



Coach Tourism & Transport Council of Ireland

# PRE-BUDGET 2025 SUBMISSION

*Driving Ireland Forward: Strategic Support for the Commercial Bus Industry*

Prepared by the CTTC National Executive in  
consultation with CTTC members nationwide

[www.cttc.ie](http://www.cttc.ie)

*June 2024*

# **Notes**

# Executive Summary

The Coach Tourism & Transport Council (CTTC) is pleased to make this submission to Government in advance of Budget 2025.

The private bus and coach sector is integral to Ireland's transport, tourism, and environmental management systems. This sector operates over 95% of school transport services, the majority of commercial bus services, private bus hires, and significantly contributes to both international and domestic tourism. Its economic and social contributions are substantial, and its strategic importance in connecting Ireland must be recognised and supported by the Government as a major priority in Budget 2025.

Volatile fuel prices and increasing operational costs are severely impacting a sector that has yet to fully recover from the revenue losses caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. To that end it is imperative that the Government introduces an emergency contingency grant for fuel costs, with dedicated funding ringfenced for the private bus and coach sector. Additionally, the Coach Tourism and Transport Council (CTTC) urges the Government to implement a further rebate in excise duty on fuel during the winter months, up until January 2025. The introduction of flexible contracts that account for fuel price variations will help safeguard crucial service provision during periods of economic volatility.

Looking forward, the private bus and coach sector remains committed to supporting Ireland in achieving its national carbon emissions reduction targets. Across the European Union, there will be a new 45% transport emissions reduction target in advance of 2030 (up from 30%). From 2035, this target will increase to 65% and by 2040, there will be a 90% emissions reduction target. To facilitate this ambitious transition and ensure it is equitable and fair, the CTTC recommends introducing a targeted scrappage scheme for commercial bus operators, extending VAT71 relief to all types of bus and coach vehicles in order to decarbonise the national fleet, and offering further incentives for the purchase of alternatively fuelled passenger vehicles.

The CTTC believes that the measures proposed herein will support the sector at a critical juncture amid emerging economic and environmental challenges. It is socially and economically crucial that a robust commercial transport sector withstands current difficulties to continue contributing to an effective and efficient transport system that offers value for money, sustains Ireland's market share in tourism, improves regional connectivity, and provides a valuable school transport service for thousands of students and their families.

The Government's '*Our Rural Future - Rural Development Policy 2021-2025*' clearly recognises the integral role of commercial bus and coach tour operators in the overall transport sector. The CTTC is now proposing the critical support measures outlined in this submission for inclusion in Budget 2025, to ensure the industry can continue to deliver efficient, sustainable transport, support regional connectivity and employment and provide valuable returns to the economy. role of private bus and coach tour operators in the overall transport sector.

# Executive Summary



**Fair Fares for CBO passengers**



**Extend VAT71**



**Alternatively Fuelled Vehicle Purchase Scheme**



**Reconfigure Ireland's transport strategy**



**Investing in EV infrastructure**



**Introduce a Tachograph Retrofit Fund**



**Incentivise investment in accessible vehicles**



**Incentivising talent to join the sector**



**Marketing of Coach Tourism**



**Fit-for-purpose Event Traffic Management**

# Introduction

The Coach Tourism & Transport Council (CTTC) make this submission to Government in advance of Budget 2025.

The CTTC is the largest representative body for private bus and coach operators in Ireland. Our members are mainly family-owned companies. The CTTC acts as a conduit between the sector and Government and other relevant stakeholders and decision-makers. The organisation aims to work in a collaborative way to deliver the most efficient, sustainable transport connectivity in Ireland. The organisation represents members regularly on issues of concern which includes post Covid-19 and Brexit challenges, transport legislation, economic considerations, public transport, school transport and the coach tourism sector. The private bus and coach industry has approximately 1,800 licensed operators in Ireland and is one of the few sectors to sustain employment (supporting 11,500 jobs) and support businesses across rural Ireland that would otherwise have limited employment opportunities. It is estimated that the coach tourism sector alone contributes in the region of €450 million to the economy annually. The entire sector generates more than €620m per annum.

## 75 million

the number of passenger journeys provided by private operators per year across scheduled services, coach tourism, school transport, and private hire

## €80 million

The amount invested per annum in new stock

Contribution of  
**€164m**  
to the Exchequer every year

## 500+

operators own 5 + vehicles

## 95%

Private operators provide in excess of 95% of all buses deployed in the school transport scheme, organised by the Department of Education

The aggregate bus fleet of vehicles is

## 11,000

80% of the Irish bus fleet is owned by private bus operators in Ireland

## 87%

of private operators are based outside of Dublin, providing employment and connectivity to every part of the country

**1/2** of the private fleet is now less than five years old, complying with EU directives on vehicle emissions

## 2 million

coach tourists were carried by operators in 2018. These include overseas and domestic holiday-makers, day trippers, cruise passengers and conference and incentive tourists

# Societal benefits of the industry



Buses and coaches **improve social inclusion**, providing access to education, employment and healthcare to all – including those on low incomes, those who do not drive, the older generation, people with reduced mobility and people living in remote areas



Coaches move people **comfortably and affordably** across long distances



Buses are the **most widely-used form of public transport in the EU**, serving cities as well as suburban and rural areas



With one bus capable of replacing **30 cars** on the road, buses help ease traffic congestion



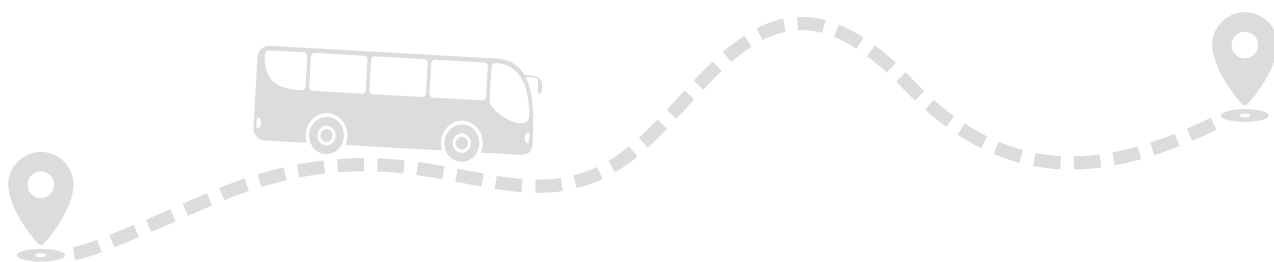
Buses and coaches are vital contributors to tourism with over **2 million passengers** per annum



Buses are a safe transport mode, responsible for **just 2% of road fatalities** in the EU



Buses and coaches have the **lowest carbon footprint per passenger** of any form of motorised transport





# Industry Supports

# FAIR FARES

**We support the government's efforts to make public transport more affordable and encourage a modal shift. However, current fare reduction schemes have not included commercial operators or the hundreds of thousands of customers who rely on them. This exclusion is creating a two-tier public transport system in the state.**

This situation places passengers nationwide at a disadvantage, as they cannot benefit from this cost-of-living measure. While the end-users—the passengers—would benefit from fare reductions, an unintended consequence of this policy is that it directly threatens the survival of every commercial bus operator in the country. We ask that commercial bus operators and their passengers be included in any future fare reduction schemes. This proposal was adopted as party policy at the Fine Gael Ard Fheis. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has attested that such fare reduction schemes have been very successful in attracting passengers to public transport. There was an increase of 24% in public transport usage in 2023. By including commercial operators, we can continue to assist the government in its policy of reducing dependency on private car usage.

The CTTC is calling for fare alignment with commercial operators, which may require a subvention from the NTA to allow commercial operators to run alongside new services without being at a competitive disadvantage. Failure to do so would be counterproductive to the ambitions of Connecting Ireland and would drive many operators away from servicing loss-making routes. Where it is proposed to reduce fares on CBO routes in line with PSO services the NTA needs to provide funding as compensation.

