

North East Joint Transport Committee

Tuesday, 14th December, 2021 at 3.00 pm

Meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Gateshead Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead NE8 1HH

AGENDA

	Page No
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Declarations of Interest	
Please remember to declare any personal interest where appropriate both verbally and by recording it on the relevant form (and submit it to the Democratic Services Officer). Please also remember to leave the meeting where any personal interest requires this.	
3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 16 November 2021	3 - 12
4. North East Enhanced Partnership	13 - 76
5. Integrated Rail Plan and Leamside Line Update	77 - 88
6. Exclusion of the Press and Public	
7. Minutes of the confidential meeting held on 16 November 2021	89 - 90
The Joint Transport Committee may wish to exclude the press and public during consideration of item 6 by virtue of paragraphs 2, 3 and 5 of Parts 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.	
8. Date of next meeting	
The next meeting will be held on 18 January 2022 at 2.30pm, venue to be confirmed.	

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NORTH EAST JOINT TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

DATE: 16 November 2021

Meeting held: Council Chamber, Gateshead Civic Centre

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor: M Gannon (Chair)

Councillors: N Forbes, J Foreman, C Johnson, C Rowntree, E Scott and R Wearmouth

IN ATTENDANCE:

Statutory Officers: M Barker (Monitoring Officer - Transport)
P Darby (Chief Finance Officer)
T Hughes (Managing Director, Transport North East)
S Ramsey (Lead Chief Executive – Transport)

Officers: J Bailes, F Bootle, L Clifford, E Goodman, J Fenwick,
R Forsyth-Ward, A Graham, M Kearney, M Jackson,
G Mansbridge, P Meikle, K Pawley, E Reynard, J Sparkes and
D Wafer.

Others: M Tugwell and J Jordan – Transport for the North

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors T Dixon, Cllr A Hopgood, Cllr G Miller and Cllr G Sanderson.

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

53. TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH UPDATE

Martin Tugwell, Chief Executive of Transport for the North (TfN) addressed the Committee. In April 2018, TfN became the first sub-national statutory body for transport in England. It holds a range of powers to improve transport across the north, promote rail and highway investment and oversee Transpennine Express and Northern Rail services.

A core element of TfN's work is the Northern Powerhouse Rail programme which is intended to radically improve east-west rail journeys across Northern England, with a business case that includes a major capacity upgrade to the East Coast Main Line, including the full re-opening of the Leamside Line to freight services.

The Northumberland Line, which he had visited earlier in the day, is a good example of how investment in rail services will provide an opportunity to unlock economic, social and environmental improvements in the region.

TfN also has a role in improving the road network and works with National Highways and other partner organisations to deliver investment and link all transport systems.

TfN is due to publish a report in the New Year which looks at the impact of transport on social inclusion and how these barriers can be addressed and linked to strategic transport planning.

Councillor Wearmouth thanked Martin for attending the Committee and explaining the role of TfN. He was pleased that Martin had visited the Northumberland Line earlier in the day and reiterated how important it is for investment in the region. He added that Northumberland County Council is happy to support any ongoing work to reopen the Leamside Line.

Councillor Wearmouth asked whether the Blyth relief road could be included in TfN's priorities in the future. The road is due to be improved at the end of the decade, which will be too late due to the economic improvements that are ongoing linked to the GIGA Plant. He added that the roundabout at Moor Farm is of particular concern and would like TfN to lobby National Highways about this issue.

Councillor Wearmouth added that the Union Connectivity Review was also important to the region, in particular the dualling of the A1 to Berwick.

Finally, Councillor Wearmouth asked whether TfN could support devolved funding for transport in the region, following the announcement of the City Regions Transport Fund.

Martin thanked Councillor Wearmouth for his well-made comment and assured him that TfN would do anything within its role to support better conversations with Government and empower regional leaders with a sound financial framework to enable them to make choices for their region.

The Chair thanked Martin for his contribution to the meeting.

RESOLVED: The North East Transport Committee noted the information within the report and the update provided by Martin Tugwell, Chief Executive, Transport for the North.

54. TRANSPORT NORTH EAST – TRANSPORT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on progress made to implement the objectives of the North East Transport Plan.

New Lumo services have commenced on the East Coast Main Line while work continues on the Rail and Metro Strategy for the region.

A funding announcement for the Active Travel Fund is expected shortly and a further report will be presented to the Committee once this is received.

The Go Smarter, Go Active campaign has continued to encourage health active travel across the region during the recent half-term holiday.

The Bus Service Improvement Plan agreed at the last meeting of JTC has been submitted to Government, although it was highlighted that the Comprehensive Spending Review Announcements on 27 October would seem to indicate that there would be far less funding available than what was originally planned.

The Tyne Pass scheme to introduce barrierless travel for Tyne Tunnel users took effect on 8 November 2021.

RESOLVED: The North East Joint Transport Committee noted the report.

55. TRANSFORMING CITIES FUND – TRANCHE 2 PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee considered a report which provided an overview of the high-level risks and emerging concerns with regards to the delivery of the Transforming Cities Fund Tranche 2 programme.

The report also sought approval for advanced funding to be provided to two schemes:

- Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) Scheme - totalling £4.5m; and
- North Shields Transport Interchange Scheme – totalling £3.24m

This will ensure that both schemes to be financially complete within the programme deadline.

Approval was also sought from the Committee to reallocate £1.5m of TCF funds from the South Shields to Newcastle Bus Corridor Scheme to the regional ITS allocation, following a rescoping of the scheme. The additional funding will

enable delivery of rescope works due to be delivered by the South Shields to Newcastle Bus Corridor Scheme to be included within the regional ITS Scheme.

RESOLVED: The North East Joint Transport Committee:

- (i) Agreed and approved advanced funding for the regional ITS scheme, totalling £4.5m, and instructed officers to prepare and execute a Grant Funding Agreement with Newcastle City Council for these funds.
- (ii) Agreed and approved advanced funding for the North Shields Transport Interchange scheme, totalling £3.24m, and instructed officers to prepare and execute a Grant Funding Agreement with North Tyneside Council for these funds.
- (iii) Approved the removal of the South Shields to Newcastle Bus Corridor scheme from the Transforming Cities Fund programme and reallocation of £1.5m of TCF funds to the regional ITS scheme.
- (iv) Acknowledged the Transforming Cities Fund programme update.

56. TRANSFORMING CITIES FUND TRANCHE 2 – GRANT FUNDING AGREEMENTS (ITS)

The Committee considered a report which sought delegated authority to approve and allocate funding from the Transforming Cities Fund Devolved Pot to the regionwide Intelligent Transport Systems Scheme. A business case for the scheme is currently being considered in accordance with the region's Transport Assurance Framework with the scheme appraisal being conducted by Transport North East's retained independent consultants.

The Committee were advised that it is necessary to expedite approval of the scheme to start on site in January 2022, to ensure that it will meet the construction programme within TCF timelines.

RESOLVED: The North East Joint Transport Committee:

- (i) Delegated authority to the Managing Director, Transport North East in consultation with the Section 73 Officer and Monitoring Officer, to approve the release of £18,607,188 from the TCF Devolved Pot to the ITS scheme, subject to successful appraisal in line with Transport Assurance Framework.
- (ii) Instructed officers to prepare and sign a Grant Funding Agreement with Newcastle City Council for the ITS scheme.

57. DISCHARGE OF TRANSPORT FUNCTIONS BY NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL 2020/21

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the discharge of delegated transport functions by Northumberland County council for the financial year 2020/21.

RESOLVED: The North East Joint Transport Committee noted the report.

58. REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2022/23 AND UPDATED FORECAST OF OUTTURN 2021/22

The Committee considered a report which provided an updated forecast of outturn for the transport revenue budgets for 2021/22, based on the position to 30 September 2021 and a summary of the draft transport budget and levies for 2022/23.

As the Committee were aware, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to have a significant impact on transport and on Nexus in particular, given its funding model. The reduction in passenger revenue in the current year has been mitigated through the provision of grant funding support from Government, but the Government has made it clear thusfar that this funding will be withdrawn in April 2022.

It is not expected that patronage on Metro will have returned to pre-pandemic levels by April 2022 which means Nexus will face a significant shortfall in its commercial revenues and cannot balance its budget once Government support is withdrawn. Current estimates indicate that patronage will be around 80% of pre-pandemic levels next year.

To meet this challenge, the Committee were advised that measures will need to be put in place to set a balanced budget next year. These measures include:

- A reduction of £7.5m in the budget used to fund concessionary bus travel reimbursement in Tyne and Wear – with the funding released being redirected to support the Metro;
- Efficient savings and additional stretched income targets for Nexus of £3.6m and use of £5.6m of Nexus' reserves; and
- As a last resort, a 6.75% increase in the Tyne and Wear levy which equates to £4.125m year on year increase. The alternative to increasing the levy would be cuts to Nexus' services to the same value as the proposed increase.

Members were advised that the use of reserves to balance the budget next year is not a sustainable position and should patronage not recover sufficiently to offset then further difficult decisions, including potential further increases in the Tyne and Wear levy would be needed in setting the 2023/24 budgets too.

All the proposals outlined within the report are subject to consultation before the Joint Transport Committee makes a final decision on the budget at its meeting in January 2022. Every effort is being made to lobby and persuade the Government on the issues caused by the withdrawal of Covid-19 support funding.

Councillor Gannon commented that in Gateshead, an increase to the Tyne and Wear Levy would equate to an additional £750,000 which on top of the other huge financial cuts that have already taken place, will be a huge challenge. If the levy is not increased, then funding for buses would need to be reduced by a further £7m which will have a huge impact on bus services. He referenced the Bus Service Improvement Plan that JTC had agreed that month to be submitted to Government, which asked for £804m to improve bus services in the region and make travel more affordable. Councillor Gannon added that although the Tyne and Wear authorities provide the levy to Nexus, Metro benefits the whole of the region and is a central part of the public transport infrastructure. He acknowledged that cuts cannot be made easily to Metro services due to its fixed costs, so if funding from Government is not provided, then either cuts will need to be made to the bus budget or a plan will need to be made for the Metro service to be closed down, which will be economically catastrophic for the region. He concluded that the region needed to continue to push Government to maintain funding for buses and Metro.

Councillor Forbes endorsed Councillor Gannon's comments and added that there was a strong evidence base that confidence about travelling on public transport has not yet returned, and car use is also increasing. He added that it is not financially feasible for local authorities to pick up the funding gap for public transport, given the unpalatable choices that every local authority is going to have to make in the forthcoming years, as a result of austerity, plus the additional costs that are being imposed due to the increase in the national living wage and care sector. Cllr Forbes agreed that the local authorities need to continue to lobby Government to extend funding and promote confidence in public transport. He added that the Enhanced Partnership that is being developed with the bus operators will include incentives to encourage people back onto buses – which was something that the Government was happy to support during the lockdowns.

Councillor Foreman agreed with all of the comments and agreed support needed to be included from economic, social and environmental sectors of the region when lobby Government.

Councillor Gannon agreed and added that in the past, lobbying has been more effective when it is not party political, and everyone speaks as the whole North East region.

Councillor Wearmouth agreed and added that Northumberland County Council is happy to support any requests to Government for funding. He asked whether there had been any feedback from any other areas in the country that also have light rail? He also suggested that a presentation to MPs about the issues may be useful.

Tobyn Hughes advised that the other light rail systems including the largest one in Manchester are also facing the same funding issues and the same impacts.

Councillor Scott suggested that a joint approach could be made and advocated for seeking support from the North East Chamber of Commerce.

Councillor Gannon advised that he had already met with John McCabe (Chair of NECC) and that he will continue to reach out to regional partners.

Paul Darby advised the Committee that there is a timing issue as there are statutory deadlines that need to be met when setting the budget for 2022/23. A decision will need to be made at the next JTC meeting in January and constituent authorities will need to set their budgets and council tax in February so if the DfT/Government were inclined to reverse the current position and extend the grant support, then we need to know sooner rather than later.

Councillor Gannon agreed and added that urgent direct meaningful discussions are required with Government due to the statutory deadlines.

RESOLVED: The North East Joint Transport Committee:

- (i) Received the report for information and comment;
- (ii) Noted the updated forecast of outturn for the 2021/22 Transport budget as set out in the report;
- (iii) Agreed to write to the Government, formally requesting that Covid-19 support for the Tyne and Wear Metro be continued over at least the next financial year;
- (iv) Considered the budget assumptions/proposals set out in the report, forming the basis of consultation on the 2022/23 Transport budget:
 - a. That £5.6m of Nexus' reserves are utilised in 2022/23 to help balance the budget next year;
 - b. That the Nexus budget for bus concessionary travel reimbursement in Tyne and Wear is reduced by £7.5m next year in line with government guidance, with funding redirected towards Nexus to help offset funding pressures with the Metro;
 - c. That Nexus be tasked with achieving efficiency savings of £2.4m and additional income of £1.2m to assist in balancing the budget in 2022/23;
 - d. That as a last resort the 2022/23 Transport Levy for Tyne and Wear is indicatively to be set at £65.225m, which represents an increase of £4.125m compared with the current year, but subject to a positive response to from the government in relation to Covid-19 support, and subject to further revision should passenger numbers on the Tyne and Wear Metro improve beyond forecast levels;
 - e. That the revenue grant to Nexus for 2022/23 is indicatively proposed to be set at £63.125m which represents an increase of £4.125m compared with the current year;

- f. That the alternative to an increased Tyne and Wear levy would be cuts to other Nexus services to the value of £4.125m;
 - g. That a minimum contribution of £500,000 to Transport North East be top sliced from the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Block grant received by the JTC in 2022/23;
 - h. That the JTC Tyne and Wear Sub Committee give consideration to increasing the Tyne Tunnels tolls for Class 3 vehicles next year in line with Retail Price Index inflation as set out in the concession contract and the agreed approach to the funding of the Tyne Tunnels (Note: the final decision will be taken by the Tyne and Wear Sub Committee in January 2022);
- (v) Noted that the budget proposals for Transport will be subject to a consultation process including reports to the JTC Overview and Scrutiny Committee, relevant officer groups and the Leadership Board of NECA and the NTCA Cabinet;
 - (vi) Noted the intention to approve the budget and agree the Transport levies at the meeting of the JTC on 18 January 2022, after considering any comments received on the proposals and decisions reached by the Tyne and Wear Sub Committee in January 2022.

59. FORECAST OF CAPITAL OUTTURN 2021/22 – PERIOD TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Committee received a report which provided details of the 2021/22 capital programme, together with the expenditure to date and forecasts to year end based on the position to 30 September 2021.

The Transport capital programme encompasses a wide range of capital schemes, mainly delivered by the constituent local authorities and by Nexus, but also investment in the two Combined Authorities' own assets, including the Tyne Tunnels.

The total capital expenditure on Transport schemes is forecast to be £157.510m, against the revised programme budget of £162.337m, a forecast underspend of £4.827m to year end, largely due to lower than forecast expenditure in year on the Metro Asset Renewal Plan and Metro Flow projects, offset by increased forecast expenditure on Metro Fleet Replacement and on the Tyne Tunnels.

Actual expenditure incurred to the end of September 2021 totalled £50.172m, 31.8% of the forecast total capital expenditure forecast for the year.

An increase of £0.400m in the budget for the Tyne Pedestrian and Cycle Tunnels refurbishment was included in the forecasts, funded from Tyne Tunnels reserves. The increased budget is required to meet the additional expenditure to complete the work on the inclined lifts.

Most of the capital investment that will be incurred during the year will be funded by Government grants with elements of the Nexus capital programme and the Tyne Pedestrian and Cycle Tunnels works funded by earmarked reserves held specifically for these purposes.

The report included an update on the assumptions being applied in the development of the capital programme 2022/23 and for future years which will be presented to the JTC at its next meeting in January 2022.

RESOLVED: The North East Joint Transport Committee:

- (i) Noted the updated forecast of capital outturn for 2021/22; and
- (ii) Agreed the £0.400m increase in the budget for the Tyne Pedestrian and Cycle Tunnels refurbishment project as set out in section 2.34 of the report, to be funded from Tyne Tunnels reserves.

60. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: The North East Joint Transport Committee agreed to exclude the press and public during items 11,12 and 13 by virtue of paragraphs 1,2,3, 4 and 5 of Parts 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

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North East Joint Transport Committee

Date: 14th December 2021

Subject: Enhanced Partnership Consultation

Report of: Managing Director, Transport North East

Executive Summary

Following the publication of our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) in October, our region continues on its journey towards the establishment of an Enhanced Bus Partnership (EP).

To make an EP, drafts of the Plan which capture the intent and ambition of the BSIP, and the Scheme which sets out the actions of the EP, must be presented to bus operators so that they have the opportunity to object. Following this objection period, a period of statutory public consultation will commence. This report invites JTC to agree the content of the EP Plan and EP Scheme so that these processes can proceed to a timeline which allows us to commence the EP on 1st April 2022.

This report also considers operational factors needed for the success of the EP, including the resource to administer the EP and the Governance which will bring the parties involved in the EP together for discussion and to make recommendations. It invites JTC to agree to the staffing resource and access to legal and bus technical expertise to successfully support, administrate and develop the EP and brings attention to headline governance arrangements which must be developed such as an Enhanced Bus Partnership Board and Local Bus Boards. The detail of these governance arrangements such as membership and terms of reference should be developed in time for the commencement of the EP. It is planned that the funding requirement for this resource in the current year and 2022/23 will be met from residual funds available from the LTA Bus Capacity (Revenue) Funding Allocation awarded to the region. For future years, it is hoped that further revenue funding for the delivery of EPs will be made available as part of the potential Bus funding settlements with DfT. In the event no external funding is forthcoming, to the extent that costs are unable to be met from available TNE budgets, local authorities would be requested to exercise their discretion to act as funder of last resort. If additional funding is required, this would be subject to a separate future request to the JTC

Recommendations

The North East Joint Transport Committee is recommended to:

- (i) agree the content of the draft Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme for presentation to bus operators for the Objection Period, and for Statutory Public Consultation;
- (ii) agree delegated authority for the Managing Director, Transport North East following consultation with the chair of the JTC and such other persons as the Managing Director considers relevant to make amendments to the plan and scheme following the operator objection period and prior to the statutory consultation if required;
- (iii) agree the recruitment of four members of staff to oversee the administration and development of the bus partnership as well as enhanced legal provision and access to bus planning expertise, in accordance with the financial and other resources implications described in the report; and
- (iv) note the reference to governance in the EP scheme, specifically around an Enhanced Bus Partnership Board and Local Bus Boards and agree to further detailed development of the governance model.

1. Background Information

- 1.1 The National Bus Strategy published by the Department for Transport (DfT) on 15 March 2021 set out the opportunity to deliver better bus services for passengers, through ambitious and far-reaching reform of how services are planned and delivered. The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is our region's response to this strategy.
- 1.2 The government has established a quantity of competitive funding to improve bus services, and the BSIP is the North East's route to securing a portion of this in order to maintain current services and invest in improvements to the wider bus network. We have yet to hear from government what allocation our region will receive from this funding, and there is currently no indication as to when this will be announced.
- 1.3 Fortuitously, the national strategy aligns with our region's published Transport Plan aspirations. A successful BSIP will help us to deliver its objectives and is a required step to forming an Enhanced Partnership between JTC and bus operators, which will go live on 1st April 2022.

The EP Plan and Schemes process

- 1.4 The next step, following the agreement and publication of a BSIP, is to draft the formal documentation that outlines how the BSIP will be delivered and makes an EP. This comprises of:
- An EP Plan: the high-level vision and objectives for bus services in the local area, and;
 - One or more EP Scheme(s): which set out greater detail of how the visions and objectives of the BSIP will be achieved, including any commitments made by the local authority or standards to be met by bus operators.
- 1.5 Local Transport Authorities must deliver a made Plan and Scheme(s) by the end of March 2022.
- 1.6 Following the notice that a Plan and Scheme have been prepared, an objection period will follow during which operators of qualifying services within the EP area can submit any objections they may have to the content of the Plan and Scheme. Following this objection period, if no objections are received or upheld, statutory consultation may then take place. .
- 1.7 The key milestones are:
- 16th December 2021 – 12th January 2022: Operator objection period
 - 14th January 2022 – 11th February 2022: Statutory consultation period
 - 15th March 2022: Meeting of the North East Joint Transport Committee to approve the Enhanced Partnership
 - April 2022: Commencement of the EP

1.8 In the event that an objection is received from an operator and which meets the criteria to be a valid objection the JTC will need to discuss the contentious measures in the plan and / or scheme with the operators to resolve them by either amending them or removing them. Once the revisions have been made to the Plan and / or Scheme it will be necessary to rerun the objection period.

