



# North East Active Travel Strategy

June 2023

# Foreword



**Cllr Martin Gannon, Chair,  
North East Joint Transport Committee**

## **We all need to be more active.**

Active Travel - walking, wheeling and cycling – is good for our health, good for the environment, and good for the economy.

People in our region are the least physically active in England, contributing to poor health outcomes (both physical and mental), unnecessary premature deaths, and an additional cost burden to our NHS services.

And yet we live in the most beautiful part of the country with amazing natural, cultural and historical sites, an abundance of parks, coastline and river banks, open countryside, and attractive town and city centres.

But active travel isn't just for leisure journeys. Not only healthy and often fun, it also reduces unnecessary car trips that create carbon emissions, road injuries and deaths, air pollution, and traffic congestion.

Better still, economists estimate that each active trip generates £1.50 for the local economy, and Sustrans say that there could be up to 26p per mile benefit for walking and wheeling and a 1.15p per mile benefit for cycling.

So, why don't we travel actively more often?

This strategy sets out the opportunities and benefits of active travel, asks people what it would take to encourage more walking, wheeling and cycling, and sets out an ambitious programme of investment that would help us to achieve our target of over half of shorter journeys being made by active travel by 2035.

This updated version of the strategy outlines our final proposals, taking into consideration feedback from the early 2023 public consultation, in which we received over 4,000 pieces of engagement. Thank you to everyone who shared their views on the proposals which have really helped to shape the strategy.

Now we must take this strategy and turn it into action to meet our ambitious target for over half of all shorter journeys to be made by active travel by 2035, and to achieve our vision of 'moving to a green, healthy, dynamic and thriving North East'.

Thank you.

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# Executive summary

This strategy aims to encourage more active travel – walking, wheeling and cycling – across the North East and sets out proposals to help people travel actively more often.

**Our aim is for active travel to become the natural first choice for short everyday travel and combine it with public transport for longer journeys.**

**We have set an ambitious target for over half of all shorter journeys to be made by active travel in the North East by 2035** – good news for the environment, public health and our economy.

To achieve this, we would need a **45% uplift** on 2018/19 levels.



To make this a reality, we will work with the seven North East local authorities and other key stakeholders to bring in significant funding to transform and improve active travel.

The strategy will allow us to make a strategic case for investment in our active travel network. It contains an initial list of active travel schemes up to the year 2035, worth a total of approximately **£500 million**. The list is a 'live pipeline' of schemes which is expected to further develop over time.

As we move to deliver this strategy, we will also make active travel more inclusive, by working to remove the barriers that make it harder for some to walk, wheel or cycle to their destination.

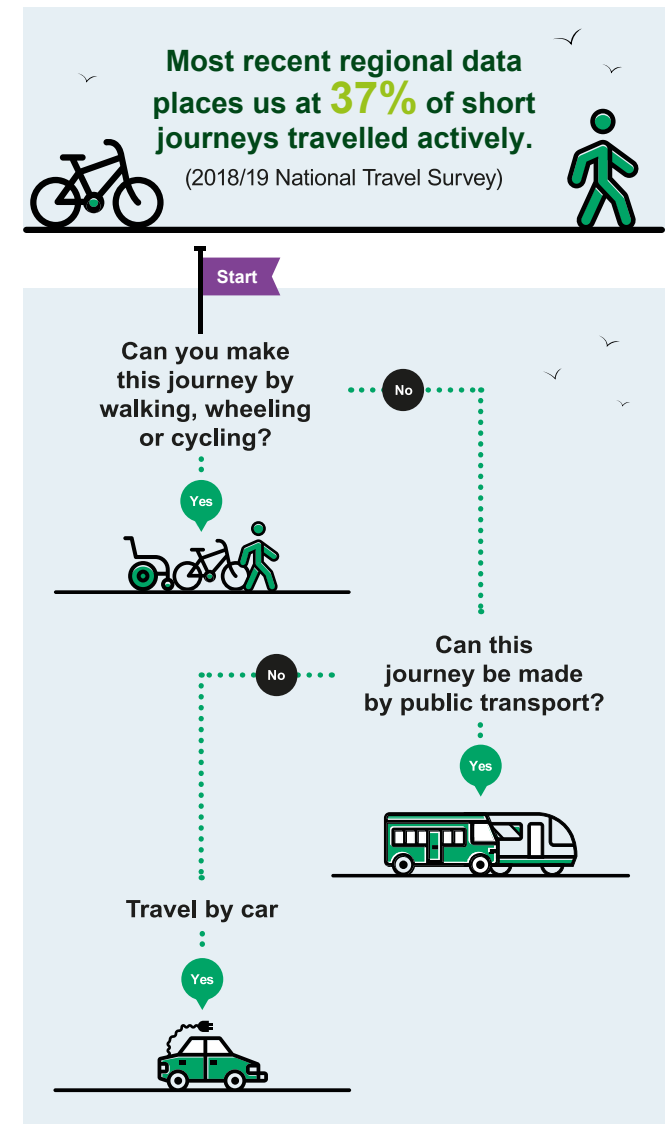
## Increasing walking, wheeling and cycling

The Making the Right Travel Choice Strategy (2022) set 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.

The 'decision tree' to the right was produced to help people to consider their travel options.

The North East Active Travel Strategy will help to achieve this switch to sustainable travel by enabling more active journeys – making them easier, safer and more enjoyable.

**Shorter journeys currently made by car have the greatest potential to be converted to active travel. Walking is a good way to increase levels of activity and has the greatest potential to improve public health.**



Making the right travel choice – decision tree

## The benefits

Over half of all shorter journeys being made by active travel in the North East by 2035 could result in the following benefits:

- Grow the region’s economy by around **£350 million a year**.
- **Reduce carbon emissions**, potentially saving around **80,000 tonnes of CO2** emissions per year.
- Prevent in the region of **1,000** premature deaths, primarily due to increased physical activity levels in the population.
- Help more people become active, improving public health outcomes including healthy life expectancy.
- Improve connectedness and cohesion of communities and decreased social isolation.
- Better air quality by reducing pollution from traffic emissions.
- Lower noise levels as congestion is eased on our road network.
- Save petrol and diesel drivers money by reducing car use.



## Barriers

There are some barriers – both real and perceived – that we will need to overcome to boost active travel. These are:

- Safety and security (including perceptions of this).
- Accessibility and maintenance – for example of walking and cycling routes and infrastructure.
- Affordability – such as the cost of cycling and/or safety equipment.
- Coordination and integration – including integration with transport hubs or local bus and Metro services.
- Journey times and perceptions of convenience – including the feeling that cycling or walking ‘takes too long’ or aren’t good options in poor weather.

## Delivery

### Policy areas and commitment statements

We have created six active travel policy areas with commitment statements aimed at supporting delivery of this strategy and how active travel will achieve the [North East Transport Plan](#) vision and objectives:

- **Active travel friendly places;**
- **World-class active travel network;**
- **Greater integration;**
- **Supporting people to walk, wheel and cycle;**
- **Improving access to equipment;**
- **Partnership working.**

Chapter 5 sets out where we want our region to be by 2035. Building on the interventions set out in the Making the Right Travel Choice Strategy, we have included an initial pipeline of schemes to be taken forward which are subject to funding (see pages 57-63).

These include new and upgraded infrastructure such as improving the National Cycle Network and links to the Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels, increasing access to equipment by launching new cycle hire schemes, maintaining the network through regular maintenance and cleaning, and targeted behaviour change initiatives to support and upskill local people.

Some of the things we intend to achieve are:

- **The creation of a brand-new regional cycle network – with consistent signage and strong recognisable branding to make it easy to use for all.**
- **Improve the pedestrianisation and ‘walkability’ of local towns and cities, encouraging more active travel and increased footfall to amenities and businesses.**
- **The introduction of a new region-wide cycle hire scheme (including e-bike hire) which will integrate with the transport network.**
- **Social Prescribing – working with NHS providers to prescribe more active travel to boost public health.**

# Introduction and context

## What is active travel?

Active travel means making journeys in physically active ways that burn energy such as cycling, walking and wheeling. Widely accepted as an inexpensive and accessible form of transport, encouraging and enabling more active travel is a key way of improving the health and wellbeing of local people.

## Why is this strategy needed?

**Making journeys is good:** most physical trips, no matter what the form of travel, stimulate the economy by getting people to employment, education, healthcare, retail, or social opportunities.

However, making journeys 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.**

Active travel and public transport are the best ways to travel for public health and the environment. Trips taken by diesel or petrol cars create carbon emissions, air pollution, and traffic congestion and can create unsafe environments for people travelling actively because of the potential for collisions.

The North East's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic is being powered by increased car and internet use.

The way many people work and socialise has changed, with far more activity taking place online. Whilst this has many benefits including allowing people to work flexibly, it has had a detrimental impact on levels of physical activity.

The lockdowns introduced during the pandemic, gave us a glimpse of quieter and less polluted streets, and people walked and cycled more.

However, the recovery period has seen road traffic volumes grow to up to **20%** higher than pre-pandemic levels, whilst public transport usage lags behind.

Switching existing shorter journeys that are currently made by petrol or diesel cars to active travel is one of the most cost effective ways of reducing transport emissions, as outlined in the Government's 2021 Transport Decarbonisation Plan. We believe that there is an opportunity in the North East for people to convert some of their journeys to cycling, walking and wheeling, especially shorter journeys that are made by car.

We want to make it easier for people to make more active travel journeys, regardless of their age or ability. This includes combining active travel with public transport where required.

This strategy describes an ambition for growing active travel in the North East. In it we set out the opportunities and benefits of active travel, consider what it would take to encourage more walking, wheeling and cycling, and set out an ambitious programme of investment that would help us to achieve over half of all shorter journeys being made actively by 2035, up from **37%** in 2018/19.



# Types of active travel

## Walking and wheeling

Walking and wheeling are some of the cheapest ways to travel and they have the greatest potential to boost levels of active travel in the region. Walking and wheeling represent people moving at a pedestrian's pace, whether someone is standing or sitting, walking or wheeling unaided or using any kind of mobility aid, including walking aids, wheeled aids (such as mobility scooters and wheelchairs), personal assistants or guide dogs. By adopting the term wheeling we can take a more inclusive approach, ensuring that active travel is for people of all ages, location, and mobility.

To ensure that this strategy takes an inclusive approach we have followed Sustrans' lead in grouping 'walking and wheeling' together throughout this strategy.

## Cycling

Cycling is widely acknowledged as an effective and efficient way of travelling, especially for shorter to medium-length distances. There are millions of short car journeys made every day which could easily be travelled by bike, if people were enabled to make the switch. We know that there are many barriers which prevent people from cycling in the region and this strategy aims to help tackle them.

Cycling can enhance individual independence and wellbeing. As well as conventional two-wheel bikes, there are a wide range of non-standard and adapted cycles available such as hand cycles, low-step bicycles, wheelchair cycles, child-carrying cycles, and cargo and e-cargo cycles (for personal or business use).

Electrically-assisted pedal cycles (known as e-bikes) are also within scope of this strategy. E-bikes are cycles which have a small electric motor fitted and could help introduce cycling to even more people. Research in 2019 found that physical activity gains from e-bikes are similar to cycling.

Cargo bikes (and e-cargo bikes) allow for goods to be delivered over short distances in place of small vans.



### Other micromobility

E-scooters and other forms of ‘micromobility’ that interact and have links with active travel are also included within the scope of this strategy.

Regulated e-scooters are currently being trialled in Newcastle (Neuron Mobility) using geofencing technology to define the riding area and is set to continue until May 2024. In May 2023, e-scooter journeys can now only end in designated parking stations located across the city. This is following partnership working with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and the Thomas Pocklington Trust (TPT) to make sure that the parking system is more accessible and works for all members of the community by helping to reduce street clutter.

E-scooter rentals were also trialled in Sunderland between March 2021 and May 2023.

Trial guidance from the Department for Transport enables regulated e-scooters to use the same road space as cycles except motorways and in cycle lanes and tracks. Outside of the regulated e-scooter trials, it is illegal to use an e-scooter on public roads, cycleways and pavements. It is however perfectly legal to buy and sell e-scooters.

As a consequence of this rather disjointed position, it is increasingly common to see them being used illegally across the North East.

Following the end of the trials the UK government is planning to create a Low-Speed Zero Emission Vehicle (LZEV) category, as well as introducing an e-scooter rental licensing framework. We therefore await further guidance and potential new legislation from the Government before we are able to develop a meaningful regional policy on this issue.

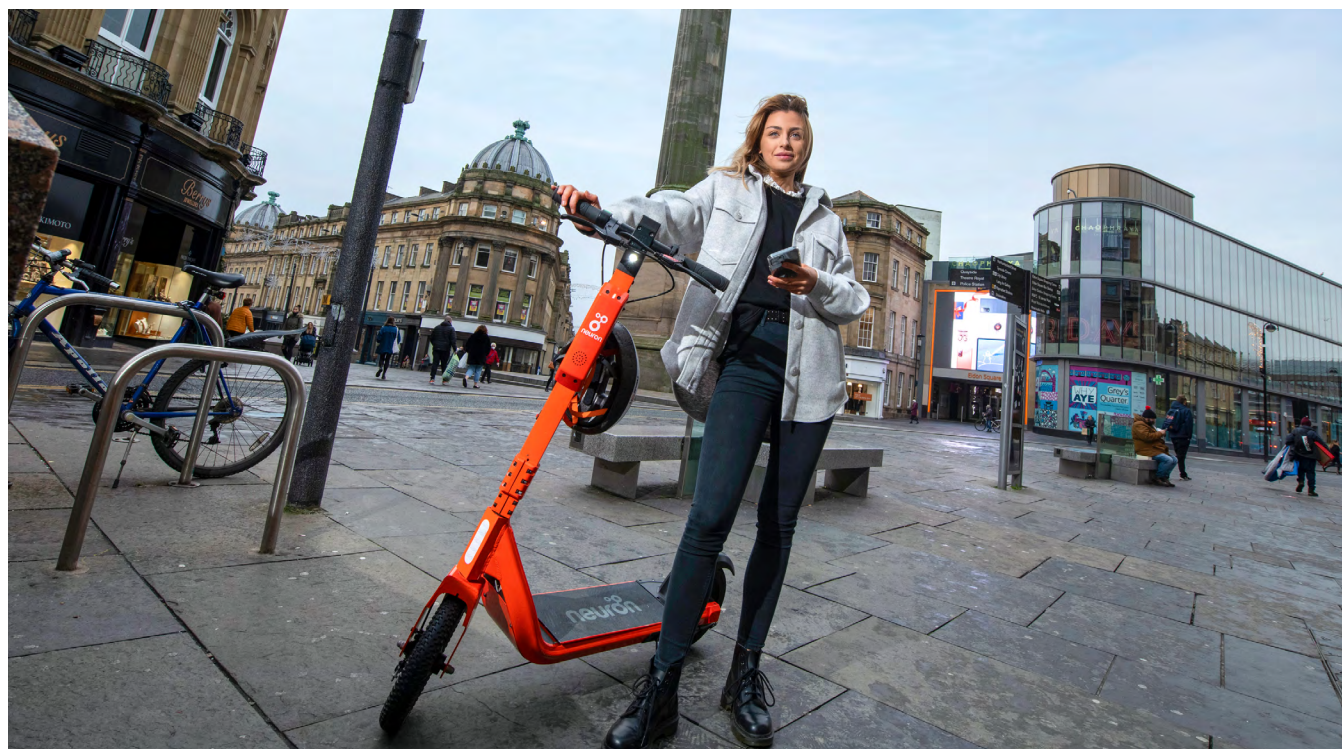


Image credit: Neuron Mobility 2022



# Strategy scope

## What is covered in this strategy?

- Walking for all journey purposes.
- Wheeling for all journey purposes (including wheelchair and mobility scooters, as well as other mobility aids).
- Cycling for all journey purposes (including use of e-bikes and e-cargo bikes).
- Encouraging active travel for part of a journey such as those combined with public transport.
- E-scooters and other forms of 'micro-mobility' that interact and have links with active travel.
- A series of key commitment statements setting out how we will work with partners to move forward.

## What is not covered?

- Non-active travel transport interventions (The North East Transport Plan and other regional transport strategies cover this).
- Detailed scheme design guidance (National LTN 1/20 guidance is in place).
- Planning reform (this strategy gives high level guidance from a transport policy perspective).
- Rights of Way Improvement Plans and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans which are local authority owned documents.

### Area covered

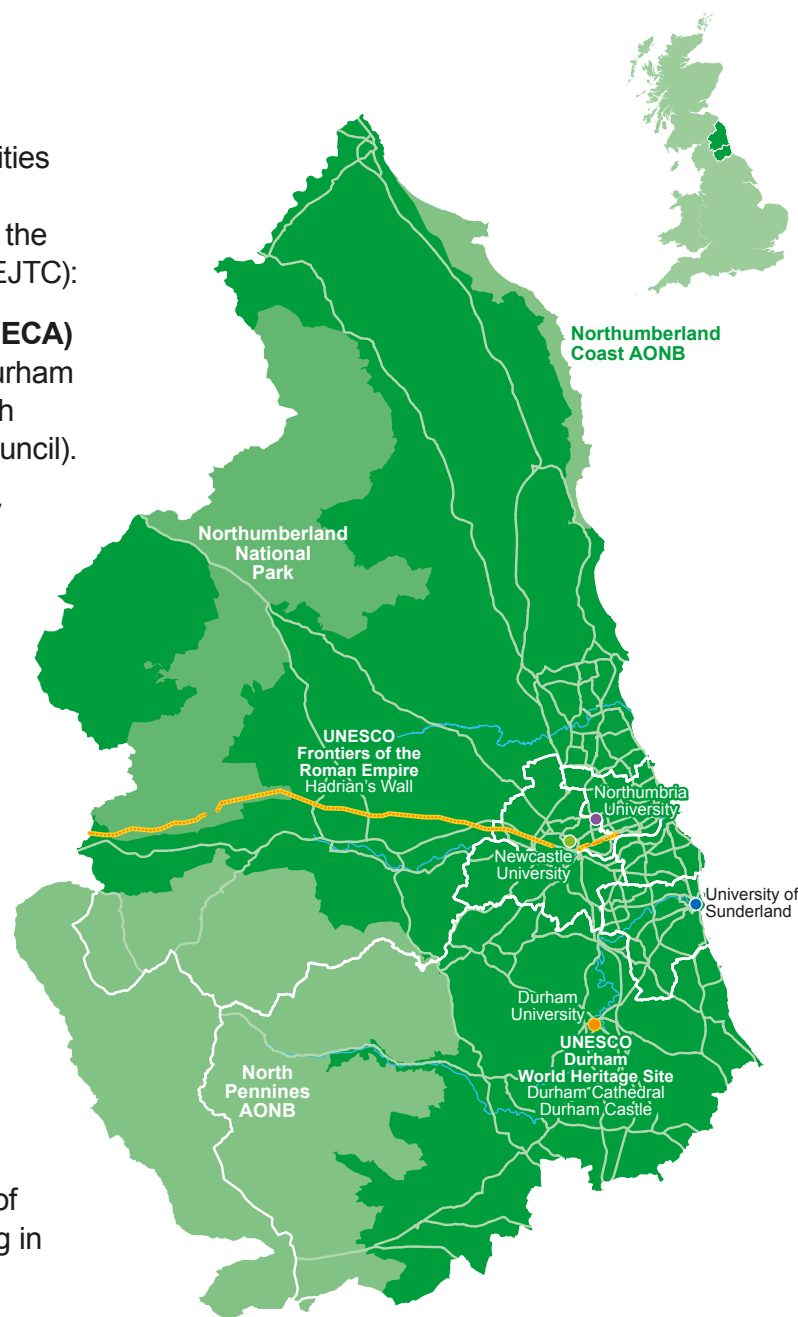
The geographical area addressed by this strategy comprises the seven local authorities in the North East, covering two Combined Authorities, which are brought together by the North East Joint Transport Committee (NEJTC):

**The North East Combined Authority (NECA)** (comprising the local authority areas of Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council).

**The North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA)** (comprising the local authority areas of Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council and Northumberland County Council).

### Our region

North East England is a unique and very diverse geographical region encompassing large and densely populated urban conurbations, a surrounding landscape of sub-urban towns and semi-urban villages and a much larger area of former mining villages and beyond them sparsely populated rural and coastal communities. According to the 2021 Census, our region has a population of 1.97 million with **79%** of people living in urban areas and **21%** living in rural locations.



The region's current active travel network connecting our communities is as equally diverse, from national trails and long distance walking routes, bridleways and permissive paths, with a variety of former railway routes and waggonways that are currently serving as active travel paths and cycle routes.

The North East is fortunate to have an abundance of long distance active travel routes, many stretching from the west coast to the east coast, as well as providing important connections between rural communities. For example, Northumberland National Park has over 600 miles of marked footpaths and bridleways for residents and visitors to explore.

The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in County Durham and Northumberland contains large sections of the Pennine Way national trail. Visit Britain data for 2019 indicates the total value of tourism day visits to the North East (including Tees Valley) was £3.32 billion with the value by foot being £85.1 million and by bike £0.5 million.

The region has an historic 19th century Waggonways network which were once used to transport coal from mines to ships at our rivers. Our Waggonways are now significant active travel assets, giving opportunities for people to walk, wheel and cycle between different communities off the carriageway.

Detailed and [interactive active travel](#) maps of the region have been produced showing the walking and cycling network.

For cycling specifically, the region has a mixture of traffic-free and on-road cycle routes.

Our growing network also includes 16 routes that are part of the National Cycling Network (NCN), a UK-wide network of active travel routes for everyone, connecting cities, towns and countryside, which the Shields Ferry crossing forms part of.

The Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels which first opened to the public back in 1951 are also still widely used today linking North and South Tyneside. **Our unique geography also means that the challenges and barriers are different based on location with distinct active travel challenges in rural, suburban, and urban areas.**

In recent years, the North East has successfully bid for and been awarded funding to unlock investment in active travel which has been used to improve the network and get more people walking, cycling and wheeling. But we know so much more needs to be done. That is why this strategy aims to build on this track record of delivery and drive further improvements and take up.

