

GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

REPORT FOR RESOLUTION

DATE: 18th December 2009

SUBJECT: Better Rail Stations

REPORT OF: Interim Bus & Rail Director, GMPTE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of the independent review of rail stations and subsequent Department for Transport consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:-

1. Note the contents of this report
2. Delegate authority for agreeing a final response to the Department for Transport consultation to the Clerk and Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair, Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Better Rail Stations: An Independent Review Presented to Lord Adonis, Secretary of State for Transport, by Chris Green and Peter Hall.

Action Stations, Network Rail

Other information held on file in GMPTE offices

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Following his week-long tour of the national rail network in April this year, Lord Adonis, Secretary of State for Transport, commissioned Chris Green (retired senior rail manager) and Peter Hall (Professor of Planning and Regeneration, University College London) to prepare a report 'To advise the Government on ways to improve rail stations, focusing on getting the basic facilities right as well as considering the broader role of stations in the future.'
- 1.2. During the preparation of the report, Chris Green and Peter Hall spoke with all PTEs and a number of other stakeholders, including train companies in Britain and Europe, Network Rail (NetR), station retailers and representatives of users. They also visited over 100 stations.
- 1.3. The report 'Better Rail Stations' was published on 17th November, 2009. On that day, Lord Adonis performed a tour of ten of the worst stations in the country; relative to the number of people using them and their overall function. The tour included Manchester Victoria, Stockport and Wigan North Western.

2. Key Observations of the Report

- 2.1. The report presents facts as the authors found them. The starting point is the bi-annual National Passenger Survey and the finding that, although passengers expressed an overall average satisfaction with the railway of 81%, the average satisfaction with stations is only 65% (60% for commuters), with Northern Rail (NorR) only scoring 58% for their stations - the worst Department for Transport (DfT) franchise. At the other end of the spectrum, East Coast (which has now reverted to the DfT due to financial problems) is joint top with 78% satisfaction, TransPennine Express (TPE) is third with 74% and the other joint top is NetR. Within the NetR stations, Manchester Piccadilly comes joint second with 85% satisfaction, only exceeded by Leeds with 86%.
- 2.2. The report comments that, as the NorR franchise was 'let with virtually no capital investment', the poor result is not surprising. However, the report also highlights that, following the upgrade of Rochdale station, passenger satisfaction rose from 48% to 76% and NorR calculated revenue increased by 2.6% - providing a revenue stream to help pay for improvements. There was also an observed 'halo effect' with passengers perceiving that all aspects of the station had been improved, even if they had not. For example, satisfaction with 'staff helpfulness' increased from 74% to 82%, although there were no changes in staffing arrangements. In general, there is high satisfaction with staff (where they are provided); it is the general appearance / upkeep of stations, personal security and car parking which generate the most dissatisfaction.

2.3. The current division of stations into six categories (based upon usage and revenue earned) is considered to be appropriate and the report notes this is similar to practice in other European countries. The categories are:

- A – National Hub,
- B – National Interchange,
- C – Important Feeder,
- D – Medium Staffed,
- E – Small Staffed,
- F – Small Unstaffed.

These categories determine the facilities that should be provided at stations. The classification of stations in and around Greater Manchester (GM) is presented in Appendix A.

2.4. Looking at the way past regimes have attempted to deliver station standards, however, the authors observe:

- *The Office of Rail Franchising tried to impose minimum standards after 1996 but these were lightly enforced in the mistaken belief that train companies could be left to operate on a self-enforcing basis*
- *The Strategic Rail Authority developed a Modern Facilities at Stations code in 2003, which provided gap funding for the more expensive renovations, but ran out of funding*
- *Passengers Focus published a Stations Report in 2005 which drew attention to the under-funding of stations*
- *The DfT strengthened minimum station standards in franchise agreements after 2004, but these were still not comprehensive and only came into force at renewal time. The 2009 Southern franchise finally brought more emphasis on station standards.*

2.5. This history does not reflect the roles and responsibilities of PTEs under the Transport Act 1968 and Railways Act 1993. Without the investment by PTEs in railway stations over the last 40 years, what would the NorR satisfaction score be? Both the NorR and TPE franchises started in 2004, before the change in emphasis at the DfT.

