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TRANSPORT  
GROUP**

# **A NEW ERA FOR URBAN TRANSPORT**

pteg becomes the Urban Transport Group



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# BUILDING ON SUCCESS

**I** am delighted to provide the foreword to this publication marking the newly-named Urban Transport Group. Almost five decades have passed since Parliament voted for the 1968 Transport Act which led to the creation of the Passenger Transport Executives. It is a mark of the Passenger Transport Executives' success in that time that Transport for London has now joined the Urban Transport Group as a full member. The group's seven strategic transport bodies will serve upwards of 20 million people - an astonishing number that will no doubt grow still further.

One of the most admirable goals of the Urban Transport Group is the pooling of knowledge and experience among members. There are great differences between the group's seven strategic transport bodies, but there are even greater similarities, including shared challenges and opportunities. They include how to meet ever-growing demand for transport, respond to greater urban density, tackle pollution and deliver greater safety. The six longest-standing members of the group have a vast wealth of experience that will be readily available to Transport for London and of great benefit to London's passengers. Likewise, Transport for London is a world-leading pioneer in urban transport solutions, and will be

able to share its experience on smart ticketing, delivering investment and, in light of the government's Buses Bill, contracting for bus services.

The Buses Bill is a reminder of how in many ways transport policy has come full circle. The visionary principles of the Transport Act - in which responsibility for local transport is handed to regional authorities - is at the forefront of political thinking today. Devolution of power and accountability to local areas, bus franchising and better partnership working, smart ticketing, the drive for greater efficiency and a fresh recognition of the value of investing in infrastructure: I hold these ideas with greater conviction because of how the PTEs have already shaped local transport for the better.

I have no doubt that under its new name and with an increased membership, the Urban Transport Group will continue to help shape our transport. For everyone who travels on networks managed by Urban Transport Group members, that will come as very good news.

*Andrew Jones MP,  
Parliamentary Under  
Secretary of State,  
Department for Transport*



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# THE VOICE OF UK URBAN TRANSPORT

If you want to invest in cities, invest in transport, says Dr Jon Lamonte, chair of the Urban Transport Group

**T**his month's launch of the Urban Transport Group represents more than a rebrand of pteg (the Passenger Transport Executive Group). It demonstrates the significance of changes over the past five years in transport responsibilities and governance in the UK's major city regions. During that time the core task of the metropolitan transport authorities has expanded from developing passenger transport services to creating holistic urban and regional transport systems which are at the heart of a wider agenda to drive economic growth and higher quality of life.

This shift could be seen in the formation of the country's first Combined Authority in Greater Manchester in 2011 and its City Deal the following year, marking an initial step towards the government's current 'devolution revolution'. The changes included the creation of a new regional transport body. Greater Manchester PTE became Transport for Greater Manchester with a remit beyond its traditional focus on bus and rail.

"We took on highways powers, urban traffic control, and highways forecasting analysis," recalls Dr Jon Lamonte, chief executive of TfGM and chairman of the Urban Transport Group. Similar developments followed in other city regions. "A feature of every devolution City Deal since then has been some form of strategic highways function," Lamonte points out.

At the same time, promotion and funding of walking and cycling and its integration with public transport became an increasingly important priority for Combined Authorities and PTEs, partly due to greater recognition of the associated health benefits. Lamonte now views it as part of the day job for city regions.

Overall he says metropolitan transport authorities have changed beyond recognition compared to the PTEs of five years ago. "It's shifted from public transport to mobility, focusing on all modes of



**Jon Lamonte, chair of the Urban Transport Group and chief executive of TfGM**

transport and how we contribute to the success of our city regions, whether that be Sheffield, Newcastle or anywhere else."

Increasingly, Lamonte says freight, logistics and air quality are also becoming part of the city region transport authorities' core activities and links with new bodies such as Transport for the North have given the shift a trans-regional perspective - for example, Merseytravel is taking the lead on freight policy across the north. This aspect will gain momentum next year when Rail North receives joint contract management powers over the new Northern and TransPennine franchises.

The transition pteg to the



**A Metrolink tram calls at Manchester city centre's new Exchange Square tram stop**

Urban Transport Group reflects this evolution in the nature and role of the city region transport bodies. The intention is to provide a platform to promote and advocate investment in urban transport services, operation and infrastructure, influence decisions on the structure of the transport industry and provide domestic and international networking and knowledge sharing opportunities.

"I think there is consensus now about the power of investing in cities," says Lamonte. "Around 60% of people live in cities, it's where the jobs are, it's where most of the economic growth is going to be created. So there's a powerful argument that if you want a successful UK PLC, invest in cities and if you want to invest in cities, invest in transport. So having one body that represents the single voice of the UK in urban transport makes a lot of sense."

Lamonte views pteg's work over the past decade as a strong basis to build on. "pteg had a very strong reputation, especially for research and advocacy," he says. "It's well known in the [Department for

Transport] and nationally for positions it's taken - like the importance of buses and making the case for active travel and I like to think it has been quite influential in retention of Bus Service Operators Grant."

Under the broader Urban Transport Group umbrella, he sees opportunities to go further in advocating city regions' position through broadening membership and creating stronger connections with other organisations.

Domestically, he anticipates that the Urban Transport Group will provide a collective means of engaging and working with campaign groups such as Greener Journeys, Campaign for Better Transport and Sustrans. Internationally, he sees opportunities to draw on global experience, for example through the Urban Transport Group's membership of UITP, the international association of public transport. Lamonte is currently leading UITP's position on the links between public transport and health, and is enthusiastic about the different perspectives that experience provides (see panel).



