

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

Financial Statements

29 March 1997

12 January 1998

**Company Registered
Number: 2818607**



Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

29 March 1997

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Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

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DIRECTORS' REPORT

The directors have pleasure in submitting their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 29 March 1997.

Principal activities

The principal activity of the company is the provision of public transport by road.

Change of ultimate holding company

With effect from 2 April 1996, Greater Manchester Buses North Limited was acquired by FirstBus plc, which was the ultimate holding company of Greater Manchester Buses North Limited on the date these accounts were signed.

Review of the business

The company made a profit before tax of £ 1.502m during the year (1996 £4.914m).

Financial matters

The results for the year are given in the profit and loss account on page 6.

The directors recommend the payment of a dividend of £1.500m (1996: £2.950m).

Fixed assets

In the opinion of the directors, there were no material differences between the market values of the company's properties and their net book values.

Creditors

It is the company's policy to abide by the payment terms agreed with suppliers whenever it is satisfied that the supplier has provided the goods and services in accordance with agreed terms and conditions. A number of significant purchases, such as fuel and tyres and commitments under finance leases and hire purchase contracts and under operating leases are paid by direct debit. At 29 March 1997 the company had 50 days (31 March 1996 - 60 days) purchases outstanding.

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

DIRECTORS' REPORT (continued)

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Directors

The directors who held office during the year are as follows:

NJ Barrett	(appointed 9/4/96)
I Bevan	(resigned 9/4/96)
RW Dickinson	
RA Duncan (Chairman)	(appointed 9/4/96)
MJR Mitchell	(appointed 7/3/97)
RJ Noble	(appointed 9/4/96)
TH Oliver	(appointed 1/1/97)
PM Simpson	(resigned 30/8/96)
AR Westwell	(resigned 7/3/97)

TH Oliver held 1000 ordinary shares in FirstBus plc at the date of his appointment and at the end of the year. The interests of RA Duncan in the ordinary shares of FirstBus plc are disclosed in the directors report of FirstBus plc. The interests of other directors in the ordinary shares of FirstBus plc are disclosed in the directors' report of GMBN (Holdings) Limited.

NJ Barrett has an interest in some of the floating rate loan notes issued by FirstBus Group Limited (previously Badgerline Group) and details of these are given in the notes to the financial statements of FirstBus plc

There is no contract or arrangement with the company or any of its fellow group undertakings, other than service contracts, in which any of the directors is materially interested and which is significant in relation to the business of the company or any of its fellow group undertakings taken as a whole.

The only director who had any interest in the shares of the company during the year was Dr AR Westwell who until 9 April 1996 held jointly with GMBN (Holdings) Limited one ordinary share.

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

DIRECTORS' REPORT (continued)

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Employee involvement

Communication with employees is effected mainly through regular briefing and negotiating meetings between the directors, the senior management and employee representatives on the central and depot negotiating committees. The briefing meetings enable senior management to consult employees and to ascertain their views on matters likely to affect their interests.

FirstBus plc, the company's ultimate holding company, is committed to wide employee share ownership and has established an Employee Share Ownership Plan. The board of FirstBus plc has resolved to allocate 5% of the Group's consolidated pre-tax profit to the ESOP. The trustees will use this to acquire shares in FirstBus plc which will then be appropriated to participating employees of subsidiary undertakings. Employee involvement has been extended by the appointment of an employee director, Mr T H Oliver.

Disabled persons

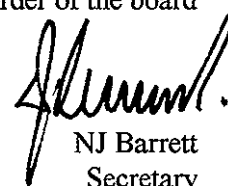
The company recognises its obligations to give disabled people full and fair consideration for all vacancies within the statutory medical requirement which have to be met for certain grades of staff. Wherever reasonable and practicable, the company will retain newly disabled employees and at the same time provide full and fair opportunities for the career development of disabled people.

Auditors

In accordance with section 385 of the Companies Act 1985, a resolution concerning the reappointment and remuneration of KPMG Audit Plc as auditors of the company is to be proposed at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Wallshaw Street
Oldham
OL1 3TR

By order of the board



NJ Barrett
Secretary
19 August 1997

DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the directors are required to:

- * select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- * make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- * state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- * prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. They have general responsibility for taking such steps as are reasonably open to them to safeguard the assets of the company and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

REPORT OF THE AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS OF GREATER MANCHESTER BUSES NORTH LIMITED

We have audited the financial statements on pages 6 to 21.

Respective responsibilities of directors and auditors

As described on page 4 the company's directors are responsible for the preparation of financial statements. It is our responsibility to form an independent opinion, based on our audit, on those statements and to report our opinion to you.

