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Labour and rail renationalisation

How much would it save?



High quality by design

HS2's Independent Design Panel is helping to guide its creation
p20



Congestion and capacity

What was discussed at last week's *Transport Times* fringe events?
p24



Low Carbon Champions

Acknowledgement for the UK's cleaner bus technology leaders
p26

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Memo to the Transport Secretary

Dear Mr Grayling, It's the party conference season and government is getting back into full swing, after the excitement of the EU referendum and its fallout gave way to a period of relative calm over the summer. It's a good time to take stock of what lies ahead.

Congratulations on making an energetic start in your role as Secretary of State for Transport. As you said in your conference speech it's an area you're familiar with from your time as shadow transport secretary under David Cameron. But people in the industry have been impressed by how you've gone out of you way to spend time over the summer getting out and about, getting yourself briefed and up to speed with the issues. This applies particularly to promoters of schemes for new runway capacity in the South East – the most pressing infrastructure decision facing you (and the Government as a whole).

The signs are that the cabinet committee to which the decision has been delegated is genuinely poised to make a decision at last. Any decision will be unpopular in some quarters; and some will not welcome any conclusion other than not to expand aviation capacity at all. But the issue has dragged on long enough and having the courage to bring the matter to a close will be a significant step.

Whatever the decision, but in particular if the committee goes with the Airports Commission recommendation and backs Heathrow, the signs seem to be that a free vote in the Commons would command a majority for the Government's recommendation while allowing MPs to vote with their consciences and constituency interests.

Your renewed commitment to HS2 is welcome, and we look forward to seeing the HS2 phase one bill completing its



It might be prudent to have a contingency plan ready in case an operator fails

parliamentary passage, allowing work to begin on construction.

Meanwhile, Labour has reaffirmed its commitment to renationalisation of rail franchises as a flagship policy. This is a policy that has wide resonance outside the ranks of Labour activists, even among many Conservative voters. What should the response be?

Jeremy Corbyn wants to divert the profits of the train operating companies into cheaper fares and to boost investment in the rail network. In fact, though, many train operators are not making much money at all, particularly in those franchises awarded most recently. Virgin Trains East Coast is understood to be struggling to hit ambitious revenue targets, and in general the profitable franchises are mainly those extended by direct awards after the collapse of the West Coast bidding process in 2012.

Recent franchise bids have been characterised by keen competition, with ambitious targets for introducing new rolling stock, increasing capacity and in some cases ambitious premium targets. It appears risk

is being transferred effectively to the train operators. A legitimate question is whether the process is becoming too competitive, given, for example, the fact that only two companies bid for the prestigious South West Trains franchise.

Operators are looking instead to opportunities in Europe (Arriva and National Express) or the US (FirstGroup).

And it might be prudent – say, perhaps, if a Brexit downturn materialises – to have a contingency plan ready in case an operator fails.

This brings us to the question of London suburban rail services and whether there should be further devolution to Transport for London. TfL is keen to bring the London Overground approach to bear to more services.

We're reminded that in the coalition government, as Secretary of State for Justice, you crossed swords with Labour's shadow minister... a certain Sadiq Khan.

We'd advise you not to let this former rivalry cloud your judgement on the subject of giving TfL more responsibility for rail. It's shown it can make an effective job of running these services and there are many potential advantages.

And the idea of challenging Mr Khan and TfL to make a better job of Southern services must be quite tempting...

Wishing you success as Transport Secretary, I remain,

David Fowler, editor
Transport Times





ANALYSIS

- 6 RENATIONALISATION?**
Franchise profits 'not excessive'
- 7 RAIL UPGRADE**
Campaign to raise awareness
- 8 INFRASTRUCTURE BOOST**
Hammond backs investment
- 9 POWERHOUSE THINKTANK**
George Osborne to head partnership
- 10 HOST CARD EMULATION**
ITSO smartphone ticket trial
- 11 EURO BUS EXPO**
Technology on display

OPINION

- 12 MINISTERIAL BRIEFING**
Smarter and greener cars will transform travel
- 13 JIM STEER**
Policies needed for the neglected periphery
- 14 LOUISE ELLMAN**
Can a fragmented railway support prosperity?
- 15 ANTHONY SMITH**
Bringing roadside services up to scratch
- 16 DEREK HALDEN**
Strikes signal concerns about changing roles
- 17 NEILL BIRCH**
Rethink network planning to revive demand
- 18 LEWIS SHAND SMITH**
Handling complaints is not all about delays

FEATURES

- 20 QUALITY BY DESIGN**
High quality design and attention to detail is essential for High Speed 2. Sadie Morgan outlines how the HS2 Independent Design Panel is helping to guide the process
- 22 STILL IN A JAM**
Finding a solution to congestion is in everyone's interests, a recent seminar heard
- 24 CONGESTION AND CAPACITY**
Transport Times fringe events at last week's Labour Party conference discussed rail capacity and the bus's role in alleviating congestion. Aimee Bell reports
- 26 GROWING GREENER**
The UK's leadership in adopting cleaner bus technology was recognised at the Low Carbon Champion awards
- 28 DODGE THE QUEUES WITH DATA**
More effective use of digital information could help to minimise congestion and deal with disruption, according to a new paper from KPMG

REGULARS

- 30 PEOPLE**
Who's moving where

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Franchise profits 'not excessive' say Corbyn's critics

Virgin Trains East Coast has promised to return twice as much to the Treasury in premium payments as its publicly-owned predecessor



Labour reaffirmed its commitment to re-nationalising rail franchises at its party conference last week. It promises to restore a third of franchises to public ownership by 2025 if elected in 2020, based on those due for renewal in that period.

The policy is strongly associated with Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn but is popular with a broad range of voters.

Labour would return rail franchises to public ownership as they come to an end. Up to five of the 16 franchises are due to expire between 2020 and 2025.

It also promises to create a "new dynamic public operator" which would reinvest profits in cutting fares and improving rail infrastructure. Labour will oppose any attempt to break up or privatise Network Rail.

Speaking at last week's conference, shadow transport secretary Andy McDonald said: "Passengers, not profit, should be at the heart of Britain's railway. Labour will take back control of our railways."

Mr Corbyn referred to "the scandal of the privatised

by David Fowler

railways [with] more public subsidy than under the days of British Rail all going to private firms, more delays and more cancellations. And the highest fares in Europe. That is why the great majority of the British people back Labour's plan, set out by Andy McDonald, to take the railways back into public ownership."

Critics of the policy argue that it is not the case that train operating companies are making inordinate profits and that nationalisation will not, as promised, allow significantly increased funds to be channelled into infrastructure investments or reducing fares.

Figures compiled by the Office of Rail and Road suggest that in the 2014-15 financial year Cross Country made an operating loss of £8m, and London Midland just broke even. The total surplus over all franchises was £233m. Franchisees paid a net £659m back to the Treasury.

A 2015 KPMG report for the Rail Delivery Group showed average train operator mar-

gins were just 2.9%, 20% lower than in the 1990s.

The Go-Ahead Group was recently criticised when it announced profits of nearly £100m last month at a time when passengers on its Southern franchise have been facing severe and longstanding disruption, partly arising from the reconstruction of London Bridge station. It is believed that most of the profits were contributed by its buses division. Group chief executive David Brown has said that Govia Thameslink Railway, of which Southern is a part, "does not contribute to our profits".

Earlier this year Stagecoach warned of slowing growth in revenue. It reported a 37% fall in pretax profit during 2015-16, and warned of "economic, consumer and political uncertainty" following Britain's vote to leave the EU.

It is believed Virgin Trains East Coast, a 90/10 partnership between Stagecoach and Virgin, has been struggling to meet revenue targets. It is due to pay the government a premium of £3.3bn over the eight years to 2022 under the franchise terms. Two previous operators

relinquished the franchise after revenue failed to meet expectations, followed by a period when the franchise was run by interim state-owned operator East Coast, which ended in March last year when the franchise was reprivated. Virgin Trains East Coast is aiming to pay double the annual revenue East Coast returned to the Treasury during its tenure.

The need to submit increasingly competitive bids for franchises is believed to be discouraging operators from bidding. Another disincentive is the requirement to pay multi-million pound bonds as guarantees for the Government in case the operator goes bankrupt.

Only two bids were submitted in the South West Trains franchise competition, one from Stagecoach, the incumbent, and one from FirstGroup. Over the course of the current 10-year franchise Stagecoach paid the Government a premium of over £1bn.

Some observers believe a possible general slowdown in revenue growth following Brexit could leave operators in general looking exposed, leading to a period of turbulence in the franchise system – the first since the collapse of the West Coast bidding process in 2012 ushered in changes which had appeared to stabilise the system, and raising the question of whether the Government would feel obliged to bail out a failing operator.

A spokesman for the Rail Delivery Group, representing its passenger train operator members, said: "The fact is 20 years ago the railway made a £2bn a year loss in day-to-day running costs. Today it virtually covers those costs, thanks to a doubling of passengers attracted by better services and good value fares, factors to which the commercial acumen of private operators has contributed significantly. This huge turnaround in rail's finances is supporting investment of more than £50bn in the Railway Upgrade Plan which will deliver thousands of new train carriages and services by the end of 2020 and build the bigger and better railway that Britain needs."

Campaign seeks to spark debate on rail's future

The Rail Delivery Group has launched a campaign, masterminded by M & C Saatchi, to raise awareness of the £50bn railway upgrade plan and why it is needed, and to prompt a debate about "a range of issues the industry must tackle".

These include how to balance taxpayer and passenger funding of the railway; how to reform fare regulation so that train companies can make it easier for passengers to buy the cheapest fares; how to modernise the railway to provide "the service passengers expect in the digital age"; where to focus investment to increase rail capacity; and how to improve the structures of the industry "to enable train companies and Network Rail to excel".

Rail Delivery Group chief executive Paul Plummer said: "There are many challenges still ahead that we need to confront. It's time we had an open and honest conversation with the wider public – passengers, freight users and taxpayers – about the tough choices



government, the industry and the country face if we are going to deliver the railway Britain needs and passengers want.

"But to have that debate, we need people to think about the railway in a way they aren't used to – to consider what it does for them and for the country. The industry needs to talk directly to people to tell its story."



Runway backers make last-minute bids to sway ministers

Promoters of the three schemes to add runway capacity in south-east England have stepped up their arguments in a last-ditch attempt to influence the Government's decision.

With a decision expected as early as next week, Heathrow indicated it could cut the cost of its third runway proposal by up to £3bn. Promoters of Heathrow Hub offered to match the saving on their own scheme. Gatwick reiterated its argument that the conclusions of the Airports Commission were flawed, and announced a deal with Bechtel to construct the runway if it is chosen.

Gatwick, which in recent weeks has been making the running on the PR front, announced a strategic partnership with the project manager of High Speed 1. It revealed it has been working with Bechtel for two years on a programme for building the runway and terminal, and that Bechtel believes the £7.9bn project

could be completed by 2025 if a decision is reached this year.

Bechtel's general manager for infrastructure, Amjad Bangash said: "We have provided Gatwick with robust plans for a second runway and are confident that this low risk project can be built to the highest quality, safely and sustainably – and that it can be operational by 2025."

Last month the airport submitted new evidence to the cabinet subcommittee which will make the decision, which it said showed the Airports Commission "drastically underestimated Gatwick's growth and made fundamental mistakes".

