

# NWPTUF's Key Bus Corridors Study for NWRA



## REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT IDENTIFICATION OF KEY BUS AND COACH CORRIDORS

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## 1. STUDY BRIEF

### Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to assist in the drafting of the RTS by identifying strategic bus and coach corridors and measures needed to improve accessibility to jobs and key services at the regional and sub-regional level. The measures should seek to provide an alternative to the private car and also to expand travel choice and access for those without a car.

### Study outputs

The study should aim to identify the following using the corridors identified in the draft Public Transport Framework:

- Bus and Coach frequencies on the identified corridors.
- Those services that are run on a commercial basis for all or part of the day or week.
- Location of key interchanges between bus and coach services and other public transport services identifying where interchange is poor.
- Location of formal and informal park and ride and suggestions for potential for more formalised arrangements.
- A map showing key corridors and interchanges and frequencies during the working day and at other times.

Using the above information and any other that is thought relevant the study should make recommendations at a regional and sub-regional level that will improve accessibility to jobs and key services. The recommendations should consider the following.

- Improvement to bus and coach services and key interchanges
- The opportunity for strategic Park and Ride sites to serve the City Regions.
- Any gaps in provision of key services and whether additional services could be provided, and interchanges where public transport choices are not available.

## 2. PARAMETERS OF THE STUDY

The parameters of the study were set by the Interim Draft Revision of the NWRA's North West Plan

This identifies <sup>1</sup> a "settlement hierarchy" comprising

- two City Regions based on Manchester and Liverpool, and each embracing a number of satellite Regional Towns and Cities.
- a further Central Lancashire City Region embracing four Regional Towns and Cities and

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<sup>1</sup> table 4.1.

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- two other sub-regions (W & S Cheshire and Cumbria and N Lancs) each including a number of Regional Towns and Cities.

The Interim Draft also identifies <sup>2</sup> by diagram and tabulation a Regional Public Transport Framework comprising

- Key Regional Public Transport Corridors (all of which happen to be rail served) and
- “Other” Regional Public Transport Corridors.

At a level below Regional Towns and Cities the hierarchy identifies Key Service Centres <sup>3</sup>, a number of which comprise significant public transport nodes which either already generate or have the potential to generate significant feeder services to the core Regional Public Transport Framework in the Working Draft.

One Local Transport Authority (Cumbria) nominated five Key Service Centres which are also significant bus service hubs. By reference to these they were able to describe four bus corridors with significant passenger movement which had not been identified in the Assembly's draft as “Other” regional Public Transport corridors.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

A desk review of each of the “Key” and “Other” Regional Public Transport Corridors was conducted using the database at [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk) to establish what, if any, timetabled bus services ran on these, and their daytime frequency.

The desk review also identified a number of corridors between Regional Centres, Towns and Cities not shown in the draft Regional Public Transport Framework.

A slightly different desk review of interurban coach services was also conducted using [www.nationalexpress.co.uk](http://www.nationalexpress.co.uk) which was able to show all the daily national express journeys <sup>4</sup> between selected nodes on selected “well coach served” Public Transport Corridors

This was then followed by structured interviews with the relevant transport co-ordinating officers at the two PTEs and three “Shire” County Councils <sup>5</sup> to eliminate as far as possible those services which are mainly supported by service subsidies awarded after tender <sup>6</sup>.

The opportunity was taken to discover from the interviewee

- existing and possible bus P+R schemes
- potential bus P+R schemes
- existing informal bus P+R schemes
- Information on bus/rail interchanges
- potential network improvements and feeder services

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix RT.1.1 and Diagram RT 1.1.

<sup>3</sup> almost but not entirely identical to those identified in existing Structure Plans.

<sup>4</sup> Irrespective of their being parts of disparate services

<sup>5</sup> the Regional Public Transport Framework does not include any services entirely within any Unitary Authorities.

<sup>6</sup> as provided by the Transport Act 1985

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- gaps in the Public Transport Framework
- Deficiencies in cross boundary (especially into adjacent other Regions) services.

In order to identify Potential Feeder Services a selection was made of Key Service Centres not situated along the defined corridors. This helped to pinpoint a number of Centres not situated on any Public Transport corridors but having bus links (or potential links) thereto.

The methodology met the purpose of the study in so far as it was able to identify strategic bus and coach corridors. It was the most difficult part of the study as the only keepers of bus patronage figures for commercial services are their operators, but using the proxies described below it was possible to arrive at reasonably robust conclusions.

### Proxies.

Bus and Coach Passenger patronage on commercial routes is extremely difficult to obtain. Operators guard this statistic jealously as it is the key to successful tendering should a commercial service be de-registered.

Patronage figures obtained from operators by DfT <sup>7</sup> routinely vary <sup>8</sup> from those obtained by County Councils <sup>9</sup>

Two proxies which if mutually inclusive can point to significant bus passenger movement are

- through services with a frequency of 120 mins or better **AND**
- through services which are also commercial (this proxy includes all Coach services).

*Corridors where these criteria are not met are shown in italics in the following tabulations .*

## 4. BUS AND COACH SERVICE FREQUENCIES ON REGIONAL TRANSPORT CORRIDORS.

The tables below show the current frequencies that have been ascertained together with those services that are commercial. As far as can be ascertained these were operational as at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006 although any pending deregistrations are not included.

