



# Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements

Project Summary



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**Figure 1**            **Tees Valley Bus Network**

**Figure 2**            **Bus Network Improvements Plan**



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## 1. Background

### What is the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements Project?

- 1.1. Central to transport in the Tees Valley is the bus network (shown in Figure 1), which, despite an overall reduction in passenger numbers over the past ten years, remains the most important public transport mode, in terms of number of passengers carried and kilometres covered. Buses are key to providing people with a means to access jobs, education, health care and leisure activities without the need for a car.
- 1.2. However, as car ownership increases (our current rate is well below the national average), there is pressure on maintaining the current levels of service across the Tees Valley in the face of an increasing funding gap between network operating costs and passenger revenue.
- 1.3. A review of the operation of the Tees Valley bus network undertaken in 2005 identified a variety of proposals across the whole of the area, based on investing in a network of high demand and high quality links to key centres in particular.
- 1.4. Following the review, a comprehensive package of measures was developed, titled the **Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements**, designed to address the overall decline in passenger numbers, offer a step change in bus service provision, and provide a real alternative to the private car to help support the long term economic recovery.
- 1.5. The Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements scheme covers bus corridors within the five Tees Valley Authorities of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees. The geographical coverage of the routes that are the subject of this scheme are only a proportion of the bus routes that cover the Tees Valley, however, the benefits of the scheme will reach across the whole of the network.

### What is in the scheme?

- 1.6. The scheme focuses on a set of key elements:
  - **Core Commercial Services:** These are the main bus routes across the Tees Valley, generally within the urban areas, supported by selected inter-urban links that complement emerging rail-based proposals;
  - **Bus Priority and Infrastructure:** A comprehensive series of bus priority measures implemented to alter the traffic balance in favour of buses, to improve the punctuality and reliability of the service for existing and new passengers;

- **Passenger Facilities:** Improvements at all bus stops on the core commercial routes, including new passenger shelters, information displays and CCTV coverage, as well as new crossing points and better routes to and from bus stops;
  - **Vehicles:** Extension of the existing hours of operation, regular even frequencies across all designated services, with newer, high quality vehicles;
  - **Fares and Ticketing:** Work with the bus operators to promote cashless entry that reduces the need for the driver to handle cash fares, thereby reducing delays at the stops;
  - **Complementary Measures:** Provision of high quality accessible information and real time journey information (screens at stops, on-line and SMS messaging) and marketing of the new services;
- 1.7. We are also working with the principal bus operators, Arriva and Stagecoach, to develop a new Quality Partnership in order to guarantee the ongoing delivery of both infrastructure and services.

## 2. Bus Network Improvements

### Which services will benefit?

- 2.1. The main bus services that will benefit from the improvements are listed in the table below.

Service Number	Section of Route where Main Improvements Planned	Principal Operator
1	High Tunstall – Seaton Carew	Stagecoach
2	Darlington – Branksome	Arriva
4	Darlington – Minors Crescent	Arriva
5/5A/7/7A/8 (part)	Darlington – Newton Aycliffe	Arriva
5/5A/X5 (part)	Middlesbrough – Guisborough	Arriva
6	Clavering – South Fens	Stagecoach
7	Headland – Owton Manor	Stagecoach
7/7A	Stockton – Yarm	Arriva
9	Darlington – Springfield	Arriva
10	Darlington – Whinfield	Arriva
11	Darlington – Red Hall	Arriva
11	Middlesbrough – Coulby Newham	Stagecoach
12	Middlesbrough – Coulby Newham	Stagecoach
13A/13B	Darlington – Firthmoor	Arriva
14	Darlington – Skerne Park	Arriva
15	Roseworth – Thornaby	Arriva
17/17A/17B/17C	Middlesbrough – Thornaby	Arriva
27/27A	Middlesbrough – Netherfields	Arriva
27A/28/29/29A (part)	Middlesbrough – Marton	Arriva
36/37/38	Park End – Norton	Stagecoach
52	Stockton – Billingham	Stagecoach
58	Stockton – Hardwick	Stagecoach
59	Stockton – Summerville	Stagecoach
61	Stockton – Elton Park	Stagecoach
63	Middlesbrough – Redcar	Arriva
64/64A	Middlesbrough – Grangetown	Arriva
X6	Middlesbrough – Eaglescliffe	Arriva

- 2.2. However, other services will benefit from the complementary measures, such as cashless entry and improved information, as we would be looking to roll these out across the whole network. The list above includes the main services that operate along the corridors covered within the scheme and which will benefit directly from the main infrastructure measures.

