



A national strategy for bus  
The Go-Ahead Group's  
recommendations

***Go-Ahead***

## About Go-Ahead

Go-Ahead is a leading UK public transport operator, providing high quality services in the bus and rail sectors. We run bus companies across the country, from Plymouth to Newcastle, and a quarter of London's buses for Transport for London (TfL). We operate a fleet of 5,200 buses, which carry more than two million passengers a day.

Internationally, we provide bus services in Singapore and Ireland, and have rail contracts in Germany and Norway.

We employ around 28,000 people across the country and over one billion passenger journeys are undertaken across our services each year.

## What a national bus strategy should prioritise

### Society

Put buses at the heart of planning for schools, hospitals, housing, town centres and social services

### Targets

Challenge local authorities and bus operators by setting demanding targets for passenger numbers, punctuality and journey times

### Standards

Flexible partnerships between local authorities and commercial bus operators that play to each other's strengths and tackle the variability in provision for quality bus services

### Green technology

Accelerate the shift to ultra-low and zero emissions vehicles to improve air quality for all

## Why we are calling for a national strategy for buses

The DfT has clear strategies for rail, aviation, roads, cycling and walking. Despite 3.5m people in the UK travelling to work by bus, and around two-thirds of all public transport journeys being by bus, there is no dedicated bus strategy

**A national strategy could provide a framework for effective delivery of local solutions.**

There has been a 12% fall in bus passenger journeys in England outside London, from 2.41 billion passenger journeys in 2008/09 to 2.13 billion in 2017/18.

This matters because of the vital importance of buses to the economy and social inclusion.

2.5 million people are reliant on buses to get them to work, a higher number than all other forms of public transport combined. Buses also support 1.4 billion shopping trips, accounting for annual spending of £27bn.



25% of households have no access to a car, (50% of workless households). 73% of bus journeys are made by people in the bottom half of income. 1 in 10 bus commuters would be forced to look for another job or give up work if they couldn't commute by bus.

With the Government introducing a Loneliness Strategy, the role of buses in enabling vital social contact for isolated people needs to be reaffirmed.

Since 2010/11 there has been a 46% cut in funding for local authority supported services in England, severing whole communities.

Passenger growth in some of our operating areas, such as Brighton (8.3% since 2011/12), Bournemouth/Poole (18.8% since 2011) and Southampton (25.8% since 2011) shows what can be achieved with the right approach, policies and investment.

Congestion in the UK's largest cities is 14% worse than five years ago. A 10% decrease in bus speeds can reduce patronage by 10% or more. Increasing average speeds at peak times could also significantly reduce bus emissions.



## Society

put buses at the heart of planning for schools, hospitals, housing, town centres and social services

Viewing bus services as traditionally within the domain of 'transport policy' restrains its potential as an enabler for social good.

The affordable, inclusive and accessible transport provided by buses can form an integral part of tackling challenges such as loneliness, obesity, air pollution, social exclusion and sustainable growth. In doing so, costs can be saved elsewhere (e.g. commissioning of taxi services, health and social care costs arising from loneliness).

The health benefits of active travel combined with public transport offer a compelling alternative to driving for, or part of, daily commutes. Go-Ahead research, undertaken with RunFriendly, shows the benefits of active travel for the first or last mile of a public transport journey include a reduced risk of heart disease, cancer or strokes.

- People who commute by bus or train can typically accumulate 20-28 minutes' physical activity per day
- Our research found 28% of drivers would be willing to consider an active component as part of their journey

Enabling buses to perform this role requires bus access to be considered in the planning of residential developments, schools, hospitals and other venues. Bus operators should be statutory consultees on planning applications. This can then enable financially sustainable services to operate.

With developer contributions increasingly going on non-transport schemes, the ability of buses to provide affordable, quick delivery schemes needs to be understood and promoted.

Best practice measures for the use of 'Section 106' funding for buses in residential and other development needs to be shared and barriers to bus solutions addressed.

## Go-Ahead examples

### Sustainable development

Across three of our businesses we employ people with planning expertise to work with local authorities on providing bus access to new developments.

