

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Rail and Metrolink Networks
DATE: 2nd October 2009
SUBJECT: Northern Rail progress report on the Southport to Manchester Airport Quality improvement Team (QIT)
REPORT OF: Interim Bus and Rail Director, GMPTE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

For Northern Rail and Network Rail to update Members on the work and progress of the Southport to Manchester Airport Quality Improvement Team (QIT), as requested at the 17 July 2009 meeting of this Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Committee are recommended to note the contents of this report.

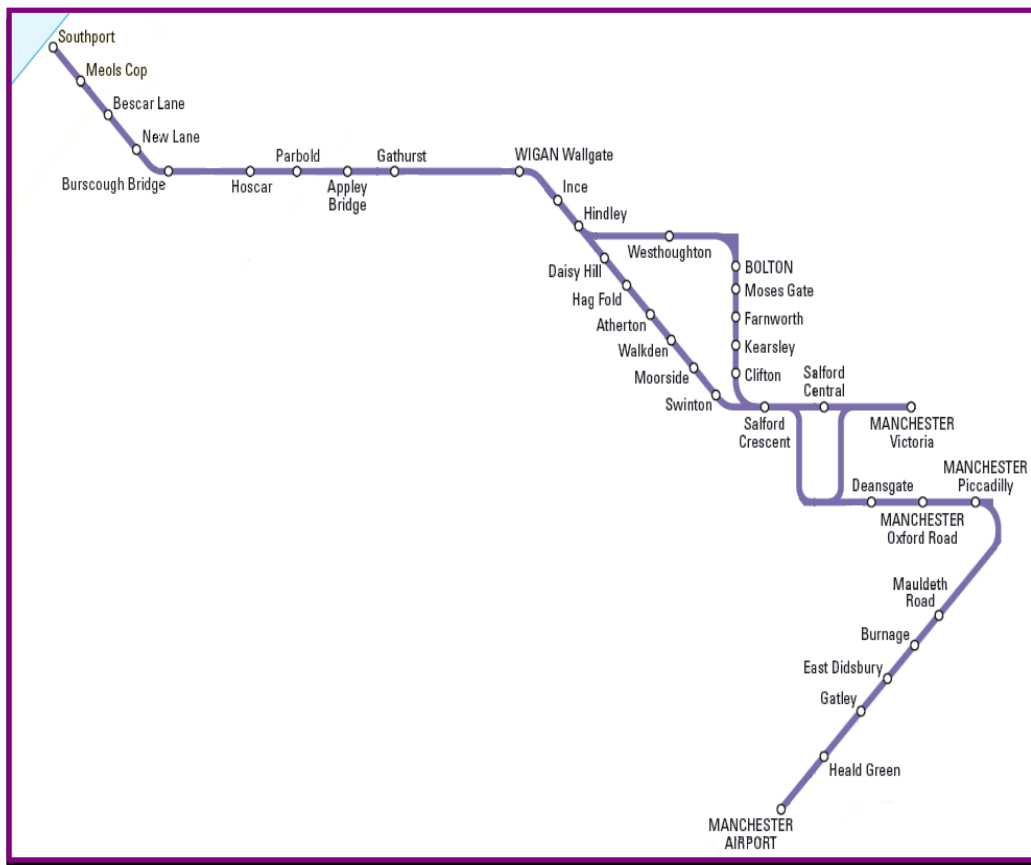
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

'Local Rail Service Performance' report to the 17 July 2009 Rail and Metrolink Networks Committee.

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Southport to Manchester Airport QIT Report