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<sup>7</sup> Operators' Bus Service Operator grant (BSOG) returns show only registered mileages.

<sup>8</sup> Local transport Today 27/10/05

<sup>9</sup> as BVM Indicators (BVPI 106)

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TABLE 1

Corridors identified in Appendix RT1.1 and shown in Diagram RT 1.1 (Regional Public Transport Framework)

From	To	Direct Rail link?	Bus No.	frequ (mins)	Comment	Commercial Service? Y = yes T= tendered K= kickstart
Manchester	Ashton	Y	216	4		Y
Manchester	Oldham	Y	82/3	5		Y
Oldham	Rochdale	Y	409	10		Y
Manchester	Stockport	Y	192	5		Y
Stockport	Macclesf'ld	Y	392 393	60		Y
Manchester	Bury	LRT <sup>10</sup>	135	7.5		Y
Manchester	Bolton	Y	8	10		Y
Manchester	Altrincham	Y +LRT	263	15		Y
Altrincham	Northwich	Y	289	120		Y
Altrincham	Stockport	Y	370	30		Y
Manchester	Rochdale	Y	17	10		Y
Manchester	Wigan	Y (2)	32	30		Y
Warrington	Wigan	Y	360	30		Y
Warrington	M/chester	Y(2)	100	60		Y
Warrington	Altrincham	N	37/8	30		Y
Manchester	M/chester Airport	Y	105 NX 11	15		Y
Liverpool	Southport	Y	284 47/8	10		Y
Liverpool	John Lennon Airport	Y	X 500	30	Bus from Liverpool South Parkway from summer 2006	Y
Liverpool	Birkenhead	Y		2.5	Numerous tunnel buses	Y
Liverpool	Chester	Y	X11	30		Y
Runcorn	Liverpool	Y	14 82 X5	30		Y

<sup>10</sup> Light Rapid Transit (Tram)

<sup>11</sup> Many National Express services are extended to call at the Airport.

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Warrington	Liverpool	Y	6	60		Y daytime
Warrington	Runcorn	Y	X30	60	Chester to Warrington via Runcorn Bus Stn	Y
Warrington	Widnes	Y	10	30	or Change	Y
Warrington	St Helens	N	50	60	Newton	Y
Wigan	St Helens	Y	320	30	leWillows	Y
St Helens	Liverpool	Y	10	5		Y
Burnley	Blackburn	Y	152	30		Y
Blackburn	Preston	Y	152 X59	30 60		Y
Preston	Blackpool	Y	X61 58	60 60	bypasses centre Bp	Part t evenings
Preston	Bolton	Y	125 126	15	via Chorley	Y
Preston	Lancaster	Y	40/ 41	30 (20/40)		Y
<i>Barrow</i>	<i>Whitehav'n</i>	Y			No service	
Whitehaven Workington	Maryport Carlisle	Y	300	60		Y
Barrow	Lancaster	Y			No through service change Kendal	
<i>Crewe</i>	<i>Chester</i>	Y	<i>84</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>via Nantwich</i>	<i>K</i>
Wigan	Preston	Y	111	60	No through service change Chorley?	
Bolton	Blackburn	Y	225	30		Y
Bolton	Wigan	Y	559 540 542 715	10		Y
Lancaster	Carlisle	Y			No through service	

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TABLE 2

Corridors between Interchanges (both "Key" and "other" interchanges shown in Diagram RT1.1) but neither drawn in Diagram RT.1.1. or listed in Appendix RT.1.1

From	To	Direct Rail link	Bus No	Frequ (mins)	Comment	Commercial Service? Y = yes T = tendered K = kickstart
Warrington	Northwich	N	43-46	60	Combined routes hourly	Part T
Chester	Runcorn	N	21 X30	30		T evening
Chester	Northwich	Y	82	60		T
Macclesfield	Crewe	N	38	60	via Sandbach & Congleton	K
Northwich	Crewe	N	31	30	via Winsford	K
Stockport	Crewe	Y			No through bus service	
Ellesmere Port	Chester	Y	411	10		Y
Ellesmere Port	Runcorn	Y	36	60	Rail service infrequent	T
Oldham	Ashton-ul	N	409	10		Y
Stockport	Ashton-u-l	N	330	10		Y
Rochdale	Bury/Bolton	N	471	10		Y
Southport	Preston	N	X59	60	Rail Link	Y
Southport	Wigan	Y	365 375 385	30		Y
M/Cr Airport	Stockport/Buxton	Y via M/cr	199	30		Y
Manchester	Lpl Airport	N	700	60	Express	Y
Burnley	Manchester	Y	X43	20		Y
Rochdale	Burnley	via HB <sup>12</sup>	592	30	via Todmordn	Y
Lancaster	Blackpool	N	42	60		

<sup>12</sup> Hebden Bridge



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<i>Preston</i>	<i>Liverpool</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>303 X59</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>Preston - Ormskirk (Change Tarleton)</i>	<i>Y</i>
			<i>311</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>L'pool - Ormskirk</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Widnes</i>	<i>St Helens</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>30</i>		<i>Y</i>
<i>Rochdale</i>	<i>Blackburn</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>464</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Via Bacup to Accrington with connection on to Blackburn</i>	<i>Y</i>
			<i>244</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>withdrawn</i>	

