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# **Making Tracks:**

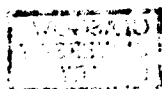
**The politics of local rail transport in Merseyside and Strathclyde, 1986-96.**

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**Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD  
Departments of Geography & Topographic Science  
and Economic & Social History  
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**September 1998**

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the impacts of geographical structures of local governance upon the development of passenger rail transport policies in the Merseyside and Strathclyde urban regions. Rather than evaluate policy outcomes, it describes and analyses the systems and processes through which strategic rail transport policy-making is shaped and constrained.

The impacts upon urban local rail transport policy-making of the statutory Passenger Transport Authorities and Executives, other local authorities, public and private sector bodies and individuals, which together comprise the prevailing structure of local governance in each area, are traced. The theory of the urban policy regime is applied to explain the development of particular policies from their basis in local political and popular concern, through to their implementation or rejection in order to illustrate the influences of each member of the policy community in practice.

The two study areas and 1986 - 1996 timescale are chosen to represent the period when two differing territorial structures of Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) co-existed in the UK. Strathclyde Regional Council, which acted as PTA for the Clydeside conurbation and surrounding area in the west of Scotland, was the last remaining example in the UK of a strategic urban local government with jurisdiction over an entire city-region. In contrast, Merseytravel, the PTA responsible for local rail transport development in Merseyside, an urban region of similar economic, social and rail transport structure to Strathclyde, was jointly administered by five smaller local authorities acting under the quasi-market principles of public choice theory.

Through a detailed exposition of the development of urban rail transport policies in each area, the ways in which both types of institutional arrangement influenced the structure and operation of the local policy regime, and its pattern of policy discourse, are analysed. The opportunities arising for the effective expression of public accountability under each system are highlighted, since this is a central aspiration of the abolition of strategic city-region wide local authorities inspired by public choice theory. Criticism of the real potential for enhanced accountability under such fragmented structures of administration is reflected in the conclusion, since of the two study areas, Strathclyde Regional Council is argued to have provided increased scope for effective accountability over the production of local rail transport policy.

**Keywords:** structures of local governance, regime theory, urban local rail transport policies, Passenger Transport Authorities and Executives, accountability.

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... and to Stuart, who will always make me smile.

## Declaration

This thesis embodies the results of original research carried out by the author between October 1994 and June 1998. References to existing works are made as appropriate. Any remaining errors or omissions are the responsibility of the author.

Iain W Docherty

Iain Docherty

Glasgow, September 1998.



# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Focus of research**

1.1.1 The geography of urban local governance

1.1.2 The geography of urban rail transportation

1.1.3 The geography of the Merseyside and Strathclyde urban regions

## **1.2 Structure of the thesis**

1.2.1 Theoretical background

1.2.2 Case study evidence

1.2.3 Research conclusions

## 1.1 Focus of the research

### 1.1.1 The geography of urban local governance

The policies of widespread deregulation inspired by the ideologies of 'public choice' represent one of the key legacies of the 1979-1997 Conservative government. Central to these reforms was the realignment of the apparatus of the local state itself, as the centre sought to restructure local government according to the principles of market provision of local public services.

The importance of these reforms for political geography stems from two facts. First, the city and the neighbourhoods within it represent the spatial scales at which most individuals consume the many services they need within their everyday lives, such as education, health care, transport and leisure: they are the "context in which people live out their daily routine" (Mellor, 1975: 277). Since many of these services are provided or regulated by the state for the collective consumption of the urban population, their management provides a real focus for the expression of political conflict within the city, as different groups of individuals seek to more closely match the patterns of service provision to their own needs by way of the local political process. Any revision of the political structures under which such collective consumption is organised can therefore be expected to produce significant effects on the distribution of these services across the city.

Second, reform of local government institutions under the principles of public choice theory has a distinctive spatial expression (McVicar et al, 1994). The fragmentation of large metropolitan-wide urban governments into a number of smaller territorial units is considered crucial to a marketised system of local service provision, since only in this way, it is claimed, can variations in the type and level of service provision be accurately matched to the diverse range of demands within the city. In practice, where economies of scale dictate that services continue to be provided on a metropolitan-wide basis, public choice objectives have been expressed through the joint working of several councils in the form of a proxy market where each authority is placed in competition with its neighbours for the allocation of public resources. Either structure is reckoned to enhance the accountability of smaller councils when compared to larger units of local government through more responsive matching of service provision to consumer demand. However, critics (Stewart, 1995 for example) point to a potential loss of accountability when joint *ad hoc* bodies are required to ensure the efficient management of services between councils.

Despite forming a central aim of government policy, the reorganisation of urban local government according to public choice principles did not in fact occur simultaneously across all of the UK's principal urban areas. Whereas the abolition of the six English metropolitan county councils dates from 1986, the similar dismantling of the regional councils in Scotland did not take place until some 10 years later. This delay provides the opportunity for a unique comparison of the impacts upon local policy-making derived from two differing territorial structures of urban local governance.

### 1.1.2 The geography of urban rail transportation

There are a number of strategic services, such as education and planning, for which a comparison of policy development between the metropolitan-wide Scottish regional councils and the more fragmented system of 'unitary' authorities in the English metropolitan counties is possible. However, the choice of urban rail transportation policy is particularly apt for three reasons.

First is the centrality of transport to the daily life of the individual citizen. Of all the services consumed within the city, the transport function is unique in that it plays a crucial role in each of Hägerstrand's (1974) three classes of constraint, which "steer the action and event sequence.... of the individual's daily existence" (Pred, 1996: 638). In common with other collective consumables, such as housing, education and health care, transport is subject to 'authority constraints', or the "general rules, laws, economic barriers and power relationships which determine who does or who does not have access to specific domains at specific times to do specific things" (Pred, 1996: 638). However, since significant 'coupling constraints' exist which pinpoint the precise spaces in which production, consumption and social interaction take place, access to these functions is "limit(ed) by the distance an individual can cover within a given time-span in accord with the transportation technology available" (Pred, 1996: 638). The distribution of access to transport across the neighbourhoods within the city therefore fundamentally determines the strength of the 'capability constraints' faced by individuals in their attempts to participate in the range of other urban activities essential to their daily lives.

Second, of the many transport modes, urban rail transport policy is especially relevant to a comparative study of this type. Since the number of railway corridors in the city is limited, the level of rail transport access varies markedly between urban localities. In developing the local rail system, decision-makers must balance the competing aspirations of local interests who seek improvement to services in areas served by existing rail lines, and those

who lobby for the extension of the network to new areas in order to ensure the reduction of urban 'capability restraints' through a more equitable distribution of rail travel opportunities.

Third, the local rail function in metropolitan areas is organised through unique special-purpose governmental institutions. The 1968 *Transport Act* created seven professional executive bodies, the *Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs)*, responsible for the management of public transport including local rail services in each of the major conurbations outside London, namely the West Midlands, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Tyne & Wear, and Clydeside. Each was charged with the task of

securing the provision of a properly integrated and efficient system of public passenger transport to meet the needs of that area.

Transport Act 1968, Part II, Section 9.

Although rail is only one of the variety of public transport modes, it assumed priority in the hierarchy of PTE operations. This was due not only to the substantial sums of money required to operate local railway networks, but also that, unlike the bus, the PTEs were made responsible for both the development of new rail *infrastructure* and the level of service provided.

The largely stable management of existing local rail services left the choice of strategic development policies aimed at improving and extending the local rail transport network as the main arena for political conflict within the PTE system. This research is therefore tightly focused on the strategic capital development of rail transport for several reasons. First, the PTEs enjoy substantial discretionary power in determining how their local railway networks should be developed under the special provisions (*Section 20*) of the 1968 Transport Act, which transfer management and capital investment control of urban local railway networks away from central government to the PTEs. Second, the construction of new rail transport facilities represents a profound means of manipulating the relative level of accessibility to urban amenities between city localities. Third, within the government's wider deregulatory reforms of the 1980s, control over the pattern and revenue finance of urban bus services was in any case removed from the PTEs in 1986. This left the development of the rail mode as the Executives' dominant function.

Each PTE was made democratically accountable to a local *Passenger Transport Authority* (PTA), through either a *statutory joint board* of the constituent councils within the PTA area or the transportation committee of the relevant regional or metropolitan county councils during their existence. Therefore, over the ten year period between the abolition of the English metropolitan counties and the similar disbanding of the Scottish regional councils, there existed two parallel systems of local democratic control over the PTEs and the urban rail development function. In Strathclyde, the sole Scottish example, the Executive remained under the auspices of a single, metropolitan-wide local authority until the end of March 1996. In each of the six former metropolitan counties in England, however, from April 1st 1986, the respective PTEs were made accountable to a joint board PTA whose membership was drawn from the elected councillors of the constituent local authorities.

Whilst seeking to analyse the impacts of systems of local governance on urban rail transport policy-making, the research does not seek to critically *evaluate* the development policies enacted by each PTE for two reasons. Crucially, the participation in interview of senior officers and councillors from within local government was only secured on the understanding that such evaluation of policy not did not take place. In any case, most of the actual development projects addressed within the research have not yet advanced to construction, due to the long lead times characteristic of significant capital investments, including those of rail transport infrastructure. Equally, fares policies are not addressed, since the broadly stable pattern of local rail fares in each study area between 1986 and 1996 resulted directly from the actions of central government in setting each PTE's revenue allocation (see Appendix).

### 1.1.3 The geography of the Merseyside and Strathclyde urban regions

As the one remaining Passenger Transport Executive area under the control of a single metropolitan wide government, *Strathclyde* Region provides the first of the two case study areas. Strathclyde incorporates the urban region centred on the City of Glasgow and its surrounding suburbs and industrial towns which together form the Clydeside conurbation, and a number of outlying sub-regional centres such as Ayr, Kilmarnock, Helensburgh and Lanark. The populations of the City of Glasgow, the Clydeside conurbation and Strathclyde Region are 0.7 million, 1.7 million and 2.3 million respectively (1991 Census). At 467 route kilometres, the region has the largest local rail network in the UK outside London.

The *Merseyside* urban region centred on the City of Liverpool was selected rather than any of the other joint-board PTA areas because of its many economic, social and rail transport

similarities with Strathclyde. Both regions are centred on historic industrial and port cities which have been successively re-imaged over the last 15 years as significant service and cultural centres (Carmichael, 1995). Although of smaller population than Strathclyde (1.4 million at the 1991 Census), Merseyside's urban structure is similarly comprised of a tightly-drawn core city (Liverpool, 0.45 million people), a mixed suburban and industrial ring (Birkenhead, Bootle, Huyton, Halewood) and peripheral sub-regional centres (West Kirby, Southport, St Helens). Both areas also suffer from significant social polarisation due to the juxtaposition of relatively prosperous suburban communities with large public sector housing areas characterised by multiple deprivation stemming from continued high unemployment levels.

Due in large part to car ownership rates significantly below the UK average (Figure 1.1), public transport usage in both regions is high. Similarly, many characteristics of the regions' local rail systems are directly comparable. Although more pronounced in Merseyside, rail transport plays an important role in breaching the significant barriers to intra-urban movement in both conurbations represented by the rivers Mersey and Clyde respectively. With similar industrial histories, the inherited patterns of rail infrastructure in each region also exhibit several common features. Furthermore, of the seven PTE areas, Strathclyde and Merseyside were two of only three to benefit from major new urban rail infrastructure construction during the 1970s. The third such area, Tyne & Wear, is not a suitable comparison for Strathclyde for several reasons. First, the region's main local rail system, the *Tyne & Wear Metro* (which carries in excess of 30m passengers per annum), is directly operated by the PTE and does not fall within the Section 20 provisions of the 1968 Transport Act. As such, the system is subject to different structures of finance and central legislative control. In addition, there has been no significant development of the Metro since its opening in 1980.

Perhaps most significantly, however, the relative importance of the Section 20 rail networks within the economic and social life of Merseyside and Strathclyde as compared to the remaining metropolitan areas is reflected in the much greater number of annual rail trips per inhabitant in these two regions (Figure 1.2). That Merseyside and Strathclyde have the highest local rail trip rate per capita emphasises their low car ownership levels and comparable size and function of their local rail networks. Finally, one further point of note in the choice of joint board-controlled PTE for comparison with Strathclyde concerns more practical considerations of the ease of access to study data. Of the six English PTEs contacted during preliminary investigations, Merseytravel proved by far the most receptive and offered excellent access to their staff and comprehensive printed archive.

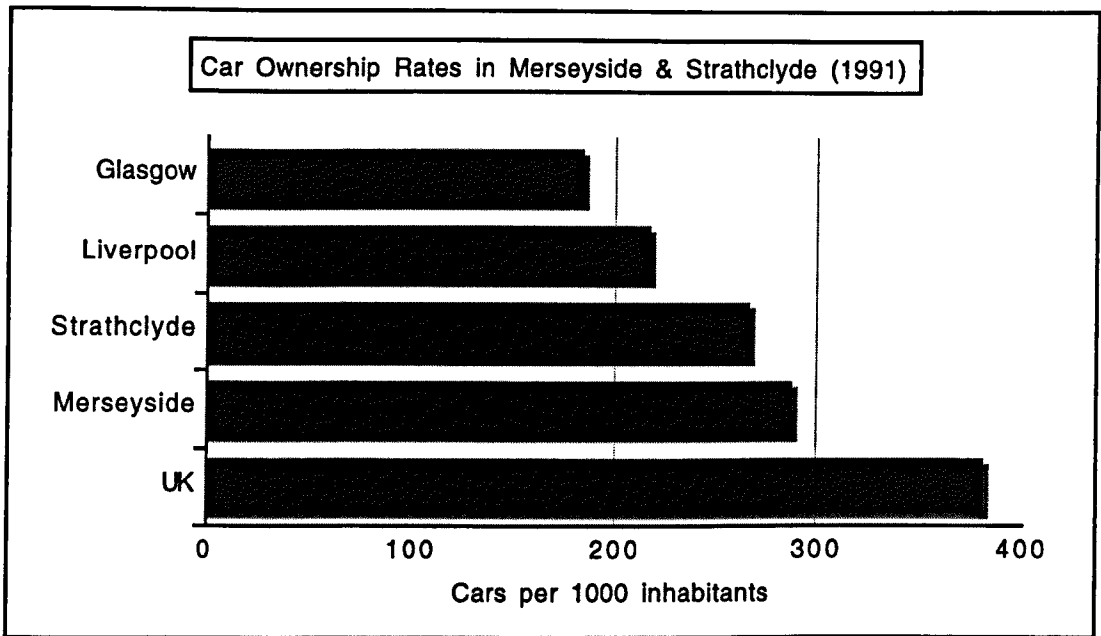


Figure 1.1 Car Ownership rates in Merseyside & Strathclyde (1991).

Source Census.

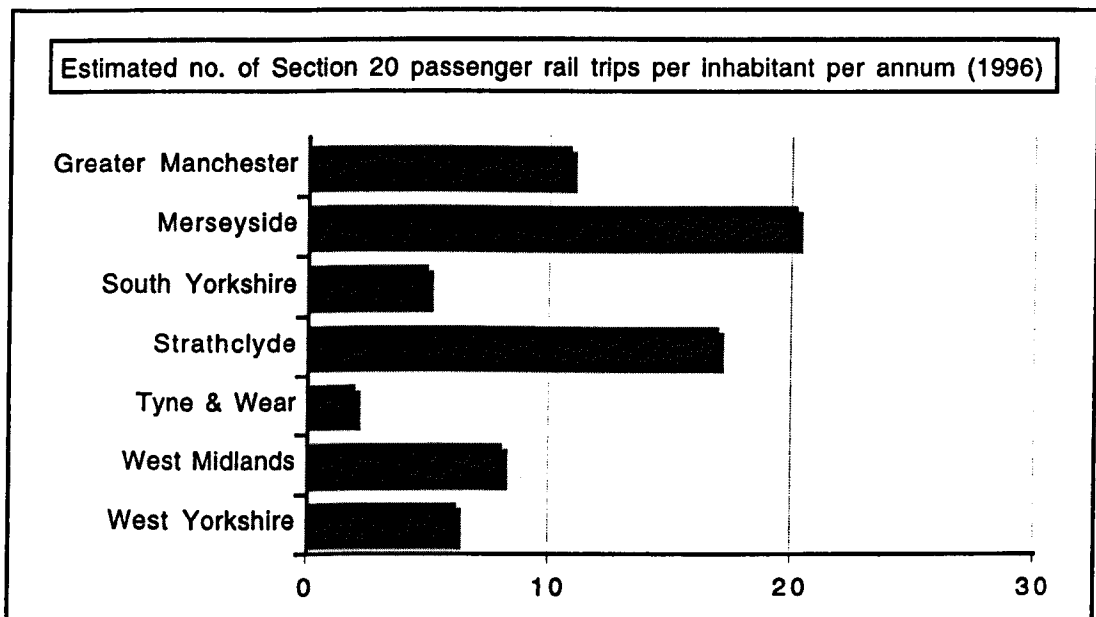


Figure 1.2 Estimated number of Section 20 passenger rail trips per inhabitant (1996), PTE areas.

Source Passenger Transport Executive Group (1996).

Note Excludes Glasgow Underground, Tyne & Wear Metro and Manchester and Sheffield non-Section 20 rail systems.

## 1.2 Structure of the thesis

### 1.2.1 Theoretical background

Chapters 2 and 3 build on the preliminary introduction to the role of urban transportation systems and the geographical structures of local governance outlined above to give a comprehensive statement of the theoretical background underpinning the subsequent case studies of rail transport policy-making in the Merseyside and Strathclyde study areas. In Chapter 2, the impacts of urban transport upon the environment and the social geography of the city are examined, leading to a review of the range of potential policies aimed at providing a solution to the 'urban transportation problem'. The likely role of the rail mode within any such solution is addressed, including the potential for conflict between the key policy aspirations of *economic and social development*. This is followed by a review of contemporary international approaches to urban rail development and its role within the city.

Chapter 3 provides a thorough review of the evolution of modern British local governance. The nature of the relationships between the central and local arms of the state, between elected local authorities and other local public institutions, and within councils, is exposed. The alleged disbenefits of large local governments identified by public choice ideologies are examined. Finally, the core theory of the *urban policy regime* is highlighted as a means to compare the mechanisms through which power is exercised and decisions made within the differing local policy communities of consolidated and fragmented institutional structures. The implications of these differences for the key notion of public accountability of the policy-making process are addressed.

Chapter 4 reviews the methodological considerations which underpin the research. *Structuration theory* is adopted as the primary methodological tool since it is best placed to reveal the underlying motivations and aspirations of the individual policy makers identified through the regime approach. The rationale for purposeful sampling and semi-structured interviewing of key policy makers is justified, along with the tactics adopted for filtering the comprehensive printed archive of available policy and position statements. Finally, the rejection of strict coding of the interview transcripts and assembled archive texts which form the mainstay of case study evidence is identified as the most reliable method of ensuring against the loss of meaning.



### 1.2.2 Case study evidence

Chapter 5 pulls together the previous theoretical reviews in the contexts of the Merseyside and Strathclyde study areas. The local manifestation of 'the urban transportation problem' within each region's historic urban development context is followed by a description of the prevailing system of local governance and rail transport policy-making in each region. After a review of the pre-existing development of each local rail network at the start of the study time frame in April 1986, the potential options open to policy-makers in each area over the subsequent decade are explored.

Chapters 6 to 10 provide detailed case study evidence analysing the formulation, adaptation and implementation of rail transport policies in Strathclyde and Merseyside. Chapter 6 compares the agreed strategic policy positions of the Passenger Transport Authorities and Executives with the personal aspirations of regime members. Through analysis of interviewees' perceptions of the composition, structure and operation of the policy process in each region, indicative models of the Strathclyde and Merseyside rail transport policy regimes are created. These models are enhanced by the succeeding four chapters which detail individual project histories in order to highlight the roles played by each individual and institution within the local urban rail transport policy regimes. The extent to which common policy preferences, the attitudes of central government and the adopted methods of scheme appraisal help shape final policy outputs is exposed to demonstrate which actors assume the power to lead the policy debate within the local regime.

### 1.2.3 Research conclusions

Chapter 11 draws a comprehensive comparison between the two case studies in order to compare the nature of the impacts on rail transport policy decision-making in each region, and their wider implications across the UK as a whole. Policy outputs in the two areas are analysed with respect to the prevailing strategic aspirations which illustrate the relative strength of individual policy preferences within each local regime. The differing location of major actors within the policy communities of Merseyside and Strathclyde is shown to reveal significant influences on policy-making derived from local institutional structure. Finally, the nature of these impacts is demonstrated to have profound implications for the typology of the regime and the resulting level of public accountability achieved within the policy process, and for the assumptions of public choice theory which underlie the fragmentation of city-regional structures of urban local governance.

## **2 'The urban transportation problem'**

### **2.1 Introduction**

#### **2.1.1 The role of urban transportation systems**

### **2.2 The role of transportation systems in the urban realm**

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### **2.5 Conclusion**

#### **2.5.1 Themes in urban rail transport development**

## **2.1 Introduction**

### **2.1.1 The role of urban rail transportation**

This chapter provides an outline of the value of urban rail transportation and its role in contemporary cities. First, the means of delimiting the 'urban' are explored, with a functional definition of the city encompassing the common economic and social interactions of a widely-drawn 'city-region' adopted as the most appropriate with respect to this research. Next, a brief review of the evolution of urban rail systems is presented, followed by an analysis of the roles of urban transportation systems in the economic and social dimensions of city life. The key concepts of mobility and accessibility, and the economic and social development roles of railways are introduced. The particular accessibility and environmental advantages afforded by urban railways are analysed in relation to each of these concepts and to the attributes of other transport modes. Finally, after a review of recent major developments in urban rail transportation which places UK policies within their wider international perspective, the key policy choices facing urban rail transport decision-makers are discussed, highlighting the potential for conflict between competing strategic objectives.

## **2.2 The role of transportation systems in the urban realm**

### **2.2.1 Defining the 'urban'**

Implicit in any analysis of urban space, society or economy is the establishment of a meaningful definition of the 'urban'. However, despite being the scale at which many geographical, political and sociological enquiries are conducted, a universally accepted definition of the urban continues to remain elusive. Although intuitively the distinction between townscape and the countryside appears stark, geographers and others have over time increasingly questioned whether this distinction is in fact meaningful when applied to highly developed states such as the UK. Such an opinion is exemplified by Pahl (1975), who claimed that "in an urbanized society, urban is everywhere and nowhere: the city cannot be defined", and by Glass (1989), for whom "in a highly urbanised country such as Great Britain, the label 'urban' can be applied to almost any branch of sociological study, (and) in the circumstances, it is rather pointless to apply it at all".

It is notable, however, that both of the above statements, whilst refuting the existence of a separate urban realm, both choose to conceptualise reality as something clearly definable as 'urban'. Savage & Warde (1993) recognise that there are a number of "recurring themes" in urban geographical and sociological research which can be said to represent an epistemological focus, and Herbert & Thomas (1990) distil these into two "benchmarks" for the practice of urban geography, that the city represents both a specific *space* and *place* of enquiry.

Subsequent definitions of urban spaces inevitably rely on the conception that they are in some way more populous or of a higher population density than those that are non-urban. This brings obvious problems, however, as any such relativist definition implies possible weaknesses when applied to specific cases. For example, a settlement of 1000 persons may well be regarded as a 'rural' village in the UK, whereas in other countries or regions such an agglomeration may represent a significant urban centre.

Herbert & Thomas (1990) therefore propose a functional basis for the city. Towns and cities, they contend, "have functions that distinguish them from rural settlements.... they are non-agricultural in character and (are also) concerned with the exchange rather than (just) the production of goods". This reflects Harvey's (1973) assertion that the development of towns and cities is central to the capitalist economic regime, in that they form the spatial means by which surplus can be exchanged efficiently. Furthermore, Harvey goes on to make the distinction between the "subsistence surplus" fundamental to the biological replication of the population, and the "social surplus" necessary to fund the cultural activity underlying wider society. Cities therefore represent sites both of economic exchange and of social and cultural consumption, although these roles have adapted as first the pattern of exchange evolved from the reciprocal to a market system, then as clearly-defined urban hierarchies within and across states developed. The emergence of modern industrial production added yet another layer of functionality to many towns and cities in the 19th century (Vance, 1971).

Such a functional definition of the urban in many ways bridges the divide between the notions of space and place. With a distinctive functional rationale, urban places could reasonably be expected to produce an equally distinctive way of life for their inhabitants. This possibility was first recognised by Tonnies (1955) in his distinction between the rigid social constructs of rural *community*, or "*gemeinschaft*", and the more flexible urban *association*, or "*gesellschaft*", in which individuals choose from the wider range of activities and lifestyles available in cities.

Louis Wirth's classic essay of 1938, *Urbanism as a way of Life*, recognised the existence of a peculiarly urban social order. Through a triangular conceptualisation of the urban realm, Wirth proposed the existence of three 'independent variables', size, density and heterogeneity, which together represent a distinctively urban culture, and a number of "dependent variables" representing place-specific details.

Although Wirth's highly positivist approach is now dated, much contemporary urban geography maintains a focus on spaces defined by one or more of his three independent variables, and recognises that each of these individual urban realms consists of a particular blend of functions and offers a unique quality of life that defines it as a discrete place within a wider geography.

Such a functional definition of the urban suggests that suitable boundaries for the practical study of particular cities should be drawn more widely than either the legal limits of the core city and the larger physical constructs of the urban agglomeration, conurbation or continuously built up area. Instead, they should seek to take account of the notion of the interdependent system of the core city, its suburbs and the smaller surrounding settlements which as part of a single common urban labour market and service catchment represent discrete "functional realities" (Herbert & Thomas, 1990: 61), or "city regions" (Champion et al 1987: 6).

### 2.2.2 The need for urban transport

The need for urban transport can be placed within the dual space/place conception of the city outlined above. The city as an economic space clearly requires a transport system capable of moving both goods and people efficiently between sites of production and exchange (Button & Gillingwater, 1986). This conception of cities as spaces of exchange within a wider economic system is further emphasised by Burtenshaw et al (1991: 96), who highlight the "gateway function of cities as route centres and transshipment points".

However, urban transport systems also illustrate the conception of the city as a social place. Hanson (1986) highlights the critical distinction between the *mobility* of goods and the workforce in the economic sphere, and the *accessibility* of urban functions and services to *individuals* implied by the notion of *gesellschaft*. For White & Senior (1983: 1), the latter role of transport in urban life is fundamental, since "transport creates the utilities of place" that together form the concept of urbanism as envisaged by Wirth. Thus, the demand for transport can be seen to be derived, in that transport itself it has no inherent value, but

instead provides the means whereby individuals can access the many different services they require within the pattern of their daily lives (Figure 2.1).

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Journey Classification</i>
<b>ECONOMIC</b>	
Earning a living	To and from work In course of work
Acquiring goods and services	To and from shops and outlets for personal services In course of shopping or personal business
<b>SOCIAL</b>	
Forming, developing and maintaining personal relations	To and from homes of friends and relatives To and from non-home rendezvous
<b>EDUCATIONAL</b>	
	To and from schools, colleges and evening institutes
<b>RECREATIONAL AND LEISURE</b>	
	To and from places of recreation and entertainment In the course of recreation: walks, rides
<b>CULTURAL</b>	
	To and from places of worship To and from places of non-leisure activity, including cultural and political meetings

Figure 2.1 Classification of purposes of urban personal travel.

Source Daniels & Warnes (1980: 20).

This categorisation of the needs for urban transport can be taken a stage further by applying O'Connor's (1973) typology of governmental expenditure. Paddison (1983: 148) describes the first category, "social investment" expenditure, as that which is necessary "to secure a propitious environment in which capital accumulation can prosper", the second, "social consumption" expenditure as that "aimed at the reproduction of the labour force", and the third, "social expenses" as that "directed at the means of legitimisation". Urban transportation can clearly be seen to fulfil all of these roles. The provision of the

infrastructure necessary for the adequate supply of labour and capital to the city as a space of production and exchange can be conceptualised as a social investment, whilst the opportunities afforded by transport for the "collective consumption necessary for the reproduction of the labour force", such as that of cultural services including "libraries, museums and recreation" (Saunders 1979: 147) represent social consumption. Indeed, such a definition can be seen to incorporate the concept of social expenses within social consumption expenditure, since the individual emancipation made possible through collective consumption of services such as healthcare, education and transport is crucial to the promotion of social inclusion necessary for the legitimisation of the modern state (Castells, 1977).

Furthermore, each of these two categories of expenditure can be associated with differing methods of policy evaluation. The desire to forecast the impacts of transport capital investment on identifiable urban economic outputs has driven the development of quantitative analytical techniques which frame the costs of such developments in terms of monetary estimates of the benefits gained (see 2.3.3). However, the impacts of policies which aim to enhance individual accessibility through extension of the range of travel opportunities within the city can be more difficult to quantify, and thus often incorporate qualitative evaluations.

Table 2.1 below integrates each of these conceived roles of urban transport under the overall perspectives of the city as an economic space and as a social place. Although individual transport policies may link objectives from either perspective, the degree to which broadly social or economic development aspirations influence decision-making emerges as a key factor in the subsequent case study analyses.

<u>Urban perspective</u>	<u>City as economic space</u>	<u>City as social place</u>
<i>Policy objective</i>	Economic development	Social development
<i>Prime function of urban transport</i>	To maximise mobility of labour and capital	To maximise individual accessibility to urban amenities
<i>Expenditure type</i>	Social investment	Social consumption
<i>Evaluation method</i>	Quantitative analysis	Quantitative and qualitative analysis

Table 2.1 Perspectives of the role of urban transport.

### 2.2.3 The evolution of urban transport in the UK

Over time, urban transport in the UK has evolved to fulfil both economic and social development roles. White & Senior (1983) contend that the earliest land systems before 1840 were based on roads for the use of pedestrians and the horse-drawn vehicles which provided the principal means of economic exchange between urban areas. Settlement outside London consisted of "foot cities" (Schaeffer & Sclar, 1975), tight nuclei within which workplace and home were often one or at close proximity, and where walking was the overwhelmingly dominant mode of intra-urban transport (Sharp, 1967).

However,

major changes in transport technology which began to emerge during the first quarter of the nineteenth century had a major influence on the growth of cities, the organization of their internal structure, and the supply, demand, efficiency, speed and opportunities for movement within them.

Daniels & Warnes (1980: 4)

The subsequent shift to the early phase of the "tracked city" (Schaeffer & Sclar, 1975), which was characterised by the horse tram, enabled the first significant "separation of homes and workplaces" (Daniels & Warnes, 1980: 2). The scope for commuting by the expanding main line railways was limited, however. Built primarily to serve inter-urban traffic and operating steam locomotives which required considerable distances between stops, these lines "only provided very limited coverage of the existing areas of urban development or potential areas for urban expansion" (Daniels & Warnes: 1980: 8). Such suburban development as was generated by the railways around provincial cities was comprised of villas for the wealthier classes grouped at much lower densities than the urban core, often separated from the existing built-up area of the city by several miles (Kellett, 1969). Indeed, in many ways, this process represents an early example of the shift towards the discrete dormitory settlements which characterise the modern city region. Furthermore, the new railway companies often played a positive role in this process, offering free season tickets to "people who agreed to build houses at any undeveloped location on the railway" (Thomas, 1971: 209).



The subsequent developmental phase of the tracked city, the widespread and rapid growth of electric street tramways around the turn of the century, enabled the expansion of the inner city through the direction of development along specific corridors, "joining up the nodes created by the steam railways" (White & Senior 1983: 119). In this way, many of the terraced and tenemental districts of British cities developed rapidly as the tram brought them within convenient travelling time of the city centre.

In the larger and more congested conurbations, the sheer physical size of the built-up area encouraged the development of fully segregated suburban railway systems in addition to the tram in the latter years of the nineteenth century. The development of the Underground network in London combined relief of the congested city centre streets with improved accessibility from the urban fringe, as the more rapid acceleration characteristics of electric trains enabled the inclusion of more stations whilst retaining acceptable journey times. As a result, large swathes of Essex and Middlesex became urbanised as the public became attracted to life in 'Metroland'. Similar suburban growth was also followed the electrification of several lines in Merseyside after 1910 (see 5.4.1). In Glasgow, however, the UK's second discrete underground railway, or *Subway*, never expanded beyond the first 10 km-long circle line serving the inner city residential areas, riverside docks and warehouse districts, due largely to the small non-standard gauge of its rolling stock, the city's compact physical form, and its already dense network of efficient surface trams (Wright & Maclean, 1997).

Although the progressive innovations of the 'tracked' era played a significant role in ensuring the mobility of the growing labour forces and thus the economic development of British cities, they can also be seen to have initiated the role of urban transport as a major element of social development. Brash (1971), for example, describes the part played by the tramways in affording the wider urban population access to the expanding civic facilities such as museums and public parks, and to other activities such as spectator sport.

The post-1945 experience of urban transport in the UK, as in most countries of the developed world, is dominated by the shift to the "rubber city" (Schaeffer & Sclar, 1975) of the bus, lorry and particularly the private car, which has brought fundamental morphological and social change to cities. Westwell (1991) highlights the American influences on British planning experience, particularly the trend towards low density suburban sprawl and the rapid growth of smaller settlements within the city region encouraged by a *laissez-faire* attitude to widespread car use. Accommodating the car within existing towns and cities also proved problematic: the elimination of trams from British cities in the 1950s and 60s provides a clear illustration of the priority attached to increasing the available road space

for private vehicles (Hall & Hass-Klau, 1985). In addition, the construction of new road infrastructure blighted many historic urban neighbourhoods, or in some cases removed them from the map altogether.

Although widely credited as representing the height of 'motorway madness', the *Traffic in Towns* report of 1963 (Buchanan, 1963) in fact acknowledged that to continue to plan for the projected increases in the demand for car travel by parallel increases in the supply of road space would entail massive reconstruction of our towns and cities which, even if affordable, would fundamentally alter their historic character (Bruton, 1985). Instead, Buchanan accentuated the likely need to restrain the use of the car in town and city centres, and to provide a realistic alternative through significant investment in rail-based urban transport systems of sufficient speed, capacity and quality as to attract the motorist.

Previously, many elements of both the Left and Right had regarded increased car ownership and use as desirable. The Right pointed not only to the perceived general increase in the level of personal choice in trip making, but also to the possibilities of sustained economic growth generated by the virtuous circle of the expanding automotive, oil and rubber industries, and of road infrastructure construction (Foster, 1981; Yago, 1984). Equally, much of the Left remained committed to a utopian vision of urban planning which incorporated universal car ownership as a solution to the transport equity dilemma (Wistrich, 1983) as envisaged by Le Corbusier and American architect Frank Lloyd Wright among others:

What nobler agent has culture or civilization than the great open road made beautiful and safe for continually flowing traffic, a harmonious part of a great whole life? Along these grand roads as through human veins and arteries throngs city life, always building, building, planning, working.

Wright (1963: 147).

Indeed, such was the importance attached by the Left to the accommodation of the private motor vehicle within overall urban transport policy that between the wars, even the celebrated socialists Beatrice and Sidney Webb remarked

we cannot doubt that - whatever precautions may be imposed for the protection of foot-passengers, and whatever constitutional and financial readjustments may be necessary as between tramways, omnibuses and public revenues - the roads have once more got to

be made to accommodate the traffic, not the traffic constrained to suit the roads.

Webb & Webb (1963: 254).

However, reaction against the bleak physical form of the "parking-lot cities" (Mumford, 1968) required to fully accommodate the car generated a "quite considerable change in attitudes and policy that, in a very short time in the middle years of the seventies, had demoted road building as a way of relieving towns and cities of their traffic burden" (Starkie, 1982: 105).

This sea-change in attitudes was represented in the UK not only by the abandonment of many urban highway proposals, but also in the extension of central government grant aid for major public transport projects and the creation of the new Passenger Transport Authorities and Executives to manage such investments. Although PTA funding remained based in large part on central government grant rather than local tax revenues, the new PTAs drove through several significant rail infrastructure investments which resulted in "a shift to investment in new or improved public transport systems as an alternative to the car" (Hall & Hass-Klau, 1985: 25). Glasgow, Liverpool and Newcastle benefited from new or re-opened underground rail links in the following decade (see 5.5.1; 5.5.2). Similarly, London Underground's 1968 Victoria Line was the first new tube in over 60 years. However, the increasing financial austerity of the late 1970s put an end to major new capital investment in urban rail systems, with both Manchester's city centre underground rail link and the second phase of London's Jubilee Line cancelled as attention shifted towards the possibilities afforded by less expensive light rail transit schemes (see 2.3.1) and bus priority measures.

For Sutton (1988: 132), UK central government transport policy since 1979 forms a unique case based on the principles of *laissez-faire* economic management which "support(s) the view of transport as any other consumer good, subject to market forces and the rigours of competition". As with the public choice project for the reform of local government (see 3.3.2), the deregulation, fragmentation and privatisation of state-owned transport undertakings was championed by the Conservative administration as a means to reduce their perceived over-supply, their unresponsiveness to changing customer demand, and the high resulting public subsidies. The first of many regulatory changes to affect urban transport provision was that of the deregulation of local bus services outside London, introduced by the Transport Act 1985, based on the belief that

the (previous) licensing system had both protected operators leading to unduly high cost operation, and had reduced flexibility to innovate in response to changed demand. It was considered that complete deregulation would allow free testing of innovation, and secure and sustain cost savings..... the government were also concerned about the amount of public money that was being devoted to revenue support payments, and thus proposed that public money could only be used to sustain services on routes or at times of day that would not be provided by the free market.

Savage (1985: 13).

However,

deregulation did not bring about most of the positive effects forecast by the government. Indeed, some adverse effects can now be seen. Competition did not yield fare reductions nor an increase in ridership. Public spending has been significantly reduced but to the detriment of overall mobility (equality of access is likely to have been affected).

Pucher & Lefevre (1996: 133).

White (1995) claims that although by 1992 the total number of local bus kilometres operated had risen by 20% in Britain, the level of patronage declined by 22% (28% in the metropolitan counties in England). Although fares rose an average of 61% in real terms over the same period, the increase in the English metropolitan counties reached 97%. The effects of deregulation on urban railways with which buses were now in competition varied, however. Whilst in Tyne & Wear, for example, the Metro rail system lost patronage as a result of competition from extended radial bus services which had previously stopped short of the city centre at principal bus / Metro interchange stations (Roberts, 1992), in many urban areas, the uncertainty brought by the fluctuating service patterns as deregulated bus operators established themselves was such that significant bus traffic in fact switched to the local rail networks: in Merseyside, rail patronage rose 12.5% in the year after deregulation (Merseyside PTA/E, 1987).

Similarly, the concept of privatisation was extended to rail transport. In 1992, the UK's first new light rail system opened in Manchester, backed by a consortium of public and private sector bodies. The following year, the 1993 Railways Act provided for the

privatisation of British Rail through its fragmentation into a new track authority, *Railtrack*, 25 passenger train operating companies, and a wide range of freight, engineering and support companies. Despite criticism from the Left (Roberts, 1992 for example) of the further erosion of public control and co-ordination of transport represented by the provisions of the Act, there was the widespread acknowledgement that some injection of new money was necessary to reverse the historic decay and "absence of investment" (Pucher & Lefevre, 1996: 126) in the rail network seen over successive decades.

Furthermore, the realisation that, unlike commercial bus services, the franchised train operating companies would continue to require significant public subsidies, re-affirmed the role of the PTEs as determinants of local rail policy in their areas, in comparison to their loss of control over commercial local buses at the time of deregulation. The 1993 Railways Act therefore cemented the position of the seven PTEs by maintaining their responsibility to set local rail service and fares levels, in return for revenue subsidy of the privatised train operating companies. However, by April 1996, neither the train operating companies within the PTE areas nor *Railtrack* itself had been transferred to the private sector, the existing mechanisms for PTE revenue support of local rail services remaining unchanged throughout the study time period (see 3.4.2).

Against this background, car use in the UK has continued to rise steadily, including those urban areas where absolute car ownership is historically lower. Encouraged by continuing economic growth and decentralisation of population within city regions, vehicle ownership and availability continued to extend across socio-economic groups and to women and young people:

It seems futile to deny these things (the advantages of motorcars). The motor vehicle is a remarkable invention, so desirable that it has wound itself inextricably into a large part of our affairs. There cannot be any going back on it.

Buchanan (1963).

Thus,

separating people from their cars is a well-nigh impossible task. It would require a considerable increase in public transport investment and the implementation of policies which favour public transport and alternative modes, neither of which seems

very likely in the future.

Pucher & Lefevre (1996: 136).

The reluctance of successive Conservative governments to implement policies aimed at encouraging the development of improved public transport can also be traced back to public choice perceptions of the economic and social roles of urban passenger transport. First, the provision of adequate road capacity for forecast levels of traffic was seen as the most efficient means of ensuring maximum mobility in the economy. Second, as in Margaret Thatcher's famous phrase (borrowed in fact from the Buchanan Report), motorists comprise the "car-owning democracy" (Riddell, 1991), who value the perceived increase in personal choice represented by immediate access to transport through the car, and indeed the status attached to car ownership itself. Whilst Swann (1992), Begg (1996) and others called for consideration of substantial increases in fuel taxation, urban road pricing and the direct limitation of the use of cars in cities as means to reduce congestion and pollution and to promote equity of access for public transport users, central government continued to reject the widespread introduction of such schemes, fearing a political backlash from motorists. Thus, the application of demand management measures was limited to the increased pedestrianisation of town and city centres, extended waiting restrictions, the definition of more bus and cycle lanes, and the negative effects resulting from traffic congestion itself (Simpson, 1988). Consequently, the railways and other modes of public transport continued to compete for modal share in a market for urban transport.

The assumed role of the railways within many British urban transport strategies of the last 30 years was therefore one of providing a credible, less environmentally-damaging alternative to the private car as a means to achieve increased mobility. This was promoted through improvements in the quality of service offered, in terms of range of destinations, frequency of services and journey times, whilst minimising the direct cost to the passenger (Hall & Hass-Klau, 1985). However, there exists a fundamental policy dilemma which recurs consistently throughout the subsequent case studies: put simply, such concentration of the limited capital resources available for urban rail transport investment on those corridors with the greatest potential for increased patronage and environmental gain through achieving modal shift away from the car, which by definition tend to be the more affluent with a higher demand for travel and higher car ownership levels, can deprive other routes serving disadvantaged areas of improved travel opportunities. The central theme of the local rail transport policy discourse in each study region therefore converges around the

search for a balance between these broadly economic development and social development aspirations.

#### **2.2.4 Contemporary issues in urban passenger transportation provision**

The above dilemma of how to best apply the available investment funds, which confronts urban rail transport policy makers in most European cities, results largely from the historic growth in the use of the private car. Thomson (1977) claims this trend lies at the root of a catalogue of social and economic difficulties which together represent 'the urban transportation problem'. In addition to the car's more obvious disbenefits of congestion, environmental degradation, parking difficulties, accidents and restrictions of the movements of pedestrians identified by Thomson, Simpson (1994: 4) contends that the UK's *laissez-faire* attitude to the spread of the car has driven the relocation of urban services, such as food retailing, towards primarily car-accessible sites, "increasing the need for public transport for fewer users", discouraged investment in public transport lowering the quality and attractiveness of the service offered, and hindered the regeneration of run-down inner city areas in favour of continued erosion of the green belt.

Thus, the urban transportation problem can be framed in both social and economic development terms. Congestion clearly constrains the functioning of the urban economic system, as the mobility of goods and labour is reduced. Similarly, the reduction in public transport services brought about by competition from the car reduces the level of accessibility of urban facilities for the "transport deprived" (Tolley & Turton, 1995) who remain "captive" to declining public transport (Burtenshaw et al, 1991). Often, this is not represented by the complete withdrawal of a service, but its limitation to specific time periods within the day or week, which denies access to those facilities or activities that themselves are time-dependent.

Hodge (1986) reviews these and other car resource implications in terms of their impact on the equity of the city. Rising car availability has clearly increased the relative accessibility of employment and social facilities to some, whilst reducing it for others. As patronage on public transport services has fallen, those without access to a car, often some of society's more deprived groups, such as the young, the old, the unemployed and the mobility-impaired, have been doubly disadvantaged as service levels on public transport have reduced (Torrance, 1992). Thus, the goal of "access for all" (Schaeffer & Sclar, 1975) remains elusive:

It is our contention that the urban crises which manifest themselves in so many ways have at least one common root. This is the increasing reliance on the automobile. In every urban area, the automobile has become the only means of transportation by which every part of the region can be reached.

Wherever the automobile is *the* mode of travel, there access to transportation is distributed very unevenly between individuals. This is probably the greatest social fault of the automobile.

Schaeffer & Sclar (1975: 103, original emphasis.)

In addition to the increasing polarisation of transport access generated by high private car use, environmental disbenefits such as particulate pollution, noise and the high level of road traffic accidents are clearly not conducive to healthy living, and entail significant social costs.

White & Senior (1983) suggest that objectives for future urban transportation policy should include a reduction in the need to travel, and for those trips which remain, the encouragement of modal shift through a reduction in the number of car trips and a parallel increase in the use of public transport:

since further extension of the road infrastructure to meet growing demand for car use is not everywhere possible for urban planning and financial reasons, nor desirable from environmental, energy and often social policy standpoints, the only remaining transport policy option is to swing modal split in favour of public transport by investment and/or pricing policy measures.

OECD (1979: 149).

Such a policy shift would also provide a major step towards the goal of *sustainability* as proposed by the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development, and championed by Whitelegg (1992) amongst others. The definition of sustainable development offered by the Commission, that which "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", is clearly at odds with the continuing increases in the levels of airborne pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption attributed to wider car use.



However, such focus on the sustainability of urban transport again highlights the paradoxical nature of the urban transportation problem: whilst the diversion of existing car-based trips toward public transport marks an significant improvement in environmental efficiency, such a trend does not equally satisfy aspirations for improved transport equity:

Policy makers in all societies have values or objectives that inform the making of social judgements and hence guide the making of social decisions. For most societies, these are likely to include attaining an efficient use of scarce resources *and* the promotion of an equitable or just distribution of those resources.

Le Grand (1991: 1; emphasis added).

A key element in the notion of transport equity is the development of public transport to incorporate the potential for new trip opportunities for individuals in more disadvantaged neighbourhoods who currently travel less. In this way, overall urban social equity can be maximised through the provision of a transport system which enables access to the full range of personal needs as identified by Daniels & Warnes, across all localities. Thus, Buchan (1992: 15) includes the promotion of transport equity as a key aspiration within a comprehensive statement of policy objectives for the enhancement of urban quality of life through the solution of the urban transportation problem (Figure 2.2).

*Accessibility*

- To encourage and provide a transport system which will give people access to workplaces, to shops and public buildings, to industry and commerce, to facilities like doctors' surgeries, to centres for recreation and entertainment, to other goods and services, and to one another;
- To coordinate transport planning with land use and economic development planning with the aim of minimizing the overall need to travel.

*Environment*

- To protect and enhance the quality of the environment as an objective in its own right and not merely to minimize the damage resulting from transport developments;
- To set quality standards which should apply throughout the country and not just in certain areas;
- To ensure that transport policies contribute towards reducing environmental damage nationally and worldwide;
- To set clear constraints which prevent the destruction of irreplaceable environmental assets.

*Economic Development*

- To create patterns of transport infrastructure which support sustainable economic development at the local and national level;

- To encourage research, innovation and technological process both in manufacturing for, and in the operation of, transport industries;
  - To regulate the transport industry itself to provide reasonable pay and conditions and fulfilment at work.
- Fairness and Choice*
- To improve freedom of choice of destination and mode for everyone, tackling the inequalities that currently exist;
  - To ensure that a major part of benefits from the design and operation of the transport system are distributed to those who are most in need them.
- Safety and Security*
- To reduce the risks and fear of personal injury, assault and harassment on all modes of transport (including walking);
  - To reduce the number, risk and level of severity of road traffic accidents for drivers, passengers, pedestrians and cyclists.
- Energy and Efficiency*
- To meet the accessibility requirements of residents, visitors, industry and commerce at the lowest resource cost;
  - To minimize consumption of non-renewable sources of energy;
  - To reduce congestion, and encourage transport efficiency.
- Accountability*
- To give people an unequivocal right to participate in the transport planning process;
  - To establish mechanisms for people to exert influence through local democratic means over the decision-making process for transport schemes;
  - To set up mechanisms by which users can directly influence the quality of service offered by the transport providers.
- Flexibility*
- To make the system responsive to changes in the external constraints operating on the transport system, and to new understanding about its impacts.

Figure 2.2 Quality of life objectives for transport.

Source Buchan (1992: 15).

## 2.3 Urban railways

### 2.3.1 The characteristics of urban railways

Despite forming a distinctive category of transportation systems, the term 'urban railways' in fact groups together a wide range of transport technologies (Simpson, 1994), which can be conceptualised as forming different geographical layers of a hierarchical passenger transport network. At one end of the spectrum is the street tram, which although successively replaced by the bus in the UK after 1945, remains a central feature of the networks of many European cities in its modernised form. Since trams share road space with

other vehicles under an integrated traffic signal control system, their average speeds are often low, at around 15km/h, limiting their effectiveness to shorter trips close to the city centre. However, despite this low service speed, trams' on-street operation provides very convenient boarding and alighting points for passengers, and network coverage is often dense.

The construction of many underground railways in more heavily trafficked cities formed an attempt to improve on the low journey speeds and limited passenger capacity of the tram by creating a right of way fully segregated from congested surface street traffic. Systems such as the Paris *Métro* sought to mimic the best features of the tram by providing a high service frequency over a similarly dense network of closely-spaced station stops (Hardy, 1993). However, the end-to-end journey time penalties inherent in such a dense provision of stations again restricted the potential distance such systems could effectively extend into the suburban ring. Even today, the role of many underground and metro systems is restricted to shorter trips of less than 10km within the higher density urban core (Simpson, 1988), in order to provide an effective inner distributor system for the city centre.

In contrast, conventional suburban (heavy) railways achieve higher average speeds by restricting stops to relatively widely-spaced stations, usually over 1.5km apart (Simpson, 1994). Thus, most modern heavy rail commuter lines form a complementary network layer to inner trams or metro systems, oriented towards longer trips within the city region, often of several kilometres. This is particularly true of those lines which share their suburban routes with longer-distance passenger and freight traffic of the higher, national rail network layer. Where this is the case, the first passenger station out from the city centre may be significantly distant, so as to reduce congestion on the terminal approaches (Daniels & Warnes, 1980). However, many later conventional railways primarily designed to accommodate suburban passenger traffic, such as Glasgow's low level lines (see 5.4.2), incorporated central area tunnels to reduce interaction with the uppermost inter-urban network layer, and thus permit through-running of local trains and more closely spaced stations in the city centre and inner urban ring.

Whilst larger 'metro' systems such as the London Underground can clearly be labelled as heavy rail, *Light Rail (or Rapid) Transit (LRT)* combines elements of both the street tramway and segregated railways. LRT routes employ varying degrees of segregation and signalling control depending on the nature of the local built environment, and provide a balance between the higher speeds of fully-segregated city-regional networks and the numerous access points of dense road-based network layers. Thus, in suburban areas and city centres, operation is often on-street in order to provide easy access to the system, particularly for the mobility impaired. Longer segregated sections between districts follow disused rail

corridors or the central reservations of main boulevard-type roads. More recent developments following the pioneering example of the German city of Karlsruhe have however sought to further integrate new street running light rapid transit routes with existing segregated heavy rail infrastructure network through 'joint running' of LRT vehicles and conventional trains, so as to provide the optimum balance between overall speed and easy city centre accessibility.

Hall & Hass-Klau (1985) summarise these variations between applications of urban rail technology in terms of three critical attributes, *speed*, *capacity* and *reliability*, to which a fourth, *frequency*, can be added. Typically, rail systems other than street tramways which by definition share infrastructure with other traffic, can achieve higher average speeds than road-based transport modes, particularly where significant congestion exists. In the case of conventional heavy suburban railways, maximum speeds can reach 160 km/h (100 mph).

Secondly, the capacity of urban passenger rail systems can surpass that of even major roads, ranging from 15,000 to 60,000 passengers per hour in each direction, although a median figure of around 30,000 is typical (Simpson, 1994). Finally, the physically fixed nature of rail systems, although presenting permanent limitations in terms of flexibility of route compared to the bus, creates a regular pattern of services which are easily understood and largely unaffected by fluctuating variations in congestion levels in comparison to road-based modes. Typical values for a range of these attributes across the variety of rail-based systems and the bus are shown in Figure 2.3 below.

	<u>Bus</u>	<u>Tram</u>	<u>Light Rail</u>	<u>Heavy Rail</u>
<u>Right of Way</u>	Shared	Shared	Mainly shared	Fully segregated
<u>Average speed (km/hr)</u>	10-20	10-20	20-30	30-60
<u>Security system</u>	Traffic signals	Traffic signals	Traffic signals; limited automatic signalling in some areas	Fully automatic signalling
<u>Passenger load per hour (each direction)</u>	12,000	15,000	20,000	30-60,000
<u>Frequency (seconds)</u>	60	60	90	90

Table 2.2 Selected technical characteristics of the bus and urban railways.

Source Hall & Hass-Klau (1985); Simpson (1994).

Although identified as a positive factor, the fixed nature of railway infrastructure also forms the basis of the main disadvantages of rail as an urban transport mode. Fundamentally, railway infrastructure is permanently located at particular points in space and cannot move in response to changing patterns of land use and demand. In the UK, this has been compounded by post-war land use policies which have consistently failed to link new urban development to existing rail transport provision, and by extremely limited new railway construction (Simpson, 1994). The continuing process of suburbanisation has created many low-density residential districts almost entirely dependent on the car. In contrast, modern residential development in several European cities, of which Stockholm and The Hague are prime examples, has focused around extensions of existing urban railway networks (Garbutt, 1989).

Similarly, city centre stations remain fixed at points often determined by the urban morphology of the 19th century. The historic drift of many cities' central business districts through the twin processes of assimilation and discard as proposed by Murphy, Vance and Epstein (1955) can be seen to have left many formerly 'central' railway stations at considerable distances from contemporary activity. Furthermore, the segregated design of most urban railway infrastructure dictates that the construction of new sections of route necessarily involves significant alterations to existing townscapes. Although the construction of tunnels provides one solution, the costs are such that this can only be justified in situations of very high traffic flow. Consequently, the renewed interest in street-running city LRT systems can be seen as a response to these problems.

### **2.3.2 The case for rail within urban transport provision**

Garbutt (1989) views the "case for metros" in relation to the advantages derived from the three attributes of urban rail transport outlined above in relation to overall quality of life objectives. He conceptualises speed and capacity as central to the role of urban railways as a element of economic development, since the accommodation of the levels of movement seen in the largest cities would be "physically impossible" if wholly dependent on the car. Further significant advantages are identified in the railways' parsimonious use of valuable urban land and energy in comparison to the car.

For Hall & Hass-Klau (1985), the transfer of urban space away from the car is essential in order to "save the city". Since unlike the bus, "efficient underground and rapid transit railway systems can be effective competitors for motorcars" (OECD, 1979: 151), they contend

that a switch from land-hungry road building to rail investment can enable the transformation of the urban environment into that which gives the needs of people precedence through the pedestrianisation of public spaces, and the revitalisation of inner-city housing.

Besides the identification of a primary role for railways as a more environmentally-friendly alternative to the problem of mobility within the urban *economy*, Garbutt also identifies a case for rail in terms of urban social development, since he asserts that wider choice of accessible destinations, shorter journey times and increased reliability in comparison to the bus should not be confined to car users. Stokes (1972) also frames the value of urban railways firmly within the concept of social development when he outlines the extended range of urban labour, education and housing market opportunities available to *individuals* through the provision of a comprehensive, fast, efficient and reliable rail system within the city.

The case for urban railways can therefore be expressed within the urban perspective categorisation adopted throughout this review. The enhancement of rail networks as a instrument of economic development offers the prospect of a transport system capable of improving the efficiency of the urban economy through a maximisation of levels of mobility of consumers and within the labour market, whilst minimising negative externalities such as physical pollution, congestion, the degradation of townscape, and the risk to personal safety presented by road traffic. In parallel, the low journey times and high quality of service offered by rail transport can maximise the opportunities of access to education, employment, healthcare and other social services provided within the urban realm for individuals as emphasised by Stokes and Buchan. A well-developed rail network offering equity of access to these facilities to the whole urban population can therefore play a substantial role in ensuring "social justice" in the city is realised (Harvey, 1973).

### 2.3.3 Financing urban railways

Although successive governments have maintained a system of competition for modal share in urban transportation, Thomson (1977) identifies significant "pricing deficiencies" in the system which favour the private car over public transport. Simply, although the costs of road construction and improvement are met by the central purse, users do not bear the full costs of their actions, in terms both of depreciation of the physical assets and the external costs arising from such factors as pollution and congestion as identified above. In contrast,

the day-to-day operation of rail transport systems entails significant labour costs in addition to those implied in the maintenance of the system.

Meyer & Gomez-Ibanez (1981) exemplify the attitude towards urban rail transportation adopted by many proponents of economic deregulation. For them, the problem is not that the market for urban transport is imperfect, but that public transport, and especially railways, are fundamentally inefficient. In particular, the assertion is made that the diurnal concentration of traffic on most routes leads to poor overall productivity. In their view, urban rail transport should be confined to short corridors within the centres of the largest metropolitan areas where excessive road congestion ensures trip demand remains high throughout the day.

Historically however, the desire to promote equity in urban transportation provision has, to some extent, counterbalanced this purely financial approach. Both the public and private sectors have recognised the potential for *cross-subsidy*, whereby the more profitable services contribute to the costs of marginal or loss-making operations (Barker & Robins, 1974). Indeed, Walker (1972) asserts that urban railways have never been directly "self-supporting", since they too have benefited from similar hidden subsidies to those now applied to the private car, as the net value of transportation is reflected not in direct profit but in gains elsewhere in the economic system.

A similarly broad approach to the evaluation of new capital infrastructure projects has also evolved over time. The recognition that new railways can reduce external car resource costs in addition to earning direct fares revenue initiated the development of *cost-benefit analysis* (CoBA) techniques. CoBA evaluations enable the estimation of both additional *user benefits*, such as the reduction of journey times over existing modes, and *non-user benefits*, such as the reduction of road congestion, within the financial appraisal of development projects. The outcome of a CoBA evaluation is a notional *Net Present Value* of a project, which is "the net surplus of discounted (against inflation) costs, over the whole life of the scheme" (IHT: 1997, 110). The first example of the mainstream application of CoBA, which evolved primarily as a means to appraise road schemes, to urban rail transport development was that of London Underground's Victoria Line in 1962 (Garbutt, 1989), for which a valuation of the benefits of likely reduction of surface congestion when added to the line's projected revenue produced a net 'return' sufficient to justify construction.

The main critiques of CoBA centre on the subjectivity inherent in the attachment of monetary values to abstract factors, and in the definition of decision rules for the inclusion or exclusion of specific considerations (Buchan, 1992). Cole & Holvad (1996) describe how successive

implementations of CoBA in transport project evaluations have attempted to account for additional factors, such as the reduction in road traffic accidents and greenhouse gas emissions brought about by investment in rail transport. However, this illustrates that as the true range of car resource implications becomes apparent, accurate assessment of the monetary costs involved becomes more conjectural. Equally, more abstract factors, such as the benefits of increased potential access to the urban labour market, remain undefined (Garbutt, 1989; Buchan, 1992; Arabeyre, 1998).

## 2.4 International approaches to urban rail development

### 2.4.1 Overview

For Pucher & Lefevre (1996: 7), despite significant national variations, "the countries of Europe and North America all seem to be headed in the same direction: more car ownership and use". However, the extent to which urban rail systems have been developed as a counterweight to this trend varies considerably. Westwell (1991) claims that the UK has fallen between the two stools of the near universal car dependence of the USA and more proactive public transport investment policies of continental Europe. This section therefore provides a brief overview of the varying attitudes to urban rail transport development in selected countries.

<u>Country</u>	<u>Per capita income (1992 US\$)</u>	<u>Car ownership per 1000 population</u>
Austria	21 139	410
Belgium	20 007	401
France	23 170	420
(West) Germany	24 552	492
Spain	12 622	335
UK	14 483	375
USA	22 278	600

Figure 2.3 Per capita income and car ownership in selected countries, 1992 US\$.

Source IRF Road statistics (1993) in Pucher & Lefevre (1996).



<u>Conurbation, date</u>	<u>Car</u>	<u>Public transport</u>	<u>Other</u>
New York, 1990	62	28	10
Los Angeles, 1990	88	05	07
Detroit, 1990	93	02	05
Paris, 1991	66	30	04
Bordeaux, 1990	64	10	26
Toulouse, 1990	63	10	27
London, 1990	48	17	35
Glasgow, 1992	68	28	04
Liverpool, 1991	71	24	05
Munich, 1992	36	25	41
Wuppertal, 1992	54	18	28
Dresden, 1992	43	21	36

Table 2.3 Modal split as percentage of total trips in selected conurbations.

Sources Pucher & Lefevre (1996); Strathclyde PTE; Merseytravel.

<u>Conurbation</u>	<u>Population in millions</u>	<u>Trips per inhabitant per annum</u>
Detroit	4.3	17
Philadelphia	4.9	78
San Diego	2.5	17
London	6.7	290
Glasgow (Clydeside)	1.7	134
Liverpool (M'side)	1.4	147
Dusseldorf	2.2	160
Cologne	1.1	150
Hannover	0.5	230
Lille	1.0	100
Lyon	1.2	186
Paris	7.2	330

Table 2.4 Public transport trips per inhabitant per annum in selected cities, 1992.

Sources Pucher & Lefevre (1996); Strathclyde Regional Council; Merseytravel.

## 2.4.2 United Kingdom

Pucher & Lefevre (1996: 126) characterise Britain's major cities as areas of "public transport decay". With limited lengths of urban motorway in comparison to many continental conurbations and only one new rapid transit system, the Tyne & Wear Metro, constructed since the Second World War, Roberts (1992: 1) claims that in 1990, Britain remained "perpetually poised on the edge of transport gridlock". Although the larger conurbations inherited extensive historic rail networks, many routes outside Greater London do not adequately serve residential districts, since they were primarily designed for inter-urban or freight movement (Kellett, 1969).

During the 1990s, a number of light rapid transit projects in cities outside London jointly financed from the public and private sectors have received central government approval. The first, the 32km initial phase of the Greater Manchester *Metrolink* light rail scheme opened in April 1992, followed the lead of the Tyne & Wear Metro some 12 years earlier in renovating the life-expired railway corridors linking Manchester city centre with Altringham and Bury with the addition of a new cross-city centre link, although in the case of *Metrolink*, this was on-street rather than underground. The relative success of *Metrolink* in replacing 2.6 million car journeys each year (Knowles, 1996: 8), has prompted approval for largely on-street extensions of the system to the Eccles in the west of the conurbation, and to Manchester Airport in the south.

The UK's second new LRT scheme, Sheffield's 31km South Yorkshire *Supertram* network, opened in 1994, has proved less successful, echoing the major dilemma for urban rail transport policy highlighted in 2.2.3. Whereas *Metrolink* serves two relatively prosperous suburban corridors with high car ownership levels, *Supertram* is located primarily in inner city areas where existing levels of bus use are high. With stiff competition from deregulated buses, the limited journey time enhancements possible due to on-street operation, patronage levels on *Supertram* have so far failed to reach even half of the projected 22m passengers per annum (South Yorkshire *Supertram* Ltd, 1997).

Although further LRT schemes in Birmingham and Croydon are due to open before the end of the century, the experience of *Supertram* has led to a reappraisal of the likely benefits of similar proposed schemes in many other British cities such as Bristol and Nottingham (Simpson, 1994).



Figure 2.4 *Supertram* at Cathedral stop in Sheffield city centre.

### 2.4.3 Germany

For Hall & Hass-Klau (1985), the “similarity in physical development” between German cities and those of the UK makes their comparison particularly instructive, especially since the pattern of industrialisation of the two societies has left a legacy of historic urban railway infrastructure largely unrivalled in Europe.

With experience of the London example, construction of new underground railway systems (*U-Bahn*) commenced in Germany in the late 19th century. By 1912, the two major cities of Berlin and Hamburg enjoyed networks of 76km and 68km respectively (Guhl, 1975). In the early 1930s, however, Berlin became the first city to separate suburban railway operations from longer-distance traffic, with the creation of the electrified *S-Bahn* (rapid rail) network (Schreck et al, 1979). After World War Two, the concept extended to other West German cities, and over time, the degree of physical separation between *S-Bahn* and other rail infrastructure increased, with the commuter lines often diverted under conventional terminals through new city centre tunnels (Simpson, 1994). This contrasts with the continuing UK system in which the suburban network layer often shares infrastructure and terminal capacity with the higher level, inter-urban services.

Hall & Hass-Klau also describe how, when faced in the 1950s with increasing urban traffic congestion similar to that experienced in the UK, many West German transport authorities chose to retain the tram, increasing its degree of segregation from other road traffic where necessary. Several medium-sized cities such as Hannover and Bremen took the opportunity to move tram routes underground in their central areas, creating a form of 'metro' operation.

Recent investment in urban rail in Germany has concentrated on limited extension of existing S-Bahn and U-Bahn systems, since "due to financial restraints, no new heavy rail metro systems are planned in any German cities" (Pucher & Lefevre, 1996: 62). Most resources as do exist are directed to the rehabilitation of the many tram systems in the former East Germany, and the "integration of the two formally separate (U- and S-Bahn) systems in Berlin".

Despite the significantly higher investment in the urban rail systems of the former West Germany as compared to those of the UK identified by Hall & Hass-Klau, the car's modal share continues to rise, as does the overall level of car use, which reached 6228km per capita in 1990, 3.8% higher than the equivalent UK figure. Significantly, this trend had led to "65% real increase in the total subsidy required for urban public transport" between 1970 and 1990 (Pucher & Lefevre, 1996; 60). Therefore, although the range of opportunities presented by German urban rail transport is high, the effects of unrestricted car use may affect the future financial viability of the system.

### 2.4.3 France

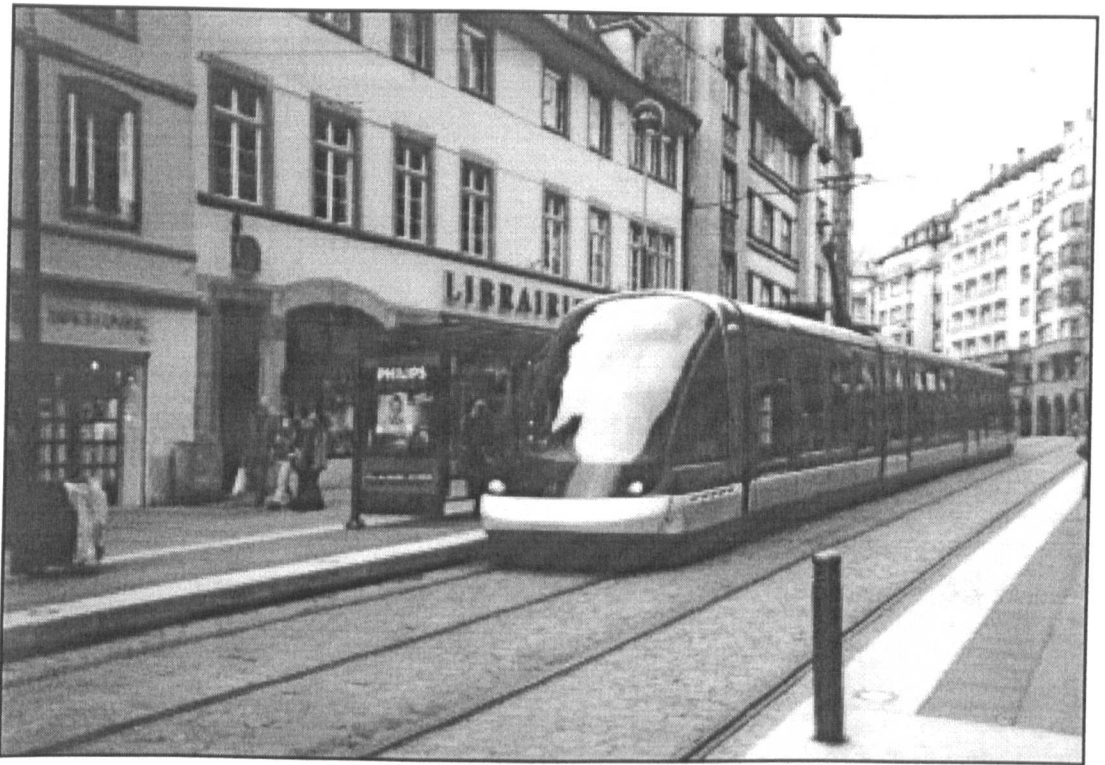
Unlike comparable urban areas in Germany and the UK, few French cities have inherited extensive historic rail infrastructure suitable for conversion into modern rail rapid transit systems. In Paris itself, the construction of the fully discrete *Métropolitain* in the early years of this century reflected the restriction of main line railways to the city periphery (Simpson, 1994). Similarly, more recent systems have been designed to minimise the physical impact on the many high density inner residential districts which characterise French cities by utilising on-street tramways (Grenoble, Nantes, Rouen, Strasbourg), or wholly-new, fully segregated metro-type railways (Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse).

Pucher & Lefevre (1996: 65) argue that the process of renewal and expansion of urban rail transport in France seen since the 1970s is not only a response to continuing problems of congestion and parking restriction, but also a direct instrument of wider national economic development. Although as in the UK, "in the 1950s and 60s, central government launched a

vast programme of investment in roads and the automobile, the car industry being considered a key sector in the country's reconstruction and growth", from the 1970s, successive French national governments shifted a significant degree of this support to the rail engineering sector. This enabled the development of innovative rail systems such as the *Train à Grande Vitesse (TGV)*, and the *Véhicule Automatique à Leger (VAL)* driverless light metros since constructed in Lille and Toulouse. Garbutt (1989) attributes this shift in investment to the national government's general desire to promote French technological excellence in the wider international rail engineering marketplace.

Contemporary development of new urban rail infrastructure in France also continues to be inspired by state intervention, particularly in the form of the *Versement Transport (VT)*, first introduced in Paris in 1971. The VT, essentially an urban payroll tax dedicated to the development of public transport, was extended to smaller cities over the 1980s and early 1990s. The resulting revenue streams were "to be used to make up the operating deficits due to fare reductions of the journey to work, and to finance infrastructures provided they were directed at the journey to work" (Pucher & Lefevre, 1996: 79). In addition to those outlined above, current major rail development projects in provincial cities include the construction of new tramways in Montpellier and St Etienne, and of VAL underground metro systems in Rennes and Bordeaux (*Le Monde*, 10/09/96).

Despite this significant ongoing investment, France shares many of the car resource problems common to other European countries. In particular, several of the largest French agglomerations are continuing to experience population growth, resulting in strong development pressures on edge-of-town sites and increasing urban sprawl. In the Ile de France region surrounding Paris, development of a regional express metro system (*RER*) is continuing through the pairing of complementary historic rail corridors by means of new deep level cross-city tunnels. Troin (1996) describes tentative proposals to implement similar schemes in urban regions such as around Bordeaux where suitable dis- or underused infrastructure exists.

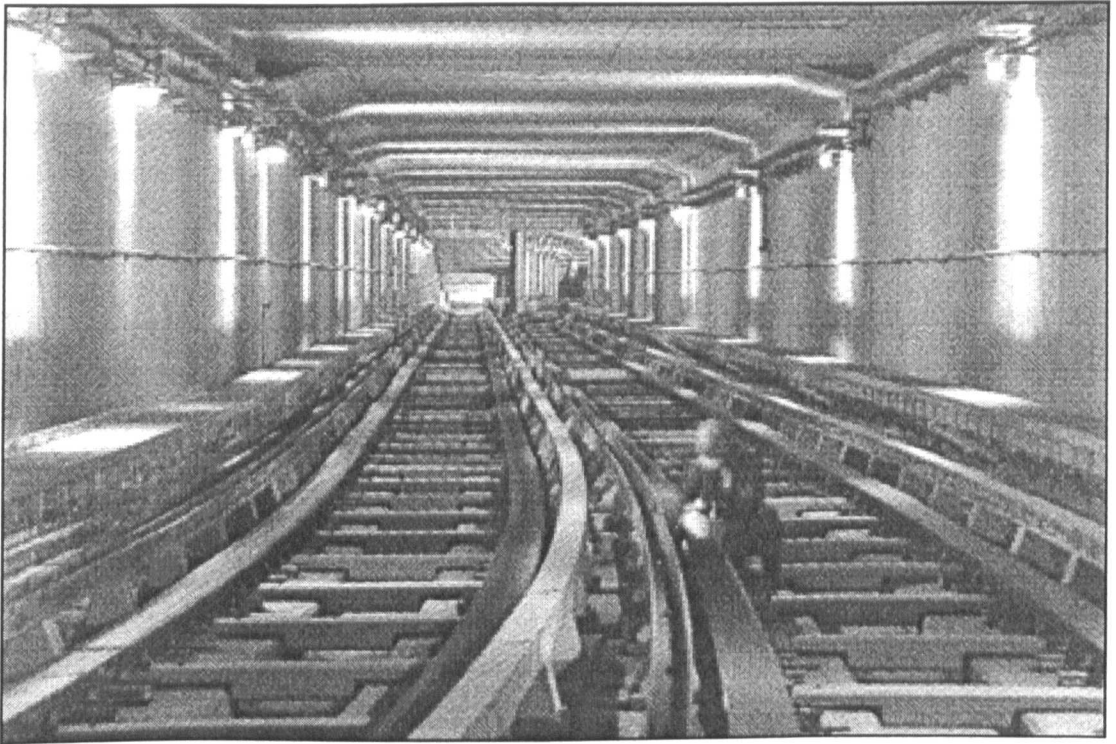


(a)



(b)

Figure 2.5 Strasbourg tram; (a) in central pedestrianised street, (b) at tram/bus interchange on outskirts of city centre.



(a)



(b)

Figure 2.6 Lille VAL light metro; (a) view of tunnelled section, (b) on viaduct. *Transpole*

#### 2.4.4 United States

Quite simply, "no other country in the world is as dominated by the automobile as the USA" Pucher & Lefevre (1996:175). The car and subsequent connotations of national economic prowess derived from its large-scale *Fordist* methods of production are seen as central to the economy and society of the United States (Wolf, 1996).

The comparative youth of many cities outside the north east developed in the automobile era is reflected in their total lack of any form of rail transit and their extremely low residential densities, typically one quarter that of comparable European cities (Murphy, 1974). The resulting hyper-suburbanisation and decline of central city cores has led to severely polarised levels of employment, housing and service accessibility between social groups. Only a limited number of principal historic metropolitan centres, such as New York and Chicago, retain subway or elevated rail systems serving a strong inner core. Elsewhere, accessibility to workplace, shopping and leisure facilities is often entirely dependent on the car (Muller, 1986). Federal assistance to those without access to a car has been targeted at politically vocal groups, such as the mobility impaired and elderly, largely ignoring the inner urban poor (Hanson, 1986).

Public transport accounted for only 2.8% of urban trips throughout the US in 1990 (Pucher & Lefevre, 1996: 179). However, significant variations exist between those cities with urban rail transit systems and those without (Table 2.5).

As in Europe, many US cities began work on new urban rail systems in the 1970s, although the policy goals were somewhat different. Fielding (1986) describes the substantial federal aid granted to a number of systems for improved rail links in the wake of the energy crisis of 1973. However, such is the importance of the automobile industry that throughout the 1980s and 90s, the emphasis of federal policy has shifted from one of investment in alternative modes to the promotion of more fuel efficient vehicles. Furthermore, there exists "overwhelming political support" (Pucher & Lefevre, 1996: 200) for the continuation of substantial federal road investment programmes and minimal levels of fuel taxation, as demanded by domestic petroleum interests.



<u>Metropolitan area</u>	<u>Car</u>	<u>Public transport</u>	<u>Other</u>
New York *	62.5	27.8	9.7
Los Angeles	88.4	4.6	7.0
Chicago *	79.5	13.7	6.8
San Francisco *	81.8	9.3	8.8
Philadelphia *	81.4	10.2	8.4
Detroit	92.8	2.4	4.8
Boston *	80.5	10.6	8.9
Washington DC*	78.9	13.7	7.4
Dallas	92.7	2.4	4.9
Houston	90.0	3.8	6.2

\* Areas with rail rapid transit systems, 1990

Table 2.5 Journey to work modal split (%) in 10 largest US metropolitan areas, 1990.  
Sources Pucher & Lefevre (1996); Garbutt (1989).

## 2.5 Conclusion

### 2.5.1 Themes in urban rail transport development

This chapter has reviewed the key role played by transportation within both the urban economy, and in enabling individuals' daily patterns of consumption and participation in the wide variety of activities which together constitute urban life. The provision of a comprehensive, reliable and efficient urban transportation system is clearly critical to the functioning of the modern city region with its increasingly complex patterns of economic and social interaction.

Within this overall framework, rail systems are well placed to fulfil several strategic urban transport policy aspirations. Railways can play an important role in addressing the two principal aspects of 'the urban transportation problem', which result from the overdependence of many contemporary cities on the private car. First, the low journey times offered by suburban railways provide a competitive alternative to the car for many trips,

which can reduce the high levels of congestion, pollution and accidents, which in turn reduce urban economic efficiency and quality of life. Second, the provision of an extensive urban rail network, which extends travel opportunities in disadvantaged city neighbourhoods of lower economic activity, can act as a powerful weapon against the social exclusion of those individuals without access to a car by promoting equity of access to urban facilities, including the labour market. Successfully integrating the lower network tier of densely-spaced stations around the inner urban core, which gives access to the majority of urban economic activity and other city amenities, with the surrounding longer distance radial corridors provides the key to achieving these two policy objectives.

However, in formulating urban rail transport development plans, policy-makers are often faced with significant conflict between these two broad strategic objectives. The key conflict which characterises the subsequent case study analyses is that between the promotion of improved urban rail transport networks as a means to enhance *mobility* within the urban economy through a reduction in congestion and other disbenefits associated with road traffic, and the parallel aspiration to improve levels of *accessibility* to urban amenities for residents in currently 'transport-deprived' localities. Tension between these two broad policy objectives, which can be summarised as *economic development* and *social development* aspirations respectively, arises essentially due to the limited amount of finance available for investment in improved urban rail provision, as for most other public services (Le Grand et al, 1992). For example, although construction of a new rapid transit line along a corridor of high economic activity and commuting flow may provide substantial environmental and mobility benefits by reducing road congestion and journey times, such enhancements in trip opportunity to already prosperous areas only serve to further polarise urban accessibility levels across the city. Conversely, whilst provision of new rail services to areas of urban deprivation may substantially improve access to employment and other amenities for their inhabitants, thus improving transport equity, such investment does little to address the environmental problems of corridors with high car commuting flows and no rail alternative. However, certain opportunities may arise for the integration of these objectives: for example, the provision of rail access to major new commercial developments may both reduce future levels of road traffic and also extend the range of urban opportunities to those individuals with access to the urban rail network.

When formulating urban rail transport policies, decision-makers must strike a balance between these often opposing strategic objectives. Outcomes will be dependent on the relative importance attached to the social and economic development dimensions of the urban transportation problem by those individuals and groups involved within the policy discourse. The importance of the varying structure of those local authorities which hold

statutory responsibility for the development of urban rail transport is that the underlying strategic assumptions on which they are built, their degree of autonomy from central government, and their means of response to local political action will impact significantly upon the policy discourse generated across the range of active individuals and groups which ultimately lead to actual policy outcomes. Chapter 3 therefore examines the evolution of the city-regional and fragmented systems of urban local governance and the nature of their policy making structures, in order to reveal their possible impacts upon the form of urban rail transport policy discourse.

### **3 Theory and practice in local governance**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

##### **3.1.1 Institutions of policy development**

#### **3.2 The roles of local government and governance**

##### **3.2.1 Theories of the local state**

##### **3.2.2 Structures of local decision-making and the *urban policy regime***

##### **3.2.3 Factors in local decision-making**

#### **3.3 Structures of local governance**

##### **3.3.1 The trend towards consolidation**

##### **3.3.2 Public choice theory and institutional fragmentation**

#### **3.4 Urban transportation as a function of local governance**

##### **3.4.1 PTA ancestors**

##### **3.4.2 The 1968 Transport Act**

##### **3.4.3 Parallel structures of PTA control**

#### **3.5 Themes for research in the governance of urban railways**

##### **3.5.1 Accountability in local governance**

##### **3.5.2 Research objectives**

### 3.1 Introduction

#### 3.1.1 Institutions of policy development

This chapter presents an account of the range of theoretical perspectives concerning the rationale and operation of local governance, and provides a review of the evolution of the UK system from its historic roots to the modern period in order to highlight the development of the varying theories and strategic objectives upon which contemporary institutions are constructed. Relationships between the local state and central government, and the internal structure of local authorities are examined in order to define the roles and powers of the individual policy-makers within local governance. The key theory of the *urban policy regime* is presented as a framework for the analysis of the decision-making process that successfully combines the underlying structuring influences of state organisation with the capacity for creative political action of local individuals and groups.

Subsequently, the creation and remit of the two study area Passenger Transport Executives is explored, together with an outline of the differing institutional arrangements for their democratic control put in place between 1986 and 1996, namely Strathclyde Regional Council and the Merseyside PTA joint board. Finally, the objectives of the study are presented within a discussion of current themes for research into the decision-making processes that generate actual urban rail transport policies, and the capacity for effective public accountability of policy-makers within local governance. The opportunity to enhance regime theory by accounting for the impacts placed upon the typology, purpose and scope for effective public accountability of policy regimes and their members derived from differing geographical structures of local governance is highlighted.

### 3.2 The roles of local government and governance

#### 3.2.1 Theories of the local state

As Stoker (1991: 230) argues, the question of why we have local government is a complex one, since "there are a substantial number of theoretical traditions and perspectives that could justify inclusion in a review of theories of local politics and government". However, each of the four broad approaches he identifies, which "represent the cross-section of opinion, draw on a range of theoretical perspectives, and (are) related to different points on the political spectrum," can be placed within Dunleavy & O'Leary's (1987: 1) overall conceptualisation of

government as “the process of making rules, controlling and guiding”. Such a process is made necessary since “some form of government is intrinsic to human society, because a society which is totally uncontrolled, unguided and unregulated is a contradiction in terms”.

For Paddison (1983: 30), local governments in unitary states such as the UK are “associated with distinct legally bounded spaces and are responsible for discharging functions that the higher (central) government considers more appropriately organised locally”. Therefore, elected local government is essentially a “creature of statute” (Wilson & Game, 1994: 22), which “is looked upon essentially as a subordinate mechanism created by the state for its own convenience.... through which the paternalist central government can arrange the provision of services for the state’s citizen-subjects” (Allen, 1990: 22).

However, Judge (1995: 13) tempers such absolutist conceptions of local government as a direct expression of the central state through the normative notion of *pluralism*, which forms “perhaps the most important theory to be examined” in any review of urban local government and power, since it “has been remarkably influential in the study of urban politics”. The concept of pluralism is defined by Dunleavy & O’Leary (1987: 13) as “the belief that there are, or ought to be many things. It offers a multiplicity in beliefs, institutions and societies, recognizes the existence of diversity in social, institutional and ideological practices, and values that diversity”. Thus, pluralism promotes the development of policies to suit the requirements and aspirations of particular localities by people in those localities. Indeed, Jones & Stewart (1983: 6) highlight the potential for local government to facilitate such engagements, since it holds considerable “potential through its localness to be accessible and exposed to influence by its citizens”, through the parallel systems of local taxation and democratic representation.

Equally, Boddy (1987) and Judge (1995: 14) also warn against the adoption of a “naive version of pluralism” which ascribes too much discretion to policy-making at the local scale, since such a view “is untenable as a description of power in Western liberal democracies” (Cox et al, 1985: 107). Wilson & Game (1994: 22) frame this assertion in terms of the UK, pointing out that British local authorities “lack the power of general competence”, their powers being prescribed by the sovereign national parliament.

The subordinate nature of local government holds the key to Stoker’s second theoretical perspective. For *public choice* theorists, the very existence of a local tier of government with limited powers is open to question, since for them “the optimal mechanism for allocating goods and making decisions is the market” (Stoker, 1991: 238). The institutionalisation of local service provision, with its inherent bureaucracy and imperfect democratic control

limited to multi-issue elections fought by party coalitions, is regarded as crude in comparison to the allocation of services by the market, which, it is claimed, can offer the public a much wider range of choices.

In reality, the public choice critique of local government has been expressed not through the desire to achieve its outright abolition, but by the encouragement of marketisation in local service provision. Pirie (1981), for example, claims that the contracting-out of the supply of a range of local services is vital to the introduction of market discipline and increased efficiency within local authorities. Furthermore, the process of local institutional fragmentation, both spatially and in terms of the range of services offered as proposed by Tiebout (1956) and Niskanen (1973), is claimed to improve the match between service supply and public demand.

Cawson & Saunders' (1983) *dual state thesis* in many ways represents an opposing view to the highly fragmented "hyperpluralist" (Judge, 1995) structures of public choice theory. Equally, it rejects normative models of pluralism as a means to accommodate local political diversity in favour of the view that the dual system of local and central government has evolved as a pragmatic approach to "fulfilling two different and often contradictory functions: ensuring the profitability of the economy and maintaining social cohesion and legitimacy" (Paddison, 1983: 148).

Stoker (1991: 245) expands on this theme, framing the dual state thesis within the social expenditure typology identified in Chapter 2. Simply, "the dual state thesis initially rests on a distinction between the social investment and social consumption functions of the state". Central and local government institutions themselves have developed because "the state has found it convenient to manage social investment policies at a national level, (whereas) social consumption policies are run primarily by local authorities whose relative visibility and accessibility make them more susceptible to a wider range of influences".

Furthermore, the resultant "specificity" (Saunders, 1981) of the activities of the local state in the field of social consumption issues identified by the dual state thesis can be seen in itself to suggest a certain degree of pluralism in local politics, since these issues "involve a much wider range of competing and diverse interests where the influence of elections, pressure group lobbying and public opinion remains real and effective" (Stoker, 1991: 240).

However, this distinction between the social consumption and social investment aspirations and expenditures of the central and local state can be less than watertight. For example, one of the most visible instruments of social consumption, the social security system, is managed

by central government. Similar criticism of the stark functional categorisations of the dual state thesis also originates from the Marxist perspective, which refuses to acknowledge the existence of a discrete local state based on the politics of social consumption, since “to understand the state it is necessary not to consider what the state does but how it does things” (Stoker, 1991: 251). Fundamentally, Marxists “deny the basic premises of pluralism” (Hampton, 1991: 240), instead conceptualising the existence of local governmental institutions as a means to achieve a degree of mediation between capital and labour. For them, the local tier provides a degree of flexibility in the “interpretation” of national policies across unevenly developed space (Johnston, 1990), and for the “representation” of local political demands to which the state may choose to make concessions for longer term gain (Duncan & Goodwin, 1982).

However, such a deterministic view of the rationale for the local state neglects the reality that political discourse is often played out between individuals and the central, not the local, state (Husbands & Dunleavy, 1985). Similarly, Stoker (1991: 253) questions the restriction of the function of mediation to local government, claiming that “have not some major social welfare reforms (which could reasonably be viewed as in the interests of non-capitalist groups) been promoted and led by central government?”. Equally, strong local governments can play a key part in managing the local economy and promoting economic growth (Imrie & Thomas, 1993) alongside their responsibilities in the fields associated with social consumption.

These contradictions have spurred the desire to create a more nuanced account of the rationale for local government, which avoids the tendency to “over-simplification” (Stoker, 1991) inherent in many of the above conceptions. Thus, the application of *regulationist* approaches has become increasingly widespread in political geography as a means to move beyond broad ‘structuralist’ accounts of the state and ‘idealistic’ perceptions of pluralism:

.... regulation is not presupposed by the logic of the accumulation process itself. It depends on a series of social, cultural, and political supports.

Lauria (1997: 6).

Furthermore, whilst reflecting the fundamental viewpoint that the overall political system must “play a key role in mediating between the state and individuals” (Jessop, 1990: 203), regulationism is



particularly concerned with the *changing* forms and mechanisms (institutions, networks, procedures, modes of calculation and norms) in and through which the expanded reproduction of capital as a social relation is secured.

(Jessop, 1990: 203, emphasis added).

Regulationism conceptualises the state as a fluid entity in which the complex “connections and inter-relations between social, political and cultural (factors)” vary in response to “the changing character of capitalist economies and the roles of cities within them” (Painter, 1995: 276). However, these structures do not simply determine the organisation of the state and of local governance, since

these structures interact and influence one another in a complex way. The changing system of local governance is affected by these developments and at the same time its institutions have the ability to intervene in the process. Moreover a system of local governance may have a central role in establishing the stability of a particular system of regulation.

Stoker & Mossberger (1995: 211).

Painter (1995: 277) conceptualises the public choice critique of local government as one response to the changes inspired by “temporal and spatial variations in the character of capitalism” resulting from the emergence of post-Fordist production. Thus, the division of responsibility between supra-national bodies such as the European Union and national, regional and local tiers of government adjusts to take account of changing systems of production, regulation and welfare provision. Similarly, the “funnel of local authority discretion” identified by Wilson & Game (1994: 16-17), whereby Westminster has gradually stripped the local state both of statutory powers and of financial independence, can be linked to increasing limitations on the role of the welfare system associated with the social consumption expenditures in part managed by local governments.

In recognising that all levels of government are subject to change driven by external economic, political and social factors, regulationism rejects the “set of difficulties associated with some versions of orthodox Marxism, which accord only a secondary role to political processes” (Painter, 1995: 276). This acceptance of a real urban politics, in which local authorities retain significant discretion in specific areas, implies a substantive policy-

making role for “the institutions and processes of urban government and governance (involving not only the local political tier of state administration, but *all* organizations exercising political authority at the local level, whether public, private or voluntary - and the relationships between these” (Painter 1995: 281, original emphasis).

Similarly, Stoker (1991: 89) warns that a tendency to reductionism through “the underplay(ing) of the significance of state organisation and internal policy-making processes” forms an underlying weakness of earlier theories of the local state outlined above. Consequently, the key to the development of a better understanding of the operation and impact on the wider political system of the local state lies with a more subtle approach based on “an analysis of the internal dynamics of local state politics”, Stoker (1991: 89) which supplements the logics derived from state organisation with increased recognition of the potential for change inspired by individual actors.

### 3.2.2 Structures of local decision making and the *urban policy regime*

For Wilson & Game (1994: 269), “there are two major sets of actors inside local authorities: *paid* officers and *elected* councillors” (original emphases). Within these groups, they identify a number of varying outlooks on the role of councillors and officers within local government. The first three focus on the councillor’s role as a local representative: that (s)he should simply represent his or her constituents on the council and be accountable to them for its actions; that (s)he should be a monitor of council decisions, and that (s)he should assume a leadership role for the local community. The fourth, however is slightly different, that the role of councillors is one of local policy formulator.

Stoker (1991: 37) suggests that this variance in the way that councillors perceive their purpose is due to some extent to the “politicisation of local government”. In urban areas especially, entry to councils depends on party nomination, which in turn attracts more career politicians to local government as a means to policy-formulating responsibilities, or as a training ground for national political office. Wilson & Game (1994) note that this tendency to politicisation is reinforced within councils by the existence of “caucuses” where policy is agreed on a party-wide basis.

Professional officers in local government can be said to fulfil differing roles in much the same way as councillors. Wilson & Game (1994) also outline these: that officers support, advise and monitor politicians, that they represent the authority externally where appropriate, and that they manage the authority’s resources. Similarly, individual officers are driven

by a range of motives. Some are professional administrators for whom local government forms a career path, some empathise with the traditional call to public service, and some are simply attracted by power:

senior officers stand at the heart of the decision-making processes of local authorities, (and) above all it is their ability to influence the choices, thinking and approach of councillors that gives them real decision-making influence.

Wilson & Game (1994: 237).

It is the interaction of these two groups that forms the key to understanding the operation of the policy process, for which "there are three main models widely used to explain the distribution of power inside local authorities" (Wilson & Game, 1994: 269).

The first model is the 'formal' or 'legal-institutional' model which "see(s) power relationships in purely formal terms .... councillors are seen as making policy while officers carry it out. No overlaps or qualifications are countenanced" (Wilson & Game, 1994: 270). This simplistic definition of the internal structure of local government relies heavily on traditional 'Weberian' notions of neutral bureaucracy and the primacy of 'the public interest' (which will be addressed later), but is open to criticism on several counts, not least by the assertion that officers have their own personal interests and motivations that affect their actions.

It is for this reason that the second, 'technocratic' model was proposed, which places officers as "the dominant force in local politics" whose power is applied through "their control of specialised technical and professional knowledge". Again,

this model, too, however, is something of a stereotype and should not be accepted uncritically. Plenty of leading and long-serving councillors, such as past and present committee chairs and leaders of party groups, have the experience, knowledge, authority and skill to assert themselves in any confrontation with officers.

Wilson & Game (1994: 271).

These deficiencies in the above two models have encouraged the development of a third. Blowers (1980: 9) argues that "the power to make policy and take decisions is concentrated

among a few leading officials and politicians. The interaction of these decision-makers and the transmission of ideas and hopes and feats among them, reveals how power is exercised and to what purpose". For Stoker (1991: 92), this *joint elite*, or "small group of leading councillors and officers must be incorporated into any realistic analysis of decision-making inside local authorities". In his study of Croydon, Saunders (1979: 216) found evidence for such a structure, claiming "there are a number of certain strategic positions.... which would appear to provide the capacity for controlling virtually the entire policy-making process". Similarly, Greer & Hoggett (1995: 34) identify numerous joint elites in their review of British local authorities which, they claim, all "hinge around the committee chair and corresponding chief officer".

However, Wilson & Game (1994: 273) warn that

it is too simple, therefore, to see the joint elite as the last word on the distribution of power inside local authorities. There is far more to an understanding of internal power distribution than simply an analysis of the activities of the most senior personnel.... the model requires supplementing if the dynamism of internal power relationships is to emerge.

In particular, the joint elite model fails to take account of two major factors. First, there is no acknowledgement of the possibility of a hierarchy of actors within the elite, nor that members of the elite may be subject to outside influence such as that from their party's ruling group (Stoker, 1991: 98). Second, and more fundamentally, the model is confined to local authorities themselves, and excludes actors from other the other bodies in the overall

system of 'local governance' in which local authorities find themselves increasingly working alongside a range of other agencies in their localities, (which) has become increasingly differentiated as new agencies and organisations have been given responsibilities which previously belonged to local authorities or as existing institutions have been removed from the control of (elected) local authorities.

Stewart (1995: 194).

It is recognising this diveristy of public agencies beyond the formal elected governmental realm that leads to the notion of local *governance*. Furthermore, Stoker (1991) and Dearlove (1979) call for the inclusion in the model of other politically-active groups, such local

interest and pressure groups, which may exercise significant influence on actors within any governing elite, either from the outside through traditional political lobbying, or internally through person-to-person networking (see below). Equally, the concept of governance can be further expanded to include local private sector interests:

decentralization and shifting responsibilities within the state, increased financial constraints, and the development of privatized services utilizing both for-profit and non-profit organizations have also created additional complexities for local governments. Urban governments are increasingly working through and alongside other interests.

Stoker (1995: 54).

Although successive applications of wider elite theory following Hunter's (1953) study of Atlanta have sought to show the close involvement of business leaders in local decision-making structures, Stoker (1995: 55) argues for a still broader approach encompassing the wider variety of actors in place in the contemporary "complex, fragmented urban world". *Regime theory*, based on the work of Clarence Stone (1980), provides such an approach, both accepting that "control over investment decisions and resources (is) central to societal welfare", but also that "politics matters" (Stoker, 1995: 56).

Stone (1993: 6) claims that "to be effective, governments must blend their capacities with those of various non-governmental actors". This is achieved by the formation of *urban (policy) regimes* within the local state, composed of complex networks of actors and institutions sharing a commonality of interest, within which exists a process of 'power bargaining', through which actors seek support for their own ideas, beliefs and aspirations over those of other regime members. This process of bargaining exists because each actor within the regime is situated in a different "context" of power. *Systemic power* may be derived from the investment potential of the business community, which may seek to make future financial investment in the locality dependent on the adoption of particular policy preferences by the local regime. Equally, systemic power may result from "the impact of the larger socio-economic system on the predispositions of public officials" (Stone, 1980: 979), in that the promotion of particular policy alternatives by officers may be justified since they reflect what has been generally accepted and successful in the past.

In contrast, the second form of power, *command power*, "involves the active mobilization of resources (information, finance, reputation, knowledge) to achieve domination over other interests" (Stoker, 1995: 65). Command power is often also associated with officers, since

their role by definition is to apply their specialist professional knowledge in order to frame coherent policy strategies. Significantly, this knowledge often centres on the requirements and conditions necessary to unlock the key *resources* of both governmental and non-governmental funding for particular projects. Finally, *coalition power* is sought by those seeking to improve their bargaining position through strength of number within the regime. Through the construction of such coalitions, policies favoured by the majority of actors within the regime may become preferred over those alternatives promoted by powerful individuals or elite clusters.

Regime theory contends that the key to understanding the internal relationships of local governance, and hence the local policy-making system, centres on an analysis of which actors build and manage the regime through the application of which form of power. In turn, through the successful combination of their power resources with those of their supporters, regime leaders can 'win the argument' in favour of their particular policy preferences, and thus assume *pre-emptive power*, the "crucial axis in regime theory... (which) rests on the need for leadership in a complex society and the capacity of certain interests to provide that leadership", and which brings "the capacity to govern" (Stoker, 1995: 65).

The composition of those individual urban policy regime(s) active in particular areas is largely determined by the type of institutions which make up the prevailing system of local governance, and by their *purpose* (Stone, 1993). The privileged position afforded to local business leaders "in the US-based regime literature" which forms the empirical foundation of the theory reflects the large proportion of American municipal funding derived from local business taxation (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 198). However, in the case of the UK, where revenues from the national uniform business rate are pooled and distributed to local authorities on a per capita basis as part of the block grant from central government, the relative role of local business leaders in the urban regime is diminished. Instead, reflecting the importance attached by UK literature to the role of professional officers within local authorities, and to the increasing diversification of local governance to include a range of non-elected 'quangos' in local administration, such officials' centrality to urban policy regimes in Britain, as in the rest of western Europe, is deemed

.... difficult to deny. These officials may be employed directly by elected local government, work for various non-elected agencies, or be local agents of various central or regional government departments.

(Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 198).

Similarly, the existence of a core joint elite of senior officers and councillors at the heart of the regime is consistent with the notion of the hierarchical construction of the policy network according to the level of each actor's power resources. Equally, outside this core, regimes may also incorporate the variety of other non-governmental actors and institutions represented in the wider structure of local civic life and politics. Such *local interest groups* are important since they can play a significant role in regimes as the driving force behind coalitions formed to promote particular policy preferences. The extent to which these groups become involved in policy-making depends on whether the regime's leading individuals and institutions adopt a broadly pluralist or elitist stance (Stoker, 1991). Elitist regimes often seek to limit interest group involvement to those 'producer groups', such as business associations and trades unions, whose viewpoints are "regarded sympathetically" (Stoker, 1991: 119) by regime leaders. Indeed, such "political communion" (Saunders, 1980: 235) may arise since individuals may both hold influential positions at the centre of the regime, as in the case of senior elected councillors, and be closely connected with particular groups aiming to build coalitions in favour of their own policy preferences, such as trades unions.

However, elitist regimes often exclude local area 'community groups' and 'cause groups' (such as the public transport pressure groups met in this study), whose "main thrust of activity is towards influencing decision-making and local state policy-making" (Stoker, 1991: 116). These groups are frozen out if their aspirations are regarded by the regime core as "unacceptable demands" (Stoker, 1991: 119). Only those pluralist, inclusive regimes which have fully 'opened-out' to their local environment attempt to fully accommodate these viewpoints.

In addition to the variation in the composition of urban regimes according to the pattern of institutions of local governance and interest group activity, regime theory is also sensitive to the range of strategic aspirations and objectives which shape the overall policy debate in any locality. Thus, urban policy regimes may be formed in order to achieve a range of purposes and goals. Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 199) summarise these varying characteristics of policy-making in their typology of regime types, which can be applied in order to "understand the fine grain of urban politics in a period of changing forms of urban governance".

<i>Defining characteristics</i>	<i>Regime types</i>		
	<u>Organic</u>	<u>Instrumental</u>	<u>Symbolic</u>
Purpose	Maintenance of status quo	Project realization	Redirection of ideology or image
Main motivation of participants	Local dependency	Tangible results	Expressive politics
Basis for sense of common purpose	Tradition and social cohesion	Selective incentives	Strategic use of symbols
Quality of coalition (congruence of interests)	Political communion	Political partnership	Competitive agreement
Relationship with environment:			
Local	Exclusive orientation	Exclusive orientation	Inclusive orientation
Non-local	Independent	Dependent	Dependent

Figure 3.1 Typology of urban policy regimes.

Source Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 199).

*Organic* regimes seek the *maintenance of the status quo* in local political life. As such, they are often associated with prosperous small or medium-sized towns and suburban jurisdictions which seek to maintain social cohesion through the exclusion of 'outsider' groups (Stone, 1993). In contrast, *instrumental* regimes are driven by the desire to achieve "project realization", where "goals are shaped in part by what is feasible" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 201). The main motivation underlying instrumental policy-making is the desire to achieve "tangible results". Crucially, the measurement of such results usually rests on their being quantifiable, so that each partner in the regime can be satisfied that a 'tangible' outcome has been obtained. Since the "political partnerships" characterising the instrumental regime are built on the basis of "what's in it for us?", goals are often framed in terms of economic development aspirations (Stone, 1993), and for firms, direct monetary returns (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 199). However, *symbolic* regimes differ in that they focus on goals defined by *expressive politics*:

In contrast to the narrow instrumental concerns typified by tangible results, (symbolic regimes) revolve around the issues of ideology and symbolic politics. Acceptance of this point involves recognizing that there is an expressive dimension to politics.



Politics and policy-making are about saying as well as doing things. They are about communicating values, intentions, and symbolic rewards.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 203).

Indeed, the existence of an expressive politics based on the symbolism of local values and ideologies implies that symbolic regimes do not tend towards 'tangible' economic results, but rather towards the less quantifiable "progressive" (Stone, 1993) aspirations of social development. In turn, an enhanced role for local political activity is assumed around symbolic regimes, since those "which have developed in a looser way focused on expressive concerns or policies that demand a wider participation will need to develop a more inclusive strategy for managing the local political environment". In contrast, "regimes which focus on tangible results and selective incentives are likely to have highly developed strategies of exclusion. The cost of spreading the material benefits may be great, and the highly selective nature of benefits is by definition the reward of being an insider" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 207). However, for both instrumental and symbolic regimes, the requirement for outside resourcing if their policy strategies are to succeed makes them highly dependent on the 'non-local' political environment of central government.

Despite the formulation of these broad categories in order to aid analysis, "any particular regime is unlikely to conform exactly to the list of characteristics that have been identified" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 208). This holds true for the notion of the *urban rail transport policy regime* applicable to this study. Although the desire to achieve tangible results through the enhancement of the local rail transport network clearly incorporates the 'project realisation' goal of promoting specific development projects associated with instrumental regimes, its other characteristics may tend towards those associated with other regime types. For example, the motivation of elected councillors within the regime network may also be derived from the desire to achieve specific major new rail infrastructure construction projects 'symbolic' of particular local political ideologies and aspirations. Equally, the paradoxical positioning of the Passenger Transport Authorities / Executives as largely autonomous decision-making bodies despite their continued reliance on central government grant funding (see Appendix), leaves the nature of each urban rail transport policy regime's engagement with the "non-local" governmental environment unclear. Thus, the actual nature of the local urban rail policy regime's relationship with central government and its appointed agencies is also likely to play a major role in defining the scope of policy development in each region.

### 3.2.3 Factors in local decision-making

For Ophir & Shapin (1991), the identification of "decision-making spaces" such as urban policy regimes gives only a partial clue to the operation of the policy process, since "the determinants of public policy lie among social, cultural, historical and technological factors, as well as political system characteristics" (Dye & Robey, 1980: 7). Equally, Cloke et al (1991: 94) regard broader enquiry into the interconnectivity of actors and institutions as important:

somehow, if only the insights concerning *both* structures *and* human agency could be interlinked, then social science would have a more realistic grounding for its thinking and practising.

(emphases added).

In order to conceptualise the operation of the bargaining process inside urban regimes, it is therefore necessary to address the nature of the "resources" and "predispositions" (Stone, 1989) which underlie each "actor group" (Painter, 1997), and system of governance (city-regional or fragmented).

Unwin (1992: 172) claims that the theory of *structuration* as proposed by Anthony Giddens represents the most convincing attempt to "combine human agency within a structural perspective", and thus move beyond blunt conceptions of the 'structuralist' impact of state organisation which "reduces men and women merely to passive carriers of structural determinants" (Thompson, 1978: 171). The basis of structuration theory is the identification of *reflexivity* in the relationship between structure, and agency, since Giddens is "particularly critical of the idea that structure occupies a position of primacy over agency, and that structures act as boundaries to, or constraints upon, action" (Cloke et al, 1991: 97). This reflexivity is expressed in two ways:

the *duality of structure*: that is the manner in which structures enable behaviour, but behaviour can potentially influence and reconstitute structure: and the *duality of structure and agency*: that is to transcend the dualism of deterministic views of structure and voluntaristic views of agency.

Cloke et al (1991: 97).

Such a definition of structuration between policy-makers and the 'systems level' of governmental structure (Giddens, 1979), that is the rules and resources of governmental institutions rather than the higher 'structures level' of the capitalist system itself, can clearly be applied to the notion of the urban policy regime. The duality of structure is represented by the underlying concepts of the regime, which locate actors according to their assumed contexts of power in relation to the bargaining process itself, which in turn can alter the relative positions of actors within the regime hierarchy. Thus, Cloke et al's assertion (1991: 100) that structures are open to change as a result of "the unintended consequences of action" of individuals clearly mirrors Stoker's view (1995: 58) that "the policy world is full of unpredicted spillover effects and unintended consequences".

The duality of structure and agency is represented by the existence of the bargaining mechanism itself, through which any actor has the potential to achieve pre-emptive power despite the apparent "bias" (Stoker, 1995) in UK policy regimes towards the resources of systemic and command power attributed to professional officers. Giddens conceptualises these predispositions as 'structuration rules', which sub-consciously inform behaviour in addition to logical rational judgements. Richardson (1996: 279) further emphasises the part played by individuals' differing levels of knowledge and predispositions within the power bargaining exchanges of policy making regimes:

the obsession with establishing or disproving the credentials of rationality blinds us to the simple fact that policy is shaped by arguments, or discourses, based on knowledge claims that may be rational or irrational, reasonable or unreasonable. The shaping of policy, however, depends ultimately not on these 'surface' characteristics of rationality, but on a deeper dynamics of power and knowledge within and between discourses.

Equally, Painter's (1997: 136) call for the application to regime theory of Bourdieu's (1990) concept of 'habitus', or "that which disposes one to act in a certain way (predisposition) and that which is the result of a process (arrangement of distribution)" resonates strongly with Giddens' conceptualisation of structuration. The clearest example of a structuration rule in action is that concerning "the impact of the larger socio-economic system on the predispositions of public officials" (Stone, 1980: 979). For Stoker (1991), this system was centred on the "official" definition of public bureaucracy based on the ideas of Max Weber, who

believed that one of the primary characteristics of societies was the drive to *rationalize* social and economic processes; by rationalization he meant the calculated meshing of means and ends to achieve social and economic objectives with the greatest possible efficiency.

Nigro & Nigro (1980: 124, original emphasis).

For Dror (1968), this 'ideal-type' of bureaucracy as proposed by Weber provided a link between local governance and wider society. He argues that rationalisation of social and economic processes is needed if the local state is to have any coherent role in what is an essentially "chaotic" world (Harloe, 1977). Thus, Weberian bureaucracies operate on the basis of policy formulation within an expert environment involving "extensive division of labour and specialization" (Dror, 1968: 83).

For Saunders (1979: 166), Weberian bureaucratic administration implies that "there is no necessary relationship between economic classes and politics", with decisions taken 'in the public interest', a concept supposedly neutral to class and socio-economic divide (Dror, 1968). In addition, Saunders outlines a second "key principle" in Weber's political sociology, "that the mode of political domination in modern societies is increasingly and necessarily bureaucratic", since "complexity and fragmentation limits the capacity of the state as an agency of authority or control" (Stoker, 1995: 58). This can be seen as the basis for both the Marxist and public choice critiques of local government. For Marxists, expanding bureaucracy and the proposal of a value-free 'public interest' constitute responses to developing crises in the relationship between capital and labour, whilst public choice theorists perceive the expansion of bureaucracies as an inevitable consequence of state control and budget maximisation. For them, the alternative of a chaotic or hyperpluralist society better provides for the unrestrained action of market forces in service provision.

The implications of the above for analyses of structured forms of policy-making lie in the fact that, "until recently, few questioned the superiority of (Weberian) bureaucratic organization" (Nigro & Nigro, 1980: 124). Thus, the Weberian consensus constituted the major structuration 'rule' under which public officials operated, both consciously and subconsciously. Furthermore, this rule was 'resourced' by the hierarchical construction of responsible positions, in which the potential for promotion was judged by adherence to the principles of the public interest.

Another view of the influences at work on policy-making officials is offered by Pahl's managerialist thesis. Knox (1987: 27) describes how Pahl begins with a reminder of the responsibilities held by local authorities for the distribution of social consumption expenditures:

the interplay of spatial and social constraints which determine opportunities of access to urban resources and facilities - transport, education and so on.... (can be analysed by addressing) the activities, policies and ideologies of the managers or controllers of the urban system.

In this way, Pahl reinforces the concepts of structuration theory in that urban 'managers' or 'gatekeepers' are influenced by their own perceptions and aspirations:

space can be manipulated according to the goals and values of those responsible for deciding locations and distributions.

Pahl (1977: 51).

In contrast to the value-free notion of the public interest, Pahl contends that bureaucrats are more likely to seek to optimise their position within the policy-making structure through the maximisation of the potential investment monies under their control, and their direction towards projects in tune with their own personal priorities. Similarly, a further explanation of budget-maximising bureaucracies is offered which reflects Wilson & Game's earlier assertion that, for both officials and councillors, local authorities provide a path to higher echelons of government, in which they must be seen to "hold their own and perhaps do better than colleagues in gaining funds" (Pahl, 1977) if they are to be considered successful bureaucrats.

The constraints imposed by bureaucratic structuration rules can also be seen to affect the nature of the actual decisions taken by individuals and groups. For Dye & Robey (1980), the incentives to avoid unnecessarily radical revisions of policy are strong:

decision makers do not annually review the range of existing and proposed policies and identify societal goals, research the benefits and costs of alternative policies in achieving these goals, rank preferences for each alternative policy, and make a selection on the basis of all relative information. They reduce their task by

considering only increments of change proposed for next year in programs, policies and budgets.

Similarly, Stoker (1995: 59) expresses these ideas of continuity in policy formulation in terms of the operation of the wider regime, which strives to "build more stable and intense relationships in order that governmental and non-governmental actors can accomplish difficult goals". This desire for stability exists because "policy-makers prefer limiting the alternatives to those that differ only incrementally from existing policies. Previous experience indicates how these policies have worked out, greatly reducing the risks" (Nigro & Nigro, 1980: 46).

Furthermore, the trend towards incrementalism in local governance policy-making is consistent with theories of the state derived from regulationism. Within the contemporary regulatory framework of diminishing local autonomy, the power of urban regimes to act is crucially affected by "the way local elites are able to manage their relationship with higher levels of government" (Stoker, 1995: 67). The incremental adjustment of local policy in line with national and even cross-national trends (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994) is often essential if central-local conflict is to be minimised, and the justification for further downgrading of local responsibilities by the centre, reduced.

However, Rhodes (1980; 1981) claims that the confusion and complexity derived from the constant shifting of the role of the state, as portrayed by regulationism, makes some degree of central-local conflict inevitable, however well local policy-makers remain in line with the centre's strategic objectives. Stability within inter-governmental relations is predicated on the formation of 'policy communities' between the administrative tiers, although these communities are asymmetric in that the centre retains power over their constitution, membership, agenda and finance (Simmie & King, 1990). The conflict derived from the juxtaposition of post-1979 Conservative fiscal retrenchment and powerful 'new urban left' authorities keen to extend social provision in much of the UK throughout the 1980s can be seen as a clear example. Furthermore, the successive diminution of local discretion, and the abolition of the upper metropolitan local tier (see 3.3.2) represent a distinctive restructuring of these centre-local policy communities. However, many of these policy communities have since re-established themselves under the theme of 'partnerships', essentially strong local policy regimes which incorporate elected local authorities, non-elected government agencies and others, and engage in constructive dialogue with the relevant departments of central government.

Thus, Carmichael (1995: 286) concludes that “despite the effects of centralising legislative measures that gnawed away at the powers of local authorities”, there remained “a diffusion of power amongst the agencies of government with local authorities still able to exert considerable influence over key aspects of policy”. For Wolman (1995: 135), the maximisation of this power and hence the overall influence of urban local decision-making within the state is critical to the promotion of popular democratic control. Furthermore, whether or not local government in the city is widely-drawn according to the city-regional model, or is more geographically fragmented, constitutes a prime consideration, since “institutional structure achieves such importance because it is the vehicle through which these basic purposes and values are carried out”. The formulation of policy, and thus the relative strengths of the elected, professional and non-governmental actors who comprise the policy regime, are therefore likely to be crucially affected by the size, autonomy and location of the local institutions they represent.

### **3.3 Structures of local governance**

#### **3.3.1 The trend towards consolidation**

The creation of local governments such as the Scottish regional and English metropolitan county councils at the city regional scale in the 1970s represented the final stage of a trend towards larger local authorities which had developed over the preceding 150 years. In order to illustrate the claimed advantages and disadvantages of the city regional organisation of local authorities which inform the subsequent case studies, it is instructive to review the considerations underlying their construction, and the perceived faults which led to their early dismantling under the ideologies of public choice.

The trend towards consolidation in British local government can be traced back to the inadequacy of traditional arrangements when faced with the growing tide of industrial urbanisation in the early 19th century (Hampton, 1991). The ancient patchwork of municipalities, each constituted by a distinct charter, non-statutory parish councils and single-purpose authorities created by Act of Parliament was completely unable to manage the transition of much of the population away from the countryside.

Despite the moves towards multi-purpose elected local authorities begun by the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act, there remained a “continuous proliferation of ad hoc bodies” created in response to the mounting social problems of rapid urbanisation (Hampton, 1991:

17). Indeed, by 1870, the 3,000 town, district and county authorities in England and Wales were complemented by 25,000 smaller bodies, many of which incorporated powers of taxation. Such was the situation that parliament described it as “chaos regards authorities, chaos as regards rates, and a worse chaos than all as regards areas” (Thornhill, 1971: 49).

The subsequent reorganisation of 1888 extended democratically-elected councils to the whole country, and provided for an increased transfer of powers away from Justices of the Peace to the new authorities. With regards to the territorial structure of local government, this reform was to set in place a system of urban and rural distinction that was to survive for almost 90 years. In addition to the new English county councils and their lower tier districts, the largest towns were to gain the administrative status of unitary counties, forming ‘county boroughs’ responsible for the discharge of all functions within their boundaries. Despite the original intention that only the ten largest settlements outside London were to be accorded such status, during the passage of the Act the population threshold for county borough status was lowered to 50,000 (or even less in the case of several historic cathedral cities) so that in all, 61 towns became separate all-purpose jurisdictions. In Scotland, the four largest cities gained county status as part of the 1929 review, with the remaining large and small burghs sharing functions with the rural counties.

As urbanisation continued into the 20th century, the number and size of the county boroughs increased, so reducing the population of the rural counties. By the early 1960s, counterurbanisation of the population had taken hold however, and the nature of the historic conflict between the counties and the county boroughs reversed to one in which it was the core towns who complained of declining population and tax revenues.

In reflecting on the growing need for reform in England in the 1960s, Redcliffe-Maud (1974: 2) claimed that this “distinction between town and country (had) increasingly come to be seen as local government’s major weakness”, one which precluded effective planning for the increasingly complex patterns of activity following the overspill of population to the suburbs and commuter towns and which underlay the creation of the Passenger Transport Authorities themselves after 1968 (see below). For Keating & Midwinter (1983: 95), the system north of the border suffered similar problems and was equally “out-dated, inefficient, and ill-fitted to the social and economic patterns of contemporary Scotland”.

The task of the parallel English (Redcliffe-Maud) and Scottish (Wheatley) Royal Commissions set up to investigate the course any reform should take was therefore to produce a “comprehensive and unfettered examination of the entire local government system” (Alexander, 1982b: 29). Both reports highlighted the “interdependence” (Redcliffe-Maud,



1969: 26) of town and country and the potential "greater strength" (Wheatley, 1969: 25) offered by a marriage between the two.

The proposed solutions in each case centred on the desire to approach any structural reform from "first principles" (Wheatley, 1969: 25). In the English case, Redcliffe-Maud proposed the adoption of all-purpose unitary authorities for most of the country based on normative notions of the 'ideal size' of local authorities in terms of the efficiency in delivery of services (Redcliffe-Maud, 1974), except in the three largest conurbations or 'metropolitan' areas of SELNEC (south east Lancashire / north east Cheshire), Merseyside and the West Midlands, where a two-tier system was preferred. However, one commission member, Derek Senior, produced a substantial memorandum of dissent, claiming that in conceptualising the problem from a purely theoretical standpoint, the majority option had ignored the realities of geography:

they have adopted a principle of organisation - the unitary principle - and determined a range of population size for unitary authorities by analysing the theoretical requirements of functional efficiency and democratic viability in isolation from the geographical context in which local government must operate.

Senior (1969: 5).

Instead of formulating local authority boundaries from what he saw as "guesswork" (Alexander, 1982b: 31) considerations of ideal population size, Senior envisaged a two-tier system based on 35 functional 'city regions' defined by labour and housing market dynamics. Similarly, the parallel Wheatley Report in Scotland identified reasons other than improving efficiency in the delivery of social services to form the rationale for reorganisation. For Wheatley, considerations of the effectiveness of structures in delivering services formed one only objective, to be placed alongside the maximisation of the power of local authorities with respect to the centre, the scope for their popular democratic control and the provision of opportunity for local involvement in the political process. Central to the "reconciliation" of these objectives was the creation of a structure of local government operating at sufficient "scale" to "shift the balance of power and responsibility between central and local government" (Wheatley, 1969: 44). The consolidation of the myriad local authorities was hence seen as an essential instrument for the enhancement of pluralist representation within the overall apparatus of the state.

Although the Wheatley reforms were accepted by parliament in 1972 subject to the shelving of local taxation reform and other relatively "minor modifications" (Keating & Midwinter 1983: 99) of boundaries and the allocation of services between regional and district tiers, the Redcliffe-Maud majority proposals for England did not survive the change of government after the 1970 general election. For Alexander (1982b: 36), the new Conservative administration's less radical reform, although acknowledging the underlying logic for a less fragmented system of local government, was envisaged clearly as providing "partisan advantage" in the retention of rural county councils and a reduction in the extent of the metropolitan areas.

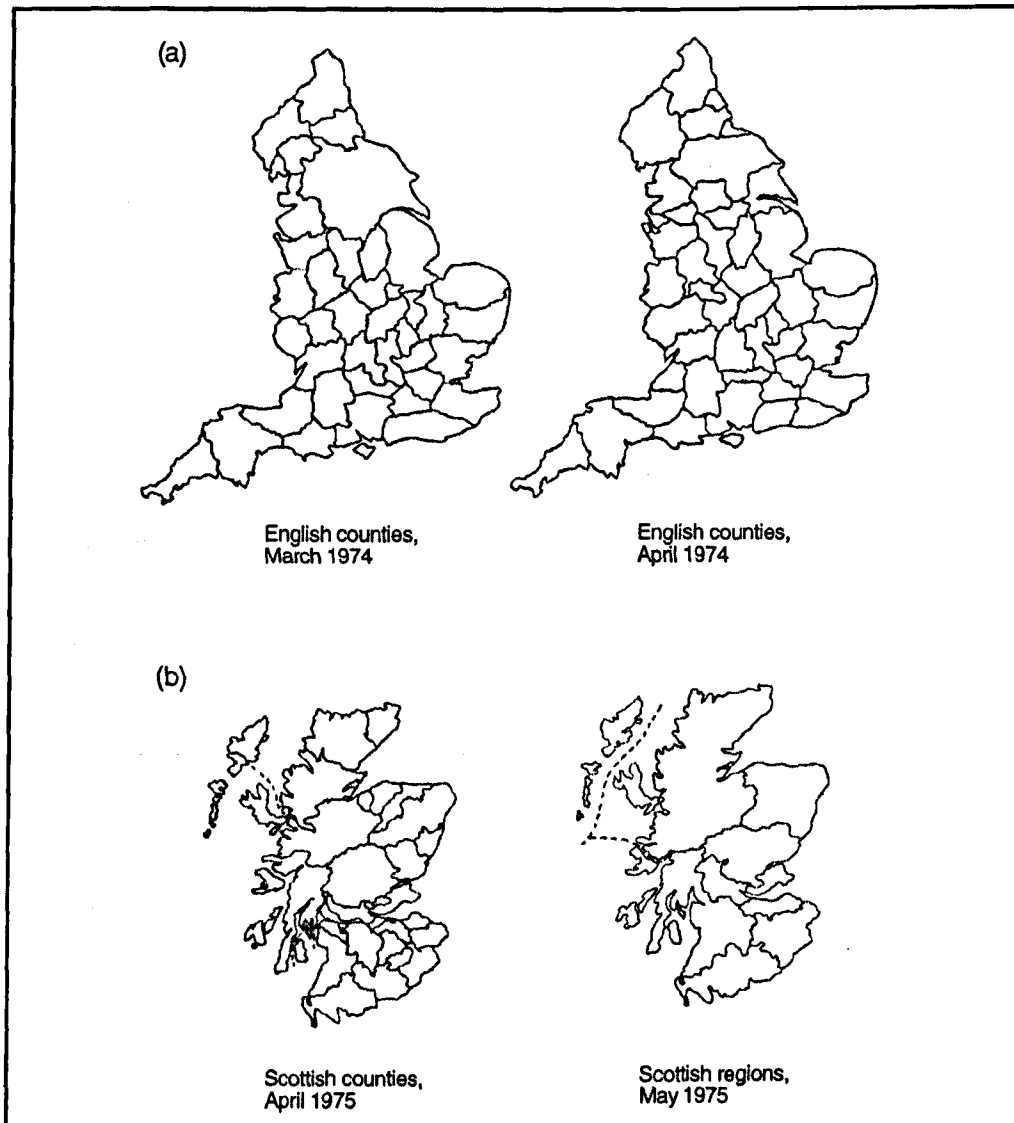


Figure 3.2 Reforms of local authority structure; England (1974), Scotland (1975).

Equally, in comparison to Senior's concern with contemporary functional definitions of local units, the two-tier approach as enacted displayed significant "boundary conservatism" (Alexander, 1982b: 38). Most of the traditional 'shire' counties were retained, and notably, "as a result of pressure from surrounding counties, all of the (metropolitan) areas were reduced in size, the boundaries being drawn quite tightly around urbanised areas" (Alexander, 1982b: 41). Similarly, the calls of both English and Scottish Commissions that the new upper tier authorities be afforded greater fiscal independence through increased powers to raise revenue locally were rejected by central government. Consequently, the autonomy of the new councils was diminished through their continued significant reliance on central block grant income (see Appendix).

In one respect, the new structures put in place on either side of the border differed considerably. The variation in the geographical extent of the Scottish regions as opposed to the English metropolitan counties was mirrored by their differing patterns of functional responsibility. Although in both cases the 'protective' and 'strategic' services incorporating the need for comprehensive planning were assigned to the upper tier, and 'environmental' and 'amenity' services to the lower, the question of where to place the 'personal' services such as housing, education and social work was more problematic. In Scotland, although education was assigned to the regional tier, amendment of the Local Government Bill ensured that housing became a district function, since "the four counties of cities were unlikely to give even the most grudging consent to a new system.... which gave control over what many councillors considered to be their most important function" to the regional councils (Alexander 1982b: 47).

<i>Function</i>	<u>English metropolitan</u>	<u>English non-metro</u>	<u>Scottish region</u>
Education	-	*	*
Highways	*	*	*
Public Transport	*	*	*
Social Services	-	*	*
Structure Planning	*	*	*
Valuation	-	-	*
Water	-	-	*

Table 3.1 Distribution of selected strategic functions between English metropolitan county councils, English non-metropolitan county councils and Scottish regional councils.

In England, the relative role of the metropolitan counties was further reduced by the decision to give the critical education service to the district tier. The fact that in non-metropolitan areas responsibility for education was to lie with the county councils reinforced the view that the existence of the new urban upper tier would lead to top-heavy administration (Alexander, 1982a; Kavanagh, 1990), through a combination of "strong boroughs or districts and relatively weak strategic authorities" (Hampton, 1991: 44). Consequently, many cities questioned the need for any transfer of power away from their former county boroughs to such "redundant counties" (Bristow et al, 1984).

### **3.3.2 Public choice theory and institutional fragmentation**

For Hampton (1991), the limited role of the final form of metropolitan county authorities created by the 1972 Local Government Act made early structural reappraisal almost inevitable. The election of a new Conservative government in 1979 firmly committed to the deregulatory policies of public choice (see 3.2.1) formed the necessary catalyst. Wherever possible, public choice theorists sought to dismantle the mechanisms for the direct provision of broadly 'welfarist' or social development strategic services invested in the city-regional metropolitan counties, which were at odds with their preferred marketised system of service provision, and which had been developed "in the heyday of a certain fashion for strategic planning, the confidence in which now appears exaggerated" (Department of the Environment, 1983).

Specifically,

there are powerful reasons why we must be ready to consider how far private provision and individual choice can supplement, or in some cases possibly replace, the role of government. Many of these reasons are economic. The need to reform our system of social provision would be pressing on public spending grounds alone. The way forward must embrace a constant readiness to consider market mechanisms as a means of promoting greater cost consciousness and of extending choice.

Sir Geoffrey Howe, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 3.7.82 in Riddell (1991: 127).

That the white paper concerned itself only with the metropolitan counties is significant. For Birch (1990: 204), the partisan advantage to be had by the government in abolishing the

urban authorities that had formed the main “centres of opposition” was obvious. However, it was the urban areas with their range of surviving district authorities that presented the best opportunities for the extension of individual choice as proposed by Tiebout (1956), for whom the jurisdictional fragmentation of cities produced units better able to “encapsulate more homogenous social groups making it easier for citizen preferences to be met” (Stoker, 1991: 241). Such a fragmented system should enable citizens to move to the local jurisdiction offering the best package of low taxation levels and service provision tailored to their social group:

... the small solution is very flexible. It will meet changes in demand with immediate changes in supply. It will supply a range of variety and choice to meet individual needs and preferences. Those who fail to do so will lose their trade to those who do. It will continue to innovate in comfort and service for the same reason.

Pirie (1982: 49).

Despite the abolition of the metropolitan tier however, the government continued to arrange for the administration of certain functions at the former-county level in order to retain economies of scale where this was deemed appropriate. Statutory joint boards of the continuing district councils were formed with responsibility for the ‘protective’ services of police, fire, civil defence and waste disposal, and for public transport (see 3.4.3). The continued government regulation of public passenger transport through the reformed joint board Passenger Transport Authorities and their Executives was

a necessary evil, the function of which (wa)s to smooth out market imperfections, which are caused by two major influences in transport. The first imperfection is the indivisibility of the product, such as the number of passengers each (public transport vehicle) is built to carry; and the second imperfection is the lead time required for major investments.... both factors distort the operation of the market mechanism and the role of government is perceived as one of establishing the planning framework within which investment decisions can be properly evaluated.

Sutton (1988: 132).

Continued control of public transport over a geographically wide area was also deemed necessary, since the rigid division of the available capital funding allocations across too

many small councils would have resulted in each authority's consent being insufficient to fund anything other than the most minor works. Within a joint structure of PTA administration, it was presumed a form of 'internal market' would operate, in which each constituent council would be in "mutual competition" (Politt, 1986: 158) with other members for larger 'lumps' of capital sufficient to finance significant new infrastructure developments in their areas. Public choice objectives would be satisfied since this competition for funding between councils would lead to more detailed appraisal of potential investment schemes and the approval of only those showing the best projected returns, in comparison to the inherent over-supply of "unresponsive" (Pirie, 1981: 31) city region-wide local governments.

Equally, Stewart & Stoker (1995: 194), highlight the second dimension of the public choice overhaul of local governance. The changes of the 1980s not only signalled the end of the historic trend towards geographical consolidation of local authorities: they also ushered in a new type of state 'splinterisation' through the creation of the "new magistracy", the unelected or 'quango' local state where new single-purpose "agencies and organisations have been given responsibilities which previously belonged to (elected) local authorities". The underlying focus of public choice conceptions of the role of local government, which highlight its potential to support urban economic development rather than the provision of 'welfarist' services aimed at urban social development (Imrie et al, 1993), was reflected in the type of institution most commonly created (Stewart, 1995). Most, such as the *Urban Development Corporations* and *Training & Enterprise Councils*, for example, were formed to promote urban economic regeneration. Furthermore, the trend towards unelected local governance implies a reduction in local autonomy, since "many of the new agencies of local governance are subject to direct influence from central government through the appointment of their controlling boards or by way of their funding coming directly or indirectly from the centre" (Stewart & Stoker, 1995: 196).

For Hayton (1993), the retention of the Scottish regional councils for a further ten years was borne out of their greater functional responsibilities as compared to the English metropolitan counties. Similarly, McCrone et al (1993: 9) saw continuing merit in the Wheatley system, claiming that the government's desire for change was borne out of "thin and weak" ideological considerations and the prospect of partisan electoral advantage. Specifically, they claim that the wide-ranging functional base of the regional councils had so delayed the shift towards an unelected local state in Scotland that wholesale reorganisation of the system became necessary in order to wrest control of specific services such as water & sewerage away from councils to centrally-appointed agencies.

### 3.4 Urban transportation as a function of local governance

#### 3.4.1 PTA ancestors

For Smith (1974), the development of public sector control of urban public transport can be clearly rooted in its dual social and economic development roles. By the early years of the century, the number of private bus and tram operators was such that in many areas, routes became unnecessarily duplicated resulting in “acute and wasteful competition between various passenger transport agencies” (Barker & Robins, 1974: 211). Many city corporations therefore assumed control of their bus and tram networks in order to improve their overall operational efficiency (Robson, 1937). Furthermore, “the taking of highly technical public functions ‘out of politics’” (Smith, 1974: 230) represented an attempt to reduce the potential for conflict between private capital and the workforce in a heavily labour-dependent industry vital to the urban economy. However, Knox (1987) also recognises the shift towards public co-ordination of urban transport as being wholly consistent with the contemporary emergence of many ‘paternalist’ municipal governments.

In London, the sheer physical size of the metropolis required another solution. Control by any single municipal authority was impossible since the city’s fragmented local government system consisted of a diverse range of institutions, including the London County Council, its constituent boroughs and the range of counties, districts and county boroughs in the suburban ring. Therefore, the creation of a ‘special purpose’ or *ad hoc* authority was deemed necessary, for only this would be capable of “leap-frogging the boundary and jurisdictional lines in use for most other functions of local governments, in order to follow their particular function wherever it may lead” (Smith, 1974: 230).

Equally, demand for the creation of such an authority extended to the private underground railway companies, for whom the “unlimited competition on the surface” (made it) impossible to do the kind of work” involved in extending and upgrading the system (Bagwell, 1988: 257). The government concurred, declaring

what is needed is some responsible and judicial authority, able to say what is required stage-by-stage for the development of London’s traffic facilities.... competition causes congestion on the more remunerative routes, destroys reliable services on the less remunerative routes, and curtails the unremunerative routes.

Lord Ashfield (1924), in Barker & Robins (1974: 208).

After the successive interim arrangements of the 1920s, which extended the scope of revenue pooling arrangements between operators, the process of amalgamation was completed in July 1933 with the formation of the London Regional Transport Board, (LRTB) with a remit to “provide an adequate and properly co-ordinated system of passenger transport in the widely drawn London area, in partnership with the mainline railways” (Barker & Robins, 1974: 273). For the then Minister of Transport, Herbert Morrison, the creation of the unified LRTB not only provided opportunities for further efficiency gains, but also for the extension of social development opportunities through the enhanced “socialisation” resulting from improved transportation access (Morrison, 1933).

### **3.4.2 The 1968 Transport Act**

Knox (1987) claims that the provincial cities of the UK remained relatively compact until the 1950s as a direct result of the success of their dense municipal tram and bus networks. However, the rapid rise in car ownership witnessed over the following twenty years brought extensive suburbanisation, with the built-up areas of most cities extending to cover a number of separate local government jurisdictions.

The resultant loss of traffic from urban public transport was reflected in the financial crisis facing British Rail in the 1960s. The Beeching report (British Railways Board, 1963) outlined that many suburban services were no longer able to meet their marginal costs, highlighting the duplication of bus and rail services in many areas. Furthermore, the social polarisation of car ownership left substantial sections of the community dependent on deteriorating public transport. Paralleling the debate in London 40 years previously, Barbara Castle, Secretary of State for Transport, acknowledged in successive white papers that urban public transport in the provincial cities was “being strangled”, and that its continued availability was essential since “it is closely linked to local community life and has important local social implications” (Bagwell, 1988: 344).

The 1968 Transport Act therefore allowed for the creation of special purpose governments at the metropolitan scale similar to the LRTB:

If in the case of any area in Great Britain outside Greater London the Minister considers it expedient for the purpose of securing the provision of a properly integrated and efficient system of public passenger transport to meet the needs of that area, then.... the Minister may by order designate that area for the purposes of this Part of



the Act by such name as may be specified in the order and shall by that order provide for the establishment of the following bodies for that area, namely

- (a) a Passenger Transport Authority
- (b) a Passenger Transport Executive.... which shall be a body corporate.

Transport Act 1968, Part II, Section 9.

The Passenger Transport Authorities (PTAs), whose membership was drawn from councillors of the various constituent local authorities, formed the democratically accountable control for the professional Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs). In many ways, the new structure mirrored similar foreign developments of the time, especially the foundation of the *verkehrsverbund* transport authorities in the conurbations of West Germany. Munby (1968: 137) claims that the new city-regional PTA/E structure enabled a major devolution of power to urban localities, since it "clear(ed) away a large number of obstacles to rational solutions, and set up an organisational framework within which it will be possible for particular conurbations and cities to work out the right policy for their areas".

The powers of the PTEs to integrate the bus and rail modes formed a central provision of the 1968 Act. This was accomplished by the transfer of the former municipal bus operations to the PTEs, and by the provision for joint arrangements with British Rail for the supply of rail services:

it shall be the special duty of the Executive for a designated area to which this section applies.... to enter into such agreements with the (British Railways) Board as the Authority may approve for securing that the Board provide such railway passenger services as the Authority decide to be necessary to ensure that such services make a proper contribution towards the provision for that area of such a system of public passenger transport as is referred to in Section 9 of this Act.

.... any agreement under this section may include provision for the making of payments by the Executive to the Railways Board in respect of the railway passenger services provided by the Board in pursuance of the agreement.

Transport Act 1968, Part II, Section 20.

In practice, these so-called 'Section 20 agreements' enabled the PTEs to specify the precise pattern of service and the level of fares charged on rail routes within their areas, in return for revenue subsidy to British Rail. BR themselves welcomed the new arrangements, as they would

enable the unrenumerative lines to be kept open where real hardship would be caused by their closure.... the railways can never become wholly viable without further action to relieve them of social burdens which, if they must be met, should be financed from sources other than railway revenues.

British Railways Board (1965).

Funding for the PTEs was drawn from the rates and central government rate support grant income accruing to the PTA's constituent councils. However, the 1968 Act also made the provision for special central grant aid in respect of major capital projects:

the Minister may make grants upon such terms and conditions as the Minister thinks fit.... towards expenditure appearing to the Minister to be of a capital nature incurred or to be incurred for the purpose of the provision, improvement or development of facilities for public passenger transport.

Transport Act 1968, Part IV, Section 56.

Thus, despite the considerable decision-making autonomy afforded to the PTEs, their capital budgets remained substantially dependent on central government rate support grant, which over time accounted for an increasing share of all local authority income. Similarly, central government retained substantial discretion in the allocation of the additional resources required for major capital schemes under the 'Section 56' provisions according to its own overall transport policies (see 2.4.1) and perceptions of the public interest.

### **3.4.3 Parallel structures of PTE control**

The first PTE, for the West Midlands, was inaugurated on 1 October 1969, with those for the SELNEC area, Merseyside and Tyneside at monthly intervals thereafter. The sole Scottish example, Greater Glasgow, began operation in 1973. With English local government

reorganisation in 1974, the concept was extended to the new West and South Yorkshire areas, with the boundaries of the existing Executives amended to match those of the incoming metropolitan county councils. Thus the MCCs assumed the role of Passenger Transport Authorities for their areas, replacing the previous joint boards.

With the creation of Strathclyde Regional Council in 1975, Greater Glasgow PTE (GGPTE) held a unique position: although the Regional Council covered a much larger area than the tightly drawn metropolitan counties, the legally defined PTE area remained confined to the Clydeside conurbation. However, from the beginning, the Regional Council decided to appoint the GGPTE to act as its agent for the provision of public transport services throughout the whole Region, thus *de facto* extending the PTE concept to encompass much of western Scotland. Subsequently, the name of the PTE was changed to that of its parent regional council, which continued to act as Passenger Transport Authority for its designated area until its abolition on March 31st, 1996. Capital and revenue funding for the rail activities of SPTA was drawn from a special rail support allocation contained within the regional council's overall grant, although the exact amount was not identified by government under a separate spending assessment heading (see Appendix).

In England, however, the abolition of the metropolitan county councils from 1st April 1986 entailed a return to joint-board PTAs similar to those in place between 1969-74. In each PTE area, representation on the PTA was drawn from that of the continuing district councils on a basis proportionate to their relative populations and their combined party political composition. Similarly, funding for the Authority consisted of a proportionate precept or levy on the district councils' budgets, although a special central grant allocation was made to each district authority to cover its share of rail support costs.

Thus, for exactly ten years between 1st April 1986 and March 31st 1996 there existed two parallel structures of PTE control, defined by opposing political ideologies. In Strathclyde, the regional council acted as Passenger Transport Authority for the whole of the Clydeside conurbation, forming a single metropolitan government of the type envisaged by the Wheatley and Redcliffe-Maud reviews of the 1960s. In contrast, the six former-metropolitan counties of England gained discrete joint-board PTAs inspired by the theories of public choice, within which each constituent district authority was expected to engage in mutual competition for the available resources on the basis of greatest potential outturn benefit. Similarly, the deregulation of bus services in 1986 focused the policy remit of the Executives and Authorities clearly within the field of their urban rail networks.



Figure 3.3 Passenger Transport Authority areas, 1974-96.

### 3.5 Themes for research in the governance of urban railways

#### 3.5.1 Accountability in local governance

For Knowles (1993: 3), the agenda for contemporary research in transport geography “owes much to the opportunities.... provided by the political and economic developments of the last decade”. Within this agenda, the need to address “the impacts of political changes on transport systems” through an analysis of actual transport policies and practices enacted by differing types of institutional structure is highlighted. Halden (1996) highlights this potential for policy research to enlighten future decision-making when he claims that

the purpose of transport research is to provide the knowledge and techniques to allow the development of appropriate transport policies and systems.... new technology will have an important role to play, but an efficient and acceptable transport system will depend on appropriate policies as well as technologies. In the end, the policy and administrative changes may be *more* important than the technological developments.

Halden (1996: 1, emphasis added).

Similarly, Buchan (1992) states that analysis of the effects of political structures upon policy-making within the urban realm offers the prospect of establishing improved governmental institutions capable of delivering practical solutions to the urban transportation problem with respect to the quality of life objectives outlined in 2.2.4.

Furthermore, Buchan (1992: 16) also emphasises the “unequivocal right” of the public “to participate in the transport planning process (in order to) exert influence through local democratic means over the decision-making process for transport”. Such participation in the political process is critical if policy-makers within the system of local governance are to be held accountable for both the spatial distribution of transport resources and the resultant individual opportunities for which they are responsible, since

the citizen has rights that differ from those of the customer. They have not merely the right to vote, but also the right to know, the right to explanation, the right to be heard, the right to be listened to and the right to be involved.... local authorities undertake collective action which rests for its justification and legitimacy on the

support of the citizenry.

Stewart & Stoker (1995: 203).

Put simply, for increased *accountability* to be achieved, citizens must be equipped with sufficient power through enhanced knowledge in order to become more fully involved in the process of policy-making. Such empowerment of the individual within the planning process is derived from a deeper understanding of overall concepts of power (Richardson, 1996: 282). Since power is not held by individuals, but is located within "the relationships between agents and citizens", the level of public accountability achieved by systems of local governance can be analysed by addressing the processes through which these relationships between governors and governed occur.

Day (1987: 26) identifies a number of such interactions between citizen and modern governance which can be conceptualised as different accountabilities, of which two emerge as the main "dimensions of accountability". The first, *political accountability*, "is about those with delegated authority being answerable for their actions to the people" by democratic means. Thus,

traditionally, those exercising public power have been held to account through a line of accountability to elected persons, who are in turn held to account by citizens in periodic elections.

Stewart (1992: 4)

In addition, there is the second dimension of *process accountability*, which "is about making sure that a given course of action has been carried out, and that value for money has been achieved in the use of resources" (Day, 1987: 27).

Clearly, focus on one or other of these two dimensions of public accountability can be seen to characterise the opposing city-regional and public choice perceptions of the ideal geographical structure for urban local governance. Proponents of powerful local authorities covering whole city-regions accent the potential for increased political accountability in the selection and de-selection of strong democratically-elected administrations according to their policy records (Alexander, 1996, for example). Equally, supporters of quasi-market structures such as the statutory joint boards which adopt market competition as a means to

enhance the degree of financial responsibility and value for money in policy-making clearly emphasise the value of process accountability in extending 'public choice' (Waldegrave, 1993).

However, substantial criticism of the real capacity for effective public accountability of local decision-makers afforded by each of these mechanisms has been expressed through the widely-held acceptance that there exists something of a "crisis in local democracy" (Stewart, 1995). Fundamentally, the continued existence of the traditional chain of accountability in local government from officer through elected councillor to public is open to doubt, since the parallel 'legal-institutional' model of local authority relations which perceives officers as simply following the instructions of councillors is now largely regarded as unrealistic (see 3.2.2). In addition, the continued dominance of the Labour Party and corresponding low turnouts at elections in many British urban areas which have become 'one-party states' highlights the limited capacity for local citizens to express opinions on particular policy fields through multi-issue elections (Raco, 1996).

The central criticism of the concept of process accountability stems from the fact that, although the maximisation of value for money in public investment may be a laudable objective, there remains the issue of who defines the core notion of 'value for money'. The corresponding element of the neo-liberal reforms of local governance, the shift to the "new magistracy" (Stewart, 1995), or the quango state of unelected local governments in which professional officers control whole areas of policy-making without elected member input, it is claimed, significantly reduces the potential to redefine this core objective according to public preference expressed through the power of elected councillors.

Therefore, Stewart (1995) echoes Richardson's call for a re-invigoration of the debate surrounding the potential for enhanced public accountability of local government policy-making in order to clarify whether these criticisms are reflected in practice. In particular, more informed consideration of the relative merits of city-regional and public choice structures is required, since the shift to unelected quangos of the new magistracy

raises the issue of public accountability of these bodies and whether that issue should be resolved through local democratic control. It shows that (systems of local governance) differ in role and structure and argues that the issue of local democratic control has to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Stewart (1995: 5).

Thus, in order that the body of empirical evidence relating to the actual forms of accountability operating in contemporary urban areas is enhanced, studies such as this which are concerned with the nature of policy-making within different structures of local governance should also take account of the potential each presents for the expression of public accountability. Studies should not only reveal whether the oft-stated criticisms of the impact on accountability of the shift towards unelected institutions of local governance are real, but also analyse whether the unreconstructed city-regional system does, in fact, provide a more effective alternative.

### 3.5.2 Research Objectives

As Wolman (1995: 135) has argued, "it is presumed that institutions matter - that political and policy outcomes will differ as institutional structure differs". Paradoxically however, "in Britain, the empirical literature on the effects of local government structure has been sparse". Furthermore, the historic emphasis on the evaluation of efficiency in local service delivery in relation to governmental size has ignored "the issue of democracy, of what structures can best secure citizen control over government and proper accountability" (Keating, 1995: 117).

This belief that the differing geographical scope of local authorities matters, that this has specific important effects on the interactions of various policy-makers which in turn impacts upon the actual policies of local authorities and thus for the resultant level of public accountability achieved, forms the basis to this research. This is not to say, however, that "we are all pluralists now" in the normative sense of "defen(ding) liberal capitalist society" (Judge, 1995: 30) through a commitment to localism, but simply that the reality of contemporary cities is one of a real politics in which the system of local governance retains significant power and discretion.

The chosen empirical focus of urban rail transport policy-making within two Passenger Transport Authorities and Executives provides a unique opportunity to integrate the two separate geographies of urban rail transportation and structures of urban local governance. The first, the evolving morphology of the local rail networks in Merseyside and Strathclyde, clearly demonstrates the real impact of transport investment on the "utilities of place" (White & Senior, 1983: 1). The spatial distribution of disbenefits arising from the urban transport problem such as congestion, pollution and access polarisation clearly contribute to the disparity in the quality of life available across these and many other



contemporary urban regions. Equally, that the potential policies aimed at ameliorating the problem may be contradictory, such as the classic dilemma of whether to direct new rail transport investment to more prosperous districts with high levels of car use rather than to more deprived communities with limited existing access to transport, highlights the fact that "space can be manipulated according to the goals and values of those responsible for deciding locations and distributions" (Pahl, 1977: 51). That the manipulation of space in this way can effect substantial variations on individuals' access to urban amenities and their qualities of life gives rise to the normative standpoint outlined above, that any real local state should be subject to the real democratic accountability of its citizens.

This second normative notion, espoused by Stewart (1995) and Richardson (1996) among others, that the accountability of institutions of local governance can be enhanced through increased knowledge of their operation derived from empirical testing of specific cases, is consistent with the deductive method preferred by Stoker (1995: 66), who argues that regime theory lends itself to such an application, since it provides

a broad conceptual framework to guide analysis. Case studies test that framework by being able to demonstrate its application in practice.

Thus, in addition to the scope for valuable description and explanation of the ways in which the beliefs, ideas and aspirations of particular actors have combined to produce the real urban rail transport policies enacted in the Merseyside and Strathclyde regions, the worth of such empirical research is further enhanced if the resulting insights can be applied across a range of examples - they should not suffer from "place-boundedness" (Cox & Mair, 1988). Transferable conclusions must not "become blurred in the detail of empirical application. Studies need to move from theory through empirical application and back to theory" (Stoker, 1995: 66).

Consequently, it is desirable to apply empirical evidence in order to further verify and enhance underlying theory, which in this case is that of the urban policy regime. In comparing the differences in regime typology and dynamics derived from the differing city-regional and public choice-derived fragmented structures of urban local governance, the factors shaping the interaction of individual decision-makers, and hence local rail transport policy-making as a whole, in each study area will be revealed, since

understanding national or even local differences in the composition of regimes can help

explain variation in motivations and politics.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 202).

Equally, such harnessing of the regime as a concept through which to compare policy-making under different local insitutional arrangements makes it possible to further contribute to the development of regime theory, by analysing the ways in which the alternative city-regional and fragmented geographies of urban local governance, represented by Strathclyde Regional Council and the Merseyside PTA joint board respectively, contributed to the typology, composition, purpose and patterns of power bargaining between actors within two actual local policy regimes. In so doing, this research addresses an

area of neglect (in regime theory) concern(ing) the role of space. This arises in several ways. Arguably, one reason the urban regime literature has not problematized the variety of (spatial) mechanisms of governance that actually exists is that co-operation as an issue has been assumed rather than understood. A major reason that co-operation is an issue is that a number of agents are place dependent in some of their social relations. This limits the range of other agents within whom they can interact and creates a variety of problems that the urban economists have grasped as those of spatial externalities and monopolies: precisely the sorts of conditions that, in more abstract terms, can explain the functional significance of governance mechanisms.

Cox (1997: 100).

Through such a 'mobilisation' of space, rather than confining it to the role of a "backdrop" (Cox, 1997: 105) to regime analysis, it will be possible not only to provide a more sophisticated exposition of the operation of these particular policy regimes in the two study areas, but also to demonstrate how the differing city-regional and fragmented spatial governmental structures impact more generally upon the structure and purpose of urban policy regimes as described in Stoker & Mossberger's (1994:199) typology. Furthermore, it will also be possible to integrate the concept of accountability with that of the regime by addressing the ways in which each spatial structure of local governance affects the mechanisms through which the regime relates to its "local environment" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 200), that is its local community and electorate, the resulting scope for public participation in policy-making, and thus the capacity for effective accountability of local rail transport policy-making.

In summary therefore, this research aims to analyse the ways in which the prevailing geographical structures of Passenger Transport Authority in Strathclyde and Merseyside between 1986 and 1996, that is the city region-wide regional council, and the statutory joint board respectively, impacted upon

- the typology and hierarchy of the urban rail transport policy regime in each area
- the resulting policy debates and consequent policy outcomes
- the opportunity for effective accountability of rail transport policy-makers through public participation in the policy process.

## **4 Methodological issues and approaches**

### **4.1 Introduction**

#### **4.1.1 Designing a research methodology**

### **4.2 Securing data**

#### **4.2.1 Integrating structures and agency**

#### **4.2.2 The available sources of documentary data**

#### **4.2.3 Accessing the printed archive**

#### **4.2.4 Preparing the focused interviews**

#### **4.2.5 Interview practicalities**

### **4.3 Data analysis**

#### **4.3.1 Preliminary sorting of materials**

#### **4.3.2 Analysing the assembled texts**

### **4.4 Robustness of research methods**

#### **4.4.1 Ensuring rigour in methodology and analysis**

### **4.5 Conclusions**

#### **4.5.1 Connecting theory and practice**

## 4.1 Introduction

### 4.1.1 Designing a research methodology

This chapter describes the project's research methodology, moving from the underlying philosophical issues surrounding the integration of theory with the empirical data which describes the operation of the policy process, to the practical considerations regarding its implementation. Three main elements of social research, theory, the connection between data and theory, and the methods applied to secure data are discussed. The operationalising of the research project is then outlined with reference to the availability of printed data sources and the practicalities of conducting focused interviews according to objectives derived from structuration theory. Finally, the robustness of the adopted research strategies is examined, and the chosen methods of analysing the secured data justified by renewed reference to the basis of the theories of structuration and the urban policy regime.

## 4.2 Securing data

### 4.2.1 Integrating structures and agency

Gilbert (1993: 18) claims that "there are three major ingredients in social research: the construction of theory", the connection between data and theory, and "the design of methods for gathering data". For this research, the construction of theory is represented by the review of theories of the state presented in Chapter 3. The main theoretical ambition of the thesis was highlighted, namely to analyse the ways in which differing city-regional and public choice-derived fragmented geographical structures of urban local governance impacted upon the organisation and interaction of policy-makers, their engagement with the wider public, and in turn, the actual rail transport policy outputs in the Merseyside and Strathclyde areas. The concept of the urban regime was identified as a framework by which to analyse the policy process, since it both avoided a crude structuralist reading of the impacts of state organisation which "reduces men and women merely to passive carriers of structural determinants" (Unwin, 1992: 171), and also accounted for the impacts of the aspirations and ideologies of individual decision-makers without lapsing into a naive or "hyper-individualist" (Duncan, 1985) version of pluralism.

Furthermore, the concept of structuration was integrated with that of the regime, since it aims to

concentrat(e) on issues of how to theorise human agency, what the implications of that theorising are for analysing social institutions, and then what the relationship is between those two concepts elaborated in conjunction with one another.

Giddens, in Gregory (1984: 124).

The considerable congruence between the concepts of 'rules' and 'resources' as they appear in both structuration and regime theories was noted. These rules, such as the norms of Weberian rational bureaucratic management, and resources, such as investment potential and professional knowledge, represent both the mechanisms which both "reproduce the relations between actors and collectivities" (Giddens, 1979: 66), and those which define the different assumed contexts of power within the regime (Stone, 1990). Thus, in acknowledging that human action contests and redefines the systems within which it is framed, the empirical data describing the actual operation of the policy process uncovered by the research can be applied to enhance regime theory. It is possible to analyse how the typology, composition and operation of the local rail transport policy regimes in Merseyside and Strathclyde were influenced by the differing constraints imposed on policy-makers by the respective joint board and city-regional types of Passenger Transport Authority put in place in each region over the 1986-96 period.

It is from such discussion of Gilbert's second 'ingredient' for research, the connection between theorising and empirically derived data, that Cloke et al (1991: 138) offer a grounding for policy research within geography, in that it should *suppose* the existence of explanatory mechanisms which operate in particular spaces, such as the urban rail transport policy regime, and "attempt to demonstrate their existence" by empirical testing. This clearly reflects Stoker's call (see 3.5.2) for the deductive application of regime theory to successive locales in order to substantiate its claim to be a reliable guide to analysis of contemporary urban political systems.

However, the structurationist concept of reflexive political mechanisms subject to formation and continual modification by human agency implies that, unlike explanatory frameworks such as the policy regime, actors' resources and predispositions cannot be assumed, but should rather be identified inductively, since they are the product of each individual's unique location within the regime's policy network, their perceptions and their experiences. Thus, for the third element of Gilbert's research triad, the collection of empirical evidence, "if the focal data for a research project are the attitudes and perceptions of individuals, the

most direct and often the most fruitful approach is to ask the individuals themselves” (Kalm & Cannell, 1957: 330).

#### **4.2.2 The available sources of documentary data**

The evidence documenting the course of policy development within the urban rail transport policy regimes active in Merseyside and Strathclyde is composed of a number of texts, each of which forms a valid data source for research. In addition to that of the perceptions and experiences of individual actors within each local regime which can be excavated through interviewing (see below), the operation of the urban rail transport policy process is recorded by a variety of printed documentation. Each of these texts offers a different positional perspective, since they are produced by a range of actors for a similarly wide variety of audiences.

Analysis of these texts fulfils two discrete objectives. First, the texts themselves offer valuable documentary evidence of the attitudes, aspirations and interactions of their respective authors at specific points in time, since they describe

ongoing processes such as the redefinition of social relationships between professionals and publics, the reconstitution of social identities and forms of self, or the reconstitution of knowledge and ideology.

Fairclough (1995: 209).

Second, their analysis forms the means by which the researcher can attain sufficiently deep background understanding of the subject of study in order to identify key concepts for further investigation through subsequent methodological techniques such as interviewing:

interviewers need to arm themselves with as much background information as possible before venturing to begin the survey. The importance of full use of documentation and archival material cannot be over-emphasised.

Wagstaffe & Moyer (1987: 196).

The most important interview strategy.... is to be well informed before the interview. The respondent will be reassured to know that the investigator understands the issues under discussion and is likely to be both more open and detailed.... Language training through prior immersion in the (subject) press will help to minimize misinterpretation of both questions and the responses. Formulating questions in the respondent's own language is preferable to assuming that the respondent can be taught to think within the researcher's frame of reference.

Schoenberger (1991: 186).

For this study, there were four primary sources of printed documentation. The most comprehensive was that of the official archive of PTA/E committee papers and other more general publications such as annual reports. The committee papers themselves give an insight into two dimensions of policy. First, as a minuted record, they describe in detail the *agreed* position of the respective authorities on previously considered matters of policy. Second, the individual subject papers within each submission represent a vehicle for their professional authors to present their opinions and motivations on developing matters of policy before the elected membership of the committee.

Equally, more comprehensive documents such as annual reports and statutory plans, usually produced by senior officials and councillors in combination, represent the advertisement of agreed policy positions to a range of publics, including their citizens and central government. Consultation documents attempt to legitimise policy priorities to the general public both as transport users and electors in terms of rational resolutions of competing investment demands. Equally, statutory documents such as the PTA *Annual Transport Plans* in England and the *Transport Policies and Programmes* submissions in Scotland aim to assure central government that the local authorities responsible for their production have followed the prescribed legal framework for policy preparation satisfactorily.

Outside local authorities themselves, the positions of other institutions within the overall structure of local governance, such as local enterprise companies and urban development corporations, are reflected in their own documentary publications. Those sources available in the public domain include policy papers from central government and its agencies, the rail industry, other interest groups and the private sector, both in the form of joint lobbying associations such as local chambers of commerce, and transport consultancy firms directly involved in the formulation and assessment of policy alternatives through subcontracting



from local government. Once again, each of these sources may seek to address differing professional, elected or public audiences depending on its intentions.

Similarly, a range of private papers was also made available by interviewees, in the form of records of internal discussion within or between the actors and institutions of the regime network. Although the sources and destinations of this correspondence often duplicated that of publicly available documentation, its subject matter, objectives and tonal registers could be of stark contrast. On several occasions, these papers highlighted lines of disagreement between actors which were not apparent in the documents, such as committee reports, produced for public consumption.

Finally, the printed and broadcast media present an external commentary on the development of policy initiatives. On one level, the straightforward reporting of the process of decision-making provides a vehicle for the actor concerned to explain his or her position to the wider public. However, critical journalism can also expose the reasoning behind specific policy decisions, creating the opportunity for further discussion and mutual criticism of actors' respective standpoints in the public domain.

The one significant type of data not generally available to the researcher was the patronage and financial performance statistics of individual rail routes and stations. This was due to the increased commercial sensitivity of such data resulting from the privatisation of the rail industry, although limited information was made available by some interview respondents and from other sources. However, in each case where such data was supplied, respondents requested they remain confidential. The extent of this problem was however minimised since, by definition, the study did not seek to evaluate policy outcomes, and in that such data was confirmed by several interview respondents to play little part in the decision-making process, which instead incorporated mainly those statistics contained in public documents such as committee reports.

#### **4.2.3 Accessing the printed archive**

Access to the archive of past committee papers for both Strathclyde Regional Council and Merseytravel was relatively straightforward since, as local authorities, they are statutorily obliged to retain their historic documentation for public search purposes. The Strathclyde record was held at the Regional Archive in Glasgow's Mitchell Library where council papers were presented for inspection in the open access search room. The papers were arranged in chronological order, divided into bundles containing those of the range of

Regional Council committees meeting in a particular month. The first research task was to separate the papers of the Roads & Transportation Committee from the remainder so that they could be inspected. After reading each of the collected papers, notes were made from those directly pertaining to rail transport policy or wider related topics such as departmental finance and strategic transport planning. Where indication was given of further examination of relevant issues in other Council committees such as General Purposes, these were also read. The high cost of photocopying limited its use to those papers containing maps and other graphical information. Other publications such as the Council's *Transport Policies & Programmes* submissions and Strathclyde PTE consultation documents were also available at the Regional archive for similar inspection.

Although comprising a legally constituted joint board with archival obligations, there was no immediate indication of the location of Merseytravel's public access documentary record, there being no central archive facility for the whole of the former Merseyside county area. Before this element of the data search could begin, contact with the PTE was necessary in order to ascertain the procedure for public access to the relevant documentation. In response to a request for information, Merseytravel's Committee and Member Services staff offered free access to their in-house collection of past committee papers, including office accommodation and free photocopying, being keen to oblige as no member of the public had ever before undertaken a comparable search. In contrast to Strathclyde, both Authority and Executive papers were available in indexed single annual bound volumes which considerably simplified the initial filtering stage of the research. Furthermore, spare original copies of each committee paper for the 1992-96 period were offered as these were surplus to Merseytravel's internal archive requirements.

Similarly, Merseytravel retained a comprehensive collection of media cuttings to which open access was granted. This consisted of local and national newspaper reports, periodical articles and transcripts of radio and television news items relating to local rail transport issues. A comparable collection pertaining to Strathclyde was located at the University of Glasgow's Business Archive, although this was limited to newspaper and periodical items.

The second source of documentary material was the interviewees themselves. Several respondents gave copies of publications produced by their organisations. In the case of local authority councillors and officers, these were often papers previously met in the respective archives, although in Strathclyde spare originals were often offered which replaced the earlier hand-written notes.

In addition to those papers already in the public domain, several respondents supplied copies of private correspondence between individuals. Although this material was often illuminating, giving clearer insight into actors' underlying motivations, it was treated with caution. In some cases, suppliers of such material were happy for it to be published, although on ethical grounds such information was not discussed in interviews unless the respective viewpoint of the second party could be ascertained from other sources. If complete confidentiality was requested then this was of course respected, although the reading of such material obviously contributed to a fuller understanding of the issues concerned.

<u>Document title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>
Annual Reports	Strathclyde PTE
Annual Reports	Merseytravel
Policy & Expenditure Plans	Merseytravel
Transport Policies and Programmes	Strathclyde Regional Council
Travelling in Strathclyde	Strathclyde Regional Council
Take Off by Train	Strathclyde Transport News
25 Years of the PTEs	Passenger Transport Executive Group
Transport and the Scottish Economy	Scottish TUC
Scottish Transport in the 1990s	Scottish Association for Public Transport
End the Missing Link	Railway Development Society Scotland
Merseyside Councils combine to produce Integrated Transport Strategy	Local Transport Today
Councillor claims a Rail Triumph	Glasgow Herald
Laying it on the Line	Glasgow Evening Times
Trams set for Glasgow Return	The Scotsman
Dock Station Wins Go-Ahead	Liverpool Echo
New Station at Eastham Rake Wins Backing	Liverpool Daily Post
New Rail Stations for Wirral?	Wirral Globe
Merseyrail Investment Paying Dividends	Merseyside & Cheshire Business News
Trams to Return to Liverpool	Granada TV
Rail Development in Merseyside	Independent Radio News

Table 4.1 Examples of collected public domain texts relating to urban rail transport policy.

#### 4.2.4 Preparing the focused interviews

Fielding (1993: 135) argues that “interviewing has a strong claim to be the most widely used method of (social) research”. Similarly, Cook & Crang (1995) highlight its use throughout the epistemological spectrum. In positivist methodologies, the *structured* interview, similar in many respects to a formal questionnaire, consists of a closely pre-defined set of questions administered to consecutive respondents in the same language and in the same order, so as to obtain data suitable for quantitative comparison. However, such an approach

implies certain assumptions about language and meaning, notably that the meaning of a given question is equally transparent to all respondents and is interpreted identically by them according to the researcher’s intentions.

Schoenberger (1991: 181).

For this project, the type of interview to be undertaken had to reflect both the deductive assumption of the existence of urban policy regimes, and their potential for influencing human action as suggested by structuration theory. At the widest conceptual level, the interviews were required to follow a subject plan based on the assumption of the existence of an urban rail transport policy regime in each region, and of the mediation of different contexts of power within them, since in applying completely unstructured interviews, there would be no guarantee that responses would cover the desired theoretical ground. Consequently, a semi-structured or *focused* interview schedule was constructed, consisting of “a list of topics which (the researcher) wants the respondent to talk about” (Fielding, 1993: 136). In this sense, the interviews consisted of “guided conversations” (Lofland, 1971), which sought “the goal (of) a collaborative dialogue that engages the respondent in working through the research problem” (Schoenberger: 1991, 182).

However, within each distinct theoretical focus of the interviews, it was necessary to ensure that the ensuing conversation was as unstructured as possible. That each interviewee could talk as freely as possible while still addressing the interviewer’s pre-defined research topics was crucial in order that they, as actors within the policy network, could reflect upon both the structural influences to which they perceived themselves subjected and the sources of political conflict and disagreement *not* reported in the official printed archive. Thus, relating to each separate study focus identified from the constructs of regime theory, it was essential to fully uncover the extent of each actor’s experiences within the corresponding empirical domain of real policy development.

The interview schedules for each study area were composed of a 'shopping list' of desired response areas. The first section in each case was constructed to discern the 'predispositions' of each actor, in terms of their individual perceptions of the role of rail transport within their local urban society and economy, and then their perception of the operation of the policy regime and their location within it. Subsequently, specific major policy areas identified from previous reading of the assembled body of archival texts were introduced to address the 'resources' of each interviewee, or the tactics and methods by which each actor and institution sought to advance their particular preferences within the regime's policy network.

The choice of research sampling technique, in this case the selection of those actors to be approached for focused interview, was also derived deductively. Just as the existence of an underlying structural mechanism (the urban rail transport policy regime) was assumed, that this regime consisted of specific actors and institutions situated in various power contexts was also assumed. That the actual choice of interviewees should be deduced from an initial analysis of the prevailing local institutional structure can also be derived from Stone's (1980: 979) own exposition of regime theory, since in each locality, power is "a matter of context, or the nature or 'logic' of the situation". Such "purposeful sampling" (Patton, 1990),

stresses the search for 'information-rich cases'. Such respondents are at ease and talk freely with the researcher such that a great deal can be learned about the research question. Sample size is determined largely by the need to involve as many experiences as possible in the development of a conceptual framework / theory.

Baxter & Eyles (1997: 513).

Therefore, interviewees were selected according to their "positionality" (Wagstaffe & Moyer, 1987) so as to represent the range of actors and power contexts within the regime. The potential systemic power of business interests was represented by several actors. In general terms, the chamber of commerce in both core cities represented the collective lobbying interests of the private sector concerning a variety of policy areas, of which urban rail transport was one. More specifically, both Glasgow and Liverpool Airports were included as examples of individual private sector companies for whom improved rail accessibility would directly affect their financial performance. Systemic power was also represented by the institutions of central government as the primary source of the PTE's revenue and capital

spending allocations, since they retain final “control over investment decisions and resources” (Stoker, 1995: 64) in certain areas.

The rail companies themselves exercise two forms of power. That PTE investment decisions may affect other non PTE-supported rail services wholly the responsibility of the companies themselves (and vice versa) could reasonably be expected to result in a privileged position for rail industry interests. In instances where PTE and (ex-) British Rail priorities conflicted, however, such as in the case of *Strathclyde CrossRail* (see Chapter 7), the companies may seek to exert command power through “the active mobilization of resources (information, finance, reputation, knowledge) to achieve domination over other interests” (Stoker, 1995: 65). Within local authorities, officers also operate in the context of command power since their professional expertise of matters such as finance can provide them with sufficient resources in order to achieve domination within the regime.

Political parties, trades unions and pressure groups represent the application of coalition power within the policy network, in that they try to promote their own policy standpoints by lobbying other actors situated in different contexts of power. A range of political representatives, environmental and transport interest groups were therefore included in each sample in order to discover how and to whom they sought to present their argument to gain influence in the policy process.

In both Merseyside and Strathclyde, the three (male) holders of the Chair of the PTA represent special cases, since this position can be conceived as occupying several power contexts. As the most senior elected individual within the regime, the Chair could be expected to attain considerable systemic power from his position. As an experienced public representative, he could also be assumed to have built up a considerable degree of expert knowledge in his field so as to exercise command power. Indeed, his motivation to assume office may be rooted in a personal interest in transport policy, as two of the three Chairs interviewed were former employees of the railway industry. Yet as a politician, he relies on the support of both his electorate and his party colleagues to retain his position, and so would be required to ensure stable backing through the expression of coalition power.

In drawing up the final list of potential interviewees, there was one particular distinction to be made. In certain instances, notably those of the institutions of local government itself, the request for interview was directed at specific individuals known to fill defined public positions. Examples include the Chairs of the PTAs, the Directors General and other senior rail network managers of the PTEs, and other leading individuals in active political or other interest groups. In most other cases, such as the rail companies and other governmental

departments and agencies, the approach was made to the head of the institution concerned, with the request that the individual most involved in the formulation of urban rail transport in the respective PTA area be contacted.

Furthermore, the order in which interviews were to be conducted was considered important. In a set of interviews such as this, in which the sample consists of a limited number of individuals each selected for their unique insight, a pilot study to test the operationalising of interview technique is not feasible. Consequently, the programme of interviews was structured so as to ensure that the central figures, especially those from the PTA/Es themselves, were left to the end of the order where this was organisationally practicable, so that technique could be refined in those conversations with other more (relatively) peripheral individuals. In this way, 'continual modification' (Burgess, 1992) of the preferred interview structure enabling the posing of better-defined questions where necessary in successive interviews was ensured, although this was kept to an absolute minimum by the previous thorough analysis of the printed archive which ensured that each interview conversation was effectively guided so as to elicit the most relevant data.

*\* Denotes specific individual identified*

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Institution</u>
1	David Spaven*	Environmental campaigner	Former Green Party & British Rail
2	Richard Maconachie	Glasgow Airport Initiative Development Manager	Renfrewshire Enterprise
3	Richard Leonard	Policy Officer	Scottish TUC
4	David Reynolds	Central Area Planner	Glasgow City Council
5	Ian Bogle*	Chair	Glasgow for People
6	Geoff Runcie*	Chief Executive	Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
7	Ian McMahon	Planning Manager	Scottish Airports Ltd
8	John Elvidge* Ken Crawford	Director Transportation Manager	Scottish Office Economic Infrastructure Development Dept
9	Ken Sutherland*	Research Officer	Railway Development Society Scotland
10	Peter Newbould	Strathclyde Service Manager	ScotRail
11	Jim Taggart*	Chair	Strathclyde Labour Party Transport Working Group
12	Hazel Martin Peter Brown	Customer Services Manager ScotRail Account Manager	Railtrack Scotland
13	Stephen Lockley*	Director General	Strathclyde PTE

14	Mary McLaughlin	Head of Transport	Scottish Enterprise
15	Respondent 15a* Respondent 15b*	Senior anonymous sources	Strathclyde local government
16	Malcolm Waugh*	Chair, 1982-94	Strathclyde Regional Council Roads & Transportation Cttee
17	Stewart Leighton	Central Area Planner	Glasgow City Council
18	John McCormick*	Chair	Scottish Association for Public Transport
19	Charles Gordon*	Chair, 1994-96	Strathclyde Regional Council Roads & Transport Committee
20	Gordon Dewar	Associate Regional Manager	Halcrow Fox Transportation Consultancy

Table 4.2 List of Strathclyde interviews (in chronological order).

<i>* Denotes specific individual identified</i>			
	<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Institution</u>
1	Stephen Rhodes	Service Manager	Merseyrail Electrics Ltd
2	Peter Rigby	Policy Director	Liverpool Chamber of Commerce
3	Chris Leah*	Director	Railtrack North West
4	Rod Hill*	Managing Director	Liverpool Airport Ltd
5	Robert Goundry	Managing Director	North West Regional Railways
6	Lewis Lesley*	Chair	Liverpool Light Rail Group
7	George Cunningham	Transportation Planner	Merseyside Development Corporation
8	Paul Thompson John Harrison	Chief Planner Planner	St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council
9	Andy Boyack	Secretary	RMT North West
10	Roy Swainson*	Director General	Merseytravel
11	Mark Dowd*	Chair 1986-	Merseytravel
12	Martin Harrison*	Rail Services Manager	Merseytravel
13	Peter Hampton Mike Tew	Chief Planner Assistant Borough Engineer	Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
15	Peter Wilson Paul Doran	Transportation Team	Government Office for Merseyside
16	Keith Moores	Transportation Sector Manager	Liverpool City Council
17	David Marks John Ryan	-	Wirral Transport Users Group

Table 4.3 List of Merseyside interviews (in chronological order).



#### 4.2.5 Interview practicalities

The process of submitting actual requests for interview was as follows. A request for interview was made to the individual or institution concerned outlining the purpose and nature of the overall research and the importance attached to the experiences and perceptions of the prospective interviewee. The overall context and politically impartial nature of the work was stressed, including the sources of funding enabling the research. A telephone reply was requested in order to arrange suitable times and places for interview.

In only four cases were requests for interview denied. In both study regions, the local bus companies refused to participate, citing lack of available resources and their general unwillingness to discuss strategic policy matters they considered likely to impinge on commercially confidential subject areas. In Merseyside, two individuals, Mr K Swallow, a former Director General of Merseyside PTE and Mr J Leatherbarrow, a prominent transport interest group campaigner, also declined. However, in these instances, the individuals' involvement in the area's policy process was confined to the very early period of the study time frame, and so their loss was not considered of crucial importance. Similarly, although two respondents, both from within the Strathclyde local government system declined to be named, their insights provided valuable additional information concerning the power context of several actors within Strathclyde Regional Council and Strathclyde PTE. Crucially, in these and several other cases, the respondent's participation in an interview was assured only after reiterating that the research sought to uncover the impacts of structures of local governance on the decision-making process, and *not* to critically evaluate the performance of actual enacted rail transport policies.

During the interviews themselves, the preamble was of particular importance in securing a satisfactory dynamic between the interviewer and the respondent(s). The most apparent consideration was that of the nature of the interpersonal variables inherent in the process of elite interviewing. Much of the literature concerning interview technique (Kalm & Cannell, 1957; Coolican, 1990; McDowell, 1992 for example) emphasises the particular case of the informed researcher and the un- or ill-informed "suppliant" (Cook & Crang, 1995) or 'researched', and the necessary sensitivity required in order to establish rapport and elicit information. In this case however, as members of an elite, most respondents were "accustomed to being in control and exerting power over others" (Schoenberger, 1991: 182). In comparison to a relatively young student researcher, therefore, senior public officials and experienced business executives in most cases assumed the more powerful position.

Consequently, in order to minimise the risk of conversational reticence, the importance of the individual's contribution and the gratitude in providing time for the interview were strongly re-emphasised at the outset. Similarly, the point was again stressed that the research did not aim to audit previous enacted policies in terms of their end performance, but instead was focused on the limitations imposed on actors within the policy-making process by local governance structures. As the Strathclyde interviews coincided with the 1996 re-organisation of Scottish local authorities, most respondents in this group readily appreciated the relevance of the research. However, in certain cases, most especially that of the transport interest group respondents, no such comments were made as it was assumed that some of the most worthwhile material could emanate from the critical discussion of past policy decisions. In all cases, preliminary exchanges centred on descriptive questions regarding the respondent's background before entering the deeper exploratory conversations, following Spradley's (1979) process of rapport establishment.

The value of tape recording interview conversations in terms of accuracy, completeness and 'repeatability' of review is well documented (McCracken, 1988, for example). Although the possibility of non-consent to recording is highlighted as a considerable obstacle to successful interviewing (Fielding, 1993; May, 1993), only one respondent saw fit to decline to be recorded, and since the individual concerned represented a rail industry company at that time deeply involved in the latter stages of privatisation negotiations, his emphasis on heightened confidentiality was understandable.

Guarantees in respect of the general confidentiality of remarks expressed off the record were of course given, as was the respondent's right to ask for the recorder to be switched off at any point during the interview. This in fact occurred in several cases. Similarly, the offer of a review of the material contained in the case study chapters in respect of the views and perceptions of individual actors was made in all cases, with around one quarter of interviewees requesting such a facility. Where this offer was taken up, respondents' comments provided a useful means of clarifying meaning and ensuring the text provided an accurate portrayal of actual events. Shorter follow-up discussions were also held with several other respondents in order to clarify particular meanings gleaned from passages of the original interviews.

