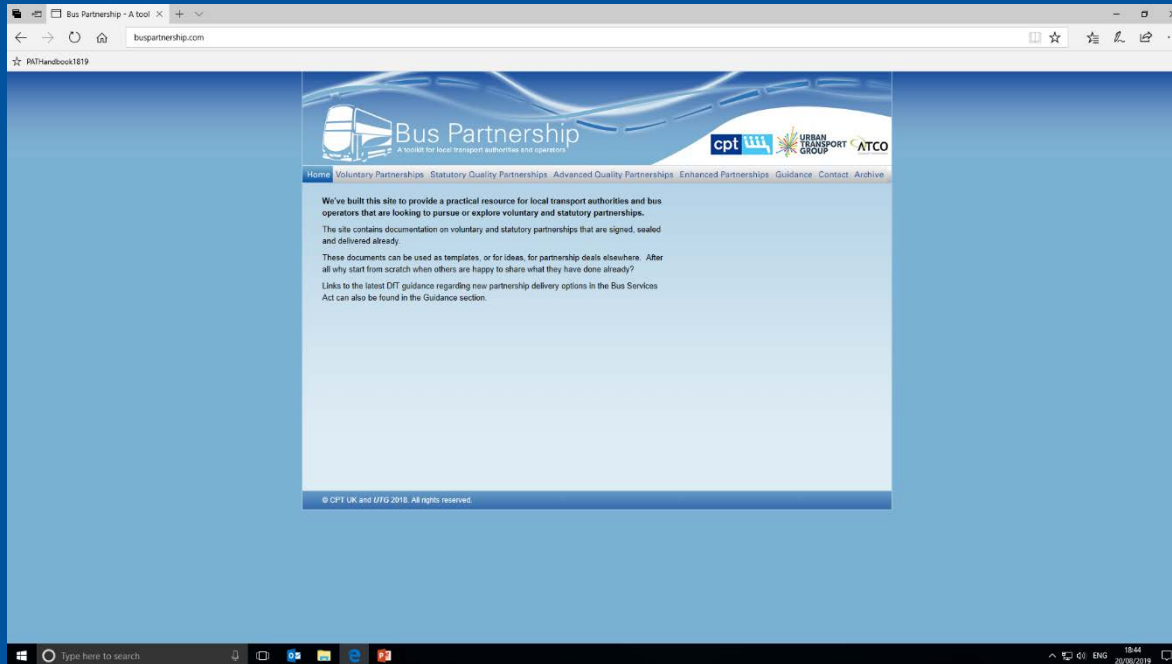


Can Bus Partnerships and Contracts Make a Difference?



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Context

Quality Bus Partnerships (QBP) are 'agreements (either formal or informal) between one or more local authorities and one or more bus operators, for measures to be taken up by more than one party to enhance (mainly commercial) bus services, in a defined area, to meet the strategic objectives of the partners'

Transport Act 1985.

Thredbo 5. John Carr and Light touch regulation (1997)

Transport Act 2000. SQPs and QCs. Only 2 SQPs.

Threbo 8. 30 VQPs (2003).

Local Transport Act 2008. At least 6 more SQPs

Bus Service Act 2017. AQPs, EQPs and Contracts.



Method

Analysis of data for 2009/10 to 2017/18 on:

- Bus trips per capita (from DfT)
- Bus vehicle miles (from DfT)
- Fares index (from DfT)
- GVA per capita (from ONS)
- Documented data on active QBPs (own work)

Undertaken for three spatial units:

- Super regions (5)
- Regions (11)
- Sample of Local Authorities with and without QBPs (35)



Super-Regional Analysis

| <i>Term</i> | <i>Coef</i> | <i>SE Coef</i> | <i>T-Value</i> | <i>P-Value</i> | <i>VIF</i> |
|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------|
| Constant | 174.30 | 7.84 | 22.24 | 0.000 | |
| GVA | -0.002982 | 0.000316 | -9.43 | 0.000 | 27.86 |
| Vehicle miles | 0.01423 | 0.00386 | 3.69 | 0.001 | 1.74 |
| District | | | | | |
| English metropolitan areas | -33.58 | 2.09 | -16.04 | 0.000 | 7.14 |
| English non-metropolitan areas | -69.70 | 1.26 | -55.12 | 0.000 | 2.61 |
| London | 220.88 | 5.80 | 38.10 | 0.000 | 44.99 |
| Scotland | -29.76 | 1.32 | -22.56 | 0.000 | 2.99 |
| Wales | -87.85 | 2.56 | -34.30 | 0.000 | * |

Note Wales is the reference dummy variable coded as -1.



Regional Analysis

| <i>Term</i> | <i>Coef</i> | <i>SE Coef</i> | <i>T-Value</i> | <i>P-Value</i> | <i>VIF</i> |
|--------------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| Constant | 92.28 | 3.73 | 24.75 | 0.000 | |
| GVA | -0.001870 | 0.000176 | -10.63 | 0.000 | 3.91 |
| Region | | | | | |
| East Midlands | -10.431 | 0.784 | -13.31 | 0.000 | 1.94 |
| East of England | -18.599 | 0.803 | -23.17 | 0.000 | 2.03 |
| North East | 14.389 | 0.902 | 15.94 | 0.000 | 2.57 |
| North West | 7.890 | 0.756 | 10.44 | 0.000 | 1.80 |
| Scotland | 29.548 | 0.832 | 35.52 | 0.000 | 2.18 |
| South East | -3.17 | 1.21 | -2.62 | 0.010 | 4.60 |
| South West | -12.108 | 0.767 | -15.80 | 0.000 | 1.85 |
| Wales | -24.453 | 0.976 | -25.06 | 0.000 | 3.00 |
| West Midlands | 8.218 | 0.775 | 10.60 | 0.000 | 1.90 |
| Yorkshire and The Humber | 8.717 | 0.786 | 11.09 | 0.000 | * |



Local Authority District Analysis

| <i>Term</i> | <i>Coef</i> | <i>SE Coef</i> | <i>T-Value</i> | <i>P-Value</i> | <i>VIF</i> |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------|
| Constant | 64.03 | 5.68 | 11.27 | 0.000 | |
| GVA | -0.001231 | 0.000228 | -5.41 | 0.000 | 1.07 |
| Contract_AQP | 31.60 | 5.72 | 5.52 | 0.000 | 1.12 |
| Contract_NQP | -13.57 | 3.00 | -4.52 | 0.000 | 1.10 |
| Met | 37.68 | 3.65 | 10.33 | 0.000 | 1.22 |
| Urban Unitary | 43.26 | 3.10 | 13.94 | 0.000 | 1.17 |



Discussion

Results exploratory but:

- Having an AQP associated with 40 - 43% higher demand.
- Not having a QBP associated with demand 17% to 38% lower.
- Evidence on franchising limited to London.

So why the limited uptake? Possible reasons include:

- Share of risk and reward.
- Knowledge and capability.



Discussion

Recent quotes.

DfT official: *I think relationships between bus operators and local authorities have never been more important.* (May 2019)

Prime Minister: *I know a lot about buses, believe me. I love buses, I helped to invent a new type of bus. I will begin in urgency, the transformation of local bus services here today in Manchester.* (July 2019)



The key challenge may be to incentivise Local Authorities.