Specific areas of advocacy will include continuing work undertaken by pteg to lobby government for city regions to gain effective powers to franchise bus services. Lamonte is looking forward to the forthcoming Buses Bill containing provisions for city regions to determine the right solution for their area rather than having to go through the current “difficult and arduous” Quality Contract procedure if they view regulation as the answer.

“There is no doubt one size does not fit all and there will be different places with slightly different aims but there is a consensus that local conditions require local determination,” he says ... “I think the strong continued commitment to deliver on that promise from this government is in part down to us making that case.”

A key issue related to franchising the Urban Transport Group will be taking forward is ensuring secure long term funding for bus services.

“We have also made the strong case that in order to make [franchising] work we need a long term funding solution,” Lamonte

says ... “we have made the point that a different funding mechanism may be required but that’s not quite where we have got to.”

Further lobbying positions will include making the case, during the current Shaw review, for the boundaries of Network Rail’s routes to be aligned with the boundaries of emerging regional bodies such as Transport for the North and Midlands Connect. “I think there is a strong role for the Urban Transport Group to contribute around this whole devolution agenda, where it makes sense, where it doesn’t and supporting metropolitan authorities in what they want to do,” Lamonte says.

Looking to the future, Lamonte is optimistic that the right transport structures and policy debates are emerging at national, regional and subregional levels.

“I think it’s the most exciting time in transport for decades,” he says. “We have new rail franchises that are transformational in their specification, whereas only 10-12 years ago we were planning for decline. We have got a programme of change in bus, which, however that develops, is exciting, and offers opportunities and no doubt some problems to overcome along the way. We’ve got a longer term road investment strategy and some feasibility studies that are starting to address the really long term problems like the TransPennine Tunnel, whereas we were looking at year-to-year change.

“So across the board we are seeing massive new investment. We have got debates going on in airports, we have got huge investment in ports. So transport in the round is really going places and actually the emphasis that is now coming through on climate change, on health, on active travel, the cycling revolution are all amazing strides from where we were.

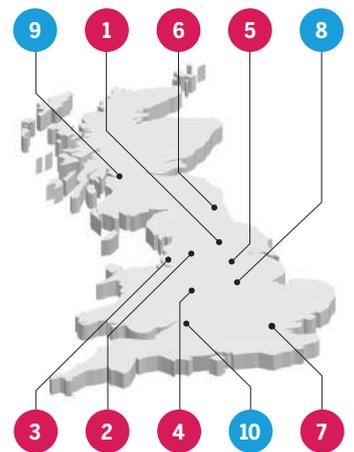
“And people recognise that none of it is about transport being an end in itself, it’s absolutely about the economic growth of the country and making people’s lives better. With that as a goal you can’t really go wrong.” ■

## URBAN TRANSPORT GROUP EXPANSION

The launch of the Urban Transport Group was marked by Transport for London becoming a full member alongside the five metropolitan areas in the north of England and Centro in the West Midlands. TfL was an associate member of pteg.

Urban Transport Group chair Dr Jon Lamonte anticipates that the broader remit and branding of the group compared to pteg will enable membership to be expanded. “We have already had interest from others that may want to consider full membership and we would be delighted to see that,” he says.

Lamonte’s expectation is that a broader membership would not only provide benefits for individual city regions but enable the Urban Transport Group to state its positions more powerfully. “I think the real benefit is that collectively we can argue for the power of cities, and we can do an awful lot more the more city regions we join up,” he says. “That’s where we really can make a difference for metropolitan areas.”



- Urban Transport Group full members:**
- 1 West Yorkshire Combined Authority
  - 2 Transport for Greater Manchester
  - 3 Merseytravel
  - 4 Centro
  - 5 South Yorkshire PTE
  - 6 North East Combined Authority
  - 7 Transport for London
- Associate members:**
- 8 Nottingham City Council
  - 9 Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
  - 10 West of England Local Authorities



Liverpool One Bus Station (Credit: villorejo/Shutterstock.com)

## URBAN TRANSPORT GROUP TO OFFER ONE-STOP KNOWLEDGE PORTAL

One of the Urban Transport Group’s core objectives is to provide a platform for knowledge sharing, both domestic and international. The group’s chair, Jon Lamonte, says membership of UITP has provided perspectives that could potentially be transferred to the UK, in terms of service quality, meeting wider social and environmental objectives and efficient use of funding at a time of significant reductions in central government grants.

“I think the emphasis some of our European partners are placing on energy efficiency in their metro and tram networks with regenerative braking is quite powerful and their attitude to collaborative procurement is perhaps something we should think about,” he says. He sees particular potential for reducing costs through authorities collaborating to procure standardised, rather than bespoke, products and services.

He adds that Transport for London’s membership of the Urban Transport Group could be especially relevant in informing expansion of smart ticketing in city regions, and Transport for the North’s agenda for a smart ticketing scheme covering the whole of the north. He also envisages TfL’s work in creating innovative means of financing schemes such as Crossrail and the Northern Line extension could potentially be adopted by other city regions.





# ‘I’M PROUD OF WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED’

**Jonathan Bray has steered pteg’s Support Unit and looks forward to guiding the organisation into a new era as the Urban Transport Group**

**P**teg’s Support Unit was a perfect fit for Jonathan Bray. With a background in transport policy and campaigning, the hallmark of his career has been a steadfast commitment to sustainable and equitable transport.

Bray was one of the founders and co-ordinators of the campaign against the national road programme in the early nineties and later led the Save our Railways campaign against rail privatisation.

Bray had always believed that Britain’s passenger transport executives were doing a lot of good work, but were not getting the recognition they deserved. So, in 2003, when the opportunity arose to join pteg’s newly-established Support Unit, based in Leeds, it seemed like a role that was tailor-made for him. He has now been there for 12 years, taking on the role of Director in 2008.

