



Department for Transport

Kim Johnson MP
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From the Secretary of State
The Rt Hon Grant Shapps

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Dear Kim,

Thank you for your emails of 13 October and 10 November on behalf of the Liverpool City Region All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG). I am sorry for the time it has taken to respond.

I am grateful for your work in leading the APPG, and I appreciate the time you have taken to get in touch about the findings of the Build Back Better Inquiry.

Our National Bus Strategy asked that all English Local Transport Authorities outside London publish Bus Service Improvement Plans by 31 October, setting out local visions for the step-change in bus services that is needed, driven by what passengers and would-be passengers want. I can confirm that Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's (LCR's) plan has been received by my department, and we look forward to understanding what transformative plans all authorities have for their areas over the coming weeks.

As the APPG touches on in its report, strong local plans, delivered through statutory arrangements, will be key to driving bus service improvements across the country. LCR has announced that it will set out its preferred delivery option in early 2022. This includes the option to reform the bus system by introducing franchising.

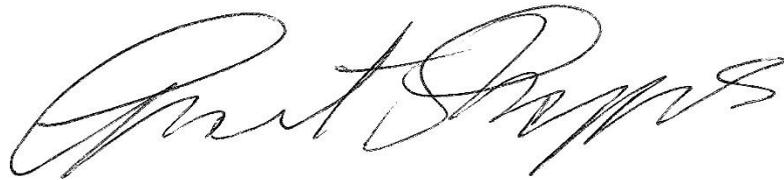
In our Strategy we have been clear that there must be seamless, integrated local ticketing between operators and this should be across all types of transport. My officials are working with representatives from the bus and technology sectors, as well as local authorities, including LCR, to establish a model for contactless multi-operator bus ticketing.

Proposals for a 'broker' system could help facilitate multi-operator ticketing at a technical level. The Department is therefore supportive, in principle, of 'Project Coral' - the Confederation of Passenger Transport / bus industry-led scheme. Nevertheless, technology would need to be supported by local

leadership through Enhanced Partnerships or Franchising agreements to ensure local fares-setting and capping agreements can be implemented, with suitable technology in place on vehicles and in operators' own revenue and data-handling back offices.

We encourage all authorities with similar ambitions to collaborate on developing technological solutions. Accordingly, we will ask Project Coral's representatives to work with LCR to explore how the region's proposals for bus and other ticketing improvements could interact with the industry-led solution, to reduce duplication and maximise benefits.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Shapps', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT