6. Public Transport

6.1. Better Buses for Greater Manchester

After a long period of decline, bus patronage in Greater Manchester has shown a slight increase in recent years, as shown in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1: Bus Passenger Journeys

However, whilst there has been significant growth on some corridors (where the Quality Bus Corridor programme has brought about improvements in reliability, journey times and passenger facilities and vehicle quality and the introduction of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme has boosted concessionary travel, the situation elsewhere has been less promising. In the short term, the economic situation means that it may be difficult to sustain patronage levels. In the longer term, as the economic situation improves, the bus network as a whole will need to attract significantly more passengers if we are to achieve our aim of economic growth without additional congestion and will need to better connect communities to work and education if people are to benefit from that economic growth. To achieve this we need to bring more of the network up to the standard of the best performing corridors. In response to passenger concerns about the punctuality and reliability of services (including the need to be kept informed about any delays or disruptions), the low service frequencies at certain times, the affordability of fares and issues of safety and security when travelling or waiting, we need to improve the quality of bus services by:

- improving the punctuality, reliability and regularity of services;
- improving the quality of service provided (in terms of vehicle cleanliness, emissions, accessibility and driver behaviour);
• improving operating conditions for buses (eg through bus priority measures, better enforcement of illegal parking);
• improving passenger convenience and experience (eg through bus stop upgrades, smartcard ticketing, real time information); and
• improving network coverage, to improve links to areas of economic activity and improve social inclusion by strengthening evening and Sunday services.

Affordability can also be a significant issue for some people, but like most of the UK outside London, commercial (i.e. non-concessionary) bus fares in Greater Manchester are determined by private operators.

The achievement of the last few years in maintaining the level of bus patronage in Greater Manchester in the face of a long-term downward trend, has been as a result of working in partnership with the bus operators. We therefore want to build on this by achieving the above objectives through agreement, using powers provided by the Local Transport Act, 2008, covering tendering, Voluntary Agreements and Quality Partnership Schemes.

**Improving service and vehicle quality**

In September 2010, GMPTE launched a Code of Conduct for bus operators. This is a Voluntary Partnership, establishing minimum service and vehicle standards (and targets for improvement) and committing operators to maintain agreed vehicle and driver standards and to participate in countywide ticketing arrangements. Although the code is voluntary, overall operator performance will be published regularly and a failure to meet standards could ultimately result in an operator being removed as a code signatory, with the attendant negative publicity. By January 2011, all the major operators and a number of smaller ones had ‘signed up’ to the Code, covering 84% of the network. Discussions continue with other bus operators who have indicated a desire to become signatories.

It is intended that the Code of Conduct will drive improved quality in four areas:

• the vast majority of timetabled services should start their journeys on time;
• frequent services should have more even gaps between buses;
• passenger satisfaction should improve as operators pay more attention to cleaning, provision of passenger information, driver attitude and more careful driving behaviour; and
• newer vehicles should be introduced more quickly.

In addition to the Code of Conduct, we will develop Statutory Quality Partnership Schemes (QPS) initially for the Hazel Grove to Manchester and Leigh to Bolton corridors. On these corridors, recent investment in bus priority measures and improved waiting facilities through the Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) programme has provided operational benefits for operators. The QPS, which will last for up to ten years, will specify service and vehicle standards that the operators must meet in return for using these facilities (which the relevant highway authorities will agree to keep in place). A separate Voluntary Partnership Agreement would also see Transport for Greater Manchester and the highway authorities agreeing to certain maintenance standards and enforcement activity.
Following on from the initial QPS on the Hazel Grove to Manchester and Leigh-Bolton routes, we intend to extend QPS gradually across a network of high frequency bus corridors.

**Case Study: A6**

Congestion along the A6 in Stockport in the peak periods affects the journey times of all vehicles and especially the reliability of buses. It is considered to be an issue by the public and is a priority for Stockport Council. There was a need, as part of the Greater Manchester Quality Bus Corridor project, to reduce congestion, improve network efficiency/reliability, improve bus performance and encourage modal shift, whilst providing for the needs of all road users including pedestrians.

During 2007, GMPTE and Stockport, with the support of Greater Manchester Urban Traffic Control and Stagecoach, tested ‘bus gating’ in Hazel Grove. This scheme uses traffic signal timings to prevent too much traffic entering Hazel Grove in the morning peak to allow the A6 to run clear heading north to Stockport Town Centre. These ‘gates’ at two feeder junctions are opened only for a short time to allow a controlled volume of traffic to pass. Bus journey times reduced by just over three minutes between the ‘gates’ and J Sainsbury at Hazel Grove, but increased elsewhere because of increased delays at a number of junctions.

Further work has been undertaken since 2009 to deal with factors contributing to congestion in, and north of, Hazel Grove, using a combination of local resources and DfT’s Congestion Performance Fund. By 2011/12, 12 schemes will have been completed. These include:

- junction and lane capacity improvement schemes;
- traffic signals equipment and programming;
- pedestrian safety schemes;
- improving traffic management;
- assistance to cyclists; and
- reducing carriageway obstructions by removing parked vehicles e.g. by use of new parking bays, waiting and loading restrictions.

The proportion car trips to Stockport Town Centre in the morning peak fell from 67% in 2003 to 58% in 2009 (Source: GMTU report 1587). At the same time there is also evidence that average journey time along the A6 has decreased since 2006.

**Average Journey time, minutes per mile for car and bus users along A6, Congestion Route 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006-07 (Sept-Aug)</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A6 Buxton Road / B6171 Nangreave Road – A6 Wellington Road / A5102 Bramhall lane</td>
<td>07:11</td>
<td>05:57</td>
<td>05:52</td>
<td>05:55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GMTU March 2011
We will continue to work in partnership with bus operators to secure fleet replacement programmes more quickly than might have otherwise occurred. In addition we will take advantage of opportunities to bid for funding to accelerate the rate at which new vehicles are introduced. As well as benefits to passengers and the environment, there can be financial benefits in buying vehicles for use on tendered services, since providing a vehicle for use on a service contract widens the market of interested operators and brings future cost savings through reduced tender prices (since the operator does not have to allow for vehicle costs). Most recently, GMPTE, a number of operators and Manchester Airport Group made successful bids to the DfT Green Bus Fund. This funding is available to support a proportion of the additional costs of buying vehicles that are capable of achieving at least a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to a similar-sized standard diesel Euro III bus. As a result over 150 new electric-hybrid vehicles will be brought into operation in Greater Manchester in the next few years. The GMPTE vehicles (now Transport for Greater Manchester) will be used on Metroshuttle services, extending the Yellow School Bus fleet and on general subsidised service contracts.

As funding becomes available, we plan to add to the fleet of Yellow School Buses, which have been successful in reducing car use on the journey to and from school by providing a reliable alternative and reducing anti-social behaviour. The buses have also been shown to reduce truancy rates among pupils.

In the longer term we will also be looking to develop new partnership approaches to bring about improvements in the areas of fares, frequencies and timings. However, if these approaches do not secure the required levels of improvement we would consider implementing appropriate Quality Contract Schemes where operators would bid to run a specified network, as is the case in London.

Improving operating conditions for buses

Heavy traffic, roadworks and incidents on the highway network all affect the punctuality and reliability of bus services. By introducing a level of bus priority, through bus lanes, signal timings and improvements for buses at junctions, our QBCs have improved punctuality, reduced the gap between car and bus journey times and reduced the variability of journey times. There is, however, the danger that these benefits will be eroded over time as traffic levels rise, so we need to maintain the comparative advantage of buses on these corridors and ensure that bus lanes and parking restrictions are backed up with effective enforcement (see section 6.1). We will also ensure that the infrastructure itself (lane markings, coloured surfacing, paving, bus stops and shelters) is well maintained.

Despite the QBC programme, there are still numerous ‘hotspots’ on the network where buses are delayed. As funding permits, we will therefore introduce measures to address local congestion hotspots, and pinch points where buses are delayed. Given the funding situation, we will prioritise improvements that will improve access to employment and support town centre regeneration, and have been evidenced through the surveys of service punctuality and reliability that are undertaken as part of our Bus Partnership monitoring.

A further source of delay for services is the payment of cash fares on the bus, which can significantly increase the ‘dwell time’ at bus stops. Ironically, as more passengers are attracted to use buses as a result of improved reliability and quality of service, this problem can become worse and can reduce
the benefit of bus priority measures. Our proposals for introducing Smartcard ticketing are described in section 6.4.

Elsewhere (section 8.1) we describe our proposals for the development of a strategic highway network management system. This will ensure that key routes to significant centres of economic activity, such as town and city centres, the Airport and Trafford Park are managed and maintained to improve reliability for all users, including bus passengers and, where appropriate, give priority to particular user groups. It will also ensure that we develop a joint approach with the Local Economic Partnership to deal with the worst congestion hotspots. Our approach will include strategic traffic management for road works, developers’ works and major events, which can cause significant delays. Figure 6.2 shows the core bus network which forms part of the strategic highway network management system.

