

STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

Key stakeholder perceptions of *pteg* and its effectiveness in influencing and affecting public policy



“ I am very impressed with the influence and breadth of engagement that pteg commands with such a small staff team. Pteg's close relationship with wider local government bodies is very welcome, strengthening the voice of local government as a whole which I believe has resulted in effective lobbying on both sides.

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Respondent

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August 2008

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INTRODUCTION

In June Connect were commissioned by *pteg* to undertake a survey of key parliamentarians and stakeholders to ascertain their views on *pteg* and its effectiveness in campaigning around the Local Transport Bill, and in wider public transport debates.

The survey was conducted during July 2008 with selected stakeholders invited to complete a short online survey. Respondents were asked to rate *pteg*'s effectiveness across a number of criteria, including general awareness of the organisation, its campaigning and lobbying, and articulation on relevant policy areas.

There was a good response rate to the survey with 35.5 per cent of stakeholders completing the survey, including 24 per cent of *pteg* MPs.

The majority of respondents found *pteg*'s briefings, advice, and support useful. They answered in favour of the notion that *pteg* is an effective advocate for the city regions on public transport issues. The survey also found that the vast majority of those surveyed believed that in recent years *pteg* has become more influential in the debate on urban transport policy.

The comments section also contained practical advice for *pteg*'s future engagement with parliamentarians and stakeholders.

METHODOLOGY

Connect were commissioned by *pteg* in June 2008 to oversee and conduct a survey of key stakeholders and parliamentarians to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the Support Unit.

The objectives of the survey were to test stakeholder opinions across a number of criteria and issues. The survey asked respondents to rate *pteg*'s effectiveness as an organisation, its campaigning and lobbying, and articulation on public transport debates. The survey specifically looked at the political support provided to MPs and other stakeholders on the Local Transport Bill which started its passage through Parliament in late 2007.

The survey was conducted during July 2008 with selected stakeholders invited to complete a short online survey. The stakeholders were identified jointly between Connect and *pteg* and represented a broad cross-section of parliamentarians relation organisations, transport groups, industry representatives, local government, think tanks and the media, all of whom should have had some previous contact or interaction with *pteg* or its constituent PTE members.

The recipients were contacted by email and invited to participate in the survey, which ran from the 1st July to 1st August 2008. As an incentive to complete the survey *pteg* offered a £50 cheque to each of two recipients drawn at random, to be presented to a charity of the winners' choice.

There was a good response rate to the survey with an overall return rate of 31 per cent, representing 46 individual replies from parliamentarians, transport bodies, local government and the media, including 14 MPs associated with the Local Transport Bill.

RESPONSES AND RESULTS OF THE STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

AWARENESS OF PTEG

All respondents to the survey indicated that they had a strong awareness of *pteg* and its policy concerns (Question 1). The results demonstrate a clear awareness of *pteg* as a distinct body, although a small number of respondents appeared to blur the distinction between *pteg* and individual PTEs.

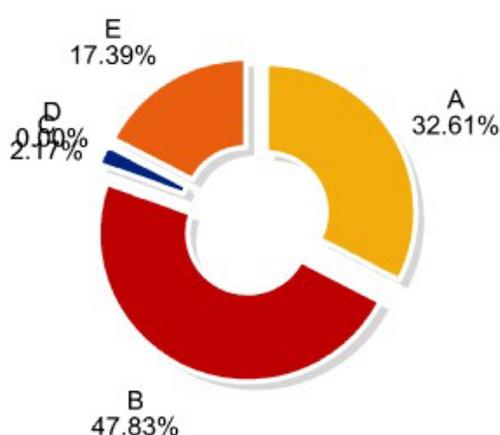
The majority of respondents also strongly agreed with the statement that *pteg* has become more effective in promoting the interests and concerns of the city regions on transport over the last five years (Question 2). In total 40 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that *pteg* had become more effective, although 6 respondents cited that they did not know whether the statement was true or not.

Unsurprisingly, the most positive response came from MPs who had been closely associated with *pteg* during the passage of the Local Transport Bill and other public transport organisations, demonstrating the positive benefits of establishing effective relationships with key stakeholders.

IMPACT OF PTEG ON THE LOCAL TRANSPORT BILL

The main area of legislative and policy activity for *pteg* during the last 18 months has been the development and passage of the Local Transport Bill. *Pteg* received a positive endorsement for its work during this period, with 80 per cent of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that *pteg* had been effective during the passage of the LTB (Question 3).

***Pteg* has been effective in promoting the concerns of the city-regions during the passage of the LTB? (Question3).**



A – Strongly agree (15); B – Agree (22); C – Disagree (1); D – Strongly disagree (0); E – Don't know (8).

