

13<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Dear Colleague,

The Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership (GMLEP) supports the intent of the Bus Services Bill.

It is vital that an elected Greater Manchester Mayor is provided with effective tools to improve and integrate bus services across the conurbation, including the option to franchise services following a public consultation.

Greater Manchester is a growing and thriving city region. We are committed to becoming a financially self-sustaining city with the size, the assets, the skilled population and the economic strength to continue to compete on a global stage. A key priority for the GM LEP is to create an environment that fosters economic growth and boosts productivity, makes Greater Manchester an investment destination of choice and allows the benefits of growth to be shared across the population of the city region.

Transport is a vital enabler for this growth. It allows individuals to access jobs and opportunities and connects employers to talent and skills; it provides vital links to stimulate and shape our housing markets and is key to unlocking the potential of all our town centres.

Devolution to Greater Manchester is providing the elected Mayor and the Combined Authority with important tools to align policy and create the right conditions for growth. Bus is a very important part of this. It is the most used form of public transport with a critical role to play as part of a fully integrated, high quality, resilient transport network.

But the fact of the matter is that the structure of the bus market at present is not delivering what passengers or the GM economy needs – as highlighted by continuing patronage decline. This must change if we are to create the integrated transport network our city region needs to support our growth objectives.

It is important the legislation is practicable and can be implemented without unnecessary obstacles, so that residents, businesses and visitors of Greater Manchester can benefit from a radically improved and integrated public transport network, helping secure future prosperity of the city region.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Blackburn

Chair of the Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership