

North East Local Enterprise Partnership Board



Thursday 29 September 2016

17.00 – 19.00

Venue: Cathedral Suite, Durham County Cricket
Club, Chester-Le-Street, Co. Durham, DH3
3QR

AGENDA

1. **Welcome from the Chair and apologies (5.00pm)**
2. **Minutes of the last Board Meeting held on Thursday 28 July 2016 (5.05pm).**
The Board will be asked to agree the Minutes.
3. **Appointment of Vice Chair and Business Growth Board Members – paper attached (5:10pm)**
Helen Golightly to update the Board
4. **Innovation Update (5.15pm)**
Hans Moller to present to the Board
5. **Inward Investment Update (5.35pm)**
Guy Currey to present to the Board.
6. **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – Funding Update – Paper attached (5.55pm)**
Helen Golightly to update the Board.
This report is confidential as it contains commercial information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person or organisation and is not for wider circulation.
7. **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – Delivery Plan 2016/2017 Update – Paper attached (6.10pm)**
Helen Golightly to update the Board.
This report is confidential as it contains commercial information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person or organisation and is not for wider circulation.
8. **Brexit – Paper attached (6.20pm)**
Helen Golightly to update the Board.
This report is confidential as it contains commercial information relating to the financial or

THIS IS NOT A PUBLIC MEETING

business affairs of organisations and is not for wider circulation

9. Devolution Update – Verbal update (6:30pm)

Verbal update to the Board.

10. NECA Theme Updates (6.50pm)

- Employability and Inclusion – paper attached
Councillor Davey to update the Board
- Economic Assets and Infrastructure – paper attached
Councillor Malcolm to update the Board
- Transport and Digital Connectivity - paper attached
Councillor Forbes to update the Board

11. Any Other Business

12. Date and Time of next meeting – Thursday 24th November 2016 from 5-7pm

ITEM 10a

North East Combined Authority

Leadership Board

Date: 20 September 2016

Subject: EMPLOYABILITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE

Report of: Thematic Lead for Employability and Inclusion

Executive Summary

This report provides an update as to the latest progress being made in delivering the Employability and Inclusion; and Skills themes of the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for the North East.

Recommendations

The Leadership Board is recommended to note the contents of the report.

Leadership Board

1 Employment Support

Intelligence

- 1.1 The Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) Portal for the North East has been redesigned to include real time access to Office for National Statistics data sets and now incorporates vacancy data available through the Labour Insight Tool. The data is available at NELEP/NECA and Local Authority levels at: <http://www.labourmarketnortheast.co.uk/>. The site has received almost 38,000 views by 9,000 unique users in the last 12 months and has 1,200 subscribers to a weekly e-bulletin.
- 1.2 The next stage of development is the design of a number of Careers Videos that will be developed to promote our key priority sectors. Denis Hall Associates have been appointed to develop the videos, which are expected to be available in the autumn 2016. They will involve local employers and younger employees (apprentices) who can talk about what it is like to work in a particular industry. The videos will be supplemented by information packs and lesson plans for teachers.
- 1.3 CfBT (the North East provider for the National Careers Service) is currently developing a programme for a North East LMI Conference. The provisional date for the conference is 17 November 2016. The conference will raise awareness of the availability and potential uses of LMI as well as including a number of sector-focused workshops to showcase current and future opportunities in particular sectors and industries.
- 1.4 Work is ongoing to support various initiatives with their LMI needs including the Good Career Guidance Benchmarks, development of Devolution proposals and support to ensure that ESF proposals meet our strategic priorities.

DWP European Social Fund (ESF) Opt-In for the North East

- 1.5 The DWP 'Opt-In' programme utilising £6m European Social Fund (ESF) will test a locally designed programme to help long term unemployed residents into work, targeting residents who have completed the DWP Work Programme without finding sustained work and who have a mental or physical health barrier to work.
- 1.6 The tendering process closed at the end of April. The preferred bidder for the North East has been agreed and can be made public on 15th September. The anticipated contract period will be November 2016 to October 2019 to support 2,500 participants across the NECA area. NECA officers will be part of performance management arrangements and will work with DWP to ensure

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delivery is effectively at the local level and integrated with other local provision.

Mental Health Trailblazer

- 1.7 The North East Mental Health Trailblazer will pilot an approach to improve job outcome rates for unemployed people with mental health conditions through integrating employment support with psychological therapy delivered by Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services in each NECA LA area. The £2.2m two year programme will support 1,500 participants across the NECA area. It is being overseen by the DWP/DH Work and Health Unit.
- 1.8 The programme has been significantly delayed by DWP approval processes. However, most processes are now completed and staff are being appointed in September. Jobcentre Plus staff will undergo training to identify and refer participants. The formal launch data and first referrals will now take place in early October.

2 Youth employment

Generation NE

- 2.1 Generation NE is now fully operational and the programme has supported in excess of 2400 young people, of which over 1200 have moved into employment and over 200 have gained work experience to date, 500 of those gaining employment have now sustained employment for 6 months or more.
- 2.2 The programme is continuing to deliver very good value for money compared to original expectations and this has been highlighted in a 'mid-term review' of the programme; a full report of the review findings has been prepared for Leadership Board.
- 2.3 Delivery of Generation NE will extend to the full NECA geography by October 2016, with the programme manager involved in an active dialogue with officers and Jobcentre Plus representatives to facilitate this.
- 2.4 Generation NE is demonstrating the impact that can be achieved through a programme that is locally led, both strategically and operationally and that can impartially 'make sense' of a complex and fragmented system. In order to continue to contribute to tackling our local economic challenges it is suggested that Generation NE should be extended and widen its focus, delivering support for those young people that do not claim benefit and are generally ineligible for much of the mainstream government support. The

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programme manager is in active dialogue with DCLG and DWP to facilitate this.

- 2.5 Funding is currently available to support this extension under Investment Priority 1.2 of the European Social Fund or the equivalent domestic funding to replace it. It is recommended that the principle of aligning some of this available funding to Generation NE should be further explored, which will allow the lifetime of the programme to be extended for up to 3 years and also the impact of the programme to be broadened to support a wider cohort of young people outlined above. Support will continue to be delivered to the existing eligibility group of young people who claim Jobseekers Allowance and Universal Credit.