2.6. The authors are convinced that improving station standards is key to improving overall satisfaction with the railway, especially now that punctuality / reliability has improved. They consider that minimum station standards should be consistent across the country and this is a key area that needs addressing as franchises are re-let. The requirements of the Southern franchise (commenced September 2009) are held-up as best practice and the work of Transport Scotland in auditing and enforcing delivery on ScotRail is commended. ScotRail obtain 73% customer satisfaction.

- 2.7. The report notes that access to stations by all modes needs to be considered as well as the stations themselves. In Britain, 53% of rail passengers walk to stations, 24% arrive by other public transport, 20% drive to stations and 3% use taxis, cycles, etc. Clearly there will be wide variations from station to station. The report also notes the importance of integrating stations better into the local community – not only to improve access, but also to widen the potential use of the station (for example in the way petrol stations have become all-night supermarkets) and improve public perception. The authors observe that enhancements to stations can therefore have financial and social impacts.

3. Summary of Recommendations

3.1. The authors make 32 recommendations which are summarised below:

- The provision of minimum standards for each category of station (covering access, information, facilities and general appearance) should be made mandatory requirements in all future franchise specifications with the objective of raising National Passenger Survey satisfaction scores for stations to at least 80%. This would then have a significant impact on the overall journey satisfaction scores.
- ‘National Interchange’ stations are not adequately funded to meet the suggested standards and therefore represent the biggest shortfall against expectations. The authors identify ten stations in this category with particularly poor scores for the condition of their general facilities and appearance and recommend immediate remedial action. Six of these are in North West England and three within GM - Manchester Victoria, Stockport and Wigan North Western.
- To achieve passenger satisfaction with stations of at least 80% overall the report recommends that the spending rate on station upkeep and improvement will need to be increased from the £600m pa assumed in the current Control Period (2009-2014) to £800m pa (on average) in the Control Periods covering 2014 – 2024 (all at current prices).
- Poor access to stations is becoming an obstacle to further growth in rail patronage and therefore the authors recommend the creation of 5,000 additional cycle spaces and 10,000 additional car parking spaces each year – the latter funded by charging for car parking.
- The authors also believe that rail stations cannot be planned in isolation and therefore recommend they should be developed in close cooperation with local authorities, PTEs, Transport Authorities and Local Planning Authorities so as to become integrated transport hubs. As part of this process they recommend the ‘Manual for Streets’ should be revised to encourage better access to stations for pedestrians, cyclists and users of other modes of public transport.

4. Department for Transport Response

- 4.1. In response to the report's observations, the DfT immediately published a statement promising that they will consult 'industry, the devolved administrations and local government stakeholders on the detailed implementation of its recommendations.' This consultation has now been published and is reproduced in Appendix B. Responses are required by 29th January, 2010.
- 4.2. In addition, the DfT has announced that up to £50 million will be made available by NetR to help improve the ten 'National Interchange' stations highlighted in the report. It is not clear if this is additional money, or transferred from other areas. It is clear, however, that the DfT do not expect this to be sufficient to address all the identified problems. They therefore say the NetR money will need to be supplemented by 'developer and local contributions and refranchising obligations'.
- 4.3. In respect of as other stations, the DfT has confirmed that the recommendations of the report will be considered as 'future investment and refranchising decisions are taken and that all investment will be subject to satisfactory business cases and the prospect of adequate financial return. In addition, the DfT say they expect 'the industry and local government to raise part of the money required...so that as many stations as possible can be tackled'.
- 4.4. Responding to the recommendations concerning access to stations, the DfT say they 'will be inviting the authorities in England to comment on this aspect of the report ...and to take account of the recommendations ...in their future planning.'

