

Road Passenger Transport Management

Road Passenger Transport Management

Planning and coordinating passenger
transport operations

Tony Francis
David Hurdle



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CONTENTS

About the editors xii

List of contributors xiii

Foreword xxi

Preface xxii

PART ONE How the bus business works 1

01 Definition of road passenger transport 3

Peter White

Introduction 3

Principal types of bus service 3

London and Northern Ireland 5

Variations within the local bus market 6

Bus priorities and bus rapid transit 9

Demand-responsive services 11

‘Non-local’ services 12

Community transport 15

Taxi and private hire vehicle services 16

Types of bus and coach operator 18

Current developments and policy issues 18

Acknowledgements 19

References 20

Further reading 20

02 History, heritage, current challenges 22

Tony Francis and Stephen Joseph

The start 22

Urban development 22

Horse to motor 23

Rapid development – the Roaring Twenties 24

The lead toward conflict 25

You’ve never had it so good, and thereafter 26

After the darkness followed the dawn 27

The free market and to new horizons	27
Challenges	28
Partnerships	29
Franchising	31
Conclusions	32
References	34
Further reading	35

03 The legal and regulatory framework 36

Ian Barlex

Introduction	36
The legal framework	36
Principal transport legislation	37
Principal highways legislation	40
Other relevant legislation	41
Legislative devolution	42
Regulation	44
Summary	53
References	54

04 Planning 55

David Jenkins

Introduction	55
How do operators choose routes?	55
Relationship between revenue, costs and frequency changes	56
Consultation	57
The role of the local transport authority	57
Public, private or community sector?	59
Depot location and capacity	59
Scheduling	60
Conclusions	61
References	62

05 Vehicles and fuels 63

David Jenkins and John Birtwistle

Section 1: Vehicles	63
Section 2: Fuels	72
Conclusions	77
References	77

06 Operations 80*Tony Francis*

Introduction 80

Staff 80

Vehicles 81

Services 81

Bus stations 83

Summary and the future 85

Reference 86

Further reading 86

07 Fares, ticketing and other revenue – turning a social service into a business 87*John Birtwistle and Kevin Hawkins*

Introduction 87

Costs 88

Demand 90

Fare structures 92

Payment 95

Ticketing equipment 98

Passenger flow 100

Travelcards 103

Revenue protection and standard fares 110

Concessionary travel 110

Other income – service support 116

Kick-start campaigns 118

The green bus fund 119

Major projects and government initiatives 119

Advertising 120

The Bus Service Operators' Grant 121

Private hire 123

Conclusions 124

References 124

Further reading 124

08 Human resources case study: Metroline 125*Steve Harris*

Introduction 125

The London scene 126

Metroline's workforce planning	129
Recruitment	130
Staff passes	132
Induction	133
Computerized tests	133
Basic training	134
Pre-service training	135
City & Guilds driver qualification	135
Apprenticeship scheme	136
Ongoing driver training	137
Vigil vanguard training	138
Conclusions	138
References	138

PART TWO Wider engagement 141

09 The present and potential market for public transport 143

Peter White

Introduction	143
The current market for public transport in Britain	144
Trends over time	149
Other factors affecting use of buses and coaches in Britain	151
Attitudinal data	154
Factors affecting overall levels of local travel	155
Future opportunities for the bus industry	155
Conclusions	156
Acknowledgements	157
References	157

10 Bus provision and land use planning 159

Tim Pharoah

Introduction	159
Benchmarking, targets and aspirations	159
The planning mechanism	161
Urban form needed to deliver a significant role for the bus	166
Other attributes needed in support of high bus mode share	170
Conclusions	172
References	174

- 11 Bus priority 176**
David Hurdle, G Nigel King and Susannah Rosenfeld-King
Introduction 176
Why bus priority? 176
History 178
Types of bus priority measures 185
Effects and benefits 192
Associated measures 193
Conclusions 195
References 197
Further reading 202
- 12 Planning and operating a rural bus service 203**
Ben Colson
Introduction 203
What we mean by rural 203
How to measure demand 204
Assessing revenue and cost 206
Measures to improve performance 211
Building the business base: marketing and promotion 218
Building the revenue base: seeking new opportunities 219
Conclusions 220
References 220
- 13 Further partnerships between bus operators, local authorities and employers 221**
David Hurdle
Introduction 221
Types of partnership 222
Growth of travel planning and bus operators' roles 225
Travel Plan bus measures checklist 234
Change is possible! 241
The way forward 244
References 245
- 14 The bus industry in Wales 248**
Stuart Cole
Introduction 248

