

The Tyne and Wear Public Transport Users Group



Annual Report 2018

*What is a good public Transport Service?
And how do we get it?*

Join a discussion* with
Christian Wolmar

Award winning writer, broadcaster & public transport campaigner

&

**The Tyne and Wear Public Transport
Users Group**



We will be discussing what the future of public transport holds,
and how we can ensure that public transport works for everyone.

Mon 15th Oct 2018 6.30-8.30pm
The Royal Station Hotel,
Neville St, Newcastle, NE15DH

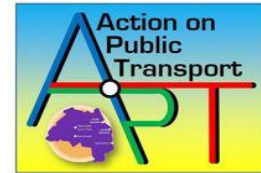
Further info from:

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*Entry is free, but advance
registration is required. Please
register at
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/what-is-a-good-public-transport-service-and-how-do-we-get-it-tickets-50322564099>
Or go to eventbrite.com and search
"what is a good public transport"



TYNE AND WEAR



Public Transport Users Group

Elected Officers 2016 – 2017.

Chair	Vicki Gilbert
Vice Chair	Bill Ions
Secretary	Paul Baker
Minute Secretary	Alan Lubbock
Treasurer	Graham Jellett
Press and Communications Officer	Shirley Ford
NECA Reports and Research	Richard Rook

Organisations and Associations Affiliated to main Tyne & Wear Public Transport Users Group

Elder's Council. Newcastle
Friends Of The Earth
Living Streets. Northern Region
Light Rail Transit Association
North East Pensioners Association (NEPA)
North East Action on Disability (NEAT)
North East Humanists
Newcastle Cycling Campaign
Newcastle Transport Forum
North Tyneside Transport Forum
North Tyneside Youth Council
North Tyneside Women's Voices
Sustrans
Talking Travel Group
Tyne & Wear Trades Council
Unite Union Community Branch

A management Committee is formed from delegates each organization sends, which meets approx five times each year and from which officers are elected

TYNE AND WEAR

Public Transport Users Group



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Annual Report 2018

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Printed and Published by Paul Baker on behalf of Tyne & Wear Public Transport Users Group.
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ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Chairs Address and Welcome.

May I extend our greetings on behalf of Tyne & Wear Public Transport Users Group and welcome everyone to our Eighth Annual General Meeting. Firstly, I want to say thank you to everyone who has helped us this year and particularly for the dedicated work of my fellow officers: Bill Ions, Vice Chair; Graham Jellett, Treasurer; Alan Lubbock, Minute Secretary; Shirley Ford, Press and Communications Officer; Richard Rook, Research and North East Combined Authority (NECA) * and to say thank you to Dave Shaw for all the valuable information he has provided for us over the past year. But especially, I want to thank our Secretary, Paul Baker for his dedicated work on planning and coordinating the overall group.

I want also to recognize the roles of Alistair Ford and Richard Rook, Shirley Ford and Wendy Gascoigne and Fiona Swindell for their contribution in organizing the local public transport user groups in their boroughs and to thank Alan Dougall for his help and work at Gateshead and to wish him and his family a happy retirement, I must also give a special thank you to Kevin Alderson for managing our website which he does so effectively and mostly at short notice. Next, I want to thank the members of the Management Committee for their continued support in representing their organizations; and in particular, Bill Day from the North East Pensioners Association (NEPA) who replaced Kevin Lightfoot, who sadly passed away this year and Malcolm Scott, from 'Friends of the Earth' for maintaining that organisation's presence and good advice in our work. I want also to acknowledge Violet and Richard Rook, Alistair Ford, Liz Scarff and John Urquhart for the invaluable contributions they have made to the 'Air Pollution' campaign; and to thank Richard Rook for his excellent coverage of the NECA meetings and a 'thank you to Alex Johnson from North Tyneside Public Transport Users Group for his regular letters to the Chronicle and News Guardian; but mostly, a special thanks to all the unmentioned members who in difficult times, have maintained interest and support for our work in local groups and Forums.

We also have to thank the Newcastle Vision Support for allowing us to use their Newcastle office as a postal address and London North Eastern Rail (LNER) for allowing us to the use of the Community Room at the Central Station, Newcastle for our Officer meetings. Finally, I am so impressed that the Labour Party have adopted our ideas on the integration of public transport, including walking and cycling; and their intention to correct the spending gap that exists between London and the other regions in the UK, as well as nationalizing rail. I also welcome their plans to tackle both the murderous levels of air pollution (that is causing so many unnecessary deaths), here in the UK; and climate change, by reducing our carbon footprint through government regulation being applied to polluting vehicles.

* The abbreviated letters in brackets, following name of an Organisation will be referred throughout eg, T&WPTUG

will be used to refer to our name. NECA for North East Combined Authority etc.

Secretary's Report

May I endorse the Chair's greetings and thank everyone for your continued support for our organization – Tyne & Wear Public Transport Users Group (T&WPTUG) My report will cover the period from this time last year (Oct 2017) to the present and consider the work we have done in maintaining and extending the influence of T&WPTUG throughout Tyne & Wear.

The past year has seen health and family commitments take it's toll on our campaigns and that has increased our frustration at the apparent inertia in achieving the necessary changes, not least an investment policy and certainly re-regulation so that services can be integrated in order to provide the public in Tyne & Wear with a good quality public transport service. Rail travelers, despite paying some of the highest fares in Europe have continued to receive a second class service with delays and cancellations almost the norm and not to mention the VTEC episode. Bus services, despite all the hard work of the local management of the three companies, are still confronted with falling ridership and congestion, largely due to there unreliability and the continuing increase in private motor vehicles (car) journeys and as we predicted, the recent Bus Services Act (BSA) has done nothing to address these problems and has left the situation the same as before.

At the same time, we have continued to work with our local councillors and Nexus, in supporting their efforts at increasing public engagement to improve public transport throughout Tyne & Wear We have also maintained a presence at the North East Combined Authority (NECA) meetings, thanks to Richard Rook who has observed and provided us with concise reports. The NECA area now includes: Northumberland, Durham and the five boroughs of Tyne & Wear. The NECA's main focus is to make policy decisions on transport, economic growth, skills and planning. Richard's reports have provided us with a wealth of information from developments at the Transport for the North agency, plans for extending local rail services, the Metro Reinvigoration and the Bus Services Bill. You will find a list of the meetings Richard has attended in his contributions on our behalf and as Elders Council representative below.

But some of our key officers have been faced with health and other problems and unfortunately, the Gateshead and South Tyneside Groups have been placed on hold, including the planned Transport Forum with local transport councillors. That said, both Newcastle and North Tyneside Public Transport Groups have continued to meet and campaign and the Transport Forums in those boroughs are still active. For those who are new to us, the forums are one of the main planks in our objective to democratize local public transport services; they help in that process by giving members of the public direct access to the people who are managing and providing the transport service in our region, a win win for everyone concerned.

This year also saw the premature termination of the VTEC franchise with much negative publicity and concern expressed, about the current way (franchise agreements) political leaders manage our rail services. The replacement (LNER) has been described as being brought back under public control, though many of the previous board are still managing the new service and we are advised that the long term plan is to put it back on the market as a partnership. The Tyne & Wear Metro came back under Nexus 'in-house management last year and the improvements to the track and other infrastructure are going ahead however the current rolling stock (out of date) continue to cause delays and breakdowns.

As the year draws to a close much of what I identified in last years report as needing attention and action remains unaddressed. Our region urgently needs government investment for the necessary upgrades to extend a public transport service to those parts that do not have one eg, extension of Metro service into parts of both Northumberland and Durham, and a coherent plan to tackle road congestion which included measures to reduce private motor vehicle journeys and also, air pollution. To end on a positive note I can report that Friends of the Earth (FoE) one of the organizations that formed T&WPTUG, who last year, undertook a survey of the levels of air pollution at key parts of North Tyneside as part of a national survey. FoE have now announced they are to target the car parks of local super-market stores in our region, to campaign and persuade drivers to switch off their car engines while waiting for friends and partners who are shopping in the store. A recent report noted over thirty vehicles with car engines idling while the driver sat in the vehicle, presumably waiting for the shopper to return.

Public Transport in Our Region.

Much of the focus in last year's report was on the crisis in the Bus Industry and we have tried to redress that this year with the invite to Christian Wolmar to address our annual meeting on the subject:

'what is a good public transport service and how do we get it?' Christian is an authority on the subject and a long term campaigner for service improvement, particularly rail so I will begin there

RAIL.

I better begin with a disclaimer: not all below here is down to me. The transport press has been full of the issues and complaints for months and I am discussing the UK wide rail service not just that in our area.

That said, lets start with a report in the journal, Passenger Transport last June.

"For the first time since 2009/10 franchised rail passenger journeys fell to 1,705m in 2017/18. The

1.4% fall in passenger journeys is the largest decrease recorded since 1993/94. The numbers of

passenger journeys made using season tickets fell for the second consecutive year with a decrease

of 9.2%." (1)

Why? Here are some of the reasons as Mr Grayling announces yet another review of the industry:

- A franchise system that is run like a 'slush fund' eg, on the East Coast line;
- Train punctuality at its worst, along with delays and unreliability;
- Timetable fiasco during this summer;
- The highest fares in Europe with another hike due in January;
- A number of much needed electrification schemes abandoned for no good reason;
- Crossrail's opening delayed by a year;
- Network Rail failing to deliver projects on time or in budget;
- Industrial relations at an all time low.

To list a few of the more obvious. For us here in the north, the inequality in both service and infrastructure is glaring eg the plan to develop new lines such as the Ashington-Blyth and Tyne which councils had hoped for, in order to link residents in those areas with the rest of the rail network, has now been halted; as has the planned restoration of the Leamside line in County Durham. The absence of full electrification

and the necessary upgrades has seen an increasing number of delays, cancellations and breakdowns, while rail fares continue to increase. Furthermore, the cancellation of the planned electrification of the northern rail system, Wales and the Midlands will leave several major cities dependent upon and served by cheap, diesel powered bi-modal trains for the foreseeable future; and will leave the rail network with a series of lines that do not provide a national network.

We have continued to ask for progress to tackle the longstanding problems such as, poor passenger facilities on both the trains and at stations. eg, toilets closed or locked with no prior notice before boarding and no one to ask at un-staffed stations. But affecting all passengers is the annual hike in rail fares, which is granted to the train operators by the government, under their franchise formula and which will see rail fares increase in 2018, by 3.6%. At the same time, the 'Crossrail' project in London has been given the go ahead with grant funding and the 'High Speed 2' has been treated in the same manner; illustrating the spending gap which is 500 times more per person in the London area compared to those here in the North East.

However, for us at T&WPTUG, the most important issue of concern is the plans for Driver Operated Only (DOO) trains, which we have campaigned against since it was first announced. The main issue for us is the safety of the passengers who travel on them. The argument has been made about DOO being safe but the testing that has been carried out has been mainly focused on avoiding collisions. Not on the safety or the needs of the passengers they carry; particularly, those of disabled vulnerable people. Another issue is the health (stress) effects on the drivers of these trains. Can I refer you to [Appendix One](#) for a copy of an article on DOO by Peter Rayner a former Safety Manager with British Rail who makes these arguments better than I can. Many stations are un-staffed while trains can carry a thousand or more passengers. We would argue that, given the profits made and the fares being charged, we argue that the DOO project is only about increasing profits for the shareholders of the private corporations who run our train service. The same corporations have taken £3.5billion in profits in the last ten years and now claim, they can no longer afford the wage of a guard for passenger safety!

So why does there need to be yet another review? There have been four since 2011, and, as one writer put it:

“We’ve had more rail reviews than we’ve had failed franchises on the East Coast”.

(2)

We suggest the answer to the problem is clear: inadequate funding for decades and a failed ideology; or to put it more simply, privatization at any price, including failure. Keep in mind, the last private franchise had to be bailed out with public money and the service brought back into public ownership where, ‘heaven help us’ it began to make a profit which immediately saw the Conservative government put it out to tender in 2015. And failure is the key: a failure to recognize that the fragmented or broken system is certainly not a ‘market’ and is a key reason why the delivery of the service to the users fails. But behind that lies another, more deeply ingrained and not so well understood ideology, which has been driving the policy of all parties in government for the last thirty years (and longer). Namely, public services such as transport (or the NHS) are to be paid for from anywhere but the Exchequer; paid for by the private corporation trying to make a profit from it or by the users who rely upon the service but not from out of the taxes we pay to the government to provide us with that service. If this situation is allowed to continue then almost certainly, the particular service will continue to deteriorate while the costs (fares) increase. It is

unavoidable and we need to begin campaigning to make people aware of this. And we should ask: why do we have or allow such a shambolic approach by politicians to the management of a service we all need and pay exorbitant amounts for? Perhaps Christian will tell us!

Tyne & Wear METRO

As reported last year, the metro returned in-house, under Nexus control at the beginning of April 2017. The service has been better under Nexus management than with DB Regio. However, unscheduled delays and breakdowns have continued to cause problems for travelers. Why? The Tyne & Wear Metro is nearly forty years old and in desperate need of both upgrading and replacement, particularly the fleet of trains. The problem here is though the carriages have recently been refurbished, the metro-cars are still the original ones and any replacement parts have to be made to order, as they are no longer available.

That is the main cause of the delays and breakdowns passengers experience and why a new fleet of trains, as promised by the government some time ago, is urgently needed; indeed, we are in Phase 2 of the government agreed Metro Reinvigoration program, which was to see the delivery of a new fleet of trains. So, what has happened to prevent this? It is clear now that the new trains should have been ordered in Phase One; indeed, the bid ought to have been in earlier, under the Blair led Labour government. Can we look forward to an improvement in the service, given the long list of complaints: breakdowns, delays, cancellations in recent years? Yes, but we are going to have to wait!

Though Nexus submitted a business case to the Department for Transport (DfT) for the above grant in October 2016 and T&WPTUG supported them in this, writing to both the DfT and the Transport Secretary, emphasizing the urgent need to replace the trains. We then had the nonsense from the Transport secretary and his suggestion of a PFI loan which was only dropped after a sustained campaign by several organisations including Newcastle PTUG with their online petition, before the grant was awarded. We can report that a contract has been tendered and several companies have indicated they will bid for the award to make the new carriages and rolling stock due 2022-4. To end on a more positive note, Nexus took a step to improve social inclusion by reducing the cost of travel on the metro to young people with the introduction of the POP card that enabled cheaper fares.

BUSES.

As I suggested in the last year's Annual Report, bus services are where the cracks are beginning to appear first under the present funding policy of public transport. In Appendix Two I have reproduced two articles that go into more detail; one, from the Campaign for Better Transport (CBT) and one by Chris Cheek who examines the actual fall in bus usage. We who rely upon bus services and the companies who provide them are confronted with a deepening crisis that requires a rethink. But first, a disclaimer: not all written here is the view of my organization or solely due to me; the transport press has been awash with this information for several years. Nor is it all the fault of the private bus operators, as they, like the rail companies are subject of the current government policy for the funding of their services.

Buses carry more commuters than all other forms of public transport combined. For example, in Newcastle, seventy five per cent of journeys are by bus and before I continue, keep in mind the bus services in Tyne & Wear are a lot better than

elsewhere in the UK. That is largely due to the hard work and commitment by the managers and staff of the three bus companies (Arriva, Go North East and Stagecoach). However, they, like everywhere else in the UK are confronted with a sharp fall in passengers, rising costs and cuts in government support. Since 2010, the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) has been cut by 45%, £182m and £20.5m in the last year. Over the same period, 3,347 routes (services) have either been reduced or withdrawn; 30% of those in the last year. (4) As I also reported last year, less than 40% of bus companies surveyed (England & Wales) claimed they had made sufficient profit to sustain their business ie just over a third. (5) Scotland has a similar problem. In Appendix Three, you will find two articles, one by Claire Haigh Greener Journeys and one by Nick Richardson Transport Planning Society that argue for a different approach to both service provision and funding.

