Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

Joint Local Plan Issues Consultation

Transport Technical Paper

Contents

1.0 What we are required to do:

National Planning Policy

1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the important role that transport policies have in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. There is an emphasis of rebalancing the transport system to make the fullest possible use of sustainable transport modes and encouraging reductions in congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. Core principles are to actively manage patterns of growth focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable. This includes achieving a balance of land uses and locating development to minimise the need to travel, for example to employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities. Larger residential developments in particular should provide opportunities to undertake day-to-day activities including work on site and ensure that key facilities such as primary schools and local shops are located within walking distance most properties.

1.2 Local plans should support patterns of development that maximise sustainable modes of transport. Measures identified in the NPPF to deliver this include; accommodating the efficient delivery of goods and supplies; giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movements; providing access to high quality public transport facilities, and; considering the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.

1.3 Strategies are to be developed in partnership with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to guide the provision of viable infrastructure to support sustainable development. This can include large scale facilities such as rail freight interchanges, roadside facilities for motorists and investment to support the growth of major generators of travel demand.

1.4 The NPPF also recognises that transport needs in rural areas will be different to urban areas and the need to travel will be greater, but this needs to be considered in light of wider policies relating to sustainable development.

1.5 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides more detailed guidance about the range and type of transport evidence required to inform Local Plans.

2.0   Our Approach in the Past:

Local Planning Policy

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006 to 2026 (adopted 2009)

2.1   The Core Spatial Strategy was written to address the following Strategic Aim related to Transport:

Strategic Aim 3 (SA3) - To reduce the need to travel, improve accessibility and increase the opportunities for development of sustainable and innovative modes of travel to support the regeneration of the plan area by securing improvements to public transport infrastructure; and the progressive provision of park and ride and facilities to promote walking and cycling.

Policy SP1 states that new development will be prioritised where it can support sustainable patterns of development and provides access to services and service centres by foot, public transport and cycling.

Policy SP3 is the primary strategic policy relating to transport and accessibility. This aims to achieve a 'compact sub-region of sustainable linked communities' which are well connected to major employment, service centres and the network of green space. Accessibility of new residential, employment, retail, health, education, open space, leisure and sport uses are to be maximised, as are strategic transport interchanges (such as railway stations) by walking, cycling and public transport. In line with the NPPF, the environmental impacts of travel such as congestion, air quality and noise pollution are to be addressed. Rail travel in the area is to be safeguarded and enhanced and the use of waterways as lines of communication is encouraged. The key objectives of Local Transport Plans are supported through securing contributions from development.

2.2   Policy SP3 also includes more specific principles such as allocating land for essential infrastructure, encouraging the production of Green Travel Plans, ensuring that the design of development increases the safety of travel, and the progressive development of Park and Ride facilities.

2.3   **Policies ASP1, ASP2 and ASP3** set spatial policy for the City Centre, Inner Urban Core and Outer Urban Area of Stoke-on-Trent and includes high density mixed use pattern of development focused on the centre and Inner Urban Core. To support this development and reduce growth of traffic the policies set out development of high quality sustainable solutions is included to reduce reliance on the use of the private car and change travel behaviour including:

- bus priority corridors linking key town centres and regeneration areas with quality radial bus routes
- introduction of remote park and ride facilities

- Cycleway improvements including better connections to the National Cycle Network through the area,
- better public space and connections for pedestrians
- canal enhancements
- provide missing links of the Potteries Way
- enhanced connection between the City Centre University Quarter, railway station and Stoke Town Centre
- better linkages to the east by means of the Hanley-Bentilee Link
- Etruria Valley to City Centre and Burslem Link
- Town Centre highway improvements

2.4 **Policy ASP4** relates to Newcastle town centre and seeks to improve connections to and within the area, particularly in regard to the severance created by the inner ring road.

