

***Winner of CILT award for best practice in passenger transport***

***promoting quality public transport.....***

## **CONFERENCE REPORT**

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

**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 mentioned the TWNW media release deploring the decision to transfer 10 TPE 170 train units to Chiltern Trains and the massive affect it had achieved with extensive press, TV and radio coverage as well as comment from politicians and the feature of the issue in Prime Minister's questions in the House of Commons. TWNW had received many plaudits for its intervention.

He drew attention to current issues that are exercising TWNW, in particular the recent report published on the subject of Information on Bus Fares. This was a follow up to a report published 3 years ago which highlighted the lack of any information on bus fares. Unfortunately this new report showed that little had changed. Bus passengers, particularly those using the major operators, still find it difficult to obtain advance fare information.

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

- Ticket Retailing Conference – ORR/DfT
- Liverpool Bus Lanes meeting – Liverpool City Council
- Bus/Tram Passenger Survey launch – Passenger Focus
- Metrolink Fares - TfGM
- Kendal & District Bus Users meeting
- ORR workshop on ticket retailing.

Finally he mentioned the launch of TravelWatch North West on Facebook, which will enable up to date news, opinion and comment to be featured as a live correspondence medium. Access can be made by joining the TWNW Facebook Group

## **2. Welcome to Manchester**

***Dr. John Lamonte, Chief Executive, Transport for Greater Manchester***

Dr. Lamonte welcomed delegates to the Conference and to the headquarters of TfGM. He welcomed the dialogue and liaison with TWNW which he valued as an important organisation as it independently represented the passenger. He has been in post for 18 months arriving from London Transport. He is committed to sustainable transport growth and saw his priorities as joining up connectivity of the various transport modes and its place in the economic prosperity of the region. A £1.5 billion transport fund is available for the mission.

He cited the success of Metrolink that had now trebled its network and had seen its patronage increase by 7 million to 29 million passengers per year and this will be complemented by increases in the tram fleet. He referred to the importance of the Manchester rail hub, the emergence of Rail North and the redevelopment of Victoria Station which he felt would be the “St. Pancras of the North” when completed. He wishes to grow the bus network but admitted that this needs capital investment but waiting and interchange improvements were at the top of this agenda.

## **3. Improving the Customer Experience**

***Alex Hynes, Managing Director, Northern Rail***

Alex began by referring to the new Northern Rail franchise that began on 1<sup>st</sup> April to run for 21 months until February 2016. This was a new franchise and not an extension. The company had seen patronage increase by 47% in the last 10 years and it was committed to creating a railway to be proud of, not just for the franchise period but for the long term, whether or not it is successful in the next franchise selection. Recent adverse comments from passengers had been noted and were being positively worked on with improving the customer experience being a priority.

Northern is undertaking a quarterly survey of passenger experience with 5000 participants in order to create an ability to solve issues with immediacy. Recent results have indicated that punctuality and reliability are the main issues with “Right Time” performance being the main concern of commuters. Timetable adjustments have been made to achieve better performance in these areas.

The present fleet is ageing and presents an engineering challenge, but it has targets to ensure availability of trains and better train presentation, to provide an excellent performance. The current diesel fleet is being retained and 56 more carriages will come into service in December with the arrival of electric train units for the Liverpool – Manchester corridor. This will be a major help in combating the overcrowding issue currently being experienced. However a long term procurement programme of new diesel trains is needed for the future.

New ticket machines are being introduced at stations and information provision is being improved with trials of WiFi availability on selected stations and trains as well as the provision of electronic real time information displays at 100 of its stations, currently not equipped with it, during the franchise period. This however will still leave the remaining 100 stations unequipped and he was fully aware of the experiences of passengers at these stations and was committed to finding workable solutions.

A programme of station and train improvements is underway as well as a staff retraining programme to provide a better information service to passengers.

Improvements are being made to customer liaison by the introduction of an improved communication and engagement programme which will feature a customer relationship database and the creation of a Customer Advisory Board.

In discussion issues raised were overcrowding on the Manchester - Chester line, revenue collection, conductor and driver responsibilities, station adopters policy, cycle accommodation, Blackpool North taxi rank safety, and ticket retailing at stations. He was open to any thoughts, suggestions and ideas on these matters and will be personally looking at many of the issues.

#### **4. Travel Choices in Greater Manchester**

***Helen Ramsden, Head of Travel Choices, TfGM***

Travel Choices is a new area of work within TfGM, to look at Sustainable Transport and to encourage travellers to adjust their attitudes to consider alternative transport modes to make their journeys. It is funded by DfT until March 2015 and an extension is being sought. The programme features:

- A travel and cycling project agenda
- Walking intervention – Health walks
- Commuter cycle project
- Schools engagement
- Car Sharing
- Improved access to employment
- Removing travel barriers & broadening horizons for job seekers
- Creating partnerships with businesses, councils and commuters
- Complementing other transport and non-transport services

Work so far has seen a programme undertaken to assist businesses and their staff to make alternative choices by personal journey planning, staff surveys, site audits, ticketing offers, car sharing trials and cycling training. Grants of up to £10,000 are available for implementation planning. The various business agencies have all endorsed the campaign and 340 businesses, representing 270,000 employees have signed up with 110 action plans being developed or in development. Car sharing schemes have now 650 members and £100,000 has been allocated in grants.

A resident's programme to encourage similar attitude changes is also being delivered, targeting residential areas where new and improved travel services have been introduced with incentives such as "taster tickets".

#### **5. Action Stations – creating attractive terminals**

***Chris Barnes, Head of Programme & Project Management, TfGM***

TfGM supports an objective of making public transport more attractive and contribute to a broader social and environmental provision. 3 new interchanges on new sites have been planned for Rochdale, Bolton and Wythenshaw, and the present interchange at Altrincham is being re-modelled. They will offer enhanced integration with other transport modes as

well as complement and support town centre regeneration. Rochdale has opened and Bolton will be relocated to be adjacent to the railway station.

Challenges that drove the creation of the new terminals were:

- Increased passenger demand & expectations
- Protecting the natural & built environment
- A complex transport industry
- Differing passenger needs
- Spatial constraints
- Convenience of modal interchange

4 design challenges were identified to cover:

- Efficiency – Moving around, waiting environment
- Sustainability – Light, air, ventilation, energy consumption, solar panels
- Legibility – defined routes, level surfaces, information, ticket sales
- Quality – seating, toilets, retailing, cash points, public art

Passenger surveys have been undertaken and have indicated good appreciation of the terminals and safety. In discussion points raised included lack of tactile information for sight disabilities and information about other transport modes within the bus terminals. The developments had undertaken full liaison with disability groups but the matters would be looked into. Additionally concern was raised about Piccadilly bus arrangements and Wigan and Leigh bus stations. Piccadilly is a Manchester City Council responsibility, but is being considered, whilst Wigan is in the next phase of investment and some improvement work is planned for Leigh.

## **6. Information - the whole truth & nothing but the truth.**

***Lynne Hagan-Lynch, Senior Duty Manager, Customer Services, TfGM***

The GM transport network covers 10 district council areas, 500 square miles, 2.69 million residents, 1 million passenger journeys per week, 45 bus operators, Metrolink and 6 train operators. In addition the area is in the top 5 visited destinations in Britain and attracts 1 million international visitors per year.

A Smarter Travel Vision is a policy adopted by TfGM to enable passengers to make informed choices in Greater Manchester by the provision of multi-modal real time information.

The Smart technology objectives are designed to encourage more use by customers, better journey planning, and provide an easy to use system with predictive flexibility. The data obtained will be used as a management tool to share information amongst all operators, abilities to respond to incidents and congestion, predict impacts of future events and provide solutions.

## **7. The View from outside Greater Manchester**

***John Owen, TWNW Director***

Manchester is viewed as the capital of the North West by people living outside the boundaries of Greater Manchester and could also be labelled as the capital of the North

and maybe Britain's 2<sup>nd</sup> city. It possesses an international recognition of one of Britain's major cities and serves a population of up to 20 million residents in its outreach. However its performance in proving for its outreach is sometimes deemed to fall short of expectation.

Northern residents travel to Manchester for a variety of reasons:

- International travel through Manchester Airport – Enhanced Global Reach
- Business & Commerce – HQ's of major companies, Govt. Dept's.
- Commuting – maximum 1 hr 20 minutes from much of outreach
- Shopping – City Centre, Bury market, Trafford Centre, Lowry mall etc.
- Healthcare – Regional Specialist Centres e.g. Christies
- Spectator Sports – Football, Rugby, Athletics Cycling etc.
- Entertainment & Culture – Theatres, Arena, Events, Museums etc.
- Long Distance Train Interchange – Manchester Piccadilly

Passengers travelling to Manchester often feel that they have been forgotten by TfGM by such matters as:

- Lack of through ticketing from rail to Metrolink destinations e.g. Bury, Oldham
- Unfriendly image of Metrolink staff
- Complicated ticketing sales outlets for the unfamiliar
- Lack of Travelcard availability outside boundaries
- Inconsistent information provision on related websites
- Omission of ticket offers for onward travel from websites e.g. PlusBus
- Poor promotion of incentives for travel
- Early "last train" departures to provinces

The general information provision and travel convenience to those residing outside Greater Manchester requires a major marketing makeover. Websites are often difficult to navigate, are not related in their information provision and generally unattractive. Provision for onward travel within GM is poorly promoted and promotional incentives, such as the June/July PlusBus offer are missed. John advised that Manchester's authorities should take a corporate view of how the City and its districts promotes itself and its transport networks to achieve better consistency and perhaps such an exercise would be best carried out by an external agency from another region.