So what we have is a severe fall in ridership with services being slashed and profits falling and no response from the current government other than:

“if you cannot run it commercially, then don’t provide that service” (6)

Congestion has been identified as one of the main causes and Begg’s report (7) suggested bus journey times have increased in length by 50% in urban areas over the last fifty years; eg, in Newcastle by 15% in past five years. (8) In that survey conducted by Stagecoach, (9) they found that a 10% decrease in operating speed leads to an 8% increase in operating costs. What that means for both service users and service providers is: slower speeds, longer journey times, higher running costs, higher fares, fewer passengers, more cars, more delays, higher costs and fares, fewer passengers, further decline in service. Two other casualties are failed punctuality and reliability. Result, increase in motor car use and more congestion as well as more carbon emissions, more air pollution, as the decline continues. This is a deadly spiral that will ultimately result, if allowed to continue, in no service at all... And the private motor car is the main cause and in particular, unnecessary car journeys. I would also suggest that bus operators have common cause with local authorities, starved of cash as both are in a similar situation and should pool their resources in the interests of the public service we still have.

Why Has This happened?

For an answer to that question we have to go back a long way, beyond the 80’s and de-regulation to understand a) the decline in bus use and b) the parallel increase in motor car ownership or love of the car. When the Conservative government de-regulated bus services in the mid 80’s one of their stated ambitions was to halt the decline in ridership over the previous thirty years. They claimed, incorrectly, that public ownership and council led bus services were to blame and that private corporations would be more in touch with the needs of bus users. That view, is still widely held today and is still peddled, despite all the evidence to the contrary, and not least, the fact that bus use has continued to decline. To understand the decline in ridership, we have to look further back to the Fifties and the post war generation; the ‘never had it so good’ for they really fell in love with the motor car. Then later, with the growth in access to finance and credit (which the Conservative government encouraged) the 80’s saw another spurt in car ownership.

The Eighties also saw other developments that impacted on bus use. The end of the ‘working day’ for many with the closure of the large centres of production eg, shipyards, steel mills and the pit closure programme following the miner’s defeat. However, privilege as always in the UK came to bear and those with, bought a car; while the rest, the elderly, vulnerable, marginalised were left waiting at the bus stop

for the privately run service. The question then which Thatcher's government didn't bother to ask: 'how could the private bus operators make a profit out of the poor and have nowts? They couldn't. That's why buses, regardless of the claims of Grayling and co, cannot be run on a commercial basis ie, cannot be run without public subsidy. Let us be clear about this. The figs for Tyne & Wear 2012-2013. (10) The cost to put a bus service across the five boroughs was approx. £140m. The three bus operators (Arriva, Go and Stagecoach) made approx. £100m ie they were £40m shy. That shortfall was made up from central taxation and local taxation in that they were given £60m; £40m to pay for the service and £20m for their shareholders profits. YES! You have read it correctly: You paid three times, once at the door to the bus when you purchased a ticket and again through the taxes deducted from your pay and again from the money you pay to our local councils. What do you get for that? Zilch! Well you have a better service than some other places; but you do not have say in where the bus goes, what you are charged, how frequently the service operates or what area is served etc. Yet, collectively we all pay nearly a third of the cost for the bus services that operate throughout Tyne & Wear.

What Next?

I have given a brief outline of some very important reports and enquiries into bus service provision so I will start there. The current situation as I have outlined above is not sustainable and I am concerned we will enter a period which will see many services and routes radically cut and particularly in the rural and less populated areas. Bus operators have historically used cross subsidy from profitable routes to fund those services that are not profitable. These will be the first casualties and is likely happening already? After that, will come the regular, time-tabled services in city centres. The situation where you see one or two double decker buses with a minimum number of passengers, followed by three double deckers, each almost empty is madness. The money isn't there and soon those buses won't be. In this respect, I believe we have to dramatically change bus service provision in our region. Can I refer you to Robert Montgomery's article reproduced in [Appendix Four](#): 'The Bus Re-invented'. Bob is a former Stagecoach manager but he is addressing what is crying out to be heard: **the bus has to compete with the car!** It needs to be more attractive to use, more accessible, flexible, reliable, cheaper and user friendly. We agree but would add that bus services needs to be integrated with the other modes of public transport and should operate under one central agency, possibly Transport for the North could be such with the proviso it was under local control.

Buses have to begin to compete with the convenience of car ownership. That will require an up to date assessment of who their potential service users are; including, where they are, when they will want a service and where they will want to go. In [Appendix Five](#) I have reproduced an article by Alex Warner entitled 'How Can We Lure Young Revelers Back To The Buses?' which bus operators will ignore at their peril. I suggest the answers entail a complete change to existing service provision eg to one that provides a 24/7 service; double deckers vehicles should be used only when demand requires them, while smaller vehicles (more numerous) should be used to service interiors; dropping points (stops) more commensurate with users needs eg, disability; bus service provision linked to modern technology which can be used to request a service, rather than running seven minute frequency levels with vehicles half empty. As Bob Montgomery's article makes clear, we can change. But only if we stop trying to provide the bus services of the past, when we were young: those service users like us are not there anymore. But there is a whole new generation, young males

if the latest research is accurate; it is women who are using cars (and not using public transport). We need to ask why and one of their answers will surely be ‘safety’?

Two other demons lurk behind this situation: air pollution and climate change. Congestion is actively contributing to an increase in air pollution; not just in the large city centres but UK wide, and not only through more cars on the roads but also, in the slow moving traffic jams where the levels of air pollution are off the scale. The levels of air pollution are regularly condemned by health authorities as being responsible for killing 45 thousand people unnecessarily each year in the UK. In Appendix Six, I have copied two reports provided by Liz Scarff from Living Streets Group and an article by Nick Richardson on ‘Making Streets More Efficient’. Climate change is of equal importance and should be given a priority it never receives. I believe what is required is a seismic change in all our behaviour but at the front of that queue should be unnecessary car use. **To achieve that requires a major re-think on the organization and delivery of bus services throughout the UK:** I suggest they have to begin competing with the car. We can also learn from other countries eg, five cities in Germany are proposing to introduce free bus travel to get people out of their cars and to tackle the high levels of air pollution, congestion and as important in the long term, climate change.

Has the present government taken on board any of this reality? For example, has the Bus Services Act (BSA) helped or made any difference? Not here in the north as I predicted last year, and not in most of the other parts of the UK. Some voluntary schemes or projects look interesting but they are voluntary and can be walked away from by any of the partners which, like the Bus services Act, leaves the situation unchanged. It gets more gloomy when you break it down. From the service users point of view, buses are unreliable, expensive, slow and a last resort for many (they would use a car if they could). From the bus operators point of view, they are losing money and passengers and faced with rising costs and a problem that appears insoluble. From the investors point of view, the industry is becoming high risk. Is anyone in the current government listening? I don’t think so, other than:

“if you can’t make a profit, don’t run the service.” (11)

Sound familiar? Yes. It’s the same approach they have to funding the railway or any other form of public service, regardless of need or anything else. We need a regulated and integrated transport service that meets the needs of everyone.

NORTH EAST COMBINED AUTHORITY REPORTS 2017-18

NECA TRANSPORT NORTH EAST COMMITTEE

A committee of the North East Combined Authority which meets several times a year at different town halls within the NECA area. It is nominally chaired by Councillor Nick Forbes.

It has had presentations about :

Transport for the North (TfN)

From April 2018, TfN’ was incorporated as a Sub-National Transport Body. The Strategic Transport Plan to be adopted summer 2018 after a 13 weeks consultation in January. The Plan will set out priorities up to 2050.

North East Rail Projects

Sunderland Rail Station – progress slow on concourse improvements. Funding gap of £6.1m but partners optimistic that funding gap will be bridged.
Horden Rail Station – funding now in place for two platform station and car park with Durham CC
anticipating 2020 opening date.

Northern Powerhouse Rail

Strategic Outline Business Case to be completed. Upgrading of the ECML and potentially adjacent routes to create a four- track railway and uplift from 6 trains per hour to 9 trains per hour.

They have commissioned an East Coast to Scotland Rail study and a Yorkshire to Scotland Road Study.

ECML franchise to be replaced 2020 by East Coast Partnership.

Network Rail have an East Coast Route Study with investment choices from the study developed into a business case development stages to build the case to government for funding.

May 2018 Rail Timetable Changes

Some improvements scheduled for May 2018 have been delayed 6 months due to lack of electrification work completion in the North West which would have released diesel trains for the North East. The proposed half hourly Newcastle-Carlisle service delayed from December 2017 until December 2018. Transpennine Express

Manchester University-York service was extended to Newcastle from May 2018.

Grand Central extra journeys

from Sunderland from December 2018. Problem of cancellations on Transpennine from May 2018 due to shortage of drivers.

Network Rail

NECA have expressed concern to Network Rail regarding upgrading of ECML north of York In control period 6 2019-24 funding only for basic maintenance, renewals and power upgrades but not for planned future growth.

Metro Futures New Fleet Procurement Update

The Metro fleet replacement has commenced the procurement process. The Government Capital Grant is £337m plus £25m from NECA making a total of £362m for new fleet and depot. The contract will be awarded January 2020 and new trains should be delivered from December 2021 with 84 metrocars (42 trains) and a new depot at South Gosforth. There will be a train service agreement, a long-term maintenance contract with the new supplier to take over maintenance of the existing fleet until the new fleet is introduced. In order for DfT to release funding, a Full Business Case to be submitted and approved by DfT following the procurement process. There will be three agreements : Manufacture & Supply Agreement, Train Services Agreement for maintenance of fleet and Depot construction Contract.

Nexus issued a selection questionnaire on 6th June inviting potential suppliers to respond by 9th July. Formal tender documents will be released in September culminating in detailed negotiations taking place before a winner is chosen at the end of 2019. A contract will be awarded by the beginning of 2020.

NEXUS

Since April 2016 until at least May 2019, Nexus have a partnership with Northumberland CC to deliver timetable information for over 850 bus stops in Northumberland.

TRANSPORT NORTH EAST (TYNE & WEAR) SUB-COMMITTEE

This committee meets several times a year at different town hall locations and looks at the performance of the Metro and Tyne Tunnel. Metro performance has deteriorated with some significant disruptions and continuing challenges of maintaining the ageing fleet. Budget surplus of £2.591m despite reduction in Metro patronage.

Metro average punctuality deteriorating. Cumulative Metro patronage is close to target and farebox revenue has started the year ahead of budget. There was a power supply problem at a substation on 29th October 2017 leading to a system-wide suspension. A report made six recommendations to prevent a recurrence of the situation and reduce impact. All the recommendations have been implemented. From 2019 the new North of Tyne Combined Authority (Newcastle, North Tyneside & Northumberland) & the existing North East Combined Authority (Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland) will administer transport functions through a Joint Committee of both authorities.

Richard Rook TWPTUG Representative observer NECA

Local Public Transport User Groups.

Work of Newcastle Public Transport Users Group 2017-18

The Newcastle Public Transport Users Group was established in 2015 with a Constitution and now meets at the LNER Community Room at the Central Station. Regular attendance is around 8 and we normally meet four or five times per year following the Newcastle Transport Forum.

The first years 2015-16 and 2016-17 were spent securing a separate identity for the branch and our presence on the Newcastle Transport Forum. We held a successful Pollution Seminar in April 2016 jointly with SPACE for Gosforth. At our last AGM on 5th June 2018, the branch elected Chair - Alistair Ford, Secretary - Richard Rook and Research Officer - Liz Scarff

It was decided to campaign on specific Newcastle issues, conduct research and inform. We deal with transport, highways and pollution issues which affect residents in Newcastle. The Chair and Secretary represent NPTUG on the Newcastle Transport Forum.

The Chair is a member of the Blue House Working Group

We are campaigning and are working on the following :

- Arriva North East polluting older buses on Gosforth High Street – letters asking for newer buses.
- Stagecoach in Newcastle – agreement to work towards common goals and co-operate on Transport Forum to achieve recognition for public transport in the City's highway schemes.

NPTUG to co-operate with Stagecoach to establish Bus User Forum in Newcastle.

- Newcastle City Council Bus Shelter Consultation – on-going NPTUG campaign to achieve

Real Time Bus Information at stops. Contact with Sally Herbert City Council.

- On-going Development of “Platform” Facebook page as main vehicle to widen membership.
- We have responded to City Council consultations on air pollution. The City Council are formulating an Air Pollution Strategy joint with Gateshead and North Tyneside Councils. This is on-going and the policy must be decided early 2019. We have conducted pollution monitoring in City “hotspots”. Collaboration with Kingston Park Neighbourhood Forum who have conducted air pollution monitoring in Kingston Park under the auspices of Newcastle University Urban Observatory.
- Representation on Blue House Working Group but decision of City Council awaited on future of roundabout.
- John Dobson Street – representation to City Council re unsatisfactory positioning of southbound bus stop causing road safety concerns.
- On-going Representation joint with Elders Council to City Council to procure bus stops on Queen Victoria Road to serve RVI
- Killingworth Road closure
- Representation to City Council re problems of Council’s non-adherence to the Terms of Reference to Newcastle Transport Forum. City Council promise to adherence to Terms of Reference.
- Increasing membership and broadening demographic of NPTUG. A leaflet has been drafted and will be printed and hopefully displayed on notice boards at Newcastle Metro stations and other places in the public realm.
- Alive After Five NE1 initiative which provides free parking after 5pm in Council multi-storey car parks. We have asked them to consider a similar initiative for public transport.
- Blackett Street pedestrianisation and diversion of cross-city bus services. We are involved in City Council consultations and discussions with Stagecoach. We are concerned that the temporary diversionary route with only one inconvenient stop may be unsatisfactory for a significant minority of passengers. We intend to survey existing bus stops in the Central Arcade/Grainger Market area in order to find an additional stopping place.

We work closely with TWPTUG as our parent organisation and share common aspirations and value our relationship with the Elders Council, Nexus and the City council.

Richard Rook Secretary NPTUG 25/9/2018

North Tyneside Public Transport Users Group.

The North Tyneside Public Transport Users Group was established during 2013 and now has a contact list with 315. We hold our meetings at Whitley Bay Library, every two months with an average of eight attending. The meetings are advertised in the local free newspaper which has been very supportive, regularly publishing our letters and adverts.

In addition we set up a Transport Forum in partnership with North Tyneside Council in 2014 and is attended regularly by councillors, transport officers, Nexus and bus and rail managers. Councillor John Harrison Chair of the NECA Transport Sub Committee is a regular attendee. The Forum is held 4/5 times each year and unlike Newcastle Transport Forum, our Forum is open to the public to attend and bring their transport problems and suggestions, to improve the service in the area in which they

live. The Forum moves around the borough, to allow residents from the different parts of North Tyneside to attend. The venue is always a local library eg, Whitley Bay, North Shields, Wallsend, Killingworth and is advertised in the local press. We are grateful to John Cram Transport Officer for the borough, for organizing each event with Nexus support.

Recent Campaigns by North Tyneside Public Transport Users Group (NTPTUG)

We campaigned against the enactment of the Bus Services Bill in its initial form and against several of the clauses, the most pernicious being Clause 21 that would deprive local councils from being allowed to own and operate their own, municipal bus company. Given that the 11 remaining municipal companies are the only ones that win any awards for service we felt very strongly about this. We were joined in our campaign by the Northern Group of Labour MPs and both Alan Campbell MP and our Mayor, Norma Redfearn both joined us at one of the photo-shoots we organized to publicise the issue. Despite severe criticism from both the House of Lords and the Transport Select Committee, the Conservative Government ignored this and passed the Bill with the clause intact and we now have the Bus Services Act to deal with and hopefully, get amended.