2.5 **Policy ASP5** seeks to improve accessibility, road safety and promote sustainable modes of transport in Newcastle and Kidsgrove urban areas, in accordance with the Local Transport Plan.

2.6 **Policy ASP6** relates to the rural area of Newcastle-under-Lyme and seeks to facilitate the improved provision of off-road routes for horses and cyclists and integration with an enhanced public rights of way network, as part of the implementation of the Staffordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan. In accordance with the Local Transport Plan, a positive approach is taken towards improving public transport accessibility through measures such as subsidised bus services, community transport schemes and assisting members of the community in special need to access employment opportunities.

2.7 **Policies CSP1 and CSP5** contain measures to improve accessibility in relation to design quality and open space, sport and recreation.

2.8 A number of policies from the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011 have been saved from deletion until they are replaced by more up to date local planning policies. There are 6 transport polices that have been saved. These relate to detailed matters such as parking and servicing requirements within new developments, and specific transport facilities such as rail freight, taxi and private hire businesses and future proposals for the M6 corridor.

3.0   Other Strategies and Programmes:

Local and sub-regional plans, policies and programmes

3.1 Local Transport Plans (LTPs) are prepared by local authorities under the Transport Act 2000 and the Local Transport Act 2008.

Staffordshire Local Transport Plan 2011

3.2   Staffordshire's LTP sets out policy and strategy for walking, cycling, vehicular and public transport in the county and the management and maintenance of local roads and footways for the period up to 2026.

3.3   The Staffordshire LTP3 prioritises objectives of **Supporting Growth and Regeneration**, **Maintaining the Highway Network**, and **Making Transport Easier to Use and Places Easier to Get to**, whilst also meeting the objectives of Improving Safety and Security, Reducing Road Transport Emissions and Effects on the Highway Network, Improving Health and Quality of Life, and Respecting the Environment.

3.4   In achieving these objectives, the LTP sets out many policies that Staffordshire County Council will implement in decision-making. Examples of policies which will be relevant at a strategic level to the Joint Local Plan include those relating to accessibility (improving bus services, supporting mobility for those are impaired or have no access to a private motor vehicle), efficient transport networks (operation of the road network, increasing capacity on existing roads, improved efficiency of freight transport, reducing the negative impact of development on the highway network, integrating transport services), social issues (community cohesion, supporting areas of deprivation, helping residents to access services and supporting rural communities), environmental issues (resilience of the transport network to changing climatic conditions; reducing emissions from road transport; minimising the risk of flooding, soil erosion and pollutants entering watercourses; minimising the risk of soil contamination; enhancing biodiversity and landscape) and wider sustainability issues (stimulating regeneration, supporting the adoption of sustainable land-use policies, improving the image of townscapes)

Draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Integrated Transport Strategy 2015 - 2026

3.5   This delivers the Staffordshire LTP by prioritising investment and expenditure on transport improvements in the borough and informing local planning policies. It identifies that Newcastle borough has good access to the Strategic Highway Network (M6 and A500) but that at peak times the A34/A52/A527 ring road displays symptoms of congestion. The ring road also presents a significant barrier for pedestrians and cyclists to negotiate. In general, western access routes to Newcastle town centre are more reliable than eastern access routes towards Stoke and the A500. Kidsgrove railway station provides services on the West Coast Mainline, however access for the mobility impaired or those with heavy luggage and/or children has been a major issue. There is considered to be a good core bus network, however the 4.7%[1] of the working age population that travel to work by bus is considered to be low for a largely urban area.

---

[1] Census 2011

3.6   Amongst the transport improvements identified in the strategy are; the widening of the A500 between Porthill and Wolstanton in connection with the proposed Etruria Valley Link Road; improved viability, sustainability and usage of bus services with the borough and with surrounding areas; Investigating solutions to gaps in the cycle network at Chatterley Valley/Kidsgrove, A34 Cedar Road/Lower Milehouse Lane, Dark Wood and Keele/Newcastle; improvements in Newcastle town centre relating to public realm, bus facilities, pedestrian and cycle links across the ring road and the capacity and efficiency of the ring road, and; accessibility improvements at Kidsgrove railway station, including a replacement footbridge.

