



## Berwick-upon-Tweed Station Travel Plan 2017





## Change Control Sheet

Date	Version Number	Information Changed	Name of changer
06/01/2017	1	Drafted by Sarah Collings	Reviewed by DG/SP – Draft to client
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## Berwick-upon-Tweed Station Travel Plan

### 1 Introduction

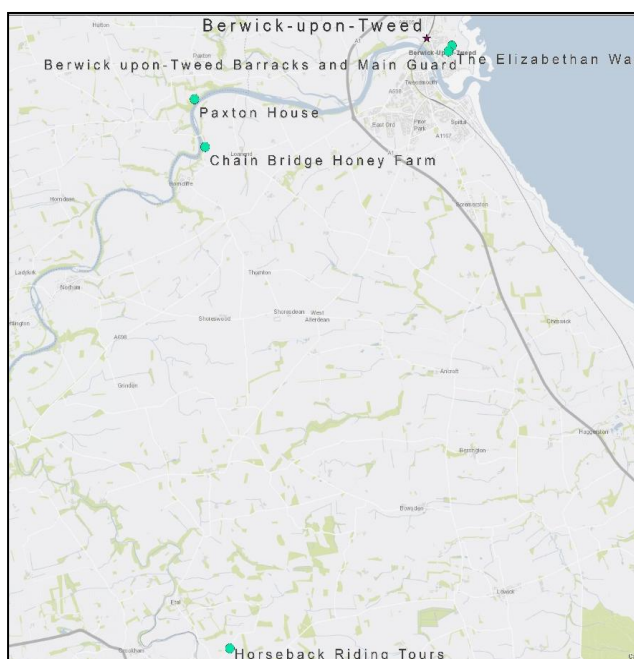
- 1.1 In March 2015, Virgin Trains East Coast (VTEC) were awarded the East Coast franchise to act as the Station Facility Owner (SFO) for stations along the East Coast Mainline (ECML). The ECML runs between London and Edinburgh, with key interchanges linking the north to the south, and intercity and local regional services. The franchise contract, runs until 2023, giving VTEC a long term opportunity to look at accessibility to and from key stations, via individualised Station Travel Plans (STPs).
- 1.2 Berwick-upon-Tweed Station (the Station) is located within Berwick-upon-Tweed (Berwick), within Northumberland and is the northernmost town in England, being approx. 2.5 miles south of the Scottish Border. The Station is approx. 0.4 miles northwest of the town centre; and the town has a mixture of independent and chain retailers, food, drink and hospitality / hotel units. The town is a renowned tourist destination, particularly for day – trippers travelling onwards into Scotland. The tourist information centre is located on Walkergate in the main town centre.
- 1.3 The Station building itself is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and is a key access interchange for the town and surrounding area.
- 1.4 VTEC provide hourly services to London Kings Cross (approx. 335 miles south) via Newcastle, Darlington, York and Edinburgh Waverley (approx. 55 miles north), with intermittent services to Aberdeen, Glasgow Central, Stirling and Inverness. In addition, Cross Country Trains provide a two hourly service both southbound, to Plymouth, via Leeds and Birmingham New Street and northbound to Glasgow Central and Edinburgh.
- 1.5 Berwick Town Council (the Council) is developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Berwick, Spittal and Tweedmouth, which will be used by Northumberland County Council, together with their Core Strategy, as a framework for deciding planning applications in the region. In essence, the Neighbourhood Plan allows for local residents and businesses to have a say in the future scoping of the area in terms of the need for workplaces, schools, open spaces and transport networks. There are planned new developments around Hatters Lane, which appear be office / retail.
- 1.6 There is a Neighbourhood Plan group set up in relation to transport, whom formed in April 2016. The group look at the development of policies in relation to discouraging car users and reducing car use, with associated increases in more sustainable modes, such as walking, cycling and public transport. The aim is to make the town centre more pedestrian friendly and encourage the growth of visitors. The work of this group, and the implications of the developing policies will have cross over and synergies with the findings and aspirations of the STP. As such the group is planning to collect evidence and assist in the formulation of the following:
  - Car Parking in the Town Centre;
  - Highway Network – in particular restricting traffic on the A1, A1167 and A698 by closing the “rat runs”;
  - Cycling Infrastructure;
  - Walking Infrastructure;
  - Buses;
  - Accessibility for Visitors; and
  - Freight (including investigations as to the potential demand for the movement of freight by rail).

1.7 Tourism and leisure is therefore crucial to the development of Berwick and the Station will play a key part in providing the gateway into the town. For further consideration, there are the following Top Five (in accordance with Trip Advisor and proximity to the Station) visitor destinations within the wider Berwick area. Their proximity is shown below and there is potential to work alongside these organisations to increase the footfall of visitors through the Station and throughout the wider area. These are outlines in **Table 1-1** below.

**Table 1-1 Information on Berwick Holiday Park and top five destinations in and around Berwick-upon-Tweed.**

<b>Berwick-upon-Tweed</b>	
Berwick Holiday Park	There is a Haven Holiday Park located 0.6 north east of the Station. A Hoppa Service runs between the Station and Berwick Holiday Park.
The Elizabethan Walls	The Elizabethan Walls surround the old town in Berwick-upon-Tweed and can be accessed from the Station by short walk or cycle.
Chain Bridge Honey Farm	Chain Bridge Honey is a honey farm which includes a visitor's centre featuring information, exhibits, and artwork. The site is located 5.9 miles west of the Station. It is a 7 mile (38 minute cycle) along National Cycle Route 1 and is not easily accessible on public transport.
Horseback Riding Tours	Hay Farm is a popular destination, offering Horseback Riding Tours. The farm is located 13.8 miles south west of Berwick-upon-Tweed and is accessible via the 267 bus, although this requires a 0.9 mile walk (20 minute) to access Hay Farm from the bus stop.
Berwick upon-Tweed Barracks and Main Guard	Berwick-Upon-Tweed Barracks and Main Guard is an English Heritage site located 0.6 miles south east of Berwick-upon-Tweed Rail Station (13 minute walk and 4 minute cycle). There are regular buses which can be taken for half of the journey (by distance).
Paxton House	Paxton House provides a range of activities, including boat tours, a tea room, and guided tours of the house. It is located 4.8 miles west of the Station and can be accessed via the number 32 bus (journey time 18 minutes) which runs from Railway Street.