The issue of air pollution and the link to the high and unnecessary mortality rates that are resulting from the particulates found in diesel fuel is also a major concern for us. We campaign regularly against motor vehicles and buses that use diesel fuel and target areas where traffic congestion is high. For example, this year we tried to get traffic banned from the seafront on 'Harbour Day' at Cullercoats, and despite doing a lot of contact work to get the local businesses and the RNLI agreement it still did not happen. We will try again next year.

In April, Friends of the Earth (FoE) had a national campaign to research the levels of pollution in selected areas across the UK. We supported the local FoE group, who undertook monitoring duties across North Tyneside. The results of their survey showed that in the parts of the borough they monitored, the levels of air pollution were in excess of the permitted national figure. Along with several other campaigning groups eg, Living Streets, Keep our NHS Public, North Tyneside Cycling Group, NTPTUG and FoE wrote to the borough Health Officer who advised her figures did not coincide with our findings. We are still campaigning about this and the next step is a plan to meet with Council Officers to see what is planned for the Council's response, following legal action taken against central government by 'Client Earth' and where the court found the UK government in breach of permitted levels of 'killer' pollution.

Bus Services in North Tyneside, as elsewhere have been subjected to cuts and the cancellation of some routes and we have received numerous complaints from members, particularly about the Number 1 service provided by Go North East that frequently, is late or you wait until the service that is timetabled behind arrives. We have also been involved in supporting the residents of Holly House Retirement Home on Marine Drive, Whitley Bay in their campaign for a bus to stop nearby, after Arriva changed the route of their service 57. After a long campaign from 2015, and which Arriva were not able to give any assistance, we enlisted the help of Cllr Sandra Graham. Nexus then stepped in and agreed to re-route a secured service (W2) pass near the home. Another success involved assisting a couple from Wallsend/Rose Hill area who were seeking an improved bus service in the area where they lived. After

liaison with the private operator, Go North East, it was agreed they would re-schedule one of their services to cover that area. Another matter is the contract for bus shelters which are being renewed in all boroughs and we have requested a new one to be placed near to the 'Fish Quay, with success.

Rail Issues. We have raised our objection to the Driver Only Operation which is planned to be introduced on most rail routes and have joined the 'Action for Rail' campaign, which has argued that no real passenger safety test has been undertaken. The only tests have been about avoiding driver collision. Our concerns are about the safety of older and vulnerable travelers, particularly when many stations are now un-staffed. Members have also had many letters about this in the local papers. We are also campaigning for the rail network to be renationalized, given the exorbitant fares charged by the franchised rail operators; rising another 3.6% in January 2018 and the poor service we receive for that.

Other issues.

We have had un-reconciled differences in our discussions with the Council regarding cycling on pavements and have requested the Council to install separation lines along the river front, with regard to the safety of walkers and cyclists. We have also requested, without success for double yellow lines to be installed at the junction of St Georges Road and Mast Lane, as we have argued, it is an accident waiting to happen, given the amount of parking and stopping near to the shops and the limited vision this creates for other users: car drivers and pedestrians. I would also point out that pavement stones in the Cullercoats area are deteriorating and not being repaired, no doubt, due to central government cuts to Council's budget however, I am advised that you can pay for the pavement to be repaired outside of your own home.

Our group are supporting the opposition to a new housing development in the Murton area, due to the likely increase in traffic congestion and air pollution and I addressed the Planning Inspector's review of the application on this matter. But to no avail.

Vicki Gilbert Secretary
North Tyneside Public Transport Users Group.

Affiliated Organisations

Work of the Elders Council Transport and Highways Working Group

I have been the Elders Council Representative on the Management Committee of Tyne & Wear Public Transport Users Group since October 2015.

The Elders Council Transport & Highways Working Group is well attended and meets on a regular basis with Bill Ions as Chair. It discusses transport and highways issues which affect residents in Newcastle. The Group monitors public transport and highways developments and gives advocacy to older people on these matters. We have good contacts with the City Council, Nexus, Arriva, Go-North East, Stagecoach and the Royal Victoria Infirmary. A number of our members are knowledgeable and monitor the transport and highways situation. Claire Tulley from Nexus has regularly updated us on Nexus and Metro matters such as Metro Reinvigoration, Concessionary Passes and Metro Station Refurbishments. Meetings normally feature a presentation given by an invited guest from a number of transport and highways related organizations at which there is a question and answer session where our members are able to raise issues.

We have had presentations during 2017-18 from the following :

- Hospital transport and problems accessing hospitals by bus
- Blackett Street pedestrianisation and diversion of buses – several meetings
- Northumberland Street revitalisation
- Work of the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT)
- Elders Council Active Voices Project in East End involving bus passenger feedback
- Stagecoach in Newcastle
- Bus Shelter Consultation – Newcastle City Council

Consultation Comments

The Group has been consulted by the City Council and we have submitted comments on a number of issues including Highway Improvements and the recent Bus Shelter Contract Consultation where we are pressing for Real Time Bus Information to be provided. We have been consulted by the City Council on the temporary closure of Blackett Street during the Great Exhibition of the North. This is an on-going topic as the City Council intend a permanent closure, possibly in 2019.

Provision of better transport practice for older people

We have secured bus accessibility improvements to hospitals and have aspirations to have the Royal Victoria Infirmary on Queen Victoria Road better served by public transport and have taken up the matter with the RVI and City Council Officers. We are also closely monitoring the closure of Blackett Street to ensure that older bus passengers are not inconvenienced or placed at a disadvantage as a result of the rerouting of cross-city bus services.

For the last nine years, we have produced a leaflet “Summer Outings using a Concessionary Bus Pass” which is useful to older people wanting a day out using local bus services covering the North East, into Cumbria, North Yorkshire and the Scottish Borders. This has been revised for 2018 with some new destinations.

We work closely with Tyne and Wear Public Transport Users Group (TWPTUG) and their Newcastle Branch as we share common aspirations and value our close relationship with Nexus and the respect of the City Council.

Richard Rook Elders Council Representative on TWPTUG Management Committee
25/9/2018

REPORT ON TYNESIDE LIVING STREETS GROUP **2018**

Tyneside Living Streets group upholds the Mission of Living Streets Charity which is to achieve a better walking environment and inspire people to walk more.

The group continues to meet regularly at MEA House in Newcastle. The group contributed comments to a recent Board Meeting in London which was held to discuss whether Living Streets should support Cycling UK in their efforts to have road safety issues examined across the board, not just those pertaining to cyclists. It was suggested by the group that cyclists did not fully understand the fear they engendered in vulnerable members of the public, that the issue of mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs also needed scrutiny, and that the Highway Code needed to

be introduced into schools so that children could become familiar at an early age with the rules that pedestrians, cyclists and other road users should follow to ensure their safety on roads, pavements and paths.

The group has agreed to liaise with other groups which are interested in road safety, such as Space for Gosforth/Jesmond. A group member has written a report about what Hackney Council is doing to keep vehicles at a distance from school gates to minimise the children's exposure to noxious emissions from cars.

The group is still pressing Newcastle City Council to repaint the double yellow lines by the dropped kerb outside Molineux Health Centre in Byker to remind drivers not to obstruct the dropped kerb which is used by vulnerable pedestrians and wheelchair users to access the Health Centre.

At their last meeting, the group decided to take some action towards air pollution mitigation in Newcastle in a way which reflects their ethos: encouraging schools to plant hedgerows where possible around the school grounds to protect the children inside from harmful particulates, which will be trapped by the closely knit plants. These will also enhance the street environment for pedestrians.

The next meeting of the group is scheduled for 6 pm on Monday 26th November 2018 at MEA House.

Liz Scarff

Friends of the Earth. North Tyneside Branch

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this years AGM of the Tyne & Wear Public Transport Users Group. Which we, along with other organizations are proud of establishing and being part of the Management Committee.

Friends of the Earth are known for their work nationally and internationally campaigning about the threat to the Earth posed by the consequences of human action such as climate change and pollution. The organisation subscribes to the Sustainable Development Goals and through its local groups seeks to implement them locally often in partnership with others such as TWPTUG. Monitoring the levels of Air Pollution in different parts of North Tyneside where we found it exceeded the legal level is a recent example of our collaboration. That joint work is to continue.

However our members have been active locally and regionally campaigning often with many other

Partners, on plastic pollution eg, cleaner beaches at Whitley sands and St. Marys Island, pollution,

Waste and successfully campaigning against an 'open caste' mine at Drurdge Bay in Northumberland. We have with others, demonstrated against the introduction of fracking in North Yorkshire, while other members have been engaged in a range of issues and campaigns in both Newcastle and Durham. We are also pleased to support the Green Bean Market at Whitley Bay Metro. Our networks are valued, growing and extensive.

The local branch in North Tyneside has been active in the borough for some fifteen years and for much of that time, able to play the role of critical friend to the local council, in their efforts to address climate change and implement the Sustainable Development Policy. Over the last few years however, we have sought to raise awareness throughout the Borough of how beautiful the natural environment is and to accept that we are all part of it. Therefore how crucial it is to our wellbeing and important it is to take action to protect it.

In the coming months our branch of Friends of the Earth will be taking up one of the Transport Users Group's central aims - air pollution from the carbon emissions from cars. It is estimated that motor vehicle emissions are responsible for over 50,000 deaths per annum across the UK. We plan to target stationary cars with their engines not turned off. Recently an FoE member counted 35 cars parked in a supermarket car park, which still had their engines running. This month we will hold a demo at a Whitley Bay supermarket car park where four placards will be held by members with messages such as "Please cut air pollution - turn off engines when parked". The object is to raise motorists awareness of the deadly effect of carbon monoxide fumes.

North Tyneside Friends of the Earth branch meets on the last Tuesday of each month in the Community Centre of St. Pauls Church, Park View, Whitley Bay. The group is Co-ordinated by Malcolm Scott and Chaired by Steve Manchee and their meetings begin at 7.30p.m. You are most welcome to join us.

Please note we are holding a special meeting,

At: Whitley Bay Library. On: Saturday 1st December 10.pm – 2.pm.

To discuss future campaigns and issues, and how members see the branch developing. The debate should result in a programme of firm campaigning action. Malcolm Scott, Co-ordinator

North East Pensioners Association

Impact Report on Issues Affecting Pensioners Wellbeing In the Region October 2018

1. CARE HOMES & HOUSING

Government Powers To Fine Rogue Landlords. These will be used By Newcastle City Council to impose fines of up to £30K on irresponsible landlords leasing unsafe premises.

Blyth Care Home Burglary Drama. A carer foiled the attempt by raising the alarm in the early hours when the burglar was in the home of a 77 year old dementia suffer. The burglar escaped.
Secure doors and windows.

2. ECONOMY

Team Valley Next - Goes Under. Locals and the 56 staff were shocked. Yet another hit for our high street retail sector.

Nissan Back Office Staff To be Cut. Car sales have dropped throughout Europe. Nissan is cutting 200 jobs across the UK but not on the manufacturing side.

3. HEALTH AND WELFARE

Alzheimer's "GameChanger" App Study. Alzheimers Society have worked with the University of Oxford's Big Data Institute. The app features a series of games designed to test specific aspects of memory which are affected by early stages of the disease. A third of sufferers go unidentified. We have about 35k sufferers in the North East and this will increase.

Sitting Down For 2 Hours - Risk. Sitting for long periods can cause circulation problems according to Birmingham University research. So walk around if you can.
Glaucoma. It's important to have regular eye tests so problems such as glaucoma can be diagnosed and treated as early as possible. Early treatment can help stop your vision becoming severely affected.

North East CCG's Legal Win. A landmark battle against drug giants has been won by 12 NHS CCGs, relating to a drug to treat the biggest cause of age-related vision loss in the UK. Savings on Avastin could be enough to pay for an extra 270 nurses or 266 heart transplants every year in the region. In a financially stretched NHS this could be life-changing for thousands of patients. Source Telegraph.

New Drink Guidelines Not Displayed - 14 Units Per Week. The Director of Balance said, "It is clear that the multi-national alcohol producers are failing to inform people about the health risks associated with alcohol including 7 types of cancer, heart disease and stroke.
Ref. Chief Medical Officers Advice 2016.

Life Expectation Reduced. The Office for National Statistics report shows that the UK has had the lowest rate of improvement in life expectancy since 2011 among western nations other than the USA. This has added to claims that austerity is the only credible explanation. Note also the Kings Fund report on what is happening.

Mobile Phone Contract Overcharge. Citizens Advice reported that as many as 4m customers have been overcharged for phones they already own. CA found that people over 65 are twice as likely to be over-charged for phones they own. CA said, "It is unacceptable that mobile providers are knowingly over-charging customers".

4. NHS

NHS Foundation Care Trusts Prepare For Winter. Many lessons were learnt in our region from last years double onslaught from the "Beast from the East" and "norovirus". Some trusts remain worried about shortfalls but although not all A&E targets were met last year the region remained a high performer.

North East Ambulance Service Winter Performance. NEAS praised the public in last years crisis for not putting unnecessary pressure on the service. They said, "We got to every single patient who needed us and where there was a delay a doctor or nurse rang them regularly to make sure they were OK".

Regional Bad Blood. Following the announcement of a public inquiry into the blood contamination scandal of the 1980s, a UK court has now ruled that surviving victims may sue the government to obtain compensation. After decades, the thousands of victims and their families (including those in our region) will feel they have finally been given an opportunity to obtain justice. Source - the Conversation & Guardian.

Brexit Impact NHS. Not clear at this time how this will work out in the long term but in the short term there is definitely a wish to retain EU NHS staff commitment.

South Tyneside Surgery To Close. Notice has been given to 3,000 patients that the Park Surgery in Hebburn will close.

Merger Of South Tyneside Hospital With Sunderland. Chair of the campaign group against said the merger plans will lead to the downgrading and closure of services at South Tyneside hospital. The Healthcare planning group are continuing to engage the public and welcome any feedback from all parts of the community and stress that both hospitals will continue to exist and play key roles in future.

CEO Gateshead Foundation Trust - Dismissed. It is not clear at the time of writing whether the CEO, in post since 2006, will exercise his right of appeal.

5. Boundary Commission Redraws The Regional Political Map. This has caused some objections as the region is set lose 4 MP's as part of the national cut from 650 to 600 MP's. Claims of gerrymandering have been raised by those opposed saying the commission may have met the criteria but that criteria was set by the government at between roughly 71,000 to 78,500 voters each. The new parliamentary boundaries for our 25 North East constituencies are as follows:

Berwick and Morpeth	Middlesbrough and South Thornaby
Billingham & and Sedgefield	Newcastle upon Tyne and East
Bishop Auckland	Newcastle upon Tyne North West
Blaydon	North Durham
Blyth and Ashington	North Tyneside
City of Durham and Easington	North West Durham
Darlington	Redcar and East Cleveland
Gateshead	South Shields
Hartlepool	Stockton and Yarm
Hexham and Cramlington	Sunderland Central
Houghton and Seaham	Tynemouth
Jarrow	Washington and Sunderland West
Middlesbrough and Eston	

6. POVERTY

National Audit Office - Tackling Problem Debt Report. The NAO estimates that the increased use of public health and housing services by people with problem debt costs taxpayers an additional £248 million a year, and around £900 million a year to the economy as a whole. Due to gaps in the government's data, it is not possible to model other impacts including on employment and benefits.