### Local policy context

Local authorities in the region have two vital documents relating to active travel:

- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)
- Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs)

#### Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)

An LCWIP complements the Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) and outlines long-term approaches to developing local cycling and walking.

**In the North East, most councils have completed, or are currently in the process of developing LCWIPs, with some areas working on version two of their plans.** A May 2023 summary which provides an update on each LCWIP in each of the seven local authority areas is appended to this strategy.

### Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs)

ROWIPs set out how improvements made by Councils to their public rights of way network will provide a better experience for walking, cycling, horse riding, horse and carriage drivers, and people with mobility barriers.

Local authorities have legal highway powers for building new or maintaining existing infrastructure. This means that this strategy is heavily influenced by local authorities and their LCWIPs and ROWIPs.

This regional strategy will help enable the success of the local LCWIPs and ROWIPs by making the case for funding.

### Regional policy context

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

A North East Active Travel Strategy is required to meet a commitment set out in the region's Transport Plan and its vision and objectives.

### National policy context

This strategy will ensure that the region is well placed to meet the goals and objectives of funding opportunities to develop our active travel infrastructure.

The Government's current policy for England is set out in [Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking for 2020-25](#), published in July 2020. The policy set the ambitious goal that cycling and walking will be the natural choice for many journeys, with half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled and walked by 2030.

In July 2021 the Government published Gear Change: one year on. The report stated that since Gear Change was published, hundreds of school streets, at least 150 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, and more than 100 miles of new segregated cycle lanes had been delivered.



Our targets match the medium to long-term targets set out in the Department for Transport's (DfT) Walking and Cycling Plan for England (Gear Change) and the second national Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2).

The second national Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2) published in July 2022, has key objectives to ensure that **50%** of trips in our towns and cities are walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030 and to **55%** by 2035.

The North East Active Travel Strategy will also assist the region and its partners in meeting (where physically and financially possible) expected standards set out in national design guidance (LTN 1/20) and help with scheme design engagement with Active Travel England (ATE).

ATE is the UK government's new executive agency responsible for making walking, wheeling and cycling the preferred choice for everyone to get around in England.

Manual for Streets is a publication which provides guidance for practitioners in England and Wales involved in the planning, design, provision and approval of new streets, and modifications to existing ones. It aims to increase the quality of life through good design which creates people-oriented streets. It is expected that this guidance will be refreshed by the DfT later in 2023, helping to enhance the design of schemes to benefit and support active travel.

### 'Low-traffic neighbourhoods' (LTNs)

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods are schemes which help create more pleasant and safer environments for people to walk, wheel and cycle. LTN's open up spaces within communities whilst also helping to connect people to local services and amenities by active travel.

LTNs work by minimising vehicle traffic in residential areas by reducing "through traffic" or "rat running" in which a neighbourhood is used to get to another destination. Although through traffic is significantly reduced, every resident can still drive onto their street and exemptions can apply to many including emergency service vehicles, blue badge holders and delivery vehicles.

The Government's 2020 [Gear Change Strategy](#) included a commitment to create more LTNs and to consult on implementation.



The UK Government's road network management guidance states that proposed LTN schemes must have effective engagement and consultation with communities.

In [Gear Change: one year on](#), it was evident that there had been significant reductions in traffic, and significant increases in cycling and walking within LTNs.

According to Sustrans, many benefits can be gained through implementing LTNs including improvements in air quality, increased levels of physical activity, strengthened community cohesion and safer environments for children to play and socialise.

### Social Prescribing

Social prescribing is an approach that connects people to activities, groups, and services in their community to meet the practical, social and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing. Local agencies such as health services, social care and community groups refer people to a social prescribing link worker who spends time with them to develop a personalised care and support plan. A growing body of evidence shows that social prescribing improves people's health and wellbeing and reduces pressure on NHS services such as GP consultations and hospital attendances.



### Integrating health and transport planning with active travel prescriptions

Gateshead Council is one of 11 local authorities nationally that will be taking part in nationwide pilots to help improve the mental and physical wellbeing of communities in the most deprived areas by enabling GPs and health professionals to offer walking and cycling activities. The scheme will embed active travel coordinators in to local primary care networks who will work with people to understand their needs and link them to opportunities to take up walking and cycling.

The pilot aligns to Gateshead's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and will include developing active travel hubs supported by trained volunteers, cycle hire schemes, bike loans, community cycle and walking activities, and cycle training. The pilot will incorporate an evaluation to understand what works and how the programme can be improved for future work.

## North East Transport Plan 2021-2035

### 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.**

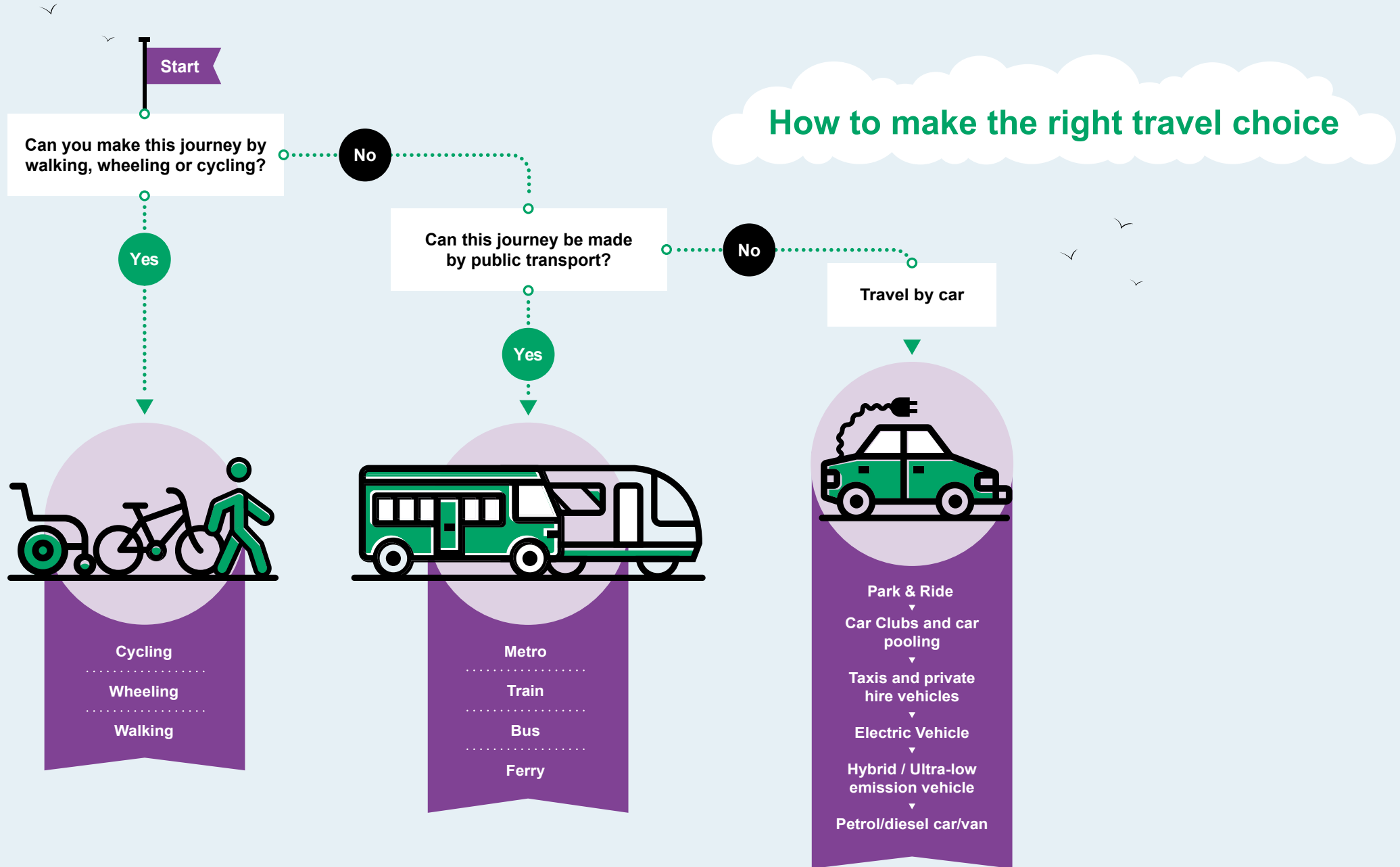


Figure 1: Making the right travel choice – decision tree

### North East Transport Plan

#### The vision

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

#### The objectives

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

(See page 14 for further information on these objectives.)

The lead policy of the Transport Plan is ‘helping people to make the right travel choice’. The region has a ‘decision tree’ (see figure 1 on page 15) which helps people to consider their travel options when they need to make a journey.

At the start of the decision tree, people are asked to consider whether the journey they are planning to make can be made by walking, wheeling or cycling, and then consider whether their journey can be made by public transport or a combination of both.

The region’s subsequent **Making the Right Travel Choice Strategy** (2022) 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.

The North East Active Travel Strategy will help to achieve this aim by ‘enabling more active travel journeys’.

### New North East Devolution Deal

A new devolution deal for the North East has been agreed that will see the allocation of significant new funding and powers to the region from May 2024.

In total, the deal is expected to provide £4.2 billion of additional investment to the region over 30 years, including a £1.4 billion investment fund alongside significant funding for transport, education and skills, housing and regeneration.

The deal would involve the creation of a new mayoral combined authority covering County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland, and is projected to create 24,000 additional jobs in the area and unlock £5 billion additional private sector investment into the region.

In respect of commitments to Active Travel, the devolution deal offers:

- A step-change in high-quality active travel provision by prioritising investment in the cycling and walking networks identified through Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

- An ambitious active travel plan creating a regional network of LTN 1/20 compliant routes, connecting active neighbourhoods to local hubs.
- Option to appoint an Active Travel Commissioner.
- A sequenced pipeline of active travel infrastructure schemes.

### Introduction and context – chapter summary

As we decarbonise transport, making cars and vans zero emission is part of the solution, but relying solely on zero emission road vehicles isn’t enough.

To help avoid a car-led recovery from the pandemic, we want active travel to become the natural first choice for short everyday travel and combine it with public transport for longer journeys. This strategy highlights the significant potential to grow the number of active trips taken.

Recent local, regional and national policy decisions and guidance mean that the time is now to bring forward a North East Active Travel Strategy which sets out how we will work with partners to provide and promote safe, attractive, and high-quality active travel infrastructure to enable and encourage more walking, wheeling, and cycling.



# Benefits of active travel

## Why is active travel important?

Active travel is often the cheapest and most sustainable travel option and can provide environmental, health, social, and economic benefits for people living in the North East.

This chapter describes these benefits in more detail and outlines the potential impact we could see in the North East if people make more journeys by active travel.

## Health benefits

Journeys taken by walking, wheeling or cycling involve periods of physical activity which improve health and wellbeing for most people. People who are physically active tend to live longer and spend more of their lives in good health. Physically active people have a reduced risk of obesity, cardiovascular diseases, cancers, type 2 diabetes, musculoskeletal conditions, disability, and mental health conditions (figure 2).

“If physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure, due to the great many illnesses it can prevent and treat.”

UK Chief Medical Officer guidelines 2019

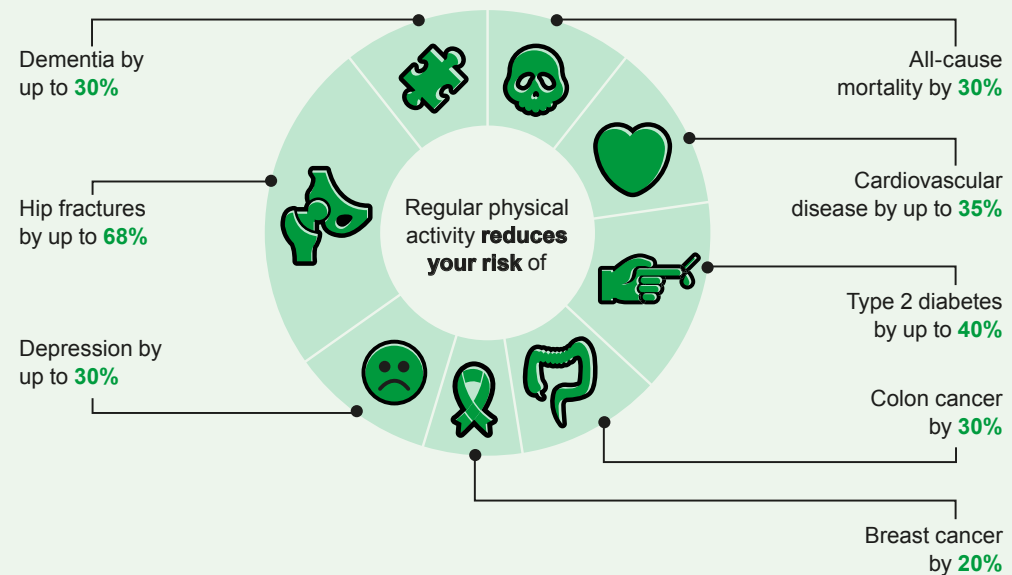


Figure 2: What are the health benefits of physical activity? (Public Health England, Health Matters)

While the UK chief medical officer recommends that each week adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity, national surveys have shown that **in the North East 1 in 4 adults are physically inactive**, meaning they do less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week. Active travel is one of the most accessible and practical ways for many people to move more and work towards and achieve recommended activity levels.

### Mental health and wellbeing

Physical activity also has a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. Being physically active has been found to reduce depression by up to **30%**. Analysis of the British Household Panel Survey found that people making the switch from car journeys to active travel experience improved mental wellbeing, and that active journeys tend to be more enjoyable, less stressful and more relaxing than car journeys.

**“Walking to work sets you up for the day, if you’ve something on your mind, it gives you 5 minutes to yourself.”**

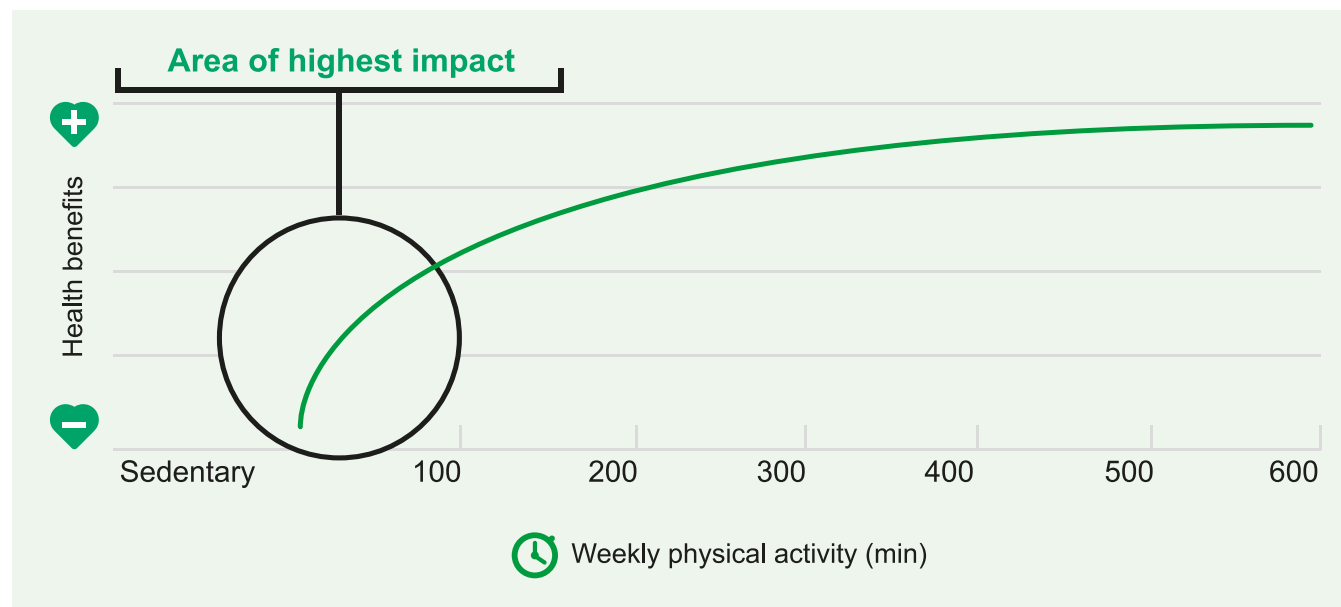
North East commuter

**“I do find walking is quite good for mental wellbeing and just getting out – and especially with the little one in the pushchair.”**

North East resident

Being physically active is also recognised as an important way of managing a wide range of long-term health conditions, disability and promoting healthy ageing. For some people, active travel can provide an opportunity for this, particularly when walking and cycling infrastructure is inclusive and the needs of people with limited mobility are considered from the outset in their design.

Most people would benefit from doing more physical activity such as walking, wheeling, and cycling, however the greatest benefits are gained by those moving from lower levels of activity to increased levels (see figure 3).

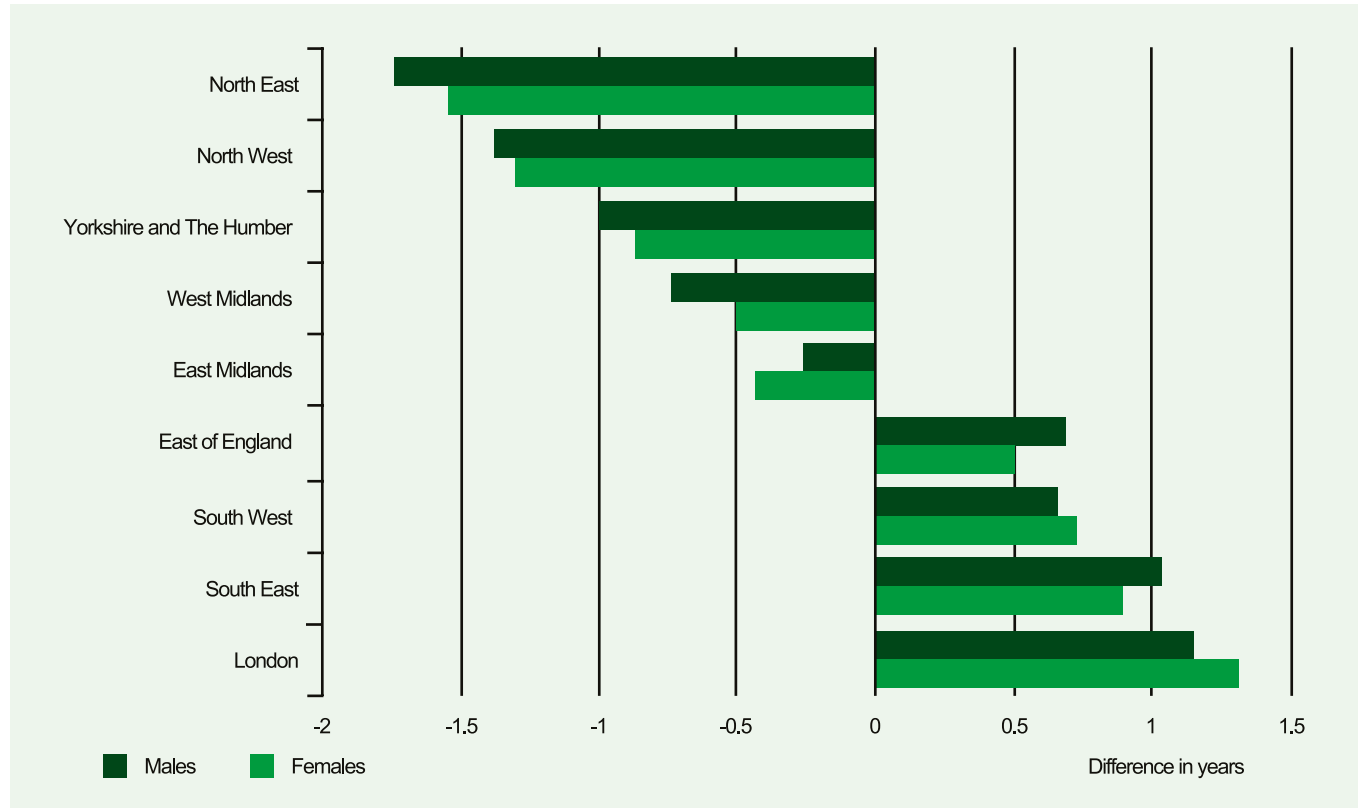


**Figure 3: Dose response curve of physical activity (UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines)**

**North East – public health metrics**

Our region is in poorer general health compared to other regions in England, having the lowest average life expectancies (see figure 4) and the highest rates of adult obesity (32% of adults), physical inactivity (26% of adults), and long-term musculoskeletal conditions (21% of people).

Within the North East there are also significant health inequalities. Compared to the least deprived areas, men living in the most deprived areas could expect to live on average 12 fewer years, and women could expect to live on average 9.5 fewer years.



**Figure 4: Life expectancy differences from England average by region for males and females (ONS 2020)**

Being the least expensive and most accessible form of transport, active travel (particularly walking) can play a part of reducing health inequalities across our region. More active travel may also help reduce pressures on health and social care systems.

It has been estimated that physical inactivity is costing the NHS in the North East in excess of £19 million per year.

### Social benefits

Increased levels of active travel could also offer social benefits for our region. Active travel can play an important part in helping connect people, reduce separation between groups, and improve cohesion and integration of communities.

Enabling more people to walk, wheel and cycle, and combining active travel with public transport for longer journeys could also help better connect people to opportunities such as employment, education, health and care, and leisure services (see figure 5 transport related social exclusion). Active journeys also provide greater opportunity for social interaction with others in public spaces and a reduction in vehicle traffic can create safer, quieter and more attractive places for people to spend time in.

Research has shown that social isolation has been associated with a **30%** higher likelihood of mortality compared to the general population and also increases the risk of developing depression.

For children, walking, wheeling or cycling from an early age can help them build confidence in their environment, their role in their community and road safety. It can also help establish healthy physical activity behaviours for life, and address childhood obesity. In the North East almost 1 in 4 children are classified as obese when starting secondary school.

Furthermore, there is growing evidence that being active improves educational attainment, concentration in school and improves social cohesion.

Supporting the implementation of more and better active travel initiatives in the region's towns, cities and neighbourhoods could improve the quality of life for people in the North East.

