



There's a growing interest in, and appetite for, giving large cities outside London more of the benefits that London enjoys on public transport. Including an integrated network with simple Oyster-style smart ticketing; the ability to properly plan and fund services over the long term; and a system where it is much clearer to passengers, and to business, who is responsible for what.

Here's how it could be done...

Buses

The obstacles

- Bus services are the main form of public transport outside London. They reduce congestion for all road users; can provide access to new development sites quickly; give the workless access to jobs; give young people access to education and training; help tackle the long term health costs of isolation for older and disabled people; and get people to medical appointments, saving money for the NHS. These benefits are not captured in the ways in which bus services are currently funded and the key forms of public support (most notably Department for Communities and Local Government funding for local government) are under considerable pressure.
- Local transport authorities outside London do not currently have the right mix of powers they need to create simple and integrated Oyster-style ticketing, or to easily introduce London-style planning and franchising of bus networks.

The change we need

- Enhance the powers available to Local Transport Authorities in the Local Transport Act 2008 to introduce London-style regulation of bus services in their areas so that services can be planned, fares simplified and standards enforced. Where bus services remain deregulated, there should be more powers for local government to ensure that tickets that can be used on the services of all operators are priced competitively and that bus operators properly promote those tickets.

- A dedicated, devolved, ring-fenced funding stream ('Connectivity Fund') for local government to support bus services, which builds on the existing fuel subsidy that the Department for Transport (DfT) provides for operators - topped up in a way that reflects the wider cross-sector benefits that bus services bring to Departments right across Whitehall.
- Regulatory change to put existing performance data derived from automatic vehicle location information into the public domain, and to reform the relationships between existing bodies concerned with bus passenger rights and complaints (including Passenger Focus and the Traffic Commissioners).

What this means for voters

- Strengthened powers for local authorities to enable them to take full responsibility for local bus networks so that services can be protected, fares capped and service quality guaranteed, in the same way that London does now.
- More powers for all local authorities to limit the extra charge made for tickets that can be used on all buses in an area when compared with tickets that can only be used on one operator's services.
- Dedicated funding stream for local government to protect lifeline bus services.
- New deal for bus passengers' consumer rights – including opening up the data about how local bus routes are performing; right of access to fares information; and clear and transparent arrangements for passenger complaints and feedback.

Rail

The obstacles

- Use of local rail services has been growing fast as more people commute further to take up the opportunities available in revitalised city centres. Yet investment in local rail services in England outside London has been inadequate with too many aging and unsuitable trains that lack sufficient capacity.
- Too many decisions that affect local rail services are taken in Whitehall and also reflect silo thinking about rail services which neglects their role in wider city region public transport networks.

The change we need

- Where powers over rail services have been devolved in the UK, more investment and better performance quickly follows. This can be seen since devolution of powers over local rail in Scotland, on London Overground and on Merseyrail Electrics. We need a commitment from Government to continue to work in partnership with consortia of local transport authorities to devolve responsibilities for local rail services. There is also a need for more freedoms and flexibilities for local transport authorities to procure trains and services in more cost-effective ways in order to get better outcomes for passengers at less cost to the taxpayer.

What this means for voters...

- Local rail services that are planned and overseen locally so that they can better meet passengers' needs.
- Oyster style smart ticketing that can be used on local rail services as well as local bus and tram systems.
- Local rail services that are more seamlessly integrated with local bus and mass transit systems.

Bringing it all together

The obstacles

- Too many decisions about local transport are taken in Whitehall and the way in which local transport is funded outside London is complex, inefficient and unwieldy. Officials in Whitehall are too remote from both the context and the implications of their decisions on local buses, trains and cycle lanes. London shows how when decisions on transport are devolved, investment, innovation and support for transport soars. The clear benefits of devolution of rail in Scotland and Merseyside show the same thing.
- We need a new deal between national and local government on transport where DfT sets national policy, and overall goals for local transport (such as safer cycling and Oyster-style ticketing) but stops second guessing how best these policies are implemented on the ground.

The change we need

- A Minister-led task and finish cities unit within DfT (which brings together city region representation, with lead officials from DfT on bus, rail and local transport), whose aim it is to crack the obstacles to delivering London-style integrated transport in Britain's other major urban areas.

What this means for voters

Rolling out the kind of integrated public transport service that London has to the next tier of largest urban areas outside London with:

- Trains, trams and bus services that connect with each other.
- Simple, smart ticketing which can be used across all forms of public transport and which is subject to protection and regulation.
- Much more influence for passengers and local communities over the public transport they use through greater control and standard setting by local authorities - and a new deal for bus passengers on how their services perform and who to complain to when things go wrong.