

TITLE OF REPORT: Progress Report - Review of Sustainable Travel

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SUMMARY

This report provides a summary update on the actions arising from the Sustainable Communities Place Review of Sustainable Travel.

Purpose of the Report

1. To highlight progress on the implementation of the Sustainable Communities Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee review of Sustainable Travel and to seek the Committee's views on progress to date and future planned actions.

Background

2. How people are able to move around in their daily lives is a central, yet often overlooked, element of the prosperity, environment and wellbeing of any area. While contributing across many themes of Vision 2030, transport has a particular role to play in the delivery of the Sustainable Gateshead Big Idea. With this in mind, on 18 June 2012, OSC agreed that the remit of the review would focus on some of the key directions provided by Vision 2030:
 - The use of cleaner fuels as a way to improve and protect the local environment.
 - Existing initiatives that improve conditions for, and to encourage people to make more trips by walking, cycling and public transport.
 - Innovations in the way we support and promote sustainable travel to schools and employment across the area that will be funded through the Government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF).
3. The review was completed in April 2013 and Cabinet agreed the Committee's recommendations on 25th June 2013. Three reports outlining progress made against the recommendations were considered by the Committee on 16th September 2013, 31st March 2014 and 26th January 2015. At the most recent of those meetings the Committee resolved to receive a further progress report.

What has happened since completion of the review?

4. Progress against each of the recommendations is presented below:

The committee acknowledges the work already being undertaken by the Council and Partners.

5. This action focussed on the opportunity to learn from the work of Partners and particularly the work on travel planning developing as part of the Go Smarter to Work (GSW) initiative funded through the LSTF.
6. Go Smarter to Work initially focussed on the A1 corridor and aims to reduce car use for commuters. It was subsequently extended to sites alongside the A19 corridor (March 2015-March 2016). The programme continues to focus on business engagement at key employment centres; within Gateshead these are the original sites of Team Valley, Metrocentre, Gateshead Town Centre and Quays, and the programme was extended to Birtley and Blaydon in October 2015. The nature of engagement is promotion and facilitation of sustainable travel amongst businesses and organisations within the specified employment areas. Initial travel surveys identify which measures from the GSW Toolkit respondents are eligible to receive, such as trial public transport ticketing and eco-driver training for car users, and training initiatives to encourage cycling and walking.
7. A programme of contacting businesses to discuss the GSW offer was started in July 2013. Each employer undertakes an inception meeting, site audit and employee survey. A tailored package of measures is created from the audit and surveys, and a subsequent follow up survey will identify change.
8. During 2015, the Newcastle Gateshead GSW delivery team have concentrated on accessing employees within Gateshead. There have been a total of 18 engaged businesses within the GSW programme and these employers account for a substantial catchment of 19,883 employees within Gateshead. Some of the larger employers include the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Gateshead Council and Gateshead College. Since March 2015, Baltimore House, Open University, Northern Design Centre, Jurys Inn and the Ramada Encore hotel have engaged from the Quays area.
9. Within Team Valley, engagement remains difficult. In part, this may be due to the confusion caused by the cessation of Valley Links' contract to deliver the project. Nevertheless, the current delivery team have successfully engaged with 7 key employers, including the Homes and Communities Agency, the UK Skills Funding Agency, De La Rue, TNT and UK Land Estates. These employers account for a catchment of 1,818 employees. There has been no engagement as yet with businesses in Birtley and Blaydon; partly due to the very recent extension of GSW to these areas (October 2015) and partly due to an apparent reticence from smaller industrial type organisations to engage.
10. The LSTF-funded improved walking and cycling route into the Team Valley is now complete. The scheme improved existing Links from the NCN 725 to Team Valley via Allerdene, which is to be further enhanced in 2016 with additional improvement of the Allerdene path.