Basis of opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the directors in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at 29 March 1997 and of the profit for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985.

KPMG Audit Plc

KPMG Audit Plc
Chartered Accountants
Registered Auditors

19 August 1997

1 The Embankment
Neville Street
Leeds
LS1 4DW

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

For the year ended 29 March 1997

	Notes	Year to 29 March 1997 £000	Year to 31 March 1996 £000
Turnover			
- continuing operations	2	65,114	65,277
Operating costs			
- General		(60,272)	(58,624)
- Restructuring and other exceptional costs		(1,300)	-
- Employees' profit sharing scheme		(280)	(675)
Total operating costs	3	(61,852)	(59,299)
Operating profit			
- continuing operations		3,262	5,978
Loss on disposal of fixed assets		(455)	-
Profit on ordinary activities before interest		2,807	5,978
Net interest payable and similar charges	6	(1,305)	(1,064)
Profit on ordinary activities before taxation	2,7	1,502	4,914
Tax on profit on ordinary activities	8	3,412	-
Profit for the financial year		4,914	4,914
Equity dividends paid	9	(1,500)	(2,950)
Retained profit for the financial year	17	3,414	1,964

No statement of total recognised gains and losses is given as all gains or losses for the year passed through the profit and loss account.

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

BALANCE SHEET

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At 29 March 1997

	Notes	29 March 1997		31 March 1996	
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Assets employed:					
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	10		31,333		26,548
Investments	11		1,405		1,405
			<u>32,738</u>		<u>27,953</u>
Current assets					
Stocks	12		872		768
Debtors	13		20,005		12,217
Cash at bank and in hand			486		3,580
			<u>21,363</u>		<u>16,565</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14		<u>(21,171)</u>		<u>(18,522)</u>
Net current assets/(liabilities)					
Due within one year			(9,206)		(7,560)
Amounts due after more than one year	13		9,398		5,603
Net current assets/(liabilities)			<u>192</u>		<u>(1,957)</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>32,930</u>		<u>25,996</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	14		<u>(14,761)</u>		<u>(10,772)</u>
			<u>18,169</u>		<u>15,224</u>
Financed by:					
Capital and reserves					
Called up share capital	16		-		-
Reserve arising on acquisition	17		7,083		7,901
Profit and loss account	17		11,086		7,323
Equity shareholders' funds			<u>18,169</u>		<u>15,224</u>

These financial statements were approved by the board of directors on 19 August 1997 and were signed on its behalf by:



Director

12 January 1998

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

RECONCILIATION OF MOVEMENTS IN SHAREHOLDERS' FUNDS

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For the year ended 29 March 1997

	Year to 29 March 1997 £000	Year to 31 March 1996 £000
Profit for the financial year	4,914	4,914
Dividends	(1,500)	(2,950)
	3,414	1,964
Goodwill arising on acquisitions of businesses written off	(469)	(915)
Net additions to shareholders' funds	2,945	1,049
Shareholders' funds at beginning of year	15,224	14,175
Shareholders' funds at end of year	18,169	15,224

No note of historical cost profits and losses is given as there were no material differences between the results as set out in the profit and loss account, and their historical cost equivalents.

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

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29 March 1997

1 Principal accounting policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the company's financial statements.

(a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention modified to include the revaluation of land and buildings and in accordance with applicable accounting standards.

The format of the profit and loss account has been changed reflecting presentation generally adopted in the industry and the comparatives have been restated.

The ultimate holding company has included within its financial statements a consolidated Cash Flow Statement in accordance with FRS No. 1 (revised). Therefore, the company is not required to give its own separate Cash Flow Statement.

FRS No 8 has been adopted for the first time in preparing these accounts.

The ultimate holding company has agreed to provide Greater Manchester Buses North Limited with necessary working capital for at least one year from 29 March 1997 and accordingly these accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis.

(b) Fixed assets and depreciation

Depreciation is provided to write off the cost (or valuation) less residual value of tangible fixed assets over their estimated useful economic lives as follows:

Freehold buildings	- 50 years straight line
Long leasehold properties	- 50 years or the lease term which ever is less, straight line
Passenger carrying vehicles:	- 3 to 15 years straight line
Other plant and equipment	- 3 to 15 years straight line

No depreciation is provided on freehold land or the land element of long leasehold properties.

Surpluses or deficits arising on the revaluation of tangible fixed assets are credited or debited to a revaluation reserve. On a subsequent disposal of a revalued asset, the revaluation surplus or deficit relating to this asset is transferred to the profit and loss account reserve.

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

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29 March 1997

1 Principal accounting policies (continued)

(c) Goodwill

Purchased goodwill is written off in full in the year in which it is acquired.

