



Making The Right Travel Choice

Draft for consultation July 2022

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Making the right travel choice

On behalf of the North East Joint Transport Committee (NEJTC), I am delighted to present the Making the Right Travel Choice Strategy.

This strategy is a key commitment of the North East Transport Plan which was adopted in 2021, and outlines some of the actions needed to make it easier for people to travel sustainably alongside what we can do to encourage more people to use active travel and public transport where possible.

It is imperative we work together to tackle the climate emergency and act to improve public health through transport. Around 1 in 4 adults in the region are physically inactive, contributing to reduced life expectancy and this is something we can improve if we boost sustainable travel.

We want to make it easier for people to pollute less and be more physically active by increasing the use of greener transport. In this scenario we all win – green transport is good for everyone – it's often the cheapest way to get around.

This strategy highlights impactful transport schemes and campaigns that we can bring forward to encourage everyone in the region to increase their sustainable journeys. We're asking car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably.

Together we can remove 200 million unnecessary car trips from our region's roads, replacing them with cleaner, greener travel. Small changes can add up to make a big difference and together we can achieve our environmental and health goals.

Of course, car use will continue to be the only suitable travel option in many cases but that certainly isn't the case for every journey and we want people to think carefully about their travel options. We are committed to making it easier for people to choose sustainable options and that is why we are asking local people for their ideas and suggestions. The result will be a multi-million pound package of measures to encourage greener journeys.

I look forward to seeing the suggestions from local people that will really make a difference to how we all travel in the future to achieve our green and health ambitions.



Cllr Martin Gannon, Chair, North East Joint Transport Committee

Executive summary

Background

Mobility is good: most trips stimulate the economy, get people to employment, education, healthcare, retail, or social opportunities. Making journeys of course leaves an impact on our environment and plays a big role in our health and wellbeing, so how we choose to travel is very important. **But sustainable mobility is far better.** Active travel (cycling, walking and wheeling) and catching public transport (Bus, Ferry, Metro and rail) – is often the cheapest way to travel and has enormous health and environmental benefits for our region, such as helping to reduce carbon emissions and improve public health outcomes.

We use the terms walking and wheeling together and consider walking and wheeling to include the use of mobility aids and pushchair.

- Sustrans definition 2021

Target

The strategy sets a target to encourage car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and for people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably.

This could result in around 200 million additional trips being made by sustainable transport every year, improving our environment and the health of local people.

Why

The pandemic and associated lockdowns gave us a glimpse of cleaner towns, cities and neighbourhoods and people walked and cycled more. However, as we continue to recover from the impact of the pandemic, road traffic volumes have bounced back to 2019 levels faster than other forms of travel.

Contributing to climate change, congestion and poor air quality, this over-reliance on non-sustainable forms of transport such as a petrol or diesel car, also contributes to external costs such as our local NHS services.

In the North East, currently **1 in 4 adults are physically inactive** and air pollution and congestion are negatively impacting public health and the local economy.

In central Tyneside alone air pollution is responsible for around 360 deaths each year and road congestion is estimated to cost every North East driver around £236 per year.

North East Transport Plan

'Making the right travel choice' is the lead policy of the 2021-2035 North East Transport Plan. If we each increase our green journeys by even one journey per week, that will take us towards achieving our vision of "Moving to a green, healthy, dynamic and thriving North East" and our five regional transport objectives.

Outlined in this consultation document are some of the actions needed to make it easier for people to travel sustainably. We need to look at breaking down barriers to greener journeys whether they're real or perceived.

During the consultation period, we will engage with the public to strengthen our understanding of what they need us to do to help them travel more sustainably.

No one-size fits all approach

The reasons why people travel the way they do are complex and depend on a number of circumstances, which can change per journey.

This strategy recognises that due to our region's diverse urban and rural mix, there will need to be different solutions and expectations to successfully encourage shifts away from private cars to more sustainable transport types.

There isn't a 'one fits all' approach and we recognise that the car or van may be the only option for certain journeys and personal circumstances.

Research

To help us understand our residents' and employers' thoughts about sustainable travel, and to inform the development of this strategy, we commissioned a programme of market research which included feedback from people from lower income groups, as well as residents with disabilities and/or health conditions that limit their mobility. A cross-section of North East employers of different sizes and locations were also interviewed.

Personas

Because everyone is different with their own unique circumstances, we've created some example 'personas' which you will see throughout this document. Please consider using them as a guide on how you might be able to introduce more green journeys into your week or continue to travel sustainably if you do not have access to a car.

Delivery

We have developed an initial pipeline of schemes to be taken forward which are subject to funding. These include incentivising sustainable trips using an app-based rewards system, working with doctors to "prescribe" healthy travel, and engaging children and parents through schools. Our schemes are ambitious, and we estimate that they would cost £29m in revenue funding over a five year period.

Consultation

As part of the consultation for this strategy, we are asking people across the region between July and September 2022 to contribute their own ideas for actions that would realistically help them to switch one journey they make from their car to sustainable travel.



1. Introduction

Introduction

What is this strategy?

Mobility is good: most trips stimulate the economy, get people to employment, education, healthcare, retail, or social opportunities. But sustainable mobility is far better than car journeys. Active travel is the cheapest way to get around, and it helps reduce carbon emissions and improve public health along with many other related benefits.

The strategy sets a target to encourage car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and for people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably.

According to the 2018/19 National Travel Survey, significant proportions of journeys made in the region were over relatively short distances. These are illustrated in the graphics below.

There is a clear opportunity to shift a significant proportion of these journeys to instead be made by walking, cycling, and using public transport.

On average people in the region make 19 trips a week, which is 2 billion trips in the North East. If car users switch just one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably, this could result in around 200 million additional trips being made by sustainable transport every year, improving our environment and the health of local people.

For this to happen we need to look at breaking down barriers to greener journeys – whether they're real or perceived barriers. This will help more people choose active travel and public transport for some of their weekly journeys when they can.

Crucially, we need to listen to the region's residents and businesses to find out what we need to introduce in order to help people to make the switch from the car and travel sustainably at least once per week and for people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably.

Our sustainable transport network is changing and there has never been a better time to try it out. Our region was recently awarded an indicative £163.5m in funding for our bus network, a new £360m Metro fleet will enter operation in 2024 and new walking and cycling routes are being delivered thanks to the Active Travel Fund. Of course, there is still much to do, and improvements are being made every day.

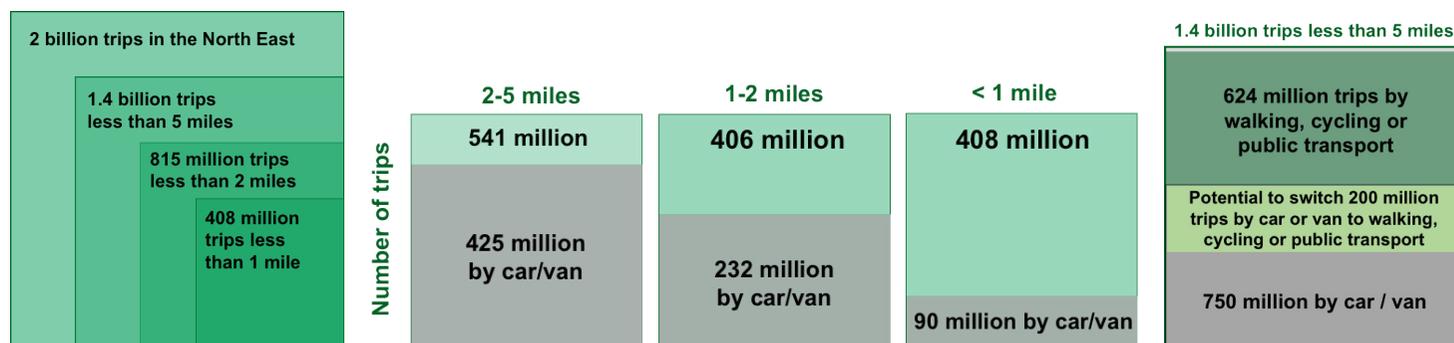


Figure 1: Estimated Trips made in the North East - National Travel Survey 2018/19

Our region

The North East is a vibrant region, with large-scale employment opportunities, an excellent student offer, world heritage visitor sites and an evening economy that attracts tourists from across the UK and overseas.

Our three City Centres of Durham, Newcastle and Sunderland are surrounded by lively towns and villages set in some of the most beautiful and least populated countryside in the UK, with miles of unspoilt coastline and Northumberland National Park AONB. Our wide range of leisure, cultural, sporting and historical attractions includes UNESCO World Heritage sites Hadrian's Wall and Durham Cathedral and Castle. Our manufacturing base, five national catapult centres, three national innovation centres and growing tech and fintech industries attract significant inward investment, helping address the unequal life outcomes of our 2 million population.

In this strategy we set out what we are doing through our transport strategies and investment programmes; we identify where there are gaps; and we aim to make sure that everything we are doing influences the uptake of sustainable travel.

To do this we will need to win the hearts and minds of travellers across the North East – people who often lead busy and complex lives, and who may not currently consider that sustainable travel is a viable option for them.

The strategy includes a programme of interventions to be delivered within the next five years, worth a total of £29m. We hope that the proposed interventions set out will support North East residents and businesses to consider travelling more sustainably if they are funded.

Why now?

From March 2020, COVID-19 accelerated the demand for digital connectivity and in many cases this had an impact on physical mobility. Whilst digital connectivity provides many benefits including allowing people to work flexibly, we believe that physical activity is hugely important and is to be encouraged because it benefits the economy and physical and mental wellbeing.

We travel to school, to work, to shop, to care for others and to socialise with friends. For businesses, the ability to travel enables the opportunity to acquire, move and sell products and goods. Doing so benefits local economies of communities which make up our vibrant region.

A 2019 evidence review for the Department for Transport into transport, health, and wellbeing found that transport can also enable 'social connectivity' to people and can enhance both independence and opportunity. It is also the key to tackling inequality and deprivation by providing easy access to jobs and leisure.

Making journeys of course leaves an impact on our environment and plays a big role in our health and wellbeing, so how we choose to travel is very important.

The pandemic gave us a glimpse of cleaner towns, cities and neighbourhoods and people walked and cycled more. However, as we continue to recover from the impact of the pandemic, road traffic volumes have bounced back to 2019 levels faster than other forms of travel. This year (2022), traffic levels increased 20% above the equivalent period in 2019 – a worrying sign that we are in a car-dominated recovery.

In contrast to this, public transport use has still not recovered to what it was pre-pandemic so there is lots of work to do to welcome passengers back to sustainable forms of transport and as a result, there has been limited progress in reducing road-based carbon emissions in the region.

Contributing to climate change, congestion and poor air quality, this over-reliance on non-sustainable forms of transport such as a petrol or diesel car, also contributes to external costs such as our local NHS services.

It is estimated that physical inactivity costs the NHS in the North East (LA7 area) in excess of £19 million per year.

If current petrol and diesel car drivers switched to making just one sustainable journey per week, there would be a **saving of around 214,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions a year.**

If everyone in the North East made one additional sustainable journey each week this would potentially reduce poor health caused by road traffic emissions and save petrol and diesel car drivers approximately £170-190 per year (based on June 2022 fuel prices).

Poor air quality affects people's health and is linked to serious conditions including heart disease, cancer and breathing problems. Older people, children and those with existing health conditions are more likely to be affected.

It is estimated that poor air quality is responsible for around 360 deaths each year in central Tyneside alone.

Supporting people to live more active and decarbonised lifestyles will also have positive effects on the region's public health outcomes such as improving life expectancy including Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE). If successful, there should be also a natural reduced demand

on NHS services through a more active and healthy population, reducing overall operating costs and freeing up capacity in the service.

Around 70% adults aged 18+ in the North East classified as overweight or obese, the highest % region in England.

Around 1 in 4 adults in the North East (25.6%) are physically inactive, the joint highest % region in England.

Enabling people to make more journeys actively or using public transport will be the most significant way of achieving our transport objectives, set out on the following page.

For some trips, people may need to travel by car or van because of the distance involved and the complexity of the journey. This is why the greater take up of Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) are important so even journeys that do need to be made by car or van can also help to achieve our objectives.



The **North East Transport Plan**, published in 2021, sets out our regional transport ambitions up to 2035. It brings to life our transport aspirations and includes a live programme of local transport schemes which will make a big difference to our environment, our health and

our economy. **Making the right travel choice** is the lead policy of our plan. This strategy builds on our policy further.

Little changes have a big impact, and if we each increase our green journeys by even a small amount, that will take us towards achieving

our vision of “**Moving to a green, healthy, dynamic and thriving North East**” and our regional transport objectives, which are set below.

The Vision

‘**Moving to a green, healthy, dynamic and thriving North East**’

The Objectives



Carbon neutral North East

We will take action to make travel in the North East net carbon zero. We will address our air quality challenges and aim to tackle the climate emergency.



Overcome inequality and grow our economy

We will return the region to pre COVID-19 levels of employment and Gross Domestic Product (GDP), then move towards the ambitions set out in the North East Local Enterprise Partnership’s [Strategic Economic Plan \(SEP\)](#).



Healthier North East

We will encourage active travel (such as cycling, walking and wheeling) to help our region reach public health levels that are at least equal to other parts of the UK.



Appealing sustainable transport choices

We will introduce measures that make sustainable transport a more attractive, and an easy way to get around the North East.



Safe, secure network

We will improve transport safety and security, ensuring that people are confident that they feel safe and secure when travelling.

These five objectives are also the guiding objectives of this strategy. Proposals we have made in this strategy are aligned to and will support progress towards achieving these five objectives.

No one-size fits all approach

North East England is a diverse region encompassing large and densely populated urban areas, a surrounding geography of towns and semi-urban villages and a much larger hinterland of former mining villages and beyond them sparsely populated rural and coastal communities.

The reasons why people travel the way they do are complex and depend on a number of circumstances, which can change per journey.

It is also important to recognise that people's needs and experiences will vary depending on the type of area they live or work in. For instance, anyone living in or visiting isolated (particularly rural) areas of our region may find that the lack of sustainable alternatives makes them reliant on a car.

Due to our region's diverse urban and rural mix, there will need to be different solutions and expectations to successfully encourage and enable people to travel more sustainably.

