

## North East Combined Authority, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 20 October 2015 at 2.00pm

Meeting to be held in a Committee Room, Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8QH

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## AGENDA

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	Page No
1. <b>Apologies for absence</b>	
2. <b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
Please remember to declare any personal interest where appropriate both verbally and by recording it on the relevant form (to be handed to the Democratic Services Officer). Please also remember to leave the meeting where any personal interest requires this.	
3. <b>Minutes of previous meeting held on 8 September 2015</b>	1 - 8
4. <b>Policy Review: Transport Related Barriers to Employment - Evidence from Stagecoach</b>	9 - 14
5. <b>Thematic Lead Transport Update</b>	15 - 26
6. <b>Devolution update</b>	27 - 54
7. <b>Forward Plan &amp; Work Programme</b>	55 - 110
8. <b>Dates and time of next meeting</b>	

3:00pm on Tuesday 1 December 2015, North Tyneside

Contact Officer: Brenda Joyce Tel: 0191 2116144 E-mail: [Brenda.joyce@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:Brenda.joyce@newcastle.gov.uk)

**To All Members**

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## North East Combined Authority, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

8 September 2015

(2.00 - 4.00pm)

Meeting held Gateshead Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1JN

### Present:

Councillor: Wright (Chair)

Councillors: Armstrong, Dillon, Eagle, Graham, A Lower, Maxwell, Meling, Pidcock, Snowdon and Wright

### 10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Crute, Flux, Glindon and Pearson.

### 11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Eagle declared an interest as an employee of Nexus and advised that dispensation had been granted for him to take part in the discussion at Item 4.

### 12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21 JULY 2015

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 July 2015 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

#### Matters arising

Minute number 3.1

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed that the response from the NELEP, regarding four points raised at the 22 June meeting (see minute number 53), was emailed to members of the Committee on 31 July 2015.

### 13 POLICY REVIEW: TRANSPORT RELATED BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT - EVIDENCE FROM NEXUS

Submitted: Report of the Nexus Corporate Manager for Customer Services and Communications (previously circulated copy attached to official minutes) to provide evidence for the policy review of transport related barriers to education, employment and training.

Huw Lewis (Nexus Corporate Manager for Customer Services and Communications) introduced the report which provided background and funding information, and detailed the current Nexus activities to overcome barriers to employment education and training.

### **Members' questions and comments**

- A Member asked where the counties of Northumberland and Durham fit in with the work of Nexus.

Huw Lewis advised that Nexus did not provide any services on the ground in Northumberland. It was involved at a strategic level across all of the seven member authorities of the North East Combined Authority (NECA), for example, national rail and the shape of new franchises; in this way Nexus was contributing to planning for the future. Nexus was also involved in planning for Smart ticketing across the NECA area. Over time Nexus may look at working across the seven local authority areas but not at this stage.

- Members stressed that as far as the policy review was concerned it was important that the two counties were included. It was proposed that the NECA Regional Transport Team be asked to consider a joined up approach through Overview and Scrutiny.
- Different ticketing arrangements and services were considered a major barrier to employment. This raised the question of when Smart would be taken up by all the bus companies in the area.

Huw Lewis informed the meeting that Nexus was close to delivering the technical aspects of Smart and that it had now been tested on 30 services. The aim was to reach 200-300 in the next few months. Although it would be widely available, unfortunately, the price barrier would continue to exist. It was anticipated that the proposals of the Quality Contracts Scheme (QCS) would address this problem.

Smart ticketing would have a daily price cap on the Metro but this would not apply to buses.

- Boundaries – the crossing of local authority boundaries was a serious issue. The day-to-day practicalities for the travelling public had to be considered. Public transport had to serve all councils residents and work should be done to look at getting 'one service for all'.
- The Chair took the opportunity to remind members that the focus of the discussion should not just be on Tyne and Wear and Nexus. As the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the NECA all issues raised would be brought together in the final recommendations of the policy review.

Nexus was funded by the Tyne and Wear authorities and therefore limited to what it could do; this was a legacy of the governance arrangements that preceded the establishment of NECA. Committee members considered that NECA should aim to broaden the strategic direction going forward.

- Shift patterns – huge problems existed for shift workers reliant on public transport in a diverse range of sectors. Other issues also included low car ownership in this region as well as sustainability and green issues – the North East had to get people to work, and back, on public transport.

Nexus was aware of the problems of shift patterns and used some funds to provide work services specifically for transport to work and to support people in employment. There was a limit to the funding and Tyne and Wear had been extraordinarily lucky to be able to protect the current services; unfortunately, the organisation was not in a position to be able to expand this service.

Also, many existing services operated in a traditional way ie. going into 'cities' first, before coming back out to other areas and this did not fit with current patterns of employment.

The Chair said that it was important to reiterate that the Committee was carrying out the review to try to bring about change and to support the North East Leadership Board (NELB).

- Members considered that the Metro was a fantastic facility for those people who lived near it. However, it failed to provide a 'wide' service within local authority areas as well as across boundaries.
- QCS – following the oral evidence sessions, the QCS Board expected written closing submissions by 11 September and intended to publish its final report by 31 October 2015.

Huw Lewis advised the QCS proposals included:-

- all buses in Tyne and Wear
- some services in Northumberland and Durham to a certain extent; a lot of buses that come into Tyne and Wear were in the scheme and would be part of the universal fare structure.

The QCS proposals were developed over a lengthy process before the formation of the NECA governance arrangements. However, since the start of the process in 2011 the agenda had completely changed and recently the Chancellor had been talking about bus franchises and local control delivering economic growth. Through the devolution agenda it was possible the scheme could be extended to the counties.

This region did not have a network of buses and this would provide an opportunity to look at a strategic network and to create workforce flexibility. The local authorities and the public would have a greater influence on how services were delivered.

- Job Seekers' Travel Voucher Scheme - this scheme was funded from the levies and partly from a government grant and administered by Job Centres. In replying to a question about the sustainability of the scheme, Huw Lewis

advised that Nexus provided this voluntarily, and as such, it was dependent on the levy funding. A breakdown of the usage figures would be provided.

- Social need - a Member stressed that operators should not only look at getting people to work but also at social needs of local populations.
- Fares – the free market legally prevented bus operators from colluding on fares. The North East would need to have the same powers as London if it was to have a universal system QCS would give the Combined Authority the ability to set fares.
- Bus patronage growth – the QCS proposals built on modelling over the next ten years. Nexus was also challenged to increase patronage as a policy objective.
- Cashless services – this type of service could cause difficulties for some passengers eg. some people do not have access to a bank account; care had to be exercised that services provided were fully inclusive.
- Bus committee – a member suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend that a ‘Bus Committee’ be established to monitor delivery.

Karen Brown (Scrutiny Officer) advised members that the NECA already had in place a governance structure which included Transport North East and the Transport North East (Tyne and Wear) Sub-Committee. The order passed by Parliament which established NECA also dissolved the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority (ITA). As a result, the role of the ITA transferred to the NECA, a single body with responsibility for strategic transport across all seven local authority areas.

- The evidence related to projects funded through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and covered the whole of the North East Combined Authority (NECA) area.
- Boundaries – the crux of the problem around barriers was public transport across boundaries. A member proposed that a representative from the three main bus operators be invited to attend a future meeting and asked why they cannot make it easier for people to travel.
- Under 16s – Nexus provided a very good price for the under 16s in Tyne and Wear which could save a family of four £300 a year. It was frustrating for Nexus not to be able to extend the scheme to 18, the education leaving age, and this highlighted that the organisation could not achieve everything it wanted.

Nexus were also aware that a flexible daily ticket was an important issue for 16-18s.

- Employment sites – Nexus currently ran 15 works services which tended to run in the very early morning, for the early shifts, around the circumference of the urban area. Further details could be provided on request.

There were some good examples of developers (as opposed to employers) supporting services to sites. Funding had been made available to divert buses onto major employment sites or putting on more buses (eg. Cobalt, Quorum). Nexus would like to go further and expand these types of initiative.

The Chair concluded by thanking all members for their contributions to the discussions which had highlighted many of the concerns and complexities of the issues. The recommendations of the review would contribute to the North East Transport Plan which would be completed in 2016.

Other evidence would be considered going forward and the two main actions arising from this meeting were:-

- a) That Overview and Scrutiny Committee meet with the NECA Transport team to ensure a coordinated approach was taken at every step of the review  
and
- b) Invite the three bus companies to provide evidence to contribute to the policy review.

#### 14 **EMPLOYABILITY UPDATE - FOCUS ON APPRENTICESHIPS**

Submitted: Report of the NECA Employability, Inclusion and Skills Steering Group (previously circulated copy attached to official minutes) to provide a brief summary of the regional response to increasing the number of apprenticeships in the region.

Shona Duncan (Principal Manager for Employment and Skills at North Tyneside Council) presented the report which included an update on the recent formal review of Apprenticeships in the Combined Authority geography. This was an independent piece of work commissioned to specifically consider what the regional approach should be to increasing the creation and take up of Apprenticeships.

Shona Duncan informed committee that she was the chair of the NECA Young Persons Skills Group which fed into the NECA Employability, Inclusion and Skills Steering Group.

The report gave a summary of partnership work to date which included information on the Apprenticeship Hub, the Regional Review and recommendations, a summary of apprenticeships in the NECA, mismatches between demand and supply, barriers to increasing take-up, the realism of current targets, the Apprenticeship Growth Partnership (AGP), future support from NECA and next steps.

Shona Duncan said that there was much good operational work going on and that all the local authorities were taking a pro-active approach; however, it was different

across the CA area which suggested that something needed to be done about the role of NECA, around promotion and in terms of perception.

### **Members' questions and comments**

- A Member said that the report was very good but a lot of the data would have been useful in chart form.
- Higher level apprenticeships – that fact that higher level apprenticeships were not being taken up was a cause for concern. Thought needed to be given about getting high end apprentices to go into schools as role models.

Shona Duncan advised that this was not because of one single reason; there had been low numbers of applicants in the first instance, it was not perceived as the same quality route way as university or college and employers did not get to see these people.

The Member said that something had to be done about how the region 'sold the value' of this type of apprenticeship; schools and colleges currently considered apprenticeships as second rate. This issue was about awareness and NECA members had to change the perceptions.

- Apprenticeship Growth Partnership (APG) – concerns were also expressed that there was no political input into the APG. The group needed to be joined up with NECA. It was considered that the NECA lead member for Employability and Inclusion, Councillor Grant Davey, should be involved as a political lead.

In response to a question from the Chair, Janice Rose (Economic and Inclusion Policy Manager, Northumberland County Council) advised that this was possibly because the group was largely officer based. However, as the subject matter was very important to Councillor Davey this would be taken back to him.

- Careers advice - there was some discussion about the careers advice provision in schools:-
  - There was not a good understanding of other route ways due to advisors own personal experiences.
  - Young people needed proper advice – not just directions to the websites of training agencies.
  - The educators were not interested in apprenticeship opportunities.
  - The funding focus of schools was based on exam results.
  - The ethos of schools needed to be changed and a cultural shift away from the emphasis on the degree path way was needed.
  - Schools had to admit that some young people would greatly benefit from vocational training.
- Benefits - The income of young people not living at home was also raised as a barrier linked to the benefits system.

- Personal development was crucial for young people and apprenticeship schemes should deliver these skills. Some sort of pre-apprenticeship could also be useful.
- Role models – some young people were doing exceptionally well and the value of apprenticeships, including the skills and training but also the confidence, pride, voluntary work etc. needed to be highlighted. The NE had a real good story to tell and this was evidenced by the data in the report.
- Young women – the issue of women taking up ‘non-traditional’ apprentice opportunities and the fact that more needed to be done on this was raised. A further issue was that of equal pay - it had been reported that young women earned only 70% of the male apprenticeship pay. The Committee would need to monitor both of these issues going forward.
- Apprenticeship definition – Committee discussed what a genuine apprenticeship was and the basic principles underpinning the role.
  - An apprenticeship contract could not guarantee a job at the end of it.
  - During training a wealth of transferable skills would be developed which could open a range of opportunities.
  - An apprenticeship was certainly not cheap labour.
  - There was a significant difference in the quality of apprenticeships on offer.

Shona Duncan advised that in terms of funding an apprentice was basically employed for 30 hours per week for a minimum of 12 months with some type of formal training from a prescribed list of qualifications (usually via day release with a training provider). The minimum wage for a 16-18 year old was £100 per week. The formal definition would be provided in writing.

- Targets - the Regional Review concluded that the targets in the Strategic Economic Plan to double the number of youth Apprenticeships over the next four years from 6,500 to 13,000 appeared very ambitious, and was unlikely to be achieved.
- Schools – a Member commented that there was a limit to what offer schools could provide until the current target driven regime was relaxed. She went on to say that the dichotomy of degree versus vocational qualification was false. It was not an either or situation – the two should work together.
- Members agreed that NECA should have careers officers going into schools and that the NELB should be asked about this. Further work was also required on the best practice of colleagues in the CA area.

The main actions arising from the discussion on this item were:-

- a) That the thematic lead, Councillor Grant Davey, be invited to become a member of the Apprenticeship Growth Partnership (APG)
- b) Personal development options and support for young women be added as additional criteria to the barriers to employment and

- c) Work be undertaken across the seven constituent member authorities to build a portfolio of best practice with regard to careers advice.

15 **FORWARD PLAN AND WORK PROGRAMME**

Submitted: Report of the Monitoring Officer (previously circulated copy attached to official minutes) which incorporated a copy of the NECA Forward Plan and the updated Scrutiny Annual Work Programme for 2015/16.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that the report provided Members with an opportunity to consider the items for the current 28 day period and to review the work programme.

It was confirmed that an additional meeting had been added to the work programme to consider the draft NECA budget 2016/2017. The meeting would be held at:

3:00pm on Tuesday 1 December 2015 at North Tyneside. Councillor Armstrong submitted his apologies for the meeting.

**RESOLVED** – That the work programme and the NECA Forward Plan in relation to the development of the Committee's work programme be received.

16 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

2:00pm Tuesday 20 October 2015, Newcastle City Centre

## North East Combined Authority

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015

**Subject:** Policy Review: Transport Related Barriers to Employment – Evidence from Stagecoach

**Report of:** Commercial Director

#### **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to provide evidence from Stagecoach for the policy review on transport related barriers to education, employment and training. This review will contribute to the Transport Plan for the North East, which is due to be completed in 2016.

#### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee receives the evidence from Stagecoach as part of its programme of evidence gathering to contribute towards the policy review.

# North East Combined Authority

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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### 1 Background Information

1.1 The Scrutiny Committee has agreed to pursue a policy review based on the following terms of reference :

- a) An assessment of current transport projects to help people get to interview, jobs, training etc.
- b) The potential impact of future spending cuts and how to maintain accessibility of public transport
- c) An assessment of the different problems across the NECA area (Durham, Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland, South Tyneside, Northumberland, North Tyneside) (e.g. the particular needs of rural areas).

### 2. Stagecoach activities to overcome barriers to employment, education and training

#### Introduction

2.1 Stagecoach North East provides a comprehensive network of local bus services in Newcastle, South Shields, Sunderland, Hartlepool and Teesside. The majority of services operate from early morning until late evening and seven days a week.

2.2 Stagecoach is a major employer in the local economy, with 1,422 staff, of which 1,110 are drivers, 192 are engineers and 120 are administration and managerial staff. The majority of employees live within the local communities in which our buses operate.

2.3 Stagecoach operates a fleet of 471 buses and has invested consistently in new low floor buses for local areas over the years.

2.4 In addition to the focused products detailed below Stagecoach provides excellent value day and weekly tickets for not only work related but leisure journeys.

2.5 Stagecoach operates its own Driver Training School providing initial vocational licence training and then ongoing "Professional Competence" training across a number of key modules including Disability Awareness and Customer Service.

2.6 Stagecoach continues to operate its own Apprenticeship scheme (currently we have 15 in training), ensuring both training and subsequent skilled engineering job opportunities are available for our young people.

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### Ongoing activities to support passenger journeys

- 2.7 All new vehicles are fully accessible and meet the latest Euro emission standards.
- 2.8 In the last 18 months, 86 brand new buses have been introduced into the Stagecoach North East fleet, including 23 gas buses in Sunderland. The gas buses are a further extension of the green agenda, as they provide a cleaner, greener ride due to lower carbon emissions and help to deliver a better living environment for local people.
- 2.9 Investment in new technology that helps to better manage operations and provide more up-to-date travel information; this includes:
- Free Wi-Fi fitted as standard to all new vehicles since 2014.
  - AVL on all vehicles providing data for Real time Passenger Information systems.

### Schools and Colleges:

- 2.10 Young people continue to benefit from discount travel schemes such as flat or half fares up to the age of 16 and 'VIP' for under 19s.
- 2.11 Our Unirider ticket offers substantially discounted travel to students on a term or annual basis.
- 2.12 We work with establishments such as Northumbria University, Middlesbrough Riverside College, Stockton Riverside College, Macmillan Academy, to produce bespoke travel solutions designed to save both them and students money.
- 2.13 Through our membership of Network Ticketing Limited (NTL) we work with other operators and modes of public transport to provide flexible solutions to students whose travel needs go beyond the services that Stagecoach offers directly.
- 2.14 We interact with local schools through marketing and educational initiatives to promote the use of public transport.

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### Employment

- 2.15 We work with local employers through our Corporate Travel Scheme to create financially accessible travel solutions that cover not only the daily commute but also social travel as well.
- 2.16 We work with Liftshare, an independent travel planning company, to provide a comprehensive approach to the needs of employees within businesses and large multi-employer sites.
- 2.17 We are launching Kickstart schemes introducing new links to employment sites (extension of Service 22 to Cobalt) and enhancing interurban frequencies (raising X34 from half hourly to every 20 minutes). More such schemes will follow.
- 2.18 We are working with Go North East and Arriva to roll out SmartZone Bus to Bus products. Allows greater travel flexibility on parallel services.
- 2.19 We are working with developers across the region to produce practical solutions for linking new housing schemes into the public transport network and offering incentives to new residents to try the bus from the point at which they move into their new house.
- 2.20 Through our membership of Network Ticketing Limited (NTL) we work with other operators and modes of public transport to offer corporate ticketing to employers as part of their Green Travel Plan obligations.
- 2.21 We seek to be involved wherever possible in development proposals for new employment sites, encouraging the use of available land adjacent to existing key public transport corridors as a logical way of providing sustainable transport solutions from day one.
- 2.22 We seek to influence local authorities in their planning proposals where they impact negatively on accessibility or interchange between modes of travel.
- 2.23 We seek to work with local authorities through the formation of Punctuality Improvement Partnerships to provide more punctual and reliable public transport which can then be promoted as a viable alternative to the car.

### **3. Next Steps**

- 3.1 This evidence is part of a wide ranging programme of evidence gathering being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Other evidence

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gathering sessions will be programmed into scheduled Overview and Scrutiny meetings.

### **4. Potential Impact on Objectives**

- 4.1 Reducing transport-related barriers to employment will assist in the Combined Authority in delivering its objective to maximise the area's opportunities and potential.

### **5. Finance and Other Resources**

- 5.1 There are no direct finance implications arising from this report.

### **6. Legal**

- 6.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

### **7. Other Considerations**

#### **7.1 Consultation/Community Engagement**

Relevant stakeholders will be consulted as part of the evidence gathering for the review. A Call for Evidence has been issued and widely circulated. Initial feedback from the Call for Evidence is set out in a separate report.

#### **7.2 Human Rights**

There are no human rights implications identified at this stage.

#### **7.3 Equalities and Diversity**

There are no specific equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

#### **7.4 Risk Management**

There are no specific risk management implications arising from this report.

