

Title: Bus Service Improvement Plan - Bus Priority Infrastructure Approval: Gateshead A167 Windsor Road
Report of: Tobyn Hughes, Director of Transport
Portfolio: Transport

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Gateshead A167 Windsor Road scheme which has a total project value of £68,572.95 of Bus Service Improvement Plan funding.

This scheme stems from the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Bus Priority Infrastructure – Tranche 1 Programme Business Case (PBC) which has a total value of £20.2 million and was agreed and approved in July 2023 by the North East Joint Transport Committee. This decision was ratified at the North East CA Cabinet in July 2024.

Proposals within the Bus Priority Infrastructure – Tranche 1 PBC are required to go through scheme level assurance inclusive of detailed consultation, local approval and S151 sign off from the Local Authority proposing the scheme prior to sign off. These requirements have now been fulfilled, and in line with thresholds set out in the Single Assurance Framework and the delegation provided to the Chief Executive agreed by Cabinet in July 2024, approval is sought to establish a Grant Funding Agreement with Gateshead Council to progress the delivery of the scheme.

Recommendations

The Chief Executive is recommended to:

- Approve the Gateshead Windsor Road Street scheme which has a total project value of £68,572.95
- Enable the payment of funding and the establishment of a Grant Funding Agreement.

A. Summary of Investment Proposal (Context)

| Project Outline | |
|---|--|
| Funding Source | Bus Service Improvement Plan Capital Programme |
| Proposal Name | Bus Priority Infrastructure - Gateshead A167 Windsor Road |
| Lead Organisation | Gateshead Council |
| Delivery Areas | Gateshead |
| Start Date | June 2025 |
| Financial End Date | August 2025 |
| Practical completion date (date by which all outputs will be achieved) | August 2025 |
| Total Project Value | £68,572.95 |
| Grant Amount Requested | £68,572.95 |
| Budget Implications | The requested grant can be met within the overall BSIP capital budget. |

1. Background

- 1.1 The North East's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is the region's response to the Government's National Bus Strategy for England which was initially published in March 2021 and

has subsequently been refreshed on an annual basis. The BSIP set out a clear ambition to improve real time passenger information by moving to a next generation system.

- 1.2 At Joint Transport Committee (JTC) in March 2023, Members approved a funding award of £163.5m of Bus Service Improvement Plan funding, of which £73.75m was allocated for capital delivery. This approval confirmed funding allocations to enable BSIP Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be delivered.
- 1.3 In July 2023, JTC Members approved to the release of £20,250,872 of BSIP capital funding for the “Bus Priority Infrastructure – Tranche 1” programme and also agreed to delegate authority to the Managing Director, Transport North East, following consultation with the Monitoring Officer, and the Chief Finance Officer, to carry out all relevant tasks to implement the Joint Transport Committee’s agreement once successful appraisals of schemes have been completed in line with the North East Transport Assurance Framework, including the payment of funding and the establishment of Grant Funding Agreements
- 1.4 At the July 2024, meeting of the North East CA Cabinet, Members re-confirmed the decisions previously made by JTC and delegated authority to the Chief Executive to enter into the relevant decisions in agreement with Monitoring Officer and the Director of Finance and Investment and in consultation with the Mayor and the relevant Cabinet Member.
- 1.5 In line with the Single Assurance Framework and in line with the delegation agreed at July 2024 Cabinet, individual scheme assurance statements have been progressed which set out the final costings and designs for schemes within the “Bus Priority Infrastructure – Tranche 1” programme.

2. The Investment Proposal

The Gateshead A167 Windsor Road scheme will see a small-scale improvement on the northbound carriageway of the A167 at Windsor Road. A bus lay-by will be built out to reduce delays to buses as they leave the stop and merge with general traffic, enabling faster journey times and punctuality improvements.

This project is part of the wider Bus Priority Infrastructure Tranche 1 Programme which involves schemes both along the A167 corridor in Gateshead and Durham, including the Gateshead A167 Low Fell scheme which was approved in March 2024.. These proposals are focused on improvements to the road network to significantly improve the punctuality and reliability of bus services across the North East.

A fully compliant partial full business with reserved matters was approved in July 2023, this has now been supplemented by a specific assurance statement which confirms that this project can be fully delivered by March 2026, and meets the overarching objectives of the BSIP, the Local Transport Plan, and the wider North East CA priorities.

2.1 Outputs and Outcomes

| Outputs | 25/26 | Total |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| New Northbound built out bus layby | 1 | 1 |

| Description of Outcomes | Timeframe for achievement | Totals |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Business users & transport providers - the improvements will benefit the bus operators through journey time savings and improved reliability. | 1 year post completion | Increase from baseline (identified in M&E) |
| Reliability impact on business users – improvements will generate more | 1 year post completion | Increase from baseline (identified in |

| | | |
|---|------------------------|--|
| reliable journey times across the network. | | M&E) |
| Wider economic impacts – improvements across a wide area for bus priority will slightly improve accessibility which will support local economic growth by relieving congestion which may help induce investment and impact employment and productivity. | 1 year post completion | Increase from baseline (identified in M&E) |
| Air quality and greenhouse gas emissions – reduced fuel consumption and tailpipe emissions due to lower levels of congestion and improved journey times for buses. | 1 year post completion | Increase from baseline (identified in M&E) |

2.2 Timetable for Implementation

| Milestone | Forecast Date |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Grant funding Agreements | June 2025 |
| Delivery Commences | August 2025 |
| Delivery Completion | August 2025 |

2.3 Evaluation

Evaluation will be undertaken by the scheme promoter in partnership with the Enhanced Partnership Team; a monitoring and evaluation plan has been produced and will be embedded into the forthcoming Grant Funding Agreement.

