

## Consultation on changes to bus registration in Scotland



### RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

#### 1. Name/Organisation

Organisation Name

South West of Scotland Transport Partnership (SWestrans)

Title Mr  Ms  Mrs  Miss  Dr  *Please tick as appropriate*

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## 3. Permissions - I am responding as...

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Individual</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> | / | <b>Group/Organisation</b><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Please tick as appropriate</i>             |   |  |

  

**(a)** Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Transport Scotland web site)?

*Please tick as appropriate*     Yes     No

**(b)** Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

*Please tick ONE of the following boxes*

Yes, make my response, name and address all available   

*or*

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address   

*or*

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

**(c)** The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Transport Scotland web site).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

*Please tick as appropriate*     Yes     No

  

**(d)** We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Transport Scotland to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

*Please tick as appropriate*     Yes     No

## **CONSULTATION QUESTIONS**

**Question 1: do you agree with the proposal to extend the pre-registration notice period from 14 days to 28 days ?**

Yes  No

SWestrans supports this proposal. An extended period of notice will give officers time to fully analyse the impacts of proposed changes to the local bus network and inform the SWestrans Board at an early stage of the likely outcomes and will assist in enabling action to be taken to address any issues.

This additional time will also enable officers to ensure the accuracy, in partnership with the operators, of the registration data and alleviate any anomalies or assumptions which currently occur within the 2 week window available. This will require operator co-operation to provide a more detailed registration submission at this pre-registration stage.

**Question 2: Do you agree with the proposal to replace the duty to inform the relevant authorities before making an application for registration with a duty to consult with the relevant authorities?**

Yes  No

SWestrans fully supports this proposal.

The proposed move to a consultation over the current duty to inform will remove the confidential restrictions that at present do not allow officers to progress discussions with the Board until after this pre-registration period has elapsed.

A duty to consult should ensure a greater partnership approach to changes between operators and SWestrans and should provide a more acceptable result for the travelling public. SWestrans is aware that such a consultation period does not mean that operators will change their proposed registration but would expect operators to approach such consultation with a fully detailed registration and a willingness to listen and if necessary make alterations that benefit the transport network as a whole.

For this proposal to be successful it will be essential to ensure that clear guidance on what is expected by all parties during the consultation period is provided and has an appropriate level of enforceability.

**Question 3: Do you agree that relevant authorities should be encouraged through guidance to draw potential concerns about new registrations to the attention of the traffic Commissioner for Scotland and/or Transport Scotland?**

Yes  No

SWestrans supports this proposal.

Experience would suggest that a small number of registrations submitted at the pre-registration stage have altered when they are actually registered which has caused concern. The ability to bring such issues to the attention of the Traffic Commissioner would assist SWestrans.

As indicated in response to question 2, SWestrans would expect that a consultation period would include full registration details of the proposed change and that such a consultation would be carried out in a proper manner. If this was not the case then it would be appropriate to highlight this to the Traffic Commissioner.

Although there may be many others issues which could be brought to the Traffic Commissioner's attention, SWestrans currently has an extremely good working relationship with its operators, and would not like this to be compromised by petty reporting of issues during registration of services. Therefore it would appropriate for some good practice guidance to be published to assist both operators and authorities with what should be reported to the Traffic Commissioner during the registration process.

**Question 4a: Do you agree with the proposal to reduce the period of registration from 56 days to 42 days? What difficulties (if any) do you consider such a change might present and how might these be addressed?**

Yes  No

Accurate and timely Information on the local bus network is a key element of what SWestrans provide and the reduction from 56 days to 42 days will put added pressures on achieving what is already a difficult task with the resources available. This will be even more critical as publicity can only be based on the registered timetable.

However, extending the overall registration period beyond 70 days (Current -14 pre-notification, 56 registration; Proposed – 28 consultation, 42 registration) would have implications for operators in terms of progressing

desired network changes. On balance, an extended consultation period within the overall timeframe may be preferable.

**Question 4b: An alternative option would be to reduce the registration period from 56 days to 42 days only where Electronic Bus Service Registration (EBSR) is used. Do you agree with this?**

Yes  No

SWestrans does not, at present, support this proposal.

Current experience with EBSR gives officers a number of concerns and requires a significant amount of manual intervention to ensure publicity is accurate post submission. The majority of operators in the region are small/medium enterprises and do not have the ability to provide registrations in electronic format.

**Question 5: Do you agree that we should require operators to detail within registered hourly frequency bands any services that are registered as frequent services?**

Yes  No

SWestrans supports this proposal.

Information systems require detailed timetables to function and provide accurate publicity. The provision of this detail on a registration would ensure greater clarity for the travelling public.

**Question 6: Do you agree that if the proposed changes set out above are adopted, they will improve the bus registration process in Scotland ?**

Yes  No

SWestrans broadly agrees that these proposed changes will improve the bus registration process.

However, this with the caveat that operators must approach the process with a positive attitude to engage in real partnership working with the aim of benefiting the passenger.

**Question 7: It is possible that much of what is proposed above could be achieved through Guidance and/or a Code of Conduct to facilitate engagement between operators and relevant authorities rather than changes to the legislation. Do you have any views on this?**

Yes  No

SWestrans' view is that it does not support this proposal.

It is appropriate to provide guidelines to assist with the proposed changes but it is only through regulation that the benefits of a proper consultation period could be enforced in the current de-regulated market..