Economist Jim Power was commissioned by the CTTC in January 2024 to examine this issue. In his report, "Addressing Fare Disparities for Commercial Bus Operators," he concludes:

"It is essential that Commercial Bus Operators (CBOs) are treated similarly from a competitiveness perspective. This is not the present situation due to the unequal and unfair application of the 20 per cent fare reduction scheme to customers of NTA Licensed Public Transport Services. This creates an unequal and distorted market environment. If it is not addressed, it will further undermine the sustainability of CBOs, who are already under significant business pressures. Equal fare treatment of CBOs and state operators is essential."

"In 2022, CBOs' non-free travel revenue totaled €139.4 million. This would imply a cost to the Exchequer of at most €27.9 million based on the 2022 outturn," Jim Power states in the report.



This would be a welcome cost-of-living measure for those commercial bus passengers currently omitted from the scheme. We have already demonstrated that we can work with state agencies to implement a verifiable system. Many operators participate in the Young Adult Card (YAC) scheme, following advocacy by the CTTC. Under this scheme, operators can recoup 70% of the fare forgone. However, we need greater certainty from the NTA and the government on this figure to ensure we encourage younger adults to continue using public transport.

Phase two of the NTA pricing strategy will take effect later this year and aims to make fares more equitable and easier to understand. The current fare determination strategy, which bases fare prices primarily on kilometres travelled rather than demand, will have significant negative consequences for commercial scheduled service operators within the coach transport sector in Ireland. This approach fails to account for the varying operational costs and passenger demand fluctuations that commercial operators face. By not considering demand, operators are often forced to charge higher fares on less popular routes to cover costs. This fare structure also overlooks the economic realities of running services in less densely populated or rural areas where demand is inherently lower, but operational costs remain high. Such a system places an unfair financial burden on operators, potentially resulting in service reductions or even route closures, which ultimately undermines the goal of providing comprehensive, equitable and connected public transport options across the country.

Progress has been made regarding Next Generation Ticketing (NGT); the NTA has awarded the contract after a procurement process. The CTTC anticipates that this should streamline ticketing and payments across all transport networks.

An example of subsidies working in another jurisdiction is the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) in the UK. It is in effect a subsidy by the UK Government to support the operation of local commercial bus services. It aims to benefit passengers by;

- Helping operators to keep fares down
- Enabling operators to run services that might otherwise be unprofitable and cancelled
- Promotes greener fuels thus lowering carbon emissions
- There are a number of eligibility criteria for routes to qualify
- Unit paid per litre: 34.57p on diesel, biodiesel, bioethanol, biofuels, reduced amount 32p for unleaded petrol
- Operators receive an 8% increase on this rate if a Smartcard system is installed as this enables easier administration
- Operators of vehicles with a low carbon emissions certificate get an additional 6p per km.
- Operators of zero carbon vehicles get an additional 22p per km.

## CTTC recommendation | Fair Fares

- CTTC asks that commercial bus operators are included in any **future fare reduction schemes**, this creates a level playing field and encourages public transport participation. The cost of including commercial bus operators in any fare reduction scheme pales in comparison to the financial repercussions of a diminished commercial bus network, and the environmental consequences of a mass return to private vehicles among disenfranchised rural commuters. A scheme such as The BSOG in the UK should be considered. This recommendation will help ensure the efficient rollout of Connecting Ireland.
- The National Transport Authority's **Fare Determination Scheme** should take into consideration commercial bus operators (CBOs). Any fare forgone must be covered by the NTA to meet operational needs. The system needs to be index-linked and must increase in accordance with any changes in operational costs and inflation. This approach will ensure that commercial operators can continue to provide essential services without suffering financial losses, thereby maintaining the sustainability and availability of public transport across the country.

