

Spirit of '68

Minister hails devolution



Devolution opinion special

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Walrus back in the swim

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Smartening up their act

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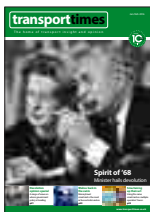
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Devolution plans gather momentum

A Conservative government espousing the principles of transport devolution introduced under Harold Wilson is not a development many would have predicted.

But that is the message local transport minister Andrew Jones has been enthusiastically putting across – both in recent speeches, and writing in this issue of *Transport Times*.

Explicitly referring to the “visionary principles” of the 1968 Transport Act, Mr Jones said: “Gone are the days of centralised control where ministers and civil servants in Whitehall made decisions about investments taking place in other parts of the country.”

That’s powerful stuff, but a number of initiatives are coming together to add to the momentum.

First, the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill provides for elected mayors to be created in combined authority areas, to whom transport powers can be devolved.

The complementary Buses Bill, about to be published, will provide details of mayors’ powers over bus services. And meanwhile, passenger transport support group PTEG has been relaunched as the Urban Transport Group. In its new guise it brings Transport for London alongside the passenger transport executives, and the new group will have a wider remit, covering roads, freight, cycling and walking.

This is a remarkable resurgence by a group of organisations which at one time during the Blair government could have faced the axe.

The new devolution agenda is not quite a return to PTEs’ origins nearly half a century ago because the organisations will not be responsible for operating bus services.

But it seems certain that the Buses Bill will make it much easier for transport authorities



It is likely there will still be stiff tests for franchising schemes

to introduce franchising of services, allowing them to set routes, fares and timetables.

This won’t be the only option: the new metro mayors are likely to have a range of tools at their disposal to influence bus provision to a greater or lesser degree.

Government thinking outlined in presentations to a series of DfT bus workshops noted that authorities had reservations about bus partnerships – they were thought risky, unenforceable and linked too heavily to infrastructure improvements. Officials said this suggested there was room for improvement in the area between quality partnerships and franchising, with stronger powers, more market control but fewer risks than franchising.

And it is likely there will still be stiff tests for franchising schemes. Though the necessity for examination by a quality

contracts scheme board is likely to be abolished, the process outlined in the workshops suggested that the Treasury’s “five cases” model would be adopted, in which a strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management case all have to be made.

A strong backlash against franchising, as demonstrated in the response to the Nexus proposals for introducing quality contracts in the North East, is to be expected. And it remains to be seen how the Government will deal with the tangled question of operators’ lost future profits, which the quality contract scheme board for the Nexus proposal considered more tangible than the benefits Nexus believed would accrue.

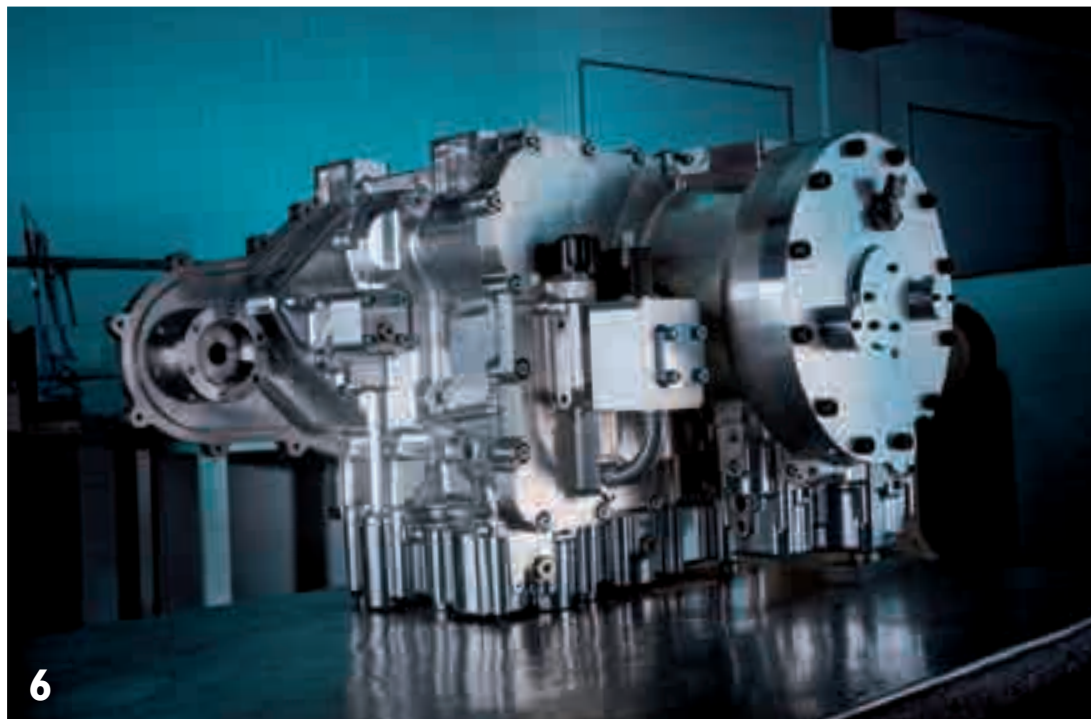
Operators would, perhaps, only be brought round if a franchising scheme could be quickly set up and demonstrated to have benefits for operators as well as passengers – by expanding the overall bus market in a given area, which is part of the rationale for franchising. But this looks like a tall order.

Nevertheless, the Government is committed to moving quickly. It plans to introduce the Buses Bill to parliament by the end of February, with the aim of it reaching the statute book in around a year’s time, so that the powers are in place before a mayoral election in Manchester in May 2017.

In other words, we will see the detailed plans within days, rather than weeks.

**David Fowler, editor
Transport Times**





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Who's moving where

Minister hails return to 'visionary principles' of 1968 Act

By David Fowler

The Government has underlined its commitment to plans for devolution to city-regions, praising Passenger Transport Executives and invoking the spirit of the 1968 Transport Act.

Speaking at a parliamentary reception to mark the launch of the Urban Transport Group, the successor to support group PTEG which brings TfL into the fold alongside the PTEs, transport minister Andrew Jones said: "The visionary principles of the 1968 Transport Act – according to which control over local transport is devolved to regional authorities – are now back at the forefront of our political thinking today."

He added: "Gone are the days of centralised control, where ministers and civil servants in Whitehall made decisions about investments taking place in other parts of the country." Mr Jones develops the theme writing in this issue of *Transport Times*.

For a Conservative minister to speak so enthusiastically about a measure brought in by Barbara Castle as transport secretary in the first Wilson government drew considerable surprise from senior transport figures. "Astounding," was the reaction of one seasoned transport campaigner.

The minister's words will add to the unease among bus operators about what the Buses Bill, about to be published by the Government, will contain.

The 1968 Act set up passenger transport executives in four conurbations, Merseyside, Tyneside, West Midlands and South East Lancashire/North East Cheshire (later Greater Manchester PTE). South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire followed in 1974.

PTEs originally had responsibility for operating as well as planning public transport services in their regions. Initiatives to emerge included the Tyne & Wear metro as well as tram schemes such as Manchester Metrolink.

Governments have since then blown hot and cold about the PTEs' role. In 1986 PTEs lost the responsibility for running buses with the general deregulation



Transport minister Barbara Castle introduced the 1968 Act during the Wilson government

of bus services. In the late 1990s under the Blair government, DfT civil servants believed the organisations had outlived their usefulness and were developing proposals to abolish them. This initiative was blocked by deputy prime minister John Prescott after a strong defence by the Commission for Integrated Transport.

Supporters of devolution are confident the Buses Bill will make it much easier for city-regions to take control of bus routes and timetables via franchising. The recent experience of Nexus in its attempt to introduce franchising through the existing quality contract legislation has confirmed the general belief that the legislation is unworkable.

However Mr Jones also says "Not every region around the country will adopt the same bus policy. It is more about what's best for each market, whether that's partnerships, a franchising approach or – where bus services are already working well – the status quo."

The bill is expected to be introduced before the end of February, with the aim that it becomes law by the end of 2016 or early 2017. This would mean the powers would be in place in

time for a Greater Manchester mayoral election in May that year.

Some insight into government thinking can be gained from documents published before and after recent bus workshops to discuss the issues with the industry.

Alongside franchising these outline proposals for strengthening partnerships – for example by moving responsibility for registration of bus routes from the traffic commissioners to PTEs and local transport authorities, which would allow them to impose conditions such as participating in a smart ticketing scheme.

Though the bill is expected to lower the hurdles for franchising, the DfT's workshops still proposed a fairly stiff accountability test based on the Treasury's fivefold business case model in which a strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management case all have to be made.

One area where the status quo may prevail is the West Midlands, where National Express holds around 90% of the bus market. Here any attempt to introduce franchising would bring the vexed question of whether operators should be compensated for the loss of future profits into particularly sharp focus.

At the same time there is strong partnership working between the company and PTE Centro.

Mr Jones stressed: "The Buses Bill will provide a great opportunity for the whole industry."

Shadow transport secretary Lilian Greenwood said: "The Buses Bill is a huge U-turn by the Government. It is welcome and we're looking forward to seeing the detail. We strongly support devolution as an opportunity for transport authorities to introduce proper integration of services and put passengers and taxpayers first."

A CPT UK spokesperson said: "The industry is, of course, awaiting sight of the Buses Bill but CPT has been engaged with the DfT as part of its consultation process. The bus industry firmly believes that the way forward lies in successful partnership working between operators and local authorities. This approach fosters flexible, locally-managed commercial bus networks, encourages innovation and ensures that services meet the changing needs of customers. Partnership working has seen passenger numbers rise, complaints fall, and has kept fares affordable."

**Andrew Jones, p11
Opinion Special, p17**



Gordon Baker: "A fantastic opportunity"

Systra acquires JMP Consultants

Rail and urban transport engineering consultant Systra has acquired UK-based JMP Consultants. The company said the integration of JMP would substantially increase Systra's transport planning and engineering capability in the UK. This is predicted to bring Systra into the top five transport planning companies in the UK by turnover, offering clients a greater breadth and depth of expertise in all aspects of the transport sector.

The combined entity will also bring significant additional expertise to the wider Systra Group.

Through this acquisition, Systra will cover all areas of UK with 12 offices across the country and new regional locations, as well as additional local projects in Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle and Reading.

JMP has 180 staff and had developed a focus on sustainability throughout its work.

Systra Ltd chief executive Tim O'Neill said: "The acquisition is a critical element of Systra's overall growth plan and demonstrates our commitment to the UK market. Our combined entity will maximise future opportunities by providing diversification to projects and clients."

JMP chief executive Gordon Baker said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for our staff at JMP to join forces with one of the global leaders in the transport business. I have no doubt that the combined businesses will go forward to achieve excellent outcomes from the many new and exciting challenges that will undoubtedly come their way."



Virtual Electric buses launched in Bristol

Two state of the art Alexander Dennis Virtual Electric buses have begun trials in Bristol.

The buses are being introduced by First West of England, in a partnership with the DfT, Bristol City Council and the University of the West of England.

The buses are equipped with geofencing technology, which uses GPS satellite positioning

to identify when the bus enters a pre-defined area of low air quality such as the city centre, and switches automatically to pure electric operation.

Outside areas of low air quality a small diesel engine runs to charge the bus's batteries. These are also charged wirelessly at the terminus of the bus route.

The buses were due to enter service at the end of this January

on route 72, linking the city centre with UWE's Frenchay campus. Only five are in operation in the UK, the others being in London.

Bristol mayor George Ferguson said: "This adds to Bristol's growing reputation as a laboratory for change and an environmental innovator. My goal is for Bristol to be one of the healthiest cities in the world and that has to start with us breathing clean air."

Contactless payments 'on all buses by 2022'

The UK's big five bus operators are developing a business case for the introduction of contactless payment on every bus in the UK by 2022.

Stagecoach, First Bus, Go-Ahead, Arriva and National Express are working on the scheme to install the technology on 32,000 buses outside London. Contactless payment is already accepted on 9,600 buses in London. The operators say that pay as you go fares with capping would be offered in all urban areas.

The scheme, to be "funded predominantly by the private sector", would cover more than 1,200 bus companies, but legislation would be needed to make sure contactless ticketing was offered by them all.

Robert Montgomery, Stagecoach UK Bus managing director and chair of the major operators' steering group on smart ticketing, pointed out

that Stagecoach and Go-Ahead between them have over 1.5 million smartcards in circulation. He said: "New technology has brought opportunities to deliver even simpler, faster and more integrated travel using contactless debit and credit cards. This is an ambitious programme that needs careful planning and close partnership working both between operators and with local authorities. We are serious about transforming travel for passengers with this initiative."

Simultaneously, the UK Cards Association, the trade body representing financial institutions in the card payments industry, and the Department for Transport published a national "framework" to help operators adopt a consistent approach to contactless journeys.

This work is expected to underpin the development of the business case for introducing contactless bus travel across the country.

The framework outlines how operators could bring contactless technology into their business and what they would need to do to make it work. It includes three models.

Two have been developed in detail: single pay as you go, where a contactless card replaces cash for single journeys; and aggregated pay as you go, where a contactless card is used several times on a particular journey or day, with the fare aggregated at the end.

The third model, pre-purchase, in which a contactless card is associated with a ticket before the journey and then used as a form of identity during the journey, will be developed in detail this year.

The Government has been accelerating the development of smart multi-operator commercial bus tickets through cross-sector body the Smart City Partnership. Transport minister Andrew Jones said: "The smart ticketing revolu-

tion is helping to build a modern, affordable transport network that provides better journeys for everyone. By working together, industry, city regions and government have been able to ensure more and more people can use smart ticketing to get around. We are determined to continue driving progress."

However Campaign for Better Transport public transport campaigner Martin Abrams accused the Government of trying to distract attention from the South East Flexible Ticketing programme, announced in September 2013 with the aim of introducing smart Oyster-style ticketing across south-east England and piloting a flexible, part-time season ticket on a commuter route into London.

He said: "Despite having spent £37m of taxpayers' money developing the scheme, it has delivered very little. Now the Government appears to be quietly trying to drop the project."

Torotrak goes into production with Flybrid

Torotrak's Flybrid kinetic energy recovery system for buses is to go into commercial production later this year.

The move follows successful in-service trials on a Wrightbus StreetLite midibus operated by Arriva.

The trials, on a bus route in Gillingham, Kent, from March last year, demonstrated the performance of the KERS system under real operating conditions, and the results have fed into the development of a second generation design.

The mechanical KERS system, originally developed for Formula 1, captures kinetic energy which would otherwise be lost during braking and stores it in a steel and carbon fibre flywheel weighing 8.5kg and spinning at up to 30,000rpm. When the bus moves off again, energy is transferred from the flywheel back to the bus's powertrain, reducing the power needed from the engine and cutting fuel consumption.

The second generation design is already undergoing tests



We are looking forward to installing Flybrid KERS across our bus fleet later this year



on rigs and on a new Euro VI StreetLite. The new design is simpler and more efficient, with fewer parts and a weight reduction of 80kg. The trials demonstrated that the system was sufficiently robust to cope with the stop-start duty cycle of a bus, as well as removing the cost of the batteries that would be used in a conventional diesel/electric hybrid.

With a global manufacturing partner, Torotrak is preparing for

commercial production to start in mid-2016, with the first systems to be delivered to Wrightbus in the second half of the year. Production buses are expected to go into service in late 2016.

Arriva UK Bus engineering director Ian Tarran said: "Having collaborated with Torotrak and Wrightbus on the flywheel project since 2012 we are looking forward to installing Flybrid KERS across our bus fleet later this year."

Flybrid has been on test on an Arriva service in Gillingham

TfL to take over suburban rail under partnership plans

Transport for London could take over responsibility for inner suburban rail services in south London as franchises come up for renewal, under new plans jointly published with the Department for Transport.

The two organisations would work together to provide more frequent services and increased capacity over the London rail network.

The move follows TfL's success on the London Overground. The DfT would retain responsibility for outer suburban services, while rail services operating mostly or wholly within the Greater London boundary would be transferred to TfL.

In addition local authorities and local enterprise partnerships inside and outside London would be given the opportunity to have a direct say on how services are specified. The proposal says

this will mean that "decisions affecting transport infrastructure support local and regional economic growth and that they are increasingly placed in the hands of those who know the needs of the region best".

The DfT has launched a consultation on the proposals.

The plans set out three principles which would underlie the partnership's approach. These are: more frequent services, better interchanges and increased capacity; greater reliability for all passengers; and high standards of customer service.

The plans envisage a London Suburban Metro service, with potential for 80% of stations to have a train every 15 minutes, compared with 67% today.

There would be service improvements for all, with no detrimental effect on fares or longer distance travel, the proposals say.

The first franchise renewals to be affected are expected to be South Western, affecting trains from Waterloo and due to be let next year; South Eastern, with services from Victoria, Charing Cross, Blackfriars and Cannon Street in 2018; and services from Victoria, London Bridge, King's Cross and Moorgate, currently part of the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise from 2021 (or later if an option to extend the contract is exercised).

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin said: "We are committed to making journeys better across London and the South East, and this new partnership represents a huge opportunity to transform travel. We are working closely with TfL to agree the best way of delivering integrated, seamless journeys for passengers, and we want to hear people's views."

London transport commissioner Mike Brown said: "This

partnership will bring us closer to delivering what customers want and London's economy needs – a reliable metro-style rail service that supports new homes and jobs and improves the quality of life for millions of people."

Rail Delivery Group chief executive Paul Plummer said: "The rail industry works closely with both TfL and the DfT to run services and will work with them to help continue to improve services. The railway in and around London is full in many places and, even with planned improvements to allow more trains to run, the desire for more services in the capital will have to be balanced with the needs of passengers further away and with the needs of rail freight. Getting this balance right is crucial to both the country and capital."

Consultation on the proposals ends on 18 March.



Bombardier completes S-Stock fleet

Bombardier Transportation celebrated successful completion of the final train in the fleet of S-Stock trains for London Underground in a ceremony at the end of December (pictured above).

Bombardier produced a total of 191 Movia trains for the Circle, District, Hammersmith & City and Metropolitan lines in the UK's largest rolling stock contract to date, a total of 1,395 cars in seven and eight-car units.

The new S-Stock trains provide improved capacity (25% for the Circle line), accessibility and comfort, with air-conditioning for the first time on the Tube, walk-through carriages and improved information displays. Regenerative braking provides significant energy savings and the fleet requires less frequent maintenance. The trains are av-

eraging over 60,000km between failures that affect service.

LU managing director Nick Brown said: "Our new trains have proved an instant hit with our customers and it's easy to see why. With air-conditioning, more space, improved accessibility and better customer information systems, they are a major part of the modernisation of the sub-surface lines. LU's successful relationship with Bombardier creates thousands of jobs in the UK and is providing superb new services for our customers."

Last November, the new S-Stock trains were voted one of the top 10 most popular designs in Transport for London's "Design Icons" poll of favourite transport designs.

The final entry into service of the new S-Stock fleet on the District Line is scheduled to be completed in 2016.

TfL's Stuart Ross dies, aged 42

Tributes have been paid to TfL director of news Stuart Ross, who died last week aged 42 after suffering from cancer.

London mayor Boris Johnson said: "Stuart's contribution to London and Londoners through his work at TfL was immense. He played a pivotal role in the transformation of TfL's reputation in the press and among the public in recent years."

