

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

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

## **CONFERENCE REPORT**

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

**The Old Fire Station, University of Salford**

**Conference kindly supported by Salford City Council**

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

The Chairman, Chris Dale, welcomed delegates to Salford and thanked Salford City Council for its generous support to the Conference.

He began the meeting by expressing concern at the possible curtailment of rail electrification in the North in the Secretary of State's recent announcement which also included news about a U-turn in the programme to electrify the Windermere line. TOWN had written to the Minister expressing these concerns and received an immediate response that was both patronising and complacent in its tone. A response is being prepared setting out reasons why the North should be treated equally to the South East.

He also referred to the many engineering projects in the North West and TOWN's monitoring exercises that were being carried out to review alternative service arrangements.

Following the election of the Mayors for Greater Manchester and Merseyside TOWN made submissions setting out the company's role and ambitions for public transport.

The Chairman had attended 22 meetings and events since the last conference as well as keeping the Facebook page refreshed with regular news items received by TOWN.

### **2. Welcome to the City of Salford**

***Paul Dennett, Mayor of Salford & Roger Jones, Executive Lead for Transport***

Paul Dennett, the Mayor of Salford, welcomed TravelWatch NW to Salford and commended the important work of the company. He referred to the City's proud history in public transport provision including the 1<sup>st</sup> public bus service in 1824, Bradshaw's 1<sup>st</sup> train timetable in 1839 and the 1<sup>st</sup> municipal airport at Barton.

Additionally Salford University was celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> year, excelling in providing degree courses in all aspects of public transport provision.

He emphasised that the City Council viewed good public transport as a vital service and that it was a major component of the City's strategy to develop and grow but at the same time remain sustainable. The Leigh Guided Busway, the City's Cycling Initiative and the Electric car programme were all examples of this commitment. The Salford Bus network review had been completed and was now in discussion with Transport for Greater Manchester. The re-draft of the Greater Manchester Framework was also a major project that identified public transport as central to its successful completion.

Roger Jones added his welcome to Salford and mentioned the historic debate with the then Government and subsequent campaign over Metrolink that led to a reverse in the cancellation decision and the 20 years of planning for the Leigh Guided Busway. He also mentioned the Irlam station project resulting in a healthy public/private sector initiative and the Congestion charge consultation, which despite being voted down was now re-emerging as a possible future idea.

### **3. Vantage & the wider bus network in Greater Manchester**

***Martin Shier, Bus Partnerships Delivery Manager, TfGM***

***Brandon Jones, Head of First Bus UK (Yorkshire & Greater Manchester)***

Martin Shier began by describing the Bus Priority Programme for Greater Manchester which provided an investment of £122 million in the routes from Leigh/Atherton via the guided busway, and Middleton to Manchester. Leigh was the only town in the UK of its size that did not have a rail link so the busway option was cited for investment. This had included the building of the guided busway, bus priority lanes/junctions, the re-engineering of Oxford Road priorities towards the University and the development of cycleways.

Planned benefits were:

- Shorter journey times
- Better reliability and punctuality
- Single journey options including cross city
- Access to main employment sites, University and hospitals
- Better connectivity & improved interchanges

The Guided section of the Leigh Guided Busway was opened on 3 April 2016 and runs for 7.5 km from Leigh to Ellenbrook and then via a further 6 km of dedicated bus lanes towards Salford & Manchester. It has 7 pairs of stops and a 4.5 metre wide multi use path for pedestrians and cyclists. In the process of building 10 major junctions received improvement, new landscaping was provided and Tyldesley Square and Leigh Bus station were redeveloped. The Busway, an owned asset of TfGM, has a 24 hour operation with dedicated managers and control centres in Manchester & Wigan.

Brandon Jones then described the experiences of the 1<sup>st</sup> 18 months of operation of the Leigh Guided Busway. 4 buses per hour operate between Leigh & Atherton &

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Manchester via Tyldesley which in turn benefits from 8 per hour. The journey time is 50 minutes and the service is carrying 50,000 passengers per week, a high proportion of which are concession ticket holders or leisure travellers. A day ticket is priced at £4.50 and a weekly ticket, £15. The service was extended to Oxford Road and the University & Hospital in April this year.

Vehicles offer free WiFi, next stop audio visual announcements, CCTV, climate control, high quality seating with some at tables, and are hydro electrically powered giving low emissions.

Feedback from customers has been extremely positive. A recent Satisfaction Survey brought in 3800 responses revealing a 98% satisfaction rate and that 67% used the services at least once a week, 73% live within 1 km of the route, 20% extracted from car journeys and a 36% modal shift. 90 drivers are currently trained for the routes and the vehicles, based at the Bolton depot.

In subsequent discussion the service was described as a good alternative to train travel with better comfort. In terms of future development of routes there were limitations of suitable corridors but it was under consideration. Double deck vehicles were selected above articulated single deck to better negotiate road structures. The Piccadilly Gardens destination had been a temporary arrangement during Oxford Road works but could be re-considered if demand was proved.

