

RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

TRANSPORT (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

Low Emissions Zones

NLC considers that the provisions of the Bill in relation to LEZs will deliver the change. However, this must be backed by regulations and guidance that provide clarity on the requirements and commitments of partners. NLC considers that complementary measures are essential in delivering improvements and any regulations or guidance should develop this area further. Consideration should be given to the use of these measures in isolation without the need for an LEZ as in some locations this may provide a more appropriate solution. Funding is essential to delivery and the Government needs to ensure that an appropriate level of funding is made available to support the development, delivery and ongoing running costs.

Bus Services – Provision of Services by Local Authorities

NLC considers that local authorities that are within a passenger transport areas should have the option to deliver services without relying on the PTA to deliver them on their behalf.

However, without strong complementary support and significant capital and revenue funding from Government, which appears to have been underestimated, it is unlikely that any local authority will be able operate services themselves. This is even more so due to the restriction that local authorities can only operate services addressing social need, which are often loss making services that commercial operators have abandoned.

Bus Services - Bus Service Improvement Partnership Plans

BSIPP have the potential to deliver improvements to the bus market. However, there are challenges for authorities in developing a scheme, particularly in areas with multiple operators, that would deliver benefits whilst keeping all the operators engaged in the process. Given the opportunities for operators to withdraw from the process and stop any plan it is difficult to see authorities investing the necessary time and money, without support from Government, when the outcome is so uncertain.

Bus Services – Franchising

The route to franchising includes the preparation of a franchising framework, an assessment of the framework, an auditors report and the approval of a panel. This process seems cumbersome. Local authorities are already delivering improvements for local communities using existing structures within the authority to ensure balance and value for money. It seems unnecessary to invent additional structures when adequate ones already exist.

Franchising has been shown to be a costly way of delivering services (London Buses ongoing net operating deficit) and without support from Government it is unlikely that any local authority would choose to use this power.

Bus Services – Information

NLC welcomes the provisions of information by an operator if they vary or withdraw a bus service. NLC would, however, wish to see the provisions in the Bill extended to include more detailed information for all services in receipt of a public subsidy.

Bus Services – Ticketing

NLC considers that there is no requirement to replace existing schemes. The UK already has a national standard in the form of ITSO. This is already widely used across Scotland.

Pavement Parking and Double Parking

NLC supports in principle the aims of controlling footway and double parking and the benefits that it can bring to many parts of the community like those with mobility issues and those with buggies. However, this will place a considerable burden on local authorities that has not been adequately considered. A major review of all of the footways within the council area will have to be undertaken to identify locations where exemption orders will be required. There is no data currently available to the council that would allow them to make this decision without visiting each location.

Within many residential areas there are no other parking options for residents, they are forced to park on the footway to ensure that other vehicles can pass. In locations like this where there is not enough room for pedestrians to pass an exemption order would not be possible and all of these residents would have nowhere to park. No consideration has been given as to how this would be managed.

Enforcement of the restrictions will be challenging. In NLC we have a small enforcement team that works during office hours; many issues will be in residential areas at night. If a service is to be provided to these areas expansion of the enforcement team will be required and income from tickets will be unlikely to cover this.

The costs to review the existing network, promote exemption orders, provide appropriate signing and to enforce the provisions of the Bill have not been adequately considered and without appropriate funding from Government will not be implemented as envisaged.

Road Works

NLC is supportive of the changes in the Bill that will help to drive compliance across the sector and improve health and safety. However, NLC consider that the additional resources required to comply with the changes has been underestimated and this will place an additional financial burden on local authorities.

Regional Transport Partnerships

NLC is supportive of the measures in the Bill that assists the RTP's in balancing their books and delivering projects over multiple years.

British Waterways Board

NLC is supportive of the proposed changes in the Bill to the governance and representation on the British Waterways Board.