

**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**3 MARCH 2026**

---

**NETWORK MANAGEMENT PLAN**

---

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report sets out the requirements and timeline for implementing a Network Management Plan.

**Summary**

2. A Network Management Plan is a statutory requirement under the Traffic Management Act 2004 that sets out how a local traffic authority should manage the highway network to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic to reduce congestion and disruption.
3. Updating the Network Management Plan does not follow any statutory timescale and is undertaken when required by individual authorities on an ad hoc basis. This report sets out the process and programme for updating the Network Management Plan.

**Recommendation**

4. It is recommended that :-
  - (a) The contents of the report are noted.
  - (b) It is noted that a future draft version of the Network Management Plan will be presented to Members of the Communities and Local Service Scrutiny Committee prior to approval by Cabinet.

**Anthony Hewitt**  
**Assistant Director – Highways and Capital Projects**

**Background Papers**

None

Joanne Roberts: Extension 3187

|                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Council Plan                                     | This report contribute to the Council Plan through the involvement of Members in contributing to the development of operational policy.                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Addressing inequalities                          | This report has no implications for addressing inequalities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Tackling Climate Change                          | This report contributes to tackling climate change as the Network Management Plan will set out how the local highway network will be managed for all traffic including pedestrians and cyclists. Motor vehicle traffic should be managed to reduce congestion that will help reduce air pollution.             |
| Efficient and effective use of resources         | The outcome of this report does not impact on the efficient and effective use of resources.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Health and Wellbeing                             | This report has implications on the health and wellbeing of residents of Darlington by reducing congestion, the risk to residents from the effects of air pollution should also reduce. Measures that encourage walking and cycling can lead to an increase in activity that can improve health and wellbeing. |
| S17 Crime and Disorder                           | This report has no implications for crime and disorder.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Wards Affected                                   | All                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Groups Affected                                  | The impact of the report on any individual group is considered minimal.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Budget and Policy Framework                      | This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Key Decision                                     | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Urgent Decision                                  | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 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

5. As Highway Authority, Darlington Borough Council is responsible for the management and movement of traffic on 547km of highway.
6. The Traffic Management Act 2004 sets out how a local traffic authority should manage the highway network to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic with a primary aim of reducing congestion and disruption. The Traffic Management Act 2004 sets out certain responsibilities to achieve this aim known as the Network Management Duty:
  - (a) Promoting better coordination of the various works carried out on the highway, whether there are authority roadworks, utility streetworks or miscellaneous activities that can cause disruption.

- (b) Coordination of other activities that may affect the highway network, such as events and fairs.
  - (c) Introducing a range of powers to allow utility works to be better controlled.
  - (d) Allowing certain contraventions, such as parking offences to be dealt with through civil enforcement rather than through the criminal process.
  - (e) The Traffic Management Act 2004 Part 6 also makes provision for local traffic authorities to assume powers to manage moving traffic offences, such as entering a yellow box junction. Darlington Borough Council has not yet applied for these powers and enforcement remains with the Police.
7. The Network Management Plan is an operational document and as a result there is no public consultation around its content as it sets out the network management duty and requirements of the Council. However, through the annual National Highways and Transport Network Survey public perception on tackling congestion performance is reported.
8. Updating the Network Management Plan does not follow any statutory timescale and is undertaken when required by individual authorities on an ad hoc basis. This report sets out the process and programme for updating the Network Management Plan that requires refreshing as follows:

| Date         | Progress                                                                                                         |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5 March 2026 | Initial report presented to Members of Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee for information.        |
| Spring       | Draft initial version of the Network Management Plan                                                             |
| Autumn       | Draft Network Management Plan to be presented at Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee for comments. |
| March 2027   | Final version of the Network Management Plan to be presented to Cabinet for approval.                            |