

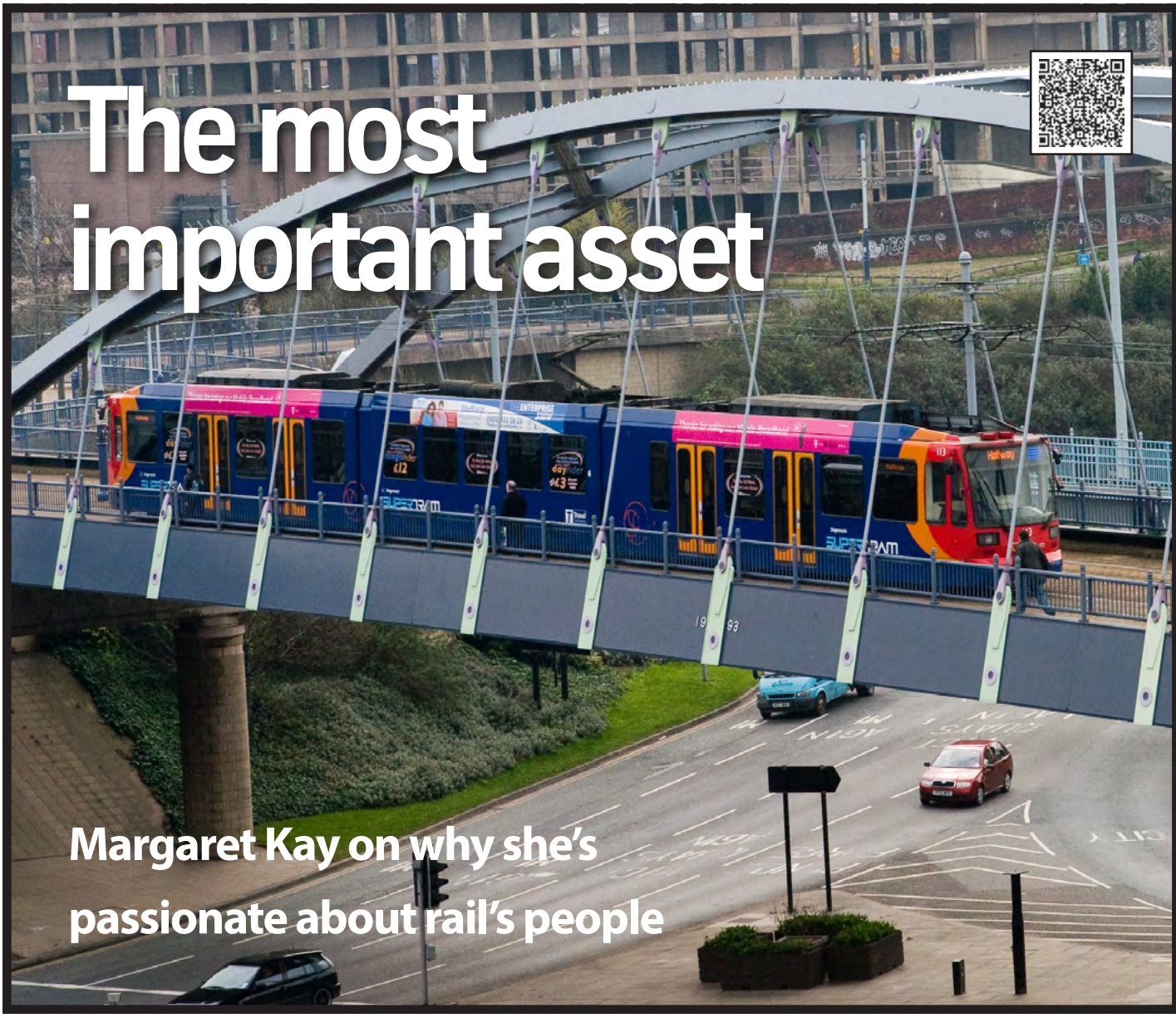
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Margaret Kay on why she's passionate about rail's people

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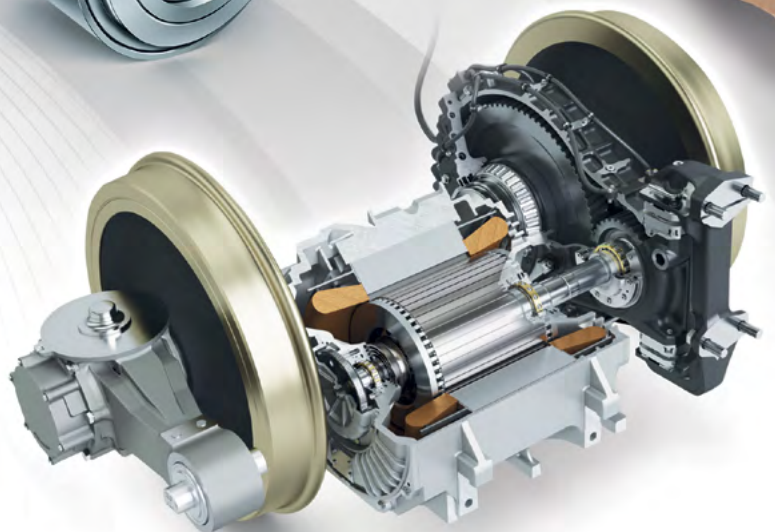
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Hallmark House, Downham Road,
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Telephone: +44 (0)1268 711811

EDITORIAL**EDITOR**

LORNA SLADE

editor@railpro.co.uk

BUSINESS PROFILE EDITOR

SAM SHERWOOD-HALE

ADVERTISING

CHRISTIAN WILES

chris@railpro.co.uk

HANNAH CARRATT

hannah@railpro.co.uk

ELLIOTT GATES

elliott@railpro.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS

BEN WARING

ben@railpro.co.uk

ADMINISTRATION

CHERIE NUGENT

info@railpro.co.uk

LISA ETHERINGTON

admin@railpro.co.uk

GILLIAN DUNN

office@railpro.co.uk

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

MILES JOHNSTONE

production@railpro.co.uk

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editor's note

“**T**rying to make sense of all the messages around franchising is a job and a half. The Transport Select Committee is urging the DfT to allow operators greater freedom to run their businesses at the same time as telling it off for failing to monitor and enforce franchises adequately – two separate things I know, but even so. At the same time we have the devolution agenda gathering pace. On top of that I know that a senior figure in the Rail Executive is not a fan of open access and sees it as discouraging to existing and potential franchisees.

Thank god therefore that we had the George Bradshaw address, where RDG chair Chris Burchell, in between getting the message across that he was a choir boy at St Paul's and enjoys a fulfilling private life, led the call for the Committee's report to 'spark a discussion about the size and scope of franchises'. I take it that's why he ignored my direct request to contribute a piece to this month's issue, themed around, you guessed it, franchising.

Burchell spoke about a need for the model to match the market, for a more bespoke approach, a freedom from the DfT's command and control strictures. 'It's too complex to be run from Whitehall and disparate organisations acting independently' he stated sagely. Still at least he sort of had something to say, unlike Mark Carne, who put the slickest politician to shame in ducking the question from host Channel 4 News' Helia Ebrahimi on whether the franchising model was fit for purpose. Taking a transactional analysis approach, Bechtel's Ailie MacAdam spoke of wanting a more 'adult to adult' relationship between regulators and industry. My mind wondering after that, I couldn't help notice that in responding to a question from the audience on whether Network Rail will be put out by increasing private industry activity, Carne's child ego state appeared like a little boy happy to leave it to the grown-ups: 'I'm all for PPP' he enthused, 'Why should Network Rail be the only one allowed to build East West Rail?'

The thing about these kinds of events, especially in rail I've noticed, is that they manifest a kind of mass hypnotic effect where nobody really gets down to business for whatever reason, and so the aftertaste was of yet another missed opportunity for real debate.

Reports of the death of BML2 have been exaggerated. The long-overdue publication recently (it was finished last April) of the London South Coast Study led to the assumption it had been scrapped (as reported in The Times). BML2 tells me nothing could be further from the truth as the events of the past nine months involving private sector involvement were not taken into account in the study. The London & Southern Counties Railway Consortium (LSCR) – the private sector-led group that has been working with BML2 to realise the line (See March's main interview) said 'everything is going extremely well' and it is 'working through pre-feasibility processes to create a viable and fundable proposition for investors, and looking forward to ongoing engagement with Department for Transport officials and ministers in the coming weeks.'

The interview with Margaret Kay went ahead very shortly before the announcement on her new job as MD of South West Trains. Having asked various Stagecoach press officers for a post-interview paragraph from Kay on how she feels about leaving Supertram and the new position, which potentially ends in the summer, I was unable to garner anything other than a bland one line statement. Still I hope the piece gives a flavour of Kay and her view that rail personnel need to recognise their abilities are a match for any sector.

Lorna Slade Editor



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“ If I look back at all those over the years whom I’ve mentored, more times than not what they needed was someone to say ‘You can do that, don’t look at the barriers look at the opportunities’ ”

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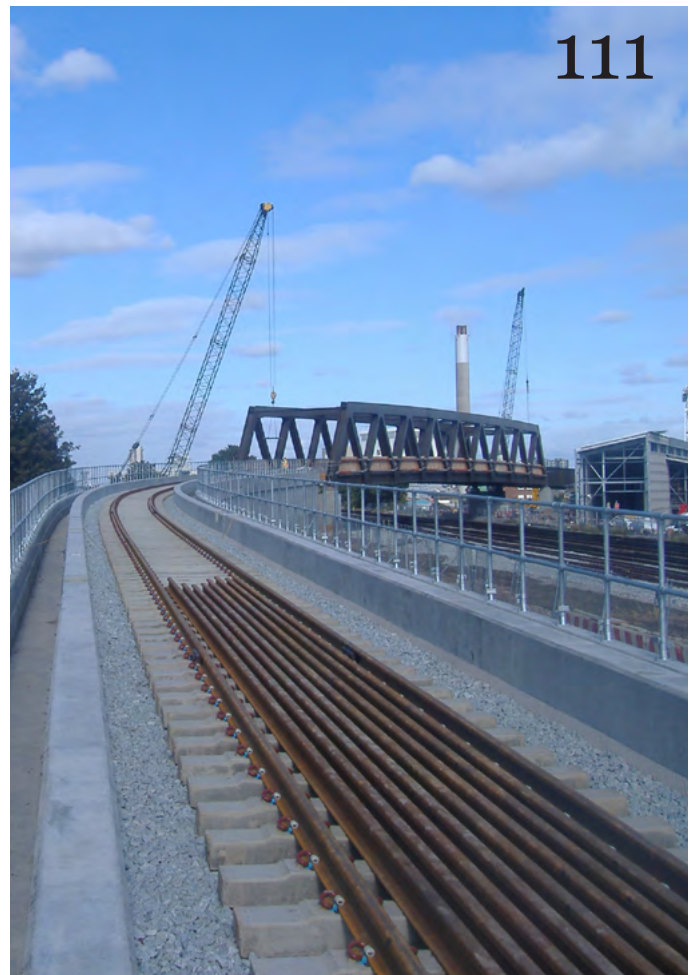
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Liability admitted for Croydon tram tragedy

A number of survivors and families of the victims are suing TfL and Tram Operations Limited (TOL), a subsidiary of First Group, which is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the trams. Tramtrack Croydon, part of TfL and TOL admitted liability in order that civil claims will not be contested and payments can be made 'promptly'. Richard Geraghty, a serious injury lawyer from Slater and Gordon, which represents two of the victims, said: 'The news that our clients will not have to endure a civil trial is very welcome.'

Rail minister says Peninsula is a priority

Paul Maynard has confirmed the South West Peninsula is a priority for future investment in rail. Speaking at a meeting with the Peninsula Rail Task Force to discuss the government's response to its 20-year investment plan report *Closing the Gap*, Maynard confirmed that from Chris Grayling down the DfT is 'clear why you matter'. Task Force chairman, Cllr Andrew Leadbetter said: 'The minister was hopeful that decisions would be announced later this year and saw no reason why the Task Force should be anything other than optimistic.'

Milestone for Blackpool Tramway

The town's revamped tramway system is more popular than ever with 5 million journeys recorded since April 2016, a figure last marked in 1994. Passenger satisfaction is also up, to 94% according to DfT figures. Work is progressing to extend the tramway from the Promenade up to Blackpool North train station. Cllr Christine Wright, chair of Blackpool Transport, said: 'It is fantastic that more and more people are choosing to use the tramway network to get around the Fylde coast.'

'Cat is out of the bag' says RMT via new innovation competition

Rail Minister Paul Maynard has announced up to £9 million to support UK businesses as part of a new innovation competition to develop solutions for national and international railways.

The competition, *accelerating innovation in rail round 4*, aims to help deliver the industry's Rail Technical Strategy and its Rail Capability Delivery Plan for 2017 and invites applications on two priority areas that:

- create high-value, low-cost railway innovations, which increase the value of rail services to passengers while driving down operational expense
- improve customer experience through station design and performance.

Maynard said: 'We are delivering the biggest modernisation programme in rail since the Victorian era but industries like automotive and aerospace spend many times what rail spends on research and development. This has to change. We have got to accelerate innovation in rail. It's what passengers deserve and expect.'

Maynard asked for participation both from within the rail sector and from organisations with little experience of working in rail. 'Winning back customer confidence is a big challenge for the industry and successful innovation will play a big role in delivering that,' he said.

The deadline for registration to the competition is midday on 10th May. UK businesses of any size can apply for funding, which is being made available by the DfT through Innovate UK. Each project should include at least one SME. Projects are expected to last up to 12 months and range in size from £150,000 to £1 million.

However the RMT said the Capability Plan, issued with RSSB support, is evidence that the government is planning to axe thousands of rail jobs, including all drivers, citing its wording: 'Given the pace of development in information and communications technology a completely new operational concept and train control and regulation capability can be developed over the short to medium-term'. The union also had concerns that the innovation competition invites entries that 'need not be constrained by existing railway standards' and requests help to 'deliver optimal staffing for a high-value, low-cost railway'.

Mick Cash RMT general secretary said: 'The cat is well and truly out of the bag now. The Capability Plan sounds innocuous enough but is, in fact, a blueprint for automation with the long-term objective of a faceless railway where passengers are left to fend for themselves without any human contact whatsoever.'

TfWM to take direct control of Midland Metro services

Transport for West Midlands is to take over the day-to-day running of its Midland Metro trams from October 2018 when the current concession, held by National Express, finishes.

The move will enable TfWM, which is the transport arm of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), to plough millions of pounds of future profits back into expanding the network.

Existing National Express staff will be transferred over to a new subsidiary company – Midland Metro Ltd – which will be wholly owned by the WMCA.

The combined authority is set to start a number of extensions which will see the network triple in size over the next decade, with passenger numbers forecast to increase from around 6.5 million at present to more than 30 million.

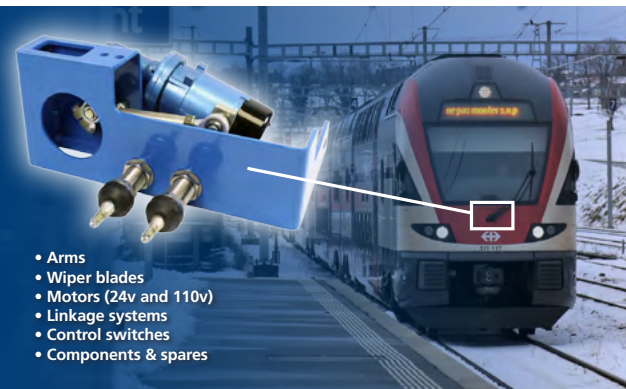
That is expected to generate profits of around £50 million over the first 11 years which the WMCA will be able to channel back into the network for the benefit of passengers and the local economy. >>>

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News in brief...

Rethink freight investment says minister

Scotland's transport minister Humza Yousaf has urged the UK government not to cut Modal Shift Revenue Support grants to three of the six cross-border rail freight traffic flows between Scotland and England. Yousaf said: 'The Scottish government has ensured that the budget for 2017/18 includes sufficient provision for continuing with the same level of support. I have written to John Hayes MP outlining my concerns. Given the clear benefits of rail freight I would strongly urge a revisit of this decision.'

Award for Mark Hopwood

The Great Western Railway MD was named Industry Leader of the Year at the Rail Business Awards 2017. Hopwood was praised for leading the company during a period of significant change and challenge (see *Rail Professional* interview December 2015). He said: 'It is a privilege for me to lead an excellent team of people at GWR. I know as we meet the challenges together we will achieve our vision of revaluing rail in the hearts and minds of our customers.'

Super for Heathrow Express

Heathrow Express has been awarded Business Superbrands status for 2017, for the 11th year in a row. Fraser Brown, director of Heathrow Express said: 'We have once again been recognised for the premium service we provide and our excellence as a train operating company.' Stephen Cheliotis, chairman of the Business Superbrands Council said: 'A strong reputation is undoubtedly one of the key drivers of business success and growth.'

On record

More than 35,000 records of London transport staff have been published online by Ancestry, the family history

>>> Cllr Roger Lawrence, WMCA lead for transport, said: 'Metro is a fundamental part of our future plans not only for transport but for the West Midlands economy as a whole.'

'It is a proven catalyst for economic growth and is critical to best connect and feed into HS2 so we can reap the maximum economic benefits possible from the high speed rail line.'

'That's why Metro is embarking on an unprecedented period of expansion and we believe bringing services in house will provide the extra flexibility and adaptability needed to meet this exciting new chapter while generating millions of pounds for the benefit of passengers and taxpayers.'

Bringing operations 'in house' would also enable TfWM to introduce new lines, trams, technology and operational practices safely, efficiently and with best value to the public purse, he said.

In taking the decision, the WMCA board was told that if it decided to continue outsourcing tram services from next October then the tendering process alone to appoint a private operator would cost taxpayers several million pounds.

Cllr Lawrence said the move and the transfer of staff over from National Express would ensure existing skills and expertise were retained helping to ensure the Metro's 99 per cent reliability and its other strengths were taken forward.

Laura Shoaf, managing director of TfWM, said: 'The end of the existing concession provides us with an ideal opportunity to change the way we operate services to better meet the needs of passengers, the wider community and ultimately the economy.'

'If we didn't do this and instead outsourced operations to a private company at a time of such major expansion then it would be extremely difficult to accurately define the scope of services required from the operator.'

'That would lead to continuous and expensive commercial negotiations to agree the price for the delivery of those network changes.'

'So while bringing operations in house is not without risk we believe those risks are far outweighed by the advantages and that ultimately the move is good for passengers, good for taxpayers and good for the future prosperity of the West Midlands.'

Colin Saward, general manager of National Express Midlands Metro said he was 'disappointed' the company won't get the chance to run the tram service when its current contract ends next year. 'But we appreciate TfWM's reasons for taking services back in house when the network is about to change so much.'

Greater Manchester wants all change at stations

Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) has submitted its Case for Change to the Department for Transport, in a bid to secure a multi-million pound investment and regional accountability by bringing Greater Manchester's rail stations under local control.

The submission has been made on behalf of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, in line with the 2014 devolution agreement and 2040 strategic vision for transport to drive economic growth and regeneration.

The business case recommends the wholesale transfer of station ownership and management from Network Rail and train operators to Greater Manchester as the best solution to help stations realise their full potential.

It sets out plans for long-term investment to enable local stations to act as community hubs; offer a seamless journey through better integration with the wider transport network; improve access to jobs and local facilities, and act as a catalyst for local regeneration and social enterprises.

Subject to an 'in principle' government agreement by summer this year, 94 local rail



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News in brief...

and consumer genomics company. Digitised from records held by TfL Corporate Archives, the London Transport Staff Registers, 1863-1931 collection includes details over a 68-year period including the First World War. Ancestry's Miriam Silverman said the records 'help us remember the stories of the men and women who got Londoners from A to B every day,' and are also a source of historical information. Visit www.ancestry.co.uk.

£40 million rail depot planned for Exeter

Planning consent for a new rail depot at Exeter has been submitted by Network Rail on behalf of GWR, which is looking to improve the existing Exeter Olds View Depot train maintenance facility to accommodate an increase in fleet size in the Devon and Cornwall area. GWR is seeking to begin the new depot, subject to planning consent being secured, in Spring 2018 and complete it in mid-2019.

Greater Anglia upgrades

The Toc is carrying out a £4.7 million refurbishment of its commuter trains in Essex and Hertfordshire that will cover 212 Class 321 carriages and 72 Class 317 carriages. Some of the 40 additional 321 carriages brought into the franchise have extended first class seating, which will be removed to increase standard class seating capacity. MD Jamie Burles said: 'We will replace our entire fleet with 1,043 brand new carriages, but in the meantime I'm delighted this investment will provide improved comfort for our customers.'

ORR statistics show low Q3 growth

Rail passenger journeys in Greater Britain for Q3 of 2016-17 reached 442.4 million, the lowest quarter on quarter growth (0.04%) since Q4 2012-13,



stations could transfer to Greater Manchester custodianship in the next two to three years, with city centre Manchester Piccadilly, Manchester Victoria and Oxford Road to follow thereafter.

Said TfGM: 'The current model of station ownership does not allow for long-term customer focus and planning, and stations and their facilities have not evolved in line with customer expectations. This is due to the short length nature of current rail franchise contracts with funding mechanisms of up to no more than nine years.'

If approved, more than £400 million – combined from existing funding streams and additional Greater Manchester investment – would be invested in local stations over the next two decades, with potential to use related land assets for additional housing, commercial development and improved car parking.

Greater Manchester's plans would act as a catalyst for social business initiatives that could see stations support local health and well-being by offering community gyms, cafes and health centres. Stations could also include art galleries, room for concerts, performing arts, festivals, and local weekend markets – and space for offices and meetings, conferences and training and development.

TfGM believes rail station transfer will help stimulate significant economic investment in local communities and spread economic benefits more widely across the region, helping Greater Manchester deliver its ambition of an extra 227,000 homes by 2035.

Tony Lloyd, Greater Manchester Mayor, said: 'Many of Greater Manchester's rail stations do not meet the expectations of the travelling public. Stations have lost their place in the community, more than half lack step-free access, and some can be intimidating to use, particularly at night. I believe it is important that our transport assets do not just meet, but exceed the demands of users. The case for change is clear.'

'Our Case for Change plan offers a long-term approach to investment and growth that our industry partners have simply been unable to deliver under the constraints of the current system. We will work with the government to ensure a quick decision is made - we want to start delivering change as soon as possible.'

Jon Lamonte, TfGM's chief executive, said: 'The recent redevelopment of Irlam rail station has already showcased how our vision can become a reality, demonstrating just what can be achieved when local stations realise their full social and economic potential.'

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according to ORR data. Passenger revenue was also shown to be lacking growth, as Q3 revenue stood at £2.4bn, up only 1.2% from the previous quarter, the lowest growth the industry had experienced since 2009-10. Govia Thameslink Railway recorded its largest decrease in journeys this quarter at only 78.4 million.

DB Cargo UK employee puts 'stamp' on history

Professional artist and DB Cargo UK employee Ian Cryer's oil painting of postal staff working aboard the last Travelling Post Office has been chosen to feature in the Royal Mail Heritage: Transport 'Post & Go' stamp series. The new issue, 'Rail and Mail', has been produced as part of Royal Mail's 500 year anniversary celebrations. Cryer created the work in 2003 after hearing TPO services were set to end, and while travelling at 90mph on a service from Plymouth to Bristol.

Don't delay, repay

East Midlands Trains is allowing customers to donate their Delay Repay compensation to charitable causes, with the first nominated as Railway Children. Toc MD Jake Kelly said: 'If we can make sure that a good cause could benefit in some way from any unfortunate delays then at least we're making a positive difference. We're looking for feedback from our customers and would love to hear their suggestions for which other charitable causes or organisations could be recipients of this scheme.'

Flying start

Gatwick Express, Heathrow Express, Stansted Express and Luton Thameslink have launched the first ever sales team at Edinburgh airport for air passengers flying to London, at the same time as new research has found they could save £163,705,505.30 and 234,374,877 minutes per year if they all ditched taxis for the express train transfers between four London airports and the centre of the capital. Gordon Dewar, CEO of Edinburgh Airport, said: 'The Edinburgh - London flight routes are a vitally important economic artery and this new service will strengthen that.'

Newcastle revamp completed

The £6 million revamp of Newcastle Central Metro station - used by 5.3 million people a year - has seen improvements to disabled access, information displays, and waiting facilities. The colour scheme, on new vitreous enamel panels, was chosen by

NSAR welcomes new third route to skills training

The National Skills Academy for Rail has welcomed chancellor Philip Hammond's budget announcement of a £500 million a year investment in 'T' levels which will replace 13,000 qualifications with just 15.

Under the plans 16-19 year-olds on technical courses will receive 900 hours of training - a rise of more than 50 per cent. This will include industry work placements of one to three months. Hammond claimed the changes will be 'the most ambitious post-16 education reform since the introduction of A-levels 70 years ago.'

Neil Robertson, CEO of NSAR said he was 'optimistic' about the new qualifications, which should effectively create an additional third route (together with apprenticeships and graduates) into skilled roles within the rail industry and help establish parity between academic and technical routes. Said Robertson: 'Investment in new "T" levels will enhance ambitions for vocational education. As a third route into skilled roles it is vital but has recently atrophied. If it is reinvigorated, with relevant programmes and student support, then we all benefit. We will strongly encourage this in our promotion work once we see the new programmes emerging. Our labour market intelligence shows we need many more skilled engineers at level 4 so investing in a good vocational education programme is sensible.'

The CBI's latest annual Employment Trends survey found that ongoing skills gaps were the most commonly-cited threat to competitiveness for UK businesses (64 per cent) and for a second year topped the list of worries for the future (58 per cent). With the skills shortage especially critical in the rail industry, earlier this year the Department for Transport launched the Transport Infrastructure Skills Strategy, which highlighted the challenges rail faces.

Last month, NSAR launched a new system called NSAR-CONNECT aimed at tackling the skills shortage in rail by matching talent from oversubscribed schemes with organisations that don't have enough candidates to fill positions.

Robertson warned recently that rail companies could be 'hit hard' by changes to the apprenticeship levy put in place this month if they are unprepared. The new regulations mean employers with wage bills of more than £3 million have to put 0.5 per cent of their payroll into the levy to fund apprenticeships in their organisations as part of the government's aims to double spending on the schemes in England and create 30,000 rail and road apprenticeships by the end of this Parliament. Robertson believes the levy would become 'just another government tax' if organisations ignore it. 'That said, the good news is that many rail companies are responding in a practical and positive way to these changes,' he added. 'The employers we've spoken to that have already got to grips with it have confirmed that it is likely to encourage them to hire more. But it is also good news because it can help provide greater control of apprenticeship programmes and improve their quality.'

Principal appointed to National College for High Speed Rail in Doncaster

The National College for High Speed Rail has appointed Jackie Grubb as its principal, to lead the education of next generation rail technicians and engineers at the largest of the government's five new employer-led national colleges.

Grubb, who will oversee the training provision for around 1,300 learners annually at the £40 million institution, has more than 30-years of experience working in further education.

Said Grubb: 'With the college gearing up to launch this September this is a great time to join the team. I'm looking forward to building a new, diverse workforce for the rail sector and am absolutely committed to working with our growing network of employers to offer cutting-edge technical and professional courses which produce the talented young people they need.'

The college's two campuses, at Birmingham and Doncaster, will each specialise in different disciplines with Doncaster focusing on rolling stock, track systems and power, and Birmingham on civil engineering, command, control and communications.



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Metro customers. Newcastle Central MP, Chi Onwurah, said: 'This key station has been transformed with the participation of passengers – and my constituents.'

Hansford Review welcomed by Hendy

Sir Peter Hendy, chairman of Network Rail, launched a Hansford Review consultation event at the ICE last month. The review has been tasked by the board of Network Rail with examining contestability in the UK rail market, as well as exploring options for third party investment and infrastructure delivery on the national rail network. Hendy asked attendees to support the work of the review, led by professor Peter Hansford and due to report its findings to NR this Spring.

Swiss on a roll

Swiss train manufacturer Stadler has signed a contract with BAM Nuttall to construct a train depot in Kirkdale and refurbish an existing depot at Birkenhead North. The £20 million deal with BAM's Warrington office is, says Stadler, a first step in building up its local supply chain in the UK. The deal is part of the contract signed last month, worth up to £700m, for Stadler to manufacture and maintain the new train fleet for Merseyrail.

More trains to more places, more often

Rail companies have unveiled plans to run over 6,400 more passenger trains every week by 2021. Projected timetable improvements for the next four years show 1,283 more trains a day (6,417 a week) will run from Monday to Friday nationwide, an 11% increase according to new analysis by the Rail Delivery Group. RMT general secretary Mick Cash said: 'We will believe this when we see it. There simply aren't the trains and staff available to make this happen.'

West Midlands rail users get Smart

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) has started to switch all 9,000 customers on its nTrain direct debit ticket scheme from traditional paper tickets to its Swift hi-tech smartcard, meaning 12,000 customers now use Swift on rail in addition to 130,000 who already use the cards on the region's bus and tram networks. The cards are accepted by London Midland and can also be used within the region on Virgin Trains, Chiltern Railways, Arriva Trains Wales and Cross Country trains.

Satisfaction at customer awards

Kathryn O'Brien, customer experience director at TransPennine Express (TPE), won the Customer Service Strategic Leadership Award at the UK Customer Satisfaction Awards last month.

O'Brien, who has been in the job since 2014, has more than 25 years of experience in the rail industry. She said: 'I've dedicated my career to helping customers and so I'm over the moon to be recognised with this award. It's also important to me to try and be a role model to women who want a career in rail. I'm proud that TPE is prioritising the balancing of our workforce to ensure it accurately reflects the communities we serve.'

TPE said: 'Kathryn has led the change for customer service within the business and has been relentless in her pursuit of excellence, consistently building successful teams to implement improvements for customers. Her strong leadership has reaped rewards with consistent year-on-year increases in TPE's spring and autumn National Rail Passenger Survey scores.'

TPE has also recently become the first UK Toc to receive a prestigious international accreditation for how it manages its 19 railway stations.

The ISO55001 certification, presented by the British Standards Institution, is a standard for asset management recognising organisations which can demonstrate they have effective systems and processes in place to deliver high levels of asset performance for customers and stakeholders.

Photo right: Dave Hook, head of property for TPE and Louise Ebbs, strategy director, with the ISO55001 certificate at Stalybridge station.



South West Trains makes pledge on mental health

The Toc made a public pledge to take mental health seriously by signing up to Time to Change, at Waterloo station last month.

Time to Change is a growing social movement run by charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness which supports people to open up to mental health problems.

Along with partners from Mind, CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) and Samaritans, representatives from South West Trains promoted the pledge to end the stigma and discrimination experienced by people with mental health problems.

Marc Sellis, HR director for South West Trains, said: 'I would encourage all of our staff to open up to mental health and take the time to talk things through with each other to help get rid of the stigma attached to such an important issue.'

Sue Baker, managing director of Time to Change, said: 'We know it can be hard to talk about mental health, which is why we're supporting employers to open up; to talk and to listen. Everyone's attitude makes a difference and it's fantastic to see organisations like South West Trains taking the lead.'

'Many leading employers have found that making a strategic commitment to the mental wellbeing of their workforce not only benefits their staff but also their bottom-line, improving productivity and staff retention.'

Left to right: Marc Sellis, Libby Moore (head of employee wellbeing for South West Trains) and Sue Baker



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In the passenger seat David Sidebottom



Working together for a better railway

Britain's railway is at a crucial turning point in its development, so it is vital that a new relationship with customers is developed where they feel Toc's are on their side, says **David Sidebottom**

Track and train are set to come together to make sure passengers are at the heart of our railways. Passengers, now the majority funders of the railway, should be at the heart of all decisions. As part of Network Rail's devolution we are making sure the passenger voice is heard.

A new supervisory board has been created to oversee all elements of the railway on the Great Western route which Transport Focus will be sitting on as the passenger representative. This board is the first in the country and is due to set the standard for local cooperation. In the coming months each of Network Rail's other routes will see similar boards created, each putting passenger needs and priorities at the forefront of their work.

Alongside Transport Focus the new Western Route Supervisory Board brings together the managing directors of Network Rail Western Route, Great Western Railway and Heathrow Express;



‘Talk to me clearly, early and often’ is the message from passengers to train companies. The key point for South West Trains and Network Rail to take away from this initial research is the need to be absolutely honest in all communications and to use all possible channels. We were reassured that South West Trains is committed to understanding more about its customers’ needs and worked with us on this research

and will be independently chaired by former government rail advisor, Dick Fearn.

Together we will be working to help all involved align action plans, improve planning of the upgrades and drive targets that improve the passenger experience. The formation of this new joint board has been made to bring ‘track and train’ operations and long-term planning closer together to improve the experience of passengers and minimise, where possible, unnecessary impacts on them. Boosting the passenger input into industry planning will be key to the railway's future. If the rail industry is to retain the confidence and trust of its passengers, it is vital that it takes full account of their needs when planning engineering work.

Elsewhere there are big changes afoot at

Waterloo, Britain's busiest railway station. Last year it was used by over 99 million passengers. It's a transport epic already and further substantial growth is forecast. Progress on a very welcome, much needed package of improvements is underway. South West Trains and Network Rail are upgrading London Waterloo station to accommodate longer trains, providing more space for passengers at the station and improving the overall passenger experience.

In August this year platforms one to nine will be closed in order for works to start so that the Waterloo can accommodate longer trains. This will lead to a temporary reduction in capacity and the timetable that can be operated. It's vital that passengers are kept informed of these changes. Our latest research working with South West Trains and Network Rail explores passengers' awareness and understanding of the works, gauging their reactions to the planned alterations and is helping guide the way these are communicated.

Frustration around communication

What is clear from the research is passengers' frustration with the way planned disruption is currently communicated. If this can be improved for major projects such as the Waterloo upgrade it has the potential to enhance perceptions

of other operators. The work we did on the Bath and Reading projects with Great Western Railway and Network Rail, among other projects, proves this. No-one wants another London Bridge with passengers experiencing the worst effects of severe disruption.

What was interesting this time is that passengers are open to hearing about the benefits of the Waterloo upgrade, unlike previous research for Bath Spa and Reading. Understanding the benefits of the upgrade makes passengers more accepting of the disruption and it is important that communications at Waterloo refer to these. However, the benefits need to be clearly seen as being in the passengers' interests - they will be asking 'what's in it for me?'

From our research, awareness of the Waterloo upgrade project was low. Passengers now expect the rail industry to utilise all possible channels and believe that, as August approaches, the message has to be 'in their face'. As communications ramp up, passengers want detailed timetable information (for trains and buses), details of bus stops/routes, other alternatives and revised platform numbers at Waterloo. Our recent research with Merseyrail passengers on its Wirral loop line shows how effective getting the message out early and often can be.

'Talk to me clearly, early and often' is the message from passengers to train companies. The key point for South West Trains and Network Rail to take away from this initial research is the need to be absolutely honest in all communications and to use all possible channels. We were reassured that South West Trains is committed to understanding more about its customers' needs and worked with us on this research.

Britain's railway is at a crucial turning point in its development, so it is vital that a new relationship with its customers is developed where passengers feel that train companies are on their side. Passengers will have to endure disruption to their journeys while these much-needed, long-promised benefits are delivered. Our research tells us time and time again that passengers expect to see the basics delivered of a reliable, punctual, railway. It is critical that they are at the centre of the biggest programme of investment since the Victorian era.

David Sidebottom is passenger director at Transport Focus



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The Scottish plan

Chris MacRae provides a rail freight response to the consultation on the future of the Scottish planning system

The Scottish government has run a consultation titled *Places, people and planning – a consultation on the future of the Scottish planning system*.

It is important that any review of a planning system takes account of the needs of freight movement, in this case rail freight, and understands how it fits into the supply chain and trading patterns of the nation.

Plans to develop rail freight interchanges are rarely popular locally; however, they bring huge national economic and environmental benefits. FTA urges government when considering changes to the planning system to balance the concerns of local residents with the need to develop national infrastructure of an international quality



Connectivity

Scotland is a net exporter competing in European and global markets. A huge proportion of the goods leaving Scotland for non-UK destinations are moved by ships and aircraft which leave from England. The most significant airport for the Scottish supply chain is Heathrow, and the most significant ports are the English southern ports (Felixstowe, London Gateway, Southampton and Dover). It is important that government understands this relationship and the trend in international shipping and aviation to hub out of key central locations in northern Europe. With Scotland geographically too far north to be a main shipping port of call, it is therefore reliant on quality road and rail links to these hubs. Improving Scotland's international supply chain is not exclusively about airports and ports in Scotland. This is equally true of the need for high quality road and rail links cross-border to link to these gateway ports.

Balance concerns

To help with reducing emissions from commercial transport, it is vital that the greenest modes of transport are given the opportunity to thrive. Each freight train is responsible, on average, for removing 48 lorries from the roads. The Scottish

government plays a key strategic role in deciding access to the rail network in Scotland via the franchise specification of passenger services, and it is vital that the temptation to allow passenger interests to dominate the agenda completely is resisted. Local planning concerns are, of course, important but should not prevent the development of much-needed nationally significant infrastructure. This can be the case with many developments of importance to the supply chain in general, and rail freight in particular. Plans to develop rail freight interchanges are rarely popular locally; however, they bring huge national economic and environmental benefits. FTA urges government when considering changes to the planning system to balance the concerns of local residents with the need to develop national infrastructure of an international quality.

Rail freight in Scotland, as elsewhere in Britain, is constrained historically through lack of gauge clearance (*i.e.* having the available space above the tracks large enough to take increasingly common 9'6" high containers on standard wagons), particularly on the East Coast Main Line and on the routes from the central belt to Aberdeen and Inverness. Failure to move forward with improvements to gauge clearance along

It is important, therefore, that the Scottish government continues discussions with Network Rail to ensure that funding constraints or organisational changes do not jeopardise potential growth opportunities in Scotland, especially cross-border Anglo-Scottish freight and inter-regional Scottish domestic flows

these routes would constrain the Scottish rail freight network, and negatively affect the capability to target key growth markets such as intermodal containers and retail traffic. It is important, therefore, that the Scottish government continues discussions with Network Rail to ensure that funding constraints or organisational changes do not jeopardise potential growth opportunities in Scotland, especially cross-border Anglo-Scottish freight and inter-regional Scottish domestic flows.

Rail freight and planning

Rail freight capital investment generally has a long pay-back period – typically ten years for infrastructure investment or wagons and up to thirty for locomotives. It is therefore essential that the planning system can accommodate such horizons. It is also essential that the following aspects of the planning review take account of the needs of rail freight:

- any review of the future role and function of Strategic Development Planning Authorities must address the national versus local issues outlined above in regard to rail freight spatial developments of terminals or facility connections
- the planning horizon would better be extended from five to ten years to account

for capital investment pay-back periods in rail freight as described above

- an 'infrastructure first' approach needs to be embedded with a presumption in favour of infrastructure development. This is particularly important in regard to issues with housing development that may encroach on railway land and operations.
- issues such as existing rail freight facilities that are encroached upon by housing schemes and protecting rail land for passenger service requirements (but not currently freight) are included in the Scottish Planning Policy, therefore confirmation is required as to whether there will be a refresh of the Scottish Planning Policy required in order that specific freight considerations can be explored
- a linked issue is that of key sites of importance for rail freight *i.e.* non-connected sites that are adjacent to the rail infrastructure but not necessarily in railway ownership.

For further information on FTA's rail freight policy work contact:

Chris MacRae, head of policy – rail freight and Scotland

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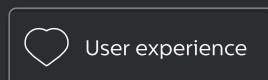
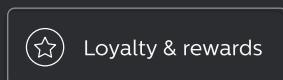
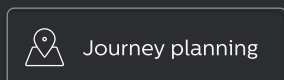
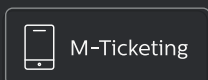
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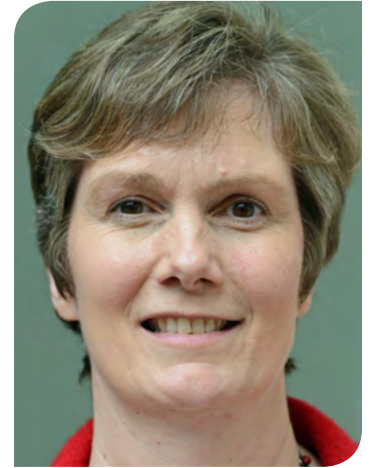


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Doing what it takes

Government consistency is key to rail freight growth, says **Maggie Simpson**

Back in the autumn, the then newly appointed rail minister Paul Maynard published the Department for Transport's new *Rail Freight Strategy*.

Widely welcomed by the industry, the document sets out how government will work collaboratively to ensure rail freight's continued success in the face of changing markets. In the foreword to the strategy, Maynard noted: "The Rail Freight Strategy that we are publishing today sets out our vision both for how rail freight in its traditional sense can continue to grow – even if some of its traditional core markets are now in decline – and for the potential opportunities for the broader logistics sector and rail industry to collaborate and innovate in order to help relieve the pressure on our road network."

Since publication, the industry steering

Yet against this backdrop of support, and collaboration, the Department has acted to undermine the very sector of rail freight which perhaps shows the most potential for growth by reducing by the budget for the Mode Shift Revenue Support Grant



group has continued to meet, and the various workstreams underpinning the strategy are making some progress. And while you cannot pin down specific consequences of strategies very easily, there are some encouraging market trends too, with the quarterly results published by the Office of Rail and Road showing intermodal traffic increasing by five per cent and construction by seven per cent compared to the same quarter last year.

Yet, against this backdrop of support and collaboration, the Department has acted to undermine the very sector of rail freight which perhaps shows the most potential for growth by reducing the budget for the Mode Shift Revenue Support Grant. This provides an incentive to those companies looking to

use intermodal rail services instead of road freight.

The scheme, and its predecessors, have existed since rail privatisation and provide a 'per box' level support where rail costs exceed road and the environmental benefits of rail justify modal transfer. The budget has been reduced from around £19 million last year to around £15 million this year, leading to a number of routes and services finding that their grant has been removed. This includes some short and medium-distance intermodal services from ports, and many domestic intermodal services which haul retail goods between warehouses, for example services between the Midlands and Scotland.

No industry likes to be reliant on grant

‘ The irony is the DfT has a real choice to reinstate the grant budget and avoid all the negative consequences and poor publicity from forcing goods back onto the road. After all, it has recently found £320 million for Southern, and £4 million for apps to help road users find free parking spaces and other measures ’

support and over time rail freight operators have acted to reduce the amount needed, with some routes no longer receiving support. This has been achieved as rail has become more efficient, through gauge clearance, longer trains and private sector investment in equipment, ports and terminals, meaning that more and more routes are competing with road in their own right. Domestic intermodal services have also achieved efficiency improvements, with grant rates falling over time, but with relatively few services economies of scale are harder to find. The lack, in some areas, of suitable rail freight interchanges further compounds this. Nonetheless, the value for money of the grant remains high, with the ‘cut off point’ for support around a BCR of 3.5:1.

Compared to many railway schemes, the loss of £4 million does not sound that large. We have been challenged on whether the loss of such a ‘small amount’ of money can really have such dramatic consequences. Yet for a freight customer, it is the ‘per load’ rate that matters – they will be comparing rail to, for example, a double decker road trailer. By this standard, the grant can make all the difference for rail.

Speaking to those affected by this cut shows the depth of concern that they have. Not only are existing services now under

review, but future expansion plans are also being called into question. This includes some new services to rail, including new routes in the north and midlands.

Even before growth is taken into account, the existing services which have seen their grant cut are estimated to be keeping in the order of 200,000 lorries each year off the motorway network. In addition, some of the services affected serve as feeders for other rail routes which are also now at risk.

The irony is the DfT has a real choice to reinstate the grant budget and avoid all the negative consequences and poor publicity from forcing goods back onto the road. After all, it has recently found £320 million for Southern, and £4 million for apps to help road users find free parking spaces and other measures. Even reinstating half the cut – £2 million – would enable some level of grant to be paid and may tip the balance in some cases. It would certainly act to restore market confidence.

Ministers have the opportunity now to put additional funds into the upcoming bid round for MSRS, and again later in the year, and we hope that they can find a way of doing so. Otherwise the commitment to rail freight, as outlined in the strategy must be brought into question.

Maggie Simpson is executive director of the Rail Freight Group

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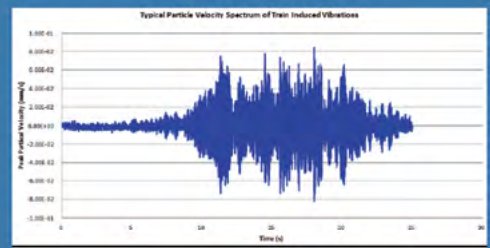
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All a bit confusing

Andrew Meaney asks, who pays for what on the GB rail network?

Delivering a sustainable railway (remember that?) set out that having the government fund more than 50 per cent of the costs of the rail network in Great Britain was not sustainable¹ and therefore that a greater proportion of costs needed to be met by the users of the network (passengers in particular). This has been achieved through a combination of significant volume growth and fares regulation that has, at various times, allowed regulated fares to increase by RPI plus zero (in a few years), plus one per cent and (although never actually enacted) plus three per cent.

This continued increase in passenger

‘...if the day-to-day operations of the rail sector are no longer receiving (net) government subsidy, then this raises the question of what the appropriate level of government involvement is in the specification and operation of what are substantial commercial operations’



volumes is reflected in the finances of the franchises, which were net contributors to the Exchequer to the tune of £622 million in 2015/16.² Of course, this masks significant differences between franchises, with South West Trains contributing £365 million in payments to government, while Scotrail received £293 million from the government.³ Network Rail continues to receive large amounts of government funding for enhancing the network.

That franchises are now, in net terms, paying a premium to the government raises an important question about the role of the government in the rail sector: of course, while something is receiving a large government subsidy, it is right that the government retains substantial oversight and control – it would be a failure of governance if it did not. However, if the day-to-day operations of the rail sector are no longer receiving (net) government subsidy, then this raises the question of what the appropriate level of government involvement is in the specification and operation of what are substantial commercial operations. Overall, passenger fares now contribute around 60 per cent of annual industry funding (excluding capital expenditure for upgrades), compared to 20 per cent from government (the remaining

20 per cent comes from other Network Rail and Toc income).^{4 & 5}

This question is all the more important in light of two recent (and interlinked) developments: the first is the Competition and Markets Authority’s policy project, which identified that there are likely to be substantial benefits to passengers (albeit not to the government in the short-term) from increased on-rail competition on intercity lines (a disclaimer, I was involved in writing the impact assessment for that policy piece for the ORR);⁶ the second is the DfT’s ongoing consultation on a Public Service Obligation (PSO) levy, payable by open access operators to ‘top up’ net franchise payments to DfT that they may (or may not) have affected.⁷

The second of these points arises directly from the first – if increased open access operations are to be allowed (and there is a large literature on the benefits that arise from competition in terms of price reductions, efficiency improvements and products that better match consumer preferences), then finding a way of reassuring the Department that its funding of unprofitable but socially necessary services will not be compromised is important. The choice of a PSO Levy is its proposal to reflect this balance; however, it

is fair to say that it focuses on the funding point, as opposed to making it more likely that open access services that pay the Levy will be able to gain access to the network (whereas the CMA expected the two to go hand-in-hand).

What constitutes a PSO?

It is also noteworthy that the European Commission is very clear about what constitutes a PSO:⁸ 'public service obligation' means a requirement defined or determined by a competent authority in order to ensure public transport services in the general interest that an operator, *if it were considering its own commercial interests*, would not assume or would not assume to the same extent or under the same conditions without reward.' Emphasis added

It would therefore be a big step forward (and help to ensure the UK is compliant with European legislation which is, for the moment, still binding) if the DfT was able to specify which services are provided commercially, and which are provided under a PSO. Without this analysis in place, it is hard to see how a Levy, designed to support PSO services, can be implemented in a way which is consistent with the Commission's definition of a PSO.

It would then be much clearer which parts of the network could accommodate

on-rail competition (subject to the payment of an appropriate PSO levy) and which are being provided on a public service basis and therefore merit funding by the government. Otherwise we will continue with the current mess of being able to identify which franchises are net premium payers, but not where on the network government funding is necessary and where the benefits to passengers from competition are being stifled. It makes for increasing specification by client bodies of the rail network, while their funding of it is decreasing, which is become less and less legitimate.

Andrew Meaney leads Oxera's Transport team

¹ Department for Transport (2007), *Delivering a sustainable railway: White Paper CM7176*, para 12.16.

² ORR (2017), 'UK Rail Industry Financial Information 2015-16', table 3.5. Available from: http://orr.gov.uk/__data/assets/excel_doc/0012/24150/uk-rail-industry-financial-information-2015-16.xlsx

³ ORR (2017), *op cit.* Table 3.13. Calculated as the difference between 'payments to government' and 'government funding'.

⁴ ORR (2017), *op cit.* Table 3.2

⁵ This figure is after netting off government income and expenditure on GB rail.

⁶ Available from: http://orr.gov.uk/__data/

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assets/pdf_file/0015/20454/cma-on-rail-competition-impact-assessment-2015-12-31.pdf

⁷ Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-passenger-rail-public-service-obligation-levy>

⁸ European Commission (2007), 'Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on public transport services by rail and by road and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) Nos 1191/69 and 1107/70, Official Journal of the European Union, L.315/113, Article 2, para (e)

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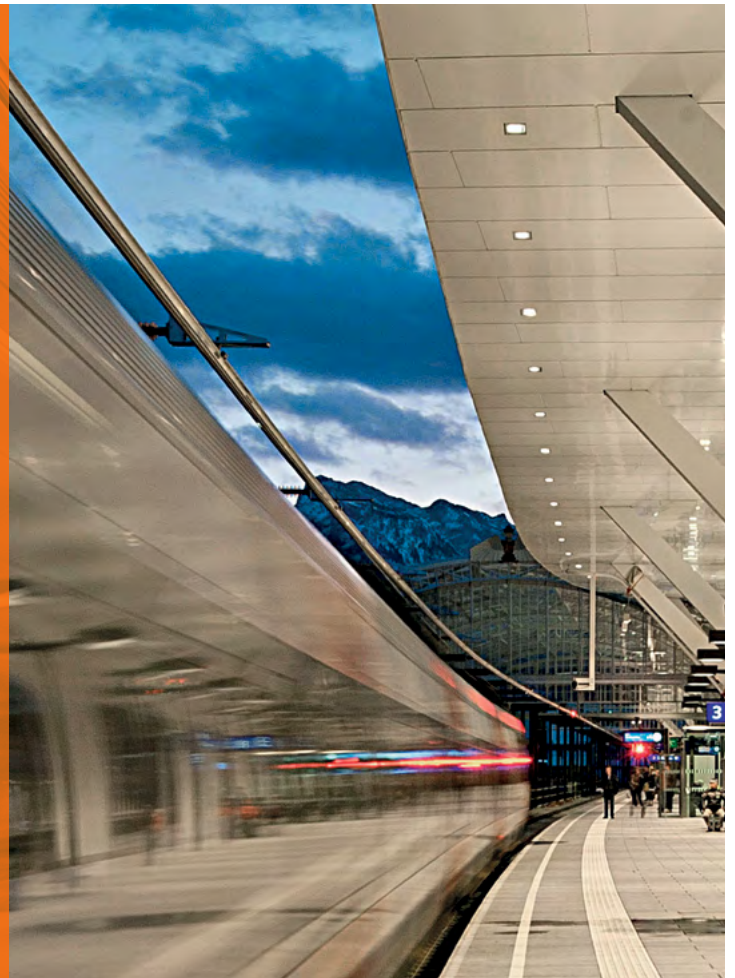
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A good time for change



While the message may be blunt, the Transport Select Committee's recommendations on franchising should be taken seriously, says **Ben Blackburn**

At a time when the industry is seeking to drive innovation, skills and improvements for its users, it is ironic that the most well-received rail story in recent weeks was about the reintroduction of a steam locomotive onto the regular timetable.

Seeing a steam locomotive in full flight should give any right-minded person a warm thrill of delight. Well over 5,000 enthusiasts and regular Northern passengers will have been delighted to travel behind 'Tornado' between Appleby and Skipton, billed as the first scheduled main line steam service since 1968.

While some will have grimly remarked that, as it was built in 2008, Tornado is significantly newer than much of the Northern fleet, many will have noticed how the widespread, positive, reporting of this Plandampf service provoked a striking contrast with the type of coverage we are

used to seeing about the regular franchised railway.

And, as the Transport Select Committee told the industry in February, the negativity may not be without foundation.

Despite the best efforts of the shadow transport team, in the absence of a well-coordinated official opposition with the appropriate resources to properly scrutinise government policy and make substantial and sophisticated new proposals beyond the safe zone of nationalisation and industrial relations, the value – both democratic and political – of the Transport Committee, is arguably at an all-time high. Its Labour chair, Louise Ellman, is long-established in the role – she has served on the committee or variations of it for 16 of her near-20 years in parliament – and as a result gives it authority and influence.

While the committee has a broad remit across all modes, it is clear that rail is a priority.

According to the outcome of the committee's inquiry into franchising, the model is simply not delivering. It is not maximising passenger benefits, is driving inefficiencies and is marked by governance failings.

On performance, the committee states that, while much improved from the turn of the millennium, PPM improvement has been stagnant since a high in 2011-12. In any case, PPM is – so says the committee – not a fair reflection of the 'real' passenger experience. Indeed, customer satisfaction has been declining since 2011, when the National Rail Passenger Satisfaction Survey first started.

On cost, the report is slightly more positive, but raises concerns about the government's strategy of shifting more of the burden of paying for the railways to passengers. It states that 'peak' and 'Anytime' rail tickets – while among the most expensive in Europe – have been increasing in cost at a slower rate than other high-income EU countries. 'Advance purchase' and 'off-peak' tickets for long-distance journeys are often equivalent or cheaper than elsewhere. The report also draws attention to the 'staggering' 23.5 per cent real terms increase in fares since 1995 (40.9 per cent on long-distance routes), and suggests that a better balance could be struck between passengers (through the fare box) and the public purse, when it comes to paying for the railway – passenger share of total industry income has risen by nearly 15 per cent between 2010-11 and 2014-15.

On competition, the committee states that the system is failing to deliver adequate levels of market interest and – relatedly – sufficient volume of opportunity. In the six years to 2012, only two contracts were let, and in the three years from the re-setting of the market in 2012, 10 out of 16 decisions were made through direct awards, without any competition.

Declining profit margins and higher



financial risks in running a franchise are undoubtedly factors in owning groups' decision making, as are the upfront costs of entering a competition (between £5 and £10 million) and the requirement to raise hundreds of millions in bonds, the 'Parent Company Guarantee', to protect the Treasury's coffers from the risk of failure.

Current model unsustainable

For the committee, the current model of franchising is unsustainable. It recommends that the DfT streamlines bidding costs and enables more competition, through appropriate encouragement of open access. It is, however, adamant that the Parent Company Guarantee should be retained. The committee cites the size and complexity of today's franchises as keeping operating costs high and inhibiting efficiency.

Geographically larger than elsewhere in Europe and fewer in number now than at privatisation, franchises – as exemplified by the TSGN super-franchise – are often highly complex. One can include several different types of operation and commercial market, reducing the potential for economies of scale to be realised. The committee calls upon the department to review the structure of each franchise and their alignment with the markets they serve, as they come up for renewal.

Another recommended intervention is to dispense with a one-size-fits-all approach to franchise length, and instead – upon expiry – seek to procure longer franchises where operational risks are low and performance has been good. But, while this may enliven competition at the procurement phases (who wouldn't want to operate a lower risk franchise for longer?) it would be essential to accompany such an approach with more requirements for in-franchise innovation and plenty of rigorous checks and balances.

Finally, the committee identified the misalignment between franchise periods and Network Rail's control periods as a key failing which results in a sub-optimal service for passengers, who suffer the delays and inconvenience of network and infrastructural underperformance. The lack of visibility on Network Rail funding also constrains prospective franchisees when they are developing their bids.

For the Department of Transport, the committee's findings and recommendation are particularly significant. Questioning the sufficiency of its structures and personnel, the committee is calling for an independent and public review of the DfT's franchising functions, which may also include a consultation on whether enforcement powers should be transferred from the department to the Office for Rail and Road

(ORR).

While the government has not yet responded to the committee's report, there is little doubt it will be taking its findings very seriously. The performance of the system is a matter of concern for operators, investors and the whole supply chain – as well as for Network Rail, the regulator and the department. While transport ministers have found it relatively easy to bat off criticism coming from Her Majesty's Official Opposition, the committee's findings should give Labour more ammunition to make the case for nationalisation as and when franchises come up for renewal.

It has recently been observed that the government has bandwidth for only one issue – Brexit. And this may well be true. But Brexit also presents departments with a good reason to undertake wholesale reviews of their work. If transport ministers wanted to tackle franchising without seeming to be undergoing a complete volte face, they may consider the upheaval and bottom-up rethinking that Brexit will force across government an opportune time to do so.

Ben Blackburn is account director at Freshwater
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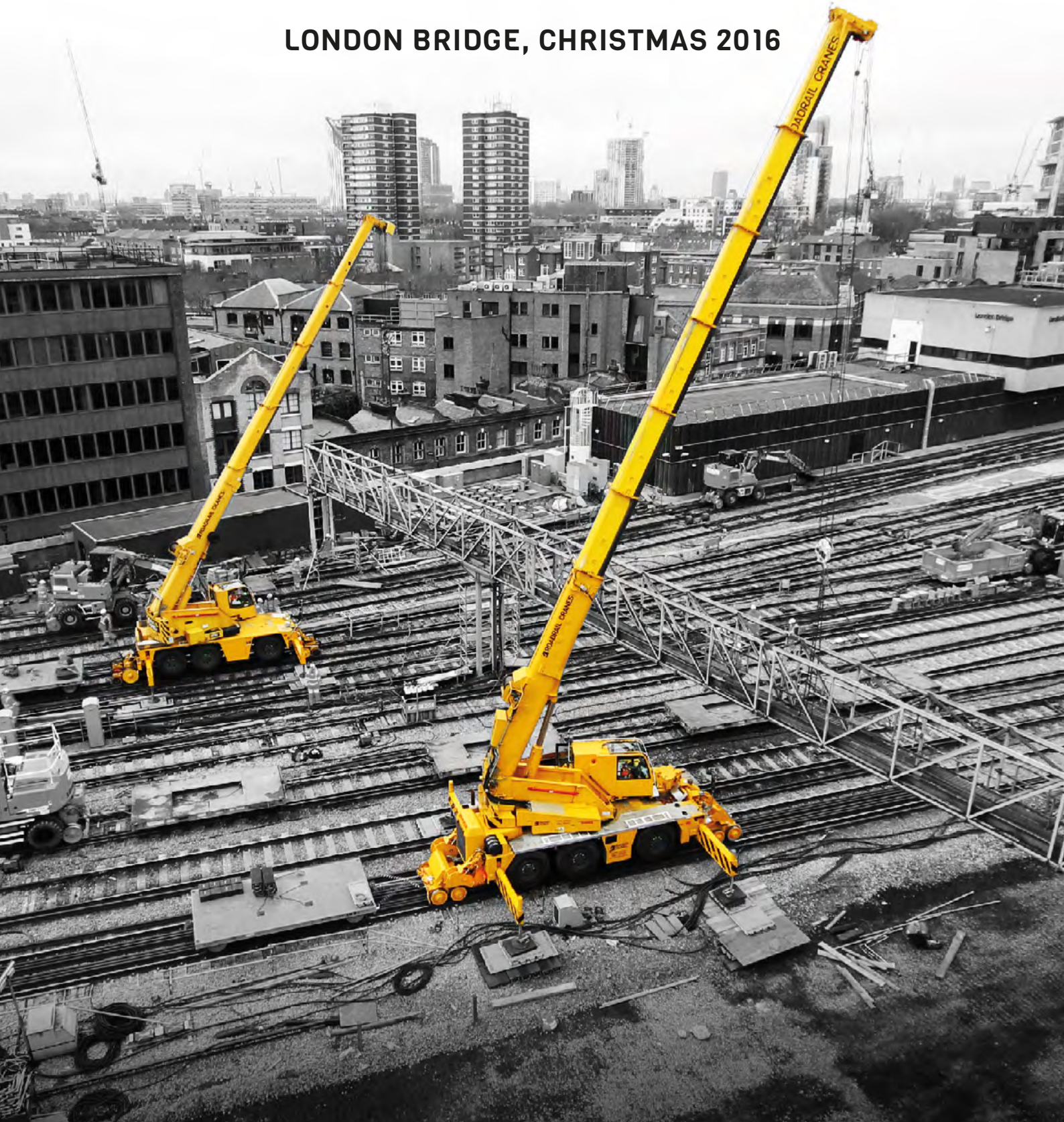
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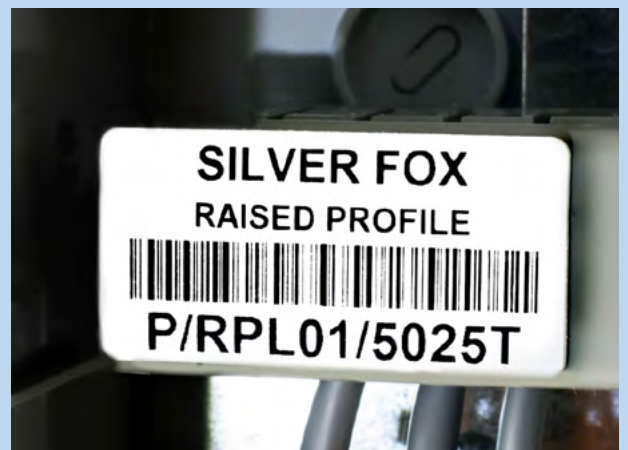
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One voice

Transport for the North's **David Brown** explains what we can expect next as its Strategic Transport Plan starts to take shape

If the North's economy is going to compete on the global stage then we need to unite behind a well-thought out strategy that has the backing needed for effective delivery – and that's the process we are currently engaged in here at Transport for the North (TfN).

Later this year we will, for the first time, be making recommendations on how to transform the North's economy by 2050, through ambitious infrastructure investment. Rather than focusing initially on specific schemes we will instead be identifying the transport corridors that are vital to link the region's economy and then identifying solutions to improve transport infrastructure in these areas.

Our Strategic Transport Plan is England's first ever pan-regional proposal, an integrated, multi-modal plan which supports our vision to establish significant improvements to road and rail links in the North which in turn could help create close to a million new jobs and boost the region's economy by £97 billion. The plan will outline a long-term investment programme for transport, grounded in the needs of the region's economic strengths, and address current constraints, all the while fulfilling the needs of the people and businesses.

The first draft of the Strategic Transport Plan is due for public consultation in the autumn. In preparation for this, later this spring we will be publishing our *Major Roads* and *Integrated Rail* reports which will form vital components of the evidence base for the plan.

More strategic view

The Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review, published in 2016, explored the economic potential of the Northern Powerhouse and set out an overarching recommendation that a more strategic view of transport investment was needed, one which connects the economic



assets across the North, both internally to create an economic mass, and externally as part of a global marketplace.

The report highlighted the fact that the economy of the North has consistently lagged behind that of the rest of England for the last thirty years. But it also identified the four prime capabilities that the North possesses which could allow it to compete on the global stage: advanced manufacturing, digital, energy and health innovation. The capabilities are present across the North and, if properly supported and linked by good transport infrastructure, they could contribute to a potential growth in GVA of nearly £100 billion by 2050.

Our work is aimed at eliminating the barriers that are restricting growth; supporting people and businesses to fulfil their full potential, thus developing a single

'voice for the North'. We will bring this transformation by increasing efficiency, reliability and resilience of the transport system, promoting and supporting the built and natural environment and improving opportunities across the region.

Central to the STP is applying joined-up thinking to issues and challenges that, up until now, have only been tackled by individual local transport authorities or viewed through a national lens from Whitehall. With one strategic transport authority identifying and prioritising opportunities across the North, using intelligence gathered from new research into where investment will perform best, I believe the plan has the potential to deliver massive returns on investment.

The importance of our work is supported with the release of the government's recent

Green Paper, *Building Our Industrial Strategy*, which states that, 'Regional strategic transport bodies, such as TfN and Midlands Connect, will help ensure that transport projects are more closely linked with economic priorities, and so really benefit people across communities.'

Prioritised list

I welcomed the secretary of state for business, energy and industrial strategy, Greg Clark's recent comments about the need for greater powers and investment in relation to infrastructure, both of which will be key elements in making our STP for the North perform at its best.

It is encouraging to hear that he is prioritising more powers and budget to support devolution and local decision-making in relation to infrastructure. But our aim now is to have a prioritised list of schemes which we can demonstrate will help to boost economic growth. I want to be sure that we have the evidence to convince policy makers to increase investment in Northern connectivity. I believe we will go a long way to achieve that over the next couple of years, particularly as we become the first sub-national Transport Body in England later this year.

At the beginning of our journey, TfN outlined some key specifications to get

Northern connectivity to the standard that it needs to be. The investment required to get to those outcomes is varied. It could be about updating existing infrastructure, using the opportunity of planned new infrastructure (like HS2) to improve other links or sometimes the only way to achieve the goals could be entirely new infrastructure.

We are seeing this with our developing plans for the Northern Powerhouse Rail network, where we know we must be both ambitious to reach the journey times and frequencies that the North requires, and pragmatic to ensure that we make the most of all investments and can demonstrate that our plans offer value for money. This is why we have been so far largely working behind the scenes, gathering evidence and working with our partners to identify what needs to be done to create a plan for the North capable of delivering transformational change.

So what's next?

Following the publication of our *Major Roads* and *Integrated Rail* reports, by this summer we will have identified all the areas where Northern Powerhouse Rail would interact with HS2, so that necessary infrastructure requirements can be included in the Phase 2b Hybrid Bill. The publication of the draft

STP will be released this autumn followed by public consultation during winter with the final version due for official publication in summer 2018.

Using Greg Clark's words: 'If there is one thing a strategy should be, it is long-term. If you want something to endure, you have to take people with you, pick people's brains and have everyone from whatever sector or whatever part of the country you are in help contribute.' This is exactly our philosophy. We're doing the research, deploying a durable transport investment plan, conducting public consultation and working with our Partnership Board with representatives from the nineteen local authorities to ensure our plan meets the needs of and benefits the wider North as much as possible.

This is a busy time for us and an exciting one for the Northern Powerhouse. This year will bring a major step forward in putting the wheels in motion in improving transport and establishing real change for the North. We look forward to sharing our findings and receiving crucial feedback from our partners and the public alike.

David Brown is chief executive of Transport for the North

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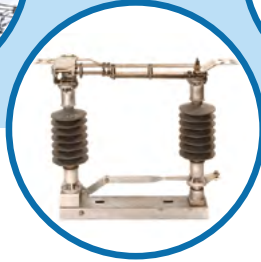
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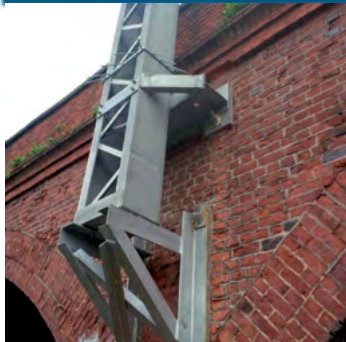
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Laying down the law

Martin Fleetwood



Don't be late with those payments...

There has been legislation covering interest payable on the late payment of commercial debts since 1998 – however, that has not stopped organisations in all sectors, including rail, being slow to pay, says **Martin Fleetwood**

Just over £41 billion is currently owed in late payments in the UK according to a recent government estimate. Over the past few years, the EU and UK legislative landscape has developed in an effort to improve payment practices in commercial transactions and, in particular, to assist SME's in securing more favourable payment terms, especially when dealing with large organisations.

‘s3 of the Small Business Act is now due to come into force on 6th April 2017 and will impose on large companies (being those with a net turnover in excess of £36 million or more than 250 employees) and large LLP's, a statutory duty to publish via an online portal a report on their payment practices

Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations

In 2013 the UK implemented the Combating Late Payment in Commercial Transactions Directive 2011/7/EU into national law through the Late Payment of

- purchasers must pay a supplier's undisputed invoice within 60 days unless otherwise agreed between the parties and the agreed terms are not 'grossly unfair' to the supplier
- where the purchaser is a public authority,



Commercial Debts Regulations 2013/395 (the 'Regulations'). The Regulations apply to B2B contracts entered into on or after 16th March 2013 and set out when statutory interest (or such other rate of interest as the parties may agree) starts to accrue. While the Regulations do not prescribe statutory payment terms, the effect is that, if purchasers want to avoid paying interest on late payments, they must comply with the following time limits for payment:

- payment of an undisputed invoice must be made within 30 days; and
- where the parties do not agree payment terms, payment must be made within 30 days from the later of (i) receipt of the supplier's goods/services; (ii) receipt of the supplier's undisputed invoice; or (iii) verification / acceptance of the goods/ services (if such a right is included in the contract or any relevant statute).

What constitutes 'grossly unfair' depends on various factors including the nature of the goods or services in question, the extent to which the clause was negotiated and the relative bargaining power of the parties, but broadly it comprises anything that is a significant deviation from good commercial practice, good faith and fair dealing. Recent commentary on this point suggests extended payment terms would not be grossly unfair if there was an objective and commercially reasonable reason for extending the terms which was not principally in the purchaser's own interest. Conversely, a blanket application of extended payment terms is likely to be grossly unfair.

More input from Europe

In August 2016, the European Commission published a report on the extent to which the Directive has achieved its aims. The European Commission found that although companies are aware of the rights the Directive confers, its usage is not yet widespread, particularly among larger purchasers. The report recommended that member states:

- establish a system to monitor and report on progress on average payment terms in both the public and private sectors; and
- encourage the development of initiatives

such as voluntary prompt payment codes.

However, the UK has been one step ahead, as a voluntary prompt payment code ('PPC'), which sets standards and promotes best practice for payment procedures, has existed in the UK for seven years. Administered by the Chartered Institute of Credit Management on behalf of The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, organisations are invited to sign up to the code in return for which they can publish the PPC logo on their documentation and website and benefit from the reputational boost this brings. The PPC was given a level of statutory backing through the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 (the 'Small Business Act'), although its implementation has, until now, been delayed.

