

## 11. Transport and Accessibility

- 11.1 Transport and accessibility are fundamental to the delivery of the Plan's spatial strategy. It is important that new development is located in the most sustainable locations and accessible by a choice of travel modes, including walking, cycling and public transport. This will help reduce the need for people to travel, minimise congestion, improve road safety and meet climate change reduction targets. This also links with the need to improve people's health by creating more opportunities for people to walk or cycle rather than use the car.
- 11.2 Accessibility is the key relationship between transport and different land uses such as housing, employment and services. It defines how easily people can move between where they live and the places they need to get to in their daily lives.
- 11.3 Gateshead and Newcastle currently benefit from high levels of accessibility by all transport modes and in particular public transport. Traffic congestion is limited to a small number of key locations including the A1 and some of the main approaches to the Urban Core. It is important that development which generates growth is managed to ensure accessibility remains high and congestion low.
- 11.4 Newcastle is one of the UK's most sustainable cities and has accolades to this effect., This is due in part to its excellent sustainable transport infrastructure and policies to encourage active travel.
- 11.5 This chapter deals with transport in and through Gateshead and Newcastle.
- 11.6 The Plan's transport policies have been developed to:
- make Gateshead and Newcastle accessible to all,
  - achieve a shift to more sustainable modes of travel including promoting alternative travel choices particularly along congested travel corridors,
  - reduce carbon emissions from transport,
  - enhance and protect the transport network to facilitate economic growth,
  - improve the efficiency of our transport networks to manage demand, address capacity issues and get more from our existing infrastructure, and
  - set out expectations in terms of development and how it will plan for the transport needs generated.
- 11.7 To improve the future for Gateshead and Newcastle local transport networks and wider strategic connections to the rest of the North East and beyond must remain fit for purpose and be improved where possible. The needs of all our communities in Gateshead and Newcastle need to be catered for and people must not be excluded from appropriate travel choices.

- 11.8 By working closely with partners Gateshead and Newcastle have a good track record of justifying investment and securing funding to deliver large-scale transport infrastructure. However, the focus is also on managing existing infrastructure better. Improving and promoting accessibility by sustainable modes of transport is a means of achieving this and will also help to address climate change and reduce social exclusion, as well as helping to create a desirable place to live, work and visit.
- 11.9 Frequent use of sustainable modes of transport enhances the quality of life for residents. It can enable residents to access work and key services, contribute to addressing health and obesity issues, and reduce the negative impacts of local traffic. A sustainable, balanced transport system which promotes walking and cycling, while still acknowledging the need to cater for the private car, will help to reduce levels of traffic, congestion and pollution.
- 11.10 The continued development of sustainable transport networks will support the planned additional housing and will promote economic growth. It is likely that higher population density will lead to increased public transport capacity, as new demand is created for these services. This will particularly be the case if development is focused around locations with high levels of public transport accessibility.



### Policy CS13 Transport

The enhancement and delivery of an integrated transport network to support sustainable development and economic growth will be achieved by:

1. Promoting sustainable travel choices including:
  - i. Improving equality of access to transport for everyone,
  - ii. Protecting and enhancing pedestrian routes, cycle networks and Rights of Way,
  - iii. An integrated public transport network and interchanges,
  - iv. Development of bus based park and ride facilities including at Lobley Hill, Eighton Lodge and Follingsby,
  - v. Metro re-invigoration and expansion of the Metro system in the longer term,
  - vi. Encouraging a change from sole occupancy car use to more sustainable alternatives, and
  - vii. The management of car parking locations, supply and pricing.
2. Improving the operation of the transport network and its wider connections by:
  - i. Promoting and facilitating improvements to wider networks where it is demonstrated that they have an acceptable impact on the local transport network and environment,
  - ii. Supporting the sustainable and efficient flow of passengers and freight via Newcastle International Airport, Newcastle Central Station, the Port of Tyne and High Speed Rail,
  - iii. Promoting the re-opening of regional heavy rail lines for passengers and freight, including the Leamside Line, and the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line,
  - iv. The creation of additional capacity on the Strategic Road Network, including the provision of an additional lane on the A1 in both directions from the A1/A19 Interchange at Seaton Burn to the Scotswood Road slip-roads, and between the southern extent of the Lobley Hill Major Scheme improvements at Coalhouse and the A1/A194(M) bifurcation at Birtley,
  - v. Undertaking an assessment of the need for additional cross-river capacity,
  - vi. The development of Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC),
  - vii. Reducing unnecessary traffic through, within and around the Urban Core, and
  - viii. Managing freight movement to minimise the impact on the network and environment.
3. Ensuring development:
  - i. Which generates significant movement is located where the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised,
  - ii. Minimises car trips, promotes and enhances public transport and for major development provides sustainable travel plans,
  - iii. Connects safely to and mitigates the effects of development on the existing transport networks,
  - iv. Includes charging infrastructure for electric vehicles within major developments,
  - v. Incorporates 20 miles per hour zones and homezone principles, where appropriate,
  - vi. Provides cycle parking and supporting infrastructure, and
  - vii. Provides for direct, safe, secure and continuous pedestrian and cycling links.