**TABLE 3**

**Cross Boundary Services between NW Region and other adjoining Regions**

<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Direct Rail Link?</b>	<b>Bus No</b>	<b>Frequ (mins)</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Commercial service? Y = yes T = tendered K = kickstart</b>
Carlisle	Dumfries	Y	79	60		Y
Carlisle	Newcastle	Y	685	60		Y
Carlisle	Lockerbie Moffat	Y	382	60		Y
		N				
Carlisle	Edinboro'	Y	X95	60		Y
Carlisle	Leeds	Y			No services	
Rochdale	Halifax	Y	590	30		Y
Manchester	Sheffield	Y	NX 350	about 120 4 buses		Y
Macclesfield	Stoke	Y	38	20	Via Congleton	Y
Crewe	Stoke	Y	20	20		Y
Crewe	Stafford	Y			No through services	
Crewe	Whitchurch	Y				
Chester	Wrexham	Y	1	10		Y
Chester	Rhyl	Y	11	30		Y
Penrith	Darlington	N			No service	
<i>Preston</i>	<i>Skipton</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>280</i>	<i>120</i>		<i>T</i>
Oldham	Halifax	N	352	60		Y
Oldham	Huddersfield	N	184	60		Y

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Stockport	Buxton/ E Mids	Y	199 TP <sup>13</sup>	30 120		Y
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**TABLE 4**

**Services between Regional towns and cities and other Key Service Centres in Cumbria County Council's structure plan and identified as significant bus service nodes**

From	To	Direct Rail link?	Bus No.	Frequ (mins)	Comment	Commercial Service? Y = yes T = tendered K = kickstart
Kendal	Barrow	N	X35	60	Rail via Lancaster	Y
Keswick	Kendal - Lancaster	N	555	60		Y
Penrith	Keswick Workington	N	X4 X5	50		Y
Penrith	Carlisle	Y	104	60		Y
<i>Carlisle</i>	<i>Keswick</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>555</i>	<i>3 trips</i>		<i>T in winter</i>

**Coach Services** are not generally<sup>14</sup> included in the above tabulations. Most, apart from a few interurban express services<sup>15</sup> are provided by National Express. They are of limited use in serving the above corridors as they tend to pass along them at irregular (and sometimes infrequent) times dictated more by the planned departure or arrival times at or from remote termini such as London and Glasgow.

The following tabulation (**Table 5**) gives an indication of the level of National Express coach services along the two major axes comprising or paralleling the M6 (N-S) and the M62 (E-W) which they mainly service (along with diversions to call at the new Manchester Airport intermodal terminal where many passengers change coaches).

Services North of the M6/M62 junction are relatively sparse.

In addition to the services shown in the table there are numerous other journey opportunities occurring once or at most two or three times per day between disparate

<sup>13</sup> Trans Peak Express bus extended from Manchester to East Midlands (Derby- Nottingham)

<sup>14</sup> the 350 Manchester – Sheffield service is shown in table 4 as the only inter regional “bus” cross boundary link on that corridor

<sup>15</sup> e.g. Stagecoach's X61 Manchester – Preston and Blazefield's (Lancashire United) X43 Colne-Manchester

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regional nodes provided by “one off” services such as London to Workington and Manchester to Leicester <sup>16</sup>.

**TABLE 5**

### National Express Coach Services

From	To	Frequency (or journeys per day)
Manchester	Birmingham	12 journeys
	Leeds	½ hourly
	Liverpool	Hourly
	Glasgow	4 journeys
	London	20 journeys
	Sheffield	Approx two hourly – 4 journeys
Birmingham	Glasgow	2 through journeys
Liverpool	Glasgow	1 journey
	London	Approx every two hours

### 5. LOCATION OF KEY INTERCHANGES BETWEEN BUS AND COACH SERVICES AND OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES identifying where interchange is poor

Unlike in many continental European states, the early railway developers in the UK were often frustrated in their attempts to locate stations at convenient town centre locations. In some cases competing railway developers built separate stations in different parts of the same town. Many large towns in the NW have railway stations which are situated some distance from their commercial centres and from their bus./coach interchanges.

Manchester has two rail hubs serving the North and South of the City as well as the congested Piccadilly – Oxford Road rail corridor which connects some South Manchester services via the Windsor Link to the North and West.

Wigan and Warrington both have two main line stations. Liverpool Lime Street is a well placed central station connected to the local Merseyrail network. Despite a rationalisation of terminal stations in BRB days in Liverpool and Manchester neither city has been able to provide significant bus/rail interchange facilities at their major termini, although the new Queen Street bus station in Liverpool is much closer to Lime Street than is Piccadilly bus station to Piccadilly rail station.

The centreline bus in Warrington specifically connects Bank Quay and Central rail stations and the bus station. The free MetroShuttle mini bus services in Manchester do not connect Piccadilly and Victoria rail stations (seen as the function of the Metrolink, the light rail system), although one service does serve Victoria, Oxford Road and Salford Stations.

