

promoting quality public transport.....

CONFERENCE REPORT

Thursday 7th February 2013

Transport for Greater Manchester, 2 Piccadilly Place, Manchester M1 3BG

Conference kindly supported by Transport for Greater Manchester

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman, Chris Dale, welcomed delegates to Manchester and thanked Transport for Greater Manchester for its generous support to the event. He went on to describe some of the work of TravelWatch NorthWest since the last conference. He drew attention to the Business Plan, copies of which were available as well as being accessible on the website. He referred to the TWNW report on Northern Trains which was published in December 2012 and the responses and attention it had created.

Consultation responses had been provided for:

- Road User Charging (EU)
- Bus Subsidy Reform (DfT)
- RUS Alternative Solutions (Network Rail)
- High Speed Rail in the UK (Independent Transport Commission)
- Stagecoach Acquisitions in the NW (OfT)
- Legislation – Transport for Disabled (HoCTC)
- Brown Review on Franchising (HoCTC)

In addition TWNW had participated in a number of conferences and meetings as follows:

- Northern Rail Stakeholders Event
- European Bus Expo
- Northern Bus Summit
- Ordsall Chord Briefing
- TravelWatch Chairs & Passenger Focus Joint Meeting
- Passenger Focus Stakeholder event
- Merseytravel
- North West Electrification – Meeting with DfT (CLIT)

2. Welcome to Manchester

Cllr. Roger Jones, Vice Chair, TfGM

Cllr. Jones welcomed delegates to Manchester and the offices of TfGM. He emphasised that Greater Manchester (GM) was in competition with other regions of the UK for

investment in transport provision. He recounted a series of milestones reached in GM that had been ground breaking during the industrial age, citing the opening of the Bridgewater Canal, the Liverpool – Manchester Railway, Manchester Airport, the Metrolink network as well as events such as the 1993 Olympic bid which ultimately led to the Commonwealth Games in 2003. Whilst the TIF Referendum was unsuccessful it led to the establishment of the GM Transport Fund and the creation of a single body to represent GM's transport needs and support procurement. Government now views Greater Manchester as leaders in the field of transport provision after Greater London.

3. Devolution and Re-franchising

Stephen Clark, Rail Programme Director, TfGM

The Government recently announced its consideration for devolution of rail franchising to regions of the UK. Such a move will devolve funding for transport schemes to regions and, as a consequence, shift power from Westminster for them to be managed in the area where projects are located. Although it has not committed to it as yet, Government has encouraged regions to consider this and to put forward programmes for potential schemes. TfGM is leading a consortium of local authorities in the North of England, including the metropolitan areas of West and South Yorkshire, Merseyside and Tyne and Wear, to build the case to Government for an inclusive Northern rail franchise embracing all rail operations in the North. Representatives of local authorities met recently and there was no dissent to the proposals. A management structure has been proposed incorporating representation from the 33 local authorities cascading down to an Executive body. The current franchises of Northern Trains and First Trans Pennine Express are due to end in March 2014 and March 2015 respectively so an opportunity to merge the two franchises into one is now a potential reality. TfGM feels that such a merging of franchises managed regionally will support growth, accountability and efficiency.

TfGM is seeking the Government's ideas on future franchising, but believes that improvements a devolved franchise will offer are:

- Better Connectivity
- Improved train capacity
- Growth
- Integrated ticketing
- Better trains and quality of rolling stock
- Higher frequencies (assisted by Northern Hub)
- Faster journeys

If the project moves on to the next stage a 7 year franchise is envisaged and a 24 month consultation process will be required, but the start date for this is currently uncertain.

In the Greater Manchester area early priorities will be to find capital expenditure for smaller schemes such as the upgrade of Salford Central and the improvement of the Bolton – Blackburn corridor. The planned upgrade of Victoria will bring about changes in passenger flow patterns as will the new platforms at Piccadilly. Improved integration with Metrolink and Cross City Bus services will be needed and currently schemes at Altrincham, Bolton, and Rochdale are taking place together with better interchange at Manchester Airport. Car parking at stations will present a number of challenges to be overcome and more stations will need attention for upgrading.

In discussion the issue of the differences in quality offered by the 2 current franchisees was raised and it was acknowledged that distinctive branding may be required for business in the different sectors. There was concern about representation in any new body from regions outside the core metropolitan areas and whether rural areas may be disadvantaged. It was also stated that large franchises have historically presented difficulties and smaller examples have been shown to work better. It was also apparent that the whole project was public sector driven and it was acknowledged that liaison, dialogue and input will be required from the private sector, business agencies, rail user groups and passenger representatives. All ideas for this will be welcomed.

