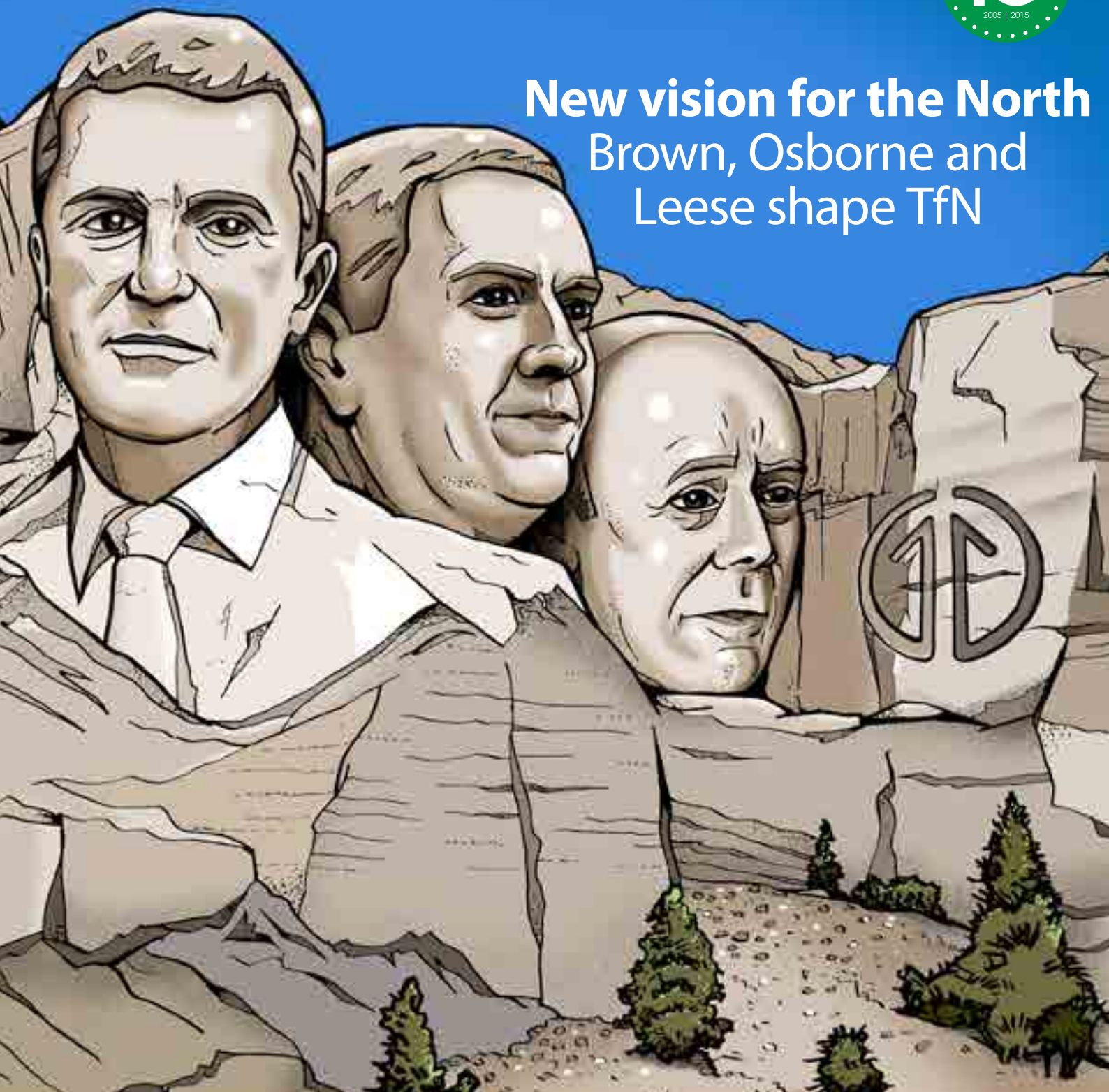


## New vision for the North Brown, Osborne and Leese shape TfN



### One man's vision

We talk to Transport for the North's new chief executive David Brown  
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### National Transport Awards

Biggest ever audience celebrates innovation and success  
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Cover illustration:  
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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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#### Printer

Buxton Press Ltd  
Palace Road  
Buxton  
Derbyshire SK17 6AE

**ISSN** 1759-1015

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HPC Publishing  
Drury Lane  
St Leonards-on-Sea  
East Sussex  
TN38 9BJ

# transporttimes

issue no: 127 November 2015

## Decisive moment on the road to devolution

**T**he momentum is now unstoppable. Transport for the North, the organisation conceived as an agency to speak with one voice on strategic transport priorities for the north of England, and envisaged as having a crucial role to play in rebalancing the economy, this week reached a decisive stage.

Its new chief executive began work on Monday, and on Wednesday this week the Government unveiled its promised proposals to put the organisation on a statutory footing. In effect this week saw the creation of Transport for the North as a permanent body.

The coordination between the transport authorities and other stakeholders in the North, which it was feared would be lost when the Northern Way was wound up during the last parliament, will now become an established feature of the political landscape, in a welcome move away from over-centralised decision-making.

Moreover the government proposals also allow for similar bodies to be set up to cover other regions of the UK, where groups of local authorities seek to collaborate, and (presumably) demonstrate an ability to do so. Second in line after Transport for the North is a body evolving from the (east and west) Midlands Connect Group (which it appears will go by the name of the Midlands Engine, to match the Northern Powerhouse).

But what powers should the new organisations have?

The proposals appear to limit TfN-style bodies' duties to advising transport ministers on investment priorities in their areas and on strategic transport schemes to boost growth.

TfN can be expected to have a strong role in drawing up proposals for the next five-year rail investment plan, to begin in 2019, and for the second Roads



**Should Transport for the North become a delivery body like TfL or Transport Scotland?**

Investment Strategy, due to run from 2020. Through Rail North, it will also exercise a joint management role over the Northern and TransPennine rail franchises.

For now, though, responsibility for managing capital spending will continue to flow through the national agencies Network Rail and Highways England.

But, in due course, should Transport for the North become a delivery body like TfL or Transport Scotland? Will we move to a situation where capital budgets are devolved and TfN acts as a client in the future?

Clearly the constituent city-region authorities of the north would aspire to this in the longer term. The Government is likely to adopt a cautious approach, however, waiting to see how effectively the new body works in practice before making this further move. Transfer of further powers is likely to depend on how successful TfN is in its work on prioritising transport schemes. Even given the experience of the authorities in the North of working together, this could still be something of a challenge, given that the TfN Partnership Board which will guide it consists of 24 members (10 local authority representatives,

10 local enterprise partnership representatives and a representative from Highways England, HS2, Network Rail and the DfT).

In this issue, long-standing Northern Way transport director John Jarvis argues in favour of a form of joint management of Network Rail and Highways England interests in the North. That would clearly be a welcome and logical step, and given the North's track record of effective collaboration over the last decade or so, would not require a particularly big leap of faith on the part of the DfT.

For now, TfN has been given only a meagre budget of £10m a year for the next three years. This is unlikely to allow it to do much more than cover its running costs and its continuing work on developing a long-term pan-northern strategy, and is not likely to go far in advancing Oyster-style ticketing in the North, part of the brief it was given by chancellor George Osborne in his July Budget.

Nevertheless, this week's developments represent a decisive moment in progress to a more devolved transport planning regime – especially given the provisions that allow TfN-style bodies to be replicated nationwide.

Indeed, with considerable prescience, Jim Steer in this issue proposes an elegant structure of subnational transport bodies to cover Britain – for the North, the Midlands, the South East and the South West of England, plus Transport for London, Transport Scotland and a body for Wales. Such a structure would give each region the scale to negotiate effectively at government level.

The way forward is becoming clear. With the aim of rebalancing the economy and putting the future of our regions in their own hands, it cannot come too soon.

**David Fowler, editor**  
**Transport Times**



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# Transport for the North by proposals for statutory



Transport for the North will seek to improve connections between the north of England's cities

By David Fowler

**T**ransport for the North has been put on solid foundations with the appointment of a chief executive and the announcement of legislative proposals to give the organisation a statutory role.

David Brown, former director-general of Merseytravel, joined the new organisation this week as chief executive and will start to put together a team to develop and put into practice a far reaching strategy for improved transport connections.

The Government announced on Wednesday its proposals to put Transport for the North and other sub-national transport bodies on a statutory footing. It had previously announced that the powers would be created via amendments to the Department for Communities and Local Government's Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill, currently going through Parliament. It is envisaged that TfN could gain statutory status by 2017. The East/West Midlands partnership Midlands Connect is set to be next in the queue.

Sir Richard Leese, leader of Manchester City Council and interim chair of TfN, said: "Statutory status will ultimately enable TfN to implement real change, transforming Northern connectivity to rebalance the country's economy." A permanent

chair of the organisation is to be appointed by the end of the year.

TfN is currently focusing on developing its updated strategy for connectivity in the North of England, to be published next spring. It is expected to work closely with the new National Infrastructure Commission. A joint report with the Government

giving an update on progress will be published later this autumn.

Mr Brown has been chief executive/director-general of Merseytravel since 2013. He was previously director-general of the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, which he joined in 2000, and before that held several positions with British Rail's Regional Railways North West. He led the establishment of Rail North, which brings together local authorities throughout the north of England in a body to develop regional and local economic, transport and strategic objectives for the rail industry and which will jointly manage the new Northern and TransPennine franchises alongside the DfT.

It has yet to become clear what TfN's precise role will be – will it be limited to strategy and influence, as the Northern Way was, or could it become a fully-fledged operational and project delivery organisation on the lines of Transport for London, with devolved budgets to match? The govern-

ment proposals suggest powers will be limited to a role in advising ministers on investment priorities and on strategic transport schemes to boost growth, as well as planning for the long term.

However, writing in *Transport Times*, consultant John Jarvis, former director of Transport for the Northern Way, proposes that TfN should have a co-management role of Network Rail and Highways England interests in the North. And Jim Steer argues that TfN could act as the blueprint for a series of super-regional transport planning authorities covering the North, the Midlands, the South East and the South West of England, alongside Transport for London, Transport Scotland and a body for Wales.

Meanwhile in its latest State of the North report, thinktank IPPR North sets out a series of tests and benchmarks for the success of the Northern Powerhouse.

It should, the organisation argues, generate "a better type of economic growth" that combines

## All directions point North

By John Jarvis

**W**hat powers and duties should Transport for the North have long term? To what extent should TfN become a delivery body – or should its sole focus be as an advisory body to the secretary of state on strategic priorities? Do Transport for London and Transport Scotland offer appropriate models for the North?

These are questions that are now being debated. The Government this week set out proposals to enable sub-national transport bodies, established at the request of local areas, to be put on a statutory footing.

The proposals envisage these bodies will initially advise the secretary of state on strategic transport schemes and investment priorities. But over time the

secretary of state may go on to devolve additional responsibilities for decision-making and delivery.

TfN is leading the way – it is already established as an informal partnership with £30m of government funding, a chief executive, David Brown, in post, work in hand on a prioritised list of scheme options to be produced in time for next spring's Budget, and a central role in rebalancing the economy.

With a population of 15 million people the North also has scale – if it were a state, it would rank eighth largest in the EU.

Each of the North's city regions require strong transport bodies in their own right, focused on their sub-regional transport requirements, with devolved powers and controls to take their own decisions. Devolution deals in place and in prospect are steps towards bringing this about.

TfN adds the wider focus on city to city links across the North, and with the rest of the UK and globally. TfN provides the opportunity for the North to speak with one voice on strategic priorities, to give confidence that it can deliver for the North and do more.

The new body will need to work well with Network Rail, Highways England, HS2 Ltd, the Infrastructure Commission, the DfT and the Treasury. It's a crowded stage, but TfN is uniquely placed to provide a single northern voice on strategic priorities. And from the start, through Rail North, northern authorities will jointly manage the new Northern and TransPennine franchises.

Looking ahead, why not some form of joint management of Network Rail and Highways England interests in the North as well – even if full devolution, as



# buoyed status

rising productivity with more jobs and higher wages; it must "liberate the potential of the region's people" through huge improvements to the development of skills. It requires investment in future success, particularly in encouraging innovation and building the infrastructure needed for the 21st century, and it must rejuvenate local democracy.

To allow economic benefits of agglomeration between the cities of the north to be realised, a benchmark for the third test is that "levels of commuter travel between the major cities of the north of England should reach the levels we would expect to see in similar metro-regions in Europe".

It adds: "The plans currently being developed by Transport for the North are expected to be transformational in this regard, creating a much broader labour market geography than we have currently."

Jim Steer, page 13

in Scotland, is in much longer grass? In any case, delivery powers will be required for early wins like pan-northern smart ticketing and for project management and procurement, should TfN play a delivery role in new road and rail links currently being studied.

There is an established track record in the North of working together on transport. The new challenge is to extend the benefits – with the prize of additional devolved responsibilities in view.

If the North's city regions are becoming more like Transport for London, is TfN set to become more like Transport Scotland?

