

Bus Services Bill Update

This update is to give you the latest information on the Bus Services Bill.

Timetable

The Bill is continuing its progress through Parliament. The latest version of the Bill, as amended in House of Lords Committee, was published on 20 July 2016 and can be found at:

http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2016-2017/0058/lbill_2016-20170058_en_1.htm

Report stage, giving all members of the Lords a further opportunity to examine and make amendments to the Bill, will be on Wednesday 12 October 2016.

Bill Amendments

The Government has brought forward a number of amendments to the Bill at Report stage. The most significant amendment will enable the Secretary of State to make regulations requiring operators of local services in Great Britain to provide “accessible information” on-board their services, which can include information identifying the route and upcoming stops, using both audible and visible media. The requirements will be imposed by way of secondary legislation, with an obligation on the Secretary of State to issue statutory guidance. A Scoping Note setting out the proposed content of the regulations can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-services-bill-accessible-information-regulations-scoping-note>

The Government has also introduced amendments to the list of statutory consultees to include:

- Transport Focus (Passengers’ Council)
- National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority
- The Competition and Markets Authority (franchising only) – the CMA is already included as a statutory consultee in partnership schemes.
- Employees’ representatives (franchising only) – as the bus market remains deregulated under partnership schemes, it would not be appropriate in this case for the local authority to consult directly with employees’ representatives.

Amendments to provisions enabling authorities to require information from operators in connection with their functions in relation to a franchising or a partnership plan and scheme have been brought forward, so that operators will be required to provide information within reasonable timescales and that provisions about use of information are set out on the face of the Bill.

An amendment to make it explicit that emission standards can be included in the terms specified in local service contracts in the context of franchising and as standards in partnership schemes, has also been introduced.

Response to the CMA

Andrew Jones has responded to the Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) recommendations in relation to competition issues in the Bus Services Bill. The response letter can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-services-bill-cma-response>

Guidance and policy statement

During discussion of the Bus Services Bill in House of Lords Committee, Peers raised a number of issues which they proposed should be incorporated in the Bill or addressed in guidance.

In response to this we have produced draft guidance, covering those areas which were felt to be of most concern and interest to Peers, and a policy statement on access to franchising powers. This should help to inform discussion during the passage of the Bill. The document is intended to outline some of the potential content of guidance and to give an indication of the general approach to some policy issues. However, at this stage it should be regarded as draft guidance only. It can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-services-bill-draft-guidance-and-policy-statement>

Secondary legislation

We are continuing discussions with key stakeholders and it is our intention to consult formally on draft regulations and guidance later in the year. In the meantime, any comments should be sent to: busworkshops2015@dft.gsi.gov.uk

**Bus Services Bill Policy Team
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