



WHAT THE LOCAL PLAN SETS OUT TO DO

- Promote more sustainable modes of travel and improve travel choices for residents in the Borough.
- Manage the highway network so that it operates effectively and maintain accessibility in the Borough, particularly by tackling congestion 'hot spots'.
- Accommodate the travel needs of new development and regeneration in the Borough sustainably, by ensuring sustainable travel plans and travel choices are embedded in new development from the outset and by doing so, avoid a significant adverse impact on the effectiveness of the existing transport system.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

Local Transport Plan: Darlington's Third Local Transport Plan sets out a transport strategy for the Borough over the 15 year period 2011-2026. This focuses on management, maintenance and improvements to the transport network. A range of investment in road and rail infrastructure has taken place over the last few years.

Investment in road and rail infrastructure: In 2014, construction of a new signalised junction at Stonebridge on the Town Centre ring road was completed. The scheme was funded as part of the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement project and aimed to improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services operating into and out of the Town Centre. Fully operational in December 2014, the junction is delivering significant benefits to all traffic. The junction is improving vehicle journey time reliability and pedestrian / cycle access to and from the Town Centre. Importantly, Arriva has also reported a reduction in delay for their bus services as a result of the junction improvements. This follows the successful bus priority scheme at North Road/Whessoe Road in 2013. Work on repairing the A167 Carlbury landslip will reach completion in May 2015. This is a joint programme of works delivered by the Council and Northumbrian Water Ltd. This will safeguard this key route linking Darlington to the Durham Dales, for a minimum of 80 years.



During the last year, improvements have been implemented at North Road Rail Station to improve access to rail services, including CCTV, seating and lighting, customer information screens and new PA systems and audio loops. This is part of a programme of works to improve customer facilities along the Bishop Line funded from Local Sustainable Transport funding, Network Rail and Northern Rail investment.

A programme to replace old street lighting columns and upgrade to LED lanterns is well underway. As well as a programme to effectively maintain this highway asset, the LED lights significantly reduce the electricity costs associated with the lighting. This programme which has been funded from the Local Transport Plan is now being accelerated following a successful bid to the Maintenance Challenge Fund in 2015.

Darlington Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2014/15

TRANSPORT FACT SHEET



Darlington Borough Council has secured £300,000 from Tees Valley Unlimited through the Local Growth Fund programme. The Council is using the funds to create a costed plan for the transformational improvement of Bank Top Station, within the framework of a new masterplan that will enable the ongoing regeneration of the surrounding area through co-ordinated investment. Consultancy firm Arup have been retained to provide the specialist evidence needed. This evidence will enable Network Rail with the Council, train operators and others to turn the masterplan into reality. Network Rail is participating in the development of the proposals and is keen to consider the Station improvement as a contender for their funding programmes after 2019. The report by Arup is expected in January 2016.

Parking Strategy: The Council approved the Parking Strategy in Spring 2014. The Strategy will co-ordinate parking investment and management actions until 2026 that facilitate and support the economy of the Borough; help tackle traffic congestion by ensuring parking does not block moving traffic; provide appropriate car parking solutions throughout the Borough; and, support a sustainable pattern of travel behaviour to minimise traffic congestion and protect the environment. The Council will be focusing on implementing the Action Plan for the Strategy during 2013 to 2026. Initial actions from the Strategy have included the resurfacing and re-lining of a number of Town Centre car parks (Commercial Street East & West, Kendrew Street East & West). In January 2015, work commenced on construction of a new multi-storey car park accessed from Beaumont Street. This will accommodate 650 parking spaces plus a unit for Shopmobility.

Sustainable Transport: A programme of improvements has been implemented for bus passengers and bus services funded from the Local Transport Plan and Tees Valley Bus Network Initiative. This has included raised platforms and bus shelters at bus stops on core bus routes as well as dropped kerbs to improve access to bus stops. Changes to the operation of bus services in the town centre have been implemented in response to feedback from local people to improve the waiting environment for bus passengers and for pedestrians walking through the Town Centre. New bus stops are under construction in Feethams which will provide services nearer to the newly opened Department for Education building and Feethams leisure development (also under construction). Improvements to passenger waiting facilities have been complemented by investment in new vehicles by the local bus operators. Since 2013, 14 new gas-powered buses have been introduced as well as a gas refueling station at the Arriva Faverdale Depot. The new buses provide a more comfortable journey experience and contribute to reducing transport related CO₂ and particulate emissions.

A new cycle route has been constructed through the Central Park site linking Darlington College, Teesside University and the new housing development to Bank Top Rail Station. A new pedestrian/cycle bridge alongside Haughton Road provides a safer route from Central park into the Town Centre for pedestrians and cyclists.

