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WHAT NEXT FOR URBAN TRANSPORT?



**URBAN
TRANSPORT
GROUP**

OUR NETWORK

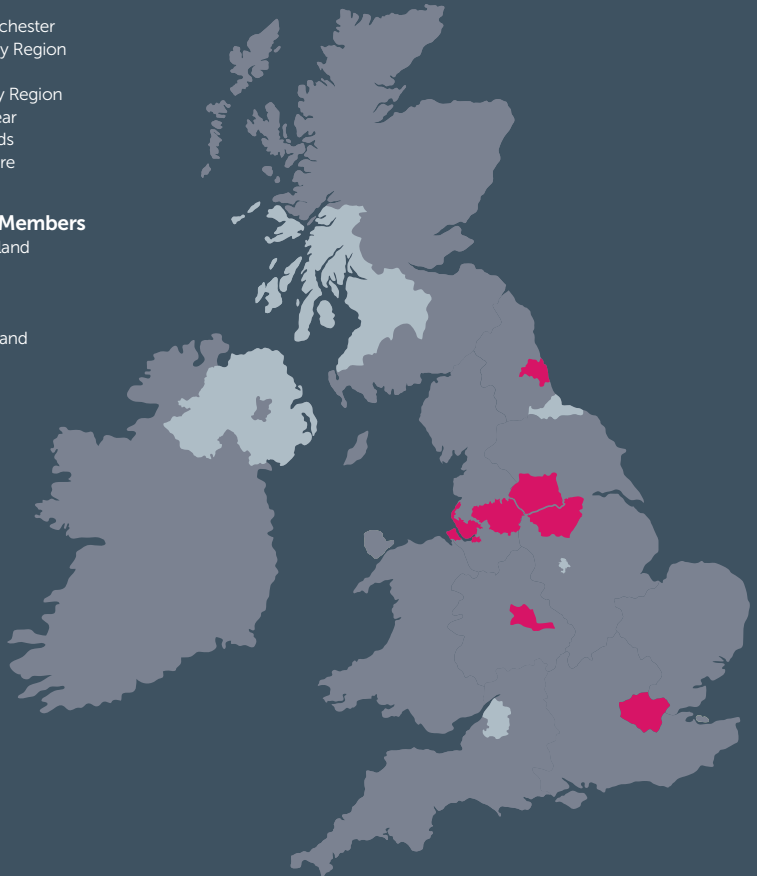
The Urban Transport Group represents England's seven largest transport authorities. We are also a wider professional network with associate members from across the UK. Between them our members serve over 24 million people.

Members

- Greater Manchester
- Liverpool City Region
- London
- Sheffield City Region
- Tyne and Wear
- West Midlands
- West Yorkshire

