

# Smart move!

Traditional paper tickets could be a thing of the past as new technology enables mobile phones and bank cards to double up as 'swipe and go' tickets. In its new ticketing strategy the Government estimates that the benefits of universal 'integrated smart' ticketing could be as much as £2 billion per year through improved journey times and faster, more convenient and reliable purchasing and use of tickets. Research commissioned by the Department of Transport also suggests that bus 'dwell time' could reduce by 50% if there was full take up of smart ticketing technology. Central to the Government's plan is the implementation of smart ticketing infrastructure using the Government backed ITSO specification to allow seamless travel between, and within, cities and regions; and different modes of transport. Some of the more innovative proposals could see electronic tickets or pre-pay credit loaded straight onto a mobile phone enabling it to be used as a ticket; or "contactless" payment which will allow ordinary bank



cards to pay instantaneously for travel simply by being passed over a terminal, dispensing with the need for a ticket at all.

London's Oyster card shows how well passengers respond. In a relatively short period of time it has boosted patronage and become an intrinsic part of London life. It is now difficult to conceive of London's public transport without it. All the PTEs are working on smartcard plans in their areas, and on their compatibility. This opens up the prospect of city smartcards which covers all of Britain's largest urban areas. This in turn could act as a stepping stone for the ultimate goal of a national smartcard offer.

# All change?



## pteg fringe meetings

### TUC

- Tuesday 15th September, 1245  
Jurys Inn (opposite BT Convention Centre) - Liverpool.
- 'Transport in the Cities - question time'
- Chair: Adam Lent - TUC  
Neil Scales - Chair of **pteg**  
Jack Dromey - Deputy General Secretary, Unite  
Mike Jeram - Unison  
Stephen Joseph - Campaign for Better Transport

### Lib Dems

- Tuesday 22nd September, 1300-1400  
Bryanston Suite - Highcliffe Hotel, Bournemouth.
- 'Transport in the Cities - What should the Liberal Democrats offer the voters?'
- Chair: Cllr John Shipley  
• Norman Baker MP - Shadow Transport SoS  
Lord Bradshaw  
Paul Rowen MP  
Neil Scales - Chair of **pteg**

**pteg** will be on the road this Autumn sponsoring fringe meetings at the three main party conferences and the TUC.

### Labour

- Tuesday 29th September, 1245-1400  
Pavilion Room - Grand Hotel, Brighton.
- 'Transport in the Cities - What should the Labour party offer the voters?'
- Chair: Ben Webster - Times Environment Correspondent  
• Sadiq Khan - Minister of State for Transport  
Jack Dromey - Deputy General Secretary, Unite  
Neil Scales - Chair of **pteg**  
Professor David Begg - Transport Times

### Conservative

- Tuesday 6th October, 1230-1400  
Lancaster Suite - Midland Hotel, Manchester.
- 'Transport in the Cities - What should the Conservative party offer the voters?'
- Chair: Philip Davies MP  
• Stephen Hammond MP - Shadow Transport Minister  
Stephen Joseph - Campaign for Better Transport  
Kulveer Ranger - London Mayor's Office  
Neil Scales - Chair of **pteg**  
Simon Moppett - Conservative Transport Group

Is Whitehall finally prepared to let go and let the city regions determine the future of their local transport networks for themselves? That may be going too far - but following on from the 2008 Local Transport Act there has been further indications over the Summer that the new Act is increasingly seen by many national policy makers not as an end in itself, but as a stepping stone towards further and deeper devolution. This goes right to the top, with the Cabinet Office now pressing the DfT to let go of more of the local funding streams and policy-making areas that it currently holds on tight to. This could involve major blocks of funding such as the DfT's role in allocating subsidies for local bus services and concessionary fare schemes. The argument being - why pay out these subsidies on the basis of wasteful 'one-size fits all' national formulae when local PTEs could target the subsidies far more precisely to meet local need?

At the same time the Communities Department (DCLG) has put its foot on the accelerator pedal on wider devolution of powers to city regions - with the focus in particular, but not exclusively, on the two forerunner city regions of Leeds and Manchester. As part of this process the DCLG too, wants a wide range of options for the devolution of additional powers on transport to be up for discussion. And even the Office of Fair Trading has got the message. Formerly there was only one answer to everything on buses from the OFT - more competition on the streets between bus companies. Now, in their recent report on the state of the local bus market, they recognise that it may well be better to support local transport authorities in their

take-up of Local Transport Act powers to better plan and regulate bus services.

Whilst ideas on devolving more powers downwards on local transport decision-making are becoming more respectable across Whitehall - there's also broad cross-party support for it. Though clearly differences of opinion over what kind of devolution and to whom. And with a general election less than a year away politicians are looking at how these earnest policy debates can be translated into manifesto bullet point pledges that the voters in the big city regions will respond to.

In the centrespread of this newsletter we set out our manifesto for positive change for transport in the cities. Our advice to whichever party gets the keys to Downing Street will be up for debate at our fringe meetings at all three party conferences as well as the TUC. Full details can be found on our website and on the backpage of this newsletter.



