

News story: Government funding boost for bus industry in drive to improve air quality

Funding will be awarded to 20 local authorities as part of the Clean Bus Technology Fund, which was launched in 2017 and is run by the Joint Air Quality Unit.

[Speaking at the UK Bus Summit at London's QEII Centre](#) on 8 February 2018, Transport Minister Nusrat Ghani set out how the money will enable older vehicles to meet minimum emissions standards, and contribute to better air quality.

Speaking at the Bus Summit, Transport Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

Buses and coaches are hugely important to those who rely on them and to the communities in which these people live and work.

Road transport is going to change dramatically over the next couple of decades – and we have to make sure that the bus industry is ready to benefit from those changes.

We have to move away from nose-to-tail car traffic at peak times, endless engine idling, stop-start travel and rising pollution and carbon emissions. Rather than contributing to the problem – buses and coaches very much form part of the solution.

The money will allow councils to retrofit vehicles with technology to reduce tailpipe emissions of nitrogen dioxide, as part of a drive to help ensure that more buses and coaches can contribute to improving air quality in UK cities.

Environment Minister Therese Coffey said:

Poor air quality affects public health, the economy and the environment, which is why we are determined to do more.

I am delighted to see so many high quality applications to the Clean Bus Technology Fund and, as a result, the government has decided to bring forward funding meaning that we will award nearly £40 million to retrofit more than 2,700 buses.

This is another way which the government is delivering on its commitment to improving the environment within a generation and leave it in a better state than we found it.

Alongside this, the Department for Transport will use the [Bus Services Act](#) as a way of encouraging councils and bus companies to look at measures to encourage the public to use buses.

In 2016, government invested £30 million through the [Low Emission Bus Scheme](#), which helped put over 300 new low emission buses on the roads, with a further £11 million and 150 buses being announced in 2017.

Winners

Clean Bus Technology Fund 2017 to 2019 winners	Number of buses	2017/18 funding	2018/19 funding
1. West Yorkshire Combined Authority	156	£1,368,000	£1,474,200
2. Bristol City Council	81	£1,047,800	£1,167,000
3. Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council	49	£828,000	£674,180
4. Leeds City Council	75	£0	£1,371,000
5. Transport for West Midlands	364	£1,500,000	£1,500,000
6. Leicester City Council	109	£1,101,581	£1,101,581
7. Oxford City Council	83	£938,910	£724,020
8. Coventry City Council	104	£0	£1,500,000
9. Nottinghamshire County Council	112	£1,373,265	£0
10. Transport for Greater Manchester	170	£1,500,000	£1,500,000
11. North Tyneside Council	69	£862,600	£339,000
12. Nottingham City Council	171	£1,500,000	£1,196,517
13. Transport for London	500	£1,500,000	£1,500,000
14. Sheffield City Council	117	£560,000	£1,386,800
15. Sefton Council	149	£1,499,586	£1,497,277
16. Southampton City Council	145	£539,183	£1,500,000
17. Derby City Council	152	£1,500,000	£798,330
18. Essex County Council	60	£1,072,500	£0
19. South Tyneside Council	29	£232,500	£252,000
20. Newcastle City Council	43	£180,000	£510,000
Totals	2738	£19,103,925	£19,991,905

Further information

In November 2016 the Department for Transport announced a further £100 million to support low emission buses. Of this, £40 million was put towards the Clean Bus Technology Fund, and £60 million was dedicated to new low emission buses. From the £60 million, £11 million was used to fund the best of the bids which had initially narrowly missed out on funding from LEBS, supporting the purchase of a further 150 low emission buses. The remaining £49 million will be used to fund the next round of the Low Emission Bus Scheme.

By 15 September this year (2018), 5 local authorities are required to set out their final plans for bringing nitrogen dioxide concentrations within legal limits in the shortest possible time. A further 23 local authorities are required to set out their initial plans by the end of March, with final plans by the end of the year.

