



Competition and Markets Authority  
The Cabot, 25 Cabot Square, London, E14 4QZ  
Via email: [pttsbereview@cma.gov.uk](mailto:pttsbereview@cma.gov.uk)

24 May 2024

Dear Sir or Madam,

## Re: Public Transport Ticketing Schemes Block Exemption: Call for Inputs

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this consultation, which we learned about via the Urban Transport Group on Thursday 16 May.

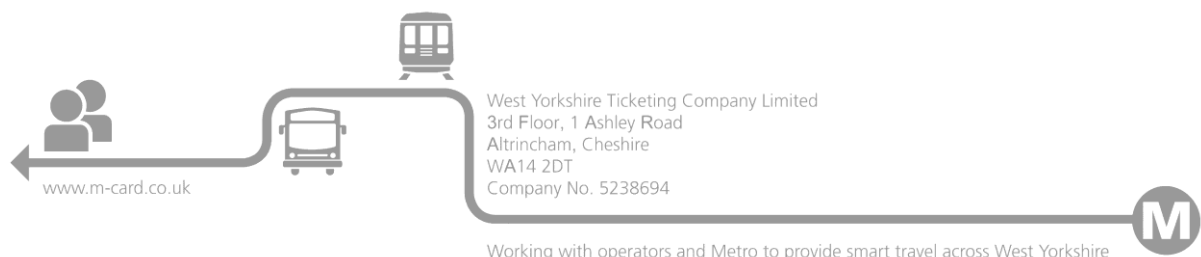
Our company, West Yorkshire Ticketing Company Limited (WYTCL), operates the MCard bus and rail ticketing scheme in West Yorkshire, England, as a private limited company operating an MTC under the PTTSBE. WYTCL is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of five representatives of bus operators, two from rail operators and one from West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA).

Although our company would be categorised as small, with one employee and two contractors, WYTCL sold £48 million in tickets in 2023-24. Many WYCA employees also have roles in administering the MCard MTC scheme. WYTCL also has nearly 30 shareholders, consisting of bus and rail operators, working together through the MCard joint venture agreement.

WYTCL also administers the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Multi Operator, Multi Modal Ticketing Scheme 2016, a statutory scheme under the Transport Act 2000 (Sections 135 to 138), which compels all bus and rail operators to accept MCard tickets within the West Yorkshire boundary.

Although West Yorkshire has an approved plan for bus franchising, the first services to be franchised will not commence until March 2027. This would only be the beginning of the process, which is expected to take multiple years to complete. This means that, for a long period of time, there will be an environment in which franchised services exist side by side with operator-led commercial services, as well as non-franchised WYCA-supported (subsidised) services. Moreover, our ticketing scheme is multi-modal, whereas franchising will only affect bus travel.

The CMA 'Call for Inputs' document states: "Under franchising schemes [...], ticketing would be centrally organised by the LTA." We have not been informed that this would necessarily be the case. Given that WYTCL administers the West Yorkshire statutory scheme, our company may be the best mechanism to provide





operator input on pricing and ticketing decisions for the long term. Furthermore, such an organisation may be needed to manage the offer for cross-boundary services and multi-modal ticketing.

The PTTSBE continues to have a role in West Yorkshire, as it provides the foundation for our MCard MTC scheme. In the absence of the PTTSBE, a self-assessed Section 9 exemption from the Chapter I prohibition may be an option. However, it does not provide the same level of legal assurance as the automatic exemption provided by the PTTSBE.

For the above reasons, we believe that the PTTSBE continues to have a role and should be extended indefinitely.

The existence of the West Yorkshire statutory scheme (2016) has not yet affected the extent to which transport operators rely on the PTTSBE, because the two are in place concurrently and we have not legally clarified whether the statutory scheme relies on the PTTSBE. Further, there is a lower awareness of the statutory scheme, despite it serving to enable the MCard joint venture agreement. Many LTAs will however not have a statutory scheme and will therefore rely on the PTTSBE.

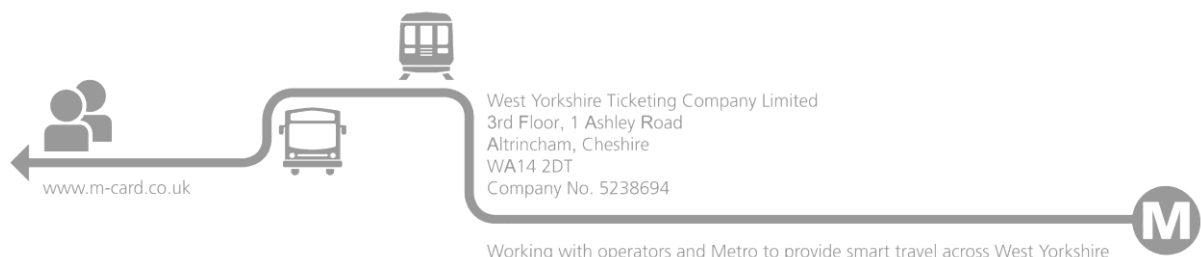
We are not aware of any other developments in England that will affect transport operators' reliance on the PTTSBE in the coming years.

The definition of 'public transport ticketing scheme' in Article 4 of the PTTSBE is sufficiently clear. However, it would be useful to have more guidance on the potential for an MTC to expand into cross-boundary bus services where this does not involve partnership with an adjacent MTC.

We do not see an issue with the PTTSBE definition of 'ticket' ('evidence of a contractual right to travel'); even a 'tap and cap' scheme is considered as a form of 'ticketing' despite not involving a ticket in the traditional sense. Schemes involving subscriptions should still be considered as tickets. However, the term 'card' in 'Multi-operator Travel Card' (MTC) may be less relevant in cases where many tickets are app-based, or where the only card involved is a credit card (cEMV).

In terms of new forms of technology or new modes of public transport, we believe it is likely that many MTC schemes would have an interest in potentially bringing Mobility as a Service (MaaS) options into the customer offer, e.g. as part of a subscription or as a journey add-on. These could include 'sharing' and hire schemes for e-scooters, other 'micromobility' modes, bicycles, cars and possibly taxis.

It would therefore be beneficial to expand the scope of PTTSBE to include these modes, giving each MTC scheme the discretion, flexibility and assurance to expand





the customer offer. However, in the likely scenario where a given MTC retail platform offers only one supplier for each additional mode (e.g. e-scooter) in a particular locale, this would have no effect on competition other than potential discounts, and in such cases the modal expansion of PTTsBE would serve no purpose.

In terms of the impacts of the PTTsBE on competition, in West Yorkshire there are cases where the single-operator product is cheaper than the MCard equivalent. There are other cases where operators have chosen to actively promote MCard products and no longer offer a single-operator equivalent. In cases where there is no competition on price, there is still competition for routes and for customers.

The important impacts of the PTTsBE are the customer benefits. Where customers choose tickets within the MCard scheme, they have a clear understanding of the price, validity period, validity area and universal acceptance by operators. With an MCard DaySaver product, for example, customers have the freedom to travel on any service regardless of operator. The ticket income is then shared among the operators that were used by those customers over the course of the day.

In the case of any major changes to the PTTsBE, online stakeholder workshops would be very useful. We would also appreciate being notified regarding any future PTTsBE consultations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours faithfully,

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Company Secretary  
West Yorkshire Ticketing Company Limited

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