

ARUP



TEES VALLEY  
COMBINED  
AUTHORITY



# A VISION FOR DARLINGTON 2025

A MODERN RAIL HUB  
FOR A MODERN ECONOMY



DARLINGTON

The Lord Heseltine report: Tees Valley Opportunity Unlimited, recommended that Network Rail and Transport for the North recognise the importance of Darlington Station as a key rail gateway for the Tees Valley City Region and stated that:

**Darlington has a major role to play in the economic growth of the North as a 'touch point' for the planned Northern Powerhouse Rail network, and that rail improvements should be included in the 2019 to 2024 investments...**

# THE VISION

**As the gateway to the Tees Valley, Darlington is already well connected and in the last 4 years a new modern economy is developing within walking distance of the station. Investment of over £200m has happened with new exciting sectors emerging. A further pipeline of £38m is coming forward and the vision sets the framework for more.**

2025 is the milestone for delivery of the new station which will be a new modern rail hub for the modern economy that is emerging. 2025 is no coincidence, the Tees Valley is where the modern passenger railway was born, when on 27 September 1825 George Stephenson's locomotion number one left Darlington for Stockton carrying passengers.

In 2025 we will also celebrate the 200th anniversary of this globally significant event, and showcase to visitors from across the world the same ambition and ingenuity that has positioned Darlington and the Tees Valley at the heart of industrial Britain ever since.

The new station sets the foundations to unlock growth and improved local train services across the Tees Valley in advance of 2025. It sets to welcome the next generation of rail transport with HS2 and Northern Powerhouse rail services arriving in Darlington.

Railway stations are critical pieces of infrastructure that support the economy through the provision of interchange between local, regional and national transport routes.

Developing stations into growth hubs and improving connectivity between people, businesses and economic sectors can unlock major commercial and regeneration opportunities.

This vision builds on proven examples from throughout the UK to illustrate how the vision can make a significant direct contribution to economic growth and prosperity across the Tees Valley, Durham, North Yorkshire and the Northern Powerhouse helping to re-balance the UK economy.

Darlington Station holds a strategic position on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) thereby drawing benefits from the strong national connections this provides and regional connections to North Yorkshire, Durham and the North-East of England. Darlington will form part of the exciting next generation of rail with HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail serving Darlington. It is fitting that so close to the bi-centennial anniversary that train building has returned to where it all started, with the new Hitachi Plant at Newton Aycliffe building new trains. Virgin have proudly branded Darlington Station as 'home of the Azuma'.

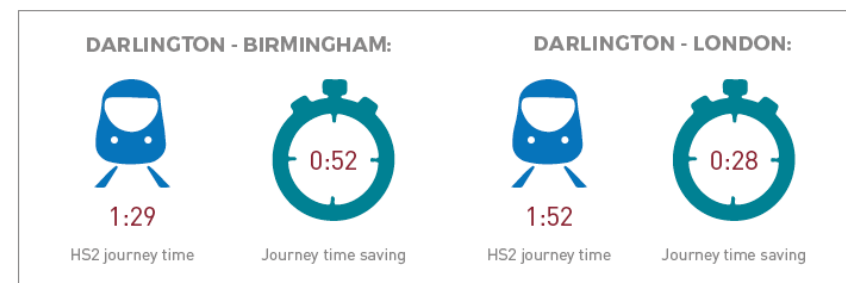
There is excellent local rail infrastructure linking to Darlington Station from the Tees Valley and Bishop Auckland. The infrastructure improvements seeks to unlock current constraints and enable local services to be redesigned to provide better local services and connections to national and regional services. These improvements will unlock opportunities for students, business, young people to have much greater reach into wider jobs markets to maximize the investment in new rolling stock from 2019.

The town centre, just a five minute walk away, has seen some major investment over the past few years, with the completion of the Feethams Leisure scheme, a new Multi-Storey Car Park, the creation of a public sector hub and the commencement of the Riverside Park. Central Park is one of the Tees Valley's Growth Zones and located adjacent to the Station. This offers development opportunities to compliment the emerging new science, education, and housing opportunities.

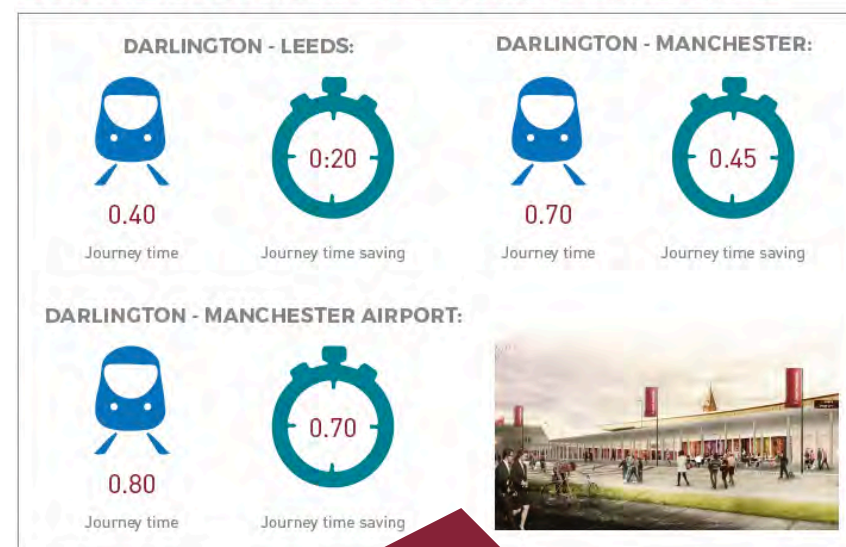
Darlington's railway heritage is of national significance being the birthplace of the passenger railway, and a station that represents the pinnacle of Victorian Railway Architecture in the North East. The development of the station will provide an enhanced experience for visitors, highlighting the heritage, innovation and ingenuity of the station and the town.

Heritage has been key to our considerations in developing the vision and will play a critical role as further development work takes place.

## HS2 SERVICES



## NORTHERN POWERHOUSE RAIL JOURNEY TIME



*Regions are using their local knowledge to identify local strengths and work out how the improved connectivity HS2 will deliver can take those strengths to a different level*

*David Higgins, Chairman, HS2 Limited*



hs2 *engine for growth*

**NetworkRail**

**Virgin  
trains**

**northern**  
a serco and abellio joint venture

HS2 can be transformational  
for the economy of the Tees  
Valley and put Darlington at  
the heart of a dynamic new  
economic corridor...

David Robinson,  
Chair of PD Ports



Significant economic and social benefits could follow if the potential of the station and the area immediately surrounding it, could be unlocked to attract more businesses and employers across a range of sectors to come to the town and contribute to its development.

By enhancing connectivity with the Tees Valley, the North East and beyond, and by improving local access to and around the station, along with promoting new economic, cultural and lifestyle opportunities, Darlington Station can catalyse the transformation of Darlington as the gateway to the Tees Valley.

The development of Darlington Station Growth Hub aims to bring exciting change for the town, the Tees Valley and the North. It presents ambitious long term vision, providing the potential to build upon the success of regional growth, connect existing development initiatives across the town and promote further regeneration to make Darlington more attractive for living, working and learning.

We have worked with our partners to bring these opportunities together in the Darlington Station Growth Hub Vision.

Darlington Station is an **ambitious new gateway** to the Tees Valley offering a **welcome arrival for all**. Beyond the station, a series of **well connected developments** has created a **thriving place at the heart of town life**, and an **urban hub of work and innovation** that supports national, pan-regional, regional and local economic growth.

Improvements to the physical connections provide a station **integrated with the town centre**, with changes to the station and surrounding area supporting further **regeneration and opportunities for the local community**.

The proposed **rail infrastructure improvements** deliver an **effective interchange** and **improved connectivity**, providing a catalyst for **wider economic opportunities for people across the Tees Valley City Region**, connecting hotspots such as Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton-on-Tees, Hartlepool, and Newton Aycliffe to other growth areas across the North and beyond.

## WHY WE NEED TO ACT NOW

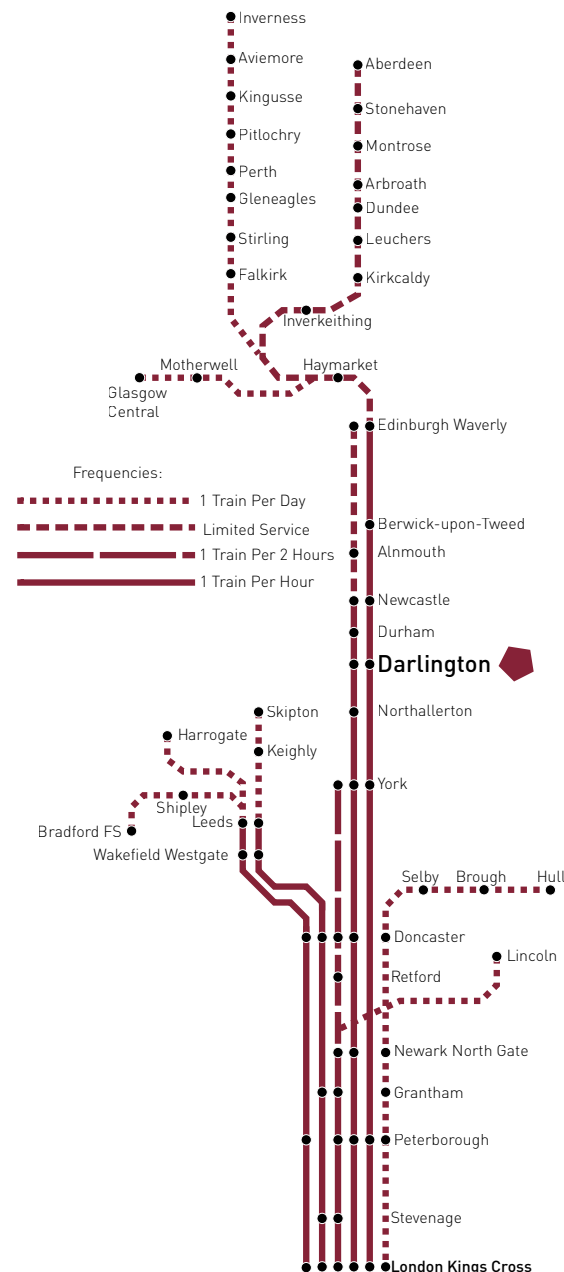
A sharp increase in demand for rail services is expected by 2020 and in 20 years demand is expected to double.