<sup>16</sup> via Macclesfield but recently diverted via Buxton – small towns lost more frequent coach calls at the expense of larger conurbations after express bus deregulation, Transport Act 1980 “Business of Transport” Bell, Bowen and Fawcett, M&E Press 1984

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Without the links provided by the Metroshuttle and Metrolink network bus/rail interchange in Manchester would be very poor.

For many reasons, including some of the above relating to the historic location of rail stations, the optimum location for bus stands or a bus station in many towns in the North West is not the rail station.

The categorisation of bus/rail interchange opportunities in regional and sub regional centres as either good or poor is to some extent subjective as there are so many criteria to consider, such as

- walking times/distance
- shelter
- pedestrian priorities
- terrain (especially steepness)
- existing bus/rail links (such as the bus at Chester Station which conveys rail passengers free to the City Centre)

However Table 6 is the result of an evidence based exercise which endeavours to set out the positive and negative aspects of interchange between bus/coach and other public transport and give an overall rating (good, fair or poor) for interchange in all regional centres and regional towns and cities in the north west.

**TABLE 6**

**Interchange characteristics between bus/coach and other public transport at Regional Centres/ Regional Towns and Cities<sup>17</sup>**

Positive factors, including planned improvements <sup>18</sup>	Negative factors	Bus/ Rail	Bus/ Bus
		<b>Good Fair or Poor?</b>	
<b>MANCHESTER</b>			
Main bus terminus at Piccadilly Gardens but several other termini in the City, and Shudehill Bus station with integral Metrolink stop opening shortly. Three mainline railways stations (plus Deansgate and Salford Central) within the City, all served by free MetroShuttle buses with 5/10 min daytime frequencies. Metrolink connects Piccadilly and Victoria Stations.	Separation of rail and bus stations	f	f

<sup>17</sup> as defined in the Interim Draft RSS

<sup>18</sup> as reported by Local Transport Authorities

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<b>LIVERPOOL</b>			
Lime Street rail station is 100m from Queen's Square bus station, with good pedestrian access via Merseyrail subway. Central station is close to both Lime St and the bus station. Buses stopping inward at Queens Square are mainly en route to new bus terminus at Paradise Street, adjacent to James Street Merseyrail station; a few services go on to Pierhead and the Mersey Ferries.	Only City bound buses stop outside Lime Street rail station	f	g
<b>Altrincham</b>			
Purpose designed interchange between Bus rail and tram. There are facilities for coaches.		g	g
<b>Ashton under lyne</b>			
The location of the bus station has helped to pinpoint the terminus of the proposed Metrolink extension to Ashton. It is close [only 100m apart] to the railway station which has recently been upgraded. There are facilities for coaches at the bus station,	Bus and rail stations on opposite side of inner ring road with no pedestrian phase at traffic lights.	f	g
<b>Bolton</b>			
An interchange adjacent to Trinity Street Rail Station was constructed in the late 1980's. The Interchange was never fully utilised owing to bus deregulation and it is currently being amended to reduce it in size and to make provision for taxis. However the potential is there if policies change. Some bus services terminate at this Bus/Rail Interchange. There are facilities for coaches at the Moor Street bus station,	Trinity Street Rail Station and the main Moor Street Bus Station 750ms apart	f	g
<b>Bury</b>			
Purpose designed bus/tram interchange. There are facilities for coaches		g	g
<b>Macclesfield</b>			
Macclesfield has a new bus station opened in March 2004. This is located very conveniently for the town centre, unlike the previous bus station which was some distance from the shopping area and separated from it by a steep hill. Interchange between buses is very easy as all bus services use it. The bus station is fully accessible, has a covered	There are no express coach services in Macclesfield, hence the question of bus/coach interchange does not arise.  The old, now demolished, Macclesfield bus station was across the road from the rail	f	g

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<p>concourse, security, public toilet and an information office. Market research indicates that users are very satisfied with it.</p> <p>Services to Macclesfield call at a bus stop outside the rail station, the penultimate stop before the bus station. Hence catching a train is easy and straightforward.</p> <p>People arriving by train and catching a bus have the option of catching a bus from the stop opposite the rail station and travelling the one stop to the bus station, or walking the short distance (250 metres) uphill to the bus station.</p>	<p>station</p>		
<b>Northwich</b>			
<p>Northwich has a recently built bus interchange. This comprises of on-street stands, all of which are accessible and have quality shelters. A staffed information kiosk is provided too. Its location is very convenient for the town. A bespoke stand for dial-a-ride type services is provided in the bus interchange. Market research indicates that users are very satisfied with it.</p>	<p>The rail station is some distance (about 0.75 mile) from the town centre and bus interchange. This means that bus/rail interchange is not very easy.</p>	p	g
<b>Oldham</b>			
<p>Frequent buses from Mumps bus layby to main Cheapside Bus Station 1km uphill. There are facilities for coaches at the bus station,</p>	<p>Bus laybys and shelters at Mumps Roundabout 200m from Mumps Rail Station and approached via long unfriendly pedestrian tunnel under inner ring road and pelican crossing.</p>	p	g
<b>Rochdale</b>			
<p>There are now plans to relocate the bus station to a new site and to a new design addressing many of the existing pedestrian access problems and as part of a major regeneration of the Town Centre. It will incorporate the proposed extension of Metrolink to Rochdale. There are facilities for coaches at the bus station</p>	<p>Rail Station 800m from bus station, which is shortly to be resited.</p>	p	g
<b>Stockport</b>			
<p>Many cross town buses stop on</p>	<p>Rail Station 500m from Mersey</p>	p	g