**Figure 1 Top 5 Visitors Attractions in Berwick**



## 2 Development of the STP process

2.1 The STP for the Station, presented below, has been developed having account of this background context and in close collaboration with the VTEC STP Project Manager, Rachael Wilson. The STP also takes account of ongoing stakeholder consultation and the local developments highlighted above. The methodology adopted is in accordance with the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) Guidance on the Implementation of Station Travel Plans, originated in 2008/9. Furthermore, Systra have used their professional judgement to adapt this STP to address the specific factors which effect the Station.

The STPs developed for the VTEC will identify measures that aim to achieve the following main overall objectives:

- Encourage journeys made to and from the Station to be made by foot, bike or public transport when these are reasonable alternatives to the car;
- Increase passenger footfall (and hence revenue); and
- Improve the journey experience of trips to and from the Station.

Of particular relevance to **Berwick**, this STP aims to:

- Lead STP partnerships at the Station, delivering customer access and egress benefits through new facilities and a closer working collaboration between the TOC, LA and local stakeholders;
- Promote and support the use of sustainable, healthy and environmentally friendly forms of transport;
- An improved door-to-door experience for all customers; and
- Contribute to VTEC National Rail Passengers Survey (NPRS) Station metric target of 84% satisfaction by 2023/24.

2.2 The STP for Berwick has been developed in partnership with key local stakeholders. In June 2016, a Stakeholder Steering Group was formed for the development of the Plan, led by VTEC, with representatives from Northumberland County Council, Berwick Town Council, Northumberland Tourism, Arriva Bus and Perrymans. There was a conscious decision to keep the membership of the group limited to key stakeholders with the proviso for additional organisations to be invited to meetings on an ad hoc basis to discuss specific measures. Evidence gathered during ATOC travel planning pilots in 2008/9, suggests that achieving early buy in and collaboration with the STP, is key to their success and legacy; stakeholders should be informed and engaged with throughout the process of development of the plan and VTEC are embracing this approach.

2.3 VTEC have gathered extensive background information for this STP, including the findings from the Stakeholder Steering Group and subsequent engagement, an initial site audit, Face to Face passenger surveys (undertaken between February to April 2016), and supporting information around regional strategic planning. From this background context an additional desktop study has been undertaken by Systra to ascertain the existing sustainable transport linkages for the Station and potential recommendations. In addition, a detailed site visit was undertaken on Tuesday 13th September 2016. **Appendix A** consolidates the original and additional site audit information.

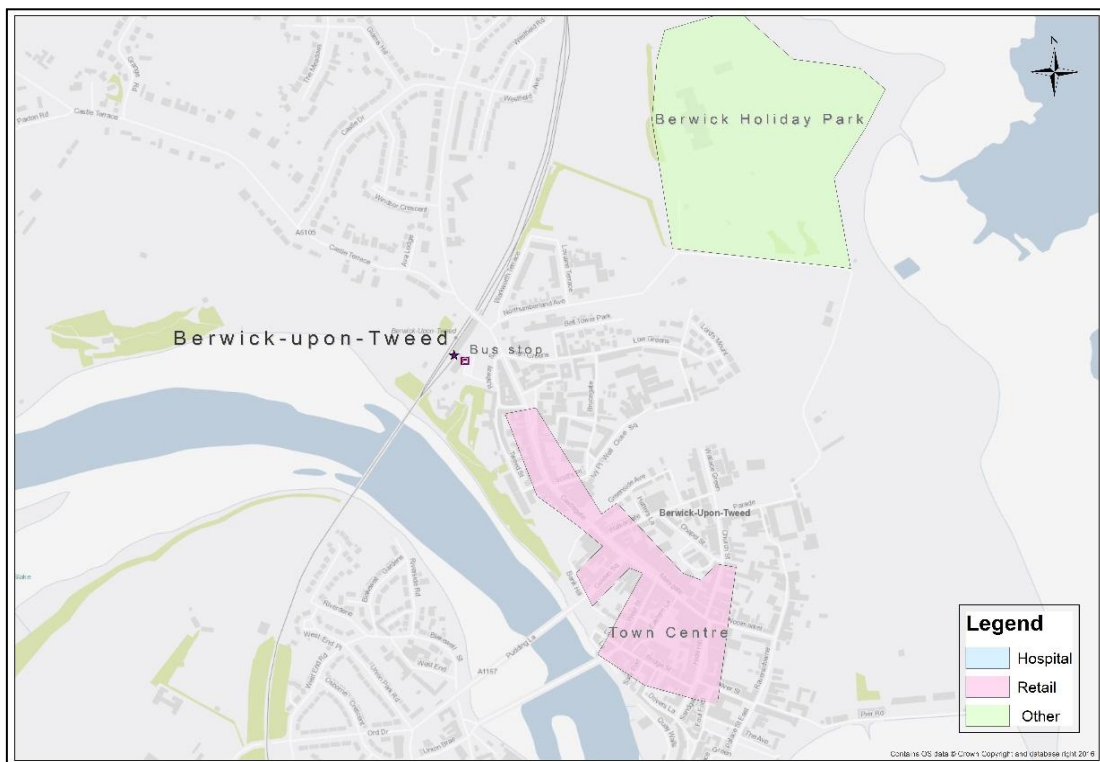
2.4 The findings from above have been consolidated into Sections 3-6 below.

### 3 Site overview

#### Location

- 3.1 The Station is located on the north side of the River Tweed close to the rail bridge. The Station is situated on Railway Street which loops around a mini roundabout directly outside the Station entrance. Railway Street leads on to a roundabout on the A1167 / Castlegate.
- 3.2 The Station lies north of the town centre which can be accessed by travelling south down the A1167. The area around the Station is predominantly residential but the amenities present in the town centre can be accessed within 5 minutes. The main Station Car Park is located immediately outside the Station and is enclosed between the Station, Railway Street and the A1167.

**Figure 2 Location of the Station**



#### Station Facilities

- 3.3 The Station has one main entry / exit point which leads into a Ticket Hall with a staffed Ticket Office immediately on the left hand side. There is a ticket machine where tickets can be purchased, pre-paid tickets collected and arrival and departure information is displayed. Adjacent to the Ticket Hall is a waiting room with seating, toilets and a telephone. Opening times for the Travel Centre are 05.45 – 18.30 Monday to Friday, Saturday 06.45 – 15.15 and Sunday 09.45 – 16.20.
- 3.4 The Station has 2 platforms which share a concourse and are accessed via a step bridge

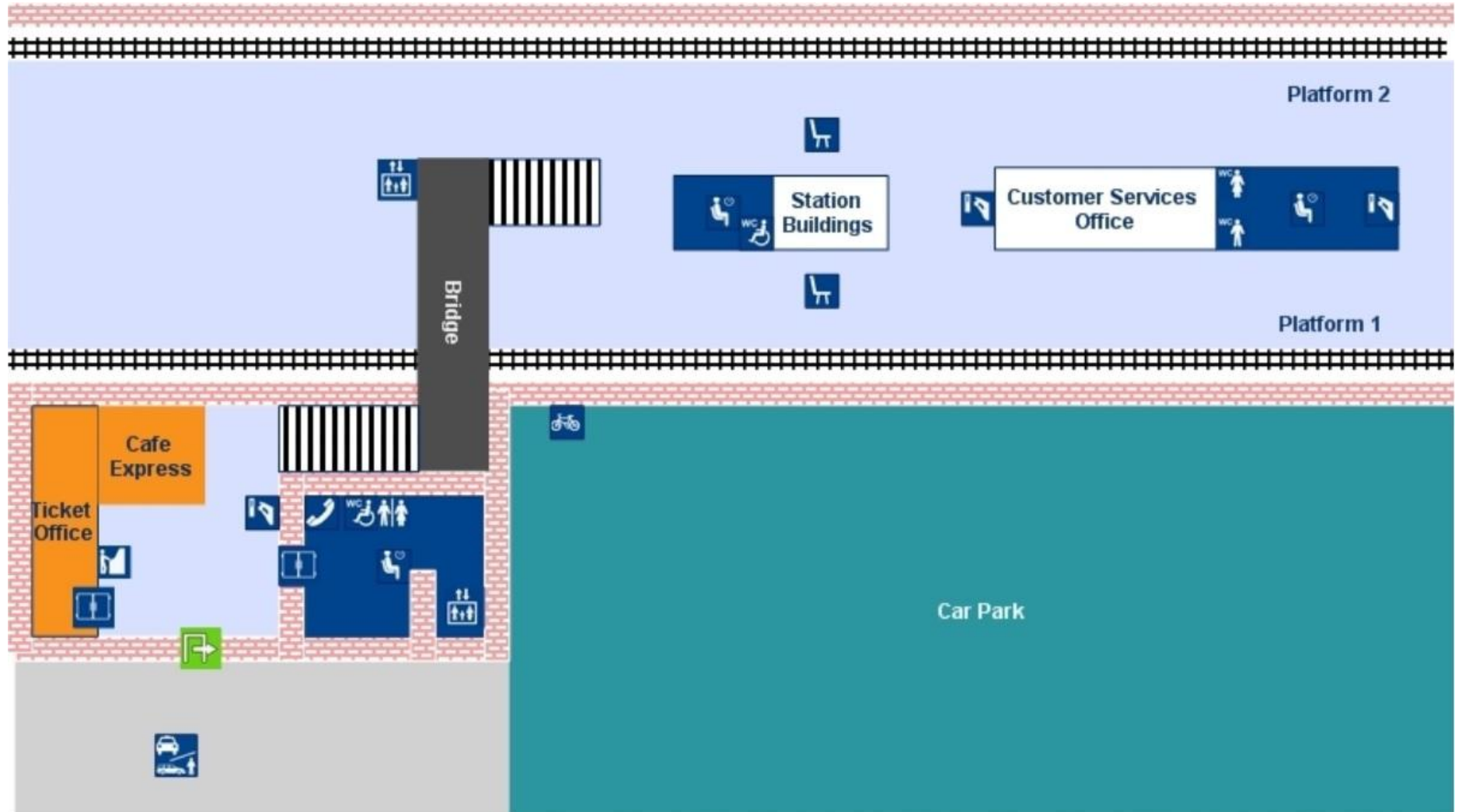
from the Ticket Hall. Alternatively, the bridge can be accessed using lifts located in the waiting room and on the platforms. The platforms share a First Class Lounge, a Customer Service Office, a waiting room with toilets and seating areas. A map of the Station and key symbols are illustrated in **Figure 4** and **Table 3-1** below.

**Figure 3** Waiting room and onwards travel information at the Station





Figure 4 Map of the Station (Key of symbols in Table 3-1)



**Table 3-1 Key for Station facilities**

Symbol	Description	Symbol	Description	Symbol	Description
	Entrance		Lift		Stairs
	Accessible Parking		Luggage Trolleys		Taxi and Drop Off Point
	Accessible WC		Male Toilets		Telephone
	ATM/Cash Machine		Photo Booth		Ticket Counter
	Coffee Shop		Ramp		Ticket Machine
	Cycle Rack/Storage		Seats		Vending Machine
	Female Toilets		Single/Double Doors		Waiting Room
	Help point				

Source: National Rail website ([www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk))

## Current Rail Services Provided

**Table 3-2 Rail services at the Station (including final / major destinations)**

Provider	Destinations served
Virgin Trains East Coast	Edinburgh, London Kings Cross, Aberdeen.
Cross Country	Penzance, Glasgow Central.

