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June 2009



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MetroLink expansion finally under way p25



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Vision of change
Adonis sets out
his priorities

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Cover photo:
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Portrait photography:
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Transport Times is published monthly and provides news, information, analysis and comment on surface transport.

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Printed by Stones, Unit 10, Acre Estate, Wildmere Road, Banbury, Oxon OX16 3ES

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transporttimes

issue no: 64 June 2009

Star batsman steps up to the crease

The appointment of Andrew Adonis as Secretary of State for Transport is welcome news for our sector. His predecessor, Geoff Hoon, was – to use a cricketing analogy – more of a night watchman to Adonis's lead batsman. Even when Lord Adonis was number two at DfT he was making most of the running on policy, and he hugely impressed civil servants with his intelligence, work rate and leadership.

We transport professionals are often critical that holders of the office of Secretary of State for Transport lack gravitas and influence at Whitehall. This cannot be said about Adonis. While some members of the House of Commons will be suspicious about another member of the House of Lords in the cabinet and the usual accountability questions that go with it, those who are more concerned with getting the best people into the Government will applaud his appointment.

What can we expect from Lord Adonis in the single year he has to make his mark? Don't expect him to take risks by trying to hit the bowling for six. This rules out any big push on road pricing. While he is intellectually persuaded – and this was the case when he was head of Tony Blair's policy unit and asked me to make a presentation on this subject to his team some eight years ago – he knows that Gordon Brown will not want it surfacing as an issue in the run-up to the general election.

While Adonis is widely respected at Whitehall he will have to work on his relationship with Alistair Darling at the Treasury. Darling has been privately contemptuous – wrongly in my view – of Adonis's crusade on high speed rail, disparagingly referring to "boys and their train sets". This has more to do with Darling's stance, when he was at transport, of talking negatively about the role of high speed rail, preparing the way for the Eddington Report, which kicked it into the long grass. Ministers don't take kindly to their



When it comes to roads, expect him to be radical on road safety and to directly take on the Taliban wing of the road lobby

successors carrying out U-turns on their policies!

In his first major speech as secretary of state this week, Lord Adonis prioritised carbon reduction, the provision of extra capacity in a sustainable way, and transport users.

He will not be satisfied if the transport sector fails to pull its weight when it comes to carbon reduction and he will want to set tough challenges for each mode of transport. For railways this will mean a big push for electrification, for cars and buses electric vehicles and hybrids.

We can expect him to make sure that the incentives are in place to persuade the bus industry to accelerate the introduction of low-carbon vehicles. At present this is a costly option with low carbon buses costing around £300,000 compared with around £165,000 for a standard double decker. The Government has invested heavily in research and development for low-carbon technologies for the car industry and a parallel strategy is required for bus

and coach and trucks.

When it comes to roads, expect him to be radical on road safety and to directly take on the Taliban wing of the road lobby, who view any policy which saves lives as an attack on the freedom of motorists. He will continue with the policy of hard shoulder running on motorways but will be concerned about the impact the inevitable cuts in public expenditure will have on the Highways Agency's budget. While he will shy away from road pricing to pay for extra capacity in the short term, he will appreciate the inevitability of this in the longer term.

In his previous ministerial jobs at education and rail he has stood up for the interests of the consumer, even if it means clashing with providers. This brought him into direct conflict with the educational establishment over policies such as city academies. At rail he stood up for passengers even if it meant clashing with ATOC over fares.

Lord Adonis is an avid reader of transport textbooks. He is always looking for new books to read to stimulate ideas. He is a transport enthusiast who frequently takes photographs to highlight changes he wants to see. His current crusade is the complete lack of cycling facilities at rail stations.

Talk at Whitehall suggests Lord Adonis could survive a change of government next year. He has many admirers in the Conservative party and is a friend of Conservative leader David Cameron, and some have tipped him to remain in a Cameron-led administration. Though that would be good for continuity of policy, he is adamant that this is not something he would ever accept.

David Begg

David Begg is publisher of
Transport Times.

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Activist sees a better future

Lord Adonis used a *Transport Times* conference on Wednesday to set out his personal manifesto for transport.

In his first major speech since being appointed secretary of state, he set three priorities: provision of extra capacity on a sustainable basis; shifting to low carbon technologies and practices in each mode of transport; and radically improving the attractiveness of public transport by facilitating door-to-door journeys.

Describing himself as “an activist, not a fatalist striving for a vision of a better future”, he rejected the view that “we just have to grin and bear congestion, that we in Britain are incapable of carrying through long-term infrastructure projects, that you will never get people cycling on British roads, and that our engineers simply aren’t up to French, German or British standards, so we will never run railways as well”.

In education he had similarly come up against attitudes that there were “deep intractable cultural reasons” why England had underperforming state schools – but with a will and the right policies, it was possible to bring about fundamental change.

He was delighted to be making his first major speech as secretary of state at the conference, he said: “*Transport Times* has long been at the forefront of innovative thinking in transport policy.”

Turning to the three priorities, on capacity he endorsed the Ed- dington report’s view of a long-term strategic outlook extending 20 to 30 years ahead, and focusing investment where economic success has concentrated demand – urban areas, inter-urban corridors and international gateways.

He said: “This is precisely our policy: to focus on capacity constraints; and to do so by a combination of sensible short, medium and long term investments.”

He restated his commitment to the infrastructure announcements made in January: to increase motorway capacity not through new motorways but by means of hard shoulder running; and a strategic framework for Heathrow, “recognising that extra airport capacity is crucial to Britain’s prosperity and economic competitiveness over the next 20 years, but also that expansion can only happen in the context of guaranteed limits on its environmental impact”.

But the most far-reaching policy was the decision to establish High Speed 2 to recommend a north-south high speed rail plan. “It has long been clear to me that a global transport policy revolution is taking place as country after country adopts high-speed rail. The question is not whether but when and how Britain follows suit,” he said.

On low-carbon transport his approach would be “a mixture of the idealistic and the hard-headed”. More detail would be set out in a transport carbon reduction strategy next month.

“Technology is part of the answer,” he continued. “Within each mode we need to move as fast as is economically, socially and technologically viable to lower carbon options.”

For road vehicles this meant government intervention on a number of fronts, from developing new vehicle standards through the EU, to supporting R&D and helping UK industry “maximise the opportunities from lower carbon technology.” There was a need to unlock the market “for the new cleaner electric and hybrid technologies that are emerging fast”.

The purchasing power of the public sector would help to demonstrate the potential of new technology. He announced that as part of a £20m scheme, “four British companies – Ashwoods, Allied Vehicles, Smith Electric Vehicles and Modex – will begin supplying low carbon and all-electric vans to selected public sector organisations within months”, with an initial 100 vans later this year.

In rail the low-carbon agenda was being pursued through examination of the case for electrifying the Great Western and Midland main lines.

In aviation and shipping the aim was “to switch to progressively cleaner, greener aircraft and ships to reduce emissions. We expect industry to drive and adopt technological improvements that will increase efficiency and reduce the environmental impact of these sectors.”

Noting that the lowest carbon method of getting from A to B, apart from walking, is cycling, he pledged: “Improved cycling facilities will be one of my key priorities as secretary of state.”

This led to the third priority, facilitating door-to-door journeys. He noted that Leiden in Holland, with a population of 120,000, has



Adonis: Low carbon policies will be “a mixture of the idealistic and the hard-headed”

supervised parking for 4,500 bikes, compared with 1,200 for all London’s rail terminals put together.

He announced plans to radically improve station cycle storage, making available £5m over two years to improve facilities at up to ten major railway stations nationwide.

Station champions Chris Green and Sir Peter Hall will be asked to recommend which stations would benefit most from this funding and the services that would be of most value, such as maintenance facilities.

He endorsed the report of the Door-to-Door Journeys working group, launched at the conference. This points out that best interchange practice can be “something as simple as ensuring station staff are well informed and easily identifiable, and that public announcements are clear”. He cited practice in Brighton, Oxford, Leeds and Hull to make interchange easier as “models of good practice for emulation nationwide”, adding that “the Local Transport Act provides the powers for local

authorities and bus operators to work together to boost bus use and improve interchange, and I am keen that they do so”.

Another critical dimension to improving interchange, he said, was the extension of smart ticketing. “By extending the use of smart ticketing technology, we can transform people’s perception and experience of public transport.” In Japan, Hong Kong and London, smart technology has made transport more attractive.

In conclusion he returned to high speed rail. In Japan in the 1950s, many saw rail as outdated, and only the vision and leadership of a small group of managers and engineers persuaded the government to build the first Shinkansen.

“I believe we are at a similar turning point in British transport policy,” Adonis said. “It is part of a wider low-carbon imperative which embraces the nation at large – but with challenge comes opportunity, and it is an opportunity which I am intent we should seize.”

Hybrids to the fore in bid to reduce bus emissions

by David Fowler

Hybrid drivetrains will become the norm for urban buses in the immediate future, according to Transport for London.

TfL is conducting trials on hybrids at present and has set a target of reducing fuel consumption and hence carbon dioxide emissions by 30%. The format can be applied equally well to any chosen power source, from a diesel engine to a fuel cell, says London Buses operations director Mike Weston.

TfL plans a gradual increase in the number of such buses it orders between now and 2012, when it expects all new buses entering the fleet to be hybrids. By effectively guaranteeing manufacturers a reasonable volume of orders it hopes to help drive down costs to a commercial level.

However some doubt whether this will be enough to persuade bus operators outside London to introduce the more expensive vehicles, and are calling for the Government to introduce more incentives.

Hybrid buses use an electric motor and a battery pack as well as a conventional engine. In a series hybrid the engine acts only as a generator to charge the batteries. The bus is driven by the electric motor. In a parallel hybrid both the engine and electric motor can drive the wheels with the electric motor providing a boost for acceleration. A normal bus operates very inefficiently because it is constantly starting and stopping, and energy used in accelerating is lost when the bus stops. In hybrids, the engine does not have to cope with peaks and troughs of demand and can be run at close to optimum speed, improving fuel consumption and usually allowing a smaller engine to be used. Energy is recovered during braking and helps to charge the batteries.

TfL has 56 hybrids running on operational bus routes in trials involving all the main operators and four manufacturers – Wright, Alexander Dennis, Volvo and Optare. BAE Systems and Allison are providing the hybrid drivetrains. Seven different configurations of hybrid are under test – series and parallel hybrids,



Transport for London has set a target of reducing fuel consumption by 30% in trials of hybrids

using batteries and supercapacitors to store electrical energy. All the results will be pooled between all the participants.

Mr Weston says: "Hybrids are ideal for intense urban stopping and starting cycles. Our view is that hybrid technology is the platform for urban buses in the future."

All the buses have been in service for at least three months, and Mr Weston says they are performing well. "The operators are pleased overall. They have settled down more quickly than expected."

Assuming the trials continue successfully TfL plans to order 300 more hybrids by the end of 2011 and intends to offer operators the option to supply them in future tenders for the renewal of bus route concessions. Beyond 2011 it will order 500 hybrids annually and hopes all new buses will be hybrids from 2012.

Through a combination of using hybrids, training drivers in eco-driving techniques and using visual displays to indicate driving efficiency in the cab, TfL believes that by 2014,

when about a quarter of the fleet will be hybrid, fleet consumption will be down by 11%. This trend will continue as the rest of the fleet is replaced.

The drawback is the cost of hybrids. The capital cost is up to 50% more than a conventional bus at present. This is expected to reduce as volumes increase. Offsetting this is a trade-off over the life of the bus between capital cost and fuel cost. Other factors include batteries – it is expected batteries would need replacing at least once in the life of a bus, whereas supercapacitors should last the life of the vehicle. Maintenance costs are expected to be similar or lower than for a normal bus.

The Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership has called for the government to provide greater incentives for operators to introduce low-carbon buses. It criticised the Department for Transport's announcement in April of a higher rate of bus service operators' grant or fuel duty rebate for low-carbon buses as not going far enough. Operators will get an extra 6p/km subsidy for each kilometre operated

by a low carbon emission bus, defined as one achieving a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared with a Euro 3 diesel bus of the same passenger capacity.

The LCV Partnership said the additional payment "provides only the equivalent BSOG payment that a diesel bus would receive." To incentivise the purchase of low carbon buses, the partnership called for initial support of 12p/km and a DfT-funded demonstration programme "to encourage bus operators outside London to gain experience of the new low carbon technologies".

• TfL is shortly to take delivery of eight hybrid fuel cell vehicles. The first vehicle, using a Wright body, is being tested in California by technology integrator ISE. Trials in the early 2000s successfully demonstrated a fuel cell powered bus could work but it had insufficient range, needing re-fuelling after 10 hours. The new buses will use a smaller fuel cell complemented by batteries and regenerative braking which is expected to solve the problem.

Doubts over Nottingham tram as county withdraws support

The future of the £400m Nottingham Express Transit extension hangs in the balance after Nottingham County Council withdrew support for the project.

The county council went over to Conservative control in May's elections. New leader Councillor Kay Cutts immediately said the county would withdraw its £28m contribution unless the route was changed and costs cut.

Nottingham City Council, which was joint promoter of the scheme with the county, this week said it was determined to press on with the project provided the county will not impede progress. The city is also committed to finding a way of making good the shortfall in funding.

Councillor Jane Urquhart, city council portfolio holder for transport, said: "NET phase two is too crucial to the future prosperity of Nottingham and the region to even contemplate pulling the plug on it. My colleagues and I have been approached by businesses pleading with us to ensure that we continue with the project. I want to be able to give them the reassurance that we will go ahead with our plans."

The council is not prepared to sign a blank cheque for tram routes

The two councils began planning phase two, which runs to Clifton, Beeston and Chilwell to the south and west of the city, in 2002.

The tram route is integral to a number of developments along its route, including the redevelopment of Beeston town centre, proposals for MediPark, a medical technology research cluster adjacent to the Queen's Medical Centre teaching hospital, and the expansion of the NG2 business park. In addition the Highways Agency is consulting on plans to widen the A453 trunk road into Nottingham via Clifton, which it has been able to scale down because the tram is expected to reduce traffic.