In general, conversations were extremely open, with most respondents freely expressing opinions and recounting previous experiences without the need for significant prompting. However, in a very few cases, the conversational structure was less fluid, with the interview adopting a more 'formal' shape involving the need for an increased number of direct questions. Attempts to ameliorate the relative incompatibility of this approach with the

emphasis on allowing free play of individual perception demanded by structuration theory were made in the following way. When the interviewee appeared reluctant to describe a particular topic in depth, a closely defined statement would be made with the invitation to respond in agreement or disagreement. In order to ensure that the replies did not merely consistently conform to or differ from the posited standpoints, the form of the questions was deliberately varied to include positions that the respondent could reasonably be expected to assume, and those for which such agreement was unlikely. Often in the latter case, playing 'devil's advocate' in offering an unlikely opinion spurred the interviewee into giving a fuller analysis of the subject area than would otherwise have been the case. It was considered that, although this approach risked the introduction of significant guidance and direction from the interviewer, this was more than likely to be outweighed by the increased opportunity for "the subject's definition and expression (through) full and specific expression" and the uncovering of "the value-laden implications of response" (Fielding, 1993: 148), thus minimising the overall impact of interviewer bias.

At all times during the conduct of the interviews, care was taken not to attach the names of individuals to discussions of particularly sensitive policy conflicts where this could be construed to be unhelpful. Such considerations are particularly important in a series of interviews within a relatively small elite group incorporating a complex web of on-going inter-personal working relationships. However, this did not preclude the successful identification of sufficient information in order to account for the realities of each actor's context of power and the expression of that power.

In several cases, conversation continued long after the end of the formal tape recorded interview. In one instance, this was driven by the respondent's desire to talk at length off-the-record on the particular policy area with which he was involved, his frustration at the operation of the policy regime becoming clearly evident. In one particular encounter with a respondent within local government, discussion continued for over two hours after the official interview, which, at 50 minutes, was of average length. Such was the openness of this particular conversation, opinion was offered not only on the development of policy within the respondent's own local rail transport regime, but also on the corresponding study area's policy network and the relationships of both to the other PTA/Es and central government. Indeed, the rapport established was such that renewed offers of assistance in many aspects of the research process were offered.

## 4.3 Data analysis

### 4.3.1 Preliminary sorting of materials

The eventual library of research materials obtained from the field was substantial, requiring suitable indexing so that efficient cross-reference could be made during the analytical process. The collected bodies of notes (Strathclyde) or photocopies (Merseyside) made from the committee papers themselves were indexed in two reference grids, showing the subject area and date of publication of each individual submission. Similar smaller grids were constructed for the remaining printed documentation received from interviewees and for the assembled media cuttings.

Each piece of documentation was then re-read. This fulfilled two purposes. First, each document was given an initial indicative 'rating', which was added to the index grids, based on its relevance to the key themes arising from the interview process. Those containing specific reference information such as rail network statistics were assigned a separate code. Indeed, the resulting documentary hierarchy became crucial to the manageability of subsequent data analysis, in that those texts considered to be the most valuable within a particular topic area could be accessed quickly, enabling efficient comparison with interview passages, for example. In no way was analysis limited to these particular documents, however.

Connection between the assembled printed archive and the interview data was also reinforced by the ongoing documentary review process. Thorough consideration of the issues raised in the committee papers formed an ideal means of constructing a mental focus in advance of approaching the interview texts themselves.

Each of the 35 tape recordings was transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Although time consuming at around six or seven hours per interview, it was felt that the process of transcribing had indeed "made (the researcher) very familiar with the data" (Fielding, 1993: 147). Throughout the transcription process, persistent themes became apparent, and connections between various actors' perceptions and the opinions expressed in the printed documentation were identified as a result of the preceding review.

### 4.3.2 Analysing the assembled texts

Silverman (1985) argues that the range of standpoints regarding the most suitable techniques for the analysis of interview data reflect the range of research projects which employ the technique. For example, highly structuralist approaches emphasise the potential for data derived from interview to enable 'factual', quantitative inferences to be made.

However, in rejecting such an approach in favour of a more nuanced combination of human agency and structuration, data contained within focused interview texts do not so much comprise discrete 'facts', but rather strands of linguistic meanings, complete with the myriad variations of meaning between different texts. To understand this kind of data, a broadly *hermeneutic* method of analysis must be employed in order to "take full recognition of the importance of textual interpretation in (the) unpacking of phenomena" (Cloke et al, 1991: 142).

Indeed, Wooffitt (1992: 52) argues that such interpretation, *inter-subjectivity*, is "the customary procedure used by sociologists to negotiate these differences" in meaning. Furthermore, the overall research process can be presented in a number of discrete steps:

- 1 Obtain statements by interview or by observation in a natural setting.
- 2 Look for broad similarities between the statements.
- 3 If similarities are found, these are taken at face value; that is, as accurate reflections of what is really happening.
- 4 Construct a generalized version of participants' accounts and present these as an analytic conclusion.

Wooffitt (1992: 52).

Cook & Crang (1995) outline what they consider to be a generally accepted method of operationalising such hermeneutic analysis of research texts so as to fully demonstrate "the intersubjective richness of the research encounters that (have been) drawn out. (By) thinking about what was being said and what the meaning and intent of each statement might have been" (Cook & Crang, 1995: 77), each parcel of text, usually a single sentence or line, is allocated a code according to a scheme of topic categorisation. Codes are then grouped together under subsequent broader headings covering subject "dimensions" (Strauss, 1987) of the overall analysis. In this way, insight into the meanings contained within discourse is

achieved through comparison of apparently similar and conflicting coded sections of various texts.

However, Fairclough (1995: 5) offers a substantive critique of the methodological process of coding in contending that “no analysis of text content and meaning can be satisfactory which fails to attend to what one might call the content of texture, or the content of its form”. *Discourse analysis* therefore rejects the notion that meaning can be inferred from individual statements in isolation, but must rather be deduced from the context of these discrete statements in relation to the overarching structure of the text itself, and indeed to the wider discourse of which the text is a part (Halliday, 1978).

Wooffitt expands this argument in his exposition of the basic assumptions of discourse analysis:

- 1 Language is used variably
- 2 Language is constructed and constructive
- 3 Any one state of affairs can be described in a number of ways, therefore
- 4 There will be variation in accounts
- 5 There is no foolproof way to deal with the variation and sift through accounts so as to locate the best and most informative reports
- 6 Consequently, the purpose of analysis should be to study the ways that language is used flexibly and constructively.

Wooffitt (1992: 55).

An example highlighting the variability in language use within interview discussion regarding one of the principal rail transport policies examined in Chapter 7 is instructive. The *St John's Link*, a short connecting line proposed for the Strathclyde rail network since the 1960s, forms the basis of the larger *CrossRail* project developed in the early 1990s, which includes additional investment such as new station construction. However, during interview, many actors used the two terms interchangeably. In some cases this was archaic use of the old nomenclature applied to the broader contemporary proposals, while in others the newer term was applied to all stages of the project's development, including the original outline plan. In one particular case, an actor consistently referred to “CrossRail”, clearly meaning only the component part of the actual “St John's Link” line itself. In labelling “CrossRail” and “St John's Link” separately in a line-by-line coding framework as proposed by Cook & Crang, the variation in meaning between the various uses of these two terms may

not have become apparent, since in “analyzing a stretch of talk by reference to only one category obscures the ways that category memberships can be fluid and occasioned to attend to the fine-grained features of interaction” (Wooffitt, 1992: 63).

Therefore, with the total number of interview transcripts relatively small at 35, it was decided that, rather than attempt a detailed ‘formal’ coding of the interview scripts, the most appropriate methodological approach was to conceive of each of these texts as a whole so as best to conceptualise the rounded predispositions and resources of each actor. Subsequent review and re-review, in combination with reflections on the ‘atmosphere’ of the interview conversations contained in additional notes, coupled with the repeatability and accuracy of the tape recordings and the visual stimulus of the typed transcripts enabled a thorough appreciation of the meanings contained in each respondent’s contribution.

Similarly, the additional knowledge derived from the researcher’s actual participation in the interviews was fully appreciated. Although such ephemeral data lie outside the language directly reproduced in the transcript texts themselves, instances such as “any significant non-verbal gestures employed (by the interviewee) assist the researcher in becoming familiar with the data and the particular nuances of each interview” (May, 1993: 106). Experience of such nuances contained within each respondent’s recollections also enabled a fuller understanding of texts within the printed archive, as in most cases, individual documents therein could be identified as the work of individual respondents themselves. However, where this was not the case, an equally holistic approach to understanding textual meaning was adopted in considering these datasets in respect to the positions of their respective institutional authors within the power bargaining structure of the regime. Each document was summarised not only in regard to its subject matter, audience and objectives, but also in respect of the power context of its author within the policy network.

The method of selection of archival and interview quotations for inclusion in the subsequent analysis chapters reflected the importance attached to retaining the consistent strands of meaning evident across and between passages of text rather than deriving meaning from potentially unrepresentative short statements in isolation. For each significant policy development identified, the relevant passages of archival text and interview transcript representing each institution and actor’s perception of the ongoing discourse within the local policy network were grouped together. Crucially, only through the proactive input of the researcher’s assembled knowledge and interpretation of the meanings of whole passages of text in combination could the often critical relationships in meaning between various passages of superficially differing focus be uncovered. Reflecting the adopted hermeneutic

deductive method, actual parcels of text for direct quotation were selected according to the researcher's interpretation of the conflicts and discourses characterising the pre-supposed rail transport policy regimes.

## 4.4 Robustness of research methods

### 4.4.1 Ensuring rigour in methodology and analysis

Although the combined methodologies employed in any geographical study such as this are necessarily unique, there nevertheless remains the need to ensure that they can be considered robust, and thus the resulting data accurate, according to a set of generally accepted criteria. The demonstration of such robustness or 'rigour' in research is therefore "critical if qualitative evidence or findings are to gain acceptance" and be "believable and hence worthy of attention" (Baxter & Eyles, 1997: 505).

In order to provide a means to evaluate the inherent value of geographical research, Baxter & Eyles (1997: 506) provide a checklist of eleven "strategies for rigour in qualitative social geography" widely adopted in recent academic geographical literature. Figure 4.1 below compares the methodological approaches adopted by this study with each of these individual 'strategies for rigour':

"Strategy for establishing qualitative 'rigour' in geographic work"	Adopted methodological approach
(a) <i>Rationale for methodology</i> : qualitative methods argued to be the most appropriate way to address the research question(s)	Qualitative focused interviewing derived from analysis of regime and structuration theories
(b) <i>Use of multiple methods</i> : more than one method used for studying the problem	Triangulation of interview and archival text extracts
(c) <i>Respondent identification</i> : a description of the group(s) of respondents (eg number and gender)	Respondents fully identified (except where anonymity requested)
(d) <i>Interview quotations</i> : the words of the respondent may be read	Detailed interview quotations provided
(e) <i>Interview practices</i> : details of how interviews were conducted is provided	Detailed description of interview practices derived from structuration theory explained



(f)	<i>Procedures for analysis:</i> a description of how data were converted into theoretical constructs is given	Hermeneutic interpretation justified by researcher's role in connecting meanings uncovered within interview and archival data
(g)	<i>Immersion / lengthy fieldwork:</i> it is argued that long field seasons enable deep understandings of research	Over two years' fieldwork undertaken
(h)	<i>Revisits:</i> revisits are made to respondents to clarify meanings	Revisits to key respondents undertaken where necessary
(i)	<i>Verification by respondents:</i> respondents are contacted to verify meanings	Text verified by 25% of respondents
(j)	<i>Appeals to interpretive community:</i> an existing theory is supported or refuted by the research findings	Data applied to add evidence of spatial impacts upon typology and operation of urban policy regimes
(k)	<i>Rationale for verification:</i> rationale for showing there is agreement between constructs and respondents' meanings is provided	Respondents invited to comment on accuracy of assembled evidence and accounts of policy-making

Table 4.4 Checklist of adopted methodological approaches and strategies for rigour.

Source Adapted from Baxter & Eyles (1997: 507).

According to the above classification, the study methodology clearly embraces each of the eleven individual strategies for rigour identified by Baxter & Eyles. First, justification for the chosen methodology, which centres on in-depth semi-structured interviewing, emerges from the position that the most effective way to analyse the actions of individual actors is to discuss their perceptions and experiences with them in detail. Similarly, the semi-structured, focused form of the interviews arises from the notion of structuration which emphasises the need to permit respondents to talk as freely as possible about their beliefs and aspirations within overall pre-defined subject areas, consistent with the deductive identification of the urban policy regime as the framework for policy-making.

Subsequent strategies concentrate on the desire to ensure the *credibility* of the events under analysis. The demonstration of credibility "allows the reader to connect the (rigour) criteria to philosophical concerns" (Baxter & Eyles, 1997: 512). Thus, the adopted approaches of triangulation between several respondents' contributions and between interview and archival texts, together with the use of detailed verbatim quotations which can be attributed to specific actors, affords the reader with greater insight into the ways in which meanings are assembled by the researcher in order to analyse the dynamics of the regime. The credibility of this data selection and assembly is further enhanced by the importance attributed to immersion in the printed archive as preparation for the interview process

itself, detailed description of the practicalities of conversation, and the selection of a wide range of individual actors according to a 'purposeful' sampling framework derived from the assumed 'contexts' of power expressed by regime theory. Finally, the credibility of the researcher's conclusions and analysis is maximised through the opportunity given to respondents to review complete sections of the thesis in order to ensure that it embodies an accurate portrayal of actual policy aspirations, events and meanings. In each case, the comments received confirmed that the experiences embodied in the finished version of the text, which takes account of their reactions, did indeed attain the level of credibility and accuracy required that "those having the experience would recognize it immediately" (Baxter & Eyles, 1997: 512).

## 4.5 Conclusion

### 4.5.1 Connecting theory and practice

This chapter has sought to place the methodological approaches adopted in the operationalising of the research project within a clearly defined philosophical setting, reflecting the desire for "studies to move from theory through empirical application and back to theory" (Stoker, 1995: 66). The deductive basis of the research was derived from the preceding review of the theories of structuration and the regime, since it aims to investigate the combined influences on final rail transport policy outputs of both underlying structural mechanisms, in this case the nature of the system of local government in each study area, and the impacts of human agency.

Within the overall deductive framework identified from theory, the choice of focused interviewing as the primary research method is justified as credible approach under a number of considerations. Personal accounts of individual standpoints and the perceived operation of the policy process obtained through interview with principal actors were regarded as the most direct data source from which to successfully uncover the rich variety of resources and predispositions influencing the mediation of power within the rail transport policy regime. The interviews themselves were as loosely structured as possible in order that the full range of influences be exposed.

The available archive of printed texts was utilised in three ways. First, as a data resource in its own right, the collection of texts forms a detailed record of the actions of a wide variety of actors and institutions. Second, consideration of the texts enabled the

identification of specific major policy areas in which to locate interview questions so that regime operation could be analysed in respect to its implications for real policy decisions. Third, the triangulation of selected archival texts with subsequent interview quotations enabled clear demonstration of actors' motivations and meanings.

That analysis of the collected texts should be hermeneutic in approach was also identified from the tenets of structuration, reflecting the final move back from application to theory. A pragmatic means of indexing the assembled archival texts was created, in order that their search and review be made practicable. For these and the interview transcripts themselves however, the chosen method of analysis rejected the detailed coding of text in favour of a holistic approach attending to the additional data contained within non-textual interview experience, and in the linguistic norms and structures used by each author. Inter-subjective comparison was therefore made on the basis of whole texts and their relative meanings within the overall preconceived concept of regime power mediation. The substantial use of verbatim quotations maximised the transparency of the process of combining the meanings contained within and between texts, and thus the credibility of subsequent analysis.

## **5 Local governance and rail transport in the study areas**

### **5.1 Introduction**

#### **5.1.1 The Merseyside and Strathclyde study areas**

### **5.2 Urban development context**

#### **5.2.1 Cities of Empire**

#### **5.2.2 Post-war decline**

#### **5.2.3 The rise of the post-industrial city**

### **5.3 Structures of local governance**

#### **5.3.1 Strathclyde Region**

#### **5.3.2 Merseyside Metropolitan County**

### **5.4 Historic railway development**

#### **5.4.1 Railway development in Merseyside**

#### **5.4.2 Railway development in Strathclyde**

#### **5.4.3 1986 network summary**

### **5.5 'The urban transportation problem' in Merseyside and Strathclyde**

#### **5.5.1 'The urban transportation problem' in practice**

#### **5.5.2 Policy options for rail transport development**

## **5.1 Introduction**

### **5.1.1 The Merseyside and Strathclyde study areas**

This chapter introduces the study areas of Merseyside County and Strathclyde Region. After an outline of the socio-economic development of their respective conurbations and core cities of Liverpool and Glasgow, their roles in the UK's contemporary economy are examined. The contrasting city-regional and public choice geographical structures of local governance put in place in each area over the ten year study time period are described, including the pattern of elected local authorities, the range of central government agencies and their responsibilities, and the internal composition of the two Passenger Transport Authorities and Executives. A brief history of railway development in each area is presented, including the major infrastructure developments of the 1970s, followed by a summary of the main characteristics of each rail network at April 1986. Finally, the potential rail network development options open to policy-makers are then analysed with respect to the local expression of the social and economic development issues which comprise 'the urban transportation problem' in each area.



Figure 5.1 Location of Merseyside and Strathclyde.

## **5.2 Urban development context**

### **5.2.1 Cities of Empire**

For Keating (1988: 1), the rise of Glasgow as a trading and manufacturing centre was inextricably linked to the 1707 Act of Union, which “gave Scottish traders access to English imperial markets”. Over the succeeding century, Glasgow prospered as a result of lucrative tobacco and latterly cotton trading with the American colonies. However, the nineteenth century saw increasing economic integration of the city with its surrounding hinterland as the heavy industries for which the area was to become world famous grew as the result of the combination of Glasgow’s strategic riverside site and the coal and iron ore deposits of nearby Lanarkshire.

By the onset of the First World War, fully one fifth of the world’s ship production was ‘Clyde built’, the industry accounting for 100,000 jobs (Keating, 1988). Similarly, Glasgow became a world centre for the production of railway locomotives following the foundation of the St Rollox and Hyde Park works after 1830. By 1900, the amalgamated North British Locomotive Company supplied over 500 engines per year to Britain and the Empire.

The wider Clydeside conurbation’s economic base diversified considerably after 1880. Publishing, chemicals and carpet manufacture became significant industries in the city of Glasgow itself. Similarly, the continuing growth in shipping encouraged by improved dredging of the Clyde and enhanced dock facilities saw Glasgow become the third British port in terms of tonnage after London and Liverpool. Several nearby towns benefited from American inward investment, with the 1895 Singer sewing machine factory at Clydebank becoming the world’s largest. Engineering firm Babcock established plants at Renfrew and Dumbarton in 1910, and the spinning of cotton thread continued to provide a particular impetus to growth in Paisley.

Such was the rate of economic development in the city itself that its population rose thirteen-fold from a figure of 83,000 in 1801 to over one million in 1911 (Carmichael, 1995). By the onset of World War One, Glasgow had justifiably assumed the mantle of ‘Second City of the Empire’.

In a similar fashion to Glasgow, Liverpool developed as a western seaport handling trade between Britain and the Empire. However, whereas the port of Glasgow expanded largely as a market gateway for locally produced manufactures, Liverpool grew to become the UK’s

largest port after London through the shipping of goods produced elsewhere, its hinterland expanding to "include almost all of Britain" (Holt, 1976: 27).

Despite the wealth, employment and famous cityscape borne of the profits of the imperial shipping companies, the exaggerated primacy of the port function within the city's economy brought early fears over its future prosperity. Simply, "Liverpool never experienced the emergence of a sizeable manufacturing sector, being better at moving things than making them" (Carmichael, 1995: 128). Thus, since "no significant artisan class developed" (*Independent*, 11/3/97), the city was "eclipsed by its proximity to Manchester" (Newman, 1986: 36). Similarly, those manufacturing industries which did locate in the Merseyside area tended to do so on the empty sites on the opposite bank of the estuary, the Cammell Laird shipyard near Birkenhead, the oil refineries at Ellesmere Port and Lever's experimental industrial community based on the Port Sunlight chemical works forming notable examples.

The fragile nature of Liverpool's economic base was reflected in the earlier onset of population loss in comparison to similar British cities - the city's maximum population of 867,000 was reached in 1937, coinciding with the first shift of trans-Atlantic shipping to Southampton. In contrast, the population of Glasgow reached its recorded peak of 1.09 million in the 1951 census.

### 5.2.2 Post-war decline

The post-war histories of both Glasgow and Liverpool and their surrounding areas are characterised by the impacts of economic and population decline. That both cities inherited a pre-war legacy of some of Western Europe's most congested slum areas is well documented (Cherry, 1988 for example), as is the 1950s and 60s fashion for 'comprehensive redevelopment' of these inner areas, and the planned displacement of substantial proportions of the urban population to surrounding suburbs and new towns. In these respects, the policies of proactive population decentralisation such as those derived from Sir Patrick Abercrombie's *Clyde Valley Regional Plan* of 1946 can be seen as a precursor to similar trends in other British cities arising from subsequent laissez-faire attitudes to suburbanisation (see 2.2.3).



<u>Burgh</u>	<u>estimated population.</u> 1946	<u>population to be</u> <u>decentralised</u>
Glasgow	1,127,000	550,000
Airdrie	27,860	3,500
Clydebank	47,912	17,500
Coatbridge	45,045	10,000
Dumbarton	22,214	10,000
Greenock	81,297	39,000
Hamilton	39,305	11,000
Motherwell & Wishaw	67,693	11,000
Paisley	91,167	28,500
Port Glasgow	19,785	9,500
Rutherglen	25,441	9,000
Barrhead	12,265	6,000
Johnstone	13,882	6,000
Milngavie	6,400	nil
Renfrew	16,509	7,000

Figure 5.2 Estimated planned post-war population decentralisation from Clydeside conurbation.

Source Abercrombie (1949: 175).

Substantial flight from both core cities accelerated despite eventual policy shifts against decentralisation from both city councils aimed at reducing such dramatic population loss and erosion of their tax bases. In Glasgow, the construction of four large peripheral housing schemes at Castlemilk, Drumchapel, Easterhouse and Pollok was envisaged as providing new accommodation for around 100,000 people within the existing city boundary. In Liverpool, a similar development took place at Speke, to the south east of the city centre. For Keating & Boyle (1986) however, these peripheral estates were quickly to become the new focus of social deprivation. In contrast to comparable European projects in cities such as Stockholm and The Hague, the new British estates emphasised the need for housing at the expense of the provision of local services such as shopping and recreation facilities for their relocated populations (Lawless, 1989). A further contrast with Swedish and Dutch

experience can also be made in the failure to provide new rail transport access to the estates (Simpson, 1994). Although their compact structure and high residential density represented significant potential catchment areas for rail transit, continued reliance on the bus ensured journey times from the new peripheral developments to city centre employment and other amenities was often excessive. Similarly, redevelopment of many inner city districts at lower densities substantially reduced the catchment population of existing urban rail transport services.

The spillover effects of several other planning policies contributed to the increasing social polarisation of both cities. The growing tenure shift towards owner occupation increased outward migration as higher income groups left for the expanding suburbs which were principally outside the tightly-drawn city boundaries (Pacione, 1995). Development also leap-frogged the newly designated green belts charged with limiting urban sprawl to smaller settlements on the peripheries of the city regions. In this way, new towns such as Cumbernauld, East Kilbride, Warrington and Runcorn, and well-placed established towns such as Crosby, Wallasey and Kirkintilloch, enjoyed a second wave of growth fuelled by private sector development after the initial overspill relocations were nearing completion. The new high-rise and deck access blocks characterising many comprehensive redevelopment districts in the inner cities were therefore often left with residual low income populations.

### 5.2.3 The rise of the post-industrial city

The decline in the populations and tax bases of the central cities was accompanied by further closure of industry across the conurbations in the 1970s and early 1980s. In Merseyside, despite growth in motor vehicle construction industries at Halewood (Ford) and Ellesmere Port (Vauxhall), the reduction of an already limited manufacturing base and the haemorrhage of jobs resulting from port containerisation brought Liverpool the tag of "the first de-industrialised city in the nation" (Parkinson, 1985: 9). In Strathclyde, both Glasgow and the surrounding industrial towns lost employment as manufacturing industry entered seemingly terminal decline. Famous names including the Rootes car plant at Linwood, Goodyear, Singer and Caterpillar all withdrew from the region, with significant reductions in the scale of many other operations including port activity. Against this background, the first public bodies formed to promote urban regeneration were established, both at the national (*Scottish Development Agency*), and local (*Glasgow East Area Renewal Partnership (GEAR)*) scales.

Carmichael (1995: 134) traces the emergence of policies aimed at the regeneration of Liverpool to the aftermath of the civil disturbances in Toxteth in the summer of 1981. He quotes a confidential memorandum written by Michael Heseltine soon after his appointment as 'Minister for Merseyside', which stated that "it took a riot" to convince central government of the case for intervention in the city's problems. The resulting *Merseyside Task Force* quango initiated a range of special incentives for firms to locate in the city and surrounding area. Perhaps more significantly, another Heseltine innovation, the National Garden Festival, first held in Liverpool in 1984, heralded the beginning of the repackaging of the city as a post-industrial centre, emphasising the opportunities for growth in the leisure, education, and other service sectors. This trend has continued in the limited rehabilitation of historic cityscape such as the Albert Dock complex, home to a branch of the Tate Gallery, in order to provide a focus for the development of tourism in the city. Similar townscape renovation schemes elsewhere in the conurbation, such as that of Hamilton Square in the historic centre of Birkenhead, have developed more recently. Major new tertiary employment within the region has been limited, the relocation of National Girobank's headquarters to Bootle and the nearby smaller administrative centre for Barclays Bank forming the main examples.

Significantly, the third National Garden Festival took place in Glasgow in 1988. Hayton (1996: 246) argues that the celebration formed a key "part of Glasgow's 'event city' strategy of self re-invention", a process begun with the City Council's famous "Glasgow's Miles Better" advertising campaign of 1983. Over the following decade, strenuous efforts were made to promote Glasgow as a service, retail and tourist centre. However, despite the limited success of the 'Merchant City' central residential developments and the growth in several tertiary employment sectors including retailing and financial services, which led to the "more optimistic picture (that) emerged in the late 1980s" (Lawless, 1989: 35), in relative terms, the growth in Glasgow's economy continues to lag behind the rest of Scotland (Hayton, 1996).

In the wider conurbation, industrial regeneration has focused on the attraction of foreign manufacturing investment. Microprocessor component suppliers such as IBM, Compaq, Motorola and National Semiconductor have expanded their operations around Inverclyde and East Kilbride, whilst the location of the Scottish channel tunnel freight terminal at Mossend in mid Lanarkshire has attracted significant investment in the form of Europe's largest manufacturing plant for television cathode ray tubes to an area previously dependent on iron and steel processing.

	<u>1971 (%)</u>	<u>1981 (%)</u>	<u>1991 (%)</u>
Liverpool	9.6	28.0	26.1
Glasgow	8.2	24.1	23.8
Merseyside	7.0	21.6	19.7
Strathclyde	6.2	17.2	16.5
Great Britain	5.6	12.4	11.3

Table 5.1 Male unemployment rates, 1971-91.

Source Census.

### 5.3 Structures of local governance

#### 5.3.1 Strathclyde Region

Strathclyde was by far the largest of the nine Regional Councils created by the 1975 reform of Scottish local authority structure (see 3.3.1), encompassing almost half of the country's five million population. Its geographical area included both the Clydeside conurbation of over 1.7 million people centred on Glasgow, and the contrasting highland and lowland rural areas of Argyll, Ayrshire and Lanarkshire. The lower tier of local government created by the reform was composed of 19 district councils. Within the conurbation, the continued opposition to the extension of the City of Glasgow's boundary had "profound effects on the social and political composition" (Keating, 1988: 41) of the new district council areas. Thus, the declining inner core remained separated from the more affluent suburban ring, in contrast to many other major British cities which were enlarged considerably during the 1970s reorganisation process (Carmichael, 1995).

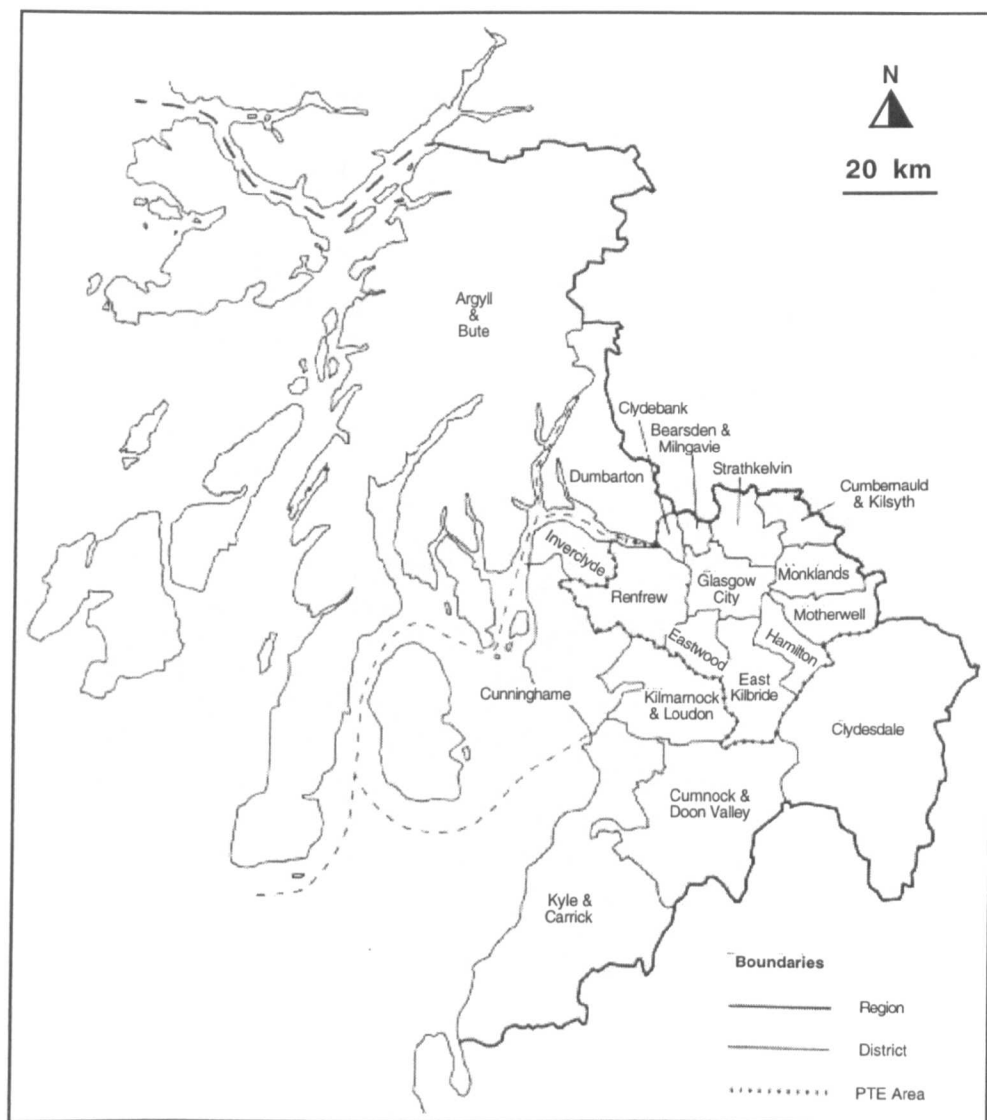


Figure 5.3 Strathclyde Region, lower-tier district council areas.



Figure 5.4 Clydeside conurbation. Crown Copyright reserved

<u>District</u>	<u>Population (1991)</u>	<u>% change 1981-91</u>	<u>% of Regional total (1991)</u>
Argyll & Bute	65140	-1.14	2.9
Bearsden & Milngavie	40612	+0.87	1.8
Clydebank	45717	-14.23	2.0
Clydesdale	57588	+0.04	2.6
Cumbernauld & Kilsyth	62412	-0.73	2.8
Cumnock & Doon Valley	42594	-6.23	1.9
Cunninghamme	136875	-1.59	6.1
Dumbarton	77173	-2.21	3.4
East Kilbride	82777	-1.73	3.7
Eastwood	59959	9.67	2.7
City of Glasgow	662853	-15.52	29.5
Hamilton	105202	-4.34	4.7
Inverclyde	90103	-12.00	4.0
Kilmarnock & Loudon	79861	-4.35	3.6
Kyle & Carrick	112658	-1.93	5.0
Monklands	102379	-8.25	4.6
Motherwell	142632	-6.10	6.3
Renfrew	196980	-6.75	8.8
Strathkelvin	89191	-3.65	4.0
Strathclyde	2248706	-7.83	100.0

Table 5.2 Strathclyde Region, resident population by District (1991).

Source Census.

As the strategic planning body for its area, the Regional Council assumed the powers both of its predecessor county authorities for highways and those of the *Greater Glasgow Passenger Transport Authority (GGPTA)* in respect of public transport. Under control of the regional council, the renamed *Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive (SPTE)* operated essentially as any other council department, its professional staff reporting to the elected members of the council's Highways & Transportation Committee, which assumed the statutory

responsibilities and local rail transport development powers of the former GGPTA. Although the legally defined PTA area was not extended at the time of the 1975 reorganisation, instead remaining limited to that of the immediate Clydeside conurbation, Strathclyde from its inception decided that SPTE should assume responsibility for public transport development throughout the regional council's area. In this way, the provisions of Section 10 of the 1968 Transport Act, which permit the extension of PTE support for local rail services up to 25 miles beyond the PTA area boundary, were applied, extending SPTE support to all commuter rail routes within the region including the significant Ayr, Helensburgh, Kilmarnock and Lanark corridors.

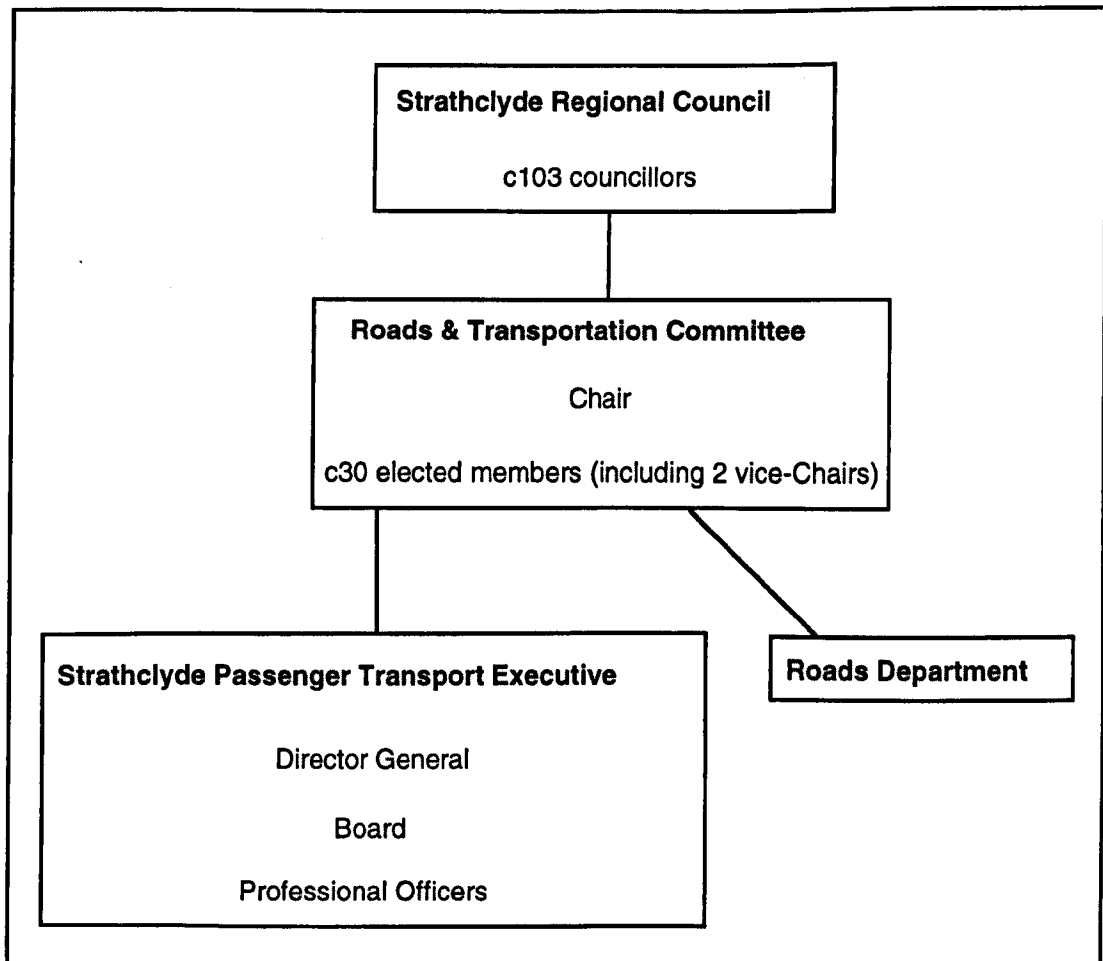


Figure 5.5 Statutory relationship of Strathclyde Regional Council and Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive.

The Highways & Transportation Committee was composed of around 30 Regional Councillors, electing a Chair and two vice-Chairs after each Regional Council election,



every four years. Like the full Regional Council, the Committee was dominated by the Labour Party throughout the ten year period, with opposition representation limited to at most three members at any one time. Two principal sub-committees were formed for Highways and Public Transport issues respectively.

The 19 District Councils which formed the lower tier of local government within the Strathclyde area were without direct powers in respect to public transport, although as local planning authorities, they were consulted in most aspects of Regional transport policy, both informally and through the statutory annual *Transport Policies and Programmes (TPP)* review. Similarly, the principal central government agencies of *Scottish Enterprise* (until 1992 the *Scottish Development Agency*) and its subsidiary *Local Enterprise Companies (LECs)* within the region addressed issues of transportation planning in relation to their economic development responsibilities, although none retained any formal competence in local transport policy formulation or investment.

Despite holding no direct powers in respect to urban rail transport policy development, central government itself through the *Scottish Office* retained a significant influence as the source of capital and revenue funding for the Strathclyde local rail network (see Appendix). Each year, the Regional Council's overall capital borrowing consent included an element assigned to local rail transport. The cyclical pattern of capital consent levels (Table 5.3) illustrates the impact of the major equipment renewal programmes such as signalling and rolling stock replacements carried out after 1986. The peak between 1985/86 and 1986/87 represents the purchase of new electric trains for the Ayrshire lines, whilst the 1989/90 and 1990/91 figures include the £30m cost of replacement of the life-expired north electric 'blue trains' built in the 1950s and 1960s. The hiatus in investment after 1995 is mirrored in all PTE areas and results from the uncertainty induced by rail privatisation.

Year	85/6	86/7	87/8	88/8	89/90	90/1	91/2	92/3	93/4	94/5	95/6
£m	20.6	26.3	9.4	6.4	25.9	14.4	9.0	6.8	16.4	5.5	1.2

Table 5.3 Strathclyde Regional Council rail capital consents, 1985/86 - 1995/96.

Source Strathclyde Regional Council.

From 1 January 1989 to beyond the study period, Strathclyde held European Union Objective 2 status as a declining heavy industrial region, and was therefore eligible for *European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)* grant assistance for rail transport capital projects.

### 5.3.2 Merseyside Metropolitan County

The County of Merseyside created in April 1974 encompasses a range of urban areas on both banks of the Mersey estuary. To the east, the county incorporates a substantial proportion of historic Lancashire, including the City of Liverpool and its immediate hinterland, the coastal towns of Bootle, Crosby and Southport, plus the free-standing industrial centre of St Helens. To the west of the river, the Merseyside county area extends across the Wirral peninsula, incorporating the former county boroughs of Birkenhead and Wallasey, ceded from Cheshire. In contrast to Strathclyde, the county incorporated few significant rural districts, its boundary being very tightly drawn around the urbanised area, the new towns of Warrington and Runcorn, to which much of Liverpool's post-war population overspill was directed, being excluded from the new county. Similarly, unlike most other major cities, Liverpool's boundary was not extended to include many surrounding prosperous suburban districts, thereby excluding significant populations from the core city tax base. One of six English Metropolitan Counties, Merseyside has a population of 1.4m (1991 Census) divided between five constituent 'all-purpose' borough councils.

<u>District</u>	<u>Population (1991)</u>	<u>% change 1981-91</u>	<u>% of county total</u>
Knowsley	152091	-13.9	10.8
Liverpool	452450	-13.5	32.3
Sefton	289542	-5.0	20.6
St Helens	178764	-6.9	12.7
Wirral	330795	-4.8	23.6
<b>Merseyside</b>	<b>1403642</b>	<b>-9.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5.4 Merseyside County, resident population by District (1991).

Source Census.

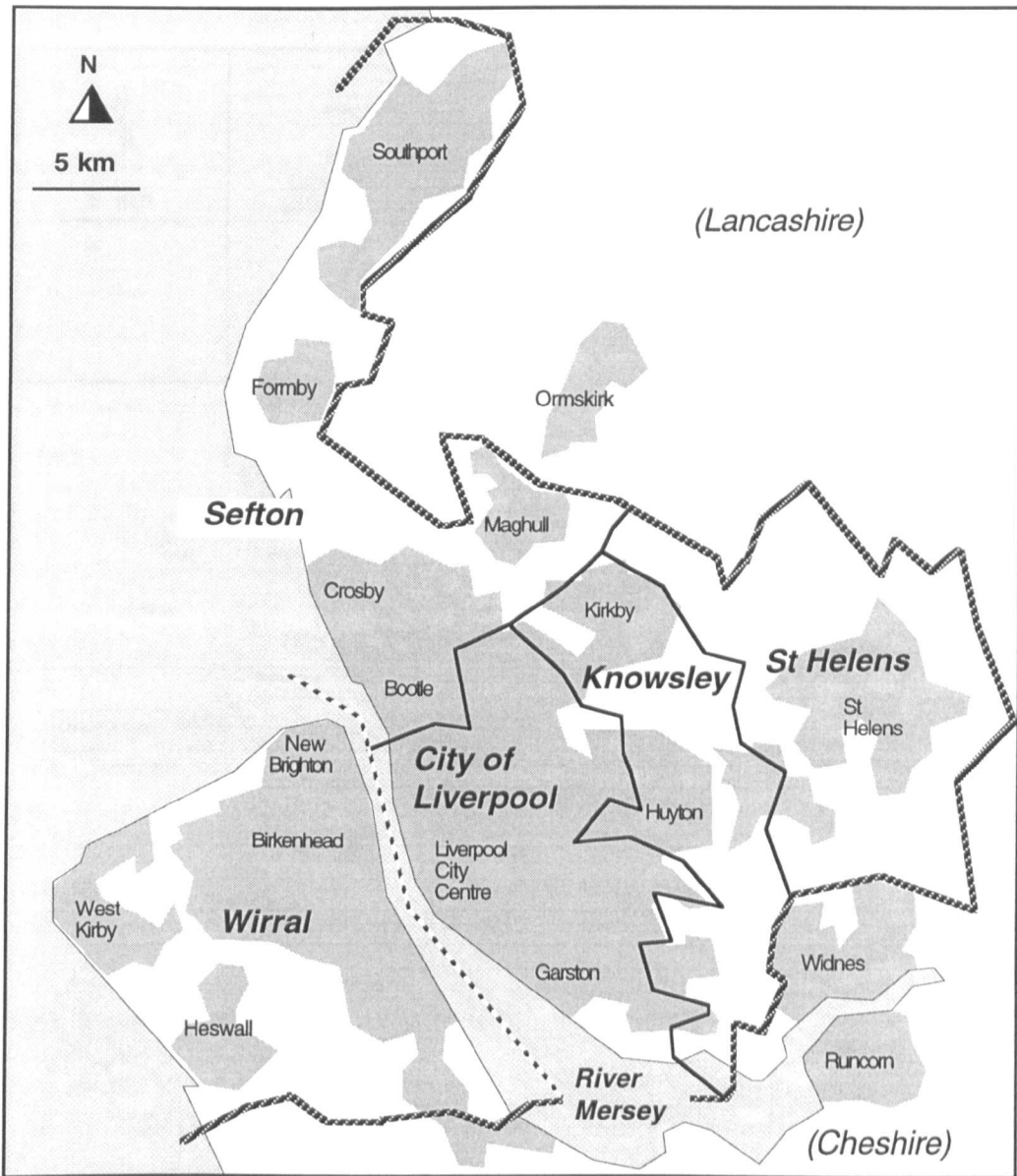


Figure 5.6 Merseyside County, constituent metropolitan borough council areas.



Figure 5.7 Merseyside County area. *Crown Copyright reserved*

On the abolition of Merseyside County Council on 1st April 1986, the continuing district and borough councils inherited many of the outgoing authority's functions. As for Police and Fire, Passenger Transport became the responsibility of a county-wide joint board (Figure 5.7). The new *Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority* drew representation from each of the county's borough councils in proportion to their populations (Table 5.4). Party political composition was proportionate to that of the five constituent authorities in combination.

Although Labour-controlled throughout the study period, both opposition parties were more strongly represented than was the case in Strathclyde, with significant Liberal Democrat support in Liverpool and Sefton Districts, and Conservative representation mainly drawn from the Wirral. From 1990, the Authority and Executive adopted the joint name *Merseytravel*, the PTA/E distinction remaining only for statutory legal and financial purposes.

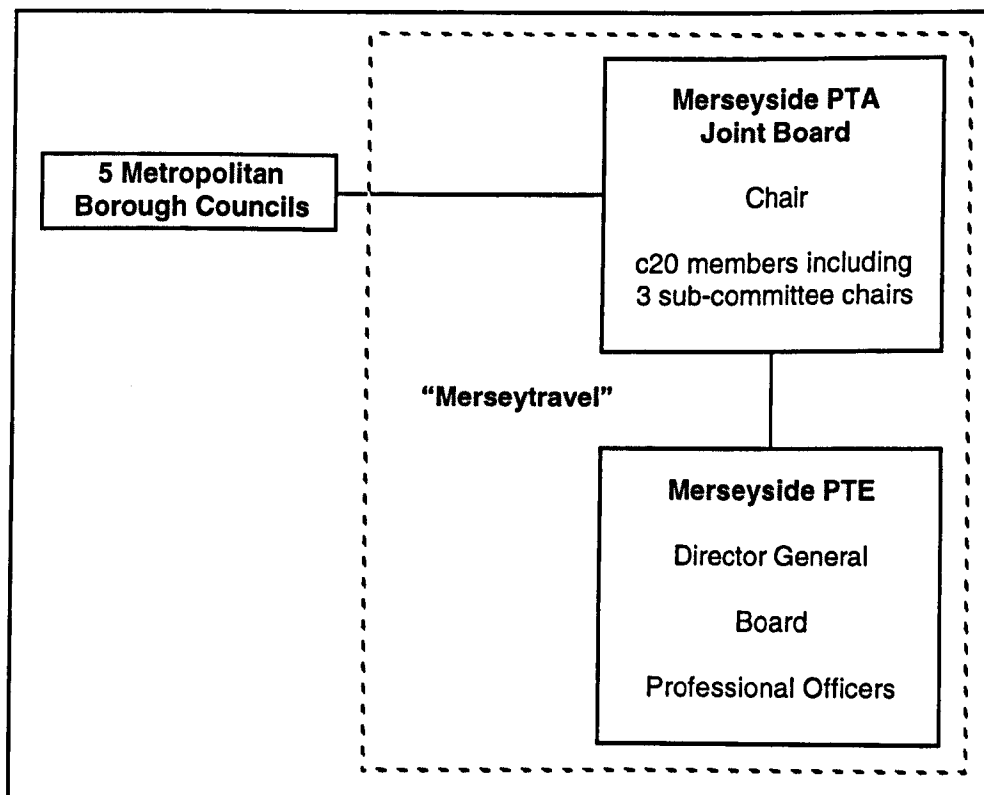


Figure 5.8 Statutory relationship between Merseyside PTA/E and Merseyside metropolitan borough councils.

In addition to the full Authority, which met to consider overall budgetary and legal matters, two Merseytravel sub-committees were designated for General Purposes and Policy & Resources. From 1992, a separate committee was formed exclusively for the consideration of local rail policy. Merseytravel's professional staff were divided into a number of business groups, including those for rail services and strategic planning, each with a manager reporting to the Director General.

As unitary authorities, the county's district councils held responsibilities for planning, including highways management. Statutory consultation exists between these authorities

and Merseytravel, in addition to the direct District representation on the PTA. Since 1991, metropolitan district councils have also been eligible to enter the government's *City Challenge* grant competition, through which local authorities may be given grant assistance for comprehensive redevelopment schemes in inner city neighbourhoods. Both public transport and roads elements are included in eligible projects.

Despite the lack of a single regional government ministry in the model of the Scottish Office, a number of central government agencies are present in Merseyside. The *Government Office for Merseyside (GoM)*, the successor body to the Merseyside Task Force, was one of a number of government regional offices formed to represent the Departments of Employment & Education, Environment, Trade & Industry and Transport in the English provinces. With regards to the transport function, GoM administers the allocation procedure for government grants to the borough councils and Merseytravel for both highways and public transport, under the provisions of the 1980 Local Government and Planning Act (see Appendix). The trend in overall capital allocations for rail development in the county (Table 5.5) differs from Strathclyde in two main respects. First, the low level of grant allocations in the early years of joint board operation illustrates the apportioning of funds to the incurred administrative costs arising from local government reorganisation itself. Second, the lower overall total of capital allocated to Merseytravel for the rail transport function over the 1986-96 period reflects the complete renewal of the Merseyrail electric train fleet in the late 1970s, in contrast to the significant Strathclyde rolling stock renewals which took place after 1986. The tailing-off of investment after 1993/94 reflects the similar situation in Strathclyde following the restructuring of the rail industry in advance of its subsequent privatisation.

Year	85/6	86/7	87/8	88/9	89/90	90/1	91/2	92/3	93/4	94/5	95/6
£m	0.8	0.2	0.7	2.9	5.9	8.1	9.3	13.9	12.4	4.3	2.0

Table 5.5 Merseytravel rail capital consents, 1985/86 - 1995/96.

Source Merseytravel.

The *Merseyside Development Corporation (MDC)* was one of the first wave of Urban Development Corporations established by government in 1981 to encourage redevelopment of derelict inner-city land. Within its overall remit, the MDC has the power to construct or

offer grant assistance to roads and public transport infrastructure projects within its prescribed area (Figure 5.8) in connection with its economic development responsibilities.

Merseyside, in common with Strathclyde, held European Union Objective 2 status as a declining industrial region until early 1993. However, from this date, the region was transferred to the six year-long *Objective 1* regeneration programme, its gross domestic product having fallen below 75% of the EU average. Public transport schemes directed at improving local economic performance qualified for additional assistance from the county's £630m Objective 1 fund, which is administered by a steering committee of public, private and voluntary sector representatives under the auspices of the Government Office for Merseyside. However, Objective 1 grant is limited to a maximum of 50% of the capital cost of any project, and so is dependent on the assembly of a funding package including finance from general local authority transportation allocations, and/or sources such as City Challenge and the MDC.

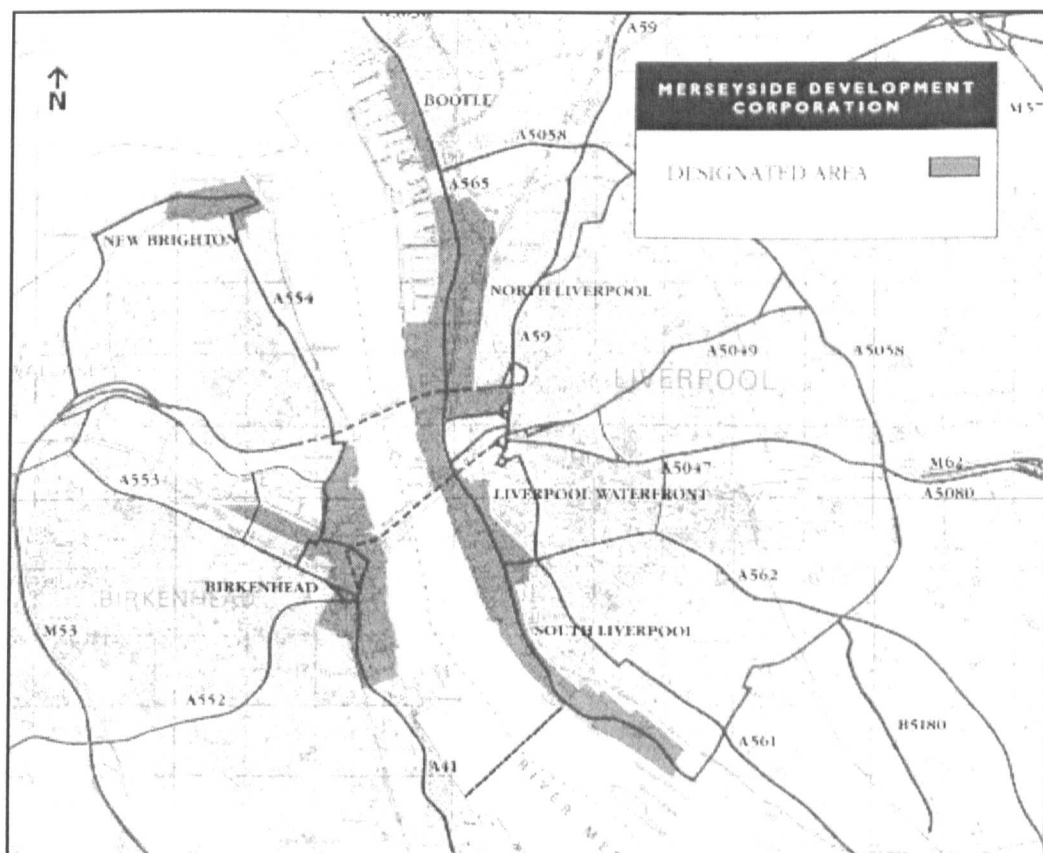


Figure 5.9 Merseyside Development Corporation designated area boundary. *Crown Copyright reserved*

## 5.4 Historic railway development

### 5.4.1 Railway development in Merseyside

The importance of Liverpool as the port gateway for much of northern England's industrial production was reflected in the early construction of railways in the Merseyside area. Holt (1976: 15) describes how the first line, the Liverpool & Manchester Railway (L&M) of 1830, was developed to "solve the pressing problems" brought by the rapid growth in goods and passenger movement between the two cities. Similarly, the second main line, the Chester & Birkenhead Railway of 1840, linked the quays and ferries of the Mersey's western shore with the centres of the south.

Subsequent development focused on the L&M junction and sidings complex at Edge Hill to the east of the city centre. A surface line skirted the built-up area reaching the extended Port of Liverpool docks near Bootle. Similarly, the central quays were connected to Edge Hill, although the construction of two tunnels was required to cross the densely populated inner city.

A third company, the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway (L&Y) constructed lines running north from the city to Wigan (1848), Preston (1849) and Southport (1850). By 1875 however, amalgamation of the local independent companies was well established, leaving three main groups competing for expanding traffic. The Cheshire Lines Committee, incorporating the Great Northern and Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire and Midland companies proposed a cross-city tunnel linking their lines with the northern docks, although this was later rejected on cost grounds in favour of a surface line largely duplicating that of the L&M. However, the extension of the Committee's line into the city centre from Brunswick dock enabled the construction of a new Central Station, which was better situated and more elaborate than competing Lime Street.

In 1866, early plans for what was to become the centrepiece of today's Merseyrail system, the tunnel under the River Mersey itself were laid, although it was to be 20 years until the line was opened as numerous delays were caused by tunnelling difficulties and an unsuccessful flirtation with pneumatic tyre technology. After crossing the river, the two branches of the Mersey Railway as it was simply known, terminated at Birkenhead Park and Rock Ferry, where connection could be made for West Kirby and New Brighton, and for Chester respectively. Indeed, such was the impact of this new corridor that Patmore (1961: 241) claims it "carried the development of specialized suburban railways a stage further", and that its "importance in opening north Wirral to dormitory development cannot be



overstressed". In 1892, the line was extended eastwards under Liverpool from James Street to a new low level terminus under the Cheshire Lines' facility at Central Station.

The following year, Liverpool's reputation for innovation in railway provision was confirmed when another new line unique in Europe was opened. The six mile Liverpool Overhead Railway, with its elevated structure and American-built Westinghouse 'third rail' electric rolling stock clearly illustrated the city's growing affinity with its sister ports on the opposite side of the Atlantic. But the 'Dockers' Umbrella' was not only important for its own sake, but moreover for its pioneering use of electric traction which paved the way for the application of similar technology to conventional lines. The Mersey Railway was first - the cramped steeply-graded confines of the tunnel and its approaches placed heavy demands on the steam engines which responded by producing a highly unpleasant sulphurous environment for passengers. With the problem reaching the extent that patronage and receipts began to fall, the company raised the capital required to electrify the system, and the first electric train entered service in May 1903.

Although the Mersey Railway was the first to be conceived and built primarily for commuter passenger traffic, the conventional lines on the Lancashire side of the river were quickly assuming a similar role:

the rapidly increasing suburban traffic was for the most part being handled by lines which also had to deal with other types of traffic. One method of increasing line capacity without the construction of new lines was by electrification.

Patmore (1961: 242).

Consequently, the L&Y's routes north from the city to Southport and Ormskirk were converted to electric traction between 1904 and 1913. Halsall (1985: 79) describes how "intentions were to continue electrification from Ormskirk to Burscough and Southport, thus giving a Liverpool to Southport loop, (but) were frustrated by the onset of war in 1914". Indeed, this project was never realised, but remains a realistic ambition even today (see 10.2.2).

Thus, "by 1912, the railway network on Merseyside had reached its maximum extent" (Patmore 1961: 242), the resulting "series of radial lines away from city centre termini with later 'belt' lines though the inner and mid suburbs as typical of large British cities" (Halsall, 1985: 77). Development between the wars was limited, the major innovation being

the electrification of the West Kirby and New Brighton lines giving through electric services from Liverpool in 1938.

Post-war improvement schemes for Merseyside's railways returned to the possibility of integrating the network through the connection of the three main line termini, an idea first proposed as early as the 1850s (Halsall, 1985). The first real support for such a proposal came from British Rail in 1962, reinforced by Liverpool Corporation who regarded the scheme "as a means of saving expensive road construction" (Halsall, 1985: 79). A study team was assembled drawing representation from BR and each local authority in the Merseyside area to review the conurbation's future transport needs. The outcome, the *Merseyside Land Use & Transportation Study (MALTS)* report of 1969 concurred with the original BR suggestions and recommended the construction of two new underground lines through the centre of Liverpool. The first, the north-south *Link* was to join the lines entering Exchange station with the old Cheshire Lines route to Garston from Central Station high level, whilst the *Loop* was to form a clockwise one-way circular route linking James Street, Moorfields (on an adjacent site to Exchange), Lime Street and Liverpool Central stations. Interchange between Loop and Link services was to be available at Moorfields and Central, and with InterCity and local services to the east at Lime Street. Capacity in the Mersey Tunnel section was to be increased by the provision of a new underground burrowing junction where the two branches of the line met at Birkenhead's Hamilton Square station, so that Wirral-bound trains could access either branch without crossing the path of those travelling in the opposite direction. Allowance for the future integration of the eastern City Line routes into the new system was made by safeguarding the section of the disused Wapping tunnel from south of Central Station to Edge Hill. However, the implementation of the Beeching Report recommendations saw the withdrawal of several passenger services from the Merseyside network, the circle branch from Walton to Hunts Cross via West Derby and Gateacre forming the most notable example.

After industrial relations disputes and tunnelling difficulties, mirroring those experienced during the construction of the original Mersey Railway, the first of the package of improvements to open, which had by this time been branded together for the first time under the *Merseyrail* banner, was the new *Northern Line* service from Central Station to Southport, Ormskirk and the newly electrified Kirkby branch via the Link, opened for passenger service on May 2nd 1977. The Loop service, or *Wirral Line*, was opened one week later, calling initially at James Street and Central stations. By January 1978, the project was complete, with the remaining Wirral Line stations at Moorfields and Lime Street open, and the Kirkby Northern Line services extended over the newly electrified route to Garston,

although the American-built 1930s rolling stock remained in service until October that year. The level of relief in finally achieving the completion of the project was obvious:

Despite the difficulties, passenger monitoring counts have proved encouraging and indicated that overall ridership at the Liverpool City Centre stations increased by 21% from March 1977 to March 1978.

Merseyside PTA/E (1978: 8).

The project cost totalled £50m and provided "what is now the focus of Merseyside's public transport system" (Halsall, 1985: 82).

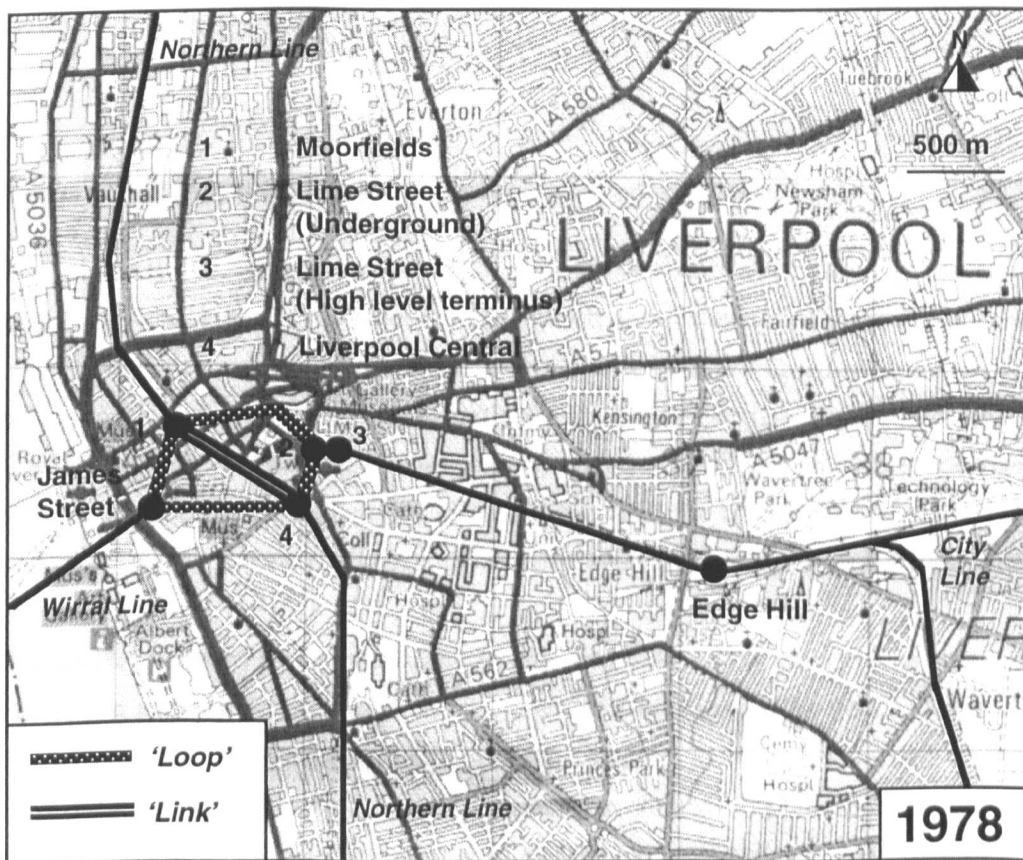
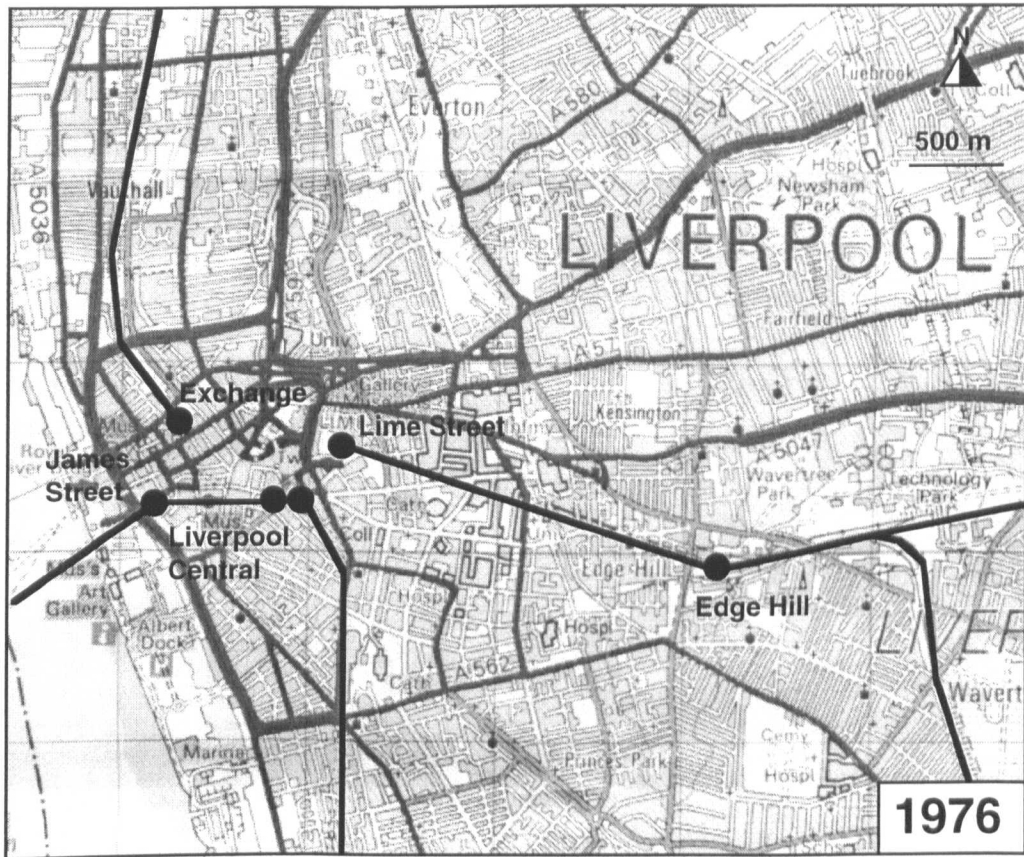


Figure 5.10 The 1978 Merseyrail system. Crown copyright reserved



Figure 5.11 Electric Wirral Line train at Moorfields station on Liverpool Loop.  
*Merseytravel*

#### 5.4.2 Railway development in Strathclyde

As in Merseyside, early development of Strathclyde's railways centred on the consolidation of the numerous small railway companies which each constructed their own discrete routes. After 1865, three principal groupings emerged. The first, the Caledonian Railway, extended to the south and east of the city around the main Anglo-Scottish trunk route, which reached Carlisle in 1848. The second major company was the North British, which was based on the Edinburgh & Glasgow Railway of 1842, and the third the Glasgow & South Western, which encompassed the routes to Paisley, the Clyde Coast, Ayrshire and Carlisle via Dumfries.

Similarly, the successive extensions to the riverside docks provided a major focus for continued railway development in Glasgow as in Liverpool. As port activity in Glasgow continued to gravitate westwards, the densely developed city centre became an increasingly significant impediment to rail access. However, in contrast to Liverpool, the development of circumferential belt lines for freight traffic was augmented by the construction of the 'low level' City & District subsurface line, from Partick in the west through Queen Street station in the city centre to Parkhead in the east, by the North British Railway. In addition to the

improved access for freight to the western docks, the possibilities afforded by the improved city centre penetration of new routes for suburban passenger traffic were such that in itself the line "secured for the north bank a comprehensive system of urban railways" (Thomas, 1971: 208).

In response to the increasing power of the Caledonian Railway, a strategic alliance between the Glasgow & South Western and North British companies was formed leading to the construction of the Glasgow City Union Railway. The City Union line formed a link between the complementary northern and southern networks of the two companies at College and Shields Road respectively, via a new bridge over the River Clyde. In addition, a new shared terminus of considerable architectural merit was constructed in the heart of the city centre at St Enoch in order to compete with the Caledonian's newly-opened Central Station on Gordon Street, which replaced their relatively isolated original Bridge Street terminus.

As in Merseyside, one significant route was developed primarily for suburban passenger use - the Cathcart District Railway of 1880 was conceived by an independent company but was absorbed by the Caledonian, taking advantage of the increasing capacity available at the expanding Central Station. Built largely in advance of Glasgow's new southern suburbs themselves, the line's surface level route reduced construction costs in comparison to the sub-surface north bank line.

Also at this time, the Caledonian secured the development of a rival to the NB's City & District low level line. The Glasgow Central & Suburban Railway ran parallel with the CG&D, passing through Central station in an attempt to attract a share of the lucrative north bank suburban traffic and dock freight. Originally conceived as an elevated line after the Liverpool Overhead Railway (Kellett, 1969), the costs of property acquisition necessitated the change to a sub-surface design. The line ran mostly in tunnel for over 6 miles from Dalmarnock in the east to Maryhill, with intermediate stations at Bridgeton, Glasgow Green, Glasgow Cross, Central, Anderston, Stobcross, Kelvinbridge, Botanic Gardens, and Kirklee. When opened in 1896, the demand generated by the new line was such that over 260 trains per day ran through the central section.

In 1896, the wholly separate cable-operated Glasgow Underground line serving 15 stations in the city centre and western docks area of the city was opened to passengers. Although physically divorced from the rest of the city's railway network, the *Subway* quickly assumed an important role, particularly in providing a further river crossing between Partick and Govan (Wright & Maclean, 1997).

Thomas (1971) claims that by turn of the century, Glasgow had assembled a "plethora" of railway facilities, with excellent coverage of the city centre and developing West End area afforded by the two parallel low level lines. However, the inner urban railways faced fierce competition from the city's tramways. Electrification of the trams commenced in 1898, four years after the City Corporation assumed control, with many shorter trips quickly switching to the comfort of the new system which reached into the suburbs and offered a swift, clean and cheap service at frequencies up to ten times higher than some of the competing railways.

Whereas many railways in Liverpool followed the Mersey Railway's lead in quickly adopting electric traction to raise the speed and quality of the service offered, in Glasgow, many routes within the inner city simply capitulated to the rise of the tram, with some services and stations closing as early as 1902. With the tramway system extending far out from the city to Paisley and the shores of Loch Lomond in the west, and to the Lanarkshire towns to the east, railway development stagnated and the system began to wither to such an extent that, by the onset of the Second World War, even costly and well-located stations such as those on the Kirklee branch of the Central underground system were shut. Indeed, by 1949, the trams had reduced the Caledonian routes' traffic to 4.2 million passengers per year, down from 9.8m in 1913 (Millar 1985). Similarly, competition from the trams delayed the promotion of the City Corporation's plan to extend the Subway beyond the first western circle, although electric services were introduced in 1935. Further delayed by the Second World War, plans for an eastern circle and north-south Subway line from Robroyston to King's Park were abandoned in favour of upgrading the existing routes of the newly-nationalised British Railways (Wright & Maclean, 1997).

Alongside the proposals for population overspill and comprehensive redevelopment, the *Clyde Valley Regional Plan* of 1949 also formed the basis for a wide-ranging reappraisal of the railway network within Strathclyde subsequently developed by British Rail. Recognition that the region's comprehensive legacy of railway infrastructure left the rail mode well placed to play a constructive role in future passenger transport provision prompted the decision to completely re-equip the core Queen Street low level line with electric trains and modern colour light signalling. When the new service began permanent operation in 1961, patronage increased by over 300% on the new electric services linking Helensburgh, Balloch and Milngavie in the west with Bridgeton, Springburn and Airdrie in the east (Thomas 1971).

The later 1962 conversion to electric working of the Cathcart Circle and its branches attracted less growth in passenger traffic. The failure to connect the new southern overspill

housing estate of Castlemilk to the railway, the continued termination of the line at Central Station as opposed to the greater number of city centre destinations offered by the through low level lines, and the rapid rise in car ownership levels in the more prosperous south side suburbs around the circle together restricted patronage gains as compared to those achieved on the north bank system, although these still amounted to more than a doubling of passengers travelling (Millar, 1985). However, modernisation continued with the extension of electrification to the south bank lines from Glasgow to Wemyss Bay and Gourock via Paisley in 1967, and to Lanark as part of the West Coast Mainline scheme completed in 1974.

These *Blue Train* developments, as they became known after the striking new livery adopted, also contributed to the closure of the parallel Central low level line, which was no match for the clean modern environment of the revitalised Queen Street system, and had in any case been in decline ever since the loss of some of its catchment stations 20 years earlier. The retrenchment of the network was continued in the Beeching era, as both the Buchanan Street and St Enoch terminal stations were closed. In contrast to Abercrombie's preference for the retention of Central and St Enoch, which between them were capable of handling both north- and south-bound traffic and had almost adjacent prime locations and interchange with the underground, Beeching proposed the closure of Buchanan Street, which was widely recognised as both cramped and inaccessible, and St Enoch, concentrating traffic at Central and Queen Street.

No sooner had the Central low level line been closed than attention turned to schemes for its re-opening and modernisation. In 1968, Glasgow City Corporation initiated the *Greater Glasgow Transportation Study (GGTS)*, which was designed to integrate previous highways plans with public transport improvements in a coherent, achievable strategy. The Greater Glasgow PTE inherited the subsidiary railway plan produced from GGTS research, published in 1974 as *Clyderail* (British Railways Board, 1974). The *Clyderail* strategy proposed a two stage development: phase one constituted the reopening and electrification of the Central low level route from Partick to Rutherglen, with new stations at Stobcross (later called Finnieston), Anderston, Central, Argyle Street, Trongate and Bridgeton. Partickhill station was to be re-sited to give direct interchange with the Underground, and a burrowing junction similar to that at Birkenhead was to be installed where the new route met the Queen Street line. Phase two was to further improve the Queen Street system - a new sub-surface station was to be built at Blythswood within the city's developing office and financial quarter, and a tunnelled link through the site of the old North British Bridgeton Central Station would give trains from Lanarkshire the choice of both low level lines through the city centre. The final part of phase two was the scheme known as the *St*



*John's Link.* This involved the re-activation of the old cross-river Glasgow City Union route which had been taken out of passenger use since the closure of St Enoch in 1968, together with a connecting curve at the site of College goods station, giving access to the westbound Queen Street electric low level line to south side trains.

The Clyderail scheme won only partial government approval - grant was offered for phase one of the works minus Trongate station, although the design process for phase two was included. As is described in subsequent chapters, the St John's Link scheme, and its modern equivalent, *CrossRail*, have remained at the centre of the rail development policy debate in Strathclyde throughout the intervening period.

The final phase one scheme, known as the *Argyle Line* after the thoroughfare under which the central section of the line passed, was opened to passengers on November 5th 1979. Significantly, the results of the Transport Research Laboratory's *Glasgow Rail Impact Study* commissioned by BR to investigate the effects of the line re-opening highlighted one of the major dilemmas surrounding the aspirations of urban rail investment addressed in Chapter 2. Although overall rail patronage was up 27% by March, this was only around half the expected figure, and only 19% of these new passengers were former motorists - the vast majority had switched from the bus. The £15m Argyle Line scheme therefore failed to make a significant contribution to reducing use of the private car in Glasgow, and indeed, the overall benefits brought by the scheme were "not high enough to produce what the TRRL termed a positive social rate of return" (Millar, 1985: 49).

In parallel with the Clyderail strategy for developing the heavy rail network, a project to modernise the Glasgow Underground had been developing, first under the auspices of the City Corporation's transport department, and after local government reform in 1975, by the new GGPTC. The concept of modernisation gathered "a strong sense of urgency...., as the essentially Victorian Underground was showing signs of advanced age, and could not be depended on to survive for an indefinite period" (Millar, 1985: 50). The choice for the future of the system was "to close it.... or to completely modernise it" (SRC 1987a: 125).

With 75% central government infrastructure grant approved for the project in 1974, the future of the Subway was secured, and despite protracted engineering difficulties, the modernised system with its new rolling stock, expanded stations and improved interchange with the heavy rail system at Buchanan Street/Queen Street and Partick opened in April 1980. To make matters worse, patronage levels on the new system after opening were 9m in the first year - an increase of 2m on those before modernisation but still only slightly more than one third of the 24m per annum envisaged in the original proposals. The fears of those

who claimed the system's catchment had been rendered insufficient by shifts in the city's population distribution had been proven, at least partially, correct.

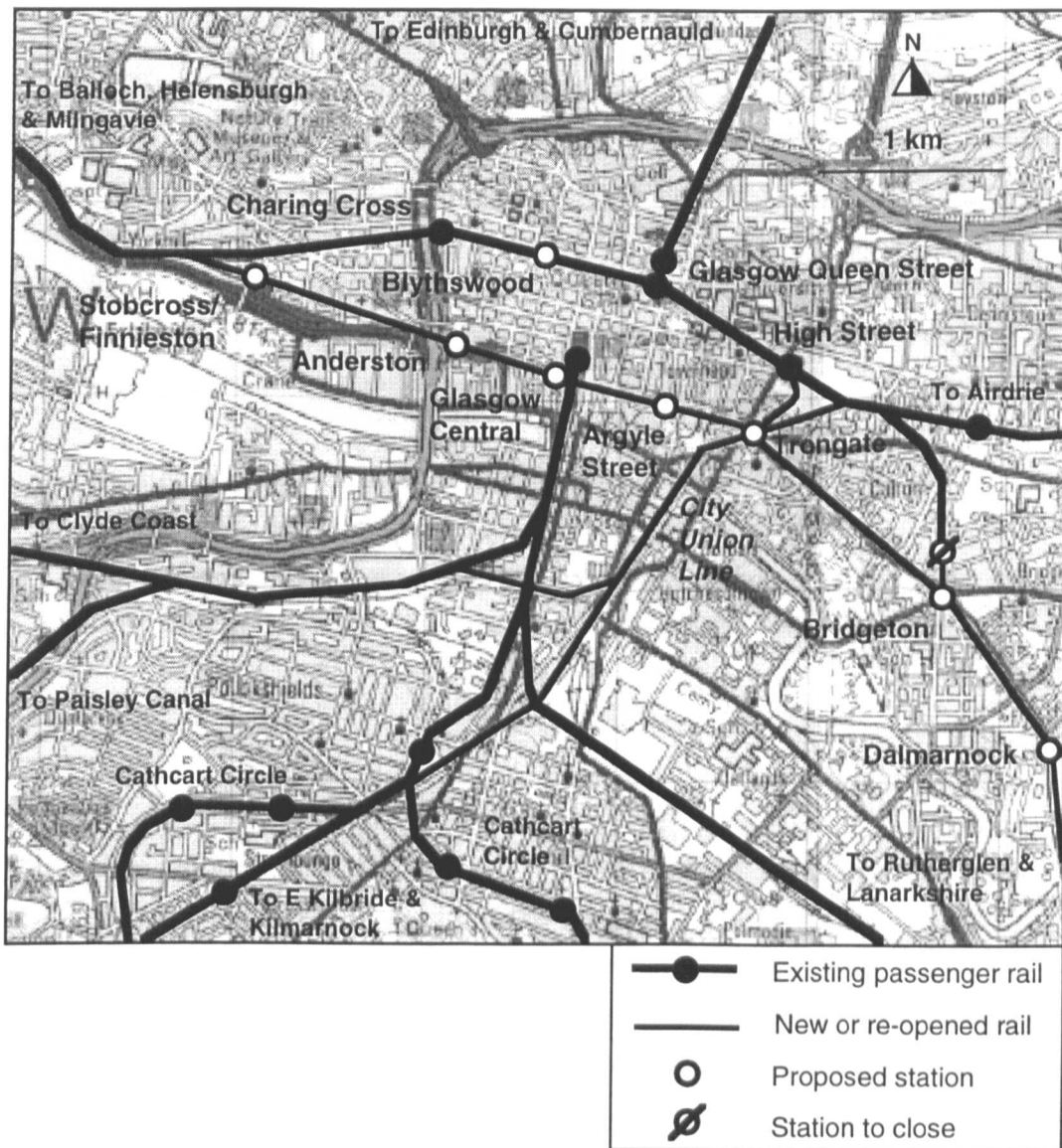


Figure 5.12 The *Clyderail* proposals.

Source British Railways Board (1974). *Crown Copyright reserved*

#### 5.4.3 1986 network summary

The disappointing early performance of the modernised Underground and the Argyle line was only one of the problems to beset the Strathclyde rail network in the early 1980s. With total patronage falling by 10% per annum between 1980/81 and 82/83, the Regional Council began to seriously consider the possibility of route closures as a means to save money. In 1982,

the Council voted to withdraw Section 20 support from the most expensive line, that from Glasgow to Kilmacolm in Renfrewshire via Paisley Canal, a course of action that had first been proposed by the PTE as early as 1976, but strongly resisted by local interests (Millar, 1985).

However, the financial question mark spread over much of the diesel operated network, which suffered from a vicious circle of aged rolling stock, poor operating efficiency and decline in passenger numbers. In addition, the 1980 Transport Act and the 1981 Public Passenger Vehicles Act were to usher in the first phase of bus deregulation (see 2.2.4), whereby independent operators could introduce limited stop express bus services over distances exceeding 30 miles. Therefore, in 1983, the Regional Council decided that a thorough review of the local rail network was necessary to address these problems:

The Regional Council decided to embark on a review of the Section 20 services in the light of decreasing cash limits imposed by central government on capital expenditure, reductions in the level of rate support grant, increasing Section 20 claims, the need for investment in the Section 20 network and the growing level of bus competition.

Strathclyde Regional Council (1987a: 5).

The outcome of the 1983 *Rail Review* was a proactive strategy of capital investment aimed at increasing traffic and reducing future running costs. Investment in modern signalling equipment and refurbishment of rolling stock was combined with the introduction of more flexible working patterns including driver-only operated trains. The most significant infrastructure development arising from the proposals was the electrification of the lines from Paisley to Ardrossan, Ayr and Largs at a cost of £43m. However, no concrete plans for the extension of the Glasgow Underground were advanced at any time during the study period due to a variety of factors, including the unique gauge of the existing tunnels and rolling stock (which are incompatible with mainline railways), the unsuitability of the trains for surface operation, and the prohibitively high cost of new urban tunnelling. Therefore, the Subway does not figure significantly in the following expositions of the rail transport policy development process in Strathclyde.

In contrast, a more positive picture emerged in Merseyside, patronage remaining at the higher levels achieved following the completion of the Loop and Link works. During the early 1980s, this investment was capitalised upon by the completion of the electric rolling

stock renewal programme and the extension of electrification of the Wirral Line from Rock Ferry to the county boundary at Hooton in September 1985, at a cost of £4.9m.

The following maps and tables summarise the principal characteristics of each rail network at the commencement of the study time period on April 1st 1986.

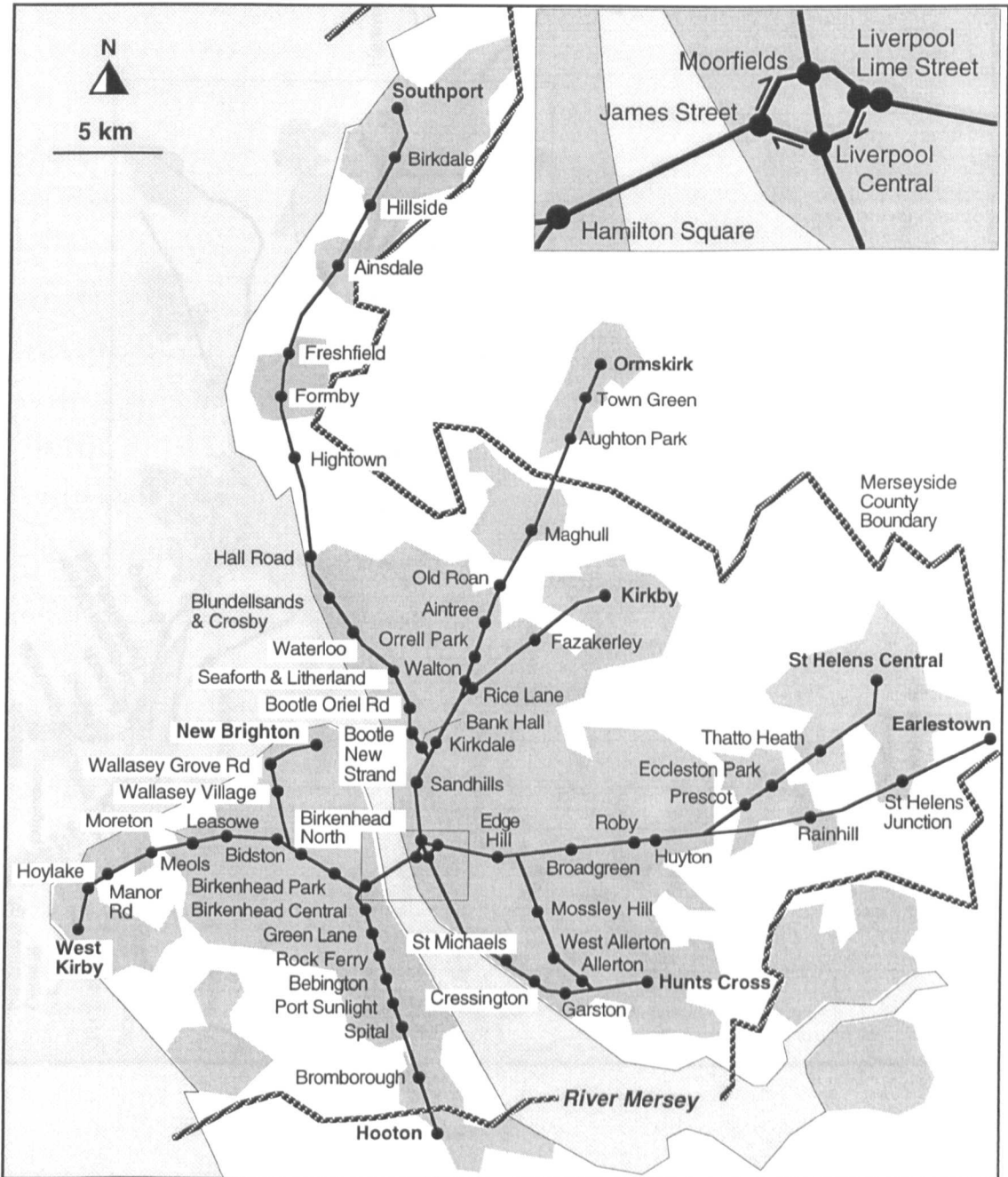


Figure 5.13 Merseyside Section 20 supported local rail network, 1986.

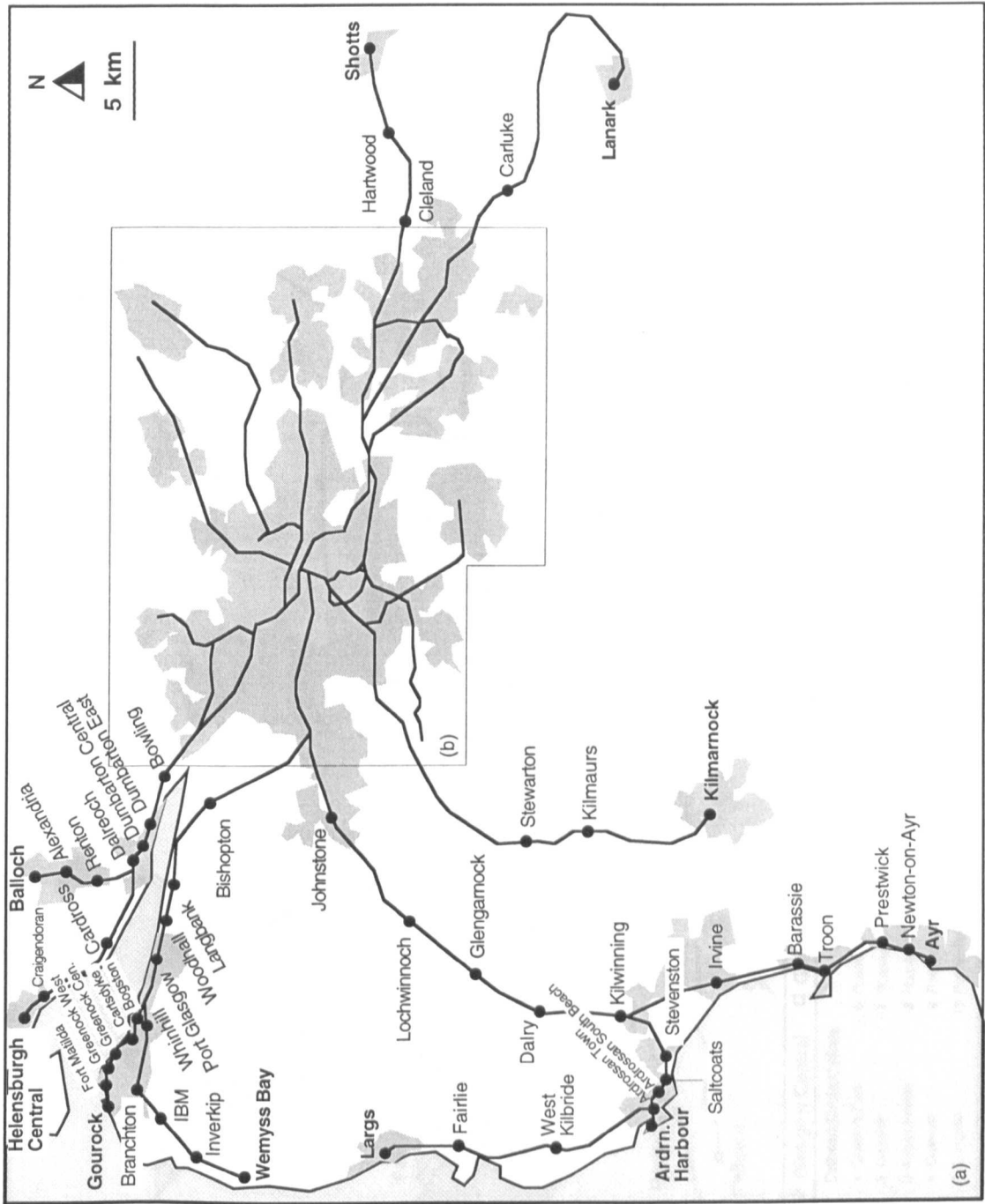


Figure 5.14 Strathclyde Section 20 supported local rail network, 1986; (a) Strathclyde.

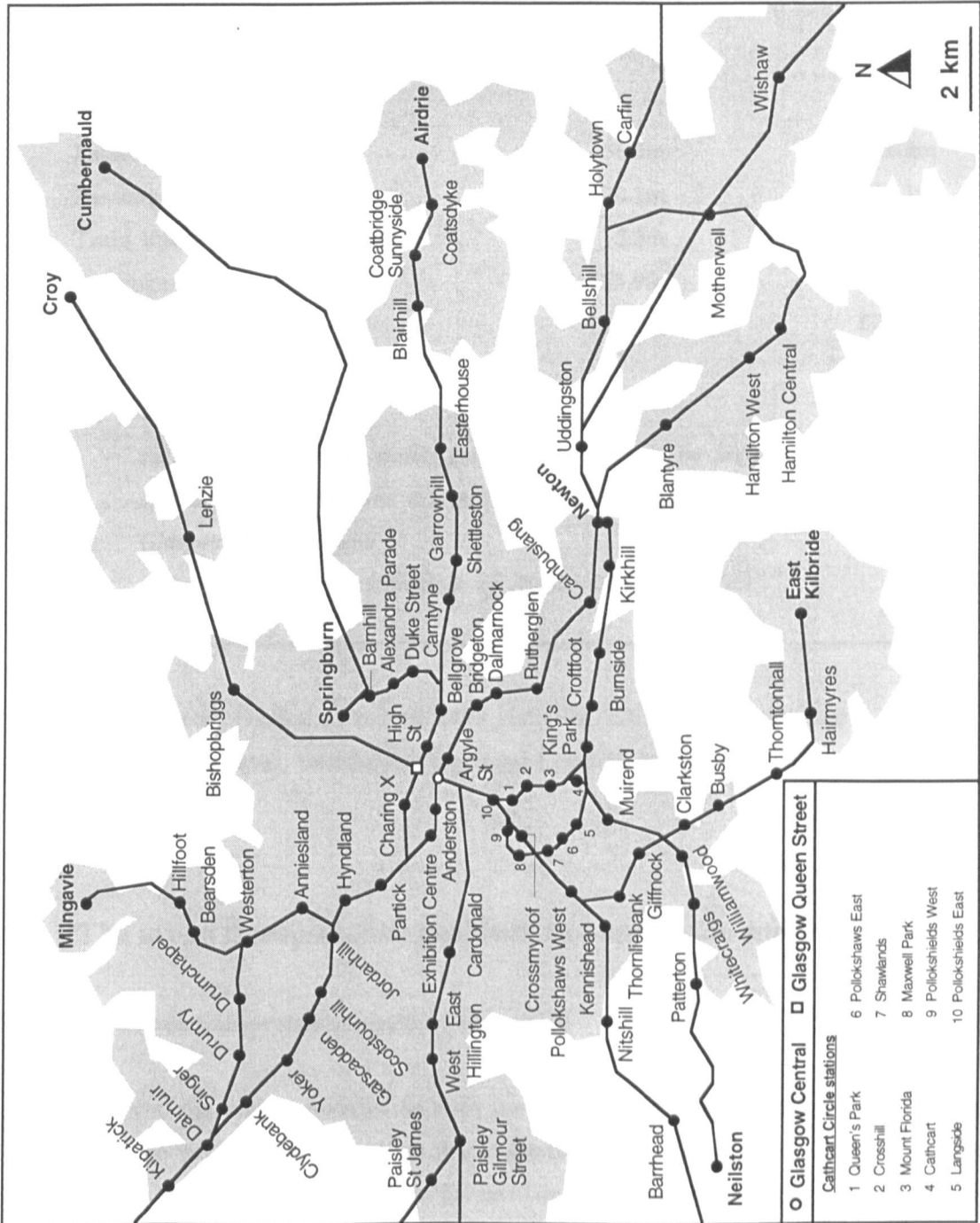


Figure 5.14 Strathclyde Section 20 supported local rail network, 1986; (b) Clydeside insert.

	Merseyside*	Strathclyde†
Supported route kilometres	121	435
% electrified	75%	78%‡
No. of supported stations	71	141
Passenger journeys	56.5m	40.4m
Passenger kilometres	490.1m	573.1m
Train kilometres	5.3m	15.0m
Passenger revenue	£15.9m	£23.0m
PTE subsidy	£13.6m	£27.6m

\* *excludes four stations within county not supported by Section 20*

† *excludes fifteen stations within Region not supported by Section 20 and Glasgow Underground*

‡ *includes ongoing electrification of Ayrshire lines (97 km)*

Table 5.6 Selected Section 20 rail network statistics, 1985/86 financial year.

Source Merseytravel, Strathclyde Regional Council, Strathclyde PTE.

## 5.5 'The urban transportation problem' in Merseyside and Strathclyde

### 5.5.1 'The urban transportation problem' in practice

In many ways, the real experience of both the Merseyside and Strathclyde study regions following 1986 profoundly illustrates the impacts of 'the urban transportation problem' derived from the continued rise of the private car described in Chapter 2. In Strathclyde, continued population shifts from inner Glasgow to dormitory suburbs such as Bearsden and Newton Mearns, and to Cumbernauld and East Kilbride new towns, coupled with accelerating development of Glasgow city centre as a service location, ensured that radial commuting flows grew substantially despite substantial continuing decline in traditional employment. As counterurbanisation from inner Glasgow continued (see 5.3.1), those in work increasingly travelled by car and over longer distances, and many roads became choked: the average annual growth on roads entering the Clydeside conurbation reached 12% in the

early 1990s, with peak traffic levels on sections of the M8 motorway through the city centre reaching 56,000 vehicles per hour, twice the road's design load (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1992). In response to these trends, the major road construction schemes undertaken by Strathclyde after 1986, such as the M77 and M80 extensions (see Figure 5.15 below), focused on arterial relief roads and bypasses of those sections of historic surface streets which continued to form part of the principal road network.

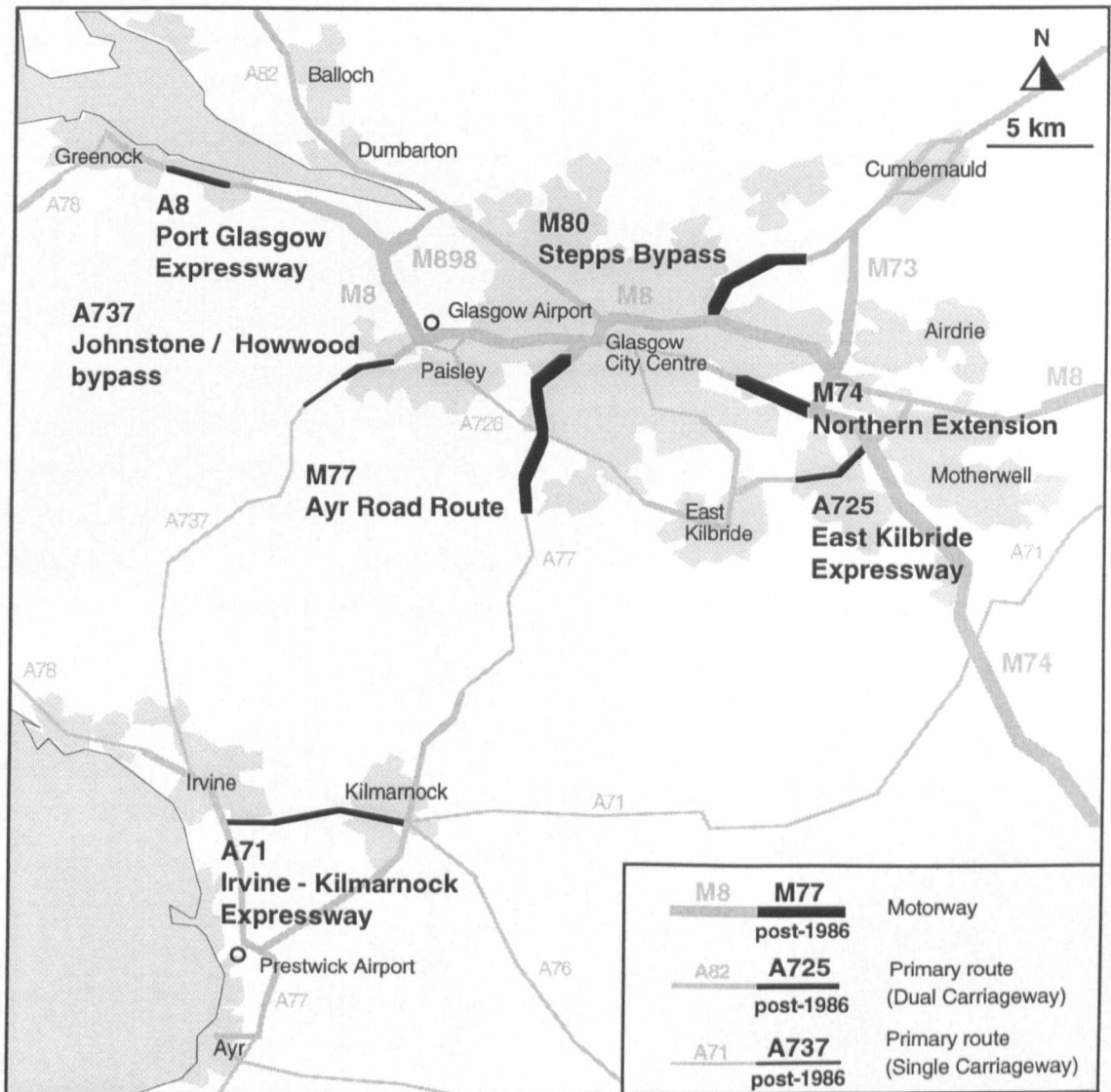


Figure 5.15 Major road infrastructure projects in Strathclyde, 1986 - 96.

Equally, the development of new employment opportunities in the new towns themselves, and around Glasgow Airport to the west of the city, brought more complex patterns of mobility which further contributed to traffic congestion, particularly on the region's



principal road artery, the M8. However, these increases in car-based mobility within Strathclyde obscured the undercurrent of worsening access polarisation. Car ownership in Glasgow's most deprived inner city areas and four main peripheral housing estates remained as low as 165 vehicles per 1000 population in 1991, around 40% of the national average (Strathclyde PTE, 1993). Furthermore, increasing congestion levels impacted on bus journey times to the estates: for example, the 35-40 minute average journey time for the 10km trip from the city centre to Easterhouse represents an average speed of only 15km/hr. Significantly, the lack of a rail alternative to the bus in these areas was highlighted by the 13% decline in Strathclyde bus patronage between 1986 and 1996, and by rates of growth of car ownership in the four estates which also reached 13% per annum by 1996, twice the UK average (Strathclyde PTE, 1993).

A similar picture of the impact of road traffic emerges in Merseyside, where annual increases in traffic reached 9% in advance of the 1991-92 recession (Merseytravel, 1993). As in Strathclyde, these increases were concentrated in the radial flows to the more prosperous dormitory suburbs. However, as only two major sections of new (circumferential) road were constructed in Merseyside after 1986 (see Figure 5.15 below), congestion effects remained particularly severe at pinch points such as those at each end of the two Mersey Tunnels linking Liverpool with the Wirral, the eastern corridor from Liverpool city centre to the M62 motorway and developing Warrington new town, and the northern corridors connecting the city to the established commuter settlements of Crosby, Maghull, Ormskirk and Southport.

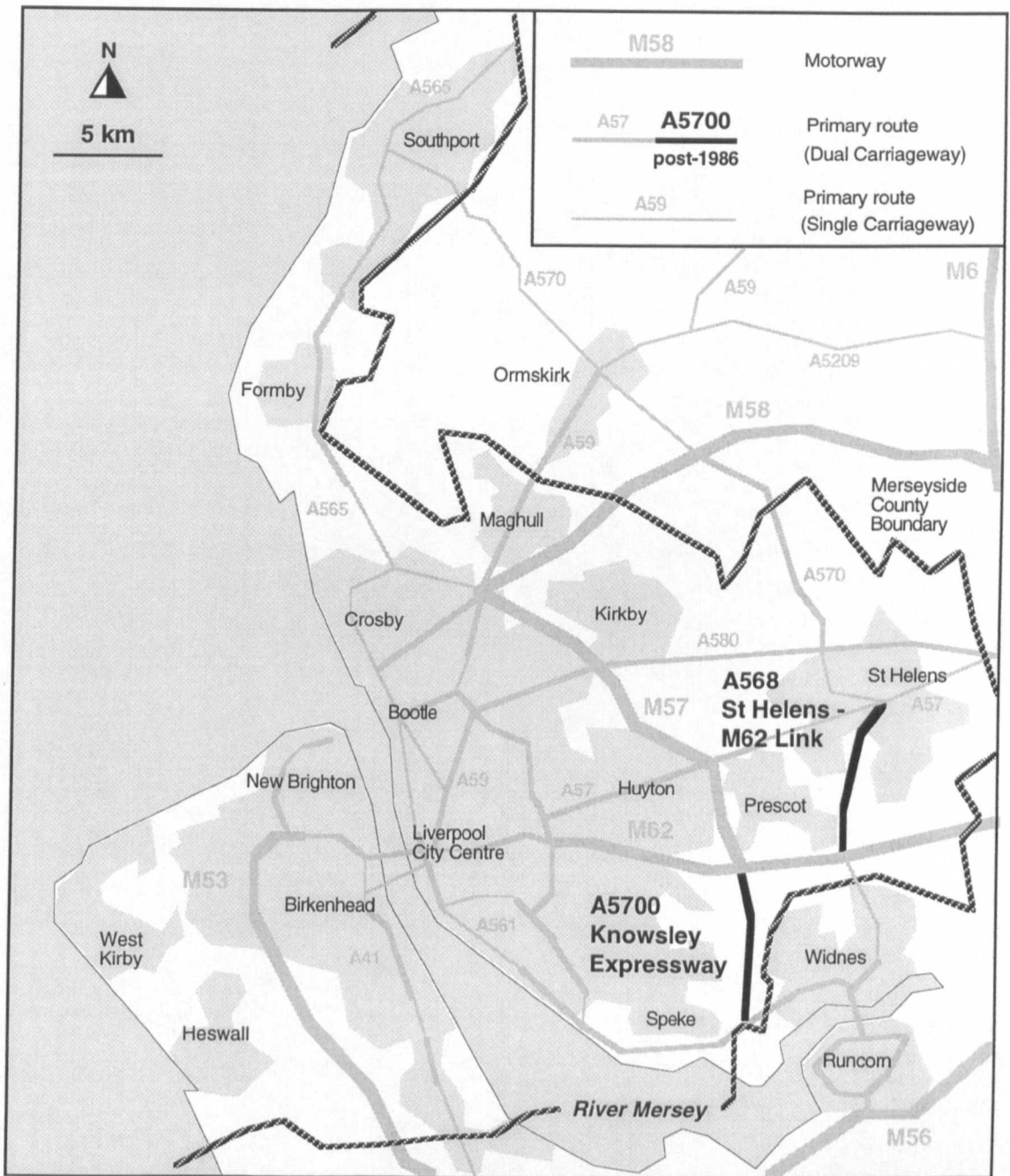


Figure 5.16 Major road infrastructure projects in Merseyside, 1986 - 96.

Liverpool's lack of an inner distributor motorway in the model of Glasgow's M8 also increased the relative stress on inner surface streets of the city centre and its surroundings, which further affected bus reliability and journey times. Bus travel times to central Liverpool from the inner city districts in which the majority of the 70% of Merseyside's population outwith walking distance of a Merseyrail station (Merseytravel, 1993b) live, showed the greatest relative increase in the county. Significantly, the 'captivity' of many communities to the bus was revealed by the *Merseyside Household Survey*, which showed

that only 4% of bus passengers could have made their journey by an alternative form of transport in 1992/93.

Despite the increasing dominance of the car, rail remained a crucial component of overall local urban transport provision in both areas for each of the economic, social, educational, recreational and cultural trip purposes described by Daniels & Warnes (1980) (see 2.2.2). Although rail travel made a relatively low contribution to overall modal share at around 10% of all trips, the legacy of strong radial network coverage left the mode particularly well placed to accommodate core arterial trip patterns, with 28% and 36% of peak public transport trips to Liverpool and Glasgow city centres respectively made by train in 1991/2 (Merseytravel, 1993; Strathclyde PTE, 1993). The importance of rail as a contribution to wider local transport provision is largely based on the centrality of these radial trip flows to the economic and social vitality of Glasgow and Liverpool and their urban hinterlands. Both local rail networks played a vital economic development role in opening up a wider labour market for the core cities, which represented 330,000 and 190,000 jobs in each city in 1996 respectively (ONS, 1998; Liverpool City Council Central Policy Unit, 1998), and by maximising the catchment of the critical economic growth sectors of retailing, tertiary education (over 80,000 student places in each city), and cultural activity / tourism which remained concentrated in the city centres. Rail's potential to enhance the urban environment through a reduction in levels of congestion and pollution also reflects the continued promotion of both core cities as significant urban tourist and cultural centres. Equally, the trip patterns accommodated by rail transport play an important role in social development. Shorter journey times and freedom from congestion-induced unreliability offered by rail as opposed to the bus widen the scope of city residents' access to the work, educational and other consumption opportunities concentrated in the city centres.

### 5.5.2 Policy options for rail transport development

The available options for local rail transport development can be grouped into two broad categories, *expanding the catchment of the network*, and *integrating layers of the rail network hierarchy*. Expansion of the catchment of the network can be achieved through the provision of new stations on existing lines, the re-opening of passenger stations on disused or freight-only lines, or the construction of wholly-new lines. In several intermediate-size urban regions similar to Merseyside and Strathclyde across Europe, such as Greater Manchester, Nantes and Strasbourg, many new developments have taken the form of surface light rapid transit schemes, which offer improved coverage of rail transport without the substantial capital costs of tunnelling. Improved integration of the different layers of the

urban rail network hierarchy can be achieved through better interchange between longer suburban rail corridors and inner area distributor lines, and through new links which expand cross-city journey opportunities.

It is from the choice of competing schemes within each category of rail network development that tension within the policy process arises, since each project offers a different balance of potential economic and social development benefits. In both Merseyside and Strathclyde, a range of potential projects which address differing aspects of the local urban transport problem existed under each heading.

In Merseyside, rail transport policy-makers were faced with a particular paradox: although the Merseyrail system served only 30% of the county's population, the existing network not only focused on the relatively prosperous communities of the Southport corridor and the Wirral, but was also particularly well located to serve a number of significant inner urban regeneration projects, such as the redevelopment of Birkenhead town centre and the Liverpool Waterfront. Thus, the location of new station developments at these core regeneration sites offered investors the prospect of effective access to highly active labour and consumer markets. However, promotion of such a policy in advance of new stations or line re-opening schemes in other residential districts would only serve to increase the relative transport inequity of the majority of the county's citizens who remained outside the catchment of Merseyrail. Similarly, the location of new LRT routes in Liverpool and its surroundings was likely to prioritise either the provision of enhanced access to inner city areas remote from the existing rail network, such as Everton and Anfield in the north east and Granby and Sefton Park in the south east, or the opportunity for relieving congestion on the city's main arterial routes feeding more prosperous suburbs.

In Strathclyde, where the opportunities for new stations in areas of urban regeneration were less visible, the main areas of conflict between economic and social development aspirations for rail development focused on the wide range of potential line re-opening and LRT schemes. For branch re-openings, potential conflict was evident between projects serving the inner city, and those such as the Larkhall and Kirkintilloch branches, which served outlying areas of the conurbation and exhibited the potential to eliminate a substantial number of lengthy car trips. Tension between competing options for the application of LRT reflected the sharp socio-economic differences between those post-war residential areas which had developed without conventional rail access. Significantly, LRT offered the prospect of extending rail transport access to both Newton Mearns, the fastest growing and one of the most affluent suburbs in the conurbation, and to each of Glasgow's four main peripheral estates, which were among the most deprived in the country. Policy-makers were required to balance the

compelling demands to reduce the levels of deprivation and social exclusion suffered by communities of Castlemilk, Drumchapel, Easterhouse and Pollok, with the potential to significantly reduce car use on one of the city's busiest commuting corridors and thereby maintain the city centre's position as the Strathclyde's prime shopping and leisure centre in line with Regional Council policy.

Several other potential policy strategies were common to both areas. The various possible forms of the proposed rail transport 'fixed links' to both Glasgow and Liverpool airports arose as significant areas of policy debate. Similarly, the ways in which better integration between the various components of each local rail network could be achieved formed a major point of contention. In Strathclyde, the *CrossRail* scheme, which claimed improved integration of several Strathclyde rail routes, permitting a wider range of direct cross-Glasgow journeys by diverting services away from terminal stations, evolved to become one of the investment proposals most hotly contested between differing members of the local policy regime, who emphasised either the potential positive or negative impacts of the proposals. Similarly, ending the continued isolation of the *Merseyrail City Line* from the core underground system in Liverpool city centre through a new link line formed a major development aspiration in Merseyside.

The following chapter highlights how the prevailing policy cultures of each study area contributed to the balance struck between social and economic development goals for rail transport investment by each study area policy regime. Subsequently, indicative models of the structure and operation of the local rail transport policy regime in each area are constructed, in advance of the subsequent case studies, which analyse how the tension between these various conflicting policy options was resolved in practice through policy bargaining within the regimes.

## **6 Perceptions of policy-making**

### **6.1 Introduction**

#### **6.1.1 Rail transport policy environments**

### **6.2 Strategic perceptions in Strathclyde**

#### **6.2.1 Strategic rail policy objectives**

#### **6.2.2 Personal rail transport policy predispositions**

#### **6.2.3 Perceptions of the policy process**

### **6.3 Strategic perceptions in Merseyside**

#### **6.3.1 Strategic rail policy objectives**

#### **6.3.2 Personal rail transport policy predispositions**

#### **6.3.3 Perceptions of the policy process**

### **6.4 Summary**

#### **6.4.1 Characteristics of the rail transport policy regimes in Merseyside and Strathclyde**

## 6.1 Introduction

### 6.1.1 Rail transport policy environments

This chapter seeks to illustrate the strategic policy environments which inform the development of the particular rail transport policies detailed in the subsequent case studies. First, the positioning of the stated strategic policy objectives of Merseytravel and Strathclyde Regional Council with respect to the potential economic and social development objectives of rail transport investment is analysed. Strong adherence amongst regime members to the objectives of the Regional Council's *Social Strategy* in Strathclyde, and to the theme of urban regeneration in Merseyside, is identified. Second, in line with structuration theory, individual policy regime members' personal perceptions of the preferred goals for rail transport development in their local area are described, in order to reveal the particular dimensions of local rail development with which they have most affinity. Areas of potential conflict between actors are highlighted. Finally, indicative models of the typology, composition, hierarchy and purpose of the local rail transport policy regimes in Merseyside and Strathclyde are constructed through an analysis of regime members' own explanations of the actual operation of the policy process, its goals and the relative power of those actors engaged within it. The differing relationships between officers, councillors and other actors in each area are addressed.

## 6.2 Strategic perceptions in Strathclyde

### 6.2.1 Strategic rail policy objectives

The formal objectives of local rail transport policy in Strathclyde were firmly rooted in the coherent corporate approach to the Region's development assembled across the activities of the authority. In 1976, the newly-formed Strathclyde Regional Council published its first *Regional Report*, containing an overall corporate mission statement which was to remain unchanged until the abolition of the Council on March 31st 1996. Within this umbrella *Regional Strategy*, the *Social Strategy*, which promoted the reduction of social deprivation, was emphasised as the primary strategic policy objective:

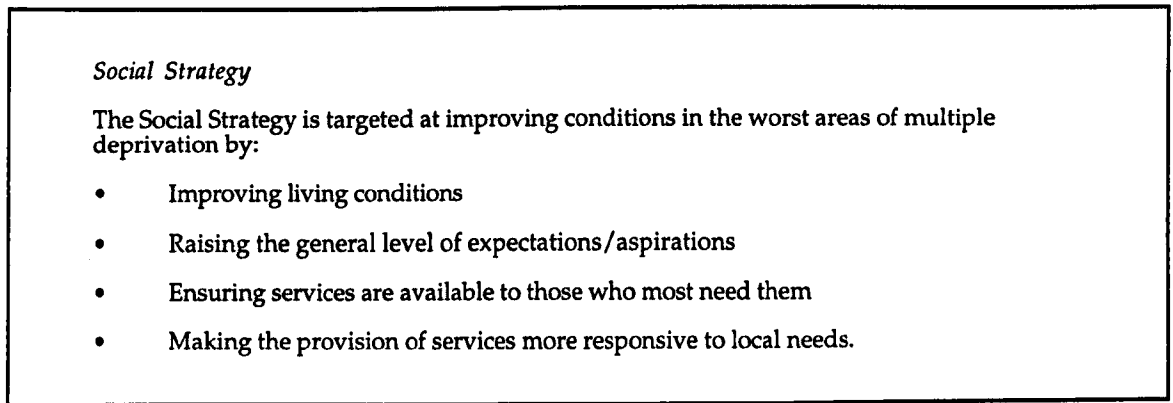


Figure 6.1 Strathclyde Regional Council *Social Strategy*.

Source Strathclyde PTE (1993: 1).

The primacy of the *Social Strategy* is significant in reflecting the hierarchy of Strathclyde's corporate policy aspirations. In all Regional Council policy development, the goals and objectives of the *Social Strategy* informed the applications of the others, reflecting a pronounced bias towards policies aimed at maximising social development benefits through the promotion of equity in urban service provision. Even the policies of the Region's *Economic Strategy* were couched in terms of "increasing the number of job opportunities and encouraging the generation and equitable distribution of wealth" (Strathclyde PTE 1993: 1) between individual citizens of the Region, rather than in promoting growth opportunities for companies. This approach, which clearly places the *Social Strategy* as the Regional Council's *raison d'être*, is virtually identical to that which Stone (1993) identifies as the main purpose of 'progressive symbolic regimes', which

stress "basic values (such as) opportunities for the poor"... economic growth exists not as a goal in itself, but as an activity that must conform to the regime's broader values about what the city is or should be.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 201).

Therefore, the general public transport management and development goals expressed through the Council's *Transportation Strategy* (Figure 6.2), were conceived as "subservient" (SPTE 1993: 1) to the strategic aspirations of the *Social Strategy*.



*Transportation Strategy*

The Transportation Strategy is sufficiently flexible and responsive to changing attitudes at both local and national levels and includes:

- Action on demand restraint
- Making more effective use of existing infrastructure
- Limited new road construction to accommodate necessary movement and facilitate environmental and public transport improvements
- Enhancement of the quality of the public transport network
- Action to reduce the number of accidents on the transport system.

Figure 6.2 Strathclyde Regional Council *Transportation Strategy*.

Source Strathclyde PTE (1993: 1)

Within the framework of the *Regional Strategy*, a continuous process of rail transport policy development was undertaken by Strathclyde Regional Council and SPTE throughout their existence, from which the developments of the 1970s, such as the Argyle Line, outlined in 5.4.2, emerged:

where justified by social cost benefit appraisal and subject to available funds, services will be improved by the provision of new lines and new stations.

Strathclyde PTE (1993: 1).

Within the study time period, this process was given fresh initiative in 1987, when a working party was formally established by the Highways & Transportation Committee to produce "a determination of the future rail services to be supported by the Council and the appropriate action, taking account of the social requirements and financial implications" (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1987a: 2). The group, incorporating senior officers and councillors, rail industry professionals and trades union representatives, which was similar in membership to that which had carried out a previous appraisal four years previously, presented its report to Strathclyde's Highways & Transportation Committee in October 1987.

The 1987 *Rail Review* addressed each of the existing Strathclyde Section 20 rail services in turn, evaluating the net cost of various investment options. Notably, the calculations were based on a form of social cost benefit analysis, which was "virtually identical to that used in the evaluation of highway schemes and has been discussed, and agreed, with the Scottish

Office" (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1987a: 173). The use of road scheme appraisal criteria is significant in that it clearly reflects the desire of SPTE professionals to account for additional 'user' and 'non-user' social development benefits not traditionally incorporated in rail improvement analyses (Cole & Holvad, 1996). Whereas government guidelines for central grant funding of urban rail schemes under the Section 56 provisions of the 1968 Transport Act recognise only the increased fares revenue resulting from service improvements, the methodology adopted by SPTE incorporated estimates for the social costs and benefits associated with the forecast reduction in passengers' travelling time (a 'user' benefit) and improved air quality (a 'non-user' benefit), resulting from rail service enhancement. Thus, the exercise demonstrated that, although the closure of certain existing local rail routes would produce a net financial gain, this was more than offset by the resulting increase in social costs, such as increased road traffic accidents and longer travel times for those passengers switching to the bus.

However, despite the prefix 'social', such analytical methods cannot quantify the more abstract benefits of increasing the *potential* for accessibility and consequent benefits in urban opportunity and equity (Garbutt, 1989; Arabeyre, 1998) envisaged by broadly social development policies such as the Regional Council's *Social Strategy*. This points to a recurring paradox in scheme appraisal in Strathclyde: whilst formal Council strategy was focused on broadly social development-inspired aspirations, quantitative appraisal methods such as those adopted in the 1987 *Rail Review* could not fully account for such policy criteria. The process leading to the resolution of this conflict can be traced in the subsequent evolution of policies detailed in the following case studies.

Consultation on the *Rail Review* proposals was undertaken with the Region's District Councils, MPs, MEPs and concerned community and transport interest groups in order to gauge whether their "representations should be considered to decide whether any such proposals merit incorporation into plans for the future" (Strathclyde Regional Council 1987a: 4).

One of the central conclusions of the 1987 *Rail Review* was that re-appraisal of the Section 20 supported rail network and the Region's wider transportation system should be ongoing, with particular respect to the possibilities afforded by emerging light rapid transit technologies. Thus, in April 1988, the *Strathclyde Transport Development Study (STDS)* was established to "review the potential for the further development of existing public transport systems and to examine the scope for possible new initiatives" (Strathclyde PTE 1989a: 4). Research work was undertaken by a small dedicated team of SPTE's professional staff, led by the Manager of Strategic Development, reporting directly to the Director General and the Chair of the Regional Council's Highways & Transportation Committee. The culmination of this process was the publication in 1992 of a public consultation document, *Travelling in Strathclyde*,

which reviewed a number of competing options for future rail transport development in the Region developed over the course of the STDS. These proposals form the majority of the Strathclyde policy case studies analysed in Chapters 7 and 8.

### 6.2.2 Personal rail transport policy predispositions

Within the wide variety of economic and social development roles identified for transport within the urban realm, Strathclyde's stated strategic rail transport policy goals as derived from the aspirations of the Regional Council's corporate *Social Strategy* strongly emphasise the latter focus associated with city-regional governments, echoing Le Grand (1991) and Buchan's (1992) exposition of equity and broader social access issues as the central concerns of urban transportation systems. Though highly supportive of the general sentiment expressed in official council policy that the local rail network had a valuable role to play in the life and economy of the Region, the range of personal definitions of the role of the rail mode in Strathclyde elicited from individual policy regime members tempered these stated strategic social policy objectives with the reality imposed by the geographic legacy of Strathclyde's inherited urban rail network.

In such a statement, Cllr Charles Gordon, Chair of Strathclyde's Roads & Transportation Committee, identified the local rail network's role in reducing the level of car use in the city:

I think commuting has to be the most important function (of urban rail), because that's where the mass market is, that's where the captive audience is. But that's also the market where we are in a position to influence our competitor mode, and our most serious competitor mode is the car, so if we're serious about achieving a modal shift from the car to public transport, then developing the potential of the rail network, improving it, is all important.

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

However, the range of city centre amenities made accessible by the radial structure of urban rail transport was also highlighted:

I think major movements in and out of Glasgow are the prime function of the rail network - not just for commuters, but for shoppers and others as well, and it doesn't cater as well for other movement patterns. But the problem with heavy rail is that you must

have substantial volumes, and unless you get substantial demand between two places you cannot justify a rail service.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

(The PTE) is not here to run a trainset, it is here to provide economic transport to maintain Strathclyde as a whole and Glasgow in particular as a thriving community, and that means that it needs to provide good access to jobs, it needs to provide transport such that anyone who is thinking of setting up business in Strathclyde sees it as a good place to go.

Respondent 15a,  
Strathclyde local governance.

Thus, the view that the role of the inherited heavy rail system was necessarily tilted towards the support of the local economy by sustaining an effective alternative to car commuting, and thus the vitality of Glasgow city centre, and that such investment should be “justified” by some criteria based on capacity for movement, was balanced by the recognition that it formed a pragmatic response to the geographical legacy of the Strathclyde rail network, the less quantifiable aspirations of the *Social Strategy* remaining an important aspect of policy development:

There is an issue to address with the rail network, because a higher proportion of its users are in the A and B (socio-economic) categories than bus users. But it's part of the strategy to get people out of their cars and get them off the streets and reduce congestion which has much wider social benefits in terms of reducing emissions etc.... We haven't been able to do too much in terms of *Social Strategy* on the heavy rail network because we've only really been able to enhance rail services where they already exist. We really found we couldn't think sensibly in terms of building new railway lines on completely new solums because the disruption that would bring would be enormous..... so it's often not so much of a provision thing on *Social Strategy* as we would like.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

Similarly, David Reynolds from Glasgow City Council reinforced the notion that the local rail network, like the public transport network in general, fulfils a key role in the social consumption of urban amenities, and that its development policies should strive to “ensure that all the population has access to urban facilities.... on an equal basis”. In contrast, however, the responses obtained from outwith the institutions of elected local government itself concentrated solely on the economic development potential of the local rail network:

We see the rail system as part of the public transport infrastructure which allows people to get to and from work, and to and from shops and to and from other areas where they consume or participate in commerce.

Geoff Runcie,  
Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

We see transport as an issue as the basis to help inward investment, to get to the marketplace, to help tourism.

Mary McLaughlin,  
Scottish Enterprise.

The future of cities which depends on managing to beat the challenge of out-of-town shopping and business developments - it is critical for cities to continue to be able to allow large numbers of people to actually get to the shops and to work.

John McCormick,  
Scottish Association for Public Transport.

Rail is really one strand of a sustainable alternative to the car.

David Spaven,  
environmental campaigner.

This view that the prime function of modern urban rail services was to offer an attractive alternative to motorists, and in turn reduce the level of car use in the conurbation, was further emphasised in a statement from Peter Newbould of ScotRail, the Strathclyde rail service

operator. Whilst detailing a purely commercial perspective on various potential enhancements of local urban rail systems, he drew the distinction between those services in the inner city and those linking the business and commercial districts of the city centre with more economically active suburban or outlying commuter districts where the potential exists for longer distance, higher revenue traffic flows:

those services that do not really achieve a good rate of return, the inner suburban services... I think I'd want to retrench somewhat. I think there are many areas which could be developed, where there is something worthwhile, (there is potential for) a change of trip mode, but you start talking about the outer suburbs where there is money to be had.

Peter Newbould,  
ScotRail.

Similarly, the potential for conflict between such purely commercial aspirations for rail network development and those policies aimed at targeting investment in those areas of greatest social need was highlighted by Railtrack:

We're quite happy to work with Strathclyde to meet their aspirations, but we realise that our views on what is good for us in commercial terms can be obviously fundamentally different from their views and aspirations.

Hazel Martin,  
Railtrack Scotland.

In spite of these varying perceptions of the overall role of rail transport in the urban realm, there was general agreement that the comprehensive coverage of the local network formed its key strength, either in terms of maximising the potential for uninhibited movement, or through promoting social equity in transport access:

For all its weaknesses, it's obviously the most comprehensive suburban network in the country outside London, and the fact that it's so extensive means that it provides a good service, and it's still got a lot of very good potential.

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

I think in Strathclyde we've actually got the best total transport provision in the UK for a city region with what is the most comprehensive local rail network outside London.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

Its strength is that it is a network, it's not just a number of routes that have been put together without any thought, it really is a network which has evolved historically, and which has now become quite comprehensive.

Peter Newbould,  
ScotRail.

I think on one level Strathclyde has done well in that they have sought to expand the role of passenger rail in their area by opening new lines, new stations. I think they've sought to make the network work a bit harder for the people of Strathclyde, it has achieved a reasonable spread of services, development rather than contraction. It has created the second largest suburban rail network in Great Britain.

David Spaven,  
environmental campaigner.

Initial analysis of respondents' perceptions of the role of Strathclyde's railways reveals significant underlying tension between the strategic aspirations of different regime members. Councillors and officers within the PTA/E remained firmly wedded to the application of social development goals wherever possible, since they acknowledged that despite its strengths, the local rail network did not serve many of the region's disadvantaged areas as well as many more prosperous districts, and that this mismatch with the aspirations of the Regional Council's *Social Strategy* formed the most significant weakness in the overall pattern of rail transport provision in the region. However, other respondents from outwith local government concentrated on the rail network's potential to contribute to economic development through its role as an alternative to the car. This conflict reinforces the broadly 'symbolic' categorisation of the Strathclyde regime outlined above. That the concept of the

comprehensive coverage provided by the Strathclyde network emerged as a “basis for a common sense of purpose” in further developing the system can be seen as a “strategic use of symbols” (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994), in order to bind together the two regime blocs holding different strategic aspirations.

### 6.2.3 Perceptions of the policy process

The second aspect of respondents’ perceptions unpacked from the interview data concerns those regarding the relative level of power held by each individual within the urban rail policy regime structure. As described in Chapter 2, the central deductive assumption of this research is that this policy network is composed of a limited number of institutions and elite actors, and this section seeks through presentation of the range of perceptions and experiences of the interviewees to expose the structure and hierarchy of actors within the elite network.

The Passenger Transport Executives, as the statutory transport bodies enacted by the 1968 Transport Act, and the parallel Passenger Transport Authorities as their controlling local governments, are clearly the principal members of the local rail policy regime. As professional bureaucracies, both Strathclyde and Merseyside PTEs are headed by a few senior individuals, those selected for interview here being the Directors General, and the lead managers for the respective rail transport sub-units. The PTAs, which for Strathclyde was the Regional Council’s Roads & Transportation Committee, are more complex - in addition to the elected Chair, the Committee itself plays an important role as the body holding legal responsibility for the PTE’s actions and enacted policies.

In Strathclyde, there was widespread agreement across respondents as to the role of each of these institutions and actors within the overall urban rail policy elite. With regard to the PTE, the Director General himself expressed his role thus:

I think there is a very close liaison between myself and the Chair of the Committee, and we’ve been blessed with the Regional Council in having very good Chairs who were genuinely interested in the subject rather than just having been allocated to it. We work in tandem I think.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.



Despite acknowledging the joint roles of officers and councillors in policy development, two well-placed observers moved the argument on by assigning final decision-making power to elected council members:

I think the elected members set the policies. Yes, I think that does happen - it's easy to say that happens because that's what it says in the textbook, but I don't think officers set the policies, I think elected members set the policies, I think they set them themselves. Where officers start to take a role is in developing the strategy that meets the policy, and I think that is an interactive stage: they put forward the strategy and it goes through the political process and changes. That is probably the most important element of how the development of a scheme works, I think it's crucially important to the outcome at the end of the day.

Respondent 15b,  
Strathclyde local governance.

It is not the professionals' role to say "why don't you do this?", but it is their role to say "if you want to do this, this is the sort of thing that will happen".... They are the voice that says "this is what happens if you try that", and their professional role is trying to look at all the ramifications of these policies. Now sure, there will be some things that officers personally think are a good idea, or professionally think are a good idea, and these may not necessarily be the same, but I'd hesitate to say they had any direct impact.

Respondent 15a,  
Strathclyde local governance.

Furthermore, despite the general perception of the senior officers of SPTE and the elected committee members as working jointly and co-operatively, there was nevertheless the recurring perception that the committee Chair held the dominant policy position, in effect representing the elected component of the PTA/E 'joint elite':

It's quite clear, Cllr Gordon is the pinnacle of the structure.

Geoff Runcie,  
Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

During my time here, in the shape of Malcolm Waugh and Charles Gordon there has been two committed individuals who have a pretty clear idea I think of what they want, and if they get something between their teeth, they don't let go very easily. It (Roads & Transportation) certainly isn't a backwater in local government terms in the way some other services are. The fact that it is a quite high profile service means that you tend to get elected members who've got considerable commitment to it. So I think there has been a drive from them, although obviously they have a close relationship with people like Stephen Lockley at the PTE.

Richard Leonard,  
Scottish TUC.

I think it's in the nature of the councils that I have come across here that the elected members tend to have the sway.

Richard Maconachie,  
Renfrewshire Enterprise.

I can recognise the obvious stature of the two Chairmen of Roads & Transportation that Strathclyde has had in recent years, and it's clear that they have played a very significant personal role.

John Elvidge,  
Scottish Office.

I think the strategy that was developed (showed) the strength of the political leaders - there's always been the one individual (Cllr Waugh) who until recently was Chairman of Roads & Transport who drove certain things through.

Peter Newbould,  
ScotRail.

Policy is clearly led by the *senior* politician.

David Reynolds,  
Glasgow City Council.

This external perception of the Chair's position as the repository of final decision-making power expressed consistently between respondents was also clearly accepted by those who held the position themselves. In addition, Cllr Waugh drew a fundamental comparison between his position on the Regional Council, and those of his fellow elected representatives from English PTAs:

If I took a decision, I could make a decision if I went to London, Brussels or wherever, whereas all the others (PTA Chairs) would have to say, "I'll have to go back to my joint board and see what they would do".

Yes, (if I wanted to change policy), I could use my political power.... I think Stephen (Lockley) (SPTE Director General) would tell you that.

Cllr Malcolm Waugh,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

Critically, Cllr Waugh's successor as committee Chair also highlighted the position holder's role as the focus of public accountability in the policy making system:

It's quite easy - I always win (in policy disputes), because at the end of the day, we're the Authority, we're the elected and accountable people. My officers are quite clear now that I don't want them to go away and look at a problem and come up with one preferred solution, i.e. theirs! I'm looking for options, even if at a later stage I personally pick the only option that's going to come forward as a recommendation.

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

Reflecting the broad consensus amongst Strathclyde respondents as to the pivotal role of the committee Chair, there was also widespread agreement on the relative role of the wider committee membership in policy formulation. Although most respondents felt unable to offer

attributable remarks concerning committee function, those that did so clearly highlighted the limited role it played:

What I perceive from the outside is that councillors are confronted with a lot of decisions to be made, and with people not only on the Roads & Transportation Committee but other committees as well, councillors tend to be confronted with very heavy workloads, and I think inevitably some of the information put forward is selective.... I think it's fair to say that there has been a lot of fairly unsophisticated councillors who were not really in a position to make highly informed judgements about the decisions they were being asked to make.

David Spaven,  
environmental campaigner.

There are often people in the committee situation who know very little about politics or how rail actually works.

Respondent,  
public sector.

I've stopped going now, but I used to have a better attendance record at Roads & Transport Committee meetings than most of the councillors themselves. The decisions are certainly not made there if you see the way it's done - you've got an agenda that's pages long, and most of them just nod their heads. Sometimes they don't even know what they're agreeing to, they just take it for granted.... most of the members don't have the time to get really interested in the alternatives to the proposals in front of them, they're told "this is a great idea and is what you want to do".

Ian Bogle,  
Glasgow for People.

One respondent actively involved in Strathclyde local governance summarised the role of Strathclyde's Roads & Transport Committee with the following unattributable comment:

the Chair takes the decisions. The other members of the committee are totally irrelevant, none of them actually knows what's involved, they just do as they are told.

However, although further remarks from respondents closer to the decision-making process were more guarded, they concurred with the general sentiment and highlighted the potential influence of the overall elected membership and particularly, the leading party group of the Regional Council, rather than its statutory committees:

I think the committee members act as a check and a balance on the Chair. The skill of being Chair is to judge the approach that carries his colleagues with him. But the committees don't in themselves count for very much at all, because the fact is that everything's been decided already of course.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

I think you can easily get the impression that the Chair of the committee is all-powerful, because he is obviously the spokesperson if you like. I also think that if you go along to a committee meeting you might even get the impression that it's pretty much sewn up - papers come up, a few words are spoken, but there's very little debate most of the time. I think the influence goes on behind the scenes - the Chair does have a very strong voice so long as he keeps his members behind him, and he'll only keep his members behind him if he is very attuned to what the concerns are, what the issues are in different groups of the whole (Regional) Council.

Respondent 15b,  
Strathclyde local governance.

The vigour of debate in the (Regional) Labour Party is far greater than the degree of debate in Committee.

Respondent 15a,  
Strathclyde local governance.

I can see why there would be the perception that the committee has a limited role, but the fact is, the way the political process worked in Strathclyde, if you wanted to change something or if you had got something wrong, if you had misjudged the mood of

the members, you would change it behind the scenes.... you should have known far earlier in the process, and what tended to happen was that for big issues, you would have gone to the Labour Group and taken soundings.

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

That was one of the advantages of Strathclyde, because once I had convinced the Labour Group of a thing, I could go ahead with it. You see, all decisions were taken in the (Labour) Group.

Cllr Malcolm Waugh,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

Outside the PTA/E structure, the concept of the policy regime network extends to a range of other organisations, from central government and its quangos to the private sector, transport interest groups and the trades unions. One respondent from one such 'producer group' described in detail his organisation's lobbying tactics, reflecting the potential mechanisms for gaining influence at the heart of the regime outlined in 3.2.2:

In addition to the (official) consultative processes, we do a lot of discreet lobbying through local Chambers and civic and business-to-business networking. The lobbying our Chamber does is on a variety of levels - if we feel strongly about an issue, then we would put the issue to our council or one of our consultative groups. We debate the issue and develop chamber policy which would become a policy statement, which we would articulate through the media, a press release or a press conference, or we would write directly to the people who we felt were needing to be influenced or were in fact in charge of the development.

Geoff Runcie,  
Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

However, one experienced observer reflected a number of other off-the-record remarks which clearly conceptualised the Strathclyde regime as falling within the 'elitist' and 'exclusive' (Stoker, 1991) model of interest group engagement. Little influence was ascribed to groups

other than those in the public sector, which were clearly regarded as sympathetic to the regime core:

There are I suppose a few real influencing groups that are within, if you like, the 'establishment' - the enterprise companies come to mind as people who come forward with specific ideas. But for the real lobby groups, the ones who say "they should do X", well there's obviously a great (difference between) the interplay of individuals.

Respondent 15a,  
Strathclyde local governance.

Notably, despite the positive reference to the enterprise network as holding real influence in the policy making structure, the Region's largest local enterprise company, the Glasgow Development Agency, claimed no formal policies or staff considering public transport issues when approached for interview, reinforcing the notion of 'distance' between the pro-social development joint elite, and other more peripheral regime members holding more overtly economic development aspirations, outlined above. Similarly, Scottish Enterprise and Renfrewshire Enterprise sought to limit their formal interest in the Strathclyde rail network specifically to the development of the Glasgow Airport rail link as part of their wider air transport strategy:

We have no overall strategy for urban passenger movement. We've never really become involved because we don't think it's a national organisation's responsibility.... we see how people move about to their work etc as being the local authority's and the PTE's responsibility. If there's somebody there doing that, it's not as if we need to fill a gap.... The area we have got involved with is a rail link (to Glasgow Airport) as part of our airports strategy.

Mary McLaughlin,  
Scottish Enterprise.

We're involved in transport through the Glasgow Airport Initiative, we're looking for ways we can grow and strengthen it, and access is one of the constraints on growth. So we're involved with transportation issues like the (airport) rail link.... (but any other

scheme) not within our geographic area, we do not have a formal opinion on.

Richard Maconachie,  
Renfrewshire Enterprise.

The apparent exclusion of the more critical transport policy 'cause' groups positioned outside the formal structure of public administration was highlighted by a particular conflict revealed between the Regional Council, SPTE and those advocating radical measures not in tune with the local transport policy 'establishment':

The policy process doesn't really allow alternatives to come through - not the normal channels of debate, consideration and decision-making. My involvement was through the idea of putting forward alternatives, but that was always going to be a long shot because the system doesn't really allow for it.

David Spaven,  
environmental campaigner.

I think far too many of the lobby groups on public transport come up with what they think we ought to have rather than on what it's practical to achieve.... We've got to do what we can afford.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

Similarly, although occupying the position of 'producer' group deemed broadly supportive of the regime's social policy aspirations, the rail trades unions were perceived to exert little influence on policy making following the revolutionary consensus inspired by the "Strathclyde Manning Agreement", part of the 1983 *Rail Review* investment programme:

I went to see the unions in 1983, and I told them what my aspirations were, and in order to cut the (revenue) losses I was going to make investment, but I wanted co-operation.... I wanted the 'Strathclyde Manning Agreement', where there could be one, two or three staff on the train other than the driver to check tickets, that would allow me to take some of the staff away from the stations. Now, the unions weren't too happy at that prospect, but the railway workers who were working on the (modernised) lines realised



there were better conditions, trains were running on time and they could make money out of it, they were more secure.

Cllr Malcolm Waugh,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

We got together pragmatically with the unions as well as management of BR and came up with the review of services that was published in 1983. It basically said that if all three parties, rail management, the trades unions and the Regional Council/PTE worked together we could do things to the benefit of everybody. And the Regional Council promised to invest heavily in the rail network if the others would do everything to facilitate that. So we got agreement on all sides, the Strathclyde Manning Agreement and a different sort of philosophy really.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

The STUC will meet with the PTE about once a year, they give us a presentation on the issues they're concerned with, and if there are any matters we want to raise we will. But the direct lobbying and pressure comes primarily from the unions, but that is limited to the more traditional industrial relations route.

Richard Leonard,  
Scottish TUC.

Finally, central government itself, in the form of the Scottish Office, although the source of capital finance for local rail transport development, was regarded as exerting little influence on the actual prioritisation of competing investment projects by the Strathclyde policy regime. Indeed, one senior Scottish Office representative himself acknowledged the operational freedom granted to Strathclyde to pursue its own urban rail transport objectives within its annual capital allocation, despite the potential for conflict between central (economic development) and local (social development) policy aspirations:

The driving principle of (central) government policy has been that efficiency, the delivery of transport services and responsiveness to consumer need are better delivered through market mechanisms.... (this is) the traditional approach to the effectiveness

of transport policy in supporting the economy and in delivering movement.... (However), I think it is fair to say that the government has left it up to Strathclyde to decide how much of an explicit social dimension it wishes to inject in its area.... The freedom which the local authority is given must be predicated on the assumption that it is in a far better position to have the information and knowledge necessary to take these decisions. (So), I would say that in a broad sense the government clearly recognises that the rail network serves a social purpose - that must be part of the justification for the rail network.

John Elvidge,  
Scottish Office.

The existence of such freedom of action was also identified by an observer from the opposite end of the central-local relationship, who perceived it largely as a result of the less aggressive posture towards central government adopted by Strathclyde as compared to several English metropolitan county councils:

The approach in Strathclyde, and this is not just in public transport but generally, has been much more of an accommodation with the powers that be in St Andrew's House (Scottish Office HQ), because for many years the political colours have been different. (SPT) achieved a great deal more than I would say any of the other PTEs on the public transport side because it worked on a pragmatic, politics-is-the-art-of-the-possible approach.

Respondent 15a,  
Strathclyde local governance.

Despite the apparent independence of the Strathclyde regime from direct control by central or 'non-local' political interests, the continuing restriction in capital consents, common to all local government services, in fact highlighted how the actions of this, like other symbolic regimes, remained 'dependent' on the central purse:

New capital investment in transport and the environment today has to be funded from a much reduced budget from that available in the early years of the Regional Council. Capital allocations, for example, are now only 50% in real terms what they were at the time of local government reorganisation in 1975.

Strathclyde Regional Council (1992a: 19).

The only thing that stopped me doing more was the lack of finance.

Clr Malcolm Waugh,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

The indicative model of the Strathclyde local rail transport policy regime which emerges from interview evidence is a highly 'symbolic' one, centred on a strong core joint elite of the Chair of the Roads & Transportation Committee, and two or three senior professional officers from the PTE, led by the Director General. The consistent application of the social development goals of the *Social Strategy*, such as widening urban accessibility, to a local rail network historically focused on providing an alternative for car-based mobility, clearly represents the "expressive politics" and "redirection of ideology" associated with symbolic regimes (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994). Around this joint elite, in which the Chair was widely perceived as the centre of decision-making, a small number of other public sector bodies, such as the enterprise companies, rail industry companies and certain district councils, are located at the margins of the regime. In focusing on the economic development impacts of local rail transport, each offers advice or support for particular development policies which impinge on their fields of responsibility, rather than regularly participating at the heart of the regime's strategic policy discourse. Significantly, however, several other groups, such as trades unions and transport pressure groups, were perceived as largely excluded from regime discussions. Critically, despite its role as the source of capital funding for rail network development, central government, in the form of the Scottish Office, was widely agreed to minimise its direct input into the regime, adopting a 'back-seat' position in policy development.

### 6.3 Strategic perceptions in Merseyside

#### 6.3.1 Strategic rail policy objectives

In April 1986, the incoming Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority joint board inherited a broadly accepted policy framework for local public transport from the outgoing metropolitan county council, rooted in the policy culture of fostering urban regeneration which dated from the appointment of Michael Heseltine as 'Minister for Merseyside' and parallel local authority regeneration strategies of the early 1980s (Carmichael, 1995). Thus, the inherited transportation strategy for Merseyside acknowledged the combination of "formidable social,

economic and environmental problems" facing the area (Merseytravel, 26/9/85). Specifically,

an effective public transport system will contribute to regeneration because it will broaden the range of accessible job opportunities, especially for the less well off and will extend the catchment area within which an enterprise on Merseyside can recruit.

Merseytravel (26/9/85).

Indeed, this dual emphasis on economic and social development objectives was recognised by central government when confirming the case for the continuation of PTAs in the former English metropolitan counties during the local government reorganisation process of 1985:

(both) social and economic considerations will clearly be at the heart of the thinking of the new PTA joint boards; nothing will carry greater weight than that.... they would not be able to do an effective job if they did not pay attention to the social and economic needs of their area.

House of Commons (19/2/85: col 1472).

The future role of the Merseyrail system within this overall strategy was first outlined in the *Policies for Public Transport* consultation document of early 1986, produced by a working party of senior officers and professional staff during the new Authority and Executive's shadow year:

The Authority recognises the value to Merseyside of the (local) rail network and is mindful to retain the present policy to maintain and improve it subject to financial resources. Ways of increasing revenue will be sought by capital investment, eg new stations, and by promoting co-ordination with bus services.

Merseytravel (21/5/86).

Within this summary aspiration, new stations, improvements to existing stations, improved interchange facilities between modes and electrification schemes were identified as the four priority areas for future investment in the Merseyside supported rail network in the new Authority's subsequent first statutory annual *Transport Plan*. In particular,

the next stage in the Merseyrail programme is the proposed development of several new stations which will utilise past capital investments and spread the benefits of the extensive system to additional population catchments... it is believed that the construction of new stations will safeguard existing Merseyrail services for the passenger by encouraging new patronage and generating additional revenue.

Merseytravel (1987).

After the publication of Merseytravel's first annual *Transport Plan*, the previous ad hoc working group was disbanded as part of the initial overall corporate planning review, geared to restructuring the organisation as a fully discrete entity. In what was essentially a phase of regime reconstruction taking into account the changed statutory arrangements following local government reorganisation, responsibility for strategic rail policy development work transferred to a new professional Rail Services Group team reporting to the PTA's Policy & Resources Committee. The first substantial strategic policy statement to emerge from the new structure was the *Rail Services Mission Statement* of August 1989 (Figure 6.3).

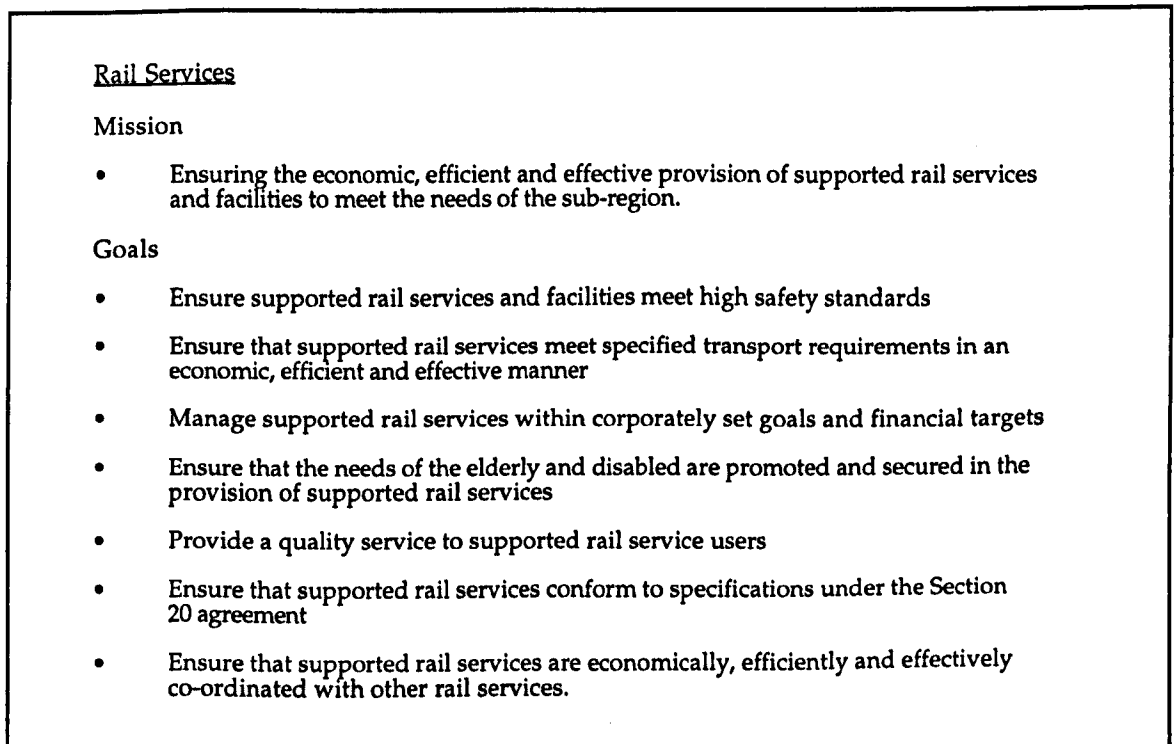


Figure 6.3 Merseytravel Rail Mission Statement.

Source Merseytravel (3/8/89).

Despite the apparent similarities between the 'symbolic' goals of the application of the *Social Strategy* in Strathclyde and the promotion of urban regeneration in Merseyside, the above mission statement calls into question the similar categorisation of the Merseyside rail transport policy regime as 'symbolic'. The absence of the 'expressive politics' of network expansion incorporated into Strathclyde's *Transport Strategy*, in favour of low-key, if more immediately achievable, 'tangible results', centred on improved quality and efficiency. In particular, the 'symbolic' aspiration to extend the equity of the local rail network through the provision of new lines and stations, although flagged two years earlier, is notable by its absence (see 6.3.3 below).

### 6.3.2 Personal rail transport predispositions

The prevailing "culture of urban regeneration" (Carmichael, 1995) in Merseyside was reflected in a near consensus identified across the predispositions of the county's interviewees. Echoing the officially stated policies of Merseytravel and the former Metropolitan County Council, the theme of promoting urban rail transport improvements as a means towards urban regeneration recurred consistently, reconciling aspirations for investing in the local economy and enhancing access to urban opportunities and amenities, including employment:

Public transport is by definition a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Public transport is an essential feature of economic regeneration, and the creation of job opportunities, and is often a very important factor in inward investment decisions..... the railway network is particularly important in terms of the vitality of the city centre, and in the attractiveness of jobs in Merseyside for those moving in from elsewhere.

Roy Swainson,  
Merseytravel.

We're here to regenerate Liverpool, and that's the ultimate priority.... if the public transport network is going to survive and thrive, it's got to be relevant to people, and one of the biggest reasons for being relevant is access to jobs.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

Without any doubt Merseyrail plays a vital role in the conurbation, it plays a major part in the regeneration of Merseyside which has been going on for a few years now.

Cllr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.

Transport is not just transport, it's a means of bringing the unemployed to training, or workers to jobs.

Peter Wilson,  
Government Office for Merseyside.

The argument is always regenerating Liverpool.

Chris Leah,  
Railtrack North West.

However, the one note of dissension to the consensus came from a local rail operator. Although recognising "Merseytravel's clear, coherent strategies aimed at improving infrastructure, providing development opportunities and therefore providing employment opportunities", Robert Goundry of North West Regional Railways reiterated the opinion outlined by ScotRail's Peter Newbould, that from a commercial standpoint, the railway industry saw little potential in inner urban catchment areas as compared to those in suburban and ex-urban districts:

I think there have been occasions when they (Merseytravel) have failed to do things a transport person would have done, because they felt that they were regenerative. Bank Hall station on the Northern Line is a classic example - any rational person would have shut it down years ago and used the benefit of reduced journey times to grow and provide faster transits from further out... what the railways do best these days is meet regional rather than purely local needs. Trying to operate trains as buses is an expensive hobby, because buses do bus things better and what you need is fill at train up at A and run as fast as you can to B and not stop anywhere in between, because that's

what people are actually prepared to pay money for..... if you want to grow the business, you've got to run as fast as possible between major centres of population.

Robert Goundry,  
North West Regional Railways.

That the priority for the future development of the local rail network on Merseyside should lie in promoting urban regeneration was also reflected in an equally widely held perception that its geographical legacy left it well placed to do so. The range of comments on the historic development of Merseyrail clearly focused around the benefits derived from the significant development of the core *Loop* and *Link* projects in the 1970s, in terms of their potential for contributing to the increased attractiveness of Liverpool as an active commercial centre:

The foundation of the success of Merseyrail was the construction of the Liverpool city centre *Loop* and *Link* (which) accesses the full range of city centre activities.

Merseytravel (1993b: para 4.1).

The Merseyrail network is a very well developed network, its principal components being the underground *Loop* and *Link*, so that unlike for example, Manchester and Sheffield to name two cities who have been looking very seriously at developing tram systems, we've actually had a means in the City of Liverpool to cross the city from one side to the other via the underground system.... we were fortunate in Merseyside in that 20 or 30 years ago, developing the underground has given us a heavy rail network that has actually made the development of alternatives less pressing for us than in other comparable cities and urban areas.

Roy Swainson,  
Merseytravel.

What is Merseyrail? It's about service frequencies, it's about quality, it's about branding, our own little railway.... I think the system fulfils quite an important role in



Merseyside, partly because of the effectiveness of the *Loop* and *Link* development.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

The reality of a rail system is it is where it is, you can't pick the system up and move it around very easily, certainly not in the Merseyside case with the marked example of the *Loop* and *Link*. So they (Merseytravel) have been pragmatic to the extent that they've looked at where it is and what it can do, but certainly the investment that went into the system, particularly in the 1970s.... created something that actually had real city centre distribution.

Robert Goundry,  
North West Regional Railways.

The beauty of the system is that it dissects the city centre underground.... the city centre access is a huge asset.

Chris Leah,  
Railtrack North West.

As far as the network is concerned, we're lucky in having a good heavy rail transport system in Liverpool, an excellent system. I think a lot of authorities are quite envious really that we have this base heavy rail network.

Keith Moores,  
Liverpool City Council.

However, the recurring perception of the Merseyrail 'product' as that associated with only the electrified services serving Liverpool city centre via the *Loop* and *Link* was emphasised by particular comments highlighting important distinctions in perception between the past integration of these network corridors in terms of the quality of service and levels of city centre access provided, compared to those of the more isolated diesel services on the City Line:

The network is viewed by its customers and the PTE very much as the 'Metro' system for Merseyside. Most of it, Merseyrail Electrics, is a self-contained railway with no other operators.... so they've taken it as their own system. However, the third wing of the system, the diesel line that comes in from St Helens is not part of Merseyrail Electrics, and that is not synonymous with the electric system.

Chris Leah,  
Railtrack North West.

There's an interesting contrast between Merseyrail Electrics, the third rail DC system, and the diesel lines. The Merseyrail Electrics system is fundamentally self-contained, and is perceived by Merseytravel, and to some extent the residents of Merseyside themselves, as basically their property, and there is some justification for that because very considerable amounts of local money went into the system, particularly in the 1970s. The City Line has always been the poor cousin, and of course it hasn't had the glamour associated with the third rail (electrification), the new trains and tunnels, new everything.

Robert Goundry,  
North West Regional Railways.

Yes, as far as the City Line is concerned, it is in many ways the poor relation because the rest of the system is electrified.... whilst we've invested money in the City Line services that go east those services do not serve the boroughs of Knowsley and St Helens and the eastern wards of the city as effectively as the boroughs of Wirral and Sefton are served by the electric services.

Roy Swainson,  
Merseytravel.

The recurring perception of the main strength of the Merseyrail network was therefore not, as in Strathclyde, its sheer scope of geographic coverage, but in its "regularity, frequency, speed and directness of services" provided on specific corridors (Merseytravel, 1993b: para 4.3). Thus,

(Merseyrail Electrics) does not have that many downsides as a rapid transit system,

although it doesn't access many of the (housing) estates because it's an old railway.

Chris Leah,  
Railtrack North West.

### 6.3.3 Perceptions of the policy process

Strikingly, each response obtained from Merseyside interviewees detailing their perceptions of the structure of rail transport policy making in the county were in direct contrast to those uncovered in Strathclyde. First, the relationships between senior professional officers of the PTE and elected PTA councillors were differently perceived. Despite the existence of a small 'joint elite' once again widely acknowledged, responses consistently expressed a reversal of the position in Strathclyde, the balance of power lying with the Director General and other senior managers of Merseytravel's Executive branch, who were widely perceived to exert substantially more influence within the overall policy-making structure than the elected Chair of the Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority joint board:

Clearly, some councillors are proactive and want to be seen to be putting forward ideas, but I get the feeling that most of the actual impetus and planning comes from the senior officers, and the actual elected officials to some extent rubber-stamp if they agree.... I think the officers are professional people and some of them are very, very interested in public transport and they want to be there - Martin Harrison (Merseytravel's Rail Services Manager) is very committed and so are his team. So I feel it comes from the officers really.

David Marks,  
Wirral Transport Users Association.

It is the senior officers such as the Chief Executive who drive the thing forward, who set the pace.

Peter Hampson,  
Wirral Borough Council.

I think he (Cllr Mark Dowd, PTA Chair) works very closely with Roy Swainson (Merseytravel's Director General), and I tend to think they work very closely, I've seen

them performing at a top table at a meeting. In fact, they appear to play one off against the other, but I think it's well stage-managed - there are some things that Roy Swainson can say that Mark Dowd can't and vice versa. (But) although I'm not exactly sure how the relationships work, I think the officers in Merseytravel have a lot more clout and they're able to take along their politicians.

Mike Tew,  
Wirral Borough Council.

When I was first introduced to Roy Swainson, I was told that he was very good, that he has a good reputation amongst officials, and so that means yes, he is the prime source of (Merseytravel) policy.

Peter Wilson,  
Government Office for Merseyside.

I see Merseytravel as being led by the officers.

Keith Moores,  
Liverpool City Council.

Merseytravel has consistently kept the politicians well under control. The politicians are presented with well prepared papers from the PTE, and the Chief Executive has always made certain that he has the relevant leader or chairman in tow, so very, very rarely do you get an overt political surprise in Merseyside.

Robert Goundry,  
North West Regional Railways.

I think senior officers are generally the source of policy development.

Respondent.

The relative strength of Merseytravel's senior executive officers in policy development and implementation was also confirmed, albeit couched in cautious terms, the organisation's respondents themselves:

My role here as both Chief of the Authority and Chief Executive or Director General of the PTE is a unique one which puts me in a particularly strong position to develop policy ideas.... It is right to say that here, policy initiatives generally come from the officers, but then that's my job - to seek to develop new policies, to seek to drive forward our strategies which consistently have had the support of the elected members and I'd be pleased to record that the relationship within Merseytravel between officers and councillors is a sound and productive one.

Roy Swainson,  
Merseytravel.

Yes, well these people (Merseytravel officers) are bright - they'll come and say, "we believe we could do so and so, do you want us to go ahead with it?", and if we don't like it we'll say "no" and we'll all think again. But there are certain things which just make common sense.

Cllr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.

The main similarity in perception with Strathclyde regarding relationships within the PTA/E structure was the broad consensus identified across those wishing to comment on the influence of Merseytravel's wider committee membership, who again expressed its very limited role. However, most views were slightly less negative than those recorded in Strathclyde, the most likely reason being that as a joint authority with no single area ruling party group, there was no alternative fixed forum identified for behind-the-scenes policy discussion between politicians:

Merseytravel is controlled by councillors who come from five different authorities, and to some extent each has their own agenda, and I think because of that amalgam of members, I get the feeling that there isn't the same level of interest because it covers

the whole of Merseyside.

Keith Moores,  
Liverpool City Council.

I don't think they have a very systematic role, but clearly there's a democratic role in that they can bring certain complaints and gripes to us, but there's no systematic check and balance. Committees tend to get more excited about the detail, you know, about what happened last Tuesday when there were no trains for a couple of hours, rather than anything else.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

Mark Dowd is very bullish, and if he were to move on, I don't think there is a natural successor so Merseytravel would suffer for that. You always get these figureheads because the other members are quite happy (to go along), because the agenda has probably been set by Mark Dowd, it's what he wants, which happens to be the same thing Roy Swainson wants. Mark Dowd certainly seems to have the rest of the Merseytravel politicians on board.

Mike Tew,  
Wirral Borough Council.

I think we act as a kind of scrutiny: there are certain things that a local person can see, so we (the members) say "what about this or that?".

Cllr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.

That pre-eminence in policy-making should be so widely ascribed to the professional officers in Merseytravel, with elected councillors playing a subsidiary, *ad hoc* 'scrutineer' role, suggests that the typology and distribution of power within the Merseyside local rail policy regime is substantially different to that in Strathclyde (see 3.2.2). Regime theory itself suggests that such professional pre-eminence is derived from systemic power, through the

application of previously successful administrative techniques, and command power, by the active mobilisation of professional resources (primarily information), specialist knowledge and personal reputation.

Evidence from the printed archive and the subsequent interview passages presented below points to two distinct processes through which professional officers assumed dominance in the Merseyside regime's policy process. The first concerns the construction of a more detailed and comprehensive regime network than that of Strathclyde, which can be directly related to the splintering of the county's institutions of governance. Simply, many interviewees argued that the existence of a number of quasi-public bodies, other than the Passenger Transport Executive itself, each holding the potential to invest in urban rail transport development, led to the formation of a much more complex pattern of discourse and information exchange, which can be conceptualised under the theme of inter-institutional 'partnership'. Thus, Merseytravel's Chief Executive identified a number of partner organisations closely involved in policy formulation:

Initiatives in the rail network are the product of, I suppose, two processes. The first one is discussion with our partners - we're a very partnership-oriented organisation, so we would have lengthy discussions with not only the rail partners, that is to say the (train service) operators and Railtrack, but also with our partners in the county of Merseyside itself, the appropriate local authority, the Government Office (for Merseyside), the Merseyside Development Corporation, the local Chambers of Commerce, and anyone else who has a role to play.

Roy Swainson,  
Merseytravel.

Paradoxically, although the broad range of statutory organisations incorporated within the local state in Merseyside is clearly the result of the fragmentationist policies of central government, the creation of the contemporary local rail transport policy regime through the construction of the framework of discourse or 'partnership' designed to re-integrate the activities of these bodies can also be traced to intervention from the centre. In particular, the intermediate institutions of the Merseyside Task Force, and its successor, the Government Office for Merseyside, essentially arms of the central state geographically defined at the local level, can be seen as the catalyst around which a new partnership-led regime based on the common predisposed aspiration of promoting urban regeneration in the county was constructed:

During 1990, the Merseyside Task Force established a group to look at the contribution that transport might make to aid urban regeneration. A Transport Strategy Working Group was formed comprising the five district councils on Merseyside, Merseytravel, neighbouring local authorities, the Merseyside Development Corporation and the private sector.

Merseytravel was an active participant in the Working Group which concluded earlier this year that a strategic overview was required which could be provided by a Transport Study closely tied to urban regeneration objectives and capable of providing advice to elected representatives and relevant agencies on the economic, social and environmental impact of different transport and development options.

District Chief Officers covering engineering and planning have subsequently met to consider this proposal... their report recognised that there is "an obvious need for a mechanism to address strategic transportation and development issues on Merseyside, to assist and advise the development of a consensus political vision and voice for the area as a whole".

Merseytravel (16/5/91).

Reflections from one such identified "District Chief Officer" illustrated that, despite the initial top-down construction of the partnership network, the local authorities involved soon realised the potential afforded by the structure for establishing a coherent, county-wide transportation strategy:

It was a shotgun marriage, because the Department of Transport first said, "we've got this new initiative in the (West) Midlands called the Package Approach, we want other areas to try it". The next time round, the Department was even stronger and said there was a presumption that metropolitan authorities will get together.

As it developed, we were able to see a way that we could co-operate, in that we took decisions regarding the strategy, so we all endorsed the same transport strategy, which is linked to a planning and regeneration strategy. We all agreed what we wanted to do on a Merseyside-wide basis.

Mike Tew,  
Wirral Borough Council.



Significantly, the re-integration of the Merseyside local rail transport policy regime by central government around the notion of promoting urban regeneration clearly mirrors the type of "political partnership" associated with 'instrumental' rather than 'symbolic' regimes:

Shared goals (between regime members) exist, but partnership has to be actively created rather than assumed. New institutions, forums, subsidies and support have to be provided to ensure co-operation and compromise among development partners.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 206).

The outcome of these 'new forum' negotiations between the professional officers of Merseytravel and the county's local authorities was the preparation of the *Merseyside Integrated Transport Study (MERITS)*, a strategic transport plan for the county. Crucially, the overall aim of MERITS, commissioned jointly by Merseytravel, the county's five district councils and the Merseyside Development Corporation, revealed a marked refinement of stated policy aspirations, the definition of 'urban regeneration' and regime typology, reflecting the influence of the quangos such as the MDC upon the fragmented system of metropolitan governance:

Urban Development Corporations have symbolized the ideological and political values of successive Conservative governments, the rhetoric of the market over planning, and the propagation of a property, in distinction to people, based approach to urban regeneration.

Imrie & Thomas (1993: vii).

Thus, rather than the 'symbolic' balance between economic development opportunities and the 'expressive politics' of social development outlined in the new PTA's early position statements of 1986/87 (see 6.3.1. above), MERITS strongly emphasised Merseyrail's role in the physical economic regeneration and development of the county, which closely reflected both central government preferences and the 'tangible results' and 'project realisation' goals of the 'instrumental' regime:

MERITS seeks to prepare an integrated transport strategy for Merseyside that assists in achieving economic growth and urban regeneration, provides a policy framework

against which to evaluate and appraise individual proposals and better enables the Merseyside authorities to make the case for external funding for transport investment.

Merseytravel (21/10/93)

Applications for funding need to be set within the context of Merseyside's approved Integrated Transport Strategy (MERITS).

The strategic (public) transport policies for Merseyside are:

- Policy 1 To target additions to improvements to the transport network which are essential to support economic development and urban regeneration opportunities.
- Policy 2 To increase the relative attractiveness of public transport and non-motorised forms of transport as a means of moderating the upward trend in car use and securing a shift away from the private car.

Government Office for Merseyside (1996: 1).

Central government's second motivation for the construction of the new partnership in the rail transport policy network within Merseyside can be seen in two related changes in capital funding mechanisms for rail transport infrastructure projects. With the principle of the joint county-wide transport strategy established, the logical progression to a single capital bid incorporating transportation projects in each of the five district council areas, the so-called *Package Approach*, became apparent:

I think in most things, partnership is everything, and as the amount of money devoted to transport reduced, I think officials quite reasonably thought that you needed to maximise the co-operation and integration to get the best out of these diminishing resources.... so I think Merseyside was one of the pioneers, because the MERITS study was commended by the Secretary of State as being an excellent example of taking a strategic approach and making the best of existing resources rather than just demanding more money. So there was a coming together of what the local authorities were beginning to realise was necessary, co-operation, and what the government wanted, which was to try to find ways of making existing resources more effective, by co-

operating and creating synergy, and by creating synergy, getting better value for money.

Peter Wilson,  
Government Office for Merseyside.

Crucially, the government's offer of increased capital allocations for those English PTAs that adopted the Package Approach represented the 'selective incentive' which completes the categorisation of the Merseyside policy network as an instrumental regime, since

selected incentives in a fragmented and uncertain world provide a powerful mechanism for establishing a common sense of purpose.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 204).

The Merseyside package has done very well over the last two years, I think it was the highest (PTA package per capita) allocation in the country, so it's done very well in terms of bringing in transport capital spending projects for the local area.

Paul Doran,  
Government Office for Merseyside.

The significance of the assembled structure of instrumental regime interaction and scheme-specific central funding applications for policy development in Merseyside can be attached to the consequences of the government's adopted appraisal methodology. In contrast to Strathclyde, where the Regional Council derived substantial freedom of action from the existence of its single relatively large capital allocation, single-handedly promoting major schemes such as CrossRail (c£80m) and the Glasgow Airport link (>£30m) according to its own symbolic objectives, the more active role played by central government at both national and Government Office level in the appraisal of all competing priority schemes over £2m capital cost was highlighted:

The MERITS study, which was the guide for the Package Bids, was jointly sponsored by the Government Office (for Merseyside), or the Merseyside Task Force as it was then, and since then they've played a very positive role in the development of the package. We have regular meetings with GoM during the preparation of the package, and in fact we also gave the Department of Transport up from London to talk through the Package

at various stages, so that we are assured we are giving them what they want, in terms of how it's being presented and the issues that are being put forward - what we don't want at the end of the day is a document that they throw in the bin because we aren't following the guidelines.

Keith Moores,  
Liverpool City Council.

What we look at mainly really is the package, because what we're looking for is an integrated approach, and co-operation and partnership between the five (district) authorities and Merseytravel, the PTA. So we go to London to talk to Department of Transport officials and put the best gloss we can on the submission: it's called a series of bilaterals, because like most jobs in the Regional Offices, we face both ways. One is towards the local authorities and PTA, and the other is towards our policy colleagues in London, and we tend to have to explain one set of people to the other. In this case, we have to encourage our local authorities and PTA to put forward the best package bid possible, to conform to government objectives, to produce all the right sorts of buzzwords, partnership and enterprise etc, and also to exhibit genuine partnership.

Peter Wilson,  
Government Office for Merseyside.

Thus, in order to win maximum funding under the package system, the Merseyside regime was required to submit rail development policies which were in tune with central government's core economic development priority of achieving modal shift:

Strategies are needed for reducing car dependency (and) promoting quality alternatives.... the Package Approach continues to be a cornerstone of the Department's local transport policy, and the main source of funding for the alternatives to the private car.... in considering local authority bids for Package funding, Ministers will be looking for clear evidence of the development and implementation of firm plans to influence car use.

Department of Transport (1996a: 2).

Specifically, such detailed scrutiny of the various elements of the package submission by central government according to their criteria brought the application of 'Section 56' restricted cost benefit appraisal to much smaller schemes than was the case in Strathclyde:

Schemes over £2m.... require a full economic appraisal.

Department of Transport (1996b: 30).

We're looking for net present value. On the major schemes (over £2m cost), there are calculations we make on net present value. So obviously, if something had a negative NPV there would be a major question mark against it - but also in terms of the Package as a whole, we're given similar guidelines (from central government) and the local authorities are given guidance in terms of what the priorities are.

Peter Wilson,  
Government Office for Merseyside.

Crucially, such rigorous application of quantitative appraisal techniques, which exclude user and non-user social benefits in favour of the economic development aspirations of congestion relief and modal shift, had a profound impact on the distribution of power within the Merseyside rail transport policy regime. First, the near universal requirement for such appraisal required by central government, in contrast to the scope for more 'fuzzy' or qualitative application of strategic policy objectives evident in Strathclyde, legitimised an increased focus on the specialist knowledges and appraisal techniques to which senior officers clearly held predisposed affinity:

What in the end we're all here for, and this is a very honest statement which I do believe although I astound some people by saying it, is that there is no point in doing a rail development if it doesn't stack up financially, or it doesn't seem the right thing to do. So I'm quite happy to say, "no, we're not doing this because although it's within my province it doesn't stack up, it's not financially viable".

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

Similarly, the power of professional officers was further enhanced because, not only did government guidelines for the appraisal of competing schemes underline their predisposed beliefs at the expense of more qualitative local political or 'symbolic' aspirations, but also that in placing increased reliance on such highly technical and complex processes, the relative influence within the regime of the professional officers charged with the actual management of the appraisal techniques was similarly expanded:

There was already a process laid down by the Department of Transport in the Section 56 grant (procedure). That process hasn't changed because we've gone to the Package Approach, those applications still need to be demonstrated, beefed up a bit in fact, and the process is that the partners have to convince the rest of the partners that in fact a scheme is good value for money. In fact, we have a session about mid-July when each partner, we start off with a shortlist, and then it gets whittled down, and then we come to the decision, "well yes, that project has to be in the Package, and it has to be the number one priority", we have a process of conferencing where we all sit round the table and the sponsor of that project will have to convince the rest of his colleagues that it is worth going for.... these are the sort of things at officer level that we have to do to keep all of the partners on board.

It (a potential capital scheme) isn't personal or local aspirations or "we're going to have this because it's good for the borough", we've got to show why and how. It's got to shake out regarding good value for money, because otherwise the officers wouldn't allow it to go forward because it would fail. Never so far have the members in any district (council) not gone along with what the officers have said. There could be a situation where one district says, "I don't care what you're saying Mr Borough Engineer, we want this project", and that would be the end of the Package, the end of the process, but we haven't got there.

Mike Tew,  
Wirral Borough Council.

Furthermore, the identified concept of 'value for money' highlights not only the focus on identifiable economic benefits and the mediation of competing investment demands between local authorities themselves, but also the influence upon their joint spending priorities applied by the range of quasi-public organisations covering Merseyside county. Whereas Strathclyde Regional Council remained the overwhelmingly dominant source of capital funds for local rail network development in its area, a range of bodies across Merseyside, including the Merseyside Development Corporation, the Objective One Secretariat (a sub-unit of GoM)

and certain district councils as City Challenge grant holders, maintained significant funds for this purpose. Thus, the atomisation of the global capital allocation for rail transport investment on Merseyside between several smaller funding 'parcels', mirroring the county's fragmented structure of local governance, forms the second crucial additional factor in explaining the more extensive and intricate nature of the county's rail transport policy regime as compared to that in Strathclyde.

Indeed, several respondents revealed the profound impact on policy development of this fragmented distribution of capital consents:

The capital investment proposals which formed the Package Bid to the Department of Transport in July 1995 have been prioritised having regard to programme area impact (Objective One, City Challenge) and any other partnership elements.

Merseytravel (10/2/95).

Any project needs to be a win-win project in relation to all the partners involved.... we obviously take account of opportunities for raising finance in other areas than just our own straightforward credit approval from (central) government. As an example of that, we have a steady flow of European monies not least through Objective One resource, but we also have a Development Corporation here which has been quite generous in its allocations, particularly towards establishing new stations, and we have new partners who, from time to time, and these are largely City Challenge-type partners, who have wanted to promote public transport in their particular area.

Roy Swainson,  
Merseytravel.

Yes, our policy is driven in part by the availability of external funding - Roy Swainson will talk about partnership, we're very keen on partnership, and let's be absolutely realistic, partnership has its financial benefits.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

For major schemes, we'll look anywhere we can to get money. It's got to the stage now that we go round and tout ourselves for money. So yes, it's generally true that the availability of money basically dictates what happens, because the ability of this organisation to fund major capital schemes without investment from other people, well, they just wouldn't happen.

Cllr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.

They (Merseytravel) get the money that they can from anywhere, there's all kinds of pots like Objective One, City Challenge, all the rest of it.

John Ryan,  
Wirral Transport Users Group.

That such a 'partnership'-led policy network evolved in Merseyside to include a diverse range of institutions reveals the central role in decision-making of these bodies' potential financial contributions, a profound expression of their systemic power within the discourse of policy formulation. Furthermore, the adopted joint structures of investment prioritisation heavily depended on purely financial or other quantitative appraisals of competing schemes, and their matching to the differing qualification criteria of each available external funding source, implying an enhanced role for those individuals charged with the management of the process. Thus, the primacy of Merseytravel's senior officers' systemic and command power within the policy development process can be clearly linked to the requirement for specialised knowledge of the possibilities afforded by varying external fundholders:

I think Swainson has more in common with civil servants than he has with the councillors, because he's there to find ways of doing things, he basically accepts the parameters he's given and then he tries to find the most pragmatic way of doing things, and he's very good at tip-toeing his way through the politics - when people start bleating about things they can't do anything about, he would say, "you're not going to get 20% more from the government, so let's sit down and find out how we can co-operate".

Peter Wilson,  
Government Office for Merseyside.



Furthermore, as the most senior professional individual in the body statutorily charged with the development of local rail policy, Merseytravel's Director General can also be seen to have gained a measure of increased systemic power through his reputation as the focus of the such discussions:

I think we get the confidence of partners partly because we spread ourselves around. I mean, Roy Swainson is respected, he spends a lot of time going round talking to people. We meet at my level District planners and engineers all the time, every six weeks, and we explain what we're doing and try to work together, so it comes back to that word partnership again really. If you don't look like people in an ivory towers, cold and resistant to any suggestion, you get co-operation.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

Thus, the widely-held perception that the elected councillors of Merseyside PTA held relatively little power can be directly attributed to the construction of the local state. Significantly, the fragmentation of available capital funding, and the primacy within the instrumental policy regime of complex government-inspired quantitative appraisal criteria, 'tangible results', economic development aspirations and the related notion of 'value for money' over more overtly qualitative 'symbolic' social development aspirations, was perceived to be the factor limiting the role of the elected councillors, who clung to a social development-led definition of 'urban regeneration':

The elected members I've met, and I've been eleven years in Liverpool now, have been genuinely concerned individuals who are trying to do the best for the people they represent, but as the power they've been able to wield has been diminished, so has the quality of councillor diminished, because no one in their right minds would have responsibility without power, which is what they've got. So the ability of councillors to understand complex local government finance measures and all the rest becomes more and more limited, they understand less and less, and the officials dominate.

