

AtkinsRéalis



# ISA Report Non Technical Summary

North East Combined Authority

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# NORTH EAST LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

# Notice

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# Non-Technical Summary

This is the Non-Technical Summary of the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) Report of the Draft North East Local Transport Plan (LTP). The purpose of this Non-Technical Summary is to set out the ISA process and the outcomes derived from this and is intended to inform people who have a general interest in the LTP, but who are not concerned with its detailed technical assessment. Readers are advised to read the full contents of the ISA Report for more detailed information if required.

It is the intention that the LTP will act as an enabler to help meet the Vision for the North East to ‘champion the full potential of our region. Collaborating with our partners and local authorities, we’ll create a better way of life by connecting communities, giving people the skills to succeed, and improving wellbeing for all, so that the North East is recognised as an outstanding place to live, work, visit and invest’. The vision is based on five commitments of North East CA to reflect the cross-cutting approach that will be required:

1. A fairer North East;
2. A greener North East;
3. A connected North East;
4. An international North East; and
5. A successful North East.

The North East CA vision and commitments have been used to develop three strategic themes for transport that will ensure that transport activities contribute to the North East CA role in improving the North East’s economy, skills, health, and environment. The three cross cutting themes for transport which underpin the delivery of the North East CA vision and commitments are:

Strategic Theme	LTP Requirement
A more inclusive economy	The LTP will enable inclusive economic growth across the North East, helping to attract investment, boost job creation, and overcome inequality by enabling access to opportunity.
A better environment	The LTP will help to protect our environment and tackle climate change by providing an attractive, seamless, and sustainable transport network for people and freight across our region.
A healthier North East	The LTP will help achieve better health outcomes for people in our region by encouraging active and sustainable travel and facilitating better transport access to healthcare and social networks.

Whilst it is important that the LTP delivers the vision for transport across the North East, it is also important that this is done in a way which protects the environment, protects the health and quality of life of the people of the North East and visitors to the region and allows as many different people from as many different areas and communities as possible, the same opportunities for accessing the facilities and services they require whilst promoting sustainable economic growth.



Figure 1 - North East Combined Authority Area



Therefore, the LTP has been subjected to a series of assessments that cover the topics of Sustainability and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA), Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). In addition, consideration has been made of potential implications for rural and coastal areas. Taken together these various assessments are described as an 'Integrated Sustainability Appraisal' (ISA). It is also important to note that as there is a potential that the LTP could lead to a direct or indirect effect on sites which have been designated at the European level for nature conservation purposes (such as Special Areas of Conservation), a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was also carried out and is reported separately.

A key element of an ISA is the development of an assessment framework, against which LTP will be assessed in order to understand the sustainability performance of the plan. This framework contains a series of objectives as follows:

1. Protect and Improve air quality
2. Reduce the impact on environmental noise from transportation sources
3. Reduce carbon emissions from transport and contribute to meeting the UKs and North East CA's net zero carbon targets by 2050
4. Maximise adaptation and resilience of the transport network to the effects of a changing climate, including through reducing the risk of flooding
5. Enhance biodiversity, promote ecosystem resilience and functionality and contribute to the achievement of Biodiversity Net Gain and the delivery of the Nature Recovery Network
6. Protect and enhance sites designated for their international importance for nature conservation purposes (linked to HRA)
7. Protect, enhance and promote geodiversity
8. Protect and enhance the significance cultural heritage assets and their settings, and the wider historic environment
9. Conserve and enhance the natural beauty the North East's protected landscapes, seascapes and townscapes, protect wider landscapes, seascapes and townscapes and enhance visual amenity
10. Protect and enhance the water environment
11. Protect soil resources and avoid land contamination
12. Promote sustainable use of resources and natural assets
13. Promote economic growth and job creation, and improve access and connectivity to jobs and skills for all
14. Support the wider coordination of land use and energy planning across the North East CA area
15. Improve health and well-being for all citizens and reduce inequalities in health (utilising the following HIA specific sub-objectives)
  - Improve accessibility to health and leisure services and facilities and amenities for all
  - Indirect impacts - Improve affordability of public transport

- Improve safety of the transport network (including roads) and reduce the number of accidents and other incidents
- Reduce severance
- Improve connections between and within communities
- Protect health by reducing air, noise, odour and light pollution from transport
- Improve access to active travel modes?
- Improve access to public transport

16. Promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society (utilising the following EqIA specific sub-objectives)

- Improve accessibility to services, facilities and amenities for all, in particular by 'walk, wheel or cycle' (active travel) modes
- Improve affordability of transport
- Improve safety of the transport network (including roads) and reduce the number of accidents and other incidents
- Improve provision of public transport in rural areas or to those areas experiencing constraint in public transport provision
- Reduce severance
- Reduce air, noise, odour and light pollution from transport

17. Promote fairness and equity in rural connectivity (utilising the following specific sub-objectives)

- Increase access via a range of transport modes for rural communities.
- Enable economic growth, and employment diversification in rural areas.
- Connecting people with nature

These objectives were accompanied by a series of 'Decision Aid Questions' that helped to ensure that the assessment was consistent and robust. Once the ISA Framework was identified, each element of LTP was assessed against it.

