

FirstGroup invests £27 million in ticketing

FIRSTGROUP has announced it is investing £27 million in smart ticketing for its 5,000-strong bus fleet in England (excluding London).

The company is looking to install machines which accept both ITSO smart media and contactless bank cards (EMV), allowing passengers alternative payment means and incorporating the needs of smart national concessionary bus passes. These will be supplied by Almex.

The new system will allow FirstGroup to offer a range of tickets including capping the daily fare and will be capable of accepting mobile phone payments in future.

The machines will be ready to accept ITSO technology from later this autumn, and contactless bank cards (EMV) from late 2012.

Giles Fearnley, Managing Director of FirstGroup's UK Bus division, said: "We strongly believe that simplifying bus travel

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and introducing a maximum capped daily fare will support our passenger growth plans. In particular, we think it will encourage car users to make the modal shift to bus, especially given the continuing high costs of fuel."

Norman Baker, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, said: "I welcome First using smart technology to improve the customer experience of bus travel. This announcement means that ITSO tickets ... will be read smartly on First's buses.

"I will be personally taking a keen interest in how this makes bus travel more attractive. I also know that First will cooperate in the development and use of smart multi-operator products, to deliver seamless, better value public transport."

FirstGroup's UK Bus division carries approximately 2.5 million customers a day in more than 40 major towns and cities. The new ticketing technology will be implemented to all of First's services in England, including Manchester, Bolton, Oldham, Wigan, Stoke, Northampton, Leeds, York, Halifax, Huddersfield, Bradford, Leicester, Portsmouth, Southampton, Plymouth, Reading, Bristol, Ipswich and Norwich.



• Manchester: One of the major cities where First buses will go ITSO-smart

New busway is booming

THE new busway in Cambridge has proved so popular that the number of buses now being deployed has doubled.

The Busway opened on 7 August and the first week saw a total of 55,895 trips being made on Stagecoach and Whippet buses. The smartcard system on board is ITSO-compliant.

The Busway is the world's longest, running for 16 miles between Cambridge, St Ives and Huntingdon.



New trio for technical teams

James Cochrane has joined ITSO's technical team as Technical Analyst. His primary responsibility will be supporting the development and use of the Specification by ITSO members.

He has worked in systems development, business strategy and systems modelling for diverse organisations around the world. He has extensive experience both developing and managing business critical systems, together with the methods of formal service management.

Most recently, James has worked with Transport Scotland on their ITSO smart ticketing strategy and AMS/HOPS migration project.

James says he remembers fondly when his priorities were competitive sport and evenings solving complex mathematical problems in C (a computer language) but now spends his time learning from a growing family of little gems – a challenge he finds not solvable using exact methods.

*James can be contacted on 07789 976725
James.Cochrane@itso.org.uk*

Methushala Yerraguntla joined as an Analyst – Testing Services—on 1 September.

His role at ITSO will be to focus on testing of interoperability and for certification, in addition to helping define the test process

and procedures.

Methu has more than 11 years experience in the IT industry with international exposure. He has worked at Yorcard and Parkeon on various ITSO smart card projects.

Methu is the father of two children and loves to spend his spare time with his family, as well as listening to music, playing chess and cricket.

*Methu can be contacted on 01908 255266
Methushala.Yerraguntla@itso.org.uk*

Tanisha Dewan joins as a Technical Tester on 19 September. Her responsibilities will revolve around testing ITSO and its partners' products to make them compatible in the wider environment.

Tanisha has more than four years' experience in home and network security software and hardware devices, e-commerce and the banking industry.

She gained Manual and Automation testing skills whilst working at Intamac, Fujitsu, Symantec and HCL.

At home, Tanisha and her husband share similar likes of exploring new places, watching movies & fish keeping — one difference being, says Tanisha, she enjoys cooking and he enjoys eating.

Tanisha can be contacted on 01908 255463

pricing review and the Service Level Agreements for Testing Services.

