



TEES VALLEY
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

TEES VALLEY MAYOR

TEES VALLEY ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP PLAN

10th October 2022

THE TEES VALLEY ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP PLAN FOR BUSES IS MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 138(G)1 OF THE TRANSPORT ACT 2000 BY THE FOLLOWING PARTIES:

1. Tees Valley Combined Authority of

Teesside Airport Business Suite, Teesside International Airport, Darlington, DL2 1NJ

2. Darlington Borough Council of

Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington DL1 5QT

3. Hartlepool Borough Council of

Civic Centre, Victoria Rd, Hartlepool TS24 8AY

4. Middlesbrough Council of

Middlesbrough House, 50 Corporation Road, Middlesbrough, TS1 2RH.

5. Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council

09 Kirkleatham St, Redcar TS10 9SH

6. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council of

Church Rd, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TW

7. Arriva North East of

26 Newport Rd, Middlesbrough TS1 5EA

8. Stagecoach North East of

Wheatsheaf, Sunderland, SR5 1AQ

9. Go North East of

3rd floor, 41-51 Grey Street, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE1 6EE

10. Hodgsons Coach Operators

20a Galgate Barnard Castle DL12 8BG

11. Scarlet Band of

Welfare Garage, Station Road, West Cornforth, Ferryhill, County Durham, DL17 9LA

12. Coatham Coaches of

Transport Yard, Margrove Park Village, Saltburn-by-the-Sea TS12 3BZ

13. Pauls Travel of

3 Coniston Rd, Hartlepool TS25 1NJ

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SECTION 1 – ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

Definitions

Affected Operator – When agreeing a bespoke variation to the Scheme, an affected operator is considered to be one where at least one of their currently registered local bus services would use the proposed facility or be impacted by the proposed measure.

Bus Gate – short stretch of road carriageway that is restricted to use by buses and (where specified) taxis and other authorised vehicles as indicated on appropriate signage on the approach and within the relevant Traffic Regulation Order.

Bus Lane – signposted lane, designated for use by registered local bus services and (where specified) taxis and other authorised vehicles, at the times also indicated by signage and within the relevant Traffic Regulation Order.

CCTV – closed circuit television system, whereby static or mobile cameras are used to record offences for enforcement or for surveillance and safety and security purposes.

EP Scheme Area – area to which this EP Scheme document applies.

Euro VI equivalent standards – Euro VI diesel bus or a bus with Clean Vehicle Retrofit Accreditation Scheme (CVRAS) approved technology retrofitted to a diesel bus to reduce nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter (PM) emissions and achieve Euro VI equivalent standards.

Facilities – physical assets that are provided at specific locations along particular routes (or parts of routes) within the EP scheme area or new and improved bus priority measures. This is deemed for such purposes by section 138D(1) of the Transport Act 2000.

Measures – improvements with the aim of:

- increasing the use of local bus services serving the routes to which the measures relate or ending or reducing a decline in their use; or
- improving the quality of local bus services.

Local Authorities – prescribed under section 23 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Local Highway Authorities – Local Authority with responsibility for the maintenance of highway infrastructure in its local authority area. In the case of this EP Scheme, this means Darlington Borough Council, Hartlepool Borough Council, Middlesbrough

Council, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

Local Transport Authority (LTA) – the Tees Valley Combined Authority.

Multi-Operator Ticketing – common fares and/or ticketing products applied and accepted by multiple operators.

Network Stability Protocol – specified dates throughout the year, agreed between TVCA and bus operators, on which local bus service changes take place.

Real Time Information – using technology to track the location of buses in real time. Information is transmitted to bus stops or devices to indicate to passengers the predicted arrival time at a particular point, and stored for future analytical purposes.

Registered Local Bus Service – as set out in Section 2 of the Transport Act 1985.

Road and Street Works Permit – permit issued by Local Highway Authorities to any organisation that wishes to undertake street works, with the aim of managing works on the public highway. Local authorities have powers to operate permit schemes under Part 3 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and The Traffic Management Permit Scheme (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

TRO – Traffic Regulation Order, made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 or any other enactment regulating the use of roads or other places.

TVCA Enhanced Partnership Plan – document made pursuant to section 138A of the Transport Act 2000 and which is required to be in place for an EP Scheme to be made.

Zero Emission Vehicle – vehicle that emits no pollutants at its tailpipe.