There isn't a 'one fits all' approach and we recognise that the car or van may be the only option for certain journeys and personal circumstances.

To help us understand our residents and employers thoughts about sustainable travel, and to inform the development and implementation of this strategy, we commissioned a programme of market research. The research included feedback from people from lower income groups, as well as residents

with disabilities and or health conditions that limit their mobility. A variety of North East employers were also interviewed. The findings from this primary research are used throughout this strategy.



2. Personas

Personas

We understand that working out the best ‘green’ transport choice for a journey can be tricky at first, so we’ve developed a series of personas to help people make the right travel choice for their specific journey circumstances, which we hope people can relate to and consider using as a guide.

We have taken the findings from our market research, along with other existing data and some reasonable assumptions about real journey circumstances and the transport barriers people face to create a set of data-driven personas.

This usage of data ensures that we focus on those who have told us they are open or willing to change the way they travel.

These personas will be used throughout the strategy to highlight issues and barriers to sustainable transport. They will also be a key tool to explore how car users can consider switching one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and people who don’t have access to a car to can continue to travel sustainably.



Leigh

About: 29 year old, living in urban North East city. Customer support agent at regional call centre. Co-habits with partner of 5 years and 2 year old daughter. Enjoys spending time with family on weekends, and playing football with friends.

Typical journey: Uses his second-hand car a lot to collect shopping and to transport his young family.

Barriers to using sustainable transport:

- Having the necessary space to carry his shopping;
- Attitudes of drivers towards cyclists;
- Shared road use isn’t clear;
- Lack of segregated cycle tracks;
- Direct walking/cycling routes.



Sam

About: 50 year old, living in suburban area of North East with husband. A senior social worker, managing a small team of employees, predominately office based with some local visits. Enjoys a comfortable lifestyle, with disposable income to go on nice holidays, socialising and keeping fit for physical and mental health.

Typical journey: Frequently goes to events in the city after work (Sam lives on the outskirts of the city) for leisure/ sporting activities.

Barriers to using sustainable transport:

- Time constraints;
- Concerns about personal safety;
- Lack of direct walking and cycling routes;
- Has additional mobility needs that make using transport more difficult.



Sahira

About: 33 year old single parent, living on outskirts of a major city in North East. Has two children aged 5 and 1. Works full time as a middle-manager at local bank, in hybrid home/ office arrangement. Passionate about securing promotion to provide greater financial security for children.

Typical journey: Frequently travels by car to do the school run and nursery drop offs and to take her children to appointments, these aren't always in the same place.

Barriers to using sustainable transport:

- Accessibility as a single traveller with two children, one of whom is in a pushchair;
- Lack of direct walking and cycling routes;
- Time constraints.



Rowan

About: 24 year old living in major city centre in North East. Became unemployed in 2020 and has struggled to find suitable employment since. Is in receipt of Universal Credit while trying to find a new job.

Typical journey: Travelling to job interviews to find employment. Rowan doesn't currently own a car as they are expensive.

Barriers to using sustainable transport:

- Cost of public transport;
- Potential to fall into transport poverty due to lack of economic stability.



Mohammed

About: 78 year old married retiree living in semi-rural area of North East. Enjoys meeting up with his friends and family, especially after being isolated in recent years due to the pandemic.

Typical journey: Always travelling to see family and friends, who live all over the North East. Tends to use the car as he thinks it is easier.

Barriers to using sustainable transport:

- Accessibility needs prevent him from walking or cycling great distances;
- Lack of bus reliability and average bus journey time.



Jo

About: 55 year old domestic cleaner and personal carer. Lives rurally with partner in North East. Travels to her elderly parents' house, whom she regularly cares for.

Typical journey: Jo uses a car to run a domestic cleaning business. Regularly travels to multiple clients' houses throughout day with cleaning equipment.

Barriers to using sustainable transport:

- Lack of time between clients;
- Parents with mobility issues;
- Finds bus fares and information confusing.



Alex

About: 20 year old living in suburban area of the North East. Manufacturing apprentice at a local plant. Lives with their parents and is insured to drive family car, therefore car shares with his parents.

Typical journey: Travelling to reach their apprenticeship each day and college once or twice a week.

Barriers to using sustainable transport:

- Shift patterns can make it hard to use public transport;
- Finds bus information confusing and struggles to access information;
- Cost of public transport;
- Their perceptions regarding safety and security on public transport.



Bobbie

About: 8 year old, in full time education, living at home with parents. All trips are made with a parent or guardian as Bobbie isn't travelling independently due to her age.

Typical journey: Travelling to and from primary school with her parents. Sometimes her mam walks her there, as her school is under a mile away from their home, but other times her parents drive her to school as they have some safety concerns about other road users and cyclists not watching out for pedestrians.

Barriers to using sustainable transport:

- Is largely restricted by parents' travel choices;
- Safety concerns around walking to school alongside cyclists and other road users;
- Time constraints due to their parents needing to get to work.

3. How do people travel now?

How do people travel now?

Introduction

Transport underpins our daily lives. The way that people in the North East travel has changed and, for some, there is a reduced need to make journeys because of increased opportunities to work from home.

Consistently high levels of car use

Our region has high proportions of private car and van use.

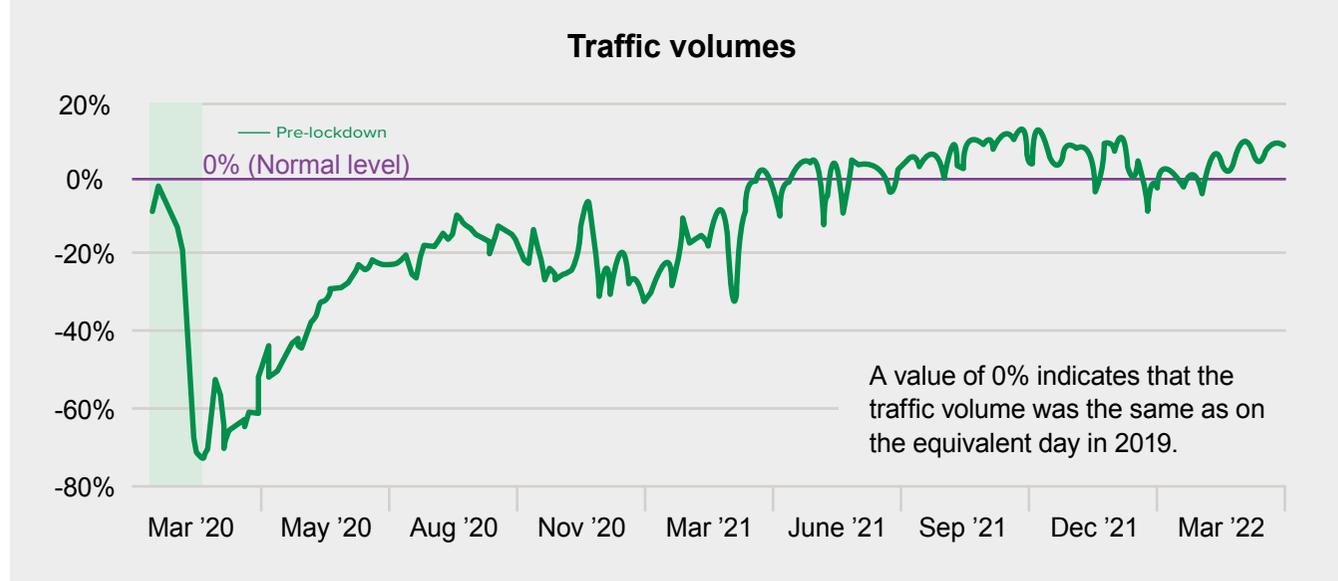
As with the rest of the UK, recent decades have seen rising levels of car use and ownership in the North East.

However, car ownership in the region is lower than all other English regions outside of London, highlighting the importance of the affordability of sustainable transport as a means of reducing inequality and providing access to opportunities.

Following the pandemic, traffic volumes bounced back to 2019 levels faster than other forms of travel. In March 2022, traffic levels increased above the equivalent period in 2019, as can be seen in Figure 2.

As a result of this, there has been limited progress in reducing road based carbon emissions in the region.

Figure 2: Regional traffic level variations throughout the pandemic.



Many of the personas are dependent on their private car to get around because of perceived issues with the sustainable transport system.

Mohammed travels by car to visit family and friends because he is mindful of the added journey time by travelling on bus or Metro.

Jo uses her car to travel between client houses as she runs her own cleaning businesses and struggles for time in between jobs.

Alex is a part-time student and manufacturing apprentice who car shares with parents because they have to regularly go between work and college throughout the week.

Reduced public transport patronage

Public transport patronage has not recovered to what it was pre-pandemic, (see Figure 3). At the end of March 2022 bus passenger numbers in the North East were 20% below 2019 levels and patronage on the Tyne and Wear Metro about 5% lower than in 2019.

Before the pandemic, bus patronage had been in relative decline but Metro passenger numbers had been relatively stable for several years.

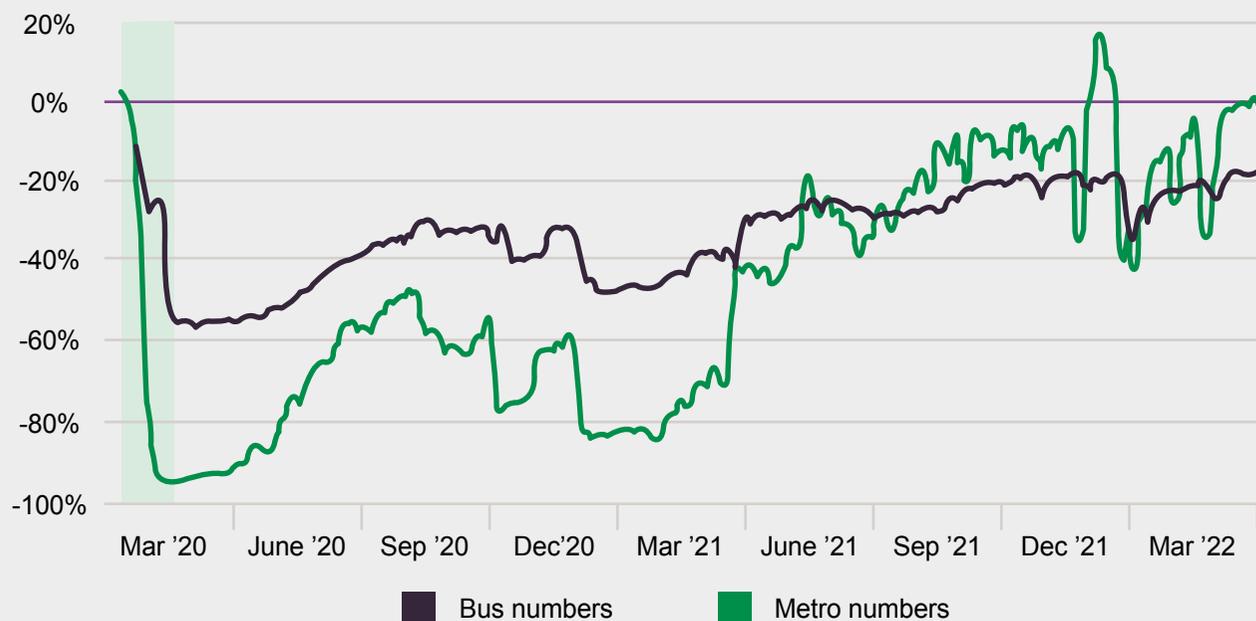
Recent rises in active travel

There is a need to address the North East's reliance on the car and to promote more sustainable modes of travel such as walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport.

During the pandemic, cycling levels increased dramatically with an estimated 24% uplift of daily volumes in Tyne and Wear in June 2021 from pre-COVID levels. This does not appear to have been sustained, although cycling numbers are still 6% up on the pre-pandemic 3-year average at the time of writing. This shows there is clearly potential for increased cycling to be unlocked.

Walking levels for leisure purpose remain higher than the national average, however for walking trips specially for a travel purpose, the region is under the national average (England only).

Figure 3: Regional bus and Tyne & Wear Metro passenger numbers as a percentage of 2019 levels.



Some of the personas reflect these data findings.

Sam works full time and is office based, but not all of the appointments she and members of her team attend are city centre based and therefore rely on their cars. She also uses her car to get to and from after-work plans. Sam also employs a number of people who are reliant on public transport to get to work.

Recent growth in Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV)

As of March 2021, there were 4,000 plug-in - including both Battery Electric (BEV) and Plug-In Hybrid (PHEV) - cars and vans licensed to private keepers in the North East. This is an increase from 2,800 vehicles in March 2020.

Shared mobility

Shared mobility refers to transport services and resources which are shared by users, either at the same time or one after another. This includes public transport, micromobility (bike sharing or scooter sharing), automobile based modes (car sharing, rides on demand) and commuter based modes of ride sharing.

The region has seen the introduction of several shared electric car club vehicles.

Co-wheels, the biggest car club in the North East currently has over 2,400 members in the area. A high proportion of the vehicles they offer are either hybrid or electric.

E-scooters have been trialled in both Newcastle and Sunderland which have proven to be successful. For the first year of the trial in Newcastle over 500,000 miles were travelled on the e-scooters.

Changes in travel patterns

The pandemic has significantly altered travel patterns not only in the forms of transport people use, but also if and when people travel.

Figure 4 (on the following page) presents the percentage change in traffic volumes in Tyne and Wear from the equivalent period in 2019. It is clear that whilst congestion is worse during the morning peak than pre-2020, the evening period is less clearly defined as traffic levels are more sustained throughout the day. The higher traffic volumes in the morning correspond with the school run. Furthermore, there are higher volumes of traffic on mid-weekdays (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday than on Mondays and Fridays). This reflects greater flexibility in working arrangements for many employees, evident from Figure 5.

Many employees in the North East continue to work from home several days per week due to agile/hybrid working models and improved technology.

In a recent survey, over **22%** of employees in the North East mainly **work from home**.