(d) Leases and hire purchase

Assets held under finance leases, which are those leases where substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of the asset have passed to the company, and under hire purchase contracts are recorded in the balance sheet as tangible fixed assets. Depreciation is provided on these assets over the shorter of their estimated useful lives or lease term, as appropriate.

Future obligations under finance leases and hire purchase contracts are included in creditors, net of finance charges. Payments are apportioned between the finance element, which is charged to the profit and loss account as interest, and the capital element, which reduces the outstanding obligations. The finance charges are calculated in relation to the reducing amount of obligations outstanding and are charged to the profit and loss account on the same basis.

All other leases are operating leases and the rental charges are taken to the profit and loss account on a straight line basis over the life of the lease.

(e) Government grants and subsidies

Amounts receivable for tendered services and concessionary fare schemes are included in turnover. Rebates in respect of duty paid on fuel are netted off operating costs.

(f) Stocks

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value

(g) Taxation

The charge for taxation is based on the profit for the year and takes into account taxation deferred because of timing differences between the treatment of certain items for taxation and accounting purposes. Provision is made for deferred tax to the extent that it is probable that a liability or asset will crystallise.

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

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29 March 1997

1 Principal accounting policies (continued)

(h) Pension costs

Retirement benefits are provided for most employees of the company by means of a defined benefit pension scheme. This is funded by contributions from the company and employees. The company's contributions are charged to the profit and loss account based on recommendations by an independent actuary, in such a way as to provide for the liabilities evenly over the average remaining working lives of the employees. The difference between the charge to the profit and loss account and the contributions paid by the company is shown as an asset or liability in the balance sheet and the tax effect of this timing difference is included in deferred taxation.

2 Turnover and profit before taxation

Turnover represents the amounts receivable for services supplied to customers during the year.

The whole of the turnover and profit before taxation derives from the company's principal activities within the United Kingdom.

3 Operating costs

	Year to 29 March 1997 £000	Year to 31 March 1996 £000
Materials and consumables	19,436	18,533
Staff costs	35,739	37,791
Depreciation and other amounts written off tangible fixed assets	6,677	2,975
	<u>61,852</u>	<u>59,299</u>

4 Employee numbers and costs

The average number of persons employed by the company (including directors) during the year was as follows:

	Year to 29 March 1997	Year to 31 March 1996
Drivers	1,681	1,736
Maintenance and traffic	497	471
Administration	116	225
	<u>2,294</u>	<u>2,432</u>

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

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29 March 1997

The aggregate payroll costs of these persons were as follows:

	Year to 29 March 1997 £000	Year to 31 March 1996 £000
Wages and salaries	31,987	33,599
Social security costs	2,527	2,742
Other pension costs	1,225	1,450
	<u>35,739</u>	<u>37,791</u>

5 Directors' remuneration

The remuneration of the directors during the year was as follows:

	Year to 29 March 1997 £000	Year to 31 March 1996 £000
Aggregate emoluments (excluding pension contributions)	479	371
Compensation for loss of office	53	-
	<u>532</u>	<u>371</u>

Retirement benefits accrue to 5 directors under defined benefit schemes and 2 directors under money purchase schemes. The emoluments of the highest paid director amounted to:

	Year to 29 March 1997 £000	Year to 31 March 1996 £000
Aggregate emoluments	177,791	95,859
Company pension contributions to money purchase scheme	-	-
Defined benefit pension scheme		
Accrued pension at end of the year	-	30,593
Accrued lump sum at end of year	-	70,853

AR Westwell retired on 7 March 1997. At this date his accrued pension was £37,245 and his accrued lump sum was £88,506.

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

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29 March 1997

6 Net interest payable and similar charges

	Year to 29 March 1997 £000	Year to 31 March 1996 £000
Bank loans and overdrafts	-	54
Finance charges payable in respect of finance leases and hire purchase contracts	1,339	1,164
	<u>1,339</u>	<u>1,218</u>
Income from short term deposits	(34)	(154)
	<u>1,305</u>	<u>1,064</u>

7 Profit on ordinary activities before taxation

	Year to 29 March 1997 £000	Year to 31 March 1996 £000
Profit on ordinary activities before taxation is stated after charging:		
Auditors' remuneration		
- audit fee	36	35
- non audit	2	166
Depreciation and other amounts written off tangible fixed assets	6,677	2,975
Rentals payable under operating leases - plant and machinery	518	590
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

8 Tax on profit on ordinary activities

	Year to 29 March 1997 £000	Year to 31 March 1996 £000
UK corporation tax at 33%		
Current year	12	-
Prior years	(14)	-
Transfer from deferred tax Prior years	(3,410)	-
	<u>(3,412)</u>	<u>-</u>

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

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29 March 1997

9 Equity dividends

	Year to 29 March 1997 £000	Year to 31 March 1996 £000
Ordinary shares of £1 each		
- final paid	1,500	2,950

10 Tangible fixed assets

	Land and buildings £000	Passenger carrying vehicle fleet £000	Other plant and equipment £000	Total £000
Cost or valuation				
At beginning of year	9,073	33,916	7,311	50,300
Additions	169	10,906	474	11,549
Intra group transfers	-	950	-	950
Disposals	(150)	(3,004)	(512)	(3,666)
Adjustment to estimated useful economic life	-	(2)	(5,888)	(5,890)
At end of year	9,092	42,766	1,385	53,243
Depreciation				
At beginning of year	461	18,974	4,317	23,752
Charge for year	148	2,313	210	2,671
Intra group transfers	-	563	-	563
Disposals	-	(2,997)	(195)	(3,192)
Adjustment to estimated useful economic life	2	1,825	(3,711)	(1,884)
At end of year	611	20,678	621	21,910
Net book value				
At 29 March 1997	8,481	22,088	764	31,333
At 31 March 1996	8,612	14,942	2,994	26,548

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

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29 March 1997

10 Tangible fixed assets (continued)

The net book value of land and buildings comprises:

	29 March 1997 £000	31 March 1996 £000
Freehold	3,460	3,499
Long leasehold	5,021	5,113
	<u>8,481</u>	<u>8,612</u>

Certain properties are subject to profit clawback arrangements if sold within a specified period.

£19.568m (1996 - £12.953m) of the net book value of the passenger carrying vehicle fleet and £0.119m (1996 - £1.974m) of other plant and equipment was acquired under finance leases and hire purchase contracts. The depreciation charges on these assets during the year were £1.874m (1996 - £1.411m) and £0.100m (1996 - £.407m) respectively.

11 Fixed asset investments

	Subsidiary undertakings unlisted £'000
Shares	
Cost at the beginning and end of the year	1,506
Provisions at the beginning and end of the year	101
Net book value at the beginning and end of the year	<u>1,405</u>

The subsidiary undertakings at the end of the year are:

GMB (North) Limited	- Dormant
Lancashire United Transport Limited	- Dormant
Bolton Coachways and Travel Limited	- Dormant

All subsidiary undertakings are wholly owned at the end of the year. All these companies are incorporated in Great Britain and registered in England and Wales.

All shares held in subsidiary undertakings are ordinary shares.

Group accounts are not presented as the company is a wholly owned subsidiary undertaking of FirstBus plc, which is incorporated in Great Britain and registered in Scotland. Accordingly, these accounts present information about the company as an individual undertaking and not about its group.

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (Continued)

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29 March 1997

12	Stocks	29 March 1997	31 March 1996
		£000	£000
	Spare parts and consumables	872	768
13	Debtors	29 March 1997	31 March 1996
		£000	£000
	Amounts due within one year		
	Trade debtors	1,023	188
	Amounts owed from group undertakings	8,340	4,344
	Other debtors	358	836
	Prepayments and accrued income	792	1,246
	Pension fund prepayment (see note 20)	94	-
		10,607	6,614
	Amounts due after one year		
	Pension fund prepayment (see note 20)	5,988	5,603
	Deferred tax asset (see note 15)	3,410	-
		9,398	5,603
		20,005	12,217

The deferred tax asset represents the taxation of certain timing differences which are expected to reverse without replacement in the foreseeable future.

12 January 1998

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

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29 March 1997

14 Creditors

Amounts falling due within one year

	29 March 1997	31 March 1996
	£000	£000
Bank overdraft	915	-
Obligations under finance leases and hire purchase contracts	4,190	2,387
Trade creditors	4,025	3,995
Amounts owed to group undertakings	1,405	1,405
Corporation tax	12	
Other tax and social security	833	981
Other creditors	577	595
Accruals and deferred income	9,214	9,159
	<u>21,171</u>	<u>18,522</u>

Amounts falling due after more than one year

	29 March 1997	31 March 1996
	£000	£000
Obligations under finance leases and hire purchase contracts		
Due between one and two years	3,937	2,481
Due between two and five years	10,769	7,870
Due after five years	55	255
Other creditors	-	166
	<u>14,761</u>	<u>10,772</u>

Finance lease and hire purchase contract liabilities are secured on the assets to which they relate. The contracts vary in length between five and ten years and are on normal commercial terms at negotiated rates.

