

Last week Greater Manchester launched the Bee Network, introducing publicly-owned buses to North West roads for the first time in 40 years. All credit goes to Mayor Andy Burnham and the local leaders who have pushed for this using the powers gained through devolution.

On Friday this week, our own region will discuss the next steps in our own efforts to bring buses here back under public control, and I'll be fully supporting the plans.

More than 80% of all public transport journeys in our region are made by bus – that's more than 400,000 journeys every day. They're a vital lifeline for many people.

If approved on Friday, the Liverpool City Region would become only the second area outside London to take control of its bus network since Thatcher's disastrous decision to deregulate services in the 1980s.

Bus services including routes, frequencies and fares would be brought under local control, so we could organise the bus network based on what passengers need and reinvest any profit made back into services.

Ticketing would also be made simpler with the introduction of a tap-and-go system, and daily fare caps would also ensure passengers would always pay the cheapest fare across the whole network.

And I'm working with both Andy Burnham and Steve Rotherham to make sure that residents in our borough can easily use services in both regions, whether they're going to Liverpool, Manchester, Wigan or elsewhere.

In stark contrast to the vision being shown regionally, we have the government cancelling HS2. Originally intended to extend between London and the North and enabling improved east-west connectivity, we've now ended up with half a line and the government's reputation for delivering large infrastructure project in tatters. It leaves the North behind, and is a complete waste of public money.

If the Victorians had shown such a lack of vision as this government then the railways would never have been built in the first place.

It was the same story with the Prime Minister's recent announcements rowing back on net zero commitments. The car industry was ready to commit and had invested heavily in new technology, and now – like those who had invested in HS2 – they're left scratching their heads at the government's turnaround.

We need a government with vision. The sooner we get a general election the better.

Best wishes to all Star readers.