

# **Our Journey**

## **A 20 year Transport Manifesto for the North East Combined Authority**

**“To provide affordable, attractive, reliable,  
safe, healthy transport choices for  
businesses, residents and visitors while  
enhancing the environment”**

**Final version – December 2016**

## **Introduction**

In February 2016, we held a public consultation on our Transport Manifesto. This is the final version of the document, and incorporates the feedback you gave us during that consultation. In all, 1,736 responses were received to the consultation.

We began the draft document by asking:

How often have you judged a place you visit by how easy it is to get around? It's time we looked at our own region in the same light.

The time you take and the quality of the journey will probably rank highly. Just as important is knowing the price and how to pay, and finding information instantly. Even on familiar routes we want to be told everything is running smoothly, or how to avoid delays.

So how do you feel about getting around the North East? Your answer may depend greatly on where you live and where you need to go. But when people struggle to get around, when businesses cannot recruit flexibly or lack strong links to global markets, our economy falters. So we need to

ensure the North East receives its fair share of opportunities and funding.

We expect our local travel to be convenient, with good quality direct links with major town centres and major business parks, whether by bus, Metro or train. And we expect good links to airports and main line stations for longer distance travel.

We expect to find public transport information at the tip of a finger, through smart applications, with simple, good value fares wherever we roam.

Cyclists and pedestrians expect safe, direct routes with clear wayfinding, traffic signals and bike storage that recognise our needs. When we get in the car we expect updates on the road ahead. Transport is a means to an end. We should normally be able to go where we need without thinking hard how to get there.

And we know that we have to travel in a way which shows we care for the natural environment. Our transport choices should be the least damaging to the environment and the most sustainable.

To help achieve all this we will create a single identity for travel in the region – Transport North

East. This will be a source for real time information, journey planning and ticket sales, no matter how you travel from door to destination. It will, for example, update you on traffic problems, direct you to a park-and-ride facility and advise you when the next train is due, using smart communication. Transport North East will be a symbol of our region's joined-up and integrated approach to travel.

To realise our ambition we need to take on new responsibilities and secure new funding. We want our transport system to be developed by the people who live and work here, as an asset to promote our vibrant local culture and economy. This will require radical changes and new powers and resources devolved to the region.

For the first time in many decades the region is coming together, as Transport North East, to set a vision. But it is not up to politicians to decide on our transport priorities; the vision of the region has to be one we all contribute to. This document will guide our way for the next two decades, and now it is your turn to let us know what you want.

**Councillor Nick Forbes,  
Transport Lead,  
North East Combined Authority**

## **A single approach to transport**

The seven councils in the North East of England (Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, Northumberland, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland) are in a partnership enshrined in law: the North East Combined Authority. We want to help our economy to grow and to make the North East an excellent place to live and work.

Our transport networks cross council boundaries in a diverse region, so only by working together will we meet people's needs and ambitions, wherever they live.

## The North East Combined Authority – some facts

- 3,200 square miles
- Urban and rural communities
- 2 million people; 4.1 million visitors per year
- 200,000 people commuting into urban centres
- The largest car plant in the UK by far
- 38,000 small and medium-sized enterprises

## Vision

The North East needs good transport that enables economic growth and sustains jobs and communities.

We want to make sense of transport so that for people who live, work and visit here it is easy to use, reliable, affordable and accessible. Transport must also work for businesses that are located here, or are looking at moving to the North East. We want a transport system that reflects the character of our area: hard-working, efficient, accessible, and friendly.

Transport needs to work for everyone by being:

1. Accessible : it should run as near as possible to where people live and want to travel to, and where businesses are (or want to be) located. It should be usable by everyone
2. Affordable : as far as possible, transport should be provided at a reasonable cost relative to the journey being undertaken
3. Reliable : the transport network should be one that we can rely on to work, with buses and

trains running on time and congestion at a minimum

4. Easy to use : it should be easy to plan safe journeys, find out the best way to travel, pay for tickets and get all the essential information for your journey
5. Safe : the transport network should be, and be seen to be, safe regarding both road safety and also crime and fear of crime on public transport. Vulnerable users should be given greater protection than they currently are
6. Sustainable : the attractiveness of sustainable modes of transport should be improved. Transport should not have an adverse impact on the environment
7. Integrated : the transport network should be connected so that people can switch easily between modes, and timings and methods of payment complement each other

## **Our guiding principles**

These seven themes above can be expanded into a set of guiding principles, which will govern what we at the North East Combined Authority are trying to achieve:

1. Good access to workplaces, services, shops and leisure
2. Well-maintained, climate-resilient and safe transport networks
3. Less road congestion
4. More sustainable travel
5. Growth in economic activity
6. Better air quality and lower carbon emissions
7. Healthy, active lifestyles
8. Efficient use of transport assets
9. Land use planning that favours sustainable travel
10. Equality of opportunity
11. Better cycling network
12. Better connectivity across the UK

13. Expand the public transport network

## What is “Sustainable” Travel?

Sustainable means taking transport decisions now that will reduce carbon emissions from transport, minimise local air pollution and won't create problems for the future.

