

Title: Bus Service Improvement Plan - Bus Priority Infrastructure: Gateshead Old Durham Road Scheme and Gateshead Cuthbert Street Scheme Approvals.

Portfolio: Transport

Report of: Tobyn Hughes, Director of Transport

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to enter into Grant Funding Agreements for the following Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) capital schemes:

- Gateshead Old Durham Road, Gateshead Council, £334k
- Gateshead Cuthbert Street, Gateshead Council, £372k

The total value of the schemes associated with this report is £706k. Schemes are fully funded through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) capital programme allocation of £40.468million 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 for each of the schemes detailed above, 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 Grant Funding Agreements with promoting authorities to progress capital delivery.

Recommendations

The Chief Executive is recommended to approve and agree to enter into the necessary grant funding agreements with Gateshead Council, for the following schemes:

- BSIP – Gateshead Old Durham Road (Gateshead Council) which has a total BSIP Capital funding allocation of £333,888.69.
- BSIP- Gateshead Cuthbert Street (Gateshead Council) which has a total BSIP Capital funding allocation of £372,029.80.

A. Summary of Investment Proposals

Project Outline	
Funding Source	Bus Service Improvement Plan Capital
Proposal Name	Gateshead Old Durham Road
Delivery Areas	Gateshead
Start Date	April 2026
Financial End Date	September 2026
Practical completion date (date by which all outputs will be achieved)	June 2026
Total Project (s) Value	£333,888.69

Grant Amount Requested	£333,888.69
Budget Implications	The requested grant can be met within the overall BSIP capital budget.
Project Outline	
Funding Source	Bus Service Improvement Plan Capital
Proposal Name	Gateshead Cuthbert Street
Delivery Areas	Gateshead
Start Date	April 2026
Financial End Date	October 2026
Practical completion date (date by which all outputs will be achieved)	July 2026
Total Project (s) Value	£372,029.80
Grant Amount Requested	£372,029.80
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 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 approval also 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 in line with the delegation agreed at July 2024 Cabinet, the schemes outlined in Section A, have now come forward for approval following successful assurance.

2. The Investment Proposals

- **Gateshead Old Durham Road - £334k**

This scheme involves extending the existing northbound bus lane to improve bus journey times and service reliability along Old Durham Road, a key corridor serving residential areas and major

trip generators. The scheme includes carriageway widening, new kerbing, resurfacing, and associated traffic signs and road markings required to deliver the extended bus lane. These measures are intended to prioritise bus movements, reduce delays to public transport, and support modal shift by improving the efficiency and attractiveness of bus travel.

- **Gateshead Cuthbert Street - £372k**

This scheme includes an extension of the right turn pocket from Bensham Road into Cuthbert Street to maximise vehicle storage capacity. This is intended to reduce delays to buses travelling southbound on Bensham Road, which are currently affected by right turning traffic. This scheme is part of a wider strategy to create safer, more attractive environments, especially for bus users and people walking and cycling. The improvements also support the Council's broader plans for central Gateshead and the Quays, including new and proposed housing developments to the east and west of Redheugh Bridge.

3. Outputs and Outcomes

For the two schemes seeking approval the following outputs apply:

Gateshead Old Durham Road

Outputs	26/27	Total
New bus lane (metres)	135	135

Gateshead Cuthbert Street

Outputs	26/27	Total
Extension of right-hand turn enabling free flow of buses (metres)	165	165
New Signalised Crossing	1	1

Outcomes

For all schemes seeking approval, the following outcomes apply

Description of Outcomes	Timeframe for achievement	Totals
Improved bus service reliability on corridor	5 years post completion	Increase from baseline (identified in M&E)
Improved journey times on corridor	5 years post completion	Increase from baseline (identified in M&E)
Increased bus patronage on corridor	5 years post completion	Increase from baseline (identified in M&E)

4. Timetable for Implementation

Anticipated milestones are outlined in section A (Summary of Investment Proposals).

5. Evaluation

Evaluation will be undertaken by the scheme promoter for each scheme, 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.

6. Appraisal

Independent appraisal identified no fundamental issues to programme delivery or viability of all schemes contained within this report. This provides comfort that proposals are sufficiently developed and pose limited delivery risk.

7. RAG Assessment

Both programme level business cases and assurance statements have been assured by specialist independent appraisers who have provided the following summary across each scheme presented for decision:

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

8. Recommended Conditions of Funding

The award of funding will 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 LTP and its associated Delivery Plan are centred on delivering a fully integrated public transport system, better travel planning to ensure smoother journeys, with a key focus on safety and security of women and girls. The proposals included within this report directly contribute towards achieving these aims, 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 each BSIP funded scheme included in this report will improve the attractiveness, accessibility and reliability of public transport, leading to more people choosing to travel sustainably, journey time savings for people choosing to travel sustainably and a reduction in harmful emissions owing to an uptake in public transport.

C. Key risks

The key risk associated with this report is the ability of the scheme promoters to defray BSIP capital expenditure within the overall BSIP programme timescales as required by the Department for

Transport (March 2027). Approval and agreement of the proposals outlined within this report will aid in the delivery of the interventions within the required timescales.

D. Financial and other resources implications

The current estimated financial profile for schemes seeking approval is included below:

Scheme name	2026/7	Total
Gateshead Old Durham Road	£333,888.69	£333,888.69
Gateshead Cuthbert Street	£372,029.80	£372,029.80
Total	£705,918.49	£705,918.49

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 to the schemes seeking approval via a Cabinet decision 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.

G. Consultation and engagement

Extensive consultation and engagement was undertaken in the development and agreement of the BSIP programme, as such the schemes included within this report have been consulted on and considered by Heads of Transport of the LA7 constituent authorities, Transport Advisory Board and at the July 2024 meeting of the North East CA Cabinet.

Gateshead Council have undertaken consultation and engagement for each of the schemes outlined in this report. This includes engagement with local ward members, the public and businesses, which has been evidenced through the assurance process.

H. Appendices

None.

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

TOG: Technical officers Group

FIB- Finance and Investment Board

DfT: Department for Transport

GFA: Grant Funding Agreement

CDM- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations

L. Consultee

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