### Which roads will be affected?

- 2.3. The roads that will be affected by the scheme are shown in Figure 2, and a selection of the main roads served, broken down by Borough, is included in the table below.

Darlington	Hartlepool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clifton Road</li> <li>• Corporation Road/Brinkburn Road</li> <li>• Haughton Road</li> <li>• Neasham Road</li> <li>• North Road</li> <li>• Woodland Road</li> <li>• Yarm Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brenda Road</li> <li>• Catcote Road</li> <li>• Marina Way/Cleveland Road</li> <li>• Oxford Road</li> <li>• Raby Road</li> <li>• Stockton Road</li> <li>• York Road</li> </ul>
Middlesbrough	Redcar & Cleveland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acklam Road</li> <li>• Cargo Fleet Lane</li> <li>• The Greenway</li> <li>• Marton Road/Stokesley Road</li> <li>• Ormesby Road</li> <li>• Newport Road/Stockton Road</li> <li>• Overdale Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middlesbrough Road</li> <li>• Ormesby Road/Eston Road</li> <li>• Normanby Road</li> <li>• West Dyke Road/Kirkleatham Lane</li> </ul>
Stockton-on-Tees	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bowesfield Lane</li> <li>• Bishopton Road</li> <li>• Durham Road</li> <li>• Mandale Road/Middlesbrough Road</li> <li>• Norton Road/Billingham Road</li> <li>• Oxbridge Lane</li> <li>• Yarm Road</li> </ul>	

- 2.4. As with the list of services, there will be other routes that will also benefit from the improvements – these are just the main corridors where the core network of services operate. There will also be improvements to bus interchanges in Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Redcar.



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### **How much will it cost?**

- 2.5. The current estimate for all the works is £57.6 million, which includes contingencies, but does not include the cost of new vehicles already provided by the operators in Darlington, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland.
- 2.6. Of this figure, around £50 million is planned for the bus priority measures and another £4 million is allocated for improvements at bus stops across the network.

### **Where is the funding coming from?**

- 2.7. The Government committed to provide £37.5 million towards the scheme in an announcement in March 2010, recognising the great deal of partnership working that had gone in to developing the project since 2004, and also the importance of a good bus service to the economic recovery of the Tees Valley.
- 2.8. This funding will be topped up with contributions from the Local Authorities and third parties, the latter concentrated around some larger scale future development proposals in Middlesbrough and Stockton.

### **What are the bus operators contributing?**

- 2.9. The bus operators have already invested in new vehicles in all five Boroughs, and they will continue to invest to reduce the average age of the fleet across the Tees Valley.
- 2.10. Through the partnership agreement, the bus operators will also be committing to running an agreed number of buses per hour on each of the main routes listed in the earlier table, as well as agreeing a new customer charter for each of the services also listed previously.
- 2.11. This charter will include agreed standards for items that passengers have told us are most important, such as driver behaviour, cleanliness of the bus and the provision of lower floor vehicles to allow easy access. The aim is to provide a high quality of service as well as better reliability.

### **What are the expected benefits?**

- 2.12. The overall benefit will be a better bus service for the people of the Tees Valley, and this is the main objective of the partnership.
- 2.13. Existing passengers have told us that they would prefer a more reliable bus service to help them plan to get to work, school, hospital or whatever else their journey purpose may be. So the bus priority measures have been designed to improve the reliability of the services by making them much more punctual – we aim to get the bus arriving at a particular stop on time more often.

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- 2.14. The target that we have set ourselves is to have 95% of services on the main corridors running “on time”, which is defined by the Traffic Commissioner as being between one minute early and five minutes late at the timing points along the route.
- 2.15. Meeting this target will provide a core bus service that is approaching the reliability of private car journeys, and the priority measures will improve the overall journey time for buses to try and gain an advantage over the private car, but without significantly increasing overall journey times for other vehicles.
- 2.16. These benefits should encourage more people to use the bus service, and the target that we have set ourselves is to increase passenger numbers by 7% over the 2007/08 baseline, over all of the routes included within this project, by 2016.
- 2.17. If we achieve this target, there will be environmental improvements as more people use buses, as well as health benefits as more people will be walking to and from bus stops rather than using their cars. An increase in bus patronage is likely to reduce car trips and therefore congestion.