Section 1: Government policy and legislation – Wales diverges from England 248

Section 2: Where do passengers want bus services to be? 255

Conclusions 259

References 260

Further reading 261

15 Working with the public 262

David Sidebottom

Background 262

Transport Focus 262

Bus passenger survey 264

Bus passengers' priorities for improvement 266

Opportunities to increase bus use 268

The future – growing the market 269

Conclusions 274

16 The value of the bus to society 275

Claire Haigh

Introduction 275

Where are we now? 275

Where do we want to be? 278

How will we get there? 281

Conclusions 283

References 284

Further reading 286

17 Presentation 287

Roger French and Ray Stenning

Introduction 287

Understand the local market 289

Livery 290

On the inside 291

Websites 293

Printed timetables and maps 294

Bus stops 296

Social media 297

Conclusions 297

18 The future and new technology 298*Tony Francis*

Introduction 298

Partnering 299

Transport and land use planning 299

Vehicles – propulsion 300

Vehicles – autonomously driven or not 300

Vehicles – interior design 301

Passengers and their buses 301

Paying for the journey 301

Bus and coach services 302

Conclusions 303

References 304

Further reading 304

*Appendix I: Regulation of road passenger transport in the Republic of Ireland (Eire) 305**Appendix II: Scotland's buses 312**Index 314*

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Tony Francis

Tony Francis FCIT first became involved with public transport when he joined London Transport in 1963 and subsequently worked for subsidiaries of the National Bus Company, including supporting the establishment of the present National Express network. He moved to local government and with Kent County Council became Head of Passenger Transport, developing and implementing policies for the enhancement of bus and rail services.

He subsequently moved to the Strategic Rail Authority, working with passenger transport executives on the improvement of local public transport networks, then moved to the Department for Transport on capital investment projects including the West Coast and Great Western Main Lines. Such activity required working with numerous stakeholders in the public transport business to ensure maximum return on capital investment and to the wider community.

He is also Secretary of the Omnibus Society and the Bus Archive and supports the examination work of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport as well as authoring articles on various current and historic aspects of passenger transport.

David Hurdle

David Hurdle DipTP, MA, MRTPI, FCILT began his career with London Transport in 1964 in various aspects of bus operation. He qualified as a Transport Planner, then moved to the Greater London Council where he secured bus priority measures and sought good access for buses in highway, traffic, town centre schemes and new residential areas, and became a Town Planner.

In the last 20 years, as a transport consultant, he has prepared, or advised on, over 90 Travel Plans. He has published *Little Bus Stories* for 4–7 year olds to establish early interest in the industry, and writes a regular public transport column in a monthly magazine in his home town of Sheringham, Norfolk.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

The editors express their utmost gratitude to those who have contributed to this book. They have spent much time researching and writing to ensure the reader can have a good and comprehensive understanding of the bus and coach business.

Ian Barlex

Ian Barlex is a specialist in road and rail passenger and freight transport, vehicle operations and fleet management, with 47 years' experience: 17 years in industry, and subsequently 30 years as a consultant. He left KPMG, where he was Director of the Transport Advisory Group, in 2007, to start his own consulting practice.

He is a Fellow of the Institute of Consulting, a Certified Management Consultant, and a Member of the Institute of Transport Administration. In addition to his consulting activities, Ian advises the Transport Benevolent Fund, the UK Passenger Transport Industry charity, in the capacity of external Development Director.

John Birtwhistle

John Birtwhistle started his road public transport career in the last years of the regulated regime, working on ticketing, information and marketing initiatives. Since then he has worked for operators, authorities and (briefly) manufacturers before many years in general transport consultancy, joining FirstGroup in 2001.

He currently leads initiatives on a variety of subjects, including domestic and European policy and legislation, local authority partnerships, business opportunities, concessionary travel, vehicle technology, legal and compliance issues, ticketing schemes and information. He has advised on the implementation of bus rapid transit in the UK and USA. John regularly represents First, and the UK bus industry, on governmental and industry committees.

