

Non-statutory public consultation on 2014 Public Bus Service Contracts

1. Purpose of consultation

The National Transport Authority (the NTA) has legislative powers to enter into contracts with bus operators for the provision of public bus services.

In 2009, the NTA entered into contracts with Dublin Bus for the provision of public bus services in the Dublin area, and with Bus Éireann for the provision of public bus services outside Dublin. Both these contracts involve payments being made by the State for the provision of the contracted services. These contracts for public bus services are due for renewal in December 2014. The NTA is entitled to enter into subsequent direct award contracts with Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann, or the NTA may competitively tender some or all of these services.

The Authority is currently considering:

- whether it should enter into new direct award contracts with the current contracted parties or whether it should undertake competitive tenders in relation to some or all of the services; and
- what contracts should be formulated to allow for the needs of passengers to be met,

in order to put appropriate contracts in place from 2014.

To inform its consideration, submissions are invited from any interested parties, including passengers using public bus services in the identified areas.

2. Bus public service contracts – NTA objectives and considerations

In entering into contracts with operators for the provision of public bus services, the NTA's objective is to ensure that the public bus services provided meet the needs of bus users. It is also concerned to ensure that any such public bus services meet national objectives in relation to encouraging sustainable travel, and in particular the use of public transport. The NTA also needs to ensure that any payments for the operation of public bus services provide good value for taxpayer money.

In that context, the NTA is particularly interested in maintaining or improving the following aspects of public bus services.

(1) Quality of service

Aspects in relation to quality of service include:

- Reliability: can passengers be confident that the service will operate?
- Punctuality: can passengers be confident that the service will arrive at the scheduled time?
- Passenger comfort
- Cleanliness of bus fleet and other passenger facilities
- Customer service and assistance.

(2) Integration

Aspects in relation to integration include:

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| Integrated ticketing – | the use of a smartcard (Leap card) for a public transport journey regardless of the number of changes or different modes of public transport used to complete the journey; |
| Passenger information - | bus timetables, real time bus arrival information, multi-modal public transport journey planner; |
| Ease of transfer - | from one public transport service or mode to another to complete a multi-leg journey. |

(3) Value for taxpayer money

Aspects here include:

- Cost of provision of public transport services;
- Degree to which services meet essential social needs;
- Fares and associated revenues; and
- The use of the bus operating subsidy from the State.

3. Consultation questions

We would welcome views on the following topics:

- How can the new public service contracts best ensure a good quality of service is provided to passengers?
- How can the new public bus contracts best ensure the integration of the public bus services and the integration of these services with the wider public transport network?
- How can the new contracts best ensure value for taxpayer money?
- Are there benefits in introducing separate contracts for different bus market segments within the Dublin area? If so, how should such market segments be defined?
- Are there benefits in introducing separate contracts for different bus market segments outside the Dublin area? If so, how should such market segments be defined?
- What are the potential benefits or otherwise of competitively tendering for the award of new bus service contracts, compared to directly awarding contracts to Dublin Bus or Bus Éireann?
- Are there any other considerations you wish to identify or comment on, that are relevant to the new contracts for bus passenger services?

4. Your submission and what happens next

To participate in this public consultation, interested parties should download the public consultation questionnaire accompanying this document on the NTA website, and

- email the completed questionnaire to 2014busconsult@nationaltransport.ie; or
- submit the completed questionnaire by post to

2014 Bus Public Consultation

National Transport Authority

Dun Scéine

Iveagh Court

Dublin 2.

Any submissions must be received by the NTA by 5pm on Wednesday 11th July 2012.

Please note that any submission made to the NTA in response to this public consultation will be publicly available.

Upon the completion of the public consultation, the NTA will review all the views expressed and intends to prepare a summary consultation report, which will be published on the Authority's website.

5. Parallel market soundings

The NTA will undertake, in parallel with this consultation, a market consultation with Irish and international bus operators.

This market consultation will explore issues such as the appetite to enter the Irish market, the size, duration and nature of potential contracts, timeframes for possible tendering and issues regarding mobilisation, depot facilities and integration requirements.