



26th September 2017

Community Transport Operators Mobilise To Challenge Dft And Launch The 'Mobility Matters' Campaign

The letter from DfT proposing changes to the s19 and s22 permit system on 31 July has sent a shock wave through the community transport sector and has brought out the fighting spirit not seen since the days of the Mobility Alliance in 1989. Around 200 community transport operators have pledged support for Mobility Matters, a grass-roots campaign that was launched in mid-August.

This is a 'political' campaign in the sense that ordinary CT operators have agreed to lobby decision-makers and persuade the government that the DfT letter is premature and based on a legal premise that is at best tenuous. The campaign has engaged transport consultants TAS Partnership to provide support and advice.

The Mobility Matters campaign has two primary goals:

- that DfT should undertake a full-scale, holistic review of the regulation of and sustainability of the community transport sector. It is acknowledged that after 40 years the regulations do need review. However, this should be done broadly, so that any changes are designed to achieve improvements in social value, safety, capacity and quality, not the current perverse impact; and
- that until this review is complete, the government should make it clear publicly that it will not support any actions that disturb the settled licensing arrangements for the community transport sector – in effect a withdrawal of the letter of 31 July.

It should be emphasised that the campaign is not setting out to uncritically defend the preservation of the s19 and s22 licensing system as it is currently operated and enforced. It is accepted that some CTs and commissioning authorities have unwittingly misused s19 in the competitive contracting arena, and that this has become a genuine concern.

A legal challenge to DfT's intent is a key part of the Mobility Matters strategy. This could entail obtaining a legal advice from a QC and / or forcing DfT's hand by way of a test case. In the first instance, however, the campaign is seeking a direct dialogue

Friendship

Diversity

Wellbeing

Unity

Equality

with DfT in the hope of being able to present evidence of the scale of the CT sector and extent of the damage that will ensue to individuals and communities if the DfT directive is enforced.

John Taylor, advisor to the campaign, said: *"If this new interpretation and its resulting implications are made into law, the impact on the mobility of thousands of people would be catastrophic, and lead to increased isolation, poverty and ill health. It would also, by restricting community groups' ability to come together, damage community resilience and self-help that is so badly needed at a time of austerity."*

Any CT operator that wishes to lend support or is interested to learn more about the campaign should visit the Mobility Matters website www.ctpermits.org

Notes to Editor

- 1. Two high resolution images of community transport passengers and a picture of John Taylor are attached and further images available on request.**
 - 2. *Mobility Matters* is a collaboration of community transport operators across the country. The campaign sets out to raise awareness on the role and vital services of community transport; organise expert legal opinion if needed; offer clarity and advice to operators and convey the local and national evidence of the powerful social value provided.**
 - 3. All statistics contained in the press release have been drawn from a combination of sources including: Traffic Commissioner statistics; CTA and county council-level online directories and information; and extensive TAS Partnership research mapping permits and operations.**
 - 4. To download a copy of the letter the campaign responds to from the DfT's Stephen Fidler, Deputy Director of Buses & Taxis, please visit <https://ctpermits.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/170731-DfT-Letter-to-Permit-Issuers-GB.pdf>**
 - 5. John Taylor, who has been at the forefront of community transport development for nearly 40 years, met with transport minister Jesse Norman and Department officials on 12 September to discuss the need for a holistic review of the regulations around community transport permits; no further detail on the time of consultation was available.**
 - 6. For more information or to organise an interview, please contact Sarah Huntley on 07557 132775 or email her at sarah@ctpermit.org for more information.**
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