

# North Tyneside Travel Safety Strategy



# North Tyneside

## Travel Safety Strategy

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## **1. Introduction**

The North Tyneside Transport Strategy sets out how we will improve safety, health and well-being outcomes and sustainability; support economic growth; improve connectivity; enable smart choices for all; and manage demand.

A key aim for both our Transport Strategy and the North Tyneside Local Plan is to provide a safer environment for road users and to continue to reduce the number of people injured on the transport network in North Tyneside.

Travel safety considers all users of the highway including, pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, motorists and users of buses, Metro and taxis and private hire vehicles.

## **2. Our strategic approach**

This strategy sets out how the Council intends to further improve road safety by reviewing and improving infrastructure, increasing awareness and education of road safety matters and working in partnership to address travel safety concerns on our transport network.

Public transport is one of the top ten issues that local residents believe is key to making the borough a good place to live. Listening to local residents and businesses is essential to enable us to manage our transport networks effectively to ensure North Tyneside continues to be a great place to live, work and visit. The remit of this strategy will therefore broaden seek to address the perceptions of safety and personal security of all transport network users.

## **3. Background**

Collision rates across the entire network continue to fall in line with regional and national trends. Locally North Tyneside is committed to achieving and supporting the NECA (North East Combined Authority) reduction targets set for 2020.

Within the borough roads subject to 20mph zones remain the safest locations on the highway network and are supported through our driver feedback sign programme.

Approximately 14,129 children were engaged across our Pedestrian training, Bikeability, and Go Smarter / road safety education schemes in 2017.

Road Safety in the borough is considered in a broader strategic context, which is made up of:

- i. the Our North Tyneside Plan 2018 - 2020;
- ii. the Local Plan 2017 - 2032;
- iii. the North Tyneside Transport Strategy;
- iv. other local strategies including the Cycling Strategy, Parking Strategy, Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) and Network Management Plan;
- v. North Tyneside Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-23; and
- vi. Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

In May 2017 North Tyneside adopted its first Transport Strategy which sets out clear overarching principles to be applied to the management of transport in the borough: these are to improve safety, health and well-being outcomes and sustainability; support economic growth; improve connectivity; enable smart choices for all; and manage demand.

The Travel Safety Strategy has been developed in accordance with these principles and is supported by the plans detailed above.

#### **4. The challenges we work with**

The challenge to continue to reduce KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured) collision rates occurring on the local highway network is significant. The local highway network has become safer each year as collision rates continue to decline despite the volume of traffic increasing. The perception of safety on the local highway network is becoming as important as actual collision statistics as this can influence decisions and behaviour.

#### **5. The outcomes we seek**

- i. reduce road casualties while increasing cycling and walking

Together with other authorities in the region, North Tyneside is committed to achieving and supporting the casualty reduction targets set for 2020 relating to road safety, which are:

- a 35% reduction in those killed or seriously injured in collisions
- a 50% reduction in children (under the age of 16) killed or seriously injured in collisions
- a 40% reduction in slight casualties (as defined by the Department for Transport, DfT)

- ii. engaging with schools to promote road safety alongside healthy travel

North Tyneside Council through its existing Go Smarter and Road Safety Education initiatives will actively increase the promotion and awareness around Travel Safety to address perceptions and improve behaviour.

- iii. supporting improved safety for public transport users

North Tyneside Council will work with public transport operators to address safety concerns raised by passengers.

## **6. Progress**

The previous Road Safety Strategy (2015-18) set actions to be delivered and progress against these actions is summarised in appendix A.

North Tyneside remains on course to deliver its target reductions for KSI collisions, Child KSI collisions, and slight casualties; in particular, reductions in slight casualties have been such that North Tyneside is currently achieving the level of the 2020 target.

North Tyneside has in recent years secured around £30m of central government funding for the highway network. The majority of this has been via the Local Growth Fund and is linked to a national and regional priority to support growth in the local economy. Frequently the schemes being delivered have also focused on improving safety.

Consequently there are very few collision cluster sites remaining across the borough that would be subject to engineering solutions. This strategy should therefore consider moving the focus away from reactive infrastructure led schemes towards collision prevention through education and awareness. However there will always remain a statutory obligation to continue to identify and resolve any cluster sites that may arise in the future.