Payment practice reporting requirements for large companies

s3 of the Small Business Act is now due to come into force on 6th April 2017 and will impose on large companies (being those with a net turnover in excess of £36 million or more than 250 employees) and large LLP's, a statutory duty to publish via an online portal a report on their payment practices. Large companies should consider their existing payment practices and

Payment Practices and Policies

Details of payment practices to be published by large companies from 6th April 2017 are to include the following information:

- standard payment terms
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- the average time taken to pay invoices
- the percentage of invoices paid outside of the payment terms
- the proportion of invoices paid between certain periods i.e. 1-30 days, 31-60 days and 61 days+; and
- membership of the PPC.

how they will be reflected in the report. Consideration should also be given as to who in the business is best placed to collate the information needed to comply with the new requirements.

Martin Fleetwood is corporate partner at Shoosmiths

Email: martin.fleetwood@shoosmiths.co.uk

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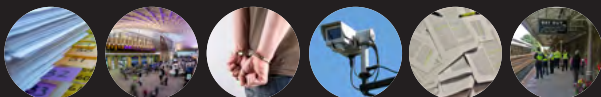


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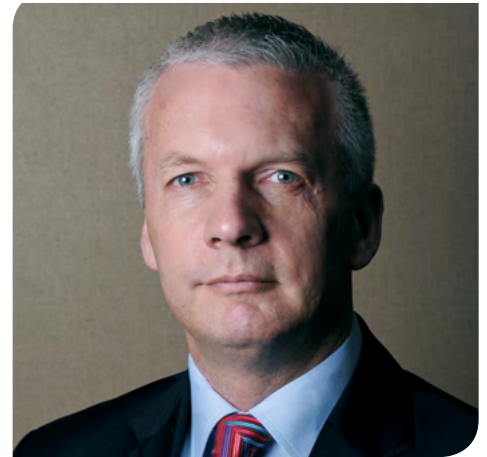
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Royal Assent for HS2: the end of the beginning?



As HS2 moves into its delivery phase, there are important lessons to be learned from the Crossrail experience, says **Mark Elsey**

FThe granting of royal assent for the first phase of HS2 (London to Birmingham) represents the final stage of the parliamentary approval process for this phase of the project. HS2 Ltd can now move forward with confidence to commence the substantive works and hopefully generate real momentum into the scheme.

Despite this major step forward, views on the scheme remain polarised. While the chairman of the West Midlands Combined Authority says that this is 'the news that the West Midlands has been waiting for' and that the region is 'ready to capitalise fully on the opportunities [HS2] offers to transform places, create jobs and attract investment', the leader of Camden Council comments that the local authority, residents and businesses challenged the HS2 bill 'every step of the way' and the campaign manager for Stop HS2 calls royal assent 'a triumph of spin over evidence-based policy' and asserts that 'the fight against phase two of HS2 will continue'.

At the same time, rumours of tensions between HS2 Ltd and its owner, the DfT continue to circulate and the NAO continues to warn that the project is under financial strain.

So does Royal Assent represent HS2 entering the final lap of the race or is it merely the firing of the starting gun for a long and gruelling process?

In seeking to answer this question, it may be helpful to contrast HS2 with the other major UK rail scheme to have been implemented in recent times, Crossrail.

Crossrail received Royal Assent in 2008. Nine years later the project is scheduled to commence operation in a year's time (slightly later than had been forecast in 2008) but critically, as it looks

increasingly likely, materially below the maximum funding figures forecast in 2008. So, in looking forward for HS2, are there comparisons or lessons to be learned from the Crossrail experience at the time of royal assent?

Turning first to the economic case, the forecast median economic case (or benefit:cost ratio) for Crossrail in 2008 was in the region of 3:1. Given the interrelationship between HS2 phase one and subsequent phases, the economic case for HS2 is more complex, but on current median predictions is around 2.3:1. The economic case for further investment in London has always been stronger and more certain.

In the past, attempts to transfer economic growth from London to the regions have largely failed. The case for HS2 was further challenged by the mid-case switch from 'journey time' benefits to capacity constraint arguments. So, not surprisingly, Crossrail scores more strongly on this measure.

And what about deliverability of these benefits? Crossrail stands as a scheme that, on its own, will deliver the forecast benefits. HS2's benefits are in part linked to the delivery of phases two (and possibly three). A high speed line that simply runs from London to Birmingham is unlikely to be a game changer for the country. The approval and budgeting challenges for phases 2 and 3 of HS2 remain significant. Again, Crossrail appears to have the advantage on this measure.

Looking next at support, Crossrail was a scheme borne out of a combination of strong London political and business support. There has been remarkably little opposition: most of the route follows existing lines or is underground, and the economic benefits

‘Crossrail stands as a scheme that, on its own, will deliver the forecast benefits. HS2's benefits are in part linked to the delivery of phases two (and possibly three). A high speed line that simply runs from London to Birmingham is unlikely to be a game changer for the country. The approval and budgeting challenges for phases 2 and 3 of HS2 remain significant. Again, Crossrail appears to have the advantage on this measure’

of having enhanced transport links to and within the capital are largely recognised by both businesses and residents. Conversely, HS2 continues to be the subject of political debate (as the quotes above demonstrate), continuing to face strong opposition from communities along the route (who see no advantages for them from the scheme) and with nowhere near the same wider business support which aligned behind Crossrail. So it looks like another tick in the box for Crossrail.

What about funding? While it could have been a weakness, the patchwork funding for Crossrail (DfT grant, TfL-backed community infrastructure levy and business rates, plus private sector contributions from a range of organisations) has in practice proved an effective and powerful motivator for the scheme, relieving economic stress on the government and evidencing the real benefits of a range of public and private sector entities operating in partnership. At present HS2 has only one source of funding – the DfT – and background noises suggest that cost control and availability of funding remain real issues. To date, in public, HS2 has maintained that single source public funding is optimal from a programme

delivery perspective. It will be interesting to see whether this remains the prevailing view. The Crossrail experience would appear to reinforce the value of a more flexible approach.

Turning finally to governance which, in many ways, is linked to funding. While currently owned 100 per cent by TfL, Crossrail has benefitted from a governance structure that has engaged the main political stakeholders (DfT and TfL) alongside private sector partners responsible for elements of the project. Without a single dominant stakeholder, this has granted the Crossrail delivery team significant control over its budget and the freedom, in large part, to get on with its main job of delivering the project.

There has been proper oversight and governance but very little change or unhelpful political interference. The binary relationship between HS2 Ltd and DfT has clear differences, including in relation to budget control, and the jury is still out as to how this will work in practice.

A Marmite project

Taking into account the above factors, you would probably say that Crossrail had the

advantage at the Royal Assent stage. Does this mean that HS2 will be a failure? Of course not. HS2 does though continue to be a 'Marmite' project. The chances are that it will be like one of those inner city tram schemes – disliked by many during implementation but loved by most once completed.

Despite the granting of Royal Assent, it is clear that HS2 still faces many hurdles. While the starting gun has been fired and probably left well behind, there are still a significant number of laps to run.

As the HS2 scheme moves into its delivery phase, there are important lessons to be learned from the Crossrail experience and let's hope that those responsible for HS2 are open to learning from them.

Mark Elsey is partner at Ashurst LLP

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The Cheek of it... Chris Cheek

Small is beautiful, say MP's. But are they right?



Chris Cheek considers the recent Commons Transport Committee report on rail franchising

There is now doubt about it, the rail industry has had a pretty rotten year. Cost overruns and delays on infrastructure upgrades, deteriorating performance and above all the worst industrial relations problems for a generation, beginning with Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) but spreading now to Merseyside and Northern – with an ongoing dispute at Great Western bubbling away in the background which may resurface when new IEP trains enter service later this year.

Into this weighed the House of Commons Transport Committee, with an investigation into rail franchising which took place last autumn. Evidence was accepted in writing and witnesses from train operators, policy bodies and trades unions appeared before the committee at four hearings in October and November. The report was published at the end of January.

These days it is almost impossible for politicians to avoid reaching for a good soundbite, and this inquiry yielded a good few of those. However, the actual report, as opposed to the rhetoric surrounding it, comes across as a serious and measured attempt to understand the issues which underlie the problems the industry now faces.

For those of us old enough to remember the British Railways of the 1960's and 70's, the current furore over industrial relations, poor performance and overcrowding seems eerily familiar. In those days, there was a lingering element of wartime austerity about the railways (especially the patched up bomb damage still visible at major termini) and the 'make do and mend' approach to life which had been adopted during the Second World War and the austere years which followed it. In many public services, the attitude was very much that people should be grateful that their train (or bus or

telephone or electricity or gas or water) had turned up at all.

Nowadays, in our consumerist society, such approaches to life are simply not tenable, and a 'make do and mend' railway is simply not acceptable to the public, no matter how creditable it might be from the point of view of financial austerity.

As well as the sections on the present disputes and the problems at GTR, the Committee focused on how the existing structures could be adapted to address the perceived failures of the current franchising structure.

In summary, MP's identified three key issues which needed to be fixed: insufficient transfer of financial risk, lack of competition and franchises which were too large to allow private operators to drive efficiencies and deliver passenger benefits.

They acknowledged – and here to some extent they echoed last year's report on Network Rail by Nicola Shaw – that much of

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the financial risk in rail 'has always resulted from maintaining and enhancing the infrastructure and this is still the case'. The continuing lack of a convincing structure to lever in private investment to infrastructure is, to me and I think many others, the real failure of rail privatisation.

However, some train operators (and their shareholders) might disagree with their assertion that 'there has been a relatively low level of financial risk from operating a passenger rail franchise'. That may be true in terms of funding the capital investment needed, but is certainly not true in terms of the transfer of revenue risk, which has saved the taxpayer many millions of pounds since 1996 – or the funding of rolling stock investment. However, the committee then rather ducks the issue, kicking it towards their next inquiry on Rail Governance and Finance.

Fewer bidders

The concern about lack of competition has arisen partly as a result of the system of direct awards adopted since 2012 to get the government out of the hole it had dug itself with the collapse of the InterCity West Coast franchise. However, there has also been a fall in the number of bidders for recent competitions, such that only two were short-listed for the South Western and

West Midlands franchises. The Committee heard concerns about the costs of bidding (£5 to £10 million) and the size of the bonds required to back up the Parent Company Guarantees which the DfT demands.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the system as it has evolved since the first bids were invited by OPRAF in 1995 and 1996, it is now almost inconceivable that a GB Railways or a Prism Rail could now emerge to challenge the major international groups – or that management buyouts could again be mounted by such teams as achieved early success (either alone or with allies) at Great Western, Thames Trains or Chiltern. It was around those bids that a lot of early innovation was achieved – notably at GB Railways with its new Rail Passenger Partnership services in East Anglia, and then ultimately the launch of open access operator Hull Trains. At Chiltern, there was the Project Evergreen scheme to upgrade the infrastructure and expand the fleet. The much lamented GNER brand also came from a new entrant to the industry, in that case Pullman train operator James Sherwood and his Sea Containers company.

However, the gigantism of the new Strategic Rail Authority soon took over amid the post-Hatfield panic, and its operations-led 'one terminal, one operator' policy quickly saw the end of competition on the

Great Western and Great Eastern routes. Innovative services such as Oxford-Bristol or Norwich-Basingstoke were withdrawn. The creation of the huge Greater Western, Greater Anglia and Northern franchises followed, all of which proved hugely difficult to manage and where performance initially fell sharply and was slow to recover.

Sustainable in the longer-term?

These decisions were taken in the face of evidence, such as the statistical analysis done as part of our Rail Industry Monitor project, which showed that the smaller franchises tended to deliver faster growth, better performance and higher passenger satisfaction. The change also rolled back the increasing focus on local markets which the railways had been moving towards ever since the first Robert Reid's sectorisation of the network back in 1982.

Thus, the Committee's focus on remedies such as smaller franchises and more use of open access operations would be very welcome to many, and further streamlining of bid costs was high on the agenda. It is difficult indeed to disagree with MP's' view that 'without change it is difficult to see how the current model will be sustainable in the longer-term.' How the government responds to these challenges over the months and years ahead will be fascinating.



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An empathetic stance

Eli Rees-King says companies could enhance their product or service's effectiveness by 'being their own customer' and taking a view on how it could improve their own experience

Customer service is being pushed increasingly to the forefront of the sector's consciousness, and it cannot be denied that there has been a shift in how the customer is perceived and thus catered for by the rail, and in fact wider transport, community. This shift in consciousness has led

The RDG states that: 'Customers must be at the heart of everything we do in the rail industry' and this ambition goes far beyond the tangible first-hand customer experience but is a huge, but vital cultural shift. Now, more than ever before the supply chain is seen as being directly involved with the delivery of a customer-centric transport solution



me to urge many a Rail Alliance member to #BeMorePassenger – by this I mean that rather than responding purely to commercial, contractual clients, that they consider their own rail journey and how their product or service would actually improve their own experience – so effectively asking them to be their own customer. This can be a huge jump for some companies, especially when it is a case of a product that cannot be tangibly appreciated by the travelling public. But as we have seen with the announcement of the RSSB's TOC16 winners, the direct and the indirect

benefit to the customer and the customer experience is as important as more tangible customer-facing properties: as an example, real-time passenger information displays compared with the latest developments in wheel-rail interface impacting on ride quality.

The RSSB competition TOC16 launched late last spring sought to address a key barrier to innovation: that of the difficulty for the rail supply chain to engage effectively with the operating companies. Designed to 'encourage greater collaboration between both [and] challenging them to work

together to develop new and innovative ways to improve performance, reliability and safety on the railway while enhancing the customer experience', the competition will enable the winners to move their projects from concept, hopefully all the way through to application (source: RSSB).

Vital cultural shift

We were looking at this aspect long-before TOC16 was launched, and I vividly recall hosting the Rail Delivery Group at a debate on the customer experience when its list of '99 problems' was broached. At this specific event we considered how, for example, the live DARWIN feed could inform customers, and more specifically the less tech-enabled passenger, of any travel disruptions before they had even arrived at the station. Just a year on from that we featured IBM's Watson in a collaborative conversation alongside the Hack Partners and the RSSB. Late last year we saw ATOC rebrand into the RDG, which to me is a crucial representation of the fact that the industrial and travelling customers be considered from a shared viewpoint. The RDG states that: 'Customers must be at the heart of everything we do in the rail industry' and this ambition goes far beyond the tangible first-hand customer experience but is a huge, but vital cultural shift. Now, more than ever before the supply chain is seen as being directly involved with the delivery of a customer-centric transport solution.

That cultural shift has been vocalised in more recent months through the concept of Mobility as a Service (MaaS), which personally feels like the natural, and correct, extension of the 'last mile' consideration. This shift is also demonstrated through an evolution of the supply chain. I deal with more and more data and design-led companies whose work is cross-mode and who understand that as a nation we expect so much more from our transport, while still expecting a less than seamless handover from one mode to another. Regardless of the demographic there is an overwhelming demand for transport to be and to become easier.

Putting the customer at the heart of everything we do is becoming second nature, but there is still a need to define who the customer is. Commuters' needs differ to those of the tourist, or those without access to private transport. Speaking with Charlotte Hughes of the Community Transport Association (CTA), she said: 'We see that over recent decades our transport network has become more accessible and inclusive and that this has been driven by developments in both innovation and regulation. This has opened up transport to many groups in society that have historically felt that their needs had not been at the forefront when public services and infrastructure have been designed.'

'Whatever breakthroughs have been achieved though, there is still some way to go before we can be confident that every

new infrastructure project and service has been enhanced in a visible and measurable way through the contributions of those most likely to face barriers to access. I believe we are in a unique position to leverage on UK market growth and in particular HS2 in order to create new ways of engagement with communities, innovative groups and individuals and the UK supply chain.'

West Midlands a pioneer in MaaS

Referring back to MaaS it is truly exciting to learn that West Midlands will become the first region to pilot Mobility as a Service to its residents. The West Midlands Combined Authority in conjunction with local service providers and Birmingham City Council are set to launch the service this year. This perfectly echoes the Transport System Catapult's view of MaaS – describing it as an opportunity to improve how people and goods move, both from the perspective of the policy maker and for travellers themselves.

Taking this full circle and going back to the notion of innovation in relation to the customer's experience it is inspiring to see news of the latest DfT funded competition, launched in mid-March. Innovate, on behalf of the Department for Transport will be managing a collaborative R&D competition to further accelerate innovation in the UK rail sector. This, the fourth Accelerating Innovation in Rail competition, will manage collaborative research and development competition as it seeks to develop technology prototypes in the broad areas of 'high-value, low cost railways' and 'improving customer experience through stations'. Like TOC16 this is not abstract thinking, but an opportunity for the supply chain to identify needs and problems and deliver specific solutions, perhaps tackling some of the barriers to access to transport as mentioned above. This competition is backed at ministerial level, and to quote rail minister Paul Maynard on this competition: 'We will be looking for innovations that will improve the delivery of rail transport in the UK and boost UK competitiveness in the international rail market. We want to encourage participation both from within

the rail sector and from organisations with little experience of working in rail.'

Consider every need of travellers

It is vitally important that we do position ourselves therefore to #BeMorePassenger – be that to help deliver the seamless MaaS type journey or to ensure that as a collective we make sure that our products, services, solutions consider every need of the travelling public. If you wish to get involved in this conversation please do get in touch, there are various ways in which you can do so:

- Railtex – come and meet the Rail Alliance team (incorporating the WMCA) at the NEC stands, where we can introduce you to the Midlands Engine representatives (L60 and M65 respectively) or contact midlandengine@railalliance.co.uk for details on the Midlands Engine breakfast on the first day of the show
- join the conversation on twitter using #BeMorePassenger
- take part in the debate at the Rail Alliance's stations focus event in late April (details on www.railalliance.co.uk/events)

The last word goes to Chris Leech MBE, who said: 'According to Business in the Community's 2015 report *Fortune Favours the Brave*, opportunities for sustainable innovation are valued at £100 billion in the UK economy alone, and there are £40 billion worth of efficiency savings still to be made in British businesses. The savings and impacts of such innovation can be passed on to customers to enhance their journey experience and ultimately increase footfall.'

'Having come through years of economic uncertainty around franchise renewals and infrastructure contracts, the transport sector is now moving from rescue to renewal – in which innovation in all its forms has a crucial role to play. After all it's how we began.'

Eli Rees-King is marketing communications director at the Rail Alliance



Chris Leech MBE



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Time to ramp it up

The date when any boarding device that is a ramp must be fixed securely to the rail vehicle is fast approaching, and the industry needs to prioritise work on a standardised solution, says

Michael Padley

Ask any train operator to name their top priorities and I'm sure ensuring a safe, punctual and reliable service for passengers will be their response.

In my opinion, there is an issue looming that also needs to be prioritised industry-wide.

It was recently noted there are a number of groups with an express interest in passenger boarding and the use of ramps. However, they were all working in isolation. Through the Rail Delivery Group, it is now hoped these interested parties can pool their knowledge and experience and by working together, suggest a way forward



By the beginning of 2020, any boarding device that is a ramp must be fixed securely to the rail vehicle. That has been the requirement of the Rail Vehicle Accessibility (non-interoperability Rail Systems) Regulations 2010 (RAVR) and we are fast approaching that date.

Both train operating companies and infrastructure managers have, in many cases, relied upon the use of friction ramps for boarding and alighting passengers with

reduced mobility, or those in wheelchairs or motorised scooters at staffed stations. The main reason for this is because one size fits all trains. But come 1st January 2020 the friction ramp can no longer be legally used. So what are we going to do?

Compliant ramps that secure to the rail vehicle will be on board the train as they have been a requirement since 1st January 1999. These ramps may be manual and stowed in a cupboard as a part of the train

on-board equipment or they may be a part of the train access system and be 'built into' the train structure.

To improve performance and customer satisfaction, most staffed stations utilise their staff to provide the customer assistance. Where a ramp is required, the station staff will stand with the customer and the local station ramp waiting for the train's arrival. Where more than one class of train stops at the station, the need for a universal ramp becomes apparent.

Daunting challenge

With passenger safety a priority, performance is key to providing a punctual service. How can we achieve it? The challenge is daunting. No two classes of train appear to have the same door entry design and some classes have different door step designs within the same fleet.

In most instances, the ramp devices are being retro-fitted and designed around the train needs, not business needs. We also have the complication in that Toc's do not own the asset so a further party of agreement and cost is layered.

Next we have the station platform and train step height. A high step may result in the ramp fixings not engaging with the train vehicle. Unfortunately, there is no standard or specification for a door plate or universal

fixing for a boarding ramp.

If we have a large station with 17 platforms we will likely have around eight to ten ramps to cover that station. If we have six different classes of train, they will likely have six different ramp requirements. We will require between 48 and 60 ramps to cover the station from 1st January 2020, and staff will be required to be trained in each ramp type.

A terminal station may not pose much of a problem for the time factor when boarding and alighting. However, what is the dwell time along the route? Once the request has been made for a passenger assist, what ramp is required, where on the platform will the coach stop, has there been a last minute diagram change, how many staff are available at the station?

It was recently noted there are a number of groups with an express interest in passenger boarding and the use of ramps. However, they were all working in isolation. Through the Rail Delivery Group, it is now hoped these interested parties can pool their knowledge and experience and by working together, suggest a way forward.

A word of caution, however. EU 1300/2014 - Persons of Reduced Mobility - Technical Specification for Interoperability (PMR TSI) uses a lesser standard of compliance than RAVR. This is because

“ It was recently noted there are a number of groups with an express interest in passenger boarding and the use of ramps. However, they were all working in isolation ”

the term 'not subject to displacement' as opposed to 'fixed securely', does not encourage the higher standard of compliance.

Train operators need to talk to each other and share experiences. Here is an opportunity to work together with the potential of making a significant saving and standardising access onto trains and, in years to come, reduce the need for bespoke solutions to passenger entry.

Michael Padley is a committee member of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health's (IOSH) Railway Group

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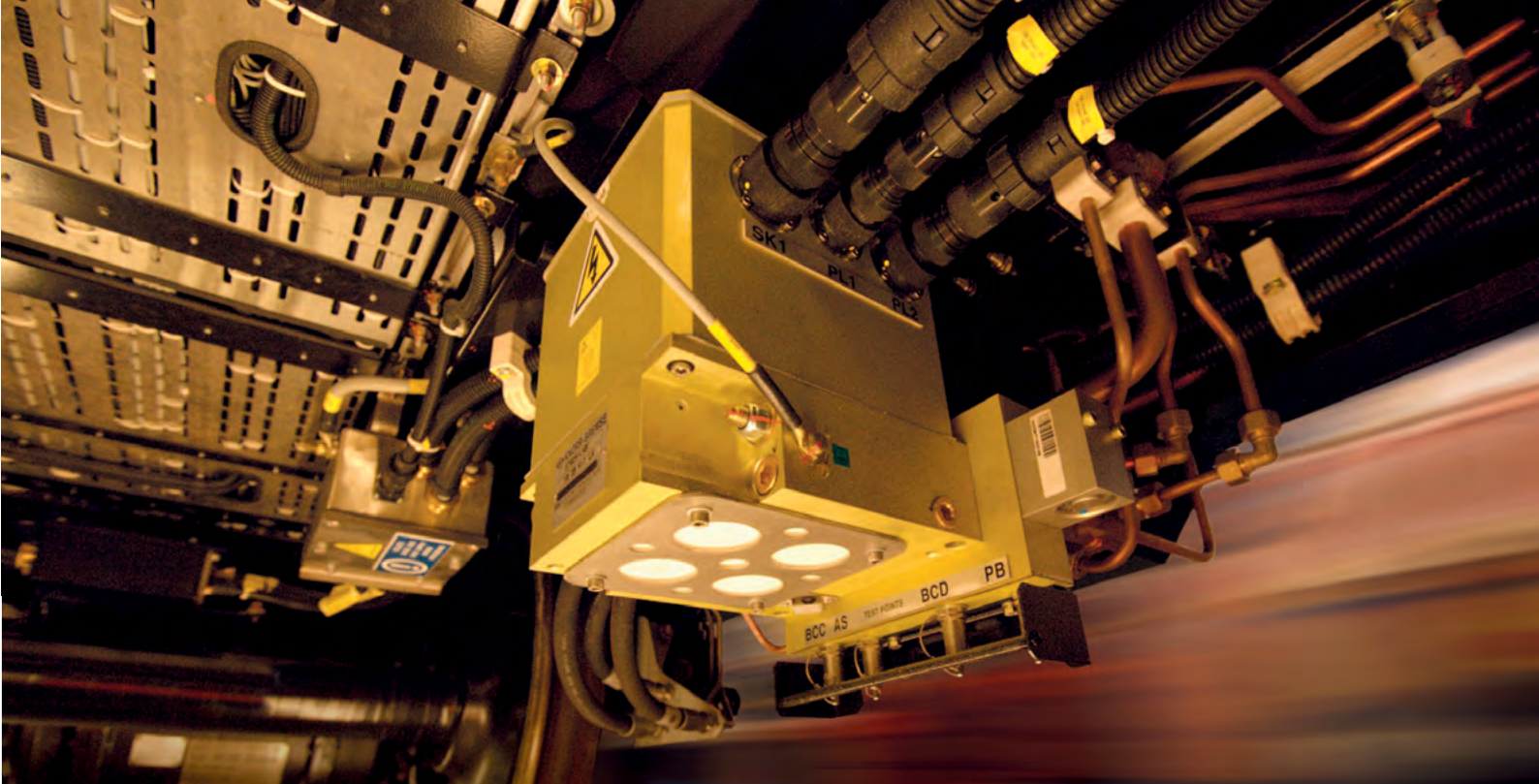
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Women in rail

Adeline Ginn



Search for the Stars

Adeline Ginn looks at cultivating and celebrating the future STEM stars of tomorrow

Role models are highly important for us psychologically, both in helping us to make important life decisions and inspiring us to cultivate and nurture the best versions of ourselves by striving to reach our potential.

But as adults, we tend to give little thought to the idea of having a 'role model', as we regard this to be a quality that children seek from the adults in their lives. If you stop and consider who most influences you now, and why, you'll no doubt agree that the people you admire are giving you some of your most important life lessons.

In fact, positive modelling in the workplace means that businesses can mentor workers to success by demonstrating proper behaviour, exhibiting which positive attributes are allowed and encouraged by the business.

In the same way, in order to change the perception of the rail sector, and work towards an equal workforce, it is crucial for us to champion women in our industry as role models. Many young girls are rejecting STEM subjects at a young age, disillusioned by the idea that jobs in these sectors



aren't 'glamorous' enough. But there is an abundance of roles available to women in STEM, and more specifically rail, and it is important to educate young women about the expansive opportunities a career in our sector can offer. To do this, we must show off and celebrate the brightest and best women who work in rail.

Evidence is there

After all, it's been proven that a diverse workforce is a stronger one – and the benefits are vast. Forbes reports that diversity is vital for a business to have the ability to adapt and innovate in an evolving and quick paced world.

Role models can make an impact fast. A recent study found that Michelle Obama's interaction with students at Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School (including her visit to the school, meeting students in Oxford and inviting a group to the White House) appear to have caused a significant jump in results relative to the rest of London schools, particularly between 2011 and 2012.

In India, the Panchayati Raj Act, a constitutional amendment introduced in 1993, which stipulated that village councils needed to reserve one-third of their seats and one-third of their council leader positions, for women, saw the share of Indian local government posts held by women rise from five per cent in 1993 to 40 per cent by 2005. The new role models had a dramatic impact on families and younger women. The likelihood that a woman spoke up in a village meeting increased by 25 per cent. Villagers who had been exposed to at least two female chiefs in West Bengal overcame their initial bias against women as leaders and rated male and female leaders equally. This category of converts included parents, who were more likely to want their daughters to study past secondary school, thus eliminating the gender gap in aspirations.

Furthermore, in the US, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission analysed data from more than 20,000 private-sector companies and found that, when the share of female top managers increased, the share of women in middle-management subsequently rose. We are at a pivotal time in the railway

‘Role models can make an impact fast. A recent study found that Michelle Obama's interaction with students at Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School (including her visit to the school, meeting students in Oxford and inviting a group to the White House) appear to have caused a significant jump in results relative to the rest of London schools, particularly between 2011 and 2012’

“ We are at a pivotal time in the railway industry, with HS2 expected to create 25,000 jobs during its construction, the Thameslink programme, Crossrail (1 and 2) and major upgrades of London Underground on the horizon. To deliver these exciting projects we need a wealth of talent at our fingertips - talent which isn’t mutually exclusive to gender ”

industry, with HS2 expected to create 25,000 jobs during its construction, the Thameslink programme, Crossrail (1 and 2) and major upgrades of London Underground on the horizon. To deliver these exciting projects we need a wealth of talent at our fingertips – talent which isn’t mutually exclusive to gender.

Understanding social purpose

But prejudice against STEM careers still thrives. A Network Rail study shows that girls as young as seven have an unconscious

bias against engineering, and by 14, many have fully switched off from it as a career option. Girls aged seven to nine were switched off by thinking engineering was too dirty and messy and those between 10 and 12 were worried that engineering is dangerous and that they weren’t strong enough.

More positively, the same Network Rail study also highlighted that younger girls were attracted to a career in engineering by understanding its social purpose and those between 10 and 12 responded positively to

role models in this discipline.

In order to change perceptions of a career in STEM industries, we need to illustrate all of the brilliant women making valuable contributions in our industry.

20 Rising Stars of Rail

That is why we are shortly to launch our search for the 20 Rising Stars of Rail. These will be 20 women across the country who are in the early stages (e.g. the first five years) of their careers in the rail sector, have already made an impact on their colleagues and are on track to become the leaders and inspirational women of tomorrow.

Nominees could include an inspiring colleague who has shown outstanding potential in supporting women and/or shaping the future of the industry, or someone who has already achieved notable success in being inspirational to their colleagues and peers.

To find out more information about the 20 Rising Stars of Rail and how to nominate, please visit www.womeninrail.org.

Adeline Ginn is general counsel at Angel Trains and founder of Women in Rail



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No going back



There is a need for fresh thinking and a different approach to solving disputes that impact public service, says **Andy Cook**

In January, the TUC got involved in the Southern Rail dispute with ASLEF and seemingly achieved a resolution where ACAS couldn't. Increasingly, attendance at ACAS is seen as part of the dance, rather than anything meaningful. This is bad for industrial relations as a whole in the UK.

Incidentally, by the time the TUC became involved the bill for compensation and lost fares stood at more than £38 million, according to a letter to the Transport Select Committee from the DfT, which

was also forced to set aside £15 million to compensate season ticket holders. These vast sums are footed by the taxpayer, although the government, as part of an unusual arrangement whereby it collects fares while paying Southern to run services, could argue that at least part of the compensation bill is covered by ticket sales.

Although it can still prove effective in resolving low-level disputes, ACAS must face serious questions about its role in higher-profile cases. In big disputes with big personalities, and especially where

If the Westminster government is to support modernisation and build bridges, rather than passing anti-strike and anti-union legalisation, it should seriously consider its approach to collective dispute resolution in the UK. This is where I see the introduction of binding arbitration as a sensible way forward. The process would offer a way of avoiding strikes (and subsequent effect on public services), and hold management to account

mainstream media are paying attention, it takes a certain level of credibility and experience among the mediators to exert the kind of influence and persuasion required to achieve movement in positions. When dealing with heavy-hitters, you need people with sufficient gravitas, authority, influence, and respect within the industry – and maybe



ACAS could not provide that.

Modernisation and increased efficiency in rail and other industries could become a reality more quickly if the system of binding arbitration was available in cases of dispute between companies and trades unions.

At present, the terms and conditions within an employee's contract are fiercely protected by unions. An employee of an inner-city transport service whose original remit is outlined as collector of payment or dispenser of tickets, for example, may refuse to embrace new technology enabling contactless payment or ticketless travel, and the union may stubbornly argue the case to the extent that the employer has to pay for the change. Meaning that in many cases, there is no financial sense in the company implementing new technology or working practices at all.

Of course, there exists scope for more flexible contracts to be introduced, whereby employers have reasonable flexibility to move employees around and change job content, allowing for the fast pace of change and demands from customers. However, there are still some elements of Britain's business landscape that suffer from inflexibility and gold-plated terms and conditions due to the age of the agreements that were struck, more often than not in ex-public sector organisations. These

agreements tend to be staunchly upheld by the unions.

New approach in UK

If the Westminster government is to support modernisation and build bridges, rather than passing anti-strike and anti-union legislation, it should seriously consider its approach to collective dispute resolution in the UK. This is where I see the introduction of binding arbitration as a sensible way forward. The process would offer a way of avoiding strikes (and subsequent effect on public services), and hold management to account.

So, what is binding arbitration? Binding arbitration is the process by which two or more parties resolve a dispute based on the ruling of a qualified, independent person, often a judge, who hears the arguments of both sides and then decides on the way forward. Significantly, those involved must agree on who is appointed to make the decision and that the decision is binding, meaning they all must agree to the outcome.

In the case of the recent rail disputes, where the unions claim that safety is considered to be the issue, binding arbitration would potentially work well. Some argue that safety is not the reason behind the strikes, that it is, in fact, about job and pay protection. So, if both sides

agreed to allow an independent expert to review and decide on the way forward, then the unvarnished facts would be revealed, the strikes solved and services resumed.

A possible reason that binding arbitration is not already more common in industrial disputes is the reluctance of parties to relinquish control, which is necessary for the process to work effectively. Managers and unions must hand over control to the person conducting the arbitration and persuading them to step back and put their trust in an independent judge can prove difficult.


After a bad start to the year with several occasions of strike action in the rail industry, I believe the government needs to stand up, take notice and think hard about the current approach to resolving these issues, but not by considering anti-union and anti-strike laws as the answer.

How many more journeys would have been made, how many people's lives would have been far less affected, and how much could have been saved in compensation payments if binding arbitration would have been available in these recent disputes?

Andy Cook is CEO of Marshall-James Employee Relations


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





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A photograph of railroad workers in orange safety gear and hard hats working on tracks. They are using tools to adjust the rails. In the background, there are gas cylinders and other equipment. The scene is outdoors and appears to be a construction or maintenance site.

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Anthony Sadler

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Anthony Sadler
FIRO, senior operations and maintenance specialist, Serco Middle East Graduate, BSc in Railway Operations Management



"The course really helped me to understand the diverse signalling systems which are a huge part of being a conductor and the part I play in ensuring the safe delivery of our customers every day. The modules also helped me to understand the importance of the principles of railway operations and how they have come to be."
Barry Weldon, conductor, ScotRail. Graduate, Certificate of Higher Education in Railway Operations Management



Barry Weldon

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The IRO Learn website (www.irolearn.co.uk) also hosts a variety of online courses that can be studied anytime, anywhere.

If you would like to find out more, please call the Learning and Development Team on 03333 440523 or email develop@railwayoperators.co.uk.

Alternatively, please visit the IRO website: www.railwayoperators.co.uk

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Clear your Diary!

Britain's rail network is seeing levels of investment unprecedented in recent years. The HS2 high-speed line, Crossrail and extensive upgrading of the existing system are all generating business opportunities throughout the supply chain. Electrification of main lines, modernisation of signalling systems and procurement of new rolling stock to handle ever increasing passenger numbers all feature in current investment programmes.

Railtex was a cost effective way for RVEL to outline its offering to the wider rail industry. With so many potential customers in one place it made doing business very easy. This is the second time we have exhibited at Railtex and we will certainly look to do so again in 2017.

