

GMITA consultation on future Transport Governance for Greater Manchester.

Pre-amble

TWNW are grateful for the opportunity to comment on GMITA's consultation on future Transport Governance.

In our response to the DfT's consultation on the Local Transport Bill we supported the proposed creation of **Integrated Transport Authorities** (ITAs). Specifically we welcomed PTAs becoming ITAs with additional powers to address their geographic limitations and to either have delegated to them some currently constraining non transport functions or to at least be given powers of direction over these.

Now that the Bill has been enacted (as the **Local Transport Act** (LTA) 2008), and following the designation in April 2009 of Greater Manchester as a **City Region Pilot** and the ongoing debate on the Local Democracy etc Bill 2009, it has become evident that AGMA and GMITA wish to explore new models of Transport Governance for this newly designated City Region.

It is also clear from this consultation that the present AGMA Executive Board, or whatever might replace this under the provisions of the Local Democracy Bill when enacted, aspires to become the accounting focus for

- Transport
- Economic development and regeneration
- Housing and
- Land Use Planning

We can well understand that GMITA, as currently constituted, sits uneasily with these objectives, and agree with the consultation document that this raises two fundamental questions as to whether

- it is in the best interests of the City region to retain GMITA in its present form, and if so how it could relate to the AGMA Executive Board or
- a Combined Authority (CA) should be established with responsibilities for the above four functions?

A concern which we have is that any successor authority might lose some of GMITA's gains under the Local Transport Act 2008 *vis a vis* its new ability to redraw its boundaries or to control (directly or indirectly) matters such as highway priorities for public transport, rail franchising, bus regulation or exceptionally becoming operators of last resort. For example, the obvious boundaries for ITAs are their "travel to work" extremities, but these might be inappropriate in another context, such as housing or regeneration.

We seek to be reassured by the consultative document's claim that any order by the Secretary of State creating a Combined Authority can include any provisions which may be made in relation to an ITA under the terms of the Local Transport Act 2008. We would prefer that any orders must include such provisions.

Questions

We give below our considered responses to the questions accompanying this consultation.

- 1. Do you agree with the analysis presented in the document concerning:**
- a) The relationship between the strategic role of AGMA and the transport commissioning and delivery roles (see paragraphs 13 to 17)**

The analysis is helpful. However, it could have been more wide ranging, perhaps pointing out that between 1968 and 1985 PTAs had a mix of elected and appointed members, and that since then one ITA (Merseyside) has successfully combined their PTA and PTE.

- b) Constitutional arrangements (paragraphs 18 to 20)**

The analysis is helpful, especially in flagging the possibility of an order under the LTA 2008 combining LTAs and PTEs

- c) Functional changes (paragraphs 21 to 26)**

We believe that the fragmentation of transport related powers between ITAs (procurement), Highways Agency, DfT (Rail) and Districts (traffic) is a **barrier to Integration** which a new authority should strive to address.

- d) Geographic scope and boundaries (paragraphs 27 and 28)**

See pre amble above.

- 2a. Do you agree that the 3 main categories of options identified in the document (paragraph 30) are comprehensive?**

Yes, but see 2b below

- 2b If no, do you think there are others? Please identify these and let us have you views on them.**

No, either GMITA is abolished and replaced or it is not, although the creation of a "half way house" Option B is a helpful analytical tool.

- 3. Please give us your views on Category A based models (paragraphs 31 and 32). Both models retain the GMITA in its**

current form. If you support either of these models, please explain why.

The status quo would not be an option in a new City Region

4. Please give us your views on Category B based models (paragraphs 33 to 35). All models retain the GMITA though with various changes to its size and functions. Again, if you support any of these models, please explain why.

The option B “half way house” models of an ITA with different reporting functions could serve as an interim measure pending the creation under the provisions of the Local Democracy Bill (if and when enacted) of an Economic Prosperity Board (EPB) or CA (=EPB+ITA) for the City Region’

5. Please give us your views on Category C based models (paragraphs 36 to 38). Both models propose a Combined Authority. Again, if you support either of these models, please explain why.

Option C2 of a Combined Authority with a Transport Commission is arguably the most robust proposal.

As a body representing passenger interest we would like to see consumer representation on any such Commission, or indeed, any other replacement bodies.

Whilst we have always championed the integration and co-ordination of transport services on the ground, between modes and with timetabled connections, fares and ticketing, we also recognise that there should be integration between transport and land use planning, as well as with education, social and economic strategies. Option C2 appears to best facilitate these objectives.

6. Do you have any comments on the analysis of delivery arrangements presented in the report (paragraphs 39 to 41)?

The delegation of responsibilities giving the ITA, CA or Transport Commission overarching control of matters affecting public passenger transport (such as roads, rail services, bus regulation and rail franchising) has already become paramount and should be addressed now. Other issues of importance will be accountability to Metropolitan District Council and the participation of adjoining Districts, Unitary and Local Transport Authorities.

7. Do you have any other comments?

Please see the pre-amble at the top of this response.

TWNW would be pleased to amplify or explain these comments in writing or in person if GMITA would find that helpful.