

# For too long the bus industry has put profit before passengers. Labour will change that – Jeremy Corbyn

Labour

will overturn the Government's ban on council-owned bus companies as part of a wider strategy to put the public back into buses and deliver affordable, greener, and accessible transport.

Labour

unveiled its bus strategy to put people not private profit first after figures revealed that passenger journeys in England outside London have declined by 39 percent and by 53 per cent in English cities since 1986. But over the same period in London, which kept regulation of bus services, passenger journeys increased by 99 per cent.

Labour's

policy includes a commitment to low emissions vehicles, Wi-Fi enabled buses, improved joint and through ticketing schemes, mandatory disability and equality training, and a commitment to introduce a national strategy for local bus services, setting out objectives, targets and funding provisions, including considering concessionary fares for 16-19 year olds.

**Jeremy**

**Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party, said:**

"Labour

will create the freedom for councils to run first class bus services which the public are proud of. The Tory legacy brought rising fares, plummeting passenger numbers and too many areas where pensioners have a bus pass but no bus.

"Labour

wants to see local communities empowered to determine their own priorities and reverse the decline in bus services. Labour will extend franchising powers to all areas that want them and will overturn the ban on new community bus companies, allowing Local Authorities to replicate the successes of the country's best performing operators.

"For

too long the bus industry has put profit before passengers. Labour will change

that.”

**Andy**

**McDonald MP, Labour’s Shadow Transport Secretary, said:**

“Buses are by far the most important mode of public transport, connecting communities, places of education and businesses like no other.

“In supporting local economies, combatting climate change, addressing air quality and tackling social exclusion, the importance of buses cannot be over-stated. Yet funding for buses across England and Wales has been cut by 33 per cent since 2010 and thousands of routes have been downgraded or cut altogether, meaning passengers across the country have to put up with sub-standard services.

“We want to see clean, hi-tech fleets of buses running accessible and reliable services that meet passengers’ needs. For this to happen, we need to give communities the power to reform bus services to make them work for passengers, as well as ensuring the funding and strategy is in place to ensure no communities are left behind.”

Labour’s policy would:

- Create freedom for local authorities to form their own bus companies by removing the Government’s ban.
- Extend the powers to re-regulate local bus services to all areas that want them – not just to combined authorities with an elected mayor.
- Require all new buses to meet the low-emission requirements set out by the Government-sponsored Office for Low Emission Vehicles.
- Require new vehicles to be equipped with Wi-Fi, and install Wi-Fi on existing buses.
- Introduce a national strategy for local bus services, setting out objectives, targets and funding provisions. This would include consideration of a reduced fare scheme for young people aged 16-19.
- Require all bus drivers and staff at bus terminals to complete approved

disability equality and awareness training, including mental and physical disabilities, by a specific date.

- Ensure bus services in England make adjustments for any disabled passenger on the bus including policies for priority wheelchair spaces.

Labour

leader Jeremy Corbyn and shadow transport secretary Andy McDonald are in Tees Valley today (Friday) promoting Labour's bus policy.

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## [News story: UK entrepreneurs are disrupting the business world](#)

Joint list by Maserati and The Sunday Times names 9 companies that have progressed with Innovate UK funding in top 100 game changers.

The [Maserati 100](#) highlights the emerging entrepreneurs who are challenging the established order with their disruptive technologies. Now in its third year, these awards celebrate the positive impact innovative start-ups have on the economy and society as a whole.

Nine businesses that have received funding from Innovate UK featured in the list.

- [Crisp Thinking Group](#) – using Crisp's software, companies are able to moderate and monitor social media to protect their brands. It has offices in Leeds, London and New York. Crisp received funding to prototype their real-time social media management platform
- [Ella's Kitchen](#) – making and selling organic baby food since 2006, the company now employs 70 people in the UK and takes 20% of the market. Global turnover is more than \$100 million. Ella's Kitchen has taken part in 3 knowledge transfer partnerships (KTP) with the University of Reading, to look at its marketing, raw materials and packaging

### [Ella's Kitchen: transforming the organic baby food market](#)

- [Horizon Discovery](#) – a gene-editing biotech company, Horizon Discovery supports the discovery of new medicines, including personalised medicines for treating cancer. It has already acquired a number of US companies to further grow the business. Innovate UK funded collaborative research and development projects to find innovative approaches for the manufacture of high-value, genome-edited cell lines
- [M Squared Lasers](#) – the Glasgow-based company designs and manufactures lasers for use in industry, defence, healthcare and energy. Its revenues

totalled more than £8 million last year. Innovate UK has funded several projects to help M Squared Lasers optimise laser emission intensity, develop high precision, handheld spectrometry and grow the market

Nils Hempler of M Squared Lasers.

- [Metail](#) – offering virtual fitting rooms to allow shoppers to create 3D models of themselves and try on clothes. Evans and House of Holland are among the retailers to have signed up. Metail received Innovate UK funding for feasibility and proof of concept studies, as well as prototype testing. This helped the company to develop computer vision techniques and digitise garments with lower costs and simpler operations
- [Ocado](#) – a pioneering online supermarket with annual sales of £1.3 billion. Ocado was involved in a collaborative, 24-month project to trial a range of vehicles with hydrogen dual-fuel technology, in order to reduce the carbon of its vehicles
- [Swiftkey](#) – predictive keyboard software that's installed in more than 300 million smartphones and tablets. Last year Swiftkey acquired by Microsoft in a deal reported to be worth \$250m. Swiftkey received 2 Innovate UK grants, to test its idea for an app that would transform the way people used keyboards and help prototype it

Swiftkey shown working on a mobile device.