Introduction

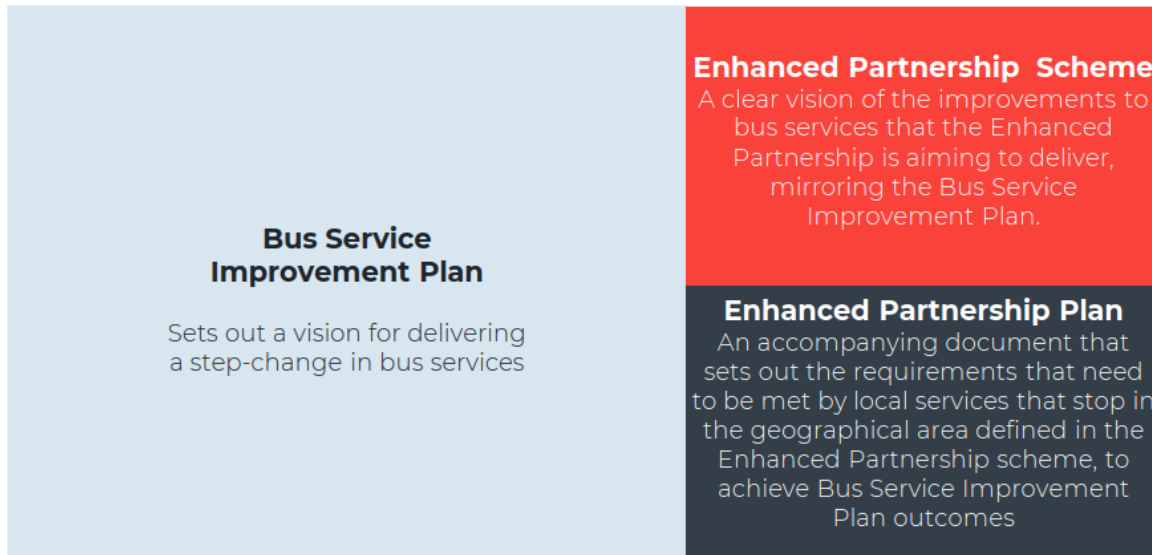
Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) was formed in 2016 as a partnership of five local authorities; Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees. Prior to this, there was no strategic body with statutory responsibility for transport at a regional level. This meant the region was at a comparative disadvantage to many other combined authority areas who had invested in their regional transport systems for many years.

The Tees Valley is now on the cusp of transformative economic growth that will have a national impact and we need to deliver a world-class transport system at pace to make this ambition a reality. A fundamental component of this is the shared commitment with operators to transform the Tees Valley bus services and grow passenger numbers.

In response to the Government requirement, TVCA has worked closely with stakeholders including the Tees Valley local authorities, local bus operators, neighbouring authorities, statutory consultees, businesses and the public (both bus users and non-users) and published a notice of intent to prepare an Enhanced

Partnership Plan and accompanying Enhanced Partnership Scheme, in accordance with section 138F of the Transport Act 2000.

Both the EP Plan and Scheme are closely aligned with the Tees Valley Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and will make a substantial contribution to the implementation of the proposed changes.

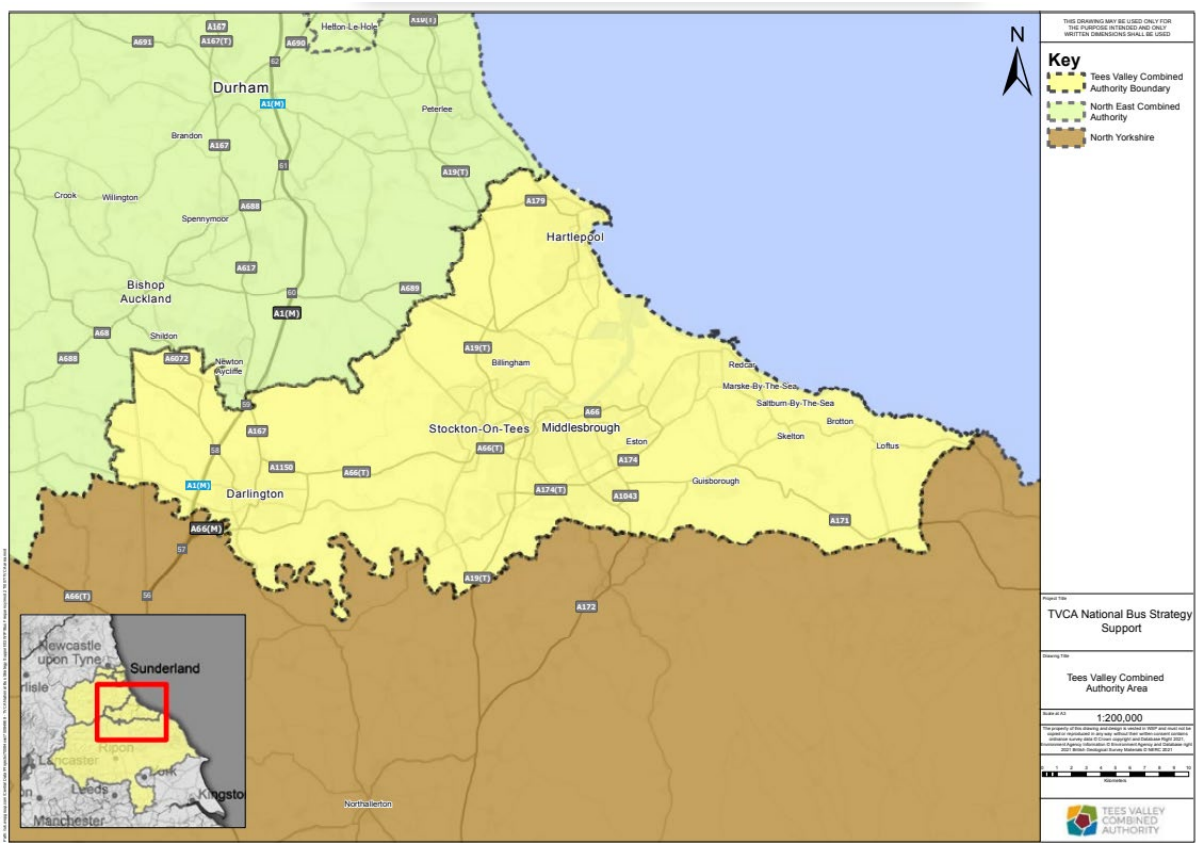


Extent of the Enhanced Partnership

Both the Plan and Scheme will bring benefits to passengers using local bus services across the Tees Valley by improving the quality and efficiency of the public transport network. This will support the efficient use of the road network and the delivery of sustainable growth, limiting the impacts of additional traffic congestion and air pollution.