It argues that whereas the commission said Gatwick would not serve 42 million passengers a year until 2030, or fly to 50 long haul destinations until 2050, both were achieved this year.

It also argues that the commission ignored the fact that new generation aircraft "are flying further more cheaply", creating growth in direct long haul routes from local airports

and "removing the need to fly through hub airports".

For Heathrow, chairman Lord Deighton has indicated that it could cut £3bn from its £16.8bn third runway project, by scrapping proposals to put the M25 in a tunnel under the new runway, axing a transit system to carry passengers around the airport in favour of buses and reducing the size of the terminal buildings. This would speed up construction and allow the runway to open in 2024.

This would mean landing charges would not have to increase in real terms. There had been fears that the charges could double, causing concern among airlines and leading to vociferous criticism from Willie Walsh, head of British Airways' parent company.

Options for dealing with the M25 include a bridge or diverting its alignment. Scraping the transit system could save £1bn.

Heathrow Hub proposes doubling the length of the existing north runway and operating it

as two separate ones at a cost of £9.7bn. It says it could match Heathrow's savings but questions whether they are desirable.

Its promoters say their scheme is cheaper, simple, less disruptive and quicker to build, and its construction can be phased. A first phase, extending the runway with associated taxiways and aprons, would cost an estimated £3.8bn and would allow an additional 70,000 air traffic moments annually, using existing and already planned terminal capacity. An additional terminal and satellites could be added as a subsequent phase. It does not require the reconstruction of the M25/M4 junction or relocation of infrastructure such as an energy from waste plant.

If Heathrow is chosen it is expected that the issue could be put to a free vote in the House of Commons, allowing Conservative cabinet members who are against expansion to dissent. It is thought that there is a majority in favour of Heathrow expansion among the main parties in parliament.

New chancellor backs infrastructure investment



Chancellor of The Exchequer Philip Hammond formally abandoned his predecessor George Osborne's plan to get the economy in surplus by 2020 but said he was prepared to borrow to invest in infrastructure and housing. Speaking to the Conservative party conference on Monday he said: "Our stock of public infrastructure – like our roads, railways and flood defences – languishes near the bottom of the developed-countries' league table. We need to close that gap with careful, targeted public investment in high value infrastructure... and encouragement of more private investment in British businesses."

He restated the Government's support for the National Infrastructure Commission, which had been thrown into doubt when expected legislation to put it on a statutory footing was omitted from the Communities and Local Government Bill, published last month. He said: "World class infrastructure is vital to maintaining our competitiveness, but it is a very long-term agenda: one that can be, and often has been, knocked off course by short-term political considerations."

"That's why we announced the National Infrastructure Commission – to define independently the nation's long-term infrastructure needs. And today I recommit to putting the commission at the very heart of our plans to renew and expand Britain's infrastructure, making sure that it is long-term economics, not short-term politics, that drives Britain's vital infrastructure investment."

Speaking on the BBC Today programme earlier in the day, he said:

"There is a distinction in my mind between investing in the things that will make Britain's economy more efficient in the future, and simply spending more on our day-to-day process of government. We need to keep the lid on day-to-day spending, but I do think there's a case that we should look at very carefully for

targeted high-value investment in our economic infrastructure."

Transport secretary Chris Grayling restated the Government's commitment to High Speed 2. Many trains around the country were overcrowded, he said.

"We need better services to places like Milton Keynes, Northampton and Coventry. We need to get more freight off the roads and on to rail."

That required "a new railway that links our major cities – so we've got more space for freight trains and commuter trains on our other busiest lines. That is why we need to press ahead with HS2."

He added that everyone would benefit from the new line. "A commuter who never uses

the new fast service will benefit from the extra space it will free up on their lines. The motorist who never uses a train will have a quicker journey as we get more freight off the roads."

He also announced an additional £12m for Midland Connect until 2020 to fund work on transport strategy.

Bircham Dyson Bell partner Angus Walker commented that without statutory status the NIC would have "less legitimacy, credibility and teeth". Moreover the Government would be "under no obligation to respond to it". He added: "I hope that the Government concludes soon that the commission should be created by statute after all and finds an early opportunity to do so."



Top left: Philip Hammond
Left: Chris Grayling

Ministers speak at TT party conference events

The Bus Services Bill will gain Royal Assent in time for next May's elections for metro-mayors, said transport minister Andrew Jones. Speaking at a *Transport Times* Conservative Party conference fringe meeting Congested Society – Could Buses Drive Change?, he said the bill would be arriving in the Commons in the next few weeks. The legislation was intended to enable local authorities to choose the model of running services that suited them best, he added. He predicted that most of the market would opt for bus partnerships, but that some would opt for franchising. He did not believe franchising would work across all the country, but added local areas would be able to choose their own solution.

DeHavilland Definitive political intelligence

Go-Ahead group chief executive David Brown expressed regret that there was no provision in the bill to cover average speeds. National Express West Midlands managing director Peter Coates added that a concerted effort to improve bus speeds could reverse the trend of decline in the bus sector.

The minister pledged to be "the champion for buses in parliament". He said he wanted to see bus passenger numbers grow; he felt that the evidence of the economic and environmental benefits of buses was "straightforward" and called on the industry to make a concerted effort to raise its profile.

At a second *TT* fringe event, Growing the Railway and Delivering Capacity, rail minister Paul Maynard stressed the Government's commitment to HS2. The solution for meeting demand for capacity was not to price passengers off the railways. He added that improvements to rolling stock and infrastructure could only achieve so much, and that was why HS2 was needed. Rail skills was another constraint in capacity, he added.

Siemens sales director Phil Heathcote said there was no quick fix to increasing capacity, but new technology in rolling stock, signalling and new infrastructure were part of the answer. He added that there was huge potential for sharing of information, including indicating to waiting passengers where there were

spaces in carriages and where to stand on platforms for boarding.

He also stressed the need for the right people to operate the technology. "We need skilled and motivated people in the rail industry," Mr Heathcote said, adding that the sector would be short by 10,000 engineers by the end of the decade.

Virgin Trains commercial director Graham Leech said that the doubling of passenger numbers on the West Coast main line had helped to move HS2 higher up the agenda. He added that there was a virtuous circle of investment to allow passenger growth and expansion. The growth of Virgin Trains passengers on the West Coast main line had led to faster journey times, longer trains and better journeys, which in turn drove further demand.

Osborne to chair powerhouse thinktank

Former chancellor George Osborne has launched a new thinktank, the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, aiming to keep up the momentum behind the initiative he championed while in government.

Mr Osborne will chair the thinktank, which will be privately funded and with a business-led board. It is understood that Mace, Associated British Ports and Barclays Bank are among the first to sign up.

Mr Osborne, MP for Tatton, is keen to keep up the pressure behind the Northern Powerhouse and devolution agenda after early indications

suggested prime minister Theresa May was lukewarm about the idea. The initiative seeks to allow “the cities and counties of the north of England to become greater than the sum of their parts” and to provide an economic counterweight to the South East.

A statement issued at the launch said: “The key to the Northern Powerhouse is a combination of a major devolution of power from Whitehall, including the creation of new elected metro-mayors, along with major new investments in transport infrastructure, science, skills and culture. This will attract business,

jobs and investment from the private sector and abroad.”

The new institute will be “a focus for research, intelligence and co-ordination with key stakeholders in the north of England to ensure that the vision continues to be developed.” It will be able to commission specialist research and work with other organisations to produce “research and insight from a pan-Northern perspective”.

It will “support the delivery of existing Northern Powerhouse commitments and develop the evidence base for taking the initiative further”.

Outlining “next steps”, the institute called for rapid

progress on HS2, support for implementation of the One North transport strategy, including Northern Powerhouse Rail or HS3, which it said were “vital to the success of the Northern Powerhouse”.

The North needs “targeted investment in improved transport links and in its world-leading capabilities, identified [by the recent Northern Independent Economic Review] as advanced manufacturing, digital development, health innovation and energy. It also needs to build on existing devolution with leaders empowered to drive forward growth and reform at a local level,” the thinktank said.



Merseyside bus alliance launched

Arriva, Stagecoach and Merseytravel have signed a five-year bus service agreement which will bring in £25m investment in its first year.

The Liverpool City Region Bus Alliance promises to provide improved, more efficient, integrated and better value services. The operators have given a commitment to provide modern bus fleets with an average age of no more than seven years.

Passengers will benefit from improved smart ticketing, and wi-fi and USB charging on all new buses.

The signing of the agreement also releases additional government OLEV funding of £4.7m – the biggest award of the last round of funding in July – for 72 new greener buses.

The two operators will work in partnership on a range of initiatives including marketing

campaigns, bus cleaning and customer service training. The agreement promises improved links to John Lennon Airport, and a night bus service will continue to be piloted. Operators will sign up to targets for punctuality and passenger satisfaction. Changing between rail and bus services will be simplified.

Cllr Liam Robinson, chair of the Merseytravel Committee, said: “This is a real step forward in improving bus services and facilities for everyone in the city region – not just for existing users but for encouraging potential new users to give it a try.”

“This investment will mean we can do some transformational work together, but that’s not forgetting what we’ve already achieved as an informal partnership.”

Campaign for Better Transport chief executive Stephen Joseph will chair the partnership.

Urban Transport Group sets out 15-step programme

The Urban Transport Group has set out a vision for UK transport policy intended to allow the UK’s largest urban areas to grow “in a smart and sustainable way”.

Policy Futures for Urban Transport is in part a response to the EU referendum and the formation of a new government. The group has been holding events at the party conferences to encourage debate and discussion of the document.

The report notes that the city regions are undertaking major investment programmes including in public transport, highways, active travel, and smart ticketing. It says that with the right national policy framework further progress can be made to create efficient and fully integrated urban transport networks, and to break down barriers between sectors to allow transport to contribute to policy goals in areas such as health, employment and education.

It makes 15 recommendations, including enacting the Bus Services Bill in a timely way, fulfilling the promise of providing a simpler route to franchising services; keeping up the momentum on rail devolution; and developing a long-term investment plans for local, regional and inter-city services. It calls for “an ambitious nation-

al active travel strategy” and a more effective strategic and operational partnership between the city regions and Highways England and Network Rail, plus greater availability of smart and simple ticketing that can be used on all providers and all modes.

Urban Transport Group chair and Transport for Greater Manchester chief executive Dr Jon Lamonte said: “Devolution of transport responsibilities and powers to more focused governance in the city regions is paying off, including through better performing and more responsive local rail networks. We now want to build on these foundations – and this report shows how.”

He added: “A key immediate priority is to ensure that the Bus Services Bill is enacted and fully usable by spring 2017 as promised, and that it delivers on its aims of giving transport authorities powers to plan, oversee and procure local bus networks in the same way that our colleagues in London can.” There was a need for “greater certainty to local transport funding in line with that which now applies to national road and rail.”

The document also calls for “a more ambitious national policy framework on air quality” and a national strategic policy on freight to encourage more long haul freight to use rail and water.

West Yorkshire to pilot ITSO tickets on smartphone

A trial of technology allowing a smartphone to act as a replacement for a smartcard ticket is due to get under way shortly in West Yorkshire.

ITSO, which manages the specification used by transport smart ticketing schemes, is working with technology suppliers Rambus Ecebs and Penrillian to support the West Yorkshire Combined Authority in undertaking the pilot. The project will feed into work being undertaken by Transport for the North which is exploring options for introducing smart ticketing more widely across the north of England.