3.7   The Integrated Transport Strategy will be subject to review throughout the development of the Joint Local Plan as policies and development proposals are finalised. It also recognised that development proposed in the Cheshire East Local Plan may result in a need to review the Integrated Transport Strategy if there is an impact on the borough, for example through increased patronage at Kidsgrove railway station.

3.8   The Integrated Transport Strategy was supported by the Newcastle-under-Lyme (urban) Transport and Development Strategy (NTADS). This was a key part of the implementation of the Integrated Transport Strategy, as it guided the contributions from development via decisions made on planning applications. The existing NTADS document was adopted in 2008 and covered the period up to 2014. This version of the strategy is no longer being implemented, however a full review of NTADS has now been completed and will be published shortly[2].

Stoke-on-Trent Local Transport Plan 3

3.9   The Stoke-on-Trent LTP3 strategy was approved by the City Council as part of the Policy Framework in 2011. It provides a 15 year vision to 2026 of how the City's transport network will look, function and how it will support regeneration. Based on the key issues from the evidence base, our LTP3 Strategy has three interlinking key goals:

- **Economy;** supporting the local economy through increasing productivity for existing businesses and encouraging new investment by making the area more attractive – better connectivity and easier to move around.
- **Environment;** improving the local environment through reducing the impact of traffic (air and noise) and moving towards more sustainable transport technology and modes, coupled with improving the appearance of local areas
- **Health;** caring for local health through improving access to transport, transport safety and encouraging active travel such as walking and cycling.

---

[2] Staffordshire County Council (Draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Integrated Transport Strategy 2015 – 2026)

3.10 City Council Cabinet have approved the 2015-16 implementation programme and noted the indicative programmes for 2016/17 and 2017/18[3]. This programme includes:

- **Supporting the economy:** delivering transport measures to complement regeneration initiatives in the City, including;
- **Improving public transport:** help to support the delivery of the Core Bus Network. Schemes will include bus priority measures along key corridors, bus stop improvements, and improved pedestrian access to bus corridors. The aim is to improve bus accessibility and their punctuality so that the bus offers a viable alternative to car journeys and this in turn helps to reduce congestion on the network.
- **Promoting safe and sustainable transport:** road safety measures, cycling and walking initiatives, and supporting school and workplace travel plans. Improvements in Road Safety will be achieved through the continued and targeted programme of local safety schemes and the safer routes to school initiative.
- **Highway network efficiency measures:** to tackle congestion hotspots but will also be targeted to supporting the Network Management Duty. Such measures will help to improve bus journey times and improve accessibility. Traffic management schemes, highway improvements and improvements to the existing Urban Traffic Management and Control along key corridors will help to support the regeneration agenda, improve journey reliability and improve travel safety.
- **Protection of the Highways and Transport Asset:** proactive maintenance of roads and highway structures; as every person depends on having a safe, reliable and fit for purpose network to move goods and people around.

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Deal

3.11 Growth Deals provide support to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) for projects that benefit the local area and economy. £97.7 million was awarded to the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP to finance future priority projects. In the Joint Local Plan area, the projects that this finance will support include; the Etruria Valley Highway and Connectivity Improvement, highway infrastructure to improve access to business and employment sites in the City Centre, and a Local Sustainable Transport Package for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire to improve connectivity and reduce congestion.