Andy Lynch, Managing Director, RVEL

Transport for London also represents a key market, with new trains being acquired, extension of the Northern Line of the Underground and a growing role in the management of the city's suburban lines. And the proposed HS3 line linking cities in northern England and Crossrail 2 in the capital have now both moved up the political agenda, promising exciting longer term prospects for the supply industry.

Visitor Registration

Entry tickets for Railtex 2017 will be available free of charge to all visitors who pre-register their attendance before the cut-off on 8 May 2017.

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Face time

Good is no longer good enough in a successful relationship between customers and rail service providers, says **Jo Causon**

The Institute of Customer Service recently published its annual UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI), an in-depth look at how well organisations are performing against customer expectations, across 13 sectors.

The report reveals that the transport sector has reached a nine year high, continuing its ongoing upward trend in satisfaction that began in 2011. However, despite this positive sign, the sector is still performing below the UK average.

This begs two key questions – what is the sector now getting right, and what still needs to be improved?

At a glance: the state of the sector

Transport companies will undoubtedly be pleased that many measures of satisfaction have improved within the sector, with the largest increases being around how they respond to complaints. Added to this, satisfaction with service over the phone is higher than the UK average and website satisfaction has improved by 1.5 points to 78.8 (out of 100).

Indeed, the rise in customer satisfaction is reflected in improvements in all customer

the transport industry remains the lowest performer across all sectors for face-to-face service. This is a concern, as ‘in person’ accounts for the largest proportion of customer interactions



measures except speed of response, whether that is in writing or via digital platforms. However, despite the progress that has clearly been made, the transport industry remains the lowest performer across all sectors for face-to-face service. This is a concern, as ‘in person’ accounts for the largest proportion of customer interactions, and so has a significant impact on the overall score.

Another factor bringing down the average score is customer satisfaction from those who use a transport provider most days. Repeated use, of course, provides the opportunity to reinforce a good experience but it does mean the need to perform consistently well at all times. A worrying sign is the fact that there has been an increase in the score for customer effort – in other words, customers said they had to expend more effort in dealing with organisations than they did a year ago. For example, 53 per cent of people say that it has taken them more than two attempts to get a problem fixed with businesses in the transport sector. The extra staff time spent on repeat customer contact to resolve issues is arguably time which could be better spent, with businesses able to save money on staff

hours if a focus is placed on ‘getting it right first time’.

Amid this picture of highs and lows for the industry, the range of performance of organisations in the transport sector is also diverse. Organisation that stand out for the improvements they have made over the past 12 months include London Midland, Great Western Railway, Northern Rail and East Midlands Trains as they are among the 20 most improved organisations in the overall UKCSI compared to January 2016. London Midland is actually the most improved organisation in the overall UKCSI, up 9.3 points since last year and its highest score in four years. However, the gap between the top and bottom railway operators has widened, particularly for customer trust, reputation, being open and transparent, caring about their customer and getting things right first time.

What does this mean for the rail industry?

To my mind there are seven areas of focus for the year ahead:

- Focus on making experiences easier and more straightforward. This could take the form of better communication around

ticket types or displaying information regarding carriages with available seats. Using all forms of communication across all channels is important here as is doing this in a timely fashion. Reflect on why face-to-face has fallen and what can be done to improve this area in terms of staff development and knowledge sharing; this is important as the top five customer priorities all relate to human interaction.

- Show that you care, across all customer engagement. Social channels have become a linchpin of organisational reputation – ensure that social media teams are fully briefed on tone and empathy, considering how easily this can be misconstrued on a digital platform.
- Ensure that problems and complaints are dealt with quickly and effectively. Review current processes of escalation to ensure efficiency – and ensure that the process is clear to customers as well as employees.
- Encourage customers to report complaints and track levels of complaint reporting. Put processes in place to track complaints – including and placing a focus on those which occur on social media, as this has increasingly become a

major platform for communication.

- Don't just pay lip service to employee engagement. Happy, engaged workers deliver better service. This is not just a logical assumption, it can be evidenced by the relationship between companies' UKCSI and employee engagement scores. A positive and defined approach to employee engagement and wellbeing is an essential part of any customer service strategy.
- Engage through people development: Training people to deal with challenging customer situations is a critical element of driving better customer satisfaction and helping equip your teams to do their jobs well. Employees are also more engaged if they know they are being invested in – a good move for them and for your organisation.
- Make sure you measure – and measure the right things. Customer experience is a measure which is important – not just to customers, but to the media, to regulators and to future clients. To ensure the time spent tracking customer satisfaction can inform and aid an ongoing strategy, focus on those measures which are important to rail

customers – face to face interaction, for example, and complaint management.

- Assess the satisfaction of vulnerable customers. Many organisations that provide essential services – such as transport – are reassessing how they manage relationships with vulnerable customers in a way that is ethical, equitable and fair to all. We have seen in the UKCSI that different customer segments often have varying expectations and levels of satisfaction. It is therefore be increasingly important to measure the quality of service experienced by different kinds of vulnerable customers, to assess what is appropriate and achievable.

The UKCSI shows us that across all sectors, good is no longer good enough, and this an important lesson for the rail industry. Improvements are needed to ensure organisational success – and little changes can really make a big difference.

Jo Causon is CEO and executive director of the Institute of Customer Service

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Getting customer complaints on track



The Ombudsman Services' fourth annual Consumer Action Monitor showed many customers are resigned to poor service. **Lewis Shand Smith** reflects on the implications for rail

The rail industry has been at the forefront of the news agenda recently, with highly publicised strikes and customer service issues marring the strong progress being made in complaints handling in the sector. Ombudsman Services' fourth annual Consumer Action Monitor looked at consumer complaints and attitudes to consumer rights across all sectors, and the effect of the issues around rail were evident in the findings.

‘The current government is prioritising ‘responsible capitalism’, and rail could be a great example of how a public utility can align its service and complaints handling process to the needs of the public. With more people resigned to poor service in rail than in any other sector, a change to a customer-centric approach has the potential to make a real difference’

Across all sectors, consumers made 55 million complaints about products and services last year. Transport was the fourth most complained about sector after retail, communications and energy - responsible for seven per cent of all complaints. Within the transport sector, rail accounted for more than half of grumbles and, worryingly, the issue seems to be getting worse. Rail complaints rose by almost half a million last year, from 1.56 million in 2015 to 2.04 million in 2016.

The most common complaints were late arrival or cancellation of service (57 per cent), poor customer service (50 per cent) and unbearable levels of overcrowding (47 per cent). It is of course impossible to eradicate all issues from an industry, especially one as complex as rail, yet these

provide interesting pointers as to where some of the big grumbles lie.

Resigned to poor service

There is no doubt that the industry has made great strides over the past decade or so. Currently though, rail's reputation for quality service and punctuality is in the spotlight - to an extent that has rarely been seen before, and this is reflected by one in five (20 per cent) consumers, who said they are now resigned to poor service in the sector.

Consumers are disillusioned with the service they are receiving across many sectors, especially those where the purchase is done out of necessity rather than desire. In rail, there is often no choice in provider - people can't find an alternative as easily as



they can in other sectors, which adds to the frustration experienced by many.

When consumers become disillusioned they often stop complaining altogether, which removes an important source of customer feedback that can help to improve service.

Across the board, lack of trust in businesses to put things right following their complaint is a significant factor discouraging people from raising their issues. One in five (19 per cent) of consumers said they do not believe companies listen to them. The time is now right for train operators to show they care about their customers, and consider how their complaints handling systems could work better for them and commuters. Currently, the processes for complaints and redress are time-consuming and confusing. The customer complaint journey depends on the operator – a situation that is now rare in a lot of industries. This leads to discrepancies with complaint handling, and doesn't provide encouragement for providers to improve flaws in the system.

Take complaints seriously

Which?'s super-complaint to the ORR highlighted the need for improvements, and

while compensation has been mooted, this won't necessarily be appropriate redress for everyone. The quality of complaints handling also plays a part – it can have a significant effect on satisfaction levels – so it's important that providers take complaints seriously. It was therefore welcome to see Chris Burchell, chair of the Rail Delivery Group, note recently that the industry needed to provide redress when things go wrong.

In December, Tim Loughton MP put forward a bill proposing a single ombudsman for the rail sector, much like the Energy Ombudsman (See *Rail Professional* February 17). This could provide real, tangible benefits to consumers who are affected by on-going problems. It would also increase accountability and help bring key operational issues to the fore.

Far from just being an enforcer, a modern ombudsman works with industry leaders, helping to spot systematic issues earlier and dealing more efficiently with complaints that do get made. This collaborative approach helps to improve the industry for everyone: providers, regulators and consumers. The current government is prioritising 'responsible capitalism', and rail could be

a great example of how a public utility can align its service and complaints handling process to the needs of the public. With more people resigned to poor service in rail than in any other sector, a change to a customer-centric approach has the potential to make a real difference.

I travel by train a lot, and I usually receive a great service – I know many people feel the same. The issue is that when something does go wrong, small changes to the complaints handling process could improve the customer experience and yield great benefits to everyone involved. The rail sector should focus on strengthening its complaint handling processes, creating a robust solution that rail passengers can easily access and trust

An ombudsman in the sector would provide independent resolution and redress for consumers, be a valuable source of information for operators and help reduce the deterrent currently experienced by the travelling public.

Lewis Shand Smith is chief ombudsman at Ombudsman Services



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What a journey!

London Midland's **Richard Brooks** says accolades are only truly matter if the real beneficiary is the customer

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We have already invested in better ticketing systems, more ticket machines, more community based projects, more and innovative apprenticeships, and new technologies – all designed with one idea in mind – to give our passengers, simply better journeys.

And the evidence is that this commitment is paying off.

Having been the worst performing train company in 2012, the Institute of Railway Operators has just named London Midland as Britain's most improved train company in both the Regional and LSE sectors.

Customer satisfaction is strong. The latest National Rail Passenger Satisfaction survey gave us a rating of 85 per cent – that's four percentage points above the industry average. And we have held on to a good score at a time when overall satisfaction with the rail industry is falling.

Receiving peer recognition has its own rewards. But the rail industry is sometimes criticised for being too inward looking. We wanted to stretch beyond traditional boundaries – to measure ourselves against the best of the best. That is why being named by the Institute of Customer Service



Trailblazer apprenticeship



Class 350 3 London Midland train

as the most improved organisation across the whole UK for customer service is so important. Accolades only truly matter if the real beneficiary is the customer. The UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI) surveys 10,000 consumers to gauge customer service provision in the UK business landscape. Out of the 244 organisations surveyed, London Midland increased its score by 9.3 points from 68.1 to 77.4 during 2016. Key areas of improvement listed by the report were complaints handling and getting things right first time.

Made simple

The UKCSI cites 'making experiences easier' as the number one driver for improving customer satisfaction. This aligns with the approach we have taken over the last twelve months. When we launched our direct award contract internally we wanted to summarise our philosophy with a single, memorable, proposition. We called that proposition Travel Made Simple.

Travel Made Simple means looking at everything we do, from back office to front-line delivery, and asking the question – how can I make this easier, simpler or better for my customer? A customer in this case can be a passenger but it can also be a colleague. The idea being that if I make a process or system easier for my colleague they will have more time to make improvements for the next person and the next until the ultimate end user – the passenger – gets a better service.

From the beginning we recognised colleague engagement as a key driver for success. It is no coincidence therefore that

all of these accolades for improving the customer experience have come along at the same time that Investors In People (IiP) upgraded our status from Silver to Gold. London Midland is just the fourth train operator to achieve the gold standard. The IiP assessors highlighted London Midland's strengths as its people, benefits and rewards, progression opportunities, corporate social responsibility and the use of Key Performance Indicators.

Quite a turnaround

Among the customer improvements we have made this year we have increased Sunday morning and late night services on key routes and reduced crime and antisocial behaviour across our network. In the coming months we will continue by launching a new innovation centre. The London Midland Labs brings together ten of the UK's hottest technology start-ups to work as our partners in developing solutions that benefit passengers' rail experiences. We are also rolling out free Wi-Fi on our Class 350 and class 323 trains. This will cover 70 per cent of all our passenger journeys by October 2017.

Getting closer to the communities we serve has been central to improving customer satisfaction. Listening to user groups and elected officials has helped shape our investment plans so that we can focus on the improvements that really matter to our customers. We will continue to increase our engagement with local communities over the next six months through a growing network of station adoption and the extension of our successful sponsorships of

“ We wanted to stretch beyond traditional boundaries - to measure ourselves against the best of the best. That is why being named by the Institute of Customer Service as the most improved organisation across the whole UK for customer service is so important ”

the arts and healthy lifestyle programmes.

This has been quite a turnaround for a franchise that, in 2012, was making customer service headlines for all the wrong reasons. You could say London Midland has come a long way since 2007. But the company refuses to be complacent and is working ever harder to increase customer satisfaction.

Richard Brooks is commercial director, London Midland

‘Rail has given me the most amazing opportunities and my passion is to say to others ‘the opportunities are there, you’ve just got to grab them and have the confidence that you can do it’. And that to me has been it

Margaret Kay

Lorna Slade spoke to Margaret Kay, managing director of Stagecoach Supetram, about her career-long emphasis on people, and why rail employees would do well to enhance their confidence and grab the opportunities

Having been guided at high speed to the offices holding the Master Cutler meeting room at St Pancras by a kind-hearted staff member in the East Midlands Trains First Class Lounge, as I finally signed in I heard my name being called warmly and looked up to find Margaret Kay, poking her head around the door to beckon me in.

Kay was personable, and aware, obviously, of her reputation in the industry for her achievements in the ‘people’ arena – a focus that has spanned her whole career, which has included a substantial amount of time in the retail sector as well as rail. It seemed reasonable therefore, if a little clichéd, to start by asking if she feels rail really does work in silos. ‘When I came into London Underground after working for Tesco for ten years I was very shocked at how that was the case, and at how little communication there was between the business in general,’ said Kay. ‘Having been an HR manager at Tesco I was quite surprised that there seemed to be little or no interest in anything to do with people at LU, and I found that just extremely strange. There was money sloshing around for training – far more than anything Tesco was capable of handing to me – but nobody was really interested in development, they didn’t put the support mechanisms behind it. So one of the things I have always tried to do, and I like to think I’ve become relatively successful at, is show that it’s everybody’s responsibility to be interested in the people. They really are the most important asset; and I do genuinely believe that’s starting to be believed in rail now rather than just said.’

Kay’s initial title at LU was ‘personnel and industrial relations manager’, a combination she found ‘bizarre’, and as a woman she was a relative novelty. ‘You got handed this thing called IR because you were in HR, and there were a lot of men in the department because the emphasis was on dealing with the unions – there was a sense that the unions were all white males so you needed to have white male managers. And as I moved up the

greasy pole most of the heads of HR at LU, and in the early days of joining Stagecoach, were white males, but that’s changing quite rapidly, and now – and I don’t think we shout about this enough – having a career in the rail industry for a female means you can go anywhere you want.’

So having become LU’s head of HR for engineering Kay then went to live and work in Egypt for a couple of years before

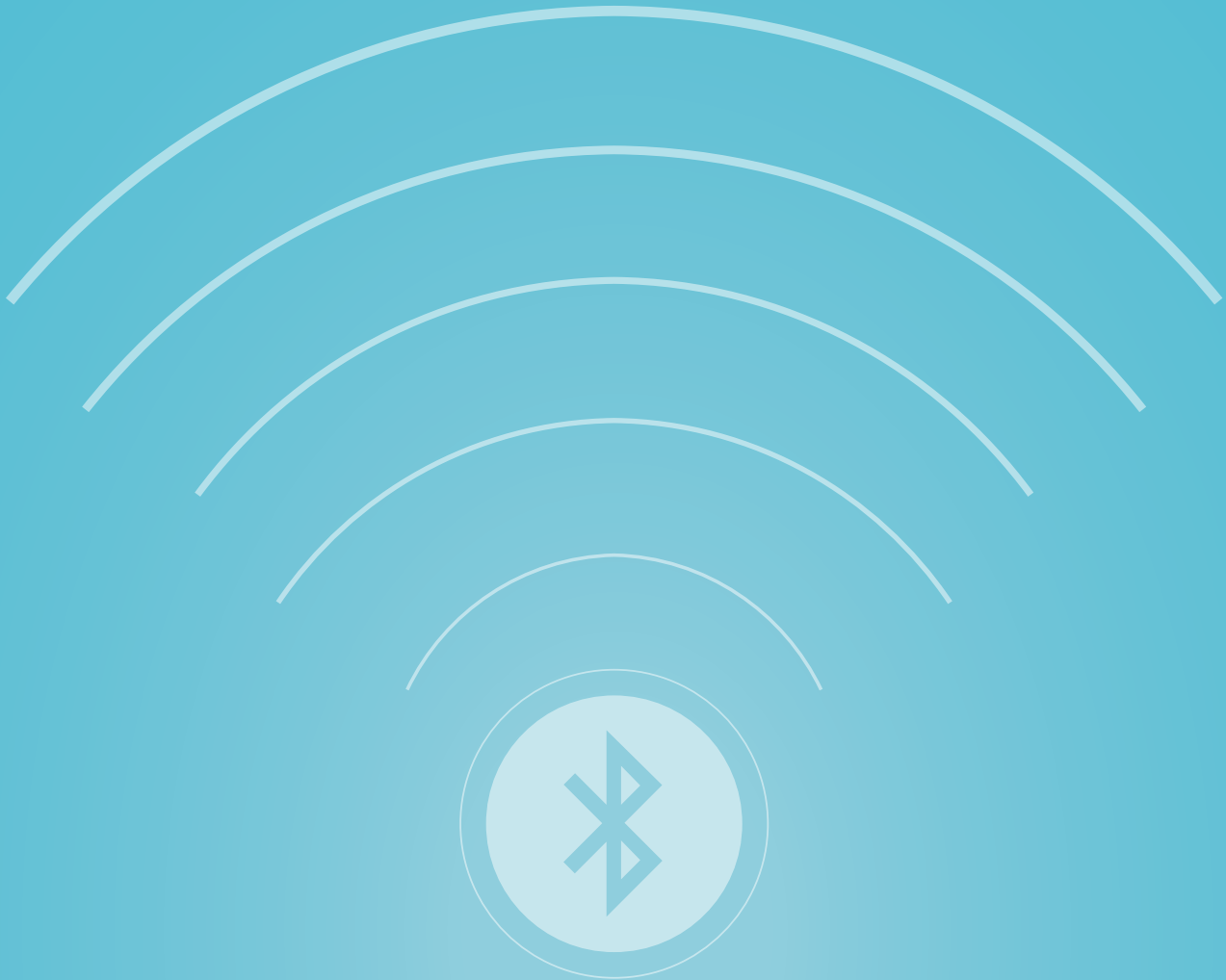




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General Manager

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returning to the UK to work at Dixons. But the siren call of rail continued and she re-joined the industry in 2000, working for Stagecoach in HR roles for South West Trains and then East Midlands Trains.

Maintaining her emphasis on people, Kay found 'refreshing' at Stagecoach, the sense that all are involved in the running of the business. Fairly unusually, her long-term relationship with the group included a transition, in 2011, from HR director at East Midlands to MD of Stagecoach Supertram. Without sounding remotely defensive Kay got the gist of the question. 'People have said 'that's not a normal step' but my HR background gave me a real benefit because again the biggest challenges I faced, and face, are around people: if everyone was trained and performed to exactly the standard you wanted, probably that wouldn't be the case. But in all businesses the job of the MD is to lead, and if you've got that skill-set then the technical know-how can be in the team around you. I just had to make sure I was satisfied that my heads of department are good guys. But what I have insisted on is that they have leadership skills because they're in the senior team and ultimately people look up to that team, they don't go 'Oh well you're in finance I don't expect you to be my leader.'

Top 20 most inspirational women in rail

Last year, Kay was voted one of Women in Rail's top 20 most inspirational women in the industry – an accolade she is clearly pleased to have been given. But it nearly didn't happen. 'I didn't know anything about it until I got an email which I thought was fraudulent, because they sometimes say 'You've been voted this and that' and then you go and buy the magazine. The only reason I didn't delete it was because it mentioned Women in Rail, which I knew my colleague Clare [Burles] was playing a really active role in. So I sent her a text asking if she knew anything about it and she replied that it's all true, because she'd been party to it. So it was lovely and I was genuinely very proud.'

On the subject of women in rail, are they are being mis-sold and/or under-sold the idea or maybe, truth be told, it simply



doesn't always appeal I pondered. 'I think it's a bit of both' said Kay. 'We can certainly do more about giving women a better idea of the real value of coming into the industry because there is obviously still a perception that rail is old fashioned and not 'sexy' and full of men, but I also think females do want to sometimes say 'actually engineering isn't something that excites me'. I don't think there's anything wrong in coming to a conclusion. It's just the way it is.'

Kay also agreed that Women in Rail could go more into schools and colleges and speak to girls at a younger age, 'and you can bring in role models, because that's what it's all about isn't it'. She then made a suggestion I hadn't heard before. 'Women in Rail is a great organisation but it's full of volunteers and we've all got day jobs to do: what about the industry doing more to support the idea of women in rail through campaigns?' 'You mean the RDG' I asked. 'Yes' replied Kay without hesitation. 'Well I mean Britain runs on rails is good, that's about campaigning, about giving a positive message. But if we do all feel strongly about diversity then why aren't we saying 'This is really important so let's do a campaign', rather than be relying on Women in Rail? They're doing a great job but I don't think they should be the only vehicle to get that message out to the wider world.'

Bitterly disappointed about Tram Train

Income has been falling on Stagecoach Supertram for some years now – seven according to DfT figures, three according to Kay, something she attributed in large part to a £32 million rail replacement programme that began in 2013 alongside network owners South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTPE), and also to falling petrol prices. 'It was a little bit like the perfect storm' she explained, 'because we had periods of between three and six months when large chunks of our system were shut down. We put on rail replacement buses but people didn't want to be getting on and off trams and onto buses, as we well know in the rail industry. Added to that the Bus Partnership was being launched and delivered, so those definitely impacted on our customer numbers.'

Since re-opening at the back end of 2015 the network has started to see an increase in returning customers but Kay freely admitted it hasn't reached the numbers pre-rail replacement, and survey work by Stagecoach showed those not returning had started taking their car. 'Unfortunately this is a challenge in Sheffield,' she lamented. 'They have given over a lot of land to car parks and in the centre parking prices are very low indeed. So we're doing everything we can to get those numbers back up and we're very pleased, but we've still got a long way to go.'

Sheffield City Region is one of only six English authorities to have received Large Local Mayor scheme funding from the DfT, and to that end more than £1.5 million is to be invested in the development of long-term plans for Supertram and the progression of a business case for up to £230 million of future investment. Stagecoach is working with the PTE to help it think about what that looks like, but Kay is pragmatic about how much this can benefit the company considering its concession is due to end in 2024.

However with reports in February of a breakdown of one of the test vehicles and the start date delays, in asking Kay about the beleaguered Tram Train pilot the shift in her body language revealed real agitation.



'I'm bitterly disappointed' she repeated twice. 'I mean it is a pilot and the first in the UK, so clearly in terms of the project itself it's not surprising that it's had some of its challenges. But from our perspective we had everything in place and were ready to go last May [the original date], and of course Network Rail has now given the date of next July.'

Kay believes Network Rail has shown a 'better' focus on the project since the last delay which has meant Stagecoach and partners the DfT and PTE are building in confidence the new date is going to be met, 'but' she stressed, 'we have been here before and we've said that to Network Rail. None of us at this stage wants to start shouting about the final day and get excited until we're much further into this year, where some key pieces of work need to be completed and completed on time. So it's very disappointing.'

With high levels of overall passenger satisfaction across all six tram networks, at 92 per cent (Transport Focus), trams are continuing to make an interesting proposition for transport planners in terms of a vision for an integrated network. Having said that she couldn't comment on the death of a passenger late last year on the Supertram network nor the Sandilands incident, due to on-going investigations, Kay was sensitive to the idea of stating they are safe, 'but they are, and they are green. They are really quite adaptable, and people love them. It's an easy form of transport that allows you to make connections a lot easier. And from a cost point of view, and if the government is listening to this, it's much cheaper than heavy rail and part of Tram Train will be able to show that, which is why there is an awful lot of interest in it, so it really should be up there as one of the key priorities for any of the major cities and towns.'

Bravery and the Northern Powerhouse

On the potential benefits and drawbacks of a Metro Mayor in Sheffield, Kay was not prepared to talk, 'I live in Northampton so I won't comment on that,' however she was more forthcoming about a feature I mentioned, in the *Yorkshire Post*, in which

Teresa May described Sheffield as a 'key part of our vision for a Northern Powerhouse'. 'I absolutely believe there could be a huge benefit to something called the Northern Powerhouse,' she stated, 'but for anything like that to work people need to be genuinely prepared to a) work together and b) do things for the greater good. And with my limited experience of being involved with the politics of South Yorkshire it's often that, because politicians are in situ for short periods at a time, to make a decision that says 'This might not be the right thing or even particularly beneficial to my local area that I'm elected from, but I'm going to make the decision for the northern part of the country', you have to be a brave person, and I'm not certain there are enough people who are going to do that.' And devolution will have to go the whole hog or not at all, Kay believes. 'It can't be 'Well you can fiddle around but actually all the power stays back in Westminster'. That model is not going to work, it really isn't.'

Sad about rail's image

Kay was effusive about the people of Sheffield. 'I've worked in London and in Derby but they really are lovely, lovely people, really the friendliest. When I'm waiting to get on the tram the driver waves and the conductor goes 'Allo love', which you don't really get in other parts of the world, and I see the vast majority of our people – you always get the odd one – are utterly passionate about what they do and absolutely proud to work for Supertram.'

To that end she is upset about rail's image. 'It's very sad, and I know they've got a story to write in the press and on TV, but all you hear about is the fat cats who are only in it for the money and so on, and that's so unfair. I've been in a privileged position where I've sat through business meetings and seen the level of detail and the concern about our customers, about their safety, about the quality of the trains and the service; people put their heart and soul into trying to improve that, and yet sometimes in the media you'd think nobody in our organisations cared at all about them, and that's very unfortunate.'

The level of cynicism isn't helping, I



add. 'Absolutely' concurred Kay. 'And people forget that privatisation occurred at a time when there was a belief among certain parts of the political community that rail was going to disappear and giving it over to privateers was a way of getting it off their plate. They should think long and hard and say 'Well actually I don't know of any group that hasn't hugely benefited from privatisation' and that includes all our stakeholders. But that's very easily forgotten and I do feel sad. I mean I'm quite resilient but I know there are lots of people in our industry who are really pained by that level of criticism.'

All about people

Kay doesn't in fact have a view about recruiting certain people, and now that she has others doing that job for her she tells them to emphasise to those who want to work for Stagecoach Supertram that they will be nurtured and trained. 'If you can allow a company to be seen like that – as a really good employer, then the issues about women and diversity start to go, but you've got to really believe in it.'

Talking again about the Tram Train project, I mentioned that Network Rail is going through a lot of change right now, and while Kay pointed out that hasn't been the reason for the delay, 'like any organisation if you're constantly going through change and turmoil, by its very nature it will affect the people, and it all comes back to the people.'

Quite clear that in rail she has come across some of the most impressive people in her career, Kay believes however that for a whole range of reasons they don't see their own abilities. 'If there is something I've always felt passionately about it is to try and get the best out of people, and usually that's very easy once you give them that confidence, once you tell them they're really good. If I look back at all those over the years whom I've mentored, more times than not what they needed was someone to say 'You can do that, don't look at the barriers look at the opportunities'. Rail has given me the most amazing opportunities and my passion is to say to others 'the opportunities are there, you've just got to grab them and have the confidence that you can do it'. And that to me has been it.'

Shortly after this interview was conducted it was announced that Kay had been appointed managing director of South West Trains





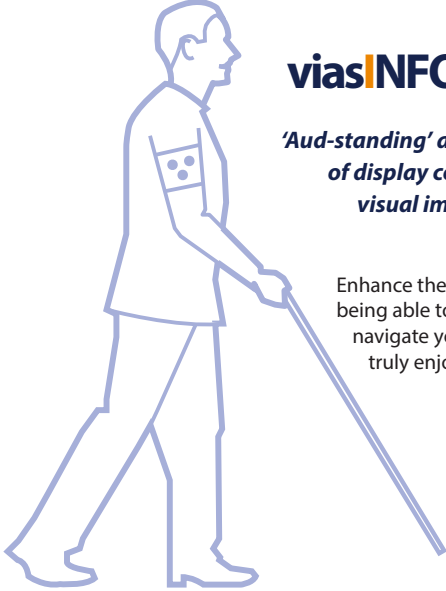
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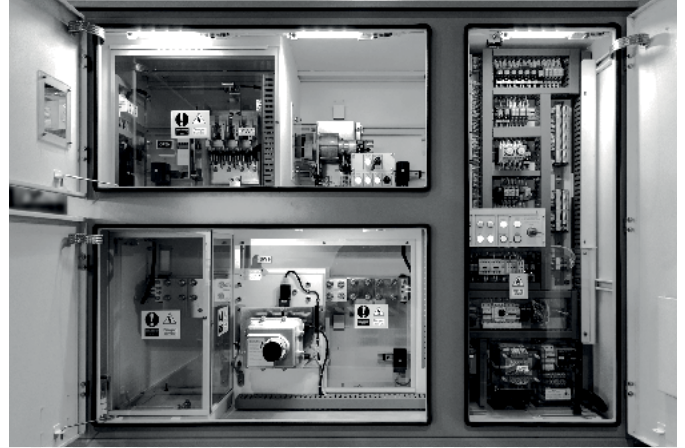
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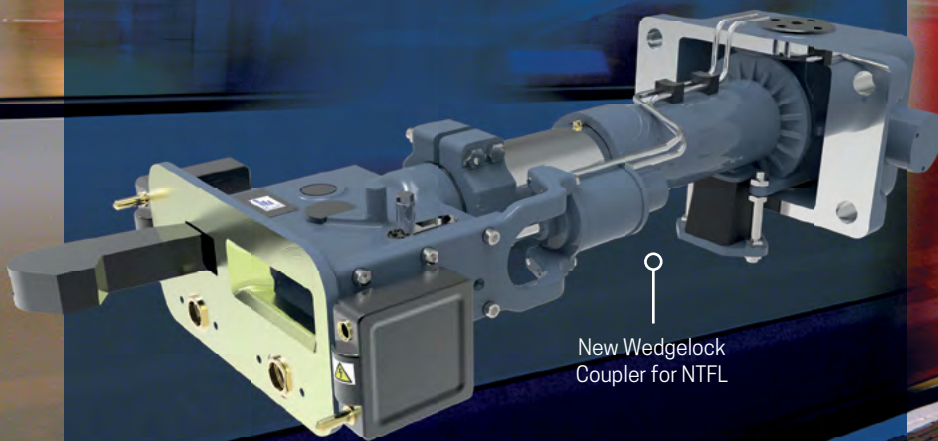
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Get your house in order



Louise Ellman says franchising reform is critical, but not the only solution for the railway

Rail franchising was the cornerstone of the rail privatisation plan in 1992. Passenger numbers have doubled over the last two decades and safety on the railway has improved dramatically since the horrendous Ladbroke Grove and Hatfield tragedies and, for the ninth year in a row, there have been no train passenger fatalities. Rail continues to be the safest form of land transport in the country.

Franchising was established on the basis of promoting competition to drive down industry costs and passenger fares and to reduce taxpayer funding. Our recent inquiry has shown that the current model has not yielded all the benefits envisaged.

The efficiency of rail in Britain lags considerably behind comparators in continental Europe, with the gap estimated to be as high as 40 per cent. Industry-wide costs have risen by around 25 per cent.

Fares have increased in real terms by 23.5 per cent and by a staggering 40.9 per cent

on long-distance routes over the last two decades, making them some of the highest in Europe.

Passenger satisfaction and rail operator punctuality performance have both deteriorated in recent years – particularly on commuter services in the South East. Passengers are paying much more for what, in many cases, is a less-than satisfactory service.

So where is the franchising model letting us down?

We know that franchising delivers the most benefits to passengers where there is robust competition to operate services. We found that, in recent years, genuine competition at the bidding stage for franchises has been limited, with more than half of the contracts since the Intercity West Coast franchise debacle in 2012 procured via direct award in which there is no competition. The number of firms queuing up to take over new franchises is dwindling, with National

Express pulling out from c2c, its last UK rail business.

The current structure of franchises limits the ability of the private operator to drive efficiencies and deliver benefits for passengers. The franchises procured in Britain are often too big and do not provide a clear enough market focus. The relatively short length of franchises also reduces the incentive of operators to both invest and reduce costs.

Franchising is contingent on the Department for Transport running an effective and well-thought out procurement process. This includes thinking strategically and planning over the longer-term. While the Department has made improvements to its franchising capabilities since the failings on the West Coast franchise in 2012, its progress has not been enough and it will be stretched over the next two years to deliver seven new franchises. One of these will be the enormous and very complex Intercity West Coast Partnership.

Where do we go from here? How can the Department provide the franchising reform to secure improvements for passengers? As a starting point, it must get its own house in order. It must improve its franchising capabilities to address core weaknesses identified during our inquiry, particularly in terms of contracting, monitoring and enforcement. The Department must learn serious lessons from the way it set up and managed the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern Franchise. A combination of a too-large franchise area, miscalculation of the impact of major construction work at London Bridge and prolonged industrial action have contributed to the management contract exposing taxpayers to substantial financial losses.

The Department must also improve the transparency of performance monitoring, so that operators are held to account for their failure to deliver promised services. In direct response to the Committee's investigations,

In direct response to the Committee's investigations, minister Paul Maynard committed to publishing contractual benchmarks and performance. We will continue to pressure the Department to ensure this is delivered as soon as possible. It also became clear that the Department was failing to monitor and enforce franchises adequately. Perhaps this responsibility should move to an independent body such as the Office of Rail and Road

minister Paul Maynard committed to publishing contractual benchmarks and performance. We will continue to pressure the Department to ensure this is delivered as soon as possible. It also became clear that the Department was failing to monitor and enforce franchises adequately. Perhaps this responsibility should move to an independent body such as the Office of Rail and Road.

The Department must find more innovative ways of franchising that incentivises operators to invest in the franchise and deliver an improved and more punctual service for the passenger. While there can be no single 'template' of what a franchise should look like – as the rail network and passenger needs are diverse – there is merit in procuring longer and smaller franchises.

Smaller franchises, with less risk, may provide a more viable option for new entrants looking to access the franchise market. While not a complete alternative to franchising because of fragmentation risks, open access could provide opportunities for new entrants to the market to promote greater competition on intercity long distance routes. The Department must work with the Office of Rail and Road to set up the appropriate regulatory structures for open access to operate in a fair and

transparent way so that operators, taxpayers and passengers get a fair deal.

Operators also need more freedom in running their businesses. Strict command and control is an outmoded method to deliver quality and innovation.

The Department needs to provide strategic leadership. We have a railway system with many tiers and interfaces, and each part of that system has to work together to drive down costs and improve performance.

It became clear during our inquiry that that the relationship between Network Rail and train operators is not sufficiently coordinated. There are a number of reasons for this, but at the heart is the fact that Network Rail and operators often have different financial incentives and their performance is measured using different scorecards. Train operators and Network Rail also typically plan their operations and longer-term investment over different horizons.

The secretary of state has made it clear that track and train should be operating in a more coordinated fashion and late last year, he proposed further deep alliancing and joint working.

