



FOR PEOPLE NOT PROFIT ACT.PARTY.COOP/BUS
the people's bus
A BETTER WAY OF DOING the people's b BUSES

campaign pack

the co-operative party
campaigns

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Introduction



For millions of people, buses are a lifeline – and by far the most-used form of public transport. But under a privatised system that is dominated by just four large bus companies, every year sees routes cut, fares rise, and passenger numbers fall.

There is a better way. Across the country, co-operative, social enterprise and other forms of not-for-profit bus operators are proving that it's possible to run bus services that are affordable and responsive to the needs of local people. By keeping routes open and fares low, community transport operators are enabling people to access work and education, tackling social exclusion and loneliness, and can be the lifeblood of isolated communities.

Buses matter. 2 in every 3 journeys taken by public transport are by bus. Every week, almost half of older people rely on them to maintain their independence and to visit friends and family. And for the 64% of job seekers who don't have access to a car, they can be the key to accessing employment and training. More than just a form of transport, buses are an essential public service and community asset.

The People's Buses Campaign calls for a re-regulated bus market in which Government better supports and encourages not-for-profit, community-led bus services. We're also calling on local authorities and transport bodies to work with non-profit operators to ensure that as much profit as possible is reinvested in services, and that local people and employees are involved in their delivery.

This campaign pack is designed to provide the background information, practical advice and ideas you need in order to get a People's Buses Campaign running in your area.

As ever, if you need any advice, information or support with your campaign, drop us a line at mail@party.coop

Why buses matter

Local bus networks provide a vital public service all over the country, linking people to services, shops and friends and family.



Vulnerable people

Vulnerable people who rely on buses for essential journeys can find themselves stranded when those services are withdrawn. Poor bus provision magnifies social problems by making it harder to access other essential public services like healthcare, training and education.



Young people

Young People need affordable bus services to have a chance to take up opportunities in education and work, and to take the first steps to independence. Studies have shown that one in five students has considered dropping out of further education because of financial cost, and transport is the greatest cost of participation.



Older people

Older people have benefited from free bus travel in ever growing numbers; however, bus cuts could mean that concessionary pass holders end up with no buses to get on. Many older people would be cut off from social activities, health services and shops.



Local businesses

Local businesses rely on buses. Shoppers travel by buses, particularly to the high street. Because of this, poor bus provision is a barrier for local economic growth, resulting in boarded up shops and dying town centres. Redundancies in the bus industry, and the associated negative social and economic impacts, will also be felt in localities.



People on low incomes

People on low incomes are disproportionately affected by cuts in bus services, contrary to the Government's claims that cuts would not hit the poorest hardest. Poorer people are less likely to have a car. Some children from poor families are put at further disadvantage because their parents cannot afford bus fares to get them to colleges and services. Children from low income families face poverty if affordable transport is not available.



Jobseekers

Jobseekers in the Welsh town of Merthyr were told by Iain Duncan Smith to get on the bus to Cardiff. However evidence from the Citizens Advice Bureau show that many people who want to work are unable to take jobs, or are forced onto benefits, because of insufficient and expensive bus provision. A third of jobseekers say poor transport options is the biggest barrier for them finding work.



Disabled people

Disabled people use buses more often than non-disabled people, and are less likely to have the choice to take a car. Cutting bus services can mean cutting people's only independent access to transport.



Rural communities

Rural communities suffer from buses that are infrequent, expensive, and in some areas nonexistent, causing isolation and suffering for many. People who fall into one of the above bus user groups who also live in the countryside are doubly disadvantaged.



Climate change

Climate change means that we need to shift away from high carbon modes of transport, like driving, to lower carbon modes like public transport. Cuts to buses take us further away from meeting vital emissions reductions targets. The UK's domestic transport emissions are still rising. Research shows that buses offer a viable low carbon alternative to car use, but increasing bus patronage requires political will and financial support, which are both currently lacking.