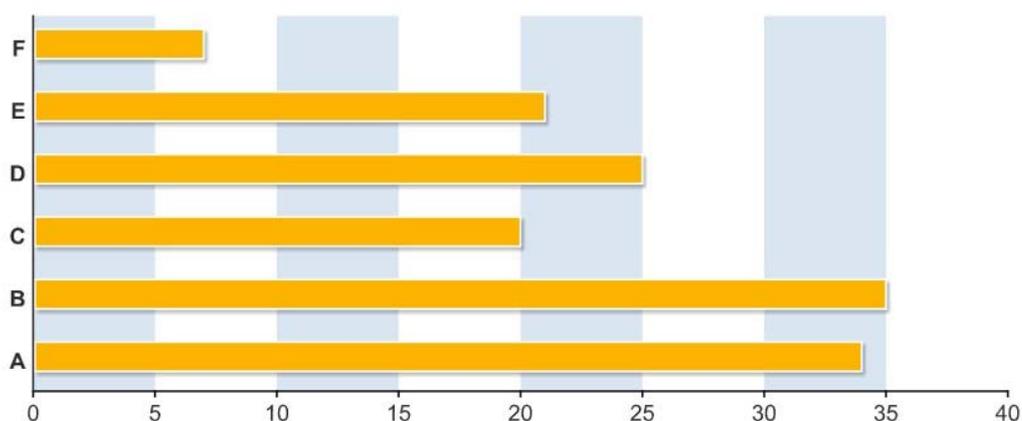
All of the parliamentarians who responded either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement about the LTB. The one disagreement came from a Member of Parliament, who, from their comments appeared to confuse the overall role of *pteg* with that of their own PTE area; they went onto comment about the: *“...lack of political decisiveness in getting funding for transport projects for our area eg over road pricing resulting in our again playing second fiddle to Manchester.”*

The eight respondents who answered ‘don't know’ to question three were generally stakeholders outside of the parliamentary or legislative sphere.

PTEG COMMUNICATIONS – USEFULNESS & METHODS

The survey also asked respondents about the nature and effectiveness of *pteg*'s communications with stakeholders. The most positive response about communications was from parliamentarians, all of whom had received an update and most of whom had attended a meeting organised about the LTB. This high level of response from MPs is unsurprising as much of *pteg*'s effort during the last year has been on the legislative development of the LTB.

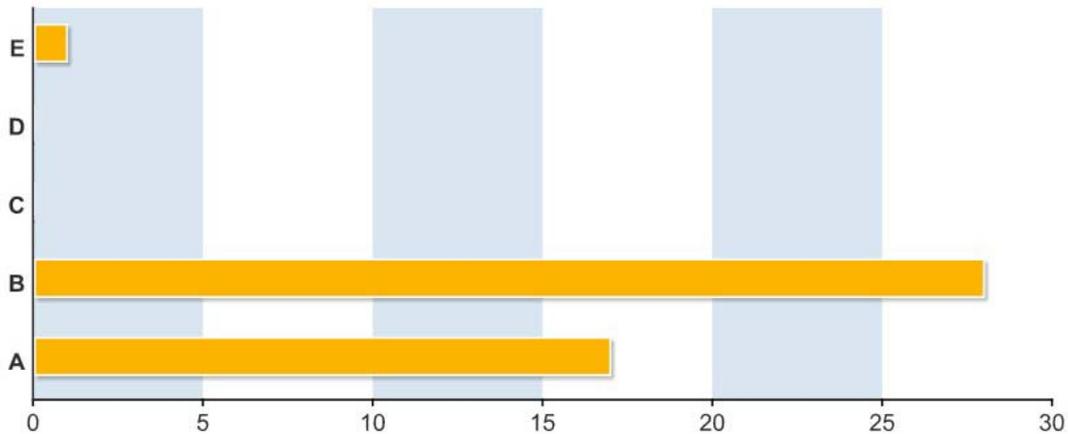
Have you had contact with or information from *pteg* during the last twelve months in any of the following forms? (Question 4).



A – Hard copy/briefing (34); B – Email update/press release (35); C - Visited website (20); D – Attended a *pteg* organised meeting (25); E – Met for a briefing (21); F – Other (7)

When asked about the usefulness of information and briefings, there was a strong endorsement of *pteg* with 45 – out of 46 – respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.

The briefings and information I receive from *pteg* are helpful in my work (Question 5).



A – Strongly agree (17); B – Agree (28); C – Disagree (0); D – Strong disagree (0); E – I have not received any briefings or information from *pteg* (1)

Respondents were also asked an open question about how *pteg* could improve the way it communicates with stakeholders. The comments are summarised below:

How could *pteg* improve the way it communicates with stakeholders, including the briefings, website, email updates and other materials it produces? (Question 8).

Quality and content of information

A little more detailed factual information and more diagrams in briefings slightly less wordy (trade union)

More use of email and the website (journalist)

Quality of materials is great, combination of short updates and more substantial reports (transport operator)

More pragmatic with government, more focussed in the argument for light rail (transport body)

Its communication with stakeholders is excellent (transport body)

Perhaps more regular localised briefings? I represent the North West of England (parliamentarian)

Further email updates and timetables of policy consultations / opportunities to influence (think tank/local government)

It's already first class but perhaps could make the written briefings more distinctive eg layout, colour etc (think tank/local government)

The website is sometimes a bit out of date and difficult to find relevant briefings. In all other areas, communication is extremely effective.

For an academic, publication of in depth reports on the web is particularly useful. **Pteg** is already very good in this respect but I am not sure if there is more material that could be made available (academic)

Events and activities

More face to face interaction (MP)

More notice of meetings/ briefings (MP)

More regular engagement with key stakeholder groups (transport group)

More on good practice by PTEs themselves, and more engagement with PTA councillors, if allowed – (transport body)

Pteg should link in to the wider governance agenda affecting other English policy debates, including skills, health, policing - as sub-regional coordination (eg MAAs) are no longer single-issue based (think tank)

Hold seminars/briefing meetings with others involved in urban planning and development - eg RTPI, RICS (Policy specialist)

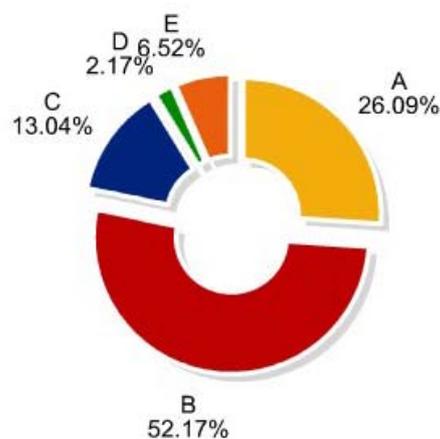
Maybe an annual conference would help strengthen the network (transport operator)

Could do more specific examples of how a city-regional approach would improve transport in cities like Manchester, Leeds, etc (think tank/local government)

PTEG'S ROLE IN THE WIDER CITY-REGIONAL DEBATE

Respondents were asked about *pteg*'s place and role in the wider city-regional debate. The overwhelming majority of respondents responded positively to this question and agreed that *pteg* had become more influential in the debate on urban transport policy (question 6). There was, however, a lower level of responses on this issue, with 13 people remaining neutral and 3 not answering the question.

In recent years *pteg* has become more influential in the debate on urban transport policy (question 6).

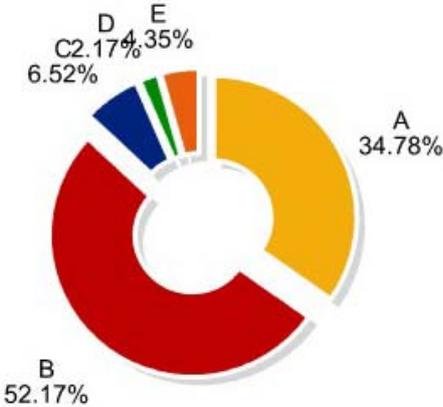


A – Strongly agree (12); B – Agree (24); C – Neither agree or disagree (6); D – Disagree (6); E – Don't know (3).

Overall, *pteg* MPs either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that *pteg* has become more influential. However, several stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed; and one disagreed with the statement.

A significant majority of respondents also agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that *pteg* is an effective advocate for the city regions on public transport issues (question 7). Again, only one respondent disagreed with the statement – a consistent response across the survey – and two more replied that they did not know on the statement. This shows an overall recognition for the policy role and intervention of *pteg* on wider transport and city regional issues.

Pteg is an effective advocate for the city regions on public transport issues (question 7).



A – strongly agree (16); B – agree (24); C – neither agree nor disagree (3); D – disagree (1); E – don’t know (2).

OTHER COMMENTS ABOUT PTEG AND ITS WORK

The final question of the survey asked respondents to list any additional comments about *pteg* and its wider work. These comments varied from short, quick endorsements (and 'thank you') of the organisation through to more detailed comments.

Overall the comments fit around three broad categories: organisational replies; suggestions for improvements; and future subject areas.