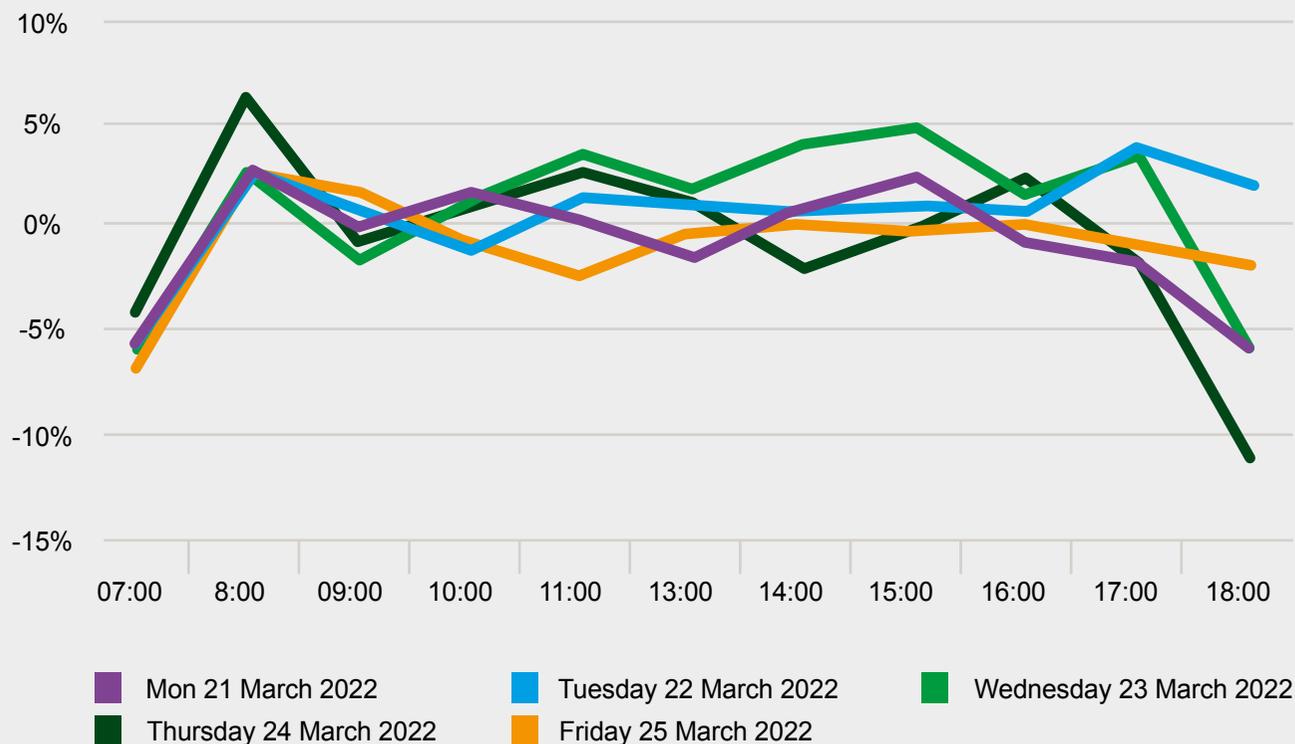
Sahira now works from home for part of the week, meaning they are naturally making less journeys into the office.

With reduced levels of commuting, public transport use remains lower throughout the week. However, patronage is generally higher at weekends than it was before the pandemic. This indicates increased levels of leisure-based weekend journeys. Similarly, the number of people visiting Newcastle and Sunderland city centres in the evening are currently higher than pre-COVID levels. For example, Sunderland city centre saw a 63% increase for the period 13 February 2020 to 29 April 2022, compared to 1 February 2020.



Patterns of education were also disturbed during the pandemic, and many students like our persona Bobbie (as well as her parents) who now school has returned to the classroom, primarily gets driven to school by her parents, although on occasions her mam will walk her to school.

Figure 4: Estimated change in traffic flow in Tyne and Wear from equivalent week in 2019.



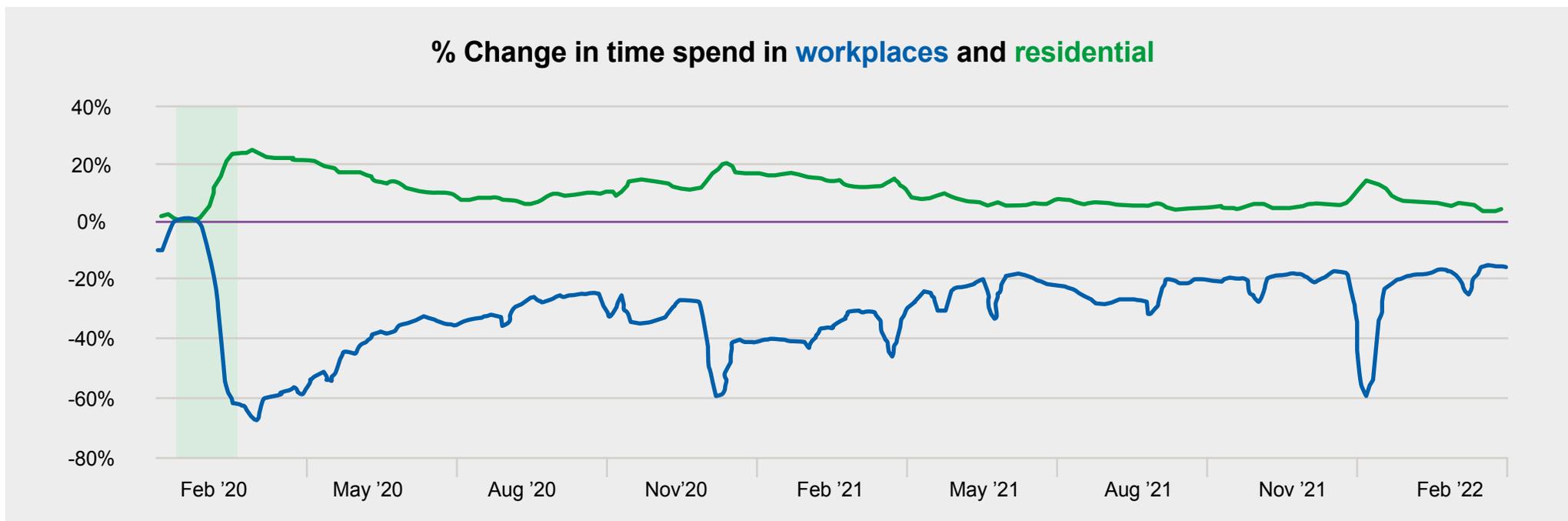


Figure 5: Percentage of time spent in workplaces and residential locations from Google Mobility data.



The pandemic also had an impact on how those who could previously afford to use the bus travel now. People like Rowan, who is not currently using the bus as much as he is unemployed and therefore does not travel to work.

Analysis – how do people travel now?

The overall transport trends which have been set out in this chapter, are having a detrimental impact on the region's ability to meet our vision and our objectives. This is because of the strong reliance on cars for travel and lower levels of public transport use. This car reliance is causing problems such as air pollution and congestion. Nevertheless, there are geographic and demographic disparities in transport choice across the region.



We'll see in later chapters of this strategy how we can help people in similar circumstances to our persona Leigh to consider making greater use of local car clubs to reduce their carbon footprint.

Changes in travel patterns reflect the differing travel behaviours of people in the North East that are at least in part a result of the pandemic. It will be important to address the variety of journey purposes and different factors that influence travel choices within this strategy.

Chapter 4 outlines the challenges and implications of how people travel now in further detail.



4. What do people and businesses think?

What do people and businesses think?

Introduction

As we have set out, this strategy sets a target to encourage car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and for people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably.



“I don't walk or cycle that much as I've seen some car users be a bit aggressive towards cyclists. This puts me off trying to travel this way as I'm not exactly a confident cyclist. That's why I take the car when I leave the house to collect my shopping, whether that's for a few items or the weekly shop.”

Leigh

To identify suitable interventions, we have been listening to our region's residents and businesses to find out what we need to introduce to help people make one of their weekly car journeys by sustainable travel.

In early 2022 we sought views exploring motivations and barriers from both a resident and employer perspective. This chapter gives a high-level summary into our initial findings on what needs to change. It also highlights research which has been undertaken throughout the past three years.

What do our residents think?

Residents living rurally stated that the due to public transport being infrequent and a lack of direct buses, the private car was widely perceived as necessary, especially for longer journeys.

Nevertheless, those living in urban and suburban areas generally felt well-served in terms of public transport connections, particularly if close to a Metro station. The **reliability of services** was, however, a talking point and a key reason given for infrequent use.

“It's not very good, the bus service, around here at all. It is reliable, but say I wanted to go further afield, you're talking 2 or 3 buses to get to your destination. That's where the car would come in.”

- Rural resident

‘the bus not turning up on time’ was the second highest barrier to bus usage .

- Big Bus Conversation 2021

37% of participants in a Nexus Insight Panel survey (2019) also believed that buses being unreliable was in the top three barriers to bus usage.

Many North East residents have told us that rising fuel costs have led to the cost of travel becoming a more important consideration.

“Yeah, certainly public transport. It just wouldn't be an option for us as a family. And now the cost of fuel rising... ..what we do as a family on a Sunday over this last month or so has changed, you know, we'll still do something but the cost and the transport is coming in to it.”

- Urban resident

“Cycling I might think about it or walking, and then totally miss out public transport and then go to car. I wouldn't even think, right I can't walk so I'll go on a bus. I will go straight to car. I don't like the uncertainty of it. When's the bus going to get there? Is it going to get there? What time is it coming? What time is the bus coming back? It's just easier to jump in your car.”

- Resident who rejects to switching travel choice

51% of residents said waiting at a stop is their main dislike about traveling by bus, rising to 60% for those with a mobility difficulty.

Amongst infrequent and occasional non-users, a **lack of an informed knowledge** of how much the bus costs was apparent. This sometimes resulted in it being assumed that **fares would be expensive**.

There was reference in all focus groups to **rising fuel costs** and an acknowledgment that the cost of travel is increasingly becoming a consideration. Others talked about how rising fuel prices had made them think more carefully about whether a journey was necessary. Some were also planning journeys to a greater extent. There were a few specific examples of where rising fuel costs had encouraged a shift to travelling sustainably for some journeys.

There was widespread agreement from residents that **promotion** of our ambition where walking, cycling or using public transport is the best way to travel is immediately required in order to **raise awareness and encourage** people to think more about their travel choices. Information to tell people more about existing sustainable transport choices such as car clubs was also suggested.

“Honestly, I wouldn't actually have a clue how much it would cost us to get somewhere on the bus these days. I think if they want people to use buses more, then maybe they need to make a bigger thing and say how much cheaper it is rather than driving.”

- Resident who rejects to switching travel choice



“I've never really thought about using sustainable transport into the city after work. I have additional mobility needs and I would be concerned that the routes I would need to use would not be accessible. I tend to use the car instead.” **Sam**

“What I’ve started doing recently, like, since the cost of fuel has gone up is - I used to use the car every single journey to go and pick up the kids from school... ..it’s literally a 10-minute walk... ..so I’m now starting to think, right, I need to walk instead of jumping in the car. I’m definitely thinking about it more, but that’s just because of the increase in fuel costs.”

- Resident who would consider switching travel choice due to rising fuel costs.

62% of infrequent users from the Big Bus Conversation survey said they would be more likely to use the bus if there were more direct and quicker journeys, as well as better waiting facilities at bus stops.



“When mam takes me to school, sometimes we are late because of the traffic.” **Bobbie**

“You would have to tell them more about your car club. If it was a good thing, and more about how you can get accessibly to public transport, and the fact that it was cheaper than using the car.”

- Resident who has the potential to switch. Lives in village / countryside

“I think if they want change to happen, they’re going to have to advertise it. Otherwise, nobody’s going to be thinking about it, nobody’s going to know that it needs to happen.”

- Resident who rejects to switching travel choice

“I think a lot of it could be that it’s just not in the forefront of my mind. So if these were plastered about the place [the decision tree], then it might be like, ah, I should have a bit of a think about how I’m going to make that journey.”

- Resident who is open to switching. Lives in city / town

A small proportion of participants told us they were already walking or cycling to get around usually when doing the school run or to the local shops. They acknowledged that they were more likely to do it in spring and summer, and in ‘good weather’. Mental and physical health benefits and financial reasons were the main motivations cited by those adopting the ‘right travel behaviour’.

Some concerns were raised around the perceived safety of active travel, particularly around cycling as well as issues of perceived personal safety on public transport.



“If I was to go further afield, it’s how many buses you would need to get there that puts me off. It’s not that you can’t, it’s just the time that it’s going to take. You don’t want an hour and a half journey for something that would take 30 minutes by car. Plus, I don’t really trust them to turn up or get to where I’m going in time.”

Mohammed



“I find it difficult when people sit in the accessible area on public transport and they just don’t want to give up their seat. That’s why I mainly use the car when travelling with my elderly parents.”

Jo

“People need to be a bit more conscious. Instead of just jumping in the car, like I said, looking at alternatives. Like how many times do I use the car to nip to the shop that literally is just a two-minute walk and you just think to yourself, why have I done that, especially with the prices and everything now.”

- Resident who is open to switching.
Lives in village / countryside



“I sometimes worry about experiencing abuse on the bus or Metro, which puts me off using it more to get to work and college.”

Alex

“I think lockdown probably had a lot to do with it. You know, I think it was probably an excuse to spend more time outdoors during lockdown... ..so it was probably a mental health thing, to try and get out of the house more. And it just became a bit of a habit really.”

- Resident who has the potential to switch. Lives in village / countryside



“Some of my employees use public transport and have been late to work in the past. Better reliability of public transport would improve staff productivity and encourage them to travel to work on public transport regularly.” **Sam**

“I wouldn’t want to cycle on the road. For me, I wouldn’t want to run the risk of being hit by a car because you see it happening all the time. I feel like they are asking you to do those things, but maybe people don’t feel comfortable doing them for whatever reason.”

- Resident who rejects to switching travel choice due to perceptions of safety

In a recent survey, **17%** of people said that the behaviour of other passengers was a barrier to bus travel.

68% of respondents have felt worried about their personal safety while on board Metro, **21%** while waiting for a Metro and **11%** when walking to/from stations and stops.