## Local demographics

3.5 In 2015, the resident population within the Berwick local authority area (Northumberland) was 315,300. Of this 46% are employed, 3% are unemployed, and 13% are economically inactive. In 2016, the average gross weekly pay per household in Berwick-upon-Tweed is £487, which is below the regional (North East) average of £492 and the national (Great Britain) £541.

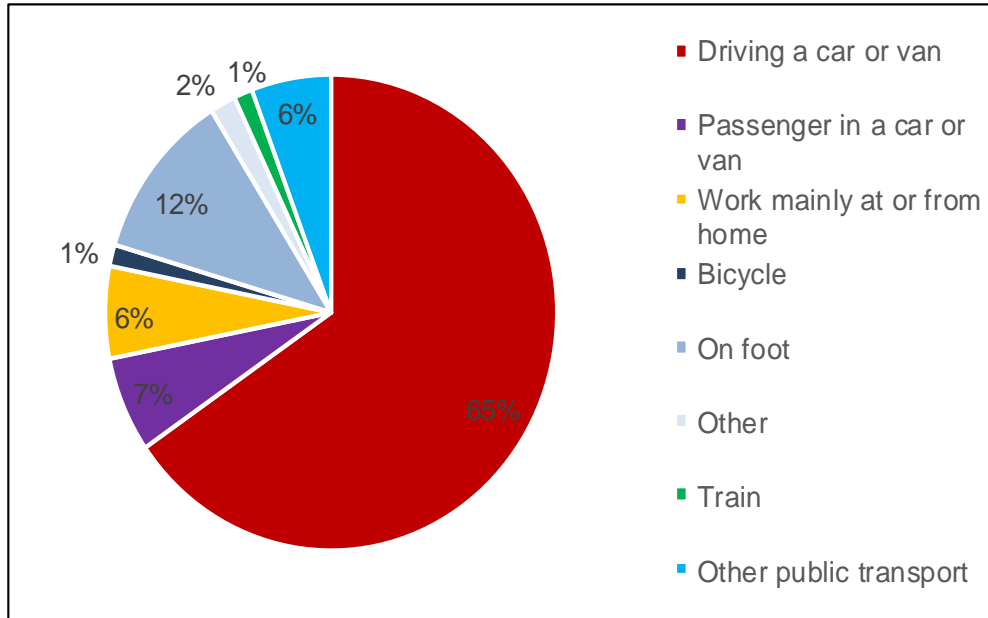
Source: Labour Market Profile, Northumberland, 2015; Office for National Statistics, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/Imp/la/1946157061/report.aspx?town=berwick>

### Travel to Work data – demographics

3.6 In Berwick, the dominant mode to travel to work is by driving a car or a van. Only a small proportion currently travel to work by train

**Figure 5 Method of travel to work Berwick, (all usual residents aged 16-74 years)**

Source: 2015 Office for National Statistics, Census Data 2011 Table QS701EW.



<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/qs701ew#>

### ORR passenger footfall data

3.7 Passenger footfall (entries / exists) at the Station has increased since 2009 although Berwick has decreased as an interchange due to a sharp decrease in passenger footfall in 2010/11-2011/12 (noting that 2015/16 data is not currently available). **Table 3-3** provides passenger footfall numbers from 2009-2015. The number of passenger interchanges experienced a boom from 2010/11 to 2011/12 when passenger footfall increased by 40%.

**Table 3-3 Berwick-upon-Tweed Station usage data**

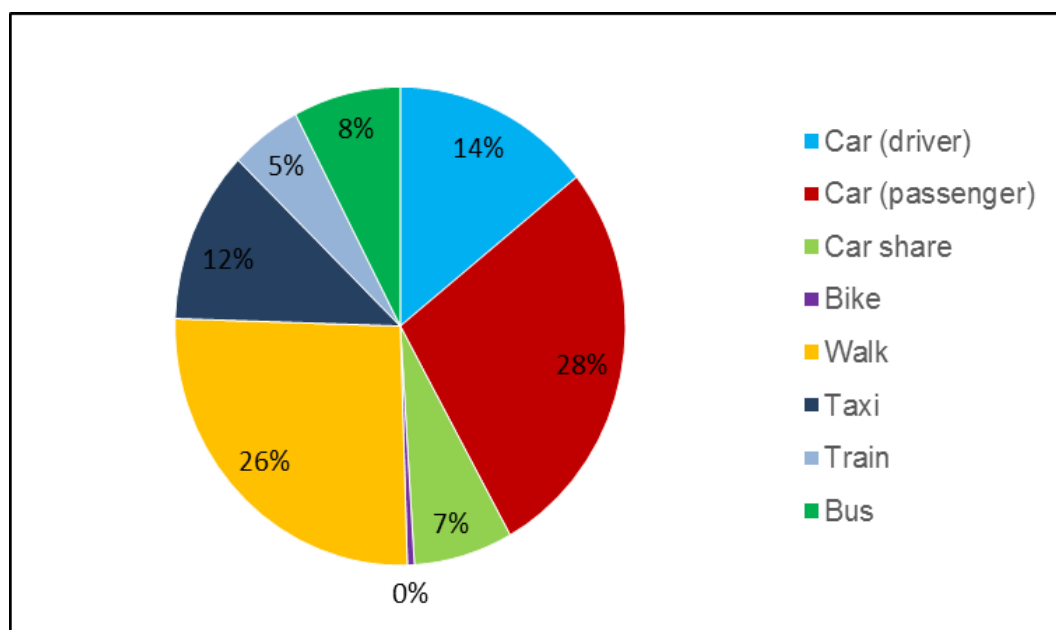
Station	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	% Change
Entries and exits	419,454	454,568	480,048	501,670	527,159	538,510	8.4% (09/10-10/11) 5.6% (10/11-11/12) 4.5% (11/12-12/13) 5.1% (12/13-13/14) 2.1% (13/14-14/15)
Inter-changes	2,579	2,851	1,035	1,123	1,167	1,339	10.5% (09/10-10/11) -63.7% (10/11-11/12) 8.4% (11/12-12/13) 4.0% (12/13-13/14) 14.7% (13/14-14/15)

**Source:** Station usage 2012/13, 2013/2014 and 2014/2015, Office of Rail Regulation, December 2015. Detail of how the data was derived can be found in the Station Usage 2014/15 Methodological Report.