Peter Wilson,  
Government Office for Merseyside.

I don't think their (professional officers' and elected councillors') aspirations are generally in accordance, although you'll hear the opposite. The officers stand very much on "we'll develop this because we can justify it on the basis of demand, it reduces the Section 20 grant, and it satisfies the PTE's integration remit", so on those grounds they tend to be very pragmatic. Some of the members view it on more social grounds, and that the balance sheet should be secondary as a principle. But I have to say, when they come together as a group though, the balance sheet does override the decisions they take.

Chris Leah,  
Railtrack North West.

Despite the obvious spread of the policy regime network in Merseyside, those organisations holding less potential for financial input were attributed less influence within the development of policy as is consistent with the notion of the instrumental regime. Although rail industry sources were widely regarded as enjoying a close working relationship with senior Merseytravel staff, their role in decision-making, as in Strathclyde, was perceived as purely advisory, reflecting the contractual relationship of the Section 20 agreement:

Yes, although I've been closely involved with the Merseyrail network for over 11 years, (policy development) was largely done by the PTE, it's their role under the 1968 Transport Act. For British Rail, Section 20 was effectively a zero sum game, there were neither rewards or penalties for being local train service operators for the PTE. So it's their responsibility for taking initiatives for identifying capital projects. Although we advised, if the PTE said they wanted a new station at Bloggsville, the railway got on and did it, we didn't second guess their judgements.

Robert Goundry,  
North West Regional Railways.

A significant difference in the role of one group was identified however. In Merseyside, one respondent with previous professional experience of the Strathclyde rail network perceived an increased level of lobby influence within the regime for the trades unions, derived from their close connection with the PTA Chair:

The members do tend to get themselves involved in industrial relations issues, and I suppose that's since that's where Mark Dowd comes from: if there's a simmering

dispute, the members tend to get themselves quite involved in how that should be sorted out. It's not at all like Strathclyde where you have the Strathclyde Manning Agreement.

Chris Leah,  
Railtrack North West.

These sentiments were similarly expressed by a trades union representative, who highlighted the Authority Chair's role as conduit for the aspirations of union members:

Our involvement obviously varies from PTA to PTA. With Merseytravel, the Chair is a railwayman. Okay, he's a member of another union, but he does work well with us and keeps us advised of developments. We have worked together in the past and will work together in the future in terms of doing everything possible to protect services and jobs.

Andy Boyack,  
RMT North West.

However, despite the rail unions' proximity to the heart of the regime through their links to the Chair, and his close involvement in Merseytravel's ongoing station staffing policy (see 10.2.3), no respondents identified their exercising of real power over strategic network development policy, re-emphasising the Chair's secondary role in such decision-making. Similarly, no significant input from transport policy pressure groups in Merseyside was noted. This was widely perceived to be the case since, unlike in Strathclyde, where the Region's local rail network formed a significant concern for the several such groups constituted at the Scottish national level, there were no powerful English national or north-west regional groups actively involved in lobbying over Merseyside rail issues. Indeed, initial requests to a number of UK-wide transport campaign umbrella organisations revealed only one active group in Merseyside, the Wirral Transport Users Group, which was included in the range of interviews. Significantly, respondents from this group described its main function as a vehicle through which Merseytravel could disseminate information to local rail users, rather than a means to actively 'campaign' for particular policies or development strategies.

## 6.4 Summary

### 6.4.1 Characteristics of the rail transport policy regimes in Merseyside and Strathclyde

Although the range of individuals and institutions selected for interview in each of the Merseyside and Strathclyde study areas was broadly similar, parallel 'purposeful samples' for each having been deductively identified after exhaustive review of archive material (see 4.2.4), the interview evidence presented in this chapter has revealed substantial differences in the typology of, and positioning and power of key actors within, each regime.

The main similarity between Merseyside and Strathclyde was the consistent identification by respondents of a small core 'joint elite' at the heart of the regime, consisting of the PTA Chair and two or three senior professional officers, as predicted by Greer & Hoggett (1995) (see 3.2.2). In Strathclyde, both elected and professional members of the joint elite strongly supported the future development of the local rail network according to the 'expressive politics' of the Regional Council's *Social Strategy*, whose social development aspirations were wholly consistent with the approach of the 'symbolic' regime (Stone, 1993). In Merseyside, however, underlying tension in the definition of 'urban regeneration' was revealed between the PTA Chair, who remained committed to the incorporation within this strategic policy aspiration of social development goals as flagged in the joint board PTA's early policy statements, and the regime's professional officials, who managed an instrumental regime which promoted strict adherence to central government's broadly economic development criteria through the notion of inter-authority 'partnership' as the best means to secure additional funding for rail transport development in the county, and thus achieve 'tangible results'.

Equally, the balance of power between the two elements of the joint elite was perceived to differ fundamentally between areas. In Strathclyde, both observers and those who had held the position themselves, located the Roads & Transportation Committee Chair as the pinnacle of the decision-making structure. The role of the Regional Council's ruling group as a forum for the expression of wider support in favour of the Chair's aspirations was identified.

In Merseyside, however, the senior professional officers of the PTE were unanimously regarded as the dominant partners in the joint elite, and thus in the regime as a whole. This can be directly attributed to the fragmentation of the institutions of local governance in the county, which maximised their systemic and command power. In contrast to Strathclyde, where the few public sector bodies outside the Regional Council with an interest in (but not statutory powers) relating to rail transport, such as the enterprise companies and district councils, assumed background 'consultee' roles in policy development at the margins of the

regime, professional officials from the Merseyside Development Corporation and the Government Office for Merseyside attained a much more powerful position in the policy network, derived from their potential to release capital funds for rail infrastructure development. Thus, in regime terminology, systemic power, founded on available 'investment potential', was distributed between a more diverse range of institutions in Merseyside than was the case in Strathclyde.

Equally, the county-wide *Package Approach* to capital funding applications for Merseyrail development reinforced the power of the five borough councils alongside Merseytravel itself. Since policy priorities were agreed across the package 'partners' through a process of bargaining of each council's own funding consents in order to win the 'selective incentive' of increased central government funding for the county as a whole, the adopted joint policies were required to demonstrate better 'value for money' than alternatives. This was further enhanced by the emphasis placed by the centre, through the Government Office for Merseyside, on effective quantitative evaluation of even relatively small capital schemes (less than £2m cost) within package bids according to the economic development criteria of 'Section 56' appraisal methodology, which focused on quantifiable 'tangible results' such as modal shift and reductions in road congestion.

This highly technical process of policy prioritisation in Merseyside, where the successful management of the regime depended on officers' professional knowledge of central government priorities, related quantitative analysis techniques and the opportunities for additional funding from sources outwith the local councils themselves, stands in stark contrast to Strathclyde where no such comparable system operated. Within the Strathclyde regime, the absence of bodies other than the Regional Council holding prescribed funds for rail transport investment reflected the main focus of policy debate back to the joint elite itself. The degree of autonomy offered to the Council to spend its single large capital consent for rail transport investment projects as it saw fit concentrated decision-making power in the most senior positions of SPTE and the Chair of the Council's Roads & Transportation Committee. Indeed, since both councillors and officers were firmly committed to the aspirations of the *Social Strategy*, the mediation of such conflict between the actual policy preferences of the professional and elected components of the Strathclyde joint elite as did exist, concentrated on the best policies through which to achieve such objectives, rather than the definition of these objectives themselves. Notably, despite the general 'bias' in urban policy regimes towards the systemic and command power of officers (Stoker, 1995) as seen in Merseyside, which is derived from the application of their professional resources and knowledge, Strathclyde respondents consistently identified the elected Chair as the pinnacle of the decision-making structure, pointing to the dominance of some other form of power within the Strathclyde regime.

The following two chapters, which analyse in detail the actual development of rail transport policies in Strathclyde between 1986 and 1996, therefore illustrate how the two successive Strathclyde Chairs were able to build substantial support across the regime for their particular policy preferences, which on several occasions were at odds with those of the professional officers from within SPTE. The assembly of coalitions of regime members with differing strategic objectives in support of particular projects, and the impact of pressure group lobbying on the wider Regional Council, emerge as key factors. Subsequently, the parallel chapters focusing on Merseyside reveal how the diffusion of capital funding across a range of governmental bodies impacted upon the actual policies developed in that region, and ensured the relative isolation of elected councillors from the decision-making process.

## **7 Major development projects in Strathclyde**

### **7.1 Introduction**

#### **7.1.1 The development of new rail assets in Strathclyde**

### **7.2 Project histories**

#### **7.2.1 *CrossRail***

#### **7.2.2 Glasgow Airport rail link**

#### **7.2.3 *Strathclyde Tram***

### **7.3 Summary**

#### **7.3.1 Strathclyde as a 'symbolic' regime**

## 7.1 Introduction

### 7.1.1 The development of new rail assets in Strathclyde

This chapter seeks to elaborate the indicative model of the Strathclyde rail transport policy regime outlined previously by analysing the ways in which three major rail development policies in the region evolved after 1986. Although the projects chosen have yet to advance to construction, they are those of the greatest capital cost promoted during the study time frame, and formed the focus of the strategic rail development debate in Strathclyde during this period. By addressing the ways in which the process of power bargaining between regime members was played out in these cases, it is possible to illustrate the actual operation of the local rail transport policy process in Strathclyde. The mechanisms through which actual policy outcomes were generated are revealed, providing a more detailed model of the composition, hierarchy and purpose of the regime, and reinforcing the categorisation of the Strathclyde regime as broadly 'symbolic'.

The evolution of each of the three policy initiatives is addressed in turn in order to identify how the institutions and individual actors incorporated within the local rail transport policy regime sought to influence the development of particular policy initiatives, and how their underlying predisposed attitudes to the role of urban rail transport and their goals and aspirations for the actual schemes concerned impacted upon the policy debate. It is possible to demonstrate why particular policy preferences were generated, illustrating the level of success each regime member achieved in attempting to influence the direction of the policy development through application of their own power resources. The structure and hierarchy of actors in the policy network is exposed. The recurring direction of local urban rail transport investment in Strathclyde towards particular policy aspirations will be shown to verify the dominance of certain strategic themes centred around the application of the Regional *Social Strategy*, and the concentration of power in the hands of the Chair of the Regional Council's Roads & Transportation Committee highlighted in the preceding chapter.

## 7.2 Project Histories

### 7.2.1 *CrossRail*

Of the numerous rail improvement policies which have emerged as a result of the Regional Council's continuing commitment to its local rail network in Strathclyde, the evolution of the *CrossRail* project most clearly illustrates the mediation of conflict and expression of power



within the Region's urban rail transport policy regime. The CrossRail scheme was designed to alleviate the restriction to movement imposed by the River Clyde through the provision of an additional linkage between the north and south bank electrified rail networks by means of the existing City Union Line (see 5.4.2), closed to passenger traffic since the 1960s, and the addition of two wholly new connecting lines, the St Johns Link, a short curve at the site of the former College goods yard to the north east of the city centre, and the Muirhouse Link, a similar curve to the south west. In so doing, rail accessibility would be extended across a widely-drawn city centre, rather than focusing on the two existing terminal stations. A number of new stations were envisaged along the route, at West Street, Gorbals, Glasgow Cross (known earlier as Trongate, see Figure 7.1) and High Street. With CrossRail, it would be possible to route southern electric services via Queen Street low level station and on to the west of Glasgow city centre, Partick and Dunbartonshire, and potentially to provide a cross-Glasgow route for longer distance trains from Edinburgh and Aberdeen to destinations in the south west including Paisley, Ayr and the proposed link to Glasgow Airport (see 7.2.2 below).

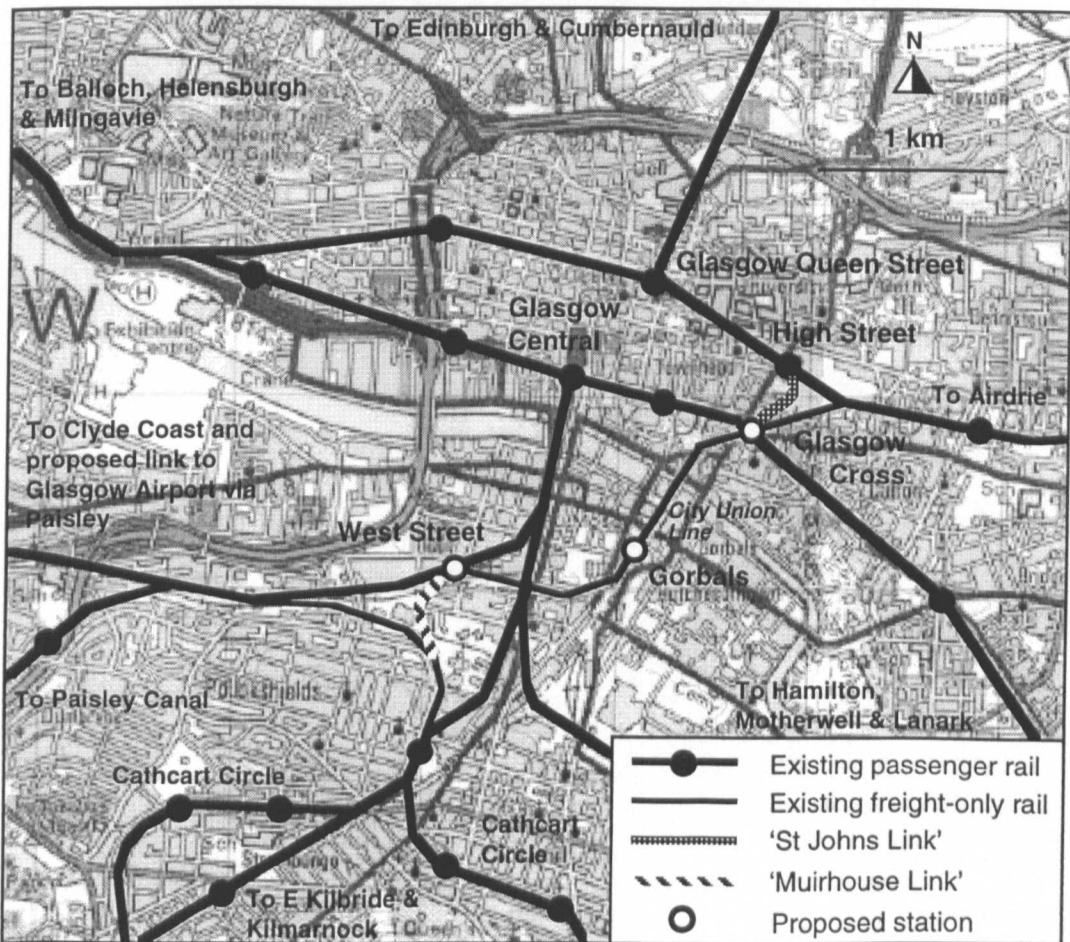


Figure 7.1 Route of proposed Strathclyde CrossRail. Crown Copyright reserved

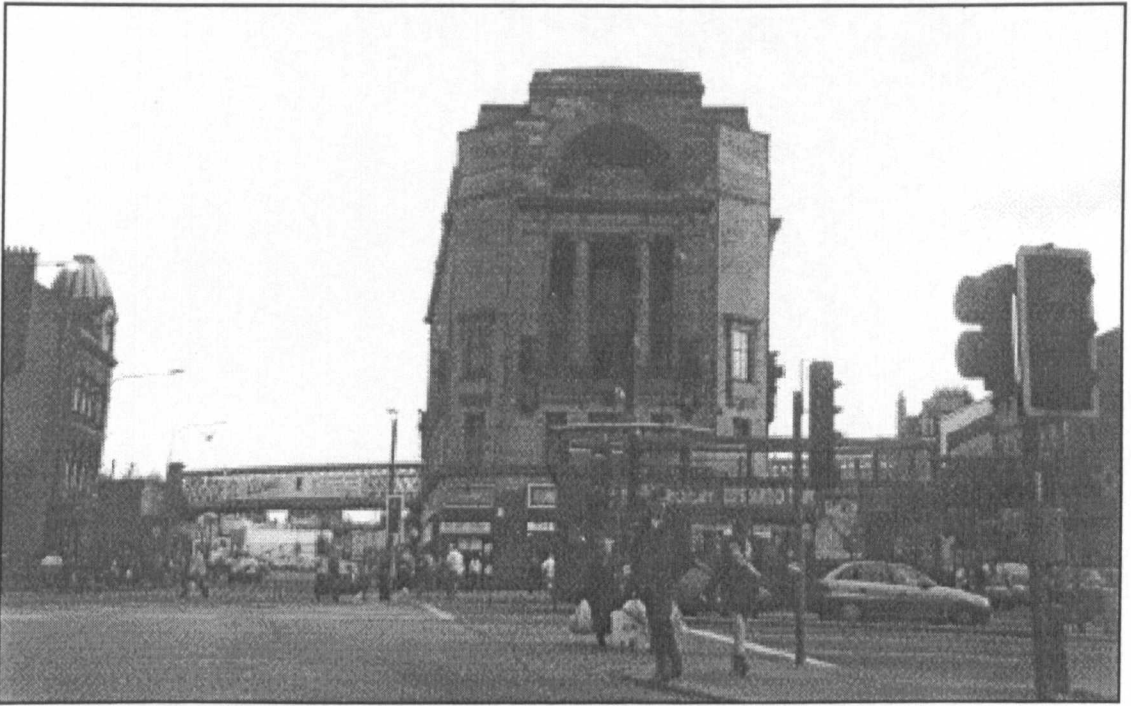


Figure 7.2 Route of elevated CrossRail line through Glasgow Cross.

The 1987 Strathclyde *Rail Review* summarised the Regional Council's prevailing policy position on CrossRail, that, whilst recognising the potential advantages of the link, its provision could not be justified as the scheme offered little potential for enhancing peak trip flows to the city centre's business and commercial areas:

There is no doubt that (CrossRail) would provide some benefits for present passengers, and would also generate additional journey opportunities, but these total benefits are not likely to be significant in relation to the capital cost of achieving the scheme.

Strathclyde Regional Council (1987a: 120).

Despite the project not featuring in the proposed investment plans emanating from the 1987 *Rail Review* appraisal, further work on the development of CrossRail was sanctioned as part of the ongoing *Strathclyde Transport Development Study*. However, by the publication of the first *STDS* consultative document, *Public Transport for the 21st Century* in December 1989, SPTE's opposition to the future development of CrossRail had become stronger:

The capital cost of the project has been updated by ScotRail to £21m excluding rolling stock. The patronage and time saving benefits have been evaluated using the *STDS* Study Model and further additional surveys carried out in the Central Area. The

evidence suggests that only one third of existing passengers would benefit from the new link and that two thirds would be worse off if any particular service were diverted via CrossRail.

It has been concluded therefore that there is no reason at this stage to change the decision endorsed in the 1987 Rail Review not to reintroduce traditional suburban rail services on these lines.

Strathclyde PTE (1989a: 12).

During interview, SPTE's Director General outlined that the Development Study's conclusions on the potential value of CrossRail rested on the quantitative social cost benefit analysis applied by Study Team's professional staff, and in which he had substantial experience, and for which, considerable affinity:

There's obviously a benefit in running through the city centre rather than to and from the city centre in that it opens up extra journey opportunities and reduces interchange for those who can take advantage of it. But it's not as beneficial overall as you might think from those two very desirable effects, because by taking the train to Queen Street Station you're adding something like 8 minutes to the present journey time to Glasgow Central. The other point of course is that the vast bulk of people even on through rail services do travel to and from the city centre.

Everything we've done on railways until now we've been able to do on a strict application of social cost benefit analysis. The measurable benefits to people in terms of reduced journey times, savings in congestion, whether it's user or non-user have always been justified against the capital cost over the period of the investment.... CrossRail does not meet the criteria, it is not justified by any social cost benefit analysis. As things stand, with present users, more people have disbenefit than have benefit quite frankly. So it's not justified, and on *our* terms we said, "well, we really can't recommend this to the (Passenger Transport) Authority".

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

The 1992 *Development Study Stage 2 Progress Report* details the social cost benefit calculations underlying professional negativity towards the CrossRail scheme. In particular, that the nature of the project was to enhance the interconnectivity of the existing rail

network rather than extend its catchment to new areas not only limited its potential to express *Social Strategy* goals, but also limited its direct financial viability, since "the reason the financial performance of the scheme is so low is that any existing rail passengers who benefit from the scheme would pay no additional fares" (SPTE, 1992: 26).

	Financial Appraisal (£m)	Social Appraisal (£m)
Capital Cost (1991 base)	7.5	7.5
St John's Link (including High St station)	7.7	7.7
Tron Line electrification; stations (Glasgow X £2.5m, Gorbals £0.6m, West Street £0.6m)	15.2	15.2
Muirhouse Link	7.8	7.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23.00</b>	<b>23.00</b>
Additional Annual Operating Costs	0.146	0.146
Additional Annual Revenue	0.387	0.387
Annual Value of Social Benefits	--	0.87
Present Value of Capital and Social Benefits	14.63	15.94
Present Value of Revenues	3.76	--
Present Value of Social Benefits	--	7.45
Net Present Value (Financial)	-10.88	--
Net Present Value (Social)	--	-8.49

Figure 7.3 CrossRail social cost benefit analysis summary.

Source Strathclyde PTE (1992: 27).

The doubts surrounding the CrossRail project expressed through SPTE's emerging social cost benefit analysis also proved powerful enough to convince ScotRail against support for the scheme, as demonstrated in the following extract, taken from a letter written to Glasgow City Council in 1991:

I can of course confirm that ScotRail is keen to support further investment in and enhancement of the local rail network. Funding for such works normally comes entirely from SRC/SPTE, and (such works) are developed by the SPTE who alone have the resources and expertise to assess their justification.

The case for (CrossRail) was reviewed again as part of the 1987 Strathclyde *Rail Review*, (which) identified that construction of the link would be somewhat more complex than its supporters perhaps appreciate.... I understand that market research undertaken by SPTE demonstrated that the majority of customers currently using Glasgow Central would be worse off if their trains were diverted via CrossRail. In these circumstances it does not surprise me that SPTE are not particularly keen on the scheme and I can see little benefit in (further) discussing the matter.

Cyril Bleasdale,  
ScotRail Managing Director,  
(21/5/91).

Indeed, during interview it was revealed that in 1996, the perception that the CrossRail scheme holds little commercial value for the company remained:

We can see very few benefits, more disbenefits. Even customer-wise, we can see very little benefit: in fact, the major disbenefit is that for people on lines like East Kilbride, it will take them anything up to 7 or 8 minutes longer to get into the centre of Glasgow. Certainly, we wouldn't put any of our own money into it.

Peter Newbould,  
ScotRail.

However, in the face of such professional ambivalence across SPTE and ScotRail, a considerable coalition of interests emerged supporting the CrossRail initiative. Led by the Scottish branch of the Railway Development Society (RDS), the *Glasgow CrossRail Action Group* actively lobbied the Regional Council for the adoption of the scheme in its capital programme. In addition to 14 of Strathclyde's MPs, the Group was supported by a variety of organisations including the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, the STUC, Glasgow for People and officers from Glasgow City Council's Central Area Planning Team.

The key to the subsequent strength of this coalition was the diverse range of its constituents, and that these institutions perceived the CrossRail link to be advantageous from both economic and social development perspectives. This was possible since CrossRail was promoted by its supporters as a 'symbol' of improved *integration* of the region's rail network, building on the system's comprehensive coverage, which most regime members perceived as its key strength, regardless of their underlying economic or social development leanings.

The RDS emphasised CrossRail's enhancement of individual access opportunities across the City of Glasgow under the theme of improved integration of the existing rail network:

While we accept that for existing passengers the majority of journeys by rail may be to central Glasgow, (CrossRail) offers the existing and potential traveller the benefits of connectivity and accessibility to activity centres, eg workplace, education, shopping and leisure within and across the central area.

Railway Development Society (Scotland) (1990: 2).

Similar social development benefits were also acknowledged by a second prominent rail improvement campaigner, who noted the potential for conflict between such strategic aspirations including those of the Regional Council's *Social Strategy*, and the more quantifiable economic benefits allied to economic development:

There's an issue here between if you just want a kind of broad brush approach to the thing and say that certain things are a good thing to do, as opposed to taking a more calculated approach which would do something like cost benefit analysis to see what you would get back in terms of each investment in terms of social and economic goals. My feeling is CrossRail is potentially very important, because as long as people from the south can only get as far as Glasgow Central and have to get out and break their journey, that's a serious impediment to the wider use of rail in the city....my feeling is that CrossRail is really needed to open up the whole system, and done the right way it could achieve an awful lot in terms of improving overall accessibility.... Strathclyde has tended to see rail as a way of getting commuters in and out of the centre of the city in the rush hours... they've not tried to make rail an alternative for cross-city journeys.

David Spaven,  
environmental campaigner.

The shape of the wider discourse between organisations involved in the CrossRail Action Group formed a clear example of coalition networking as active individuals sought to extend the range of support for the scheme. On one level, highly visible public lobbying took place in the pages of the local press:

Strathclyde's suburban trains still run on a crippled network as the result of the vital missing CrossRail link in Glasgow. Quite unbelievably in the 1990s, not a single train runs across Glasgow and the Clyde, eg from Partick to Paisley, Cathcart to Clydebank

or Cardonald to Coatbridge. All such trips for work, education, shopping and leisure involve the time wasting hassle, frustration and sheer disincentive of the enforced change of stations in Glasgow.... the persistence of this artificial gap only makes two isolated rail systems less efficient than they should be.

Ken Sutherland,  
Railway Development Society (Scotland),  
(Glasgow) Herald (29/11/1991).

In parallel with attempts to more widely publicise the CrossRail lobbying action, individual networking developed across interested groups. Stewart Leighton from Glasgow City Council described his involvement thus:

Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, I can remember that Ken Sutherland of the RDS was plugging away trying to get CrossRail resurrected. I became involved and the first thing we did was the Central Area Local Plan Consultative Document of 1986 where we advocated CrossRail.... and a wide cross-section of people gave support to the proposals.

Stewart Leighton,  
Glasgow City Council.

Subsequently, Leighton's views were adopted by the City Council's Central Area Planning Team as a whole. The improved network integration presented by CrossRail was both wholly consistent with their overall social needs perspective and their wider 'symbolic' strategy to improve the city's infrastructure to the level of competing cities:

CrossRail links the north and south rail networks, and in doing that you're obviously increasing the opportunities that are available for people in terms of leisure, employment and all the rest. We're trying to achieve a totality of a city which is able to compete at a European level, so we need to have high quality facilities like CrossRail.

David Reynolds,  
Glasgow City Council.

Similarly, Stewart Leighton also lobbied in support of CrossRail within the Strathclyde Labour Party, which was receptive to the proposal:

What we wanted was for the suburban rail system to merge into a true urban *network* through some changes that could be made to the infrastructure, and CrossRail was in many ways the crucial one.

Jim Taggart,  
Strathclyde Labour Party  
Transport Working Group.

In turn, the local Party and those senior Labour politicians outside local government, such as the MPs involved in the CrossRail Action Group, combined with other members to raise the profile of the scheme within the wider elected membership of the Regional Council:

Running in parallel with the Central Area Plan statement were the separate and individual efforts of the Railway Development Society who were in contact with a range of politicians. There were many senior politicians and MPs throughout the Strathclyde area who, when they were written to and when the various issues were explained, wrote in (to the Regional Council), hand written letters signed by themselves, statements giving support for this particular project... including Brian Wilson who was one of Labour's (parliamentary) transport spokesmen, which must have been seriously influential within Strathclyde.

Stewart Leighton,  
Glasgow City Council.

Crucially, however, the coalition extended beyond local political interests emphasising the perceived social development credentials of CrossRail to include several local retail and other business interests who, despite SPTE's apprehension at the project's worth in an economic sense, nevertheless perceived CrossRail as a powerful means to support movement and hence exchange within the Glasgow economy according to their own economic development aspirations:

I think a north-south link as is proposed through CrossRail in theory to me at least to me as a rail user is strategic, the priority.



The Railway Development Society were the most vocal group - they brought the thing to our attention. Then we had a consultative paper on it, and I know that the retailers, particularly in the Merchant City area were very keen. It's not necessarily the sort of thing to get people out of their cars, it's more about getting people by train into the (retail) thoroughfares.

Geoff Runcie,  
Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

Such an assembly of coalition support across a number of groups with differing aspirations is typical of the politics of the symbolic regime. Simply, through the promotion of the 'symbol' of improved local rail network integration and the subsequent potential for its wider use, the coalition in favour of CrossRail grew to incorporate not only local political interests who conceived the scheme as falling within the 'expressive politics' of expanding wider city accessibility for disadvantaged groups, but also local businesses promoting the scheme as an economic development aimed at supporting city centre activity. Thus, CrossRail illustrates the 'competitive agreement' type of coalition building characteristic of the symbolic regime, where

there is a relatively low congruence of (strategic) interests between partners, but still a requirement to work together and achieve a common objective. What is involved here is an issue network focused around a common concern but one where the various interests lack a deep, shared understanding.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 206).

Subsequently, after years of official opposition to the scheme, Strathclyde's 1992 consultation document *Travelling in Strathclyde* presented the CrossRail scheme to the public for popular support. However, Cllr Malcolm Waugh, the then Chair of the Region's Roads & Transportation Committee, explained in a critical passage of interview that his reasons for including CrossRail within the range of consultation options outlined in *Travelling in Strathclyde* were not wholly the result of pressure group lobbying:

CrossRail - Ken Sutherland and the Railway Development Society had been on at me for about four years about CrossRail before I spoke about it. But Ken's idea on CrossRail was to let the two sides of the rail network meet. I didn't see it as being beneficial in that way - I had a good network on both, I didn't need that, but when I thought of the

(Glasgow) airport link, I needed it then to get people from all over Strathclyde to the airport.

I've got to say, I listened to them (SPTE officers) for years, and I took their side for years because I reckoned I didn't need CrossRail. But when I came up with the airport idea, I needed CrossRail, so I suggested it. *Travelling in Strathclyde* was my idea, I wanted public reaction and support, because it was important that it took the public, because if I could prove that I had taken the public with me, there's no Labour Group in its right mind that would have resisted.

I needed that evidence - convincing the PTE wasn't bothering me, if I could convince the Labour Group then the PTE would start to go with me. That was one of the advantages of Strathclyde, because once I had convinced the Labour Group of a thing, I could go ahead.... At the end of it (the *Travelling in Strathclyde* consultation exercise) I was really pleased because you can gauge things - I had the confidence of the people, and I thought then that I could go back to the Labour Group and say "I want money for CrossRail".

Cllr Malcolm Waugh,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

Thus, in order to construct a strong enough case to overturn the Council's previous professionally-inspired policy on CrossRail within the Region's ruling Labour Group, Cllr Waugh added to his own systemic power by adopting another tactic associated with the symbolic regime: securing the added weight of public opinion through his own consultation exercise, since there exists "the need for popular participation for (symbolic) regimes" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 201):

(The force behind *Travelling in Strathclyde*) was Malcolm Waugh, he used it as a weapon. It was produced to get public ammunition to begin to stop the PTE's plan (to reject CrossRail). He said, "I'm going to put the plans (for CrossRail) out to consultation, there will be a public consultation in the summer, and we'll put out the PTE's plans, and we'll put out the other proposals, and we'll get the public to choose".

Respondent.

SPT couldn't continue to oppose the scheme (CrossRail) after the results of the consultation exercise.

Respondent.

Significantly, despite the apparent limitation of the impact of coalition lobbying claimed by Cllr Waugh in explaining his conversion to the support of CrossRail in connection with the development of the Glasgow Airport rail link (which is detailed below), such outside activity *was* reckoned by most respondents to have played a major role in shifting attitudes, by *leading public opinion* as expressed through the *Travelling in Strathclyde* consultation responses, which recorded 63.5% support for the scheme. Thus, the expression of public support played a vital role in sustaining the coalition in favour of the CrossRail project. Notably, Councillor Waugh's actions reflected those of councillors as defined by the 'legal-institutional' model of local democracy, in that he represented a 'conduit' for the conveyance of public opinion to the very heart of the local policy regime.

Indeed, circumstance dictated that such lobbying was to play a further role in the eventual adoption of the project. In spring 1994, before firm plans for CrossRail had been incorporated into the Regional Council's capital spending plans, Cllr Charles Gordon was elected to the Chair of the Roads & Transportation Committee. He explained his role in re-positioning the Council's official stance:

(That CrossRail finally became a preferred scheme) is my doing. When I took over as Chairman in 1994 I made up my mind what I wanted.... On CrossRail, which I knew as the St John's Link in my NUR days, from time to time, the NUR would consider RDS and SAPT material, and we would support the St John's Link. So, I was responsible for reviving it. (However) it's fair to say that there was a great deal of ambivalence professionally within the PTE and the railway industry about CrossRail and that's understandable to an extent, because what people have to bear in mind about CrossRail is that it's been rather simplistically portrayed arguably by people like the RDS, with this idea that you'll be able to go from anywhere to anywhere - you're always going to have to change for some journeys. The other thing is that a lot of commuters who currently quite handily come in to Glasgow Central are going to be diverted away round CrossRail, and they may not be pleased about that.

The professional ambivalence was to do with the appraisal, the economic analysis. Now, I don't accept this type of analysis in itself applied to public transport, because we've got social and environmental responsibilities as an Authority that we have to discharge. And indeed there's wider responsibilities, you know, travel to, access to new

job opportunities.... I think there's got to be some vision and a bit of a leap of faith - I don't think other things like the Manchester Airport rail link would ever have been built if people had been solely influenced by what the sheer technical and economic appraisals had thrown up.... these decisions have got to be taken with a bit of strategic vision, because at the end of the day, they're political decisions. Decisions about big schemes like CrossRail can't just be left to the boffins.

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

The significance of Cllr Gordon's statement refers back to the earlier paradox between the Council's 'symbolic' social policy goals and methods of quantifiable scheme appraisal associated with the 'tangible results' of economic development. Although both the elected Chair and PTE professional staff shared the same general aspiration to apply the policies of the *Social Strategy*, their predisposed attitudes to appraisal methodology reflected a clear divergence in approach. For the professionals, the key to improving appraisal methods in order to account more fully for *Social Strategy* objectives was to extend the range of factors included in the analysis beyond those based on movement criteria accepted by central government and used in the earlier 1987 *Rail Review*:

The full effect of both user benefits and non-user benefits is not taken into account by the government, they only take into account what is clearly measurable, such as congestion relief and the associated reduction in accidents. But the wider non-user benefits such as the reduction in pollution, or noise and intrusion (of car traffic) are not taken into account.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

However, even this extension of the appraisal criteria was not sufficient to satisfy the two Committee Chairs, who, in common with other coalition members, perceived the benefits of CrossRail in even wider terms. Despite the apparent potential social disbenefits of the scheme derived from the diversion of services away from their existing termini revealed by quantitative analysis, the Chairs highlighted the possible improvement in the future overall levels of accessibility across the city implied by the provision of cross-city rail services via the new route could enhance the *potential* access to urban facilities, such as employment, for disadvantaged and other social groups. Indeed, Cllr Gordon's assertion that this more "strategic vision" should inform the direction of investment was repeated by a

another experienced observer, who agreed that this “leap of faith” towards a more qualitative application of aspirations of the Council’s *Social Strategy* was the key to unlocking more widespread support for CrossRail:

I think professional opinion was formed largely on the basis of a comparison of costs and benefits.... it was always difficult to (demonstrate) the benefits other than in quite a wide context, because in terms of the main movements of people to the centre of Glasgow, there aren’t really that many beneficiaries from the CrossRail scheme. I think the fact the decision was changed reflected to some extent perhaps their looking more closely at the benefits and saying, “well, maybe there are greater benefits, maybe there are benefits in terms of city centre regeneration, maybe there are in terms of just widening the opportunities of the network”. But all these things need to be a bit of an act of faith because it’s very difficult to say that they will materialise, and some of the benefits aren’t strictly transportation benefits, they’re wider benefits for the city. So I think SPTE’s professional opinion initially was based on that kind of analysis.

(However) I think political opinion was probably always at least favourable towards the scheme, there was always a political desire to see it happening in a wider sense, both in terms of the local (Glasgow City) Council and in terms of other groups that were seeking to have an influence, and that undoubtedly grew, and eventually the Regional Council said the scheme was one that they wanted to have, and in the end, if they decide that’s what they want to see promoted, the PTE had no option but to go ahead (although) some people there still think the economic case is fundamentally weak. But undoubtedly, it was a lot of political pressure that brought the scheme into the programme, and that pressure came both from within the wider Council and people acting on the Council.

Respondent 15b,  
Strathclyde local governance.

Certainly, CrossRail is a case in point - there was a groundswell of opinion (in favour) even although from a professional standpoint it was hard to justify under the rules we applied, the cost benefit analysis which only takes account of specific effects, not the wider regenerative effects we’re trying to obtain in terms of *Social Strategy*.... it’s now being viewed as part of the much wider scene of the regeneration of Glasgow, to encourage more people to actually move more widely, to brown site developments, to travel more easily. So it’s the stimulus to regeneration, relocation etc that will come in the future, that we weren’t taking account of before that has made the difference.

(And) there is the complete public perception and all the rest of it...., it's just a general mood.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

That the final adoption of CrossRail was due to the "general mood" in its favour is highly significant. In a powerful section of interview text, Cllr Gordon expressed that the most visible lobbying efforts of some transport interest groups were in fact counterproductive, reinforcing the perceptions of several interviewees outlined in Chapter 6, that the Strathclyde regime adopted a generally 'exclusive' stance towards organised local political action:

I think sometimes people assume that either it's difficult to get to us or that they can somehow get more leverage if they issue a proclamation in the Glasgow Herald and then come and see us and they're in an entrenched position. It maybe says something about the style of pressure group politics in this country rather than about public transport per se.... (although) I think railway pressure groups in particular tend to be a bit self-opinionated. (This is) not to say that councillors have closed minds - councillors can be influenced, but we're influenced by pressure groups and individuals who first of all conduct themselves in a courteous fashion, and don't see the debate as a chance to score points publicly. It's maybe an obvious point, but if someone wants to influence us, the first thing they should do is try to meet us privately and have an exchange of views, and to try and understand the reasoning behind our position as well as expecting us to understand theirs - if people want to influence us, they should avoid megaphone tactics in my view, because sometimes that can be counterproductive.

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

A similar opinion was also expressed by another observer:

some (pressure groups) do far more harm than good because they refuse to accept an opinion that differs from their own...., and I think that stridentness can put people (in the PTA/E) off.

Respondent 15a,  
Strathclyde local governance.

This evident conflict between senior policy-makers and certain 'excluded' pressure groups at a public level reinforces the view expressed in several further comments that the strength of such groups' influence on policy-making was obtained through *secondary* lobbying of the wider Council membership, and other potentially influential individuals. In this way, the groups' highly visible promotion of CrossRail through the media generated increased support for the project not through direct influence on the joint elite itself, but by further extending the supportive coalition seeking to act upon such key individuals (see Figure 7.4 below):

I think groups like Glasgow for People and the Railway Development Society are well known locally, in the press, and I'm sure people like local MPs who have become involved (in promoting CrossRail) were fairly heavily lobbied by the (pressure) groups.

John McCormick,  
Scottish Association for Public Transport.

I think the way pressure groups have influence varies, and probably the most positive way they do is actually through influencing the local (council) members, because in the end it's they who make the decisions and it's getting to them that's the most effective way of doing things.

Respondent 15b,  
Strathclyde local governance.

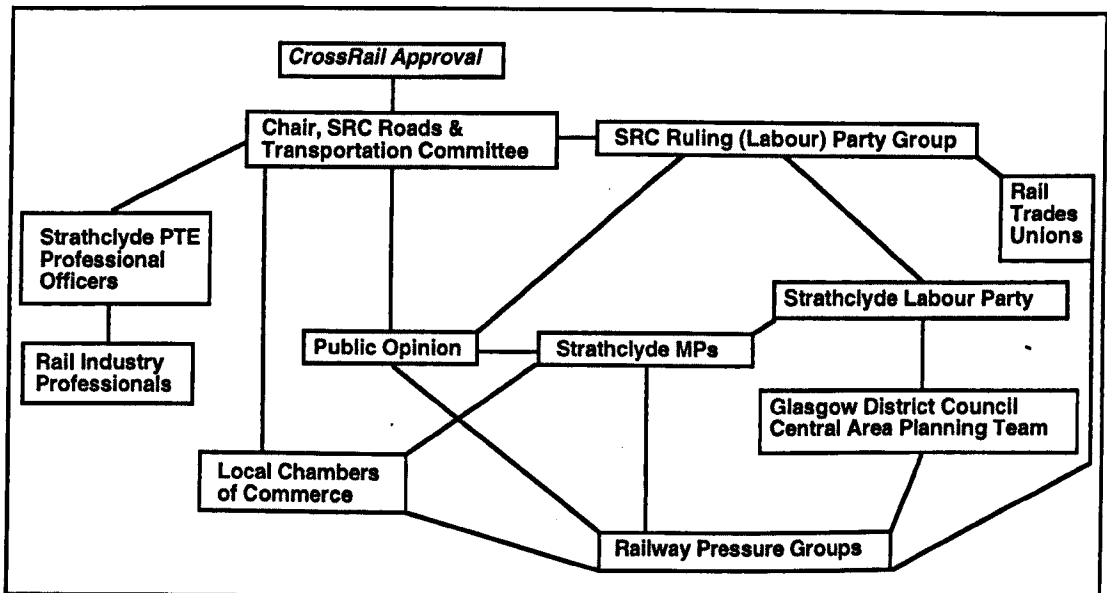


Figure 7.4 *CrossRail* coalition structure.

Thus, by 1996, despite a more detailed capital cost estimate of around £80m, some 3 times that of the STDS estimate on which SPTE's unfavourable social cost benefit analysis had been based, a combination of the Cllr Waugh's systemic power backed up by public opinion and the impact of the growing coalition reflecting Cllr Gordon's own preference for the scheme ensured CrossRail had become firmly established as a key element in Strathclyde's rail transport capital programme:

To enhance Strathclyde's prospects for the future, and with the overall aim of improving the quality of our environment, Strathclyde Regional Council, in 1992, published *Travelling in Strathclyde - An Integrated Transport Strategy for the Region*. The CrossRail scheme is within this package and received widespread public support during the consultation exercise on the strategy, confirming earlier support from the public and a wide variety of organisations.

CrossRail is a new passenger rail line which, when developed, will link the Glasgow North Electric Services with other electrified services to the south of Glasgow. It will provide a wider choice of city centre destinations and will create many additional opportunities for through journeys and interchange, I believe it will provide a great benefit to Strathclyde's citizens.

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde PTE (1994).



### 7.2.2 Glasgow Airport rail link

The possibility of a rail link to Glasgow Airport was first officially aired by Strathclyde Regional Council in the 1987 *Rail Review*. At this time, the facility owners, Scottish Airports Ltd (part of BAA plc), embarked upon a major terminal expansion programme in advance of gaining 'gateway' status for Glasgow as the prime Scottish entry point for transatlantic and other long haul air traffic. Research into the potential benefits of an airport rail link therefore began against a background of substantial projected increases in future passenger throughput and heightened competition from other airports in the UK, particularly Edinburgh and Manchester. Although the congruence of the Glasgow Airport rail link with the Regional Council's *Social Strategy* was largely limited to the improvement of access to employment at the airport, the link primarily representing an economic investment aimed at promoting growth in the Strathclyde economy, its promotion was consistent with the notion of a 'symbolic' rail transport policy regime in Strathclyde, since it forms a prime example of the 'expressive politics' which generates

the idea of 'our locality in competition with others', (which) is often used to mobilize local interests in economic development. It may be important to individuals to live in a city that people can be proud of, that is 'in the vanguard', 'world class', and outcompeting other localities.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 204).

The Regional Council supports the development of Glasgow Airport as Scotland's major airport with 'gateway' status to ensure wherever practicable that international travellers to and from Scotland can be catered for satisfactorily without the necessity to travel via England.

On this basis there would be merit in provision of rail connections to the airport. The potential for this has already been examined having regard to the rail facilities in use at Heathrow, Gatwick, Birmingham, Southampton and Teesside, and under consideration at Stansted, Manchester and Newcastle airports.

Strathclyde Regional Council (1987a: 111).

Within the overall framework of a 'symbolic' airport rail connection, three possible approaches were identified for evaluation. The first, an extension of the Glasgow

Underground system was quickly dismissed due to the limited size of the rolling stock and the disadvantages of disrupting the network's self contained circular service pattern. The second approach was to create a direct heavy rail connection running non-stop from Glasgow Central station to the airport by means of the old disused Arkleston route to the east of Paisley with an additional short extension into the terminal complex. That this was the only potential heavy rail corridor put forward can be linked to the previously identified predisposition reflecting the engineering-based background of SPTE's senior officers, specifically that realistically, new rail infrastructure could be provided only in established urban areas by the re-use of historic rail solums and not the construction of disruptive completely new alignments:

A western line was considered because it would link the airport with Paisley Gilmour Street station, however this option was discarded very quickly due to the great difficulty of achieving a satisfactory alignment due to the present road and rail routes and the flight path approaching the airport.

Strathclyde Regional Council (1987a, 7.9-3).

My main thing was that we already had a rail line that went past the airport, so why couldn't we divert that and get into the airport? At first, the officers said "no, it can't be done", the roads would all need to be altered, and the PTE said it couldn't be done because of something or another.

Cllr Malcolm Waugh,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

The final option was more revolutionary - in order that the town of Paisley itself and further destinations other than Glasgow be served, a discrete 'people mover' automatic light rail shuttle route such as that previously established as an inter-terminal link at Gatwick Airport (Figure 7.5) was proposed.



Figure 7.5 Gatwick Airport light rail 'people mover'.

The tone of the interim statement on the development of the airport rail connection research exercise included in SPTE's 1989 *Public Transport for the 21st Century* consultation document illustrates the in-house professional study team's emerging enthusiasm for the people mover option, which satisfied their own 'symbolic' preferences for a 'high-tech' solution which maximised the integration of the airport link with the region's already comprehensive rail network:

The direct conventional rail link would provide the shortest in-vehicle journey time. However, to provide a service more frequently than half-hourly would involve much higher costs in providing additional rolling stock. The benefits of this link would also be restricted to those travelling to or from central Glasgow.

A link to Paisley Gilmour Street (station) which is approximately 1.5 miles south of the airport would connect with existing fast high frequency rail services to Glasgow, Ayr, Largs and Inverclyde. The short distance (about twice the distance between the rail station and Terminal 2 at Gatwick, presently served by a similar system) would enable the link itself to be provided on a very high frequency (up to 10 per hour) thus allowing a short overall journey time.

A grade separated automated people mover such as a monorail would provide the necessary speed and convenience and would have additional benefits in promoting a

futuristic, high technology image of the Region.

Strathclyde PTE (1989a: 20).

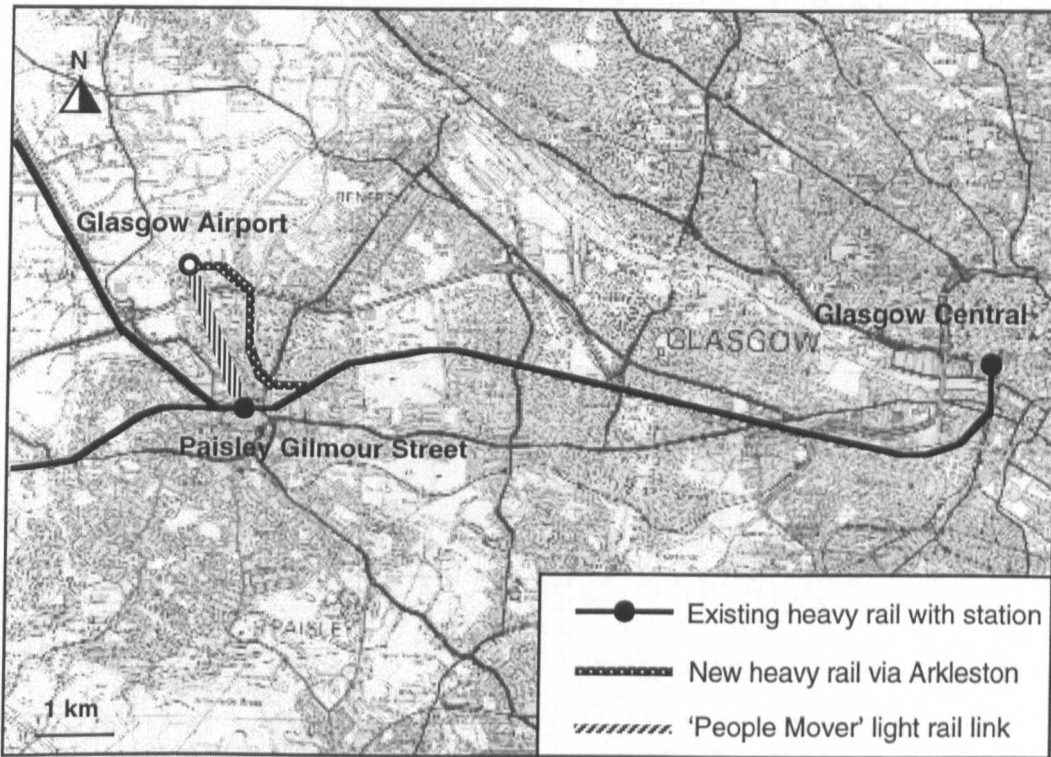


Figure 7.6 1987 Rail Review Glasgow Airport rail link options. Crown Copyright reserved

Further development of the two options in advance of the STDS's *Stage 2 Progress Report* in 1992 by means of financial analysis techniques, revealed a professional focus on quantifiable data similar to that in respect to the CrossRail scheme, although as the airport link choice was between two schemes serving the same destination, no attempt was made to account for the attached social costs and benefits, which were assumed equal for each option. In particular, the relative benefits of both schemes were subject to the weight attached to small variations in the average estimated waiting time for each mode:

	<u>Direct Rail</u>	<u>Rapid Transit ('People Mover')</u>
Walking Time (mins)	10	10
Waiting Time	08	06
Journey Time (to city centre)	<u>13</u>	<u>15</u>
Total	31	31

It can be seen that-

- The overall journey time would be the same for both options
- The walking time would be the same for both options

The slightly longer journey time by the rapid transit link is balanced by a shorter total wait time due to the very high frequencies of both the rapid transit system and the rail service at Paisley Gilmour Street.

It is normal practice in transport planning to assume that passengers will much prefer to spend time in transit than walking or waiting. On this basis the rapid transit link should be more attractive than the direct rail link based on the above analysis.

Strathclyde PTE (8/9/92).

The combination of these assumptions and the extra journey opportunities (and therefore patronage) offered by a change from people mover to conventional rail at Paisley Gilmour Street produced a full financial analysis outcome in favour of this option:

	<u>Direct Rail</u>	<u>People Mover</u>
Present value of Capital and Operating costs	£52.02m	£38.26m
Present value of Revenues (assuming 5% pa traffic growth, fare £1.35)	£29.13m	£36.99m
Present value of Revenues (assuming 5% pa traffic growth, fare £1.60)	£33.76m	£43.00m
Net present value of scheme @ fare £1.35	-£22.90m	-£1.27m
Net present value of scheme @ fare £1.60	-£18.30m	+£4.75m

Figure 7.7 Glasgow Airport Link - Appraisal Summary.

Source Strathclyde PTE (1992a: 33).

Interview respondents also identified strong professional preference for the people mover option among the officers of SPTE, reflecting clear predispositions concerning not only the value of interchange to a range of destinations at Paisley, but also the potential afforded by new automated light rail technology and the quantifiable values of time:

I think that (the people mover was preferred by officers) was due to a number of issues.... it was taking the passenger to Paisley Gilmour Street linking into another high frequency rail service, and because it was taking you right into the network there, there was a range of destinations that you could get to. So the professional feeling was that in benefit terms that was better than what would be at best a 15-minute rail service directly to the airport, and that train perhaps able only to go to one place, the city centre.... essentially, I think the recommendation was again made after they weighed up the costs and benefits from a professional point of view.

Respondent 15b,  
Strathclyde local governance.

In strict cost benefit terms the people mover showed up best. The costs are very similar, but it actually gives you a quicker average journey time from the airport to the centre of Glasgow. It also means that by interchanging at Paisley Gilmour Street it gives you many more travel opportunities as well as catering for travel to and from Paisley itself. The point is that if it's a four minute frequency which is what we envisaged at the end, the average wait is two minutes, and I think the travel time would have been about four minutes, so from the terminal to the station that would be six minutes. And of course, the station is almost there - if you treat the station as almost a satellite terminal, part of the airport, people walk miles in an airport on travelators and don't think anything of it.... so the capital cost was similar, but in calculation terms there was more benefit from the people mover in terms of less average delay and also more travel opportunities, and of course the operational cost was less, because once you've paid for the infrastructure, these things would run automatically and it would be a lot cheaper.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

In many ways mirroring the process leading up to the adoption of CrossRail, the plans for a heavy rail link to Glasgow Airport re-emerged as a result of the efforts of the Roads & Transportation Committee Chair, Cllr Malcolm Waugh. In another crucial passage of

interview text, Cllr Waugh revealed the predispositions behind his favouring the conventional rail alternative and the ensuing discourse between himself and the main developers of the people mover scheme, the principal officers of SPTE:

I wanted something to the airport. We went down to see the people mover at Gatwick (Airport), and I've got to be honest, I wasn't too keen on it, although Steve (Lockley) (SPTE's Director General) was very keen. I would rather have had a direct rail line. To me, there was a lot of problems with the people mover, watching people with heavy luggage, and I thought, "that's not what I want, I want a direct line to the airport terminal".

They (officers) tended to talk about people who go to airports like, I suppose they were just used to flying up and down to London. But I didn't fly to London, I usually took the train, or indeed the bus, to see what it was like. I used to say, "well, that's all right if you've only got a briefcase, to step onto a people mover, but people going on holiday, they can have two or three heavy cases with them", and the people mover wasn't advantageous to them. So I wanted the rail link. Finally, maybe Steve would say I used my political power, I don't know, but it was obvious - CrossRail and the direct rail link was the way I saw it. Now I don't think Steve or Hamish Taylor (SPTE's Director of Technical Services) were ever fully happy with it, when the people mover was moved out - they saw it as a fast efficient way. It wasn't really fast, you know, a people mover doesn't really go that fast. I really think they were only thinking of people going to the airport, because of course it was termed the *people mover*, but what I had to convey to them was that it wasn't only people that would go on it - people going onto aeroplanes and going on holiday take clothes and other things with them! However, I've got to say that I used my political muscle, to decide that the people mover was out and it was a direct rail link that I wanted.

Cllr Malcolm Waugh,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

Once again, Cllr Waugh adopted the tactic of presenting the public with a choice between his preferred project, the direct rail connection, and that of SPTE professionals, the people mover scheme, in the *Travelling in Strathclyde* consultation document in an attempt to resolve the conflict by demonstrating general public support for his preference despite its apparently poorer performance under quantitative scheme appraisal.

The public consultation responses revealed that, despite clearly flagging the estimated cost differential (c£70m for the heavy rail line and c£25m for the people mover) and the lack of

potential interchange at Paisley, fully 71% of respondents favoured the direct rail option. However, professional doubts remained despite such overwhelming public support for the rail link:

I think from the beginning there was a strong political view that the people mover wasn't the right option to put forward - I think Malcolm Waugh wasn't too keen on it. Now whether that was a failing on the officers' part in not describing it properly to everyone, or whether it was a failing of the scheme, I don't know.

Respondent 15b,  
Strathclyde local governance.

This continuing professional ambivalence towards the direct rail link was clearly articulated in a report by SPTE's Director General regarding the outcome of the public consultation process. Reiterating the viewpoint that the advantages of the people mover scheme had not been properly understood, the document presented the perceived passenger time benefit analyses of both alternatives outlined above, claiming that

The questionnaire responses to *Travelling in Strathclyde* were heavily in favour of the direct rail link with 71% preferring this option compared with 29% for the rapid transit link. (However) it was only possible within the consultation document to give the briefest description of the two options and it is considered that these responses should not be given undue weight given the limited amount of information respondents had on which to base their judgement.

The main reason for preferring the direct rail link to the people mover option undoubtedly relates to the perceived greater convenience for passengers of a direct link to Glasgow city centre. The responses to the consultation showed a strong dislike of the need to change from the rapid transit link to a train at Paisley Gilmour Street station.

Strathclyde PTE (8/8/92).

Thus, there remained marked disagreement between Cllr Waugh as Chair of the Committee and the professional staff of SPTE as to the best choice of Glasgow Airport rail connection scheme, and both options continued to be developed. Further similarities between this conflict and that surrounding the appraisal of CrossRail can be seen in the unfolding of subsequent events. In the aftermath of the *Travelling in Strathclyde* consultations, a second transport policy coalition formed to press for the formal adoption of the heavy rail



connection as Strathclyde's preferred option for the airport rail connection at the expense of the people mover. In contrast to that promoting CrossRail however, the airport rail link coalition had no formal lead group or structure, and was composed almost entirely of a range of public sector institutions, with comparatively little input from transport lobby groups, who focused their limited resources on CrossRail.

The major similarity with the CrossRail group was, however, that the strength of the coalition lay in the fact that the airport direct rail connection fulfilled differing aspirations between the participants. On this occasion, the 'symbols' linking the disparate groups together were those of modernity and economic prosperity represented by an airport rail link, which was seen as essential if the region was to remain competitive with other urban centres that already had, or were developing, similar links. This united those groups which preferred a heavy rail link over the 'people mover', and those who focused, as did SPTE, on the need for the Airport link to serve the whole of Strathclyde, not just Glasgow city centre:

Airport links - people are promoting the scheme because basically Manchester has an airport link and so Glasgow needs an airport link, indeed, any major airport that's going to play a part and compete as an international airport, and international gateway needs a city rail link. That's a general proviso to start with.

Mary McLaughlin,  
Scottish Enterprise.

Our bottom line was to get a heavy rail link to the city.

David Reynolds,  
Glasgow City Council.

If you're serious about attracting inward investment, either from overseas or from other parts of the UK, you need an airport which has got good public transport links with the city centre, and at the moment, Glasgow doesn't have that. It's about the perception of what happens when business people get off at Glasgow Airport and get off the plane - do they have to get a taxi? At other airports, you can just jump onto a rail link and you're into the heart of the city.

Richard Leonard,  
STUC.

In addition to the perceived value of an airport rail link in increasing the vitality and attractiveness of Glasgow city centre, the prospect of a direct rail line connected to the already comprehensive Strathclyde local network presented considerable business potential to Scottish Airports Ltd, and to the other partners in the Glasgow Airport Initiative, a loose partnership organisation led by the local Renfrewshire Enterprise company geared to expanding the role of Glasgow Airport and its role in the wider Scottish economy. In this aspect, several coalition groups, although pressing for the direct rail connection option in opposition to SPTE, mirrored one of the Executive's principal professional aspirations underlying the people mover concept, that the development of any Glasgow Airport rail link should be focused on the potential afforded by for improved airport access across a much wider geographic catchment than merely central Glasgow:

The airport needs a rail link to improve its catchment area, to get more people to use its services.... it should be a commercial, viable proposition to help increase the catchment area for the airport, help the airport's business, therefore giving us better services and having spin-offs in terms of employment and all the rest of it.

Mary McLaughlin,  
Scottish Enterprise.

One of the problems with the rail link as it was planned is that it was developed almost as if it was a rail link to Glasgow city centre, and that's not how it should be developed.... the whole thing should be approached, the rationale of it, the ethos of it should about through links. In my opinion the rail link is not only about Glasgow, it's about hinterland markets like Edinburgh, Dundee, Perth, the north of England. To me, the principle of the rail link should be about opening up wider markets. Even the majority of local passengers are shuttle passengers, and the outgoing ones tend to come from well-to-do areas north and west of the city centre, Bearsden, Milngavie, Hyndland - these are the people who are travelling down to the airport.

Richard Maconachie,  
Renfrewshire Enterprise.

Our figures show that only something like 11% of passengers at Glasgow Airport have a final origin/destination within walking distance of Central Station. The rest are spread right throughout Central Scotland - the north side of the river, as you can

imagine from the business market for instance, a large proportion of our passengers come from Bearsden, Milngavie etc.

Ian McMahon,  
Scottish Airports Ltd.

(The role of the rail link) is as likely to be getting people to the city centre as getting people who are going to use the airport to the airport, traffic will be very much two-way, to avoid parking and walking through the rain to the terminal, and also so that holidaymakers from all around could get on a train straight to the airport.

Geoff Runcie,  
Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

Critically, despite being in accordance with one of SPTE's underlying motives for advancement of the people mover scheme, that any airport rail link should serve not only Glasgow city centre but the wider Strathclyde Region, these individuals maintained, as did Cllr Waugh, that such a separate light rapid transit linkage between the airport and the rail network was unacceptable:

What people want is they want to get on a train and know it's going to Glasgow Airport. People, especially when they go on holiday, want decisions made for them, you don't want to worry about "is this my stop?" You want to know for sure if this is where you get off, you don't want to worry about changing here or there. You have to make it simple to use, and that's why the people mover was perhaps perceived as one modal split too many.

Richard Maconachie,  
Renfrewshire Enterprise.

We're not convinced that the LRT link would work. In fact we're utterly convinced that it wouldn't work, because the average visitor or businessman coming here is not going to stand around, get an LRT link that winds around Paisley, to get off that and onto another train no matter how frequent they are and how smooth the connection is. It's

still a change of gauge, made more difficult since people often have luggage as well.

Ian McMahon,  
Scottish Airports Ltd.

It's the craziest thing you've ever heard of - people having to get off and onto another mode of transport.

Respondent.

On the basis of such coalition support for the his preferred heavy rail option, Cllr Waugh was finally in a position to dictate the future development of the project within the regime's joint elite:

Who came up with it (the people mover scheme)? It was the PTE that came up with it.... it was the officer side to start with, but then it became a political scheme when the individual in charge (Cllr Waugh) at the time said "I'm not having that".

Mary McLaughlin,  
Scottish Enterprise.

He (Cllr Waugh) told us that (SPTE) officers were instructed to draw up different plans for the airport along the lines of his plan (for a heavy rail link).

Jim Taggart,  
Strathclyde Regional Labour Party  
Transport Working Group.

That's how I got Strathclyde convinced - (I showed them) I'd listened to everybody but that I'd made up my own mind.

Cllr Malcolm Waugh,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

Therefore, in March 1994, a paper was presented to the Regional Council's Roads & Transportation Committee outlining the further development work undertaken on the Glasgow Airport rail link since the publication of *Travelling in Strathclyde*. Significantly, this acknowledged the influence of several coalition partners, stating that

wide ranging consultations were undertaken to ensure that the views of parties with an interest in the proposals were known and could be taken into account in assessing the options. The main parties involved in the development and the consideration of the alternatives in terms of practical feasibility were:

- ScotRail
- Scottish Airports Ltd
- Glasgow Airport Initiative
- Scottish Enterprise
- Renfrewshire Enterprise
- Glasgow Development Agency
- Strathclyde Regional Council
- Renfrew District Council.

Strathclyde PTE (4/3/94).

The following observations from a well-placed observer confirms the effects of the gathering consensus on the airport link project across the range of coalition organisations and public opinion:

In terms of the change in policy if you like, it was really a result of the outcome of the consultation process, which was very much against the people mover option and in favour of a direct rail link, and that was coming from the airport, although they were a bit ambiguous as they had been for many years. But also (there was) the Chamber of Commerce and a whole range of people who said, "the people mover is not the best way to serve the airport".

Respondent 15b,  
Strathclyde local governance.

Well, there was a perception that it (the people mover) was Mickey Mouse, that it wouldn't be robust enough to cater for high volumes, and heavy rail is perceived by many more people as being better. And of course heavy rail does offer the possibility

with CrossRail of more direct services as well. So it (the direct rail link) is basically the option which is, generally speaking, more publicly acceptable even though from a transport planner's point of view isn't as justified.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

Thus, a form of compromise between the parties was necessary. This rested on the fact that despite the people mover concept having been roundly rejected by both the coalition partners and Cllr Waugh, they concurred with one of SPTE's main professional standpoints underlying their choice of scheme, that the original Arklestone route was unsatisfactory in that it avoided Paisley and thus reduced the integration of the airport link with the wider Strathclyde rail network. Thus, a resolution to the conflict required a reappraisal of the potential heavy rail corridors, discarding the earlier predisposition that options should be confined to historic solums:

the latest studies undertaken by Strathclyde PTE into the practical feasibility of alternative suburban rail (alignment) options identified (two) alternatives (to the Arklestone branch).

Strathclyde PTE (4/3/94).

The report identified two further potential heavy rail alignments. The first route, that via Braehead and Renfrew was promoted by the independent consultancy 4 Bees Ltd in a study document (4 Bees Ltd, 1993) and also envisaged re-use of several abandoned rail solums, whilst the second, from near Paisley St James station to the west of the airport, followed the wholly new alignment originally rejected in the initial feasibility study carried out by SPTE as part of the 1987 *Rail Review* investigations. However, further more detailed consideration outlined that such both routes were feasible, albeit in each case requiring the demolition of several commercial and residential properties, and in the case of the St James option, the removal of a considerable tract of a local public park.

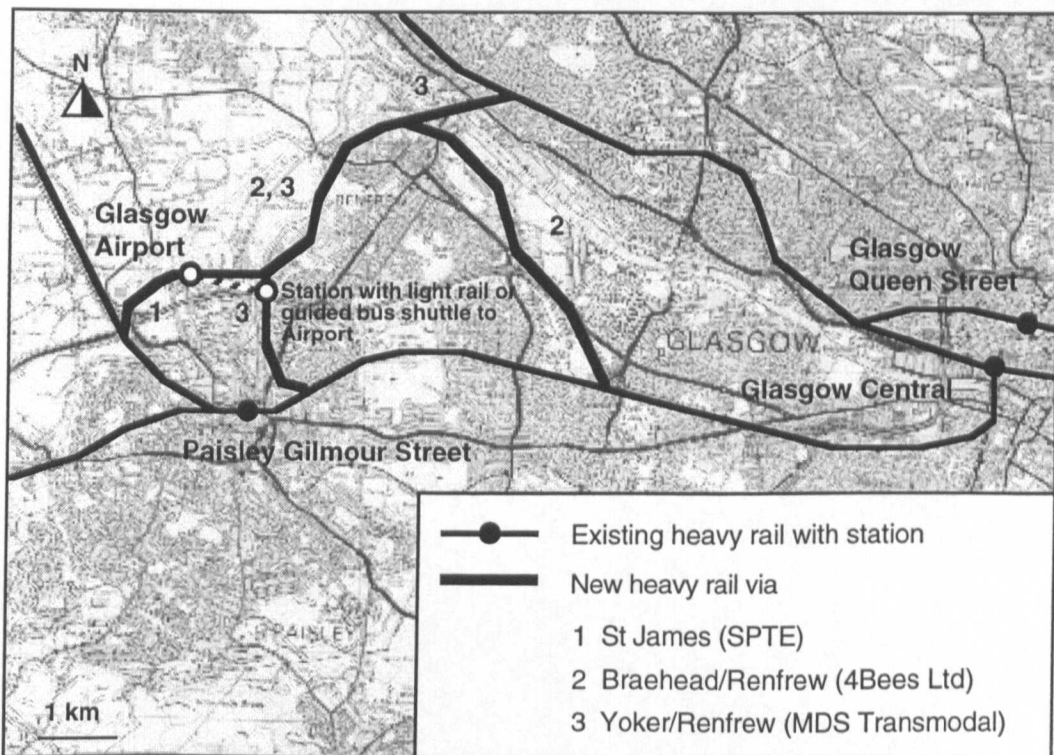


Figure 7.8 Further options for Glasgow Airport rail link, 1994. *Crown Copyright reserved*

The projected minimum capital costs of the alternative schemes were £28.5m for St James and £56.9m for the route via Braehead and Renfrew. Thus, since

Paisley would not be served by the route through Renfrew and Braehead (which) it is unlikely could be justified given the high cost and disruption to industrial and residential properties, and that the more direct of the two routes via Paisley St James is comparable in cost with the Arkleston and people mover options and would serve Paisley.... the St James option is therefore recommended for approval.

Strathclyde PTE (4/3/94).

Despite the apparent resolution of the Glasgow Airport rail link scheme controversy in favour of Cllr Waugh's preferred option a full seven years after the publication of the 1987 *Rail Review*, a further shift in Regional Council policy followed less than three months after the above recommendation was made. After his election to the Chair of the Roads & Transportation Committee, Cllr Charles Gordon sought to review the choice of airport rail scheme as part of his wider reappraisal of Regional transport strategy. With the precedent for a heavy rail connection set by the adoption of the St James option, Cllr Gordon initiated another round of consultation with coalition parties:

The original route choice was bedevilled by the fact that there were several options, and I wanted another one considered, crossing the Clyde at Yoker from the north which wasn't given consideration at the time, but when I became Chair I opened that one up again.

So in the last year of the Region, I held three seminars on Glasgow Airport access by road and rail. We tried not to identify a common solution, that would have been impossible, but we highlighted in an intelligent fashion the issues and the competing priorities.

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

He (Cllr Gordon) very helpfully set up three seminars which looked at the rail options and clarified a lot of the thinking on the matter.

Ian McMahon,  
Scottish Airports Ltd.

Through this further phase of consultation, the range of groups active in the development of the airport rail link project each put forward their own preferred alignment, with substantial support evident for the combination of a cross-Clyde route and the St James spur as identified by Cllr Gordon, and suggested by Scottish Enterprise as a result of their wider commissioned appraisal of potential access improvements across airports in central Scotland (MDS Transmodal, 1994):

Our view was that it should be done in such a way that it went through Renfrew, to put Renfrew on the rail map, and get a river crossing at the old Yoker power station site through the rail depot there and onto the (north electric) line near Garscadden so that the (North Electric) trains could be diverted to run to the airport.

Jim Taggart,  
Strathclyde Regional Labour Party  
Transport Working Group.



We are aware that there is an option put onto the table a little while ago from some consultants which suggested a new link off the Paisley line through the airport crossing the river, in fact to take the place of CrossRail, and in many ways that to us had more sense than other initiatives.

Peter Newbould,  
ScotRail.

I would actually prefer a through line.... coming over the Clyde at Yoker to Renfrew with a station there and then down to the airport and Paisley. That way you could have trains coming from Queen Street and beyond.

Richard Maconachie,  
Renfrewshire Enterprise.

Thus, in reopening the debate, Cllr Gordon further emphasised the power disposed to the Committee Chair to assemble a coalition of support in favour of a particular policy option:

I want a big loop to the airport - I want CrossRail and then coming in from Paisley via St James, but the line going right through the airport to Renfrew, and then something that goes on a bridge or preferably a tunnel under the Clyde.

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

By the time of the abolition of the Regional Council in March 1996 therefore, the preferred scheme for the Glasgow Airport rail link had changed twice from the original people mover option developed by the professional staff of the Passenger Transport Executive. This clearly demonstrates the Chair's potential to develop policy alternatives within the urban rail transport regime, through the harnessing of public support and the assembly of a broad supportive coalition of various regime members based on the promotion of largely 'symbolic' aims. In this case, the use of the symbol of locality in competition with others in order to bind the coalition together again reinforces the categorisation of the Strathclyde rail transport policy regime as a 'symbolic' one, firmly located in the realm of 'expressive politics'.

### 7.2.3 *Strathclyde Tram*

Like the two other major projects addressed in this chapter, the evolution of the *Strathclyde Tram* light rail scheme has its roots in the conclusions of the 1987 *Rail Review*. Within the overall theme of promoting further increased efficiency in supported urban rail operations, the potential offered by advances in light rail transit was identified as a possible way forward for public transport in the Region:

Continuing improvements in efficiency to capitalise on the gains already made will clearly assist when considering the potential for further investment. These investigations must take account of the scope for innovation and opportunities offered by new technology, and should embrace a comprehensive study of the potential for introducing light rail transit in Strathclyde. There are proposals for development of LRT in other major urban centres in Great Britain, notably London Docklands and Manchester, and it is important that Strathclyde is not left behind in these developments.

Certain existing lines utilised by ScotRail services have been identified for further study regarding possible utilisation as part of an LRT system. It is proposed that the study should embrace full consideration of the economic and social needs of Strathclyde as well as the financial implications for the Council and the more specific implications for public transport users, the environment and road users.

Strathclyde Regional Council (1987a: v).

Thus, the development of potential options for LRT development in Strathclyde formed the central focus of the ongoing *Strathclyde Transport Development Study* carried out in-house by SPTE in the aftermath of the 1987 *Rail Review* findings.

Of particular relevance was the impending life-expiry of much of the rolling stock, electrification and signalling systems installed as part of the 1960 *Blue Train* schemes, especially those of the Cathcart Circle and its branches, which despite serving densely populated areas of Glasgow exhibited the weakest passenger revenue to cost ratio of any electrified route:

The initial part of the light rail (project) came back to the *Rail Review* when the PTE was looking at the South Electrics, (which) the usage of is a fraction of what it was in days gone by. And, the electrification equipment is 35 years old now, so it's approaching the time when it will have to be renewed now, and it was within sight

then. The thought was, "couldn't a more economic way of providing a segregated service on that route be applied?", which is basically taking the existing line and, for want of a better word, putting trams on it, having got that, not go into Glasgow Central, but dive down onto the street in the city centre, and possibly at the other end go to places like Castlemilk and Newton Mearns.

Respondent 15a,  
Strathclyde local governance.

The other thing about 1987 was.... we had a worry, and we still have an ongoing worry, in relation to the Cathcart Circle - we try and market it from time to time, and it's failing to thrive. I think there was a genuine issue then that if you could convert the Cathcart Circle, or one half of it even, to light rail then that might be the answer as you could put in more intermediate stops.

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

(Light Rail) has a lot of sense to Glasgow for me, so you could actually get out of some of the dreadfully heavy expenditure you've got on heavy rail, keep the Cathcart Circle as a railway, but run trams on it, then drop down into the city centre here coming over a low level bridge or one of the existing bridges over the Clyde really, and bring the network out through the city centre and then back out again on the Springburn branch, the Northern Suburban line or whatever.... I think without doubt that in inner cities that is the way forward.

Peter Newbould,  
ScotRail.

Subsequent development work on light rail in the Strathclyde context presented in 1989's *Public Transport for the 21st Century* consultation document therefore outlined a range of corridors in the Clydeside conurbation where the introduction of LRT was considered feasible. The preferred "partially segregated metro strategy" (Strathclyde PTE, 1989a: 13), similar in conception to Greater Manchester Metrolink, the UK's first light rail scheme for which parliamentary powers had just been secured, formed the ultimate expression of the pragmatic approach to new infrastructure development, combining existing and disused historic rail corridors with the opportunity for on-street operation in Glasgow city centre and outlying

suburbs, thus extending the penetration of rail transport access to further established urban areas impossible to serve by new heavy rail construction.

In forming the means to further enhance the catchment of rail transport in the Region, the LRT concept was consistent with the central predisposed notion that the key strength of the Strathclyde rail network was its comprehensive geographic coverage, and so enjoyed wide support amongst individuals and organisations across the regime:

With light rail, because of its characteristics, you can actually get 90% of the benefit of the bus plus 90% of the benefit of the train, and therefore you get 180% in the sense that you get fast segregated travel between places, but you get easy access at each end to houses and shops.... and you don't get the same level of severance either.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

The (original) network was really a combination of trying to take the rail network to a number of places that aren't well served just now, or were rather poorly served, doing it in a way that would make use of existing infrastructure and rights of way that were there, to get faster journey times if you like. I think it was really about getting to places that the rail network didn't really serve well.

Respondent 15b,  
Strathclyde local governance.

It was trying to extend the advantages of a segregated network to those parts where the rail network doesn't reach, and certainly in a heavy rail sense can't realistically hope to reach.

Respondent 15a,  
Strathclyde local governance.

We had also proposed that trams should be re-introduced.... as an east-west link through the city centre from High Street to Partick with the possibility of extending it to places the rail network didn't reach like Knightswood, and also to try to reduce the

amount of diesel bus traffic in the city centre.

Jim Taggart,  
Strathclyde Regional Labour Party  
Transport Working Group.

In 1987, this Council also produced a report called *Light Rapid Transit* which examined whether LRT had a place in Glasgow to provide the kind of high quality public transport we aspire to, but in many respects we're not achieving in areas only served by the bus network.... light rail gives you a tool to build onto the rail network at a lower cost within the integrated system.

David Reynolds,  
Glasgow City Council.

By 1992, the number of potential routes had been considerably reduced as a result of further research into the practical impacts of LRT on the operation and maintenance of the remaining heavy rail services. This left an indicative network comprising the existing South Electrics routes plus two short wholly new extensions to Castlemilk and Newton Mearns to the south of the Clyde, and a five branch network on the north bank largely following disused historic solums, with on-street linkages between the sections in the city centre.

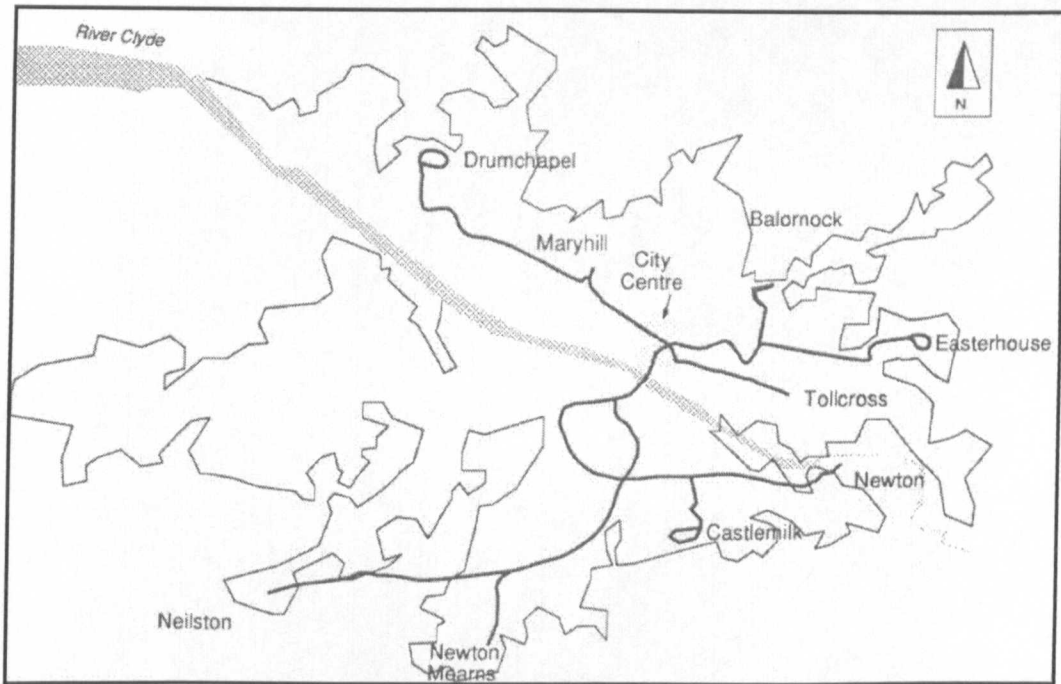


Figure 7.9 Indicative Strathclyde LRT routes.

Source Strathclyde PTE (1992a: 62).

The choice of route to be adopted for the implementation of LRT was made in 1994 after the completion of the *Travelling in Strathclyde* consultations, and illustrates a markedly different process of mediation within the Strathclyde rail transport policy regime to those previously identified with respect to CrossRail and the Glasgow Airport rail link.

Simply, that the northern LRT network should be adopted in advance of the conversion and extension of the existing South Electrics lines can be seen to be the result of a strong 'congruence of interest' between the two elements of the joint elite, the senior officers of SPTE and the Regional Council's Chair of Roads & Transportation, founded on a powerful combination of 'symbolic' factors. First, with the exception of the central section through the city centre and west end, that the route ran through some of Glasgow's most decaying inner and peripheral housing estates was consistent with their joint predisposed affinity with the 'expressive politics' and aspirations of the Council's *Social Strategy*:

The original proposal was conversion on the south side in the main, but that would also have had spurs to Castlemilk and the Newton Mearns area, because the Cathcart Circle is basically not that efficient on heavy rail, the stations are too close together, and basically by adding a station between each of the existing ones we'd have a very efficient tram system. And the conversion would mean it would be relatively cheap to achieve of course. But you wouldn't actually open up a lot more in terms of extra

catchment, and going back to the *Social Strategy*, Easterhouse and Drumchapel are two areas where you know, there's a need to give enhancement and contribute to the regenerative effect.

We are where we are: when the railways were built around 150 years ago, they tended to run radially to the main centres, and we are now in the position where we cannot sensibly think of much new heavy rail for reasons such as severance etc. However, what we've tried to do with the tram route is to take advantage of some (disused) segregated routes that exist, but to serve some of the peripheral housing schemes where they don't have easy transport access at the moment, and that's very central to the whole social policy. The whole point of the tram proposal is to serve places like the Easterhouse area, so all those places in the wider East End of Glasgow would get a much enhanced, accessible system with the tram.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

Essentially, the route was designed to meet the corporate policy objectives of the Council.... there was the *Social Strategy* element in that we were trying to bring modern and fast transport to peripheral areas that were entirely at the mercy of the deregulated bus market.

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

The second key factor in professional support for the northern network was in its significantly better projected social cost benefit analysis outcome:

An analysis of the impacts and benefits of each of the light rail routes indicates that those to the north of the city exhibit the greatest benefits. A light rail network comprising routes to Easterhouse, Balornock, Tollcross, Drumchapel and Maryhill has been appraised on this basis and has been found to produce a favourable ratio of benefits to cost.

Strathclyde PTE (1992a: 63).

Equally, for the elected membership, the geographic focus of the LRT proposals had obvious attractions in terms of promoting the legitimacy of Regional Council transport policy to their main constituencies:

The tramway was put forward in such a way as to make it politically acceptable to the (Regional) Labour Group. I mean, with the key areas of Easterhouse, Drumchapel, Maryhill, Lambhill and Balornock, it was to bring in the housing schemes, it was something new for Labour voters to get into the city centre.

Jim Taggart,  
Strathclyde Regional Labour Party  
Transport Working Group.



Figure 7.10 Artist's impression of *Strathclyde Tram* in Glasgow's East End. *Strathclyde Regional Council*

Finally, the strong political and public desire to secure the CrossRail project, which formed an alternative development option for the enhancement of the existing South Electrics rail services, was claimed to have exerted a substantial impact on the shift in emphasis away from the provision of a southern LRT network:



There was also the issue that if you start from the larger light rail network, with the south and north of Glasgow, the south side decision was closely tied to the political will to see CrossRail happen, and you know, it doesn't make sense to pursue CrossRail, the feeling was you couldn't really justify the investment in CrossRail *and* South Electrics conversion, because there wouldn't actually be that much left to run over CrossRail then.

Respondent 15b,  
Strathclyde local governance.

(Although) the introduction of LRT found favour with 88% of those responding (to the *Travelling in Strathclyde* public consultation), 63.5% agreed that CrossRail should have higher priority than the Southern LRT.

Strathclyde Regional Council (23/04/92).

However, the preferred northern LRT system and its emphasis on achieving the aspirations of the Regional Council's *Social Strategy* was not, as with CrossRail and the Glasgow Airport rail link, supported unanimously by other individuals and organisations involved in the local rail transport policy process. Although Glasgow City Council (1992) and the Scottish Association for Public Transport (1992) expressed their general support, other respondents to the *Travelling in Strathclyde* consultation expressed doubts focused around the central dilemma in urban transport provision, that of improving access to urban facilities and amenities in deprived, public transport-dependent neighbourhoods, versus the provision of enhanced public transport services in areas of high car ownership and hence potential for modal shift and further spin-off reductions in levels of urban congestion:

Regarding priorities for implementation (of specific routes) within the (LRT) system, two schools of thought were evident. One group felt that priority should be given to areas with high car ownership. This was on the basis that this would maximise transfer from the private car rather than result in a change from one public transport mode (bus) to another (LRT). The other group took the view that deprived areas should be given priority as that is where the need is greatest.

Strathclyde Regional Council (23/04/92).

Significantly, these reservations over the Council's preferred LRT strategy ranged across disparate organisations. At one level, the limited potential offered by Strathclyde Tram for environmental gain in terms of reducing the level of urban car use was highlighted by one of the city's main transport pressure groups:

It's a pretty crazy route actually - to connect up Easterhouse with Drumchapel. It certainly won't take cars off the streets - you're talking about two of the most deprived areas in Glasgow with extremely low car ownership.

Ian Bogle,  
Glasgow for People.

Similarly, the business community also perceived the preferred LRT scheme to be negative, perceiving that their movement maximisation and economic development priorities could be better served by a change in its geographic emphasis:

I know that the feedback I've had from business is that the line that's proposed seems to be an unusual joining of two disparate parts of the city together. There is a serious concern about the Easterhouse end - whether enough people would actually use light rail to travel in the numbers that would make it viable.... I certainly don't think that the business community is saying that the tram is what travellers want and they'll all jump on and use it. It seems an unusual route to have chosen - I can understand some of the social reasons for doing it, but there's some questions from some of the people I've spoken to about whether those reasons are valid. I would certainly like, we have specifically suggested that light rail should be used to connect the city centre to the Exhibition Centre and the possible developments (elsewhere).

Geoff Runcie,  
Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

Furthermore, in an unusual alliance, the one trades union to become involved in Strathclyde LRT consultations, the Transport & General, provided the strongest public criticism of SPTE's proposals, amplifying the environmental and economic reservations outlined above in an argument strongly geared towards safeguarding the future of the local bus network:

We welcome the development of rail-based urban public transport initiatives where they are appropriate. However, we are not convinced that the Strathclyde Tram route as presently proposed, represents the best use of scarce investment resources, nor do we

believe that the route will make a significant contribution to reducing the number of car commuters, indeed the converse is likely.

Since the Clyde is one of the biggest constraints on access, we believe it makes most sense to put the first new generation public transport in the city, with enormous carrying capacity, on a cross-river route.

This view is reinforced if the proposed route is examined in detail, particularly in relation to the geography of car access in Glasgow. Of all the immediate areas served by the proposed route, only Kirklee/Botanic Gardens has a relatively high level of car ownership, all the others have low car ownership.

This means that if the line is built as proposed, the inevitable consequence is that it will abstract (patronage) from buses, and have little impact on car-based commuting at first.

However, since the Maryhill and Easterhouse corridors are amongst the 'best bussed' in Glasgow, abstraction of passengers by the tram will hit bus company profits severely. This in turn will mean a cut in new bus investment, and a reduced ability to cross-subsidise less profitable or loss-making routes. By definition, many of these areas have high car ownership, and the impact of the route is therefore likely to be negative so far as city congestion is concerned.... thus, there is a stronger case for the first proposed Strathclyde Tram route to be north-south rather than east-west.

T&G Scotland (1995: 10).

However, in contrast to the positive impact of regime coalition opposition to both the CrossRail scheme and the Glasgow Airport rail link policy outcomes, in an expression of joint systemic power, both the senior professional officers of SPTE and the Chair of the Regional Council's Roads & Transportation Committee rejected calls for a re-appraisal of the route choice for Strathclyde Tram light rail network. Despite acknowledging the conflict between the aims of promoting modal shift away from the car and improving the accessibility of disadvantaged communities, the 'symbolic' social development benefits associated with the latter option were heavily promoted:

There's a wee bit of tension between these two policy objectives, because if we're serious about achieving modal shift, should we be giving the motorist an incentive, a green bonus for parking and riding? And how does that sit with the *Social Strategy* where

additional resources are supposed to go into deprived areas, and why should we give any benefits to middle class people who are already well off?

