

**Title:** Bus Service Improvement Plan- Safe and Accessible Bus Stops Approval: Tyne and Wear Programme.

**Report of:** Tobyn Hughes, Director of Transport

**Portfolio:** Transport

**Report Summary**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for Tyne and Wear Safe and Accessible Bus Stop Programme which has a total project value of £7.1 million.

This scheme is fully funded through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) capital programme allocation of £40.468m, approved by the North East Combined Authority (North East CA) Cabinet on 30 July 2024, which also 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 and local approvals 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 Nexus to progress the delivery of the Safe and Accessible Bus Stop Programme on behalf of the five Tyne and Wear authorities.

**Recommendations**

The Chief Executive is recommended to approve the Tyne and Wear Safe and Accessible Bus Stops programme which has a total value of £7,103,505.61 funded by the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) capital programme and the completion of the necessary grant funding agreement with Nexus for delivery.

**A. Summary of Investment Proposal (Context)**

Project Outline	
<b>Funding Source</b>	Bus Service Improvement Plan Capital Programme
<b>Proposal Name</b>	Safe and Accessible Bus Stops
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Nexus
<b>Delivery Areas</b>	Tyne and Wear
<b>Start Date</b>	February 2026
<b>Financial End Date</b>	March 2027
<b>Practical completion date (date by which all outputs will be achieved)</b>	December 2026
<b>Total Project Value</b>	£7,103,505.61
<b>Grant Amount Requested</b>	£7,103,505.61
<b>Budget Implications</b>	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 make bus travel faster, more affordable, and a more attractive offer to customers.

- 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 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 Tyne and Wear Safe and Accessible Bus Stop Improvement Project, has come forward for approval following successful assurance.

## **2. The Investment Proposal**

The Tyne and Wear Safe and Accessible Bus Stop Programme will see the delivery of a range of measures to 431 bus stops, delivered by Nexus on behalf of the five Tyne and Wear Authorities. Key interventions include:

- Provision of new shelters and bus stop flags
- Upgrades to existing shelters, including enhanced information provision
- Improved lighting and seating at key bus shelters
- A range of improvements to the surrounding public realm to support accessibility, including increasing pavement widths and raising kerbs to support those with mobility impairments who have the greatest difficulty in accessing services.

This project is part of the wider BSIP Safe and Accessibility Bus Stops Programme. Approval has already been granted to Durham County Council for phase 1 of their bus stop improvements project. Future approvals anticipated as part of this programme include Northumberland County Council bus stop improvements project, and Durham bus stop improvements (phase 2) project.

An Assurance Statement has been produced which confirms that this project can be fully delivered by March 2027, and meets the overarching objectives of the BSIP, the Mayor's Local Transport Plan, and the wider North East CA priorities outlined in the corporate plan. The assurance statement has been independently appraised by retained transport assurance consultants, who have recommended the project for approval.

### **2.1 Outputs and Outcomes**

<b>Outputs</b>	<b>26/27</b>	<b>Total</b>
Removal and Installation of new Shelter	160	<b>160</b>
Installation of New Shelter	149	<b>149</b>
New bus stop Flags	122	<b>122</b>
Accessibility improvements including raised kerbs	23	<b>23</b>
New seating provision	113	<b>113</b>
New lighting at shelters	173	<b>173</b>

<b>Description of Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeframe for achievement</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Improved access to bus network for a greater number of people.	3 years post completion	Increase from baseline (identified in M&E)

Improved customer satisfaction	3 years post completion	Increase from baseline (identified in M&E)
Increased access to sites of employment, further education, health and leisure opportunities.	3 years post completion	Increase from baseline (identified in M&E)
Improved attractiveness of public transport	3 years post completion	Increase from baseline (identified in M&E)

## 2.2 Timetable for Implementation

Milestone	Forecast Date
Grant funding Agreements	February 2026
Delivery Commences	February 2026
Delivery Completion	December 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 delivery or viability. This provides comfort that proposals are sufficiently developed and pose limited delivery risk.

## 2.5 RAG Assessment

The project's full business case 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
	<b>Overall rating</b>	<b>Green</b>

## 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 project business case.

## 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, accessibility, safety and security 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:

<b>Scheme Name</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Nexus Safe and Accessible Bus Stop Improvement Project</i>	£7,103,505	<b>£7,103,505</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,103,505</b>	<b>£7,103,505</b>

All amounts are fully funded from the BSIP capital programme, the grant recipient is Nexus, who will delivery works on behalf of the five Tyne and Wear Local Authorities.

#### **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 schemes seeking approval through the Cabinet decision provided in July 2024 (C24/7/24).

### E. Legal implications

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

### 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 distinct roles of the Combined Authority as an employer, a commissioner and deliverer of services, and a civic leader. This scheme will improve bus passengers 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 approved and allocated at the July 2024 meeting of the North East CA Cabinet.

Nexus have undertaken consultation and stakeholder engagement activities with each of the relevant local authorities, local ward members, the public and businesses to compile the delivery programme.

**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  
**FIB:** Finance and Investment Board  
**DfT:** Department for Transport  
**GFA:** Grant Funding Agreement  
**CDM:** The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations  
**M&E:** Monitoring and Evaluation

**L. Consultee**

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