



**SIPTU Statement to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Transport, Tourism and Sport with regard to the 'Impact of the Bus Connect Programme'.**

July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**SIPTU Spokespersons**

John Murphy, Sector Organiser - Transport Sector

Stephen Hannan – Worker Director Dublin Bus

Chairman, members of the Committee, on behalf of the SIPTU members in Dublin Bus, the CIE Group, the wider Transport Industry and across all sectors of Industry and Employment, we wish to thank you for this opportunity to outline to you our members and this Unions position regarding the Impact of the Bus Connect Programme.

SIPTU views the Bus Connect Programme as a largely positive step in plans to achieve the goal of a fully integrated public transport system that will deliver a reliable, affordable, efficient service for the citizens of our society. We also view the programme as an opportunity to ensure Ireland develops a quality road transport service that is convenient for the travelling public, and those that are dependent on such services, and which can deliver decent secure and sustained employment for those that provide the service.

While SIPTU welcomes the programme and the many positives it strives to deliver we must also comment on the potential negatives with the aim of having such addressed at the initial stages, during consultation and planning, so as when the programme is being rolled out, there is support for the service from all stakeholders involved in and reliant on Public Transport.

SIPTU has consistently called for the necessary investment in Public Transport and we welcome the fact the Department, through the National Transport Authority (NTA), are committing to such investment. We believe that this investment and the Bus Connect Programme can and must alleviate the extreme and increasing congestion faced by our citizens on the roads of Dublin and the surrounding area. The CSO statistics in 2016 showed that private car usage accounted for 69% of all journeys while Bus usage accounted for 4%.

SIPTU believes the Bus Connect Programme, if delivered successfully, can dramatically change this statistic and this would have a positive impact for citizens, workers, business and the economy.

SIPTU believes the Bus Connect Programme can help reduce our carbon emissions and help Ireland tackle climate change. Not only can this strategy take private cars off our congested roads, the planned investment in low emission buses must be welcomed by all stakeholders.

The Bus Connect Programme can further improve the interconnectivity of our Public Transport System, which must be welcomed. With the recent commencement of LUAS Cross City, the opening of the Phoenix Park Tunnel Rail Service and the Public Bike Scheme along with the necessary further investment in additional services (increased DART Frequency, new rolling stock for Irish Rail to increase capacity, New LUAS lines, etc), SIPTU sees this programme as a vital step in encouraging and attracting people to use Public Transport.

SIPTU also views the proposals to introduce Bus Rapid Transit and dedicated bus lanes on the entire length of radial routes as a positive step. While there has been increased services and frequency on such routes, the fact that approx. only one third of such radial routes have dedicated bus lanes results in unplanned delays where buses interact with other modes of transport. These delays discourage passenger usage as bus transport is viewed as unreliable. SIPTU contends dedicated bus lanes must be adequately policed to ensure they have the maximum opportunity to provide the intended reliable services.

The proposed redesign of the Fares system and the future seamless interchangeability of tickets on the various modes of Public Transport is also welcomed to improve interconnectivity and encourage usage of all modes of Public Transport.

SIPTU welcomes the plan whereby the NTA and Dublin Bus will jointly be involved in the planned Public Consultation on the programme. While the NTA is tasked with delivering the Public Transport Services, it is vital that Dublin Bus, with their experience and knowledge of the needs of passengers be part of this process. Dublin Bus has always met and exceeded the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) set by the NTA in delivering Road Passenger Transport Services. Their proven track record in operating a reliable, efficient and high-quality service and the ability of our members to consistently deliver such a service needs to be retained and built on if any programme is to be successful. Dublin Bus has links in every community in the Dublin region and their staff are the first point of contact with passengers, this undoubted knowledge and experience must be to the forefront of delivering new services.

SIPTU must also comment on the potential negative impact of the Bus Connect Programme and particularly the possible impact on passenger's dependent on the services and indeed on the workers delivering the services.

Under the provision of Public Transport, the NTA and the Department have an obligation to provide services which may not be economically viable but which are socially necessary. This obligation must be met under the Bus Connect Programme. The Programme should not simply be about getting intended passengers from one point to another safely and efficiently. We need to also

take into consideration the needs of the disabled and the people reliant on the free travel scheme (pensioners and social welfare recipients). Many of these passengers have no other means of transport and are reliant on their Bus Services. There needs to be widespread consultation with the representatives of these groups to ensure they are not left behind and that the services that are needed for access to education, healthcare and to the community is considered and improved upon in any future transport service changes.

SIPTU also has reservations on the impact of the Bus Connect Programme on workers who provide these services. As previously stated, we believe Dublin Bus is best placed to deliver the necessary services under Bus Connect. Any plans by the NTA to franchise out such services will be resisted by SIPTU as it will inevitably lead to a for-profit service which will not benefit the passengers, workers or those dependent on services. SIPTU has been actively campaigning for the establishment of a Sectoral Employment Order (SEO) for the Public Bus Transport Industry and we are again taking this opportunity to promote this agenda. SIPTU, arising from the previous agreement in 2015 between the NTA, the Department of Transport, the Public Bus Companies and the Trade Unions whereby 10% of public bus services were tendered, will continue to organise all workers in the Industry as we view this as a way to best protect all workers who provide the services. An SEO will provide a level playing field for all operators and workers in the Industry and will provide security of services for the travelling public.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, SIPTU is largely supportive of the Bus Connect Programme, with some reservations. We see the Public Consultation process as vital and this

consultation must be all encompassing and involve all aspects of our society to ensure our future Bus Services delivers for all potential passengers, for workers and for the Country.

Thank you, Chairman.