The £400m-plus project was granted a Transport and Works Act order awarding planning powers at the end of March, and a decision is awaited on the Nottingham City Council's planned workplace parking levy, which would provide most of the 25% of local funding required for the scheme. The project is due to be considered by the Treasury Project Review Group in July, after which, if approved, it could go out to tender.

Ms Cutts has said the county wants the route diverted from Bees-

ton town centre and Chilwell, where there has been objection to a limited amount of demolition and the fact that the tram will take over land earmarked for a relief road in the 1970s, which is used as a pedestrian space.

Councillor Richard Jackson, the county's cabinet member for transport, added: "A plan with an effective and efficient route and a budget that adds up will get serious consideration. This, however, will not be in the form of the current phases two and three of the tram. Until then, the council is not prepared to sign a blank cheque for tram routes that will have to be paid back by Nottinghamshire taxpayers during a recession."

CLlr Urquhart said: "Nottingham City Council recognises the value of a modern, efficient and clean public transport system. Sadly this view is not shared by the Conservative group at the county council despite all the factors being fully and thoroughly examined at the public inquiry. However, all we ask of them is that they do not impede our progress."

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Consultants get on board High Speed 2

High Speed 2, the company set up by the Department of Transport to develop proposals for a high speed rail line from London to the West Midlands and beyond, has appointed consultants in a number of key areas.

Arup will provide engineering assessment expertise by producing a series of outline designs for line of route and station options. The firm will also provide advice on a range of technical issues and rail specifications which will feed into work on the costs and scope of work involved in constructing a new line.

Booz & Co with Temple Group will undertake environmental appraisal, with Booz working on project appraisal and Temple Group providing specialist environmental and

sustainability knowledge. Their task will be to produce an environmental and planning assessment and to draft a full appraisal of sustainability report.

This will include a framework within which the relative sustainability of different options, and environmental mitigation options, can be assessed.

Atkins had previously been appointed to carry out demand modelling and economic appraisal work.

Three "external challenge" groups of academics and experts have also been established to scrutinise HS2's approach. In its first meeting, the strategic challenge group discussed the project's remit and approach to appraisal, the need to build in sound commercial analysis and reflect the longer-term potential for high speed

rail in the UK.

The analytical challenge group considered the need for a realistic reference case for comparison with the business case for the new line, HS2's approach to demand modelling, and lessons from abroad.

The technical challenge group focused on the technical parameters for a new line and technical and environmental considerations.

HS2 has completed work on identifying a "long list" of options for stations and is now in its second phase, in which it is analysing strategic fit (for example with regional spatial strategies), costs, environmental considerations, wider impacts, and consideration of demand and benefits of the options.

- The Government has taken formal control of London & Continental

Railways and its financial subsidiaries. This lays the ground for the sale of a long-term concession in High Speed 1, to offset public investment in the construction of the line and to open up the high speed line to more competition.

This will allow subsidiaries Eurostar, which operates services on the line, to be separated from CTRL (UK), which acts as client for the operation and maintenance of the line, and LCR Properties, which has responsibility for regenerating the land around HS1 stations.

Transport minister Sadiq Khan said that freeing the companies from their past construction liabilities would allow a lower, more commercial rate for access to the line to be charged, potentially attracting more operators.

Smartcard data to be required for Scottish bus pass claims

A review of the Scottish free bus travel scheme concluded that the scheme is meeting many of its objectives, but called for further work on its long-term financial sustainability.

The review recommended extending the scheme to cover seriously injured veterans of HM Forces. Apart from that it said the current eligibility criteria should be maintained, amid concern over pressures on the budget. And all operators should be required to use smartcard data to justify the number of passengers for which they claim reimbursement.

There are concerns that an ageing population will result in escalation in cost of the scheme, worries that

are shared by the English national concessionary travel scheme. In addition the rate of reimbursement to operators has been a source of controversy because it is not clear how many additional passengers are being carried as a result of the introduction of the concession. Scottish bus companies receive 73.6% of the full adult single fare for each concessionary passenger carried.

The review was overseen by a steering group bringing together representatives from the Scottish Government's transport directorate, from Transport Scotland, and the Confederation of Passenger Transport.

The review concluded that the scheme was contributing to modal

shift and social inclusion, though research had suggested a limited increase compared with previous local schemes. It reaffirmed that operators should be compensated on a no better-no worse off principle but added: "A key issue is the robustness of the reimbursement calculation".

It added that "there are financial and economic factors that could make it difficult to sustain the scheme in its current form in the longer term".

Analysis had not been able "to identify a robust specific reimbursement rate." According to Scottish Government analysis "the direction of change is downward". However, "CPT argued that... if anything, the rate should go up."

The review recommends that all operators not charging a flat fare should be required to move to a common method of claiming reimbursement: this should be a "shadow fare", using smartcard technology. Operators should be required to keep records of reimbursement claims for at least three years.

An independent examination should look into fare discounts, to report in time for setting the reimbursement rate for the 2010/11 financial year and to feed into funding decisions for the next spending review period. Further work should be undertaken "specifically to examine the long-term sustainability of the scheme".

Midland Metro celebrates first decade with plans for extensions and new trams

Midland Metro celebrated its tenth anniversary at the end of last month as plans for extensions stepped up a gear.

Plans for three extensions and for 25 new trams were included in February as priorities in the West Midlands's regional funding allocation submission for the period up to 2018/19. Passenger transport executive Centro plans to submit business cases for two of the extensions later in the year. It is working with Network Rail on a tram/train proposal for the third.

When it opened in the summer of 1999 the Midland Metro brought trams back to the West Midlands after forty years. It now carries over five million passengers annually across 23 stops linking Wolverhampton, West Bromwich, Wednesbury and Birmingham and is one of the most reliable systems in the UK.

The provision of 25 new, longer trams will allow service frequency to be increased to six minute intervals throughout the day (currently it is 6-8 minutes at peak times and 10 minutes at other times). It will allow 40% more passengers to be carried in the peaks and 75% more off-peak.

A £60-70m extension from the cur-

rent terminus at Snow Hill across the city centre to the redeveloped New Street station is expected to increase the number of passengers to 8 million annually. Research by the Centre for Economic and Business Research suggests this could generate £70m annually for the regional economy and create up to 2000 new jobs. A start is planned by 2014.

The £30m Wolverhampton loop would travel around the city centre from the existing terminus at Wolverhampton St George's on a single track, with a spur to the rail station where a new interchange is planned. This is also expected to start by 2014.

Separately, a detailed planning application for the first phase of the £174m interchange scheme, which will ultimately rebuild Wolverhampton's bus station and rail station and provide new commercial buildings and public space, was submitted this month. Neptune Developments is working with Centro and Wolverhampton City Council on the project. The £24m first phase, which was held up by the economic slowdown, will cover the rebuilding of the bus station, with a £13m contribution from the Department for Transport. Work could start in October this year.



Proposals to link Wednesbury, Briarley Hill and Stourbridge are being developed with Network Rail, with the aim of bringing a disused freight line back into use and sharing it between trams and freight trains, reducing construction costs by around 20%. The trams would leave the line at intervals to go on street in Dudley and also to serve the Merry Hill retail and business complex.

A preliminary study shows the

benefit to cost ratio of the scheme is greater than 2:1, rated as 'high' value for money by the DfT. It would benefit the national rail network by providing a freight bypass round central Birmingham, forming part of a south-west to north-east strategic route. It would reduce rail congestion in central Birmingham.

It is expected to get under way after 2014, though it could be built earlier if circumstances allow.

Manchester authorities pool £1.5bn to create investment fund

Greater Manchester has unveiled a £1.5bn transport fund to allow priority schemes to go ahead following the rejection of a congestion charge in its Transport Innovation Fund referendum last December.

The package amounts to a 'plan B' which the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities says will act as a "real multiplier" of DfT funding with the potential to boost growth in the region by 20%.

The plan involves bringing together regional and national funding such as regional funding allocation investment with local resources such as local transport plan funding, the integrated transport authority's levy, revenue from Manchester Metrolink and third party contributions.

It would cover projects that could go ahead quickly, capitalising on work with the DfT on the TIF bid.

Transport projects have been prioritised on the basis of gross value

added per pound of local money spent, to produce a list of 15. All were originally proposed under TIF.

Last month the DfT announced that £195m of government funding would be brought forward to allow an "accelerated package" of the top four schemes to go ahead. These comprise Metrolink extensions from Chorlton to East Didsbury and Droylsden to Ashton-under-Lyme, the most advantageous parts of a cross-city bus package, and park and ride schemes across the region. AGMA believes all these could be completed by 2014.

The £1.5bn is made up of contributions from the ITA levy, £448m in regional funding allocations between now and 2019, a DfT contribution of £165m to the South East Manchester multi-modal study, £147m from local transport plan funding to 2019, and £126m in revenue from Metrolink and Manchester airport. The proposals have been submitted for DfT approval.

Manchester's transport priorities

Metrolink: Chorlton to East Didsbury

Metrolink: Droylsden to Ashton

Cross City Bus Package

Greater Manchester park and ride

Multi modal study scenario

Mottram bypass and Glossop spur

Leigh-Salford-Manchester busway

Metrolink: Rochdale town centre

Ashton northern bypass stage 2

Wigan inner relief road

Metrolink: airport and second city crossing

Funding contributions to stations

Altricham interchange

Bolton interchange

Metrolink: Oldham town centre



Scotland aims for zero road deaths

Trials of intelligent speed adaptation, 20mph speed limits in residential areas and restrictions on newly qualified drivers are among proposals in a new ten-year road safety framework for Scotland.

Transport minister Stewart Stevenson launched targets to reduce the number of serious injuries on Scotland's roads by half and the number of fatalities by 40% over the next decade – as an interim step towards a future with no road deaths in Scotland.

This is the first time Scotland has been able to set its own targets separately from the rest of the UK. The plans concentrate on areas where the Scottish government has competence.

Mr Stevenson challenged Westminster to amend legislation to allow Scotland to go further on issues such as drink-driving – or devolve power to Scotland to take action.

The proposals include a pilot of intelligent speed adaptation devices which prevent vehicles from exceeding the speed limit; action to improve school bus safety; incentives for local authorities to introduce 20mph zones in all residential areas; and an examination of the case for restricting newly qualified drivers in aspects such as the number of passengers they can carry, engine size, speed and the times at which they drive.

Mr Stevenson said: "This framework delivers distinct and challenging targets for Scotland which can

set us on a downward trajectory to achieve a vision of zero road deaths in this country."

He added that the Scottish government wanted to introduce tougher drink-driving limits with the ability to breath-test drivers anytime or anywhere. But Holyrood has no powers to do this, or to bring in tougher restrictions on new drivers, or to require more stringent training and testing of learner drivers. The Westminster government is currently considering its position on these issues. "Where the UK Government will not commit to changes in legislation at GB level, we want to see the powers handed over to the Scottish Government – and we will take action," he said.



Stewart Stevenson: seeking greater powers

Flying start for domestic high speed

The UK's first domestic high speed rail services will start next Monday, 29 June, as Southeastern builds up to a full launch in December.

Keith Ludeman, chairman of Govia, which operates the franchise, said he hoped the new service would open up a new market by attracting Kent commuters out of their cars, reducing carbon emissions.

Lord Adonis, speaking at the launch, said the new trains "will transform the quality of service from the east Kent coast. I want to see a great deal more of high speed rail in this country."

In a demonstration trip for the media last week the Hitachi Class 395 covered the distance between St Pancras International and Ashford non-stop in a few seconds over 30 minutes each way.

The preview service, opening six months ahead of schedule, will run St Pancras to Ebbsfleet at half-hourly intervals through the day, with services from Ashford in the morning peak and back in the evening peak. Journey times will be 17 minutes to Ebbsfleet and 37 to Ashford.

When the full service starts the trains will leave High Speed 1 and continue on normal lines, reaching Gravesend in 22 minutes and the Medway towns in 38. Canterbury and Folkestone will be under an hour away, a saving of over 30 minutes.



Javelin Class 395s will reach Ashford in 37 minutes

Mr Ludeman said the early start would allow Govia to iron out faults and "hit the ground running with a quality service" in December.

Based on detailed modelling during its franchise bid, Govia expects the service to open up new markets among people commuting by car to London, and in particular Docklands, which will be served when Stratford International opens in December. Billboards approaching the Blackwall tunnel will advertise the service.

"A higher income group of people still commute by road," he said. "We're hoping people in Kent, at present put off by a protracted journey, will be persuaded to use the train to come to work. We really want to get people out of cars." Ebbsfleet is expected to become an important park and ride centre. "It will be the largest station car park in the UK, with 7,000 spaces," he said. "We hope people will use it as a railhead."

Govia, a joint venture of Go-Ahead and Keolis, also celebrated retaining the Southern franchise, announced in early June. A short contract period, from September this year to July 2015, is designed to fit in with the re-tendering of Thameslink following its upgrade.

Govia will pay a premium of £534m to the DfT over the life of the contract, rising from £35,500 in the first full year to a peak of £201,000 in

the year to March 2015.

However Mr Ludeman pointed out that this was offset by reduced track access charges to Network Rail, replaced by more direct grant from the DfT to the infrastructure owner. The bid assumes passenger numbers will decline by 2% in the year to June 2010 and will take till June 2012 to return to 2009 levels, but initiatives to offset weak economic conditions will result in revenue continuing to grow by 4% over the next two years.

Govia undertakes to provide an increase of 10% in capacity by December 2013, with an increase from eight to ten-car trains on key routes, and significant extra capacity on peak services into London Victoria, London Bridge, and Brighton.

There will be £76m of investment in stations, and a focus on maintaining punctuality while work on the Thameslink programme goes on. There will be £3m investment in new ticket machines by 2012 and the introduction of an Oyster-style ITSO-certified Smartmedia system by the same date. Oyster pay as you go will also be introduced.

Real-time information systems will be introduced across the fleet by 2010, and regenerative braking will be fitted to all Class 377s by 2010. There will also be improved information systems at station.

Other bidders were Stagecoach, National Express, and Nedrailways.

National Express eases debt terms

National Express has renegotiated terms on part of its £1.2bn debt, but speculation continued that it would be obliged to withdraw from the GNER franchise and hold a £400m rights issue.

