

9 January 2023



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Re: Freedom of Information request ref CA202

Thank you for your request for information received on 7 December 2022. The response is given below:

Request

I would like to request all DFT correspondence with the CA concerning the outcome of the CAs bid for funding for improved bus services related to the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Response

All correspondence between Department for Transport and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority concerning the outcome of the bid for funding is listed below and attached to this email

- Email from Steve Blackmore, Department for Transport to Oliver Howarth, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority dated 19 April 2022
- Email from Steve Blackmore to Oliver Howarth dated 7 April 2022
- Email from Oliver Howarth to Steve Blackmore dated 5 April 2022
- Email from Steve Blackmore to Oliver Howarth dated 4 April 2022
- Email from Oliver Howarth to Steve Blackmore dated 4 April 2022
- Letter from Mr Stephen Fidler, Department for Transport dated 4 April 2022

I hope this information is helpful but if you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review, you should write to us via our contact us email address: democratic.services@cambridgeshirepeterborough

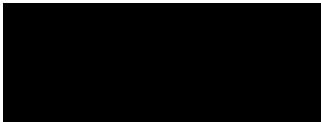
2nd Floor
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon
Cambs
PE29 3TN

ca.gov.uk or write a letter to Complaints, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, 2nd Floor, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 3TN within 40 days of the date of this e-mail.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, or via their website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Generally, the ICO will not undertake a review or make a decision on a request until the internal review process has been completed.

Yours sincerely



Sue Hall
Acting Data Protection Officer

Enc



2nd Floor
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon
Cambs
PE29 3TN

From: Steve Blackmore <Steve.Blackmore@dft.gov.uk>

Sent: 19 April 2022 12:30

To: Oliver Howarth <oliver.howarth@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk>

Cc: BSIP <BSIP@dft.gov.uk>; Ben Kempner <Ben.Kempner@dft.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Enquiry

Morning Oliver

Ben Kempner has suggested a short meeting next week to discuss the way forward on franchising, but I thought it would be helpful to send a few thoughts over in advance.

Franchising could be used over one or more smaller areas of an authority to address gaps in commercial provision – where new standard tendered services might otherwise be introduced. If a key market town or other location was poorly served by buses and it was not commercially viable to introduce them under a planned EP, a franchising scheme could cover that area only – allowing the authority to introduce new services with certainty that they would be delivered in line with the BSIP and with a reduced level of revenue risk. Any existing services that crossed the boundary of the franchised area which the authority wanted to see continue could be provided under a service permit. The rest of the authority's area would still be subject to a planned EP if it was capable of delivering other BSIP outcomes. Under this approach, franchising may be a more deliverable and less resource intensive option for the authority than if it were introduced across the whole of their area.

The other obvious question is whether your franchising assessment includes provision for a 'trial' area. The legislation assumes that the LTA produces an assessment of franchising in all or part of their area and then goes through the remaining statutory processes to decide whether to adopt it in the area defined. I would have thought that provided the trial area is included within the overall area covered by the assessment you should be fine, but nevertheless, a question for your lawyers. To end franchising there is of course the revocation process in the legislation that you would need to go through and you would need to extend your EP to fill the gap – as the BSIP Guidance says, all LTAs must have either an EP or franchising in all their area to qualify for future funding.

We can't say on what basis any future funding will be allocated as that is decided when the funding appears and what it is for. However, it is safe to say that the BSIP is likely to play a significant role – so if new funding appears in advance of the six-month review we may, for example, ask LTAs to submit updated content.

Para 21 of the BSIP guidance says LTAs can swap between franchising and an EP, so you would not be penalised for altering your plans to adopt a hybrid of franchising and an EP. But the quality of the BSIP will be important again, as will speed of delivering benefits on the ground to passengers.

On the last point, a list of areas which have transport bids remaining for round 2 of LUF was published last week on 13 April: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-round-2-technical-note/levelling-up-fund-round-2-technical-note>

Annex F is the bit that tells us whether Cambridge & Peterborough Combined Authority have bids left, and the good news is you do! For any further queries contact : Zeba.Khan@dft.gov.uk

Hope that helps!