He was the 2016 President of the Confederation of Passenger Transport, the UK bus and coach trade association, and is the current President of the European Passenger Transport Operators Association.

Gavin Booth

Gavin Booth was born in Edinburgh and joined the Scottish Bus Group in 1961 as a management trainee. He was Group Marketing Manager when he left the group at the time of privatization in 1988. Since that time he has been a self-employed consultant and has written extensively on transport matters, with more than 70 published books under his name.

More recently he was Chair of Bus Users UK and was latterly Scottish Director for Bus Users, working on behalf of bus passengers.

Stuart Cole

Professor Stuart Cole CBE is Emeritus Professor of Transport at the University of South Wales where he established the Wales Transport Research Centre in 2001 and became its first Director. He entered transport professionally in 1974 as Cheshire County Council's Economic Advisor – Transportation. In 1979 he went into academia at the Polytechnic of North London (subsequently the University of North London and London Metropolitan University) as a Senior Lecturer then Principal Lecturer in Transport, and was the first Director of TRaC (Transport Research and Consultancy).

Stuart's main research interests are in public transport (bus, rail and coach) highways management, economics, policy and planning. He has authored over 150 articles as well as the *Applied Transport Economics* textbook. In transport management practice he is a member of, and adviser to, the Board of TrawsCymru, the Welsh Government's long distance bus/coach operation, which he set up in 2012 having researched its base, together with the Bwcabus demand-responsive bus system in west Wales. He is currently on the Great Western Railway advisory board and is President of the Heart of Wales Line Travellers Association. Stuart is a member of the Technical Committee of Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru (which deals with parking, bus and people logistics).

He chaired the Welsh Government's Active Travel Board (2012–15) and has sat on the Welsh Government's Air Quality Commission since 2018. Stuart has produced reports/advice/evidence for the Senedd (formerly the National Assembly for Wales), the Welsh Government, the UK Wales Office, the European Commission, the European Parliament; the Silk Commission, the House of Commons, 10 Downing Street's Policy Unit, and the Federation of Small Businesses.

Between 1984 and 2010 Stuart was Transport Specialist Adviser for the House of Commons Select Committee on Welsh Affairs on 15 inquiries. He has 45 years' experience on relevant and practical solutions to transport and

planning policy. He has worked on transport projects in Wales, UK, Europe, North America, southern Africa, China, India, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia and widely in European Union member states including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, France, The Netherlands, Greece, Italy, Germany, Spain and Portugal for the European Commission.

He is acknowledged by parliaments and governments and the transport industry as one of Wales', UK's and Europe's leading experts in transport economics and policy. Stuart is a regular broadcaster on BBC Cymru Wales radio and television, S4C, and on occasion BBC Radio 4, BBC News Channel and ITV Cymru Wales. He has a monthly transport column in the *Western Mail* and a fortnightly podcast (Transport Talk) on Business News Wales. Stuart is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport and a Fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

He was awarded the CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June 2012 for services to transport in Wales.

Ben Colson

Ben Colson, MBE, BA(Hons), FCILT joined the state-owned National Bus Company (NBC) after completing a Business Studies degree course, and held a number of posts in different locations, including senior management positions at Taunton and Northampton. The privatization of the bus industry saw the Northampton-based part of NBC bought by Stagecoach in 1987, the third and final operator it bought directly from the State. Two years later, Stagecoach transferred Ben to Stagecoach North West, covering an area from Greater Manchester to Hadrian's Wall – a mix of metropolitan, regional town and deep rural operation.

In January 1996, with a colleague from the bus industry, Ben bought the Norfolk Green bus company, with just three buses based in rural West Norfolk. A few months later Stagecoach requested that he also take the role of Commercial Director of the newly acquired Stagecoach Manchester operation, and a few months after that the fallout from the IRA bomb in the city brought him face to face with the politics of local transport.

Meanwhile, Norfolk Green grew in size and stature, peaking at just over 80 vehicles and covering a wide area of North Cambridgeshire, South Lincolnshire, and North and West Norfolk. In 2010 it was judged the Bus Operator of the Year in the annual UK Bus Awards, the only SME operator to be so acclaimed.