Associate Members

- Northern Ireland
- Nottingham
- Strathclyde
- Tees Valley
- West of England



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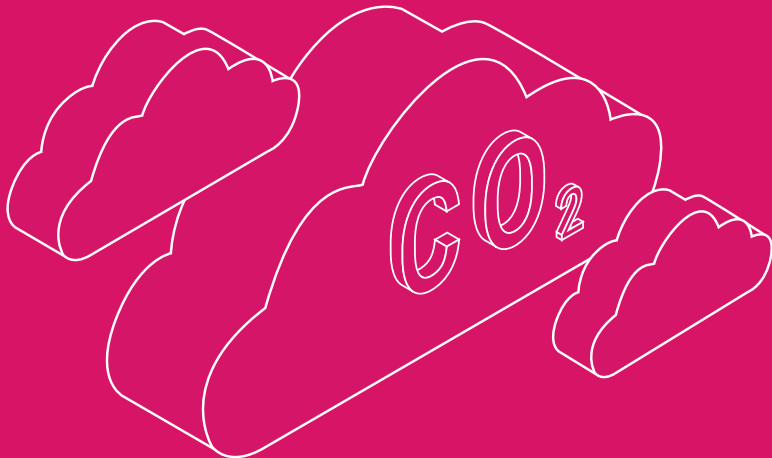
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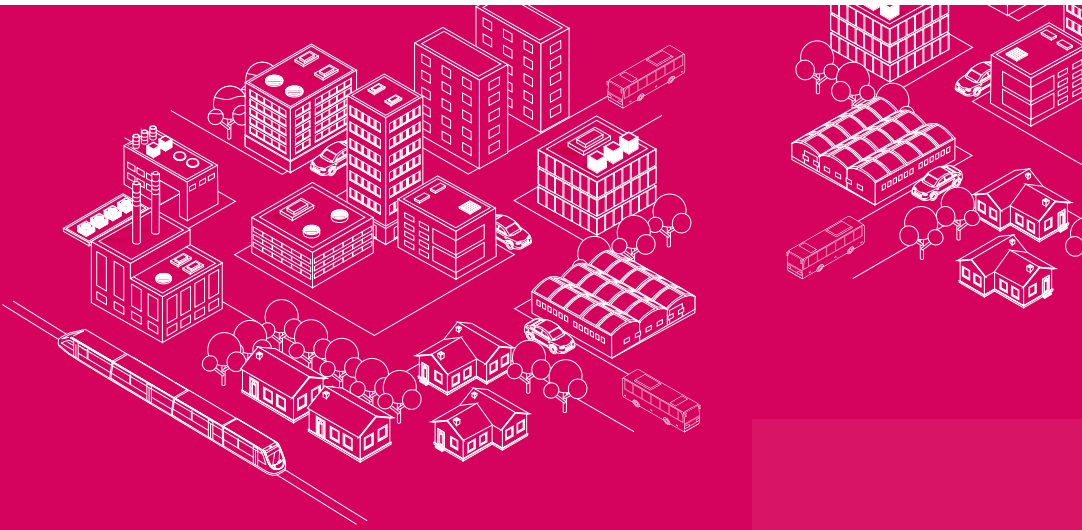
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THE FOUR URBAN TRANSPORT CHALLENGES

1 Tackling climate change and improving air quality

The world is facing a climate crisis with global heating already bringing with it more extreme weather. In response, both national and local Government are signing up to net zero emissions targets as part of wider climate emergency declarations. In the UK, the transport sector is now the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases with little progress being made in reducing transport's overall national contribution in recent years. At the same time, there are ambitious targets for cleaning up toxic air in cities – where again transport is the main cause of the problems.





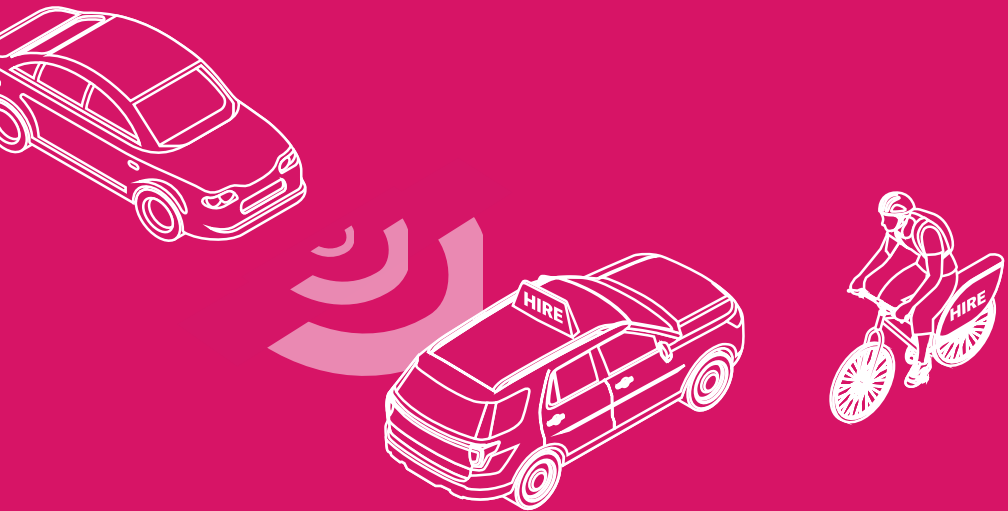
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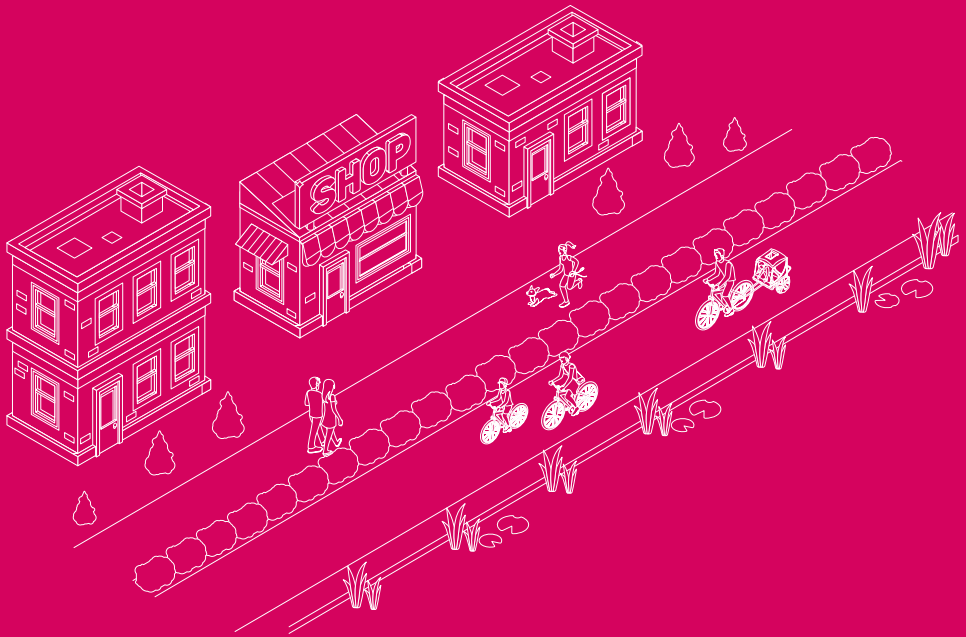
Ensuring growth is inclusive