11. The current year is the last to be funded by the LSTF; the period 2015-16 forms the one-year extension to the original 4 year LSTF period. Legacy plans are in place for both the Schools Go Smarter (SGS) and the Go Smarter to Work (GSW) elements of the LSTF Programme, and the Go Smarter (GS) brand will continue; the GS website will remain in place for a further five years, and legacy activity will co-ordinate with it.
12. Much work has been undertaken to prepare a legacy for the engaged organisations in GSW. These proposals include a Business Network, free to join for the first year and a library of Travel Planning resources hosted on the Go Smarter website.
13. SGS legacy plans focus (but are not confined to) on the transition from primary to secondary school. If plans are approved by the Tyne & Wear Delivery Group (TWDG), Gateshead officers will perform a lead role in the delivery of SGS legacy, supported on some elements by Nexus officers.
14. A new 'Access' fund for sustainable travel was announced as part of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review in December 2015. The fund is intended to build on the legacy of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and support growth in cycling and walking, with £580 million (£80 million revenue and £500 million capital). The level of funding available to individual authorities or groups of authorities and the route for obtaining that funding will emerge in the coming months
15. The Council has updated its own Travel Plan, and it is now available via a dedicated website, to allow flexibility as well as ease of access and future updates. The site (www.TravelSmarterGateshead.co.uk) provides an attractive and long term solution to achieving more consistent and effective promotion of active and sustainable travel and ensuring that Gateshead Council's Travel Plan remains current and relevant to staff. It includes the objectives and targets of the plan and measures and initiatives to promote use of sustainable transport. Significant recent initiatives have been the introduction and extension of business passes for bus travel and the introduction of electric pool bikes.
16. The Council pool car scheme will be extended from January 2016 to include 18 cars of which 16 will be based at the Civic Centre and 2 at Shearlegs Road. Three of the vehicles will be electric. The cars are also available out of office hours as a community car club
17. A revised draft of the Council's Cycling Strategy was approved by Council in December 2014 and is now available to the public through the Council's website.
18. In December 2014, the Government announced three new streams of funding based around the promotion of Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles. These streams cover buses, taxis and the designation of Ultra Low Emission Cities. The latter stream is solely car based and the main objectives are to significantly increase the level of Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) uptake and achieve exemplar status across a local area. Bids for all three streams have been considered at a NECA level.

19. The final NECA Go Ultra Low City bid was submitted on 2nd October 2015, and further details have been supplied to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) in response to questions. It is hoped that they will make a decision on successful bids early in 2016.
20. The bid focusses on a range of measures which aim to produce a step change in ULEV uptake across the NECA area – involving a significant expansion of the charging network (including rapid charging hubs), priority for ULEV vehicles, additional vehicles available through fleets/car clubs and promotional activities. This approach is centred on 9 priority routes, including Durham Road and Felling Bypass in Gateshead.
21. A number of potential options were considered as bids for the bus stream but ultimately work was halted as there were doubts over the delivery mechanisms of any proposals against the background of ongoing Quality Contract Scheme discussions. In addition, there were further uncertainties about how the required match funding would be secured.
22. Bidding for the Low Emission Taxi Scheme was a two phase process. A bid was made by NECA in June 2015 to gain funding for a feasibility study to be carried out by the Energy Savings Trust, which would inform a final submission for funding in January 2016. Unfortunately this bid was unsuccessful and while this does not preclude the development of a detailed bid, it now seems unlikely that one will be submitted.
23. In 2015 NECA successfully bid to Carplus for DfT funding to support the expansion of car clubs in the region. Funding to support 20 new vehicles for one year was awarded; three of these will be based in Gateshead including one electric vehicle. Potential locations for the vehicles are under discussion.

The Council continues its role as a leader in the adoption of low carbon vehicle technology.