“I’m really proud of what we’ve achieved as a network and also with the team here given that we’re relatively small,” he says. “We’ve achieved what was originally set out for us, which was to ensure that the city regions punch their weight and that people have a much better understanding of the challenges that the city regions face and the importance of getting integrated, quality public transport.”

The pteg network itself does three things.

The first role is thought leadership. pteg set the agendas for a wide range of debates ranging from urban

freight to ‘Total Transport’ (a name invented by pteg to echo the ‘Total Football’ tactical theory pioneered by the Dutch in the sixties and seventies), which is about sharing resources to improve common goals across healthcare, education and social services transport.

The second role is offering a professional network to share good practice and to prevent “wheel reinvention”. By pooling resources in areas such as passenger surveys and concessionary fares expertise, Bray believes that pteg has saved members a sum much greater than they spend on membership.

The third role is making the case. Here, for example, big strides have been made on rail devolution, for which pteg has consistently campaigned. The Merseyrail Electrics franchise was one of the first to transfer to local control, the new Northern and TransPennine Express franchises are the most recent.

pteg members, with the help of their Support Unit, have made the case for buses too and Bray believes there has been progress here, despite deregulation leaving many of the levers outside their control.

“I think as a network we’ve been very effective in dragging the buses from the margins of the transport debate and much closer to the centre, and raising the game of the [bus] industry in our city regions,” he says. “The kind of things they’re doing now, the kind of things they’re offering, were nowhere near the bargaining table when we started.”

A new chapter has now begun. pteg has become the Urban Transport Group, an evolution that reflects what Bray believes is the dawn of a new era for urban transport. ➤

## INTERVIEW

He has observed an important shift in thinking in Whitehall – for the first time he believes that the value of modern, London-style, integrated transport networks is recognised. And this shift in thinking has come at a time when there is an unstoppable momentum towards further devolution of powers.

“People can see the link between London’s runaway success and growth and the fact that there is a lot of investment going in to ensure that it has a quality public transport system,” he says.

The launch of the Urban Transport Group sees Transport for London come on board as a full member (it was an associate member of pteg). There’s clearly much that this vast and globally respected organisation can offer the group, but Bray says it will be a two-way street in terms of exchanging good practice and expertise.

Other potential new members are also welcome to join an organisation that will occupy the urban transport policy space for the UK, and act as a portal between the UK and both Europe and the wider world. The Urban Transport Group will work closely with UITP, the Brussels-based international association of public transport, which Bray says has changed dramatically in a relatively short space of time to become a much more focussed organisation. It will raise issues that are important to the UK and will influence EU policy, and assist with knowledge sharing.

There is much experience that UK cities can draw upon. Bray himself has been impressed by the approach taken to transport in some Dutch cities, where there has been a strong emphasis placed on active travel (walking and cycling) and seamless integration between modes.



## A SEASONED CAMPAIGNER

“I don’t like easy campaigns, in a way,” Jonathan Bray, Director of the Urban Transport Group, explains.

“I don’t like campaigns where you’ve just got to say exactly what everyone else is saying. I prefer it where there’s something that I think is the right thing to do but it needs an effective strategy to make the case and change the weather.”

Transport has offered Bray a variety of different campaigns that have each fulfilled this brief over the past three decades, including campaigns against the ‘Roads to Prosperity’ national road building programme, cuts to public transport and rail privatisation. But why transport?

“I did have a more geeky interest in transport I suppose as I was growing up, in railways in particular,” he admits, “but also I’ve always had a side of me that’s been motivated by trying to change things that I see as wrong or stupid or greedy, or where there’s a kind of lazy, outdated group-think.”

Growing up in Yeadon, close to Leeds-Bradford Airport, Bray recalls his frustration at the limited bus service timetable, especially in the evenings. He has memories of some very tortuous bus journeys.



Jonathan Bray previously campaigned for ALARM UK and Save our Railways

And even when he moved to London in the mid-eighties to study Geography at the London School of Economics it seemed like public transport was under-valued. It was a time when public transport was being run down in the capital, there was the King’s Cross fire and there was even talk of shutting Underground stations (hard to believe now).

“It seemed like public transport wasn’t seen as the future, it was seen as the past,” he says ... “Things were at a pretty low ebb.”

Looking more widely, the railways also seemed to be in deep trouble, with the Serpell report and turbulent

industrial relations threatening their existence.

Bray decided to do something about it. He got involved in Lambeth Public Transport Group where he worked alongside John Stewart, who now chairs the anti-Heathrow HACAN campaign.

The Lambeth group was about trying to improve public transport but he also got involved in some of the anti-roads campaigns of the era, including proposals to dust off plans from the seventies and turn London’s South Circular into a proper trunk route dual carriageway. The schemes were dropped and public transport was the beneficiary because, as his colleague John Stewart had foreseen, if the road schemes were halted then other forms of new transport capacity would have to be provided.

Later, with ALARM UK, Bray also played a part in getting the national roads programme curtailed.

“Again that helped in a big paradigm shift,” says Bray, “a recognition that you could no longer go down this road lobby view or seventies view that the main purpose of transport policy was to provide capacity for traffic and that public transport was a kind of residual service. I think that was a huge victory which hasn’t been reversed.”

His next campaign was not so

successful, however. As campaign director for Save our Railways, Bray took centre stage in a high profile campaign against rail privatisation. It was of course in the days before the internet and social media, and even before mobile phones, but the shoestring campaign generated a lot of media coverage.

Rail privatisation went ahead, leaving Bray to muse on how different things might have been if the government had decided to privatise the Post Office first, instead of the railways.

However, he believes that Save our Railways helped to emphasise to politicians the importance of rail to the media, and ensured that they backed the industry with funds.

“I think it demonstrated how interested the media are in rail and how errors such as the South West Trains driver shortage - not that famous now but it was at the time - will be punished politically.”