**John Jarvis established John Jarvis Consulting in 2011 and is associate director with Greengauge 21. He was formerly Transport Director at the Northern Way.**

# DfT agrees to 30% cuts as spending review deadline approaches

By David Fowler

**T**ransport is one of four Whitehall departments which have agreed to a 30% cut in day to day spending over the next four years.

Chancellor George Osborne made the announcement this week, a fortnight before he is due to announce details of the spending review to the House of Commons.

The Department for Transport, along with Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Communities and Local Government, and the Treasury itself, will make cuts of 8% on average in so-called resource spending over the next four years. Transport campaigners voiced fears that everyday transport, including buses and provision for safer cycling, would suffer as a result of the cuts.

Mr Osborne said: "These savings will be achieved by a combination of further efficiencies in departments, closing low value programmes, and focusing on our priorities as a country." Details will be announced on 25 November.

He stressed that the provisional settlements applied to the day to day spending of the departments, not to their capital budgets.

Stephen Joseph, chief executive of the Campaign for Better Transport, said: "We fear that this huge cut in spending will hit everyday transport, the transport networks people use on a daily basis, while big road and rail schemes will remain untouched. We await details, but we fear this will mean more potholes in local roads, more cuts in local bus services, and less funding for safe cycling and walking routes."

He called on the Government to invest in a Transport into Work fund, which would help overcome transport barriers to employment and would replace the successful Local Sustainable Transport Fund. CBT also called on the Government to



use its rail franchise premium income, estimated to reach £3.7bn by 2020, to introduce fairer fares and flexible ticketing for part-time workers, such as three-day week season tickets.

At the launch of the National Infrastructure Commission two weeks ago Mr Osborne said that infrastructure would be "at the heart" of the spending review. He gave a commitment that the Government would spend £100m on infrastructure during this parliament, on roads and rail as well as flood defences, broadband and other schemes. There will be full funding for the £15bn Roads Investment Strategy.

The Treasury is planning a range of asset sales through which it expects to raise billions of pounds which will be ploughed back into infrastructure projects.

At the same time Mr Osborne confirmed the membership of the Infrastructure Commission. They include former deputy prime minister Lord Heseltine, former Olympic Delivery Authority chair Sir John Armitt, and Volterra Partners senior adviser Bridget Rosewell. They will work alongside chair of the commission Lord Adonis to produce a report at the start of each parliament making recommendations and prioritising infrastructure projects (TT last month)

The commission's immediate focus, on which it will report by next spring's Budget, are connectivity between cities in the North of England, priorities for large scale transport improvements in London, and energy.

Mr Osborne said: "Infrastructure is about people's lives, economic security and the sort of country we want to live in. I am determined to shake Britain out of its inertia on infrastructure and end the situation where we trail our rivals when it comes to building everything from the housing to the power stations that our children will need. We need to think long-term and deliver a cross-party consensus on what we need to build."

Lord Adonis said: "For Britain to get on with the job of delivering high-quality infrastructure that benefits everyone, you need more than just a commitment to invest – you need long-term forward plans and the maximum possible consensus. That is what the National Infrastructure Commission is here to promote."

- Media reports last week that suggested that the DfT is planning to appoint a private sector consortium including CH2M, Mace and PwC to manage Highways England's roads programme have had no official confirmation.

# Quality contract decision stokes franchising controversy



Operators Go-Ahead and Stagecoach welcomed the decision

**T**yne and Wear transport authority Nexus has reacted angrily to the rejection of its proposals to introduce a bus quality contract scheme. The proposals met only two of five public interest criteria, the quality contract scheme board convened to consider the proposals said last week. Nexus had argued that the scheme, under which it would take franchising powers over bus services, was necessary to protect services in the light of diminishing grants for the authority to support bus services.

The decision came less than two weeks after chancellor George Osborne signed a devolution deal with the North East Combined Authority which included giving the authority responsibility for franchised bus services, as had been the case with Greater Manchester's deal.

The QCS board, chaired by traffic commissioner for the north-east of England Kevin Rooney, convened hearings into the proposals last July. In its report it found that two of the public interest criteria would be met. The scheme would improve the quality

of bus services, and it would contribute to the implementation of local transport policies.

However, the board found that the scheme could not demonstrate that it would increase the use of buses, because its affordability had not been demonstrated. Nexus had modelled four specific risks but had not applied an optimism bias on top of this. The board said that "the risk contingency was likely to be spent on 31% of possible outcomes" and "there is therefore a likelihood that the scheme will run out of money". In addition there was an issue of cash flow in the early years of the scheme.

It also concluded that the proposals did not provide value for money. "Errors in the modelling" had overstated the benefits, in particular those associated with simplified ticketing.

Finally, the impacts on bus operators were "wholly disproportionate to the benefits" to travellers and the wider public. The negative cash impact on the three operators was estimated to be in the range of £85m-226m. The board pointed out that the upper figure was of the same order of magnitude as the fine imposed on Barclays for manipu-

lating the foreign exchange markets. "The board is firmly of the view that Parliament never had in mind that the introduction of a quality contract scheme would lead to cash impact on businesses of the order of hundreds of millions of pounds", it said.

It adds that a voluntary partnership agreement put forward by the three bus companies could potentially produce benefits of a similar order of magnitude to those of the quality contract scheme. However the board criticises the operators for being slow in coming forward with proposals: "It is hard to avoid concluding that the operators put forward as little as possible until the very last minute."

In its summary the board adds: "This is the first time that the 15-year-old legislation supporting quality contract schemes has been put to the test. It seems to us that the legislators probably had in mind that it would be tested on a rather smaller scale first." It continues: "Everything that Nexus was trying to assess was a novel intervention" with little research to draw on. "It is the board's view that they have done exceptionally well to get where they have got to today."

It adds that, regarding the voluntary partnership agreement, "Nexus can be proud that it has led three bus companies to put forward a proposal that is in itself novel and groundbreaking".

Nexus managing director Toby Hughes said: "We are extremely disappointed. We want to introduce a simple, affordable and integrated public transport system in this area, and the board recognises our proposal could achieve this. It should not be this difficult."

"The board's opinion is that we should not go ahead largely because we are not providing compensation to bus companies for profits they may lose in the future. We simply disagree with many of the board's conclusions, and we will be discussing next steps with the North East Combined Authority."

Stagecoach group chief executive Martin Griffiths said: "We welcome the board's confirmation that the core franchising proposal was unaffordable, inflexible, high risk and not in the public interest."

The company added that "the decision has clear implications for bus franchising powers linked to the government's devolution programme. The forthcoming Buses Bill must provide a legislative framework for enhanced partnerships, and ensure any franchising proposals are subject to proper safeguards and a transparent public interest test."

David Brown, until this week director-general of Merseytravel and who leads on bus issues for passenger transport executive group PTEG, said: "PTEG has consistently argued that, where transport authorities wish to introduce the franchising of bus services, the quality contract process is disproportionate and too costly, given that it was meant to make franchising a more realistic option."

"The forthcoming Buses Bill needs a fair and proportionate process by which bus franchising can be introduced in line with the wider devolution plans that city regions are agreeing with Government in order to promote growth."



# Virgin and Stagecoach call for new approach to inter-city rail competition

**S**tagecoach and Virgin Trains have called for open auctions of capacity on intercity routes to allow direct competition between operators.

In response to a consultation by the Competition and Markets Authority, the companies call for the new approach to be piloted on the East Coast, West Coast and Great Western main lines.

The new system would replace franchising on these routes as well as the “confused and damaging” open access regime under which non-franchised operators can “selectively run competing services without paying the same access charges or meeting the same specification”.

The CMA consultation, which closed last month, proposed four possible options for reform from 2023: retaining the existing market structure, but with significantly increased open access operations; appointing two franchisees for each franchise; adopting franchise areas with more

overlap; or licensing multiple operators, subject to conditions.

Virgin and Stagecoach joint ventures operate both the East Coast and West Coast main lines. Stagecoach also operates South West Trains and East Midlands Trains. Open access operators First Hull Trains and Grand Central operate on the East Coast line to destinations not served by the main franchise.

The new “licensing” system proposed by the companies would allow competition in the market rather than for the market, as in the franchised system, they argue.

Under the new system, bundles of train paths would be auctioned by the DfT, the Office of Rail and Road, or another independent government body, based on a nationally agreed capacity statement.

Stagecoach and Virgin say this would allow for multiple operators to compete on a route on an equal footing, encouraging lower fares and improved services,

and making the most efficient use of scarce network capacity.

Franchising, with no open access arrangements, would continue to be the best approach for all other routes, such as south-east commuter networks, the companies argue, because capacity and commercial constraints mean full in-market competition is not likely to be viable.

The document argues: “There is strong evidence that competition can deliver benefits to passengers through lower fares, better service quality and innovation. The current confused and damaging mix of both open access services and franchised networks does not provide a level playing field, with biased track access and ticketing regimes.”

It adds that this has reduced profitability on the East Coast line. “This hybrid cherry-picking arrangement offers poor value for money for taxpayers, is an inefficient use of network capacity and, at worst, risks franchise failure. For example, the East

Coast franchise has produced significantly lower revenue growth compared to other inter-city franchises over the last 15 years because open access has been abstracting revenue and blocking timetable optimisation.”

The companies argue that franchising has been “a proven and effective model” in other parts of the network.

The CMA launched its project to examine the scope for increasing competition in passenger rail services in Great Britain, and to see whether this could lead to better value for money and improve service quality, in January this year. The exercise is a “policy project”, not a formal investigation or market study.

Launching the consultation in July, it said the evidence suggested that a material increase in on-rail competition would result in benefits for passengers and taxpayers. The authority is expected to produce a final report, setting out its recommendations, early in the new year.

## Chiltern opens new services between Oxford and London

**T**he first new rail line connecting a major city to the capital in 100 years opened last month when Chiltern inaugurated services between Oxford Parkway and London Marylebone.

The new rail link, a £320m investment, includes a new station at Bicester Village as well as the new parkway. It was officially opened by David Cameron and Network Rail chair Sir Peter Hendy.

Chiltern’s new service offers Oxford commuters an alternative to travelling to London via Reading and Paddington and is expected to attract an additional 250,000 return commuter journeys each year. Journey times are similar to those on Great Western services but Chiltern argues door-to-door journeys could be quicker

using the parkway station, which is next to the A34 and close to the A40 and A44. It has capacity for 1,500 cars.

The station at Bicester Village will create a direct connection to the shopping destination from London for the first time, with a travel time of 46 minutes from Marylebone.

Chiltern Railways, which has a unique 20-year franchise, conceived and designed the new line and stations and will operate the trains. It contributed £130m to the cost. Network Rail contributed the rest and built the track and stations on time and budget.

The project entailed linking the existing Oxford-Bicester branch line to the Chiltern main line, and improving and doubling the branch line. The project also forms the first part of the East-West



**The new line is expected to attract an additional 0.25m commuter journeys annually**

Rail project to connect Oxford to Bedford and Cambridge.

Services are due to be extended into Oxford itself next year when new track and platforms are completed.

# Electric cars not the sole solution to air quality, says report



Electric cars: "Only part of the jigsaw"

**R**elying on electric vehicles to improve air quality in British cities will be too expensive and take too long, says a new report.

The report, *A clear choice for the UK: technology options of tackling air pollution* was published by trade association the Environmental Industries Commission, and based on modelling work by consultant Temple group.

It examined the costs and air quality benefits of introducing five pollution control technologies. These were widespread introduction of electric cars; replacing old diesel cars with the latest models when tougher emissions standards come into force in 2018;

fitting 10,000 older buses with the latest emissions control exhaust systems; switching to renewable diesel for construction site generators; and applying photocatalytic treatments to polluted roads.

The modelling showed that no technology is likely by itself to make significant enough cuts in air pollution. Electric cars could cost five times as much per tonne of pollution reduction compared with the other technologies modelled. Different technologies had different strengths and weaknesses – for example, whether they could be targeted on pollution hotspots and whether they reduced CO<sub>2</sub> as well as NO<sub>x</sub> and particulate emissions.

The report recommends that older buses outside London should be retrofitted with emissions control technology. The planned reduction of the LPG duty differential should be reconsidered, and any future change in fuel taxation should take account of the impact on local air pollution as well as CO<sub>2</sub>. A scrappage scheme should be introduced to encourage the owners of Euro 4 and older diesel cars to replace them with new Euro 6c models (once Euro 6c is introduced, and if the promised emission performance is achieved in real world conditions) or LPG cars.

The report also calls for the scheme to restrict emissions

from construction site machinery, recently introduced in London by the mayor, to be properly enforced, extended to include alternative fuels and introduced in other UK cities.

Investment in development of zero-emission vehicles such as electric cars should be balanced by funding for trials of innovative technologies which offer realistic prospects of cost-effective air pollution reductions, such as photo-catalytic treatments. Speed limits on dual carriageways should be reduced to 60mph where they pass through air quality management areas.

The EIC adds that a statutory Air Quality Committee should be established, based on the Climate Change Committee. Like the CCC, the new committee would be required to report annually to Parliament on progress in meeting legal air pollution limits and on the effectiveness of government policies in delivering progress.