1.9 There are two criteria under which objections could cause the need for changes to the EP Scheme or Plan:

Criterion One

The combined registered distance of all the qualifying local services operated by objectors is at least 25% of the total registered distance of all local bus services operated by all bus operators in the relevant EP area, And

- (i) where there are four or more operators in the relevant EP area, at least three are objectors; Or
- (ii) where there are less than four operators in the relevant EP area, all are objectors.

Criterion two

At least 50% of the total number of operators of qualifying local services within the relevant plan or scheme area have objected and the combined registered distance of the qualifying local services operated by the objectors in the relevant area is at least 4% of the registered distance of all local bus services operated by all bus operators in that area.

1.10 Our region's EP Plan replicates our BSIP, confirming the shared aspiration of JTC, bus operators and partners to deliver the extensive improvements to our bus network outlined in that document if enabled through funding.

1.11 Our region's EP Scheme, in its current form, contains initiatives and actions to be delivered early in the currency of the EP and are commitments made by LA7 members, Nexus and bus operators.

1.12 In its current form, our EP Scheme represents the beginning of the Partnership with actions which are currently funded. Once an announcement is made by government over the funding available to our region, further initiatives can be added.

Governance and Staffing Resource

1.13 Currently, meetings between JTC, other parties and bus operators are informal in status, and no formal change mechanisms for events such as bus timetable changes exist.

1.14 Our BSIP, and therefore our EP Plan and Scheme, set out an intention for governance to be introduced to oversee the effective functioning of the EP; and the making of an EP Scheme provides an opportunity to introduce this governance.

- 1.15 The EP Scheme refers to an Enhanced Partnership Board and Local Bus Boards, the full terms and membership of which have yet to be defined.
- 1.16 Current resources dedicated to bus matters in the Transport North East team are only temporary and in place until the end of the current fiscal year. No resource is currently identified to administrate and support the needs of the EP from its commencement date, therefore this report sets out the staffing requirements and funding arrangements of this necessary resource in 2022/23.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 This report proposes that:

JTC approves the content of the draft EP Plan and Scheme (Annex A and B of this report) for inclusion in an operator objection and statutory consultation process;

Subject to relevant consultation, the Managing Director, Transport North East is given delegated authority to make amendments to the EP Plan or Scheme following the operator objection period and ahead of consultation if this becomes necessary;

JTC agrees to four additional, permanent staff members being recruited to administer and facilitate the EP funded through residual Bus Capability Funding, as well as enhanced legal provision and access to bus planning expertise; and

JTC agrees the need to develop and introduce effective governance for the EP in line with the EP Plan and Scheme Content.

3. Reasons for the Proposals

- 3.1 Without an EP Plan and Scheme, an EP cannot exist under the Bus Services Act 2017. Government has previously indicated that funding for our bus network will be conditional on an EP being in place on the 1st April, and so the EP Plan and Scheme are critical to meet this requirement. The need to take the EP Plan and Scheme through an operator objection period and statutory consultation have been outlined earlier in this paper.

- 3.2 Once the EP Plan and Scheme become live, customers will begin to experience benefits on the bus network, brought about by the scheme including:

- New all day multi modal tickets for bus, metro and ferry with fares for adults and U19s;
- Pay as you go smartcard ticketing on all bus, metro and ferry services;
- Development of a new website to buy tickets and find travel information across public transport in the North East;
- Commitments to high environmental and accessibility standards on newly manufactured vehicles including lower emissions and state of the art audio visual information systems;
- Commitments to improved bus information when out and about around the

region including bus stop information, information and staff at interchanges and printable information;

- Investment in Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) on some of the region's busiest bus corridors to accelerate bus journey times and improve reliability, and;
- Commitments to develop a passenger charter.

3.3 A timetable change process so that bus users and stakeholders are better consulted over service changes is also under development and it is planned that this will be formalised through the EP.

3.4 The proposal that the Managing Director, Transport North East is granted delegated authority to make minor and proportional amendments to the EP Plan or Scheme, in consultation with LA7 officers, bus companies, Nexus and other parties, after the bus operator objection period will assist with meeting the 1st April deadline in the event that if the bus operator objection period reveals a substantive objection, the EP Plan or Scheme can be amended quickly.

3.5 The proposal is that four additional, permanent members of staff as well as an enhancement of legal provision and access to bus planning expertise should be introduced to the Transport Strategy Unit to facilitate the effective management of the EP and allow the following, critical tasks to be undertaken:

- Effective timely briefing to JTC on bus matters and the servicing of EP Partnership Board and other meetings;
- Enhanced strategic liaison with government, bus companies, other combined authority areas and key stakeholders;
- The effective management of technical aspects of the EP including performance monitoring and management, customer satisfaction and briefings for technical issues such as network planning or change;
- The development of projects which will become variations to the Scheme or introduction of further Schemes to further develop the bus network in order to improve customer experience and attract new customers;
- Management of the annual BSIP review and refresh; and
- Support in the administration of Local Bus Boards so that the information and data flow between these bodies and the Enhanced Bus Partnership Board is functional and effective.

3.6 Furthermore, the proposals associated with the governance and resource for the administration of the EP, are made to ensure that the EP can function effectively from its inception on 1st April 2022.

4. Alternative Options Available

4.1 To abandon the Enhanced Partnership process.

5. Next Steps and Timetable for Implementation

- 5.1 Subject to approval, the EP Plan and Scheme will be distributed to operators on 16th December 2021 and will then go to statutory consultation on 13th January 2022. Ongoing work will then be undertaken in the development of the EP Scheme, which must be in place by 1st April 2022.

6. Potential Impact on Objectives

- 6.1 A successful EP will help us to deliver the objectives of the North East Transport Plan. In particular, the EP will support a green recovery through the provision of an attractive form of sustainable transport.

7. Financial and Other Resources Implications

- 7.1 Failure to deliver an EP Plan and Scheme(s) by April 2022 will prevent the North East from accessing any new government funding for buses (both capital and revenue support). Additional government funding streams could also be affected, such as the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), which will only be available for services operated or measures taken under an EP. Failing to deliver an EP has the potential to affect future, wider funding allocations for transport in the North East from the government, as they will take into account LTAs' performance with respect to the policies set out in the National Bus Strategy.
- 7.2 In its first iteration, the Scheme is assumed to be without additional cost to JTC as the year one costs can be met from underspending against that grant funding provided in the current year to establish the BSIP and EP which will be carried over in an earmarked reserve at year end. It is assumed that development work, for example that being undertaken associated with a logo to represent the new network and for website development can be met with Bus Capability Grant funding provided by the DfT for the development of the EP; and £0.100m has been allocated from this funding for this workstream.
- 7.3 The ITS elements of the EP Scheme will be funded through our region's TCF allocation. The business case and grant funding arrangements for this are not yet in place, however the EP Scheme includes suitable caveats to ensure that LAs are protected as delivery of these ITS elements are subject to funding from TCF being confirmed.
- 7.4 All other actions within the EP Scheme are costs already met by Nexus, Durham County Council and Northumberland County Council.
- 7.5 The cost of the new roles in the team is estimated at up to £0.180m including on-costs for a full year (subject to job evaluation of posts). Additional legal support and technical bus expertise required in the first year is estimated at up to £0.100m. The final cost of the team will be determined through job evaluation and other processes which are currently underway.
- 7.6 The funding required for the first year can be met from underspends against the Bus Capacity grant which is expected to be available following completion of the

work required in developing and submitting the BSIP and preparing the EP. A revised budget of up to £1.656m for the project to deliver the work was agreed by the JTC which included a substantial contingency element (£0.281m). The revised funding package for the project was a combination of JTC reserves (up to £0.240m) and LTA Bus Capacity grant awarded by DfT (£1.416m) - once DfT grant was confirmed, agreed contributions from constituent local authorities and Nexus were no longer required and were not drawn down. It is not now anticipated that the contingency allocation within the budget will be spent, so it is proposed that the remaining agreed funding from the Capacity funding and JTC reserves is directed towards funding the team in its first year. This is permitted under the grant letter, which has no specific conditions attached and specifically mentioned the Department's aim to see the development of in-house capabilities on bus issues across all LTAs.

- 7.7 For future years, it is hoped that further revenue funding for the delivery of EPs will be made available as part of the Bus funding settlements with DfT. In the event that no external funding is forthcoming, to the extent that costs cannot be met from available TNE budgets, local authorities would be requested to act as funder of last resort. If required, this would be subject to a separate future request to the JTC.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 The EP follows a statutory framework requiring legal notices and formal agreements. The EP will become legally binding upon the LTA, LAs and Bus Operators. Specialist legal advice has been sought in support of the development of the EPs, particularly, in relation to subsidy control and competition law matters.

9. Key Risks

- 9.1 Failure to comply with the requirements of the National Bus Strategy would risk the removal of existing bus funding support and therefore potentially cause severe damage to the existing bus network within the region.
- 9.2 There are also risks in relation to the provision of future central government funds by not complying.
- 9.3 If we are to receive any operator objections that require the objection period to be repeated, without delegated authority to repeat these steps this process would need to go back to the JTC. Given the tight time scales associated with this project, this would cause significant delays and likely prevent the EP from being delivered in line with Government deadlines.
- 9.4 The proposals outlined within this report and the actions and improvements proposed by the Bus Service Improvement Plan as well as the ongoing development of the Enhanced Partnership mitigate these risks. There are risks that schemes, services and policies in a BSIP and Enhanced Partnership could

leave Authorities with long term commitments without central government financial support; the BSIP has been constructed to minimise this risk.

10. Equality and Diversity

10.1 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications arising from this report.

11. Crime and Disorder

11.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

12. Consultation/Engagement

12.1 The process for developing and implementing an Enhanced Partnership necessitates statutory consultation with the public, bus operators and key stakeholders. Detailed consultation in the production of the BSIP has been undertaken with partners and is ongoing to develop the EP Plan and Scheme. An extensive public engagement exercise underpinned development of the initiatives, as reported to JTC on 21 September 2021. In addition, LA7 officers have been briefed on the content of this report, and LA7 legal officers have reviewed draft versions of the EP Plan and Scheme and offered comments on drafting. .

13. Other Impact of the Proposals

13.1 None

14. Appendices

14.1 Enhanced Partnership Plan – Appendix 1
Enhanced Partnership Scheme – Appendix 2

15. Background Papers

15.1 North East Bus Service Improvement Plan: [TNE-BSIP_FINAL.pdf \(transportnortheast.gov.uk\)](https://transportnortheast.gov.uk)

Bus Back Better – The National Bus Strategy: [Bus Back Better \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The Bus Services Act 2017 – Enhanced Partnerships Guidance: [The bus services act 2017: enhanced partnerships \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

JTC Report – Vision for Buses (item 9): [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for North East Joint Transport Committee, 13/07/2021 14:30 \(northeastca.gov.uk\)](https://northeastca.gov.uk)

JTC Report – Bus Partnerships (items 9 and 10): [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for North East Joint Transport Committee, 15/06/2021 14:30 \(northeastca.gov.uk\)](https://northeastca.gov.uk)

Bus Service Improvement Plan outline resourcing form (the content of this document is exempt from publication pursuant to paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)

16. Contact Officers

- 16.1 Philip Meikle, Transport Strategy Director
E-mail: philip.meikle@transportnortheast.gov.uk
Tel: 0191 433 3859

17. Sign off

- The Proper Officer for Transport:
- Head of Paid Service:
- Monitoring Officer:
- Chief Finance Officer:

18. Glossary

BSIP – Bus Service Improvement Plan

EP – Enhanced Partnership

JTC – Joint Transport Committee

NBS – National Bus Strategy

LTA – Local Transport Authority

LA – Local Authority

DfT – Department for Transport

BSOG – Bus Service Operators Grant

<i>BSIP Objectives</i>	<i>EP Approach</i>
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**TRANSPORT NORTH EAST
ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP PLAN**

THE NORTH EAST JOINT TRANSPORT COMMITTEE ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP PLAN FOR BUSES IS MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 138G(1) OF THE TRANSPORT ACT 2000 BY:

The Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland Combined Authority known as the North East Combined Authority ("NECA") (comprising of the local authority areas of Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council).

The Newcastle Upon Tyne, North Tyneside and Northumberland Combined Authority known as the North of Tyne Combined Authority ("NTCA") (comprising of the local authority areas of Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council and Northumberland County Council).

Tyne & Wear Passenger Transport Executive ("Nexus") of Nexus House, 33 St James' Boulevard, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4AX;

The County Council of Durham of County Hall, Aykley Heads, Durham, DH1 5UZ. (**Durham**);

The Borough Council of Gateshead, Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH. (**Gateshead**);

Newcastle City Council, Newcastle Civic Centre, Barras Bridge, Haymarket, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8QH (**Newcastle**);

The Council of the Borough of North Tyneside, The Quadrant, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY (**North Tyneside**);

Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF (**Northumberland**);

The Council of the Borough of South Tyneside, Town Hall & Civic Offices, Westoe Road, South Shields, NE33, 2RL (**South Tyneside**); and

Sunderland City Council, Civic Centre, Burdon Road, Sunderland, SR2 7DN (**Sunderland**).

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Over 154 million journeys a year were made by bus in the North East before the Covid pandemic. Buses provided essential services during the pandemic, and bus ridership is making a rapid recovery as things open up again. TNE want the bus network to play an even greater role in bringing healthy and fair economic growth across the region.
- 1.2. Buses are essential to delivering the vision set out in the North East Transport Plan 2021-2035 (the "**Transport Plan**"): a green, healthy, dynamic and thriving North East. Increasing the share of travel by bus will support the Strategic Economic Plan for a growing and decarbonised economy. Buses are uniquely well placed to give access to work and training opportunities for everyone, and they can help with the health of our region too through lower carbon emissions and they are easy to integrate with walking, cycling or other active travel for part of the journey.
- 1.3. The below table gives an overview of the key objectives of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (the "**BSIP**") and how it will work together with the EP Plan and EP Scheme to deliver better bus services for local people and wider local transport plan objectives.

1. Repair the damage caused by Covid-19 to bus ridership numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and promote good standards of hygiene and cleanliness across bus fleets and public transport infrastructure. • Ensure that sufficient funding is available to maintain the current network and secure 'socially necessary' services once the Bus Recovery Grant ceases.
2. Grow bus patronage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve facilities and information provision onboard buses, in stations and at stops, and online. • Develop and introduce a new, regionwide brand for public transport complementary to existing operator brands. • Introduce more attractive and relevant ticketing options. • Expand and improve routes and services within the network as well as better connections beyond our boundaries.
3. Grow bus modal share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and improve routes and services within the network as well as better connections beyond our boundaries. • Introduce more attractive and relevant ticketing options. • Commit to and consult on infrastructure improvements which prioritise and promote the bus network. • Develop and implement a marketing campaign to provide the bus network with increased public exposure.
4. Increase customer satisfaction amongst users of the bus network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve facilities and information provision onboard buses, in stations and at stops, and online. • Introduce more attractive and relevant ticketing options. • Expand and improve routes and services within the network as well as better connections beyond our boundaries. • Ensure staff have adequate training to assist with journey planning and maintain high standard, as well as creating new roles in order to facilitate the rollout of improvements. • Develop and implement a Bus Passenger Charter and network change processes with a view to establishing community engagement, accountability, and review at the heart of all improvements.
5. Make buses faster, more punctual and more reliable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and improve routes and services within the network as well as better connections beyond our boundaries. • Commit to and consult on infrastructure improvements which prioritise and promote the bus network. • Commit to targeted infrastructure interventions on particularly salient corridors / pinch points.
6. Make buses greener	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement changes to vehicles and supporting infrastructure pursuant to the regions green vision.

1.4. This document fulfils the statutory requirements set out by the Bus Services Act 2017 of an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan. Initially, this will facilitate the introduction of a single EP Scheme covering the whole area covered by this EP Plan. Over the Plan period, other potential EP Schemes may be proposed by Transport North East (TNE), constituent authorities or bus operators. The EP Scheme will place binding commitments on partner organisations to provide enhancements, and ensure on-going provision of high-quality bus services.

1.5. The EP Plan initially covers a three (3) year period from April 2022. The EP Plan will be reviewed by 31 March 2023 and at least annually thereafter.

- 1.6. Any variation to this EP Plan shall be made in accordance with section 138L Transport Act 2000.
- 1.7. If it is determined to revoke this EP Plan this shall be done in accordance with section 138O Transport Act 2000.
- 1.8. In accordance with statutory requirements for an EP Plan, this document includes:
 - 1.8.1. Details of the area covered
 - 1.8.2. Factors affecting the local bus market
 - 1.8.3. A summary of passengers' experiences of using bus services and the priorities of users and non-users for improvements
 - 1.8.4. Trends in bus journey speeds and the impact of congestion on bus services
 - 1.8.5. Objectives that are sought for bus service provision
 - 1.8.6. Interventions needed to achieve the desired outcomes

2. COMPETITION TEST

The making of the Enhanced Partnership has been subject to the Competition Test set out in Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000. The assessment, undertaken by NECA and NTCA concludes that the scheme does not have and is not likely to have a significantly adverse effect on competition and any effects on competition are proportionate to the achievement of those purposes.

3. AREA COVERED BY THE ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP PLAN

- 3.1. North East England is a diverse region encompassing large and densely-populated conurbations, a surrounding geography of commuter towns and semi-urban villages and a much larger hinterland of former mining villages and beyond them sparsely populated rural and coastal communities.
- 3.2. As such, this EP Plan covers seven local authority areas in the North East, consisting of two combined authorities:
 - 3.2.1. The NECA (comprising of the local authority areas of Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council).
 - 3.2.2. The NTCA (comprising of the local authority areas of Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council and Northumberland County Council).
- 3.3. These Combined Authorities are Local Transport Authorities in their own right. They discharge their transport functions jointly through the North East Joint Transport Committee ('NEJTC'), which is a statutory body responsible for transport policy and delivery across the region.
- 3.4. Transport North East ("TNE") is the name of the officer group that supports the NEJTC in developing and delivering transport and strategy across the region.
- 3.5. "Nexus" is the trading name of the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive, responsible for



Figure 1.1

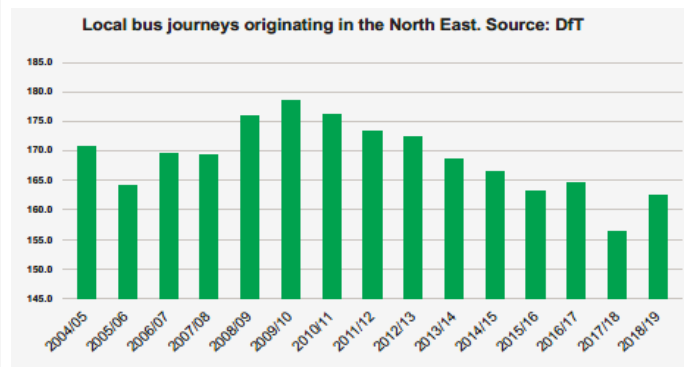
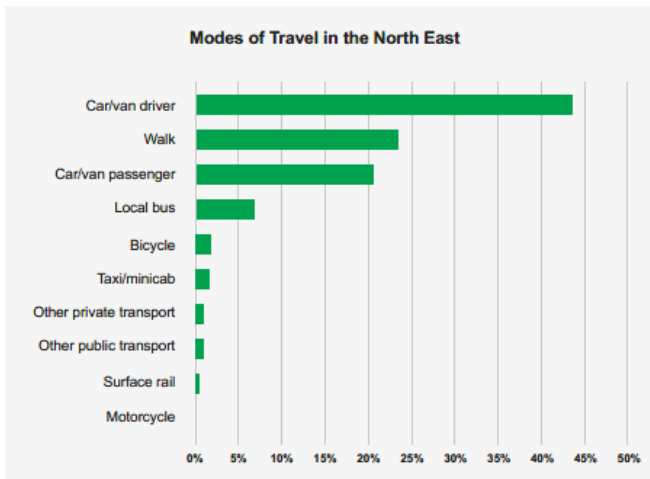
delivering passenger transport in Tyne and Wear which is a largely urban sub-section of the region covering the local authority areas of Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

4. A SUMMARY OF ANY AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON PASSENGERS' EXPERIENCES OF USING BUS SERVICES IN THE AREA AND THE PRIORITIES OF USERS FOR IMPROVING THEM

- 4.1. TNE talked to the people and businesses in the North East through an informal engagement campaign called ‘the Big Bus Conversation’, to understand what people think needed to be done to encourage bus use.
- 4.2. TNE established a Stakeholder Forum for businesses, services such as health and education, advocates for equalities groups and passenger and community representatives. Stakeholders contributed by email and through attendance at four multi-media events, which were well attended, both online and in person. The most rural parish councillors welcomed the ability to participate virtually, since ‘more buses to more places’ is their primary need. The DfT presented to the Stakeholders and took part in discussion, as did "NEbus", the name of the local bus operators’ association encompassing the providers of services across the North East. The events gave insights into the planning and delivery of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT), customer service for people with extra needs, and ways to support businesses and services to increase the use of bus by their staff and customers.
- 4.3. Before the pandemic, local buses accounted for 6.4% of journeys made in the North East (a measurement called “modal share”), in comparison to 64.1% by car and van. However, 49% of people told TNE that they would be open to using buses more often. This shows a strong potential for significant growth in bus use.
- 4.4. However, just over a quarter of people told TNE that they’re “not the kind of people who get the bus”, highlighting a problem with the perception of bus services. This does not match people’s experience on the ground; bus user satisfaction in our area is 91% according to Transport Focus.
- 4.5. When TNE asked about the barriers to using the bus more often, people said that bus fares are too high, they don’t trust buses to turn up on time, buses are slow and they don’t always go where people need them to. Cleanliness and maintenance are also important to people in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.6. Bus Modal Share

4.7. The below graph shows the percentage of trips by head in the North East according to DfT data (note that this currently includes journeys in the Tees Valley). Car and van use, either as a driver or passenger, accounts for 64.1% of journeys made in the North East, in comparison to local buses which account for 6.4%. With 49% of people in our market research indicating that they would be open to using buses more often, there is a strong potential for significant growth in bus modal share from the current position.