## Assessment of Reasonable Alternatives

As well as understanding the sustainability performance of the LTP, it is also important to try and ascertain if implementing the plan will result in a better sustainability outcome compared to 'reasonable alternatives'. In this instance, there is an existing approach to transport planning in the North East that would continue to be implemented in the absence of the proposed LTP. As such, comparison was made of the anticipated likely outcomes of continuing with the existing 'Business as Usual' against implementing a new LTP, to see which approach would likely have the more sustainable outcome.

It was shown that implementation of the LTP represents a more favourable approach to transport planning across most ISA Objectives in comparison to continuing under the present approach. While it is to be recognised that the present approach does have some key elements, such as an active travel network in the region and provision of EV charging points, these elements of the existing transport network are not reaching full potential and there is continued challenges across a range of issues that ultimately result in poorer economic outcomes, poorer connectivity across the region, continued transport related social exclusion and poorer health outcomes. While these issues are multi-faceted and an improved transport network will not completely solve them, the intention is that the LTP will result in an

efficiently designed, simple and easy to use network with extended reach. It can be reasonably expected that this should give people a much greater opportunity to access the services and facilities that they need, as well as to grow the economy.

## **Compatibility between the LTP Objectives and the ISA Objectives**

Early consideration of the key elements to the LTP (in particular the three cross cutting strategic themes) also showed that it could be anticipated that the LTP would be broadly compatible with the aims of the ISA and provide a firm underpinning, that will apply across the LTP and will help to ensure that the sustainability performance of the Plan could be maximised. Key elements of these strategic themes were shown to potentially develop an approach to the LTP that will include an approach to economic development and enable access and overcome inequality, protect the environment, tackle issues relating to a changing climate and help to achieve better health outcomes by encouraging active and sustainable travel. These elements were considered to be in line with the general approach to sustainability that should aim for beneficial effects in respect of economy, environment and society.

## **Assessment of LTP focus areas**

The ISA then examined each of the following LTP focus areas in turn:

- Planning journeys/informing users/supporting customers.
- Ticketing and fares.
- Reach and resilience of infrastructure.
- Safety, especially of women and girls, and other improvements in service quality.
- Connections between different transport types.

These focus areas set out a series of standards, which it is intended will collectively make up the improved transport network and set the framework for interventions which follow in the Delivery Plan.

A common thread running through the focus areas is the overall need to encourage and facilitate a shift to more sustainable modes such as public transport (bus and rail), as well as active travel (walking and wheeling). It is also the intention to make the transport network operate as efficiently as possible. This shift in mode and increased efficiency will be enabled through a variety of mechanisms set out for each focus area such as:

- better, more up to date information that is easier to access,
- a stronger identity for and pride in the network,
- a more resilient network,
- easier, simpler and more affordable fares, better ticketing options and higher service standards,
- better integration of the transport network to make travel as seamless as possible,
- increased reach of the transport network to all areas of the region,
- increased service provision and capacity on the network,
- increased EV charging provision or use of new low or zero emission fuels,
- clear and effective ways to report crime or anti-social behaviour,
- tackling root causes of crime and anti-social behaviour and targeted actions to prevent these,
- increasing trust and perceptions of safety in the transport network,
- a focus on safety and accessibility, particularly for vulnerable users
- a joined up approach to investment and spatial planning

Each of these focus areas were assessed against the ISA Objectives using the following significance scale:

Assessment Scale	Assessment Category	Significance of Effect
+++	Major beneficial	Significant
++	Moderate beneficial	
+	Slight beneficial	Not Significant
0	Neutral or no obvious effect	
-	Slight adverse	
--	Moderate adverse	Significant
---	Major adverse	

Results of the assessment are shown below:





Focus Area		ISA Objective																	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
1	Planning journeys	++	+	++	+	+	+	0	+/-	+/-	+	+	+	++	+	++	++	+	
2	Ticketing and fares	++	+	++	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	++	0	++	++	++	
3	Reach and resilience	++	--	+/-	++	--	++	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+++	++	++	++	++
4	Safety of women and girls	++	++	++	-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	++	0	++	++	+
5	Connections between transport type	++	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	++	+	++	++	++



While the focus is on sustainable modes and increased transport efficiency, the LTP does recognise that this may not be suitable for all and as such, there are elements of the LTP which still provide mechanisms for more efficient use of private vehicles

Overall, it is considered that the LTP, through shifting travellers to more sustainable and active modes, will be beneficial in respect of reducing air pollution and carbon emissions. It is also likely that noise, associated with the transport network will reduce through reduced volumes of traffic and congestion, as well as increased uptake of EVs. A reduction in disturbance and pollution emissions / deposition would also likely have slight beneficial effects on biodiversity (including those areas designated for nature conservation), the water environment, heritage assets, soils, landscape and townscape and reduce the use of hydrocarbons.