Members can expect to be contacted soon and invited to take part in an engagement event. May I encourage you please to take part if you can - this is your opportunity to be directly involved, and to have input on areas which are likely to affect your business.

Our plan is to hold a number of sessions covering a number of topics.

Welcome from the CEO

As mentioned in last month's ITSONews, one of our strategic objectives for 2011/12 is to begin reviewing the ITSO Specification.



This is a critical activity for members and for the immediate and long-term future of ITSO. The review will be undertaken from a Licensed Operator perspective, incorporating the views of existing and potential members to ensure that we understand their needs. We will be seeking views from the full ITSO community over the course of the review.

The first stage in the consultation process is a series of workshops which will take place in London during the week of 3 October. All members will be invited to attend one of these sessions and invitations will be issued shortly.

We recognise that not everyone will be able to attend, so we will also be giving members the opportunity to submit views in writing, about the Specification review and a number of our other objectives, between mid-October and mid-November.

More information on how to make a written submission will be provided nearer the time.

We will then analyse all the submissions and the input we receive and make our initial findings available in December.

You can find more information on ITSO Ltd's strategic objectives for 2011/12 in [our business plan](#).

- We're now ready to start working with suppliers to complete the new demonstration area within the suite at Milton Keynes. We will be contacting suppliers of ITSO certified technology in the coming month to finalise their support for this critical initiative.

Regards, Michael

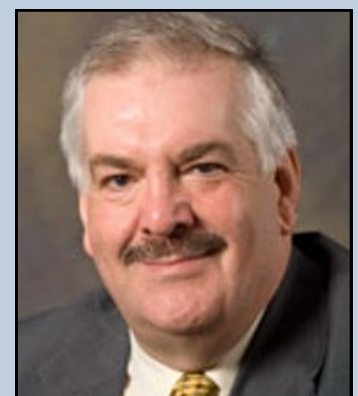
From the Chair

NO DOUBT most ITSO members and staff enjoyed a well-earned summer break, but the requirement on the Company to meet its strategic objectives took no holiday, and we have been taking steps to arrange engagement sessions with members.

As I mentioned last month, a number of ITSO's strategic objectives for the current year cover topics which will directly affect members - such as a

For members who are unable to attend sessions in person, we will have alternative methods. The aim is to discuss as many topics as possible at each event, to avoid the need to canvas members repeatedly on different subjects.

This is a very real opportunity to discuss ITSO Ltd topics with Company staff and fellow members alike, and to influence the forthcoming activities and objectives, so I hope you'll



make every effort to get involved.

Train operator Southern pilots smartcards

TRAIN operator Southern will be going live on 18 September with a trial of ITSO-compliant smartcard technology.

Southern's parent company, the Go-Ahead group, is also piloting the new smartcard called 'the key' at two more of its transport companies—London Midland and Brighton & Hove Buses. The key can be recharged again and again with various types of ticket including seasons, singles and returns.

The trial will be at all stations on the line from Brighton to Seaford where work has started on installing the equipment required to support the smartcard system. Up to 100 passengers will take part, reporting back on their experience of the system so that Southern can refine it before rolling it out elsewhere.

The key smartcard system will provide passengers with quicker and easier ticket purchase online or via ticket machines at Southern stations in a one touch



transaction, and they will be able to store and manage different ticket products through their personal online account.

Southern sees other benefits of the key as being:

- faster 'touch in and out' when passing through ticket gates at stations

- the option to store one or more ticket products, all on the key
- quick cancellation of the key if it is lost or stolen so protecting the ticket products stored on it
- avoiding having to buy a paper ticket ever again or replacing it if it gets worn, and
- future options for new rail ticket products and integrated transport opportunities

Southern's Development Director Alex Foulds (pictured) said: "This is just the start. The key smartcard will evolve over time with many possibilities for the future. For example, in time we will be able to tailor ticket products such as 'early bird' season tickets for those who travel earlier than the morning rush hour, or perhaps a carnet-style season ticket for less frequent travellers. There will also be opportunities for integrated travel tickets such as rail-bus tickets."