EIC director Matthew Farrow said: "Britain has an air pollution crisis. Electric vehicles have the potential to transform air quality, but they are only one part of the jigsaw, and in the short term, they appear to be relatively expensive compared with the other technologies that are modelled in our report.

"To protect public health we must make meaningful cuts in air pollution as soon as possible, and the truth is we need to use all the cost-effective technologies at our disposal."

The report is available at [www.eic-uk.co.uk](http://www.eic-uk.co.uk)

## Autonomous vehicle research launched

**J**aguar Land Rover and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council have announced a jointly funded £11m autonomous vehicle research programme.

The research will take place at ten UK universities and the Transport Research Laboratory. It follows a joint call by the EPSRC and the car maker for research proposals focused on developing fully autonomous cars, under the title *Towards Autonomy – Smart*

*and Connected Control (TASCC)*. Five projects were selected and Jaguar Land Rover will be leading the collaboration with the successful research groups.

TRL is the only non-university research institute involved in the programme and it will work alongside the University of Surrey, Warwick University and Imperial College London on a project to understand how distributed control systems and cloud computing can be integrated with vehicles. The project,

which will be led by Dr Mehrdad Dianati from the University of Surrey, aims to design and validate a secure cloud-based distributed control framework for connected and autonomous cars.

TRL chief scientist Alan Stevens said: "The project will explore how increasingly automated and connected vehicles can operate safely and securely when connected to each other and, via the road infrastructure, to cloud-based resources. The aim is to develop a secure framework that

will allow the implementation of safe and robust semi-autonomous functions on future cars in the short term, and fully autonomous cars in the long term."

Business secretary Sajid Javid said: "The Government has no intention of being a passenger in innovation, so it is pioneering autonomous car technology in partnership with industry. This programme and the winning projects are a perfect example of this and will help to keep us at the forefront of the robotics revolution."



**Keynote Speaker:**

Andrew Jones MP  
Transport Minister

**Confirmed Speakers**

Derek Mackay MSP  
Scottish Transport Minister



David Brown  
Chief Executive,  
Transport for the North



Dr Jon Lamonte,  
Chief Executive, Transport  
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Managing Director - Surface  
Transport, Transport for London

The second annual UK Bus Summit will be held in London at the QEII Centre, Westminster on 11th February 2016 and once again is supported by the Department for Transport.

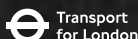
As before, it aims to bring together operators, local authorities and the bus supply industry to encourage the industry to work together to stimulate patronage growth, and to raise awareness of the role the bus can play in stimulating the economy, getting people to work, reducing emissions, providing access for the elderly and tackling inequality.

**Additional confirmed speakers include:**

Martin Griffiths, Chief Executive, Stagecoach  
Giles Fearnley, Managing Director - UK Bus, FirstGroup Plc  
David Brown, Chief Executive, Go-Ahead Group Plc  
Kevin O'Connor, Managing Director - UK Bus, Arriva  
Nick Forbes, Leader, Newcastle City Council  
Prof David Begg, Chief Executive, Transport Times  
Anthony Smith, Chief Executive, Transport Focus  
Claire Haigh, Chief Executive, Greener Journeys  
David Young, Interim Director General, SYPT  
Andy Eastlake, Managing Director, Low CVP  
Ken Scott, Group Engineering Director, Alexander Dennis Limited  
Neill Birch, Director - Public Transport Operations, Systra  
Hilary Chipping, Acting Chief Executive, South East Midlands LEP  
Alastair Munro, Engineering Director, Optare

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# We are building a railway for the 21st century

Investment in rail offers the opportunity to revitalise civic pride and bring about a resurgence of interest in British engineering, says **Claire Perry**



It is one of the most remarkable transport achievements of our age that in the 20 years since privatisation, the number of passengers using Britain's railways has doubled. What's more, our railway today is one of the safest and most reliable in Europe. Yet the main inter-city network is little changed from that built a century and a half ago. So while the efficiency of the railway has improved dramatically, the trains and stations that passengers use have suffered from long-term underinvestment. It's hardly surprising that along the way, Britain's love affair with the railway has fallen off the tracks.

The next two decades will be the most important for rail in this country since the pioneering Victorian era. If the coalition government was all about articulating our vision for rail and making the case for investment, now it's all about delivery. But this time, we're not just investing to maintain old infrastructure. We are creating a modern railway that will change the way Britain thinks about the industry.

Wherever you look throughout the railway, there's growth and activity. We have finished tunnelling for Crossrail and we're building stations for the new line in London. The new Hitachi train plant has just opened in the North East. We're getting on with electrifying the trans-Pennine, Great Western and Midland main lines. And a few weeks ago I helped open the National Training Academy for Rail in Northampton.

But for me, what really brought home the importance of what we're doing was the rapturous reception that greeted the recent reopenings of Birmingham New Street and Manchester Victoria stations – not so long ago rated among the worst stations in Britain.

The amazing public response didn't just reflect the investment

in better services. There was also genuine civic pride in the way people reacted – pride in what the new stations said about their cities. The old, overcrowded, gloomy buildings were replaced by light, spacious, modern transport hubs; places where millions of visitors each year would form their first impressions of our biggest cities.

This was part of a process of renewal which began with St Pancras, and continued with King's Cross. It's a process that Crossrail and Thameslink will continue. For the first time in generations, people can see evidence of bold, visionary design on our railway, and are beginning to appreciate what a modern railway could do for this country.

**A rapturous reception greeted the recent reopenings of Birmingham New Street and Manchester Victoria stations**

Of course, capacity, connectivity and reliability of journeys are most important. But there's a growing awareness that we can build a world class, state of the art railway that can bind the nation together. And there's an excitement about the opportunities that such a fast-growing industry can provide – not least a resurgence in British railway engineering.

The biggest opportunity will be HS2. Preparations are moving quickly ahead. Over the summer we started recruiting for HS2's design panel (its members were announced this week). Lord Adonis – who championed HS2 as Transport Secretary in the last Labour government – joined HS2 Ltd's board. And soon, we will announce plans to take forward HS2's northern sections.

A few weeks ago, the chancellor started the bidding process for phase one, with contracts worth a total of £11.8bn, including some of the biggest in UK construction history. HS2 Ltd has been touring round the country to engage firms interested in bidding so they can start attracting the talented staff required to develop the new line. To support this, we have appointed Terry Morgan, the chairman of Crossrail, to develop a transport skills strategy, including 30,000 new rail and road apprenticeships in this parliament. And in 2017, the National College for High Speed Rail will open its doors.

But we need to attract a bigger pool of talent. For example, we desperately need to attract more women into engineering and construction. Diversity today is not about tokenism or political correctness. It's about making the industry better, and attracting the brightest and best people from all sections of society.

To achieve that, we must make a career in engineering or infrastructure more appealing to a wider selection of youngsters, and change the way we promote the industry. We need to sell the value of engineering qualifications, and how those skills are appreciated by employers across the economy – so an engineering degree is not perceived as narrowing your future opportunities, but precisely the opposite.

HS2 gives us the perfect opportunity to do all these things, and many more. It will help us market the whole railway. It will help us develop our supply chain. It will give us a clean slate to design ticketing, stations, and passenger facilities. And it will provide an opportunity to finish the job started with HS1 and St Pancras – to make Britain a 21st century railway nation.

**Claire Perry is minister for rail and Conservative MP for Devizes**



# Grand design for regional transport emerges

Following the example of the north of England and the Midlands, new government proposals will enable the creation of a number of English super-regions to exercise devolved transport powers

It's always good to see one government department helping another. In this case it's the Department for Communities and Local Government, which has added a transport provision to its Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill, which passed its second reading last month. Local authority alliances will be given powers to establish statutory regional transport bodies under amendments to the bill.

Speaking at the second reading debate, communities secretary Greg Clark said: "We intend that the bill will also allow for the creation of sub-national transport bodies, Transport for the North being one, so we will want to reflect the powers to enable such bodies to be established."

Later the same day, I listened to transport minister Andrew Jones tell a meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Rail in the North Group that the legislation would be placed before the House of Commons "before the end of the month" to establish Transport for the North (TfN) on a statutory basis to put into effect the transport elements of the Government's "Northern Powerhouse" programme. These details were announced on Wednesday.

The minister also said that Rail North was on course to take up its role from 1 January next year as an equal partner with the DfT in managing the replacement Northern and TransPennine Express franchises, expected to start next April. The Rail North group of 29 local authorities, with its established voting and governance arrangements, will be "folded into" TfN.

Recently appointed Rail North head David Hoggarth told me that it was correct to regard TfN's chief executive, David Brown, as his boss. An aspiration is for Rail North to co-ordinate a northern bid for rail funding for control period 6 (from 2019-2024), with the input of all parties involved in rail management in the region.

And so we see coming into existence a devolved statutory planning and delivery organisation for the north of England.

The North has ten years' experience of collaborating at this level, using its collective clout and overcoming parochial interests to get an effective audience with Westminster. Its initial reward was the commitment to the Northern Hub rail investment programme. Nowadays it's a much wider ambition – the Northern Powerhouse, with IPPR North recently calling for £50bn public investment in the region.

In dealing with Westminster, seeking financial and other powers, size matters. The reality is that the 39 local enterprise partnerships in existence today

**What's missing is the super-region level that can be trusted with decisions over large budgets, Scotland or London style**

don't form a viable counterpart to the deal-making culture of contemporary government. City regions with mayors and counties (Cornwall being an early example) will get fresh powers under the devolution bill. But what's missing is the super-region level that can be trusted with decisions over large budgets, Scotland or London style.

The north of England is not alone in spotting the opportunity. Jon Collins, leader of Nottingham City Council, co-chairs the Midlands Connect Partnership and has said: "We welcome this announcement and we will now sit down together and with the Government to explore the options. Moving to a more formal arrangement may help us speak with one voice on transport."

So here's an emerging picture of the geography of de-

volved transport: a pattern of English super-regions alongside the devolved nations.

In the North, TfN's coverage embraces the territory of three former regional development agencies – the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the North East. Midlands Connect embraces the East and West Midlands.

The south-east and east of England would do well to join together, adopt an open engagement with London, and form a wider South East authority: in railway terms, a Network South East to complement TfL; in highway terms, a super-region connected by the M25. With Thameslink and Crossrail 2 linking the shire counties on either side of London, it could make good sense to have a statutory authority to work alongside TfL in planning service development.

So that just leaves south-west England. The region extends over 200 miles east-west; it has no natural neighbours with which to conjoin. But it has shared interests with south Wales and the Cardiff city region. This points to the need for these subnational agencies to seek cross-boundary partnerships where this would be helpful – at least on an ad hoc basis, just as Cheshire East and the Potteries are currently seeking to achieve.

It's never good to be left on the margins. City-region definitions – with part of Sheffield's catchment lying in the north Midlands, for example – already anticipates this need.

The North, The Midlands, the South East and the South West: what could be simpler? Add in London, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and there is a structure that could be truly effective for transport devolution. It may not be anybody's grand design, but it's starting to happen.

**Jim Steer is director and founder of Steer Davies Gleave.**



# Potholes, stacks, signs – and road users' views

Transport Focus took on the additional responsibility of representing users of roads earlier this year. Now, new research is starting to reveal the public's priorities



**P**otholes: just a local issue? That's what you might think, but strategic road network users told us otherwise.

The quality of road surfaces was their top priority for improvement, followed by safer design and maintenance of roads, better behaved drivers and the better management of roadworks.

Transport Focus found this out during our first piece of research since we took on the new responsibility of representing road users earlier this year. We're already using this work to challenge Highways England and the Department for Transport to show how they are putting road users' needs at the heart of their work.

What else have we been up to? We're currently working on a new version of the existing Road User Satisfaction Survey. We're keen that the new survey becomes a real tool for improving road users' experiences on our motorways and trunk roads.

I've been out and about on the road network with our new road user director Guy Dangerfield.

As I mentioned road users' priorities for improvement include better road maintenance and management of roadworks. I was particularly interested to see a trial by Highways England of new roadworks signs when I drove through works on the A21 this summer. Distinctive new orange signs draw attention to the human side of the works – "Our Dad works here", "Nobody likes a tailgater" and so on. On two sites, safety barriers and other installations along the roadworks have been given orange makeovers.

Highways England's "Project Orange" is aimed at changing driver behaviour and improving safety. We hear there has been an unusually high level of feedback from users, mainly positive so far. We relayed

back to Highways England our experience, which was broadly positive, although the new signs were only visible once we were already into the work area.

Personally I thought the signs are thought-provoking but need a more meaningful implementation. Some are small, lean precariously weighed down by sandbags, and can get a bit lost – particularly amid all the other standard signing that Highways England is required to display at roadworks.

As we were driving around, the signs we most welcomed were those for motorway service areas! However, we don't really know what makes a good service area from a road user perspective, so we have started planning some research in this area.

**Priorities for improvement included better road maintenance and management of roadworks**

We're also working on a project that we hope we will never put into use. Operation Stack needs little introduction. The queues of lorries on the M20 in Kent – the response to the awful problems at Calais – hit the headlines in a big way during July. But it has been a recurrent, if normally short-lived, nuisance for local traffic in Kent for many years now.