The group is aiming to bolster cash flow by £100m this year through a "self-help" programme, and has sold its London bus operations to raise £33m.

But the GNER franchise is struggling with commitments to pay the Government a premium totalling £1.4bn over the life of the franchise.

The premium payable this year is £133m, up from £85m, and rising to £395m by 2015. The franchise bid assumed 10% revenue growth, compared with 0.3% in the first three months of this year.

The group announced that it had negotiated to ease a debt covenant for six months, to allow it to borrow up to 4 times earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation, rather than 3.5, even though it would have met the 3.5 times figure at the end of June.

Analysts believe shareholders are unlikely to back a rights issue while the group retains a loss-making franchise.

Savings of £2.5bn reduce Tube PPP funding gap

Transport for London has cut the funding gap on Metronet's Tube upgrade contracts by £2.5bn. This has been achieved through renegotiating some contracts on train, track and signalling, revising the upgrade programme and improving procurement and operational efficiencies.

Metronet, responsible for upgrading three-quarters of the Tube network under the public-private partnership arrangement, went into administration in October 2007. But the full details of the state of its finances did not start to become apparent until it was transferred to TfL in May 2008.

A report to TfL's board this week said that Metronet's legacy was "one of poor programme management and system integration, ineffective cost control, a lack of forward planning and inefficient fiscal management."

The station upgrade programme in particular was in a state of disarray with cost escalation over the first 7.5 years of the PPP of over £1bn, and only half the planned 55 stations completed.

TfL developed a baseline case that showed that, had Metronet continued, the renewals programme would have cost £16.2bn during the second 7.5-year period of the contract. Savings have brought it back to £13.7bn.

These have been achieved through revising and re-tendering the supply chain contracts, previously let

directly to Metronet shareholders, saving £0.5bn. Development of more robust estimates and a cost containment exercise, including the elimination of duplication between LU and Metronet teams, saved £0.2bn.

Efficiency and productivity savings, including procurement efficiencies, saved £1bn. A revised station upgrade plan was produced to reschedule the work, saving £0.8bn.

Of the individual programmes, the Victoria Line upgrade, one of the most advanced, is now said to be well within the original programme and on budget.

For the sub-surface lines (the shallow lines such as the Circle and Metropolitan) the signalling system is to be completely retendered on the grounds that the proposed plan involved provision of "a plethora of additional signals at great cost" and "a lack of interoperability with other line signalling systems being installed by Tube Lines". There will be savings not only in capital cost but in future maintenance.

There remains a funding gap between what the other PPP contractor Tube Lines says its upgrade programme from 2010-17 will cost and TfL's estimate, with TfL putting the cost at £4.1bn and Tube Lines seeking £7.2bn. But the report says that "although its delivery of the line upgrades is still an area of concern... the Metronet experience should not be expected to be repeated with Tube Lines".

ITS in Daily Life is congress theme

The theme of the 16th ITS World Congress and Exhibition, to be held in Stockholm in September, will be ITS in Daily Life.

It will explore how ITS can improve everyday mobility with strong emphasis on multiple modes, and on ITS solutions for all transport modes.

Technical visits will include a visit to the Security Management Centre where Stockholm Public Transport manages all Stockholm's security resources as well as first-hand experience of e-Adept, an advanced pedestrian navigation system for the visually impaired. There will be a tour of the Traffic Management Centre "Trafik Stockholm, which collects, processes and provides information about the current traffic situation in Stockholm County and

uses powerful ITS technologies to help the process. Participants will also be able to visit the Stockholm Public Transport Authority, to see the different information channels used to present traveller information and how intelligent systems will enhance the possibilities for the traveller to better plan their journey.

There will be over 170 exhibitors, while the Demonstration Theatre in the exhibition hall will offer visitors an opportunity to see how ITS ensures a more efficient, safe and secure future, covering the following areas: secure transport; cooperative systems; safe and sustainable transport solutions; extended e-transactions and daily commuting.

The congress takes place at Stockholm International Fairs from 21-25 September 2009.

Cityspace in Cambridge and Swansea contract awards

Cityspace has been awarded contracts to supply ticket and passenger information systems for two of the UK's leading bus rapid transit schemes, in Cambridge and Swansea.

For Cambridge, Cityspace has developed 17 smartcard enabled ticket machines for stops along the 25km guided busway linking Cambridge with St Ives. They will be the first ITS0-certified off-bus self-service ticket terminals in the UK.

The machines are said to combine the ability to accept cash and non-cash payments with Oyster-like swipe technology.

For the Swansea Metro, the firm will supply a network of eight Smart Screens and two Smart Panels in phase one, with a possible 23 further large screens being considered as part of a £10.4m bus station redevelopment.

Simon Rees-Jones, Swansea assistant engineer for capital schemes, said: "Real-time information is the glue which will make the BRT service compelling to passengers."

The system, with a high propor-

tion of dedicated busways and traffic segregation, will have its official launch in September.

Meanwhile, First started running the first of a fleet of FTR vehicles for Swansea from the beginning of June. The decision is part of a steady build-up of the new service to allow a technical bedding-in period, gearing up to full capacity by the end of the summer.

The FTR will run alongside regular service buses as First monitors its vehicles on the new road layout in Swansea, which includes the mile-long Landore express busway, running parallel to the railway line entering Swansea (*TT*, November 2008).

First, along with the council, will use technical information gathered to fine tune its services before gradually introducing the nine-strong fleet.

The infrastructure works for Swansea metro cost an estimated £10m, funded through a Welsh Assembly Government transport grant, while FirstCymru has spent £4m on 10 FTR vehicles and upgrading its Swansea HQ.



FirstCymru has introduced FTR buses in preparation for the opening of Swansea Metro



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Adonis's next task: forge consensus on road pricing

Electoral unpopularity has scared politicians off charging – but there is no palatable solution to congestion. Instead the government must find a way of allaying voters' suspicion

A few days before he stood down as transport secretary, Geoff Hoon said that he was looking for “a different way” to tackle Britain's congestion problems. Charging motorists for the use of scarce road space was not practical, he claimed. “I think we are still a long way short of having road pricing... I just don't think the debate is mature enough or the technology is mature enough to start this.”

As one of a long line of second-rate transport secretaries on their way out of office, Mr Hoon should not be criticised for failing to stick his neck out. Since the Edinburgh and Manchester referendum results and the Downing Street anti-road-pricing petition signed by 1.7 million voters, advocacy of charging is politically toxic. Politicians of all parties are scared of even discussing the issue with an election less than a year away for fear that they will be misrepresented.

Yet it is depressing that such a vital policy debate remains so mired in confusion and ignorance. One reason why there is such a gulf between the views of academic transport experts, who almost without exception are in favour of charging, and members of the public, is a failure of political leadership. The normal process, by which politicians filter the views of experts and articulate them in a way which is acceptable to voters, has just not happened.

One of the most difficult issues facing the new transport secretary Lord Adonis is to restart this crucial debate. He is well equipped for the task, as he has shown in his skilful creation of a consensus behind the need for a high-speed rail network. Pulling off the same trick on road pricing with an election approaching is admittedly more difficult, but it is not impossible.

Both the Conservative and Liberal-Democrat parties are in favour, at least in principle, of charging for

scarce road space. Ken Livingstone, who was elected for two terms as London's mayor, showed not only that charging can be politically successful but also that it can work in practice in one of the most complicated cities in the developed world.

Until recently, drivers have tended not to blame politicians for congestion. They have accepted it as a fact of life, comforted by the fact that there is, at least, equality of misery. They have preferred to queue rather than pay. But how long will this continue?

Even in recession, peak-hour traffic conditions in many of Britain's urban

It is depressing that such a vital policy debate remains so mired in confusion and ignorance

areas and on many of its motorways are near paralysis. When growth resumes, congestion will get worse. Politicians who prattle about “other ways” of tackling congestion will become more and more exposed, because there is no painless solution.

Building more motorways, regulating speeds, controlling motorway access point, and enforcing tight parking restrictions will provide, at best, a very short breathing period. The long-term solution has to be traffic restraint, and that is best achieved by road pricing.

Politicians of all parties privately accept this, but achieving a consensus on the way forward will not be easy. The transport select committee, which could have provided such a forum, has been consistently disappointing.

The Commission for Integrated Transport, and motoring organisations such as the RAC, have pub-

lished useful research. But the majority of voters remain suspicious, if not hostile. Much more effort needs to go into advancing the case for road pricing.

One counter-intuitive point which is barely appreciated is that you don't have to exercise much restraint to achieve a dramatic lessening in congestion. Taking two cars out of 20 off a busy road can make the difference between paralysis and free-flowing traffic.

Nor have the revenue benefits of charging been adequately stressed. In the years ahead, when public finances will be squeezed, charging revenue could provide a crucial source of infrastructure funding, not just for new roads but also for the development of high-speed rail.

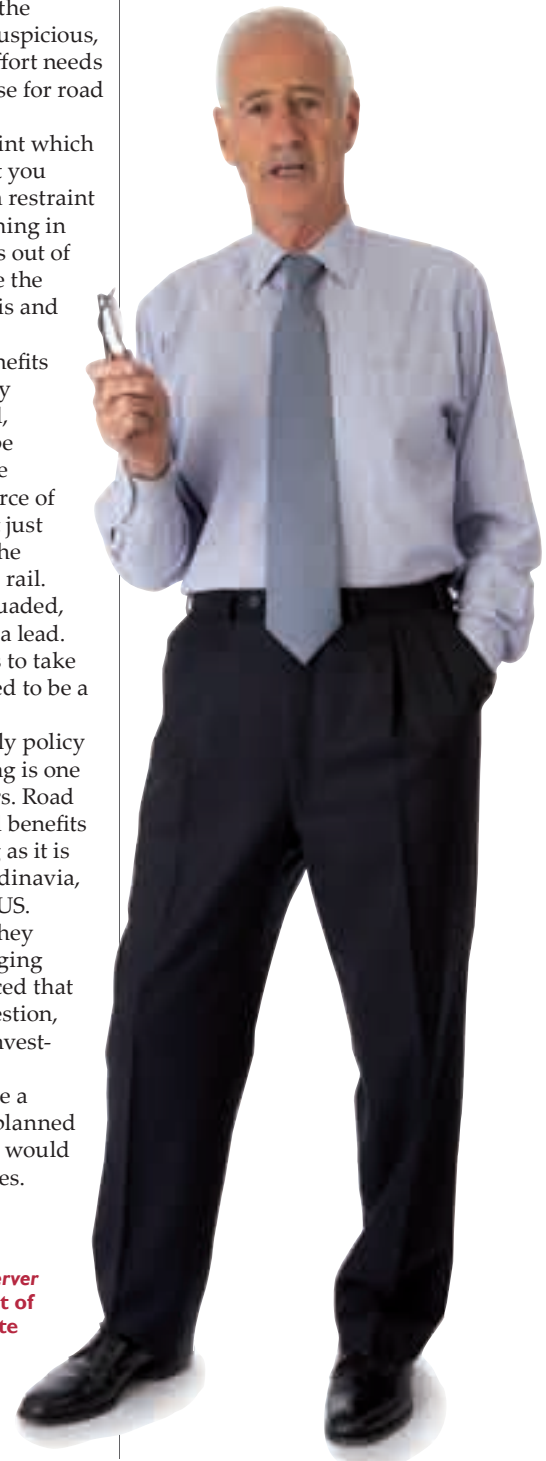
If the public is to be persuaded, the Government must take a lead. Relying on local authorities to take the political risks has proved to be a dead end.

In the short term, the only policy likely to get popular backing is one that directly benefits drivers. Road pricing based on additional benefits to motorists – value pricing as it is called – works well in Scandinavia, Canada, Australia and the US.

Voters have shown that they are willing to support charging schemes if they are convinced that the result will be less congestion, improved roads and new investment in public transport.

Lord Adonis should make a start by declaring that the planned £10bn widening of the M25 would be the first in line for charges.

Adam Raphael, a former executive editor of *The Observer* and transport correspondent of *The Economist*, is the associate editor of *Transport Times*. He is a former presenter of BBC's *Newsnight* and an award-winning investigative journalist.



Is this what to expect from a Tory government?

As London mayor Boris Johnson has been responsible for a disparate set of policies that don't bode well for transport if the Conservatives win the General Election



I would like to take Boris Johnson seriously. I would like to think that behind the buffoonery and the TV shots of him falling into swamps there was a coherent set of thoughts that would gradually improve the transport situation for Londoners.

But after more than a year of the Boris show, it is really impossible to discern anything like a coherent narrative. Instead there are a bunch of disparate policies which transport commissioner Peter Hendy embarrasses himself by trying to justify.

So we have had the scrapping of the Western extension of the congestion charge scheme, the abandonment of a host of major light rail projects, the rejection of the part-pedestrianisation plans for Parliament Square (which the Tamils seem to have brought about through their demonstrations anyway) and the ending of work on the London Cycle Network.

Boris also rather came unstuck in the recent Tube strike, highlighting his naivety. Pressed on why he had not begun talks with the RMT over a no-strike deal, a manifesto commitment, he said he would not talk to a union while they were in dispute. And guess what, the notoriously militant RMT has been in dispute with some bit or other of TfL ever since he was elected.

But neither has he talked to ASLEF, which is not in dispute. This is playground politics. It is just an excuse for not reaching a no-strike deal, which was never deliverable anyway. What's in it for the unions, after all?

Sure, there have been a few good initiatives, such as the development of the cycle hire scheme in central London and the expanded target for removing guardrails on London's roads, a particularly infuriating restriction for pedestrians as part of Boris's commitment to reduce clutter. But even here there are issues.

The cycle hire scheme promises to be extremely expensive, and without concomitant measures to improve conditions for cyclists in central London it may be an expensive flop. Allowing fast motorcycles into bus lanes is just the sort of thing cyclists do not want. Just because the number of cyclists in London has increased greatly in recent years does not mean there are a host more ready to jump on their bikes. Indeed, the opposite may be the case.