The threat

Each year millions of bus miles are lost on our roads and routes are lost. According to the Campaign for Better Transport, 1300 bus routes have suffered in this way since 2010.

Under the current 'deregulated' system, bus companies are free to choose the individual routes and set timetables for the services they provide. This enables a small number of dominant bus companies to make huge profits by running services on the most commercially successful routes, while at the same time demanding public subsidy to run those that are less profitable.

Cuts in public spending in recent years has meant a reduction in the grants and subsidies available. Much of this public subsidy is targeted at routes which play an important role in the economic and social life of communities, but which are not otherwise profitable. Because of this, when bus subsidies fall and bus company profits rise, it is often the communities most dependent on public transport who are disproportionately affected.

But the bus market is set to change again. The Government's push to devolve greater powers to local authorities creates an opportunity for local people to re-think how local bus services are delivered.

In figures

- Since 2010, 70% of local authorities have cut funding for bus services
- In 2015 alone, more than 500 bus services have been cut or altered, with 222 withdrawn altogether
- Since 2010, £55.4m has been cut from supported bus budgets across England



Solutions

Given the scale of the threats that local bus services face, we believe it's time to promote a new approach.

Powers being handed over to local authorities open up the the possibility of new ways of delivering public bus services - driven by the needs of local people, rather than for profit. For example, are opportunities for councils to take greater control over the number and types of bus companies operating in their area, the chance for them to set fares and to specify routes, and to choose to work with existing not-for-profit operators, or to even set up one from scratch.

We want to see:

- Government and relevant devolved institutions placing more emphasis and effort on developing the community transport and not for profit sectors further, by providing expertise and funding.
- Local councils reviewing their procurement strategies to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose and give not-for-profit operators equal treatment.
- An extension of existing Community Asset legislation to take into account local bus services. This extension could give communities the right to designate bus routes as Community Assets this would give them more say in routes being changed or cut. This change could also open up new avenues for community right to run and community right to bid in future.



Powers long enjoyed by London are now being extended to the rest of the country. This creates an opportunity for local areas across the UK to create joined-up, efficient and affordable transport networks of their own.



Case study



There are many examples of great quality not for profit bus operations in the UK, some even with a foothold in the UK's best and most envied bus market - London.

For example HCT Group - which has its origins in Hackney Community Transport, founded in 1982 - is the world's leading transport social enterprise. This organisation safely provides over 20 million passengers trips each year including London bus routes.

- HCT deliver a range of transport services - from mainstream bus services to social care transport, from school transport to park and ride, from community transport to education and training.
- HCT reinvest the profits from their commercial work into further transport services or projects in the communities they serve.
- Rather than having shareholders as HCT's priority, HCT share the service commissioner values



A demonstration of their work can be seen in the States of Jersey who retendered their bus network, they were looking for a different kind of relationship with their bus operator, one based on true partnership.

“ We’ve welcomed having a genuine, open partnership with HCT Group in Jersey. Working together has meant saving a great deal of public money, improving services – and growing bus ridership.

The profit share agreement we have has meant more money for us to invest in transport infrastructure – a real win-win – and HCT Group’s social enterprise model will mean a new parish bus service helping the most vulnerable to get and out and about.

Tristen Dodd

Director of Transport, States of Jersey.

In figures

- HCT Group provided 21.2m passenger journeys in 2014/15.
- 84% of service users say they could get out more thanks to service it provides, 73% said they have improved access to healthcare.
- In 2014, bus travel in Jersey increased by 11%.
- 59% of passengers have access to a car but choose the bus.
- Passengers in Jersey rate the service 7/10.
- The current maximum fare for anywhere on the island is £1.70 (shorter journeys are £1.20) compared to a UK average of £2.00 for a three-mile journey.



How to run a local event

When

Pick a date that enough members of your branch can do so you have people on hand to help you out and have an idea of how many people you can expect. If you're going to make the event open to non-Co-operative Party members, make sure you choose a date when there is less competition from other events and things like football matches. You may also want to make it a joint event with interested groups like your local Labour Party, trade unions or campaign groups.