Durham Youth Employment Initiative (DurhamWorks)

- 2.6 DurhamWorks has been delivering since April and at 10th August had engaged 1005 participants. 62% are male and 38% female with 51% being 16-18 years old and 49% being 19-24. Changes to the participant eligibility evidence required by DWP have proved challenging, but processes are in place to ensure that DWP's expectations are met. The first claim has been submitted to DWP and all partners are now waiting for confirmation of payment.
- 2.7 All Delivery Partners have access to the BkSB initial assessment tool which they are using to support participants with functional English and maths.
- 2.8 The Hanlon participant tracking system is being used by all Delivery Partners and continues to be refined to meet the needs of the programme. The performance reporting tools in the system are beginning to take shape and will provide valuable data from quarter 3 onwards.
- 2.9 Groups to support the ESIF Cross Cutting themes of Sustainability and Gender Equality and Equality of Opportunity have been established, alongside those for the development of Marketing activity and the Participant Voice. The latter group is particularly important because the group will identify ways to access feedback from DurhamWorks participants about what is and isn't working for them in order to refine delivery. Delivery Partner representatives are engaged in each of these groups and their expertise and knowledge will be invaluable in shaping the groups' work.
- 2.10 Marketing and Employer Engagement plans are in place. There is an interim DurhamWorks website - www.durhamworks.info and a procurement exercise is currently underway to create a permanent site. The DurhamWorks Facebook page is also now live - www.facebook.com/durhamworks. The wrap

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around support staff are using Facebook as an engagement tool with participants and young people are responding well to this form of contact.

Good Career Guidance Benchmarks

- 2.11 From June 2015 and in partnership with The Gatsby Foundation, North East LEP has been supporting the application of the Good Career Guidance benchmarks. This provides the opportunity to test the benchmarks in action; lead the development of practice which will have local impact and national profile; and improve the quality of provision and opportunity for young people.
- 2.12 Schools and colleges are currently re-auditing their position against each benchmark. This process will be completed by September and we are seeing significant progress, both in terms of fully achieving and partially achieving each career benchmark. At least three schools now fully achieve five of the benchmarks – making them comparable with the best that was seen nationally. The North East LEP is currently considering models to enable the benchmarks to be rolled-out wider than the initial pilot schools and colleges.
- 2.13 The new national strategy for careers education has been completed in final draft form. The release of the new strategy has been delayed due to the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Education and a new ministerial team. The decision was taken to release the Sainsbury Review of Technical Education first and this happened in July. We are in close contact with the DfE about the release of the new national careers strategy and associated updated statutory guidance; and have developed a regional campaign to coincide with the release of the new national careers strategy so that the North East's position, in terms of leading on this work, is recognised.
- 2.14 The Sub-Committee, formed last year from the BIS and Education Select Committees to look at Careers Education, published its report. The Career Benchmarks and the North East pilot were mentioned favourably. The work we are doing delivers against many of the recommendations. We are in the process of arranging meetings with the North East MP's who sit on the reporting committee.
- 2.15 An information session was held in July for LA guidance staff to raise awareness and understanding of the career benchmarks and how they are being implemented by schools in each LA area. This builds on previous sessions that have been held in several LA areas. Two members of staff from each LA team attended the Connexions Hub and will share information back with their respective teams.
- 2.16 The pilot has funded 10 additional innovation projects across the North East LEP region. These include:

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- How can schools provide meaningful experiences of workplaces in constrained financial climates? – a study with the MDI Unit at Northumbria University with recommendations tested by schools.
- A National Good Practice guide focusing on how employers (especially enterprise advisers) can be integrated into the to both the pastoral and curriculum aspects of a school to make maximum impact.
- A research report investigating what young people mean by LMI, how they currently access LMI, how they would like to access this in the future and what they would like to be able to do with it.
- Sector based resource development with associated lesson plans for Y7/8 pupils.
- The development of a young career advocates programme focusing on pupil voice in careers education and the development of peer to peer careers resources and peer to peer careers messaging. The model will be created for replication in other schools and colleges.
- Integrating careers education into the initial teacher training of staff who intend to join the profession.
- An investigative study looking at where parents get their careers information from and how this could be improved in the future so that accurate information can be provided to young people to enable them to make more fully informed decisions.
- Development of a real-time data analytics resource that can be integrated into curriculum planning and careers messaging, including the potential development of a digital careers adviser app.
- Destinations data being tracked and shared in a more comprehensive, more timely and more coherent form so that it can be used more effectively by LEP's, LA's, School leaders, careers advisers, parents and young people.

Enterprise Advisors

- 2.17 This key Government-backed initiative was initiated in September 2015. The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) is an employer-led organisation that has been set up to inspire and prepare young people for the fast-changing world of work. Its role is to take an umbrella view of the landscape of careers and enterprise, supporting programmes that work, filling gaps in provision and ensuring coverage across the country.
- 2.18 The North East LEP has taken the opportunity to shape and adapt the original CEC model to enhance the opportunities for school and business engagement. A dedicated co-ordinator was recruited in November 2015 and

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another in May 2016. To date there are currently 59 Enterprise Advisers supporting the initiative; 40 as strategic level Enterprise Advisers (Tier 1) and 19 who wish to support the strategic level Enterprise Advisers (Tier 2).

- 2.19 Activity planned in the near future includes an ‘Inspiration event’, in the autumn, which will celebrate distance travelled by the national ‘Good Career Guidance Benchmarks’ pilot in the North East LEP region; further promote the opportunity to join Enterprise Adviser Network and enable further matches of Enterprise Advisers and schools/colleges.

3. Apprenticeships

- 3.1 The North East has a strong and active part to play in meeting the Government’s target of three million apprentices by 2020. However, there is also a recognition that there is still much to be done to deliver the stretching targets that the region has set itself within the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP).
- 3.2 Given this background, a desire has been expressed to Parliamentary Committee within the context of devolution and localism to explore the scope for ensuring how the structural changes being generated by the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy can be tailored to the specific needs of the North East with a view to maximising the number of apprenticeships starts. This is based on the premise that whilst a simple and clear approach is welcome, one size may not fit all. The North East has a high dependency upon smaller businesses with low numbers of larger, independent employers. Therefore the Combined Authority is keen to influence local solutions and flexibilities that deliver greater outcomes for all our employers, including our smaller employers and individuals.
- 3.3 The Parliamentary Committee has therefore been requested to explore the scope to build in local flexibilities to the national framework for the Apprenticeship Levy – which could obviously be enshrined in subsequent Devolution Agreements. Within this the Combined Authority’s submission indicated that the North East are prepared to act as a pilot in exploring such options and as such would be happy to participate and inform any debates or further work the Parliamentary Committee undertakes with regard to this issue.
- 3.4 The Apprenticeship Growth Partnership (AGP) met in July 2016, future meeting scheduled to take place on a quarterly basis. The group now has broad and varied representation from businesses, education and training provision. The remit of the AGP is to support businesses, to encourage the development of apprenticeship vacancies, to promote higher level

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apprenticeships and to engage sector groups to develop standards and liaise and promote the development of high quality apprenticeships.

- 3.5 The focus of the latest meeting was to discuss a strategy to engage employers regarding the reforms, concerns and the challenges employers foresee and how these can be collated and fed back through boards to Government.
- 3.6 On Friday 12th August the government published updated proposals for consultation on how the apprenticeship levy will operate from April 2017. This had been due at the end of June 2016 and was delayed due to the referendum.
- 3.7 This included information on a new apprenticeship funding system for frameworks and standards, rules for funding cross-border training and the re-training of existing staff. Updated guidance has also been published for businesses considering the employer-provider option and proposals for a new register specifically for apprenticeship training providers. The government is aiming to publish the consultation outcome in October, which will be followed by the final funding & eligibility rules in December.

4. Skills – capital investment

- 4.1 2015/16 was the first full year of the North East Growth Deal LGF Capital Programme. Ensuring the annual budget was effectively committed was a major challenge and through the efforts of delivery partners 96% of budget was spent which is regarded by Government as a positive achievement.
- 4.2 Most projects in the programme still remain at the pipeline or construction phase; however two skills projects were fully completed in 2015/16. It is not until later years of the programme that contracted outcomes are forecast to increase and targets for 2015/16 were largely met.
- 4.3 Government has confirmed that the £4.275bn remaining from the £12bn national Growth Fund budget 2015-21 will be allocated as follows:
- Housing and Communities Agency (HCA) - £2bn to support, via loans, infrastructure investment for major housing schemes – developments of over 2,500 homes.
 - DoT Large Local Transport Scheme - £475m – of which £150m is pre-allocated.
 - Growth Deal Round 3 - £1.8bn – includes a non- ring fenced £500m Access Fund.

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- 4.4 Proposals for the Growth Fund Round 3 and Large Transport Scheme were submitted in mid-July 2016. Formal notification is expected as part of the 2016 Autumn statement. Consultation with a wide range of strategic partners was undertaken and Skills Capital remains a high priority for the region.

5 Potential Impact on Objectives

- 5.1 The work being taken forward is consistent with the Combined Authority's stated objectives

6 Finance and Other Resources

- 6.1 Financial plans will be developed and reported to the Board as appropriate.

7 Legal

- 7.1 The legal implications of the work will be considered as delivery progresses.

8 Other Considerations

8.1 Consultation/Community Engagement

No consultation or community engagement has been undertaken at this stage in the work programme.

8.2 Human Rights

There are no specific issues arising from this report.

8.3 Equalities and Diversity

There are no specific issues arising from this report.

8.4 Risk Management

Appropriate risk management arrangements will be put in place as delivery progresses.

8.5 Crime and Disorder

There are no specific issues arising from this report.

8.6 Environment and Sustainability

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There are no specific issues arising from this report.

9 Background Documents

9.1 None

10 Links to the Local Transport Plans

10.1 Accessibility to employability, inclusion and skills provision is a key challenge for the North East that is appropriately reflected in the emerging Local Transport Plan.

11 Appendices

11.1 None

12 Contact Officers

12.1 Janice Rose, Policy Manager, Northumberland County Council
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01670 624747

12 Sign off

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

Please use ✓

ITEM 10b

North East Combined Authority

Leadership Board

DATE: 20 September 2016

SUBJECT: Economic Development and Regeneration Theme Update

REPORT OF: Economic Development and Regeneration Thematic Lead

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on activity and progress under the Economic Development and Regeneration theme of the Combined Authority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Leadership Board is recommended to receive this report for information.

Leadership Board

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides an update on activity and progress under the Economic Development and Regeneration theme of the Combined Authority.

The Leadership Board is recommended to receive the update for information.

2.0 Inward Investment

2.1 Inward Investment 2016/17 (Quarter 1) Successes

In Quarter 1, in total there were 16 inward investments into the NECA area which will lead to the creation of 2,435 jobs.

2.2 Foreign Direct Investment

There were ten investments leading to the creation of 880 new jobs.

Investors included:

- Teleperformance (Call centre outsourcer)
- Accenture (Software ICT)
- Janus international (Manufacturing)
- Unipress (Automotive)

2.3 Investments by UK-owned Companies from Outside of the Region

There were six investments leading to the creation of 1,555 jobs. Companies announcing investments included:

- ResQ (Contact Centre)
- Estover Energy (Energy)
- Fermeda (Life Sciences)

3.1 Enquiries

There continues to be significantly fewer enquiries coming through to the Invest North East England (INEE) Team than last year. This is mainly down to fewer enquiries from UKTI (INEE are the single point of contact for new enquiries from UKTI in the NECA area). The impact of Brexit is one possible cause of this. INEE is working closely with UKTI to gain a better understanding of what is happening and to ensure that enquiry levels recover in the second half of 2016/17.

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3.2 Invest North East England Website

One way in which the INEE team is planning to increase the size and quality of its investment enquiry pipeline is by becoming a proactive service, actively generating new investment enquiries. A key element of this new approach is the launch of the new INEE website, scheduled for the end of September.

In parallel with the website launch there will be an associated social media campaign, aimed at generating enquiries from key sectors. New investment leads are also to be sourced through lead generation contracts in key markets. In the first instance UK and overseas companies based in London will be targeted.