## THE URBAN TRANSPORT GROUP TEAM

- Jonathan Bray, Director
- Pedro Abrantes, Senior Economist
- Rebecca Fuller, Policy and Research Manager
- Saila Acton, Office Manager
- Tom Ellerton, Researcher



Nexus in Tyne & Wear has shown that this is a difficult route to take. The forthcoming Buses Bill is intended to offer a simpler process for franchising, and he is confident that it will and that franchising will soon become a reality in UK cities.

The Urban Transport Group will also be able to take a broader view. Bray believes the new group will have the capacity to tackle issues that have perhaps previously been placed in the “too difficult” box, such as air quality, taxis and highways.

“There’s a sense that as technology speeds up, so does the speed with which all cities need to find ways of responding to these changes, he says. The exponential expansion of the Uber taxi solution, he says, is the classic example of how things can change very quickly.

He adds: “Given the scale of these challenges and the resources available, it’s much better to do that collectively than it is for each city region, under all the pressures they are, to try and address these changes individually.”

Looking forward, Bray is enthusiastic about the potential for the Urban Transport Group.

“With a new name, which is a much clearer fit with what we do and who we are, and with TfL on board, the sky’s the limit in what we can achieve.

“And, more widely, we are now in a context where there is a consensus that having decent, integrated high quality public transport is essential if cities are going to perform, and also there is a recognition that we need better links between the cities, not just North-South but also East-West.”

Bray believes that cities across the country could have integrated transport networks that “look and feel much more like London” in a relatively short period of time.

He concludes: “It’s a genuinely exciting time to take what we’ve done forward with a bigger network that really will be the voice of urban transport and be the space to discuss and resolve the transport challenges that are ahead of us.” ■

He’s also interested in some of the work going on in German and Austrian cities around developing the multi-media platforms that ensure that they are the centre of an evolving mobility offer, “rather than some American corporation”.

“They seem quite determined not to become a junior partner and I think that’s very interesting,” he says.

And he also admires the stylishness of new light rail schemes in French cities, where value has been attached to making a bold statement.

In the past he believes that while it was interesting to observe what happened elsewhere in Europe, there was less that could be applied back at home. That has now changed, however, with urban areas across the continent facing common challenges. And the inclusion of bus franchising powers in a series of devolution deals agreed between city regions and the Treasury could see the UK move towards a model of bus service provision that is increasingly common across the Channel.

Bray has always felt that bus

deregulation was one of the biggest issues holding back public transport in Britain (except in London, where services are contracted out), and he says that pteg succeeded in showing that buses are not going to be a forgotten backwater, and that buses matter.

While Quality Contracts have never been employed, Bray believes that they have focussed the minds of private operators. “A gentleman’s agreement around quiet but highly

profitable managed decline is now no longer acceptable,” he asserts.

He believes buses are now in a good place and are now taken seriously by Whitehall. “They are definitely taken far, far more seriously than they ever have been in the past by national government,” he says.

The 2008 Local Transport Act opened the door to re-regulation of buses via Quality Contracts, with pteg devoting a lot of work to this, but the recent experience of



**Above (top):** Centro’s way-finding signs in the West Midlands. **Above:** Sheffield’s tram-train. (Credit: Paul J Martin/Shutterstock.com). **Previous page:** Merseyrail, a devolution model

# TOWARDS DEVOLUTION 2.0

**As Transport for London joins the Urban Transport Group, the man in charge of planning London's transport network considers what the future holds for London transport and the Urban Transport Group. Richard de Cani, Managing Director of Planning at TfL**

**T**he launch of the Urban Transport Group is a significant moment for Britain's cities. TfL and its members have worked for a long time to build a consensus for investment in urban transport and, as long-term associate members, we are now proud to be joining with other urban transport authorities to continue making that case.

It is an exciting time for anyone whose job is to keep major cities across the country working and growing. Urban transport is at the forefront of the chancellor's devolution agenda, and features prominently in each and every devolution deal which has been signed. It's at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse and a key cog in the Midlands Engine for Growth. And when cities vote to elect their first mayors in 2017, transport will be a key campaign issue.

But it isn't just a domestic issue. With more than half the world's population now living in cities, the Urban Transport Group has a responsibility to work internationally to push the boundaries of what we can achieve - in Brussels, with UITP, the international association of public transport, and with other cities around the world.

We will bring our 15 years' experience of transport devolution to the table. In 2000 we were created to bring together responsibility for

public transport and major roads in London for the first time.

This devolution package, which could be called 'Devolution 1.0', has delivered enormous benefits for London and the wider UK economy.

Integrating the transport network and having the powerful voice of an elected mayor for the city has allowed us to build the case for investment and deliver major infrastructure improvements - starting the modernisation of the Tube and getting on with Crossrail. It also allowed for the development of innovations such as Oyster and now contactless payment, and a relentless focus on what our customers and users want: a world-class, reliable service and joined up information before and during journeys.

But for too long, those same benefits have not been available to other cities. Passengers in other parts of the country too often face fragmented services, confusing ticket structures and a network which simply does not join up. That's why the push to devolve powers to cities is so important. Giving cities the power and capacity to plan their transport networks could unlock enormous economic potential, as it has in London.

In embracing devolution, we must recognise that cities across the country operate in a different world to the late 1990s when our devolution settlement was devised. When we were created, smartphones, hybrid cars and social media were yet to be developed. Since then, each have helped change the way customers use our transport networks and will continue to do so.

Technological developments offer great opportunities, but cities also face new challenges. Key amongst them is managing a rapid



**Above: Richard de Cani, MD of Planning at TfL. Above (top): Waterloo station**

rate of population growth with ever tighter resources. London is today bigger than it has ever been at 8.6 million people and by 2030 it is forecast to be 10 million. That means it is growing at a rate equivalent to two full Tube trains of people a week.