Mr Ross served under three transport commissioners, Bob Kiley, Sir Peter Hendy and Mike Brown, and was at the forefront of TfL's communications during the launch of the congestion charge in 2003, the 7/7 terror attacks in 2005, and the London Olympic Games in 2012.

Sir Peter Hendy said: "Stuart Ross was a straight, honest, passionate man. That he was a press officer for a public institution makes those qualities rare; that he was a real friend even rarer. My heart goes out to his wife, child and family."

Mike Brown said: "Stuart will be hugely missed, both as a highly distinguished public servant, and as an inspirational and warm-hearted colleague. He played a vital role in key



moments in TfL's history, from the aftermath of 7/7 to the huge success of the 2012 Games."

TfL marketing and communications managing director Vernon Everitt said: "It is impossible to overstate Stuart's enormous contribution. He has been instrumental in making us the organisation we are today. Stuart will always be an inspiration and hero to us."

Mr Ross is survived by his wife, Becky and daughter, Rowan.

A full appreciation will appear in next month's TT.

Network Rail publishes details of revised upgrade plan

How key projects are affected

Great Western electrification

Electrification Maidenhead-Didcot: December 2017
Didcot-Bristol Parkway and Cardiff, Reading-Newbury: December 2018
Bristol Temple Meads: February 2019-April 2020
Didcot-Oxford: June 2019
Cardiff-Swansea: CP6 (2019-2024)

In all cases the first timetabled electric train is not expected to run until sometime in control period 6.

Midland Main Line electrification

Bedford-Kettering/Corby: December 2019
Kettering-Nottingham and Sheffield via Derby: December 2023

Trans-Pennine route upgrade

Electrification of the trans-Pennine line between Stalybridge and Leeds and on to York and Selby, and capacity and journey time improvements between Manchester Victoria, Leeds and York: December 2022

Intercity Express programme

East Coast main line: IEP trains expected in timetabled service: September 2018
Great Western: first timetabled use of IEP bi-mode train on main line routes from London to Bristol, Plymouth, Swansea, Worcester, Hereford: July 2017

East-West Rail phase two

Direct passenger services between Oxford, Milton Keynes and Bedford, and Milton Keynes-London Marylebone: CP6

Electric spine development programme

Intended to create a 25kV electrified passenger and freight route from the south coast via Oxford and the Midlands to South Yorkshire over a number of control periods. Development work on this programme is now entirely planned for CP6.

Welsh Valley Lines electrification

The Welsh Government is reviewing the scope of the scheme and all Network Rail development work is on hold until the review is completed.

Network Rail has published detailed timetables for its programme of upgrade works, following Sir Peter Hendy's review and re-planning of the £38bn programme after cost overruns, published in November (*TT*, December 2015).

The plan sets out the implications for the completion of all the projects included in the original "Enhancements Delivery Plan" for the period 2014-19.

The Department for Transport has begun a consultation on the plan, which will run to 18 March. The DfT says the Transport Secretary is "minded" to accept the plan.

Implications for the most significant projects are given in the box (right).

Dates given are completion dates as far as Network Rail's obligations are concerned, when the project is "authorised for public use". Entry into timetabled service may be later than this if it depends on the actions of other industry partners, such as provision of rolling stock or the introduction of a new timetable.

CAF to build Pacer replacements

The end of the line for unpopular Pacer trains in the north of England came a step closer with the announcement that Arriva has signed a contract for new rolling stock for the Northern franchise.

Arriva announced that Spain's CAF will build the 281 new carriages, with the first arriving by October 2018. The deal will be financed by Eversholt Rail Group.

The new trains will be capable of 100mph and will feature air-conditioning, audio and visual on-board passenger information, power sockets and tables, cycle racks, free wi-fi and toilets.

Arriva Rail North takes over the franchise on 1 April this year. One of the DfT's requirements was to replace the outdated and uncomfortable Pacers.

Under the nine-year contract Arriva will also invest in refurbishing other rolling stock and will introduce extra services, increased capacity and a variety of station and ticket improvements.

The company announced earlier in January that Alex Hynes, managing director of

Northern Rail for outgoing franchisee Abellio/Serco, would continue to lead Northern's 5,500 employees as managing director of Arriva Rail North.

A new fleet of AT300 trains for Great Western Railway will be manufactured at Hitachi Rail Italy's facility in Pistoia, the company announced in December.

Hitachi Rail Europe finalised a deal in July last year to supply and maintain 29 AT300 trains for the GWR franchise, which operates trains between Paddington and Plymouth and Penzance.

Comprising seven nine-car and 22 five-car bi-mode trains, the mixed fleet will allow for flexible use, including 10-car formations (two five-cars coupled together) for through services to and from London.

The AT300 is closely related to the Class 800 bi-mode train designed for the DfT's Intercity Express programme, but with higher power to cope with the gradients in Devon and Cornwall. The AT300s will be equipped with larger fuel tanks to cater for the long-distance journeys to Plymouth and Penzance.



Hitachi Rail Italy will build AT300s for GWR

Hitachi acquired Italian train maker AnsaldoBreda in November. Its Newton Aycliffe plant in County Durham is fully occupied building Intercity Express trains and AT200 electric multiple units for the ScotRail franchise.

Meanwhile Alstom is reported as saying it will build a new manufacturing plant in the UK if it wins the contract for trains

for HS2. The company closed its Washwood Heath factory in the West Midlands, with the loss of 1,000 jobs, in 2004 at the end of its contract building Pendolino tilting trains for Virgin Rail.

Formal tendering for the high-speed trains is due to start later in the year. HS2 has indicated that it wants the trains to be at least partly built in the UK.



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After 50 years, a new era opens for PTEs

The new Urban Transport Group will be a forum for spreading best practice, as devolution and the forthcoming Buses Bill open up new opportunities for the city-regions, says **Andrew Jones**

It is almost half a century since Parliament passed the 1968 Transport Act, which led to the creation of Passenger Transport Executives. Until this point, the management of transport in Britain's large conurbations had been haphazard and poorly co-ordinated. The Transport Act paved the way for a new approach, with PTEs taking control of bus operations and local rail networks in five major city-regions.

Although local transport governance in Britain has been reformed many times since, it is a mark of the PTEs' success that they have survived the intervening decades largely intact.

In fact they are not just surviving. They are thriving. And they have now been joined by Transport for London in the new Urban Transport Group, the body which has replaced PTEG and brings together the country's largest urban transport authorities for the first time.

It is important to recognise the scale of the new group. Together, the seven full members will serve upwards of 20 million people in Yorkshire, Merseyside, the North East, Greater Manchester, London and the Midlands. These are in addition to three associate members – Bristol and the west of England, Strathclyde, and Nottingham.

Their task is to plan and execute transport strategies that will keep our leading city-regions on the move, and support further economic growth. They will make the case for transport investment in their areas, and act as networks for industry professionals.

The group will also be expanding its remit beyond public transport to cover freight, strategic highways and active travel – in other words developing a comprehensive transport plan for each city and wider region, where cycling is considered alongside bus

services, and where multi-modal freight strategies are planned across boundaries.

As minister for local transport, I welcome the changes, and look forward to working with the group.

In many ways it is a reminder of how transport policy has come full circle. Gone are the days of centralised control, where ministers and civil servants in Whitehall made decisions about investments taking place in other parts of the country. The visionary principles of the 1968 Transport Act – handing responsibility for local transport to regional authorities – are back at the forefront of political thinking today.

I'm only too aware of the different transport challenges each

The visionary principles of the 1968 Transport Act are again at the forefront of political thinking today

city-region faces. Geography, local politics and investment history are just a few of the factors which make every city unique, and which require a unique transport response. So PTEs will continue as standard-bearers for devolution as part of the Urban Transport Group.

But there are more similarities and shared challenges than differences in our major conurbations. Each PTE has to meet ever-growing demand for urban transport while tackling pollution and carbon emissions. Each has to find ways to get better value from investments. And each has to respond to the housing shortage, while reducing congestion and making roads safer.

The welcome addition of Transport for London to the Urban Transport Group can only help spread best practice

among PTEs. The longest-standing members of the group have a vast wealth of experience that will be readily available to Transport for London and of great benefit to passengers in the capital. For its part, Transport for London is recognised as a pioneer in urban transport, and will be able to share its knowledge on smart ticketing, building Crossrail and Thameslink, finance and investment, and how to make bus regulation work for passengers.

The government's Buses Bill will provide a great opportunity for the whole industry. Not every region around the country will adopt the same bus policy. It is more about what works best for each market, whether that's partnerships, a franchising approach, or – where bus services are already working well – the status quo.

What is important is that bus services can grow to meet the changing needs of passengers, particularly in cities, where demand for travel is rising fast.

The new bill, and the influence of Transport for London within the Urban Transport Group, will make it easier for other cities to benefit from London's lead, planning, developing and regulating bus services, and offering integrated, Oyster-style ticketing.

I have no doubt that with its new name and increased membership, the Urban Transport Group will build on the achievements of PTEG, and nearly 50 successful years of Passenger Transport Executives.

For everyone who uses urban transport in our major cities, that will come as very good news indeed.

Andrew Jones, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport



Smart ticketing must start with simplicity

London's ticket system evolved over many years. Expectations for rapid progress in the North must be tempered by the knowledge that there are numerous hurdles to cross



Londoners are stunned when they realise that other parts of the country don't have Oyster, so familiar and essential has it become in the capital.

Getting something similar for the North and the Midlands is a top priority. Surely this can be quickly fixed, well before major investments in east-west transport infrastructure come onstream?

Perhaps not. What is not widely understood is just how long it has taken Transport for London to get to today's happy state, with full multimodal functionality and a choice of contactless and Oyster available.

The process started 35 years ago. Then, in an inspired piece of political leadership, the incoming leader of the Greater London Council Ken Livingstone insisted he wanted a single flat fare for the whole of London.

