

Meeting: Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee

Date: 22 March 2022

Title: Bus Partnership and Bus Services

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Service: Regeneration and Economic Development

Wards affected: All

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report presents an update on work at regional level to develop an Enhanced Partnership (EP) for bus services. As an appendix, it gives a summary of forthcoming bus service changes in the borough.
- 1.2 A presentation will be given at the meeting to provide further details.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The sub-committee is invited to note the information in this report.

3. Bus Partnership

- 3.1 The North East, comprising the 7 authority areas covered by the North of Tyne Combined Authority and North East Combined Authority, has a single Joint Transport Committee (JTC).
- 3.2 The Government announced in March 2021 that ongoing funding for bus services would be dependent on authorities' and bus operators' participation in new arrangements. These involve putting in place an Enhanced Partnership (EP) with bus operators. Each area was also required to develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). The North East's BSIP was approved by the JTC in October 2021.
- 3.3 On 29 November 2021 Cabinet authorised the Deputy Mayor, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and appropriate Directors, 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.
- 3.4 The original timescales for the submission of the BSIP have since been changed by the Department of Transport (DfT). Each area is now required to share a draft EP plan and scheme with DfT by the end of April 2022. Once the draft has been considered by DfT and finalised, formal consultation with bus operators, and public consultation, will be undertaken prior to approval being sought for the final EP plan and scheme(s).

4. Bus service changes

- 4.1 Bus operators may register changes to their commercially operated services at any time. Bus patronage has not returned to full pre-Covid levels, and Government Covid grant support for bus operators is to end later in 2022.
- 4.2 The three main bus operators in the borough registered a number of service changes which will take effect from 27 March 2022. From the same date, Nexus has re-cast its network of secured bus services to seek to minimise the impact of these changes.
- 4.3 Despite a recent announcement from the Government that Covid grant funding will continue in some form until October 2022, the bus service changes have been registered and will proceed as planned.
- 4.4 The note on bus service changes, which was circulated to all members on 23 February 2022, is attached as the Appendix to this report. Full details of service changes can be found on the Nexus website.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The following background documents have been used in the compilation of this report and are available from the report author:
 - [Cabinet Report dated 20 September 2021 'Bus Partnership'](#)
 - [Cabinet Report dated 29 November 2021 'Bus Partnership'](#)
 - [North East Joint Transport Committee \(JTC\) Report December 2021 'North East Enhanced Partnership'](#)
 - Nexus website – [summary of bus service changes from 27 March 2022](#)

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 Briefing note (circulated to all members) on bus service changes