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

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29 March 1997

15 Deferred taxation

The amounts provided for deferred taxation and the amounts not provided are set out below. The amounts unprovided represent contingent liabilities and are calculated using a tax rate of 33% (31 March 1996 - 33%).

	29 March 1997		31 March 1996	
	Provided £000	Unprovided £000	Provided £000	Unprovided £000
Accelerated capital allowances	97	1,978	1,399	-
Other timing differences	1,466	-	1984	-
Trading losses	(4,973)	-	(3,383)	-
Advance corporation tax recoverable	-	-	-	(516)
Unrealised capital gains	-	516	-	516
	<u>(3,410)</u>	<u>2,494</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

No provision is made for tax of £0.516m (31 March 1996 - £0.516m) which would arise on the disposal of land and buildings transferred from other group undertakings at a value in excess of original cost. It is not the intention to dispose of them without reinvestment of the sale proceeds.

16 Called up share capital

	29 March 1997 £	31 March 1996 £
Authorised		
Ordinary shares of £1 each	100	100
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Allotted, called up and fully paid		
Ordinary shares of £1 each	100	100
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

17 Reserves

	Reserve arising on acquisition £000	Profit and loss account £000
At beginning of year	7,901	7,323
Goodwill arising on acquisition of businesses written off	-	(469)
Realisation of reserve arising on acquisition	(818)	818
Retained profit for the year	-	3,414
At end of year	<u>7,083</u>	<u>11,086</u>

12 January 1998

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

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29 March 1997

18 Acquisitions

During the year the company acquired the bus operating activities of two small local businesses. The company has used acquisition accounting to account for these purchases.

The assets and liabilities acquired are set out below:

	£'000
Cost of acquisition	469
Value of assets acquired	-
Goodwill	469
Satisfied by cash in respect of consideration	225
Creditors in respect of consideration	244
	469

No fair value adjustments were made. Due to the immaterial size of these acquisitions their turnover and operating profits have not been separately disclosed in the profit and loss account

19 Commitments

Capital expenditure

Capital commitments at the end of the year for which no provision has been made are as follows:

	29 March 1997 £000	31 March 1996 £000
Contracted for but not provided		
Year to 29 March 1997	-	600
Year to 31 March 1998	497	-
Authorised but not contracted		
Year to 29 March 1997	-	400
Year to 31 March 1998	903	-
	1,400	1,000

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

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29 March 1997

Operating leases

Commitments for payments in the next year under operating leases are as follows:

	29 March 1997	31 March 1996
	£000	£000
Operating leases which expire:		
Within one year	305	181
From two to five years	294	285
	<u>599</u>	<u>466</u>

20 Contingent liabilities

The company is a member of a VAT group covering a number of subsidiary undertakings. All members are joint and severally liable in respect of any VAT owed to HM Customs and Excise.

21 Pension scheme

The company participates in the Greater Manchester County Superannuation Fund, which operates within the requirements of the Local Government Superannuation Regulations and provides benefits of the defined type. The assets of the scheme are held in separate trustee administered funds. In addition the company provides self funded and ex - gratia benefits, supplementing those payable from the Greater Manchester County Superannuation Fund and also operates a defined contribution pension scheme.

An actuarial assessment of the scheme was carried out as at 31 March 1995 by the fund's actuary.

Cash contribution rates are determined by the fund's actuary on the basis of triennial valuations. As a result of this valuation carried out at 31 March 1995, a cash contribution rate of 4.5% to the fund is anticipated by the company until 1999.

The total pension charge for the company to the profit and loss account during the year was £1.225m (1996:£1.450m). The cash contribution rate was determined using the attained age method and assumed investment returns would be 9% per annum, earnings increases would average 6.5% per annum, present and future pensions would increase at the rate of 4.5% per annum and that dividends would increase at the rate of 4.5% per annum. The prepayment in respect of the fund benefits is £6.082m (1996: £5.603m)

Greater Manchester Buses North Limited

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

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29 March 1997

The surplus comprises:

	29 March 1997 £'000	31 March 1996 £'000
Surplus on defined benefit fund	11,659	7,947
Provision for self funded pensions	(5,577)	(2,344)
	<u>6,082</u>	<u>5,603</u>

Both the provision for self funded pensions and the provision for ex - gratia benefits (included in creditors 1997 £ 0.190m, (1996 £0.145m)) have been provided in full.

22 Ultimate holding company

The ultimate holding company is FirstBus plc, which is incorporated in Great Britain and registered in Scotland. Copies of the accounts of FirstBus plc can be obtained from the Company Secretary of this company at Oldmixon Crescent, Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset, BS24 9AY.