In August 2017, the [Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership launched the Clean Vehicle Retrofit Accreditation Scheme](#), with government funding support.

Speech: Government funding for cleaner buses

Thank you David [Begg, Chair] for that welcome.

It's a real pleasure to join you for today's (8 February 2018) summit.

This is my first formal speech since joining the Department for Transport in the recent reshuffle, and I was delighted to take on responsibility for government bus and coach policy.

Bus and Coach Minister Nusrat Ghani speaking at the UK Bus Summit.

Importance of industry

I'm a huge advocate for buses.

Catering for over 5 billion passenger journeys a year.

That's two thirds of all public transport trips.

Buses are the most effective and affordable way to keep busy towns and cities moving.

And we're very fortunate to have such excellent coach services in this country too.

Providing a comfortable, reliable and great value alternative to long distance train and car travel.

Put simply, this industry is indispensable.

No other form of public transport offers anything like the benefits that you offer.

Whether it's capacity, geographical coverage, ease of use, cost, efficiency – I could go on.

For me most importantly, buses provide a unique answer to most of the local transport challenges that we face.

Yet so fundamental are they to British life that they're often taken for granted.

That's something that I want to change, with your support.

I want to champion buses and coaches.

To shout about the benefits of bus travel.

How they bind our towns and cities together.

How they provide essential links for rural communities, such as the one I represent in Wealden, East Sussex.

And how they'll become even more vital in years to come.

Congestion and air pollution

Of course, one of the biggest obstacles to growth is road congestion.

And that's nothing new.

Buses have been hampered by congestion since the days of the horse-drawn omnibus.

But I want to use the [Bus Services Act](#) as a way of encouraging authorities and bus companies to make services more attractive, and create a shift away from car use.

I know it's a big challenge.

But road transport is going to be revolutionised over the next 3 decades.

New vehicle technologies.

New infrastructure.

The phasing out of fossil fuels.

And digital communications transforming the way passengers plan and use transport...

All of which provide an unprecedented opportunity for buses.

We have to hammer home our message:

That rather than contributing to the problem of nose-to-tail traffic and harmful pollution.

Buses and coaches are a part of the solution.

You'll certainly have the government's support.

We have already committed £3.5 billion for measures to improve air quality.

Last year we published plans to tackle traffic pollution, and announced a £220 million [Clean Air Fund](#) in the Budget.

Later this year we'll be unveiling our Clean Air Strategy.

And hosting an international zero-emission vehicle summit.

The opportunity here is to position the bus industry as a leader in environmentally friendly transport.

As a catalyst for greener, smarter travel.

And as the most practical answer to the long term mobility needs of our towns and cities.

Low emission buses

Britain is already a pioneer in low carbon buses.

And the industry can be proud of what it's achieved in recent years.

We've got great companies like ADL, Wrightbus and Optare manufacturing green buses.

We have almost 6,000 low carbon buses in service.

The highest number of electric buses in Europe.

And we also have the largest hybrid fleet of over 3,000 vehicles.

And in 2015, our Low Emission Bus Scheme helped put more 300 green buses on roads across Britain.

And that was followed in November 2016 with a further £100 million investment.

We welcome further interest and participation in these schemes.

The sooner we get more low emission buses on the road, the faster we'll reap the benefits.

So today I'm pleased to [announce that we'll be awarding nearly £40 million of that funding to 20 local authorities as part of the Clean Bus Technology Fund](#).

This will be used to retrofit buses with technology to reduce tailpipe emissions of nitrogen dioxide.

Originally we invited authorities to apply for a funding total of £30 million now and £10 million in 2 years' time.

But we received a large number of strong applications for this round.

And we wanted to start realising the air quality benefits as quickly as possible.

So we've made the full amount – just under £40 million – available now to fund two-year projects.

It will enable older vehicles to meet the minimum standards in the Clean Air Zone Framework, particularly in areas exceeding statutory limits.