3.12 In the growth deal the Department for Transport and Network Rail commit to more proactive engagement of the Local Enterprise Partnership in the long-term rail planning process (e.g. Route Studies) and in rail franchise

---

[3] Stoke-on-Trent LTP Capital Programme was item 54 at the City Council Cabinet on Tuesday, 17 March 2015: http://www.moderngov.stoke.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=7246#AI52893

specification through targeted local engagement of the Local Enterprise Partnership as part of an enhanced consultation process. The Department for Transport also commits to encourage bidders for franchises to identify and take into account the priorities of Local Enterprise Partnerships and other key local stakeholders as part of the franchising process, and will also encourage Train Operating Companies to continue with, and enhance where possible, their engagement with Local Enterprise Partnerships as key local stakeholders.

3.13 Also the deal commits Highways England to developing more proactive and collaborative approaches to promoting growth. Through its Route Strategies, Highways England will engage the Local Enterprise Partnership in better understanding the challenges and opportunities associated with the network and to develop evidence based long-term plans to bring about much needed local economic growth and development.

Road Investment Strategy

3.14 The Government's Road Investment Strategy (RIS)[4], to be delivered by the Highways England Delivery Plan 2015-2020[5], includes investment to the A500, A50 and M6. With expected start dates before 2020, the investment will deliver:

- widening the A500 between Wolstanton and Porthill near the Etruria Valley development north of Stoke-on-Trent; this complements measures on the local road network funded under the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Deal,
- upgrading the M6 to Smart Motorway between junction 16 (Stoke) and junction 19 (Knutsford) in Cheshire, and between junction 13 (Stafford) and junction 15 (Stoke south),
- the replacement of two roundabouts on the A50 at Uttoxeter with grade separated junctions.

3.15 The RIS also includes a vision for 'The network of the future' by 2040 which includes all the M6 through Staffordshire and Cheshire as a Smart Motorway, plus the A50 and A500 as Expressways. It sets out that Expressways will provide a high-quality journey to users with, as a minimum:

- Junctions which are largely or entirely grade separated, so traffic on the main road can pass over or under roundabouts without stopping,
- Modern safety measures and construction standards,
- Technology to manage traffic and provide better information to drivers.

---

[4] Road Investment Strategy https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-investment-strategy

[5] Highways England Delivery Plan 2015-2020: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/highways-england-delivery-plan-2015-2020

HS2

3.16 High Speed 2 (HS2) is a planned high-speed railway to directly link the city centres of: London, Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester. The government has deposited a hybrid Bill with Parliament to secure the powers to construct and maintain Phase One of HS2 between London and the West Midlands. Phase One includes the network to Birmingham and Fradley in Staffordshire with a connection to the WCML at Handsacre. In response to the Government's consultation on route options for Phase Two, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, backed by Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce and the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, has provided a case for an alternative route via Stoke-on-Trent. The Stoke-on-Trent Route[6] would include an additional station in the centre of the North Staffordshire urban area.

3.17 The joint response prepared by Staffordshire County Council, Lichfield District Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council to the Phase Two consultation[7] opposes HS2 but if it is to go ahead then calls for North Staffordshire to be served by a classic compatible service through Stoke-on-Trent utilising existing and proposed HS2 infrastructure.

3.18 On 30 November 2015, the government announced a proposed way forward on Phase Two of HS2. The Government wants part of Phase Two – the route between the West Midlands (Fradley) and Crewe – to open in 2027, one year after Phase One, and six years ahead of the rest of Phase Two. This will be subject to its own hybrid Bill, which the Government hopes to deposit in parliament in 2017. The Government has asked HS2 Limited to explore how to best serve Stoke-on-Trent and Macclesfield, including through classic compatible trains.

Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan

3.19 The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) establishes a framework for managing the Rights of Way network over a 10 year period, in order to meet the needs of the existing and future population. Issues that the ROWIP identifies include; **population pressures** (76% of the county's population live within its urban areas – just 15% of the land area. The population is projected to continue to grow in future and increase demand on the rights of way network); **an ageing population** (a greater proportion of retired people who have increased leisure time, improved accessibility to the rights of way network for those with mobility problems is likely to be needed); **deprived areas and ethnic minority communities** (under representation of countryside use due to physical, perceptual or cultural barriers), and; **high demand on more scenic areas** (largely in rural areas).

