

Transit

5 APRIL 2007 ISSUE 308

The right powers

Peter Hendy and his colleagues at the Commission for Integrated Transport came up with a straightforward answer when they studied what Britain's city regions need to drive forward improvements in transport - they all need a Peter Hendy.

There are as yet no plans to clone Transport for London's commissioner, but his role may yet be cloned. Hendy's vision and expertise has played a huge role in the regeneration of London's bus network, but so to have the powers available to him to drive through these changes. Those powers are simply not available to the transport supremos in Britain's city regions. Director generals of the PTEs have so far been reluctant on gaining new powers over their bus networks. Peter Hendy presides over a regulated bus network, why can't we, they ask. But CfIT and its chairman, Hendy, argue that there are other reasons why the PTEs are so reluctant to deliver on the grand strategies that they set in the glaring area over which they lack powers is roads. Greater Manchester, for example. The region's Quality Bus Corridors will eventually cover over 170 miles along 24 key routes. However, they can only boast just 17 miles of bus lanes. London now has 100 miles of bus lanes, and the congestion charge. It is now clear that it's not easy for GMPTE to get its 10 district councils to agree to put in bus lanes. But why give up? The need for a strategic road network is quite plainly obvious to help traffic in the city regions to move freely. As road speeds improved then bus services would become more economic - fare increases could perhaps be suppressed. Original services might be spared the axe. GMPTE have even concluded that the introduction of Quality Bus Corridors is unnecessary.

City regions clearly can't all have a Peter Hendy, but we should have a single, strategic transport authority with powers over roads. The government must include this in the forthcoming Road Transport Bill.

letters

Transport is a whipping boy for the climate change lobby

I am frankly alarmed at the hold established by climate concern groups in such a short space of time. Their refusal to countenance any alternative or complimentary theories is awfully reminiscent of ideological struggles rather than genuine concern about the issues and it is, bluntly, scary to see our politicians tripping over themselves to be "greener than thou".

Transport is a convenient whipping boy, particularly the airline industry. But we must be careful. Looking at that industry for a moment, just how many folks worldwide depend upon it to feed their kids? How many economies rely heavily on visitors? And then the UK roads and rails are overburdened, without internal flights we would be facing gridlock on many key routes.

But there are questions we should ask. Do we really need a next day delivery society? Coastal shipping or airships perhaps, development of these modes is surely hindered by our insistence on speed - necessary or not.

Do we need so many lights? Do offices need them on out of hours, how effective are advert hoardings at 3am, are traffic lights needed 24 hours a day and are all these streetlights really necessary? Vehicles are after all fitted

with their own lights. And nearly all our lighting needs can be met by energy efficient means.

Look at the vapour trails in the sky, how many are caused by freighters? Could not many of the goods travel slower, or not at all? It is preposterous that 40% of the world's bottled water comes from France with all the transport that means.

These are the sorts of questions we should be asking, ones that are likely to gain support and taken together make a real difference. We should question use not provision. Taxing and shaming us into the past won't work.

Roger Davies, Leeds

ITSO is now very much alive

ITSO does not agree with David Brown's statement that "ITSO ... still hasn't delivered" (*Transit* March 23). Since last year we now have operational schemes in Scotland, Cumbria, Lancashire, and Cheshire and more will follow in the next few months. ITSO is now very much alive, working and delivered into real operations.

Valentina Barker
Marketing Manager, ITSO Limited
Centro House, Birmingham

No moonlighting by BBC journalists at the Rail Business Awards

John Nelson is entitled to his views on the Rail Business Awards and I would echo his comments on the amount of noise generated by the audience during the presentations. But he is not entitled to describe me as a 'moonlighter' on some kind of 'special contract'. Moonlighting is a dangerous word here: it suggests that I am being paid for working behind the BBC's back and without the knowledge of my manager. I strongly resent this suggestion. Mr

Nelson will find no evidence that I have ever been paid for being part of the judging team for the Rail Business Awards nor for turning up on the night to present the award for which I acted as lead judge. I do it because it is an excellent way of meeting key industry figures, building contacts and even picking up the occasional story.

Alan Whitehouse
BBC Yorkshire, Leeds

Transit welcomes letters for publication on any matter relating to passenger transport business management. Write to: The Editor, Transit, 250 Kennington Lane, London SE11 5RD. Fax: 0845 270 7961 Email: ed.transit@landor.co.uk

inpassing

Disorganised religion

It is always dangerous to invite your industry colleagues to say what they think of you, and certainly it takes a brave organisation to share the

Toilet humour

Oxford Bus Company recently introduced Britain's cleanest coaches onto its Airline service to Heathrow and Gatwick. The eight Euro V