

Middlesbrough Bus Station Improvements

The Department for Transport has awarded the Tees Valley Local Authorities a total of £57.6 million to invest in the local bus network. This money is being invested in:

- Bus priority measures to improve reliability and punctuality;
- Improved passenger facilities (e.g. shelters, timetables);
- Accessibility enhancements.

In return for this public investment, the area's two main bus operators have pledged to invest in newer, better and more accessible vehicles as part of a Bus Quality Partnership Agreement. The project overall is known as the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements (TVBNI).

The accessibility enhancements include improved 'at stop' bus timetables to make them easier to read by people with visual impairments, raising kerbs at bus stops to allow step free access and introducing more accessible buses. In addition, £1.2 million is being invested to make Middlesbrough Bus Station more accessible.

Middlesbrough Bus Station was originally opened in 1982 and is at the heart of the Tees Valley bus network, being used by more than 35,000 passengers every weekday. Because it is now thirty years old, the design of the Bus Station no longer meets modern accessibility standards. The investment from the TVBNI will tackle this issue and ensure that the Bus Station is fit for purpose into the 21st century.

The investment will be used to fund the reconstruction of the external bus concourse area and part-reconstruction of the ramps to the upper deck, dropping the carriageway level to create low floor stops at the majority of the local bus stands within the bus station. The money will also pay for the introduction of automatic doors at each of the stands, which will be triggered when a bus approaches.

Unfortunately it will not be possible to completely reconstruct the ramps to the upper deck, so a small minority of stands (7 out of a total of 22) will not have step free access once the works have been completed. The only way that this could be achieved would be to rebuild and remodel the entire bus station, which is not a practical option given the funding available.

The improvements at the bus station are the centrepiece of a much wider investment programme, which will raise kerbs at bus stops across the Tees Valley. The partners recognise that there is still more work to be done in improving access to the public transport network, and this investment should be seen as an important step in the right direction. Work to improve the accessibility of the public transport network will continue, with both Local Authorities and local bus companies committed to ensuring complete equality of access.