The LTP is also anticipated to result in a more robust and resilient transport network to the effects of a changing climate. As well as more proactive maintenance of drains, or fixing aspects of infrastructure, better information will allow travellers to plan more effectively, or decide not to undertake journeys in the first place. Alternative routes / travel solutions etc will also be identified.

The LTP is considered to be particularly beneficial in terms of economic growth and access to jobs. This will be realised through a focus on connectivity - locally, across the region and beyond. This increased connectivity will be in respect of both people and goods – for example, note is made of improving long distance rail links to help welcome new business and organisations to be based in the North East. Similarly, note is made of enhanced infrastructure to improve freight connectivity and delivery services and it is noted that it is anticipated that there will be reduced journey times for the movement of people, and goods between freight centres in the region, across the UK and internationally. Note is also made of enhancing links by sustainable means to new employment sites and that the reach of the integrated transport network should be expanded, connecting people to towns, cities, employment, education and essential services. More generally, facilitating journeys by a range of modes will make it easier for people to access employment and economic opportunities more widely across the region. This will also include better facilitation for disabled travellers – this could help to make it easier for people with disabilities to access the job market and therefore increase the workforce. Similarly, an example of the Metro serving disadvantaged areas is given and this could help people in those areas access jobs or training opportunities further afield.

In relation to health, equalities and the effect on rural or coastal communities it is anticipated that the LTP will also bring significant benefits. As noted, employment or training opportunities will increase, alongside better accessibility and connectivity and more affordable fares across the whole of the region. This can be expected to have benefits for wellbeing. Health benefits can also be anticipated from a reduction in pollution, particularly for those more vulnerable members of the community such as children, the elderly and those with certain health conditions. Increased active travel will provide opportunities for people to incorporate more activity into their daily routine, with better access to green spaces.

There will also be better designed and quieter public realm, with potentially a greater ‘sense of place’ and with safety (particularly for vulnerable travellers) a key focus. For example, note is made there should be wide, segregated and well maintained pedestrian infrastructure with reduced street clutter, dropped kerbs, ramp access provision and other inclusive infrastructure such as well designed crossing points and this general ‘decluttering’ and improvement of design will help those with visual or physical disabilities to move through the townscape. Signage, lighting and other such aspects will also improve. This will increase safety for all groups and improve wellbeing. Safety and security will be further improved through reduced potential for accidents.

There will also be clear initiatives for ensuring that people using the network have increased trust, confidence and perceptions of safety. Note is made of the need for clear and effective channels through which to report harassment and violence and a need for targeted action and resources assigned to



prevent violence and anti-social behaviour on the region's transport network. It is anticipated this will benefit all vulnerable users.

However, it is also the case that there are aspects of the LTP which not all groups may be able to take full advantage of. For example, an emphasis on active travel may not work well for the elderly, those with certain health conditions, those with young children and so on. The distances in rural areas may mean that active travel routes would be more likely to be used for recreation, rather than the full connectivity they can bring. Similarly, an emphasis on new technology to better disseminate information may not work well for all groups due to language barriers, reading ability, cost, access to technology etc.

However, the LTP recognises these challenges. For example, provision is still made for improving the network for the use of private vehicles – the elderly, or those in rural areas may still need to rely on this mode for some journeys.

It is inherent in the nature of the LTP that it will result in a series of transport infrastructure Interventions, which in some cases will require heavy civil engineering works across large areas, though it is recognised that for the most part this will be in limited areas to address specific issues such as congestion hotspots or providing connections to new developments. Nevertheless, it is in the nature of these works that there will be environmental implications in particular. For example, new infrastructure such as roads (or road widening and junction improvements), as well as interchange hubs and park & ride sites could involve a direct loss of habitat, or soils. There could also be an adverse effect on the water environment through pollution incidents during construction, or through polluted runoff during operation, and would also result in a new feature in the landscape. Increased disturbance could have adverse effects in terms of noise or the setting of heritage assets and so on.

