

# **Greater Manchester Provisional Bus Strategy**

**July 2005**

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## Executive Summary

As required by the Transport Act, 2000, this Bus Strategy sets out our policies to meet the transport requirements that we have identified, seeks to ensure that bus services are provided to the required standard and that appropriate facilities and services connected to bus services are also provided. The strategy is an integral part of the Local Transport Plan, and is therefore supported by the other policies in the LTP.

As the main mode of public transport in Greater Manchester, the bus is an integral part of the LTP strategy of reducing reliance on the car. Patronage has declined from 355 million per year in 1986 to 221 million in 2004/05 (although there was a small increase in 2003/04 to 226 million). We have made some progress, in partnership with operators, in arresting the decline in patronage, which is around 10% higher than we estimate would have been the case if action had not been taken. To this end more than £290m has been invested in the bus network by the public sector since 2001/02. However, significant levels of economic growth are expected in Greater Manchester as a result of regeneration and this will result in an unacceptable level of congestion unless significant mode shift occurs. The impact of the additional trips will be felt most in the Regional Centre, where to hold the number of car trips to 2002 levels will require a significant mode shift towards public transport. We face a considerable challenge in increasing bus patronage to achieve this kind of result and a step change will be required in the level and nature of interventions made.

Passengers and non bus users have told us that their main concern is having reliable services that run on time. We are trying to deliver an integrated transport strategy in Greater Manchester, but we understand that for integration to work reliability is key. Passengers have also told us they want: decent waiting facilities with adequate shelter, to feel safe when travelling by bus, a good frequency service, accurate information, sufficient capacity, reliable journey times, and value for money tickets. Access to bus services facilities is also a problem for many people who live away from the main radial routes.

We have set a series of objectives for the bus network to help achieve our vision for a 'safe, comprehensive, sustainable and integrated public transport network complemented by excellent information, ticketing, waiting and interchange facilities and supported by high quality and reliable services'.

To achieve these objectives, we need to make improvements in 6 areas:

- Comprehensive network development
- Improving service delivery and performance
- Integration to allow seamless journeys
- High quality and accessible information
- Making journeys safe and secure
- Sustainable transport.

In particular, our strategy calls for:

- A bus network that performs a key role in an integrated public transport network. This means better integration between bus services in terms of timetabling and ticketing, and better integration with other modes so that the bus complements rail and Metrolink services.

- A high frequency network, providing services where people want to travel, within walking distance (400 metres) of as many people as possible. This will make bus travel more attractive to car users by reducing waiting times, reducing the need to consult timetables and improving reliability
- A network of local services within walking distance of as many people as possible, linking to local centres or interchanges and to specific key facilities such as healthcare, education and employment
- Demand Responsive services such as Local Link or Community Transport services operating where demand is too low for a conventional bus service
- Social Needs services, to provide for people who are unable to use conventional buses
- Support for the economic activity focused in town and city centres. This means linking them by high frequency services, providing the larger centres with cross town or distributor services to improve internal connectivity and, where appropriate, night services linking them with suburbs to support the evening economy
- Services to Manchester Airport, starting early in the morning and ending late at night, to enable people to access jobs there

These network improvements will be supported by policies relating to:

- Service quality (including reliability, vehicle quality and accessibility and integration with other modes), with performance standards clearly defined
- Investment by operators and the public sector in Quality Bus Corridors
- Investment in bus stops, shelters and interchanges
- Development of seamless ticketing covering the whole of a passenger's journey on one ticket
- Development of feeder services to fixed track modes
- Improving safety and security for drivers and passengers
- Improving the environmental performance of services and infrastructure
- Improving information provision and promoting bus use.

A key feature of the strategy is the approach to partnership working. Joint working with operators on a voluntary basis, via the Integrate Project, has brought some improvements; notably the introduction of Quality Bus Corridors, reduction in the number of changes to the network and improvements in information and ticketing. However, partnership working has not sufficiently improved reliability (our passengers' major concern) or vehicle quality, and therefore significant improvements are required. In addition partnership working has so far failed to deliver significant improvements in terms of integration of services, modes and fares. Within the next five years we intend to deliver improvements within these key areas to ensure the bus will attract more people away from their cars for more of their journeys.

The Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Strategy has identified the need for a stronger, more focussed and target driven system of partnership working to ensure that the desired outcomes are delivered. This is necessary because:

- There is a need to ensure that transport strategies are aligned with regeneration strategies, to achieve a wide set of economic development and regeneration related outcomes
- Key aspects of transport strategy cannot be implemented without co-operation and accountability between GMPTA/E, bus operators, Highway Authorities, other public sector agencies (eg the health and education sectors), major employers and developers

- There is a need to ensure that major investment in public transport is not undermined by wasteful competition from other modes

We therefore intend to establish corridor partnerships where key stakeholders enter into agreements for the delivery of outcomes. As well as GMPTA/E and the highway authorities, these will include key bus operators, regeneration agencies, local private sector agencies and businesses. An integrated transport plan for each corridor will designate the primary public transport mode for medium to long distance journeys (this will be either rail, Metrolink or segregated busway), ensure that other public transport modes underpin and support the role played by that primary mode and introduce appropriate complementary measures to support their future development and maximise the benefit of the public transport investment. The partnerships will also be responsible for setting corridor specific performance standards and monitoring outcomes.

Some of the corridors will include Quality Bus Corridors for which we intend to introduce Quality Partnerships to guarantee standards and protect the investment made by both the public sector and the operators. The aim of the Corridor Partnerships is to achieve better integration between all public transport modes, which will improve the offer to the travelling public and help to grow patronage on the bus network as well as on rail and Metrolink. The partnerships will also have a key role to play in ensuring that future transport, land use planning and regeneration policies are effectively aligned. This will help to improve the market for bus travel by ensuring that new development is accessible by public transport.

Initially, the corridor approach is being piloted on four corridors where major public transport investment is planned, either in terms of Metrolink or a busway:

- Manchester – Droylsden – Ashton – Stalybridge/Greenfield
- Manchester – Failsworth – Oldham – Shaw – Rochdale
- Manchester – Swinton – Leigh
- Manchester – Chorlton/Didsbury – Wythenshawe – Airport

The aim is to have these partnerships in place by the time of the Full LTP submission in March 2006. Further partnerships will be set up during early part of the LTP period. The Full Local Transport Plan will identify priority corridors and the key stakeholders to be represented, along with work programmes for each partnership to deliver the integrated strategy and identified outcomes, including specific performance standards.

Bus operators clearly need to play a central role in delivering the Bus Strategy. In recent years, a number of improvements have been made through GMPTA and the District Councils working with operators on a voluntary basis via the Integrate Project. However, the performance of the bus network still falls short of passenger requirements in a number of respects and significant interventions are needed if the bus is to attract people away from their cars in sufficient numbers to respond to forecast economic growth without adding to congestion.

Where the only practical way of delivering the required improvements is through either a statutory Quality Partnership or a Quality Contract we will seek the powers to introduce these. The Bus Strategy therefore identifies circumstances where a Quality Contract would be necessary in order to implement the strategy should the partnership approach continue to fail to deliver our objectives. We would consider using these powers in order to: increase service quality (particularly reliability and integration) to make the bus an attractive alternative to the car; co-ordinate the

services of different operators in order to benefit passengers; deal with the over-provision of services where this is driving down service quality; co-ordinate timings with other modes and with connecting buses; achieve higher service levels to complement investment in high quality infrastructure; address instability in the network; protect feeder services from competition in order to minimise the call of GMPTA resources' and to prevent excessive competition from eroding the return on public investment in infrastructure.

## **PART 1: BACKGROUND**

## 1. Introduction

The Transport Act, 2000, requires the Bus Strategy to set out our policies to:

- Meet the transport requirements that we have identified
- Ensure that bus services are provided to the required standard
- Ensure that appropriate facilities and services connected to bus services are provided

Greater Manchester's first Bus Strategy was published in 2002, sitting alongside the Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2000/01 – 2005/06. However since guidance on the preparation of the second LTP (2006/07 – 2010/11) made it clear that bus strategies should form an integral part of that wider strategy, there was a need to revise the document. In Greater Manchester, bus is a major plank of the LTP strategy of reducing reliance on the car, being the main mode of public transport in the conurbation. Whilst this strategy document should therefore be read within the context of the LTP (which sets out the wider strategy, including managing the demand for car travel) it can also be read as a freestanding document setting out our policies for the bus network during the period 2006/07 – 2010/11.

The Bus Strategy is being submitted in Provisional form in July 2005. It will be further developed, particularly to reflect the Accessibility Strategy and the continuing development of the Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Strategy, for the March 2006 submission. This will also allow for more detailed consultation with bus operators than has been possible for the Provisional strategy. A detailed Action Plan will also be developed to sit alongside the high level strategy document.

