

**Title:** Bus Service Improvement Plan - Bus Priority Scheme Approvals

**Portfolio:** Transport

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

## Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek the Chief Executive's approval to enter into Grant Funding Agreements for five Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) capital schemes, listed in the Recommendations section of this report, which have now produced their final assurance statements.

The total value of schemes associated with this report is £12.6 million. 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 the completion of grant funding agreements for the following schemes:

- BSIP – Gateshead Askew Road (Gateshead Council) which has a total BSIP capital funding allocation of £2,027,289.82
- BSIP – Boldon Abingdon Way (South Tyneside Council) which has a total BSIP Capital funding allocation of £1,779,000.00
- BSIP – Boldon Hubert Street (South Tyneside Council) which has a total BSIP Capital funding allocation of £2,965,256.89
- BSIP – North Tyneside A188/A189 Corridor (North Tyneside Council) which has a total BSIP Capital funding allocation of £2,792,422.00
- BSIP – Dalton Park (Durham County Council) which has a total BSIP Capital funding allocation of £3,199,400.76

### A. Summary of Investment Proposals

Project Outline	
<b>Funding Source</b>	Bus Service Improvement Plan Capital
<b>Proposal Name</b>	Gateshead Askew Road
<b>Delivery Areas</b>	Gateshead
<b>Start Date</b>	March 2026

<b>Financial End Date</b>	March 2027
<b>Practical completion date (date by which all outputs will be achieved)</b>	September 2026
<b>Total Project (s) Value</b>	£2,027,289.82
<b>Grant Amount Requested</b>	£2,027,289.82
<b>Budget Implications</b>	The requested grant can be met within the overall BSIP capital budget.

### **Project Outline**

<b>Funding Source</b>	Bus Service Improvement Plan Capital
<b>Proposal Name</b>	Boldon Abingdon Way
<b>Delivery Areas</b>	Boldon (South Tyneside)
<b>Start Date</b>	April 2026
<b>Financial End Date</b>	March 2027
<b>Practical completion date (date by which all outputs will be achieved)</b>	November 2026
<b>Total Project (s) Value</b>	£1,779,000.00
<b>Grant Amount Requested</b>	£1,779,000.00
<b>Budget Implications</b>	The requested grant can be met within the overall BSIP capital budget.

### **Project outline**

<b>Funding Source</b>	Bus Service Improvement Plan Capital
<b>Proposal Name</b>	Boldon Hubert Street
<b>Delivery Areas</b>	Boldon (South Tyneside)
<b>Start Date</b>	September 2026
<b>Financial End Date</b>	March 2027
<b>Practical completion date (date by which all outputs will be achieved)</b>	February 2027
<b>Total Project (s) Value</b>	£2,965,256.89
<b>Grant Amount Requested</b>	£2,965,256.89
<b>Budget Implications</b>	The requested grant can be met within the overall BSIP capital budget

### **Project Outline**

<b>Funding Source</b>	Bus Service Improvement Plan Capital
<b>Proposal Name</b>	A188/A189 Corridor
<b>Delivery Areas</b>	North Tyneside

<b>Start Date</b>	August 2026
<b>Financial End Date</b>	March 2027
<b>Practical completion date (date by which all outputs will be achieved)</b>	March 2027
<b>Total Project (s) Value</b>	£2,792,422.00
<b>Grant Amount Requested</b>	£2,792,422.00
<b>Budget Implications</b>	The requested grant can be met within the overall BSIP capital budget
<b>Project Outline</b>	
<b>Funding Source</b>	Bus Service Improvement Plan Capital
<b>Proposal Name</b>	Dalton Park (Durham)
<b>Delivery Areas</b>	Durham
<b>Start Date</b>	April 2026
<b>Financial End Date</b>	March 2027
<b>Practical completion date (date by which all outputs will be achieved)</b>	January 2027
<b>Total Project (s) Value</b>	£3,199,400.76
<b>Grant Amount Requested</b>	£3,199,400.76
<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 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

2.1 This paper requests Finance and Investment Board endorsement of the following schemes:

- **Gateshead Askew Road - £2million**

This scheme will see the introduction of a bus lane onto the eastbound carriageway of Askew Road West extending onto the A189 Redheugh Bridge south approach, on the slip road, thereby reducing congestion at a key pinch point. This scheme will also support Gateshead Council's wider vision of housing development, active travel, and sustainable growth in the heart of Gateshead. Modelling has identified that there will be improvements to reliability, journey times savings and a positive impact on the wider traffic network.