London Transport was aghast. Such a coarsening of the fares regime, then full of local peculiarities, would surely mean a huge loss of revenue, it objected. So a compromise was duly reached: there would be not one, but two, zones, an inner and an outer. This arrangement soon evolved to six concentric zones for Greater London – and a few more for areas beyond served by lengthier London Underground lines.

By the mid-1980s, a family of Travelcards was available for single zones or combinations of them, and combinations of travel modes. Public transport use soared. Amazingly, 30 years later, Travelcards are still available, now encoded with a magnetic strip to operate the ticket barrier system installed in the 1990s.

Oyster was launched in 2003; contactless ticketing, at first on buses only and using the same yellow card readers, followed in 2012. It already accounts for 25% of London's pay-as-you-go travel, with bank cards accepted from 70 countries.

So the sequence in London, with a properly resourced implementation team, strong singular political leadership, dedicated budgets and a substantial role for private sector contractors was: first, simplify the fares; second, rationalise fares applicable across diverse routes and modes; third, install gatelines at all stations; fourth, progressively adopt electronic systems. With operations and ticketing digitised, a natural follow-on is to make data freely available for third-party app providers.

London's system is rightly recognised as world-leading. But it has taken over 30 years to get there and to build trust in the system and the brand. So expectations on Transport for the North, for example, need to be set accordingly.

Outside London, the difficulty is to get all operators to agree the price of a multi-operator ticket

Not that it can be given 30 years. Speaking to *The Times* on 8 December, TransPennine Express managing director Nick Donovan was surely right to demand smart ticketing for the north of England – and the newly awarded TPE franchise will introduce simpler smart and mobile ticketing, according to First Group chief executive Tim O'Toole.

Donovan bemoaned the rail industry's inability to make progress thus far, excusing itself with tales of a complex fare inheritance. But he might have gone too far in thinking that Oyster was dead now that contactless was available.

As Shashi Verma, TfL's director of customer experience and the man who has led in this field for

over ten years points out, Oyster – a card issued and administered by TfL – still has appeal to some market segments in the era of contactless bank cards. It has a continuing purpose for those without bank accounts (children, for example); for those who may have an account but don't have contactless cards; and those who prefer to manage their expenditure on travel separately. That's why there are 11 million Oyster cards in existence today.

And as rail fare expert and commentator Barry Doe – one of a handful of people who would claim to understand today's national rail fare structure – recently pointed out, smart-cards only work with a clean slate. To add them to an already over-complicated fare system would be a disaster, he said. As explained here, London made those simplifications many years ago. It took strong political leadership to do it. Ken Livingstone didn't have to worry about the impact on franchise economics or individual bus companies.

And here's the rub. TfL manages and takes the revenue risk on the bus and Tube system. On top of this, the bus and Tube market is so big that TfL was able to drag rail along with it. Outside London, the difficulty is to get all operators to agree the price of a multi-operator ticket, whether it is smart or not, and this is where commercial interests come into play. There is a financial barrier to simplified ticketing. We might get smart, but will we get simple?

It will be important for Transport for the North to make early progress. The new rail franchises will have a key part to play. The metro/tram systems can surely then be added. But only five of 500 stations under the Northern franchise have ticket gates. Strong leadership and northern innovation is clearly called for.

Jim Steer is director and founder of Steer Davies Gleave.

Under the surface, road users want the same

The latest research from Transport Focus uncovers broad agreement between drivers of HGVs and other vehicles over improvements they'd like to see

We've been out talking to heavy goods vehicle drivers, and you may be surprised to hear that their view of the world isn't that different from a car driver's.

Transport Focus's HGV drivers report, published at the end of 2015, looked at the aspects of England's motorways and major A-roads (the strategic road network) that HGV drivers want to see improved most.

We've now asked four different types of road user what they want improved most, and they all said the same – quality of road surfaces. The message is clear:

"Road repairs needed urgently" (male, 60-64, East);
"Just better road surfaces" (female, 25-34, Midlands).

Our next step is to establish which aspects of surface quality road users most want to see improved. Is it general "smoothness"? Is it potholes? Or is it noisy surfaces?

"Better management of unplanned delays such as accidents and breakdowns" and "better management of roadworks" are also in HGV drivers' top three priorities.

We had detailed feedback including "better planning of roadworks – keep traffic flowing and reduction of lane closures when no works are being done" (male, 60-64, North West) and "don't carry out roadworks on all alternative routes at the same time" (male, 45-54, Midlands).

Car and van drivers and motorcyclists shared the top priority but their top three included "safer design and upkeep of roads" (ranked second for car and van drivers and third for motorcyclists) and "better behaved drivers" (ranked third for car and van drivers and second for motorcyclists).

The results gave us an understanding of which aspects of the strategic network HGV drivers

regard as a greater priority for improvement than others. Our "index score" goes further and shows us how much more or less important a given factor is compared with an average priority for improvement. This means we can see that not only is "improved quality of road surfaces" the top priority for improvement, it is also over three times as important as the average priority for HGV drivers.

We're often asked how we can be sure the drivers were talking about the right roads. This is a good question, because many people don't know what the strategic road network is. For all the road users we surveyed

Just under seven in ten car drivers and under 20% of motorcyclists had heard of smart motorways

in both pieces of research, we asked the participants to identify their journey on a map, so we could exclude travel not on the strategic network.

We discovered that most journeys on the strategic network are surprisingly short: for HGV drivers, around half are 20 miles.

We also asked about smart motorways – those sections of motorway with extra technology to manage traffic, such as variable speed limits or the ability to open the hard shoulder as an extra lane at busy times.

HGV drivers, perhaps unsurprisingly, were much more familiar with smart motorways. Nine in ten of them were aware of their existence, and almost eight in ten had used them.

By comparison just under seven in ten car drivers and under 20% of motorcyclists had heard of smart motorways.

We're taking this work out to Highways England, the

Government and others to help focus investment and management attention.

New insight from South Western passengers

As part of our work in rail, we carry out bespoke research in areas of the country where the franchise is about to be re-let. Added to the nationwide picture provided by our National Rail Passenger Survey, this gives the Government and the bidders a good idea of what they will need to do to keep passengers satisfied.

Before the competition to find a new operator for the South Western franchise, we asked current passengers about their experiences and hopes for the future. We found that passengers were generally happy with trains and could see that there had been efforts to improve punctuality. But they still wanted to see more trains running, better information and better value ticket products.

Like passengers across the country, South Western passengers are concerned with value for money. It's more than just the cost of fares – it's about ticket options that reflect people's travel patterns, and how they want to buy tickets and manage that process. It also reflects the ease and comfort of their journey, particularly whether they can get a seat and how any disruption is handled.

Now that we have published this detailed insight, we will continue working to ensure that the final franchise contract has passengers' needs at the heart.



Anthony Smith is chief executive of Transport Focus.

Electric vehicles? The switch we need is modal

The latest buses are cleaner and more efficient. If the Government wants to improve air quality and avoid climate change they are a better bet than cars – either conventional or electric



Air quality has shot up the agenda. It is estimated that poor air quality may cause 29,000 early deaths a year, and transport has been identified as a major contributor. The Government is rightly focused on the issue, as recent announcements on Clean Air Zones and the Clean Bus Technology Fund demonstrate.

But one aspect has escaped all mention. It is astonishing that Clean Air Zones will focus exclusively on HGVs, buses, coaches and taxis, with nothing planned for private cars. The Government should be taking this opportunity to encourage modal switch from car to more sustainable transport. By imposing additional costs on buses, but no change for cars, this appears to do the opposite.

It has been a long time since the Government has dared to talk openly about “modal shift”. That sort of parlance hasn’t been given any real prominence since the 1998 Transport White Paper. But until we reduce car dependency, any real progress both in improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions will elude us. The fact is we will have to make it more expensive and less attractive to drive if we are to address these burning issues.

And the problem is becoming increasingly urgent. The world is awash with cheap oil, with no sign of that changing soon. Supermarkets routinely price below £1 a litre, and recent estimates suggest that petrol could drop to 86p a litre. All this cheap oil may be providing temporary relief to household incomes, but it is extremely damaging to efforts to tackle climate change. In the past year, the number of cars on England’s roads has risen by almost 600,000. And as congestion in our towns and cities worsens, buses find it harder than ever to compete with the car.

There needs to be much greater consideration in policy

formulation of the benefits of modal switch. It is also time to set the record straight on a number of issues pertaining to buses on which the general perception is sharply out of kilter.

One of these issues is testing. The Volkswagen emissions scandal shone a light on the fact that the current testing and monitoring of car emissions do not reflect the experience of motorists in reality. And it is not just diesel cars that have been in the spotlight. The stated fuel efficiency of petrol cars is also in question. An overhaul of the whole car manufacturing testing regime will be needed

Until we reduce car dependency, progress in improving air quality will elude us

if confidence is to be restored.

Testing for bus manufacturing, on the other hand, tells a very different story. Euro VI buses are subject to much more rigorous testing than Euro 6 cars. Not only is the factory test much closer to real world performance, but one of the requirements of Euro VI is that manufacturers have to carry out continuing tests to validate in-service emission levels throughout an engine’s life.

There is an exceptionally good story to tell on Euro VI. Real-world testing for Euro VI buses carried out by Transport for London shows a 95% reduction in NOx emissions compared with their Euro V counterparts. And recent figures from the SMMT reveal that 53.5% of new buses and coaches feature the latest low emission Euro VI technology, a threefold increase from 2014.

There has been a misconception that buses have been lagging behind. But buses

are getting cleaner and more efficient, thanks in part to successive rounds of the Green Bus Fund under the last government. The Clean Bus Technology Fund will help stimulate the adoption of retrofit technology for older buses. And as Euro VI demonstrates, in many important respects bus manufacturing is leading the way.

The real opportunity lies in modal switch. Buses provide an immediate solution for improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions per passenger by taking cars off the road. Research for Greener Journeys has shown that the best-used bus services in urban areas are reducing carbon emissions by up to 75%. Moreover, investment in buses and bus infrastructure provides very high value for money. Analysis by KPMG demonstrates up to £7 of net economic benefit for every £1 invested.

Pro-bus measures ought to be an obvious choice, but ministers remain reluctant to adopt them. Instead they are putting their faith in electric cars as the main way to decarbonise the transport sector. But it appears that the electric car market is failing to take off. SMMT figures for the electric vehicle market show that, though there has been growth in recent years, it still only represents 2.1% of the total market and includes a large number of conventional hybrids. It would take a total transformation to achieve 40-50% uptake of plug-in vehicles by 2030.

It’s time the Government started addressing the real issue. The chief barrier to improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions is car dependency. The best immediate opportunity lies in encouraging modal switch.

Claire Haigh is Chief Executive of Greener Journeys, a campaign dedicated to encouraging people to make more sustainable travel choices www.greenerjourneys.com

Political row over bridge closure misses the point

Those seeking to make political capital from the closure of the Forth Bridge should realise that the more important lessons lie in how all sectors of transport responded to the emergency, says **Derek Halden**

The sudden closure of the Forth Road Bridge in the run-up to Christmas was just about as convenient as the sudden closure of Hammersmith Flyover in London a few months before the 2012 Olympic Games. As the welding torches blazed to repair the bridge trusses before Christmas, I thought of former London transport commissioner Peter Hendy's metaphor about the Olympics as a "burning deck" to prompt innovation.

Around the Forth, the response of bus and train operators, road authorities, the NHS and many others providing essential and emergency services was admirable. There is no doubt that a bit of extra pressure can sharpen up effectiveness.

One example was the transport service set up so that cancer patients could reach their daily appointments effectively. Setting up similar schemes to this across the country could save very large sums of public money and improve health outcomes, but over the last decade sustaining cross-sector partnership working on such schemes has eluded most authorities. The need for daily treatment in specialist centres is always a key transport challenge, and those of us who have set up such schemes look enviously at the two days it took during the emergency bridge closure to set up a workable scheme.

If a short-term emergency can help us provide better value, higher quality transport services, can we design more dynamic and innovative asset management systems with suitable incentives? Currently change is being driven by funding pressure in revenue spending, complemented by large capital programmes – including building a new Forth Road Bridge. More could be done to set up the enabling mechanisms to overcome the instincts of asset managers to protect their

revenue budgets against change, in the face of funding cuts.

The ink was barely dry on the Institution of Civil Engineers State of the Nation Report for Scotland when the emergency closure of the bridge took place. The ICE report highlighted the growing backlog of maintenance, including the risk to bridges, and suggested that, if basic maintenance could not be afforded, additional road charges might be needed to fund them. The lack of a sustainable business model for transport asset management makes transport different from most other essential infrastructure.

The lack of a sustainable business model for asset management makes transport different from most other essential infrastructure

The current generation of politicians are clear that road charging is not on their agenda, but could a new business model help to inject capital funding into better transport management? The nation's transport infrastructure is a capital asset worth protecting, not just a revenue liability to be defended.

The Scottish Government has set up the Scottish Futures Trust to create a mechanism whereby private capital for social projects could become publicly acceptable. Could a similar approach be adopted to enable people to pay for better transport? Much of our current infrastructure was built by crowdfunding mechanisms such as public subscription.

Ironically, the Forth Road Bridge was until recently one of the few bridges on the network with a largely sustainable business model, where income from tolls was more than sufficient to fund maintenance and to contribute towards renewals.

A Scottish Parliament inquiry will now look at whether the transfer of the asset to Transport Scotland and the winding up of the Forth Estuary Transport Authority last year contributed to the recent asset management failure. The desire of politicians and officials to defer maintenance on the old bridge until the new bridge was open was a sensible economic and social goal. The inquiry will focus on how decisions were made, and whether expert bridge engineers were comfortable with the ultimate choices made.

Inevitably there will be a spread of opinion among bridge engineers about whether politicians made the right decisions, and undoubtedly a focus on the recent management changes. The transport minister attacked some bridge engineers who disagreed with the government position, describing them as being politically motivated. The inquiry report will be able to review what evidence the minister had for these claims. Good engineering judgement should always be based in its social, political and cultural context, so greater clarity on how the parliament views this professional role will be welcomed.

Of much greater interest will be whether the lessons about emergency integrated transport management can be applied to sustained integrated transport provision. There may be political capital to be gained from scrutinising a bridge asset management problem.

However, politicians could probably learn more about better transport governance by focusing on how the transport industry was able to rise to the challenge when it was needed. Replicating these benefits more broadly would be a welcome goal for 2016.

Derek Halden is director of transport data and technology business DHC Loop Connections and is secretary of Scotland's transport think tank STSG. www.dhcl.co.uk



Derek Halden: "Extra pressure can sharpen up responses"

Fog closes in again over decision on new runway

The Government's postponement of a decision on runway capacity has left the situation less clear than before the Airports Commission's report, say **Shabana Anwar** and **Alexia Ellassadi**



Shabana Anwar (top) and Alexia Ellassadi: "Main advantage for Heathrow is the claimed number of new jobs"

In December, the Government further delayed a decision on where new a new runway should be built until at least summer 2016. It confirmed that it agreed with the Airports Commission that there was a need for additional runway capacity in south-east England, and with the commission's shortlist of three runway options, all of which it considered "viable".

The Government said the delay was needed to allow further analysis of the environmental impact relating to air quality, climate change and noise that would be associated with each option.

It has confirmed that the runway selected would need to apply for a development consent order under the Planning Act 2008, rather than through the parliamentary hybrid bill process or the conventional planning route in order to obtain consent. So we now know the process and what that could mean for the timescale for delivery.

To say that this further delay has been met with disappointment would be a massive understatement. The Government has been accused of "dithering" and "disgraceful vacillation" and of being "gutless". This reaction is hardly surprising when considered against the backdrop of political U-turns and procrastination on this subject over the last 10-15 years, and in spite of the Airports Commission urging the Government to "take an early decision to ensure that new capacity is put in place as soon as possible".

Ministers though, at least in public, claim to have a strategy for aviation and a clear plan for coping with increased demand in the South East. Quite how this dovetails with the delay is unclear.

Both airports have spent significant amounts since the publication of the final commission report to persuade the public and politicians that they should be chosen. Rather than being disheartened by the unanimous

conclusion of the commission's final report that a new Heathrow runway presents the strongest case, Gatwick has argued that it is the only achievable option; it remains "very much in the race" because the commission's view is simply a recommendation, and the decision, however contentious and unpalatable, will be taken by the Government.

The decision to use the DCO route gives further credence, as Gatwick would see it, to its case. Though on average the DCO route enables consent to be obtained in 18 months, the pre-application stage can run to several years while public consultation is undertaken and issues resolved. Gatwick has fewer objections to overcome

Rather than being disheartened by the unanimous conclusion of the Airports Commission, Gatwick argues it remains very much in the race

than Heathrow and could submit the application much sooner.

What are the pros and cons of the three shortlisted options and what is the current position of the main political parties and the key figures?

Gatwick is the cheapest option at an estimated £9.3bn compared with an estimated £18.6bn for the Heathrow northwest runway and an estimated £13.5bn for Heathrow Hub's extended northern runway. Gatwick will have a shorter delivery time, and fewer people will be affected by noise. It will also have a lower environmental impact: Gatwick has never breached EU or UK air quality limits. The contribution needed from taxpayers would be the least at £787m.

Both the Heathrow options, in addition to being more expen-

sive to build, affect the taxpayer to a greater extent (£5.7bn for the new runway and £6.3bn for the extended runway) and a greater number of people would be affected by noise. Heathrow already breaches EU air quality regulations and would face a challenge to prevent the situation worsening. The main advantage for Heathrow over Gatwick is the claimed number of new jobs that will be created, estimated at over 100,000, and an estimated £100bn in economic benefits.

Despite Heathrow's numerous high profile critics, the airport has the purported backing of chancellor George Osborne and business secretary Sajid Javid. David Cameron's position is less clear cut.

Labour mayoral candidate Sadiq Khan initially backed a third runway at Heathrow but is now strongly in favour of expansion at Gatwick. Jeremy Corbyn and shadow chancellor John McDonnell are said to be anti-Heathrow while not specifically endorsing Gatwick. The Liberal Democrats are against all airport expansion.

Almost regardless of the outcome of the mayoral elections in May, London will be anti-Heathrow, which could put it on a direct collision course with the Government. Politically at least, Gatwick seems the more palatable.

Regarding the next steps, we await the outcome of the further work being undertaken by the Government, and Patrick McLoughlin's statement to the House of Commons on the Government's plans which he has promised at "the first opportunity" and which will detail the "best possible package of measures to mitigate the impacts on local people".

An actual decision on airport capacity will not, however, be made by the Government until at least the "summer".

Shabana Anwar is a partner and Alexia Ellassadi is a trainee solicitor at Bircham Dyson Bell



BIRCHAM DYSON BELL

Devolution Bill will usher in a quiet revolution

Momentum behind the decentralisation of powers to city-regions is growing. Over the next three pages we present a range of views of the implications and opportunities. Here **Matthew Bentley** and **Mike Indian** look at the new powers on offer

Away from the notoriously delayed decision over airport expansion and the debate over High Speed 2, the Government has been pursuing a quiet but radical transport revolution.

A piece of legislation at the heart of its plan to radically decentralise decision-making in this country is about to become law. The Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill forms part of the Government's wider policy of devolving powers to local areas, in this case allowing the creation of elected "metro mayors" for combined local authorities.