Universal Credit Claimed In The Region. As with all kinds of poverty the extended family shares the burden e.g. the grandparents help out in financial emergencies where they can. The Trussell Trust - the UK's largest foodbank network - has reported foodbank referral rates where the full Universal Credit rollout has taken place are more than twice the national average. The Bishop of Durham has put his name to a petition calling on the Government to "fix" Universal Credit.

7. SECURITY

Carer Gaoled For Stealing £8500 From 94 Year Old. The judge stressed in handing down a 15 month sentence to the accused, from Gateshead, that not only had the victim suffered but also public confidence in the care profession had been undermined by his crime.

Sunderland Man Gaoled For Robbing 81 Year Old In Home. The robber left the pensioner bruised and terrified after pushing and shoving her around in her own home while posing as a window cleaner.

Cyber Crime 1. Be aware of fake British Gas emails claiming to offer refunds. The links provided in the emails lead the phishing websites that are designed to steal your usernames and passwords. **Never** automatically click on a link in an unexpected email or text.

Cyber Crime 2. There has been an increase in reports about fake Netflix emails claiming that there's an issue with your account or that your account has been suspended. Netflix phishing website is designed to steal your username and password, as well as payment details. **Never** automatically click on a link in an unexpected email or text.

Cyber Crime 3. As with 1 and 2 this is a fake TV Licensing email re a refund. Yes you've got it's a scam after your ID details. This we have explained below:

CYBER CRIME - fish'ing or Phishing Explained. This is the act of sending an email to a user falsely claiming to be an established legitimate enterprise in an attempt to scam the user into surrendering private information that will be used for identity theft. Phishing email will typically direct the user to visit a website where they are asked to update personal information, such as a password, credit card, social security, or bank account numbers, that the legitimate organisation already has. The website, however, is bogus and will capture and steal any information the user enters on the page (click "website spoofing").

8. TRANSPORT

Tyne and Wear Public Transport User Group AGM. It will be held in the Balmoral Room, at the Royal Station Hotel, Neville St, Newcastle on Monday 15th October at 6pm. Guest Speaker: Christian Wolmar author and campaigner on Public Transport who will speak on: ***What is a Good Public Transport Service and How to Get It.*** Admission is free but it is necessary to register through Eventbrite to ensure everyone can be accommodated

NEXUS Consultation on Companion Card Scheme This consultation is about proposed changes to the eligibility criteria for the Nexus Companion Card concessionary travel product. Companion Card holders can take a companion with them on their journey if they need to do so, free of charge. To take part on line click here. To contact by phone 0191 2020747 by post 33 St James' Boulevard NE1 4AX.

Oyster Cards. These have been tested in Yorkshire and could start be rolled out before the end of the year i.e. one ticket allowing you to use it on all modes of public transport. This according to North East Combined Authority Report. Chronicle.

The North East Pensioners Association meet

At: The Irish Centre, Gallowgate, N/cle. On: 1st Monday every month at 10.am. – 12.Noon

Sean Fahey
NEPA Secretary

Conclusion.

If you have read so far you have met with an amazing group of people, for all these groups and affiliated organizations act and maintain their operation either without any remuneration or minimal funds; They do this as volunteers and because of their deep concern for their communities and the welfare of the people who reside here; and also, the environmental damage that is being done to our wonderful region.

At the beginning of this report, I used the word, frustrated to describe the past year. When I consider the contribution to improving public transport in our region, that the people above have made and then look at the damage being done by the actions (or lack of action) of the present government, frustration does not express the sense of rage at something which is deliberately being allowed to decline; which is the product of a backward looking ideology and political ineptitude.

Both the rail and the bus industry are being starved of the vital financial investment they require in order to provide the people with an adequate service while the delays to financing the much needed refurbishment of the Metro in our region, are both deliberate and politically driven and causing major inconvenience to the people who rely upon the service. As I asked above, why do we allow such a shambolic approach by politicians to the management of the public transport service we all need and pay exorbitant amounts for?

What is needed is a national transport policy. I do not mean re-nationalisation. The last thing we need are more Whitehall mandarins and career civil servants. We have that now. Transport should be managed as locally as possible and by regional authorities which have both statutory and fiscal powers; and which have responsibility for all forms of public transport including, rail, buses, metros, ferries, road and car use. Yes car use as we have to find some way to persuade drivers to desist from using them and one answer to that is a more attractive and flexible use of buses. That body should be composed essentially by those employed in these industries and who depend upon them for a living and of course (this is revolutionary), those who use and rely upon them, as well as garnering local transport expertise: the objective here should be a transport service for the benefit of all.

If I can turn to the bus industry in particular, we all are caught up in a failing industry and with a poor public image. We are trying to organize and deliver bus services on a commercial basis and to an imagined public that is no longer there. There's nothing wrong with having commercial involvement in the provision of public transport with the 'proviso' it is just that; it is not running the particular service as a commercial operation ie, when the profit motive becomes the *raison d'être*, the public service gets left behind. (12) That is the story of the last thirty years, as is the continued decline in bus ridership. We have to start seeing the bus as an opportunity to tackle a range of problems beginning with: congestion, car dependence, air pollution, climate change and social exclusion. It could meet everyone's needs for communication at both the local and longer journeys.

The problem of public engagement is also central here. The lead author of the 'Transport for Quality of Life' report 2014 (13) Dr Ian Taylor suggested that most people still believe that local authorities either delivered or managed their bus service or were responsible for the poor service they received (14) and my own experience bears this out. I have had countless conversations with people waiting at bus stops (I

use a bus everyday) and I have yet to find anyone with the remotest idea of how bus services are organized and delivered or who is to blame when things go wrong. A clear example is when a bus is late and we can wait for anything up to forty minutes, when two, three, four or more double deckers with the same service number will arrive in convoy form; with the two vehicles at the front packed and rest near to empty. Those who grumble have little or no idea and when I ask about who controls the flow of traffic, the frequency of the service or the levels of congestion or who is actually responsible for their service, I am either looked at blankly or told, "it's the council to blame!" This lack of any real information or understanding, particularly of the costs involved has to change if we are to make any progress.

We have to engage with why people use buses in order to unlock the present situation. We need to and can reach out to people. The Transport Forums that T&WPTUG have helped to create and which our councils welcome and support, are a first step and a platform. In order to attract greater public involvement we have to offer something that will improve their situation with regards to public transport. That is why we have to adopt a campaign for the full integration of all public transport as our main object and slogan and the first step in that is the demand for re-regulation under one central transport agency. **We need a national transport policy with regional authorities given statutory responsibility for all forms ie rail, metro, buses and cars; yes cars because motorists need to be persuaded to get out of them and the answer to that is a more attractive, flexible and affordable public transport service and that can only be achieved by adequate investment from central government. And central to this are the cities we live in and the environment there: it should be understood as a right to live in a healthy, safe and pleasant place to explore. Not what we have now!**

Notes.

1. Figures quoted in Passenger Transport journal June 22nd 2018
2. Norman Baker quoted in Passenger Transport journal September 28th 2018.
3. Figs quoted from last year's bid for Metro Reinvigoration grant.
4. Figs quoted in Passenger Transport journal June 22nd 2018.
5. The Bus Industry Performance Report 2017. Pub by Passenger Transport Monitor 2017.
6. Grayling 's Advice to Bus Operators quoted at UK Bus Summit Conference 2018.
7. The Impact of Congestion on Bus Passengers. 2016. Prof, David Begg..
8. Nationwide Survey On effects and Costs of Congestion Conducted by Stagecoach Bus Co
9. Ibid.
10. Reported in audit papers Costs of Bus Services Tyne & Wear (pre NECA) 2014.
11. Jones, one of Grayling's predecessors at UK Bus Summit 2017. Quoted in P T journal 24th Feb 2017.
12. The problem with nationalized transport was that it was being run along commercial lines before service.
13. Transport for Quality of Life Report 2015. Dr Ian Taylor and Lynn Sloman.
14. Ibid. 'Transport for Quality of Life' Report 2015.

Paul Baker
Secretary
Tyne & Wear Public Transport Users Group

Appendix One

DOO: we cut costs but ignored the Passengers!

Does 'driver only operation' (DOO) ignore the needs of railway passengers?
Peter Rayner. Former British Rail Safety Manager believes it does.

The question of DOO and the needs of passengers has been much debated and is currently very much in the news. I was among the first generation of railway managers to consider Driver Only Operation. We thought about it, and indeed everything else, in terms of safe operation.

We developed the concept for empty trains, freight trains, and indeed any train that did not have passengers on it, to look for technical ways to protect it in times of delay or derailment. So Guards became less and less a feature in a purely operating sense.

Therefore, when we started to introduce DOO on passenger trains in the early 1980s, we again saw safety and the operating difficulties almost entirely in terms of avoiding collisions. We did not see it in terms of passenger assistance.

That was flawed thinking and I now strongly believe that our approach was misguided, having been influenced by the work that I do now for the National Pensioners' Convention and AGE Platform on older people's mobility, and also by my chairman—

ship of the Accessibility and Inclusion Forum of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport.

However, I did have concerns a long time ago and recorded my doubts in my book 'On and Off the Rails', published in the late 1990s. I stated then that by the year 2000, I believed DOO would come to be seen as a mistake. This is how I explained it:

"I came later to say to Leslie Davis, Chairman of the Drivers Council - also to others at meetings on Driver Only Operation, that single manning, certainly driver only operation, the main source of railway economies in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, would be considered by the time we arrived at the turn of the century as one of the evils. It will be seen to have contributed to more accidents, more nervous breakdowns, more heart attacks, more vandalism and unruly behaviour on trains, and that after reflection we will return to adequately staffed trains and adequately staffed stations".

Well I got that wrong - at least as far as the timing was concerned. However I take comfort from the fact that now at last we are beginning to question the concept, not on the grounds of pressure to staff, which I had envisaged, but simply and sensibly in terms of the customer. **I believe a particularly key issue now is the question of who is going to look after vulnerable people in a world of unstaffed stations?**

That person (and I do not personally care what he or she is called) should be competent, trained, have contact with the train driver, be present on all trains going to any un-staffed station, and get out on to the platform each time the train stops. Who opens and shuts the doors is also not important. When the closure procedure happens is important, but not who presses the button.

So how did we get into the present muddle and locked into a dispute?

I suppose it is my fault, or the men of my generation's fault (I say men since we were predominately a male organisation at the time, which was perhaps part of the trouble).

Our mistake was that we pursued cost savings without considering the wider issues. It was, in fairness, done before the Equality Acts and the introduction of many other sensible provisions affecting disabled and, indeed, older people.

However, under the 'Access for All initiative' by successive governments, money has been spent making stations accessible - a great deal of money, in fact, and that money is now wasted on the altar of political dogma that stations should be un-staffed to save money. This concept of running a railway, or indeed other public facilities, by relying solely on electronic technology and disembodied voices, is the way to ensure the old and generally vulnerable people remain in their homes.

My present stance defending the presence of Guards (or 'on train competent people') for the customer is really because I have seen the foolishness of our 'savings at any price' approach. Former colleagues of mine are saying: "But we have had DOO for years." "Yes," I point out, "But we used to hang people: it doesn't make it right." After the first rush of introducing Driver Only Operation – predominantly in

situations where trains stopped frequently and all stations were staffed - the pace slowed and for many years I believed that beyond the conurbations and their intensively used services DOO was unlikely to become an issue. Now for the first time in years, managers and politicians are pursuing a policy that calls for more and more DOO.

The practice had its resurrection in Sir Roy McNulty's 2011 so called 'Value for Money' report which stated DOO is: "a safe method of operation and improves performance". And that DOO should be: "the default position...with a second member of train crew only being provided where there is a commercial, technical or other imperative." Well, I believe the needs of older and disabled people on trains, and getting on and off trains, to be exactly such an imperative, otherwise they are being discriminated against.

Research, including by Transport Focus has shown that older and disabled passengers value the presence of uniformed staff more than most people. The government is adamant about the need to get disabled people back in work and encourage the growing number of older people to work longer, yet it is bent on making that more difficult, nigh impossible, if they want or indeed need to use trains to do so. **It seems no one in government is prepared to accept that McNulty got it wrong.** It is beginning truly to look as if the driving force is politics and a desire to face down the trade unions' influence that has existed within the railway for years - and mostly as a force for good. It saddens me that trade unions are often seen as the enemy within.

Compromise is not a dirty word and the ability to meet in the middle seems to have been lost. Lost, I fear, in many industries, not just the railway, because in Britain we have forgotten how to manage. Management today is not about human relations but is communication by electronic means - and often using convoluted language. Quite recently a young rail manager spoke to me when I raised a problem regarding the positioning of wheelchair ramps, of the need 'to find ways to solutionise.' Invented jargon, perhaps, but what that young manager has to understand in his 'solutionising' world is simply this: **if a train with no staff apart from the driver in the cab calls at a station with no staff, anyone with a disability or other forms of reduced mobility cannot board the train**

Printed and adapted from an article published in the journal 'Railnews' April 2017

Appendix Two

Bus users continue to disappear in droves

Scotland led decline in first quarter of 2018 with 5.8% drop in bus journeys. Patronage was down 1.9% across Great Britain, and it looks set to continue



Chris Cheek
Analyst

► Bus demand in Great Britain fell once more in the quarter ended March 31, 2018 - by 1.9%, according

to statistics published by the Department for Transport. The fall meant that the rolling year total number of bus passenger journeys went below 4.9 billion for the third quarter in a row - the lowest patronage for 12 years.

The fall was not unexpected, as the economy continued to be in the doldrums, with poor winter weather, continuing falls in High Street footfall and faltering growth in the wider economy.

The DfT's provisional seasonally adjusted estimates put total demand during the 12 weeks at 1,202 million passenger journeys, compared with 1,225 million in the same quarter in 2017, a fall of 1.9%. The figures show that demand fell by 5.8% in Scotland, 3.7% in Wales, 2.9% in the English Shires, 1.2% in London but just 0.1% in the English PTE areas. The total for Great Britain outside London was 2.4% down at 649 million.

The longer term trends show a fall of 7.7% in the Great Britain total for this quarter compared with five years earlier. Largest falls were in Scotland (a whopping 14.5%), Wales (10.8%), followed by London (9.0%), the English Shires (6.5%) and the English PTE areas (6.0%).

Rolling Year figures

The provisional figures for the whole year to March 31 show total demand for bus services in Great Britain at 4,852 million passenger journeys, 1.6% lower than the same figure in 2017. This is the lowest figure since March 2006, the year before free concessionary travel was extended to all areas of England.

The largest fall came in Scotland

(3.5%), followed by Wales (3.3%), English Shires (2.3%), the PTE areas (2.0%) and London (0.6%).

Over the last five years, the numbers show an overall decline of 6.7% in the GB total. Wales led the downward spiral, with a fall of 10.1%, followed by Scotland on 9.9% and the English PTE areas on 7.3%. The decline in London was 6.6% whilst the English Shires saw the smallest drop of 5.1%.

Fares

The latest fare indices, also published by the DfT in December, show that in the year to September, bus fares rose by an average of 0.6% after taking account of inflation, compared with March 2017. However, the average once again disguised some variations: the indices show fares in London continuing to fall by 2.2%, with rises of varying magnitude elsewhere. Fares rose by 2.6% in Scotland and the English Shires, 1.1% in Wales and 0.7% in the PTE areas.

Comment

The bus industry's miserable run of patronage decline continues: the winter quarter was the fourteenth successive three-month period in which numbers declined, and one now has to go back to the summer of 2014 before there was even a glimmer of good news on this front.