While thankfully we've not had a repeat of the exercise since the summer, we're still working with multiple agencies to ensure the road user voice is heard. As part of this, we have a research project ready to go if Operation Stack is activated again.

We'll ask those caught up in it about their experiences and needs, and use this information to push for better facilities while a longer-term solution is sought.

We wrote to the three lead agencies (Highways England, Kent Police and Kent County Council) to express dissatisfaction with the information available during the last period that Stack was live. We also asked about provisions made for driver welfare and what research was being done to measure the impact of it. We suggested some alternative traffic-control measures as well.

We've also submitted evidence to the Transport Select Committee recently on the work we have been doing and what we'll be doing in the future. You can read a copy of the letter and more about our work on Stack on our website.

Part of my introductory tour involved visiting the DPD parcel distribution centre at Birmingham. We spoke to drivers about their experiences and were invited to have a ride in the cab of an articulated truck. You get a very different view of the road – literally.

You can't speed up or slow down so quickly, momentum is all and overtaking is not that easy. Research is still being carried out, but we will find out more about truck drivers' views on improvements to the strategic road network when we publish the second part of our work in this area.

**Read more about Operation Stack at [www.transportfocus.org.uk/road-users/operation-stack-update](http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/road-users/operation-stack-update)**

**The select committee letter: <http://tinyurl.com/ofu4rnu>**

**Follow Anthony Smith at [@anthonymsmithTF](https://twitter.com/anthonymsmithTF)**

**Anthony Smith is chief executive of Transport Focus.**



# Maintenance squeeze risks a downward spiral

The need to tackle the deteriorating condition of our roads, with an £8bn-plus maintenance backlog, is a cause all road users should get behind, argues **Steve Gooding**

**W**hat are the critical issues in transport?

A stack of airliners circling Heathrow on a foggy morning? A long list of railway projects queued up at the doors of the Treasury? High Speed 2?

All valid. All big issues. But none bigger, in my view, than the humble pothole in the road.

Because it's the pothole that puts an unwelcome jolt into the day of those many millions of us who rely on our roads to get where we need to be, whether that's in a car or a coach, on a bus or a bike. In other words, if you are a transport professional (which you probably are if you're reading *Transport Times*) and you are trying to think what in your world is likely to affect the largest number of people every day, it shouldn't take long to identify road maintenance as the culprit by, and I use the term advisedly, a country mile.

The trouble is that no-one gets invited to a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a road resurfacing. Many of us tend to take the roads for granted, though not everyone. Certainly not the 29,000 drivers who were moved to fight for compensation for damage to their vehicle in the last financial year – our research found that claims were being made at a rate of three every hour, every day of the year.

And when you delve deeper and actually go out and ask people what they think, time and again the condition of the road surface comes out as a major cause for concern. Look at our pre-general election survey of voters' transport priorities; look at research by the Office of Rail and Road; look at the RAC's Annual Report on Motoring.

The condition of our roads is a topic that should create a broad coalition of common interest among disparate groups of road users. Having a decent road

surface is one of the biggest and best investments we can make to encourage cycling. When our roads fall into disrepair bus services, our most-used form of public transport, suffer.

"But," I hear you cry, "do we not have an infrastructure-friendly government, committed to the Road Investment Strategy?"

Yes, the Road Investment Strategy is a huge positive for the strategic road network, and we look to Jim O'Sullivan to make good use of the five-year plan he is responsible for at Highways England. But it was the chancellor of the exchequer who quoted an £8.6bn figure for the cost of the highways maintenance backlog, a backlog

**The backlog manifests itself mainly on the 97% of roads for which local government is responsible**

that manifests itself mainly on the 97% of roads for which local government is responsible.

We often hear that local authority budgets are being squeezed, but do we understand how those budgets are made up? To answer that question we commissioned RAC Foundation trustee David Bayliss to cast his forensic eye over the ways that local roads are funded.

His forthcoming report is illuminating and worrying in equal measure. It paints a picture of dizzying complexity and vulnerable cash flows.

On the capital side there's a block grant from the Department for Transport which decreased in real terms by 18% between 2011-12 and 2014-15 (though at least this ship has been steadied by the guarantee of almost £1bn annually for the next six years). There are one-

off payments to help tackle the impact of bad winter weather.

And there is an array of other funds, among them the Local Growth Fund and the DfT's integrated transport block, which is allocated via local enterprise partnerships – and who should know better than LEPs that a key requirement for economic growth is the health of existing transport networks?

Throw in borrowing and a smattering of PFI schemes, and you find that total annual capital spending over the past couple of years has been running at £1.8bn – the lowest amount since 2001/2.

Road maintenance revenue spending for the local network is funded from a combination of central government money (the bulk of the cash), council tax receipts and business rates. But the money from Whitehall is not ringfenced, which leaves highways officers facing a double whammy: not only is the nominal budget shrinking, it is being eroded further by sums being siphoned off locally to support the growing demands of child and adult social care.

The Local Government Association predicts worse to come. The impact is obvious. Our assets will deteriorate more quickly and the demands on the capital budget – to replace failing infrastructure – will increase. It could become a downward spiral.

We might never be invited to a ribbon-cutting celebration for a maintenance scheme, but the need to return our roads to rude health is a cause which we should all get behind.

**Steve Gooding is director of the RAC Foundation**



**Steve Gooding: "Dizzying complexity and vulnerable cash flows"**

# We need to capitalise on Osborne's momentum

The chancellor's enthusiasm for transport, which has led to the creation of the National Infrastructure Commission, presents a huge opportunity which the industry must grasp, says **Angus Walker**



Angus Walker: "Political interest will fade"

**T**here was widespread enthusiasm for George Osborne's announcement at last month's Conservative Party conference of the creation of a National Infrastructure Commission, with Lord Adonis as its chair. But what does it all really mean for transport?

Stealing a Labour idea, and a former Labour minister to boot, the chancellor announced that the national need for infrastructure would be considered by the new commission, whose other members have also been announced (see page 34). It is pretty much the same proposal that Labour had in its manifesto, down to the name of the body to be created.

Sir John Armitt's independent review of infrastructure, which proposed the commission, was widely praised on its publication, but up to the general election it remained a Labour idea. With Ed Balls, who asked Sir John to undertake his review, having lost his seat and a new leadership team in charge of Labour, the ground was open for Osborne to appropriate the idea.

The commission has been given the task of considering three areas by next year's Budget, two of which are transport-related. They are transport in London and the "Northern Powerhouse" (the third is electricity generation). The second of these includes HS3, the proposed northern east-west higher speed rail link.

How will the commission operate? I imagine it will adopt a similar approach to the Airports Commission, with consultation and the commissioning of expert evidence on what is needed for the different types of infrastructure, leading to recommendations by the commission. That is hard to reconcile with reporting in a mere five months, so it will be interesting to see what is produced by then.

What will it produce? I suspect it will be something like a cross between the National Infrastruc-

ture Plan and national policy statements, possibly replacing both. The former has been produced annually by the Treasury since 2010, but is little more than a list of current and future projects, rather than a plan. The latter are required for various types of nationally significant infrastructure projects; they set out the level of need for them with the impacts that project promoters should assess and inspectors should examine when applications are made. They do not usually specify particular locations for infrastructure, though they can, and have done in the case of nuclear power stations and wastewater infrastructure.

Whether the commission will go further than has been the case

**Whether the commission will go further in specifying where things should be built will be one of the most keenly-watched areas of its work**

so far in specifying where things should be built will be one of the most keenly-watched areas of its work. The national policy statement for roads and railways ("national networks") doesn't currently include any spatial policies, even though where transport infrastructure runs and what it connects are its key features.

The commission's recommendations could be quite significant in encouraging or discouraging particular projects from being brought forward. From then on, the process of applying for development consent, construction and operation will probably be relatively little changed.

Is it a good idea? While politics can never be removed from the process of authorising the country's most significant

projects, it will be helpful to have an evidence-based long-term recommendation for future infrastructure needs to underpin the inevitably political decisions as to what should and shouldn't go ahead. The commission will also be unfettered by five-year parliamentary terms and will be able to plan over a longer period.

The Tories originally opposed the setting up of the commission, saying that it was too "mechanistic", but seem to have come to the realisation that something is needed. It is interesting that when the current regime for planning and gaining consent for nationally significant infrastructure projects was introduced in 2008, declarations of need were for politicians to decide, and the deciding of applications was to be done by an independent body. Soon it will be the other way round: an independent body will declare need, and politicians will decide individual applications.

There is an important question to ask, though. Why did Mr Osborne take this step? It appears that he has become frustrated by a lack of progress in infrastructure development, including transport. Progress has been slow. So Lord Adonis and also Transport for the North, which will work with the commission, will be expected to make progress and quickly.

The whole of the transport sector needs to build on the momentum provided by an enthusiastic chancellor and the new commission. Political interest will fade as the Conservative party turns its attention to the EU referendum and then to choosing its new leader.

The sector needs to get going if it is to make the most of this massive opportunity.

**Angus Walker is a partner at Bircham Dyson Bell**



BIRCHAM DYSON BELL





# Man with a vision

With legislation to create Transport for the North going through Parliament, its new chief executive David Brown is eager to see results, he tells **Jeanette Bowden**

**A**s I arrive for my interview with David Brown in the offices of Transport for Greater Manchester, it seems entirely apt that he has just travelled by rail from Liverpool and I have journeyed from Leeds. These cities are among those specifically targeted to benefit from the improved transport links as advocated by the One North prospectus; our respective journey times would be substantially reduced under its proposed strategy, with rail travel from Leeds to Manchester taking around 30 minutes and the journey time from Liverpool to Manchester halved to 20 minutes, as well as the added dimension of a potential direct link from Liverpool to Manchester Airport.

However, as the newly-appointed chief executive of Transport for the North, who took up his post this week, is keen to emphasise, the plan is as much about generating badly needed additional capacity within the transport and rail infrastructure as shaving minutes off journey times. This is one of the reasons he favours the name "TransNorth Rail" for the proposed rail improvement programme, which

he concedes is "not as sexy" as the emerging tag of High Speed 3, but much more befitting its goals.

He says: "It's not actually high speed, because for a journey of 30 to 40 miles you can't realistically travel at 200 miles an hour." Nevertheless he recognises that current journey times from Leeds to Liverpool of two hours by rail and potentially more by road are not tenable for today's business commuters.

With a CV that includes stints as director general of South Yorkshire PTE (2008-13), followed by chief executive of Merseytravel (which last month won the Integrated Transport Authority of the Year and Ferry Operator of the Year categories at the National Transport Awards), Mr Brown is clearly steeped in the north of England and its transport needs.

He explains that the primary aim behind March's *Northern Powerhouse* report, produced jointly by the north of England transport authorities and the Department for Transport, with Highways England, Network Rail and HS2 Ltd, is to create a plan for strategic transport investment to underpin the Northern Powerhouse

concept. This, in turn, reflects a now widely held belief that, economically, cities of a similar size – both in the UK and elsewhere in Europe – are outperforming those in the north of England and that this is at least partly attributable to a disparity in the quality of strategic transport links.

Following the report's publication in March this year, Transport for the North has undoubtedly become high profile. The budget statement by the chancellor of the exchequer in July further underlined the Government's commitment to its progress, announcing the intention to establish TfN as a statutory body and confirming its three-year funding. The appointment of transport guru Lord Adonis to head the independent infrastructure commission that will assist in prioritising strategic projects became the last piece in the jigsaw.

As Mr Brown is keen to stress, Transport for the North will build on existing commitments – HS2 being just one example – and extend their benefits to the cities across the north of England, including Liverpool,

**“If you're travelling from Bolton to Manchester every day and can't get on the train, you want something to happen now”**

turn to page 18

Smart ticketing (bottom left), closer integration between Northern and TransPennine Express services (top) and improvements to the M60 (top right) are among TfN's ambitions. Below right: freight including port development will feature in the plans. Below centre: Pacer diesels are to be replaced (© Mattbuck/Creative Commons)

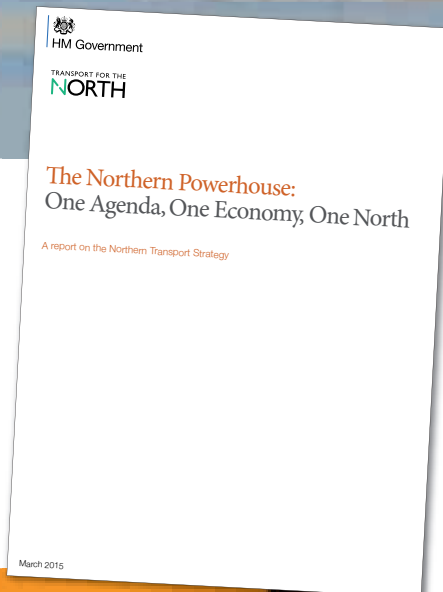
from page 17

Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Hull and Sheffield. "The plan is to meet the demand that we know is already there, but also to get ahead of the curve and put in place a system that will allow the economy to grow," he says.