City region economies and populations are growing. The rate at which their economies are growing differs both between and within city regions, so that as well as containing some of the most thriving places in the UK they also contain some of the poorest and most disadvantaged places. For the city regions to fulfil their potential they need to be well served by high quality public transport networks which give them good connectivity both internally and between one another. Transport networks also need to be affordable, available, acceptable and accessible to all so that everyone can get to the jobs, education, healthcare and leisure opportunities they need.

3 Making the most of technological change

New technologies, new business models and a changing society are bringing with them waves of change for transport. Dockless hire bikes and scooters, the rise of Uber and other private hire providers, and electric vehicles have already changed the face of our city streets. And there will be more to come, including vehicles which are more connected and increasingly autonomous. These changes offer the potential for greener and more convenient travel, as well as a vibrant urban tech sector. However, they also bring challenges – from the neglect of those people who are not tech savvy, or of communities which are less attractive to tech investors, to the potential undermining of mass transit in favour of clogging streets with artificially cheap private hire cars.





4

Creating healthier, happier places

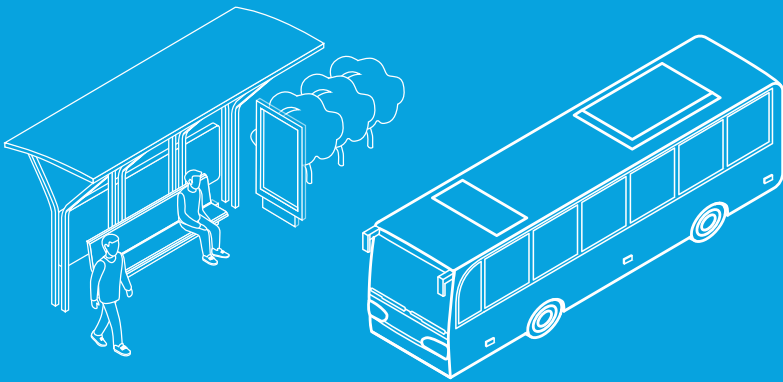
Physical inactivity and poor diets are contributing to a public health crisis in England. We have one of the highest childhood obesity rates in Western Europe and over a quarter of adults are obese. At the same time, air pollution is worsening asthma and lung functioning and causing deaths from heart disease, strokes and cancer. Mental health is an added challenge with a sixth of 16 to 64 year olds and one in ten children and young people experiencing a mental health problem at any one time. A loneliness epidemic is also affecting people of all ages. Transport and the neighbourhoods in which people live are a major influence on all of these challenges – with the capacity to be part of the problem (through car dependency and sedentary lifestyles, for example) or part of the solution (for example, through active travel, urban design and keeping people connected).