Where it was considered that performance could be improved, a series of recommendations were made to strengthen the focus area wording in order to address those areas identified as adverse or to accentuate those areas of the LTP which have been identified as being beneficial to sustainability. These recommendations resulted in a series of amendments to the LTP which provide greater clarity on how sustainability would be considered during design, construction, maintenance and operation of any intervention / scheme. Of particular note, it is recognised that there will still be work to do in terms of ensuring adverse environmental or social effects are minimised as much as possible, while beneficial effects are maximised. To this end, North East CA have committed to working with partner organisations, including engagement with the statutory bodies of Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England; undertaking Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessment, Health Impact Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment, as well as the development of Carbon Management Plans and Construction Environmental Management Plans. There are also a series of more specific actions to increase resilience in the transport network and address specific environmental, health or equality related issues.

In conclusion therefore, notwithstanding that the nature of LTP will result in some adverse sustainability effects that will require mitigation, it is considered that the focus areas provide a robust base for an overall good sustainability performance.

### **Assessment of proposed LTP Delivery Plan**

In addition to the LTP focus areas, consideration was made of the Delivery Plan. This Plan contains approximately 300 interventions across a range of intervention types. Of these, 62 have been identified as having Mayoral Commitment and 27 of those are expected to be delivered within the next 3 years. The interventions are programmed over three time periods within the LTP – delivery by 2027, delivery by 2030 and delivery by 2040.

The Interventions comprise of a mix of 'soft' measures, i.e. those which are not likely to require civil engineering or construction activities and include measures such as information provision, ticketing



options and so on. Such measures generally apply across the LTP area. Other Intervention types can be considered 'hard' in the sense that they will require civil engineering and construction activities and these would be developed in discrete locations within the LTP area.

The Intervention types assessed at a high level were:

- New infrastructure projects
- Service improvements (ticketing and fares, vehicles, stations)
- Regulation (land use, vehicle type, financial, planning policy)
- Promotion and sharing information (marketing, data sharing, workplace engagement) and Creation of Partnerships<sup>1</sup>
- Innovation development (planning for the future, trialling ideas, working with other organisations across the North East)

An overview of assessment scores for the Intervention types can be seen as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> The ISA combines 'Promotion and sharing information' with 'Creation of Partnerships' Intervention Types into one category owing to the overlapping characteristics of schemes supporting these respective Intervention Types and therefore similarities in respect ISA assessment.

Intervention Type	ISA Objective																																		
	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		
	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	
New Infrastructure Projects	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	0	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	-	+	-	+	0	+
Service improvements (ticketing and fares, vehicles, stations)	-	+	-	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	+	
Regulation (land use, vehicle type, financial, planning policy)	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	++	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	-	+	-	+	0	0	0	
Promotion and sharing information (marketing, data sharing, workplace engagement) / Creation of Partnerships	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	
Innovation development (planning for the future, trialling ideas, working with other organisations across the North East)	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+



In addition to assessing each Intervention type, assessment was made of those Scheme which are likely to be delivered in the period up to 2027.

### **Bowburn Relief Road**

J61 of the A1(M) is operating at capacity following the junction upgrades in 2020. Given the additional demand to be generated by Integra 61 Phase 1, this is due to increase in the future situation. There is no additional capacity on the network for future development, with transport issues preventing economic growth through restricted access to employment opportunities that could otherwise come forward locally.

During construction, significant adverse effects are anticipated towards reducing carbon emissions due to plant and machinery use, and biodiversity due to the intersection of priority habitat.

During operation, significant beneficial effects are anticipated towards promoting economic growth and improving access and connectivity, and to the support land use and energy planning due to the reduced congestion in the local area.

### **Blyth Relief Road**

Delivery of a relief road for Blyth which will create additional radial capacity for Blyth, reducing congestion, improving bus journey time reliability, and creating the space for high quality segregated cycle corridors identified through the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for the town.

The scheme requires the upgrading of the existing A1061 Laverock Hall Road to provide a new 4.5km dual carriageway connection between the A189 Three Horseshoes roundabout to the A193/A1061 roundabout at South Beach. The scheme will also include a single carriageway connection between Chase Farm Drive and Ogle Drive to ensure benefits to the A193 Cowpen Road are maximised .

During construction, significant adverse scores are anticipated towards reducing carbon emissions due to plant and machinery use, and biodiversity due to the loss of priority habitat. Blyth estuary which is part of Northumberland Shore SSSI identified in proximity to the scheme provides wintering grounds for shore birds. Blyth Pier and the estuarine areas of the site are regularly supporting over 250 bird species including international and national significant redshank and golden plover .