The coverage includes the entirety of the Tees Valley Combined Authority area, which is around 3,300 square miles and has a population of approximately 670,000. Neighbouring Authorities who have been engaged during the production of the BSIP, Plan and Scheme include North Yorkshire County Council (immediately to the south) and the North East Combined Authority (immediately to the north). They will continue to be engaged during implementation of the EP Scheme to ensure consistency for cross boundary issues.

The map below identifies the geographical area covered by the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme and the neighbouring authorities.



All operators running bus services in the Tees Valley have been invited to participate in the preparation of the Enhanced Partnership Plan and accompanying Scheme which will come into effect from the 10th October 2022.

The Plan and the Scheme will have no specific end date, but they are initially intended to cover the five-year period from 2022/23 to 2026/27. The intention is to review progress on a quarterly basis and prepare publicly accessible update reports on an annual basis.

Transforming Bus Services

The detailed narrative set out within the Tees Valley Enhanced Partnership Plan for Buses (“The Plan”) outlines, in as much detail as practicable, the collective actions to transform buses across the Tees Valley over the five-year period from 2022/23 to 2026/27.

The Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan (STP) 2020 – 2030 was developed following extensive public consultation and stakeholder engagement. The STP includes a package of required outcomes, two of which are to:

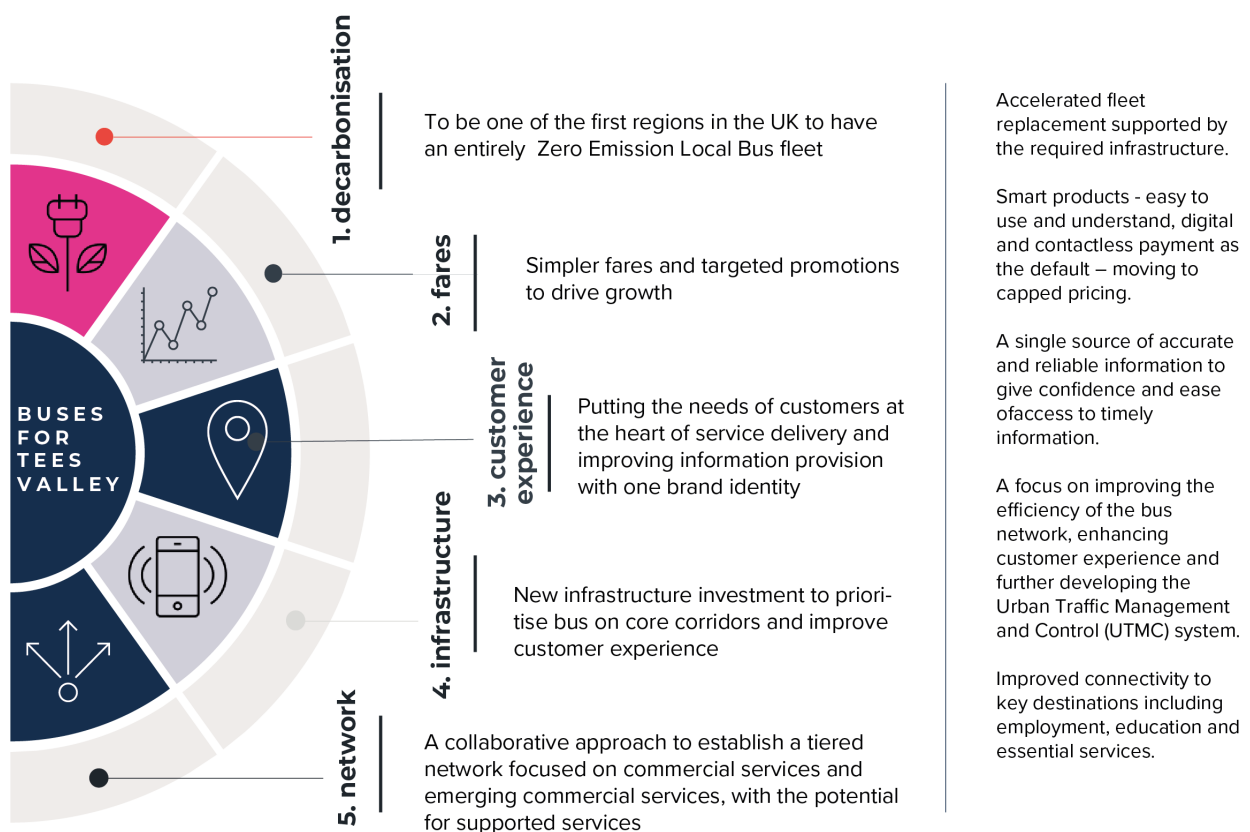
- deliver and maintain a frequent, high quality, reliable and integrated public transport network; and
- develop and improve transport interchanges, ticketing options and information to provide a seamless integrated experience for the travelling public.

This Plan is pivotal to the delivery of these strategic outcomes.

