



Position statement 3

Branding

This statement sets out shared principles for what a partnership agreement could contain on branding.

Why should this be included in partnership?

The main objective of any operator-PTE partnership agreement will be to deliver growth in bus patronage, both from existing users and through modal shift. Branding is relevant because:

- Branding facilitates communications between the public and the promoting partners.
- Investment in brand awareness reassures the passenger of the partners' commitment and product quality.
- Branding is a very visible, public symbol of the partnership

How will we work together?

Organisations, both commercial and public, are naturally proud and protective of their brand identities and values. The extent to which any operator-PTE partnership requires modification to brands and liveries needs to be carefully weighed against the objective of growing patronage – in particular, partnerships should avoid 'vanity projects' which make no real difference to the customer. A wholesale repainting of buses would incur substantial and unnecessary costs:

- Branding should be agreed on a case by case basis, depending on the nature of the partnership. For example, region-wide partnerships lend themselves to a network approach (eg Network West Midlands in the Centro area); more localised partnerships lend themselves to a route or a town approach.
- Other industries have successfully used kite-mark devices as a badge of quality. There may be some merit in seeking to develop a similar device for services benefiting from an operator-PTE partnership. This could have a local or a national identity.
- Branding is likely to appear on bus exteriors, bus stops and all marketing collateral. Typically, the industry uses vinyl applications to 'badge' bus exteriors. This is easy to do and relatively cheap. However, it is also inflexible, and arguably, does little to promote the image of the bus. Operator-PTE partnerships may provide an opportunity for a more imaginative use of new technologies; for example, fitting buses with LED display screens to carry the brand identity, promote services and local events.

How will it be reflected in the agreement?

- The local branding principle will be included in the agreement and supported by a branding plan that incorporates all aspects of service identity and on & off vehicle branding in order to ensure consistency of approach.