This edition of the North East Freight Partnership Annual Leaflet is a special one as we’re delighted to formally welcome Northumberland and Durham into the initiative. This offers exciting opportunities to increase the reach and scope of the Partnership as well as to receive contributions and inputs from organisations not previously involved.

The 2015-16 year will see exploration of how Durham and Northumberland can contribute to and benefit from their enhanced involvement.

The Partnership is now in its 11th year, and as such represents one of the longest running and most successful Freight Quality Partnerships in Europe. It is thanks to the efforts of all those involved that the initiative continues to be a success. In addition, AECOM has been retained to assist delivery of the Partnership.

This leaflet outlines the activities of the Partnership over the last year in addition to highlighting some of the forthcoming tasks to take place.
Quarterly Meetings

As usual, the Partnership quarterly meetings continue to be well attended – thanks to all those who have come along and contributed. We continue to identify interesting venues and speakers for the meetings. The June meeting saw Port of Sunderland hosting and included a fascinating explanation of the Port’s history, operations and future plans. Our next meeting is scheduled for early December (see website for details). It would be great to see you there.

Website and Social Media

We have updated the Partnership website to reflect the new wider remit of the initiative, in addition to the redesign completed in 2014. The website continues to represent the portal by which the activities of the Partnership are showcased. Information on meetings, FORS, Best Practice and mapping can also be accessed by visiting the website. Online mapping is now Smartphone compatible.

In addition to the Twitter account set up in 2014, we have also created a Partnership Facebook group. Please take a minute to ‘like’ our page and receive updates on the activities of the Partnership and relevant news and information. A LinkedIn group has also been set up.
The Partnership continues to promote the FORS initiative. FORS is an accredited membership scheme for businesses operating commercial vehicle fleets of all sizes. It offers impartial, independent advice and guidance to motivate them to improve their operation and environmental, social and economic performance.

In 2012 the North East was the first region outside London to adopt FORS, entitling freight and fleet companies operating in the region to join, and enjoy all the same exclusive benefits and discounts available to their counterparts who deliver into London.

At the time of writing there are 88 companies registered with FORS across the seven partner authorities, comprising 3,015 vehicles. This includes two Silver and 77 Bronze accredited companies.

In 2015 FORS became a fully national scheme, in addition to transitioning to a charging mechanism, which means operators now have to pay to become accredited.

The Partnership continues to support FORS in the region, providing advice and support as well as funding FORS Practitioner workshops for operators that deliver into or are based in the region. Please visit the Eventbrite website [www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/fleet-operator-recognition-scheme-fors-2410121576](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/fleet-operator-recognition-scheme-fors-2410121576) for more details.
Cycle logistics is growing as a means of delivering goods in urban areas across Europe. Increasing fuel costs, concerns over air quality, congestion and road safety have resulted in the promotion of greener and safer methods of facilitating ‘last-mile’ delivery. Delivery by bicycle is one such method.

Research associated with the North East Freight Partnership showed that there were no insurmountable barriers to the introduction of a cycle logistics operation somewhere in the region. The larger potential markets offered by Newcastle and Sunderland suggested that either of these locations were best placed to act as an initial base for a prospective cycle logistics organisation.

Research also demonstrated that there was a lack of a cycle logistics operation or even traditional cycle couriers anywhere in the region, despite the current and planned investment in cycling infrastructure and associated promotional activities.

A workshop (aimed at helping prospective cycle logistics companies) held by the European Cycle Logistics Federation demonstrated that there was interest in setting up cycle delivery firms in the area. Sugar Down Bakery, based in central Newcastle, attended and their representative stated they were looking to replace one of their vans with a cycle cargo bike. They were looking to deliver baked goods to their customers using a cargo bike, as the narrow streets and restrictions on general traffic movements in Newcastle city centre make this a more attractive option. In addition it was felt that the positive PR generated by the initiative would also aid the bakery’s business.

LSTF funding was used to match-fund the purchase of a cycle cargo bike in March 2015. The bakery is now in receipt of the cargo bike and is in consultation with Sustrans regarding potential delivery routes through the city. Deliveries commenced this summer.

The Partnership is also running a trial addressing the different types of HGV-Cycle safety technology available to determine what impact they may have on the safety of vulnerable road users. This includes equipment such as side proximity sensors, blindspot cameras and RFID technology. The Partnership has agreed with suppliers to provide free equipment to road freight operators who wish to participate in the trial and learn more about how it works.

A number of organisations have already signed up to take part in the trial and we would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in getting involved (see details on the back page of the leaflet). We anticipate that the trial will run from this month (October) through to 2016.
Safety of Vulnerable Road Users

The ever increasing number of cyclists on our roads brings with it potential for conflict with other road users, particularly freight vehicles. Accidents involving cyclists and goods vehicles have become a major source of concern in London and, as cycling levels rise in this region, it is important to avoid similar problems arising here.

For this reason, the Partnership considers it important to develop a clear understanding of the hazards involved and the solutions to minimise potential accidents.

As a result the Partnership offered a number of Safe Urban Driving courses, which provided the opportunity for HGV drivers to experience the road from a cyclists’ viewpoint, as well as providing classroom based training.

A total of 28 drivers took up places on the course in June and July last year.

We have arranged a further set of courses for the autumn and spring of 2015-16, in association with the Go Smarter project. Please visit www.safeurbandriving.co.uk/booking.html to book your drivers on any of the courses.
2014 also saw us provide support to students at NewRail, based in the School of Mechanical and Systems Engineering at Newcastle University. Both students successfully completed their dissertations relating to the movement of goods via the Metro system and the creation of a baggage delivery system for Newcastle Airport.

We are liaising with the University regarding support for further students in 2015-16.

The Partnership remains committed to promoting the opportunities for rail freight usage and rail freight infrastructure within the North East.

Since 2011, we have held twice-yearly Rail Partner Group meetings with invited stakeholders from the rail freight industry and organisations with an interest in rail freight; these have included Network Rail, Rail Freight Group, FTA, DB Schenker, CILT, local port operators, the University of Newcastle and other interested bodies.

The most recent meeting took place in the Stephenson Railway Museum and was followed by a fascinating tour of the facilities. The next meeting will take place at the AECOM offices, First Floor, One Trinity Gardens, Quayside, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 2HF on 18th November at 11am.
The freight industry took centre stage at the first Freight Partnership awards ceremony on 4th March 2015.

Recognising talent from across the sector, categories included Freight Driver of the Year, Operator of the Year and a special Lifetime Achievement Award.

Organised by the Partnership, the awards celebrate operators and drivers that were felt to have made a significant contribution to the goals of the Partnership.

Ian Rutherford from Abacus Haulage, Shiremoor, took the title of Freight Driver of the Year in recognition of his commitment to reducing fuel consumption and protecting the environment.

Alex Smiles Limited, a waste recycling logistics company based in Sunderland, took the coveted title of Operator of the Year. The judges commended the company’s commitment to the Partnership and their support for the North East Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS), including providing time for staff to train as FORS practitioners.

These awards will continue in 2015-16.
We have a number of exciting plans for the future. Keep an eye on the website and newsletters for updates. If you have any ideas for activities that the Partnership could progress we would like to hear them. Get in touch using the details below.

To find out more information about the Partnership, or if you would like to get involved through attendance at meetings or events or simply receive our quarterly email newsletter, please contact:

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