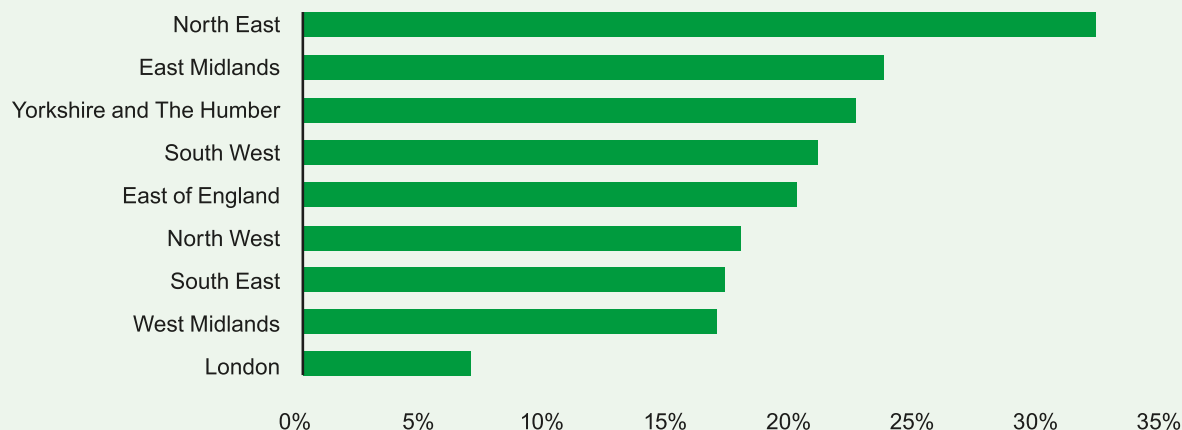
### Transport related social exclusion

Transport for the North have recently published a report that investigated transport related social exclusion (TRSE) in the north of England. This is where people are unable to access opportunities, key services, and community life due to poor transport links.

In the North East, **31.5%** of people are at high risk of TRSE, which is significantly higher than other regions.

In our region, we have areas with poor access to jobs, education, health, and basic services by all types of transport. Often, these areas with poor access overlap with areas with high levels of vulnerability to social exclusion.

The report also highlighted that people with disabilities, caring responsibilities, and those on low incomes are disproportionately affected by transport-related social exclusion.



**Figure 5: Population at high risk of transport related social exclusion in regions of England (Lower super output areas). Source Transport for the North 2022.**

## School Streets

School Streets is a temporary restriction on motorised traffic on roads outside schools at school drop-off and pick-up times. The restriction applies to school traffic and through traffic. The initiative aims to reduce traffic congestion, help tackle air pollution, improve road safety and encourage more active travel within journeys to school.

The School Streets initiatives have been adopted by many local authorities across the country and is being trialled across areas of the North East including in Northumberland, North Tyneside, Newcastle and Sunderland.

In Newcastle, two School Streets have been implemented on a signage-only basis, enabled by intensive behaviour change and engagement activity carried out by Sustrans. Activities included the Sustrans Big Street Survey; events; assemblies and Q&A sessions for children; regular on-street information pop ups; bike servicing and Learn to Ride and Cycle Skills holiday club.

Sustrans' Walking and Cycling Index showed that **49%** of residents in Tyneside supported School Streets, and this is borne out in the response to Newcastle's first School Street.

Public response to the scheme at Hotspur Primary School in the east of the city showed that **86%** of respondents supported the scheme being made permanent, with more than half of text responses citing improved safety.

According to bike and scooter counts, levels of active travel at the school have significantly increased. Motor traffic has visibly decreased, and children report feeling happier, safer, calmer, and more connected to nature and community around their school.

The success of the scheme has led to a commitment from Newcastle City Council to roll out School Streets to more primary schools in the city and requests for School Streets from schools and families across the city.



©2022, Sustrans, all rights reserved.  
All children in the photo have signed parental photo consents.

## Active Travel Friendly Places – PlayMeetStreet North Tyneside

Play streets are regular, temporary, resident-led road closures that create a safe space for children to play, and for residents of all ages to meet on their doorsteps. The idea began in Bristol in 2010 and has since spread across the UK and beyond. Within the North East, North Tyneside has one of the most successful play streets schemes in the country, with almost 100 streets involved since 2017. A number of other councils in the region are also considering trialling and actively developing schemes to support resident-led play streets.

Play streets can be a safe space to learn to scoot, skate and cycle, giving children skills and confidence that they can take beyond their streets, into their neighbourhoods and onto the school run; **74%** of play streets organisers in North Tyneside said children on their street had learnt or improved cycling skills. In North Tyneside, organisers tell us that play streets also give them the opportunity to imagine and reclaim their streets as a space for more than just driving and parking; they normalise different kinds of activity on the street and different forms of mobility, including walking, wheeling and cycling.

## Community Cycle Hub – Cycling Minds, Northumberland

Cycling Minds was launched in 2021 to provide community cycling opportunities, operating from 'The Link' Community Cycle Hub from April 2022. Charitable guided e-bike rides are provided along with workplace training, mainly for young people who have had struggles such as social exclusion, a lack of education, employment or training (NEET), and poor mental health. Workplace training includes bike servicing, bike hire, guided cycle rides for paying customers and selling second hand bikes, and new and second-hand clothing, components and accessories. Young people are initially engaged with to encourage cycling as a sport, this helps to develop the basic skills and knowledge needed to volunteer and eventually work with the organisation and as ambassadors for cycling in their local communities.

The Link is now a focal point for cyclists in the area and cycle tourists. A key goal for Cycling Minds is to be self-funded, primarily through cycle tourism, working with organisations to develop the Northumberland County Destination Action Plan.

Achievements so far have been:

- More than 300 bikes serviced (through two people).
- 10 guided rides attended by a variety of local people including adults with special educational needs, refugees, and temporarily homeless individuals.
- 26 community outreach events ran, including in low-income neighbourhoods.
- Volunteering opportunities for 35 local people including teenagers and retired people.



Source: Cycling Minds,  
Northumberland

## Cycling for Health

Cycling UK run a Cycling for Health scheme that aims to help people get started with cycling and improve their health and wellbeing. People are referred to the scheme by community organisations and health and social care professionals and enrolled on a 12-week instructor led course to provide a route into regular activity through cycling. Designed for adults identified as having poor mental health, the course involves working together with others to develop a new skill and grow in confidence.

Evaluation of the Cycling for Health scheme in West Yorkshire found that at the end of the programme **63%** of attendees increased cycling levels and **49%** reported they now cycled more than once a week. Those meeting the Chief Medical Officer Physical Activity Guidelines (150 minutes per week moderate activity) rose from **22%** to **69%** immediately after completing the programme, and mental health and wellbeing indicators have consistently improved over the past 5 years.

## Environmental benefits

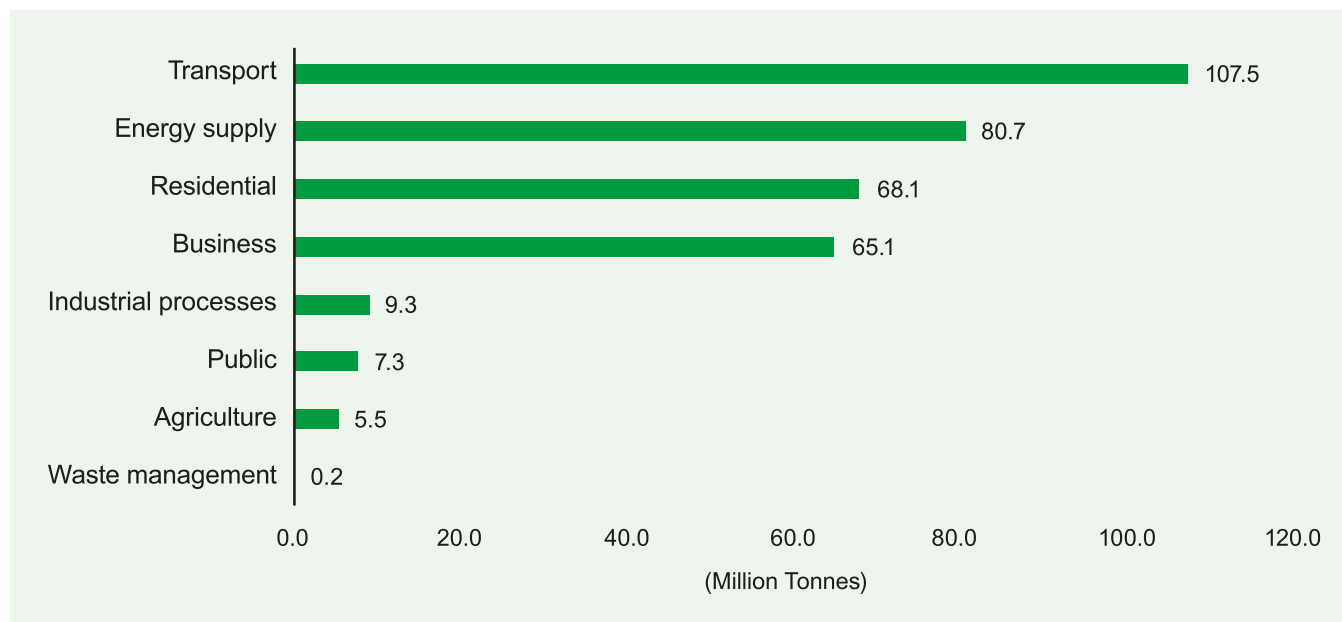
Active travel is the greenest way to travel around our region, helping reduce carbon emissions and harmful air pollutants. In 2021, transport was the largest contributor to CO2 emissions of any sector, contributing 107.5 million tonnes in 2021 (see figure 6). The North East's two combined authorities and seven local authorities have all declared climate emergencies.

For an average journey of 6 miles, a petrol car emits an average of 1.4kg of CO2, and a diesel car emits an average of 1.7kg of CO2.

Motor vehicles emit air pollutants that are harmful to health and can lead to serious short-term and long-term effects on respiratory and cardiovascular systems.

Poor air quality disproportionately affects people living in the most deprived areas, often located closer to main roads or industrial sites, which can exacerbate health inequalities.

Air quality is linked to around **40,000** early deaths every year in the UK, including an **estimated 360 deaths** each year in central Tyneside.



**Figure 6: CO2 emission by industry 2021**



If everyone in the North East were exposed to levels of NO2 no higher than 20.5µg/m3 (typical urban background level away from roads), it would reduce rates of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, and is estimated to save the health and social care system in excess of £100 million over a 20 year period.

(Public Health England – estimation of air pollution impact tool)

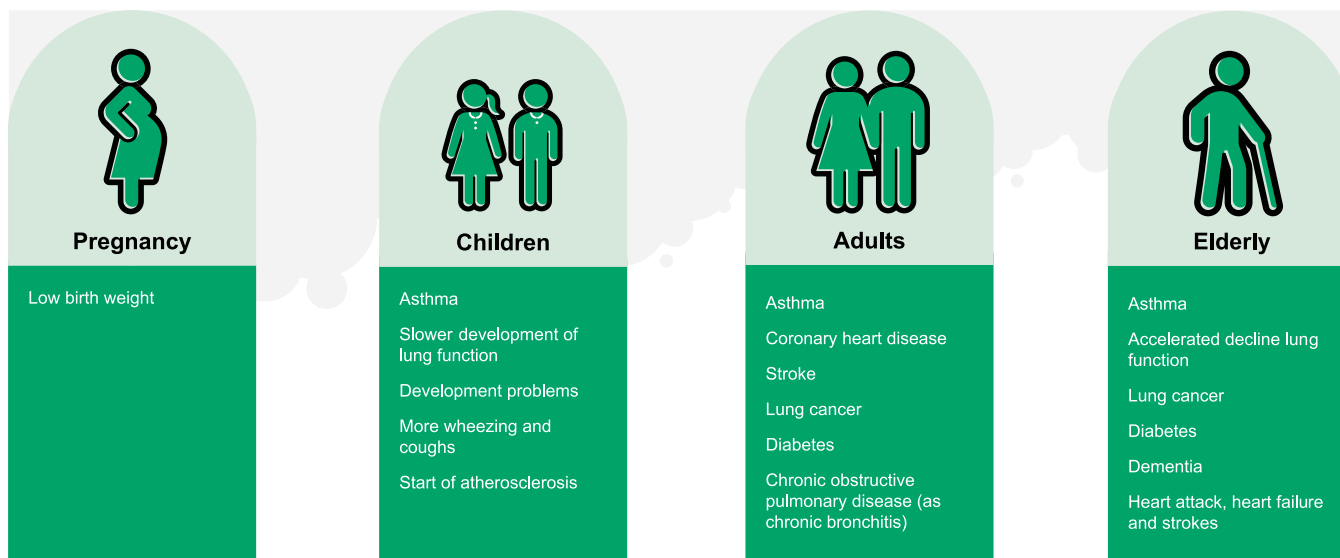


Figure 7: Poor air quality is a public health crisis and air pollution affects people throughout their lifetime (Public Health England – Health Matters)

From March 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic, people walked and cycled more. Active travel increased from 25% of journeys to 32% of journeys. Air quality improved in many of our cities, towns, and neighbourhoods and provided a glimpse of the environmental benefits we could expect from more active travel (see figure 8 nitrogen dioxide in central Newcastle between 2019 and 2022). Building on this trend is important and we can do this by supporting people to switch more journeys from motor vehicles to active travel and lead us to a cleaner and greener future.

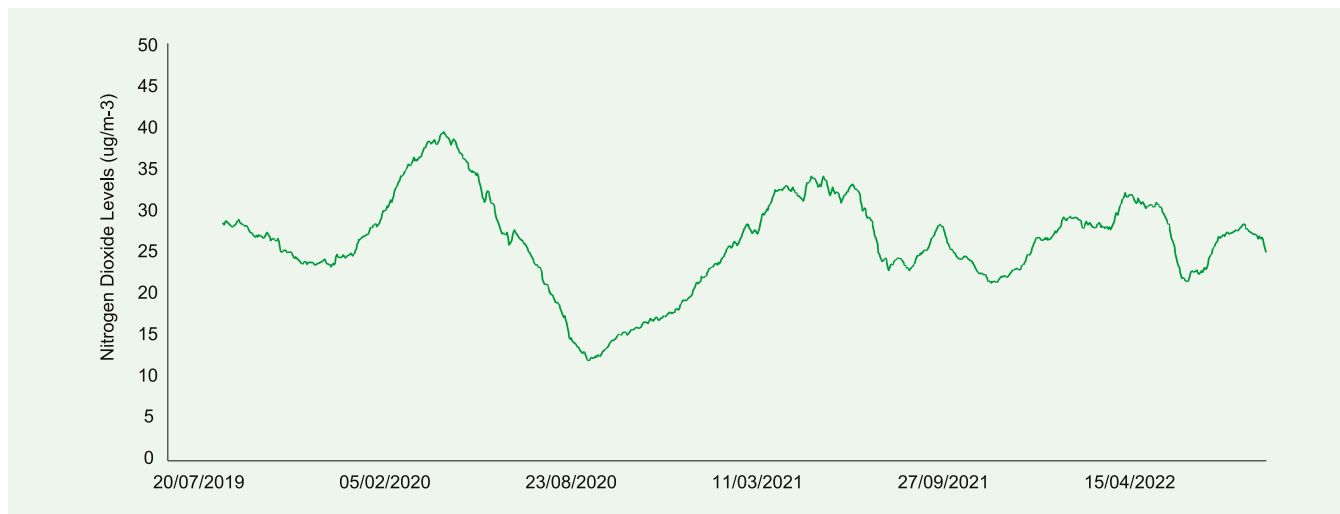


Figure 8: Background nitrogen dioxide in Newcastle centre 2019-2022



A further benefit of active travel is a reduction in noise pollution from road traffic. In the North East, **6%** of the population live close to major routes and are exposed to more than 55dB noise (similar level of noise to an average dishwasher) from road traffic during the night (see figure 9). This is a level of noise that can result in disturbed sleep and increased stress.

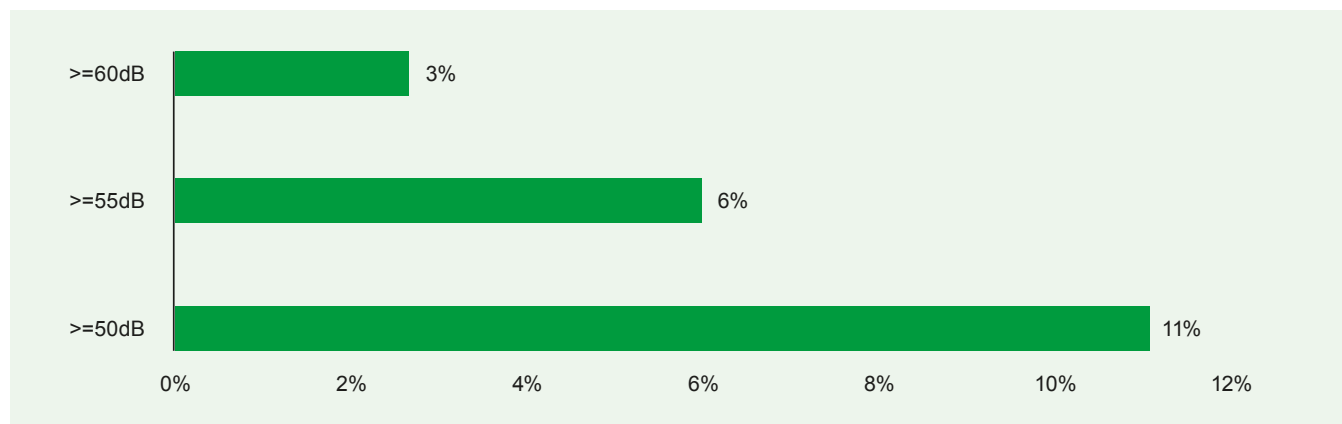
### Economic benefits

There are significant economic benefits of active travel, both for individuals and the wider local economy.

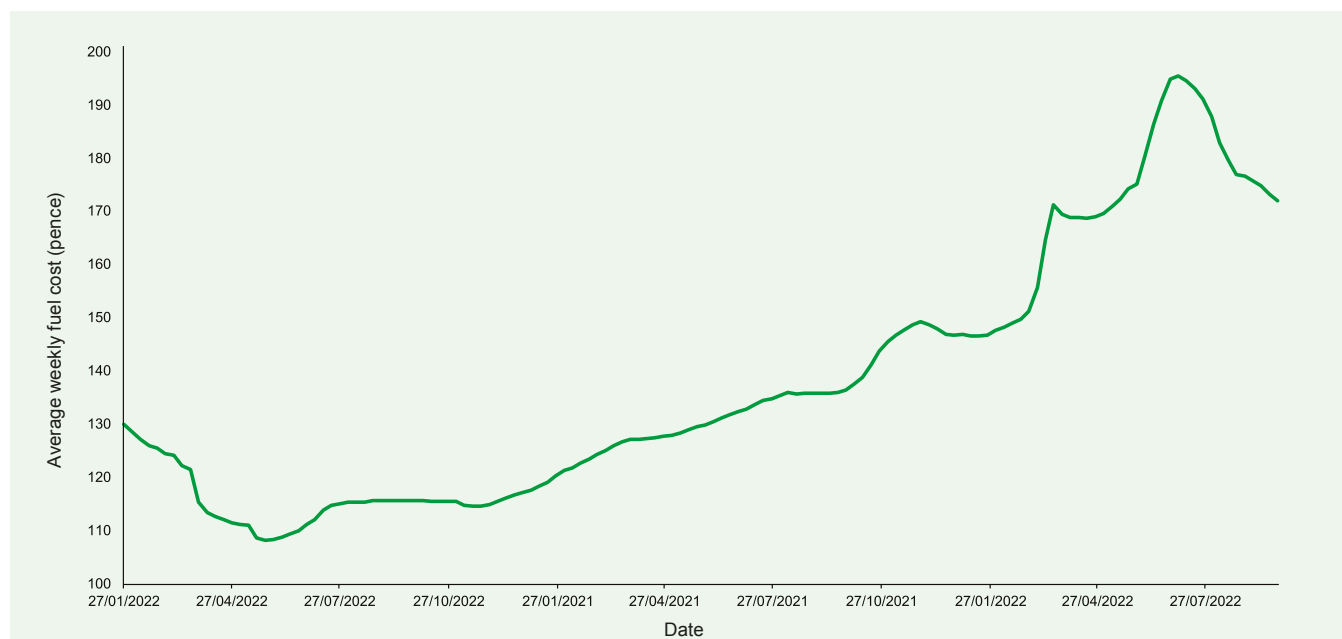
Trips taken by active travel are much cheaper (and often free) compared to other types of transport such as the private car. In 2022, the average cost of a 3-mile daily round trip in a petrol vehicle cost over £150 per year in fuel alone, whereas the cost of these trips made by walking or cycling would be negligible.

The average North East household spent £77 per week on transport between 2019-2021. This is **14%** of household expenditure, up from **12%** between 2013-2015.

The cost of living crisis and associated inflation have also affected transport, with an increase of **15%** in June 2022 compared to a year earlier, with much of this increase (**42%**) driven by rising fuel costs (see figure 10). Active travel may provide an opportunity to reduce outgoings for those able to switch their transport choices.



**Figure 9: Population affected by road noise pollution levels at night in the North East (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, 2019)**



**Figure 10: Average weekly cost of fuel (pence) in the UK 2020-2022**

Increased levels of active travel could also improve the region's productivity. The North East economy benefits by **£436.5 million annually, with a 26p net benefit for each mile walked or wheeled** instead of driven and **£1.15 for each mile cycled** instead of driven (Sustrans 2021 Tyneside walking and cycling index). It is also estimated that traffic congestion cost the UK economy £6.9 billion in 2019, and physically active workers take **27%** fewer sick days.

Economic modelling commissioned by Transport North East estimated that even without significant changes to travel behaviours, active travel will provide over £1.2 billion benefit to the North East by 2035. It also estimated that if every driver in the North East switched one journey per week from car to active travel, it would result in around £50 million further benefit for the area's economy.

Research has shown that improved active travel infrastructure can also enhance local business performance and that walking and cycling projects can increase retail sales by at least **30%**. Investment in better streets and spaces for walking can potentially increase footfall and attract customers to local businesses.