---

[6] www.stoke.gov.uk/hs2
[7] http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/publictransport/trains/highspeedrail/Timescales/Phase-Two/Phase-Two.aspx

3.20 The ROWIP identifies that the southern and south-western areas of the borough (around Ashley, Keele, Loggerheads and Whitmore) have high demand for walking opportunities, but low provision of walking routes. There is a wider mismatch of the needs and provision for horse riding across the borough, with the exception of areas around Knighton and Madeley Heath.

4.0   Past Trends:

4.1   As Newcastle-under-Lyme is not a highway authority, many of the sources of data relating to transport are published at a Staffordshire-wide county level. However it is possible to identify some evidential data relating to transport issues within the borough.

Census Data and National Statistics

4.2   Nearly 80% of the working age population in employment in Newcastle-under-Lyme travel to work by car or van (either as a driver or as a passenger). In Stoke-on-Trent the figure is around 75%. This compares to around 5% in Newcastle and around 8% in Stoke who travel to work by bus, and around 9% in Newcastle and around 10% in Stoke who travel to work on foot[8].

4.3   As shown on figure 1 over 20 million bus passenger journeys are made in Staffordshire each year of which over 3 million are in the Newcastle urban area. Around 12 million bus passenger journeys are made each year in Stoke-on-Trent – this is a decline from over 15 million 5 years ago, which is a significantly faster rate of decline over this period than national and regional averages[9]. Budget pressures during this period have seen the removal of discretionary element to concessionary fares (removing free travel before 09:30 and after 23:00 weekdays) in Stoke-on-Trent, and revenue support for non-commercially viable bus services reduced. Combined with reductions in Bus Service Operator Grant from Central Government and rising costs, bus operators have rationalised services in response to market conditions. This has led to further limitations of bus services away from urban centres and outside of busy times, with a contraction of commercial bus services reducing connectivity and accessibility.

4.4   This decline now sees less than 50 passenger journeys per head of population per year in Stoke-on-Trent which is much less than other large urban areas: 75 per person in Hull, Plymouth, York, Sheffield, and Manchester, whilst in West Midlands, Nottingham, Reading, Tyne and Wear there are around or significantly above 100 journeys. This is without counting passenger transport journeys also made by metro and tram systems in some of these urban areas.

---

[8] 2011 Census: Table QS701 – Method of Travel to Work
[9] Table BUS0109 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus01-local-bus-passenger-journeys

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Bus Passenger Journeys

4.5 Accessibility problems link to the economic and social issues in North Staffordshire, well documented in the LTP evidence base. In the urban area in particular car ownership is low with many reliant on walking, cycling and public transport – the 2011 census records over 70% of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent households have limited access to a car (1 car or less), with 28% having no car, higher than the regional and national averages. . Dependency on a car in low income areas can also lead to 'transport poverty'. Travel problems in the area are increased by the polycentric and sprawling structure, resulting in many instances of poor non-car accessibility. Where public transport is available, journey times can compare unfavourably with those of the private motor vehicle, and fares can be expensive. Analysis of accessibility modelling confirms town centres can be reached by much more local population than more peripheral business parks. However journeys by bus can take almost twice as long as the equivalent trip by car penalising bus users. With limited dedicated physical infrastructure to give priority to bus services, to attempt to achieve punctuality in unpredictable congestion, bus operators have had to sacrifice fast journey times, allowing extra time in timetables to enable on-time departure from timing points. However local monitoring of bus punctuality has recorded a decline to less than 70% of buses on time at timing points, not helped by instability and continued rationalising of commercial bus services in response to the market conditions. Implementation of Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) across the conurbation is ongoing.
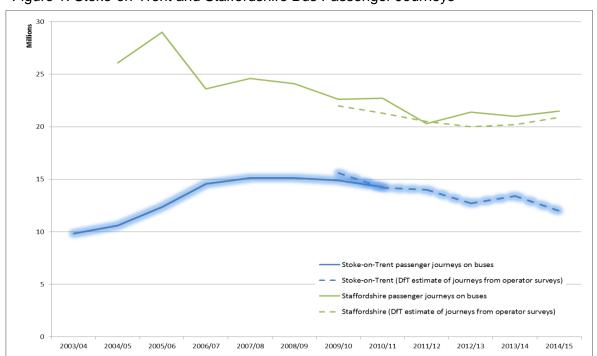
Figure 1: Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Bus Passenger Journeys[10]

