

# North Tyneside Council

## Report to Deputy Mayor

### Date: 6 January 2022

#### Title: Enhanced Bus Partnership

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

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#### 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 an EP must be in place by April 2022 in order for the region to receive any further Government funding for bus services.

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 the carrying out of associated engagement and consultation on those documents. Cabinet authorised the Deputy Mayor, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and appropriate Directors as set out in section 1.2, to approve the draft EP plan and scheme for consultation and subsequently amend the plan and scheme if necessary following consultation. Cabinet also authorised the Director of Law and Governance, 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 and the Director of Resources, to take the necessary steps for the Authority to enter into the EP.

The North East Joint Transport Committee (JTC) on 20 December 2021 approved the proposed EP plan and scheme, and agreed to carry out further external engagement, which is currently taking place, and formal consultation will commence in January 2022.

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.

Recognising the positive value of having an EP in place and allowing for the timescales necessary to meet Government deadlines, the Deputy Mayor, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and appropriate Directors as set out in section 1.2, is invited to agree the draft Enhanced Partnership's plan and scheme insofar as they relate to the Authority's highway authority functions undergoing public consultation in accordance with the Transport Act 2000.

## **1.2 Recommendation:**

It is recommended that 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, the Director of Law and Governance and the Director of Resources, agree to the draft Enhanced Partnership's plan and scheme attached at Appendix 1 of the report being consulted on in accordance with the Transport Act 2000.

## **1.3 Forward Plan:**

It has not been possible to give twenty-eight days' notice of this report however it is required to be considered at this time in order to reflect timescales set by the Government for bus partnership development. This item first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 10 December 2021.

## **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

## **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 1.2, to approve the EP plan and scheme for consultation and to agree any amendments to the plan and scheme made following the conclusion of the consultation exercise.

A copy of the report prepared for Cabinet on 29 November 2021 is appended to this report at Appendix 2. 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.

### 1.5.2 Engagement process

On 20 December 2021 the JTC approved the draft EP plan and scheme, engagement/consultation on the proposed EP plan and scheme, and for the plan and scheme to be published so that the 28 day Bus Operator Objection period could commence, which is underway.

In addition to the objection period given to Bus Operators, there is a requirement for the EP scheme to be publicly consulted on. This consultation will commence in January 2022.

The timescales set by central government require the EP Plan and scheme to be in place by 1 April 2022.

### 1.5.3 Next steps

The main next steps in the process (including indicative dates) are as follows:

January 2022	Statutory consultation to commence (subject to approvals)
15 March 2022	JTC approval sought for final EP plan and scheme
March 2022	The Authority and the other Highway Authorities' approval sought for final EP plan and scheme
1 April 2022	EP to commence

## 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 support the further development 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) and The North East Joint Transport Committee Enhanced Partnership Scheme for Buses (draft)

Appendix 2 – Cabinet Report for 29 November 2021 Cabinet Meeting

## 1.9 Contact officers:

Paul Dowling, Service Manager Regeneration and Transport, 0345 2000 101

Nicholas Bryan, Highway Network Manager, 0191 643 6622

Andrew Flynn, Integrated Transport Manager, 0191 643 6083

John Cram, Integrated Transport Officer, 0191 643 6122

Cathy Davison, Principal Accountant Investment (Capital) and Revenue, 0191 643 5727

John Barton, Lawyer, 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](#) (approved by Cabinet on 18 October 2021)
- (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) [North East Joint Transport Committee \(JTC\) Report December 2021 ‘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 (Appendix 2): a Government announcement is

awaited on the level of funding which will be provided to the region. 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 (Appendix 2).

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.

At this stage, the Deputy Mayor is being asked to agree to the draft EP plan and scheme being consulted on.

## **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 Director of Regeneration and Economic Development, the Director of Environment, Housing and Leisure, the Director of Law and Governance and the Director of Resources.

### **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 (Appendix 2). Further external engagement with the Bus Operators is being carried out by Transport North East, and formal statutory consultation is proposed to take place, as described in section 1.5.2.

## **2.4 Human rights**

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

## **2.5 Equalities and diversity**

There are no equalities and diversity issues directly arising from this report. The Enhanced Partnership is to be 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 no environment and sustainability issues directly arising from this report. There are potential positive implications from the introduction of an Enhanced Partnership as this is expected to support the greater provision of zero-emission buses and new ticketing products which may incentivise bus travel in preference to car travel.

### PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive
- Director of Service
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Assistant Chief Executive