Format

There are a number of different formats for your event, depending on how many people you are expecting and what you would like to achieve. For example if you're worried only 10 people will turn up - that's fine. Have a policy roundtable where everyone gets to talk about a policy topic and contribute rather than top-down speaker and Q&A type event.

Speakers

Decide who the ideal speaker is and try and base the date around their diary if possible. If you need some help with this contact the Co-operative Party.

Logistics

Be clear about who is dealing with all logistical concerns such as venue, catering and other speakers and make sure they have the basic tools they need to finish the job. Remember things like making sure your venue is fully accessible to disabled people and has car parking or is close to public transport. Make sure you haven't booked an all-male panel too.

Invitations

Invite everyone to the event – we can help you find the key contact for your local co-operative and help make contact with Labour & Co-operative elected representatives. Email is often the cheapest and most cost-effective way to spread the word but if you've lots of members without email then why not set-up a phone bank or send them a letter. Your branch secretary can provide you with an updated membership list.

Importantly you must do this process more than once. People forget to register and put things in their diaries, don't assume because you've told everyone once that they'll automatically remember.

Finally, after the event is finished, make sure you thank everyone who contributed. Don't forget to take photos during the event that you can share with local papers and the National Party.

Running a street stall

When

Pick a date that enough members of your branch can do so you have volunteers on hand to help you out. You should also make sure it's a day when there's likely to be people traffic going past the stall.

Where

If you have a Co-op on your High Street, you may want to set up your stall close to there – this helps show your local society what the Party has been doing and you're likely to come across more people who are interested in co-operative campaigns. When planning, check to see if you need permission from your local council and you should approach the Co-op in question to see if they mind. We can let you know the contacts for your co-operative membership department. Depending on the campaign you may also want to encourage them to get involved while you're doing so.

Materials

If you don't have things like a table, cover, clip board, etc already, you may wish to ask colleagues in the Labour Party if they have some you could use for the day. The Co-operative Party also has a range of leaflets, posters, banners, stickers and badges to help you make your stall a success and help attract people over.

Get the word out

As a start, be sure to invite local Co-operative Party members, Labour Party members, other local co-operatives and local Councillors to come down and say hello at the stall. This is a really low-level ask for activists and you'll be surprised how many offer to help for a short while or who just come down and say hello. Your branch secretary can provide you with an updated membership list. Depending on the campaign you may also want to send information to other local groups such as relevant trade unions and campaign groups.

Take action

A really strong way of engaging people is to have some sort of 'action' people can take at the stall. One of the best ways to do this is through a local petition that allows people to show their support for your campaign, and also allows you to gather the details of local people who are interested, meaning you can update them after the stall.

Don't forget to take photos at the stall that you can share with local newspapers and the National Co-operative Party.

For more information and support
membership@party.coop
020 7367 4151.

Sample press release

As part of your local Party's campaigning, you may wish to send a press release to your local newspaper or news programme, or to email bloggers writing about your local area.

Feel free to use the template below as a starting point. But remember - the more you are able to customise it with information and detail to make it specific to your local area, as well as quotes from local figures, the more likely it is to be of interest and to get published.

For immediate Release

Not-for-profit buses please

The Co-operative Party in [name] have launched a campaign to call upon [Insert name of local transport authority] to give the public the bus service it deserves by taking the profit motivation out of local services.

Local bus services are in crisis. Ahead of the much anticipated Buses Bill the Co-operative Party (the sister party of the Labour Party) believe they have the answer. Today they launched the 'People's Bus' campaign.

The People's Bus Campaign aims to ensure that in the Government's upcoming Buses Bill, not-for-profit operators will be given support to expand. This will give them a chance to properly take on the large private sector operators who, the Co-operative Party believe, currently hold a virtual monopoly across the country.

