

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

19 March 2024

Network North: Phase 3 Bus Service Improvement Plan funding proposal

Report of the Corporate Director - Environment

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To brief the Executive on the Network North Bus Service Improvement Plan 3 funding for 2024/25 and seek approval to submit scheme proposals and accept the one-year funding.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Bus services continue to be under significant pressure both locally and nationally following the Covid-19 pandemic. Passenger numbers have recovered to around c.90% of pre covid levels with this figure much lower for concessionary pass users at around 70%. This has particularly affected rural routes where older passengers represented a greater proportion of users.
- 2.2 There has also been a significant increase in operating costs (vehicle procurement, maintenance, insurance, staffing, property rental and fuel) along with national difficulties with recruiting bus drivers, engineering staff and sourcing spare parts. As a result of these added pressures, providers are reviewing their services more than ever before, resulting in commercial service level reductions and higher prices for routes operating under contract to the council.
- 2.3 Around a third of bus services have seen timetable reductions since the pandemic or have required additional financial support to maintain services. The Council is also receiving other grants from the Department for Transport (DfT) to support previously commercial bus routes that would otherwise already have been withdrawn due to fewer passengers travelling and rising costs. North Yorkshire County Council received £1,389,140 in 2022/23 and £1.4m of funding allocated for both 2023/24 and 2024/25 to the new unitary council. This will be used to meet the higher cost of maintaining the current bus network until 2025.
- 2.4 On 23 October 2023, the Government announced a further £150 million of funding for buses called 'Network North: Phase 3 Bus Service Improvement Plan funding' (BSIP3). This is to be allocated to local authorities in the Midlands and the North for 2024/25, following the decision not to proceed with the High Speed 2 rail project.
- 2.5 On 07 December 2023, North Yorkshire Council received notification from the DfT that we had an indicative allocation of £3.5m one off, temporary funding for 2024/25. (Appendix A).

3.0 BSIP3 funding approach

- 3.1 BSIP3 is revenue funding and is currently temporary for one year only (2024/25) and so will need to be focused on schemes that can be delivered in a relatively short timescale. Working with the bus companies, we need to submit proposals to DfT for approval by 28 March (with a draft by 29 February) for this funding to be confirmed.
- 3.2 Schemes need to be agreed through our Enhanced Partnership, which includes bus companies and passenger representatives. DfT expects us to use the funding to maintain existing service levels and on measures that are consistent with official guidance on BSIPs. The terms of our existing Memorandum of Understanding for BSIP funding signed on 29 September will also apply to BSIP3. (Appendix B).
- 3.3 Proposals will need to fit within the following categories:
- Bus Service Support
 - Fares Support
 - Marketing
 - EP Delivery: LTA Costs
 - Other Infrastructure
 - Ticketing Reform
 - DRT
 - Other
- 3.4 Given the priority local residents have placed on bus services in the recent Local Transport Plan engagement, this additional funding gives an opportunity to address some of the issues that were raised, albeit on a temporary basis to pilot services which operators feel may have commercial prospects if the funds were used to support them initially. With this in mind, we are focussing on some key areas of delivery:
- Strengthening bus routes through higher frequency and improvements to evening and weekend services
 - Making bus travel more affordable for young people by introducing a £1 fare cap for a single journey for those under 19 years old.
 - Improving information and customer experience through better marketing and promotion as well as providing additional customer service support at very busy bus stations
 - Providing additional journeys for rural communities
 - Delivery of general maintenance improvements to bus service infrastructure such as bus stops and signage
- 3.5 With the establishment of the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) in February 2024 we are working closely with City of York to ensure our BSIP plans align and that passengers will see a joined-up approach on bus fares and services. City of York received a £1.15m BSIP3 allocation, on top of their £16m of original BSIP support. Future BSIP funding for both authorities will go via the MCA.
- 3.6 All Bus operators were asked to submit proposals for using BSIP3 funding and we held an Enhanced Partnership Board meeting on 09 January to discuss ideas. The results of this, along with resident and stakeholder feedback from the Let's Talk Transport engagement, have been used to develop scheme proposals to submit to DfT. (Appendix C). The proposals are geographically diverse and will support improvements to a range of service across the County.

- 3.7 The schemes introduced will be for service enhancements and fare promotions designed to be in place for one year only. The funding will be utilised to pump prime additional service frequencies and to reduce the cost of travel for under 19's with an aim to increase ridership and make services financially sustainable. It is important to note that these improvements will only be on a trial basis for a period of one year. Should the increased services not be utilised by the public during this period and therefore not become commercially viable, they will be withdrawn at the end of the funding period in March 2025.

4.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

- 4.1 Engagement with bus operators has taking place through the Enhanced Partnership which includes bus companies and the passenger representative group Passenger Focus. A briefing was made to the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 01 February and the proposals are being informed by the extensive 2023 Local Transport Plan engagement which received around 5000 public and stakeholder responses.
<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/letstalkny>

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None, this is additional funding to support bus services in North Yorkshire. If we do not submit schemes for consideration the opportunity to improve public transport for residents will be missed and it may prejudice future Government grant funding.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The BSIP3 grant is revenue funding of £3.5m for one year, 24/25. No match funding is required. The grant is additional funding being provided for bus services and proposed schemes will need to be approved by DfT and will be fully funded by the BSIP3 grant. As the proposals will initially be only for one year, in line with the grant, there will be no ongoing funding requirement for the council.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None, BSIP3 is a further funding allocation under our existing BSIP, and the same conditions and Memorandum of Understanding will apply. Previous BSIP+ funding was approved by the Executive on 19 September 2023.