S

From: Steve Blackmore <Steve.Blackmore@dft.gov.uk>

Sent: 07 April 2022 15:07

To: Oliver Howarth <oliver.howarth@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk>

Cc: Steve Cox <steve.cox@cambridgeshire.gov.uk>; Ben Kempner <Ben.Kempner@dft.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Meeting request

Oliver

There's not much more I can tell you at the moment. An action plan on how we engage with all individual LTAs is being put together now – future engagement is likely to involve a combination of us and consultants – including feedback on your BSIP.

In terms of suggested next steps for you, the BSIP is the shop window for future funding. So in advance of engagement from our side, I suggest you pick a BSIP from an area you believe similar to yours that got funding (the more the better) and go through it, comparing theirs to yours and also to the BSIP guidance. Then look to update your BSIP at the six-month review point. There really is no 'secret sauce' to this, we assessed on what we asked for in the guidance.

In terms of franchising, as explained in the letter from Stephen Fidler, if you are still working on a franchising assessment, you can continue to do so. You only need to switch to an EP if you conclude at some point in the process that franchising is not the right solution. At which point you can stop work on franchising and switch to an EP. Not having an EP (because you're still pursuing franchising) will not penalise you for future funding. But you have to get the BSIP right.

Sorry I can't be more helpful at this point. Ben K and I are on leave next week, but hopefully colleagues will have announced more detail on LTA engagement by then.

Kind Regards

Steve

From: Oliver Howarth <oliver.howarth@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk>

Sent: 05 April 2022 13:17

To: Steve Blackmore <Steve.Blackmore@dft.gov.uk>

Cc: Steve Cox <steve.cox@cambridgeshire.gov.uk>

Subject: Meeting request

Steve,

Please can we set up a short meeting between yourself, Steve Cox and myself about how we might be able to just ascertain what CPCA need to do, in terms of actions that are in our powers, to re-engage as quickly as possible; and how long we need to take to deliver you a signed and sealed EP to cover us whilst we work out whether to continue to explore Franchising?

Kind regards

Oliver

From: Steve Blackmore <Steve.Blackmore@dft.gov.uk>

Sent: 04 April 2022 14:08

To: Oliver Howarth <oliver.howarth@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk>

Cc: Rowland Potter <rowland.potter@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk>; Ben Kempner <Ben.Kempner@dft.gov.uk>; Steve Cox <Steve.Cox@cambridgeshire.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: BSIPs, CRSTS, LRT allocations

Hi Oliver

I know the announcement is disappointing for you. Letters are being issued to all LTAs – regardless of whether they got funding – and you should receive yours very soon. That will explain next steps.

Not involved in BRG, that's a separate team. Have you contacted Heather Winchester here?
Heather.winchester@dft.gov.uk Might the £5m be your BRG settlement?!

Kind regards

Steve

From: Oliver Howarth <oliver.howarth@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk>
Sent: 04 April 2022 13:21
To: Steve Blackmore <Steve.Blackmore@dft.gov.uk>
Cc: Rowland Potter <rowland.potter@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: BSIPs, CRSTS, LRT allocations

Hi Steve,

I imagine 500 urgent emails have just appeared in your inbox.

As you can imagine Cambridgeshire & Peterborough are concerned that having marched so close to Franchising of our bus service, it has suddenly been halted because we seem to have no BRG settlement and no BSIP funding.

We as officers need a very rapid confirmation of where we stand as this is quite a concern all round. Please can you suggest a date & time for this?

Kind regards

Oliver

NB We note that £5.8m arrived last Thursday night from DfT without any explanation or coding and wonder what that is?

Oliver Howarth
Bus Strategy Manager

oliver.howarth@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk

Kind regards

Oliver



Stephen Fidler OBE FCIHT
CO-DIRECTOR: LOCAL TRANSPORT
DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT

GREAT MINSTER HOUSE
33 HORSEFERRY ROAD
LONDON
SW1P 4DR

Web Site: www.dft.gov.uk

4 April 2022

Transport Director
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
Combined Authority

[by email]

Dear Transport Director,

BSIPs and ongoing bus improvement support for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

Thank you for submitting your authority's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). We appreciate the time and effort you and your local bus operators have put into development of your plans.

