



**Name of meeting: G&R Scrutiny**

**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**Title of report: Transport Strategy**

**Purpose of report:** To note the current status of the development of the Kirklees Transport Strategy.

<b>Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £500k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards? Decisions having a particularly significant effect on a single ward may also be treated as if they were key decisions.</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u></b>	<b>Key Decision – N/A</b> <b>Private Report/Private Appendix –No</b>
<b>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> &amp; name</b>  <b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>  <b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b>	<b>David Shepherd</b>  <b>N/A</b>  <b>N/A</b>
<b>Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a></b>	<b>Cllr M. Crook</b>

**Electoral wards affected: All – District wide**

**Ward councillors consulted: All Ward councillors will be consulted**

**Public or private: Public**

**Has GDPR been considered? Yes**

## 1. Summary

The report will provide an update on the matters listed below as guided by the G&R Scrutiny Panel to be an area of focus:

- To provide a brief update on the development of the Kirklees Transport Strategy.
- To review what has been achieved so far and to look ahead at what work needs to be undertaken.
- To link this work to Kirklees Council's Local Development Plan Review.
- And the emerging new WYCA Local Transport Plan (LTP).

The report intends to provide be a high-level detail to set the context around the areas of focus and invite comment from the panel Members.

## 2. Information required to take a decision

The Transport Strategy is being developed by the Transport Strategy and Policy team as a series of individual public facing strategies, bound by an overarching transport strategy document to serve the following purpose: -

- Assist with delivery of the core council priorities including achieving our ambitious net zero objectives by 2038.
- Provide the adopted council position on transport policy and the development of local transport schemes and initiatives.
- Support the Council with the implementation of transport schemes and measures through clear policy and direction.
- Provide both evidence and clear policy objectives and actions to assist with the Kirklees Local Development Plan Review and support future land use planning allocations within Kirklees.
- To both feed into and support the emerging statutory West Yorkshire LTP which is anticipated to be developed in 2024 / 2025.

### 2.1 Background

Kirklees Council are currently developing a district wide Transport Strategy.

The strategy will support national, regional and local policies, including a commitment to achieving Net Zero by 2038 along with policy objectives and targets contained within the current West Yorkshire Local Transport Strategy 2040 and the new West Yorkshire LTP.

Our Council's draft transport vision promotes a straightforward approach to travel which focuses on a reduced need for reliance on the private car, with

fully integrated active travel links and reliable and affordable public transport at its heart. This, along with the promotion of using the appropriate mode of travel for the appropriate journey, is the key to improving connectivity and accessibility across our district. The ability to travel easily across the district has a huge impact on the communities within our administrative boundary and the quality of their lives.

Our Transport Strategy will have a strong focus on people and place and be developed in line with the Council's Transport Vision for Kirklees where:

- All communities across the district are connected and have equal access to opportunities.
- Transport affordability for all is a priority.
- Healthy and sustainable travel is an obvious and easy choice.

Our ambitious transport investment programme pipeline will link our transport vision to reality. Our plan to invest in all transport modes and in partnership with our stakeholders will:

- Address local congestion and air quality issues,
- Aid economic recovery and levelling up,
- Assist inclusive growth,
- Integrate active travel with other modes,
- Improve journey times, and
- Enable people better access within and to / from the district for work, education and leisure.

The Kirklees Transport Strategy will be consistent with all current and emerging Department for Transport (DfT) Guidance and any new West Yorkshire LTP which may be developed at a similar time subject to issue of LTP Guidance (currently delayed).

Historically, transport policy and strategy across Kirklees has been set as part of a wider West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan. With ambitious Council targets to achieve Net Zero by 2038 and an obligation to produce a district wide transport strategy contained within our Climate Change Action Plan, we are now keen to develop and adopt our own district Transport Strategy.

Through local political sign off, our Transport Strategy will be instrumental in assisting and realising the Council Vision, enabling the development of sustainable transport schemes and meeting our ambitions for Net Zero to tackle the climate emergency.

In the light of the above and along with the proposed development of further large transport projects such as TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU) and Mass Transit which will have a positive impact on the district. Kirklees Council is developing an all-encompassing transport strategy that demonstrates both the importance and need for a bold, clear, comprehensive and fully integrated transport strategy at district level that supports national, regional and local policy alongside the council's own corporate priorities. And recognising the importance of working with WYCA and neighbouring mayoral combined authorities. The Penistone Line successful LUF bid is a good example that demonstrates what can be achieved.

It is critical that Kirklees Council can maximise the benefit of such large transport investment across the district. The transport strategy will set out a long-term approach to 2038 to align with the Local Development Plan review and any future West Yorkshire LTP.