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

The social regeneration benefits of LRT have been acknowledged by the inclusion of the proposed network as an element of the Council's *Social Strategy*. The benefits in terms of social regeneration will result most directly from the gain to users in providing better access to employment, shopping and other facilities.... there will also be an important secondary benefit in that the significant investment in high quality infrastructure within the areas will be seen as a statement of confidence in their long term prosperity.

The initial (northern light rail) network will meet the aim of extending access to rail-based transport by serving large areas of Glasgow outwith convenient walking distance of an existing station. The routes also serve large housing areas with low car ownership and will help in alleviating the worst effects of increasing car ownership by providing a very good public transport service. By serving directly such areas, social deprivation will be eased with enhanced accessibility to job opportunities.

Strathclyde PTE (7/6/94).

Thus, unlike the other two major projects outlined above, there existed a strong consensus of opinion across the 'joint elite' of elected committee Chair and senior professional officers in favour of the northern LRT route network, based on the symbolic aspirations of the Regional Council's *Social Strategy*. This produced a committed scheme for the Strathclyde Tram project consisting of the central Maryhill to Easterhouse section as the first phase, to be followed by additional branches to Balornock, Drumchapel and Tollcross. Significantly, the emerging coalition of interests against the scheme was marginalised since, unlike in the cases of CrossRail and the Glasgow Airport rail link, Cllr Waugh agreed with the professionally-developed scheme choice, and so did not require to assemble a strong coalition within the regime in favour of his own policy preference.

However, despite the project's adoption as a preferred scheme, there remained a number of obstacles to its implementation. At a capital cost of over £150m, the scheme was clearly outwith the reach of the SPTE's standard annual capital allocations, and so from the outset, additional central government grant aid through the 'Section 56' mechanism was considered essential if the scheme were to proceed. Furthermore, for the Council to acquire the requisite

legal powers to construct the line required the approval of a public enquiry, chaired by four independent commissioners appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland in March 1996.

It was through this mechanism that the final dramatic influence on the development of Strathclyde Tram was applied by a private sector interest previously highlighted as strongly opposed to the social development rationale of the project:

Typically, what's happened with other light rail developments around the UK is that this stage is pretty uncontentious other than a few localised issues of digging up streets. However, what happened in Strathclyde was very unusual for this stage, in that Strathclyde's Buses petitioned very heavily on a very detailed basis and actually questioned the economic basis, which has never been done at this level before. So what it came down to was, "should the public enquiry concern itself about economic and financial appraisals?" The whole debate was on appraisal - there was really no contentious debate on powers at all.

Gordon Dewar,  
Halcrow Fox.

Critically, the author of the case against Strathclyde Tram adopted by the T&G union also acted on behalf of the local bus company at the enquiry to argue that the proposed light rail scheme did not meet the approved central government appraisal guidelines for additional capital grant, and was therefore not in the public interest. That the petition was upheld and permission for the light rail scheme was not granted reveals the most profound restriction imposed by central government on local rail transport policy development in Strathclyde.

Simply, by targeting disadvantaged communities with low car ownership with the objective of improving potential access to urban facilities in line with the aspirations of the *Social Strategy*, the Regional Council

completely misse(d) the point in terms of the appraisal that central government demands, which is, "if you want us to fund it then there's got to be modal transfer".

Gordon Dewar,  
Halcrow Fox.

Specifically, the type of limited cost benefit analysis demanded for transport capital grant applications under the provisions of Section 56 of the 1968 Transport Act limits incorporates a

much reduced range of factors than that adopted by SPTE in its own similar appraisals, such as those contained within the 1987 *Rail Review*:

The *restricted cost benefit appraisal (RCBA)* is commonly referred to as the "Section 56 appraisal". The name reflects the fact that applications for S56 grant need to be accompanied by a full and restricted CoBA. The principal difference between the two forms of appraisal is that in an RCBA the change in consumer surplus for those using the new service is not included.... the purpose of the RCBA appraisal is to assess whether the scheme meets the Department's general criterion that, as far as possible, the costs of public transport investments should be recouped from the beneficiaries, and that any additional subsidies should be justified by benefits to non-users.

Department of Transport (1996b: 33).

The criteria for Section 56 is that is a limited cost benefit appraisal, and the main thrust behind it is that those people gaining benefits, they should pay for them through the fare box, and you can't claim any additional benefits for the users on a wider scale, so effectively what that knocks out is public transport user time benefits.

Gordon Dewar,  
Halcrow Fox.

The crucial paradox here is that such 'public transport user time benefits' accruing to users of the proposed light rail service were vitally important - that the main aspiration of the Council's social development-inspired policy was to provide rail based transport to disadvantaged communities *in order to* reduce journey times to city centre employment and other opportunities was disregarded by the government's adopted Section 56 appraisals, which were constructed around the economic development aspirations of maximising movement through the 'tangible results' of modal shift and the associated reductions in urban congestion:

(One of the weaknesses of Section 56 appraisal) is that it doesn't pay enough attention to less quantifiable issues.... I think, and I have some sympathy for Strathclyde's position, in that it doesn't really give enough weight to policy. I think it is vital that

there is an overview, and unfortunately all these appraisals fail to take an overview.

Gordon Dewar,  
Halcrow Fox.

Furthermore, the Section 56 appraisal structure in fact limits the proposals likely to qualify for grant aid to those serving localities of wholly different socio-economic status:

To satisfy the (Section 56) criteria, I suspect they should have targeted high car ownership, cross-river movement, they should have targeted corridors that give you benefits over existing car journey times because that's what it's looking for - modal transfer and congestion relief, and that's the only way you're going to make a case. Going to an already high bus corridor is not really going to achieve much on these criteria. Now if your criteria were development and pushing the regeneration of Easterhouse and all the rest, then I think it's a perfectly valid approach, but unfortunately, the appraisal doesn't count that.

Gordon Dewar,  
Halcrow Fox.

The rejection of the Regional Council's proposals for a light rail network in the north of Glasgow therefore demonstrates the most significant limitation of regime power, and indeed of local government autonomy, uncovered in Strathclyde. In spite of the evident consensus exhibited across the joint elite of senior councillors and professional officers who promoted the scheme as a means to apply the agreed policies of directing rail transport investment to areas of greatest social need, the fact that the project required additional central government capital grant aid illustrated the potential influence of the centre, outside direct government intervention in local policy-making. The necessity for additional Section 56 finance in respect of the largest projects such as Strathclyde Tram illustrates that, notwithstanding the Regional Council's considerable operational autonomy within its own annual capital allocations, the successful promotion of its most costly proposed developments remained highly dependent on the systems of the centre, or 'non-local political environment'.

## 7.3 Summary

### 7.3.1 Strathclyde as a 'symbolic' regime

The three project histories outlined in this chapter confirm the indicative 'symbolic' model of the Strathclyde rail transport policy regime previously assembled from the perceptions of interview respondents. The cases of CrossRail and the Glasgow Airport rail link clearly identify a joint elite based around the notion of 'competitive agreement': although both elected and professional elements defined their strategic objectives according to the goals of the Regional Council's *Social Strategy*, substantial tension between them was identified over whether they should be implemented according to social cost benefit analysis criteria or more qualitative, politically-inspired aspirations. The successive conflicts between those project options which could be 'justified' by professional analyses and those which were preferred on a more qualitative application of the social policy objectives on which the council's ruling group was elected, characterised the strategic decision-making process in Strathclyde. Central to the succeeding policy debates was the construction of broadly-based coalitions within the regime, based on consensual 'symbolic' aspirations, such as the maximisation of rail network coverage and integration, which united economic and social development interests. Support from the wider ruling party caucus and general public, to whom local rail transport pressure groups directed much of their energies, was critical to the assembly of these wide-ranging coalitions through which each Chair ensured his own major project preferences became adopted policy.

The third policy example, that of the proposed *Strathclyde Tram* light rail scheme, illustrates a different set of processes consistent with the symbolic regime. In this instance, there was much less conflict between the Committee Chair and the professional officers of SPTE, since the choice of the northern route network equally satisfied both qualitatively- and quantitatively-expressed *Social Strategy* aspirations. Thus, there was no need for either Chair to actively assemble a coalition to endorse his position within the regime. However, a coalition of regime interests independent of the joint elite did form to oppose the core's preferred route choice. That the Chair sought to exclude their views from consideration reflects the 'distancing' of more peripheral regime members from the core when coalition power is not required to win an argument within the joint elite.

Despite the substantial degree of local autonomy noted in most policy-making, the refusal of permission to proceed with Strathclyde Tram revealed a residual 'dependency' factor underlying the relationship between the Strathclyde regime and central government over the funding for the largest investment projects outside the scope of annual capital budgets. The mismatch between central government's 'Section 56' evaluation criteria and the more



extensive range of social factors incorporated within SPTE's own professional social cost benefit calculations produced a preferred scheme which was not fully in tune with the centre's economic development aspirations. Significantly, the congruence of interest between the centre and the assembled opposition coalition produced defeat for SPTE's preferred scheme at the subsequent public enquiry.

## **8 Incremental development opportunities in Strathclyde**

### **8.1 Introduction**

8.1.1 Ongoing rail network development in Strathclyde

### **8.2 Project histories**

8.2.1 Branch line re-openings and extensions

8.2.2 New stations on existing lines

8.2.3 Enhancement of existing routes

### **8.3 Summary**

8.3.1 'Symbolic-pragmatic' policy-making in Strathclyde

## 8.1 Introduction

### 8.1.1 Ongoing rail network development

This chapter analyses the processes underlying the development of the range of smaller network investment projects within the Strathclyde rail transport policy regime between 1986 and 1996. Other than minor maintenance works and the three major strategies outlined previously, every potential development policy involving the provision of a new rail service or passenger facility considered by Strathclyde Regional Council, SPTE and the wider regime during this period is addressed. Following the initial exposition of possible projects in the 1987 *Rail Review*, the ways in which the development of new branch lines and extensions, new stations on existing routes and enhancement of existing routes was steered by particular regime members towards their own priorities is analysed. The role of the Regional *Social Strategy* as prime motivating factor and the primacy of the elected Committee Chair within the joint elite and wider regime are reinforced. However, the aspiration to develop actual policies according to both the 'expressive politics' consistent with the adopted model of the Strathclyde local rail transport policy regime as 'symbolic', and the 'instrumental' goal to achieve 'tangible results' is highlighted.

## 8.2 Project Histories

### 8.2.1 Branch line re-openings and extensions

Both Merseyside and Strathclyde PTEs have promoted the expansion of their local rail networks by the extension of existing routes or the addition of new branch lines in order to increase the total catchment populations served. In most cases, such schemes propose the re-opening to local passenger traffic of operational freight-only or inter-urban mixed traffic routes, or those lines previously closed to all traffic but whose soliums remain physically intact. Capital costs are dependent both on the prevailing condition of the route and the resulting degree of re-engineering required, and on whether additional rolling stock is needed to operate the new service. The range of possible routes serves communities of contrasting socio-economic status, they may aim to fulfil any of the range of urban transportation functions, including accessibility enhancement, congestion relief and urban regeneration. This range of potential 'tangible' and 'symbolic' benefits, and the highly visible expression of political legitimisation in bringing the train to new areas, reflects the insight that the prioritisation of new branch line services brings to the analysis of the aspirations and operation of the local urban rail transport policy regime.

The pattern of branch line re-opening schemes enacted and proposed in Strathclyde both reinforces several distinct trends uncovered in previous sections, and extends the 'purpose' of the regime to include limited 'instrumental' or 'project realisation' aims. This degree of instrumentalism, where "goals are shaped in part by what is feasible" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 201) results from the consistent expression of pragmatism in relation to the engineering and financial feasibility of new infrastructure schemes:

We're not short of new ideas, but we are constrained by doing things within the existing solums - I don't think logically we are in a position to think of new rail lines outwith the existing solums with the exception of CrossRail and Glasgow Airport which we're doing with very short new sections.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

The idea of constructing absolutely brand new heavy rail lines is really verging on cloud cuckoo land - little snippets here and there like CrossRail and Glasgow Airport maybe, by reusing old solums certainly, but brand new lines? Forget it.

Respondent 15a,  
Strathclyde local governance.

Therefore, with the exception of the link to Glasgow Airport and the abandoned town centre extension of the East Kilbride line (see below), all of the proposals for new local passenger rail services in the Region envisaged the re-opening of historic disused rail solums, or the extension of Section 20 support to lines then operational only for freight or long distance, non-PTE passenger services.

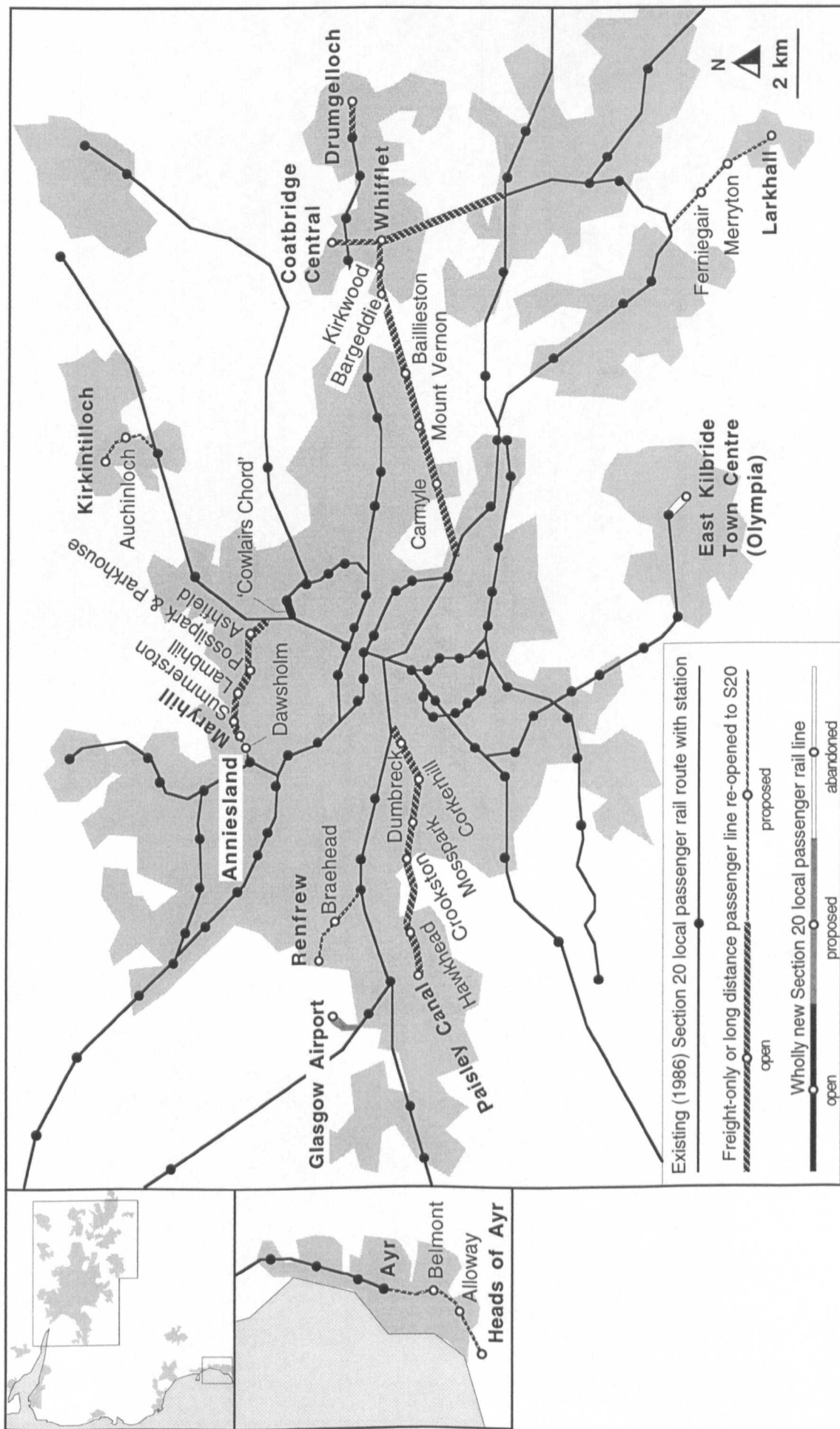


Figure 8.1 Location of rail branch line re-opening schemes in Strathclyde.

<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Length (km)</u>	<u>No of additional stations</u>	<u>Previous condition of route</u>	<u>capital cost (£m)</u>	<u>Status at 31/3/96</u>
Drumgelloch	2	1	disused	0.7	open 1989
Paisley Canal	10	6	freight only	3.0	open 1990
Cowlairs Chord	0.5	0	wholly new infrastructure	0.8	open 1990
Rutherglen - Coatbridge	14	5	freight only	8.0	open 1993
Northern Suburban	Phase 1: 5 Phase 2: 2	5 1	PSO trains disused	2.2 1.5	open 1993 awaiting finance
Larkhall	5	3	disused	c14.0	awaiting finance
Kirkintilloch	2	2	disused	--	study ongoing
Renfrew	4	2	disused	--	study ongoing
South of Ayr	5	3	part PSO; part disused	--	study ongoing
Glasgow Airport	2	1	predominantly wholly new infrastructure	c40.0-60.0	study ongoing
East Kilbride Town Centre	0.8	1	wholly new infrastructure	c 4.0- 6.0	abandoned

Table 8.1 Strathclyde line re-opening schemes, selected characteristics.

However, the instrumental goal in Strathclyde of re-opening disused lines was not adopted by the regime at the expense of the "broad vision or set of beliefs" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 201) which characterise symbolic regimes, but rather was *complementary* to the core consensus values of enhancing the comprehensive coverage of the local network, and of the *Social Strategy*. Recalling the comprehensive reach of the local rail network inherited by Strathclyde, Cllr Waugh outlined how the concept of branch re-openings emanated from the basic social development aspiration to extend the opportunity of rail transport access to a larger proportion of the Region's population:

I realised that there were a lot of places denied access to the rail network, so I wanted to expand the rail network.

Cllr Malcolm Waugh,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

Thus, the first three potential line re-opening schemes identified as part of the 1987 *Rail Review* appraisal process combined these symbolic aspirations with a pragmatic approach to the expansion of the local rail network, since they involved the upgrading for local passenger services of *existing* track formations used by other sectors of British Rail in areas of mild social deprivation. A fourth project, the Cowlairs Chord, involved the construction of a short connecting line across disused railway land in order to remove the need for trains from Glasgow Queen Street to Cumbernauld to reverse direction en-route. Significantly, such pragmatism ensured strong support for these projects across the professional and elected components of the joint elite, since each satisfied both political qualitative aims and SPTE's preferred social cost benefit analysis criteria.

The first line re-opening scheme, the short 2km eastern extension of the North Electric line to Drumgelloch, comprised the renovation and electrification of the then goods-only section of the historic Glasgow - Bathgate line, and was estimated to generate enough new patronage to produce a net gain to the PTE's Section 20 revenue balance. Similarly, the upgrading of two further freight routes, that part of the former Kilmacolm line between Glasgow and Paisley Canal, and the branch from Rutherglen station to Whifflet near Coatbridge, were also projected to produce a net financial and social cost benefit betterment.



Figure 8.2 Carmyle station on re-opened Whifflet passenger rail route.

In contrast, the fourth re-opening project, the provision of a Northern Suburban local service to Maryhill, reflected a key trend previously identified in the evolution of both the CrossRail and Glasgow Airport schemes: as the dominant position of the Committee Chair within the joint elite was cemented over time through extended coalition and public support, the importance attached to SPTE professionals' quantifiable cost benefit analysis of potential investments waned in favour of a more qualitative, political application of the Council's corporate social policy aspirations.

Plans for a Northern Suburban service were initially rejected in the *Rail Review*, since preliminary appraisals indicated that, despite utilising a combination of existing Section 20 routes and ScotRail's West Highland line, "due to its circuitous nature, journey times (by rail) would be similar to present bus journey time and offer little if any benefit" (SRC, 1987a: 107). Significantly, however, over the course of the *Strathclyde Transport Development Study*, both the Drumgelloch and Paisley Canal schemes were completed, and proposals for the Rutherglen - Coatbridge line were well advanced. Other than CrossRail and part of the West Coast Main Line, this left the Northern Suburban route as the last operational rail line in Strathclyde without local Section 20 services.

The adoption of the Northern Suburban line as a preferred scheme was once again the result of the efforts of the Roads & Transportation Committee Chair, backed up by the power of strong public support. In his foreword to the *STDS* consultation report of 1989, Cllr Waugh reiterated his personal aspirations for the development of the local rail network, emphasising the desire for the achievement of increased equity in urban accessibility:

The opportunities presented in this document provide an exciting way forward into the next century for public transport in Strathclyde. They have been designed to give the option of reliable, frequent, comfortable public transport to an increased proportion of the Region's population.

Cllr Malcolm Waugh,  
Strathclyde PTE (1989a: 1).

The importance of this statement can be seen in the subsequent course of line re-opening schemes in Strathclyde. With over two thirds of public responses to *Travelling in Strathclyde* favouring the future re-opening to passengers of additional dormant rail lines in



the Region, in which the Northern Suburban was identified as an early possibility, Cllr Waugh pushed for the continuation of the policy in line with the aspirations of the *Social Strategy*. Several interview respondents claimed PTE officers agreed to the advancement of the Northern Suburban scheme ahead of others such as Larkhall, since, in spite of its unfavourable social cost benefit analysis outcome, the project combined the broad symbolic objective of extending rail network coverage to an area of low socio-economic activity with the promise of enhancing SPTE's track record of line re-openings. Notably, this reflects the goal of 'project realisation' associated with 'instrumental' policy-making, where "technocrats may see as a way of winning public support and getting things done perhaps (in order) to advance their careers" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 203). Thus, the degree of instrumentalism apparent in Strathclyde was based on the desire to 'realise' those more feasible projects, rather than to maximise the 'tangible results' of revenue and patronage.

The order of things has been influenced by the ease by which they could be done. Paisley Canal was a fairly easy line to put back because the track was still largely there - it didn't involve actual re-opening, it didn't involve any parliamentary powers. Similarly, the Whifflet line and the Northern Suburban line were easy to do. The ones that have arguably got a stronger financial case, like Larkhall or Kirkintilloch, are more complicated because the track is lifted and SPTE need to get parliamentary powers.

Respondent.

SPTE saw that if they were to survive, they had to be seen to keep investing in the railway, expanding the railway, and coming up with a reason to exist.

Respondent.



Figure 8.3 Maryhill rail route station at Ashfield serving area of predominantly local authority housing.

Overall, this strategy of pursuing line re-opening schemes irrespective of their likely financial effects produced a profound effect on the emphasis of the Strathclyde local rail network, since each of the four enacted projects, the Drumgelloch, Paisley Canal, Whifflet and Northern Suburban lines, serve relatively deprived communities where the scope for achieving the social development goal of enhanced access possibilities is more apparent than those of economic development and revenue gain:

I'd (doubt the wisdom) of some of the, I hesitate to use the term 'unprofitable', but those new services that do not really achieve a good rate of return, like the Northern Suburban, like the Paisley Canal and the Whifflet service, because if you look at the number of people who are actually on the trains, there's very few, but then I'm looking at it from a purely commercial sense.

Peter Newbould,  
ScotRail.

Thus, through a pragmatic combination of the strategic 'symbolic' goals of the *Social Strategy* with those of 'project realisation' as a means to effect local political legitimacy, the enacted branch line re-opening schemes in Strathclyde were directed towards those which serve less prosperous areas of the Region in advance of those in commuter areas, such as the Larkhall, Kirkintilloch and South Ayr proposals, which exhibited better potential revenue returns. However, that Strathclyde was able to pursue this policy despite its potential influence on the annual running costs of the local rail network illustrates the relatively generous system of PTE revenue finance (see Appendix).

However, the rejection of one final line extension scheme, although providing a further illustration of the pragmatic 'project realisation' approach adopted by Strathclyde towards the extension of the local passenger rail network, also illustrates the residual potential for central government to influence the development of local rail transport policy in the Region.

Although East Kilbride has grown to house over 80,000 people and has become the second largest retail centre in Strathclyde Region since its designation as a new town in 1947, its terminal rail station lies remote from the town centre by just under 1km. The possible extension of the line to better serve the business, retail and leisure facilities in the town centre therefore represents a significant potential enhancement to the overall level of urban accessibility afforded by the Strathclyde local rail network. Significantly, however, that these benefits would be extended to the relatively prosperous southern Glasgow suburbs already connected by the existing line limited the scheme's impact in terms of *Social Strategy* aspirations, which concentrate on the extension of rail transport access to those disadvantaged communities currently dependent on the bus.

The case of the East Kilbride rail line extension project is significant for two reasons. First, the scheme is the only heavy rail capital investment project in Strathclyde to be abandoned during the 1986-1996 period. Second, that this occurred can be directly attributed to the impact on the Strathclyde rail transport policy regime of the existence of the *East Kilbride Development Corporation (EKDC)*, and its relationship to central government.

Before its abolition in 1995, EKDC was responsible, like the similar bodies in other designated new towns throughout the UK, for the strategic development of its area. Thus, the Corporation formed one of the few unelected local government bodies under the Scottish system, and was responsible for several aspects of public policy, such as housing and industrial development, normally exercised elsewhere by Regional and District Councils.

EKDC became involved in the development of the East Kilbride town centre rail extension project following the Regional Council's 1987 *Rail Review*. Despite the identification of the project as potentially worthwhile due to the accessibility benefits outlined above, under the prevailing system of quantitative social cost benefit analysis in place at the time, SPTE professionals could only justify a contribution of 20% of the projected capital cost:

During 1986 a study was carried out by the PTE, British Rail and the East Kilbride Development Corporation into the possibility of developing an alignment which would allow the rail line to be extended from the present terminal station into the town centre to a site adjacent to the shopping centre and bus station. These studies have confirmed that such an alignment could be achieved and that its creation would cost £4.4m to £5.9m.

It is considered however that significant capital contributions would be needed from outwith the Regional Council to justify the scheme being progressed, and accordingly it is recommended that a formal approach be made to the East Kilbride Development Corporation and other relevant parties to ascertain what financial contributions they would be prepared to make towards the extension of the rail line into the town centre.

Strathclyde Regional Council (1987a: 62).

Crucially, despite EKDC itself reacting favourably to the proposal, the Corporation was unable to secure authorisation to fund the scheme from its parent administration, the Industry Department of the Scottish Office:

The proposal to divert the East Kilbride line from its present terminus to a new town centre station has not received Scottish Office approval and therefore this project will no longer proceed.

Strathclyde PTE (28/5/91).

We were trying to go to East Kilbride as you probably know, to extend to the town centre there, and we could only justify 20% of that cost in transport terms, but the Development Corporation would have paid the rest, but they were prohibited by government from doing it, because the (Scottish Office) Industry Department felt that

if money they wanted to go on industry and commerce went on transport, then that would start a whole lot of other things going.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

Thus, the decision of the Scottish Office not to approve the East Kilbride Development Corporation's contribution to the projected extension of the East Kilbride line was cancelled, and has not subsequently been re-visited, despite the shift away from quantitative appraisal methodologies such as those under which the original decision to limit the Regional Council's capital contribution to the scheme was made. Several respondents indicated in off-the-record remarks that this was due to a continuing consensus across the joint elite - in addition to ongoing professional doubt based on the results of the original quantitative appraisal, senior elected members highlighted the wide range of competing line re-opening projects outlined above, which could be more fully justified in terms of the *Social Strategy*, as higher priorities.

### 8.2.2 New stations on existing lines

The locations of those new stations built on existing Section 20 passenger rail lines in Strathclyde over the ten year study period reveals a similar policy-making outcome to that in place for the choice of the larger line re-opening schemes. With such an extensive network, the number of potential new station locations in Strathclyde is large, with the 1987 *Rail Review* including preliminary evaluations of 48 such sites where stops could be accommodated within existing service patterns, thus obviating the need to purchase additional rolling stock. Sites were suggested by a range of organisations, including SPTE itself, the Region's District Councils, individuals, and two pressure groups, the Railway Development Society and the Scottish Association for Public Transport.

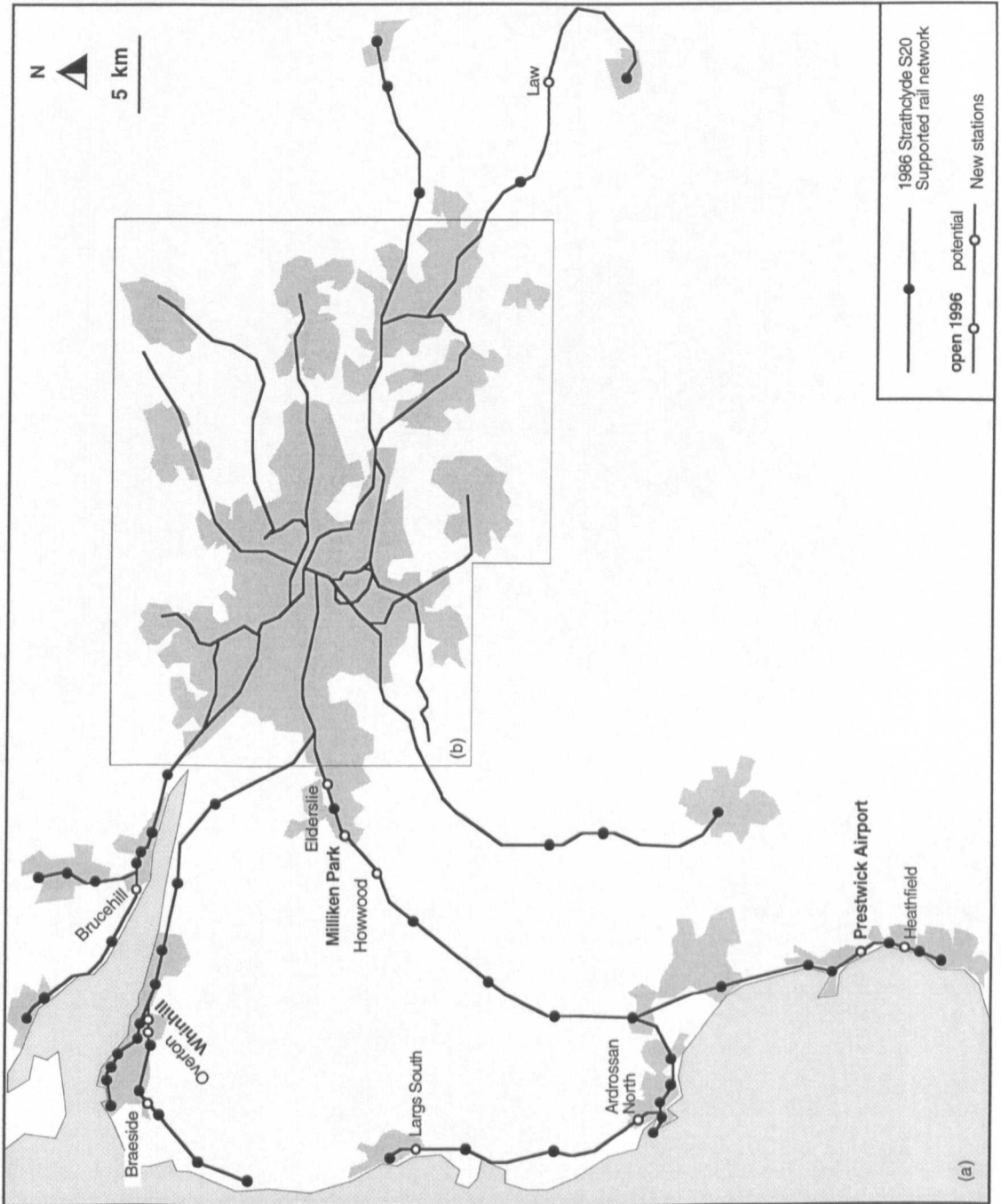


Figure 8.4 Potential new station sites in Strathclyde; (a) Strathclyde.

Source Strathclyde Regional Council, (1987a).

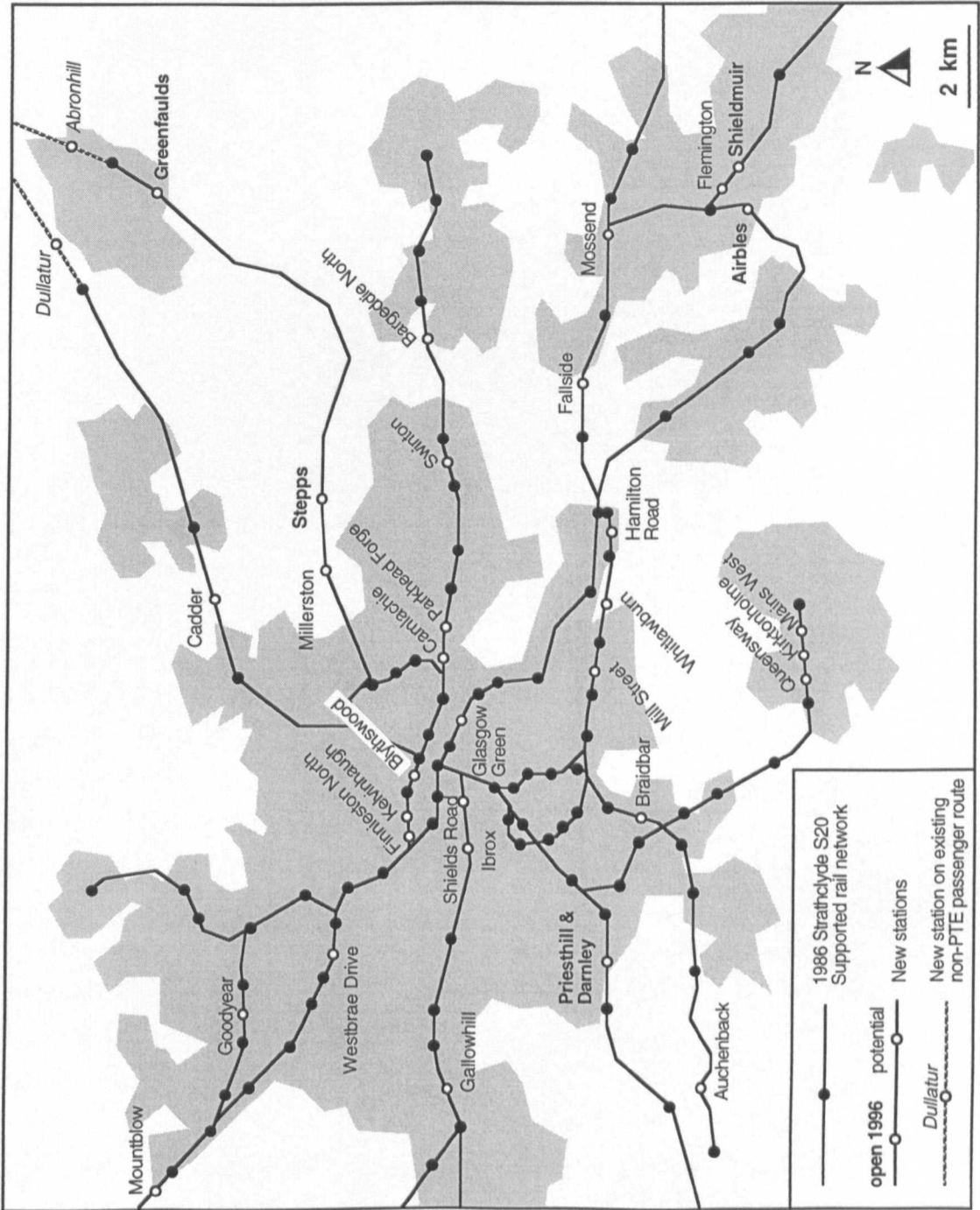


Figure 8.4 Potential new station sites in Strathclyde; (b) Clydeside insert.  
 Source Strathclyde Regional Council, (1987a).

The impetus for the programme of new station construction once again came from Cllr Waugh.

I realised there's a lot of gaps even within the existing lines, where even if you had a rail halt, you could attract passengers, because between stations you could have 2 or 3 miles. But within that 2 or 3 miles you could have large housing developments where people would not go a mile-and-a-half the other way to get the train in the morning. So, I decided to come up with rail halts.... I developed the rail halts and we started to get more passengers.... And, not only was my patronage increasing, but my subsidy was coming down as I was getting more people onto the trains.... the fact is we opened the railways up to a lot of people who were denied access, and by doing that we increased the patronage.

Cllr Malcolm Waugh,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

In the light of the experience gained from the opening of the first four new stations in 1989, at Airbles, Milliken Park, Stepps and Greenfaulds, a further five stations on existing lines, Shieldmuir, Whinhill, Priesthill & Darnley, Whifflet and Prestwick Airport, were opened on existing lines before 1996 in parallel with the branch re-opening schemes. Two distinct policy perspectives are of particular importance in analysing the choice of these schemes. First, the Council's station staffing policy had a direct relevance on the costs of new station provision: in Strathclyde, where fully de-staffed stations have been in place over much of the network since the implementation of the Strathclyde Manning Agreement after the first 1983 *Rail Review*, the mean capital cost of the new un-staffed stations opened between 1986 and 1996 was £391,000 (£169,000 excluding the predominantly privately-financed Prestwick Airport station), with the annual direct operating costs and capital financing charges reaching £4,000 and c£19,000 respectively (Strathclyde PTE, 4/8/88). This contrasts starkly with Merseyside, where the PTE has retained fully staffed stations (see 10.2.3) and the mean cost of such new stations with the necessary staff and booking office facilities between 1986 and 1996 was £875,000.

The second significant dimension once again concerns the form of appraisal methodology adopted in the choice of scheme for incorporation in the programme, which reinforces the impact of the several factors previously identified within the Strathclyde rail policy regime.



For Cllr Gordon, since the construction of a new station on an existing line did not imply the increased revenue impact of a wholly new rail service, there was a single priority in appraising such potential schemes - ensuring that sufficient patronage would be generated to cover the capital and operating costs of the project and therefore make a net contribution to the Regional Council's Section 20 revenue account:

What you've got to consider is whether a station can wash its face financially, because what you've got to avoid is, whilst we can achieve a station through capital investment, we've got to be careful that there's no increased revenue impact unless we can identify where the recurring costs can be met from. There's other things too - sometimes you've got to take opportunities as they come along - if somebody gets planning permission for several hundred houses, and you think that will make your station sustainable, then you can put that site up your pecking order.... I don't think anybody can argue there are glaring omissions in terms of priority in our station network, so I think we can afford to be a wee bit pragmatic with this, we can chop and change.

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

One particular new station scheme which provides a clear practical application of SPTE's pragmatic and opportunistic 'project realisation' approach to the construction of new stations is that at Prestwick Airport, which has evolved as an alternative to Glasgow Airport for holiday charter and smaller operator scheduled flights. In recognition of the potential for rail transport to play an important role in access to the airport resulting from the close proximity of the passenger terminal to the main electrified Glasgow - Ayr rail route, the 1987 *Rail Review* included an appraisal of the likely costs of station construction at the site. However, despite Prestwick at that time handling transatlantic air services in advance of their transfer to Glasgow in 1990, projected rail passenger numbers were such that "the Regional Council did not feel able to justify alone the £1.5m to £2m cost involved" (SRC 1987a: 115) in providing a station with the necessary luggage trolley-capable lifts and covered connection to the airport complex under the appraisal methods then used.

By 1993 however, the situation had changed. A consortium of the airport's new private sector owners and Enterprise Ayrshire, the area's local government enterprise company backed by their own European Union grant approached SPTE with the offer to fund 75% of the station's estimated £2m capital cost. That the Regional Council agreed to fund a

contribution of £505,000 transferred from longstanding new station priority projects represents one of the most significant shifts in its policy priorities generated by the possibility of external capital grant funding.

The theme of pragmatism in new station location choice and the related ability to modify the list of preferred options outwith the unique example of Prestwick Airport stems directly from Strathclyde's adopted threshold criteria that the increased patronage from any new station need only make a net contribution to the Section 20 account. In advance of the first wave of new station construction, a committee report outlined the actual level in terms of daily passengers required to pass this financial threshold:

Costs would be covered by an average daily usage of less than 100 passengers (excluding Sundays) at each station. It is considered that the additional passengers generated by the stations will exceed this number at both locations and thus it is anticipated that both sites (Airbles & Milliken Park) will make a net contribution to the reduction of the Regional Council's revenue expenditure.

Strathclyde PTE (4/8/88).

Thus, any new station generating the relatively small sum of around £25,000 per annum covers its operating and financing costs, fulfilling the Council's criteria of making a net contribution to the PTE revenue account. The *extent* to which a new station exceeded this minimum level of revenue generation was not considered important. This allowed the choice of schemes to be more flexible, as these incurred additional revenue costs could be covered by a station attracting relatively few new passengers trips, such as the figure of less than 100 single journeys quoted in the above report, a target patronage level within the reach of many potential station sites in even the most disadvantaged areas.

Furthermore, the adoption of such criteria in preference to a more comprehensive and 'objective' cost benefit comparison of the potential 'tangible results' of several competing options permitted a substantial degree of freedom for new stations to be built in respect of 'symbolic' local political demands:

Latterly, stations have quite definitely been opened for political reasons rather than commercial reasons.

Respondent.

Yes - certain stations are done for reasons that aren't solely transport, to further local aspirations and all the rest of it. It's like with bus routes - we often say "we don't think a service is justified", and for political reasons the PTA would say, "well, we think it is".

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

Indeed, this direct political input has had a real effect on the chosen locations of new station development in Strathclyde. Two stations in particularly depressed areas of the Region, Shieldmuir, in the vicinity of the former Ravenscraig steel works in Lanarkshire and Priesthill & Darnley, on the south western periphery of Glasgow, were identified as having been advanced as a result of such 'expressive politics' after the more pragmatic choice of the first tranche of schemes:

The initial stations, Milliken Park, Stepps, Greenfaulds and Airbles were influenced by the fact that they were easy to do and there was a self-evident demand for them. Stepps was a fairly isolated community, and Greenfaulds, Airbles and Milliken Park all had new housing developments, so the demand was self-evident. (There was no detailed cost-benefit analysis, but what was done was work out how many people would be required to justify building a station, and the PTE was satisfied, in each case rightly, that the number of people would way exceed the number required, so that they have a contribution towards Section 20 rather than increasing it, while still providing greater access and use of the network.

There are two of the new stations that have certainly had a substantial political input. There's Shieldmuir and Priesthill & Darnley, which is really too close to Kennishead and Nitshill in operational terms, but there was a political will, a real political push for that one.... it was on the list of possibilities and there was some political pressure to say, "well, that's one we'd like to do".

Respondent 15a,  
Strathclyde local governance.



Figure 8.5 1970s local authority housing adjacent to Priesthill & Darnley new station.

In this way, the targeting of new station investment at disadvantaged peripheral communities formed a further direct application of the values of the Regional Council's *Social Strategy* within local rail development policy. A further consequence of this approach is that potential stations near development sites in the city centre, such as Finnieston/SECC North, and those in more affluent, economically active residential districts, exhibiting higher rates of car ownership and potential for modal shift to public transport, were shelved. Particular examples are Cadder, midway between the existing stations at Bishopbriggs and Lenzie, and Heathfield to the north of Ayr, which despite inclusion in the Regional Council's original tranche of four preferred new stations schemes (Strathclyde PTE, 12/4/88), has never been progressed. The desire to enhance rail transport equity in accordance with the values of the *Social Strategy* was therefore clearly placed above the opportunities to promote broadly economic development goals, such as reducing urban congestion.

### 8.2.3 Enhancement of existing routes

A notable omission from Strathclyde Regional Council's rail network development programme over the study time frame is undoubtedly the lack of any further electrification

of the existing local passenger rail system. That after the completion of the Ayrshire lines project in early 1987 no further electrification schemes were planned is in contrast both to Merseyside, where the continuous extension of Merseyrail electrification has been a central development goal, and also several other PTE areas including West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, which have progressed such schemes.

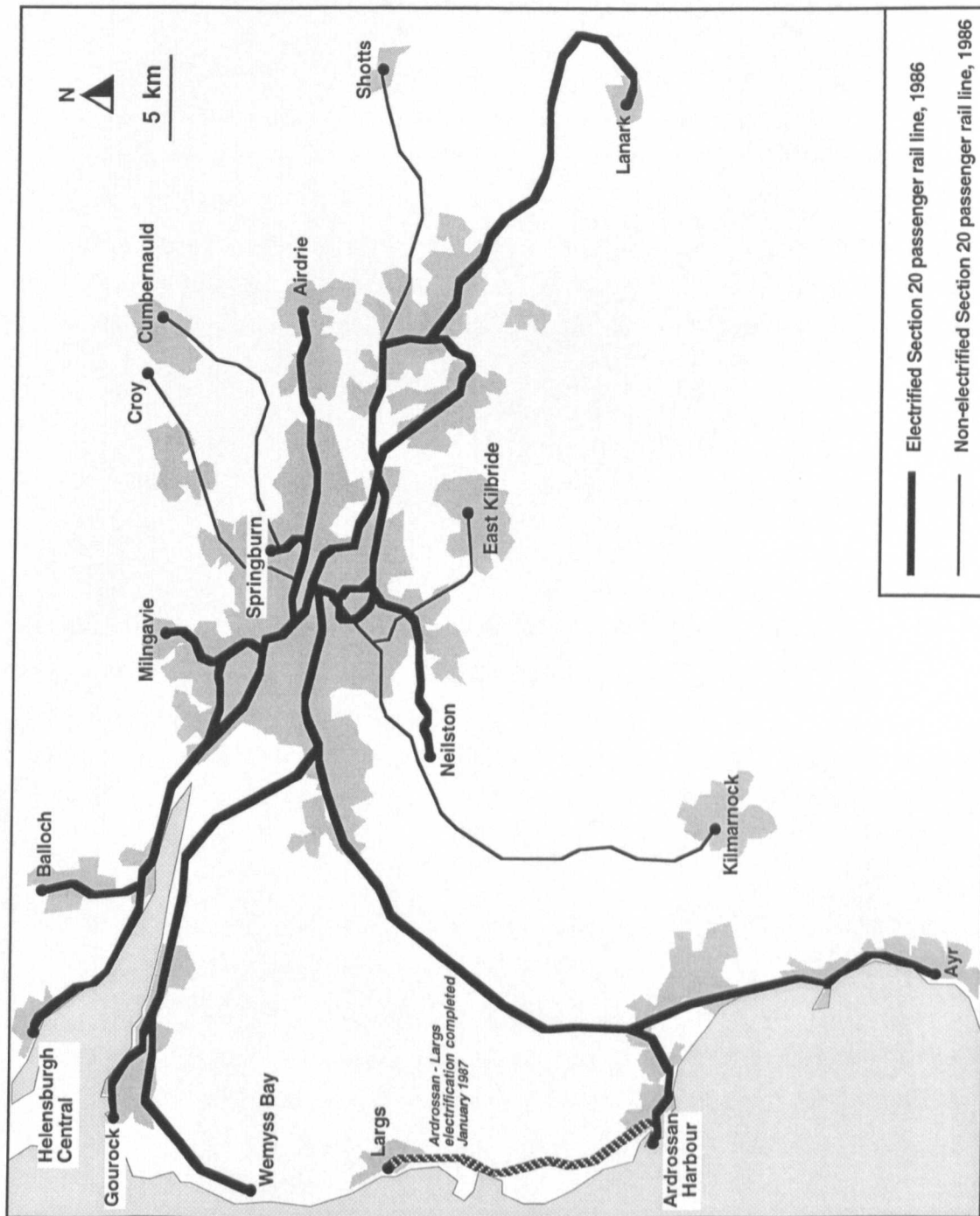


Figure 8.6 Electrified passenger rail lines in Strathclyde, 1986.

The lack of proposals for Strathclyde electrification emanating from the 1987 *Rail Review*, can be expressed as a result of a 'congruence of interest' across the joint elite and other regime members. Cllr Waugh, who was instrumental in achieving the decision to electrify the Ayrshire lines during the process leading to the 1983 *Rail Review*, expressed that he regarded further electrification of inner suburban routes as less pressing:

I asked one or two questions about the Sprinter (to BR staff) on the way down (to Largs), because although I wasn't a transport man, I was an engineer. So, I (decided to electrify the Ayrshire routes) because I wasn't pleased with the Sprinter units when I took one down to Largs, because they lose power when it's doing any upward travel.... You see on shorter lines like the East Kilbride I could afford that, because it was a shorter journey.... but (to Ayr and Largs) was a longer line, so electrification was something that would give me a general speed - it was necessary for speed and comfort, and I think I was proved right there.

Cllr Malcolm Waugh,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

In addition, the professional viewpoint from within SPTE was perceived by another well-placed observer to concur with Cllr Waugh's perception of the limited benefit in electrifying shorter inner suburban routes, since, for these lines, which traditionally had a more fragile traffic base than longer routes such as Glasgow - Ayr, the capital investment in the fixed electrification works could not be justified under the professional appraisal criteria applied in the *Rail Review*:

In the case of the Cumbernauld line, (SPTE's recommendation not to electrify) was simply that the traffic base wasn't sufficient enough to justify it.... and to electrify East Kilbride, (they considered it), but it would have been way too expensive. And, officers are not convinced that the 'sparks effect' really applies in the same way to suburban operation - there are people and pressure groups who particularly like electric trains, but for the average passenger, they (SPTE) don't know if they bother too much.... certainly the traffic growth on the East Kilbride line since the new (diesel) Sprinters were introduced has been absolutely vast.

Respondent 15a,  
Strathclyde local governance.

Equally, a similar perception of limited quantifiable benefits arising from extended electrification existed beyond the joint elite:

In terms of our priorities, I can't see where we would immediately invest in (electrification) in the PTE area. Electrifications *per se* aren't a bad thing, if it allows improvements in journey times, and the TOC can make more money and we can get a slice of the action as part of our putting the investment in. So obviously *per se* they're not a bad thing, but within the PTE area, there's been nothing obvious to us that's been worth investigating in detail at this moment in time.

Hazel Martin,  
Railtrack Scotland.

Finally, there was the opinion that in light of the limited capital allocations available to the Regional Council, the further electrification of existing routes should not be promoted in advance of the central predisposed 'symbolic' priority amongst the joint elite, the maximisation of the catchment and access equity of the rail network through the provision of new lines and stations, which represented a highly 'visible' expression of SPTE's role to the wider public:

(The decision not to electrify) was made to spread the benefit (of capital investment). But also, the 'sparks effect' diminished in benefit. The East Kilbride line we did initially envisage for electrification, but we actually put in new diesel units there, and the stimulated increase in patronage on the East Kilbride line was of a similar magnitude to the Ayr/Largs line. So we've been able to do (other) things like opening the Paisley Canal line, opening the Whifflet line and the Northern Suburban.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

I think the (lack of electrification) was a specific policy because there wasn't the money. Latterly that was undoubtedly the plan. But it's also easier to get diesels running to Maryhill, for example, because the actual capital cost isn't that great, and

you're establishing a new service, you're making the rail network bigger, you're attracting new passengers - a lot of people only think of the railway in terms of "well, we've got the train going to us now".

Jim Taggart,  
Strathclyde Regional Labour Party  
Transport Working Group.

That the output of the decision-making process was not to continue with the historic policy of extending electrification across the Strathclyde rail network can therefore be attributed to the consensus between the predisposed attitudes and 'symbolic' aspirations of the central members of the policy regime, that expanding the catchment of the system should remain the prime objective of policy development. Similarly, that service frequencies were not raised on any existing local rail line where this required the purchase of additional rolling stock further underlines the consensual nature of the adherence to *Social Strategy*-inspired aspirations to ensure the direction of development capital towards maximising the equity of local rail access across the Region, rather than to expand services to already well served areas.

### 8.3 Summary

#### 8.3.1 'Symbolic-pragmatic' policy-making in Strathclyde

The evolution of the less costly rail investment projects detailed in this chapter both reinforces several significant trends in the development of local rail transport policy previously identified, and extends them to incorporate the notion of limited 'instrumentalism' in policy-making. First, the consistent adherence to the social development principles of the Regional Council's *Social Strategy* by both the professional and elected elements of the joint elite represents a clear structuring influence underpinning policy development. However, the significant limitations on such aspirations imposed by the inherited legacy of the Region's local rail network, which better served established communities of relatively higher levels of economic activity, was again fully acknowledged by both groups. Significantly, this legacy directed actual policies towards the pragmatic development of the limited under- and disused rail infrastructure assets, in order to both further the symbolic aspirations of improved network coverage and rail transport equity,



whilst also achieving the 'instrumental' aim of 'project realisation' as a means of public legitimisation.

The manner in which the initial divergence in attitudes between SPTE officers and the Committee Chair over the types of appraisal under which policy prioritisation should occur was resolved again highlights the power of symbolism in Strathclyde. That the first line re-opening schemes promoted after the 1987 *Rail Review* resulted from 'competitive agreement' between officers and councillors based on the consensual desire to further extend the local rail network, since they satisfied both quantitative and qualitative goals, reinforces the underlying 'symbolic' nature of the Strathclyde regime. Equally, that the Chair was able over time to elevate qualitative criteria for the selection of line re-opening schemes was again due to the congruence of his preferences with wider public opinion expressed through the *Travelling in Strathclyde* consultation process. Finally, the symbolic basis of the Strathclyde regime was also represented by the loose criteria set for the construction of new stations on existing lines, which permitted their location according to the 'expressive politics' of local political demands, and by the concentration on the symbolic aspirations of network expansion and improved equity in rail access at the expense of extended electrification of existing routes. Although such policies suggest a degree of 'instrumentalism' in policy-making, scheme prioritisation with respect to those deemed more 'feasible' within time and budgetary constraints rather than according to the level of potential 'tangible results', implies that, rather than 'symbolic-instrumental', policy-making in Strathclyde can be regarded as 'symbolic-pragmatic'.

## **9 Major development projects in Merseyside**

### **9.1 Introduction**

#### 9.1.1 The development of new rail assets in Merseyside

### **9.2 Project histories**

#### 9.2.1 Conway Park new station

#### 9.2.2 *City Line Link* and route modernisation

#### 9.2.3 Liverpool Airport rail link

#### 9.2.4 *Merseyside Rapid Transit*

### **9.3 Summary**

#### 9.3.1 Merseyside as an 'instrumental' regime

## 9.1 Introduction

### 9.1.1 The development of new rail assets

This chapter seeks to elaborate the indicative model of the Merseyside rail transport policy regime outlined previously by analysing the ways in which four major rail development policies in the county evolved after 1986. Although all but one of the projects chosen have yet to advance to construction, they are those of the greatest capital cost promoted during the study time frame, and formed the focus of the strategic rail development debate in Merseyside during this period. By addressing the ways in which the process of power bargaining between regime members was played out in these cases, it is possible to illustrate the actual operation of the local rail transport policy process in Merseyside, to reveal how actual policy outcomes were generated, to provide a more detailed model of the typology, composition, and purpose of the regime, and to reinforce the categorisation of the Merseyside regime as 'instrumental'.

The evolution of each of the four policy initiatives is addressed in turn in order to identify how the institutions and individual actors incorporated within the local rail transport policy regime sought to influence the development of particular policy initiatives, and how their underlying predisposed attitudes to the role of urban rail transport and their goals and aspirations for the actual schemes concerned impacted upon the policy debate. It is possible to demonstrate why particular policy preferences were generated, illustrating the level of success each regime member achieved in attempting to influence the direction of the policy development through application of their own power resources. The structure and hierarchy of actors in the policy network is exposed. The recurring direction of local urban rail transport investment in Merseyside towards particular policy aspirations will be shown to verify the dominance of certain strategic themes, centred around the impact of the atomisation of government capital allocations for urban rail transport investment between numerous institutions, and the resultant concentration of power in the hands of senior Merseytravel officers highlighted in Chapter 6.

As the new Wirral Line underground station at Conway Park in central Birkenhead forms the single largest capital project undertaken by Merseytravel over the ten year period concerned, and has exerted profound effects on the evaluation of subsequent initiatives, it is presented in this chapter separately from other new station schemes as a prime illustration of the operation of several strands of the discourse of policy regime power bargaining under consideration.

## 9.2 Project histories

### 9.2.1 Conway Park new station

The possibility of the provision of a new station serving the proposed mixed residential, retail and Wirral Metropolitan College development at Conway Park, which borders the Merseyside Development Corporation's Birkenhead regeneration zone, was first raised in 1987 during a wide-ranging review by PTE professional staff of potential new station sites across the Merseyrail network:

It was a scheme that I started looking at when I came over to the PTE, because I realised that there was a huge patch of land in Birkenhead with a railway running underneath it, and it was proposed for a mega-development, and it seemed right to build a station as part of the development.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

I think that the Conway Park site was in either Martin Harrison or one of his predecessors' minds, on a kind of notional map which has got all sorts of stations filling all sorts of gaps where there's a sort of pencilled-in "we might one day look at this as a potential station site".

Robert Goundry,  
North West Regional Railways.

That the provision of a new station at the site could be linked with the commonly held predisposed objective of furthering urban regeneration was highlighted in an early committee report on the project:

The proposal to include a station in the development fulfils the Authority's policy of supporting Merseyside's urban centres and helps achieve regeneration on Merseyside.

The proposed station is in line with the Authority's policy objectives to support the main urban centres on Merseyside and the regeneration of the county generally. Birkenhead is the main shopping centre for the Wirral: the new station will provide increased accessibility to the town centre as a whole, give substantial support to the

Conway Park development as well as encouraging the regeneration of surrounding areas of Birkenhead.

Merseytravel (20/4/88).

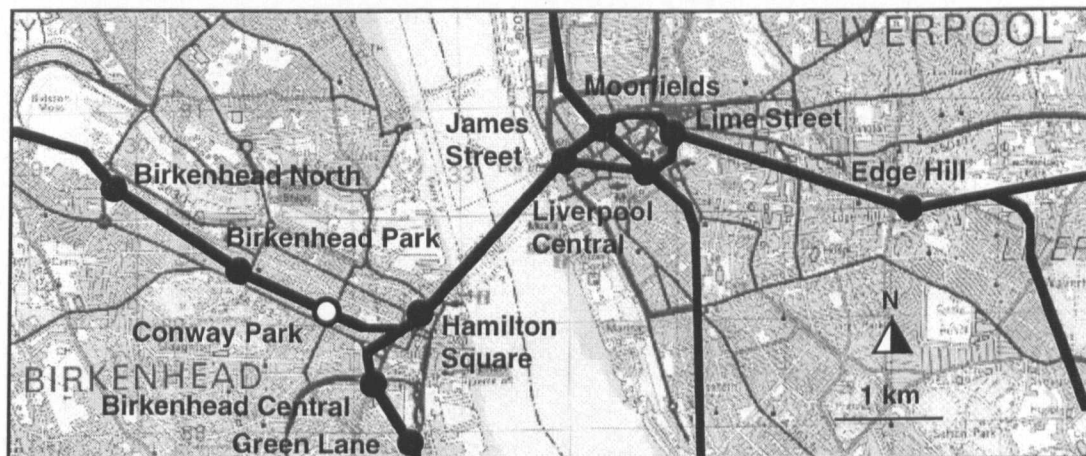


Figure 9.1 Location of Conway Park new station. *Crown Copyright reserved*

Following further preliminary development, the first appraisal of the Conway Park scheme was incorporated in the 1989 *Merseyrail New Station Study*, jointly funded by Merseytravel and the Merseyside Development Corporation, who “sought the involvement of Merseytravel and British Rail in a comprehensive study of the benefits of the new stations at Conway Park, Vauxhall and Brunswick” (Merseytravel, 14/9/89). Critically, rather than in broad ‘symbolic’ terms, the station’s contribution to the regeneration of Birkenhead was to be appraised through a detailed cost benefit analysis of its impacts, designed to precipitate the assembly of a funding package based on the “leverage” (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 198) of funds through a ‘political partnership’ of various local governmental organisations typical of the ‘instrumental’ regime:

This approach to justification of these proposals is essential in this case rather than the financial and transport appraisals normally undertaken by the Executive. This stems from the wider implications on the Merseyside Development Corporation and District Council development strategies, the regeneration of Merseyside and the direct benefits accruing to specific developments adjacent to the stations. The results of the study will play a central role in negotiations on grant applications and capital contributions to the stations from the various beneficiaries of each station proposal.

Merseytravel (14/9/89).

The study report, produced six months later, confirmed the regenerative potential offered by the station development in terms of the economic development criteria favoured by the MDC:

The station would support Wirral's shopping strategy by generating additional shopping trips to Birkenhead town centre and also support the leisure element of the proposed Conway Park development;

The development prospects for fringe development sites in the Merseyside Development Corporation area would be improved with increased occupancy rates in the Wirral Waterfront development;

An additional 700 jobs would be generated by 1997 as a result of the station;

Local businesses would benefit from increased labour accessibility.

Merseytravel (12/4/90).

However, the project stalled due to the downsizing of the proposed Conway Park shopping and leisure facilities by the private sector developers which placed doubt on the financial viability of the station project:

The study highlighted that the station could not now be justified on the present and planned level of development without substantial grants or contributions from outside parties. This arises in part from the high capital cost of the station (£10.5m) but also from changed development factors:

A revised concept for the Conway Park development retail development around the station involving a change from the original integral extension to the town centre to a car-oriented retail warehouse park;

The lack of firm development proposals for the adjacent Merseyside Development Corporation sites before the year 2000.

Merseytravel (12/4/90).

Despite the granting of outline planning permission for the revised Conway Park development, the deepening recession of the following months resulted in the withdrawal of private sector involvement and the collapse of the scheme. Similarly, although the Merseyside Development Corporation had become actively involved in preparatory work on the new station scheme, Conway Park did not qualify for MDC grant aid since it lay just outside the Corporation's designated area. However, the first round of central government's City Challenge capital grant competitions presented the Wirral Borough Council as the local authority with renewed reason to secure significant funding for a wholly-new, mixed-use regenerative development at the site including associated public transport improvements, thus more closely reflecting the aspirations of the Council's original proposals to extend and regenerate Birkenhead town centre. Thus, the potential for a major new station at Conway Park re-emerged, not as the result of symbolic 'expressive politics' on the part of local policy-makers, but from the potential offered by this new funding source to achieve the longstanding aspiration of 'realising' the construction of the station:

In 1991, Wirral MBC's 'City Lands' submission under the Department of the Environment's City Challenge initiative received approval. The approval secured £37.5m grant for the regeneration of the Wirral City Challenge area over a five year period (from April 1992).

The focus of the Wirral MBC City Lands Action Plan for the regeneration of Birkenhead is the enlargement of the town centre area to embrace the Conway Park development area. A key to this is the provision of a new station at Conway Park to serve the area. The proposals for the redevelopment of the site and the construction of a new station at Conway Park have been included as a high priority in the City Lands Action Plan.

Merseytravel (22/6/95).

Yes - the (original) development had withered to become retail warehouses, and therefore the contribution to the station withered, and in the end the whole development just fragmented. So the whole thing died, but then with the City Challenge proposals it came back.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

I think the generator of the Conway Park station development was the winning by Wirral Borough Council, with the support of its partners, of City Challenge status. One of the features of that winning bid was that it was the redevelopment of Birkenhead town centre, which had been I think blighted for a number of years.... there had been a developer on the scene who was anxious to promote a range of activities, housing, leisure and commercial, but that developer as it happened, disappeared, so City Challenge came in, and that was the generator, and we were a supportive partner in the bid. Now, the partners realised that, and we agreed, that if Conway Park was going to be regenerated with the range of activities that was being suggested, new commercial developments, new residential and leisure development and the Wirral Metropolitan College development, there needed to be good access to and from the facilities from other parts of the Wirral, and it was equally recognised that not everybody had or wanted to have access to a car for these purposes.... so I think the generator was the winning of the competition that recognised the need to upgrade an area and all its facilities, coupled with the recognition that public transport was a major accessibility factor to the success of that.

Roy Swainson,  
Merseytravel.

Thus, the spur to the re-evaluation of the Conway Park project came not from Merseytravel, but from City Challenge, a central government initiative, and subsequently Wirral Borough Council, one of the PTA's constituent authorities. As such, the station scheme proceeded within a development partnership, as both the Borough Council, as sponsors of the new 'City Lands' development, and Merseytravel, as statutory local rail authority and ultimate beneficiaries of the increased patronage and revenue generated by such a major development, stood to gain from the project's implementation. However, despite the potential capital contribution from the City Challenge award fund, neither Merseytravel nor Wirral City Lands were able under the cost-benefit appraisal criteria adopted to construct a funding package for the station project without additional grant from the county's European Union Objective One funding stream. The future of the project hung in the balance until

the Objective One Technical Committee approved grant of £6.1m towards the £15.67m outturn cost of the scheme.... (therefore) as a result of these approvals, the scheme is now able to proceed subject to formal approval by Merseytravel and Wirral City Lands.

Merseytravel (29/11/95).



Significantly, this report moves on to record substantial evidence of the leading role in policy development adopted by the professional officers of both Wirral MBC and Merseytravel in the preparation of external grant applications:

Objective One grant has been awarded to Merseytravel and Wirral City Lands at a rate of 39%. It is considered, in view of the substantial benefits to Wirral and Birkenhead, and to the Merseyrail network and the size of the grant aid that the project should proceed on the basis of this grant offer. Wirral City Lands and Wirral MBC have already confirmed their outlined approval of the project on the basis of this grant offer, subject to the approval of Wirral MBC members.... (however) officer agreement has been reached with Wirral City Lands and Wirral MBC on the financial arrangements.

Merseytravel (29/11/95).

That the funding package evolved as a result of detailed negotiations between a number of professional officers in Merseytravel, Wirral MBC and the Merseyside Objective One liaison committee did not, however, reflect the restriction of the desire to proceed with the Conway Park station project to these individuals, although the importance in securing cross-partner agreement was acknowledged. Thus, the role of the additional external funding necessary for the scheme to commence illustrates the direction of Merseytravel's priorities not towards 'symbolic' projects, but rather to those development schemes which can be 'realised' through the harnessing of available external grant aid:

Well, if you look at Conway Park...., I think what we did with that one was say, "look, where can we get the finance?", and there was finance from Wirral City Lands, there was European money and there was capital from Merseytravel, so it was a case of the amalgamation of cash that built it, because it would be virtually impossible for Merseytravel on its own to fund a £15m - £17m scheme.... there's no doubt that without the external finance there's no way we could have considered it.

Cllr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.

Sometimes you get a new station which you wouldn't have built without outside grant, Objective One or whatever, and the new station at Conway Park is like that - we

wouldn't build it on a financial basis, but we got 50% from Wirral City Lands, and each of us gets 39% from Objective One on our contributions. So we get a regeneration scheme - you dig a hole in Birkenhead and drop a station into it and regenerate the area and get 7,000 to 8,000 extra passengers a day. But it wouldn't stack up financially if it didn't have external grant funding.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

Without any doubt it's generally true that the availability of money for certain things dictates things, because the ability of this organisation to fund major capital schemes without investment from other people, it just wouldn't happen.

Cllr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.

Crucially, the unanimous support for the Conway Park station scheme across Merseytravel's constituent councils also reflected the culture of partnership underlying the regular exchanges between officers of the authorities, and the recognition that such co-operation was necessary to maximise the 'selective incentive' of available external grant aid in order to further the regeneration of the county as a whole:

There were no dissenting voices within Merseyside (about Conway Park prioritisation) that I'm aware of. Remember that a lot of money was coming in from elsewhere (other than Merseytravel/district councils) to do it.

Chris Leah,  
Railtrack North West.

There were never any voices of dissent when we decided to put Conway Park as the first priority in Merseyside with regards to public transport, even with the lads out in St Helens, at either officer or member level. This is due to the close working relationship we had built up over the last four or five years at officer level, which the members have been happy to endorse without getting too involved - they've let the officers get on with it. We've brought home the goods, and we've been able to show that without

this co-operation, we wouldn't have been able to bring as much money to Merseyside for transport as we would have otherwise.

Mike Tew,  
Wirral Borough Council.

Conway Park was one of those things that was discussed very well. It was something that, the developers were there, the funding from City Challenge was there, the funding from Europe was there, the whole thing was extremely big, an extremely attractive scheme generally, and I think at that stage, any of the Districts which had a scheme like that, as big and as good as that, would have been upset if the other Districts hadn't backed them to get it. It's heavy public transport infrastructure, it met the regeneration criteria that we're aiming for, it hit all the right buttons. And it got matching funding from all sorts of places - it was the obvious scheme to go for, and so Merseytravel and everybody involved said "yes". At the time of the decision two years ago, it had unanimous support throughout Merseyside really, because it was the opportunity to really do something, it was the main thing to do.

John Harrison,  
St Helens Borough Council.

The opening of Conway Park station in June 1998 represents one of the most coherent outputs of the local rail transport decision-making process in Merseyside, which clearly illustrates locates the county's local rail transport policy regime within the 'instrumental' categorisation on several counts. First, the decision to proceed with the project rested not on 'symbolic' aspirations, but on the desire for each partner institution to combine their investment potential pragmatically in order to achieve a highly 'tangible result' which meshed with their own strategic objectives. As such, the supportive coalition within the regime was built on the theme of 'political partnership', with the Objective 1 and City Challenge funding streams representing those "new subsidies" needed to "ensure co-operation and compromise between development partners" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 206). The limitation of such subsidies to the Wirral City Lands area focused attention on the 'realisation' of the Conway Park project ahead of others, since it represented a "goal shaped by what is feasible" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 201). The 'selective incentive' of increased transport funding for the county as a whole was identified by both councillors and officers as the 'basis for common purpose' of the regime. Critically, that the maximisation of such future funding rested on the successful management of the regime by officers in order to demonstrate

such partnership in action, reinforced such professionals' position at the heart of the regime, and the relative isolation of elected councillors.



Figure 9.2 Conway Park new commercial, residential and rail station development.

### 7.2.2 *City Line Link* and route modernisation

The expansion and quality enhancement of urban train services can bring greatly improved access opportunities for the communities located within the catchment of the rail network. However, it is equally the case that non- or under-investment in particular routes denies such extension of opportunity to similar communities elsewhere in the conurbation. Furthermore, under-investment in the rail service increases the attractiveness of other modes, especially the private car, with the attendant disbenefits of increased congestion and the associated social and environmental costs.

In Merseyside, there is one particular corridor which stands out in contrast to the remainder of the network, both in terms of the level of PTE investment made and the level of local rail service provision offered. As described in Chapter 2, the geographical delimitation of the Passenger Transport Authorities by local government administrative area creates "a major problem of mismatch between the PTA boundary and the logical railway operating area" (Halsall, 1985: 88). Consequently, this 'logical' actual pattern of rail services on certain routes is that they are cross-boundary, in that they fulfil both a local role within the PTA

area, and are supported as such by the PTEs, but also a longer distance inter-urban function as part of the integrated national rail network layer. This duality presents an obvious added complication to the assembly of any improvement package.

In much the same way as the Edinburgh & Glasgow route, Merseyrail's City Line services, those routes running east from Liverpool Lime Street high level station, integrate two different rail transport network layers. The infrastructure is shared between both PTE-supported local services linking east Liverpool, Knowsley and St Helens boroughs to the city centre, and longer non-PTE inter-urban trains to London, Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle. However, the level of central area access offered by the City Line's single Lime Street terminus is more limited than that of the Northern and Wirral Lines which serve several city centre stations. Furthermore, current City Line trains cannot operate in the central area underground system since they retain diesel traction, as only that part of the system from Lime Street to the West Coast Mainline at Acton Bridge is electrified at present.

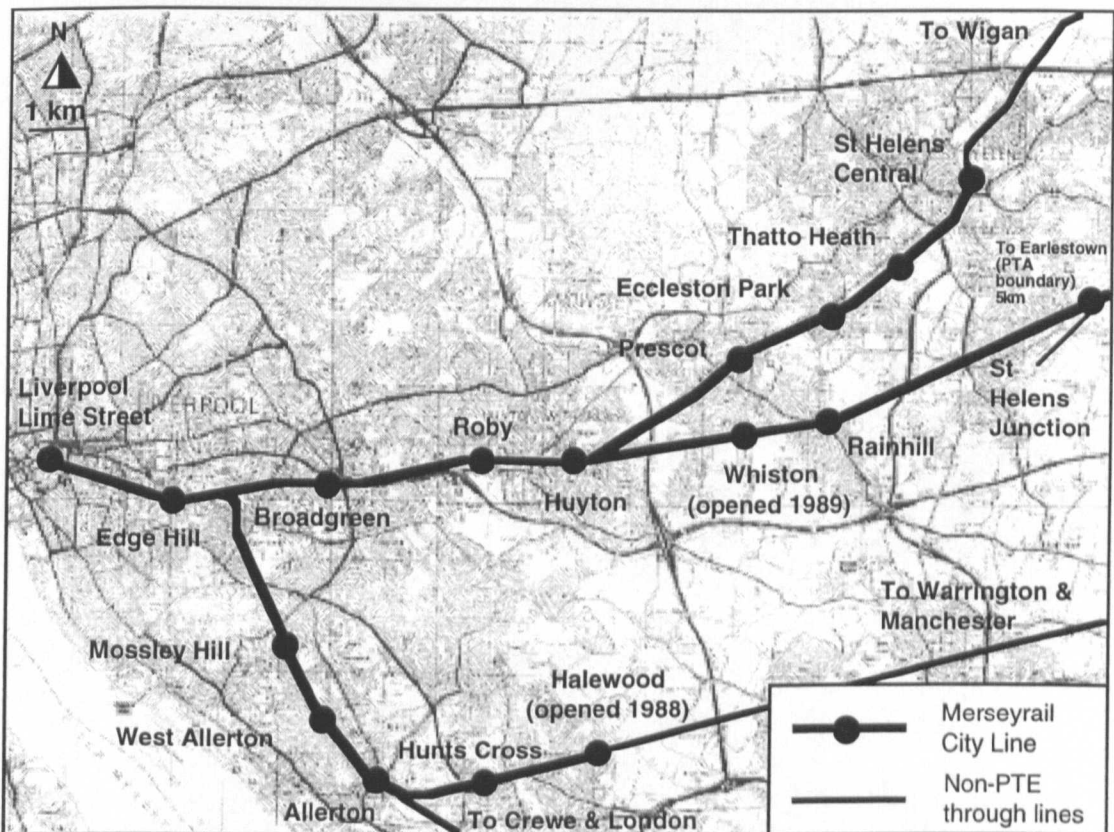


Figure 9.3 Route of Merseyrail City Line. *Crown Copyright reserved*

However, in order to address these two relative deficiencies, provision was made for a further tunnelled connection, the *City Line Link (CLL)*, running from a point just south of

Liverpool Central station via the disused Wapping tunnel to Edge Hill, during the Link works of the 1970s. In many respects similar to Strathclyde's CrossRail scheme, the City Line Link presents the possibility of the electrification and integration of services to the east of Liverpool with remainder of the Merseyrail network, including the provision of an intermediate underground station to serve the universities and cathedrals precinct. Although the City Line Link represents a further major potential development of the Merseyrail network, its significance lies in the fact that it has never been seriously progressed beyond the earliest stages of planning and development.

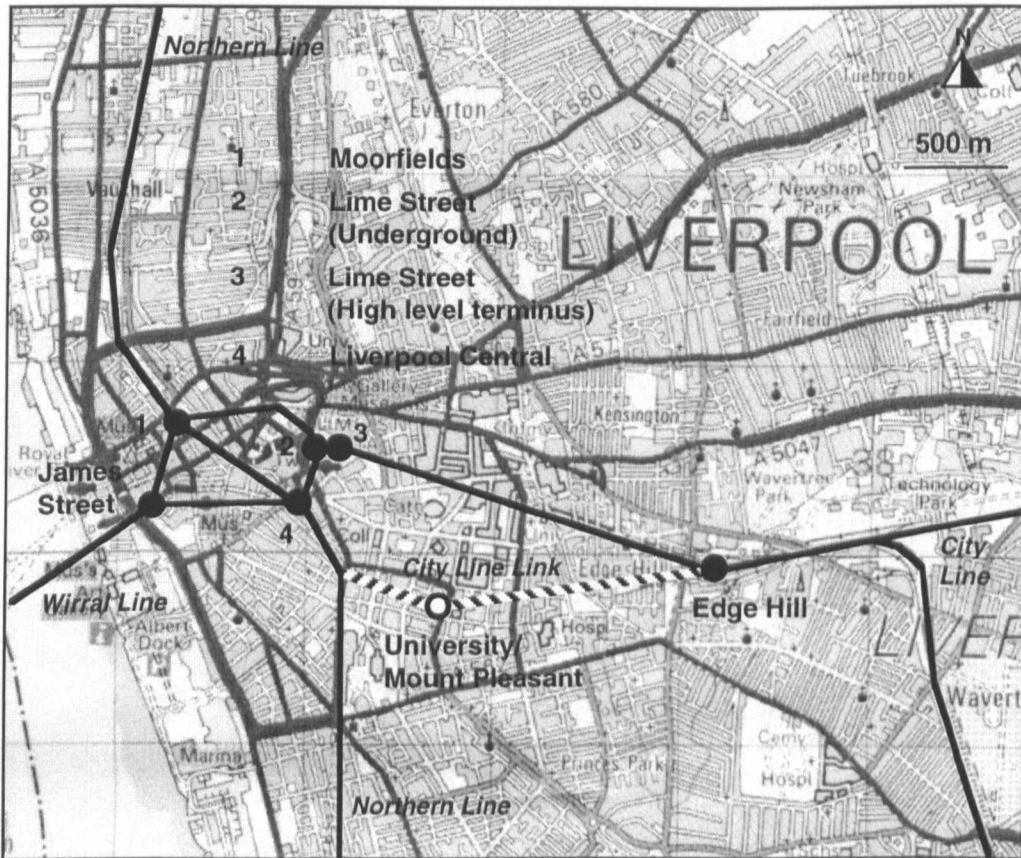


Figure 9.4 Merseyrail City Line Link proposals. Crown Copyright reserved

Renewed consideration of the City Line Link began in the years following bus deregulation in 1986, when despite a low base figure, patronage growth on the diesel City Line services substantially outperformed that of Merseyrail's electric Wirral and Northern Lines, the annual increase exceeding 15%. This favourable growth trend and acknowledged deficiency in the standard of service compared with the core electric network prompted the opinion that significant suppressed demand remained on the City Line corridor, due at least in part to the lack of city centre penetration compared to that afforded by the underground Loop and Link:

Previous Merseyrail (enhancements) have been aided by direct access to the city centre through the Loop and Link. The remoteness of Lime Street station may limit the potential (for growth) of the City Line.

Merseytravel (24/8/92).

The City Line serves substantial population catchments equivalent to those on the Northern and Wirral Lines. Nevertheless, analysis of station trip rates indicates that the City Line is less well used, despite the steady rise in usage since 1985. This suggests that the City Line could play a wider role in meeting the transport needs of Merseyside for both local and cross-boundary needs.

Merseytravel (1993a: 7).

The strongest support for the concept of the City Line Link came from Merseytravel's Chair, who, echoing his Strathclyde colleagues' conceptions of the 'symbolic' role of CrossRail, perceived the scheme as a means to practise 'expressive politics' by harmonising the quality of local rail service provided across each of Merseyrail's catchment areas:

For the longer term, the obvious thing as far as I'm concerned is that we could run trains in the tunnel at Edge Hill (into Liverpool City Centre). Over a period of years we could then electrify the line from Liverpool to St Helens and possibly on to Wigan, because I think we should be providing the same service on that line as the others, it should be electrified.

Cllr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.

Whilst the subsequent history of the CLL project reveals similar disagreement over its value between officers and councillors as was the case for CrossRail, the resolution of this tension highlights the 'instrumental' nature of the Merseyside regime, and the resulting marginalisation of the 'symbolic' aspirations of the Merseytravel Chair. Despite Cllr Dowd's acknowledgement of the potential 'symbolic' value of the scheme, professional development of the City Line Link proceeded slowly, with internal feasibility work dropped in 1996. Of obvious importance is the scale of the project and its likely costs, estimated at between £60m and £100 million (Merseytravel, 1993a), which included the electrification of

the City Line required if its services were to operate in Merseyrail's central area tunnels. Although this figure is of a similar order of magnitude to the projected cost of the CrossRail scheme, several respondents suggested that a funding package of that level would be difficult to construct within Merseyside's environment of fragmented capital consents across the regime's several partner institutions.

Equally, it was widely suggested that the CLL fell because a range of smaller alternative schemes were more likely to provide the direct financial returns on capital demanded by the appraisal methodologies of the 'Package Approach'. Significantly, that the package approach was so strongly geared to the maximisation of 'tangible results' in terms of identifiable economic development outputs, such as increased fares revenue and modal shift, reinforced the dominance of professional officers within Merseyside's joint elite and the wider regime, who held similar economic development aspirations:

I started looking at the City Line Link before the County Council was abolished, but when you start to look at the capital costs, it began to look dubious - it was £40m then, so that's probably about £60m now, which compares to the *Loop* and *Link* package which would be about £80m at updated prices. So what happened is that with that capital cost, it's just something we couldn't envisage. But there's also so many other problems and opportunities out there like mid-Wirral, like building new stations. So I never really took it much further.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

At the time of the *Loop* and *Link*, there was certainly a strategy which said, "well, we could at least get some of the City Line services further into the city centre by using tunnels that are already there", because basically if you go to Edge Hill just outside Liverpool city centre, there is a whole series of disused tunnels that go down towards the docks, and so there was the idea that they could be integrated into the system. That basically fell because I think they never really produced a very good rate of return in financial terms, and also because the spirit of the age moved away from large scale public works projects - that that sort of grand project didn't pay for itself in the short term obviously made it just not achievable for local authorities.

Robert Goundry,  
North West Regional Railways.



Thus, without local pressure group action on which to build a coalition in favour of the scheme, Cllr Dowd's symbolic aspirations for the promotion of the City Line Link scheme were frustrated. This is in stark contrast to CrossRail, which was progressed largely as a result of coalition pressure managed by the PTA Chair to promote the 'symbolic' aspiration of network integration, despite that scheme's similar lack of identifiable economic returns. Equally, whereas the expression of public opinion played a significant role in promoting the pro-CrossRail coalition, the Merseyside public and their elected representatives were excluded from the decision to drop the CLL project, which was made by officers in light of the significant restrictions on policy prioritisation imposed by central government through the prevailing system of project appraisals and fragmentation of investment funds.

Significantly, a further statement expanded upon the reasons for the shelving of the City Line Link by Merseytravel, linking the decision to the parallel opportunities afforded by the proposed initial Light Rapid Transit line for Merseyside, which are of similar financial magnitude and also serve the eastern sector of the city, but crucially, offer increased likelihood of 'realisation' through better potential financial returns and enhanced opportunity for external funding (see 9.2.4 below):

And then there's what's happening now - one of the reasons why you'd have the City Line Link is to access the areas of the hospitals and universities on the hill just above Liverpool city centre. But, I think I've come round to the view that the best way to do that would be with LRT, (which) is more cost effective, at £80m for a whole route going out from the city to places like Huyton and Old Swan.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

That the progression of the City Line Link tunnel connection itself was deemed unattainable did not, however, negate the more general aspiration for concerted investment in, and improvement of, City Line train services, identified in response to the widespread consensual predisposition that the quality of the service on these routes fell short of the 'metro' standard achieved on the remainder of the Merseyrail network, and that

the City Line if you compare it to the others (Merseyrail Northern and Wirral Lines) has a lower trip rate, but nevertheless, it has a high population catchment, especially out to St Helens and Rainhill. So it's been our strategy from the start to raise service

levels to something that is comparable with the Northern and Wirral Lines.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

The consistently favourable growth trend despite the acknowledged deficiency in the quality of service provided led to the view that significant suppressed demand still exists for rail travel along the City Line corridors, and that the extension of electrification even without the construction of the City Line Link could play a substantial role in catering for this demand. However, this desire to bring the service quality of City Line system more fully into line with the rapid transit Merseyrail image successfully cultivated on the existing electric system was, and remains, limited by a range of factors, including the aspirations of BR, and latterly Railtrack, for the infrastructure concerned as part of the national rail network.

In 1990, British Rail and a consortium of local authorities from throughout the north of England commissioned the *Transpennine Rail Strategy Study* to examine the future of a range of rail corridors between Liverpool and the East Coast Mainline at York via Manchester and Leeds. Although the original study report of 1992 recommended partial electrification including that section of line within Merseyside east of the existing Northern Line terminus at Hunts Cross, the re-organisation of the rail industry in April 1994 in advance of privatisation prompted a re-evaluation of the 1992 study report in light of the creation of Railtrack and the various new route franchises. A two-stage improvement package was now envisaged, representing "the best way forward to deliver the strategy against the background of the new railway structure" (Merseytravel 25/9/96) The revised strategy was based around the early introduction of tilting diesel trains of the type increasingly employed in continental Europe, and limited infrastructure alignment improvements by 2001, with electrification of the core route put back to a target date of 2010.

In spite of the shelving of Trans-Pennine electrification as a result of the study deliberations, Merseytravel remained committed to the upgrading and electrification of the principal St Helens branch, over which the majority of Section 20 supported services operated, in recognition of "the need to examine proposals to enable these City Line services to meet standards of reliability and comfort achieved on the Wirral and Northern Lines" (Merseytravel, 9/1/91).

In contrast to the consensus against early extension of electrification noted in Strathclyde, where the 'symbolic' priority of network extension through the provision of new diesel services on re-opened lines was highlighted by both officers and councillors, the strategic

aspirations underlying the general support for the extension of electrification to encompass the St Helens route again differed between the two core elements of the Merseyside local policy regime. Cllr Dowd's symbolic perception of electrification as a means to harmonise the quality of service provided across Merseyrail's three route corridors re-emerged:

We could electrify the line from Liverpool to St Helens and possibly on to Wigan, because I think we should be providing the same service on that line, it should be electrified.

Cllr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.

However, officers from Merseytravel and St Helens Borough Council itself conceived the benefits of electrification not symbolically, but rather in terms of 'tangible' efficiency, environmental, mobility and regenerative benefits derived from improved reliability and reduced journey times:

The existing local City Line service suffers by comparison with Northern and Wirral Line service. In particular, the punctuality is worse, services are less frequent and the rolling stock is of a lower standard and suffering problems of poor availability and high failure rates. It is clearly not achieving its full potential as a major rail corridor in Merseyside. This has wider energy, environmental and traffic implications.

Merseytravel's corporate mission is to secure the provision of effective transport services to meet the social and economic needs of the region. (Electrification) would address these needs in the following ways:

- improve local services to serve the needs of the rail corridor, in particular St Helens, Huyton and Liverpool areas; and
- support efforts to regenerate Merseyside; in particular the town centre of St Helens, Prescott and Liverpool.

Merseytravel (9/1/91).

Electrification is one of those things that is always on the books, one of the things that could be brought forward. The benefits of it are faster trains, better trains basically,

it's a way of getting much better rolling stock, to improve what we've got and get it more efficient and better used, and then we could try to build on that.

John Harrison,  
St Helens Borough Council.

However, despite general support for the concept of St Helens electrification across a range of regime members, the nature of the capital funding measures imposed on the Merseyside 'package bid' once again made the progression of the scheme impossible. Quite simply, the result of the commissioned study into the viability of the £8.5m project concluded that the project did not produce the level of 'tangible' benefits required by the Package appraisals:

the evaluation of all electrification options demonstrated that the financial viability of all the options fell substantially short of the Department of Transport's financial criteria (Section 56)... inclusion of the effects of patronage generation (ie additional trips by existing rail users or new trips made because of new transport facilities) does not substantially alter the case.

Merseytravel (24/8/92).

Furthermore, a significant reference was made to the impact upon policy prioritisation of the limited range of factors included within the Section 56 methodology demanded by central government for rail scheme appraisal within the Package Approach. Crucially, a more broadly-based set of social benefit criteria, similar to that used by central government in the evaluation of road schemes, and indeed that adopted by Strathclyde Regional Council officers in the 1987 *Rail Review*, would fundamentally improve the justification of the project. Thus, the range of investment benefits which could be defined as 'tangible' was directly derived from central government policy aspirations:

PTEs and county councils have been pressing the Department of Transport to allow evaluation of the benefits of rail investment on the same basis as highway investment (taking into account full economic and social-cost benefit factors such as time savings, reduced congestion, reduced accidents). This change (would) significantly improve the case for electrification.

