

Record of Delegated Executive Decision(s)

1. Subject of decision

Enhanced Bus Partnership

2. Name and Title of Decision Maker

Jacqueline Laughton, Assistant Chief Executive

3. Details of any Conflict of Interest and any Dispensation granted in respect of such Interest

Not applicable

4. Executive summary (taken from the written report)

Cabinet in September 2021 agreed fully to support and endorse the establishment of an Enhanced Partnership (EP) for bus services in the North East. Through its National Bus Strategy, the Government has stipulated that areas must establish an EP in order to receive ongoing Government funding for bus services.

In November 2021, Cabinet noted the required next steps in the EP process and authorised the Deputy Mayor, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development, the Director of Environment, Housing and Leisure (as it then was), the Director of Resources and the Director of Law and Governance (as it then was) to agree the draft EP plan and scheme for consultation.

Prior to being finalised, the EP plan and scheme were required to undergo first the 'Objection Period', giving local bus operators the opportunity to object to aspects of the documents, and then a period of statutory consultation. The North East Joint Transport Committee (JTC) on 15 November 2022 agreed the proposed EP plan and scheme for the Objection Period and statutory consultation, and gave delegated authority for the documents to be amended following the Objection Period and prior to the statutory consultation.

While the JTC discharges functions on behalf of the local transport authorities, namely, the North East Combined Authority and the North of Tyne Combined Authority, aspects of the EP plan and scheme will relate to powers held by the Authority, as the highway authority for the borough.

Accordingly, on 6 December 2022, the Deputy Mayor took the decision to agree the draft EP plan and scheme for consultation. In order to reflect the current senior management structure, prior to taking this decision the Deputy Mayor consulted with the Assistant Chief Executive in addition to the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development and the Director of Resources.

In November 2021, Cabinet also authorised the Director of Law and Governance (as it then was), in consultation with the Deputy Mayor, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development, the Director of Environment, Housing and Leisure (as it then was) and the Director of Resources, to enter into an Enhanced Partnership and Scheme(s) on behalf of the Authority and to take all other steps necessary to implement these proposals. In order to reflect the current senior management structure, it will now be the Assistant Chief Executive who will make the decision to enter into the Enhanced Bus Partnership and Scheme in place of the Director of Law and Governance following consultation with the Deputy Mayor, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development and the Director of Resources.

Recognising the positive value of having an EP in place, the Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with those set out above, is invited to agree to enter into an Enhanced Partnership and Scheme on behalf of the Authority and to take all other steps necessary to implement these proposals.

5. Alternative Options considered

Option 1

To approve the recommendations as set out in paragraph 1.2 of the report.

Option 2

Not to approve the recommendations as set out in paragraph 1.2 of the report.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

6. Decision(s)

The Assistant Chief Executive has made a delegated decision, in consultation with the Deputy Mayor, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development and the Director of Resources, to agree to enter into an Enhanced Partnership and Scheme on behalf of the Authority and to take all other steps necessary to implement these proposals.

7. Reasons for the Decision(s)

Approving the recommendations in paragraph 1.2 of the report will enable the establishment of an Enhanced Partnership, which represents an opportunity to deliver aspects of the Authority's and the region's transport objectives and to secure ongoing Government funding for bus services.

8. Date Decision Made

9 February 2023

9. Is this decision subject to call-in and if so expiry date of call-in period

Yes, the call-in period expires at 5.00pm on 16 February 2023

10. Date of Publication

9 February 2023

11. Implementation Date (if decision not called in)

After 5.00pm on 16 February 2023