The strategy will build upon the foundations of the adopted strategies and emerging strategies which have been developed at a West Yorkshire level including the West Yorkshire Active Travel Strategy (consultation anticipated December 2023), Bus Strategy and Rail Strategy (new strategy under consultation) in addition to the Transport Strategy development work already undertaken by officers.

## **2.2 Our Vision**

We want to open the discussion about how to make our district somewhere where it's simple, sustainable, and safe for everyone to get around.

Our Transport Strategy Vision is shaped by the ambitions for Kirklees, as set out in [Our Council Plan](#). This is:

### **The Vision**

*'Kirklees is to be a district that combines a strong, sustainable economy with a great quality of life - leading to thriving communities, growing businesses, high prosperity and low inequality where people enjoy better health throughout their lives shared outcomes.'*

**Connecting Kirklees  
Better Places, Better Lives**

**Accessible, Safe, Sustainable, Inclusive**

Kirklees' Transport Strategy Vision sets out our ambition for a place where:

- People have travel choices that suit their lifestyle.

- People can easily and safely access the goods and services they need.
- All communities across the district are connected and have equal access to opportunities.
- Transport affordability for all is a priority.
- Healthy and sustainable travel is an obvious and easy choice.

Our vision promotes a straightforward approach to travel with reliable and affordable public transport at its heart. This, along with the promotion of appropriate modes of travel for appropriate journeys, is the key connectivity and accessibility in Kirklees.

In terms of delivery, our ambitious transportation investment programme is what links the vision to reality. Our plan to invest in all transport modes, working with partners, has the potential to address local congestion and air quality issues, aid economic recovery, assist inclusive growth, integrate active travel, improve journey times, and make it easier for Kirklees residents to move around.

### **2.3 Active Travel**

Active travel is an integral part of our approach to sustainable transport in Kirklees, enabling our residents to walk, cycle and wheel (wheelchairs, mobility scooters etc) for short journeys as well as integrating it with other modes particularly public transport. Our residents tell us they feel better both physically and mentally when travelling more actively, as well as reducing emissions from vehicles, congestion on our roads and improving air quality.

Active travel infrastructure schemes have begun to be delivered on the ground, including the A62 Smart Corridor and Huddersfield Narrow Canal Phase 2 (with the Canal and River Trust).

The Council coordinates the Kirklees Active Travel Partnership of local stakeholders, as well as on-going engagement and support recognising the collective effort of a broad range of partners to support the development in this area.

### **2.4 Bus**

We recognise the strategic importance of bus services, as the most heavily used form of public transport across our district. The future development of bus operations in Kirklees forms a central part of meeting the strategic aims and objectives of our emerging Kirklees Transport Strategy.

Bus services across Kirklees provide vital connections to work, health care, retail and leisure. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown how crucial these services are, whilst at the same time highlighting the vulnerabilities of a commercially funded and operated bus network. Since the pandemic, the bus network in Kirklees has declined to an unacceptable level. Almost forty different services have been impacted through either service withdrawals or reductions to service levels. These

changes have a significant and detrimental impact on communities who rely upon their bus services.

Bus Reform recognises the need to change the way local busses are run. The Council remain supportive of the proposed franchising model (similar to that currently being rolled out in Greater Manchester). Kirklees Council are in full agreement with the assessments undertaken by WYCA, that conclude a franchising model that provides the greatest level of control and direct influence to deliver services and network stability in the future together with our operators.

## **2.5 Rail**

The West Yorkshire Rail Strategy will be an important way in which we influence the industry. The strategy delivers our shared ambition to:

- Facilitate a shift towards more sustainable and efficient modes of travel.
- Efficiently connect communities to opportunities throughout our region.
- Improve productivity by increasing the reach of labour markets.
- Provide an alternative to the road network for the transport of freight.
- Assist with delivering ambitious decarbonisation targets.
- Levelling Up the region.

Furthermore, the strategy aligns closely with our own emerging district strategy as follows:

- Increasing mode rail share.
- Trans Pennine Route Upgrade of the key East – West Trans Pennine corridor linking the North-west through Manchester – Leeds, North-East and Scotland. Including delivering the project as quickly as possible whilst seeking to minimise disruption as much as possible.
- Future development of the North - South corridors linking the neighbouring towns and cities of Barnsley, Halifax, Sheffield and Wakefield including frequency enhancements to a minimum of 2 trains per hour on these routes
- Creating seamless journeys through better integration between modes, thus providing an attractive alternative to journeys by private car.
- Enhancing station facilities and infrastructure to provide safe, secure and attractive waiting environments.
- Working with partners within the industry (Network Rail and Train Operating Companies – TOC's) and regional partners including Transport for the North to improve service quality, reliability, frequency and ticketing options.
- Seeking opportunities to develop rail freight within the district.

