



Tackling rail growth in the city regions




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The PTEs need access to funds for continued investment if they are to keep up with rising demand for rail services.

operating companies will have no direct responsibility to the PTEs.

The PTEs have a long history of supporting local rail services in their areas and want to build on this in the future. Achievements so far include 69 new stations opened in PTE territory, reopening of complete lines such as

Huddersfield to Halifax and the Larkhall line in Glasgow, and investment in new trains such as the Class 333 fleet on the Airedale and Wharfedale routes in West Yorkshire.



Roy Wicks, pteg Chair.

Watershed

Roy Wicks points to the booming ridership on the Northern franchise, where patronage figures have risen by over 10% in two years, as reason for optimism. 'There are a number of reasons for the

rising traffic levels' he says. 'Performance was doing well in the last years of the previous franchise and has continued to improve since Northern took over. The new franchisee has proven better at collecting revenue, and the economies of the city regions served by the franchise are doing well.'

All this is changing the way the railways in the Passenger Transport Authority / Executive (PTA/E) areas are perceived. Not much more than a year ago, the northern cities were uneasy over the potential impact of the DfT's review of the Northern franchise, which identified high levels of subsidy per passenger and considered a number of options for driving this down.

'We got a positive result out of all of this' says Mr Wicks, 'as rather than saying we have to take so many millions of pounds out of the franchise, transport minister Derek Twigg concluded that the franchise is well-run and that some of the more extreme options in the review are not worth pursuing.'

Northern's managing director, Heidi Mottram, agrees that the government reaction to the Northern review was a watershed. 'The issue now is about capacity: how rail can be a viable alternative to the car. If there is road congestion and standing on public transport, the jobs may go elsewhere.'

Meeting growth aspirations in the city regions

The UK's core cities are booming. The centres of cities such as Manchester and Leeds are growing apace, with retail and office developments complemented by some high specification apartment blocks. In the wider regions surrounding these cities, employment is often declining in traditional manufacturing industries, while jobs are being created in the service sector in the city centres. This trend favours rail: focused on the city centres, railway lines are good conduits for taking people to the new employment opportunities.

'It is widely accepted that the London economy depends on getting people in and out of the city at the beginning and end of the working day' comments Roy Wicks, Director General of South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive and Chair of *pteg* which represents the PTEs. 'It is the same in the North. The cities are seen to drive the economies of their regions, and rail can help to keep them vibrant both by taking people to work in the city centres and by providing connectivity with London, the national capital.'

Mr Wicks maintains that this is now a widely shared perception in the corridors of power, and it is driving a change in attitude. 'The 2005 Railways Bill was all about devolving decision making, and the

Department for Transport is following the spirit of this by encouraging the regions to help decide on spending priorities, inviting the PTEs to bid for funds.'

London is seen as the model here. 'In broad terms, the DfT sees Transport for London as being successful and is interested in replicating this in the regions' says Mr Wicks. 'If the city regions are to work well, they need more powers – but if they are given more powers, they have to be able to demonstrate that they will behave responsibly, in the way that TfL has done.'

Running counter to this trend in favour of devolution is a removal of the requirement for the PTEs to be counter-signatories to franchise agreements, so for example Centro (the West Midlands PTE) does not have an automatic right to be a co-signatory to the new West Midlands franchise which is to be let next year. One suspects that a primary reason for this is that the Department, charged with getting some return for the taxpayer for the billions spent on the West Coast Route Modernisation, wants to be the final arbiter on how scarce track capacity is allocated on this route. Nevertheless, the move is causing some disquiet in some PTEs, for although the Executives will have the authority to fund discretionary additional services, train

One in seven

155 million annual passenger journeys are made on PTE and SPT rail networks – one in seven of all rail journeys in Britain.

The next test coming up will be in the West Midlands, where the Government's reaction should bids for the new franchise come in requiring more money than expected will be crucial. The High Level Output Specification will be another point to watch, but Mr Wicks remains confident. 'It is difficult to see how anyone could go to Leeds, for example, and say "We are going to reduce services because they are costing too much". Saving big money requires taking rolling stock off lease or closing lines – withdrawing off-peak services does not save much money.'

An example of how improved rail services can help city regions function more effectively is provided by the north western corridor out of Leeds, where electrification and a 15-min service frequency have made a very attractive part of the country easily accessible to the city. Ilkley, for instance, is now just half an hour from the centre of Leeds. 'As a result you get a lot of professional people living in this area who would not consider taking the car into Leeds. The 'green' commuting helps the city work better and is a factor in the large number of new jobs that have been created in Leeds in recent years' says Ms Mottram.

A bigger role for the PTA/Es

As traffic congestion rises in the city regions, there is growing demand for rail services. A view has to be taken on how to deal with that, in terms of the quality and capacity of rolling stock, the capacity of the network and pricing. The PTA/Es have an important role to play, says Mr Wicks, one advantage being that they can take the long view – unlike the train operator focused on the end of the franchise.

Already, the regions are taking decisions to ease the capacity crunch. Yorkshire Forward, the regional development agency, is investing £8.7million towards the leasing costs of 12 extra carriages to ease overcrowding problems on the Leeds-Harrogate and Leeds-Bradford-Halifax routes.

In an even more ambitious move, the PTEs in the Northern franchise area are considering helping to fund the acquisition of new diesel multiple-units from China, to replace Pacers and go some way towards meeting the growth requirement.

Infrastructure capacity is also coming under the spotlight. West Yorkshire PTE has commissioned Network Rail to undertake a

Achievements so far include 69 new stations opened in PTE territory, reopening of complete lines and investment in new trains

feasibility study of platform lengthening on the Calder Vale and Harrogate lines. In the Greater Manchester PTE area, reinstatement of two platform faces at Salford Central, near to an area of rapid urban redevelopment, is being studied.

'We need longer trains and we need longer platforms' says Northern MD Heidi Mottram. 'The Department for Transport sees that if it is to plan for economic growth, and persuade people out of cars and onto public transport, then we need a long-term strategy.'

Funding: the big issue

While *pteg* believes the basic argument about the value of the railway is now largely over and decided in rail's favour, the question of securing extra funding for the rail networks of the city regions remains. 'London has won the argument for more spending on transport – and funding levels per head in London are more than two and a half times higher than they are in our areas' points out Mr Wicks. 'We are not saying take it out of London – the

Rail growth in the PTE areas is outpacing that in other areas of the country.

capital is the engine of the national economy and needs more money – but we do not need to start a catch-up process. For example if the funding gap between London and our regions were to be halved that would release an additional £4 billion a year for transport in our regions.'