Since winning re-election last year, chancellor George Osborne has agreed a number of devolution deals with combined authorities, to give what the think-tank IPPR North called "Boris of the North" figures a range of powers, including over transport.

Though each deal is different, the new mayors could gain powers including control of a consolidated transport budget, incorporating all local highways and sustainable travel funding; shared responsibility with Network Rail and Highways England for some rail lines and roads; the role of promoting the introduction of smart ticketing; and the ability to place a supplement on local business rates to fund infrastructure projects.

Moreover, the promised Buses Bill would grant them the responsibility for the franchising of bus services in their area. That legislation was announced in last year's Queen's Speech and is expected to be unveiled soon.

One of the criticisms of the Government's devolution agenda from opponents has been that it is too city-centric, overlooking rural communities. But although the new roles have been dubbed metro mayors and the majority of deals have been with city-regions, Cornwall will also receive similar powers under its

deal. This could open the door for other areas outside major urban centres to follow suit.

The devolution bill will also make possible the creation of sub-national transport bodies. In practice, it would formalise the role of Transport for the North, which ministers have been using to coordinate investment as part of the Northern Powerhouse agenda. It is intended to give regions outside London legal powers to advise Whitehall on investment priorities and strategic schemes. Already, the Birmingham/Nottingham initiative Midlands Connect has indicated that it will seek to be placed on a statutory footing.

The new mayors will be their regions' most effective advocates for infrastructure investment

In addition, ministers have already begun to devolve other transport decision-making powers, including over rail services. Rail North has been leading the way in this area and will jointly manage the TransPennine and Northern franchises with the Department for Transport. This will not just be confined to that region: West Midlands Rail will also have a role in its local franchise.

However, London is leading the way on transport devolution. A new proposal will hand responsibility for nearly all rail services in the south of the capital to Transport for London as the franchises expire. Increasingly overcrowding and delayed services have driven this decision. Similar challenges could emerge if the Government's economic rebalancing results in growth in regions outside London, and those areas could choose to follow this example.

Local authorities have been promised a greater role in the planning and specification of rail services. Though this policy lacks firm details at present, it is a signal of the evolving and malleable approach central government is taking to the question of transport devolution.

Elected mayors will be required to work with bodies such as Transport for the North and Rail North, reflecting the shift away from the centre. But the most important role they will have in relation to transport will be as champions for their regions. Just as London mayor Boris Johnson campaigned for TfL to be given greater control over rail services, the new mayors will be their regions' most effective advocates for vital infrastructure investment. But with that role will come responsibility.

What is the final goal of transport devolution? A range of new actors and bodies are becoming involved in transport. The challenge will then become how they can effectively communicate and coordinate. At a local level, the system is becoming complicated. Meanwhile, at a national level, though ministers are clearly keen for localities to have more say in how their transport needs are met, there will still be a role for national government to provide an overarching view.

And although existing funding is being devolved and massive investment is being directed towards capital projects, there is no new money for local transport, including buses and rail services. The challenge for metro mayors and the other new bodies will be whether they can improve transport with less cash.

Despite this, the devolution revolution still represents a huge opportunity for transport.

Matthew Bentley is the transport consultant at DeHavilland. Mike Indian is a senior political analyst



Matthew Bentley (top) and Mike Indian: "Cornwall could pave the way for non-urban centres"

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A strong, united voice as cities enter a new era

As devolution opens up new possibilities, **Jon Lamonte** says the Urban Transport Group will represent the UK's city-regions, provide leadership and share best practice



Jon Lamonte: "The most exciting time for urban transport in decades"

This month's launch of the Urban Transport Group represents more than a rebrand of PTEG (the Passenger Transport Executive Group). It demonstrates the significance of changes over recent years in transport responsibilities and governance in the UK's major city-regions.

During that time, our core roles have expanded from developing public transport services to promoting holistic urban and regional transport systems which are at the heart of a wider agenda to drive economic growth and support a higher quality of life. Our remit now encompasses strategic highways and active travel as well as freight and logistics.

As our role has changed, we have developed much more in common with London as we all seek to realise the opportunities that greater devolution offers. That is why I am so pleased that Transport for London has joined us – immeasurably strengthening our professional network and making us a united voice for all the largest urban areas on transport.

There is also potential synergy with the new bodies which have been set up to improve the strategic links between our cities and to oversee rail services – such as Transport for the

North, Midlands Connect, Rail North and West Midlands Rail.

As the Urban Transport Group we will seek to do three things. First, to make an effective case for urban transport – and in particular for the powers and funding our members need to make the right choices on what works in each area. Second, to be Britain's premier professional network for urban transport professionals in the public sector. As a network we will learn from each other and do more for less through shared procurement and eliminating reinvention of the wheel. Third, to provide thought leadership for the sector by looking at longer-term challenges as well as issues that span sectors – such as the links between transport and health, and transport and worklessness.

Our remit now encompass strategic highways and active travel as well as freight and logistics

The thought leadership work has already been setting the pace at a national level, for example on Total Transport, on best practice on what works for young people and transport, and most recently our *Horizon Scan* report on the implications of transformative social and technological change for urban transport policy. With London a full member I believe we will be able to do more and do it better in all these areas.

It's a British habit to see the weaknesses in what we do rather than the strengths, so it was instructive that in welcoming the launch of the Urban Transport Group Alain Flausch, general secretary of UITP, said that there is a good case to be made that London has been leading the world on forward-thinking transport policy. He also paid

tribute to the contribution that TfL has made to UITP's evolution and the "strength and ambition" that a united UK voice on urban transport can make.

We want to make good on this: we believe that as a UK urban network there is much that we can learn from, and share with, leading cities through UITP, given that counterpart cities are developing innovative solutions to common problems based on similar principles to those which drive us.

It's my belief that this is the most exciting time for urban transport in decades. We are moving to much more devolved rail franchise models with much higher levels of investment built in. New bus legislation is on its way, which should give us far more effective tools with which to provide the integrated, stable and easy to use bus networks that passengers want. We are heading towards long-term planning and funding frameworks not just for rail but also for strategic road networks. Formerly marginalised issues like cycling and walking are going mainstream and formerly separate policy areas such as freight and logistics are much better integrated.

With the move to combined authorities we can begin to more effectively make the connection between transport and other key priorities for cities and city-regions – such as cleaner air, improved health, and better access to opportunities for all.

In the context of making the most of these exciting times our door is open to other public sector transport authorities with a significant urban component who would like to consider joining our growing network.

Dr Jon Lamonte is director general of Transport for Greater Manchester and Urban Transport Group chair.

Cycling and walking will be brought into the mainstream



Grasp this opportunity to reverse bus decline

The Buses Bill is expected to give local authorities a range of powers to improve bus services. But there must be more emphasis on protecting rural services, says **Martin Abrams**

Buses play a vital role for millions of people, especially those in isolated areas with no other means of transport who rely on the bus every day to get to work or to school, attend hospitals, visit friends or to go to the shops. Sadly, following years of government funding cuts across England and Wales, usage and mileage have fallen dramatically, and our most commonly used form of public transport is in crisis.

As the Government continues with spending cuts that are leaving local authorities struggling to meet their financial demands we are seeing a devastating effect on vital bus services all across the country. CBT's latest report, *Buses in Crisis 2010-2016*, found that since 2010 over £75m has been cut from local bus funding, which equates to around 25% of the supported bus budget being wiped out. The situation is likely to get worse, with Somerset, Oxfordshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Wiltshire and North Yorkshire councils all proposing huge cuts to their local bus services.

Yet there is potentially light at the end of the tunnel for bus users and communities all around the country: the Government will soon introduce a Buses Bill in Parliament, almost exactly 30 years since the 1985 Transport Act privatised and deregulated buses across the country. The bill is intended to complement the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill and will give new executive powers to cities such as Manchester, with the creation of new directly elected mayors. The new mayors, and other authorities such as Cornwall where devolution deals are agreed, will then have the potential to introduce "London-style" franchising over local buses.

We still don't know exactly what will be included in the Buses Bill, but from the Department for Transport's recently released background document we have a

fair idea. Put simply it will have a central focus on providing franchising powers for local authorities, so they can plan networks properly and introduce simple, unified fare structures. The DfT is clearly intent on giving local authorities a wide range of means to achieve these ends, including strengthening partnerships, but the toolbox should include the ability to franchise services where the authority judges that this is the best way to achieve this. Our view is also that the central objectives of simple ticketing and efficient network planning are difficult to achieve, at present, without some kind of franchising.

There is much that can be achieved without new legislation, and there are many examples of

The DfT is clearly intent on giving local authorities a wide range of means to achieve simple ticketing and efficient network planning

bus operators and local authorities working very well together. However, in many areas passengers and communities are frustrated that simple but important improvements, such as simplified fare structures with multi-operator and multi-modal ticketing, better marketing of public transport networks as a whole and better and longer-term planning of networks, are just not happening.

Franchising is unlikely to be the desired model for bus service provision in all areas, and that's why it's important for the Buses Bill to strengthen regulation of partnerships. The background document offers some ways of doing this, including the possibility of devolving bus registration powers from traffic commissioners to local authorities, and also some competition

powers. This has the benefit of bringing together the different regulations governing bus services so the local authority can, for example, apply specific criteria to the granting of registrations, such as participation in multi-operator smart ticketing.

There is still a big question that hangs over the Government: the bill has a focus on urban areas, but isolated and rural areas that have been severely hit by local authority funding cuts to supported bus services must not be forgotten and should also benefit from the new powers. One approach CBT has suggested would be to require local authorities to conduct effective assessments of the need for public transport in their areas. Many local authorities are simply not doing this, meaning that when cuts to tendered services are made, often whole communities are being cut off. Such a requirement would ensure there was better strategic planning of tendered services and would allow a broader view than simply focusing on short-term figures, such as the cost of subsidy per passenger.

