

Appendix 1: Cycling development – current policy context

National context

The Cycling and Walking Strategy; Investment Strategy and ‘Access’ fund 2016

1.1 The current Government has indicated a commitment to cycling and walking through its announcement to produce a ‘Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy’. It is intended that this will be produced in summer 2016 and will be used as a guide to target future investment.

1.2 Linked to the Cycling and Walking Strategy was the announcement of an ‘Access Fund’ in the Autumn statement of November 2015. This fund has £80m attached to it, £20m of this was released in February 2016 as a ‘Sustainable Travel Transition Year’ fund. It is intended that this funding will address the Government’s manifesto commitment to;

“...double cycling and reduce the numbers of cyclists killed or seriously injured; and to support sustainable transport schemes which support access to work, skills, education and training, for example Cycle-Rail links.”

1.3 The objectives for the ‘Sustainable Travel Transition Year’ funding are to;

- 1) *Support the local economy and facilitate economic development, for example by reducing congestion, improving the reliability and predictability of journey times or enhancing access to employment and other essential services*
- 2) *Reduce carbon emissions, for example by bringing about an increase in the volume and proportion of journeys made by low carbon sustainable modes including walking and cycling to benefit economic growth and carbon reduction.*
- 3) *Help to deliver wider social and economic benefits (e.g. access to employment, education and services)*
- 4) *Actively promote increased levels of physical activity through walking and cycling.*

1.4 In July 2016 the Government asked for bids for the remaining £60m of funding from the Access Fund. The **primary objectives** of the Access Fund are;

- *To support the local economy by supporting access to new and existing employment, education and training and*
- *To actively promote increased levels of physical activity through walking and cycling.*

1.5 Bids are open to all local transport authorities in England and have to be submitted by 9th September 2016.

Door to Door Strategy 2013

1.6 Produced by the Department of Transport this strategy recommends that accurate, accessible and reliable information is made available for sustainable transport options. It also recommends affordable tickets, regular connections and safe, comfortable transport facilities.

Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon 2011

1.7 This Department for Transport White Paper aims to encourage sustainable local travel and economic growth by making public transport, cycling and walking more attractive and effective, promoting lower carbon transport and tackling local road congestion.

The National Infrastructure Plan 2010

1.8 The National Infrastructure Plan aims to support sustainable economic growth and tackle climate change. The promotion and development of cycling is seen as a key component to address this broad aim.

Regional / Sub-Regional Context

Tees Valley's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) / LGF application 2014.

'The Vision for the Tees Valley'

1.9 The Tees Valley's vision is for a high value, low-carbon economy which thrives on diversity and inclusivity and where employment opportunities are open to all residents. The Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) has a priority to 'Provide Infrastructure to Enable Growth'. The SEP recognises that effective transport connectivity is crucial to the future development of the Tees Valley as it will stimulate, support and be a driver for economic growth. The SEP therefore sees that overcoming barriers to get businesses and people moving, trading, working, learning and exporting is essential to achieving the economic aims of the Tees Valley.

'Gearing Up For Growth' – A Cycle Tourism Strategy for the North East

1.10 The North East Cycle Tourism Strategy is a regional plan to develop cycling as a product for marketing inside and outside the region. It identifies a range of 'hard' and 'soft' measures designed to increase the attractiveness of the Region as a destination for cycling as an integral form of tourism.

1.11 The Strategy also contains guidance on issues such as route maintenance and the development of new routes noting that:

'...effective maintenance of routes will be a key priority if they are to achieve their potential. Current maintenance regimes for some existing urban routes appear to be failing to deliver the quality of ride experience that is needed'

'...the development of safe and attractive cycle routes that link places to visit and things to do is a key priority for developing recreational cycle day visits'.

Tees Valley Cycling Strategy

1.12 The Tees Valley Cycling Strategy highlights the need for both 'hard' and 'soft' measures to improve accessibility to cycling, allowing individual members of the public to make informed travel and lifestyle choices. The Strategy also highlights the importance of cycling in meeting national, regional and local objectives for the environment, social improvement, health care and the economy, as well as providing the Sub-Regional context within which this Strategy has been developed.

Local context

The Hartlepool Vision – 2015

1.13 Launched by Hartlepool Borough Council in 2015 the Hartlepool Vision represents the first step in creating a radical new blueprint to revitalise the centre of Hartlepool, spark the town's wider regeneration and lay the foundation for its future prosperity.

1.14 Its aim is to create major new business, leisure and retail facilities, increase the town's profile as a visitor destination and produce a host of new job opportunities.

1.15 The Vision process is intended to initiate a discussion between Hartlepool residents, businesses and landowners, to ensure that the right decisions for the future are made. The Vision has led to the creation of a detailed Masterplan which explores in depth the full potential of the area and proposes realistic solutions for what can be achieved.

1.16 The Vision identifies 8 key locations. These are;

1. Church Street
2. Hartlepool Waterfront
3. Port Estate
4. Queens Meadow
5. The Headland
6. Town Centre
7. Seaton Carew
8. Wynyard

The Hartlepool Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy

1.17 As a Local Authority Hartlepool Borough Council has a duty under section 508A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to produce on an annual basis a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy. This strategy is part of a wider package of duties in relation to home to school travel and transport. The intention of the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy is to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to children and young people of compulsory school age who travel to receive education or training in the Borough of Hartlepool. The key journeys to be considered are those to and from institutions where education or training is delivered.

1.18 The current strategy is in draft form and follows recent Government guidance issued in 2014. Actions are detailed under the following project areas;

- Project Area (A): Assessing travel and transport needs of children and young people
- Project Area (B): Auditing the infrastructure to support sustainable school travel
- Project Area (C): Identifying an action plan to develop infrastructure to support the travel needs of pupils
- Project Area (D): Implementing the action plan in order to increase sustainable travel options to and from schools and educational establishments

Coastal Communities Fund - Hartlepool Coastal Regeneration Project

1.19 The value of Hartlepool's coastline as an economic and recreational resource is something that the Council is keen to develop. The regeneration of Hartlepool as a tourist location has been supported through a number of funding programmes, many of which have focused on the coastal zone from Crimdon in the north to the Tees Estuary in the south. The Council's Estates and Regeneration team are currently advancing a bid for funding to the 'Big Lottery Fund' Coastal Community Fund called the Hartlepool Coastal Regeneration Project. Essentially this project will create a new focal point for visitors at Seaton Carew and also provide public art linking Church Street / Hartlepool Interchange to Seaton Carew.

1.20 A key theme for the public art seeks inspiration from Ridley Scotts' first film 'Boy on a Bicycle'. The renowned director, famous for films including *Alien*, *Blade Runner* and *Thelma and Louise* was born in the North East and attended the West Hartlepool College of Art. The 'Boy on a Bicycle' theme and resulting sculptures will provide opportunities to promote cycling and develop facilities including better cycle parking and signage in an area that includes the National Cycle Network route 14. A bid has been submitted for Stage 1 of the Coastal Community Fund process. If successful a stage 2 bid will be submitted towards the end of 2016.