Of course, the publication has led to the usual flurry of 'something must be done' cries, with the siren voices of the left calling for a greater degree of public control - as if the public sector was not to blame for a good deal of this in the first place, with the slashed support budgets leading to massive service reductions, cuts in BSOG and reduced concessionary reimbursement.

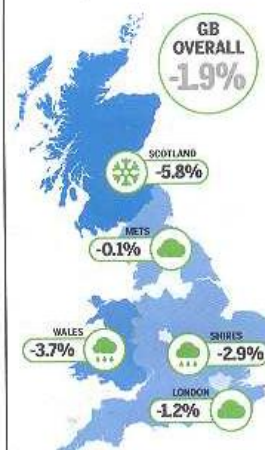
This is not going to change any time soon, of course. There are no spare resources from which to boost public spending on bus services - and whatever spare cash there might have been has been thrown at the NHS this week (not to mention all the cash that wasn't spare - and indeed will have to be raised from increased taxes).

Then there's the whole issue of congestion, and the consistent refusal to do anything which might just damage the interests

GB BUS USAGE WEATHER MAP

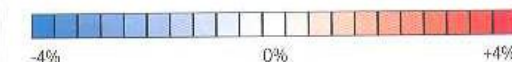
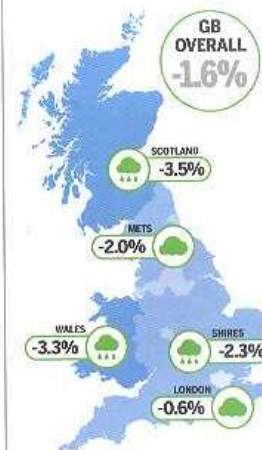
QUARTER-ON-QUARTER CHANGE

January-March 2017
vs January-March 2018



YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE

Year ended March 31, 2017
vs Year ended March 31, 2018



Source: Quarterly Bus Statistics, Department for Transport

of the motoring lobby. Again, this pervades the whole of the public sector. Governments of both parties have been frozen in the headlights of the fuel price rebellion since the turn of the century, whilst local councillors gleefully remove bus lanes.

In truth, of course, there is a lot more going on here than public sector spending cuts or increasing congestion - a sluggish economy and a retail sector having the lifeblood sucked from it by the growth in online retail. According to the Office for National Statistics, online accounted for over 17% of all sales in the first quarter of 2018 - having exceeded 18% in the run up to Christmas. It was just 10% five years ago.

This is not just about travelling to go shopping, of course. Store closures such as those promised by House of Fraser and Marks & Spencer in recent weeks

reduce town centre employment, and do so amongst those occupations and age groups who are most likely to use the bus to travel to and from work.

And then there's Brexit, this fumbling and dysfunctional government, the railways (another fine advertisement for the public sector - witness Network Rail) and Trump and the Russians. Not exactly the time for any sort of feel good factor, is it?

Joking aside, I can see no reason on the horizon as to why the underlying decline should cease in the near future. The economy is not going to pick up any time soon, retail sales will continue to move online and overall demand for travel will continue to fall.

My best advice for industry managers at the moment? Send Peter Shipp best wishes for a happy retirement... and follow him. As soon as possible. ■

BUS PASSENGER JOURNEYS (MILLIONS) IN THE WINTER QUARTER (JANUARY-MARCH) SINCE 2014

Source: Quarterly Bus Statistics, Department for Transport

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
London	607.9	589.1	565.8	559.9	553.2
English PTEs	245.8	242.8	236.1	231.3	231.1
English Shires	324.3	324.7	319.3	312.4	303.2
Scotland	106.5	102.7	102.6	96.6	91.0
Wales	26.5	25.0	25.8	24.6	23.7
Great Britain	1,311.0	1,284.2	1,249.5	1,224.8	1,202.1
All outside London	703.1	695.2	683.7	664.9	648.9

BUS PASSENGER JOURNEYS (MILLIONS) IN THE YEAR TO MARCH 31 - ROLLING YEAR FIGURES

Source: Quarterly Bus Statistics, Department for Transport

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
London	2,384.1	2,363.6	2,292.6	2,240.3	2,226.0
English PTEs	990.7	975.7	949.5	937.6	918.9
English Shires	1,297.9	1,288.1	1,265.6	1,260.3	1,231.6
Scotland	421.1	414.3	407.4	393.2	379.5
Wales	107.2	101.1	101.3	99.6	96.3
Great Britain	5,201.0	5,142.9	5,016.5	4,931.0	4,852.4
All outside London	2,817	2,779	2,724	2,691	2,626

Bus funding cut by a further £20m in 2017

Campaign for Better Transport calls for bus investment strategy

BUS CUTS

▶ A new report published by the Campaign for Better Transport (CBT) has highlighted that local authority bus budgets in England and Wales were cut by £20.5m last year – the eighth year in a row budgets have been cut.

In total since 2010/11, supported bus budgets in England and Wales have been cut by £182m – a 45% reduction. CBT has also found that 64% of English local authorities reduced or spent nothing on supported bus services last year. In England, subsidy for supported services was cut by a further 9% (£20m).

The latest cuts in funding have meant 301 routes were altered or completely withdrawn last year, with a total of 3,347 altered, reduced or withdrawn in the last eight years.

“Our latest report confirms that the slow death of the supported bus continues, with local authority bus budgets suffering yet another cut this year,” said Steve Chambers, CBT’s public transport campaigner. “The resulting cuts to services mean many people no longer have access to public transport, with rural areas hit especially hard.

“The loss of a bus service has huge implications – it can prevent people accessing jobs and education; have an adverse effect on the local economy with people prevented from getting to shops and businesses; affect people’s physical health and mental well-being; and has an inevitable effect on congestion and air pollution as

more cars jam up our roads.”

Chambers added that the Bus Services Act had the potential to improve local buses, but argued that this was not enough on its own. “The government must wake up to the crisis hitting local buses before it’s too late,” he added.

CBT has called on the government to introduce a National Investment Strategy for Buses and Coaches, backed up with proper long-term funding, like those that already exist for roads, railways, cycling, walking and other modes.

It also wants the government to come up with new and smarter funding for buses, and to join up the different public sector transport contracts in a ‘total transport’ approach.

The report also recommends that local authorities should use the powers in the new Bus Services Act, and urges the government to encourage and support them to do so. ■

“Many people no longer have access to public transport”

Steve Chambers, CBT

Appendix Three

CLAIRE HAIGH



Buses need long term investment strategy

As we celebrate Catch the Bus Week, a new report warns that buses are in crisis. With more cuts on the horizon, action is needed

• We face a housing crisis. The UK needs to build 300,000 new homes a year for the foreseeable future to address this. Research by KPMG demonstrates that planning and investment in local bus networks will be key to unlocking the value of housing investment. New developments in urban centres can stimulate 50% more economic growth than similar developments located at the fringe, but these benefits will be diluted if traffic congestion can't be controlled. Unless we provide more public transport options alongside new housing, we risk bringing local roads to a standstill.

Investment in bus networks must be a priority for the Housing Infrastructure Fund. We urge the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government to change the way it measures 'value for money' from different infrastructure schemes. Funds are currently allocated on the basis of Land Value Uplift without any consideration of vital wider economic, social and environmental impacts.

Congestion is a major capacity challenge and constraint on growth. Traffic congestion in the UK's largest cities is 14% worse than it was five years ago. Department for Transport figures due to be published this week are likely to show this trend is worsening. Buses are a major part of the solution: a double decker bus can take 75 cars off the road. But buses are also affected more detrimentally by congestion than any other mode. Congestion has been causing bus speeds to slow down by on average 10% per

decade; patronage has declined by 10-14%.

Transforming Cities Fund presents a timely opportunity to invest in bus. Every £1 invested in local bus infrastructure can deliver more than £8 in wider economic benefits. This is why Greener Journeys has commissioned Arup to undertake a study of where different bus investments can have a transformational impact on a city region's economic performance. Part 1 of their study was published this week.

Finally, it is imperative that we reduce emissions. Congestion must be tackled not only to address our capacity challenges, but also to reduce pollution. In nose to tail traffic tailpipe emissions increase fourfold.

Buses are key to tackling our air quality crisis. Real world testing of modern diesel

buses demonstrates a 95% reduction in NOx emissions compared with previous models. A modern diesel bus has fewer emissions overall than a modern diesel car despite having 15 to 20 times the carrying capacity.

Buses are also central to delivering on our carbon reduction targets. More than 40% of new buses sold last year were low carbon emission vehicles. The bus sector has the highest penetration of low carbon emission vehicles of all modes of transport. Not only have we seen a revolution in clean bus technology - with more than 5,000 low carbon emission buses in operation - but modal switch will be essential. If everyone switched just one car journey a month to bus, there would be a billion fewer car journeys on our roads and a saving of two million tonnes of CO₂.

Despite the vital role of the bus in addressing our major infrastructure, capacity and emissions challenges, bus patronage is declining. Bus networks are suffering from a perfect storm of rising congestion and the effects of disruptive changes, including online shopping, more delivery vehicles, increase in private hire vehicles, and relative low costs of motoring compared to public transport. Moreover, as the LGA reported last week massive cuts to local authority budgets have seen a sharp reduction in supported services. A new report from the Campaign for Better Transport details the extent of the damage.

We need a long-term investment strategy for bus. We have long-term investment strategies for road, rail, walking and cycling, but nothing for bus. More people commute to work by bus than all other forms of public transport combined, and those bus commuters generate £6.4bn in goods and services. Buses provide vital access to essential services and are a lifeline for the elderly and many people on low incomes. A 10% improvement in bus service connectivity is associated with a 3.6% reduction in social deprivation.

The decline in bus patronage comes at a time when it is more important than ever that we harness the potential of the bus to reduce congestion and emissions and address the UK's major infrastructure challenges. A long-term bus investment strategy would be an excellent first step. •

CLAIRE HAIGH is Chief Executive of Greener Journeys - greenerjourneys.com



Catch the Bus Week events are taking place across the country

NICK RICHARDSON



How can we tackle the decline of buses?

A recent report highlights reductions in bus services and suggests how this problem should be addressed with a coordinated response

► The Campaign for Better Transport (CBT) has produced a helpful report that sets out the changes over recent years in funding for local bus services and makes some suggestions about how a decline in bus provision and use outside London could be addressed. The report – *Buses in crisis: a report on bus funding across England and Wales 2010-2018* – includes some worrying headline figures:

► There has been a 45% reduction in funding for bus services in England and Wales between 2010/11 and 2017/18; and

► Since 2010, 3,347 services have been reduced or withdrawn.

The consequences of this are far-reaching in that buses fulfil a core part of many people's lives and daily activities and withdrawing services has wider impacts on individuals and communities.

A dismal picture

CBT obtained responses from all 82 local transport authorities in England plus the combined authorities responsible for public transport in large urban areas and all 22 single tier authorities in Wales. Since 2010/11, spending on bus services has been entirely removed in Blackpool, Bristol, Cumbria, Darlington, Hartlepool, Isle of Wight, Luton, Middlesbrough, Oxfordshire, Southend-on-Sea, Stockton-on-Tees, Stoke-on-Trent, Swindon and Torbay with Wiltshire having a change of heart by reinstating some budget for 2018/19. In Wales, Cardiff, Neath Port

Talbot and Wrexham have ended their revenue support. Virtually every authority has reduced its support in recent years and, as the list shows, these include some major urban areas. This is depressing reading but although the root cause is cuts in the funding allocated by central government to local authorities, it reflects a lack of understanding about what buses do. CBT points to the testimonies of individuals who have had what is often their main transport option reduced or removed. Funding cuts almost always result in greater spend in other areas such as healthcare and where buses are no longer part of the local economy, the structure and economic success of communities is heavily compromised. It could be argued that funding is not necessarily

the main issue and that the provision of services could somehow be improved to attract more users to make more services viable. Sadly marginal services are very vulnerable and even modest reductions in revenue support can have lasting effects.

This raises a regular problem, that of revenue spending against capital spending. Infrastructure projects are always popular because there is tangible evidence of commitment to some sort of transport improvement. For example, creating new road capacity and upgrading the rail network are important to politicians. However, revenue funding is hitting the buffers for many local authorities, evidenced by deteriorating roads (creating longer term problems that cost more than regular maintenance) and bus service withdrawals. This isn't helped by the national concessionary fare schemes to which funding has been diverted to the detriment of revenue support. In contrast, trains have lots of infrastructure, funding and support.

One of CBT's recommendations proposes a long term investment strategy for buses alongside those for other forms of transport. Buses are an issue that is not regarded by government as being important and it is left to an imperfect market to sort out deficiencies. Crucially, buses and coaches are the only forms of transport not to have a long term investment strategy; the contrast with others is stark – railway infrastructure and services, the Highways England network of major roads, aviation and in some places cycling and walking all have an agreed framework. For a mode that carries twice as many users as the railways, it appears that buses continue to be a long way away from the Magic Money Tree that keeps on giving for other causes. Bus and coach operators face cost increases meaning that it requires more resources to stand still or, more likely, that services are shrunk to fit. The report highlights the absence of any meaningful emphasis on local transport despite the fact that local journeys form a huge majority of public transport journeys and enable people to access work, education and training, healthcare and social activities that many regard as the basis of a successful economy. As usual, local authorities face the backlash from the travelling public although the role of local government in bus services has been limited and for many is now almost non-existent.



Spending on bus services has been entirely removed in many areas, including Cumbria. Services are now operated on a fully commercial basis by bus operators



Adopting a familiar approach

Creating a national strategy for anything is all very well but it needs funding commitment if it is to achieve the objectives set for it. Understanding the role of the bus seems to be limited by some decision-makers in terms of health and wellbeing, economic success, stabilising smaller communities, addressing traffic growth and tackling poor air quality. Simply regarding the bus and coach network as another privatised commodity like energy or communication suppliers doesn't work. We all know the shortcomings of the former utilities but bus services are different in that they enable other activities take to take place in a cost-effective way. Instead of bringing services to the people as the expensive option, buses enable access to those vital services.

In addition to funding, buses could be more closely linked with land use planning and changing demographics and also to tackle air quality which has become a priority that isn't being addressed consistently or comprehensively. For those who cannot think beyond capital spending, low emission buses are a huge opportunity but for those for whom revenue spending is also important,

extending services rather than reducing them is a way forward. A national strategy could set out standards for how new housing should be accessed, the level of emissions that should be tolerated and so on, supported by real funding commitments. At some stage this has to be linked with roadspace demand management in various forms as the only meaningful way to address traffic congestion and pollution. While bus use has continued to decline, it would appear that an integrated transport strategy remains elusive. Spending on sustainable transport initiatives could be offset by new revenue streams if everything was considered together rather than each component doing things in their own way with limited resources.

Any national strategy needs to include clear objectives but for buses and the communities they serve, this is not the difficulty. Mobilising change in an institutional structure that features competition rather than cooperation misses the point that buses and coaches are part of a solution to a well-rehearsed problem. The obsession has been dealing with how bus services are provided, not with why they are provided and so that whole half of the supply and demand equation has receded into the background.

A new beginning

In achieving a national bus and coach strategy, local bus networks and local authorities need to be inextricably linked, not necessarily through revenue support but by taking a collaborative approach that includes bus users and network planners (and councils' car parking activities). Success of such a strategy will only be achieved through a combined plan in which all stakeholders have been involved. This would then determine the changes needed and the level of funding required. The funding regimes of Network Rail and Highways England provide a mechanism for dealing with both revenue support and capital programmes in response to particular challenges. In particular, a bus strategy could focus on linking desperately needed additional housing capacity with areas of significant employment in order to help support the wider local economy.