4. Operating the enlarged Metrolink Network ***Chris Coleman, Managing Director, Metrolink***

The Metrolink network commenced in April 1992 and since then various extensions have opened and been planned to make it the largest light rail system in the UK:

- 1992 - Phase 1 Bury – Altrincham
- 2000 - Phase 2 - Eccles line
- 2010 - Media City spur
- 2011 - St. Werburgh's Road
- 2011 – Oldham
- 2012 – Shaw
- 2013 – Droylsden
- By 2016 – Rochdale, East Didsbury, Ashton, Manchester Airport

The network's routes now carry 22 million passengers a year with 57,000 trips per day. It extends to 66 km and has 52 stops. The fleet of trams, supplied by Bombardier, will number 94 by 2016, each with capacity for 206 passengers.

The Operator is RATP Dev, who took over from Stagecoach in August 2011. The company is an international public transport organisation active in many cities throughout the world as well as in London, Bath and Bournemouth and is seeking further growth in the UK. It employs 600 people, 240 of which are drivers. The company believes in customer focussed operations and accordingly all staff undergo customer interface training using a model from the Virgin transport companies.

The operational timetable is agreed with TfGM, which owns the system, and trams are scheduled to operate on a 6 minute headway in the City Centre with a 12 minute headway outside the City. TfGM sets the fares and funds investment.

£1.4 billion of investment is planned by 2016 and soon the major event venues in the City will all be served. For special events a special planning unit is formed to determine need for services, staffing and vehicles.

Passenger information is provided by a dedicated website, and an "App" which is updated regularly. Other social media such as Facebook and Twitter are also engaged. It is planned to resurrect station information displays but signalling upgrading is currently preventing this in the short term. In the meantime, long line PA announcements and staff intervention are used as necessary.

In discussion reference was made to previous aspirations for the network to reach Glossop and Marple but this was not now a priority. The need for a printed timetable was raised but, with such a short interval between services, it was felt that this was not required.

5. The Cross City Bus Project

Anthony Murden, Departmental Manager, Projects & Programmes, TfGM

The Cross City Bus Project is part of the GM Transport Fund programme to drive growth in the economy and features 25 miles of bus routes including the Leigh – Salford guided busway, the Middleton busway as well as the Cross City scheme. It is fully funded by the DfT and local finance.

The Cross City scheme is designed to enable buses to travel freely across Manchester City Centre and consequently reduce the need for passengers to change buses in order to complete their journeys. It will also improve links with various locations and provide improved inter-modal connectivity. The development will also create improvements for cyclists and pedestrians. Better punctuality, reliability and faster services will result and it will also offer direct access to employment, healthcare and education sites. It is anticipated that it will stimulate re-generation in suburbs and satellite towns.

The Leigh – Salford guided busway will run for 4.5 miles from Leigh with 7 stops. An additional bus lane will be provided on the A580 section of the route. P & R facilities will be provided at Leigh and Tyldesley where bus priority traffic schemes will operate as well as in Atherton, to allow connection to the guideway. The route is scheduled to open in 2015.

The Middleton – Manchester City Centre busway is expected to be open by 2014. In addition enhanced bus priorities are being introduced in the City Centre and changes are to be made to the Oxford Road corridor with no through route being available for general traffic. A series of public consultations are in progress and can be viewed at www.tfgm.com/buspriority.

6. Metroshuttle – A Greater Manchester Success Story

Howard Hartley, Departmental Manager, Infrastructure Services, TfGM

The Metroshuttle, providing free transport across Manchester City Centre, was launched in 2002 and re-launched in 2010 with a greater emphasis on quality and customer service. 20 low carbon hybrid vehicles, equipped with technology, featuring auto passenger counting and vehicle diagnostics, now operate the system on 3 branded routes. Passenger numbers are increasing with 2.6 million journeys in 2012. High customer satisfaction (94%) has been recorded from 12000 interviews.

Information is available from the printed route map and a downloadable “App” from the TfGM website, which features interactive mapping and a “next stop” warning device. Metroshuttles also operate in Stockport, Oldham and Bolton.

In discussion it was suggested that the printed route map should be available on board vehicles and it was acknowledged that better distribution is required. It was also acknowledged that drop off and pick up arrangements at Piccadilly Station need attention to ensure that buses draw up to the stop for passengers to disembark and embark at the

same time, rather than disembarking taking place lower down the approach ramp and embarking passengers having to wait some time (in the cold) before the empty bus draws up to the stop.

