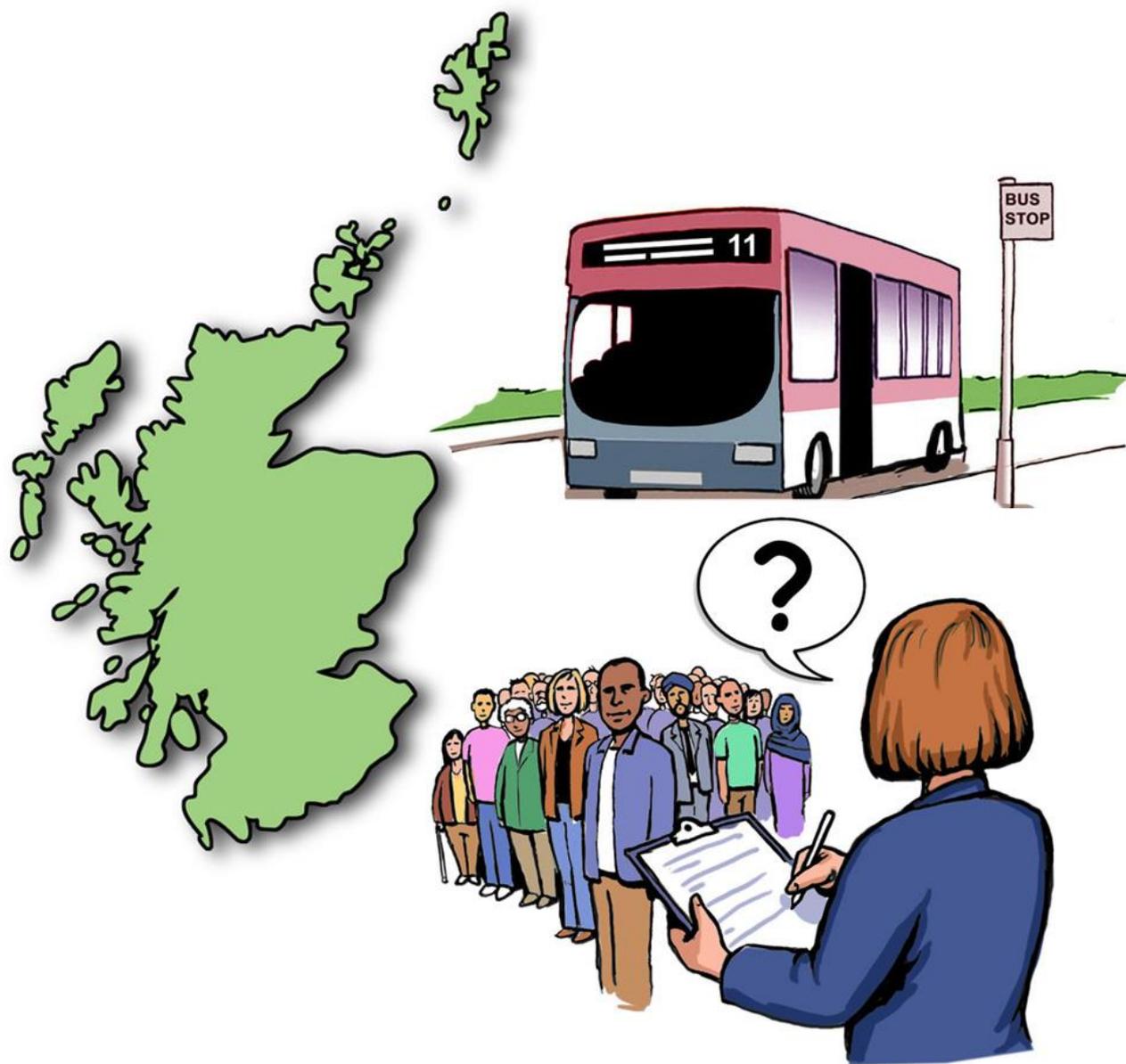


# Bus Services Consultation Results



Easy Read Version

# Background



People in Scotland are not using buses as much as they used to. More people are driving their cars.

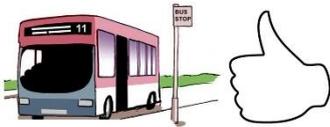


Rules are now being changed to give local transport authorities powers to make buses better. Local transport authorities are organisations that are in charge of public transport in a local area.



Transport Scotland did a consultation in 2021 to ask what people and organisations think. The consultation was about the new powers for local transport.

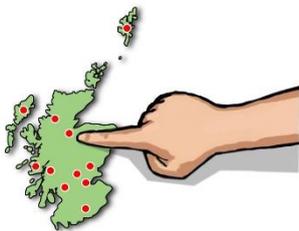
These powers are:



- Local transport authorities (LTAs) can run their own bus services



- Local transport authorities can work together with bus companies and other organisations. These are called Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs)



- Local transport authorities can choose to use a franchising system. This means they can choose a company to run bus services for a set period of time



- Local transport authorities can get information from companies when a bus route is changed or cancelled.

# Who Responded to the Consultation?



The consultation got 67 responses. 42 were from organisations and 25 from individuals. There were also 1,107 emails received as part of a campaign.

## Key Themes

These key themes came up in the consultation:



- Local Authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships, Operators and organisations representing them were not against Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs). Some people were against them. They wanted bus services to be owned by the government and the public



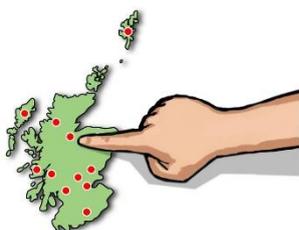
- More and clearer information was needed



- Some of the meanings in the rules should be clearer



- People wanted good practice and examples in the guidance



- Bus services need to be the same across Scotland. They need to meet local need.

# Consultation Questions



The following sections are a summary from the consultation.

## Local Transport Authority Bus Services



The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 says Local Transport Authorities can run bus services if they have a licence. Scottish Ministers can give guidance on how this should work.



The consultation asked for views on this. It asked if other information would support Local Transport Authorities to run their own bus services.



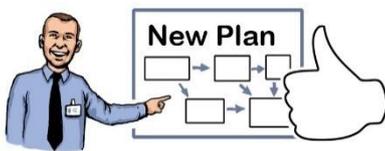
People said that Local Transport Authorities would have to think about several things. This included the law, funding, competition and how to find the best way to run a bus service.

# Bus Service Improvement Partnerships



Bus Service Improvement Partnerships would be partnerships between Local Transport Authorities and bus companies. There are several plans for how these partnerships might work.

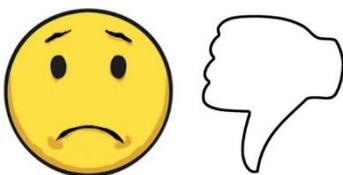
## Plans



The consultation asked for views on these plans. Many said that the plans were good and could work. They would need to be flexible to meet different needs of areas.

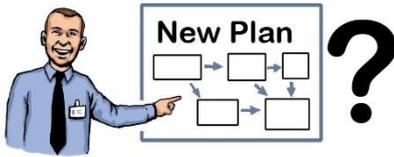


People said there should be a full consultation in each local community when putting a partnership together.



Some people said that the partnerships were a bad idea. They would make services private. They said this would not help with the cost or lack of services.

## Making, changing and cancelling plans

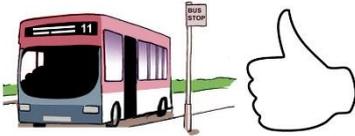


The consultation asked how plans should be made, changed and cancelled. It asked how people should be told about them.

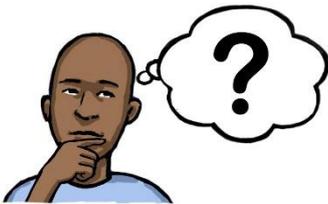


Most said there was a need to be flexible. More than half of people did not think there should be any conditions for cancelling plans, but some people gave more detailed answers on the subject.

## Making things to improve bus use (facilities and measures)



The Local Transport Authority must show they will spend money to improve bus use. Facilities could include building more bus stops. Measures could be less road works on major bus routes.

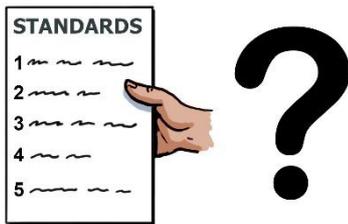


The consultation asked for views on the meaning of facilities and measures. Most disagreed with the meaning of measures and said it could cover more things.

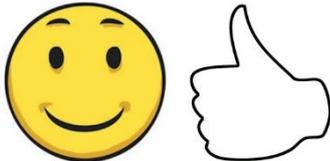


Most said that facilities should be part of a plan with no time limit.