A national strategy should also involve wider interests such as train operators (especially where, like many, their parent companies are bus operators as well), the education sector that moves large numbers of students on a daily basis and community transport providers in their various forms. Other interests should be included such as large employers and interests such as Business Improvement Districts and town centre managers. It would then be possible to create local bus networks that are directly relevant to what people need to create a virtuous circle of more bus users and better communities. Of course this involves both collaboration and funding. This is certainly a challenge to government but a decision to develop such a strategy could be a turning point for buses. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Transport Planning Society provides professional development, a meeting place for all those working in the transport sector and leads the response to emerging policy issues. See www.tps.org.uk for further information. Nick Richardson is Technical Director at transport consultancy Mott MacDonald, a Director of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (UK) and Chair of PTRC Education and Research Services Ltd. In addition, he has held a PCV licence for over 30 years.

Appendix Four

The BUS REINVENTED A New Approach. By Robert Montgomery

The combination of deteriorating air quality and rising traffic congestion levels in the UK's major cities is not sustainable and will, inevitably, drive change in how people commute and move around. The bus can play a key and growing role in that change as the leading solution along key arterial corridors into and out of major cities where the ability for up to 100 people travelling in the same direction to share one vehicle will be the most efficient, least polluting ride sharing option.

However, in the world of Apple, Google, Uber and Amazon, the bus will need to adapt and become much more high tech, much more flexible, much more environmentally friendly much more customer focussed, much more efficient, much more like it is a product of Apple or Google and much less like a traditional city bus.

Achieving that transformation will require a different mindset with a focus on: differently designed networks; a dramatic increase in productivity and efficiency; a step reduction in operating costs; a step increase in capital and infrastructure investment; more flexible employment practices; a radical simplification of pricing, payment and ticketing; much improved information and customer communication; deep, enduring partnerships between private sector bus operators and the public authorities which provide the track on which their buses run and between those same operators and other private sector players engaged in urban mobility The urban bus reinvented for tomorrow's world!

Buses are big! Urban double decks can carry up to 100 people but, for a whole variety of political, cultural and historic reasons, actual outturn load factors in urban bus networks across the UK are sub-optimal and fail to exploit the full commercial potential of that capacity.

If the bus is to truly play its role in improving air quality and combatting congestion, there needs to be total focus on designing truly car competitive networks which people will happily choose to use as a comfortable, attractive, quick, direct route to their destination.

The backbone of public transport in major cities should be a simple, high profile network of direct, fast, frequent arterial bus routes operating 24 hours per day as an essential core part of the city's infrastructure.

With a frequency of at least every 10 minutes between 7am and 7pm, at least every 20 minutes between 7pm and midnight and at least every hour between midnight and 7am, every single bus on the route should follow precisely the same alignment with no deviations or exceptions.

They should be boldly promoted as a core branded network with distinctive, consistently branded vehicles and associated infrastructure and a clear, simple network map.

Buses fulfil a wide range of transport requirements in towns and cities across the UK but fail to capture their fair share of demand and growth on key arterial routes by those services being starved of investment, subsumed into the complicated spaghetti of lower frequency, lower demand routes and focused on the wrong objective. The key arterials are one product for a very specific market and the other bus products in the wider network also need to be addressed and delivered in a new way through a parallel, but different, programme of change.

Bus operators need to be bold about building big, car competitive core routes for big buses and promoting them well!

Priority

Big, bold bus routes deserve big bold highway priorities! If operators are prepared to invest heavily in delivering car competitive, comprehensive, frequent, direct big bus routes, highway authorities should be equally bold in giving them a fast track into city centres.

The better the priority the bigger the bus loads, the higher the frequencies, the greater the demand and the less need or desire for people to drive their own car. That needs close, long term, genuine partnership working between public sector local authorities and private sector bus operators to agree just what it takes to ensure those big buses with their big load factors only slow down and stop to pick up and set down customers.

It also needs a recognition that public sector investment in bus infrastructure and priority measures producing a payback to private sector bus operators through higher demand and revenues, faster operating speeds and reduced costs needs 'benefit sharing' methods in place as part of a partnership approach.

The cash from the additional demand should not just lie where it falls but be part of a wider, independent analysis of all the costs and benefits arising from big bus routes boldly delivered with big investments in big priorities.

Local authorities and bus operators need to build big, bold, positive partnerships founded on sound economic analysis of their dynamics!

Productivity and Efficiency

Building core city arterial networks will open up big opportunities for operators to exploit technology to deliver a step change in operating costs. Traditionally bus operators deliver precisely the same timetable every day Monday to Friday. They do that because, well, they have always done that and that is the way it is done.

Not any more! Demand for core bus services varies by the day and by the season and varies again due to 'events' but, come what may, traditional bus operators stick to the same timetable virtually every day.

Responding flexibly to fluctuations in demand across the week or due to the season or due to events is only done in very exceptional circumstances because of the logistics involved in rescheduling and an employment culture wedded to five-day, 40 hour weeks and traditional rostering practices.

If Google or Apple or Uber ran buses...

...data would drive the schedule, tech would deal with the logistics and people would be employed more flexibly. There are big cost savings for bus operators in labour, fuel and the capital cost of vehicles by using data and technology to deliver big urban bus routes to a different model.

Using data, they could allocate every one of the 365 days of each year to a specific demand pattern and flex frequencies on the busiest services within a 10-minute time band. Moving from a five-minute frequency on a busy Friday in November to a 10 minute frequency on a quiet Wednesday in August cuts fuel and labour costs in half, and fuel and labour account for 65% of an operator's total expenditure!

Faster running speeds, too, on that quiet Wednesday in August would make the labour saving even more than half! Flexing the frequencies on different days of the week would impact on vehicle requirements allowing routine servicing to be scheduled on quieter days cutting the total size of the fleet.

Building big high frequency urban bus routes will open up a whole new frontier of cost savings.

Flexing frequencies by the day and by the season makes allocating work to drivers and servicing and maintenance support staff more complicated and wouldn't have been practical in the days of manual scheduling of buses, staff and fleet maintenance, but technology has moved on and is now capable of much more dynamic and flexible scheduling. Creating up to 365 different scheduling patterns, as opposed to the current three, is a technology challenge well within the capability of technology businesses to supply. Cutting those unnecessary costs could fund cheaper fares delivering greater demand or, perhaps, justify a step increase in investment in technology and infrastructure. Big choices which need to be made.

Big investments

Regardless of how buses are powered, their high load factors on major city corridors guarantee that their customers' total impact on the city's air quality will always be less than if they drove their own petrol or diesel cars. Even relatively old Euro 2 or 3 diesel buses will have a better effect on air quality per customer journey than a new petrol or Euro 6 diesel car through the ride sharing effect.

All new bus investments, as a minimum, are now Euro 6 and, therefore, switching commuters to bus will increasingly improve air quality. However, there is a powerful argument for an accelerated switch to full electric for all buses deployed on core high frequency urban routes. They will be ultra clean, ultra quiet, ultra smooth and cheaper and simpler to maintain. In the short term, the capital cost will be materially higher and there will be operational challenges around vehicle range and charging.

We are now close enough to seeing capital costs fall, electric vehicle reliability improve and battery range increase to take the bold step of pressing the button on the transformation of core high frequency urban bus routes to all-electric operation over,

say, a seven-year period by 2025. Setting that target and calling a halt to investing in new diesel buses right now for core urban networks will act as a catalyst to make manufacturers focus even more on resolving the last barriers to electric conversion. Setting that bold target should also reinforce the case for big bus priorities and the costs should be factored into the calculation of 'benefit sharing' within urban public/private sector partnerships for the delivery of core bus services.

Customer proposition

It has been over 50 years since using the bus in major provincial cities in the UK has been a core part of city lifestyle and bus travel a popular consumer product. The above steps should be accompanied by a radically revised customer proposition. Core urban bus corridors need to be marketed as a fashionable consumer products for better city living with a completely different approach to pricing, payment, ticketing, information and the integration of bus travel with all other essential mobility products.

Those big, bold public/private sector partnerships in the major cities need to embrace more than just buses but bring in suburban trains, trams, cycle hire, car clubs, taxis and private hire cars into bigger city mobility partnerships offering integrated information, ticketing and payment options designed to reduce dependence on private cars.

On payment, it is time to take all cash and retailing transactions away from the driver on core, high frequency urban corridors. Journey speed is critical to deliver serious modal shift and, even if only 15% of bus boardings on those corridors involve a ticket purchase from the driver, that still slows the journey for everyone. That is simply a bold management decision for operators to take.

On pricing, it is time to radically simplify the options with a single flat charge for an internal city journey coupled with prices for a day, a week or a month's unlimited travel on packages of urban mobility products including those of one bus operator, all bus operators, all bus and tram travel, all bus rail and tram travel and wider subscription packages, including cycle hire and taxi use etc.

That is another bold management decision for operators to take and then work in partnership with the wider mobility industry and public sector to create the necessary packages and products and commercial arrangements around them. On ticketing, customers need to be able to buy the product, package or subscription they choose from a wide range of convenient retailing outlets, websites, Apps or machines, have it loaded onto a mobile phone, smartcard or other device and present that to a reader or flash to the driver on boarding.

With a flat single fare in place on the branded core high frequency arterial network, there is no need to touch off. Providing the commercial decisions on payment, pricing and partnership have been taken, ticketing becomes simply a matter of technology.

Information needs to be clear, simple, dynamic and integrated and becomes an issue for the Mobility Partnership in each city, ideally through a dynamic website, App and other communication materials but with data open to other commercial information providers under license to ensure responsible use.

That requires collaboration, creativity and technology to deliver.
The challenges

There is no doubt this is a challenging agenda but the prize for communities, local authorities and private sector bus operators is huge. Only radical thinking and bold action will bring it to fruition.

Everything on that agenda is simply there to be done - none of those challenges are impossible if the will is there to make it happen.

Delivering each of the steps outlined above can be achieved as follows...

It is entirely within the power of the existing private sector bus operators to restructure their networks in major cities to create direct, fast, high frequency routes along core arterial roads into city centres.

This will involve 'taking a brick out of the wall' of their wider urban networks but this will challenge them to be more innovative in how those lower frequency lower demand routes are delivered since they too, have growth potential if radical change of a different type is considered.

It is within the power of those operators to enter into partnership agreements with local authorities to develop common branding and joint promotion of consolidated networks of direct, fast, high frequency routes and for the local authorities to deliver appropriate priorities and infrastructure through those partnerships.

Operators already use extensive technology to plan routes, schedule buses and crews and allocate buses and drivers on a daily basis alongside separate fleet maintenance scheduling technology. Enhancing those technologies and linking them with other technology applications and data sources will facilitate major improvements in productivity and efficiency.

Operators can sensibly review their internal labour practices and agree more flexible arrangements with their employees compatible with the more flexible service delivery arrangements particularly since they will generate greater future security of employment.

Making the move to all electric operation is clearly an operational and commercial decision for the bus operators but, within the context of radical, long term partnership agreements, innovative funding and risk sharing mechanisms could play a part.

All of the customer proposition issues can be dealt with through a deep, enduring partnership between local authorities, private sector bus operators and other private sector parties.

This is not about the mechanics, the commercial agreements or the technology but about the willingness of private sector bus operators and local authorities to work constructively together to truly transform and grow urban bus use. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Published by the Passenger Transport Journal Issue 167. Sep 2017

How can we lure young revellers back to buses?

A night out on the town isn't like it was when I was strutting my stuff, and the bus product often looks as out-dated as my moves on the dancefloor



Alex Warner
Mystery traveller

“How old are you mate?” asked one inquisitive youth as I stood outside the entrance of the nightclub looking at buses across the road. “47, last Monday,” I replied before he yelled at a gaggle of young females, all fake tan and dressed as if it were Ibiza than a cold night in the North. “Look at him, 47, I hope I can be like him and still come out on student night when I’m his age,” the lad replied. I was mortified.

I had an excuse, I was being paid. My consultancy has been engaged by a leading transport company to find out why patronage has stalled in their town. We spent last month doing impressive cerebral, cutting edge, societal change and demographic analysis and then got the 20-somethings in our team to hit the dance floors. Now it was my turn. This unnamed large provincial town, could have been like any other across the UK, as what we observed and heard epitomised the headwind bus companies are fighting against.

Figures published in 2015 showed that the number of nightclubs in the UK had plummeted to 1,733 from 3,144 in 2005. There’s not been any publicly produced stats since but you can expect further attrition as these venues grapple with high business rates and a seismic shift in youth culture.

A lot’s changed culturally in the

15-20 years since I regularly went out on the razz and tonight I’m hearing about it from the locals, including the club bouncers. Firstly, whereas in the old days getting on the bus into town, full of excitement and in party gear around 8pm, then boozing in pubs with dancefloors followed by moving onto a club, followed by a kebab and night-bus or cab home, used to be the staple diet for a Thursday, Friday or Saturday night. Now it’s all changed.

Youngsters these days socialise and dine at home, in fact one in four are teetotal so it’s not even a case of them going to the “offy” for some cheap booze, then getting tanked up further on the bus. Now they don’t descend into town until 11pm, too late in many cases to get the bus. Ever protective parents drive them or with the cut throat proliferation of cab firms around, it’s cheaper solo let alone in a group to get a taxi.

The internet and home entertainment means they have a more varied exposure to issues and interests and their working lives are now flexible and more diverse, so a simplistic Friday night in town to let their hair down no longer presents itself as the only enjoyment that they

“A lot’s changed culturally since I regularly went out on the razz”

have in a week of total drudgery. They can take it or leave it.

It runs deeper than the time at which youngsters head into town. However much we dress it up, in olden days, one of the attractions of going to a pub or club was not only to chat to chums but also because it was part of the mating game; to meet a future partner or a temporary one - to pull as the phrase goes. Now, it’s all done on Tinder or Grindr or one of many other apps. Why spend an evening hoping they’ll be wall-to-wall totty (of whatever gender) in town, risk the humiliation of rejection or have to put up with sexual harassment on the dancefloor, when you can scroll through the app and choose your option in the comparative safety of home?

These youngsters are though, more civilised and principled today. They are less promiscuous than previous generations, and they prefer to entertain at home, fine wine and dining for water if you are one of the 25% non-boozers. Playing on the Playstation or Xbox is also the fad and if they go out it’s conversation and healthy eating in small bistros or niche wine bars, scattered across disparate places, not always in the same town, rather than a big venue or meat-market. These principled PC kids of today also want to listen to each other talk, rather than bellow above deafening music and they’d rather be in chic setting that doesn’t smell and where the bogs are clean.

They’re also into their gyms and fitness, walking or jogging

rather than bussing. All this means there will be less people travelling by bus of an evening and their expectations in terms of the comfort of their journey are higher than ever. What’s more, inconveniently, their destination won’t necessarily be at the heart of the town centre where the frequent buses currently converge.

Where I am tonight, for instance, the massive nightclub that used to cater for almost all of the night-lifers at some point in the evening is now a discount supermarket. The once well positioned bus stop just sits forlornly next to it, redundant once the shop’s shutters come down at 5pm.

And there are additional challenges. The taxi firms have offices in more prominent positions than before and at night-time the controller (no longer rooted to his phone because apps replace his radio) stands outside, a looming presence to cajole people, just as the bus inspector should be doing.

Ring-roads, one-way streets and pedestrianised centres have forced bus stops onto the periphery and there’s never any signage pointing customers towards these or their destinations. What exists isn’t lit up in the dark evening skies in any case. The absence of buses slap bang in the road outside the pubs and clubs, means that there’s not as many visual reminders in the consciousness that they play a big role in the life of the town or city.