Five Key Priorities

The Plan has been developed following detailed work identifying the current state of bus provision and areas for improvement. It sets out how we will stabilise and then grow bus patronage following the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. The actions are structured around five key priorities:

Tees Valley Partnership – 5 Point Plan



Supporting Policies

The [Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan](#) sets out our aspiration to drive the transition to a high-value, low-carbon, diversified and inclusive economy. The [Tees Valley Local Industrial Strategy](#) identifies an overarching ambition that Tees Valley will be a global leader in clean energy, low carbon and hydrogen. The area will achieve a net zero carbon industrial cluster by 2040, providing good jobs with long term prospects that local people can access.

Teesworks, which incorporates the UK's largest Freeport, is focused on offshore wind, clean energy, advanced manufacturing and the chemicals and process sectors. This, alongside other Freeport sites in each of the five boroughs, is the cornerstone of the economic transformation of the Tees Valley and will generate an additional 41,780 net direct jobs and £3.2bn of GVA to the region.

The [Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan](#) (STP) 2020 – 2030 sets out how we will deliver a world-class transport system and provides the framework for transport investment.

Competition Test

The Tees Valley Combined Authority has undertaken an assessment of the impacts of the EP Plan and Scheme (made on 10th October 2022) on competition and believes it will not or is unlikely to have a significantly adverse effect on competition, for the purposes of Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000.

There are currently no proposed changes to services or impacts on operators that could be considered disproportionate to the expected benefits. At this stage, most interventions are only set out in the Scheme at a headline level with the detail to be agreed through bespoke variations. The competition test will be repeated as each stage of detail is added, keeping it under continual review.

SECTION 2 – BUS NETWORK OVERVIEW

The Tees Valley Enhanced Partnership Plan will seek to deliver:

- an improved bus service offer for current and new bus users; and
- a high-quality alternative to car travel.

Operators and the market

The two main bus operators in the Tees Valley are Arriva and Stagecoach, with a smaller number of services operated by Go North East and independent operators.

Market share based on the number of operational local bus service vehicles is dominated by Arriva (60.3%) and Stagecoach (31%), with Go North East holding just over 3%.

Some services are also operated by smaller independent operators: Coatham Coaches in Redcar & Cleveland; Hodgsons in Darlington; Paul's Travel in Hartlepool; and Scarlet Band in Darlington. These services together represent around 5% of the operational market.

Operator	Stagecoach	Arriva	Go North East	Coatham Coaches	Hodgsons	Paul's Travel	Scarlet Band
Fleet Size [^]	90	175	10	1	11	1	2
Market Share %*	31%	60.3%	3.4%	0.3%	3.8%	0.3%	0.7%

[^] Fleet Size – Based on weekday Peak Vehicle Requirement (PVR) on local bus services

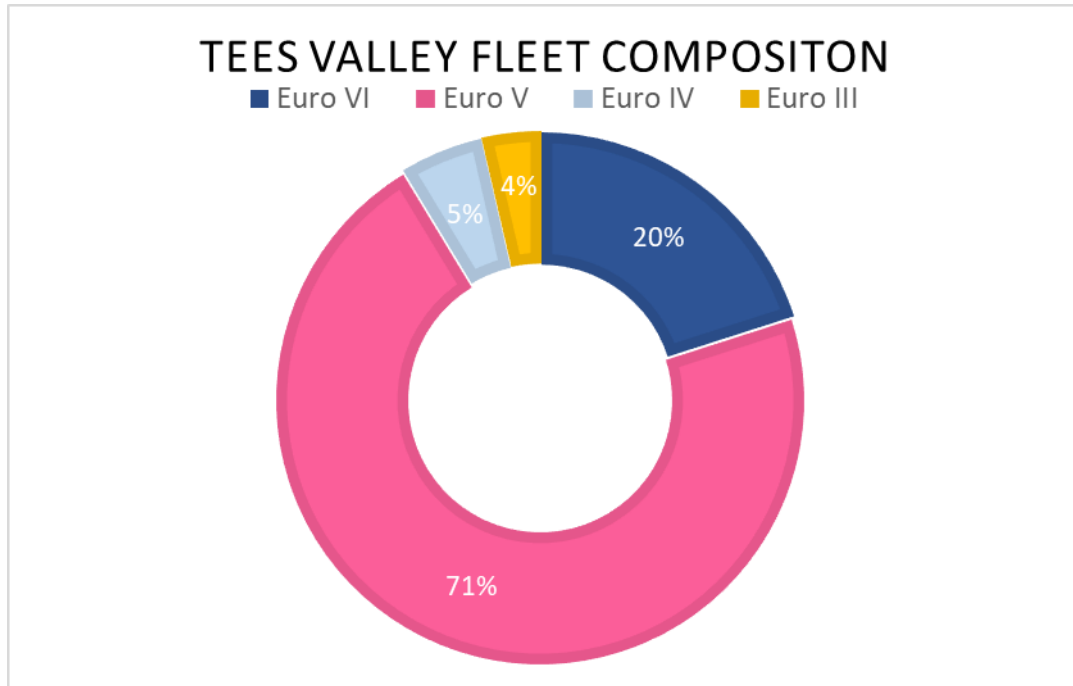
*Market Share – Based on number of operational local bus service vehicles (as at August 2022)

There is limited operator competition in Darlington and Redcar & Cleveland where services are almost operated exclusively by Arriva. In Hartlepool, services are operated almost exclusively by Stagecoach. In Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees, both Arriva and Stagecoach operate.

Fleet

The total vehicle fleet for all operators across the Plan area has an operational Peak Vehicle Requirement (PVR) of approximately 290 vehicles. The spare level is estimated at 13%, which means the total fleet is circa 334.

