

**THE NORTH EAST JOINT TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
TRANSPORT NORTH EAST**

Notice that an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme have been prepared by the North East Joint Transport Committee

21 December 2021

Dear operator,

This is a notice to confirm that the North East Joint Transport Committee ("NEJTC") has prepared an Enhanced Partnership ("EP") Plan and EP Scheme for the region, as required and set out in section 138F of the Transport Act 2000.

The EP Plan and EP Scheme can be found on the Transport North East website at [Enhanced Partnership and Bus Service Improvement Plan - Transport North East](#), however if you would like a hard copy please email buses@transportnortheast.gov.uk. The EP Plan and EP Scheme together work towards implementing the North East Bus Service Improvement Plan ("BSIP") for the region, to deliver better bus services for local people and wider local transport plan objectives, as set out in the overview appended to this notice at Appendix A.

You have been sent this notice as the NEJTC understands you to be an operator of a "qualifying local service", the meaning of which is set out in Appendix B of this notice.

All operators of qualifying local services have a right to object to the EP Plan and EP Scheme and have 28 days from the date of this notice within which to make an objection. This **28-day operator objection period commences on 22 December 2021 and ends on 19 January 2022**.

If a sufficient number of objections to the EP Plan and/or EP Scheme are received from operators, the EP Plan and EP Scheme will not be able to proceed to consultation. The Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018 ("**Regulations**") define the relevant thresholds as being reached where:

- the registered distance of all the qualifying local services operated by those objecting in the EP area is at least 25% of the registered distance of all qualifying local services operated by all the operators in the relevant EP area and where:
 - the total number of all operators of qualifying local services in the relevant area is 4 or more, at least 3 of those operators are objectors; or
 - the total number of all operators of qualifying local services in the relevant area is less than 4, all of those operators are objectors¹: or
- at least 50% of the total number of operators of qualifying local services in the EP area have objected and the registered distance of all qualifying local services operated by the objectors in the relevant EP area is at least 4% of the registered distance of all qualifying local services operated by all of the operators in that area².

Any objections should be sent to the NEJTC by 19 January 2022, by email to [\[buses@transportnortheast.gov.uk\]](mailto:buses@transportnortheast.gov.uk) or by post to the following address:

Transport North East
c/o Gateshead Council
Civic Centre
Regent Terrace
NE8 1HH

When submitting an objection, an operator of qualifying local services is required to provide the following:

¹ Regulation 11(4) of the Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018.

² Regulation 11(5) of the Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018.

- its reasons for objecting - as stated in the guidance published by the Department for Transport³, to object without giving reasons would run against the requirement in the BSIP to co-operate with the EP process to receive discretionary funding, including the Covid-19 Bus Service Support Grant ("CBSSG"); and
- the registered distance of all of its qualifying local services which are operated in the EP area.

Regulation 10(1) of the Regulations requires the NEJTC to publish the names of any operator that makes an objection to the EP Plan and/or EP Scheme within 14 days of the last day of the period during which objections may be made. The name of any operator which is to be published must be the name in which the local service operated by the operator is registered with the traffic commissioner by virtue of section 6 of the Transport Act 1985, as required by Regulation 10(2) of the Regulations.

For further information, please contact buses@transportnortheast.gov.uk

Thank you for your collaboration so far on the development of the EP Plan and EP Scheme. Transport North East looks forward to continuing to work with North East operators to deliver services and improve the network for the benefit of passengers across the region.

Signed: 

Mike Barker

Dated: 21 December 2021

North East Combined Authority for and on behalf of the North East Joint Transport Committee

³ The National Bus Strategy Delivering Bus Service Improvement Plans using an Enhanced Partnership (July 2021), paragraph 4.3.

APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF BSIP OBJECTIVES AND EP APPROACH

BSIP OBJECTIVES	EP APPROACH
1. Repair the damage caused by Covid-19 to bus ridership numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and promote good standards of hygiene and cleanliness across bus fleets and public transport infrastructure. • Ensure that sufficient funding is available to maintain the current network and secure ‘socially necessary’ services once the Bus Recovery Grant ceases.
2. Grow bus patronage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve facilities and information provision onboard buses, in stations and at stops, and online. • Develop and introduce a new, regionwide brand for public transport complementary to existing operator brands. • Introduce more attractive and relevant ticketing options. • Expand and improve routes and services within the network as well as better connections beyond our boundaries.
3. Grow bus modal share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and improve routes and services within the network as well as better connections beyond our boundaries. • Introduce more attractive and relevant ticketing options. • Commit to and consult on infrastructure improvements which prioritise and promote the bus network. • Develop and implement a marketing campaign to provide the bus network with increased public exposure.
4. Increase customer satisfaction amongst users of the bus network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve facilities and information provision onboard buses, in stations and at stops, and online. • Introduce more attractive and relevant ticketing options. • Expand and improve routes and services within the network as well as better connections beyond our boundaries. • Ensure staff have adequate training to assist with journey planning and maintain high standard, as well as creating new roles in order to facilitate the rollout of improvements. • Develop and implement a Bus Passenger Charter and network change processes with a view to establishing community engagement, accountability, and review at the heart of all improvements.
5. Make buses faster, more punctual and more reliable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and improve routes and services within the network as well as better connections beyond our boundaries. • Commit to and consult on infrastructure improvements which prioritise and promote the bus network. • Commit to targeted infrastructure interventions on particularly salient corridors / pinch points.
6. Make buses greener	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement changes to vehicles and supporting infrastructure pursuant to the regions green vision.

APPENDIX B: DEFINITION OF QUALIFYING LOCAL SERVICE

1. A service is a "*qualifying local service*" for objection purposes as defined in Regulation 3(1) of The Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018 ("**Regulations**") if it:
 - 1.1. is a local service (as defined in section 2 of the Transport Act 1985) which has one or more stopping places within the geographical area of the EP Plan or EP Scheme, in this case seven local authority areas in the North East, consisting of two combined authorities - The North East Combined Authority (comprising of the local authority areas of Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council) and The North of Tyne Combined Authority (comprising of the local authority areas of Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council and Northumberland County Council); and
 - 1.2. is not an excluded local service. An excluded local service is defined in Regulation 3(2) of the Regulations as:
 - a service or any part of a service provided under arrangements made under sections 89 to 91 of the Transport Act 1985 in any case where the authority retains all the revenue from that service;
 - a service which is registered as a local service under section 6 of the Transport Act 1985, but which would otherwise be an excursion or tour within the meaning in section 137(1) of that Act;
 - a service in respect of which a community bus permit has been granted under section 22 of the Transport Act 1985 (an EP does not apply to this type of registered service – however an operator of such a service may voluntarily comply with some or all of the EP requirements that would otherwise apply to that service); or
 - a service which is a local service for 10% or less of the overall distance covered by the service (this might include interurban or other long-distance scheduled services that are not generally used for local journeys within the EP area, but may use bus stops within it).
2. Whether or not a particular service is a qualifying local service is determined on the basis of its status on the day before this notice is issued.