

GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

REPORT FOR RESOLUTION

DATE: 19 June 2009

SUBJECT: Proposed GMITA Policy Priorities for 2009/10

REPORT OF: Councillors Dickinson, Knowles, Macdonald and
Whitmore

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present, for the Authority's approval, a set of Policy Priorities, which will guide the work of the Authority during the 2009/10 municipal year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Authority are recommended to:

1. comment on or otherwise approve the proposed 2009/10 Policy Priorities set out in the report; and
2. subject to the approval of the Authority, request officers to prepare a more detailed report setting out a process for the progression of the agreed priorities for consideration at the first meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

GMPTA Policy Priorities 2008/9, report to the Authority, 1 August 2008.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Authority has established a practice for several years of agreeing a set of policy priorities at the outset of each municipal year to advise officers and stakeholders of those areas of policy that it intends to give particular priority to through the year. These priorities are intended to complement the overall objective of the Authority to work with constituent district authorities, transport operators, central government and other stakeholders to deliver a public transport system which:
- Supports the economic competitiveness of Greater Manchester
 - Provides people with attractive and safe travel choices
 - Respects the area's environment
 - Aims to address problems of transport related social exclusion
- 1.2 The priorities also sit alongside the ongoing core duties of the Authority.
- 1.3 Within this broad context, the Authority will focus particularly on the following key areas over the next twelve months.

2 Local Transport Plan (LTP)

- 2.1 The 2008 Local Transport Act places on the Authority the responsibility for the preparation of the next Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan (LTP). The current LTP, which is the second such plan produced by Greater Manchester, expires at the end of March 2011.
- 2.2 Therefore, a priority for the Authority over the coming year will be to lead on the first stages of the production of the third LTP in close consultation with the ten Greater Manchester highway authorities, so as to ensure that a timely LTP3 submission is made to the Government in March 2011.

3 Greater Manchester Transport Fund (GMTF)

- 3.1 The recently agreed establishment of the Greater Manchester Transport Fund provides the platform for the delivery of a series of key local transport investment schemes over the coming years, including a number of major public transport schemes.
- 3.2 During 2009/10, the Authority, in partnership with the AGMA Executive, will prioritise, timetable and oversee the implementation of the previously identified GMTF public transport schemes.

4 Development of Smartcard and Real Time Passenger Information Systems

- 4.1 The Authority is seeking to establish its objectives for securing improved public transport integration in part through the implementation

of a multi-modal smartcard ticketing system and real time passenger information (RTPI) services.

- 4.2 During 2009/10, the Authority will seek to establish appropriate mechanisms to secure the future delivery of its smartcard and RTPI objectives.

5 Passenger Security and Safety

- 5.1 During 2008/9, the Authority established a Members Panel to review the current GMITA/PTE arrangements for partnership working with Greater Manchester districts, public transport operators and the police to promote passenger safety and security on the local public transport network. The Panel will report its findings in late summer / autumn 2009.
- 5.2 This year, the Authority will commit to improving safety and security for passengers by establishing mechanisms to implement the findings of the Panel, and by continuing dialogue with GMP to secure a more prominent police presence on the public transport system with GMP.

6 Metrolink

- 6.1 The recently agreed arrangements for the renewal of the current Metrolink system and delivery of Metrolink 3b through the GMTF agreement, alongside the work underway to deliver Metrolink 3a, present the opportunity to secure the Authority's objectives for Metrolink..
- 6.2 During 2009/10, the Authority will play a full and important role in overseeing the planning, prioritisation and implementation work for Metrolink 3a, 3b and current system renewals, so as to ensure that Metrolink is established as a first class, 21st century light rail system.

7 Buses

- 7.1 Buses are the single most important mode of public transport in Greater Manchester, accounting for around 80% of local public transport trips. The Authority has long-committed to work with bus operators to secure a consistently high quality of service – including punctuality, reliability and safety – that passengers rightly demand. Over recent months, the Authority has begun to oversee the development of a revised Greater Manchester Bus Strategy, utilising the new provisions contained within the 2008 Local Transport Act.

Bus Quality Partnerships and Cross City Bus Routes

- 7.2 In 2009/10, the Authority will prioritise the development of Statutory Quality Partnerships (SQPs) with the co-operation of bus operators and district highway authorities to bring early control over bus routes, improved frequencies and maximum fares, and to enable cross-city

routes to operate. The Authority will also consider how Quality Contracts may be implemented to secure its objectives, should SQPs be unsuccessful in doing so.