#### **7.5 Crime and Disorder**

There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

#### **7.6 Environment and Sustainability**

There are no specific environment and sustainability implications arising from this report.

### **8. Background Documents**

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8.1 None

### **9. Links to the Local Transport Plans**

9.1 This review will contribute to the Transport Plan for the North East Combined Authority.

### **10. Appendices**

10.1 None

### **11. Contact Officers**

11.1 Robin F Knight, Commercial Director, Stagecoach North East

### **12. Sign off**

- Head of Paid Service ✓
- Monitoring Officer ✓
- Chief Finance Officer ✓

### **13. Glossary**

- Network Ticketing Limited (NTL) – is a partnership of the key providers of public transport services including Arriva, GoNorthEast, Stagecoach and Nexus
- Kickstart schemes – funding to deliver efficient “one off” short-term public investment for otherwise unviable bus projects

## North East Combined Authority

### Leadership Board

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**DATE:** 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015

**SUBJECT:** Thematic Lead Update Report

**REPORT OF:** Thematic Lead for Transport

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report outlines details of major transport developments and announcements since the last update report was provided to the Leadership Board on 14<sup>th</sup> July.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Leadership Board note the contents of this report.

# North East Combined Authority

## Leadership Board

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### 1. Transport developments and announcements since the previous report

1.1 Since the last full meeting of the Leadership Board, there have been a number of significant transport developments affecting the North East, and these are detailed below.

### 2. Transport for the North

2.1 The North East Combined Authority continues to play an active role in the Transport for the North (TfN) partnership, bringing together transport authorities from across the North to promote investment in key inter-city and inter-regional connections across the north of England.

2.2 TfN has continued to review its governance structures to ensure it is able to bring together the whole of the North. Membership currently consists of the five Combined Authorities and the Hull/Humber area, and representatives from all other areas of the North have now also been invited to appoint representatives to join the Partnership Board. The government has also announced the intention to put TfN on a statutory footing. Recruitment of a Chief Executive is underway, and the Partnership will shortly be advertising for an Independent Chair, to be confirmed by the end of 2015. TfN are also developing investment plans to meet the long-term ambitions set out in its “One North” strategy, and to ensure sufficient resources are available from the Comprehensive Spending Review.

2.3 Partly in response to criticisms of its decision to “pause” investment on the electrification of the Trans-Pennine Services, on 11<sup>th</sup> August, the Department for Transport produced a detailed blueprint showing how government investment in transport will help create the Northern Powerhouse.<sup>1</sup> Whilst the various road and rail investment schemes set out in the blueprint are to be welcomed, they are basically a re-statement of previous announcements. In order to close the investment gap between the North East and other parts of the country, there is a need for even more ambitious transformative schemes and we look for early progress on these. In particular, we will use our membership of TfN to make progress in improvements to the East Coast Main Line, Trans-Pennine services, and to the strategic road network – with clear timescales for when improvements will be secured.

#### Roads

2.4 TfN and Highways England have identified that investment in the A66 and/or A69 corridors could play an important part in resolving road congestion across the Pennines. A strategic study of the Northern Trans-Pennine corridor has therefore been commissioned which will explore the case for

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<sup>1</sup> Published at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-boost-for-northern-powerhouse>

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## Leadership Board

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dualling the A69 and/or A66, with the aim of creating a new strategic link across the Pennines in northern England. An inception meeting was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July which included a site visit to both roads to establish current conditions. Following the site visit, a feedback session was held which will inform the brief for the Northern Trans-Pennine corridor.

### Freight

- 2.5 TfN has made important progress in developing a freight strategy for the North, alongside its work on the road and rail network. A Northern Region Freight and Logistics Strategy has been commissioned, to report in 2016, and a private sector reference group, including representatives from this region, has been established to ensure that businesses involved in the movement of goods can inform the strategy. Specialists Mott MacDonald and MDS Transmodal have been appointed to help drive forward the development of the strategy, supporting TfN in determining the size, role and likely growth potential of the freight and logistics industry in the north. Once the baseline studies have been conducted, TfN aim to develop investment proposals and a policy agenda which will support the sustainable development of this important sector.
- 2.6 TfN has also agreed to extend its strategic work on the international connectivity of the North, identifying the global markets which the north will need to have access to in the years ahead, and the current connections for both passengers and goods. As part of our contribution to the capacity required to take forward TfN's work, officials in the North East will be taking the lead on this aspect of TfN's programme.

### **3. Transport Vision for the North East**

- 3.1 As Board Members will be aware, the Combined Authority is committed to producing a Transport Plan for the North East which will supersede the existing Local Transport Plans for Durham, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear.
- 3.2 Production of this Plan will be a two-stage process:
1. A Transport Manifesto setting out high level ambitions; followed by
  2. The Transport Plan – a comprehensive, statutory document
- 3.3 As part of the development of the Manifesto, and following a request at the Transport North East committee, a seminar was arranged for Elected Members to discuss the latest draft version of the Manifesto. This took place on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September in Newcastle Civic Centre. All Members of TNEC and NELB and their nominated Deputies were invited, along with officers from the Transport Group. Following this seminar, the indicative timescale for the Manifesto is as follows:

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- Incorporate changes from seminar into revised draft : Sept 2015
- Report revised draft to TNEC, obtain approval for public consultation : TNEC, 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 2015
- Public consultation : Dec 2015 – Jan 2016
- Incorporate public consultation results into further revised draft : late January 2016
- Report to TNEC on further revised draft including consultation feedback, obtain final sign-off : TNEC, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016

3.4 This in turn implies the following indicative timescale for the Transport Plan:

- February 2016 : produce final Transport Manifesto
- May 2016 : produce first draft Transport Plan for public consultation
- May to July 2016 : formal consultation on Transport Plan (avoiding election Purdah)
- August-September 2016: incorporate consultation feedback into Transport Plan
- October 2016 : produce final version of the Transport Plan for the North East

## 4. Local Growth Fund Transport Schemes

4.1 As the Leadership Board will be aware, in 2014 it was announced that 15 road and public transport schemes, plus a Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) package, due to commence delivery in 2015/16, had been granted funding from the Local Growth Deal. As part of the deal, a provisional funding allocation has also been made for five more projects starting in 2016/17.

4.2 As business cases for the various schemes are concluded, and subject to their undergoing satisfactory independent assessment, they will be brought forward to this Board or to the Transport North East Committee for final approval to release funding.

4.3 A separate agenda item covers the Lindisfarne roundabout transport scheme in South Tyneside.

## 5. Rail

### 5.1 Rail North

5.1.1 Bids for the Northern and TransPennine Express rail franchises are being evaluated jointly by the Department for Transport and Rail North. The successful bidders for both franchises are expected to be announced in late

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2015, with the new franchises starting on 1st April 2016

5.1.2 Meanwhile, Rail North has begun to populate its executive structure, with positions within the organisation being advertised in recent weeks. Officers appointed into roles working with Rail North will work in partnership with DfT officials to manage the new franchises once let. The Board of Rail North Ltd, on which the NECA is represented by the Thematic Lead for Transport, has oversight over these appointments.

### 5.2 North East Rail Management Arrangements

5.2.1 On behalf of the Combined Authority, Nexus officers have finalised a draft Collaboration Agreement to define the North East Rail Management Unit, which would include the Combined Authority as well as regional partners from the Tees Valley, Cumbria and North Yorkshire. A proposal is being developed for consideration by the Transport North East Committee (TNEC) at its next meeting.

### 5.3 Network Rail's Long Term Planning Process

5.3.1 As previously reported, Network Rail are conducting a series of planning exercises, called 'Route Studies', to determine where rail infrastructure investment is required and how this investment should be distributed. Nexus is participating in these studies on behalf of the Combined Authority.

5.3.2 Whilst the East Coast Main Line route study is in early development, progress on the North East England Route Study has indicated that capacity constraints exist in several locations in the Combined Authority and wider North East geography.

5.3.3 Nexus have asked Network Rail to outline the extent of these capacity constraints and identify potential solutions, which may be required to accommodate additional local services throughout the region.

## 6 Public Transport

### 6.1 Quality Contract Scheme

6.1.1 Following the submission of written evidence by all parties to the QCS Board, oral evidence sessions took place on two consecutive weeks in July 2015. Witnesses for the three main bus operators, the Combined Authority and Nexus appeared before the Board.

6.1.2 In addition to being cross-examined by Counsel on a wide range of issues, the witnesses were also asked questions directly by members of the QCS Board. Unite the Union also attended and were cross-examined.

# North East Combined Authority

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6.1.3 The next step is for all parties to provide closing submissions to QCS Board by 11 September 2015. The Board expects to publish its opinion on or before 31 October 2015.

### 6.2 Metro train fleet refurbishment

6.2.1 The £30m refurbishment of the Tyne and Wear Metro's train fleet has been successfully completed, five months ahead of schedule. DB Regio Tyne and Wear, the light rail operator which runs the Metro on behalf of Nexus, has delivered the work as part of the Metro fleet's 'three-quarter life' refurbishment project.

6.2.2 A total of 86 Metro carriages have been modernised over the last five years through the £389m Metro all change modernisation programme. Nexus, which owns and manages Metro, commissioned DB Regio to undertake the work in 2010 when the Metro modernisation funding was given the green light.

6.2.3 The Metro trains were stripped down to their frames and corroded bodywork was replaced, extending their service life by another ten years. They have been brought up to the Government's required standard on accessibility. Metro is the first train fleet in the UK to reach this standard.

6.2.4 New seating and lighting has been installed, along with a new carriage layout to afford more space for wheelchair users. The Metro trains have also got a vibrant new colour scheme, with a sleek metallic grey and black finish, incorporating the iconic bright yellow brand livery of the Tyne and Wear Metro.

### 6.3 Smart Travel

6.3.1 A Metro Pop 'Pay As You Go' (PAYG) pilot was launched with 250 users in July 2015. Feedback from customers has been very positive, and the pilot will be progressively expanded to more users over coming months before it is launched in full later in the year.

6.3.2 Nexus has launched Pop Shop ([www.popcard.org.uk](http://www.popcard.org.uk)), allowing anyone with a Pop card to buy and renew Metro season tickets online. Customers need to register their existing Pop card online and select the required product. New customers can also buy new Pop cards from the site, which can also be reached through [www.nexus.org.uk](http://www.nexus.org.uk). Metro season tickets are uploaded directly to the Pop card when the customer touches in at any Metro ticket validator, eliminating the need to go to a Metro ticket machine or Nexus Travel Shop.

# North East Combined Authority

## Leadership Board

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- 6.3.3 Pop Pay As You Go (PAYG) pilots have been extended on Go Ahead and Arriva bus services; Arriva is planning to further extend coverage on its services north of the Tyne. A PAYG pilot has been established by Stagecoach on bus services in Middlesbrough.

## 7. Sustainable transport

### 7.1 Cycling

- 7.1.1 The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of our popular suite of cycle maps have now been released, covering Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South-East Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland, with 10,000 copies produced for each district. These free maps provide comprehensive details of on- and off-road cycle routes and places of interest in each district.

### 7.2 Low-Carbon Vehicles

- 7.2.1 In December 2014 the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) announced three funding schemes aimed at encouraging the uptake of low emission vehicles;
- Go Ultra Low City Scheme
  - Low Emission Bus Scheme
  - Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Taxi Scheme

#### Go Ultra Low City Scheme

The NECA is currently developing a bid for the Go Ultra Low City Scheme with the primary aim of increasing the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) and achieving exemplar status across a local area. The deadline for submission of bids is 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015.

#### Low emission bus scheme

NECA have been investigating the possibility of submitting a bid for funding from the £30m low emission bus scheme. Unfortunately, the bid deadline is 31<sup>st</sup> October, at which time the NECA will not have received the opinion of the Quality Contract Scheme Board and will not therefore have made a firm decision whether or not to progress the QCS. We feel that it would be premature to progress a major funding bid at this time which is predicated on the QCS being in place. Furthermore, the bid requires match funding whose availability cannot be identified with clarity until the outcome of the Spending Review in November is known. For these reasons, Nexus are proposing not to submit an application at this time but instead to write to OLEV explaining these difficulties and seeking a postponement of the bidding deadline until

# North East Combined Authority

## Leadership Board

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there is greater certainty over availability of match funding and the regulatory environment that we are bidding within.

### Taxi Scheme

The NECA has been informed that the expression of interest submitted for an Office for Low Emission Vehicle: Ultra-Low Emission Taxi Scheme-funded feasibility study was unsuccessful. Guidance for the Ultra-Low Emission Taxi Scheme states that local authorities can still fund their own feasibility study to underpin a possible final bid to the Office for a slice of main Taxi Fund. The Regional Transport Team is working with Taxi Licencing and Environmental Health Departments across the NECA Region to investigate opportunities for funding a feasibility study, which will be determined by taxi vehicle type grant eligibility, interest from operators and availability of feasibility study funding and staff resources. Final bids to the Office's Taxi Scheme would need to be submitted by early March 2016.

## **8 Aviation**

- 8.1 On the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015, the Treasury published a discussion paper that explores options to support regional airports in England from the impacts of the devolution of Air Passenger Duty to Scotland and Wales. A consultation response was produced on behalf of NECA, with approval from Leaders / Elected Mayor, prior to the deadline of 8<sup>th</sup> September.

## **9. Digital Connectivity Update**

### **9.1 Introduction**

- 9.1.1 In the light of our Strategic Economic Plan's focus on the broader issue of "connectivity", this report also provides an update on activity across the Combined Authority's area in respect of our commitment to enhance digital connectivity.

### **9.2 Background**

- 9.2.1 North East councils have prioritised digital connectivity to ensure that both businesses and individuals can fully realise the opportunities that are available in an evolving and increasingly technology driven economy. The main focus of activity is:

- Supporting the development of digital skills and facilitating take-up
- Delivering hard infrastructure where it is needed
- Delivering superfast broadband

# North East Combined Authority

## Leadership Board

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- Supporting business needs and improving digital inclusion

9.2.2 The region has considerable strengths in this area, and in recent years has seen more new technology company start-ups than any area of the UK outside of London. The North East has emerged as one of the leading centres for digital games development and start-ups, with dynamic clusters that act as a magnet for entrepreneurs and students.

9.2.3 Business and residents have expectations for digital connectivity that are comparable to the most advanced cities in the world. It is vital that we are ambitious in our approaches and meet these expectations to ensure we are competitive now and in the future. Digital is an evolving agenda and we must strive to be at the forefront of this agenda for future economic success.

### 9.3 **Current Activity**

9.3.1 A Digital Leads group has been established – including representatives from the 7 Local Authorities, and Chaired by Bob Paton, Chief Executive of the LEP with considerable experience in the digital sector. The group meets monthly and actions will be based around agreed priority themes of:

- Achieving vision and future ambition
- Delivery of infrastructure
- Digital Skills and increasing take-up.

9.3.2 Initial focus of the group has been on increasing skills and business support, including:

- Aiming to establish Code Clubs and / or Maker Spaces in all primary schools
- Enabling businesses to exploit digital technologies, particularly where they are not doing so (working with the Growth Hub).

9.3.3 The group has also supported the development of devolution proposals for the North East in this area.

### 10. **Next Steps**

10.1 The North East Combined Authority will continue to work with funding bodies, transport operators and delivery partners to secure a modern, sustainable and efficient transport network. Work will continue on developing the Transport Plan for the North East.

### 11. **Potential Impact on Objectives**

# North East Combined Authority

## Leadership Board

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- 11.1 Successful delivery of the various transport and digital connectivity schemes and investment proposals outlined in this document will assist the Combined Authority in delivering its objective to maximise the area's opportunities and potential.

### **12. Finance and Other Resources**

- 12.1 The completion of Business Cases will identify any variations in costs and funding which will need to be managed within available resources and may require decisions to be made about compensating savings elsewhere within the programme. These programme management issues will be considered by TNEC, with recommendations made to NELEP and the Leadership Board for decision.

### **13. Legal**

- 13.1 NECA is under a duty to prepare a Local Transport Plan. The Transport Plan is required to develop policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within NECA's area and NECA must carry out its functions to implement these policies.

### **14. Other Considerations**

#### **14.1 Consultation/Community Engagement**

Many of the transport programmes outlined in this report have been the subject of consultation, at either a regional or national level.

#### **14.2 Human Rights**

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

#### **14.3 Equalities and Diversity**

# North East Combined Authority

## Leadership Board

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There are no specific equalities and diversity implications arising from this report.

### 14.4 Risk Management

There are no specific risk management implications arising from this report.

### 14.5 Crime and Disorder

There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

### 14.6 Environment and Sustainability

Delivery of the various rail, cycling and public transport measures listed in this report should assist in meeting our objectives for a more sustainable transport system and improved air quality.

## 15. Background Documents

None.

## 16. Links to Plans in the Policy Framework

This report has no direct link to plans in the policy framework.

## 17. Appendices

None.

# North East Combined Authority

## Leadership Board

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### 18. Contact Officers

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### 19. Sign off

Head of Paid Service ✓

Monitoring Officer ✓

Chief Finance Officer ✓

## North East Combined Authority

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015  
**Subject:** Devolution update  
**Report of:** Head of Paid Service

#### **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Scrutiny Committee with an update on progress to date and the content of the North East Combined Authority's submission to Government and also to consider governance systems and the role of overview and scrutiny under devolved arrangements.

#### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee notes the current position and comments on the future role of overview and scrutiny in devolved arrangements.

# North East Combined Authority

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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### **1 Background Information**

- 1.1 At the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015 members received stakeholder feedback from a series of meetings with local and regional stakeholders as well as MPs and House of Lords members on the initial proposals.
- 1.2 Additionally, the Scrutiny Committee was informed that the Leadership Board had written to Government on 17 July 2015 seeking to begin detailed negotiations on devolution of funding, powers and responsibilities to the Combined Authority and the Scrutiny Committee responded to this.
- 1.3 The report attached at Appendix A updates on progress to date and the on the content of the North East Combined Authority's submission to Government.

### **2 Devolution and governance**

- 2.1 The Devolution Bill<sup>1</sup> produces what is being called an 'enabling framework' for devolution. This will enable areas to put in place arrangements for governance which suit them and their needs.
- 2.2 Part of the planning process for devolution and the process of negotiation will involve non-executive councillors having an opportunity to review the development of policy; transparently monitor performance and improvement, and involve the public in their activities on behalf of decision-takers.
- 2.3 Good governance has a critical role to play in ensuring that devolution makes a real difference to people's lives. Governance arrangements will necessarily involve constructive challenge from strong and effective scrutiny to help to hone and refine plans and strategies, reflect priorities and ensure that what is happening on the ground reflects local people's needs for the area.
- 2.4 The publication attached at Appendix B from the Centre for Public Scrutiny helps to explore how good governance can be promoted and brought into practice.
- 2.5 The Chair of the NECA Scrutiny Committee has been invited to participate in a 'Devolution Roundtable', to be chaired by Lord Bob Kerslake, being held in

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<sup>1</sup> The Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill had its first reading in the House of Commons on 21 July 2015. The date for the second reading debate on the Bill is expected on Wednesday 14 October 2015.

# North East Combined Authority

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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London on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015. The Vice-Chair, Councillor John Eagle, has agreed to attend this event on behalf of the Chair and the Committee. The Roundtable discussion is part of the work being done by CfPS to develop scrutiny's role in new devolution arrangements. The Roundtable will include key individuals involved in devolution nationally and locally to discuss the opportunities and challenges of ensuring fundamental governance issues are highlighted. The Vice-Chair will be invited to feedback to a future meeting on the outcome of the discussions.

