

For too long the bus industry has put profit before passengers. Labour will change that – Jeremy Corbyn

Labour

will overturn the Government's ban on council-owned bus companies as part of a wider strategy to put the public back into buses and deliver affordable, greener, and accessible transport.

Labour

unveiled its bus strategy to put people not private profit first after figures revealed that passenger journeys in England outside London have declined by 39 percent and by 53 per cent in English cities since 1986. But over the same period in London, which kept regulation of bus services, passenger journeys increased by 99 per cent.

Labour's

policy includes a commitment to low emissions vehicles, Wi-Fi enabled buses, improved joint and through ticketing schemes, mandatory disability and equality training, and a commitment to introduce a national strategy for local bus services, setting out objectives, targets and funding provisions, including considering concessionary fares for 16-19 year olds.

Jeremy

Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party, said:

"Labour

will create the freedom for councils to run first class bus services which the public are proud of. The Tory legacy brought rising fares, plummeting passenger numbers and too many areas where pensioners have a bus pass but no bus.

"Labour

wants to see local communities empowered to determine their own priorities and reverse the decline in bus services. Labour will extend franchising powers to all areas that want them and will overturn the ban on new community bus companies, allowing Local Authorities to replicate the successes of the country's best performing operators.

"For

too long the bus industry has put profit before passengers. Labour will change

that.”

Andy

McDonald MP, Labour’s Shadow Transport Secretary, said:

“Buses are by far the most important mode of public transport, connecting communities, places of education and businesses like no other.

“In supporting local economies, combatting climate change, addressing air quality and tackling social exclusion, the importance of buses cannot be over-stated. Yet funding for buses across England and Wales has been cut by 33 per cent since 2010 and thousands of routes have been downgraded or cut altogether, meaning passengers across the country have to put up with sub-standard services.

“We want to see clean, hi-tech fleets of buses running accessible and reliable services that meet passengers’ needs. For this to happen, we need to give communities the power to reform bus services to make them work for passengers, as well as ensuring the funding and strategy is in place to ensure no communities are left behind.”

Labour’s policy would:

- Create freedom for local authorities to form their own bus companies by removing the Government’s ban.
- Extend the powers to re-regulate local bus services to all areas that want them – not just to combined authorities with an elected mayor.
- Require all new buses to meet the low-emission requirements set out by the Government-sponsored Office for Low Emission Vehicles.
- Require new vehicles to be equipped with Wi-Fi, and install Wi-Fi on existing buses.
- Introduce a national strategy for local bus services, setting out objectives, targets and funding provisions. This would include consideration of a reduced fare scheme for young people aged 16-19.
- Require all bus drivers and staff at bus terminals to complete approved

disability equality and awareness training, including mental and physical disabilities, by a specific date.

-

Ensure bus services in England make adjustments for any disabled passenger on the bus including policies for priority wheelchair spaces.

Labour

leader Jeremy Corbyn and shadow transport secretary Andy McDonald are in Tees Valley today (Friday) promoting Labour's bus policy.