

Report to Partnership Meeting 17 September 2021

Consultation

Transport (Scotland) Act – Bus Services Consultation

Purpose of Report

This report invites Members to consider HITRANS response to the consultation on Implementing the new Bus Provisions in Part 3 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019

Background

Bus Services account for three quarters of all public transport journeys. However, bus patronage in Scotland (and the UK) has been declining since the 1960s with the trend continuing through and beyond the privatisation of the sector following deregulation in 1985. Set against this backdrop, the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 has developed and refined the regulatory landscape with a suite of options designed to halt the decline in patronage and improve bus services.

Transport Scotland are now consulting with a view to informing the design of the implementation framework set out by the bus provisions contained within the 2019 Act, which covers partnership working, local services franchising, powers for local transport authorities to run their own buses and improvements to information.

A copy of the consultation paper can be found at the following link -

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/consultation/implementation-of-part-3-bus-services-of-the-transport-scotland-act-2019/>

The consultation contains questions on:

- Local Authority run services (questions 1 - 2)
- Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (questions 3 - 19)
- Local Services Franchises (questions 20 - 25)
- Information relating to services (questions 26 - 34)
- Impact assessments (questions 35 - 36)

HITRANS officers have already begun to prepare a response to the consultation and are working with public transport managers in partner Local Authorities to help inform this submission. The deadline for submitting responses is 6th October. A verbal update of the key issues will be provided at the Partnership meeting with Members encouraged to highlight any key areas that the HITRANS response should focus on. A copy of HITRANS draft response will then be electronically shared with Members for comment and subsequent approval before it is formally submitted.

Recommendation

Members are invited to;

1. Note this report
2. Review the consultation paper - implementing the new bus provisions in Part 3 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019
3. Delegate authority to HITRANS Chair and Partnership Director to prepare and submit a finalised response to the implementing the new bus provisions in Part 3 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 consultation on behalf of HITRANS

Risk Register

RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – Several of the provisions in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 support RTS priorities including those relating to social inclusion and access to employment and education.

Policy

Impact - Positive

Comment – This consultation provides an opportunity for HITRANS and partner Local Authorities to help shape the guidance supporting the new provisions contained within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

Financial

Impact – Neutral

Comment - There is no direct impact on HITRANS but the outcome of the review may have significant implications for the provision of local bus services throughout the Highlands and Islands.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment –

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