#### **4. Mobike in Greater Manchester** ***Steve Pyer, General Manager, Mobike UK***

Mobike was launched in China in April 2016 and now provides 7.5 million cycles for hire in 200 cities in 8 countries around the world. It is currently providing 30 million rides per day. It has 200 million registered users.

Mobike launched in Manchester, its 1<sup>st</sup> UK city, on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017 with 1000 cycles provided at strategic locations. To access the service customers must first register on-line and open an account. They will then receive an access code via a mobile phone app that will enable them to unlock a cycle. A £29 returnable deposit is applied at registration and a cycle usage fee is charged at 50p per 30 minutes.

Data recording equipment is contained in each cycle enabling journey tracking, types and trends. This data is useful for partnership and stakeholder development. A partnership has been established with British Cycling and a number of joint events have been organised to encourage cycling as an alternative transport mode and for training purposes. Mobike employs local staff and supports local good causes as well as providing international exposure through its worldwide network.

In discussion the risk of vandalism was identified but in practice, whilst there had been an above average degree in the UK, it was not as bad as had been reported in some quarters.

## 5. Points of View

The Points of View session provides an opportunity for delegates to raise any matter they wish to on public transport issues in the region. The following matters were raised and debated:

Inter-connectivity at Eccles – The layout of locations for various transport modes was stated to be inconvenient and could benefit from improvement.

Printed train timetables – Recent changes to design, layout and coverage of printed timetables as well as withdrawal of some issues was stated to be misleading in many cases. There was a patchwork of styles and inconsistency. Northern stated that there had been some consolidation and that it was difficult to come up with coverage that suited all users. On line solutions for such information were a more modern option but all TOC's remained open to suggestions and requests.

Train stops at Chinley – The new East Midland franchise proposed a reduction in stops at Chinley making access to social travel needs more difficult. Need to lobby for re-instatement and TOWNW would support this in consultation response.

Rail Replacement Buses responsibility – The train operators are responsible for replacement services and TOWNW is constantly monitoring and reporting back on quality and service issues.

Seniors Concession Passes – Bus operators are relatively content with the provision of concessionary travel but recognise inconsistencies between local authority areas.

Electrification Progress - The Manchester to Preston electrification appears to be slipping with a large degree of work yet to be started. Now scheduled for May 2018 timetable so may require some monitoring.

### 5. Salford Rail Strategy *Roy Chapman, Lynwood Transtec Ltd.*

The Salford City area, wished to develop its position as a leading global city, addressing challenges to develop a transport system that would help fulfil its potential. The Rail Strategy identified a realistic and achievable vision, to make substantial improvements to the city area's public transport network. The City of Salford saw the rail network as being a vital part of the future, if it can be improved with targeted investment in infrastructure, stations and services. The wide range of ideas within the Salford Rail Strategy were all about connectivity, modal shift, regeneration, economic development, and transforming the quality of life for the City's residents, and the travel experience of visitors. The Strategy also supported the revised Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, the Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan, the TfGM 2040 Transport Vision and other such work. It also related to the aspirations of the Northern Powerhouse and Rail North.

The 4 Core Objectives are:

- Bringing measurable benefits to rail passengers
- Achieving wider economic and social objectives of regeneration, employment, inclusion, and accessibility in the Salford communities served by rail
- Ensuring that rail contributes to sustainable development across Salford
- Ensuring that where practicable Salford City Council's spatial and planning policies are integrated with developments on the rail network

Delivery identifies 4 main sectors for focussed attention:

#### Train services routes and rolling stock

- Reduced Crowding and extra Sunday Services
- Delivery of Franchise Commitments
- Improved set of services between Salford Central and Manchester Airport/Liverpool
- Chat Moss Line implications of reduced TPE services
- Atherton Line Enhancements
- Electrification progress and opportunities

#### Stations– Salford Cent/Salford Cres/Walkden/Irlam/Eccles/Patricroft/Moorside/Clifton

- To be located at the heart of Communities
- Wider recognition of role
- Development of Commercial and Investment potential
- Community involvement
- Regeneration of surrounding areas
- Interchange and Integration improvements
- Accessibility Initiatives
- Improvement of facilities & amenities including retail outlets
- Platform modernisation
- Identification of station catchment areas

#### Stakeholder Relationships

- Freight - Port Salford terminal
- Community Rail Projects – single CRP for Salford
- Friends Groups
- TOC's investments
- Station Adoption schemes

#### Longer term developments incorporating sustainability & investment

- Metrolink expansion and development using disused railways
- Re-opening closed stations where deemed useful
- Skelton Junc – Glazebrook Junc. – Tram or Busway/Freight access

In discussion reference was made to other rail and transport strategies in Greater Manchester Boroughs. Presently Stockport uses its 2015 document and Rochdale is currently in the process of producing one. It was emphasised that station

maintenance after re-development was important and timescales have to be flexible to acknowledge financial and resource pressures.

## **7. Rail Strategy in the North of England**

***David Hoggarth, Rail North Director***

The Northern region consisted of 14,400 square miles, 16 million people, and 7.9 million jobs and provided 20% of the UK economy. Growth has outstripped the national average with the North West recording the largest internal growth outside London. By 2050 GVA is expected to reach £97 billion with 850,000 more jobs.