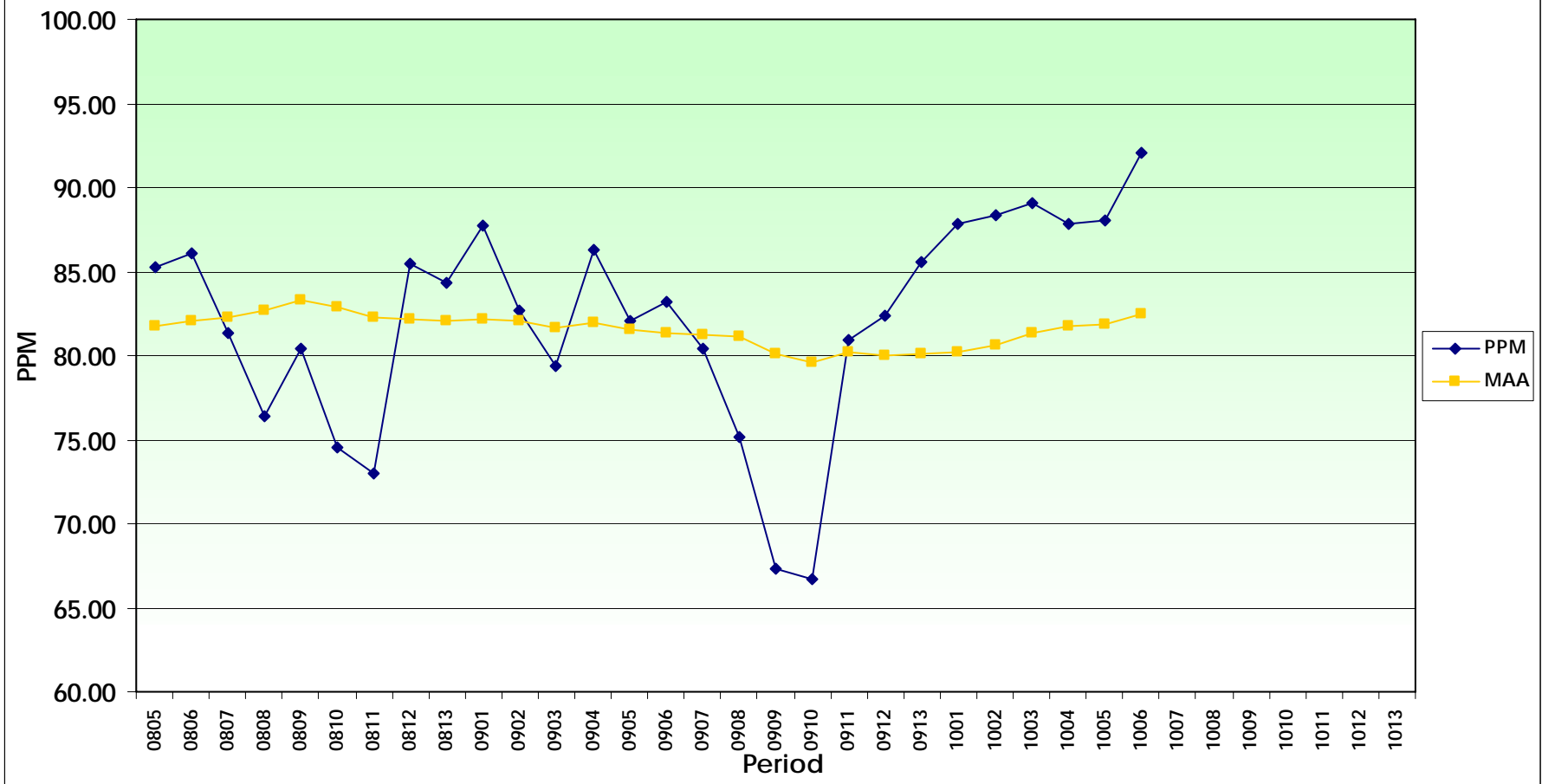


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1 Performance Overview

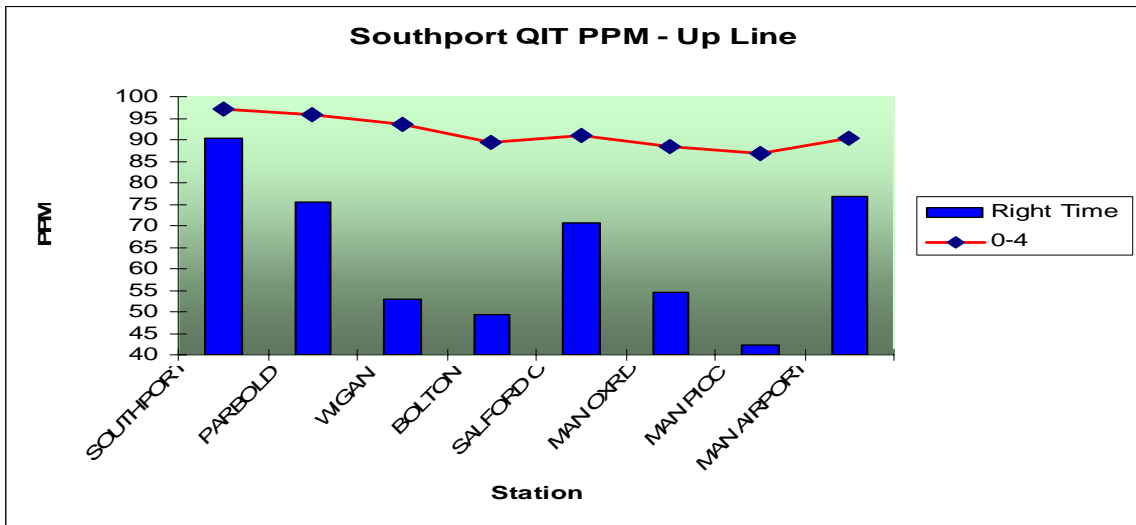
- 1.1 The Southport to Manchester Airport service group is one of the worst performing routes within the Manchester and Liverpool PMU area. Just over 12 months ago it was decided to re-form the Quality Improvement Team (QIT) for this route, to not only improve the PPM, but also to sustain a high level of good performance and meet Northern Rail's 90% target consistently. The QIT is made up of key representatives from Northern Rail, Network Rail, GMPTE and Merseytravel, with the collective goal being to examine any problems, however small, and manage them by working closely together to find common solutions. The ethic is about sharing information and working openly so issues can be rectified by the combined unit.
- 1.2 Analysis has been carried out in order to identify key areas of concern across the route such as the busy corridor between Salford Crescent and Manchester Airport. Since the end of the Southport engineering blockade in mid February, there has been a real benefit to train running times due to improved track quality. There is still work to be done on the route however; the section of track between Meols Cop and Southport is a good example with a slow approach / departure to / from Southport due to the 10mph / 20mph linespeed both in and out of all platforms. The scheduled dwell times at stations are also often inadequate due to the loading of prams, pushchairs and suitcases; this is being further examined to look at how the best type of unit can be provided and / or the dwell time increased where it necessitates.
- 1.3 Consistent progress over the two periods prior to Period 6 had seen the PPM getting nearer to achieving the 90% target. During Period 4 the PPM reached 89.05% and this was the highest since the beginning of the Northern Rail franchise. In the following period the PPM dipped slightly by 1% and finished at 88.02%, however the overall score for both periods was affected by major incidents in the Wigan area. There was a points failure on a critical junction at Wigan Wallgate on 24th July, which blocked the route