



FAO The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, The Rt Hon Liz Truss MP

22 August 2022

An open letter from the Confederation of Passenger Transport to the Conservative Party Leadership Candidates

Dear candidates,

Buses and coaches play a pivotal role in serving the UK and keeping communities connected. Buses provide 60% of all public transport journeys – 5 million trips per day – while coaches transport 500 million passenger journeys across the country each year, contributing £14bn to the tourism economy in 2019, and delivering vital services including home-to-school, rail replacement and vulnerable group transport.

But in my role heading up the trade body for the industry, I know that our contribution isn't limited to this. A full bus or coach can take dozens of cars off the road and can help solve some of the most significant issues the UK faces. Helping people choose to get out of their cars and onto passenger transport is crucial to achieving net zero, levelling up, and improving the health of the UK. Making it possible for people to switch just two car trips per month to bus or coach by 2050 will save 20 million tons of CO₂ and bring £30bn and £15bn in economic and health benefits. We can't afford to ignore potential like that.

However, there are significant challenges both immediate and long-term we must overcome. We will only be able to reap these benefits if people have regular, fast and reliable services they can make the most of. While the industry is working hard to adjust to a post-Covid landscape, this needs to be accompanied by a supportive environment provided by the government that allows operators to put the right services on the road for local communities.

As you seek to become our next Prime Minister, we ask that whichever of you is successful takes action in the following areas to ensure that the UK can deliver on its potential.

1. Provide stable and long-term BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan) funding across England, accelerating bus priority measures and introducing policies that will deliver faster and more attractive services to get people out of cars and onto buses and coaches
2. Working with us to develop a fully funded, long-term roadmap for the delivery of zero emission buses, coaches and infrastructure
3. Take immediate action to help the industry solve driver shortages - approximately 10% - which should mirror the effort put into recruiting new HGV drivers and is critical in allowing operators to support communities with necessary service levels
4. Work with the industry to rebuild passenger confidence with a strong pro public transport message that encourages passengers back on to buses and coaches

There are huge benefits for the UK that can be realised with long-term planning and support for the critical services that the bus and coach industries deliver for the country and its communities. We ask that you work with us to do so.

Yours sincerely,



Graham Vidler
Confederation of Passenger Transport Chief Executive