## VAT 71

Under current regulations, the provision of passenger transportation services in Ireland is VAT exempt. This means that providers of such services are generally not entitled to claim tax relief on incurred costs. In contrast, Northern Ireland has a 0% VAT rate on transport provision, allowing operators to claim VAT relief on costs, thereby giving them a competitive advantage. The only mechanism for claiming tax relief in Ireland is the VAT71 refund scheme, which is restricted to the purchase of a limited number of tour buses that meet specific criteria for height, length, floor height, and underfloor luggage capacity.

The Department of Finance has confirmed that the statutory instrument outlining the current VAT71 regime places no restriction on the fuel source of a qualifying vehicle, meaning electric and alternatively fuelled vehicles could qualify. However, the same instrument includes qualifying criteria relating to the physical dimensions of the bus. Unfortunately, the dimensional criteria, particularly the minimum floor height, are outdated, resulting in universally accessible low-floor buses and low-floor electric buses being excluded from the VAT71 scheme.

Including these vehicles in the VAT71 relief scheme would provide a clear purchasing incentive for commercial bus operators and stimulate the modernisation and efficiency of the national fleet. Targeted tax relief applied to the purchase of low and zero-carbon vehicles is a widely used, proven mechanism to incentivise such purchases.

The dimensional criteria are not set in stone. In fact, these criteria have been incrementally changed through successive statutory instruments from the 1970s to 2012. For example, the minimum floor height requirement has nearly halved, from 1,500mm in the 1970s to 775mm in 2012. Given that the dimensional criteria have evolved over time, we argue that the Department of Finance should be open to further changes to the minimum floor height to facilitate the qualification of low-floor electric, low, and zero-carbon buses. This simple change, which could be introduced quickly, would align with the historical VAT derogation and support government policies on accessibility and climate action.

## CTTC recommendation | VAT 71

The CTTC asks that the statutory instrument-imposed dimensions are amended so that VAT 71 could apply to Euro VI and lower emission vehicles, thus removing a policy impediment to Government strategy. This should include electric buses, Public Service Vehicles and low-floor electric vehicles and should apply to all coaches involved in transporting people and not just those involved in coach tourism.

# Alternatively Fuelled Vehicle Purchase Grant Scheme

The transition to net-zero vehicles presents a significant challenge to the Irish coach industry, one that the sector can only achieve with government support. To effectively undertake this medium-term task, the Coach Tourism and Transport Council (CTTC) emphasises the need for the government to establish a Coach Transport Sustainability Fund. This fund would assist operators in transitioning to net-zero fuels, ensuring equitable access to public transport.

The CTTC welcomed the Alternatively Fuelled Heavy Duty Vehicle (AFHDV) Purchase Grant Scheme as part of the government's plan to decarbonise the transport sector. However, the high cost of purchasing alternatively fuelled vehicles and the scheme's availability to other sectors mean that this fund will fall short of achieving its full potential.

The CTTC is calling on the government to introduce a dedicated fund to accelerate the wider adoption of greener technology in the public and commercial transport sectors. Currently, private operators are willing to explore alternatives to fossil fuels, but the cost-prohibitive nature of these investments and the lack of infrastructure to support intercity services are significant barriers.

## CTTC recommendation | Alternatively Fuelled Vehicle Purchase Grant Scheme

CTTC requests that the Alternatively Fuelled Heavy Duty Vehicle Purchase Grant Scheme is extended beyond the current €2million, to allow for a dedicated Coach Transport Sustainability Fund geared towards the purchase of low emission coaches. This with an amendment to VAT71 will go a long way to transitioning the national fleet to low emission/electric and Euro VI vehicles.



# Reconfiguring Ireland's transport strategy

## Developing a Bus Rapid Transport System

The CTTC contends that Government must reconfigure our transport strategy for Dublin and other major cities, to encourage commuters to make more sustainable choices in transport, promote a modal shift away from private, single-occupancy vehicles and ensure quality, timely service provision which is not impacted by unnecessary delays. Mobility Hubs encouraging multi-modal transport should play a key role in the future.