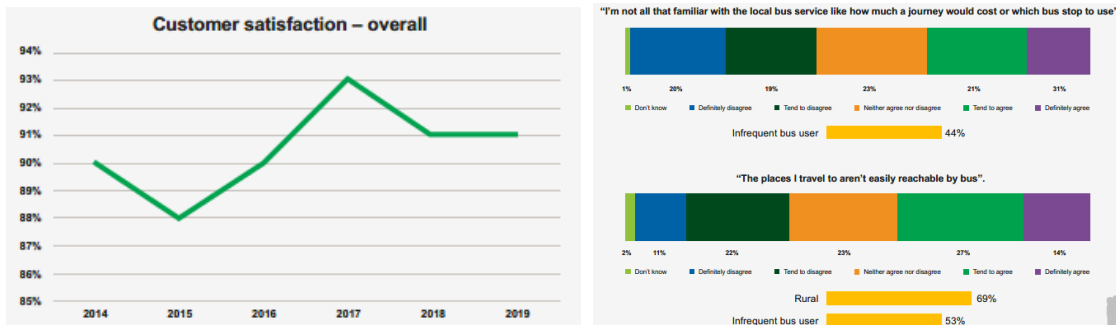


4.8. Patronage

- 4.9. Bus patronage has been declining for many decades although in recent years the picture has been more varied. There are a number of reasons for this, and qualitative market research data shows that a quarter of those aged 75+ feel that ‘bus times don’t fit their needs’. This is especially important as people in this age bracket are most at risk of social isolation, with many seeing the bus as a lifeline to human connection.
- 4.10. Market research showed that 75% of our minority communities who are car users say they would consider switching to the bus for some journeys. There is therefore a real opportunity to grow patronage in our minority communities if barriers are removed.
- 4.11. The picture builds as TNE explored the data relating to those living in rural areas. 28% of people living in rural parts of the North East said that ‘the places [they] travel to aren’t easily reached by bus’ according to market research.

4.12. Customer Satisfaction

- 4.13. The below graph, based on data from Transport Focus, shows that 91% of people using bus in the North East were satisfied with their journey. While this is higher than the national figure of 89%, there is still room for improvement. 69% of respondents to market research rated local bus services as excellent or good. However, for people in rural locations only 22% were positive about local bus services, compared to 30% who shared negative responses.



- 4.14. Many people who use buses in our region do not have another means of transport available to them. In Tyne and Wear alone 89% of bus users have no car available to make the journey and therefore they need the bus to be on time, clean and have the necessary facilities they need for comfort and convenience. Improving customer satisfaction will be key to maintaining existing customers and keeping the patronage of those who make the change from car to bus.
- 4.15. Currently, 54% of the region’s bus fleet is not at the engine emission standard of Euro 6 or higher.
- 4.16. When TNE consulted the public as part of the Big Bus Conversation many people were also mindful of unnecessary carbon emissions coming from bus engines.
- 4.17. Additionally, the independent market research report provides further insight into barriers to bus use. One of the barriers identified was a lack of knowledge about service provision and fares: 34% of people who responded agreed with this, rising to 52% of those who class themselves as infrequent users.

5. A SUMMARY OF ANY AVAILABLE DATA ON TRENDS IN BUS JOURNEY SPEEDS AND THE IMPACT OF CONGESTION ON LOCAL BUS SERVICES

- 5.1. Services are inevitably tailored to geography, demographics and markets, with frequent services in the metropolitan and urban areas and more targeted services connecting many other key locations. “Secured

services”, which are bus services that are tendered and contracted by the local authorities and Nexus, respond to social need where commercially operated services are not viable, often in rural or remote areas, places that are hard to serve as part of an existing bus route, or at the extremities of the day.

5.2. **Reliability**

5.3. Reliability was a concern for many during independent research for the Big Bus Conversation. The sentiments expressed below demonstrate just how crucial it is that buses run on time. Buses connect people to work, education, healthcare and social events – all of which are essential when it comes to living a healthy and well-balanced lifestyle, which is something we want for the people of the North East. When buses fail to arrive on time it has a knock-on effect on each of these things, which undoubtedly puts people off using the bus service again.

5.3.1. “We need real-time digital information on street bus stops as not everyone has internet, and there are problems in winter with reliability.” (Big Bus Conversation)

5.4. **Punctuality At The Start Of A Journey**

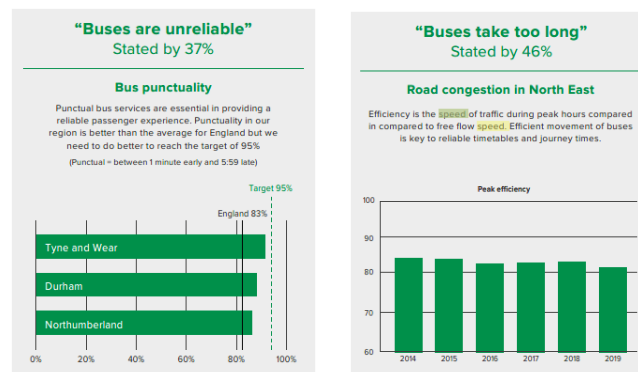
5.5. The buses in the EP Plan area have better punctuality than average for England, however they fall short of the 95% punctuality target.

5.6. Punctuality is intrinsic to efficient bus travel and the continued use by the public of the bus network.

5.7. A lot of people, especially those from low-income households without cars, rely on the bus to make connecting journeys on different modes of public transport in order to get from A to B. When the start time of a bus journey is delayed, this has the consequence of halting someone’s planned multi-modal journey, and again will most likely result in a lack of trust and confidence in the bus network. It may bring with it social and economic repercussions for the traveller, for instance if this makes them late for work or a social engagement.

5.8. **Punctuality At Timing Points**

5.9. Punctuality in the region has suffered from the rise in traffic post pandemic. In autumn 2021, a blended figure of operator data showed almost 20% of buses arriving at stops more than 5 minutes late or 1 minute early. During lockdown, performance on the least reliable routes increased to 96%, showing what can be achieved if buses have a clear run. Travelling by bus usually takes longer than travelling by car and one of the reasons for this is because of the amount of times buses are required to stop along routes. There is still scope to provide more direct services, especially at peak times, to further reduce journey times and address passenger feedback like the following:



5.10. **Average Bus Speeds**

5.11. The speed of a bus journey can be an off-putting factor when making a travel choice. Bus services need to be as quick and efficient in terms of journey time as possible, to respond to feedback from the Big Bus Conversation that included:

5.11.1. “Conductors on buses needed to speed up journeys”;

- 5.11.2. “An Oyster card system would speed up bus boarding”;
 - 5.11.3. “More BUS ONLY lanes and traffic light priority for buses, and an end to speed humps or chicanes on bus routes”, and
 - 5.11.4. the need for “shorter journey times with better links between Durham, Washington, Sunderland and Newcastle”.
- 5.12. Others think there is work to be done to introduce more express shuttle services to key locations from small villages that have minimal stoppage along the route (Big Bus Conversation), and this is backed up by the market research carried out.

6. AN ANALYSIS OF CURRENT LOCAL BUS SERVICES

6.1. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

6.1.1. Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI)

- 6.1.1.1. RTPI systems are limited throughout the North East and where they do exist, they can be unreliable and function poorly. The information that is available is not always real-time, as the systems work from scheduled data where they cannot match a vehicle to a trip. This means in many cases, the information provided to customers is incorrect.

6.1.2. Information Off-Bus

- 6.1.2.1. There is currently no single source of pre-journey information available across the North East. Each of the large operators, some smaller operators, Nexus and the Local Authorities have their own websites and digital platforms which present information relevant to their organisation in inconsistent styles and to varying degrees of timelines. Interactive network maps are available through some Local Authorities which have the scope to be expanded to be regionwide. In addition, third-party apps such as CityMapper can be used to display transport options between any two locations, usually with live timing.
- 6.1.2.2. Printed timetables are currently provided at selected stops throughout the region and leaflets are available in a limited number of places.
- 6.1.2.3. The Urban Traffic Management Control (“UTMC”) centres currently monitor traffic flow without specific attention to bus, meaning that messaging about disruption on the road network is at a general level to inform motorists and not, necessarily, made relevant to bus users. Some bus operators also use their social media channels to notify customers of delays and changes in real-time.

6.1.3. Network Branding

- 6.1.3.1. The North East has multi-operator individual branding, along with that of Nexus, the seven Local Authorities, Traveline and Network One. Network One is the trading name of Network One Ticketing Ltd, a partnership of bus, metro, train and ferry companies in the North East, which provides a range of tickets. The existing branding is strong on an operator basis and there is extensive route-specific branding along key corridors. However, from a customer perspective, the complex range of brands, different fare offers, and complex timetables have significant limitations and are not tied together through a unified bus network brand.

6.1.4. Information At Bus Stops

- 6.1.4.1. The quality of information provision at bus stops varies widely throughout the region. The majority of stops have impartial, customised printed timetables, provided entirely by Nexus and the local authorities.

6.1.4.2. A limited few have real-time information and some stops across the region lack any kind of passenger information. Shelter provision is discussed in detail in the Highways and Infrastructure section (see subsection 10.6.7). Real-time information is currently installed at 400 stops across the region, but where it is present, it can be unreliable and functions poorly. This means in many cases, the information provided to customers is incorrect.

6.1.5. Customer Safety

6.1.5.1. All major North East bus operators, including nearly all independent operators' fleets are fitted with CCTV cameras inside and out, to provide a safe and secure environment. Operators continue to invest as technology evolves. The majority have invested in additional safety measures including a vehicle location system, using mobile technology which immediately pinpoints the location of any bus or incident in real-time, improving response times and passenger support.

6.1.5.2. It became a statutory requirement for all buses to be fitted with AVL on 7 January 2021, so all buses' live locations will be available. Bus stop CCTV is limited to City Centre coverage, with very little coverage outside of central locations. Lighting is also inconsistent, with rural areas in particular often having very little lighting at bus stops.

6.1.6. Information On The Bus

6.1.6.1. Approximately 40% of the fleet of the main operators is currently fitted with next-stop audio-visual (AV) technology.

6.1.6.2. Large operators are committed to purchasing audio-visual equipment as part of the standard specification for new buses, but small operators are led by contractual agreements. An enhanced specification for equipment is not standard.

6.1.7. Customer-Facing Colleagues

6.1.7.1. Customer feedback varies between groups with elderly and disabled passengers complimenting customer-facing colleagues on very high standards of empathy and care, whereas teenagers are less complimentary. Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) staff training is carried out on an annual basis by operators; however, this is designed to maintain professional skills and meet the needs of the individual organisation, and customer service elements are not co-ordinated in terms of content across the board.

6.1.8. Ride Experience

6.1.8.1. All buses are wheelchair accessible, which makes boarding, alighting and moving through the bus easier. Other improvements targeted at people with extra needs also make the journey better for everyone else such as 'Stop' buttons which can be palm-operated, within the reach of every seat; voice and screen information about the next stop. Where buses in other parts of the country carry advertisements for shopping, dating, colleges, etc., NEbus operators recognise that there is a greater commercial return from building customer confidence. On buses in the North East, the advertising vinyls show the bus journey map, how to contact customer service, how to access the Wi-Fi, and other messages that make the customer feel they are in a cared for and high-quality environment.

6.1.8.2. All buses used on the network have wheelchair access and around 40% have AV technology installed. Many buses on flagship routes come with Wi-Fi and charging points as standard.

6.1.9. Information At Stations And Interchanges

6.1.9.1. Digital real-time bus information displays already exist in some key rail and Metro interchanges in the region but need upgrading from dated screens, and updating in line with the introduction of a new information system.

- 6.1.9.2. Signage directing customers who are interchanging between bus towards their next bus stop location is also limited. There are few 'Where to catch your bus' posters.

6.1.10. Customer Charter (Beyond The Bus)

- 6.1.10.1. Each of the region's main operators have their own customer charters. They broadly align on common themes including safety; information provision; fares and reliability of services. They also outline the complaints procedure and the rights of customers. Smaller operators typically don't have customer charters.

6.2. FARES AND TICKETING

6.2.1. All Day Multi-Modal Ticket

- 6.2.1.1. The region has some of the base characteristics of a fully integrated multi-modal public transport network, such as smart card ticketing and multi-modal tickets, yet people find the offer difficult to understand, especially non-users, 69% of whom stated this to be the case through the 2019 Nexus Insight Panel.
- 6.2.1.2. The closest product to a regionwide multi-modal capped ticket currently is offered through Network One as an Explorer ticket at a current price point of £10.90 for an adult, £5.70 for a child (under 15) and £20.60 for a family of up to two adults and three children for one day. The ticket does offer some extensions beyond the region into North Yorkshire. It is scarcely marketed beyond the Network One website.
- 6.2.1.3. Other multi-modal tickets are offered by Network One as weekly, four week and annual tickets. The price is based on a Network One zonal model which consists of 5 zones and the NTL 'plus' area which covers Northumberland and County Durham. Network One Zones are inconsistent with those which have been established by bus operators and Nexus for their own ticketing.
- 6.2.1.4. The Transport Plan explains that the majority of people who live in County Durham and Northumberland also work within their local authority area, with Newcastle the next largest work destination. No daily capped fares exist in Northumberland or Durham for travel exclusively within those counties using multi-operator or multi-modal tickets. Noting that Nexus Metro and Ferry services do not operate within Durham or Northumberland and that as mainline rail operators do not currently participate in Network One, the current focus is on the lack of multi-operator rather than multi-modal products.

6.2.2. Tickets Options For Under-19s And Region Wide Under – 19 Multi-Modal Fare Cap

- 6.2.2.1. Bus fares represent a heavy cut of the disposable income of some groups. This disproportionately affects young people; even those in professional careers are on relatively low incomes when they start their career. For young people in apprenticeships, again their career prospects may be strong, but their starting salaries are lower. Young people seeking less skilled work have a lower pay range.
- 6.2.2.2. This issue is particularly prevalent in the North East given the lower-than-average wages and employment levels.
- 6.2.2.3. Additionally, pockets of health and income inequalities are seen across the North East, with deprivation largely concentrated in urban areas. There are large disparities in levels of youth unemployment throughout our region.
- 6.2.2.4. Some places like Blyth in Northumberland and deprived electoral wards like Byker have youth unemployment levels of 15% and 16% respectively. By contrast, affluent areas such

as Gosforth and Corbridge both have levels of 1%. This demonstrates that levels of opportunity for young people in the North East are highly uneven depending on geography. Single fares are available for Under-19s at a price point of £1.20 in some locations in the region; however, on longer distance services, for example those reaching into Northumberland, fares at this price cannot currently be achieved without subsidy to the operators.

6.2.2.5. Network One currently offers a ticket aimed at the Under-19 and student market but this product is only available in one and four week iterations. There are various other tickets by different operators that are designed for young people and students but there are few similarities between these.

6.2.3. Family and Children Tickets

6.2.3.1. Only one of the region's main bus operators offers a family ticket. There are no other family specific offers available to bus passengers, however, the Tyne and Wear Metro recently ran a successful trial offer where you can 'Take the Kids for Free'. This offer is now a permanent ticket option on Metro.

6.2.4. ENCTS

6.2.4.1. Under the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) which is a national scheme bus operators are required to carry pass holders during the core times of 09:30-23:00 Monday to Friday, and at all times on weekends and Bank Holidays.

6.2.4.2. Three slightly different versions of the scheme, as allowed by the Transport Act 1985 and the Travel Concession Schemes Regulations 1986 apply, as there are three separate Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) in the North East:

6.2.4.2.1. Nexus;

6.2.4.2.2. Durham County Council; and

6.2.4.2.3. Northumberland County Council.

6.2.4.3. Although all schemes allow travel until the end of service, rather than 23:00, each has varying discretionary arrangements covering, for example, the treatment of the travel allowed with the pass pre-09:30.

6.2.4.4. Bus operators are reimbursed by each TCA using the general principle that operators should be 'no better or no worse off' as a result of carrying concessionary passengers and are therefore reimbursed for 'revenue foregone' or the sums of money that they would have received if the concession did not exist. The basis for the calculation of revenue foregone is the DfT calculator, using passenger volumes and average fares, although there are annual discussions between each TCA and each operator to agree the payments.

6.2.4.5. ENCTS payments for the 2021/22 year totalled £52.5 million. Nexus was responsible for £35.7 million of this money whilst Northumberland and Durham paid £4.9 million and £11.9 million respectively.

6.2.5. Care Leavers' Concession

6.2.5.1. Care leavers often find it more difficult than other young people to access and stay in education, training and work. Lacking the family support that other young people have, travel makes up a large proportion of their disposable income.

6.3. THE NETWORK

6.3.1. Maintaining Our Current Levels Of Bus Services As A Minimum

6.3.1.1. The goal is to use the current network as a foundation, so that the strong base of bus patronage in the North East is maintained and can then grow, ultimately safeguarding and increasing patronage levels.

6.3.1.2. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a significant reduction in bus passenger numbers. Patronage is still currently between 20% and 30% lower than the same period in 2019, although we are beginning to see slow growth. Stakeholders told us that the strong “avoid public transport” messaging of the early phases of the pandemic caused many people to choose other options instead of the bus, increasingly relying on private cars. Stakeholders felt that to an extent, people are using that as an excuse to drive in spite of knowing now that bus travel is safe.

6.3.2. Consolidation To Reduce Duplication and Over-Provision

6.3.2.1. There are particular locations across the network where there may be overprovision of bus services, and therefore, there is scope on the network for consolidation opportunities under Enhanced Partnership Schemes. Transport North East has reviewed the current network in detail in order to identify what they might be.

6.3.3. Bus Network Improvements

6.3.3.1. The vision to improve the bus network starts from a relatively strong position. More trips per capita are made by bus in the region than in most other English regions because there is a good network supported by well-developed bus priority measures.

6.3.3.2. Many corridors have high-frequency services, and there is an excellent and well-used network of interurban express routes running into the region's cities, which are assisted by traffic priorities to maintain high performance. In September 2020, a national survey by Transport Focus found that the biggest priority for bus passengers is more frequent services. This was fairly consistent across age groups and journey purpose and corresponds with research undertaken by TNE, especially in the Tyne and Wear area. This needs to be taken into account, as it indicates there may be potential to grow already frequent services.

6.3.3.3. However, the polycentric nature of the region means there are several towns that serve as local, sub-regional and regional centres, and many have poor links between them. Feedback from the Big Bus Conversation and stakeholder engagement confirmed that people want more and better connections between local places, not only the radial routes to the cities.