Norfolk Green was sold in late 2013 due to health issues. Since then Ben spent two and a half years as Chairman of ALBUM, the organization

representing the interests of smaller operators, and is now Chair of Bus Users UK, the charity committed to improving bus users' experience and advocating for the bus as a means of reducing social isolation.

Roger French

Roger French began his career in the bus industry in 1970 with holiday jobs, including bus conducting in London and working at London Transport's head office at '55 Broadway'. After university he worked with bus companies in West Yorkshire, Kent and South Wales before moving to Brighton in 1982, staying at the helm of that city's buses for 31 years until retirement in 2013.

He was part of the management buy-out team of the Brighton & Hove Bus Company in 1987 and remained involved after its subsequent sale to the Go-Ahead Group six years later, continuing as Managing Director of the company.

During his long career in Brighton he became active in the community, being involved in many committees, forums partnerships and charities. He was awarded an OBE for services to public transport in 2005, an Honorary MA by the University of Brighton in 2007, a Deputy Lord Lieutenant for East Sussex in 2007 and was awarded the Freedom of the City of Brighton & Hove in 2013.

Since retiring, he travels extensively around the UK commenting on public transport matters online and in trade magazines. He is a Patron of the Young Bus Managers' Network and a Trustee of the Foundation for Integrated Transport.

Claire Haigh

Claire Haigh is Chief Executive of Greener Journeys, a coalition of the UK's major public transport organizations committed to encouraging people to make more sustainable travel choices.

She also chairs the Delivery & Impacts Independent Review Panel for the Government's Joint Air Quality Unit (DfT/Defra), is the Executive Director of the Transport Knowledge Hub and is a Director of the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership. She has previously been an advisor and board member of Transport for Greater Manchester.

Steve Harris

Steve Harris started his career with London Transport in 1986 as a driver, gaining promotion after 15 months to a supervisory position. At that time, one could only commence employment as a graduate or start at the bottom.

The mid-1990s saw him managing Cricklewood and then Willesden garages for Metroline, followed by Edgware. He left Metroline in 2001 to work with Steve Telling and Bill Hiron after they had been successful in gaining work from the London bus tendering market.

Steve was asked by the then-Managing Director to re-join Metroline in 2004 as a business manager. There then followed an appointment as Operations Director in 2011, followed by Managing Director in 2018. He studied for the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport corporate qualifications in the mid-1990s under Professor Stuart Cole, and became a Fellow of the Institute in 2016. Metroline has 15 garages and over 2,000 buses operating over 100 Transport for London routes.

Kevin Hawkins

Kevin Hawkins is an experienced professional in the bus industry. He was with Arriva and its predecessors for over 35 years, with roles in bus service planning, management of depots as a General Manager and, ultimately, as Regional Commercial Director.

He is now with a specialist consultancy, undertaking work for both local authorities and bus operators on a wide range of tasks, including bus operations, fares, network reviews and ticket machine data. He is married with two very grown up children and lives in West Sussex.

David Jenkins

David Jenkins BSc (Hons) MCILT is a graduate of the renowned Aston University transport course, and had it not been for privatization, would have been among the last senior management trainees recruited by the National Bus Company. Instead he carried out the same role with Southern Vectis, on the Isle of Wight and at their fledgling mainland operations.

Subsequently he held management positions with National Welsh and Crosville Wales, where he introduced joint bus and rail ticketing in Ceredigion. He then moved to Kent County Council, where he carried out much integration of school travel with the local bus network, then became involved with infrastructure and Local Transport Plans.

After a brief interlude as Project Manager for what became the RV1 central London bus route, he returned to transport planning posts at Kent County Council, bringing a more pro-public transport aspect to its work.

Since 2009 he has been an independent consultant, working with others to provide advice to most of the major bus groups, as well as long-standing work assisting a council public transport team, and occasionally working

with developers. He writes in the trade and enthusiast press, and has a wide range of contacts within the industry.

Stephen Joseph

Stephen Joseph OBE is a transport policy consultant and visiting professor at the University of Hertfordshire. He chairs the editorial board of Bauer Media's *Smart Transport* programme, and is a trustee of the Foundation for Integrated Transport. He stepped down in 2018 as Chief Executive of the Campaign for Better Transport, having been in that role since 1988.