### Passenger Surveys

- 3.8 VTEC undertook a Face to Face survey with 250 passengers in February, 2016. The results of the survey show that, of the 196 who responded to the question, 26% of passengers accessed the Station by foot. The car was also a commonly cited method to access to the Station (49%) with most passengers being dropped off; taxi (12%) and bus (8%) were the two other modes which were most commonly cited.
- 3.9 Convenience (96%), time saving (28%) and the capacity of desirable bus options (10%) were the most frequently cited reasons for accessing the Station by these modes. The overwhelming majority of respondents (98%) did not consider any other method when travelling to the Station. When asked to consider which modes would have been more feasible, catching the bus (31%), walking (18%), and receiving a lift (7%) were the most commonly identified modes.
- 3.10 This suggests there is potential for increasing bus use as a sustainable method to access the Station. However, for this to be successful, measures are needed to address the perception that bus times are not convenient to access the Station. The main “other mode” which respondents would consider is the bus and there appears to be a conception that the availability of current services / routes is inadequate. Currently there is no information on how to access the key tourist destinations within the Station concourse /waiting room.
- 3.11 An additional Passenger Satisfaction online survey was published in February 2016 to gather more passenger input and feedback. Respondents were asked to think about their last journey by train. They were subsequently asked how they made this journey to the Station and to reflect on how satisfied they were with getting to the Station. There were only 8 respondents reporting that their last journey began at the Station and so we do not report the results here due to the small sample size.

**Figure 6 Face to Face survey, How did you access Berwick-upon-Tweed Rail Station?**



## 4 Existing Travel Network

### Accessibility and pedestrian linkage to buses

- 4.1 There are 3 bus stops located within 100m of the entrance / exit to the Station. A total of 14 services are provided from these stops. The most frequent services are summarised below:
- X15: (Newcastle-Berwick via A1); Arriva; runs hourly;
  - X18: (Newcastle-Amble-Berwick); Arriva; three times a day from the Station;
  - 32: (Swinton-Hutton-Berwick-Tweedmouth); Travel sure; runs every two hours;
  - 60: (Galashiels-Duns-Berwick-Tweedmouth); Perrymans; runs hourly;
  - 67: (Galashiels-Kelso-Berwick); Perrymans; runs hourly;
  - 267: (Wooler-Etal-Berwick); Perrymans; runs hourly;
  - 464: (Wooler-Lowick-Berwick); Perrymans; once a day; and
  - 477: (Holy Island-Berwick); Perrymans; runs August-December, twice a day.
- 4.2 One of the bus stops is located on a pedestrian island, requiring pedestrians to cross the taxi lane located directly outside the Station entrance (Figure 7). A second bus stop is located on the junction of Railway Street and the route for one-way traffic, south of the Station. From this bus stop, a Hoppa service runs to Berwick Holiday Park.
- 4.3 To access the Hoppa service to Berwick Holiday Park, pedestrians must exit right out of the Station, pass the bus stops and then cross the two way traffic of Railway Street adjacent to the junction where one-way traffic arriving south of the Station.

**Figure 7 Front entrance / bus stops at the Station**



- 4.4 There is an onward travel poster on the outside wall of the ticket hall, right of the Station entrance, which details the bus services available and a map showing the locations of bus stops in the vicinity of the Station. The signs at the bus stops opposite and to the right as you exit the Station, are small and the area at the bus stop is unsheltered.
- 4.5 Although there appears to be an adequate range of services, concerns have been raised by stakeholders regarding their frequency and reliability as passengers are commonly using taxis as their method of onwards travel due to convenience. The main pick-up / drop-off area

of the buses within the town centre is Golden Square which is within a 10 minute walk of the Station.

- 4.6 Conversations have taken place between VTEC and Northumberland County Council regarding changes to the layout of the front of the Station. These have included rationalization of the bus stop positions in relation to the Station frontage, the position and function of the roundabout outside the Station, and the potential to install sloped ramps to access the Station. Further assessment to explore the feasibility and best way of re-arranging sustainable modes around the Station environment should be considered.

### **Pedestrian Accessibility**

- 4.7 The main route between the Station and the town centre is via Castlegate, requiring pedestrians to travel slightly north along Railway Street, before turning south towards the town centre. Other routes pedestrians could opt for are turning south along Railway Street and continue along this road to access Castlegate, or turn south down Railway Street and then continue onto Tweed Street which merges with Castlegate further south of the Station. It should be acknowledged that the last two options require navigation of narrower roads and paths.
- 4.8 Signage at the Station does not detail the pedestrian routes available and, conversely, the pedestrian routes to the Station from the town centre are not clear.
- 4.9 The pavements in the immediate vicinity of the Station are in a good condition and well lit. Similarly, the pathways in the town centre appear wide and in a good condition. Crossing points for pedestrians predominately have tactile pavement and dropped kerbs both in the town centre and outside the Station. The junction in the town centre around Golden Square / Marygate is fitted with a toucan crossing (note Golden Square is the major route to cross the Tweed Estuary). There are no other toucan crossing points. However, there are a series of islands with dropped kerbs and tactile paving along Marygate and Castlegate and, as vehicular traffic is slow, pedestrians are largely able to cross these roads safely.

**Figure 8 Narrow Pedestrian pathway on Tweed Street**



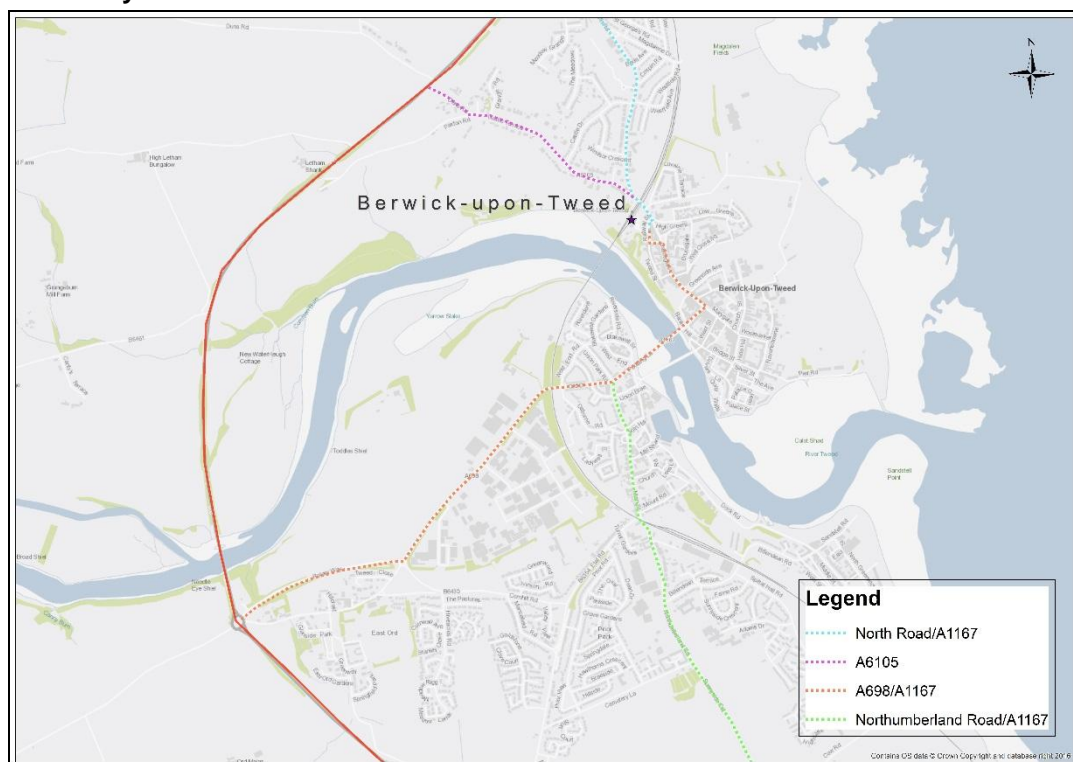
### **Vehicular Access for Berwick-upon-Tweed Station**

- 4.10 The A1, a major road connecting the North and South, runs east of Berwick. The A1167 connects Berwick to the A1 to the north and south of the town, crossing the River Tweed.

The A6105 and A698 are two other major roads which connect the A1 and surrounding areas to Berwick town centre.

- 4.11 Traffic flows through Berwick town centre appear heavy and, therefore, congested. A consideration of the Council could be to the rerouting of traffic around the town centre; which also forms an important part of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.12 The main passenger pickup / drop off point is located directly in front of the Station entrance and is shared with taxi pick up / drop off. The bus stop located on the far side of the pickup point is also sometimes used to pick up / drop off passengers.

**Figure 9 Major roads in Berwick-upon-Tweed and roads to approach the Station by motorised vehicle**



### Car Parking

- 4.13 There is a Council operated car park outside the front of the Station which offers 24 hour parking for £3.50. Additionally, there is 20 minutes free parking in designated bays, suitable for drop offs. There are 124 spaces, 5 of which are disabled. This car park tends to be full throughout the day. There is adequate parking in Berwick town centre and in other Council operated car parks, with the closest being the Castlegate Long Stay Car Park which is free of charge and has 70 spaces. This car park also has an overflow area adjacent to it, disabled and motorcycle parking. There are 6 other car parks within a 5 minute walk of the Station.

**Figure 10 Station Car Parking at front of the Station**



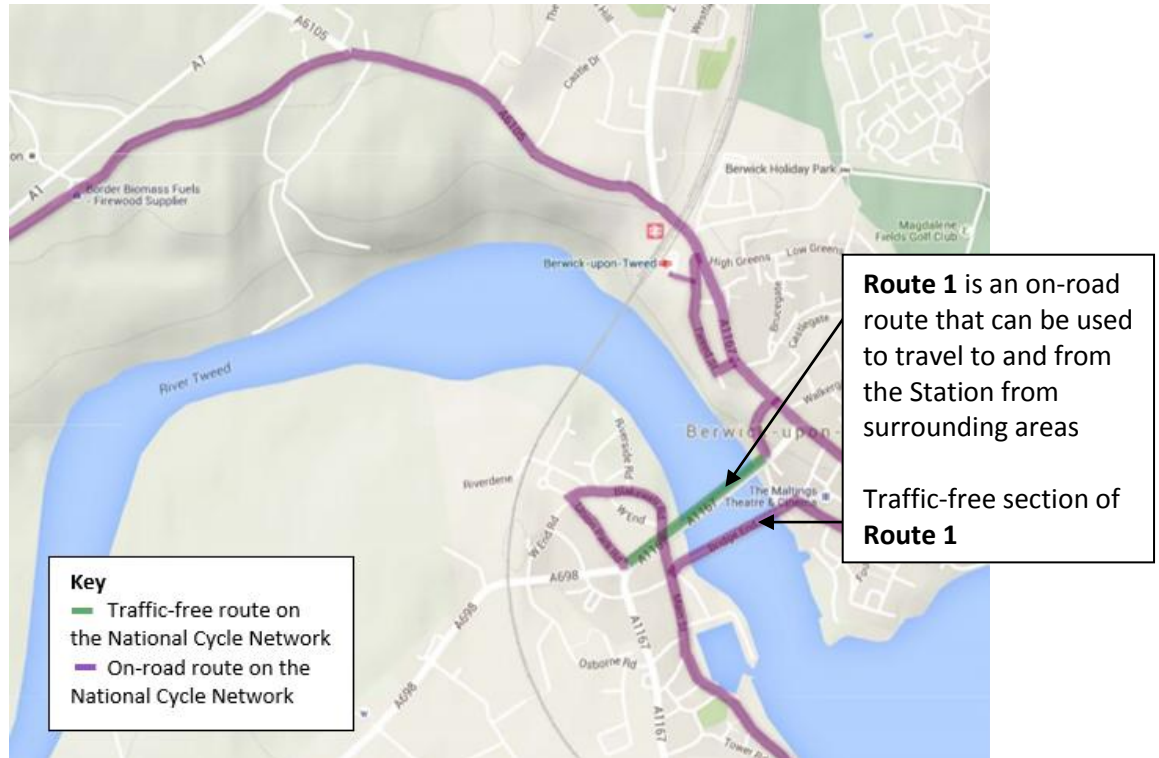
- 4.14 VTEC are currently exploring options for additional car parking for rail passengers towards the rear of the Station, with Network Rail and the Council. For any new cars parks, the addition of car sharing spaces and electric vehicle points should be explored.