### CTTC recommendations | A Bus Rapid Transport System

- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a high-quality bus-based transit system that delivers fast and efficient service that may include dedicated lanes, busways, traffic signal priority, off-board fare collection, elevated platforms and enhanced stations.
- The CTTC recommends that significant additional resources are required in the delivery of transport infrastructure for the creation of a Bus Rapid Transit system in Ireland, namely designated affordable park and ride points, mobility hubs and the introduction of dedicated bus corridors along the arterial routes into our major cities, particularly the M1, M4, M7 and M11 into Dublin.
- In addition, the CTTC recommends enhancing the current network of Quality Bus Corridors along the arterial routes into Dublin and other major cities

## Investment in Ireland's EV Infrastructure

In recent years, Ireland has seen a rapid increase in the number of electric vehicles on Irish roads, actively supported by Government incentives. Thanks to these initiatives, and the increased demands from motorists and businesses, there were around 118,000 registered electric vehicles in Ireland (as of February 2024).

While the Government has published an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025 the rollout of publicly accessible EV charging infrastructure has been patchy to date, thus slowing down the transition to EVs.

The Government's National En-Route EV Charging Network Plan 2023-2030 provides a roadmap for the deployment of EV charging infrastructure across the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and primary and secondary national roads in Ireland. But the rollout has been slow, compounded by delays in providing the necessary connections from the electricity grid. Many other parts of the road network don't yet feature at all in the plans for charging points.

Some local authorities, particularly in Dublin, Limerick and Cork, have published ambitious plans or have taken an active lead in installing EV charging infrastructure, in some cases supported by pilot project funding provided by ZEVI. However, there is too much inconsistency, with many parts of the country being left behind. On a more positive note, in line with both the Climate Action Plan and the National Sustainable Mobility Policy, the Government has announced the expansion of Shared Mobility Hubs which will include shared e-charging facilities

### CTTC recommendations | EV Infrastructure

- Targeted funding (for ESB Networks and/or via CRU) to overcome staffing barriers which are delaying the connection of EV charging infrastructure (including through use of more contractors).
- Funding to accelerate the installation EV charging infrastructure on the national road network, while this has been announced it is imperative that this is rolled out speedily.
- Increased grant funding for local authorities.
- Introduction of a collaborative funding scheme to support installation of depot charging by commercial vehicle and bus operators.

## Tachograph Retrofit Scheme

The retrofit of Version 2 Smart Tachographs as part of the EU Mobility Package I will place a significant financial burden on the country's coach and bus operators. Upgrading such tachographs will cost up to €2,000 per vehicle. This is particularly challenging given the tight compliance timelines, which require retrofits by 31 December 2024 for older vehicles, 18 August 2025 for those with Smart Tachograph Version 1, and 1 July 2026 for certain LCVs. Providing financial assistance will ensure that operators can meet these regulatory requirements without compromising their financial stability, thereby supporting the continued safety and efficiency of Ireland's transport sector. This funding is crucial for maintaining the competitiveness and operational viability of our nation's coach and bus operators, who play a vital role in the transport infrastructure and tourism industry.

### CTTC recommendation | Tachograph Retrofit Scheme

The Coach Tourism & Transport Council of Ireland urges the government to establish a dedicated fund to assist commercial coach and bus operators with the associated costs.



## Recruitment & Retention

An increasing skills shortage, combined with competition from other public transport companies has led to a crisis in recruitment and retention of drivers. This is especially pertinent to the school transport sector which has expanded in recent years. We welcome the recent school transport review and the ambition to have an extra 100,000 passengers using the scheme by 2030. Private operators run 95% of the routes on behalf of Bus Éireann who run the scheme at the behest of the Department of Education. At present, private coach operators only employ fully qualified drivers who have obtained their PSV Driving License. The industry faces significant barriers to continued growth particularly in respect of the age profile of drivers and the excessive costs of licence qualification which is in the region of €2,500.