6.3.3.4. There are also many places that have few or no bus services at all. These are mainly rural areas that have very few local facilities, so people need to travel to take part in society. Low population densities have traditionally made rural areas difficult to serve viably by buses (even on a secured basis), but experience in the region and elsewhere suggests that innovative measures like Demand Responsive Transport and brokerage can be successful in filling gaps in the network.

6.3.3.5. The region already has 24-hour services on three routes from Newcastle to Chester-le-Street, Durham, Washington and Sunderland, and from Sunderland to Ryhope and Seaham. They have been very successful, improving access to jobs and supporting the night time economy by giving people a safe way of getting home after work or going out with friends.

6.3.4. Demand Responsive Transport

6.3.4.1. Currently County Durham is the only part of the region that has a comprehensive scheme of DRT that aims to complement the conventional bus service network. The Link2 service is open to everyone and aims to cater for people who do not have a suitable bus service or are unable to access regular bus services due to mobility issues. It can be used for any local journey, connecting with the bus network to travel further afield. Tyne and Wear has a taxi

card system to help people with mobility difficulties travel independently. It allows them to travel with approved taxi companies at a discounted price. Members get issued with a card that is credited with a set amount of money every year - they use the money on their card to help pay towards each journey they make.

6.3.4.2. Both of these services are focused as a service for specific users for whom they are a lifeline; but they do not seek to grow modal share or bus patronage for the general population.

6.3.4.3. The region has some of the most rural communities in England with 21% of the population living in rural towns and villages. Analysis for Northumberland alone, shows that 37,000 residents of West Northumberland do not benefit from a bus service that allows for access to: key employment centres; significant further education sites; major shopping locations or evening recreation. Likewise, in County Durham, significant numbers of people live away from bus routes. In communities such as these, the car is the obvious transport mode, and there is no attractive sustainable alternative. Tyne and Wear also has rural communities in which the walking route to the main bus route may be too long for some, or the terrain may be challenging, again forcing groups of residents to the car.

6.3.4.4. Markets such as these are historically unattractive to bus operators because areas of low population density inevitably yield low passenger loadings and revenue over a higher operating distance and therefore cost. The value for money consideration of local authorities providing services is also likely to be low.

6.3.5. A New Technologically Enabled Offer For Home To School Transport

6.3.5.1. In our region, 17.3% of the population are of school age, attending a total of 912 schools. School start times coincide with the busiest period on our road network each day with an estimated 132m car journeys for education being made in the North East each year. Data from Pop Blue, the smart card ticketing product for school-age young people in Tyne and Wear shows that many parents drive children to school and that children return by public transport.

6.3.5.2. The data is backed up by verbatim feedback gathered in the Big Bus Conversation campaign and at stakeholder events, where parents reported that their need to drive to work is driven by their need to drop children at school.

6.3.5.3. The Big Bus Conversation suggests a series of barriers to bus use for home-to-school journeys, with common themes such as difficulty accessing information and the perception of safety, security and reliability of bus services being potential reasons why many don't consider the bus a viable option.

6.3.6. Cleaner And Greener Vehicles

6.3.6.1. The North East bus fleet is made up of 1,352 vehicles of varying ages and emissions standards. The average age of the fleet is approximately 8.9 years, which is substantially higher than the UK average of 8 years.

6.3.6.2. Big Bus Conversation data showed 23% of passengers surveyed were concerned about the condition and cleanliness of the bus used for their journey.

6.3.6.3. The emissions standards of the vehicles that operate in the area vary from Euro 3 to full electric (zero-emission). Over 40% of the fleet meets the Euro 6 standard, while 38% are Euro 5 and 17% are Euro 4 or lower.

6.3.6.4. There has been some investment in new, modern low emission vehicles across multiple providers over the last decade. For example, in 2013, Stagecoach deployed a fleet of bio-methane powered buses in Sunderland with a devoted gas refuelling facility at its depot in the City. More recently, in 2020, Go North East invested £3.7 million in new fully electric zero emission buses, which were partly funded by the Ultra-Low Emission Bus Scheme

(ULEBS). Branded Voltra, the buses are powered by electricity that is sourced from zero-emission supplies such as solar, wind and hydro. They operate services 53 and 54 between Newcastle, Gateshead, Bensham and Saltwell Park.

6.3.6.5. However, Covid-19 has reduced investment below normal fleet replacement levels, as operators are concerned about the post-pandemic market, which means the average age of the fleet is increasing and there has been little progress to reduce emissions standards. The only confirmed vehicle orders are a further batch of nine zero emission electric buses for Go North East, which are due to be introduced in mid-2022.

6.4. HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

6.4.1. Highways Network

6.4.1.1. There are busy arterial routes into cities and major towns which do not have infrastructure installed to a standard which meets their potential.

6.4.1.2. The Coast Road and The West of Newcastle Corridor are examples of this. Both play a key role in connecting people in the region to school, work and leisure, but are too often sites of congestion and pollution. The current bus routes, while frequent, do not offer the high-quality, uninterrupted experience the challenge demands.

6.4.1.3. The Coast Road (A1058) runs from Newcastle City Centre through densely populated North Tyneside to the Coast. Although the Metro does provide an alternative to private cars for many in North Tyneside, along the Coast Road itself many residents and key sites are not within a walkable distance of the nearest Metro stop. Traffic generated by Silverlink Retail Park, Cobalt Business Park, North Wallsend and other parts of North Tyneside and East Newcastle all come together on this key artery often resulting in significant traffic congestion.

6.4.1.4. The even more densely populated and heavily residential area of the West end of Newcastle is currently underserved by the higher speed public transport available elsewhere in the region (the Metro). Westgate Road is the direct route into the City from the A69, the main strategic road from the West of Northumberland and Cumbria into Newcastle which carries 38,000 vehicles a day. The A167 serves as the main artery into the centre of Newcastle from the A1 and the A696, the trunk route coming from Newcastle International Airport, carrying 27,000 vehicles a day. Together, this means that they are some of the busiest routes into the City.

6.4.1.5. These are just two examples of corridors in the region, where priority infrastructure could be improved.

6.4.2. Facilities For Walking To And Waiting For Buses

6.4.2.1. Stops and stations in the region range widely from high-quality interchanges in both rural and urban areas such as Hexham bus station and South Shields interchange, to stops with no timetable, signpost, or road markings.

6.4.2.2. People reporting experiences of low-quality waiting provision at stops and interchanges is a serious problem for the region, with 51% of residents saying waiting at a stop is their main dislike about traveling by bus, rising to 60% for those with a mobility difficulty. Poor waiting facilities at stops acts as a deterrent to people who rarely or never use the bus, and as a barrier to those people considering changing modes. Engagement with stakeholder groups showed the differing dimensions of accessibility when walking and waiting for the bus, as well as the creativity and variation possible in these facilities.

6.4.2.3. Whilst two-thirds of the region's residents live within a 5-minute walk of a stop or station, many live much further away. The experience of that walk, and the wait for a bus needs to compete with the convenience of car travel.

6.4.3. Our Park & Ride Provisions

6.4.3.1. Across all modes, the region has an established Park & Ride offer with current sites providing over 4,300 spaces at:

- 6.4.3.1.1. Tyne and Wear Metro stations and bus interchanges;
- 6.4.3.1.2. Three bus-based sites with dedicated bus links serving Durham City Centre;
- 6.4.3.1.3. Newcastle’s bus based Great Park site; and
- 6.4.3.1.4. 19 National Rail stations across the region.

6.4.3.2. There are frequent examples of instances where people will park on roads, and in some cases, adjacent roads in housing estates to main bus routes, especially longer distance, express routes, to travel by bus.

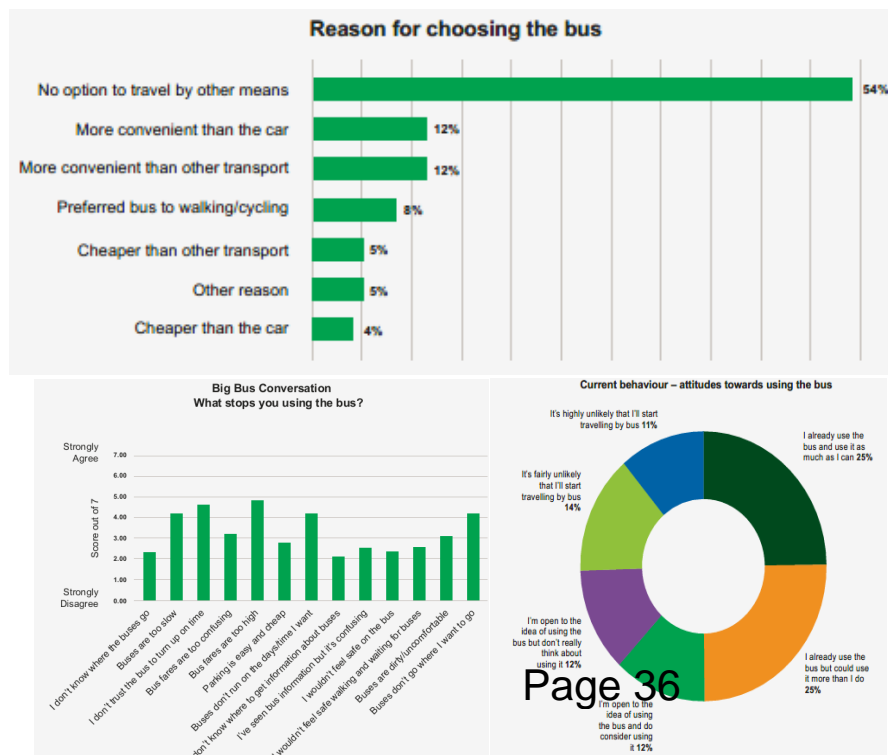
7. ALL THE RELEVANT FACTORS THAT THE PARTIES CONSIDER WILL AFFECT, OR HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT, THE LOCAL BUS MARKET OVER THE LIFE OF THE EP PLAN

7.1. This section sets out information and data about factors which affect the use of bus services in the region including:

- 7.1.1. Identified barriers to bus use;
- 7.1.2. Perceptions and attitudes toward buses;
- 7.1.3. Car parking: the extent and pricing of parking provisions in towns and cities and the split between local authority and private sector provision. Also, the amount spent by each local authority in the region on parking enforcement; and
- 7.1.4. Other competing and complimentary factors to the bus network in the North East.

7.2. Identified Barriers To Bus Use

7.2.1. 1 in 5 people who are avoiding public transport are doing so because they don’t feel safe to use it at the moment. Cleanliness and maintenance are much more important now and are likely to be legacies of Covid with increased user expectations in these areas



7.3. Car Parking

- 7.3.1. Decisions on car parking policy sit with each of the individual local authorities and are dependent on a range of factors, such as economic policy, rurality and the range of public transport options available.
- 7.3.2. The relationship between car parking charges and public transport fares can influence how people choose to travel, because of cost and time sensitivities which drive travel behaviours. Adaptations to parking policy, carefully linked to the introduction of an improved public transport offer, can be a means of gradually switching demand towards public transport in a sustainable manner. Instruments such as workplace parking levies can also act as a funding stream to assist with attractive, sustainable alternatives to the car.
- 7.3.3. The cost of car parking, especially in relation to getting the bus, often influences travel choices.
- 7.3.4. The following tables offers a summary of parking provision and spending on parking enforcement in each of the seven local authority areas in the region.

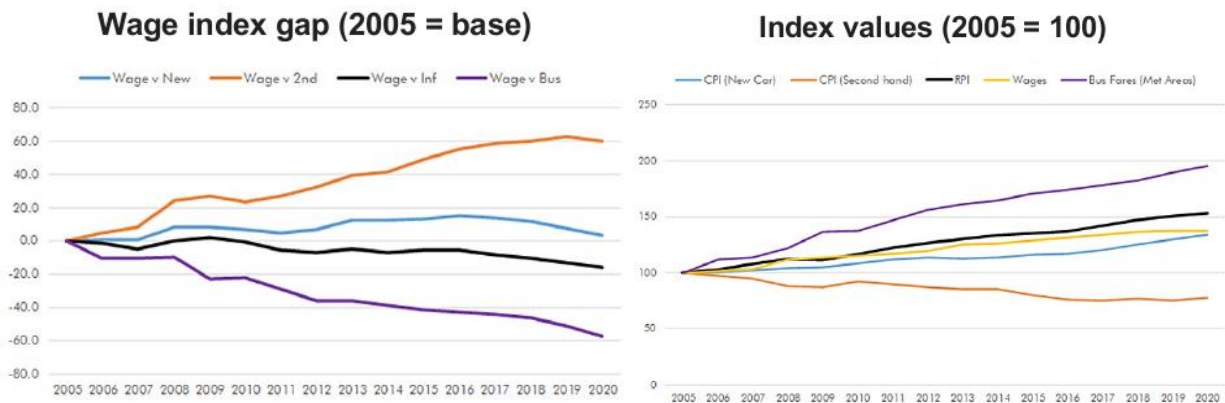
	Estimated number of LA operated spaces	Average hourly rate to park	Estimated number of private sector operated spaces*	Average hourly rate	Local authority	Budget allocated to parking enforcement
Durham	3,500	43p	2000	69p	Durham	£650,000
Gateshead	2,123	£1.04	756	92p	Gateshead	£799,000
Newcastle	6,004	£1.44	3743	£3.20	Newcastle	£2.2m
North Tyneside	2,544	95p	Unknown	N/A	North Tyneside	Part of a contract
Northumberland	11,821	0	0	N/A	Northumberland	£2m
South Tyneside	2,477	75p	270	Varies	South Tyneside	£1.1m
Sunderland	2,958	£1.15	941	£1.47	Sunderland	£950,000

- 7.3.5. TNE will explore and engage with people and businesses in the region over issues of car parking supply and potential deployment of workplace parking levies, congestion charging, and strategic reduction in parking spaces to see if these can be effective tools which can be adopted across the region to encourage a switch to attractive, sustainable transport options such as buses, including considering the introduction of a relationship between the cost of car parking in major centres of retail and employment and the cost of travel on public transport, where it makes economic and strategic sense to do so.

7.4. Other Factors Which May Influence Competition Between Car And Bus:

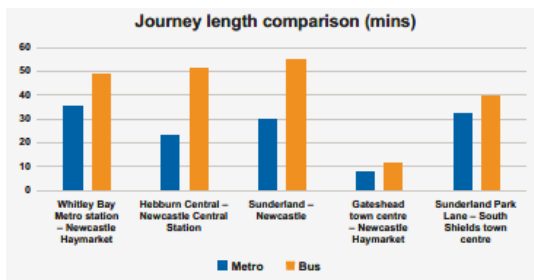
7.5. Relative Affordability Of Bus And Car Travel

- 7.5.1. The relative price of bus and car has become increasingly unfavourable to bus. It can be seen from the graph on the left below that wages have not kept pace with inflation nor with the price of bus fares. The graph on the right compares wages to the cost of these transport modes. For example, the cost of a secondhand car has decreased when compared to wage growth, whereas the cost of bus fares has increased when compared to wage growth.

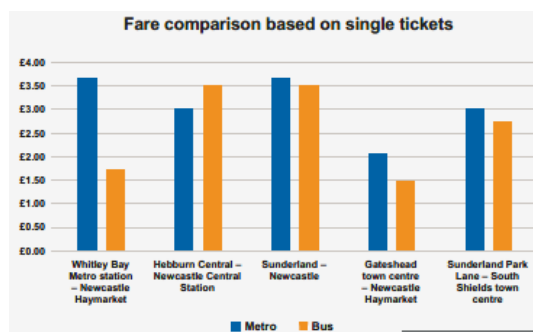


The Tyne and Wear Metro system

- 7.5.2. The Metro and bus networks complement each other and interchange is generally accessible and well signposted. Many people transfer from bus to Metro, whilst those who perceive interchange as a high penalty take through journeys on the bus.
- 7.5.3. The Metro appears a competitor to bus for some journeys, but it also brings people to the bus for the first leg of a journey they might otherwise make by car.
- 7.5.4. The below graph shows that for a sample of journeys that can be completed by either bus or Metro, the bus takes longer for every journey.



- 7.5.5. The below graph shows that for fare cost based on single tickets, buses compare favourably to Metro for some of the journeys, however Metro prices can also be cheaper, or near to the same cost. This means that the customer has a choice of transport which can depend on the customer’s priorities of a faster or cheaper journey.

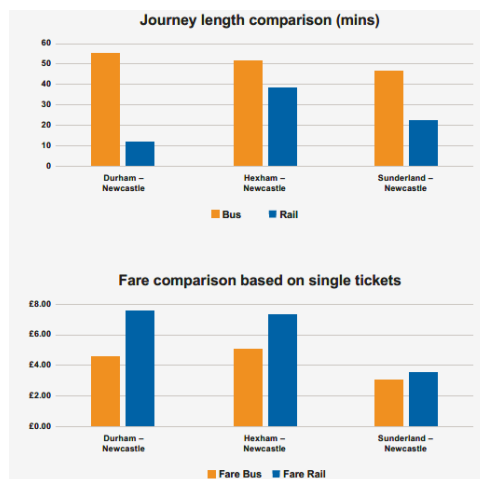


- 7.5.6. Nevertheless the basic structure for integrated public transport continues to exist in the region. Network One provides integrated multi-modal tickets, transport interchanges continue to see many thousands of interchange journeys each day between bus and Metro, and peoples’ travel habits – often the same since childhood – continue to see a combined bus and Metro journey on many trips. Indeed for some trips a combined bus and Metro journey is the only viable public transport combination.

7.6. **The National Rail Network**

7.6.1. The geographic size of the region means that key centres are linked by rail, including ‘Intercity’ long distance trains. These services co-exist alongside well-used bus services, because buses serve more local places along the way and more ‘first and last mile’ origins and destinations.

7.6.2. The graphs below show some sample journey times and fare comparisons between rail and bus.



7.6.3. For all of the journeys we are aware of, it is slower to travel by bus, however it is almost always cheaper. There will therefore be a significant number of people who travel by bus instead of rail even though it takes longer.

7.7. **Integration Between Bus and Active Travel**

7.7.1. Active travel is wholly complementary to the bus network, especially as every bus journey starts and ends with an element of active travel.

7.7.2. Already, early measures are in place to promote the opportunity for multi-modal trips including bike and bus. For example, six Go North East routes have capacity to carry two unfolded bikes, and stations across the Tyne and Wear Metro system are fitted out with approximately 750 places for cycles, much of which takes the form of digitally operated cycle lockers.

8. **THE OBJECTIVES OF THE EP PLAN – IN TERMS OF HOW IT WILL IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL BUS SERVICES IN THE CORRESPONDING EP SCHEME AREA**

8.1. The Transport Plan adopted by the NEJTC in March 2021 provides the strategic framework to support delivery of an improved, more seamless, coordinated and integrated transport system across the region. It sets out how transport can help support the wider goals of creating and sustaining more and better jobs in a growing and decarbonised economy, where social and health inequalities are greatly reduced.

8.2. The vision statement for the Transport Plan is: “Moving to a green, healthy, dynamic and thriving North East”. This vision is supported by five strategic objectives for transport in our region:

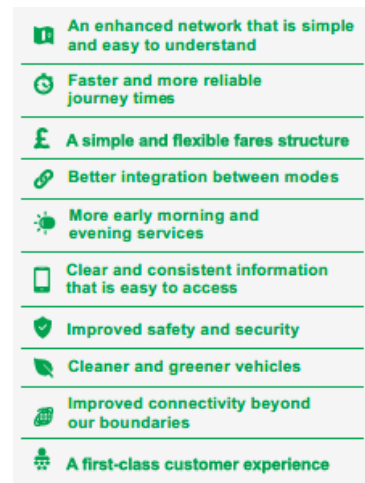
- 8.2.1. Carbon-neutral North East;
- 8.2.2. Overcome inequality and grow our economy;
- 8.2.3. Healthier North East;
- 8.2.4. Appealing, sustainable transport choices; and

8.2.5. Safe, secure network.

- 8.3. They are reflective of the critical strategic issues such as the Climate Emergency declared by each of the region's Local Authorities and Combined Authorities, the ambition for a clean and green recovery from the pandemic and the need to address the health of the region.
- 8.4. Central to the Transport Plan is a policy named: “Making the Right Travel Choice”. This policy sets out the actions that need to be enabled, through interventions on the transport system, to drive progress against the objectives.
- 8.5. The policy of ‘Making the Right Travel Choices’, leaves no doubt: the region is committed to positioning buses as an appealing and sustainable transport choice which people should choose ahead of a car whenever possible.
- 8.6. The goal in North East England is to do more than just provide a sustainable transport network – it should be made attractive, so people want to use it.