If the Buses Bill gives local authorities more powers over bus services, but comes with further cuts to local authority revenue funding, it will not halt the decline in bus use. CBT will continue to campaign and work with a broad group of charities and NGOs which have a strong stake in improved bus services to help the people they represent and serve.

The Buses Bill can push buses much higher up the political agenda. This is a great opportunity for the Government to bring in legislation that helps to stop the funding decline and bring about better bus services for the communities and passengers who rely on them.

Martin Abrams is a Public Transport Campaigner with the Campaign for Better Transport



Martin Abrams: "Light at the end of the tunnel"



Walrus back in the swim

After an uncertain start, Merseytravel's smartcard has bounced back to become the most popular outside London. **David Fowler** reports

The smart ticketing success story of the last 18 months has undoubtedly been Merseytravel's Walrus. Launched in November 2014 to customers in Wirral and extended over the whole Merseytravel area the following spring, over 300,000 cards have been issued and 950,000 tickets have been sold, making Walrus the most active scheme outside London.

This success is the more remarkable because Walrus suffered from a false start. After an ambitious announcement in 2011, progress was slow. But since a review in 2013 and the adoption of a new strategy there has been a remarkable turnaround.

Merseytravel director of corporate development Liz Chandler explains how this happened. "We undertook the review and made the project more customer-focused," she says. At the launch in autumn 2014 Merseytravel's popular Saveaway, a one-day off-peak ticket valid on buses, trains and Mersey Ferries, which had been a paper scratchcard, was moved to the Walrus platform. "It made

Bus industry colleagues were very keen to get Solo

sense to use a low-value, high-volume product to launch with," says Ms Chandler. "You have to take the travelling public with you. People loved Saveaway, so they embraced Walrus, and it's grown from there."

With PayPoint as a partner, the ticket was available from 800 outlets – "good from a social inclusion point of view".

The project also gained from strong leadership and support, both from Merseytravel chief executive and director general (now Transport for the

North chief executive) David Brown, and politically from Merseytravel chair Councillor Liam Robinson. Walrus appears on the agenda of all Merseytravel's committees, covering all areas of the city-region and all transport modes, such is the level of interest.

And instead of being self-contained, an integrated Walrus team was created. This brought in head of IT Gary Ennis, who had conducted the review of the project, and Ms Chandler as overall project leader because of her customer-focused background, with colleagues from across Merseytravel.

Under the new approach, a modular, step-by-step approach has been adopted. Following Saveaway, last autumn Solo tickets were added to the Walrus portfolio. These are 7 and 28 day tickets valid on all buses in the region.

"The original project was launched prematurely," says Ms Chandler. "And it was trying to do too much." Head of IT Gary Ennis adds that under the original project "progress was happening, but across so many different fronts it appeared slow."

A lot of good work had been done, building on the experience of having 320,000 concessionary travel passengers. Mr Ennis says: "A lot of the core infrastructure was in place, including a proven back office, databases, and the technical communications infrastructure." Buses had been fitted with electronic ticket machines, and a managed service for smaller operators, who couldn't afford to invest in a bespoke back office, had been set up. "A commercial ticket was what was missing," he says.

This made it feasible to use Saveaway for the initial launch. The fact that it was multimodal would have added to the complexity but for the fact that much of the underlying infrastructure was already available.



However, although key Merseyrail stations were gated, Northern stations were not. Rather than attempting to install gates at Liverpool Lime Street and elsewhere, a phone app to allow train conductors and ticket inspectors to check tickets was developed. This used existing technology but was further developed in-house. "We took an existing app and translated it. It picks up ITSO terminology – we modified this to say 'This is a Saveaway'," Mr Ennis says.

Merseytravel has developed a close working relationship with bus and rail operators both at a technical level and through a smart ticketing steering group. The decision to launch Solo as the next ticket type was in many ways a logical extension of this. It was a popular move.

"It's a key segment of the customer base. Opening to PayPoint improved the customer offer – Solo was previously only available at travel centres and Post Offices," says Ms Chandler. "Senior colleagues in the bus industry were very keen to get Solo. It went live at the same time on all 31 bus operators."

Meanwhile, Stagecoach and Arriva tickets are now interoperable on key routes of Merseyside's quality bus network.

But in a further development, through the Merseyside bus alliance, it has been agreed that individual operators' weekly and monthly bus season tickets will all in future be branded Walrus, starting later this year. "It will be the smart ticketing platform in our region," says Ms Chandler. The bus alliance zonal structure is also being reviewed with the aim of offering better value.

The zonal system will be made simpler, making it easier for passengers to work out which is the best prepaid



ticket, something that is perceived as somewhat difficult at the moment.

The next steps in the ticketing strategy went to the Merseytravel committee for approval last month.

"We're working with Merseyrail to offer Railpass," says Ms Chandler. This is the equivalent of Solo on rail, currently offered as a paper pass with photo ID. Merseyrail managing director Jan Chaudhry has made it a priority for this year and a project plan is being finalised.

In addition the project review identified some gaps in the range of tickets offered. One group not catered for is people who don't necessarily travel on consecutive days, such as workers on zero hours contracts, and Merseytravel hopes to introduce carnet tickets this year – that is, a number of tickets for use on non-consecutive days, sold at a discounted price.

Another gap is that there is no young persons' four-weekly Solo ticket – this will also be introduced. To complement Saveaway, Smart Trio tickets will be introduced – these are tickets which can be used all day, unlike Saveaway which cannot be used in the morning peak.

"It's all focused back to growth in passenger numbers," says Ms Chandler. The target is for 10% growth in farepaying passengers compared with April 2014 by March next year.

Pay as you go is not an immediate priority. "Applying lessons from the beginning, taking simpler products and a step-by-step approach,

Saveaway, a day pass valid on bus, rail and ferries, was chosen to launch Walrus. A smart version of the Railpass season ticket is a priority this year

there's still quite a lot to do to get to a common offering to customers," says Mr Ennis. "Pay as you go is a whole different way of ticketing. We need to get customers – and operators – used to smartcard technology first. As the city-region becomes more familiar with smartcards, pay as you go will become more achievable."

Both mention the DfT's Smarter Cities Partnership and the help and support it has offered. By discussing plans with the partnership, lessons have been learned from other cities, allowing Merseyside to move forward more quickly.

Work is also under way with Transport for the North and its smart ticketing working group. TfN has been given the task by the Government of speeding up the introduction of smart ticketing across the whole of northern England, and it will soon appoint a programme director. "We're helping to take it forward," says Mr Ennis. "We want to extend smart ticketing to cover the wider travel to work areas, such as Liverpool to Manchester," he says.

The progress of the last 18 months, then, looks set to continue.

Ms Chandler sums up the philosophy underlying this progress: "You have to focus on what you're trying to do, not what's possible," she says. "You can't expect customers who've been using scratchcards for years to just change. We pride ourselves that we've now got a strong plan that we will deliver."

Future developments

A recent report to the Merseytravel committee made a number of proposals for future strategy.

In the short/medium term (up to two years) more tickets would be made available on Walrus.

Principles of a three-year plan agreed with partner operators and the DfT's smart cities partnership include using Walrus as the preferred ticket platform. Pre-paid tickets would be moved to Walrus, including Stagecoach Merseyside and Arriva Merseyside weekly bus tickets. Merseytravel is working closely with Merseyrail to introduce smart ticketing early this year.

Longer-term the aim would be to build on the work of Transport for the North, to develop a common approach and look for economies of scale. An intelligent back office system, capable of dealing with contactless bank cards and mobile phone ticketing as well as smartcards, would be developed. This would be linked to pan-Northern travel.

The ticket system would be simplified and rationalised, reducing the number of variants.

New tickets would be created and old ones discontinued as appropriate – for example creating a day version of Solo, removing annual and term-time tickets and moving as many tickets to Walrus as possible, developing its brand as Merseyside's transport card.

One key decision is whether to introduce a single zone for bus fares. Moving to a single zone for Solo and Saveaway alone would reduce the number of smart ticket types by 80% (32 tickets).



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Keynote Speaker:

Andrew Jones MP
Transport Minister

Confirmed Speakers



Michelle McIlveen MLA
Minister for Regional
Development



George Ferguson CBE,
Mayor of Bristol



Dr Jon Lamonte,
Chief Executive, Transport
for Greater Manchester



Leon Daniels,
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
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
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

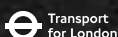
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Smartening up their act



You can now use the same smart ticket on several different operators' buses in the UK's main cities.
By **David Fowler**



Oyster-style in Nottingham

With bus operators joining forces to pledge to bring contactless travel to all buses by 2022, and as transport minister

Andrew Jones hailed the “smart ticket revolution”, Northern cities such as Manchester and Nottingham are the latest to experience the benefits of smart ticketing across their transport networks.

In Nottingham, the “Robin Hood” pay-as-you-go smartcard was introduced in December. Passengers can add money to the card to pay for bus and tram fares on around 95% of the services in the Greater Nottingham area. It is valid on the NET tram network, and buses from Nottingham City Transport including Pathfinder and South Nottinghamshire, Kinchbus, Trentbarton and the city council’s Linkbus network (including park and ride).

Operators have agreed to charge a uniform price for the trips made using the card, with single trip fares of £1.70 on any operator and unlimited trips on more than one operator for £4.00 – making Robin Hood the only card outside London offering pay as you go with capping.

It is claimed that fares are at least 10% cheaper than paying by cash.

Jeanette Bowden



Multi-operator smart ticketing is available in the UK’s nine biggest cities, the UK’s five main bus companies announced early in January.

A single card is now accepted on different operators’ buses in the metropolitan areas of Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire plus Nottingham, Leicester and Bristol.

The cities, members of the DfT Smart Cities Partnership, have a combined population of around 15 million.

Stagecoach, FirstGroup, Go-Ahead, Arriva and National Express said that the conclusion of the project fulfilled a pledge in November 2014 to introduce smart ticketing by December last year.