Our current rail infrastructure won't cope and improvements have to be made in time for HS2. We say do it once and do it now.

The improvements will mean better access to national routes as well as better connections within the Tees Valley - including new stops along routes.



HS2 and the local area rail network



The East Coast Mainline



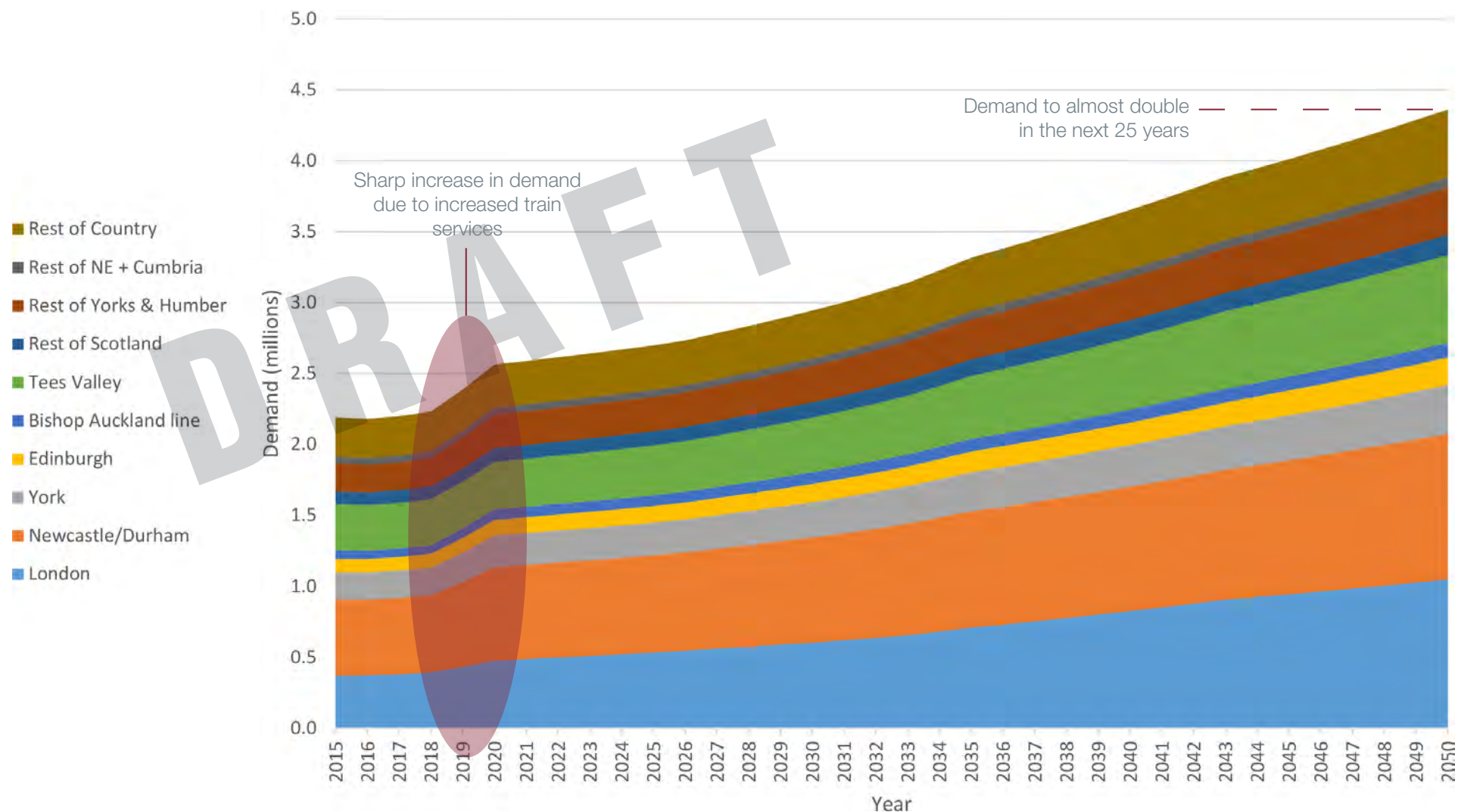
**It is an exciting time for  
Rail with new franchises,  
new rolling stock and new  
ambition to transform rail  
in the UK through HS2 and  
Northern Powerhouse Rail.**