The Campaign for Better Transport has shown that since 2010 over £78 million has been cut from local authority supported funding in England and Wales. A 25 per cent reduction overall that has resulted in over 2,400 bus services being cut, altered or withdrawn completely.

Hundreds of Community Transport not-for-profit operators across the country are already entrusted to run the most important community links. However the Co-operative Party believes that this part of the sector holds the key to reversing the trend of reduced bus passenger services in a time of reduced subsidies.

Commenting on the campaign Gareth Thomas MP (Chair of the Co-operative Party) stated:

“It is vital that Not-for-profit, community-led buses are supported to step up and provide bus services across the country. We need to take back our bus services and show there is a better way for them to be run.

“There are already fantastic examples such as HCT in London operating, we believe now is the time for a rapid expansion of this type of enterprise whereby profits are reinvested in to services rather than lining the pockets of shareholders and European Governments.”

The Campaign has attracted support from the Co-operative Party’s sister party the Labour Party with Lilian Greenwood MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Transport stating:

“Buses are vital for our villages, towns and cities but the status quo just isn’t delivering. Passengers and communities need more of a say over bus services. The Co-operative Party are right to highlight the role that not-for-profit transport can play in a fairer industry.”

[Insert name of local party Chair] The Chair of XX Co-operative Party stated:

[Insert quote from your local party Chair here]

[ENDS]

Tips for sending

- Phone the newsdesk in advance to check the best address or if there is a specific journalist you should send it to.
- Paste the text of the release into the body of an email. Never send your release as an attachment - they’re rarely read.
- Use BCC to email to multiple recipients.

Sample motion

One valuable way you can draw attention to the campaign and the issues it raises is via a motion to your local CLP (Constituency Labour Party).

Submitting a motion will give other members the chance to discuss the issue and serve as a demonstration of support for our campaign. To help you get started, a sample motion is included below, which you can adapt and build on.

Model local CLP motion for discussion

(To be submitted 14 days before meeting to CLP secretary, must be proposed and seconded at CLP meeting)

'[insert constituency Labour Party name] believes buses matter. 2 in every 3 public transport journeys are carried out on the bus. Buses services provide critical community links as well as tackling social exclusion and benefitting the environment.

'Further, this Constituency Labour Party believes that profit should not be the sole motivation within the provision of bus services. Therefore the Constituency commends the Co-operative Party for its campaign 'The People's Buses'. This CLP recognises that there are already many forms of not for profit bus service providing vital community links around the country and these should be promoted locally and procuring authorities explore their potential in [insert area].'



Social media

One of the most effective ways of spreading the word about the People's Buses campaign is via your own personal social media channels and those of your local party. Here are some tips and example tweets to get you started.

Hashtag **#peoplesbus**

Mention **@coopparty**

Signup page

[www.act.party.coop/buses](http://act.party.coop/buses)

*Time for local buses to be run for local people rather than profit. Join **@CoopParty #Peoplesbus** campaign here:
<http://act.party.coop/buses>*

*Wrong that the private bus barons can cherry-pick most profitable routes while leaving councils to prop up the rest:
<http://act.party.coop/buses>*

*Not-for-profit local buses like **#CTPlus** provide alt to high fares, withdrawn routes **@CoopParty #Peoplesbus** campaign:
<http://act.party.coop/buses>*

*Thousands of routes lost, soaring fares, record private profits. Time for a better way of running buses **#peoplesbus**
<http://act.party.coop/buses>*



Social media posts that work

The truth is that there are very few hard rules about what works and doesn't work on Twitter and Facebook, because every audience is different. The key thing is to try new things, measure the response, and to change your approach in response.

However, from our experience, here are some examples of things that work:

- Try to use photos, graphics and short video clips wherever you can.
- Focus on people and stories that bring the issue to life - think about how you can use concrete examples of how local buses affect people's day-to-day lives.
- Quirky facts or detailed local knowledge that isn't widely known - tap into people's curiosity or sense of nostalgia.
- Clear statements of shared values or moral principles, e.g. "it is wrong that..." or "We believe that..."