3.3 MIPIIM UK

INEE is to have a stand presence at the UK's largest property investment event, MIPIIM UK, which is being held in London from 19-21 October. Six private sector partner sponsors will also be attending from the North East along with representatives from NECA's constituent local authorities. As part of the event, there will be a business showcase event held with a private/public sector panel discussing key recent property deals and new opportunities available to investors in North East England.

3.4 Economic Development and Regeneration Inward Investment Workshop – 26 July 2016

3.5 Building on the discussion and presentations at the EDRAB meeting in March and a 'UKTI Summit' on the development of the Northern Powerhouse in April, an Inward Investment Workshop took place on 26th July 2016. Alongside EDRAB members (supported by economic development officers from each local authority), UKTI and private sector representatives took part in the workshop.

A debate took place on the future of Inward Investment services and activity in the NECA area. Presentations were received from UKTI and Pricewaterhouse Coopers, property development sector representatives and the Director of Invest North East England.

The Deputy Director of Global Operations for UKTI updated the group on the changes to UKTI including the new dedicated, north-focused team. It was stressed that 'co-delivery' with partners is key in the climate of limited resources. PWC had been commissioned by UKTI to undertake work on the development of the Northern Powerhouse and it was outlined that this would involve an online survey to gather factual evidence over the summer to

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understand where opportunities exist, followed up with face to face interviews with key stakeholders. The report is expected by the end of the year.

Adam Serfontein, the Managing Director of Hanro Group and Chair of Developing Consensus, along with other private sector colleagues (Tim Evans from Knight Frank and Michelle Percy from Clouston Group), provided perspectives on investing in the North East. They identified some of the experiences of investors and the private/property sector. Discussion focused on the need to promote the region coherently 'at the point of entry' and to better understand the benefits to all of each single investment. A call was made for more resource into the Invest North East team and an offer was made for the private sector to input funding to grow the team if matched by local authority funding.

The workshop concluded with a presentation from the Director of Invest North East England focusing on the issues in attracting investment to the North East, specifically the organisation of local capacity and resources. The group discussed how best to target these.

It was agreed that the EDRAB would consider the outcomes of the discussion and agree further steps.

4.0 Regional Investment Plan / Project Pipeline

4.1 The Board has received previous updates on the development of a project pipeline and how work undertaken to date has proved useful in informing bids and programmes for funding.

4.2 Information has been compiled on the type of investment, planned output/outcomes, any public investment required, delivery timescales, planning status and barriers to development, for each site (employment and housing). The work is undertaken by the NECA Planning and Housing Officer Group hosted by Durham County Council, which reports into the NECA Economic Directors.

4.3 This pipeline of projects / sites and the supporting 'spatial narrative' have helped inform the assembly of a set of significant infrastructure projects that were included in the NELEP submission to the Local Growth Fund (LGF Round 3) in July 2016. Discussions with DCLG will shortly begin, with announcements anticipated as part of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement (usually late November/early December).

5.0 Potential Impact on Objectives

5.1 The report sets out issues that will support the Authority in meeting its objectives.

6.0 Finance and Other Resources

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6.1 There are no additional financial implications arising directly from this report.

8.0 Legal

7.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

8.0 Other Considerations

8.1 Consultation/Community Engagement

There are no issues arising from this report for consultation.

9.0 Human Rights

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

10.0 Equalities and Diversity

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

11 Risk Management

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

12 Crime and Disorder

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

13 Environment and Sustainability

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

14 Background Documents

14.1 North East Strategic Economic Plan – More and Better Jobs

15 Links to Plans in the Policy Framework

15.1 This report links to the Strategic Economic Plan and other plans in the Policy Framework.

16 Appendices

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16.1 None.

17 Contact Officers

17.1 John.scott@southtyneside.gov.uk, 0191 424 6250

18 Sign off

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

ITEM 10c

North East Combined Authority

Leadership Board

DATE: 20th September 2016

SUBJECT: Transport Thematic Lead Update Report

REPORT OF: Thematic Lead for Transport

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report gives details of developments and announcements since the last update report was provided to the Leadership Board on 19th July 2016. Although, due to the parliamentary recess, major government announcements have been relatively few, there has been progress as reported below regarding:

- Transport Manifesto and Plan
- Transport for the North
- Rail
- Public Transport (Buses, Metro and Smart Travel)
- Large Local Major Transport Schemes
- Sustainable Transport

The report also includes an update on digital connectivity, reflecting the inclusion of this topic alongside transport within the Strategic Economic Plan's 'connectivity' priority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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1. Transport Manifesto and Plan

1.1 The draft refreshed version of the Transport Manifesto will be taken to the November meeting of Transport North East Committee for approval and then placed on the NECA website when the full Plan goes out to public consultation.

1.2 The draft of the full Transport Plan document is currently with relevant officers at each of the seven Councils for comment. Informal discussions will be held with lead Members from each Council in late September/early October. Dependent on the scale of consequent changes it is hoped to take the Plan to the November meeting of Transport North East Committee and to Leadership Board. The public consultation is intended to take place in early 2017.

2. Transport for the North (TfN)

2.1 At its last meeting the Leadership Board agreed in principle to support the proposal for TfN to become a statutory body, drawing down powers to deliver investment and improve services, devolved from central government.

Details of progress with individual TfN workstreams are given below.

2.2 TfN Transport Strategy and Investment Plan

2.2.1 As a sub-national transport body, TfN must develop a Transport Strategy and Investment Plan. Work on the Plan, which will draw together all of TfN's existing workstreams into a unified whole, is underway and will be completed in late 2017. The Plan will also incorporate two 'daughter' strategies, a Highways Strategy and an Integrated Rail Strategy. NECA officers will be taking part in the development of the plan and associated Strategies.

2.3 Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR)

2.3.1 NPR is the title given to a workstream looking at infrastructure options to increase capacity on the North's rail network as well as speeding up journeys between key economic centres. For the North East this work focuses on the Leeds to Newcastle corridor. Evidence from a separate Network Rail long term planning process is showing that, even without NPR, capacity between Leeds and Newcastle, including at Newcastle Central Station, will need to increase in the future to accommodate predicted growth.