### **Cycling Accessibility and Facilities**

- 4.15 There is an on-road cycle route that is part of the Sustrans National Cycle Network (Route 1). Route 1 runs along the east coast to the south of the estuary, before crossing the estuary mouth. The path then continues inland, along the north side of the estuary and through Berwick. However, there are few designated cycle lanes / paths in the town centre and on the main vehicular routes. This means there is potential for conflict between cyclists and motorists on Railway Street and Castlegate. **Figure 11** shows the cycle route network though Berwick-upon-Tweed town centre.
- 4.16 Signage and wayfading for cyclists coming out of the Station is poor, and signs to the town centre currently take you initially away from the centre before directing you back in. Additionally, current road markings on Tweed Street are in need of refreshing and could be made more prominent.

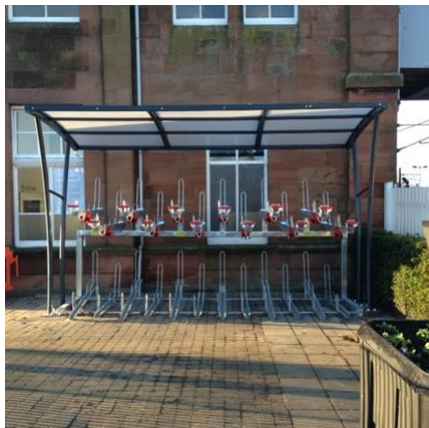


**Figure 11 National Cycle Network in Berwick-upon-Tweed.**



- 4.17 The Station has newly installed two tier cycle racks, which provide 24 spaces. These are located within the Station car park to the left hand side of the main entrance, and have CCTV coverage. These stands treble the previous amount of cycling spaces and have been installed as part of the strategic upgrading of cycling facilities being undertaken by VTEC.

**Figure 12 New Cycle parking at Berwick Station**



### Facilities for powered two wheelers

- 4.18 There are 3 spaces for motorcycle parking within the main car park at the Station; however the 'loop' system of traffic outside the Station is not clearly marked to show this.



**SYSTRA**

- 4.19 In addition, there is no signage to motorcycle parking within / on exiting the Station or on Railway Street leading to the Station car park.

#### **Access to the Station by Taxi**

- 4.20 The taxi-rank is located immediately outside the entrance / exit to the Station. Here, there are spaces for 3-4 taxis to wait. In the waiting room there is a taxi number but no free phone. There is currently no shelter but the rank can be seen from inside the Ticket Hall and passengers are able to wait there.

## 5 Issues and Opportunities

- 5.1 The key findings, constraints and issues identified from the desktop study, stakeholder consultation and Station visits have been used to develop a range of potential schemes and travel plan measures to improve access and to increase rail patronage, see **Table 5-1** below.
- 5.2 There is a definite opportunity for the STP to complement the aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan for Berwick and to embrace the tourist trade travelling through the Station, to the town and then beyond. In addition, by encouraging more sustainable modes for local residents accessing the Station, this will also assist with the Neighbourhood Plan objectives of reducing congestion within the town and generally improving mobility for cyclists and pedestrians. Other issues are around improving the connectivity between bus and rail travel, making wayfinding easier and raising awareness of both local attractions and the Station.
- 5.3 There is a need to fit the measures developed for the STP into the wider Neighbourhood Plan and stakeholder considerations. One aspect that could be considered is getting a clearer perspective on the market for VTEC in terms of the passenger profiles, i.e. whether the majority of rail passengers travelling through Berwick are tourists / leisure / retail passengers or commuters. Car parking in the immediate Station vicinity and throughout the town should also be considered, but firstly a better understanding of who is using the car parks and the length of stays should be explored. These issues and measures are summarised in **Table 5-1** below.

**Table 5-1 Issues and Measures**

<b>Pedestrian Signage and Wayfinding</b>	
<b>Issue</b>	No departure screens on the platform, only a very small screen in the waiting room, also very limited onwards travel information.
<b>Measure</b>	Consider the provision of a touch screen onwards travel information, similar to Morpeth Station and consider developing a map / or further leaflet stand with key destination information. Development of a 'How to Get to Guide' for the Station.
<b>Issue</b>	Need to improve the wayfinding for pedestrians and cyclists and provide access to the town centre. Signage / maps on key routes to the town centre could also be made clearer. In addition, there is no signage to local attractions or bus stops / onwards travel, for either pedestrians or cyclists. Also noted is that there is no signage for the Station in the main town centre car park on Castlegate.
<b>Measure</b>	Look into developing a signage and wayfinding strategy – highlighting key decision points for improved signage and work in collaboration with the Council to consider and signing quieter routes along Tweed Street.