And I am going to announce the successful bidders:

West Yorkshire.

Bristol and Bath.

Gateshead.

Leeds City.

Transport for West Midlands.

Leicester City.

Oxford City.

Coventry.

Nottinghamshire.

Transport for Greater Manchester.

North Tyneside.

Nottingham City.

Transport for London.

Sheffield City.

Sefton MBC Air Quality.

Southampton City.

Derby.

Essex.

South Tyneside.

And finally, Newcastle City.

I'm grateful to all the bus companies who had a hand in the applications.

Ultimately, we see dedicated ultra low emission buses as the long-term answer – but retrofitting offers a very attractive alternative for now.

Not all local authorities were successful with their bids.

But there will be further opportunities for councils to receive money for retrofitting through the Clean Air Fund.

As local authorities prepare to set out their initial plans for reducing nitrogen dioxide concentrations by the end of March, retrofitting technology will help ensure that more buses help clean up the air in our cities.

And as we look to the future, technology will give us other opportunities to improve the efficiency of buses.

For example, if we know how much passenger demand there is for a particular route or service, we can look at providing the appropriate size of vehicle for the job....

Not just cutting the number of empty seats.

But cutting costs and emissions too.

Bus Services Act

I've already mentioned the Bus Services Act, and how it's designed to make bus services more attractive to the travelling public.

That's something I will be focusing on in the months ahead.

New enhanced partnership powers will enable local authorities and bus operators to work together to improve services.

And new franchising powers, replacing the existing Quality Contract Scheme, will also improve the management of buses in the regions where they apply.

I'm keen to see the open data provisions in the act benefit passengers too.

One of the existing barriers to passenger growth is that it can be difficult to obtain information on bus fares, routes or times.

Where the information does exist – on the web, for example – it can be inconsistently presented, or be buried in unwieldy and hard-to-decipher timetables.

But by making data open and accessible, software firms can create apps that package and deliver the relevant information to smartphones at the click of an icon.

So the open data should make it easier for passengers to use the bus network.

We published guidance on implementing the measures in the Act last November.

And we'll publish further regulations and guidance this year.

Conclusion

So – to sum up – I see the future as full of opportunity.

If buses are crucial to our transport system today...

Then as road transport is transformed over the coming decades...

They will become more important than ever.

And I'll be doing everything I can to spread the message.

I'll be getting around the industry over the next few months, and meeting as many of you as possible.

To hear your views on how we can best support growth.

But one thing is absolutely clear.

The key to success is partnership. Government and bus industry, local authorities and operators working together. For the benefit of the passenger, for the benefit of bus operators, and for the benefit of Great Britain.

[News story: Carillion: Official Receiver's employment update](#)

A spokesperson for the Official Receiver said:

We have continued to review Carillion's contracts, as well as core divisions of the business, and I can confirm that we have safeguarded a further 1,221 jobs. These roles are connected to the delivery of both public and private contracts and cover services for a city council, as well as a range of facilities management services. This means so far, we have been able to save more than 2,000 jobs.

Regrettably, we are also announcing that 101 roles have been made redundant. These are a mix of back-office functions and engineering support roles that new suppliers no longer require.

We continue to engage with staff, elected employee representatives and unions throughout. Those who have lost their jobs will be able

to find support through Jobcentre Plus' Rapid Response Service and are also entitled to make a claim for statutory redundancy payments.

The liquidation process continues and we remain focused on engaging with staff and new suppliers about any changes to jobs and contracts.

- in total, to date 2,250 jobs have been saved and 930 jobs have been made redundant through the liquidation
- further information about rights in redundancy is available on gov.uk
- continued support by Carillion's public and private sector customers is enabling as many employees as possible to be retained in the interim until all contracts have been worked through

To be notified of future updates from the Official Receiver please [register to receive an email alert](#).