[10] Source: Department for Transport (Table BUS0109 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus01-local-bus-passenger-journeys) and local authority monitoring of LTP2 for the period before 2009/10.

Bus punctuality in Stoke-on-Trent

4.6   Slow speeds for buses in comparison to car is a key issue as research indicates that that people looking for work in similar areas in the North West impose a 20-30 minute time limit for job search areas.

4.7   The need for better bus services and information is reflected in the National Highways and Transport (NHT) public satisfaction survey results in Stoke-on-Trent, with poor satisfaction levels and a negative trend for satisfaction with ease of access without a car.

4.8   However usage of rail services locally is growing at a faster rate than the national average. Rail patronage estimates published by the Office for Rail and Road[11] indicate in 2014-15 approaching 2.7 million passenger journeys starting or ending at Stoke-on-Trent railway station, having more than doubled in 10 years. 2014-15 entries and exits at local stations are 195,832 at Kidsgrove, 64,184 at Longton, and 48,322 at Longport. These figures total near 6 times the 2004/05 level. The estimates for the local stations have noted the high growth and suggest the work of the North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership as an explanation. The partnership promotes the Crewe-Stoke-Derby local rail service. It has secured funding to improve local stations, enabling the provision of CCTV, information screens, new lighting, access and co-ordinates teams of volunteers to adopt stations and their gardens. The partnership and Staffordshire County Council have secured significant investment to transform accessibility at Kidsgrove station. The key problem now is overcrowding due to lack of capacity on the inadequate rolling stock.
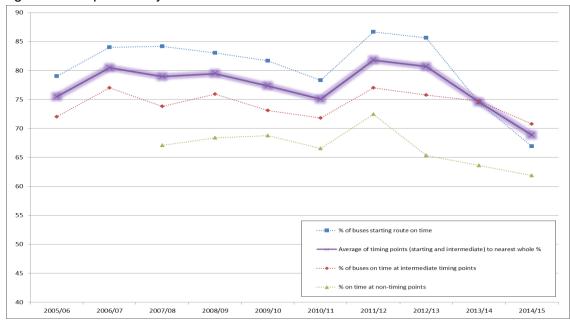
Figure 2: Bus punctuality in Stoke-on-Trent

[11] Local Rail Patronage – estimate of station usage figures (ORR) http://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/station-usage-estimates

5.0   Evidence Base:

Midlands Connect

5.1   Midlands Connect is an ambitious initiative to identify and then realise the transport connectivity improvements that the Midlands needs to maximise long-term economic growth. It brings together a cross-LEP partnership to develop the strongest possible case for strategic transport investment in the Midlands. Midlands Connect has produced evidence to demonstrate how better connectivity will maximise growth for the Midlands and the nation.

5.2   Based on this evidence it has set a series of strategic transport priorities for the Midlands:

- Making the most of HS2;
- Linking to international gateways;
- Improving east-west connectivity;
- Improving freight services;
- Making the strategic transport network more resilient;
- Opening up land for commercial and residential development; and
- Growing and connecting established regional centres.

5.3   The analysis suggests 'intensive growth corridors' that connect the existing urban areas and strategic growth locations, which include corridors connecting 'Birmingham – Black Country – Staffordshire and the North' and 'Nottingham – Derby – North Staffordshire'. It identifies North Staffordshire as one of four locations in the Midlands that are both major hubs of economic activity and key points of convergence on the strategic transport networks.