Many operators are struggling to recruit and retain drivers, particularly in the context of school transport. In an industry survey conducted last year, 97% of Commercial Bus Operators (CBOs) reported recent driver losses, with 42% citing employee retirement as a key factor. Currently, Bus Éireann permits private bus drivers to operate school transport services up to the age of 70, provided they undergo and pass an annual full medical examination.

Many retired drivers are interested in partially returning to work but are deterred by financial barriers. The requirements of school transportation necessitate drivers to work five days a week, both mornings and evenings. Consequently, any retired driver re-entering the workforce would lose at least half of their wages to tax, as their tax-free allowance is fully utilised by their pension.

Some European countries, like Germany, have introduced flexible retirement options such as partial retirement, which allows older workers to gradually transition into retirement while continuing to work reduced hours. This flexibility enables school bus drivers to maintain their employment while enjoying a lighter workload. In Sweden, older workers can reduce their working hours while still receiving a proportionate salary, allowing school bus drivers to continue part-time work, accommodating their preferences and easing into retirement. Similarly, the Netherlands and Denmark offer financial incentives for those willing to postpone their retirement.



## CTTC recommendations | Recruitment & Retention

- To ensure continuity of service in the years ahead, the CTTC recommends that targeted funding and/or schemes be introduced to support driver training programmes. Under such schemes, new recruits could receive fully funded driver training, in exchange for completing a set number of years' service with a private coach company. This would allow young drivers to acquire their full driving qualifications, without incurring the significant financial cost that is currently associated with the PSV Driving License - while also tackling the issue of chronic driver shortages. In addition, these measures would help to reduce the average age of drivers in the industry and ensure a consistent supply of new and skilled recruits.
- The CTTC also recommends partnering with the Education and Training Board (ETB) to expand driver training further.
- Alongside measures to attract new drivers into the industry, the Coach Tourism and Transport Council (CTTC) recommends that the Government charge a lower tax rate of 20% on the earnings of school transport drivers who are retired or semi-retired or explore other schemes that allow workers over 65 years to remain in the workforce. This dispensation would serve as an incentive to retired drivers, helping to address the current shortage in school transport drivers.
- A public campaign to encourage the recruitment and training of bus drivers.



## Insurance

The high cost and poor availability of insurance cover continues to have a negative impact on our members. While we acknowledge the very positive progress made by Government in this area in recent times, it has not yet had the desired impact on liability insurance. While premia have gone up 7-8%, payouts have come down at the same rate, allowing increased profits to the insurance companies.

### CTTC recommendations | Insurance

- We urge the Department of Finance to ensure that sufficient funding and related resources are in place to provide for an acceleration of the work of the Office to Promote Competition in the Insurance Market to promote the urgent entry of more underwriters, currently there are just two, into the Irish liability insurance market.
- More generally, we urge Government to do everything in its power to increase underwriting capacity in the liability market, encourage competition and improve availability of cover. Equally, we ask that Government do nothing from a fiscal policy perspective that would discourage new entrants into the Irish market or diminish risk appetite.

## Family Firms Retirement Relief Cap

Given the significant number of our members and operators across the country are family-owned firms, we urge the Government to reconsider the impending changes that place a cap on retirement relief for Capital Gains Tax (CGT) on assets passed to the next generation valued at over €10 million. This policy could jeopardise the viability of family businesses, forcing the sale of assets or the forfeiture of investments to meet the CGT obligations. Such measures would severely disrupt succession planning and hinder the growth and scaling of family enterprises.

These changes do not fully account for the fact that many family businesses do not have the liquid assets necessary to cover this tax liability without selling parts of their business. This forced liquidation would not only undermine the stability of these businesses but also contradicts the Government's stated aim of not impairing the viability of enterprises.

The Commission on Taxation emphasised that changes to retirement relief should not undermine business viability. Imposing a 33% tax on the value of assets above €10 million does just that, making it nearly impossible to scale businesses and pass them onto the next generation. This contradicts Enterprise Ireland's ambition to make Ireland a leading location for starting and scaling a business.