#### **What are the main risks?**

- 2.18. The biggest single risk is cost. If the cost estimates at the end of the more detailed design work currently being undertaken exceed the funding available from all sources, then there will be a need to either apply for additional funding, or to prioritise those elements that are considered greater value for money.
- 2.19. Although there will be significant public sector funding cuts from the latter part of 2010 onwards, the Government funding is legally committed, and so will be protected from any future cuts. However, a number of the schemes do have significant contributions from the private sector, and these could be at risk given the economic position.
- 2.20. Almost all of the land required to build the improvements is within the ownership of the Local Authorities, and where land is required, it will be purchased within the next six months in order to allow the individual schemes affected to proceed.

#### **Who is leading the project?**

- 2.21. The project is being led by Tees Valley Unlimited, a partnership between the five Tees Valley Authorities, regional regeneration agencies and business leaders to drive forward the future development of the Tees Valley economy. The bus operators are also represented on the group managing the project.
- 2.22. Much of the technical development work is being undertaken by the Local Authorities and their nominated consultants.

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### **When will we see the improvements?**

- 2.23. Some improvements, notably in Hartlepool and Middlesbrough, are already underway and will be complete later in 2010.
- 2.24. The majority of the improvements are planned to be rolled out over a four year period, starting in June 2010, and with completion on all corridors planned for March 2014.

### **Will there be lots of disruption?**

- 2.25. Much of the construction work will take place on the routes listed in the earlier table, and there will inevitably be times when some roads are partially closed, services diverted, or work is required at bus stops. In these cases, alternative arrangements will be made wherever possible and the disruption will be kept to a minimum.
- 2.26. As well as information displays at bus stations and on the buses themselves, passengers can keep up to date with the progress of the works on the Tees Valley Unlimited transport portal – [www.connectteesvalley.com](http://www.connectteesvalley.com) – or via Local Authority websites.

### **What about the rest of the bus network?**

- 2.27. As mentioned, improvements to ticketing and information will be rolled out across the whole of the network as part of this project, not just on the routes listed in the earlier table. Other services will also benefit from the measures where these buses use the improvements planned, particularly around the town centres.
- 2.28. A review of the lesser used services will take place over the next year or two in order to ensure that the Tees Valley continues to benefit from a comprehensive and effective public transport network that meets the needs of residents.

### **What will happen next?**

- 2.29. Local Authorities will engage with the public to seek views on the various schemes within the overall project using appropriate methods. Please look out for local information over the coming months.
- 2.30. Further project updates will be provided at important times as work on the project progresses.

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### 3. Future Developments

#### **Will bus fares continue to rise?**

- 3.1. The measures in this project should increase the number of people using buses, and hence reduce the costs for bus operators. This should improve the financial returns across the network and reduce pressure on fares in the future.

#### **What about a Tees Valley Oyster Card?**

- 3.2. All of the Local Authorities in the North East have come together to develop a project called NESTI – North East Smart Ticketing Infrastructure, which has been allocated £10 million of regional funding to allow smartcards to be used on all bus services (and some rail services) across the North East.
- 3.3. By the end of 2012, it will be possible for a single smartcard to be used for travel almost anywhere in the North East. This will not only apply to holders of free concessionary travel passes but also to other passengers.
- 3.4. In the longer term, provided that the available funding is sufficient and as long as the right commercial partners can be found, it is planned to develop an “electronic purse”. It is also intended that, as long as passengers have loaded enough money to their smartcard, they can travel on any public transport service in the North East without having to pay with cash. This will be the equivalent of an Oyster card.
- 3.5. This project will make public transport even more attractive and easier to access. When accompanied by effective products and backed by marketing, it will attract further new passengers to public transport, reducing car travel even more than the levels that the bus improvements project will result in.

