

# Journey Solutions partnership



## ticketing and new rail franchises

### Top 5 priorities for new TOC's – summary:-

1. Remain committed to promote and retail all existing PLUSBUS day and season tickets;
2. Retail PLUSBUS day tickets and weekly season tickets by all self-service ticket vending machines (TVM's) at all stations;
3. Retail all PLUSBUS season tickets online (with rail season ticket renewals);
4. Fulfil all PLUSBUS day and season tickets on ITSO Smartcards;
5. Ensure that PLUSBUS will be retailed by any new retail channel that may be introduced.

### Background

**PLUSBUS** is Britain's only nation-wide train to bus ticketing system, which is now available for 293 rail-served towns and cities. It is an ATOC/National Rail ticketing product, which is managed on behalf of train and bus operators by the **Journey Solutions partnership**\*

PLUSBUS is a discounted price bus pass that the train traveller buys with their train tickets (current retail channels are all National Rail station ticket offices, by 'phone and online). It offers the train traveller bus travel to/from the train station (and around the whole urban area of the town) that's at the start and/or finish of their train journey. Both day and season ticket versions are available.

In the last four years sales of PLUSBUS tickets have increased by over 1,000% and we aim to sell around one million tickets in the current rail financial year (ending 31 March 2012). Currently 50% of PLUSBUS day tickets (and 6% of season tickets) are sold online and we plan for this to rise further in the next few years.

PLUSBUS is a well-regarded integrated ticketing scheme that has been praised on numerous occasions by Transport Ministers past and present. PLUSBUS was set-up as an operator-led initiative (without Government involvement or financial support) and has been developed, is managed and is funded solely by the **Journey Solutions partners**. Its future development depends upon the continued support and active involvement of partners in the bus and rail industry. In particular Train Operating Companies, who have the customer base and undertake retail and fulfilment functions. For this reason, this document aims to give bidders for new rail franchises an understanding of how PLUSBUS may fit into their future retailing and ticketing strategies.

The business benefits of including PLUSBUS in rail franchise plans are:

- PLUSBUS is an operator-led initiative. Britain's leading PLC bus and train operating Groups have supported, funded and managed PLUSBUS to date, and are involved in its on-going development. PLUSBUS ticket prices are set by the participating bus operators in each local scheme. Neither central nor local Government (except in rare cases where the majority of bus services are provided under local authority contract) has any control over the management, operating costs or individual ticket prices of PLUSBUS.

- PLUSBUS is already accepted by over 200 bus companies across Britain. This makes it Britain's biggest integrated multi-modal ticketing scheme. In most PLUSBUS served towns all bus companies (large and small) that run local services participate in the scheme and accept the ticket for travel. This is a great strength of PLUSBUS, in that we are already meeting one of the Governments key objectives for integrated ticketing schemes - that they are multi-modal (train and bus) and multi-operator (accepted by the majority/or all bus operators in a given locality). This is important so that customers can use their PLUSBUS ticket on the first bus that comes along going to their destination. Obtaining such significant coverage of all local bus services, at all times of day in each rail-served town is likely to take a several years to achieve with other fulfilment methods, such as ITSO Smartcards.
- PLUSBUS already has all the necessary bus operator agreements in place, so it can be fulfilled by any rail-approved method (such as ITSO Smartcards) and will not require time-consuming or expensive negotiation of such agreements.
- Further developing self-service channels for PLUSBUS ticket purchase will further significantly grow the volume of tickets sold.
- PLUSBUS ticketing provides train operators with an important tool for meeting Station Travel Plan objectives and local authority aspirations for closer integration between modes.

## What might rail franchisees do to further develop PLUSBUS ticketing?

1. **Remain committed to promote and retail all existing PLUSBUS day and season tickets to passengers, through all existing rail retail channels, including:**
  - at all rail station ticket offices,
  - through telesales and website,
  - by on-train conductors/train managers.

2. **Retail PLUSBUS day and week tickets by all self-service ticket vending machines.** Currently most TVM's do not offer PLUSBUS tickets in this way.

ATOS are currently gaining RSP accreditation for a software release that will programme all their Shere TVM's to automatically offer PLUSBUS day ticket for customers destination town.

Sheidt&Bachmann have developed a 'Station Profiling Tool' for TOC's to buy that will enable "add-on" products, like PLUSBUS to be added onto the product list of each TVM.