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Wellington Road 250m from Rail Station. The current location of the bus station is being reviewed as part of the new Town Centre Masterplan and it is hoped to strengthen the link to the railway station as well as accommodating a possible extension of Metrolink to Stockport. There are facilities for coaches at the bus station.	Square Bus Station and at a much higher level. The shortest link is by a steep flight of steps.		
<b>Warrington</b>			
Town bus service links rail and bus stations.	Two stations 1km apart. Bus station (currently being resited) 250m from Central Station. Town bus service only runs every 20 mins in daytime and because circular anti clockwise Bank Quay to Central takes much longer than Central to Bank Quay.	f	f
<b>Wigan</b>			
Rail stations 200m apart. A new Bus Station built 300m from Wigan Wallgate in the late 1980's replaced a series of on street stops and a small facility adjacent to the market. It is well used and links into the subsequent redevelopment of Wigan. There are facilities for coaches at the bus station,	Two stations either side of busy road. (A49)	p	g
<b>Birkenhead</b>			
New Merseyrail Station and bus-rail interchange at Conway Park is only 150m from the new retail centre at Grange Park Precinct.	Existing Merseyrail station at Hamilton Square has poor interchange between rail & bus There is now an electric minibus service from the nearby Woodside Ferry terminal to Conway Park	f	g
<b>Widnes</b>			
Buses towards St Helens stop on A568 100m from the rail station (Service 17 every 30mins)	Rail station on A568 2kms North of town centre (no bus station - buses depart Town Hall Stands)	p	f
<b>Southport</b>			
Most buses stop at the Monument outside the Merseyrail station (75m distance)		g	f
<b>St Helens</b>			
Bus Station at front of St Helen's Central	.	g	g

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Railway Station and only 30m from main shopping precinct. Bus link to St Helen's Junction station.		f	
<b>Runcorn</b>			
Buses (Runcorn - Widnes services) stop at laybys on giratory traffic approaches to Runcorn Bridge adjacent to the main InterCity station.  There is also a bus stop on Runcorn's dedicated Busway (with frequent services to Runcorn Bus Station at Shopping City) at Runcorn East Rail Station.	Bus Station between both rail stations and 2.5kms from each. Giratory system pedestrian unfriendly Busway at Runcorn East approached by a long steep pedestrian ramp.	f	g
<b>Blackburn</b>			
Bus station at rail station forecourt		g	g
<b>Blackpool</b>			
Talbot Rd bus station opposite Blackpool North Rail station. Airport 500m from station at Squires gate.	Tram stop 500m along Talbot Road at Promenade. Second rail station at Blackpool South.	g	g
<b>Burnley</b>			
New replacement bus station with bus/coach interchange approx 2/3 km from each rail station and closer to the town centre than either.	Served by two main rail stations approx 1km apart and each with hourly trains in either direction.	p	g
<b>Preston</b>			
The present bus station which is scheduled to be redeveloped and relocated provides for interchange between town, regional bus services and coach services.	The bus station is 1.2kms from the rail station. There is no viable relocation option near the rail station but a kickstart grant has been made for a City orbital bus service which will connect the two.	p	g
<b>Barrow</b>			
Interchange with local (town) service to town centre from forecourt with shelter. Other local services from nearby road (approx 100m ) Access for buses away from Barrow involves only crossing a minor road.	No coach services to/from Barrow There is no bus station in Barrow. The main focus for buses is the Town Hall which is about 1 km from the station.  Access for buses towards the town centre from Abbey Road involves crossing the road at a pelican crossing.	f	f



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<b>Carlisle</b>			
Interchange with most city services and some rural services approx 50m, with shelters.	Bus [for most rural services] and coach station (Lonsdale Street) approx 500m, not signposted for pedestrians. Waiting facilities, ticket agency at bus station. Taxi rank approx 25m from station entrance, no shelter.	f	f
<b>Lancaster</b>			
New (2001) bus station with bus/coach interchange.	Rail station approx 2/3rd km up steep hill from bus station	p	g
<b>Chester</b>			
Buses in Chester use a bus station and numerous on-street stops. The bus station is soon to be replaced with a new high quality one. This will improve the situation.	The rail station is some distance from the town centre and bus station (about 0.75 mile). This makes bus/rail interchange inconvenient, but there is a shuttle bus between the rail station and town centre which is free to rail ticket holders, but does not call at the bus station.	p	f
<b>Crewe</b>			
Crewe bus station is expected to be rebuilt soon on a slightly different site.	The rail station is about 1.3kms from the bus station. There are reasonably frequent bus services between the two.	f	g
<b>Ellesmere Port</b>			
Ellesmere Port has bus station which is in average condition. The rail station is just about 800m from the bus station.	The walk between the bus and rail stations is not particularly attractive walk.	p	g

### 6. LOCATION OF INFORMAL/FORMAL PARK AND RIDE and opportunities for strategic park and ride.

There are relatively few bus based Park and Ride schemes (P+R) in the NW (**see Table 7**).