Stephen was a member of the Commission for Integrated Transport from 1999 to 2005, having been one of the panel of external advisers on the *Transport White Paper 1997–98*, and was a member of the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment (SACTRA) during its inquiry into transport and the economy. He was also on the steering group for the Government's road user charging feasibility study 2003–04, and was a member of challenge panels or advisory groups for Government plans on high-speed rail, eco-towns, transport appraisal and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

He was awarded the OBE (Order of the British Empire) in 1996 for services to transport and the environment, and received an honorary doctorate from the University of Hertfordshire in November 2010.

G Nigel King

G Nigel King is a chartered Civil Engineer specializing in traffic and transportation, with almost 60 years' experience in the sector. A Civil Engineering BSc graduate from Imperial College, London, followed by graduate training with British Railways GW and a post-graduate in Traffic and Transportation from Newcastle University, he has concentrated his expertise in Greater London and has held roles as Head of Traffic and Safety Division at the Greater London Council, Assistant Director (Transportation and Traffic Management) at Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and latterly, Head of the Bus Priority and Traffic Unit (BPTU) and the London Bus Initiative (LBI) for London Transport, as well as consulting for Oscar Faber.

With a comprehensive knowledge of traffic management systems as well as selective traffic management (bus priority), he offers a clear overview of transportation in Greater London as well as nationwide. King has chaired and presented at numerous committees, public enquires and seminars.

King has focused his expertise on the 'people moving' capacity of roads, as opposed to the standard 'vehicle moving', with the particular emphasis on the need to protect buses from the effects of traffic congestion in order to 'keep buses moving'.

Cyril McIntyre

Cyril McIntyre BA, BSc (Econ), CMILT is a Transport Consultant and Editor of *Omnibus Magazine*, the official journal of the Omnibus Society of which he has been a member since 1966. He retired from the position of Fleet Planning & Control Manager at Bus Éireann in 2006, after a transport career which spanned 45 years.

During that period, he worked in a variety of roles in Córas Iompair Éireann (the Irish state transport organization) and its subsidiary Bus Éireann, gaining a wide range of experience across several sectors – railway operations, rail and road freight services, bus operations, computer systems and media relations.

Tim Pharoah

Tim Pharoah is a transport and planning consultant working independently. He has more than 50 years' experience of transport and land use planning, urban regeneration and public realm design, in local authorities, private consultancies, and the academic sector. He is a keen advocate of planning for vibrant urban communities through integrated accessibility, public realm design and speed management.

He was the lead author of *Buses in Urban Developments*, the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation's good practice guide, published in 2018.

Susannah Rosenfeld-King

Susannah Rosenfeld-King is a lecturer and practicing artist with a BA from Central Saint Martins, a PGCE from the Institute for Education and a Masters from Middlesex University, where she works as a visiting lecturer. Rosenfeld-King has worked in the academic and educative fields for over 25 years with 20 of these spent living in London.

During her time in London, Rosenfeld-King also worked at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in their Town Planning department as well as at the London Bus Initiative (LBI). This year, Rosenfeld-King collaborated with G Nigel King on site visits to survey specific bus priority measures in London.

David Sidebottom

David Sidebottom started his current role as Transport Focus's Director in June 2011. He initially started working at Transport Focus in January 2006 as a Passenger Link Manager, before being promoted to the post of Bus

Passenger Director in January 2010. David was responsible for the planning and delivery of Transport Focus's then-new bus, coach and tram passenger representation duties.

Prior to this, he spent over 11 years representing the needs and interests of energy consumers in the north west of England where he was regional director of Energywatch, the former gas and electricity consumer council.

Ray Stenning

As the founder and head of the specialist design, marketing and advertising agency Best Impressions, Ray Stenning has possibly done more than anyone else over the past 40 years to change how public transport is perceived, presented and sold through projects and schemes big and small in the bus, coach and rail sectors. As an example, he has probably designed more commanding liveries than anyone else in the world.

Ray is committed and passionate about the role that public transport should play in a progressive society and not only practices what he preaches, he also preaches what he practices as a conference speaker and writer in trade magazines on his pet subjects of design, marketing and customer care. He has been described as colourful, and is certainly unconventional.