The technology will allow passengers to buy travel tickets from their smartphone, and then use the phone in the same way as a smart ticket.

The technology behind the mobile app was developed by Rambus Ecebs and uses "host card emulation", an approach used widely in the payment industry, which allows the phone to emulate an ITSO smartcard. This is combined with an app developed by Penrillian, which allows passengers to buy the ticket directly from their phone. The mobile device then acts as the host for the ticket and uses near field communication to interact with

card readers or ticket barriers, exactly as a smartcard would.

ITSO says the host card emulation technology will provide a strong security management system to guarantee the security of the transaction data.

ITSO general manager Steve Wakeland said: "The Transport for the North trial is a significant landmark in the development of HCE with ITSO on smartphones. We have been working very closely with our members and suppliers on the solution for the trial, and through their knowledge and expertise we have been able to identify various technologies and approaches relating to HCE. We will continue to explore these different options, with the objective of identifying viable solutions for broader adoption and rollout by our members."

He added: "We have identified a number of solutions that meet the high security standards placed on ITSO schemes which means that it is no longer as challenging as it used to be to provide mobile ticketing alongside classical contactless smart cards."

The trial, due to begin later in the autumn, will use a small test group of staff who will be issued with NFC-enabled smartphones with the ITSO HCE app installed. They will be able to test purchasing and downloading tickets to their phones as well as using the phones for validation purposes on ticket barriers. The trial will operate on rail lines between Huddersfield and Leeds stations, where a number of its ticket gates have been configured to accept the new technology.

London mayor promises new Thames crossings

Three new Thames crossings in east London could be in operation within five to ten years following a new commitment by London mayor Sadiq Khan on Tuesday.

The mayor said the crossings would "vastly improve travel across the capital" while supporting new affordable homes and encouraging cycling and public transport use.

The mayor called for plans for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge linking Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf to be speeded up. He proposed improvements to the proposed Silvertown Tunnel intended to make it "greener and more public transport focused". TfL has been instructed to develop plans for a Docklands Light Railway crossing at Gallions Reach to Thamesmead.

The plans for the Silvertown Tunnel were attacked by environmental campaigners.

The tunnel is intended to alleviate pressure on the Blackwall Tunnel, where congestion and air quality are predicted to get worse, as well as providing a more reliable crossing. The tunnel, which would open in 2023 and be paid for via a user charge, will help significantly reduce traffic queues, the mayor's office said.

The proposed tunnel was consulted on last year and following improvements requested by the

mayor, a six-month public examination will begin next week. Changes called for by the mayor include a clear commitment within TfL's business plan to support new buses through the tunnel. There will be a bus concession for local residents for a period, and the tunnel will be one of London's low emission bus zones. TfL will also consider providing a bespoke cycle-bus which will carry cyclists and their bikes through the tunnel. 55% of construction material will be delivered via the river.

The new pedestrian and cycling bridge linking Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf will make it easier for people south of the river to link to the East-West Cycle Superhighway and give people north of the river better access to the Thames Path and planned cycle routes throughout Southwark.

The bridge would need to open for shipping, and TfL has carried out analysis on whether a bascule or swing style bridge could be more suitable. A competitive procurement process will be held next year and subject to funding, availability of land and approvals, the new bridge could be open as soon as 2020.

A Docklands Light Railway crossing from Gallions Reach to Thamesmead will help to support development of around 17,000 new homes in Newham and the borough of Greenwich in the next 10 years.

TfL will seek to find the majority of funding for these crossings through third-party developer contributions and via existing community infrastructure levies.

The mayor has asked TfL to look at developing a new ferry between Canary Wharf and North Greenwich, which will help support new developments on the Greenwich Peninsula and the Isle of Dogs, and reduce demand on the Jubilee line. TfL is also looking at the case for the extension of the London Overground from Barking Riverside across the Thames

towards south-east London.

London First infrastructure director David Leam said: "Better river crossings will help unlock the economic potential of east and south-east London and connect thousands of new homes in Newham, Barking, Greenwich and elsewhere. We're delighted the mayor has sped up these plans."

Campaign for Better Transport sustainable transport campaigner Bridget Fox said: "We are extremely disappointed that the mayor has decided to press ahead with the Silvertown Tunnel, which will spread congestion and worsen already lethal air pollution. It's doubly disappointing given his recognition of the potential of new rail and cycle crossings to link communities across the Thames."





Technology on show at Euro Bus Expo

Euro Bus Expo 2016, the European showcase for the bus and coach industry, returns to the NEC, Birmingham on 1-3 November – and will be the biggest yet, the organisers predict. Confidence in the market has led to a sell-out in stand space at the show.

Euro Bus Expo is free to attend and offers visitors the opportunity to meet the industry and see the latest vehicles, service and product innovations available.

Almost 300 exhibitors will display over 100 of the latest bus and coach models, technology and service innovations.

Technology

Real-time information and streamlined booking processes have transport operators hastening to adapt to meet the expectations of passengers. Updating revenue collection is now a commercial priority,

with some 92 million contactless cards issued in the UK.

The increasing demand for transport integration and intelligent mobility will be met by exhibitors in the Technology Zone, who will display the latest solutions for passenger convenience and connected services.

Vehicles

The largest industry trade show for 2016 will feature 25 vehicle manufacturers and dealers displaying more than 100 of the latest coach and bus models. With London and Paris deciding to move to electric-only bus operation over the next few years, visitors can expect to see the latest product launches from a number of manufacturers.

Manufacturers exhibiting include Alexander Dennis, Beulas, BYD Europe, Daimler (EvoBus), EVM, Indcar, Irizar, MAN, Optare, Otocar, Scania, Sitcar, Temsa,

Unvi, Van Hool, VDL, Volvo, Wrights Group and Yutong.

Dealers participating in the show displaying other manufacturers' models include Connaught PSV, Minis to Midis, BASE and BYD.

Eyes are already turning to how vehicle automation will be applied to the coach and bus markets with the predicted arrival of driverless cars on the mainstream market in a few years. It will be one of several hot topics at this year's Euro Bus Expo.

Master Class Theatre

The Master Class Theatre, sponsored by SmartDrive Systems, will address some of the biggest challenges facing the bus and coach sector, including the Bus Services Bill, Brexit, devolution and smart ticketing.

The show's speaker lineup already includes leading industry figures such as Nottingham City Transport managing

director Mark Fowles, Trentbarton managing director Jeff Counsell, and Reading Buses chief executive Martijn Gilbert.

As in previous years, big names from the Confederation of Passenger Transport will also be hosting presentations.

Accessibility

The Accessibility Zone, sponsored by Rescroft and its "Accessible Solutions" theme, is dedicated to vehicles, products and services for community transport operators, local authority transport providers and commercial operators offering accessible vehicles. Suppliers will show purpose-built and specially adapted vehicles that are fitted with the latest equipment including low floor entry, seating, tail-lifts and safety aids.

Transport operators, planners and consultants: register now at eurobusexpo.com

Smarter and greener cars will transform travel

Changes on a scale not seen for a century are afoot, if we are ready to grasp the opportunities offered, says **John Hayes**



A century ago, Henry Ford's Model T heralded a new era of transport. Ford's vision was to "democratise the automobile".

He wanted to take the horse off the highways, render an old, unreliable, dirty form of transport obsolete, and make journeys faster, cleaner and easier. He said: "When I'm through, everybody will be able to afford one, and about everybody will have one."

He sold 16 million cars. And in doing so, changed the world.

It is rare for a minister to be able to look across his brief and see that we stand on the brink of another historic transformation. But that is indeed where we find ourselves today, 100 years on from the Model T.

We aim again to democratise transport and make vehicles clean. This has profound implications for the future of travel. Technology is changing with the development of driverless and electric cars, and we are also changing as consumers.

Connected and automated vehicles will alter the nature of journeys, making them simpler and safer, while also helping traffic flow more smoothly through our towns and cities. Imagine today's congested roads with far fewer vehicles, yet transporting the same volume of people. And the future is closer than many people think, with driverless car testing already under way in Milton Keynes, Coventry, Bristol and London.

We have to be forward-thinking to anticipate the opportunities and challenges of this new age. An effective partnership of public, private and civic authorities that is willing and eager to be at the forefront of change will achieve this transformation.

Important trials are feeding research to identify the key social and behavioural considerations associated with automat-

ed vehicles. The Government's Modern Transport Bill will lay the foundations for future policy. We must guarantee too that British workers, with the necessary skills, benefit.

By 2050, we also want to ensure that almost every car and van on our roads is zero emission, reversing decades of pollution. This is not about some high-flown notion of the planet's future in centuries to come, but driven by the need now to make the air we breathe cleaner. We are preparing related infrastructure, with grants for workplace and on-street charging points. We are reducing the cost of electric vehicles to consumers through the plug-in car grant. And we are investing in eight Go Ultra Low cities.

Imagine today's congested roads with far fewer vehicles, yet transporting the same volume of people

Change is happening. London Fire Brigade has replaced all its cars with electric BMW i3s. By next year, Microsoft UK aims to make one-fifth of its entire fleet electric. Sales of cars eligible for the plug-in grant have soared by almost a third this year.

But there is a third great opportunity, perhaps the most significant of all. As we introduce new technologies and invest in road infrastructure, we have a chance to reconsider the aesthetics of what we build. In the post-war years, the pressure of developing our trunk road network to meet the rapid rise in the number of cars left the principles of good design largely ignored. We came to accept – wrongly, of course – that roads and motorways must be necessarily ugly. The result was infrastructure which forged

a fatal disconnect between society and the environment.

Now we have a first chance to improve the aesthetic of what we build for the common good. Just consider what's happened at railway stations like St Pancras, King's Cross and Manchester Victoria. After decades in which we allowed design to become substandard soul-sapping and drab, we've rediscovered that station architecture can lift and delight the senses.

Similarly, Victorian railway infrastructure is loved in a way that modern motorways are not because structures were built according to time-honoured architectural principles, and often worked in harmony with the natural environment.

It's time we applied these lessons and brought fresh thinking to road design too. Ours can be a new age of elegance.

From motorways and bypasses to service stations and bus terminals, road architecture need not be miserable and alienating. As new infrastructure is developed, it will be the duty of government to ensure it is as sympathetic to the landscape in which it stands as it can be. Indeed, I have already begun to put in place changes to help us achieve that objective. The success of all we do should be measured by the wellbeing of those who are affected.

Smarter and greener transportation is going to transform the way we travel and ultimately the way we live. The opportunities are extraordinary. And one century on from the Model T, Henry Ford would surely be enthused, excited and enthralled by the prospects.

John Hayes is Minister of State for Transport and MP for South Holland and the Deepings.

Policies needed for the neglected periphery

The EU referendum vote sent a signal that policymakers' attention needs to turn away from cities to towns and villages with declining economies and high joblessness

Early analysis of the Brexit vote pattern looked to a north-south explanation, but it turns out it is better understood as a divergence of opinion between the centre and periphery.

Post-referendum, with business turning its attention to the task of managing continuing uncertainties, government policymakers will be aware as never before of the scale of estrangement 52% of the nation feels from the metropolitan centre. Can we expect shifts in transport policy (and not just in rhetoric) as a result?

Transport policy of the last 10 to 15 years was driven by a Treasury mindset that eschewed "picking winners" but wanted to "back success". That meant devolving powers to London, allowing it to plan and to borrow, and – albeit with some reluctance – seeing a parallel in the north of England, provided it was concentrated on the major cities, Leeds and Manchester especially. Investment in transport then fits the bill like no other: visibly targeting where demand is greatest, supporting but not interfering with the market economy.

