



4<sup>th</sup> May 2018

### **Ring & Ride under threat!**

You may have heard recently that the Government is consulting on the licensing for community transport (Ring & Ride services) after a commercial bus company challenged current UK guidance in the European courts.

As a result, community buses with more than 8 passenger seats like our Ring & Ride minibus will be subject to the same regulations as public buses and coaches run for a profit. As you know, Go North Devon is a non-commercial organisation and we would therefore consider that all our services to our specific client groups are non-commercial.

The proposed changes are likely to affect **Go North Devon** as the financial costs involved in becoming a commercial operator would be prohibitive to our small charitable organisation. We risk losing our one local authority education contract and Devon County Council's grant support for Ring & Ride which will impact on the overall viability of the organisation and the various services we deliver.

Indeed, if the guidance is implemented as it currently stands, it threatens the operations of thousands of not-for-profit organisations who deliver transport, and including those the Department for Transport (Dft) explicitly said would not be affected. Furthermore, these changes will have a major impact on local services which focus on access for frail elderly and disabled persons and the rurally isolated who do not have access to alternative public transport.

Go North Devon services have been described as a "safety net" for those who are isolated and disadvantaged in the community and provide social value to the community.

Chairman of Go North Devon, David Netherway said "we wish to reassure our clients; stakeholders and sponsors that we are doing all that can be done at this stage and have responded formally to the consultation process. Of course we are concerned and have raised these concerns with Peter Heaton Jones MP whilst keeping him updated as the 12 week DfT Consultation on s19 and s22 CT Permits comes to an end on 4<sup>th</sup> May. We hope once the DfT has reviewed all responses to its consultation that it listens to the growing list of concerns of the unintended consequences if they continue to push through the guidance as it stands".

Go North Devon Ltd [www.gonorthdevon.co.uk](http://www.gonorthdevon.co.uk) 01271 328866 or call into the Shopmobility Centre, Albert Lane, Barnstaple EX32 8RL