We believe that sustainable travel is a good thing in its own right. Moving around the local area, participating in the local economy and interacting with other people all contribute to a healthy lifestyle for individuals and to a better society.

Sustainable is also about creating an economic environment that helps businesses to thrive and generates enough jobs for everyone in the North East who needs one.

Walking, cycling, public transport and taxis are all forms of sustainable travel that will grow the local economy and contribute to a healthy and active local culture. They also minimise pollution from greenhouse gas emissions and poisonous particulates in the air we breathe.

Because of this our first preference is for people to travel sustainably to, from and around the North East. Therefore the majority of our activities in

transport will be focused on developing our sustainable transport networks

## **Transport drives competitiveness**

Successful business needs transport that is geared to its needs for:

1. safe, reliable on-time delivery of goods
2. employees to be able to get to and from work quickly, easily and affordably
3. good connections locally, regionally, nationally and internationally to enable businesses to link up with each other to achieve growth

## **What is Transport North East? What will it do?**

- The North East Combined Authority is the first Transport Authority established in the country with coverage of such substantial urban and rural populations.
- Transport North East will be the new identity for transport functions for the Combined Authority
- It will design and build transport networks around common standards, and oversee transport

operations that deliver connectivity to communities, businesses, and visitors.

- It will also promote the healthiest and greenest ways to move around, and so encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport wherever possible.
- This means the public should notice no change in standards simply because they have travelled across a council boundary within the North East

Our vision, from your doorstep to the other side of the world...

### **Walking: healthy and sustainable local travel**

- Create safe, attractive, obstruction-free pedestrian routes including better signage and signals for crossings.
- Improve walking links within and between communities in both rural and urban areas.
- Promote walking to school and work, to tackle inactivity and over-reliance on the car.
- Ensure new developments and roads have walking designed in.
- Continue to reduce pedestrian casualty rates by improving road safety for pedestrians
- Take account of the needs of disabled pedestrians

## **Cycling: quick, healthy and safe**

- Build a network of attractive, good quality, safe, strategic urban and rural cycle routes, integrated with transport hubs, workplaces, shopping, leisure and education sites.
- Improve existing streets and junctions to support cycling, including reallocating road space.
- Establish cycle-friendly standards for neighbourhoods, towns and city centres, based on comprehensive parking, clear signage and good maintenance.
- Continue to promote cycling as a positive, sustainable way of improving health and well-being for adults and children alike.
- Continue to reduce cycling casualty rates by improving road safety for cyclists.

## **Bus services: underpinning local public transport**

- Simple, good value and integrated fares backed by smart payment technology.
- Good network coverage reflecting local needs including in rural areas
- Easy to use timetable, real-time departure and on-board information.
- Meeting all travellers' accessibility needs.
- Improved levels of punctuality and reliability.
- Priority on highways wherever needed.
- Low-carbon vehicles wherever possible
- Good access for everyone, including disabled people
- Measures to tackle crime and fear of crime so it is not a deterrent, particularly late at night

**Taxis (Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles)  
: flexible public transport**

- Integrate taxis into the wider public transport network with better interchange and information.
- Ensure high standards of licensing and provision.
- Encourage greater use of low emission technologies in taxi fleets.

## Local rail and Metro: driving economic growth

- Simple, good value and integrated fares backed by smart payment technology
- Replace outdated Pacer trains and deliver an essential new fleet for the Tyne and Wear Metro.
- Create a regional express network, with high quality, faster trains and more routes electrified.
- Open new local stations on current lines, re-open key disused lines, consider more Park and Ride stations, upgrade freight-only sections to passenger use and build new routes.
- Devolve greater control to the region, so local rail and Metro can be managed together to deliver a higher standard for stations, information and customer service.
- Work with rail industry partners to address overcrowding and improve cycle access on trains
- Address reliability and punctuality issues
- Improve access for everyone, including disabled people
- Tackle crime and fear of crime so it is not a deterrent, particularly late at night.

## **National rail services: joining our economy with others**

- Invest, and work with Network Rail, to grow capacity, resilience and reliability of services including for our main line to London and Scotland.
- Improve long-distance connections from market towns in the region.
- Reduce journey times and increase the number of trains to core cities including Leeds, Manchester, Edinburgh and Birmingham.
- Make sure the North East is part of the High Speed Rail network.