to both Kirkby and Southport. During Period 5 there was a direct attack on signalling (cable theft) which affected the entire signalling system at Wigan for 36 hours, including the West Coast Main Line. The PPM figure dropped as a result of this incident from 91.59% to 76.30% and the service group spent the remainder of the period trying to recover. Each week it got progressively higher and at the end of Period 5 fell just 2% short of the 90% target.
- 1.4 It is pleasing to be able to report that during Period 6 (23 August – 19 September 2009), the Southport – Manchester Airport service group achieved the 90% PPM target for the first time within Northern Rail's franchise history. The period end score was a record 92.11%. This was a result of combined efforts between Northern and Network Rail. Daily focus reports have been produced since the beginning of period 5 and circulated to all key front line teams and operational staff, to raise awareness of performance throughout the current period. This, coupled with an absence of major external incidents, helped to achieve the record-breaking result. Northern Rail appointed a new Performance and Service Quality Manager in May 2009, and improving the PPM result on this route has been a key priority for him.
- 1.5 The focus of the Southport QIT will now be to address the timetabling and linespeed issues described in paragraph 1.2, as well as potential future track renewal schemes. This should enhance the long-term resilience of the timetable and create a firm foundation for sustainable performance. In the shorter-term, the QIT will work to ensure the continued focus of all teams involved in train service delivery.
- 1.6 It should be noted that train performance nationally is affected in the autumn period. This generally covers railway reporting periods 7, 8 and 9 (20 September – 12 December 2009). Northern Rail and Network Rail have been working together to mitigate the effects of the autumn period on the Southport line, including lineside de-vegetation schemes in hotspot area. A revised timetable will also be in operation on this route. It is however expected that performance across all routes is likely to be below 90% during the leaf-fall season.

