

North Tyneside Council

Report to Assistant Chief Executive

Date: 9 February 2023

Title: Enhanced Bus Partnership

Portfolio: Deputy Mayor	Cabinet Member: Councillor Carl Johnson
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Report from Service Areas:	Regeneration and Economic Development
Responsible Officer:	John Sparkes, Director of Regeneration and Economic Development Tel: (0191) 643 6091
Wards affected:	All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

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 on behalf of the Authority. 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(s) 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(s) on behalf of the Authority and to take all other steps necessary to implement these proposals.

1.2 Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Assistant Chief Executive, 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, agrees 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.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days' notice have been given and this item first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 9 December 2022.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

The proposals in this report support a number of priorities in Our North Tyneside, the Council Plan 2021 to 2025, in particular:

- A secure North Tyneside
 - We will continue to invest £2m per year in fixing our roads and pavements
- A green North Tyneside
 - We will increase opportunities for safe walking and cycling, including providing a segregated cycleway at the coast
 - We will publish an action plan of the steps we will take and the national investment we will seek to make North Tyneside carbon net-zero by 2030

The proposals also support a number of objectives in the Carbon Net Zero 2030 Action Plan, in particular:

- Travel

- Regional Bus Service Improvement Plan (e.g. increased bus priority, night buses, new service routes, integrated multi-modal ticketing)

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

Cabinet in September 2021 agreed to fully support and endorse the establishment of an Enhanced Bus Partnership (EP) for bus services in the North East. In November 2021, Cabinet noted that the required next steps in the EP process involved developing an EP plan and one or more EP schemes and carrying out associated engagement. On 29 November 2021 Cabinet authorised the Deputy Mayor, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and appropriate Directors as set out in section 1.1, to approve the EP plan and scheme for statutory consultation and to agree any amendments to the plan and scheme made following the conclusion of the statutory consultation exercise.

A copy of the report prepared for Cabinet on 29 November 2021 is accessible via a link in section 1.10. It is not proposed to repeat what is included in that report in terms of the National Bus Strategy and the EP process and the rationale for the seven highway authorities in the North East of England and the two Combined Authorities seeking to enter into an EP with local bus operators. The Government removed the previous requirement for an EP to be in place by April 2022.

1.5.2 Formal consultation process

On 15 November 2022 the JTC agreed the proposed EP Plan and Scheme for the Objection Period and statutory consultation, and agreed delegated authority for the Managing Director, Transport North East, following consultation with the chair of the JTC and the North East Combined Authority's Monitoring Officer, to make amendments to the plan and scheme following the operator objection period and prior to the statutory consultation.

The Objection Period commenced in December 2022 and concluded in January 2023 with no objections having been received. The main subsequent steps in the process are as follows (dates beyond the date of this report are indicative):

11 January 2023	Statutory consultation commenced
8 February 2023	Statutory consultation closed
9-10 February 2023	The Authority and the other Highway Authorities' approval sought for the final EP plan and scheme
21 February 2023	JTC approval to be sought for the final EP plan and scheme
28 February 2023	EP to commence

Following the conclusion of the statutory consultation on the EP plan and scheme, no amendments to the EP plan and scheme have been proposed.

In accordance with the authorisation given by Cabinet on 29 November 2021, this report seeks agreement from the Assistant Chief Executive on behalf of the Authority to enter into an Enhanced Partnership and Scheme on behalf of the Authority and to take all other steps necessary to implement these proposals.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by the Deputy Mayor:

Option 1

To approve the recommendations as set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

Option 2

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

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

Approving the recommendations in paragraph 1.2 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.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1 – The North East Joint Transport Committee Enhanced Partnership Plan for Buses (draft)

Appendix 2 – The North East Joint Transport Committee Enhanced Partnership Scheme for Buses (draft)

1.9 Contact officers:

Nicholas Bryan, Highway Network Manager, 0191 643 6622

Andrew Flynn, Integrated Transport Manager, 0191 643 6083

John Cram, Integrated Transport Officer, 0191 643 6122

Amar Hassan, Principal Accountant Investment (Capital) and Revenue, 0191 643 5747

John Barton, Team Leader Corporate and Regulatory Team, 0191 643 5354

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) [North Tyneside Transport Strategy](#)
- (2) [North East Transport Plan](#)
- (3) [North Tyneside Network Management Plan](#)
- (4) [North Tyneside Travel Safety Strategy](#)
- (5) [North East Bus Service Improvement Plan \(BSIP\)](#)
- (6) North East [‘Your Vision for Buses’](#) (July 2021)

- (7) [Bus Back Better: the national bus strategy for England](#)
- (8) [Department for Transport Guidance – Bus Services Act 2017: Enhanced Partnership creation](#)
- (9) [Cabinet Report dated 20 September 2021 ‘Bus Partnership’](#)
- (10) [Cabinet Report dated 29 November 2021 ‘Bus Partnership’](#)
- (11) [Deputy Mayor delegated decision report dated 6 December 2022 ‘Enhanced Bus Partnership’](#)
- (12) [North East Joint Transport Committee \(JTC\) Report June 2022 ‘Transport Plan Progress Report’](#)
- (13) [North East Joint Transport Committee \(JTC\) Report November 2022 ‘North East Enhanced Partnership’](#)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The North East’s BSIP set out an ambitious request for Government funding for the delivery of measures relevant to bus services as described in section 1.5.4 of the 29 November 2021 report to Cabinet. The Government announced in April 2022 that funding of £163.5m would be provided to the region and this was reported to the JTC in June 2022. Entering into an EP is a requirement in order to receive ongoing Government funding for bus services.

Any expenditure which cannot be contained within existing budgets will be reported to Council / Cabinet, as appropriate for a decision before any expenditure is incurred or committed.

2.2 Legal

The legal requirements that need to be met before the EP Plan and Scheme can be entered into by the Authority are dealt with in the Legal section of the 29 November 2021 report to Cabinet.

As stated in the body of the report, the EP Plan and Scheme can only be entered into following engagement with the Bus Operators and following a period of statutory consultation, both of which have now been undertaken.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

Internal consultation has involved the Deputy Mayor, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, the Assistant Chief Executive, the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development, the Director of Resources and others in the Senior Management Team.

2.3.2 External Engagement

External engagement was previously carried out by Transport North East in Summer 2021, as described in the 29 November 2021 report to Cabinet. Further external engagement with the Bus Operators has been carried out by Transport North East, and formal statutory consultation has taken place, as described in section 1.5.2. No objections were received as part of the bus operator Objection Period. Six responses were received to the statutory consultation: these included comments on matters such as addressing anti-social behaviour; passenger information at bus stops and online; provisions to make bus services and information more accessible; and technical aspects of the EP plan and scheme.

2.4 **Human rights**

There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.

2.5 **Equalities and diversity**

There are no equality and diversity issues directly arising from this report. The Enhanced Partnership has been developed in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

2.6 **Risk management**

There are no risk management implications arising directly from this report. Strategic and operational risks associated with transport matters are assessed via the established corporate process.

2.7 **Crime and disorder**

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

2.8 **Environment and sustainability**

There are potential positive implications from the introduction of an EP as this is expected to support the greater provision of zero-emission buses and new ticketing products which may incentivise bus travel. Aspects of the proposed EP also complement the aims of securing greater use of walking, wheeling or cycling, for example as a stage in a journey made partly by public transport; it therefore complements efforts to secure a wider modal shift away from car travel. The proposed EP plan includes an objective to accelerate operators' existing programmes to move towards all buses in the fleet being Euro VI standard or zero-emission vehicles.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive X
- Director of Service X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) X

- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Assistant Chief Executive