

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

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

## **CONFERENCE REPORT**

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2015 - The Hornby Lecture Theatre, Blackburn**

**Conference kindly supported by Blackburn with Darwen Council**

### **1. Welcome and Introduction**

The Chairman, Chris Dale, welcomed delegates to Blackburn and thanked Blackburn with Darwen Council for its generous support to the Conference. He began by presenting a summary of recent projects and work carried out by TWNW. He listed the 17 meetings he had attended with the rail and bus industries since the last Conference in February and he had also carried out his ongoing governance work as Chairman as well as keeping the TWNW Facebook page up to date publishing almost daily articles on issues affecting passengers.

He referred to the Invitation to Tender (ITT) bids for the Northern Rail and Trans Pennine Express (TPE) franchises due to commence next year and the welcome arrival of the new 319 class electric trains entering service for Northern. He mentioned a recent visit by a small TWNW delegation to Long Marston, by invitation from Viva Rail, to view the former London Underground “D” trains being refurbished for possible use on branch lines of the national network as diesel powered units and the ongoing dialogue between the two parties.

He also commented upon the disruption being caused to passenger journeys due to engineering works on the rail network, particularly at weekends, notably at Farnworth Tunnel and continually on the West Coast main line and the alternative arrangements for passengers affected as well as the affect to tourism destinations in the North West that have become regularly isolated. These issues, and particularly, the reluctance to use the Settle and Carlisle line as a diversion route, are ongoing subjects of correspondence, monitoring and campaigning.

Concern still continues about bus service cuts and the likelihood that this will become more acute as the new government progresses with its policies. The situation is continually being monitored with intervention where appropriate as well as looking at the usefulness of Community Transport as an alternative. The survey into the attitude of bus drivers over the ENCTS scheme will be repeated in the late summer after the Traffic Commissioner expressed supportive interest in the project.

## 2. Welcome to Blackburn

***Cllr. Phil Riley, Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Regeneration***

Cllr. Riley welcomed delegates and thanked TOWN for its important work and for choosing Blackburn as the location for its Conference. He referred to the significant array of regeneration projects being undertaken in the town, many of which have important relations to public transport. He mentioned the Pennine Reach project for bus services in the area and the Todmorden Curve opening, affording residents of the area an alternative direct rail service route to Manchester and towns of east Lancashire. Finally he drew attention to the bus station development in the town centre and whilst this is a positive project he regretted that its progress had become delayed due to contractual issues that are currently in the process of being resolved.

## 3. Looking after the Bus Passenger

***Mrs Beverley Bell, Senior and North West Traffic Commissioner***

The main subject of Mrs Bell's presentation was the Statutory Guidance Document No. 14 on Local Bus Services in England and Wales, published in March of this year following a series of consultations within the industry. The Document provides a detailed set of issues, including Guidance to the Legislations and Directions in Case Law, that bus operators are required to comply with to avoid sanctions. In summary the document includes:

- General approach
- Service amendment procedures
- Window of tolerance (95% - 1 min early/5 late)
- Statutory sampling and monitoring of service and information provision
- Compliance
- Reasonable excuse (e.g. breakdowns, accidents, severe weather, road closures)
- Sanctions ranging from £100 - £550 per vehicle (TC discretion)
- Punctuality requirements at intermediate stops with 15 minute timing points
- Vehicle Standards

Operators have a statutory requirement to comply with the provisions of the document and must cooperate with the Commissioner in providing evidenced data, accept tailored monitoring and sampling of services, and provide any information requested by the Commissioner.

The Commissioner is also interested in reviewing driver conduct and encourages passengers to raise issues with her if they do not achieve satisfaction from the response of the Bus Operator. This includes the issue of lost property.

Mrs. Bell then went on to mention a number of live issues that will exercise her office over the near future. The triennial review of the work of the Traffic Commissioners is imminent and with the government committed to saving £10 billion on regulation alone there could be threats to the service. She also referred to the Buses Bill mentioned in the Queens Speech and this is expected to go down the franchising route with bus operators likely to oppose such a measure.

In discussion it was noted that bus travel in PTE areas was in decline in contrast with other areas and their continued to be a desire to have local bus user groups

#### **4. Blackburn with Darwen Connect**

***James Syson, Transport Strategy Team Leader, BwD Council***

In 2012 a team was assembled to find solutions to encourage sustainable transport in the Blackburn and Darwen areas including links to other parts of East Lancashire and the North West. The team consisted of business and community groups working with the Council. Funding of £1.4 million had been allocated to support the local economy by projects for transport, particularly public transport. The Council's function was to work with providers and partners to influence and encourage change in transport usage and behaviour. Challenges to be encountered were identified as economic growth, carbon emissions, health and well-being, support for the elderly and young population (33% under 19) and encourage access by sustainable transport.