<b>Vehicular Accessibility and car parking/ motorcycle parking</b>
<b>Issue</b>
<p>Only one drop off point at the front of the Station, sometimes causing congestion between competing modes of taxis, buses and cars at peak times. Waiting taxis can block the entrance. Short stay bays can be used for free for 20 minutes but this is not currently being utilised. In addition, pedestrian / cyclist crossing points on exiting the Station are not clearly visible.</p>
<b>Measure</b>
<p>Consider the reconfiguration / realignment of the access at the front of the Station, recommendations could include replacing the existing taxi waiting area with an extended forecourt. Merging bus and vehicle access into the existing lane and promoting the use of the short stay car park for drop offs. Another potential could be to divert the taxis into the area of the car park currently used for drop off (20 mins free zone) and have bus and passengers drop off as priority at the front.</p> <p>When considering vehicular priorities, also assess the use of pedestrian crossing / or informal marked crossing to the main car park.</p>
<b>Issue</b>
<p>Current motorcycle parking is not well signed or clearly evident as it is situated within one corner of the car park.</p>
<b>Measure</b>
<p>Look at signage for the motorcycle bays within the Station and on external car parking signage, consider repainting / remarking hoops to make them more visible.</p>
<b>Issue</b>
<p>There are no dedicated car sharing spaces or electric charging point within the current car park.</p>
<b>Measure</b>
<p>Investigate the potential to provide car sharing and electric vehicle points on reconfiguration of Station car parks / consideration of additional car parking.</p>
<b>Public Transport</b>
<b>Issue</b>
<p>Bus passengers are currently experiencing congestion of traffic on the sloped approach to the Station and on Railway Street. Also it is not clear which stops, serve which routes causing confusion amongst passengers new to Berwick.</p>
<b>Measure</b>
<p>Look to work with the bus operators for input into improving vehicular access to the Station (as above) and also consider providing a touch screen information stand on the Station entrance / waiting area; or provide Real Time Information on bus stops. Consider the development of a map – to demonstrate the key routes and frequencies from / to the Station, town centre and surrounding attractions. Explore the potential for funding / sponsorship of</p>

<p>improvements from both bus operators and local destinations. Also discuss the potential of a short “Hoppa” service from the Station to the town centre with bus operators.</p>
<p><b>Issue</b></p>
<p>Perception that bus travel from the Station is difficult and infrequent and that taxis are the more convenient option for onwards journeys.</p>
<p><b>Measure</b></p>
<p>Consider further surveying / research to ascertain the usage of the bus, the patronage on current services and the perceived barriers for rail passengers. Work with the bus operators on exploring solutions to these findings. Recommendations may include changing the frequency / routing of services or more simply raising awareness and providing promotion of the current services, such as free taster tickets / trials / events and increased information provision.</p>
<p><b>Issue</b></p>
<p>No Plus Bus ticket currently available and stakeholders have suggested this may be an opportunity.</p>
<p><b>Measure</b></p>
<p>Explore the potential of Plus Bus tickets with the bus operators and consider promoting this on a trial basis to ascertain take up (linked into the Measure above).</p>
<p><b>Pedestrian / Walking Accessibility</b></p>
<p><b>Issue</b></p>
<p>Pedestrian access on Railway Street is unclear, with the footpath ending on the south side, with dropped kerb and currently no clear crossing facility. There is poor visibility due to the physical barrier of the wall and traffic. The footpath on the main slope is narrow and often cluttered at busy times, with bus passengers waiting etc. The entrance to the Coronation Park is also slightly concealed.</p>
<p><b>Measure</b></p>
<p>Consider a pelican crossing or zebra crossing and extension of the footpath, in alignment with a reconfiguration of the Station entrance (see above). Look at providing signage for the Park.</p>
<p><b>Cycling</b></p>
<p><b>Issue</b></p>
<p>There are no cycle channels on the stairs for cyclists to wheel their cycles up.</p>
<p><b>Measure</b></p>
<p>Consider inclusion of ramps / cycle channels on stairs for cyclists.</p>
<p><b>Issue</b></p>
<p>Lack of segregated cycling facilities on main route from the Station to the town centre and surrounding area. Lack of designated / quieter routes for cyclists. Most well used route is alongside the A1167; however the traffic is often busy.</p>
<p><b>Measure</b></p>

VTEC to explore liaising with the Council and Sustrans to produce a full cycle audit, highlighting current issues and recommended solutions, include more cycle parking within the town centre and clearer signage, alongside infrastructure improvements to the existing roads.
<b>Issue</b>
Faded and unclear existing signage on routes near to Tweed Street.
<b>Measure</b>
Liaise with the Town Council / Highways department to consider refresh on road marking and signage.
<b>Awareness Raising and Communications</b>
<b>Issue</b>
No signage currently within the Station or in the immediate vicinity to the Station to direct passengers' pedestrian access to the town centre.
<b>Measure</b>
Explore improved internal and external Station signage, look at training staff in best routes and provide a handy 'How to Get to Guide', showing the town centre walking routes and key destinations.
<b>Issue</b>
The current information and leaflets are within the waiting room which is adjacent to the Station exit, however passengers do not have to go through the waiting room on exit.
<b>Measure</b>
Examine moving all information to a more prominent location at the front of the Station. Also consider interactive journey planner, similar to Morpeth Station, for all onwards travel information.

## 6 Action Plan and Monitoring / Evaluation

- 6.1 The next stages of the STP are to develop a strong Action Plan with feasible and realistic measures to improve connectivity to the Station by more sustainable modes than single car occupancy. This is a challenge with the current lack of clear wayfinding for the Station and the limited usage of public transport at present. There are conflicting priorities currently for vehicular traffic, causing a knock on effect for those wanting to use sustainable modes, in blocking the visibility of routes and bus stops etc. A key consideration should therefore be the reconfiguration of the Station entrance to include and enhance accessibility by all modes.
- 6.2 In addition, the potential patronage for VTEC from the tourism sector and the residual effects of this on the town centre are significant and partnerships with key organisations and bus operators will play a key role in bringing this forward.
- 6.3 It is suggested that the final prioritisation of the Action Plan is undertaken at a further Stakeholder Steering Group Meeting and in close collaboration with Northumberland Council and the Council. The STP will then be fully reviewed and refreshed after three years (2020) to consider measures up to the end of the franchise period in 2023.