The **perceived expense of public transport** was cited as a barrier, as was long, indirect journeys when compared with the private car. Positive cost comparison around using car vs public transport was also suggested as an effective way of possibly encouraging change.

There was strong interest from car owners in switching to an electric or hybrid vehicle, although cost and charging infrastructure were raised as barriers. Amongst some respondents, switching to an electric car was the only alternative transport option they would consider. Those in lower income groups were seen as being presently excluded from electric vehicle ownership.

The feasibility and personal relevance of 'making the right travel choice' was questioned by those with mobility issues. The importance of convenience was such that the issue of sustainable travel was secondary.

"I can't actually get my car anywhere near my house. Because we have a communal car park for probably around 50 houses, which are all terraced houses. So even if I wanted to buy an electric car I couldn't, because I have no means of charging it"

- Resident who has the potential to switch. Lives in village / countryside

"I actually tend to only go out about once a week-that's when my friend will take me. I don't have to pay that bus fare, and I can actually get extra shopping with the money that I'm saving."

- Urban resident with low income

"Honestly, I wouldn't actually have a clue how much it would cost us to get somewhere on the bus these days. I think if they want people to use buses more, then maybe they need to make a bigger thing and say how much cheaper it is rather than driving"

- Resident who rejects to switching travel choice

"Yeah, I mean, if that was on my phone, I could access on my phone to find out if it was delayed. That would help because then I would just go away and sit down somewhere or go home and come back. But I live a fairly good walk away from the bus stop, so if I had to walk to the bus stop, which I could do, for me to wait at the bus stop and then the bus not come, I would be exhausted."

- Resident with mobility issues

“They should have an app to warn people if there’s offers coming up...that you could sign up to and get deals and offers.”

- Resident from a lower income group

“I like a car. I like being on my own. That sounds pretty sad. I would get an electric car if it was affordable. Yeah. And I’d be happy to do that. But it’s not affordable at all.”

- Resident who rejects to switching travel choice

“I think if I was guaranteed help from somebody or I could get on and off a bus easily, that would be the main thing.”

- Resident with mobility issues

“Trying to get my rollator on and off the bus. I have to lift it up or wait for someone to come and help me.”

- Resident with mobility issues

Amongst participants who felt they were unlikely to change their travel behaviour, the perception that more ‘negative’ messaging around environmental impact of travel choices predominated. This stood in contrast to those more open to switching to a more sustainable way of travel, who felt that more ‘positive’ messages linked to personal benefits would be more motivational.

The need for positive messages around the price, safety and cleanliness of public transport, to raise awareness and tackle barriers were also perceived to be required.

“I think it’s all about word of mouth. If someone goes on it [public transport] and it’s a much better experience, and it’s a bit more frequent, then others might try it.”

- Resident who rejects to switching travel choice

“I think if they want change to happen, they’re going to have to advertise it. Otherwise, nobody’s going to be thinking about it, nobody’s going to know that it needs to happen as much.”

- Resident who rejects to switching travel choice

“Could they project, say in 25 years time, what will happen if we keep going the same way, compared to if everybody made the change? I don’t know if it would work, but at least we’d be able to see the kind of impact that we’re going to have. Because I think people live for the moment.”

- Resident who rejects to switching travel choice

“I would think motivation rather than making people feel bad for not doing it as much, definitely more upbeat.”

- Resident who has the potential to switch. Lives in village / countryside

79% of people rated the ease of getting about their local area by car or van as good, but only **40%** rated the provision of cycle lanes and paths as good. This shows the disparity between perceived facilities for car travel and that for active travel.

- 2021 Public Attitudes Survey

Summary from North East business

The primary research with North East employers was structured to engage a variety of businesses in terms of size, sector and locations. Here is a summary of the main findings:

- Business size and the need for travel within the working day stand out as influencing current practices and outlook towards sustainable travel.
- Business location is also significant, with those in areas without good access to public transport feeling that reliance on car is inevitable.
- For many of the employers we spoke to as part of our research for this strategy, a switch to electric vehicles was seen as a first positive step in being more green, although the cost required to buy a vehicle was cited as a major barrier.
- Consistent with the residents' strand of work, improving public transport provision is perceived to be essential. To improve access, this needs to be supported by better value, simpler and multi-modal ticketing, especially to engage lower-wage earning groups.

“Education would be key to encouraging uptake. More high profile campaigning is important to raise the profile of the alternative options for travel - for staff and for employers alike.”

- Small business, North Tyneside

“You can't do this type of campaigning ad-hoc - it has to be regular and constant.”

- A North East Business park

“A single website for users to be able to investigate and map journeys via multiple modes is key. A single quality source of transport information is important. The current situation seems fragmented.”

- Micro business, Newcastle

“I appreciate not everyone can give up cars, so any support on looking at alternatives, for example car sharing or cycling, is helpful.”

- Micro business, Newcastle

“Yes definitely, get people to ‘try before you buy’, trialling new options to help get people to shift.”

- Large business, South Tyneside

“Greater use of electric vehicles for localised travel would be good.”

- Large business, Durham

“Cheaper fares and passes would be important incentives to help. The alternatives have to be cost effective.”

- Small business, North Tyneside

- The changing work patterns triggered by the pandemic present a potential opportunity, although indication that employees need encouragement to return to public transport and transport-sharing behaviours.
- Businesses also stated that the Cycle to Work schemes have been successful over time with many noting strong results and good uptake amongst their staff. In addition, North East employers were clear on the need for an improved offer and more joined up approach to cycling with other modes of transport so that users can seamlessly use different types of transport in one journey.
- An integrated communications and information campaign could be important to raise awareness and to begin the process of behaviour change.

“Car sharing used to popular and used regularly by staff but was discouraged during Covid and hasn’t picked up again.”

- Large business South Tyneside

“It’s good to encourage increased cycling in city centres like Newcastle through bike lanes, but the other transport options need to be joined up, so that bikes can be carried on the Metro and bus, for example.”

- Micro business, North Tyneside

“The [transport] network is poor, consistent and not joined up.”

- Small business, Newcastle

“Yes, we do it [public transport ‘taster’ tickets], but its only for a short term measure, and its for bus only. Metro access has been stopped. Network- wide taster tickets would be much better.”

- North East business park

“Business owners receive an incentive and tax benefits if their transport options switch to electric, but that incentive does not apply to individuals. The economics don't add up and so staff choose traditional cars.”

- Small business, Newcastle

“Post Covid, there’s lots of changed working and travel behaviours. Business has embedded online and agile working, and increased use of technology - all of which contribute to greater thought around travel.”

- Large business, Gateshead

“The changing nature of working [as a result of the easing of COVID-19 restrictions] is dictating a shift. People want to travel again, feel safer, and face to face meetings are important to their clients. But this switch for staff has been back to traditional car use - not public transport.”

- Small business Newcastle

5. What are the challenges?

What are the challenges?

Introduction

We have identified a series of key challenges which we need to address to enable us to break down barriers to greener journeys – whether they're real or perceived. If we are successful, sustainable travel such as walking, cycling, and public transport will be a more attractive offer and help health and the environment.

These challenges are:

- Safety (actual and perceived)
- Accessibility
- Affordability (actual and perceived)
- Information and messaging
- Coordination and integration
- Journey times and reliability (actual and perceived)

Safety (actual and perceived)

Personal safety

The findings from the research set out in the previous chapter found that some people are concerned about potentially falling victim to crime or witnessing anti-social behaviour while using public transport, both at stations and on services. The same is true for people's perceptions of personal safety when cycling or walking in built up places and in rural locations.

We also know that some people have negative perceptions of safety and security impacts on public transport especially at night.

Passengers' most significant personal security concern (on Metro) was identified as being the risk of experiencing anti-social behaviour which negatively impacted people's perceptions of personal safety.

For active travel, poor street lighting, busy and inconsiderate road traffic and a lack of or inappropriate places for crossing roads were safety issues which have been highlighted by residents.

Cleaning regimes

Although cleanliness on transport has always been important to passengers, since the pandemic this has become more of a priority and often acknowledged as a reason for not using transport.

Buses, Metros, trains and stations were already professionally cleaned daily but enhanced cleaning regimes and improved ventilation on public transport were introduced from March 2020.

Cleanliness remains a challenge and has led to more people choosing to travel by private car.

26% of people in the north east felt that not enough was being done to ensure safety on public transport following the pandemic and 32% indicated that they would never again feel completely comfortable on public transport.

In early April, 16% of respondents to the Insight Panel were identified as 'COVID reserved', indicating high levels of concern since the pandemic and thus are unlikely to be willing to travel by public transport.

Road incidents

A challenge which was highlighted by those who either cycled or considered doing so, was poorly maintained cycle lanes, as well as having to share road space with cars, and a lack of cycle lanes in general. Safety was a specific barrier identified for cycling.

Figure 6: Aspects of safety as a barrier to cycling (users and non-users)

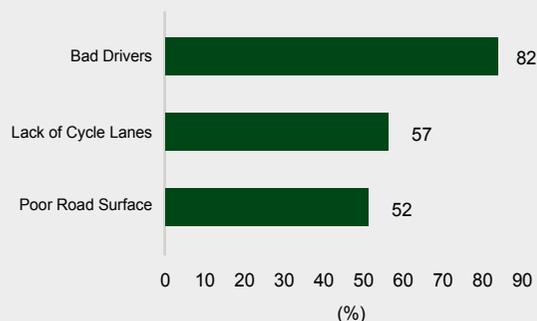
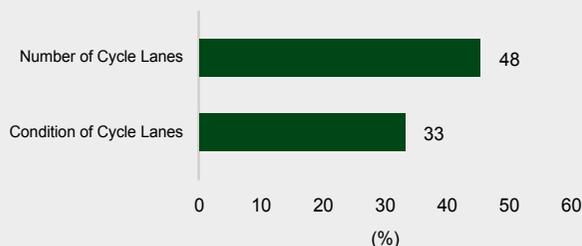


Figure 7: Reasons for dissatisfaction with cycle lanes (users and non-users)



Accessibility

The North East's geography, both in terms of the economy and in patterns of settlement and development, provides challenges and opportunities around sustainable transport options.

Our mix of urban, suburban, and rural landscapes results in complex demands for travel and this is reflected in our varied transport challenges, from rural isolation in our remoter areas to poor air quality and congestion in our cities. For many people living in more remote rural communities, using a private car for travel is perceived as the only viable option.



Another of our personas, Jo, faces similar issues when she attempts to travel with her parents, one of whom is in a wheelchair. Sometimes the accessible areas on board public transport are already taken by those who don't need the spaces, which leads her to rely more on her private car when travelling with her parents.

It is important to recognise this variation and the way people's needs and experiences vary between the type of area they live in, for example urban or rural. There are also those who experience particular barriers to mobility and access due to a disability or injury, the elderly and people with hidden disabilities and conditions.

Transport and socio-economic inequality are linked. Inequalities in the provision of transport services are strongly linked with where people live, and the associated differences in access to employment, healthcare, education, and local shops.

Transport can help to reduce inequalities by enabling people to access a range of services quickly and easily. Good transport links also play a role in reducing deprivation by enabling people to access job opportunities which in turn can improve quality of life and reduce inequality.



In the past Sahira has struggled to get both of her young children on board public transport, especially as her youngest is in a pushchair and there was not sufficient space.

Public transport

The North East bus network reflects the nature of the area in which it operates, with infrequent services in remote rural areas and high frequencies in dense, urban areas. In rural and suburban areas there is often a lack of public transport between towns and rural communities with the focus being on links to urban areas.

Bus journeys can be long and indirect which makes them less accessible and poor supporting infrastructure such as a lack of bus shelters can also hinder usage.

Poor waiting facilities at bus stops acts as a deterrent to people who rarely or never use public transport, and as a barrier to people considering changing the way they travel.

Rail connectivity is of a high quality within the urban Tyne and Wear core, mainly thanks to the well-developed Metro system. However, connectivity remains a challenge to more remote rural areas and deprived areas in the urban periphery.

There are large areas of the North East that do not benefit from train services at all because there are no local routes. This hinders wider opportunities for businesses and residents alike.

The lack of train services does not just occur in rural areas of the region. For example, in Tyne and Wear there are significant communities that are unserved by rail, for example Washington and West Newcastle. This leads to over-reliance on the congested road network and economic isolation for people without a car.

Active travel

Walking and cycling accessibility is impacted in many cases by poor street lighting, and a lack of places for crossing roads.

There needs to be improved integration to enhance accessibility to successfully encourage people to walk or cycle to stations and interchanges. Which reduces opportunities to employment and other key facilities.

Mobility issues

The research findings outlined in chapter 3 highlighted how people with mobility issues are heavily reliant on the car, which is partly due to accessibility issues with public transport. Problems have been reported by those who have accessibility issues whilst attempting to use the network including a lack of dropped kerbs, unsuitable crossing points and shared paths.

Our research found that non-essential journeys were a rarity amongst those with mobility issues.

In addition, passengers face challenges of inadequate facilities including bike storage facilities and no way-finding between different types of transport.

Sustainable links to employment sites

Professional services tend to be focused on the main urban centres and at out-of-town commercial developments, with advanced manufacturing located at business parks around the region.

Typically, higher volumes of Metro and local rail usage are closely correlated with areas of high employment density, particularly in Tyne and Wear.

However, some key developments go against this trend and are located away from city and town centres in locations with irregular bus services and poor and indirect walking and cycling routes. Instead, they are served by large car parking facilities and promotes private car use as the most convenient travel option. This is a key challenge which we need to work with employers to see if this can be addressed.

