

Winner of CILT award for best practice in passenger transport (2013)

promoting quality public transport.....

CONFERENCE REPORT

Wednesday 12th October 2016

County Hall, Preston

**Conference kindly supported by Lancashire County Council
and Transdev Blazefield Ltd.**

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman, Chris Dale, welcomed delegates to Preston and thanked Lancashire County Council and Blazefield Transdev Ltd. for their generous support to the Conference.

He referred to the new rail franchises now in operation in the North of England by Arriva Trains North and First TransPennine Express and stated that, whilst new trains will be introduced in the future, improvements will be a long time coming with overcrowding still being a major issue. It is planned to include presentations from the franchisees at the next Conference early next year.

A response to the WCML franchise consultation had been sent covering a wide range of passenger issues, including service patterns, station and train environments, engineering work disruption, better dialogue with stakeholders, and the need for greater service frequency between Liverpool and London.

A report on the Spring WCML improvement work and associated replacement road services had been published in July. Some of the coach alternatives could have been more convenient for passengers and there were detailed failings such as lack of proper information at Kendal but overall there was much to commend.

Chris then listed the various meetings he and colleagues had attended during recent months on behalf of TOWNW that included events of West Coast Rail 250, Transport for Greater Manchester, Liverpool City region, Merseytravel, Rail North, Arriva Rail North, First TransPennine Express, London Midland, Stagecoach, and Transdev Blazefield, as well as a number of liaison meetings with business and passenger groups.

He had also referred to the difficulties caused early in the year as a result of flooding and landslips throughout the region and congratulated all transport operators for their resilience in finding solutions to the many challenges presented to them.

2. Welcome to Lancashire

***Oliver Starkey, Head of Service, Public and Integrated Transport
Lancashire County Council***

Oliver Starkey welcomed delegates to County Hall and referred to the many challenges faced by Lancashire County Council in bringing a balanced budget together following severe funding cuts from government. This had resulted in much change and transport had not escaped cuts with many weekend and evening bus services being lost. Some funding had been found to support the tendered network for the current year and some operators had responded to the challenges by accepting commercial risk on some of their services. He also mentioned the Bus Service Bill and its potential implications.

On the positive side new bus stations had opened at Blackburn and Accrington as part of the completed Pennine Reach initiative, with Preston also undergoing refurbishment, and investment was being considered for new rail stations at Skelmersdale, and Cottam (NW Preston).

3. Transport for the North

David Brown, Chief Executive, Transport for the North

The North of England is home to 16 million people, supports 7.2 million jobs and has an economy of £290 billion. However it is thought to be under performing to the tune of £37 million.

Transport for the North (TfN) was formed in 2014 as a partnership between central government, local government and local enterprise partnerships, as part of the Northern Powerhouse initiative to address the shortcomings of the regions. In 2015 it launched its blueprint vision to transform the transport infra structure throughout the North and also the linkages with neighbouring regions.

TfN is tasked with adding value, driving growth, coherence, integration, planning, governance and funding to assist the transformation of the North's economy. It is the first sub national transport body to be formed in England with devolved powers to make the right decisions for transport across the North. It launched its Strategic Transport Plan in 2015 (available on TfN website) and this features:

- Motorways – network requirements and strategic linkages
- Rail - £1.2 billion initial investment after which growth must continue over a 30 year plan to address vast improvements in frequency, capacity and reduced journey times.

Improved linkages will enable freight to achieve a £35 billion growth over the next 60 years, and improvements to international connectivity with major world markets

Smart and Integrated ticketing is also on the agenda to offer seamless travel and a business case is going to government to trigger funding.

The forecast result of investment by 2015 should improve the GVA by £97 billion and create 850,000 more jobs.

Key Milestones for the immediate future are:

Autumn 2016 – Strategic Plan Consultation
 Spring 2017 – Strategic Plan published
 Summer 2017 – TfN gets statutory status
 Summer 2018 – Sustainability Plan published

In discussion reference was made to the importance of travel for leisure, tourism and social matters and the importance of provision for these sectors, all of which constitute significant parts of the economy. These had been taken into account but overall conveying the message of need for the North to government and political bodies was still challenging as was the understanding of local need.