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- 2.3.2 Regarding the Leeds to Newcastle corridor, work led by Network Rail suggests that significant track and station improvements will be required to achieve TfN's ambitions for a 60 minute Newcastle – Leeds journey time and a frequency of 4 trains per hour. This would bring significant economic benefits to the North East by improving connections to other major economic centres.
- 2.3.3 TfN has engaged consultants to assist with the route option prioritisation process which will lead to a preferred infrastructure package being recommended for consideration by the TfN Partnership Board at its December meeting. Three broad options are emerging:
- i) a wholly new direct line between Leeds and Newcastle
 - ii) utilising the planned HS2 route from Leeds to the ECML, and then line improvements north of York with some 'cut offs' to improve journey time
 - iii) As option (ii) plus reopening the Leamside Line to increase capacity
- 2.3.4 Although the original remit for NPR was to link the main northern cities plus Manchester Airport, as work has progressed and the upgrade of the East Coast Main Line is forming a likely part of the solution, calls at York, Darlington and Durham are also being looked at in terms of the impact on journey times as well as the economic value of calling at these other significant economic centres.
- 2.3.5 At the same time work is also progressing on the economic case for the overall Northern regional network to feed into the development of the outline business case for investment to fund the ambitious rail improvements required to deliver the overall NPR capacity and journey time outputs.
- 2.3.6 Network Rail's "Digital Railway" Project, which involves the long-term replacement of the track side signalling with an on-board signalling system, would also assist towards meeting the journey time reduction target when introduced on the East Coast Main Line.
- 2.3.7 The aim of NPR is to boost economic growth through facilitating greater numbers of passengers travelling to key locations for jobs, education and leisure purposes. The stations where these services stop will therefore need to be assessed to see how best to accommodate the predicted increase in passengers.
- 2.3.8 With regard to the changes needed to accommodate additional passengers at Newcastle Station, it has not yet been determined how many additional

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trains are required to complement the current services to cater for the uplift in demand. Adjustments to the existing services may possibly meet, in part, the required frequency, capacity and journey time requirements. Two options for improvements to passenger access are being considered; either greater over track pedestrian access or new under track pedestrian access (the latter fits in with the proposal for a new South entrance to the station and would also provide direct access to the Central Metro Station).

2.3.9 In summary, the next significant decision point for the development of the NPR will come towards the end of the calendar year. The preferred package of options will then proceed through the next phases of more detailed design and economic appraisal work. Regular updates will be provided to this Board and also to Transport North East Committee.

2.4 Road

The strategic study exploring the case for dualling the A69 and/or A66, with the aim of creating a new strategic link across the Pennines in northern England, is well under way. Interim findings suggest that dualling of the A69 generates the largest journey time savings but will also be the most expensive option. In comparison, completion of A66 dualling will generate around half the journey time savings of the A69 dualling but will be less costly. Further work will take place to refine these options, taking into account wider economic benefits, with a final report due to be completed by the end of 2016. NECA officers attend the Programme Board for the study on behalf of TfN.

2.5 Freight

A Northern Region Freight and Logistics Report is expected to be launched by TfN in the near future. This will be followed by a series of LEP-area studies looking in more detail at the implications for individual regions. The freight sector in this area will continue to be kept informed via the North East Freight Partnership.

2.6 Strategic Local Connectivity

This workstream examines interventions which might complement larger schemes and have a pan-northern economic impact, in light of the Northern Independent Economic Review. In the initial assessment of this process five NECA schemes were considered to potentially have a pan-Northern Impact. This workstream will now be considered as part of the evidence for the TfN Strategic Transport Plan.

2.7 International Connectivity

This workstream is tasked with reviewing international connectivity in the

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north and identifying ways of achieving the best possible connectivity for the north's airports and major ports. The workstream will also identify opportunities to expand into new international markets. The report is expected to be published in the autumn.

2.8 Smart Travel

2.8.1 Nexus officers continue to be actively involved in this workstream, with the aim of delivering smart and integrated ticketing across local bus, Metro and rail services in the North. With the introduction of smart ticketing technology now well advanced on the Tyne and Wear Metro and on bus services across the NECA area through the NESTI Programme, the NECA is in a strong position to take a lead role in the early implementation phases of the next generation of Smart Ticketing technologies.

2.8.2 TfN has commissioned Nexus and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), to jointly develop the specification for an 'Intelligent Back Office' on behalf of TfN. The Intelligent Back Office will enable the introduction of the next generation of Smart Ticketing technologies, including the use of contactless bank cards. This presents an opportunity for passengers in the NECA area to be early beneficiaries of this investment.

3. Rail update

3.1 North East Rail Management Unit (NERMU)

3.1.1 The new 'NERMU Officers Steering Group' held its inaugural meeting on the 14th July. Representatives from each of the North East Combined Authority, Tees Valley Combined Authority, North Yorkshire County Council (Esk Valley line interests) and Cumbria County Council (Tyne Valley Line interests) were invited. At the meeting Northern, TransPennine Express, Virgin Trains East Coast, Grand Central, Cross Country and Network Rail were represented and gave an overview of service performance.

3.1.2 The Train Operating Companies (TOCs) will every two months provide updates regarding individual performance measures and any underlying issues which impact on rail passengers in the North East.

3.1.3 There is also a commitment from the TOCs and the local authorities to share investment and development plans so as to work collectively to maximise the benefits to rail passengers of any single or joint investment in the North East

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3.1.4 A draft business plan has been produced for the NERMU and arrangements are being put in place to hold the inaugural NERMU board meeting to ratify the business plan.

3.1.5 Officers of the NERMU are working closely with Northern as it develops Station Investment Plans, as required under the Franchise Agreement. Across the whole Northern Franchise there is £22.6m to be spent upgrading facilities at stations controlled by Northern. The funding is split across four themes; physical comfort; customer information; customer safety and customer retail choice.

3.1.6 Officers are working to maximise the value and benefits of that investment in the North East. Once Northern has agreed its plans with Rail North and the Secretary of State, improvement work will start to commence and be delivered over the next 4 years. Some common improvements such as introducing improved lighting through an LED replacement programme not only improve the safety and security at stations but also contribute to reduced running costs.

3.2 Network Rail Long Term Planning Process

3.2.1 Network Rail is combining work on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) Route Study (from London to the Scottish Border) with development work for Northern Powerhouse Rail (as reported in section 3.3 above). As work progresses, it is becoming more apparent that significant improvements to the East Coast Main Line will be required to meet the expected impact of growth on the route up to 2023 and 2043.