The profile of the fleet is dominated by Euro V vehicles (two-thirds) with smaller proportions of newer and older vehicles (see figure below).



TVCA area bus fleet composition

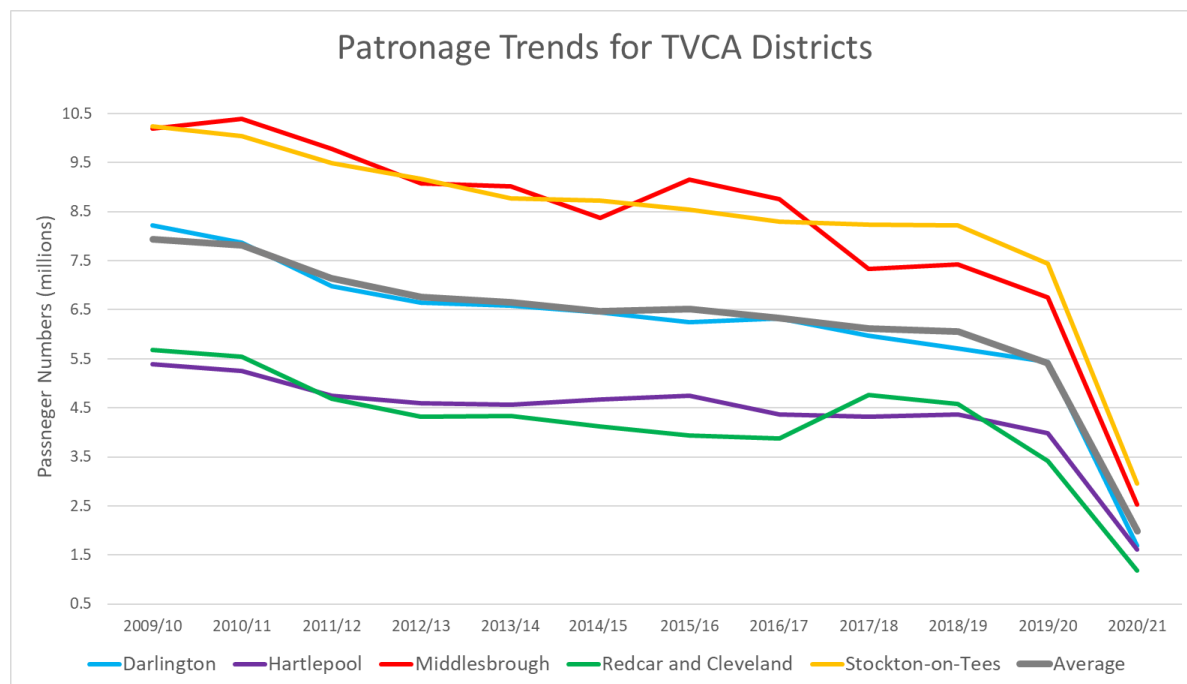
Factors affecting the local bus market

There are a number of factors which are likely to affect, or have the potential to affect, the local bus market over the life of this Plan. These include:

- a long-term trend of declining bus patronage coupled with the impact of Coronavirus and difficulties with driver recruitment affecting particular depots, impacting on revenue and driver/service availability;
- specific locations and corridors on the Key Route Network (KRN) that are already at capacity or will be over capacity by 2025, which is impacting on bus service punctuality and the reliability of bus services;
- a requirement to continue to decarbonise the bus fleet;
- a requirement for bus services to connect new housing and job opportunities;
- a requirement to connect rural areas of the Tees Valley and the challenge of longer journey times when compared to the car;
- a complex fares and ticketing system;
- the cost and convenience of bus when compared to other modes; and
- the cost of transport being a barrier for people in deprived communities and/or low paid jobs, particularly when seeking work or starting new employment.

Patronage

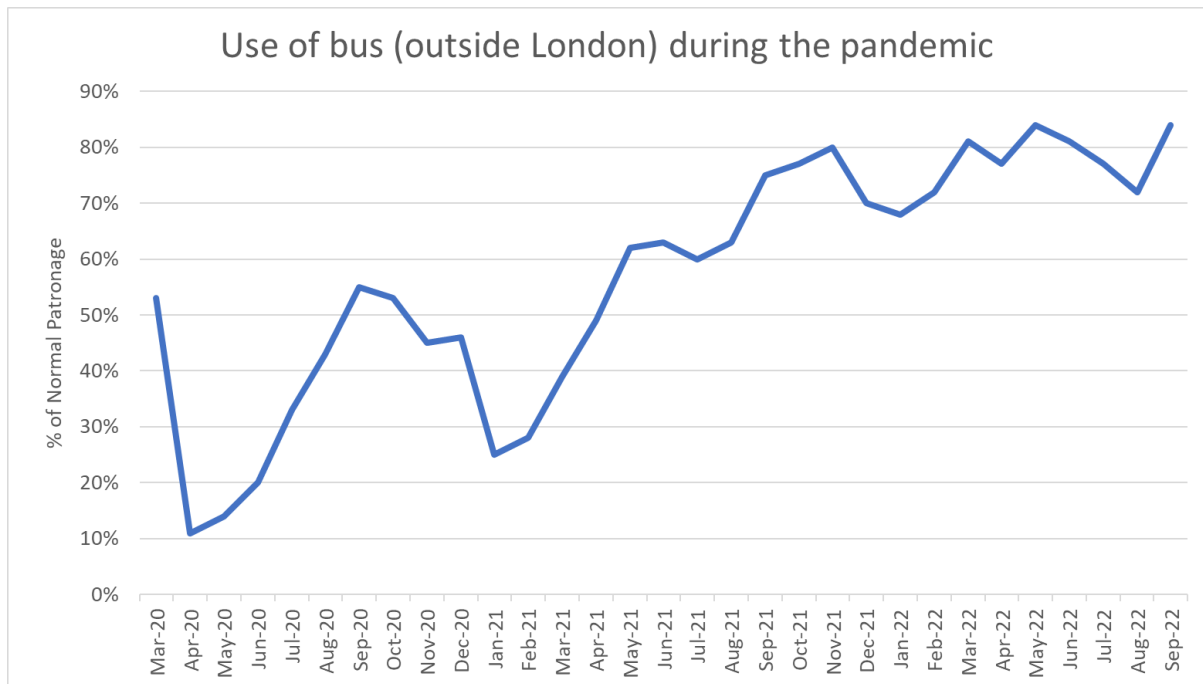
There has been a decline in patronage on bus services in the Tees Valley over the past ten years, which has been relatively consistent across all local authority areas. Overall, patronage in 2019/20 (pre-Coronavirus pandemic) was around 70% of that observed in 2009/10, as shown in the graph below.



Tees Valley Patronage Trends – 2009/10 – 2020/21 (Source: DfT BUS 0109a - Passenger journeys on local bus services by local authority, England)

In addition, analysis of passenger journeys per head of population has also been undertaken, which shows a similar trend in that totals have fallen since 2009/10 to 66% of the baseline figure by 2019/20. This means that trip making by bus, as well as overall passenger journeys, have both consistently declined over the last decade.

The onset of the Coronavirus pandemic had an unprecedented impact on national bus patronage and all other forms of transport as several restrictions on movement and social interaction were implemented by Government to protect public health. The chart below illustrates the impact over time from March 2020 as patronage immediately dropped to around 11% of normally observed levels.



DfT Statistics

In the Tees Valley, patronage levels as of July 2022 were on average around 77% of the figure pre-pandemic. This demonstrates that the residual impact has continued into 2022/23, which creates challenges around the longer-term commercial viability of the Tees Valley network.

The bus network offer

Detailed analysis of the bus network has been undertaken to understand:

- the relative provision of bus services and levels of service (frequencies and spread of operation by day);
- accessibility to a range of destinations including town centres, education, employment and essential services; and
- the provision and adequacy of passenger infrastructure.

There are nine core bus corridors across the Tees Valley where there is significant potential to grow passenger numbers. Aligned to the Government’s ambition for bus priority schemes, there is a programme to deliver improvements to prioritise bus on these corridors with a focus on two aspects:

- Measures to make it easier for buses to travel on these corridors, which could be physical, for example junction improvements and the introduction of bus lanes, or digital, for example giving buses priority at traffic signals; and
- Measures to improve passenger experience, for example improved waiting facilities and combined real-time information underpinned by a passenger charter setting out expected standards of delivery.

This investment package is a fundamental component of our five priorities and further detail is included in the Scheme.

SECTION 3 – PASSENGER INFORMATION

Passenger information across the Tees Valley is currently available through several channels. The operators provide service and ticketing information via their own websites and apps, and the Connect Tees Valley website and social media channels provide comprehensive travel information across a range of modes.

Printed timetables, and occasionally separate network maps, were generally produced by the bus operators for their own services under their own branding, but this ceased with the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, and it is doubtful if they will be reinstated. The availability of timetable and mapping information from the bus operators is now wholly online and can appear to be disjointed from a passenger perspective because of the number of sources, styles and variations in presentation.

The only multi-operator information is that produced under the Connect Tees Valley brand. Printed bus stop timetables, which include all operators' services, are produced to a standard format and installed by the local authorities. Similarly, the Connect Tees Valley website hosts a comprehensive Tees Valley bus map featuring all services, along with timetables for all services and town centre bus stop location and service allocation plans. Printed versions for individual areas are currently being developed.

Travel Planning Information

The Let's Go Tees Valley service delivers a programme of behaviour change activity. This includes personalised travel planning (PTP) targeted at employees within large organisations, students and job seekers. There is also a programme of promotional, incentivisation and marketing activity to encourage behaviour change. Traveline is used by the Tees Valley as the journey planner.

Brand identity

TVCA is developing the concept of a new Tees Valley transport brand that can be used for multiple purposes from general travel information to the promotion of new infrastructure and campaigns. The objectives for this brand are:

- to provide timely travel information for users of public transport;
- to promote different ways to travel around the region and try to influence consumer behaviour to make sustainable modes first choice; and
- to communicate the transport improvements and investments we are working on around the region.

The brand will ensure a single source of accurate and consistent information provision across the Tees Valley. It will be customer focused, ensuring that the provision of information meets customer requirements and encourages different travel behaviours. There will be digital functionality and a physical presence on the ground, for example bus stops, cycling routes, etc. The brand will be developed to enable integration with the Government's new national bus brand.

Stakeholder views and feedback

The Plan is underpinned by several engagement exercises, which provide insight into the attitudes, views and perceptions of bus users, non-users and stakeholder organisations. There have been four main areas of research:

- public consultation undertaken during the preparation of the Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan and Bus Implementation Plan;
- a survey of irregular and non-users of buses commissioned by Let's Go Tees Valley;
- the various tranches of the Transport Focus Bus Passenger Surveys; and
- a more recent public and stakeholder engagement exercise during the production of the BSIP in September 2021, to get an up-to-date view from both bus users and non-users.