Oxford SmartZone a great success

THE new Oxford SmartZone scheme from Oxford Bus, Stagecoach and Thames Travel has been hailed as both a 'revolution' and a 'great success'.

The ITSO-compliant scheme sees passengers being able to use one set of smartcard products to travel on any bus within the zone, as well as coordinated timetables on four of the busiest routes.

The scheme went live on 24 July. Passengers can buy weekly, monthly or annual passes on their smart cards which they buy and top up online or through travelshops.

The local paper, the [Oxford Mail](#), reports that commuters see the joint ticketing scheme as a great success and quotes Hugh Jaeger of Bus User UK saying: "This will be the biggest revolution [to public transport in Oxford] since deregulation in 1986."

The new timetable and smart ticketing arrangements follow the launch of Oxfordshire County Council's [Transform Oxford](#) strategy which aims to reduce the number of buses in Oxford City Centre.

In preparation for the timetables and ticketing scheme, the bus companies have invested over £10 million in 46 state-

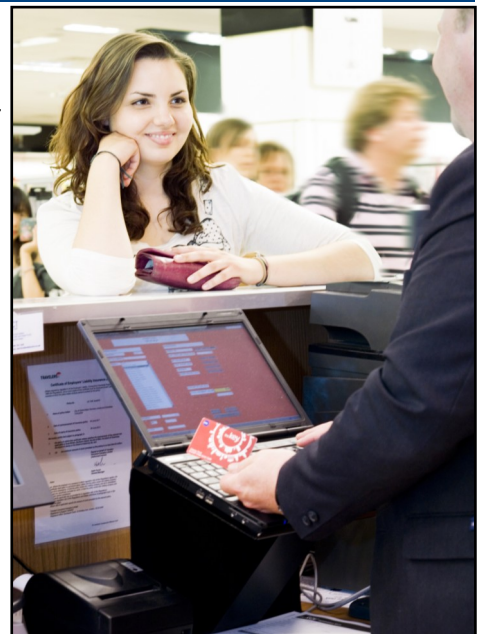
of-the-art double deck buses which deliver a significant reduction in emissions.

Philip Kirk, Oxford Bus Company Managing Director, said: "The three partners to this agreement have been working together for many months to deliver a better bus network with lower emission vehicles and easier access. This is good news for Oxford and for people using buses in Oxford."

Martin Sutton, Managing Director of Stagecoach said: "The new timetables and smarter ticketing options will make a huge difference to passengers, giving them access to a much bigger bus network and the flexibility to get on the first bus that comes along as well as offering some great deals on tickets."

Councillor Rodney Rose, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport, said: "This is the first agreement of its kind to be put in place in the UK and was all part of our Transform Oxford vision for the city.

"We have been working with the bus companies to develop a package of timetables, new buses and shared, smartcard ticketing that will benefit both bus passengers and pedestrians in Oxford, as well as improving air quality. The bus companies have been working



very hard with the council on this and I look forward to seeing the new system unfold in coming weeks and months."

Michael Leach, CEO of ITSO, said: "Oxford is holding up a beacon showing the way operators and authorities using ITSO can help realise the Government's vision that smart and integrated ticketing has the potential to revolutionise the way passengers use public transport."

- Oxford Bus and Thames Travel are part of the Go-Ahead group.

OneCard going all the way in Leicestershire

A £2 million smartcard system for concessionary bus passengers is planned to go live on Arriva buses in Leicestershire this month.

The ITSO-compliant OneCard scheme is being introduced for 160,000 holders of concessionary travel passes in the county.

Leicestershire is working with five bus operators: Arriva, Centrebus, First, Kinch and Thurmaston, running around 500 buses in total with current passenger journey numbers of around 50 million a year.

All have plans in place to buy upgraded electronic ticketing machines which go live on Arriva buses later this month, with other operators following over the next few months.

Commercial

The scheme will use the existing bus passes which already have electronic chips. The OneCards will ultimately be rolled out to enable people to access all commercial public transport by topping them up to replace cash.

