# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket:** **Planning Buses as a Public Service for Wales**  |
| **DATE**  | **31 March 2022** |
| **BY** | **Lee Waters MS, Deputy Minister for Climate Change** |

I am pleased to announce we are today publishing the white paper One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket: Planning Buses as a Public Service for Wales. The white paper proposes changes to the way bus services are delivered in Wales to design and deliver a bus network fit for the climate emergency, fit for the future and fit for the people of Wales.

Buses are an essential service for many people, but we currently can’t plan and design bus networks to meet people's needs, either in our cities and towns or for our rural communities. We must change this and provide a better service if we want to break our reliance on the private car. This white paper lays out how we plan to do this.

Our proposals have passengers as the focus. People need a well-planned, easy to understand network; buses that are timetabled to connect with each other and with trains; and a single, simple, easy to use ticketing system. The white paper proposes a franchising model to deliver this, and build a network of buses that can tie in with the wider transport system.

This model will enable coordinated network planning between the 22 local authorities and through the 4 regional Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs), focusing on providing the services people need. The Welsh Ministers will hold ultimate responsibility for ensuring a national network plan is produced and delivered for bus services across Wales. Rather than competing for franchising skills and experience across Wales, we are proposing to create a centralised franchising team within Transport for Wales, acting on behalf of Ministers. The proposed franchising team will both support local authorities and CJCs with network planning and let and manage franchise contracts, on behalf of the Welsh Ministers, making sure the whole of Wales has access to the same procurement power and resource. This will also aid with the aspiration to tie in with the full public transport network to be able to truly deliver One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket.

This model highlights the importance of joint working between all levels of Government in Wales. Best practice franchising models in other countries show the importance of a single ‘guiding mind’ that brings key decision makers together and enables them to design and deliver public transport services as effectively as they can. We are aiming to use such a group, including representatives of operators, staff and passengers, to bring all levels of Wales’ bus system together and bring a real focus on maximising the benefits it delivers for people across Wales.

The Climate Emergency demands urgent action. We have to make more progress over the next 10 years than we have in the last 30. Franchising will help us design an attractive network that gets people where they want to go easily and reliably, and drive vehicle decarbonisation standards. This is key to supporting the scale of modal shift we need to see to hit our climate targets. It will also support our ambitions to cut emissions from our bus fleet, moving people around as sustainably as possible.

The draft Regulatory Impact Assessment, which will shortly be published to accompany the white paper analyses the cost implications of different bus operating models. This highlights both the benefits franchising has to offer over alternatives, and the scale of what we could be achieving with the hundreds of millions of pounds we already invest in buses in Wales if we were able to better design networks to meet people’s needs.

We want to work in partnership with the industry between now and the proposed introduction of franchising, so it is an easy path for all stakeholders. We will also continue to work with stakeholders during the roll out and bedding-in process of this proposal. We are already in consultation with operator representatives and Local Authorities as this proposed legislation needs to be done once and done right. Transitional arrangements will be made, in consultation with the industry, to work together to go as far as possible in the meantime. We want to improve bus services so that once the proposed legislation in place, we are ready to take the last steps to offer people in Wales the bus network they need.

This white paper consultation is a key step towards a new model for running buses in Wales, and a chance for us to raise our sights on what we want from our public transport services. We want to hear the voices of people across Wales and across the industry, to help us take this opportunity to re-design our delivery model for bus services as effectively as possible and implement a world-class bus system for Wales. The consultation will remain open for responses until 24 June.

However, we recognise that this new model for running buses in Wales will take a number of years to achieve. Therefore, I am also today publishing Bus Cymru, which sets out a detailed routemap for how we want to work collaboratively going forward to improve all aspects of bus service provision for passengers. This includes infrastructure, road allocation, accessibility, integration with other public transport modes, and, more widely, how we can bring about positive change in the short term. To achieve these improvements will though require positive joint working with our partners in local government and the bus industry.

We have also committed to look at School Transport and will take forward this year a wider programme of work that encompasses consideration of a complete revision of the Learner Travel Measure. I am therefore publishing today the findings from the Learner Travel Measure Review undertaken in 2021. This has identified that the main issues for further consideration are:

* Distance eligibility and child welfare
* Lack of dedicated school transport for post-16 learners
* Young people with additional learning needs
* Residency criteria
* Socio-economic impact of parents paying for transport
* Welsh medium and faith school education
* Nursery School provision
* School Transport Infrastructure

In taking forward this work we will be engaging with stakeholders to develop the evidence base to support any proposed changes to ensure that they are fair, proportionate, and affordable. We will be consulting on this work later this year.

School travel is an intrinsic part of the way we support local bus provision and we want to make sure we take forward reform in tandem with our wider bus work, and not deal with it in isolation.

[One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket: Planning Buses as a Public Service for Wales](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fone-network-one-timetable-one-ticket-planning-buses-public-service-wales&data=04%7C01%7CGovernment.Plenary.Business%40gov.wales%7Cae8b5c58af794a1c9ebe08da1266384c%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637842527476391882%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=JIm09kXYlse1agm2NkoSTm9N4B1ZsKzDyNwDu8RHczo%3D&reserved=0)