Campaign checklist

With dozens of bus routes being lost every month, there's a good chance that that one near you may be under threat, and there may well already be a local campaign already underway to save it.



If you're interested in running a campaign to save a specific bus route near you, The Campaign for Better Transport can provide assistance and advice. Here's their 7-point checklist to get you started:

- The **aim, or the overall goal, and the objectives of the campaign**, or the stepping stones that you will use to get there. For example, you might have an objective to collect and collate evidence on the value of buses to your community
- The **allies** you would like to back your campaign. For example, older people's groups or a local hospital
- **Key messages** that will persuade those audiences – keep them short and punchy, and vary them by audience. It can be useful to choose three key messages to back your campaign
- The **channels or tools for your campaigning** (e.g. local press and radio, a street stall, Facebook, public meetings)
- What **materials** you might need, leaflets, posters, banners, placards etc
- **Influencing opportunities** (e.g. consultation, MPs surgery, council meetings)
- A campaign **timeline**, including all of your proposed activities and any deadlines

For more information on campaigning to save a local bus route, visit www.bettertransport.org.uk/save-our-buses

Printed materials order form

Whether it's a public meeting, street stall, press stunt or other event around the People's Buses campaign, the Party's national office is here to give you the support you need.

To order materials, simply fill in the form below, including your delivery address, and place in an envelope along with a cheque or invoice address to FREEPOST COOPPARTY (no postage required).

You can also email your order to mail@party.coop, or order online via our online store at www.party.coop/shop

Order form

Item	Quantity	Price
People's Bus campaign postcards- pack of 50 A5 postcards		£2.50
Campaign posters - pack of 6 A3, full colour		£3.00
People's Bus campaign roller banner		£80.00
Printed copies of this campaign pack (<i>price per single item</i>)		£1.00
A Co-operative Agenda for Britain – Co-operative Party Manifesto 2015 (<i>price per single item</i>)		£5.00
Generic purple Co-operative Party roller banner (<i>customisable with your local party's name at no extra cost</i>)		£80.00
	Totals	

Delivery address

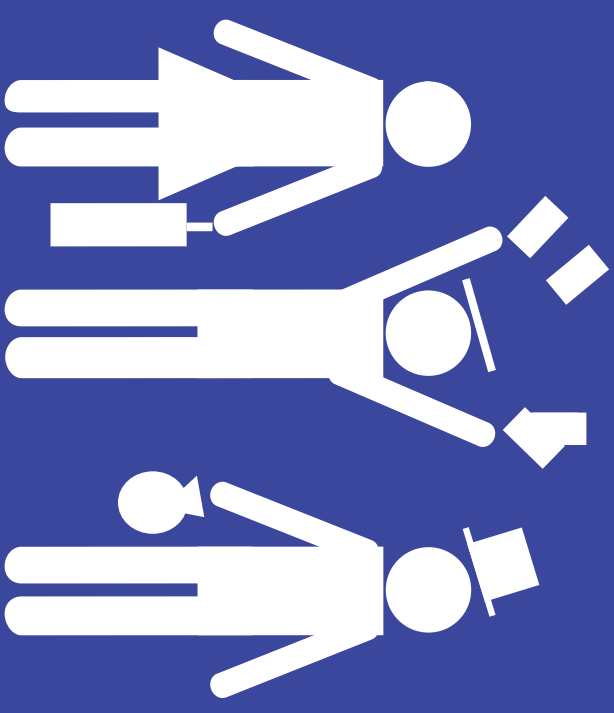
**A route out of inequality:
Time for local buses run for
people, not profit.**

act.party.coop/buses



the people's bus
a co-operative party campaign

Priority area
for shareholders,
investors and private
profit maximisers



Buses for people, not profit

act.party.coop/buses

politics for people

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