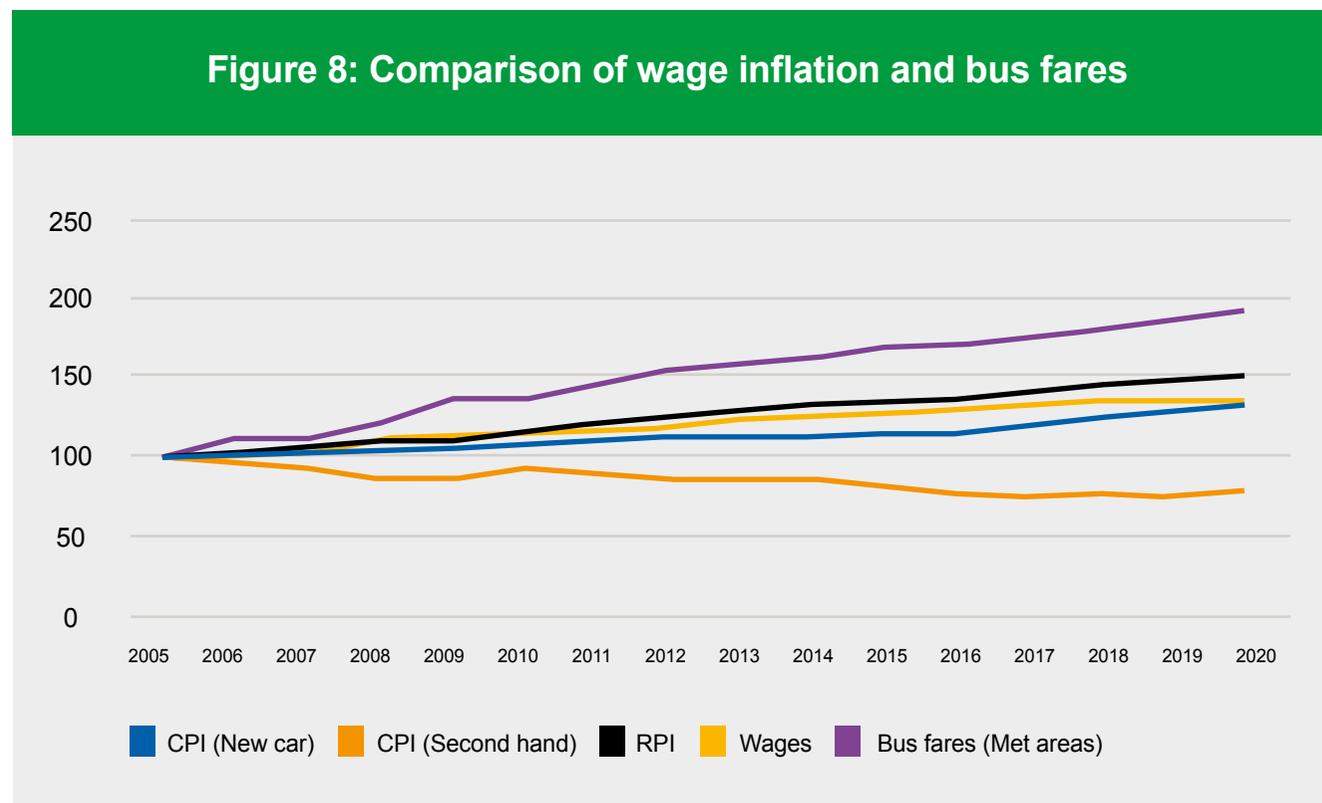
Affordability (actual and perceived)

Pricing and affordability can be a barrier to sustainable transport use.

Transport poverty

Transport poverty is defined as households and individuals who struggle or are unable to make the journeys that they need. This can be the result of low income, poor availability of public transport and needing a long time to access essential services. The impacts of transport poverty are worst for disadvantaged people in rural areas according to a recent review.

Over a third of Metro stations on the network are located in the bottom 20% of nationally defined areas of deprivation. As with the rest of the UK, recent decades have seen rising levels of car use and ownership in the North East. However, car ownership in the region is lower than all other English regions outside of London, highlighting the importance of affordable, sustainable transport as a means of reducing inequality and providing access to opportunities.



Relative affordability of public transport and car travel

In 2021, people told us that the biggest barrier to public transport use was that bus fares were perceived to be too high. This perception often leads to people using their private vehicle.

Over the last twenty years in real terms the cost of motoring nationally fell by 15%. Over the same period the cost of rail fares went up by over 20% and bus and coach fares by over 40%.

Figure 8 shows that wages have not kept pace with inflation (Retail Price Index) or with the prices of fares.

Affordability (actual and perceived)

Cost of Zero Emission Vehicles

Although outside of our remit, the cost of purchasing a ZEV can also be a barrier to the take up of Electric Vehicles.

With the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to end by 2030 and from 2035 the commitment that all new cars and vans must be fully zero emission at the tailpipe, this is a challenge that must be addressed.

Rising fuel costs

In 2022, prices are rising faster than wages. In March 2022, the UK inflation rate rose to 7%, the highest rate since 1992, driven by a sharp increase in petrol and diesel costs.



The cost of insurance, petrol and car parking is a key reason that Rowan does not own a car and is reliant on public transport to get to job interviews.

Information and messaging

Real-time information is a challenge for those open to using public transport in the North East as it is not network-wide and it is mainly accessed through a mobile app. This perhaps restricts those who are able to get this information.

As of June 2022, there is currently no single source of real-time pre-journey information available across the North East.

Information provision varies widely throughout our sustainable transport network. The up to date and quality of information at waiting facilities range widely from high-quality interchanges with modern and current information in both rural and urban areas, to bus stops with no timetabled information.

A challenge is that many of the current transport information tools aren't responsive to short term changes such as delays, which means that the information is incorrect as to when the next service will arrive.

Another key challenge is the lack of internet access for 12.1% of our residents, the highest proportion in England. This restricts these people from accessing accurate and up-to-date service information.



Integration

How integrated each type of transport is with another, affects the way in which people decide to travel.

Passengers have a choice and if travelling between different types of public transport is difficult, confusing and/or frustrating then they may perhaps stick to one type or alternatively travel by private car. This will improve regional health and environment.

For example, many services in the region are not connected in terms of timetables, so it is likely someone could get off the bus at an interchange but face having to wait a period of time to board a connecting bus or rail service.

Multi-modal ticketing

The North East offers a variety of ticketing products that allow interchange between different operators and types of transport, including buses, Metro, the Shields Ferry and some local rail services.

Consequently, there is still a complex range of brands, fare offers and a lack of standardised tickets for particular demographics such as young people.

Active travel

People have told us that the limits on the carriage of cycles on buses and trains and the different booking arrangements between train operators remains confusing and continues to act as a barrier to use. This is in addition to the lack of cycling facilities discussed earlier in this chapter.



Journey times and reliability (actual and perceived)

Perceptions of the reliability and punctuality of buses in our region, as well as their actual performance, are a barrier to bus use.

The journey times, frequency and average speeds for local rail services in the North East are not comparable with the private car. Currently, a car is faster than a direct train to travel from Newcastle to Middlesbrough in Tees Valley and a journey by train from Sunderland to Darlington.

Active travel

Many people hold the perception that the journeys they need to make are too far in length to be taken on foot or by bike. Based on a 2018/19 National Travel survey, 408million regular everyday trips that people make were less than one mile and 1.4 billion were between 1 and 5 miles in length. Arguably, this shows that many of these journeys are capable of being made by walking or cycling, even if only in part.

Seasonality on the use of active travel

Active travel use is affected by seasonality. Some research participants acknowledged that they were more likely to walk or cycle in spring and summer, and in good weather.

Road network

The North East has a comprehensive and extensive road network.

However, this network carries increasing levels of congestion, with high proportions of car usage in urban centres including Newcastle, Durham, Gateshead and Sunderland. This congestion imposes costs on our society, to the economy, where it is estimated to cost £236 per driver each year and is leading to increasing journey times, journey time reliability and increased emissions.



This is the case for Sam, who is concerned about getting home from the city after work as a lone female traveller. She's used her car to do this for some time, primarily because she thinks that public transport takes longer to make journeys and is less direct, but secondly because she doesn't deem it safe.

Reliability of public transport

Many north east residents perceive the reliability of public transport as an issue. Some residents have told us that the bus not turning on time a key barrier and prevented them from using the bus. If people travelling are not confident in the reliability of the transport network, they simply will not use it. Often, if a person has a negative experience during their journey they will not use it again. Additionally, passengers want certainty that their train will arrive on time.

6. Where do we want to be?

Where do we want to be?

Introduction

The aim of this strategy is to set out ways in which we can make it easier for people to travel sustainably. We need to reflect the barriers people face and every day needs of people making journeys – this includes young people, working parents and the elderly.

This strategy sets a target to encourage car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and for people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably.

We believe that mobility is good and active travel is the cheapest and healthiest way to get around. That is why we want to encourage people to be more physically active where possible.

This would have a big impact on carbon emissions, make people healthier by improving mental and physical wellbeing, and make our roads and streets safer and cleaner places. Enabling people to make more journeys actively or using public transport will be the most significant way of achieving our transport objectives.

To do this, we will need to win the hearts and minds of travellers across the region – people who often lead busy and complex lives, and who may not currently consider that sustainable travel is a viable option for them.



For car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably, we need to look at breaking down barriers to greener journeys – whether they're real or perceived barriers. This is why we need local people to share their thoughts and ideas on what we need to do to help make sustainable travel easier for everyone.



This small change will mean at least
200 million
more trips will be made by sustainable forms of travel each year, benefiting our environment and public health.

This chapter sets out where we want to be over the next five years for each of our identified barriers:

- Accessibility
- Affordability (actual and perceived)
- Information and messaging
- Coordination and integration
- Journey times and reliability (actual and perceived)

We need to build on this and ask residents and businesses what we need to introduce to enable people to convert just one of their weekly journeys currently made by car to sustainable travel and for people travelling sustainably to continue to do so.

It is important to note that the interventions set out as part of this strategy won't address some of the challenges that follow. The work we are doing through our other transport strategies and multi-million pound investment programmes will. It is the aim of this strategy to identify where there are gaps to make sure that everything we are doing boosts the uptake of sustainable travel.

Safety (actual and perceived)

We want to increase the use of active travel by making the North East a safer place to walk, wheel or cycle. Safety will be the first consideration in the design of all new transport schemes and programmes to support people to make the right travel choice.

On our road network, the needs of all users will be considered, ensuring that conflicts between the most vulnerable road users and other traffic are reduced to improve road safety. We want to be in a position where there are more direct and safer routes to public transport hubs for pedestrians and cyclists which are well maintained, with attractive and well-designed waiting facilities.

People who wish to walk or cycle will be confident using the network as cycling routes will be safe, secure and segregated where possible to make it a natural choice for their journey, such as home to school trips. This will be considered mainly as part of our forthcoming North East Active Travel Strategy.

Groups identified as feeling unsafe either travelling by walking and cycling, or on the public transport network will have a renewed confidence using the network, ensuring that more people travel sustainably from home to work for example.

Cleaning regimes on buses and Metros will continue to be of the highest importance to operators, ensuring that the network is safe. Passengers will no longer have concerns about this and through concerted efforts, current non-users will also be aware of how clean and secure the sustainable network is.

Accessibility (actual and perceived)

We want to be in the position where people who live, work and visit our region have excellent accessibility to an integrated public transport network that connects more people to employment and education opportunities.

This means a more accessible sustainable transport network which offers a feasible alternative to travelling by car, including high-quality connections. We want to narrow the gap in public transport provision between urban locations and rural communities in the North East.

Where people need to travel by car or van, we will encourage them to use a Car Club, or order a Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) taxi, or own a ZEV car or van, because the region will have a world-leading electric charging infrastructure offer.

We want to make it easier for people with restricted mobility to travel sustainably. We recognise there is a clear need for public transport services, such as taxis and private hire

vehicles, to help people with mobility difficulties travel independently, who for specific users they are a lifeline. This also means ensuring people with mobility issues can access and use the integrated network.

We want the region to have regular high-quality public transport services which connect people to employment, education and leisure locations with competitive journey times to the private car. We want to ensure that new housing and economic development in the North East has good active travel and public transport links built in from the outset.

Affordability

We will address perceptions of the affordability and value for money of public transport fares. We also want to reduce the impact of transport poverty, by ensuring our sustainable transport network can get both current and non-users where they want to be, at a price considered affordable and that public perception represents fares as being good value for money.

Information and messaging

We want local people to consider using sustainable transport an attractive choice. We want our strategic marketing and messaging to attract people who haven't used sustainable travel before as well as 'win back' former users to grow public transport patronage and get more people travelling actively. We want our messaging to reassure people that public transport is safe, breaking down perceived barriers to use.

There is a need to address the perceptions of reliability and the convenience of public transport, through accurate and easy to access information, whilst enhancing the customer experience through refurbished public transport stations, and integration with the wider sustainable network.

Coordination and integration

We want to have an improved, seamless, coordinated and integrated transport system across the North East which includes network-wide ticketing and journey planning being made easily available to passengers.

We want to encourage more multi-modal journeys in which a user may use a car for part of their journey, then switch onto a sustainable form of transport using a Park & Ride facility.

We want to make public transport easier to understand for new customers. We also want to achieve increased accessibility to an integrated sustainable transport system for people in rural areas, connecting them more effectively to main bus routes, railway stations and Park & Ride facilities, which have adequate cycle storage.

Integration of different types of transport will allow passengers to make sustainable travel choices across the whole of the North East.

Journey times and reliability

We want public transport end-to-end journeys to be faster and more competitive with the private car.

We want to address actual perceptions of public transport reliability by ensuring services are more punctual and improve perceptions that services will arrive on time through the greater use of real-time passenger information.

We want the North East to have reliable active travel infrastructure in place so it can be used year-round, addressing perceptions that walking, wheeling, and cycling is just for warmer and dryer months.

We want to enable switching short car journeys to cycling and walking where possible. We also want to make our roads flow better for goods and essential car and van journeys, improving journey times and efficiency.

Making the right travel choice 'decision tree'

We want people to consider using the decision tree as a guide to see whether they can convert one of their weekly journeys currently made by car to active travel or public transport.