3.2.2 Officers are therefore working with Network Rail to press for a programme of progressive improvements to the East Coast Main Line to ensure that improvements over the coming years are complementary.

3.2.3 Both the outcomes of the Route Study and the preferred options for NPR are due to be known by the end of the calendar year.

3.3 Regional Rail improvements

3.3.1 A range of improvements and, in some cases, re-openings to routes and stations are being sought in order to upgrade local rail connectivity and re-connect local communities to the national rail network.

3.3.2 The most significant project is the proposed re-opening of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line, a key strategic transport infrastructure investment identified in the Strategic Economic Plan in 2014 and in the devolution deal. Passenger forecasts indicate the potential of 360,000 users per annum by 2034. The service would enhance connectivity for many communities in

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South East Northumberland with the rest of the region, improving access to employment and learning facilities and locally acting as a catalyst for the further regeneration of communities along the line.

3.3.3 Development funding for this scheme is being sought through the Large Local Major Schemes Fund and the present position in respect of NECA's bid is outlined in section 5 of this report.

3.3.4 Elsewhere in South-East Northumberland, the Council are exploring opportunities for the provision of a newly located railway station at Cramlington to help facilitate growth in the town and take advantage of the opportunities presented by its location on the strategically important East Coast Main Line.

3.3.5 In the west of the region, Northumberland County Council are working in partnership with the local community, endorsed by MPs for the relevant Northumberland (Guy Opperman MP) and Cumbria (Rory Stewart MP) constituencies, to reopen Gilsland station to passengers, acting as a gateway to Hadrian's Wall. Further work will need to be undertaken to challenge the emerging costs of reopening which currently appear significant.

3.3.6 The Durham Coast line is an important link between Tyneside, Wearside and the Tees Valley. We are working with the rail industry to seek improved services on the route as a whole and, in particular, Durham County Council are developing plans with key partners, including Network Rail and Northern Rail, for a proposed new station at Horden. The benefits will include:

- Improved access to jobs and opportunities for residents in the East Durham area
- Enhanced connectivity to the main regional centres of Sunderland, Newcastle and Teesside for business and leisure
- Decreases in car km on the local highway network related to modal shift to rail, with consequent reductions in congestion, accidents, noise and emissions
- Stimulus to the local economy in the form of wider economic benefits, including increased attractiveness of the area for development and extra visitors to the Durham Heritage Coast.

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- 3.3.7 Positive discussions have been held with Northern Rail regarding them as the rail operator using the station. A site options appraisal study was concluded in May 2016 with Network Rail, and the Council are moving into GRIP (Governance for Railway Investment Projects) Stage 4 (single option development). Subject to progression along within the GRIP process, extra required funding being found, and land assembly being confirmed, it is likely there will be a 24 month lead in to commencing on site.
- 3.3.8 In summary, NECA are engaging closely with the rail industry, local communities and funding bodies to ensure that our regional rail network can play an even greater role in supporting economic growth and providing better connectivity for our residents.
- 3.4 HS2
- 3.4.1 On 22nd July, the HS2 East Partnership, in collaboration with the NECA Regional Transport Team, hosted the event, *HS2 East: Improving Connectivity to the North East and Scotland*.
- 3.4.2 The HS2 East Partnership is a broad coalition of local government and combined authorities, including the NECA, that are working to make the case for why the Eastern Leg of HS2 East is the best option for bringing the benefits of High Speed Rail to all communities, from the Midlands to the North of England and Scotland via the North East.
- 3.4.3 Delegates from the political and business worlds, from Scotland to Nottingham, attended the event to discuss the benefits that HS2 East could deliver for Eastern regions.
- 3.4.4 A panel discussion was held involving myself, the leader of Nottingham City Council Councillor Jon Collins, Councillor Russell Imrie of Midlothian Council, and Sir David Higgins of HS2 Limited.
- 3.4.5 The discussions centred on the importance of the Eastern proposed route for HS2, emphasising that it will serve more economies and businesses on a route to Scotland than the Western routing. HS2 East was frequently referred to as a 'jobs railway', and a key way to help re-balance the national economy. Linking high speed services to Scotland via an upgraded East Coast Main Line will bring a major total economic uplift of £717 million annually, with 70% of this benefit being generated outside London.
- 3.4.6 It is expected that a decision will be made during the Autumn on whether the HS2 East proposal will be recommended by HS2 Limited.

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4. Public Transport

4.1 Bus

4.1.1 The Bus Services Bill has been introduced to Parliament, and it is hoped it will complete its progress through the Commons in early 2017 and gain Royal Assent in the spring. The last thematic update to this meeting outlined the potential options it might provide for the NECA to deliver improvements to bus services.

4.1.2 These options are being examined through a scoping study conducted jointly by Nexus, Durham County Council and Northumberland County Council on behalf of the NECA and further reports will be submitted to Leadership Board and Transport North East Committee once this process is complete.

4.2 Metro

4.2.1 At its meeting in March the Leadership Board confirmed Nexus' proposal to allow the current operating concession for Metro to lapse on 31st March 2017. Nexus has established a Metro Transition project to ensure a smooth transfer of the Metro back to Nexus' direct operation from 1 April 2017.

4.2.2 At its meeting in July the Leadership Board approved a new Metro and Local Rail strategy, along with an outline of the proposed Metro fleet specification, as well as essential renewals for the 2021-2035 period and potential future Metro network extensions.

4.2.3 As Thematic Lead for Transport, I wrote to the new Secretary of State for Transport on 26th July 2016, introducing the new Strategy and requesting his support for the replacement of Metro rolling stock. The letter is attached for information at Appendix A.

4.2.4 Metro performance has improved since the start of the year and charter punctuality was 85.52% in the most recent period (covering July). This is slightly below the target set by Nexus for the train operator. Passenger numbers have dipped slightly below the peak of 40 million but still represents a four million increase compared to 2013.

4.2.5 A major line closure between Benton and Monkseaton took place for 15 days from 23rd July until 6th August 2016 to allow for track replacement. A bus replacement service was provided for passengers in the affected areas. Works were delivered according to plan, with follow up works now underway between Cullercoats and Northumberland Park. Refurbishment of Central Station continues and is due to be completed by the end of October, following a series of weekend closures to primarily lay new floors.

