

promoting quality public transport.....

CONFERENCE REPORT

Thursday 4th February 2010

Renaissance House, North West Development Agency, Warrington

Conference kindly sponsored by the NWDA and Muttons Cranes of Rochdale

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman, Chris Dale welcomed delegates to Warrington and thanked the sponsors for their kind support. He went on to inform delegates of the activities and work of TravelWatch North West since the last conference. A large number of meetings had been attended. These included:

- Ø West Coast Rail 250
- Ø Trans Pennine Express Stakeholders
- Ø Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan Strategy
- Ø SELRAP Conference (Skipton – Colne line)
- Ø Merseyside Integrated Transport Forum
- Ø Manchester Airport Liaison Forum
- Ø TravelWatch Chairs joint committee
- Ø North West Bus Summit
- Ø Passenger Focus Board meeting (Liverpool)
- Ø Local Government Asscn. Conference – (1st year of Local Transport Act)
- Ø Louise Ellman MP- Chair, Commons Transport Select Committee

A number of consultations had been responded to as follows:

- Ø Position Paper on High Speed Rail (Network Rail)
- Ø Smart & Integrated Ticketing (DfT)
- Ø Better Rail Stations Report (DfT)
- Ø Oldham Loop closure issues
- Ø Concessionary Fare Grant funding (DfT)

He made particular reference to the meeting with Louise Ellman MP who had approached TWNW for the meeting. She expressed great interest in the TW movement and asked to be kept informed of work and developments through regular liaison. He also highlighted to Passenger Focus Board meeting in Liverpool in December when a major topic that emerged, from Board members and Train Companies, was overcrowding on trains in the North of England. Chris also drew

attention to the TOWN Business Plan launched towards the end of 2009 and suggested that delegates obtain a copy.

2. RS2010, The Integrated Regional Strategy

Neil Cumberlidge, Director of Strategy & Planning, NWDA.

Neil informed delegates that NWDA was half way through the process of producing RS2010. The production of the strategy is a statutory requirement and work began 18 months ago. Its aim is to link all the regional and sub-regional strategies into a "single vision" document. The work is led by NWDA and 4NW through its Regional Leaders Board. The strategy aims to provide a vision to 2030 and is sectioned by 4 strands, viz.:

- 1) Capitalise on the opportunities of moving to a low-carbon economy and address climate change.
- 2) Build on our sources of international competitive advantage and regional distinctiveness.
- 3) Release the potential of our people and tackle poverty.
- 4) Ensure the right housing and infrastructure for sustainable growth.

These 4 strands were selected to comprehensively embrace the defined needs of the region to grow in a low carbon and sustainable way over the next 20 years. Stratagems include:

- Ø Reducing demand for energy
- Ø Encourage low carbon travel
- Ø Empower international competitive sectors
- Ø Increase knowledge base
- Ø Improve International connectivity
- Ø Increase the Culture, Sport, Leisure and Tourism economy
- Ø Optimise business use of Manchester and Liverpool airports
- Ø Receive the High Speed rail service
- Ø Tackling poverty
- Ø Improving the transport network and its connectivity

The strategy still needed to answer some fundamental questions though:

- Ø How to grow Manchester and Liverpool
- Ø Identify the roles of North Cheshire, Preston & Pennine Lancashire
- Ø Sustainable growth in Cumbria

The consultation period for the current draft document ends on 26th February, and will be followed by a formal consultation in the Summer and an Examination in public in late 2010.

Discussion followed and it was emphasised that it was important for the strategy to integrate with sub regional and local strategies and that a synergy between them was achieved. Additionally work and liaison was taking place with neighbouring regions where “Cross Border” issues were prevalent.

On transport issues the importance of the Northern Way vision, the Manchester Rail Hub and the many current transport projects were recognised, and it was believed that these would be brought into sharper focus after the consultation.

The potential effect of the election and a change of government was discussed and it was pointed out that the strategy being divided into 2 parts was a deliberate act to address this eventuality. It is recognised that financial cuts are very likely, so Part 1 will be published immediately after the election and will be a strong statement of the North West Vision.

3. A low Carbon Future within the Transport Sector

Prof. John Whitelegg, Stockholm Environment Institute & University of York

Prof. Whitelegg believes that the public transport offer in the UK is extremely poor in comparison to mainland Europe. Major UK failings include encouragement of Carbon Reduction, better Bus Patronage and cycling. He feels that spatial arrangements in urban areas require better planning to encourage low carbon emissions, but many of these fail due to positioning and a lack of appreciation of the contribution public transport can make to reducing emissions. He wished that all new residential developments could be carbon neutral but this was not the case.

Decarbonisation is a possibility by 2050 if actions were taken now in Spatial planning, better use of Technology and changes in Behaviour. Even a change to the use of electric cars could carry consequences as the National Grid may not work due to over demand.

Current examples of failings in the UK are:

- Ø Walking is in decline
- Ø Cycling in Liverpool represents less than 2% of transport modes
- Ø £10 rail ticket in UK covers 10 miles travel – 80 miles in Sweden
- Ø Only 6 tram systems in UK – 16 in France + 7 in development
- Ø Government’s appraisal is defective (NATA)
- Ø Bus subsidies up 128%; Fares up 17%, Passengers down 8%: Big 5 profits up 36%

Examples of good practice that could be adopted from Europe are “Road” Trains carrying lorries to destinations and freight trams as used in Amsterdam. Many others are available but the UK is slow in both consideration and adoption of new principles.

To accelerate the move to de-carbonisation Travel Plans should be compulsory in the development of Workplaces, Schools and Residential building. Core benefits of such a movement would be Improvement to Air Quality, Social Inclusion and Accessibility.

4. North West Rail Campaign ***Roger Jones, Campaign Director***

Roger opened his presentation by stating that Transport in the UK was not a priority with political parties when compared against the likes of Health, and Education etc. In a recent survey of potential candidates in the next election transport came 16th in importance whilst climate change came 19th. He also believes that whoever wins the election will introduce serious cuts in public spending. He set out his views on Bad News and Good news:

Bad News

- Ø Severe public spending cuts after election
- Ø High Speed rail could be a “non-starter”
- Ø Value for money tests on all projects and schemes
- Ø Bus subsidy cut (20% - 30 %) resulting in cuts in non profitable routes
- Ø Light rail schemes cut or deferred
- Ø Health and Education will take priority at expense of Transport

Good News

- Ø Manchester Hub Study due 16th February – Need to enhance Victoria and link to Piccadilly; build more through platforms at Piccadilly; create loops for fast trains to pass slow trains.
- Ø North West lobby for Transport is strong and viewed as 2nd to London in importance

With the General Election approaching and the political parties gearing up their campaigns Roger encouraged delegates to enter into talks with their prospective parliamentary candidates at the earliest opportunity.

5. Debate – What do (public) transport users want from the Planners ***Facilitated by David Robinson, Chair - CTC***

David Robinson began the debate by reminding delegates of the 4 strands of the Regional Strategy as described earlier by Neil Cumberlidge, viz:

- 1) *Capitalise on the opportunities of moving to a low-carbon economy and address climate change.*
- 2) *Build on our sources of international competitive advantage and regional distinctiveness.*
- 3) *Release the potential of our people and tackle poverty.*
- 4) *Ensure the right housing and infrastructure for sustainable growth.*

Delegates raised a number of points as set out in Appendix A

6. North West Rail Stations Report ***Lillian Burns, Board Member, TWNW***

Lillian introduced the recently published report and distributed copies to delegates. She informed that it builds on the Better Stations Report published by DfT. She described the yawning gap in facilities at a number of major stations. 7 of the stations highlighted in the DfT report are located in the North West and the TWNW report has added to these, Manchester Oxford Road, Bolton, Blackpool North, Chester and Carlisle.

Whilst the £50 million pledged by Lord Adonis for improvements to stations the challenge to stakeholders to match it would likely be difficult in the current financial climate and against a background of expected cuts in public expenditure.

The report is to be distributed to all members and industry stakeholders as well as key politicians. The response will be monitored and the report will be followed up later in the year.

7. Smart Ticketing in Cheshire ***Colin Kennington, Cheshire Integrated Transport Service***

The Cheshire integrated transport service is a partnership of the Councils of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington.

The Smart ticket was introduced in 2002 at about the same time as cards in Nottingham and Southampton. The London Oyster card followed later but was based on completely different systems. The card holds funds for the holder and card readers on buses automatically deduct fares that are programmed into the machines.

The key objectives of the Smart card and its associated technology was to:

- Ø increase bus ridership
- Ø achieve faster bus journeys by reducing boarding time
- Ø improve reliability
- Ø support concession schemes
- Ø optimise efficiency of school transport
- Ø provide a healthy bus industry
- Ø improve profitability and lower costs for operators
- Ø maximise income

Reasons to adopt a Smart system were many. Encouraging a modal shift to public transport at the same time as reducing carbon emissions are important factors as is support to the national economy and providing a better quality of life as a result.

The development costs are high, however (£3k per bus and £25k back office costs) and the systems are quite complex.

The Cheshire cards are usable on other Smart card areas in England and after 10 years operation the system is now well embedded. However, it is technically difficult and expensive to initially install. However it works and is popular.

For the future it is hoped to build on the DfT Smart and Integrated Ticketing Strategy by rolling the system out to all bus operators and trains. It also has the potential to be extended outside transport into other products. Technology exists to incorporate the system into bank cards and mobile phones. It is also hoped to achieve integration with the Oyster system.

If the initial complexity and development costs can be overcome, the cards provide a benefit to operators and users alike and have been proved to increase patronage of public transport with all its associated benefits. Particularly to carbon reductions.

8. Open Forum

Questions raised in the Open Forum were:

Can a Manchester Metrolink Timetable be published? – Not currently published

Proposals to close Metrolink tram stop at Moseley Street poorly consulted. Take up with GMITA.

Need for a coherent Strategy between all stakeholders to achieve desired rail investment in the North West.

The re-Blackpool company has suggested that rail services be cut back from Blackpool South to Lytham. Blackpool Council has rejected this preferring and extension further into the resort and current Northern franchise will not permit any curtailment.

Extra trains serving Maryport – Workington will be removed when the road bridge is operational. Future of Workington North station will depend on local stakeholder's investment and a robust business case.

Merseytravel funding through LTP for Wrexham – Bidston services.

Bus fares information non-availability on the Web is a disincentive to potential passengers. Industry Association is being encouraged to look at this.

The new National Rail Website is now user unfriendly to blind users. Also the site is more complex than the old one and text is mis-aligned. Take up with National Rail.

8. Next Conference

Saturday 12th June, Lancaster.

Appendix A - Regional strategy – discussion points

Moving to a low carbon economy – address climate change

Reduce dependency on imported oil
Energy gap facing us

International competitive advantage and regional distinctiveness

No comments

Potential of our people – and Poverty

Safe environment in local neighbourhoods – people at heart of strategy

Housing and (transport) infrastructure for sustainable growth

Is sustainable growth still possible ?
Is it needed for good quality of life ?
Work to live or live to work ?

Total transport integration is necessary between modes and providers. Connectivity by public transport – emphasise and emphasise and repeat!

Importance of accessibility to services, culture, leisure, work etc.
Good public transport links help to address social exclusion and contribute to a green environment

Reduce the need to travel by -

- Local services or central distribution – thereby reduce need to travel
- Reduce distances travelled to work
- Promote “Slow” movement in life style
- Overcome the UK culture issue which asserts that travel is good !
- Cut food miles – local sourcing
- Local jobs for local people
- Local school is best school
- Housing proposals are not related to job provision and this increases the need for transport.

Smarter choices for travel. Public transport must become a more attractive option and be supported by better information to encourage modal shift. How do we make walking, cycling, bus as first considered options? – a cultural change is needed. Support from within the community should be encouraged, and partnership of public and voluntary services. Poor bus services in many large housing areas – services concentrate on main roads

Overcrowding not just a conurbation issue – over region as a whole.
Restore lost transport links ?

No services in evenings or Sundays
Affordability of services to user - how to pay for improvements?

Car transport is much cheaper relative to public transport than it was in the past. There is a different approach to cars in UK than continental Europe. Why? Margaret Thatcher was critical of bus users. There is too much negative perception of bus travel which has a poor public image. Bus operators not being properly compensated for concessionary fares.

Public transport is not covered fairly in the press and media
Public transport must be talked up. Contrast reality and experience of public transport – timetables are an expression of hope.

Appendix B - Attendance

Name	Organisation
<i>Adrian Dunning</i>	<i>NW Transport Roundtable</i>
<i>Alan Pettener</i>	<i>Cheadle & District RUG</i>
<i>Alan Salter</i>	<i>Transport Matters</i>
<i>Allan McLean</i>	<i>VirginTrains</i>
<i>Barry Eaton</i>	<i>Warrington BC</i>
<i>Carol Lavell</i>	<i>Peak District National Park</i>
<i>Cedric Green</i>	<i>North Cheshire RUG</i>
<i>Chris Anslow</i>	<i>Lancs CC</i>
<i>Chris Dale</i>	<i>TWNW</i>
<i>Chris Jarvis</i>	<i>Institute of Transport Administration</i>
<i>Christine Garner</i>	<i>Cheshire West and Chester Council</i>
<i>Colin Barnett</i>	<i>Bus Users UK</i>
<i>Colin Kennington</i>	<i>Cheshire Integrated Transport</i>
<i>Dave Koring</i>	<i>Shropshire Council</i>
<i>David Burton</i>	<i>SELRAP</i>
<i>David Butterworth</i>	<i>TWNW</i>
<i>David Evans</i>	<i>Blackpool & Fylde RUA</i>
<i>David Robinson</i>	<i>CTC</i>
<i>Debbie Rothwell</i>	<i>Merseytravel</i>
<i>Emma Antrobus</i>	<i>NW Rail Campaign</i>
<i>Frank Salt</i>	<i>STORM</i>
<i>Frederick Consterdine</i>	<i>Crewe & Shrewsbury Passr Assoc</i>
<i>Gabriel Drew</i>	<i>East Cheshire RUG</i>
<i>Geoff Kerr</i>	
<i>Geoff Partington</i>	
<i>Ian McDermott</i>	<i>North Trafford Rail Group</i>
<i>Ian Watson</i>	

<i>John Moorhouse</i>	<i>TWNW</i>
<i>John Owen</i>	<i>TWNW</i>
<i>Janet Briggs</i>	<i>North Cheshire RUG</i>
<i>Janet Cuff</i>	<i>Ramblers Assoc</i>
<i>Jeremy Walker</i>	<i>Blackpool Council</i>
<i>John Aaron</i>	
<i>John Culshaw</i>	
<i>John Hart</i>	<i>TWNW</i>
<i>John Hobbs</i>	<i>North Cheshire RUG</i>
<i>John Ryan</i>	<i>Wirral TUA</i>
<i>John Warner</i>	
<i>Julie Corke</i>	<i>Northern</i>
<i>Keith Pennyfather</i>	<i>Macclesfield PTLC</i>
<i>Ken McKelvie</i>	<i>Ramblers Assoc</i>
<i>Leonard Green</i>	<i>TWNW</i>
<i>Les Burton</i>	<i>Stagecoach Merseyside</i>
<i>Lillian Burns</i>	<i>TWNW</i>
<i>M Richardson</i>	<i>Blackpool & Fylde RUA</i>
<i>Malcolm Conway</i>	<i>Lakes Line RUG</i>
<i>Mark Barker</i>	<i>Northern Rail</i>
<i>Michael Wrigley</i>	<i>STORM</i>
<i>Mike Lambden</i>	<i>National Express</i>
<i>Neil Caldwell</i>	<i>CILT North West</i>
<i>Neil Cumberlidge</i>	<i>Director of Strategy NWDA</i>
<i>Paul Antrobus</i>	<i>Halton BC</i>
<i>Paul Faichney</i>	<i>Arriva North West</i>
<i>Paul Fawcett</i>	<i>TWNW</i>
<i>Peter Foster</i>	<i>Sustrans</i>
<i>Peter Johnston</i>	
<i>Peter Lamkin</i>	<i>Wrexham Birkenhead RUA</i>
<i>Peter Robinson</i>	<i>TWNW</i>
<i>Philip Harrison</i>	
<i>Phillipa Sudlow</i>	<i>CPT NW</i>
<i>Prof John Whitelegg</i>	<i>University of York</i>
<i>Roger Barton</i>	<i>Goyt Valley RUA</i>
<i>Roger Jones</i>	<i>North West Rail Campaign</i>
<i>Russell Warhurst</i>	<i>University of Chester</i>
<i>Sandra Dutson</i>	<i>RoadPeace NW</i>
<i>Stephen Clapham</i>	<i>Friends of Eccles</i>

Tom Lunt

Tony Garrett

Tony Potts

Tony Young

Wirral TUA

Copeland RUG

CILT