



Delegated Decision Report

29 February 2024

Subject: Northumberland Line Economic Corridor – Technical Capacity Fund
Report of: Senior Regeneration and Economic Development Officer
Portfolio: Housing, Land and Development

Report Summary:

In March 2021, NTCA Cabinet agreed the Northumberland Line Economic Corridor Strategy approach and allocated £500k towards an associated Technical Capacity Fund, to develop propositions and undertake feasibility studies for potential future long-term investment along the railway line. This was reinforced with the endorsement of the NLEC ten-point plan report at Cabinet September 2022 which sought to catalyse investment and maximise the impact of the line for businesses and communities. Cabinet also authorised the Chief Executive to approve businesses cases and delivery plans in consultation with Investment Panel and the Mayor.

In April 2023, the NTCA Technical Officers Group (TOG) and Investment Panel (IP) considered and gave indicative approval to the overall approach to implementing the NLEC action plan and the associated breakdown of funding, including the defined NLEC TCF projects; post workshop and consultation in December 2022. These projects now return for final approval, so that a delegated decision report may be signed off and the decision published.

To progress the work of the Northumberland Line Economic Corridor, alongside the final development of the Line itself, we are proposing to allocate £335,600 of funding from the NTCA NLEC Technical Capacity Fund to the three local authorities, as approved by NTCA Investment Panel in April 2023 and at TOG in February 2024. Full summary details are as below:

Recommendations:

The Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) in consultation with the Mayor and relevant Cabinet Member and in accordance with the scheme of delegation is recommended to:

- i. Approve £335,600 for the schemes as set out in the report.
- ii. Extend the lifetime of the NLEC TCF programme to December 2024.

1. Background Information, Proposals and Timetable for Implementation

The following five projects are all studies to be undertaken by specialists and commissioned by the three local authorities of the NTCA.

Proposal Name	Visitor Economy – Waggonways study: Description - <i>Phase 1 of this work is to develop a walking/cycling visitor trail that originates from the new Northumberland Park Station and incorporates existing cultural, heritage, and natural assets located along the former Waggonways network in North Tyneside and Northumberland. Phase 2 of the work would see designs of the sections where the route could be enhanced prepared to support delivery of these improvements through the regional City Regions Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) allocation.</i>
Lead Organisation	North Tyneside Council

Delivery Areas	Waggonways network North Tyneside and throughout neighbouring local authority (Newcastle; Northumberland) areas.
Timescales	March 2024 – December 2024
Project Value	£125,000
Grant / Loan amount requested	£125,000

Proposal Name	First and Last Mile Transport – Mobility Hub: Description - <i>This project will investigate the viability of developing each station into a 'Future Mobility Hub'. The ambition is for the hubs to expand the reach and patronage of each station and enhance the sustainable travel options available at local strategic housing and employment sites and support the wider visitor economy. As a key interchange station, Northumberland Park has been proposed for a pilot scheme once the line becomes operational.</i>
Lead Organisation	North Tyneside Council
Delivery Areas	All NLEC Stations
Timescales	March 2024 – December 2024
Project Value	£75,000
Grant / Loan amount requested	£75,000

Proposal Name	First and Last Mile – local transport study: Description - <i>This project will carry out a feasibility study of an active travel corridor through Choppington which would provide improved connections to the new stations at Ashington and Bedlington.</i>
Lead Organisation	Northumberland County Council
Delivery Areas	Linking Choppington ward (Northumberland) to Ashington and Bedlington Stations.
Timescales	June 2024 – December 2024
Project Value	£9,100
Grant / Loan amount requested	£9,100

Proposal Name	First and Last mile transport study: Description - <i>A study of public transport systems in and around Newcastle Central Station to identify key requirements for delivering improved modal connectivity.</i>
Lead Organisation	Newcastle City Council
Delivery Areas	Newcastle Central
Timescales	March 2024 – December 2024
Project Value	£56,500
Grant / Loan amount requested	£56,500

Proposal Name	Manors Masterplanning study: Description - <i>A masterplan study for Manors to inform the delivery of longer term aspirations for targeted regeneration around Manors train station</i>
Lead Organisation	Newcastle City Council
Delivery Areas	Manors, East Central Newcastle
Timescales	March 2024 – December 2024
Project Value	£70,000
Grant / Loan amount requested	£70,000

NTCA Budget Implications: The allocation of the funding to the individual studies outlined above leaves £49,400 in the NLEC TCF pot.

2. Funding Profile:

FUNDING			
	2023/24	2024/25	Total
NTCA NLEC Technical Capacity Fund	£115,000	£335,600	£450,600
Match Funding	-	-	-
Total	£115,000	£335,600	£450,600

3. NTCA Outputs/KPIs:

The following activity is in line with the original KPI's set out for the Northumberland Line Economic Corridor:

KPIs
New Waggonways walking/cycling visitor trail
New plan to develop each station into future Mobility Hub
Choppington Active Travel Corridor feasibility study
Newcastle Central Public Transport systems study
A full Manors Station Area Masterplan planning document

4 Potential Impact on Objectives:

4.1 These projects relate to supporting economic activities which are highlighted in the Devolution Deal, with the Northumberland Line identified as being a key economic corridor.

5. Key Risks:

5.1 The risks associated with this application are mitigated through funding conditions and Grant Funding Agreements, albeit all relate to minor research and consultation exercises.

6. Financial and Other Resources Implications:

6.1. The allocation for these projects was set out and approved at Cabinet in 2021 and subsequently at Investment Panel in April 2023. It has subsequently been confirmed that £49,400 will remain in the NTCA NLEC TCF pot post allocation.

7. Legal Implications:

7.1 The comments of the Interim Monitoring Officer are included in the report.

8. Equalities Implications:

8.2 NTCA is committed to driving equality and diversity. The measures contained within this paper will help the NTCA meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010, particularly around advancing equality of opportunity for those with protected characteristics, particularly with regard to socio-economic background.

9. Inclusive Economy Implications:

9.1 The project sets out a range of interventions that will help grow the economy of the North of Tyne in an inclusive manner providing opportunities for communities to access sustainable transport options linking to high quality jobs; plan for future growth and to both grow the Visitor Economy within the region and enable access to a healthy visitor trails.

10. Climate Change Implications:

10.1 The support to the NLEC helps enable access to sustainable, accessible, green transport solutions.

11. Consultation and Engagement

11.1 Detailed consultation has been undertaken with all relevant stakeholders on several occasion throughout the development of the proposals herein.

12. Appendices

12.1 None

13. Background Papers:

<https://www.northoftyne-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Approved-Minutes-1.pdf>

14. Contact Officers

Ian Freshwater – Senior Regeneration and Economic Development Officer - ian.freshwater@northoftyne-ca.gov.uk

15. Sign-off

1) Mayor and Portfolio holder: Yes	2) Director/SMT Yes	3) Chief Finance Officer: Yes	4) Monitoring Officer: Yes	5) Head of Paid Service: Yes
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