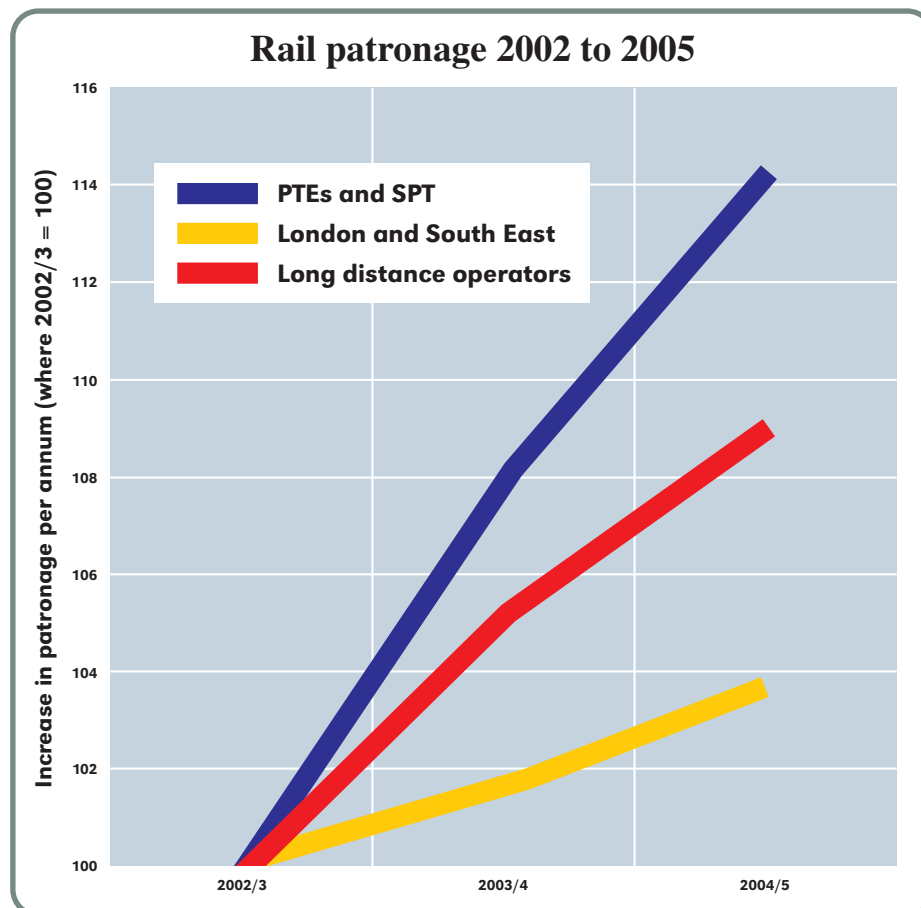
Spending on transport in the UK is well below the average for western Europe, so there is a good argument for putting more into the sector. 'There is a need to redress the balance' says Mr Wicks. 'If we could halve the gap between the regions and London it would help to forge a more integrated economy, spreading some of the Gross Domestic Product out into the regions.'

There are already a number of mechanisms in place to channel the funds that are available. Local Transport Plans play a role in getting some of the smaller schemes off the ground. *pteg* is hoping for big things from the Transport Innovation Fund, launched in 2004. This allocates £200million per annum to projects that reduce traffic congestion and/or enhance transport productivity, and the big northern cities look set to benefit from this.

Rail industry processes such as the High Level Output Specification and the Route Utilisation Strategies offer avenues for enhancements to be introduced. On a more strategic level, work being done on the city regions by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Eddington Review of the transport sector could promise much for the rail networks in the PTE areas.

'We are convinced we have a good case' asserts Roy Wicks. 'The city regions are key economic and policy drivers, and decisions on their local rail networks should reflect this. Investment is needed now to fulfil's rail's potential in our great metropolitan centres.'

PTEs are responsible for rail services that are vital to local communities in Britain's big metropolitan areas.



Merseytravel – success for

Look: Liverpool's first £2.4million flat!' cries Patrick Verwer, Managing Director of Merseyrail, brandishing an article in the local paper. The new deluxe apartment that has caught the headlines is evidence of renewed confidence on Merseyside. Liverpool's proud heritage of architectural gems, built from the proceeds of the Atlantic trade in the 18th and 19th centuries, is now being complemented by some 21st century counterparts, including the Kings Dock Arena, a convention centre that will accommodate 9,000 people, and Liverpool One, the largest City Centre redevelopment in Europe.

The icing on the cake for Liverpool is that the city has been chosen as European Capital of Culture for 2008, an accolade that has engendered a new sense of civic pride and is spurring much of the construction work.

Bustling and reliable railway

The positive mood is reflected by the local rail system, one of the most intensively used in the UK with almost 35million passenger journeys a year. At its core are the Merseyrail electric lines – now among the most reliable in the UK with over 92% of trains on time – which feed from as far as Southport, Ormskirk, Wirral, and Chester into underground sections serving Liverpool City Centre.

Responsibility for Merseyrail's operation was devolved to the PTE, Merseytravel, in 2003 – this engendered a sense of shared

responsibility with Serco-Nedrail, the franchised train operator, that has served the rail network well, says Jim Barclay, Merseytravel's Director of Resources. Also helping is the 25-year length of the contract, which means all parties can plan for the long term.

Merseytravel has invested in improving the system over many years. Nearly every station is staffed, helping to provide a more secure and welcoming environment for passengers, and Merseytravel has made considerable investment in modernising stations. There is a clockface, regular interval timetable throughout the week, and high priority has been given to improving accessibility. Merseyrail's 59 trains have all recently been refurbished following a £34million investment by Merseytravel.

'We have strong political leadership from Mark Dowd at the Passenger Transport Authority and strong managerial leadership from Neil Scales at the Passenger Transport Executive', says Mr Barclay. 'Merseyrail knows that once authority is given by one of

them, they can get things done – and as a result they get done quickly.'

Patrick Verwer says the franchisee responds in kind. 'People in Merseytravel told us they wanted to be kept informed about what is going on, so I said, "Fine, they should be equipped with our pagers, so if something goes wrong they know about it right away". Neil Scales gets SMS messages updating him and our staff as to how the railway is operating at any given time. This is a level of trust that goes way beyond just delivering what it says in the contract.' The degree of openness extends as far as the financial position, where the four-weekly management accounts are circulated to the PTE by Merseyrail as soon as they are compiled.

Those financial reports are looking a lot healthier since the new franchisee took Merseyrail's notorious levels of fare evasion in hand. 'It is down from about 12% three years ago to around 3 or 4% now', reports Mr Verwer. An expansive programme of installing ticket gates at the busiest stations in the city, while reintroducing penalty fares and having a highly visible security presence on the network, has brought the situation under control.

Merseytravel's Mr Barclay says that for the politicians on the Passenger Transport Authority, the key point about penalty fares was not revenue generation (in fact, any revenue is re-invested back into better security) but the image projected by the revenue protection officers issuing the fares – that the forces of law and order are in control of the system. 'This serves to reinforce the other security measures we are introducing', he says.

Together, Merseytravel and Merseyrail have invested heavily in safety and security. More than 40% of stations have achieved 'Secure' status, 10% of all the 'secure stations' in the country. Merseyside has also seen the first Community Support Officers on the UK rail network.

Stimulating development

For the Passenger Transport Authority, one of the key functions of the local rail system is to play a role in stimulating the regional economy. For example, the station at Brunswick has supported the economic regeneration of Liverpool's Docklands: ten years ago there was very little activity in this area, but now there are new apartments for urban living and other developments.

The most recent example of this pump-priming role is the £32million new station at Liverpool South Parkway, opened in June this year at the intersection of a Merseyrail electric line and the West Coast main line into Liverpool Lime Street.

Milk with your ticket, sir?

The Serco-Nedrail consortium that runs Merseyrail is half Dutch, and one innovation that is being introduced from the Netherlands is the concept of the station corner shop. While stations have always had retail opportunities, this idea goes one step further by making the rail operator the retailer. Facilitating the move are new Fujitsu ticket machines, which can handle both rail ticket and retail sales from one terminal.

'Operation of the "M to go" shops is being kept in-house, because we did not want to outsource the sale of train tickets to outside bodies as it remains the core activity of any train operator', explains Rudi Boersma, Merseyrail's Media and Corporate Affairs Manager. Instead, rail staff will sell milk, bread, sandwiches and similar items in a high quality shop environment.