**Figure 6.2: Core bus network:**

Building on the QBC concept, we are planning to introduce two further substantive bus priority schemes in the next five years, namely: the Cross City Bus Package and the Leigh-Salford-Manchester Busway.

**Cross City Bus**

The Cross City Bus Package, which is subject to Department for Transport funding approval, will bring significant improvements for passengers. Most bus services to Manchester currently terminate in the city centre, with passengers having to change buses to reach destinations on the other side of the city. The Cross City Bus Package involves providing direct linkage between three major bus
corridors (from the north, west and south of the conurbation) across Manchester city centre by introducing bus priority to improve reliability, particularly in the city centre, thus enabling the introduction of reliable through-services. This will enable through-journeys, improve access to the universities and hospitals located on Oxford Road/ Wilmslow Road in the city, reduce bus journey times and improve reliability.

The Oxford Road Corridor is the location of the Hospital and the Higher Education Precinct (HEP) and is a significant economic centre which currently includes around 4% of the city’s total business stock. The number of jobs provided in the Oxford Road corridor is expected to grow from 36,000 jobs in 2008 to over 55,000 jobs by 2020. The scheme will enhance public transport links between areas of deprivation to the North and West of Manchester with new and existing job opportunities, education facilities and health services on the Oxford Road Corridor in South Manchester. The Corridor has recently strengthened its role as the key location for health care provision within the conurbation bringing further jobs as well as additional visits for health related purposes.

The cross city scheme will support the economic development of the city centre by removing through-traffic from the pedestrian priority core and will bring significant improvements for pedestrians and cyclists.

**Leigh-Salford-Manchester Busway**

The Leigh Salford Manchester Busway will significantly improve journey times between Leigh and Manchester, reducing the travelling time between Leigh and Manchester City Centre by 30%). This will be achieved by creating a 7km (4.3 mile) stretch of segregated busway between Ellenbrook and Leigh, along a disused railway line and introducing on-highway bus priority measures between Salford and Manchester, linking with the Cross City scheme described above. By using dedicated high quality vehicles, the scheme will bring the benefits of rapid transit to a number of communities along this important public transport corridor, eg Astley and Tyldesley. The scheme is estimated to have a ‘walk in’ catchment of 30,000 households, of which around 24% have no access to a car.

In the longer term we plan to develop other proposals for further bus transit or express bus corridors as part of a wider rapid transit strategy, described in Section 6.2.
Case Study: Cross City Bus Package

Transport for Greater Manchester, working in partnership with Manchester, Salford and Rochdale Councils, has developed a series of Cross-City Bus proposals aimed at improving transport connections along three of Greater Manchester’s busiest roads through Manchester City Centre.

The scheme, in conjunction with other elements of the Greater Manchester Transport Fund Programme, will provide bus priority infrastructure that supports the creation of three direct bus routes, from:

- Leigh and Atherton, to the west of Manchester (with additional connecting services from Wigan) to the MRI on Oxford Road via the A580, Salford Central and the Regional Centre;
- Middleton Bus Station to the North of Manchester to the MRI on Oxford Road via Rochdale Road and the Regional Centre; and
- Parrs Wood in South Manchester to Pendleton on the A580 corridor, via Oxford Road and the Regional Centre.

The types of measures that will be implemented on the corridors include:

- dedicated bus lanes and bus-only sections of route;
- formalised parking arrangements;
- carriageway widening/narrowing;
- geometric signal design/redesign;
- bus stop upgrades;
- side road closures;
- movement restrictions at junctions;
- loading and waiting restrictions;
- pre-signalisation and signal priority for buses; and
- enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities.

The Cross City Bus Package scheme network will enhance the existing Greater Manchester Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) network and address the unique problems of the Oxford Road corridor, which has the highest demand for bus travel in Greater Manchester, yet has the poorest results in terms of bus performance.

The primary objectives of the Cross City Bus Package Scheme, in conjunction with other elements of the Greater Manchester Transport Fund Programme, are to:

- increase accessibility from areas of social deprivation along the A580 and A664 corridors to the Regional centre, Oxford Road employment growth centre; healthcare facilities, education opportunities, shops, leisure and other key facilities along the corridors, thereby contributing to additional jobs and improved economic productivity;
- reduce bus journey times and improve punctuality and reliability;
- minimise the carbon impact of transport growth, predicted to be 5,000 extra morning peak bus journeys into the Regional Centre by 2020; and
- reduce accidents.
Improving passenger convenience

In the last ten years, we have introduced new, high quality bus stations into a number of our town centres including Oldham, Middleton, Eccles, and Hyde and at Shudehill, in Manchester city centre. These give greater levels of passenger convenience, comfort and security by providing a central passenger concourse, which can be designed to complement the town centre.

We now plan to build major new interchanges at:

- Altrincham (bus/rail/Metrolink), funded through GMTF;
- Bolton (bus/rail), funded through GMTF;
- Rochdale (bus/Metrolink), awaiting Department for Transport funding; and
- Wythenshawe, funded by Transport for Greater Manchester and Manchester City Council.

We will also develop plans for a new interchange at Stockport, along with a related package of measures to improve access to it. All the above schemes will make connections between different public transport modes easier and are central to ambitious town centre regeneration plans. As funding allows, we will seek to bring forward other interchange improvements.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), new buses must be accessible by 2017. To maximise the benefits of this change bus stop kerbs need to be raised to give easy access onto low floor vehicles. This work has already been completed on the QBCs. We will continue to upgrade bus stops to improve physical accessibility, comfort (eg providing shelters) and personal safety (eg improving lighting), but the rate at which we can do this will depend on the level of funding available and we will develop a prioritised programme. We will also take opportunities to use developer funding where new development will increase the usage of a bus stop.

We will also develop proposals for simpler fares and ticketing arrangements, linked to our proposals for smartcard ticketing, and for better and easier-to-use passenger information systems. This is discussed in more detail in section 6.5.

Future employment growth in Manchester City Centre will require a growth in bus patronage if road traffic is to be kept to current levels. In the short term, there will be limited funding available to develop additional interchanges and so the use of existing facilities will be optimised. In the longer term, the plan is for a phased re-location of on-street stops into interchanges. Plans to extend pedestrian priority and improve public realm in some areas will require a new routing strategy in the central area, that still allows passengers to access employment, education/training, shopping and leisure destinations.
Improving network coverage

Greater Manchester has an extensive public transport network, with most residents having public transport access to a local centre that provides key retail, health and public services. However, levels of bus service decline away from the main routes, leaving rural areas and some estates with limited alternatives to the car, particularly in the evenings and at weekends. In addition some key employment areas, such as Trafford Park are difficult to access by bus, either because of a lack of services or due to lengthy journey times. Changes such as the introduction of Sunday trading, ‘out of town’ developments and the re-organisation and consolidation of key services (for example, in the health sector), have changed travel patterns and the bus network has not always been able to respond. In the future, increased levels of part-time and shift working will place further demands on the network. Where bus services can not be provided commercially, such as in rural areas and the more isolated housing estates, Transport for Greater Manchester is able to provide tendered services to meet social needs, including ‘demand responsive’ services (see below) where demand is very low, but budgetary constraints mean that it will never be possible to provide all the desired bus services.

We have recently reviewed the bus network with the aim of removing duplication, creating more even intervals between buses, improving integration between services, improving access to areas of economic activity, and serving areas with un-met transport needs. As a result, we have developed a ‘Target Bus Network’ which better supports the pattern of development in Greater Manchester, improves links to areas of economic activity and strengthens services in the evenings and on Sundays. We will use this target network to help shape changes to the commercial bus network, in agreement with bus operators, focusing on changes that improve access to areas of economic activity, to support people getting back to work. As the economic climate improves we will also look to extend the coverage of services in the evenings and on Sundays to reduce the isolation of people who do not have access to a car.

Most bus services operate on radial routes into town and city centres, and as a result, many ‘orbital’ journeys, across the urban area can only be made by changing buses in town centres. We will look at whether additional orbital bus routes could better meet peoples’ travel needs and help to meet our wider objectives eg improving access to employment. Connections across town centres have been improved by the introduction of free Metroshuttle services in Manchester, Bolton and Stockport; we will investigate the potential to introduce these in other town centres. Although the lack of resources will limit our ability to do this in the short term, we will seek opportunities do so, eg through third-party funding.

In areas of low demand, it is difficult to justify a conventional bus service. Transport for Greater Manchester therefore provides a number of ‘demand responsive’ services, which help to fill gaps in the network. We need to keep the requirement for demand responsive services under review so that they complement new approaches to traditional bus service provision as they are implemented during the lifetime of this Plan. Our approach to demand responsive transport, including taxis, private hire and community transport is described in the Door-to-Door Transport section below.

