

Bus Services Bill Campaigner Guide

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for anyone in the voluntary sector who wants to see better bus services in their community. This includes charities, parish councils, campaigners and campaign groups.

Where will the powers of the Bus Services Bill be available for use?

The powers proposed in the Bus Services Bill could be used anywhere in England. All the powers could be used by any local transport authority. This includes combined authorities, county and unitary councils.

Under the current proposals, mayoral combined authorities will be able to use all the powers of the bill as soon as it is made law and all other authorities will have immediate access to most of the powers.

Local transport authorities will be able to use these powers in some or all of their geographic areas. They will be able to use a mix of powers, with different solutions for specific areas.

What does the Bus Services Bill do?

The Bus Services Bill seeks to empower local transport authorities with a wide range of tools to improve bus services. It makes local transport authorities ultimately responsible for providing good bus services in their area.

The headline potential benefit of the bill is the ability for transport authorities to fully specify bus service standards within all or part of their area. This is known as franchising and is similar to what happens in London. However, this is likely to be taken up in only a few areas of the country.

More significantly, the bill is planned to enable local authorities and private operators to collaborate through a variety of partnership mechanisms to provide the following potential benefits:

- Consistent fares
- Improved timetables and service levels
- Attractive branding of routes
- Ticket acceptance on the services of multiple operators
- Provide open data to third parties to provide transport apps
- Full specification of bus services (franchising)

When do these powers become available?

The powers are planned to become available in May 2017 to all local transport authorities in England, right after the elections of combined authority mayors, county councillors, and unitary authority councillors in many areas.

How do I encourage my local authority to take up these powers?

The run up to the May 2017 local elections is an excellent opportunity to encourage your elected representatives to take up these powers.

In combined authority areas you should target your potential mayors as well as your local authority representative on the combined authority. In all other areas you should target councillors standing for election.

Show them this briefing and encourage them to get informed about the Bus Services Bill provisions. Make them commit to exploring how the local transport authority will use these powers from May 2017.

How do I get more information?

To get the latest information on the Bus Services Bill visit www.bettertransport.org.uk/save-our-buses/newpowers

July 2016

Steve Chambers
Campaign for Better Transport

Campaign for Better Transport's vision is a country where communities have affordable transport that improves quality of life and protects the environment. Achieving our vision requires substantial changes to UK transport policy which we aim to achieve by providing well-researched, practical solutions that gain support from both decision-makers and the public.

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