

North East Mayoral Strategic Authority

Transport Act 2000, section 123E(2)(d)

Notice of Proposed Bus Franchising Scheme for the North East

6 July 2026

In accordance with section 123E(2)(d) of the Transport Act 2000, the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority (Authority) hereby gives notice that it wishes to proceed with a proposed franchising scheme for the North East (Proposed Scheme) and undertake a consultation regarding the Proposed Scheme in accordance with section 123E of the Transport Act 2000, as determined at its meeting on 17 March 2026.

The Proposed Scheme would cover the whole of the Authority's area, being the local authority areas of Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, Northumberland County Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council (Proposed Scheme Area).

The Proposed Scheme identifies the local services (as defined by section 2 of the Transport Act 1985) that the Authority proposes to provide under local service contracts which will give the operator awarded the local service contract the exclusive right to operate the local services to which the local service contract relates. If the Proposed Scheme is made, the intention is that all local services that are being operated within, and into, the Proposed Scheme Area when the Proposed Scheme is made will, with certain exceptions be provided under such local service contracts. It is proposed that any local service which is listed in Annex 1 of the Proposed Scheme will be excepted from regulation arising because of the Proposed Scheme.

If the Proposed Scheme is made, local services (other than an interim service as defined in section 123O(2) of the Transport Act 2000) in the Proposed Scheme Area that become subject to section 123J(2) and (3) of the Transport Act 2000, that are not provided under local service contracts or which are not excepted from regulation, will require a service permit to operate within the Proposed Scheme Area. The Authority intends to operate a service permit regime to allow non-franchised services to operate in the Proposed Scheme Area where appropriate if the Proposed Scheme is made, and it is proposed that any local service which operates 50% or more of its total timetabled route outside the Proposed Scheme Area or which is procured by a neighbouring local transport authority will be subject to the service permit regime.

It is proposed that the date on which a local service contract to provide a local service may first be entered into is 30 March 2029. A local service would be provided under such local service contract no earlier than six months after such local service contract is entered into. Therefore, it is proposed that the date on which a local service may first be provided under a local service contract is 30 September 2029.

As required by sections 123E(3)(b) and 123E(2)(a)-(c) of the Transport Act 2000, the following documents have been published by the Authority:

- the Proposed Scheme;
- the consultation document relating to the Proposed Scheme prepared by the Authority (which includes more information about the Authority's proposals and how to respond to the consultation);
- the assessment of the Proposed Scheme prepared by the Authority; and

- an independent auditor's report on the assessment of the Proposed Scheme,

and may be inspected online at <https://www.northeast-ca.gov.uk/haveyoursay> or in hard copy upon request.

The consultation regarding the Proposed Scheme is open for 12 weeks, starting on 6 July 2026 and ending on 28 September 2026 at 9am.

To respond to the consultation please:

- visit <https://www.northeast-ca.gov.uk/haveyoursay> to read the consultation document and other consultation materials; and
- complete a consultation questionnaire to share your views – visit <https://www.northeast-ca.gov.uk/haveyoursay> for further information and to access the consultation questionnaires.

For further information about this Notice please contact the Authority at HaveYourSay@northeast-ca.gov.uk or by telephone on 01912774223.