

Title: Bus Service Improvement Plan – Alnwick Bus Station Approval

Portfolio: Transport

Report of: Tobyn Hughes, Director of Transport

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Alnwick Bus Station scheme which has a total project value of £1.8million.

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 30th 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, local approvals 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 Northumberland County Council to progress the delivery of the scheme.

Recommendations

The Chief Executive is recommended to:

- Approve the Alnwick Bus Station project programme, which has a total value of £1,814,277 funded by the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) capital programme.
- Authorise the completion of a Grant Funding Agreement with Northumberland County Council.

A. Summary of Investment Proposal (Context)

Project Outline	
Funding Source	Bus Service Improvement Plan Capital Programme
Proposal Name	Alnwick Bus Station Scheme
Lead Organisation	Northumberland County Council
Delivery Areas	Alnwick Town Centre
Start Date	June 2026
Financial End Date	March 2027
Practical completion date (date by which all outputs will be achieved)	December 2026
Total Project Value	£1,814,277
Grant Amount Requested	£1,814,277
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 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 Alnwick Bus Station project, has come forward for approval following successful assurance.

2. The Investment Proposal

The Alnwick bus station scheme will see improvements to modernise the environment of the station, including enhancing the accessibility, safety and security of the station for passengers. Key deliverables include:

- Provision of defined bus stands and layover space
- Accessible kerbs and inclusive pedestrian routes
- Formal pedestrian crossing arrangements
- Widened and re-profiled footways with new paving to enhance accessibility
- Improved lighting, CCTV, and passive surveillance
- Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) and audio announcements
- Provision of clear wayfinding signage and improved connectivity to the town centre

An Assurance Statement has been produced which confirms that this project can be fully delivered by April 2027, and meets the overarching objectives of the BSIP, the Local Transport Plan, and the North East CA's wider priorities for investment 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

Outputs	26/27	Total
Provision of bus stop bays/stands to support scheduled services	4	4
Construction and improvement of footways to improve accessibility to and from the bus station	1180m ²	1180m²
Installation of dropped kerbs	22	22
Installation of traffic signals	10	10
Installation of CCTVs	3	3

Installation of additional lighting	6	6
Installation of new seating provision	12	12

Description of Outcomes	Timeframe for achievement	Totals
Growth in bus patronage	3 years post completion	Increase from baseline (identified in M&E)
Increased bus passenger satisfaction	3 years post completion	Increase from baseline (identified in M&E)
Reduction in accidents	3 years post completion	Increase from baseline (identified in M&E)
Improved perception of bus amongst non-users	3 years post completion	Increase from baseline (identified in M&E)

2.2 Timetable for Implementation

Milestone	Forecast Date
Grant funding Agreements	March 2026
Delivery Commences	March 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
	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 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 the Alnwick Bus Station scheme included in this report 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 the scheme promoter 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. Corporate Implications

D1. Financial and other resources implications

The financial profile for the programme is outlined below:

Funding source- BSIP Capital	2026/7	Total
Alnwick Bus Station scheme	£1,814,277	£1,814,277
Total	£1,814,277	£1,814,277

All amounts are fully funded from the BSIP Capital programme. The grant recipient is Northumberland County Council.

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).

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 different roles of the Combined Authority as an employer, a commissioner and deliverer of services, and a civic leader. Accessibility improvements to the surrounding areas leading to and from Alnwick Bus Station will significantly improve access for those individuals and groups who experience mobility and accessibility difficulties.

D4. Consultation and engagement

Both the wider BSIP Safe and Accessible Bus Station programme 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 approved and allocated at the July 2024 meeting of the North East CA Cabinet.

Northumberland County Council have undertaken consultation and stakeholder engagement activities with local ward members, the public and businesses through the course of scheme development.

E. Appendices

N/A

F. Background papers

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

G. Contact officers.

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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
M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

I. Consultee

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