### The benefits of active travel - chapter summary

Enabling people to travel actively for all or part of more journeys will deliver significant health, social, environmental and economic benefits, ultimately creating better places to live, work and visit.

A healthier population is more productive, with less sickness absence and allows people to spend their working lives more productively.

This will help us work towards our vision of moving to a green, healthy, dynamic and thriving North East, and ultimately achieve our five regional transport objectives.



# How do people travel now?

In recent decades, the North East has seen rising levels of car use and ownership. This reliance on private cars needs to be addressed, and the use of sustainable types of travel (such as walking, wheeling and cycling) promoted. This chapter provides an insight into the way that people are travelling in the North East as of mid 2023, including information on recent levels of active travel in the region.

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, meaning that at least 33% of trips in the region under 5 miles were made by car. In line with government aims, we want to prevent a car-led recovery from COVID-19. Active travel can play a key part of this, with government seeking active travel and public transport to be the natural first choice for journeys going forward.

Active travel is crucial to how we get around. From walking or wheeling to a local shop to cycling on one of our National Cycle Network routes, active travel is a popular way to move around the North East, consistently being the second most frequent choice of transport for all trips.

It is also estimated that for journeys to Metro stations only walking and cycling have rebounded above the overall level of recovery. According to the 2021 National Travel Survey, regionally 31% of trips of all distances in 2021 were made by walking. This gives us a solid base to build on to achieve governmental targets for active travel.

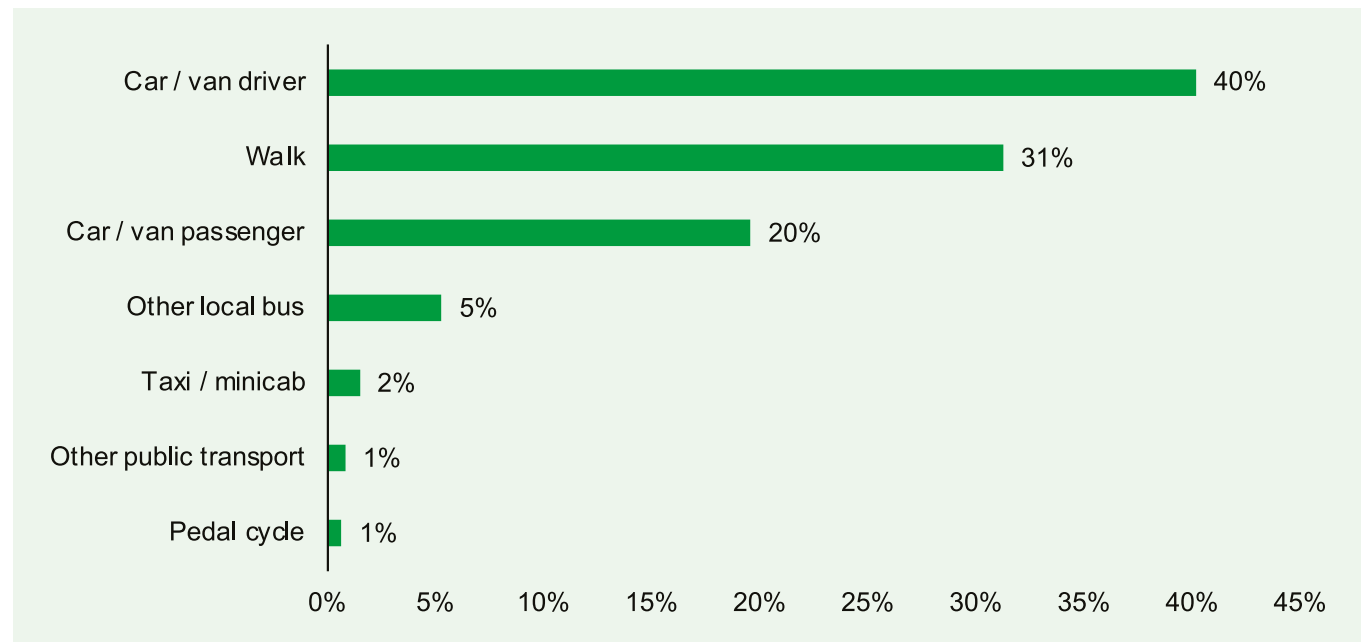


Figure 11: 2021 North East Transport Choices. National Travel Survey 2021

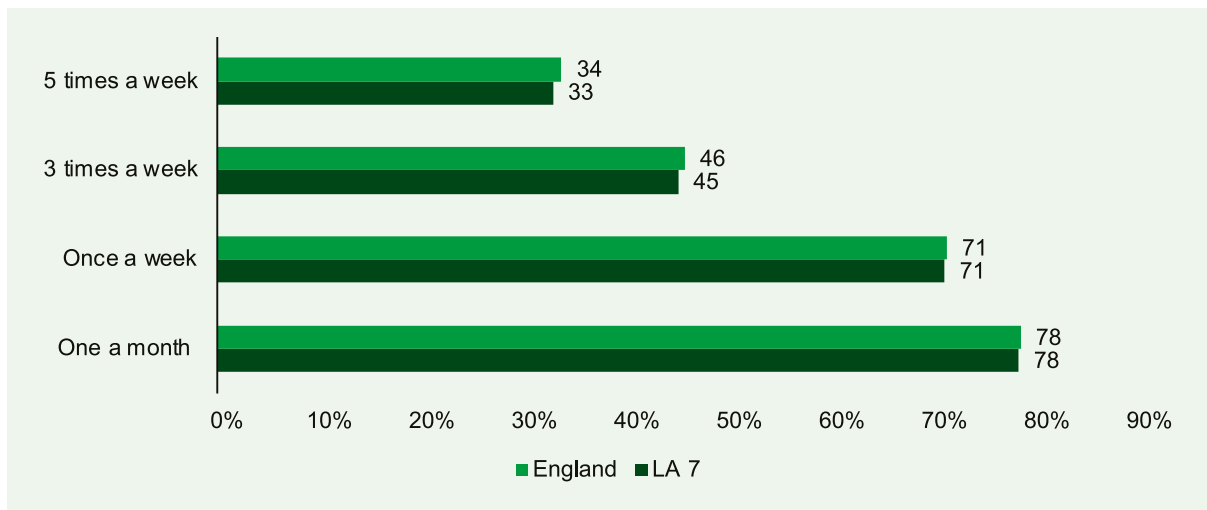
## Walking and wheeling

In the North East we are close to national level average rates for walking once a month, once a week, or five times per week (shown in figure 12). This is good and shows that we can also reach the national targets set out in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2. Department for Transport figures show that **71%** of people in the North East walk or cycle as part (or all) of a journey at least once a week, while **88%** of respondents to a 2022 survey on walking and wheeling in Tyne and Wear either would or do walk 5 minutes to get public transport as part of the same trip.

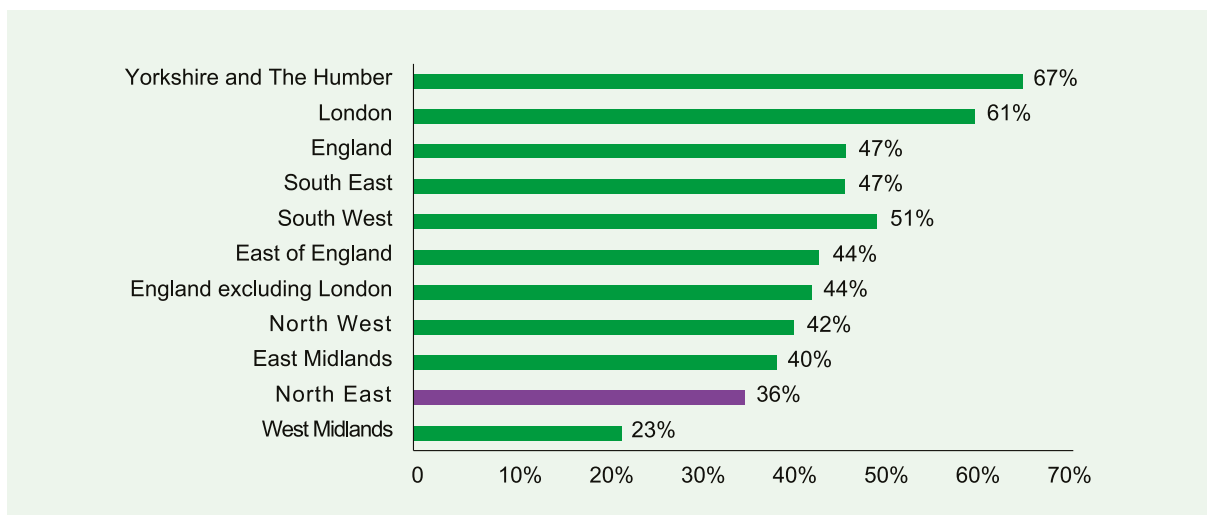
In the North East Travel Survey (2022), the most frequent types of journeys that people walked were attending education, for leisure and shopping. For cycling, it was commuting, attending education and leisure. Walking has also proven resilient to the increase in road traffic volumes, with walking still the principal mode of travel to school at **45%** of 5–16-year-olds, however this gap has been decreasing, particularly at primary school age

### Focus on Journeys to School

**Regionally, according to the National Travel Survey we have the second lowest level of active travel to school of any region in England at 36%, below the national average of 47%. One of the key aims of this strategy will be to address this.**



**Figure 12: How often do people in the region walk, wheel or cycle. Department for Transport (published 2022)**



**Figure 13: Active travel to school (5-16 year olds) by region 2021. National Travel Survey 2021**

## Cycling

Through 2022 we saw an increase in cycling of around **6%** compared to pre-pandemic levels, with some routes seeing larger rises. A 2022 survey in Tyne and Wear found **60%** of respondents who cycled did so least once a week, with the majority cycling 3-5 days a week. Our research also found that while **51%** of people who cycle had not changed their amount of cycling over the last 12 months, **20%** were cycling slightly more or much more than 12 months ago. This is positive and we need to continue to encourage this growth moving forward.

Our research shows that in Tyne and Wear, access to bicycles had not shown much change between 2019 and 2022, with around half of respondents owning a bicycle, and a further **6%** able to borrow one when required. This was **10%** higher than the national average of **47%**.

National Travel Survey data (2021) also shows that bicycle ownership and access changes over time. The highest uptake is between the ages of 5-10 and 11-16, when many begin learning how to ride a bike.

## Impact of Covid-19 and Cost of Living

Active travel became an even more important part of our lives during the period of COVID-19 restrictions when social movement was limited, and active travel provided a way to get some exercise. Active travel was also a way of getting around when people were advised to only travel if necessary and where possible, to avoid public transport.

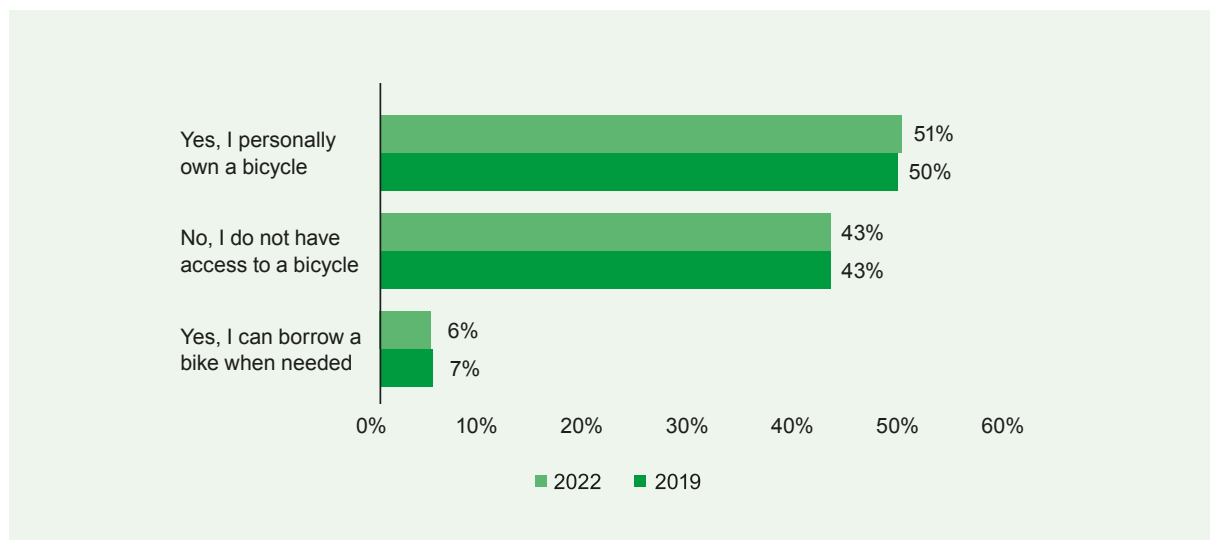


Figure 14: Nexus Insight Panels 2019 and 2022

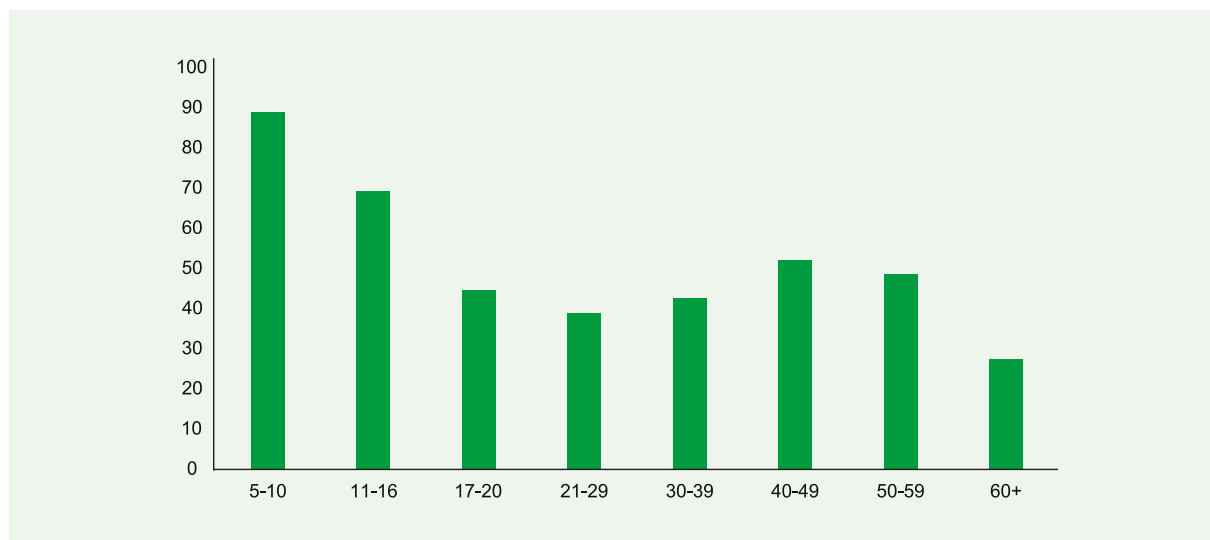


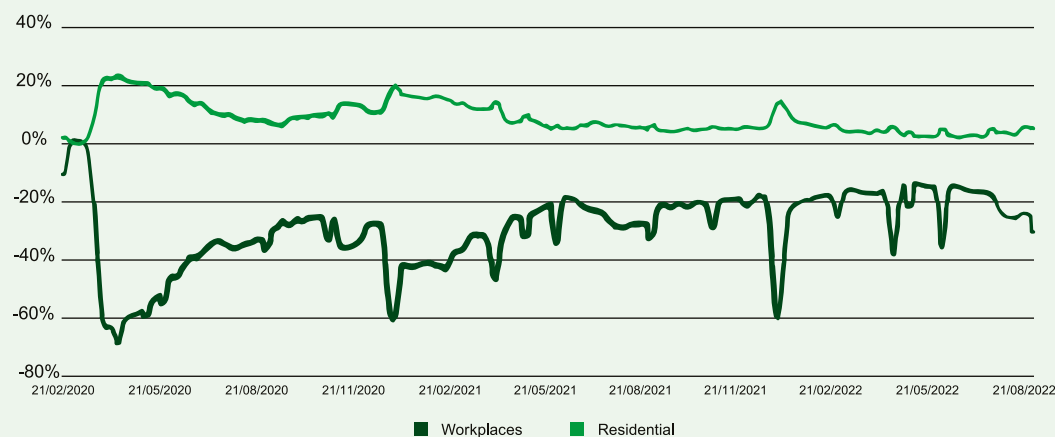
Figure 15: Owns or has access to a pedal cycle in England by age band (%). National Travel Survey 2021

Transport is an important area of regional average household spending. The average North East household spent £73.90 per week on transport prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which was **15%** of total household expenditure. This was before the cost of living crisis, about which **39%** of Tyne and Wear respondents to the Walking and Wheeling Nexus Insight Panel (2022) signalled an expectation towards walking more and **26%** towards cycling more in the next 6 months based on cost of living concerns. In a national level survey, **39%** of respondents suggested they were beginning to make fewer non-essential journeys. Our research as part of the Making the Right Travel Choice Strategy (2022) has shown that households are already reconsidering some of their journeys due to cost.

Changes to some working habits may also create long term shifts in active travel patterns. According to the Office for National Statistics (2022), around **22%** of employees in the North East work mainly from home, with shifts towards hybrid working in many industries meaning that people are spending less time in the workplace, and more time at home, as can be seen from figure 16. The North East however does have a lower percentage of homeworking than London, the South East, North West and South West, and is around **2%** below the national average for England. These working patterns may well change in the medium to long term.

For those who may now walk, wheel or cycle less as a result of changing working patterns, the possibility of active travel for leisure becomes even more important to ensure they remain healthy and mobile, as well as the maintenance of active travel rates in the region.

Uptake above the national average for walking for leisure in the region offer positive indications that walking and wheeling for exercise and leisure will continue. For example, in a 2022 Walking and Wheeling Nexus Insight Panel survey in Tyne and Wear, exercise and convenience were the two main motivators for journeys that respondents walked or wheeled.



**Figure 16: Change in time spend in Workplaces and Residential (Google Mobility 2022)**

### How do people travel now - chapter summary

In summary, it is clear that while we start from a strong base in our work to develop active travel in the region, there are areas that we can improve on.

For many metrics, we are around the national average and are well positioned to work to get more people walking, wheeling, and cycling for more journeys. The next chapter will look at the challenges of active travel.

# What are the challenges?

**We have identified key challenges which need to be addressed in order for us to break down barriers to active travel, both actual and perceived.**

Several studies and engagement campaigns have been carried out in the region, the findings of which have helped us to better understand perceptions and barriers to active travel for residents and businesses.

**They are:**

- Public Attitudes Survey for North East Active Travel Fund (2021)
- Making the Right Travel Choice – Market Research with North East residents and employers (2022)
- Making the Right Travel Choice Strategy – Public Consultation (2022)
- Nexus Insight Panel –
  - Walking and wheeling (2022)
  - Cycling (2019 and 2022)
- North East Underrepresented Groups in Cycling Market Research (2022)
- Active Travel Strategy Stakeholder Forum (2022)

The samples of these surveys are not intended to be representative of the North East as a region, but can be read as useful indicators.

The research has shown us that there are five key themes that are important to people when considering walking, wheeling and cycling:

- **Safety and security (including perceptions of safety and security).**
- **Access for all and maintenance.**
- **Affordability.**
- **Coordination and integration.**
- **Journey times and perceptions of convenience.**

If we address these barriers then more people in our region will be able to travel actively for more of their short journeys, helping to achieve our vision of ‘moving to a green, healthy, dynamic and thriving North East.’

## 4.1 Safety and security

### Infrastructure safety concerns

A significant challenge that needs to be addressed is the perception that active travel is unsafe because of concerns over infrastructure and/or personal safety and security.

Research found fear of motor traffic to be the main barrier to cycling. Concerns included perceptions that roads are dangerous places for cycling due to the amount of other road traffic. Specific safety concerns include the traffic being too busy on roads, the speed of other traffic, and a lack of segregated cycle routes.

Although most people who took part in the 2022 Underrepresented Groups in Cycling research having journeys they could feasibly make by bicycle it was not uncommon for them to completely discount road cycling due to safety concerns

**When asked about the main barriers to cycling in the region, cyclists and non-cyclists agreed that the main concern is traffic.**

Nexus Insight Panel on cycling (July 2022)

The research indicates that cycling on roads and concerns about safety when cycling are closely linked. **In particular, women and those aged 60+, perceive that it is unsafe to cycle on roads.**

Concerns were voiced about shared use paths, with the mixing of cyclists and pedestrians seen to compromise the safety and experience of both people cycling and those walking or wheeling.

Sustrans' 2023 Disabled Citizens Enquiry found that people are prevented from walking and wheeling by damaged, poorly maintained and low-quality pavements. The biggest issues are uneven surfaces, lack of dropped curbs, slippery conditions, inconsistent design and inaccessible diversions around building works.

Safety concerns also included perceptions that in rural areas, there is a lack of pavement space, with narrow roads and high speed limits (60 mph) along some non-residential roads often shared between motor vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.

Inadequate pavements can lead to serious safety issues, with many disabled people at higher risk of falling or being injured when walking and wheeling. Concerns around safety and accessibility whilst walking and wheeling can also deter disabled people from attempting these journeys. (Disabled Citizens Enquiry, Sustrans, 2023).

2021 research from infrastructure management firm Gaist, found that pavements in England have been gradually declining and semi-urban areas have the highest proportion of pavements in poor condition. (Gaist, Healthy Pavements, National Assessment of Footways in England, 2021)

**“I’m someone who signed up to my cycle to work scheme. I got the bike, but I don’t really feel that safe, where I live, cycling to work. There’s a lot of cars parked on the pavements so there isn’t the space to cycle on. I wouldn’t dare cycle on the roads, where I live, there’s just a lot of drivers that wouldn’t expect to see somebody cycling to work in the estate where I live.”**

Participant, Underrepresented Groups in Cycling in the North East (September 2022)

### Personal safety and security concerns

A lack of lighting and CCTV, poor maintenance and blind spots contribute to perceptions of poor safety and security when walking, wheeling or cycling. Poorly lit areas of the network can negatively effect usage and are often perceived as unsafe spaces, especially when traveling at night.