Other cities are growing rapidly too, which means that roads are becoming more congested, stations busier and trains and buses fuller.

Waterloo Station is a prime example. Passenger numbers at the station have increased from 62 million in 2004/05 to 98 million in 2013/14.

While we can't control the growth in population, we do have a responsibility to ensure that population growth drives productivity and economic growth, and new citizens can access the jobs, training and leisure opportunities that keep the national economy moving.

That requires effective integrated transport in cities, but also better inter-city links which can drive economic activity. Manchester and Leeds' contribution to GDP is constrained by the speed and frequency of the links between them, even though the distance between them is shorter than London's Central Line.

We must now push the boundaries in ensuring that



## IN NUMBERS

# \$2.7bn

Our cities compete internationally for investment and business. Other cities internationally have long-term funded plans to improve their transport networks. Paris has a funding package in place for infrastructure investment to 2030, adding an estimated \$2.7bn a year to the French economy.

# 15%

Sustained investment in transport infrastructure can save 15% of costs by enabling providers to work with their supply chain to find efficiencies.

# 8%

TfL's cost of revenue collection is down from 15% of revenue in 2006 to 8% today. With further uptake of contactless payment, it could be as little as 6% in 2020.



# 76m

There are 76 million contactless cards in the UK, a 39% increase in the last year. (UK Cards Association)

# 61%

61% of UK growth is generated by city regions. (City Growth Commission)

# 82%

82% of business leaders think the UK's major cities are held back by their lack of powers to make long term infrastructure plans - and that London and other major cities should have more powers including to retain some of the tax revenues paid by a city to fund transport improvements.

# 2/3

Two-thirds of UK adults own a smartphone and more and more see their phone as the most important device for going online. (Ofcom, 2015)

transport investment unlocks housing and widens people's horizons, opening up new job opportunities. Collectively, we need to make the case for an upgraded Devolution 2.0. Devolution packages for city regions need to give them the power to invest, innovate, and drive the national economy. An upgraded devolution approach should base funding decisions on economic payback rather than commuter journey times. It should give city regions the tools and powers to pull together the packages to fund the developments they know will unlock investment and growth. Fundamentally, it must recognise that investment is not a zero-sum game: one city or region does not 'win' at the expense of others.

When it comes to innovation, we must give cities and transport authorities the power to use the massive developments in

technology we have seen for the benefit of their economies. Whether that is by putting open data to its best use in communicating with customers, making sure today's technologies such as smart-ticketing are implemented nationwide, or harnessing technologies of the future, our cities will be at the forefront of creating solutions that work. Across the Urban Transport Group, we should share the best ideas which could make a difference, and work together to implement them quickly.

Finally, we need to make the case together for city transport driving the national economy. After all, the benefits of investment do not stop at the boundary of city regions: investment benefits the country as a whole. Some 61% of UK growth is generated by city regions, and together we serve approximately 20 million residents. Investment in

infrastructure also directly supports jobs across the country: for example, our supply chain supports 60,000 jobs outside London.

Our voice has never been stronger. Now is the time to define everything we want from Devolution 2.0 and work together as much as we can to deliver it. It must be honed by the city regions on the frontline of implementing devolution packages, who know how to make their local economies thrive. We are ready to share our expertise, from smart-ticketing to technical advice on bus franchising and financial management, to help turn devolution rhetoric into reality.

The launch of the Urban Transport Group represents a new way of working which will help shape our city regions for years to come. We're excited to be joining as full members, and helping shape what our cities can deliver under devolution. ■



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Barbara Castle (left) was a hugely influential Transport Minister in the government of Harold Wilson (right), shaping legislation that created the PTEs (Credit: Trinity Mirror/Mirrorpix)

## 50 YEARS OF PTEs – A HALF CENTURY OF CHANGE

**In 1966 the Wilson government published the first of three White Papers, placing transport at the heart of Britain's major urban areas. It led to the creation of the Passenger Transport Executives that steered transport provision in the city regions**

### 1966

October 1964 sees a Labour government elected, with Harold Wilson as Prime Minister. His administration sees Barbara Castle handed the transport brief in December 1965, a role she held until April 1968.

In 1966 Castle publishes the first of three White Papers that emphasise the role of transport

in the economy and efficiency of the nation. This is the cornerstone in the re-evaluation of public transport at the heart of urban policy. A further White Paper in 1967 note the role of public transport in relieving congestion and cutting pollution.

### 1968

The White Papers lead to the Transport Act of 1968. It provides legislation for the creation of passenger transport areas to improve public transport. These are adopted by the four largest conurbations outside London - Merseyside, Tyneside, West Midlands and South East Lancashire North East Cheshire (SELNEC). Each would be locally

accountable with powers to plan and provide integrated public transport networks.

Each of these urban areas is tasked with creating a master plan for transport, running local bus services and co-ordinating local rail services in the largest piece of non-financial legislation since the war!

With Barbara Castle highly successful in her role at the Ministry of Transport, she moves to the Employment brief as a result of her reputation as a troubleshooter. Her successor, Richard Marsh, steers the Act through Parliament.

### 1969

The 1968 Act is enacted, with Passenger Transport Authorities (PTAs) formed in the four areas.

They are tasked with creating local accountability and setting policy objectives implemented by their respective Passenger Transport Executive (PTE).

The process commences in the West Midlands on October 1, 1969 with the remaining PTAs/ PTEs following at roughly monthly intervals with the process completed in Tyneside.

Each PTE brings together the municipal bus operations of their respective areas under a single umbrella brand. Meanwhile, in a boost to local rail services, Section 20 agreements as part of the Act see British Rail operate local rail services that are specified by the PTAs.