### **3 Next Steps**

- 3.1 The governance framework will be a framework in which it is expected that local discussions will result in local solutions about how different partners in governance will work together to bring accountability, transparency and involvement.
- 3.2 Devolution is a process, not an event and this will allow the Combined Authority to address why devolution, and more powers, makes sense for the local area and then holding to account the combined authority for delivering against that aim. This report encourages debate and comment on ensuring transparency and accountability in new devolved arrangements.
- 3.3 The Leadership Board will be carrying out further engagement activity and will be considering the viability and effectiveness of the governance arrangements including levels of accountability, transparency and involvement. Comments from scrutiny members will be fed into the Leadership Board's ongoing deliberations.

### **4 Potential Impact on Objectives**

- 4.1 The progress summarised in this report sits within a broad debate on devolution and economic growth and will inform the further development of devolution proposals for the North East that will accelerate the area's economic growth.

### **5 Finance and Other Resources**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Costs relating to the initial work to develop the devolution proposals have been met from reserves. The financial implications associated with any future devolution of powers will be assessed and reported to the Leadership Board as detailed negotiations with government are progressed.

### **6 Legal**

# North East Combined Authority

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The legal implications associated with any devolution of powers will be assessed as detailed negotiations with government are progressed.

### **7 Other Considerations**

#### **7.1 Consultation/Community Engagement**

Extensive stakeholder engagement has been carried out by the Combined Authority and this has previously been reported to members.

#### **7.2 Human Rights**

There are no specific issues arising directly from this report

#### **7.3 Equalities and Diversity**

There are no specific issues arising directly from this report

#### **7.4 Risk Management**

The risks associated with devolved powers and funding streams will be assessed as detailed negotiations with government are progressed.

#### **7.5 Crime and Disorder**

There are no specific issues arising directly from this report.

#### **7.6 Environment and Sustainability**

There are no specific issues arising directly from this report.

### **8 Background Documents**

Report to NECA Leadership Board – ‘Developing a Devolution Prospectus for the North East Combined Authority’ – 20 January 2015

### **9 Links to plans and policy framework**

This report will support delivery of each of the Combined Authority themes and “More and Better Jobs”, A Strategic Economic Plan for the North East.

### **10 Appendices**

10.1 Appendix A Leadership Board report Devolution Update 15 September 2015

Appendix B Devo Why? Devo How? Questions about governance under English devolution

# North East Combined Authority

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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### 11 Contact Officers

11.1 Karen Brown, Scrutiny Officer, 0191 561 1004

### 12 Sign off

- Head of Paid Service ✓
- Monitoring Officer ✓
- Chief Finance Officer ✓

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**North East Combined Authority**

**North East Leadership Board (NELB)**

**DATE:** 15 September 2015

**SUBJECT:** Devolution Update

**REPORT OF:** Interim Head of Paid Service

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At the July meeting of the North East Combined Authority Leadership Board, the Chair provided an update on positive discussions held with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Greg Clark MP on the Combined Authority's outline devolution proposals. The Leadership Board wrote to Government on 17 July 2015 seeking to begin detailed negotiations on devolution of funding, powers and responsibilities to the Combined Authority, following which Government set a deadline of 4 September for all areas to put forward their proposals as part of the Spending Review.

This report updates on progress to date and the content of the North East Combined Authority's submission to Government.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Leadership Board note the contents of the report.

# North East Combined Authority

## North East Leadership Board (NELB)

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REPORT FOR INFORMATION

### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the July meeting of the North East Combined Authority Leadership Board, the Chair provided an update on positive discussions held with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Greg Clark MP on the Combined Authority's outline devolution proposals.
- 1.2 The Leadership Board wrote to Government on 17 July 2015 seeking to begin detailed negotiations on devolution of funding, powers and responsibilities to the Combined Authority, following which Government set a deadline of 4 September for all areas to put forward their proposals as part of the Spending Review.
- 1.3 This report updates on progress to date and the content of the North East Combined Authority's submission to Government.

### 2 Background information

- 2.1 In January 2015 the North East Combined Authority Leadership Board agreed a set of outline proposals as the basis for the Combined Authority to engage with government ministers and other stakeholders, in securing greater devolution of funding, powers and responsibilities.
- 2.2 A series of meetings with local and regional stakeholders as well as MPs and House of Lords members took place in March 2015 to test the initial proposals. Overall the feedback demonstrated strong support among a wide range of stakeholders from communities, businesses and partners for the principle of devolution to the North East.
- 2.3 On 17 July 2015 the Leaders and Elected Mayor wrote to Government seeking detailed discussions on a potential devolution deal for the area in parallel to consideration of appropriate models of governance, including an elected mayor. On 21 July the Chancellor launched Spending Review 2015 and set a deadline of 4 September for all areas to put forward their proposals as part of this process.

### 3 Statement of Devolution Intent

- 3.1 Leaders and the Elected Mayor have focused recent activity on developing a Statement of Intent which demonstrates the ambition for the North East to be at the forefront of an ambitious programme of real devolution of powers, funding and responsibilities from Whitehall to Combined Authorities. The Statement of Intent builds on the ambitions set out in 'More and Better Jobs' the North East's Strategic Economic Plan and draws on the responses to the

# North East Combined Authority

## North East Leadership Board (NELB)

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REPORT FOR INFORMATION

consultation conducted prior to the election, which demonstrated wide public and business support.

3.2 The Statement of Devolution Intent is attached at Appendix 1 and is summarised below:

- **Human capital development.** Transforming aspiration and opportunity through skills, employment and early intervention to address economic dislocation.
- **Long-term investment.** To transform our economy and build more homes, by taking local responsibility for infrastructure and regeneration, with flexible long-term funding to meet local priorities.
- **Regional export lead for the UK.** Driving export led growth, by investing in the infrastructure for global trading success and innovation, to become the export lead for the UK.
- **Fiscal devolution.** To address under-funding by securing new sources of revenue and investment.
- **Better connectivity and infrastructure.** Creating a modern, integrated local transport system connected across the region, nationally and internationally.
- **Public service reform.** To take local responsibility for decent, financially sustainable public services, with an emphasis on investing to address long-standing inequalities and intervening early to reduce social and financial costs.
- **Regulatory devolution to local communities.** To take local responsibility with new powers for community-empowerment, in areas such as public health and re-invigorating neighbourhoods.
- **Rural growth and stewardship.** Taking local responsibility for programmes to support rural growth and the stewardship of our rural areas.

3.3 The Statement of Intent was submitted to Government by the 4 September deadline for Spending Review 2015.

## 4 Next Steps

4.1 The submission of the Statement of Intent to Government is very much a starting point in the process and paves the way for discussions with Ministers on the detail behind the proposals.

4.2 Further engagement of stakeholders on an ongoing basis was a key theme emerging from the consultation exercise in March and arrangements are now being made to seek stakeholder views on the key issues moving forwards.

## 5 Potential impact on objectives

- 5.1 The Statement of Devolution Intent attached to this report sets out a high-level ambition for the north east to be at the forefront of a substantial programme of real devolution of from Whitehall to Combined Authorities. It provides a framework to start discussions with Government on devolution to the North East of the necessary powers, funding and responsibilities that are required to accelerate the area's economic growth.

### **6. Finance and other resources**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Costs relating to the initial work to develop the devolution proposals will be met from reserves. The financial implications associated with any future devolution of powers will be assessed and reported to the Leadership Board as detailed negotiations with government are progressed.

### **7 Legal**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The legal implications associated with any future devolution of powers will be assessed and reported to the Leadership Board as detailed negotiations with government are progressed.

### **8 Other considerations**

#### **8.1 Consultation/community engagement**

A series of meetings with local and regional stakeholders as well as MPs and House of Lords members took place in March 2015 to test the outline devolution proposals. Overall the feedback demonstrated strong support among a wide range of stakeholders from communities, businesses and partners for the principle of devolution to the North East.

Arrangements are now being made to ensure stakeholders further views are sought on the key issues arising from the proposals moving forwards.

#### **8.2 Human rights**

There are no specific issues arising directly from this report.

#### **8.3 Equalities and diversity**

There are no specific issues arising directly from this report.

# North East Combined Authority

## North East Leadership Board (NELB)

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REPORT FOR INFORMATION

### 8.4 Risk management

The risks associated with devolved powers and funding streams will be assessed and reported to the Leadership Board as detailed negotiations with government are progressed.

### 8.5 Crime and disorder

There are no specific issues arising directly from this report.

### 8.6 Environment and sustainability

There are no specific issues arising directly from this report.

## 9 Background documents

### 9.1 Report to NECA Leadership Board – ‘Developing a Devolution Prospectus for the North East Combined Authority’ – 20 January 2015

Report to NECA Leadership Board – ‘Developing a Devolution Prospectus for the North East Combined Authority – update on stakeholder engagement – 16 June 2015

## 10 Links to plans and policy framework

### 10.1 This report will support delivery of each of the Combined Authority themes and “More and Better Jobs”, A Strategic Economic Plan for the North East.

## 11 Appendices

### 11.1 Appendix 1 – Statement of Devolution Intent

## 13 Contact Officers

### 13.1 Caroline Winter, Policy Manager, 7 North East Local Authorities caroline.winter@newcastle.gov.uk (0191) 2115058

## 14 Sign off

- Head of Paid Service

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# North East Combined Authority

## North East Leadership Board (NELB)

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REPORT FOR INFORMATION

- Monitoring Officer ✓
- Section 151 Officer ✓

## North East Combined Authority – Our Statement of Devolution Intent

With the Government's commitment to the Northern Powerhouse and its wider devolution agenda, the North East Combined Authority (NECA) recognises that there is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to achieve a real devolution deal for the people of the North East. We are determined to seize that opportunity as an ambitious region with strong public support for a significant shift of power and responsibility from Whitehall to the North East. Our proposals are based on the principle of subsidiarity, with devolution from Whitehall, accompanied by a strengthening of local and community leadership.

Our proposals are not simply a product of our work over the last few weeks, but are embedded within the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) established by our Local Enterprise Partnership and have been the subject of significant consultation and public debate. In our view, they are absolutely necessary to meet our ambitions in the SEP. We set out below a brief summary of our vision and the outline of a devolution deal that we would like to discuss with Government.

### Our ambition - North East International

We believe that any substantial devolution deal should be underpinned by an ambitious vision for the social and economic future of the North East and with certainty of fairer long-term funding to enable the rebalancing of the economy. And we have a very clear view about what this should be.

What differentiates the North East is our international focus. At the northern edge of England, we face more out than in. This is reflected both in our popular culture and in the international standing of our cultural institutions and landmarks.

We start with a substantial trade surplus and are the only region in England with a *manufacturing* trade surplus. We want to build on this existing strength, and on our physical, social and historical assets, to drive export led growth for our region and the UK. So we are developing a growth strategy that will focus on how to develop further our competitive strengths in sectors such as automotive and advanced manufacturing, financial services, life sciences, offshore engineering and the creative industries.

Our region, with its population of 2m and GVA of £34bn, has enjoyed faster growth than most other regions in the UK in recent years. But our economy is still too small and there are too few private sector jobs. The way in which we will boost our GVA and create new opportunities for our people is through a laser-like focus on what will grow trade, innovation and investment in the North East.

But this growth strategy needs to be supported by a devolution deal that enables this vision to be realised.

### The Enablers - Our ideas for a devolution plan for the North East

**1. Human capital development** – The North East has a culture of making and trading, and we are renowned for our resilience and hard work, reflected, for example, in the

Nissan car plant, which is now the most productive in Europe. But too many of our residents have been scarred by the experience of economic dislocation and this in turn has helped create a culture of low expectations, low skill levels and educational underperformance. Skill shortages are a major constraint for our growth prospects. To achieve our economic ambition we need a human capital development strategy that raises ambition, aspiration and attainment so that the people of the North East can be both the agents and beneficiaries of export led growth. We are developing the most ambitious and innovative approach to human capital development in the UK. This will transform aspiration and opportunity through linking early years intervention, and family support, with targeted community employment initiatives, education and skills provision.

**2. Long term investment** – Delivering on our ambitious plans requires the certainty of a long term programme of investment that can create an environment in which there is market confidence about the stability of investment opportunities in the region. So we want to establish a North East International Investment Fund that would invest in projects that can help us achieve our economic ambition. This would be a long-term fund, with a minimum commitment from Government, to lever in further public and private resources; supporting a project pipeline developed according to high standards of investment appraisal and accountability. This investment will help to meet the SEP target for an additional 100,000 jobs. This would replace short-term bidding for project-based funding. We propose to make decisions on European regional funding here in the region. A recyclable housing investment fund will support our ambitious plans for 6,000 new homes per year.

**3. Regional export lead for the UK** – As part of our objective to drive export led growth, we want the North East to be recognised as the UK's regional export lead. Based on our analysis of the main growth sectors in global trade, we want to target innovation and export support to our region's export champions. We want to be able to commission UKTI to work in partnership with the Combined Authority and LEP to more effectively promote the region and target selected investors. We believe that the strength of our plans will underpin a significant uplift in real estate values over a ten year period. We intend to share our plans with a core group of investors and to provide a range of investable opportunities, which will enable those investors to co-invest alongside local authorities and benefit from rising property values. With the support of Government, we will produce plans for a programme of nationally and internationally significant business, cultural and sporting events in the North East. Possible examples include MIPIM UK, Technology, Entertainment and Design Events and 'a Year of Digital Art'.

**4. Fiscal devolution to support North East international and to remove the risk of competitive disadvantage with Scotland** – To support our export focus we need greater fiscal freedom, to ensure that our businesses do not face higher costs than Scottish businesses and to enable investment funded from sharing the proceeds of additional growth. We would want to work with Government to ensure the North East is not disadvantaged in relation to both fiscal freedoms granted to the Scottish Government and also the relative underfunding faced by the North East. We are also keen to explore opportunities for strengthening economic cooperation with Scotland and the North East on areas of common interest through an Economic Cooperation

Programme covering, Economic Development and Business, Tourism and Culture, Education, Transport and Public Services.

**5. Better connectivity and infrastructure integration** – The North East Combined Authority is working towards an integrated and upgraded transport system across the region, with devolved responsibility for all aspects of capital and revenue funding. This would be accompanied by additional investment to deliver transport improvements. The new authority should have the power to regulate buses and commission Highways England directly to carry out road improvements. We plan to develop a long-term strategy for developing our ports as key trade assets and to establish new international routes from Newcastle International Airport.

**6. Public Service Reform** – Our public services are a major asset for the North East, but they face growing spending and demand pressures. Reform of public services is a big local priority, and our councils have been amongst the leading innovators in the UK. To underpin this, we need transitional support to enable our services to adjust and to put greater emphasis on prevention. There is much more we could do collaboratively, especially if we had longer-term, place-based settlements, alongside additional public service powers, and a stronger voice in commissioning national agencies (e.g. for arts, culture and tourism). Our collective reform priority is to focus on the drivers of demand - citizens, communities and their interactions with public services. We want to strengthen resilience and responsibility in order to reduce dependency. We propose to establish a Health and Social Care Commission, jointly with Government.

**7. Regulatory devolution to Councils and local communities** - The North East is a large and diverse region, with very distinct places and communities, which have their own identities, assets and challenges. We don't see devolution as just being about drawing down powers and responsibilities from central Government to the North East Combined Authority. We also want to devolve to our local communities. This is particularly important in relation to regulation, but it also has a bearing on our approach to public service reform, which is about bottom-up community empowerment and resilience building as much as it is about system reconfiguration.

**8. Rural growth and stewardship** – The North East Combined Authority is unique in its coverage of diverse urban and rural communities. We propose to take full responsibility for devolved programmes to support rural growth and the stewardship of our rural areas.

We believe our propositions represent radical proposals for devolution of substantial funding, powers and responsibilities, which will ensure the North East is able to take responsibility for its own future. We are particularly committed to addressing the long-standing barriers to work and to raising skills and aspirations in the region. For us, devolution has to be about the people of the North East, the benefits they can see within their communities and in ensuring there are opportunities for all to share in the area's increased prosperity.

Delivering substantial responsibilities of this nature will require an outcome in the Spending Review that delivers the necessary levels of public investment committed over a long period. We therefore propose to engage with Government on the detail of

our proposals as part of the Spending Review. Our aim should be to deliver a long-term devolved budget for the North East, with equivalent status to budget deals between HM Treasury and individual Government departments.

In parallel to this, we will consider with Government the most appropriate governance structures, including an elected mayor, to oversee new powers drawn down from central Government. We will approach this process of negotiation with an open mind about where this takes us, and expect the same open-mindedness from Government.

Finally, we are clear that devolution does not sit in isolation from the wider impact of cuts to public services, and to local government in particular. North East councils have demonstrated our commitment to growth and reform, but this can only continue if we remain financially viable, with the capacity to deliver. This requires a fairer funding settlement for the North East, coupled with a commitment to meaningful devolution.

We look forward to discussing our proposals with Government in more detail and to start the process of negotiating a real devolution deal fit for our region.

Councillor Simon Henig  
Leader, Durham County Council



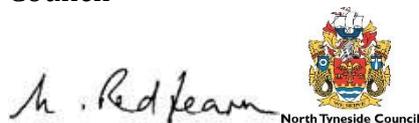
Councillor Mick Henry  
Leader, Gateshead Council



Councillor Nick Forbes  
Leader, Newcastle City Council



Mayor Norma Redfearn  
North Tyneside Council  
Council



Councillor Grant Davey  
Leader, Northumberland County



Councillor Iain Malcolm  
Leader, South Tyneside Council



Councillor Paul Watson  
Leader, Sunderland City Council



# Devo Why? Devo How?

Questions (and some answers) about  
governance under English devolution



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## Author

Ed Hammond, Head of Programmes (Local Accountability)

## Acknowledgments

Our thanks to Sarah Allen at Involve who provided useful comments on a draft of this paper.

## About CfPS

The Centre for Public Scrutiny is a charity devoted to good governance and good decision-making.

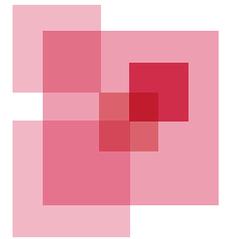
Our work is about exploring how good governance can be better understood, promoted and brought about in practice. We work with politicians, with academics and other thinkers at national level, with local politicians and those who support their work, and to those who provide services on the ground to work out how decisions can be made in a way that is more accountable, more transparent and which meaningfully involves a wide range of people – in particular, the public.

**Find out more about our work on governance and devolution at [www.cfps.org.uk/devolution](http://www.cfps.org.uk/devolution)**



# Foreword: Lord Bob Kerlake, Chair of the Centre for Public Scrutiny

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Clear and effective governance and scrutiny must be a critical element of the devolution dialogue in England from the beginning.

New devolution arrangements must not be responsible for extending the divide between the governed and the governing. English devolution has huge potential to pass on proper power to those best placed to understand what's needed to improve the lives of their residents and the places where they live. It's also critical to putting local councils in a position to manage the financial pressures they are currently under.

Greater responsibility requires greater scrutiny. Devolution is a positive opportunity to build governance arrangements which are dynamic, flexible and really add value, rather than perpetuate old assumptions about those arrangements representing a brake on innovation.

From the beginning, there must be a clear role for elected members outside of the privileged few doing the deal. Devolution is a process, not an event. By adopting the principles of accountability, transparency and involvement from the off, local arrangements will fit an acceptable governance framework.

I'm delighted to be a part of CfPS's campaign to ensure that these vital issues take centre stage over the coming months. I look forward to seeing more leaders and senior decision-makers commit to the principles of accountability, transparency and involvement as they go about designing and delivering services together.

