

NORTH EAST JOINT TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

The Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps MP
c/o Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit
Department for Transport
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Gateshead Council
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By email: transportinfrastructure@dft.gov.uk

2 July 2021

Dear Secretary of State

The Proposed Northumberland Line Order

I write as Chair of the North East Transport Committee, which represents the North of Tyne Combined Authority and the North East Combined Authority's combined interests on transport matters. On behalf of the North East Transport Committee I wish to express support for the application by Northumberland County Council for the above-mentioned Order.

The Northumberland Line is a key project for our region and will help to deliver on our Transport Plan objectives. The improved connectivity provided by the Northumberland Line will bring social and economic benefits to residents, commuters, visitors and businesses both in Northumberland and the wider North East region.

The Transport Plan has five objectives and the Northumberland Line will make a significant contribution to each of these:

- Achieve a carbon-neutral North East – by providing an attractive alternative to car commuting for residents of South East Northumberland, thus reducing local congestion and emissions.
- Promote a healthier North East – use of public transport increases the level of physical activity and links to feeder walking and cycling routes are part of the overall project plan.
- Deliver appealing sustainable transport choices – the project will link communities along the line into the wider public transport network including the Tyne and Wear Metro. Plans for an integrated ticketing offer are also included to take another step towards a truly integrated public transport system for people of the North East.

- Overcome inequality and grow our economy – a key benefit of the new passenger service will be to open up opportunities from towns such as Ashington and Blyth to employment hubs like Newcastle, as well as opening up new opportunities for education and travel. The service will also attract new visitor opportunities to Northumberland and improve local tourism.
- Provide a safe, secure network – through careful design and thoughtful operating of the passenger service and station facilities, passengers will feel safe and secure using the new service and be confident in making journeys linking through to the many business and leisure opportunities the line will open up.

The proposed Northumberland Line Order is vital to secure the delivery of the scheme and we hope you will confirm the Order to enable the scheme to go ahead as soon as possible so it can make a difference to the lives of local people.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Gannon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Martin Gannon
Chair of the North East Joint Transport Committee