Our Metrobus company in West Sussex worked with local planners on the development of Kilnwood Vale, a 2,500 home extension of Crawley. The local councils agreed to build two bus-only link roads towards Crawley, helping to make the bus the quicker option, and linking planning consent to sustainable transport.

### Chatty Bus

Go-Ahead's operators supported the fight against loneliness and social isolation with a 'Chatty Bus' campaign. Passengers were able to enjoy conversations, a cup of tea and in some locations even a piano sing-a-long! On designated 'chatty buses' ambassadors handed out 'happy to chat' badges to interested passengers to encourage conversations.

Transport Minister Nus Ghani said "Transport has a vital role to play in tackling loneliness and bringing people together... I am delighted to see such an innovative approach from Go-Ahead."

### Social inclusion

Brighton & Hove Buses provide free travel for homeless people to essential appointments, free travel to support events for refugees and discounts for carers, and work with Credit Unions to make season tickets more affordable for those on low incomes. It is introducing neighbourhood advisors to work alongside local partners to support independent living and tackle isolation with initiatives, such as bus buddying and personal travel planning.

Go North East blazed a trail by introducing simple cheap fares for under 18s, achieving double-digit growth in youth bus travel in the region, with other operators since following their lead. Plymouth Citybus has also successfully introduced a £1 fare for under 18s during school holidays.





## Standards

encouraging flexible, collaborative partnerships between local authorities and operators across the UK to tackle the variability in provision for quality bus services

Partnerships with local authorities that are collaborative and retain commercial freedom to respond to changes in customer demand can enable patronage growth.

Go-Ahead is demonstrating this partnership approach in several regions, where our operating companies are delivering locally-designed services for passengers through trusting long-term relationships.

We advocate a joint understanding of broader economic development and social priorities for councils, and how the bus can help to deliver on these areas.

Buses need to form an integral part of multi-modal transport strategies pursued by emerging sub-national transport bodies.



## Go-Ahead case studies

### Southampton Bus Quality Partnership

Go South Coast (GSC) works with Southampton City Council through the local Bus Quality Partnership. Projects have improved bus stop facilities, delivered award winning signage and reduced the time roads are closed for roadworks by a third. The wider SolentGo partnership delivered the first multi-modal multi-operator smart ticketing scheme outside a Metropolitan area. These activities contributed to Southampton winning the Transport City of the Year in 2013.

Private sector investment and successful funding bids have resulted in the average age of buses in Southampton dropping from 9 years to 2½ years. The city has bucked the national trend with a 17% increase in bus use between 2011 and 2018 with over 21m journeys undertaken by bus in the city – representing a 19% modal share.

### Brighton & Hove Quality Bus Partnership

Brighton & Hove Quality Bus Partnership has enabled the implementation of the Go-Ahead multi-operator ticketing system. This was delivered at minimal cost to the public sector and was well-reviewed in DfT's post-introduction report. Brighton & Hove Buses also cooperated on first phase Low Emission Zone standards and the current Ultra Low Emission Zone standards enforced from 1 January 2019.

### Oxford SmartZone scheme

Since 2011, a smart ticketing scheme has been in place in Oxford SmartZone which enables customers to use Oxford Bus Company, Stagecoach or Thames Travel buses in and around the city of Oxford.

The scheme was created through a partnership agreement that also saw the city's major operators agree to rationalise services on key corridors (using Competition Act powers) addressing stakeholder concerns around the volume of buses in Oxford's city centre.

Further examples of multi-operator ticketing are in place across Go-Ahead's operating areas, a recent one being the new Hull Card, which enables travel on our East Yorkshire services as well as Stagecoach in Hull and the surrounding area.



## Targets

challenge local authorities and bus operators by setting demanding targets for passenger numbers and journey times

A national framework with targets for patronage growth could enable delivery at a local level.

Local authorities could then target journey times with bus operators and be incentivised to adopt relevant local solutions (e.g. parking restraints, workplace parking levies, delivery restrictions, bus priority, and road access charging for utility companies).

These should be linked to future Government funding through Transforming Cities funding or other sources to ensure that the most effective solutions are developed.