The Objectives were:

- Create a more informed travelling public
- Complement the Pennine Reach investment and rail projects
- Unlock key employment sites
- Provide access to employment and training
- De-congestion of key routes (3 major corridors identified)
- Promote active travel (cycling/walking)

The Connect project was tailored to find pathways for segments of business, social and residential transport needs and featured a number of initiatives including:

- Development of personal travel planning for business and job seekers
- Creating a better informed resident and visitor population
- Support of health and well-being in the workplace
- Targeted capital projects
- Mentoring programmes for businesses, charitable organisations, and training providers
- Travel assistance for interview attendance (600 assisted)
- Bespoke walking and cycling groups

Promotion of the project was covered by an active online presence, targeted posters and leaflets, 165 road-show events reaching over 10,000 people, electronic journey planners at RB Hospital, Blackburn College and planned for Darwen Town Hall.

Cycling initiatives included "led" rides with 11,000 participants, "bike-ability" training, 6 km of new cycle routes, 40 new cycle parking spaces, increases to stock of free hire bikes for public use and a new cycling hub at Witton Park with a community cycle club.

Walking initiatives included 4 workplace walk groups, "led" walks with 19,000 participants and improved pedestrian access projects to schools and businesses.

Rail projects had resulted in community projects to improve Cherry Tree and Mill Hill stations, reductions in trespass and vandalism, and long term station adoption with a result of increased patronage.

Bus projects had included a number of local promotion campaigns with competitions featuring travel prizes, and more attractive ticketing incentives.

4200 people were now registered in the Car Share scheme [sharedwheels.co.uk](http://sharedwheels.co.uk) and 63% of users had been converted from single car occupancy. Dedicated car share parking bays were provided at RB hospital and a total result of 1 million car miles had been saved across Lancashire since to start of the project.

Results of the Connect campaign have seen:

- 24,000 hits on the bespoke website,
- 800 Twitter followers,
- 615 people assisted into training,
- 200 people completed mentoring training
- 90 local businesses signed up
- High profile and media campaigns

Funding for 2015/16 is secure in partnership with Lancashire County Council

## **5. Pennine Reach Update**

***Richard Saint, Capita Symons Ltd.***

The Pennine Reach project was progressing well with a number of developments reaching their objective as follows:

- Earcroft Junction – Work commencing in June to increase traffic capacity through the junction including a bus lane
- Brands Road Junction – completion Sept 2015 including a bus gate
- Ewood – New road structure and bus interchange – Oct 2015
- Furthergate – dedicated continuous bus lanes and road widening – Dec 2015
- Town Centre – bus station development and improved bus stop waiting accommodation
- Technology – Statutory bus partnerships featuring training; better vehicles; customer interface
- Fares & Ticketing – cash loaded Smartcard with strategic top up points; zonal fares system

An Urban Traffic Management Control system is now in place to apply flexibility to the management and control traffic in the area in the light of prevailing conditions.

North West Public Transport Users' Forum Community Interest Company trading as TravelWatch NorthWest

Company No. 6181713

Registered Office: 11 Harvelin Park, Todmorden, Lancs OL14 6HX

Whilst large bus operators were on board, discussion is ongoing with smaller operators to sign up to the Quality Partnership in order for them to have full access to all the new infra-structure.

## 6. The North of England Electrification Task Force

*Pete Brunskill, Principal Rail Development Officer, Transport for Warrington*

The Task Force had been set up by the Secretary of State in December 2013 to provide an independent view from the North of priorities for electrification of rail lines and routes and to inform Network Rail processes and programmes as well as to assist the DfT in formulating its HLOS.

The Task Force structure included a Board with representatives from regional MP's, 2 Council leaders, DfT, Network Rail, SYSTRA and the rail industry. Reporting to it in a pyramid structure were a Steering Group, a Stakeholder Group and an Implementation Group.

After a series of delays in the assembly of the Task Force its work was completed quickly and the report was published in March 2015, identifying 32 schemes by line of route that had been scored and prioritised into 3 categories for investment priority.

The report had been received favourably and will inform Network Rail's Electrification RUS refresh consultation which is overdue and expected imminently. This will provide a further opportunity to comment on issues raised and for a possible re-convening of the Task Force if required.

## 7. Just a Minute

The Just a Minute session included issues raised on the advantages of a circular train service through East Lancashire utilising the new Todmorden curve and returning via the Darwen line, the shortcomings of short length rail franchises that inhibit investment, a call for improved passenger consultation by TfGM in Greater Manchester, and generally better and up to date information provision at bus stops throughout the region.