Perceptions that cycling is generally unsafe affects the willingness of parents to let their children travel actively. As a result, young people may not get into the habit of cycling.

Cycle training provided to children declines rapidly when they start secondary school, often impacting on their confidence. This is an important age group to target given the opportunity to get them to cycle for all of their adult life.

**“More dedicated cycleways, reduced priorities for motorists, more cycle paths out in the open not secluded (I’m a woman and these are just too secluded. Really need some focus groups on why women are scared of cycling).”**

Female, 50-60 Tyne and Wear



**“The only problem about walking is the safety aspect being a senior citizen.”**

Female, 60+, Tyne and Wear

**47% of respondents to the North East Travel Survey (2022) reported feeling either unsafe or very unsafe due to a fear of crime or disorder while walking at night compared to 6% during the day.**

### Road Safety

Between 2013-2022, there were 43,519 casualties (of all severities) reported in the North East for all methods of travel. The North East Transport Plan key performance indicators include improvements to road safety regarding the number of people killed or seriously injured as well as improvements to the number of slight injuries on our network.

A regionwide strategy for the future management, safety, maintenance and improvement of the North East's Key Route Network (KRN) for all users will be developed in 2024/25.

### 4.2 Access for all and maintenance

The lack of consistency in the quality of active travel routes was strongly highlighted as a barrier. For example, perceptions of poorly maintained existing pavements and cycle paths was raised as an issue, with references to the cycling experience being impacted by debris such as glass as well as cracks and potholes.

**53% of respondents in Tyne and Wear were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the condition of cycle routes in the region.**

Nexus Customer Insight Panel, 2022

Lack of information on active travel options can reduce access. Direct and pleasant routes may be available, however, if the public aren't aware of them, they will not be used. This includes public rights of way and the National Cycle Network.

Segregated cycle lanes starting and stopping resulting in people cycling having to share road space with other road traffic was also referenced as a deterrent to cycling for some.

It was felt by many members of the public that enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure could make trips shorter, safer and more pleasant.

Providing a quality active travel infrastructure in rural areas was perceived as being more difficult because of the anticipated expense of adapting roads to meet and exceed the latest design standards, which apply to the entire local highway network.

Design standards often conflict with the characteristics of some of the region's rurally based towns and villages, although national policy recognises that the level of provision required depends on the location.

Maintenance of pavements and cycle ways is an issue as highway maintenance funding does not cover footway and cycle infrastructure assets which leaves a shortfall. Addressing the maintenance backlog and keeping pavements in England (excluding London) in good condition is estimated to cost £1.7 billion. There are no dedicated government funding streams specifically for footway maintenance as well as a lack of information on the additional health costs brought about by the impact of poorly maintained footways.

Falls are a leading cause of injury-related morbidity and mortality, as well a significant burden on health and social services.

### Access for all and maintenance (continued)

Research from University College London found that of all pedestrian casualties hospitalised in England (2007–2009) 23,528 were involved in a road traffic collision and 76,087 were injured in falls on the public highway. **The number of pedestrian fall casualties were, similar to Dutch figures, over three times greater than those involving a motor vehicle.** This research also found that about three quarters of the pedestrian falls were related to bad or slippery pavement conditions.

Outdoor pedestrian environments influence falls risk, but this area is poorly researched in comparison to indoor falls risks, however a 2016 study by the University of Glasgow found that the following issues may increase the risk of outdoor falls:

- Uneven pavements
- Pavement materials (e.g. cobbles, paving blocks)
- Poor lighting
- Weather – icy, wet, windy
- Slopes and steps
- Pavement width
- Obstructions (street clutter, overhanging trees, tree roots)
- Road crossings
- Crowded streets

Some routes do not have the necessary supporting infrastructure to encourage walking such as seating areas so that people can rest during their journey or suitable street lighting and shelters for follow-on public transport.

Many towns have a high volume of road traffic, but little space to accommodate pathways, and constrained widths with insufficient space between building lines.



Frankland Lane, County Durham  
Surface before improvement



Frankland Lane, County Durham  
After the surface was improved

The scope of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) is perceived to focus on urban areas, potentially impacting on the ranking and prioritisation of rural improvements linking communities.

Direct routes linking rural communities are often on roads with national speed limits. As a result, some active travel routes have recently been reclassified by Sustrans.

Another specific rural challenge is the difficulty of identifying potential high-use corridors, as there is less demand for active travel routes compared to urban environments.

A new challenge with the current cycling infrastructure is that it isn't always suitable for cargo bikes and e-cargo bikes as older routes may not be sufficiently wide. A lack of secure storage and space for cargo bikes to complete delivery drop offs has also recently been cited as a barrier to cargo bike usage. (Transport for London's Cargo Bike Action Plan, 2023)

The images to the left show improvements on a 2-mile route linking Newton Hall to Durham City Centre from Brasside (Frankland Prison) to The Sands (Durham City) which had previously been unusable for anyone other than walkers and mountain bikers. It has opened up the bridleway for everyday walking, wheeling, and cycling, showing what can be done to make active travel infrastructure more accessible.

### Access for all and maintenance (continued)

**“It’s not a continual network [in Durham], so there’s a lot of stopping and starting and again, cyclists are not prioritised. You have to stop at various different points and have to wait for the traffic to move. So yes, it’s not as joined up as it could be.”**

Female, County Durham

### Poor physical environment for walking, wheeling, and cycling

A perceived poor environment, affected by issues such as traffic road congestion, noise, severance, air pollution, street clutter and streets and estates that are viewed as ‘car-centric’ and dominated by vehicles and car parking, were referenced as reasons why people wouldn’t consider travelling more actively.

People with restricted mobility (such as wheelchair users, people with pushchairs, and vulnerable groups) have highlighted issues which impact on their ability to travel actively.

Common barriers include ‘street clutter’, a lack of dropped kerbs, turning spaces, and ramps, and where narrow paths result in the potential for conflict with other users of the space.

Removing unnecessary obstructions such as street clutter could improve accessibility for everyone, including visually impaired people.

### Users with disabilities / long term health conditions / restricted mobility

Disabled people face greater barriers to travel than non-disabled people, taking **30%** fewer walking trips than non-disabled people according to a 2023 report from Sustrans and Transport for All.

These barriers can prevent disabled people accessing essential services like healthcare and food, opportunities in work and education, and social benefits like community and green space. It can lead to reduced independence and a higher risk of isolation for disabled people.

A UK-wide survey by the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) in 2015 found that **95%** of blind and partially sighted people had collided with an obstacle in their local neighbourhood over a three-month period.

New commercial demands on pavements and walkways such as dockless hire bikes and e-scooters are perceived to be adding to the problem caused by street clutter such as: advertising boards and vehicles parked on pavements.

**16%** of UK disabled people are not able to get access to the right mobility aid to walk or wheel, such as wheelchairs, mobility scooters, crutches or walking sticks, assistance dogs, carers or personal assistants (Disabled Citizens Enquiry, Sustrans, 2023).

Some residents living in rural areas told us that narrow paths and a limited amount of pavements can act as barriers to active travel.

Addressing these barriers can ensure active travel routes are accessible to all, regardless of age, sex, race or disability and do not create risks for users.

Walking was widely referenced as easy and enjoyable by research participants who took part in the underrepresented groups in cycling study. Walking was also seen as a way of fitting exercise into daily routines, either for short journeys or as a leisure activity in itself. However, it is important to acknowledge that walking may not be ‘easy’ or ‘enjoyable’ for everyone, especially those with disabilities and or long-term health conditions. That is why the region’s active travel infrastructure also needs to be made more accessible.

### Access for all and maintenance (continued)

#### Access for bikes

A lack of cycle access was raised as a key barrier to cycling (see figure 17). Regional access to bikes (to own and to hire) has remained static between 2019 and 2022. The amount of people who have no access to a bike has remained at **43%**. This shows that bike accessibility is a challenge.

#### Perception of fitness and perseverance required

Perceptions that active travel requires too much effort and that people are not fit enough to do it are common challenges. Whilst some people have restrictions on their physical mobility which can restrict their ability to travel, others are deterred from active travel by perceptions of the fitness and perseverance required when walking, wheeling, and cycling.

The weather has been highlighted as a perceived barrier, with unpleasant conditions during the winter and dark mornings and evenings being highlighted. There were also perceptions that hilly parts of the region require high fitness levels in order to travel actively.

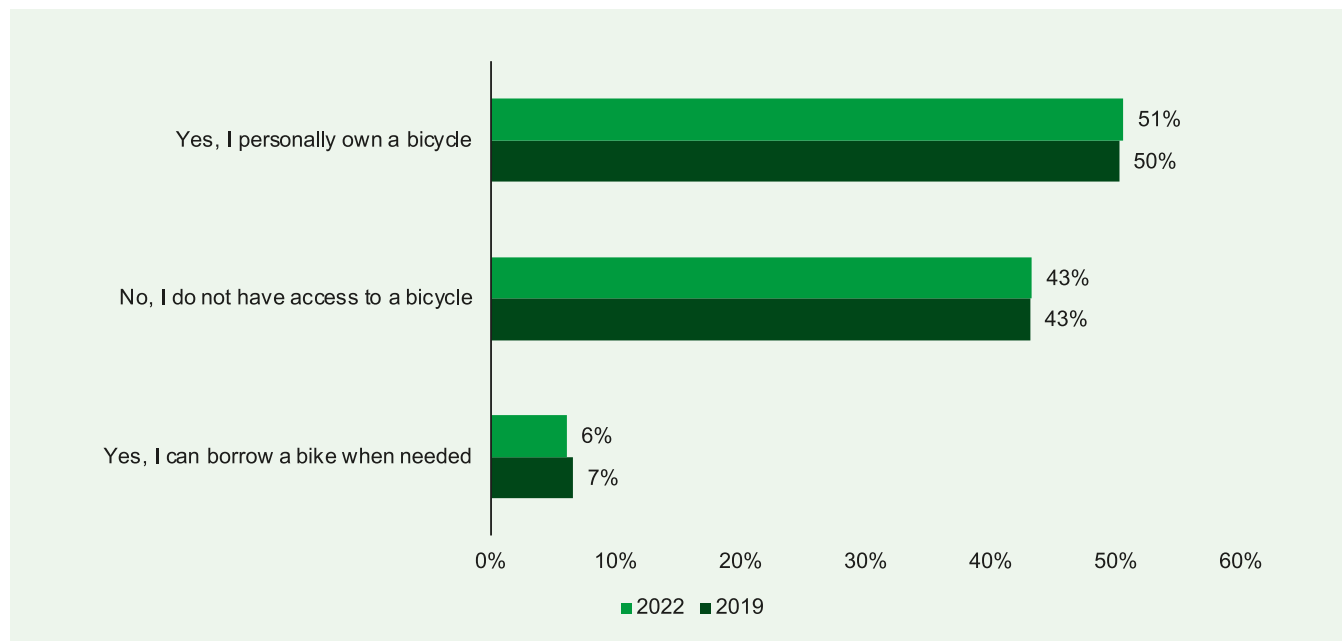


Figure 17: Tyne and Wear bicycle access 2019-2022 (Nexus Insight Panel, 2019 & 2022)

### 4.3 Affordability

Active travel is often the cheapest way to get around, especially in the case of walking. For cycling there are cost barriers such as purchasing a bicycle, e-bike, cargo bike, or e-cargo bike and associated equipment.

The 2022 North East underrepresented groups in cycling research found that cost does act as a barrier to cycling. For example, the economic benefits of cycling, particularly in comparison to car use due to current fuel costs, were widely acknowledged but the cost of purchasing a bike was often described as a barrier to ownership.

Research participants specifically referenced the perceived value of purchasing a bike was an affordability barrier. For example, many saw it as a discretionary spend, something they felt was currently limited by increases in the cost of living.

Some people with restricted mobility highlighted the high cost of adaptive bikes as a key barrier.

For those that told us they could afford a bike, some saw a bike as not being value for money as they would get limited use from it. This was particularly felt amongst some women in the region, who took part in the underrepresented groups in cycling research.

Cost reduction is a significant motivator for some considering switching the way they travel, prompted by the cost of living crisis.

**“The price of petrol at the minute is just crazy. So that’s another reason why we’ll just go local down to the coast [on bikes].”**

Female, 35-59, Underrepresented Groups in Cycling, 2022

A significant affordability barrier to e-cargo bike deliveries is that it is more expensive than diesel vans on a like for like basis. It is common practice for van deliveries to be fulfilled by independent contractors so many of the economic costs of deliveries are borne by the contractor rather than the delivery company. Passing these economic costs to diesel van drivers means courier companies can undercut deliveries by most e-cargo bike operators who tend to internalise such costs. This creates a barrier to the adoption of cargo and e-cargo bikes and further growth in usage.

### 4.4 Coordination and integration

Perceived lack of integration between active travel and public transport is a barrier to making longer sustainable journeys that require integration between different public transport types and services.

A perceived lack of real-time passenger information, inadequate information and signage was also identified as a common barrier that prevents more people from travelling by active modes to a public transport station or interchange.

Our research found that a perceived lack of secure storage and uncertainty about whether bikes can be taken on to trains, buses and Metro acted as a barrier to combining cycling with public transport.

Improved cycle routes, segregated from road vehicle traffic, linking to public transport stations, interchanges and other suitable locations was seen as important to people when considering if they could combine active travel with public transport use for longer journeys.

Integration of active travel and public transport is especially important in rural areas because of the distances needed to be travelled.

**“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

### 4.5 Journey times and perceptions of convenience

Our research highlighted that some people believe many regular journeys they need to make cannot be walked, wheeled, or cycled because of the distance, and a view that it would take too long.

**“Everyone’s in a hurry all the time. Like life’s just moving too fast. Everyone’s going to work, then they’re going somewhere straight after work and they’ve got to be here and there, and they’re squeezing things in around family life.”**

Female, under 40, urban

## What are the challenges?

The practicability of getting people to consider switching short car journeys to active travel was questioned by some, mainly due to the perceived ease of car use. Although being stuck in traffic can be inconvenient, it did not outweigh the perceived convenience of travelling by car for some.

The perception around the ease of driving, supported by the low cost and availability of car parking at workplaces and in town and city centres around the region, was also highlighted.

Those with childcare responsibilities viewed the private car as the quickest, most convenient choice for their needs because of the multi-purpose journeys and commitments they have.

Some people with restricted mobility were clear that convenience was crucial in determining how to make a journey and that the issue of sustainable travel was secondary.

People also highlighted negative perceptions of walking or cycling to work. Some felt that travelling actively was mainly a leisure activity and not suitable for journeys to work where journey time and convenience take priority.

Spatial planning and new development were also mentioned as a barrier to the convenience of cycling, walking and wheeling. This is because many new developments, such as housing, have not provided a good standard of active travel infrastructure,

leading to perceptions that the car the most convenient way to travel for journeys. Another issue highlighted was a perception of new developments being located away from city and town centres with irregular or no bus services and poor and indirect walking and cycling routes.

People in the 60+ age group, and those living in rural and semi-rural locations, mentioned a reluctance to consider changing travel behaviour to more active and sustainable journeys.

**“Stopped [cycling] in my teens, never picked it up again.”**

Female, 50-60, Tyne and Wear

### Storage and facilities

A common barrier referenced was the lack of secure cycle storage at both workplaces and transport interchanges. Whilst many employers and business parks in the region have good cycle storage, shower and changing facilities available, it was found that employees aren't always aware of these.

Limited access to showering facilities at destinations was also highlighted as an issue affecting the appeal of cycling.

However, the lack of shower facilities at destinations was only listed as the 8th most important barrier to cycling in the region by people who took part in the July 2022 Nexus insight panel on cycling. Moreover, the underrepresented groups in cycling research found that improved facilities may not increase participation, due to a reluctance around showering and changing at destinations.

The perceived need to change and shower when arriving at work, as well as making multiple journeys for business, and perceived issues with having to carry a change of clothes and other equipment was also highlighted.

For all audiences, the thought of arriving at a destination – particularly work or for a social occasion - hot, sweaty, and possibly smelly, was off-putting.

**The issue of showering is a particular barrier for women, and almost as much a barrier as safety.** Reasons for this included: the additional effort and time requirement; the need to carry a change of clothes; concerns about unisex facilities.

### Journey times and perceptions of convenience (continued)

2019 research from the British Council for Offices found that up to **38%** of British office workers would consider commuting by bike if their workplace offered better facilities.

Having a safe place to store bikes was raised in discussions about facilities, with evidence suggesting that a lack of facilities at destinations is a more widespread issue than a lack of storage at home.

The perceived lack of secure cycle storage at destinations was a barrier amongst those more open to cycling as transport. (Underrepresented Groups in Cycling in the North East, September 2022) There also is a general lack of facilities to cater for the storage of non-conventional cycles.

**14% of all responses on barriers to cycling in Tyne and Wear related to end point facilities such as cycle parking and showers.**

Nexus Customer Insight Panel, 2022

Regional cycle storage exists at public transport interchange and business parks, but we have identified a lack of awareness as a barrier to greater use.

Another barrier to the take up of e-bikes and e-cargo bikes could be the current lack of public charging availability. About 190,000 electric cars were registered in the UK in 2021, just 15,000 more than e-cycles, but there are more than 30,000 e-car charging points and only a limited number of e-cycle charging points. Sustrans is working with partners to place e-bike charging stations on the National Cycle Network to enable people to travel longer distances across the UK using electric bikes.



### Summary – what are the challenges?

As can be seen in figure 18, exercise and convenience were the two most important considerations stated for those who decided to walk as part of the whole of a journey. While environmental concerns were not a major factor, it still accounted for **13%** of responses, showing that they are still taken into account.

Respondents were asked to rank their key barriers to cycling in the region (see figure 19), with levels of road traffic, the overall safety of cycling and lack of specific segregated infrastructure proving the three most important factors.

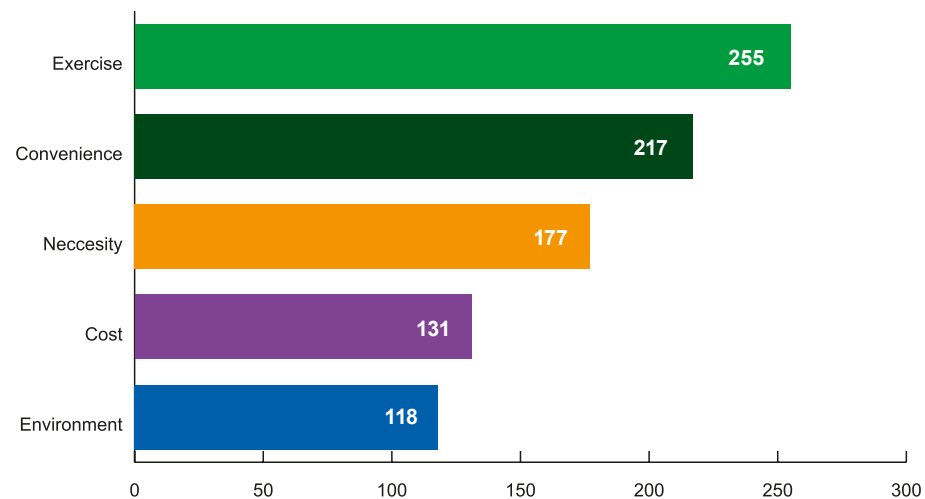


Figure 18: Motivations when deciding to walk or wheel – 2022 Nexus insight panel

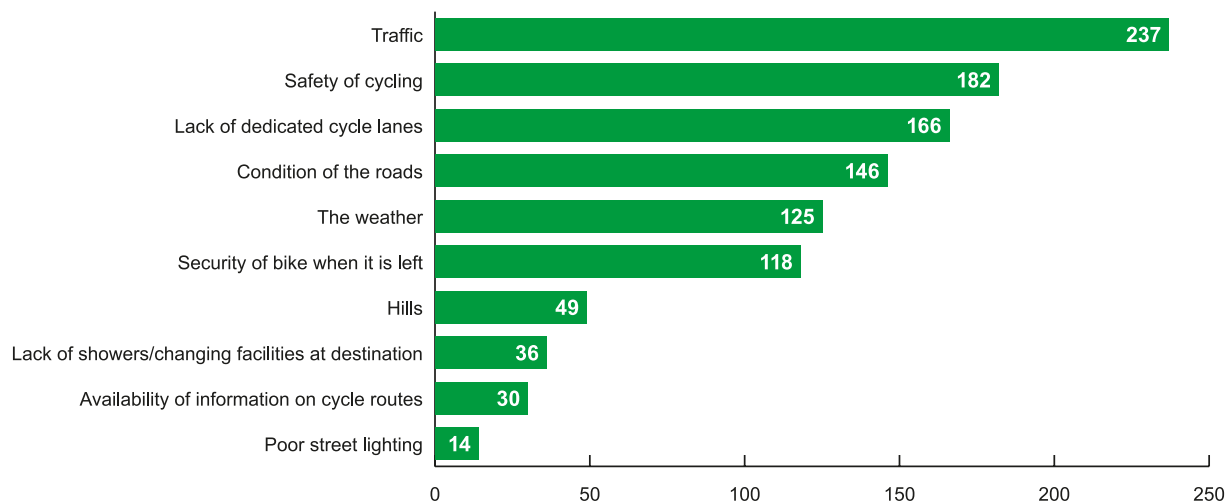


Figure 19: Key barriers to cycling in the region – 2022 Nexus insight panel



# Where do we want to be?

## Background

By 2035 we would like our region to be at the forefront of having made the transition to decarbonise transport, having cleaner air for our people to breathe, having a more physically active population, and having a stronger economy.

We want active travel to become the natural choice for short everyday journeys and to combine with public transport for longer travel.

**Our target to meet this aim is for over half of all shorter journeys to be made by active travel by 2035, up from 37% in 2018/19.**

It is ambitious but can be achieved with the right level of investment and policy change. The region must also work to tackle the barriers people face and the everyday needs of people making journeys, which includes everyone living in, working in and visiting the North East.

There is significant potential to grow the number of active trips taken, and we need to work with partners to help provide safe, attractive, and high-quality active travel infrastructure which helps people move around the region and make more everyday journeys by walking, wheeling or cycling.