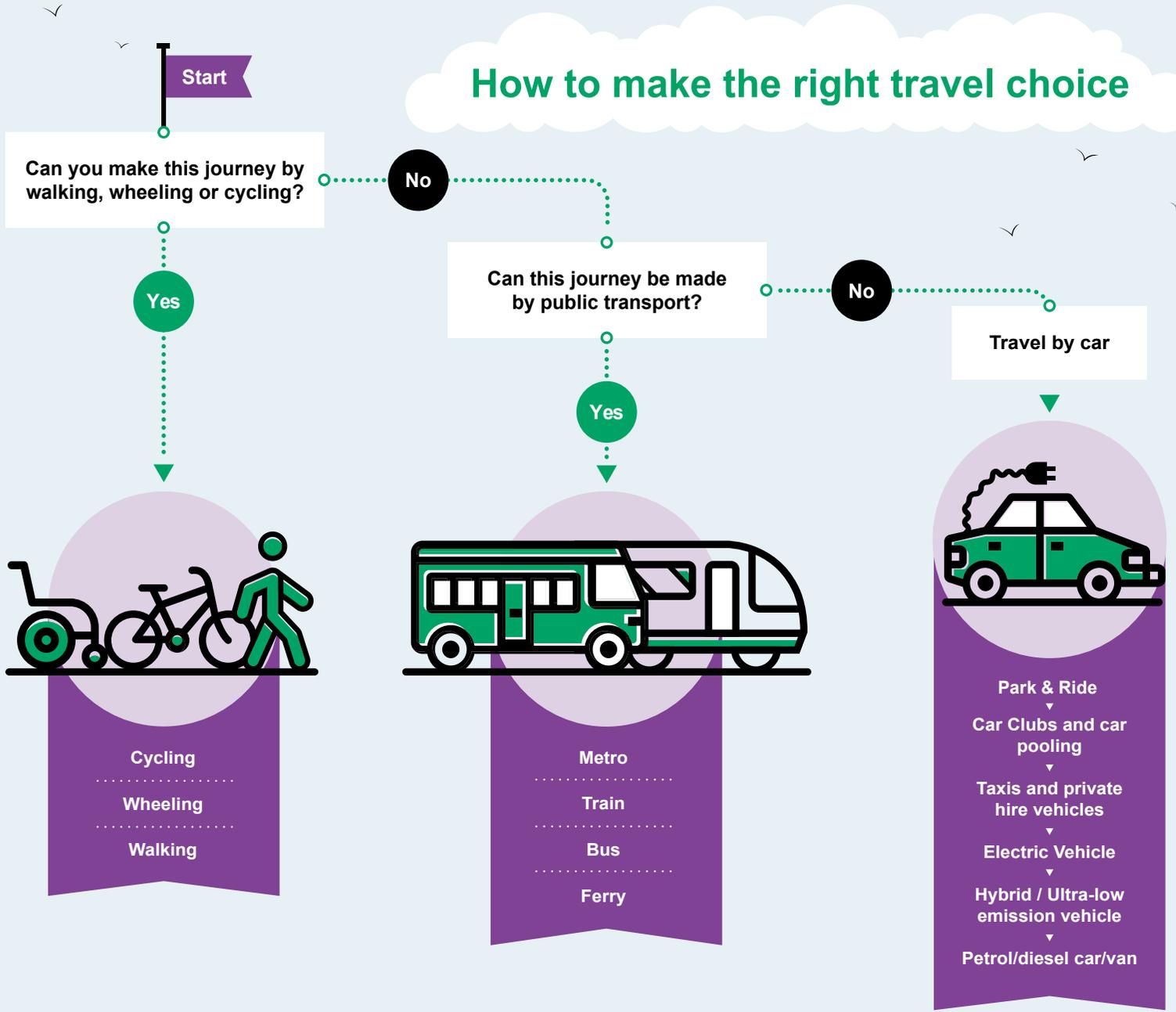
At the start of the decision tree, the first question asks people to consider whether the journey they are planning to make can be made by walking, wheeling or cycling.

If not, we then ask people to consider whether their journey can be made by public transport such as by Bus, Metro or Rail.

If the journey cannot be made by walking, cycling or by public transport either due to personal or journey circumstances, then we understand that people may need to travel by car. Where this is the case, we first ask whether a journey could be made by driving to a Park & Ride interchange where they could park and then make the rest of their journey by public transport. The second consideration of travelling by car on our roads should be whether the journey could be made by the use of a car club, a taxi or private hire vehicle or a Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV), rather than by a petrol or diesel vehicle.



How to make the right travel choice



Some things to bear in mind

- Can you mix modes?
- Do you have restricted mobility needs?
- What's the weather?
- How much are you carrying?
- How much time do you have?
- What type of transport do you own?
- Can you afford the cost of the journey?

Figure 9: Making the right travel choice decision tree.

Personas

We have used the decision tree to help our personas to change one of their weekly journeys currently made by car to active travel or public transport, based on their individual and journey circumstances which we set out on pages 13-15. These examples are intended to help people to consider choosing a more sustainable and greener travel option for just one weekly journey.



Leigh would be able to switch a shopping trip. If he is going to collect the essentials, like milk or bread, then he could consider walking or cycling instead of driving his car. However, if he's going to collect a large weekly shop from the supermarket he probably needs to drive.

To make car journeys more sustainable, Leigh could consider joining a local car club for frequent journeys or book a Zero Emission Vehicle taxi. These options have the potential to significantly reduce Leigh's carbon footprint in the long-term for his necessary car journeys.



Jo is an example of someone, who because of the nature of their work, personal circumstances and rural location, would not be able to get everywhere they needed via public transport or active travel. For Jo, we think the car will be the right choice for many of her weekly journeys.

To make her journeys more sustainable, she could consider replacing her current diesel vehicle for a zero emission vehicle. That's not to say Jo can't use public transport at all, in fact when she is caring for her parents, they could travel together via bus or Metro safe in the knowledge that the vehicles are accessible, and guarantees are in place should the accessible spaces ever be fully occupied at the time of travel. This could be her one journey which she currently does by car now by sustainable transport.



Bobbie and her parents could travel to and from school by foot more frequently given it is within walking distance, if the street infrastructure was improved near to the school and made safer.

This may not be possible every day, but we could encourage Bobbie's parents to walk to school as and when their working day allows. If Bobbie and her parents switched one of their car journeys to sustainable travel, there would be a clear benefit to their health and wellbeing, as well as a reduction in unnecessary car journeys during peak travel times.



In the case of Mohammed, who is 78 years old and travels frequently to see family and friends, the places he wants to visit are beyond the distance he is able to walk or is comfortable cycling, so public transport is his best alternative.

However, his semi-rural location won't always make this easy, which is why in some cases he may need to still travel by car if he is meeting at a time or in a place that isn't well served by public transport. In these instances, using Park & Ride services will be key to minimising the amount of car mileage, which will reduce his carbon emissions and save him money on fuel.



An example where active travel and public transport are both viable is Rowan, who is 24 and has been looking to find employment since 2020.

The main journeys Rowan is making are to interviews locally, thereby continuing to travel sustainably, with associated health benefits. If the interviews he is travelling for are outside the city, a sustainable travel option would be to travel by bus, Metro or local rail.



For Sahira because of the varied trips she needs to make juggling the school run and working, switching one of her weekly car journeys will depend on the situation. For example, where time allows Sahira has the potential to use public transport to get to general appointments, run errands and pick her children up.

This will save her some time and it would reduce carbon emissions and air pollution. Where she is pushed for time, particularly during the working week, there is an appreciation that Sahira will likely continue to use her own car to get around. She may start to think about purchasing a Zero Emission Vehicle in time.



In Sam's case, utilising one of the region's Park & Ride facilities could be an effective way of switching to a more sustainable journey a week, as she can be confident that her onward journey will be accessible on public transport given her additional mobility needs.

Sam's actions will hopefully encourage her employees to make greater use of public transport. This means they could have a less stressful commute as they aren't having to contend with heavy traffic during the drive to work.



Alex could easily switch to make one additional sustainable journey per week. They live in a suburban area, and their main journeys to work and college as a manufacturing apprentice are well served by public transport.

Using the decision tree, it is apparent that Alex's entire journey could not be made using active travel as they live too far away and work varied shift patterns, meaning they would sometimes be travelling at night, which they don't feel confident doing. However, using multiple modes of transport would be the best option to get Alex where they need to go. This could be cycling to and safely storing a bike at a transport interchange, then using the Metro, Ferry, bus or a combination of them to reach their final destination.

7. Case studies

Tyne and Wear Metro 'Take the Kids for Free' offer

In early 2020 Nexus introduced a new offer for passengers called 'Take the Kids for Free'. This initiative allows up to three children (aged 11 and under) to travel for free with a fare paying adult. A fare paying adult was defined as anyone with a valid adult ticket, including season ticket holders and Gold Card holders. The offer was initially introduced on weekends and proved to be successful before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. With restrictions lifted over summer 2021, Metro expanded the scheme to a daily offer.



Boosting sustainable leisure travel along the North Northumberland Coast

Northumberland County Council has worked with bus operators Arriva and Travelsure as well as other stakeholders for several years to encourage more sustainable leisure travel by bus along the North Northumberland coast.

The campaign delivered simple and easy to understand routes, coordinated schedules for both the summer and winter seasons, joint marketing using a common 'Coast and Castles' brand and a unique multi-operator Travelcard scheme covering a dedicated range of tickets.

Arriva and Travelsure have now been consistently recording growth of 1-2% per annum, allowing investment in new or refurbished vehicles and more journeys to be added to timetables (especially on Sundays and Bank Holidays).



Cobalt Business Park – North Tyneside

Cobalt Business Park in North Tyneside has a Travel Plan to support the whole site and help promote greater use of walking, cycling and public transport as well as discouraging the use of cars, especially single occupancy vehicle trips. The business park saw demand for cycling grow in 2020.

All Cobalt employees are offered the Cobalt More Card, entitling the holder to free travel on any bus service within the Cobalt Free Zone and discounts on travel

Tickets including 5% off the cost of the Network One Annual Pass which can be used on bus, Metro, ferry and trains.

Go-Hi

Go-Hi Mobility as a Service (Maas) platform, launched by the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) in June 2021, aims to improve accessibility to integrated transport services for residents, tourists, and business travellers in Scotland's Highlands and Islands regions and beyond.

It integrates multiple transport and travel options into one app, providing more journey planning capabilities, easier access to travel information, in-app ticketing and a simple payment system. It allows users to plan, book and pay for end-to-end multimodal journeys in a single transaction using a smartphone or desktop device. The platform offers instant access to buses, trains, ferries, taxis, car clubs, car rental, bike hire, domestic flights, demand responsive transport and hotels allowing users to plan bespoke door-to-door journeys.

There were over 1,500 downloads of the app in the first year of operation.

Walk Once a Week

Walk Once a Week, a project ran by Living Streets, a charity for everyday walking in the UK, involves primary schools and encourages children to walk to school at least once a week. At the start of each school day children are asked to record how they have travelled to school. They get points based on how sustainable their journey to school has been and are given sticker badges as rewards. The project can be used for class and school competitions with the goal of encouraging sustainable travel and reducing car use.

Walk Once a Week schools see, on average, a 30% reduction in car journeys taken to the school gate and a 23% increase in walking rates.

8. Measures of success

Measures of success

The key measure of success of this strategy will be achieving growth in the number of people using sustainable travel types such as active travel and public transport and reducing car travel.

Enabling people to make more journeys actively or using public transport will be the most significant way of achieving our transport objectives.

Firstly, we want to repair the damage caused by the pandemic to public transport use in the North East. We then want to progress to a position where a higher proportion of people choose to travel more sustainably for all journeys. This will lead to growth in sustainable transport use.

We know that for some trips, people may still need to travel by car or van because of the distance involved and their personal and journey circumstances. This is why the greater take up of Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) are important so that even journeys that do need to be made by car or van can also help to achieve our objectives.

Target

On average, people in the region make 19 trips a week. There were an estimated 408 million trips under one mile and 750 million trips under five miles made by car in the North East in 2018/19.

This strategy sets a target to encourage car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and for people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably.

This small change will mean at least 200 million more trips will be made by sustainable forms of travel each year, benefiting our environment and public health. Little changes have a big impact, and if we each increase our green journeys by even a small amount that will take us towards achieving our vision and objectives.

The strategy sets a target to encourage car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and for people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably.

Benefits

If car users switched one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and people who don't have access to a car continue to travel sustainably this would:

- Potentially save around 214,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions a year;
- Potentially reduce poor health caused by road traffic emissions. It is estimated that poor air quality is responsible for around 360 deaths each year in central Tyneside alone;
- Result in more people becoming active, improving healthy life expectancy (HLE);
- Potentially save petrol and diesel car drivers approximately £170-190 per year (based on June 2022 fuel prices).



If car or van drivers who were making trips less than 1 mile walked instead, there could be approximately 60 million more walking trips a year. This would bring an estimated

£12.5 million

of economic benefits for the North East (based on Sustrans' figure of 26p benefit per mile).



If 10% car or van drivers who were making trips of between 1 and 5 miles cycled instead, there could be approximately 44 million more cycling trips a year, generating an estimated

£110 million

in economic benefits for the North East (based on Sustrans' figure of £1.15 benefit per mile).

North East Transport Plan KPIs

Achieving this target and following this strategy will achieve the following KPIs as set out in the North East Transport Plan.

Sustainable travel



Sustainable journeys:

33%

of journeys to be made by public transport, walking & cycling.

Increase the take up of Ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs)



Accelerated take-up of ULEVs is an essential component for meeting

net zero carbon

emissions from transport.

Improving road network performance



Our road network needs to operate more effectively. 100% efficiency means that all traffic is flowing without any hold-ups or delays.

In 2019 our network operated at

71.8%

of this.

Climate action



Reducing transport CO2 emissions per capita currently:

1.7 tonnes

the lowest outside London.

Improving air quality



Successfully encouraging a switch from private car to sustainable travel

will also improve air quality.

Reduce motor vehicle miles per head



Without successful interventions and alternatives, motor vehicle mileage per head

will grow

in our region in the years ahead.

