

Introduction

This report summarises the first full year's progress of delivering the objectives and strategies set out in the Local Transport Plan for Tyne and Wear. The Local Transport Plan (2001-06) aims to develop high quality local transport systems to improve quality of life for people in Tyne and Wear. The Plan contains strategies for all means of travel, including:



The Local Transport Plan Partners – Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, South Tyneside Council, City of Sunderland and Tyne & Wear Passenger Transport Authority/Nexus – have been delivering LTP strategies since adoption of the Plan in April 2001. This has been possible following a significant increase in Government spending on local transport.

Now, the Plan Partners are preparing their first Annual Progress Report, which outlines the main achievements during the LTP year. Our achievements are measured against key indicators of progress towards the Plan's objectives, namely:

- The need to improve **access** to jobs, schools, shops and local services
- The improvement of **safety**, in particular need to reduce the number and severity of road accidents
- Reducing the **environmental impacts** of travel including noise and air pollution
- Improving the efficiency of transport to support the **economy and local business**

- The need to **integrate** transport systems, especially public transport, to improve travel opportunities and choices.

This report sets out what has been achieved towards these objectives during the 2001/02 financial year (1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002). In the remaining sections of this report, we provide;

- the context for our local transport strategies,**
- a description of our implementation programme for 2001/02,**
- information on our response to Government's decision letter last year,**
- our activities for sharing good practice and learning from others,**
- our approach to public consultation and our progress towards national and local targets**

Firstly, we invite you to read a brief statement from the lead Councillors for transport in Tyne and Wear.



A Message from the Tyne and Wear Lead Members for Transport

The past year has been an exciting time in Tyne and Wear, culminating in a royal visit when Her Majesty the Queen officially opening the Sunderland Direct Metro link and the Gateshead Millennium Bridge. These innovative yet functional additions to the transport network of Tyne and Wear illustrate

the area's ability to plan and deliver projects that progressively transform the physical, economic, social and travel landscape of Tyne and Wear.

Improving accessibility and enabling people to make best use of opportunities for work, education, commerce and leisure is fundamental to our transport plans. We are delighted that our approach to planning for improved accessibility was recognised by Government last year with the designation of a national Centre of Excellence for Integrated Transport Planning.

We recognise that much remains to be done to deliver local transport systems that meet the needs and improve the quality of life for people in Tyne and Wear. Partners in the Local Transport Plan are committed to delivering a massive programme of investment during the life of the plan. We will continue to seek support for imaginative and worthwhile project to improve our local transport infrastructure. This progress report describes what we have achieved during the past year and how we intend to move forward in 2002/03.

Centre of Excellence Status

In February 2002, the Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan received a Centre of Excellence award from Central Government. Only 18 Plans nation-wide have received this accolade, in recognition of excellence and innovation in local transport planning.

Tyne and Wear was noted for its innovation with regard to public transport accessibility. Our methods for assessing and monitoring local accessibility complement long-term programmes to improve public transport services in partnership with operators.

Our development of expertise in Public Transport Accessibility is a response to the requirement to monitor the performance of the local public transport network as part of the local transport plan. Accessibility is a key consideration for many strategic planning frameworks e.g. PPG6 and PPG13. A key objective is to ensure that jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services are accessible by public transport.

Our Local Transport Plan places strong emphasis on accessibility for users, especially people with disabilities and

mobility impairments and in terms of access to locations throughout Tyne and Wear. The area already has a high proportion of fully accessible low-floor buses, delivered through Quality partnerships with the operators, as part of the extensive network of accessible bus routes.

We believe this approach will ensure that people have a greater choice of destinations accessible by public transport – helping to promote greater opportunities and social inclusion. Our approach enables us to monitor network changes over time and work with stakeholders to maximise the level of service throughout Tyne and Wear. Presently, we are developing our analytical tools, enabling planners to assess the impact of proposed changes to public transport services.

Already, we have been working closely with development planners to disseminate our understanding of the local public transport network. We hope to extend our approach to assist development of regional accessibility criteria as part of the North East Regional Transport Strategy.



Councillor Peter Boyack (left) receiving the Centre for Excellence Award for public transport accessibility from Transport Minister Sally Keeble and Professor David Begg, Chair of the Commission for Integrated Transport.