We want to be in a position where the vision and objectives of the North East Transport Plan and Active Travel Strategy are realised. We also want to ensure the region can help to meet the national targets set out in the Government's second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2) published in July 2022, and the 2020 'Gear Change' cycling and walking plan for England which sets out a vision for a travel revolution in England's streets, towns and communities.

For this to be achieved, our transport network and offer will look different to how it does today. Active travel will take a more prominent role in how people travel alongside a sustainable, affordable public transport system and zero emission vehicles.

This chapter sets out how we envisage walking, wheeling and cycling will look in the North East by 2035 if this strategy has been implemented. We have identified the need for a better active travel infrastructure, using our seven Local Authority Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and the region's Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs), including the proposed development of a North East active travel network, with affordable cycle hire, docking and storage at key transport interchanges, education and employment sites.

We have created six active travel policy areas aimed at supporting delivery of this strategy and how active travel will achieve the North East Transport Plan vision and objectives. This chapter sets out where we want to be in the coming years for each of the following themes:

- **Active travel friendly places;**
- **World-class active travel network;**
- **Greater integration;**
- **Supporting people to walk, wheel and cycle;**
- **Improving access to equipment;**
- **Partnership working.**



### 5.1 Active travel friendly places

Streets and public spaces will be more appealing and safer, with better experiences for people using them.

We want active travel to be a choice for all. Removing barriers that make it harder for some to walk, wheel or cycle to their destinations, will make our streets and active travel infrastructure more inclusive. This will ensure that travelling actively in the North East is more accessible to all regardless of age, sex, race or ability.

For example, areas, particularly town and city centres will be more 'walkable' and wheeling friendly, through better and more inclusive pedestrian infrastructure improvements. As well as improvements to the built environment and greater CCTV coverage, providing reassurance and boosting confidence, enabling more shorter journeys to be made by active travel, including underrepresented groups. Our research identified women, lower socioeconomic classifications, those aged 60+, minority ethnicities, people with disabilities and long term health conditions, and people living in rural and semi-rural locations as underrepresented groups in cycling.

On our road network, the needs of all users will be considered, ensuring that conflicts are reduced, suitable speed limits are in place and vulnerable road users are protected to improve road safety.

People walking, wheeling, and cycling will be physically separated from cars, where possible, to improve road safety for vulnerable road users. We will strive for more cycle lanes to be physically segregated from pedestrians except where no alternatives exist.

Cycle routes will be more direct with good lighting, improving safety.

Given the challenges of accommodating segregated active travel pathways, particularly in rural areas, highway authorities will have considered measures to improve safety for people walking, wheeling, cycling or horse riding when sharing the carriageway with motor traffic.

Improvements to public spaces and enhanced signage and wayfinding across the region will also help visitors to the North East to walk, wheel and cycle during their stay.

Improving the accessibility of the region through promotion of and investment in active travel will enhance the offer to visitors arriving by air, rail and sea, as well as those arriving by car but wishing to travel actively while in the region.

Our footpaths and cycleways will be attractive and pleasant, and people will enjoy using them. Physical access barriers on active travel paths, such as waggonways, which prevent access to non-standard cycles will have been removed or replaced where possible.

A greater presence of people moving around our region actively will have led to improved perceptions of personal safety and security, achieved by more people walking, wheeling and cycling around our cities, towns, suburbs and villages for everyday journeys. More people travelling actively will have encouraged others to do the same, helping to support local businesses and other economic development.

More 'School Streets' and 'Low Traffic Neighbourhoods' will have been trialled and introduced across the region which will help lower congestion, improve air quality and boost the number of children walking, wheeling, and cycling to school each day.

Streets will be for all, with greater priority given to people walking, wheeling, or cycling. People will be met by modern and safe waiting and storage facilities to complete their onward journeys by public transport such as bus, Metro, rail, and ferry. A range of cycle storage solutions will be available across the region, and these will be covered by CCTV where possible, combatting bike theft.

There will be wide, segregated (where possible) and well-maintained routes with reduced street clutter, dropped kerbs, ramp access provision where needed, and other inclusive infrastructure such as well-designed crossing points.

Greater provision of shelters, rest areas and other amenities will ensure people have the opportunity to take a break during their journey. There will have been an increase in the amount of supporting active travel infrastructure such as seating areas, street lighting and shelters, especially at leisure locations and at stations and interchanges for follow-on public transport.

### 5.2 World-class active travel network

Active travel will be viewed as a regular activity that everyone can enjoy for a range of journey purposes. Routes will be more direct, improving journey times in some cases linking into key destinations and attractions.

The North East will have developed a fully joined-up active travel network, linking together existing parts of our active travel networks, parks and greenspaces.

This future network will link both urban, suburban, and rural communities, where possible, and will be designed to a consistent regional standard with a strong, identifiable brand. Investments will be targeted to extend benefits of existing schemes and existing spaces.

New infrastructure solutions will be high-quality and will meet (and where possible exceed) minimum design standards such as LTN 1/20 and future updates.

This will be created initially by working with local authority partners to identify and address known gaps in the active travel network to create more direct and desirable routes.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs) will feed in directly to the development of the strategic regional network.

There will be robust maintenance of the network. Targeted investment will strive to ensure that maintenance and cleaning are regularly undertaken, and the network remains reliable and pleasant for users. The region will have successfully made the case for partners to obtain financial resource for targeted investment in maintenance activities to complete maintenance at pace, to improve resilience and drive up the safety of the region's network.

For example, we will endeavour for footpaths and cycle ways to be well maintained, free of uneven surfaces, potholes, trip hazards (including from street clutter/obstructions) and overhanging vegetation through strengthened maintenance and cleaning regimes.

It will be easier for people with restricted mobility to be able to use active travel as a form of transport, including as a means of accessing public transport.

In addition to providing new active travel routes, the existing network will have continued to be upgraded to the highest standard, enabling onward connections away from main routes including off carriageway routes in rural areas.

Our active travel network will be suitable for use by non-traditional bikes through the removal of barriers and improving surfaces. Physical access barriers on active travel paths, such as waggonways, which prevent access to non-standard cycles will have been removed or replaced where possible.

We will strive to reduce street clutter on footpaths and cycle lanes due to badly parked vehicles and poorly placed temporary signage, through considering greater enforcement which will help all users – especially visually impaired people – and people using wheelchairs and pushchairs.

Mobility hubs in urban, suburban and rural areas will provide services related to walking, wheeling and cycling, walking and wheeling, such as hire bikes and possibly bike repair.

People will be able to easily hire cycles, including e-cycles and, where appropriate, e-scooters throughout the region at public transport stations and interchanges.

E-bikes will be hireable and available in more rural locations because of the longer distances people may need to travel and will also enable people to tackle hills easier. E-bikes will have unlocked a huge opportunity for improving transport between and beyond suburban areas where distances to key destinations are too long for many to consider walking or cycling using a conventional bike and where public transport options are limited.

As well as e-cargo bikes being used for home deliveries, there will be greater use of e-cargo bikes to carry children, supporting families to switch more journeys from car to active travel.

We will aim to make new routes wide enough for non-traditional bikes to be used and for secure storage facilities to be provided in suitable locations.

Many journeys between rural communities will be perceived as more cyclable distances, through allowing space for paths within or outside of the highway boundary, improving safety for active travel. There will also be more active travel routes in rural areas, better connecting communities.

Given the limitations that are often in place for creating new active travel infrastructure in rural locations, creative solutions which make better use of existing infrastructure will be introduced.

### 5.3 Greater integration

Combining active travel with public transport, such as walking, wheeling or cycling to a station or interchange will be an effective way for people to incorporate physical activity into daily life and raise activity levels.

There will have been significant growth in the numbers of people travelling actively for the first and last mile of journeys, using bus, Metro, local and national rail, as well as the Shields Ferry as part of a journey.

Cycle hire will be integrated with the rest of the region's sustainable transport network.

Active travel routes will link to public transport stations and interchanges, allowing for safe and seamless travel with other forms of transport.

The region's public transport network and services will work better for people using bicycles than it already does in 2023. For example, it will be easier to safely store cycles, including accessible bikes at interchanges and bring them on more public transport services. There will also be greater information on storage for cycles at stations and on services.

Greater active travel journeys in the region will not replace or compete with journeys currently made by public transport, but rather complement and feed into the region's public transport system as part of a one, total, sustainable network. People will be able to see where there is available cycle parking and be able to easily use it.

There will be seamless active travel integration with public transport for onward journeys. Real-time public transport passenger information will show how long it takes and the most convenient route to travel when walking, wheeling or cycling to a public transport station or interchange.

Incentives as part of an integrated transport app could also be in use to reward people for making more active journeys.

In rural areas, active travel routes will link with good quality, reliable and affordable public transport services to encourage more journeys to be made by combining walking, wheeling or cycling with public transport.

For example, given the importance of integration with public transport for active travel in rural locations, creative solutions combining active travel with public transport such as mobility hubs, Demand Responsive Transport (DRT), including bus services and Mobility as a Service (MaaS), will have been introduced in rural communities.

### 5.4 Supporting people to walk, wheel and cycle

People of all ages will have improved confidence and cycling skills through equal access cycle training initiatives across the North East.

More school children will travel actively to school, with the region no longer having the lowest level of active travel to school (age 5-16) of any region in England (36% in 2021, below the national average of 47%).

People will have awareness of the updated Highway Code which places walking and wheeling at the top the road user hierarchy. There will be an understanding of key changes, including other traffic having to give way to people crossing or waiting to cross at a junction, and the position in the road for cycling, will be enhanced. Raising awareness of the 2022 updated hierarchy and future updates will help improve the safety of people walking, wheeling and cycling.

Improvements to lighting and maintenance of active travel routes could also support people during their commute to and from work during early morning or late evening shift patterns. People working shift patterns and hospitality workers will have particularly benefited.

The night time economy is a key part of the North East economic makeup and improving the safety of routes, especially when traveling at night, will support more active journeys irrespective of the time chosen to travel.

There will have been a significant rise in e-bike and e-cargo bikes across the region, especially from people who currently don't cycle. Organisations will be able to deliver some goods over short distances using cargo bikes, instead of doing so by using petrol or diesel vans.

Safety will be the key consideration in the design of all regionally promoted active travel schemes and programmes to support people to use active travel for more journeys.

Entry and exit points of visitors to the North East, where the leisure-based movements of these visitors differ from local residents making journeys for work, education or to access services, will support more people to walk, wheel and cycle through better information and facilities.

Visitor economy locations will also be supported in installing active travel infrastructure such as safe cycle storage, docking for bike and e-bike hire.

More people will walk, wheel or cycle to work, education sites, healthcare appointments and to leisure locations and facilities. More streets will be used for leisure and recreational activities, such as children playing.

Negative perceptions of active travel will have been addressed through various initiatives such as promotional campaigns which will have successfully helped more people to walk, wheel and cycle for all types of journeys in the North East.

Teenagers and school leavers will also receive cycling education to help them take forward active travel into their adult life.

We will remain realistic in our recognition that active travel won't be suitable for all journeys. The reasons why people travel the way they do are complex and depend on a number of circumstances, which can change per journey, so a flexible approach is needed. There will not be a 'one size fits all' approach in the region, recognising that the car or van may be the only option for certain journeys and personal circumstances.



Source: Cycling UK

### 5.5 Improving access to equipment

The region will champion active travel, particularly walking and wheeling for more journeys as an affordable, attractive, and healthy way of traveling.

People will be able to easily hire dockable cycles across the North East, including e-bikes in order to travel around cheaply. Access to hire bikes, and e-bikes, with a consistent and integrated payment scheme and adequate promotion and information provision will address issues around transport poverty and social exclusion.

Opportunities to work with partners to introduce the hire of non-conventional cycles will have been explored to improve access to equipment.

Docking stations will be strategically placed around the region at key employment sites, residential areas, and transport interchanges. People will be encouraged to leave bikes at docking stations to help reduce street clutter, enabling walkers and wheelers to travel actively on paths and pavements. The region will have also explored further opportunities of regulated e-scooter hire.

Businesses and employers will be able to support and enable their staff to introduce more active journeys to and from work, building on current initiatives such as the Cycle to Work scheme. More employers will have electric bikes available for staff to use during work hours for business travel.

The region will also have suitable active travel hire and storage facilities at leisure spots and key employment sites to ensure that people are able to safely store their bicycle. This will be achieved by working with local authorities, transport operators, destination management organisations (DMOs), such as Visit Northumberland, Visit County Durham, NewcastleGateshead Initiative, and other active travel stakeholders.

### 5.6 Partnership working

The North East Joint Transport Committee will have achieved the aim and targets of this strategy through partnership working with a range of stakeholders, using this strategy's commitment statements as a call to action.

By 2035, the region will have achieved its active travel aims and targets through partnership working with communities, local authorities, transport operators, Nexus, police forces, public health and the NHS, businesses and employers, school and universities, as well as third sector stakeholders. Partnership working with these stakeholders will be key to develop closer relationships and joint working to achieve the aims of this strategy.

Accessibility groups, communities, and local requirements will have been properly consulted on regional active travel policies as well as the development of infrastructure.

The region will have supported our local authority partners by successfully bidding for funding opportunities, enabling the delivery of Local Cycle and Walking Investment Plans (LCWIPs) and Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs).

Working with local authorities and developers, new housing and business developments will be built around making active travel the first choice for short everyday journeys.

Safety and perceptions of safety on public transport will have been improved through partnership working with local police forces. Bike theft will also be reduced in the North East through improved storage and joint working with the region's police forces.

There will be more initiatives and schemes that enable more walking, wheeling and cycling to improve health and reduce inequalities (inclusive of geographical and socio-economic inequalities as well as those amongst protected characteristics and wider protected groups) across the North East.

Effective partnerships with businesses and employers will have been developed and strengthened which will have led to more employees in the North East travelling actively for journeys to and from work, including travelling actively for part of a commuting journey.

More school children and students will travel actively for journeys to and from school, achieved by working with schools and other education providers to encourage active travel.

The National Cycle Network (NCN) and long-distance walking routes will have been improved by working closely with local authorities, Sustrans and other key delivery partners.

More people will visit the region and travel actively when getting around. More visitors will use our long distance walking routes, cycle routes, rambling and mountain biking for example. This will be achieved by working in partnership with tourism organisations to promote the region's active travel assets.

### Improving active travel infrastructure in Blyth, Northumberland

Improvements are being made to active travel infrastructure using the Active Travel Fund. Segregated cycling and crossing facilities have been built on Waterloo Road to improve access to the town centre, aligned to wider 'Energising Blyth' town centre redevelopment proposals. The scheme opened to traffic on 31st August 2022.



### Smart and Healthy Metro Stations, South Tyneside

As part of the Transforming Cities Fund, South Tyneside Council is developing two Smart and Healthy Metro Stations. Chichester and Tyne Dock Metro Stations have been focused on initially due to the levels of commercial and industrial activity within the immediate area of each. The scheme will improve active travel connectivity from each Metro Station to nearby businesses and areas of commercial activity, including the Port of Tyne. These schemes are expected to be complete by Spring 2023.

### Community Cycle Hub – Bike4Health, North Tyneside

Bike4Health Community Interest Company was established in 2014 with a focus on promoting modal shift by delivering unique cycling experiences in partnership with schools, businesses, charities and the NHS across the North of Tyne Combined Authority.

Projects are diverse and often involve working with partner organisations. An example of this is YMCA Newcastle, who connect young people to their own social history through exploring Newcastle's historical sites and parks by bike. Another is working with both Crisis and Forestry England to show people who use their services how easy it is to get away from the city centre by bike.

The approach is to build confidence and resilience whilst having fun, and allowing people the freedom to get out and explore their local area by bike.

## Regional Active Travel Network – The ‘Bee Network’, Greater Manchester

In 2018, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) launched ambitious plans to develop a fully integrated regional walking and cycling network, branded the Bee Network.

Made up of 1,000 miles of walking and cycling routes, including 75 miles of segregated bike lanes, the network will connect every community across Greater Manchester helping to make walking and cycling a primary form of travel for everyday journeys, whilst also helping to decarbonise transport throughout Greater Manchester.

The Bee network aims to create pleasant active travel spaces with safety and inclusivity intertwined. The growing network consists of routes for young children to walk or cycle safely and ease of access for all, including wheelchair users and those with pushchairs.

Priority has also been given to walking and cycling at strategic areas of the city to further promote safety and convenience of active travel journeys, and integration with public transport has been central to development around the city with a particular focus on passenger experience throughout their journeys.

The yellow branding helps to promote active travel around Greater Manchester and gives cycling and walking routes an identity that communities can connect with. The growing network also brings huge benefits to public health and the environment, alongside financial boosts to the local economy.

## Sunderland City Council – Bus rationalisation and active travel improvements – March 2023

A segregated eastbound cycle lane was opened in March 2023 funded by the Transforming Cities Fund with matched funding by Sunderland City Council.

The new route extends along the north side of the carriageway between the Albion Place / Green Terrace junction and the Holmeside / Waterloo Place junction. The lane is segregated from the carriageway through an island, making the scheme LTN 1/20 compliant.

Additional pedestrian improvements including the widening of existing footways and the introduction of tactile paving areas at existing crossing points within the scheme have provided a significant enhancement to the existing pedestrian provision within the area. A pedestrian crossing has also been simplified as part of the scheme, making it easier to use for people walking and wheeling.

The scheme has improved access into the city centre from the west by providing a safer, more direct route and will be the main cycle route to the redeveloped Sunderland Railway station from the west. According to Sunderland City Council, feedback from active travel groups has been positive.



Holmeside - Sunderland City Centre



## Where do we want to be – desired outcomes

### Active travel friendly places

We will invest in and support developments which improve public spaces to enable more walking, wheeling and cycling. Active travel will be deeper integrated with public transport by improving access to equipment such as cycle hire and storage at public transport stations and interchanges.

### World-class active travel network

We will promote more safe, continuous, direct routes for cycling in towns and cities, physically separated from volume motor traffic, as well as people walking and wheeling, serving the places that people want to go.

**NOTE – these images are for illustrative purposes only. They are intended to give a flavour of what delivery of this strategy might look like in urban and rural areas of the North East.**

**They are not designed schemes and not intended to be final design proposals. The core of this strategy is to grow the number of trips made by active travel, to the point where active travel is the natural first choice for short everyday travel and combines with public transport for longer journeys.**



**Suburban coastal active travel 'superhighway' route with consistent signage and lighting**



**Rural active travel route, linking rural communities together**



**Urban pedestrian improvements with cycle hubs outside public transport interchanges**



## Where do we want to be – chapter summary

This chapter has set out how we envisage walking, wheeling and cycling will look in the North East in 2035 if this strategy has been successfully implemented.

It sets out a vision for the region where people make more everyday journeys by walking, wheeling or cycling. Active travel will take a more prominent role in how people travel, with over half of short journeys made by active travel by 2035.

More active travel will compliment a sustainable, affordable public transport system, along with zero emission vehicles.

This will be achieved by securing funding for providing and promoting a safe, attractive, and high-quality active travel infrastructure, which this strategy makes the case for.



# How do we get there

**To realise the ambitions of this Active Travel Strategy, the North East Joint Transport Committee will work in collaboration with central government, Active Travel England, and local people.**

Our schemes are ambitious, and we estimate would cost in the region of £500 million to fully deliver the strategy. However, this is just the beginning of the scheme pipeline and funding which the region requires to truly meet the vision and objectives of this strategy and as further schemes are developed over the period to 2035.

## Identified Programme – North East Active Travel Strategy

Our programme of proposed investment stems from the North East Transport Plan. The plan sets out a live programme of interventions. All interventions within the programme were initially tested to ensure that they are consistent with Transport Plan objectives and that they are deliverable.

But that is not the end of the process. All schemes will be subject to more rigorous testing and appraisal and will only be delivered where they have demonstrated, through detailed business case development, that they can appropriately contribute towards the delivery of the objectives.

If schemes cannot contribute towards objectives and don't support the Transport Plan, they will not be taken forward.



This strategy has utilised the Transport Plan pipeline and Nexus' (The Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive) capital pipeline schemes. We have identified schemes that will support North East Active Travel Strategy objectives from the below work packages. The different work packages are schemes that can be delivered within the following time periods:

- **Schemes for delivery in the next five years (requiring funding to be accelerated)** – these are either smaller scale schemes that can be quickly developed and delivered or larger schemes at an advanced stage of development. Accelerating development funding will move them to 'Shovel Ready' status; and
- **Schemes for development and delivery by 2035** – A programme of smaller schemes coupled with ambitious schemes requiring development funding to bring them to an advanced stage and move to delivery.

### What are we proposing?

We want active travel, particularly walking and wheeling, to become the natural choice for short everyday journeys and combine with public transport for longer travel.

The proposed investments set out in this strategy broadly consist of:

- **New and upgraded forms of active travel infrastructure:** Enhanced infrastructure for walking and cycling delivering quality, safe, connected, and accessible infrastructure for walking, cycling and wheeling;
- **Access to equipment schemes** that allow people to affordably access the active travel network;
- **Maintenance of the active travel network** to ensure it remains safe and accessible to all users; and
- **Targeted behaviour change initiatives** that encourage uptake of the network and sustain these levels of usage, building on the proposals set out in the region's 'Making The Right Travel Choice' strategy. Key examples include social prescribing and clearer accountabilities to drive the vision for active travel.

Our proposed programme has been further tested to demonstrate how it meets the objectives and the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of this strategy and importantly how they meet central government objectives set by Active Travel England (ATE) including from the Cycle and Walking Investment Strategy 2 (CWIS 2).

### Delivery

This programme will be delivered by the constituent authorities and Nexus within the North East, together with regional schemes being delivered by the JTC on behalf of the region's Combined Authorities.

The Transport North East programme team will manage this programme and will be responsible for sponsoring the development of various schemes and projects that support this plan, as well as a series of region-wide initiatives.

Implementation of the interventions that are regional initiatives are within the region's control and will be delivered in accordance with the region's programme management and assurance frameworks.

The role of Transport North East acting on behalf of the JTC is varied. In some cases, we will act as the promoter of schemes and will be responsible for delivery but in most circumstances, delivery may be undertaken by another organisation, for example our constituent Local Authorities with Transport North East securing funding at a regional-scale and providing technical assistance as required.

