

promoting quality public transport.....

Network RUS Consultation Response
Network Rail
4th Floor, Section P
Kings Place
90 York Way
London
N1 AG

28th November 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

Network RUS: Alternative Solutions Draft for Consultation September 2012

TravelWatch NorthWest (TWNW) is an independent organisation representing all public transport users in NW England. This is essentially an update on the submission we made on the scoping document on 30th April this year.

1. Tram or Tram Train

- A general comment is that more emphasis should be placed on what passenger priorities are especially before seeking to convert heavy rail services to tram/ tram train operation.
- We welcome the inner city penetration that tram/ tram train can bring – this has been one of the positive features of Manchester Metrolink.
- Tram/ tram train services tend to exhibit a lower passenger facing staff presence. Revenue protection clearly becomes a major issue but from a passenger point of view safety and personal security whether perceived or actual are also very important considerations.
- Evidence shows that rail passengers prefer through journeys wherever possible. Care should be taken to ensure that the introduction of tram/ tram train services does not impose the need for substantially more changes of mode (i.e. tram or tram/train and train) than is the case now for a significant number of passengers.
- There are many commuting routes into urban centres which have the benefit of relatively fast limited stop services for commuters and others. If such a route were to be considered for tram/ tram train every effort should be made to retain attractive journey times for these flows.
- Trams/ tram trains may not be suitable for longer journeys where for example on train toilet facilities need to be provided. Chester to Manchester via Northwich is a case in point.
- Ideally tram/ tram trains should be regarded as part of the national network. For example in the interests of passenger convenience

ticketing must be fully integrated with the national rail network. Manchester Metrolink currently has shortcomings in this regard.

- Whereas tram or tram train conversion can release heavy rail capacity at city centre stations, due regard should be paid to ensure that interchange at such stations between tram/ tram train and the national rail network is maintained as conveniently as possible for passengers.

2. Electrification

The extension of conventional electrification schemes in the NW has adverse implications for stations left outside the schemes which currently have a range of through services. The leading examples in the region are the Oxenholme – Windermere and Lancaster - Barrow routes which currently are linked by through services with Manchester. Electrification between Manchester and Preston will reduce the number of these services.

If we understand the consultation draft correctly the use of discrete electrification (involving on board energy storage in the form of batteries) could be the means of providing through electric services on those routes. (Routes shown in fig. 8.1). This is to be welcomed.

3. Community Rail

The benefit of Community Rail is that it bridges gaps in local and regional communities and identifies the rail line as a major artery and a significant part of the local economy and social utilities. By engaging with communities the Community Rail Partnerships fill a role that no other organisation can achieve and so must be encouraged and be led by local champions. As the draft consultation demonstrates there are many examples of the good work these partnerships carry out. In our previous submission we referred to their limitations in respect of the ability to generate major funds for capital projects, such as electrification etc. We are confident that this is recognised. A sense of realism is needed.

It has also been brought to our attention that there is a need for effective consultation with Community Rail Partnerships on many of the developing proposals and processes set out in this draft that affect them.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond

Yours faithfully

John A Moorhouse

John Moorhouse
Company Secretary