2. **Retail all PLUSBUS season tickets online (with rail season ticket renewals).**

ATOS webTIS can automatically do this and a number of TOC's have enabled this already.

Thetrainline.com webTIS cannot currently retail PLUSBUS season tickets with rail season ticket renewals/purchases (although it is a high-end aspiration of the Journey Solutions partners that we achieve this as soon as possible and we have had various discussions with thetrainline.com to this end).

### 3. Fulfil all PLUSBUS day and season tickets on ITSO Smartcards.

Ticketing systems need to be configured so that PLUSBUS day and season tickets can be fulfilled onto ITSO Smartcards.

### 4. Ensure that PLUSBUS will be retailed by any new retail channel that may be introduced.

## PLUSBUS and ITSO Smartcards

The UK Government is committed to all new rail franchises having ITSO Smartcard ticketing as standard, including for integrated ticketing with other modes. It is expected that this will be a franchise obligation.

The **Journey Solutions partnership** welcomes the opportunities that ITSO Smartcards offer. In particular, we recognise that ITSO Smartcards will, in time, become a **very convenient additional fulfilment method** for PLUSBUS ticketing.

We are also keen to ensure that all new rail franchises both continue to promote and develop the existing PLUSBUS ticketing scheme in its current form (as a paper ticket) and also make preparations to migrate fulfilment onto ITSO Smartcards as and when equipment is available. The partnership is already in the process of preparing its first trial of PLUSBUS on ITSO Smartcard in 2012 and hopes to implement further trials.

However, with regard to integrated ticketing between train and bus, ITSO Smartcard products may be a several years away from attaining the same level of nation-wide coverage and the comprehensive level of bus operator participation that PLUSBUS currently enjoys as a paper-based product.

All of the leading public transport operating group's in Britain are investing in ITSO Smartcard ticketing equipment. However, many, particularly smaller bus companies have yet to establish a convincing business case to invest in ITSO Smartcard equipment. Future local and national developments depend not only on the initial capital cost of ITSO equipment, but also the technical expertise being available to establish and run an ITSO Smartcard ticketing scheme.

Services to and from stations can be provided by different operators, with more than one provider linking stations to bus stops distant from the railhead. If some of these operators do not have ITSO Smartcard readers on their buses then the customer with a rail-issued integrated ITSO Smartcard is not going to be able to travel on the services of multiple bus providers. As PLUSBUS is an all inclusive multi operator product, JSp would not wish rail franchise led ITSO requirements to result in a reduction in the effective availability of PLUSBUS.

Furthermore, both bus and train operating companies are also trying other new ticketing technologies, such as m-ticketing, NFC mobile and print-at-home ticketing. Overall this means that the range of PLUSBUS ticket fulfilment methods will gradually diversify even more.

Therefore, a twin-track approach is required. For the foreseeable future (certainly the next three years) there is a compelling case to continue with and further develop the existing PLUSBUS schemes as a paper-based ticket. It already exists, the costs of running this nation-


wide scheme are incredibly low and there is no requirement for significant investment in new equipment or software to maintain its national availability. From a customer view-point it is easy to buy, easy to use and simple to understand. It uses existing rail ticketing equipment and retail channels. The inter-operator agreements are established and revenue sharing mechanisms are robust and work well.

At the same time, PLUSBUS needs to be fulfilled by ITSO Smartcard as and when all the participating bus operators in each PLUSBUS locality become ITSO equipped. However, with the option to enable non-ITSO enabled operators to join in the future.

**PLUSBUS is a complete ticketing product** (which in future could be fulfilled in a variety of ways, including on ITSO Smartcards), whereas **ITSO Smartcards are a ticket fulfilment method** onto which value or ticketing products are loaded and stored. Both need to exist together in order to offer customer's choice and best-value.

## Conclusion

PLUSBUS offers both the bus and the rail industry an excellent platform for the expansion of multi-modal, multi-operator integrated ticketing. Companies bidding for rail franchises can include within their plans a number of significant immediate marketing and retail channel developments for PLUSBUS as well as making suitable medium-term plans for fulfilment of PLUSBUS products on ITSO Smartcards.



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\* **Journey Solutions** partners are:

ALBUM, Arriva, ATOC, CPT, First, Go-Ahead, National Express, Stagecoach & Veolia Transdev.