During operation, significant beneficial effects are anticipated towards air quality and noise, reducing carbon emissions, promoting economic growth and greater access and connectivity, supporting land use and energy planning, health and wellbeing, promoting greater equality of opportunity and promoting fairness and equity in rural connectivity. This is due to the new and improved road links reducing congestion and bus journey times in the area, as well as a segregated cycle corridor promoting a shift towards active travel, improving access and connectivity to the local area and public transport.

### **North Shields Ferry Landing**

Relocation of the Ferry landing on the north bank of the Tyne to tie in with the regeneration of the fish quay area. The scheme includes :

- new ferry landing at North Shields Fish Quay;
- pedestrian and cycle links between the ferry landing and nearby connecting bus links, and
- improved infrastructure for fishing boats that will also provide wave protection for the ferry operation.

During construction, significant adverse effects are anticipated towards reducing carbon emissions due to plant and machinery use, and historic environment due to intersected conservation area.

During operation, significant beneficial effects are anticipated towards promoting economic growth, supporting land use and energy planning, health and wellbeing, promoting greater equality and

opportunity and promoting fairness and equity in rural connectivity. This is due to the provision of pedestrian and cycle link improving access and connectivity to connecting bus links, promoting a shift to more active travel and public transport.

## Mitigation

As part of the ISA assessment process, a series of mitigation measures/approaches have been identified and recommendations made as set out below.

Approach to mitigation	How has this been incorporated into the LTP?
Refining the LTP in order to better reflect the ISA Objectives and improve the likelihood of positive effects and to minimise adverse effects	Assessment was made of a draft LTP and recommendations were made in relation to clarifying and bolstering aspects of sustainability. Ongoing iterative discussion also took place with the Plan making team. New elements relating to Sustainability was added to the LTP Delivery Plan and this sets out approaches to addressing sustainability issues going forward. Of particular note, clear commitment is made to undertaking as required, Health Impact Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment. Carbon Management Plans will also be prepared. During construction phase, a Construction Environmental Management Plan will also be developed as required. The focus areas for delivering the LTP also include many aspects of sustainability and clear linkages can be made to the ISA Objectives.
Refining Interventions / Measures in order to improve the likelihood of positive effects and to minimise adverse effects	High level interventions have been set out at this stage of LTP development and have been assessed in the ISA, with appropriate mitigation considered – see Chapter 12. The detailed mitigation for each intervention and how it will be applied will be clarified through further work that is yet to take place. Note that LTP sets out clear commitments by North East CA to undertake the required assessments at appropriate stages and this will inform consideration of mitigation through the design and planning phases.
Technical measures (such as requiring adherence to appropriate guidelines) to be applied during the implementation phase	Clear commitment is made within LTP and its associated Delivery Plan to undertake the required assessments at appropriate stages as set out above. This will require adherence to guidance etc as required. For example, clear reference is made within LTP that North East Combined Authority will ensure to use the latest inclusive design standards across the transport network for any new or improved infrastructure.
Identifying issues to be addressed in Scheme / Intervention assessment (i.e. at Project level), including but not limited to WebTAG, Environmental Impact Assessment and the development of Environmental Management Plans, for	<p>The LTP clearly sets out a process of how environmental issues will be considered in future scheme development. LTP sets out that dependent on the scheme, assessment will include as required, Health Impact Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment. Where these statutory assessments are undertaken, they will be guided by the HM Treasury Green Book and DfT Transport Appraisal Guidance (or equivalents prevailing at the time) throughout the life of LTP.</p> <p><i>Note typical specific mitigation that may arise from interventions promoted under respective Intervention Types have been outlined in Table 12-2.</i></p>

Approach to mitigation	How has this been incorporated into the LTP?
certain projects types of project	
Proposals for changing other plans and programmes	No proposals have been made to change other plans and programmes as the LTP will act in accordance with a range of other Plans and Programmes e.g. local development plans and there are clear commitments made within the LTP to work closely with partner organisations, including the relevant Local Authorities in the North East, to ensure that consideration of sustainability, including health and equality, is made at the earliest possible planning stage for schemes. This is in line with the North East CA Vision to ‘collaborate with our partners and local authorities... create a better way of life by connecting communities, giving people the skills to succeed, and improving wellbeing for all...’
Contingency arrangements for dealing with possible adverse effects	The ISA has proposed a series of monitoring indicators. It is anticipated that the monitoring programme will cover significant social, environmental and economic effects and which will involve measuring indicators that will enable the establishment of a causal link between the implementation of the LTP and the likely significant effects (both positive and negative) being monitored. This will allow identification at an early stage of unforeseen adverse effects and allow appropriate remedial action to be undertaken. Note is also made that North East CA has a statutory duty to monitor the performance of the LTP and its Delivery Plan against their strategic objectives and policies. Feedback from the monitoring process allows the Delivery Plan to be adjusted according to the actual performance against objectives. As noted in the LTP, this monitoring and evaluation will take place on a yearly basis and be publicly accessible via the North East CA website. This provides a level of accountability, informs whether strategies and policies are working, and highlights if KPIs are moving in the desired direction.

In addition, typical mitigation that may apply to interventions promoted under respective Intervention Types have been outlined for information. Note that mitigation for individual schemes would be developed further and expanded upon as part of the planning and design process and would be informed by any additional assessment such as EIA, HIA, HRA, EqIA and so on. The mitigation would then be detailed in a Construction Environmental Management Plan that would be enacted during the construction phase. North East CA have set out a commitment within the Delivery Plan to ensure that such further assessment is undertaken.

## Cumulative, synergistic and indirect effects

There is also a requirement to consider cumulative, synergistic and indirect effects of the LTP as a result of the joint implementation of all elements of the Plan. Secondary and indirect effects are effects that are not a direct result of the plan but occur away from the original effect or as the result of a complex pathway. Cumulative effects arise where several proposals individually may or may not have significant effects but in-combination have a significant effect due to being located in the same area or being developed at the same time. Synergistic effects are when two or more effects act together to create effects greater than the simple sum of the effects acting alone.





Effects were considered in relation to those which will be just a result of LTP ('In-Plan' effects) and those which would be a result of interaction with other plans and projects.

## Monitoring

It is important that North East CA understands the effects of implementing the LTP and the ISA therefore outlined a potential series of monitoring indicators that will be considered and finalised alongside final development of the LTP.

Monitoring can be integral to compiling baseline information for future plans and programmes (or in this instance to future iterations of the LTP or to help inform decision making in terms of the LTP Delivery Plan), as well as to preparing information which will be needed for further assessment such as EIA's, HRA's, HIA's, EqIA's etc. of projects. As such, it is the intention that this ISA monitoring will complement the monitoring plan set out in the LTP (see section on Measuring success / key performance indicators). Monitoring and evaluation of progress towards objectives and targets can form a crucial part of the feedback mechanism. Feedback from the monitoring process helps to provide more relevant information that can be used to pinpoint specific performance issues and significant effects, and ultimately lead to more informed decision-making. Note that any further assessment process such as EIA may also identify further monitoring that may be important to undertake at an appropriate time.

It is to be further noted that monitoring does not necessarily need to be undertaken by the responsible authority, rather information used in monitoring can be provided by other bodies. Indeed, due to typical budgetary or resource issues, it is often considered that the most effective monitoring programme utilises information that is already being collected, either by the responsible authority itself or by other bodies with whom information can be shared, rather than proposing the collection of new datasets. The LTP recognises this and notes that North East CA will monitor their KPI's by continuing to collaborate and effectively share data with both regional and national organisations. These include but are not limited to:

- Nexus
- The Transport Accident and Data Unit (TADU)
- Our two Urban Traffic Management Control Centres (UTMCs)
- Transport for the North
- Central Government Sources:
  - Department for Transport
  - The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
  - The Office of National Statistics
  - UK Health Security Agency
  - Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
  - Government Office for Science
- Public Transport Operators

## Next steps

This ISA Report is being published for formal consultation with the Draft LTP. The results of the formal public consultation exercise may well result in changes to the Draft LTP and these may have implications for the ISA results. In addition, the consultation exercise may result in direct changes to the contents of the ISA Report. These will be reported in the next stage of development of the LTP and ISA following adoption of the plan.



## Summary and Conclusions

North East CA have developed a new LTP to set out the aspirations for the region's transport network up to 2040. It is the intention that this will result in a green, integrated transport network that works for all. North East CA believe this will make sustainable travel options more attractive, convenient, and safer, enabling more people and freight to make greener journeys.

In order to assess the sustainability performance of the LTP, an ISA has been carried out during its development. This ISA process has been thorough and comprehensive, with iterations of the LTP being subject to review by an experienced ISA team who are independent of the plan making team. Close liaison between the ISA team and the Plan making team (North East CA) has taken place throughout this process. It is considered that this approach resulted in an enhanced and more robust incorporation of sustainability considerations to the LTP, in terms of policy approach but also particularly in terms of clarity of actions to be taken as any intervention (scheme) derived from the LTP will be developed.

Based on the findings of the ISA, it is possible to draw a number of key conclusions with regards to the LTP and its implications for sustainability.