Meanwhile, it’s as if bus companies think that the bus stop is signage enough, when in reality you now need additional way-finding just to find them. There are no branded bus vinyls in and around the towns reminding you of the presence of the bus company and in the pubs and clubs, you’ll find leaflets, flyers and coasters promoting a whole range of events and services, including the local

where the customer is king



Young people are now more likely to be found supping slowly at their cocktails, not a pint or drunk in sight

taxis but never the bus company.

As 11pm arrived last week, the bouncer was true to his word, people started arriving. He said they'd stay till 6am (time for the first bus home, surely?) but I wasn't going to hang out all night. I went in pub after pub and saw the polarised society in this place, which is pretty representative of any provincial town in this nation.

The old traditional pubs, where in previous years' visits there would be young, attractive, middle class, upwardly mobile types socialising, were now empty, sparsely populated and all by old folk – the types also who looked down on their heels. The pubs hadn't been updated in decades and the clientele matched the setting – disconsolate, having

seen better days, peeling paint, grubby floors, loud pointless music that no one seemed pleased to hear and blokes behind the bar that were less hospitable than your worst bus driver.

Next door, was a tiny, rank looking pub throbbing out acid type music really loud. There were bouncers everywhere, but only two people inside – both women were completely inebriated and gyrating in a sexually provocative way to passers-by.

Across the road, though and I was sucked into a bright bar, modern in appearance and with students gassing from all corners in a civilised manner, supping slowly at their cocktails, not a pint or drunk in sight. No music, just the hum of conversation.

And then I went back out onto the street and followed the smartly dressed lads and procession of hot pants and stilettos a couple of doors away into an immaculately presented bar/disco. The dancefloor throbbed to the beat of RNB with a bit of techno and respectful bopping, no hint of insobriety.

As I stood by the side of the dancefloor in my best blue suit, complete with matching Gareth Southgate waistcoat and white silk handkerchief, I plucked up the courage to interrupt some of the dancing by asking whether revellers travelled on their local bus and if not, what could my client do to get them onboard. I was met with giggles, "Why would I do that?", "What's the

point, I've got a car?" followed by loads of preconceptions about buses smelling, being grubby and grumpy bus drivers and that most soul-destroying of responses "as soon as I pass my driving test, I'll never set foot on a bus again".

But, there were some rays of hope – free Wi-Fi, plug sockets, leather seats and contactless were seen as real positives (I'd always thought this was spin pummelled out by bus company bosses, but now realised it is appreciated).

The youngsters we'd sent out a few weeks earlier to the nightclubs came back with tales of today's principled teens and 20-somethings bemoaning bus companies not caring enough about litter, or failing to tell off people for vaping or for drivers that weren't friendly.

"I can't understand why bus companies are the only businesses in the customer service sector these days that allow their staff to be either so rude or indifferent to customers?" lamented one – don't forget this generation has been brought up in a world where the customer is king and they can't comprehend a sector that hasn't moved with the times.

Then, I had one of those moments where a scene tells a picture that illustrates the problem or the divide that has emerged as societal changes have occurred. Standing outside the nightclub, I could see the excitement from the youngsters inside and feel the warm waft from the heating in the premises. Across the road were the bus stands, shrouded in darkness, with no flags or destination signs or branding and tatty timetables produced by the county council.

The driver stood outside, open collar, hairy chest protruding and unkempt hair. The few people at the bus stop were similar to those in the dark, dingy pub that I'd just left which was next

to the bus stand - stain-ridden tracksuits, swearing, flobbing on the pavement and looking at their wits end with life, waits and strays - society's misfits. A few buses sat motionless and the clientele had a similar demeanour.

There was a choice to be made, which side of the street to stand on and which pavement would define the life that one might wish to be associated with. How could anyone choose to cross the road, over there was the life and people that had been left behind? How could the product and lifestyle being offered across the divide resonate and appeal to any of those jiving and chatting in their smart outfits?

The problem with my ruminating is that it plays into the hands of those bus industry bods (and in particular newcomers to the sector) that are obsessed with youth. There is a danger in over-concentrating on getting young bums on seats and neglecting another core market, old-timers. Nothing makes a bus marketer happier than seeing a bus full of young people; it is a more aesthetically appealing picture. Why do so many of them arrange photoshoots of young models boarding their buses when it isn't entirely representative of your average bus clientele?

But, there is nought wrong than a bus full of retired buffers. Bus companies neglect these at their peril and not enough is done to create interventions in the consciousness of those in their 50s so that they transition into travelling by bus when they retire and the concessionary pass is imminent. This is as crucial as encouraging the younger generation to travel by bus. It is a truism that there will always be old people, even if they can be quite often a miserable, belligerent and high maintenance market with



"It also needs bus managers to be out and about with the youth of today"

insufferably high expectations. There should be a prize for any marketer that unashamedly puts their head above the parapet to go after these and leave the younger market to a colleague.

So, what are the conclusions that can be taken from my nocturnal foray? Well, the midweek evening market is almost dead, Thursdays are not the new Fridays anymore, and only the resilient places are clinging onto a night time economy on these nights, and where "nightlife" exists, it is scattered in the kind of pockets that are difficult to subsume into a viable and cost-efficient bus network.

Moreover, the young and traditional older markets now overlap only at the point at which the latter are heading home, whereas in my era, the infusion of both would have been earlier and more prolonged. Furthermore, the two are now more segregated,

there's a less diverse make up in the same establishment, perhaps youngsters don't want to be in the company of the over-50s - something which may be another factor preventing them from getting on a bus?

Taxi companies are also more high profile, groping the streets, slap-bang outside the evening establishments, in the places where buses used to hang out and their fares are more competitive than ever. It's also no surprise that a fastidiously clean, vegan-eating, anti-Brexit, teetotal won't countenance the thought of hanging round a grubby pub serving nothing but pints and pork scratchings and with vomit and vermin in and around the bogs. Nor will he or she get on a bus unless it is luxurious, eco-friendly and hospitable, where the driver is smart and polite and fellow customers are decent.

In some cases, bus companies don't need to re-engage with young people; they need to start to engage for the first time. With their suspicious policies that doubt the credentials of someone travelling with a child pass and the legacy of grumpy drivers telling off kids, there's not a great tradition

of harmony and bonding between the young and bus operators, albeit many of the better companies have worked strenuously to address this in the past decade.

Less successful operators think, though, that logging on to social media or just making a tokenistic effort to read Transport Focus' fantastic report into the relationship between bus companies and youngsters will do the job alone. It involves more targeted penetrating of message boards and forums, as well as creating a network of young ambassadors to infuse excitement around bus services in their own community or "friendship group" (as is the term, these days).

It also needs bus managers to be out and about with the youth of today - but not in the kind of contrived way that the police do at the Notting Hill Carnival, by trying to pretend to be partying in a stilted way, but by appointing young people and in a way that represents the gender and ethnicity of their customer base.

Even a young looking, groovy 47-year-old wearing a dapper, sharp suit such as I, got found out hanging round on student night last week, it needs more than a middle age interloper but someone able to participate "on the scene", rather than watch nostalgically whilst propping up the bar. ■

VERDICT

► So much has changed so quickly in terms of Britain's night-life. In a decade, apart from on a handful of key corridors, maybe buses will be a total irrelevance beyond daylight hours? It's not too late to save the situation but radical, appealing and proper engagement is required to stop bus companies and youngsters drifting further apart. Don't forget, it can also be cool to concentrate on senior citizens too.

Appendix Six

1. Air Pollution Research Paper presented to Royal Geographical Society

Study finds impact of road transport on air quality not given sufficient priority in UK transport planning

UK transport planning is not sufficiently taking into account the environmental impacts of transport choices; this is the conclusion of a synthesis of research conducted over several years, due to be presented at the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) Annual International Conference on Wednesday 31 August.

Road transport is the principal cause of air pollution in over 95% of legally designated “Air Quality Management Areas” in the UK. Current estimates are that over 50,000 deaths a year can be attributed to air pollution in this country.

Yet despite considerable policy and practice activities at various levels of governance over the two decades since the Environment Act 1995 committed the UK to improve air quality to internationally accepted standards, measurements in the real environment show little improvement has been achieved.

Dr Tim Chatterton and Professor Graham Parkhurst, both of the University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol, reviewed the findings of a number of projects they had been involved with to identify the underlying reasons why the air pollution concentrations from UK road transport have shown little-to-no reduction over the last two decades.

The study reviewed collaborative work between two leading research centres³ at UWE Bristol. The underlying research applied mixed methods, involving: in-depth analysis of local authority approaches to managing air quality; evaluation of data collected by government as part of annual MOT tests; analysis of longitudinal UK air quality data; and analysis of studies undertaken for the Department of Transport into people's attitudes and transport choices.

The researchers found that UK transport planners are not taking the environmental impacts of transport choices sufficiently into account. Despite pollution contributing between 15 and 30 times the annual number of deaths associated with road traffic accidents (RTAs) (2000-2015), Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) continue to remain the primary concern of transport planners while, at best, air pollution has been designated a “shared priority” between the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department for Transport (DfT).

“Air pollution is perhaps the grossest manifestation of a general failure of UK transport planning to take the environmental impacts of transport choices sufficiently into account. Currently air pollution is a shared priority between Defra and DfT, but shared priority does not mean equal priority.

“Environmental managers only identify and monitor the problems. Insufficient relevant priority has been given within the sector responsible for most relevant

emissions – transport policy and planning – which has instead prioritised safety and economic growth,” said Professor Parkhurst.

Alongside a lack of joined-up government, the study identified a strategic policy ‘tone’ which continues to signal and provide for the private car as central to national transport policy, combined with limited regulatory and financial support for alternative modes of transport and for local authorities seeking to introduce potentially effective air improvement measures such as ‘low emissions zones’.

Further factors identified by the review as frustrating attempts to reduce pollution from UK road transport include:

- . An over-reliance on policy measures to influence individual travel behaviour, whereas in practice transport choices emerge from individuals interacting with a wide range of social actors (employers, businesses, schools, healthcare providers etc.) and are strongly conditioned by factors such as the nature of the built environment and the provision of transport alternatives.

- . Lack of political salience of the problem amongst the wider population, which has limited awareness for example of the morbidity and mortality costs. Therefore limited pressure to change the priorities in the road transport sector.

- . Belief that technological improvement would make a big difference was misplaced, in part due to the emphasis placed on energy efficiency, which encouraged the adoption of diesel technology for private cars and encouraged technological change for heavy diesels, which reduced consumption but increased emissions of key pollutants. Additionally, emissions control technologies have not performed as designed in the ‘hostile’ real-world road environment. It would take a major shift to zero emission vehicles to address this problem.

- . Failure to recognise that, given the existing vehicle fleet is replaced only slowly, reduced vehicle use is the only sure way to bring about changes in measured concentrations. However, there is a corresponding lack of emphasis on ‘push’ behaviour change policies. to encourage walking and cycling in particular. Instead, policies for behaviour change mostly rely on voluntary measures, which are as a result not very effective.

Additionally, there is a strong social equity issue, with households in poorer areas tending to be exposed to much higher levels of air pollution, whilst contributing much less to the problem, principally through driving less.

Professor Parkhurst and Dr Chatterton’s findings reconfirm the need for poor air quality to be promoted as a public health priority issue. “Air pollution-related morbidity and mortality are at ‘epidemic’ levels and, although less obvious, are more significant than road transport collisions as a cause of death and injury. Politicians at local and national levels must treat poor air quality as a public health priority, placing clear emphasis on the severity of the problem and the limitations of technological fixes. “Existing approaches that focus on individual, voluntary, behaviour change and technological innovations are not sufficient to tackle poor air quality. There needs to be a strong political and societal

commitment to protecting public health, particularly the health of children, whose life chances can be seriously compromised by exposure to air pollution. This will require not just improvements to transport infrastructure but also changes across society in our expectations of how we, and those we connect with, get around. The ‘nudge’ approach to behaviour change favoured by David Cameron’s governments will not be adequate to meet this challenge. Given recent events, we would like to see the government making a clear, strong effort to ‘take back control’ of the air pollution problem,” said Dr Chatterton.

A key recommendation coming out of the review is the need for key government departments (DfT, Defra) to look again at the relationship between environmental management and transport management at both the national and local levels. Specifically, transport agencies, such as Highways England, and local authorities should be required to give higher priority to air quality management, which would involve resource investment.

“A local authority grant funding line is needed to tackle air quality problems through local transport policy measures, this would help ensure that poor air quality receives sufficient priority,” said Professor Parkhurst.

ENDS

August 2016

2. BUSES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION:

a) Frequency of bus journeys

Around two thirds of all public transport journeys are made by bus, defined as a large passenger vehicle serving the public on a fixed route. In 2013 there were 5.16 billion bus journeys in the UK: most were in England (4.65 billion) with more than half of these in London. Bus journeys fell by 0.6% in England in 2014/15. Buses account for half the public transport journeys in London - more than 2 billion passenger trips each year (TfL 2015)

b) Pollution from buses

Bus transport is a significant contributing factor to local air pollution in European cities.

c) Age and quality of buses

After deregulation in 1980 (UK mainland), very old buses (12 years or more) increased from just 15% to 40% in 1996, as there was an underlying disincentive to invest. However regulation at UK and EU level regarding disabled access and vehicle emissions has brought the age down. In London, because Transport for London is able to specify quality, the age of buses is lower than the rest of the country (5-6 years) compared to 7-8 years in metropolitan areas and 8-9 years in non-metropolitan areas.

OWNERSHIP AND NUMBERS OF BUSES IN THE UK:

Nowadays, there are three main large bus operators in the UK: Stagecoach (8,100 vehicles), First (7,500 vehicles) and Arriva (6,300 vehicles)

The smaller bus companies are as follows: Go Ahead (3,600), National Express (1,900), Ratp Dev (1,000), Transdev (935), Veolia (640), Wellglade (470), Status Bus & Coach (400), Eym's Group (400)

There are 11 remaining municipal bus companies (Local Authority run) on the mainland: Lothian (600), Nottingham (325), Cardiff (240), Blackpool (175), Reading (155), Warrington (125), Thamesdown (105), Rossendale (100), Newport (90), Ipswich (71), Halton (61).

Northern Ireland has its own publicly run Translink vehicles (1,600).

In total 34,892 vehicles, broken down to 3,647 municipally run and 31,245 privately run. Figures are necessarily approximate. Transport for London do not own any buses. The bus services themselves are operated by private operators, which work under contract to London Buses (part of TfL). London Buses manages bus services in London. It plans routes, specifies service levels and monitors service quality. It is responsible for bus stations, bus stops and other support services.

FUELS USED BY BUSES:

There are a variety of fuels employed to power buses: ethanol, methanol, compressed natural gas (CNG), liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), liquefied natural gas (LNG), diesel, petrol, biodiesel, hydrogen, propane, plug in electric vehicles (PEVs), hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs and PHEVs). Of the biofuels; besides biodiesel, there is biomethane, paraffinic diesel and bioethanol. The foregoing is by no means an exhaustive list.

In the US in 2007, diesel was mainly used in a 80-20 ratio to other fuels. By 2013, the ratio of diesel to other fuels was down to 60-40. In order of use, diesel then CNG, LNG and blends, electric and hybrid.

HARMFUL EMISSIONS FROM BUSES (TAILPIPE AND WELL TO WHEEL):

Petroleum based fuels i.e. fossil fuels are major sources of air pollution: ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, sulphur dioxide and lead.

Particulate matter (PM) - particles of soot and metals - 25% of particulates from road transport. PM is considered to be the most harmful pollutant.

Nitrogen oxides (NO_x) - 44% of NO_x emissions are from road vehicles.