24. The Council fleet now includes eleven Euro VI compliant vehicles; six refuse/recycling vehicles, three Mercedes Benz minibuses and the three latest gritters. The Euro VI standard has required manufacturers to shift their attention to particulate matter emissions, rather than CO₂, with a larger focus on local air pollution and health impacts rather than greenhouse gases.
25. The trial of Lightfoot technology, a live in-cab driver behaviour management tool, has continued throughout 2015 with the data showing driving behaviour has improved. The reports show consistent performance in the green band which is the performance area that best utilises the fuel efficiency of the vehicles and also indicates good driving behaviour. The results are now being assessed for environmental and economic benefits with consideration being given to using the system in more vehicles across the fleet.

The Council continues investment in bus infrastructure, supporting operator investment in new, low-emission vehicles.

26. The public transport element of the 2015/16 LTP capital programme has concentrated on the Durham Road Quality Corridor; phase IV of the scheme will be completed this financial year. Design work has started on phases V and VI and will be completed in 2016/17; construction work has not yet been scheduled.
27. While LTP funding has been constrained, funding has been secured for two cycling schemes, through the Cycle City Ambition Grant, which will also assist buses. A scheme which creates new cycle lanes along High West Street between Arthur Street and Jackson Street also involves improvements to the signalised junction at High West Street/Arthur Street which will ease bus movements through the junction. Similarly, a scheme to improve the environment for cyclists in Hills Street should also aid bus movements onto the Tyne Bridge.
28. The High West Street scheme is due to be completed in 2015/16. Design work on the Hills Street scheme will be completed in 2016/17 with construction in 2017/18.
29. In 2013, the North East Local Transport Body identified its priorities for major transport schemes funding in the period 2015-2019 and the list includes the proposed Park & Ride facility at Eighton Lodge. Work is still continuing to develop the business case for the scheme, part of the process required to secure the funding for the scheme, and it is anticipated that a report on this will be presented to Cabinet in February 2016. Discussions between the Council and the agent acting on behalf of the landowner have failed to reach agreement on the value of the land required for the scheme. In June 2015, the Council resolved to make a Compulsory Purchase Order for the land and negotiations continue.
30. The 'Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne', the first element of the Council's Local Plan, was subject to Examination in Public in the summer of 2014, and adopted in March 2015. The plan releases land for housing from the greenbelt in a number of locations, including Dunston Hill where one of the requirements for development will be the provision of a Park and Ride facility.
31. Go North East has continued to invest in low carbon emission vehicles with new buses introduced on services X66 (Metrocentre - Gateshead) and 45/46 (Newcastle - Metrocentre - Rowlands Gill - Consett) during 2015.
32. As reported previously, a joint bid by the Council, Newcastle City Council, Nexus and Go North East was successful in securing funding from the Department for Transport's Clean Bus Technology Fund in August 2013. The successful bid involved fitting cleaner exhaust technology to the 21 vehicles operating the 93/94, 97 and 98/98A services. The vehicles are fitted with Euro 3 standard engines, but after treatment the emissions now meet the standard for Euro 5 engines and almost reach Euro 6 levels.

33. In June 2014, DfT launched a further round of funding; the Clean Vehicle Technology Fund (CVTF). Two bids were submitted for Tyne & Wear covering:
- the 30 double decker vehicles operating service 56 (Newcastle to Sunderland, via Gateshead) and service 309/310 (Newcastle to Blyth/North Shields)
 - the 28 single decker vehicles operating service 27 (South Shields to Newcastle, via Gateshead) and service 43/44 (Durham to Newcastle via Metrocentre)

The bids both involved the fitting of flywheel technology to existing diesel vehicles, effectively converting them to hybrid electric vehicles. Both bids were successful and secured just under £913k from DfT, with Go North East also investing over £1.1M.

34. A pilot vehicle was fitted with the technology and tested using the Transport for London methodology at the Millbrook laboratory. The results of the testing were:

	Before (g/km)	After (g/km)	Reduction (%)
NO _x	656.0	491.1	25
NO ₂	126.7	96.6	24
PM	7.7	2.8	64
CO ₂	101984	71824	30

35. Unfortunately, subsequent to the testing, there have been technical issues with the systems fitted to the first two vehicles and the programme has been delayed while these issues are resolved with the manufacturer. Completion of the projects is due in summer 2016.