Dutch shop fitters have been employed to install a pilot shop at Moorfields in the city centre. The first "M to go" was opened on 19 July, with others to follow at Maghull, Hamilton Square and Hooton. The shops will be convenient for passengers, improve the station environment and introduce extra jobs for rail staff: at Moorfields, as opposed to the existing one ticket window, there will be three members of staff covering the tills in the morning, lunchtime and evening peaks.



'This is a level of trust that goes way beyond just delivering what it says in the contract'

PATRICK VERWER, MD, Merseyrail

local control

As well as a very useful rail interchange, Liverpool South Parkway also serves to connect the rail network to a bus shuttle to Liverpool John Lennon Airport, just a ten-minute ride away, and acts as a hub for local bus routes. The 240-space car park offers park-and-ride opportunities. The Littlewoods mail order operation has relocated 200 jobs to nearby Speke from Manchester, and the hope is that the new public transport interchange will

result in more employment generation in the area with employers such as Jaguar, MBNA and a range of other large organisations.

The improved transport links also allow easier travel to reach jobs further away. For example, there are large government offices in Bootle, which can now be reached from Runcorn with one change at Liverpool South Parkway. In the other direction, commuter areas of south Liverpool have easier access to

Runcorn, with connections to London which could ease the chronic congestion on the Runcorn-Widnes road bridge.

While Liverpool South Parkway is transforming public transport journey opportunities in the south of Liverpool, Merseytravel has a rolling programme of station improvements aimed at stimulating other areas of the conurbation. The latest to benefit from this treatment are Bootle Oriol Road and Sandhills, two stations where Merseytravel has just committed £8million towards improvements. Sandhills, where the three lines from the north of Liverpool from Kirkby, Ormskirk and Southport converge, is one of the most intensively-used stations on the Mersey Electrics network. St Helens Central station is being completely rebuilt in a £6m scheme: a futuristic building that reflects the town's regeneration.

Depots are also being improved, including a new wheel lathe and washplant, funded by Merseyrail.

Extending the network

Merseytravel has an expansive policy on electrification. Extending the electric train network over the Borderlands line from Bidston to Wrexham in North Wales has been costed at £59million. Under longer-term consideration is the introduction of electrification from Liverpool to Manchester via Widnes. The Kirkby-Wigan line might also justify a similar approach.

The new Liverpool South Parkway interchange station. Tony Miles



MORE THAN JUST A JOURNEY

We pride ourselves on our performance, our people and our partnerships with others, which combine to deliver a safe, reliable and customer focused rail service for the people of Merseyside



One of the most intensive rail networks in the UK

Tackling the Manchester and Birmingham bottlenecks

New Gateway plan for Birr

The iconic fishscale cladding of the new Selfridges building in Birmingham has become a symbol of the city's 21st century resurgence. Hard by Moor Street station, Selfridges is part of the new Bullring shopping centre that draws in shoppers from all over the region.

Not far away, the International Convention Centre is a world class conference venue.

Upmarket apartment blocks stand next to the canals that were the West Midlands' industrial life blood 150 years ago, and now serve to boost the image of the city as the 'Venice of the North'.

The region's service sector, focused on Birmingham city centre, is creating jobs at a rapid rate, making up for the loss of manufacturing employment in places such as the Black Country. But to reach the new jobs people in the outlying areas have to be able to make it into the city centre – and here rail has a vital role to play.

One in five peak commuters into the centre of Birmingham arrives by train, the highest number in England outside London – indeed Birmingham is reckoned to have moved towards the London model, becoming far more dependent on heavy rail commuting to maintain the city centre employment density.

Centro-West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority has driven forward an extensive cross-conurbation rail network through long-term investment in routes such as the Lichfield-Redditch CrossCity line and the Stourbridge-Warwick axis running through Snow Hill station.

The CrossCity line is the busiest in the Centro-PTA area, accounting for about 40% of local rail passenger journeys in the region. In 2002, a ten-minute service frequency was introduced on the route – and this has powered a 35% rise in patronage over the past five years.

Capacity crunch

The rapid increase in patronage on local rail services has given rise to capacity problems. 'Economic growth is creating increasing demand for rail, and with further investment in retail and service sectors, rail is key to beating congestion,' reports Peter Sargent, Assistant Director of Rail Services with Centro. 'We're currently predicting that a strategy of train and platform lengthening, depot and car park expansion will be needed. This is outside any decision on other measures to combat congestion – such as road pricing.' To entice people into using the train to reach the centre of Birmingham, Centro-PTA has already pursued an active policy of car park expansion at stations, with over 6,000 parking spaces – generally free of charge – provided at 37 stations in the region.

Fast-growing patronage

Patronage on the West Midlands rail network grew by 42% in the decade from 1995, outpacing the national average of 34%. Use of Birmingham New Street station increased by 53%.

In 2004/05 passenger journeys in the region stood at over 29million. Local authorities forecast a growth in demand for travel by up to 43% by 2011.



There is as yet no road pricing to push people out of their cars, but even so the rail network in the region is already hard pressed. The problem is particularly acute on the Coventry-New Street-Wolverhampton corridor, where the Centro-PTA sponsored local train service has to share a two-track route with Pendolinos from Euston and freight services.

This route is seeing increases in patronage on the local trains since a recasting of the timetable in December last year, which resulted in Canley, Tile Hill, Berkswell and Hampton-in-Arden being given quicker journeys into Birmingham. A new direct service was introduced between Birmingham International and Walsall. On the route to Wolverhampton, Coseley and Sandwell & Dudley have been given better journey opportunities. New Class 350 Desiro trains now operate many of the services on the Coventry-New Street-Wolverhampton corridor.

A new Birmingham Gateway

With patronage rising fast, ways of accommodating extra passengers are being

Symbol of Birmingham's resurgence – the new Selfridges fishscale clad building.

investigated. One issue is the sheer number of people passing through Birmingham New Street station. The 'Birmingham Gateway' plans for enhancing the station have recently been submitted for Government funding approval: this transformation would see passenger facilities at the station improved, accommodating the extra passengers that longer trains would carry.

No extra track is included in the Birmingham Gateway plans, but as all the approach routes to New Street are virtually saturated, new track in the station area would be of little help on its own. For the longer term, one suggestion is that new connecting lines should be built to allow some services that currently use New Street to divert instead to the unused terminal platforms at Moor Street station. Centro-PTA favours this proposal over the use of these platforms for Chiltern Railways services (London Marylebone-Banbury-Snow Hill-Stourbridge-Kidderminster), which it would prefer to continue to serve Snow Hill.

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irmingham

Proposals for four-tracking the two-track route from New Street out to Coventry have been around since the days of the London, Midland & Scottish Railway, but the dense urban fabric traversed by the line makes this a very expensive proposition which is unlikely to be acted on any time soon.

Meanwhile, the route will get even busier in 2009 when the Euston expresses increase in frequency from two to three per hour, making for some hard choices for the timetable planners. The current half-hourly local services between Birmingham and Coventry will not be compatible with the 20-minute London services and lengthening some peak services to 8-car formations is likely to be necessary. This would require some platform lengthening. For example, Tile Hill and Berkswell stations can currently only accommodate four-car trains.

Stretching the network

The south end of the CrossCity line is a single-track branch to Redditch; this stretch is limited to a half hourly service at present. Centro-PTA would like to increase frequencies on this branch and the possibility of providing a passing loop at Alvechurch is suggested in the recently published Regional Planning Assessment.