4. Public Transport in Lancashire

Andrew Varley, Public Transport Manager, Lancashire County Council

Public Transport support is not a statutory requirement of Local Authorities and much misunderstanding of the role is the cause of confusion and complaint. The only items required of Councils in public transport provision are:

- an overview of appropriateness
- School travel
- National Concession Scheme

The majority of bus services in Lancashire operate commercially. However, prior to this financial year £7 million was provided to support unprofitable services but this was withdrawn as part of budget cuts following reductions in grant from central government. After further consideration £2 million was restored to the budget to support travel for work, health, education, and welfare. Consequently 60% of the 113 supported services are still running in some form. Future years look even more challenging with the prospect of further budget reductions and the ever growing demand for social care which takes priority over everything.

The work of LCC involves responsibilities for:

- school service contract (200 +) including DBS checks
- NoW card applications (220,000 in Lancs.)
- ticket data monitoring
- timetable and information publication in partnership with operators
- Traveline – supply of data
- Bus station management

A series of investment projects have been completed or are in the process of development viz:

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

Preston bus station - refurbishment began on 26 September and is scheduled for completion by the end of 2017. It will offer 33 bays on the eastern side

Accrington bus station opened in July 2016 and features hi-tech information and passenger assistance.

The Pennine Reach initiative is complete featuring new shelters, new vehicles, traffic light priority, and bus lanes

Lancaster Park & Ride – opens November 2016 adjacent to M6 junction 34

Parish Community bus scheme - £1million development fund to support local bus provision. Already accessed by Chorley BC and Longton PC.

Rail responsibilities include active involvement with Rail North, Community Rail Partnerships, School and College travel need, and all future rail development in the County.

5. “Just a Minute”

Items raised during the “Just a Minute” session included:

- Withdrawal of duo tickets by Arriva Northern rail
- Bus services between Tarleton and Leyland
- Effective rail connections to complement HS2
- Transparency and publication of bus fares

6. Blazing Ahead – Buses People want to be seen on *Alex Hornby, Chief Executive, Transdev Blazefield*

Transdev operates buses across a linear strip of the north from Preston to Scarborough. This includes services in Blackburn, Burnley and most of East Lancs as well as Keighley, Harrogate, Leeds and York. The company also operates the Coastliner service between Leeds and Whitby.

There is a significant market change in bus travel with growing competitive factors from online on demand services like Lyft, and Uber. Even on line shopping and apps such as Deliveroo are competitive affording the passenger with the ability to shop from home rather than making journeys for the purpose. Driverless vehicles also bring a future challenge as their technology emerges. Consequently there is a need for bus operators to react with a quality product that is attractive to passengers old and new. Transdev has adopted a philosophy that takes in a number of stratagems:

- Customers proud to use bus services
- Staff are content, happy and proud of the business
- Innovative business model leading to success
- Redefining the travel environment

Transdev examined good business models in the industry and mirrored them. Investment in vehicles to either modernise or replace together with good frequency of service has resulted in significant passenger growth. It has recognised “flat” markets when they occur and found remedies. They have also taken into account the volatility of the market if quality drops or stagnates and reacted positively with corrective results. It therefore operates a perpetual and economic heavy refurbishment programme “doing more with less.”

New initiatives include:

- City Zap – an express non-stop service between Leeds and York with the driver empowered to select best routes to minimise delays caused by traffic congestion
- positively entering partnerships such as Pennine Reach
- contactless payment facilities on board vehicles
- app development featuring bus tracking
- mobile phone ticketing
- even an on board library
- local bus branding – connecting with local people
- hybrid buses in urban areas using innovative fuelling
- investment in staff to create sense of belonging and ownership of company

7. Little Green Bus – bringing transport services to the heart of the community ***Donna Atkinson, Chief Executive, Little Green Bus***

The Little Green Bus service commenced in 1992 to provide Community Transport in the Ribble Valley area of East Lancashire. It provides door to door “dial a ride” community transport services and with mini buses and volunteer car drivers. It currently has just over 30 bus and car drivers operative. The company is a charity and so does not operate the national concession scheme. It charges a membership fee of £20 per annum and a journey fee of £2 each way. It normally requires 48 hours notice but can be flexible in extreme cases of need. It also runs a Day Out trip weekly at a flat rate of £11, regardless of destination.