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The final new escalator at Central Station will be brought into service in time for the Great North Run weekend.

4.2.6 Significant work has been undertaken in preparation for this year's Great North Run on Sunday 11th September, including revised queuing systems at South Shields, and additional trains and customer facing staff on the day.

4.3 Smart Travel

4.3.1 Pop Pay As You Go was developed through the North East Smart Ticketing Initiative (NESTI), a joint programme between local authorities in the Combined Authority area and those in the Tees Valley. Pop Pay As You Go can now be used as payment for;

- Arriva Services north of the Tyne and in Redcar and Cleveland
- all Go North East services in the NECA area
- all Stagecoach services in the NECA area and Tees Valley
- Durham City Park and Ride
- On Metro (with a daily price cap) and the Shields Ferry
- Stanley Travel services 40, 40A and 40B in and around Durham City

4.3.2 Plans are in the process of being implemented that will see Pop Pay As You Go being accepted in place of cash payment for tickets across all services of the three major bus operators by the end of the summer. Work to extend the provision across the smaller bus operators is continuing.

4.3.3 As noted in section 2.8 above, Nexus are playing a key role in TfN's smart ticketing development.

5. Large Local Major Transport Scheme Update

5.1 The Leadership Board approved a report on the Large Local Major Transport Schemes Fund at its meeting on 19th July, outlining the proposed approach to prioritising and submitting schemes to this Fund from the NECA.

5.2 The report recommended that the 'Sunderland Commercial Links' scheme be submitted as the main priority for the region, and that two other schemes – 'Ashington, Blyth & Tyne Line' and 'Metrofutures' – would also be submitted, the latter subject to further discussions with the Department for Transport. The report pointed out that, of these three schemes, only the Sunderland Commercial Links scheme was at a suitable point of business case development to bid for full scheme funding, whereas bids for the other two schemes would be for development funds to progress a business case.

5.3 Subsequent discussions with the DfT confirmed that it was reasonable to submit 'Metrofutures' as a third scheme, therefore this and the 'Sunderland

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Commercial Links' scheme were submitted by the Local Enterprise Partnership to the DfT by the main submission deadline of 28th July. The report had also pointed out that the 'Ashington, Blyth & Tyne Line' had been submitted to an earlier 'fast-track' opportunity, which allowed bids for funding for 2016/17.

- 5.4 On 5th August, the DfT announced that it had received 17 fast-track scheme bids in total, and awarded funding to just four, and the Ashington, Blyth & Tyne Line was not successful in gaining fast-track funding. However, the DfT then allowed a short extension to the deadline for main round bids for LEPs to resubmit unsuccessful fast-track schemes if they chose. The bid document for 'Ashington, Blyth & Tyne Line' was therefore amended accordingly with the funding request put back into the 2017/18 year, and then resubmitted.
- 5.5 It is expected that the Government will announce the successful schemes for Large Local Major Transport Scheme funding just before or at the Autumn Spending Statement. It is also expected that further bidding rounds for this Fund will be announced in the future; however, no indication has yet been given of the timing of subsequent bidding rounds.

6. Sustainable Transport

6.1 Access Fund 2017-20

6.1.1 At the meeting of Leadership Board on 6th September, the NECA's proposed bid to the Department for Transport Access Fund was approved. NECA is seeking £7.497m of revenue funding for the 2017-20 period to deliver a range of sustainable transport projects that seek to grow the economy by boosting levels of cycling and walking, and by improving access to jobs, skills, training and education, building on the success of our existing Go Smarter programme.

6.1.2 A decision is expected in December and, if approved, measures will begin to be delivered from April 2017.

6.2 Go Smarter 2016-17

6.2.1 Whilst a decision is awaited on the Access Fund, delivery of current Go Smarter activities for 2016-17, using funding received from a previous funding award, is taking place with schools activities being resumed for the new term. This will include a new 'Be a Smarter Parker' campaign to be launched next month, aimed at all schools in the NECA area, following the success of similar campaigns in 2014 and 2015.

6.2.2 'Be a Smarter Parker' encourages parents to think carefully when parking near to the school, or even within the school car park, to help keep our

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children safe by reducing congestion around the school gates. The campaign consists of printed materials, like flyers and banners, PR and social media.

7. Digital Connectivity Update

7.1 The North East Digital Leads group is currently developing investible propositions to sustain and grow the region's competitiveness in the Digital Economy, alongside the development of a Digital Connectivity Strategy. The NECA Digital Leads group are working closely with the North East LEP to ensure strategic and collaborative opportunities are not missed, and to present a co-ordinated and coherent vision of our strengths and potential to external partners.

7.2 This work reaffirms that the North East Digital Economy is growing and competitive. We have one of the most thriving clusters in the country and have attracted a number of world-leading institutions and key investors in the sector; from '5G' trailblazers to multinational companies. In doing so, this work is not taking place in isolation, but in coherence with our aspiration to ensure we deliver the inclusive growth which enables our people, businesses and communities to play a prominent role in the Digital Economy.

7.3 Some of the key messages that we are getting from businesses include:

- Digital connectivity will play a significant role in future economic growth.
- All businesses and communities in the North East are able to benefit from the Digital Economy; through wealth creation, jobs, skills and infrastructure.
- We achieve distinctiveness within the UK by being widely regarded as a leading location for sorting, analysing and adding value to data.
- There are significant opportunities arising from the development and testing of 5G technology, which will underpin growth opportunities arising from Big Data and the 'Internet of Things' (IOT) – with an aspiration that the North East is increasingly seen not only nationally, but globally as a location of choice for testing, refining and rolling out Digital products and services.