Like the CrossCity core, the Stourbridge line also enjoys a 10-minute interval service that is proving attractive to passengers. Stourbridge Junction has been a spectacular success for Centro-PTA's park-and-ride policy, with the car park doubled in size to 800 spaces a year ago. However, the extra room is already close to being filled and it is anticipated that empty parking spaces will be hard to find there in the run-up to Christmas.

The branch to Stourbridge Town is served by a lightweight Parry People Mover railcar on Sundays. A one-year trial is testing the feasibility of lower-cost vehicles. Centro-PTA is providing some financial support.

availability of both diesel and electric high quality commuter rolling stock is an issue for all the PTE areas, and may be an issue that the PTEs are best placed to tackle together rather than individually.

Franchise change

The Department for Transport is changing the franchise structure in the Centro-PTA area. Up until now, Central Trains has been the provider of the majority of local rail services in Birmingham, and Centro-PTA has been a co-signatory to the company's franchise since 1997.

From 11 November 2007 a new West Midlands franchise is planned to begin. One

One in five peak commuters that come into the centre of Birmingham arrives by train

In central Birmingham, Centro-PTA is investing over £10million on creating a second entrance to Snow Hill station, reflecting growing development in the area to the north of the station.

More rolling stock

The excellent acceleration and high capacity of the Class 323 electric train fleet has served the region well since the early 1990's, but obtaining more stock to cater for growth is now a real problem. The

option in the restructuring is that Chiltern Railways should take over all services into Snow Hill.

'Centro-PTA has been working closely with the Department over the specification for the West Midlands franchise', reports Peter Sargant. 'However, we are concerned that under the 2005 Railways Act we will not necessarily be co-signatory to the new franchise. Our experience is that we can push through improvements for local rail users faster if we have co-signatory status.'

Manchester rail hub – serving a revitalised city

One doesn't want to thank the IRA for their contribution to town planning, but there is no doubt that Manchester is better since the IRA bomb.' Thus a town planner at a recent exhibition in Manchester's Urbis Centre to mark the tenth anniversary of the explosion on 15 June 1996 that destroyed Marks & Spencer and damaged many other shops and offices in the Arndale Centre.

Those injured will not remember the event in a positive light, but it gave Manchester's civic leaders the opportunity to have a think about how best to rebuild the central area.

And it has to be said they got it right. The Urbis Centre, with its dramatic funicular lift, is one result of this catharsis. As for the Arndale Centre itself, this has changed virtually beyond recognition, from a dowdy collection of 1970s shops into a glitzy 21st century retail

experience. Airy plazas that are home to street theatre brighten the urban scene.

This transformation is symptomatic of the newfound confidence in the economy of central Manchester. Creation of jobs in the service sector in the city centre and retail expansion have gone hand in hand, drawing in more people both during the week and at weekends. The rail network has benefited from this, with the number of local rail trips up 64% in the decade to 2004/05. The result has been that previous spare capacity has largely been taken up, and in the peaks some routes are now heavily crowded with significant suppressed demand.

The growth has been uneven, as Manchester's economy has changed. Half a century ago the pattern was that the city centre's banks and insurance offices were staffed by people from the south of the



Trips on the local rail network are up 64% in 10 years. This is Manchester Piccadilly.

railphotolibary.com

conurbation, while people in the mill towns to the north lived near their places of work. With closure of the mills, those people have had to look further afield for employment, with many attracted to the jobs being created by the service sector in the city centre.

This has led to rapid growth on the rail routes leading into Manchester from towns such as Wigan and Bolton. The leafy southern suburbs have not had the same structural shift in the economy that has spurred the northern growth, and in addition in recent years the disruption prompted by the West Coast Route Modernisation has tended to hold down commuter numbers on the lines through Wilmslow and Macclesfield.

rail strategy, and it had a recent major boost with the go-ahead for a further phase of development of new lines.

Metrolink's core routes have revitalised tired urban rail routes, joining them via a cross-city tram link which takes passengers right into the city centre, or across it on new direct journeys. Some of the new Metrolink package just approved will use a similar formula, converting the rail route via Oldham to Rochdale to modern tram operation.

Two new lines are also to be built, east to Droylsden in Tameside, and south to Chorlton, part of planned longer routes to Ashton-under-Lyne and Wythenshawe / Manchester Airport.

in the centre of Manchester: this 'Manchester Hub' is the North West's big rail intersection, where the heavily-loaded West Coast main line meets the busy trans-Pennine routes. Bob Woolvin, Fixed Track Account Manager with GMPTE, comments: 'The importance, and increasing difficulty, of integrating local travel with long distance travel should not be underestimated, especially if trains have to compete for scarce track capacity.' One urgent problem is that some difficult choices will have to be made to yield the necessary platform capacity at Manchester Piccadilly to accommodate three London trains an hour planned for late 2008.

GMPTE has developed a major Manchester Hub project to relieve congestion, unlock spare capacity in the rest of the network, and improve reliability of rail services across North West England, which has been supported by local authorities and development agencies. Improvement schemes have been identified for a dozen or more locations to alleviate particular problems – some of these are more expensive than others. Additional tracks and platforms at Manchester Piccadilly, and flyovers to provide extra capacity at junctions on the approaches to the city, are the main elements of the Manchester Hub plan.

This is being co-ordinated with a Route Utilisation Strategy that Network Rail is currently developing for the Manchester area. The company is working closely with GMPTE in an attempt to understand the likely pattern of future demand as more parts of the city centre are redeveloped. A strategy is emerging to help focus investment where it would be of the greatest benefit.

Manchester Airport – a third platform is planned at this cramped site, to give extra capacity for reshaping of services. A new Class 185 TransPennine Express train is in the station. *Tony Miles*

The Manchester Hub is the North West's big intersection

The upshot has been that for the last seven years the northern services have carried more passengers into the centre of Manchester than the southern ones, and the northern lines have now seen over 30 years of growth. New stations prompted by Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive have helped. For example Horwich Parkway, opened in 1999, has stimulated traffic on the line from Preston into Manchester. Built to bolster the regional economy following on the closure of the local foundry, this station has been a huge success. Not only does it serve new shopping and office buildings and the Bolton Wanderers football ground, it now acts as a park-and-ride site for motorists off the M6 seeking to avoid traffic congestion on the roads into Manchester.

New light rail development

Manchester's successful Metrolink light rail system has been a major element of the local

Manchester Hub capacity plan

The growth on the traditional 'heavy' rail network shows no signs of abating. Peak demand is forecast to increase to over 30,000 trips each way by 2021 (47% higher than now). This is driven by increasing employment in the regional centre of Manchester / Salford, and an ever expanding journey to work area as people choose to live in Cheshire and Lancashire and commute in to the city centre. This forecast does not take account of any mode-shift as a result of future road demand management action such as road pricing.

The rip-roaring growth has presented the PTE with the headache of how to accommodate all the extra passengers on a local rail network that was pared down to the bone in the economy drives of 30 years ago.

Growth rates suggest that in the longer term additional infrastructure will be needed



Longer trains

Meanwhile, what can be done quickest to provide for Greater Manchester's growing numbers of passengers?

'In most cases the most cost effective way to meet forecast growth is to operate longer trains, thereby making more efficient use of existing track capacity', says GMPTE's Bob Woolvin. Thus there is a need for additional diesel rolling stock, both to allow longer trains for passenger growth, and to replace existing stock as it deteriorates over time.

