

Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

Transport (Scotland) Bill

24 October 2018 - Discussion forum

Background

On 24 October the Committee held a discussion forum in the Parliament to hear people's views on the Transport (Scotland) Bill. 47 people from a range of community groups, local authorities and business interests were present. The evening started with a panel of academics briefly sharing their views on the Bill and then discussion was opened up to the floor.

The following is a summary of points raised by participants during the discussion:

Parking

It was felt that...

- Enforcing the current rules is difficult and it was questioned how the rules in the Bill will be better enforced in future.
- Decriminalised Parking Enforcement by local authority officers would be essential for proper enforcement to be achieved. Although it was questioned whether the Bill had enough in the financial memorandum to cover this.
- Enforcement in rural local authorities would be by its very nature more challenging than in urban authorities.
- The 20min exemption for deliveries on pavement and double parking effectively legitimises short term pavement parking and makes the job of any enforcement personnel more difficult. There was also a concern that the 20min cycle could effectively run into one another for different deliveries.
- Double and pavement parking makes moving around very difficult for parents with buggies, blind people, people with mobility issues and cyclists.
- Parking on dropped kerbs is also a significant barrier to mobility and access and should be addressed in the Bill.
- Education and encouragement not to pavement park would be helpful for some people. Although it was noted that in many areas people do not have a choice but to pavement park and that if they don't the road becomes impassable.
- In some circumstances double or pavement parking is essential to gain access close to people's homes for pick up / drop off on community transport vehicles which are often helping the older and less mobile.
- The delivery of goods is essential to businesses and customers. It was noted that in the Bill double and pavement parking are dealt with together. It was questioned whether it would be more effective to deal with them separately.
- The Bill discusses loading and unloading - not specifically delivery vehicles. It was questioned whether that wording in the Bill could be abused.
- Our streets and city centres are not designed for large delivery vehicles and we should design our services around the infrastructure we have.

- The use of distribution hubs in the outskirts of a population centre and transferring goods to be brought in on smaller vehicles. However, it was noted that this could have unintended consequences on the environment and congestion.
- There was a concern from cyclists that if parking is moved off pavements its shouldn't then take up space on dedicated cycle paths.
- There must be demand management so that people are using their cars less. It was felt that a work place parking levy or a wider non-residential parking levy would be useful to stop people taking their cars into city centres. It was noted that the work place parking levy has been successfully implemented in England. However, it was noted that we need a viable alternative means of public transport in place before a levy would work.
- Clarity is needed on whether the Scottish Government intend to make the parking provisions in the Bill a 'power' (Local Authorities can apply the provisions if they want to) or a 'duty' (Local Authorities must apply the provisions).
- That the enforcement of parking restrictions for zig zag lines should be included in the Bill.

Buses

It was felt that...

- The Bill may restrict local authorities so that they can only run the loss-making services which must be provided to meet social necessity.
- Arresting the decline of bus patronage is the single most important thing to do to meet economic objectives of the Scottish Government.
- No transport act to date has effectively addressed bus decline. There is a need to focus on demand management, reduce congestion and encourage modal shift. It was noted that the indicator that measured congestion in the National Performance Framework has been removed.
- Young people are more likely to book a taxi than get on a bus. Need to change the culture.
- It was suggested that a work place parking levy and possibly a town centre levy would help to reduce demand for cars. It was noted that the work place levy has been used successfully in Nottingham. However, that they had an effective and reliable transport network in place before it was imposed.
- The Bill in its current state will not deliver a Lothian style bus service in other local authority areas. Local Authorities may not have the capacity or the willingness to take on the financial risk associated with operating their own bus service as currently set out in the Bill.
- Route level data is required to build a business case for quality contracts and the bill should incorporate some mechanism to allow for this.
- The Bill could say more about how local authorities and bus companies work in partnership. Some people felt that the biggest barrier to partnership was the limited nature of local authority funding cycles and that measures are required over a longer period. Others felt that the relationship worked better before it was placed on a statutory basis in 2001.
- There were mixed views on franchising. Some were doubtful of the success of the franchising proposals as the economics of the industry would not support

them. It was noted that profit margins are not large and that bus fares have risen but not because of excess profitability. Others felt that franchising could deliver benefits but only if properly implemented. It was noted that franchising has worked well in other areas only because they have benefited from significant investment.

- There was a concern about some operator's cherry-picking routes. It was noted that community transport may be forced to pick up the ones left over to support the elderly and the disabled.
- In rural areas many of the vehicles are coaches whereas fully accessible buses are what is required. This places a burden on rural communities which are expected to fill that gap with community transport.
- The link between bus travel and active travel should be acknowledged. Every bus journey will start with a walk or a cycle.
- The quality of bus provision is mixed across Scotland. It was noted that for railways there is the SQUIRE policy framework to ensure standards and that makes a big change to passenger experience. It was suggested that there could be a role for a bus quality regime given amount of public money.

Low Emissions Zones (LEZ)

It was felt that...

- Technical details and the determination of what vehicles may enter the LEZ must be done at a national level so that there is a single understanding of what is allowed in an LEZ.
- People had different views on grace periods for compliance. Some felt that they should be shorter as the impact on public health and the environment must be urgently addressed. Others felt that the longer grace periods were necessary so as not to punish those with less money who may drive older vehicles and won't have the capability to replace them before time.
- In the Bill LEZs won't apply to special roads and motorways. This will cause issues in cities such as Glasgow which has motorways running through the middle and cause most of the air pollution. It was questioned whether this was a credible position.
- There should be key tests / objectives set out in the Bill which every LEZ should meet. E.g. Does it help to deliver overall modal shift to hit climate change development targets?
- The Euro 6 standard is good on particulate matter but could be better on nitrogen oxide emissions.
- Zones should be embedded into broader regional geography so that benefits can also accrue outside zones. E.g. travel to work areas.
- Support should be put in place to help community transport vehicles comply with the zones as they are often older vehicles and the communities which run the vehicles must get maximum use for their money. They must be supported to either retrofit or upgrade to meet the standards.
- LEZ must be considered holistically as part of a range of other activities to encourage modal shift. Transport is only one source of air quality problems.

- It was noted that the benefits of the Euro 6 compliant engine in buses won't be realised unless the bus can reach certain speeds. This is unlikely to happen in our congested cities and town centres.

Smart Ticketing

It was felt that...

- There is an important distinction between smart ticketing in terms of the technology used and integrated transport which allows people to buy one ticket which will allow access to multiple modes of transport.
- We need to be ambitious as technology is moving quickly – we need more than a plastic card – people have the expectation they can use contactless payments and smart phone payments.
- Genuinely integrated ticketing would be very challenging to achieve as some modes are much more expensive than others.
- Smart ticketing has its advantages. However, if it's not coupled with attractive pricing it isn't going to make the difference to get people back on the buses.
- Integrated ticketing would be easier to achieve if the regulatory and regional public transport system was operated on a gross cost basis whereby local authorities keeps the revenue and pays others to operate the service.
- The ITSO system is a multi-modal, multi operator ticketing system which already exist. However. challenges occur in the allocation and collection of revenue as well as the integration of back office technology of the various operators.
- There are concerns about how some zone cards operate. For example, in Glasgow you can only buy the zone card at the bus station and it always expires on Saturday.
- A daily price cap is essential for effective integrated ticketing. Although the technology is available to cap now it was felt that it would only be possible to deliver economically through franchising. Some people felt that this would be an argument for franchising in and of itself. However, it would mean higher costs to the public sector.