Southport - Wigan - Bolton - Manchester Apt/Oxford Road PPM Graph

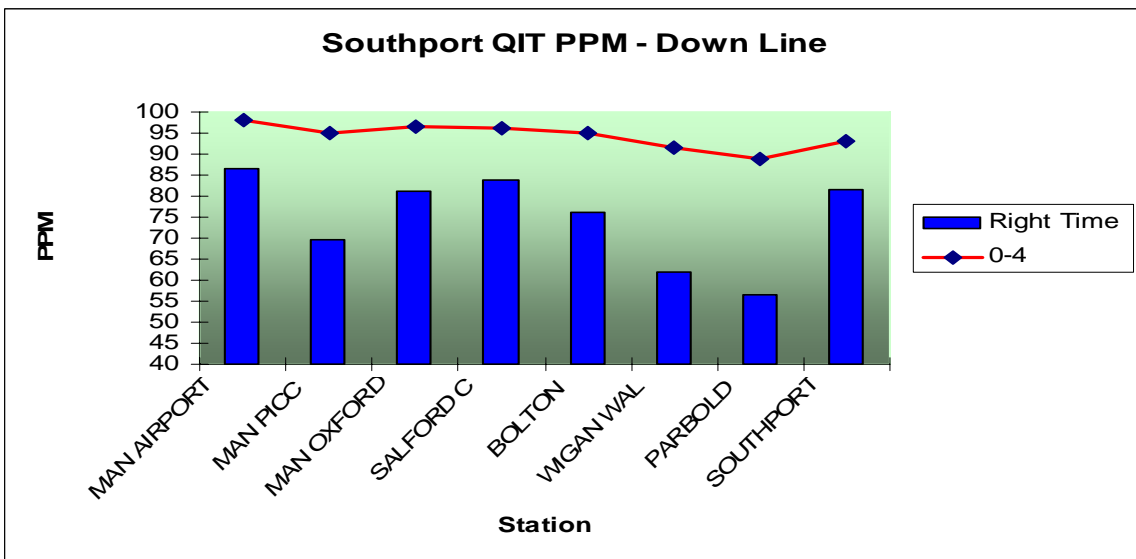


2 Route Performance

2.1 The graph below shows the 0-4 PPM at various locations on the route between Southport and Manchester Airport, between 1st April and 6th September 2009. It also shows the percentage of trains which depart on time from each location.



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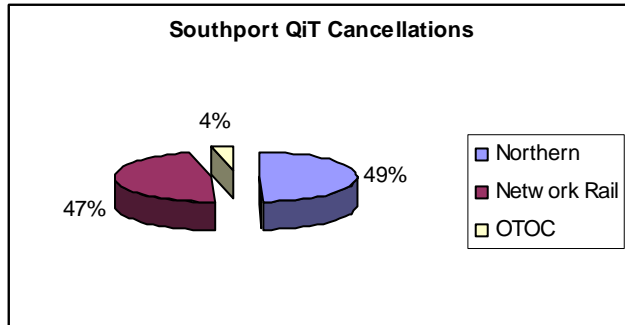
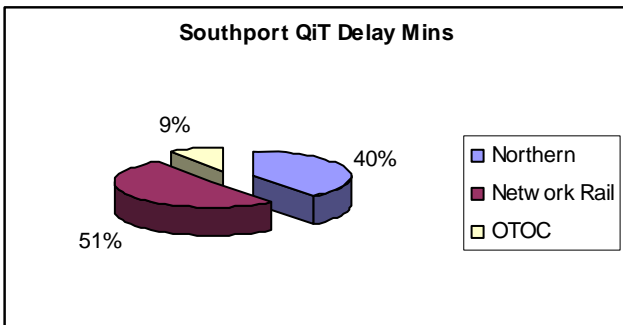
3 Significant Incidents

3.1 The table below shows the top 10 most significant performance incidents affecting the route between 1st April and 6th September 2009.