As for guardrails, there has been little action so far because the highway engineers are worried about risk assessments. Steve Norris, now a TfL board member, has pressed for an overall assessment to cover

London has no shortage of transport problems and bendy buses are nowhere near the top of the list

all eventualities, but the issue may get bogged down in technicalities and legalities. (As an aside, I have been writing to TfL to remove some frankly dangerous bits of guardrail near where I live in Holloway, which pose a danger to motorists as well as cyclists and pedestrians, for two years with no result.)

However, it is the bendy bus fiasco that really shows up Boris as little more than a standard-issue Tory playing narrow political games. The replacement of the first three bendy bus routes – two routes linking London stations, the 507 and the 521, and the 38 which serves Hackney from Victoria – is under way. But there really is no coherent case for this policy. Over the past few months, I have had various

conversations with senior TfL and London Tory figures, and none have managed to provide any proper evidence for a change that is set to be expensive as well as adding to congestion and bus timings.

They mention fare evasion (unproven and could be dealt with by increasing number of inspectors); danger to cyclists (no accident statistics); unpopularity (not backed up by any balanced evidence); and their inflexibility (sure, on a few narrow streets they are not a good idea but that would be best dealt with by route changes).

I am no great fan of bendy buses which are not objects of great beauty. But, my god, they do their job efficiently. I travel frequently on the 29 up and down Camden Road and they operate far faster, with much greater loadings, than the old double-deckers that served the route. On London's major arteries, they are an enormous boon and there is no evidence that they are unpopular. There is no doubt, however, that scrapping them will make my local bus journey slower.

I suppose it is the attention given to the bendy bus issue which irritates me most. London has no shortage of transport problems and bendy buses are nowhere near the top of the list. The issue highlights the fact that Boris has no clear idea of where he is going.

The Johnson victory in the mayoral election was supposed to give some pointers to what we might expect from a Tory transport secretary if the party won the next election. Unfortunately, if what has happened in London so far is a pointer, then our expectations must remain rather modest.

Christian Wolmar is a writer and broadcaster who writes a regular column for *Rail* magazine. His latest book, *Fire and Steam: A New History of The Railways in Britain*, is published by Atlantic Books, £19.99 (now out in paperback).

Regional partnerships show the way through recession

Collaborative working, joint procurement and sharing best practice will be needed to make efficiency savings and protect councils' transport functions in the face of public sector spending cuts

As the recession continues to take hold, many local authorities will be bracing themselves for the expected crackdown on public sector spending in the next Comprehensive Spending Review commencing in 2011. This is particularly worrying when we will still be charged with facilitating the national growth agenda and stimulating economic regeneration.

The widely held mantra of "infrastructure first" before growth is challenging at the best of times, but in the current economic climate appears an almost impossible aim. Many councils are preparing for major staff cuts over the coming years that could see a haemorrhaging of skills and capacity in the transport sector that will take years to reverse. The irony is that this is all happening at a time when local authorities are being pressed to take on additional powers and duties, and the need for investment in infrastructure and construction is greater than ever.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies is predicting 2.3% spending cuts in real terms to individual government departments in the wake of the recent Budget announcements. It is reasonable to assume that demand-led services such as health and education will escape the worst of the burden, meaning that highways and transport could take the brunt of the cuts.

Investment between 2011/12 and 2013/14 is estimated to fall by 17.3%, the first net negative investment since the 1990s – and more than three times as severe. While local authorities have managed to store away significant reserves in the past to help them through such difficult periods, the coffers are running dry: last year £1.2bn was taken out of reserves, the first net reduction for four years.

A recent survey of local government revealed that 56% of respondents expected to have at least 10% fewer staff working for them by 2014 (7,000 public sector jobs have already

been lost in the last six months). For a sector that employs around 1.8 million people in England alone the impact of this would be massive.

At the same time 70% of local government employees believe their workload has increased over the last 12 months. It is no wonder that council structures are being rethought and opportunities for mitigating the impact of the cuts through collaborative working and sharing of services are being heightened.

A year has passed since the nine regional improvement and efficiency partnerships (RIEPs) were established. By encouraging authorities to work together to make more effective

The nine regional improvement and efficiency partnerships have reported savings of the order of £100m for 2008/09

use of their collective buying power RIEPs have reported savings of the order of £100m for 2008/09.

A good example of collaborative working supported by RIEPs in the transport sector is the Midlands Highway Alliance. The alliance is focused on improving efficiency in the five key areas of professional services, commodities, term maintenance, medium-sized projects and major projects. Through joint procurement and sharing best practice, £11m savings are forecast. Eleven highway authorities, including the Highways Agency, are members of the alliance and more could join.

Initiatives such as this will need to become more mainstream if the sector is to have any chance of providing a meaningful service post-2011.

It would be unwise to think that the "demand" for growth has disap-

peared as a result of the recession – we are just experiencing a significant glitch in "supply". In Northamptonshire alone, our housing completion rates would need to increase by more than 30% in order to meet our set targets – this could rise to almost 60% as the downturn continues and the time remaining to deliver decreases. Meanwhile, the county's population continues to increase. Development gain is diminishing, and along with it investment in upfront infrastructure.

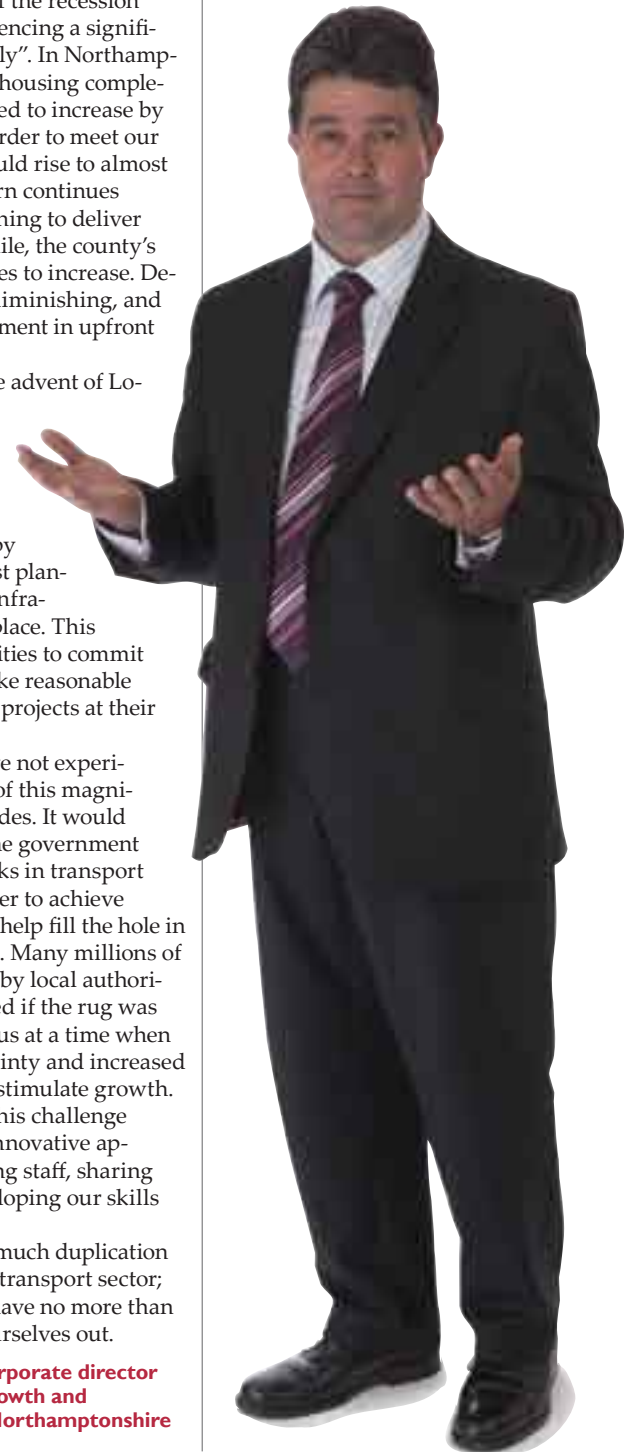
In many ways the advent of Local Transport Plans and the Regional Funding Allocation mechanism has helped to deal with such glitches by ensuring that robust planning for transport infrastructure is put in place. This has allowed authorities to commit expenditure and take reasonable risks in developing projects at their own expense.

However, we have not experienced a downturn of this magnitude for many decades. It would be misguided for the government to introduce cutbacks in transport programmes in order to achieve short-term gains to help fill the hole in the national budget. Many millions of pounds committed by local authorities would be wasted if the rug was pulled from under us at a time when we need more certainty and increased investment to help stimulate growth.

We must rise to this challenge through new and innovative approaches to retaining staff, sharing resources and developing our skills base.

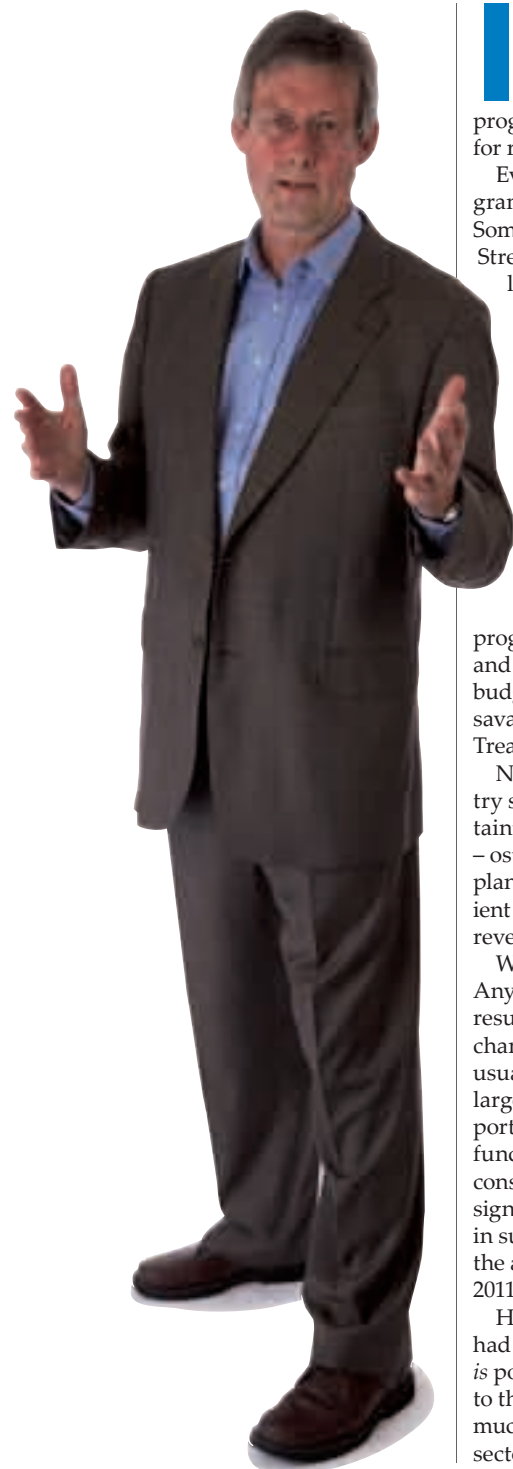
There is still too much duplication of effort within the transport sector; it appears that we have no more than two years to sort ourselves out.

Tony Ciaburro is corporate director for environment, growth and commissioning at Northamptonshire County Council.



Beware: the Treasury axe is about to fall

A lack of conviction about the benefits of transport projects to the wider economy makes transport especially vulnerable when budget cuts are sought



In Britain, the fiscal stimulus programme as it applies to transport appears to amount to the retention of the railway's HLOS programme for 2009-14. The rest is up for review.

Even the five-year HLOS programme is not exactly watertight. Some projects (like Birmingham New Street station, Reading and Thameslink) are itemised as specific deliverables. But other measures, such as the East Coast Main Line upgrade, are not. It would seem that only those works needed for Thameslink (Hitchin flyover, extra platform at Peterborough) are in effect committed.

The East Coast probably suffers from an aversion syndrome triggered by the costs of West Coast route modernisation. But it will be to the roads programme, highway maintenance and the local and regional transport budgets that the axe will swing most savagely to offer savings to HM Treasury.

Now you know why all the industry sages hankered after the certainty of five-year budget settlements – ostensibly to enable proper resource planning, but also to offer a resilient flak jacket at times of economic reverse.

What will survive this process? Anything that produces tangible results at minimal cost. To have a chance of sneaking through, all the usual requirements apply, just writ large. Total wider community support, preferably with some external funding, for a start. Projects with consents and all the preliminary design work complete also tend to win in such circumstances. But be quick: the axe falls soon, to be ready for the 2011 Budget.

How different it could all be if we had some greater conviction that it is possible to make a real difference to the wider objectives that matter so much to decisions in the transport sector. Then the Treasury would

have to listen to arguments about the importance of reliable and efficient transport to our weakened economy. Perhaps we should invite Sir Rod Edgington back over for a brief reprise.

How different, if, for example, we were able to show what could be done with public transport in areas of high demand other than those into city centres. We're talking suburbia here, the great dissolute sprawl that seems to owe no allegiance to any given local centre. The veritable product of the motorised lifestyle, why would it want a centre as such, unless there was sufficient parking?

There is a rather tiresome set of views around this type of area, which basically says that public transport can only work for city centres, and everywhere else we should be realistic and recognise that the costs of putting up alternatives to the private car are simply too high.

One wouldn't mind so much if there was any coherent thought given to the interface between the two apparently parallel (well, at least concentric) universes this creates. But there never has been (until Ebbsfleet) a park and ride facility on the M25 and never a sense that this type of strategic interface is needed.

These days, we can think of course

in terms of ride-share and car clubs; bus, cycle parking and hire and taxi – all kinds of modal interfaces worth considering, not just park-and-ride, car to rail: in effect the creation of intelligent travel hubs.

But in any event we can't give up on areas of high car use/high demand levels if we want to stand a chance of reaching the reduction in carbon levels now contemplated. And not so far away, others are prepared to have a go.

The diagram below shows the set of schemes now being developed for the Greater Paris area: a set of measures designed to address the high volumes of travel to places other than the centre of Paris. A British equivalent list would look rather sad in comparison. Perhaps the Croyley Link would make an appearance.

But there is no systematic attempt to make good the deficiency in the public transport network between the peripheral centres of the wider south-east.