36. The 2015 round of the Clean Bus Technology Fund was launched over the summer and resulted in two bids from Tyne & Wear; both returning to the cleaner exhaust technology of the 2013 projects by proposing the fitting of Selective Catalytic Reduction and Continuously Regenerating Trap technology to the vehicles. The proposals also included fitting a micro-hybrid system to the vehicles, which aims to reduce exhaust emissions and improve fuel consumption.

37. The first proposal was a joint bid from Gateshead Council (lead), Newcastle City Council, Nexus and Go North East for the vehicles operating the recently extended Quaylink services (Q1/Q2/Q3). The second was a joint bid from Sunderland City Council (lead), Nexus and Go North East for the Red Arrows services (X1/921). While the Red Arrows routes are largely in Sunderland (Hetton/Houghton/Washington), they also operate in Gateshead between Wrekenton and the Town Centre via Old Durham Road. Therefore, while the Council has lead on one of the bids, benefits would accrue to Gateshead residents from either being successful.

38. Happily, it has recently been announced by DfT that both bids have been successful. This will result in a further £680,000 of investment in improving air quality in the Borough.

Major infrastructure schemes should be monitored to assess their impact on alternative routes.

39. The Highways England works on the A1 continue to have an impact across the network with widespread diversions resulting in increased flows.
40. Comparison of weekday flows from September 2014 to February 2015 looking at shows the most notable impact on Handy Drive and Durham Road:
 - Large increase on Handy Drive westbound (27%)
 - Notable increases on:
 - A167 Durham Road northbound (14%) and southbound (9%)
 - Handy Drive eastbound (19%)
 - Minor increases on Felling bypass westbound (4%) eastbound (5%)
41. All major routes are also monitored by the Tyne & Wear UTMC Centre which provides updates to the travelling public via social media. Images from traffic cameras across the Combined Authority area are also available via the internet (<http://www.nettrafficcams.co.uk/>).

Partners should co-operate to ensure effective enforcement of parking, bus priorities etc.

42. The camera car purchased through the LTSF was introduced in September 2013 at which time there were 18 schools where restrictions could be enforced by camera. There has been an ongoing initiative to bring more schools into the project, resulting in the total of enforceable school sites increasing to 52 by February 2015. Since then, engineering works have been completed at a further number of schools, and the majority are now nearing completion. However, 17 sites still require remedial action to facilitate enforcement action.
43. In 2015 (to date) a total of 962 PCNs have been generated using the camera enforcement vehicle. Of these, 704 are for bus stops and 92 at school keep clear restrictions. There were 770 patrols to schools locations. A small number of schools continue to request attendance due to ongoing problems (in the main these are the schools that remain unenforceable); however, the number of requests has fallen compared to previous years.
44. The camera car was featured in the 'Be a Smarter Parker' video promoting road safety at schools. The video was released early in 2015 accompanied by a publicity campaign on local radio, TV and social media.
45. Whilst it was purchased with the aid of the LSTF grant, the camera car is a Council asset and is now part of the general vehicle fleet. It will continue to be used as an enforcement vehicle from April 2016 in relation to school keep clear and bus stop clearway restrictions.
46. Moreover, when a methodology for bus lane enforcement is put before Cabinet later this year, it is likely that the camera car will be proposed as the initial method of enforcement.

The provision of real-time information should be progressed as quickly as possible, and should be made available as widely as possible.