**T** Darlington Station has significant potential due to its strategic position on the ECML. However, its ability to realise that potential is limited by existing constraints. The configuration of the existing rail infrastructure limits the ability to increase the station's local, regional and national connections. Future train service provision is forecast to increase and if the Tees Valley's ambitious growth proposals are realised, passenger demand at the station could double in the next 25 years.

There is little current capacity headroom to accommodate this growth and indeed, capacity pressures are predicted to reach a critical level from 2020 onwards. There is a commitment to run additional train services through Darlington Station in the future but as it stands, these additional services cannot be accommodated due to capacity constraints. Physical changes are therefore required to accommodate more frequent services on all routes to ensure that the opportunity for job creation and billions of pounds of economic benefit is not lost.

The vision sets out an ambitious proposal for an effective interchange such as those present at other regional hubs such as York and Leeds.

# THE NEED FOR RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS



Passenger demand at Darlington Station

# THE RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTION

**Welcome  
Arrival  
for All**

The current capacity at Darlington Station is restricted by the conflict between the north-south ECML services, and those running east-west along the Bishop Auckland to Eaglescliffe line. This is because the ECML route is blocked every time a crossing movement to access the station takes place.

To meet the requirement of the traffic levels in 2020 it will be necessary to re-design how north-south and east-west trains interact, reducing conflicts where possible. New platforms on the eastern side of the railway will remove the need for the Local Line to cross the ECML.

This will change how the train services currently operate and bring Darlington Station in line with other regional transport hubs. The solution will allow for greater connectivity between east-west and north-south services, reducing wait times for connecting trains whilst facilitating more frequent, reliable, quicker services. Shortly after 2020, when the demand for further ECML line capacity will mean that southbound services will no longer be able to use the main station shed, a new main line platform to the east of the ECML will be needed to provide the stopping platform for York-bound trains as well as for local train services. This platform will be designed to cater for Northern Powerhouse and HS2 trains.

These rail improvements, accompanied with new development on the eastern side of the station, will not only create a much improved rail interchange, presenting the right facilities and image for the city-region as soon as anyone steps off the train, but will also create the opportunity for further new development, with the transport interchange at its hub.

The proposed station reconfiguration and regeneration provides opportunities to retain the character and value of the station while ensuring it is integrated within the regenerated community, and continues to provide services to both visitors and residents.



The proposals for the station provide:

- **New Eastern platforms** to increase station capacity.
- **Improved public spaces** at the Portico and the new eastern entrance.
- **Retention of northern access** for further integration.
- **Enhanced facilities** at the station for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users.
- Creation of **public and passenger east-west connectivity** through a high level footbridge.
- **Strengthened urban links and movements.**
- Promotion of **greater use** of the internal station buildings and the replacement of the existing retail units with a **higher quality offer.**
- **De-cluttering interior spaces** of station buildings.
- A **modal interchange** on eastern side.
- Opening up the station to its surroundings, making it **accessible from numerous approaches.**

A strength of Darlington Station is its heritage status. Improvements to the station and recognition of its national significance are key elements in the strategy for promoting Darlington and its unique railway heritage. This heritage status will act as an attraction, responding to and catering for the wider development schemes at and around the station.