We will continue to work in partnership with the bus industry to secure the level of bus services that will meet community needs, particularly in providing access to work, healthcare and to education. Whilst it will be possible to make some changes to the existing network, either by operators agreeing to alter commercial services or by making changes to the network of supported bus
services, we recognise that short term funding pressures, together with rising bus industry costs will constrain the ability to achieve this.

We believe that we need to target local and national public financial support for bus services in the most effective way to achieve the fares and service level that will give maximum value to both passengers and the taxpayer. We will work with bus operators and the Department for Transport to develop new approaches, which may require primary legislation, to the delivery of local bus services that better reflect the balance of public financial support and commercial risk. In the event that we are not able to bring forward such alternative delivery mechanisms, we will consider using existing legislation to introduce a Quality Contract Scheme.

Coaches

Coach services provide cost effective long distance travel and are particularly popular with students and older people. They are also vital to tourism and the visitor market in the conurbation eg for events and shows. Many services are focused on the Central Manchester Coach Station, but individual local authorities will work with operators to ensure that there is adequate signing to suitable coach parking locations and that coaches can pick up or set down close to their destinations. We will also work with operators to examine the scope for express buses or coaches to operate on long distance corridors, especially where there are no rail services or where parallel rail routes are overcrowded and highway (such as motorway) routes are congested.

Water Taxis

Greater Manchester’s network of canals offers traffic-free routes through the conurbation. Private sector operators have expressed an interest in running water taxi services between Manchester city centre and Salford Quays/the Trafford Centre. We will work with the private sector to identify the role that water taxis might play as part of Greater Manchester’s transport offer, for leisure and commuting trips.
6.2 Door-to-Door Transport

Door-to-door transport is an important component of the transport network. It includes taxis and private hire vehicles, community transport, demand responsive transport and specialist services such as Ring and Ride. Whilst door-to-door transport is vital for people who are not able to drive or to use conventional public transport, or who have no bus service available, it is also used by many more people because of its convenience.

The growing number of older people in the population are likely to have higher expectations in terms of accessibility (since many will have been car drivers), and the ease with which they can start and end journeys will be a significant factor that determines whether they use public transport. For people in their 80s and above, door-to-door transport will be vital in helping them to make journeys.

Door-to-door transport also has the potential to improve local accessibility, particularly linking communities with jobs, in areas where public transport does not provide these links. It can, therefore, play a role in increasing productivity in the conurbation.

Taxis and Private Hires

Taxis are vital to the functioning of the conurbation, providing:

- an alternative to the private car for those who do not own one;
- support for the night-time economy (when people wish to leave their car at home);
- the final ‘leg’ of a public transport journey; or
- a backup mode when other arrangements fail.

In addition to conventional hackney cab and private hire services, taxis are used by Transport for Greater Manchester to provide ‘demand responsive transport’ services in some areas where the demand is too low for a bus service (see below).

In recognition of their role in supplementing the public transport network, hackney cabs are permitted to use ‘with-flow’ bus lanes throughout Greater Manchester, since they can be easily distinguished from private cars. However, this can not be extended to private hire vehicles because there is such variation in their appearance and no common feature exists to distinguish them from private cars.

The issue of licences for hackney cabs is controlled by each of the ten local Licensing authorities, who also determine the location of taxi ranks. Each authority sets its own standards eg for the number of licenses issued, the age of vehicles and the area in which they can operate.

Our long term aim is to achieve more consistency across Greater Manchester in order to provide a better, more integrated service for the public. We will work with Licensing Authorities, taxi and private hire operators to bring this about, building on best practice from elsewhere.

Community Transport

Recognising the potential of community transport to provide local services to communities in areas of low demand, GMPTE and the Community Transport Association (CTA) established the Greater Manchester Community Transport Forum (GMCTF) to encourage best practice among community transport operators and build their capacity to bid for contracts and deliver DRT services.
Greater Manchester’s third Local Transport Plan 2011/12 – 2015/16

As a result, in 2009/10, the 10 community transport operators in Greater Manchester secured over £1.1 million in contracts from GMPTE alone as well as winning over £390,000 in European funding. In the same year, the sector provided nearly 840,000 passenger trips to Greater Manchester residents (and covered 3.6 million kilometres in doing so\(^{17}\)), saving an estimated 40,000 car journeys.

Other recent developments have included the establishment of a Quality Framework, which is an annual monitoring and evaluation tool and includes a web-based Vehicle Management System (VMS) that is compliant with Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) legislation. Volunteer driver schemes have also been established in partnership with Primary Care Trusts and social service departments.

We will continue to support and work with the community transport sector, and this relationship is likely to become more important as part of the empowerment of communities.

**Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)**

Transport for Greater Manchester has 28 DRT services operating throughout Greater Manchester. These provide pre-booked journeys, picking passengers up from home and taking them to key local destinations. DRT is a planned response to gaps within the current public transport networks. DRT services operate throughout the day and evening in some of the most geographical and economically disadvantaged communities, enabling local residents to access key destinations such as employment, health, education and leisure and cultural activities.

Initially, DRT was operated mainly by community transport services; however, private hire taxis now operate almost 50% of the DRT services in Greater Manchester. As with community transport operators, we have established good links with private hire taxi organisations in Greater Manchester to provide training programmes (such as tender training).

We will seek opportunities to draw on third-party funding for specific DRT projects to improve accessibility, for example the Department of Health funded ‘Partnerships for Older People Project’ (POPP) through which we have provided flexible transport to healthcare, shopping and social opportunities in Rochdale. We will also continue to seek developer contributions as a way of improving access to new developments.

**Ring and Ride**

Operating for over 25 years, Ring and Ride is a door-to-door service operated by Greater Manchester Accessible Transport Limited (GMATL). Unlike DRT, which is for all passengers living in an agreed geographical area, Ring and Ride is exclusively for disabled and older passengers and for those passengers who find it difficult to access public transport. Grant funded by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Ring and Ride service operates 81 fully accessible minibuses throughout Greater Manchester, carrying over 1.1 million passengers each year.

\(^{17}\) Transport for Communities data, 2010
Integration of Door-to-Door Services

A call centre, utilising the latest technology, books and schedules DRT services and the Ring and Ride Manchester and Stockport services. This will eventually cover Ring and Ride throughout the conurbation. Not only is this the most effective way of scheduling door to door services, deploying buses in the most efficient way, the system also allows for web booking and eventually SMS text messaging. The same system also hosts scheduling software used for adult services in Tameside and Wigan. This collaboration between Greater Manchester authorities has allowed the development of a model for expanding the use of booking and scheduling services in a way that will realise efficiencies for participating authorities and promote the shared use of ‘backroom’ services.

There are currently a number of agencies who provide some kind of demand responsive service (community transport, DRT, Ring and Ride, taxi, social services, education and NHS patient transfer services) and there is scope to better co-ordinate these so as to use vehicles and staff more efficiently. Our aim is for all door-to-door services to be booked via a one-stop call centre available to statutory organisations, voluntary groups and residents of Greater Manchester. This would not only be cost effective (as the increased number of trips that can be delivered reduces the unit cost) but would provide an improved offer to individual passengers as well as those in receipt of personalised budgets via social services departments.

Case Study – Integrated Social Needs Transport (ISNT)

ISNT has employed innovative collaborative techniques with multiple partners to improve transport and mobility outcomes, including journeys for children with special needs or adults in receipt of care packages, through increasing efficiencies in demand responsive transport services. The project has also housed and led an EU supported Interreg Project (Improving Connectivity and Mobility Access – ICMA) to achieve best practice in respect of the delivery of effective ‘first and last miles’ transport solutions.

Improvements include the integration of booking and scheduling technology (developed in conjunction with GMATL who operate Ring and Ride services), passenger responses and fleet resources, together with the development of a model to facilitate the migration of scheduling services for local authority and other statutory agencies. This has been deployed in Wigan and Tameside and can also be rolled out further to accommodate other agencies.

Further improvements (funded by ERDF through the ICMA Project) have been made to address additional demand and include a web booking facility. This is of particular help to those using the services for work. The IT system has enabled cross-sector support in a Shared Technology Project supported by AGMA’s Collaborative Efficiency Programme Office.

Current challenges include:
- relocation of the Scheduling Centre following a period of growth leading to capacity issues;
- further promotion and development of web-based booking;
- further service quality improvements for DRT services, including greater use of text and voice messaging to update users on relevant operational issues such as late running; and
- additional work with local authorities, inside Greater Manchester and further afield, to develop a sustainable business model for expanding collaborative work linked to booking and scheduling transport services.
Successes include:
• support for the expansion of the DRT service base delivered by Community Transport operators from 8 to 16 services by 2010;
• increase in booking and scheduling activity to 30000 bookings per month by 2010;
• shared use of Scheduling Centre services by 4 organisations; and
• reported expected efficiency savings in excess of £150,000 per annum.

Quotes from DRT service users:

“The service is always on time which is really useful as I am often going to the doctor’s.”

“I always find the drivers friendly but it can take a long time to get through to book. I am very happy with the service.”

