

New franchises for three franchised bus companies

A Government spokesman said today (June 18) that the Government plans to engage Citybus Limited (franchise for the Airport and North Lantau bus network) (Citybus (Franchise 2)), Long Win Bus Company Limited (LW) and New World First Bus Services Limited (NWFB) for discussion on the granting of new 10-year franchises upon expiry of the current ones. Members of the public are welcome to submit their views on the requirements of the three new franchises.

The spokesman said that the current franchises of Citybus (Franchise 2) and LW will expire on May 1, 2023, and that of NWFB will expire on July 1, 2023. The three franchisees have indicated interests to apply for new 10-year franchises. According to the Public Bus Services Ordinance (Cap. 230) (the Ordinance), the Chief Executive in Council may grant to a company a franchise conferring the right to operate a public bus service for a period not exceeding 10 years. The Ordinance also requires a franchisee to maintain a proper and efficient public bus service to the satisfaction of the Commissioner for Transport at all times during the franchise period.

"Citybus (Franchise 2), LW and NWFB have been providing proper and efficient bus services, and have indicated that they are willing to continue to invest for further enhancement of the bus service. The operating environment of the bus industry in the foreseeable future is expected to be even more difficult owing to the rising operating costs and competition from other public transport modes. During the discussion on the granting of new franchises, the Government would endeavour to further enhance the quality of bus service and bus safety," the spokesman said.

The Panel on Transport of the Legislative Council discussed the requirements of the new franchises for the bus networks of Citybus (Franchise 2), LW and NWFB today. The relevant information documents about the three franchises can be downloaded from the websites of the Transport and Housing Bureau (www.thb.gov.hk) and the Transport Department (TD) (www.td.gov.hk). Members of the public may put forth their views on the requirements of the three new franchises using an online form available on the TD's website or by post (addressed to Bus and Railway Branch, Transport Department, 16/F, South Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, 11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon), fax (2802 2679) or email (bus-franchise@td.gov.hk) on or before September 10, 2021.