Carbon Monoxide (CO)

Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)

Greenhouse gases e.g. CO₂

Total Hydrocarbons (THC) and NMHC, toxics (hazardous air pollutants) benzene, 1,3-butadiene, acrolein, Volatile organic compounds (VOC) equivalent to THC plus aldehydes but minus methane and ethane.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK:

European emission regulations are commonly referred to as Euro I VI. These cover NO_x, THC, NMHC, CO and PM - but not CO₂ emissions.

The emission standards apply to all motor vehicles with a "technically permissible max-laden mass" over 3,500 kg, equipped with compression ignition engines or positive ignition natural gas (NG) or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) engines.

Euro I - 1992

Euro II - 1996

Euro III - 2000

Euro IV/V - 2005/2008

Euro VI - 2013/2014 - comparable to US 2010 standards, with stricter OBD regs, particle number emission limits and new testing requirements (off-cycle and in use testing)

For Euro VI petrol driven vehicles, the limit for NO_x remains at 60 mg/km, which is the same as Euro V, but for diesel driven vehicles, NO_x is down to 80 mg/km from 180 mg/km (Euro V)

Some countries offer financial incentives, such as tax relief and preferential road toll rates, for scrapping or retro fitting with emission controls.

To make emissions tests more reflective of real world driving, new testing procedures to be introduced in 2017. RDE - real world driving emissions test for regulated pollutant emissions uses a portable emissions measurement system to record real world emissions.

As well as the Euro standards, there are also Enhanced Environmentally Friendly Vehicles (EEVs) - buses can be equipped with closed particulate filters and SCRT technology to reduce PM₁₀ and NO_x emissions.

As of November 2015, there were 3,384 low carbon emission buses on UK roads.

FEEDBACK FROM BUS OWNERS/REGULATORS:

Transport for London:

In 2010, in a response to a Freedom of Information request, Transport for London stated that they first started reducing emissions in their 8,000 strong bus fleet in 1998. By the end of 2005, two key targets had been achieved:

a) all buses had achieved a minimum of Euro II emission standards. 60% have now achieved Euro III standards and 14.1% are Euro IV or better.

b) all buses were fitted with a diesel particulate filter. (Filter programme started in 1999.) Fitting a particulate filter has reduced emissions of some of the most harmful air pollutants emitted by buses - fine particles, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons - by over 90%.

They added that they were in the process of trialling cleaner fuels and technologies. There are currently 56 hybrid buses in London's bus fleet and we are due to have 5

hydrogen buses later this year (2010 figures). (See more up to date figures in Clean_Buses pdf)

Reading Transport:

Reading Transport has 31 diesel-electric hybrids in its fleet. These vehicles were purchased with the assistance of the UK Green Bus Fund. Fuel costs are lower than conventional buses, but this does not compensate for the higher purchase price over the life cycle of the vehicle. (Taken from Clean_buses pdf)

Stagecoach Buses:

February 2015 figures. They have cut carbon emissions by 30% in the past 5 years and have been awarded the Carbon Trust Standard for global operations.

New types of fuels and fuel additives are being tested across the UK: 40 gas buses in Sunderland, 23 qhybrid buses in Newcastle and all other Stagecoach buses in the north east running on B30 diesel, which blends 30% biodiesel with normal diesel, reducing harmful exhaust emissions. In Lincoln there are 11 Optare Solo buses converted to run on low carbon fuel i.e. biomethane produced from household rubbish and animal waste. This reduces carbon emissions by 40%. The buses start off on diesel then an electronic control system gradually replaces this fuel with the other. (Grants of £260,000 and £100,000 from Lincolnshire County Council and Midlands Development respectively)

In 2007, biobuses were introduced in Kilmarnock in Scotland (numbers not mentioned). These have dual fuel tanks (diesel and biodiesel). The biodiesel is produced from used cooking oil and other food industry by-products. They start using mineral diesel then switch to biofuel, reducing CO2 emissions by 80%.

The Green Road system is installed on all Stagecoach vehicles. Using a traffic light LED system on the dashboard, the system gives all 13,800 drivers instant feedback on speed, braking, acceleration, lane handling and turning, encouraging smoother, safer and more fuel-efficient driving (targeting 4% reduction in fuel consumption). It improves unnecessary idling (unavoidable at traffic lights and junctions). Drivers are given 'green' points which can be exchanged for financial benefits. Staff at depots are encouraged to reduce, re-use, recycle and even cycle, with hundreds of employees signed up to the company's cycle to work scheme.

Stagecoach invests in hundreds of new buses and coaches every year, which meet the latest European emission standards. £290 million has been invested by Stagecoach for regional bus networks in Scotland, England and Wales.

Green hybrid electric buses produce 30% less carbon emissions. 120 hybrid electric vehicles costing a total of nearly £33 million are either in service or on order across the UK. These buses feature an innovative regenerative braking system which makes them more carbon and energy efficient.

A high tech fuel additive, Envirox, gives a cleaner burn which results in more fuel efficiency and fewer emissions - a 5% reduction in fuel consumption and associated emissions. This has been rolled out to new UK depots and Canada (Quebec & Ontario).

At 100 Stagecoach sites, annual heating energy consumption (gas) has been cut by a third with hi-tech energy management. Similarly, control of depot lighting and air compressors has reduced electricity consumption by more than 10%.

Go North East Buses:

They have a fleet of 691 buses in the North East. 100 Euro V buses have been delivered and a similar number of Euro II vehicles have been withdrawn. 40 buses have been converted to better than Euro V standard through the Clean Bus Technology Fund.

With Green Bus Fund support, there are 15 new hybrid electric double deck buses for the Angel bus service, linking Durham City to Gateshead and Newcastle. There are 3 hybrid electric minibuses funded by the Green Bus Fund, Sunderland City Council, Sunderland University and Nexus to ferry passengers between Sunderland City Centre and the University campuses. As with Stagecoach there is energy efficiency at depot sites. The new Gateshead Riverside depot provides energy-efficient design together with waste and other environmental measures, specified to high standards. Paper tickets have been reduced by 15 million per annum, due to smart ticketing systems.

Arriva Buses:

They currently employ 250 hybrid diesel electric buses throughout the North East, North West, Yorkshire and The Shires (introduced in 2013). The 308 bus through Blyth is one of these.

In Milton Keynes, in 2014, they introduced 8 battery-electric buses topped up by contactless recharging points. The wireless charging technology lets buses run all day.

Gas buses were introduced to the North East in 2013 using mains gas from the National Grid - treated and compressed into tanks on the roof. Arriva returns biogas from sewage and landfill back into the Grid. The 2, 11 and 12 buses in Darlington, X21 in Ashington and the 1,2 and 3A/3C in Runcorn in the North West use this fuel.

Arriva has invested some £22.2 million in the implementation of a number of gas and hybrid vehicles across the UK with an additional £4.5 million funding provided by the Department for Transport's Green Bus Fund.

Like Stagecoach, each bus has a dashboard mounted LED, giving feedback on the driver's performance and also like Stagecoach, they have invested money making 65 of their UK depots more energy efficient (£1.4 million).

In 2014 Arriva invested £1.7 million in a fleet of 10 brand new single-deck buses running from Luton to Watford, £1.2 million on 6 buses running between Maidstone and the Medway towns and £1 million on 7 brand new buses for central Maidstone. These all have audio-visual displays to help those unfamiliar with the route and aid the visually impaired. They are fully accessible. The new 'micro-hybrid' technology allows waste energy from braking to be collected and channelled back into the batteries to power some of the auxilliary units electrically, reducing the amount of

load on the engine to significantly cut carbon emissions and give greater fuel economy.

CONCLUSION:

Biofuels for transport were invented and even used over 100 years ago in the United States e.g. peanut oil, but the cheaper fossil fuels took precedence and we are only now in the last 20 years beginning to progress away from them and their harmful emissions. In 2011, the City of Umea in Sweden achieved the Holy Grail - fully electric buses run fully on clean energy (pure wind and hydropower). These buses use LTO batteries that can be charged in 6 minutes for a 1 hour drive. The initial investment is high, but they save in fuel costs and maintenance as there are fewer moving parts (Clean_buses pdf).

NICK RICHARDSON



Making streets more efficient for all users

Traffic congestion is affecting bus punctuality but can we use our road space more effectively in order to create streets for all

» Urban areas all have a limited amount of road space available. In this constrained space we attempt to include everyone, but in many places we have reached the point at which conflicting demands are more evident than efficient movement. For example, in Glasgow, bus services have become severely compromised by traffic congestion (see Professor David Begg's thoughts in last edition of *Passenger Transport*) with a situation that transport operators alone can do little to influence.

Demand for road space

The evidence of conflicting demands for road space is all around us. We try to accommodate the demand of people walking and cycling, buses, coaches, taxis, delivery vehicles, heavier commercial vehicles but above all, cars. Individual vehicles fill up most of the space and usually in the least efficient way, each conveying just one person but taking up lots of space. Every individual has an opinion on what should be done, (the bane of every transport planner's life is that everyone thinks they are an expert) but often it is of marginal benefit, squeezing out a bit more from streets that were never intended to do what is now being expected of them. To make matters worse, not all road users are equal, giving rise to the term 'vulnerable users' which serves to perpetuate the contrast between vehicles and people. This means that we try to mix buses - large, slow and stopping frequently - with cyclists who want to keep going and don't want to mix with traffic. Simple

observation shows that people walking in urban centres greatly outnumber those sitting in cars. In transport planning, a hierarchy can be useful to determine who should be allocated space, typically starting with those who walk, cycle, use passenger transport, followed by freight and deliveries and last of all car users. This is fine if there is sufficient space for everyone.

The grid approach

There are ways of improving movement for everyone by rethinking how streets are used. One approach is applicable to any urban street layout which involves grid pattern roads such as central Glasgow. Similar layouts have been planned in a wide variety of places across the world including of course the US but also the Middle East, Africa and some parts of the

UK. The largest is Milton Keynes where the roads spread far and wide in a grid format, the claim that there is never any congestion because there is always an alternative route is true in part. This arrangement lends itself to a reallocation of road space on a large scale, not just reappportioning limited space badly. In London, the creation of cycle superhighways has constrained the road space available for everything else including buses which now go slower than ever. That's not to say that cyclists are not deserving of more space and the number of users is spectacular, but an unintended consequence has been further degradation of bus performance. In contrast, removing vehicles that don't need to be there at Bank in the City of London has improved bus journey times substantially.

The grid layout offers something more comprehensive. Allocating alternate streets for buses/selected access/cycles on one grid and all other traffic on the adjacent grid means that everyone has equal access to everything but that many of the conflicting movements are avoided. It means that buses actually have meaningful priority because they are not jostling for space with every other vehicle. It also means that speeds can be improved or at least be more consistent, which can reduce the emissions associated with stop-start traffic. This is proper priority, providing extensive space where it is most needed; it designates whole streets, not just traffic lanes. Where there are not parallel routes, creating a bus-only part of the street is achievable. It gives much greater prominence to buses and sets them apart, literally, from other vehicle movements. Such an arrangement



Fitzroy Square, an area of green surrounded by roads, benefited from the removal of all traffic so what was once roads is now pedestrian space

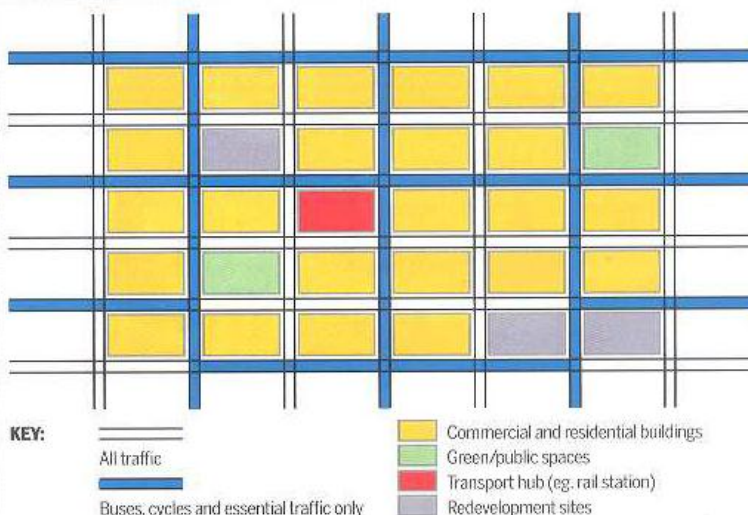
would be straightforward for everyone to understand but maintains access for essential vehicles possibly at restricted times. Shops need to be serviced, often from the front and other businesses need post and parcel deliveries, building works and a multitude of other things but not necessarily via the front door. Specialist activities such as hospitals or major hotels can re-orientate with a 'front door' for essential users and those who arrive by sustainable means and a 'back door' for deliveries and servicing.

Re-defining streets

Many main streets have a parallel route which could be designated for all traffic while converting the main street into something more attractive. It comes back to defining what streets are for and squeezing as much as possible out of the limited space available. There has been a move to more street activity with shops and cafes extending business to the street (within their curtilages) with markets and events occupying space that was formerly devoted to vehicles. For streets that have been fully pedestrianised, some having been introduced decades ago, no-one would suggest converting them back to trafficked streets. Open spaces, green or paved, are important and benefit from traffic removal in terms of access for all, fresher air and less noise. Trafalgar Square in London lost one side of its gyratory some years ago which was a vast improvement, setting the National Gallery in an imposing position. Also, in London, Fitzroy Square, an area of green surrounded by roads, benefitted from the removal of all traffic, so what was once roads is now pedestrian space. It has happened elsewhere, such as in Bristol and Manchester's Oxford Road and we are now more enlightened about what attracts people to city centres - it certainly isn't traffic.

This is exactly the principle of one-way systems, addressing the problems of inadequate space by reorganising it to enable more efficient vehicle movement. Although some one-way systems have been superseded as traffic has grown and fashions have changed, the principles behind them hold true, albeit with different objectives which consider people movement rather than just vehicle movement. This presents an opportunity to promote sustainable urban movement rather than trying to enable faster vehicle movements.

GRID STREETS



Applying the principles

The diagram above shows a hypothetical scenario in which full reallocation could work: all the blocks have equal access by priority and non-priority streets, acknowledging that some premises will be orientated to one or other at the moment rather than both. The result is two networks superimposed on each other, one that provides for vehicle movements and both providing access by sustainable means. Providing the blocks are not too big and that the layout is consistent, then everyone can have easy access from bus stops to where they need to be. The size of the blocks is an important consideration - too big and access becomes more difficult because more people are displaced. However, it does humanise urban centres because there are spaces that people can relate to without the fear of being in conflict with vehicles. It allows people to discover their surroundings, for example looking up at buildings without fear of being run over. There are some beneficial side-effects: reducing the plethora of street signs that have invaded streets, many of which are unintelligible or simply ignored. Redefining streets also provides improvements for people with restricted mobility because potential conflicts are diluted and trouble-free access is achieved.

With the changes occurring in the retail sector, access to new types of activity in urban

centres is as important as ever. Cities evolve over time and have always been planned with some sort of access in mind. A fresh look at planning principles suggests that taking urban activity and transport into account in an integrated way creates opportunities for renewal and investment. This contrasts strongly with the previous efforts of Glasgow and many other cities that have attempted to reconcile conflicting demands with little success because they have not gone back to basic principles. There is now an opportunity to place buses and trams in situations where they will flourish and where all forms of access are effective without competing for the same space. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Transport Planning Society provides professional development, a meeting place for all those working in the transport sector and leads the response to emerging policy issues. See www.tps.org.uk for further information. Nick Richardson is Technical Principal at transport consultancy Mott MacDonald, a Director of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (UK) and Chair of PTRC Education and Research Services Ltd. In addition, he has held a PCV licence for 30 years.