And if it's not visible around the capital, you can bet it's non-existent around our other great conurbations.

Jim Steer is a director of Steer Davies Gleave and was responsible for strategic planning at the erstwhile Strategic Rail Authority.



Home Office plans give cowboy clampers free rein

A new licensing system will not address the problem that drivers can face huge fines for parking infringements on private land, with little right of appeal

You do not have to be a member of the Association of British Drivers to realise that millions of motorists feel they get a very raw deal from the Government.

Having won over the rail industry with his obvious enthusiasm for trains, Lord Adonis, our new transport secretary, is going to have to work hard to convince drivers that he cares about the mode used for 92% of travel.

Of Labour's seven transport secretaries since 2000, Adonis is the least likely to dream of completing a lap of *Top Gear's* track. For all Geoff Hoon's boasts of coming from a railway family, he was actually a bit of a petrolhead with a passion for classic sports cars.

Adonis has a Vauxhall Vectra which is so old that it qualifies for the Government's scrappage scheme. He considered applying but realised he did so few miles that the carbon cost of building a new car would outweigh the benefits of crushing a rarely-used gas guzzler.

Adonis is unlikely to feel much natural sympathy with car-addicted families who see all motoring taxes and charges as a threat to their freedom of mobility.

The Government may have tucked road pricing away in the "too difficult" box but the compelling logic of the pay-as-you-drive mechanism will defeat all attempts to bury it. As electric cars become more popular and fuel duty revenue starts to dwindle, ministers will be forced to consider new ways of raising money for public services.

Despite the 1.7 million-signature petition against road pricing, I believe a majority of drivers could be persuaded to support it if they felt they were getting a fairer deal overall.

That doesn't have to mean making motoring cheaper. But it does mean addressing some of the issues which make drivers feel victimised and

suspicious of politicians who fail to protect them.

High on this list of grievances is the appalling way thousands of drivers are treated each year by clamping companies which operate on private land.

The clampers' victims are not only held guilty until they can prove their innocence but face huge obstacles to gaining even a belated fair hearing.

Motorists who breach poorly advertised parking rules are regularly fined over £500, more than some careless drivers pay for killing people.

Parking enforcement on the public highway is governed by strict limits on fines and the right to appeal whereas on private land it is a free-for-all

The Government is proposing to tinker with legislation governing the parking industry but is failing to address the key problems. The attitude of both the Department for Transport and Home Office appears to be that parking disputes are civil matters and best left to drivers and clampers to fight out among themselves.

In the minds of many drivers, this lack of interest in the injustices they suffer stems from a prejudice against cars. They believe that ministers consider them to be fair game and to have surrendered their rights simply because they choose to travel by car.

Why else would any government tolerate a situation in which parking enforcement on the public highway is governed by strict limits on fines and the right to appeal to an independent adjudicator, whereas on private land it is a free-for-all for

cowboy clampers who act as their own appeals body?

After being approached by several *Times* readers, I struggled for weeks to get some straight answers from the British Parking Association, the trade body for clampers.

Even when presented with clear evidence of breaches of its code of conduct, it defended its rogue members rather than ensuring justice for their victims.

And yet the Home Office is consulting on a new licensing system for clampers which would hugely strengthen the BPA's monopoly. Any company wanting to clamp would have to become a member of the BPA.

Under the guise of protecting drivers, the Government is planning to enshrine a fundamentally flawed system of self-regulation.

Drivers do not have the right to park where they like but should have the right of appeal to an independent body if they feel they have been treated unfairly by a parking company.

The BPA recognised months ago that the industry's highly profitable system of self-regulation could be threatened by the Home Office consultation and it embarked on a clever policy of adding a veneer of legitimacy to its members' shady activities. It duped the RAC Foundation and IAM Motoring Trust into lending their names to its effort to protect its monopoly. Judging by the Home Office's dismissive response to my queries, it appears the BPA's tactics are working.

No wonder so few drivers trust the Government to administer road pricing fairly, when it will not even protect them from extortion by cowboy clampers.



Ben Webster is transport correspondent of *The Times*.

Integrated journeys are the key to attracting passengers

The bus and rail industry has come together to propose how to make travelling by public transport a seamless experience from door to door, says **Giles Fearnley**



Giles Fearnley : "All the principal operators have signed up to further integration"

Over the last 15 years Britain's bus and rail operators (often in partnership with local authorities and passenger transport executives) have introduced a considerable number of initiatives to improve journeys for passengers using more than one mode of public transport.

Integration of journey information, ticketing and interchange facilities is now better than ever.

In the 1990s the emphasis was on smaller-scale, local or regional schemes; this quickly developed into national schemes such as Traveline and Plusbus ticketing. These were important integration initiatives that tried to bridge the gap that had existed between rail and bus services.

Part of this process was also learning about passengers' expectations and gaining an understanding of what was successful. More recently, some significant integration programmes have been introduced (for example, better bus maps and information on the National Rail website) and there is a real sense within the industry that closer integration has become part of our operating culture.

Unfortunately, the myth that there is very little integration between bus and rail services in Britain (compared with Europe) is still widely promoted by the popular press and some politicians. And sadly, perception is reality in many people's eyes.

Against this background, recent secretaries of state for transport (Ruth Kelly and Geoff Hoon) have both met with the chief executives of the leading bus and rail operating groups in Britain and their respective trade associations ATOC and CPT. The gauntlet was thrown down for us to show what as an industry we have done to improve passengers' door-to-door journey experience and what we plan to do in the future.

Lord Adonis is keen to see public transport services work together better for the benefit of passengers and to achieve modal shift from car.

As chairman of Journey Solutions, the bus and rail industries' integration partnership, I have had direct involvement in the development of Plusbus over ten years. In the early days getting Plusbus established was difficult – outside London and the metropolitan areas, we just didn't have a history of integrated ticketing in Britain.

But now that has changed. 2007 was a real turning point: we gained nationwide coverage, ticket sales increased 100% year-on-year and we won a European award.

This month we reached another

It is often the smaller, practical initiatives that make a real and more immediate difference to the quality of most customers' journey experience

significant milestone. For the first time passengers can buy Plusbus tickets along with their train tickets online, through a number of websites. Britain is the first country in Europe to offer online purchase of tickets for train and bus travel pretty much anywhere across the country.

Our second big announcement is the publication of our *Door-to-door by public transport* report. What is significant about this isn't so much that we are championing lots of existing integration good practice, but that all principal bus and rail operators have worked together on this and have signed up to implement a range of further integration initiatives. This partnership between modes, between operating groups and between the two main trade associations is going to be the key to success here.

Our report makes recommenda-

tions to implement quickly a number of cost-effective improvements, such as better provision of bus information at rail stations, better briefing of station staff about how to assist customers with their onward travel needs and the development of guidance for train companies in preparing station signage projects. There is also further promotion of PLUSBUS at the point of sale as well as more retailing by self-service vending machines (to complement the online initiative). It also outlines a dozen or so longer-term ideas.

There are people out there who will say that what we propose to achieve is not groundbreaking enough. To those critics I would say this. While grandiose investments in new infrastructure or technology might make good news headlines, the individual passenger's journey experience is often that they don't live up to the hype.

It is often the smaller, practical initiatives that make a real and more immediate difference to the quality of most customers' everyday journey experience, and will make them choose public transport again and again. It is delivering these practical improvements that our energies are now focused upon.

The proposed new, more senior level Journey Solutions Partnership will build on the excellent work already achieved and will over the next few years make a real and lasting improvement to the way public transport in this country is integrated.

Opportunities to gain new customers for public transport are real. We need to prove to passengers that making a door-to-door journey using bus and rail services is convenient, value-for-money and overall a pleasant experience.

And that is our real challenge, to best promote the great services that we provide.

Giles Fearnley is Chairman of the Confederation of Passenger Transport, Journey Solutions and the Door-to-Door Journeys Working Group.

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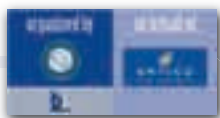
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A matter of time

Having observed first hand high speed railways around the world, and with support for high speed across the political spectrum, **Andrew Adonis** says the question is when, not whether, the UK follows suit

My instinctive view as a historian is that high speed rail could be a revolutionary change for jobs, for growth, for industrial policy and for innovation. Above all, it would help overcome the north-south divide, one of our most debilitating legacies.

But instinct only gets you so far in multi-billion pound investment decisions. As the minister responsible for rail, I decided as soon as I was appointed to test my prejudices with a dose of facts. As President Obama said recently: "There are those who say high-speed rail is a fantasy – but its success around the world says otherwise."

That is why I decided to go and see for myself with visits to some of the leading countries where high speed rail is being developed.

Japan is the pioneer. It took only five years to build the line between Tokyo and Osaka, such was the prowess of the Japanese engineers who undertook it. It was an immediate success.

The key issue for the future in

Japan is that the original Tokyo to Osaka line is approaching saturation point. The latest generation bullet trains leave on the Nagoya/Osaka line from Tokyo every four or five minutes with trainloads of up to 1,300 passengers; that is 12 trains an hour (309 per day).

Japan Central Railways is now proposing to build an entirely new maglev line on the first Tokyo to Nagoya section of this route, capable of speeds of up to 500km/h, halving existing Shinkansen journey times. So great are the challenges that the scheduled date for completion is not until 2025. But when I met the chairman of the Japan Central Railways and the deputy Transport Minister, they did not brook the possibility that it would not happen.

I asked about the major risk factors that might prevent the maglev project hitting its 2025 target; the response was a terse "none", followed by a long silence. But given the considerable uncertainties about maglev, my discussions in Japan did not cause me to question our decision to rule it out for High Speed 2.

The whole Shinkansen network closes between midnight and 6am for engineering work; no engineering work is done during the day. When I asked the chief operating officer of Japan Central Railways whether the Shinkansen was ever closed during the day even for major engineering work, he looked startled.

"Closed? Do you mean shut with no trains running?" I nodded. "Ah, no, we wouldn't do that. We did do it once about 30 years ago for a morning, but there were such complaints that we have found ways of avoiding this since."

Helpfully, Iain Coucher, the chief executive of Network Rail, was standing right next to me at this point.

The distances between the major cities on the Shinkansen are not greatly different to major inter-conurbation distances in Britain. The view that high speed rail only succeeds over longer distances is wrong. Tokyo to Nagoya is a little further than London to Manchester; Tokyo to Osaka is less than London to Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Seventeen years after Japan

launched its bullet train, France introduced its first TGV service, between Paris and Lyon, in 1981.

The development of the TGV was in key respects similar to that of the Shinkansen. As in Japan, the initial success of the first line – which cut the journey time for the 264 miles from Paris to Lyon to under two hours – soon afterwards led to the decision to develop an entire national network.

The TGV became a symbol of French national pride and modernity. As early as 1983 SNCF published a strategic plan for four further lines to be built by 2000 – extending the Sud-Est line from Lyon to Marseille, and new lines from Paris to Lille in the north, Alsace in the east and Le Mans going west.

All four of the planned lines are now in operation as the creation of a national TGV network became a cross-party priority for successive French governments. The French Prime Minister, Francois Fillon, recently described the TGV as one of the two infrastructural transformations of modern France, the other being energy independence through

the French nuclear programme.

As the French high-speed network is built out and interconnects with those of neighbouring countries, the long-dreamed-of Trans-European Network is becoming a reality. The line from Paris to Lille and the Channel Tunnel will soon link, via Brussels, into the new Dutch high-speed line up to Rotterdam and Amsterdam, giving a Paris-Amsterdam journey time of two hours.

The Sud-Est line has extensions, under construction or planned, south-east from Marseille along the Cote d'Azur to Nice and ultimately into Italy; south to Montpellier and – through a 17-mile tunnel under the Pyrenees – to Barcelona; and east from Lyon to Turin and into the north Italian high speed network, via a 32-mile tunnel under the Alps. These two tunnels will be engineering feats to match the Channel Tunnel.

As TGV popularity soared, so did the willingness of French local and regional authorities to help pay for it. Only 2% of the cost of the Paris to Lille line was paid by local authorities; by contrast, for the current Le Mans to Rennes line out to Brittany the proportion is 39% and it is high for the other current projects.

What are the lessons from international experience of high-speed rail? First, I am more than ever convinced that a north-south high-speed rail line in Britain is just a matter of time. The issue for us is not whether we follow suit, but when and how. A huge amount is at stake in the “when and how”, which is why in January we established High Speed 2 both to assess the case for such a line – the transport case, the environmental case and the business case – and also to recommend route options.

Second, there is no single high-speed model which we can lift off the shelf and implement. The more you learn about high-speed rail, the more alive you become to the choices in each major aspect of the project.

It is very important that policymakers in Britain call on a serious body of expertise in the detail of other countries' practice and plans in everything from funding and engineering to station design, location and spacing, and arrangements for freight, rolling stock and interoperability with the existing network. I am struck by the wildly divergent costs presented to me for high-speed projects of apparently broadly similar scope. Given our experience with High Speed 1, cost control is a key issue High Speed 2.

Third, other countries have developed high speed rail networks for a variety of reasons – some quanti-

able, some not – but never for just one reason. Often, capacity constraints on a major existing inter-city route have driven the development of a first high-speed line; thereafter wider regeneration, environmental and political arguments take hold, not least the desire of unconnected regions, cities and towns to gain high-speed connectivity.

In Britain we are very much at the first – and, in terms of a business case, the most straightforward – stage of this evolution. High Speed 2 is concentrating first on the capacity requirements of our principal inter-urban corridor, London to the West Midlands, the busiest inter-city line in the country and already near saturation even with the recent £9bn upgrade. It is looking then at options for extending a line beyond to the other major conurbations of the north-west, west Yorkshire, the north-east and central Scotland.

Fourth, high-speed rail enables countries to escape from the constraints which geography and technology imposed on the first generation of rail infrastructure, and it is essential that its full potential is exploited in this regard. There is no reason to be imprisoned in our thinking of future rail corridors by the fact, for example, that the Victorians built the west coast and east coast main lines and didn't go across the Pennines, which separate the two largest conurbations in the country after Greater London.