## Effective Interchange

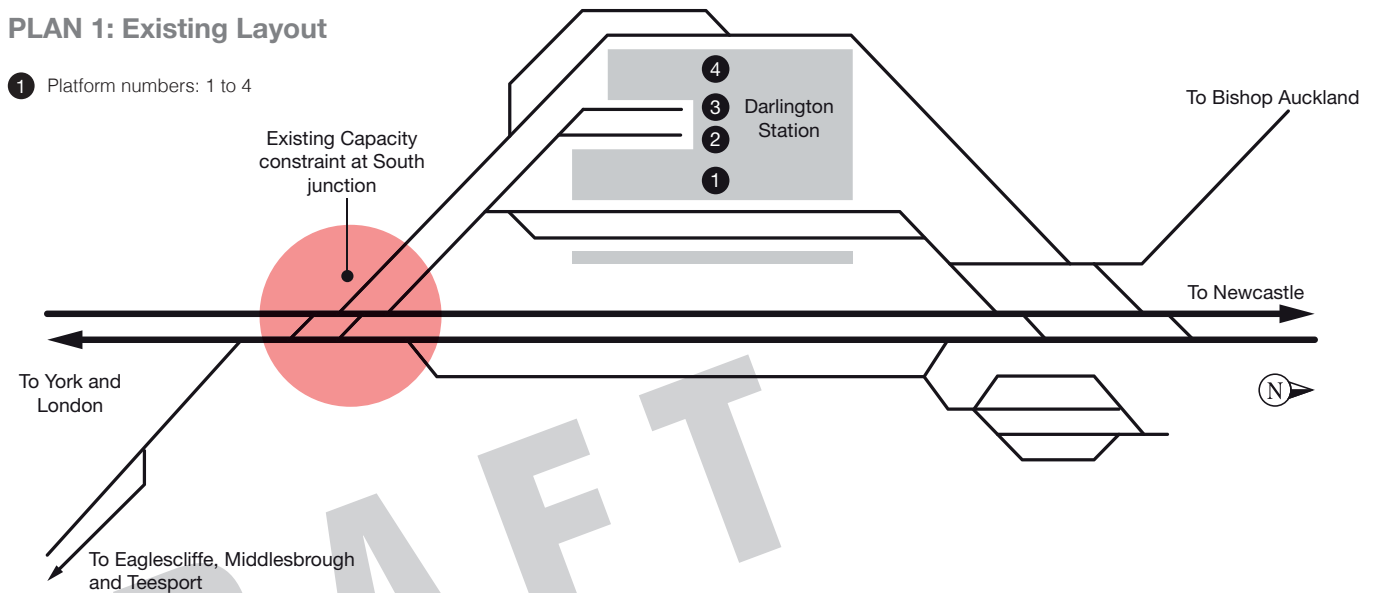
**Build It Once,  
Build It Now,  
ready for NPR  
and HS2**

• • • • •  
**Ambitious New  
Gateway**



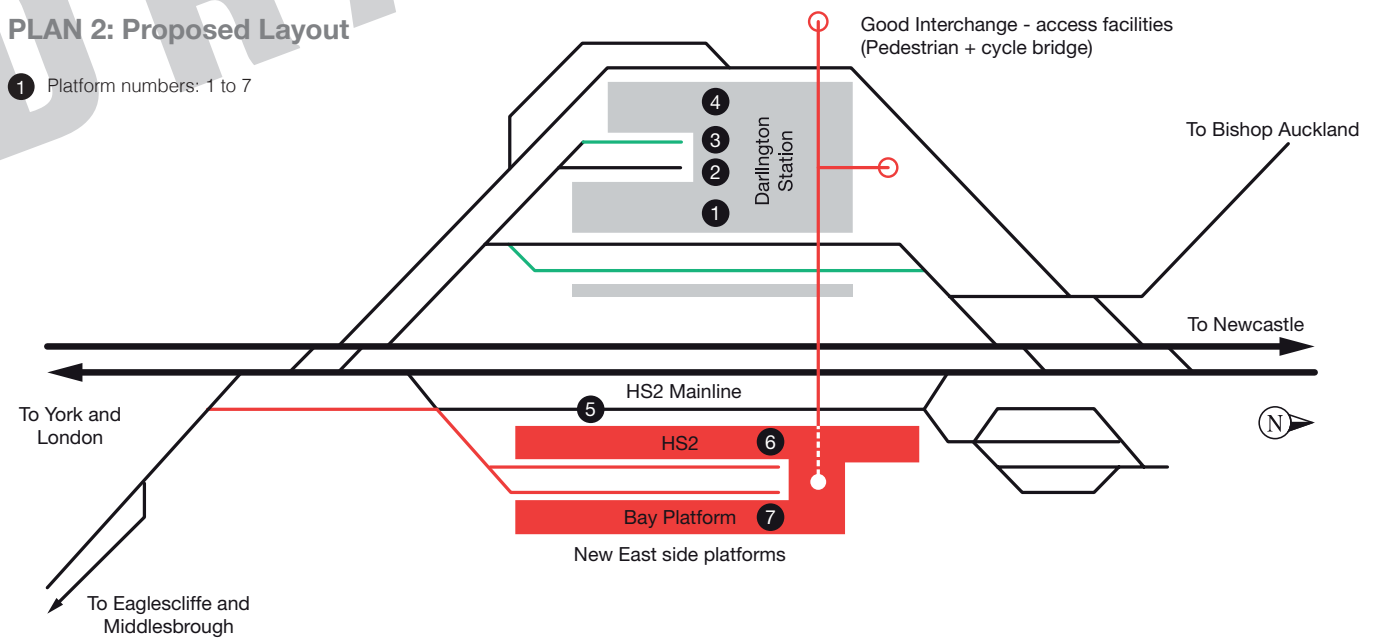
## PLAN 1: Existing Layout

① Platform numbers: 1 to 4



## PLAN 2: Proposed Layout

① Platform numbers: 1 to 7



# DARLINGTON STATION GROWTH HUB

The provision of new eastern side platforms provides an opportunity to address the severance that currently exists between the town centre and the east side of the station caused by the railway corridor. This is to be achieved through the provision of a new footbridge linking the east and west sides of the station.