The Department should be providing the strategic leadership to ensure Network Rail and train operators work together as a

team, to focus on the passenger. Network Rail's devolution of power from the centre to Routes, whose targets will be more aligned and driven by customers, is an encouraging sign of industry leading change. But more needs to be done. Network Rail's devolution and future joint working with operators will be a focus of the Committee's future investigations.

Running the railway is not cheap and the government is contributing nearly £5 billion annually for enhancements and maintenance on the network. Network Rail's enormous debt, last estimated at £41.6 billion in 2015-16 must also be serviced. When the network is upgraded, it is not just the passenger and the general public who benefit. Businesses and developers often gain from these investments. One of the key challenges is to identify additional investment from the private sector where this can be beneficial. We will be exploring this further.

Britain's railways are increasingly busy. It is essential that the rail sector works together much more cohesively to deliver the best deal for the public. The Department must provide the strategic leadership to enable this to happen.

Louise Ellman is MP for Liverpool Riverside, chair of the Transport Select Committee and a member of the Liaison Committee

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Potentially radical

Chris Nash, Andrew Smith and Phill Wheat discuss their views on how the franchising system could be changed so that it isn't solely a qualified success on the demand side

The recent House of Commons Transport Committee report on rail franchising concludes that franchising is not yet giving the benefits in terms of efficiency, reduced subsidies, lower fares and improved services foreseen at the time franchising was introduced. While acknowledging that franchising has facilitated the remarkable growth in rail patronage of the last twenty years, it finds that unit costs have increased, fares risen and performance has plateaued. It considers that key reasons for this are problems with the way franchising is undertaken and inadequate competition.

To a degree, the situation they describe, with a large number of short franchises let by direct award, remains the continuing consequence of the pause in franchising following the problems with the letting of the West Coast Main Line franchise in 2012. But attention is drawn to the worrying reduction in the number of bids per franchise, with two recent competitions only having two bids. However, from the evidence the report cites, it does not yet appear that the lack of competition is leading to excessive profit margins in the industry. But of course a lack of competition may have other consequences, including a lack of pressure on costs.

The report considers that costs might be reduced by longer, smaller franchises. Our own econometric work on Britain is correctly cited as evidence suggesting that many GB Toc's are above optimal size from a cost perspective, and work in Germany reached a similar conclusion for the larger franchises there. Longer franchises would provide a greater incentive to tackle inefficient working practices. Smaller franchises may also attract more competition, as the capital requirements needed to underwrite franchises will be smaller.

We do also consider that the greater

use of gross cost contracts, as is common in Sweden and Germany, may focus attention more on cost reduction. Such contracts are currently only used on two franchises, London Overground (by Transport for London), and by DfT on the Go-Via Thameslink contract; the latter is heavily criticised in the report for being inadequately managed and for loading too much risk on the taxpayer. In the case of Govia Thameslink a gross cost contract was adopted as a temporary measure as the consequences of the major infrastructure investment and changes to patterns of services underway were seen as too uncertain for the private sector to bear the risk.

It is the case that gross cost contracts, which remove all revenue risk from the operator, require careful attention to other means of giving incentives in terms of fares, quality and developing the market. In Sweden and Germany regional transport authorities are responsible for planning regional rail services and are also typically responsible for procuring regional bus services on a similar arrangement, allowing planning of an integrated public transport network. Beyond Scotland, Wales, Greater London and Merseyside, there is currently no appropriate tier of government, but bodies such as Rail North / Transport for the North could develop the necessary capabilities and powers.

One way in which the Department for Transport has sought to influence working practices in recent franchises is by a direct requirement to introduce one person operation of trains, or to procure rolling stock suitable for such operation. This development has contributed to a very complicated industrial dispute with the unions, in which the franchisee is caught between the requirements of the franchise agreement and the demands of the unions. In such a situation, it is difficult

for the Department for Transport to leave resolution of the dispute entirely to the train operator and perhaps this situation has contributed to the lack of transparency noted by the Committee in the way this franchise has been managed.

In general it is recognised that the combination of relatively short franchises, net cost contracts, and the fact that franchisees take over an existing company at franchise replacement, have led to a situation where there are limited incentives to tackle the cost base. The loss of revenue during an industrial dispute is a major disincentive to operators; and any resulting gains achieved in terms of a lower cost base will then be available to all bidders at the next franchise competition. Table 1 shows that unit Toc costs (excluding payments to Network Rail) have increased substantially. Typically, competitive tendering is expected to bring down unit costs, as the evidence suggests has been achieved in Germany and Sweden (though there is limited data in Sweden in more recent years and the picture is blurred to some extent in Germany by the mix of net and gross cost contracts).

No clear evidence of integrated working success

Gross cost contracts would potentially change the dynamics in regard to bringing pressure to bear on costs. Indeed, the revenue hit of the lengthy dispute on the Southern network is surely not a risk that a private operator would be prepared to take on in general.

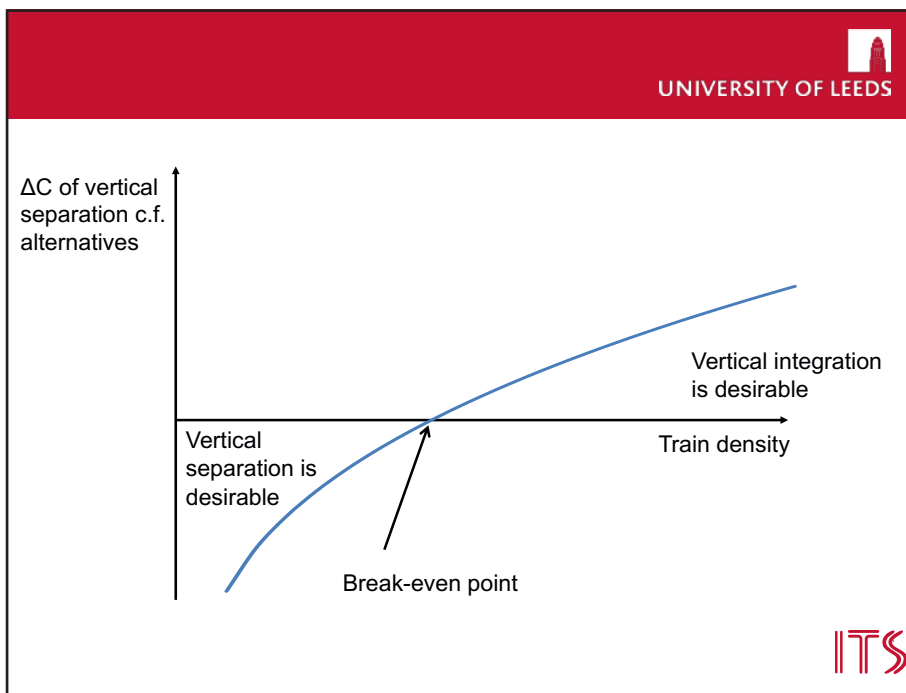
A further approach to reducing costs being pursued by government is by closer integration of infrastructure and operations. Our own econometric results, developed in partnership with universities from Europe and Japan, suggest that more integrated structures such as the holding company model (most notably used in Germany) may have benefits on busier railways where

Table 1: Train Operating Company Real Unit Cost Changes 1998-2015

	Per train-km	Per vehicle-km*
Staff costs	+44%	+34%
All TOC costs (excluding payments to Network Rail)	+25%	+16%

Sources: ATOC (2013) and Great Britain Rail Industry Financial Information 2011/12 to 2014/15, ORR. * Vehicle-km data is based on ORR/Network Rail up to 2010, after which it is assumed that average train length remains constant

Figure 1: The cost difference between vertical separation and vertical integration and its relationship with train density



lines are close to capacity (see Figure 1). This results because, in a separated environment, the problems of co-ordination across company boundaries become magnified as the railway becomes busier. The report notes that experience of integrated working through deep franchises is to date very limited and that there is no clear evidence as yet of its success – this may reflect the fundamentally different objectives and regulatory framework facing the different parties – and potentially raises the question as to whether more formal integration, in some circumstances, could even be considered.

Expansion of open access

One other way of increasing competition and putting pressure on costs which the Committee considers is the expansion of open access competition. This has already been advocated by the Competition and Markets Authority, and we are cited as

providing evidence that existing open access operators have costs similar to or below those of franchisees. To be clear on this, we find that open access operators have similar costs to franchisees, but because of the low density of their operations we would expect their costs to be significantly higher. Thus the conclusion that they find ways of offsetting this disadvantage, by paying lower wages and by making more productive use of staff. What is not clear is to what extent open access operators could maintain these advantages while expanding. Certainly if open access operators took over services currently run by franchisees, one would expect TUPE arrangements for transfer of staff to apply, as they do when a franchise changes hands, giving protection to the wages and conditions of existing staff at least in the short run.

There is a further tricky issue with the expansion of open access competition. The Committee notes that this will require

a revision to track access charges so that open access operators bear a share of the fixed costs of the infrastructure, as well as the introduction of a PSO levy on such operators. What is difficult is to design a set of charges which raises adequate revenue from the more profitable parts of the market without driving out the sort of 'niche' open access operation on routes poorly served by the franchisee that we currently have. A very high degree of market segmentation would be needed to do this, for instance with different charges by destination and time of day/week.

Our view

Despite the reviews of franchising undertaken in 2012/13 it is clear that the Committee does not think that the problems of franchising have been resolved; indeed it goes so far as to question whether franchising on the current model is sustainable.

Our view is that while franchising appears to be a qualified success on the demand side (qualified, because much of the growth is probably driven by external factors), potentially radical changes may be needed to bring about improvements on the cost side and to maintain healthy franchise competition. These changes could include some combination of smaller, gross cost contracts (of longer terms in some cases), combined with measures to strengthen co-operation between Network Rail and operators. However, the lack of clear success from previous attempts to provide additional 'glue' within the separated system through alliances and other mechanisms, suggests the need for innovative approaches. The danger is that such approaches could add significant risk and complexity and if these cannot be made to work then trialling of fully integrated franchises, in some cases, could be an option to consider. At the other end of the spectrum, another radical option to bring pressure on costs and generate wider benefits is through the increased use of open access. Here again there is a risk of greatly increasing complexity and raising new problems. None of the options are straightforward but it does seem that fairly major changes are now needed.

Andrew Smith is professor of transport performance and economics at the Institute for Transport Studies (ITS), University of Leeds; Chris Nash is a research professor and Dr Phill Wheat an associate professor both at the ITS

Figures:

Source Mizutani, F, Smith, A.S.J., Nash, C.A. and Uranishi, S (2015), *Comparing the Costs of Vertical Separation, Integration, and Intermediate Organisational Structures in European and East Asian Railways*, *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, Volume 49, Number 3, July 2015, pp. 496-515.

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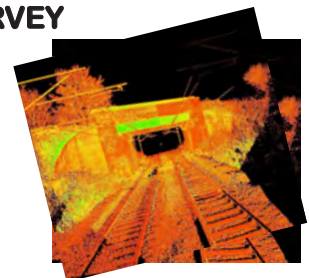
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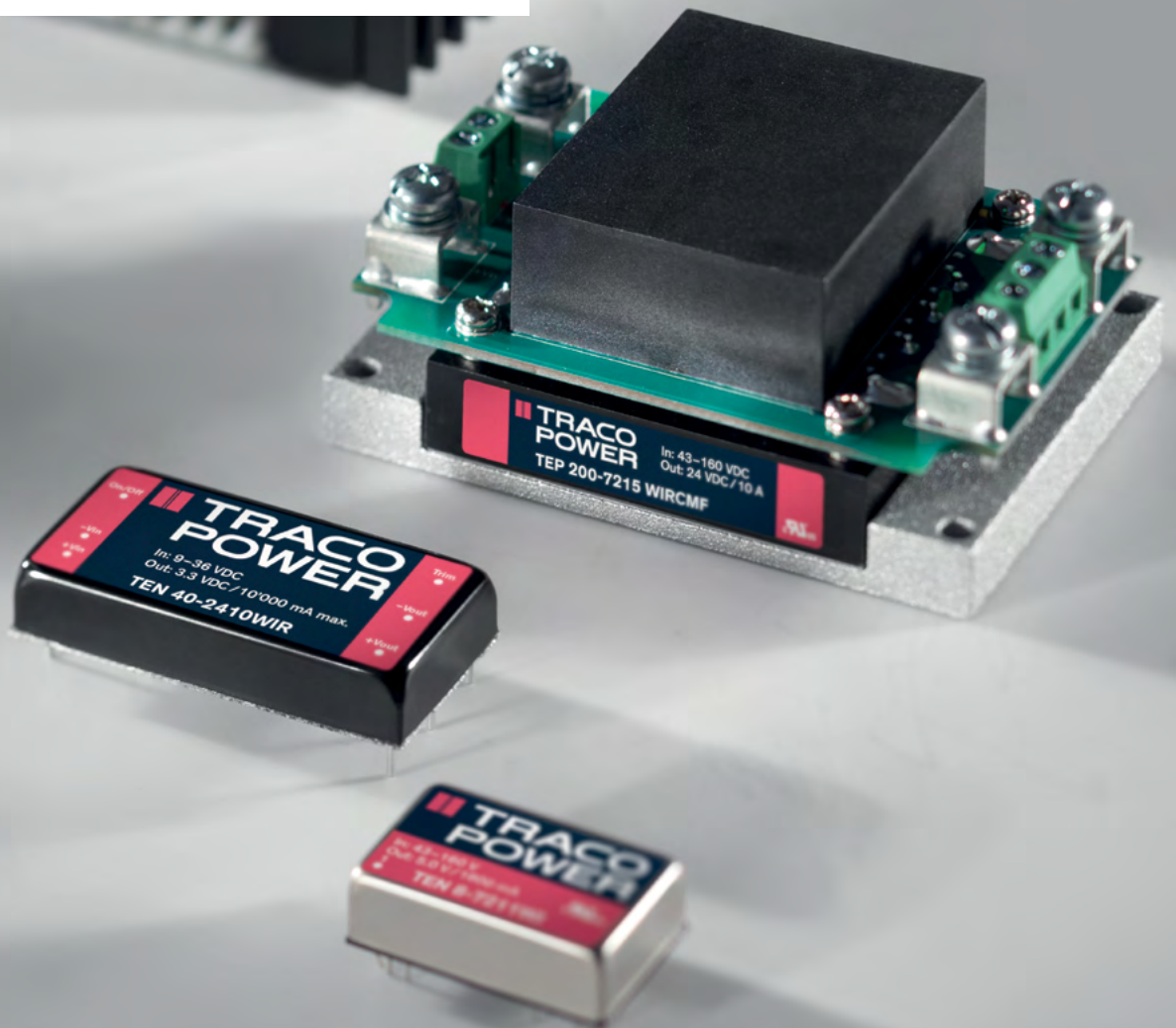
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Keep calm and do nothing?



Matthew Moll looks at the options for a reform of franchising and at who should deliver and oversee it

Rail franchising is a hot topic at the moment, with the recent report from the House of Commons Transport Select Committee (TSC) coinciding with the Southern debacle. Meanwhile National Express, erstwhile franchising giant, has sold its last contract citing European ones as being more attractive. So, there are fresh calls for an overhaul of the current franchising system which goes deeper than those undertaken following the West Coast Franchise fiasco.

What do we want from franchising?

Before we can even think about the best franchise model(s) to follow, we have to ask the question which often feels like the rail industry equivalent to that of the meaning of life the universe and everything. What is the point of rail franchising? A question industry commentators have been asking, or similar, since at least 1992. As with life the universe and everything, the answer can be baffling. In its report the TSC asserted that the 'premise behind franchising was that competition would increase efficiency, reduce the taxpayer subsidy, lower fares and improve services.'

The TSC was damning in its assessment of the competitive nature of the market, with recent franchise competitions such as South Western only being run with two bidders. While open access is seen as the major reason for the growth in freight tonnage on rail since privatisation, in the passenger sector it has been actively discouraged by the DfT. Meanwhile, there has been a general trend in decreasing passenger satisfaction and above-inflation fare increases.

So what options are there for reform, as things stand? Four possible models are:

- management franchises

- longer-term commercial franchises
- market differentiated open access
- carry on as we are

Management franchise

At its most simple, the Franchising Authority (FA) puts out to tender a comprehensive outline of what will run, with what resource, and then the bidder provides a price. The two key benefits of a management franchise are:

- continued identity between franchises – as with ScotRail and London Overground, despite a change in operator the livery and brand remain the same
- holistic long-term planning – the FA is able to look beyond the current franchise to what investment is needed in the next 10 to 20 years and can deliver this without the usual end-of-franchise investment hiatus.

Of course there are drawbacks to this method, the main three being:

- tarnishing the brand – the poor performance of the incumbent operator can affect the long-term view of the brand, even if the operator changes
- race to the bottom – a very prescriptive management contract means there is little scope for the bidders to differentiate themselves on anything but price, which can lead to unsustainable cost-cutting in order to undercut competitors
- lack of innovation – again, where the focus is only on price, then the private sector has little scope in which to innovate.

Longer-term commercial franchise

The TSC states that 'the relatively short length of franchises reduces the incentive of operators to both invest and drive down costs'. Chiltern Railways is seen as one of the

great successes of privatisation, the main reason being its 20-year franchise allowing for long-term investment both in rolling stock and infrastructure. The investment in infrastructure, of course, requires close co-operation between operator and Network Rail; this was also seen as a success with the South Western franchise, despite the termination of the alliance.

Long-term franchises don't always guarantee stability, for example:

- a company can go through a re-brand mid-franchise, such as when the rather elegant blue c2c livery was replaced by a drab, corporate livery and more prominent National Express branding
- the franchise could be sold to another organisation, e.g. Chiltern, where parent company Laing Rail was bought by DB and eventually transferred from DB Regio to Arriva
- an operator may choose or be forced to hand back the franchise after over-estimating patronage and revenue (such as with National Express East Coast) or providing a below-contract target level of service.

Trying to predict what the world will look like in ten years' time is nigh on impossible, so some kind of break point needs to be inserted partway through the franchise.

Market differentiated open access

The most radical departure from our current system is a mixture of management franchise, commercial franchise and open access dependent on the market. Intercity routes would be operated via open access licences similar to the system suggested by Stagecoach/Virgin back in October 2015. Companies would bid for bundles of paths which would be grouped so as to provide



competition on core routes but still provide services to locations which may not have the demand for more than one operator. For example, the East Coast Main Line could comprise three bundles:

- Leeds (1 per hour), Edinburgh (1 p.h.) and Middlesbrough (0.5 p.h.)
- Leeds (1 p.h.), Edinburgh (1 p.h.) and Lincoln (0.5 p.h.)
- Leeds (1 p.h.), Newcastle (1 p.h.) and Hull (0.5 p.h.)

Bidders could also be asked to specify cost for extending certain paths on to places such as Aberdeen and Bradford. This would provide more head-to-head competition, which in theory should drive down prices and encourage innovation.

Regional and commuter routes would still be franchised, either through a management or commercial system.

This would be a complex system to implement, especially if ensuring all intermediate stations (such as Retford and Grantham) are covered by services, and it may not be suitable for all Intercity routes.

Carry on as we are

You always need the do-nothing option in a report, even if it is an illogical choice. Changes in the way franchises are assessed can be seen as successful for shifting the emphasis on to the quality aspect of a bid rather than cost – resulting in new rolling stock ordered for the Northern franchise and for local services in Norfolk – something unimaginable five years ago.

There are some major inconsistencies in the current system. For example, it was considered unsuitable to include Trans-Pennine Express services within the Northern franchise, yet East Midlands, East Anglia and Great Western all mix high-profile Intercity services with local and commuter routes. The new East Coast franchise was let on a commercial basis, yet bidders had little freedom over rolling stock. The TSC sees franchise size as a barrier to competition. It has been suggested that the TSGN franchise is just too big, however, there are other large franchises such as Northern for which there is an equal challenge of balancing differing markets. It may be in the future, that the Northern franchise could be more focused on inter-urban and regional routes, with commuter routes in large urban areas let under separate franchises. This is likely, at least, in Greater Manchester where TfGM's 2040 Strategy includes the upgrade of routes such as the Atherton line to metro-style operation.

Structural reform

Hand-in-hand with what we want from franchising are the questions of who should deliver it and who should look at the overall strategy (especially if there are management contracts). There is movement towards the FA being the regional body (such as Rail North) for regional franchises in a similar style to countries such as Germany. However, here the local network is often divided into a number of small management

contracts – for example the Northern Franchise splitting into smaller chunks such as Calder Valley inter-regional services and Tyne-Tees locals.

For all its faults, the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) provided a basis for formulating a non-political, long-term strategy. One of the causes of the recent electrification crisis was the amount of projects promised by politicians who have influence over the DfT. The current obsession by the DfT over Driver Only Operation (DOO) appears to be a very knee-jerk reaction to the lack of increase in efficiency and reduction in costs by the industry. Having a more independent body in charge may have led to a better outcome at Southern, being less hell-bent on implementation and who, one hopes, would have undertaken a feasibility study into DOO and other efficiency measures before including them in franchise specifications. Another benefit of the re-creation of the SRA is to move the non-maintenance orientated responsibilities from Network Rail, allowing it to focus purely on the day-to-day maintenance of track, S&C etc.

The HS2 Challenge

HS2 is the elephant in the room franchise-wise. When the full network is operational, it will be abstracting revenue from five franchises (Chiltern, Cross Country, East Coast, East Midlands and West Coast) which, in turn, will either return lower premiums or require higher subsidies. The West Coast Partnership makes sense for the first phase of HS2 as it parallels the current West Coast franchise, although it will have an effect on Chiltern traffic too. The full network will either need to be:

- operated as a standalone franchise, separate from everything else;
- split into three and operated by the Cross Country, East Coast and West Coast franchise holders respectively; or
- operated on an open access basis with potential operators (which can include other franchises) bidding for paths.

Which way to go?

As the TSC points out, there is no one answer, however given the current animosity to management franchises and the complexity of the conversion of Intercity franchises to open access, the best option is to look at smaller and longer-term franchises. A 10-15 year franchise, with performance-related breaks, would allow for a more measured and steady investment flow while also giving a long enough time period, and being a manageable enough size, to make them more attractive to bidders. This should not only help increase competition at the initial letting stage but allow for more point-to-point competition.

Matthew Moll is a consultant at TAS Partnership

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Time to get our heads around mental health



Meera Rambissoon calls out to the industry to think more deeply about the needs of passengers with mental illnesses and to introduce initiatives and support that can make rail travel less stressful

This time a year ago something pretty momentous took place. It was also around the time I started to disappear down the all-too-familiar tunnel of depression and anxiety.

As someone who has suffered on and off with both over the years, imagine my delight – and it was delight – when I heard about a conference dealing with both mental health and transport – two things I feel passionately about.

The Mental Health and Transport Summit of February last year was, for me, a most welcome bolt out of the blue, bringing together transport operators, mental health campaigners (from organisations such as Mind, Anxiety UK and Time to Change) and government ministers into one room. You couldn't get more powerful than an introduction from Alastair Campbell, love him or hate him, on why we need to start talking about mental health openly and without stigma, not unlike the 'Big C' of cancer a few years ago and hearing directly from people for whom journeys on trains, planes and buses have been agonisingly painful to the point of horrific, via conditions such as bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

We heard stories of passengers suffering panic attacks being offered – and I shudder deeply to write this but it reveals part of the problem – wheelchairs. We heard about what some operators are doing to educate, train and offer support to their staff regarding mental health illness.

We discussed how to make life easier – for staff and passengers alike. With one in four people suffering from a mental health illness in the UK, that's an awful lot of people.

We started a conversation that day, 25 February 2016 – about breaking down barriers and creating the equivalent of 'our ramp' as one speaker from Anxiety UK put it, a lady who has previously run up thousands of pounds of debt from relying on taxi travel to avoid the pain of public transport.

And finally, we walked away – deep in thought – having made pledges to change:

change our attitudes and behaviour or encourage such change in others. It was, for me, mind-blowing but made clear what a long journey there is ahead – and the first stage in that journey is getting people to understand.

I'm pleased to report there were a good number of people from Toc's present at the summit: from Greater Anglia, Northern Rail, GWR, CrossCountry and Virgin Trains.

As I gushed to one of the speakers from a mental health group about how impactful I was finding the day, he rather curtly, but quite rightly, said that's all very well but it's what people actually do to change things here on in, that matters.

A year later, what has happened? What has changed?

For me, a lot. I 'came out' not only on social media but also in a passenger transport magazine about my experience of mental health illness, how it can feel – in my case, the crippling sense of isolation and failure and self-doubt – and calling for people in the industry to tell me about their own experiences, calling for companies to start thinking about and tackling the issues for staff and passengers or tell me how they are already doing so. The response was overwhelming and deeply touching, as a number of people from different roles and areas sent me messages of thanks and shared their personal experiences. But very sad to say, they all felt that they could not be honest to their employer let alone in the public domain about their illness and experiences, and I get that – hence a sense of connection in reading about my own.

I'm lucky in the sense that my anxiety, when it kicks in, doesn't manifest itself in relation to public transport – however, I spent a considerable amount of time on trains last year trying to cover up floods of tears, feeling alone, vulnerable, small, embarrassed and emotionally paralysed, wishing that either everyone around me would disappear or that someone would come over and give me a hug and tell me it would be okay.

A friend of mine revealed to me that he experienced two incidents lately over ticket inspections on trains 'which threw me

completely'. It was hard for me to read – one led to him dashing off the train at the next station, not his stop, in a state of panic and the other led to a 'complete meltdown' at Euston which put him in bed for the rest of the day. 'The most worrying thing is how something so routine as a ticket inspection can invoke such a massive response and transport professionals need to be aware of these things,' he said.

Can you imagine how this feels? Unpleasant would be an understatement. The ripple effect of a whole day reeling after something which might at the very least be the cause of annoyance to many of us. An experience which would lead some to never repeat the experience again and avoid travelling, or even avoid leaving the house.

One of the speakers, Alex from Mind in Derbyshire who has suffered from PTSD for many years and also diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, powerfully explained: 'When you say you are feeling anxious, people seem to react with 'there, there dear, have a cup of tea, you'll be fine'. But it is much more disabling than that: you can't breathe, you can't think, you feel everyone is against you, they're coming in at you and you need to get out very quickly. It's the flight or fight response.'

Moving forward with summit pledges

On behalf of the TAS Partnership, the passenger transport consultancy I work for, I am and will be talking to other organisations about what they are doing, the pledges they made at the summit and how we might collaborate to move things forward. At TAS we have started the conversation – but need to go further in training staff. We will be incorporating related policies into our staff handbook and outwardly, we are and will be encouraging operators we work with to take positive steps.

I can't report on what progress rail companies have made since the conference – please let us know – but I rang a few operators and went on their websites to see what support is on offer to passengers. The good news is that there is plenty of it for those with mobility issues and physical disabilities.

Personal assistance is on hand at origin and destination for, for example, wheelchair users, if they get in touch ideally at least, 24 hours in advance. However, for those with the hidden, non-physical mental health related conditions help is not there – or rather it is not obvious.

When I telephoned the customer services or personal assistance number for a handful of operators, I spent a lot of time going through the long-winded automated rounds of inquisition and was then put on hold or got the engaged tone. One customer service operator said I could get help on and off the train and that was that – another told me the same but went into much more detail and made me feel more informed and reassured. Hats off to Virgin Rail, its West Coast and East Coast websites sounded the most welcoming and accessible; however, as with others, the focus is still largely on physical issues. No one is doing things wrong as such, but a new, additional approach is needed – always easier said than done.

For someone who feels severely anxious about travelling anyway, a laborious and unhelpful process isn't going to start them on a positive – and, of course, the journey doesn't start at the station, so instilling as much confidence as possible from the start is a big part of the equation.

What is needed

I had a long, hard think about what I believe

is needed and three words came to me: flexibility, patience and reassurance. The flexibility of being able to move someone having a panic attack, where possible, to a seat or carriage – even to First Class – where they will feel less hemmed in and calmer. Ways of communicating specific needs to staff who have been trained to be aware but moreover receptive and supportive. These aren't concepts alien to customer service are they? But it's not me you need to be speaking to or hearing from.

For anyone wondering what the immediate first step is:

- first of all, read the report from the summit
- talk to passenger groups
- talk to mental health organisations, not least Mind Derbyshire and Mental Health Action Group Derbyshire who played a big part in organising the summit
- most crucially, if you do not already, talk directly to people who suffer from mental health illnesses to find out what the barriers are and how you can help, in realistic and tangible ways
- find out what training you can give your staff, and remember it is not just about looking after your customers but the people who work for you – training which can result in a positive and supportive attitude towards passengers and colleagues

experiencing such a condition

- consult on what policies, practices and ethos you can incorporate into your working culture and HR guidance
- think about what travel initiatives and support you can introduce and advertise, that can help those with mental illnesses (something I will be returning to share best practice on).

My friend who I mentioned went to a CILT conference on hidden disabilities earlier this year. I'll leave you with his words: 'I found it quite liberating when it was pointed out that mental disability and physical disability are in essence much the same; your mental state prevents you doing things in just the same way as your physical state prevents you doing things with a physical disability.'

They're not worlds apart but it is time to get our heads around mental health and then see what can be done.

Meera Rambissoon is a senior consultant at TAS Partnership

Please do get in touch with Meera to tell her about your experience, research or initiatives in this area.
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Undoing a knotty problem



Future private operators need to ensure they build on the programme set in place by Network Rail, and that knotweed remains on the maintenance agenda, says **David Layland**

When private rail operators gain the opportunity to take over responsibility for track maintenance from Network Rail in 2018, the invasive plants that line railway tracks might not be perceived to be a top priority. The recent case involving Network Rail, however – in which the public-sector organisation paid out thousands in compensation due to Japanese knotweed – demonstrates the level of financial risk this particular invasive plant poses, and suggests it should indeed become a priority.



Japanese knotweed, a non-native invasive plant, is rife amongst the 20,000 miles of railway track across the UK. Network Rail inherited this extensive infestation from the Victorians, who used knotweed to line tracks in order to reinforce embankments. The plant grows extremely quickly, and a new infestation is able to start from a piece of rhizome smaller than a fingernail. The extensive root structures and rhizome make it a threat to properties in close proximity to tracks. Knotweed is renowned for being resilient, and is able to grow through cracks in concrete and tarmac, enabling it to cause serious structural damage.

Aware of its societal responsibilities, Network Rail attempts to control knotweed through a chemical programme that involves spraying the plants on a regular basis. In February, however, it lost a case brought against it by two property owners, after knotweed encroached onto their properties from the railway tracks and reduced the value of their houses. They subsequently received compensation from Network Rail, a third of which is reserved for use on a treatment programme to handle the infestation.



A priority for private operators

This case demonstrates that knotweed necessitates a more sophisticated method of control than reactive spraying – the effectiveness of which is reduced by its inability to target the roots of the plant, and that it can be blown or washed away by weather conditions. This is particularly important given that the implications of the case could be extremely wide-reaching, due to both the devolution plans for track maintenance, and the fact that this was a landmark case and may set a precedent for other home owners to make similar claims. It should affect the way in which private operators, such as Virgin and Southern Rail, approach the issue and deal with knotweed. They need to ensure they build on the programme set in place by Network Rail, and that knotweed remains on the maintenance agenda. While the plant is prevalent on tracks nationwide, the problem is not

‘...the implications of the case could be extremely wide-reaching, due to both the devolution plans for track maintenance, and the fact that this was a landmark case and may set a precedent for other home owners to make similar claims. It should affect the way in which private operators, such as Virgin and Southern Rail, approach the issue and deal with knotweed



a mechanical fault. Knotweed cannot simply be uprooted haphazardly: this risks spreading the infestation further, as small pieces will inevitably break off and cause new areas of growth.

Best treatment options

Depending on the extent of the infestation, the best treatment options would be root barriers or stem injection, as this will result in minimal disruption to services. Both options produce more effective and reliable results than spraying the plants. Root barriers, which prevent further spread and contain existing soil contamination,

would only be suitable in those areas where roots have not yet reached property and land nearby. For the more extreme infestations, stem injection would provide effective results. This involves injecting herbicide into the cane of the weed, where it will ultimately be absorbed into the root system and the plant will be suppressed. It is crucial that the plant be left in situ and undisturbed while it decays over time.

Treating the knotweed allows organisations to maintain financial control and minimise vulnerability. It is important,

however, that they select a remediation firm that offers a warranty for completed work which is protected by an independent insurer, and that includes structural damage cover. Equally important is obtaining an upfront fixed fee. Even with proper treatment, knotweed can sometimes regrow, and these financial guarantees ensure that companies will not be confronted with recurring costs after the initial financial commitment.

Private rail operators will have much to consider when they assume responsibility for maintaining the UK's railway tracks, as Network Rail does now. Maintenance issues that have the potential to affect the safety of passengers should never be compromised. However, they need to continue Network Rail's campaign against knotweed, and implement more effective methods of control. The plant should not be overlooked, nor put on the back burner. It should be easier for separate companies to manage the situation given their smaller areas of responsibility. The process of devolution therefore represents an opportunity for knotweed's place on the list of priorities to be revised.

David Layland is joint managing director of Japanese Knotweed Control and a founding member of the Invasive Non-Native Specialists Association.

insurmountable.

Companies newly responsible for maintenance should make it a priority to implement a grading system, mapping out low, medium and high risk areas across their respective networks in relation to the level of threat posed to neighbouring properties. The higher the risk of contamination, the sooner it needs to be dealt with. When it comes to treating the plant, organisations should approach this with the same care and diligence they would apply to resolving a construction problem or fixing



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Here's the Thing

Donna Butchart looks at how rail companies can establish clear and effective IoT strategies

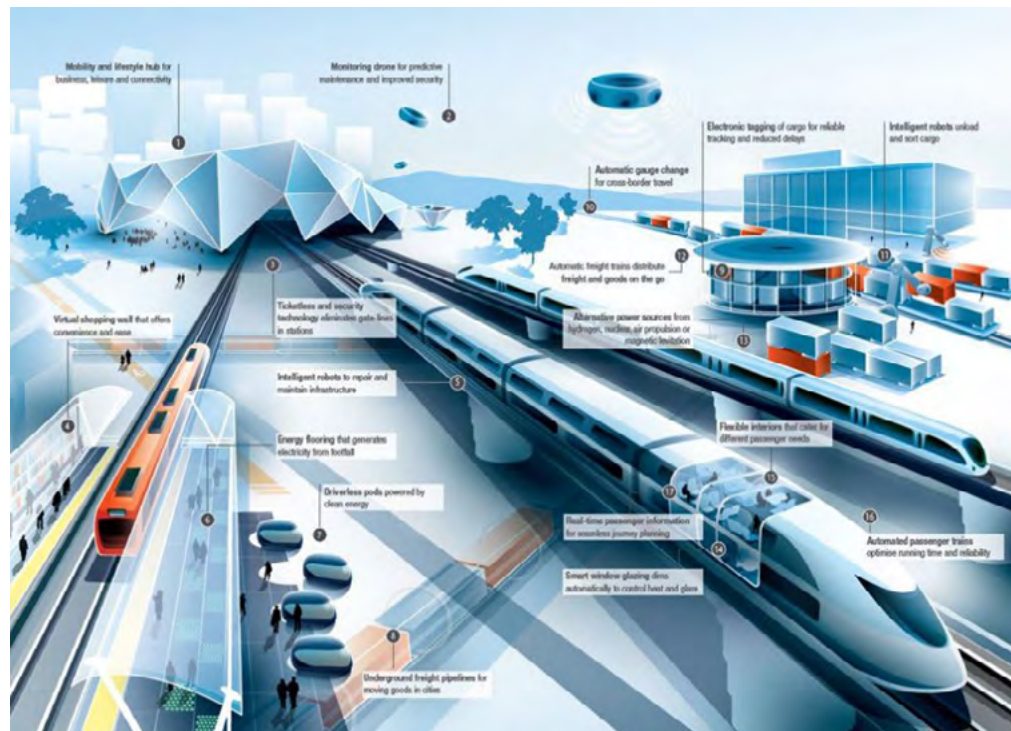
Much has been written about the Internet of Things (IoT); it has generated vast tomes of printed and digital articles about its ability to revolutionise the way we interact with everyday objects. Considering how much the internet and connectivity has transformed our lives over the past three decades, it is no surprise that the IoT is set to provide a similar reform to the rail industry.