Fifth, the environmental argument for high-speed is generally accepted

in all the other European countries I visited. Rail is a relatively energy-efficient means of transport, contributing only around 2% of the UK's domestic transport carbon dioxide emissions. A high-speed line will expand capacity in a transport mode that is generally more energy-efficient than short-haul air and long-distance road journeys.

The task for High Speed 2 is to assess the positive impact of this potential modal shift against the negative impacts of newly generated journeys and a straight transfer from existing trains, understanding load factors and the sources of electricity generation.

Intuitively, you would expect high speed rail to provide positive environmental benefits, and it is this robust assessment that we need to support the overall business case for high speed rail and its contribution to carbon reduction.

Finally, in every country I visited, there is a high degree of political unity behind high-speed rail, and it has generally been driven forward by cross-party consensus. In particular, while “national” parties support high-speed rail partly for overtly nation-building reasons, regional – even separatist – parties also tend to support it to boost the potential of their regions to prosper unaided.

It will be decades before we know who turns out ultimately to be right. Meanwhile this rare potential for political popularity and consensus on such a major infrastructure policy should be seized by transport modernisers.



The task for High Speed 2 is to assess the positive impact of potential modal shift against the negative impacts of newly-generated journeys and transfer from existing trains

Lord Adonis is Secretary of State for Transport. This article has been adapted from a speech he gave at the Arup Campus, Solihull, entitled *High Speed Rail – Reflections on an International Transport Revolution* last month.

Bullet trains leave Tokyo for Osaka 12 times an hour; (below) the success of France's first TGV line led to the creation of a network





Uphill struggle

Nottingham Express Transit phase two is expected to boost the economy of the city and the wider region around it. But years of planning have been called into question after a change in leadership at the county council. **David Fowler reports**

Promoters of tram systems in the UK must occasionally feel rather like Sisyphus: condemned to perpetually roll a rock up a hill, only to find that whenever they get it to the top, it's there waiting for them at the bottom the next day.

In March, Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council, the backers of the city's planned tram extension, breathed a collective sigh of relief on reaching the top with one of the bigger rocks, when the Transport Secretary granted the Transport & Works Act order giving planning powers to build the scheme.

Moreover a decision from the DfT on whether or not to approve the city's planned workplace parking levy, which would fund the bulk of the councils' 25% local contribution to the scheme was thought to be close.

If approved, all that would then remain would be to submit an updated business plan to the DfT and get through the Treasury Project Review Group to gain conditional approval, go out to tender, select a bidder, tie up a private finance initiative deal,

and go back to the DfT with a final business case to gain final approval.

Not exactly straightforward, but at least it had all been done before for Nottingham Express Transit line one.

Then came this month's local elections. The county council fell to Conservative control and one of the new leader's first acts was to withdraw support for the project, objecting both to the route and the £400m-plus cost. (The city council, a unitary, was not involved in the elections.)

With an appearance before the Project Review Group scheduled for mid-July, the city has signalled its determination to press ahead alone.

Nottingham Express Transit director Pat Armstrong, who was brought in to lead the project in 1990 virtually from its inception, remains hopeful that a working relationship with the new administration can be maintained. The councils have successfully collaborated over a number of years on wider transport policy issues, producing joint Local Transport Plans, for example.

Mr Armstrong points out NET line one, which in March celebrated five years since opening and earlier this month carried its five millionth passenger, is widely regarded as one of the most successful tram projects in the UK.

"One of the reasons Nottingham has been successful is because it has two very strong strategically thinking bus operators [Nottingham City Transport which is still majority-owned by the city council, and Trent Barton] which are more interested in expanding the public transport cake than fighting over a slice," he says. So there is good integration between

bus and tram, with the companies adjusting their networks to complement and integrate with the tram by offering feeder services, rather than trying to compete, or duplicate them.

A good relationship has also existed between the bus operators and the councils, contributing to an increase in bus use of 8% over five years, with the councils introducing extensive highway measures to assist bus operations.

The tram route has a high degree of segregation from road traffic, running alongside a railway for part of its route, then along relatively lightly trafficked secondary roads into the city centre, with priority at most traffic lights. The route passes directly through the city centre, where extensive improvements to public spaces



Clockwise from above: Nottingham station is to be redeveloped as a transport hub; a tram on the planned Clifton line; the proposed MediPark development would be served by Beeston and Chilwell



were carried out alongside it, and there are park and ride sites near line one's two outer terminuses.

The councils have also worked closely with developers who wanted to build near the line, for example in Nottingham's Lace Market.

Perhaps most importantly, the tram links key destinations: Nottingham's main line station and two outlying ones, the city's main theatre, and Nottingham Trent University, as well as running close to both main shopping centres. And the PFI deal (with operator Arrow, a joint venture of NCT and Transdev) has successfully transferred risk to the private sector and provided the operator with incentives to meet punctuality and reliability targets.

It was always intended that line

one would be the start of a network. "It stops half a mile south of the city centre, and doesn't serve a lot of the conurbation," says Mr Armstrong.

Work on phase two started in earnest in 2002 with a lengthy, three-stage process of public consultation. This narrowed down route options from pretty much all feasible routes across the conurbation, first to three corridors and finally to the two routes most likely to be successful and also meet government criteria for funding, with fairly limited options. This became phase two.

The extension starts from the end of the existing route at Nottingham rail station, crossing over the railway and continuing for around 0.5km before dividing into two.

The Clifton line continues through the Meadows, a residential area, crosses the river Trent on an existing bridge and follows a disused railway line to more residential areas in Wilford and Compton Acres, part of West Bridgford.

It continues on a segregated route to Clifton, a large former council estate built in the 1950s when it was the largest area of council housing in the country, and an area of high public transport use.

The line goes through the town centre and ends at a park and ride site adjacent to the A453, the main route south to M1 junction 24.

The Highways Agency has wanted to widen the A453 for many years but proposals for a grade-separated dual carriageway were not considered acceptable through Clifton. The agency is now proposing creating a

One of the reasons NET has been successful is because the city has two very strong strategically thinking bus operators

Workplace parking levy

Nottingham has limited resources to contribute to a tram, by comparison with the PTEs which have promoted most other tram schemes in the country. It began looking at a workplace parking levy as a way of creating a revenue stream as well as complying with government policy of incorporating demand management measures in 2000.

There has been opposition from business, despite the business community's backing for the tram, but Mr Armstrong says: "We argue that 70% of congestion is due to people travelling into work to free or cheap parking spaces."

As well as funding much of the local contribution to the tram, the levy will contribute to a £68m scheme to redevelop Nottingham station as a transport interchange and Nottingham's Link bus network, which serves destinations such as the university, the hospital, park and rides and important employment sites.

It is planned to introduce the levy at £185 annually for each space, rising to around £350 by the opening of NET phase two. It will only apply to firms with over 10 parking spaces, and employers will have the choice of whether to pass it on to employees. Nottingham hopes it will encourage behaviour change, either directly if the levy is passed on, or by encouraging employers to undertake workplace travel planning.

Mr Armstrong points out that the charge is quite small compared with the overall cost of running a car, or even commercial car park rates: "The direct impact on congestion is likely to be small, but the indirect impact will be much bigger."

Following a public examination the council made an order to introduce the levy from next year, but it has to be confirmed by the secretary of state before it can go ahead. A decision is expected soon. "Obviously now is a difficult time to introduce an additional burden on business," says Mr Armstrong, "but based on modelling, the transport improvements will outweigh the drawbacks." The levy has been in the local transport plan and in manifestos for nine years, he points out, and Nottingham has continued to attract investment.



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If the city goes alone, it could add to the perceived risk of the project if the county council is actively obstructive, resulting in higher tender prices

History of phase one

The idea for the tram first came from a local business group set up in 1988 to look at ways of sustaining Nottingham's economic future. It identified traffic congestion and poor access as problems.

By 1990 feasibility studies supported the view that the tram would be the optimum solution, and identified a network of six lines from a possible 25. One in particular – the eventual line one – appeared to have a strong case and efforts were focused on this. An Act of Parliament granted powers to build it in 1994 but no money was available until 1998. At this point the new Labour government required it to be funded through the private finance initiative. It became the first scheme to be funded in this way, with almost no upfront grant funding.

It took till 2000 to finalise the PFI contract with the Arrow consortium (then Bombardier, Carillion, Transdev and Nottingham City Transport).

Line one opened in March 2004.

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dual carriageway through non-residential areas to the edge of Clifton, where the road will become a four lane single carriageway, retaining junctions and bus stops. This is possible on the basis that much of the traffic will divert to the park and ride and use the tram.

The Chilwell and Beeston line passes through the new NG2 business park and on to the Queen's Medical Centre teaching hospital, where there is large commuter demand. Going through the heart of the site, there will be a tram stop at entrance level between the QMC main entrance and a new private sector diagnostic and treatment centre opposite.

It will then go on to serve the proposed new MediPark, a 15-year-project being planned as a partnership to bring together the expertise of the university and the hospital with industry, to create a medical technology and clinical research cluster. It is led by Nottingham Regeneration Limited, which submitted a planning application last month.

The line crosses the A52 ring road on a flyover and drops down into Nottingham University's campus, again a large catchment, and passes alongside Highfield Science Park which is in the process of doubling in size. It runs through an area of sporting facilities including Nottingham Tennis Centre, host to a number of tournaments and used by professionals preparing for Wimbledon.

Up to this point the line is mainly segregated. It then runs to Beeston, effectively a town in its own right with a good shopping centre and mixed housing, including a large student population. A master plan being developed for the town centre is designed around creating an interchange between the tram, a new bus station and the town's main car park, all integrated with a shopping development.

It passes on relatively narrow streets through a residential area where a small amount of demolition is required, and along an area intended for a relief road in the 1970s. When the road failed to materialise it became a pedestrian space so that there was some controversy about the tram taking it over. The Conservative opposition to the tram has seized on objections to the demolitions and loss of this amenity.

The route ends at a park and ride close to Stapleford on the A52, the main route between Nottingham and Derby and convenient for junction 25 of the M1.

Having won planning powers – the report of the public inquiry inspector spoke in glowing terms of the project and explicitly said that the aims could not be achieved by bus – the promoters submitted an updated business case and are in discussions with the DfT over conditional approval. The tough hurdle of getting through the Treasury Project Review Group, also needed for conditional approval, is pencilled in for mid-July.

If successful, the city council planned immediately to issue an EU expression of interest notice followed by an invitation to negotiate in November.

Bids would be returned next April or May. A considerable amount of design work would be needed because designs have only been taken to the level of detail required for the TWA inquiry, except for high risk areas such as the bridge over the railway at Nottingham station.

The intention would be to issue a design, build, finance and operate concession including the operation of line one: the existing contract would be terminated on the same day as the new one was awarded.

It was hoped to sign a PFI contract in summer 2011 and have trams running three years later.

Currently, however, all this hangs in the balance. The Treasury review group will need to be convinced funding is in place. Approval of the workplace parking levy (see box) would not necessarily be needed first. But the county's position – whether it will simply withdraw

from the project or actively try to impede it will have to be clarified.

The DfT is to provide 75% of the cost of the project and the councils, between them, the remainder. Of this it had been agreed that the city, which is promoting the workplace parking levy alone, would provide 80%, most of it from the levy and some from other sources such as Section 106 agreements.

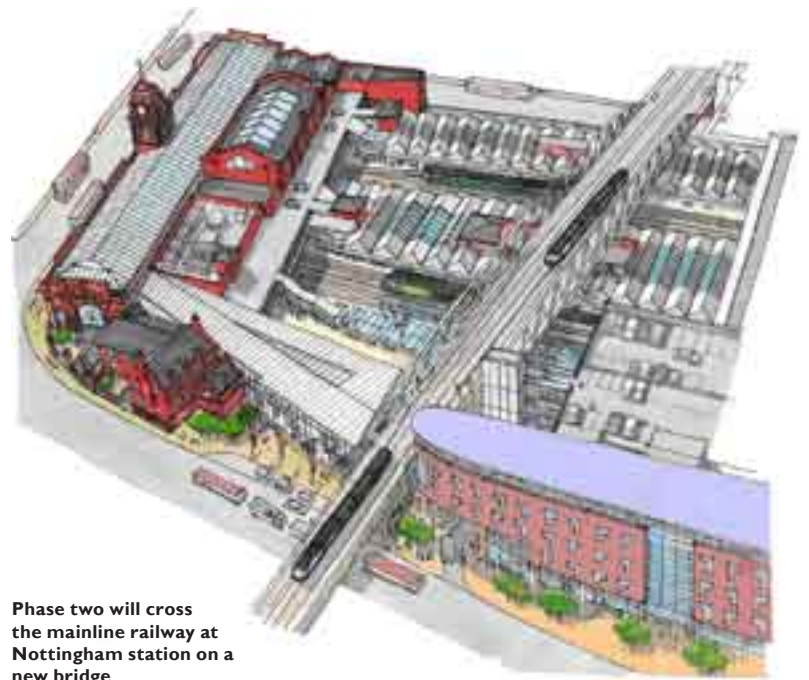
The missing sum is £28m, not huge compared with the cost of the overall project but difficult for the city council to find. It is exploring additional or restructured borrowing, drawing on reserves, and looking again at workplace parking levy revenue predictions, where there is some allowance for contingencies.

The city's transport portfolio holder, Councillor Jane Urquhart initially hoped to continue with a joint approach.

But with the TWA order granted the route cannot be changed; in theory it could be stopped short of Beeston and Chilwell, but that would affect the business case.

Cllr Urquhart points out that without the tram NG2, MediPark, and the redevelopment of Beeston would be undermined, and the A453 plans would have to be rethought. But if the city goes alone, it could add to the perceived risk of the project if the county council is actively obstructive, resulting in higher tender prices.

Whatever the outcome, the city council would certainly have preferred not to be given this particular rock to push up the hill just at this moment.



Phase two will cross the mainline railway at Nottingham station on a new bridge

Clear ahead for Metrolink



Caption

The planned doubling in size of the Manchester tram network is finally getting under way. **David Fowler** reports

The long-awaited transformation of Manchester's tram network is gathering pace. In Manchester city centre, the second stage of a multi-million pound track replacement project has been under way since April.

