

North East Local Transport Plan

NEST 2-page summary for sharing

There are points in the draft North East Local Transport Plan (LTP) that we agree with, points that we think are missing, and things that we think should be strengthened. This summary suggests some key points that you may wish to make in your own consultation response.

Things we agree with:

- The vision for a green, integrated regional transport network that delivers seamless integration between modes (including active travel), and a safer, more resilient, and simpler means of travelling by sustainable means.
- The recognition of the impacts, positive and negative, of transport on the environment, including greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, on society, including health and social inclusion, and the economy.
- The 'Greener Journeys' decision tree in the LTP, setting out the ambition that people should walk, cycle or wheel as a first choice, and then adopt public transport if not.
- The focus on safety: that transport options that are viewed as unsafe will be barred to many people. We are pleased that the safety issues for active travel are recognised, and the need to address these with better infrastructure, and the safety of women and girls.
- The aspiration to invest in the Metro and the Leamside Line, and to urge national government to invest in capacity on the East Coast Main Line, particularly for local trains.
- The ambition to improve information on transport, including enabling better choices, and real-time information for public transport services.
- The creation of a road safety 'action plan' (Ambition 18) and the target to reduce deaths and serious injuries to zero by 2040. Since 2020, 236 people have been killed on North East roads, 49 of these women and girls, with 3,016 serious injuries (938 women and girls).

Things we would like to see added:

- An overarching traffic reduction target: the Green Alliance has [estimated](#) that car use needs to be significantly reduced to meet net zero commitments. We believe the North East LTP should include a target to reduce vehicle miles travelled in the region by around 25% by 2030 to meet emissions and air pollution ambitions.
- Measurable targets for other Key Performance Indicators, especially decarbonisation of transport in line with UK commitments. The Mayor has committed to "make the North East the best connected and greenest region in the UK", which we fully support, but the plan should set out the detail of what this means compared to other regions and what she expects to achieve at the end of her term of office.
- Prioritisation of the many proposals to ensure rapid delivery of the most effective ones.
- Discouraging the proliferation of larger vehicles (e.g. SUVs), via measures such as differential parking charges, already used by several local authorities. The trend towards larger cars is locking in higher emissions rates and increasing danger for people walking and cycling: the exact opposite of what is needed.
- A commitment to prioritising safe routes to schools, and school streets, to enable the next generation to travel independently and sustainably.

- A strategy to tackle pavement parking, both in terms of the impacts on safety and accessibility for people with disabilities, parents and children and older people, but also the maintenance costs of repairs.
- A regional approach to parking policy, including the adoption of a Workplace Parking Levy, as successfully introduced in Nottingham, to deter car use and generate revenue for improved sustainable transport offering.
- Consistently lower speed limits across the region on any roads lacking appropriate cycle infrastructure or with high pedestrian flows. A default 20mph limit on residential roads, reclaiming streets for children, and lower speed limits on rural roads to improve safety.
- A set of 'quick wins' that can be achieved at relatively low cost and without big financial outlay (e.g. consistent minimum parking charges across the region, bikeability training for adults, removal of duplicate bus service numbers, low traffic neighbourhoods).
- A plan for the Mayor to honour her manifesto commitment to "work with local authorities to make sure it's safe for families to walk or cycle to school", a key daily journey for women and girls. Only 25% of females who cycle felt safe to do so on North East roads.
- A concrete strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with UK Carbon Budgets.

Things which should be strengthened:

- The link between the Local Transport Plan and spatial planning (Ambition 7), particularly the need to ensure that new housing is built in sustainable locations and to higher density (50 dwellings per hectare or more) to ensure public transport and active travel is a viable option. We would like the forthcoming North East Spatial Strategy to establish the principle that new developments are sited close to major public transport routes and hubs, or within easy walking and cycling distance of amenities. The LTP should stop using roads to "unlock" new development, focussing on active travel and public transport instead.
- Expansion of the Pop Card to all the region's bus services, and to national rail services used for local journeys within the region, not just local rail services.
- Stronger co-ordination with the Tees Valley Combined Authority to encourage the use of sustainable transport, particularly for flows to and from County Durham and Sunderland.
- More emphasis on the role of shared transport, particularly an ambition to roll-out car clubs across the region and to incentivise car sharing.
- Increased coverage of local rail services, particularly on the East Coast mainline with electrified services calling at existing and new (e.g. Killingworth, Belford, Birtley) stations.
- We support the integration and coordination of local bus services but believe this should start with a blank sheet of paper to reflect 21st Century passenger demands. This should create a new network of routes, with new numbering, brought under a simple branding and unified liveries in keeping with the Nexus 'Calvert' branding.

Things which we disagree with in the plan:

- Expensive road projects such as dualling the A1 in Northumberland, which will harm the prospects for increased rail travel and rail freight and do little to tackle congestion due to induced demand. Average speed cameras could be cheaply deployed to improve road safety. The public examination of the A1 scheme revealed that it would lead to construction phase emissions of and total net operational emissions over a 60-year period of 2,428 ktCO₂e, far from helping to achieve net zero emissions for the region.
- The suggestion in Ambition 20 that improving road journey times will help attract people to public transport, whereas the most effective measures will be road reallocation to prioritise buses and active travel.