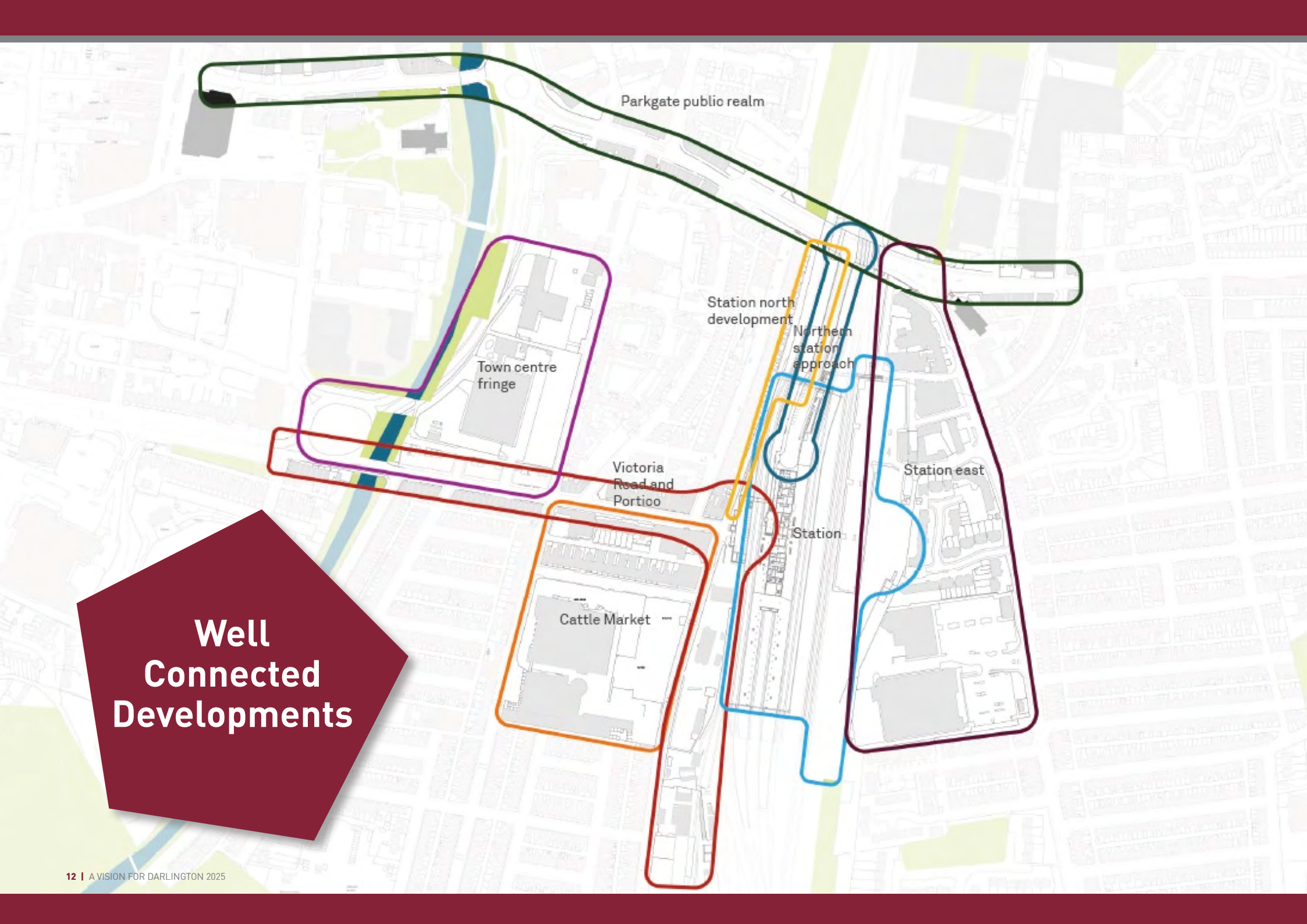
The Darlington Station Growth Hub Vision seeks to connect areas of opportunity linked by high quality public realm and wayfinding, redressing the severance currently experienced in and around the station. The provision of the new eastern side platforms, presents an opportunity to deliver a new fully accessible pedestrian and cycle link over the ECML which will provide better cycling and walking connections to Central Park via a new cycle/footbridge, and the town centre and improved bus interchange, placing the Station at the heart of town life.