Major work has already started on the East Manchester extension to Droylsden – one of three new lines forming part of a £600m expansion which will double the size of the network. Work on the line to Oldham and Rochdale gets under way between now and autumn and preparations are already in progress both here and on the south Manchester line to Chorlton.

In May, a Transport and Works Act order granted Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive powers to build the short (0.4km) but vital spur to Salford's new MediaCity development, where the BBC's northern headquarters will be sited.

And last month, Transport Secretary Geoff Hoon announced funding to accelerate two further extensions of the east and south lines to Ashton

One of the biggest challenges is pulling everything together seamlessly, when all the different packages have different funding streams

and East Didsbury as part of a £244m accelerated package.

All in all, GMPTE Metrolink director Phil Purdy has a lot on his plate. "One of the biggest challenges is pulling everything together seamlessly, when all the different packages have different funding streams and finishing dates," he says. "At the moment we're tacking on the accelerated package – we need to take decisions on what it will look like and what facilities to put in at the new stations, as well as keeping going on the other packages."

One of the trickiest aspects, and the most obvious area of activity at present, is the renewal of the city centre track, which is now over 16 years old and was showing its age. The renewal is part of a £100m upgrade project which also includes improvements to stops, new ticket machines, and the first batch of new trams.

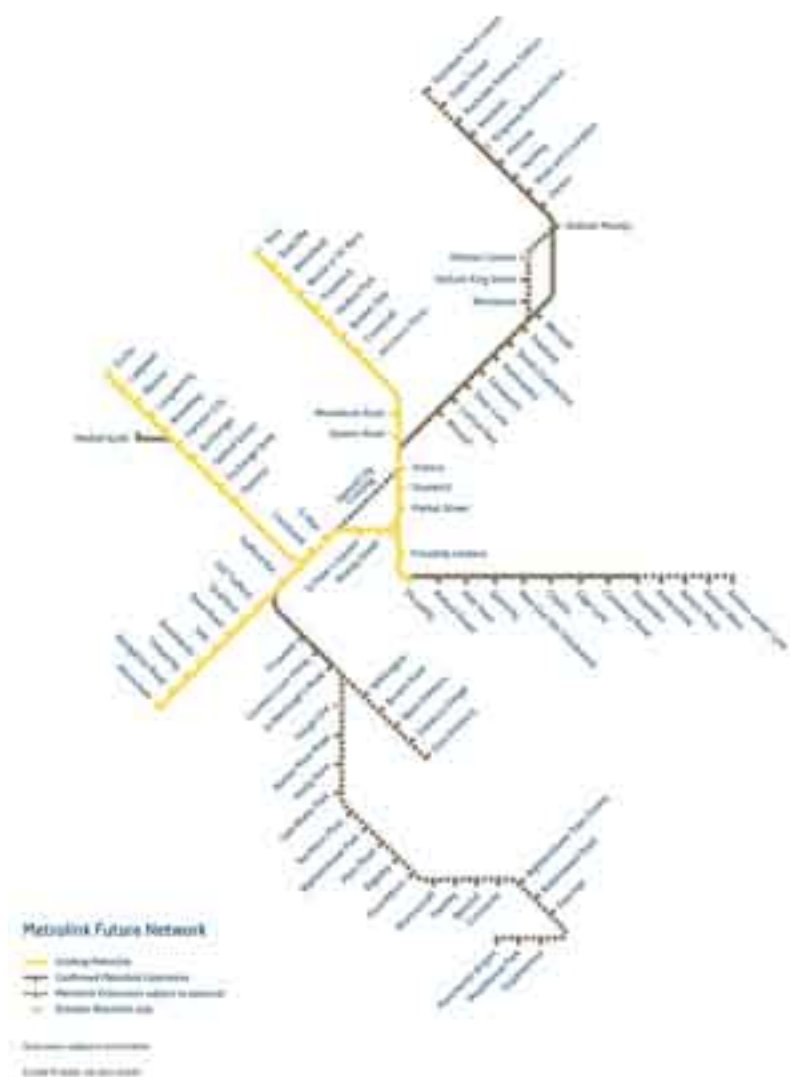
The network from Piccadilly through central Manchester to Victoria has been closed since April, with trams running from Altrincham and Eccles to St Peter's Square, and from Bury to Victoria. The work, being car-

ried out by Stagecoach Major Projects as part of Stagecoach's operating concession, with subcontractors UDP responsible for site clearance, Volker Rail for trackwork and Mayfield for finishes is due to be complete in October.

The track renewal is more complicated than it might sound. The city council is taking the opportunity to improve the urban landscape by laying new and higher quality surface finishes at the same time, and a rethink of the track design is being undertaken. The existing track is laid on a concrete slab with each rail in a groove or slot in the concrete. The groove is filled with resin to provide noise insulation. However this arrangement provides no restraint to maintain the gauge, in other words to stop the rails moving gradually apart under forces from the tram. Nor do the new surface finishes provide resistance.

The relaid track will incorporate tie bars to keep the rails accurately in

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Above: Extensions to Rochdale, Droylsden and Chorlton are getting under way. The second city crossing and airport extension remain priorities for the future

Opposite (from top clockwise): City centre track is being renewed

from page 25

place, meaning less maintenance will be needed, and providing better ride quality. Some of the sharper curves are also being straightened out, to the extent allowed by the width of the slab.

Two of the main city stops are being upgraded: the platform at Piccadilly Gardens will be widened to 6m and at St Peter's Square it will be lengthened to suit double length trams – though, because the square is a conservation area, some details of the design still have to be finalised.

Upgrade work is complicated by the fact that a route has to be kept open across the city so that once a week some of the trams can reach the depot at Queen's Road for maintenance. A second depot will be built at Trafford Bar as part of the expansion plans.

In August, the quietest month, the whole Altrincham and Eccles lines shut down completely for a month for major upgrade work. "We're co-ordinating a lot of work – upgrading a lot of the stops including some new

platforms, lifts, and introducing the new identity," says Mr Purdy (Metro-link is being rebranded in yellow and silver as part of GMPTE's new overall corporate style).

New Scheidt & Bachmann ticket machines, which will take notes, debit/credit cards and, when introduced, smartcards, are being introduced at a cost of £5.4m across the network, and new information displays will come into service on all stops early next year.

Overhead electrification cable equipment on the line, originally installed in the 1930s when the line was a conventional railway, will be completely replaced.

In addition connections will be made for the new depot and Media-City spur. When this opens next year, at peak times there will be a shuttle to the development from Cornbrook, where extensive remodelling of the track is needed to allow trams to reverse. Off-peak, Eccles line trains will go into MediaCity and out again.

Making the connections during the August closure will allow most of the extension work to be completed without further disruption.

One of the most important aspects of the upgrade is installing a new tram operating system to allow line-of-sight operation. This requires new equipment on the trams and new loops on the track so controllers know where the trams are, and, of course, additional training for the tram drivers. It will have considerable benefits, says Mr Purdy, who has experience of operating a line of sight system in his previous job with Melbourne's Yarra Trams.

"It's very significant – I think the public will see a lot more flexibility," he says. Essentially line of sight means tram drivers will start and stop the trams based on what they can see ahead, like driving a car. The tram system was created by converting commuter rail lines to tram operation and the conventional block signalling system was carried over. This limits capacity because only one tram can be in any block at a time.

Mr Purdy says line of sight operation will allow broken-down trams to be replaced more quickly, and it will overcome problems experienced at large events. "Now we can only provide one tram every four minutes. With line of sight we will be able to load two trams together and they will go back to the city in convoy," he says. Capacity will be limited only by the number of trams available.

The new depot will be near Manchester United's Old Trafford stadium while purpose-built sidings are being provided near the City of Manchester

stadium for Manchester City. "We'll be able to park trams and bring them straight out when we need them at the end of a football match," says Mr Purdy. "Manchester will start to see trams travelling in bunches quite close together to move a lot of people. In Melbourne in the peak we ran 450 trams based on line of sight and traffic signals."

The first of a batch of new trams will arrive from Bombardier next month, for testing and commissioning. The order for the Flexity vehicles, similar to those provided for Cologne, began as eight to improve capacity and flexibility on the existing network, but has been expanded by four for MediaCity and another 28 for the coming phase 3a. As the new trams come into service, old trams will be taken out for a reliability upgrade and internal refurbishment to a similar standard to that of the new ones.

Phase 3a, the new extension, gets under way properly in October when the existing local rail line to Oldham and Rochdale closes for conversion to tram operation. Doing the work in one big closure will allow equipment and supplies to be brought in by train instead of road, reducing impact on people living nearby.

A disused railway alignment will be brought back into service between the existing network and Central Park. Tree clearance and assessment of structures on this section are under way. The new line will open to Central Park in spring 2011, to Oldham in autumn that year, and to Rochdale in spring the following year.

To get the maximum benefit from the line, sections of single track will be doubled, except adjacent to a refuse dump where this is impractical.

Seven new stops will be provided and some will be remodelled, for example moving platforms from one side of the track to the other. "We're opening up a lot more areas to public transport," says Mr Purdy.

When the line re-opens trams will run at 12-minute intervals instead of the current, at best, half-hourly service. The journey time, even with the extra stops, will be about the same because the trams will be able to accelerate faster than the trains could.

Major work has started on the east line to Droylsden, where an underpass below the inner ring road is needed to connect to Piccadilly station. Piling for retaining walls has started. "It's a fairly significant exercise of a type not normally associated with a tramway," says Mr Purdy. The route runs on a reserved alignment through SportCity, the 2002 Commonwealth Games campus, as far as the velodrome but then continues mainly

on street to Droylsden. Utility diversions are under way and detailed design of stations and the streetscape are in progress.

For the on-road sections consideration is being given to replacing, as far as possible, lost roadside parking spaces – but in addition, attention is being paid to the overall streetscape. “The idea is to do a complete design so the whole area will be changed – we see this as a benefit,” Mr Purdy says. Throughout, extensive consultation with local stakeholders is being carried out.

The accelerated programme will allow a further extension from Droylsden to Ashton-under-Lyne. Though this again runs on-road, most of this section uses the central reserve of a dual carriageway.

On the south line, to Chorlton, detailed design is under way. The line will open to Chorlton, again using a disused rail line, in spring 2011. Under the accelerated package the line will be continued to East Didsbury.

At the end of May a final business case for the work covered by the accelerated package was submitted to the DfT. It is planned to award the extra work as variations to the existing contracts. But there are a number of implications. For example, Droylsden was being designed as a terminus and the design team now has to consider what needs to change.

GMPTE has formed a 90-strong delivery team to supervise the project, made up of staff from the PTE and its delivery partner, Parsons Brinckerhoff. Between 30 and 40 of the team are co-located with the contractor team, M-Pact Thales – a joint venture of Thales, GrantRail and Laing O’Rourke which won the contract to design, build and maintain the new lines and depot – to identify and solve problems as they arise. “It’s working very, very well,” says Mr Purdy, praising the fact that attitudes have remained positive despite constant changes in scope following, first, the loss of December’s Transport Innovation Fund referendum vote and now the addition of the accelerated package.

Even with the completion of the current extensions, Manchester’s ambitions for Metrolink are not at an end. A second route across the city centre, a line from Chorlton to Manchester Airport, and extensions into Oldham and Rochdale town centres were originally part of the TIF bid. These are included as priorities in plans for the Greater Manchester Transport Fund announced last month, through which the most important of the TIF schemes are now hoped to be advanced.





Oxford station forecourt is a mini bus station

Out to sell door-to-door travel

A group bringing together the main bus and train operators has identified ways of improving co-ordination of multi-leg journeys

How often have you been put off travelling by public transport because you can get most of the way by train, but aren't sure how you get from the station to your final destination? Or arrived at a station to find no information about buses or where to catch them?

Have you ever wished you could buy a ticket to cover both the train and the bus legs of a trip in one go? And how often have you decided to drive somewhere because you can go from door to door and it's just easier?

Research shows that passengers think of a journey as a whole and want it to be seamless, and this is why in 2008 Ruth Kelly, then secretary of

state for transport, asked the chief executives of the main transport operators, and their respective trade bodies, to set up the Door-to-door Journeys Working Group.

Just over a year later, the group's report on how integration between public transport services can be improved was published, at a *Transport Times* conference earlier this week. Aimed mainly at transport operators, it highlights examples of good practice with the aim of working towards making this "the universal norm".

The group's work focused on identifying existing good practice, developing a list of aspirations for facilities and services that would be available to travellers in an ideal

world, and identifying "quick wins" which can be introduced quickly and cost-effectively to make "an immediate improvement" to journeys.

It concentrates on links between rail and other modes, mainly bus or tram. This is because 95% of bus trips involve no other transport mode, apart from walking, and around nine out of 10 walking, cycling, bus and car trips don't go outside the county where the traveller lives. Rail trips tend to be longer and more complex, with only 54% remaining in one county, and 57% involving at least one other transport mode. Around 660 million train passenger journeys annually rely on good interchange facilities with other transport modes:

"fundamentally, rail stations are transport interchanges, not just places where passengers board and alight from trains", the report says.

The working group identifies four main components of a seamless multi-modal journey: information for passengers before and during the journey; integrated ticketing; interchange facilities; and services that provide timely connections.

A new group involving the main operators and the two trade bodies, to be known as the Journey Solutions Partnership, is to be set up to push through the quick wins as well as considering how to make progress with the longer term recommendations. "The quick wins will be delivered over a period of 12-18 months by Britain's main bus and rail operating groups," the report says.

Target groups likely to be amenable to using other forms of public transport to get to and from rail stations, or potential "early converts", include low to medium income commuters, passengers travelling for leisure, shopping or education, and travellers into London. Those less likely to be persuaded are business travellers on expenses and middle to high income commuters, who are prepared to pay station parking fees.

Giles Fearnley, chairman of the working group and of the Confederation of Passenger Transport, says that setting up the Journey Solutions Partnership is an indication of serious intent by the transport groups. "These are issues that have in the past been near the bottom of the agenda," he says. "It's difficult to see a commercial return through making seamless journeys easier." But, he says, as chairman of the working group he was encouraged by the enthusiasm shown by the group chief executives, with an apparent realisation that it made sense to work together. "There was very serious engagement from each of the groups."