The company works in partnership with Lancs. County Council and is in cooperation and dialogue with other Community Transport operators in the county, being part of a county wide consortium for which it currently acts as the lead body. This enables a simplistic approach with LCC support through a single contract, the sharing of good practice, performance monitoring, development of a corporate image all of which lead to better recognition and wider use. Funding also comes from lottery initiatives and other donations.

The company also offers services such as a minibus driver awareness scheme (MIDAS), vehicle hire with or without driver, and acts as a mobile neighbourhood watch and “listening ear” alerting services to any situation encountered. It is also liaising and working with parish councils to soften the effects of cuts.

8. Next Conference

Thursday 9th February, 2017, Warrington

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

Attendance

Name	Organisation
Alan Mayor	Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line
Alex Hornby	Transdev Blazefield Ltd
Andrew Varley	Lancashire County Council
Cedric Green	North Cheshire Rail Users Group
Chris Dale	TravelWatch NorthWest
Chris Holmes	Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport
Chris Jarvis	Institute of Transport Administration
Colin Barnett	
Colin Kennington	TravelWatch NorthWest
David Armstrong	
David Beer	Transport Focus
David Brown	Transport for the North
David Burton	South East Lancs Rail Action Partnership
David Butterworth	TravelWatch NorthWest
David Culshaw	Friends of Hindley station
David Evans	Blackpool & Fylde Rail Users Assoc.
David Simper	Blackpool Council
Derek Tasker	Ormskirk Preston Southport Travellers Assoc.
Donna Atkinson	Little Green Bus
Don Jary	
Doug Macadam	Ormskirk Preston Southport Travellers Assoc.
Edward Boothroyd	Great Western
Elisabeth Tasker	Stagecoach Merseyside & South Lancs
Geoff Kerr	
Graham Meiklejohn	First Transpennine Express
Jim Davies	Lancaster District Bus Users Group
Joe Hannett	Preston Community Transport
John Aaron	
John Berry	Ormskirk Preston Southport Travellers Assoc.
John Hart	TravelWatch NorthWest
John Hobbs	North Cheshire Rail Users Group
John Lobb	
John Moorhouse	TravelWatch NorthWest
John Owen	TravelWatch NorthWest
Judie Collins	Mid Cheshire Line Community Rail Partnership
Keith Pennyfather	
Ken Harper	Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line
Ken Swallow	Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport (NW)
Kenneth McKelvie	Ramblers Association
Lee Rowbotham	Transport Focus
Lillian Burns	TravelWatch NorthWest
Malcolm Conway	TravelWatch NorthWest
Malcolm Richardson	Blackpool & Fylde Rail Users Assoc.
Margaret Mitchell	
Martin Robinson	Arriva North West

Martin Shier	Transport for Greater Manchester
Matthew Cranwell	Stagecoach Cumbria & North Lancs
Matthew Worman	Northern Rail
Meera Rambissoon	TAS Partnership
Mike Laycock	Wirral Transport Users Association
Mike Machin	Lancaster & Morecambe Rail Users Group
Neil Caldwell	Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport
Norman Adams	
Oliver Starkey	Lancashire County Council
Peter Lamkin	Wrexham Birkenhead Rail Users Association
Richard Lysons	
Rob Jones	Stagecoach Merseyside & South Lancs
Robert Florence	North Cheshire Rail Users Group
Robert Mason	Blackpool Transport Services Ltd
Robert Talbot	TravelWatch NorthWest
Roger Barton	Goyt Valley Rail Users Association
Ron Herbert	
Roy Chapman	Lynwood Transtect
Sarah Huntley	TAS Partnership
Siobhan Woodland	Merseytravel
Stephen Waring	Halifax & District Rail Action Group
Sue Mullen	Confederation of Passenger Transport
Tim Young	Campaign for Better Transport Lancs
Tony Potts	Copeland Rail Users Group
Tony Young	TravelWatch NorthWest