He adds that the strategy will work at three levels, the first being nationally significant, macro projects. These include east-west rail improvements as well as road feasibility studies being undertaken by Highways England in relation to trans-Pennine road improvements, such as a possible tunnel, and improvements to the high level Scotch Corner to Penrith A66 route. These will be complemented by regional projects, such additional rail capacity and electrification, and improvements to the M60 north-west quadrant. The third level encompasses plans for improved local connectivity, including the local bus and rail network.

Mr Brown explains: "It's not just about going fast from Liverpool to Leeds, but how easily you can get on to that spine and off it. There is no point in getting quickly from Liverpool to Leeds and then sitting on a Pacer going at a snail's pace to Huddersfield."

Although rail links are an obvious priority, improvements to all types of freight and passenger connections, including roads, ports and airports, are within the remit of TfN. Mr Brown highlights Teesside and Liverpool ports as important hubs that need to feature within the plan. Movement of freight, he says, is often overlooked: "Plans tend to be focused on passengers and people movement, but it's equally important to look at freight logistics."



Integrated bus and rail services, smart ticketing and consistent fares for passengers are clearly aspirations for a successful northern transport network. But how realistic is it to reflect the London model in disparate northern cities? Mr Brown is pragmatic: "People want a similar model to Oyster, but Transport for London has spent years getting to that point. But we want to learn from that experience and from experience elsewhere in Europe."

In relation to coordinating bus services, particularly in a deregulated bus market with multiple operators, he says: "At the moment, TfN will focus on strategic infrastructure, but as part of local connectivity we would expect city regions to have comprehensive plans on how they are going to provide bus services." He adds that "buses are absolutely fundamental to local connectivity" but advocates that responsibility for how local services are provided – including city-specific decisions on bus franchising – should remain at the appropriate level, using the description "subsidiarity" to explain his belief in devolving decision-making to those closest to understanding the local need.

In respect of ticketing, he says: "All the big city regions are developing smartcard ticketing systems. In Liverpool there is Walrus, in Manchester the Getmethere card, the Pop card in Newcastle and so on." TfN







120 new diesel carriages. "Operators of the new franchises will be in place by April and part of that specification is to provide new, better trains."

He concedes that while the failure to merge Transpennine and Northern may be seen as a missed opportunity, there is logic in the decision, given that the Northern franchise alone being reputedly larger than the total railway network of Denmark. In any event, he intends that TfN will aim to improve integration between the two franchises, with the main aim being that passenger service and timetabling are seamless. It becomes obvious that Mr Brown sees both sides of the equation: as a regular user of trains, with rail being his preferred mode of transport, he recognises that passengers are not concerned with who operates the trains, but by how successfully and smoothly they are getting from A to B.

While reluctant to commit himself to timeframes, as the plans are awaiting the outcome of recommendations to be formally submitted to the Government in March next year, Mr Brown is confident that there is a lot that can be achieved in the next five to ten years: "If you look at the whole system from Liverpool to Leeds and Hull, some parts in engineering terms are easier and more affordable than others."

He argues that it is more important to fully consider the problems that need to be solved rather than rushing into designing schemes that may not be the best fit for the requirement. The inevitably lengthy process of electrification may be seen as a case in point. He says: "If you are travelling from Bolton to Manchester every day and can't get on the train then you want something to happen now, rather than the promise of a future vision."

Nevertheless vision is clearly a quality that David Brown is bringing to his new role, as well as a

clear grasp of what is realistic and achievable. Having worked in Sheffield, Manchester and Liverpool, he knows both the people and the local transport issues in the cities he is planning to represent. Transport for the North, he says, will be "the next evolution for me and the North."



has no desire, he says, to intervene where things work well as part of a local plan. "Where TfN adds value is to make it easier to travel between those big employment centres."

Improving rail services is a logical first step for TfN. Although the proposal to combine the Transpennine and Northern Rail franchises, as put forward by Rail North, was ultimately rejected by the DfT, the department has clearly taken heed of the body's recommendation to scrap the outmoded Pacer diesel multiple units currently used on the Northern franchise. These are to be replaced by at least





# Chancellor builds spend



Above: George Osborne  
Middle: Patrick McLoughlin  
Right: Lord Adonis

George Osborne appears genuine in his enthusiasm for big infrastructure projects, but the DfT still faces a 30 per cent cut in current spending, says **Mike Indian**

The chancellor clearly has big plans, as demonstrated by the launch of the National Infrastructure Commission last month in York. He declared that infrastructure would be at the heart of the spending review, committing the government to £100bn worth of projects by 2020. The commission has the task of producing a report at the start of each five-year parliament to recommend priorities for infrastructure investment for the next 20 years.

Mr Osborne appears to have poached the idea from Labour's general election manifesto, and he clearly intends to raise the capital to back its recommendations. This is reflected in his choice of commissioners. Former Labour Transport Secretary Lord Adonis lends both political weight and cross-party consensus to the body as its chair. Meanwhile, Conservative peer Lord Heseltine has been drafted in to bring his fervour for inner city regeneration and infrastructure investment to the

role. Respected figures including Sir John Armitt, who proposed the commission in a report to shadow chancellor Ed Balls during the last parliament, and Professor Tim Besley of the London School of Economics are also in the line-up. This is not a body Mr Osborne intends to ignore.

The commission's initial priorities demonstrate that transport is integral to George Osborne's vision for building Britain, as two out of the three areas the body has been asked to focus on immediately are transport-related.

One of the two areas will be connectivity for the North, a central plank of the Chancellor's pet political project, the so-called Northern Powerhouse. Improving the strategic transport network between the region's cities, especially east-west across the Pennines, lies at the heart of the Government's plans. The solution for this will undoubtedly be HS3, the proposed rail link between Liverpool and Hull via Manchester and Leeds. Backed by

It helps to be nice to the person who pays your bills.

That applies doubly if the person in question is chancellor George Osborne, Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin gently reminded one of his more mischievous parliamentary colleagues of this in the House of Commons recently.

Government departments are tightening their belts, and the DfT is one of four which have agreed to cut their resource (day to day) spending by 30% over the next four years.

There are, however, reasons for cautious optimism. Mr Osborne is entering the spending review, due on the 25th of this month, giving strong indications of his backing for key infrastructure projects, with transport at the heart of his long-term plan.

"We are the builders," the chancellor declared in his address to the Conservative Party conference in Manchester last month. It was the central theme of his speech, and he returned to the phrase time and time again to reaffirm his commitment – to the assembled delegates and the country as a whole.

But what is Mr Osborne hoping to build?





# Spending review expectations

David Cameron, the project is reported to be top of Mr Osborne's list.

However, the chancellor's commitment has been called into question since key rail electrification projects ran into trouble just after the general election. Work on the trans-Pennine route and Midland main line was "paused" in June after Network Rail was revealed to be behind schedule and over-budget. Despite both projects being restarted last month, speculation abounds over just how much the Conservatives knew about Network Rail's troubles in the run-up to the election.

Mr Osborne could use the spending review in two important ways. First, he will want to reaffirm the Government's commitment to its £38.5bn investment programme in the railways generally. The delays to the rail electrification projects have taken the shine off the Northern Powerhouse brand for some, and left ministers wary of the label becoming too closely associated with particular improvements.

Second, the chancellor will have to take note of the three reviews of different aspects of Network Rail currently under way. Dame Colette Bowe is examining how the organisation can improve its budget planning;

its chair Sir Peter Hendry is assessing how much of the upgrade programme can still be afforded, and High Speed 1 chief executive Nicola Shaw is overseeing a far-reaching look at the financing and structure of the company. They are expected to report in the coming weeks (a "scoping study" in the case of the Shaw review, with a detailed report in time for the Budget next spring). Calamitous judgements from any of these could lead to privatisation options being laid out.

The commission's second immediate priority will be the transport needs of London. In particular, it will be charged with making sure that any infrastructure spending, whether that is on road, rail, Underground or Crossrail 2 stays within the money threshold set by the spending review. Crossrail 2 is expected to be funded in a similar way to its predecessor, with half the capital raised through taxes and business contributions. At a time of constrained public spending, innovative infrastructure funding solutions are needed.

One area that is certain not to feature in the spending review is that of airport capacity. The issue does not fall within the remit of the infrastructure commission and Mr Osborne will not want to pre-empt the final decision of the Government, due to be taken by the end of the year. However, recent reports have suggested that the chancellor favours Heathrow over Gatwick for a new runway. Both sides will be watching the review closely for any hint of a preference, though they are likely to be disappointed.

There is another area that the Chancellor will be prioritising. The Treasury has committed itself to raising tens of billions of pounds for infrastructure investment through asset sales. One of the biggest beneficiaries will be the Government's £15bn Roads Investment Strategy.

In short, capital spending on infrastructure will be a priority for George Osborne in this spending review. However, the DfT budget is not protected and the axe must inevitably fall in other areas.

With the announcement that the department will cut its day to day spending by 30%, campaigners fear that "everyday transport" in the form of local roads, buses, cycling and walking will bear the brunt.

Mr Osborne has prioritised his commitment to big infrastructure over other areas, such as safe cycle



lanes. Some £318m was spent on these in 2015, but future budgets appear unlikely to exceed this level.

Another area potentially at risk is local bus services. Local authorities covering mainly rural areas, such parts of Wales, have warned that cuts in subsidies could lead to routes being withdrawn as they will become financially unviable.

However, the bus industry will be watching for details of the Government's forthcoming Buses Bill with interest. That has been preceded by the new devolution deals, the next wave of which looks likely to be announced alongside the review later this month, with transport powers being devolved to England's great city regions. With Nexus's proposed quality contract scheme for buses in Tyne and Wear deemed unworkable, transport devolution is more important than ever. Nonetheless, critics see devolution as a way for Whitehall to deliver cuts by stealth.

Transport as a whole will not be a net winner in the spending review. For every flagship project in the fast lane for funding, there will be many more stuck on the hard shoulder of cuts. Mr Osborne believes that he is building the future, but he needs to make sure everyone can get there.

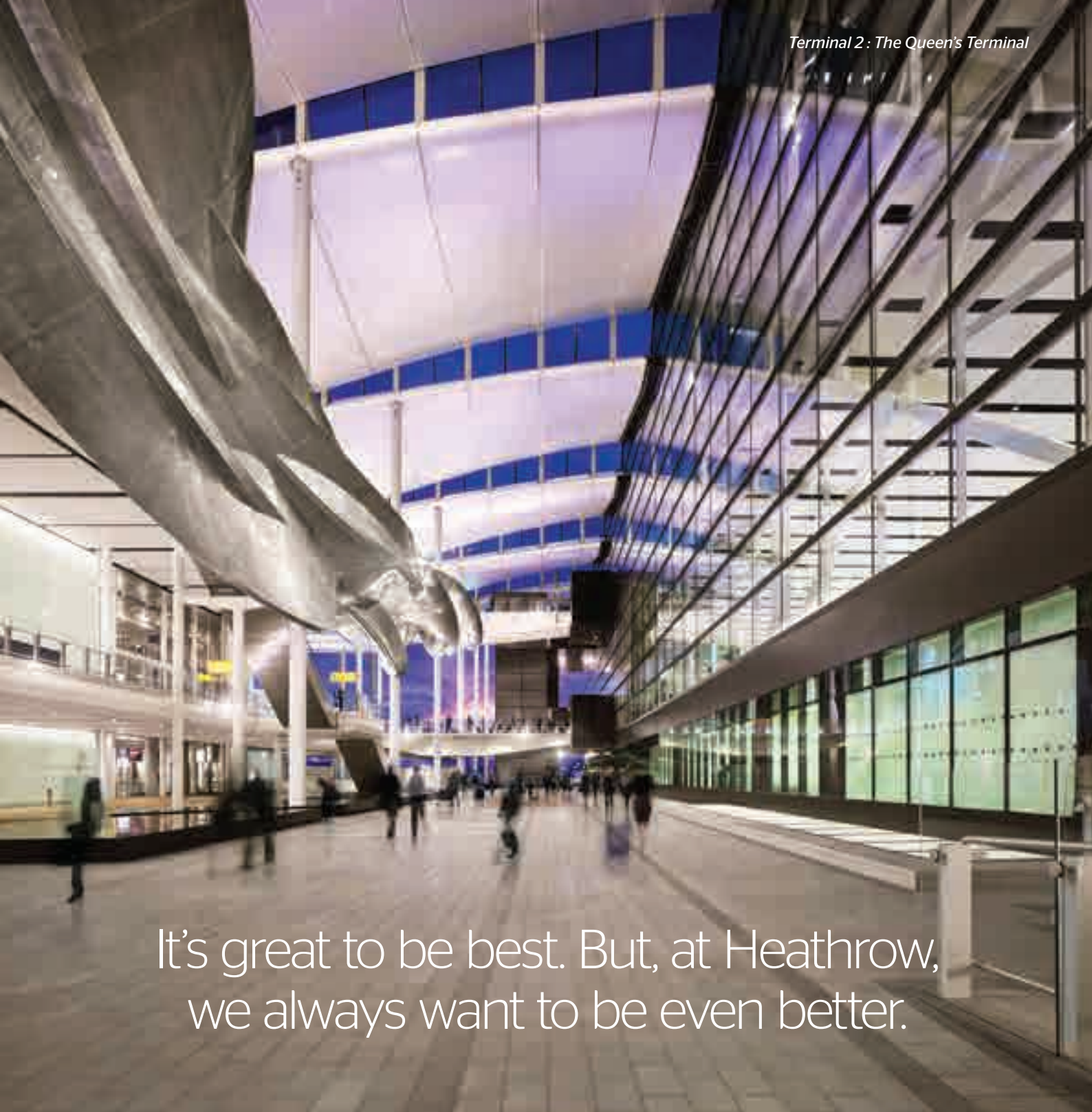
**Transport as a whole will not be a new winner in the spending review**

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Definitive political intelligence

**DeHavilland**  
Definitive political intelligence







It's great to be best. But, at Heathrow,  
we always want to be even better.