9. How do we get there?

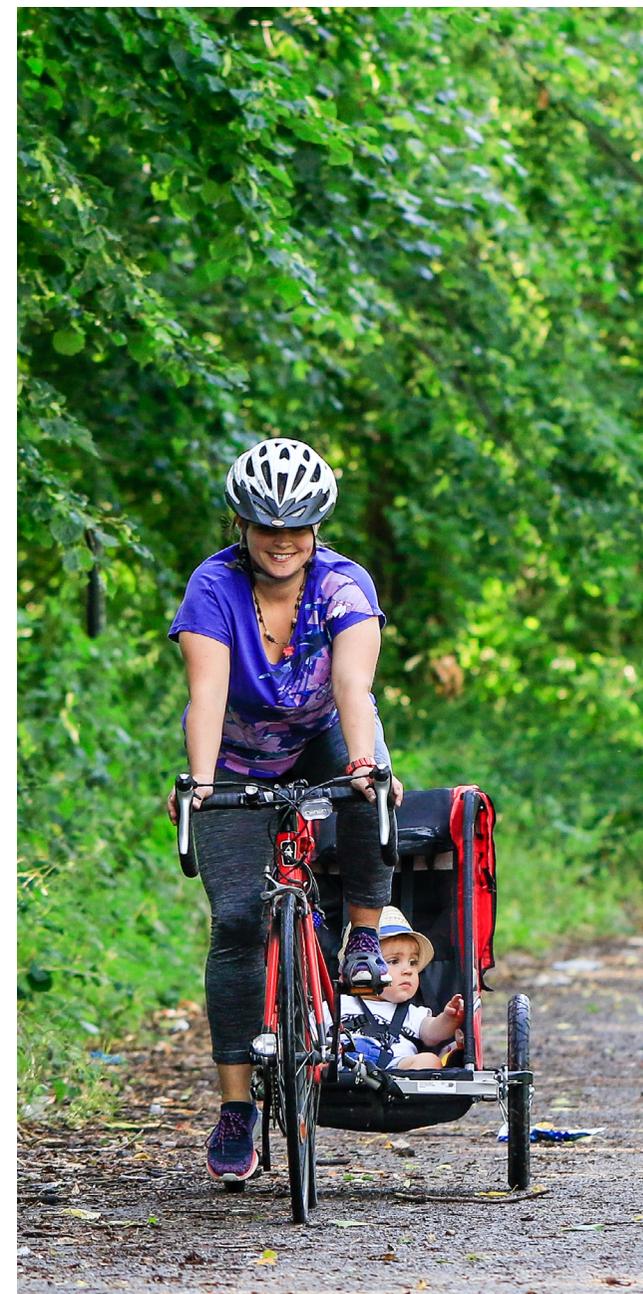
How do we get there?

This chapter sets out what interventions need to be delivered to help us achieve our target of asking car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably.

As part of the research, businesses were asked about any specific support or interventions which could support them to help their employees to switch to sustainable travel. The following suggestions were made:

- Ensuring closer relationships between transport operators across the North East so that the transport system is more integrated and easier to use for customers;
- Making quality improvements right across the region's whole transport network, as well as extending the network itself;
- Supporting better use of integrated technology such as improved travel information, an enhanced central website, and better network-wide ticketing and;
- Undertaking high profile campaigning.

We have used these findings and findings from research with residents to create a set of key commitments. We have also listed a delivery plan schemes which enable and encourage car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and also supports people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably.



Summary of key themes and commitments:

Theme	Key commitments	Objectives which will be achieved
<p>1. Raising awareness and messaging</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will appoint an Active Travel Ambassador for the region, who will champion and promote cycling and walking. • We will work with education and training providers to promote sustainable travel within schools. • We will work with employers, to promote sustainable travel for journeys from home to work. Options may include a Travel Plan Coordinator. • We will continue to make use of the Go Ultra Low North East brand, as a way to market and promote activities to support the uptake of electric vehicles for journeys that need to be made by car or van. • We will review our existing messaging to ensure that we can provide the tools to enable people to make the right travel choice. • We will work with partners to promote active travel for last mile of people’s journey. • We will work with public transport operators in the region to actively target new people to use public transport to grow patronage. This means developing specific plans and schemes to attract journeys from car including promoting Park & Ride. • We will consider messaging which links environmental impact and travel choices more explicitly, such as through journey planning apps that include carbon emissions information for different modes of transport. • We will ensure positive messaging which promotes the mental and physical health benefits and of active travel. • We will consider messaging which compares cost of car use (fuel, insurance, maintenance, wear and tear, parking etc.) with that of public transport. 	

<p>2. Incentives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work with North East employers, education providers, tourism organisations and other key partners to develop new and improve existing incentives for the use of sustainable transport. We will work with regional stakeholders to develop and promote existing value-based initiatives such as gamification application to encourage public transport uptake. Gamification is an online marketing technique to encourage engagement with a product or service. 	
<p>3. Making sustainable travel more competitive with the private car</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will strive to make sustainable travel options easier, more accessible, reliable, and affordable to be competitive with the private car by developing improvements such as multi-modal passenger information, showing real-time information. We will ensure that all recommendations, policy statements and commitments made in our current and forthcoming transport strategies develop quality improvements right across the network to make it easier for people to make the right travel choice. 	

Key

-  – Carbon neutral North East
-  – Overcome inequality and grow our economy
-  – Healthier North East
-  – Appealing sustainable transport choices
-  – Safe, secure network

1. Raising awareness and messaging

It is clear that undertaking high profile campaigning to raise awareness is required to encourage and enable car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and also support people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably.

There is a need for a regionally co-ordinated and branded sustainable travel behavioural change campaigns which focus on common journey types, such as commuting to work, and to education and training.

Whilst we recognise that it will not always be possible for people to make their entire journey by active travel and public transport, we will encourage people to consider travelling sustainably for at least part of their trip where possible.

We will also raise awareness of shared mobility services such as car clubs, cycle and e-scooter hire through co-ordinated campaigning.

In more remote rural areas such as large parts of Northumberland and Durham, where walking, cycling and public transport are not always suitable transport options, car clubs can provide a practical and cost-effective alternative to car ownership, reducing overall car use whilst offering access to a car for longer journeys.

The North East's Bus Service Improvement Plan sets out the need for a significant marketing and information campaigns to drive growth in bus patronage and to highlight key improvements and initiatives. Activities would be delivered on the ground by a range of partners (including bus operators, Nexus and Local Authorities), amplified by partnership-level campaigns.

We also must raise awareness to support the uptake of Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) for those already travelling by petrol or diesel cars. ZEVs provide a sustainable, emission-free option for journeys that need to be made by car or van and cannot be made by active travel or by public transport.

In 2022, public transport operators have been reassuring customers public transport is safe, overcoming negative messaging throughout 2020 and 2021.

There will need to be continued comprehensive, targeted publicity, highlighting steps that are being taken to maximise personal safety and minimise risk.



Messaging can also play a role in encouraging more people to consider cycling. For example positive messaging which sets out what is being done to address safety concerns regarding cycling and working to overcome barriers such as perceptions of personal safety.

We will highlight the health, social and community benefits that accompany initiatives which create more space for walking and cycling and safer spaces for children to play.

We will consider positive active travel messaging such as the numbers of cars that cycling would take off the road every day, its role in preventing long-term health conditions, the amount of tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions it saves, and the economic benefits.

We will also promote regional walking and cycling maps throughout the year through a specific awareness campaign to promote the benefits of active travel.

Key commitment(s)

- We will appoint an Active Travel Ambassador for the region, who will champion and promote cycling and walking.
- We will work with education and training providers to promote sustainable travel within schools.
- We will work with employers, to promote sustainable travel for journeys to work.

- We will continue to make use of the Go Ultra Low North East brand, as a way to market and promote activities to support the uptake of electric vehicles for journeys that need to be made by car or van.
- We will review our existing messaging to ensure that we make people feel capable and confident and motivate people to consider travelling more sustainably.
- We will work with partners to promote active travel for last mile journeys.
- We will work together with public transport operators in the region to actively grow patronage. This also means promoting Park & Ride for multi-modal journeys.
- We will consider messaging which links environmental impact and travel choices more explicitly, such as through journey planning apps that include carbon emissions information for different modes of transport.
- We will ensure positive messaging which promotes the mental and physical health, economic and environmental benefits of active travel.
- We will consider messaging which compares cost of car use (fuel, insurance, maintenance, wear and tear, parking etc.) with that of public transport.

2. Incentives

It is clear that incentives will be necessary to encourage and enable car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and also support people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably.

We will support public transport operators to introduce product ranges, such as fare trials/ taster tickets for employees and unemployed people, enabling them to try out different forms of transport.

Gamification incentives such as loyalty schemes and discount offers should also be considered to encourage people to switch a car journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling.

Key commitment(s)

- We will work with North East employers, education providers, tourism organisations and other key partners to develop new and improve existing incentives for the use of sustainable transport.
- We will work with stakeholders to develop and promote existing value-based initiatives such as gamification to encourage greater public transport use.

3. Making sustainable travel more competitive with the private car

Research commissioned by the Department for Transport found that travel decisions are driven primarily by convenience and cost, so to be competitive with the private car, sustainable travel options must be easy, accessible, reliable, and affordable.

We will continue to work with local authorities and transport operators to promote a shift towards public transport and reflect user and non-user feedback to make using sustainable transport more attractive and accessible.

We will promote the benefits of the forthcoming Enhanced Bus Partnership, Metro Flow scheme and the 46 new Metro trains which will deliver a step-change in the passenger experience and reliability.

Through delivery of the North East Transport Plan and daughter strategies such as our North East Rail and Metro Strategy, our Enhanced Bus Partnership, and our forthcoming Active Travel Strategy we are bringing forward changes to our transport network. This will enable travelling sustainably to be more attractive and feasible by improving the whole journey experience for the user.

This means improvements such as upgrading cycling and walking links to and from stations and bike storage at stations to encourage rail users to start and finish their journeys using healthy travel types.

On a wider scale, as set out in the North East Transport Plan, we also need the funding to create a grade-separated regional cycle network, and maintain it in excellent condition, that links both urban and rural communities, is designed to a common standard and has a strong, identifiable brand; this will mean cyclists do not conflict with other road users and can travel longer distances including to link into bus, Metro and rail services.

Whilst not directly part of this strategy, the recommendations identified in these other documents are the key way in which we achieve our target of asking car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably, delivering the region's transport vision and five objectives.

This strategy will also deliver interventions to support and enable people to use the infrastructure improvements being delivered through our other strategies.

However, in this strategy in order to make sustainable travel more competitive with the private car, we recommend that the region takes forward high-quality information improvements such as introducing real-time journey planning which will be made available to passengers through a single dedicated website and accompanying app.

We will also ensure that where feasible, the region's transport interchanges and rail stations will be supported with passenger information, showing real-time information about connecting journeys.

We are also currently developing a new logo for the emerging North East Enhanced Bus Partnership that will be applied across the network, so that it becomes a recognisable symbol of quality public transport for the region.

Guaranteed support when boarding and alighting was cited as factor that could encourage more people with mobility issues to use bus. We will work with operators to deliver a taxi guarantee which will give disabled passengers the peace of mind that if there isn't room for their wheelchair on board, a taxi replacement will be provided for them at no extra cost, as identified and set out in our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

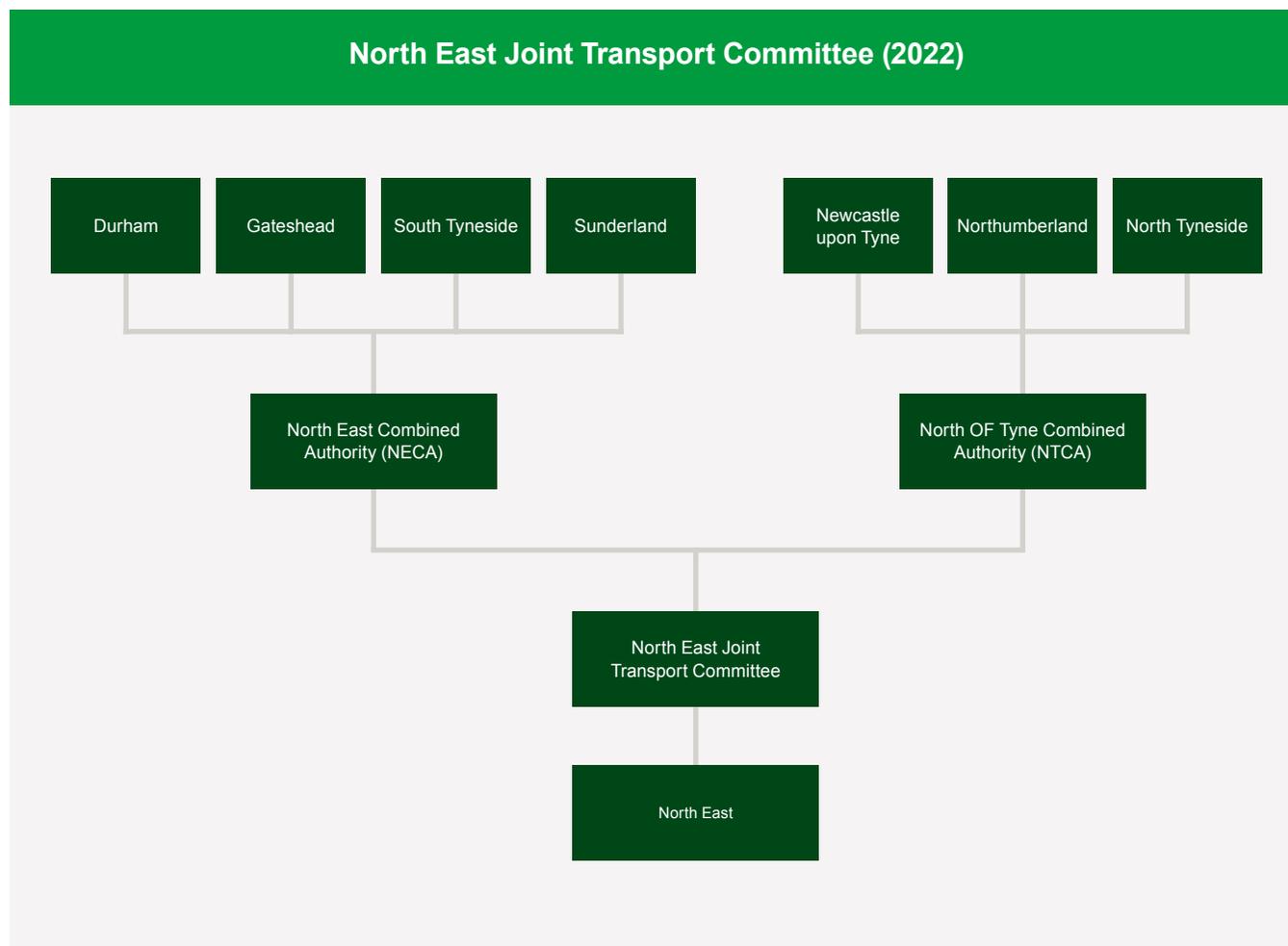
Key commitment(s)

- We will strive to make sustainable travel options easier, more accessible, reliable, and affordable to be competitive with the private car by developing improvements such as multi-modal passenger information, showing real-time information.
- We will ensure that all recommendations, policy statements and commitments made in our current and forthcoming transport strategies develop quality improvements right across the network to make it easier for people to make the right travel choice.

