

promoting quality public transport.....

8th October 2008

Response to GMPTA's Consultation on its bid to DfT's Transport Innovation Fund.

TravelWatch NorthWest (TWNW) supports the principle of influencing modal shift by a combination of Congestion Charging and hypothecating revenues to procure enhancements to public transport. This is seen as an essential element of a transport strategy to manage demand ¹.

This overall support, however, is qualified by a number of reservations (considered below) relating to specific elements of the plan.

GMPTA's plan	TWNW's responses
Proposed enhancements	
Metrolink 3B	Agree need for additional city centre link ²
New Park and Ride sites	Agree these should be paid for by TIF or Congestion Charging and should be located at transport hubs, ideally on brownfield land, and where they will neither <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage "railheading" by motorists from outside GM taking advantage of GMPTA low fares nor, if they require their own dedicated services, abstract from existing bus or rail services ³
Additional rolling stock for Metrolink and local rail	There is already chronic overcrowding on both the rail and tram networks and TWNW strongly support this strategy. Indeed there is a pressing need to take action to procure additional rolling stock for many rail commuter lines as quickly as possible whatever the outcome of the TIF referendum
GM Travelcard	No Local Transport Authority has yet succeeded, despite existing statutory powers, ⁴ in introducing a statutory bus and rail ticketing scheme. TWNW considers that little short of a Quality Contract will be able to deliver a multi modal properly co-ordinated and integrated public passenger transport system such as is envisaged. Any travelcard scheme

¹ CILT NW offer the same broad support in their response (July 2008) to the GMPTA Consultative document "Our Future Transport"

² **TWNW response to "Regional Centre Transport Strategy" Jan 2008**

³ NW TAR's draft Position Statement Sept 2008 and TWNW's submission to NWRA RTS June 2006

	should also permit the use of smartcards to pay both public transport fares and the congestion charge, and should be “ITSO compatible” with recently introduced national smartcard concessionary bus passes.
Governance	Many users from outside Greater Manchester, despite being significant stakeholders, will be disenfranchised by the referendum. TOWNW is concerned at the lack of consultation with these “stakeholders”. The proposals ideally require to be administered by a single unified body with a clear elected mandate. Neither AGMA nor GMPTA fully meet this requirement but an expanded PTE constituted as an Integrated Transport Authority ⁵ and covering the GM “journey to work” area could well do so.
Cycling and walking	No targets are set, ⁶ apart from those relating to cycle parking at rail and metrolink stations within GM. TOWNW supports “soft measures” such as travel plans and believes they should be given more consideration in the plan.
Phase 2 proposed highway investments (Wigan relief road, SEMMS etc)	Phase 2 should prioritise on further public transport improvements rather than road building. TOWNW would prefer to see the emphasis in Phase 2 placed more on any “windfall revenues” supporting additional public transport, including schools and community transport
“A transformed bus network”	
“higher frequencies, especially in the peak”	TOWNW supports this approach but also believes that the paucity of early morning, evening and Sunday services is a major disincentive to modal shift.
Bus priorities	TOWNW supports these, provided they are rigorously enforced. Unreliability of bus services is a further major disincentive to modal shift.
New interchanges	TOWNW supports these as an essential prerequisite of a properly co-ordinated and integrated public passenger transport system and hopes they will be both mono and multi modal as appropriate.
Less competing services and a more co-ordinated and integrated public passenger transport network	TOWNW cannot see how this can be achieved without recourse to area wide Quality Contract(s) ⁷ . The proposal should make the intended methodology more transparent.

⁴ Transport Act 2000 s 138

⁵ Transport Bill 2008

⁶ NW TAR’s draft Position Statement Sept 2008

⁷ Transport Act 2000 as intended to be amended by Transport Bill 2008 – It may be possible but very difficult to rely on adjoining Statutory Quality Partnerships as redefined in the Bill.

Guided busway	TWNW supports this proposal for the Salford – Leigh corridor
Bus Rapid Transit Services and Cross City Services	The latter appear not to sufficiently penetrate Manchester City Centre, most passengers' preferred destination ⁸
Expand Yellow School Bus fleet	TWNW supports this policy as a significant contribution to modal shift. It should be further expanded in Phase 2
Hypothecation of Congestion Charge Revenues	TWNW agrees that this is an essential 'quid pro quo', and further urges that 100% of the proposed public transport enhancements ⁹ are put in place before congestion charging either by TIF funding or by borrowing against and ahead of the revenue streams from the eventual Congestion Charging

The Proposed Congestion Charge

GMPTA's plan	TWNW's responses
Peak hours inner and outer charging cordons	<p>TWNW believes the plan feasible but cautions that the proposed "tag and beacon" technology might be overtaken by more recent and more sophisticated developments. Regard should be had to the results of DfT trials of possible alternative road pricing mechanisms (e.g. GPS or NPR based systems) which might deliver potential better value for TIF moneys. The final choice of technology needs to have maximum flexibility so as to be as "future proof" as possible and be able to accommodate any changes in cordons and perhaps eventually also be compatible with any emerging national road pricing systems.</p> <p>The location of the outer cordon inside the M60 could potentially be considered illogical. It could have the unintended consequence of re-assigning some cross city traffic to the orbital motorway, and further studies of this possibility are urged.</p> <p>A wider outer cordon ¹⁰ might avoid this and simultaneously provide the opportunity to bring some of the other seriously congested centres in GM (whose</p>

⁸ TWNW response to "Regional Centre Transport Strategy" Jan 2008

⁹ the consultation document now refers to 80%

¹⁰ NWTAR suggest positioning the outer cordon at the PTE boundaries - NW TAR's draft Position Statement Sept 2008

	exclusion could be potentially unfair) into the scheme
Ring fencing of revenues for spending on enhanced public passenger transport initiatives	TWNW considers hypothecation of revenues an essential pre-requisite if congestion charging is to gain public support. Spending on improved public transport ¹¹ ahead of congestion charging is a further imperative ¹²
City centre economic regeneration	This claim appears unsubstantiated, indeed the congestion charge could have a constraining effect on some City Centre businesses ¹³ . TWNW believes that the TIF bid should focus as much on social benefits as on economic regeneration.
Reduced traffic growth	TWNW suggests absolute reductions in traffic and in average journey lengths ¹⁴ with a clear correlation with improved bus service reliability, would be more useful “key aims” ¹⁵

Abbreviations

TWNW – TravelWatch NorthWest
TAR - Transport Activists Round table
CILT - Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport
RTS - Regional Transport Strategy
RSS - Regional Spatial Strategy (includes RTS)
RES - Regional Economic Strategy
GPS – Global Positioning Systems
NPR – Number Plate Recognition (as in London Charging Scheme)

Explanations

RSS and RES are to combine as SRS (Single Regional Strategy) of the appointed North West Development Agency.

Previously RSS was created and ‘owned’ by the indirectly elected NW Regional Assembly (NWRA, now reconstituted as ‘4NW’).

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¹¹ Either by TIF funding or by borrowing secured on future congestion charging revenue streams

¹² CILT/NW Policy Committee initial submission. “GM Future Transport Initiative (TIF)” July 2008

¹³ Point made by both NWCILT and NWTAR

¹⁴ By reducing the need to travel in line with the NW RSS/RTS

¹⁵ NW TAR’s draft Position Statement Sept 2008