In essence the IoT is the inter-networking of physical objects which have their own unique identifier, creating a network connectivity that allows them to collect and exchange data. At a basic level this interaction between physical objects and IT systems allows improved efficiencies and accuracies to provide financial benefits. At a more advanced level it transcends into a cyber-physical system such as smart grids, smart homes and intelligent transportation (for example remote security systems and automated cars). This has a direct application for the rail sector.

Although the lifecycle of the IoT is still in its infancy, analysts are forecasting that the number of objects interconnected will be more than 200 billion within five years. Of this 14 per cent of objects will be autonomous connected things, meaning the pace of change and scale of transformation is unquestionable. Traditional ways of interaction with previously inanimate objects will become a thing of the past.

Already we are seeing rail companies effectively using IoT technology to support remote asset monitoring with a view to helping organisations improve operations; it is also being used for rail repair sensing, helping central teams to identify and plan repairs remotely.

However the trick for those within the rail business and its allied supply chains is not to get stuck on focusing solely on the Internet of Things. After all that is just creating an infrastructure that links



uniquely identified objects to let them collect and share data. For the truly smart rail organisations it is focusing on the data collected and shared (rather than the infrastructure to collect); this is known as the Internet of Things Analytics (IoTA).

In essence IoTA applies to the measurement and transformation of gathered data that provides real business intelligence that can then be used to support business processes and make informed decisions. For example the advancement in the telecoms industry around IoTA means that mobile devices could become a direct conduit for gathering and sharing rail information – taking e-tickets and real-time travel information to the next level.

Those companies who want to create an effective IoT strategy are recognising that

it is a far cry from the world of traditional web analytics. An IoT strategy is not about measuring static internet devices to see trends or to try and forecast behaviours, it is about creating scenarios where the business has intelligent transparent input and output data from their business assets on which business decisions can then be made.

When we consider that as much as 90 per cent of all the current data generated by mobile devices and connected appliances is never analysed it illustrates the lack of effective IoT strategies. The reasons for rail organisations not establishing clear IoT strategies are complex and myriad, however some of the main issues are around:

- lack of infrastructure for collating collected data and channelling to the relevant teams

“ An IoT strategy is not about measuring static internet devices to see trends or to try and forecast behaviours, it is about creating scenarios where the business has intelligent transparent input and output data from their business assets on which business decisions can then be made ”

- lack of board buy-in to value of data collected
- lack of central cohesion around how data can be extracted and analysed
- uncertainty over how the data can be used effectively by operational or management teams to help the business achieve its corporate objectives.

However as the IoT continues to gather momentum rail businesses and their supply chains need to start considering how to adapt to this new environment. It will end

For a board to create a robust IoT strategy it needs to consider seven key questions:

- have you already created an IoT strategy? Is it owned at board level and does it encompass the data collection and analytics elements? Are all the different business teams extracting value, where possible, from the data?
- are your products connected devices? Is it possible/feasible to move from static objects to uniquely identified objects that can collect and gather valuable business data?
- are your company assets interconnected? Can you create an infrastructure within which different teams can access valuable information? Could you be using your data more effectively?
- are you already using business analytics within the business? Is there a strategy to develop it to encompass the IoT? Do your teams use data-led decision making within their day-to-day roles?
- is the IT department a suitable sponsor for the IoT strategy or does it need board level buy-in to ensure the full benefits are identified and realised?
- would IoT give your organisation a competitive advantage by increased automation, work efficiencies or more informed decision making?
- are your competitors already adopting an IoT strategy or are you able to use IoT to create a real differential within the market?

up changing the way many companies do business. The degrees and timings will vary depending on the level of interconnections, appetite for competitive edge, budget to invest and state of existing IT infrastructure and systems, however boards need to be developing an IoT strategy that reflects their business focus over the next five to ten years.

Whatever your current business model, the Internet of Things is set to revolutionise the rail marketplace. Make sure your Internet of Things strategy keeps your business on track.

Donna Butchart is managing director of Project (EU)



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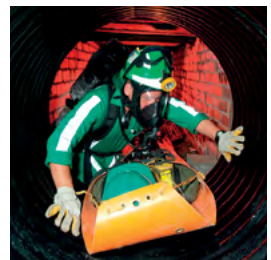
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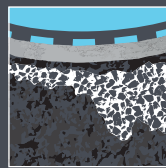
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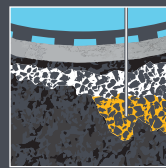


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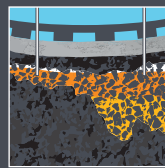
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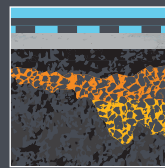
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(Left to right) Richard Carr and Alain Lovambac shake hands on their acquisition deal

Mechan acquired by major French rail group

The rail depot equipment specialist is joining integrated solutions firm CIM Group. Sheffield-based Mechan will be retaining its name, management and personnel, but will, it says, 'benefit from the support of CIM's export expertise and industry contacts'.

Mechan will be adding its range of heavy lifting and handling equipment to CIM's portfolio of products and services, which includes the design and realisation of railway infrastructure supply and construction projects.

Richard Carr, Mechan's managing director, said: 'This takeover will provide us with an opportunity to accelerate our international development. I will continue to lead Mechan's team and as far as existing clients are concerned it will be business as usual. However, we are looking forward to raising CIM's profile in the UK and becoming part of an organisation that has demonstrated its dynamism through consistent growth.'

CIM operates in more than 120 countries worldwide working for many of the main rail transportation and public transport operators.

Alain Lovambac, chief executive of the CIM Group said: 'Mechan is a particularly innovative and successful company whose high-quality products are complementary to our own. This acquisition strengthens our ambition to become a world leader in the design and supply of turnkey railway workshop solutions.'

Visit: www.mechan.co.uk

New alerts service will bolster customer experience

Rail information systems provider Nexus Alpha has launched a new product – the Application Programming Interface (API) – for its JourneyCheck Alerts

system, which will 'for the first time' allow Toc's to 'take control of the user experience and truly own the connection with their passengers'.

This will prove vital, said the company, for Toc's seeking to optimise their management of customer relationships via mobile devices, apps and ticketing engines, as the passenger sign-up process is controlled direct by the Toc through these interfaces. The API is the only service of its kind to offer this level of compatibility with Toc's own technologies.

Real time alerts on service delays, cancellations, alterations and reinstatements are delivered to passengers via email or SMS,



with a push notification service set to be added in the near future. Twitter represents another option, while alerts can be delivered to all ticket holders via their chosen medium if required.

Andrew Langmead of Nexus Alpha explained: 'Up until now, the JourneyCheck

service has been purely website-based but we have acknowledged the need for Toc's to have greater ownership of customer relationships and to be seen to be supplying this information direct to their passengers.'

'With customer experience a key performance indicator for Toc's in their contracts, any action they can take to manage and supply information direct will be a boon to them – and the API allows them to sign up new customers and manage existing relationships via whatever interfaces they have available.'

Visit: www.nexusalpha.com

MSPS rebrands as BakerHicks

Design and engineering business Morgan Sindall Professional Services has been re-launched as BakerHicks, a new name with a 60-year heritage that 'reflects its established reputation as an independent consultancy'.

The BakerHicks brand acknowledges two of the original founders of the IDC Group from which MSPS emerged: developer and entrepreneur Howard Hicks, IDC Group chairman, and its research and development director Professor Sir John F Baker, previously head of Cambridge University's Engineering Department.

Managing director of BakerHicks, Martin Lubieniecki, said the rebrand allows a new chapter in the company's history to be written: 'Although we have always operated as a wholly independent design and engineering consultancy, our former name suggested an attachment that potentially confused our 'independence' story. Describing ourselves as providing 'professional services' also did little to convey the full range of disciplines we deliver.

'With our new name and identity, we can both celebrate being an endorsed brand within the Morgan Sindall Group, but with a name that allows us to return to our roots and enable potential clients not to be distracted by an association either real or imagined.'

www.baker-hicks.com

Eversholt Rail awards Class 320 upgrade to KBRs

Eversholt Rail has signed a contract with Knorr-Bremse RailServices (KBRs) for an upgrade of 22 Class 320 trains in the ScotRail fleet.

The scope of the £6 million programme, to be carried out at KBRs's Springburn Depot in Glasgow, includes a full interior refresh as well as a total interior refurbishment including repaint of all surfaces, new flooring, tables and new seat moquette; at-seat power sockets; dedicated cycle space; LED lighting; enhanced CCTV and new interior labelling and signage.

The production phase for the upgrade of 66 carriages is scheduled to start in October 2017 and due to finish in early 2019.

Stephen Timothy, client relations director at Eversholt Rail, said: 'This contract is testament to our ongoing investment into our Scottish fleets, following the refurbishment projects on our Class 318s, and 334s, as well as deploying seven extra trains to add capacity and relieve overcrowding.'

Ian McConnell, the ScotRail Alliance's programmes and transformation director, said: 'By 2019, 90 per cent of our rolling stock will either be new or refurbished and two hundred additional services will run each day.'

Humza Yousaf, Minister for Transport & the Islands, said: 'The KBRs workforce's



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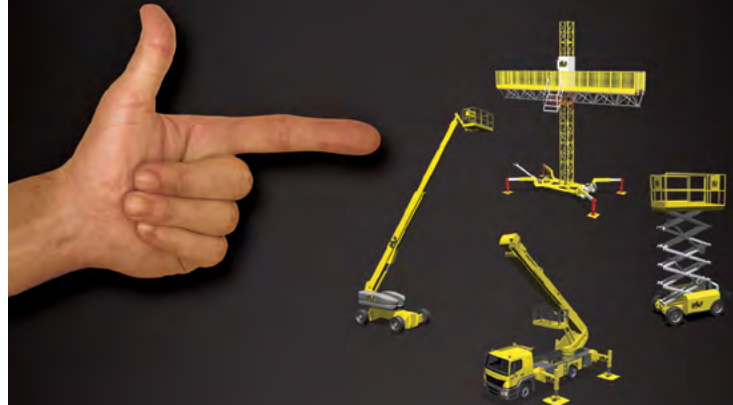
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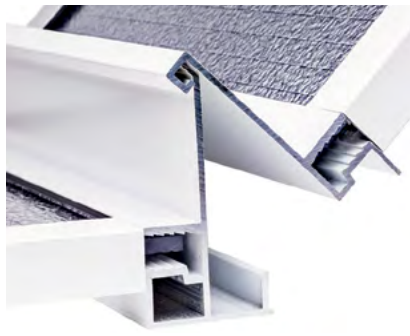
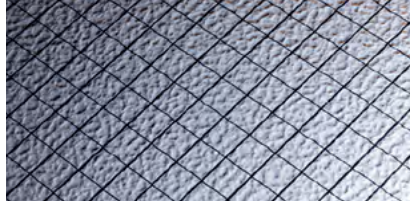
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In order to drive efficiencies within their work in rail Twinfix have utilised up-to-date 3D printing to aid product innovation and development, employing this new technology to view a 3D model of a revised Multi-Link bar design for use in future rail applications.

For ease of specification the Multi-Link-Panel is available as a BIM object for download in IFC and Revit formats from the Twinfix website.

The modular roofglazing panels can be glazed with Twinfix Georgian wired effect polycarbonate. This clever innovation looks like Georgian wired glass, but is much lighter and will not crack, craze or break. Perfect for heritage applications.

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excellent efforts on previous refurbishment programmes is recognised by this latest significant order which, in turn, helps provide more job security and boost the local economy in Springburn.’
 Visit: www.eversholtrail.co.uk

FM Conway recognised for rail excellence

The infrastructure services firm has received London Underground’s BEACON site safety and welfare award for its work on the Four Lines Modernisation (4LM) programme.

The award, which recognises contractors who demonstrate best practice in site management, was awarded to FM Conway’s Lillie Bridge Depot site in Wouth West London, where the company is constructing a new Signal Equipment Room. The project is part of a £5 million package of works won last year under the 4LM programme which will see the business construct five new SER’s across the London Underground network.

Wayne Frewen, head of rail at FM Conway said: ‘We won’t be resting on our laurels and I look forward to working to secure BEACON status for our other SER sites.’

The BEACON award scheme is a bespoke safety and welfare initiative created by London Underground to address the particular health, safety and welfare demands of working on the Underground network.

The award was presented to the Lillie Bridge Depot site team by Stuart Harvey, programme director for London Underground.

Visit www.fmconway.co.uk



Street CraneXpress signs service deal with Hitachi Rail Europe

The Sheffield-based company has signed a new five-year maintenance contract to service and repair overhead cranes and handling equipment at Hitachi’s rail vehicle manufacturing facility at Newton Aycliffe.

Hitachi Rail maintenance and facilities manager, Chris Evans, said: ‘After reviewing our options for lifting facilities we agreed that the best choice was to outsource to Street CraneXpress. It also fits with our ethos to encourage British engineering, not only in employing local talent, but also in how we build our business partnerships.’

Street CraneXpress sales manager, Duncan Randall said: ‘The new facility in Newton Aycliffe is simply outstanding, and it’s been a genuine pleasure to see it develop over the past year. This agreement will give Hitachi Rail the dual benefit of lower repair bills and significantly reduced production downtime.’

Visit: www.scx.co.uk



Rail Alliance supporting the Midland’s Engine at Railtex 2017

The Rail Alliance has been appointed by the Midland’s Engine to assist and support it by delivering a number of focused activities at Railtex 2017 (9th – 11th May).

The Midlands Engine initiative aims to boost economic growth across the Midlands region through enhanced trade and investment activity. This is an exciting time for rail in the UK, and the Midlands places itself at the heart of this rail revolution.

The Midlands rail supply chain includes expertise in rolling stock design, development and manufacture; light and very light rail technologies; infrastructure and signalling; and leading university research and government support from the Midlands network of Catapult Innovation Centres.

The Midlands is also seeing large investment in existing and new rail networks, including High Speed 2 (HS2), Midlands Metro, Midlands Connect as well as station redevelopments across the Midlands.

In addition to positioning the region as an attractive destination for investment there is also a commitment to support international trade from across its 11 Local Enterprise Partnership zones. Inwards or outwards, the trade with the Midlands Engine is ripe, and The Rail Alliance will be providing multiple opportunities for exhibitors and visitors to meet with and learn more about the initiative and how to get involved or access support.

To underline the aspirations of the Midlands Engine and the integral role that the RSG plays across the industry, The Rail Alliance has announced that Gordon Wakeford, will be delivering The Midlands Engine Keynote Speech at 12:30pm on the opening day of the show. Wakeford is managing director of the Mobility Division of Siemens and the industry chair of the Rail Supply Group.

Visit: www.railalliance.co.uk



Contractor appointed for Worcestershire Parkway

Worcestershire County Council is moving ahead with plans for Worcestershire Parkway regional interchange station with Buckingham Group Contracting being awarded the design and build contract, working alongside SLC Rail, which is project managing the scheme on behalf of the Council.

Worcestershire Parkway forms part of the County Council's Local Transport Plan and Worcester Transport Strategy and is pivotal to growth plans to boost the county's economic value to £2.9 billion, creating 25,000 new jobs by 2025.

The scheme – given the stamp of approval by the Department for Transport in January, will make it easier for many more passengers to use the County's 'North Cotswold' rail link from Worcester to Oxford and London Paddington. Worcestershire residents will also be able to catch regular long-distance cross country services which currently pass through the county on the Gloucester to Birmingham route without stopping.

Located at Norton, just east of M5 Junction 7, the new station will build on the government's investment in the new Intercity Express train which Great Western Railway will introduce on the North Cotswold Line by 2018.

The majority of the budget for the scheme will be self-funded through station car park fees and access charges levied on Toc's, along with £8.3 million from the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership through the government's Growth Deal.

Visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk

Rail Freight Group welcomes rail safety training for the construction industry

A new training course offering rail safety awareness training to the construction materials industry has been welcomed by Rail Freight Group.

'With increasing volumes of aggregates and other building materials being delivered to construction sites by rail, this is an excellent time to launch a training course on rail safety for those working in the construction industry,' said Maggie Simpson, RFG executive director.

'We are delighted that the initiative, which came from RFG's construction working group and is supported by the Mineral Products Association (MPA), has been taken up by some of our members and developed into an on-going series of training courses,' she continued.

The programme, which includes both interactive theory and practical elements of loading and unloading rail wagons and working in sidings, has been designed by rail freight operations specialists Victa Railfreight and courses are offered nationwide by Mentor Training Solutions.

'Safety has been a high priority in the rail and construction industries for many years but specialist training can be difficult for individual companies, spread over many sites, to organise themselves, so this provides an ideal opportunity,' said Simpson.

More than 40 per cent of the construction materials used in London is delivered by rail, with more than 20m tonnes transported annually throughout the UK.

Visit www.mentortrainingsolutions.co.uk

Barclaycard secures new Merchant Acquirer Contract with TfL

Barclaycard has retained its contract to provide payment solutions to Transport for London for another seven years, with an option to extend for a further three.

The renewed partnership will see Barclaycard continue to play a role in delivering one of the UK's largest payments infrastructure projects as TfL's network grows beyond London. This includes providing contactless payment solutions for

TfL re-awards asset maintenance contracts to Lanes Group

Transport for London has re-awarded contracts to Lanes Group to maintain structure and drainage assets associated with the Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly underground lines.

The awards, made under Lot 3 of TfL's asset maintenance procurement process, means Lanes Group has retained all contracts currently held.

Under TfL's new procurement regime, designed to streamline its maintenance supply chain, it also means Lanes Group can now bid for more work across all transport infrastructure.

Matthew Todd, commercial director of Lanes Rail Division, said: 'This reflects very well on the dedication and hard work of our maintenance teams who deliver a safe, high-quality service in what are some of the most challenging transport asset maintenance environments you can find.'

The contracts will be managed by Tube Lines, a subsidiary of TfL, which is responsible for the maintenance of the 'JNP' lines.

Lot 3 is split into three options. Lanes Rail will now share the work available in Option 1, civils and structures maintenance, and Option 2, drainage maintenance, with three other contractors on a framework.

Option 3, reactive civils and structures maintenance, has been re-awarded to Lanes Group as a sole supplier. All options are due to start operating from this month.

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Shashi Verma, chief technology officer at Transport for London, said: 'This new 10-year contract will help ensure contactless journey numbers continue to grow while also providing support to allow us to develop our ticketing system even further.'

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The digital journey

For many, a significant proportion of each day is spent traveling and internet connectivity on the move is no longer seen as a luxury

As expectation levels rise, so does the demand for rail operators to stay ahead of the curve and provide exciting new solutions for those travelling.

Having installed services on thousands of trains globally and with an average of more than half a million passengers connecting to its onboard Wi-Fi networks every day, Icomera is a market-leader in delivering fast and reliable connectivity to rail operators.

Providing mobile networking solutions, Icomera customers have publicly reported increases in passenger numbers and ticket revenues and attributed these to improvements in passenger satisfaction that have come from providing new services such as passenger Wi-Fi, infotainment and real-time information.

The perks of passenger Wi-Fi

Whether it's browsing websites, shopping online, searching for information or connecting with others, people increasingly rely on the internet for both their work and social life.

Figures from Ericsson show global mobile data consumption has increased by 60 per cent over the past 12 months. Icomera is experiencing this trend first-hand, having tripled data delivery to its customers in the last three years and it doesn't expect to see this slow down anytime soon.

Thanks to wider Wi-Fi availability and faster browsing speeds, more and more



purchases are being made when travelling; it's been reported that £9.3 billion each year is spent on commuter commerce. The opportunity to increase productivity while travelling is making public transport usage more attractive for business travel.

With the possibility to send emails, take part in conference calls and research information for business tasks, commuters can continue to work beyond the confines of the office space. Many travellers are also using their morning and evening commute to carry out digital chores such as paying

bills, renewing insurance policies and searching for new properties or jobs.

Operators are now looking to take the next step in improving the passenger journey by providing a seamless Wi-Fi service from the station to the train. Speaking about the possibilities this multimodal approach opens-up, Icomera's director of UK Rail, Peter Kingsland, said, 'By only needing to log-in once, passengers benefit from a continuous and reliable Wi-Fi experience. They can be smoothly transferred from the station Wi-Fi to an onboard network, simplifying the journey and providing a smooth, effortless digital experience'.

Movies on the move

Beyond passenger Wi-Fi, there are clear benefits in keeping passengers entertained and Icomera is leading the way in delivering successful infotainment services for transport operators, giving travellers access to movies, music and audiobook streaming options, as well as games to play.

Icomera's infotainment application runs from the same router that provides passenger Wi-Fi, so there's no need for additional hardware to be installed and content can be accessed faster. Infotainment users avoid long download times because they are streaming the content directly from the box, while passengers using the Wi-Fi for other tasks such as email, social media and online shopping benefit because the





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bandwidth is freed up from heavy media content downloads.

Infotainment can only be successful if its content is kept up-to-date, otherwise regular passengers will quickly become bored. That's why Icomera infotainment systems can be managed directly by the operator using a cloud-based content management system, meaning that content can be easily updated across vehicles in a fleet with a single click.

An exciting development is the extent to which analytics can now be used to curate and improve the passenger experience. Depending on their journey, different passengers will want different types of information and entertainment. By analysing usage data, it's possible to see what types of content users are looking at and use this to customise the travel experience.

A tourist on a longer journey may well be more interested in streaming media content, while a business traveller on a short morning commute may be more likely to want quick access to up-to-the-minute news.

Real-time information

In addition to media content, real-time passenger information can be directly injected into the infotainment portal, informing passengers of the current train location via GPS tracking, expected arrival times and ongoing destinations from the next stop.

Icomera's real-time passenger information module can be integrated with any RTI system that has an API (including Darwin, the UK rail industry's real-time train running information engine), automatically providing passengers with

notifications about delays and timetable changes.

Implementing real-time information can be used to provide improved customer service. When delays happen, operators can turn a negative experience into a positive one by providing passengers with vouchers for complimentary coffee, free films for those stuck on a broken-down vehicle or an online or automatic refund to passengers before they even leave the vehicle.

Through internet connected crew apps, rail staff can take advantage of real-time service updates via company-issued smart devices. Staff are kept up-to-date on service issues such as delays or disruptions and can use these updates to provide useful and up-to-the-minute information to passengers.

Designing hardware using open architecture principles and using software built to open platform standards helps enable flexible solutions, making it easy to install new applications, upgrade systems and innovate quickly over time.

For example, the same wireless internet solutions that support Icomera passenger Wi-Fi can also be used to provide other onboard services such as real-time CCTV, allowing operators to monitor a train remotely, keeping passengers, staff and assets safe.

Adding real-time connectivity to other traditional transport systems such as passenger information or passenger counting creates new possibilities to add value to the customer journey by, for example, telling them which carriages have spare seats available.

Icomera's VP of product development, Thomas Roberts sees these real-time

applications as just the beginning. He said, "The digital journeys of the future will not be based on train or bus tickets and timetables but will instead be always-online personal journeys based on mobility-as-a-service applications. This type of service will rely on continuous connectivity for information flows to and data flows from the traveller as they move seamlessly between transport modes, e.g. from bus to train to self-driving car."

An essential offering

Whether it's searching for a good restaurant for lunch, shopping online, messaging family on the commute home, reading the latest news, learning a new language or uploading photos to social media sites, people value having easy, on-demand access to information and being able to constantly communicate.

Through facilitating this connection via onboard Wi-Fi, infotainment and real-time information solutions, operators can significantly improve the experience for those travelling, making the rail journey a seamless part of the digital day.

The most exciting possibilities of internet access on rail journeys remain undiscovered. Embracing new connectivity solutions to enhance and personalise the passenger experience will help unlock more advantages in the years to come. Icomera is at the forefront of this journey, discovering and implementing industry-leading solutions for rail operators.

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Putting training in the driver's seat

From April 2017, the apprenticeship levy will transform the funding of apprenticeships for all large organisations

The UK government's aim is to greatly increase the amount of apprenticeship-based training within UK industry and to ensure greater relevance and benefit by giving the businesses concerned more control.

The apprenticeship levy effectively ensures that all organisations with a wage bill totalling more than £3 million will create their own apprenticeship funding pot by establishing a tax of 0.5 per cent of the total wage bill. If the organisation doesn't use the fund, it loses the money to the exchequer, so there is a substantial incentive to develop the best plans for ensuring a good outcome.

For the last eight years, the Derby-based engineering and business improvement training provider Qualitrain has delivered adult apprenticeships at Bombardier, BTRS and Great Western Railways. The programmes have been designed to answer specific individual needs, but have all aimed to enhance workplace skills, develop lean

processes and improve health and safety. Qualitrain began life as a training provider serving engineering and manufacturing companies in the East Midlands, but now supports businesses throughout the UK, with rail industry clients strongly represented. Indeed, until the Crossrail contract created the need for more space, the company had a permanent base within Bombardier's Derby site.

Understandably the Qualitrain team has focused for many months now on the challenges the Apprenticeship Levy will bring, and the advantages it may offer.

Key thoughts

Qualitrain's MD Richard Bates said, 'Correctly identifying the real needs of an organisation, and responding imaginatively and vigorously to them, has already helped us build lasting partnerships with our rail industry customers.'

'We have always known that off-the-shelf 'tick-box' training exercises are a waste of

time and effort, but if you have properly understood where a business can derive real benefit, you can develop a training strategy of genuine worth. Insofar as the levy will encourage businesses to really focus hard on how to extract the maximum bang from their training buck, the benefits seem to be there for the taking.

'However, there are plenty of hoops to jump through, apprenticeships are delivered in a wide variety of skills areas and as vitally important, nationally-recognised qualifications are strictly administered and evaluated, creating all the back-office requirements of a college (including scrutiny by Ofsted) to ensure standards are consistent and accreditation is legitimate.'


The Qualitrain team suggests there are two basic choices for large organisations with a considerable levy pot to administer, such as will be common in the rail industry. One is to find a very well established and properly accredited training provider (or a series of them) with which to partner,





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or alternatively to develop internal training schemes which can make use of apprenticeship frameworks, and which can therefore be funded through the Levy. No doubt some companies will run with a combination of these options – especially ones with a pre-existing internal training function.

'Neither of these choices comes without a degree of difficulty' adds Qualitrain's Mike Perkins, because most businesses, even large and long-established ones, are not likely to have the expertise or resources to undertake the nuts and bolts of skills training – maintenance of learner records, compliance, safeguarding, end point assessment and so on. The requirements are rigorous and meeting them is costly and time consuming.

Many training providers do not have all these things in-house, and those that do may specialise in non-industrial areas such as retail or social care, or purely in health and safety. HR and Operations Directors will need to choose their partners carefully to ensure a good fit over a long period.

'The building blocks are in place for large businesses to develop their own, very specific apprenticeship frameworks, suitable for staff members of any age and background provided they meet the basic criteria. Using an experienced and properly accredited partner to assist with the development and administration of such schemes would mean the business concerned need not stray so far from core activities, even if they do choose to do much of the delivery themselves.'

Creating Maximum Benefit

Qualitrain believes that recent examples of its work at BTRS and Bombardier point the way by which rail companies across the UK

can make sure they get maximum benefit from their Levy budget.

At BTRS, for instance, Qualitrain has implemented business improvement training for frontline team leaders, in addition to developing a core competency programme which included PMO (performing manufacturing operations) at level 2 for the entire work force.

Subsequently, when BTRS had an urgent requirement to employ 300 new staff, Qualitrain was called on to develop a single-week training course covering all the key processes of building electrical wiring looms.

'We were delighted with the way Qualitrain met the challenge' said BTRS operations manager Steve Slater. 'They developed a series of practical tests which could feed performance data back to management so that improvements could be made accurately with no overlap or wastage. In my opinion they are a first-class supplier who really know their business and are tenacious in seeing a project through successfully.'

Also at Derby, Qualitrain assisted Bombardier Transportation with business improvement training linked specifically to the company's extensive in-house training programme. Qualitrain worked with Bombardier's own trainers to ensure the high standards set throughout the business were successfully mapped across into all training activities, with no fewer than 170 managers passing through the programme. At level 2, the pass rate was 100 per cent, and the programme has since moved to level 3.

At First Great Western and then at GT Railway, the apprenticeship framework improving operational performance was deployed to great effect to transform health

and safety to award winning standards. Now Great Western Railways are using apprenticeship frameworks in imaginative ways to embed high-performance operating procedures, positively affect customer experiences and to underpin the longer term aims of their high level strategic planning.

'These training schemes continue to be very successful' says Qualitrain director Lee Rookes, a man with a comprehensive history of training delivery into the rail industry, 'but they wouldn't have been found in a text book. The frameworks are very flexible, and a creative and truly competent training provider can tailor the delivery to a high degree, guaranteeing an excellent match with the real-world needs of each particular business.'

'Many people find the term 'apprenticeship' a bit of a problem, largely because it has been associated in the past with the training of young people. The fact is that these qualifications are aimed at correcting skills shortages across the entire workforce and, deployed correctly, they can have a truly transformative effect, often measurable in a business's bottom line.'

'I would encourage all rail businesses to embrace the challenges the apprenticeship levy will bring. Without the right training partner, this has often been difficult in the past and we all know ops directors who have had disappointing experiences. Find the right partner, however, properly accredited with a full suite of back-office systems and with the right attitude and background to understand your business, and you can turn the challenge into a notable success.'

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Franchising and innovation

The first passenger train service operated by a privatised franchise was the South West Trains 05:10 Twickenham to Waterloo on 4 February 1996

Rail franchising was 21 years old last month so what lessons have we learned over that period, how might we move forward to address some of the problems which our railway faces today and how will innovation help us?

The SNC-Lavalin Rail & Transit team, has been active in rail franchising for all of those 21 years, helping bidders present their proposals to the Department for Transport (DfT) and helping train operating companies (Tocs) deliver their promises. The company's UK roots are in the British Rail (BR) privatisation era, where Interfleet grew out of the Inter-City sector of BR, before being acquired by SNC-Lavalin in 2011.

Last year, the company worked within two winning client teams whose bids for rail improvements in the north of England were accepted by DfT and right now it is working with bidders for the Wales & Borders and East Midlands franchises.

As a business, SNC-Lavalin has learned a lot about rail franchising – having lived with it since its inception. Historically, the primary focus has been on the rolling stock aspects of the bids, but as its UK capability grows, it is increasingly supporting other aspects of a franchise bid, including:

- rolling stock strategy development, including leasing and new train procurement strategy
- rolling stock maintenance planning including depot strategy and contract option development
- rolling stock modification and upgrade planning (cost, programme)
- fleet management organisation, compliance and safety
- safety, quality, energy consumption modelling and environmental issues
- demand forecasting
- train crew planning and resource calculation
- initial design and costing of

infrastructure, station or depot enhancements

- project management, bid writing and production.

Two observations on franchising

The recent House of Commons Transport Committee report highlighted many of the strengths, and weaknesses, of the franchising system. Picking just two of them to comment on:

The report sings the praises of open access operators, citing the fact that First Hull Trains and Grand Central currently top the latest survey of passenger satisfaction. Open access itself is, in fact, an innovation and a successful one.

Open access operators have identified markets which are not well served by the established franchise structure and have exploited that opportunity. Crucially, they are not bound by a set of requirements which is in effect fixed for a period of years, as with a franchise specification.

This affords them the opportunity to change the service offering in line with emerging passenger expectations and with ridership. Hull Trains, for example, started with 3 car Class 170s, but has since progressed through 4 car Class 222 Pioneers to 5 car Class 180 Adelantes and has recently ordered a fleet of bi-mode Class 802 trains from Hitachi's AT300 stable. In contrast, a franchise Toc like Cross-Country has had its rolling stock strategy constrained by the franchise framework and the existing fleet configuration is now perceived as a significant constraint on the Tocs carrying capacity. The challenge for Government and the Tocs is to find a mechanism whereby franchises can be both fixed enough to enable both parties to ensure that costs and risks are properly under control, but also be flexible enough to change and grow over time.

Wholesale rolling stock renewal

Abellio's decision to replace the entire fleet came as a shock to many, and a particular blow to the rolling stock owners. The elimination of the 321 fleet, in particular, has sent shock waves through the rolling stock (leasing) company (Rosco) community, but the 379s probably teach us an even more interesting lesson.

These are trains which were bought just a few years ago, for a specific purpose (the Stanstead Express service) and which were funded by a relatively new entrant



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to the rolling stock leasing market. But unfortunately, they were expensive trains bought with expensive money. In 2016, the market had moved, trains were relatively cheap and historically low interest rates meant that funding costs were also low. Brand new trains became a simple decision when set against the costs of updating, for example, 321s to meet the accessibility regulations and DfT's requirements for customer facilities on the franchise.

The economics of rolling stock replacement will be a most interesting issue to watch over the coming years: the cost of money cannot go any lower, the effect of Brexit on exchange rates will surely push up the cost of trains and the finance community will undoubtedly look at the 379 fleet and think very carefully about residual value and the viability of future leases.

Where does innovation come into all this? Firstly, the new trains which Abellio are procuring are innovative: Bombardier's Aventra is a generation ahead of the Electrostar family in terms of its running costs, but even more significantly, Stadler has entered the UK market with an articulated vehicle, and some of them will even be bi-mode diesel electrics too. The Stadler fleet is definitely innovative in UK terms.

So what of the future?

West Coast Partnership is, perhaps, the most prestigious franchise on the immediate horizon. Where, in a winning bidder's strategy, will technical innovation play a role? It is likely that capacity over the first 6 years, until HS2 opens, will be a major challenge.

125 mph capable tilting trains are not currently available in the second-hand market, but the West Coast timetable is entirely written around that type of train. With HS2 coming along in 2026, the business case for new construction of "Pendo Mk2" is likely to be pretty weak. How then can bidders deliver short term capacity at reasonable cost? That challenge is currently occupying some of the industry's best brains.

Will a small degree of passive tilt allow trains to run at enhanced permissible speeds? Would even greater acceleration rates allow non-tilting trains to deliver competitive journey times? Or would their performance be so different to a tilting trains that they eat up the available paths?

Finding a way of delivering additional capacity of the West Coast Main Line (WCML) between 2019 and the opening of HS2 without it costing so much that the

franchise becomes unaffordable is the next big challenge.

But innovation is not just about technology. The digital railway is bringing innovation to control systems to provide better train regulation and more capacity. The Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) is sponsoring research across a wide range of fields and new trains are allowing new financiers to enter the rail leasing market with innovative ways of structuring their finance to make them competitive in the market.

