

**COUNCIL**  
**17 JULY 2025**

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**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL OVERVIEW**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform and update Members on the Leader's Portfolio since the last meeting of Council. The following are some of the areas of work under the Leader's Portfolio.

**TVCA Transport Portfolio Update**

2. As the TVCA Cabinet member with responsibility for transport the following sections provide a general update on elements of the portfolio relevant to Darlington.

**City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Funding 2022/23 to 2026/27**

3. Significant progress is being made on the development and delivery of the CRSTS programme. Of particular interest in Darlington, is the anticipated approval of the Woodland Road Phase 2 Active Travel scheme, to extend the scheme which starts on Duke Street towards Cockerton. Work is also at an advanced stage on accessibility improvements to North Road station to complement the investment made to Hopetown and the improved station entrance. This will enable work to commence later this year, following the S&DR200 bi-centenary events.

**Transport in City Regions Funding 2026/27 to 2031/32**

4. On 4 June 2025, in advance of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the government confirmed an allocation of a £15.6bn settlement for nine eligible mayoral strategic authorities as devolved funding to invest in transport infrastructure. Rather than being called CRSTS2, this programme is now called Transport in City Regions (TCR) funding and TVCA is to receive £978m for the period 2026/27 to 2031/32 comprising £916m of capital funding and £72m of revenue funding. Whilst formal guidance has not yet been issued it is understood that the revenue is being provided to support the development and delivery of the infrastructure programme and cannot be used to deliver revenue projects so, for example, it cannot be used for the provision of additional bus services.
5. In January 2024, TVCA Cabinet unanimously approved a £1bn investment programme to allocate the CRTCR2 funding and to allow project development work to take place to ensure that a project pipeline was in place in advance of April 2027. Further details of the investment programme can be found on the TVCA website:  
<https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/about/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/01/7-Transport-Programme-Cabinet-Report-Jan-2024-1-1.pdf>
6. The published objectives of TCR are:

- (a) Continuing to drive growth and productivity through investment in integrated transport networks
- (b) Transforming infrastructure to support the delivery of new homes and improve access to opportunity for all
- (c) Decarbonising transport and enabling healthy living, including promoting modal shift from cars to public transport, walking and cycling

### **Tees Valley Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Active Travel Programme**

- 7. TVCA successfully secured £17.8m of LUF funding to deliver a package of Active Travel improvements across the region. Development work has been continuing over several months on the nine identified schemes, which includes improvements to connectivity between Darlington Town Centre and Northgate. All these schemes are at an advanced stage of project development, with business cases being prepared for assessment. Approval is expected in Q2 of 2025/26 (July – September) to enable all the schemes to move into the delivery phase before the end of the year.

### **Darlington Station**

- 8. Delivery of the Darlington Station project continues ahead of scheduled completion at the end of this year. In May, a major project milestone was achieved with the final link of the new footbridge installed, connecting the new and existing station. Network Rail have now commenced work to facilitate the bridge fit out and are continuing to progress fit out of the station shell.
- 9. The TVCA-led work to the multi storey car park and external landscaping is progressing well, with the new entrance from Neasham Road to the short stay interchange area now created the Highways Authority for the associated highways works is being developed and engagement has started with utilities companies in preparation for the associated works.
- 10. A site compound, hoarding and scaffolding has been erected around properties at the Victoria Road entrance of the Station in preparation for the remaining demolition work for the Western Gateway scheme. Initial demolition work has commenced with roof tiles starting to be removed, and it is anticipated that the demolition will be complete by the end of August. Conversations are ongoing with LNER to understand programme interfaces with their planned works to the Porte Cochere, but it is anticipated that the highway and public realm improvements work will commence later this year.

### **Climate Change**

- 11. The Cross Party Working Group met on 18 June and heard from the Assistant Director for Resources on what progress is being made in his departments.
- 12. The Group terms of reference will be amended to take account of the recent Nature Restoration Emergency motion.

## **External Meetings and Engagement**

13. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are some of the meetings and events I have attended:

- (a) Various Cabinet and Transport meetings at the TVCA
- (b) Rail North and Transport for the North meetings
- (c) Briefings with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England
- (d) Federation of Nursery Schools & Reid Street Primary School governing body meetings
- (e) Bi-monthly catch up with Ciaron Irvine, Deputy Chief Constable
- (f) Informal catch up with David Garthland, Darlington College
- (g) Memorial Service in remembrance of the Royal Canadian Air Force who served out of RAF Middleton St George during the Second World War
- (h) Visited Hopetown to see the voluntary work being undertaken by A1 Trust, DRPS and NELPG
- (i) The Junction Foundation
- (j) Citizenship Ceremony
- (k) Briefings with Jim McMahon MP, Minister of State at the MHCLG
- (l) Climate Change Working Group
- (m) Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board
- (n) Darlington Neighbourhood Board
- (o) ANEC – Association of North East Councils
- (p) Darlington Community Carnival
- (q) The LGA Conference
- (r) Gavin Foster, Northern Echo editor

**Councillor Steve Harker**  
**Leader of the Council**