In the first instance, it was shown that implementation of LTP represents a more favourable approach to transport planning across most ISA Objectives in comparison to continuing under the present approach. While it is to be recognised that the present approach does have some key elements, such as an active travel network in the region and provision of EV charging points, these elements of the existing transport network are not reaching full potential and there is continued challenges across a range of issues that ultimately result in poorer economic outcomes, poorer connectivity across the region, continued transport related social exclusion and poorer health outcomes. While these issues are multi-faceted and an improved transport network will not completely solve them, the intention is that LTP will result in an efficiently designed, simple and easy to use network with extended reach. It can be reasonably expected that this should give people a much greater opportunity to access the services and facilities that they need, as well as to grow the economy.

Early consideration of the key elements to the LTP (in particular the three cross cutting strategic themes) also showed that it could be anticipated that the LTP would be broadly compatible with the aims of the ISA and provide a firm underpinning, that will apply across the LTP and will help to ensure that the sustainability performance of the Plan could be maximised. Key elements of these strategic themes were shown to potentially develop an approach to the LTP that will include an approach to economic development and enable access and overcome inequality, protect the environment, tackle issues relating to a changing climate and help to achieve better health outcomes by encouraging active and sustainable travel. These elements were considered to be in line with the general approach to sustainability that should aim for beneficial effects in respect of economy, environment and society.

The ISA then examined each of the following LTP focus areas in turn:

- Planning journeys/informing users/supporting customers.
- Ticketing and fares.
- Reach and resilience of infrastructure.
- Safety, especially of women and girls, and other improvements in service quality.
- Connections between different transport types.

These focus areas set out a series of standards, which it is intended will collectively make up the improved transport network and set the framework for interventions which follow in the Delivery Plan.

A common thread running through the focus areas is the overall need to encourage and facilitate a shift to more sustainable modes such as public transport (bus and rail), as well as active travel (walking and



wheeling). It is also the intention to make the transport network operate as efficiently as possible. This shift in mode and increased efficiency will be enabled through a variety of mechanisms set out for each focus area such as:

- better, more up to date information that is easier to access,
- a stronger identity for and pride in the network,
- a more resilient network,
- easier, simpler and more affordable fares, better ticketing options and higher service standards,
- better integration of the transport network to make travel as seamless as possible,
- increased reach of the transport network to all areas of the region,
- increased service provision and capacity on the network,
- increased EV charging provision or use of new low or zero emission fuels,
- clear and effective ways to report crime or anti-social behaviour,
- tackling root causes of crime and anti-social behaviour and targeted actions to prevent these,
- increasing trust and perceptions of safety in the transport network,
- a focus on safety and accessibility, particularly for vulnerable users
- a joined up approach to investment and spatial planning

While the focus is on sustainable modes and increased transport efficiency, the LTP does recognise that this may not be suitable for all and as such, there are elements of the LTP which still provide mechanisms for more efficient use of private vehicles

Overall, it is considered that the LTP, through shifting travellers to more sustainable and active modes, will be beneficial in respect of reducing air pollution and carbon emissions. It is also likely that noise, associated with the transport network will reduce through reduced volumes of traffic and congestion, as well as increased uptake of EVs. A reduction in disturbance and pollution emissions / deposition would also likely have slight beneficial effects on biodiversity (including those areas designated for nature conservation), the water environment, heritage assets, soils, landscape and townscape and reduce the use of hydrocarbons.

The LTP is also anticipated to result in a more robust and resilient transport network to the effects of a changing climate. As well as more proactive maintenance of drains, or fixing aspects of infrastructure, better information will allow travellers to plan more effectively, or decide not to undertake journeys in the first place. Alternative routes / travel solutions etc will also be identified.

The LTP is considered to be particularly beneficial in terms of economic growth and access to jobs. This will be realised through a focus on connectivity - locally, across the region and beyond. This increased connectivity will be in respect of both people and goods – for example, note is made of improving long distance rail links to help welcome new business and organisations to be based in the North East. Similarly, note is made of enhanced infrastructure to improve freight connectivity and delivery services and it is noted that it is anticipated that there will be reduced journey times for the movement of people, and goods between freight centres in the region, across the UK and internationally. Note is also made of enhancing links by sustainable means to new employment sites and that the reach of the integrated transport network should be expanded, connecting people to towns, cities, employment, education and essential services. More generally, facilitating journeys by a range of modes will make it easier for people to access employment and economic opportunities more widely across the region. This will also include better facilitation for disabled travellers – this could help to make it easier for people with disabilities to access the job market and therefore increase the workforce. Similarly, an example of the Metro serving

disadvantaged areas is given and this could help people in those areas access jobs or training opportunities further afield.

In relation to health, equalities and the effect on rural or coastal communities it is anticipated that the LTP will also bring significant benefits. As noted, employment or training opportunities will increase, alongside better accessibility and connectivity and more affordable fares across the whole of the region. This can be expected to have benefits for wellbeing. Health benefits can also be anticipated from a reduction in pollution, particularly for those more vulnerable members of the community such as children, the elderly and those with certain health conditions. Increased active travel will provide opportunities for people to incorporate more activity into their daily routine, with better access to green spaces.