Innovation outside rail will play a part too: for years, the news has been that the explosion of digital technology will do away with the need for people to travel to meetings – yet ridership on railways continues to grow year on year and passengers are demanding even better connectivity during their journey.

Innovation is all around, it's just sometimes difficult to differentiate it from the changes which are always happening in the industry.

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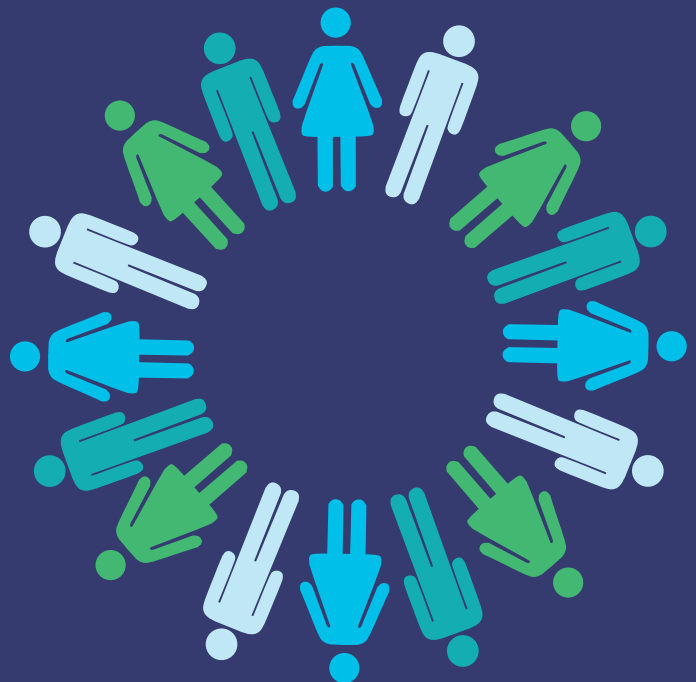
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How to manage business speak

Engineering management and organisational structures are by their very nature pretty well structured and their processes well tested and optimal

In general, this is a correct assertion, however there is a seemingly growing lack of basic structure and joined up thinking at many companies in the 21st century. This rise is mirrored only by the increasing prevalence of popular management process tools that focus on a small element of the overall business management process.

Longsight has for many years been involved with business management systems. Mostly associated with large engineering based organisations, the majority of whom have some form of safety criticality associated with their activities. One of the benefits of the company's experience of being a consultancy is that it will get to see how many differing organisations approach the same process, and the disparities are interesting to examine.

Historical context

It was perhaps 30 years or so ago that the shockwaves of BS5750 were rippling through the workshops and depots across the land and people with vision and responsibility crafted maintenance and overhaul policies against which they were regularly, and thoroughly tested. Then along came ISO 9001, privatisation, PAS55 and ROGS, with side dishes of EFQM, Linkup and RISAS.

Those parts of the industry involved in building stuff or indeed maintaining and repairing stuff adopted LEAN, Six Sigma, KANBAN and many other process tools. Railway Group Standards came and went, interoperability became the new vision and even the much beloved VAB process withered away.

The insular rail industry became a more complex interaction of suppliers and sub-contractors and for a time disaster followed disaster. Apprenticeships and long term learning were replaced by a much quicker heart beat driven by franchise length and the integrated whole dissolved.

The business ethic has replaced the corporate good and long standing integrated management processes have collapsed, the franchise process is still evolving and infrastructure maintenance has been restructured several times and large multinational manufacturers sit alongside train operators.

What is needed now is a common management language that works across the boundaries, is business focussed, safety aware, risk driven, simple and speaks with data. That's what Longsight has developed.

Management as a whole

Taking the best bits from all of those various management standards, mix in decades of experience and the result is a well crafted powerful, integrated and structured management system that can replace QMS and SMS.

It works as a whole, it works in discrete bits and it works across supply chain boundaries. It recognises tool box tools such as LEAN or RISAS and works with them, integrating them into the whole. It is the missing link, the underlying structure on which to found business and management processes, and as it uses the common language of data it's an excellent decision making tool, allowing businesses to manage with data not anecdote.

It works across an entire business and yet works at a departmental level as its



designed to work like a fractal, every time a manager focuses in on it they will see the same overall structure reappear. This allows any individual to use the whole structure to assist their daily task and everything they do is reflected back up to the board room, so no matter where anyone is in the organisation they can easily interpret information and understand its context.

The whole process is designed to give individuals a sense of their contribution to the whole. For many employees, getting asked which business goal they are primarily working to help achieve might cause some nervous looks. How many would have a clear answer? So if they don't know, how do you expect your organisation to be optimal?

Goal orientated focus

The system is seeded with business goals, these may be law / legislation / mandatory related, safety focussed, profit focussed and performance focussed. These goals are analysed to establish contributory management/production processes. Measurements set to ensure the client can determine the effectiveness of the relevant processes and a review loop that examines root cause of failure.

Supporting this cyclical core activity are a number of elements: management review, data analysis, document control, training, competency, risk based asset whole life cost model, non-conformance,





assurance, audit, supply chain management, materials management, workload planning, visualisation and financial profile processes.

All of these elements can be integrated into the whole management process to support a wide range of business goals. Each element however can be managed by implementing the overall structure, this puts any individual's job (or even specific tasks) at the centre of the whole management system – it's the power of the fractal design.

Even more powerful though is the ability to graphically represent the whole process and draw responsibility boundaries – this is a hugely useful aspect of this system when agreeing supplier scope, or inter departmental interfaces.

For businesses with significant assets to manage such as rolling stock, infrastructure

or plant and machinery Longsight has a fully developed risk based asset whole life cost model. It's a great tool for evaluating risk, training and competency needs, supplier management, occupational health requirements, safety and technical performance, failure mode analysis and whole life financial profiles down to the component level.

Longsight's non-conformance process compliments the audit and assurance processes and gives a structured feedback on things that go wrong, and as they are linked to business goals and risk, resource planning is simple. Having a structured approach to business development isn't just for those who need an ISO certificate, virtually every

business benefits from structured thinking.

Final thoughts

Longsight is always available to discuss how its whole system works, and can delve into specific elements and explain how this model makes franchise assessment simple. Remember, this is not gobbledegook, there are no bespoke software packages its all common sense and experience.

This quote by Woody Guthrie sums it up - 'Keep it simple — but not simplistic. Any fool can make something complicated, it takes a genius to make it simple'.



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Axles and gears

Schaeffler axlebox and gearbox bearings continue to ensure reliability of Hitachi Javelin high-speed trains

As part of an ongoing bogie overhaul programme of Hitachi Rail Europe's Class 395 'Javelin' high-speed trains, Schaeffler has successfully delivered more than 1,300 axlebox bearings and gearbox bearing sets to Hitachi Rail Europe's flagship train maintenance centre in Ashford, with further deliveries planned this year.

Built by Hitachi, the Class 395 Javelin trains offer the fastest domestic service rail travel in the UK. The Class 395 operates at a maximum speed of 140 mph and is built for high speed commuter services on HS1 and elsewhere on the Integrated Kent Franchise.

Since the Hitachi train was put into service in 2008, Schaeffler UK has worked closely with Lucchini UK, the company responsible for the bogie overhaul on the Class 395. From its Manchester base, Lucchini UK provides a full wheelset service package for the Class 395 trains, including inspection, re-wheeling, reprofiling, axle skimming and supply of new axles, as well as inspection, overhaul and maintenance of wheelsets, train gearboxes and final drives to UK-based operators and train maintenance contract holders.

Lucchini and Schaeffler UK have collaborated on a number of improvement projects for the Class 395, including mileage extensions and condition monitoring of the drive train, including axles, traction motors and gearboxes.

Mark Hughes, Hitachi's Depot Manager at Ashford in Kent commented: 'Schaeffler continues to supply a quality service and has been fully supportive of Hitachi's aspirations to safely extend Class 395 axlebox bearing life.'

The current overhaul programme, which started in 2014, has seen Schaeffler supply 480 gearbox bearing sets and 840 TAROL axlebox bearings to Lucchini.

Mike Wood, commercial manager at Lucchini UK commented: 'We purchase the bearings from Schaeffler on a controlled programme covering the overhaul of wheelsets for the full fleet of 29 Javelin trains. The bearings are changed on each mileage periodicity governed by Hitachi. We are currently in the second overhaul periodicity and have full service support from Schaeffler in achieving to date full on time deliveries.'

TAROL axlebox bearings

TAROL (tapered roller bearings) units from



Schaeffler are used primarily as axlebox bearings on rail vehicles such as goods wagons and passenger carriages. Axlebox bearings comprise the interface between the wheelset and the bogie frame and so are subjected to extreme loads. TAROL units are double row tapered roller bearings supplied with factory-set clearance, greased and sealed for life.

Supplied ready-to-fit, the units are pressed onto the shaft journal in a single operation using a hydraulic unit. Due to the press fit of the unit on a shaft journal of a diameter within the specified tolerances, the bearing support achieves the required axial clearance.

Schaeffler is also supplying a variety of

gearbox bearings, including both cylindrical roller bearings and four-point contact bearings, which stabilise the gearbox shaft and support the transmission of forces. In doing so, the bearings must withstand extreme loads under complex environmental conditions such as high vibrations, high speeds and high temperatures.

Jeremy Spencer, rail sector manager at Schaeffler UK commented: 'Since the Class 395 was put into service, the axlebox bearings are replaced at regular intervals. Originally, the bearings were replaced, regardless of their condition, at 500,000 kilometres. However, by working closely with Lucchini UK, we've managed to extend this to 650,000 kilometres between bearing replacements.'

'We've also assisted Lucchini by providing non-intrusive condition monitoring units to measure the vibration of the axlebox bearings as they are returned to the Hitachi Train Maintenance Centre in Ashford, as well as for use on gearbox bearings at Lucchini's Manchester depot. These handheld FAG Detector III vibration monitoring units are supplied with custom developed software to enable bearing vibration levels to be measured in less than one minute.'

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Cycle hub for commuters

In December of 2016 a new and bespoke cycle hub was officially opened in Gravesend for the benefit of the local community and commuters

Southeastern Rail awarded the project to Walker Construction as principle contractor to design and build a new state of the art Cycle Hub at Gravesend train station. The scheme demonstrated a commitment and substantial investment to the local community and commuters.

The funding for the project came from key stakeholders to enable Walker Construction to deliver a new cycle hub building over two floors that offers a cycle hire shop with a maintenance workshop for repairs, cycle hire and sales charging facilities for both Brompton and Electric Bikes.

Facilities

There is space for 180 bicycles on bespoke cycle racks in the main building and a further 44 spaces located under the main building. The cycle hub also offers a DIY stand with a set of standard cycle maintenance tools, including a cycle pump and tyre repair kit and facilities to lock away cycle helmets and accessories.

The key stakeholders for this project included, Southeastern Rail, Network Rail, Department for Transport, Kent County Council, Gravesend Borough Council and the Cyclopark Trust to facilitate and encourage cycling as a preferred method of transport in the local area.

The main design of the building was carried out by Walker Construction's in-house design team, WSS. WSS worked collaboratively with the procurement and delivery teams through to construction and completion. Once planning consent was granted by the local authority and Network Rail approved the landlords consent application from WSS, the works were started on site on February 22 2016.

The construction work was challenging throughout, due to its location by the main access road (Rathmore Road) and behind platform one. Control measures were agreed in advance and incorporated within the construction phase to allow maxim output of work without imposing on the access road or platform.

The main embankment was excavated to expose the footprint of the building under the watchful eye of the local archaeologist and ecologist. Reinforced concrete retaining walls were installed including concrete foundations for the building.

The new drainage was installed and incorporated both surface water and foul



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labour plant and materials, construction phase and finally handing over the completed building to the client.

The local community have been extremely supportive of the project and have been left a legacy. Walker Construction UK (ltd) are proud to have been a major part of supplying this scheme and hope that its stands the test of time being used as one of the largest Cycle Hub's in the UK.

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connections. The surface water for the new building was captured and diverted through pipework into a new pre-designed soakaway system using recycled plastic crates thus reducing any environmental impact. Whilst excavating for the new soakaway an old train line was uncovered and turn table that was of interest to the local archaeologist. Due to the historical importance of the find, a new location for the soakaway was needed so as to protect and preserve the historical find.

Materials and equipment

The steel frame and floor sections for the building was installed using a 40 tonne mobile crane under a contract lift by a specialist lifting company.

Perimeter access scaffolding was installed to the building allowing access to install the new timber roof and single ply Sarnafil roof covering.

The glass curtain walling sections were installed onto the steel frame including the glazed sliding doors at each end of the building. The glazing was also covered with anti-graffiti film with a designed manifestation. The main floor was constructed using non-slip lightweight GRP sections as part of an environmental and

financial value engineering exercise. The workshop floor was constructed using beam and block with floor screed.

The building was fitted out with internal and external lighting, power, CCTV, IT and CIS (Customer Information Screens) and alarms. The building is also fitted with access controls to the doors for customers to leave their bicycles and accessories in a safe and secure environment.

The external works included access steps and ramps (DDA compliant) to and from the building, brick retaining walls with decorative steel railings, decorative paving and slabs, handrails, signage, lighting, footpaths and surfacing works.

To ensure that the contract ran smoothly and efficiently the project was allocated to an experienced project manager Clint Martin; who understands the challenges of working in rail environment. Clint had recently completed an extremely high profile project at Crystal Palace Station (September 2015 Issue) and was the right choice to manage this project to completion.

Clint was involved in every aspect of the project including the production of the main construction programme, design buildability, risk management, procurement

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Looking ahead to Raitex 2017

As Britain's largest rail exhibition, *Raitex* acts as a showcase for the UK's leading suppliers of railway technology, innovative products and services

With thousands of rail professionals expected to visit this year's event, held on May 9-11 at Birmingham's NEC, it's expected to be the biggest in more than a decade.

This year, Rowe Hankins can be found at Stand K61 in the Rail Alliance area. The team will highlight its skills in the design, development and manufacturing of safety critical rail products, including speed and direction sensors, current monitors and wheel flange lubrication, all of which will be exhibited at the event.

Advancements in speed sensor technology

The trade fair gives Rowe Hankins the opportunity to showcase its range of speed sensors. This year the company will unveil a display which highlights the rapid advancements of speed sensor technology, from the invention of the single-phase channel in 1998, the dual channel in the early 2000s, to current developments with four channel sensors and the progression to the latest wireless sensing technology.

Committed to speed sensor advancement, Rowe Hankins continues

to invest in new rail technologies and is currently carrying out extensive research and development to ensure its speed sensor solutions respond to the demand for rail technology which both increases utilisation and improves safety.

Designed to operate in harsh rail environments, the safety critical multi-channel sensors measure speed and direction. Robust and with a long life expectancy, the sensors are a cost-effective solution for speed and direction measurement.

For most applications, speed sensors are designed to work against a ferromagnetic steel target wheel by using Hall effect sensor technology. However, sensors can also be designed for magnetic target wheels with alternating north and south poles. Comprising of a permanent magnet and Hall effect elements that scan a ferromagnetic target wheel, speed is measured by the magnetic field in the sensor, which changes due the rotating tooth wheel and modulation of the Hall voltage.

The speed sensor can have single, dual or multiple output channels, of which specific channels can be isolated to be powered from a different power supply. Single channel sensors generally benefit older rolling stock



vehicles with traction control systems. Dual channel sensors are mainly used in network management, as it provides improved brake and traction control, direction sensing and protection against redundancy in case of signal failure.

Output channel drive circuits are available as open collector, supply tracking, push-pull or 2-wire. Speed sensors can be mounted directly onto the bogie, usually one sensor per bogie, or can be located on the motor drive. This is to either sense the speed of the axial or the speed of the motor. Experts in speed sensor technology and its applications, Rowe Hankins' engineers can provide bespoke speed sensing solutions. Various terminal connection or connectors can be selected to meet customer requirements and also relevant fire and smoke certification.

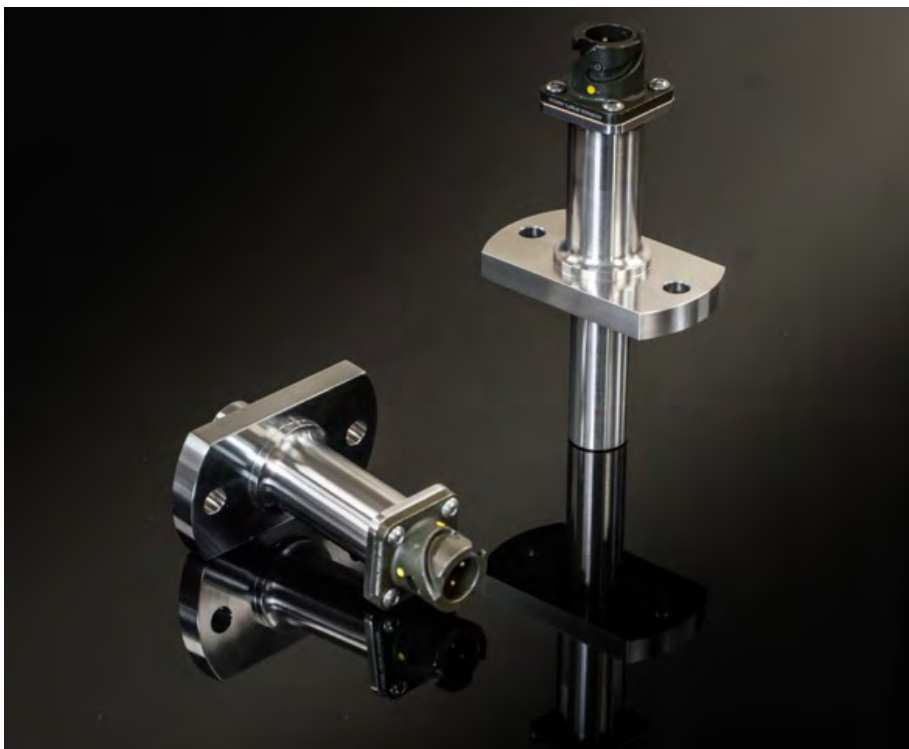
The speed sensors have proven a reliable solution for world leading train companies, including the London Underground, Alstom, Bombardier and Siemens.

Preventative measures

Rowe Hankins will also be promoting its new split-core non-intrusive current monitor (NIC), which has been designed for use in rail condition monitoring (RCM) systems, allowing engineers to fix problems before failure.

Designed for trackside application to assist Network Rail's preventative maintenance programme, the split-core NIC has many benefits, including its retro-fit installation. This allows the unit to be clamped around circuits without interference to the circuit or signalling systems, removing the need for costly downtime while a RCM is installed, which means that the rail network can continue to run safely.

The signal is received from the split-core NIC via the associated data logger, the programme output then highlights that the primary current variations are outside





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of the normal limits, indicating a potential problem.

The aperture can be opened and closed via a jaw latch locking system. The onboard green LED indicates the unit is powered up and the red LED indicates that the primary current has reached the defined trip level. This allows installation engineers to see real-time working functions. The transducer can be clamped around a conductor of sizes up to 26mm in diameter.

The transducer uses fluxgate sensing

technology which is a passive sensor that is far more sensitive than conventional magnetic sensors. Its other advantage is its superior performance at extreme temperature ranges, found in rail networks, as well as ambient temperatures. This results in a far greater overall accuracy of the RCM. The sensitivity combined with the temperature improvements gives a much improved measuring resolution.

The design team behind the split-core NIC were aware of existing problems caused

by rail network AC electrical noise from overhead lines, which are picked up on DC track side signalling circuits. The transducer was designed to remove these with low pass filtering techniques. This filtering is done at the source of the measuring circuit, completely removed from the output signals generated.

Safety first

Visitors to the Rowe Hankins stand can also expect to see the intelligent wheel flange lubrication (iWFL), an onboard dispensing system, which applies precise amounts of biodegradable lubricant. Engineered for both national rail networks and urban tram services, the iWFL improves safety by greatly reducing both wheel and track wear.

Over the years there have been a significant number of train and tram derailments caused by heavily worn track. Evidence shows that lubrication of the interface between the rail's gauge corner and the wheel's flange root reduces the rolling contact fatigue in the rail. An intelligent use of lubrication can increase safety and reduce the chances of further fatalities.

In order to extend rail and wheel life it uses geographical location based dispensing of flange lubrication. Its intelligent design senses the location and intensity of track curves using a combination of GPS signals and speed and distance sensors. The unit processes the data and, only where required, applies lubricant precisely at each location.

The intelligent top of the rail friction modifier (iTORFM), when used with the iWFL, improves safety by reducing friction and rail wear. It also improves fuel economy, reducing fuel consumption by 10 - 15 per cent.

Research shows that an effective flange lubrication system significantly extends wheel life and reduces rail wear, when compared with a non-lubricated network. This results in extending service and maintenance intervals, reducing down-time and costs, and most importantly, improved safety.

The eco-friendly and cost effective system is already in use on rail networks across Europe. In the UK, it has been successfully trialled with a major City Centre tram system and Rowe Hankins has also been approved as the preferred supplier to a major supplier of the new high frequency, high capacity railway for London and the South East.

Thanks to hard work, passion, knowledge and expertise, Rowe Hankins has built a global reputation for quality, reliability and innovation. Its products are making vast improvements to the rail industry, not only making safety economical but also efficient, reliable and attainable.

Visit the booth at Stand K61 in the Rail Alliance area of Railtex 2017, from May 9 - 11 at Birmingham's NEC.

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The beautiful British countryside racing past your window? A friendly smile across from your table seat? Some interesting urban graffiti in a frighteningly unlikely location? The buffet trolley?

Actually, there's no guarantee you'll see any of the above. But assuming there are fellow passengers on board, you could lay money on the fact that you'll see this: heads bowed to meet hands slightly raised, and eyes in lock down. Oh, and smartphones. Lots of busy smartphones.

Whether you're taking a short commuter hop or a long-distance service, it's pretty much the same story: we are addicted to our portable technology. It's the one travel buddy most of us couldn't contemplate making a trip without.

Technological changemaker

In the ten years since it first hit the mass consumer market (the iPhone launched in January 2007) the smartphone has impacted almost every aspect of how we live our lives.

It's how we keep up with our friends, check our email, order the week's shopping and navigate an unknown town or city.

It's increasingly how many of us meet our partners. Whatever it is that we're doing with them, more than eighty per cent of the UK population now has a smartphone and collectively we look at them more than a billion times a day. A BILLION times a day.

Last year there were 1.7 billion passenger journeys on UK railways, with an average of more than 4.5 million passengers travelling on any given day. On the basis that 80 per cent of those passengers had one with them, that



would mean around 1.3 billion smartphones are travelling on our trains over the course of the year and 3.6 million on any given day.

The fact is, the digital age isn't just coming, it has arrived and it's currently standing on platforms 1 through 22 and making good time all over the network. But as the industry starts to adapt and technology continues to evolve, how can Tocs make sure the age of mobile technology will work for them?

That's a question that Glow New Media has been keen to answer since it launched ten years ago, coincidentally the same year that the iPhone first hit the shelves. Over the course of a decade, and working with local, national and international operators across different modes of passenger transport, the company has developed a whole suite of innovative systems and apps that are helping to maximise the potential of the real-time, always-on connectivity that the smartphone presents us with.

Recent projects include

User-centred passenger apps which are helping customers across the network make informed – and better – choices about their journeys based on the real-time information and data flows that they have at their fingertips.

Staff-centred apps which, by improving real-time communication between operational employees, are enhancing the safety of staff on the ground as well as the efficiency and reliability of the network.

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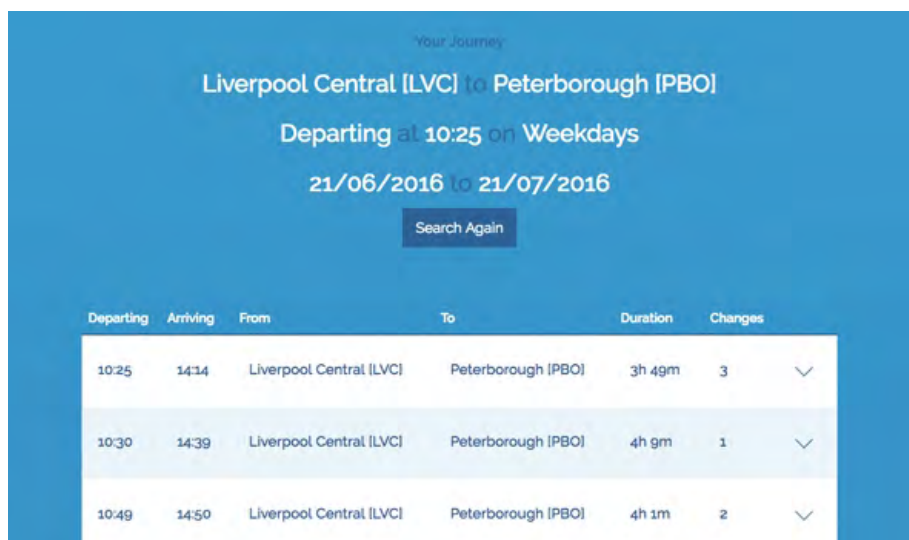
The smartphone evolution is not yet complete. Technology will continue to evolve and disrupt the transport status quo. It is already changing the way customers move around and travel between towns and cities and how they access customer service. And it is a crucial tool for tackling the capacity issues which challenge the network.

Glow will continue to help its clients identify the best way to use this enormous digital potential. To innovate and create, to try and test and ultimately to use technology to support the continued growth and sustainability of the railway network.

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Prioritising regional passengers

Furrer+Frey is an engineering company made up of a dynamic team of engineers, consultants and project managers, supported by a century of Swiss railway engineering excellence

Emil Furrer and Arnold Frey founded the company Furrer+Frey in 1923. As engineers they had learned the overhead line business and recognised early the potential of overhead contact lines and the electrification of the railways.

Furrer+Frey specialises in the design and

The company's drive for innovation and development encompasses various engineering activities in overhead line including: dynamic simulations, design of components and overarching systems, mechanical, electrical, testing, as well as the development of bespoke design software and apps.

system designed for metros' as well as light rail and uses lightweight aluminium cantilevers.

FL200 Light is a new metro focused derivative of the proven FL200 system, which has been used on regional railways across Switzerland. FL200 also formed the basis of the GEF system for the renewals of the Great Eastern Route out of London.

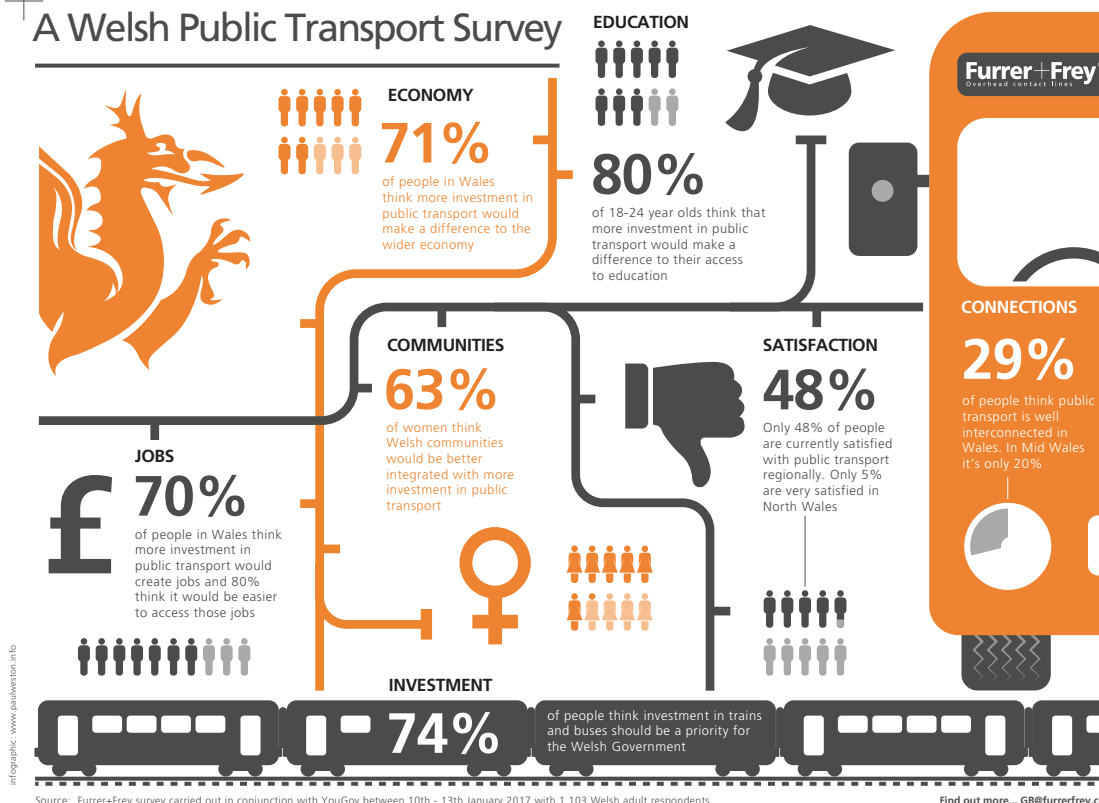
The second development has been the opening of Furrer+Frey's Cardiff office in 2016, following on from a number of high profile projects in Wales such as the Severn Tunnel, Newport Tunnel and mainline system (concept) design to Cardiff.

There are a number of projects in Wales that include an electrification element. The largest and most significant of these are the electrification of the mainline from Cardiff to Swansea, the Cardiff Metro Project, potentially including electrification of Valley Lines and the electrification of North Wales.

Other transport opportunities

Furrer+Frey's expertise isn't solely aligned to the rail industry and

A Welsh Public Transport Survey



development of overhead line electrification systems in all forms of public transport. First and foremost an engineering design house, the team is reinforced by allied professions such as project management, materials supply and development, logistics and training.

The company has accumulated experience from developing, constructing and maintaining overhead contact line systems since 1923. With expertise being passed on from one generation of engineers to the next, constantly building knowledge and understanding through the company's capital, the engineers and staff.

UK Projects

In the UK, Furrer+Frey has won several large mainline rail electrification design projects over the past 10 years. However, more recent developments have led Furrer+Frey to also now focus on regional passengers.

The first development is that Furrer+Frey have been awarded with the replacement of the overhead line equipment on Nexus the Tyne and Wear Metro, northeast England's urban transit system. The contract foresees the renewal of electrification equipment on 3,500 structures with Furrer+Frey's new FL200 Light electrification system. FL200 Light is Furrer+Frey's new cost effective

the company has identified diversification opportunities in other public transport electrification markets including metro systems, light rail, tram and buses.

With so much potential activity in the region, Furrer+Frey's new office is designed to capture this growing market. Furrer+Frey's ambitions in Wales are not limited just to design, but include further growth in public transport as well as implementing an advanced engineering manufacturing hub in Wales for manufacturing materials.

Furrer+Frey is also working Coleg y Cymoedd (College of the Valleys) in Wales

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to grow future engineers to work in railways and public transport.

To coincide with their arrival in the region, the company has drafted a white paper, studying electrification and its benefits to the area. The white paper, entitled 'Developing Sustainable, Agile, Multimodal Transport Solutions for Wales' shows that public transport is a real concern for the majority of the Welsh public. Furrer+Frey is presenting the white paper to the Welsh Assembly on April 5 2017.

The research provides a real focus on benefits of electrification and potential options for electrification in Wales. The Welsh government is focused on driving economic benefits from investment in public transport, such as inward private investment, more and better jobs and better access to education.

Testing public support

To support the White Paper Furrer+Frey commissioned a YouGov survey of over 1,000 people across Wales to show the appetite for public transport investment.

The survey revealed that 74 per cent of the 1,103 Welsh adults surveyed believed public transport investment should be a priority for the Welsh government. 71 per cent of those surveyed thought more

investment in public transport would make a difference to the wider Welsh economy.

80 per cent of Welsh 18-24 year olds felt that more investment in public transport would make a difference to their access to education and 70 per cent of those surveyed said the investment would create jobs while 80 per cent think it would be easier to access those jobs.

Only 48 per cent were currently satisfied with regional public transport with those in North Wales the least content – with just five per cent of those surveyed saying they were 'very satisfied'.

The Welsh Government has taken particular interest in Furrer+Frey's rapid charge stations which - in basic terms - charge public battery powered public transport like buses, trams and trains.

Furrer+Frey has worked around the world on a multitude of interesting and challenging projects, from mega projects in China and India to complex projects in over 30 other countries. In the UK alone in the past two years the company has won awards from the IET for their work on simulations of electrification performance, Most Collaborative SME at the ICW Awards, Electrification Project of the Year at the UKRIA Awards and trophies at the RailStaff Awards.

Educating the future

Furrer+Frey also has a tradition of academic excellence, working with universities around the world. Currently in the UK the company has teams collaborating on projects with Oxford, Birmingham, Sheffield and Cambridge universities. The latest joint venture is an Electrification PhD with the University of Sheffield.

Now as the company approaches its centenary it remains a family owned company, currently managed by the fourth generation. With that history shaping what the company stands for today, it retains a family feel whilst maintaining a commitment to pioneering in the field and investing in the intellectual capital of the company.

This is reflected in the company striving to gain international best practice, but working and implementing this at a local level.

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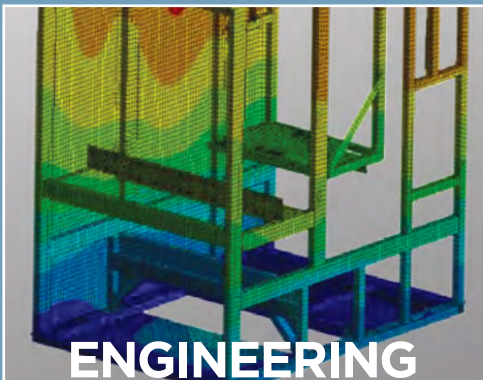
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Fast track to gold standard training

The National Training Academy for Rail (NTAR) is delivering gold standard training thanks to its partnership with **EAL**

EAL, the specialist awarding organisation for industry, now certifies and validates 39 courses at NTAR through its accreditation services, with a suite of qualifications covering traction and rolling stock and maintenance.

Facilities include a large fully fitted workshop, a virtual reality suite, a 'digital railway' room, and areas dedicated to the European Rail Traffic Management System/ European Train Control System (ERTMS) and rail electrification. The first cohort of learners from Siemens and South West Trains entered training in October 2015 and so far more than 150 apprentices have used the facility.

A successful partnership

Dan Walker, head of apprentice delivery for NTAR and Siemens Rail Systems said the partnership with EAL is crucial to its success.

'Siemens has long been an EAL centre and has always trusted its qualifications, so when we created NTAR - EAL was the obvious choice again' said Mr Walker.

'For many years, qualifications in the rail industry were generic but what has been developed with EAL is a structure and content which is relevant, realistic and understands today's requirements of the rail industry. EAL's expertise was instrumental in the development of the new trailblazer apprenticeship standards and has been key in the successful running of NTAR. Customer service is also a strong point - EAL works closely with us, responds promptly to feedback and is very attentive.'

The new apprenticeship qualifications set to be delivered at NTAR include EAL Level 3 Diplomas in Rail Engineering Technician Knowledge and Competence. There are no formal entry requirements for these qualifications; although learners must have the minimum levels of literacy and numeracy to comply with health and safety, the completion of the learning outcomes and the external assessment.

The qualifications are suitable for apprentice new starters and can also support the up-skilling of career changers from other

industries, who may have existing technical engineering knowledge and skills and need these to be recognised in a qualification. They also provide the skills and knowledge aspects of rail engineering apprenticeship standards.

