

Greater Manchester – Delivering the Bus Strategy



TravelWatch NORTHWEST

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Background to Bus Strategy

Bus usage is stable at around 220 million trips per annum

Network is complex and difficult to understand to non-users

Barriers to greater use:

- lack of early morning and evening services
- reliability
- low frequencies
- interchange penalties
- lack of integration
- complex ticketing schemes
- quality issues
- personal safety



Bus Strategy – objectives

Improved Services

Higher frequencies and service/vehicle standards delivered in partnership arrangement with operators.

Improved Operations

More competitive journey times relative to car use, and improved reliability delivered via a range of bus priority measures on main corridors

An Integrated Network

Better levels of information before and during travel, easier ticketing systems, a simpler network and better interchange between buses and with rail and Metrolink services.



Improved Services – Objectives

- Provide adequate capacity to cope with the extra demand from economic growth,
- Ensure that those without a car are able to access employment, healthcare, education, shops, leisure and other key facilities,
- Provide a fast reliable public transport option to the City Centre on Non – Metrolink or Rail corridors from beyond the M60 ring,
- Be the main public transport mode for trips to the City centre from within the M60 ring
- Provide feeder bus services to rail and Metrolink stations, and main bus radials, in outer GM



Improved Services

Target Bus Network Standards

Minimum Frequencies

- at least every 7/8 minutes (daytime) 20 minutes (evenings & Sundays) on principal corridors to the regional centre
- at least every 20 minutes (daytime) 30 minutes (evenings & Sundays) on principal corridors into major town centres

Improved Services

Target Bus Network Standards

First and last buses

- first buses to arrive at regional centre by 6.00 am
- first buses to arrive in main town centres by 6.30 am
- last bus to leave regional centre after 11.30 pm
- last bus to leave main town centres after 11.00 pm

Access to the network

- maximise the number of people within a 5 minute walk of a regular (20 minute) all day service to their most appropriate district centre.



Partnership Working Arrangements with Bus Operators

Partnership Steering Group – GMPTE/ITA/GMBOA

Meets every 2 weeks

Three Working Groups

- Fares and Ticketing
- Network Design and Delivery
- Standards and Facilities

Regular progress reports to GMITA and wider
GMBOA membership



Bus Strategy – Delivery

Local Transport Act 2008

Improved Services

Operators make commercial changes to their services to reflect GMITA's target network.

Subject to budget – GMITA uses tendering powers to secure remaining elements of target network

Where appropriate GMPTE brokers “Qualifying Agreements” on discrete topics, e.g. operators working together to deliver evenly spaced services.

Bus Strategy – Delivery Local Transport Act 2008

Improved Standards

Operators sign up to a countywide Code of Conduct, a Voluntary Partnership Agreement, covering a range of vehicle and service standards across their commercial bus network.

Quality Partnership Schemes are used to set route specific quality standards on corridors with infrastructure investment.

Commercial services - voluntary changes

- Engage with operators in consultation on the GMITA target network.
- Operators to consider whether to amend services to support GMITA's target network.
- GMPTE certifies potential qualifying (market sharing) agreements between operators to resolve commercial conflicts where for the public benefit.

Code of Conduct

- Invite bus operators to sign up to a Code of Conduct for all services across Greater Manchester.
- The purpose of Code is to gain a commitment from operators to GMPTE's aspirations including;
 - Requirement for partnership working
 - Vehicle and service standards to be adopted by all operators
 - Commitment to support GMPTE's fare strategy e.g. fare structures and products
 - Commitment to work towards smartcard project



Quality Partnership Schemes

- Schemes will impose standards for frequencies and timings but balanced against commerciality and cost of non-commercial services (the “proportionality test”)
- Schemes will impose service standards, e.g. capacity, driver standards, low floor, emissions, reliability, punctuality, cleanliness, information, security etc.
- Registration restrictions may be used to protect operators from new bus operations with lower standards of service
- Maximum fares may be imposed to reflect fares aspirations and commercial viability of the service

Tenders

- LTA 2008 gives GMPTE more flexibility in its tender requirements
- Can be used to procure services which would not otherwise be provided, or which would not be provided to a specified standard i.e. can be used to "upgrade" services to higher standards than would be commercially viable.
- Can be used to address services that operators are not able/willing to offer commercially
- Standards need to be justifiable if existing commercial services are adversely impacted. Competition test protects existing operators.

Qualifying Agreements

- Allow for co-operation e.g. joint running or synchronised frequencies or market sharing
- May be required to enable operators to comply with terms of QPS (for example running even headways on common sections of routes)
- May be proposed by commercial operators in response to GMITA network plan (or other commercial proposals)
- GMPTE must certify to make legal, but still risk of challenge if competition test not actually satisfied:
 - transport benefits must be proportionate to impact on competition:
 - cannot include price fixing

Improved Operations

Two aspects to this:

New investment – delivered in conjunction with districts

- Cross City Bus Priority Package
- Further work on existing QBCs
- Hot Spot treatments

Effective enforcement and maintenance of existing facilities

- Highway authority obligations built into QPS
- Regular monitoring to identify delay / congestion locations



Improved Integration

Better interchange between bus and rail / Metrolink:

Target network designed more “feeder” services

New bus stations planned for Rochdale, Altrincham and Bolton

Integrated ticketing:

Code of Conduct seeks common fares bands

Qualifying Agreements could enable ticket “sharing”

QPS can include maximum fares.



.....and if partnership fails?

GMITA position is clear - the desire is to work in partnership with bus operators to secure the bus strategy objectives.

But, if partnership fails.....

Officers have also been asked to look at the potential role of Quality Contracts.