The Class 158 trains which have been the mainstay of TransPennine service are coming on to the leasing market with the arrival of new Class 185s, but the Class 158s' design with doors only at the vehicle ends can present problems, as the trains take precious extra minutes to load and unload. 'At places like Manchester Piccadilly platforms 13 and 14, dwell times have to be kept tight to achieve the required throughput', explains Mr Woolvin.

Discussions are under way as to whether or not a group of PTEs should help fund an order from the franchised regional train operator, Northern, for new diesel multiple-units from China, to replace worn-out Pacer vehicles and provide a cushion for traffic growth.

Infrastructure capacity

Besides extra rolling stock for longer trains, more infrastructure capacity is required shorter-term, and the PTE is investigating possible enhancements such as platform lengthening. There is also a desire to improve the quality of the environment in and around some stations in the GMPTE area, with improved lighting and extra cameras to enhance passengers' perceptions of security.

A case in point is Salford Central, in the centre of an area of urban regeneration where the Spinningfields development of offices and flats is close to completion. This station used to shut at 18.00, but thanks to discretionary spending by the PTE services now run later into the evening. A £4.5million facelift of the station, part-funded by the European Union, is due to begin this autumn. For the medium term a direct bridge link into Spinningfields, plus opening two platform faces on the Liverpool line, are under consideration.

Next station down the line is Salford Crescent, a major interchange between trains from Manchester Victoria and those coming from the south side of the city via the through tracks at Manchester Piccadilly. GMPTE has proposed that a third platform be built here, on an existing line. Not only is there a need to accommodate more interchange traffic, but there is also growing local usage: nearby Salford University is expanding and commercial activity is increasing in the area.

A third platform face is also proposed at Manchester Airport station. Mirroring the rise in air travel, passenger throughput is growing in leaps and bounds at the airport station and more capacity is needed to accommodate it. This is a difficult site and the idea is that the new platform would be squeezed in on the south side of the approach cutting. Network Rail is hopeful that the work can be finished by the end of 2008, to give extra capacity for the reshaping of services in the area that will come with the new West Coast timetable at that time, featuring those three trains an hour between Manchester and London.

Tyne & Wear's railway future

The local rail network in Tyne & Wear is dominated by the Metro, the UK's first light rapid transit system. Its lightweight railcars and direct cross-city links beneath central Newcastle were introduced 25 years ago, when the vision and the determination of local politicians saw this leading-edge electric railway created to modernise the local rail network and transform its usefulness.

The original 35 miles (56km) of Metro routes provide links via central Newcastle with communities on both sides of the Tyne, running to both North and South Shields. The circular route on the north side loops round through Whitley Bay and Monkseaton.

Two major route extensions have taken place, the first taking the Metro to Newcastle Airport in 1991. Then, four years ago, the Metro reached Sunderland, sharing Network Rail tracks as far as Sunderland, and then continuing to South Hylton on a new Metro-only route. This brought the Metro network to 48 miles (77km).

A strong identity

It is impossible to imagine Tyne & Wear now without the Metro – it is one of the most locally recognised brands. But with its third decade approaching, the Metro will soon need renewal.

Originally designed for planned integration with bus services, Metro has been affected by competition from bus services after deregulation, and by an economic shift towards development at the urban fringe, as well as rising car ownership and fares evasion – most stations are unstaffed.



Across the Tyne by Metro – the electric rail network provides direct cross-city services in central Newcastle.

points, payphones, and a high standard of accessible information as well as improved lifts and escalators.

But the ticket machine technology, and the networks for signalling, control and communication, are beginning to show their age – and the physical infrastructure, including stations, will need renewal in the next decades, as will the trains.

Renewal plan

Project Orpheus is the Tyne and Wear PTE, Nexus's, plan to rejuvenate public transport, with renewal of the Metro system at its core – and to keep pace with the needs of the area it serves, possible extensions are proposed.

Implementation of Project Orpheus is planned in two 10-year phases: the first will see substantial reinvigoration of the Metro network and the delivery of bus based improvements, with segregated bus lanes where appropriate. The second phase will complete the Metro's reinvigoration, and see

You can't imagine Tyne & Wear without the Metro

But there has been passenger growth on key routes – the Metro's airport traffic has grown by 25% recently, largely due to budget airlines. Fares evasion is being tackled through closer management of the network with CCTV and better revenue protection. Ironically, the fraud checks, in a joint operation with the police, have affected official ridership figures – passenger volumes stood at 36.8million in 2004/05, dropping back a little to 35.6million in 2005/06, but almost all of this fall is reckoned to be in fare cheats deterred from using the system.

After research among Metro users, numerous improvements have been carried out, including refurbished trains with more room for wheelchairs and buggies, and better seating. As well as CCTV, many stations now have real-time platform indicators, help

the introduction of new street running trams where justified on the busiest corridors.

These comprehensive improvements will be integrated, to offer the customer the best possible quality of service, with good journey planning information and a range of appropriate ticketing.

Nexus believes that without the improvements of Project Orpheus, road congestion in Tyne & Wear will continue to increase, seriously damaging the local economy, preventing people from moving freely, and increasing pollution levels.

The 20-year programme has an estimated £500million cost (present values), with new trains making up £168million of that, and an outline business case was presented to Government in 2005.

Nexus has also asked for private-sector expressions of interest in Orpheus. Huw

Tackling rail growth in the city regions

Lewis, Head of Media and External Affairs, says, 'We want to find out how our ambitions as to what we do, or want to do, stand up. How does what we want to achieve compare with what the private sector can offer?'

Key travel corridors

Project Orpheus picks out the region's key travel corridors, with the aim of encouraging people to travel more by public transport, help promote economic regeneration and contribute to improving the quality of life.

It will build on an active programme already creating new stations and transport interchanges. One notable transport corridor project already in place is the Stephenson Link, introduced in 2004, to connect

Stadium of Light station was opened as part of the extension of the Metro to Sunderland and South Hylton.



employment sites in North Tyneside with the main public transport system. It included creation of Metro/bus interchanges, through a major rebuild of Percy Main's Metro station, and a new Metro station at Northumberland Park. There are also new ferry landings at North and South Shields. A high quality bus link with extensive bus priority measures – Go North East's Route 19 service – links the employment centres in the route corridor with the new transport interchanges.

A busy Tyne & Wear Metro train heads for central Newcastle en route to Sunderland and South Hylton.

This integrated project has increased access to job opportunities for the wider population of Tyne & Wear, particularly to residents of South Tyneside, where there is relatively high unemployment. The scheme was driven by funding and support from North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Nexus, and Go North East.

The new Northumberland Park station also serves a growing residential area, and already attracts 18,000 passengers a month, mainly commuters. A large car park and village centre shopping complex are planned, the £5.75million project funded mostly by private developers.

The Metro's new Sunderland / South Hylton route has a bus interchange at Park Lane, Sunderland, giving people a much wider area in which to seek work. Travel to central Newcastle is good, with frequent services.

Nexus is planning a further new station to fill a transport gap and promote social inclusion. Simonside, near Tyne Dock, is a residential area with low car ownership: it is to gain a new station on the Metro's South Shields line. The station will cost £3.1million to build and will open in late 2007.

Innovative funding for Sunderland improvement

The pull of Newcastle as an employment centre affects towns in the 12 to 25 mile range of Newcastle, such as Ashington, Morpeth, Hexham, Durham and Sunderland, all but the last outside the Nexus area.