There was a general view that this week's conference was "a staging post". "We've reported back to the secretary of state, but the job doesn't end there. We've set up a permanent JSP to maintain life in the project," he says, adding that the DfT has shown strong support. This week's conference was intended to start a discussion about what should be the next staging post in a year's time. "The working group report is full of practical examples – it will act as a springboard," Mr Fearnley says.

Many of the recommendations, particularly the quick wins, depend on bus, train and station staff being briefed on transport connections, and on encouraging greater use of Plusbus

integrated tickets in which bus travel can be added to a rail ticket at the time it is bought.

Sales of Plusbus tickets have doubled annually in the last two years, though total sales were still only 300,000 in the last full year, a small fraction of the number of journeys involving an interchange.

Mr Fearnley, who also chairs Journey Solutions, the partnership of the six main bus and train operating companies which is responsible for the administration and promotion of Plusbus, admits that the growth, while impressive, started from a low base. But he believes a number of factors mean that Plusbus is poised for a breakthrough. First, it is now available all around the country (though not necessarily at every station).

More importantly, he says, "two outlets were blocked to us – ticket vending machines and e-retailing".

Vending machines are now gradually being upgraded to allow them to sell Plusbus tickets alongside rail tickets, for example at King's Cross for Cambridge. Where this facility is introduced, he says, growth has been "exponential". Once the train operating companies, which get commission on the Plusbus tickets, notice this, the project will start to gain a momentum of its own.

And following a pilot the Trainline website now sells Plusbus tickets online, further opening up the potential market.

Operators are to undertake a programme of briefings of front-line staff, to help them assist passengers more effectively with questions about their onward journey. Sceptics might

doubt whether staff will take with enthusiasm to the proposed new role of advising passengers.

Mr Fearnley says: "It will take time to roll out and be fully effective. The aim will be to instill in the minds of staff the value to the business – and to their jobs – of making it as easy for passengers to use public transport as possible. If you encourage passengers to use the bus it's good for rail as well. But it will be a long drip feed to get over the message that we're all in this together."

However, he points out that

staff will not be expected to know all the options in infinite detail – they will be expected to provide the basics of which number bus to catch where, to point out displays giving further information, and provide an

enquiry phone number for questions they are unable to answer.

One aspect not addressed in detail is the question of devising timetables so that services connect. This has proved problematic in the past. Practical problems include the fact that bus and rail timetables themselves are updated on differing schedules making it difficult to keep them synchronised. And if services are devised to dovetail, the effort can backfire if one or other service is delayed and the connection is missed.

But Mr Fearnley hopes this can at least be put on the agenda for the future. He hopes that discussions can take place, perhaps also involving local authorities with a view to incorporating proposals in quality partnerships, "to think sensibly about what can practically be achieved."

The quick wins will be delivered over a period of 12-18 months by Britain's main bus and rail operating groups



Quick wins

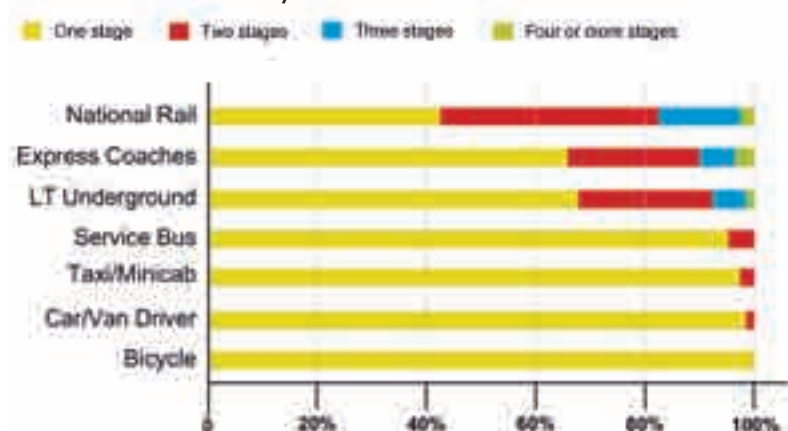
Progress on these initiatives will be monitored between autumn this year and the end of 2010, with some to be introduced immediately.

- 'Continuing your journey' travel information posters in a common format will be produced for display at around 100 medium-sized rail stations outside London where there is potential for greater interchange. This will be undertaken by Journey Solutions.
- The principal transport groups will work with local authorities and passenger transport executives to improve provision of bus timetable information at stations.
- Train companies will brief station staff about onward travel services from their station. Journey Solutions will provide a guidance pack for station management teams to assist this.
- The National Rail Enquiries website will offer more information about the availability of bus, coach and tram services for journeys to and from rail stations.
- Transport Direct website will offer details of Plusbus ticketing for any journey to or from a station that is a Plusbus interchange.
- Journey Solutions will organise a marketing campaign to promote Plusbus over the next 12 months. Train companies will be encouraged to indicate Plusbus interchanges on their route diagrams and to advertise Plusbus availability on ticket office windows.
- Plusbus day tickets will be sold online from this month. They will also be sold more widely by self-service ticket vending machines at rail stations.
- ATOC and Journey Solutions will produce a good practice guide on improving signs at stations directing passengers to buses, trams and taxis.
- Co-operation and improved communication between bus and rail company staff will be encouraged by establishing a database of local, regional and national contacts, to be available to operators on the Journey Solutions website.
- A new senior-level Journey Solutions Partnership, initially bringing together the same organisations that made up the working group, will meet regularly to continue its work. All leading bus and rail operators in Britain will be invited to become involved. The partnership will arrange a series of integration showcases at rail stations across Britain.

Longer term initiatives

- Local authorities and PTEs will be encouraged to examine opportunities to work with bus operators to provide pump-priming funding for improved bus services to rail stations.
- ATOC, Journey Solutions and train companies will look into the potential for greater standardisation of through journey tickets – with the aim of introducing a Plustram ticket analogous to Plusbus.
- ATOC and CPT will monitor progress of ITSO and other electronic ticket and payment systems to ensure both rail and bus take full advantage of the technology.
- The trade bodies, operators and the Department for Transport will work together to examine and report in detail on the business case for closer integration between train and bus services, to report next year.
- Other recommendations include train companies appointing a manager responsible for integration issues; preparing station travel plans for all medium and large stations, subject to the outcome of a trial at 31 stations currently being undertaken by ATOC; and producing station access strategies to set targets for the number of passengers arriving by sustainable modes.

Number of stages per trip (excluding walk stages) by mode, Great Britain, 2006.
Source: National Travel Survey



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- The public transport operator of the year

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New team at Department for Transport



Paul Clark



Chris Mole



Sadiq Khan

Lord Adonis was promoted from minister of state at the DfT to replace Geoff Hoon as Secretary of State for Transport in the government reshuffle following this month's elections. He will have overall responsibility for the Government's transport commitments and long-term transport strategy, including carbon security, as well as retaining responsibility for the Government's work on high speed rail.

Sadiq Khan becomes the new minister of state for transport, with responsibility for leading on transport business in the Commons, city and regional networks including London and Crossrail, environment and climate change and Europe.

The son of a London bus driver, Mr Khan, MP for Tooting, had previously been a minister in the Department for Communities and Local Government, and the whips' office, and had served as parliamentary private secretary to Jack Straw during his tenure as leader of the House.

Before entering Parliament he was a human rights lawyer, chair of Liberty and a visiting lecturer at two London universities.

Paul Clark continues as under-secretary of state with a change of responsibility to international networks, road safety, motoring and freight services agencies.

Chris Mole is the second under-secretary of state, with responsibility for national networks and corporate matters. He had been an assistant government whip since last year, having previously served

as parliamentary private secretary to local government minister John Healey. He had also served on the select committee scrutinising the work of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. He was deputy chair of EEDA, the regional development agency for the East of England, from 1998 and was leader of Suffolk County Council until his election as MP for Ipswich in 2001.

Former Highways Agency chief executive Archie Robertson has joined Capita Symonds as a non-executive director.

Mr Robertson played a lead role in Capita Symonds' recent bid for the Crossrail delivery partner role



Archie Robertson

and will build on this experience to develop its programme management business on major international infrastructure projects.

With a background in major project delivery at the Highways Agency, Mr Robertson helped to shift the focus of spending away from major capital projects and towards more cost-effective and sustainable intelligent transport management systems, such as the M42 active traffic management (ATM) trial which now looks set to be widely adopted across the highways network.

He was director of operations at the Environment Agency from its inception in 1996 to 2003, including responsibility for major infrastructure including the Thames Barrier and building new flood defences throughout England and Wales.

The appointment – coupled with the recent acquisition of transport technology specialists MMB Associates – is intended to strengthen further Capita Symonds' focus on intelligent transport and heavy infrastructure markets.

Crossrail Ltd has appointed **David Bennett**, currently deputy Crossrail project representative, to the newly created position of implementation director. Mr Bennett will start his new role next month.

The implementation director will work closely with the project delivery partner (the consortium of Bechtel, Halcrow and Systra which will oversee construction of the central tunnelled section) to ensure the major construction element of the

people

Crossrail programme is completed on time and to budget.

Mr Bennett joins Crossrail Ltd from the Crossrail Project Representative Team, which provides oversight support to the project sponsors – the Department for Transport and Transport for London – to ensure that Crossrail will complete the project on schedule, within budget and to the agreed standard. He has senior management experience in railway construction on projects overseas and in the UK, most recently as implementation director for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (High Speed 1).

Dr Chris Humphrey has joined WSP as an associate in the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) business. The appointment will strengthen WSP's public transport offering, bringing experience from Traveline, European projects and operational policy. He will lead a team offering specialist ITS technical and policy advice.

Dr Humphrey previously worked for Transport & Travel Research, specialising in passenger transport information systems, demand management and sustainable transport systems for clients including the Department of Transport (Transport Direct), the European Commission's transport directorate, the British Retail Consortium and numerous UK local authorities.

International traffic survey company Sky High Technology, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary, has appointed transport survey expert **Jon McGivern** to manage the company's latest office in Cardiff. Mr McGivern joins the company as regional manager for Wales and the south-west of England following over 15 years' experience in the transport survey sector, working on both a consultancy and employed basis. He has worked on large projects for clients such as Mott MacDonald and Cardiff Council. The office will serve clients in Wales and the south-west of England.



Mouchel worked with the Highways Agency to develop Active Traffic Management

Mouchel

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The company provides more reliable roads, teaching and learning environments, sustainable energy and waste solutions, and accessible public services. Mouchel helps its clients to find better ways to run their own services and to reap the rewards of investment in technology and systems.

The current company is a result of the merger in 2003 of Mouchel and Parkman. After further acquisitions, Mouchel has an order book worth around £2bn, more than 11,500 employees and 114 offices across the UK.

Around a third of Mouchel's staff are employed in the company's high-

ways business and are recognised as among the UK's leaders in the sector. It operates in areas that cover the entire lifecycle of a highway from planning through design, operation, maintenance and optimisation.

In network operations, Mouchel is MAC service provider in Areas 1, 3, 9 and 13 for the Highways Agency, as well having contracts in North West Scotland for Transport for Scotland, with Transport for London, several London boroughs and the City of Westminster.

Mouchel has the largest intelligent transport systems (ITS) consultancy business in the UK. It works closely with organisations that operate road and transport networks providing solutions to manage congestion and improve safety. Alongside the Highways Agency, Mouchel developed the Active Traffic Management concept that is successfully used on the M42

and is being introduced across the most congested parts of the motorway network.

Mouchel announced in January that it had been commissioned to deliver the ITS Masterplan for the Roads and Transport Authority of Dubai. Similarly, Mouchel is transferring its network operations skills to Australia, where a joint venture with a local partner has been established.

The business is also a key delivery partner of new road and bridge design schemes for all tiers of highway authorities.

Mouchel has combined its operations, technology traffic management and enforcement expertise to enter the parking market offering services ranging from on street-civil enforcement, cashless parking technology, CCTV and e-permit applications to provision of market leading software and back-room support.

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Contact: Steve Ashley 07976 456419

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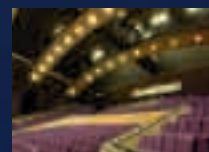
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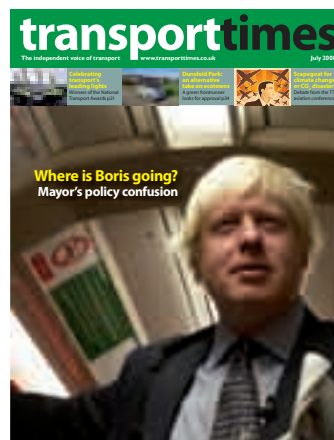
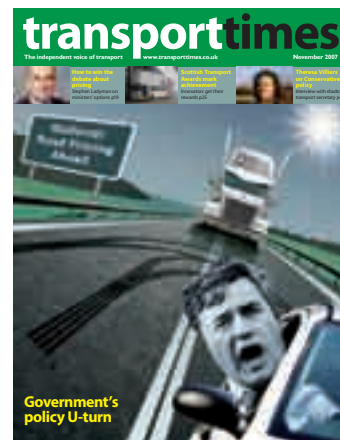
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- CEng, MICE, MIStructE etc desirable

Traffic Signals Specialist

£30 – £38k

Location; Gatwick

Client facing Project and Operational Manager for Traffic Signalling Systems, and associated technologies and projects.

- UTMCI, ANPR, CCTV, Communications (Data/Voice/Video), UTC, RMS, SCOOT
- HND/HNC in engineering or equivalent
- Sector 8 accredited
- Production of design, technical and operational documentation including safety RA's, MS's & HSP
- System design and maintenance of traffic signalling systems
- Test and commissioning technology systems, including configuration and optimisation of new and existing systems
- Testing and street-trials including associated documentation

Highways Project Manager

£35 – £45k

Location; West Sussex

Professionals are required to manage the delivery of highways services ensuring project requirements and client specifications are fully met. You will act as the main point of contact with client Project Managers, be managing client relationships and winning new business.

- Feasibility and preliminary design of highways schemes, major improvement schemes, traffic calming, safety schemes, junction improvements, cycleway schemes and local highway improvements
- Degree in Civil Engineering and chartered status
- Team management experience
- Conversant with highways design software

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