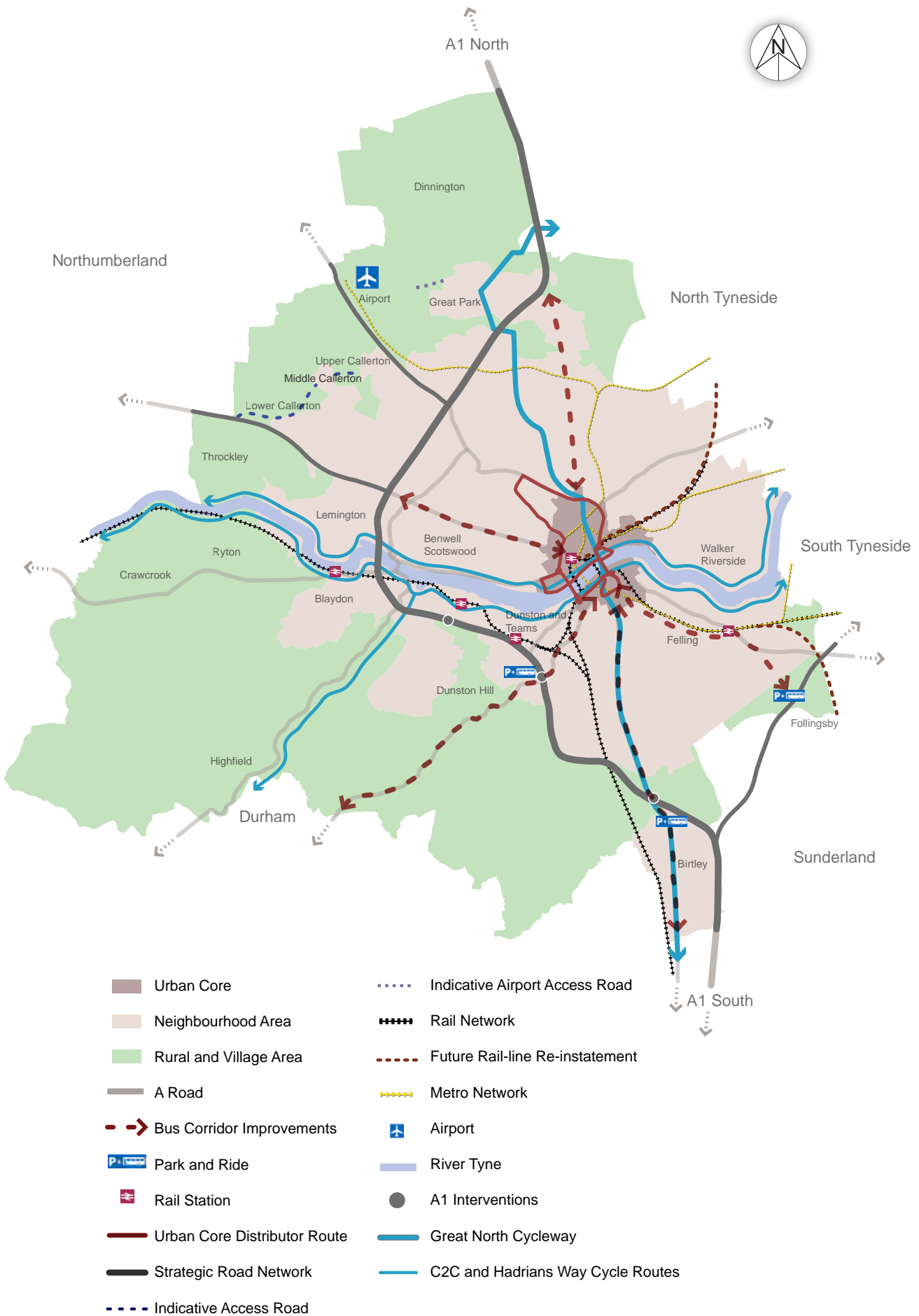


Figure 11 Transport

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- 11.11 Figure 11 illustrates the transport improvements in the Plan that are supported by the Local Transport Plan for Tyne and Wear 2011-2021<sup>39</sup> and the emerging work of the North East Combined Authority.
- 11.12 The aim of the Plan is to create sustainable communities, centres and new developments where priority is given to sustainable modes of transport. The hierarchy of sustainable modes of transport is:
- Walking
  - Cycling
  - Public Transport (including taxis)
  - Freight
  - Car Traffic
- 11.13 There is a fundamental relationship between the location of development and how people choose to move around. It is a key part of the Plan's transport strategy that the developments which generate the most trips should be located at the most accessible locations possible in terms of walking, cycling and public transport, and where they are not, that they provide improvements to the transport network to mitigate the impact of the trips generated.
- 11.14 Walking is a component of most journeys, and is an important form of transport in its own right. Routes that are well designed and safe encourage walking. This is central to other themes to enhance and create places that are people-friendly. Places that encourage public participation in leisure and recreation are those that are attractive and have strong economies. Walking and cycling contribute to improved health outcomes, through increasing personal exercise, improving wellbeing and happiness through interaction with the physical environment and other people. As walking and cycling become more prevalent carbon emissions will reduce.
- 11.15 The Councils will work with partners to create a strategic cycle network across the plan area that provides sustainable access to jobs and services. This network will be formed from a mixture of on-road lanes (sometimes mixed with other modes), shared-use paths, off-road routes and recommended routes through traffic-free areas. We will seek to further enhance a major north-south route across Gateshead and Newcastle and into Durham and Northumberland (the Great North Cycleway). This route will link all the major national and regional cycle routes in the area to the heart of Tyneside. We will also provide better links from our local network to the National Cycle Network and provide a new cross-river cycle and pedestrian link between Newburn and Blydon. More cycle parking will be provided at key destinations.
- 11.16 The Councils have a statutory duty to manage the rights of way network and to publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan<sup>39</sup> (part of the Local Transport Plan). As well as fulfilling this duty, we will seek to ensure that development accommodates the network, or if this is not possible, to provide suitable replacement links.