The **Strategic Transport Plan consultation** asked respondents to indicate the level of priority for each of the Strategic Transport Plan outcomes. The results revealed that to *'Deliver and maintain a frequent, high-quality, reliable and integrated bus network'* was the highest priority for the Strategic Transport Plan with 84% of respondents selecting this as either a very high or high priority. In addition, and very relevant for bus was to *'Improve accessibility and the equality of opportunity for more remote and deprived communities'* with 81% of respondents selecting this as either a very high or high priority.

This was supported by a further question that asked respondents which mode of transport they would use if improvements were made to infrastructure and services. The results indicated that usage on buses could increase by 21% with the appropriate investment in infrastructure and services.

Key findings from the **survey of irregular and non-users of buses** was:

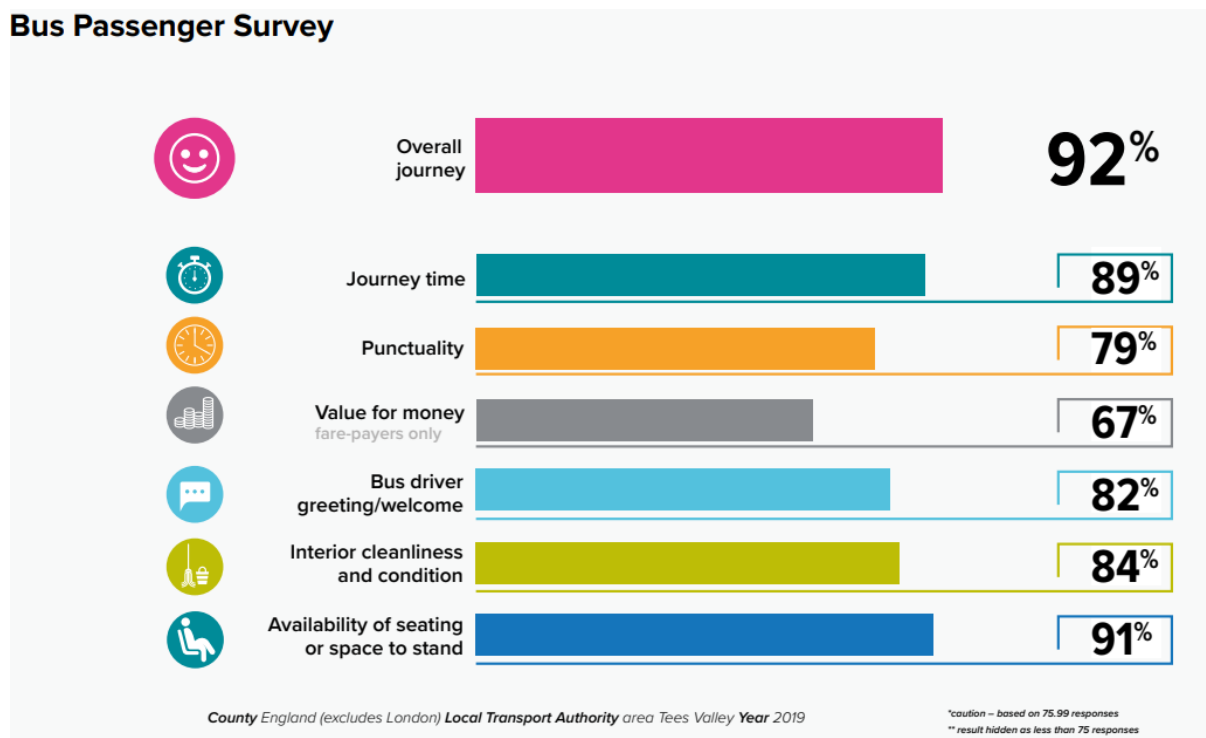
- Car was the most frequently used method of transport, with 74% travelling by car as a driver at least once a week and 52% travelling by car as a passenger at least once a week.
- Having an alternative means of transport was the top reason for not using buses, or not using buses more, with 63% of respondents giving this as a reason.
- 39% do not use a bus because they would have to use more than one to get where they need to go, 33% because buses are too expensive, 32% because they cannot get to the destination they need to by bus and 31% because buses are not frequent enough.
- The top three things that would encourage respondents to use buses, or use buses more, were cheaper fares (48%), more frequent services (43%) and more reliable services (38%).
- The top factors that respondents thought are important in making a good bus service were a bus that turns up on time (67%), fares that are affordable (47%), a frequent service (43%) and buses to destinations they want to travel to (42%).

- 59% of respondents would be willing to make a journey by bus that they currently make by other means if there was a good bus service.

Transport Focus consult almost 50,000 passengers a year to produce the Bus Passenger Survey. This measures passengers' satisfaction with their local bus service for a representative sample of journeys. The latest set of results, disaggregated to a Tees Valley level, were published in March 2020.

Passengers rated their satisfaction of a wide range of aspects including the bus stop, waiting for the bus, on the bus, the outside of the bus, the bus driver as well as their overall satisfaction with that bus journey and value for money.

Bus Passenger Survey



The Transport Focus research shows that overall satisfaction scores for the bus journey and other aspects in Tees Valley (2019) are higher than the national scores across all areas. However, there are aspects that scored lower, with punctuality and value for money being the two lowest scores.