## **7. Revised Approach**

Following engagement with Cabinet, the Young Mayor, public transport operators, and residents both through the residents survey and correspondence with officers the following suggestions were made when considering this revised Road Safety Strategy:-

- Consider a broader remit when addressing safety to include public transport users and pedestrian and cyclist safety off-road
- Provide more clarity on the process for setting speed limits and how enforcement varies across different types of road
- Consider residents priorities around footways as condition is directly linked to perception of safety
- Provide more details on how road safety and speed information is collated and how this is used to identify future schemes

Following the review of the previous Road Safety Strategy and taking on board the points raised above, the strategy remit is being broadened to cover Travel Safety as reflected in the new title. The Travel Safety Strategy will consider a wider remit around safety and the perception of safety and personal security raised by residents and public transport users.

## 8. Road Safety Challenges

The local highway network has become safer each year as collision rates continue to decline despite the volume of traffic increasing. The number of KSI collisions is reaching such a low level across the network that influencing driver behaviour is becoming the most appropriate method of achieving further reductions in casualties.

However, the Council will always have a responsibility to review and identify the collision rates across the network to identify any cluster locations where trends can be resolved through improved infrastructure design/provision.

The perception of safety on the local highway network is becoming as important as actual collision statistics and can impact decisions and behaviour that compound negative perceptions. Most notably, the perception of pedestrian safety around schools can lead to parents making travel decisions that can increase traffic levels and make roads busier and feel more unsafe. Whereas in fact, as traffic volumes decrease so does the likelihood of a collision occurring.

Below are several examples of such challenges to which we will seek to respond:-

- Public Transport patronage reduces substantially in the evenings, in particular Metro usage. The most commonly cited reason for this is personal security associated with being alone on a Metro or at a station. If patronage levels remained consistent with off-peak daytime rates, the level of natural surveillance would increase and so in turn reduce the perception of vulnerability for lone travelers.
- Short journeys made by cars increase the volume of traffic and pressure on the local highway network substantially. The perceived safety associated with walking/cycling alongside/crossing the road reduces as more traffic is present on the network, despite traffic speeds being at their lowest during peak periods.
- Parking pressures around schools at peak times can lead to difficulties for residents and children wishing to safely access/cross the road. As the number of trips made to school by sustainable modes increases, the need for parking restrictions and formal crossing provisions reduce.

These perceptions need to be addressed and the Council will work on providing information to road users and travellers that will help improve awareness and allow residents to make more informed decisions. Our programme of education and awareness raising initiatives around travel safety will include messages around health, air quality, and congestion reduction. These supporting themes will all benefit from improvements to Travel Safety, in particular those delivered in schools.

Public Transport operators have been engaged to identify opportunities to share information and facts around perceived and actual safety risks associated with this mode of travel. Bus passenger surveys identified that approximately 20% of passengers felt unsafe at bus stops, this reduced to 12% when on the bus itself. Whereas only 0.4% of passengers actually directly or indirectly experienced anti-social behaviour during a journey. All figures have been taken from the National Bus Passenger Survey 2016 broken down for Tyne & Wear (Nexus area).

## 9. Action Plan

The Travel Safety Strategy sets out a number of actions that will deliver improvements, against which performance can be monitored. Successful progress against these actions will be reported back to the public through the Annual Transport Strategy Report submitted to Cabinet.

Over the period of this strategy we intend to deliver the following actions:-

**Action 1** – Expand and deliver a range of Travel Safety **education initiatives** which support health, safety and sustainability, e.g. pedestrian and cycling training

We will review and expand our existing offer of education initiatives to deliver to more people across a wider background, i.e. beyond schools. Following a review of successfully delivered initiatives from around the region and wider UK we will expand our offer to include those most appropriate to North Tyneside.

Through the Go Smarter in North Tyneside programme and our ongoing engagement work with schools, we will endeavour to raise awareness among pupils, parents and staff of the impacts of short car journeys on safety. This work will continue to be supported with investment in appropriate crossing infrastructure along routes to schools.

