

Community leaders in South Tyneside get behind the £100m Metro Flow project

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Community leaders have welcomed a £100 million track dualling scheme that will increase service frequency, reduce journey times, and improve reliability on the Tyne and Wear Metro.

The Metro Flow project will see an existing freight line upgraded and electrified in South Tyneside, making it capable of carrying Metro services, boosting the capacity for an extra 24,000 customer journeys every day.

Three sections of single track will be dualled between Pelaw and Bede Metro stations from September 2022.

Council leaders and traders have thrown their support behind the project, which got the final funding approval from the Government in August, saying it will deliver a big economic boost for South Tyneside.

A total of £95m has been secured from the Government's Transforming Cities Fund, allowing Metro operator Nexus to deliver the scheme, which will cost £103m in total.

South Tyneside's Lead Member for Housing and Transport, Cllr Jim Foreman, said: "We're delighted to have worked alongside Nexus to have secured Transforming Cities funding for this project which will deliver huge benefits to South Tyneside and the wider region.

"The improvements will increase capacity and efficiency on the Metro system as well as promoting sustainable transport and supporting our decarbonisation agenda.

"A safe, reliable and efficient public transport network is vital to boost economic growth, and to link our residents and businesses to job, education and social opportunities."

South Tyneside Chair for the North East England Chamber of Commerce, Alan Metcalfe, said: "This has the potential of being a huge boost for the businesses in South Tyneside in that they can draw on potential new employees from a market that previously was untapped due to infrastructure shortfalls. This will have a massive impact on the economy of the area as more realise what a good place to work, and to visit, South Tyneside is."

Cllr Martin Gannon, Chair of the North East Joint Transport Committee, said: "The Metro Flow project will be truly transformational for people using the Tyne and Wear Metro service every day to get to work, education or leisure destinations across the region.

"It will offer improved journey times across the entire Metro system so I'm sure this will encourage more people to consider public transport as a clean, safe and reliable way to travel."

Benefits of the Metro Flow project include:

- Increasing the frequency of Metro trains to one every 10 minutes outside central areas
- Deliver capacity for an extra 24,000 passengers a day
- Improve reliability and allow quicker recovery from major disruptions
- Better support for major events including the Great North Run, Sunderland International Airshow, stadium concerts, and major sporting events
- Unlock the door to the expansion of the Metro system

The funding for the Metro Flow project also allows Nexus to buy four more new trains on top of the 42 which have already been ordered.

Metro Flow allows three sections of single track on the Metro network totalling three kilometres to be dualled between Pelaw and Bede Metro stations.

There are three single-track sections on the Metro network, where trains must use the same line in both directions.

The sections of line are located between Pelaw and Hebburn (800 metres), Hebburn and Jarrow (1.4km) and Jarrow and Bede (600 metres).

The Metro Flow project will be carried out by Buckingham Group Contracting Ltd, who won a £55m tender for the construction stage of the project.

Photo credit: Nexus