

Officer Briefing Note – Bus Services Bill

Motion proposed by Councillor Kershaw and seconded by Councillors Brayshaw, Devey and Reynolds:

This council notes:

1. *That the Bus Services Bill currently passing through Parliament includes Clause 21 that will effectively “prohibit a local authority from forming a company for the purposes of providing a local bus service”.*
2. *That the Localism Act (2011) provides general powers of competence to local authorities.*
3. *That municipal bus companies like Reading and Nottingham provide some of the best bus services in the country and have a successful track record of increasing bus passenger numbers and providing high quality bus services.*
4. *That polling by We Own It found that a majority of the public (57%) oppose clause 21, whilst just 22% support it. The opposition to Clause 21 is consistent across voters from all political parties.*

This council believes:

1. *Clause 21 contradicts the general powers of competence and the spirit of the Localism Act 2011.*
2. *If there is a need and a demand from their public, then Councils should be able to provide their own bus services.*
3. *Should they wish, Councils should be legally able to follow the model developed by Reading and Nottingham.*
4. *Consequently Clause 21 should be omitted from the Bus Services Bill.*

This council resolves:

1. *To write to Lord Ahmad and to call on the Department for Transport to omit Clause 21 from the final legislation.*
2. *To write to local MPs Cat Smith and David Morris to ask them to oppose clause 21 when the Bus Services Bill reaches the House of Commons and ask them to write to Lord Ahmad and the Department of Transport to raise concerns about Clause 21.*
3. *To work with any organisations such as We Own It to publicise our opposition to clause 21 in local media.*

The City Council is not the transport authority for the district; that responsibility lies with the County Council. Because of this, the City Council does not employ officers with specialist expertise in transportation matters.

As a district council, there is no reason, procedurally, why the City Council should not raise issues relating to a transport bill with central government, as well as with the other individuals and agencies referred to in the motion, if the Council feels this issue may affect Lancaster district.

Monitoring Officer Comments

The briefing note has been prepared by the Monitoring Officer in her capacity as Democratic Services Manager.

Section 151 Officer Comments

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.