

MEDIA RELEASE

Bus renaissance under way in towns and cities across the UK

- *Bus use is increasing in key urban areas as services become greener, more convenient and better connected*
- *Affluent southern regions including Bristol, Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire see biggest rises*
- *New survey shows that travel convenience is passengers' main reason for using the bus*

The bus is coming back into fashion in parts of the UK where new, modern and innovative service offers are helping more people beat congestion, cut pollution and get from A to B more conveniently.

Official Government figures show that passenger numbers have been growing in certain towns and cities, particularly more affluent parts of the south, bucking the trend of long-term decline across the UK as a whole.

A [new report](#) by the LowCVP, commissioned by Greener Journeys, highlights how bus services in many of the regions experiencing the biggest growth in bus patronage, including Bristol (19% increase from 2009/10 to 2015/16), Reading (17%) Milton Keynes (15%) and Oxfordshire (12%), have benefited from investment and prioritisation by local councils in partnership with operators.

The boost is by no means limited to the south, with York more recently experiencing a 7% increase in bus usage since 2011/12 – the equivalent of an extra 600,000 passenger journeys per year.

Popular improvements identified by the report, *Any Journey is Greener by Bus*, include cleaner vehicle technology, real-time travel information, integrated ticketing, free WiFi and charging, improved seating, shorter journey times, better routing and bus priority measures such as bus lanes.

The report, to be launched today at the UK Bus Summit, says that in some cities and regions operators have introduced not just cleaner vehicle technology but also a host of other innovative features which are attracting people back to buses, and even out of their cars in some cases.

It adds: "Over the last ten years, bus use has grown in the South West and South East of England, suggesting that the balance between private and shared travel for those living in the wealthiest, most congested, parts of the country may be gradually shifting in favour of the bus. 'Peak car' may not yet be widespread, but there could be signs of its emergence here."

A separate survey of more than 800 passengers across the UK found that convenience is the most common reason to choose the bus for their journey, with 57% of respondents naming it as a key factor.

But in the south east and south west – the regions where bus usage increased overall – passengers were more likely to cite avoiding traffic (30%) and environmental benefits (28%) as a main reason for travelling by bus than the national average (22% and 20% of passengers respectively).

Previous research by Greener Journeys has shown that as well as reducing congestion and carbon emissions, buses can deliver substantial social benefits. A 10% improvement in local bus services is linked to a 3.6% reduction in social deprivation across England, taking into account employment, income, life expectancy and skills.

Claire Haigh, Chief Executive of Greener Journeys, said:

“This new report clearly shows that investment in buses, and prioritisation of bus networks, can reap real rewards by increasing passenger numbers and taking more cars off the road, with all the economic, social and environmental benefits that brings.

“We would encourage councils and operators across the UK to look at the innovative services, measures for tackling congestion and clean bus technology detailed in this report as a model for raising usage and sparking their own bus renaissance.”

Andy Eastlake, Managing Director, Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership, said:

“This report, the third in a series on progress in the bus industry, shows that innovation in technology is a part – but only a part – of what will make passengers return to the buses in greater numbers.

“Buses have the potential to play a central role, particularly in cities of the future where the idea of mobility as a service is already becoming a reality. But, as these case studies show, the industry has to move fast to keep up with the game and deliver the kinds of services that modern passengers are coming to expect.”

[Download the report here](#)

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For further information

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About Greener Journeys

Greener Journeys is a campaign dedicated to encouraging people to make more sustainable travel choices. It is a coalition of the UK’s leading public transport organizations, user groups and

supporters. It aims to reduce CO₂ emissions from transport by encouraging people to switch some of their car journeys to bus or coach instead. Switching from car to bus for just one journey a month

would mean one billion fewer car journeys on our roads and would save 2 million tonnes of CO₂ every year. For more information visit www.greenerjourneys.com.

About the LowCVP

The LowCVP is a public-private, not-for-profit partnership that exists to accelerate a sustainable shift to lower carbon vehicles and fuels and create opportunities for UK businesses. The LowCVP has been - and continues to be - mainly funded by the Department for Transport but with increasing contributions via membership fees and sponsorship/project income. Approaching 200 organisations are members, from diverse backgrounds including automotive and fuel supply chains, vehicle users, academics and environment/not-for-profit bodies.

For more information visit: www.lowcvp.org.uk