The Council says it wants to make travelling on public transport quicker and easier, as well as cutting the risk of fraud.

The OneCard was officially launched by City Mayor Peter Soulsby and deputy mayor Councillor Rory Palmer on 15

Residents are often frustrated the different bus companies operate their own ticketing systems with little or no integration ... the OneCard is one step to resolving this



• **OneCard launch: Deputy City Mayor Cllr Rory Palmer, Arriva driver Susan Allen, Mayor Peter Soulsby and Arriva communications manager Keith Myatt**

August.

Sir Peter Soulsby said: "The OneCards are absolutely brilliant. They will make it easy for people to travel by bus so they won't have to dig around for change in their pockets. The potential to expand this technology to enable people to access all sorts of services is enormous."

There are plans to allow access to public libraries, leisure centres, universities, school transport and more via the OneCard.

Leicester Deputy City Mayor with responsibility for transport, Councillor Rory Palmer, said: "Residents are often frustrated the different bus companies operate their own ticketing systems with little or no integration, so the launch of the OneCard is one step to resolving this."

"Smart ticketing is one way we can get

more people using public transport in the city and eventually we will link the card technology with other services as well."

City council OneCard project officer Adele Wearing said swiping the cards would register which journeys were made but not who made them to protect passenger privacy. She also said lost cards could be quickly deactivated and replaced.

Adele added: "It will help us prevent fraud where people get fake bus passes made and flash them at our drivers. We know it is a problem in Leicester but we don't know the scale of it."

Arriva spokesman Keith Myatt said: "We are delighted to have been chosen as the first bus operator to run the OneCards. It should make loading passengers much quicker."

Update on progress of the ISMS

SINCE the migration to v1.5 in mid-May, the ISMS has processed greater than three million messages.

The total number of messages processed in August this year was three times that processed in August 2010.

Further to the significant increase in connected ISAMs in July, last month a little over 1300 ISAMs were connected, compared to 300 in August last year.

This now means we have more than

58,000 ISAMs connected to the ISMS.

There was one major incident, caused by an issue with virtual memory, during August. This was recovered almost immediately, and the source of the issue is being addressed.

• **All queries concerning the ISMS should be directed to the ISMS Service Desk Hotline on 01908 255477 or email ismdesk@itso.org.uk.**



Looking to collaborate on Smart Network



KENT County Council is this week holding a market engagement event to explore the best way to continue its investment in new smart ticketing technology.

The subsequent procurement will include a new back office system (HOPS), Card Management System (CMS) and card bureau. The programme was recently given a boost by the Department for Transport (DfT) through its Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF).

Kent is keen to develop a regional Smart Network, providing other authorities with the opportunity to join the smart journey and benefit from reduced costs resulting from collaborative working.

Kent is talking to a number of authorities about the potential for such a partnership and is keen to hear from other authorities who may be interested.

The Smart Network proposal presents

• Canterbury tale: Stagecoach already has a commercial smartcard in Kent

an opportunity for authorities to benefit from knowledge sharing and reduced procurement and contract costs, which has become all the more important following the recent DfT announcement that all authorities must move away from the ITSO Services Ltd HOPS (ISL) in 2012.

Freedom Pass

Kent first took the plunge back in 2009 when they left ISL and procured their own HOPS.

Since then they have been working with private bus operators to kit out buses with smart ticket machines for use with Smart ENCTS passes, and Kent Freedom Passes (the Council's bus pass giving young people 24/7 access to the bus network of Kent).

Kent is looking to work with operators to

develop commercial products using the new HOPS.

Stagecoach has already launched concessionary and commercial smartcard schemes on its Kent buses. Arriva and a number of other smaller operators also accept Kent's concessionary products.

Kent Project Manager Thomas King said: "This provides us with a unique opportunity to improve our current provision using the knowledge we've built up over the last four years, whilst taking advantage of new technological developments within the smart card industry."