So to say now that the periphery – which has a geographic as well as a social dimension – should not be ignored poses a new question, because these places *have* been ignored. They are not where demand is highest, and they will not provide the much vaunted agglomeration benefits of major city-based development. But in transport, as well as other policy fields, what should change?

Think about the prevalence of gently declining or already doomed housing estates in the larger cities, remote from activity centres. Or of high streets and local shopping arcades, where the internet and poverty have combined to leave a boarded-up representation of lost local prosperity. Or think of the mining villages and industrial towns that form not so much a rust belt, but a

national rusted archipelago. What contribution can contemporary thinking on transport make to restoring a sense of wellbeing and of community to such places?

I think the transport needs for non-metropolitan and peripheral places should be considered at three levels: local, regional and national. This aims should be (i) cost-effective local improvements; (ii) a re-examination of strategic transport opportunities at a regional scale and (iii) ensuring that the needs of peripheral and marginalised places are reflected in decisions taken on major national transport investments.

Of these three, local improvements sound the most straightforward, but probably aren't. A fresh effort at streetscape that

What contribution can contemporary thinking on transport make to restoring a sense of wellbeing and community?

can encourage informal social contact, making provision for cycling, for car-share schemes, for better paving and lighting would be among the many measures possible. But the hollowing out of local authority resources will need to be redressed to make any of this possible, and community-based regeneration supported financially once again.

At the regional level, we could think of connectivity designed specifically to meet the needs of disadvantaged areas rather than the nearest metropolitan centre. Of course both might gain from developments such as the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway reopening in Northumberland (for which GRIP 2 feasibility work has just been completed), connecting one-time colliery villages and towns with Newcastle and the Tyne and Wear

Metro system, linking areas of high joblessness with employment opportunities. But at the regional scale it is also worth considering more radical ideas.

Regional policy is hardly fashionable. In the early 1970s, London overspill housing had reached Peterborough and Basildon, and even places as far afield as Burnley. We wouldn't consider social replanting any more, but we shouldn't be frightened of investing in better connectivity.

Along our coasts, there is often a challenge of struggling resorts, and weak economies. For Hastings (an important destination for London overspill in the past) there is the prospect of investment to allow a high quality commuter service over High Speed One. Other coastal rail links are missing completely. The scope to create new estuarial crossings (Essex-Kent by rail, for instance) is given little attention. Why isn't there, for example, a rail bridge or tunnel across the Tees, cutting the journey time from Middlesbrough to Hartlepool along the north-east coast from today's 30 minutes to 10 minutes?

At the national level, important transport decisions lie ahead, and these matter to the neglected non-metropolitan periphery too. Championed by south-east businesses and London First, more runway capacity in the south-east registers at national GDP levels. But the decision on where the runway capacity is located affects places well away from the metropolitan centre. Heathrow has a huge advantage over Gatwick in this respect. It can be linked directly with much of the country using the new western rail link. There is no reason why the Black Country shouldn't have a direct Heathrow rail service, or South Wales or Cornwall: a facility that cannot be readily matched at Gatwick.

Jim Steer is director and founder of Steer Davies Gleave.



Can a fragmented railway support prosperity?

The Transport Select Committee is conducting five interrelated inquiries into the future of rail with a view to identifying ways to improve capacity, connectivity, affordability and reliability



With the oldest railway system in the world, the UK has a long and proud rail history. By reducing journey times, lowering transport costs and stimulating investment, the railway laid the foundations in the 19th century for the prosperity that followed for many years.

Rail is fundamental to the UK, particularly in the economic and social benefits it provides. Passenger numbers are at a post-war high, having more than doubled since the mid-1990s to over 1.6 billion in 2015. Commuters rely on rail every day to get to work and people use it to get across the country for business and leisure.

There is no reason why the railway can't have the same stimulating effect on the UK economy in the coming decades. To achieve this, it is absolutely essential that the rail is run efficiently and safely and facilitates crucial connectivity to regional economies as well as national networks.

Safety on the railway has improved dramatically since the horrendous Ladbroke Grove and Hatfield tragedies and, for the ninth year in a row, there have been no passenger or workforce fatalities in train accidents. Rail continues to be the safest form of land transport in the UK. Nevertheless, vigilance is required.

What remains a great concern, however, is that the cost of rail tickets is the highest in

Europe and has risen twice as fast as weekly earnings in recent years. The situation is unlikely to improve, with regulated rail fares in England and Wales set to rise by nearly 2% next year. The high fares persist in spite of the £4.8bn government subsidy that is still being fed into the railway.

Additionally, the UK lags considerably behind continental Europe, with the efficiency gap between the UK and our continental comparators estimated to be as high as 40%. The Government conceded in its own command paper that the railways are "unacceptably inefficient".

Many other aspects of the sector's performance are causing concern. The overall passenger

The efficiency gap between the UK and continental comparators is estimated to be as high as 40%

rail performance and punctuality measure is the lowest since the mid-2000s and passenger satisfaction is down.

So where do we go from here? How do we improve performance across the network for the benefit of passengers and the broader economy?

In short, there is no quick fix. Following privatisation in the early 1990s, the UK developed a fragmented network structure made up of many stakeholders which has arguably produced a less cohesive sector.

The Transport Select Committee is currently completing a series of five interconnected inquiries into the future of rail. The aim is to take a sectoral approach to dissect the railway, from its ownership and governance to the way in which infrastructure is being improved and managed, and most importantly how the passen-

ger is experiencing the railway.

The committee is nearing completion of two of these inquiries. The *rail technology* inquiry scrutinised plans for deploying new digital technologies and how technology could improve timetable planning by bringing in real-time traffic management.

The *passenger experience* inquiry examined progress in achieving key priorities for passengers, particularly regarding the punctuality, reliability and facilities of trains, as well as the progress of smart ticketing schemes.

The *rail franchising* inquiry is continuing and will have its second oral evidence session next month. As part of this, we are assessing the effectiveness of the Government in procuring passenger franchises and whether there is scope for further competition on the network.

The *rail safety* inquiry, launched earlier this month, is currently taking evidence and will examine the safety and security of the rail network as a whole.

The final inquiry on the *finance and governance* of the network will determine whether the current governance structure can expedite a more coordinated and accountable functioning of the railway, and whether funding sources are sustainable to allow for the crucial capacity improvements necessary in coming years.

These inquiries are attempting to identify underlying problems on the network and put forward important recommendations for the Government on options to address current and future issues.

Ultimately improvements in the capacity, connectivity, affordability and reliability of the network have to be targeted to the benefit of the passenger. With the right policy and structures, the railway has the potential to promote economic prosperity.

Louise Ellman MP is chair of the House of Commons Transport Select Committee and Labour MP for Liverpool Riverside.

The Transport Select Committee is conducting a wide-ranging inquiry into the structure of the rail industry



Bringing roadside services up to scratch

Research shows facilities at services areas can be inconsistent, especially for lorry drivers and on A-roads. Operators and Highways England both have a role to play

For road users making longer journeys, stopping at services is an integral part of the journey experience. This can be for a short toilet or fuel stop, or longer to rest and eat. For lorry and coach drivers, services are an essential part of doing their job, given legal requirements to take regular rest breaks and, for some, the need to stay overnight.

In Transport Focus research *Road user needs and experiences* last year, we found that some users had concerns about the facilities available at service areas. Transport Focus wanted to follow this up and research users' views about roadside facilities on England's motorways and major A-roads.

It is worth noting that services are operated by private companies. In order to be signposted from the motorway they have to provide a minimum level of facilities but are otherwise free to provide the facilities they think will meet the needs of their customers. They can set prices as they see fit.

We found that most road users are broadly satisfied with services on motorways. They have functional needs that are generally met: the ability to use the toilet and buy a coffee, sandwich and fuel. They told us that you know what you'll get at a motorway service area. That doesn't mean everything is perfect, with concern about cleanliness, particularly of toilets, and the cost of food, drink and fuel.

We found lorry drivers to be less happy with roadside facilities, whether on a motorway or A-road. They told us their needs are often not fully met. They feel there are too few spaces for heavy goods vehicles to park where and when they need to stop.

Even when there is space to park, what is provided does not always help drivers rest properly before getting back behind the

wheel. Many lorry drivers and freight organisations felt: "The law says I must stop and rest, but nobody helps me do it."

We found that road users' views of services on major A-roads or trunk roads were less favourable. People talked about inconsistency, poor quality and low confidence that even basic needs would be met. This extended to lack of clarity about where those services are, what time they are open and what facilities are available.

Transport Focus drew three main conclusions from this research. First, Highways England should explicitly acknowledge that roadside facilities are a key part of its customers' experience. It should play an active role in facilitating high-quality provision, both on motorways and A-roads.

Many lorry drivers felt the law says they must stop and rest, but nobody helps them to do it

Second, Highways England should develop a strategy to ensure there is sufficient capacity for lorries to park in the right places and with facilities that meet drivers' needs. It will need to work with the freight industry, the Government, local authorities and others to do this.

Third, operators of service areas should seek to meet road users' challenge that they want greater consistency in cleanliness, especially of toilets.

It is clearly in the interests of those who operate services that their facilities meet road users' needs. But it is also in Highways England's interest not only to improve road users' journeys, but to help ensure people don't drive tired, don't stop unnecessarily on the hard shoulder and

don't run out of fuel. Beyond causing delays, there is a safety argument because these are often contributory factors in accidents that cause injury or worse.

Transport Focus will use the research to explore with Highways England, the Government and those who operate services how the issues highlighted can be addressed.

The issue is becoming more pressing. It is generally felt that the number of parking spaces for HGVs is reducing as traffic volume increases. This is being keenly felt in Kent where "fly-parking" (anti-social and sometimes illegal parking) is becoming a real issue, even when Operation Stack is not on. We will soon publish our work on HGV drivers' views about the proposed Kent lorry park and the regular Dover TAP (traffic assessment project) scheme, where lorries queue on the approaches to Dover.

We have already held a seminar with the industry and the Government to discuss the findings; both Highways England and the roadside services industry welcomed the research. There was broad agreement that A-road facilities hadn't had sufficient attention in the past, and that decent provision of services is a key safety issue.

Simply mapping what facilities are available where would also help. It was noted that new development can take years to get through planning. Anything Highways England and the Government can do to speed up the process would be welcome.

None of this is easy, but you can't have a strategic road network without thinking strategically about where drivers are going to stop and rest, whether they are going on holiday or in charge of lorries that the economy relies on to function.

Anthony Smith is chief executive of Transport Focus.



Strikes signal concerns about changing roles

Disputes on ScotRail and CalMac ferries are rooted in a shift in emphasis from technical to social skills, and staff concern that these will be less highly valued



The RMT union recently served notice that it is in a formal dispute with ferry operator CalMac over pay. This comes on the heels of a damaging summer of rail strikes across Scotland with a dispute affecting ScotRail train services run by Abellio. Both ferry and rail franchises have recently been renewed, so should we be worried that ingredients for failure have inadvertently been built into the new contracts?

The skills of CalMac staff are clear from high ratings achieved on services such as TripAdvisor. Visitors to Oban rate CalMac ferry journeys higher than any of the other visitor attractions to the area, with customer service from ferry staff scoring highly. The staff have been commended for their personalised advice about local attractions and events, in addition to the efficient way they maintain safe operation of the vessels.

