Integrated Transport Authorities and the Local Transport Bill Working Paper

What is an Integrated Transport Authority?

Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) is the new name for Passenger Transport Authorities. Passenger Transport Authorities (PTA) are currently responsible for the provision, planning, procurement and promotion of public transport. Under the draft Local Transport Bill, November 2007 they can take on new powers and roles over strategic roads, rail and local highways.

Where are they?

Currently there are six PTAs in England covering Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire. Each PTA is made up of representatives from the local councils in the areas they serve. Each PTA has Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) made up of officers under a Chief Executive to undertake the actual work.

How are they funded?

Funding is through a combination of an annual levy on the local council tax and historic grants from national government for local rail services.

How will the Local Transport Bill change things?

As well as renaming PTAs the Local Transport Bill includes powers to establish new Integrated Transport Authorities. Proposals must demonstrate they will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of transport within its area. This is enabling legislation i.e. proposals should be locally driven with different approaches for different areas. One size or type of ITA does not fit all.

Existing PTAs are not necessarily a model for new ITAs.

Key features of the Bill are:

- Two or more authorities (county, district, unitary) can put forward proposals for an ITA.
- Secretary of State can direct two or more authorities to undertake a review and put forward ITA proposals.
- ITA must consist of the whole of two or more authorities.
- New Bus Quality Contracts and Partnership powers (see below).
- Strategic roads and rail powers can be delegated by the Government to the ITA.
- Local highway authority powers (e.g. bus lanes, traffic calming, maintenance) can be transferred to the ITA.
- Membership – majority must be appointed from amongst elected members from the ITA area.
- Establish an Integrated Transport Executive (officers) to implement the powers of the ITA.
- Local Transport Plan to be produced by the ITA only.
The Bill also contains new bus powers for:

- Quality Contracts – easier to introduce where local authorities can specify and regulate bus networks creating a franchised bus network.
- Quality Partnerships – enable greater co-operation and integration of bus services.

**Potential benefits**

- Provide robust governance for planning, delivery and management of transport in the area.
- Transport for London style ‘Overground’ with ITA setting rail fares, timetables and quality standards.
- One brand for both rail and bus services with integrated ticketing, smartcards and London style ‘Oyster’ cards.
- Take over strategic roads as well as rail.
- Extend ITA into neighbouring authorities to cover full travel to work areas at District or County level. Note this would mean the whole area of a county or district or unitary.
- Powers over traffic management measures and maintenance.
- Franchised bus network through Quality Contracts – specify and regulate bus services across the whole of the West of England.
- Set bus fares and frequencies through Quality Partnerships.

**Potential Disbenefits**

- Costs of setting up, operation and funding.
- Additional tier of administration.
- Loss of some local authority highway powers.
- Weaker geographical and transport links if ITA covers too great an area.

**Timescale**

The Local Transport Bill is likely to become law by Summer 2008 with final guidance to follow.

West of England Partnership
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