As the Go Smarter in North Tyneside programme expands to incorporate work with employment sites, town centres, and residential developments this will be supported with Travel Safety education work.

We will deliver cycle training to young people through schools in the Borough. The national standard Bikeability training has been extended in scope and, alongside the well-established cycle training at age 9-10, now includes training for younger children to develop their confidence in riding, using small pedal-free “balance bikes”. We will explore opportunities to expand cycle training to adults and build people’s confidence in cycling independently.

**Action 2** – Work with **public transport** organisations including Nexus, bus operators, and Taxi operators to improve **perceptions** around safety, e.g. include passenger survey data in education initiatives.

We will work with all major bus operators, Nexus (Metro and Shields Ferry), and hackney carriage and private hire vehicle operators to understand and present information around the perception of safety on transport and at points of access e.g. bus stops, Metro stations, Taxi ranks. We will work with these operators to help promote their safe use, with specific consideration around operation at night.

We will engage with operators to feed back views from residents and identify measures that could be delivered to resolve identified/perceived barriers to passengers, such as surveillance and personal security concerns.

**Action 3** – Improve **coordination** with delivery partners to increase opportunities to deliver Travel Safety improvements. e.g. Joint delivery of safety training with Active North Tyneside team.

We will work with partners to promote safe travel more widely in the community, e.g. through the Active North Tyneside programme which supports people to become “community health champions”, alongside promoting healthy lifestyles. We will seek to

raise awareness of relevant activities and events, e.g. the "pop-up" cycle hubs provided at major business parks.

We will ensure that there is a consistent message across areas of work, including Public Health, Highways (including parking), Education, NSRI (Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative), Road Safety GB, the Police, and transport operators, to raise awareness of safe and sustainable travel in North Tyneside.

**Action 4** – Invest in new **technology** for monitoring traffic speeds and enhance data collection, e.g. Upgrading signal controlled crossings to record speeds and refreshing driver feedback sign equipment

We will review and upgrade our existing collection of driver feedback signs to provide more reliable, flexible, and effective equipment. This equipment will continue to be utilised as part of our feedback sign rotation programme, but will also serve as speed survey data collection systems.

The information gathered from this equipment and supplemented with the TADU (Tyne & Wear Traffic and Accident Data Unit) network of traffic speed survey sites will be used to validate annual Department for Transport traffic speed data (Trafficmaster). Trafficmaster data covers the whole local highway network and is gathered remotely using GPS data taken from millions of vehicles every day.

An annual speed map for the borough will be produced showing those roads where excessive average speeds have been recorded. This information will be used to identify locations where further speed reduction measures may be necessary.

Further local traffic survey sites will be created through upgrading signal controlled pedestrian crossings and some signal controlled junctions (where appropriate). These sites will expand the data collection network developed by TADU and will provide more accurate, real-time results allowing more informed decisions to be made.

**Action 5** – **Report ongoing performance** as part of the Transport Strategy Annual Information Report, e.g. detailed analysis of collisions involving vulnerable users within close proximity to schools

We will continue to report on progress against the NECA 2020 KSI reduction targets but will expand our analysis to consider the following categories:-

- Speed related collisions occurring in 20mph zones
- Child pedestrian/cyclist collisions occurring within close proximity to schools
- Pedestrian crossing collisions in town centres
- Collisions involving cyclists along the Strategic Cycle Route Network ("Tube Map")
- Pedestrian trips/falls reported, to inform future footway improvement programmes

We will undertake a full review of the 20mph zone programme delivered between 2008 and 2012. The review will consider if the schemes have been successful in reducing the risk to the most vulnerable road users as intended. Locations where average speeds continue to exceed 24mph will be identified and consideration given to further supportive self-enforcing speed reduction measures such as additional signage and traffic calming features.



## **10. Speed Management**

A key part of travel safety is the management of speed limits on the local highway network to ensure they remain appropriate and adhered to. When setting speed limits there are several variables and road characteristics that are considered including road classification (e.g. A, B, unclassified), traffic volumes, residential frontage, crossing provision, road width, etc.). Appendix B sets out the criteria North Tyneside Council considers when setting speed limits.