P+R sites at town approaches and which are primarily intended to reduce urban congestion can sometimes create a less favorable modal split between public and private transport. Motorists who might otherwise have used public transport may now drive to them, and if doing so along an identified corridor in the Public Transport Framework, actually undermine existing public transport on this<sup>19</sup>. NWPTUF have advised<sup>20</sup> that schemes should where possible be designed so as not to

<sup>19</sup> "Park and Ride, its role in transport policy" CPRE Campaign Briefing 1998

<sup>20</sup> "Park and Ride" NWPTUF submission to NWRA July 2004

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- generate additional car mileage or
- abstract from existing public transport provision

There is also concern that P+R sites might be created in greenbelts,<sup>21</sup> but not all P+R schemes require additional land take<sup>22</sup>.

Other P+R sites (sometimes referred to as **Parkways** to distinguish them from commuter/shopper P+Rs) may be aimed at **longer distance travellers**. Some of these situated at rail stations will fall outside this bus corridor study.<sup>23</sup>

### Commuter/Shopper/Leisure P+Rs

Chester, as might be expected being a free standing historic city, probably has the best developed P+R system in the Region.

The sites of the Preston Dock and Southport P+Rs are so close to the urban centre that they might if anything be expected, as suggested above, by encouraging car journeys to them, to unfavorably affect bus patronage on this interurban corridor.

Manchester has a successful seasonal<sup>24</sup> P+R from Siemen's factory car park near the junction A5103 (Princess Parkway) and M60. A small scale all year round P+R scheme based on a superstore car park and utilising a passing 15 minute frequency registered local bus service collects car passengers leaving the Motorway at the Oldham exit. bound for both Oldham town centre and the Royal Oldham Hospital.

Some **informal P+Rs** where radial routes with good bus services intersect ring roads or M-ways have been discovered. One, at the A6/M55 junction in Preston has recently been closed off on safety grounds. Several (e.g. Crumpsall, Hollinwood) exist near junctions on the M60 Manchester ring road. The most successful of the temporary P+R sites established for the Commonwealth Games at Manchester was in Heaton Park, itself adjacent to the M60.

Local Transport Authorities have aspirations for similar sites such as at M62/Edge Hill in Liverpool, A59/M6/Redscar Preston, and A7/Kingmoor Carlisle.

In Cumbria there are aspirations for P+R in the Carlisle area on the A7 (North, at Kingmoor), A69 (East) and A595 (West) approaches to the City. South Lakes District Council support a seasonal free P+R from a retail outlet East of Kendal, and the Lakes National Park would like to intercept traffic destined for the Park and leaving the M6 towards Kendal. Similarly at the Rheged Centre adjacent to the Penrith A66/M6 junction there is the opportunity to park and use the hourly X4/5 express bus to Keswick. There is

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<sup>21</sup> "Park and Ride, its role in transport policy" CPRE Campaign Briefing 1998

<sup>22</sup> "P+R" NWPTUF submission to NWRA July 2004. The "Green Space" v. "Green Transport" debate is still ongoing

<sup>23</sup> for example any Parkway at Guide Bridge (as was envisaged by a TOC bidding for the TPE franchise) might fall outside this study although motorists exiting the M60 might be able to transfer to either bus or rail there.

<sup>24</sup> Weekends at Christmas time.

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also another seasonal P+R site at Bowness with a bus connection to Windermere and the Lake steamers.

### Parkways aimed at longer distance travelers

It is the P+Rs aimed at intercepting longer distance car journeys which might be expected to have the most impact on the Regional Public Transport Framework

Cheshire CC have aspirations for a Chester – Manchester coach service (similar to the successful X61 Preston – Manchester) but with dedicated P+R sites which although off the M-way are non the less adjacent to M-way access/egress points

There is anecdotal evidence that some motorists use the Capital Centre P+R site on the A6 just South of Preston (but in South Ribble Borough) not to bus into the City but to catch the X61 Express coach to Manchester. This service also has a stop (so it can be registered as a local service with stops more frequent than 15 miles) at Bolton West services on the M61<sup>25</sup>.

There may well be opportunities for **strategic P+R** sites to relieve traffic on core **interurban** roads, although the tabulation below of the informal, planned for and “aspirational” schemes uncovered by this research does not suggest many of these!

The majority identified are in fact primarily aimed at reducing urban congestion .

**TABLE 7**

### Existing and potential bus based park and ride sites

<b>P+R Site (Bold = existing)</b>	<b>Commuter/Leisure</b>	<b>Parkway</b>
<b>Preston Docks</b>	X	
<b>Preston South</b>	X	x
Preston East A59	X	
Carlisle: A7 (North, at Kingmoor), A69 (East) and A595 (West)	X	
<b>Oldham (A627(M))</b>	X	
<b>Southport</b>	X	
<b>Chester (3 sites)</b>	X	
M56 (2-4 sites) Cheshire Oaks retail park, Runcorn East – J12, Daresbury – J11, Poplar 2000- J9/M6		x
M6 Over Tabley - J19		
M60 (2-3 sites) Jj 5.17.22, 23	X	Guide Bridge J23
Bowness		recreational
Penrith (Rheged)		
<b>Kendal (seasonal)</b>	X	

<sup>25</sup> Expensive long term parking charges discourage P+R here

## 7. POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS TO BUS AND COACH SERVICES, KEY INTERCHANGES and gaps in the network of key corridors where public transport choices are currently unavailable

A “**gap analysis**” indicates several potential improvements where Regional Towns and Cities are either unconnected or only connected by rail.