Organisational replies

Overall very good, and saves me a lot of digging (trade union)

More outreach beyond usual suspects required (MP)

pteg are always friendly and cooperative and are a good source of info re English transport policy (think tank/local government)

Lack of political decisiveness in getting funding for transport projects for our area e.g. over road pricing resulting in our again playing second fiddle to Manchester (MP)

In PR terms a good organisation. I'd like to see press releases put in the website more regularly (journalist)

Keep up the good work (transport body)

I am very impressed with the influence and breadth of engagement that *pteg* commands with such a small staff team. *Pteg's* close relationship with wider local government bodies is very welcome, strengthening the voice of local government as a whole which I believe has resulted in effective lobbying on both sides (think tank/local government)

Only that we need to remember that not all city regions are covered by PTEs, so there are other views! (think tank/local government)

Of a very high standard (journalist)

Improved immensely in last 12 months. Ivan Henderson's nouse has been a useful addition (MP)

An excellent organisation for those involved with transport issues (Parliamentarian)

Pteg has a difficult role in balancing the need to represent the interests of its members with the need to back up its arguments with objective evidence. Generally it achieves this but there is a need to ensure that this balance is maintained (academic)

Pteg's work is very useful to us. The website in particular is a very good resource (transport body)

Clearly **Pteg** and the PTEs are organisations with political masters, and this influences their stance, e.g. on re-regulation of buses. The confrontational relationship in some PTE areas with bus operators has arguably made progress on improvements for passengers difficult (regional body)

Improvements

It would be useful if **Pteg** engaged with a wider range of stakeholders in the voluntary and social enterprise sector and supported the role they can play as elements of an integrated transport network (transport body)

They need to cast their support net wider in specific areas (transport operator)

Does a lot - provides a focus for non-London issues; that said, **pteg** should strengthen its links with bodies like ATOC who are very London-centric (transport operator)

Future subject areas

Mainly extremely positive. Some additional work to examine links between transport and other strategic themes within the city region context would be useful and we would be prepared to partner on this (think tank/local government)

Need to get out of the transport box more - there is a bigger picture. For example the economic benefits of urban agglomeration depend critically on correcting the massive backlog of high quality public transport everywhere except London. This should be a national campaigning issue (policy specialist)

Eventually **pteg** need to benchmark against each other and publish results! It can appear a bit homogeneous 'happy clappy' at times (transport body)

The Local Transport Bill/Act is clearly a crucial issue. One of the issues with city regions is that there is no single advocate/responsible body for transport, so it is not clear who/what is accountable, and in some cases there can be mixed messages. The LTB when enacted should hopefully provide clarity (regional body).

CONCLUSION

The survey brings together a snapshot of opinion from a broad range of stakeholders across the transport, policy and political sectors. Overall, it presents a very positive picture for the **pteg** and the Support Unit as it reaches its fifth anniversary.

There is widespread knowledge of **pteg** and its issues amongst a core of stakeholders from the transport and local government environments. It also presents a high degree of commitment and satisfaction from key **pteg** MPs – who present a clear picture of the support they have received during the passage of the LTB and recognition for the role of **pteg** as an advocate for its issues.

The survey does not deal with the wider set of parliamentarians or stakeholders many of whom may know of the importance of public transport but have less awareness of **pteg**.

The survey also indicates a number of areas that **pteg** may wish to consider for future improvement or strengthening its policy portfolio, including examining the wider link between transport, infrastructure and other strategic city-regional themes and ensuring the effective implementation of the Local Transport Bill.

APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF RESPONDENTS

Overall return rate – 31% return rate

Members of Parliament (14) – 24% return rate

Andrew Gwynne MP
Angela Smith MP
John Pugh MP
Lynne Jones MP
Clive Betts MP
David Chaytor MP
Neil Turner MP
David Clelland MP
Peter Kilfoyle MP
Kerry McCarthy MP
Jeff Ennis MP
Fraser Kemp MP
Iain Stewart MP
Paul Truswell MP

Other stakeholders (32) – 35.5% return rate

Elected Politicians

Lord Richard Rosser
Brian Simpson MEP

Think Tanks/Policy bodies

Dermot Finch – Centre for Cities
Chris Leslie – NLGN
Colin Howden – Transform Scotland
John Jarvis – Yorkshire Forward/Northern Way
Jonathan Brown – Yorkshire Forward
Caroline Green - LGA
Chris Murray - CoreCities

Journalists

Christian Wolmar
Alan Millar, Editor Buses
Mark Smulian
Peter Plisner
Alan Whitehouse
Meera Rambissoon

Trade Unions

Mike Jeram – UNISON
Manuel Cortes – TSSA
Charles King – GMB

Transport Groups

Anthony Smith – PassengerFocus
Stephen Joseph – Campaign for Better Transport
Cat Hobbs – Campaign for Better Transport
Emma Antrobus – North West Rail Campaign
Jonathan Murray – Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership

Transport Operators

Cameron Jones – NedRail
James Harkins – Light Rail UK
Paul Salveson – Northern Rail
David Mallender - First

Other

Cllr Helen Holland – Leader, Bristol City Council
Alan Wenban-Smith – Consultant
John Stewart
Ewan Jones
Prof Chris Nash