## Services exempt from standards



The rules say that Bus Service Improvement Partnerships must follow standards. This covers the vehicles used, cost of fares and when bus times can be changed.

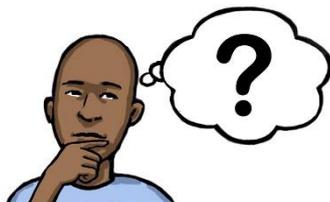


The consultation asked if any bus services should be exempt from these standards. Most people said that all bus services should have to follow the standards.

## Voting



The rules say that bus companies should have a say in how the partnership works. The voting system is based on how large an area is covered by the bus service.

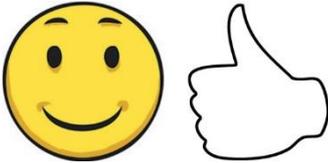


The consultation asked for views on the system of voting and if some bus companies should be left out. Most people disagreed with the wording of the rules and said they were not clear. Many agreed that some bus services should be left out of voting. Many did not agree or disagree with the voting system in the rules.

## Multi-operators travel card

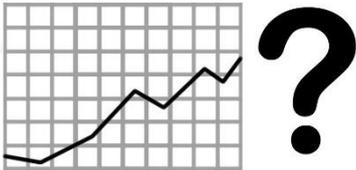


The rules say there can be multi-operator travel cards. This is a scheme that lets the ticket holder make three or more journeys on three or more public transport services. They must follow laws about competition.

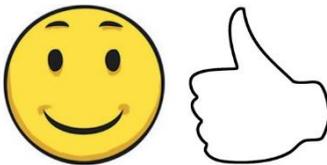


Most people agreed with this idea.

## Reviewing and reporting



A Bus Service Improvement Partnership must say how its operation will be checked and when reviews will be done. The consultation said this should be covered by Scottish Government guidance.



Most people agreed with this.

## Checking on Bus Service Improvement Partnerships



The rules say what information Local Transport Authorities are allowed to get from bus companies before they set up a partnership.



The consultation asked if there should be information left out. Most people said no information should be left out. Some were concerned about giving out business information. Some people also said this information should be shared if there was an impact on bus services.

## Accessibility of services



The consultation asked if further guidance was needed on making bus services accessible for disabled people.

People said there was a need for:



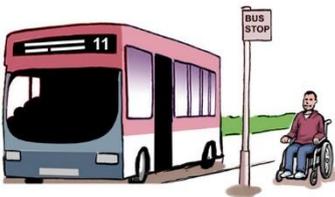
- disability awareness training for drivers



- consultation with a range of organisations



- accessible information



- all bus stops to be accessible.

Some comments said there was a need to think about the kinds of vehicles used for some bus services.

## Guidance

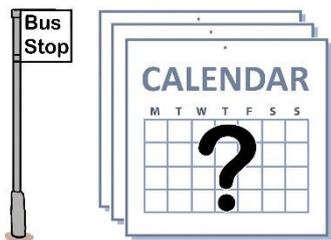


The consultation asked if any more information should be included in the Bus Service Improvement Partnership guidance.



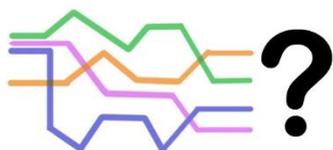
Most people said that road services should be included. There should be better planning of road works and closures that would affect bus services.

# Local Service Franchises

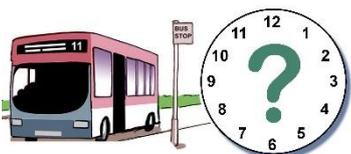


Franchising is a system that lets a Local Transport Authority have a single company run bus services for a period.

The rules say the steps a Local Transport Authority needs to take before they set this up. This includes an assessment. This would say:



- the routes the company will cover



- the times the buses will run

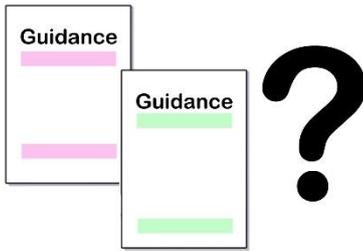


- the quality of service



- the cost of fares.

## Guidance for franchise assessments



The consultation asked what the guidance for assessments should cover.



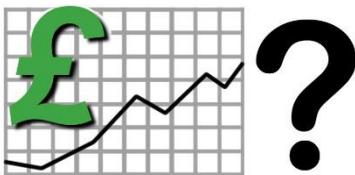
People said the guidance should give examples of the best way to do the assessment. The guidance should also explain the different parts of franchising.

