

Title: Bus Service Improvement Plan – A185 Jarrow Slake Scheme Approval
Report of: Tobyn Hughes, Director of Transport
Portfolio: Transport

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the A185 Jarrow Slake scheme which has a total project value of £424k, funded through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) capital programme.

This scheme is fully funded through the BSIP capital programme allocation of £40.468m, approved by the North East Combined Authority (North East CA) Cabinet on 30 July 2024, which delegated authority to the Chief Executive to approve investments within the allocation and to enter into associated grant funding agreements.

Proposals within the BSIP Capital programme 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 complete a Grant Funding Agreement with South Tyneside Council to progress the delivery of the scheme.

Recommendations

The Chief Executive is recommended to approve the A185 Jarrow Slake scheme (total project value of £424,468) and the completion of the necessary grant funding agreement with South Tyneside Council.

A. Summary of Investment Proposal (Context)

Project Outline	
Funding Source	Bus Service Improvement Plan Capital Programme
Proposal Name	Bus Priority Infrastructure: A185 Jarrow Slake Scheme
Lead Organisation	South Tyneside Council
Delivery Areas	South Tyneside
Start Date	February 2026
Financial End Date	September 2026
Practical completion date (date by which all outputs will be achieved)	August 2026
Total Project Value	£424,468
Grant Amount Requested	£424,468
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 bus punctuality and reliability across the bus network.

- 1.2 At Joint Transport Committee (JTC) in March 2023, Members accepted a funding award of £163.5m of Bus Service Improvement Plan funding, of which £73.75m was allocated for capital delivery. This confirmed funding allocations to enable BSIP Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be delivered.
- 1.3 In July 2023, the JTC approved £33.29m of BSIP Capital funding for investment in Bus Priority Infrastructure and Intelligent Transport Systems. In March 2024, JTC Members approved and allocated the remaining unallocated BSIP capital funding totalling £40.468m.
- 1.4 At the 30 July 2024, meeting of the North East CA Cabinet, Members re-confirmed the decisions previously made by the JTC and delegated authority to the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Mayor, relevant Cabinet Member, Monitoring Officer and Director of Finance and Investment) to enter into agreements for up to £40.468m of BSIP capital funding (Cabinet Decision C24/7/24 (9)).
- 1.5 In line with the Single Assurance Framework and the delegation agreed at July 2024 Cabinet, the A185 Jarrow Slake scheme has come forward for approval following successful assurance.

2. The Investment Proposal

The A185 Jarrow Slake scheme will provide a traffic signal junction improvement through the upgrading of signal equipment to improve journey times for buses travelling along a primary bus corridor. Upgrading the traffic signals will enable better highways management of traffic and facilitate priority for buses at the junction by linking into the Urban Traffic Management Control system (UTMC).

A scheme specific assurance statement which confirms that this project can be fully delivered by August 2026, and meets the overarching objectives of the BSIP, the Local Transport Plan, and the wider North East CA priorities has been produced and appraised, confirming that the scheme is recommended for approval.

2.1 Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	26/27	Total
Full upgrade of existing signal equipment, including controller, ducting, and signal heads at A185 Jarrow Slake Junction	12 signals	12

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 monitoring and evaluation (M&E))
Reliability impact on business users – improvements will generate more reliable journey times across the network.	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	January 2026
Delivery Commences	February 2026
Delivery Completion	August 2026

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 appraised 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 2027
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

The Mayor's Local Transport Plan (LTP) and its associated Delivery Plan are centred on delivering a fully integrated public transport system, inclusive of better travel planning to ensure smoother journeys and a key focus on safety and security for women and girls. The proposals included within this report directly contribute towards achieving the objectives of the LTP, and in turn, support the North East Combined Authority corporate objectives of delivering a Home of real opportunity and a North East we are proud to call home. The benefits that will be realised through the delivery of this BSIP funded scheme will improve the attractiveness and reliability of public transport, leading to more people choosing to travel sustainably.

C. Key risks

The key risk associated with this report is the ability of scheme promoters to defray BSIP capital expenditure within the overall BSIP programme timescales required by the Department for Transport (March 2027). 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:

BSIP Capital	2025/26	Total
<i>South Tyneside Council</i>	£424,468	£424,468
Total (£)	£424,468	£424,468

Status of match funding:

No match funding is required for BSIP.

Funding availability:

The funding which has been identified in this report is allocated to the scheme seeking approval through the Cabinet decision provided in July 2024 (C24/7/24).

E. Legal implications

The comments of the Monitoring Officer have been included in this report.

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 scheme will improve bus passenger journey experience through accessibility and safety enhancements to bus stop environment and waiting facilities.

G. Consultation and engagement

Both the wider BSIP programme and this project has been consulted on and considered by 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.

South Tyneside 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

GFA – Grant Funding Agreement

CDM – The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

UTMC- Urban Traffic Management Control System

L. Consultee

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