He is considered a bit outrageous to some, courageous to others, but under that threatening exterior he has a heart the size of a planet and just wants to create desire and get public transport to be seen as the most desirable way to travel.

Peter White

Peter White joined the University of Westminster (then known as the Polytechnic of Central London) in 1971, as a Lecturer in Public Transport Systems, subsequently being promoted to Professor. He retired from his teaching role in 2015, but continues to be active as an Emeritus Professor in public transport research, especially bus, express coach and rail systems.

He is the author of the textbook *Public Transport: Its planning, management and operation* (6th edition published December 2016), and many published papers. Research interests over many years have included factors affecting the demand for public transport, its market composition, and efficiency of operation. He is the author of a rapid evidence review on the role of the UK public road passenger transport system for the Government Office for Science, available on the GOV.UK website.

His experience includes acting as an adviser to five enquiries on transport-related matters by Parliamentary Select Committees in Britain. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (FCILT).

FOREWORD

The bus and coach industry is now taking centre stage in the Government's agenda to address travel issues, the environment and quality of life. Considerable investment is planned for new services, fleets of all-electric buses and more extensive priority measures. The time is certainly right to think of a career in this business, and play a role in this now valued mode of travel.

The aim of this book is to provide an insight into the workings of the road passenger transport industry, to help those keen to make a career in that business and to assist others who may have to deal with it from the outside, for example in local government, but without necessarily having had the opportunity to see how it all works.

Although this book seeks to describe the key planning, operating, social and environmental context in which both buses and coaches function, it is hoped that the reader will be encouraged to explore further, especially in the area where they work and live. Bus services must be designed and provided to meet the precise requirements of the locality in which they function, but equally there are standards and disciplines, especially regarding safety and reliability, that are nationwide.

Those working in the business provide a variety of skills in numerous professions and activities. It is very much dependent upon everyone with these different backgrounds and work methods coming together to work as a single team towards a single focus on the provision of quality services, and also being proud of doing so. The various chapters are written by such a variety of people, all of whom have had gathered enormous experience and understanding of the workings of the humble bus, which is increasingly recognized as having the potential to contribute far more to a sustainable lifestyle for both rural and urban communities.

We hope you enjoy reading all these contributions.

*Austin Birks and John Carr,
Bus and Coach Forum,
Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport*

PREFACE

Tony Francis and David Hurdle

It is important to begin by explaining the current context, trends and issues facing both the bus industry and those associated with it such as local authorities, and to highlight some key messages for the future.

Buses have never been as important in their 200-year-and-more history as now. 50 per cent of all public transport passenger journeys in England are by bus. There are 33,900 buses, with London accounting for 29 per cent of them, and 51 per cent of all bus passenger journeys. (All the following information applies to England, and is taken from the Department for Transport's annual bus statistics for 2018/19 (Department for Transport, 2019)).

Trends

The overall trend in bus travel, that of decline, is clearly a major concern given the role that buses can play in encouraging more sustainable travel. Passenger journeys have fallen by 7 per cent from 1982 to 2018–19. Although there have been upward trends, eg during 2004–08, there has been a downward trend since 2008. In London, bus use increased each year between 1998/99 and 2012/13, since when it has declined each year; albeit still higher, 22 per cent, in 2018/19 than in 2004/05.

Real-term increases in the cost of bus travel continue to contribute to the unattractiveness of using buses. In the year to March 2019, bus fares increased by 3.3 per cent, faster than the annual all items Consumer Prices Index rate of inflation of 1.9 per cent. Between March 2005 and March 2019, inflation rose 38 per cent, but bus fares rose 71 per cent.

Another worrying trend is that central and local government support for local bus services has been declining since 2009, putting further pressure on bus operations. Support consists of three elements:

- 1 Payments for supported services. Bus mileage outside London has declined by 14 per cent since 2004/05. This has been driven by a 50 per cent decrease in local authority supported mileage.

- 2** The Bus Service Operators' Grant (BSOG). This has decreased by 46 per cent in real terms between 2004/05 and 2018/19.
- 3** Concessionary travel reimbursement. This comprises 47 per cent of total support. Concessionary travel (for older and disabled people, and young people where local authority schemes exist) makes up 34 per cent of bus passenger journeys.