## 8. Next Conference

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2015, Offices of Merseytravel, Liverpool to include AGM

## Attendance

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Name	Organisation
<i>Aidan Turner-Bishop</i>	<i>Campaign for Better Transport Lancashire</i>
<i>Barry Dobson</i>	<i>Arriva North West</i>
<i>Beverley Bell</i>	<i>Senior Traffic Commissioner</i>
<i>Chris Anslow</i>	<i>Lancashire County Council</i>

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<i>Chris Dale</i>	<i>TravelWatch NorthWest</i>
<i>Chris Holmes</i>	<i>TravelWatch NorthWest</i>
<i>Chris Jarvis</i>	<i>Institute of Transport Administration</i>
<i>Cllr Phil Riley</i>	<i>Blackburn with Darwen Council</i>
<i>Colin Kennington</i>	<i>TravelWatch NorthWest</i>
<i>Craig Harrop</i>	<i>Northern Rail</i>
<i>Craig Wright</i>	<i>Goyt Valley Rail Users Association</i>
<i>David Burton</i>	<i>South East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership</i>
<i>David Butterworth</i>	<i>TravelWatch NorthWest</i>
<i>David Culshaw</i>	<i>Friends of Hindley station</i>
<i>David Evans</i>	<i>Blackpool &amp; Fylde Rail Users Assoc.</i>
<i>David Simper</i>	<i>Blackpool Council</i>
<i>David Wood</i>	<i>TravelWatch Midlands West</i>
<i>Geoff Kerr</i>	
<i>James Syson</i>	<i>Blackburn with Darwen Council</i>
<i>John Aaron</i>	
<i>John Culshaw</i>	<i>Mattersons Cranes</i>
<i>John Hart</i>	<i>TravelWatch NorthWest</i>
<i>John Owen</i>	<i>TravelWatch NorthWest</i>
<i>John Threlfall</i>	<i>Transdev Lancashire United</i>
<i>Jordan Sargeant</i>	<i>Transport Focus</i>
<i>Kathy Jones</i>	<i>Greater Manchester Transport Campaign</i>
<i>Keith Pennyfather</i>	
<i>Ken McKelvie</i>	<i>Ramblers Association</i>
<i>Ken Swallow</i>	<i>Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport NW</i>
<i>Kevin Riddehough</i>	<i>The Young Weavers</i>
<i>Leonard Green</i>	<i>TravelWatch NorthWest</i>
<i>Malcolm Conway</i>	<i>TravelWatch NorthWest</i>
<i>Malcolm Richardson</i>	<i>Blackpool &amp; Fylde Rail Users Assoc.</i>
<i>Mike Laycock</i>	<i>Wirral Transport Users Association</i>
<i>Mike Machin</i>	<i>Lancaster &amp; Morecambe Rail Users Group</i>
<i>Neil Williams</i>	
<i>Paul Fawcett</i>	<i>TravelWatch NorthWest</i>
<i>Paul Grant</i>	<i>Lancaster &amp; Morecambe Rail Users Group</i>
<i>Paul Harris</i>	<i>East Lancashire Forums Assembly</i>
<i>Paul Rowen</i>	<i>Transport Focus</i>
<i>Pete Brunskill</i>	<i>Transport for Warrington</i>
<i>Peter Lamkin</i>	<i>Wrexham Birkenhead Rail Users Association</i>
<i>Phil Pearson</i>	<i>Network Warrington</i>
<i>Richard Lysons</i>	<i>Friends of Littleborough Station</i>
<i>Richard Saint</i>	<i>Capita Symons Ltd</i>
<i>Robert Florence</i>	<i>North Cheshire Rail Users Group</i>

<i>Robert Kenyon</i>	<i>Hyndburn Borough Council</i>
<i>Robert Talbot</i>	<i>TravelWatch NorthWest</i>
<i>Rob Meaden</i>	<i>Transport for Greater Manchester</i>
<i>Sarah Cunningham</i>	<i>First TransPennine Express</i>
<i>Sarah Ford</i>	<i>First TransPennine Express</i>
<i>Simon Reynish</i>	<i>Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport NW</i>
<i>Stephen Jones</i>	<i>Greater Manchester Transport Campaign</i>
<i>Tony Fawthrop</i>	<i>Greater Manchester Transport Campaign</i>
<i>Tony Young</i>	<i>TravelWatch NorthWest</i>
<i>Victoria Riddehough</i>	<i>The Young Weavers</i>