



BUS SERVICES BILL (NO.2)

Briefing for the Bill Committee

BACKGROUND

Campaign for Better Transport is the UK's leading transport NGO, working to maintain, improve and expand public transport across England and Wales. We work closely with the Department for Transport, HM Treasury, the transport industry, our 20,000+ supporters and parliamentarians from all parties. Our research has informed prominent government bus policies, including the introduction of the £2 bus fare cap for single journeys outside of London.

The below briefing summarises our position on the Bill as it currently stands, as well as amendments that we believe can be made to improve the offering for passengers. We remain available to discuss these further with members or clerks of the committee.

CONTACT

Ben Curtis | Head of External Affairs

E: ben.curtis@bettertransport.org.uk

T: +44 (0) 7552 982673

OUR POSITION

We welcome this Bill and its objectives and believe that it can make a tangible difference to the sector.

However, it must be stressed that further measures are necessary to ensure an improvement in bus services across the country. For example, while we welcome the extension of the power to franchise services to all Local Transport Authorities, few will feel in a position to take up this option because of lack of funding certainty, shortage of skills, expertise and capacity within the local authority passenger transport team or lack of political will.

We recognise that the committee and the clerks will determine whether our proposed amendments are best delivered through primary legislation, secondary measures, or explanatory notes. Our intention is to ensure these improvements are implemented in the most effective and workable way.

AMENDMENTS

We believe that the Bill Committee should consider three amendments to strengthen the Bill.

Support LTAs to identify the gaps in service provision

The Bill requires LTAs (Local Transport Authorities) to identify existing services which are "socially necessary" and to consider mitigations if operators propose to cancel or alter them. However, it overlooks areas where services are lacking, leaving many communities underserved.

Recommendation: Amend the Bill to require LTAs to review services as a network and identify gaps in socially necessary service provision, not just protect existing routes. This approach would enable existing funding to be targeted at these gaps to ensure equitable access to bus services.

Enhance information provision at bus stops

While the Bill makes provisions for the publication of a new statutory guidance to improve the accessibility of bus stops, service information provision is not mentioned. Up-to-date route and timetable information, as well as real-time arrival boards, are crucial for all passengers, especially those without access to digital tools, and improve the feeling of safety.

Recommendation: Ensure the legislation covers both infrastructure and information provision, including up-to-date route maps, timetables, and real-time arrival information at bus stops, ensuring accessibility and safety for all users.

Better coordination of local transport

NHS Trusts are responsible for commissioning multi-million-pound contracts for non-emergency patient transport services (NEPTS) but they are not required to coordinate provision with LTAs and other local transport operators, leading to a disjointed system of delivery and duplication of efforts.

Recommendation: Place a duty on NHS Trusts to work with LTAs, bus operators and community transport providers to coordinate transport services. This coordination would reduce duplication, improve outcomes, and deliver better value for public money.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further research on buses is available:

- [Bus Funding Paper](#) (Campaign for Better Transport)
- [National Bus Stop Standard research](#) (Campaign for Better Transport)