts. Public consultation took place in January/February 2022 and we have incorporated a number of requests into the final designs, including a signalised crossing outside Cockerton Club, accommodation of parking on West Auckland Road and reduction in the size of two of the roundabouts. We continue to work with residents and businesses to redesign the area in front of Cockerton shops and the greenspace on Carmel Road North. Planning permission will be sought in Spring/Summer 2023.

Maintenance

10. Maintenance schemes completed include surfacing works at A68 Dual Carriageway, A68 Swan House Roundabout, Coniscliffe Road, Faverdale Industrial Estate and Neasham Road. Recycling schemes, which involve reusing the materials from previous schemes, continue at Newbiggin Lane and Prior Street which was an insitu recycling scheme. Footpath schemes at Greenhill Road and Prior Street have also been completed, alongside 68,000m² of micro asphalt surfacing which is a method used to seal and prolong the life of the carriageway.
11. A programme of Micro Asphalt works has been carried out on unclassified roads in 46 residential streets (listed on the Council website). This equates to approximately 9km of road.
12. The number of potholes repaired in the period April to December 2022 was 3,327, a 19% decrease on the same period last year. This suggests an improvement in road condition as we are required to repair any potholes that meet criteria that are reported by the public or identified by Inspectors. In the first full year of the 'Report It' portal (1 June 2021 to 31 May 2022) 1,595 reports were received, of these 938 (59%) were made via the portal rather than telephone/e-mail. In the first year 442 reports (28%) related to potholes/road condition.

Delivered in Partnership with TVCA

13. The Tees Valley Wheels 2 Work scheme is designed to support Tees Valley residents to access employment, training and education opportunities where transport has been identified as a barrier. TVCA has funded a fleet of 75 e-motorbikes and 60 e-cycles for hire through the scheme for up to six months at a subsidised rate of £21 per week for the e-cycle and £30 per week for the e-motorbike, which includes insurance and regular maintenance. The scheme is operated by Redcar and Cleveland Voluntary Development Agency (RCVDA) on behalf of TVCA and has

supported a number of Darlington residents to access employment opportunities they otherwise wouldn't have been able to.

14. In July 2022, Sustrans was appointed as the Active Travel Hub for Darlington by the TVCA. Since then, Sustrans has established a base within First Stop Darlington's offices, in collaboration with Bike Stop Darlington, to deliver support and services to residents and workplaces within Darlington, to enable more people to walk and cycle in their everyday lives. The Active Travel Hub in Darlington is one of five hubs across the Tees Valley run by Sustrans.
15. Installation and commissioning of the electric charge points in Darlington town centre car parks, that comprise the first phase of the Tees Valley network is well underway, following award of the contract by TVCA. Completion in all seven identified car parks is planned for January 2023. TVCA are leading on a communications strategy around the EVCPs, which seeks to update residents on the availability of the chargers.
16. Despite not receiving any Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding for the October 2021 Tees Valley submission, TVCA and partners have progressed with forming an Enhanced Partnership and delivering the actions set out in the BSIP that are affordable without additional revenue funding.
17. Tees Flex, the TVCA funded on-demand bus service that started operation in February 2020 concludes its three-year trial period in February 2023 & TVCA are presently reviewing the service.
18. As part of CRSTS, TVCA is investing into a programme of improvements across nine priority bus corridors in the Tees Valley, to enhance the bus offer. The improvements include a co-ordinated programme of on-highway infrastructure improvements, digital upgrades (Urban Traffic Management and Control System improvements), bus priority, bus shelter and passenger information improvements. In Darlington, the following priority corridors have been identified: Darlington to Durham, Darlington to Middlesbrough and Branksome to Red Hall. Detailed assessments have been carried out to understand the issues and identify the required bus priority interventions, which aim to reduce the impact of congestion and journey time variability on end-to-end bus journey times, thereby improving punctuality and overall passenger experience to make bus a more desirable mode choice. As the corridor options develop public consultation will be undertaken on the proposals.