8. Next Steps

8.1 It is anticipated that, before the next meeting of Leadership Board:

- The TfN Freight Report will have been published
- A follow-up freight study, focused on local LEP areas, will be under

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way

- A fresh range of Go Smarter activities will be in progress within schools for the new term
- The 'Be a Smarter Parker' campaign will have been launched
- The draft refreshed version of the NECA Transport Manifesto will have been taken to the November meeting of Transport North East Committee for approval
- The consultation draft version of the full Transport Plan will also have been approved by TNEC
- The inaugural NERMU board meeting will have taken place

8.2 By the end of the calendar year:

- A preferred infrastructure package for the Leeds – Newcastle rail corridor will have been approved, enabling more detailed design and economic appraisal work to commence
- The strategic study exploring the case for dualling the A69 and/or A66 will have been published setting out recommended options

8.3 In addition, work will continue to:

- Participate in TfN workstreams and the Network Rail Long Term Planning Process
- Engage with Network Rail and TfN to develop options for NPR and start the refining of options to be recommended for more detailed design and economic appraisal
- Monitor the progress of the Bus Services Bill through Parliament and continue to progress the Bus Services Bill scoping study
- Roll out Pop Pay as You Go across the region
- Progress development of large local major transport schemes depending on the outcome of the government's funding decision
- Refine the Digital Connectivity Strategy and develop investible propositions alongside partners

9. Potential Impact on Objectives

9.1 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.

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10. Finance and Other Resources

10.1 The report includes information on funding and financial opportunities. There are no specific additional financial implications for NECA arising from the specific recommendations in this report.

11. Legal

11.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

12. Other Considerations

12.1 Human Rights

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

12.2 Equalities and Diversity

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

12.3 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.

12.4 Risk Management

This report is for information only and there are no specific risk management implications arising from it.

12.5 Crime and disorder

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

12.6 Environment and Sustainability

Delivery of the various rail and public transport measures listed in this report should assist in meeting our objectives for a more sustainable transport system and improved air quality. The Access Fund bid referred to in section 6.1 is specifically aimed at the reduction of carbon emissions and the promotion of active, sustainable travel.

13. Background Documents

None.

14. Links to plans in the policy framework

The various transport schemes and programmes listed in this report link to

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the forthcoming Transport Plan for the North East that is covered in section 1 of this report.

15. Appendices

Appendix A – letter from Councillor Forbes to the Secretary of State for Transport

16. Contact Officers

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17. Sign off

Interim Head of Paid Service

Monitoring Officer

Chief Finance Officer



Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
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26 July 2016

Dear Chris

Congratulations on your new role as Secretary of State for Transport. As the North East Combined Authority's Thematic Lead Member for Transport, and the Leader of Newcastle City Council, I look forward to a productive engagement with you as we work to improve transport in Newcastle and the North East.

I am writing to ask for your help in securing essential investment in the Tyne and Wear Metro system. It is hard to over-state the Metro's importance to our economy, environment and wider society. The Metro carries over 40 million people each year to work, education and social activities and it keeps many millions of car trips off our already congested roads.

The combined authority this week adopted a new Metro and local rail strategy that sets out a long-term vision for growing the system, supporting the plans for economic growth that we share with our Local Economic Partnership. I enclose a copy for your information.

Before we can properly consider expanding the system we have an immediate and pressing need to replace our train fleet. We are still operating the original trains from the late 1970s, which have already passed the end of their design life. Train faults now create delays and disruption on most days, and our passengers' patience is being tested to breaking point as the system, quite literally, grinds to a halt.

We plan to introduce new trains five years from now, with procurement beginning in 2017. Maintaining the current timetable with the existing fleet for another five years will be a significant challenge in itself; beyond 2021 it is likely to be impossible and reductions in service levels seem inevitable. Urgent action needs to be taken to protect the Metro system and its essential role in the North East's local economy – the future of the system is at risk.

If you need this information in another format or language, please contact the person who sent it.

The full Outline Business Case, previously discussed in draft has now been passed to officials in your department. In the future we intend to couple ongoing revenue funding with capital funds, so that we can go to the rolling stock supply market with the proposition of a very long-term contract.

In order to progress this we need to have a complete understanding, by the end of this calendar year, of three key funding streams for Metro that are under the government's control:

- Capital and/or revenue funding to support fleet replacement. We estimate the investment needed to be £537 million, with a benefit-to-cost ratio of 2.22;
- Ongoing 'Metropolitan Rail Grant' that supports the operation of the Metro. This amounts to approximately £25 million per annum, and the current DfT funding agreement ends in 2019; and
- Capital funding to support the continuation of our programme of essential asset renewals on the Metro's railway infrastructure. The current DfT funding agreement for this ends in 2021. We estimate the investment needed over the subsequent 15 years to be £518 million, with a benefit-to-cost ratio of 6.09:1.

I understand that a series of structured discussions is planned between combined authority representatives and DfT officials over the next few months, with support from HM Treasury representatives where appropriate, to move this matter forward. I would be grateful if you could lend your support to this process.

This investment will lay the foundation for future system growth to help us to create more and better jobs, empower our future workforce, attract inward investment, and unleash the economic potential of the area. Not surprisingly this proposal has extensive support from across our local business community.

I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss this with you face to face, and I would be delighted to meet you in Newcastle to show you the Metro system. If you would like to take me up on this, my office will be pleased to discuss suitable dates.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

Nick Forbes .

Cllr Nick Forbes
Leader of the Council, and neca Thematic Lead for Transport

If you need this information in another format or language, please contact the person who sent it.

29th September 2016

**Item 3: Vice Chair and Business Growth Board
Member appointments**

1.0 Appointment of private sector Vice Chair

1.1 The private sector LEP Board Vice Chair position has been vacant since Andrew Hodgson was appointed Chair of the North East LEP. Andrew has proposed that Heidi Mottram takes up the Vice Chair role and seeks Board members' support for this.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to appoint Heidi Mottram as the private sector Vice Chair of the North East LEP.

2.0 Appointment of Business Growth Board members

Due to their level of business commitments, Julian Leighton, James Hall, Allison Thompson and Rob Earnshaw have decided to step down from the Business Growth Advisory Board, leaving space for up to four replacement private sector members. An open and transparent recruitment process managed by NRG resulted in a shortlist of 8 candidates being selected for interview during September.

The Interview panel consisted of LEP Board members, Paul Varley and Mark Thompson, supported by the LEP's Business Growth Director, Colin Bell, and observed by Lorna Moran from NRG.

The final interviews will take place on 29 September and Paul Varley will update the Board on the process and recommend the next steps and proposed appointments.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to receive a verbal update at the meeting and agree next steps as appropriate following the final interview session on 29 September.

Key North East Strategic Economic Plan Headline Indicators

The following demonstrates updated figures for our headline indicators. For more information, you can view the economic analysis paper on our [website](#).

