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# TRANSPORT

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## Dowd forced to quit as Merseytravel chairman

Posted 15/06/12

Merseytravel chairman Mark Dowd was last week forced to resign after 20 years in the post saying that his position had become "untenable" after half of his 16 fellow Labour members on the Integrated Transport Authority called for him to resign.

With opposition Liberal Democrat and Conservative members also calling for him to go, Dowd faced the prospect of losing the vote to elect Merseytravel's chairman.

In their letter calling on Dowd to stand down, the eight Labour councillors said that the Merseytravel chair had failed to address a "number of significant concerns about how power has been exercised and public money allocated and spent".



"When we have previously attempted to discuss our concerns with you, you have chosen either to cancel requested meetings or truncate them to such an extent that any in-depth discussion of these serious matters has been prevented," they said.

They added that Merseytravel faces a number of challenges over the next few years, including the procurement of new rolling stock for Merseyrail, constrained public finances and the devolution of funding to the city region.

They continued: "Unfortunately at no time have you articulated a clear, strategic and deliverable vision for transport across the city region."

One of the Labour councillors, Joe Hanson, has written a highly critical report that questions governance arrangements in place at Merseytravel under the leadership of Dowd and Neil Scales, the former chief executive who left Merseytravel for a new job in Queensland, Australia at the end of 2011.

### Concern over new Pier Head office costs

Merseytravel this week faced questions over the cost of its new offices at Liverpool's Pier Head.

It currently has a 30 year lease on the 13 storey office block, which it moved into in February 2012, at a cost of £2.9m each year. This is despite it only requiring two thirds of the building. A tenant has been found for one floor, but will pay Merseytravel rent of £19.50 per square foot, space that the PTE leases at a cost of £20.50 per square foot.

"This is the economics of the madhouse," commented former Liverpool council leader Lord Storey.

*Pictured: Mark Dowd (holding plan) in January 2009 when Merseytravel signed deal for Pier Head offices - which are being built behind group*

### PASSENGER TRANSPORT

This article was first published in *Passenger Transport*, the leading fortnightly magazine covering the UK transport sector. Transport Briefing subscribers are entitled to a 20% discount off *Passenger Transport* annual subscriptions. To order the magazine for £112 (normal price £140) email [editor@transportbriefing.co.uk](mailto:editor@transportbriefing.co.uk).



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