Quality improvements can be delivered through targeted capital investment, such as enhanced bus stations, improved integration with rail and other modes, and improved roadside infrastructure.

The powers already available for local authorities to tackle congestion through the Traffic Management Act 2004 need to be effectively used and enforced.

Local bus operators can match these commitments with investments in new vehicles and high standards in information, ticketing, accessibility and service quality, through partnership agreements.

## Go-Ahead examples

### Brighton Bus Priority

Bus prioritisation in Brighton has led to 48% of passengers being carried on 2% of vehicles on the A259 Coast Road during peak time.

The local authority investment in bus lanes enabled our investment in additional vehicles. As a consequence the number of buses operating in the peak has doubled.

### Prioritised Maintenance

Go South Coast is working with Southampton City Council and Balfour Beatty on monitoring road surface conditions to give a live feed to the highway authority, to then prioritise routes for maintenance.

### Fastway - Bus Rapid Transit

The state-of-the-art Fastway network (including bus lanes, guideway, and traffic light prioritisation) delivered by our Metrobus company with West Sussex County Council has enabled 160% growth in passengers over 10 years and a 19% reduction in car trips.



## Greener Technology

accelerate the shift to ultra-low and zero emissions vehicles to improve air quality for all

Central government needs to provide a framework and local authorities need to step up on deliverable programmes that support clean air zones. These can be linked to demand management schemes that raise revenue (e.g. workplace parking levies).

Go-Ahead is the largest operator of electric buses in the UK and is ready to invest more in electric in tandem with public infrastructure development, which requires an investment commitment.

In the short term there needs to be continued investment in new and retrofitting ultra-low emission diesels (Euro VI).

Local authorities should prioritise air quality for children by working towards mandating Euro VI vehicles for schools' contract services.

Go-Ahead supports the reform of the Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG) to enable the transition to zero emission buses. At present, the BSOG provides support purely for use of diesel vehicles.

In tandem with the above, Go-Ahead pledges to achieve the following:

- **No new diesel vehicles purchased after 2025**
- **Zero emission fleet by 2035**

To support the delivery of these pledges, we would like to see an industrial strategy for UK bus manufacturing, to accelerate transition to zero emission vehicles and support the continuation of high value employment (83,000 jobs in UK bus and coach manufacturing).

## Go-Ahead examples

We operate almost 100 fully electric buses, which serve key commuter journeys across London, and are the largest operator of electric buses in the UK.

Waterloo garage, one of the largest electric depots in Europe is now emission free, having previously emitted 900 tonnes of CO2 emissions per annum.

Go-Ahead London, TfL and manufacturer BYD jointly won the 2017 Low Carbon Champions Grand Prix award for delivering the vehicles and infrastructure for London's first all-electric bus routes.

In our Oxford-based operations we will have 161 Euro VI buses in the fleet by July 2019, supporting the city's planned ultra-low emission zone in place from December 2020. The company has also invested in improved monitoring of air quality data and is partnering with Oxford City Council to upgrade five sightseeing buses to full electric power.

Across the Group, we invested £200m over 2016-18 in 900 new Euro VI buses, and Brighton & Hove Buses will introduce the UK's first extended-range double decker buses in Brighton in 2019. Powered by electric throughout, each bus has a small Euro VI Diesel engine to recharge onboard batteries. The diesel engine is geo-fenced, ensuring the bus utilises only electric power while in the Brighton Ultra Low Emission Zone. Metrobus' Gatwick Fastway service will see the introduction of 20 fully zero emission hydrogen fuel cell (HFC) buses, the UK's first in a commercial network, and Go North East are introducing nine new electric buses. Both projects are receiving public funding support as well as Go-Ahead investment.





## Future of transport

Go-Ahead is innovating and using technology to provide solutions that meet the changing expectations of customers and contribute to addressing society's challenges.

We are keen to discuss the contribution these solutions can make with national and local stakeholders and to work collaboratively with the public sector to ensure they can be widely applied.

### Mobility as a Service

Go-Ahead is developing a ground-breaking app aimed at making journeys across different transport modes hassle free, helping customers to take more control of their journeys.