**Bob Kerlake**  
September 2015

# Introduction

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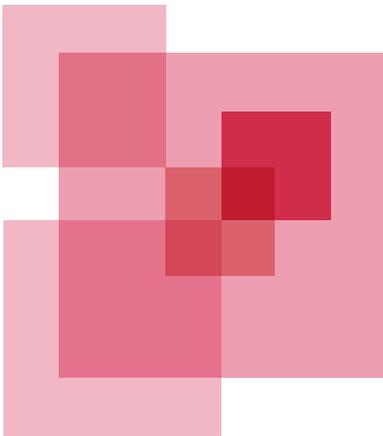
Devolution presents a huge opportunity to local areas. A vista of new powers is opening up – powers over local health services, over transport planning, over skills and economic development – and the funding to back them up.

At least, that is the hype.

For many, the subject provokes a combination of enthusiasm and trepidation. This is what local government has been asking for, local powers will allow the joining up of public services which is essential if we are to improve outcomes and create a system which is affordable

The breakneck speed of government policy change and implementation has caught many off guard and now fearing being left behind. There has been a burst of activity – deals for combined authorities in the North are developing, additional powers and responsibilities have been planned for Manchester and feverish preparation was carried out over August 2015 to submit proposals to meet the Chancellor's spending review deadlines. This all adds to the sense that big rewards are there for the taking. But there is also a sense that, in some areas, nobody is quite sure how to get hold of them.

There has been widespread public debate and discussion – including referendums – around devolution, and the development of devolved powers, in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This dialogue and openness has not been repeated in England. We think that this needs to change.



# Background

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More and more councils have been considering joining together to form **combined authorities**. Combined authorities were provided for in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009; the first to be formed was Greater Manchester, but others have joined them. CAs do not automatically secure devolved powers from Government, but they will usually take on the existing local roles and functions of Integrated Transport Authorities and Economic Prosperity Boards.

Meanwhile, **city deals**, or **devo deals**, are negotiations struck with Government about powers and functions currently controlled by central Government which will be devolved to local level. They generally follow on from approval of combined authority status, although such deals and negotiations do seem to be happening concurrently now.

A fundamental part of all the discussions have been the prospects for further fiscal devolution – giving local authorities, as they come together to form combined authorities, more power to raise and spend funds as they see fit. This presents a highly attractive opportunity for local government to assert its independence.

Meaningful fiscal devolution is central to the vision of many for a settlement which will see local areas take responsibility for designing, financing and delivering services locally.

Without it, there is an argument that devolution is merely decentralisation, a farming-out of certain central Government functions to local areas while Whitehall stays firmly in control of the purse-strings.

Without it, the ability of councils to truly innovate, and to create an affordable system, is severely hampered.

This has meant that, nationally, conversation has skipped ahead quickly to the “how” of devolution. How will deals be developed and improved upon? How will decisions be made?

These are important questions that focus on governance – accountability, transparency and involvement.

They are not, however, questions which address the fundamental question at the heart of the devolution debate – why? Why devolve? What improvements will result from devolution, and is devolution the only way to secure those improvements?

This paper will begin to set out some of the key governance issues which councils (and other public sector organisations) will have to address around those two questions - the-why and the how.

# Why?

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As set out by many commentators, “the case for devolution” is heavy on assumptions. There are some benefits which will cut across most areas of England and about which the LGA, as the membership body for local authorities in England, is fairly confident. These are that devolution can deliver:

- More sustainable public finances (through more freedom to innovative, and to deliver proposals around service integration and transformation which will save money);
- A stronger economy, and long term prosperity (through a more localised approach to dealing with skills and employment issues);
- A fairer settlement for England and the rest of the UK (balancing the need for devolution in England against further devolution in Scotland and Wales, in particular)<sup>1</sup>.

1. “Devo Next: English Devolution – local solutions for a successful nation – an offer of partnership with Government” (LGA, 2015)

All of this may be true. However, the precise local benefits, and reasons, for securing combined authority status, and then a city deal, can be difficult to identify. Those reasons and benefits are likely to be different for every area – this stands to reason, otherwise there would be little point in pursuing devolution as a policy goal in the first place. But this means that local discussion and determination is vitally important.

In our paper, “Growth through good governance” (2014) we highlighted the risk of failing to clearly set strong, strategic objectives. Clarity of purpose is critical – a sense of what the question is that devolution is answering. Before the structures of a combined authority or a “devo deal” are even being discussed, there needs to be a clear sense of what its constituent authorities are trying to achieve.

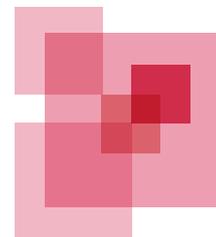
This demands robust scrutiny and strong governance to work. It requires that:

- The development of the main strategies which define how councils and their partners will work together be delivered transparently;
- Those strategies must be based on a strong evidence base, aimed at clarifying what outcomes the authorities are aiming to achieve by working together as a combined authority, and whether other partnership models (alongside, or instead of) might help to achieve those ends;
- This evidence base be developed through a focus on residents’ needs, and a mature approach to risk and resilience;
- Issues around institutional and public ownership of these plans be clear at the outset<sup>2</sup>.

2. “Growth through good governance” (CfPS, 2014), pp8-9

**Scrutiny committees of the authorities aspiring to form part of the combined authority must be able to look at those authorities’ plans, to ensure that they satisfy these critical criteria, before detailed negotiations with Government begin.** We think that ideally, public engagement at the outset can help those leading the negotiations to understand what a “good” settlement for local people might look like.

In reality, the pressure of timescales may make widespread public engagement and dialogue difficult, and under these circumstances it may be that this scrutiny can be led by the overview and scrutiny committees of combined authorities themselves, if those structures have been established in advance of a deal being done with Government.



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Whatever happens, there needs to be some independently led, reflective dialogue about devolution, its aims, objectives, and outcomes – even if this is limited to the general themes and principles.

This is about opening up the process by which areas first come together to ascertain whether pursuit of a devolution deal, is right for them. It is about democracy, bringing other voices into the debate, other than the “local elite” of senior officers and Leaders, and other privileged partners.

Councillors can help to bring more insight about what local people want and need. In their community leadership role, they can work to engage people who might be less likely to take part in a formal consultation process.

Non-executive members can help, through their representative role, frame this debate, weigh up different priorities, and ascertain what some realistic outcomes might be. It will also increase their understanding of what is happening and help gain their ownership and buy-in.

This is not just about undertaking an academic exercise, or adding a sprinkling of bureaucracy for the sake of things. It satisfies three important requirements:

- Opening out the planning process around combined authorities and devolution deals, in the interests of local democracy<sup>3</sup>;
- Making the planning process itself more robust. Planning for major service change is more effective if others – particularly non-executive councillors – are actively involved<sup>4</sup>.
- Creating the right culture which has accountability, transparency and involvement as the core operating principles from the off and recognises the positive value of scrutiny.

3. See blogs at:

[http://www.cfps.org.uk/?location\\_id=394&item=461](http://www.cfps.org.uk/?location_id=394&item=461), and <http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/devolution-lets-less-secrecy-town-9532772>

4. “The change game” (CfPS, 2015),

[http://www.cfps.org.uk/domains/cfps.org.uk/local/media/downloads/CfPS\\_Change\\_Game\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.cfps.org.uk/domains/cfps.org.uk/local/media/downloads/CfPS_Change_Game_WEB.pdf)

# How?

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The “how” of devolution is the big governance challenge. There are probably two particular areas of focus – the transition (the business of doing the deal itself) and then design and delivery of joined-up strategies, delivery plans and the redesign of services under the new arrangements.

## Transition and negotiation

The deal-making process is currently almost entirely secret. Details have been released only when agreements have been reached, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. A couple of announcements were made to coincide with the Budget in June 2015<sup>5</sup>; more are expected alongside the Spending Review in autumn 2015.

What we do not know is the process that has led to these announcements. Some evidence exists which gives an imperfect insight<sup>6</sup>. The Devolution Bill produces what is being called an “enabling framework” for devolution which will clarify some issues, but the detail will still be thrashed out in private between a handful of privileged individuals. This bilateral negotiation (rather than a national settlement for the whole of England) means that the process of transition, and of delivery under devolved arrangements, will be asymmetric – that is, it will look very different from place to place<sup>7</sup>. Devolution will therefore be dynamic, flexible and – critically – entirely bespoke.

This is excellent for ensuring that areas are more likely to be able to put in place arrangements which suit them and their needs. But the asymmetry involved also provides an additional impetus for transparency. Local people – anyone, indeed, not involved in the negotiations – need to understand what devolution priorities are being arrived at and agreed on. Increased public exposure in this process will lead to a more informed local debate. At the very least, the broad shape and principles of a bid for more devolved powers should be opened up to the public eye.

As we have set out above, part of the planning process for devolution, and the process of negotiation, must involve non-executive councillors (and others, as appropriate) having an opportunity to review and test the plans which the area takes to Government.

## Design and delivery

In some quarters, the devolution debate has started and ended with the question – “how will we deliver on the ground?”. It’s an important issue to resolve, but not until the issues we have already discussed have been agreed upon.

Design and delivery are fundamental to making sure that the outcomes that the combined authority and its partners expect and plan for actually happen. Strong governance will help here.

We explored in our publication “The change game” how redesigns of public services need to be carried out in ways that involves local people and increases understanding of their needs, and that they be overseen by independent-minded non-executives. This is certainly the case for existing organisations undergoing transformation, but it is especially pertinent for brand new organisations and partnerships such as combined authorities. Here, there is a real opportunity to design in good governance from the ground up. It presents a vital chance to integrate the principles of accountability, transparency and involvement into everything the combined authority does. If this happens, good governance itself can help to bring about the outcomes that the combined authority’s leadership want to achieve<sup>8</sup>.

5. For example, in respect of Greater Manchester – <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-33448965>”.

6. For example, “A new devolution baseline: a planning tool for councils” (LGA, 2015), <http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/6917361/Devolution+Deals/877c953d-5f89-4c09-b92a-256bf9aab8a2>

7. “Devolution: a road map” (LGiU, 2015); see also “Asymmetries in UK devolution: the logical consequences of bilateral negotiations” (Centre for Constitutional Change, blogpost, 2015)

8. See “Growth through good governance” (CfPS, 2014)

## Growing devolution, growing governance

The deals now being done with different areas of England will not be preserved forever in aspic. They will grow and evolve over time. Even now, the deal previously done between Government and Manchester is developing, to incorporate more services and responsibilities.

We can assume that aspects of the devolution deals for all areas will also grow and evolve. Devolution, after all, is a process, not an event. Leaders will be thinking flexibility about different opportunities – not least the prospect for further fiscal devolution, but also changing demographics, the development of new technologies and changing organisational, and area, priorities.

Alongside fiscal devolution (which many in local government hope, rather than expect, to arrive – but whose need is only going to become more pressing with time) will come the freedom for combined authorities to design more innovative approach to service delivery, and achieve outcomes for local people, in radically different ways. The prospect of the scale and nature of devolution which would allow this to happen country-wide is not imminent, but it is something that we can perhaps hope for and expect. It presents a vital opportunity for the local government sector to take control of a wider range of services, on behalf of and for the benefit of local people. But the way in which this happens will look different in different parts of the country, as we have already mentioned.

How, therefore, do we design governance systems which will be appropriate – not only for what we have now, but for the work that combined authority areas will be doing in future? Those priorities – the “why” of devolution – may shift and change over time. The structures of delivery, the expectations of local people, the nature of public finances – all are also likely to change. We have to put in place governance frameworks that have the flexibility to change accordingly.

Furthermore, how do we design into those systems a way to evaluate and hold to account how they are performing, and what the outcomes are, as a means of informing councils’ future plans for requests for further powers?

We feel that whatever governance arrangements are adopted, they need to satisfy several requirements:

- **Accountability** – Decision-makers must clearly take responsibility, and engage with those seeking to hold them to account (non-executives, the public, and others); decision-makers also need to have the confidence that systems are in place that allow them to benefit from the insight that those holding them to account (especially the public) can provide.
- **Transparency** – It must be clear (to professionals, elected councillors and the public) who is making decisions, on what, when, why and how. Transparency is key to effective accountability (although the two or not the same thing<sup>9</sup>);
- **Involvement** – A sense of being informed by the views and concerns of the public. A commitment to public involvement should be seen as central to good governance.

All these principles require a central role for non-executives. Scrutiny councillors must be seen as central to any arrangements – they bring the credibility that comes through direct election, and the insight that their engagement with their constituents brings to the debate;

9. “Your right to know” (CfPS, 2013)

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## National framework, local determination

It is critical that these issues be resolved by meaningful discussion at local level, rather than national prescription. However, experience suggests that this is easier said than done. There is generally a tendency to underthink governance – to put in place structural measures which answer the questions of political representative and managing the dynamics associated. They can often provide the illusion of accountability and transparency, but fail to deliver on either.

We are in favour of approaches which see combined authority areas being given the initial push to have that meaningful discussion, but with the product of that discussion, and the approach agreed as a result, being entire down to the area to resolve. By this we mean that:

- There has to be a conversation amongst a range of local people and organisations about what good governance and accountability will look and feel like;
- Everyone involved should agree on some measures to put this into practice;
- These measures should be set down in writing in a way that is understandable, and shouldn't be able to be changed or ignored unilaterally.

What this probably means is that Government needs to provide a light-touch framework within which that discussion can happen, to protect against the risk of an imbalance of power between executive decision-makers and non-executives (and those outside the system entirely), leading to measures being adopted which reflect the convenience of influential people rather than the wider good of the whole area.

Getting the balance right between no direction at all, and too much, is a challenge. But we think that we have developed a number of approaches that Government could adopt that could help. Legislation would provide for the building blocks of these arrangements, but would crucially leave the detail to local areas to decide upon.

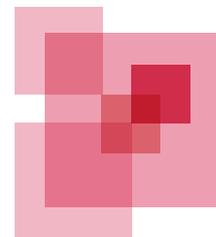
- **Local accountability systems statements.** As a deliberate response to the increased decentralisation of public services, and the need to assure value for public money<sup>10</sup>, the last Government started to produce “accountability systems statements” – documents setting out how Government Departments’ Accounting Officers will account for the money voted to it by Parliament. The statements highlight the differing levers and systems (including local democracy) which act together to secure effective accountability<sup>11</sup>.

It seems logical to spread this national scheme to local areas. The national accountability systems statements will themselves provide a good start. Such statements could involve not only combined authorities, but other tiers of government, and other partners delivering local services.

- **Local governance frameworks.** A local governance framework would provide a slightly more prescriptive means of doing roughly the same thing. We consider that a framework should contain statements on public involvement, on policy development and on performance (how policy would be developed by a combined authority, how performance would be monitored, and how non-executives could be involved in these processes), on partnership working, and on the structures and resources to support these systems and arrangements. Again, the detail would be left to local areas to decide.

10. “Accountability: adapting to decentralisation” (DCLG, 2011), [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6263/1994187.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6263/1994187.pdf)

11. Reflecting some of the findings from our own research, “Accountability Works” (CfPS, 2010)



12. "Devolution in England: a new approach" (Federal Trust, 2014), [http://fedtrust.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Devolution\\_in\\_England.pdf](http://fedtrust.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Devolution_in_England.pdf)

- **Local public engagement, discussion and dialogue.** A wide variety of options exist – polling, citizens’ juries, focus groups, and even the establishing of local constitutional conventions or other forums for discussion and debate<sup>12</sup>. What such deliberative measures have in common is that they would see local people being able to talk about how they would want and need to influence decision-making when new, sub-regional arrangements are established. They would also discuss the practical issues of the devolution deal itself – lending legitimacy to that deal by having its negotiation informed by a wider group of stakeholders.

A common theme for all of these approaches is the involvement of a wider range of people in debate and discussion that might otherwise have been the case. As we have suggested, some additional protections would need to be built in, to ensure that this happens. We think that it makes sense that what governance arrangements exist are “owned” by non-executives, so that they will be able to have a veto over how governance will work, and will hold to account decision-makers for their delivery against whatever has been agreed.

### **What Scrutiny arrangements might work best?**

The point of our approach is that it would be entirely down to local areas to decide on approaches to governance that work best for them. Different powers and functions will be devolved, at different speeds, to different areas. A one size fits all approach is therefore particularly inappropriate.

In “Growth through good governance” we posited a range of different governance models which could be used for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), with a focus on how those bodies could be held to account. We think that a similar spectrum of choices exist for combined authorities. Ranging from powerful local Public Accounts Committees to more traditional scrutiny committees, discussions between authorities and their partners can design a niche for effective, strong accountability exerted by non-executive members.

Such “overview and scrutiny-led” structures will be the core of sub-regional accountability but not its totality. Other governance arrangements will need to play their part. Audit committees, open access to official information produced and used by the authority, and concrete plans for meaningful public involvement will all have to play their part. The combined authorities’ leadership will need to demonstrate their own clear commitment to making these systems work.

The OSC will however play an important role in assuring the viability and effectiveness of these arrangements, and will need to be supported and resourced accordingly.

How scrutiny is undertaken also needs further examination. As public expectations change, the way that councillors undertake their work needs to adapt for it to continue to be relevant, responsive and of public value.

## Our next steps

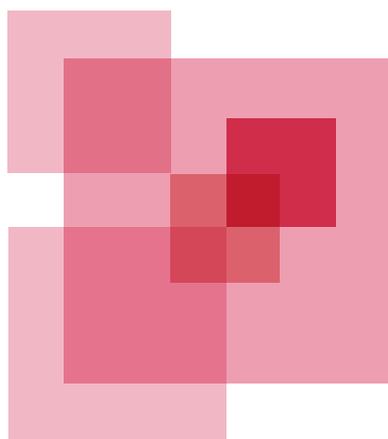
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In 2015/16 we will:

- Provoke and develop a debate amongst key policymakers nationally and locally about good governance, bringing the principles of accountability, transparency and involvement into the heart of the design and development of the English devolution settlement;
- Work directly with a small group of areas to develop and embed their governance arrangements, further to the agreement of a devolution deal with Government;
- Publish our findings from this work, informed by our wider work on governance and major service change.

The next six to twelve months are critical. As the vanguard of English combined authorities are created and agree deals with central Government, expectations around what devolution looks like, and how it should feel, will become more set. Designing new and different governance arrangements will become more difficult, when it is felt that there is a tried and tested model to follow. We want to help local areas to break out of those assumptions, to lead and develop local discussion about devolution, and to design systems which give power and voice to a wider range of people, rather than sticking to the institutional status quo.

We are keen to have further discussions with anyone who wants to talk about the issues raised in this paper, and to share further details on our thoughts and plans. You can contact Ed Hammond, Head of Programmes (Local Accountability) on **020 7187 7369** or at **ed.Hammond@cfps.org.uk**



## North East Combined Authority

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015

**Subject:** Forward plan & Scrutiny Work Programme

**Report of:** Monitoring Officer

#### **Executive summary**

The purpose of this report is to provide scrutiny members with an opportunity to consider the items on the Forward Plan for the current 28 day period and to review the updated Annual Work Programme for 2015/16.

#### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the Forward Plan in relation to the development of the committee's work programme and notes the revisions to the work programme since the last meeting.

# North East Combined Authority

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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### 1. Background Information

- 1.1 The Forward Plan is a document which lists the decisions that the North East Combined Authority committees intend to take in the coming months. The Forward Plan contains specific information relating to each decision, including the date the decision will be made, a brief explanation of the topic, the consultation to be undertaken, and contact details of the author.
- 1.2 Details of each decision are usually included on the Forward Plan 28 days before the report is considered and any decision is taken.