5. Network Rail Initiative

- 5.1. NetR has also launched a station development initiative under the title 'Action Stations'. This consists of a ten-point action plan on which they are inviting comments. The plan is for stations they own whether they are managed by NetR or a train operator. The ten points are:

All our stations should aim to:

- *Be safe, secure and easy to use.*
- *Provide the information needed for passengers to plan their journeys.*
- *Allow quick and easy transfer to other forms of transport.*
- *Attract people to use the rail network.*
- *Have a positive impact on the environment.*

Our managed stations should also aim to:

- *Be places people want to work, shop and travel.*
- *Showcase good British design and safeguard our heritage.*
- *Provide a hub for other modes of transport.*
- *Act as a catalyst for the development of our major cities.*
- *Anticipate the changing and dynamic needs of our passengers.*

5.2. NetR suggest that key areas for investment in the future are likely to be escalators and lifts, access for everyone, entrances and foot-bridges, longer platforms and more car parking.

5.3. To take this forward, NetR are planning 'a series of focus groups (to) test the vision...and offer views on how we can collectively achieve it.' Through this process, they 'want to draw on expertise and experience', and in particular they want to know: is the ten-point plan right, what areas should be priorities, who should be leading this and how can the objectives be best delivered.

6. Implications for Greater Manchester

6.1. In and around Greater Manchester there are 100 stations. Only Manchester Piccadilly comes within the highest category (National Hub), but there are four National Interchanges, five Important Feeder stations, seven medium staffed stations, 45 Small Staffed stations and 38 Small Unstaffed stations (see Appendix A). This mirrors the proportion of stations nationally in the National Hub and National Interchange categories, but GM has a particularly large proportion of small staffed stations – which reflects the suburban nature of the network. The number of Important Feeder stations, however, is low. The distribution of stations between categories is regularly reviewed and therefore consideration should be given to challenging some of the allocations in conjunction with the station / train operators – especially since future investment decisions may be based on the allocations. In particular, where stations are grouped together for ticketing purposes (e.g. in Manchester and Wigan) the distribution of passengers (and therefore revenue) between stations can be unreliable and therefore the allocation to categories could be incorrect.

6.2. The recommended station standards for the three lower categories (90% of stations around GM) fall in some respect below the GM Rail Station Improvement Strategy (RSIS) standards. This applies in particular to information and security systems, which are the key components of the RSIS. Further work is required to understand the full implications of this – and also the benefits of providing a booking office with (minimal) staffing so as to lift a station out of the lowest category.

6.3. NorR has approximately 400 stations, most of which are likely to require some work to bring them up to the recommended standards. It is clear from the DfT response that there is no commitment to funding the suggested improvements.

- 6.4. The ITA/PTE will need to consider what they would like the next franchises (NorR, TPE and West Coast) to deliver with respect to railway stations and present arguments to DfT that can lead to franchise commitments.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1. The report 'Better Rail Stations' and the recommendation that standards should be consistent throughout the country is to be welcomed. However, the standards expected at local railway stations are lower than the ITA/PTE aspire to.
- 7.2. How improvements to rail stations can be funded remains a concern. Although National Hub stations (such as Manchester Piccadilly) attract sufficient passenger numbers and associated commercial activity to be self financing, it is clear that this is not usually the case for other stations – hence the £50 million fund to help improve the next category down (the National Interchanges).
- 7.3. Nationally 86% of stations (in and around GM 90% of stations) fall in the bottom three categories and it is unlikely any of these could ever be self financing. Therefore, external funds (primarily from the DfT and local authorities) will continue to be needed if these stations are to present a reasonable standard to passengers. Both the NorR and TPE franchises are due for renewal in the coming years and it will be important for the ITA/PTE to reach an understanding with the DfT on how the standards at stations can be improved during the next franchises.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1. See front sheet of report for recommendations.