Delivering our strategy

To realise the ambitions of this strategy, the North East Joint Transport Committee (JTC) will work with stakeholders (including members of the public, local authorities, private sector bodies and the third sector) to deliver this strategy.

Schemes identified in this strategy will be included in our transport pipeline and will be fully developed as projects in accordance with the North East Transport Assurance Framework. This will demonstrate the propositions are socially acceptable, economically viable and deliverable as well as supporting the achievement of objectives nationally, regionally and locally.



Identified programme

This strategy has utilised the Transport Plan Pipeline, which was published in 2021, as a starting point, this strategy identifies additional schemes that will support people to make more sustainable journeys.

Initial schemes listed will achieve our target of asking car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably.

Our programme of investments stems from the North East Transport Plan as well as additional ideas garnered through consultation. The programme will be updated following engagement with the public as part of the consultation period. All of these interventions have been tested to ensure that they are consistent with Transport Plan objectives and that they have a degree of deliverability.

All schemes will be subject to more rigorous testing and appraisal in line with our Assurance Framework. They will only be delivered where they have demonstrated that they can contribute towards the delivery of the objectives.

Funding

All schemes presented in this strategy are subject to funding and further development. Transport North East actively seeks out funding opportunities from all sources and these proposals will be developed to a state of readiness to ensure they can access funding through the appropriate stream.

Previous rounds of the Local Growth Fund (LGF) and Transforming Cities Fund show how the region can deliver significant packages of investment. The pipeline of schemes is live and will be refreshed on a regular basis.

Our schemes are ambitious and we estimate would cost £29m in revenue funding over a five year period. We will further refine cost estimates as schemes are developed further.



Making the right travel choice – Proposed list of schemes and interventions

- 1 – Raising awareness and messaging
- 2 – Incentives
- 3 – Making sustainable travel more competitive with the private car

Scheme name	Scheme description
Creation of a regional behaviour change team	<p>We recognise that enabling transformative change in the way people travel in our region will not be easy. Therefore, to help people transition to a sustainable alternative, we will establish a dedicated Regional Behaviour Change Team. This will look at how we can ensure people in our region can make the right travel choice and that we make the right interventions by 2035 to migrate people over to more sustainable transport types.</p> <p>The team will also consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and ticketing solutions • Education in schools • Marketing and information campaigns • Gamification incentives • Engagement with local communities and employers • Perceived and actual barriers to public and sustainable transport use such as transport poverty and affordability. • Current car club and carpool provision and where commercial models are not viable, investigate potential solutions to overcome this
Social prescribing	Working in partnership with North East GPs, nurses and other healthcare providers to create a behaviour change programme in which patients may be referred to improve their health and wellbeing through a range of activities.

Scheme name	Scheme description
<p>'Go Smarter to School' - sustainable travel programme</p>	<p>A regional Active Travel / Sustainable Transport Promotion within North East Schools.</p> <p>Initiatives part of the programme could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specific schools-based marketing and comms campaign with a logo and branding. • Working with the Department for Transport's national award provider for cycle training in England, bikeability, introducing cycle training for different age groups, including Balance Bikes (bikes with no pedal where the focus is getting children used to being able to balance). • Bike maintenance training. • Public transport projects supporting the transition children make from primary school to secondary school, so are able to confidently use public transport (including the walk / cycle to where they access the service) and understand the expected standard of behaviour whilst travelling on public transport. • Walk Once a Week – class / school competitions with points based on how active the journey to school has been, including hands up surveys, project mascot, sticky badges as awards (will need to include encouraging park and stride). • Child pedestrian training – educating primary school age children on how to cross the road safely. • Theatre in education – a play presented to secondary school students on the dangers of using mobile phones when travelling, how to avoid dangerous situations and what to do in an emergency, etc. • Extra assistance provided to a small number of schools where car travel to school remains high, where students are asked to think about the active travel options available to them and how the streets could be improved to make the journey safer and more comfortable. Findings can be provided to the relevant local authority. • A single online system available regionally to capture survey information as a baseline and during the period of activities to see what the improvements have been. • Bike tagging (working with Northumbria Police). • Parking enforcement at schools – supporting the use of vehicles at schools to fine individuals parking illegally or inappropriately around schools.

Scheme name	Scheme description
Upgrades to the two Urban Traffic Management Control for command and control of the network	<p>Upgrades to the North East's two Urban Traffic Management Control systems to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrate and link with neighbouring areas and National Highways. • incorporate cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems and incorporate improvements in Artificial Intelligence giving accurate count and vehicle classification data for our network.
Customer experience strategy	<p>A customer's journey starts before they have even left the house. To make effective decisions customers we need to both provide the incentives to travel sustainably and break down the barriers from which to do so. We intend to produce a strategy which develops a high level accessibility standard for the region and integrate all aspects of the journey storyboard, setting expectations around how the transport plan will operate.</p> <p>This strategy will set out a framework for ideas around,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Information and Ticketing; 2) Access to stations the public transport network; 3) Safety, access and security on the public transport network; 4) Access to destinations. <p>The second component will be built around an access audit framework with an application to a number of case study locations.</p> <p>A linked idea is that the strategy will be supported by funds in order to garner new ideas and make changes to the network to improve the quality and access of the system.</p>
Innovation challenge fund for smart places	<p>Creation of an innovation challenge fund to develop and trial smart place applications with SMEs, start-ups and social enterprises. This could include digital technology for apps/online information related to connectivity for first and last mile journeys, rural mobility, micro mobility, smart mobility (intelligent transport systems, trip repurposing technology, and demand-supply matching).</p>

Scheme name	Scheme Description
Regionwide infrastructure mapping application	<p>Deliver a regional infrastructure and asset map which enables connectivity solutions to unlock further strategic growth sites (housing and employment) to be realised. This will include an online platform to enable local trade, deliveries and international exports. Will be achieved through engagement with the region's freight and logistics industry, supporting connectivity between different transport modes.</p>
Enhancing real-time public transport passenger information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing the perception of reliability and convenience of public transport, as highlighted through market research, through the provision of accurate and easy to access information. • Delivery of improved real-time passenger information including use of apps, social media, links from different sites, online, and interchange screens (making it clear it is real time rather than timetable). • Enhancements must include improved information on expected future delays such as expected roadworks, diverted routes, metro maintenance periods (including up to date info on replacement buses for the Metro). • Greater integration across all sustainable transport including Park & Ride space and availability and location and number of EV charging facilities.
Comprehensive ticketing and information package - including single smart transport payment system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor the delivery of a comprehensive cross modal ticketing, information and planning services, solution built in partnership with authorities and operators. • Build on and integrate available data sources to help travellers and staff better manage and plan journeys on our network in real time. • Enhance back office systems including UTMC technologies. • Build databases and tools for transport planners to continually enhance the offer to travellers. • Deliver a single smart transport payment system that works across all modes and incentivises sustainable travel choices. • Adopt strategies and technologies to reduce the cost of maintaining and operating of ticketing and information assets whilst enhancing customer experience.

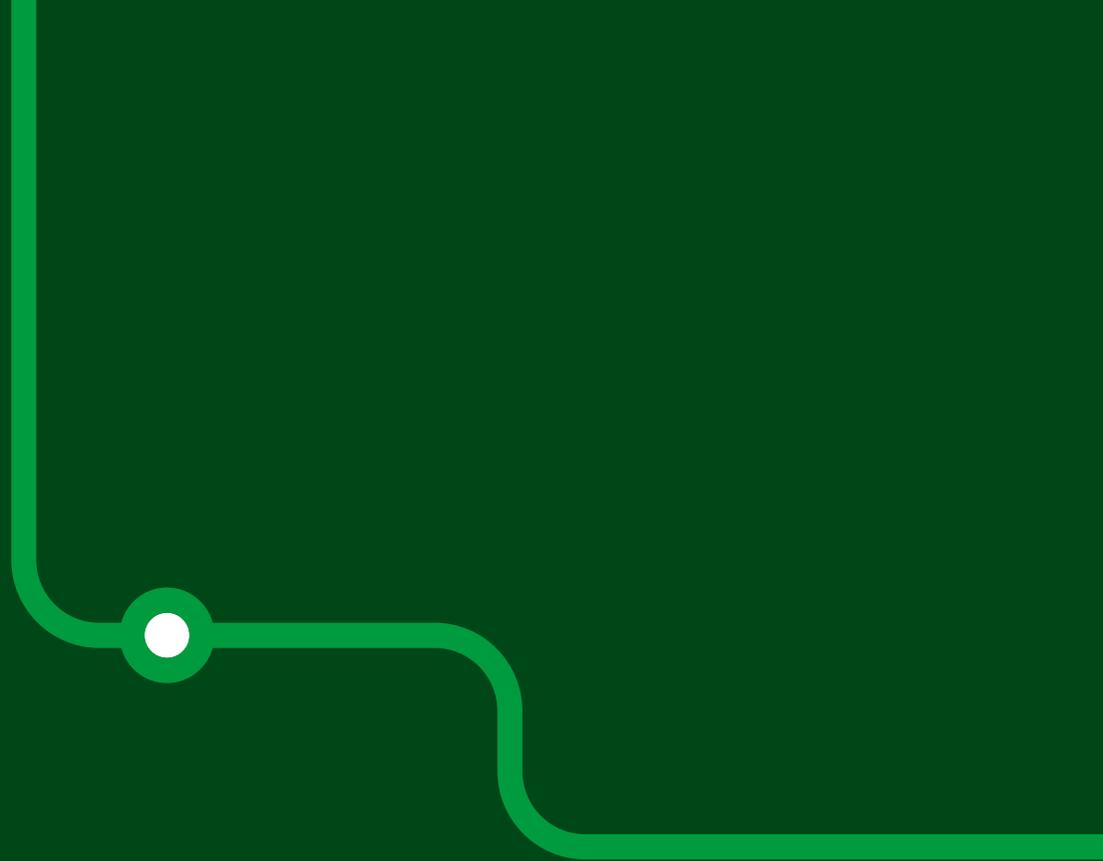
Scheme name	Scheme Description
Regional transport model and monitoring package	Development of a regional transport model for analysis and decision making together with monitoring tools.
Bringing contactless payment to Metro	To make Metro travel simple and convenient by introducing the ability to pay by contactless card or device with capped daily fares being charged. This would remove the need to visit a ticket machine reducing the risk from any contamination introduced by touching. This introduces the ability to turn up and go without needing to make any ticketing provision in advance. For this to be introduced there would need to be investment in hardware at the gate lines and validators and also the back office to collect the taps and calculate and collect the best value fare.
'Go Smarter to Work' – sustainable travel programme	Active Travel / Sustainable Transport Promotion for employers and employees, specifically focusing on making journeys from home to work more sustainable.
North East Park & Ride promotion campaign	A campaign to promote the use of Park & Ride facilities in the region to encourage uptake and growth.
Mobility support guarantee	<p>A scheme which provides guaranteed support for those with mobility issues when using public transport.</p> <p>This could include a taxi guarantee to give disabled passengers the peace of mind that if there isn't room for their wheelchair on board a bus, a taxi replacement will be provided for them at no extra cost.</p>
Flexible transport solutions trials	<p>Development of emerging forms of flexible transport. Consideration would need to be given to trial opportunities such as car clubs, car sharing, electric bikes, electric scooters, taxi sharing, on demand bus and minibus services.</p> <p>Raising awareness of upcoming trials and initiatives would also be necessary to help to kick-start pilots and support operations for an initial defined period.</p>

Scheme name	Scheme Description
Regional promotional campaign for public transport and active travel	<p>A regionally co-ordinated and branded public transport and active travel promotional campaign to grow patronage.</p> <p>Campaign will champion recent infrastructure improvements, forthcoming improvements and refer to ticketing offers and raise awareness of cleaning regimes.</p>
Gamification pilot	<p>A trailed regional 'gamification' app to 'reward' people making more sustainably journeys.</p> <p>Gamification pilot schemes could also 'reward' people based on the number of sustainable journeys made, subject to scope and funding.</p>
North East travel plan accreditation scheme	<p>Encouraging travel plan take up, delivery and monitoring in businesses and education establishments when local officers / consultants engage with them as part of the Go Smarter to Work and Go Smarter to School programmes.</p> <p>This includes setting up accreditation schemes so best practice is recognised, including use of comms activities where appropriate.</p>

Conclusion

Conclusion

The challenges		Our aims		Outcome	
<p>Estimated that at least 33% of trips in the North East less than 5 miles made by car.</p> <p>Estimated 90 million car trips a year under 1 mile.</p>		<p>A target of encouraging car users to switch one journey a week to public transport, walking or cycling and for people who don't have access to a car to continue to travel sustainably.</p> <p>Preventing a car- dominated recovery.</p> <p>Breaking down barriers to greener journeys to increase % share of walking, cycling, and public transport.</p> <p>Greater take up of Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) for necessary car / van journeys.</p>		 <p>Carbon neutral North East</p>	
<p>1 in 4 adults in the North East are physically inactive costing the region's NHS in excess of £19million per year.</p>				 <p>Overcome inequality and grow our economy</p>	
<p>Poor air quality responsible for around 360 deaths each year in central Tyneside alone.</p>	<p>></p>		<p>></p>	 <p>Healthier North East</p>	
<p>North East Road congestion estimated to cost around £236 per driver per year.</p>			 <p>Appealing sustainable transport choices</p>		
<p>662 people were killed or seriously injured in 2021 on the roads in our region.</p>			 <p>Safe, secure network</p>		



Email: info@transportnortheast.gov.uk

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