8.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any adverse equality impacts arising from this decision (see Appendix D). The acceptance of the BSIP3 grant will enable the release of £3.5m funding to the council to improve local bus services local bus services which are often relied on by older, disabled or lower income groups.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any adverse climate impacts arising from this decision and a Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) has been undertaken. (Appendix E). Improving local bus services will support travel by more sustainable modes and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport by reducing private car journeys. Improving local bus services will support a modal shift away from the car with associated positive climate impacts.

10.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 DfT has made £3.5m available to improve local bus services in North Yorkshire during 2024/25. This is new funding that will be used to improve local bus services and lower bus fares for one year on a pilot basis which will benefit residents across the county.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 11.1 The Executive is asked to consider the information in this report and:
- i) approve the submission of BSIP3 proposals to the Department for Transport by 28 March 2024.
 - ii) and to authorise the Corporate Director - Environment, in conjunction with the Corporate Director - Resources, to accept the BSIP3 grant from Department for Transport subject to agreeing appropriate terms.

APPENDICES:

- Appendix A – BSIP3 allocation letter from DfT
- Appendix B – BSIP Memorandum of Understanding
- Appendix C – BSIP3 Scheme proposals
- Appendix D – Equalities Impact Assessment
- Appendix E – Climate Change Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

Karl Battersby
Corporate Director – Environment
County Hall
Northallerton
22.02.24

Report Author – Andy Clarke Public & Community Transport Manager
Presenter of Report – Paul Thompson, Assistant Director - Integrated Passenger Transport, Licensing, Public Rights of Way and Harbours

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

Initial equality impact assessment screening form			
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.			
Directorate	Environment		
Service area	Integrated Passenger Transport		
Proposal being screened	BSIP3 Funding		
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Andy Clarke		
What are you proposing to do?	Submit proposals & accept the BSIP3 funding allocated to NYC by the Department for Transport.		
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	This will enable the release of £3.5m funding allocated to NYC to improve local bus services. This will bring benefits for bus passengers including groups with protected characteristics.		
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	No		
Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYCC's additional agreed characteristics			
As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? 			
If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your Equality rep for advice if you are in any doubt.			
Protected characteristic	Potential for adverse impact		Don't know/No info available
	Yes	No	
Age		X	
Disability		X	
Sex		X	
Race		X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage or civil partnership		X	
People in rural areas		X	
People on a low income		X	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		X	
Are from the Armed Forces Community		X	
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	This grant will provide additional funding to support local bus services which are often relied on by older, disabled or lower income groups.		
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with	no		

protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.				
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Continue to full EIA:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for decision	Accepting this grant will provide additional funding for public transport. This will bring benefits for bus passengers including groups with protected characteristics.			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Paul Thompson			
Date	22.02.2024			

Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:

Planning Permission
Environmental Impact Assessment
Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk for advice.

Title of proposal	Network North: Phase 3 Bus Service Improvement Plan funding proposal	
Brief description of proposal	Submit proposal & accept the BSIP3 funding allocated to NYC by the Department for Transport. Funding will be used to improve local bus services and lower bus fares across the county.	
Directorate	Environment	
Service area	Integrated Passenger Transport	
Lead officer	Andy Clarke	
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	None	
Date impact assessment started	22 February 2024	

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Options appraisal

Were any other options considered in trying to achieve the aim of this project? If so, please give brief details and explain why alternative options were not progressed.

No, this is additional funding to support bus services in North Yorkshire. If we do not submit schemes for consideration the opportunity to improve public transport for residents will be missed and it may prejudice future Government grant funding.

What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Cost neutral, funding is being provided by Dept for Transport.

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes over and above business as usual Evidence or measurement of effect Figures for CO₂e Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
<p>Minimise greenhouse gas emissions e.g. reducing emissions</p>	<p>Emissions from travel</p>	X		<p>Improving bus services and lowering fares encourages modal shift from the private car which reduces emissions.</p>	<p>A number of the routes involved will be operated by electric buses by</p>	<p>Improving passenger numbers strengthens bus services which increases the</p>

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<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where	No impact (Place a X in the box below where	Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.					summer 2024 which further supports a reduction in travel emissions.	likelihood of further investment in lower / zero emission vehicles.
	Emissions from construction		X	No impact anticipated		
	Emissions from running of buildings		X	No impact anticipated		
	Other					
Minimise waste : Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic		X		No impact anticipated		
Reduce water consumption		X		No impact anticipated		

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<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)		X		No impact anticipated		
Ensure resilience to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers		X		No impact anticipated		
Enhance conservation and wildlife		X		No impact anticipated		
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of North Yorkshire's landscape		X		No impact anticipated		
Other (please state below)		X		No impact anticipated		

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Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal? If so, please detail how this proposal meets those standards.

N/A

Summary Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

Improving local bus services will support travel by more sustainable modes and lower greenhouse gas emissions from transport by reducing private car journeys. Improving local bus services will support a modal shift away from the car with associated positive climate impacts.

Sign off section

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

Name	Andy Clarke
Job title	Public & Community Transport Manager
Service area	Integrated Passenger Transport
Directorate	Business and Environmental Services
Signature	A Clarke
Completion date	22/02/2024

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): Paul Thompson

Date: 23.02.24

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