- 11.17 Excessive vehicle speeds are a deterrent to walking and cycling. Both Gateshead and Newcastle will continue to promote road safety and to introduce 20 mile per hour limits in residential streets and local centres. In addition, new developments will be encourage to be designed to homezone principles. Limiting vehicle speeds will be a key element of promoting sustainable travel choices.
- 11.18 Gateshead and Newcastle already has an extensive public transport network (Metro, bus, rail and taxi) that provides high levels of accessibility to services and opportunities across most of the area. However, there are some locations, notably towards the east and west (for example Walker, Crawcrook, Chopwell, Throckley, Newburn, Lemington) where accessibility is more limited. Working with partners the Councils will seek to address these inequalities, improve reliability, reduce journey times and enhance the journey quality for all passengers.
- 11.19 Buses play a significant role in improving accessibility and reducing the impact of car traffic. However, for bus services to be efficient, they need to be assigned greater priority so they are a viable alternative to car use. They also need to be better promoted and marketed so that more people are encouraged to use them. Both Gateshead and Newcastle have a good record of providing bus priority measures, and will further build on this by developing and implementing a programme of bus corridor improvements over the plan period. This will include:
- A692 Corridor
  - Durham Road
  - Felling Bypass
  - Great North Road, Gosforth High Street
  - West Road
- 11.20 We will also explore the 'red route' approach which includes parking restrictions and enforcement on our main bus corridors to improve bus efficiency. The Bus Strategy Delivery Project is being undertaken to examine delivery of key transport objectives which include maintaining and improving bus use, increasing network accessibility and delivering better value for money.
- 11.21 The emergence of new vehicles using alternative fuels will be a major feature of transport over the plan period and will contribute to tackling climate change. Gateshead and Newcastle are at the forefront of delivering investment in sustainable new technologies. Investment has been made in electric vehicles and the charging infrastructure across Gateshead and Newcastle. Local bus operators are currently investing in hybrid buses. The Councils will continue to support growth in this sector.
- 11.22 Given economic constraints, it is not feasible to provide bus services for all destinations, or at all times. Therefore, the Councils will work closely with taxi (hackney carriage and private hire vehicle) operators, and community transport groups, to ensure that the more flexible the services they provide are, the better they will be integrated into transport planning and information provision.