Ministers were very pleased to see such a high level of engagement with the bus strategy across the country. As we set out in our update letter in January, and as you will recognise is often the case with any funding process, the scale of demand for funding set out for BSIPs exceeded the funding available.

This means that we cannot provide new funding for your BSIP at this time. We know that news will be disappointing. However, this is not a final no and, while we can make no promises, you should not give up hope of funding. It is possible that further BSIP funding will become available in the coming months. Other funding streams, such as round two of the Levelling Up Fund (for which applications close at 12:00 noon on Wednesday 6th July) can also support investment in aspects of your BSIP.

We therefore encourage you to implement all aspects of your BSIP that do not require new funding and to maintain your ambition for bus service improvements including by seeking funding from other Government funding streams when available. As set out below, we will be funding you for a dedicated Bus Improvement Officer. Should further BSIP funding become available in the near future, we will not require you to apply for funding but will assess you and others in your position based on your initial BSIP. In

many cases the miss was a narrow one and with more money it will be possible to fund more places. In making decisions on any further funding round, we may seek evidence of your willingness to continue with the plans you proposed. For the Levelling Up Fund, should you be eligible, a fresh application will be needed.

Bus Service Operators' Grant will continue to be paid across the country; it is our intention that this will be conditional on having an Enhanced Partnership in place or following the statutory processes to consider bus franchising.

Progressing with your BSIP

Although it may not be possible for you to implement many of the costlier measures proposed in your BSIP at this time, there is still a lot that can be done to improve local bus services and grow bus patronage. Some interventions may be funded from other public funding sources or on a purely commercial basis.

Many authorities have developed other measures, such as integrated ticketing offers, marketing, branding or bus priority, at low cost in conjunction with their operators or as part of other funding streams.

Support from DfT

The Department will continue to support your work to improve bus services through further funding and other practical support:

- To strengthen in-house capacity, we will provide a further capacity support (revenue) grant to your authority in 2022/23. This should be sufficient to enable you to employ a dedicated Bus Improvement Officer for the next three years. We will write to you soon to set out the value of the grant to be made to your authority.
- To strengthen your in-house capability, we will support appropriate training for your officer under the auspices of the new Bus Centre of Excellence. We will also support the community of local authority bus officers nationwide through the networking and information-exchange activities provided through the Bus Centre of Excellence, which will include and incorporate the existing Basecamp channel.

Ticketing

Convenient bus ticketing solutions will encourage demand growth and along with improved passenger information, help encourage an integrated look and feel to otherwise fragmented networks. We are continuing to work with potential partners of a technical solution to facilitate Pay-As-You-Go multi-operator revenue allocation and will make further announcements in due course (subject of course to how you would deliver an all-bus ticket under franchising). It is our intention that this system will ultimately be available nationwide, forming the basis of a standard set of improvements available to all. We will continue dialogue with authorities and operators to increase availability of on-board equipment and revenue processing systems to take advantage of the new solution.

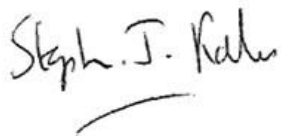
Next steps

As we set out in the bus strategy, we want to see every area forming Enhanced Partnerships or pursuing franchising arrangements; and again, Ministers were very pleased to see that all authorities issued notifications of intent last year to do so. Please do proceed with the statutory process to reach a franchising decision as soon as reasonably possible, so that you are able to benefit from other discretionary funds in the future.

As set out in Bus Back Better, we intend to consult on reform of the Bus Service Operator's Grant (BSOG), including on making the reformed BSOG available only to authorities and operators in an EP, or where franchising is being actively pursued.

If you would like to request feedback on the assessment of your BSIP, please contact the DfT Bus Reform Engagement Team at BSIP@dft.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steph. J. Fidler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Stephen Fidler