

**TITLE OF REPORT:** OSC Review - roads and highways – interim report

**REPORT OF:** Director of Development, Transport and Public Protection

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### **SUMMARY**

The Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee have undertaken a review of the role of the Council and its partners towards roads and highways. This has involved evidence gathering sessions in the four areas of road safety, funding and repairs, enforcement and traffic congestion.

This report provides interim feedback on the outcome from the evidence gathering. A further session is being sought to allow further input from the Police on the matter of road safety. A final report will be prepared following the outcome from this session.

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### **Background**

1. This report sets out the interim findings of the OSC review into roads and highways.
2. This report summarises:
  - the aims and scope of the review;
  - the policy context for the review;
  - how the review was carried out;
  - issues emerging from the review;
  - recommendations.

### **Aims of the review**

3. The review was focused on gathering evidence in four main areas:
  - funding and repairs;
  - traffic congestion;
  - enforcement;
  - road safety.
4. The review was led by the Council, but included input from the Police in relation to the area of road safety.

### **Policy context**

5. Vision 2030 sets out the 6 Big Ideas for Gateshead. Transport relates closely to the themes of “City of Gateshead”, “Sustainable Gateshead” and “Active and Healthy Gateshead”.

6. The Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan, which sets out the transport policy framework for Gateshead, identifies three main challenges for the transport network:
- Supporting economic development and regeneration;
  - Addressing climate change;
  - Supporting safe and sustainable communities.
7. Policy CS13 of the Gateshead/Newcastle Core Strategy seeks the enhancement and delivery of an integrated transport network to support sustainable development and economic growth through:
- Promoting sustainable travel choices;
  - Improving the operation of the transport network and its wider connections;
  - Ensuring new development is located and designed to promote sustainable travel choices, minimise unnecessary car trips, and connect safely to the network.

### **How the review was carried out**

8. Evidence sessions were held into each of the main areas identified in paragraph 3 above. A further session is being sought in the area of road safety to allow further input from the Police.

### **Issues emerging from the review**

9. As a result of the evidence gathering sessions the following issues were identified:

#### *Funding and repairs*

10. Available funding is not sufficient to maintain the highway. A further OSC session is to be arranged to review the position, and how the situation has changed since the previous presentation. In addition an approach towards keeping members informed of repairs to roads in their areas is being investigated.

#### *Traffic congestion*

11. As with many urban areas traffic congestion is a significant problem, with various economic, social and environmental consequences. Future development threatens to worsen existing problems, and this needs to be managed through a continuation of current policies and, where appropriate, consideration of further measures.

#### *Enforcement*

12. Effective parking management and enforcement contributes to a number of wider objectives, including congestion, safety, air quality, accessibility and fairness. It is also important in meeting the needs of local residents and businesses.
13. The Council is currently progressing plans to introduce bus lane enforcement. This will help target specific problem areas identified by residents and the Police.

#### *Road safety*

14. Information on trends in road safety was, and the benefits of better safety noted in relation to:
- lives saved and injuries prevented;
  - people living full and healthy lives;
  - preventing emotional and physical trauma;
  - saving public money;

- supporting wider policies;
  - tackling health inequalities;
  - improving quality of life.
15. A presentation was received from the Police in relation to their road safety activity. As noted above, a further session is being sought to allow further input from them on this matter.

### **Recommendations**

16. Given that a further OSC session is being sought, this report is an interim one. Appropriate recommendations will be made in any final report following from the additional evidence gathering session.

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