- 11.23 Park and Ride facilities will play a role in reducing congestion. Facilities need to have convenient car access and be located on high- frequency transport corridors. Bus-based Park and Ride will be pursued primarily at the following locations:
- Eighton Lodge
  - Follingsby
  - Lobley Hill
- 11.24 Metro travel is greatly valued by passengers and plays a large part in the existing high levels of public transport accessibility in the area. The Tyne and Wear Metro is currently undergoing a significant programme of re-invigoration and this is expected to be the main focus of the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive's (Nexus) investments over at least the early years of the plan period. It is important that Metro stations are considered safe, high quality places, and that they encourage seamless interchange with other modes of transport, including walking and cycling. However, the Metro system only serves a proportion of Gateshead and Newcastle and as the re- invigoration programme progresses the councils will work with Nexus to explore the potential extension of the network.
- 11.25 The councils will also support the North East Combined Authority, Nexus and bus operators in making public transport travel easier. For example, the introduction of smart ticketing on public transport will provide seamless integrated travel across the area.
- 11.26 Gateshead and Newcastle will develop a joint car parking strategy to manage demand. The strategy will seek to reduce long-stay commuter parking in centres. Short-stay parking for shoppers and visitors will be promoted. The introduction of car parking charges at retail centres will be sought where this can be achieved without threatening the vitality and viability of the centre. This will complement improvement of conditions for sustainable modes, including the expansion of Park and Ride.
- 11.27 A key theme of the plans transport policy is to improve the operation of existing air, rail and road transport networks that can help link the area nationally and internationally. Developing these networks to meet local demands and to strengthen strategic connections will be crucial to sustainable development in the plan area.
- 11.28 Strategic international, national and regional connections are very important in the way that Gateshead and Newcastle are seen by the rest of the world. Perceived isolation has an impact on the image of Gateshead and Newcastle as a place to live and to do business. Improvements on this scale will predominantly be delivered in partnership with outside agencies such as the Highways Agency or Network Rail as part of national programmes.

- 11.29 The range of destinations served, and the facilities provided, by our main gateways at Newcastle International Airport, Newcastle Central Station and the Port of Tyne are crucial in developing perceptions of Gateshead and Newcastle as a place to live and to do business. These issues will largely fall outside the scope of this Plan, but Gateshead and Newcastle will continue to support and facilitate expansion as appropriate.
- 11.30 Connection of the North East to the proposed national High Speed Rail Network remains a priority in the long term. Gateshead and Newcastle as part of the North East Combined Authority will continue to promote the importance of any High Speed Rail Network being introduced in parallel on both the eastern and western sides of the country so as not to create economic disparity between regions. The councils and their partners will continue to lobby for and monitor the development of High Speed Rail through the plan period, defining and safeguarding potential routes and station locations as appropriate to ensure the network can be extended to the North East and on to Scotland.
- 11.31 Newcastle Central Station provides access to national, regional and local rail services. The councils and their partners will continue to improve access to these services by further developing interchange facilities, implementing public realm improvements, introducing better crossing facilities and developing a southern access route. Policy NC1 sets out specific proposals for the Central Gateway projects, which will improve Central Station and the surrounding area. The Councils and their partners will also work with regional partners, East Coast and Network Rail, to support improvements to the East Coast Main Line. The importance of continued investment in the existing rail network in the short to medium term is recognised, to ensure forecast growth on this important strategic connection is addressed. Similarly we will press for improvements to the local rail network by supporting the re-instatement of the Leamside Line, and the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line as sustainable connections to and from the Urban Core.
- 11.32 The Strategic Road Network serving the area (A1, A69, A194(M) and A696) is essential for connectivity which will help secure economic growth and prosperity for Gateshead and Newcastle. The councils will work with the Highways Agency to facilitate enhancements to these strategic corridors, giving better access to other major towns and cities and to international gateways.
- 11.33 While supporting improvements across the Strategic Road Network is important, tackling congestion on the A1 is our priority. As part of the Newcastle City Deal (July 2012)<sup>16</sup>, it was agreed that the Department of Transport, the Highways Agency, the councils and other local partners would develop an investment programme to reduce congestion on the A1 Western Bypass, and finalise a business case for an improvement scheme at Lobley Hill. The funding for this scheme is now in place to allow completion by 2017. The Highways Agency has also now published its wider route based strategy for this section of the A1 which sets out a number of possible further interventions, including schemes to provide additional capacity, reduce speed limits and introduce traffic signal controlled access to the route. Further work by the Highways Agency has suggested that the A1 is likely to require an additional lane of capacity in both directions along much of this route. These additional lanes are likely to be needed from Seaton Burn to the Scotswood Road north-facing slip-roads, and then from the southern extent of the Lobley Hill Major Scheme to the A1/A194(M) bifurcation at Birtley.