THE FOUR URBAN TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

1 Helping people make more short journeys on foot or by bike

Too many short journeys are being made by car which could be made on foot or by bike. A shift from the car to active travel would be better for everyone – good for physical and mental health as well as for reducing road traffic and making towns and cities into better places. But if people are going to walk and cycle more, they need to feel that it is a safe and attractive option – which means more investment in cycling and walking routes as well as in improving the urban realm in town and city centres. It also means having staff who can support people in making the shift (for example on cycle training). It can be done. Cities which are now seen as shining examples (like Copenhagen) used to cycle as little as we do now – until they decided to make a big shift. And where UK cities have invested in upgrading cycling routes we have also seen significant growth.



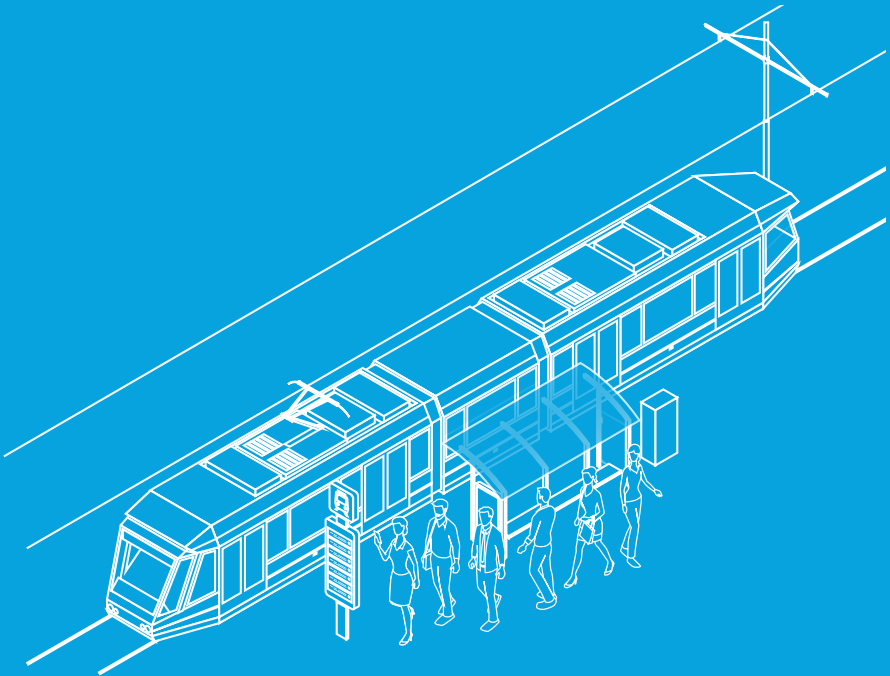


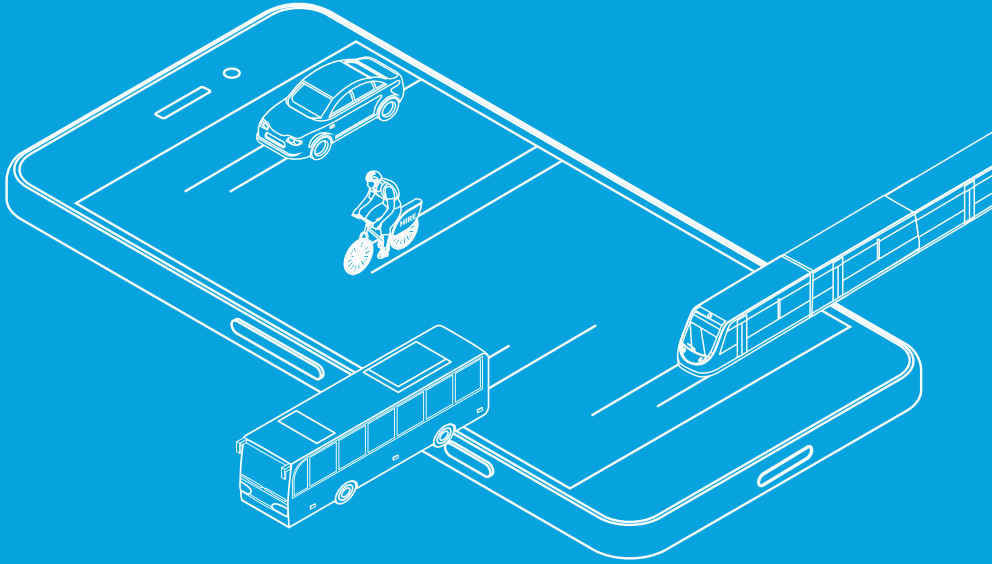
2 Getting city regions back on the bus

The bus can move large numbers of people in a way that uses limited road space very efficiently. It is also flexible in that you can upgrade bus services and the vehicles that provide them relatively quickly. They can also be made accessible, available and affordable for all. Although the bus is still the main form of public transport in the city regions, the long term picture has been one of shrinking networks, rising fares and falling patronage. The overall exception has been London (the only place in Great Britain where the bus network is regulated) where Transport for London has been able to support a high quality, integrated and extensive service.

3 Boosting rail capacity

We have seen huge growth in the use of urban rail networks in the city regions because of rail's intrinsic ability to provide rapid and easy access to thriving urban centres. In some ways rail is now a victim both of its own success, and of years of underinvestment, leaving many urban rail networks struggling to cope with ever expanding volumes of passengers on outdated infrastructure and trains. Successful cities have always grown around expanded rail networks and only through boosting the capacity and reach of urban rail and tram networks will city centres be able to continue to grow without more gridlock on the roads.





4 Harnessing the power of technological change

As batteries and renewable energy become cheaper, we can accelerate the pace at which transport is powered by cleaner electricity rather than fossil fuels. New information and ticketing technologies can also help make it easier and convenient for people to choose to travel more sustainably, be it using public transport or through sharing vehicles where public transport is not right for the trip being made. We can also use technology to manage public service and public transport vehicle fleets more efficiently. But to make sure that city regions can harness the full benefits of technological change, in an inclusive way, we need a legal and regulatory framework that keeps pace with the rate of change. A framework that also gives city regions the powers they need to strike the right balance between supporting innovation, realising consumer benefits and protecting the wider public interest.