## **Making journeys easy: smart travel and information**

- Expand the existing “Pop” branded smartcard for all local transport, as well as integrated uses like park-and-ride, cycle storage and Tyne Tunnel tolls.
- Offer affordable fares, particularly to support skills and training, especially for young people.
- Provide real time information for all local transport at stations, selected stops and to mobile devices.
- Develop a network of variable message signs on roads.
- Make full use of the Urban Traffic Management Centre to deliver information to road users.
- Make sure public transport services, timetables, information, fares and tickets are integrated

## **Ports: gateways to a world of trade**

- Improve road and rail links from the region’s ports to the rest of the UK.

- Support the growth in cruise traffic to boost tourism and investigate the potential for new North Sea ferry routes.
- Ensure our ports can support new developments and innovation, such as growth in the offshore wind industry.
- Explore better use of our main rivers as transport arteries.
- Further improve integration between the Shields Ferry and other forms of transport.

## **Flying the flag for the region – the future for air travel**

- Make our airports the preferred choice for people in the North East and surrounding areas.
- Build on the success of direct flights from Newcastle to Dubai by supporting new routes to China and the Far East.
- Increase capacity on Newcastle airport's existing runway, extend terminal facilities and support growth
- Improve public transport links.

## Moving freight

- Promote an efficient, safe and sustainable freight sector as a major employer and driver for growth.
- Support the North East Freight Partnership to raise standards and provide accurate routeing and mapping.
- Develop a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange as part of moves to encourage a shift from road transport while growing overall business.
- Work with all partners to move freight away from road transport wherever possible

## Innovation

- Develop and expand the successful Urban Traffic Management and Control Centre to promote public transport and reduce congestion.
- Expand rapid vehicle charging points through the region with a common standard across communities, integrated with Highways England's strategic network.
- Encourage the spread of Car Club sites, especially for Electric Vehicles (EVs).
- Promote ultra-low emission buses, taxis and freight vehicles, while supporting the development of alternative fuels and power sources.
- Promote North East universities and businesses as global leaders in research and technology for sustainable urban development.

## **Roads fit for purpose**

- Invest to alleviate congestion and collision hot spots.
- Create well-maintained road space that is safe for all, with good access to key employment and development sites.
- Support existing proposals to improve roads including M1 extension to Gateshead, A1 dualling in Northumberland, Western Bypass enhancements and A19 junction upgrades.
- Consider further proposals if they are consistent with carbon reduction.
- Work with Highways England on A66 and A69 investment to improve cross-Pennine traffic.
- Offer car users better information on journey times, delays, parking and public transport alternatives.
- Reallocate road space to more sustainable forms of transport
- Improve road safety, particularly for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Address congestion issues

## **Powered Two Wheelers (motorcycles, scooters and mopeds)**

- Recognise the benefits of PTWs to users and the environment
- Facilitate PTWs as a choice of travel within a safe and sustainable transport network
- Consider the needs of PTW users
- Ensure good access to secure on and off-road parking for PTWs

## Joining it all together

- Ensuring that our transport system promotes economic growth.
- Working with health colleagues to ensure people can get to health facilities.
- Promote healthy transport choices including walking and cycling.
- Making sure that new developments and regeneration plans are “transport friendly” and promote walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing.
- Improving interchange between different forms of transport.
- Working together to unify our existing different policies on
  - taxi licensing,
  - bus and “no car” lanes – including the times they apply and what vehicles are allowed in them,
  - planning applications – where these impinge on neighbouring areas.

## Devolution

As we said at the start, the North East Combined Authority needs to take on new responsibilities and secure new funding, to allow our transport system to be developed by the people who live and work here:

- A local transport budget for many years to come, covering all relevant local highways and sustainable travel funding
- A potential long-term funding programme for Metro investment including fleet replacement, possible expansion of the Metro network and integration with local rail services
- Responsibility for the new Northern and Transpennine rail franchises from April 2016, in partnership with other Authorities across the North and the Department for Transport.
- A fully multi-modal smart ticketing and transport information network across the North East and beyond.
- Powers to take forward our plans for bus services

- Work with national agencies (Highways England, Network Rail, HS2) on a joint agreement specifying improvements for the national road and rail network across the North East.
- A locally-devolved Highways Fund, committed over a multi-year period.

If you need this document in a different format, such as large print, please contact us on 0191 211 6024 or [transportconsultation@northeastca.gov.uk](mailto:transportconsultation@northeastca.gov.uk)