Heathrow has done Britain proud again this year. Terminal 2, The Queen's Terminal, has been named Construction and Engineering Project of the Year at the National Transport Awards. Meanwhile, our great service has already been recognised by other prestigious awards. For the second time, we've been voted Europe's Best Airport (over 25m passengers) by Airport Council International. And at the Skytrax World Airport Awards, we won Best Airport in Western Europe.

And we're just as proud to have won the ACI Europe 2015 Eco-innovation award: for what the organisers described as Heathrow's *"extensive efforts... in energy efficiency, groundbreaking research on aviation noise and... forward planning on environmental issues."*

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Making every journey better



# Excellence comes as standard



The 15th National Transport Awards attracted the event's biggest-ever audience as the industry celebrated success and innovation

**T**he people making a real difference to UK transport were recognised at the National Transport Awards. Over 800 transport professionals gathered to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the event, including Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin who gave the keynote address, and with Rory Bremner as host.

## Transport Local Authority

**Ealing** took the prestigious Transport Local Authority of the Year award in recognition of a host of initiatives promoting safety and sustainable travel.

Recent achievements include a complete redesign of Southall Broadway using shared space principles to increase pedestrian and cycle priority without adversely affecting other traffic.

Ealing developed a new collision warning system to warn lorry drivers of an impending collision with a cyclist, pedestrian or motorcyclist. The device is being fitted to Ealing's fleet.

In Acton a version of Danish roundabout practice was installed with widened and newly demarcated cycle lanes and raised pedestrian crossings.

"Mini Holland" cycling proposals are due to go ahead in Ealing town centre. Two Ealing schools were recognised as the best in west London for their achievements in active and safer travel. The council has worked with bus operators to identify bus route delay hotspots and find solutions.

**Southampton City Council**, Transport City winner in 2013, was highly commended in this category in recognition of its ambitious transport vision, guided by a partnership with Southampton University and Sustrans to create the Centre for Sustainable Travel Choices.

## Integrated Transport Authority

**Merseytravel** was named Integrated Transport Authority of the Year, sponsored by National Express, following successes in introducing new tickets and in setting out long-term plans.

Merseyside's smart ticketing scheme is the most active outside London, less than a year since launch. The Smart Saveaway, an off-peak day ticket for buses, trains and ferries, was introduced in Wirral last November, followed by the rest of Merseyside in February. By May, more than 224,000

tickets had been sold. With bus operators, Merseytravel reduced the cost of bus travel for young people through the introduction of MyTicket, a £2 all-day ticket, in May last year. By March this year, 1.3 million had been sold.

In the last year Merseytravel has produced a five-year Transport Plan for Growth, a long-term rail strategy for the next 30 years, and a 15-year bus strategy aimed at entrenching collaboration with bus operators and reversing the decline in passenger numbers.

## Bus Operator of the Year

**Arriva Yorkshire** was named Bus Operator of the Year following a "Year of Innovation and Investment". With First Group and the Confederation of Passenger Transport, it launched a state-of-the-art next stop announcement smartphone app developed for blind and visually impaired passengers. It introduced MAX, a sub-brand intended to redefine interurban express services across Yorkshire. The three MAX routes (Leeds-Huddersfield, Selby-York and Bradford-Dewsbury/Wakefield)

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**Merseytravel's smart ticketing scheme is the most active outside London**

**Above: Arriva Yorkshire was named Bus Operator of the Year**

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showed annual revenue growth of 8%, 14% and 25% respectively.

**Plymouth Citybus** was highly commended in this category.

## Rail Operator of the Year

The continuing upgrade programme is significantly increasing capacity on **London Underground**, which was named Rail Operator of the Year (sponsored by Thales) for the second time in three years. Improvements to reliability mean the average Underground journey is 13% shorter than in 2002, in turn allowing more services. As the modernisation programme continues, the Jubilee line has a third more capacity, and on the Victoria line in the peaks 34 trains run every hour. When the Northern line upgrade is complete at the end of the year, capacity will have been increased by 20% and journey times cut by 18%.

**c2c**, recently awarded a new 15-year franchise, and **First Hull Trains**, which boasts one of the highest customer satisfaction scores in the industry at 96%, were highly commended.

## Ferry Operator

**Mersey Ferries** was the winner of the Ferry Operator of the Year award, following Merseytravel's programme to attract more passengers and reduce subsidy. The ferries had struggled to compete with other transport modes in recent years.

Merseytravel devised a transformation programme to maintain cross-river services and to improve leisure services outside commuter service times. Changes included a temporary reduction from three to two vessel operation, revised staffing arrangements, simpler ticket booking arrangements and improvements to

the Manchester Ship Canal cruises. A decline in leisure travel has been reversed and operating subsidy has been reduced by over £750,000 in two years.

## Freight Operator

**United Biscuits** was the inaugural winner of the Freight Operator of the Year category. The 300-strong team improved customer service in 2014 and introduced a range of cost-saving projects. In the warehouse, narrow aisle staffed operations were replaced with unmanned cranes, taking the warehouse to 90% automation. Like-for-like carbon emissions from transport in 2014 were 43.5% lower than in 2005. Using 62 long trailers removed 450,000 truck miles last year. Waste vegetable oil from the company's own manufacturing processes, of which 500 tonnes is generated annually, is used as fuel by the company's fleet.

## Improvements to Bus Services

**National Express West Midlands** took the honours in Improvements to Bus Services, sponsored by Diva Creative. Over three years, the company has transformed itself into one of the most innovative and successful bus operators in the UK. Overall satisfaction and punctuality have increased and there has been consistent commercial patronage growth, of over 5% in some areas. The Transforming Bus Travel partnership between the company and Centro, described by the judges as "a wide-ranging partnership revitalising an entire network", has been acclaimed by local leaders for its breadth and depth.

**South Gloucestershire Council** was highly commended for an initiative which saved £1m on supported bus services while patronage increased by nearly 9%, as was **Transport for Greater Manchester** for the Parting-



Cruise passenger traffic through Southampton is expected to reach 1.8 million this year. **National Express West Midlands** was the winner in improvements to Bus Services

ton Local Link, improving accessibility to jobs from a deprived area.

## Transport Supplier

Train maker **Bombardier** took the honours in the Transport Supplier of the Year category with London Underground's new Sub-Surface Line fleet. In the largest rolling stock project undertaken in the UK, Bombardier is supplying 191 new trains for the Metropolitan, District, Circle and Hammersmith & City lines.

The trains provide improved capacity, accessibility and comfort. The fleet replaces A, C and D stock, some of which date back to the 1960s, with the first air-conditioned trains on the Underground network. The new trains provide an immediate capacity improvement (25% for the Circle Line), are cheaper to maintain, and with regenerative braking save the equivalent of two months of electricity each year.

## Rail Station of the Year

High Speed 1's **St Pancras International** was named winner in this section. Transport Focus research consistently puts St Pancras at the top of the table for satisfaction with station facilities. In the last year the station wayfinding scheme has been revised. There is free wi-fi, and a St Pancras app provides users with access to offers and station information.

Network Rail (High Speed), which maintains the HS1 route, has worked with local schools to fund a youth leadership programme and offer work experience placements.

**Northern Rail** was highly commended for the recent refurbishment of Grade II listed Blackburn station.







## Port of the year

The **Port of Southampton** won this category for Associated British Ports. In the past two years £150m has been invested. Southampton's vehicle handling business grew 12% to 834,000 vehicles. A fifth vehicle handling terminal was opened in 2014. Over £3m has been invested in rail infrastructure, allowing the delivery by rail of over 200,000 vehicles annually.

The UK's newest container handling berth, SCT 5, was opened in March last year following a £130m project. A new 500m quay is designed to handle the biggest ships afloat. The number of cruise passengers passing through the port was expected to reach 1.8 million in 2015.

## Airport of the Year

**Glasgow Airport** took the honours in this section, sponsored by Worldline. The Commonwealth Games, the Ryder Cup and the MTV European Music Awards contributed to the airport's busiest year since 2008, with more than 7.7 million passengers. The £20m terminal investment programme was completed, including modernisation of the main check-in hall, landscaping of a new public space at the front of the terminal, and new heating and ventilation systems. The airport secured 20 new routes and services.

**London Southend Airport** was highly commended.

## Construction and Engineering Project of the Year

The new **Heathrow Terminal 2**, known as the Queen's Terminal, was named Construction and Engineering Project

of the Year. The original Terminal 2 was handling four times its design capacity by the time it closed in 2009. The £2.5bn new terminal opened in June last year.

It comprises the £1.2bn main terminal building, a £600m satellite pier, a 1,350 space multi-storey car park, 23 aircraft stands and two taxiways. It took eight years from concept to opening but was completed within budget and cost less per square metre than Terminal 5.

Highly commended were the **GNGE** project to create an alternative 86-mile freight route parallel to the East Coast main line; **Somerset County Council's** project to provide access to Mulchellney on the Somerset levels after the 2013-14 floods; and **TfGM** for the Manchester Airport Metrolink Line.

## Transport Team/Partnership

The Transport Team/Partnership of the Year award, sponsored by Bombardier Transportation, went to the **West Yorkshire Combined Authority** for its handling of the Tour de France.

Over a weekend in July last year, local transport and highway authorities, government agencies, bus and rail operators and TdFHUB2014 Ltd, the company set up to co-ordinate Le Grand Depart, came together to manage the opening two stages. This required over 300 miles of roads to be closed for over eight hours, while still providing access for spectators. Rail operators increased capacity on their services by up to 50%. Bus operators had to contend with road closures dividing some of Yorkshire's main cities. A transport co-ordination facility was set up with representatives of all the leading highways and public transport agencies.

Highly commended was the **Borough of Poole** for the South East Dorset Quality Bus Partnership, and the **DfT-Highways Agency Roads Reform team**.

## Excellence in Technology

**uTrack Software** and **National Express** won the Excellence in Technology category, sponsored by Clear Channel. A nationwide tracking system has been introduced for National Express coach services, which allows live punctuality measurement of 400 coaches, 46 operators and 1,400 stops around the UK. Punctuality and timetables have been substantially improved using a comprehensive database of historical journey information.

## Most Innovative Transport Project

The introduction of contactless payment on London's transport system was a genuine world first and was judged winner of the Most Innovative Transport Project category, sponsored by Go-Ahead. Since September last

year, passengers have been able to travel on the Tube, buses, trams, the DLR, the Overground and national rail services using a contactless bank card.

**TfL** and **Cubic** worked on the complex technical and legal issues posed by the payments industry and created the Transit Transaction Model for the use of contactless cards, which is now available to transport operators around the world. Fare calculation takes place in the back office, allowing a more sophisticated fare calculation system. Cubic replaced 20,000 card readers. The in-house back office system was launched seamlessly throughout the network.

## Travel information and marketing

**First Bus** came out top in the Travel Information and Marketing category, sponsored by Nomad Digital, with its South Yorkshire Young Persons Fares Campaign. Travel by people under 18 in South Yorkshire was declining. First identified cost and ticket inflexibility as possible reasons. Only a 70p single ticket was available to this age range. It introduced a £5 weekly ticket and a £2 day ticket, supported by a marketing campaign targeting young people and their parents, emphasising the flexibility of a weekly ticket and using bright imagery and a "Google Maps" look. Volumes increased by 9.1% in the year to April 2015 as well as reversing a 9% decline – effectively an 18% increase.



## Contribution to Sustainable Transport

West Midlands transport authority **Centro** was named winner of the Contribution to Sustainable Transport category, sponsored by Heathrow Airport, for the Smart Network, Smarter Travel project. The £50m project was launched in 2012 to help stimulate the West Midlands economy and cut traffic congestion. Centro worked with the seven West Midlands metropolitan districts to help local businesses, schools and individuals make smarter travel choices to reach jobs, education and services. Measures

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**The original Terminal 2 was handling four times its design capacity by 2009**

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included improvements to walking and cycling routes, expert journey planning, and free travel for jobseekers.

**Integrated Transport Planning Ltd** was highly commended for Lowestoft Local Links for Business, as was **Nottingham City Council's** electric bus project.