**Gaps** in the provision of bus services on the Key Corridors in the Public Transport Framework, and also between some key towns and cities in the NW such as

- Carlisle – Lancaster
- Wigan – Preston
- Warrington – Crewe - Stafford
- Whitehaven – Barrow
- Cumbria – Teeside

in general occur either because of

- competition from parallel rail services (all of the above except Cumbria – Teeside)
- insufficient commercial demand
- the rural nature of the corridor or
- the existence of good alternative M-way or trunk road links making driving much more attractive

However, where there are few or no Key Service Centres on such corridors and these are through deep rural areas any bus service must rely on end to end patronage and will rarely become commercial.

A few **kickstart** services<sup>26</sup> have been identified where Local Transport Authorities have used this Department for Transport (DfT) fund to “pump prime” these in anticipation of their eventually becoming commercial.

Whilst the National Express **Coach** network is entirely commercial and generally links key centres in the NW with other regions, there may be an “improvement” case for other inter urban express coach services on some corridors such as the successful X61 from Manchester to Preston and X43 from East Lancs to Manchester. A similar X52 via M56 from Chester to Manchester is a Cheshire County Council aspiration [see P+R above Section 6].

### **Services between Regional Towns and Cities in the NW**<sup>27</sup>.

- 1 The West Pennine Moors separate Greater Manchester and Central Lancashire City Regions and apart from the X43 Manchester – Burnley service (bypassing Bury on the M66) and the well served Bolton – Blackburn bus/rail corridor it is usually necessary to change at Accrington to make cross regional journeys such as Rochdale to Blackburn.

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<sup>26</sup> eg Crewe – Chester and Northwich – Crewe.

<sup>27</sup> Many of these are “Cross Boundary” between adjacent Local Transport Authorities

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- 2 Services in the quadrangle bounded by Warrington – Wigan – St Helens and Widnes are adequate along its periphery but Traveline generally fails to provide timetables for these<sup>28</sup>. For journeys such as Warrington to St Helens Traveline usually gives the option to change at Newton le Willows<sup>29</sup>
- 3 Liverpool to Preston is a difficult bus journey, involving two changes<sup>30</sup> and the use of one tendered service. Services on the parallel rural rail line are also poor and involve a change<sup>31</sup> but there is a fast hourly rail service via Wigan.
- 4 There are few or no bus services parallel to some sections of the M6 – for example Warrington to Crewe is only possible by changing at Northwich<sup>32</sup>. Preston to Wigan involves a change at Chorley. There is no regular bus link between Kendal and Penrith although a new local service is an LPT2 aspiration of Cumbria CC. There are other infrequent and often inconveniently timed National Express coach services on some of the above links.
- 5 There are no buses between Barrow and Whithaven on the Cumbrian Coast, but the road between Whithaven and Millom is circuitous compared to the rail and the area is sparsely populated. However there will be some leisure demand in summer. Millom to Barrow has an infrequent local service.
- 6 There are no bus services parallel to the Furness line between Barrow and Lancaster largely because of the geography of the Kent Estuary and Morecambe Bay, but both the Kendal – Barrow (X35) and Kendal - Lancaster (555) services are hourly. However the also hourly train service over the Kent viaduct is much faster and more convenient.
- 7 No significant gaps have been identified in either of the PTEs' bus networks.

### Cross Boundary Services between the NW and adjacent Regions

1. Cross Pennine services between Lancashire/GMPTE and Yorkshire/WYPTE are generally adequate except that the Aire Gap<sup>33</sup> is badly served from the NW<sup>34</sup> compared with services from Skipton into West Yorkshire.
- 2 There are no bus or rail links between Cumbria and Teeside.<sup>35</sup> but the A66 is a fast trunk road scheduled to be “dualled” for its entire length.
- 3 Carlisle has hourly bus services to Dumfries, Moffat and Edinburgh in Scotland, and to Newcastle in the NE.

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<sup>28</sup> maybe GMPTE and Merseytravel each believe the other has input these to the Traveline database?

<sup>29</sup> Where there are only “on street” waiting facilities. However, this can sometimes be the shortest journey in both time and distance.

<sup>30</sup> Ormskirk and Tarleton

<sup>31</sup> at Ormskirk

<sup>32</sup> Crewe to Northwich is a kickstart service and Northwich to Warrington is part tendered.

<sup>33</sup> Corridor East of Skipton (and M65) through the Pennines to Keighley and Leeds

<sup>34</sup> 280 service, 2 hourly

<sup>35</sup> The nearest NHS dentist to Kirkby Stephen, for example, is in Barnard Castle

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- 4 There are no bus services South from Crewe to Stafford (West Midlands) other than via Stoke although the parallel rail service is good
- 5 There is only a poor connecting service<sup>36</sup> to Shrewsbury and onwards into Central Wales.