47. The Nexus real-time information (RTI) project is progressing. The data broker (which holds all real time bus data and predicts arrival times) and display management system are now complete. However real time bus information data from operators has been slow to be released but trials are progressing with Arriva and Stagecoach.
48. Real time bus data will be available at stop via either the Quick Response (QR) code or Near Field Communication (NFC) chip already fitted at every stop in Tyne and Wear. Currently, anyone with a smart phone can either read the QR code or NFC chip and scheduled bus times will be displayed on their phone in chronological order. When real time data starts to flow this will replace the scheduled information.
49. This creates a self-service environment where everyone with a smart phone (approx. 60% of all phone owners) can access real time data from any stop without the need for expensive at-stop displays.
50. Scheduled bus information is also currently available on a stop by stop basis on-line through the Nexus myJourney website. This facility will also be updated to RTI as data becomes available.
51. In parallel with this process, Go North East have developed their own smartphone app which currently provides a mixture of real-time and timetable information for their services on a stop by stop basis.

Innovative ticketing arrangements should be considered to complement infrastructure investment

52. The North East Smart Ticketing Initiative (NESTI) is still progressing well. Smart tickets are now generally available on most forms of public transport in the North East. The offer ranges from operator specific ticketing products to the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme smartcard.
53. POP Pay As You Go was officially launched on 2nd November 15 and is available to use on Metro, certain bus services and the Shields Ferry. This allows passengers to top-up credit on their smartcard and use it to pay for trips as and when they travel rather than buying a ticket or pass in advance. The product uses zonal price capping, when used on Metro, with the back office system automatically calculating the best fare for a journey or combination of journeys.

Further work should be undertaken to address the image of cycling with secondary school pupils.

54. As part of the Schools Go Smarter initiative, Transport Strategy staff co-ordinated Bike It and FEAT 1st officers in a pilot project in two secondary schools (Heworth Grange Secondary and Thomas Hepburn) plus 6 of their feeder primary schools, to promote cycle journeys during the transition period, and supporting pupils to

keep cycling as they move up from primary schools. This was so well received that plans to extend this new project have now been integrated into the SGS legacy programme.

What impact has this had for users?

55. The latest figures available from the Government show carbon emissions in Gateshead from traffic in 2013 were down by 15.5% on 2005 levels. This is also a 1.3% drop from 2012 despite traffic volumes increasing slightly by 0.2% between 2012 and 2013, indicating that vehicles and fuel continue to become more efficient and lower carbon.
56. As of March 2015, actual greenhouse gas emissions from Gateshead Council operations were 15% lower than in 2007/8. Fleet transport emissions are now 24% less than in 2007/8, which is a result of both increased efficiencies and reductions in transport operations.
57. As of March 2015, Council fuel use for fleet and plant equipment was down by 25% since the 2007/08 baseline, a continuation of the trend over the period. When compared to the previous year, fuel use in 2014/15 was down 81,000 litres (equivalent to 213 tonnes of CO₂).
58. Since the start of the current programme, the LSTF initiatives supplied through Sustrans in Gateshead (Bike It and FEAT1st) have delivered over 2600 activities, achieving an average of over 31,000 pupil interactions, 1,500 school staff interactions, and 1,600 parent interactions with the project in each year. With the establishment of the Go Smarter Centre at Bill Quay farm, the last year (2015-16) has seen a near 40% increase in the number of hours delivery from the projects; now exceeding 1,400 hours for just the first eight months of the year.
59. As noted above, the Go Smarter to Work initiative has now engaged with businesses that employ over 70,000 employees, and delivery staff are engaged in revisiting those engaged at the start of the process to monitor impact. GSW legacy plans are also well formed, centring on a self-sustaining business support network.

What will we do next?

60. As noted above, the actions arising from the report are ongoing and will continue to develop over the coming months. Some points to note are:
- Work will continue to develop the business case for the proposed Park & Ride at Eighton Lodge. The potential to incorporate smart technology to pay for both parking and travel as part of the scheme will be investigated as part of this process.
 - The Council will continue to investigate new funding opportunities for sustainable travel initiatives, infrastructure, low emission vehicles etc. either on its own or through partnership with neighbouring authorities and stakeholders.

Recommendations

61. It is recommended that the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Consider whether sufficient progress has been made against actions to date

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