Serving these markets, the Metro is complemented by traditional 'heavy rail' routes, west from Newcastle to the Gateshead Metro Centre and the Tyne Valley, south towards Durham, and north towards Morpeth.

The route to Sunderland is shared between the Metro and Network Rail, and major improvement at the Network Rail-owned Sunderland station is now under way. This much-needed project got the green light recently after Nexus secured funding of £6.9million. This is the first 'revenue for capital' swap enabled by a provision in the 2005 Railways Act - financial savings achieved from a reduced frequency heavy rail service between Newcastle and Sunderland have been redirected to the station project. The result will see the platform and waiting areas at the subterranean station completely refurbished, new information systems installed, and an escalator to the concourse above.

The Sunderland heavy rail service, still part-sponsored by the PTE, runs hourly between Middlesbrough and Sunderland via Newcastle Central to Hexham, on the Tyne Valley line. The important Tyne Valley line station at MetroCentre is served by other trains, including those running via Newcastle to Morpeth, to the north. Not far from Metro Centre is Blaydon, the PTE boundary station on the Tyne Valley route, and here the feasibility of a park and ride facility is being investigated.

From the south, trains from Chester-le-Street are two-hourly during the day, expanding to four very busy trains arriving in Newcastle before 09.00. Durham of course also has trains provided by Virgin CrossCountry and GNER.

From the north, Alnmouth, 35 miles and about half an hour by train from Newcastle, is now seeing growth in commuting.



In-town boom

The Metro on its own can deliver big benefits for economic activity in the areas near its stations. Nowadays, planning directives frown on out-of-town retail parks in favour of regeneration of existing urban centres: Metro stations are often well-located to play a part in a buoyant in-town economy.

The five largest new development areas in Tyne & Wear are served by Metro. One prominent example is the Newcastle brewery site, close to St James station, where new housing, a science campus, and an International Convention Centre will all be established.

And people from all over Tyne & Wear can easily access employment in central Sunderland too, as its centre sees regeneration after four years of Metro service.

With a GNER train awaiting departure for London King's Cross, a Class 156 train departs from Newcastle, forming a service for Sunderland. Brian Morrison

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport builds on PTE's strong legacy

Scottish transport is undergoing fundamental changes, among them the recent replacement of Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive with the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, one of seven Regional Transport Partnerships established under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005.

For railways, control of train-operator franchising goes to the national Scottish transport agency, but the Partnership retains a major role in developing new rail projects.

Record passenger numbers

Startling growth levels are being seen on Strathclyde's rail services, with records being broken as more than a million journeys are made in the busiest weeks. In 2005/06, total journey volumes reached nearly 50million, up over 9% on the previous year, and up by more than 15% compared with 2003/04. The number of journeys has increased by over 11million over the past 10 years.

In its 30 year existence, the PTE opened or reopened 39 stations and invested

Analysis of passenger growth and funding over a recent 10-year period suggests that the train operator ScotRail would have cost taxpayers nearly £4million more but for a range of PTE led initiatives which boosted passenger numbers and increased revenue.

The analysis by the LEK Partnership identified the most significant factor which influenced passenger numbers as initiatives including new stations, improved station facilities, new or refurbished rolling stock, additional services and marketing initiatives. 62% of the 4.75million rise in passengers over the decade to 2000/01 were found to be travelling by train as a direct result of SPT initiatives. 52% of the £7.13million rise in revenue over the same period was attributed to PTE initiatives.

PTE-led initiatives have boosted passenger numbers and increased revenue

Centred on Glasgow, Strathclyde's 334-mile (538km) rail network is the largest outside London. It has a high share of peak period travel, with about a third of commuters using main line rail and the single underground line. Strathclyde, stretching from South Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire to Argyll & Bute, has just over 42% of Scotland's population but over two thirds of all rail journeys in Scotland.

£400million in the local rail network. The most recent new line to open is to Larkhall, which runs five miles south from Hamilton with two intermediate stations. Patronage of 30,000 per four weeks is more than 30% above predicted figures. New services for the Cumbernauld and Coatbridge areas, and the north side suburban service from Glasgow Queen Street to Anniesland are among other significant innovations.

Trio of developments

Capacity issues on the rail network are increasingly imposing real constraints, and the PTE and partner organisations developed a number of major schemes to boost capacity.

Several major new rail investment plans are currently being taken forward, with the £210million Glasgow Airport Rail Link now approved by a parliamentary committee of four MSPs and into an inquiry phase. With its new branch line joining the Gourock line east of Paisley St James station, it would have trains running to Glasgow Central every 15 minutes. To increase capacity, additional track along the route and improvements at Glasgow Central for longer trains are also key parts of the project, with opening expected for 2009 or 2010.

Meanwhile, Partick Interchange – Scotland's fifth busiest public transport interchange and one of the best used hubs in the Strathclyde network – is undergoing a major, £12.3million upgrade, with special attention to access, information and security.

The reopening of the Glasgow-Edinburgh route via Airdrie seems likely to go ahead as a Transport Scotland project. Restoration and electrification of 12 miles of railway between Drumgelloch and Bathgate is involved.

Glasgow Crossrail is the long standing proposal to restore passenger services on the cross-Glasgow City Union line with its bridge over the Clyde. Opening up a huge range of possible rail connections, the prize would be much enhanced network linkages and city centre access, with the potential for more direct travel from other parts of Scotland to both Glasgow Airport and Prestwick. It would also support the regeneration of the east end of Glasgow.

A busy rush-hour scene at Glasgow Queen Street. John Glover



Where next for West and South Yorkshire?



New PTE-sponsored semi-fast services have transformed what rail has to offer on the key Leeds to Sheffield corridor.

South Yorkshire network moves forward

South Yorkshire's rail system differs from the other Passenger Transport Executives in that, rather than serving a dominant hub such as Manchester or Leeds, it links several urban centres together in a web. Thus Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley rank alongside Sheffield as important centres on the rail system.

While suburbs-to-centre flows dominate in the other northern cities with their hub and spoke networks, the multiple nodes in South Yorkshire mean that inter-urban flows dominate there. South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive has built on this, co-operating with West Yorkshire and Northern Rail to launch the new Sheffield-Leeds semi-fast service via Barnsley last year. The thinking behind this initiative was that these cities are the same distance apart as Leeds and Manchester, but the service was not as good as the four per hour frequency across the Pennines. The new service takes 50 minutes between Sheffield and Leeds and calls at Meadowhall, Barnsley and Wakefield Kirkgate.

The additional train means there are now two PTE-sponsored semi-fast services an hour between Leeds and Sheffield, one via Barnsley and one via Rotherham. 'The new service has been a success in terms of delivering what passengers want' says Roy Wicks, Director General of SYPTE. A measure of that success is that, although funding was only guaranteed until the end of 2007, the new semi-fast service has been included in the base timetable for the new East Midlands franchise and may be extended to Nottingham in future.

'The new service exemplifies our strategy, of filling the gaps in the services and ensuring the basics get done' says Mr Wicks. 'To meet passengers' aspirations we want longer trains, better rolling stock and more frequent services – but all of this costs money, and in some corridors, such as Leeds to Doncaster, there are capacity constraints.' In the medium term the PTE would like to see the Sheffield-Leeds semi-fast service doubled in frequency from two to four trains per hour, and would also like to see frequency improvements on other corridors such as Sheffield-Doncaster.

Sheffield station is currently undergoing a £50million refurbishment in which passenger circulating areas are being improved and links with other modes strengthened. A direct pedestrian link has been built to a stop on the Sheffield Supertram network.