To discuss the possibility of joining the proposed Smart Network or for more information about Kent's smart card journey, please contact Thomas King on 01622 696828, or email thomas.king@kent.gov.uk.

DfT to issue guidance following ISL contract end decision

ON 29 July the Department for Transport wrote to all Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) advising them that its contract with ITSO Services Ltd (ISL) will not be renewed after it expires on 24 September 2012.

It is the responsibility of those TCAs that

are currently members of ISL to make alternative arrangements to ensure that they remain able to produce and issue ITSO-compliant concessionary travel passes and manage their ENCTS products. It is important that these arrangements are put in place well in advance of the contract expiry date.

Any TCA which believes it has not received a copy of the letter should contact Simon Ardron at the Department for Transport (0207 944 2238 or simon.ardron@dft.gsi.gov.uk).

Further guidance to TCAs is planned to be issued by the Department for Transport later this month.

Taxicard will save York more than expected

DISABLED people in York are now able to take advantage of a new concessionary SMART travel scheme introduced by City of York Council.

The scheme, York Taxicard, has been implemented by Ecebs and is open to York residents of any age who have a qualifying disability. It is an alternative to the National Bus Pass and uses an advanced, secure smartcard that will allow users to pay for taxi travel using the card.

It is currently a standalone scheme, but the smartcard solution also provides a migration path to a full ITSO scheme for the council.

York has successfully bid for £4.6 million funding through

the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and part of the plan is that First, the principal bus operator in the city providing 80% of services, will invest approximately £500,000 in ITSO-compliant ticketing equipment by 2012.

Previously the Council used a system of taxi tokens, whereby eligible residents were given an allowance. These tokens were redeemed via various taxi operators who, in turn, were reimbursed by the token-issuing company. This system was difficult to manage and, like similar voucher-based schemes, had high annual production costs in addition to being open to fraud.

The Smartcard solution enables the taxi driver to receive payment at regular

intervals via BACS, thus reducing delays in payment, often a problem with other schemes. The system records and allocates funds due to a driver when the smartcard transaction takes place during the journey and the driver doesn't need to take any further action.

The York Taxicard provides eligible residents with a smartcard containing a unique card number and user photograph, while each taxi is equipped with a portable GPRS-enabled smart card terminal. People eligible for concessionary taxi fares will get a smart card, which will be scanned by the taxi's reader at the start and end of their journey.

The system simultaneously deducts the subsidy from the passenger's overall allowance, as well as from the total cost of that particular journey. The traveller then pays any remaining charge to the driver as normal. The journey is automatically registered with the council and the taxi company is reimbursed from managed funds.

The scheme is designed with ease-of-use in mind for everyone involved, and taxi drivers and residents have responded positively.

The system also captures key journey information and automatically generates management information reports for the council. All the evidence gathered to date from the detailed Management Reporting indicates a full payback of implementation costs will be achieved in less than 12 months.



The initial roll-out involves the production and distribution of 1,250 smartcards to those eligible, the supply of 110 mobile card readers to participating taxi operators, training and on-going support.

In offering a smartcard replacement to their token-based scheme, City of York Council has also provided a greener, lower-cost alternative to residents, compared to the production of vouchers or tokens which are needed in large supply.

"The forecast savings are greater than our business case had suggested. I am delighted with the Ecebs system and the support that we received during the implementation," commented Andrew Bradley, Principal Transport Planner, City of York Council.

David Burdett, Managing Director of Ecebs, said: "The previous system meant there was an upfront cost for each token so money is spent even if the token isn't actually used. The taxi driver then has to present the tokens for reimbursement which means they have to wait for payment. The Smartcard solution solves these problems and offers a migration path to a full ITSO scheme as and when required in addition to offering flexibility for future applications to be used with the same card."



Contribute to your newsletter

If you wish to contribute to ITSONews please contact Sheila MacDonald, Communications Advisor, on 01908 255487, email sheila.macdonald@itso.org.uk. Your news should be relevant to an existing or planned ITSO-compliant scheme.