- [The Floop](#) – this tool collects data for motor insurers from a driver's phone or a black box in their vehicle. Floop has more than 70 staff in Sheffield and clients include Direct Line and AIG. Floop was involved in a collaborative funding project to accelerate the development, market readiness and deployment of automated driving systems
- [The Framestore](#) – an innovative special effects firm that has worked on films including Gravity, the 2013 Oscar winner for Best Visual Effects. The Framestore received funding in 2 collaborative projects: to create an extensible, pluggable digital security framework that protects media companies; and the development of a production pipeline process that improves quality, speeds up production and reduces costs

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## [Press release: New £1 million flood competition to protect more communities](#)

A new ground-breaking competition will allow flood defence projects around the country to apply for a share of £1 million to help protect even more homes and businesses, Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom announced today.

This government funded competition is the first of its kind and will be open

to innovative projects that plan to use landscape features such as ponds, banks, meanders, channels, and trees to store, drain or slow flood water.

Natural flood management already forms an important part of the government's flood strategy and funding these new projects builds on £14m already committed to similar schemes across the country.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

I am delighted to offer more support for local communities looking to employ natural flood management measures to better protect their homes and businesses.

We now carefully look at flood risk across an entire catchment area from a river's source to the sea – to make sure we have in place the best tailored mix of natural as well as concrete, engineered defences to better protect communities.

The Environment Secretary announced the new competition in Leicester, where a natural flood management scheme is already successfully in place reconnecting the floodplain with the river.

This scheme has not only reduced the flood risk to 1,200 properties, it has transformed public spaces along the river, with improved seating areas and cycle paths for the local community to enjoy. A total of 100 trees and 7,000 shrubs have been planted and wildlife such as grey heron and little egret are now regularly seen around the area.

The new natural flood management competition will give small-scale natural flood management projects around the country the opportunity to apply for funding, so they too can achieve similar results.

Environment Agency Chair, Emma Howard Boyd, said:

At places such as Leicester, Morpeth, and Medmerry, the Environment Agency has already shown that natural flood management can reduce flood risk alongside traditional flood defences and property resilience.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to natural flood management: it's about using a range of measures, from creating ponds and woody dams to redirecting river channels, that work together to reduce flood risk. This competition is a great way to explore the different ways these approaches can benefit communities and the environment.

Details of the competition and how to apply are available [here](#).

The deadline for competition entries is 19 May 2017 and the successful

projects are expected to be announced by the end of June 2017.

Notes to editors:

- Applications are to be submitted through existing Catchment Partnerships – bodies formed of local people, landowners and statutory bodies that work together to manage whole river catchments.
- Upstream management of flooding is already a central theme in many areas, including the Cumbria and Calderdale Flood Action Plans.
- The Government has already provided £4.1m to natural flood management demonstration projects in Holnicote (Somerset), Pickering (North Yorks) and Upper Derwent (Derbyshire).

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## [We need investment, not cuts, for the Armed Forces](#)

UKIP Defence Spokesman Bill Etheridge has slammed a decision by politicians to force the Army to cut £10bn from the defence budget over the next decade calling it “irresponsible and illogical.”



Mr Etheridge said the decision to make the Army and the Navy “scrap it out” for funding was “bad government” and “all of our Armed Forces should be properly funded.”

“This failed policy of pushing the ‘soft power’ of foreign aid rather than hard power of a properly defended country is an irresponsible and illogical policy which has not worked so far and will continue to fail.

“Only this week there were rumours that our helicopter carrier HMS Ocean was being sold to Brazil: this is part of 3 Commando brigade which are one of our two brigades who can rapidly deploy to theatre. Are we only going to be left with one?

“Instead of hiding behind this bureaucratic shield that the government are meeting the NATO targets of 2% of GDP we need urgent investment in the

military, which the Army's own think tank concluded would be unable to withstand an attack from Russia for longer than an afternoon.

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## EU negotiating guidelines show they have learned nothing from Brexit

The statement put out today by the European Union setting out their guidelines for negotiating with the UK over the next two years is "bound to create more division amongst EU nations", said Paul Nuttall, the UKIP Leader today.



"By wrapping the negotiations in a bureaucratic straitjacket all that they guarantee to do is highlight the already glaring differences of approach amongst the rump 27 nations in the bloc."

"As we near March 2019 and the UK's final days as a member, national politicians in national capitals will realise that the package approved by Brussels will not be in their own specific interests nor that of their citizens.

"Brussels wishes to play hardball with the reciprocal rights of individual citizens. How will Poland, for example, react when 1 million plus Poles live in the UK and only about 30,000 UK citizens live in Poland and their rights are threatened? Those million citizens vote, so do their friends and families. Polish people will expect their own Government to do a deal to protect their own citizens. The EU's rigid approach will be seen as the problem, not the UK.