

# TWNW's Responses to Government's consultations on their draft Local Transport Bill

John Moorhouse - Company Secretary

Paul Fawcett - Advisory and Research

Consultant

John Moorhouse

# Background

- 12/06 “Putting Passengers First” White Paper
- 3/07 TWNW response to White Paper
- 5/07 draft Local Transport Bill
- 6/07 TWNW’s written response to the House of Commons Transport Committee (HOCTC) in response to their request for comments on the Bill (pre-legislative scrutiny)

# Background [cont]

- 6/07 TWNW presented evidence to HOCTC
- 7/07 HOCTC issued their report, supportive of an English Bus Users' Consultative Committee.
- 8/07 DfT further consulted on the specific issues of the role of the Traffic Commissioners, bus service registrations and quality and quantity controls

# Background [cont]

- 9/07 TOWNW made an overarching response to DfT on all of the above consultations.
- All TOWNW responses can be found on [www.travelwatch-northwest.org.uk](http://www.travelwatch-northwest.org.uk)
- HOCTC minutes and report can be found on [www.parliament.uk/transcom](http://www.parliament.uk/transcom)

# A qualified WIN

- HOCTC accepted that bus users in England (outside London) have no statutory voice
- Recommended the Bill should establish a statutory BUCC for England
- but stopped short of recommending a multi-modal Transport UCC.

# A qualified WIN [cont]

- However there exists a parallel Government cross departmental review of all statutory consumer representation and Utility regulation and
- The supplementary DfT consultation on the role of the Traffic Commissioners suggests that (together with the non statutory BUUK and the BAB) they are well placed to handle passenger representation and complaints. We have some concerns with this.

Paul Fawcett

# Traffic Commissioners

- Under-resourced to inspect and enforce the Bill's proposed bus performance regimes.
- Self reporting by operators unacceptable
- Monitoring by independent Inspectors would be preferable, possibly using observations, GPS, Concessionary Travel surveys or BSOG data.
- Allowing TCs to approve Quality Contracts could result in a conflict of interests.

# Quality Partnerships

- TWNW support easements of competition law to facilitate Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) and
- Statutory QPs by amending the “Schedule 10 block exemption” to allow the inclusion of fares and frequencies.

# Quality Contracts

## [franchised re-regulation]

- Support “Public Interest Test”
- Too “urban centric” (linked to road pricing and ‘bustitution’)
- May be both necessary and suitable in some rural areas
- ATCO’s TNZs supported.
- Approval mechanism too heavy, LTPs should be able to determine their own QCs.

# PTE Governance

- Useful provision but
- should not be necessary to redraw boundaries to include the whole of local transport authorities' areas
- Support Integrated Transport Strategies to replace LTPs but barriers of deregulation, competition law and passenger vehicle licencing remain in the absence of QCs!

# Payment of BSOG on patronage

- Would provide incentives for operators and
- encourage network stability but
- discriminates against rural transport which badly needs revenue funding
- could be paid to LTAs (as in TNZs) and combined with reimbursements for Concessionary Travel.

# Use of PHVs as taxi buses

- Long standing TOWN aspiration
- Helpful to rural transport procurers
- Equivalent if not identical PSV and Taxi quality standards
- Disapplication of separate fares criteria superficially attractive but could have unintended consequences.

# Other matters in the draft Local Transport Bill

- Road Pricing and TIF (next presentation!)
- Community Transport social enterprises are encouraged by widening the scope of Permits beyond their present limitation (minibuses with 9-16 passenger seats) to include buses and small PCVs.
- Increase powers for TCs to hold operators and LTAs to account.