Continuing Priorities: Orbital Bus Routes, Metroshuttle Developments and Flexible Transport Services Review

- 7.3 In addition, the Authority will further pursue three specific initiatives identified in 2008/9 to:
- Develop and implement proposals for orbital bus routes to serve non-radial travel patterns;
 - Encourage and determine proposals for town centre Metroshuttle services, and market and monitor the operation of approved schemes with district councils; and
 - Consider the findings of the ongoing Members Panel review of flexible transport services.

8 Rail

Manchester Hub

- 8.1 The Authority has previously welcomed the DfT's proposals to bring forward measures to achieve the Authority's long-standing priority of unlocking more of the region's economic power by increasing rail capacity in and around Manchester, through a fundamental study of the economic case for the Hub and of the optimal network solutions to address the Hub problems. In 2008/9, the Authority committed to taking a lead role in scrutinising the work and ensuring that the work is progressed swiftly. The Authority will continue to press this work to ensure that its outputs provide for the optimal combination of local, regional and national rail services that will secure maximum future benefit towards the City Region's economic, environmental and social policy objectives.
- 8.2 Members also identified the Manchester Hub as the prime lobbying theme for the forthcoming Autumn Party Conference season and the Authority's October Parliamentary Lobby. Through summer 2009, the Authority will now press Network Rail to ensure that appropriate early deliverables are available from the ongoing analysis of Manchester Hub solutions by early September 2009 to support effective GMITA/Network Rail lobbying in the autumn.

2010 Timetable

- 8.3 In 2008/9, the Authority expressed its concerns regarding the impact of the December 2008 rail timetable changes on the availability of services on a number Greater Manchester local rail lines. Effective pressure from the Authority is anticipated to result in some remedial measures being brought in to address these concerns in December 2009; however, a significant number of outstanding concerns will remain.

- 8.4 Therefore, in 2009/10, the Authority will seek the reinstatement of local service cuts made in the December 2008 timetable, through the December 2010 timetable planning process, in addition to seeking to lengthen overcrowded trains and introduce additional frequencies where there is track, platform and rolling stock capacity. In doing so, it is proposed that the Authority will establish a Task and Finish Group to lead work to identify the most overcrowded local rail routes and services, so as to clearly prioritise routes and times that require longer trains and more frequencies.

Overcrowding of trains and platform lengthening

- 8.5 The Authority remains committed to working closely with Northern Rail to ensure that the maximum number of train units committed by the DfT under the HLOS rolling-stock strategy is secured in the Greater Manchester area for fleet-strengthening. In addition, the Authority has identified the need to secure the retention of the released rolling stock from the Oldham loop line (following its closure for Metrolink conversion in autumn 2009) within the conurbation.
- 8.6 In 2009/10, the Authority will seek to prioritise the allocation of new carriages and extra trains, and the reallocation of rolling stock from the Oldham loop. The Authority will also co-ordinate the associated programme of investment in platform-lengthening to ensure that double units can be operated on the most overcrowded routes.

Accessible Rail Stations

- 8.7 The Authority has previously identified the scope to review the arrangements for identifying future priorities for investment in accessibility improvements at local rail stations.
- 8.8 In 20-09/10, the Authority will prioritise a future programme of investment in making stations accessible for those with mobility impairments, parents with prams and other members of the local community. The proposed approach will be based upon station patronage levels and the distance to the nearest accessible station, with the aim of achieving improved and equitable levels of access across the local rail network.

9 Reflecting Current Economic Conditions

- 9.1 The Authority will be keen to ensure that its decisions and the operations of GMITA/PTE are undertaken in a manner that reflects the wider condition of the economy in 2009/10. In particular, the Authority will seek to ensure that opportunities to secure short-term improvements in access to employment for Greater Manchester residents are prioritised, whilst continuing to ensure that maximum efficiencies are sought from all ongoing operations and projects.

10 Next Steps

- 10.1 The proposed new GMITA Committee Structure identifies a clear role for the Policy & Resources Committee to oversee the delivery of the Authority's Policy Priorities. Therefore, subject to the approval of the Authority, officers will be requested to prepare a more detailed report setting out a process for the progression of the agreed priorities for consideration at the first meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee.

11 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 A full set of recommendations appear on the front page of this report.