WHAT WE NEED FROM GOVERNMENT

Our members are already working with Government to invest in the solutions to our urban transport challenges. We are building and expanding modern tram and light rail networks. We are investing in cycle superhighways and in healthier streets. We are funding bus services and concessionary travel schemes as well as investing in programmes of bus priority, park and ride and bus rapid transit schemes. We also bring all of these together through integrated ticketing schemes and investing in new public transport interchanges. However, we could do more, and given the scale of the challenges that the city regions face, we need to do more. But for this to happen, we need two things from Government.

1

Let us take control of our transport networks

Although we have seen some progress on devolution of urban transport in recent years, it is still the case that there is too much remote control from Whitehall. The centre remains reluctant to let go of power that should be in the hands of the places that understand and rely on urban transport. Indeed, apart from London, the city regions currently have less control over their public transport networks than just about any other comparable city regions in Western Europe. If city regions cannot properly plan and oversee their public transport networks, how can they hope to properly address the full range of urgent and complex challenges that they face on transport? For city regions to be able to take control of their transport networks, we need to see:

- all the city regions having the option of taking advantage of streamlined powers to plan and oversee their bus networks.
- any plans for rail reform (either under privatisation or nationalisation) to include full devolution of responsibilities for urban rail services, as well as greater influence over rail infrastructure.
- powers for city regions to operate more public transport services directly where they choose to do so.

2

A new funding deal for urban transport

To plan effectively on transport, we need long term funding certainty in order to recruit and retain the skills and expertise needed to deliver schemes; to get best value from contractors; to most efficiently maintain what we have; and to integrate new transport schemes with wider housing and commercial developments. National roads and national rail now have five year funding deals. However, funding for urban and local transport is short term and often based on ad-hoc competitions at Whitehall's whim and favour.

Revenue funding for urban transport has also been hit hard during recent Government austerity programmes – with direct consequences for bus services in particular. Lack of revenue funding also leaves transport authorities short of the skills and people they need to make the most of technological change or to help people take up active travel. The challenges are exacerbated because transport authorities have a legal duty to fund the rising costs of the Government's national concessionary fares schemes which then take a progressively bigger chunk out of falling revenue budgets every year.