In 2011 additional funding amounting to £4.076m was successfully secured from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) to continue 'Local Motion' which provides information, advice, support and motivation to local residents to encourage more travel by walking, cycling and using buses and trains. From 2012-2014, Local Motion has delivered personalised travel marketing to all households in Darlington and continued work with schools to promote sustainable travel.

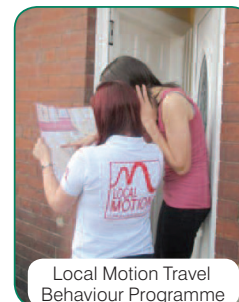


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Through Local Motion, the Council is seeking to help create community transport schemes where community groups run their own transport service to meet the travel needs of their area. A grant scheme using Local Sustainable Transport Funding and Community Transport Association funding has enabled a bus service to operate in the west end of the town. A significant part of this service is now commercially viable. In addition a rural service operates to a number of villages providing the only public transport. An accessible taxi service has also been developed with a wheelchair accessible vehicle and specially trained drivers, which became operational in March 2015.



Local Motion Travel Behaviour Programme

A further successful bid for LSTF funding is enabling this work to continue, now on a broader basis across the Tees Valley. The work now has a focus on using public transport for inter-urban trips; active travel for short local trips; and working with businesses to promote and support sustainable travel to and at work.



Community Transport Bus

Travel Behaviour: Rail patronage across Tees Valley stations is at its highest levels since monitoring started in 2007/08 at 6.437m trips. This trend is mirrored in Darlington as Rail patronage across the 4 stations in Darlington Borough is also at its highest levels since monitoring started in 2007/08 at 2.323m trips. The latest cycling and pedestrian cordon count data reveals that there is an upward trend of people choosing to cycle or walk in Darlington. A comparison of counts done in April for 2014 and 2015 is shown in the table below.

	April 2014	April 2015
Cycling	1,003	1,128
Walking	32,200	32,633

In terms of bus patronage, there has been some reduction in numbers of people using buses from a total of 6,604,117 people in 2013/14 to 6,505,849 in 2014/15.

Traffic modelling: Consultants have been commissioned to undertake two pieces of highway modelling work. The first is a strategic model covering the main urban area of Darlington. This model will examine existing traffic conditions and then apply projected growth in terms of proposed housing and employment allocations to the model with scenarios of different mitigation measures included. Early results of this study have indicated the existing strain on the North West Corridor (West Auckland Road to Woodland Road) and therefore a complimentary and more detailed AIMSUN model has been commissioned in order to more accurately assess the impact of development and potential mitigation measures on traffic flows in greater detail. Both pieces of work will cover the timescale of the plan period while also forecasting beyond to 2030 and final results are expected in Summer 2015.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Local Plan transport policy is being positively supported by actions and funding that has been secured to implement the Local Transport Plan (LTP3). Investment in road and rail infrastructure continues to play a key part in supporting future development across the Borough. Encouragingly, there is much still happening on the sustainable transport front. Local Motion continues to provide information and advice to local residents to encourage more travel by walking, cycling and buses and trains. While the latest data shows a downward trend in bus patronage, data shows that there are positive trends in travel behaviour for walking and cycling. Rail patronage across the 4 stations in Darlington Borough is at its highest levels since monitoring started in 2007/08 and there is an upward trend of people choosing to cycle or walk in Darlington.

MOVING THINGS FORWARD: KEY ACTIONS

- Develop detailed transport policy and proposals as part of the preparation of the Making and Growing Places Development Plan Document.
- Ensure policies on sustainable travel choices and behaviours are embedded within the Making and Growing Places Development Plan Document.
- Continue to implement the Local Motion Travel Behaviour Programme in Darlington and in partnership across the Tees Valley, including focusing on the journey to work.
- Continue to implement and monitor delivery of the Local Transport Plan (2011-2026).
- Work with Highways England, Tees Valley Unlimited and neighbouring local authorities to develop and implement plans to improve the strategic highway network (A1, A66)
- Work in partnership with the rail industry to achieve improvements to rail connectivity in Darlington and Tees Valley for passenger and freight transport (plans for major upgrade of Darlington Bank Top Station is a key example).
- Consider findings of transport modelling work.

Last Updated Summer 2015

Contact Us: You can access more information on planning policy in Darlington at:
www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy

If you are particularly interested in statistics and data for Darlington borough, you can view these at:
<http://lis.darlington.gov.uk/>

Alternatively, contact the Planning Policy Team on **01325 388644** or email planning.policy@darlington.gov.uk

This document is available in different formats on request.