### 2. Role of Overview and Scrutiny

- 2.1 One of the main functions of this Committee is the review and scrutiny of decisions made by the North East Leadership Board (NELB), the Transport North East Committee (TNEC), Transport North East (Tyne and Wear) Sub-Committee (TWSC) and Nexus. Durham County Council (DCC) and Northumberland County Council (NCC) are also subject to overview and scrutiny in relation to transport functions delegated to them, as is the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) to the extent of the NECA's role as its accountable body. One of the ways this can be achieved is by considering the forthcoming decisions of those various decision making bodies
- 2.2 In considering items in the Forward Plan, the Scrutiny Committee should determine whether scrutiny can add value in relation to the decision being made.
- 2.3 To this end, the most recent version of the Forward Plan is attached marked Appendix 1.

### 3. Annual Work Programme

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Committee's Annual Work Programme is attached as Appendix 2.
- 3.2 The work programme has been compiled to allow the Scrutiny Committee to have an overview of all performance, decision-taking and developments within the NECA, as well as being focused and flexible to allow for new issues and recognising the capacity of the scrutiny committee to respond in a timely way to emerging developments throughout the year.

# North East Combined Authority

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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3.3 The NECA Scrutiny Committee obtains work programme items from the following sources:

- a) Items submitted by Members of the Committee (and including items referred by other members of the combined authority)
- b) The Budget and Policy Framework
- c) The Forward Plan
- d) The three Thematic Leads
- e) Evidence for the policy review

### **4. Policy Review – Transport Related Barriers to Employment**

4.1 The Scrutiny Committee is currently gathering evidence for a policy review of transport related barriers to education, employment and training. The review will contribute to the North East Transport Plan. The Plan will contribute to the delivery of “More and Better Jobs”.

4.2 A Call for Evidence has been issued and circulated widely. Written submissions have been received to the Call for Evidence and all responses have been collated and are attached as Appendix 3.

4.3 These written submissions are important evidence for the review and will contribute to further evidence gathering sessions to be programmed into the work programme.

### **5. Next Steps**

5.1 In considering the Forward Plan, Members are asked to consider those issues where the Scrutiny Committee could make a contribution which would add value.

5.2 If the Scrutiny Committee determines to review or scrutinise a decision notified in the Forward Plan, a meeting of the Committee will be arranged to allow scrutiny members to carry out their role in a timely way.

5.3 The draft work programme will be refreshed and updated at each meeting of the scrutiny committee throughout the year.

### **6. Potential Impact on Objectives**

6.1 Development of a work programme and review and scrutiny of decisions in the Forward Plan will contribute towards the development and implementation of the policy framework of the NECA, Nexus and NELEP as well as providing appropriate challenge to decisions taken.

# North East Combined Authority

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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### **7. Finance and Other Resources**

7.1 No financial or other resource implications are identified at this stage. The financial impact of any proposals or recommendations should be taken into account and any significant implications should be reflected in any considerations and comments made by the Scrutiny Committee.

### **8. Legal**

8.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from these recommendations.

### **9. Other Considerations**

#### **9.1 Consultation/Community Engagement**

Not applicable

#### **9.2 Human Rights**

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

#### **9.3 Equalities and Diversity**

Not applicable

#### **9.4 Risk Management**

Not applicable

#### **9.5 Crime and Disorder**

Not applicable

#### **9.6 Environment and Sustainability**

Not applicable

### **10. Background Documents**

10.1 None

### **11. Links to the Local Transport Plans**

11.1 None

### **12. Appendices**

# North East Combined Authority

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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- 12.1 Forward Plan - Appendix 1
- Work Programme - Appendix 2
- Written evidence submitted for the Policy Review - Appendix 3

### 13. Contact Officers

- 13.1 Karen Brown, Scrutiny Officer, karen.brown@sunderland.gov.uk

#### Sign off

- Head of Paid Service ✓
- Monitoring Officer ✓
- Chief Finance Officer ✓

### 14. Glossary

Forward Plan – list of decisions to be taken in the next 28 days  
Work Programme – schedule of reports to be taken over the year

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## Forward Plan of Decisions

Published 6 October 2015 \*

The Forward Plan for the North East Combined Authority (NECA) is prepared and published by the Monitoring Officer for the purpose of giving the 28 day notice of decisions that are planned to be taken by the NECA, its committees or a Chief Officer, which impact on the key areas of the NECA, namely Transport, Economic Development, Regeneration, Skills and Inclusion.

Unless otherwise indicated, if you require any further information or wish to make representations about any of the matters contained in the Forward Plan, please contact the appropriate officer as detailed against each entry at least 7 days before the meeting.

**\*The most recent entries are referred to as “NEW”. Updated entries are referred to as “Updated”.**

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No./ Date Published on Forward Plan	Date of Decision	Decision Maker	Topic	Thematic area	Consultees /Consultation Process	Background Documents	Contact Officer
<b>A. North East Leadership Board (NELB)</b>							
A 1.	17 November 2015 and then all ordinary meetings	NELB	Update reports from Thematic Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development and Regeneration;</li> <li>• Employability and Inclusion; and</li> <li>• Transport</li> </ul>	All	To be confirmed	Held by the Contact Officer	<p>Economic Development and Regeneration: Beverley Poulter Lead Policy Officer Sunderland City Council <a href="mailto:beverley.poulter@sunderland.gov.uk">beverley.poulter@sunderland.gov.uk</a> 0191 561 1150</p> <p>Employability and Inclusion: Janice Rose Economic and Inclusion Policy Manager Northumberland County Council <a href="mailto:janice.rose@northumberland.gov.uk">janice.rose@northumberland.gov.uk</a> 01670 624747</p> <p>Transport: Mark Wilson Regional Transport Principal Advisor</p>

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							<a href="mailto:mark.wilson@newcastle.gov.uk">mark.wilson@newcastle.gov.uk</a> 0191 211 5679
A 2.	17 November 2015	NELB	Devolution Update To note the latest developments in relation to the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill and the governance options.	Corporate Issue	The Leaders and Elected Mayor as well as the Head of Paid Service and the Chief Executives of the Constituent Authorities will be consulted on this item.	To be confirmed in the report to the Leadership Board	Adam Wilkinson, Head of Paid Service, North East Combined Authority <a href="mailto:adam.wilkinson@northeastca.gov.uk">adam.wilkinson@northeastca.gov.uk</a> 0191 643 5689
A 3.	17 November 2015	NELB	Draft Budget 2016/17 and Transport Levies	Corporate issue	The budget for 2016/17 will be subject to consultation in advance of the formal agreement in winter 2016.	Held by the Contact Officer	Paul Woods, Chief Finance Officer, North East Combined Authority 07446936840 <a href="mailto:paul.woods@northeastca.gov.uk">paul.woods@northeastca.gov.uk</a>
A 4.	19 January 2016	NELB	Budget 2016/17 and Transport Levies	Corporate issue	The budget for 2016/17 will be subject to	Reports to NELB and other	Paul Woods, Chief Finance Officer, North East Combined

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					consultation.	committees of the Combined Authority.	Authority 07446936840 <a href="mailto:paul.woods@northeastc.a.gov.uk">paul.woods@northeastc.a.gov.uk</a>
A 5.	Any future meeting	NELB	Project Approvals  This is a standing item, which will include the approval of any funding or contractual arrangement that may be necessary from NECA for projects to proceed. This includes projects where funding is allocated directly to NECA or projects where funding is approved by the NELEP Board,	The projects could relate to any of the thematic theme areas –  Transport; Economic Development and Regeneration ; or Employability and Inclusion.	Any, where necessary.	Held by the Contact Officer	Paul Woods, Chief Finance Officer, North East Combined Authority 07446936840 <a href="mailto:paul.woods@northeastc.a.gov.uk">paul.woods@northeastc.a.gov.uk</a>

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			<p>where the approval may also be necessary from NECA in its role as accountable body. The report may include information about projects approved under delegated arrangements in between formal meetings, to enable projects to proceed in a timely fashion to achieve the outcomes of the Strategic Economic Plan.</p>				
<b>B. Transport North East Committee (TNEC)</b>							
B 1.	24 November 2015 and all future meetings	TNEC	<p>Transport Vision for the North East</p> <p>Report for approval</p>	Transport	Wide public consultation will take place following publication of	Held by the Contact Officer	<p>Mark Wilson Head of Transport Policy <a href="mailto:Mark.Wilson@newcastle.gov.uk">Mark.Wilson@newcastle.gov.uk</a></p>

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					the Transport Vision		0191 211 5679
B 2.	24 November 2015 and all future meetings	TNEC	Transport for the North – an update on the programme to improve the transport network in Northern England  Report for information	Transport	To be confirmed	The Northern Powerhouse: One Agenda, One Economy, One North: document published at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northern-transport-strategy">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northern-transport-strategy</a>	Mark Wilson Head of Transport Policy <a href="mailto:Mark.Wilson@newcastle.gov.uk">Mark.Wilson@newcastle.gov.uk</a> 0191 211 5679
B 3.	24 November 2015	TNEC	Appointment of Vice-Chair of TWSC	Corporate issue	This is a constitutional matter	Constitution	Vivienne Geary Monitoring Officer <a href="mailto:viv.geary@northtyneside.gov.uk">viv.geary@northtyneside.gov.uk</a>
B 4.	24 November 2015	TNEC	Draft budget 2016/17 and transport levies	Corporate issue/ Transport	To be confirmed	Held by the Contact Officer	Paul Woods, Chief Finance Officer, North East Combined Authority 07446936840 <a href="mailto:paul.woods@northeastc">paul.woods@northeastc</a>

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							<a href="http://a.gov.uk">a.gov.uk</a>
B 5.	24 November 2015 and all future meetings	TNEC	QCS Programme Update  The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the QCS Programme and Workstreams.	Transport	The report has been prepared through Nexus's internal reporting arrangements.	Held by the Contact Officer	Tobyn Hughes Managing Director (Transport Operations) <a href="mailto:tobyn.hughes@nexus.org.uk">tobyn.hughes@nexus.org.uk</a> 0191 203 3246
B 6.	24 November 2015	TNEC	Local Sustainable Transport Fund programme update  This report would provide information on the delivery of the NECA-wide capital schemes and the 3 revenue-based schemes in Northumberland, Durham and Tyne	Transport	To be confirmed	Held by the Contact Officer	Mark Wilson Head of Transport Policy <a href="mailto:Mark.Wilson@newcastle.gov.uk">Mark.Wilson@newcastle.gov.uk</a> 0191 211 5679

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			and Wear				
B 7.	24 November 2015 and all future meetings	TNEC	<p>Capital Programme Monitoring Report</p> <p>This report provides the Transport North East Committee with a progress update in relation to delivery of the transport related capital programme. This is a requirement of the NECA constitution and is a function delegated to TNEC.</p>	Corporate issue	Consultation on 2014/15 capital programme with Treasurers and Chief Executives, and capital programme agreed by Leaders in April 2014.	NECA Budget and Capital Programme 2014/15	<p>Eleanor Goodman Senior Accountant <a href="mailto:eleanor.goodman@newcastle.gov.uk">eleanor.goodman@newcastle.gov.uk</a> 0191 277 7518</p>
B 8.	24 November 2015 and all future meetings	TNEC	<p>Revenue Budget 2014/15 Monitoring Report</p> <p>This report</p>	Corporate issue	Consultation on 2014/15 budget with Treasurers and Chief	NECA Budget and Capital Programme 2014/15	<p>Eleanor Goodman Senior Accountant <a href="mailto:eleanor.goodman@newcastle.gov.uk">eleanor.goodman@newcastle.gov.uk</a> 0191 277 7518</p>

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			provides the Transport North East Committee with a progress update in relation to how the transport related budgets for the delivery agencies are being managed. This is a requirement of the NECA constitution and is a function delegated to TNEC.		Executives, and budget agreed by Leaders in April 2014.		
B 9.	Any relevant meeting	TNEC	Transport Project Approvals. This is a standing item, which will include the approval of any funding or contractual arrangement that may be necessary	Transport	To be confirmed	Held by the Contact Officer	Paul Woods, Chief Finance Officer, North East Combined Authority 07446936840 <a href="mailto:paul.woods@northeastc.a.gov.uk">paul.woods@northeastc.a.gov.uk</a> and

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			<p>from NECA for projects to proceed. This involves projects where funding has previously been approved by the Local Transport Body and where the approval may also be necessary from TNEC, on behalf of NECA in its role as accountable body.</p> <p>Report for approval</p>				<p>Mark Wilson Head of Transport Policy <a href="mailto:Mark.Wilson@newcastle.gov.uk">Mark.Wilson@newcastle.gov.uk</a> 0191 211 5679</p>
B 10.	Annually	TNEC	<p>Discharge of Transport Functions by Durham County Council.</p> <p>The report provides an</p>	Transport	The report refers to the discharge of delegated functions by officers in Durham County	The North East Combined Authority Constitution The North East Combined Authority Deed of Operation	<p>Adrian J White Head of Transport and Contract Services Durham County Council <a href="mailto:adrian.white@durham.gov.uk">adrian.white@durham.gov.uk</a> 03000 267455</p>

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			update on the discharge of delegated functions at Durham County Council.		Council in consultation with the relevant cabinet portfolio holder and its contents have already been noted by the Cabinet of Durham County Council.	dated the 29th April 2014.	
B 11.	Annually	TNEC	<p>Northumberland County Council – Public Transport Activity Report on Delegated Functions 2014</p> <p>The report provides an update on the discharge of delegated functions at</p>	Transport	To be confirmed	Held by the Contact Officer	<p>Stuart McNaughton Principal Transport Policy Officer Northumberland County Council <a href="mailto:stuart.mcnaughton@northumberland.gov.uk">stuart.mcnaughton@northumberland.gov.uk</a> 01670 624 104</p>

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			Northumberland County Council.				
<b>C. Transport North East (Tyne and Wear) Sub-Committee (TWSC)</b>							
C 1.	24 November 2015	TWSC	<p data-bbox="792 564 1093 639">Monitoring Nexus' Performance</p> <p data-bbox="792 676 1093 1377">The purpose of these reports is to advise TWSC of Nexus corporate performance in respect of service and project delivery such that the Sub-Committee exercises the monitoring and oversight functions in respect of Nexus activities delegated to it from the NECA Leadership Board.</p>	Transport	The report has been prepared through Nexus corporate performance reporting arrangements.	Held by the Contact Officer	<p data-bbox="1807 564 2179 676">Tobyn Hughes Managing Director (Transport Operations)</p> <p data-bbox="1807 676 2179 735"><a href="mailto:tobyn.hughes@nexus.org.uk">tobyn.hughes@nexus.org.uk</a></p> <p data-bbox="1807 735 2179 778">0191 203 3246</p>

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C 2.  Deferred from the 17 September meeting	24 November 2015	TWSC	<p>End Date of Current Metro Concession <b>(confidential report)</b></p> <p>The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement for the proposed end date of the current concession and to provide options for the future concession.</p> <p>The report will be exempt from the publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of The Local Government Act 1972 because it is likely to include commercially sensitive</p>	Transport	The report has been prepared through Nexus's internal reporting arrangements	Held by the Contact Officer	Tobyn Hughes Managing Director (Transport Operations) <a href="mailto:tobyn.hughes@nexus.org.uk">tobyn.hughes@nexus.org.uk</a> 0191 203 3246

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			information relating to the Metro Concessionaire.				
C 3.  <b>Updated</b>	24 November 2015 and then at every meeting	TWSC	Tyne Tunnel Update <b>(confidential report)</b> The report will provide an update for Members on the operation and management of the Tyne Tunnel  The report will be exempt from the publication by virtue of paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of The Local Government Act 1972	Transport	To be confirmed	Held by the Contact Officer	Michael Murphy Engineer to the Tyne <a href="mailto:michael.murphy@newcastle.gov.uk">michael.murphy@newcastle.gov.uk</a> 0191 211 5950
C 4.	24	TWSC	Metro	Transport	To be	Held by the	Tobyn Hughes

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	November 2015 and all future meetings		Performance Update  It is recommended that the Committee note the report and measures in place to improve Metro performance.		confirmed	Contact Officer	Managing Director (Transport Operations) <a href="mailto:tobyn.hughes@nexus.org.uk">tobyn.hughes@nexus.org.uk</a> 0191 203 3246
C 5.	24 November 2015 and all future meetings	TWSC	Nexus Strategic Risks 2015/16  The purpose of this report is to provide an update to TWSC of the strategic risks identified by Nexus for 2015/16.	Transport	The report has been prepared through Nexus internal reporting arrangements.	Held by the Contact Officer	Tobyn Hughes, Managing Director (Transport Operations), E-mail: <a href="mailto:tobyn.hughes@nexus.org.uk">tobyn.hughes@nexus.org.uk</a> Tel: 0191 203 3246
C 6.  Deferred from 17 September meeting	24 November 2015	TWSC	Publicity, Marketing and Promotions Policy  To seek approval for the Nexus	Transport	The report has been prepared through Nexus internal reporting arrangements.	Held by the Contact Officer	Tobyn Hughes, Managing Director (Transport Operations), E-mail: <a href="mailto:tobyn.hughes@nexus.org.uk">tobyn.hughes@nexus.org.uk</a> Tel: 0191 203

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			policy on all publicity related activity.				3246
<b>D. Governance Committee</b>							
D 1.	11 December 2015 and 1 April 2016	Governance Committee	Internal Audit Progress Report  The report provides an update on the outcomes from internal audit activity and progress against the delivery of the internal audit plan.	Corporate Issue	Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer	Internal Audit Plan, Final Internal Audit Plan	Philip Slater Audit, Risk and Insurance Service Manager Newcastle City Council <a href="mailto:Philip.slater@newcastle.gov.uk">Philip.slater@newcastle.gov.uk</a> 0191 211 6511
D 2.	11 December 2015	Governance Committee	Annual Audit Letter	Corporate issue	To be confirmed	Held by the Contact Officer	Philip Slater Audit, Risk and Insurance Service Manager Newcastle City Council <a href="mailto:Philip.slater@newcastle.gov.uk">Philip.slater@newcastle.gov.uk</a> 0191 211 6511

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D 3.	11 December 2015	Governance Committee	Draft budget 2016/17 and Transport Levies	Corporate issue	This report will form part of the consultation process	Held by the Contact Officer	Paul Woods, Chief Finance Officer, North East Combined Authority 07446936840 <a href="mailto:paul.woods@northeastc&lt;br/&gt;a.gov.uk">paul.woods@northeastc a.gov.uk</a>  And Eleanor Goodman Senior Accountant <a href="mailto:eleanor.goodman@new&lt;br/&gt;castle.gov.uk">eleanor.goodman@new castle.gov.uk</a> 0191 277 7518
D 4.	1 April 2016	Governance Committee	Accounting Policies Update 2014/15  The report will set out the draft accounting policies to be used in the preparation of the 2015/16 accounts, with an explanation of any changes which may have been	Corporate issue	To be confirmed	Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2014/15	Eleanor Goodman Senior Accountant <a href="mailto:eleanor.goodman@new&lt;br/&gt;castle.gov.uk">eleanor.goodman@new castle.gov.uk</a> 0191 277 7518

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			introduced, and an update on changes to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. Governance Committee will be asked to approve the policies.				
<b>E. Governance Sub-Committee</b>							
Currently, there are no meetings scheduled							
<b>F. Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&amp;S)</b>							
F 1	20 October 2015	O&S	Devolution update  To provide progress to date and the content of the NECA's	Corporate Issue	To be confirmed	Held by contact officer	Karen Brown Scrutiny Officer 0191 561 1004 <a href="mailto:Karen.brown@sunderla">Karen.brown@sunderla</a>