7. Issues from the Floor

The following issues were raised from the floor:

A recent report issued in December by ORR had indicated that station information systems were acceptable. Recent experiences had indicated that this was not so at some unmanned stations in the North and delegates were invited to notify the Secretary of any anecdotal experiences they have encountered by the lack of information or its failure, in order that the issue can be raised with the authors of the report.

Direct trains services from Chester to Manchester Airport were called for as this is an important passenger flow.

Regular services on the east Manchester rail route (Stockport – Stalybridge) were called for as part of the planned rail investment in Greater Manchester. It was recognised that pathing issues would need to be examined.

8. Next Conference

Thursday 20th June at County Hall, Lancashire County Council, Preston.

Attendance

Name	Organisation
Adrian Dunning	NW Transport Activists Roundtable
Alan Wilson	Kendal & District Bus Users Assoc.
Alexander Davidson	Friends of Hindley Station
Alison Chew	Transport for Greater Manchester
Andrea Fawcett	Station Adopter Adlington
Anthony Murden	Transport for Greater Manchester
Beverley Gallier	Transport for Greater Manchester
Bob Barlow	Friends of Heaton Chapel Station
Bob Florence	North Cheshire Rail Users Group
Chris Coleman	Metrolink
Chris Dale	TravelWatch NorthWest
Chris Holmes	Transport for Greater Manchester
Chris Jarvis	Institute of Transport Administration
Chris Smyth	Institution of Railway Operators
Chris Trueblood	Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign
Colin Barnett	Bus Users UK
Craig Harrop	Northern Rail
Cllr Craig Wright	Transport for Greater Manchester
Dave Koring	Severn-Dee Travel Ltd
David Burton	South East Lancs Rail Action Partnership
David Butterworth	TravelWatch NorthWest
David Thrower	
David Simper	Blackpool Council
Dennis Harrison	Wirral Transport Users Association
Duncan Roberts	Lancaster Morecambe & District RUG
Fred Consterdine	Crewe & Shrewsbury Passr Assoc.

Gabriel Drew	East Cheshire Rail Users Group
Geoff Kerr	
Howard Hartley	Transport for Greater Manchester
Hugh Mowat	Lancaster Morecambe & District RUG
Ian McDermott	
Ian Stuart	
Jim Davies	Lancaster Morecambe & District RUG
John Moorhouse	TravelWatch NorthWest
John Aaron	
John Culshaw	Mattersons Cranes
John Hart	TravelWatch NorthWest
John Kenny	Crewe-Manchester CRP
John Owen	TravelWatch NorthWest
John Ryan	Wirral Transport Users Association
John Warner	Kendal & District Bus Users Assoc.
Kathy Jones	Greater Manchester Transport Campaign
Kathryn O'Brien	First TransPennine Express
Keith Pennyfather	
Ken McKelvie	Ramblers Association
Ken Swallow	CILT North West Region
Leonard Green	TravelWatch NorthWest
Lillian Burns	TravelWatch NorthWest
Malcolm Richardson	Blackpool & Fylde Rail Users Assoc.
Mark Barker	Northern Rail
Mark Cleave	Merseytravel
Maurice Duckworth	First Rail Support Ltd
Maxine Myers	First TransPennine Express
Michael Wrigley	STORM
Mike Laycock	Wirral Transport Users Association
Neil Caldwell	CILT North West Region
Paul Fawcett	TravelWatch NorthWest
Paul Owen	Network Rail
Peter Garvey	Greater Manchester Transport Campaign
Peter Lamkin	Wrexham Birkenhead Rail Users Assoc.
Peter Leppard	
Peter Robinson	TravelWatch NorthWest
Phil Rowbotham	Friends of Heaton Chapel Station
Philip Harrison	
Preva Crossley	Friends of Hindley Station
Richard Rollins	TravelWatch NorthWest
Robert Talbot	TravelWatch NorthWest
Roger Barton	Goyt Valley Rail Users Association
Roger Jones	Transport for Greater Manchester
Ronald Schwarz	Railfuture NW Branch
Ross Stafford	Stagecoach Merseyside & South Lancs
Russell Warhurst	University of Chester
Ryszard Berechula	Institution of Railway Operators
Sally Buttifant	Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership
Sheila Davidson	Friends of Hindley Station
Sheila Dee	Chester Shrewsbury Rail Partnership
Stephen Clark	Transport for Greater Manchester
Stephen Clapham	Friends of Eccles Station
Stephen Jones	Greater Manchester Transport Campaign
Tony Fawthrop	Greater Manchester Transport Campaign
Tony Young	TravelWatch NorthWest