The visitor economy brought the rail dispute to a head. When strike dates were announced during the Edinburgh Festival, talks moved up a gear, and just over a month later, on 19 September, the dispute came to an end.

For both Abellio and CalMac, their recent franchise bids were based on plans for improving performance and efficiency. The incentives in the franchises are intended to create pressures for

market development, but there are also fears they could lead to pay restraint for staff. Achieving the promised productivity gains may be more challenging than the companies hoped.

On the settlement of the rail dispute, ScotRail Alliance managing director Phil Verster said "Once every 40 years, when you introduce new trains, you have an opportunity to make a change in the operating practices for the fleet, so we had to explore what was possible with our new fleet." It is good to see the rail dispute resolved, but the railway industry will need to go quite a bit further than they did in the summer 2016 if they are to explore "what is possible".

What lay behind the dispute was fear that erosion of functional and safety roles could be associated with lower pay

The RMT was keen to emphasise the "safety critical" role of guards, and Abellio highlighted the growing customer service demands being placed on all staff. What lay behind the dispute was fear that any erosion of functional and safety roles for staff, like opening and closing doors, could be associated with lower pay. High standards of customer care include many tasks, and not all traditional roles need to be performed in the same way. Increasingly the technological capabilities of new transport hardware will improve safety for repetitive tasks, allowing staff to add particular value for more complex interventions.

The current rail and ferry franchise structure implies that operators should lead change, but sometimes the constraints set by others can seem like insurmountable hurdles. The new franchises

are under strain in their first year, and these pressures could grow as new technologies and social change create opportunities not envisaged when the franchises were agreed.

The RMT sees the compromise it reached with Abellio as protection of the 560 guards who "will not see their status, skills or pay reduced for the length of the ScotRail franchise". The compromise allows Abellio to meet the terms of its contract with the Scottish Government, protecting it too. The Scottish Government largely avoided public wrath about the recent rail strikes by deflecting the public debate with calls for nationalisation of ScotRail train services.

Compromising on a lowest common denominator based on old agendas is not a strong platform from which to achieve investment and joint working on future services. Technologies and systems are changing rapidly. The government could soon get a purer public sector debate about change if the dispute with the wholly publicly-owned ferry operator CalMac escalates.

Transport operators, unions and the government need to find new ways to secure better conditions for staff and customers in a changing and growing transport economy.

Many staff are already highly motivated, recognising that their job satisfaction comes more from adding value to passenger journeys than performing mechanical tasks. Current disputes about new franchises reveal worries that productivity gains are being viewed more in terms of wages than staff capabilities.

A fresh look at the franchises might be helpful to ensure that they can be better geared to promote investment by all involved, particularly staff.

Derek Halden is Director of DHC Loop Connections and secretary of Scotland's transport think tank STSG, www.stsg.org.uk

The dispute with CalMac ferry staff could be a headache for the Scottish Government



Rethink network planning to revive demand

Public transport services are often inconvenient, unreliable and unresponsive to local needs. A serious analytical approach can create rational and effective networks instead, says **Neill Birch**

Rail nationalisation is back on the political agenda. How firmly it's back depends on your view of Jeremy Corbyn's prospects at the polls, but there is no doubt that the Labour Party's rediscovered enthusiasm for public ownership is striking a chord with a lot of people. Some of this has to do with perceived high fares, of course, but lack of investment and the sense that much rail provision is chaotic and poorly planned is a big part of it. What the nationalisers promise – and what many voters want – is a properly integrated, centrally planned system of national rail.

It's not hard to understand why this might seem attractive. Deregulated public transport services in parts of the country have created networks that are inconvenient, unreliable and unresponsive to local needs. This is not only, or even mainly, to do with rail. Bus services are often the worst culprits of poor planning.

Even following consolidation in the bus industry into a number of big groups, some high streets remain clogged with buses from competing firms while other essential routes are neglected, including lifeline links to many rural areas.

It might be that regulatory changes are part of the solution, even if full renationalisation is a step too far. London's transport success story, for example, has at least something to do with TfL's powers to plan and direct services over the range of public transport modes. When it was recently announced that TfL would extend its control to suburban train services, nearly all commentators welcomed the logic of the move, and support from the travelling public was strong.

But whatever the regulatory framework, it has become obvious that many transport authorities need to take a radically

different approach to planning. Some urban bus routes seem barely planned at all. It is as if the planners had simply looked at a map, picked out roads with no bus provision and sketched in the route from there.

It means that the service isn't going where its users need it to go, and so passenger numbers drop and it enters a vicious circle of falling revenue, less reliable services, fewer customers and so on.

But it doesn't have to be that way. If the authority is willing to take a hard, analytical, data-driven look at the service as a whole, asking "why is this bus here?" a rational and effective network that generates demand can emerge.

Some urban bus routes seem barely planned at all

There are already many successful examples. Systra's work in Galway and Cork, where the bus network was sclerotic to the point of fossilisation, identified key links between towns and major destinations and undertook a radical re-routing of the service. This in turn led to a 12% increase in demand in a year – and that is just the beginning. But it required a culture change, a step back from the detail of route planning into a more strategic analysis of what the bus is good for and what it's not.

This process has already been seen at work on the railways. In 1960, before Beeching, the rail service was the product of an unplanned historical evolution that meant that countless train services were running without any real commercial or social justification. They were just the wrong tool for the job. After Beeching, demand for rail in the UK exploded

because the trains were doing what they were best at doing.

This isn't always a popular message, but what is needed today is a bit more of Dr Beeching's clear-eyed analysis if countless urban transport networks are not going to be left to wither and die.

We need an army of Dr Beechings, able to respond to the very local nature of many urban transport systems, unsentimental but with the optimism that best practice can breathe new life into the network and leave a system robust and vital enough to increase demand and adapt to an uncertain future.

It won't always be easy, in some places the treatment will be drastic and the benefits, at first, unclear from the customer's point of view. There will be losers as well as winners.

But the alternative will be far worse. If we don't find the new doctors, many local services will be better off calling for a priest.

Neill Birch is Systra's Director of Public Transport Operations



Neill Birch: "Clear-eyed analysis is needed"

Effective planning can transform the effectiveness of bus networks



Handling complaints is not all about delays

From this month the Consumer Rights Act applies to all transport services. Creation of an ombudsman for the rail sector could improve customer relations across the board, says **Lewis Shand Smith**



Lewis Shand Smith: “Delays cause disruption, but how problems are managed can significantly affect satisfaction”

The rail sector has experienced a decade of unprecedented change and improvement, with increased passenger numbers and better use of technology for pricing and ticketing among its key achievements, but at the same time the industry has been hitting the headlines as customers become less satisfied with the service they receive. Delays or other issues can significantly disrupt both the home and professional lives of commuters.

The most recent National Rail Passenger Survey, published in the spring, reveals customers were less satisfied with their journey overall than they were six months previously (a 3% decline). In December last year *Which?* made a supercomplaint to the ORR. In its response the ORR concluded that there needed to be improvements in the ways passengers are informed about their right to claim compensation and simplification of processes. From the beginning of this month the Consumer Rights Act applies to all transport services.

However, blanket compensation for delay may not provide the appropriate redress for all travellers. And it's not just about delays and compensation. While many operational issues are unavoidable, how problems of all types are managed can have a significant effect on satisfaction

levels. It's important that rail operators take complaints seriously, answer them promptly and use them to improve service.

In light of this, the rail sector should focus on strengthening its complaint handling processes, creating a robust solution that rail passengers can rely on.

I'm sure that as in other regulated sectors, the majority of complaints are dealt with quickly in the rail industry. But what happens to those who remain unhappy? In finance and energy, for example, customers have the right to have their complaint heard by an independent ombudsman who will consider the evidence, reach a conclusion and deliver a legally binding solution.

Effective complaints management is an excellent investment for a company to make

Responsible capitalism is a key priority for the Government and the rail sector has an opportunity to be a prime example of how a public utility can be attuned to the needs and desires of its users, particularly when it comes to complaints handling.

The time is right for train operators to consider how their complaints handling systems could work better for them and consumers, and the potential impact both on their businesses and the industry.

Ombudsman Services is the UK ombudsman for both the Energy and Communications industry and what we see in these sectors is that effective complaints management is an excellent investment for a company to make, leading to higher levels of satisfaction, better service and ultimately supporting profitability.

In these sectors, as in finance, internal complaints handling is supported by an external ombudsman as part of any review. There should now be a debate across the whole rail industry about the creation of a single sector ombudsman, which is separate from any advocacy or advice giving body, free for consumers and provides feedback to help companies to improve their customer service.

A large part of our work involves working with business leaders to help them improve the quality of their complaint handling, address systemic issues and thereby reduce the number of complaints they receive. With more than 10 years' experience, we have a wealth of information for those seeking advice, and we believe we are well placed to serve your customers' needs and put the trust back into transport.

The creation of such an ombudsman is a long-term project that will involve the co-operation of the industry and its regulator. Some train operators are taking the steps required – we're in discussion with several providers about the creation of a bespoke ombudsman service.

I travel a lot by train and I'm generally impressed by the service I receive. The train operators have achieved much, but customer service is a work-in-progress in any sector, and developing a customer-centric approach gives the rail sector great opportunities. Providing an independent and binding means to have complaints resolved for those travellers who remain unhappy presents an opportunity for transport companies to show they are on track to give a good deal to their customers.

Lewis Shand Smith is Chief Ombudsman, Ombudsman Services. For more information, visit www.ombudsman-services.org

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This page: Crossrail set a benchmark for insisting on good quality design, extending to the areas around stations. Opposite: Principles of good design will be applied to HS2 stations and civil engineering works as well as detail elements

Quality by design

High quality design and attention to detail is essential for High Speed 2. **Sadie Morgan** outlines how the HS2 Independent Design Panel is helping to guide the process

H S2 Ltd will be awarding its enabling works contracts later this autumn and main civil contracts early next year, following Royal Assent for the phase one hybrid bill. Many of those attending next week's *Transport Times* conference will be bidding for this work, and will play a role in helping to achieve high quality design as set out in the HS2 Design Vision, under the themes of People, Place and Time.

It is almost a year since the HS2 independent design panel was established. It is a testament to the national significance of the project that over 300 leading professionals applied to join the panel. The ambition has been to establish a panel that is able to advise HS2 Ltd on every aspect of design quality – from landscape, to station design, to bridges and viaducts.

The panel also has the skills to advise on the processes that are essential to achieve high quality design, such as the procurement of design teams and contractors. The panel is unique in its breadth of expertise and is working with HS2 Ltd to ensure that no aspect of design is neglected.

In the first 11 months that the panel has been in operation, we have commented on more than 40 projects and topics. Most of the meetings so far have taken place at parliamentary design or specification design stage.

This means that many of the reviews have focused on strategy documents and design guidance, as well as HS2 Ltd's approach to procurement and the details of tender questions and scoring. These stages of work will set the foundations for the scheme design work, led by contractors appointed for the phase one civil engineering contracts and by station design teams. It is unusual, and positive, that HS2 Ltd has involved a design panel at such an early strategic stage.

Part of our challenge during the first year has been to establish priorities for the continuing work of the design panel, deciding where to focus our energy and resources. We have done this through a series of route briefings, site visits, and workshop meetings with HS2 staff. We now have a programme in place that includes not just the most high-profile elements of the project, such as stations and large civil engineering structures, but also smaller elements, such as bridge parapets and track security fences.