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			submission to Government.				<a href="http://nd.gov.uk">nd.gov.uk</a>
F 2	20 October 2015	O&S	Forward Plan and Work Programme  The purpose of this report is to receive the latest version of the Forward Plan and annual work programme	Corporate Issue	To be confirmed	Held by contact officer	Karen Brown Scrutiny Officer 0191 561 1004 <a href="mailto:Karen.brown@sunderland.gov.uk">Karen.brown@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
F 3	20 October 2015	O&S	Update on Transport Developments  To provide details of transport developments to the committee	Transport	To be confirmed	Held by contact officer	Karen Brown Scrutiny Officer 0191 561 1004 <a href="mailto:Karen.brown@sunderland.gov.uk">Karen.brown@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
<b>G. Economic Development and Regeneration Advisory Board (EDRAB)</b>							

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G 1. <b>NEW</b>	18 December 2015	EDRAB	Inward Investment – Development of NECA Investment Gateway Function and Sector Propositions  Members are requested to provide views on the development of the NECA Investment Gateway function along with key sector propositions, in order to attract investment projects to the region.	Economic Development and Regeneration	NECA Elected Members and officers; NELEP Members and officers	North East Strategic Economic Plan - More and Better Jobs	Beverley Poulter Lead Policy Officer Sunderland City Council 0191 561 1150 <a href="mailto:beverley.poulter@sunderland.gov.uk">beverley.poulter@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
G 3. <b>NEW</b>	18 December 2015	EDRAB	Economic Assets  Members are requested to provide views on a	Economic Development and Regeneration	NECA Elected Members and officers; NELEP Members and	North East Strategic Economic Plan - More and Better Jobs	Beverley Poulter Lead Policy Officer Sunderland City Council 0191 561 1150 <a href="mailto:beverley.poulter@sunderland.gov.uk">beverley.poulter@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

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			draft schedule of projects for inclusion in the Regional Investment Plan and make recommendations to the NELB.		officers		<a href="http://erland.gov.uk">erland.gov.uk</a>
G 3  <b>NEW</b>	18 December 2015	EDRAB	Devolution Update  The purpose of the report is to note the latest developments in relation to the government's devolution agenda.	Corporate Issue	The Leaders and Elected Mayor as well as the Interim Head of Paid Service and the Chief Executives of the constituent authorities have been consulted on an ongoing basis during the development of the report.  A series of meetings with	Report to NECA Leadership Board – 'Developing a Devolution Prospectus for the North East Combined Authority' – 20 January 2015  Report to NECA Leadership Board – 'Developing a Devolution Prospectus for the North East	Adam Wilkinson Head of Paid Service, North East Combined Authority  <a href="mailto:adam.wilkinson@northeastca.gov.uk">adam.wilkinson@northeastca.gov.uk</a>  0191 643 5689

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					local and regional stakeholders as well as MPs and House of Lords members took place in March 2015 to test the initial devolution proposals.	Combined Authority – update on stakeholder engagement – 16 June 2015	

## Appendix 2

Work Programme 2015/16

Date	Items	Lead Officer	Informal Briefings / Development Days
22 <sup>nd</sup> June (Durham)	Appointment of Chair & Vice-Chair	Viv Geary	13 <sup>th</sup> July – CfPS Development Session
	NELEP annual report 2104/15	Bob Paton	
	NELEP overview of funding	Paul Woods	
	Scope of Policy Review – Transport related barriers to employment	John Bourn	
	Forward Plan & Work Programme	Karen Brown	
21 <sup>st</sup> July (Sunderland)	Policy Review – Local Sustainable Transport Funded Projects	Project Managers	
	NECA Devolution Proposals Update	Vince Taylor	
	Financial Monitoring Update – Outturn 2014/15		
	Forward Plan & Work Programme	Karen Brown	
8 <sup>th</sup> September (Gateshead)	Thematic Lead Update – Employability : focus on Apprenticeships	Shona Duncan, Employment & Skills Manager, North Tyneside Council	
	Policy Review: Transport Barriers to Employment – Evidence from Nexus	Huw Lewis, Nexus	
	Forward Plan & Work Programme	KB	
20 <sup>th</sup> October (Newcastle)	Transport Lead Update Report	Ian Coe	
	Devolution Update	Adam Wilkinson	
	Policy Review: Transport Barriers – evidence from Stagecoach	Robin Knight	
	Forward Plan & Work Programme	KB	
1 <sup>st</sup> December (North Tyneside)	Draft Budget 2016/17	Paul Woods	
Policy Review: Transport Barriers to Employment – Evidence from Job Centre Plus			
Nexus Performance update			
Consultation on Transport Vision	MW		
9 <sup>th</sup> February (South Tyneside)	Economic Development Thematic Lead Update	Thematic Lead Member	
	Policy Review Draft Report		
	Forward Plan & Work Programme	KB	
22 <sup>nd</sup> March (North Tyneside)	Transport Thematic Lead Update	Thematic Lead Member	
	Policy Review Final Report		
	Forward Plan & Work Programme	KB	
<b>In addition to the schedule items, the following items will be included in the work programme.</b>			
Shared Services	Opportunities for sharing the delivery of services between authorities. This could involve reviewing the progress currently being made with the sharing of services across the seven authorities within the NECA three key priority areas.		
Strategic Planning Frameworks	Partnership and collaboration in joining up local development planning frameworks to support devolved decision making		
Child Poverty	Child Poverty Commission's Plan for Regions		

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## Policy Review – Transport: Barriers to Employment, Education and Training Call for Evidence – Written Submissions

### Introduction

As part of the Scrutiny Review a Call for Evidence was issued and circulated widely. This sought to give members of the community and stakeholders the opportunity to submit relevant evidence based on their experience. General comments were invited and as a guide to the sort of information required, we asked respondents to consider the broad categories below.

1. The accessibility of public transport (i.e. whether people can travel at reasonable cost, in reasonable time and with reasonable ease)?
2. The availability of public transport and the extent to which it is adequate to access employment sites?
3. What alternative transport approaches could be considered to support people being actively engaged in work?

The following list contains all of the evidence submitted to date for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee.

### **1. Evidence Submitted from Training Providers**

Our learners range from 16-23 and attend traineeship and study programmes out of both Turbine and SASMI. As part of their course they do work experience in the supply chain behind Nissan e.g. Johnson Control, Calsonic, Blue Arrow to name a few. Indeed we have numerous learners who filter through into Nissan from our courses.

*Q1. The accessibility of public transport (i.e. whether people can travel at reasonable cost, in reasonable time and with reasonable ease)?*

Our learners use public transport from various areas outside and including Sunderland. Our concern is the nearest bus stops are located a long way from Turbine and the supply chain i.e. the slip roads off the A1231. In adverse weather conditions and doing 12 hour shifts, we are putting our learners at risk tackling the roundabout over the top of the A1231 with access to Barmston Lane. This and various other reasons are why we feel the bus companies need to reconsider extending the route into Turbine.

Another example is where the learners arrive into Turbine via Washington Road (A1290). Again the trek down and into Cherry Blossom Way leading onto Nissan Way, is extremely long and there are isolated open areas where there is no protection from the elements and given the autumn/winter is upon us, we feel that the least we can do is try and put a case forward for our learners to receive the best support and due care for their safety to and from their learning/work.

*Q2. The availability of public transport and the extent to which it is adequate to access employment sites?*

Those on work experience doing 12 hour shifts, starting at 7:00 who live in South Shields will NOT be able to arrive in time as the first bus doesn't arrive until 7:08. This and point 1 above should be taken into consideration.

*Q3. What alternative transport approaches could be considered to support people being actively engaged in work?*

With the UK's skills shortage being at the forefront of our mission to provide employable and ready-for-work candidates to the likes of Nissan, Johnson Control etc, we feel it necessary that a case be put forward to the appropriate authorities. We would request that the bus companies extend the route into Cherry Blossom and Nissan Way and at times that service not just the supply chain, but also any provider like ourselves who are trying to close the skills shortage gap.

Surely it is our responsibility to make sure that learners arrive safely and on time both for their tuition and when they are doing their work experience in the supply chain. We want them to have the best opportunities for the world of work and yet we cannot provide them with adequate transport into a very busy area of Sunderland where there are various global suppliers to the industry and where the sixth largest automotive manufacturer is situated.

We hope this can be taken into consideration when speaking to the bus companies.

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We've recently been in discussion with a rep of GoSmarter about the lack of transport around Turbine Park in behind Nissan and amongst the suppliers we deal with i.e. Johnson Controls, Calsonic, Unipres etc. She herself uses public transport and knows only too well that when she has visited the employers/suppliers in that area, that the bus service is not adequate.

I know she is talking to Go North East this morning about it and she mentioned that any requests to extend a bus service has to be taken to the transport commissionaire and this can take 6 weeks.

We moved our delivery over to Turbine Business Park at the end of June and we have over 35 trainees/apprentices currently attending our programmes, some of which use public transport which doesn't go anywhere near this, in some cases the learners have to get off the bus just off the slip road on the 1231 and cross over an extremely busy roundabout and walk a good way to their classes.

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I am a provider based in Bishop Auckland. The cost of travel is preventing some of my learners attending the courses for 3 days a week. The majority of learners are paying an average of 5 pounds a day which is a major barrier.

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As an organisation we run training courses from our offices in Bishop Auckland and place clients in much needed work placements in order to ready them for employment. Due to the infrequency or lack of public transport coupled with the high cost, we have been unable to take number of clients from the Dales areas. Clients' access to available jobs and placements is also geographically severely restricted for these reasons.

In our experience people who get part time work are earning little more than their benefits and so paying excessive bus fares can be a factor that will prevent a client accepting a job.

Suggestions for alternative travel approaches:

- When contracts are awarded there could be a process by which clients can be registered to access concessionary rates on public transport for the days when they are actively involved in the training or placement.
- Establish a shared taxi/bus scheme whereby clients could access empty seats on school buses or taxis at a reasonable rate.
- Extending the above by putting on a demand led mini bus service that would cover the areas badly served by public buses and could be booked by anyone accessing training or work placements from a range of registered providers.

The above suggestions could also be extended to young people who are accessing first tier employment.

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## **2. Evidence from Members of the Public**

The only comment I would like to make is that about two or three years ago, our village lost its only bus service due to the fact that Darlington Council decided to discontinue the contributions to their subsidised and supported bus services. In this case, Arriva decided it wasn't a commercially viable service using incorrect figures to support their decision and relied on the council's financial support. There are many elderly residents in the village and those without their own transport are faced with a half-mile walk along a narrow country lane, part of which doesn't have a footpath, to the nearest main road and bus stop. Young people going to and from school or college are similarly affected.

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In the Teesdale area public transport is not what it should and could be, buses that often turn up very late or more often the case not at all, if they are running late from Durham they just cut out continuing to Cockfield and Evenwood, these areas are becoming more and more cut off and isolated. Not everyone drives or owns a car and a large number of people especially the younger generation and the older residents of these villages rely on public transport, it is essential that services are maintained and are reliable.

Residents of these villages have lots of cause for complaint some have no service at all and those of us who have are thankful but please treat us with respect let us keep what services we have and turn up when at the appropriate time.

This year over the festive period our villages will have no public transport for 4 days, we understand being none Christmas day and boxing day and we never have any on a Sunday anyway but 4 days is a bit extreme, the same thing happens over the Easter holiday we have none for 3 of the 4 bank holidays.

Living in the 21st century not very good for travel if you live in a rural area.

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I live in Sedgefield. The X1 service to Middlesbrough drives passed our local bus stop without stopping. This means that the mainly elderly residents of the village have to walk half a mile into the centre of Sedgefield to catch a bus. We have asked Arriva to consider stopping at our local stop and they refuse, even though this does not require any diversion or extra resources. The bus passes by there anyway. This affects the whole community. To 'rub salt into the wound' the bus stops at every single stop between Durham and Coxhoe, it only becomes an express service on

its way to Middlesbrough. Arriva has not even considered that this could be a Request Stop. There is now only one bus (the 21A) that stops at our local stop.

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I have to travel from Ludworth just east of Durham city to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead regularly for treatment. There is no direct bus from Durham. I have to catch 3 different buses, the final bus being the X1 from Washington. The alternate route I could take again involves 3 buses via Peterlee. There used to be a bus from Hartlepool via Wingate, Wheatley Hill, Thornley, Ludworth and Haswell to Easington Lane where the necessary service X1 starts and is every 10 minutes. Can either a direct bus from Durham to the Q.E or a link from the forgotten villages to Easington Lane be considered?

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Would you please consider Devonshire Road in the Haughton area of Darlington. It is a small estate with mainly elderly, and some residents that have difficulty walking it makes a lot of the residents out of breath as most of it is on a slight incline. It is quite a way to walk from the estate to the main road and quite treacherous in bad weather. Then if they manage to get to the main road it is still quite a walk for an elderly or infirm person to walk to the nearest bus stop. As I am 84 and my husband is 88 and partly disabled I know what a help this would be to the people of this estate as they would not be so housebound. At the very least, the bus stop on the main road could be moved nearer to the entrance to the estate to help elderly residents.

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I live in Chilton, near Ferryhill. We are a community of mainly elderly people and we now have no direct bus service to Bishop Auckland. Even though it is only 20 minutes journey time, it takes approximately an hour to travel there as we have to go through Ferryhill. The direct bus route was taken off a few years ago. This affects people using Bishop Auckland hospital and people who work in Bishop Auckland Asda.

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Public transport in this region is a joke.

It is run for the benefit of the transport companies not for the benefit of the people.

I live in a small village called Brafferton just 5 miles from Darlington. We used to have a bus twice a hour when we moved in 38 years ago, then it was reduced to 1 an hour, and last year we lost the bus altogether. Even when it did run it started too late for people to get into Darlington in time for work and stopped before 6 so you could not get home. Hurworth and other small villages round Darlington still have buses but with this same problem. Secondly is the cost, if it was not for our bus passes we would always use the car as at £3 each, each way for a 15 minute journey it is far too expensive.

We have just returned from Spain landing at Malaga airport and used the train to Fuengirola cost for a 30 minute journey "2.70 euro" about £2.10 ----- 30 minutes on a train from Darlington is York cost £22.80 if you just turn up (WE JUST TURNED UP IN MALGA) more than 10 times the price.

Buses from Fuengirola to where we were staying ran every 30 minutes running till midnight cost 1.55 euro about £1.20. This was for a 30 minute ride. Notice the comparison for a journey into Darlington ran the Spanish way the cost should be 60p. The Spanish are supposed to be bankrupt yet they seem to be able to run an efficient service for their public transport system, furthermore

their trains were very clean and new, were fully accessible for the disabled travellers, all doors had ramps which automatically extended onto the platform.

Finally the bus that was removed from Brafferton was the 5A. This still runs but does not follow the route through the village instead it takes a short cut which saves 1.2 miles It must be very expensive to run buses if the saving in fuel of 1.2 miles is that good. I know that nothing will come of this but it does make me want to move from the UK more and more when I see how other countries look after their citizens.

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### **3. Evidence from Commuters**

I live in Longframlington and work in Newcastle, on the whole the X14 works for me. Only because I had to ask my employer if I could “adjust” my start and finish times to accommodate the bus times. I should start work at 8am but the bus does not get into Newcastle till after 8am.

My return bus is ok.

I don't work Saturdays but if I did the timetable is not conducive to Saturday working. We won't mention Sunday – no service at all.

The world we live in is just about 24/7 but our transport system isn't!

I am going to have a problem at Christmas. Most bus companies only run a Saturday service between Christmas and the New Year. The first bus on a Saturday gets into Newcastle at 08.41 which is no good unless you start at 9am (which I don't). I think more people nowadays start at 8am or 8.30am.

I know a lady in the village who only works in Morpeth but quite often has to walk 5 miles to Felton to catch a bus to Morpeth! Not good when Morpeth is only 12 miles away!

If I were to look for employment nearer to home I would still struggle to use a bus! There are no buses to Alnwick – only 6 miles away!

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I live in Newton Aycliffe, and work past Durham City, the only bus option I have is the no.7 route followed by another to take me out of the City.

Train service is unviable, Taxis too expensive, Cycling! would suggest a 26 mile bike ride, 5 days a week to be excessive. I've never had a driving licence.

My work is 'open' Mon to Fri 8am to 8pm, sat 8am to 6pm & sun 10am to 4pm.

- 1) It is impossible to get to work to start at 8am SAT or 10 AM SUN. This also applies (In the opposite direction) if I were to work beyond 50 meters of Darlington Town Centre.
- 2) The buses run daytime regular but as soon as tea-time comes (home time for most workers!) they change to 1 every 30 min then once an hour from early evening, the connecting bus services are not designed to connect on time to allow a direct transfer. so often a delay in journey is forced,;

Each of my journeys takes approx 1hr 15min, (one way, 2 buses for 13 miles!)

However this has frequently taken over 2 hours when services withdrawn without public notification, max time taken 3 hrs 45 min (it was snowing!!)

To be in work on time for a 7:45 start, I have to get the 6am bus!, for an 8 hr day, plus travel I do nearer an 11 hour day, just as well I like the Job I do.

- 3) Ticket and timings and routes, there's no cooperation between rail and bus services or between 'rival' public bus services. (bar the overpriced "North East Explorer ticket")
- 4) Arriva control the routes in this area, no competition, Go Northern pretty much owns all the surrounding areas.
- 5) We have no public service to any regional shopping centres Metro, Teesside Park, outlets, Multiplex Cinema etc
- 6) Sales in shops start Boxing Day, we have NO public transport service, whereas in the UK's cities they seem to have their 'local' services running well.
- 7) We have no night time services at all.

The fixes are not as easy:

- The Newcastle metro, (or newer version) extended to cover the whole region 24/7.
- Long lost rail links reopened using better efficient engines
- A set and structure of a public bus/transport service that cares more about its passengers than its market share value
- better policing of anti-social behaviour, remembering not all people fight swear abuse, but every one need to get home safe secure and not be overcharged for the privilege of doing so, as we do live in a free tolerant multi-racial society, whether we like it or not.

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It would be of great help for people living in Chester le Street (like me) to be able to get a train that gets you into Newcastle for 9am. The current service (and these services are not nearly regular enough despite the £21.50 weekly pass being a fair(ish) deal for a train service) gets into Newcastle 9.03am and is always full to the brim.

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I'm responding to the above survey and my comments are as follows:

1. I commute daily from my home near Northumberland Park Metro station to my job at the Civic Centre
2. The journey takes around 20 minutes in each direction plus waiting time
3. My views on cost, ease and timeliness of transport are
  - a) Cost. I have an annual all-zone Metro pass bought through my employer who arranges for me to pay monthly, thus spreading the cost. I consider the cost very reasonable in relation to my income
  - b) Ease. In my view my Metro journey to work could not be easier. I live about 2 min walk from Northumberland Park Metro station and the Civic Centre is only about 2min walk from Haymarket Metro station. I accept that it is not always possible for me to get a seat for all or any of my journey, bearing in mind I travel at peak time.
  - c) Timeliness. Apart from occasional delays, I don't think my journey could be any faster
4. Although I own a car, I would not even consider using to travel to and from work here.

5. Before I started work at the Civic Centre in January, I worked at County Hall in Morpeth. The situation there was very different: without a car, I would not have found the journey between my home and there easy, timely or reasonable cost.
  6. I realise I am very fortunate compared to others
- 

1. The accessibility of public transport (i.e. whether people can travel at reasonable cost, in reasonable time and with reasonable ease)?

I use Nexus metro system on a daily basis to get to and from work, ( I also have to use it during the day of I am working in different office bases). The system has gradually gotten worse so much so there is a social media group on Facebook which is keeping a log of the actual daily events that people using the system have to contend with.