North Staffordshire Connectivity Study

5.4   The North Staffordshire Connectivity Study and LTPs have collated detailed evidence of the transport issues in North Staffordshire. They show North Staffordshire has good national connections, however local travel patterns are complex and highly localised due to the unique polycentric geography. Congestion and accessibility issues contribute to wider economic, environmental and social issues.
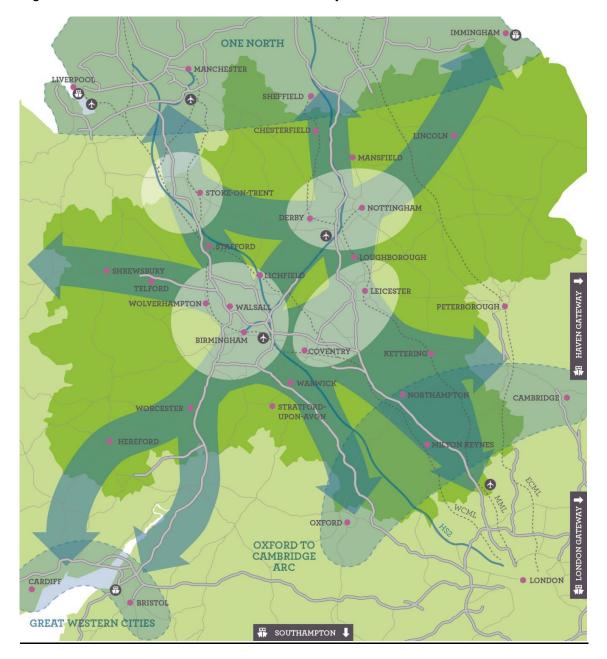
Figure 3: Intensive Growth Corridors' identified by Midlands Connect

5.5 The North Staffordshire Connectivity Study included analysis of economic, environmental and social issues and the role of transport in addressing them. The main transport issues identified by the study are:

- Poor internal connectivity, accessibility and localised peak-hour congestion results in business and other economic costs which are not offset by other (more positive) factors. This is despite relatively low car ownership levels.

- There are issues with severance in the centre of the conurbation created by the combination of the A500, West Coast Main Line and Trent &

Mersey Canal, with limited numbers of for east-west crossing points and congestion at junctions on the A500.

- Access to jobs and education facilities by public transport is relatively poor.

- Lack of investment and opportunity due to the lack of 'place' and the overall image of the City and surrounding areas despite good connectivity by national transport networks.

5.6 The study emphasises that transport investment in the area should be considered within a wider context of ever increasing welfare if the economy is allowed to stagnate.

Evidence from the Local Transport Plans

Complex travel patterns mean the local transport network is operating inefficiently: principal roads have slow average journey speeds in the peak hours due to high levels of congestion, although many trips cover short local distances. Well over 1,000 million vehicle kilometres are travelled on Stoke-on-Trent's roads (excluding trunk roads) each year[12]. DfT congestion statistics for average weekday morning peak vehicle journey time show our 'A' roads are amongst the slowest outside of London – well over 3 minutes per mile[13]. This traffic emits significant amounts of carbon, the Department of Energy and Climate Change estimate well over 500kt of CO_2 emissions from road transport in Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme[14]. The amount of traffic and congestion also lead to noise and air quality issues, with the whole of the City of Stoke-on-Trent declared an Air Quality Management Area[15] (AQMA) together with areas of Newcastle-under-Lyme [16] due to exceedances of Nitrogen Dioxide concentrations.