The panel is not only interested in iconic projects, like the stations and the Colne Valley viaduct. It feels passionately that the many smaller bridges, viaducts, cuttings, embankments, depots and construction compounds should be designed with care. There is huge potential for HS2 Ltd to develop a "kit of parts" approach to achieve

both high quality and efficiency in cost. Intelligent use of standardised construction has the potential to provide economies of scale, as well as the ability to configure standard components to respond to particular contexts.

Bridge parapets are one example of this, where the scale of HS2 provides scope for design innovation. Parapets will be one of the most visible parts of the railway line and the panel has pointed out that they have the potential to establish or reinforce an HS2 brand and identity. Their design is therefore hugely important to the overall impression that the public has of HS2.

One idea suggested by the panel was that the parapets could be transparent. People naturally want to see through parapets to what is across and below. Although no solution is currently on the market, the challenge from the panel was to explore that option



Professor Sadie Morgan is Chair of the HS2 Independent Design Panel. She will be speaking on the importance of design at the Transport Times conference HS2 – Phase One and Beyond on 12 October





rather than preclude it. The panel has encouraged HS2 Ltd to create a specimen design for parapets that would be an illustrative solution to provide a design quality benchmark.

Where the panel is involved in commenting on station designs, the hybrid bill requires arrangements and panel membership to be jointly agreed

between local authorities and HS2 Ltd. This means that bespoke panels have been put in place for each of the phase one stations. In discussions to date on station designs, the panel has emphasised the importance of joint working between local authorities and HS2 Ltd. This will be essential to maximise the regeneration benefits of the new railway. The panel has pointed to Cross-rail as an exemplar for this way of working, and hopes that HS2 Ltd will follow its example in taking an ambitious approach to partnership working.

The panel's involvement in larger civil engineering projects is at an early stage, but we have been invited to comment on design guidance such as the Bridge Design Requirements document. The panel has also encouraged HS2 Ltd to commission a specimen design for the Colne Valley viaduct, to explore potential solutions to the brief, and to set a benchmark for future design work by contractors. There may well be scope for a similar approach on other high-profile

civil engineering structures, as part of both phases one and two.

In my role as chair of the HS2 independent design panel, I am acutely aware of the responsibility that HS2 Ltd has to build a railway that passes through many beautiful areas of our countryside. It will also have an impact on historic buildings along the route, including conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, and listed buildings. There is a very obvious need for design that contributes in a positive way to our country's landscape, and responds with sensitivity to our heritage. This is a sobering thought, but one with great potential to inspire creative solutions.

I feel honoured to have been given the task of bringing together some of the best and most respected design practitioners and leaders, to act as a critical friend to HS2 Ltd – and support its work to create a railway that will enhance the lives of future generations of people in Britain and that will be admired around the world.

There is a very obvious need for design that contributes in a positive way to our country's landscape





Brighton and Hove's parking policy was instrumental in encouraging a shift to buses

Still in a jam

A recent Greener Journeys report quantified the disproportionate effect congestion has on bus services. But finding a solution is in everyone's interests, a recent seminar heard. **David Fowler** reports

Congestion poses a serious risk to bus services. It has a detrimental impact on passengers and is costing 5,000 jobs annually.

So said Claire Haigh, chief executive of bus campaign group Greener Journeys, introducing a House of Commons seminar on the impact of congestion on bus passengers. The event also launched a new, extended version of the recent Greener Journeys report on the subject to which new case studies have been added.

Prof David Begg, author of the report on the subject and chief executive of *Transport Times*, said he had decided to undertake a study of congestion after a poll at February's *TT* Bus Summit. This showed that the main issue of concern for the bus industry was not regulation or deregulation, smart ticketing or the Buses Bill.

"Overwhelmingly, local authorities and bus companies were focused on congestion," he said.

He had tried to quantify the effect on the bus sector. From a study of timetables dating back over the last 50 years, a trend became apparent. Every decade bus speeds have been declining by an average of 10%. "I didn't appreciate the extent to which congestion is the enemy of the bus passenger," he said.

The steepest decline was in Cheltenham and Gloucester, where the bus journey between the two had doubled from 30 to 60 minutes in the last 30 years. In the upper quartile, surprisingly, were Brighton and Glasgow. Among the best performing cities were Oxford and Edinburgh – and Dublin, where the decline has been held to an average of 4% each decade, lower than anywhere else.

The reduction in speeds affects demand – operators have to reduce service frequency or put on more buses, raising fares, and passengers find punctuality is affected and that they are spending more time on buses. All these reduce demand.

"The trend goes back to the 1960s, but has accelerated recently," said Prof Begg. He put this down partly to more roadworks and more traffic generally, but two categories of traffic in particular were "causing mayhem": delivery vans carrying internet parcels and private hire cars resulting from the rise of services such as Uber. At the same time internet shopping meant fewer people were shopping in town centres, meaning fewer bus passengers.

Even in London, the big success story where passenger numbers had doubled since 2000, the trend had gone into reverse and passenger numbers were declining. This was an issue for London mayor Sadiq Khan and Transport for London, which will lose its operating subsidy or general grant from 2018/19.

But, Prof Begg said, "if you could get bus speeds back to where they were in 2003, just after the congestion charge was introduced, you could wipe out the subsidy."

The long-term improvements to bus services that we all want cannot be imposed from Whitehall

This would mean an increase in speeds of 24%, which is what was being achieved in the capital in that year.

Bus minister Andrew Jones said the report "raised some important questions for the industry to answer". "It's absolutely essential to make buses work for the future," he added. "Heavy traffic makes buses less reliable, causes more pollution, make journeys longer and causes more frustration. It's a contributory factor to why bus use has stalled."

He continued: "The bus itself is still the best answer to high capacity transport. Bus priority is good value for money, with a return on investment of three to one." Bus rapid transit had been successfully launched in Manchester and was planned in Swindon. But he said: "The fundamental long-term improvements to buses that we all want cannot be imposed from Whitehall. They must be locally managed."

"Local authorities are best placed to work with operators, and the Bus Services Bill is designed to allow that." Local authorities and bus companies must work together, he said, whatever route is used – franchising or partnerships. Smart or contactless ticketing could make journeys 10% faster by reducing dwell times, he added.

Asked in a question and answer session if the Government planned a national bus strategy, he said: "We do want to see more people on buses – but is it about a national overarching strategy? We want to see people in local areas working together. There is no lack of support from the DfT."

Asked if there would be any government funding to replace the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, Mr Jones said: "I'm not sure whether we can find more to support buses." He added that the Buses Bill "is relaxing the requirement to provide bus infrastructure as part of partnership schemes."

Prof Begg set out a five-point plan to tackle congestion. First, local authorities should set targets for bus speeds, at least to prevent them continuing to fall. Second, demand management. This was not popular, but in recent years a policy of giving people "choice" had left "no alternative but to sit in congestion".

Third, bus priority. But how to sell its merits to the general public remained a problem.

Fourth, improving dwell times. Buses spent 25-40% of their time standing at bus stops. This could be dramatically reduced using smart and contactless ticketing. "This has a very quick payback time," he said. Though bus companies were moving in this direction, "the sooner it comes the better", he said. "It's great for the customer and for operators."

Finally there needed to be a more effective voice for the bus user. Motorists,

rail passengers and cyclists already had powerful lobby groups. Bus companies in particular must get better at communicating with passengers, he said.

Commons transport select committee chair Louise Ellman said that outside London many bus services supported from local authority funds were being withdrawn because of cuts, leaving people isolated, especially in rural communities, and affecting people's ability to travel to work and school. "Outside London, most people who use buses are on low incomes," she said. "It's difficult to get the attention of the media."

The select committee would scrutinise the Buses Bill, currently in the House of Lords, before it came to the Commons. "Much of the debate about the bill has been to do with regulation and franchising," she said. "Should there [instead] be more requirements on local authorities to do more about traffic management?" she asked.

In general discussion, Salford city councillor Roger Jones reflected on Manchester's experience of trying to introduce congestion charging. "If you take a head-on approach and have a referendum you create lots of enemies," he said. Instead he suggested that there should be an approach to the ten most congested cities in the UK with a proposal to

set up a congestion committee. This would be made up of "the great and the good", including representative from motoring organisations, "to come up with answers. Congestion," he said, "drives everybody mad."

Speakers identified a lack of coordination between Highways England over the strategic road network and local authorities responsible for the local network as part of the congestion problem, and between police, local authorities and bus operators over keeping bus lanes clear.

Former Brighton & Hove Bus Company managing director Roger French said the Brighton and Hove partnership used a controlled parking policy as a proxy for a congestion charge to deter car use. "A sensible parking policy can be a big part of the solution," he said, but added: "The Buses Bill doesn't give local authorities power over developers of shopping centres providing parking at low rates, or free, in city centres."

The Impact of Congestion on Bus Passengers by Prof David Begg is published by Greener Journeys and is available from www.greenerjourneys.com/publication/impact-congestion-bus-passengers-new-extended-version/ The extended version includes an additional five city studies



Clockwise from main: the Leigh-Manchester-Salford BRT scheme has proved highly popular; Louise Ellman asked if the Bus Services Bill should focus more on traffic management; Roger Jones proposed a congestion committee bringing together the ten most congested cities



Congestion and capacity

The *Transport Times*/Greener Journeys bus seminar featured (from l-r) Go-Ahead's David Brown; Claire Haigh, shadow minister Daniel Zeichner and David Begg; and Stagecoach's Robert Montgomery
 Top right: the rail seminar with Liam Robinson, Graeme Clark, David Begg and Louise Ellman

Transport Times fringe events at last week's Labour Party conference discussed rail capacity and the bus's role in alleviating congestion. **Aimee Bell** reports

Capacity was the topic for a *Transport Times* rail fringe event at the Labour party conference, Growing the Railway and Delivering Capacity, chaired by *Transport Times* publisher Prof David Begg.

Transport select committee chair Louise Ellman told the meeting that railways were a "mixed story". Although there were complaints about overcrowding and rising prices, rail and the use of trains were more popular than ever.

Though track maintenance and a reliable signalling system were essential to improving rail capacity, all these factors had to be interconnected and considered as part of a single "rail sector" for them to be sustainable, she argued.

She supported HS2, but believed it was important not to focus too much on the south of England, and she supported improving existing lines in the North and in particular the proposals for HS3, and improvements on the existing lines across the Pennines.

The digital railway could improve signalling systems, which could in turn provide more capacity, Ms Ellman added. However, a long-term national strategy would be needed to realise this vision, she said.

Ms Ellman believed devolution had a lot to offer and could potentially open up new regional routes. To do this, however, rail had to be part of a fully integrated transport system, she said.

Siemens Rail Systems head of business development Graeme Clark said that introducing new trains, even if longer or even double-decker, would not alone increase

rail capacity. The use of digital trains was crucial, he explained.

He drew attention to the skills gap in the industry, which, if left unaddressed, could lead to 10,000 less technical staff on the railways by the end of the decade. He pointed out that Siemens was playing its part in addressing this problem by establishing a training college in Northampton and by visiting schools to generate interest. The rail industry offered "fantastic future job opportunities", he said.

Merseytravel chair Liam Robinson said that, although Merseyrail was one of the most successful franchises in the country, without further improvements in the next few years it faced being 160% over capacity.