- Trains do not ruin to time table on any day – this impacts on my travelling time as I change trains en route. If one train is late or early in leaving or arriving at a station I often miss my connection. E.g. today the connection train left early so I have a 12 minute wait until the next one.
- Trains are too full during the peak times. I would think in any other sector of work health and Safety would be 'up in arms'. People are standing all of the time. People with any physical disability are at a total disadvantage and possibly could not actually get on the train.
- The noise and brightness on the trains are also an added unnecessary synthetic distraction which hinder the journey rather than enhance it.
- I experience disruption on a weekly basis. Reasons are: the weather affecting track adhesion, broken trains, fire alarms, rail network's fault with lines, adverse weather conditions.
- Bus links to the stations are not great unless the station is a 'main' one.
- When trains are not working the announcements on the system are slow and limited. When the system fails in peak hour the links to the other operators are diabolical and the other operators will not accept the tickets already bought for the metro system therefore people have to pay twice.
- I purchase an annual pass but am not able to use the barriers they have recently erected as they are not programmed for my type of ticket. I have to wait for a member of staff to open the barriers for me. This adds to the length of commuting time as depending on how busy the staff are I can be waiting some time.
- The tickets are not reasonably priced for the service offered. If the service actually worked then it would be a fair price.
- The concessions for young people are minimal and as the system services 3 major Universities as well as colleges they have a captive audience.
- The systems in place to get refunds, when trains are late are biased in favour of the company. They are difficult to navigate and it takes too long to receive a reimbursement.
- The appeals procedure and on the spot fining are subjective and unfair.

2. The availability of public transport and the extent to which it is adequate to access employment sites?

- The bus transport links are great and using this mode of transport when travelling around for work within the locality I can access the majority of offices and sites. The Main one which has poor links is Cobalt Business Park. The links must have been planned by people who do not use public transport: the times are too close together for each bus leaving large gaps between the cluster and the services do not run or link to the metro stations well.

3. What alternative transport approaches could be considered to support people being actively engaged in work?

- One system run by the public sector – or to give the metro system to the collective of bus companies to run. Nexus is poor and unable to meet the needs of the commuters.

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The companies around Nissan are difficult to travel to and to get to work on time. The bus stops a long walk from the site and in a difficult location to access work.

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#### **4. Evidence from Travel Advisors**

Re Cobalt Park, North Tyneside - we have worked with both Arriva and Go North East very successfully over the last 9 years often responding to /recruitment/occupiers/relocation needs within a short period of time. Arriva diverted the 53 service and add on evening services when Accuread (now G4S) located to the park from Killingworth when staff were within walking distance from their old site. The success of the service at the time ensured that the company did not lose any staff during the relocation period.

Providing postcode data to the bus companies and nexus allowed us to work in partnership to target services to meet the requirements of business growth. The launch of the Cobalt Clipper (Newcastle – Cobalt – Blyth) was a pump prime service with an initial contract for 5 years and enabled GNE to supply new buses on the contract, the service was extended into early evenings when Newcastle Building Society opened a office on Cobalt to cover their early evening shifts. The service now runs every 15 mins weekdays, 30 mins weekends and evenings.

We continue to work in partnership with bus companies and Nexus to ensure that the needs of the occupiers continue to be met and enable them to meet recruitment and work patterns needs as well as promoting sustainable travel to the 14,000 workforce. Bus companies continue to support the Cobalt Freezone as well as 7 days free trial for new starters.

However as Cobalt continues to grow and excellent transport links play a huge part of that we need to continue to break down other barriers to employment by public transport.

- Most bus companies have good route savers – i.e £13 for 7 days unlimited travel, however a lots of areas require a change of operators which becomes expensive from areas such has Northumberland and South of the river limiting access to jobs outside the city centre.
- Real time information by app or google maps so you can make a choice which service to get.
- Smart ticketing for integrated ease of travel, PAYG travel included
- Studies to extend metro lines to key employment

Public transport needs to be reliable that requires infrastructure improvements and investment in a co-ordinated manner as a region looking at incorporating other transport modes such a car clubs, cycle hire etc.

Bette cycle and walking links from residential to employment areas are also cost effective and will improve Health and Wellbeing to the workforce, over 1/3 of Cobalt's workforce live within a 5 mile radius but is difficult to cycle from Tynemouth, Cramlington, Wallsend etc or the links are disjointed.

Other staff can travel much further distance, therefore Metro and Bus connection options to be included or park and ride at key interchanges Blyth, Heworth etc. These again have to cost aware to the end user.

Information and awareness is also essential a lot of the big employers already employ travel coordinators providing information and raising awareness to staff and visitors. Go Smarter is going some way to bring this together with other employment areas but this could be improved.

I'm not sure if this is what you are looking for but I would be happy to discuss further, Cobalt has offered to pilot new schemes and projects over the years and assisted in securing funding from DFT, Big Lottery and LSTF with many partners including Sustrans, North Tyneside Council, Nexus, GNE and Arriva.

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a) An assessment of current transport projects to help people get to interview, jobs, training etc.

- Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) – Wheels to Work project  
This is an initiative in which Tyne and Wear residents are able to get a grant to pay for a scooter. The scheme is operated by Adapt and has
- LSTF – Free Public Transport Provision – offered across T&W to job-seekers attending interviews and then a month-free travel to act as a ‘kick-start’
- Tyne and Wear UMTC Project – provision of travel information to the travelling public. The resource located within Newcastle University but has coverage across all of the Tyne and Wear provides up-to-date travel information via a number of forums including social media outlets and web sites.  
Further information available at the following web link :-  
<http://www.tyneandweartravel.info/public/map/map.htm>
- Local Growth Fund Transport Projects - identified in the North East Local Growth Fund will improve how people travel throughout the NECA region, the prioritised schemes can be found in the North East LEP Strategic Economic Plan. In South Tyneside, we will be implementing the following schemes:-
  - South Shields Town Centre Public Transport Interchange - £15m
  - Lindisfarne Roundabout / Corridor Improvement Scheme - £6.1m
  - The Arches (A194 / A185) junction improvement scheme - £5.73m
  - The A185 Improvement Scheme - £4m
  - Localised access improvement to support the Testo's Major Scheme - £4m
- Highway England Strategic Road Improvements - Further to the above, there are a number of strategic road improvements being delivered throughout the region by Highways England including A1 / A19 corridor improvements, with Testo's / Downhill Lane being constructed within STC at an estimated cost of £120m.
- Smart Ticketing Project for the North East – simplified approach to streamlining the amount of PT tickets available across all PT modes.
- Finally, I am sure that the Job Centre plus and the respective local authorities offer incentives for job seekers to gain access to public transport when attending interviews etc.
- Training – There is a range of student (16-21) discount tickets for public transport modes via either the bus operators and / or Nexus.

b) The potential impact of future spending cuts and how to maintain accessibility of public transport?

***First ask is why just Public Transport, as surely all modes of transport should be considered including Sustainable Transport in terms of barriers to transport?***

***I would question the importance of Sustainability / Active Travel rather than just Public Transport.***

- Impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review in November 2015.
- Future of Local Sustainable Transport Fund – current funding is set to end in March 2016, with the government not identifying future awards.
- Active Travel Campaigns – potential new direction for Government Funding opportunities
- Devolution Asks for Transport for NECA region – how will these affect future funding decision across the region and for STC
- NECA Governance and Structure will be important going forward in terms of the delivery model
- Importance of Transport for the North and accessing funding
- Regional Super-power??
  
- Concessionary Travel and the rising population age – Current projections indicate that the CT scheme is likely to be unaffordable, with many Passenger Transport Executives having to use alternative funding sources to continue with the current scheme.
  
- Quality Contract Scheme for Bus Services – opportunities for the management and operation of bus services to be in the public hands. but also a financial risk in terms of the future patronage figures across Tyne and Wear  
Findings of the QCS board expected at the end of October 2015.

c) An assessment of the different problems across the NECA area (Durham, Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland, South Tyneside, Northumberland, North Tyneside) (e.g. the particular needs of rural areas).

- Ageing Population
- Devolution Asks for Transport for the NECA region – governance, financial arrangements, powers etc
- NECA Governance and Structure will be important in terms of going forward.
- Importance of Transport for the North and accessing funding.
- Importance of Rural vs Urban demographics and transport provision / need across the NECA region.

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## **1. The accessibility of public transport (i.e. whether people can travel at reasonable cost, in reasonable time and with reasonable ease)?**

### **COST**

- Affordability of Public Transport (Cost of Petrol vs Cost of PT fare – fuel costs are seen as everyday of life expense, whilst PT fares are an additionality)
- Smart Ticketing / Confusion of amount of PT ticketing – need for consolidation
- The ability to sustain the current Concessionary Travel scheme, especially with the ageing population age!!

### **TIME**

- Real Time Information that prescribes when the bus / metro / ferry is due at a particular destination

- Problems with the Metro Service (daily problems reduces confidence levels)
- Issues with the Metro Concession (DB Regio contract expires in 2019, but major concerns with performance)

#### EASE

- Public Transport Information via Smart Phones and other technology streams
- Social Media Outlets being utilised and harnessed to provide update.
- Metro Fleet Replacement is not expected until 2023 and at a cost of >£250m
- Interchange Options through Smart Ticketing
- Nexus offer a number of transport provisions to the socially excluded including the following schemes:-
  - Community Transport
  - Subsidised Bus Services
  - Taxi Buses
  - Scholar Services
  - Concessionary Transport Scheme plus the Gold Card option

### 2. The availability of public transport and the extent to which it is adequate to access employment sites?

- Punctuality and Reliability matters of public transport;
- Quality Contract Scheme for bus services could improve bus service operation.
- Employment sites are often located close to the strategic road network due to the transportation of goods. As a consequence of this, the staff travel patterns are heavily reliant on the private car. Due to this, Public Transport services are often reduced / limited, as the patronage figures are not viable.

### 3. What alternative transport approaches could be considered to support people being actively engaged in work?

- Agile Working
- Flexible Hours
- Working from Home
- Reducing the travel requirements (teleconferences / meetings) avoiding the need to travel
- Public Transport Discount Ticketing Schemes (Metro Corporate Saver scheme – ticket payment comes directly from employees salary, providing discount)
- Smart Ticketing presents a great opportunity of simplifying as to how people travel (No payments will be exchanged, but costs recovered at the end of month)

No.	Barrier	Specific Examples/Details
1.	Bus zones – Sunderland zone ends at Ferryboat Lane and Washington zone.	Two zones required, or walk across footbridge over A19, potentially increasing costs for employees at Nissan, Unipres, Johnson Controls and Vantec.
2.	Services provided along Washington Road do not always coincide with shift patterns.	Service 50 – 1 <sup>st</sup> one from So Shields past Nissan at 07:08, after most shifts have begun. Service 50 becomes 50A in evenings and operates via HMRC Waterview Park and not

		Washington Road.
3.	Turbine Business Park – distance from bus stops	Approx 30-40 min walk from Washington Road bus stops to Turbine Business Park if travelling from Town End Farm area. Approx 20 min walk from bus stop on slip road onto A1231. No bus shelters at these stops.
4.	Mandarin Way / HMRC Waterview Park served by buses provided by different operators	Increasing costs for employees. Unable to take advantage of cheaper fares.
5.	Pattinson Industrial Estate, no buses serving the south part.	Use of public transport involves lengthy walks of around 20-30 mins.
6.	Stephenson Industrial Estate – no direct services to main transport links, eg Galleries bus station or Heworth Interchange.	Service to/from Galleries and Heworth withdrawn, meaning employees having to change buses at Concord which also involves a 10 min walk.
7.	Birtley Road – length of journey time from Galleries and Heworth	One service withdrawn from Heworth meaning only one bus serving this area from there, taking around 50 mins.
8.	Sunderland Enterprise Park – call centre businesses operating shifts ending/starting during evening – no or few services.	Service 99 – last one at 18:54 Service 73 – last one at 18:04 Service 8 – last one at 19:27 Service 35A – last one at 23:36 Many shifts end/start between 19:00 and 20:00, therefore to use public transport would involve long walk to Hylton Park or Southwick.
9.	Sunderland Enterprise Park – services provided by different operators.	Increasing costs and reducing choice of travel options.
10.	Doxford International Park – call centre businesses operating shifts ending/starting during evening – no or few services.	X35 – last one at 17:30 to Hartlepool, 18:33 to Peterlee, 19:30 Sunderland 39: 23:23 33: 18:13 37: 17:37 or 18:07 to Galleries
11.	Lack of bus shelters at various locations used by employees.	Lack of protection whilst waiting.

## 5. Evidence from Sustrans

Sustrans makes smarter travel choices possible, desirable and inevitable. We're a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day.

### 1. The accessibility of public transport (i.e. whether people can travel at reasonable cost, in reasonable time and with reasonable ease)?

A wide range of in depth consultation exercises and research studies have examined the ways in which the availability of transport acts as a barrier to work and education. Some of the most important external reports on this subject from across the UK include:

- Joseph Rowntree Foundation, transport and poverty literature review, 2014

- The Social Exclusion Unit, making the connections report, 2003
- The Youth Select Committee enquiry on young people and transport, 2012
- The Environment Audit Committee enquiry on access to public services, 2013
- The Work Foundation, transport barriers to youth unemployment, 2012
- Elizabeth Finn survey work on transport poverty in Northern Ireland, 2011
- Office of National Statistics, life opportunities survey (chapter 5, transport), 2014
- Various Campaign for Better Transport reports
- A range of research studies including the work of the Centre for Transport and Society at the University of the West of England

Sustrans has policy expertise in the area of transport poverty and the ways in which transport opportunities limit opportunity to access a wide range of life opportunities including work, training and essential services. We have been requested to provide evidence to UK select committee enquiries on this subject and have produced several policy briefings (See Sustrans 'Locked Out' and 'Access Denied' reports).

These reports clearly document the ways in which transport barriers cause disadvantage in employment, training and life opportunities, and the common causes of these problems.

The availability of public transport is one common cause of these problems. However the research set out above, alongside our direct experience working with people across the North East who face transport barriers, has taught us that the availability of convenient and accessible public transport is only one element of this problem. Transport barriers to work and training are also caused by:

- The cost of public transport, especially for young people (exacerbated by the end of the Educational Maintenance Allowance for young people, lower minimum wages for those on apprenticeships)
- Public transport not meeting the needs of shift workers who are travelling at unusual times of day and night
- Careers advisors or Jobcentre Plus not having the confidence to give journey planning advice and ability to encourage all travel modes
- Low travel horizons among those who are out of work or training
- Lack of knowledge about public transport services leading to adverse perceptions of journey length and connectivity
- Desire to cycle or walk constrained by Poor quality or poorly maintained bikes, low confidence and fitness levels and poor quality walking and cycling routes
- Unemployed young people are more likely to live in short-term rented or crowded accommodation with nowhere to securely store bikes

## **2. The availability of public transport and the extent to which it is adequate to access employment sites?**

"The North East's cycle infrastructure is characterised by a number of long distance cycle routes that are in parts traffic free. While these offer some provision for cycle tourism, vital connections that link communities, schools, employment and other destinations in urban areas are required to generate a significant modal shift to sustainable transport.

Sustrans endeavours to work directly with local authorities to transform towns and cities across the region. Highway engineers and Officers are experienced in traditional highway schemes

and detailing, but lack the technical knowledge of cycle infrastructure or urban design. Similarly, while senior officers and policies demonstrate the intent to improve walking and cycling numbers, Sustrans can help to plan networks and deliver schemes street by street to create and inspire what is effectively a cultural shift.”

Job seekers are often willing to travel further by bike than average commuters, Merseytravel for example found average cycle travel distance of 5 to 9 miles.

### **3. What alternative transport approaches could be considered to support people being actively engaged in work?**

Sustrans has delivered a range of transport projects to support people facing transport barriers to active engagement in work and training:

- In Sunderland working with the city’s biggest employers to improve access to work and improve staff health and wellbeing with a variety of innovative initiatives.
- In North Tyneside we work with two of the country’s biggest business parks. We deliver short term engagement activities, short term bike loans, Dr Bike sessions and cycle confidence sessions. These business parks are now recognised nationally as followers of good practice.
- In Derby we are working with whole families, secondary school and college students, and job seekers to give the skills to travel sustainably to employment.
- In Ashington we recruited, trained and supported local people to become volunteers to increase active travel in a deprived community. The project loaned over 500 recycled bikes in order to access workplace training and job interviews. Beneficiaries reported that one of the main motivations was getting to work more easily, and the vast majority agreed that both cycling and walking increased their sense of independence
- In Kirby we designed and built a new cycling and walking network between neighbourhoods with high unemployment, employment opportunities and other essential services. The route is very well used, over 80% of users say they use the route because it saves them money, and over 30% of people now use the route to get to work.
- In Stockton, working with an employment agency we supplied low cost reconditioned cycles to people new to work and struggling with transport poverty.

Our Sustrans experience and best practise has been benchmarked against projects across the UK that offer transport solutions to job seekers and NEETs and offer lessons to the North East, including:

- The TfGM job seekers programme covers 2.7m residents in 10 LA areas with high unemployment rates. The programme works with Transport operators, job centres and work programme providers to deliver ‘Bike Back to Work’ (recycled bikes and bike training), low cost or free public transport tickets, travel surgeries at job centres and

training of travel champions at job centres. 10,000 job seekers have been helped back to work through the initiative.

- Centro's WorkWise offers Residents within West Midlands Free day tickets to attend job interviews, free travel tickets when starting a new job, free travel support and information, and free cycling support. To date, the scheme has helped more than 12,000 people back into employment.
- Let's Get Moving Merseyside project worked across Merseyside to make sure that transport is not a barrier to finding work. Services included Neighbourhood Travel advice Teams, Dial-a-Link bus services, Rent a scooter/Borrow a bike and Free travel card tickets. An independent evaluation found Bikes are more sustainable than other options (85% of bike recipients remained in employment after 6 months) and that bikes were by far the most cost effective option, costing on average £9.16 per month (over 12 months), free public transport passes £84.72 to 137.22 per month and scooters from £140.42 to 152.08 per month.

**Many projects or initiatives set up to solve mobility problems faced by those accessing work or training focus on subsidising public transport costs or offering free tickets. Although this can be very helpful in the short term, the benefits are not necessarily sustained as**

- This approach focuses on financial support only, which can jeopardise retention of participants in training, education or employment once the subsidy ends
- Our experience shows that a free ticket offer skews support to those with fewest transport barriers, and does not provide the intensive support required to engage long-term unemployed and inactive participants
- The approach addresses public transport barriers only, and does not provide the unemployed with the skills and confidence to walk and cycle, which would benefit them for the rest of their lives and lead to associated health benefits.

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## 6. Evidence from Parkinson's UK

About Parkinson's and Parkinson's UK

1. Parkinson's is a progressive, fluctuating, neurological disorder, with no known cure that affects around 127,000 people in the UK. Around a third of people with Parkinson's develop symptoms before the age of 65, and one in 100 before the age of 40. The number of people with Parkinson's is estimated to increase by 28% by 2020.
2. Parkinson's affects everyone differently and while the condition impacts on movement (rigidity, tremor and slowness of movement) there are over 40 "non-motor" symptoms that people report including anxiety, depression, fatigue, pain, continence issues, memory problems and sleep disturbance. The condition can also affect all aspects of daily living including talking, walking, swallowing and writing.