Extract from Officer report on Salford DRT following on board interviews:

‘A lot of the passengers seemed to know each other from using the service and there was a good community atmosphere. The service is very valuable to those who use it and they conversed aside from me with each other about how valuable the service was. The driver also told me about regular passengers who go shopping but do not seem to buy anything and he felt the service provided a good method of social interaction for some people’.
6.3 Delivering the Metrolink Vision

The existing network

The existing Metrolink system comprises lines to Bury and Altrincham (Phase 1) and Eccles (Phase 2), with a spur from the Eccles line to MediacityUK. Despite the small size of the network, it already carries around 19 million passengers a year, compared to nearly 23 million on the much more extensive rail network. Figure 6.3 shows the growth in patronage.

Figure 6.3: Passenger Journeys on Metrolink

![Graph showing passenger journeys on Metrolink]

Source: DfT Transport Statistics “Public Transport”

A major series of improvements began in 2007. These were needed to: address the problem of overcrowding in the peak; renew some parts of the infrastructure that were inherited from the former Bury and Altrincham rail lines and to make improvements to ticket machines and information, in response to issues raised by passengers. Improvements already introduced are:

- additional trams to relieve overcrowding;
- replacement of more than half the Bury Line and all of the City Centre track and introduction of new, high quality street finishes in the city centre;
- renewal of overhead lines on the Altrincham line;
- improved passenger facilities on the Altrincham line (repainted station buildings, new signage, seats and litter bins, additional cycle parking and improved accessibility);
- improvements to Piccadilly Gardens to give more room and better shelter facilities) and St Peters Square (to give improved access and level boarding for double-length trams); and
- starting the roll-out of new ticket machines (which accept credit/debit card payments and allow the purchase of multiple tickets in a single transaction).

Further improvements, starting during 2011 will be:

- improved passenger facilities on the Bury and Eccles lines;
- a new stop at Abraham Moss on the Bury line, replacing Woodlands Road which is less well placed to serve the local education and leisure facilities;
subject to funding, a new Bury line stop at Queens Road (which is currently a stop for the depot only), to serve the Collyhurst Housing Market Renewal Area;

• closure of the Mosley Street stop to improve the flow of trams through Manchester City centre once the network is extended; and

• new passenger information screens, providing real time information at each stop.

Extending the network

Proposals to expand the network have been central to our transport strategy for many years, underpinning the first two Local Transport Plans produced in 2001 and 2006. The importance of an expanded network to Greater Manchester lies in the benefit to the economy, through improved connectivity of the labour market, reduced congestion and the regeneration of town centres and communities along the route.

In 2010, services commenced on a short spur from the Eccles line to MediaCityUK, funded by the North West Regional Development Agency. MediacityUK is a nationally significant new home for creative, digital and media businesses and the main tenant will be the BBC, who will have over 2500 employees based there by 2011.

Funding to build new lines to Oldham and Rochdale, Ashton-under-Lyne and Manchester Airport (Phase 3) was granted by Department for Transport (DfT) in March 2000, but subsequently withdrawn in July 2004 due to concerns regarding the cost of light rail procurement nationally. Following a determined local campaign to keep the scheme alive, a ministerial working group was set up with DfT to find a way forward and the Government subsequently confirmed that the £520 million funding originally offered was still available for Metrolink expansion via the Regional Funding Allocation.

In April 2005, the Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Strategy reaffirmed Metrolink, set in a multi-modal context and supported by behavioural change strategies, as the best solution for the Oldham/Rochdale, Ashton and South Manchester/Airport corridors. As a result of a revised procurement strategy and detailed appraisal, the South Manchester/Airport route was modified so that only the eastern section of the circular loop through Wythenshawe to the Airport was included in the scheme. However, the powers that would enable future development of the western loop have been retained, since improving transport links to Wythenshawe hospital remains a high priority. The intention is now to link the hospital to Metrolink via a shuttle bus. Completion of the Metrolink western section remains an aspiration but will have to await future development and funding opportunities.

The original plans for Phase 3 to Oldham/Rochdale, Ashton-under-Lyne and Manchester Airport were split into two phases: Phase 3a being those elements that could be funded using the available Government funding, and Phase 3b being those elements for which another funding source would be needed. On that basis we were able to proceed with Phase 3a, which comprises:

• the lines to Oldham and Rochdale using the existing heavy rail line (but excluding the new sections going into the two town centres);

• part of the south Manchester line, as far as Chorlton; and

• part of the east Manchester line as far as Droylsden.
In 2009, the Greater Manchester Transport Fund was established to bridge the funding gap between the total cost of a number of priority transport schemes and the level of funding available through the Regional Funding Allocation and other national transport funding initiatives. This is described in detail in section 10.2. As a result of this fund, the balance of the funding for the Phase 3 Metrolink expansion is being provided locally, enabling all three lines to be delivered in full. Details of the new lines are set out below. By the end of 2012, four new lines (to Oldham/Rochdale, South, East Manchester and MediacityUK) will nearly double the size of the tram network, with 32 km (20 miles) of new track and 27 new stops. The effect will be to take 5 million car journeys off the road each year and increase the number of daily passenger trips from 55,000 to 90,000. The extensions to the Airport, Ashton-under-Lyne, Oldham and Rochdale town centres and East Didsbury will further add to this, to effectively treble the size of the existing network by 2016. Figure 6.4 shows the extent of the existing and planned Metrolink and rail networks in Greater Manchester.

Figure 6.4: Greater Manchester Metrolink and Rail Networks
Oldham and Rochdale
This 22.5 km (14 mile) extension to Oldham and Rochdale will join the Bury Metrolink line just outside the city centre and run along an abandoned railway corridor to Central Park in east Manchester. Here it will join the existing Oldham loop rail line between Manchester, Oldham and Rochdale, which is being converted to Metrolink. Stops (either new or as a result of upgrading existing stations) will be built at Monsall, Central Park, Newton Heath & Moston, Failsworth, Hollinwood, South Chadderton, Freehold, Oldham Mumps, Derker, Shaw & Crompton, Newhey, Milnrow, Kingsway (subject to confirmation of funding), Newbold and Rochdale Railway Station (on Maclure Road). As a result, Metrolink will serve key employment sites at Central Park, Hollinwood and Kingsway Business Park, as well as a number of Housing Market Renewal Area sites in Oldham and at Newton Heath.

As a result of the Greater Manchester Transport Fund, the line will be further extended to Oldham and Rochdale town centres. New stops will be built in Oldham at Westwood, Oldham King Street and Oldham Central (Union Street). There will be an additional stop at the new transport interchange in Rochdale town centre. Completion dates are as follows:
- Central Park: Spring 2011
- Oldham Mumps: Autumn 2011
- Rochdale: Spring 2012
- Oldham town centre: 2014
- Rochdale town centre: 2014

Case Study: Improving the connectivity of Oldham with Metrolink

The former Manchester-Oldham-Rochdale heavy rail route is being converted to Metrolink and extended to penetrate Oldham and Rochdale town centres. It will link residents in areas historically poorly served by public transport with employment, retail and leisure destinations throughout the conurbation.

The construction period will bring the following challenges:
- The rail service ceased in October 2009 to enable conversion, causing the loss of a valuable service where the bus alternatives are slower.
- Highways have been disrupted as a consequence of these works – this is likely to get significantly worse in Oldham town centre in the coming two years.

The measures put in place to mitigate the impacts and to promote Metrolink include:
- A multidisciplinary team has been put together to mitigate any ill-effects from the construction works.
- Extensive efforts will be made to provide correct, useful and timely information to enable people plan around construction and disruption.
- Information will be provided on a staged basis to enable people to take advantage of the new transport links as they come on stream.
- Existing and prospective regeneration investors are being made fully aware of the coming major new opportunities.

Each new service will connect with the existing and new Greater Manchester – wide Metrolink services, using new trams to provide frequent, fast and reliable transport links. By 2014 there will be 20 stops on the Manchester – Oldham – Rochdale route and connections through to Manchester city centre, Altrincham, Ashton, Bury, Eccles and Media City, south Manchester and Rochdale. Manchester Airport will become available later. The Rochdale Interchange scheme (see section 6.1) is an essential improving connectivity in Rochdale town centre; providing a bus/Metrolink interchange in the heart of the town centre.
South Manchester
The 2.7 km (1.7 mile) extension to St Werburgh's Road in Chorlton will run south from Trafford Bar along a disused railway line with three new stops at Firswood, Chorlton and St Werburgh's Road. A new depot at Trafford Bar will provide capacity to house and maintain the expanded tram fleet. As a result of the Greater Manchester Transport Fund, the line will be further extended from St Werburgh's Road to East Didsbury with additional stops at Withington, Burton Road, West Didsbury, Didsbury Village and East Didsbury, providing an effective alternative to the car on a congested corridor. Completion dates are as follows:

- St Werburghs: Spring 2011
- East Didsbury: Summer 2013

Manchester Airport
The line to Manchester Airport branches off from the South Manchester line at Chorlton. Additional stops will be built at Barlow Moor Road, Hardy Farm, Sale Water Park, Northern Moor, Wythenshawe Park, Moor Road, Baguley, Roundthorn, Martinscroft, Haveley, Benchill, Crossacres, Wythenshawe town centre, Robinswood Road, Peel Hall, Shadowmoss, Woodhouse Park and Manchester Airport. As well as improving access to the Airport for workers in the neighbouring residential areas, the line will serve regeneration areas in Wythenshawe town centre and improve access to recreational areas at Wythenshawe Park and Sale Water Park. The line also includes a strategic park and ride alongside the M60 at Sale Water Park.

Design and advance work started in 2010 and passenger services to the airport are expected to begin in 2016.

East Manchester
The new 6.3 km (3.9 mile) extension to Droylsden in Tameside will run from Manchester Piccadilly through the heart of east Manchester. The line runs under Great Ancoats Street, through Holt Town and along Ashton New Road. The line will provide a link to the City of Manchester Stadium and the Velodrome and will have eight new stops at New Islington, Holt Town, Sportcity-Stadium, Sportcity-Velodrome, Clayton, Edge Lane, Cemetery Road and Droylsden.

As a result of the Greater Manchester Transport Fund, the line will be further extended from Droylsden to Ashton-under-Lyne with additional stops at Audenshaw, Ashton Moss, Ashton West and Ashton-under-Lyne. In addition to serving major leisure and sporting destinations and the Ashton Moss business park, the line will serve major Housing Market Renewal areas at New Islington and Holt Town and will support the regeneration of Ashton town centre.

Completion dates are as follows:

- Droylsden: Spring 2012
- Ashton-under-Lyne: Winter 2013/14
Second City Crossing
By the time the above new extensions are completed, the Greater Manchester tram network will be the largest in the UK, and there will be a significant increase in the numbers of trams passing through the city centre. This will increase the vulnerability of the central section to disruption eg due to incidents or breakdowns. We therefore plan to develop plans for a second Metrolink route across the city centre. The proposals form part of the wider transport strategy for Manchester city centre and will also be funded by the Greater Manchester Transport Fund.

A second Metrolink line across the city centre will provide:

- increased operational capacity;
- improved reliability for all Metrolink services;
- capacity to accommodate additional services beyond those currently committed and to extend services from MediacityUK into the city centre without having to change trams;
- flexibility to serve special events; and
- reduced disruption caused by future maintenance and renewals (by providing a diversionary route).

The new route will start at Manchester Central Convention Complex (Deansgate-Castlefield stop), run along Cross Street and Corporation Street to re-join the existing Metrolink line just outside Victoria Station.

Longer term plans
Beyond the committed expansions to the Metrolink system described above, we have two key longer term priorities for extending the network:

- an extension through Trafford Park, connecting with the Trafford Centre, the new City of Salford Stadium and Port Salford; and
- an extension to Stockport town centre.

Extensions to Trafford Park and Stockport have long been an aspiration. Work is underway to review design and alignment options. In the case of Trafford Park, this involves developing proposals for an extension running through Trafford Park, connecting with the Trafford Centre, the City of Salford Stadium and Port Salford. This extension will provide greatly improved public transport to the largest concentration of employment outside the Regional Centre and we will work with partners to identify a delivery mechanism for the scheme. In the short term we will work to improve local connectivity by other non-car modes. Bringing Metrolink to Stockport will further improve accessibility to the town centre and support the anticipated growth associated with the Stockport town centre Masterplan. Work is underway to develop the optimal solutions that complement the wider strategic development of the town centre.

Clearly, given the current funding constraints, it may take some time before major investment in further new routes will be possible. However, planning will continue so that we can take advantage of any future funding opportunities and also plan new commercial and residential developments in tandem. We have identified a need to extend the benefits of Metrolink-style routes and services to more parts of Greater Manchester, making public transport more competitive with the car in terms of speed and expanding the labour market catchments of town and city centres. In addition to serving existing development, other corridors of long-term demand are emerging through work
being undertaken in tandem with the developing Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (see section 3.2). Providing fast, frequent and attractive public transport services to more areas could involve increasing the capacity of the existing Metrolink system, new Metrolink lines or other types of ‘rapid transit’ routes. These could include proposals for extending Metrolink onto the local rail network by track sharing with other rail services where capacity exists (‘tram-train’), or ‘bus rapid transit’ routes, involving some sections of off-highway route (as with the proposed Leigh-Salford-Manchester Busway). Other options include ‘bus transit’, involving comprehensive upgrading of specific bus routes to make them faster and more attractive; new express bus routes; or simply an enhanced version of the existing Quality Bus Corridors.

A number of the District Councils have specific aspirations for rapid transit routes, and these will need to be evaluated as part of this ongoing work. Examples are the SEMMMS proposals for a number of Metrolink or tram-train routes in Stockport, Trafford’s proposals for a bus rapid transit route as a precursor to Metrolink through Trafford Park and Tameside’s aspiration to extend Metrolink through Ashton town centre to Stalybridge.
6.4 Rail System for our Future Economy

Greater Manchester’s extensive rail network, shown in Figure 6.4 above, is a key asset in both social and economic terms. Over the past decade there has been a concentration of high-value jobs locating in the regional centre developing in parallel with an expanding journey-to-work area which now covers not only the entirety of Greater Manchester, but parts of Merseyside, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire. Given these changes to people’s living and working patterns the railways have seen a large and unprecedented increase in patronage; severe levels of overcrowding are a common problem, particularly in the peaks, but also at weekends.

The vast majority of train journeys in Greater Manchester have an origin or destination in Manchester city centre, with 23,000 people arriving by rail each day (compared to 27,000 by car, 25,000 by bus and 7,000 by Metrolink during the AM peak). This growing trend is the result of the high number of commuters who use rail as the main mode for their journey to work. The growth in patronage and the particular importance of rail in economic development (given its role in reducing car trips, particularly into the Regional Centre and allowing the economy to grow without additional congestion) means that it plays an extremely important role in our overall strategy. The growth in patronage is shown in Figure 6.5 below.

Figure 6.5: Passenger Journeys on Local Train Services

Freight is also an important user of Greater Manchester’s rail network, vital to the economy but potentially conflicting with passenger services if sufficient capacity is not available. Our proposals for freight are discussed in section 8.4.

Greater Manchester does not build infrastructure, own the rail network, or, with some minor exceptions, subsidise services. The rail network is owned by Network Rail, with train services

Source: DfT Transport Statistics
operated under franchise, currently by Northern Rail, First TransPennine Express, East Midlands Trains, Cross Country, Arriva Trains Wales and Virgin Trains. The 90 stations are managed by Northern Rail, apart from Manchester Piccadilly (operated by Network Rail), Stalybridge and Manchester Airport (operated by First TransPennine Express) and Stockport and Wigan North Western (operated by Virgin Trains). Transport for Greater Manchester owns one station, Horwich Parkway, which is managed by Northern. Our role in the rail network is therefore mainly one of influencing others to make the improvements needed, rather than making them ourselves.

Our aim is to facilitate the development of a rail network in Greater Manchester that supports the region’s economic growth; particularly allowing people to access employment, strengthening business links and improving the attractiveness of the area as a place for people to live and work. Our specific objectives for working with the Government, Network Rail, train operators and other stakeholders are to:

- provide strong linkages between businesses – supporting the sustainable growth of the economy;
- significantly improve rail connectivity into and within the city region and to increase the number of destinations reachable without the need to change trains;
- reduce journey times between locations such that rail offers a viable alternative to car travel;
- ensure that sufficient rolling stock is provided to the region such that passengers should not have to stand for more than 20 minutes and that rolling stock is of a quality that passengers can reasonably expect;
- provide stations which are accessible, attractive, safe and secure and which provide accurate and up to date travel information; and
- ensure that fare prices are set at a level which represents good value for money for passengers, whilst also providing an appropriate level of revenue to improve services.

To achieve these objectives, we have a number of priority areas for development:

- network capacity;
- overcrowding;
- station improvements;
- electrification; and
- improved working with the rail industry.

Network Capacity

The Greater Manchester rail network is made up of a number of rail corridors that come together in the centre of Manchester to form the ‘Northern Hub’. This is recognised as the single largest rail bottleneck in the North of England, and the problem has been made worse by the increases in rail patronage and traffic in recent years. It is therefore Greater Manchester’s priority for rail infrastructure over the short to medium term.

In recognition of the seriousness of the problem, the Government commissioned a study into the Hub in late 2007 and, as a result, Network Rail published a report setting out proposals in 2010. The report called for new infrastructure to enable existing infrastructure capacity to be better used. This involves greater use of Victoria Station and the connection of Victoria and Piccadilly stations by way
of new track to the west of the city centre, as well as journey time reductions and frequency enhancements on routes to Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield and an increase in cross-regional connectivity.

During this work, Greater Manchester has benefited from widespread support from stakeholders across the whole of the North of England, with the Northern Way identifying the Hub as the largest and most fundamental bottleneck on the North’s rail network. The level of support is partly a reflection of the fact that whilst the problem is located primarily in Greater Manchester, the benefits will be felt across the whole of the North, including in Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield and Newcastle. We will work closely with our regional neighbours to ensure that this support is maintained and that benefits are realised across as wide an area as possible.

**Case Study: The Northern Hub**

The Northern Hub (previously known as the Manchester Hub) is the coming together of 14 of the North’s radial rail corridors at Manchester’s two main stations, Piccadilly and Victoria, their junctions and signals, and the mix of long-distance, regional, local and commuter and freight services that operate on them. The Hub is central to the economic success of the north but it is severely congested and suffers from a number of infrastructure constraints that, between them, are preventing the rail network in the North of England from playing its full role in driving economic growth.

In 2007, the Government announced a major study into the Manchester Hub in recognition of its importance to the regional and national economy. This study has been carried out in two phases. Phase one, led by the Northern Way, was an assessment of the potential economic benefits to the country from the improvement of the rail network around Manchester. Their conclusions were published in a Conditional Output Statement in April 2009. Following this work, Network Rail reported in February 2010 on the second phase of the study, which has looked at the existing infrastructure and service patterns, likely future requirements, the difficulties that could be encountered in meeting these requirements and potential actions to overcome them.

Network Rail has developed a solution that makes greater use of both Victoria and Piccadilly stations and which eliminates the majority of crossing movements that constrain capacity and lead to poor performance. The solution is based on all north–south services using Manchester Piccadilly, with most east–west services calling at Manchester Victoria. The £530million package of infrastructure improvements would be delivered over the next ten years and would include the Ordsall Chord – a new piece of railway providing a direct connection between Victoria and Piccadilly stations via Salford and Oxford Road, improving connectivity from the north east and allowing services from Victoria to access the airport – together with additional platforms, including two new bay platforms at Victoria, two new through platforms (15 and 16) at Piccadilly and a fourth platform at the airport.

Key benefits for passengers would include trains every 15 minutes to Liverpool and Yorkshire, faster journey times between Manchester and Liverpool and additional capacity for local and commuter services.
The cost of the proposals outlined above has been assessed at £530m for capital, with a similar revenue requirement over 60 years, but in return the scheme generates £4bn in benefits for the national economy, making it a strong candidate for Government funding. Additional analysis carried out on behalf of GMPTES found an additional £2.1bn per annum of benefits to the north’s economy through increased connectivity, and estimated the scheme could facilitate the growth of 23,000 jobs. A key objective of this strategy will be to secure a Government commitment to delivering the Hub proposals between 2014 and 2019.

However, the £4 billion benefits referred to above come mainly from improved inter-urban frequencies and journey times, with only limited benefits for local trips within Greater Manchester. Providing additional platforms at Salford Central station to enable most/all trains to stop, and a bus link from there to the Higher Education Precinct for those passengers who no longer have a through rail service to Oxford Road, are key to unlocking the potential of the likely local rail services. The platforms are not part of the published Hub scheme and we will therefore work with the rail industry to ensure that these are delivered.

The Government has committed to the building of a high speed rail line linking London and Birmingham and from there to Manchester and Leeds, and then further north. High speed rail has the potential to significantly accelerate the economic development of the cities of the north and Greater Manchester is committed to working with the Government, HS2 Ltd (the government-owned development company) and other stakeholders to develop these proposals. However, planning horizons for rail are long and the construction of any line is only likely to be incremental. It is therefore important that, in the meantime, the development of the conventional rail network is progressed so that it can act as a strong local, commuter and, where appropriate, feeder network and contribute to the growth of the economy.

A further long term measure that has the potential to increase the capacity of the network is to convert some services to tram-train operation, where lighter vehicles can both use the heavy rail network and travel on the on-street Metrolink lines. This is widely used in Europe and is currently being trialled in the UK in Sheffield. We will work with the industry to develop appropriate proposals for Greater Manchester.

Communities in Rochdale and Bury have expressed a desire for the East Lancashire Railway (ELR), now a heritage railway, to be used more widely. In order to enhance transport links to key employment destinations and support development proposals, particularly in the Heywood area, the East Lancashire and West Rochdale Area study (ELWRAS) is in progress. This includes an assessment of the role that the ELR could play in improving access.

**Overcrowding**

The main commuter franchise operating in Greater Manchester is Northern Rail. When this was let in 2004, it was without any provision for growth over the period of the franchise. However, patronage has increased by over one-third since the start of the franchise, with growth generally highest on routes in the north of the conurbation (the Wigan and Bolton corridor carries the highest number of both peak and off-peak passengers in the whole of Greater Manchester). The failure, at national level, to anticipate growth has resulted in a shortage of rolling stock and significant levels of overcrowding. Figure 6.6 below shows how this overcrowding is forecast to increase.
Figure 6.6: Forecast of Overcrowded Trains

Source: GMPTE analysis of TOC count data and DfT growth assumptions

The Government Rolling Stock Plan, published in 2008 identified the need for an additional 1,300 additional carriages nationwide by 2014 to accommodate both recent and forecast growth in passenger numbers, with approximately 220 of these earmarked for Northern Rail and First TransPennine Express. However, following concerns about value for money, very few additional carriages have been provided (it is expected that at April 2011 Northern Rail will have only 10 additional carriages). Working with Government to secure additional rolling stock requirements will therefore be a key objective for Greater Manchester over the coming years.

In November 2010, the Government confirmed a new rolling stock policy which would see electric trains cascaded from other franchises to operate on the newly electrified lines in Greater Manchester, as part of 650 additional vehicles procured for franchises outside London. We will work closely with the Department for Transport (DfT) and operators to maximise the number of these vehicles that will benefit passengers in Greater Manchester and also work with Network Rail on a programme of platform lengthening to ensure that stations can accommodate longer trains.

A further issue post-2014 is the need to renew the life-expired Class 14X ‘Pacer’ vehicles. We will work with DfT to secure the next generation of rolling stock.

Passenger Facilities

Stations need to provide a safe location for passengers to obtain information on services, purchase tickets and catch the train. The passenger’s experience when using the station influences their perception of the rail service and their willingness to use it in future.
Responsibility for stations is split between Network Rail who own the station infrastructure (with the exception of Horwich Parkway, which is owned by Transport for Greater Manchester), and various train operators who are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the station (with an exception for key stations such as Manchester Piccadilly which are managed directly by Network Rail).

Research carried out for Passenger Focus suggests that passengers consider stations in Greater Manchester to be of a lower standard than those in Merseyside and West Yorkshire. Greater Manchester stations scored significantly less in relation to four aspects of station standards, namely: upkeep & repair, attitude of staff, availability of staff and car parking.

We will consider options to take over the responsibility for cleaning, maintenance and retail at all, or unstaffed stations, from the operator where this can be shown to bring tangible benefits for the passenger. Transport for Greater Manchester is already responsible for the operation, cleaning and maintenance of 20 bus stations and 11,000 bus stops, and oversees the management of the Metrolink Stagecoach contract, which includes a requirement to clean and maintain the network of tram stops. Whilst the implications of such a change must be thoroughly considered the integration of responsibility for rail stations with other modes could achieve a better standard than that currently experienced by passengers. This will be examined in advance of the re-letting of the Northern franchise in 2013. We will continue to press operators on the importance of staff training and availability/visibility to passengers. Parking at rail stations is considered in section 8.3.

Over the past five years investment in the region of £40million has been delivered at stations through a number of initiatives aimed at improving passenger comfort, safety, security, information and accessibility. This has included £9million as part of Department for Transport’s National Stations Improvement Programme (NSIP) which delivers improvements at medium-sized stations across the country and £2 million from GMITA’s own Rail Station Improvement Strategy (RSIS) as a means of improving passenger security and information systems at 48 smaller stations across Greater Manchester. Wherever possible we have looked to secure additional funding from external sources in order to achieve maximum value for money from public funds.

Eight of the remaining stations within the RSIS programme are currently fully funded. It is planned that works will start on site in spring 2011 at Ashton-Under-Lyne, Marple, Bramhall, Walkden, Westhoughton, Rose Hill Marple, Brinnington and Reddish North and be completed in summer 2011.

Sixteen remaining station schemes are included in the RSIS programme. Although these schemes are not currently funded, we will continue to work with key stakeholders to deliver these station schemes over the LTP 3 period. Delivery will be subject to confirmation of funding. In the order of priority agreed by GMITA these are:

- Irlam
- Flowery Field
- Newton For Hyde
- Hale
- Smithy Bridge
- Castleton
- Broadbottom
- Eccles
- Flixton
- Gathurst
- Hall I’ Th’ Wood
• Ashburys
• Pemberton
• Hattersley
• Ince
• Strines

Several of these investment programmes are set to end during the lifetime of this LTP and details of any successor programmes are not yet available. However, we will continue to identify opportunities to improve stations across Greater Manchester and to work in partnership with other stakeholders to secure third-party funding wherever possible.

**Case Study: Bolton town centre**

Bolton Council and GMPTE have been working together to improve the integration of public transport modes in Bolton town centre. A comprehensive package of improvements is currently being implemented at Bolton Rail Station. The main improvements include:

- additional waiting canopies and shelters, tied in with changes to train stopping positions which reduce passenger walking distances;
- electronic Customer Information Screens, CCTV and Public Address equipment;
- new fully accessible toilets on all platforms;
- refurbishment of passenger waiting rooms;
- new cycle stands;
- improvements to platform surfacing and drainage; and
- improved waiting, ticket office and retail facilities.

GMPTE will also be exploring any potential opportunities for improving the pedestrian footbridge as part of the overall scheme. The £4 million scheme is funded through the Network Rail National Stations Investment Programme (NSIP), GMITA and a Northern Rail franchise commitment. Completion is expected in summer 2011.

As part of the wider Innovation Zone Bolton regeneration initiative, a second scheme involves integrating bus provision with the rail station. This involves developing a multimodal transport interchange through building a new bus facility adjacent to the rail station on the triangle of land between the Preston and Blackburn railway lines. A direct pedestrian bridge will link the new bus station to the rail station. The £48 million scheme is fully funded through the Greater Manchester Transport Fund and it is expected that construction will start during 2012 and be completed in 2014.

Manchester Victoria is a key regional centre station and the Northern Hub proposals foresee an increase in its usage. However, it is in an extremely poor state of repair and Network Rail, Transport for Greater Manchester and Manchester City Council are currently progressing a £25m scheme to redevelop the station including: providing a new roof, improving the waiting environment and passenger facilities whilst looking to protect the distinct heritage features associated with the
station. Work is currently set to begin in autumn 2013 for completion in winter 2014, although we will work with all parties in an attempt to achieve an earlier delivery.

Tranche 2 of NSIP funding, estimated to be around £2m, is provisionally available during the LTP3 period. Stations within Greater Manchester likely to benefit from around £1m investment include Blackrod, Eccles, Wigan North Western (for which funding has now been secured) and Wigan Wallgate. Delivery of the NSIP schemes is planned by 2014.

As part of the High Level Output Statement, Network Rail, in conjunction with Transport for Greater Manchester is developing a scheme at Salford Crescent, to be delivered by 2014, which will provide platform lengthening to accommodate six car trains, a de-clutter of the station to provide passengers with more space, a new or refurbished canopy on the island platform to protect waiting passengers from the elements, a new ticket office and Disability Discrimination Act-compliant access.

Three stations will benefit from Department for Transport ‘Access for All’ funding in 2011/12, aimed at improving physical accessibility: Cheadle Hulme, Littleborough and Marple. Improvements at Manchester Oxford Road are planned for 2012/13, however, the scheme does not extend to platform 1, which would remain without level access. Accessibility in this area will need to be addressed in the future in order for a complete solution at the station. To this end we will continue to explore all opportunities with the rail industry to make the station fully accessible. In addition, Oxford Road, which has a key role in providing access to the city centre and Higher Education Precinct, will require further improvements in the future as a consequence of the Northern Hub scheme which will result in increased footfall as a result of improved connectivity from the north-east of the conurbation.

Stockport Council completed the purchase of the Grand Central leisure complex, an area which is adjacent to Stockport rail station, in January 2011 in order to drive forward the regeneration of the site and of the wider town centre. The Council’s intention is to develop a scheme that will create up to 700 new jobs and attract up to a further £100 million private sector investment. The Council is initially focusing on securing a private sector partner to deliver new and high quality uses including office space, a hotel and multi-storey car park. The long-term plan is for the scheme to become a landmark gateway to Stockport town centre, including for passengers arriving by train at Stockport rail station. We are working with Stockport Council to assist them in achieving their vision, particularly from a transport and accessibility perspective.

In addition, we will continue to work with the Department for Transport to take forward our aspirations, with regard to passenger facility enhancements at Stockport Station, including influencing schemes proposed in the rail re-franchising process. We will also seek further improvements at Wigan North Western, which was also included in the ‘Better Stations’ proposals. Better integration between the two stations in Wigan remains an aspiration.

A number of other initiatives are underway as part of the delivery of Network Rail’s Strategic Business Plan, we will continue to work in partnership on these schemes to ensure that projects are delivered on time, to budget and that they deliver the optimum outputs for passengers.

We will continue to support Community Rail Partnerships and ‘Friends of’ Groups, who do valuable work (from monitoring problems and reporting these to train operators, to making small scale improvements such as gardens, planters, cycle parking, art works and signage) in caring for local stations and making them part of community life. This in turn encourages more people to use their local rail services.
The scale of the local rail network; the changing nature of economic and housing development over time in Greater Manchester; and the opportunities for interchange that the expanding Metrolink network may offer all mean that there are a range of locations where the potential has been highlighted for additional stations on the network, either by the local planning authority, developers or local community groups. In particular, through the LTP3 consultation process, stakeholders in Leigh and Baguley have indicated their wish to develop local rail station facilities, and we will assist promoters of any emerging proposals in understanding the potential costs and benefits as part of any business requirements. The changing arrangements on national rail franchising, the impact of the forthcoming electrification project and the ongoing debate to secure network capacity enhancements through the Northern Hub proposal will all be critical in defining the future rail investment environment and in securing the network capacity for new rail service patterns. In advance of these key strategic contextual matters being resolved, there are currently no clearly defined business cases for any additional stations. However, we will continue to review the prospects for station development during the lifetime of this Plan as we develop a clearer view on the framework within which we can consider the future pattern of relevant rail services and associated operating costs, the level of demand from any particular proposed new station and the potential for securing capital funding through the rail industry.

**Electrification**

The lack of a comprehensive electrified network in Greater Manchester and the prohibitively high costs of procuring new diesel train vehicles have resulted in proposals for the region to receive large numbers of second-hand diesel carriages cascaded from other operators. Not only does this mean that passengers travel on lower quality trains than would be the case with new vehicles, it also cause issues for train operators in terms of the increased cost of maintaining a diverse fleet of older, less efficient vehicles. This is a concern if we are to encourage modal shift to train, reduce the cost of providing rail services and reduce carbon emissions. It also has value for money and revenue implications, as passengers are unwilling to pay more for what they consider to be an inferior product.

In July 2009, the Government announced a scheme to complete electrification of the Liverpool – Manchester Victoria line (via Eccles and Newton-le-Willows), and followed up with a similar announcement on the ‘Lancashire Triangle’ linking Blackpool, Liverpool, Manchester, Preston and Wigan. This was subsequently confirmed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as part of the October 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review. Progressive electrification of the network will be key to reducing the operational cost of the railway, which is essential if rail services are to be put on a sustainable footing. We will seek to influence the Government to deliver these schemes. Network Rail have advised us that loading gauge enhancements on the Chat Moss line will be included in the electrification scheme, which will benefit freight traffic. The scheme will also include passive (at least) provision for the Port Salford development (see section 3.2).

These electrification schemes will make a contribution to reducing the region’s reliance on old, unreliable and expensive diesel rolling stock – as well as reducing journey times and improving journey quality. To ensure the long-term viability of the heavy rail network additional electrification is essential, therefore we will continue to lobby for a wider electrification programme taking in a number of routes, including the cross-Pennine route to Leeds and associated branches (via Huddersfield) and beyond.
Working with the rail industry

As part of the agreement between the Government and Greater Manchester Authorities to establish a Combined Authority in return for reformed governance and decision making structures, a Rail Protocol was signed which set out the basis for a closer working relationship between The Greater Manchester Combined Authority/Transport for Greater Manchester and the Department for Transport on rail matters. This Protocol contains within it the processes by which Greater Manchester could secure a greater involvement in long term planning and strategic development, areas for joint working and mechanisms for securing additional influence in the development of future franchises and improvements to the network. Officers from Transport for Greater Manchester and the DfT meet regularly to progress these issues and it is intended that this Protocol be exploited to secure optimal outcomes for the Greater Manchester rail network and services. The Protocol is ‘operator neutral’ and intended to secure greater influence for Greater Manchester over central government policy and decision making, regardless of which operators happen to be managing franchises and stations at any given time.

There are a number of key stages in the rail industry planning framework, where we will need to make the case for the improvements that Greater Manchester needs. Key dates are:

- the publication of Network Rail’s Initial Strategic Business Plan (its assessment of the work needed over the next five years, 2014-2019) in September 2011;
- the publication in July 2012 of both the High Level Output Specification (HLOS), which sets out the railway that the Government wishes to purchase; and
- the Statement of Funds Available (SoFA) which sets the maximum price it wants to pay.

The renewal of the franchises covering Greater Manchester represents an important opportunity to ensure that they deliver a high level of service to passengers and support growth and investment. Alongside the other northern PTEs, we are a co-signatory, with the Department for Transport, to Northern Rail’s franchise agreement. This creates the scope to specify and monitor service levels, quality requirements and fares levels. All other franchises are let by the government (or, where applicable, devolved administration). The next three years will see the Trans Pennine franchise expire in January 2012, the West Coast contract comes to an end in March 2012, and the Northern franchise the following year in September 2013. Government policy is to favour the awarding of longer franchises (15 – 22.5 years instead of the current 7 year norm) in the belief that this will encourage greater private sector investment. The DfT is currently considering awarding an extension of the TransPennine franchise to September 2013.
Franchises in the North of England are generally expensive to operate due to a number of factors; which include:

- high reliance on old diesel rolling stock, which is more expensive to procure and maintain (see below);
- high reliance on rolling stock which is inappropriate for the services being operated, leading to operating inefficiencies (see below);
- relatively low line speeds on large parts of the network, combined with relatively long distances between large centres of population;
- constrained infrastructure leading to operating inefficiencies; and
- relatively low fares (compared to the national picture).

These factors make it difficult to justify rail investment in the north as opposed to the south of the country. However, future patronage levels have been consistently under-estimated, and we believe that expiry of existing contracts presents an opportunity to let new franchises which recognise recent (and future) levels of patronage growth and which secure investment to facilitate this growth.

The Office of Rail Regulation has set Network Rail the task of reducing its costs by 21% between 2009 and 2014. We will work with the Government and the industry to help secure these reductions whilst ensuring that our aspirations for the Greater Manchester rail network are delivered.
6.5 Fares, Ticketing and Information

In addition to improving public transport services and promoting them, the simplification of fares and ticketing are an essential part of the smarter choices ‘offer’, necessary for achieving modal shift.

Surveys show that affordable public transport fares are consistently ranked by the public in the three or four most important attributes of public transport services, along with reliability and frequency. The price people pay is an important factor when choosing the mode of travel, or even whether to travel at all.

Like most of the UK outside London, commercial (ie non-concessionary) bus fares in Greater Manchester are determined by private operators and can not be subsidised under current regulations. There are presently more than 100 separate fares available, although the major operators have been moving towards three or four fare bands. As part of the recent partnership agreement between GMPTE and bus operators (see section 6.1), most services will have only three fare bands by 2014. In recent years, bus fares have tended to rise faster than motoring costs and general inflation.

Most peak train fares in Greater Manchester are set as part of the heavily-subsidised Northern Rail franchise and increases are regulated by central government. Prior to rail privatisation, rail fares in Greater Manchester were held lower than outside and this difference has been maintained since privatisation by the government’s limits on price increases.

Metrolink fares are set by Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority at levels that cover costs and service the borrowing that has part-funded the expansion of the system.

Various groups such as pensioners, children and people with disabilities qualify for concessionary fares. Some of these concessions are mandatory, such as free travel on local bus services for pensioners, whereas others are at the discretion (and expense) of local authorities. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority funds reduced fares on all modes for under-16s and free or reduced fares on Metrolink and trains after 9.30 for pensioners.

Through the ticketing and fares proposals described below, we are committed to working with transport operators and DfT to secure the most effective and deliverable customer focused, simple, affordable and integrated fares structure, that offers value for money for the passenger, for bus, tram and rail to:
• improve value for money for public transport customers; 
• simplify the promotion, purchase and use of public transport; 
• generate sufficient revenue for cost recovery, investment and profit; and 
• maintain a balance between generating revenue and avoiding damage to Greater Manchester’s growth prospects through congestion and crowding.

Simplification reduces customer confusion, providing certainty and creating a greater willingness to travel. Simplification also drives cost savings (reduced ticket transaction times, bus dwell times and fraud).

It is important that any systems developed allow all passengers to secure the cheapest tickets for their journeys, whether or not they have access to the internet.
Smart ticketing

GMPTE, in collaboration with Bolton MBC and Arriva Bus has conducted a trial that has demonstrated the viability of loading value (in Bolton’s case via a website using credit/debit cards details) onto a smart card, which customers can then use as an electronic purse to pay for their journeys by simply touching their card against the ticket machine. Mobile phones could also carry this technology. Building on this pilot, we intend to introduce smart ticketing across Greater Manchester. The scheme will initially focus on the Metrolink tram network but, with bus operators’ cooperation, will eventually be expanded to cover the bus network. DfT will require all new rail franchises to provide for smart ticketing schemes.

Potential direct benefits include:

- time savings for customers and bus operators;
- confidence for customers in being able to get the cheapest ticket without knowing in advance what journeys they will make;
- more direct relationship between customers and operators enabling targeted ticket deals;
- greater security for customers;
- reduced costs of ticket sales and cash handling for operators, and
- reduced fraud.

These should all lead to improved value for money, hence greater patronage and revenue. A further indirect benefit of smartcards should be better data on trip-making, and particularly multi-mode and multi-operator trips, for which revenue is currently difficult to apportion between suppliers. In turn, better apportionment should reduce the risks that operators face with innovative ticketing products.

Banks are already distributing contactless debit cards to customers, who will be able to use them for small transactions without PIN verification (currently up to £15) to replace cash. If the public transport system is equipped to read these cards, they should also provide some time-savings and operating cost reductions.

However, we recognise that the full benefits of smart ticketing, as experienced by users of London’s Oystercard, can only be realised if the technology is supported by simplified, flexible, integrated fares and ticketing systems.

Integrated Ticketing

Compared to the car, public transport has the disadvantage of not being able to offer direct links between all origins and destinations. This can be made worse by limited ticket options. Where a trip involves interchange and purchase of a separate fare for each leg and or mode, the cost will be significantly higher than by a direct route. Customers are in effect charged more for a worse (ie slower and less convenient) journey. Travellers can rarely choose their operator and will often have no knowledge of who all the operators are in a multi-leg trip.

Since 1994, System One Travel (Greater Manchester Travelcards Limited – GMTL) has managed the multi-operator, multi-mode transport ticketing scheme. It is co-owned by Greater Manchester’s bus, rail and tram operators and Transport for Greater Manchester. System One tickets are accepted by most bus companies, plus rail operators and Metrolink. They are promoted and sold via Transport for Greater Manchester Travel shops and System One / Transport for Greater Manchester websites.
and Paypoint agents. Currently there are 17 System One adult travelcards, covering various combinations of modes and time periods but, despite this range, there is scope to further revise the scale and cost of the scheme’s range of products. In particular, we would like to ensure that future ticketing can provide flexible and fully multi-modal ticket products that:

• offer incentives for regular commuters who work part-time and so cannot benefit from traditional ‘5 days per week’ season tickets; and

• support travel from all communities by flattening out the greatest geographical differences in fares arrangements in Greater Manchester.

Making improvements to multi-operator and multi-modal ticketing is therefore central to opening up new journey opportunities. This approach is supported by the 2011 ‘Transport White Paper’, which identifies smart ticketing as a key factor in delivering shared objectives. We welcome the Government’s intention to drive this agenda forward following the current Competition Commission review of bus services, and would be keen to be at the forefront of any potential arrangements that this may deliver.

Information

Improvements to public transport hold huge potential for economic growth, as evidenced by the analysis behind the Greater Manchester Transport Fund agreement. Providing easy to use and readily available information about public transport plays a key part in ensuring that this potential is realised. Passengers and potential passengers need to be able to find the information they want at the time and place that they need it.

Transport for Greater Manchester provides, in partnership with operators, a wide range of public transport information, including information in alternative formats. This includes printed timetables, bus stop displays, a telephone inquiry service and a web-based journey planner. However, our analysis shows that there is also a need to address gaps in, current information, for example:

• information on interchange between different modes; and

• information tools to support travel planning, eg integrating information about different modes to make people fully aware of their travel options.

Over time, we intend to increase the use of new technology (eg mobile phones to target specific markets and present more information in real time), however our focus will be less on providing particular systems than on making sure that people can obtain travel information when they need it and are aware of what is happening on the network, so that they can make decisions about their journey. This means that our focus is on personalised information systems, such as mobile phones, rather than the roadside equipment that has more traditionally been associated with real time information provision.

We aim to maximise value for money by using the same data both for informing passengers and managing performance and will also improve efficiency and affordability, particularly in respect of paper-based materials.
Public transport services can be complex, times difficult to remember, routes difficult to follow and the best ticket deal difficult to find, even for regular users. This can be a particular issue for elderly or disabled people who can lack the confidence to use mainstream public transport. We will therefore encourage the provision of ‘travel training’ to enable more people to use buses, trams and trains. We will also continue to present information in the most accessible format.

Information about travel choices is essential if people are to be encouraged to travel by more sustainable modes. Our longer term aim, as funding becomes available, is to deliver:

- ‘Informed Traveller’ solutions to the ‘smart’ delivery of a personalised travel planning system for Greater Manchester; and
- a travel information simplification project or integrated call centre.