## Excellence in Cycling and Walking

**Brighton and Hove City Council** was the winner in Excellence in Cycling and Walking for the Lewes Road sustainable transport corridor. Lewes Road, the A270, links the city centre to employment sites, two

universities, the Brighton & Sussex medical school and the Amex Community football stadium.

The £6m scheme was designed to encourage sustainable travel by creating high quality cycle facilities and allowing more reliable bus journeys. A 4.5km length of the road was converted into a single lane for general traffic, alongside a bus lane with a widened cycle lane. There has been a shift to cycling along the route; bus journey times have improved in both directions.

**Luton Borough Council** was highly commended for a number of schemes which have led to a 20% increase in walking and a 40% increase in cycling between 2011 and 2014.

## Road Safety, Traffic Management and Enforcement

**Glasgow City Council**, with **Transport Scotland**, **Police Scotland**, and **Glasgow 2014 Ltd**, was named winner of the Road Safety, Traffic Management and Enforcement category, sponsored by FirstGroup. They developed the Commonwealth Games Route Network and traffic management plans to keep the city's traffic moving during the 2014 Commonwealth Games. The games route network transported over 90% of athletes to their competition venue in 20 minutes or less. Local area traffic management and parking plans were developed.

**Transport Scotland's** A9 interim safety plan was highly commended.

## Transport People



### Outstanding Contribution to Transport

Transport Scotland chief executive **David Middleton** received the Outstanding Contribution to Transport Award.

He took up the Transport Scotland post in February 2009, having been head of the Scotland Office in the UK Government from 2007. A career civil servant who joined what was then the Scottish Office from Glasgow University in 1978. From 1999, he held director-level posts in the Scottish Government, including head of local government and external relations between 1999 and 2002 and head of agriculture from October 2002.

He has presided over one of the largest transport capital programmes outside London. Notable achievements under his custodianship include the recent opening of the Borders railway, on-time progress on the Queensferry crossing and a radical approach to re-franchising Scotland's railways.

### Frontline Employee of the Year

A joint award was made in the Frontline Employee of the Year category to **David Ellam** and **Melanie Horwood**.

Mr Ellam, 64, was not content with having worked for National Express as a driver and inspector for 30 years. Shortly before his official re-



**Top left: David Middleton (centre) receives his award**

**Top right: David Ellam**  
**Below: Melanie Horwood**

tirement, he successfully applied to become a bus station supervisor for Centro. In that role he has dealt with many difficult situations including supporting a young girl who had been sexually assaulted by another passenger, and helping to deliver a baby girl when an ambulance he had called for a pregnant passenger didn't quite arrive in time.

Ms Horwood is a terminal duty officer at London Luton Airport, where she has worked for 26 years and leads a team of 13. She is well known for her dedication and for taking extra time to make sure that passengers are happy.

Colleagues tell of several instances where she has paid for taxis for passengers out of her own pocket when delays have left them stranded, or negotiated with airport retailers to supply food for them. As a first aider, she has helped save numerous lives, resuscitating passengers and offering comfort until paramedics are able to attend.





# Calling all suppliers...

Next week *Transport Times* hosts the conference Who Will Build HS2? Here **Simon Kirby** stresses the opportunities for suppliers of all sizes as the project moves into the procurement phase, while overleaf **Daniel Loschacoff** looks at best international practice

In September this year we launched an £11.8bn procurement process for work on HS2. Since then, I've regularly been asked how that process will develop during the next 12 months and beyond.

There will of course be a great deal of activity, but first I would like to talk about some of the work undertaken long before the chancellor's announcement, in which he invited bidders to apply to prequalify for seven contracts for surface works and tunnels on the phase one route.

Our market engagement began earlier than that for any other capital works programme. From multinational construction companies to small, owner-managed businesses, we have already begun building relationships throughout the supply chain.

During the past two years, we have held more than 50 events and spoken to more than 3,000 business people. A significant proportion of those were from small and medium companies – which will be able to benefit from thousands of opportunities. On Crossrail, around two-thirds of contracts went to smaller companies. We want to do more.

This early engagement should help make our procurement process smooth and cost-effective. And this kind of innovation is crucial because we want HS2 to be built in the best, fastest and most efficient way.

Looking ahead, next spring we expect to invite tenders for the contracts that have already been advertised. Beyond that, the procurement process for the construction of the stations in Birmingham and London will start.

There is much more to come. As contracts are awarded, we will hold a series of "meet the contractor" events between successful bidders and suppliers. Our regional and national engagement will continue and we will bring our contractors to meet the local firms who may be able to help bring the project to fruition.

I've already touched on innovation and I will expand on this further during the conference. This is a quality that is absolutely central to the success of the project and something we will look for throughout the supply chain.

We will be looking for contractors who can also be completely relied on where safety, skills and ethics are concerned. We want companies who

treat their workforce the right way. This industry has made great strides in the field of diversity but we want to be at the forefront of encouraging and driving it to do even more.

Much was made of the fact that the chancellor's announcement of the start of procurement was made in China – but I want to be clear that, though we want to encourage relationships between UK suppliers and those overseas companies which have previous successful experience of building a high speed railway, we are very much focused on creating jobs in Britain. We already have some excellent capability and skills in this country which we must tap into and build on.

Through initiatives such as the National College for High Speed Rail we will create a new workforce: one that is capable of successfully undertaking a project of this scale.

HS2 will create a legacy and new benchmarking standards for major infrastructure projects throughout planning, construction and operation. Our supply chain will play a major role in that, and I am very excited about the times that lie ahead.

HS2 aims to surpass Crossrail's record of involving smaller suppliers



Simon Kirby is chief executive of HS2 Ltd



# No magic bullets for high-speed trains

KPMG Global Rail Leader **Daniel Loschacoff** outlines four key lessons in best practice from European high speed rail experience

**Above:** Europe and Japan are the only places where projects have been operational long enough to make meaningful evaluations of how the projects were approached. **Centre:** continuity is needed between construction and operation. **Bottom:** the UK has aimed to build multi-party support for its plans

**M**y first thoughts when reflecting on best practice in high-speed rail were about the lessons I've learned through 15 years of working across multiple continents. Typical questions in a first meeting with a client tend to be about what is possible: "Will our cost estimate be the same as the eventual contract price?" "Is a private sector investor [which of course hasn't been identified yet] able to finance the project fully, and can long-term demand risk be transferred to them?"

The next string of questions I get are: "Where has that happened before?" "Did it work?" "Would the parties involved repeat it?" And "is that example relevant for the project at stake?"

Now I have to be honest. In all my years working on HSR engagements, I have only taken two projects through to financial and contractual close. One, with Portugal's dedicated high-speed rail authority RAVE, was later cancelled and its main promoter – the then prime minister José Socrates – imprisoned under corruption allegations. The other was the Dutch *Hogesnelheidslijn Zuid* (high-speed line south), which hasn't fared much better. The Dutch secretary of state for infrastructure, Wilma Mansveld, resigned last month after a damaging parliamentary inquiry highlighting

her office's mismanagement of the rolling stock and operations of the line.

Two challenging projects in 15 years doesn't really sound like much, but it says a lot about how politically and financially difficult this market is.

Most HSR projects continue to be procured in a traditional way, and for most of these the thought leadership involved remains mostly technical or technology driven. However, the large majority of HSR projects discussed never leave the drawing board.

The best – or perhaps I should say worst – example of this was the Brazilian Trem Bala, or bullet train project to connect Rio de Janeiro to São Paulo and Campinas. I got involved around 2006 when the idea was to have the line ready for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games. It was a pretty ambitious target given the geological challenges to get to Rio, but probably still doable.

However, the incredible amount of money and time spent, including my own, could not conceal poor project management and the use of a plethora of assumptions that had little to do with reality. The bidding process was launched three times, and three times it failed due to a lack of bidders. Considering the typical "first questions" often raised by clients, there was little interest in the answers in Brazil,

because the establishment already thought it had them. Given the country's current financial challenges and unresolved corruption issues, Trem Bala has been shelved indefinitely.

On the more positive side, there are other examples of projects that do check assumptions with reality, align communities with the strategy, build a robust business plan, and take risk management seriously. Even then these projects still face a terrific task to reach completion on time and budget and successful operation – operation being as challenging as cost control.

High speed rail is no longer limited to Europe and Japan. Project preparation is booming in Asia and to a lesser extent the Americas, where we see a wide variety of different approaches. However, the thinking on incentives, private finance and private sector innovations really started in Europe, and outside Japan it's also the only place where projects have been operational long enough to truly evaluate them. So what lessons can be learned from the European experience?

The first may be one of expectations. There are limits to both the transfer of risks and the private sector's ability to manage them. Too often governments believe private investors will solve their problems, and there will be little further involvement required except for



the awarding process. We may strongly disagree with that view, but the latest HSR project awarded in Indonesia more or less follows this approach. It has added complexity, because rather than a straightforward private contractor to public sector relationship, it is a more bilateral government-to-government affair with a Chinese consortium having been awarded the contracts.

Second, proper project preparation is critical. In Brazil, preparation didn't match with the political agenda to bring the project online ahead of the major games. Preparation is at risk when deadlines are set around a political window of opportunity that will close at some stage. The UK, by contrast, developed its HSR plans more slowly but achieved essential multi-party support to mitigate the risk of it being derailed.

projects are not necessarily indifferent to the outcome. Bent Flyvbjerg, a professor at the University of Oxford, has shown many times that rather than speaking of "cost overruns", we should deliberately refer to "cost underestimation". To change this behaviour is to look at the underlying incentives or disincentives and try to align them to the project's objectives.

Fourth and finally, more than the contractual arrangements, the real value is in the implementation. This is true both between transaction and construction and between construction and operations. Too often there is too much focus on the contractual arrangements to the neglect of considerations of how the project will be built and operated, culminating in a contract or contracts with too little insight as to their implementation.

This has further implications. Transaction teams should be built around capabilities (and staff) that continue to be driving forces for the project after the transaction. In traditionally-executed projects – as well as in public-private partnerships – too often the initial construction team is disconnected from the operations team. This can even be the case where those teams are part of the same organisation, but I don't believe that solving this issue is merely a question of organisational integration. The opposite – a complete separation of "infrastructure" and the "transportation business" – is possible, but only if operational objectives and problems are deeply considered from the start and continually challenged throughout critical decision-making.

All too often expectations – on roles, project preparation, costs and performance incentives – have not been thought through sufficiently. Clients walk blindly into a project, then seek a magic bullet to resolve the resulting issues. We don't have to look far to see that shortcuts are bad for rail projects. As an industry, we need to eliminate such behaviour rather than pander to it. This requires greater knowledge and strengthened willpower.

With that will come the confidence of what we all know is possible – the sustainable development of high-speed rail as the preferred mode of medium to long-range travel. This will connect and bolster local economies, and address environmental issues while also helping governments manage congestion caused by increased urbanisation.

This is after all the question we should be answering: "How can high-speed rail give my community a solid foundation for future growth and an improved quality of life?"

**Megaprojects often fail not because of poor engineering but poor stakeholder management**



Another interesting approach is the multinational organisation of the Scandinavian 8 Million City project from Oslo in Norway via Gothenburg in Sweden to Copenhagen in Denmark. The project is focusing most of its early efforts on building alliances with potential stakeholders, such as local businesses. This approach really acknowledges that megaprojects often fail not because of poor engineering, but poor stakeholder management.

Third, it is also important to get the right allocation of risks and responsibilities through the proper structuring of a project. If the incentives are not there, or perversely the collaboration between public promoters and private players results in squabbles over who can out-negotiate the other and maximise benefits to one side, you will never achieve what is best for the overall success of the project. This is of course easier said than done – employees and advisers of these



**W**hen aired in public debate, the idea of using personal data and biometrics to improve services such as transport is often met with scepticism and viewed as a potential threat rather than a benefit to society. Many are worried that by allowing service providers access to their data, they are surrendering their privacy and risking details of their movements and preferences being sold on to unscrupulous brokers.

What this viewpoint overlooks is that our “personal” data is being used to shape some services we use regularly, to the benefit of all. Thanks to the latest advancements in smart technology and the proliferation of connected devices, the potential for crowdsourcing data to inform the planning and deployment of transport is growing by the day.

As a company whose business is increasingly founded on intelligent technology, Cubic Transportation Systems believes that in managing masses of personal data, we must respect every individual's right to anonymity. However, we should also ask whether fear about data is holding back innovation – and whether surrendering a degree of data privacy could be a good thing.

A further point that is not often acknowledged in the privacy debate is that, unlike social media, data used for applications such as planning of services is generally anonymised. The data is based on the “token” used by the individual to access transport services: whether this is a proprietary card or a bank card, it is the unique identity of the card, rather than the individual, that is the basis of data collection. And of course, strict regulations ensure that banking and other personal details are handled in complete security.

Last year Transport for London was able to contact around 56,000 bus pas-



## Redefining the boundaries of privacy

People are happy to share information on social networking sites, yet are reluctant to allow personal data to be used by other services. But sharing a small amount of data could result in a big improvement in transport planning and operation, argues **Martin Howell**

sengers who regularly travelled on a route crossing Putney Bridge to tell them there would be changes to their journey to work while bridge repairs took place. These people were able to benefit from this knowledge because their personal travel histories were recorded from their Oyster cards and

**Biometrics has been used to improve throughput at some of the world's busiest airports**

they had specifically chosen to allow TfL to contact them with information relevant to their travel profile.