3. We believe that with appropriate care and support, many people with Parkinson's can have a good quality of life for many years after diagnosis.
  4. Parkinson's UK is the research and support charity for everyone affected by the condition. We bring people with the condition, their carer's and families together via our network of local groups, our website and free confidential helpline. Specialist nurses, our supporters and staff provide information and training on every aspect of Parkinson's.
  5. We welcome the North east combined authority's call for evidence on transport and have sought the views of people affected by Parkinson's living and working in the area. Below are concerns that people expressed about whether they can travel at reasonable cost, in reasonable time and with reasonable ease.
  6. Many people living with Parkinson's need access to hospital on a regular basis to attend health appointments with members of their multi-disciplinary team, for instance consultants, Parkinson's nurses, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and psychiatrists. Visits to these professionals are crucial for people with Parkinson's to maintain their health and wellbeing. However a number of our supporters shared their difficulties with being able to get to hospital if they live in the country, on the outskirts of a main city or even in the centre. For instance:
    - a. Once out of the Tyne Valley main corridor access by bus is difficult from Alston to Hexham.
    - b. It is even more difficult to get to Newcastle, Bellingham, Hexham or Wooler to Alnwick or Berwick.
    - c. The buses do not link up with key areas in the region, such as Hexham to Newcastle or Carlisle or Alnwick to Newcastle.
  7. We have also heard that there can be issues getting to and from hospitals after working hours as some services reduce after 6pm to just one per hour. For instance people in south west or west Northumberland struggle to get transport to take them to Newcastle Freeman or the Royal Victoria Hospital, Newcastle.
  8. We would be happy to provide further information on access to public services to improve life for those affected by Parkinson's.
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## **7. Evidence from the Association of Colleges**

Over 100,000 young people and adults per year are enrolled on high quality vocational and academic courses and Apprenticeships at the ten Further Education Colleges which are located in the NECA area. The Colleges recognise that an excellent transport system is of critical importance in supporting a growing economy and to ensure that the NECA area can attract new investment and people.

However against a backdrop of the statutory education participation age being raised to 18 – coupled with severe cuts in public funding for Further Education (for example, the Adult Skills Budget having been cut by 24% between 2014/15 and 2015/16) - the ten Colleges in the NECA area are currently investing a significant amount of resources to ensure that as many young people and adults as possible have the opportunity to attend college without transport being a barrier. In some cases the cost of this travel exceeds £1000 per learner and it is necessary to pay two or even three different transport providers.

So whilst some progress has been made in recent years there does still appear to be room for improvement in developing a more cohesive transport strategy in the NECA area in order to

ensure that travel cost and accessibility is not prohibitive to young people and adults when seeking to engage in educational and employment opportunities.

For example current arrangements make it particularly difficult for college students to travel across county boundaries and in some circumstances within the same county. In contrast an excellent example of a cohesive strategy is Transport for London which offers all students under 18 free travel across all London Borough's with a single public transport provider.

Taken as a whole it is estimated that the majority of FE college students travel to college using public transport and are therefore dependent upon the punctuality and reliability of this service. It appears that one of the largest factors in causing delays is a lack of capacity in the infrastructure – particularly at peak times - to cope with patterns of demand.

In addition to enabling young people and adults to access education provision it is recognised that effective transport networks are a key to economic growth and in ensuring that this ultimately generates opportunity and prosperity for all.

To ensure that the travel system is “intelligent” and functions correctly, well trained staff are required to design, create and maintain it. So in addition to being key stakeholders in the NECA area's transport system colleges have a key role to play in supporting the development of skills needed to design, develop and operate the transport system.

Just one example of this is Newcastle College's Rail Academy which is the only facility of its kind in the country. This offers the region a vital resource in developing the trained staff of the future for both the backbone and development of a regional ITS structure. In addition, this facility is augmented, with other provision within the college to provide training to transport infrastructure staff.

In order to address the aspirations of NECA and to develop an ITS, further development and training of key personnel will be required to build on this initial momentum. In addition Newcastle College is developing its capacity and expertise to enable it to offer training and development in new areas including logistics, traffic flow management and multimodal networks which combine Information Technology and Telecommunication Systems and include cyber security, data systems and on-line information.

Colleges in the NECA area would welcome the opportunity to discuss their thoughts further and to work in collaboration with NECA to address the issues which have been identified above.

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## Response from The City of Durham Trust to the North East Combined Authority's request for views on future public transport needs in the region.

We were asked to give considered response to three questions about local public transport:

- Whether people can travel at reasonable cost, in reasonable time, and with reasonable ease
- The extent to which public transport gives adequate access to employment sites; and
- What alternative transport approaches could be considered that would support people into permanent employment.

These questions are necessarily deeply intertwined (for instance, “reasonable cost” in question 1 is effectively presupposed by “adequate access” in question 2) and they cannot be considered in isolation from each other. In addition, no viable policy on public transport needs can be separated from crucial issues of spatial planning more generally, especially concerning the location of new housing and employment sites, as well as other measures that influence private car use such as major new road building.

### Spatial Planning

Durham County Council's Local Transport Plan 3, adopted in 2011 after extensive consultation, set out a firm and commendable policy basis for discouraging additional or longer car journeys and for favouring the more sustainable forms of transport. It rests on the principles of ensuring that all County residents can access opportunities without the necessity of reliance on private motorised transport, and on development policies which minimise the need for new road construction.

Paragraphs A.5.1-A.5.3 of that document read:

A.5.1 Road building can be disruptive and expensive and it is more preferable that new development is located to minimise the need for new road construction. In terms of building roads to overcome problems relating to congestion and safety, then such projects shall only be pursued after all other potential options have been considered.

A.5.2 The new road infrastructure programme has to change from facilitating the growth of traffic to one of managing the growth of traffic, with a view to eventually reducing traffic.... To be consistent with this Plan's goals, new roads need to be designed so as not to encourage more or longer car journeys, nor detract from any of the more sustainable forms of transport.

A.5.3 The County Council will continue its approach to integrating all modes of transport, to build a sustainable transport system for the county and will ensure that all new highway proposals complement the Plan's goals. All highway schemes will be fully assessed to ensure that they fully support the Plan's [i.e. LTP3's] goals and challenges.

Unfortunately the Durham County Council appears largely to have disregarded its own policies in its subsequent approach to transport delivery and in the exercise of its strategic land-use and development control responsibilities. Contrary to the

provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, it has allowed out of town shopping and employment sites to expand at the expense of town centres, while for budgetary reasons it has significantly reduced its expenditure on supporting bus services, with the consequence that in many parts of the County no bus services are provided in the evenings and on Sundays. At the same time the Council has continued to prioritise expenditure on schemes which improve the journey times of car users, in some instances to the detriment of pedestrians and cyclists. This approach is clearly contrary to LTP policy A.5.2, and as a result the relative disadvantage of public transport users, pedestrians and cyclists has increased since the new Council was established in 2009.

Durham County Council's "Integrated Transport Approach for Durham City" of 2013 argued:

Durham City is the most sustainable settlement within the County from a transport perspective. The County taken as a whole has a dispersed settlement pattern which creates specific transport issues. The majority of its residents do not live, work, shop or spend recreational time all in one place and the provision of public transport in the County is difficult and is often reliant on subsidies, especially in rural areas.

For Durham County Council this difficult scenario remains one which supports a policy of intensified development in and around Durham City. This is understood to remain the argument of the emerging new draft of the County Durham Plan, despite heavy criticism of this policy in an Independent Inspector's report of February 2015. This led to the Council's launching an appeal for judicial review. The High Court's subsequent quashing of the Inspector's report related, necessarily, to matters of procedure, not of content, with the court also ordering withdrawal of the original plan. To date, no cogent answer has been given to the Inspector's criticism that the Council's development policy risks further exacerbating the isolation and deprivation of other parts of the County.

Ironically, this preferred mode of recent developments in the area near Durham City has actually tended to weaken it as a retail centre, for the stress has been on out-of-centre retail centres and for plans for housing estates built near them in the green belt. In addition, the Council's policy of shifting its own key customer-facing services to out of centre locations such as Belmont Business Park (the parking shop, the registration of birth, deaths and marriages, and most recently the social work services moved from Hopper House) is both undermining the city centre and making such facilities more difficult for non-car users to access, whether they are city residents or those from further away who travel to Durham by bus and who are now forced to make a second journey to reach these Council offices. Current car parking regimes also reflect this regressive out of-centre bias, with charges for those in the centre while outlying retail and business centres are free.

In the meantime, the balance of use of retail properties in the centre of Durham City has changed, with a proliferation of coffee shops and estate agents while other goods (for example, hardware, household goods, men's clothes) are provided in small quantities by a very limited number of shops. Recent planning applications have seen a prime site on Claypath turned over to student housing, and a drastic reduction in retail space proposed for a major shopping mall with space being devoted instead to restaurants and a cinema. In the past year the Council has approved an additional out-of-town retail park on Dragon Lane and extra capacity at the Arnison Centre.

- **Whether people can travel at reasonable cost, in reasonable time, and with reasonable ease**
- **The extent to which public transport gives adequate access to employment sites**

These two questions need to be answered together.

A recent national survey by the Campaign for Better Transport of cuts to supported bus services shows that reductions in support from Durham County Council have been small compared to those in other regions, with a 1.5% cut levied in 2014-2015. Nevertheless, large parts of Durham County are becoming increasingly cut off, with loss of Sunday and evening services. Rural areas are particularly disadvantaged. For instance, the latest one can leave for Wolsingham by bus from Durham on a weekday is 19.15. Along with the closure of many pubs and local post offices, such deteriorations represent a slow death sentence to many small communities, cutting young people off from the chance of accessible employment or social life.

Urban centres are also being affected. There is no bus service on a Sunday between Durham and Seaham, and links between Durham and Bishop Auckland, two of the largest towns in the County, consist only of a half hourly bus service after 7pm on weekdays and hourly on Sunday evenings. The situation is exacerbated by the extremely reduced nature of the rail network in the County. To travel by rail between Durham to Sunderland, or to Gateshead, Washington or Stockton is at present time-consuming to the point of being impractical. Only the Durham to Newcastle and Durham to Darlington routes are feasible as useful links, while train services between Durham and Chester-le-Street run only every 2 hours for most of the day.

The privatized nature of local bus services can be a significant hindrance to travel. At present to buy a return ticket out towards Gilesgate Moor from Durham City is to restrict yourself as to which company's service can be used in the return journey. Journeys which entail a change of service will often require a new and separate ticket. The information available at bus stations and bus stops is also often inadequate, with timetables that require detailed advance local knowledge to be usable.

Bus services do not serve some major employment sites very well: Durham University's Mountjoy Campus is isolated, as is Belmont Industrial Park. Currently, the quickest route between Belmont and the Raintons and the University is by changing between the GoAhead Sunderland buses at the Claypath underpass and an Arriva service to or from Middlebrough, Bishop Auckland, or Hartlepool. But (a) the bus stops are not laid out to facilitate such an interchange, and (b) because the services are operated by different companies, two tickets are needed, even though both Arriva and Go-Ahead have their own zonal tickets for their services in Durham City.

The Trust understands that at a recent meeting of Durham University's sustainable transport group there were various discussions along the lines of the need for better cycle infrastructure, for faster public transport connections with Queen's Campus, Stockton and Teesside generally, and for buses from the Belmont and Sniperley Park & Ride to serve the University. This issue is not just of importance for the University, for residents of Durham City will recognise how strongly traffic levels and local congestion suddenly ease during the University vacations.

To return to the example of Belmont Industrial Estate, the poor provision of public transport effectively cuts off this site from access by those without a private vehicle. To highlight the absurdity of this situation we observe that when Arriva relocated its Durham bus garage out to the Business Park it had to provide a mini-bus for its own employees because of the lack of a regular scheduled bus link between the city centre and the new depot, apart, that is, from the very few peak-hour buses operated by its competitor.

A comparable situation exists in relation to Aykley Heads, which Durham County Council has been pushing vehemently as the most attractive business location in the North East, stressing its supposedly fine transport links. A Traveline check for the journey from High Shincliffe to Aykley Heads in the morning peak revealed that two of the suggested options for travel entailed getting off the bus at the Market Place and then taking a walk of twenty-five minutes for the rest of the way.

Because travel by car is still significantly cheaper for almost all journeys, the retarded and disintegrated nature of the local transport services still locks the County into an environmentally destructive pattern of increased car dependency. The lack of adequate public transport provision and the continuance of planning policies which encourage or necessitate use of the private car is a social injustice. This injustice seems particularly stark for many women in the County seeking employment. Scrutiny of the latest unemployment statistics from NOMIS, compared with the figures from five years ago, shows that the situation for women during this period became significantly worse, even while male employment rates have exceeded the national and regional trend:

This is the unemployment average for the 12 months April 2014-March 2015

County Durham:	Male 4.9% (6,500)	Female 9.3% (11,700)	NE
average M	8.1%	F 7.8 %	GB average M 6.1% F 5.8%

Going 5 years back, to the start of the new Council (April 2009-March 2010) the figures were:

Male 9.2% (11,400)	Female 7.2% (8,000)	NE average	M 11.3%	F 7.9%
GB average M	8.8%	F	6.8%	

This context highlights the social injustice inherent in the Durham County's current policies insofar as they merely assume or encourage private car use, for in most one-car households it is still the male who generally uses the car.

Finally, lack of adequate evening travel by public transport means that a considerable part of the population is effectively living under curfew (the last train even from Newcastle back to Durham City on a Saturday leaves at 21:55).

- **What alternative transport approaches could be considered that would support people into permanent employment.**

The City of Durham Trust would welcome the establishment of a regional transport body able to determine the funding priorities for transport infrastructure schemes across the region, as opposed to schemes with a more parochial focus, such as recent and still active plans for Western and Northern relief roads around Durham City, environmentally destructive schemes that could only increase dependency on the private car. The Trust believes that any money raised from developers and likely to

be earmarked for the two relief roads could be more sustainably used to help improve rail links between Durham City and the north and the north east.

The Trust supports current plans from the North East Combined Authority for a Quality Contract Scheme for more legal power over bus services, setting ticket prices, routes and timetables, and ensuring the interoperability of tickets between different companies and modes. Such proposals, however, are currently developed only in application only to Tyne and Wear (via NEXUS) and on some routes in and out of County Durham and Northumberland. However, as Mr Kevan Jones, MP for North Durham, has argued, there is now a danger of regions outside of Tyne and Wear losing out, becoming less accessible and being perceived as having a second rate transport infrastructure. A transport scheme of this kind must surely embrace the whole area of the new authority, not just the urban core. Given that wider context, the Trust would support unreservedly current plans, that significant amounts of money currently taken by bus companies be redistributed to support local services. We also agree that bus fares need to be reduced, having risen by on average more than 3% above inflation for a decade, as well as with a proposal that younger people, aged 16 to 18, travel at a reduced fare (which would also support the central government policy that young adults undergo education or training to the age of 18). In general and as a crude basic principle, the cost of using public transport should be less than that of using a car.

The current situation with bus services in and around Durham City illustrates such a need for a wider Quality Contract Scheme. Durham County Council's current options for supporting buses are severely limited and any proposed financial support for bus services is piecemeal, with developers being asked for a financial contribution towards bus provision for specific sites. Durham County Council's "Integrated Transport Approach for Durham City" of 2013 also remains timid of sustainable transport measures once they suggest expenditure, and makes no mention of any measures that might raise revenues by constraining the private car, such as an extended congestion charge or workplace parking levy, measures recommended by the Transport Innovation Fund study of 2006/7 as reducing congestion when combined with enhanced public transport. Increased use of 20 mph speed limits in town and village centres will make them safer and more attractive as retail and community centres. The closure of selected streets to private traffic altogether is a well-known method of increasing the vibrancy attractiveness of central retail areas..

An IPPR study published a year ago demonstrated that transport capital investment in the North East was distinctly less than all other English regions: <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/aug/07/london-gets-24-times-as-much-infrastructure-north-east-england> . In this context, the current proposals and rhetoric concerning a "Northern Powerhouse" represent an opportunity to attract needed central government funding for transport, and the Trust believes this can be more easily achieved by the development of bolder, more innovative and sustainable schemes, as opposed to various and expensive fixes to congested bottlenecks in a highways network that is far less sustainable in the longer term. Core Planning Principle 17 of the NPPF requires planning "for developments which make the fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are, or can be made sustainable."

The Trust supports further research into the viability of reopening former railway branch lines in the regions and notes that the Campaign for Better Transport has singled out 12 such lines in the North East (<http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/re->

opening-rail-lines#ne ). The Trust welcomed consideration of options in the draft County Durham Plan for extending the operations of the Tyne & Wear Metro into the County from their existing terminus on the former Durham- Sunderland branch at South Hylton to a proposed new railway station at Horden Sea View (Paragraph 9.30). 1 The safeguarding of those parts of the Leamside line within or along the County boundary should also be extended to the former Durham-Sunderland branch between Newton Hall and Leamside, for the same reasons that are set out in para. 9.34 of the draft plan. 2 Safeguarding the Leamside line should include provision of a station at Ferryhill and the Leamside line and should also be included in considerations for any extended metro. This could provide opportunities for sustainable rapid transport links to be created from the Newton Hall and Belmont/Sherburn areas to Washington, Newcastle and Sunderland via Rainton, relieving the A167, A690 and A1(M). It would possibly also allow the Belmont Park & Ride site to be developed into a major multi-modal transport interchange, capable of feeding the Tyne & Wear conurbation in addition to Durham City, and thus reducing carbon emissions within the county which arise from cross-boundary car journeys.

## Summary of Main Points

*Spatial Planning.* The feasibility and cost of local transport use is not just a matter of transport systems themselves. Their use is fundamentally influenced by planning decisions on the location of housing, employment, and of public service and retail sites. Current trends towards out-of-centre retail and business parks have only built in divisive assumptions of private car ownership and made sustainable travel more impracticable.

*Ease, cost and reliability of local transport, and of access to places of work.* The current limited and declining provision of bus services is cutting off the more rural areas of the County, especially in the evening and at weekends. It also serves poorly links between larger centres. Journeys can be roundabout, excessively expensive, and may involve more than one operator and ticket. There is no practicable and attractive railway access to urban centres in the County which are not on the East Coast Main line. Current Durham County Council ideas on sustainable transport have often been rather feeble add-ons to schemes which actually lock-in and encourage private car use. The difficulty of travel seems especially to have impacted employment prospects among the female population of the County.

*Alternatives that would improve the situation.* The Trust would welcome changes to the law that would enable an integrated transport scheme, such as that currently in the pipeline for Tyne and Wear, to be expanded to the whole NE region. Railway lines should be reopened and the metro extended. Larger scale sustainable schemes of that sort could be offered as giving credibility to the place of County Durham in a "Northern Powerhouse."

## Notes

1. "In particular, a new station on the Durham Coast Line, and the Leamside Line provide opportunities for sustainable travel from the County into the conurbations. Although not included in the Plan there is also potential the Tyne and Wear Metro could extend into County Durham in the longer term with an extension. Nexus, who manage public transport in Tyne and Wear, have expressed an interest in extending the Metro service southwards on the Durham Coast Line, to Seaham and possibly to the new station at Horden (Peterlee). The extension would be dependent on the electrification of the Durham Coast Line and compatibility with existing passenger and freight services."

2. "There is evidence that both the ECML and parts of the A1(M), particularly the Gateshead Western Bypass, are running at or above capacity. The reinstatement of the Leamside Line would be a significant and regionally important piece of transport infrastructure which would provide additional capacity and relieve the existing two track railway between Darlington and Newcastle, improve transport accessibility across the region and provide opportunities for modal switch and the associated environmental benefits this entails. It would also have the added benefit of providing extra capacity for more freight to be transported in and out of the County making the area a more attractive location for business."

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