More recent research from The Transport Focus shows that around 86% of bus passengers were satisfied with their journey (UK wide).

The most recent **BSIP preparation research**, which provided a relatively even spread of responses across gender and age range, has noted a significant change in attitude. The majority of individual respondents¹ (62%) were somewhat or very dissatisfied with the bus services in Tees Valley, with just 15% of respondents claiming to be satisfied or very satisfied. This is a significant shift from the last Transport Focus survey carried out before the Coronavirus pandemic.

¹ Data rounded to nearest whole number for presentation

Of those who were not currently bus users, the most common reasons preventing individual respondents from using the bus more/at all were:

- There are no services available in my area when I need to travel (32%)
- I have a car available and prefer to use that (31%)
- Buses do not go where I want to go (29%)
- Cost/Value for Money (26%)

Awareness of the current channels available for information was low, with 61.33% of individual respondents saying they were not aware of the Connect Tees Valley website and 75.68% not aware of the Let's Go Tees Valley website.

When looking at possible improvements, a large number of individual respondents said that more reliable (47%) and more direct (45%) services, as well as extra services in the morning or later in the evening (43%) would encourage them to use the bus more.

More frequent evening and weekend services were highlighted as a priority by many individual respondents (43%), closely followed by more reliable buses (43%), real time information tracking (39%) and more punctual buses (37%).

Overarching Conclusions – there are consistent themes across all four surveys, which respondents say would facilitate greater use of buses in the Tees Valley. These are:



– **Reliability and punctuality:** buses turning up as expected and on time



– **Frequency:** provision of services on a more regular basis



– **Accessibility:** services where people need to travel



– **Availability:** more extensive evening and weekend services



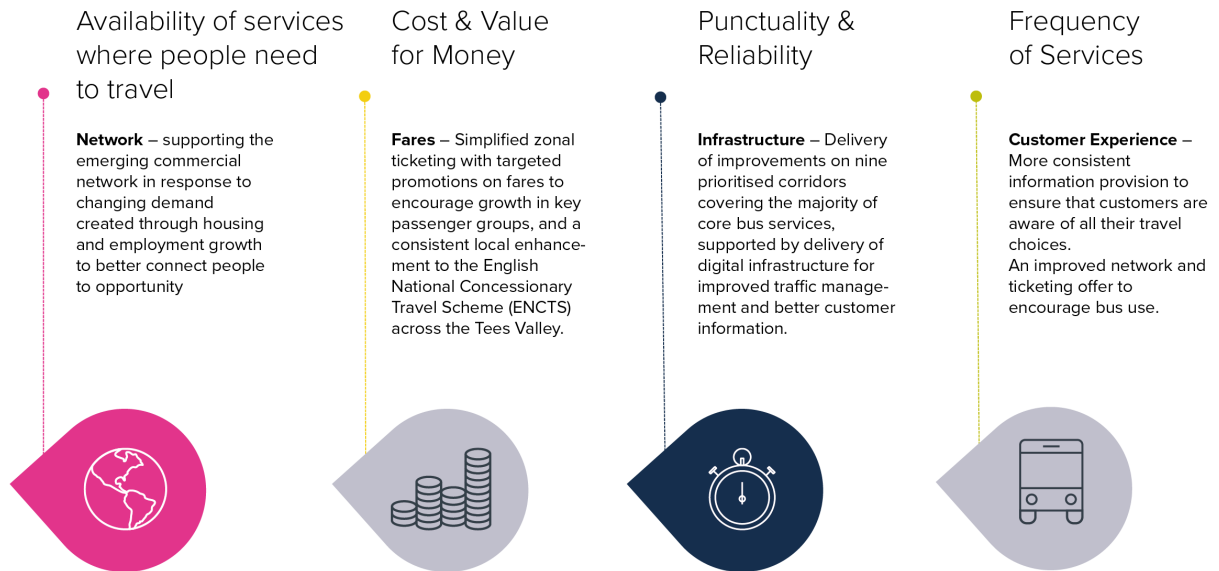
– **Fares** and or tickets which provide better value for money

This intelligence has informed the development of the five priorities.

The most recent survey indicates that overall satisfaction with bus services has dropped significantly. However, it must be recognised that this is a single survey and is not a sustained trend. It is felt that the feedback could be driven by the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. There will therefore be a need for close monitoring of passenger feedback as the priorities in this Plan are implemented.

Enhanced Partnership Plan

Evidence from a range of sources, including local and national user and non-user surveys, and stakeholder engagement, has identified a number of key barriers, which, if overcome, will lead to opportunities to restore and then grow the number of journeys made by bus in the Tees Valley. This is illustrated below and demonstrates how the five priorities (structure shown above) will address these barriers:



SECTION 4 – FUNDING

The partnership is acutely aware of the need to ensure that the bus network is both sustainable and stable. This is vitally important so that people and businesses have confidence that their travel needs will be met into the future.

Current and future funding availability is critical to ensure that:

- everyone, no matter where they live in the Tees Valley, is connected to opportunity; and
- existing business can grow and the Tees Valley is able to continue attracting new businesses and inward investment.

The Enhanced Partnership will draw on multiple funding sources to deliver the desired outcomes of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme, including:

- City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement from the Government;
- developer contributions;
- reinvestment of operator resources saved through investment; and
- other external funding opportunities (including devolved BSOG).

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