The app will provide 'Mobility as a Service', combining planning and paying for journeys into one easy-to-use tool, ensuring customers always pay the best price available through Pay As You Go.

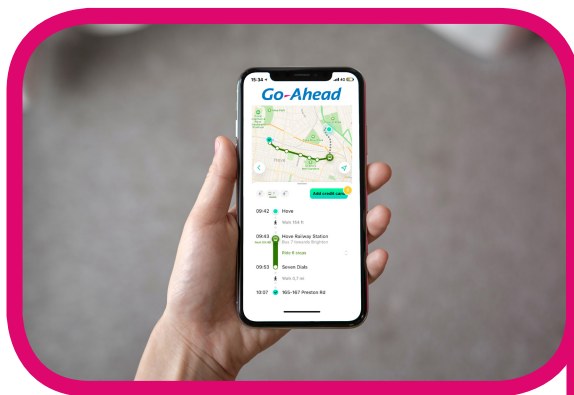
The new app will initially focus on the Brighton and Crawley area, where we are working with stakeholders to make travelling without a private car easier, enabling people to move away from car ownership. After an initial launch for bus and rail we aim to extend to other modes, such as car clubs and bike hire.

### Mobile Apps

Each of Go-Ahead's bus companies has a mobile app that is aimed at making planning and paying for bus journeys easy and convenient.

As users plan journeys, tickets are suggested and can be bought using the full range of payment options including Apple Pay, Android Pay, Visa Checkout and Paypal, often with promotional prices on offer.

Real time information on services shows both expected arrival time and actual location of upcoming buses.



## Go-Ahead examples

### Billion Journey Project

The Billion Journey Project is the UK's largest privately funded multi-modal transport innovation accelerator programme. Working with emerging tech companies it aims to improve the 1.3 billion passenger journeys made on our services every year.

The project provides mentoring from industry leaders and access to systems and sites, creating powerful partnerships for technology companies. 20 scale-ups have been taken through the incubator, with plans to pilot Citi Logik offering customers train crowding information and Airportr, helping air passengers move their luggage so they can leave their car at home, while they catch the train.



### Demand responsive buses

Our demand responsive PickMeUp service in east Oxford allows passengers to request journeys using an app and travel via virtual bus stops. It is enabling businesses to grow in an area of restricted car parking. With a good value flat fare it provides the convenience of a taxi for the price of a bus. We registered PickMeUp as a bus service, incurring the higher costs of fully accessible vehicles because it was the right thing to do. Over 140,000 journeys were made on PickMeUp in its first year of service.

In May 2019 we began operating 'Go Sutton', a 12-month 'on demand' bus trial for TfL in Sutton – an area with high car use. The trial aims to explore how an app-based service could complement existing public transport and reduce car usage.



# Future of transport



## Cutting edge ticketing

Go-Ahead has led the way in developing ticketing to meet the needs of today's customers. All of our buses across the country accept contactless payment, making it easier for customers to jump on a bus, without the worry of having enough change. But we're determined to go further.

From summer 2019 customers on our Brighton & Hove Buses will no longer need to work out what ticket they need through 'Pay As You Go' bus travel – on a large scale for the first time outside London. Using geolocation technology, customers will automatically be charged the best value fare for their journeys, using the 'tap-on/tap-off method' often used on trains and trams. Capping means they can make as many journeys as they want and never pay more than the cost of a day ticket.

## Seamless travel solutions

Go-Ahead has successfully introduced multi-operator ticketing in several regions outside London and is working with industry partners to develop multi-operator capping through contactless. This ensures value and convenience for customers using multiple operators' services, reducing another barrier to bus travel.

Geolocation technology is being used for other ticketing solutions, where payment is linked to the physical action of getting on and off the bus. It removes the need for a customer to use their smartphone, creating true frictionless travel.

As bus journeys become faster and easier to use, they become more attractive to customers.



**Brighton & Hove**  
essential travel for our city

**go** south coast

**Go** *Ahead-London*

**METRO**BUS

**go** east anglia

**oxford**  
bus company

**Go** North East

**city** PLYMOUTH bus

**Go** North West

**East**  **Yorkshire**

***Go-Ahead***