## CTTC recommendations | Family Firms Retirement Relief

Therefore, we call for an urgent reassessment of this policy to safeguard the future of family-owned businesses, their contribution to the local economy, and their role in achieving Ireland's broader economic objectives.



# Ensuring Irish Coach Tourism is competitive

## Investment in facilities for Coach Tour passengers

There is a need for greater engagement with Local Authorities and the OPW, on the distinction between the requirements of touring coaches and scheduled bus services. These requirements include the provision for coach tour parking – this must be a consideration in the process of Local Authority planning; particularly for drop-offs and collections, at both Dublin and regional airports, as well as tourist attractions. Where possible, provisions should also be made to ensure that every service station on major regional and arterial routes have full servicing facilities. The lack of public toilet facilities in many urban and rural areas is having a negative impact on customer experience. Better infrastructure at Ports, particularly Dun Laoghaire and Dunmore East is needed to encourage the Cruise sector, at present they are very weather dependent.

## CTTC recommendations | Coach Tourism Facilities

- The CTTC calls on the government to ensure there is adequate funding in Budget 2025 for the provision of comfort stops, mobility hubs, parking bays and other services for coach tour passengers.

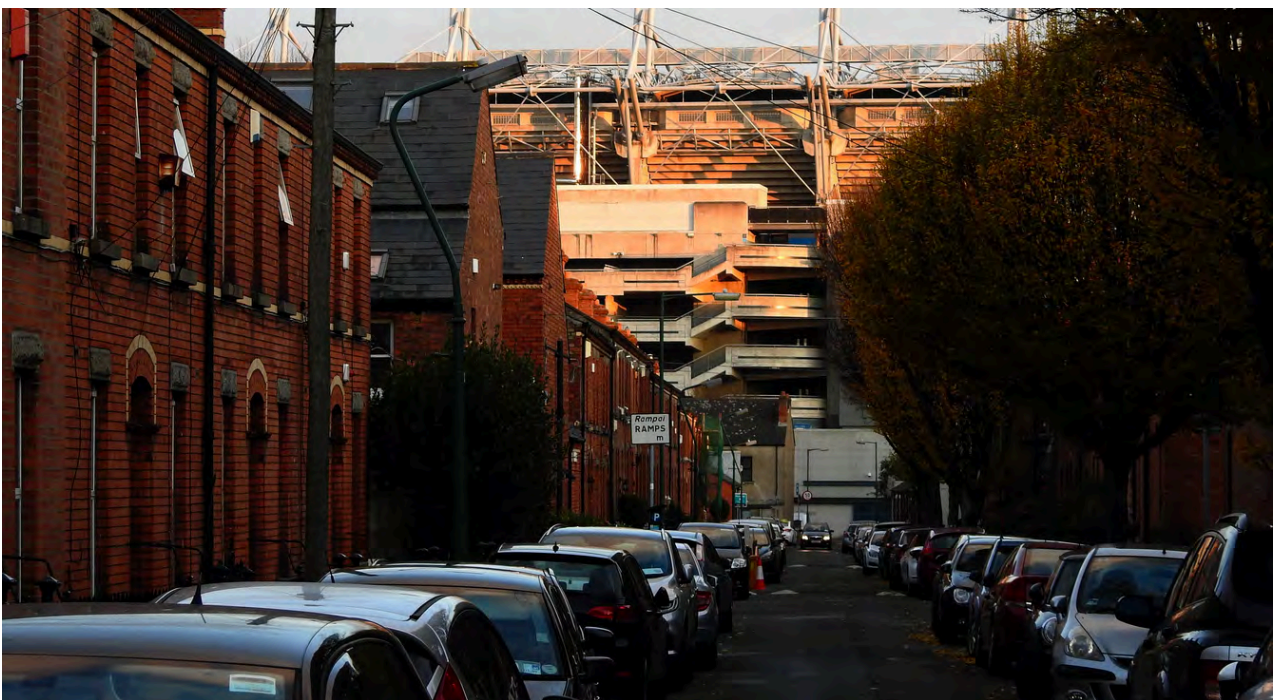


## Event Management

We urge that a comprehensive public transport plan be mandatory for event permits issued to promoters and venues. For example, in Dublin, the removal of designated coach parking from Mountjoy Square, traditionally servicing Croke Park, has resulted in private coaches being forced to park over 3.5 km away - a 45-minute walk. Our passengers — GAA supporters and event attendees from across the regions, many of whom travelling with small children or may have limited capacity — are disproportionately affected by the lack of viable set-down and pick-up options to access Dublin arenas for major games and events. This has already resulted in the cancellation of services to concerts as patrons resort to private cars, exacerbating congestion and emission levels in the capital. We ask all stakeholders to collaborate, as is the situation in Malahide and other venues for events, to ensure the most efficient traffic management plans are put in place to encourage eventgoers to use group transport.

### CTTC recommendations | Event Management

Ensure the issuing of a transport/parking plan is mandatory in order for a licence for large events to be granted. This is the case in most European countries.



## Increasing Coach Tourism Passengers

The CTTC welcomed, additional government investment of €15.5m bringing the total marketing spend by Tourism Ireland to a record €78m.

This was an acknowledgement of the significance of the Irish tourism industry, both domestically and internationally. Members of the CTTC have a deep understanding of the importance of tourism to rural and regional economies because their industry transports an average of 2 million tourists throughout Ireland annually.