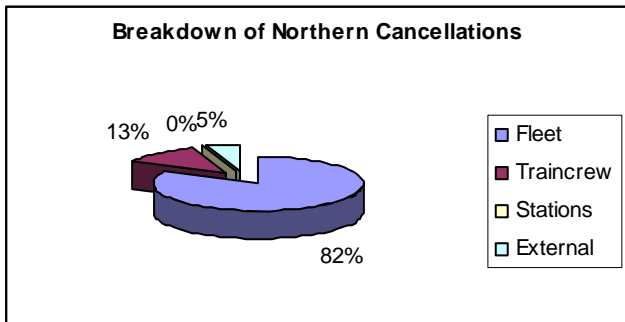
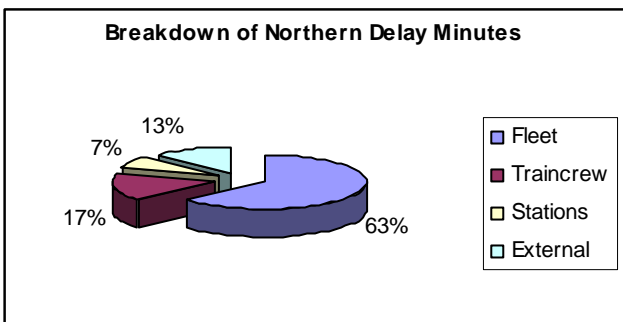
DATE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	DELAY MINUTES	CANCELLATIONS
28-Jul-09	WIGAN NW	CABLE CUT	1228	108
24-Jul-09	WIGAN WALLGATE	POINTS FAILURE	868	56
23-Apr-09	CLIFTON	CABLE THEFT	616	11
15-Jun-09	MAN AIRPORT	TRACK CIRCUIT FAILURE	294	7
11-Jun-09	HEALD GREEN	TRACK CIRCUIT FAILURE	275	7
28-Jul-09	WIGAN WALLGATE	CABLE THEFT	262	5
01-Jun-09	BURSCOUGH BRIDGE	DEFECTIVE LEVEL CROSSING PHONE	200	0
15-Apr-09	HEALD GREEN	POINTS FAILURE	115	5
03-Apr-09	SOUTHPORT	ML2151 POINTS FAILURE	92	8
20-Aug-09	WIGAN WALLGATE	2A24 156426 ON ONE ENGINE	76	2

4 Delays and Cancellations - between 1st April and 6th September 2009

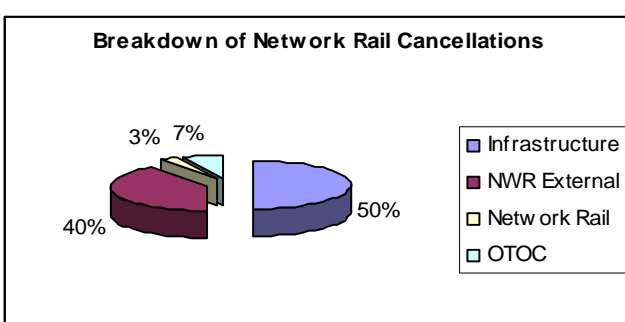
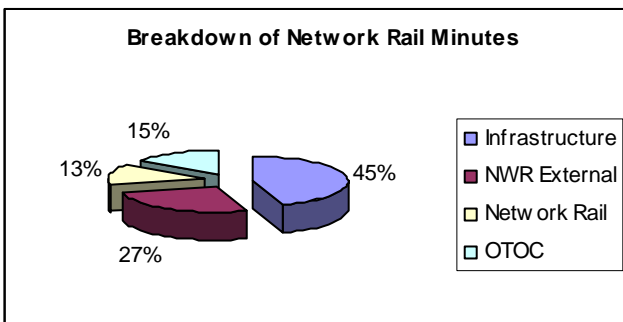
Overall:



Northern Rail's delays and cancellations can be broken down into:



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5 Top 5 Worst Performing Trains - between 1st April and 6th September 2009

Headcode	Description	4	Run	Bkd	%
352A02MA	0722 SOUTHPORT-MANINTAPT	99	122	136	72.79
352A12MK	1224 SOUTHPORT-MANINTAPT	111	130	136	81.62
322F81ME	0903 MANINTAPT-SOUTHPORT	112	121	136	82.35
352A18MQ	1524 SOUTHPORT-MANINTAPT	112	127	136	82.35
352A22MU	1724 SOUTHPORT-MANINTAPT	112	129	136	82.35