9. **WHAT OUTCOMES NEED TO BE DELIVERED TO IMPROVE LOCAL BUS SERVICES IN THE EP PLAN AREA**

- 9.1. In June 2021, the NEJTC published a high-level strategic vision document called ‘Your Vision for Buses’. This document was developed in partnership with the region’s bus operators and considers the role that buses can play in delivering the Transport Plan. In doing so, it sets out Ten Solutions for the bus network – and asks the region to consider and test these solutions. These Ten Solutions are aligned with the Government’s ‘National Bus Strategy’.
- 9.2. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been developed jointly by NEbus and the NEJTC and link to the Transport Plan objectives.
- 9.3. In most cases a baseline year of 2018/19 has been chosen for the KPIs, because that was the last full financial and reporting year where bus ridership and road traffic levels were not affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 9.4. Firstly it is necessary to repair the damage caused by Covid-19 to bus ridership in the region.
- 9.5. Then the intention is to progress to a position where a higher proportion of people choose the bus to travel, leading to a significantly higher number people using buses – especially for journeys to work and education and in rural areas. This will lead to growth in bus patronage.
- 9.6. This will only happen when people see tangible improvements made to bus services, which will be measured through improved customer satisfaction. For passengers to be happy buses must be punctual and reliable, and buses need to be faster and not caught in congestion.
- 9.7. Although getting more people on the bus and growing its modal share will of itself improve environmental performance, a continuous improvement in the emission standards of the bus fleet will also be targeted.
- 9.8. **KPIs that will need to be delivered to improve local bus services in the EP Plan area**



9.8.1. **Recovering from Covid-19**

9.8.1.1. **KPI 1:** Bus ridership to achieve 154.4m trips during the year 2022/23, returning us to the baseline level of 2018/19.

9.8.2. **Modal Share**

9.8.2.1. **KPI 2:** Modal share of buses to grow by 1 percentage point in 2023/24 from the baseline of 6.4%, and a further 1 percentage point in 2024/25.

9.8.2.2. **KPI 3:** Modal share of bus use for journeys to work and education to grow by 1 percentage point in 2023/24, and a further 1 percentage point in 2024/25.

9.8.3. **Patronage**

9.8.3.1. **KPI 4:** Bus patronage to grow by 10% in 2023/24, and then by a further 10% in 2024/25.

9.8.3.2. **KPI 5:** Bus patronage from people under the age of 25 to grow by 10% in 2023/24, and then by a further 10% in 2024/25.

9.8.3.3. **KPI 6:** Bus boarding at rural bus stops to grow by 10% in 2023/24, and then by a further 10% in 2024/25.

9.8.4. **Customer Satisfaction**

9.8.4.1. **KPI 7:** Overall bus passenger satisfaction to grow from a baseline of 91% to 92% in 2023/24 and to 93% in 2024/25.

9.8.5. **Bus Performance**

9.8.5.1. **KPI 8:** Average speed of buses to grow, relative to the average speed of general traffic, in each year of the EP Plan.

9.8.5.2. **KPI 9:** Bus reliability to be 99.5% throughout the period of the EP Plan.

9.8.5.3. **KPI 10:** Bus punctuality at point of origin to be 95% in 2022/23, 96% in 2023/24 and 97% in 2024/25.

9.8.5.4. **KPI 11:** Bus punctuality at all timing points point of origin to be 90% in 2022/23, 95% in 2023/24 and 95% in 2024/25.

9.8.6. **Environmental Performance**

9.8.6.1. **KPI 12:** Bus fleet emission standard to Euro 6 or better to be 63.2% in 2022/23, 80.8% in 2023/24 and 91.1% in 2024/25 and to be 100% at the start of 2025/26.

10. **WHAT OVERALL INTERVENTIONS NEED TO BE TAKEN TO DELIVER THOSE OUTCOMES**

10.1. The following improvements have been identified as necessary to deliver the strategic objectives and to achieve the targets. These measures which will enhance the experience of current bus users; and make bus use a more attractive proposition to those who don't currently use the bus.

10.2. Within this section are five main subsections:

10.2.1. Customer Experience;

10.2.2. Fares and Ticketing;

10.2.3. The Network;

10.2.4. Highways and Infrastructure; and

10.2.5. Delivering the BSIP through the Enhanced Partnership.

10.3. Customer Experience

- 10.3.1. Network-wide ticketing and journey planning will be made available to passengers through a single dedicated website and accompanying app. We will also continue to provide leaflets and printed information.
- 10.3.2. We will develop a new and consistent brand for The Partnership that will be applied across the network, so that it becomes a recognisable symbol of public transport for the North East.
- 10.3.3. The 400 bus stops with existing real-time information will be updated to a next generation system such as “E-Ink” which shows up-to-date real-time passenger information. A further 100 stops will be updated with the technology.
- 10.3.4. We will provide clear printed information at stops and stations, including in rural areas, and maintain it.
- 10.3.5. We will improve CCTV provision throughout our entire network, ensuring coverage of every major station and stop across the region. 700 moveable CCTV cameras will be available to be deployed across the region, in areas where there is demand for them or areas where there is deemed to be a safety risk. The cameras will be remotely accessible and information from them can be accessed on an on-demand basis.
- 10.3.6. We will provide seamless service information to customers, offering a single source of truth, feeding to any connected systems for passenger information.
- 10.3.7. All vehicles will be fitted with enhanced next-stop audio-visual equipment, charging points and Wi-Fi as standard.
- 10.3.8. We will develop a consistent training module to be delivered to all our colleagues who fulfil a direct customer experience role.
- 10.3.9. A taxi guarantee will give disabled passengers the peace of mind that if there isn’t room for their wheelchair on board, a taxi replacement will be provided for them at no extra cost.
- 10.3.10. Turnaround cleaners will be employed at bus stations throughout our network. They will be available to quickly clean any operators bus to ensure a clean and pleasant journey on any bus.
- 10.3.11. All interchanges and rail stations will be supported with multi-modal passenger information, showing real-time information about connecting journeys.
- 10.3.12. Transport ambassadors will be available at key interchanges throughout the network to guide passengers and help them make the right travel choices.
- 10.3.13. Improvements will be made to wayfinding in major stations and interchanges through new posters showing where to catch your bus.

10.4. Fares and Ticketing

- 10.4.1. Network One and its tickets will be valid for travel on all bus, Metro and Ferry services across the North East, as well as on rail services between Sunderland, Newcastle, Metrocentre and Blaydon. It will also cover Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services provided through our partnership. Network One, which is the trading name of Network One Ticketing Ltd, will re-brand itself as part of the launch of the new product range.

10.4.2. Network One will simplify its zonal structure and price multi-modal tickets more attractively:

<i>Zone</i>	<i>Multi-modal / Multi-operator target daily cap fare – adult</i>	<i>Existing price</i>
<i>Country Durham</i>	<i>£4*</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Northumberland</i>	<i>£5*</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Tyne and Wear</i>	<i>£5*</i>	<i>£7.80</i>
<i>All zone</i>	<i>£6.80*</i>	<i>£10.90</i>

*All proposed fares are undergoing modelling at the time of writing, and ultimate pricing will be subject to the level of subsidy available to each bus operator and Nexus (for the Metro), and the approval of the Board of Network One Ticketing Ltd. It is expected that all prices will be reviewed from time to time and may be increased to reflect inflationary pressures.

10.4.3. A complete pricing structure will be developed using the daily fare as the starting point. The range of products will include weekly, monthly, annual, flexi (for commuters who travel regularly but not every day), and student discount.

10.4.4. To further improve the offer, additional low cost, multi modal, multi operator fares will be developed to make pricing more affordable in areas that are a short distance from a zone boundary.

10.4.5. Our multi-modal fares will be available in two forms:

10.4.5.1. a ticket purchased before travel begins (from a bus driver, at a Metro ticket machine, online, or through a new app);

10.4.5.2. a price “cap” that is automatically calculated and applied when a customer uses a contactless bank card, mobile phone payment app, or Pay As You Go smartcard to pay for travel. Through the BSIP we intend to put in place the back-office system and upgrade existing ticketing equipment to allow this to happen.

10.4.6. Our simplified multi-modal products will be displayed and advertised clearly throughout the region and will also feature in electronic and printed bus and Metro information, and in specific marketing campaigns.

10.4.7. We will introduce tickets for under-19s across the region, with a target £1.20 fare for single tickets and target £2.50 region wide multi-modal fare cap. The mechanism for delivering this will be further explored.

10.4.8. The current Metro ‘Take the Kids for Free’ offer will be extended to cover all bus services in the region for a trial period in summer 2022.

10.4.9. We will carry out a study to examine whether local additions to the English National Concessionary Bus Pass scheme can be standardised throughout the region.

10.4.10. A care leavers’ concession will be available throughout the region. The fare to be set will be agreed through the Care Leavers’ Covenant.

10.4.11. The fares package we propose by its nature deals with integrated, multi-modal ticketing. Bus operators will continue to offer their own bespoke range of tickets which in many cases will still be the cheapest way to travel by bus.

10.4.12. Some fares already on offer are very attractive. For example, some operators offer a £1 evening flat fare for travel. We encourage all bus operators to adopt simple and affordable pricing structures and to simplify zonal pricing so that there is a common approach region-

wide. Although this is out of scope for the EP, we believe that bus operators will consider it under their own decision-making processes.

- 10.4.13. We anticipate that if all of the investments are funded and delivered, bus patronage will grow by 20% in our region.

10.5. Network

- 10.5.1. We will work with operators to ensure that sufficient funding is available to maintain their current networks once Bus Recovery Grant ceases.
- 10.5.2. We will similarly work with local authorities and Nexus to ensure that they have sufficient funding to maintain their 'socially necessary' (secured) services.
- 10.5.3. There will be more early morning, evening and overnight services as well as better connections beyond our boundaries.

Category	Monday to Saturday Daytime	Sunday Daytime	Daily Evening	Overnight
Superbus	5-10	7-15	15-30	
Interurban Express	15	30	30	
Connect	30	60	60	
Rural	60-120	120		
Remote Rural and targeted groups	DRT, Special	DRT, Special		
Night network				60

- 10.5.4. **Superbus** will have two variants:

- 10.5.4.1. Superbus Red Routes will run at least every five minutes from 0630 until 1830 on Mondays to Fridays and from 0730 until 1830 on Saturdays. There will be buses every 7-8 minutes from 0830 until 1830 on Sundays, every 15 minutes during the early morning and evening.
- 10.5.4.2. Superbus Green Routes will run at least every 10 minutes from 0630 until 1830 on Mondays to Fridays and from 0730 until 1830 on Saturdays. There will be buses every 15 minutes from 0830 until 1830 on Sundays and every 30 minutes during the early morning and evening.
- 10.5.4.3. Superbus services will be made more attractive by the investment in bus priority provided for in the BSIP.
- 10.5.4.4. We will build on the success of our existing night buses by introducing them on Superbus Routes where there is established demand.
- 10.5.5. **Interurban Express** services will knit our region together better, providing fast links into our cities and major towns from the surrounding towns and villages. Buses will run up to every 15 minutes on Monday to Saturday daytimes and every 30 minutes in the evening and on Sundays. They will operate on a 'limited stop' basis within cities to minimise journey times, complementing the Tyne and Wear Metro and National Rail network. Buses will provide high standards of comfort and on-board service.
- 10.5.6. **Connect** will be the network of socially and economically necessary links between the local, sub-regional and regional centres in our region, complementing the Tyne and Wear Metro, National Rail and interurban express services. Buses will run at least every 30 minutes on Monday to Saturday daytimes, hourly in the evening and on Sundays.
- 10.5.7. **Rural routes** will be tailored to the specific requirements of the communities they serve, with buses running at least every two hours on Monday to Saturday daytimes.

- 10.5.8. We will deliver a range of improvements in the rural areas of South West Durham and West Northumberland, including better Monday to Saturday daytime services and new Sunday journeys where there is potential demand. In particular, we will introduce a new service to Kielder in the Northumberland National Park and ensure that buses run all year round to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Hadrian's Wall.
- 10.5.9. We will also ensure that rural services are fully integrated with other bus routes and modes of transport, as we know the importance of effective connections in rural areas.
- 10.5.10. We will launch two pilot rural Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) operations in the second year of our BSIP.
- 10.5.11. We will partner with schools in a pilot scheme to market our new home-to-school offer and, using centrally-procured route planning technology, plan efficient bus routes to the school considering the postcodes of subscribing families.
- 10.5.12. We will accelerate operators' existing bus replacement programmes so that all vehicles are Euro VI standard or Zero-emission by March 2025.
- 10.5.13. We will trial hydrogen vehicles and install hydrogen refuelling stations to support them.

10.6. **Highways and Infrastructure**

- 10.6.1. We will deliver major highways interventions to accelerate bus journey times and increase punctuality and reliability on 17 of our busiest corridors in the region:
 - 10.6.1.1. West of Newcastle (BRT), Wallsend, Coast Road (BRT), A188 / A189 North Tyneside, Dunston, Bensham Road, Leam Lane, Old Durham Road, Chester Road, Sunderland, A690 Sunderland, South Shields to Sunderland, South Shields to Newcastle, Blyth Cowpen Road, Cramlington, Morpeth, Seaton Burn, Durham A167.
 - 10.6.1.2. The vast majority of bus routes in our network use these 17 corridors for all or part of their journey. As a result, the investment we are planning to deliver will have a major benefit for bus journey time, reliability and punctuality across the entire bus network in the North East.
- 10.6.2. Major highways interventions improvements will be delivered in two tranches:
 - 10.6.2.1. We are already developing business cases to deliver Tranche 1 schemes once rigorous public consultation has taken place and design work is complete; and
 - 10.6.2.2. Tranche 2 schemes are deliverable in the EP Plan time frame, but not yet at Business Case so require further development and consultation.
- 10.6.3. We will also deliver a series of 'spot fix' interventions which will tackle isolated pinch-points which may not necessarily be situated along a high frequency corridor, but will contribute to better bus performance throughout the region. Examples include Northern South Tyneside, central Durham, Bishop Auckland, West Gateshead and Northern North Tyneside.
- 10.6.4. Our region is committed to investment in highways infrastructure which could include road space reallocation, junction redesign, traffic signal re-prioritisation, bus gates and other measures designed to improve bus services.
- 10.6.5. We will contribute to already planned investment in the regions highways in the Intelligent Traffic Systems (ITS) project to ensure the potential for bus priority in this project is maximised.

- 10.6.6. Our local authorities are also willing to consider changes to on-street parking and moving traffic enforcement on these and other corridors, to the extent that red routes could be introduced, subject to public consultation.
- 10.6.7. We plan to bring a consistent standard throughout the region's bus shelters and stops:
- 10.6.7.1. 1,350 shelters which are unwelcoming and poorly used will be replaced by modern facilities which will include lighting, CCTV and high-quality pedestrian access to increase safety;
 - 10.6.7.2. 240 shelters and stops with particularly high usage will have an additional high specification applied; and
 - 10.6.7.3. a strategic plan will be developed to select 'hub' shelters that can serve as a community focus for interchange opportunities, between bus routes, with cycling and walking, with National Rail, ferry, Metro and our Pocket Park & Ride and Kiss & Ride.
- 10.6.8. We will replace all our bus stop 'flags' to ensure consistent standards throughout the region.
- 10.6.9. New bus stations will be delivered in Durham, Alnwick, Bishop Auckland and an additional Newcastle City Centre bus station. There are further plans to improve bus access to North Shields Fish Quay and the International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP).
- 10.6.10. We will introduce five new major Park & Ride sites in the region, served by high-specification articulated vehicles running a dedicated service for Park & Ride customers.
- 10.6.11. These will benefit from the major highways infrastructure investments along our 17 busiest bus corridors.
- 10.6.12. We will establish formal 'Pocket Park & Ride' locations around the network, with a modest number of car parking spaces, supported by high-quality information and waiting facilities. These sites will be situated along major express bus routes and some will also serve as likely interchange sites between the DRT proposal set out in our BSIP.
- 10.6.13. Network subsection and buses on our major corridors.

10.7. **Delivering the BSIP through the Enhanced Partnership**

- 10.7.1. A significant marketing budget will be used to drive growth in bus patronage and to highlight key improvements and initiatives. Activities will be delivered on the ground by a range of partners (including bus operators, Nexus and Local Authorities), augmented by partnership-level campaigns through contracts procured by Transport North East.
- 10.7.2. We will use dedicated team members to collaborate with businesses including industrial estates and sites, large public sector employees and hospitals, with the objective of encouraging employees to switch to the bus.
- 10.7.3. We will provide a dedicated team and budget to work with communities, especially those who currently feel excluded from public transport, to encourage greater bus use:
- 10.7.3.1. a fund to allow volunteers to train as 'Community Bus Ambassadors' or 'Bus Buddies',
 - 10.7.3.2. work with groups in minority and harder to reach communities, including people with Equality Act protected characteristics or other extra needs so that they can promote ideas to make buses more accessible for them and increase confidence in using the bus,

- 10.7.3.3. Village, parish and town councils will be provided with marketing collateral backed up with promotional event ticketing offering discounted or free bus travel to community events, and
- 10.7.3.4. an 'Adopt a Bus' scheme with organisations such as schools to foster community engagement.
- 10.7.4. We commit to exploring and engaging with people and businesses in the region over issues of car parking supply and potential deployment of work place parking levies, congestion charging, and strategic reduction in parking spaces to see if these can be effective tools which the region can adopt across our geography to encourage a switch to attractive, sustainable transport options such as buses.
- 10.7.5. We will also discuss the introduction of a relationship between the cost of car parking in major centres of retail and employment and the cost of travel on public transport, where it makes economic and strategic sense to do so.
- 10.7.6. We will create a North East Bus Partnerships team to manage the programme of investments and activities set out in the BSIP, and to oversee the performance of the bus network, to manage the partnership agreement.
- 10.7.7. We will put in place a formalised Change Management Process with community engagement at its heart, that will see all major changes that are proposed for our bus network to be clearly set out, consulted upon, and following the consideration of feedback, introduced in a structured and well-communicated manner.

10.8. Reporting

- 10.8.1. A Bus Passenger Charter will apply on all bus services in our region to build customer confidence, and to improve consistency and transparency.
- 10.8.2. We will report on progress towards our KPIs on a six-monthly basis to our Bus Partnership Board, and onward to Department for Transport (DfT) and other key stakeholders, and publish the information on our website and in a non-digital format.

11. PLANS FOR CONSULTING OPERATORS AND PASSENGER GROUPS ON HOW WELL THE EP PLAN AND EP SCHEME(S) ARE WORKING

- 11.1. NEBus and the NEJTC have agreed shared objectives and KPIs. Progress towards our KPIs will be reviewed on a regular basis to assess whether the actions being taking are leading to success or whether corrective action needs to be taken.
- 11.2. The partnership between NEBus and the NEJTC provides an opportunity to reset many aspects of the North East's bus network, including addressing how bus passengers feel about the standard of service on offer and whether it meets their expectations. This will be done on a consistent basis, regardless of which operator customers are travelling with. The goal will be to achieve a far greater sense of community ownership over the bus network, so that local people feel that the bus is a community asset that responds to their needs and helps them to achieve their goals and objectives. Once this happens, it is far more likely that people in the community will feel inclined to use the service on a regular basis.
- 11.3. A Bus Passenger Charter (BPC) will describe what passengers can expect from bus services in the North East. Having a charter in place will enable passengers to hold bus operators and local authorities to account for delivering against this EP Plan. The BPC will signpost passengers to routes for recourse, enabling them to provide feedback on how authorities and operators are performing in meeting their commitments in this EP Plan.
- 11.4. Reporting to the Regional Enhanced Bus Partnership Board and to the Department for Transport

- 11.4.1. TNE will produce a six-monthly report to the Regional Bus Enhanced Partnership Board. It will set out the latest available data by which to measure the partnership's performance against its KPIs.
- 11.4.2. The report will contain commentary to explain why targets are being met, not met, or exceeded, and will include supplementary information such as long-term trends, social and economic trends that may help to understand performance and benchmarking information.
- 11.4.3. The report will set out the actions that have been taken by the partnership in the previous six-month period, and the actions that are planned for the following six-month period.
- 11.4.4. As well as focusing and reporting on 'hard' data in the shape of KPI performance, qualitative data will also be included in the report, to evidence how users actually feel about the network, and what has been said in relation to the new service provision. First-hand feedback like this cannot be underestimated, as it provides a true insight into the minds of the consumer. Effort will be made to record and analyse in-person customer feedback, as well as providing analysis of social media comments. This routine exercise will help to set the KPIs within the context of the bus user and the narrative around the new network.
- 11.4.5. Local Bus Boards and the business and services-focused North East Bus Advisory Panel will be consulted over the report. The report will be sent to the NEJTC and may also be provided to other stakeholders with an interest, such as individual local authorities and Nexus.