Michael Renshaw
Interim Bus & Rail Director

Categories for stations in and around Greater Manchester

Station	Footfall 2008	Staffed	Category
MANCHESTER PICCADILLY	20,078,810	Y	A
MANCHESTER VICTORIA	3,425,014	Y	B
STOCKPORT	2,783,957	Y	B
BOLTON	2,643,442	Y	C
MANCHESTER OXFORD ROAD	2,540,976	Y	C
MANCHESTER AIRPORT	1,877,057	Y	B
SALFORD CRESCENT	1,576,221	Y	C
WIGAN NORTH WESTERN	1,189,342	Y	B
WIGAN WALLGATE	1,170,314	Y	D
ROCHDALE	819,083	Y	C
STALYBRIDGE	737,970	Y	D
GLOSSOP (Derbyshire)	544,349	Y	D
CHEADLE HULME	432,105	Y	D
HAZEL GROVE	411,140	Y	D
HEATON CHAPEL	401,531	Y	E
ASHTON UNDER LYNE	389,469	Y	E
MARPLE	357,693	Y	D
HEALD GREEN	307,864	Y	E
HORWICH PARKWAY	295,919	Y	F
ATHERTON	294,393	Y	E
BROMLEY CROSS	249,389	Y	E
ROMILEY	243,307	Y	E
HADFIELD (Derbyshire)	240,935	Y	E
ALTRINCHAM	235,336	Y	C
LEVENSHULME	229,856	Y	E
URMSTON	216,978	Y	E
LITTLEBOROUGH	212,241	N	F
WALKDEN	203,919	Y	E
MOSSLEY	198,197	Y	E
GATLEY	188,262	Y	E
HINDLEY	187,418	Y	E
MAULDETH ROAD	185,295	Y	E
MILLS HILL	182,413	N	F
GREENFIELD	178,269	Y	E
GUIDE BRIDGE	177,961	Y	E
EAST DIDSBUY	175,504	Y	E
DAVENPORT	172,016	Y	E
BRAMHALL	171,450	Y	E
LOSTOCK	164,774	Y	E
BLACKROD	161,075	N	F
IRLAM	157,694	N	F
DAISY HILL	157,525	Y	E
WESTHOUGHTON	155,362	N	F
BREDBURY	149,320	Y	E
NEWTON FOR HYDE	145,577	Y	E
APPLEY BRIDGE (Lancashire)	145,040	N	F
FLOWERY FIELD	133,496	N	F
SALFORD CENTRAL	120,107	Y	E
CASTLETON	119,833	N	F

BROADBOTTOM	119,061	Y	E
BURNAGE	118,764	Y	E
NEW MILLS NEWTOWN (Derbyshire)	118,465	Y	E
SMITHY BRIDGE	115,214	N	F
BRYN	113,302	N	F
WOODSMOOR	111,532	Y	E
GATHURST	111,221	N	F
HALE	104,020	Y	E
DINTING (Derbyshire)	98,932	Y	E
ROSE HILL	94,548	Y	E
REDDISH NORTH	92,833	Y	E
SWINTON	90,084	Y	E
ORRELL	89,090	N	F
NEW MILLS CENTRAL (Derbyshire)	84,877	Y	E
GORTON	80,555	Y	E
MANCHESTER DEANSGATE	77,325	Y	D
ECCLES	70,299	Y	E
FLIXTON	66,594	Y	E
MOSTON	63,637	N	F
HALL I'TH' WOOD	62,500	N	F
DISLEY (Cheshire)	61,850	Y	E
BRINNINGTON	57,203	Y	E
PEMBERTON	56,066	N	F
MUFC HALT	56,027	Y	F
GODLEY	55,852	N	F
NAVIGATION ROAD	54,871	N	F
HAG FOLD	54,014	Y	E
HATTERSLEY	44,736	Y	E
TRAFFORD PARK	42,090	N	F
ASHBURYS	39,894	N	F
MOORSIDE	36,949	Y	E
HYDE CENTRAL	36,765	N	F
WOODLEY	36,424	N	F
CHASSEN ROAD	32,980	Y	E
FARNWORTH	31,936	Y	E
KEARSLEY	26,903	N	F
GLAZEBROOK (Cheshire)	26,554	Y	E
MOSES GATE	24,013	N	F
HYDE NORTH	22,462	N	F
PATRICROFT	20,255	N	F
HUMPHREY PARK	18,793	N	F
RYDER BROW	16,125	N	F
INCE	15,736	N	F
MIDDLEWOOD	8,366	N	F
FAIRFIELD	7,722	N	F
BELLE VUE	7,429	N	F
STRINES	6,379	N	F
ARDWICK	431	N	F
CLIFTON	204	N	F
REDDISH SOUTH	84	N	F
DENTON	59	N	F