Besides linking urban centres, the railway also serves a regeneration role in South Yorkshire, for example providing access to jobs in nearby towns from the former mining area in the Dearne Valley. A highly-successful park-and-ride and bus hub has been established at Swinton station.

An airport link?

Links to Manchester and the new Robin Hood Airport are a vital part of South Yorkshire's economic transformation. At present, the links to Manchester are not attractive, basically a half-hourly service. The introduction of Class 185s TransPennine Express from this summer is welcomed but the frequency needs to be increased.

South Yorkshire PTE would like to have seen the present Central service to Manchester and Liverpool combined with the South TransPennine service as part of a strengthened TPE franchise. Improving capacity at Sheffield and between Sheffield and Doncaster for more trains is also essential if the South Yorkshire network is to fulfil its full potential.

SYPTE is also supporting the introduction of a rail link at Robin Hood airport, the fast-growing airport serving the Doncaster/Sheffield/Nottingham area located at the former RAF Finningley airfield. The airport is seen as having huge potential, as its vast runway is one of the very few that can accommodate A380 super-jumbos and its site means it is seldom subject to disruption by wind and fog.

In its first year of operation, Robin Hood had passenger throughput of 800,000 people – a creditable start. But for a rail link to be justified, passenger numbers of the order of five million plus are needed – clearly a long way off. 'There are special circumstances at Robin Hood which suggest we wouldn't need such large numbers to justify rail provision' explains Roy Wicks. 'First, the airport is close to the Doncaster-Lincoln line, and second, Doncaster boasts such a range of rail services in every direction that a shuttle from the airport into Doncaster could prove very attractive to air passengers.'

Discussions are now underway on how the airport could be linked to the rail system. Two options are under consideration: a new station on the Doncaster-Lincoln line with a bus shuttle into the airport, and for the longer term, a spur taking the railway into the heart of the airport. SYPTE is hoping to see the new station

Sheffield station has benefited from a £50million refurbishment.



and bus shuttle incorporated into the base timetable for the new East Midlands franchise.

'Whilst pressing for these additional investments we will continue to work closely with Northern Trains to ensure there is a quality service in South Yorkshire' adds Roy Wicks. 'To achieve that, we must address the quality and amount of rolling stock. Many of our services are provided by Sprinters which are showing their age and Pacers that were not fit for purpose many years ago. That is why we are working closely with the Northern Way, Northern Rail and other stakeholders to secure new trains.'

The South Yorkshire PTE area stretches north east of Doncaster to Thorne on the Scunthorpe and Goole routes. A stopping service from Sheffield via Doncaster to Scunthorpe is seen at Althorpe, east of Thorne. *Brian Morrison*



West Yorkshire gets to grip with growth

In recent years, the West Yorkshire economy has been booming. This is particularly so in Leeds, where over the last 20 years there has been a net increase of 91,000 jobs – more than in any other major city outside London. The forecast for the next decade (2004 to 2014) is 31,600 more jobs in the city.

This rampant growth has been accompanied by diversification from traditional industries such as mining and manufacturing into a range of service sector areas, such as financial and legal services. These changes have been accompanied by a huge growth in commuting, particularly into Leeds. The fast rate of job creation means another 10,000 rail commuters into Leeds are expected over the next decade. Growth is also strong in other parts of West Yorkshire and the wider City Region.

Metro (West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive) has been working hard in recent years to cater for this rising demand. The PTE has a strong record of investment in new trains, stations and new routes.

Modernisation of the Airedale and Wharfedale routes is a good example of what can be achieved. The PTE sponsored electrification of the lines from Leeds to Ilkley, Bradford Forster Square and Skipton, and comfortable new Class 333 electric trains were introduced in 2001. Stations on the route were refurbished. All this has been rewarded with steadily increasing patronage: traffic grew from 5.5million in 1998 to 10million in 2005. Now, three out of every four commuters from the upper Aire Valley

With new electric trains, dramatic growth has been seen on the lines to Ilkley, Bradford Forster Square and Skipton. Class 333 No 333006 arrives at Leeds on 14 August 2006, forming the 12.35 service from Bradford Forster Square.

(north of Shipley) to Leeds city centre come in by rail.

Another example of Metro's expansive policy is the way in which sections of freight railway have been opened for passenger trains: the line between Wakefield and Pontefract via Featherstone was reopened in 1992, while that between Huddersfield and Halifax via Brighouse saw passenger trains again in 2000.

A substantial programme of station openings has seen more than 20 stations opened in the past couple of decades, together with building improvements and extra staffing at existing stations.

At the hub of the network, Leeds station has been transformed in a multi-million pound project supported by Metro. Reconstruction of the station and remodelling of the approaches in 2000-02 saw the number of platforms increased from 12 to 17. Passenger circulating areas have been brightened and improved with renovation of retail space. Leeds station now handles over 80,000 passengers per day, making it one of the busiest in the country.

Keeping up with growth

While much has been achieved, Metro cannot afford to rest on its laurels. 'The whole area is growing', says David Hoggarth, Assistant Director of Development at Metro. 'The three elements to be linked are employment, housing and regeneration, and the transport links are crucial.'

Metro has to monitor carefully the location of new and upcoming centres of employment to ensure they are adequately served. Thus in the Leeds Metropolitan District, Holbeck (south of the centre) is becoming a high tech urban village – but access from the rail station is currently poor, so Metro is working with Network Rail on proposals for a new southern pedestrian access from the station.



Aerial view of Leeds station, recently extended and refurbished.

Other developments concern the lower Aire Valley to the south and east of Leeds. Refurbishment of lower price residential properties in the 'back of Leeds' is moving them upmarket, so changing potential transport demand.

Areas outside Leeds are growing too: as an example one could point to Airedale in Bradford District which is a major regeneration and employment growth area.

Overcrowding

The rail system in West Yorkshire has been so successful that train overcrowding in the region is among the highest in the country. In the



morning peak, over 2,000 passengers (17%) arriving in Leeds have to stand, while nearly half of trains arriving have standing passengers.

A prime example is the Harrogate line, which is worked mainly by three-car Class 144 Pacer railbuses. The five morning peak trains on this route are loaded to between 142% and 182% of seating capacity.

Perhaps the simplest way of providing more capacity is to lengthen trains, which has the advantage of not requiring additional timetable slots. Metro has recently benefited from £8.7million funding for new trains, in partnership with Yorkshire Forward, the Regional Development Agency.



The freecitybus in Leeds connects the station with key areas in the city centre.

This is sufficient to acquire 12 extra diesel cars for use on the busiest peak services: these will be in full operation from December 2006. The overcrowded Harrogate line will benefit from this: trains on this route will be lengthened and a number of Pacers replaced by more suitable Sprinters.

Much more funding, however, will clearly be needed. Train lengthening means ensuring that platform lengths are sufficient to cope, and on difficult sites platform lengthening can be an expensive exercise.

A major barrier to delivering extra capacity is that the financial structure of the industry is stacked against metropolitan railways. Even where an additional carriage is filled with new passengers, the revenue will generally only cover around a third of the operating and lease costs. There are wider benefits, particularly in terms of reduced road congestion, which would justify the investment in economic terms – but unfortunately these social and economic benefits are not reflected in any growth funding for the Northern franchise.

RailPlan6, Metro's rail strategy, places emphasis on the provision of peak capacity, but also recognises that some of the funding will have to come from fares. Thus fares will now rise at RPI+3% until the end of the Northern franchise, with proceeds directed to providing extra rolling stock.