11.5. Bus Passenger Charter (BPC)

- 11.5.1. The BPC will ensure performance information is accessible and easy to understand.
- 11.5.2. The BPC does not create any new legal relationship with passengers, it sets out commitments to:
 - 11.5.2.1. Outline the standards of service customers can expect from buses in the North East, such as punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, proportion of services operated, accessibility of buses and related infrastructure to groups with protected characteristics.
 - 11.5.2.2. Update on performance on a six-monthly basis relative to the KPIs for the partnership that are shown in section 9.8 of this EP Plan.
 - 11.5.2.3. Make available six-monthly reports on the TNE website, supplemented by communication channels appropriate to the relevant audiences.
 - 11.5.2.4. Identify where KPIs are not being met and describe the measures being taking to ensure these are met in future.
 - 11.5.2.5. Advise customers on how to obtain local travel and general public transport information, and how to travel safely.
 - 11.5.2.6. Inform customers of the complaints process to follow if something goes wrong or the service falls below the expected standard, as well as providing routes to gather other feedback.
 - 11.5.2.7. Inform customers on how to offer improvement suggestions.
 - 11.5.2.8. Advise customers on who to contact and provide appropriate channels.
 - 11.5.2.9. Publicise upcoming planned improvements and changes and advise customers how they can play a part in future proposals.

12. HOW THE RELATED EP SCHEME(S) ARE INTENDED TO ASSIST IN IMPLEMENTING THE POLICIES AND ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE EP PLAN

The initial EP Scheme provides both a framework for implementation of the EP Plan through the governance arrangements set out in section 8 of the EP Scheme, and also implements a number of measures and requirements which start implementation of the EP Plan. In particular:

- 12.1. Measures set out in the EP Scheme start to implement many of the customer experience objectives with clear, consistent information provision being introduced over the period of the EP Scheme, including a common approach to real time information, multi-modal passenger information, and provision at bus-stops;
 - 12.2. Ticketing measures introduced in the initial EP Scheme include a common pay-as-you-go ITSO compliant smartcard, and all-day multi-operator adult and under 19 fares across the region;
 - 12.3. New buses will be expected to meet the Euro VI standard and incorporate next-stop audio visual equipment;
 - 12.4. A number of major highway interventions will be delivered on some of the busiest corridors with traffic signal upgrades on six key corridors being delivered through the initial EP Scheme to allow full traffic control interventions;
 - 12.5. The EP Scheme provides a framework for reporting on KPIs, and a mechanism to introduce further measures as they are agreed between the Authorities and Operators.
13. **THE INTENDED EFFECT OF THE EP SCHEME(S) ON NEIGHBOURING AREAS THAT ARE OUTSIDE THE EP PLAN AND EP SCHEME(S) AREA**

The EP Scheme specifically exempts services which have over 50% of their route outside the EP Plan Area, so is not intended to apply requirements to services which operate predominantly in neighbouring areas, and therefore it is expected that the effect of the EP Scheme on neighbouring areas will be limited. Whilst the EP Scheme does impose some requirements on new vehicles these are not deemed onerous for new vehicles, and the initial EP Scheme does not require operators to upgrade their vehicles to meet new standards. To the extent any cross boundary operators are not exempt and have to comply with the ticketing standards specified in the EP Scheme, the initial EP Scheme does not seek to cap the required multi-operator fares, and therefore these will be set by the operators on a commercial basis initially. As a result the EP Scheme is not expected to materially affect neighbouring areas.

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TRANSPORT NORTH EAST

ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

THE NORTH EAST JOINT TRANSPORT COMMITTEE ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP SCHEME FOR BUSES IS MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 138G(1) OF THE TRANSPORT ACT 2000 BY:

The Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland Combined Authority, known as the North East Combined Authority ("**NECA**") (comprising of the local authority areas of Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council);

The Newcastle Upon Tyne, North Tyneside and Northumberland Combined Authority known as the North of Tyne Combined Authority ("**NTCA**") (comprising of the local authority areas of Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council and Northumberland County Council);

Tyne & Wear Passenger Transport Executive ("Nexus**")** of Nexus House, 33 St James' Boulevard, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4AX;

The County Council of Durham of County Hall, Aykley Heads, Durham, DH1 5UZ. (**Durham**);

The Borough Council of Gateshead, Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH. (**Gateshead**);

The Council of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle Civic Centre, Barras Bridge, Haymarket, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8QH (**Newcastle**);

The Council of the Borough of North Tyneside, The Quadrant, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY (**North Tyneside**);

Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF (**Northumberland**);

The Council of the Borough of South Tyneside, Town Hall & Civic Offices, Westoe Rd, South Shields, NE33, 2RL (**South Tyneside**); and

Sunderland City Council, Civic Centre, Burdon Road, Sunderland, SR2 7DN (**Sunderland**).

1. EP SCHEME CONTENT

1.1 This document fulfils the statutory requirements for an EP Scheme as set out in the Transport Act 2000 as amended by the Bus Services Act 2017. In accordance with the statutory requirements in sections 138A to 138S of the Transport Act 2000, the EP Scheme document sets out:

1.1.1 the area covered by the EP Scheme (section 3);

1.1.2 the commencement date and period of operation (section 4);

- 1.1.3 Facilities and Measures (section 6);
 - 1.1.4 requirements in relation to local services (section 7); and
 - 1.1.5 governance arrangements including variation and revocation (section 8).
- 1.2 The EP Scheme can only be put in place if an associated EP Plan has been made. Therefore, this document should be considered alongside the North East Enhanced Partnership Plan.
- 1.3 This EP Scheme has been jointly developed by the North East Joint Transport Committee ("NEJTC"), Local Highway Authorities, Nexus and those bus operators that provide Local Services in the EP Scheme area.
- 1.4 The EP Scheme sets out obligations and requirements on the Authorities including Local Transport Authority and Local Highway Authorities, and operators of Local Services in order to achieve the intended improvements, with the aim of delivering the objectives of the North East Enhanced Partnership Plan.

2. Defined Terms

- 2.1 The following terms are used in this EP Scheme:
- 2.1.1 **"AQPS"** – means an Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme made pursuant to section 113C of the Transport Act 2000 (as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008 and the Bus Services Act 2017).
 - 2.1.2 **"Authority"** means each Local Transport Authority, each Highway Authority and Nexus and **"Authorities"** shall be construed accordingly.
 - 2.1.3 **"Bus Lane"** means a signposted lane, designated for use by registered local bus services and (where specified) taxis and other authorised vehicles, at the times indicated by the relevant signage.
 - 2.1.4 **"Bus Lane Enforcement"** means action taken to ensure that bus lanes and bus gates are used only by authorised vehicles.
 - 2.1.5 **"Bus Stand"** means a bus stop clearway as defined in accordance with paragraph 1(a) of Part 1 to Schedule 19 of The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 but which permits or will permit a local bus to stand within the clearway for as long as may be necessary up to a maximum period of 10 minutes.
 - 2.1.6 **"EP Plan"** means an enhanced partnership plan as defined in section 138A(3) of the Transport Act 2000.
 - 2.1.7 **"EP Scheme"** means an enhanced partnership scheme as defined in section 138A(5) of the Transport Act 2000, and **"this EP Scheme"** shall be construed as a reference to the EP Scheme made pursuant to this document, as may be amended or varied from time to time in accordance with its terms or pursuant to section 138K of the Transport Act 2000.
 - 2.1.8 **"EP Scheme Area"** means the area to which this EP Scheme applies.
 - 2.1.9 **"Facilities"** shall have the meaning given in section 138D(1) Transport Act 2000 and shall include assets that are provided at specific locations along particular

routes (or parts of routes) within the EP Scheme Area or new and improved bus priority measures which are made within the EP Scheme Area;

- 2.1.10 **"Local Authorities"** means Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland.
- 2.1.11 **"Local Highway Authority"** means a Local Authority with responsibility for the maintenance of highway infrastructure in its local authority area.
- 2.1.12 **"Local Transport Authority"** has the meaning given to it in section 108(4) of the Transport Act 2000 and for the purposes of this EP Scheme shall include references to NECA and NoTCA as the case may be.
- 2.1.13 **"Local Service"** has the meaning given to it in section 2(1) of the Transport Act 1985.
- 2.1.14 **"Measures"** shall have the meaning given in section 138D(2) of the Transport Act 2000 and shall include improvements which have the aim of:
- 2.1.14.1 increasing the use of Local Services serving the routes to which the measures relate or ending or reducing a decline in their use; or
- 2.1.14.2 improving the quality of Local Services.
- 2.1.15 **"North East Enhanced Partnership Plan"** means the EP Plan made by the Authorities pursuant to section 138A of the Transport Act 2000 and which is required to be in place for this EP Scheme to be made.
- 2.1.16 **"Operator"** means an operator of a Local Service within the EP Scheme Area which is not exempt pursuant to section 5.
- 2.1.17 **"TRO"** or **"Traffic Regulation Order"** means a traffic regulation order made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 or any other enactment regulating the use of roads or other places.

3. SCOPE OF THE EP SCHEME AND COMMENCEMENT DATE

3.1 Description of Geographical Coverage

The EP Scheme will support the improvement of all local bus services operating in the administrative areas of the NECA and the NTCA.

3.2 Map of EP Plan and EP Scheme Areas

A map of the EP Plan and EP Scheme Area is included at Schedule 1 (*EP Plan and EP Scheme Area*).

4. COMMENCEMENT DATE

- 4.1 This EP Scheme is made on 1 April 2022 and shall come into operation on 1 April 2022.
- 4.2 The EP Scheme shall have an initial term of 3 years and will be reviewed annually in accordance with section 8 (*Governance Arrangements*) of this EP Scheme.

5. EXEMPTED SERVICES

The following Local Services are exempt from the requirements of the EP Scheme:

- 5.1 In respect of all Local Services operating in the area of the EP Scheme:
- 5.1.1 Any Local Service which is primarily operated as a replacement service for Metro, rail or ferry services;
 - 5.1.2 Any Local Service which is operated by a vehicle which it has been agreed, by the relevant Authority, acting reasonably is intended primarily for novelty or leisure purposes rather than as a standard local service;
 - 5.1.3 Any Local Service which has over 50% of their route mileage outside the area of this EP Scheme;
 - 5.1.4 Any Local Service which forms part of a longer route which is not registered as a Local Service and operates as a long-distance scheduled coach service;
 - 5.1.5 Any Local Service which is registered as a flexible service;
 - 5.1.6 Any Local Service which is registered to support a special event and which therefore operates no more than 7 days in any year;
 - 5.1.7 Any Local Service which would, other than for its registration under section 6 of the Transport Act 1985, be an excursion or tour within the meaning in section 137(1) of the Transport Act 1985;
 - 5.1.8 Any Local Service which is registered to operate less than three journeys in any day or on no more than one day a week;
 - 5.1.9 Any Local Service which whilst open to the general public has a start point or destination at a school, and which is predominantly used by students travelling to or from such school;
 - 5.1.10 Any Local Service which has been procured by an Authority pursuant to section 63 of the Transport Act 1968 or section 9A of the Transport Act 1968, and where such Authority did not receive a compliant tender (which is deemed to include such tender complying with all requirements specified in this EP Scheme) which offered value for money, in the opinion of that Authority, acting reasonably;
 - 5.1.11 Any Local Service where the Operator is paid by a third party (including, but not limited to developers, supermarkets, employers or other parties requiring a bus service to be provided to a location in the EP Scheme area, but for the avoidance of doubt excluding any company which is a parent company or subsidiary of that Operator, or a subsidiary of any parent company of that Operator) in order to provide such service, and such Local Service would not operate in the absence of such payment.
- 5.2 For Local Services which mostly operate in the administrative area of Northumberland any Local Service which is operated solely with vehicles having 16 seats or less.

6. FACILITIES AND MEASURES

6.1 The Authorities named in column 3 of the table in Part a of Schedule 2 (*Facilities and Measures*) shall provide the relevant Facility described in column 2 by and from the date or dates indicated in column 5.

6.2 The Authorities named in column 3 of the table in Part b of Schedule 2 (*Facilities and Measures*) shall provide the relevant Measure described in column 2 from the date or dates indicated in column 5.

6.3 Where a Required TRO is specified in column 4 of the table in Part a of Schedule 2 (*Facilities and Measures*) or column 4 of the table in Part b of Schedule 2 (*Facilities and Measures*) then the Local Highway Authority (or Local Highway Authorities) for the area to which the TRO applies shall use all reasonable endeavours to make such TRO in sufficient time for the relevant Facility or Measure to be provided no later than the date or dates indicated in column 5. Where a Local Highway Authority is unable to make any required TRO in the timescale specified, then the relevant Local Highway Authority may propose a Proposed Variation which:

6.3.1 amends the date or dates indicated in column 5 for such Facility or Measure until a date reasonably following the actual date that the TRO is made ; and

6.3.2 amends the date or dates specified for implementation of any requirement that is identified in column 6 of the relevant table as being dependent upon such Facility or Measure,

and where a Proposed Variation specifies both the amendments specified sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2 and provided that these are the only amendments specified, then section 8.4.9 shall apply to such Proposed Variation as if it had been recommended by the relevant Bus Board(s).

6.4 Where an Authority is unable to introduce any Facility or Measure in the timescale specified (including where funding from Department for Transport or any other funding body which is required to introduce such Facility or Measure has not been provided), then such Authority shall promptly notify the NEJTC, and where the NEJTC assesses, acting reasonably, that it is not reasonably practicable to introduce such Facility or Measure in the specified timescale under this EP Scheme, the Authorities may propose a Proposed Variation which :

6.4.1 amends the date or dates indicated in column 5 for the introduction of such Facility or Measure until a date reasonably following the actual date that the relevant Authority is able to introduce such Facility or Measure ,

6.4.2 amends the date or dates specified for implementation of any requirement that is identified in column 6 of the relevant table as being dependent upon such Facility or Measure,

and where a Proposed Variation specifies both the amendments specified sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 and provided that these are the only amendments specified, then section 8.4.9 shall apply to such Proposed Variation as if it had been recommended by the relevant Bus Board(s).

6.5 Where, notwithstanding their obligations pursuant to sections 6.3 or 6.4 an Authority is unable to make a Required TRO or introduce any Facility or Measure within the term of this

EP Scheme (including where funding required from Department for Transport or any other funding body to introduce such Facility or Measure will not be provided within the term of this EP Scheme) and this is demonstrated to the reasonable satisfaction of the NEJTC, then in accordance with section 138E of the Transport Act 2000, this EP Scheme shall be varied to remove the requirement to implement such Required TRO, Facility or Measure and to remove any requirement that is identified in column 6 of the relevant table as being dependent upon such Required TRO, Facility or Measure

7. REQUIREMENTS IN RESPECT OF LOCAL SERVICES

7.1 Operators of Local Services identified in column 3 of any table in Schedule 3 (*Requirements in respect of Local Services*) shall ensure that such Local Services meet the relevant requirement set out in column 2 of such table by and from the date or dates specified in column 4.

7.2 Where one or more Operators is unable to meet any relevant requirement in the timescales specified in any table in Schedule 3 (*Requirements in respect of Local Services*) they shall promptly notify the NEJTC, specifying the time period in which they can meet the relevant requirement, and setting out any reasons why the standard cannot be met in the specified timescale. \Where the NEJTC assesses, acting reasonably, that it is not reasonably practicable for one or more Operators to meet the relevant standard in the specified timescale under this EP Scheme, the parties agree that one or more Operators may proposed a Proposed Variation which:

7.2.1 Amends the date or dates indicated in respect of such standard until a date reasonably following the actual date on which the standard can be met by all relevant Operators (or could have been met, had such Operators used reasonable endeavours to achieve the relevant standard); and

7.2.2 which also amends the date or dates specified for implementation of any Facility or Measure that is identified in column 5 of the relevant table as being dependent upon such standard,

and where a Proposed Variation specifies both the amendments specified sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2 and provided that these are the only amendments specified, then section 8.4.9 shall apply to such Proposed Variation as if it had been recommended by the relevant Bus Board(s).

8. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

8.1 Bus Boards

8.1.1 The Operators and Authorities shall constitute a Regional Enhanced Bus Partnership Board for the EP Scheme Area ("**Partnership Board**") to:

8.1.1.1 oversee work on delivery and implementation of the EP Plan and EP Scheme;

8.1.1.2 to provide effective and strategic governance to drive performance against the KPIs specified in the EP Plan; and

- 8.1.1.3 provide recommendations to the Authorities in respect of implementation of measures supporting the EP Plan and EP Scheme and any Proposed Variations.
- 8.1.2 The Operators and Authorities shall constitute local partnership boards for each Local Authority area within the EP Scheme Area ("**Bus Boards**" and each a "**Bus Board**"), to oversee work on delivery and implementation of the EP Plan and EP Scheme.
- 8.1.3 The Partnership Board shall be responsible for considering the future content and arrangements for the variation and revocation of this EP Scheme in accordance with section **Error! Reference source not found.** where this relates to matters that affect operation of local services across the area of the EP Scheme, or Facilities or Measures which are delivered by NEJTC, NECA or NTCA.
- 8.1.4 The relevant Bus Board(s) shall be responsible for considering the future content and arrangements for the variation and revocation of this EP Scheme in accordance with section **Error! Reference source not found.** where this relates to matters that affect operation of local services in the area of a specific Bus Board, or Facilities or Measures which are delivered by the Local Authority (or Local Authorities) for the area of that Bus Board. The Bus Board(s) will act in an advisory capacity and will provide their advice to the Authorities, the Partnership Board and/or the NEJTC where required and appropriate.

8.2 Review of this EP Scheme

- 8.2.1 This EP Scheme shall be reviewed by the Partnership Board and each Bus Board at least annually, in conjunction with review of the EP Plan, commencing no later than on the anniversary of the Commencement Date. The NEJTC shall commence each review, and ensure that such review is carried out in no less than 6 months. The review shall take into account:
- 8.2.1.1 Review by each Bus Board of matters relating to its area; and
- 8.2.1.2 Review by the Partnership Board of performance across the area of the EP Scheme, including consideration of matters reported by each Bus Board.
- 8.2.1.3 data on progress towards achieving the KPIs specified in the EP Plan.
- 8.2.2 The Partnership Board or any Bus Board may review specific elements of this EP Scheme on an ad-hoc basis. Partnership Board or Bus Board members and any other Operator of Local Services should contact the NEJTC using the following email address buses@transportnortheast.gov.uk explaining what the issue is and its urgency. The NEJTC will then decide whether to table the matter at the next scheduled meeting of the Partnership Board and/or the relevant Bus Board or Bus Boards to which the matter relates or make arrangements for a more urgent meeting of the Partnership Board or the relevant Bus Board or Bus Boards, where the matter requires resolution in advance of the next scheduled meeting.

8.3 Postponement of operation of requirements of this EP Scheme

For the avoidance of doubt, where it appears to the NEJTC that (or where they are notified by any Local Authority, Nexus or any Operator that) any of the dates specified in section 138I(3)(b) to (e) of

the Transport Act 2000 should be postponed, then section 138I of the Transport Act 2000 may apply in respect of such postponement, but those dates may also be amended in accordance with section 8.4.