Darlington Station Growth Hub will bring forward regeneration through the creation of new commercial space, jobs and homes. Up to 98,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial space is possible in the new Station East Development along with the Cattle Market and Town Centre Fringes to the west. Increased connectivity will attract businesses to these commercial areas, increase the footfall through the station and complement the research and academic activities in Central Park. Alongside the commercial offer, up to 1,500 new sustainable homes, will be provided in strategic locations around the station which will also benefit from the improved connectivity.

**A Station  
at the Heart  
of Town Life**

• • • • •  
**Urban Hub  
of Work and  
Innovation**





Parkgate public realm

Town centre  
fringe

Station north  
development

Northern  
station  
approach

Victoria  
Road and  
Portico

Station east

Station

Cattle Market

**Well  
Connected  
Developments**



## The Growth Hub sets an ambitious long term vision which identifies that there is the potential for the following:

### STATION

#### **Improved East – West Connection | New Gateway**

A new station building and new eastern platforms, improvements to the station which deliver east west connectivity, and significant improvements to public realm areas at a new eastern entrance. Proposals are recommended that enhance the existing high quality heritage assets and achieve the objectives of connectivity whilst minimising impact on listed structures. There are opportunities to overhaul the stations retail offer.

#### **STATION EAST DEVELOPMENT**

##### **30,000m<sup>2</sup> Commercial floor area | 375 dwellings**

Station East presents a major opportunity to comprehensively redevelop the area around the new station building to deliver a major new commercial focused development as an extension of Central Park. A major new public space with vehicle drop off and taxi drop off from Neasham Road would be framed by active ground floor uses and supplemented by retail and complimentary cultural programs. Business focused spaces around the station provide for the areas use as a major commercial hub around the HS2 line. A new multi-story car park to the east of the station.

### CATTLE MARKET

#### **12,500m<sup>2</sup> Commercial floor area | 620 dwellings**

The Cattle Market site and adjoining land ownerships present a major opportunity to deliver both new high quality housing and amenity focused mixed use alongside significant improvements to the approach to the western side of the station and the heritage setting of the Portico. This package is seen as critical to a change in perception of entry and arrival to the town and delivers homes in a strategic location.

#### **VICTORIA ROAD AND WEST PORTICO**

##### **One hectare of high quality public realm**

Victoria Road, from an opened up River Skerne crossing up the station Portico and extending south along Park Lane represents a key element of the station environment. Streetscape improvements to encourage walking and cycling along Victoria Road, and a greater sense of arrival and linkage into the town centre. Supported by shop front improvements and initiatives to uplift the offer of amenity along the street and at the station entrance would help to deliver quality for both local and regional objectives.

### TOWN CENTRE FRINGE

#### **55,000+m<sup>2</sup> Commercial floor area | 500+ Dwellings**

The town centre fringe provides for a significant new public realm character area of waterfront development along the River Skerne. Outline proposals to adjust the geometry of the road network, to provide increased development area and significant public realm benefit. The impact of these changes is significant and further testing is required as set out in the action plan.

#### **PARKGATE PUBLIC REALM**

##### **0.3 hectare of high quality public realm**

Parkgate is the key northern pedestrian link between Central Park, the northern station entrance, the town centre and the emerging cultural quarter.

It is also a key road link, via Yarm Road to the arterial connections to Tees Valley and beyond. As a key link for all modes the vision proposes public realm improvements including tree planting, works to provide pedestrian priority, alignment works to junctions subject to survey and assessment and improved bus waiting facilities.

### NORTHERN STATION APPROACH

#### **New small retail units | 0.3 hectare of high quality public realm**

New commercial space for entrepreneurs and small business and exciting public realm.

Public realm improvements to the northern station entrance create a vibrant and pedestrian/cyclist focused environment, where currently the vehicle dominated. Space for new small scale retail units is provided and opportunities for public art and cultural activities should be explored as this area becomes a more active gateway to the Town and onward transport links.

#### **STATION NORTH DEVELOPMENT**

##### **New commercial space for entrepreneurs and small business | 3300m<sup>2</sup> commercial floor area**

The vision proposes to develop sites between the northern entrance approach and the through rail lines. Supplemented by public realm improvements, these currently underused spaces provide opportunities for low density workspace to encourage new business to retain in the area around Central Park, forming another linked cluster.

- **+£900m of net lifetime Gross Value Added**
- **2,000 direct jobs**
- **1,100 indirect jobs**
- **1,500 new homes**
- **98,000m<sup>2</sup> commercial floor space**

## THE OPPORTUNITIES

### **NATIONAL & REGIONAL (NORTH EAST)**

Maximising the benefits of Darlington's unique strategic position on the ECML is critical to future regional growth in the wider context of the UK and Northern and North Eastern England. The northern cities are planned to be better connected as a result of 'Northern Powerhouse' initiatives and Darlington Station plays a major part in this by acting as a hub for regional connections to the national network.