There will also be better designed and quieter public realm, with potentially a greater 'sense of place' and with safety (particularly for vulnerable travellers) a key focus. For example, note is made there should be wide, segregated and well maintained pedestrian infrastructure with reduced street clutter, dropped kerbs, ramp access provision and other inclusive infrastructure such as well designed crossing points and this general 'decluttering' and improvement of design will help those with visual or physical disabilities to move through the townscape. Signage, lighting and other such aspects will also improve. This will increase safety for all groups and improve wellbeing. Safety and security will be further improved through reduced potential for accidents.

There will also be clear initiatives for ensuring that people using the network have increased trust, confidence and perceptions of safety. Note is made of the need for clear and effective channels through which to report harassment and violence and a need for targeted action and resources assigned to prevent violence and anti-social behaviour on the region's transport network. It is anticipated this will benefit all vulnerable users.

However, it is also the case that there are aspects of the LTP which not all groups may be able to take full advantage of. For example, an emphasis on active travel may not work well for the elderly, those with certain health conditions, those with young children and so on. The distances in rural areas may mean that active travel routes would be more likely to be used for recreation, rather than the full connectivity they can bring. Similarly, an emphasis on new technology to better disseminate information may not work well for all groups due to language barriers, reading ability, cost, access to technology etc.

However, the LTP recognises these challenges. For example, provision is still made for improving the network for the use of private vehicles – the elderly, or those in rural areas may still need to rely on this mode for some journeys.

It is inherent in the nature of the LTP that it will result in a series of transport infrastructure Interventions, which in some cases will require heavy civil engineering works across large areas, though it is recognised that for the most part this will be in limited areas to address specific issues such as congestion hotspots or providing connections to new developments. Nevertheless, it is in the nature of these works that there will be environmental implications in particular. For example, new infrastructure such as roads (or road widening and junction improvements), as well as interchange hubs and park & ride sites could involve a direct loss of habitat, or soils. There could also be an adverse effect on the water environment through pollution incidents during construction, or through polluted runoff during operation, and would also result in a new feature in the landscape. Increased disturbance could have adverse effects in terms of noise or the setting of heritage assets and so on.

Where it was considered that performance could be improved, a series of recommendations were made to strengthen the focus area wording in order to address those areas identified as adverse or to accentuate those areas of the LTP which have been identified as being beneficial to sustainability. These recommendations resulted in a series of amendments to the LTP which provide greater clarity on how sustainability would be considered during design, construction, maintenance and operation of any

intervention / scheme. Of particular note, it is recognised that there will still be work to do in terms of ensuring adverse environmental or social effects are minimised as much as possible, while beneficial effects are maximised. To this end, North East CA have committed to working with partner organisations, including engagement with the statutory bodies of Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England; undertaking Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessment, Health Impact Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment, as well as the development of Carbon Management Plans and Construction Environmental Management Plans. There are also a series of more specific actions to increase resilience in the transport network and address specific environmental, health or equality related issues.

It is also the case that a series of mitigation measures for different intervention types have been identified through this ISA. At a strategic level, this included refining the LTP itself, refining aspects of the Interventions and noting specific mitigation, ensuring adherence to technical measures, addressing the need for further assessment, working with partner organisations, as well as contingency arrangements for dealing with possible adverse effects.

It is recognised that LTP will not act or be delivered in isolation and will influence and be influenced by, other Plans and Policies or developments across and beyond the North East. It is anticipated that the LTP will act to benefit those other Plans and Policies, though there is a potential for some adverse effects. Nevertheless, it is considered that the LTP sets out an approach to further assessment that will address any cumulative effects arising.

It is important that North East CA understand the effect of the implementation of their LTP and the ISA set out a potential series of monitoring indicators that will be considered and finalised alongside development of the Delivery Plan. These will also complement those KPIs which North East have identified in the LTP for measurement. It is the intention that monitoring will cover social, environmental and economic effects and it will involve measuring indicators that will enable the establishment of a causal link between the implementation of the LTP and the likely effects (both positive and negative) being monitored. This will be of particular benefit to those involved with the next iteration of the LTP and if required, will allow early remediation to be undertaken of any identified adverse effects.

**Overall, it is considered that the LTP represents a well-balanced approach in terms of sustainability performance across the full range of potential key effects delineated in the ISA Framework. It is anticipated that this should help ensure that the need for a connected North East, as set out in relation to the vision for the North East can be achieved in a sustainable and integrated fashion.**

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