#### **What about future extensions?**

- 3.6. Tees Valley Unlimited is currently looking at its priorities for the next two investment periods, 2014 – 2019 and 2019 – 2024. As part of this work, we are examining even extensions to the high frequency bus network to serve new development areas, as well as park and ride opportunities. We are also looking at how to link the bus improvements planned with the proposals for Phase 1 of the Tees Valley Metro.
- 3.7. This work is at an early stage, however, and the focus of our efforts is on delivering the improvements for which funding has already been made available and achieving a real improvement in the bus service for everybody in the Tees Valley.

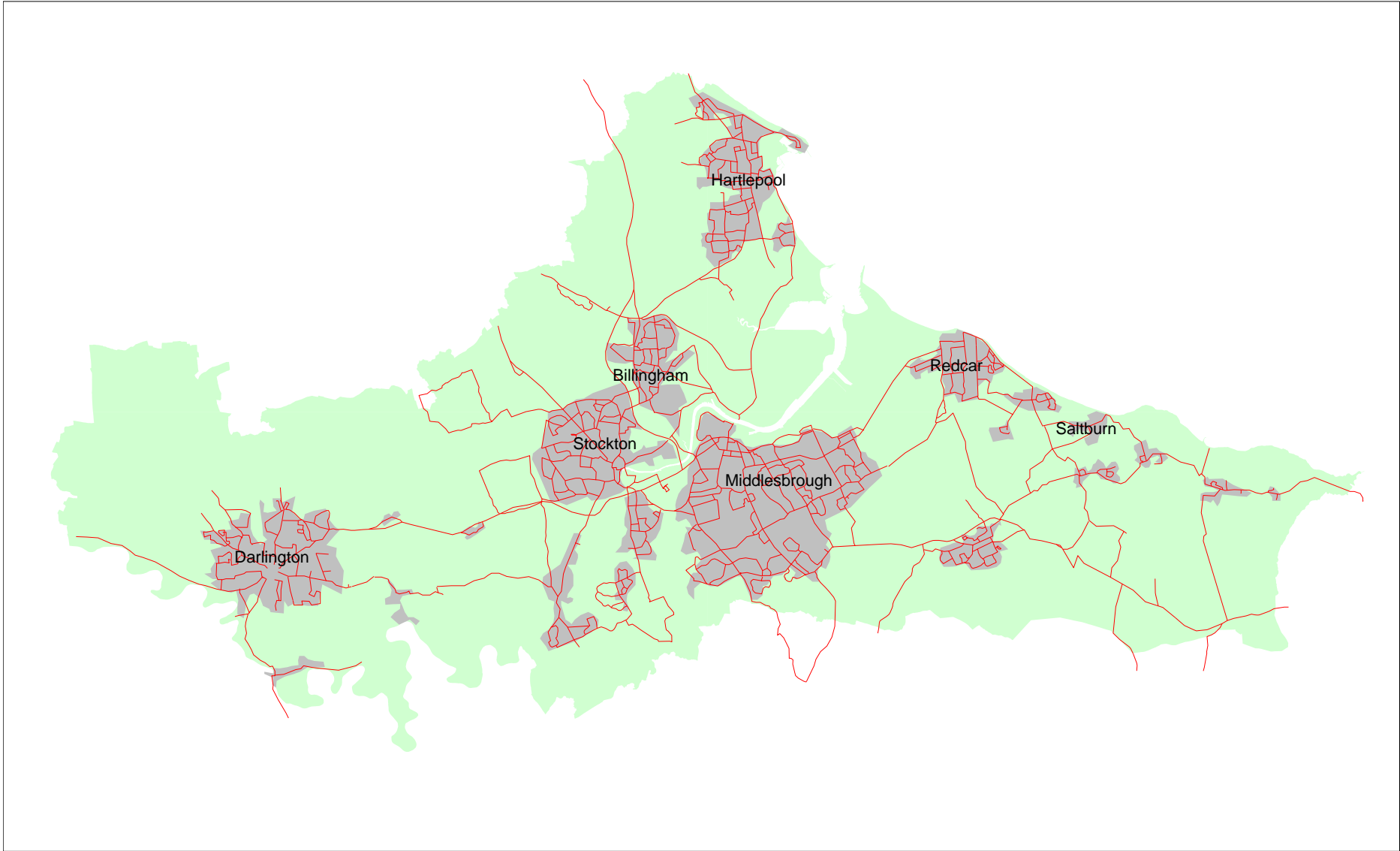


Figure 1

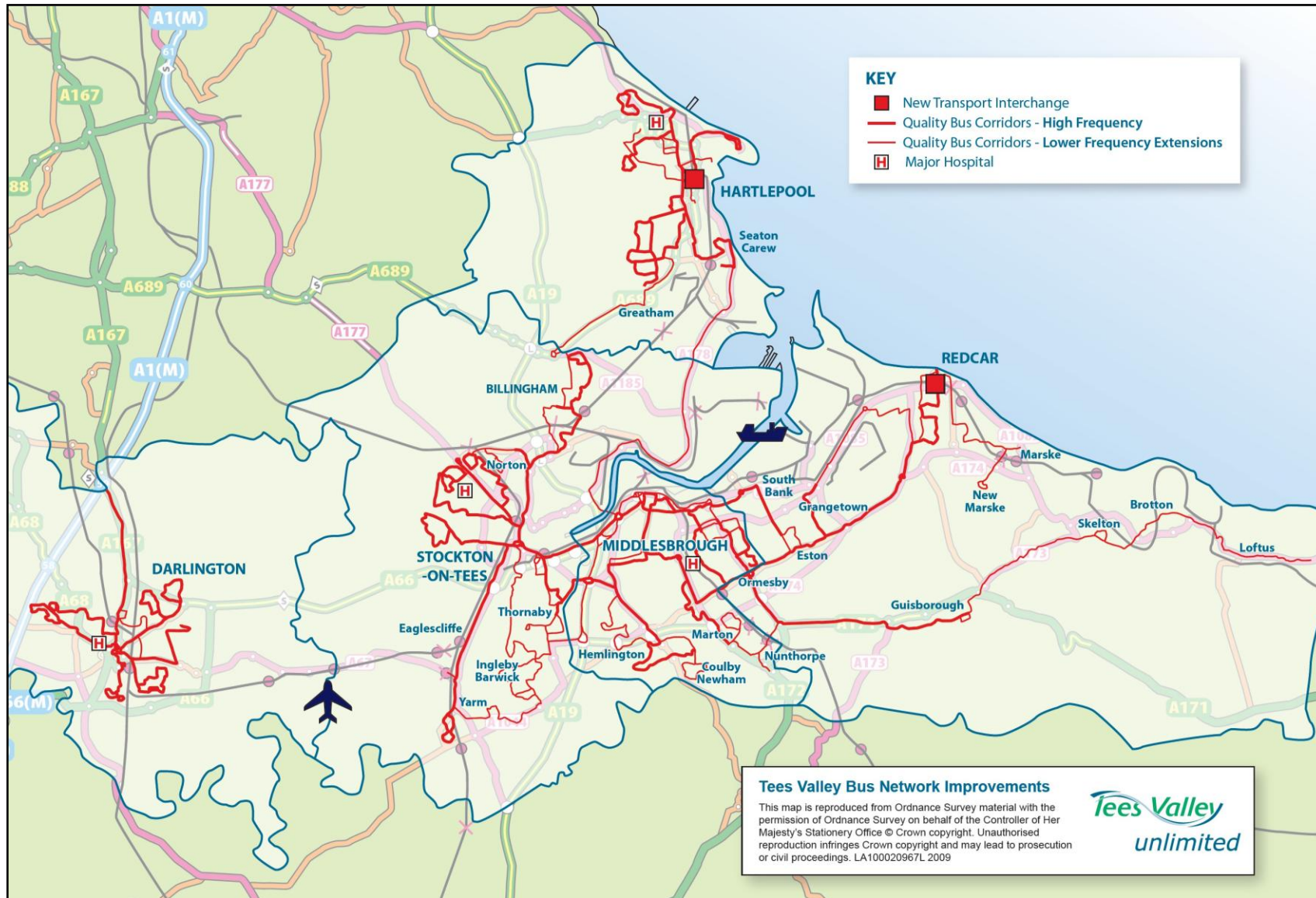


Figure 2



# Tees Valley unlimited



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