- 5.1 The 0722 Southport – Manchester Airport service was mainly affected by coupling faults, and other reactionary unit failures. There was also a direct attack on signalling at Clifton and Wigan. Other infrastructure failures included a track fault at Manchester Airport.
- 5.2 Incidents affecting the 1224 Southport – Manchester Airport service include a track fault at Heald Green, various train failures, and a defective signal at Manchester Airport. Conductor availability also impacted on this service.
- 5.3 The biggest incidents impacting upon the 0903 Manchester Airport – Southport service were the points failure at Wigan Wallgate and the direct attacks on signalling. There was also coupling faults and other mechanical issues.
- 5.4 Train faults at Southport affected the departure of the 1524 Southport – Manchester Airport which impacted upon its PPM. It was also affected by various points failures and trespass incidents at Southport and Gathurst.
- 5.5 A track defect at Burnden Junction along with infrastructure failures – points and signals – affected the performance of the 1724 Southport – Manchester Airport service, as did reactionary unit failures and traincrew availability.

6 Area Focus

6.1 What We Have Achieved

- Cross industry and cross functional teams working together.
- £7k investment secured for additional Signal Post Telephones at Southport to reduce time for train cautioning.
- Improved awareness within Network Rail and Northern Rail's internal departments about performance on the route.
- Improved manual train reporting by signallers with new TRUST machines in all signalboxes on the route.
- Cable buried at Clifton and CCTV columns complete, awaiting cameras – September 2009.
- Additional shunt driver at Wigan.
- Good analysis has identified the key problem trains and problem locations.
- Diagrams changed to improve timetable resilience from December 2009.
- Daily report to signallers and controllers to raise awareness of previous day's performance.
- Conductors emailing customer assistance at Southport when carrying wheelchairs and pushchairs.
- Critical Rail Temperature sites reduced and risk of speed restriction due to high temperatures averted.
- Supervisors doing set allocations at Wigan Wallgate.
- Poster campaign about the gates at Southport being closed 1 minute before departure time.
- Flooding location at Appleby Bridge resolved.
- Target PPM of 90% achieved in Period 6.

6.2 Work in Progress

- £150k investment paper submitted for cable burying at Wigan.
- Joint working between Northern Rail and Network Rail Control teams to monitor and manage the service.
- Reviewing the 10mph linespeed for departures from Southport and the 20mph linespeed at Meols Cop.
- Moving traincrew break point from station building to station platform at Wigan Wallgate – October 2009.
- Working with Local Level Committees to secure feedback from frontline staff and get their ideas for solutions to some of the problems.

6.3 Next Steps

- Engage the Kirkby line campaign renewals team to look at Southport linespeed improvements for 2010 – 75mph and beyond and 50mph approach Meols Cop.
- Vegetation clearance to improve signal sighting and reduce autumn risk.
- Review outstabling at Southport to improve engineering access and reduce risk with empty stock movements.
- Review the case for electronic treadles for level crossings on the route.
- Adopt focus route best practice from Right Time Railway initiatives.
- Review station dwell times and retime empty stock earlier for am peak departures.
- Linespeed increase for timetable resilience, not for journey time improvements.
- A better way of maintaining level crossings on Sundays – additional bovertime.
- Additional engineering allowances for trackwork temporary speed restrictions when the Campaign Renewals move to the Southport line for the duration of their work.
- Reduce occasions of relieving at Manchester Oxford Road and Wigan Wallgate to reduce risk – taxis, running brake tests etc.
- Working with Control and Planners regarding type of unit allocated on this route to be 15x where possible.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The Southport – Manchester Airport route has constantly been one of Northern Rail's worst performing routes in the Manchester and Liverpool PMU. The QIT was established to collaboratively address issues affecting performance and to identify the root cause of delays, however small. An improving trend in PPM MAA performance is evident in recent periods and for the first time ever the route has scored above 90%. The QIT is continuing to focus on ensuring sustainable performance by ensuring enhanced timetable resilience. Members will be able to monitor further progress within the regular Performance report to the Rail and Metrolink Networks Committee.

Michael Renshaw
Interim Bus and Rail Director