The cost of multi-operator travel has been reduced in some areas and tickets by up to 20%, the operators claimed.

The operators said the project was the result of significant but unspecified private investment. But despite claims that the initiative was “larger than Oyster”, it has been built on replacing existing multi-operator

paper tickets, developed and offered for many years by PTEs and councils, with smart versions. The buses were generally already equipped with smart ticketing equipment to accept concessionary passes and the operators’ individual smart offerings.

Tickets offered vary from area to area but generally one-day, seven-day and 28-day passes are available.

The level of PTE involvement varies from area to area – in the West Midlands, the Swift system was set up by Centro, which invested £14m.

In West Yorkshire the MCard smart ticket has been accepted by all operators since 2013, with the PTE Metro making a HOPS back office system available to smaller operators and offering the ability to lease electronic ticket machines through Yorcard, the company it set up with SYPT. A carnet of tickets for use on non-consecutive days is in development, and MCard is also valid on rail services throughout the region.

At the other extreme, the NE Smartzone was an initiative of Arriva, Go-Ahead and Stagecoach.

Reboot for Manchester

Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) placed a contract in 2012 with digital services specialist Atos for the introduction of a comprehensive multi-modal ticketing system, to be introduced “initially on Metrolink and with options to roll the system out subsequently to bus and rail”.

However, after a faltering start that resulted in the cancellation of the contract in August 2015, the efforts were “rebooted”. Last November, TfGM announced the introduction of

a multi-operator smart ticketing system, a collaboration with more than 30 bus operators including Arriva, First and Stagecoach of the big five. Branded Get me there, it complements the Metrolink tram Smartsystem, which has been in operation since October 2014. Replacing the previous System One paper based ticketing system, the Get me there bus scheme allows passengers to buy multi-operator passes to travel across the region. It is one of the largest schemes outside Lon-

don. In parallel, the Metrolink tram system announced the launch of the Get me there app, which enables passengers to buy and download Metrolink tickets using their smartphones.

At this stage the Manchester smartcard initiative does not allow passengers to use the same ticket on journeys encompassing both bus and tram. Nevertheless, the Metrolink app has been downloaded more than 10,000 times and is being used by around 1,200 passengers weekly.

For bus travel, more than 8,000 Get me there cards have been issued and more than 11,000 Get me there travelcards sold.

TfGM’s ambition is still to offer “seamless integrated transport across all modes”. The ability to monitor travel patterns of current concessionary card holders enables it to establish priorities as smartcard technology is extended over the network.

Jeanette Bowden



Nexus, the PTE, offers weekly and monthly Metrosaver tickets on its Pop smartcard, but these are not generally accepted on buses. However, the recently launched Pop pay as you go is accepted on certain routes operated by Arriva and Go North East. All buses in the region are in principle equipped to accept pay as you go and Nexus is working with the bus companies to extend acceptance.

Stagecoach UK Bus managing director Robert Montgomery said: "Stagecoach already provides passengers with the most extensive bus smart ticketing platform outside London and we are delighted to work jointly with our industry partners and transport authorities to deliver more seamless travel to attract more people on the country's buses."

Arriva UK Bus managing director Kevin O'Connor said: "This is a significant step forward which has been achieved through a real partnership with our colleagues in local authorities and passenger transport executives."

The initiative was welcomed by transport minister Andrew Jones. The DfT, and particularly Baroness Kramer in the last parliament, had been pushing for faster progress on smart and integrated ticketing through the Smart Cities initiative which brings together the DfT, bus operators and the PTEs.

However West Yorks Combined Authority acting director for transport John Henkel points out that none of the conurbations have Oyster-style ticketing in the sense of pay as you go with daily capping. "Only Nottingham has that," he says. And with different companies having different fare structures "it would be near-impossible to achieve" because of the difficulty in working out what would be the best value fare.

Bus multi-operator smart ticketing in cities								
City region		Smartcard scheme	Operator					
			Arriva	First	Go-Ahead	National Express	Stagecoach	Other operators
Regions in the Smart Cities Partnership	Greater Manchester	Get me there	Y	Y			Y	Smaller operators supported by PTE
	Merseyside	Saveaway, Solo on Walrus	Y				Y	Smaller operators supported by PTE
	South Yorkshire	Travelmaster [4]	Y	Y			Y	
	Tyne & Wear	Pop PAYG [1]	Y		Y			Stanley Travel
		NE SmartZone [2]	Y		Y		Y	
	West Midlands	nBus on Swift	Y			Y		[3]
	West Yorkshire	MCard [5]	Y	Y				Approx 40 operators including Transdev
	Bristol/Avon			Y				11 operators in total
	Leicester	Leicester Flexi	Y	Y				Centrebus
Others	Nottingham	Robin Hood [6]						Nottingham City Transport, Trentbarton, Kinchbus and Linkbus
	Brighton & Hove				Y			Compass Travel, Big Lemon
	Oxford	Oxford SmartZone			Y		Y	
	S Hants	Solent Go		Y	Y		Y	

Notes

- [1] Offered by Nexus. MetroSaver season tickets available on Pop valid on Metro, ferry and Newcastle-Sunderland rail but only Go North East Quaylink buses
- [2] Offered by bus operators, covering Newcastle, Sunderland, South Tyneside and North Tyneside
- [3] Swift system funded and set up by Centro and covers all operators and Midland Metro tram

- [4] Period tickets valid South Yorkshire-wide available alongside tickets for Sheffield or Rotherham areas only, and bus/tram tickets for Sheffield
- [5] M-Card was developed by West Yorkshire PTE, Metro
- [6] Also valid on NET tram system



Nottingham now has capped pay as you go tickets



Tim Shoveller



Susan Cooklin



Alex Hynes



Leo Goodwin

Tim Shoveller to head Stagecoach rail business

Tim Shoveller has been appointed managing director of Stagecoach Group's UK Rail division. Reporting directly to group chief executive Martin Griffiths, Mr Shoveller will be responsible for the management of the group's existing rail businesses and for new business development.

The UK Rail division includes South West Trains, East Midlands Trains, Virgin Trains East Coast and the Supertram light rail network in Sheffield.

Mr Shoveller, who has nearly 25 years' experience in the rail industry in the UK, has been managing director of South West Trains for the past four years, where he led the alliance with Network Rail. He was previously managing director of East Midlands Trains. He joined Stagecoach in 2007 from Virgin Trains where, as business development director and previously operations director, he played a key role in the success of Virgin Trains West Coast. He is a fellow of the Institution of Railway Operators.

Christian Roth, fleet director of South West Trains, will succeed Mr Shoveller as managing director of the franchise. He has covered a variety of roles in his 25-year railway career, both in the UK and in Germany. His experience includes engineering management as well as project management and development. Mr Roth joined South West Trains in December 2008, following three years heading Siemens' UK rail business.

Network Rail has appointed **Susan Cooklin** as its new route services director. She will join the company's executive team. Ms Cooklin was previously group chief information officer and director of shared services, leading the company's 900-strong IT and shared services unit.

In the newly-created role she will head a route services directorate which will supply services to each of Network Rail's eight routes – or regional business units – allowing them to gain the benefits from economies of scale and the company to optimise resources on a national basis. The directorate will initially include group business services (IT, payroll and finance shared services) the national supply chain (providing engineering trains, equipment and materials for upgrade works) and Network Rail Consulting.

Chief executive Mark Carne said: "This new role, leading a new team, is another step towards delivering a better, more efficient national service to our route teams."

Ms Cooklin studied economics and accountancy before moving into technology in the financial services sector. She has held senior and executive roles in both IT and business operations in FTSE top 20 companies in the UK. Before joining Network Rail she spent seven years at Barclays Banking Group in a variety of executive roles.

Arriva has announced the appointment of **Alex Hynes** as managing director of

- **Susan Cooklin** named Network Rail route services director
- **Alex Hynes** to be Arriva Rail North MD
- **Leo Goodwin** appointed MD designate of TransPennine Express
- **Professor Stephen Glaister** to chair Office of Rail and Road

Arriva Rail North, which will operate the Northern rail franchise. Mr Hynes, who has been managing director of Northern since August 2013 for incumbent franchisee Abellio/Serco, will transfer on 1 April when Arriva begins operating the nine-year contract, awarded in December.

Mr Hynes has held a variety of senior roles in the rail industry. He joined Go-Ahead in 2005, becoming commercial director at its London Midland franchise and then managing director for rail development on Go-Ahead's executive committee.

Chris Burchell, managing director of Arriva's UK Trains Division, said: "Alex understands the huge importance of the Northern network to towns, cities and local communities. He brings continuity and is the ideal person to lead Northern into its next chapter."

FirstGroup has announced the appointment of **Leo Goodwin** as managing director designate of TransPennine Express as it mobilises for the new franchise from 1 April. Mr Goodwin joined the group in

1998, initially working at First Great Western in a range of management positions. After the group's successful bid for First TransPennine Express in 2003, he was part of the management team and became commercial director during a period in which the franchise achieved industry-leading levels of passenger growth and a significant expansion of services. In 2013 he became commercial development director of First's rail division.

Liz Collins remains interim managing director for current operator First/Keolis Transpennine until the new franchise begins.

Professor Stephen Glaister has been appointed chair of the Office of Rail and Road for a 12-month term, replacing **Anna Walker** who stood down in December after more than six years. The Transport Secretary made the interim appointment pending a review of the future role and responsibilities of the ORR, following the recommendations of Dame Colette Bowe last year. Prof Glaister had been a non-executive director of the ORR since April last year.

ORR chief executive **Richard Price** will also step down early this year. **Joanna Whittington** has been appointed chief executive on an interim basis from January, allowing for a handover period. Ms Whittington joined the ORR board in March 2014 as executive director of railway markets and economics.

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