There are extensive cycle routes, in particular greenways in the urban area. Recent delivery of the Newcastle Greenway and Lyme Valley Cycle have dramatically improved off road cycle routes into Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre. Stoke-on-Trent has over 180km of cycling infrastructure, with over 100km away from roads including greenways, canal towpaths and river routes. In addition, the City's cycle map has over 250km of advisory routes on streets that are less busy than main roads. Many of these include traffic calming and 20mph zones, many have restrictions to motorised traffic movement but are fully open to cyclists, thanks to permeability measures and contraflow provision to one way streets. The provision of this infrastructure has seen, from a low base, an increase in the number of people cycling, with counts of cycling levels in the City Centre 3 times the level they were 10

---

[12] National Road Traffic Survey https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tra89-traffic-by-local-authority
[13] Congestion - average weekday morning peak vehicle journey time on locally managed 'A' roads - mins per mile - https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/cgn02-flow-weighted-vehicle-speeds
[14] Carbon dioxide emissions within the scope of influence of local authorities https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-emissions-estimates
[15] http://www.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/content/environment/environmental-health/pollution/air-quality/air-quality-management-areas.en
[16] https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/all-services/environment/environmental-protection/air-quality-newcastle-under-lyme

years ago. However the amount of cycling is low compared to other areas, and relative to the many short trips made in the area.

6.0   Transport Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Good connectivity to the rest of the UK by national transport networks (the M6, A500, A50, A34 and the rail network).	• Relatively sprawling/low density polycentric urban pattern, rather than high density or transit orientated development patterns.
• Fast and direct access to London, Birmingham and Manchester transport hubs from Stoke-on-Trent Railway Station. Local and 'semi-fast' services to London, Manchester, Crewe and Derby also call at Stoke-on-Trent and Kidsgrove, and the Crewe-Derby service also serving Longport and Longton.	• Complex pattern of movement. • Local network suffers extra unpredicted congestion during trunk road incidents. • At peak times many junctions and links of the highway network operate at or approaching capacity causing congestion, particularly on the Newcastle town centre ring road.
• Local usage of rail services is growing at a faster rate than the national average.	• Traffic related air quality and noise problems.
• There is a good core bus network in the urban area that serves City Centre and town centres, Royal Stoke Hospital, and Universities.	• Frequency of services at local stations can be poor, and there is overcrowding on the Crewe-Derby service through Staffordshire. This limits the ability to accommodate further growth in rail patronage.
• Extensive network of routes for cyclists away from roads along greenways, canal towpaths and riverside paths, plus large network of less busy roads many of which are traffic calmed but fully open and permeable to cyclists.	• Journeys by rail to the North West, West Midlands and East Midlands can be relatively slow and indirect. • Limited bus services away from urban centres and outside of busy times with contraction of commercial bus services reducing connectivity and accessibility.
• Lower number of causalities from road traffic collisions than previous decades.	• Bus journey times and levels of punctuality are poor.
• Recent investment in high quality City Centre bus station.	• Travel to work by bus is relatively low – with the proportion of the working age population who travel to work in a car or van relatively high compared to other urban areas.
• Recent investment in improved areas of public realm in centres across both Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent.	
• Planned investment in transport infrastructure in Etruria Valley and to the City Centre improving connectivity in the urban area.	

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Extra rail capacity from Network Rail investment, in particular Norton Bridge and Stafford area, and HS2 providing opportunities for improving national connectivity, improved regional passenger services, and freight services. • Funding is secured for Access for All improvements, a new 200 space car park and enhanced transport Interchange at Kidsgrove rail station.	• Limited dedicated physical infrastructure to give priority to bus services. • Variable quality of public realm and walking environments. • Busy roads form a barrier for walking and cycling for all but the most confident. • Newcastle ring road presents a barrier for pedestrian and cycle movement to and from the town centre. • Very limited high quality protected space for cycling on busy corridors that are attractive to the full demographic of people wanting to make local journeys. • Maintenance backlog of transport assets is an increasing burden. • The existing rights of way network in Newcastle will come under pressure from increased population and an ageing population with increased leisure time, particularly in the rural south and south west of the borough.