North Tyneside Council delivered a programme of 20mph zones with the intention of directly reducing the number of KSI collisions in these areas. These zones when supported by self-enforcing speed reduction measures such as speed cushions, pedestrian refuges and signage (including feedback signs) are very effective in reducing average speeds. RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) identified in the "Road Safety Factsheet" November 2017 that the fatality rate of 8% associated with collisions at 30mph reduced to around 1.5% when speeds reduced to 20mph. Therefore ensuring speeds are below 30mph in residential areas and around schools reduces the risk to vulnerable road users.

Historically within North Tyneside, our most challenging collision "black-spots" have been on high speed approaches to busy junctions, such as the A1058 Billy Mill junction. As part of our recent £30m highway investment programme we have delivered schemes that directly address some of these locations with historic road safety challenges. This has resulted in reductions in collisions at some junctions of up to 75%.

## **11. Enforcement**

North Tyneside has very few locations where excessive speeding regularly occurs, which is reflected by the low number of fixed and mobile camera enforcement sites. As part of our Safety Camera Partnership with Northumbria Police we continue to monitor speeds on all roads to ensure enforcement is carried out where necessary. Additional enforcement sites will be added if required and in agreement with Northumbria Police.

Whilst enforcement of speed limits remains the responsibility of the Police, North Tyneside Council continually reviews the operation of the highway network and will introduce further supporting traffic calming measures where appropriate to reduce the resource burden on Police to enforce. This will often involve the temporary installation of driver feedback signs which advise drivers of their speed and remind them to adhere to the speed limit.

North Tyneside Council has an increasing driver feedback sign rotation programme which identifies locations on the network where speeds have periodically exceeded appropriate averages for the speed limits in operation. The majority of these locations are situated on local estate distributor roads that are subject to a 20mph speed limit but were previously subject to a 30mph limit.

Evidence from the sign rotation programme suggests that when signage is installed it has a positive impact on average speeds but only when present for a short period of time (approximately 2 weeks). When situated for prolonged periods, the signage becomes increasingly ignored and therefore average speeds increase again. The

rotation programme therefore seeks to rotate feedback sign locations frequently and return to sites multiple times each year.

We will be investing in new and additional feedback sign equipment to ensure the effectiveness of these measures continues. The new equipment will passively record speeds which will be used to determine whether or not further supporting measures are required and to locally validate the annual speed data we receive from the Department for Transport.

The sign rotation programme is reviewed annually and additional sites are included following a review of requests received from residents and speed survey data. The sign rotation programme site list is available to view on North Tyneside Council's website.

North Tyneside Council is also trialling and investing in upgrades to traffic signals which allow vehicle speeds, classification, and volumes to be recorded in real-time. This information will allow for traffic signal operation to be better optimised and also provide additional data sources of recorded speeds around the network. Detailed analysis of this information will be undertaken annually to understand how speeds vary across the day in relation to traffic volumes.

As part of a refreshed Travel Safety Strategy we will increase awareness of local speeding concerns through engagement with residents, staff employed in the borough, and councillors. Analysis of speed survey data often highlights if the issue is caused by local residents, staff, or by general through traffic to an area. This allows for more focussed engagement with those users contributing to a speeding problem.

## **12. Monitoring and Reporting**

As highlighted in Action 5 of the Action Plan, North Tyneside Council is committed to providing evidence of the success of its revised approach to travel safety and will be increasing the amount of post scheme monitoring and evaluation and making this information available to the public through an annual report submitted to Cabinet.

The Transport Strategy Annual Information Report will include information including:-

- Action Plan Progress
- Collision reduction statistics (TADU)
  - Progress against NECA 2020 reduction targets
  - Speed related collisions occurring in 20mph zones
  - Child pedestrian/cyclist collisions occurring within close proximity to schools
  - Pedestrian crossing collisions in town centres
  - Collisions involving cyclists along the Strategic Cycle Route Network ("Tube Map")
  - Pedestrian trips/falls reported, to inform future Footway Improvement Plan proposals
- Annual Highway Network Speed Map
  - All-day average speeds
  - Peak-hour average speeds
- Feedback Sign Rotation Programme
  - Updated site list
  - Review of effectiveness