He was passionate about big infrastructure projects like HS2 and, potentially, HS3. But he also welcomed the possibility of reopening the existing rail route between Liverpool and North Wales. The use of existing systems to squeeze out more capacity, as well as buying more trains, was a good way to increase rail capacity, he said.

Signalling improvements and other technological advances were key, he said. Such improvements made economic sense in places like Liverpool, which had the potential to transport goods imported to its ports by rail, removing lorries from the roads. This was "not just a nice thing to do", but "an economic necessity".

Increasing rail capacity would generate £12bn economic growth, he added, and would maximise spending locally and generate new railway engineering jobs.

He welcomed devolution, adding that once powers were devolved, outcomes tended to improve. Mer-

seyrail had significantly improved as a result of devolution, as would Northern rail and TransPennine Express, he believed.

Opening up discussion, David Begg asked if there was a disconnection between Network Rail and train operators and whether a body like the Strategic Rail Authority needed to be reinvented. Campaign for Better Transport chief executive Stephen Joseph said that there was an issue of "blame-shifting" between the Department for Transport and trade unions and the sense that nobody was in control. Fragmentation of the railway continued to be an issue, he added.

Asked by David Begg why the Labour Party's track record on transport in the north of England was not as good as it was in Scotland and in the south, Cllr Robinson said that with regional devolution he believed the party had missed a real opportunity. Merseyrail was an example of where devolution happened and worked, he said, as was Rail North.

On skills, Mr Robinson agreed on the need for a skills strategy, and he called on the Government to provide a co-ordinated response to the skills shortage.

Buses and congestion

Opening the bus event, Congested society – Could Buses Drive Change, Professor Begg argued that buses did not get a "fair deal", with bus passengers and fares being severely affected by a 20% cut in bus service grants.

He queried whether this was because buses were deemed a local issue, as opposed to a national one, or whether it was because bus users tended to be poorer, quieter and less vociferous.



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remain key issues

Shadow transport minister Daniel Zeichner pledged to improve the Bus Services Bill, and, in particular, opposed the bill's prohibition of municipal bus companies. The Labour Party also wanted to see the franchising model opened up to rest of the country, he said.

He agreed that congestion was a real issue, with online-shopping delivery vans and Uber drivers creating more traffic on the roads. He believed that bus services were a "class and gender issue". When fares went up the people most affected had no voice. It was the responsibility of the Labour Party to represent them and the champion their cause, Mr Zeichner concluded.

Transport select committee chair Louise Ellman said that outside London buses were not typically seen as the best mode of transport. She believed that information was key because often people did not know what was on offer, or where buses travelled to and from. She also stressed that people needed to feel they could rely on their bus services.

She reiterated the need for greater affordability and accessibility of buses, specifically for disabled people. She was happy, she said, that at long last buses were "a national issue".

Labour MP and former shadow transport secretary Lilian Greenwood said that the problem of congestion was to a large extent the result of greater numbers of cars on the roads, specifically those with a single occupant, and that these people would need to be persuaded to use public transport. In her own constituency, Nottingham South, Ms Greenwood said there had been great success in persuading people to use public transport, with growing numbers of bus users in the area. This was partly because of the quality of the bus services available, with clean and modern buses where passengers

could connect to wi-fi and charge their mobile phones while travelling. She wanted to see the Bus Services Bill contain measures to increase the desirability, accessibility and reliability of buses, through the use of audio-visual and real-time displays, which she believed would make bus journeys a much more pleasant experience for both frequent and infrequent bus users.

Greener Journeys chief executive Claire Haigh said congestion had seriously affected bus services, with a 10% increase in bus journey times each decade. This not only affected buses, but also put jobs at risk. The trend needed to be counteracted by methods such as greater use of contactless payment or more bus priority lanes. She called for the Bus Services Bill to contain guidance for setting targets for bus speeds, which she believed would make a tangible difference.

Stagecoach UK managing director Robert Montgomery reinforced the importance of "partnership with a small 'p'" between bus operators and local authorities to tackle congestion and improve services.

He did not necessarily believe more bus lanes was the only solution to congestion, but also saw the importance of single and double yellow lines and red routes to keep buses and traffic moving. He called on operators, local authorities and regional bodies to be more creative. For example, Merseytravel, Arriva, and Stagecoach were working together to make buses in Liverpool better, and had last week signed a proposal to address issues like congestion (see *News*). The partnership would prove to be highly significant for investment, he argued, with Stagecoach and Arriva committed to providing new buses in Liverpool.

Merseytravel chair Cllr Liam Robinson said 80% of workers and shoppers used the bus to travel to

Liverpool One. These passengers were key to the success of Liverpool city centre, he argued. He had two targets, which were to increase farepaying patronage by 10% over the next year and to achieve industry-leading passenger satisfaction scores.

He also hoped to see better marketing of the bus in general, as well as an overall improvement of journey times and reliability, by focusing on priority measures such as smart traffic light technology, red routes and smart ticketing.

Overall, he wanted to reverse the current "sub-optimal offer" and declining patronage, and provide a better deal "so that people see buses as their first choice and not their last choice", he said.

Go-Ahead group chief executive David Brown pointed out the link between congestion and inflation in bus fares. Road space and the quality of road networks were important, he said.

In London much of TfL's work to remove pressure on the London Underground by encouraging people to switch to bus has been undone through congestion caused by roadworks, which had forced bus passengers back on the Tube. Bus networks needed to be protected in London, he said, not simply for the wellbeing of bus services, but also to achieve policy objectives on air quality and greener journeys.

He agreed that partnership was needed to combat congestion. He hoped the Bus Services Bill would provide incentives for bus operators and local authorities to come together.

He also wanted to see greater control over speeds, as well as the introduction of more yellow lines and yellow boxes and a possible cap on roadworks.

Merseytravel, Arriva and Stagecoach are working together to improve bus services in Liverpool

Aimee Bell is a News Analyst at De Havilland.

Growing greener



The UK's leadership in adopting cleaner bus technology was recognised at the Low Carbon Champion awards

First Bus and Sir Peter Hendy were among the 2016 Low Carbon Champions at an awards presentation hosted by the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership.

Winners of the overall Grand Prix award were H2 Aberdeen, the hydrogen fuelling partnership led by Aberdeen City Council, and bio-diesel fuel supplier Argent Energy.

The awards were held in association with the Cenex LCV 2016 event, held at Millbrook Proving Ground.

Cenex LCV 2016 itself celebrated the UK's pioneering adoption of low carbon buses, using examples of the latest low emission buses to transport delegates from the parking area to the main event.

First Bus was winner of the Low Carbon Vehicle Operator of the Year award in recognition both of the high proportion of low carbon buses in its fleet but also for creating a fuel economy test. The judges, a panel of 22 senior industry figures, said: "First Bus has demonstrated innovation by creating a Millbrook Fuel Economy Test for bus manufacturers as part of its bus procurement strategy. This has set a challenge for manufacturers, pushing forward improvements in fuel efficiency in the industry as a whole. The company has spearheaded the adoption of

Argent Energy provides a public service, turning waste into low carbon energy

a range of low carbon bus technologies including hybrid, electric and hydrogen buses as well as embracing the latest Euro VI vehicles."

First Bus sparked a development race among bus manufacturers in 2012 when it introduced the annual testing programme, the results of which help First Bus decide which buses to buy. The company is investing £70m in 305 new buses this financial year, and since 2012 has invested around £300m in almost 1,600 new buses. With orders of this magnitude at stake manufacturers have treated the annual trials at Millbrook seriously and improved the fuel efficiency of buses by 30%, reducing carbon emissions by the same amount.

First Bus runs 12 electric buses in

York and two in Bristol, four hydrogen fuel cell buses in Aberdeen, and trialled a biomethane bus in Bristol.

It operates the largest fleet of DfT certified low carbon buses in the UK (around 1,000) and in 2015 announced the largest order on record in the UK for buses with Euro VI engines (355), which produce 95% less oxides of nitrogen emissions.

Sir Peter Hendy was named Outstanding Individual in Promoting Low Carbon in recognition of his role in introducing low-emission buses at Transport for London. The judges said: "Sir Peter Hendy has been a leader in the deployment of hybrid buses in London, which, following successful trials in 2008, now represent over 20% of its fleet. The early trial and demonstration of other new technology – including electric and hydrogen fuel cell buses – has also driven the bus manufacturing industry to develop new products."

Aberdeen's H2 Project shared the overall Grand Prix for outstanding achievement in low carbon transport with Argent Energy, and was winner of the Low Carbon Transport Initiative of the Year award.

Aberdeen adopted a 10-year hydrogen strategy and has introduced hydrogen powered buses, vans and cars to the city.



It has the largest fuel cell bus fleet in Europe, which has travelled more than 250,000 miles on commercial routes. The buses are performing at above 75% availability. They produce no harmful exhaust emissions and will save an estimated 1,000 tonnes of carbon emissions over four years.

The city also has the largest and most advanced hydrogen production and bus refuelling station in the UK. The 1MW plant has produced and dispensed more than 51 tonnes of hydrogen since it was commissioned in March 2015.

Hydrogen is produced and stored on site from a 1MW electrolyser, which runs on electricity supplied on a "green tariff".

The project is seeking to validate the economic case for hydrogen-powered buses in intercity duty cycles and is investigating the role electrolyzers can play as an energy-storage and grid balancing medium.

The city council is undertaking trials of hydrogen vehicles in its fleet. Two vans have been fitted with Revolve's H2ICED conversion which allows them to run on a variable blend of diesel and hydrogen – burning the hydrogen rather than using it to produce electricity, as a fuel cell does. The vans produce lower emissions than a diesel (59g/km CO₂) but are cheaper than a fuel cell van. It has also acquired electric Renault Kangoo Maxi ZEs with fuel cell range extenders which double their range.

Partners

The judges said the entry demonstrated "strong public-private partnership working and a long-term strategy aimed at embedding hydrogen vehicles in Aberdeen's transport system. The judges commended the project's commitment to adopting renewable hydrogen and efforts to disseminate the outcomes of a range of hydrogen vehicle projects."

Joint Grand Prix winner and winner of the Low Carbon Fuel initiative of the Year was Argent Energy, which manufactures 60 million litres of biodiesel from waste each year. In 2015 it began supplying a blend of fuel with a higher biodiesel content to two London bus companies. No modifications to the buses were needed. It has also supplied Stagecoach in Scotland for a number of years. The judges said: "Argent Energy has put a great deal of effort into sourcing waste feedstocks and providing a public service, turning waste into low carbon energy. The judges were impressed by the success that Argent Energy has achieved."

Toyota was the winner of the Low Carbon Car/Van Manufacturer award in recognition of its longstanding commitment to introducing low-carbon

Low-carbon buses at LCV 2016

Nine examples of low emission buses transported delegates at LCV 2016 between the event and the parking area. A number of different types were represented, including parallel diesel hybrids, a flywheel hybrid, biomethane and full electric buses.

The LowCVP said that although older technology buses had historically contributed up to two-thirds of NO_x emissions in the most densely trafficked areas, 40% of new buses sold in 2015 met the exacting official requirements to qualify as low carbon.

The UK's success in adopting new technology means that the bus is being transformed from being part of the emissions problem to becoming a component of the solutions, the LowCVP said.

This is the result of effective collaboration between technology developers and policymakers, and the development of assessment processes such as the LowCVP's Low Emission Bus Test, which shows how Euro VI emissions systems provide real-world benefits, and the introduction of government support schemes including the series of Green Bus Funds.

