



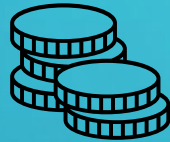
Franchising Bus Services in Rural Areas?

Melanie Watson - Director

Rural Transport

Specific Challenges – largely trend of decline?

Costs



Funding £

Lower Patronage



Quality of Infrastructure



Perceptions



Are we asking the right question?

Key issues include:

- **Role of public transport in contributing to local outcomes**
- **Prioritising public transport funding – making the case**
- **Many rural areas do not invest significant sums into the bus network to enable sustainable growth.**
- **Franchising can be delivered in different ways, but some of the outcomes can be leveraged with reduced public sector risk.**

The role of LTAs is evolving

Strong vision and leadership is required – reset rural public transport

- **Own the problem / solution**
- **Make the case, prioritise & fund it**
- **Make it relevant for communities**
- **Communicate simple messages**
- **Collaborate and work together**

BSIP funding provides the platform



Rural Transport – Creating the Vision

The Vision...

One network – presented as a whole

One timetable – integrated with other modes

One map – showing all routes

One website / app – with everything the customer requires

One ticket – to use on any bus, and wider if possible!



Network & Information

One Network

One Map

One Timetable

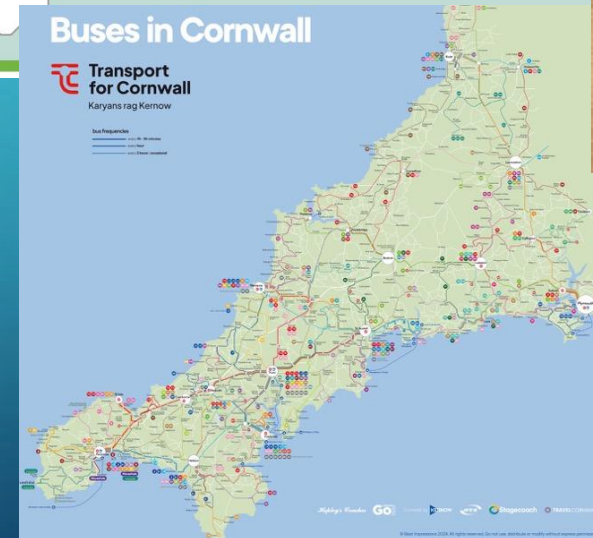
SIMPLE & CONSISTENT

Collaborate and provide guiding mind

Remove duplication

Consistent approach across LTA boundaries

Customer orientated



Ticketing

One Ticket - framework for fares?

- Common terminology for tickets and consistent age ranges – all operators / across LTA boundaries
- Inter-operability with no price premium
- Simplicity – allows marketing and better customer understanding
- Consider impacts of interchange



Rural transport needs more than franchising

- **Sensible collaboration** – LTA's, operators, stakeholders etc.
- **Leadership** – a guiding mind and clear ownership
- **Stronger case for funding** – rural premium?

Challenging issues to be faced around governance, risks and finance if VfM to be achieved.



To conclude

Buses support equality, social mobility and facilitate economic growth – yet we know rural bus networks are hard to sustain. We need to step out of the comfort zone and drive change with LTA's taking a more strategic and leading role in setting the agenda for bus services and securing new funding streams.

Or we continue to manage decline?

Franchising alone won't deliver change.

Access to transport changes lives.



Thank you

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