### Programme management and assurance

The funding required to realise the ambitions of this strategy is substantial, however the region is fortunate to have a well-established and ratified Transport Assurance Framework in place which is proportionate to the nature, scale, and value of schemes.

The Transport Assurance Framework is a scalable series of gateways that provide our governance structure with the confidence that each component investment is delivering on the requirements of the programme and delivering the Active Travel Strategy and Transport Plan outcomes that have been ascribed to that investment. For more information on our Transport Assurance Framework, please visit: [www.transportnortheast.gov.uk](http://www.transportnortheast.gov.uk) or contact [info@transportnortheast.gov.uk](mailto:info@transportnortheast.gov.uk).

### Funding and development options

We will engage with external organisations such as National Highways and Great British Rail (GBR) to ensure that active travel is given consideration as part of their future infrastructure improvements and where possible, enhancements provided for walking, wheeling, and cycling.

The main source of funding for transport is from central government. Previous rounds of the Local Growth Fund (LGF) and Transforming Cities Fund show how the region can deliver significant packages of investment.

Transport North East will continue to work with government to secure funding through competition based funding and longer-term devolved settlements to unlock schemes. Engagement continues with Active Travel England to secure funding through the Capability and Ambition Fund rounds and the Active Travel Fund to take projects from concept to delivery.

For certain investments, developer contributions will form a viable part of the financial model. We will work with the individual authorities to secure appropriate levels of contributions or works in kind where the investment is directly related to the development and is needed to mitigate the impact of the scheme in question.

Realising the ambition of this strategy will be partially reliant on the ability to secure the necessary powers and consents for delivery in terms of traffic regulation orders (TRO) and in some cases planning consent.

Alternative funding may be considered on a case-by-case basis, particularly where shared integrated priorities can be realised. This may include borrowing, local government financing, third party support, alternative central government funding and the UK Infrastructure Bank.

The North East has a track record in selecting and prioritising projects which balance objectives around the economy, environment, health, and society. It is important that the plan is flexible to respond to funding opportunities and as such a prioritisation process has been designed incorporating the assessment against the vision and objectives that can be deployed based on the fund that is available.

### How do we get there – summary

The region has set out a range of initiatives within this strategy document, worth approximately £500 million that will meet the objectives of this strategy and our Transport Plan and get us to our vision of ‘moving to a green, healthy, dynamic, and thriving North East by 2035’.

We will keep this pipeline updated and have plans in place to develop schemes, so they are ready for delivery over this time period.

We will actively investigate all options for the future financing of these projects including much needed maintenance and revenue support that offer the best combination of security, flexibility, and value for public money in order to successfully deliver where we want to be.



### North East Active Travel Strategy – key commitment statements

In order to drive forward this strategy, we have created a list of clear key commitment statements linked to our active travel policy areas. These commitments are aimed at supporting the delivery of this strategy and how active travel will achieve the North East Transport Plan vision and objectives:

#### Active travel friendly places

- We will support improvements to streets, existing routes and open spaces to make them more appealing, safer and a better experience for people using them.
- We will support local partners to consider trialling and introducing more 'School Streets' and 'Low Traffic Neighbourhoods' to protect children and improve air quality.
- We will encourage use of the streets for leisure and recreational activities.
- We will support accessibility design and infrastructure improvements to make streets more inclusive in line with the Equality Act.
- We will support local authorities to improve and maintain pedestrian infrastructure, minimise street clutter and give greater priority to pedestrians.
- We will promote signage and wayfinding to facilitate walking, wheeling and cycling.

#### World-class active travel network

- We will adopt inclusive design principles to make the region's active travel infrastructure safer and more accessible for everyone.
- Our Active travel network will have safe, continuous, direct routes for walking, wheeling and cycling in towns and cities. Cyclists will be physically separated from volume motor traffic and pedestrians (except where no alternatives exist) to serve the places that people want to go.
- We will adopt LTN 1/20 (and later) design standards across the region.
- We will continue to receive training on cycle infrastructure design guidance to help empower and enable highways authorities to deliver safe, inclusive and good quality cycle infrastructure.
- We will work with and support Sustrans to improve the National Cycle Network (NCN).
- We will support highway authorities to undertake robust maintenance of the network.
- We will work to increase cycle parking and storage ensuring that it goes where it is needed.

### Greater integration

- We will work to integrate walking, wheeling and cycling with public transport such as improving active travel access and infrastructure to and from stations and interchanges.
- We will work with Local Authorities, Nexus and the region's transport operators to make sure public transport works better with active travel.
- We will work with Local Authorities, Nexus and the region's transport operators to make it easier to carry bikes on public transport services.
- We will work with Local Authorities, Nexus and the region's transport operators to improve real-time passenger information and to support active travel route finding.

### Supporting people to walk, wheel and cycle

- We will promote and support inclusive and culturally aware initiatives to ensure that adults and children can be trained how to ride and maintain a cycle safely.
- We will work with schools and other education providers to encourage active travel patterns from an early age (primary and secondary, and further education) and enable family support to continue.

### Improving access to equipment

- We will work with partners to consider introducing and then expanding an affordable cycle hire scheme in the North East, including the hire of e-cycles.
- We will work with local authorities and Nexus, to develop secure cycle parking, also including accessible cycles in cities, towns, and neighbourhoods across the region.
- We will support and promote cycling for the carriage of freight, to reduce unnecessary motorised freight and servicing traffic.
- We will support the development of mobility hubs at the heart of communities to improve access to hireable bikes and e-bikes, as well as other types of micromobility.

### Partnership working

**We will continue to engage with key stakeholders through the North East active travel stakeholder forum to help strengthen our work on active travel at a regional level.**

#### Communities

- We will consult and listen to people who live and work in our region and want to travel actively for more journeys to ensure that their requirements are considered when developing new policies and infrastructure.
- We will also work with accessibility groups to ensure that the needs of people who have disabilities and mobility barriers (visible and hidden), are considered when schemes are being developed.
- We will work with our local authority partners to bid for funding opportunities, enabling the delivery of their Local Cycle and Walking Investment Plans (LCWIPs) and Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs).

#### Planning

- We will work with our local authority planning partners, public health teams, and design partners to strengthen active travel infrastructure within new developments, reduce car dependency, and improve the quality of existing environments for walking, wheeling and cycling.
- We will support pedestrianisation and the walkability of town and city centres, to encourage more active travel and increase footfall for local amenities and businesses.
- We will support the reduction of street clutter and the provision of rest areas to encourage more accessible and safer neighbourhoods for active travel.

#### Police and community safety

- We will work with the Police, Local Authorities and Nexus, and transport operators to improve people's safety (including perceptions of safety) to and from stations as well as on public transport services to encourage public transport use as part of an active travel journey.

#### Public health

- We will work with our partners in local authority public health teams and at the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) to encourage and support schemes that enable more walking, wheeling and cycling to improve health and reduce inequalities across the North East.
- We will work with local charities, social care and health services to promote social prescribing of active travel.

#### Business and employers

- We will work with and support local businesses and employers to enable their employees to commute and make more trips by active travel.
- We will work with employers and business parks to strengthen the promotion of active travel and public transport.

#### Third sector stakeholders

- We will continue to work with partners including Cycling UK, Sustrans and Living Streets to ensure that there is alignment between the work and activities which they lead on and our delivery projects.



# Delivery Plan 2023-2028

Key			
	Active travel friendly places		World-class active travel network
	Greater integration		Supporting people to walk, wheel and cycle
	Improving access to equipment		Partnership working

Scheme number	Scheme name	Promoter	Scheme description	Capital / Revenue
DU16	Improvements to the National Cycle Network Route 1 in County Durham (NCN1)	Durham County Council	<p>NCN1 Improvements in Durham – a series of works to improve the quality of the route including upgrading to take into account biodiversity and appearance of a section of National Cycle Network Route 1 which runs between Seaham and Stockton. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seaham to A19 – improvements to this section to include resurfacing and widening.</li> <li>The Moonscape – implement a preferred route to include resurfacing and widening.</li> <li>Pesspool Woods – replace the current boardwalk with a suitable, safe and to standard alternative. Improving the lead into and exit from the woods.</li> <li>Making habitat improvements along the route where appropriate.</li> <li>Removing any barriers along the route which prevent access for all non-motorised users.</li> </ul>	Capital
DU23	A689 Sedgefield to Wynyard active mode route improvements	Durham County Council	Upgraded/new off carriageway track connecting Sedgefield and Wynyard growth area.	Capital
DU24	Bishop Auckland to Barnard Castle active mode route improvements	Durham County Council	Upgraded/new off carriageway track connecting Bishop Auckland and Barnard Castle.	Capital
DU26	A177 cycling improvements, linking Coxhoe with Net Park	Durham County Council	A177 cycling improvements, linking Coxhoe with Net Park employment site and Sedgefield.	Capital
DU27	Belmont to Newton Hall active mode route improvements	Durham County Council	Cycling route improvements via Belmont Viaduct, linking North and east Durham employment sites.	Capital
DU36	Newton Aycliffe active mode improvements	Durham County Council	Delivering the priority phases of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Newton Aycliffe.	Capital
DU37	Three towns active mode improvements	Durham County Council	Targeted Improvements in Willington, Tow Law and Crook and the surrounding area.	Capital
DU38	Hornden active mode improvements	Durham County Council	Targeted Improvements in Hornden and the surrounding area.	Capital
DU44	Bishop Auckland walking and cycling improvements	Durham County Council	Targeted Improvements in Bishop Auckland and the surrounding area.	Capital
GA03	Small scale cycling improvements (Gateshead)	Gateshead Council	Package of small scale improvements and additions to the cycle network across Gateshead assisting to deliver the Council's Cycling Strategy.	Capital
GA23	Gateshead local cycling and walking investment proposals	Gateshead Council	Under developed cycle route network acting as a deterrent to increased cycle use.	Capital
GA29	Portobello to Washington footbridge access improvements	Gateshead Council	Improve approaches to the bridge on both sides of the A1 to make the route more open and inviting to users, whilst also providing a ramped access for cyclists and street lighting.	Capital

## How do we get there – delivery plan: 2023-2028







Scheme number	Scheme name	Promoter	Scheme description	Capital / Revenue
GA32	High Spen to Greenside cycle route	Gateshead Council	Provision of 3m wide off road shared use path between High Spen and Greenside alongside Spen Lane to provide sustainable transport routes in the outer west.	Capital
GA33	Upgrading the National Cycle Network (NCN) routes in Gateshead	Gateshead Council	Upgrading of NCN cycle routes to meet current standards.	Capital
GA47	Derwent cycle route improvements	Gateshead Council	Various cycle improvements linked to housing development in west Gateshead.	Capital
NE06	Cycle City Ambition 3 programme to invest in corridor improvements	Newcastle City Council	Further programme of investment in strategic cycling infrastructure, including the urban core and routes into North Tyneside, Gateshead and Northumberland.	Capital
NE08	Newcastle Urban Core pedestrian and cycling improvements	Newcastle City Council	Investment in pedestrian and cycle upgrades identified in Core Strategy and linked to urban development – Northumberland Street; Camden Street Bridge; Forth Yards.	Capital
NE15	Newcastle Streets for people	Newcastle City Council	Delivery of streets for people/Healthy Metro & bus areas designed to provide filtered permeability.	Capital
NE18	Central Newcastle - walking, cycling and public transport improvements	Newcastle City Council	Investment in public transport, walking and cycling to enable traffic-free and zero carbon central Newcastle.	Capital
NE22	Delivery of local walking and cycling improvements across Newcastle	Newcastle City Council	Investment in top priority LCWIP routes and junctions.	Capital
NX17	Cycle parking and hubs	Nexus	Provide a network of secure cycle lockers that are smart enabled across Metro stations, bus interchanges and rail stations. Also develop a series of secure cycle hubs at public transport interchanges/Metro stations based on development at other areas including West Midlands and Transport for Greater Manchester.	Capital
NT01	Improvements to cycling and walking routes in North Tyneside	North Tyneside Council	Build new and improved infrastructure to cater for and facilitate increased demand for cycling and encourage modal shift, for travel to work and other journey purposes. This covers routes across the borough: for example purposes these may include e.g. the west-east A191/A186 corridor; north-south A188/A189 corridor; the A193 corridor linking the borough's historic town centres.	Capital
NT13	A191 all user improvements	North Tyneside Council	Improve capacity and cycling and walking provision in the A191 corridor west of the A19.	Capital
NT18	Improving Wallsend town centre public realm delivery and improve accessibility for all users	North Tyneside Council	Public realm, public transport corridor and cycling and walking improvements, e.g. enhanced links to Metro, employment, town centre destinations and Unesco world heritage site.	Capital
NT19	Improving Whitley Bay town centre public realm delivery and improve accessibility for all users	North Tyneside Council	Upgrade of traffic signals equipment throughout town centre; improvements to public transport movements, management of traffic flows, improve cycling and pedestrian facilities and public realm. Improve scope for seasonal road space reallocation schemes. Improve connectivity by sustainable modes to the wider network, including links to the Sea Front Sustainable Route (considered for ATF3). Links to A191 corridor.	Capital

Scheme number	Scheme name	Promoter	Scheme description	Capital / Revenue
NT20	Local cycle and walking improvements across North Tyneside	North Tyneside Council	Improvements within town and district centres with reference to the emerging Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to deliver a package of improvements for walking and 'last mile' cycling in town centres.	Capital
NT27	Killingworth Moor underpass	North Tyneside Council	Provision of route crossing the A19 to better link strategic housing development into the local transport network.	Capital
NT30	Sustainable access improvements - North West of North Tyneside	North Tyneside Council	Improvements to public realm and infrastructure for cycling, walking and horse riding to support accessibility as part of the regeneration of the North West of North Tyneside, which currently experiences more limited accessibility.	Capital
NO12a	Walking and cycling upgrades in Alnwick	Northumberland County Council	Improvements to existing and new pedestrian and cycle connections within Alnwick.	Capital
NO12b	Walking and cycling upgrades in Amble	Northumberland County Council	North / South and East / West corridor upgrades for pedestrians and cyclists.	Capital
NO12c	Walking and cycling upgrades in Ashington	Northumberland County Council	Town Centre and suburban improvements to existing active travel routes.	Capital
NO12d	Walking and cycling upgrades in Bedlington	Northumberland County Council	Identified improvements to existing active travel routes including connecting to Bedlington Station.	Capital
NO12e	Walking and cycling upgrades in Berwick Upon Tweed	Northumberland County Council	Targeted improvements from the station to Town Centre and from Tweedmouth to the Town Centre.	Capital
NO12f	Walking and cycling upgrades in Blyth	Northumberland County Council	Continuation of existing investment including improved North / South links and to the Northumberland line stations.	Capital
NO12g	Walking and cycling upgrades in Cramlington	Northumberland County Council	Improvements for all users around the train station, town centre and industrial areas of the town.	Capital
NO12h	Improved links in Haltwhistle	Northumberland County Council	North, South and East-West routes including improved links to schools and the leisure centre.	
NO12i	Better walking and cycling links in Hexham	Northumberland County Council	Focused investment within the town centre including the rail and bus station and on longer distance links including to Acomb and along the A695.	Capital
NO12j	Walking and cycling upgrades in Morpeth	Northumberland County Council	Investment on radial corridors into Morpeth town centre for all users.	Capital
NO12k	Walking and cycling upgrades in Ponteland	Northumberland County Council	Suburban and rural route improvements connecting Ponteland to neighbouring villages and suburbs with upgraded infrastructure.	Capital
NO12l	Focused upgrades on walking and cycling routes in Prudhoe	Northumberland County Council	Improvements on routes south of the Town Centre and East / West along the A695 alignment.	Capital
ST12	Improved cycling links to Tyne Pedestrian Tunnel	South Tyneside Council	Improved connections on both the South and North side of the Tyne Pedestrian Tunnel.	Capital

Scheme number	Scheme name	Promoter	Scheme description	Capital / Revenue
ST07	Strategic Transport Corridors: All user improvements along strategic corridors in South Tyneside	South Tyneside Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Transport and Cycle Corridor Upgrades as part of a LCWIP upgrade.</li> <li>Upgrades to Traffic Signals / ITS.</li> <li>Upgrades to junctions to improve flow and conditions for pedestrians.</li> <li>A184 Strategic Cycling Improvements Cycling Improvements on the A184 from Testo's to White Mare Pool.</li> <li>NCN 14 Cycling Improvements Cycling Improvements to NCN14 within South Tyneside.</li> <li>A185 Cycling Improvements Cycling Improvements along the A185 corridor.</li> <li>NCN 1 Route Upgrade Realignment of NCN 1 within South Tyneside along the A183 corridor.</li> <li>A194 Cycling Corridor Cycling improvements along Western approach connecting the Arches/A194 schemes to South Shields.</li> <li>A1300 Cycling Corridor Cycling Improvements along the A1300 Corridor (John Reid Road to the Coast).</li> <li>A184 Cycling Improvements Cycling Improvements along the A184 from East Boldon to the A1018 junction.</li> <li>South Shields Cycling Improvements South Shields Town Centre Cycling Improvements.</li> </ul>	Capital
SU14	Vaux-Stadium Village footbridge	Sunderland City Council	New high level pedestrian footbridge linking the Vaux development site and the City Centre with Stadium Village. Estimates for a bridge at this location will vary widely depending on the required width and quality.	Capital
SU29	Improving strategic links between University of Sunderland and Sunderland city centre	Sunderland City Council	Environmental / public realm improvements providing strategic links between Sunderland University and City Centre.	Capital
EX40	Upgrades to Active travel routes to NE rail stations	Transport North East	Improve walking /cycling routes to rail stations.	Capital
TNE19	Delivering the residual Transforming Cities Fund ask	Transport North East	The region made a compelling case for investment in public and sustainable transport demonstrated through our Transforming Cities Fund submission with a very positive BCR from the Business case. We gratefully received a settlement of £198 million. Residual overprogramming of approx £10 million is delivered, therefore TCF Tranche 2 programme is delivered in full.	Capital
TNE27b	Access to active travel equipment scheme	Transport North East	Identifying and supporting the development of access to equipment schemes such as cycle grants or loans / cycle to work or education schemes for those not in full time employment. This includes exploring a Cycle to Work Alliance	Revenue / capital
TNE27c	Active travel ambassadorial programme	Transport North East	Walking and cycling ambassadorial programme implemented and a region wide behavioural change initiative delivered to cement best practice. Through Behaviour Change programmes encourage an active last mile to improve awareness of health benefits. Investing in Wow Walk to School, Modeshift STARS for schools and STARS for workplaces, schools, colleges, communities and neighbourhoods, leisure and tourism.	Revenue
TNE27d	Sponsoring cycle training in schools	Transport North East	Sponsoring Cycle training programmes in schools and available in the community with group rides.	Revenue
TNE27e	Improved mapping and promotion of the Active Travel network	Transport North East	Sponsoring the development of outward facing promotional material, including an interactive map perhaps integrated with an app development and highlighting a network of servicing locations for equipment.	Revenue
TNE27f	Active Travel Evaluation	Transport North East	A common approach to monitoring and evaluating usage on the active travel network, linked to a placed based management approach.	Revenue

Scheme number	Scheme name	Promoter	Scheme description	Capital / Revenue
TNE31	Integrating health and transport planning with active travel prescriptions	Transport North East	A clear action plan around initiatives between the NHS, Public Health Directors and Transport North East around spend to save initiatives to encourage activity.	Revenue
TNE30	Accessibility Audits Fund	Transport North East	Accessibility Audits Fund– A fund to address identify and address maintenance issues achieved via accessibility audits on the existing active travel network.	Capital
TNE47	North East active travel partnership board	Transport North East	The creation of a North East Active Travel Partnership Board will provide a strategic steer on the direction and development of Active Travel in the region.	Revenue
TNE46	Regional bike hire scheme	Transport North East	Integrated as part of the region’s sustainable transport network, affordable to help people cycle who aren’t able to own/afford a bike. Hubs will be located at strategic points around the region (transport interchanges, employment sites, town and city centres, residential areas).	Capital/ Revenue
TNE44	School Streets	Transport North East	The region wishes to secure development funding to deliver a blueprint for a consistency in approach towards the deployment of school streets. This will provide a palette for the delivery of future deployments. It will additionally develop up a pipeline of interventions and arrive at an initial set of propositions for funding in future Active Travel Rounds. The future costs and benefits have been modelled based on the deployment of 8 schools per annum (based on experience) across the 7 local authority areas.	Capital/ Revenue
DU53	Three towns active mode improvements	Durham County Council	Lack of active mode infrastructure: Limited infrastructure for active modes in the Three Towns is inhibiting mode choice for residents who wish to travel between Willington, Crook and Tow Law. Current provisions are intermittent, and there is limited access to the NCN, which provides connectivity further afield to places like Bishop Auckland and the City of Durham. Of the three towns, the NCN only passes through Willington. There is also a lack of cycling parking and information boards within the town centres. New and upgraded routes as well as enhanced facilities and wayfinding will help alleviate these issues.	Revenue
TNE45	Tyne Bridge Sustainable Maintenance	Transport North East	An opportunity to design and deliver active travel interventions at pace that will encourage people to choose active travel for their entire journey or part of it building on existing foundations. Initial opportunities that will be developed through this project include; Cycle parking hubs at destinations and at park and ride locations, Bike/e-bike hire, Improved signage in and around the bridge, Cycle way and pavement upgrades to address pinchpoints along the route, improving quality.	Capital
GA57	A694 corridor improvements	Gateshead Council	Changes are needed to several junctions, the bus lane and cycling facilities along this corridor due to housing development in Core Strategy (South Chopwell). A short bus lane already exists but may not be working optimally and cycling infrastructure is lacking.	Capital
GA58	Askew Road West cycleway	Gateshead Council	The main aim of the scheme is to facilitate cycling access to / from Gateshead towards more western residential areas such as Teams, Bensham and Dunston. Cycle provision in this direction at present is on road along the busy Bensham Rd with this scheme connecting to recently completed schemes along the remainder of Askew Road to provide cycle access to the Gateshead Quays area.	Capital
GA59	MetroGreen Intermediate schemes	Gateshead Council	Part of the regeneration of the MetroGreen Area of Change, this scheme proposes additional infrastructure to improve pedestrian and cycle access and improve bus priority in the area. As part of the work on the Area Action Plan a series of mitigation measures has been identified to facilitate more sustainable development.	Capital
TNE27a	North East active travel network	Transport North East	The North East Active Travel Strategy proposes the development of a fully joined-up and region-wide active travel network, linking together existing parts of our active travel networks, parks and greenspaces. This future network will link both urban, suburban, and rural communities where possible, and will be designed to a consistent standard with a strong, identifiable brand. Investments will be targeted to extend benefits of existing schemes and existing spaces.	Capital