## Information needed for assessments



People said Local Transport Authorities should be able to ask for information they need for a franchise assessment. Some said there might be an issue with keeping some information private.

## The process



Once a Local Transport Authority has done a franchise assessment, they must get another check for the financial part. This is called an audit.

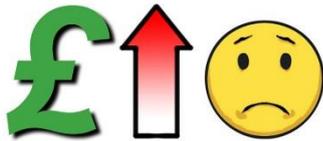


Many people said that guidance for the audit should include social, environmental and financial benefits.

## Guidance for making new franchise assessments



There are some reasons why a Local Transport Authority would need to do a new franchise assessment.



Lots of people suggested reasons why a new assessment might need to be done. Some people said it would be very difficult and would need lots of money and staff.

### Independent panel set up by the Traffic Commissioner



If the Local Transport Authority still wants a new franchise, they must ask the Traffic Commissioner. The Traffic Commissioner is in charge of local bus services.



The Traffic Commissioner will pick three people to make up a panel to decide if the franchise is ok. The consultation asked who should be on the panel.

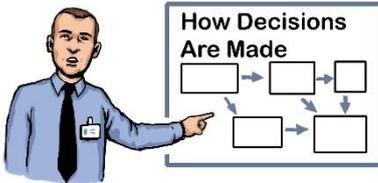


People said they must be fair and open about why they make their decisions. They should not have a personal reason to make decisions.



Some people said the panel should include experts on finance and transport. Other suggestions said legal professionals, bus users and community groups.

### The job of the panel



Most people said the panel should follow a set process when making their decision. There should be a list of things they need to think about.



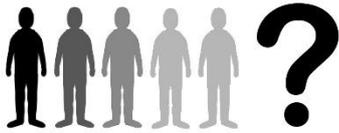
Some people said the panel should think about the cost and how this would affect bus services and the local area.

## Information about bus services



The rules say that Local Transport Authorities can ask bus companies for information. This is when they would like to change or cancel a local bus service.

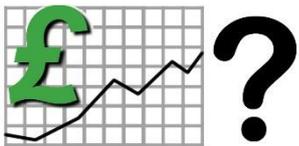
This information includes:



- the number of passengers



- how many journeys are made



- what the fares are

- how much money the company makes.



Local Transport Authorities can only ask for information that will help them set up good bus services.

## Timescales for providing information



The consultation asked how much time a Local Transport Authority should be given to get the information it needs. Most people said there should be no time limit.



The consultation asked how much time a bus company should have to supply the information. A lot of people said they should have two weeks or less.

## Service information bus companies must give



The consultation asked about the kind of information bus companies must give. People listed information that should be asked for when deciding to change or cancel services.



The consultation asked if there was any information that should not be given. About half the people said that all information should be given. The other half said that the rules should not cover private or sensitive information.

## Passenger information

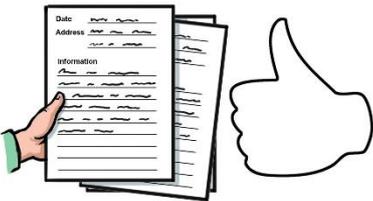


The consultation asked if any other passenger information should be given. People said that passenger information should be made available and be accessible.



Some said that information could be made available in a way that kept people's privacy.

## Further information and consultation



People said that bus companies should keep records of information, so they are available if asked for.

This information should be in a format agreed by bus companies and Local Transport Authorities.

## Impact Assessments



The rules say the reasons why impact assessments should be done. They measure how successful a plan is and the effect of changes.



The consultation asked for people's views on these. Very few people commented.

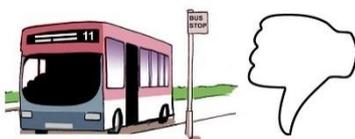
## Additional comments



There were some key themes in people's answers. This included that Scottish Ministers and Transport Scotland should give more funding and support.



There were concerns that Bus Service Improvement Partnerships are being given more money than the other services. Some people said they liked public ownership.



There were other comments about the current bus system in Scotland. It is run for profit and has not provided the level of services needed. Many people were negative of bus services.



However there were some positive comments about Lothian Buses. This was seen to be a good example with a good service.



**TRANSPORT  
SCOTLAND**

CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

Transport Scotland  
Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road,  
Glasgow, G4 0HF  
0141 272 7100  
info@transport.gov.scot  
www.transport.gov.scot

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