

**COUNCILLOR WHITMORE:  
ADDRESS TO TRAVELWATCH NORTHWEST CONFERENCE, 8 OCTOBER  
2009**

I am very pleased to be with you today and support TravelWatch Northwest in their important role of promoting good quality public transport.

This is a very positive time for public transport in Greater Manchester. In the years to come, all modes; Rail, Bus and Metrolink will all benefit from an unprecedented programme of sustained investment through the £1.5 billion Greater Manchester Transport Fund which was agreed earlier this year.

Many of you will have already seen evidence of early investment;

- Infrastructure on the Altrincham Metrolink Line has been fully upgraded and many stations, including Altrincham have been refurbished.
- Replacement of Metrolink track and improvement of stops in the City Centre is nearing completion.
- Our fleet of new trams is beginning to appear.
- Work is progressing on all the Metrolink extensions and last weekend the Oldham Loop closed to enable it's conversion to start.

Phil Purdey will be here this afternoon to talk you through all the Metrolink developments.

- By the end of March next year the ITA will have funded the installation of CCTV, passenger information screens, help points and public address at 20 local stations – and there will be more to come over the next few years.
- The investment in quality bus corridors continues and Melanie Watson will talk later on this and the importance of working in partnership with bus operators

GMPTe is currently working on detailed proposals to provide;

- More and expanded park and ride sites, and
- Improved passenger access at stations in addition to the DfT's major "Access for All" schemes

However, there are many other issues we would like to address but at present we have no agreed way forward.

We welcomed the recent Government announcement to electrify the railway between Manchester and Liverpool. However, at the same time it was announced that the order for new diesel trains had been deferred.

This will further delay the expansion of capacity on our local trains to accommodate the sustained and continuing growth which has been very evident over the past few years.

We continue to lobby very hard to get agreement on the need to invest in improvement of infrastructure in the Manchester Hub.

This is essential if the growth of the local, inter-urban and inter-city rail services is not to be stifled and undermine the growth and well-being of the North West.

Our campaign is far reaching and involves stakeholders on both sides of the Pennines.

Your support would always be welcome.

I am pleased to see that the list of speakers today includes Neil Buxton.

The ITA is very keen to encourage the growth in community support for local railways.

Of all the PTEs, Greater Manchester has the greatest commitment to supporting Community Rail Partnerships and Station Adoption Groups.

I am very pleased that one of our stations, Glossop, won the award for the “Best Station Adoption Group” at the Acorp Community Rail Awards in Carlisle on 25 September. I congratulate the Group for the hard work they have put in and particularly the success they have had in gaining funds from new sources.

The PTE works closely with Acorp to encourage more people to get involved with their local railway or station.

In November, I am hosting a conference at Manchester Town Hall for existing supporters and those who might be interested in forming new support groups in Greater Manchester.

I hope some of you may be interested in attending.

I want to leave some time for questions but before I finish I should like to briefly respond to the comments made in the TravelWatch NorthWest report issued in February this year about the condition and facilities at Manchester stations.

We share the aspiration to see significant improvements at the 6 important stations which were the subject of that report.

The ITA and the PTE have been working for many years with various stakeholders to develop schemes and secure funding to bring about these improvements.

Understandably these will not all happen at once but over the next few years I am confident that you will see improvements introduced at most of the six stations.

Major improvements are in the pipeline for Victoria, Salford Crescent and Oxford Road.

In the shorter term, hopefully starting later this year, less costly but nonetheless important improvements to passenger facilities will be made at Piccadilly, Oxford Road and Victoria.

We are also planning further improvements to Salford Central in conjunction with Network Rail and other funding partners.

I hope you have a worthwhile and entertaining conference, I am now happy to take questions....