Interchanges

Metro led the development of a new £2.2million bus interchange right outside Leeds station which caters for around 100 buses per hour. A free bus service around the central area of the city has been introduced: the route covers the hospitals, the university, the shopping centre, the main bus station and the markets. It carried 500,000 passengers in the first six months. Metro is currently

working with the other district councils to introduce free town and city buses linking rail stations to key sites. Huddersfield will be next with a free Town Bus to be introduced in October 2006. Others will follow.

Metro has secured funding for a new £16million bus/rail interchange at Castleford which will bring the bus and rail stations together on one site for the first time. David Hoggarth comments: 'This is an excellent example of where a public transport investment can contribute to the wider regeneration of an area. Castleford and the surrounding area will be a substantial growth area and investment such as this will help link people with jobs.'

matter, as the lengthening of journey times by extra station stops would require more trains to run the present service level, let alone cater for the additional traffic which would result.

Just south of Bradford Interchange, a new station at Low Moor could include a 100 to 150 space car park. Also proposed is a new station at Horsforth Woodside, which could cater for around 200 car parking spaces and provide relief for the over-subscribed car park at the existing Horsforth station.

'All these have timetable and performance implications which have to be carefully considered' says David Hoggarth. 'At the end of the day it's a balance, but it is clear that the strategy of expanding access to the network through new stations has contributed to the spectacular turnaround in the network over the last 20 years.' Mr Hoggarth sees the forthcoming RUS (Route Utilisation Strategy) as a way of addressing these issues and getting the best out of the network. The recently introduced Leeds-Sheffield semi-fast service is a good example of where existing resources have been re-deployed to achieve wider benefits.

Towards the longer term

Metro has been working with authorities across the City Region to develop a 25-year vision for transport. The aim of the vision is support economic growth (in a sustainable way) and improve connectivity between all the main centres and destinations.

Unsurprisingly, and building on past successes, rail will have a major role to play in this. A decision earlier this year not to proceed with construction of the Leeds Supertram network puts extra emphasis on developing the heavy rail network. Possibilities include more electrification of the network. Also under study is the development of a tram train network, based on existing heavy rail routes, but diverting off to serve major development and growth areas: Harrogate could be a pilot project for this. Tram/train would not be cheap, but it would be more affordable than completely new alignments and would build on existing successes.

Other Metro aspirations include higher quality rolling stock for the Caldervale line (Leeds-Hebden Bridge-Manchester Victoria) to upgrade that line fully and put it on a par with the trans-Pennine route through Stalybridge. Bradford Interchange would also be improved to become a fitting gateway to the city centre.

Services on the Pontefract line run to Knottingley from both Leeds and Wakefield, with a minimal extension of the Leeds service to Goole. The vision for these routes is to build on the major new interchange authorised for Castleford (a regeneration area), and extend the Wakefield Kirkgate services through to Wakefield Westgate where additional platform capacity would be needed.

The case is also to be developed for more Bradford/Skipton to London services; one challenge is the electric power supplies, which need strengthening to allow Great North Eastern Railway electric services.

For the longer term, decisions need to be made about access to the Leeds/Bradford airport at Yeadon.

Passenger journeys on local services in West Yorkshire

| Year | Journeys (millions) | % increase |
|---------|---------------------|------------|
| 1992/93 | 12 | 0 |
| 1993/94 | 12.7 | 5.8 |
| 1994/95 | 11.5 | -4.2 |
| 1995/96 | 13.3 | 10.8 |
| 1996/97 | 15 | 25 |
| 1997/98 | 14.9 | 24.2 |
| 1998/99 | 15.3 | 27.5 |
| 1999/00 | 16.3 | 35.8 |
| 2000/01 | 15.3 | 27.5 |
| 2001/02 | 16.1 | 34.2 |
| 2002/03 | 16.6 | 38 |
| 2003/04 | 19.3 | 61 |
| 2004/05 | 21.1 | 75.8 |
| 2005/06 | 23.1 | 92.5 |

More new stations

There has been no let-up in Metro's expansive new stations policy. Most recently, Glasshoughton near Castleford was opened in 2005 to serve a new mixed use development built on an old colliery site, at a cost of £2.4million. This was expected to attract patronage of 150 passengers a day, but the actual result has been 250 so far.

The Glasshoughton experience suggests that the scope for new stations is far from exhausted, despite the substantial number already opened. On the Airedale line, station opening schemes under consideration include Kirkstall, to serve a development site, and Apperley Bridge, where a park-and-ride site with 250-300 car parking spaces adjacent to the A658 is proposed. Opening of new stations on a busy route such as this is a finely judged

Rail Growth in the City Regions was written by James Abbott and John Glover



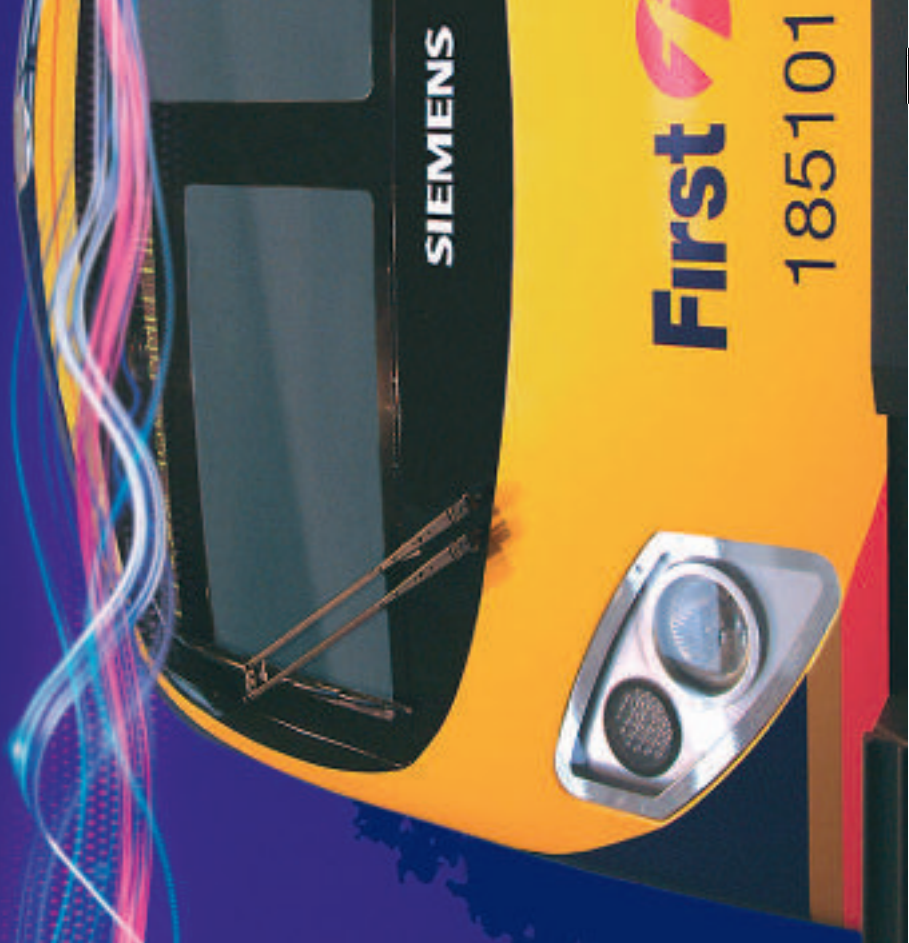
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