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21 September 2016



Appendix 4

BY EMAIL

**TO: ALL LEEDS CITY REGION
MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT**

Dear Member of Parliament

BUS SERVICES BILL

Buses are vital to West Yorkshire, its people, its business and its economy. Each week people in West Yorkshire make over 3.5 million journeys on local bus services, making them the most highly used form of public transport in our area. An improved bus system is vital to achieve the ambitious levels of economic growth we have set for West Yorkshire and the City Region.

Throughout the summer of 2016, the Combined Authority has been consulting local people and businesses on a strategy which seeks to create the best bus system in Europe; where catching the bus is an attractive and natural choice for everyone. This will give a clear mandate upon which to apply the legislative tools available to improve bus services.

At present these legislative tools are too weak. They provide limited scope to ensure fares are simple, smart and integrated, to deliver stable networks, to address air quality concerns or to ensure consistency in matters which are important to customers including punctuality, reliability and cleanliness.

The Bus Services Bill, currently before Parliament, is an opportunity to give Transport Authorities, including the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, the powers that London currently enjoys to plan and regulate the local bus network.

Its aim is to do three things:

- Introduce a simpler route to the franchising of bus networks for Mayoral Combined Authorities (and to other places at the discretion of the Secretary of State). This will allow bus services in those areas to be provided in the same way that buses are provided in London with the public sector specifying services and the private sector competing for the contracts to provide those services;
- Improve the arrangements in those areas which remain deregulated through providing for more comprehensive partnership agreements between local transport authorities and bus operators;
- Provide for more and better 'open data' to support enhanced passenger information.

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To All Leeds City Region MPs
21 September 2016

In its present form we believe that the Bill (which started in the Lords and completed its Committee stage before the recess) is broadly on track to achieve these aims and we are pleased that in general terms its objectives enjoy all part support.

However, one area of detail where we share the concerns of many parties is that all Transport Authorities should have equal access to franchise powers. As the Bill is currently drafted this is limited to a Mayoral Combined Authority (other places at the discretion of the Secretary of State).

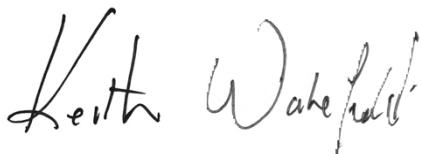
It is also important that during the course of the passage of the Bill that additional requirements or tests are not added to the legislation. In this regard it is important to recognise that two previous pieces of legislation (the 2000 Transport Act and the 2008 Local Transport Act) intended to provide powers for transport authorities outside London to franchise bus services proved unworkable in practice because the processes they contained were disproportionate, convoluted and restrictive.

With a new Government now in place it is vital that the commitment to this legislation is maintained and to the original timescales (enactment with all secondary legislation and guidance by Spring 2017). If this is achieved then we believe that we will be in a position to move ahead on fundamental improvements to bus services in West Yorkshire using the new powers available.

If it would be helpful my colleagues and I would be very happy to brief you further through a face to face meeting on this important piece of legislation.

More background on the Bill can be found on this dedicated microsite on the Urban Transport Group's website: <http://www.urbantransportgroup.org/resources/bus/bus-services-bill>.

Yours faithfully



Councillor Keith Wakefield
Chair
WYCA Transport Committee



Councillor Martyn Bolt
Leader of the Conservative Group
WYCA Transport Committee

A Pinnock

Councillor Andrew Pinnock
Liberal Democrats
WYCA Transport Committee