

Executive Summary

Preface

The Congestion Reduction Plan has been produced on behalf of the Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan partners by the Tyne and Wear LTP Core Team, at the request of the Department for Transport (DfT). All the targets set out in the document apply to Tyne and Wear as a whole.

Introduction

Congestion affects residents and businesses throughout Tyne and Wear. As car ownership grows, congestion may become much worse unless we act now. This document sets out the currently-identified measures we are taking to deal with congestion and how we will develop them up to 2011. It is a living plan which will be constantly updated and which is supported by our partners.

In most cases, the measures we will take to manage congestion fit in with our other transport policies. Where they do not, a judgement will be needed on which is more important. The chart in Chapter 3 shows the bodies that will make such decisions.

The Eddington Report has explained the problems and costs caused by congestion. Businesses are especially concerned about rising expenses caused by traffic jams. Regions remote from London, like the North-East, are particularly affected. As a result, large urban areas – including Tyne and Wear – have been instructed by the DfT to set congestion targets. The target for Tyne and Wear is to limit congestion so that, by 2010/11, travellers experience a maximum 7% increase in average journey time per person mile on 16 key corridors throughout Tyne and Wear. This compares with an expected 12% growth in traffic on these roads during this period.

These corridors are the local authority roads which have the worst congestion problems and they are listed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 – Background

This chapter gives more details about each corridor. They are all radial routes into town or city centres. They do not include trunk roads as these are managed by the Highways Agency. Traffic speeds on the corridors have been measured based on guidance provided by the DfT.

It can be difficult to define congestion. Even without congestion, traffic in urban areas often travels quite slowly for safety reasons. However, as congestion gets worse, journey times begin to vary and people and businesses have to allow for possible delays, even if they do not occur. There are also problems for the emergency services and for public transport users. Other results of congestion include poor air quality due to stop – start traffic and employers moving out of urban areas to sites close to trunk roads. People without cars often find it hard to reach such sites.

Chapter 2 details how the congestion data for 2005/06 has been arrived at and how forecasts have been produced using the Tyne and Wear Strategic Transport Model. It describes the 16 corridors and identifies the particular characteristics of each.

Chapter 3 – Governance and Reporting

This chapter explains the governance arrangements within Tyne and Wear for the development of transport policies through the Local Transport Plan process. The key stakeholders are the six LTP partners, comprising the five district councils and the Passenger Transport Executive, Nexus. The other important governing bodies comprise:

Joint Lead Members (Transport)

LTP Steering Group

Joint Transport Working Group

LTP Core Team

The LTP Monitoring Sub-Group, meeting every month, will measure progress towards the congestion target using DfT guidance and feedback from Network Managers who look after the local road networks in each district.

Chapter 4 – Risk Management

To ensure that we properly manage the risks associated with the Congestion Reduction Plan, a Risk Management Strategy has been drawn up. This covers the whole of Tyne and Wear but is based on Newcastle City Council's Risk Management Strategy. The key risks were identified at a workshop organised by the DfT on 2nd November 2006.

Local risks have also been listed for each district.

Chapter 5 – Communications

This chapter explains how the plan will engage with:

- ***The partner authorities***
- ***Local authority officers responsible for planning and transportation policy***
- ***Transport operators***
- ***Government agencies (e.g. Highways Agency)***
- ***Interest groups***
- ***The wider public***

The measures outlined in the plan are not ‘new’, they are based on those already set out in the second Local Transport Plan and which were based on a large consultation exercise. Continuing consultation is carried out via the Tyne and Wear LTP website and in our regular meetings with transport groups (e.g. cyclists, bus companies, freight operators). Key guidance also comes from:

- ***Tyne and Wear PTA***
- ***Tyne and Wear Leaders Group***
- ***Tyne and Wear Chief Executives Group***

We also maintain close liaison with the groups responsible for the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) investigation into congestion management.

Chapter 6 – Enabling Actions and Future Interventions

This chapter outlines the key spatial and transport features of each of the corridors. It sets out the present traffic situation on each corridor and lists the known improvements which are scheduled to be carried out over the next 4 years. There are also details of new developments which may affect traffic volumes, such as the Scotswood Housing Expo in Newcastle and the Sunderland **arc** plans for the former Vaux Brewery site.

Chapter 6 also provides information about Nexus proposals that will benefit the whole region (such as Metro Re-invigoration) and details wider initiatives that will help to manage congestion, these being:

- *Parking Guidance*
- *Strategic Network Management System*
- *Freight Quality Partnership*
- *Network Management Duty*
- *Transport Asset Management Plan*
- *Decriminalised Parking Enforcement*

Chapter 7 – Milestones

As requested by the DfT, this chapter identifies the key milestones that will occur during the period of the plan up to 2011.

Chapter 8 – Progress

The trajectory within which we hope to address the congestion target, and how it has been arrived at, is shown in this chapter. Chapter 8 also explains what use we will make of any reward funding received for achieving (or exceeding) our congestion target. Such funding will be used to improve the Superoutes bus network in Tyne and Wear.