### **NATIONAL AND REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- Promoting economic growth through faster links between the North East LEPs and the Northern Powerhouse.
- Utilising strong transport links with London and Edinburgh via the ECML to grow enterprise and attract innovation and new businesses.
- Anticipating the arrival of HS2 and maximising future benefits of fast links to London and Europe.

## CITY-REGION (TEES VALLEY)

Darlington's position at the gateway to the Tees Valley city-region and its Enterprise Zones, together with the town's strong road and rail links, will drive regional economic growth.

### CITY-REGION OPPORTUNITIES

- Developing a stronger brand as a regional gateway, with a more distinctive and defined offer.
- Promoting economic and educational links to the Tees Valley Region such as the Colleges and Teesside University, the North East LEPs and with institutions and businesses to the north and south along the ECML.
- Building on opportunities associated with the nearby research and technology cluster of Central Park and the National Biologics Manufacturing Centre, just five minutes walk from the station.
- Contributing to the 25,000 jobs target for the Tees Valley region.
- Utilising opportunities for local employment and supply chains to develop in tandem with Hitachi and other major inward investors.
- Capacity and frequency improvements on the Tees Valley line brings Middlesbrough and Teesport closer to the Northern Power House cities as well as the London to Edinburgh Corridor.
- Extra £2.8 billion into the Tees Valley economy.
- Tees Valley will be the demonstration region for the circular economy in England.
- Increased return on investment to £1:£8.

## LOCAL (DARLINGTON)

Benefits could accrue at the local level by building on Darlington's rich and varied history and strategic road and rail connections, while investing in opportunities to revitalise the local economy.

### LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

- +£900m of net lifetime GVA and 2,000 direct and 1,100 indirect jobs. This excludes the vast economic benefit that ECML enhancements will provide, with Darlington rail infrastructure improvements a necessary part of realising this.
- Leveraging further investment and building on over £200 million of public and private sector investment that has been secured for Darlington over the last 5 years.
- Rejuvenating the town by enhancing the historic station, developing 1,500 new homes and 98,000sqm of commercial space.
- Further developing the science and research and development (R&D) cluster, building upon the proximity to high quality R&D industries in science and technology such as the National Biologics Manufacturing Centre.
- Taking advantage of excellent connectivity to Durham Tees Valley Airport and national A1(M) and regional (A66) road networks.
- Public realm enhancements, connecting the town centre, the station and Central Park.

# AN AMBITIOUS DELIVERABLE PLAN

The catalyst required to kick start the Darlington Station Growth Hub Vision will be the £100m of rail investment required to provide the new east side platforms. These rail enhancements, driven by demand, are required as early as 2020 and are essential if huge economic benefits are to be gained. They are at the heart of triggering the added value necessary to deliver the regeneration at the scale and level of ambition as set out in this vision.

By building on the strong leadership already evident and continue to raise the profile of the scheme and proposal at a national level this ambitious, long terms vision can be realised.

This in turn will create an attractive place to visit, an office location for the wider Tees Valley city-region and make the provision of higher density, better quality family housing a viable proposition.

The vision seeks to make more efficient use of land and raise values to the level of those currently experienced at other Regional transport hubs such as York and Newcastle. Darlington Station Growth Hub, when implemented, will create a sense of 'place' that will change the perception of the area and create strong linkages to other parts of the town. These, alongside the creation of a definable town identity, investment in the public realm, fundraising and the implementation of an investment plan will go a long way in raising investor confidence and market values.

Darlington Station Growth Hub cannot be achieved by public funding alone. As a development enabler, the proposal is for public investment of approximately £4m in high quality public realm and approximately £100m in rail infrastructure. This needs to be supported by a planned investment strategy that adopts a phased approach so that the scheme is viable and can be delivered. To assist in this, a flexible master plan has been developed. It is broken into eight discrete but integrated packages, which allows delivery to be market driven and incremental







# THE DARLINGTON GROWTH HUB REPORT

To accompany this Summary document, the Darlington Station Growth Hub report has been produced to set out the vision in more detail and to provide the supporting evidence which has influenced the decisions made. The final measures proposed were the result of extensive discussions with a range of stakeholders and the report includes the work presented at three stakeholder workshops which helped guide the progression of the Master Plan proposals.

The main report provides further details on the context, the Economic Case for the proposals and the Action Plans. Appendices are included which give the detail of the research, analysis and other technical work that has been undertaken and which underpins the Darlington Station Growth Hub Master Plan.



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