Rail North is in partnership with 25 local authorities, 11 Local Enterprise Partnerships, and 4 development organisations in the North of England and has a formal partnership with DfT to manage the Northern Trains and the Trans Pennine Express franchises. It is overseeing the delivery of franchise commitments including the procurement and delivery into service of 500 new carriages. The organisation will be integrated into Transport for the North in 2018. It has a vision to have a world class railway that will see a 40% increase in passengers, £60 million investment in stations and 2000 more train services per week including Sundays.

As well as co-managing the 2 franchises Rail North will provide a strong voice for the North, create a Strategic Plan for travel and seek to deliver Smart travel technology.

The Rail Strategy for the North of England, currently in production, will be evidence based and feature a number of transport objectives and multi modal options. It will identify strategic development corridors and highlight priorities for connectivity. It will integrate with the Transport for the North work programme, its transport plan and investment programme and will also seek to update the current long term strategy. Its priorities will be:

- Delivery of Passenger Benefits
- Delivery of Network Rail projects
- Make the case for Trans Pennine route upgrade

In discussion the future of services on the Cumbrian coast was raised and it was confirmed that Rail North was working with the LEP to deliver a better service. The deferment of the Platforms 15/16 proposals at Manchester Piccadilly was now a major challenge in being able to deliver extra capacity and the case was still being made. Improvements to the service between Ellesmere Port and Helsby was not a current priority but if a case could be made it could be considered. Electrification decisions would be reviewed against finance availability and dialogue with DfT was ongoing. Alternative routings were being considered as well as correcting any disparity in fare structures (e.g. cross PTE boundaries). Staffing was acknowledged as an issue that will need to grow to cater for all new services and dialogue to ensure delivery of this element of the growth plan is ongoing with the franchisees.

## **8. Next Conference**

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Lancaster

## Attendance

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Name	Organisation
Alan Goater	Chinley and Buxworth Transport Group
Alan Jackson	High Peak & Hope Valley CRP
Andy Saunders	Manchester Airport
Bec Bennett	Salford University
Bob Robinson	Ormskirk Preston Southport Travellers Assoc.
Brandon Jones	First UK Bus (Yorks & Greater Manchester)
Chris Dale	TravelWatch NorthWest
Chris Holmes	TravelWatch NorthWest
Chris Smith	Salford City Council
Colin Kennington	TravelWatch NorthWest
Craig Wright	Goyt Valley Rail Users Association
Dave Koring	Severn-Dee Travel Ltd
David Armstrong	
David Butterworth	TravelWatch NorthWest
David Culshaw	Friends of Hindley station
David Evans	Blackpool & Fylde Rail Users Association
David Godsmark	
David Hoggarth	Rail North
Dennis Harrison	Wirral Transport Users Association
Doug Macadam	Ormskirk Preston Southport Travellers Assoc.
Frederick Consterdine	
Geoff Kerr	
Ian Stuart	
James McCollom	ROSSO Bus
Janet Briggs	North Cheshire Rail Users Group
Jim Davies	Lancaster Bus Users Group
John Bone	
John Culshaw	
John Hart	TravelWatch NorthWest
John Lobb	
John Moorhouse	TravelWatch NorthWest
John Owen	TravelWatch NorthWest
John Ryan	Wirral Transport Users Association
Judie Collins	Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association
Kathy Jones	

Keith Pennyfather	
Keith Whitmore	
Ken Swallow	Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport (NW)
Kenneth McKelvie	Ramblers Association
Lee Evans	Salford City Council
Lillian Burns	TravelWatch NorthWest
Lucja Majewski	TransPennine Express
Malcolm Conway	TravelWatch NorthWest
Malcolm Richardson	Blackpool & Fylde RUA
Margaret Mitchell	
Mark Barker	Cheshire Best KeptStations
Martin Shier	Transport for Greater Manchester
Matthew Worman	Northern Rail
Mike Laycock	Wirral Transport Users Association
Miriam Walton	Chinley and Buxworth Transport Group
Neil Caldwell	Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport
Norman Adams	
Owain Roberts	Transport for Greater Manchester
Paul Dennett	Mayor of Salford
Peter Lamkin	Wrexham- Bidston Rail Users Association
Phil Pearson	
Phil Rowbotham	Friends of Heaton Chapel Station
Philip Briggs	North Cheshire Rail Users Group
Richard Lysons	Friends of Littleborough station
Richard Wright	B'Spoke Coffee
Robert Florence	North Cheshire Rail Users Group
Roger Jones	Salford City Council
Ross Stafford	Stagecoach Manchester
Roy Chapman	
Sandra Dutson	RoadPeace North West
Sheila Dee	Chester Shrewsbury Rail Partnership
Stephen Jones	
Stephen Waring	
Steve Hopkins	Friends of Eccles Station
Steve Pyer	Mobike
Tim Young	Campaign for Better Transport Lancs
Tony Potts	Copeland Rail Users Group