- **Boldon Abingdon Way - £2.5million**

This scheme will deliver a realignment of the Abingdon Way / Witney Way and Abingdon Way / Didcot Way junctions, into a signalised crossroads alignment. This will improve the efficiency of the junction and enable quicker bus movements thereby reducing passengers' journey times, as well as significant improvements to the punctuality and reliability of bus services.

- **Boldon Hubert Street - £2.9million**

This scheme will see the current configuration on Hubert Street changed from a roundabout to a signalised junction with the provision of additional space for right turn bays in the middle of the road for both eastbound and westbound traffic. This will significantly reduce a well-known pinch point for buses on this corridor. Modelling shows a significant reduction in delay and congestion in both the morning and afternoon peak periods.

- **A188/1A189 North Tyneside - £2.7million**

This scheme delivers targeted bus priority and highway improvements on the A189 Benton Lane and its approaches at West Moor Roundabout. The scheme focuses on improving bus journey time reliability and safety through the introduction of dedicated bus lanes, achieved via carriageway widening and reallocation of existing highway space, including the repurposing of the existing segregated left-turn lane. As a result of these interventions, buses' journey speeds will increase and buses will be more reliable, thereby making the bus a more attractive offer to the public.

- **Dalton Park (Durham) - £3.2 million**

The proposals at Dalton Park involve a series of site-wide interventions including carriageway widening, extension of bus stopping facilities, and a series of bus hurry calls, resulting in buses entering the site from the west, traversing the site and exiting at the eastern end of the site. In addition to the anticipated improvements in wider network efficiency, the scheme will support more reliable bus operations by reducing journey time variability and improving punctuality. The proposal also includes improved crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists to enhance safety, and wider public amenity improvements. Furthermore, by enhancing the consistency and predictability of bus journey times, the scheme contributes to the wider programme objective of creating a more attractive and user-friendly bus network.

## 3. Outputs and Outcomes

For the five schemes seeking approval the following outputs apply:

### Gateshead Askew Road

Outputs	26/27	Total
New bus lane	125m	125m

Widening of gyratory to facilitate better bus movements	1	1
Additional lane on roundabout	60m	60m

### Boldon, Abingdon Way

Outputs	26/27	Total
New carriageway	90m	90m
New footway	60m	60m
New traffic signals	9	9

### Boldon, Hubert Street

Outputs	26/27	Total
New signal-controlled junction	1	1
Signal-controlled junction arms	4	4
Signal-controlled pedestrian crossings	1	1
New bus stops	2	2
New & Upgrade works on carriageway	430m	430m

### A188/A189 North Tyneside

Outputs	26/27	Total
New bus lane provision	250m	250m
Carriageway widening to facilitate bus lane	300m	300m
Traffic signs	9	9

### Dalton Park- Durham

Outputs	26/27	Total
New east-west continuous bus route	1	1
New signalised systems	4	4
New bus stop	1	1
New pedestrian crossing	1	1
New toucan crossing	1	1
Removal of bus turning circle	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. Delivery of investment through BSIP as a whole will lay the foundations for an integrated and inclusive transport network.

## 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. Corporate Implications

### D1. Financial and other resources implications

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

<b>Scheme name</b>	<b>2026/7</b>	<b>Total</b>
Gateshead Askew Road	£2,027,289.82	<b>£2,027,289.82</b>
Boldon, Abingdon Way	£1,779,000	<b>£1,779,000.00</b>
Boldon, Hubert Street	£2,965,256.89	<b>£2,965,256.89</b>
A188/A189 North Tyneside	£2,792,422	<b>£2,792,422</b>
Dalton Park, Durham	£3,199,400.76	<b>£3,199,400.76</b>
<b>Total (£)</b>	<b>£12,763,369.47</b>	<b>£12,763,369.47</b>

#### **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).

### D2. Legal implications

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

### D3. 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.

### D4. 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.

Scheme promoters 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.

## E. Appendices

None.

**F. Background papers**

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

**G. Contact officers**

Name: Kim Farrage

Title: Programme Manager (Funding and Programmes)

Email address: [kim.farrage@northeast-ca.gov.uk](mailto:kim.farrage@northeast-ca.gov.uk)

**H. Glossary**

**North East CA:** North East Combined Authority

**BSIP:** Bus Service Improvement Plan

**JTC:** Joint Transport Committee

**TOG:** Technical officers Group

**F&IB:** Finance and Investment Board

**DfT:** Department for Transport

**GFA:** Grant Funding Agreement

**CDM:** The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations

**I. Consultee**

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