Further challenges to passengers travelling to Greater Manchester will come from the future rail investment as certain provinces look likely to be left out. Whilst electrification will be a welcome development, those areas that will still rely on diesel trains face curtailment of the through services they currently enjoy and some have already witnessed reductions. Lack of any procurement of new diesel trains to replace the ageing Northern fleet and possible re-mapping in the next round of franchising may bring unfavourable changes to public transport access, leading to travellers to revert to car journeys.

In conclusion, John felt that TfGM, together with its colleague local authorities, has much to do to address the needs of those from the NW regional provinces who use Greater Manchester as their regional capital. However, the work required is mostly simple attention to detail and presentation rather than major capital projects. By doing so the City and the GM region will benefit from better appreciation, growth, image and sustainable traffic.

## 8. Next Conference

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October at the offices, of Merseytravel, Liverpool.

## Attendance List

| <b>Name</b>         | <b>Organisation</b>                      |
|---------------------|--|
| Alan Jackson        | High Peak & Hope Valley CRP              |
| Alan Wilson         | Kendal & District Bus Users              |
| Alex Hynes          | Northern Rail                            |
| Barry Drelincourt   |  |
| Bob Florence        | North Cheshire Rail Users Group          |
| Brian Grey          | Wirral Transport Users Association       |
| Cedric Green        | North Cheshire Rail Users Group          |
| Chris Barnes        | Transport for Greater Manchester         |
| Chris Bowles        | Stagecoach Manchester                    |
| Chris Dale          | TravelWatch NorthWest                    |
| Chris Holmes        | TravelWatch NorthWest                    |
| Chris Jarvis        | Institute of Transport Administration    |
| Chris Smyth         | Heritage Railway Association             |
| Clifford Winstanley |  |
| Cllr Alan Whitehead | Tameside Metropolitan Council            |
| Cllr Roger Jones    | Salford City Council                     |
| Colin Barnett       |  |
| Colin Kennington    | TravelWatch NorthWest                    |
| Craig Harrop        | Northern Rail                            |
| Craig Wright        | Goyt Valley Rail Users Assoc.            |
| Dave Koring         | Severn Dee Travel Ltd                    |
| David Chadwick      | Bolton Metropolitan Council              |
| David Culshaw       | Friends of Hindley Station               |
| David Evans         | Blackpool & Fylde Rail Users Association |
| David Simper        | Blackpool Council                        |
| Dr Jon Lamonte      | Transport for Greater Manchester         |
| Ed Boothroyd        | First Group                              |
| Fred Consterdine    |  |
| Gabriel Drew        |  |
| Geoff Kerr          |  |
| Harry Boardman      | Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association      |
| Helen Ramsden       | Transport for Greater Manchester         |
| Ian McDermott       | Friends of Reddish South Station         |
| Ian Stuart          |  |
| John Aaron          |  |
| John Culshaw        | Mattersons Lifting Equipment Ltd         |
| John Hart           | TravelWatch NorthWest                    |
| John Kenny          | Crewe-Manchester CRP                     |
| John Moorhouse      | TravelWatch NorthWest                    |
| John Owen           | TravelWatch NorthWest                    |

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|---------------------|--|
| John Ryan           | Wirral Transport Users Association           |
| John Warner         | Kendal & District Bus Users                  |
| Kathryn O'Brien     | First TransPennine Express                   |
| Kathy Jones         | Greater Manchester Transport Campaign        |
| Keith Pennyfather   |  |
| Ken McKelvie        | Ramblers Association                         |
| Ken Swallow         | Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport |
| Lillian Burns       | TravelWatch NorthWest                        |
| Louise Collins      | Passenger Focus                              |
| Lynne Hagan - Lynch | Transport for Greater Manchester             |
| Malcolm Richardson  | Blackpool & Fylde Rail Users Association     |
| Margaret Mitchell   |  |
| Matthew Worman      | Northern Rail                                |
| Mike Laycock        | Wirral Transport Users Association           |
| Neil Caldwell       | Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport |
| Paul Fawcett        | TravelWatch NorthWest                        |
| Paul Rowen          | Passenger Focus                              |
| Philip Harrison     |  |
| Preva Crossley      | Friends of Westhoughton Station              |
| Richard Lysons      | Friends of Littleborough Station             |
| Roy Chapman         | Transport for Greater Manchester             |
| Samuel Whitfield    | Peak District National Park                  |
| Stephen Jones       | Greater Manchester Transport Campaign        |
| Tony Fawthrop       | Greater Manchester Transport Campaign        |
| Tony Young          | TravelWatch NorthWest                        |