# Delivery Plan: 2029 – 2035

Key			
	Active travel friendly places		World-class active travel network
	Greater integration		Supporting people to walk, wheel and cycle
	Improving access to equipment		Partnership working

Scheme number	Scheme name	Promoter	Scheme description	Capital / Revenue
DU03	Walking and cycling improvements in Durham City Centre	Durham County Council	Package of proposals that seeks to enhance walking, cycling, public transport and driver information on Durham City.	Capital
DU42	LCWIPs (Chester-Le-Street, Barnard Castle, Consett, Peterlee, Seaham, Spennymoor and Shildon)	Durham County Council	Because of the rural nature of the county, upgrading or providing new active mode links to the network enables more people to walk and cycle more often everyday giving better transport options to residents enabling them to travel actively and sustainably for both work and leisure purposes.	Capital
GA04	Gateshead central integrated transport improvements	Gateshead Council	<p>Reconfiguration of road network in and around Gateshead town centre to reduce severance and dominance of road traffic.</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconfiguration of Bensham Road roundabout.</li> <li>• Removal of flyover and construction of tree lined boulevard.</li> <li>• Upgrading of pedestrian, cycle and public transport environment on key link to Tyne Bridge.</li> <li>• Urban Core pedestrian improvements.</li> <li>• Exemplar neighbourhood footbridge, link between town centre and freight depot site.</li> </ul>	Capital
GA05	Blaydon station to town active travel link	Gateshead Council	Potential active travel improvements at Blaydon rail station. The pedestrian bridge is being replaced connecting the town with the railway station and phase 2 will be onwards over the river.	Capital
GA10	West Tyneside cycle route (bridge over East Coast Mainline)	Gateshead Council	New bridge over East Coast Main Line between Chowdene and Team Valley.	Capital
GA30	Bill Quay pedestrian link to a future Metro Station	Gateshead Council	Pedestrian link from Gullane Close in Bill Quay to proposed Metro Station at Westburn.	Capital
GA46	New Derwent walking and cycle crossing at MetroGreen	Gateshead Council	New crossing of River Derwent at MetroGreen.	Capital
W19	New bridges to remove severance e.g. Blaydon / Newburn, A194M/Follingsby, A1 Coalhouse	Gateshead Council	New bridges over key motorway / A road infrastructure.	Capital
GA53	Coatsworth road improvements	Gateshead Council	Need to improve environment of Coatsworth Road to make it a more attractive centre, particularly for pedestrians and active modes.	Capital
NO16	Recreational cycle network development	Northumberland County Council	Capital investment targeted at improving the walking and cycling networks in Northumberland to support greater opportunities for recreational cycling and accessing the visitor attractions across the county by active modes. We will support families and individuals who want to start to cycle by providing traffic free short circular routes and links to where people want to go including visitor attractions, county parks and other recreational areas. We will support visitors and residents who want to explore our longer distance recreational cycling routes by ensuring where possible they can access them by public transport, the network is safe and trouble-spots or gaps in the network are addressed and we will support those looking for a specialist cycle offer through developing our specialist trails and network of off-road trails.	Capital

Scheme number	Scheme name	Promoter	Scheme description	Capital / Revenue
NO16	Tyne Valley Active Travel corridor	Northumberland County Council	Proposed Superhighway between Newcastle and Carlisle, likely to be delivered in phases.	Capital
SU10	Improving strategic cycle networks in Sunderland	Sunderland City Council	<p>Sunderland has a strong transport policy (LTP, DfT) imperative and political support for the continued development of a strategic cycle network across the city. The five Regeneration Area Committees/Place Boards have formally supported and endorsed the initiative. The project will be embedded in and strongly support the integrated development of transport for Sunderland, and will be linked to a regional cycle network in accordance with LTP3 policy. Strategic Transport Corridors with frustrated expressed and latent demand and opportunity for modal shift and equitable active access from residential to work service and education trip generators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A19 Corridor</li> <li>• A1018 Corridor</li> <li>• Coalfields</li> <li>• West/East City Centre</li> <li>• North</li> <li>• Washington</li> </ul>	Capital
SU16	Stadium Village – St Peter's Subway	Sunderland City Council	5.5m wide subway below Wearmouth Bridge North Approach linking St Peter's area and Bonnersfield development site with St Peter's Metro Station and Stadium Village.	Capital

# Measures of success

This will be achieved by breaking down the barriers, securing funding and addressing the key challenges. We hope to ensure that, if we are successful, over half of all shorter journeys in the North East will be made by active travel by 2035. This is aligned to Active Travel England's national target of increasing the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities that are walked or cycled from **41%** in 2018/19 to **46%** in 2025, then to **50%** in 2030, then **55%** by 2035.

## Headline target

**We want to see over half of all short journeys in the North East being made by active travel by 2035.**

## The opportunity

Shorter journeys currently made by car have the greatest potential to be converted to active travel.

According to the latest (2018/19) regional breakdown of the National Travel Survey (NTS) by distance, **80%** of journeys under 1 mile in the North East were made by active travel. **17%** were made by a car or van. However, for shorter journeys above 1 mile and under 2 miles, only **34%** of these were made by active travel, with cars and vans making up **58%** of journeys of this distance.

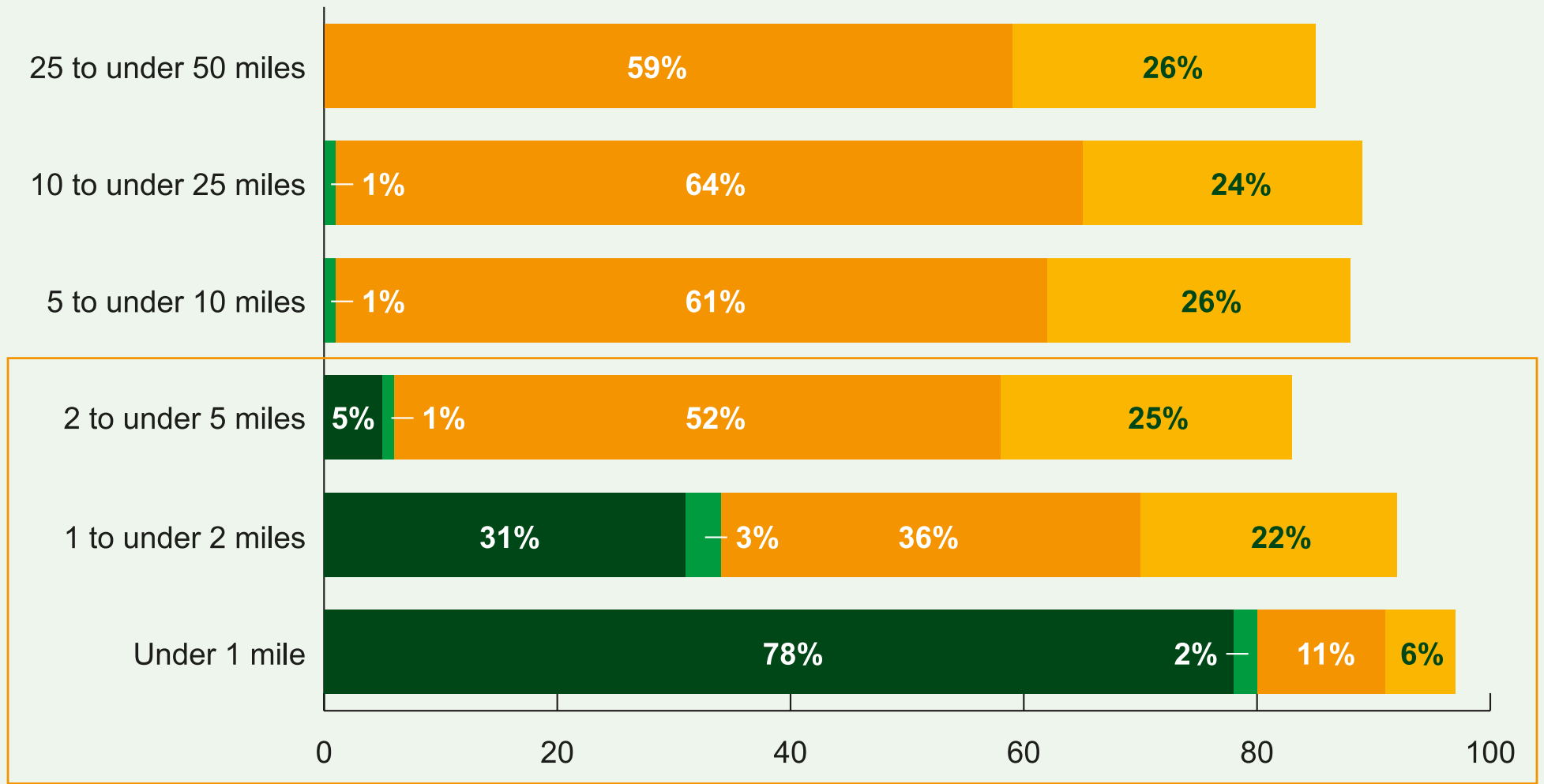
For journeys above 2 miles and under 5 miles, only **6%** of trips were made by active travel. **77%** were made by car or van. It is these shorter journeys that are currently made by car that have the greatest potential to be converted to active travel. Many of these trips could be walked, wheeled or cycled, which would help to reduce carbon dioxide emitted from cars, benefit local economies, as well as improve people's physical health (see figure 20 on the following page).

Our Making the Right Travel Choice strategy sets out ways in which unnecessary car journeys can be reduced and asks people to consider switching at least one journey a week to active travel or public transport and for people without access to a car, to continue to travel sustainably.

If we all switch one journey a week to active travel, there would be a significant increase in active travel region wide. Making all cars, public transport and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) zero emission is part of the solution to decarbonising transport, but relying solely on zero emission road vehicles isn't enough. That is why we need to promote and grow active travel.

**A lot of the increase in the number of active journeys will likely need to come from reducing the number of unnecessary car journeys. However, realistically, the increase will also be achieved if our region secures the £500 million worth of investment required for better pavements, paths, and cycle routes.**





The opportunity

■ Walk 
 ■ Bicycle 
 ■ Car / van driver 
 ■ Car / van passenger

Please note that these figures do not include public transport trips.

**Figure 20: 2018 - 2019 National Travel Survey – North East breakdown**

### The benefits

Over half of all shorter journeys being made by active travel in the North East by 2035 could result in the following benefits:

- Grow the region's economy by around **£350 million a year**.
- **Reduce carbon emissions**, potentially saving around **80,000 tonnes of CO2** emissions per year.
- Prevent in the region of **1,000** premature deaths, primarily due to increased physical activity levels in the population.
- Help more people become active, improving public health outcomes including healthy life expectancy.
- Improve connectedness and cohesion of communities and decreased social isolation.
- Better air quality by reducing pollution from traffic emissions.
- Lower noise levels as congestion is eased on our road network.
- Save petrol and diesel drivers money by reducing car use.



### Example journeys

We understand that for everyone, a 'short journey' may mean different things. Greater active travel journeys will not replace or compete with journeys currently made by public transport, but rather complement and feed into the region's public transport system as part of one sustainable network.

Examples of introducing active travel into regular everyday journeys could be choosing to walk to a Metro station or bus interchange instead of driving. Another example could be choosing to walk or cycle to work or school instead of driving or getting dropped off by car. For others, it might be that active travel can make up the whole of an everyday journey. For example, walking to a local shop to pick up essentials like milk or bread instead of driving.

### Monitoring and reporting

For the purposes of our target, 'short journeys' refers to trips of less than 5 miles. We propose to monitor success against our vision by looking at different journey lengths, journeys under one mile, from one to two miles, and from two to five miles, in line with Governmental distance classifications. We will be reliant on available National Travel Survey (NTS) data to monitor our progress and understand relevant travel patterns in our region.

Progress will be measured using a North East breakdown of National Travel Survey (NTS) data, which is collected on a calendar year basis and published the following year. Progress will be reported to the North East Joint Transport Committee (JTC).

With greater levels of funding and continued development of regional capacity, we could use methods such as regional travel diaries and increased use of counter or sensor technology to give us a greater understanding of active travel in our region and more accurately assess our position against our goals.

When monitoring the Key Performance Indicators, we will also seek to analyse and monitor inequalities in transport and health. Again, we will seek funding to better understand which groups benefit most from any improvements in our active travel network.

### Rationale

The target was selected after modelling both the change in journeys to the region if we achieve our goal of switching one car journey a week using National Travel Survey data and applying an overall increase that we would expect to see in active travel rates by 2035 based on available third party modelling.

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Successful delivery of this strategy will help achieve the following KPIs as set out in the North East Transport Plan:




**Sustainable travel**

**Increase the % of journeys made by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport.**

(33% in 2019)

Intended direction of travel: **Increase**



**Climate action**

**Reducing transport CO2 emissions per person.**

(1.7 tonnes emitted per person annually using transport, 2019)

Intended direction of travel: **Decrease**



**Improving road safety**

**Reducing numbers killed and seriously injured.**

Numbers killed and seriously injured (KSI) three year rolling average (2016-17 to 2018-19) 778.

In the three-year rolling average from 2018 to 2021 there were 683 KSI.\*

Intended direction of travel: **Decrease**




**Improving air quality**

**Encouraging a switch from car to active travel to improve air quality.**

The highest, median, hourly nitrogen dioxide reading was 26.9ug/m3 occurring in the morning traffic peak (2019).

Intended direction of travel: **Decrease**



**Motor vehicle traffic**

**Reduce motor vehicle traffic miles per head.**

Estimated vehicle miles per head in our region in 2019 5,077. Without successful interventions and alternatives, motor vehicle mileage per head will grow in our region in the years ahead.

Intended direction of travel: **Decrease**



**Improving road safety**

**Reducing number of slight injuries.**






Number of slight injuries three year rolling average (2016-17 to 2018-19) 3,275.

The three-year rolling average from 2018 to 2021 was 2,519 slight injuries.\*

\*It is important to note that lower traffic volumes in 2020 and 2021 are likely to have contributed to the observed reduction in KSIs.

Intended direction of travel: **Decrease**

# Conclusion

2023 – Barriers to active travel that need to be overcome	Our investments proposed are:	2035
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety and security (including perceptions).</li> <li>• Accessibility and maintenance.</li> <li>• Affordability.</li> <li>• Coordination and integration.</li> <li>• Journey times and perceptions of convenience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New and upgraded forms of active travel infrastructure.</li> <li>• Access to equipment (cycle and e-cycle hire).</li> <li>• Maintenance of the active travel network.</li> <li>• Targeted behaviour change initiatives (building on the Making the Right Travel Choice Strategy).</li> </ul>	<p>Over half of all shorter journeys are now made by walking, wheeling, or cycling. Active travel is now the natural first choice for short everyday travel and combines with public transport for longer journeys.</p> <p><b>Our vision</b></p> <p><b>“Moving to a green, healthy, dynamic and thriving North East”. ✓</b></p>
North East health challenges	Desired outcomes	Our objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>1 in 4 adults</b> are physically inactive – the highest proportion in England, costing the region’s NHS upwards of £19 million per year.</li> <li>• <b>Life expectancy at birth is the lowest of all regions</b> in England for both males (77) and females (81).</li> <li>• <b>70%</b> of adults “18+” are classified as overweight or obese – highest proportion in England.</li> <li>• <b>44%</b> of children are overweight or obese at year 6.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrianisation and walkability of town and city centre improvements to encourage more active travel and increase footfall for local amenities and businesses.</li> <li>• The need to create a regional cycle network with consistent signage and strong recognisable branding.</li> <li>• Introduce a regional cycle hire scheme, integrated with the region’s wider transport network, including e-bike hire.</li> <li>• Social Prescribing – working in partnership with the region’s NHS.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Carbon-neutral transport;</b> </li> <li>• <b>Overcome inequality and grow our economy;</b> </li> <li>• <b>Healthier North East;</b> </li> <li>• <b>Appealing sustainable transport choices;</b> </li> <li>• <b>Safe, secure network.</b> </li> </ul>

# Appendix 1

## May 2023, North East LA7 area Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) update

### County Durham

The County Durham [Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan 2019-2029](#) sets out the Council's commitment to undertake 11 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) by 2024.

The first three LCWIPs (Chester-le-Street, Durham City and Newton Aycliffe) were adopted in October 2021. In 2022, the remaining 9 LCWIPs for Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Consett, Crook, Peterlee, Seaham, Spennymoor, Shildon and Stanley were drafted. 8 of these town LCWIPs are due to go to Cabinet for approval in mid-2023. Barnard Castle will become the first LCWIP Lite town.

Durham County Council is seeking funding to further develop designs and to deliver priority routes. LCWIPs for the 5 mile routes from Durham City and an LCWIP Lite project are in development and are due for completion later this year (2023).

### Gateshead

Gateshead Council is in the process of developing an LCWIP for the Borough and it is expected to be completed later this year.

They have updated their previous draft pilot LCWIP and have engaged consultants to expand the coverage to the whole of Gateshead. That work is nearing completion and public consultation is due to start shortly with a view to adopting the Plan later in 2023.

### Newcastle City Council

[Newcastle's LCWIP](#) was adopted in June 2021 with implementation subject to funding over coming years. The council is currently aiming to review and update the 2021 plan and its schemes, as well as their priority for delivery going forward.

### North Tyneside

The current North Tyneside Cycling Strategy was adopted by Cabinet in March 2018. Public consultation on the updated draft North Tyneside Cycling Strategy, including a proposed borough-wide LCWIP, took place in Autumn 2022. The draft Cycling Strategy, including the LCWIP, is expected to be brought to Cabinet for approval in June 2023.

### Northumberland

Northumberland County Council have developed 12 individual LCWIP documents, including an in-depth evidence base and walking and cycling network plans, for each of its 12 main towns; Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Berwick, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe.

The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans Strategy will be presented to Cabinet in Summer 2023. Active schemes include:

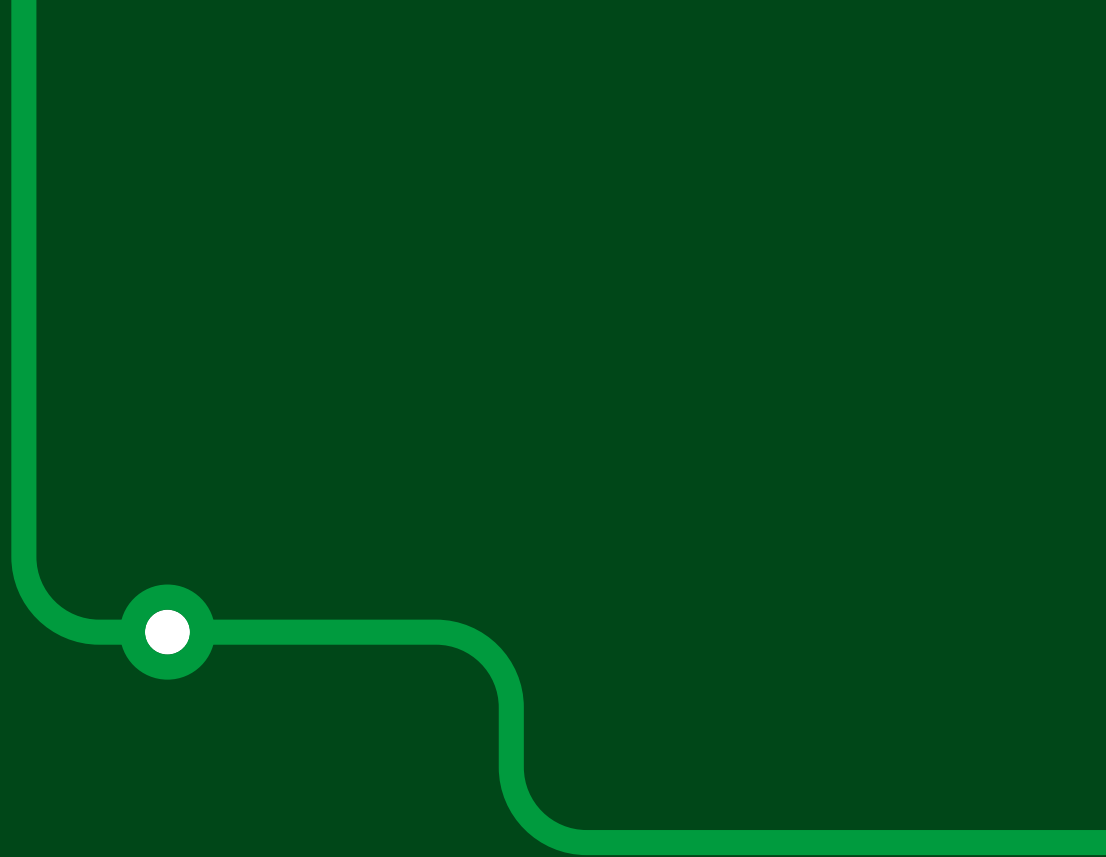
- Ponteland – Callerton
- Hexham – Corbridge
- Bedlington
- Ashington
- Bondicar – South Beach
- Blyth Bebside – town centre
- Energising Blyth – Bridge Street
- Borderland – Haltwhistle

### South Tyneside

South Tyneside Council has a published and approved [Borough wide LCWIP that is valid between 2021-2036](#). The plan has been consulted upon and the Council is now working towards the delivery of new and improved routes over its lifespan. It is still considered a live document and reviews will be undertaken periodically to ensure that it remains relevant to the public and reflects local need.

### Sunderland City Council

[Sunderland's LCWIP](#) was open for public consultation for 6 weeks during November 2021. It was Approved by Cabinet in September 2022 and Published November 2022.



**Email:** [info@transportnortheast.gov.uk](mailto:info@transportnortheast.gov.uk)

**Visit:** [www.transportnortheast.gov.uk](http://www.transportnortheast.gov.uk)