## **2.6 Road Network**

Our approach is for an efficient, safe and reliable road network for all users, that creates new opportunities for jobs and housing. Some new road building will be

necessary to relieve congestion hot spots, take traffic away from town and city centres, and to connect and bring forward development sites.

We recognise the challenges that exist include:

- Over-reliance on car use is contributing to a rise in obesity, diabetes and coronary heart disease.
- Safety on our roads, with particular concerns for those walking, cycling and motorcycling.
- Heavy traffic flows creates barriers to communities and the movement of young, elderly, frail and disabled people.
- Some roads are in poor condition with public dissatisfaction with defective roads and footpaths.
- A limited choice of travel options is restricting people's opportunities.
- Car dominance.

In managing this we are providing strategic and local networks of quality walking and cycling routes that are safe and convenient to use and provide access to town centres, local services and the wider public transport network, with enhanced cycle parking provision for joined up 'door to door' journeys.

## **2.7 Decarbonisation**

Road transport is the biggest contributor to roadside air pollution. Cars are the largest source of emissions, but buses, trains, taxis and goods vehicles also contribute. Air pollution - especially nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter - increases the risk of lung cancer, asthma and heart disease. New evidence also suggests links with other cancers, strokes, low-birth weight babies and children's development.

We will continue to support a comprehensive electric vehicle charging network to support the shift to a more environmentally friendly cars, provide facilities to charge power assisted bicycles and work with bus operators to move to a near-to-zero emissions bus fleet.

Behavioural change is a key part of ensuring and encourage modal shift starts to happen. We will continue to encourage healthy, active travel with improved cycling and walking facilities through promotional campaigns.

## **2.8 West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan (LTP)**

The emergency West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan led by the Combined Authority is current planned to be published in August 2025. It is set to replace the current West Yorkshire Transport Strategy 2040. Kirklees Offices are working closely with WYCA colleagues to ensure Kirklees ambition and visions are captured.

It is therefore important that our emerging Kirklees Local Transport Strategy is co-developed with the new West Yorkshire LTP to ensure there is alignment and

consistency in both the local setting and at the wider regional level. The vision will be very much an integrated one. It will set out the transport solutions needed to be Net Zero by 2038.

Key issues we will be looking at a place-based approach to transport in different settings like urban areas against our rural settings. How travel choices will be made through infrastructure improvements (pull) and demand management (push) interventions.

### **3. Implications for the Council**

#### **3.1 Working with People**

Collaborating with partners is key to ensuring the Council get the best outcomes for citizens, communities, and Kirklees as a whole. As part of the development of the transport strategy there will be considerable engagement including promotion through our social media channels.

This will help shape a transport strategy that work for all of our residents.

#### **3.2 Working with Partners**

The Council has and will continue to engage with businesses and stakeholders during development of the Transport Strategy.

#### **3.3 Place Based Working**

All our projects with are developed with the communities and local Councillors to ensure we get the best outcomes for our residents. The Transport Strategy is no different.

#### **3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality**

Both climate change, biodiversity net gain and air quality are key considerations through the development phases of projects moving forward and thus will form a key part of our Transport Strategy. The promotion of better connectivity through the area and to surrounding communities particularly using active travel will reduce adverse transport derived impacts on communities and improve public health.

#### **3.5 Improving outcomes for children**

The design approach seeks to create safer environments for all users. The direction set out within the Kirklees Transport Strategy will influence the design of our Transport Network current and future with all generations in mind. Making sure that the network is safe and inclusive for all especially in areas where children congregate (e.g. schools).

### **3.6 Financial Implications for the people living or working in Kirklees**

None.

### **3.7 Other (eg Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)/Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions**

All projects where required undergo an Integrated Impact Assessment and are reviewed by our Corporate policy colleagues. This ensures we maintain a high standard in our approach and our strategy will align with the Council's wider strategies on inclusion, diversity, inclusion and on our environmental/climate strategies..

## **4 Consultation**

Consultation is a key part of the development of the Transport Strategy and this will be undertaken using all channels available.

## **5 Engagement**

Engagement is a key part of the development of these projects and will continue through various stages as part of our quality assurance process.

## **6 Next steps and timelines**

Officers to continue to progress development of the strategy in 2024/2025 and align with the development of the WY Local Transport Plan.

## **7 Officer recommendations and reasons**

To note and invite comment on the Transport Vision and the development of the Kirklees Transport Strategy.

## **8 Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder supports Officer recommendations.

## **9 Contact officer**

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## **10 Background Papers and History of Decisions**

None.

**11 Service Director responsible**

Edward Highfield – Service Director, Skills and Regeneration