**PRESS RELEASE**

**BUS INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS LEADERS WILL ASSEMBLE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS TODAY TO LOBBY GOVERNMENT WITH A FIVE POINT PLAN TO GENERATE ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**Buses vital to generating connectivity, says business**

The importance of the bus to the UK economy, highlighted recently by an authoritative new report, will be presented to the House of Commons today in a new five point plan for growth (1).

The ***Buses and Economic Growth*** report (2), undertaken by the Institute of Transport Studies at the University of Leeds, revealed that more people commute to work by bus than all other public transport combined; bus commuters generate over £64 billion of economic output and 400,000 people are in better more productive jobs as a result of the bus.

Drawing on key findings from the report, Greener Journeys (3), a campaign to promote sustainable travel, produced the five point plan for growth ***Bus Policy: a five-point plan for growth*** which includes:

1. More co-ordinated pro-bus policy and funding arrangements at central and local government level
2. Good value, multi-operator ticketing, in particular to help low-income groups and young people
3. Taxation incentives for travelling by bus and more focus on travel planning support
4. Local Enterprise Partnerships, businesses and town centres to help fund bus improvements to boost local economies
5. Closer partnership working between bus operators, business and local government

**Transport Minister Norman Baker** said: "Buses are the mainstay of the public transport sector, carrying millions of passengers every day for business and leisure as well as helping to cut carbon by reducing congestion and replacing car journeys. And crucially, as this report highlights, buses are a keystone to the economy.

"The coalition Government strongly supports bus travel. We spent £1.77 billion last year supporting passengers travelling by bus in England, including financing for local government major projects and our Better Bus Area Fund. This was in addition to our £600 million Local Sustainable Transport Fund which is helping to finance projects improving provision of bus services and facilities for passengers.”

**Rhian Kelly, Director of Business Environment for the CBI**, said “We’ve all been thinking about how to re-balance our economy, create more connectivity and revitalise our communities. What this report does is articulate the vital role of public buses in underpinning this activity. It reminds us that buses play an important role in supporting our towns and city centres. Indeed, more people access the high street by bus than any other mode - 40% of trips to the high street are made by bus, as opposed to 30% by car.”

**Tim O'Toole, FirstGroup Chief Executive** comments "The bus is critical to the UK's economy. Two thirds of all public transport users take the bus - it is the backbone of how people get to work, visit town centres and access leisure facilities. As this case shows, investment and support of our bus services will help reinvigorate local economies, reduce congestion and reduce carbon emissions."

**David Brown, Go-Ahead Chief Executive**, formerly responsible for all of London's buses at Transport for London said:"Buses provide crucial access to labour markets and support to businesses and local retail economies. People understand the social and environmental importance of buses. This report highlights the economic benefits that the bus can bring."

**Sir Brian Souter, Stagecoach Group Chief Executive**, said: "Every pound invested in buses is an investment in the future of our communities, our high streets and city centres, our young people and

our country's economy. We need more joined up thinking across Government, better partnerships between transport operators, local authorities and business, and a focus on practical measures that make the bus the travel mode of choice. These are low-cost, and in many cases, no-cost solutions but they have the potential to be a real springboard for growth and a more sustainable future."

"In these difficult times we need to exploit the potential of the bus to stimulate jobs and growth," says **Claire Haigh, Greener Journeys Chief Executive**. "We need to match up unemployed people with jobs. For too many cars are a luxury they can’t afford, buses provide essential access. This is why we are calling for fairer tax treatment for bus passengers, and measures like tax incentives for bus commuting."

**David Martin, Arriva Chief Executive**, said: "The Government has been exploring how the planning system can be better used to support economic development and regenerate the economy. At the same time, it's vital to ensure the planning system delivers the right incentives for local authorities and developers to provide the right transport infrastructure and environment to support bus services which help underpin that growth.

“Ensuring employers have access to a wider pool of labour and people have more opportunities to use public transport to get to work or make a new job possible has never been more important than it is now. The bus provides lower cost transport options which have less impact on the environment and can help mitigate the environmental and economic impacts of congestion on our roads."

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Notes to Editors

1. Greener Journeys will present its five-point plan for growth to MP's at the House of Commons on Monday 17 September, 1530-1700. Transport Minister Norman Baker MP will give the keynote address.

Copies of the report, ***Bus Policy: a five-point plan for growth*** by Greener Journeys and a short video news release debate between CBI's Rhian Kelly, Go-Ahead's David Brown, Greener Journeys' Claire Haigh and Passenger Focus' Anthony Smith will be available on the Greener Journeys website: [**www.greenerjourneys.com**](http://www.greenerjourneys.com) from Monday 17 September.

2. The ***Buses and Economic Growth*** report, conducted by the Institute for Transport Studies (ITS) at the University of Leeds has quantified an assessment of the economic contribution of the bus in growing the economy, connecting people with jobs, helping businesses and supporting the vitality of city centres. It also highlights the significant direct contribution of the bus industry itself in creating employment and investment.

Key findings include:

* More people commute to work by bus than all other public transport combined
* Bus commuters generate £64 billion in economic output
* 1 in 10 bus commuters would be forced to look for another job or give up work if they could no longer commute by bus
* 400,000 people in better more productive jobs as a direct result of the bus
* More than 50% students rely on the bus to get to their education or training
* Young people are more dependent on buses than any other demographic group
* People use the bus to make shopping and leisure trips to the value of £27 billion

3. Greener Journeys is a campaign dedicated to encouraging people to make sustainable transport choices. It is a coalition of Britain's leading bus companies and other public transport supporters, including the Confederation for Passenger Transport, PTEG, the RAC Foundation and Transport for London. Its primary funders are bus companies (Arriva, FirstGroup, Go-Ahead and Stagecoach).

4. **SUMMARY OF FIVE POINT PLAN**

**1. Creating the right public policy framework**

* 1. The wider economic impacts of the bus system need to be captured in to the appraisal and allocation of funds for bus infrastructure projects and consideration of the case for Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG)
	2. To provide adequate revenue funding in addition to capital funding streams to enable the ‘full bus package’ to be implemented.
	3. To conduct joined-up thinking across different government departments on the role of the bus in helping the economy (e.g. DfT, HM Treasury, BIS, DWP, DfE, DCLG and DoH).
	4. Planning decisions on new developments to consider fully the critical role of public transport in giving employers access to a wide and diverse labour market and giving people access to jobs.

**2. Meeting the needs of bus passengers**

2.1 Good value fares to be maintained to ensure accessibility of bus services to low-income commuters and young people in particular

2.2 Where feasible, smart attractively priced multi-operator ticketing should be introduced

2.3 Local implementation of pro-bus policies

**3. Supporting the bus in its vital role in the labour market**

3.1 Taxation incentives for travelling by bus

3.2 Increased take-up of workplace travel plans and for the bus to be considered and promoted as a core option within them

3.3 Travel planning assistance and fares offers for school leavers and unemployed people to help connect them to education, training and the job market

**4. Enabling businesses and local retail economies to benefit from bus services**

4.1 LEPs to prioritise funding for bus infrastructure projects to optimise the role of the bus in helping to create the right environment for business growth in their areas

4.2 Business Improvement Districts to use part of their levies to help fund bus improvements

4.3 Town Centre Management Groups to include the bus as part of their town centre transport access strategies

**5. Building strong alliances across bus operators, businesses and local government**

5.1 An effective and locally appropriate framework for closer working between local business community, local bus operators and local authorities

5.2 Stronger corporate ownership of responsibilities for sustainable transport policies

5.3 Better monitoring of bus users by employers and retail/town centre management groups