A: National Hub, B: National Interchange, C: Important Feeder,
D: Medium Staffed, E: Small Staffed, F: Small Unstaffed.

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17 November 2009

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BETTER RAIL STATIONS - THE REPORT OF THE STATION CHAMPIONS

In May 2009 the Secretary of State invited Sir Peter Hall, Professor of Planning at University College London, and Chris Green, formerly Chief Executive of Virgin Trains, to advise on ways to improve railway stations in England and Wales, focusing on getting the basic facilities right as well as considering the broader role of stations in the future.

The report which these two Station Champions have produced has been published today, along with an initial Government response. I attach copies of both documents. The Government warmly welcomes the report as a strategic blueprint for stations of the future. The Secretary of State has announced immediate action to improve standards at large interchange stations where the Champions found the current facilities to be least adequate.

As far as the rest of the report is concerned, we understand that there needs to be a large measure of consensus about the way forward, to ensure both that money is spent wisely and that the desired improvements come to fruition. The Secretary of State has therefore announced that he will be consulting industry and local government stakeholders about the Champions' recommendations.

I attach a list of questions on which we would value your comments. The questions are intended to help you structure your response on the main elements of the report, but you are welcome to comment on any aspect of what the Champions have said and in any convenient format.

BETTER RAIL STATIONS: CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

- 1. The report argues the need for improved passenger satisfaction with stations. The satisfaction rate is currently 65%. What do you consider would be a reasonable target to be achieved within five years? []%**
Please add any further comments below:

- 2. (a) Do you agree with the changes which the report proposes to the way in which stations are categorised?**
YES [] NO []
(b) Do you agree with the changes of category they have proposed for some stations?
YES [] NO []
Please add any further comments below:

- 3. Do you have any amendments to suggest to the detail of the proposal for Minimum Station Standards, bearing in mind the need to balance provision for passengers with affordability and value for money?**

- 4. The report recommends that the new station standards form the basis of future franchise agreements. Over what time period do you think it reasonable for these standards to be met for the overwhelming majority of stations? [] years**
Are there other steps which should be taken to meet these standards across the generality of stations?
Please add any further comments below:

- 5. Do you agree that there is a need for a substantial programme of additional car parking at stations**
YES [] NO []
Do you believe it can be self-funding through additional parking revenue?
YES [] NO []
Please add any further comments below:

- 6. (a) Do you have any comments on the recommendations in the report concerning the need for improved bus services and improved car, cycle and pedestrian access at stations?**
(b) Is there a need for new Government guidance in this area?
YES [] NO []
Please add any further comments below:

7. **Do you have any comments on what the report says about the community use of stations?**
8. **Do you agree that there is scope for more retail facilities at many stations, potentially including combined retail and ticket sales, bearing in mind the balance between retail provision and operational convenience?**
YES [] NO []
What type and range of retail facilities would you expect to see in stations, taking account of relative size?
Please add any further comments below:
9. **Do you have any comments on the vision for the future set out in the report, including the type and style of stations which will be required in 2030?**
10. **Do you have any further comments on any aspect of the report?**