8.4 Arrangements for Varying or Revoking this EP Scheme

- 8.4.1 In accordance with section 138E of the Transport Act 2000, the procedure in this section 8.4 shall apply in place of the provisions of section 138L to 138N of the Transport Act 2000, in order to vary this EP Scheme.
- 8.4.2 Consideration will be given to any proposed variations to this EP Scheme (**Proposed Variation**) which are raised by the NEJTC, Nexus, a Local Authority, an Operator or one of the organisations represented on a Bus Board (**Proposer**):
- 8.4.3 In proposing a Proposed Variation, the Proposer shall, so far as reasonably practicable:
- 8.4.3.1 demonstrate how the Proposed Variation would contribute to achieving one or more of the objectives set out in the BSIP, EP Plan and/or other current local transport policies;
 - 8.4.3.2 identify the Local Services and areas which will be affected by the Proposed Variation, including the requirements which will be imposed on Operators in respect of such Local Services, and the changes required to Schedule 3 of this EP Scheme and any description of the proposed standards which should be included in the Appendix to Schedule 3;
 - 8.4.3.3 identify any Facilities or Measures which are to be implemented as part of the Proposed Variation or any modifications or amendments to existing Facilities or Measures within the EP Scheme including proposed dates for implementation, the proposed Authority which is to implement any such Facility or Measure and the sources and availability of funding required to deliver such Facility or Measure, and any other information required to include such Facility or Measure in Schedule 2, including any description of the proposed Facilities or Measures to be included in the Appendix to Schedule 2;
 - 8.4.3.4 identify any significant adverse effect on competition of the Proposed Variation, and where any such adverse effect is possible, identify whether such Proposed Variation has a view to achieving one or more of the purposes specified in paragraph 2(3) of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000 and consider whether the effect on competition is likely to be proportionate to the achievement of those purposes; and
 - 8.4.3.5 identify the Bus Boards which have an interest in the Proposed Variation.
- 8.4.4 Any request for a Proposed Variation shall be in writing and submitted to buses@transportnortheast.gov.uk . The NEJTC will forward all requests received on to all members of the relevant Bus Boards within 5 working days of receipt.
- 8.4.5 On receipt of a request for a Proposed Variation the NEJTC will convene each relevant Bus Board giving at least 14 days' notice for the meeting, to consider the Proposed Variation.

- 8.4.6 If the Proposed Variation is agreed by all Operator representatives present at the Bus Board, and if the NEJTC and each Authority who is affected by the Proposed Variation also agrees, then subject to section 9.2, the Proposed Variation shall be referred to the NEJTC and each Authority affected by the Proposed Variation for approval in accordance with section 8.4.9.
- 8.4.7 If there is not full agreement by Operator representatives present at the Bus Board, but the NEJTC and each Authority affected by the Proposed Variation have agreed to the Proposed Variation in accordance with section 8.4.6 then the Proposed Variation may be put to the operator objection mechanism as set out in The Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018, as if the Proposed Variation was a variation to this EP Scheme notified under section 138L of the Transport Act 2000 save that:
- 8.4.7.1 a reduced objection period of 14 days shall apply in place of the 28 day period stated in section 138L(2)(c) of the Transport Act 2000;
- 8.4.7.2 references to "the area to which the scheme relates" in section 138L(5)(b) of the Transport Act 2000 shall be taken to be references to the areas of the relevant Bus Boards to which the Proposed Variation relates.
- 8.4.8 If objections under the operator objection mechanism implemented pursuant to section 8.4.7 do not reach the statutory objection limits, then subject to section 9.2, the Proposed Variation shall be referred to the NEJTC and each Authority affected by the Proposed Variation for approval in accordance with section 8.4.9.
- 8.4.9 Following any recommendation by a Bus Board pursuant to sections 8.4.6 or 8.4.7 to make a Proposed Variation, the NEJTC and any Authority affected by the Proposed Variation shall be entitled to promptly confirm agreement to that Proposed Variation following a formal decision by such Authority to the Proposed Variation, and within seven working days of the final approval of NEJTC or any relevant Authority the NEJTC shall publish the revised EP Scheme on its website on behalf of the Authorities.

8.5 Revocation of an EP Scheme

- 8.5.1 An EP Scheme can only exist if an EP Plan is in place and an EP Plan requires at least one EP Scheme to be in place, therefore:
- 8.5.1.1 if the North East Enhanced Partnership Plan is revoked then this will automatically lead to this EP Scheme ceasing; and
- 8.5.1.2 if this EP Scheme is revoked then unless another EP Scheme is in place in the area of the North East Enhanced Partnership Plan, the North East Enhanced Partnership Plan will cease.
- 8.5.2 If any Authority or Operator of Local Services believes it is necessary to revoke this EP Scheme, then in accordance with section 138E of the Transport Act 2000, the procedure at section 8.4 shall apply to revocation in place of the provisions of section 138O of the Transport Act 2000 to revoke the EP Scheme, on the basis that the Proposed Variation will be revocation of this EP Scheme, and such Proposed Variation will therefore be relevant to all Bus Boards and Operators.

8.6 Franchising Scheme

If at any point in the future, any area covered by this EP Scheme is included in a bus franchising scheme, the relevant requirements set out in this EP Scheme document will cease to apply to areas covered by the franchising scheme, in line with the arrangements set out in the franchising scheme.

9. Competition

9.1 The EP Plan and the EP Scheme have been developed with all operators of Local Services, and the EP Scheme does not have and is not likely to have a significantly adverse effect on competition. The competition test set out in Part 1 of Schedule 10 to the Transport Act 2000 has been applied and it is concluded that, at this point, there will be no significantly adverse effect on competition arising from the EP Plan or the EP Scheme.

9.2 Where a Proposed Variation is to be effected to this EP Scheme in accordance with section 8 the NEJTC shall apply the competition test set out in Part 1 of Schedule 10 to the Transport Act 2000 on behalf of NECA and NTCA and the Proposed Variation to the EP Scheme shall not be made if the NEJTC is unable to conclude either:

9.2.1 that the making of the Proposed Variation will not have or be likely to have a significantly adverse effect on competition; or

9.2.2 that the making of the Proposed Variation is justified by paragraph 2(2) of Part 1 of Schedule 10 to the Transport Act 2000.

SCHEDULE 1: EP PLAN AND EP SCHEME AREA



Figure 1:1

SCHEDULE 2: FACILITIES AND MEASURES

1	2	3	4	5	6
Reference	Scheme Name and Description	Authority Responsibilities	Required TROs	Date from which facility is to be provided	Dependency
ITS01a	Delivering traffic signal upgrades at junctions and pedestrian crossings, in order that full traffic control interventions can be enabled remotely. Focused on an initial six corridors with potential to scale up or down with more funding:		Yes	31 March 2023	N/A
	A167 Corridor: – Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) investment to improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services in the region and reliable real time information. This project will be managed in two phases.	Tyne and Wear Regional Traffic Signals Service, Newcastle, Gateshead and Durham Local Authorities will deliver major works along this corridor including full junction renewals with conversion to Extra Low Voltage (ELV) signals (Siemens Plus+), replacement of existing signal poles with passively safe aluminium columns, the provision of 4/5G Urban Traffic Control (UTC) communications and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) / CCTV connected to the Urban Traffic Management Centre (UTMC). Minor works will also be delivered for sites that are already operating ELV and just require an upgrade to provide 4/5G communications to facilitate control via UTC and the addition of ANPR/ CCTV cameras.	No	31 March 2023	N/A

	Coast Road Corridor: ITS Investment	Tyne and Wear Regional Traffic Signals Service, Newcastle and North Tyneside Local Authorities will deliver major works along this corridor including full junction renewals with conversion to Extra Low Voltage (ELV) signals (Siemens Plus+), replacement of existing signal poles with passively safe aluminium columns, the provision of 4/5G Urban Traffic Control (UTC) communications and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) / CCTV connected to the Urban Traffic Management Centre (UTMC).	No	31 March 2023	N/A
	West Newcastle: ITS Investment	Tyne and Wear Regional Traffic Signals Service and Newcastle Local Authority will deliver major works along this corridor including full junction renewals with conversion to Extra Low Voltage (ELV) signals (Siemens Plus+), replacement of existing signal poles with passively safe aluminium columns, the provision of 4/5G Urban Traffic Control (UTC) communications and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) / CCTV connected to the Urban Traffic Management Centre (UTMC). Minor works will also be delivered for sites that are already operating ELV and just require an upgrade to provide 4/5G communications to facilitate control via UTC and the addition of ANPR / CCTV cameras	No	31 March 2023	N/A
	Great North Road: ITS Investment	Tyne and Wear Regional Traffic Signals Service, Newcastle and North Tyneside Local Authority will deliver	No	31 March 2023	N/A

		<p>major works along this corridor including full junction renewals with conversion to Extra Low Voltage (ELV) signals (Siemens Plus+), replacement of existing signal poles with passively safe aluminium columns, the provision of 4/5G Urban Traffic Control (UTC) communications and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) / CCTV connected to the Urban Traffic Management Centre (UTMC).</p> <p>Minor works will also be delivered for sites that are already operating ELV and just require an upgrade to provide 4/5G communications to facilitate control via UTC and the addition of ANPR / CCTV cameras.</p>			
	<p>South Shields to Newcastle: ITS Investment</p>	<p>Tyne and Wear Regional Traffic Signals Service, Newcastle, South Tyneside and Gateshead Local Authority will deliver major works along this corridor including full junction renewals with conversion to Extra Low Voltage (ELV) signals (Siemens Plus+), replacement of existing signal poles with passively safe aluminium columns, the provision of 4/5G Urban Traffic Control (UTC) communications and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) / CCTV connected to the Urban Traffic Management Centre (UTMC).</p> <p>Minor works will also be delivered for sites that are already operating ELV and just require an upgrade to provide 4/5G communications to facilitate</p>	<p>Yes – required for Bus Lane to form part of scheme.</p>	<p>31 March 2023</p>	<p>N/A</p>

		control via UTC and the addition of ANPR / CCTV cameras.			
	A183 Corridor: ITS Investment	<p>Tyne and Wear Regional Traffic Signals Service and Sunderland will deliver major works along this corridor including full junction renewals with conversion to Extra Low Voltage (ELV) signals (Siemens Plus+), replacement of existing signal poles with passively safe aluminium columns, the provision of 4/5G Urban Traffic Control (UTC) communications and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) / CCTV connected to the Urban Traffic Management Centre (UTMC).</p> <p>Minor works will also be delivered for sites that are already operating ELV and just require an upgrade to provide 4/5G communications to facilitate control via UTC and the addition of ANPR / CCTV cameras.</p>	No	31 March 2023	N/A
ITS01b	Delivering enhanced real time information enabling buses to be accurately located in real-time and ensure they benefit fully from hurry calls at signalised junctions. Systems will be deployed regionwide on all buses with the hurry call detection enabled on the routes where ITS01b has been deployed.	<p>Back office system to be hosted within Nexus and the Tyne and Wear UTMC managed by Newcastle.</p> <p>Onboard equipment either by existing ticket machines or bespoke equipment.</p> <p>User requirements are being defined through a Business Case and a bespoke system is intended to be delivered through an Innovation Partnership.</p>	No	31 March 2023	N/A
L01	<p>Information Provision:</p> <p>Provision and maintenance of printed information at existing stops throughout the network.</p>	Durham will when replacing bus stop liners replace them with new bus stop liners which adhere to the policy specified as applicable to Durham in the section headed Bus stop timetable	N/A	30 April 2022	N/A

	<p>The format of timetable information will become consistent across the region where this improves information.</p>	<p>displays in Part b of Appendix 1.</p> <p>Northumberland will when replacing bus stop liners replace them with new bus stop liners which adhere to the policy specified as applicable to Northumberland in the section headed Bus stop timetable displays in Part b of Appendix 1.</p> <p>Nexus will when replacing bus stop liners replace them with new bus stop liners which adhere to the policy specified as applicable to Nexus in the section headed Bus stop timetable displays in Part b of Appendix 1.</p>			
L02	<p>Multimodal Information Provision and Digital Information Provision:</p> <p>Information pertaining to intermodal travel will be provided at interchanges (bus, metro and rail) across the region in order to better facilitate passenger transitions from one mode of travel to another.</p> <p>Wayfinding in major bus stations and interchanges will be supported by measures including 'where to catch your bus' posters.</p>	<p>Durham to provide information standards as set out in the section headed Information at Interchanges in part b of Appendix 1 at the interchanges listed in respect of Durham at part a of Appendix 1</p> <p>Nexus to provide information standards as set out in the section headed Information at Interchanges in part b of Appendix 1 at the interchanges listed in respect of Nexus at part a of Appendix 1</p> <p>Northumberland to provide information standards as set out in the section headed Information at Interchanges in part b of Appendix 1 at the interchanges listed in respect of Northumberland at part a of Appendix 1</p>	N/A	30 April 2022	N/A

		In each case where an identified interchange is not managed by the relevant Authority, that Authority shall only be required to use reasonable endeavours to provide such information.			
L03	<p>Customer Support Staff:</p> <p>Staff at key interchanges in Tyne and Wear will be available to support customers.</p> <p>Ambassadors will help with guiding passengers and supporting them in making travel choices.</p>	<p>Durham will provide the staff specified in the section headed staff in part b of Appendix 1 at the interchanges listed in respect of Durham at part a of Appendix 1</p> <p>Nexus will provide the staff specified in the section headed staff in part b of Appendix 1 at the interchanges listed in respect of Nexus at part a of Appendix 1</p>	N/A	30 April 2022	N/A
L04	<p>Core Network Mapping:</p> <p>Printed information will be available on our core network (subject to BSIP funding) to facilitate better understanding of the wider regional bus network.</p>	Subject to BSIP funding, printed information, set out in the section headed Printed Information on Core Network in part b of Appendix 1, will be available on the core network in Durham.	N/A	30 June 2022	N/A
L05	<p>Printable information:</p> <p>Printable information will be available online for the whole network.</p>	Durham, Northumberland and Nexus shall provide the relevant timetable and network information on their websites.			
L06	<p>Logo:</p> <p>We will develop a new and consistent logo for the partnership that will be applied across the network so that it becomes a recognisable symbol</p>	Authorities and operators will take an active role in the development and consultation for a new logo which will be facilitated by NEJTC.	N/A	31 May 2022	N/A

	of local public transport in the North East				
L07	<p>Website:</p> <p>Network wide ticketing and journey planning will be made available to passengers through a single dedicated website under the as yet to be decided regional bus transport brand</p>	Authorities and operators will take an active role in the development and consultation for a new website which will be facilitated by NEJTC.	N/A	30 April 2023	N/A
L08	<p>Bus Passenger Charter:</p> <p>NEJTC have provided an indicative Bus Passenger Charter in Appendix A of the BSIP, which will be developed through consultation with Local Authorities and Operators.</p> <p>The Charter will hold all signees to account regarding regional bus transport services.</p>	NECA and NTCA will develop and write a passenger charter in consultation with all appropriate local authorities and bus operators.	N/A	30 April 2022	N/A

APPENDIX 1: APPENDIX: DETAILS OF FACILITIES OR MEASURES

Part a: Interchanges

County Durham:

Interchanges	“Key” interchanges
Durham City Bus Station	Durham City Bus Station
Consett Bus Station	
Stanley Bus Station	
Peterlee Bus Station	
Bishop Auckland Bus Station	
Chester-le-Street	
Ferryhill	
Crook	
Barnard Castle	
Seaham	
Newton Aycliffe	
Spennymoor	

Nexus:

Interchanges	“Key” interchanges
Regent Centre	Eldon Square
Four Lane Ends	Haymarket
Northumberland Park	Four Lane Ends
North Shields	Gateshead
Wallsend	Park Lane
Monument	South Shields
Haymarket	
Gateshead	
Jarrow	
South Shields	
Park Lane	
Central Station, Newcastle	
Heworth	

Eldon Square	
Fawcett Street / Sunderland Station, Sunderland	

Northumberland:

Interchanges	“Key” interchanges
Blyth	
Hexham	
Morpeth	
Ashington	
Alnwick	
Berwick	

Part b: Information and staff provision**Staff:**

Authority	Details of staff provided
County Durham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities management staff for cleaning toilets, passenger concourse etc. at main bus stations (Durham, Consett, Stanley and Peterlee) • New Durham bus station will have customer facing staff in core hours on completion of rebuilding (due 2023)
Nexus	A team of 5 staff who operate north of the River Tyne and 5 staff south of the river. Both teams are managed by a customer service manager
Northumberland	n/a

Bus stop timetable displays:

Authority	Details of information displayed
County Durham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trapeze Novus X software is used to automatically generate all timetable displays for any given change date • One of several layouts is used depending on the space available on the page • Bus stops that have a future timetable change are automatically identified and the most appropriate layout is chosen • Displays are grouped into pre-defined areas for printing and distribution • Efficient system that allows displays to be updated by the change date with minimal staff resource • Modified 'where to board' layout is used for large format static electronic passenger display screens • Durham CC policy is to replace every printed timetable display within 7 days and before any bus service change date. • Timetable displays at bus stops and bus stations are managed by Durham County Council • Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) is available at 150 bus stops across County Durham • RTPI displays at main bus stations (Durham, Consett, Stanley and Peterlee) show next bus departures at head of stand and summary of services

Authority	Details of information displayed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPI displays at other principal bus stops show next bus departures
Nexus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetables at bus stops and stations are managed by Nexus • Each stop has its own customised timetable • They are frequently updated as alterations to timetables are made • Real time information is available at approximately 66 bus stops across Tyne and Wear (220 including stops within bus stations) • Bus operators provide Nexus with vehicle location data in the form of SIRI, which is then used by a prediction engine to produce an estimated time of arrival (ETA) • Efficient system that allows displays to be updated by the change date with minimal staff resource • As Nexus and operators use different prediction methods, there can be slight discrepancies in the final ETA
Northumberland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northumberland procure their bus stop liners on a contractual basis from Nexus

Information at interchanges:

Authority	Details of information provided
County Durham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large format (55") static electronic displays show 'where to board your bus' information. This is a basic webpage updated with current data as required • Printed 'where to board your bus' displays are provided and maintained at all bus stations • Large format (55") interactive electronic displays are available at Durham Railway Station and Durham Bus Station for journey planning and onward rail travel information • Other information includes: notices, advertisements, service disruption and holiday service information
Nexus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus interchanges and Metro stations are fitted with PID's providing a live feed of departures • For Metro, Resonate provide the data feeds and for bus the arrival and departure times are predicted based on real time vehicle locations provided by the operators
Northumberland	n/a

Printed information on core network:

Authority	Details of information provided
County Durham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed timetable display at every bus stop • Large format poster in Adshell shelters • Smaller Bissel standard case on posts at other stops • A County Durham bus map is published which includes surrounding cross-boundary services • Shape files for bus routes are updated as part of the existing County Durham interactive bus map
Nexus	Printed timetable display at every bus stop
Northumberland	

SCHEDULE 3: REQUIREMENTS IN RESPECT OF LOCAL SERVICES**1.1. Vehicle standards**

1	2	3	4	5
Reference	Standard Description	Local Services or Area to which standard applies	Date from which service standard is to be met	Dependency
OP01	Audio Visual Equipment: All newly manufactured vehicles to be fitted with next- stop audio visual equipment as standard in order to improve the onboard passenger experience.	All local services within the EP Scheme area excluding services stated in Section 5 of this EP Scheme	30 April 2022	
OP02	Vehicle Standards: All new vehicles will meet, as a minimum, Euro VI standards	All local services within the EP Scheme area excluding services stated in Section 5 of this EP Scheme	30 April 2022	

1.2. Ticketing

1	2	3	4	5
Reference	Standard Description	Local Services or Area to which standard applies	Date from which service standard is to be met	Dependency
OPT01	<p>Smart Card:</p> <p>Customers can use an agreed single common Pay-As-You-Go ITSO-compliant smart card when paying for any journeys by bus</p>	All local services within the EP Scheme area excluding services stated in Section 5 of this EP Scheme	30 June 2022	[Ref Measure or Facility in Schedule 2]
OPT02	<p>Adult Ticketing:</p> <p>All day multi-operator adult fare regionwide ticket,</p>	All local services within the EP Scheme area excluding services stated in Section 5 of this EP Scheme	30 April 2022	
OPT03	<p>Youth Ticketing:</p> <p>All day multi-operator under 19s fare regionwide</p>	All local services within the EP Scheme area excluding services stated in Section 5 of this EP Scheme	30 April 2022	

APPENDIX: DETAILS OF REQUIREMENTS

North East Joint Transport Committee

Date: 14 December 2021

Subject: Integrated Rail Plan and the Leamside Line

Report of: Managing Director, Transport North East

Executive Summary

This report provides an outline of the government's Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands (IRP) which was published on 18th November 2021 and the impacts on future rail connectivity of the North East. This report also summarises the latest position regarding study work covering the East Coast Main Line (ECML) and the Leamside Line.

The outcome of the IRP for the region is very disappointing as the North East is no longer proposed to be connected to the UK's future high speed rail network. The IRP also rules out government investment in the Leamside Line as a means of adding capacity to the ECML.

The IRP does however discuss more limited potential improvements to the existing ECML route in our region, as well as committing to a £96bn package of major investments to upgraded and new railway routes elsewhere in the North and Midlands. It also suggests that the Leamside Line could be part of a "future city region settlement".