There are huge variations in bus travel around England. Outside London the local authorities with the lowest bus passenger journeys per head are Rutland and Windsor and Maidenhead, with just 9 per year. Compare this with the highest – Brighton and Hove with 172, and Nottingham with 150. The average is 45. Out of the 88 authorities outside London, 70 saw a decrease from 2009/10 to 2018/19.

Issues

The debates on climate change and air pollution alone require urgent action and different policies. Quite simply, roads are used to over-capacity, and how we travel needs to change. Buses, with their efficient use of road space, contribute to an immediate and quality solution. But their role is often misunderstood; with some justification, people have poor perceptions of them. They are sometimes unreliable, uncomfortable, and turn up late or not at all.

In 2018/19, 83 per cent of non-frequent services ran on time; 'on time' is defined as between one minute early and 5 minutes and 59 seconds late. This means that nearly one in five did not. There was also a large variation in punctuality between authorities, ranging from 63 per cent to 97 per cent. But this can change.

A key aspect of operating buses is that they use public roads that are owned and maintained by a variety of national, regional and local authorities, unlike railways that have their own right of way. Roads are used by many other vehicles, and this can result in congestion, slow speeds and unpredictable delays to buses. Highway authorities should be fully appreciative of this and of the ways that they can each assist efficient bus operation. They have an enormous influence in enabling efficient bus operation, and reliable and attractive services.

Furthermore, planning authorities can ensure that new developments such as housing, business and commercial centres build in and accommodate efficient bus operation. Employers should also be encouraging their

staff to travel more sustainably. Despite declining bus use throughout the United Kingdom, there have been some excellent examples of passenger growth. It can be achieved given the will.

And the role that buses can play in the future looks promising. The industry is embracing new fuels and new technology. The vast majority of buses, 92 per cent, have CCTV, 98 per cent have an Automatic Vehicle Location device, 74 per cent are enabled for payment by contactless bank card, and 31 per cent have free WiFi.

A factor often not recognized is that bus travel is six times safer than car travel, and the safest of any form of travel; the fatality rates per billion passenger miles being 0.3 and 1.8 respectively.

Messages

First we need to understand the bus industry and the essential assistance it needs. This book's purpose is to do that. It is a manual aimed at:

- people joining the industry;
- those within it and progressing their careers, who could benefit from learning about good practice elsewhere (through case studies), and about greater co-operation with local authorities and other partners;
- crucially, local authorities at all levels, and how they can assist bus operation and increase patronage.

Therefore, all aspects of bus operation are covered.

Part 1 of the book explains how the bus business works, from the legal framework to planning services, fares and revenue, and staffing. Part 2 then covers wider engagement. It stresses the importance of operators working in partnership with other organizations, be they local authorities, employers, developers. It examines the market for public transport, planning new housing to ensure efficient bus operation and maximum use, bus priority measures to ensure efficient operation, the particular challenge of providing rural bus services, Travel Planning with employers to reduce 'drive-alone' car use and maximize sustainable travel, buses' social role, the all-important need to promote bus services and not just publicize them, and finally their future role in a rapidly-changing environmental context.

Although in decline, bus travel remains an important, and safe, form of travel. Yet as well as suffering from declining use, it is also witnessing less

financial support from central and local government and having to implement above-inflation fare rises.

The role of bus services needs to be far better appreciated and supported. Yet a key finding from preparing this book is the inconsistency throughout the country in supporting the bus industry. If ever there was a need for an effective national strategy, it is now. Buses can play a major short-term role in tackling climate change, which by its very nature requires urgent, and different, action now. As at 21 October 2019, 65 per cent of the UK's councils had declared a climate change emergency (Climate Emergency UK, 2019). But bus operation needs the support of central and local government to do its job properly and efficiently, and to ensure all services are attractive to use.

The book has drawn upon the expertise and experience of many well-respected professionals in, and close to, the industry. Each chapter leaves messages. These need to be acted upon to ensure that the industry contributes to more sustainable travel by being both efficient to operate and attractive to use. Operators working in partnership with other bodies is key.

A final message. Bus operators are not in business to run buses; they are in business to carry people, with a full understanding of their individual and collective needs.

References

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