In a bid to rejuvenate these networks, the new PTAs and

## RETROSPECTIVE

PTEs begin to examine options for improving their local networks.

Tyneside investigates options for a light rapid transit network to replace much of its run down diesel-operated local rail network, while Merseyside advocates a new underground 'loop and link' in the city centre to create a comprehensive electrified cross-conurbation network.

**1971**

Tyneside PTA publishes The Transport Plan for the 1980s. At its heart is a continental-style integrated transport network with a light rail system operating through new tunnels under Newcastle city centre.

In Manchester, SELNEC PTE (South East Lancashire North East Cheshire), advocates the 'Picc-Vic' project, a new cross-city heavy rail tunnel, linking Piccadilly and Victoria stations.

**1973**

The Greater Glasgow region becomes the fifth PTE/PTA area on June 1, 1973.

The Tyneside Metropolitan Railway Bill gains statutory approval and receives Royal Assent in July 1973. Funding for the project is received from a government grant covering 75% of the cost. However, the Conservative government of Ted Heath rejects SELNEC's application for grant funding for the Picc-Vic project.

**1974**

The Local Government Act of 1972 reorganises local government, creating the six Metropolitan Counties, which come into being on April 1, 1974. The legislation abolishes the PTAs with their functions taken on by the new Metropolitan County Councils.

The existing West Midlands PTE area is expanded to take in Coventry, while Tyneside gains Sunderland, becoming Tyne & Wear PTE in the process. SELNEC becomes Greater Manchester PTE. Merseyside PTE expands by taking on transport responsibilities in Southport and St Helens. Two new

PTE areas are established in South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

In Tyne & Wear, work commences in Newcastle city centre on the Tyne & Wear Metro light rail system.

**1975**

Local government reorganisation is enacted in Scotland. It sees the creation of Strathclyde Regional Council with Greater Glasgow PTE taking on transport functions across a huge area. The PTE not only co-ordinates local bus and rail services, but ferry and air connections too!

The first prototype Metro train arrives in Tyne & Wear. It is the first modern light rail vehicle to have been manufactured in the UK and the PTE opens a special test track in North Tyneside to put the rolling stock through its paces and test construction methods.

**1976**

Differences between Tyne & Wear PTE, British Rail and the rail unions about who should own and run the Tyne & Wear Metro system lead Transport Minister Bill Rodgers to threaten to axe the system unless an agreement is reached. The issues are resolved with Tyne & Wear County Council committing significant capital investment in the project.

South Yorkshire begins pursuing a low fares policy for its local bus network. It is anticipated that with fares frozen, there will come a point where it will cost more to collect fares than to take them, leading to completely free travel.

**1977**

Unable to secure funding from government, Greater Manchester County Council drops plans for the Picc-Vic tunnel and Merseyside drops plans for an expanded Merseyrail network.

There is some good news for Merseyside though, with the cross-city link tunnel opening under Liverpool city centre.

South Yorkshire PTE identifies a number of corridors where continental-style articulated buses



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1. The Tyne & Wear Metro system saw the construction of extensive infrastructure in order to link up parts of the existing rail network with new tunnels and bridges  
2. Continental-style integration of public transport, with interchanges at key stations was at the heart of the Metro  
3. Rolling stock for the system was built by Metro-Cammell in Birmingham and based on a German design. They were the first modern light rail vehicles to be built in the UK



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could be introduced. It leads to a trial of an articulated bus destined for a Swiss operator.

Glasgow's Subway closes for a three year period in order to facilitate a complete modernisation of the system with new rolling stock and upgraded track and station facilities.

Meanwhile, PTEs continue to invest in new or upgraded bus stations and interchanges. In West Yorkshire a new bus station opens adjacent to Bradford Exchange railway station, linking buses and trains in a covered environment.

**1978**

The Merseyrail network expands with the electrification of services

from Walton to Kirkby and Liverpool Central to Garston.

The Birmingham Cross-City line opens. The £7.4m project consolidates rail services into Birmingham from the north and south into a single line. It sees three new stations on the route opened and several others significantly upgraded.

**1979**

South Yorkshire PTE introduces Britain's first articulated buses on the free 'City Clipper' city centre service in Sheffield following dispensation from the Department of Transport.

The Argyle Line is opened as a joint venture between Strathclyde



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4. The PTEs brought together the municipal bus operations in their areas as a single network (Credit: Trevor Whelan)  
 5. Greater Manchester had high hopes for its Picc-Vic project across the city centre  
 6. The Queen takes a trip on the Merseyrail extension to Kirkby in 1978  
 7. South Yorkshire PTE introduced the bendybus to Britain (Credit: Kevin Lane)  
 8. It also trialled trolleybus technology for a planned system in Doncaster (Credit: DM Gauden)



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**1984**

The final section of the initial Tyne & Wear Metro opens, creating a 55km network. In its first year of full operation there are more than 60 million passenger journeys, confirming Metro's potential as the mainstay of a fully integrated public transport system.



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Transport Secretary Nicholas Ridley publishes his White Paper on buses in July. It proposes deregulation of the bus industry and privatisation of the National Bus Company.

A Rail Study Group, composed of officials from British Rail, Greater Manchester County Council and GMPTE formally endorses proposals for a light rail system in Greater Manchester. It proposes a phased approach to create a 100km network.

South Yorkshire PTE deposits a Bill in November seeking powers to operate trolleybuses on specific routes in Doncaster and Rotherham and general powers for the whole of South Yorkshire.

**1985**

The Local Government Act 1985 abolishes the Metropolitan County Councils and the Greater London Council from March 31, 1986. Governance of the PTEs moves to newly recreated PTAs comprised of elected members from districts.