- 11.34 The promotion of sustainable modes of transport and the delivery of infrastructure improvements will be supported by further development of the area's intelligent transport system - Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC). The introduction of UTMC will make best use of the existing road network for all modes of transport and provide valuable information to those who seek to move around the Urban Core. The system will manage traffic flows, car parking and priority for sustainable modes of transport giving valuable information to the travelling public, enabling them to make more informed travel choices.
- 11.35 Movement of goods is fundamental to an effective economy. While the councils will seek to promote and facilitate the expansion of rail and sea freight, it must also be recognised that the majority of freight movements will remain on-road and that safe and efficient movement for goods vehicles must be provided. Both Gateshead and Newcastle are members of the Tyne and Wear Freight Quality Partnership and will continue to fully support its work in improving freight mapping, signage, driver information, freight exchange programmes and environmental fleet recognition.
- 11.36 The strength of Gateshead and Newcastle as the main centres of employment within the regional economy means that there is already an influx of commuters from neighbouring authorities. The balanced approach to managing and developing networks, including intelligent transport systems and the bus corridor and Park and Ride proposals will help to accommodate movements and minimise their impact. Neighbouring authorities will be expected to contribute to this approach, where appropriate.
- 11.37 Assessment of the traffic impacts of our growth aspirations highlighted a number of potential concerns where more detailed investigation may be required including Main Radial Corridors, Wrekenton, Team Valley, Lamesley, Whickham, Blue House Roundabout, Cowgate and Haddricks Mill. A number of potential mitigation schemes have been identified and are included in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
- 11.38 Some strategic infrastructure may not continue to serve the network as it currently does and alternative infrastructure may need to be provided during the plan period. One example of this is the High Level Bridge which currently carries public transport south out of Newcastle into Gateshead. It is possible that the councils will need to provide additional crossing capacity on the river during the lifetime of the Plan to mitigate against reductions in capacity and to support our growth aspirations. Gateshead and Newcastle will examine new crossings to the east and the west. Where these are found to be beneficial the councils will prepare funding bids and seek other sources of funding to provide them and work with the Combined Authority to prioritise future investment in these infrastructure projects as they develop.

- 11.39 The Urban Core chapter sets out how to manage transport networks to and through the Urban Core. It also sets out how to improve the local environment, public realm and accessibility and reduce non-essential traffic.
- 11.40 Traffic that passes through the Urban Core contributes significantly to congestion but little to its vitality. While working towards the reduction of this traffic, we must also recognise that although some of the main traffic routes through the Urban Core act as barriers to other forms of travel, particularly walking, some traffic is also necessary to bring vitality and growth. We will seek to manage routes by reducing traffic speeds, improving crossings and improving the public realm.
- 11.41 All developments have an impact on the transport network. In order to manage the network effectively, take account of road safety and support sustainable travel development must ensure that it minimises car trips, supports sustainable travel alternatives, facilitates all modes and mitigates its impacts on the highway network. The need for new routes through the Green Belt will be assessed as part of the masterplanning process for housing and employment sites.
- 11.42 The potential impacts of development will be evaluated through Transport Assessments or Statements primarily. The councils will implement best practice guidance to mitigate any adverse impacts. In addressing potential impacts, car parking at developments will be managed, and robust and measurable travel plans will be required to minimise the number of car trips attracted and generated.
- 11.43 As part of the planning application process, developers will be expected to address any identifiable impacts on, or barriers to, sustainable travel. This will be done by improving linkages to development from surrounding areas (particularly for pedestrians and cyclists), improving connections between homes and jobs, and by incorporating best practice to decrease the mode share of the private car.
- 11.44 Developers will be required to complement the Councils' introduction of charging points for electric vehicles by incorporating them as a minimum in major developments, and by the introduction of 20 miles per hour zones in all residential areas as well as encouraging the adoption of homezone principles.
- 11.45 Pedestrian and cycle access to and through new developments must be safe, direct and usable. Layouts of new developments are expected to facilitate an increase in cycling, together with an emphasis on creating walkable neighbourhoods, where facilities and services can easily be accessed on foot.