



Smartcards for the city regions

- the opportunities ahead and the role that PTEs can play -

PTEs plan, promote and procure public transport for eleven million people in the six largest conurbations outside London. Our aim is to bring about single integrated public transport networks accessible to all.

Simple, integrated ticketing products are key to achieving this objective which is why PTEs have taken a leading role in instigating, supporting, promoting and administering multi-modal tickets in their areas, for example:

- **South Yorkshire PTE and Metro** have led the development and piloting of Yorcard – an ITSO compliant, multi-modal, contactless smartcard. A range of versions were available during the pilot, including a pay-as-you-go Yorcard which automatically calculates the best value fare. Lessons from the pilot are currently being evaluated with a decision on how to move forward due shortly.
- **Merseytravel** trialled smartcard technology as early as 1995 and are now the majority shareholder in Livesmart – a smartcard organisation that has developed a range of products for the city including 'Your ticket for Liverpool'. For a one-off payment, this visitor smartcard offers free travel on selected city centre buses combined with deals and discounts for city attractions.
- **Greater Manchester PTE** hope to act as trailblazers for smartcard technology in their area by rolling out smartcard technology on the Metrolink light rail system, laying the ground for bus and rail operators to follow suit.
- **Nexus** will implement smartcards on the Tyne and Wear Metro in the next two years, and have initiated 'Programme Smart' to develop a North East-wide smart ticketing infrastructure
- **Centro** has invested in the region of £14 million to bring smartcards to the West Midlands. This includes providing operators with the ticket machines – some 2,500 buses will be fitted with smartcard equipment during 2010 – as well as procuring back-office hardware and providing cards to concessionary users. Concessionary passes will be used in smart format from the outset and there are plans to develop further innovative commercial ticketing products in the near future.

We believe that integrated, unified and simple ticketing structures – delivered by smart media like smartcards – bring a host of benefits for public transport operators and users alike.

London's Oystercard shows how well passengers respond. In a relatively short period of time it has boosted patronage and become an intrinsic part of London life. It is now difficult to conceive of London's public transport without it.

The benefits of integrated ticketing delivered by smart media like smartcards include:

- ✓ makes public transport **easier and more convenient** for users and promotes greater use of public transport networks
- ✓ **improves journey times** by speeding passage through ticket barriers and reducing bus 'dwell time'.
- ✓ **reduces fraud and administrative costs** as it is harder to cheat a smartcard system than a paper-based system, and automation of the administration is easier to achieve
- ✓ **provides more - and more reliable - data** about the journeys people are making which in turn can inform better decision making about the planning of services
- ✓ opens up **further options to target concessions** in a more sophisticated way at a wider variety of excluded and low income groups
- ✓ creates the **potential for commercial add-on applications** that can help support public transport investment **or civic add-ons** like local authority libraries and leisure centres

As technologies evolve there is also the potential to move beyond smartcards to enable banking cards to act as public transport payment cards, or mobile phones or indeed other devices that contain the right kind of smart media. For example, in Hong Kong smart wrist watches can be used to access and pay for trips on the public transport networks.

pteg believes that however the technologies develop it is important to ensure that the central objective is to provide passengers with easier ticketing options.

This is important as without this central objective being pursued there is a danger that the opportunity to give passengers what they want – which is something that resembles the simplicity of Oystercard – will be lost. Instead there will be too many smartcards with too many ticketing options.

We also believe that there is an opportunity to build on London's lead by introducing a series of compatible integrated ticketing products - delivered by smartcards - for the next tier of major conurbations – that is the six PTE areas.

If this can be achieved the PTE areas and London will have public transport smartcards covering the majority of urban England – some 17 million people. This in turn could provide a base upon which to build a national public transport smartcard.

To this end the PTEs will:

- work together on the technical and administrative aspects of their smartcard strategies to **ensure future compatibility**
- look at ways in which the multi-ticketing products that they currently offer can be **made more consistent with each other**
- explore the potential for a **commonly badged and mutually compatible smartcard ticketing offer** which could be used across all six of the PTE areas.