The Transport Act 1985 receives Royal Assent on October 30. It calls for the UK bus market to be deregulated with the break-up and privatisation of the

PTE and British Rail. It creates a cross-Glasgow rail route using disused infrastructure. This includes re-opening Glasgow Central's low level station, which closed to passengers in 1964.

**1980**

In August the first section of the Tyne & Wear Metro opens. It is the first UK railway to be fully accessible to those with disabilities.

**1981**

In West Yorkshire, Metro achieves consolidated fare scales for bus services in West Yorkshire after six years' work.

West Midlands County Council and West Midlands PTE form a

joint planning committee to look at light rail options as a means of solving growing congestion issues. The subsequent report, published in 1984, advocates a network of 10 lines which would be predominantly street running, but with underground sections in Birmingham city centre.

**1982**

GMPTE concludes that a light rail system is the cheapest solution for improving public transport. The network would either replace or complement existing under-used heavy railways.

Fitzwilliam station opens in West Yorkshire. This marks the start of a station-opening

programme that sees 18 new stations opened over the next 10 years.

South Yorkshire PTE's planning section estimates that the cost of collecting bus fares will equal revenue by 1987/88. The PTE begins examining how a free fares policy could be introduced.

**1983**

Merseyrail's Northern line is extended from Garston to Hunts Cross.

The Transport Act 1983 gives the Secretary of State power to lay down limits on public transport revenue support that can be paid in London and Metropolitan Counties. Meanwhile, a

National Bus Company. The PTE and municipal bus operations are required to be reconstituted as 'arm's length' enterprises.

The Act also sees the continental-style integrated network in Tyne & Wear scrapped and the low fares policy pursued in South Yorkshire ended.

The South Yorkshire Light Rail Transit Bill is deposited in Parliament in November.

**1986**

The sale of the NBC subsidiaries commences in July and bus services are deregulated on October 26, 1986. Prior to this, the bus operating interests of the PTEs are passed to 'arm's length' companies.

**1987**

In July, the government announces that GMPTE's Metrolink proposals must involve private sector capital, with a transfer of risk, in addition to meeting other conditions.

GMPTE hosts a public demonstration of light rail technology over two weekends. It involves a newly delivered Docklands Light Railway vehicle

operating on a short stretch of freight only heavy railway in Greater Manchester.

Elsewhere in Greater Manchester, Salford Crescent railway station opens to the public. It facilitates the opening of the Windsor Link the following year, allowing trains from north west of Manchester to be diverted to Piccadilly station.

Birmingham's Snow Hill station reopens in October, 20 years after its closure as part of the Beeching cuts. Local services to Leamington Spa and Stratford-upon-Avon initially use the station with Network South East restoring limited-stop services to London in 1993.

**1988**

Authority to construct Phase 1 of Metrolink is granted in January 1988 with the passing of the Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) Act 1988.

West Midlands PTA announces plans for a light rail network, named Midland Metro, with up to 15 lines. The first would be between Birmingham and Wolverhampton, using much of

the disused trackbed of the former Snow Hill to Wolverhampton Low Level line.

Metro, the West Yorkshire PTE, sells its bus operation, Yorkshire Rider, to its management.

**1989**

The tender to design, build and operate the Manchester Metrolink system is awarded to Greater Manchester Metrolink Limited (GMML) on September 27, a consortium whose shareholders includes GEC Alstom, John Mowlem plc, Amec plc and GM Buses. It is ratified by Transport Minister Michael Portillo on October 24.

Tyne & Wear PTE sells Busways, its 'arm's length' bus operation, to its employees.

**1990**

The Scott Hall Road guided busway corridor opens in Leeds.

Construction of the on-street sections of Metrolink begins and GMPTE acquires legal authority to construct a Metrolink route to Salford Quays.

Transport Minister Roger Freeman announces a £240m

funding package for Sheffield's Supertram. Contributions come from the Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield Development Corporation, Sheffield City Council and the European Regional Development Fund.

SPT and British Rail reopen the line between Shields Junction and Paisley Canal station, restoring services to Glasgow.

**1991**

Extension of the Tyne & Wear Metro to Newcastle Airport. It creates the shortest journey time by public transport between an airport and a city centre in Britain.

Transport Minister Roger Freeman launches construction of South Yorkshire Supertram on 16 September.

Bus operator West Midlands Travel is sold to its employees.

**1992**

On 6 April 1992 Metrolink services between Bury and Victoria begin. The central section between Victoria and G-Mex opens on 27 April. Services between G-Mex and Altrincham begin on 15 June, with Piccadilly following on 20



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1. The Queen opens Manchester's Metrolink system (Credit: Trinity/MirrorPix)  
 2. The initial system linked Bury with Altrincham via the city centre  
 3. The success of Metrolink was emulated elsewhere, including in the West Midlands  
 4. Electrification of the Airedale line led to significant improvements to rail services  
 5. West Yorkshire pioneered guided busway technology (Credit: Photofusion Picture Library)



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July. The Queen officially opens the network on 17 July 1992.

**1993**

South Yorkshire Transport is sold by South Yorkshire PTE to its employees.

Competition concerns see GM Buses split into two separate companies - GM Buses North and GM Buses South. Both businesses are sold to their management teams in 1994. Merseybus is sold by Merseytravel to its employees.

Meanwhile, the Merseyrail network is expanded to Chester with a further extension to Ellesmere Port opening in 1994.

**1994**

The first section of South Yorkshire Supertram between Meadowhall and Commercial Street opens on 21st March. The remainder of the system opens between then and late 1995.

**1995**

Consortium Altram wins the contract to construct the Midland Metro. Construction commences in November.

Electrification of the Airedale and

Wharfedale lines in West Yorkshire is completed, significantly improving services on these routes.

