



Northumberland

County Council

ASHINGTON AND BLYTH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 12TH JULY 2023

NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL BUS BOARDS

Report of: John Riddle, Cabinet Member for Improving our Roads and Highways

Lead Officer: Stuart McNaughton, Strategic Transport Manager

Purpose of report

To agree the Local Area Committee's nomination for the Northumberland Local Bus Board.

Recommendations

This Local Area Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Nominate a member of the Ashington & Blyth Local Area Committee to act as the area's representative on the Northumberland Local Bus Board.**

Link to Corporate Plan

The Local Bus Board will help deliver on the 'Driving Economic Growth' priority within the Corporate Plan through helping to deliver a connected county by improving the bus network across Northumberland.

Key issues

- 1.** In May 2023, NCC Cabinet noted the decision of the North East Joint Transport Committee to make an Enhanced Bus Partnership for the region. The cabinet report is appended to this report
- 2.** The Enhanced Bus Partnership incorporates a package of regional and local bus schemes including:
 - a.** New ticketing products, which will enable cheaper, simpler, multi modal and multi-operator fares, with the aim of attracting more bus passengers to the network;
 - b.** New services and improved services, delivering new routes to connect communities and improving frequencies and operating hours for existing

services. Funding for service improvements in Northumberland is expected to total £7.8m and be spent by 31 March 2025.

- c. Improved reliability and speed of buses through Bus Priority Infrastructure and Intelligent Transport Systems Investments, allowing users to rely on buses and attracting more people to use their local services.
- d. Investment focused on connectivity in rural areas.
- e. Funding to update outdated bus stops in the county to correct safety or accessibility issues that may be barriers to travel; and
- f. Ensuring services run as a cohesive network, including branding and enhanced passenger information. This will be in the form of a new website and app as well as additional staffing and online information.

- 3. Once funding is received, the council will begin to deliver a range of schemes to improve bus patronage, modal share, performance, and customer satisfaction.
- 4. As part of the delivery of the Enhanced Bus Partnership, local transport authorities have been asked to establish Local Bus Boards. The aim of the Local Bus Board is to allow representatives from across Northumberland to meet with bus operators to increase understanding between the parties involved, specifically but not limited to, reporting and discussion of forthcoming bus service changes in Northumberland.
- 5. The Local Bus Board would seek to improve working arrangements for the discussion of bus service reliability, service improvements, highways infrastructure measures, fares initiatives and information to the public.
- 6. Draft Terms of Reference for the Northumberland Local Bus Board (NLBB) are appended to this report. In summary:
 - a. The NLBB is not a public meeting and will not be a decision-making body
 - b. The ordinary frequency of meetings will be four times per year and will be chaired by the relevant portfolio holder.
- 7. Also set out in the Terms of Reference is the proposed membership of the NLBB and this includes a representative from each of the Local Area Committees. To that end, this report requests a nomination from this LAC to act as the local representative of the NLBB. On receipt of nominations from across the LACs, the first Local Bus Board will be arranged for the autumn.

IMPLICATIONS

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| Policy | This approach will provide ongoing support to transport providers and support the economic recovery of the region, as well as supporting the Council's strategic objective of connecting people by provided access to education, employment, and social activities. |
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| Finance and value for money | None. |
| Legal | None. |
| Procurement | None. |
| Human Resources | None. |
| Property | None. |
| Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> | None. |
| Risk Assessment | None. |
| Crime & Disorder | None. |
| Customer Consideration | None. |
| Carbon reduction | None. |
| Health and Wellbeing | None. |
| Wards | All Wards |

Background papers

[May 2023 Cabinet Report - North East Bus Service Improvement Plan](#)
[Northumberland Local Bus Board - Draft Terms of Reference](#)

Report sign off

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| | Full Name of Officer |
| Monitoring Officer/Legal | |

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| Executive Director of Transformation and Resources | |
| Relevant Executive Director | Simon Neilson |
| Portfolio Holder for Improving our Roads and Highways | |

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