- 20mph Zone Review
- Major Scheme Monitoring
  - Pre and post scheme safety review
- Update on New Technology trial
  - Signals data collection upgrades
  - Driver feedback signs
  - Use of VMS signage

### 13. Indicators of Success

We will know we have been successful in improving Travel Safety if we can demonstrate that:

- i. **Collision rates** continue to **reduce** in line with our targets
- ii. **Improved observance** of speed limits in accordance with thresholds recommended in DfT guidance.
- iii. there is **greater participation** and engagement through our Travel Safety education initiatives
- iv. survey data for public transport indicates **improvements** in people's **perception of personal safety**.

Progress against these targets will be reported in the Transport Strategy Annual Information Report.

## **Appendix A – Road Safety Strategy (2015-18) Progress**

**Action 1** - We will continue to monitor and assess the success of 20mph zones in residential areas and amend their design if required;

Performance – Roads subject to 20mph zones remain the safest locations on the highway network and are supported through our driver feedback sign programme. Performance is monitored through traffic speed surveys from which data is used to identify if there is need for further supporting measures or to confirm that speeds remain appropriate.

**Action 2** - We will improve safety for children and other vulnerable road users, by identifying potential issues in the Annual Information Report and addressing these through engineering measures, education and publicity;

Performance – An annual road safety information report is prepared but ongoing annual road safety information will now be included in the Transport Strategy Annual Information Report presented to Cabinet in May of each year.

**Action 3** - We will continue to deliver road safety education and training to schools and key focus groups, working with our delivery partners;

Performance – approximately 14,129 children were engaged across our Pedestrian training, Bikeability, and Go Smarter / road safety education schemes in 2017.

**Action 4** - We will take into account the safety needs of all road users;

Performance – Engagement on proposed Road Safety schemes includes Cycling user groups, local access forum, disability user groups, and schemes are subject to Road Safety Audits.

**Action 5** - We will continue to work in partnership with other organisations such as the Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative (NSRI), the Police, the Highways Agency, neighbouring authorities, Sustrans and Living Streets to improve the borough's network and maintain consistency with other councils.

Performance – Through our regular North Tyneside Network Management meetings and regional Road Safety partnership meetings we continue to engage with key delivery partners. Meetings include discussions around schemes/initiatives being delivered throughout the region and nationally.

**Action 6** - We will ensure, through the Network Management Plan and the Highway Asset Management Plan, that the road network is managed so that motorised traffic uses the most appropriate routes and that the network is maintained to an acceptable and safe level.

Performance – Both the Network Management Plan and Highway Asset Management Plan are also due to be refreshed in 2018 and will remain interconnected with the Travel Safety Strategy.

## Appendix B – Speed Limit Criteria

Road Classification	Road Purpose	Traffic Volume (AADT)	Urban / Rural	Residential Access	Crossing Provision	Carriageway Type	Traffic Calming	Speed Limit
A	Major distributor	>20,000	Rural	None	Grade Separated	Dual	No	70
A or B	Local distributor	< 8,000	Rural	None	Uncontrolled	Single	No	60
A or B	Local distributor	>12,000	Urban	None	Grade Separated / Uncontrolled	Dual	No	50
A or B	Local distributor	>12,000	Urban	None	Controlled	Dual / Single	No	40
A or B	Local distributor	any	Urban	Driveways	Controlled / Uncontrolled	Single	No	30
Unclassified	Estate distributor	> 8,000	Urban	Driveways	Controlled / Uncontrolled	Single	Yes	30
Unclassified	Estate distributor	< 8,000	Urban	Driveways	Controlled / Uncontrolled	Single	Yes	20
Unclassified	Local Street	< 8,000	Urban	Driveways	Uncontrolled	Single	Yes*	20
Industrial Estate / Business Park	distributor	> 8,000	Urban	None	Controlled / Uncontrolled	Single	No	30

\*subject to 20mph zones with self-enforcing traffic calming measures)

This table is intended as a guide and there will be locations where variations to this will be necessary, such as on approaches to signal controlled junctions where approach speeds will be reduced to 40mph or less.