### Potential Feeder services.

A comparison of the “Key”, “Other” and already “further identified” Public Transport corridors with the NWRA’s list of Key Service Centres shows that a number of the latter are not situated on any of these corridors.

Table 8 identifies those Key Service Centres (as identified in draft RSS 13 dated January 2006) which already have feeder bus services to the main corridors.

<b>Key Service Centre</b>	<b>Feeding</b>	<b>currently</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Longridge	Preston	Commercial bus	15 mins
Fleetwood/Poulton/ Lytham	Blackpool	Tram and bus	Frequent
Nelson and Colne	Burnley	Rail	Hourly
		Bus	Frequent
Leigh	Manchester	Bus	Proposed busway
Ormskirk/Skelmersdale	Wigan	Bus	10 mins
Macclesfield/Wilmslow	Manchester	Rail and Bus	30 mins

Other feeder services<sup>37</sup> might be expected to develop as the above “gap analysis” suggests, but these will generally be for the Local Transport Authorities to address through the LTP2 mechanisms.

### Improvements to key interchanges

Section 5 (Table 6) identified where bus/rail interchange at key locations is poor and also where specific improvements are planned.

The following list of poor interchanges will inevitably include some where there may be potential for improvement but also others where there probably will not be. In the latter case considerable, perhaps relatively recent, investment may have been made resulting in a best possible, albeit sub optimal, improvement<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> necessitating changes at Nantwich (to a Stoke – Whitchurch service) and Whitchurch.

<sup>37</sup> E.g. from other significant Key Service Centres such as Kirby Stephen, Kirkby Lonsdale, Silloth, Alston and Settle (in Yorkshire and Humberside) and in Lancashire to designated rail-connect stations (Carnforth, Clitheroe, Chorley and Silverdale, and soon to be commissioned, Burscough interchange)

<sup>38</sup> e.g. it is hard to envisage another location nearer the station for the new bus station at Lancaster

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### Towns where bus/rail interchange rated "poor":-

Northwich

Oldham (Planned bus/metrolink interchange in GMPTE's Metrolink Phase 3 Plan)

Rochdale (Planned bus/metrolink interchange in GMPTE's Metrolink Phase 3 Plan)

Stockport (New bus station in town centre masterplan)

Wigan

Widnes

Burnley

Preston (bus station resiting planned)

Lancaster

Chester (redevelopment planned)

Ellesmere Port.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There may well be scope for improvements to bus and coach services and key interchanges, but the extent of this can only be determined by a thorough transport needs analysis of the potential corridors which this study pinpoints. [Sections 1 -4, 5 & 7]

On some corridors there may be a case for inter urban express bus services, Further work would also be required to establish potential demand for such interurban express services.

In many cases however the necessary Registered Local Services to serve any so identified traffic will have to be funded by Local Transport Authorities. Also a deregulated bus market coupled to unhelpful competition legislation is unlikely to create viable connecting and feeder services relevant to core interurban routes. [Sections 1-3]

The NW is not well endowed with effective bus – rail interchanges although there are many examples of excellent bus to bus interchanges<sup>39</sup>. A number of towns are identified where potential improvements might be possible [Sections 5, 7 and Table 6]

There may well be opportunities for **strategic P+R** sites to relieve traffic on core **interurban** roads, although this research does not suggest many of these. Some existing or planned P+R schemes struggle to avoid either

- creating additional car mileage,
- abstracting from existing bus services or
- encroaching on "green" or otherwise "sensitive" land<sup>40</sup>

[Section 6]

As with the P+R issue further research by the Local Transport Authorities is required to establish the level of transport need on inter urban roads where there are **gaps** in the bus network.

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<sup>39</sup> especially within the two PTEs and Lancashire (where small bus-rail "Staging Points" are also being trialled.

<sup>40</sup> E.g. land for the necessary car parking may be in a neighbouring authority which might either not benefit from or be harmed by the scheme

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Conversely a case might be made<sup>41</sup> that supporting through LTP2 or RTS the **trial operation** of “gap” and “feeder” services to both measure if they generate demand and to “pump prime” or “kickstart” them could be less costly than expensive Transport Needs Surveys! [Section 7].

Some new **feeder** services might be expected to develop, but these will generally be for the Local Transport Authorities to address and fund [Section 7].

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### Appendix – map showing Public Transport Corridors of Regional Significance

#### The map shows

- Key Regional PT Corridors
- Other Regional PT Corridors
- Rail and LRT lines
- Bus services every 30 mins or better
- Bus services every two hours or better
- Identified “Gaps” in RTF with NO service OR
- Poor tendered service
- “Kickstart” supported services
- Existing P+R (excluding rail based)
- Potential P+R
- Services crossing Regional Boundaries

*Authors - Paul Fawcett & John Moorhouse on behalf of NWPTUF, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2006*

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<sup>41</sup> D Whyte NWRA, Project Meeting 9/12/05



NWPTUF's Key Bus Corridors Study for NWRA

# Key bus and coach corridors, frequencies and interchanges in North West England