The buses were an ADL Enviro 400 H City; a BYD 10.8 m Pure Electric; a Scania ADL 300 (Reading Buses); a Reading Buses Plug-in CNG range extender hybrid from Magtec; Magtec's Pure EV sightseeing bus from York; Magtec's retrofit pure EV, soon to be upgraded to have a hydrogen fuel cell range extender installed; a Volvo B5HL hybrid; an Optare Solo EV; and Torotrak's Flybrid flywheel hybrid.



Opposite top: First Bus introduced an annual fuel economy trial in 2012

Above: Aberdeen has the UK's most advanced hydrogen production and refuelling station
Opposite: A low-carbon bus at Cenex LCV 2016

vehicles, particularly hybrids, which it pioneered, throughout its model range.

Reading Buses were shortlisted in this category, and Gnewt Cargo, a last mile city logistics operation that uses a 100% electric fleet, was highly commended.

Low Carbon Heavy Duty Vehicle Manufacturer was Scania GB. Bus makers Alexander Dennis and BYD Europe were respectively shortlisted and runner-up in this category.

Tevva Motors won the award for a low carbon fuel initiative by a small or medium company. It has developed and produces electric range

extended drivetrains for 7.5t trucks. An electric motor drives the wheels, powered either by batteries or a small capacity diesel engine driving a generator. The technology can be fitted to a chassis on the production line during the build process, or to an existing chassis as a retrofit package. Tevva's Predictive Range Extender Management Software can predict a day's energy use and decides when and where to use the range extender engine, so that the truck can operate in zero emission mode in city centres. It could significantly reduce emissions for existing and new vehicles.



Dodge the queues with d

More effective use of digital information could help to minimise congestion and deal with disruption, according to a new report.

Stare into the crystal ball of future transport, and images of commercial passenger space vehicles and a 600mph Hyperloop emerge from the milky glow. Yet beyond such exercises in high-tech kite flying, it's likely to be technologies that are far less showy that shape how we move from A to B over the next few years.

By making better use of existing and rapidly-emerging technology, UK travel will become faster, more convenient and more reliable, giving the travelling public greater choice and flexibility. That's the view of Ben Foulser and Giles Morgan, the authors of a white paper produced by KPMG, *Digital Traveller: How Data Technologies Could Reimagine UK Transport*.

Virtual networks, they argue, will achieve at least as much as the

conventional approach of building new roads, rail and aviation infrastructure. Society will be able to reap huge benefits in a relatively short timescale by making better use of what already exists; in particular, current digital technologies have the potential to massively improve our ability to gather, analyse, process and distribute travel information.

The KPMG paper limits its scope to concepts that could realistically be achieved within a few years, focusing on the central components of rail, road and air travel and ticketing. The key is to use existing technologies to subtly alter traditional commuter behaviour. Big data is central to this: it is just necessary to understand how to use it better.

As far as public transport is concerned, more intelligent use must be

made of the vast amount of data that multi-modal transport cards such as Oyster already collect on users' transport habits. Currently, when a delay or cancellation occurs, passengers typically respond by seeking routes around cancelled services – moving en masse to another section of Tube line in London or train platform in major city central stations. Often, the effect is to exacerbate congestion on their chosen diversion. But by using the data from each individual passenger's habitual commuting patterns, technologies could be used to suggest a bespoke alternative route to each individual – dispersing passengers across the network and on to other modes of transport, minimising the knock-on effects of service disruptions. Such information and personalised travel services could be communicated by



ing to a new paper from KPMG

congestion, but to avert it by using technology that is already commonplace: traffic light phasing could be altered, variable speed limits made more effective, and the routes suggested by satnav systems coordinated to disperse demand for road space.

For ticketing, greater data exchange, new payment systems, analytics and automation can make journey planning and booking far less fiddly and time-consuming. All that's required is for some of the latest innovations to be better understood or come to maturity. Apps such as Moovel, Vix, GTV and ByteToken already sell "mobility as a service", enabling travellers to compare journeys on different transport modes; and Google and Apple offer digital ticket "wallets" that permit people to store sets of tickets on their smartphones.

Such technology currently lacks the ability to alter or exchange tickets and routes in real time. But by making better use of advancing digital technologies and smartphone connectivity, such apps could mature into "managed service providers". MSPs would present travellers with a range of alternative journey plans, calculating and aggregating total costs – then buying all the elements of a chosen route, and uploading the tickets to the passenger's smartphone.

From this starting point, it is no great jump for managed service providers to become responsible for the entire journey as it unfolds. Live data feeds bring in real-time information from the road, rail, aviation and other transport networks, so the MSP would know immediately of any change in travel conditions. If a train is cancelled or a bus route congested, the MSP could alert the traveller and offer alternative routes – even if they've already embarked on the first leg of their journey. The traveller would then select their preference, allowing the MSP to cash in their existing tickets, purchase a new set and upload them to the traveller's phone.

Such a system would not eradicate a bugbear that all commuters complain about: the high price of short-notice travel, particularly at peak time. The inference is that, in the short term at least, such nimble footwork on the part of an MSP would be of most benefit to those on business or first-class tickets. Such travellers pay substantial premiums for a more comfortable journey, and for many, certainty of arrival time is a still more valuable commodity.

To alleviate such issues, MSPs could present the user with an estimate of their chances of arriving on time if they make a straightforward ticket purchase, along with the option to buy "insurance policies" against

delays. Offered at different price points, each policy would include a cap on the additional spending that the MSP would take on.

Such fleet-footed thinking could be employed in other areas, such as airport security queues. Airports can be caught off-guard when, for example, transport delays bring a sudden influx of late-running passengers – whereupon security queues lengthen at the very moment when many people are in a hurry, leading to missed flights.

Some airports already monitor data feeds to anticipate and pre-empt sudden changes in demand by building up intelligence on how travel conditions affect arrivals at the security desks; the white paper argues that much more can be done with existing technology. This includes combining an airport's own data feeds with route-planning searches on systems such as National Rail and RAC route planners, plus anonymised feeds from satnav providers and connected car managers. Gatwick Airport is already running a trial programme monitoring delays on the rail and roads networks. Airports could soon have the ability to continually predict demand at the security gates.

In the white paper, KPMG outlines two business journeys, both from Essex to Edinburgh: one using today's technology, the second set five years hence. This imaginary scenario attempts to explore how using some of the approaches outlined in this article could make the difference between arriving for an appointment on time and relaxed, or late and stressed.

To see the full report, including the reimagined journeys, and to provide feedback or your own vision of how transport technology may unfold, visit: <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmg/pdf/2016/07/digital-traveller.PDF>

Managed service providers would present travellers with a range of journey plans, calculating total costs



the wi-fi that is becoming ubiquitous on many forms of public transport.

A similar approach could be applied to road transport, to reduce the phenomenon of long lines of motorists obediently following their satnav off a motorway or around a city to avoid a traffic jam – only to collectively create another snarl-up of their own. KPMG's white paper argues that, while satnav and other programmable navigation devices will underpin more nuanced responses, much more intelligent use of them is required. "Better use of mobile phone network data and the rise in connected cars – which share information in real time – are fast increasing the data available on motorists' locations and destinations," the document says.

By using this data, road managers may be able not only to predict



Dyan Crowther



Sir Howard Bernstein



Kevin Hargreaves



Simon Pringle

Crowther named as new High Speed 1 chief executive

High Speed 1 has appointed **Dyan Crowther** as its new chief executive.

Ms Crowther will join from Go-via Thameslink, where she held the position of chief operating officer. She replaces Nicola Shaw, who left HS1 in May. It is anticipated that Ms Crowther will formally join the business in January.

She has significant sector experience spanning 30 years, including senior roles at Network Rail, British Rail and Railtrack.

Ms Crowther commented: "I am delighted to be taking on this role. High Speed 1 has transformed rail travel through Kent and to the continent. Its growth and performance in the last nine years are testament to its success and I look forward to leading the business and helping continue this success for customers and passengers alike."

Sir Howard Bernstein will retire as chief executive of Manchester City Council next spring. He joined the council as a junior clerk in 1971 and has been in the top job since 1998.

He has played a central role in the regeneration and economic growth of the city, including serving from 1996-99 as the chief executive of Manchester Millennium, which oversaw the transformation of the city centre in the aftermath of the 1996 IRA bombing. Since then the city has experienced unprecedented growth and investment. He was also instrumental in securing Manchester's hosting of the 2002 Commonwealth Games.

As clerk to the Transport for Greater Manchester Committee and its predecessor bodies he played a leading role in the introduction and expansion of the Metrolink tram network. He was involved in the establishment of Manchester Airport as a plc in the mid 1980s and the group's continuing expansion.

Sir Howard played a key role in developing collaborative working relationships between the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities, which culminated with the establishment of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in 2011, the development of the Northern Powerhouse initiative and a series of historic devolution agreements.

Sir Richard Leese, leader of Manchester City Council, said: "Sir Howard is widely recognised as one of the great local government chief executives. Having someone of his talent, vision and drive dedicate his career to the city has been an undoubted plus for Manchester."

Transport for Greater Manchester has appointed the UK's first key route network manager, with a brief to oversee the strategic development and operational performance of the region's major road network.

Kevin Hargreaves will be responsible for managing the development and implementation of strategies and programmes for 600km of roads over 10 local authority districts, representing 7% of Greater Manchester roads and carrying 64% of A and B

- **Sir Howard Bernstein to retire**
- **Kevin Hargreaves named TfGM key route manager**
- **Alstom appoints Henrik Anderberg as regional MD**
- **Simon Pringle to lead at Steer Davies Gleave**

road traffic. He will contribute to the improvement of KRN operational performance, working in partnership with Highways England and local authorities, assisting with the management of scheduled and unplanned events and incidents and monitoring performance targets.

The role also involves management of TfGM's highways response to planning applications that affect the network and coordination of inventory and investment plans.

Mr Hargreaves joins TfGM from Wigan Council.

Alstom has appointed **Henrik Anderberg** as managing director for regional and intercity at Alstom UK & Ireland. He was previously director for HS2 and replaces Rob Whyte, who takes over as MD for Alstom in the Nordics. Mr Anderberg will continue to be responsible for HS2.

He will oversee the maintenance of the Virgin fleet of Pendolino trains and the introduction of Alstom's TrainScanner technology. He will also be in charge of bids for new rolling stock contracts for both conventional and high speed lines

in the UK, including HS2.

Steer Davies Gleave has announced the appointment of **Simon Pringle** to lead its integrated economic development practice. He joins as a director based in north-west England working in the UK and Europe.

He has more than 20 years' experience of appraisal, evaluation, economic impact assessment, strategy development and process consultancy. At Steer Davies Gleave, he will be responsible for developing the firm's wider economic development practice, taking its existing expertise in transport and movement into adjacent policy areas such as enterprise, knowledge, skills and governance.

Mr Pringle was previously a director and managing director at consultancy SQW.

WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff has appointed three new technical directors. **Carol Stitchman** has joined as rail technical director from Network Rail, based in Birmingham. She will strengthen the consultancy's expertise in major station projects.

A chartered architect by background with more than 32 years' experience, Ms Stitchman was Network Rail's head of design for the £780m redevelopment of Birmingham New Street station.

Stephen Pottle joins as technical director in the highways and bridges team, based in Cambridge, from TfL.

Andy Digweed has been appointed technical director in the development team.



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