[News story: Healthcare UK promotes digital innovation at Arab Health in Dubai](#)

The Healthcare UK delegation at Arab Health 2018 led by Health Minister Lord O'Shaughnessy (4th from right) and managing director Deborah Kobewka (2nd from left), with the leaders of Babylon Health, Helicon Health , i5 Health and iamYiam.

The healthcare sector in the Middle East is changing fast. It is responding to rapidly growing demands for preventive care, and for effective ways to reduce lifestyle-related diseases and ensure a longer, healthier life for citizens.

The sector is moving towards specialist, more personalised healthcare with much greater interaction and self-management enabled by the ever-growing digital technology.

The extraordinary and unique combination of the UK's National Health Service's (NHS) huge data assets, its world-leading centres of clinical excellence and the UK's vibrant tech sector is producing some of the most innovative, evidence-based digital health solutions in the world today, in areas such as artificial intelligence, the internet of things, virtual and augmented reality as well as big data analytics.

Focus on prevention, quality and innovation

At Arab Health 2018 in Dubai (29 January – 1 February 2018) Healthcare UK showcased how the best of British healthcare provides exactly what healthcare leaders in the Middle East are looking for. The focus was on prevention, quality and innovation, with exceptional applications in the field of digital healthcare. Four outstanding UK digital healthcare companies were on display:

UK delegation led by Lord O'Shaughnessy

The UK delegation was led by Lord O'Shaughnessy, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Health and Social Care.

Lord O'Shaughnessy said:

The NHS's unparalleled collection of data enables the development of innovative solutions based on real-world scenarios and evidence. Combining that vast data set with clinical excellence (we have 3 of the top 4 medical schools worldwide) and outstanding technology companies means that the UK is at the cutting edge of healthcare innovation and technology.

High level of commercial interest generated

The combination of 4 outstanding UK companies presenting from an attractive, interactive and eye-catching set, a busy programme of supporting seminars and a package of other engagement activity was very effective in generating a high level of commercial interest. A major contract between babylon and the Saudi Ministry of Health was signed on the event stand, and a number of other contract discussions are proceeding well.

[Healthcare UK](#) is a joint initiative of the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and Department for International Trade.

Contact us at healthcare.uk@trade.gov.uk to discuss how we can help you, whether you are a UK-based supplier or an international buyer.

[Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Libya in February 2018](#)

Mr Baker will take up his appointment in February 2018.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

The UK is at the forefront of diplomatic work with the Libyan government and our international partners to help bring stability to Libya. If left unchecked the violence and ungoverned space will only increase the challenges from illegal migration and terrorism. These are issues that matter to the people of Libya, but also to people here in the UK.

Frank has served the UK well as our ambassador to Iraq and also Kuwait. I look forward to working together with him to help Libya make progress towards the political solution and more secure future it so deserves.

Commenting on his appointment, Mr Baker said:

I am honoured to be the new British Ambassador to Libya. Britain and Libya have a long history.

Over the coming weeks I will listen to and learn from people across Libya and discuss how we can work together to achieve our common interests.

Frank Baker – CV

Full name: Francis (Frank) Raymond Baker CMG OBE

2014 – 2017 **Baghdad, Her Majesty's Ambassador**
2010 – 2014 Kuwait City, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2007 – 2010 FC0, Deputy Director, Middle East
2003 – 2007 Washington, Political/Military Counsellor
2000 – 2003 FC0, Head of Africa Department (Equatorial)
1998 – 2000 FC0, Private Secretary to Minister of State
1998 FC0, Head of Iraq Section, Middle East Department
1996 – 1998 Washington, on secondment to US Government
1993 – 1996 Ankara, First Secretary
1991 – 1993 FC0, Desk Officer, Human Rights Policy Department
1986 – 1991 Buenos Aires, Third, later Second Secretary
1983 – 1986 Panama City, Third Secretary
1981 – 1982 FC0, Personnel Operations Department
1981 Joined FC0

Further information