We are concerned about possible negative economic consequences for the region given that rail connectivity will be transformed between many English centres, but the North East will be almost untouched by these benefits.

The government has also recently published the Union Connectivity review (26th November). A detailed report will be brought to the January Committee, including what the review says on road, air and sea connectivity.

This report proposes a series of steps to continue both work to improve the capacity of the ECML in our region, and to reopen the Leamside Line using Metro and local rail services.

Recommendations

- i) The Joint Transport Committee is recommended to continue to work with local and regional stakeholders to provide strong evidence (through business case development) of the need to significantly invest in rail connectivity within and between the North East and the other main economic and social hubs across the north and the rest of the UK.

1. Background:

- 1.1 In the summer of 2019, the UK government commissioned an independent review on 'whether and how' to proceed with HS2. Then in February 2020 the review concluded that for Phase 2b of HS2 (the route from Birmingham to Manchester and Leeds) the Y-shaped network "was the right strategic answer for the country." However, the review also concluded that Phase 2b needed to be considered as part of an 'Integrated Rail Plan' which also includes Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), Midlands Rail Hub, and other major rail schemes "to ensure these are scoped, designed, delivered, and can be operated as an integrated network"
- 1.2 The government stated in November 2020 that once published the IRP "will inform the Department for Transport's planning for the long-term future of the East Coast Main Line (ECML)." Under the original plans, both HS2 and NPR services would serve the North East by joining onto the ECML, enabling the region to be connected to the UK's high speed rail network.
- 1.3 To this end TNE has been working on behalf of JTC with both TfN and Network Rail to develop the studies required to produce a preferred NPR network which was approved at the TfN Board. The reopening of the Leamside Line in full (to divert freight off the ECML to enable an uplift of 50% in passenger services capacity) was part of this preferred network, on to which local enhancements for Metro /local rail could be incorporated in the future.
- 1.4 In 2020 the UK Government asked Sir Peter Hendy CBE to undertake a detailed review into how transport connectivity across the UK can support economic growth and quality of life in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. He was also asked to make recommendations as to whether and how best to improve transport connectivity between the nations of the UK. Members will recall that JTC submitted a response to the call for evidence as part of the review.

2. Summary of the reports' contents

What does the IRP recommend?

- 2.1 The IRP has cancelled the eastern leg of HS2 between Birmingham and Leeds, and as a result no HS2 services are now proposed to reach the North East. The government will now upgrade existing routes and build high-speed lines in some areas:
 - A 42-mile section between Birmingham and East Midlands Parkway, just south of Nottingham;
 - A second high-speed route will run south from Leeds for about 23 miles;
 - A third stretch will run for 33 miles from Crewe to Manchester, to

complete the western leg of HS2.

- 2.2 The IRP has also downgraded plans for Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), the east-west rail line being developed by Transport for the North (TfN). NPR is now truncated to a new line between Warrington and just into Yorkshire, plus a series of low-level upgrades and part of the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU). Again, the Leeds to Newcastle leg of the NPR network has been dropped.
- 2.3 Instead, the East Coast Main Line will 'get digital signalling and also upgrade the power supply to allow longer and more frequent trains, increase maximum speeds up to 140mph in some places, improve the capacity of stations, and remove bottlenecks such as flat junctions'. This would enable for example, a 20-minute faster journey time between Newcastle and London, but only a 5 minute journey time improvement to Leeds as opposed to a 30 minute saving proposed by NPR.
- 2.4 The IRP also says, 'North of York we will look to increase the number of paths for long distance high speed trains from 6 to 7 or 8 per hour'. This is subject to a future business case and is less than the proposed 9 trains per hour under the former HS2/NPR proposals and does not include the reopening of the Leamside Line. Elsewhere in the plan it states 'We will ask Network Rail to now take forward these proposals, including considering any alternatives which may deliver better outputs and/or more cost-effective solutions'. Appendix 1 shows a map of the proposed new network which shows that the North East will no longer be connected to the UK's proposed high-speed rail network, with rail services being kept on the existing ECML.

What does the UCR recommend?

- 2.5 The review provides 18 recommendations the most relevant ones for the North East regarding rail are:
- Design and implement UKNET – a strategic transport network for the whole of the United Kingdom, and commit funding to improve the network, in particular, the parts that are not performing well;
 - Plan improvements to the network using multimodal corridors, which should be reviewed regularly and appraised on a wider economic basis in order to support government objectives such as levelling up and net zero
 - Seek to work with the Scottish Government to develop an assessment of the East Coast road and rail transport corridor from North East England to South East Scotland, including improvements on the East Coast Main Line and the A1

What does the IRP mean for the North East?

- 2.5 The IRP means that the Eastern leg of HS2 will no longer go ahead as planned and North East will no longer be part of the HS2 network. The region is also no longer considered to be part of the NPR "core network" and east-

west rail journey times will not be improved significantly. For example, Newcastle to Leeds future rail journey times will only be 5 minutes faster than today. Therefore, the plans to downgrade NPR diminishes the opportunity to secure economic growth across the Pennines.

- 2.6 The removal of the North East's links to HS2 (2 trains per hour) and potential loss of direct NPR services (a further 2 trains per hour) means that there will be fewer future services than the 9 trains per hour previously planned on the ECML in the region, which has led the government to conclude that there isn't a major capacity problem to be solved. The IRP therefore only identified a need to deliver 7 or 8 train paths per hour, only marginally more than today and just enough to accommodate the additional London service that was proposed in the recent May 2022 timetable consultation.
- 2.7 There are some smaller-scale investments planned to release ECML capacity in our region including additional platforms at Newcastle, reinstating the Bensham curve and a third line north of Chester-Le-Street. The North East Joint Transport Committee is already part funding Network Rail to develop the business case for these improvements.
- 2.8 The reinstatement of the Leamside Line, which would enable the region's future capacity needs to be met between Northallerton and Newcastle, are now not being taken forward by central government, but the IRP suggests it 'would be best considered as part of any future city region settlement'.
- 2.9 The ECML in the North East will continue to consist of only two tracks – one in each direction already at full capacity (6 trains per hour in each direction), with minor upgrades to accommodate one or two extra trains in future. An additional consequence would appear to be that the plans for a HS2 train stabling depot in Heaton to store 11 HS2 trains, allowing HS2 services to start and terminate at Newcastle and serve the rest of the route has been cancelled by the government.
- 2.10 The primary reason for the downgrading of proposals to better connect the North East to a high-speed rail network seems to be based on a short term cost saving. It does not seem to consider the wider economic consequences of such a proposal and does not take account of the government's levelling up policy. It is still focused on serving London and the south east and does nothing to improve the North East's connectivity to Leeds and Manchester, which was downgraded even in the recent May 2022 timetable consultation. The IRP seems to miss the point that connectivity is not only about minor increases in journey times to London, but also about the frequency of services to other destinations and the reliability and resilience of those services – all of which require improved capacity. No consideration seems to have been given to the fact that with a mixed passenger and freight route and only a 2-track railway the ECML in our region is not fit for today's services never mind future growth.
- 2.11 By geography the North East is a long way from the other northern economic centres and thus any improvement work is likely to be more expensive on a cost-per-mile basis to the nearest large city (Leeds) than connecting other cities that are closer to each other. However, passengers from our region

already pay higher fares to our nearest NPR city pair (Leeds) because of this distance.

- 2.12 The North East interventions which the government has asked Network Rail to look at in the IRP have been in plans for a decade without being progressed.

What does the UCR mean for the North East's rail services?

- 2.13 Although a section of the report is focussed on connecting the North East (of England) with the South East of Scotland, disappointingly it proposes another 'assessment' for the East Coast corridor – of which there have already been many, whereas elsewhere in the review it proposes "investment" for the West Coast Main Line.

3. Options for moving forward

- 3.1 The JTC has considered in the past the interventions which it believes will deliver a transformation to the North East connectivity as proposed in the NPR preferred network, including those intervention identified in the IRP plus the full reopening of the Leamside Line.

- 3.2 Work has been progressing on several fronts associated with plans to reopen the Leamside Line for rail / Metro use including

- a) The development work of an Umbrella Business case for interventions.
- b) Progressing engineering feasibility work and demand forecasting studies for the South Tyneside and Wearside loop.
- c) Submitting a Restoring your Railways bid and local MPs' proactive response.

Umbrella Strategic Outline Business Case

- 3.3 There are a number of studies being looked at along the ECML/Leamside corridor. We are working to coordinate these various studies and assimilate them into a single coherent plan which maximises the benefits to the North East. Consultants have been engaged to prepare an Umbrella strategic outline business case. The delay to the publication of the governments Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands (IRP) has hampered progress. However, progress has been made with a baseline report being completed and a skeleton structure for the document produced. This includes the development of the following objectives:

- **Inclusive Growth** - Connect communities with employment and education opportunities and reduce national and regional inequalities.
- **Low Carbon** - Incentivise a shift to more sustainable modes of transport and promotes decarbonisation and electrification.

- **Integrated and Multi-modal** - Provide improved choice and value for users through enhanced connectivity and integration across the network and across modes (including active travel).
- **Resilient** - Ability to support a growing transport demand without compromising on performance or reliability.

3.4 An officer Programme Board is overseeing the work and includes representatives from DfT, Network Rail, TfN, the Northern Transport Acceleration Council and local authorities. Now the IRP has been published we will need to review the USOBC progress to date and aim to complete the work by the end of the year.

South Tyneside and Wearside Loop

3.5 This a new Metro route that would use the north end of the Leamside Line to bring the Metro through Follingsby to Washington, over the River Wear, and then across to join up with the existing Metro terminus at South Hylton. This would provide a Metro connection between Washington and Sunderland. It could also have a direct route from Follingsby to Heworth using a bridge over the existing rail line in the Pelaw area, allowing South Tyneside to be joined to the new service.

3.6 As part of the programme of studies into corridors for potential Metro extensions, consultants have been working on the engineering feasibility and demand forecasting along sections of the South Tyneside and Wearside Loop. We have already updated Members on the result of feasibility work looking at the Northern end of the route, including:

- Pelaw Flyover
- Bowes Chord Grade Separated Junction (an alternative to Pelaw Flyover)
- Boldon Junction to Tyne Dock
- Boldon Chord Station
- Pelaw to IAMP
- A potential IAMP Station

Work is now nearing completion on the feasibility work on the southern section of the route, linking Washington through to Sunderland. A number of challenges present themselves along this section including:

- The Victoria Viaduct
- Access beneath the A19
- The level crossing at South Hylton and impacts on the station.

3.7 The report to access the engineering feasibility and provide high level cost is expected imminently and a more detailed report is planned to be brought to JTC at the January committee. In parallel to the engineering feasibility work, demand forecasting is also been developed. This is exploring four service

pattern scenarios and will also be complete at the end of November, beginning of December. Thus, a comprehensive update can be providing in January.

- 3.8 Funding has been secured via the LEP (with a level of match funding from the Extension budget) to progress the findings of the two (Engineering and Demand) studies to an outline SOBC. More details of the SOBC will be reported in the January update.

Leamside heavy rail passenger services

- 3.9 As part of the suite of projects being investigated involving the Leamside Line, a Restoring you Railways expression of interest bid for “Ideas funding” was submitted with the aim to help us progress the strategic outline business case for a local passenger service to operate from Newcastle, via Washington to connect Ferryhill. A separate bid had previously been accepted for a service from Ferryhill to Middlesbrough.
- 3.10 Following the comprehensive spending review and budget announcement, the Rail Minister informed the local MPs that our bid was unsuccessful. The covering letter attached cited that *‘Our discussion and assessment found that your proposal did not set out the case sufficiently for it to be recommended for further funding. The scheme shows good potential in terms of transport and socio-economic benefits, however the overall cost of the re-instatement (circa £600m) remains prohibitive. I would advise that any future submission considers phasing the proposal so that any re-instatement of the line is done in a series of smaller, less costly proposals’.*
- 3.11 Whilst this is obviously disappointing news it does acknowledge that reopening the Leamside would be a positive move in terms of socio-economic benefits. Local MPs reacted proactively by seeking recognition of the role the route should play in the Integrated Rail Plan around the capacity relief on the ECML and local connectivity. Despite intense lobbying by North East MPs including a joint letter to Ministers, along with JTC members, the LEP, the Chamber and the Northern Powerhouse Partnership (NPP) the published IRP does not see the Leamside Line as part of a wider strategic network but a potentially a local connectivity scheme.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 Whilst it is disappointing that the IRP effectively rules out government investment in the Leamside Line as a means of adding capacity to the ECML, nevertheless the strategic case remains strong for the JTC to develop a business case for the route to be used for Metro and local rail services. Work is already underway in this regard, with budgetary provision already having been made for the Metro South Tyneside and Wearside Loop to be developed to SOBC.
- 4.2 Equally, although the government has decided not to accept our bid to the “Restoring Your Railways Fund” in relation to local heavy rail passenger

services along the Leamside Line, we believe that there is a significant opportunity to improve the connectivity and social and economic outcomes for communities along the line. We therefore propose to commission a study using our own budgetary provision for Metro and Local Rail services in the next financial year, subject to approval through the budget-setting process.

4.3 We have recently reported that work to examine a 7th path on the existing ECML to meet short-term needs is underway. The government had previously declined to fund this work and so it is currently being taken forward, funded jointly by the Joint Transport Committee, Transport for the North, and Network Rail. We will hold discussions with the Department for Transport over the implications of the IRP and whether the government now wishes to play a more active role in this work.

4.4 We do not accept the IRP's analysis that only 7 or 8 paths are required on the ECML in our region. This would meet the short-term need but does not allow for any future growth in services – passenger or freight – and it does not improve the resilience of the route. We will therefore continue to make the case to the government for future investment. We will also ensure that our work to progress the reopening of the Leamside Line for Metro and local passenger services allows, where possible, for its future use by long-distance freight and passenger services.

4.5 The Joint Transport Committee will also wish to continue to work with local, regional and national stakeholders to provide strong evidence (through business case development) of the need to significantly invest in rail connectivity within and between the North East and the other main economic and social hubs across the north and the rest of the UK.

5. Reason for the Proposals

5.1 The above proposals are intended to ensure that the Joint Transport Committee continues to work to enhance the region's rail connectivity, both on the ECML as a national strategic route, and to better connect communities in the region.

6. Next Steps and Timetable for Implementation

6.1 The next step is to work with government, TfN and Network Rail to plot the best course for the future development of the North East connectivity and then develop strong cases for the incremental development of both the ECML and the Leamside line.

6.2 A further report will be brought to JTC in January outlining:

- i. the engineering and demand forecasting work on the South of Tyne and Wearside loop and the proposals for the SOBC.
- ii. the Umbrella SOBC report
- iii. Progress with the ECML 7th path SOBC

7. Potential Impact on Objectives

- 7.1 There is no potential impact on objectives as a result of the proposals put forward by this paper. However, the removal of North East connections to both HS2 and NPR will have significant negative impacts on the strategic objectives of the Transport Plan, primarily reducing our ability to 'Overcome inequality and grow our economy'.

8. Financial and Other Resources Implications

- 8.1 There are no immediate direct financial and resource implications from this report.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 There are no immediate direct financial and resource implications from this report.

10. Key Risks

- 10.1 There are no key risks resulting from this paper, the key risk as a result of the IRP (and UCR) is that whilst other areas of the country will see improved high speed rail connectivity, the North East will not and thus the differential economic and social disparities are likely to widen even further.

11. Equality and Diversity

- 11.1 There are no specific equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

12. Crime and Disorder

- 12.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

13. Consultation/Engagement

- 13.1 This report has been through the Heads of Transport and Transport Strategy Board in accordance with the governance of JTC reporting.

14. Other Impact of the Proposals

- 14.1 The impacts of the IRP are outlined in the body of the report.

15. Appendices

- 15.1 Appendix 1 – IRP 'core network' map

16. Background Papers

- 16.1 The Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands.

17. Contact Officers

17.1 Derek Gittins, Head of Heavy Rail,
Transport North East
Email: derek.gittins@transportnortheast.gov.uk

18. Sign off

- Head of Paid Service: ✓
- Monitoring Officer: ✓
- Chief Finance Officer: ✓

19. Glossary

19.1 All acronyms or technical terms used are explained in the body of the report.

IRP – Integrated Rail plan for the North and Midlands

NPR – Northern Powerhouse Rail

HS2 – High Speed 2

TfN – Transport for the North

JTC – Joint Transport Committee

NECA – North East Combined Authority

TNE -Transport North East

SOBC – Strategic Outline Business Case

ECML – East Coast Main Line

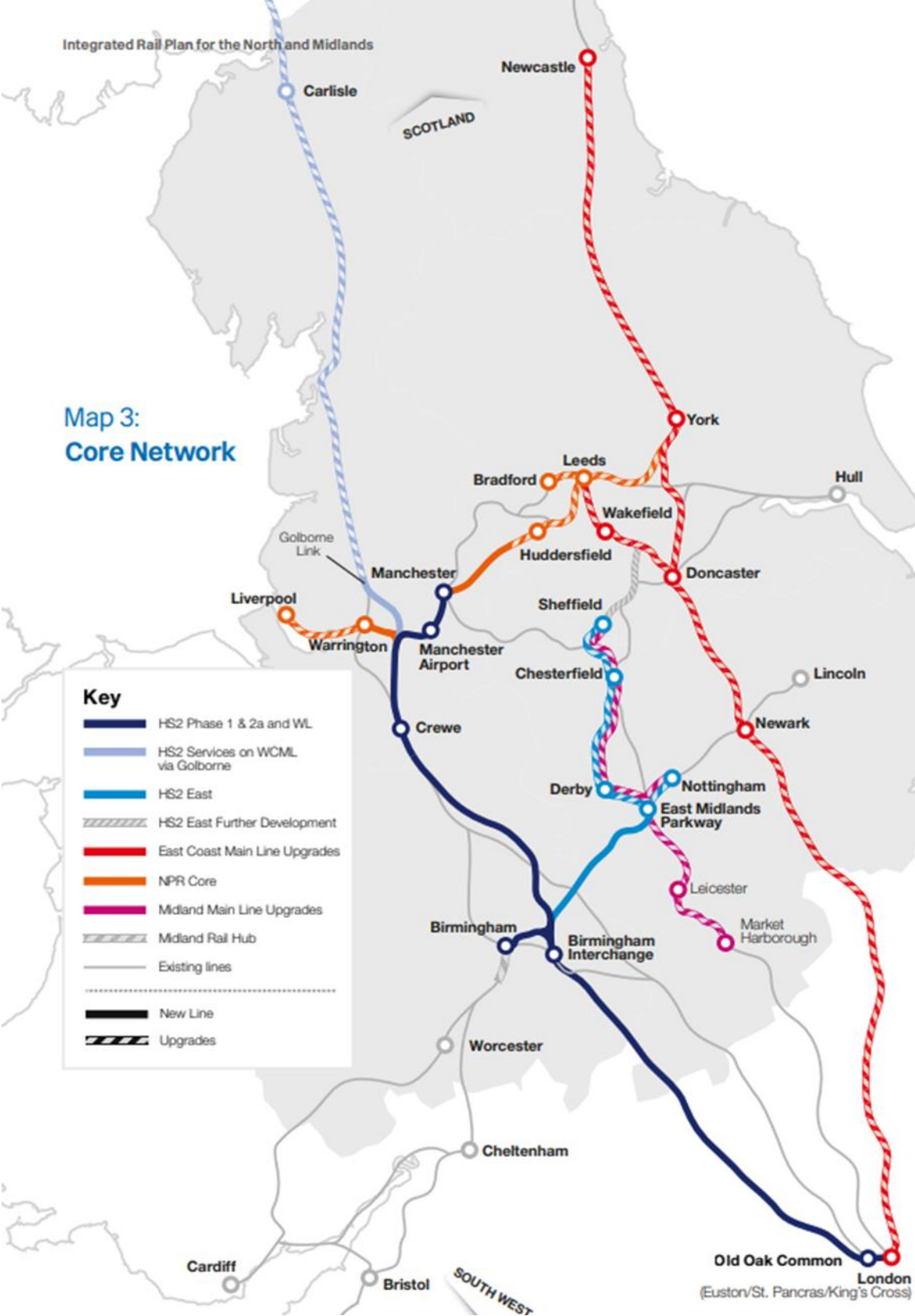
NPP- Northern Powerhouse Partnership

LEP – Local Enterprise Partnership

DfT – Department for Transport

UCR- Union Connectivity Review

Appendix 1 – IRP ‘core network’ map



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