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public transport
through technology

Steven Salmon
Department for Transport

14th March 2022

Dear Steven,

Local Bus Service Registration Review Stakeholder Survey

Firstly, we welcome the start of the process to review the local bus service registration process.

As you know from our shared involvement in committees and working groups, RTiG is a community group whose members include UK local authorities, public transport operators and system suppliers, along with representatives from Government and other key industry groups. Our aim is to further the effective use of information technology in the public transport sector - through sharing experience and developing common approaches and specifications. RTiG was established over 20 years ago with the express purpose of bringing together a range of stakeholders within public transport to promote knowledge sharing and consensus. This has given RTiG access to a wide range of perspectives, which can be further expanded where appropriate; and an objective credibility across the sector.

Our work in developing technical standards and common approaches for data and interfaces between systems has been key to the efficient, cost effective roll out and development of public transport information systems across England and the wider UK.

RTiG, as a non-partisan group felt we were unable to respond directly to the recent local bus service registration review stakeholder survey. We do, however, with a focus on information and the customer, wish to share some views at this early stage of the review on the current process that we feel should be considered as part of the review of registration processes.

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Customer Information

The current rules around registration result in timetable data that is not simple to use in the production of quality information for the customer. The use of split registrations for example, requires a high level of knowledge of the industry to make sense of the data to provide information that properly reflects the bus service as envisaged by the Operator.

The data required as part of the registration process should be in a form and structure that makes it as simple as possible to produce customer information.

Changed data and Advanced notice

Any process change should require the provision of revised data whenever there is a change that would impact on customer facing information. Currently, not all changes to a service require updated data to be submitted and the approach to charges disincentivises the submission of data for non-registrable changes.

Updated data should be required to be submitted sufficiently in advance to enable consumers of the data to ensure that systems and outputs are updated in time for customers to be notified in advance of the change. This includes printed information at bus stops and journey planners: as examples where the lead times can be lengthy. The Bus Service Act 2017 encourages submission of all changes but does not require the data to be submitted sufficiently in advance to allow the publication of the data in information products with longer lead times.

Operational data

With the requirement to submit registrations 56 days in advance, many operators have not created the operational data necessary to provide high quality live information for the customer. Currently, there is no requirement to provide information that includes the necessary operational data. Any process revision should, therefore, consider requiring the provision of this data sufficiently in advance to enable consumers of the data to ensure systems are updated - improving the quality of customer information.

Data Standards

The data required should be in a highly structured format and be well documented, with the requirements clearly articulated. The format should be an internationally recognised standard based on Transmodel to ensure the concepts are familiar to suppliers and operators and to make the combining of live and fares data as easy as possible. In the short term this would mean TransXChange; in the medium term: 3 to

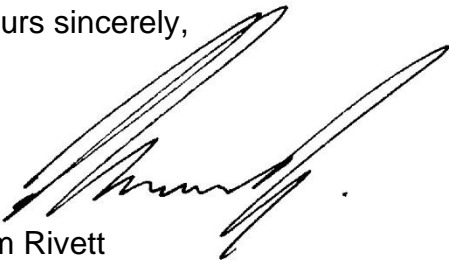
5 years, a move to NeTEx should be planned to enable easier integration of data with other modes and future proofing.

Responsibility for Compliance

Over the next few years, we foresee the potential for wide variation in local rules and agreements surrounding changes to services - with the introduction of enhanced partnerships and franchising. The registration process provides the opportunity to regulate these at a level to ensure consistency. The key requirements outlined in this letter, which focus on the ability to provide quality and timely information for the customer, should be applied as a minimum requirement to whoever is responsible for registering the service and whatever partnership arrangements are in place locally.

Once again, we welcome the start of the review of the local bus service registration processes, hope that you find these comments useful and look forward to working with you and colleagues to help deliver outcomes that help provide customers with timely and accurate information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Rivett', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Tim Rivett
General Manager

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