**1999**

The first section of the Metrolink extension to Salford Quays and Eccles opens.

The Midland Metro light rail service opens to the public in May.

**2000**

The Transport Act 2000 requires PTEs to produce Local Transport Plans. GMPTE advocates a third phase of Metrolink expansion with four new lines linking Oldham and Rochdale, East Manchester, South Manchester and Manchester Airport. It argues for funding for all four lines to be included in this third phase, terming it a 'big bang' expansion.

The full Eccles extension of Metrolink opens on 21 July, 2000.

In West Yorkshire, Brighouse station reopens to the public after 30 years of closure.

**2002**

Extension of the Tyne & Wear Metro to Sunderland at a cost of £100m. The route between Pelaw

and Sunderland is shared with the heavy rail network, mixing heavy and light rail services on the national rail network for the first time.

**2003**

The PTEs, under the umbrella of the Passenger Transport Executive Group, create the pteg Support Unit to focus the activities of the PTEs.

An annual business plan sets out pteg's priorities and presents clearly defined targets. pteg shares good practice through specialist sub-groups, which draw on expertise from across the network of PTEs. It also publishes good practice guides, and promotes the discussion of policy issues relevant to PTEs.

**2004**

In July Transport Secretary Alistair Darling withdraws funding for the third phase of Metrolink due to rising costs. However, following a high-profile campaign and lobbying exercise by local politicians and media, funding is reinstated with a cap on any further contributions from government.

Merseytravel makes a Transport

& Works Act application for a single light rail corridor, the first of three planned routes, between the centre of Liverpool and Kirkby. It is hoped that construction of Merseytram could commence the following year.

**2005**

Metro and South Yorkshire PTE launch their younextbus real-time passenger information service in September.

Rising costs see the government withdraw support for the Leeds Supertram and Merseytram schemes. West Yorkshire is urged to consider cheaper, bus-based alternatives. It leads to the development of the New Generation Transport scheme, a trolleybus corridor connecting the north and south of the city.

**2006**

Following extensive negotiations, Transport Secretary Douglas Alexander approves funding for expansion of Metrolink to Oldham, Rochdale and East Manchester, plus renewal of track on the existing network.

The Transport (Scotland) Act is passed. It sees Strathclyde's PTE and PTA, along with the WESTRANS voluntary regional transport partnership, replaced by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport.

**2007**

Planning permission is granted for a 400-metre branch off the Metrolink Salford line to connect with MediaCityUK.

South Yorkshire PTE opens Barnsley Interchange, bringing bus and rail services in the town together under one roof.

**2008**

The 2008 Local Transport Act sees PTAs renamed as Integrated Transport Authorities, tasked as the sole transport planning authorities in their areas.

Greater Manchester voters reject plans for public transport improvements linked to a congestion charge. Talks



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6. While light rail schemes in Manchester, Sheffield and the West Midlands went ahead, similar schemes in Leeds and Liverpool (pictured) were axed in 2005 by transport secretary Alistair Darling

7. The PTEs have played a key role in funding rail networks over the years, responsibility for which was enshrined in the Transport Act of 1968 (Credit: Rail Images)



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1. PTEs have invested heavily in new bus stations and interchanges over the years. Pictured is Wolverhampton's new bus station, which opened in 2011
2. West Yorkshire is developing plans for New Generation Transport, an advanced trolleybus scheme
3. Today the PTEs are playing a key part in the introduction of smart ticketing in their areas
4. Chancellor George Osborne has confirmed a string of devolution deals that will see greater powers over transport handed over to the city regions



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with the government lead to the creation of the Greater Manchester Transport Fund in 2009, unlocking funding to invest in Metrolink.

**2010**

Greater Manchester takes forward proposals for the establishment of a Combined Authority with wide-ranging devolved powers, including over transport.

The Metrolink extension to MediaCityUK opens.

**2011**

Greater Manchester Combined Authority is established on April 1, 2011. It sees GMPTe's remit expanded as Transport for Greater Manchester with the ITA abolished and replaced by the Transport for Greater Manchester Committee

that ultimately reports to the CA.

Metrolink's extension to Chorlton opens for business in July.

PTEs continue to innovate on smart ticketing. Nexus, the Tyne & Wear PTE, launches the Pop smartcard, facilitated by the introduction of new ticketing infrastructure on the Metro.

**2012**

The coalition government approves extension of the Midland Metro through Birmingham city centre to New Street station. Funding is also released to procure a new fleet of trams.

**2013**

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin approves plans for the Second City Crossing,

an alternative Metrolink route through Manchester city centre, due to be completed in 2017.

**2014**

Combined Authorities are established in the Sheffield City Region, North East, Liverpool City Region and West Yorkshire areas.

Chancellor George Osborne announces an historic devolution deal with Greater Manchester. It includes the option to introduce franchised bus services as part of a package of responsibilities for a new, directly-elected mayor.

Metrolink's extension to Manchester Airport opens.

**2015**

The Treasury and Department of Communities and Local

Government agree devolution deals with the Sheffield and Liverpool city regions, the North East and West Yorkshire. Following the template set by the agreement with Greater Manchester in 2014, all include enhanced transport powers, including the option for franchised bus services.

**2016**

The Passenger Transport Executive Group becomes the Urban Transport Group to tie in with the growing importance of transport in meeting policy goals. It sees Transport for London, previously an associate member of pteg, become a full member of the Urban Transport Group, which becomes the UK's main body on urban transport policy. ■



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Wellington House  
40-50 Wellington Street  
Leeds LS1 2DE

**Telephone:** 0113 251 7204

**Website:** [www.urbantransportgroup.org](http://www.urbantransportgroup.org)

**Email:** [info@urbantransportgroup.org](mailto:info@urbantransportgroup.org)

