



Northumberland
County Council

North East Enhanced Bus Partnership

6th October 2021

www.northumberland.gov.uk

Strategic Importance of Buses in the Region

- 162.4 million passenger journeys on region's bus network in 2018/19
- Only 68% of NE households own a car (compared to 74% nationally)
- 30% of NE bus journeys are to employment
- Vital role in social inclusion – school, shopping, health, key services
- Part of the solution to air quality and carbon reduction commitments through modal shift from private cars
- Bus companies are also big employers in region, with over 6000 jobs in the industry

Northumberland Bus Network

Fully commercial bus network



Fully or partly subsidised bus network



Impact of Covid-19 on bus services in Northumberland

The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent advice to stay at home and avoid unnecessary travel has had a profound effect on the public bus network over the last 18 months. There have been over 6.5m fewer journeys in 2020/21 when compared with the previous year.

The resulting decline in patronage has meant that, in common with other regions, the Northumberland bus network is now being heavily supported by the public purse, due to farebox revenue that allows commercial bus services to make a return on costs having been decimated.

Bus Passenger Patronage in Northumberland (Total Boardings)

	2019/20	2020/21	% prior year
April - June	2,174,000	357,000	16.4%
July - September	2,487,000	915,000	36.8%
October - December	2,282,000	836,000	36.6%
January – March	1,904,000	788,000	41.4%

Indicative revenue of bus operators

Funding Stream	Pre COVID-19 Revenue	Revenue (April - March 21)
From Fares	61%	25%
Concessionary Travel (LA)	23%	23%
Secured Services (LA)	10%	10%
Bus Services Operator Grant (DfT)	6%	12%
Bus Services Support Grant (DfT)	0%	30%

Future Funding of the bus network:

Bus Service Improvement Plan & Enhanced Partnerships

LTA invited to bid for additional funding post March 2022

What the DfT wants us to do...	How the DfT wants us to do it...
<p>Be Ambitious Be Successful Be in a Partnership: joint working with operators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote the use of buses;• Attract lapsed, existing and new users;• Reverse decades of decline in passenger numbers;• Reformed network;• Improve public confidence;• Address misconceptions, and;• Encourage people to use bus.	<p>Aim high Deliver at speed Meet the October 2021 and March 2022 deadline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More frequent;• Faster & more reliable;• Better integrated with other modes & with each other;• Greener;• Accessible and inclusive by design;• Innovative;• Seen as a safe mode of transport;• Cheaper;• More comprehensive;• Easier to understand;• Easier to use, and;• Better to ride in.

A Successful Bus Service Improvement Plan / Enhanced Partnership

- Share of £3bn transformational funding for buses
- Deliver on the governments levelling-up agenda
- Support a green recovery to make region a healthier and more vibrant place
- Benefit local economy
 - Every £1 invested in bus infrastructure can generate more than £8 of economic benefit
 - Bus revenue funding delivers £3.70 of economic benefit for each £1 spent

Vision for Buses "Ten Solutions"

An enhanced network that is simple and easy to understand

Faster and more reliable journey times

Better intergration through modes

A simple and flexible fares structure

More early morning and evening services

Clear and consistent information that is easy to access

Improved safety and security

Improved connectivity beyond our boundaries

Cleaner and greener vehicles

A first-class customer experience

Delivering our Transport Plan commitments

- Changing road space so buses can travel faster and more reliably around region
- Dealing with traffic pinch points through bus priority
- Major investment in longer term solutions – rapid bus corridors, lower fares, greener vehicles, better frequencies
- Address sparsity of transport in rural and isolated areas through more demand responsive transport
- More integrated and smarter ticketing, better information
- Improved safety and security on transport