Training leadership

Alison Parkes, managing director of EAL, said 'NTAR is a fantastic facility that is making a real difference to skills in the railway industry and supporting the huge rail infrastructure development programmes underway across the UK.

'EAL has worked with Siemens and NTAR to validate a suite of qualifications



needs of any company working in rail and, in EAL - we have an awarding organisation which is flexible in ensuring qualifications are relevant and up-to-date.

As the apprenticeship levy comes in, I would urge any employer in the industry to contact us, as together we can find the best solutions for their apprenticeship programmes.'

EAL has been at the forefront of



offering flexible learning solutions to support trainees, apprentices and existing staff. It will help to build a workforce that can steer the railway network through a transformational era and attract bright young talent into the industry.'

Dan Walker finished by saying 'We have had a lot of interest and companies were quickly able to see how NTAR could support their learning and development plans. As well as virtual technology, we have authentic working environments which can meet the

creating pioneering new employer-led rail apprenticeship standards.

Its raft of qualifications cover all six rail engineering disciplines: track, traction and rolling stock, signalling, telecoms, electrification and overhead line.

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Why safety is Kee for rail infrastructure projects

Tubular handrailing and guardrailing structures perform vital safety tasks for transport users and maintenance teams in different rail-related locations across the country every day

Handrails, guardrails and barriers are routinely fitted on one or both sides of a railway track, on parapets, bridges and other high risk areas, as well as alongside access ramps, staircases and gradients in and around stations, and the wider rail network.

These structures not only protect important trackside equipment and workers where there is a risk of a fall from height or from passing trains, they also assist with passenger guidance, and help secure safe, easy access for rail users and maintenance teams.

Safety should be a foremost concern, but other supporting factors also need consideration, especially when the choice on

a project may be between a fabricated or a tubular structure assembled using standard tube and fittings. Notably, ease and speed of installation, high corrosion resistance and adaptability should all be considered as part of the specification process.

When it comes to ease and speed of installation, then guardrailing constructed using standard tubes and fittings is proven to be 20 per cent less expensive than fabricated structures.

Kee Systems has carried out a comparison study on a typical 16 metre structure, one assembled using standard tube and fittings whilst the other was fabricated on site, connected using traditional welded joints.

The study shows that the fittings

structure provided a 41 per cent saving in labour which contributed to an overall 20 per cent cost reduction in assembly time. Working with a tube and fittings type solution also eliminates the hidden costs associated with fabrications, such as, the requirement for tailored fabrication drawings, extra site visits, transport and the cost of welding consumables.

Superior corrosion resistance

The Zinc Millennium Map (1998-2000) details the background atmospheric corrosion rates of zinc across the UK and Ireland. Given sufficient time, oxygen, and water, any iron mass eventually converts entirely to rust and disintegrates.

Using information from the survey, and



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Correct installation

It's clear that working with tubular structures presents a number of benefits. However, as with any system, if they are not installed correctly, they will not perform properly and could become a hazard rather than a safety solution.

Examples of such mistakes are:

- incorrect design loadings applied
- incorrect wall thickness of tube used
- inaccurate design heights
- wrong type of fixing used
- upright systems not aligned and levelled
- fixing directly on top of brickwork instead of core boring the upright in
- hand painting instead of polyester powder coating which is much harder wearing and reduces maintenance.

Example projects

Kee Systems has worked extensively in the rail sector and regularly installs Kee Klamp® fittings to provide barrier solutions protecting passengers and safeguarding workers. 8,000 metres of Kee Klamp® fittings have been installed along the East West Railway route between Bicester and Oxford to prevent pedestrian and vehicles from straying into off limit areas and to provide safe access to maintenance teams on either side of the railway line.

On the Brighton mainline, Kee Klamp® components were chosen to create a handrail and fence safety solution to protect train depot staff. Both Kee Klamp® guardrails and Weld Mesh Panels were installed on the Brighton element of the Network Rail Thameslink programme to create a metre-high safety barrier from high voltage cables, whilst screening the train depot from litter.

As on site requirements change, so too do fittings with new options being added to ensure continued ease of installation and adaptability. For example, last year saw the introduction of a range of 12 new fitting types, designed specifically for use on steeper gradients. The new range of Kee Klamp® slope fittings complements the existing range by offering a single fitting solution for the creation of guardrails along staircases, and ramps where the slope is greater than 30°, making them perfect for bridges, culverts and other areas of the railway infrastructure.

Rail safety remains the driving factor behind the specification of handrailing and guardrailing. However, providing a structure that is quicker and more cost-effective to assemble as well as being safer for longer will pay dividends. Ultimately, it will also be cheaper in the long run, especially for those designing structures in more testing environments, for example close to the sea.

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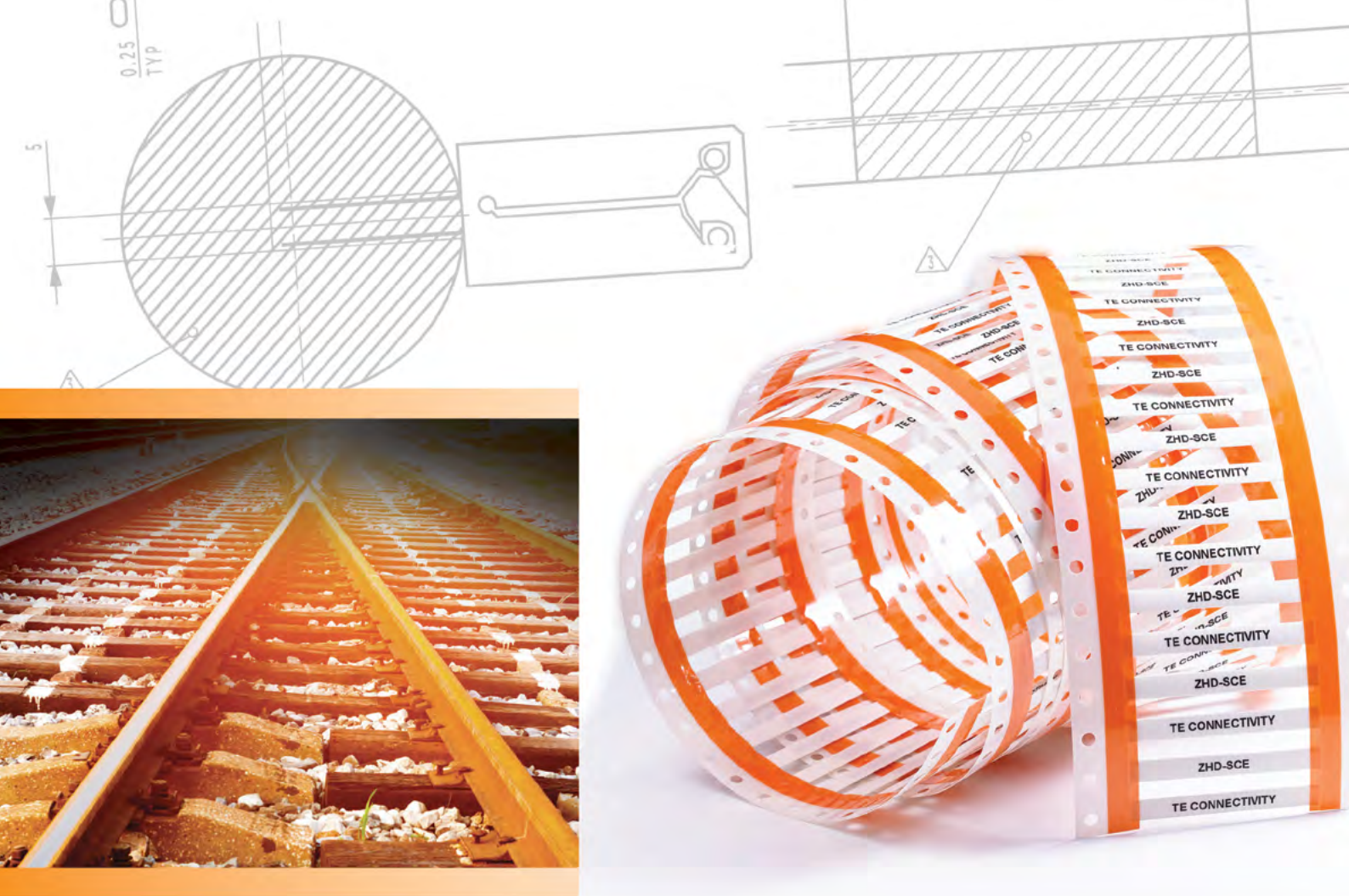
deeming the structure unsafe following local corrosion of 25 per cent, Kee Systems has identified that the average life of a structure using corrosion resistant hot dip galvanised fittings, such as the Kee Klamp® range of fittings, will be 37 years in a category three town such as Newcastle Upon Tyne. This compares to just under five years for a fabricated structure, featuring a uniform 3.2mm weld.

Galvanised fittings are available with a combination of protective coatings applied to achieve a longer life and a better corrosion resistance. This is vital for structures in areas which may be prone to a high level of weathering or rusting, and structures which are in difficult places to access and work on.

It allows pre-cut lengths of standard tubing (from 21.3mm to 60.3mm) to be quickly and easily connected. The result is a finished structure with uniform appearance which meets guaranteed design loads and British Standard requirements.

All fittings within the range incorporate an integral socket screw which locks the fitting securely onto its tube. This method creates a strong, stable and safe structure and has the added benefit of eliminating the need for time-consuming welding or specialist skills. The extensive range ensures that they can also cope easily with any changes in direction or gradient, and accommodate requirements for quickly adapting or extending an existing structure.





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The fifth mode of transportation

TE Connectivity has sponsored rLoop's innovative entry for the SpaceX Hyperloop competition, project managing a team of 1,000

When the SpaceX and Tesla entrepreneur Elon Musk published a white paper introducing Hyperloop in 2013, the mass transit concept seemed pretty far out. However, SpaceX signalled its intent to make the idea reality in 2015 when it launched a competition inviting teams to design pods.

Having been inspired by one of the competing teams, rLoop, TE has taken the opportunity to sponsor the team and has learned a lot about teamwork and collaboration in the process.

Dubbed the 'fifth mode of transportation' by Elon Musk, the concept involves a pod travelling through a vacuum at close to the speed of sound. The lack of air resistance would allow the transportation pod to reach 700 mph. This would allow a journey time of 30 minutes between Los Angeles and San Francisco, a distance of around 400 miles.

The Hyperloop challenge

Seeing a need to speed up the development of transportation prototypes and encourage innovation among students, SpaceX challenged the engineering community to invent prototype pods for its Hyperloop transportation services in June 2015.

The teams were challenged to design a half-scale pod for the Hyperloop and test it at a track at SpaceX's site in Hawthorne, California. 1,800 teams entered from around the world. When the competition was announced, it grabbed the attention of a group of people on the social media site Reddit, with members of the group quickly agreeing to form a team to enter the open competition.

The group became rLoop, a team of volunteers tied together by online collaboration and financed by crowd funding. Using online tools like Slack and Google Hangouts, they were able to create

a prototype unlike any other seen in the competition.

Ultimately, the team was formed by more than 1,000 volunteers from around the world, with a core group of 140 members in 14 countries and 500 people contributing to a crowd funding campaign.

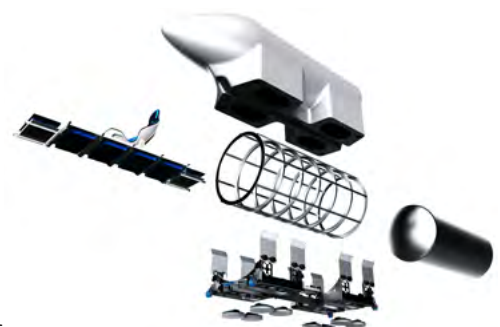
rLoopers come from all walks of life, including professional engineers, university and high school students, retirees and even CEOs of companies. What brings them together is the enthusiasm to contribute to a project that is shooting for the moon.

Micro tasks and complete transparency

One challenge of such a large team was managing change as new members came on board continually throughout the two year process and others left. As numbers grew, the normal project management tactics were no longer sustainable. Efficient onboarding and effective communication were key.

Through trial and error, rLoop developed a core team of project managers who were able to delegate while seeing the bigger picture.

The rLoop team was keen on ensuring that people could get started as soon as they signed up so project managers broke



tasks down into microtasks, which could be completed without having to know the full history and documentation.

Another aspect was to keep people engaged by allowing new members to choose what they wanted to work on – whether it was mechanical engineering, electronics or even public relations – and then get started right away. For example, some engineers came on board who wanted to contribute to the mechanical engineering parts of the project, whereas a physics graduate wanted to be involved in public relations. The microtask approach allowed that.

Another guiding principle was transparency. All new members had access to all documentation as soon as they joined. While this is unthinkable in industry, where intellectual property is closely guarded, the rLoop team saw this open source approach as a huge advantage because it helped with the on-boarding process.

Competing teams were quick to pick up on this and openly admitted that they pulled inspiration from rLoop, but the team is adamant that its open approach is a competitive advantage in the fast-paced development environment. Its logic is that controlling the flow of information would have stifled innovation, and if other teams are focused on rLoop, they are less focused on their own projects.

Design of the rPod

Even though the SpaceX competition was for a relatively simple prototype pod, the rLoopers had a vision to develop a true prototype with a full suite of technologies that would be needed on a real-life Hyperloop pod. The team wanted to keep the future Hyperloop in mind during the whole process, rather than focus on just winning the competition.

The result, the rPod, was an incredibly complex system with two main subsystems made up of a pressure vessel and the platform it sits on. In a full scale pod, the pressure vessel would include the passenger compartment but in the rPod it contains the brains of the system with batteries and electronics.

The platform contains magnetic brakes, the levitation system and sensors to measure acceleration and location relative to the surface.

Another key difference with other entries was that rLoop adopted active levitation. It uses spinning magnets in the pod to create levitation by interacting with the magnetic force from the static magnet in the Hyperloop test track. Some simpler pods used static magnets, which meant that they only achieved levitation once they reached high speeds.

Because of the pressure vessel and spinning magnets, the rPod was complex and needed a high energy battery system. Off-the-shelf battery packs didn't meet the right specifications such as weight, power and energy density so rLoopers created a



bespoke battery instead, which was a its own project within the bigger project.

Moving to manufacture

After a year, rLoop had its pod design in place and was ready to start building – a major achievement considering the team had never met in person.

This is where TE came into the picture. The company heard about rLoop and decided to sponsor it. This included a manufacturing space at TE's Menlo Park facility in Silicon Valley, access to its components and 20 engineers as volunteer advisors.

rLoopers chose more than 70 TE components for the rPod, which created almost the entire central nervous system. These included all the connectors, heavy gauge specialised wires as well as 500 temperature sensors embedded in the battery and high capacity cables to charge the battery system. TE even imported specialised components from around the world to help the team.

Choosing the correct components was critical, ideal combination of weight, size and performance but additional challenges were that the pressure vessels needed sealed connectors and the spinning magnets in the levitation system meant that good shielding was required.

The competition

Of the 1,800 teams that originally entered, rLoop was one of only 27 that made it through to design and testing at SpaceX in January 2017.

Although an issue meant that the rPod was not one of the three tested on the track at the competition, the SpaceX judges were very impressed with the pod and awarded the team the Pod Innovation Award, recognising the unique team organisation and pod design.

SpaceX is running a second competition



to find the fastest speed in the tube. While the competition is officially for student teams, SpaceX judges ruled that rLoop was welcome to enter as it is made up only of volunteer members who balance their contribution with working and family lives.

The team is now developing a full scale model for the second competition in 2017 and is looking at ways to increase speed with additional propulsion while reducing overall drag.

The future of Hyperloop?

While it seemed far out when Elon Musk published his white paper back in 2013, the Hyperloop concept is gaining ground. Two commercial Hyperloop organisations (Hyperloop One and TransPod) exhibited at InnoTrans in 2016 and are actively pursuing partnerships, with the United Arab Emirates undertaking a feasibility study for a route linking Abu Dhabi with Dubai and taking only 12 minutes to cover 99 miles.

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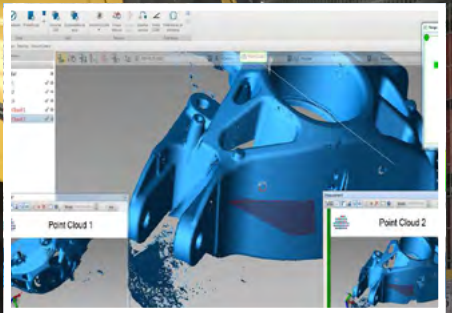
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The importance of regulation

For an industry that is so highly regulated it is surprising that consultancy within risk and safety management is unregulated

Hazard and Risk Management (HaRMUK) is a leading provider in health, safety and risk management consultancy services within the rail sector. HaRMUK managing director, Paul Thompson, believes that the company's resolve to deliver innovative and best in class services to help companies achieve their business objectives is a driving force behind its success.

He states 'The negative health and safety perception can be justified where poor practice is evident. For an industry that is so highly regulated it is surprising that consultancy within risk and safety management is unregulated. This in turn can lead to some consultancies failing to deliver appropriate advice or support to clients.'

He continues 'Common consultancy problems include an overly zealous attitude towards some risks whilst using generic templates to then inform clients what they already know without offering any real solutions, practical support or recommendations to reduce the risk and

cost to business'.

Engaging in the core activities that help support the organisation's business objectives is key. Paul says 'we add value to clients who recognize they do not have the time, available resource or knowledge to achieve their business objectives and it makes business sense for them to buy in this support. This is typically short term work although we are finding some clients also value a longer partnership approach.

'We can provide an agreed fixed term proposal and plan or ongoing health, safety and risk management support to organisations with limited full time staff dedicated to safety management. We also offer clients a range of annual packages to suit every need.'

Client based solutions

HaRMUK aims to reduce risk, optimise performance, enhance capability and ultimately improve health and safety standards, claims defensibility and working practices by way of providing specific techniques to deal with client needs or helping clients to develop their own solutions.

Services include solutions to support hazard and risk management projects, legal compliance and best practices, management systems and implementation, capability and technical support, information and assurance services, certification and bid support programmes.

HaRMUK subscribes to the principle and practice of continuing professional development. Its services are conducted by OSHCR registered consultants, bound by the code of ethics of a professional body and characterised by:

- relevant experience, knowledge, skills and qualifications in the subject area
- ability to apply these in the right way, while recognising competency limits
- training and other professional development activities to maintain competence and professionalism.

HaRMUK
HAZARD & RISK MANAGEMENT

'We add value to clients who recognize they do not have the time, available resource or knowledge to achieve their business objectives and it makes business sense for them to buy in this support. This is typically short term work although we are finding some clients also value a longer partnership approach'

HaRMUK enables services to be competitively priced offering the best value to its clients. Engaging with the right people will save you time and money in the long run.

The company provides a free, no obligation initial consultation and deliver services to an agreed fixed term proposal and plan, annual package or agreed variable terms based on a daily rate or hourly rate to suit client requirements.

HaRMUK is a member of the Rail Industry Supplier Qualification Scheme (RISQS).

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Paul Thompson





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Reliability, innovation and disruption management

After eight years at Northern Rail, Lee Wasnidge is the new managing director at **Cabfind**. He shares his vision for the business' future as the on-demand transportation market continues to accelerate

Cabfind's connection with the rail industry goes to the very heart of the business and its innovative approach to delivering managed taxi services. The company is now led by newly appointed managing director, Lee Wasnidge with a career background in rail, and in particular, strategic change.

Lee joined the business after being recruited by Cabfind's parent company, global transport provider Transdev. He is a fellow of The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport with an MBA from the Manchester Business School. In his previous role as Transition Director at Northern Rail, Lee led strategic change including customer experience improvements, rolling stock refurbishments and on-time performance.

Now he heads up a company that owes its UK network of 160,000 vehicles to its very beginnings when Cabfind first started to forge links with the rail sector more than 10 years ago. Cabfind provides managed taxi services for crew and passenger movements with a customer portfolio that includes train operating companies such as GWR, London Midland and Northern Rail.

Providing pre-planned, ad-hoc and emergency movements, it blends operational capacities with innovative, added value processes and business intelligence. Its commitment to delivering exceptional levels of customer service is matched by detailed knowledge of the sector and a deep understanding of critical issues such as duty of care and safety.

Last year, Cabfind was crowned Subcontractor of the Year at the 2016 UK Rail Industry Awards in recognition of its innovation and excellence.

Lee explained: "The transport sector is going through a period of massive change thanks to technology-driven applications which are raising expectations and offering incredible new opportunities to meet customer requirements.

"The rail sector continues to be the backbone of Cabfind's business and during periods of exceptional activity when multiple incidents coincide across the rail



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network, the whole company mobilises to support its rail team.

‘The same ethos and commitment is applied to all our customers across a diverse range of sectors from retail and freight to media and public sector organisations.’

Disruption management

When travel disruption hits the national news, it is a case of all hands on decks for the team at Cabfind which provides on-demand crew, staff and passenger movements 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year.

When storm Doris moved across the UK in February bringing strong winds of up to 94 mph transport was widely disrupted with delays and cancellation to train services and flights throughout the day.

As a key travel partner to the rail industry, Cabfind played a huge role in managing the disruption. During storm Doris the company experienced a 250 per cent uplift in calls to their contact centre.

Lee added: ‘Our success in delivering excellent service in such challenging conditions was down to hard work and a strong relationship with the supplier network.’

‘Our customers provided positive feedback to its pro-active response and in the post incident review the company was able to identify processes that responded effectively to the emergency situation and areas that required additional support.’

This highlights the importance of agility. Dealing with customers’ planned journeys on a day-to-day-basis is standard practice, but when crisis events occur, it is vital to be able to scale up quickly and absorb the additional requirements.

Equally important is application of duty of care considerations to ensure the safety of staff and passengers at all times.

Lee explained: ‘We work closely with our supply chain to build strong relations based on trust and a mutual understanding of the importance of safety, adhering to all essential policies and protocols.’

Interpreting crew diagrams

Central to Cabfind’s service proposition is the company’s capabilities to interpret crew diagrams, delivering operational efficiencies and giving customers the flexibility to adapt and change journeys where necessary.

Lee added: ‘Our IT platform integrates with customers’ systems to interpret crew diagrams, extracting the relevant information which allows the dedicated rail team to coordinate taxi requirements independently without the need for any



Daniel Price

direct interaction with the client.’

After this, a pre-journey analysis is provided and the customer is empowered with online management tools to amend or modify the booking as they wish in line with changing needs or requirements.

Without this capability, resource managers would have to extract the data manually to identify taxi requirements and then make the relevant taxi bookings, which if they are using multiple service providers, can prove to be a lengthy and painstaking task.

Lee concluded: ‘Not only does Cabfind have the technology to streamline the process to identify taxi journey requirements and provide fulfillment but it can also identify a range of time and cost-saving measures.’

Analysis of costs and performance

Cabfind’s online management tools are designed to provide the customer with real insight into performance, costs and business intelligence. Matched by its in-depth expertise and experience, it relieves customers of the pressure to provide their own in-house capabilities, freeing up valuable time and resources.

Cabfind’s newly appointed commercial director, Daniel Price explained, ‘Our online management tools set Cabfind apart from the competition. It means that we can work alongside customers’ resource managers and really drill down into the detail to identify ways of working smarter.’

For example, it is possible to model against the ratios between high and low touch bookings to help optimise the impact on customers’ busy control room environments.

Cabfind identify ways to make savings on

regular routes to get value for money from the supply chain and then monitor incident performance. Alongside the benefits of using a single source provider which consolidates invoicing, cost centres and cost codes, Cabfind’s appetite to perform and innovate continues.

Delivering innovation

With the arrival of Lee Wasnidge at the helm of Cabfind alongside a new management team including commercial director Daniel Price, the business is drawing on expertise from across the ground transportation sector.

Daniel has a proven track record within the mobility sector after holding senior roles at Avis Budget Group and Sixt rent a car. He brings specialist expertise from the car rental industry and is focused on getting people and products to the right place at the right time.

Daniel said, ‘Understanding the needs of our customers and the pressures that they are facing is essential especially when it comes to issues surrounding duty of care. The travel and transportation sector is witnessing a period of major change thanks to a combination of factors, not least the rise of on-demand technology.’

‘The management team at Cabfind draw on a wealth of experience from different areas with real insight into changing expectations, thought processes and ideas. What never changes however, is the need for strong, customer focused partnerships that offer exceptional service, duty of care and value for money.’

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Invasive weeds in rail networks

Invasive species are such a rising problem that invasive non-native species are now recognised as the second biggest threat to biodiversity worldwide

It is important to distinguish between the different threats. For example, Japanese Knotweed is an extremely aggressive alienating species. From an ecological point of view, it destroys the habitats of native species putting bioregions at great risk, which is subsequently a threat to our environment. In addition, Japanese Knotweed is listed by the World Conservation Union as one of the most invasive species due to its continuous growth, of up to 20 centimetres a day, and extremely difficult nature to remove.

Overall, it is incredibly detrimental to buildings and land, blocking footpaths, damaging concrete, tarmac and the stability of river banks – hence, a huge threat not only in the landscaping industry, but to many other vertical sectors from railway networks to highways, water networks and the property industry to name a few.

Today, invasive species are causing structural damage to the tune of £2.1 billion per year according to figures from the Environment Agency and the Department of the Regions. It has got to such an extent that the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors now survey for Japanese Knotweed in or near a property as part of its mortgage survey. If it is present, not only will the property be devalued by around 40 per cent, it will also affect neighbouring properties' values and often results in subsequent litigation.

And it's not just Japanese Knotweed, although this is the most pernicious to control. A further invasive species to be mindful of is Himalayan Balsam, which spreads its seed through biological 'explosions'. These seeds can remain viable for five years, meaning a long-term treatment regime is crucial. Additionally, giant Hogweed contains sap that can cause horrific blisters on contact with skin. The only good news is that it is susceptible to herbicide if treated correctly.

Japanese knotweed growing out of control

There are three species of Knotweed currently growing in the UK, up from just one a few years ago, these include Japanese Knotweed, Giant Knotweed and Hybrid Knotweed.

Why is this a problem for property owners, transport and utilities networks and the construction and estates management/FM sectors? According to Neil Huck, Ground Control's national training manager and invasive weeds expert, invasive species

such as Japanese Knotweed are becoming a serious problem due to the increasing requirement to manage properties and structural assets ranging from electricity pylons, sub stations and reservoirs to railways, tunnels and bridges in often difficult access areas where these invasive weeds are growing.

To be clear: having invasive weeds growing near any structure is a big problem, not only due to its ability to degrade the infrastructure and therefore make it weaker, but also the subsequent cost to remove it completely with no possibility of it growing back.

To put this into perspective, allowing the spread of Knotweed from any site into



neighbouring properties could subject the property owner to fines and removal costs as well as law suits. There is then the silent cost: that individual's reputation. With the huge rise in such digital media as social media, an organisation's reputation can quickly become soiled due to people posting messages across platforms including





Facebook, Twitter and even LinkedIn.

Catching invasive species early is the key

Ground Control is both an innovator and a pioneer of technology, delivering a range of services including grounds maintenance, winter maintenance, tree works and vegetation management, soft and hard landscaping, ecology, design and build, pest control, fencing, window cleaning and roofing services.

Additionally, its managers are expertly trained to work across the range of possible systems and site types to ensure that you continue to deliver services for your customers throughout the year.

Timing of treatment, whether it is for

Knotweed or another invasive species, is critical for achieving acceptable levels of control, and early engagement of Ground Control is recommended. For example, Japanese Knotweed is an herbaceous species which lies dormant throughout the winter. This means that it is incredibly difficult to pick up during these months. However, don't be fooled as it will start to appear in mid to late March and is most active throughout the summer growing season. To be able to spot any invasive species on the likes of rail networks, knowing what they look like is critical. Presently, Ground Control is assisting Network Rail in the training of its staff around what to look for when identifying invasive species including



Japanese Knotweed. This includes their natural habitats, what environmental factors increase their growth and most importantly, what to look out for.

This way, rail engineers and other staff will know what they are looking for during their everyday activities, therefore speeding up the process of treating it before it impacts on such areas as neighbouring cities and villages.

Following identification, the next step is to call in the experts, for example Ground Control. Ground Control can assist rail networks in creating a long-term strategy, that includes a sustained annual tri-treatment chemical control regime, resulting in the saving of much needed money in comparison with the likely significant cost of having to dig up and remove the invasive species from at worst, underneath the rail tracks.

Ground Control's services include

- pre-development Site Surveys
- biosecurity
- the legislative landscape and organisations' legal obligations
- full technical support and advice
- long-term treatment guarantees
- internal staff training for customers
- Lantra registered training.

To summarise

Invasive species such as all forms of Knotweed (Japanese Knotweed, Giant Knotweed and Hybrid Knotweed) and Himalayan Balsam should not be ignored if construction on and around the land where they inhabit is to continue.

Although organisations like Ground Control are trained in their identification, control and removal, it is also important to educate and inform personnel in sectors such as rail around their natural habitats, what environmental factors increase their growth and what to look out for. By taking these important steps, Ground Control will not only reduce the impact of invasive species, but also the cost of dealing with them.

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Visit: <https://www.ground-control.co.uk/invasive-weed-management/>.

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Metrolink head bows out

Peter Cushing has welcomed **Danny Vaughan** to the role – his deputy since joining Transport for Greater Manchester in 2013 from Luas, Dublin's light rail network.

Cushing will continue in a part-time capacity to oversee the change in operator from RATP Dev UK to KeolisAmey.

Councillor Andrew Fender, chair of the TfGM Committee, said: 'Peter has played a vital role in delivering one of the country's largest transport projects in the Metrolink expansion. During his tenure we have seen record-breaking patronage and year-on-year increases in passenger satisfaction. That is, quite simply, remarkable and the greatest tribute to his first-class stewardship.'

Cushing said: 'The past four years have not been without their challenges, but have only served to make the many successes we've shared all the more rewarding.'

He continued: 'This year is going to be a fantastic period for the network, with completion of the Second City Crossing, silver jubilee celebrations, and a new operating contract in place. Collectively, it feels like a fitting point in time to end my tenure and I can think of no better person to pass the mantle to than Danny.'



Peter Cushing (left) with Cllr Andrew Fender

Robin Proctor to be new president of CILT

Robin Proctor is to become the next president of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in the UK. He will take up the one-year presidency from Will Whitehorn next month at the CILT president's inauguration.

Said Proctor: 'I hope to play an active role in leading change and promoting CILT's influence as we head into this exciting era for the logistics and transport profession.'

Whitehorn said: 'It has been a privilege to be president of CILT during a year that has produced so many momentous events.'



South West Trains MD moves on

South West Trains managing director **Christian Roth** has decided to step down after nearly a decade with the business.

Roth joined the Toc in 2008 from Siemens. A former fleet director at South West Trains, he became managing director of the franchise in February 2016.

Margaret Kay, managing director of Stagecoach Supertram (see interview pg47) has been appointed MD of South West Trains for the remainder of the current franchise, which runs until summer 2017.

Tim Bilby, currently Supertram's head of finance and commercial, will become its interim MD.

Tim Shoveller, MD of Stagecoach Group's UK Rail Division, said: 'I would like to thank Christian for his contribution to the business over the past decade and wish him well for the future. 'Margaret is one of the most talented executives in the UK rail industry and is a tremendous role model and mentor for the next generation of young managers. She has real understanding of the fundamental role that our people play in delivering a successful railway for our customers. I would also like to congratulate Tim on his appointment at Stagecoach'



New appointment at Nexus

The company has appointed **Chris Carson** as Metro services director, overseeing the operation of trains and stations.

Nexus, which owns and manages the Tyne & Wear Metro will take direct control of its operations on 1st April, when the existing contract with DB Regio comes to an end. Carson, currently operations and safety director at DB Regio, said: 'Performance hasn't been where it should be over the last few years and the aim is make it better for our customers.'



Steve Coslett

New chaplain for the South West

Steve Cosslett is the new railway chaplain for the South West of England, based at Exeter St David's. He comes to the Railway Mission via Mexico, where he worked for the One Mission Society as field director.

Cosslett will also take on most of the responsibilities that were Alan Thorpe's, the chaplain based in Bristol, who has decided after almost 30 years that semi-retirement is his next step.

Liam Johnston, executive director of Railway Mission said: 'Steve's experience will bring a fresh approach to the chaplaincy support in the South West, we are all very happy to welcome him to the railway industry and the railway family.'

Stuart Cockburn joins Arriva

Cockburn has been appointed as the Group's strategy and development director.

CEO Manfred Rudhart said he joins at a 'defining time' for Arriva. 'The way we deliver transport for our clients and customers is changing, and that presents opportunities as well as some significant challenges. A clear focus on our strategy is essential to our future success.'

Cockburn's most recent role was with broadcasting and telecoms company Arqiva.



Jason Bridges is COO for Wessex Route

Network Rail has appointed Bridges into the new role, which encompasses all services to and from Waterloo.

Bridges joins the Wessex Route from Saudi Arabia, where he is currently operations consultant for Network Rail Consulting in the Middle East. Before joining Network Rail, he worked in Australia as general manager for Sydney Trains.

Becky Lumlock, route managing director at Network Rail's Wessex route, said: 'Jason brings with him a wealth of industry experience from around the world.'

Three promotions in Alstom's UK & Ireland senior management team

The company said the new appointments 'refocus' the top team around opportunities in the UK & Ireland markets and complement the recent merger of Alstom's signalling and infrastructure businesses in the UK.

Susan Evans has become the most senior female director at Alstom UK & Ireland with her promotion to managing director, urban & services. Evans will take her experience from the Nottingham Tram Extension and apply it across Alstom's Transport for London, Dublin and other urban businesses. She will also have a special responsibility for championing diversity and Women in Rail within the company.

Piers Wood has been promoted to managing director, regional and intercity, taking on responsibility for maintaining the fleet of Alstom-built Pendolinos used by Virgin



Piers Wood

Trains on the West Coast Main Line, and other maintenance contracts. He will also oversee bidding for rolling stock orders and the introduction of Alstom's new hydrogen train technologies, both in the UK.

Jason Baldock is the new director of high speed rail, leading Alstom's bidding team.

Nick Crossfield, managing director, Alstom UK & Ireland, said: 'My senior team is now complete.'



Susan Evans



Jason Baldock

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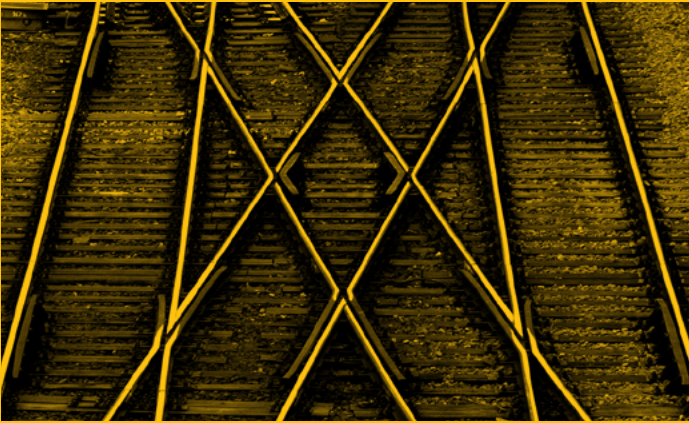
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