**delivering public transport solutions**

Representing Britain's  
Passenger Transport Executives

**pteg** represents the six English Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs). Nottingham City Council, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and Transport for London are associate members of the group. If you would like to be added to our mailing list for future copies of the newsletter, and other information on **pteg**, then contact us at:

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# Manifesto for transport in the cities

With an election less than a year away political parties are turning their attention to what the transport offer should be for the voters in the largest cities outside London.

Here's some of the ideas we think could help take transport in the cities to the next level - whoever gets the keys to Downing Street.

## Tackle the transport 'funding gap' between London and the next tier of major cities

Transport spending has risen in recent years - but far faster in London than it has in the regions. So much so that spending in London (at £826 a year per head) is now three times what is spent in the North of England and the West Midlands. And that gap is widening - transport spending per head has risen by almost 60% over the last five years in London compared to a 25% rise in the North and the West Midlands.

## Bring our commuter rail networks into the 21st century

In recent years rail use has grown faster on our rail networks than it has on the rail networks in the South East or on long distance routes. That's because our rail commuter networks have helped underpin the revival in our core city economies and commuters have switched to rail to beat the jams and access the new opportunities that have opened up in vibrant city centres. Yet although our rail networks have been growing fast, some of them also have the oldest and most basic trains in the country. Worse than that - there hasn't been enough of them to carry all the passengers that want to use them! Our commuter rail networks have simply not been getting their fair share of new train orders. It's time that changed.

## Work with us to deliver smartcards that provide an Oyster-style offer

Smartcards make public transport easier to use - as the runaway success of Oyster card in London shows. If the PTE areas can follow London with a smartcard product then that's 17 million people who will have a city smartcard, providing a stepping stone for the ultimate goal of smartcards throughout the nation. Smart ticketing needs to be complemented by continued Government support for the rolling out of real time information systems - giving passengers up-to-the-minute service information at bus stops and by mobile phone.

## Work with us on transforming local bus services

The vast majority of public transport trips in our areas are by bus. The bus *is* public transport for most people in our cities. Which means if we don't get buses right we won't get public transport right. In our areas you can find much to be positive about on bus

services - with plenty of examples of state-of-the-art interchanges, bus priority programmes and modern vehicles. Yet in too many of our areas, and for too long, bus services have been in decline. Across the piece there is a long way to go before we have the affordable, integrated and high quality networks that we need as standard if we are to see the bus really achieve its potential. The 2008 Local Transport Act gave PTEs more options, and a bigger role in working with bus operators to transform the bus 'offer' for passengers. We want to see Government getting behind both the more effective voluntary and statutory partnership arrangements that the Local Transport Act allows for, and supporting PTEs that want to franchise networks of bus services.

## Fair play for tram schemes

Modern trams can get people out of their cars, transform the urban realm and generally meet the public's aspirations for what they think public transport should be all about. However, the systems the Department of Transport uses to assess tram schemes are biased against them and the time taken for officials to make decisions can be way too long. We recognise that tram schemes don't come cheap and only sound proposals should get the go-ahead. However, given the proven benefits of trams we believe that the process for appraising them should be both streamlined and fairer.

## Transform our rail connectivity

We want to see better rail links to London and between our cities. We believe that new High Speed Lines have the potential to take passengers out of the skies, free-up capacity on existing lines and take the image and reality of rail travel in the UK to the next level. As well as having good rail links to London our cities also need better rail links between them. At present rail journeys between some of the regions' major urban centres take too long on trains that aren't right for the job. As well as kicking off the high speed revolution through new high speed lines there is scope for improvements to existing routes, bottlenecks and hubs to provide a marketable,

consistent and attractive set of journey times between the major centres in the regions.

## Help take the pressure off low income families and help get people back to work

The national concessionary fares scheme for older and disabled people has been a runaway success - opening up new horizons for millions of older people, many of whom are on low incomes. However, whilst the cost of off-peak bus travel for older and disabled people has fallen to zero, the cost of bus travel for many low income families has sky rocketed as bus fares shoot up way above the rate of inflation. We want to work with Government to see what can be done to take some of the pressure off the budgets of low income households through a better and more consistent approach to child fares. Transport can also be a barrier to accessing new jobs and opportunities. PTEs have been at the forefront of removing those barriers through 'WorkWise' schemes which put travel advisors into job centres to provide information (and free tickets) so that job seekers can get to interviews and get through the early weeks of a new job until the first pay cheque arrives. We think WorkWise is such a cost effective way of getting people back into work that the Government should get behind it and mainstream it in our areas.

## Broaden, widen and deepen the devolution of decision making on local transport

Decisions on local transport should be made locally - not by civil servants in London hundreds of miles away. That's why we are pleased to see that there is broad all-party support for devolution of local decision making. We also believe that the Local Transport Act 2008 was a very big step in the right direction. Now we need to go further by, for example, devolving more of the subsidies that Whitehall currently allocates inefficiently for local bus services (such as concessionary fares). PTEs should also take responsibility for service monitoring and complaints handling, as well as take an integral role in planning local rail services.