In addition to CTTC members' own efforts to position Ireland as a prime location for coach tourism, the CTTC acknowledges Fáilte Ireland's efforts to continue marketing Ireland as an appealing tourist destination.

### CTTC recommendations | Increasing Coach Tourism Passengers

- The CTTC recommends specific marketing of coach tourism as a sustainable, safe and enjoyable way to explore Ireland particularly to our primary markets in the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States. This will help ensure that Ireland maintains its share of a growing market that is expected to be highly competitive in the coming years.
- The Coach Tourism and Transport Council strongly supports lifting the current annual 32 million passenger cap at Dublin Airport. Removing this restriction is vital to accommodate the increasing demand for air travel and to bolster Ireland's tourism sector. Lifting the cap would not only facilitate smoother operations and reduce congestion but also enhance Ireland's attractiveness as a tourist destination, benefiting the coach tourism industry by increasing the flow of visitors requiring transport services. This move aligns with international standards seen in major airports in Europe, such as Heathrow and Schiphol, which operate without such restrictive caps, thereby maximizing their economic and operational efficiency. Government investment in this area will ensure that Ireland remains competitive in the global tourism market and supports the continued growth and sustainability of the transport and tourism sectors. Left unhindered, passenger numbers are forecast to grow by 3.7% each year between next year and 2030, which would result in the numbers potentially reaching 39.6 million.

# Conclusion

In summary, while our sector faces significant challenges, our priority remains to collaborate with all stakeholders towards our collective ambition of a reliable, sustainable, and well-serviced national transport network.

The Coach Tourism and Transport Council of Ireland (CTTC) believes that the measures sought herein would substantially support the sector. A robust private transport sector is socially and economically vital, as it contributes to an effective and sustainable transport system that represents value for money and plays a key role in meeting our carbon emission reduction targets. This is intrinsic to Ireland achieving its climate goals.

The Government's 'Our Rural Future - Rural Development Policy 2021-2025' clearly recognises the crucial role that private bus and coach operators play in the overall transport sector. The CTTC is now asking for the critical support measures outlined above to be delivered in Budget 2025. This will ensure that the industry can continue to provide efficient, sustainable transport, support regional employment, and deliver valuable returns to the Exchequer. By aligning government policies with the needs of the commercial coach and bus sector, we can collectively drive forward towards a greener, more connected Ireland.





The Voice of Ireland's  
Independent Bus & Coach Operators



#BusesMoveIreland  
[www.cttc.ie](http://www.cttc.ie)