Merseytravel (24/8/92).

In conclusion, that St Helens line electrification was not proceeded upon, despite underlying support across the Merseyside regime again highlights the limitations imposed on policy evaluation within the 'package approach' by the appraisal criteria dictated by central government, which emphasise particular economic development aspirations.

### 9.2.3 Liverpool Airport rail link

The final potential line re-opening scheme examined by Merseytravel highlights a further particular philosophical conflict generated by the identified restrictions on the range of rail investment projects imposed by the county's decision-making structure. Liverpool Airport, which had a throughput of 720,000 passengers in 1995, clearly does not play as significant a role in Merseyside's economy as does Glasgow Airport within that of Strathclyde, but nevertheless, the airport complex is identified as a potential major employment growth pole for the county, since the consistently upward trend in the level of demand for aviation brings the possibility that today's smaller regional airports could grow significantly in the future. With this in mind, Liverpool Airport plc, a subsidiary company of British Aerospace, submitted proposals in 1996 for the upgrading of the facility to a capacity of 12m passengers per year by 2030.

Clearly, the provision of a rail link to Liverpool Airport could aid both its own development and that of Merseyside in general, through stimulating traffic growth and secondary commercial investment at the airport, thus providing a major stimulus to job creation. The concept of such a rail link can therefore be identified with both economic and social development perspectives, and as such, enjoyed support from both the professional and elected branches of Merseytravel:

Liverpool Airport is the one (new rail link) that I'm very interested in.... there's areas to be served on the way to the airport as well as the airport itself, and that would be a major priority, because the airport is a big money spinner potentially, a big jobs creator, and again, that's the priority I see.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

That's something we've looked at over a number of years, and it would be an absolutely incredible thing for the area, say for instance people travelling from Southport could

get a train directly to the airport. I think it would open the airport up, I don't think there's any doubt about that at all, as has been proved in Manchester. It should be a case of let's get it built and see what it can do.

Cllr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.

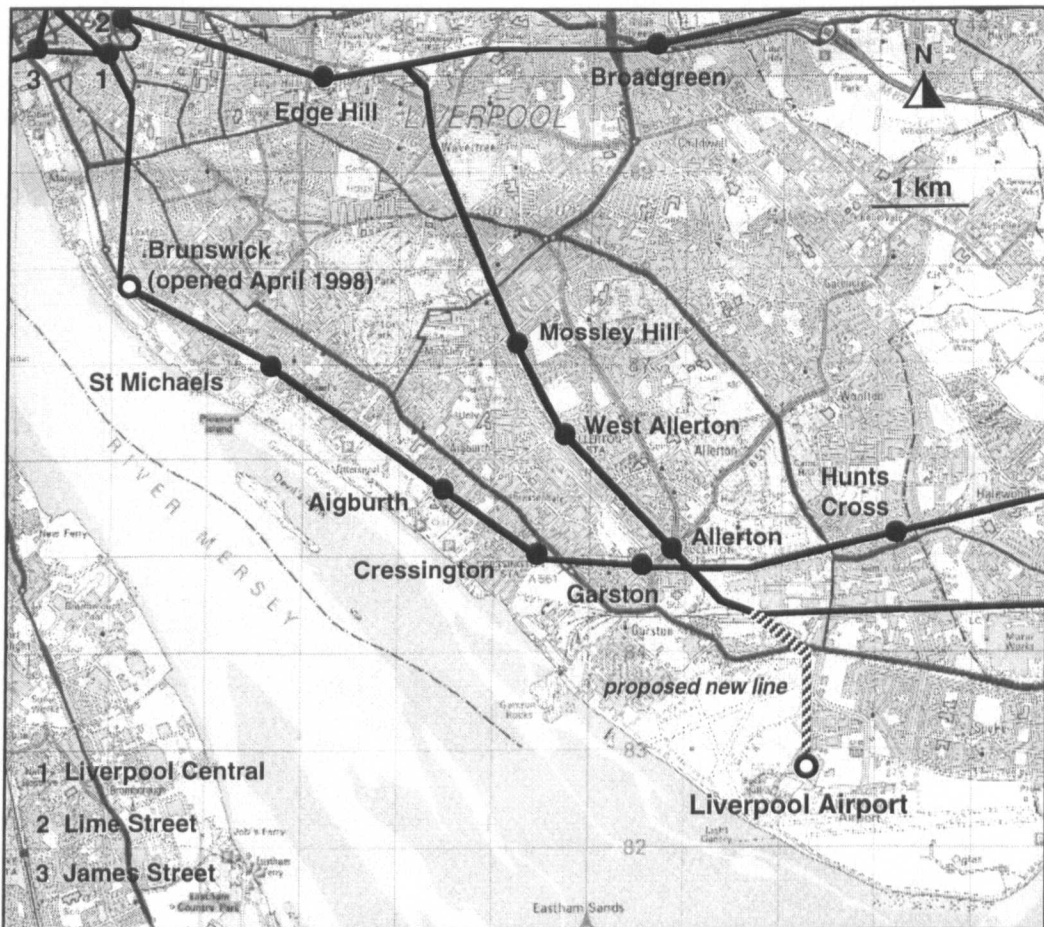


Figure 9.5 Route of proposed Liverpool Airport rail link. *Crown Copyright reserved*

The low level of current air traffic at Liverpool, which is hampered by the continuing expansion of Manchester Airport, and the inherent costs of the provision of the necessary rail spur mean that at present, plans for a rail link remain at the most preliminary stage. However, the potential development of a rail connection to the airport is significant as part of any more general analysis of the assumed roles of the PTEs. As the rail link to London's Stansted Airport, which was fully funded by the Department of Transport and opened concurrently with the airport terminal itself demonstrates, as do the stated aspirations for the CrossRail link in Strathclyde, the provision of rail access to an airport or indeed any

significant urban development can in itself play a valuable role in *generating* use of the facilities. Thus the early provision of rail infrastructure to serve such developments represents a 'symbol' of confidence in their future, rather than as a means to achieve 'tangible' economic returns over the short to medium term. Indeed, such investments could easily be justified as part of the PTEs' statutory function as prescribed by the 1968 Transport Act to "provide passenger transport services to meet the needs of their area". However, as has been shown, the reality of the Section 56 capital grant regime imposed by central government, under which the Merseyside 'package bid' operates, dictates that major new rail construction projects must produce the 'tangible result' of financial returns on capital soon after the commencement of services, directing new infrastructure provision to those urban places where a sufficient level of overall transport demand is *already* established.

Thus, in a significant passage of interview text, the Managing Director of Liverpool Airport plc reiterated the view that the adopted structure of funding for local rail developments in Merseyside excluded from serious consideration such projects as the Liverpool Airport rail link which, while not showing direct 'tangible' financial returns from the date of opening, were nevertheless highly 'symbolic' of confidence in the facility's future development potential:

What we want is a link in to the airport from the main rail system. We want the ability for people to arrive here by train. But, in discussions with Merseytravel, British Rail, Railtrack or whatever, it's always, "well, you need to achieve a certain size - does this give us a payback pretty quickly?" They can't afford to wait ten years for a payback. Therefore, to put a rail link in, it's going back to planning, if you had the vision you'd do it, because by doing it you actually help to create the critical mass (of patronage). If you wait for the critical mass it will never come. So there's a key issue - when does the fixed link go in in terms of timing? I think with the funding structure there now is, it will never go into those airports which need it as a boost to their future potential, because it's the wrong way round. Everybody is saying, "does this make economic sense? Can we make a return on the investment on this?", and if the answer to that is "no", the resources are simply not earmarked, there's no help from government in terms of "well our philosophy is to move people onto rail, so to do that we need to let the infrastructure in".... what Merseytravel should be doing if there weren't the financial restraint and resource problems, what they should be doing is in a co-ordinated way saying, "yes, we want an airport to support Liverpool and Merseyside".... and having a co-ordinated approach to the development of transport which includes a fixed link. But I can't be critical of them because I know it comes back to this problem of critical mass, because I know that they can't do anything without

having a good business case for it now.

Rod Hill,  
Liverpool Airport plc.

Similarly, that the airport should achieve a 'critical mass' of passenger traffic before a rail link became a practical possibility was also articulated by rail industry representatives:

There's been a lot of study (on a rail link) to Liverpool Airport.... however, to put a fixed link in would need much more throughput than they've got at the moment, they're below one million, so there isn't really a market for it from all the research work that's been done.

Chris Leah,  
Railtrack North West.

We know from our experience with airports in Britain that when they reach a certain high volume of (annual) passenger throughput, and that is probably around the 10 million mark, that there begins to be an opportunity for heavy rail to pick up worthwhile business. Liverpool Airport has been for years a place that people said should develop but never has done.... and never will be of interest to any heavy rail operator unless it does.

Robert Goundry,  
North West Regional Railways.

Comparison of the evolution of the Glasgow and Liverpool Airport rail link projects once again reveals significant differences in the underlying justification for rail transport investment generated by each regime. Although Glasgow Airport handles many times more passengers than does Liverpool, its traffic levels remain significantly below that generally acknowledged as required in order to produce a direct financial return on the investment. However, with the substantial autonomy granted to Strathclyde in applying its capital budget, the Glasgow Airport rail link was vigorously progressed as 'symbol' of confidence in the airport's future, and its role in sustaining the competitiveness of the Region. Such a course of action was closed to the Merseyside regime, however, since the lack of immediate



'tangible' financial returns ruled out the Liverpool Airport scheme from serious consideration within the framework of the 'package approach' and its appraisal methodologies.

#### 9.2.4 Merseyside Rapid Transit

The concept of Light Rapid Transit on Merseyside emerged from a review conducted by PTE professional staff in 1992 into its potential benefits for the county in light of experience gained elsewhere in the UK. The major difference from the then five-year old investigation into LRT in Strathclyde was that from the start, LRT on Merseyside was conceived as providing an improved form of public transport for corridors dependent on the traditional bus, rather than as a means to replace life expired local heavy rail services:

There are many places on Merseyside not served by the Merseyrail network. Although some of these places are well served by buses, the journey times to the City Centre can be prolonged as buses have to compete with cars and are therefore often delayed. Merseytravel has implemented a strategy of bus priority measures to aid this, but due to the large numbers of people using buses in certain corridors, a more rapid form of transport is required.

Merseytravel (1996).

I've said before that the eastern wards of the city are not as effectively served by public transport than the boroughs with the electric rail services. Obviously we've got the bus, but the bus has its critics and I've been one of them - the bus network on Merseyside has been exceedingly poor over a number of years. But buses alone cannot provide for the whole public transport need, if we are to make public transport more popular what you have to introduce something that is new, innovative, exciting and something that perhaps the person with a genuine choice of whether to ride on it or not might choose. So that was the genesis of the rapid transit idea as a concept.

Roy Swainson,  
Merseytravel.

That the central policy goal behind the development of LRT on Merseyside, like that of the route eventually chosen for the first line of the *Strathclyde Tram* system, was to improve the quality of service available on corridors of existing high public transport flow, dictated that

the initial criteria adopted for the appraisal of potential routes should be based on a maximisation of potential ridership, rather than on the possibilities for effecting modal shift away from the private car to the new system. Thus, an external study was commissioned by Merseytravel to produce a comparison of the potential benefits of LRT across the five busiest bus corridors into central Liverpool, with the appraisal of each option based purely on potential ridership, and hence revenue potential:

We then set about deciding which of the range of alternative lines we should look to develop first, and again we engaged consultants, we engaged in extensive consultation, we constructed models, we looked at patronage areas, we looked at car ownership, we looked at existing public transport networks and we chose a line of route which looked to offer the best returns in financial terms and number of patrons. But it will be an expensive route because one of the components is the city centre service, but once that is in place, it will be comparatively much cheaper to develop lines to other parts of the city and that go out from the city.

Roy Swainson,  
Merseytravel.

The Stage 1 feasibility study examined five corridors defined in the brief as the major public transport corridors in Liverpool. These corridors were defined largely on the basis of bus passenger flows.

An overriding need was identified to provide a high quality system in order to enhance the role of public transport to attract car users, and support wider economic regeneration objectives.

A spreadsheet mode choice model was used to forecast the numbers of passengers who would be attracted to LRT... the results were combined with the cost estimates to produce an assessment of financial viability (in terms of the ratio of revenue to operating costs) and the proportion of the capital costs which could not be recovered from fares revenue and would therefore need external funding.

The Stage 1 evaluation results indicated that only corridors 2, 4 and 5 would have an operating ratio (revenue: operating cost) greater than unity, indicating that an operating profit could be generated. This is one of the key requirements for central government's Section 56 grant eligibility.

(Further) results showed that as part of a network, all corridors achieved good operating ratio, with corridors 2W and 5 achieving a significant surplus. As standalone routes, the corridors performed less well with only corridors 2W and 5 achieving a significant surplus. Of the network options, Network B (corridors 2W, 4 and 5) performed best.

Steer Davies Gleave (1994).

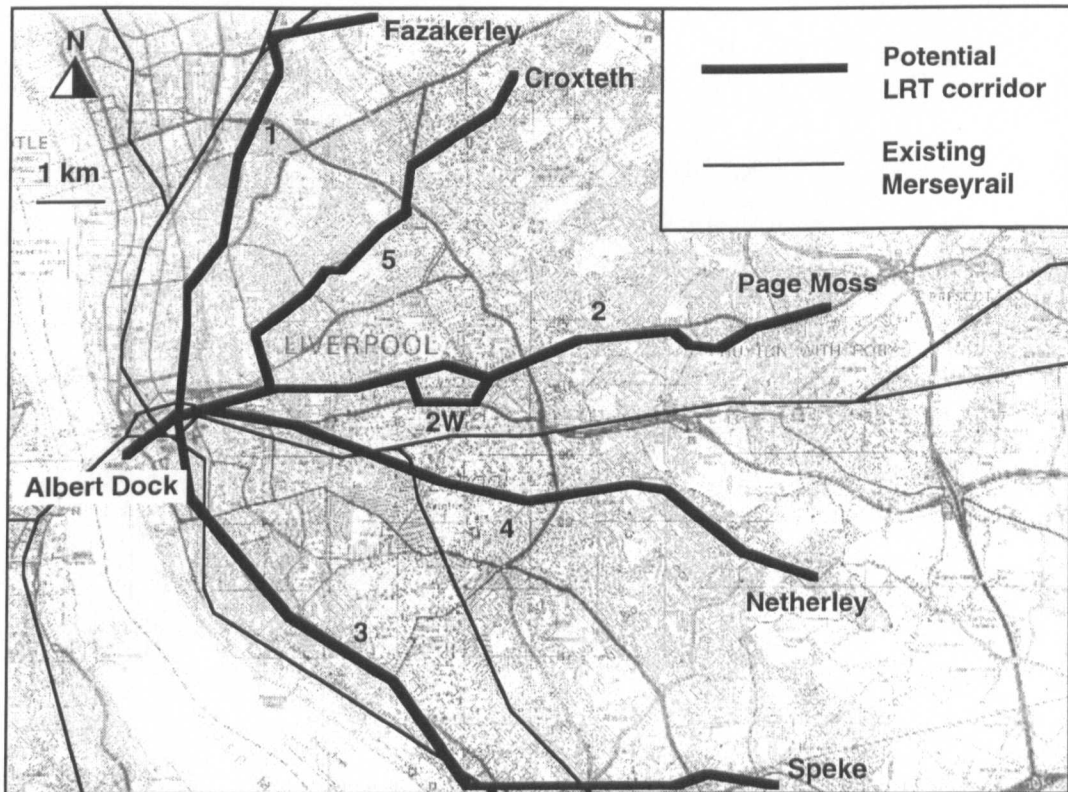


Figure 9.6 Potential development corridors evaluated in *Merseyside Rapid Transit Study*.  
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The conclusion of the study was that a 3-line *Merseyside Rapid Transit (MRT)* system comprising those corridors likely to produce the 'tangible result' of a positive rate of return on the initial capital investment should be pursued, with the best performing corridor, from Liverpool city centre to Page Moss via the Wavertree Technology Park (corridor 2W), to be constructed first. Significantly, one respondent emphasised that the prioritisation between the three preferred routes provided the opportunity to enhance not only MRT's financial performance, but also to satisfy particular strategic political aspirations within the regime:

I think there are two main thrusts to (their choice of route). One which has been announced publicly is economic development. The Wavertree Technology Park is one of the main areas to be served. At the moment, it's grossly underdeveloped, and I'm sure the purpose of the exercise is to raise the profile of the technology park, to improve the access along with the new railway station proposed for it. So that's the public reason, economic development. The political argument I think is much more interesting, and the way I see it is that Merseytravel is perceived very much as a Liverpool organisation, principally because so much money is going into the Merseyrail network, and the Merseyrail network is based in Liverpool yet it's funded by five authorities. So the PTE needs to have a project that involves at least two of its authorities to increase the political support, and they can do it with a light rail scheme that just goes into Knowsley.

Prof Lewis Lesley,  
Liverpool Light Rail Group.

Significantly however, despite the fact that the study brief purposefully limited the potential routes to those corridors of highest existing bus flow, three of which (3, 4 and 5) fell wholly within the Liverpool city boundary and two (1 and 2) which extended into Knowsley Borough, the fact that the evaluation exercise was conducted by external, independent consultants, and concentrated on 'objective' appraisal criteria ensured general support for the scheme across members of the policy regime, despite some variance in individual perceptions of the best choice of route:

We were quite happy with that (route). Remember that you have a conurbation which is pretty well served by heavy rail, but not every corridor is, and so the choice is a quite densely populated area that does not have a heavy rail connection, it's quite sensible to go in that particular direction. So we're perfectly happy with it.

Peter Rigby,  
Liverpool Chamber of Commerce.

I think we are very supportive of the MRT concept, in fact we've been involved with Merseytravel in all the discussions and the various meetings with consultants at an officer level, and it's been reported to our members on a number of occasions and they again have been very supportive of it as a concept. In terms of the route that has been chosen, well there has been some debate over whether it was the best route to choose,

and certainly some people have suggested that we should be providing it on other routes, but I think from the evidence that has been put forward from all the consultants is that no other route would be as likely to perform as well.

Keith Moores,  
Liverpool City Council.

In Liverpool, in Merseyside, the rail network is well spread, it's high profile, therefore there's very few points you could justify it. Probably the route that's been chosen wouldn't be the route that I would say is the right one. But the city centre and hospitals element is right. I'm surprised it's come out so well, in a professional study into the costs and benefits, But yes, I would have put it further south right away from the rail catchment, since my gut feeling is that I wonder whether it's the right scheme.

Respondent.

I think the main thing that has concerned our members is that this is a scheme which obviously affects Liverpool and Knowsley very positively, it has great benefits for them. It doesn't have any great benefits for Wirral or Sefton although it could in the future, but it doesn't really benefit St Helens at all. But, they picked that one because it's the biggest (flow), it's the corridor where they can pick up the most traffic, where they can get the highest patronage, where they've got the opportunity to do something big where they feel there is inadequate capacity on existing transport modes really. Now I would tend to go along with that, it's probably true, that it was the obvious thing to do, and it has the best payback and is the one most likely to bring private sector funding into play.

John Harrison,  
St Helens Borough Council.

In one particularly illuminating section of interview text, a senior officer from one of Merseytravel's constituent district councils outwith the potential scope of MRT further amplified these sentiments, and went on to highlight the regime 'rule' underlying the support given for the project by districts not directly benefiting from it: that support was derived from the 'trust' in project evaluation outcomes generated within the discourse of the

regime policy network by the consistent application of the same 'objective' quantitative methods of appraisal across all potential rail transport projects in Merseyside:

Why has that route been chosen? I'm not too sure actually, but we have enough trust in Merseytravel, and when it comes to our working relationship, we don't really have an axe to grind in the Wirral, we don't want MRT, we can recognise we're not going to get MRT or anything like it, but if it shakes out and satisfies the usual criteria, we will be prepared to support MRT in Liverpool. And our backup position was that we'd had out fair share - if our members complained, we would say, "well look, we've just had £x millions, so why stand in the way of something else?" Because they were in a similar situation, the lads (officers) in St Helens and Sefton came to the conclusion that they trusted the analysis that Merseytravel had concluded that Conway Park station was the number one on Merseyside and all the rest. It's an element of trust, isn't it? I mean, we don't see all the justification, all the papers, all the documentation, we just know that, we've got the confidence of knowing that we've got Merseytravel and Liverpool City working together, and they've come to the conclusion that MRT on that corridor would be good for Merseyside, good for that corridor.

Mike Tew,  
Wirral Borough Council.

The importance of the 'trust' generated by consistent methods of project appraisal in exchanges between individual regime members was further emphasised by Merseytravel's Director General:

The other part about those parts of our patch not served - it's always tricky to persuade local authorities which are not directly advantaged by a development of this kind to support it. But the 'package approach' to transport investment demands that there should be this level of support. Getting people to be statesman-like is not easy. We as an organisation have always adopted a fairly statesman-like approach to what our partners are doing in the public and private sectors - we've always been prepared to stand next to them in the interests of speaking with one voice for Merseyside, and we expect our partners to do likewise with ourselves.... so I feel that if, to quote an example, the MRT line doesn't happen to run into St Helens or Wirral or Sefton, and is confined in the first instance to Liverpool and Knowsley, the other local authorities will stand to benefit from that, and I'm pleased to say that the majority of local

authorities mentioned have supported that line.

Roy Swainson,  
Merseytravel.

With support for the concept of MRT and its preferred routes assured, the second major obstacle to the project's implementation, as in the parallel Strathclyde example, was the requirement for substantial additional capital funding. Although around half of the estimated cost of Strathclyde Tram, the £80m MRT scheme clearly fell outwith the scope of Merseytravel's own capital consents, so additional capital grant was required in order for the scheme to proceed.

However, since in common with Strathclyde PTE, Merseytravel had chosen to promote a scheme with strategic objectives other than achieving a reduction in urban congestion through modal shift away from the private car, it was unclear whether a case could be made for additional capital grant for MRT under the Department of Transport's Section 56 appraisal regime. The existence of sources of additional capital funding other than those obtained directly from central government therefore presented the opportunity to pursue implementation of the agreed MRT network irrespective of its potential for generating modal shift:

Funding for light rail schemes has traditionally come principally through the Section 56 grant process from the Department of Transport. This is an extremely long process and there is currently a waiting list of schemes, which have passed the evaluation criteria, but which await funding. The Department of Transport is also looking for a substantial private sector input to any scheme.

It is felt that because of the current lack of resources for Section 56 grants that this is not a realistic path to pursue. Merseyside is fortunate in having the alternative option of Objective 1 funding, and (there is the possibility of) provision for contribution towards a light rail or guided bus scheme. A key element in pursuing rapid transit, however, is the ability to lever in significant levels of private sector funding.

Merseytravel (16/6/94).

(Further work) highlighted the opportunity to use Objective One funds and a partnership between Merseytravel, Liverpool City Council and private sector interests

to develop a light rail or guided bus system in Liverpool.... (as) such, further work should concentrate in the first instance, on testing the viability of light rail in those corridors where there seems from the study to be the greatest commercial opportunities.

Merseytravel (20/10/94)

Furthermore, that the guidelines for EU Objective One funding demanded matched input from the private sector reinforced the case for MRT on corridors with existing high levels of public transport flow, where the shift from bus to LRT could reasonably be expected to be high, acting as a basis for future patronage growth. In this respect, the second crucial difference between MRT and Strathclyde Tram is visible, in that on Merseyside, rather than opposing the scheme, two major local private sector bus companies became involved in preliminary discussions into their involvement in any future LRT scheme via the independent Liverpool Light Rail Group consortium. Rather than remaining competitors to a largely publicly-financed LRT project as in Strathclyde, the public-private partnership demanded by the available Objective One funding arrangements presented the opportunity for the companies concerned to become directly involved in MRT as a worthwhile extension to their core activities:

As far as buses were concerned, of course the (Liverpool Light Rail Group) consortium included two bus companies, who saw LRT as an opportunity to rationalise their services in Liverpool, to re-organise the service, in particular to improve the cross-Liverpool links which at the moment are very poor, and part of the design project was to produce some bus/tram interchange stations to make it very easy for people to interchange between the two, and given that there were bus companies in the Group, to integrate services.

Prof Lewis Lesley,  
Liverpool Light Rail Group.

The development history of MRT reinforces the previously identified influence of the atomisation of public transport capital consents across a range of public sector institutions on Merseyside and the resultant 'instrumental' construction of the local rail transport policy regime. In this example, however, the existence of Objective One grant enabled the progression of a scheme whose fundamental strategic goals did not wholly match those of the central government as expressed through the Section 56 evaluation criteria. The existence of Objective One monies, and their requirement for matched private sector funding, enabled the



involvement of local bus companies in the project and the location of MRT in corridors of existing high bus flow. The commonly-held predisposed aspiration to maximise the level of funding, or 'selective incentives', available to the Merseyside region for rail transport investment ensured that support for the project was forthcoming across members of the local policy regime, reflecting the importance of the 'trust' relationships built up between the professional officers charged with the management of policy development between the various partnership bodies in order to promote those schemes seen as 'realisable' and producing 'tangible results':

Again, MRT is to do with funding from elsewhere, be it Objective One or whatever. We decided that what we'd do is look at the possibilities of an LRT system, basically from the waterfront right through to Knowsley, and the reason we came up with that route is that it is not served by railways. And what we want is to see how much the private sector would put in. We've done a thorough feasibility study and we think it would do well.... we've got to get to the stage where we actually know what it means in financial terms for the District Councils and ourselves, what we need from the private sector etc. It's a case of having to know everything, then coming to a decision, and saying to the Districts, "look we can do this scheme for this amount of money, here are the figures", and then take a decision. The obvious thing is that there's no way you could take a decision on a Package Bid or other funding with MRT unless the District Councils were fully behind it.

Cllr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.



Figure 9.7 Route of MRT on approach to Liverpool city centre at Mount Pleasant.



Figure 9.8 Artist's impression of MRT light rapid transit vehicle. *Merseytravel*

## 9.3 Summary

### 9.3.1 Merseyside as an 'instrumental' regime

The development of the largest Merseyrail projects and MRT detailed in this chapter reveals several significant impacts upon policy formation of both local decision-makers' attitudes to local rail transport investment, and the distribution of 'investment potential' represented by capital funding reserves across the range of interested local government and other institutions participating in the Merseyside rail transport regime. Clearly, the implications of the negotiations required in order to ensure the operation of the 'package approach' to transport capital allocations administered by the Government Office for Merseyside characterises the development of local rail policy in the county. Significantly, the wider variety of institutions within the Merseyside regime holding the potential to invest in rail transport projects, and the intimate involvement of the centre through the Government Office, can be seen to have generated a more quantitative approach to scheme appraisal than in Strathclyde, which emphasised the achievement of particular 'tangible' economic development outputs according to the criteria of the 'Section 56' appraisal system.

The need to assemble viable funding packages between diverse groups such as the Merseyside Development Corporation and City Challenge boards in addition to Merseytravel itself according to these criteria reinforced the perceived value of quantitative appraisal as a means to ensure 'objectivity' and fairness in the direction of investment between the county's five borough council areas. Indeed, the transparency of the criteria under which these Package appraisals were conducted represented a profound expression of 'process accountability' (see 3.5.1) in the prioritisation of competing capital projects in Merseyside. In order to secure the agreement between representatives of interested non-elected local bodies, the county's five borough councils and the Government Office necessary for the successful promotion of the Package Bid, a high degree of mutual 'trust' based on the impartiality of professional quantitative appraisal was required. Implemented projects, such as the new station at Conway Park, were chosen since they maximised the level external grant aid available to Merseytravel and its constituent councils. A similar process held true outside the 'package' for the development of MRT. In this case, the requirement of EU Objective One funding that matched private sector capital be secured tilted the scheme towards a corridor of already high public transport patronage, and the 'tangible result' of abstraction of existing bus traffic.

Finally, the role of senior Merseytravel officers as the managers of the complex financial and informational discussions within the policy regime reinforced their relative level of power as compared to the isolation of the PTA Chair, whose own policy preferences, based on more

'symbolic' qualitative political criteria, conflicted with those of central government which characterised the 'package' discussions. Significantly, the isolation of the elected Chair of the PTA, and the lack of policy coalitions founded on public support for particular preferences as in Strathclyde, implies a significant loss of 'political accountability' (see 3.5.1) in the Merseyside local rail transport policy regime.

## **10 Incremental development opportunities in Merseyside**

### **10.1 Introduction**

10.1.1 Ongoing rail network development in Merseyside

### **10.2 Project histories**

10.2.1 Mid-Wirral Line modernisation

10.2.2 Branch line re-openings

10.2.3 New stations on existing lines

### **10.3 Summary**

10.3.1 'Instrumental' policy-making in Merseyside

## 10.1 Introduction

### 10.1.1 Ongoing rail network development in Merseyside

This chapter analyses the processes underlying the development of the range of smaller network investment projects within the Merseyside rail transport policy regime between 1986 and 1996. Other than minor maintenance works and the four major projects outlined previously, every potential development policy involving the provision of a new rail service facility considered by Merseytravel and the wider regime during this period is addressed. The ways in which proposals for the development of new branch lines and extensions, new stations on existing routes and the enhancement of existing routes were evaluated within the regime is analysed. The impacts of the atomisation of capital funding consents across several regime institutions and the rules of quantitative project appraisal within the 'Package' submissions are reinforced. The development of actual policies according to the 'instrumental' goals of 'project realisation' and the achievement of 'tangible results' is highlighted.

## 10.2 Project histories

### 10.2.1 Mid-Wirral Line route modernisation

Several of the infrastructure and service improvements achieved on Merseyrail through the heavy capital investment of the 1970s and mid 1980s centred on the electrification of existing rail routes, in order to provide a faster, more comfortable and efficient service to passengers. In Merseyside, electrification appeared as early as 1903 as a response to the unsustainable operating conditions within the Mersey Tunnel brought about by the use of steam traction. Consequently, all through services to Liverpool via the Mersey Tunnel, and on the Northern Line via the 1970s underground *Link*, have utilised electric traction so as to avoid the introduction of diesel exhaust pollutants into these confined environments.

For the Wirral Line, this has proved a particularly important legacy for more recent policy decisions: with such substantial investment represented by the 1970s *Loop*, and indeed the original Mersey Tunnel, future investments which maximise the use of these assets present obvious attractions: that the extension of Merseyrail electrification from Rock Ferry to Hooton in the early 1980s was driven by the desire to increase patronage and revenue by

better fulfilling the potential afforded by existing historic cross-river infrastructure was outlined in 5.4.1.

Although the single example of the extension of Merseyrail electrification achieved within the study time-frame was in fact outside the PTE area, it nevertheless reiterates the 'instrumental' approach of the Merseyside regime. In 1990, a funding package for a £8.1m scheme extending electrification from Hooton to Chester and Ellesmere Port was assembled between the PSO sector of British Rail, Cheshire County Council and Merseytravel. Merseytravel's contribution of £3.2m was approved under the '25 mile rule' provisions of the 1968 Transport Act, since although the entire length of route to be electrified fell outwith the PTE area boundary, the opportunity presented by external funding sources rendered the scheme highly 'realisable'. Similarly, at an estimated £400,000 per annum, the additional revenue accruing to the PTE for travel within its area represented a highly 'tangible result', sufficient to meet the incurred additional operating and financing costs. In addition, the project satisfied general policy aspirations through

support(ing) the regeneration of Merseyside and particularly the renaissance of Liverpool city centre, the expansion of Birkenhead town centre, and the new commercial, shopping, leisure and tourist developments taking place throughout Merseyside.

Merseyside PTA/E (1989).

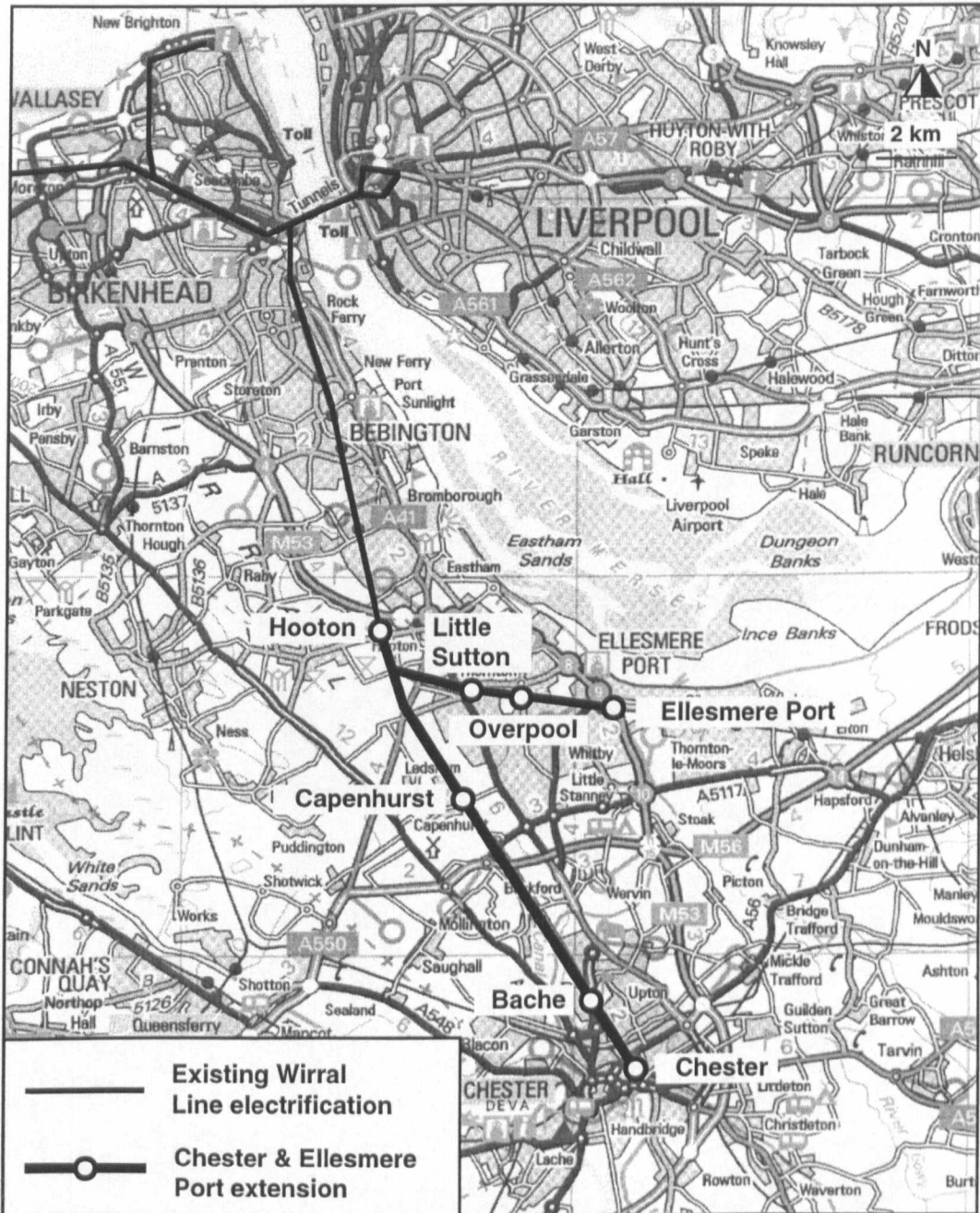


Figure 10.1 Route of Chester and Ellesmere Port electrification. *Crown Copyright reserved*

After the upgrading of the section of the Wirral line south of Hooton, the only remaining unelectrified section of the route was that running south from the junction at Bidston (Figure 10.2). Although this section falls within the Merseyside PTA designated area, it is not included in the county's Section 20 supported rail network since the continued use of diesel traction precludes the through-running of trains to Liverpool via the Mersey Tunnel. The lack of Section 20 support can be seen in the deterioration of the line's unstaffed stations (Figure 10.3). However, in 1995, Merseytravel commissioned a feasibility study to research



the effects of extension of revenue support incorporating the electrification and station modernisation of the section of line within Merseyside county, since “potential new markets and existing markets are present that could form the basis of a development strategy” (Merseytravel 1995) for the line, which has an estimated catchment population of around 30,000 people.

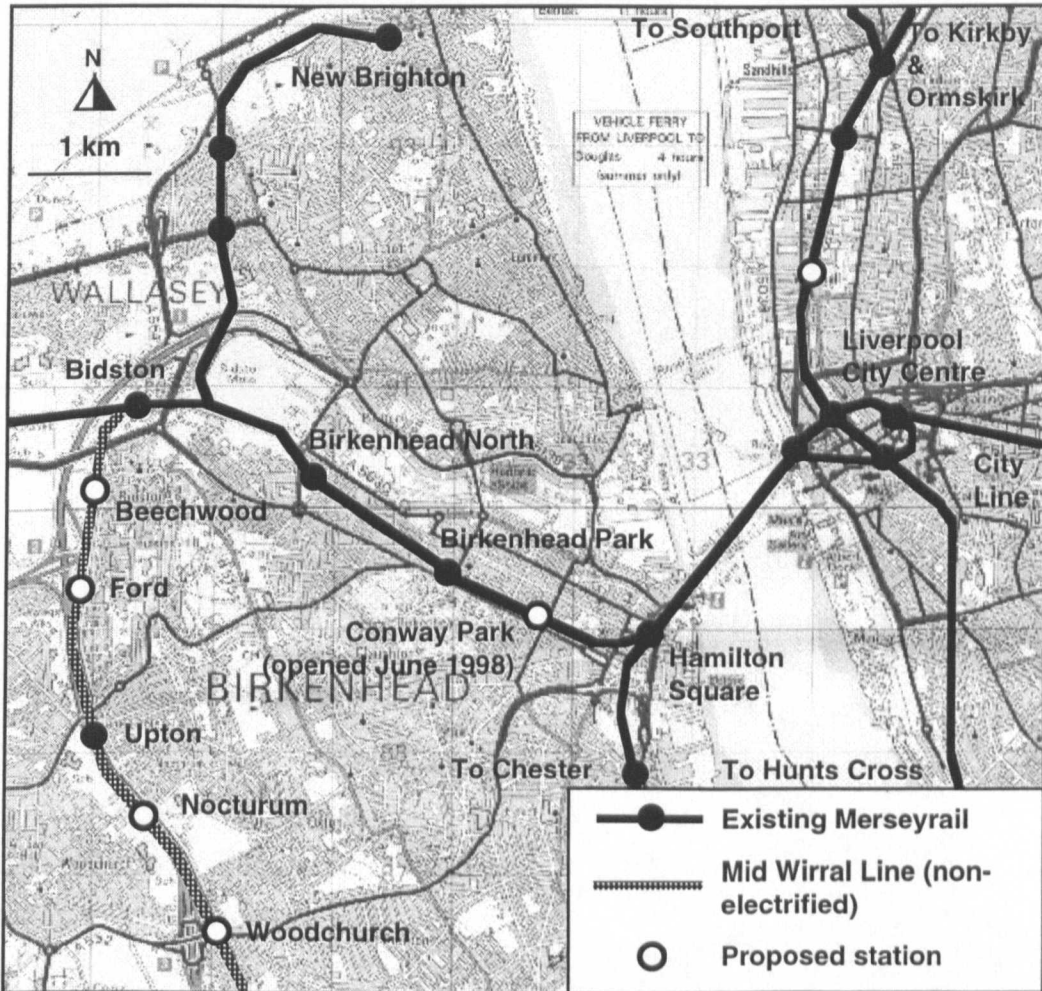


Figure 10.2 Route of Mid-Wirral Line. *Crown Copyright reserved*



Figure 10.3 Derelict condition of Upton station, 1997.

Merseytravel's plan envisaged a phased strategy of electrification plus new stations within their area. The first stage would extend electric services as far as Woodchurch, with new stations at Beechwood, Ford, Nocturum and Woodchurch, which could be achieved without new rolling stock or alterations to the existing electrical supply system for the Wirral line, thus providing substantial extension of electric Merseyrail services whilst minimising the estimated capital cost to around £5 - 7m. It would then be possible at a later date to further extend electrification southwards to Heswall and beyond the Merseyside county boundary as funding for additional rolling stock and power supply work became available.

The policy significance of the Woodchurch project is related to the impact of successive historic investments on future capital programmes. As late as 1993, the scheme was just one of a range of possible electrification extension options including revitalisation of the City Line (see below) and several other small extensions beyond the county boundary. However, by late 1995,

The proposal for a new station at Conway Park in Birkenhead has now received Objective One approval and the expenditure is approved on the station. The construction of the station is key to the development of the Wrexham - Bidston (Mid-

Wirral) line as it substantially increases the range of destinations available to passengers by the inclusion of shopping, educational, employment and leisure land uses in central Birkenhead in addition to Liverpool city centre and the Wirral waterfront... (this) emphasised the central importance in developing the Wrexham - Bidston railway line of providing direct rail access to Birkenhead town centre via Conway Park new station to complement access to Liverpool. Without this, the case for extension of electrification beyond Bidston would be difficult to justify.

Merseytravel (20/12/95).

Woodchurch I think, is one of our core schemes. I'm not entirely sure how we'll approach it at the moment, but I want to see the justification and the revenue forecast. But again, it works on the back of the *Loop* and *Link* in the city centre, you know, the good access, and Conway Park being built with good access to Birkenhead, so we can extend the tentacles of electrification like we have done, you increase the utilisation of the core bit by bit.... I openly said despite pressure on me that if Conway Park doesn't go ahead then Woodchurch is a no-no. If you look at how people live down there, 50% travel to Liverpool to shop, but the other 50% go to Birkenhead, and if you haven't got a good station at Birkenhead then there's no point in doing it.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

Thus, the viability of extending electric services and Merseytravel revenue support to the mid-Wirral route was clearly based on the succession of core infrastructure developments from the Mersey Tunnel itself, through the Liverpool *Loop* and *Link* to the new station at Conway Park, which provided the final stimulus to its examination:

One of Merseytravel's great successes is in the way that they have incrementally increased the scope of the third rail system.... and with Woodchurch, they've said, "where can we push it to next?", (and) I guess Woodchurch is the next obvious place to go from a population density point of view. So historic investment in the Wirral Line is still driving their priorities now.

Robert Goundry,  
North West Regional Railways.

The particular significance of this cumulative pattern of investment is in the evident secondary influence of the atomisation of central government capital consents. As the Woodchurch development scheme lies outside the urban core of Merseyside, the project cannot attract City Challenge funding, and is under severe competition for other more limited funding streams from more densely populated transport corridors in Wirral, Merseyside and further afield. Therefore, besides Objective One grant for which similar schemes throughout Merseyside are eligible, the sole source of finance for the c£5 - 7m Woodchurch electrification is projected to be Merseytravel's share of the county's transport Package Bid capital allocation from the 1998/99 and subsequent financial years (Merseytravel, 1994)

Thus, the previous allocation of external grant to enable the construction of Conway Park station can be seen to have a profound effect on the prioritisation of Merseytravel's *own* subsequent capital spending. In adopting quantitative appraisal criteria, the projected patronage and revenue growth arising from the development of Conway Park improves the case for Woodchurch electrification to the stage where it becomes a priority option exhibiting the necessary 'tangible results' to secure funding within the county's Package Bid, in turn perpetuating the cycle of cumulative Merseyrail investment in Wirral Borough. However, this necessarily implies a lowering in prioritisation of competing rail development schemes elsewhere in Merseyside which, crucially, may have exhibited a better financial or cost-benefit case than the Woodchurch project *before* the externally-driven decision to invest in Conway Park was made:

There are factions that say you should be spending the money on those services that are run-down, ie the City Line to St Helens, and not keep putting it into the wealthy part (of the county), the Wirral.

Chris Leah,  
Railtrack North West.

Thus, the existence of City Challenge grant aid in respect to one part of Wirral promoted the geographic concentration of local rail network investment in the borough as a whole. Although the Conway Park station project was financed through partnership arrangements, its effects clearly altered the relative cost-benefit performance of the Mid-Wirral project

within Merseytravel's own capital budget, at the expense of competing schemes in other areas.

### **10.2.2 Branch line re-openings**

In contrast to the Strathclyde local rail network, "Merseyside, unlike other conurbations, is poorly endowed with old freight lines or disused track beds that offer useful opportunities for re-opening" (Merseytravel, 1993b: para 15.4). As a consequence, no additional sections of rail route have been opened to local passenger traffic since the Beeching closures of the 1960s, or are programmed to do so over the medium term. By March 1996, some studies had not been completed, but the final evaluations of those available are outlined below. The achievement of several extension projects is considered desirable, and so a number of existing freight-only routes and solums have been safeguarded should their use be required in the future.

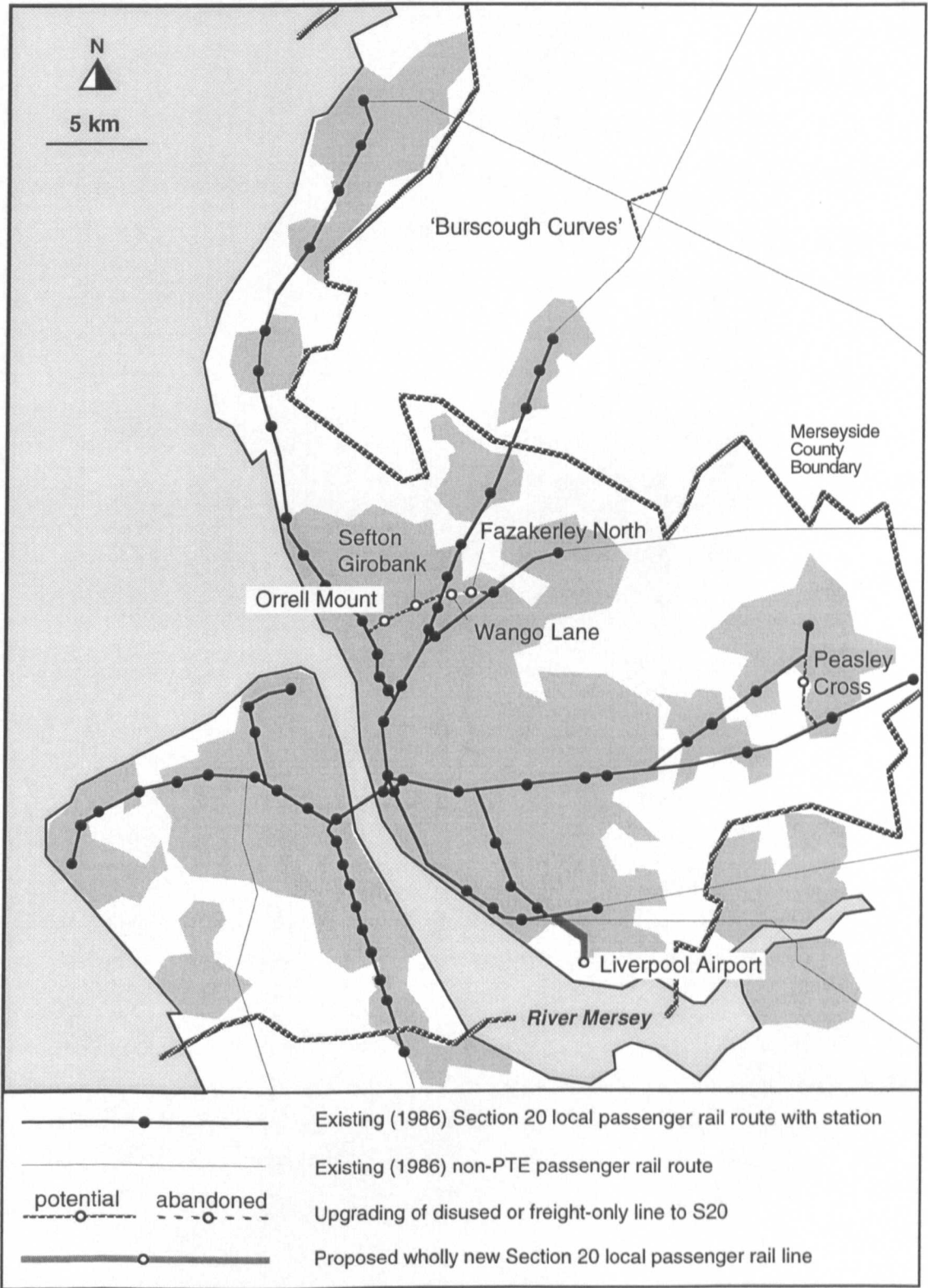


Figure 10.4 Location of potential line re-opening schemes in Merseyside.

<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Length (km)</u>	<u>Number of additional stations</u>	<u>Previous condition of route</u>	<u>estimated capital cost (£ million)</u>	<u>Status at 31/3/96</u>
Aintree Triangle (core scheme)	4	2	freight only	4.5	route safeguarded
Fazakerley Extension	2	2	disused	2.5	route abandoned
St Helens Central Junction Link	3	1	disused	c4	study ongoing
Liverpool Airport	3	1	wholly new infrastructure	c10	study ongoing
Burscough Curves	1	0	disused	>6	route safeguarded

Table 10.1 Merseyside line re-opening proposals, selected characteristics.

Significantly, the apparent lack of progress in this aspect of the development of Merseyrail, in contrast to the case in Strathclyde, reinforces the categorisation of the county's rail transport policy regime as 'instrumental'.

The first potential line re-opening proposal to be considered in Merseyside during the study time frame was proposed in early 1989 and exemplifies the operation of the local policy regime in this respect. The possible upgrading of the existing freight-only line between Bootle and Aintree was identified as a means to serve the Sefton Business Park development, a major urban regeneration scheme stretching west from the existing Aintree station on a tract of derelict land known as the "Aintree Triangle". The eventual business park development, although not of the scale originally envisaged, nevertheless incorporated the new headquarters of National Girobank, and additional financial sector business activity. As a major new employment centre, it was also to become a significant trip generator.

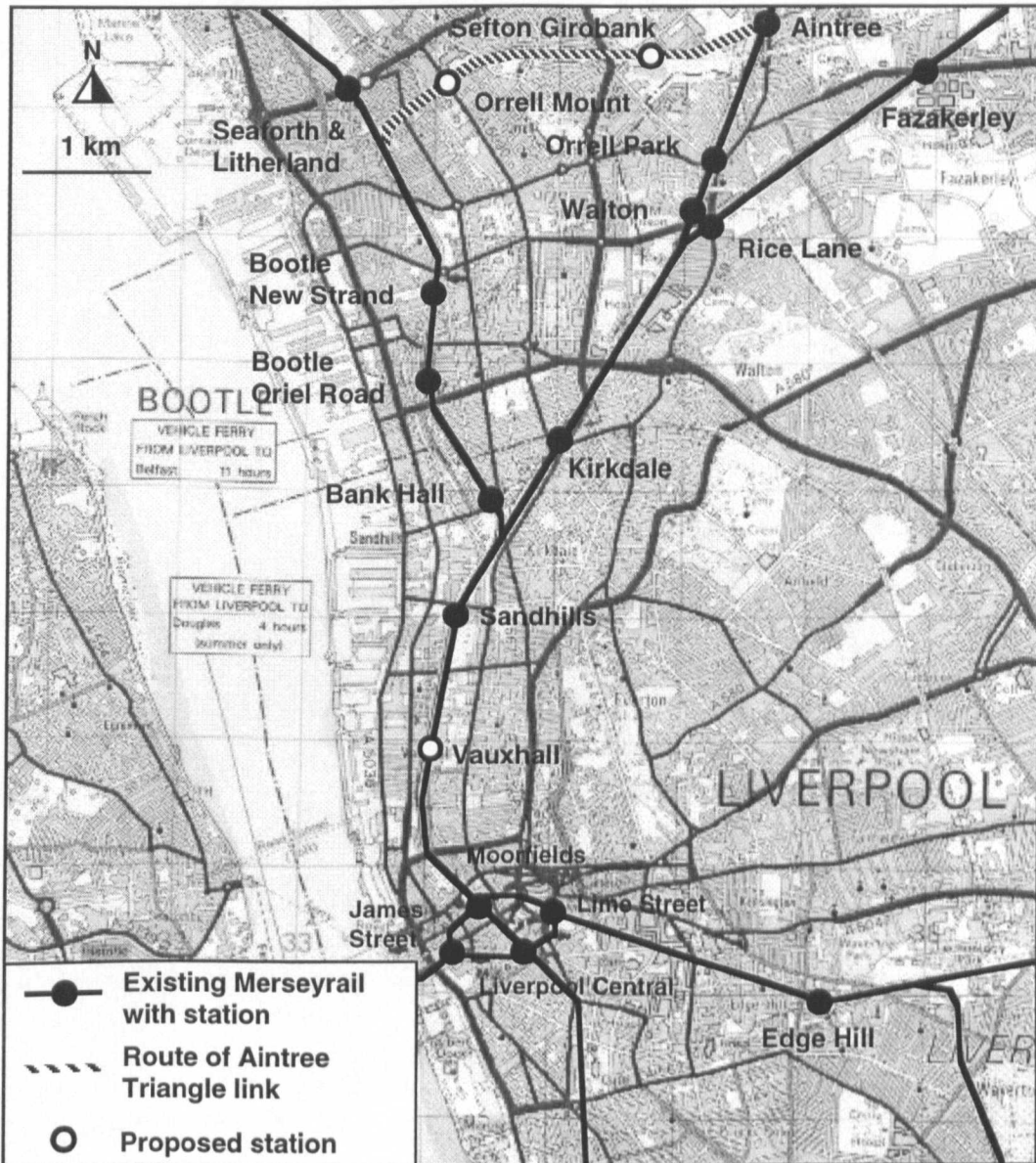


Figure 10.5 Route of proposed Aintree Triangle rail link. *Crown Copyright reserved*

The possibility of progressing the scheme was first identified by Sefton Borough Council, the local authority for the area, in a submission to Merseytravel. Although Aintree itself was already served by a Merseyrail Northern Line station, this lies on the periphery of the Aintree Triangle development, and offered direct rail access only to Liverpool city centre, not to Sefton's own Bootle town centre. By re-opening the line, access would be enhanced not only to the employment opportunities at the Triangle development itself, but also the existing employment, retail and leisure facilities in Bootle. In addition, the further possibility of re-opening the disused solum east of Aintree was also highlighted:



Development of the link between Bootle and Aintree would meet Merseytravel's corporate mission to secure the provision of effective passenger transport services to meet the social and economic needs of the area.

The main benefits of the proposals include

- a) improved accessibility to Liverpool, Bootle and Merseyside generally for residents of areas adjacent to the line
- b) support for the development of Sefton Business Park as a major development
- c) support for the continued development of Bootle as a shopping and office development.

Merseytravel (21/2/91).

Given the general priority accorded to the urban regeneration of Merseyside, the proposal for the Aintree Triangle link enjoyed consensus support across both the professional and elected sections of Merseytravel:

In that I would be looking to do things which follow the jobs angle, yes with the Aintree link, there is a bit of a jobs angle, there's a lot of regeneration in that area, and so it's interesting in that respect.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

The other thing I would like to do is to open up the line from Aintree to Bootle, because the railway's still there, and with electrification you could get more people to Bootle, which is a major shopping centre without having to change trains and pass the place twice. If we could open that spur, which is only about two or three miles long, we could entice people onto the trains because the station is right by the shopping centre, and I

know people would use that service if it were available.

CLlr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.

The structure of the subsequent appraisal of the Aintree Triangle rail link scheme further highlights the crucial differences in approach to policy development seen between Strathclyde and Merseyside PTEs. For this, like the larger Merseytravel investment projects addressed above, an exhaustive external study was commissioned focusing on the quantifiable financial and other benefits arising from the implementation of the project by means of a Section 56-type cost-benefit analysis of the proposals consistent with that employed within the Package Approach submissions.

The results of the study, presented to the Authority in early 1991, quickly dismissed the additional Fazakerley connection due to its "poor financial performance and the lowest level of benefit to the area" (Merseytravel, 21/2/91). Evaluation therefore centred on the core element of the upgrading and electrification of the Bootle - Aintree link for passenger trains, with an estimated capital cost of £4.5m including two new stations at Orrell Mount and Sefton Girobank. Projected patronage was 1,650 trips per day at opening in 1993, increasing to 2,450 by 2001, arising from the

journey time improvements for significant flows between the Ormskirk Line, Sefton Business Park and Bootle.... there would be justification for the construction of a station at Orrell Mount and significant financial and patronage justification for a new station at Sefton (Giro) given any overall justification for provision of a passenger service across the link.

Merseytravel (21/2/91).

However,

despite the apparent benefits to the accessibility of employment and other urban opportunities generated by the provision of the link, at the present time, re-opening of the link to passenger rail services cannot be justified in terms of the increase in rail patronage and revenue benefits to Merseyrail. Revenue which would cover additional operating costs however, but would only meet approximately 1/4 of the capital cost.

It is unlikely that a successful application for Section 56 grant could currently be made.... the Executive consider(s) that even this option (Bootle - Aintree) which performed better in the overall evaluation does not appear likely to enable a suitable funding package to be assembled at present.

Merseytravel (21/2/91).

Consequently, although the Aintree Triangle link would attract significant additional patronage to the Merseyrail system, and was projected to cover its operating costs, its construction could not be justified under the prevailing capital finance regime. Merseytravel resolved not to proceed with the project at that time, but to safeguard the solum for possible future use. Despite the elected members' continuing support for the project based on their evident strategic rail development aspirations, the scheme could not be justified within the prevailing funding processes of the local policy regime, which required an increased level of 'tangible results' beyond that of meeting additional operating costs.

The comparison between this policy outcome and that of the several line re-opening schemes progressed by Strathclyde Regional Council, despite their markedly worse financial performance, is stark. In a significant section of interview text, one respondent highlighted the paradox of the Aintree Triangle project in similar terms to those expressed in connection with the proposed Liverpool Airport rail link (see 9.2.3): whilst the scheme meets its operating costs and is likely to play a significant role as a catalyst of urban regeneration in the Aintree area, the prevailing criteria of Package appraisal applied to local rail transport policy-making in Merseyside ruled the scheme out for early approval since it could not exhibit an immediate financial return:

Aintree was really, there was a case for retaining the track bed which has been done and Railtrack is continuing to do, but early improvement - no. I think to some extent what we're waiting for is the whole of Merseyside to change - with things like the old MALTS study, the scenario was unbelievable in terms of Merseyside continuing to take off and flourish, but the whole world has changed. So for me, until Merseyside changes substantially, and the network is much more intensively used, then the case for Aintree, well there isn't a case to be frank, unless you say policy-wise, the financial balance sheet is not that important, we'll do it because it will do other things. It's the wider benefit argument, isn't it?

Respondent.

Several other potential line re-opening schemes further illustrate the block placed against 'symbolic' aspirations by the highly 'instrumental' structure of scheme appraisal and capital funding present in Merseyside. In a subsequent section of interview text, the Chair of Merseytravel's elected branch articulated his frustration at the existence of such restrictions on the development of the local rail system in terms of a particular potential investment, and demonstrated similar predisposed aspirations for the extension of the network as a means to increase travel opportunity to those expressed by Strathclyde councillors, based on a qualitative application of the Authority's stated strategic development goals:

I think if I had immediate funds available, I think I'd re-open the railway from Ormskirk to Southport, the Burscough Curves, which was shut down years ago. I think that would possibly be my first priority, because we've got this position that if you wish to go from Southport to Ormskirk, you must first basically travel into Liverpool and back.

I believe at the end of the day, what we've got to do because of the environment and to provide a service, is we should have more electric trains, and give the people who live on the Southport and Ormskirk lines more travel opportunities. If it was a road, nobody would bother, it would be a case of "build it lads!", we'd just have it, but because it's a railway, we've got this financial straitjacket which says "you can't do this because we don't believe it will be viable". But what does viable mean? I don't know what it means! Do you lose nothing, £2m, £3m, £10m? I don't know. But what I do know is that we should be providing a service for people along the Ormskirk line to go to places like Southport, and from people in Liverpool to go to Wigan.

Cllr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.

Indeed, an investigative study into the likely benefits of the Burscough Curves re-opening formed a similar conclusion to that in respect of the Aintree Triangle proposals:

the capital cost of the scheme far exceeds anything that could be justifiably funded from revenue.... the nature of the services and the lack of non-user benefits make external funding improbable, and therefore (it is) concluded that it would not be possible to provide rail services over the Burscough curves that would produce a

sufficient rate of return to justify the investment required at the present time.

Merseytravel (29/4/96).

The Burscough Curves is an appalling proposal. It's appalling because it's really a railway enthusiasts'-type proposal, "we've got a railway therefore we ought to be able to use it" rather than a market-driven scheme.... the point about going beyond Ormskirk is that it's very empty, there's nobody there until you go a long way. If you go round the corner to Burscough itself, it's not going to make anybody any money or produce very much travel.

Robert Goundry,  
North West Regional Railways.

This evidently contrasts with the proactive line re-opening policy outcome seen in Strathclyde. Despite Cllr Dowd's enthusiasm for the potential benefits arising from the Burscough Curves link, the scheme was doomed to failure within the Package because it could not cover its capital costs through increased revenue generation, and the availability of external funding to improve its financial case was extremely unlikely. This contrasts strongly with the Strathclyde case, where the qualitative criteria adopted for scheme appraisal and the existence of the Regional Council's larger single capital consent enabled the re-opening of several branch lines which, in some cases, have failed to meet even their direct operating costs in the early years of their operation.

Furthermore, the failure of such projects to win support within the Merseyside rail transport policy regime not only represents a clear limitation of the power of the PTA's elected membership, but has also reinforced the geographical disparity in the level of rail services provided in each of the county's boroughs. The prime example of this effect once again affects the borough of St Helens, in which no new rail facilities have been provided at any point in the study time frame. Specifically, a further potential line re-opening scheme identified by Merseytravel constitutes the Borough Council's priority public transport capital project:

There is an old rail link that runs between our two stations that would allow us to make more connections, but that's out of commission now, and we are desperately trying

to get Merseytravel to upgrade it to take passenger services again.

John Harrison,  
St Helens Borough Council.

Indeed, Merseytravel officers themselves acknowledged the persuasive case for investment in the link based on the strategic policy objective to promote urban regeneration:

The rail route between St Helens Central and St Helens Junction closed to passenger services in the 1960s, and the route was abandoned for freight services in the 1980s. The route links strategically between St Helens town centre and the southern areas of St Helens borough (which are) poorly served by public transport.

The St Helens Unitary Development Plan highlights as a policy objective, the provision of an efficient, effective passenger transport system and improvements to the rail network as a means of promoting urban regeneration, improving activity and providing new infrastructure. The Plan supports the reopening of the link as part of this strategy and protects the route to allow re-opening to occur.

Merseytravel (10/1/95).

However, that this link once again exhibited a poor financial performance under test severely diminished the likelihood of its being given approval for construction:

The other one which we've just got the study back on is the St Helens Central to St Helens Junction Link, and again, it doesn't come near to washing its face, it would need 100% grant to justify it.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

Thus, despite forming a key element of St Helens MBC's plans to regenerate the borough, and enjoying outline support across Merseytravel officers and elected members, the scheme was shelved, since it did not satisfy the economic evaluation criteria of the Package Bid and would therefore not qualify for funding from Merseytravel's own annual capital allocations.

### 10.2.3 New stations on existing lines

As in Strathclyde, the construction of new stations on existing Merseyrail lines presents the opportunity to extend the benefits of rail transport access to increased population catchments for substantially less capital cost than other larger-scale rail transport investment schemes such as those addressed above. Furthermore, the relatively low capital cost and the larger range of potential schemes implies an increased level of flexibility in policy prioritisation, and consequently the level of competition for resources between differing localities should be maximised. However, despite demonstrating the most cogent application of elected systemic power, the history of new station development in Merseyside also serves to reinforce the impact of professional influence and the fragmentation of capital consents previously identified as principal factors in the operation of the local rail transport policy regime.

There are several significant differences in Merseytravel's new station strategy in comparison to that seen in Strathclyde, not least in terms of the actual costs of the schemes concerned. In 1986, the new Merseyside PTA inherited advanced plans for four new stations from the outgoing Metropolitan County Council. Three of these, Eastham Rake on the Hooton branch of the Wirral Line, and Whiston and Halewood on the City Line system, were located in residential communities at considerable distance from Liverpool city centre, and thus showed considerable potential for high revenue, longer distance commuting use.

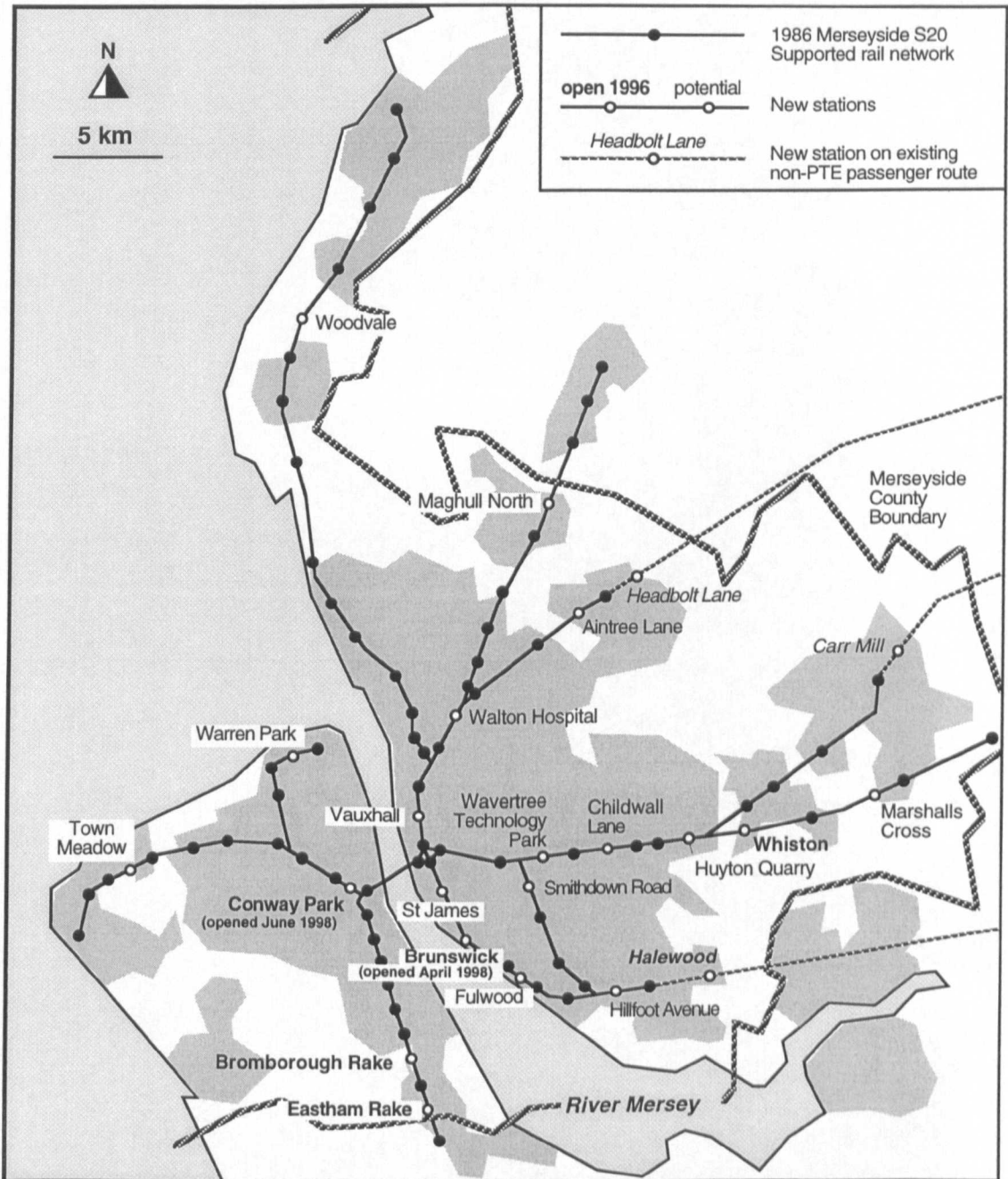


Figure 10.6 Location of potential new station sites in Merseyside.

Although projects of less than £2m capital cost did not require full 'Section 56'-type cost benefit analysis to qualify for funding as part of the county's 'package bid', the appraisal of new station projects in Merseyside was analogous to those adopted in Strathclyde, since it was



not consider(ed) that proposals (for a new station) should be progressed unless the additional revenue generated covers operating and financial costs.

Merseytravel (1993b: para 15.2).

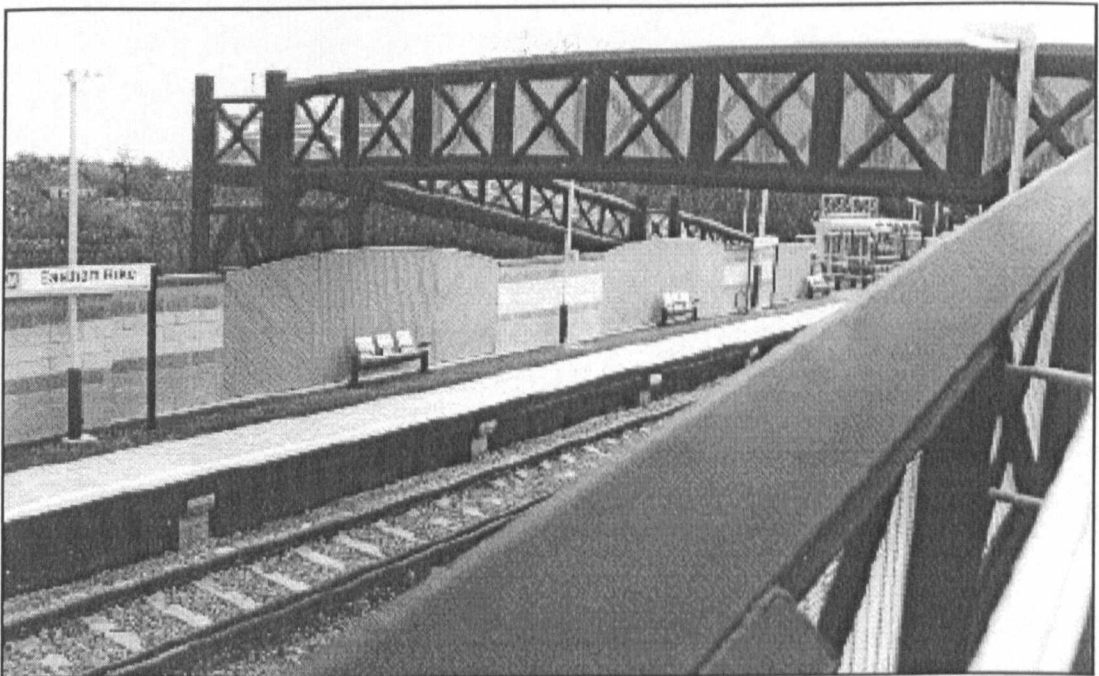
However, one particular policy position adopted in Merseyside can be seen to have had a profound effect on the process of new station construction in the county. The example of Halewood station is instructive in comparing the financial and patronage implications of each PTA's new station staffing policy. The capital cost of the new Halewood station, including staff and booking office facilities was estimated at £415,000, or 195% of the cost of a similar but unstaffed station at Milliken Park in Strathclyde, authorised in the same year of 1988. The resultant annual running cost of Halewood, assuming the same 50% ERDF capital grant as secured by SPTE, was £48,000, some 2.82 times that of Milliken Park. Therefore, in order to meet future operational and capital financing charges, this new station in Merseyside was required to generate around three times as much revenue as its broad equivalent, in terms of catchment and distance from the city centre, in Strathclyde. In the case of second inherited new station project, the resultant costs were even higher - when approved in 1993, Eastham Rake new station had an estimated capital cost of £1.88m.



Figure 10.7 Diesel *Pacer* train at Halewood new station.



(a)



(b)

Figure 10.8 Eastham Rake new station; (a) booking office and waiting room; (b) platforms.

10.8b: *Merseytravel*

The retention of full staffing at all supported stations, unique amongst the seven PTEs, with the attendant additional costs for staff and ticket selling facilities within new developments, represents the one truly 'symbolic' element of policy-making in the Merseyside regime, and can be traced to the influence of Merseytravel's elected Chair. Cllr Dowd himself expressed that the decision to retain fully staffed stations was based on his clear predisposed attitudes towards perceived resultant benefits in terms of service quality and passenger safety:

We've kept the stations staffed because we believe at the end of the day in the safety of passengers, and that's why we've kept guards in the trains as well, because if you don't have those people there, we don't believe the travelling public would elect to use the rail system. (So) we believe at the end of the day you must have the staff there, on the stations and in the trains.

Cllr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.

Several respondents, including the local RMT union representative, signalled that Cllr Dowd's position within the regime's 'joint elite' and close personal linkage with the local rail trades unions were crucial to the maintenance of Merseytravel's full station staffing policy, reflecting the privileged position of such 'producer groups' within the regime outlined by Stoker (1995):

With Merseyrail, we have influence because the Chair is a railwayman. He might be a member of another union, but he does work well with us and keeps us advised of developments. We have worked together in the past and will work together in the future in terms of doing everything possible to protect services and jobs.

Andy Boyack,  
RMT North West.

It is Mark Dowd who retains the (staffing) policy.

Respondent.

Finally, one interviewee with professional experience of both study areas reiterated the view, also expressed in earlier perceptions of the elected membership's overall role within the Authority, that Cllr Dowd's general approach to the station staffing and other operational issues reflected his background as a active railwayman and trades unionist:

The members do tend to get themselves involved in industrial relations issues, and I suppose that's since that's where Mark Dowd comes from: if there's a simmering dispute, the members tend to get themselves quite involved in how that should be sorted out. It's not at all like Strathclyde where you have the Strathclyde Manning Agreement.

Chris Leah,  
Railtrack North West.

Off-the-record remarks from respondents outwith Merseytravel officers indicated that, although harbouring doubts about the cost-effectiveness of the policy, officers were nevertheless supportive of full station staffing since this represented a clear 'symbol' of Merseyrail's 'metro' qualities (reminiscent in this respect of London Underground), and thus its distinctiveness from the remainder of the BR network. Indeed, that such an opinion was not shared by other members of the local policy regime outside the joint elite demonstrated the impact of the Chair's systemic power on this particular dimension of policy:

Station staffing has become a political shibboleth, it's something that it is not even acceptable to challenge.... it's based on a view that it's creating employment and the view that having somebody at the station enhances the perception of security and customer-friendliness, (which) is only half correct.

Robert Goundry,  
North West Regional Railways.

Besides constituting a clear expression of systemic power, the outcome of Merseytravel's station staffing policy dictated that any new station construction entailed higher capital and ongoing revenue costs than its equivalent in Strathclyde, decreasing the number of potential schemes that could be funded from any fixed capital allocation.

Indeed, this restriction further heightened the competition for an already scarce resource between different localities, in the case of the PTA area the constituent district councils, who each promoted a range of new station schemes as part of their own transportation and economic development strategies. With a much expanded choice of potential projects under the new station heading than was the case with more expensive major infrastructure improvements such as electrification, new branches (and indeed the uniquely costly example of the new underground station at Conway Park), the scope for political bargaining within the local policy regime was maximised.

The existence of such competition was acknowledged by Merseytravel's Chief Executive, who highlighted the means through which the aspirations for new stations of each constituent District could be accommodated:

Yes, although we don't get (party) political, we do get local constituency competition for this limited resource. We try to get over that, all other things being equal, by ensuring that in our longer term Policy and Expenditure Plan, which we still have even with the short term financial vision, by actually establishing these as priorities, but putting one in Year 1, and the second in Year 3 if you like, so at least the constituency knows that it's next on the list, that there is a project, it has been accepted, we're not guaranteeing that we're going to deliver it, but it has been accepted as a project that has merit in it.

Roy Swainson,  
Merseytravel.

The existence of a strategic plan which incorporated a range of potential projects in response to the local political aspirations of each constituent borough was confirmed by subsequent respondents:

Well, they have a wish list - when I used to work with them (Merseytravel) and go to their meetings, it was very interesting. They certainly have a wish list of things that can be funded one-by-one.

John Ryan,  
Wirral Transport Users Group.

Well, they do it on the basis of having a plan that set out what they were going to do.... (this is) a response to political pressures.

Robert Goundry,  
North West Regional Railways.

However, Swainson's remark that the inclusion of a particular new station project did not guarantee its progression within the Authority's priority programme signified that the final selection of schemes for implementation did not purely rest on the desire to balance the spread of investment around the county, or for other 'symbolic' aims, but was based on a similar range of 'instrumental' financial criteria illustrating 'tangible results' to those applied in respect of larger infrastructure investments:

I think they (Merseytravel) do a pretty good survey of ridership and potential, and I have to say that when they put up a business case for a new station, their statistics are pretty sound. They haven't gone down many lines of "we'll build a political station", in fact never as far as I know.

Chris Leah,  
Railtrack North West.

Therefore, although the existence of a potential new station schemes 'wish list' for Merseyside can be traced to the need to formally recognise various local constituency demands for such investment, thus ensuring a degree of continuing political legitimacy for the PTA itself, the actual selection of projects for implementation once again hinged on the level of 'tangible results' each displayed in terms of future patronage and financial returns, rather than any local 'symbolic', political or social development aspirations. In addition, the parallel priority that the schemes progressed should be those which best utilise the 'selective incentive' of outside grant aid was highlighted in a passage of interview with Merseytravel's Rail Services Manager. Simply, he claimed that the prioritisation of new station schemes rested on the harnessing of the available monies, particularly those of the EU Objective One programme and the Merseyside Development Corporation, which were directed towards the widely-held goal of urban regeneration:

There's a priority we have, delivering schemes to foster the regeneration of Merseyside. I've changed the focus from residential new stations to new stations which give access to sites (of new economic activity), because within the five year long Objective One regime, you can get money (for them). Our priority in Merseyside at the moment is to bring back jobs, bring back prosperity, and stations like Conway Park, Brunswick, Wavertree Technology Park and Marshalls Cross are key to that strategy. So I've changed the focus away from places like Maghull North, Carr Mill in St Helens and Town Meadow in the Wirral. We can come back to those, but you know, the important thing is to follow the jobs which are in places like Wavertree, Marshalls Cross and the MDC's docks area of Liverpool. If you get the infrastructure there you bring people into those stations, you're following the jobs, you're utilising the network better, and that will reinforce the case for residential stations some time in the future.... you can actually be more effective in giving access to jobs by building stations where new jobs are than by building suburban stations that might not be relevant if you haven't got the central infrastructure. But I think a multi-functional station is better than a simple residential station on two grounds: one, it will generate a lot more traffic, and two, with the partnership thing that we should get Objective One grant on that, whereas you wouldn't for a residential station.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

Thus, the pattern of proposed new station development on Merseyside can be seen to closely follow the availability of external capital grants, with the schemes at Brunswick (opened April 1998) and Vauxhall (MDC redevelopment areas), and those at Wavertree Technology Park and Marshalls Cross (Objective One comprehensive redevelopment sites) assuming priority over longstanding residential catchment new station schemes such as Maghull North and Carr Mill. However, this policy can also be seen to affect the relative level of rail transport equity across different localities in Merseyside. Quite simply, that the focus of new station construction was shifted to major sites of economic development implies an increased level of accessibility to employment for those (largely more prosperous) residential communities *already* served by a Merseyrail station, whereas those residential areas where the provision of a railway station has been delayed by the shift in priorities are doubly disadvantaged, both by a continuation in their relative isolation from existing jobs and other urban opportunities in established areas such as Liverpool city centre, and also in their lack of access to similar opportunities in emerging redevelopment zones. The shift in the locational priority for new station construction to sites of economic development in

preference to dormitory areas reinforces the relative disparity in accessibility levels between areas well served by the geographical legacy of the Merseyrail network, such as the boroughs of Sefton and Wirral, and those such as St Helens which are not. Significantly, the overriding priority within the Merseyside regime to harness the available Objective One money in order to 'realise' as many new station projects as possible put paid to any dissension between different members of the regime over the change in preferred projects. Equally, the weight attached by regime members to maximising such grants also excluded from serious consideration the limited local public and political lobbying, publicised through the pages of the Southport Advertiser, St Helens Reporter and Wirral Globe and other local newspapers, in favour of longstanding new station projects in residential areas which were ineligible for external financial assistance.

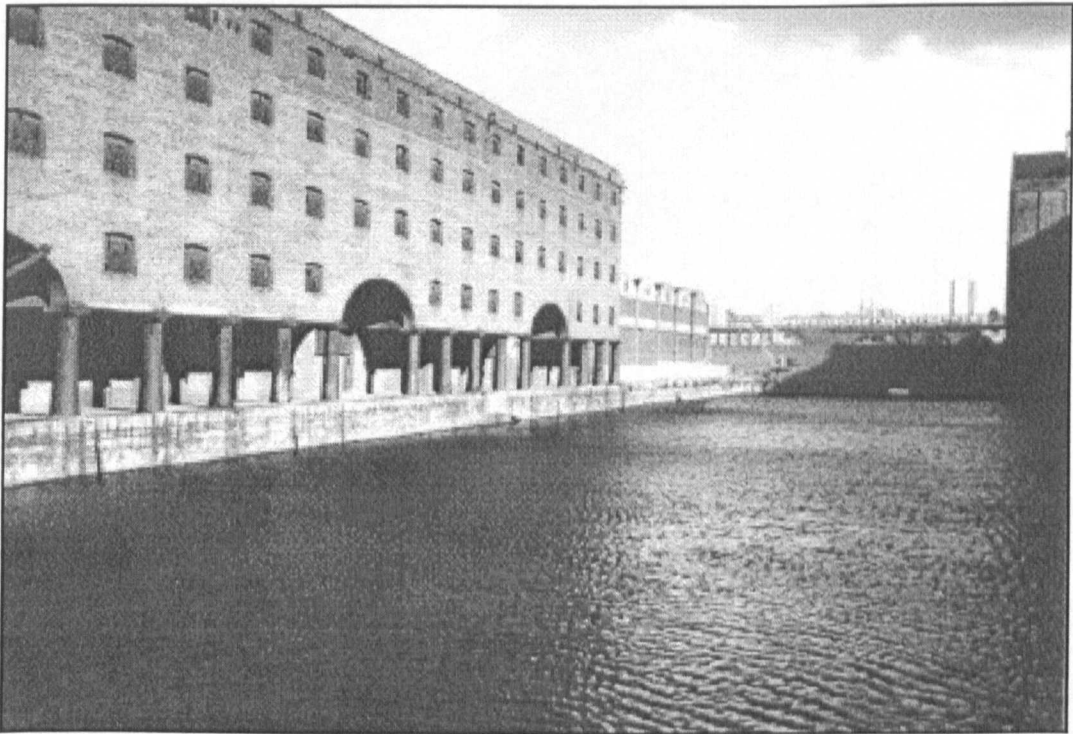


Figure 10.9 Location of proposed Vauxhall new station behind the Merseyside Development Corporation's Stanley Dock redevelopment area.



## 10.3 Summary

### 10.3.1 'Instrumental' policy-making in Merseyside

The ongoing development of the Merseyrail network represented by the smaller capital projects detailed in this chapter reinforces several significant impacts upon policy formation highlighted in preceding chapters.

The emphasis of the potential role of local rail transport in the urban regeneration of Merseyside again represents the first major influence underlying policy-making. Actual policy priorities centred around extending the capacity of the existing local rail network to promote sites of new economic activity in the county, since the scope for extension of rail services to new areas was severely limited by Merseyside's relative lack of disused rail infrastructure.

The availability of capital allocations for local rail transport development other than that of Merseytravel itself remained a critical factor in the prioritisation of competing potential development schemes. The recent completion of the new station at Brunswick in south Liverpool in advance of longer-standing new station projects in residential communities throughout the county illustrates the power of external grant aid, in this case that of the Merseyside Development Corporation, to affect the order in which such schemes are progressed. Similarly, the elevation of the Wavertree Technology Park, Vauxhall and Marshalls Cross sites to the head of Merseytravel's short term capital programme reflects the availability of European Union Objective One assistance for the projects.

The availability of such external finance for particular projects underlines the Merseyside regime's instrumentalist desire to prioritise competing projects according to the feasibility of their 'realisation'. However, this atomisation of funding parcels across a much wider range of government agencies than was the case in Strathclyde also exerted a lasting effect on the priorities attached to the future distribution of Merseytravel's *own* resources: in particular, the construction of Conway Park new station (see 9.2.1), enabled only by the Wirral City Lands grant contribution, elevated the nearby Woodchurch electrification project within Merseytravel's preferred project list at the expense of longstanding development schemes elsewhere in the county, such that it is now the top priority for future capital investment, outwith new stations, in Merseyside (Railtrack plc, 1998).

## **11 Conclusions: impacts on policy-making**

### **11.1 Introduction**

11.1.1 Impacts of structures of local governance on rail transport policy-making

### **11.2 Local rail transport policy regimes in Merseyside and Strathclyde**

11.2.1 Regime typologies

11.2.2 Local rail transport policy outcomes

### **11.3 Implications for accountability of local governance**

11.3.1 Process accountability and the 'instrumental' regime

11.3.2 Political accountability and the 'symbolic-pragmatic' regime

11.3.3 Integrating accountabilities

## 11.1 Introduction

### 11.1.1 Impacts of structures of local governance on rail transport policy-making

The preceding accounts of actual rail transport development in Strathclyde and Merseyside have provided substantial evidence of the real impacts upon policy-making derived from the differing geographical structures of local governance operational in each study area between 1986 and 1996. This final chapter provides a review of these policy outcomes with respect to the theoretical frameworks of local state organisation, the regime and structuration previously established, and explores their implications for the level of public accountability achieved in rail transport policy-making under the city-regional and joint board structures of Passenger Transport Authority.

The assembled archival and interview evidence which explains the development of particular policies in each area is analysed in order answer the three summary research questions outlined in 3.5.2. First, parallel models of the typology and hierarchy of the local rail transport policy regimes in Merseyside and Strathclyde are constructed. The categorisation of the two regimes as 'instrumental' and 'symbolic-pragmatic' respectively is derived from a review of the underlying strategic aspirations of each PTA for local rail network development. Second, the reality of regime typology and operation in each of the two study areas is demonstrated to result in actual rail transport policy outputs which address different aspects of 'the urban transportation problem'. Finally, the scope presented by each regime for the effective public accountability of rail transport policy-makers is discussed with reference to the location within the regime hierarchy of key actors, and the tactics through which leading individuals were able to steer the regime towards adoption of their own particular policy preferences, as revealed by the case studies. The integration of the strong process accountability of the fragmented 'instrumental' Merseyside PTA with the significant role afforded to public consultation by the 'symbolic-pragmatic' Strathclyde Regional Council is highlighted as the key to improved future scrutiny of local rail transport policy decision-making.

## 11.2 Local rail transport policy regimes in Merseyside and Strathclyde

### 11.2.1 Regime typologies

In Chapter 3, the notion of the *urban policy regime* was adopted as the best means to theorise the processes through which public policies are generated across the range of public and private institutions which together form the modern system of urban local governance. The *local rail transport policy regime* was identified as the network of individuals and institutions, centred on the *joint elite* of senior officers and councillors from the statutory Passenger Transport Authorities and Executives, through which actual local rail transport policies were generated, debated and implemented in each study area. Analysis of the ways in which each different geographical structure of PTA under study, namely the metropolitan-wide Strathclyde Regional Council and the public choice-derived Merseyside PTA joint board, impacted on the type of power held by each regime member, was deemed critical to the explanation why particular rail transport strategies were pursued, since

understanding national or even local (i.e. sub-national) differences in the composition of regimes can help to explain variation in motivations and politics.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 202).

This section compares each defining element of the 'typology' of the Merseyside and Strathclyde local rail transport policy regimes, as derived from case study evidence, with those of Stoker & Mossberger's (1994) generic model (see 3.2.2). The uncovered variations in typology are applied to highlight the impacts of the two structures of urban local governance concerned on regime construction and dynamics, the level and type of power attributed to each regime member, and thus on final policy outputs. The primary 'structuration rules' active in each region, which are derived from the underlying ideologies of the city regional and public choice models of urban local governance, and from the assumed roles of elected councillors and professional officials (see 3.2.3), are demonstrated to shape the overall *purpose* of each regime, and the *motivations of its participants*. Areas of consensus between the rules structuring each actor's aspirations for local rail transport policy development define the *sense of common purpose* of the emergent coalitions within the regime formed to promote particular policy strategies. The ways in which such strategies evolve is linked to shifts in the *congruence of interests* between regime members, which are directly attributable to the action of 'reflexivity' between regime structure and human agency.

In turn, these attributes define the nature of each regime's *relationship with its local and non-local environments*. The extent to which local political demands are incorporated by decision-makers, and the degree to which each regime is able to formulate policies autonomously of central government, are shown to depend on the allocation of available capital funding, or 'investment potential', for local rail network development between member institutions.

Finally, these characteristics are combined to produce models of the *hierarchy* of each regime which highlight their *dominant members*, those individuals who control policy-making through the harnessing of 'pre-emptive power' (Stoker, 1995), thus gaining the capacity to lead the regime and to govern the development of local rail transport policy in their area. Critically, whilst pre-emptive power rests with the elected Committee Chair in Strathclyde, senior PTE officers are deemed to lead policy-making within the Merseyside regime.

#### *Type & purpose*

In Strathclyde, the *purpose*, or strategic goal, of the local rail transport policy regime condenses around the aspirations of the Regional Council's corporate *Social Strategy*. The strategy, which strongly reflected the generally 'welfarist' and 'redistributist' (Alexander, 1982a) sentiments underlying the formation of large city-regional local governments such as Strathclyde, stressed the social development goals surrounding enhanced equity of access to urban amenities, clearly mirroring those of other 'symbolic'-type regimes which focus on similar 'basic values' (Stone, 1993). Thus, the application of the *Social Strategy* to rail transport network investment constitutes both the main structuration rule acting upon decision-makers in Strathclyde, and a profound "redirection of ideology" (Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 199) away from inherited transport policies, which primarily sought to maximise economic development benefits through the promotion of the local rail network as an alternative mechanism for mobility to the use of the private car in the Region:

symbolic regimes emerge in circumstances in which groups are attempting to establish a new political outlook or paradigm.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 205).

The development of the *CrossRail* link exemplifies such 'redirection' of the ideology of rail transport in Strathclyde. The scheme was promoted as a means to enhance the social development benefits of the inherited rail network by extending the range of accessible central locations for those communities already served by the railway. Crucially, since *CrossRail* required the diversion of existing services away from Glasgow's Central Station, the project's perceived social development benefits could only be achieved at the expense of negative economic development impact of increased radial journey times on certain key commuter routes. Thus, the 'purpose' of *CrossRail* was to refocus the rail network towards providing improved accessibility of a variety of urban amenities across a widely-drawn inner area, rather than its historic concentration on radial journey-to-work flows to the central business district.

This historic framing of the role of rail transport in Strathclyde resulted from the geographic legacy of the local rail network. Although the system served most of the region's established, relatively more prosperous suburban communities, which evolved in tandem with the railways, significant deficiencies in post-war land use planning left the much of the deprived inner conurbation, and each of Glasgow's four main peripheral housing estates, without rail access. Extending the network to better serve these areas, and thus rebalance the overall equity of access offered by the railways across the region, formed a further key element of the redirection of local rail transport policy in Strathclyde towards the aspirations of the *Social Strategy*:

We haven't been able to do too much in terms of *Social Strategy* on the heavy rail network because we've only really been able to enhance rail services where they already exist. We really found we couldn't think sensibly in terms of building new railway lines on completely new solums because the disruption that would bring would be enormous..... so it's often not so much of a provision thing on *Social Strategy* as we would like.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

Thus, the provision of new rail lines and stations was necessarily limited to those possibilities which could realistically be achieved, which in the vast majority of cases, were those sites on the existing passenger network, or on freight-only or disused lines. Consequently, the practical application of *Social Strategy* objectives illustrates the element of 'project realisation' apparent in Strathclyde's approach to local rail development.

Whilst such objectives are normally associated with the 'instrumental' regime, in Strathclyde's case, such aspirations were consistent with the application of 'symbolic' goals within the limitations imposed by the region's inherited rail network legacy. The examples of the Northern Suburban line re-opening (see 8.2.1) and the programme of new stations on existing lines (see 8.2.2) demonstrate that, although the Strathclyde rail transport policy regime sought to 'realise' all possible development projects, no attempt was made to prioritise between projects according to their relative level of measurable, economic 'tangible results', such as potential patronage or financial returns (see below). Rather than a truly 'instrumental' approach focusing on the achievement of specific 'tangible' economic development outputs, the Strathclyde regime sought the goal of 'project realisation' as a realistic, pragmatic strategy through which to promote those projects with 'symbolic' social development aims which were feasible given the region's inherited rail network legacy. Thus, the Strathclyde regime can be categorised as 'symbolic-pragmatic'.

In contrast, the local rail transport policy regime in Merseyside is clearly identifiable as 'instrumental'. Simply, this was the result of the higher degree of splinterisation of the county's institutions of local governance as compared to Strathclyde. Unlike the Regional Council, which framed its corporate strategic policies in social development terms, each of the wider range of non-elected government agencies in Merseyside holding 'investment potential' (i.e. capital funding reserves) for local rail development, such as the Government Office for Merseyside, and particularly, the Merseyside Development Corporation,

symbolized the ideological and political values of successive Conservative governments, the rhetoric of the market over planning, and the propagation of a property, in distinction to people, based approach to urban regeneration.

Imrie & Thomas (1993: vii).

Such values represented the main institutional structuration rule for Merseyside, reflecting the "culture of regeneration" (Carmichael, 1995) based on a definition of urban regeneration linked to physical infrastructure and property revitalisation as a means of providing growth opportunities for companies:

In the 1990s, MDC's key policy will be to stimulate economic activity by attracting and encouraging the growth of new businesses and jobs.

Merseyside Development Corporation (1990: 10).

Within this strategy, local rail transport improvements were directed towards the principal economic development aim of ensuring maximum labour mobility within the county whilst minimising economic disbenefits such as those arising from road congestion:

The strategic (public) transport policies for Merseyside are:

- Policy 1 To target additions to improvements to the transport network which are essential to support economic development and urban regeneration opportunities.
  
- Policy 2 To increase the relative attractiveness of public transport and non-motorised forms of transport as a means of moderating the upward trend in car use and securing a shift away from the private car.

Government Office for Merseyside (1996: 1).

Consequently, the main purpose of the local rail transport regime in Merseyside was to re-integrate the atomised capital funding parcels held by a variety of regime institutions in order to 'realise' those particular opportunities for rail network development, such as Conway Park and Brunswick new stations, which were related to specific urban regeneration projects sponsored by one or more regime partners. Similarly, the route chosen for the MRT light rapid transit route was that most likely to be 'realisable' in light of the availability and aspirations of the private sector and EU Objective One funding pools. Schemes which promoted 'symbolic' objectives, such as the harmonisation of the service quality and image of the Merseyrail City Line with the remainder of the network through electrification and the construction of the *City Line Link* (see 9.2.2), were never seriously advanced.

Significantly, this requirement for co-operation across a range of local governmental bodies in order to combine capital resources into 'lumps' large enough to finance major rail infrastructure projects greatly enhanced the role of professional officers in local policy-making. In turn, this reinforced the notion of 'project realisation' within the Merseyside regime, since the desire to "get specific projects accomplished" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 201) also lies at the heart of the "actor group" structuration rules or "habitus" (Painter, 1997) attributed to professional officers (see Table 11.1 below).



<u>Actor Group</u>	<u>Habitus Grounded In (Structuration Rules)</u>
Public sector professionals (e.g. urban planners, accountants)	Codes of professional conduct; procedures heavily influenced by norms and expectations generated in process of professional training and accreditation; common sense based on detachment, objectivity and public service
Unelected public bodies (e.g. UK Quangos)	Knowledges imported (mainly) from private sector, though some public sector elements; ends predominate over means; culture of formal, legal (rather than democratic) accountability, common sense based on getting the job done.

Figure 11.1 Habitus of professional officers in local governance.

Source Painter (1997: 138).

### *Main motivation of participants*

The main motivation of the participants in each regime clearly reflected the influence of the local institutional and actor group structuration rules on individuals. In Merseyside, the firm location of the government agencies acting alongside Merseytravel in the field of local economic development steered local rail transport policy-making towards the achievement of 'tangible results'. Since agencies such as GoM and the MDC were required to demonstrate substantial 'legal' or 'process' accountability to central government by justifying that their contributions to local rail infrastructure projects had contributed to "getting the job done" (Painter, 1997: 138) according to their own statutory responsibilities, a system of policy-making which placed heavy emphasis on the quantitative, cost benefit analysis of competing projects was assembled, reflecting the practice of central government itself.

Professional officers sought to apply appraisal methodologies which both conformed to the structured Weberian 'norms' of rationality, impartiality and ensuring value for money, and which reflected the broader local institutional rules of promoting economic development through maximising urban mobility. The result was a decision-making system based on ensuring the optimum level of quantifiable 'tangible results', primarily reduced congestion, modal shift away from the private car and increased public transport revenue:

It (a potential capital scheme) isn't personal or local aspirations or "we're going to have this because it's good for the borough", we've got to show why and how. It's got to shake out regarding good value for money.

Mike Tew,  
Wirral Borough Council.

However, outwith the professional groups, Merseytravel's senior elected councillors held to their own definition of urban regeneration which reflected the local political desire, similar to that in Strathclyde, of promoting rail network investment as a means to achieve the 'expressive politics' of social developments such as improved equity in rail transport access:

I don't think their (professional officers' and elected councillors') aspirations are generally in accordance, although you'll hear the opposite. The officers stand very much on "we'll develop this because we can justify it on the basis of demand, it reduces the Section 20 grant, and it satisfies the PTE's integration remit, so on those grounds they tend to be very pragmatic. Some of the members view it on more social grounds, and that the balance sheet should be secondary as a principle. But I have to say, when they come together as a group though, the balance sheet does override the decisions they take.

Chris Leah,  
Railtrack North West.

But what does viable mean? I don't know what it means! Do you lose nothing, £2m, £3m, £10m? I don't know. But what I do know is that we should be providing a service for people along the Ormskirk line to go to places like Southport, and from people in Liverpool to go to Wigan.

Cllr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.

Notably, such 'expressive' aspirations gained little currency within the Merseyside policy network due to the *congruence of interests* of the other members of the regime (see below).

In Strathclyde, the structuring impact of the umbrella *Social Strategy* objectives generated a highly 'expressive politics' to which both officers and councillors subscribed. However, for senior SPTe officers, this primary local institutional structuration rule, which favoured the promotion of particular policy options according to their capacity for extending social development benefits, particularly improved accessibility to urban amenities for communities of lower car ownership, conflicted with the parallel actor group rule of applying traditional transport appraisal techniques which concentrate on the 'tangible results' of quantifiable, economic development factors such as congestion relief and modal shift. In attempting to resolve this paradox, Strathclyde officers retained the quantitative cost benefit techniques with which they empathised, but incorporated a wide range of additional factors which attempted to quantify the social development benefits associated with rail transport investment:

.... everything we've done on railways up 'til now we've been able to do on strict application of social cost benefit analysis. The measurable benefits to people in terms of reduced journey times, savings in congestion, whether it's user benefit or non-user benefit, have always been justified against the cost over the period of investment. The government don't do that of course, there are two reasons - one is on user benefits, the government only takes account of the income you get from the users. The full effect of the user benefits are not taken into account and that's a massive factor, but the other factor is that the full non-user benefits are not taken into account by the government either, they only take into account what are quite clearly measurable, such as congestion relief and the associated reduction in accidents. But the wider non-use benefits such as the reduction in poor air quality, or the noise and intrusion and all the rest of it are not taken into account by the government. But we did take all these things into account.

Stephen Lockley,  
Strathclyde PTE.

However, senior councillors, who were not subject to the actor group rules of conformity with established practice, political neutrality and 'objective' quantifiable appraisal associated with public officials, moved beyond even this position by promoting a very pure form of 'expressive politics' resting on a highly qualitative reading of *Social Strategy* aspirations:

I don't accept this type of (cost benefit) analysis in itself applied to public transport, because we've got social and environmental responsibilities as an Authority that we

have to discharge. And indeed there's wider responsibilities, you know, travel to, access to new job opportunities.... I think there's got to be some vision and a bit of a leap of faith.... these decisions have got to be taken with a bit of strategic vision, because at the end of the day, they're political decisions. Decisions about big schemes like CrossRail can't just be left to the boffins.

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

Thus, although officers and councillors in both Merseyside and Strathclyde were similarly influenced by the umbrella institutional structuration rules of each area, conflict over the means through which these strategic objectives should be applied emanated from the divergence in each parallel set of local 'actor group' structuration rules (Figure 11.2 below).

<p><b><u>Strathclyde</u></b></p> <p>Adherence to the Regional Council's <i>Social Strategy</i> through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promotion of equity in rail transport access across social groups particularly as a means to</li> <li>• improve individual access to employment and other urban amenities and opportunities</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Senior PTE professional officers</b></p> <p>Apply <i>Social Strategy</i> through adaptation of traditional quantitative transport appraisal techniques to account for extended user and non-user social benefits</p>	<p><b>Senior elected Regional councillors</b></p> <p>Apply <i>Social Strategy</i> through qualitative targeting of rail transport investment to areas of transport and urban deprivation</p>
<p><b><u>Merseyside</u></b></p> <p>Promote the urban regeneration of Merseyside through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing opportunities for company formation and expansion in order to</li> <li>• enhance the overall level of economic activity in the county</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Senior PTE professional officers</b></p> <p>Integrate rail transport investment with physical regeneration schemes sponsored by regime partners according to central government appraisal methodologies</p>	<p><b>Senior elected PTA councillors</b></p> <p>Retain a qualitative 'people-based' approach to urban regeneration through direction of rail transport investment to areas of transport and urban deprivation</p>

Figure 11.2 Local institutional and actor group structuration rules underpinning urban rail transport policy-making in Merseyside and Strathclyde.

***Congruence of interests***

The nature of the common ground upon which relationships between each local policy regime member are founded, the *congruence of interests*, is derived from the areas of overlap of each actor's structuration rules. In Strathclyde, the concept of *competitive agreement*, which is associated with the symbolic regime, existed in the relationship between the senior officers and councillors of the joint elite. Competitive agreement results when

what is involved is an issue network focused around a common concern but one where the various interests lack a deep, shared understanding and where there is an absence of

consensus and the presence of conflict. There may be considerable conflict within the regime and competition to influence its direction.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 206).

Within the Strathclyde joint elite, although both professionals and politicians strongly adhered to a "common concern", the social development aspirations of the Regional Council's *Social Strategy*, considerable conflict emerged over the best means through which to achieve implementation of the *Strategy's* goals. This conflict arose from the mismatch or "lack of deep, shared understanding" in the groups' secondary structuration rules. Whereas officers attempted to reconcile largely qualitative *Social Strategy* aims with the quantitative 'objective' scheme appraisal techniques commonly applied by local government professionals (Stoker, 1991; Painter, 1997), the two committee chairs promoted a highly qualitative interpretation of the *Strategy* which emphasised unquantifiable factors, such as increased potential access to the wider labour market cited in respect of CrossRail.

Indeed, over time, the cumulative impacts of such qualitative policy aspirations drove a reflexive process of individual action which reinforced and then subtly moulded the structural norms under which policy-making in Strathclyde operated. Early project appraisals carried out by SPTE's professional officers, such as those contained within the 1987 *Rail Review* exercise, adopted the established governmental norms of quantitative cost benefit analysis, an integral part of the "Weberian rational consensus" (Nigro & Nigro, 1980) which underlies the traditional basis of spending decisions in public bureaucracies. However, these norms, inspired by the economic development objective for urban transport of minimising the monetary loss associated with urban congestion, conflicted with the parallel structuration rule of adherence to the social development aspirations of the Regional *Social Strategy*. Reflexivity, as described by Giddens, can be identified in the subsequent course of individual action. First, in acknowledgement of the economic development basis of traditional quantitative transport appraisals, SPTE's professional officers sought to extend the scope of the quantitative cost benefit analyses performed to account for factors such as public transport user time benefits, which, although central to *Social Strategy* aspirations of extending the range of urban amenities accessible to peripheral and other deprived localities, were excluded by conventional rail transport financial and 'limited cost benefit' appraisals such as central government's 'Section 56' methodology. Subsequently, the spillover effects of the developing perceptions of senior elected councillors, who increasingly associated the aspirations of the *Social Strategy* with the 'expressive politics' of factors such as the increased *potential* to travel and access urban facilities and amenities, factors

which could not be quantified in any meaningful manner, led to the position that subsequent policy initiatives, such as CrossRail and the choice of scheme for the Glasgow Airport fixed link, could be justified by such qualitative criteria alone. Thus, the structuring influence of the Regional Council-inspired *Social Strategy* was reinforced by the shift away from central government's appraisal criteria towards a set of factors built on local social and political demands.

In Merseyside, the larger number of institutions participating at the heart of the local regime's policy-making discourse encouraged a different form of relationship. Simply, the regime operated exactly like the proxy market of the statutory joint board (Pollitt, 1986), envisaged by public choice theorists, since each constituent council sought to re-integrate the fragmented parcels of rail transport capital funding into 'lumps' large enough to finance actual infrastructure investment schemes in their area:

It's generally true that the availability of money basically dictates what happens, because the ability of this organisation to fund major capital schemes without investment from other people, well, they just wouldn't happen.

Cllr Mark Dowd,  
Merseytravel.

This required the assembly of a new coalition by central government, in this case the 'Package Approach' based on the results of the *Merseyside Integrated Transport Strategy (MERITS)* research, which brought together Merseytravel, the county's district councils and Merseyside's range of other government agencies:

Shared goals exist, but partnership has to be actively created rather than assumed. New institutions, consultation forums, subsidies, and support have to be provided to ensure co-operation and compromise among development partners.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 206).

MERITS seeks to prepare an integrated transport strategy for Merseyside that assists in achieving economic growth and urban regeneration, provides a policy framework against which to evaluate and appraise individual proposals and better enables the

Merseyside authorities to make the case for external funding for transport investment.

Merseytravel (21/10/93)

Notably, as in Strathclyde, the ground rules of the Package system, which were based on the main local structuration 'rule' of promoting rail transport investment as a means to achieve the urban regeneration of the county through economic development (Figure 11.1), were reinforced through the reflexivity of local structure and human action. Although the new institutions and forums such as the Package were put in place by central government, the strong local identity evident across the Merseyside policy community, derived from the county's general "culture of regeneration" (Carmichael, 1995), further encouraged the establishment of strong inter-authority 'partnerships'. Significantly, the numerous individual dialogues resulting from the commissioning of the county-wide MERITS integrated transport study and the subsequent formation of the Package Bid capital funding mechanism formed the basis of the increased interconnectivity of the local policy network structure and the reinforcement of 'partnerships' between its constituent institutions, culminating in the high degree of mutual "trust" identified by several interview respondents. As the 'tangible results' of Package-funded schemes integrating rail investment into wider regeneration schemes, such as Wirral City Lands' Conway Park initiative, became increasingly apparent, officers from those districts which had already promoted larger schemes relying on the Package's larger capital funding pool in turn supported applications from other council areas, further reinforcing the importance of the Package as a vehicle to ensure co-operation across formal institutional divides.

A second highly significant implication of the arrangements made for the appraisal of alternative policy priorities within the 'partnership' discourse of the Merseyside transport Package Bid negotiations was that the system of individual scheme appraisal operated by the regime stood in stark contrast to that of Strathclyde. Crucially, the system of county-wide project appraisal could only succeed on the basis of mutual 'trust' between the professional officers of Merseyside's five local district councils. Despite each borough being in competition with each other for the allocation of Merseytravel's own limited capital resources, officers from each area were jointly charged with ensuring the smooth operation of the system. This necessitated the adoption of appraisal techniques perceived to all concerned as rigorous and impartial. The application of detailed 'objective' quantitative techniques such as cost benefit analyses not only ensured the upholding of the necessary trust, but also proved acceptable to the range of local quangos as a means of allocating their resources between localities, since the techniques adopted mirrored those employed by



central government itself. Furthermore, such faith in quantitative analyses made the justification of social development-inspired projects unlikely, reinforcing the economic development basis of the actual local rail transport policies promoted in Merseyside:

although it has been refined over the years, the (CoBA) method is still less than perfect, mainly because a number of obvious benefits (including the improvement of access to shops and entertainment, the widening of employment opportunities and labour markets, and the 'standby' value of the line) are difficult if not impossible to quantify, and because the indices of value applied to other benefits cannot be more than notional in character.

Garbutt (1989: 14).

In the evaluation of transport infrastructure projects, CoBA represents a well made tool for predicting certain quantifiable or monetary factors. Its economic calculations integrate perfectly the direct effects of (new) transport infrastructure both on jobs and the performance of different sectors of the economy, and on the operation of the transport network, in terms of time savings and cost reductions etc. However, the politics of transport also affect the definition of objectives such as economic growth, spatial and social equity, and preservation of the environment. In this area, CoBA appears limited. (Thus) appreciation of the politics of transport within regional planning requires deeper appraisals than that offered by CoBA.

Arabeyre (1998).

#### *Basis for sense of common purpose*

The establishment of the inter-authority co-operation and trust based around the Package Approach in Merseyside also exemplifies the application of 'selective incentives' as a means to promote the formation of a strong regime coalition in an environment of governmental fragmentation. The establishment of a pooled Package capital consent for local transport funding in Merseyside amalgamated the previously discrete capital allocations of the PTA and five metropolitan district councils as a means to promote coherent county-wide transport planning and 'value for money'. However, although the possibility of securing Package funding for larger individual schemes than would be possible within one fragment of the county's overall funding allocation was attractive to Merseytravel and the district councils,

the establishment of joint working was also 'selectively incentivised' by central government through the offer of increased total funding for those metropolitan counties which embraced the system:

selective incentives in a fragmented and uncertain world provide a powerful mechanism for establishing a common sense of purpose.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 204).

It was a shotgun marriage, because the Department of Transport first said, "we've got this new initiative in the (West) Midlands called the Package Approach, we want other areas to try it". The next time round, the Department was even stronger and said there was a presumption that metropolitan authorities will get together.

Mike Tew,  
Wirral Borough Council.

The Merseyside package has done very well over the last two years, I think it was the highest (PTA package per capita) allocation in the country, so it's done very well in terms of bringing in transport capital spending projects for the local area.

Paul Doran,  
Government Office for Merseyside.

In Strathclyde, however, the concentration of the available funding in the hands of the single Regional Council created a wholly different basis for common purpose between the joint elite from within the Council/SPTE, and other regime members. "The strategic use of symbols" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994) was applied in order to secure support for the policies of the joint elite, which despite conflict over means of implementation, remained firmly wedded to the promotion of social development goals, and other largely pro-economic development institutions at the periphery of the regime, such as public enterprise network companies, local business associations and transport pressure groups. Potential new projects were promoted as enhancing those 'symbolic' characteristics of Strathclyde's local rail

network already perceived as key strengths by both regime blocs in order to build consensus in their favour:

.... it may be that symbolic approaches are essential in conditions where no other basis for coalition building exists. The glue of symbolic expression comes to the fore when other incentives for co-operation are absent or weak.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 205).

For example, more widespread support for CrossRail was secured by stressing its capacity to enhance the comprehensive coverage of the Strathclyde network, promoted by SPTE as 'the largest local rail network outside London', through creating better connectivity between rail corridors. This goal linked the *Social Strategy*-led aspiration of enabling individual access to a wider range of destinations across the city, with economic development interests, particularly the local business community, who perceived the scheme as a means to extend the market catchment of key commercial areas in the south and east of the city centre. In the case of Glasgow Airport, a different symbol was promoted by Cllr Waugh, who enlisted the support of Strathclyde's local business community and public enterprise companies by promoting his preferred scheme, the direct rail link, as the only option comparable with similar projects being advanced by competitor cities:

the idea of "our locality in competition with others" is often used to mobilize local interests in economic development. It may be important to individuals to live in a city that people can be proud of, that is 'in the vanguard', 'world class', and outcompeting other localities.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 204).

### *Relationship with local environment*

Like the basis for a sense of common purpose, the type of relationship each regime attempts to build with its wider political environment, that is the range of pressure groups, local political parties and activists and the general public, is also directly related to the congruence of interests which underlie the foundation of the regime. In Merseyside, the strict focus on the 'realisation' of projects, such as Conway Park and Brunswick new stations, according to the opportunity to integrate funding packages across the regime, and the range of

participating government agencies all keen to demonstrate the achievement of particular 'tangible results' required by their constitution, left little scope for local political lobbying for those potential schemes not eligible for additional grant aid:

Regimes which focus on tangible results and selective incentives are likely to have highly developed strategies of exclusion (since) the cost of spreading material benefits may be great.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 207).

Indeed, the lack of active local pressure groups campaigning for particular rail improvement projects in Merseyside is symptomatic of the concentration on securing additional finance rather than on other priorities such as ensuring an equal spread of investment across the county (see 11.2.2 below). In Strathclyde, however, a different picture emerged. Central to the eventual assembly of regime coalitions in favour of particular projects, such as CrossRail, driven by the 'expressive politics' of the *Regional Social Strategy*, was the harnessing of public support, since

Symbolic regimes which have developed in a looser way focused on expressive concerns or policies that demand a wider public participation will need to develop a more inclusive strategy for managing the political environment. Progressive regimes will need to mobilize popular support.... extensive outreach is needed.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 207).

However, despite the significant role played by wider public consultation in Strathclyde policy-making, particularly with respect to CrossRail and the Glasgow Airport rail link, the region's regime did not adopt a truly pluralist stance by fully 'opening out' to incorporate all shades of local political opinion. In particular, a distinctly 'elitist' stance was adopted towards certain (although not all) local rail transport 'cause' groups, who campaigned for more radical high-cost investment strategies deemed unrealistic within the bounds of prevailing local capital spending limits by councillors and officials alike. Thus, the Strathclyde local rail transport regime can be regarded as 'selectively inclusive', since it sought to incorporate general public opinion as a means to ensure the legitimacy of its proposed 'symbolic' policy programme, but sought to exclude the views of more critical 'cause' pressure groups.

Equally, despite the combination of PTA and roads authority functions within a single Roads & Transportation Committee of the Regional Council, none of the officers from the Roads or Physical Planning Departments participated in Strathclyde's local rail transport policy regime. Their exclusion further underlines the combination of pragmatism and the 'expressive politics' of social development underlying rail transport policy-making in Strathclyde. Since the Council's strategic aspirations for rail transport development focused on providing increased access to travel in disadvantaged areas of low car ownership according to the opportunities presented by inherited rail network legacy, the comparative appraisal of rail and road schemes serving the same localities was not pursued.

### *Relationship with non-local environment*

The characteristics of any regime's relationship with its 'non-local political environment', or more simply central government, is a highly significant factor in analysing the degree of autonomy and accountability associated with institutions of local governance. Crucially, the nature of this relationship differed fundamentally between the two study area local rail transport policy regimes. The Merseyside regime, with its 'instrumental' focus on the re-integration of member institutions' funding parcels in order to achieve 'project realisation' was heavily dependent on central government for two reasons. First, several regime members, such as the Merseyside Development Corporation and Wirral City Lands, were agencies directly responsible to the centre for the distribution of their resources. Consequently, they deployed their significant financial 'investment potential' according to the accepted norms and practices of their parent central government departments of Transport and the Environment. Thus, the atomisation of the available capital consents for rail transport development across such bodies in addition to the PTA itself increased the level of influence accruing to the established practices of the centre, in turn reducing the capacity for the local regime to follow different policy trajectories:

(a regime) coalition seeking to get things done and deliver tangible results is likely to require the support of legislation and resources from the non-local political environment. This entails a more dependent relationship.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 208).

Second, the Government Office for Merseyside played a crucial role in facilitating the operation of the quasi market of the Package Bid, which was also required to closely follow central government's own priorities for rail transport investment. Similarly, the reinforcement of conventional quantitative appraisal criteria within the Package discussions also steered the policy outcomes produced by the process more closely towards the economic development aspirations of the centre:

instrumental regimes often require non-local support for their actions. Their dependence on such support means that a key element in their political strategy is to present themselves in a way that is acceptable to non-local political forces or higher levels of government.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 209).

What we look at mainly really is the package, because what we're looking for is an integrated approach, and co-operation and partnership between the five (district) authorities and Merseytravel, the PTA. So we go to London to talk to Department of Transport officials and put the best gloss we can on the submission: it's called a series of bilaterals, because like most jobs in the Regional Offices, we face both ways. One is towards the local authorities and PTA, and the other is towards our policy colleagues in London, and we tend to have to explain one set of people to the other. In this case, we have to encourage our local authorities and PTA to put forward the best package bid possible, to conform to government objectives, to produce all the right sorts of buzzwords, partnership and enterprise etc., and also to exhibit genuine partnership.

We're looking for net present value. On the major schemes (over £2m cost), there are calculations we make on net present value. So obviously, if something had a negative NPV there would be a major question mark against it - but also in terms of the Package as a whole, we're given similar guidelines (from central government) and the local authorities are given guidance in terms of what the priorities are.

Peter Wilson,  
Government Office for Merseyside.

Significantly, the relative freedom granted to the Strathclyde regime to pursue its own 'symbolic' social development policy preferences independently of the aspirations of central

government stood in stark contrast to the greatly increased level of central control present in Merseyside. Quite simply, the consistent availability of a single large capital consent for the Regional Council's local rail network development programme largely removed the need to combine the resources of a diverse range of partnership organisations within a policy dialogue based on 'trust' generated by the operation of quantitative appraisal methodologies defined by the centre. Consequently, the Strathclyde policy regime was at liberty to develop an investment strategy based on wider more 'expressive' qualitative and political objectives:

It's part and parcel of the considerable autonomy that the government have given (Scottish regional) local authorities in the transport field, that they don't revisit the decisions that are made at local level and ask themselves whether those are the same decisions they would have made.... I think it is fair to say that the government has left it up to Strathclyde to decide how much of an explicit social dimension it wishes to inject in its area.

John Elvidge,  
Scottish Office.

That the number of non-elected local institutions in Strathclyde able to influence the Regional Council's policy priorities through the exercising of 'investment potential' was severely limited is therefore crucial. Although the two specific examples of the aborted East Kilbride town centre rail extension scheme and the successfully implemented Prestwick Airport station clearly indicate that the Regional Council was open to such similar pressures as those experienced by Merseytravel, the very fact that these two projects form the sole examples of investment partnership between SPTE and outside organisations highlights the much greater degree of autonomy exercised by the Council as compared to Merseyside's joint board PTA. Freed from the restrictions of the highly quantitative appraisals demanded by the Package Approach, Strathclyde was able to promote particular local rail development projects reflecting the unique 'expressive politics' of the region. In this sense, the single large Regional Council was indeed of "sufficient scale... to shift the balance of power and responsibility between central and local government" (Wheatley, 1969: 44)

#### *Regime hierarchy and dominant member(s)*

Like each of the characteristics outlined above, the hierarchy of actors and institutions, and the position of the individual who was able to assume 'pre-emptive power', or the ability to

lead the policy-making debate, are clearly different in each study area rail transport policy regime.

In Merseyside, the documentary evidence and individual testimony clearly places two senior professional individuals at the centre of the local rail transport policy regime. Merseytravel's Chief Executive and Rail Services Manager, supported by other professional officers, were able to hold such influence due to the dominance of 'systemic' and 'command power' within the Merseyside rail transport policy elite. This can be clearly linked to the institutional fragmentation of the county's system of local governance. Quite simply, their position resulted from the atomisation of the available capital consents for rail infrastructure investment between a range of public institutions of which the Passenger Transport Authority/Executive itself was only one. Unelected professional bodies such as the Merseyside Development Corporation, Wirral Borough Council's Wirral City Lands, the Government Office for Merseyside and the county's Objective One Management Committee, through their holding of the critical 'investment potential' of their own capital allocations for local rail transport development, enjoyed an equivalent degree of systemic power to the business interests identified in Stone's expositions of the American urban regime. The example of Conway Park new station, where the scheme proceeded only after inter-professional agreement and the input of significant investments from Wirral City Lands and Objective One illustrates the application of this investment potential systemic power in practice.

Merseytravel's own senior officers, as representatives of the statutory rail authority for the county, were placed at the centre of these discussions and fulfilled a pivotal role in the development of policy. However, in addition to this evident systemic power, the very fact that the 'partnership' discourses of the Package Bid group are based on complex technical appraisals and numerous inter-authority contacts also imbued these individuals with a substantial degree of command power, in that they as the lead managers of the process possessed the potential to filter and manipulate the flow of financial and informational resources between other members of the local policy network:

It is right to say that here, policy initiatives generally come from the officers, but then that's my job - to seek to develop new policies, to seek to drive forward our strategies.

Roy Swainson,  
Merseytravel.



I think we get the confidence of partners partly because we spread ourselves around. I mean, Roy Swainson is respected, he spends a lot of time going round talking to people. We meet at my level District planners and engineers all the time, every six weeks, and we explain what we're doing and try to work together, so it comes back to that word partnership again really. If you don't look like people in an ivory towers, cold and resistant to any suggestion, you get co-operation.

Martin Harrison,  
Merseytravel.

This concentration of substantial systemic and command power in the hands of the Merseytravel's two senior rail policy officers particularly, and the wider professional membership of the local regime more generally, considerably reduces the relative level of power retained by the PTA's elected chair. Of particular note was Cllr Dowd's declared dissension over the nature of the appraisal criteria applied by the policy network to the consideration of potential infrastructure schemes. Only those projects likely to produce significant 'tangible results', as defined by central government's prevailing appraisal methodology, could be seriously considered within the Package. This clearly conflicted with the Chair's stated 'expressive' desire to ensure the same quality of service across all of the corridors sponsored by Merseytravel, and represents a clear restriction on his strategic aspirations imposed by the operation norms of the Package dominated regime. Equally, the need for immediate rather than longer-term financial returns on capital also rendered such projects as the Liverpool Airport rail link unrealisable, since it was designed to stimulate long term future growth at the airport, and in turn, patronage for the new rail service, over a longer period of time than was permitted by the Package appraisals.

However, several respondents identified one respect in which the Authority Chair was able to apply his own more limited systemic power to effect a particular policy outcome, the policy of full station staffing. The retention of staffed Merseyrail stations despite the evident reservations of many officers and representatives of the rail operators can be attributed to the ability of the Chair, supplemented by a limited coalition of local political and trades union supporters, to elevate this issue to become in itself a tertiary structuration 'rule' intimately associated the unique image and management policy of Merseyrail.

In spite of this, the overall pattern of local rail transport policy development decision-making revealed from the documentary and interview evidence obtained in Merseyside clearly illustrates the dominance of the systemic and command power accruing to a limited

number of senior professional individuals. In managing the ongoing dialogues with the relevant wider professional groups from the county's other potential investor institutions, the officers of its constituent district councils and non-elected local institutions with whom were shared broadly similar predisposed attitudes and aspirations, Merseytravel's senior rail transport policy officers, primarily the Chief Executive and Rail Services Manager, attained the pre-emptive power necessary to control the priorities and discourse within the local policy development regime.

The evidence describing the operation of the policy network in Strathclyde stands in stark contrast with that of Merseyside, however. Despite a similarly widespread recognition of the existence of a 'joint elite' of senior elected councillors and professional PTE officers, the final balance of power within this group was clearly subject to different structural influences.

In Strathclyde, the two Roads & Transportation Committee Chairs were able to lead the Region's rail transport development policy rather than senior PTE officials. As in the case of Merseytravel's officers, this was the result of their ability to combine the resources of systemic and command power. The attribution of such power to both elected Chairs rather than the professional officers of the PTE can be linked to a number of factors. First was the strength of the consensual adherence to the values of the Regional *Social Strategy* to which SPTE officers were also highly committed. As the primacy of officers' main professional appraisal norm of traditional quantitative scheme analysis was diluted by the existence of this second jointly-held structuration rule, over time, the two Committee Chairs were able to achieve dominance over SPTE officers' initial approach to policy appraisal which, like that of the Merseyside Package Bid, was based on the structurationist 'norms' of quantitative economic analysis:

Yes, (if I wanted to change policy), I could use my political power.... I think Stephen (Lockley) (SPTE Director General) would tell you that.

Cllr Malcolm Waugh,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

It's quite easy - I always win (in policy disputes), because at the end of the day, we're the Authority, we're the elected and accountable people. My officers are quite clear now that I don't want them to go away and look at a problem and come up with one preferred solution, i.e. theirs! I'm looking for options, even if at a later stage I

personally pick the only option that's going to come forward as a recommendation.

Cllr Charles Gordon,  
Strathclyde Regional Council.

Equally, however, the overwhelming primacy of the Regional Council's own capital consent as a source of funding for local rail development precluded the extension of the Chairs' command and systemic power by managing investment partnerships involving other public bodies, such as local enterprise companies as was achieved by Merseytravel officers. Instead, both Cllr Waugh and Cllr Gordon secured their personal influence through the harnessing of coalition power within the policy regime. Although professionals in Strathclyde's few non-elected local institutions participated in the discourses of the local rail transport policy network, the fact that they held no money of their own to spend on rail transport projects left them free, like the two Chairs themselves, to adopt qualitative criteria on which to base support for specific projects such as the heavy rail link alternative for Glasgow Airport.

In this way, both Committee Chairs were able at various points in the period of study to assemble wide coalitions in support of particular policy options including various other policy network members, the wider elected membership of the Regional Council itself and the general public. Not only was the Chair able to express command power in the promotion of a policy discourse within the regime based on 'expressive' local political aspirations rather purely financial considerations, but he was also bolstered in his systemic power by the support for his position by the Council's ruling Group and the comprehensive coalitions formed to promote particular policy alternatives. As was recognised by SPTE's professional officers themselves, both Committee Chairs were able to assume pre-emptive power within the joint elite and wider regime through their combination of the three sub-elements of coalition, command and systemic power. However, there remains one prime limitation to this power - whilst within the scope of the normal annual capital consents for rail transportation the freedom afforded to the Regional Council in the prioritisation of competing schemes is clear, the example of the *Strathclyde Tram* light rail scheme demonstrates the continuing veto afforded to the centre over the largest potential projects, since the appraisal processes controlling the distribution of the necessary additional grants, such as Section 56, remain constructed around the quantitative financial criteria abandoned by the Council for the prioritisation of schemes funded by its own resources. Thus, whilst the Regional Council enjoyed significantly more autonomy from central influence than did Merseytravel, in this example, the decision of the panel of commissioners to reject the

*Strathclyde Tram* scheme illustrates the retained power of the centre to direct rail transport policy outcomes in Strathclyde according to its own preferences.

A further contributing factor concerns the political structure of the Regional Council itself. Although respondents overwhelmingly discounted the full Roads & Transportation Committee membership as a powerful force within the regime, the overall ruling Labour Group of the Regional Council provided crucial additional support to the two Chairs for particular projects, such as CrossRail, where these could be shown to express the values of the *Social Strategy*. Significantly, such united support for policies based on the theme of social development illustrates the power of the Regional Council to promote major initiatives independently of central government. This contrasts strongly with the definitive statements of policy guidance from central government characterising the Package Approach in Merseyside. In securing the Labour Group's support for particular policy initiatives, the systemic power derived from the party's electoral mandate could also be ascribed to the Chair. Finally, the examples of the options for the implementation of CrossRail and the Glasgow Airport Rail Link contained within the *Travelling in Strathclyde* document of 1992 demonstrate how, as Chair, Cllr Waugh in particular utilised the public relations resources of the Regional Council to hold widespread consultation exercises so as to harness public popular support to the coalition in support of his own personal policy preferences:

Symbolic regimes revolve around ideological or image-building concerns. Their aims are transformative, and they are dominated by participants whose prime concerns are expressive. Their involvement is based on communicating their intentions, values and concerns.

Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 209).

The following figures draw together the analysis of the typologies of the Merseyside and Strathclyde local rail transport policy regimes outlined above. First, their 'instrumental' and 'symbolic-pragmatic' categorisations are summarised with reference to each of the defining characteristics of Stoker & Mossberger's (1994) typology of regime types. Second, the hierarchy of each regime is illustrated by a diagram which describes the linkages between key actors and institutions and the location of the actor(s) who hold pre-emptive power, or the ability to lead the policy-making process, in each study area.

	Merseyside	Strathclyde
<i>Regime type</i>	'Instrumental'	'Symbolic-pragmatic'
<b>Purpose</b>	Consolidation of fragmented rail transport capital funding in order to 'realise' investment projects	Redirection of ideology towards Regional <i>Social Strategy</i> Pragmatic 'realisation' of smaller projects according to opportunity
<b>Main motivation of participants</b>	Tangible results of urban regeneration through economic development, increased patronage and financial returns on capital investment	Expressive politics of social development and equity in rail transport provision across Region
<b>Basis for sense of common purpose</b>	Selective incentive of increased future government grant for 'Package Bid'	Strategic use of symbols of locality and comprehensive spread of rail network coverage
<b>Quality of coalition (congruence of interests)</b>	Inter-authority 'trust' based on strong political partnership of the 'Package Approach'	Competitive agreement between PTE officers and Ctte Chair over suitable appraisal methods, and between joint elite and peripheral regime members over social versus economic development focus
<b>Relationship with environment:</b>		
Local	Excludes local political demands to focus on 'realisable' projects as defined by available funding	Selectively inclusive orientation: seeks exclusion of pressure group demands but embraces public opinion within coalitions
Non-local	Highly dependent for all potential projects on central government approval of annual 'Package Bid'	Largely autonomous of central government outside the largest schemes requiring additional grant
<b>Dominant member(s)</b>	Senior PTE officers	Council Roads & Transportation Committee Chair

Table 11.1 Typology and characteristics of Merseyside and Strathclyde local rail transport policy regimes.

Source Derived from Stoker & Mossberger (1994: 199).

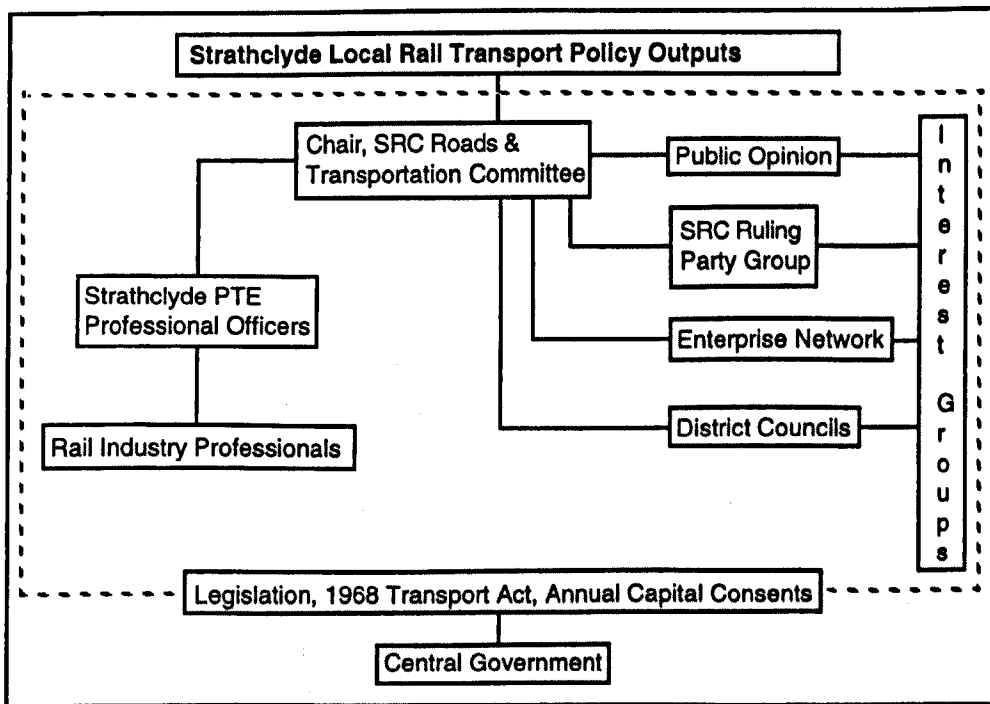
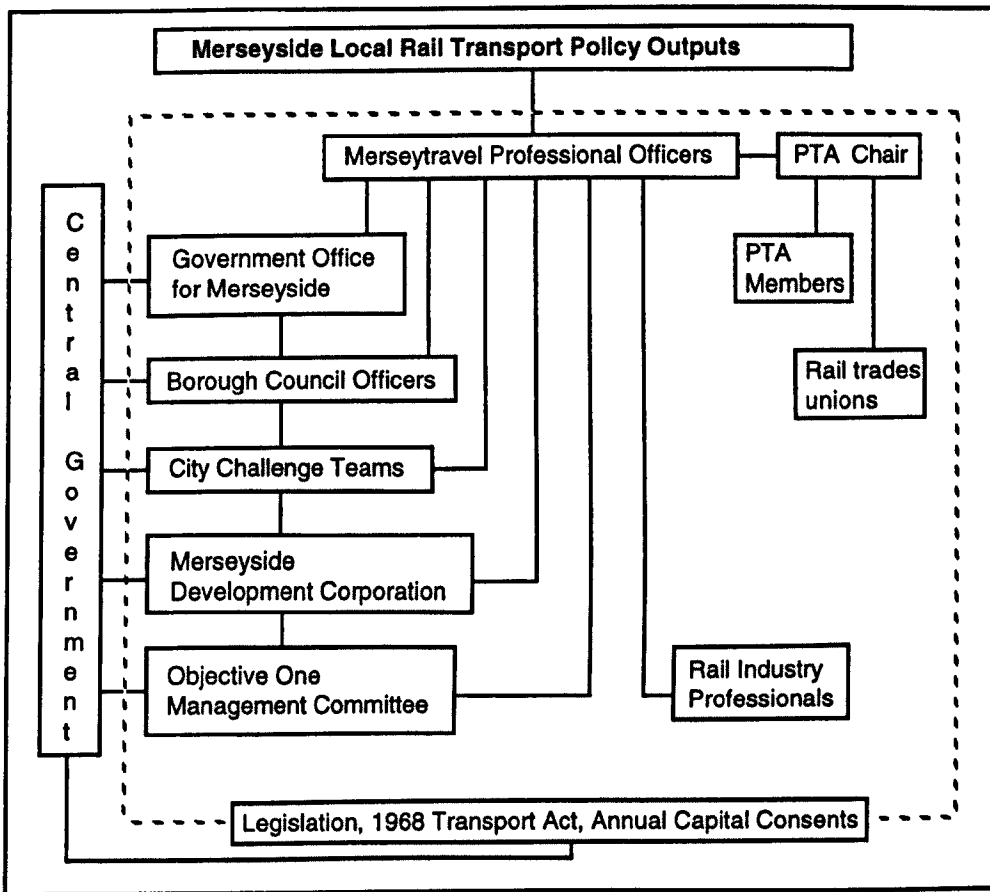


Figure 11.2 Hierarchy of Merseyside and Strathclyde local rail transport policy regimes.

### 11.2.2 Local rail transport policy outcomes

The typology of each study area regime derived from the variations in local institutional spatial structure discussed above exerted profound effects on the actual local rail transport policies enacted and rejected in Merseyside and Strathclyde. Most significantly, the balance struck between the economic development-inspired aims of reducing congestion and achieving modal shift away from the private car as a means to improve mobility within the urban economy, and those social development measures aimed at increasing equity of access to urban transport, and therefore to other amenities within the city, differs markedly between both regions.

In Strathclyde, the development of new rail assets was strongly targeted at increasing the catchment of the already comprehensive network in order to maximise the equity of rail travel opportunity across the Region. Since the existing rail system offered comprehensive coverage of historic dormitory areas which often developed in tandem with the railway, the pragmatic extension of passenger services over the region's several dormant branches in less economically active areas became a central development policy closely attuned to the 'expressive politics' of the Regional Council's *Social Strategy*.

The proposed CrossRail project represents a further expression of such 'redirection' of strategic rail transport objectives towards the 'expressive politics' of social development. In promoting a scheme designed to achieve greater connectivity between the numerous discrete corridors which together comprise the Strathclyde rail network, CrossRail presents the opportunity to enhance the *potential* for wider, more complex patterns of rail passenger movement within and around Glasgow. In particular, the link offers the prospect of increasing the range of accessible travel destinations for passengers, substantially widening the labour market and other opportunities available to individuals. However, that this could only be achieved at the cost of diverting certain radial journeys away from existing city centre termini, represents a move away from the historic primacy afforded to maximising the role of the rail mode as an alternative to the car for these radial trips.

Similarly, the development process of the proposed *Strathclyde Tram* light rail scheme illustrates the profound influence of the *Social Strategy* upon the formulation of local rail policy in Strathclyde. The original conception of light rail as a means of enhancing the rail service in areas of relatively high car ownership was dropped in favour of a scheme designed to extend the advantages of high quality rail-based mode of transport to Glasgow's peripheral estates reliant on the bus. This demonstrates the high level of commitment to the

social development objective of improving rail transport equity across both the elected and professional elements of the Regional Council and SPTE.

For Strathclyde, the focus on the promotion of equity in transport access across the Region also produced a distinct geographical concentration of new developments in the peripheral areas of the City of Glasgow and other surrounding industrial towns in the Clydeside conurbation. In large part, this concentration can be seen to result from the pre-existing urban morphology of the area. As described in Chapter 5, the lack of a concerted programme of new railway construction as part of post-war urban redevelopment left most of the numerous new peripheral housing estates, whilst containing substantial populations, remote from the local rail network largely laid out in the 19th century. The proximity of such estates as Drumchapel to more mature and prosperous suburban communities served by the railway such as Bearsden, for example, illustrates the obvious disparities in access to urban opportunities, including employment, across the conurbation which the aspirations of the *Social Strategy* were designed to address.

The development of light rail technology in Strathclyde as a means to extend rail transport access to these estates can be seen as a clear response to the failures of much post-war urban land use planning in and around Glasgow to provide for an alternative to road-based transport. Since LRT routes are able to penetrate such existing, high density built up areas without substantial destruction of the built environment and at an acceptable cost, their proposed development can be seen a realistic way of extending rail catchments within the city. Similarly, the extension of conventional rail passenger services to dormant routes such as the Drumgelloch, Paisley Canal, Whifflet and Maryhill lines, and the construction of new stations such as Airbles, Whinhill and Milliken Park represents a further direction of infrastructure investment towards relatively deprived, lower income suburban areas.

Alongside the evident emphasis on projects such as CrossRail and *Strathclyde Tram* founded on such social development principles, the importance attached by the Council and SPTE to the provision of a rail link to Glasgow Airport represents a further example of the promotion of improved urban rail transport as an element of local 'expressive politics'. The eventual decision to adopt the more costly direct heavy rail link to the airport, rather than a separate automatic light rail 'people mover', despite there being little chance of the conventional link generating enough revenue to recover its c £50m capital cost in the foreseeable future, demonstrates the 'symbolic' priority attached by many members of the Strathclyde local rail transport regime to ensuring the region is prepared to "outcompete other localities" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994: 204), such as Manchester and Dublin, developing similar links.



In contrast, the promotion of economic development aspirations ahead of more 'expressive' social concerns in Merseyside was founded in the county's particular form of "property as opposed to people" (Imrie & Thomas, 1993) approach to urban regeneration. The central government-inspired practices of the Package Approach, which facilitated the re-integration of the available rail transport 'investment potential' distributed across wide range of government agencies active in the county, drove a rail transport policy strategy closely targeted to the achievement of the 'tangible results' of physical regeneration, modal shift and the attraction of new firms to sites of urban renewal. In turn, this promoted the prioritisation of rail investment at sites of new business activity, such as Conway Park, Brunswick dock and Wavertree Technology Park in order to extend their pool of potential labour.

The proposed implementation of light rail / guided bus technology in the form of the *Merseyside Rapid Transit* scheme highlights a further divergence in strategic approach between the two regimes. Whereas *Strathclyde Tram* represented an attempt to extend the advantages of efficient tracked public transport to particularly disadvantaged areas within the 'expressive politics' of social development, the conception of *MRT* as a means to relieve road traffic congestion along several of Liverpool's busiest arterial routes was also clearly attuned to economic development priorities. In particular, the diversion of the originally conceived route in order to serve the developing Wavertree Technology Park, like the new Merseyrail station programmed for the same location, further illustrates Merseytravel's targeting of improved public transport facilities as an alternative to the car serving particular sites of economic regeneration.

This direction of Merseyrail investment towards sites of regeneration also produced a differing spatial pattern of local rail development to that of Strathclyde over the study period. The majority of the prestige urban redevelopment schemes promoted by partner institutions of the local rail transport policy regime, such as the major revitalisation of Birkenhead through the Conway Park development managed by Wirral City (Challenge) Lands, Wavertree Technology Park developed with Objective One grant aid, and those sponsored by the Merseyside Development Corporation along the Mersey waterfront, were located in historic inner city districts of the county directed local rail investment towards the inner urban core and away from other residential locations with poor rail access.

This adopted policy of directing the new station construction programme in Merseyside to such sites of inner city regeneration rather than longstanding alternatives in dormitory areas carries significant implications for the level of equity in access to employment and other

urban opportunities across the conurbation. Although the construction of new stations at sites of employment and service growth ensures a marked improvement in the overall attractiveness of such developments, the potential benefits for individuals across the city of these facilities becomes increasingly polarised with respect to their *existing* level of rail transport access. Thus, although the new stations at Conway Park, Brunswick and Wavertree Technology Park may provide greatly enhanced employment opportunities to individuals living near an existing Merseyrail station, the relative level of opportunity for those remote for the railway is reduced, since not only are they denied efficient access to these sites of new economic activity, but also their existing relative accessibility disadvantage with respect to access of traditional rail traffic destinations such as Liverpool city centre remains in place.

### 11.3 Implications for accountability of local governance

#### 11.3.1 Process accountability and the 'instrumental' regime

In the discussion of the theories promoted in support of various ideal structures of urban local governance presented in Chapter 3, the notion of *accountability* was identified as a key concept underlying analysis of the decision-making process. After uncovering significant divergence in the distribution of pre-emptive power, "the capacity to govern" (Stoker, 1995: 65) and thus the actual policies of the two urban rail transport policy regimes according to local institutional spatial structure, the final question to be addressed by this research concerns the relative merits of the two systems of local governance under investigation with respect to their inherent level of public accountability.

The potential for increased public accountability is central to the aspirations of both the city-regional and public choice models of local governance outlined in 3.2.1. The comprehensive size and scope of large local authorities such as the Scottish Regional Councils was deemed necessary in order to shift the balance of power away from the centre towards localities and in so doing extend *political accountability* (Day, 1987) (see 3.5.1). However, criticisms of this model, which focused on the 'remoteness' of such large authorities and a perceived tendency towards the homogenisation of local policies encouraged by city-regionalism, spurred the development of the public choice approach. The jurisdictional fragmentation of the metropolitan area through the creation of several smaller district authorities was designed to encourage a competitive market-derived administrative structure focused on achieving efficient use of local resources through which

increased *process accountability* (Day, 1987) is intended to emerge. By reducing the size of local councils, Pirie (1982) and others predicted an increased flexibility in policy-making, where local governments would become more responsive to the distinctive demands of their citizens (Tiebout, 1956), in terms of matching the level of service provision to that of need.

Statutory joint boards, in which a number of relatively small authorities act in combination in the form of a quasi market for public resources, represent one practical application of public choice principles. This study has demonstrated that the constituent councils of the Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority did indeed enter into intense "mutual competition" Pollitt (1986: 158) for the scarce public resource of 'investment potential' for local rail transport capital projects held by central government and other local regime members within the arena of the county-wide 'Package Bid'. From this, the priority attached to the appraisal of policy options through transparent, 'objective' quantitative appraisal criteria emerged as a means to legitimise the direction of resources to particular projects and district authority areas. Furthermore, the level of refinement of the 'objective', quantitative appraisal methodologies required by the local policy regime in order to facilitate the prioritisation of competing schemes mirrors that predicted by public choice theorists such as Pirie (1981). For them, the importance placed on quantifiable benefits rather than softer political objectives highlights the greater efficiency of the pseudo-market local state operated according to the principles of public choice.

Thus, the Merseyside local rail policy regime can be regarded as prime example of a marketised system of local governance. Both the core joint board administrative structure and the development of partnerships between the PTA and other institutions of local governance, such as the local Merseyside Development Corporation, the county's Objective One Management Committee and City Challenge initiatives, contributed to a policy discourse in which 'value for money' considerations expressed through detailed cost benefit analyses were paramount. 'Efficiency' in the distribution of public resources was demonstrated since, in a time of limited public expenditure for public transport, Merseytravel followed development policies designed to maximise the 'tangible results' of modal shift from car to rail and the resulting revenue gains, subject to the local policy commitment to retain fully staffed stations.

Such an approach also exemplifies the notion of process accountability, which "is about making sure that a given course of action has been carried out, and that value for money has been achieved in the use of resources" (Day, 1987: 27). Examples such as the promotion of Conway Park new station demonstrate how the need to re-integrate the necessary 'investment potential' divided between several regime members maximised the focus on

achieving a number of specific 'tangible results', such as minimising the impact of the new development on the level of road traffic in the county and maximising the additional revenue accruing to Merseytravel.

Whilst this approach may satisfy demands for the efficient use of local resources, the spatial distribution pattern of new rail transport facilities detailed above highlights the disparities between the levels of investment seen across Merseytravel's five constituent borough council areas, revealing an implied deficit in the level of political accountability in Merseyside.

One particularly notable example concerns St Helens borough. Located on the eastern fringe of Merseyside county, St Helens is relatively isolated from Merseyside's commercial and employment focus in Liverpool city centre, and has much to gain from the provision of improved local rail links. However, no new rail transport facilities were provided in St Helens Borough within the 1986-96 period, and those schemes such as the St Helens Central to Junction link line which are within Merseytravel's adopted capital programme face continuing stiff competition from numerous alternatives which exhibit better estimated rates of return. This contrasts starkly with Merseytravel's development programme for the Wirral Line serving the Wirral Borough Council area, which includes Bromborough Rake and Eastham Rake new stations, the prestige £15m Conway Park underground station development, Merseytravel's single largest capital scheme over the last ten years, and successive electrification schemes, of which the next phase from Bidston to Woodchurch has moved to the top of the PTA's medium term priority programme (Railtrack plc, 1998).

Quite simply, although representing an efficient use of public resources in terms of 'tangible results', the emphasis on ensuring the value for money of approved local rail development schemes in Merseyside as defined within the Section 56 methodology of the Package Bid created a 'virtuous circle' of investment in this particular district at the expense of others. As each successive layer of historic investment was added to the Wirral Line, further potential developments of the route exhibited better performance under the adopted cost benefit appraisal methodologies than competing schemes elsewhere. For example, although the St Helens Link and Woodchurch electrification schemes may at first have exhibited similar potential benefits, the additional spur to rail patronage growth in Wirral generated by the construction of Conway Park station directed Merseytravel's future priorities to the consolidation of this investment through the upgrading of the Woodchurch branch, in the same way that construction of Conway Park station itself builds on the Wirral Line's improved city centre accessibility afforded by the 1970s underground *Loop*, where no such facility exists on the eastern City Line branches.

There are two substantial implications for the political accountability of Merseytravel and the wider Merseyside local rail transport policy regime arising from this situation. First, the central role of Wirral City Lands and the Government Office for Merseyside's Objective One Management Committee in securing the funding package enabling the construction of Conway Park station, and thus the subsequent shift in Merseytravel's future development priorities, underlines the potential for bodies other than Merseytravel, which are *unelected*, to profoundly influence the direction of the regime's rail transport policy priorities across the whole county.

Second, the fact that these prevailing power structures within the Merseyside rail transport policy regime result from the splintering of the 'investment potential' between various member institutions reduces the level of influence of elected representatives as compared to unelected professionals. This clearly minimises the potential for the citizens of St Helens or any other borough council areas similarly denied rail transport investment to seek redress through the ballot box. Although the efficiency and 'value for money' emphasis of the decision-making process mirrors the quasi-market public choice objective of matching the supply of rail transport development to the areas of greatest *existing* demand for rail travel and 'tangible' returns on investment, the resulting lack of scope for public scrutiny of the shift in priorities resulting from the 'virtuous circle' of scheme prioritisation within the Package system illustrates one of the main critiques of such fragmented structures of local governance:

the citizen has rights that differ from those of the customer.... local authorities undertake collective action which rests for its justification and legitimacy on the support of the citizenry.

Stewart (1995: 203)

The notion of the *legitimacy* of systems of local governance resting on "the support of the citizenry" reveals a further crucial criticism of the marketised Package system of policy development. In addition to the likelihood that unelected bodies will influence future policy priorities of the PTA through the wielding of their 'investment potential' in favour of particular projects and localities, there remains the fact that the appraisal criteria under which such policy prioritisation occurs remain defined by central government, since the *congruence of interests* of the numerous institutions participating in the Merseyside rail transport policy regime hinges on their adoption of central government's strategic policy

aspirations and appraisal practices in order to secure the *selective incentive* of increased funding for the Package as a whole.

Thus, although the Package system demonstrates the high degree of transparency in decision-making criteria required for process accountability, the legitimacy of the local rail transport policy regime is weakened since the marketised system of policy prioritisation required to facilitate the adoption of coherent policies is necessarily defined according to the objectives of the centre, rather than those of Merseyside itself. Crucially, this underlines the inability of locally elected politicians to influence the direction of urban rail transport policy in the county.

### 11.3.2 Political accountability and the 'symbolic-pragmatic' regime

The revealed typology and hierarchy of actors within the Strathclyde local rail transport policy regime stands in direct contrast to that of Merseyside. The near exclusive concentration of 'investment potential' in the hands of the Regional Council itself as PTA for its area substantially reduced the complexity of the local policy network, and minimised the influence afforded to the managers acting as gatekeepers by controlling the flow of financial and informational resources between regime actors. With the key element of non-PTA capital funding largely removed from the system, the level of professional systemic power derived from the management of numerous inter-authority partnerships is considerably reduced in the Strathclyde regime as compared to Merseyside.

The role of the elected Chair of the Council's Roads & Transportation Committee is central to the formulation of local rail transport policy in Strathclyde. By combining the resources of systemic power accruing from the electoral mandate of the Council's ruling group and that of coalition power derived through the qualitative application of policy objectives reflecting those of the public, the Chair undoubtedly held the capacity to exercise the pre-emptive power required to lead the implementation of policy.

However, the adoption of 'fuzzy' qualitative appraisal methods and the related concentration of power and in the hands of one individual exemplifies the lack of process accountability associated with large units of local government by the public choice critique. That Strathclyde was able to pursue rail transport policies clearly at variance with the strategic economic development aspirations of the centre, which continued to provide the necessary capital finance, and to place little emphasis on securing the best possible 'tangible' financial returns from such capital investment, could be claimed an irresponsible

outcome of the inevitable budget-maximising tendencies of large public bureaucracies. Although such powerful individuals may add weight and vision to policy strategies, there remains the risk that they may follow narrow personal policy agendas. The absence of the 'tangible' financial discipline maintained by the need to re-integrate the dispersed capital allocations of several regime partners within a fragmented system in order to achieve jointly-held aspirations may lead to the adoption of costly projects offering little in the way of identifiable returns.

However, several interview respondents in Strathclyde claimed that the increased level of discretion afforded to the Chair as pinnacle of a high-profile decision-making process was, in fact, more likely to attract to the position individuals with substantial expertise in the field and who were closely attuned to the demands and aspirations of the electorate, minimising the risk of unpopular, profligate strategies. Equally, critics of the public choice paradigm, such as Stewart (1992; 1995), also argue that the fact an elected individual was able to assume the 'pre-emptive power' necessary to lead local policy-making suggests that the unified structure of the Regional Council brings considerable advantages in terms of political accountability as compared to the fragmented systems of local governance such as that of the Merseyside local rail transport policy regime. First, the Strathclyde Chair was free to adopt social development-led policies for local rail transport investment which reflected the particular 'expressive politics' of the region rather than those of central government. Second, the Chair was also able to define the system under which competing projects were appraised, rather than be restricted to the quantitative techniques imposed by central government as an impartial arbiter of the marketised Package Approach.

Furthermore, as was most clearly demonstrated by the results of 1992's *Travelling in Strathclyde* consultation process, a third dimension of the political accountability of the Chair was derived from the particular form of 'check and balance' arising from the creative tension or *competitive agreement* which characterised the joint elite in Strathclyde. Although both senior councillors and PTE officers were firmly committed to the 'symbolic' strategic objectives of the Council's *Social Strategy*, there remained considerable disagreement over the best means to prioritise the range of possible rail transport projects according to these aspirations. On several occasions, most notably in the cases of CrossRail and the Glasgow Airport rail link, Cllr Waugh proposed the adoption of alternatives which performed less well under the Region's extended social cost benefit appraisal methodologies than those put forward by PTE officers. Since Cllr Waugh's ability to 'win the argument' within the joint elite over such issues depended on his ability to demonstrate widespread popular support for the 'expressive' aspirations underlying his own personal policy preferences rather than those of the professionals', such highly 'expressive' policies

were only promoted on the basis of strong public support. Thus, public opinion enjoyed a conduit to the very heart of the policy-making process.

### 11.3.3 Integrating accountabilities

In combination, the relatively limited role of elected PTA members in formulating and directing the policies of the Merseyside local rail transport policy regime, described by one interview respondent as “responsibility without power”, and the level of importance afforded to public opinion through the pivotal role of the elected Committee Chair in Strathclyde, suggest that public accountability was more fully expressed in the latter study region. However, despite there being a significantly greater degree of political accountability in Strathclyde, derived from each successive Chairs’ need to assemble widespread public support in order to assume dominance within the joint elite, there remained substantial limitations to this accountability. First, outwith major consultation exercises such as *Travelling in Strathclyde*, the views of the Strathclyde electorate remained distanced from the Chair, in that (s)he was not directly elected, but rather filled as a result of political bargaining across the whole elected membership of the Regional Council. Although both the Chair and the ruling party group of the Council, of which both Cllr Waugh and Cllr Gordon were members, could be called to account through local elections, it would be unreasonable to assume that a significant proportion of the ruling group’s democratic mandate was derived from voters’ consideration of rail transport issues.

Equally, the principal advantage of the jointly-administered Merseyside PTA, the enhanced process accountability was derived from the transparent nature of the appraisal criteria under which decisions were made, is limited by the fact that there was little scope for the local public, either directly or through the influence of their elected representatives, to challenge the particular type and scope of economic development criteria on which such methodologies were based.

The application of the evidence assembled by this study to possible improved future structures of local rail transport policy-making therefore centres on the integration of the city-regional and joint board PTAs’ strengths in terms of political and process accountability respectively, so that the local community may be granted the maximum scope to shape local rail policies according to its own ‘symbolic’ or ‘instrumental’ objectives. Simply, the extent to which this can be achieved hinges on the geographical construction of Passenger Transport Authority charged with developing such policies, and nature of the relationship between the PTA and central government.



Crucially, if elected politicians rather than professional officials are to be ultimately responsible for local rail transport policy development, the PTA should be city-regional in character rather than take the form of a joint board of several authorities. The experience of Merseyside illustrates that the complex web of inter-authority contacts which form the quasi-market systems required to mediate between a number of local councils acting jointly in forums such as the local transport 'Package Bid' is a powerful factor underlying the "bias" (Stoker, 1995) in UK policy regimes favouring professional officers over elected councillors. In contrast, the reduced institutional fragmentation in Strathclyde under the city-regional system minimised the impact of non-elected bodies upon policy priorities, and emphasised the role of the elected Chair of the Regional Council's Roads & Transportation Committee in policy-making.

The strength of the Strathclyde chair resulting from his position at the head of a single city-regional authority is exemplified by the development of the CrossRail scheme, and its recent reappraisal following the abolition of the Regional Council in April 1996. Whereas Cllr Waugh was able to overcome long-held ambivalence within SPTE and the rail industry by demonstrating widespread public support for the project across the Region, the new joint-board PTA in Strathclyde has ordered a re-examination of the project. Simply, this has stemmed from the demands made by several of the 12 unitary councils participating in the new authority that the potential benefits of the project must be demonstrated in more 'transparent' quantitative terms, since if they are to contribute to the capital cost of CrossRail, it must be demonstrated to provide quantifiable benefits for areas across Strathclyde, rather than solely the 'symbolic' social development aspirations of increased accessibility and transport equity in the City of Glasgow previously emphasised. Thus, within two years, the new joint board PTA structure in Strathclyde has mirrored that of Merseyside since 1986 in demonstrating a significant shift away from the promotion of 'expressive' and 'symbolic' policies associated with the single Regional Council, to those focusing more on the achievement of specific 'tangible results'.

Despite the increased role of senior elected politicians in Strathclyde, the region's regime did not display the high degree of process accountability resulting from the clarity in decision-making criteria which characterised the Merseyside Package Bid. In contrast, the main strength of the Merseyside regime was the discipline of the Package system derived from the need to create viable funding streams through the re-integration of fragmented parcels of 'investment potential'. Simply, this results from the strength of 'ownership' of these funding parcels. With each partner agency required to demonstrate substantial 'legal' or process accountability to central government in the distribution of their resources, their

participation depended on the achievement of precisely-defined 'tangible' outputs, or a clear understanding of "what's in it for us" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994).

The key to integrating these two accountabilities rests on the extent to which they are defined by the *type* of bodies holding the necessary 'investment potential' for local rail transport investment. The lack of political accountability in Merseyside results from the definition by central government of the conditions under which Merseyside's non-elected government agencies, such as the Merseyside Development Corporation and Wirral City Lands, should enter into Package funding agreements. Equally, the reduced process accountability in Strathclyde results from the fact that Strathclyde's investment potential was not its 'own', but rather a block grant handed down from central government.

Improved accountability could therefore be achieved through *re-regionalising* and *re-connecting* the 'investment potential' allocated by PTAs, and by further strengthening the links between the elected Chair and the local electorate. The re-regionalising of PTAs along the city-regional model would reduce the complexity of the regime compared to fragmented quasi-market structures and in turn highlight the role of elected councillors rather than professional officers. Indeed, the recent government White Papers on transport policy (DETR, 1998; Scottish Office, 1998) have flagged the potential for the establishment of 'regional' local authorities charged with integrating the management of all transport modes with strategic land use planning. In the case of Scotland, it is even suggested that such authorities could cover areas broadly analagous with the former Regional Councils.

However, and such re-regionalisation of the governance of urban transport should also be accompanied by the transfer of the financial responsibility associated with the holding of capital 'investment potential' to the new authorities. In short, the level of process accountability seen in the Package Approach could be transferred to city-regional PTAs such as Strathclyde by requiring them to raise the necessary money for local rail transport investment themselves.

Such "re-connection" (Mulgan & Murray, 1993) of local taxation with local spending within a city-regional framework would combine the positive features of both types of PTA system under study. "Pre-emptive power" (Stoker, 1995), or the ultimate capacity to govern, would rest with the most senior elected member of the Authority:

At the root of transport policy must be an overall vision at the national, regional and local level encompassing the wider social, economic and environmental aims of the

community. Such a vision can only be determined by society's elected representatives reflecting current public opinion.

Transport Planning Society (1997: 1).

Policy appraisal would continue to be highly rigorous as a result of the creative tension or "competitive agreement" (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994) characterising joint elites in which both officer and councillor "actor groups" (Painter, 1997) are powerful. The requirement for senior councillors to demonstrate strong public support for their preferences where these differ from those designed by expert professionals would ensure full and open appraisal of competing potential projects. As in the case of Strathclyde, PTAs would enjoy enough discretion to pursue policies attuned to their own balance of economic and social development aspirations. However, the added dimension of local responsibility for the raising of the 'investment potential' required to fund such new rail transport projects would further enhance the level of accountability of the system. 'Expressive' and 'symbolic' aspirations may still win through in the discussions of the local policy regime, but such objectives would be more closely scrutinised in order that the taxpayer and elector can be certain that the desired policy outputs are achieved. This need not be in strict economic development terms of 'value for money' as defined by the Package Approach, but could be in the form of changing qualitative social development aspirations as the cumulative effects of previous projects take hold. Equally, although without their own investment potential, other local agencies such as enterprise companies would continue to be closely involved in policy-making as integral members of policy coalitions within the regime, as occurred frequently in Strathclyde.

Finally, the accountability of the PTA could be further improved by maximising the proximity of the Chair to the local electorate, since it is the form of "the relationships between agents and citizens" (Richardson, 1996: 282) which defines the ultimate level of influence local communities are able to exert upon policy-makers. Although the privileged location of both Strathclyde Committee Chairs at the heart of the policy regime afforded significantly more influence to public opinion than was the case in Merseyside, the Chairs remained distanced from the public to a considerable degree since they assumed their position as the result of bargaining within the overall ruling party group of the Regional Council, rather than from a direct electoral mandate.

Indeed, the belief that the political accountability of leading local policy-makers can be further enhanced through increasing the power of electors to assign particular policy roles

and portfolios to individual candidates is a developing trend. Proposals for directly-elected mayors responsible for strategic services, including public transport, at the city-regional scale, as recently supported in the London referendum (DETR, 1997), and proposed for other provincial cities and conurbations, recognises the increased political accountability arising from the identification of specific individuals with particular local services.

Such a system may be achieved through the creation of a 'cabinet' style of local government for strategic city-regional services, where a number of service heads are appointed by the mayor for each service. However, if the range of services for which (s)he is responsible is manageable, the directly-elected mayor may be charged with running these services directly. Applied to local rail (and other public) transport, this model, which reflects aspects of American and French practice, places the mayor in the role equivalent to 'Chair' of the contemporary PTA analysed in this research. The considerable 'systemic' power resulting from direct election cements his or her position at the heart of the joint elite and wider local policy regime. A state of 'competitive agreement' would continue to exist between the mayor, bolstered by his or her direct mandate, and the professional officers of the PTE. However, there would also exist the opportunity for the mayor to implement and be accountable for the arrangements under which the 'investment potential' required for investment in the local urban rail network was raised. (S)he would face the verdict of the electorate at regular intervals, and stand accountable for both the raising and spending of local resources. Although the identification of the most applicable of the myriad potential funding streams, such as a version of the French *versement transport* (see 2.4.4) or road pricing, parking and congestion charges amongst others (Goodwin, 1997) is in itself another research task equal to this, the concept of re-connecting responsibility for generating the requisite 'investment potential' through whatever means with the decisions regarding its distribution are made is central to increasing the overall level of accountability of strategic, city-regional local governance (Richards, 1998), and minimising the risks of a return to the profligate, budget-maximising local authorities of the 1970s and 1980s so profoundly criticised by public choice.

## Appendix: Local government finance

### A.1 Local rail transport capital finance

The annual capital allocations for local rail transport in Strathclyde were contained within the general Roads & Transportation Department consent distributed each year by the Scottish Office, the principal department of central government for Scotland. However, under the procedures of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1981, each of the departmental 'headline' or *Section 94* allocations for local authorities were in fact interchangeable between council departments. Thus, if a regional council so wished, borrowing consent from one heading, such as education, could be transferred to the transport or other budget, or vice versa.

The predicted 'headline' consent for Roads & Transportation for the following five financial years was made available to the council annually to permit advance planning of larger schemes requiring finance from two or more annual budgets. Formal approval for the council's five year transport programme was secured through the submission to central government of *Transport Policies & Programmes (TPP)* documents detailing the estimated cost and justification for each individual project, although as is stated throughout the preceding case studies, no formal financial, cost benefit or other quantitative appraisals of schemes were required.

In Merseyside, as for the other former metropolitan counties of England, a similar system of annual individual district TPP submission and 'headline' consents operated in parallel with the production of annual PTA Transport Plans which focused on a three year horizon. With the move to the 'Package Approach' of pooled county-wide transport capital funding in the early 1990s, the previous inter-authority funding partnerships assembled between the PTAs, metropolitan borough councils and other government agencies were formalised in the form of a single three year transport programme for each former metropolitan county. However, each project of over £2m capital cost put forward for Package funding was required to demonstrate a positive *Net Present Value (NPV)* outcome under the *Section 56* limited cost benefit appraisal methodology already used by the Department of Transport and the Scottish Office to justify exceptionally large transport schemes outwith the scope of councils' annual capital consents.

## A.2 Local rail transport revenue finance

The annual revenue costs associated with the operation of local rail networks in the PTA areas were met through the so-called *Section 20* consent, paid to Strathclyde Regional Council by the Scottish Office and to Merseytravel by the Department of Transport under the direction of the Transport Act 1968. Until early 1983, Section 20 was paid to each PTA in the form of a direct government grant covering the difference between fares revenue as set by the PTE and operating costs. However, a phased change to a system where Section 20 consents were incorporated into general local government capital consents was implemented. In Scotland, Section 20 became an integral part of Strathclyde's annual Roads & Transportation revenue allocation. In England, after the abolition of the Metropolitan County Councils in 1986, Section 20 was no longer paid to the six PTAs but instead to each of their constituent authorities as part of their global revenue settlement. PTAs including Merseytravel recovered their rail support costs through an annual 'levy' paid by each district council in proportion to their share of the county's total population (not share of supported rail patronage).

This incorporation of Section 20 consents within PTA's wider revenue allocations *de facto* ended their powers to freely set the level of rail fares as they saw fit. Whereas before, fares could have been reduced in order to encourage patronage with the cost falling entirely to the 100% shortfall Section 20 grant paid by government, there was no guarantee that reductions in revenue resulting from such action could be recovered through standard local authority revenue grants. Instead, the PTA's goal shifted towards maintaining the inherited level of Section 20 costs and fares relative to inflation.

However, the new system continued to allow for a substantial degree of 'insulation' for each PTA from annual fluctuations in Section 20 costs outwith their control. Although Section 20 costs remained broadly static in Strathclyde between 1985/86 and 1995/96 (falling in real terms), Merseyside's Section 20 requirement jumped in the late 1980s as a result of the loss in rail patronage resulting from the severity of economic recession in the county and protracted emergency repairs to the Liverpool city centre *Link* and *Loop* tunnels. Thus, as was the case for the *Public Service Obligation* grant (PSO) paid to British Rail in support of passenger services outwith PTA areas, which shot up as commuting levels fell in the wake of the economic downturn, the level of Section 20 grant payable to Merseytravel's constituent authorities through their transport consents was adjusted upwards to take account of the situation. Similarly, the increased costs due to both Strathclyde and Merseyside PTAs as a result of the new accounting procedures adopted by the rail industry at the time of the

formation of Railtrack and the individual train operating companies in April 1994 was fully met by central government through an additional *Metropolitan Railways Grant*.

Fares levels on supported rail services in each PTE area depended on prevailing Section 20 costs. In Strathclyde, the broadly stable level of annual Section 20 requirements produced fares increases over the 1986-95 period in line with prices. However, in line with the practical consideration of keeping fares increases to round figures (i.e. multiples of 5p), increases did not occur in every year. Slightly higher fares rises were agreed between Merseytravel and the Department of Transport reflecting the steeper rise in Merseyside's Section 20 requirement resulting from the drop in patronage due to the severe recession of 1991-92 and major engineering works in central Liverpool which forced repeated closures of key sections of the Merseyrail network.

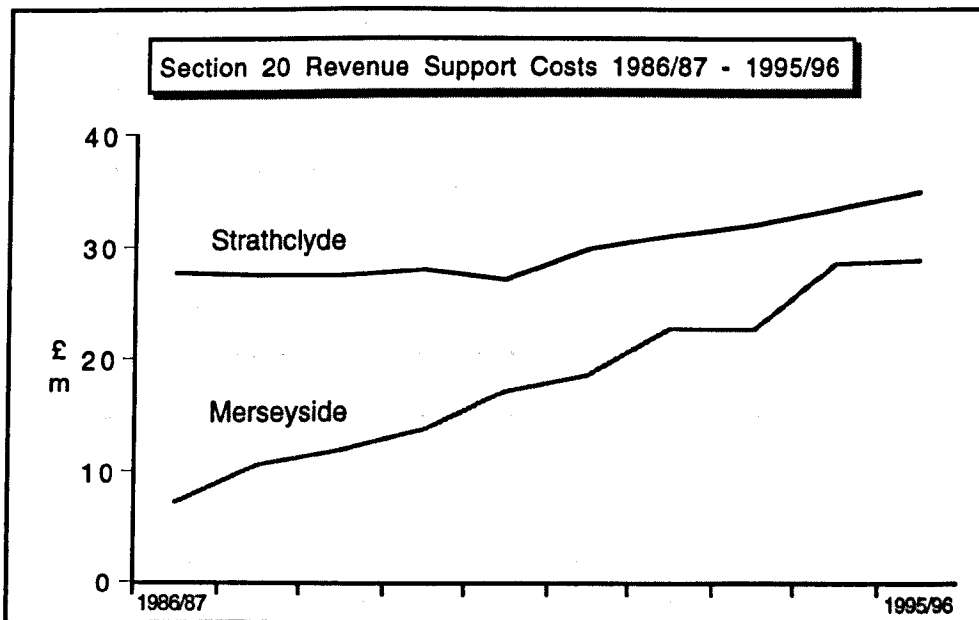


Figure A.1 Merseyside and Strathclyde Section 20 revenue support costs, 1985/86 - 1995/96 financial years.

Source Merseytravel (various), Strathclyde PTE (various).

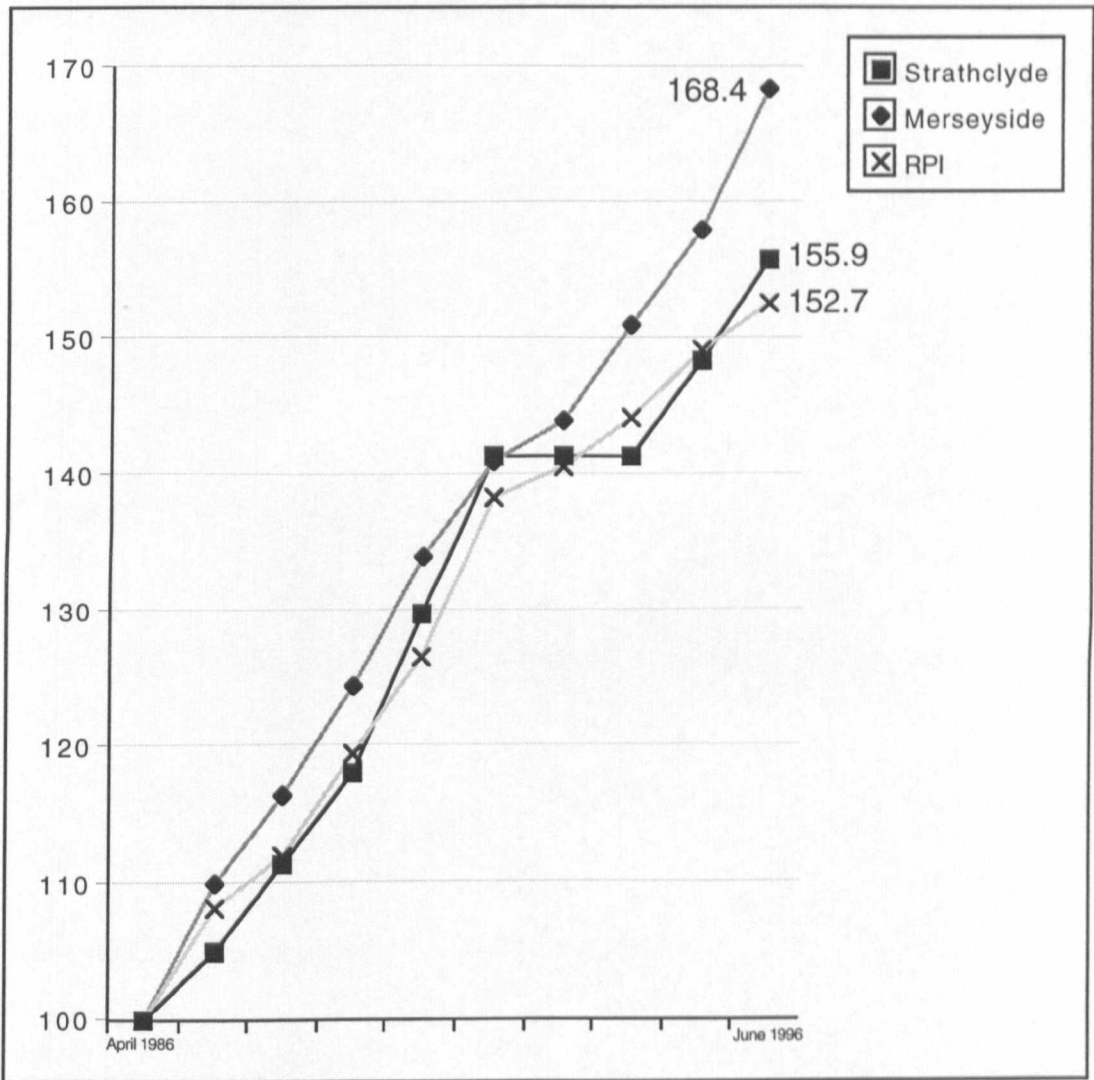


Figure A.2 Merseyside and Strathclyde local rail fares, April 1986 - June 1996.

Source Merseytravel (various), Strathclyde PTE (various), ONS (1998).



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## Glossary

### Abbreviations & Acronyms

BR	British Rail
Cllr	Councillor
Ctte	Committee
DETR	Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions
DMU	Diesel Multiple Unit
DoE	Department of the Environment
DoT	Department of Transport
EMU	Electric Multiple Unit
MCC	Metropolitan County Council
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council
NUR	National Union of Railwaymen
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development
OHLE	Overhead Line Electrification
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OPRAF	Office of Passenger Rail Franchising
PSO	Public Service Obligation
PTA	Passenger Transport Authority

PTE	Passenger Transport Executive
RDS	Railway Development Society
RMT	Rail & Maritime Trades Union
STUC	Scottish Trades Union Congress
TOC	Train Operating Company

### Definitions

Burrowing junction	Junction with underpass or overbridge removing the need for trains to cross the path of those travelling in the opposite direction.
Capital allocation / capital consent	The amount of money any local authority may borrow in a financial year to fund capital investment for particular function, such as rail transport, as defined by central government
Diesel Multiple Unit	Modern train with diesel engines fitted under the floor of passenger carriages rather than with separate locomotive.
Electric Multiple Unit	Modern train with electric traction motors fitted under the floor of passenger carriages rather than with separate locomotive.
Electrification	Infrastructure necessary to supply electric current to the railway line, either by overhead wires ( <i>overhead line electrification</i> ), or by live rail ( <i>third rail</i> ).
Headway	Time interval between passage of two consecutive trains.



(Statutory) Joint Board	Local government committee formed by Act of Parliament responsible for the delivery of specified public service(s) across two or more local authority areas.
Merseytravel	The joint name for Merseyside PTA and PTE adopted in 1990.
Metropolitan Borough Council Metropolitan District Council	These terms for the 'all-purpose' local authorities in the former Metropolitan counties of England, are synonymous.
Modal split	The proportion of total trips made by different means of transport such as car, bus, train, cycle, foot.
Office of Passenger Rail Franchising	Government agency responsible for overseeing provision of passenger rail services by privatised train operating companies.
Pacer	Type of lightweight modern DMU train
Public Service Obligation trains	Passenger trains operated by British Rail independently of Passenger Transport Executive control and funded by Public Service Obligation (PSO) grant from central government.
Section 20	Schedule of the 1968 Transport Act under which payments are made by PTEs to (former) British Rail for provision of local train services.
Section 56	Schedule of the 1968 Transport Act under which special central government grants for major transport capital infrastructure developments are made available to PTEs.
Solum	Land forming the physical bed of a (disused) railway line.
Sparks effect	Increase in rail service patronage due to line electrification.

Sprinter	Type of modern DMU train
Subway	Original and local name for Glasgow Underground
Train Operating Company	Privatised company responsible for operation of train services to contract from OPRAF and PTE.