Now imagine if the same principle could be applied on a daily basis. Imagine if you could be told of any delays or changes to your morning journey before even leaving the house. Using personalised data could mean more personalised services through predictive travel updates sent directly to your phone.

In fact, the use of historical data gathered over time allows an accurate predictive model to be established, so that where combinations of circumstances arise, highly likely outcomes can be accurately predicted and that intelligence relayed to the travellers likely to be affected.

Again, people don't realise we already willingly give out personal details about our habits to organisations and authorities each day (particularly supermarkets and online retailers, and of course internet service providers) without worrying unduly. Why is it we become data-shy where our travel habits are concerned?



Apple Pay is authenticated by fingerprint recognition



## The Facebook generation and biometrics

Earlier this year Facebook recorded its busiest day ever, with one in every seven people on Earth having logged on to the social networking site that day. At 1.49 billion monthly users, Facebook is potentially one of the largest facial-recognition databases in the world, contributed to willingly by users. This data library has led to the creation of automatic photo-tagging using biometrics. Despite some privacy concerns, the site continues to enjoy steady growth.

If the Facebook generation is happy to share, as many do, a huge amount of information about their personal lives through the site, then why would they not be willing to share a small amount of data with city authorities to improve daily commuting trips, including their own?

In London, it is possible to see how biometric technology is changing the way people pay for travel with the launch of Apple Pay on TfL's network earlier this year. The payment option is authenticated by fingerprint recognition on the phone, and according to a Brandwatch survey, transport is what most people with Apple Pay use the service for. The convenience for commuters is they need only a smartphone to travel, something most people have with them on a daily basis.

Internationally, biometrics has been used to improve throughput at some of the world's busiest airports. Personal data stored in ePassport chips has allowed travellers to authenticate their own identity at self-service biometric gates. Elements of this technology could equally apply to city transport – if people are willing to use their face to travel internationally, then why not do the same to speed up passage through busy stations?

## The face of future travel

Cubic is exploring how biometrics might be used to improve station design, developing a concept gate-line that uses facial recognition to authenticate payment and eliminate the need for a physical ticket barrier. By removing the barriers that separate the station concourse and platform areas, busy stations can potentially double passenger throughput.

The innovative aspect here is that people will be able to register their face and use those details to pay for travel. The option to use traditional ticketing methods and mobile payments remains for those who do not want to register these details, giving people the choice to use their personal details or not.

Increasing passenger throughput within existing infrastructure is a challenge modern transport authorities face due to rapid urbanisation. It's expected that more than three-quarters

of the world's population will be living in cities in 30 years' time, and city planners will need to invest in new ways to move masses of people within existing infrastructure. Managing station capacity with biometrics is one way to help. Another is through using the data already available in our cities to improve the whole transport experience.

## Big data, big city

Modern cities generate vast amounts of data daily. For city planners the challenge is not producing this data, but sifting through the mountains of information to pull out actionable insights. Mining big data can produce real results for transport networks looking for new ways to stretch existing infrastructure further.

Faced with the changing needs of cities, Cubic has developed the NextCity strategy to provide both operators and travellers with real-time information that will make journeys quicker and more reliable. Integrating data, information and operations is increasingly crucial to gaining the whole travel network picture, because as new transportation services arise, more data silos will appear.

Limiting data to exist within a single silo can result in a loss of insight into relationships that may exist between multiple data pockets. Only through integrated information can we get a city-wide, whole of transport, view of mobility. Through this, we can identify otherwise unseen interrelationships and inefficiencies. Through integrated analytics we are able to model and measure the impact of decision and policy changes across the entire network, as well as perform complex benchmarking and performance measurement.

While there are obvious benefits to having access to private data, it's important that people are clear about what information they are sharing and how it will be used. A survey of 3,000 people conducted by Accenture last year revealed people were more likely to allow the use of their biometric details if they knew what security measures were in place to protect this data, as well as how the information would be used.

In the same survey, nine in every ten respondents said they were okay with sharing biometric details to travel across international borders if it would improve efficiency, security and save them time. These findings suggest perhaps people aren't as data-conservative as we sometimes assume them to be.

## Changing attitudes

With Facebook, ePassports and linking personal details to a card such as Oyster, providing personal data is a choice. Given the option to share information with a transport provider, the majority can and do decide that surrendering a small bit of privacy is a fair compromise if it makes a meaningful improvement to their lives.

But gaining acceptance of new technology and changing public perception takes time. Any corporation or city authority which wants to use personal data to improve services will need to make sure individuals are made fully aware of exactly how their information will be used – and they're given a choice about whether to participate. Furthermore, if data can help us solve the rapid urbanisation challenge, then we must do everything possible to make sure personal details are not compromised and are protected at all times.



**Martin Howell** is external affairs director at Cubic Transportation Systems

Cities will need to find new ways to stretch existing infrastructure further



# Winners of The National Transport Awards



## Winners

Road Safety, Traffic Management & Enforcement  
category

Glasgow City Council, Land and Environmental Services are delighted to have won the Road Safety, Traffic Management & Enforcement category at the recent National Transport Awards ceremony in London.

The award, for our delivery of the Games Route Network and Traffic Management Plans for the 2014 Commonwealth Games, was collected on behalf of Land and Environmental Services by Andy Waddell, Jamie Rodden and Michael Brady.

We would like to **thank our partners and all staff** involved in both the project and the submission for their hard work and dedication which contributed directly to Glasgow's delivery of **'the best Games ever'**.





# Amey seeks rail recruits for Scotland



Amey is seeking to expand its rail consultancy business in Scotland by recruiting around 50 new staff

**R**ecruits can expect a variety of work, the opportunity to develop, the ability to work on long-term projects, and the chance to work elsewhere in the UK or internationally, says business director for Scotland Gordon Allan.

"We've been successful in developing a rail business in Scotland and we want to create a high level of rail consultancy here too," he adds. Employees joining the business will have the opportunity to work in a variety of markets in Scotland including Amey's long term highways contracts for Transport Scotland, as well as water and power contracts in the utility sector.

The infrastructure services provider employs 2,500 in Scotland, "from a standing start 15 years ago" in Mr Allan's words, with turnover in the rail sector of £350m annually. Amey has expanded rapidly since acquiring consultant Owen Williams in 2006, to enable it to offer clients an end-to-end service from investigation and design, through to management and maintenance. It acquired WYG Rail in 2010 to further strengthen its rail offering.

Rail is one of Amey's most successful sectors. Amey's design consultancy contract is the largest ever awarded by Network Rail in the UK to a single designer. Key contracts include the civil examination framework agreements (CEFA) for control period 5, worth £40m annually, to-

gether with the AmeySersa Switches and Crossings renewal contract.

Under CEFA, Amey is responsible for examining and monitoring the condition of over 100,000 rail assets over the whole UK network, such as stations, signalling systems and bridges – and including the legendary Forth Bridge.

Amey's work on the switches and crossings renewal contract was set up to bring the most efficient track renewal techniques in Europe to the UK over the next ten years. The £400m contract covers repair and renewal of switches and crossings on cross-country routes throughout Scotland. The company won the Most Innovative Transport Project award at this year's Scottish Transport Awards.

For this recruitment drive, Mr Allan says "we're looking specifically to grow our rail consultancy team and front end design staff. It seems the right time to be expanding."

In addition, the company is hoping to win more work under Network Rail's control period 5 investment and improvement plans.

For a number of years Amey has had a strategy of developing multi-disciplinary design hubs – these exist in Glasgow and Edinburgh, as well as Birmingham, Crawley, Bristol, Swindon and Belfast. Within the company work is passed from region to region via the hubs. "We have people here working on projects in

Australia, the US, the Middle East and elsewhere," says Mr Allan.

The company is looking for people at all levels over a range of disciplines, from director level, through senior project managers and engineers to technicians, graduates and apprentices. Skills being sought include permanent way and track, signalling, telecoms, civil engineering, electrification and plant, traction, and power engineering.

Applicants should be "talented, flexible and innovative", Mr Allan says.

The company prides itself on its ability to offer a wide range of opportunities. "People can be working on highways projects one day and examining rail structures the next," he says. "They can take up opportunities internationally: it happens day in, day out."

Amey provides successful graduate and apprentice development programmes. "Our last 25 candidates in Scotland have all gained professional accreditation, becoming either chartered or incorporated," he says. "It's very pleasing to be able to create opportunities and see people develop from graduates to senior engineers and principal engineers."

For people interested in applying the company is holding open days on 17-18 November at the Hilton, Glasgow. More information can be found via the website at [www.amey.co.uk/joinusinscotland](http://www.amey.co.uk/joinusinscotland)

**We have people working on projects in Australia, the UK and the Middle East**



Sadie Morgan



Bridget Rosewell



Joanne Thompson



Jo Kaye

# Osborne appoints team of heavyweights to commission

Former deputy prime minister Michael Heseltine is among members of the National Infrastructure Commission announced by George Osborne at the end of October. The independent body, to be chaired by **Lord Adonis** (*TT* last month) will report at the start of each parliament setting out priorities for infrastructure investment in transport, energy, water and other utilities, and broadband.

The commission members will be:

- **Lord Heseltine**, the former deputy prime minister who has long championed the regeneration of Britain's inner cities through infrastructure investment;
- **Sir John Armitt**, the former chair of the Olympic Delivery Authority and president of the Institution of Civil Engineers, who recommended the creation of an infrastructure commission in a report for the Labour party;
- **Professor Tim Besley**, a former member of the Bank of England monetary policy committee and of the LSE's Growth Commission, which recommended an independent infrastructure body;
- **Demis Hassabis**, artificial intelligence researcher, neuroscientist and head of DeepMind Technologies;
- **Sadie Morgan**, a founding director of dRMM Architects and design panel chair of HS2;
- **Bridget Rosewell**, a senior adviser at Volterra Partners

and former chief economist and chief economic adviser to the Greater London Authority;

- **Sir Paul Ruddock**, chairman of the Victoria & Albert Museum and the University of Oxford Endowment.

The commission will report on three priorities – transport connections in the north of England, strategic transport options for London and energy – by the next Budget.

Vantage Power, manufacturer of an innovative retrofit hybrid system for buses, has appointed **Robert Marshall**, chief executive of hi-tech engineering firm Marshall Group, as its chairman.

Mr Marshall will advise the board on strategy, based on the expertise of the Marshall Group in the design and manufacture of complex automotive and aerospace systems, as well as running vehicle fleets and motor dealerships.

Vantage Power was founded in 2011. Its hybrid engine system, the B320, can be fitted to the UK's most popular double-decker buses, cutting fuel consumption by over 40%. Four buses can be converted for the price of one new hybrid bus. The system was shortlisted in the recent National Transport Awards, and the company is in the process of commercialising and scaling up production of the B320 following its most recent round of investment, generating £1.7m.

Mr Marshall said: "Vantage Power has developed a unique

- **Robert Marshall to chair Vantage Power board**
- **Go-Ahead appoints Patrick Butcher as CFO**
- **Penrillian names Joanne Thompson as new chief exec**
- **Jo Kaye to be Network Rail director of strategy**

and brilliantly conceived hybrid drive technology with obvious benefits in the bus sector. I am very proud to be taking the chair of this young dynamic company."

Go-Ahead Group has appointed **Patrick Butcher** as chief financial officer.

Patrick joins from Network Rail where he has been group finance director since 2009. He led capital raising activities in public markets for the organisation prior to its reclassification in 2014 as a public sector company.

He previously held finance director roles at English, Welsh and Scottish Railways (now DB Schenker), Mapeley, London Underground and King's College Hospital. His early career was spent at Deloitte & Touche as a management consultant and auditor. He will join the group by May 2016.

For the transitional period following the departure of incumbent Keith Down this month, Go-Ahead financial controller **Paul Edwards** will become interim group finance director.

Mobile technology company Penrillian has appointed **Joanne Thompson** chief executive as it seeks to

accelerate its growth in the transport and technology industries.

Ms Thompson joins the mobile software development company following a career in technology companies, including roles as managing director of Serco's Transport Technology division, senior vice-president of BT in Europe, and European director of professional services at Equant.

Penrillian is one of the world's longest established developers in mobile technology. Its software is used by millions of people daily in applications from contactless payment and wireless dongles to ticket and mobile money apps.

Network Rail has appointed **Jo Kaye** as director of network strategy and planning. Ms Kaye joined Railtrack as a graduate, gained extensive experience in operational roles and has recently served as a director in the strategy and planning team.

She will become a member of the company's executive committee, replacing Paul Plummer who leaves Network Rail later this month to lead the Rail Delivery Group.

Ms Kaye studied biology at Imperial College London and followed it up with an MSc in passenger transport management. She was head of West Coast in 2008, during the main line upgrade, and then became route managing director of the London North West route, responsible for the busiest mixed traffic railway in Europe.



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