

## **RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE**

### **TRANSPORT (SCOTLAND) BILL**

#### **SUBMISSION FROM SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL**

##### **Low emission zones (LEZs)**

The Bill would grant Scottish Ministers the power to approve all LEZs and to set national rules for their operation. South Lanarkshire supports this proposal.

It would grant Councils the power to set the rules governing the operation of individual LEZs. South Lanarkshire supports this proposal.

The promotion of LEZs, however, should not focus solely on the prohibition or banning of certain vehicles but must take a holistic view of the provision of viable alternative forms of the transportation of both people and goods. Particularly, but not exclusively, in the west of Scotland LEZs must not simply focus on the “soft” target of buses, as there has been a huge decline in bus patronage over recent years, which shows no signs of slowing down. It is important to view buses as a solution rather than as a problem, given advances in bus engine technology and the passenger carrying capability of such vehicles when compared with the private car.

It is noted that the Government is committed to the introduction of LEZs in to Scotland’s four biggest cities between 2018 and 2020 and into all other Air Quality Management Areas by 2023 where the National Low Emissions Framework appraisals advocate such mitigation. At this time South Lanarkshire have no proposals to introduce any LEZs and would look to learn from lessons emerging from the larger city schemes before considering whether such measures are the best solution for smaller rural settlements.

##### **Bus services**

The Bill provides local transport authorities with powers to improve local bus service provision through statutory partnership working with bus operators, the creation of local bus service franchises and the ability to operate services themselves, where these are not in competition with commercially operated services.

While South Lanarkshire generally supports these proposals it considers that similar powers already exist in the west of Scotland. It is our view that in many respects the Bill could be regarded as a missed opportunity to provide a stimulus to bus services in the west of Scotland.

Without strong complementary support and significant capital and revenue funding from Scottish Government, which appears to have been underestimated, key provisions of the Bill are likely to prove ineffective or unworkable. For example the ability for local authorities to operate services themselves, but only where these are not in competition with commercially operated services, places a high financial risk upon them. Such a service could, theoretically, become commercially attractive. A private operator may then decide to provide a rival service, requiring the authority to cease direct operations despite the financial and material investment in vehicles, depot infrastructure, staff and the like.

The Bill would require bus operators to share information on routes, timetables and actual running times with third parties in order to make it easier for passengers to know when their bus will arrive and how much it will cost.

Councils have been asked how best they or bus operators could improve the ways information on timetables and routes is provided. Five options are suggested which are bus operator apps, paper timetables on bus stops, bus operator web sites, portable paper timetables and real-time displays at bus stops. South Lanarkshire consider them all to be relevant, but with different ones more appropriate in different circumstances, for example in an urban environment as opposed to a rural one.

### **Smart ticketing**

South Lanarkshire supports, in principle, the provisions of the Bill in relation to smart ticketing, however, it feels elements are unnecessary or over-prescriptive. It is considered that a national technological standard for smart ticketing already exists in the form of ITSO, a UK national standard which is widely used in Scotland for most bus operators as well as ScotRail and the Glasgow Subway.

South Lanarkshire cannot see any significant benefits from a National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board or the requirement for local authorities to produce annual reports on the use of ticketing powers.

The Bill seeks to give Scottish Ministers the power to direct local authorities to implement ticketing schemes. South Lanarkshire do not support this proposal as Local Authorities already have this power and if they are not implementing a scheme it is perhaps because there is no demand, or because they have no budget or resource to do so.

### **Parking**

While supporting the principles of the Bill South Lanarkshire have concerns at the, as yet un-quantified, burden which will be placed on local authorities to enforce this legislation and the potential negative effects on other road users, for example refuse collection vehicles and buses.

An issue that does not seem to have been considered is that in streets where it will be necessary to permit an element of pavement parking it will not be possible to accommodate the volume of vehicles that currently park there in that manner. This is because currently vehicles will park on a pavement round radii, at dropped crossing points and in visibility splays, however, it will not be appropriate to designate and mark such locations as suitable for parking, so the theoretical capacity of a street will be reduced.

The Bill proposes a number of exemptions to the prohibition on pavement parking and double parking, including the likes of emergency service vehicles, vehicles undertaking road works, and refuge and postal delivery vehicles. South Lanarkshire is supportive of the proposed exemptions.

The Bill, however, requires that vehicles that benefit from an exemption only use it where it is unavoidable and for the shortest time possible. South Lanarkshire is supportive of this position.

The Bill would allow local authorities to exempt any footway from the prohibition on pavement parking, as long as it has had regard to any guidance issued by Scottish Ministers. South Lanarkshire support this.

### **Road works**

South Lanarkshire consider that any powers and measures that will strengthen the existing powers of the Commissioner, in order to help drive compliance across the sector and improve health and safety, are to be supported.

### **Regional Transport Partnerships**

South Lanarkshire support the proposals in relation to Regional Transport Partnerships.

### **Scottish Canals Board**

There are no canals in South Lanarkshire, therefore, we do not have an opinion on this proposal.