2.4 Appraisal

Independent appraisal identified no fundamental issues to programme and scheme delivery or viability. This provides comfort that proposals are sufficiently developed and pose limited delivery risk.

2.5 RAG Assessment

The project's assurance statement has been assured by specialist independent appraisers who have provided the following summary:

| Overall RAG assessment | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Risk Rating | Strategic case | Green |
| | Commercial case | Green |
| | Economic case | Green |
| | Financial case | Green |
| | Management case | Green |
| | Overall rating | Green |

2.6 Recommended Conditions of Funding

The award of funding would be **subject to the following proposed funding conditions:**

| No. | Condition |
|-----|---|
| 1. | All funding must be defrayed by March 2026 |
| 2. | All funding can only be spent on scheme deliverables set out in the Assurance statement |

B. Potential Impact on North East Combined Authority Objectives

By improving the reliability and punctuality of bus services across the region, thereby making public transport a more appealing option, this project supports the strategic aspirations of the North East CA, as detailed in the Corporate Plan which aims is to increase opportunity, create more well-paid employment, improve transport connections, and build a greener North East.

C. Key risks

The key risk associated with this report is the ability of scheme promoters to defray BISP capital expenditure within the overall BSIP programme timescales required by the Department for Transport (March 2026). Approval and agreement of the proposals outlined within this report aid in the delivery of interventions within the required timescales.

D. Financial and other resources implications

The financial profile for the programme is outlined below:

| Funding source- BSIP Capital | 2025/26 | Total |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Gateshead Council</i> | £68,572.95 | £68,572.95 |
| Total (£) | £68,572.95 | £68,572.95 |

Status of match funding:

No match funding is required for BSIP.

Funding availability:

The funding which has been identified in this report is fully allocated and has previously been committed to with the Bus Priority Infrastructure – Tranche 1 programme, approved by the Joint Transport Committee in July 2023 and re-confirmed by the North East CA Cabinet in July 2024.

| Name of Programme/Scheme | Date of Approval Sought/agreed | Value £ |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| Programme: BSIP Bus Priority Infrastructure- Tranche 1 Programme Business Case Approval. | Delegated Decision at Joint Transport Committee in July 2023 (this was ratified at Cabinet approval in July 2024) | £20,250,872 |
| Approved Scheme: BSIP Bus Priority Infrastructure Tranche 1 – Gateshead A167 Low Fell scheme | March 2024 | £206,555 |
| Approval Sought: BSIP Bus Priority Infrastructure Tranche 1 – Gateshead A167 Windsor Road scheme approval | Via Delegated Decision | £68,572.95 |
| Total BSIP Bus Priority Tranche 1 Programme Funding Remaining | - | £19,975,744.05 |

The remaining budget identified above, is sufficient to fund all remaining schemes within the overall programme.

E. Legal implications

Grant Funding Agreements (GFA) are being developed, prepared, and will be approved by Newcastle City Council Legal for onwards agreement with Gateshead Council as scheme promoter. GFAs will minimise any legal risks and ensure the North East CA's obligations to the Department for Transport in regard to BSIP funding are met, these obligations will be appropriately transferred to each scheme promoter through the GFA. Clear roles and responsibilities have been established concerning the design and development of proposed infrastructure, including ensuring compliance with Health and Safety and CDM regulations.

F. Equalities implications

The North East CA follows the Public Sector Equality duty, and this report has due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010. In June 2024 the North East CA adopted equality objectives to reflect the different roles of the Combined Authority as an employer, a commissioner and deliverer of services, and a civic leader. This project will improve reliability and punctuality of bus services, and a reduction in journey times by reducing pinch points across the corridor.

G. Consultation and engagement

Both the wider BSIP Bus Priority Infrastructure programme and this project has been consulted on and considered through Heads of Transport of the LA7 constituent authorities and at the March 2024 meeting of the Joint Transport Committee. BSIP capital funding was re-confirmed and allocated at the July 2024 meeting of the North East CA Cabinet.

Gateshead Council have undertaken consultation and stakeholder engagement activities as part of scheme development, including with local residents and business.

H. Appendices

N/A

I. Background papers

[North East Combined Authority Cabinet Meeting July 2024](#)

J. Contact officers.

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K. Glossary

North East CA – North East Combined Authority

BSIP- Bus Service Improvement Plan

JTC- Joint Transport Committee

DfT- Department for Transport

L. Consultee

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Cabinet Member: | Director/Head of Service: | Director of Finance and Investment: | Monitoring Officer: |
| Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |