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promoting quality public transport.....

Integrated National Transport Strategy
 Great Minster House
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20th February 2025

Dear Team,

Integrated National Transport Strategy – a call for ideas

1. TravelWatch NorthWest is an independent Community Interest Company representing the interests of public transport users throughout North West England. We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation

In your opinion, how could the transport network be better 'joined-up'?

2. TWNW recognises the importance of multi modal integration - essential to encourage shift from cars - and we have continually emphasised our approach over the years. There should be a commitment to integration with other modes, both in timetable planning and ticketing, as on the continent, but in this country this is not a funding priority. In the absence of a proper policy on integration car owners should be encouraged to use park and ride or rail for the majority of their journeys.

3. In January 2023 the House of Commons Transport Committee asked interested parties to submit a 500 word proposal on what the Committee should investigate for its next in depth inquiry. We made a submission to the Committee on the subject of Transport Integration in the UK. Our submission was not taken up.

4. We said that compared with Europe our country is very dilatory in working towards (or even identifying the need for) an integrated public transport system. Comparisons with the continent where there is a more enlightened view are often made. In Switzerland for example a single unified timetable co-ordinated by SBB, the train operator, covers trains, buses, funiculars, cable cars and boats. A single unified fares system allows multi-modal journeys to be bought in a single transaction where all fares are known in advance. In addition the Swiss method involves total integration of timetables such that a

connecting bus will arrive at the nodal railway station say 5 minutes ahead of the departure time for the onward train – and likewise for the return journey.

5. Here in the UK, simple measures such as Bus and Rail being situated together in large towns and cities and in smaller towns buses serving the rail station en route to the town centre and other destinations should be the norm.

6. An example of how to better join up -

6.1 In 2016, TWNW had carried out a survey of bus/rail integration at 42 mainly medium sized stations in the NorthWest. During 2023 we felt it would be opportune to repeat the exercise at the same stations to ascertain if any changes had been made (both positive and negative) to the provision of guidance for passengers when changing from train to bus at rail stations.

*6.2 The survey of stations was delayed and the report published in June 2024. In the report we concluded that at most of the stations we visited there **was** information to be found about where to catch a bus but in general where information was lacking there had been little change since 2016.*

6.3 We acknowledged that there had been some material improvements -

- Some Avanti stations had seen the introduction of a digital screen in the concourse showing real time bus departure information from nearby bus stops.*
- New interchanges such as Bolton and improved bus stations such as Wigan had been built with better facilities including real time bus running information.*

6.4 We again recommended that train & station operators and where appropriate Local Transport Authorities, including Combined Authorities and Unitary Authorities undertake a comprehensive review of all stations in our region to assess the provision of this information. This review should aspire to maximising as far as possible the accessibility, standard and appropriateness of information at stations relating to the availability and location of onward bus service facilities.

6.5 Following publication of the report we were pleased to learn of improvements to signage at Accrington rail and bus stations instigated by Community Rail Lancashire. Burnley Manchester Road and Burnley Central stations are in the CRPs sights at the time of writing and we wish them well. Burnley Central, described as “a very unwelcoming station” by our surveyor is very much in need of attention

7. Integration in rural areas is a particular problem. Buses serving villages or towns should include any station on their route. Adequate parking at railheads for wider areas is essential and will produce more passengers. Airports should have direct public transport from the main city station. For example there used to be a bus from Liverpool Lime Street station lime to the airport. This

has now ceased. The alternative by local train to Liverpool Parkway station and then a bus is unattractive as it involves two changes.

How could data be used to improve the transport network?

8. Data can mean having better information about journeys, such as but not limited to departure times, journey planning, traffic information and accessibility information.

How could technology be used to improve the transport network?

9. Real time information and real time on board journey information are vital for passengers seeking to travel by and travelling on public transport. Bus services in particular suffer from a lack of these essentials in our region.

How, if at all, would you improve the way decisions are made about the transport network?

10. There should be greater devolution e.g. to Combined Authorities such as Greater Manchester and Merseyside. The former has made a good start in launching the "Bee Network." The challenge now is to incorporate rail services and emulate Greater London in multi modal ticketing and joined up journey planning.

Any other comments?

11. We cannot emphasise enough that climate change and wider environmental issues demand that everything possible should be done to encourage people to use public transport and making integrated journeys easier is a no brainer. Though some efforts are being made in the larger urban conurbations (against ingrained dogmatic resistance) large tracts of our region and no doubt the rest of the country are bereft. Now is the time to thoroughly assess and press for realising the potential for implementing a practical transport integration policy.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Yours faithfully,

John A Moorhouse

John Moorhouse
Director and Company Secretary.