## 2. The Local Transport Plan

The revised Bus Strategy, as part of LTP2, must respond to the scale of change expected to take place in Greater Manchester. The overriding objective of the Greater Manchester Strategy is to ensure the continued economic and social renaissance of the sub- region with increased levels of inward investment, increasing levels of employment and wealth generation and a higher standard of living. The most significant changes are expected to arise from:

- Knowledge Capital (50,000 jobs in the Regional centre and a further 50,000 throughout the conurbation);
- Manchester Airport (passenger numbers rising to 42 million by 2015, bringing 18,000 additional jobs);
- New East Manchester (a doubling of population, from 30,000 to 60,000, by 2015 and 10,000 new jobs);
- Kingsway Business Park (expected to create 8,000 jobs)

Further office and service sector growth in the Regional Centre and the Housing Market Renewal areas in Manchester/ Salford and Oldham/Rochdale is expected, as are the smaller, but locally significant changes arising from regeneration schemes such as Economic Development Zones or town centre developments eg in Wigan, Bolton and Stockport.

The impact of this economic growth in terms of trips is expected to be substantial, especially in the Regional Centre. In 2002 there were 68,000 person trips from the

Regional Centre in the two hour evening peak. Assuming that the high growth from the expected changes occurs, there could be 90,000 person trips by 2020. Without modal shift, the consequences for the Regional Centre would be serious. If about 50% of trips were made by car, as at present, an additional 8,000 cars would commute daily into and out of the Regional Centre. The consequences of additional congestion together with the demands for additional road space and car parking would be unacceptable. To hold the number of car trips at 2002 levels would mean increasing the mode share of public transport to 61%, ie an 11% shift. Clearly, all public transport modes will need to play a significant role in catering for the increased demand, but if it were to be accommodated entirely on buses, the number of bus based trips would need to rise by 109% (from the current 18157 to 38044). The LTP is therefore based on a continuation of the existing public transport led strategy, aimed at achieving a mode shift away from the car and onto more sustainable modes.

The existing public transport-led strategy has been successful in reversing the decline in bus patronage in the face of demographic and social changes which are tending to increase car use. Increases in GVA and employment levels have been achieved without a significant worsening of congestion. In particular the growth in activity in the Regional Centre itself has taken place against a backdrop of an increasing proportion of trips in the morning peak being made by public transport and other non- car modes.<sup>1</sup> However, to achieve modal shift on the scale now required will require significant new policy interventions to make the bus an attractive alternative to the car.

### ***Segment Analysis***

The Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Strategy (GMITS), which informs the Local Transport Plan has analysed trends, problems and issues in different parts of the conurbation before identifying preferred solutions which will ensure that transport complements the wider regeneration and competitiveness agenda being pursued across Greater Manchester. For this analysis the area was divided into geographical segments: north-east, north-west, south-east and south-west, with an additional segment covering the Regional Centre. Whilst the full analysis is included in the LTP itself, the issues and solutions relating to the bus network are summarised in the Table 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan Fourth Annual Progress Report

**Table 1: Summary of Segment Analysis**

Segment	Issues	Solutions
<b>Regional Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Projected 50,000 additional jobs in and around the city centre as a result of the Knowledge Capital initiative</li> <li>▪ Major movement demands along the Oxford Road and Chapel Street corridors and associated conflicts between different road users</li> <li>▪ The main commercial and retail centre in the conurbation attracting well over 300,000 trips per day</li> <li>▪ Increasing modal share for public transport needs to be maintained and increased to cater for growth in a sustainable way</li> <li>▪ Variable quality of public transport infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Conflicting demands for scarce road space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved bus passenger facilities in the City Centre</li> <li>• Development of an effective bus routing strategy</li> <li>• Improved public transport information</li> <li>• Development of a strategy to address Oxford Road corridor movement demands</li> <li>• Continuation of proactive traffic management measures, including QBCs on radial routes</li> </ul>
<b>North West</b> (Wigan, Bolton + parts of Bury )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic with slow speeds causing congestion, air quality and road safety problems especially on major through roads, in town centres and around motorway junctions- causes delay to buses</li> <li>• Poor integration of public transport termini in Wigan and Bolton and Salford and unattractive environments at a number of bus stations</li> <li>• Local accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigation of additional park and ride facilities.</li> <li>• Investigation of the need for Bus Quality Contracts<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>• Development of additional Quality Bus Corridors (including JETTS)</li> <li>• Leigh–Salford–Manchester QBC to improve access to the Regional Centre</li> <li>• Investigation of the</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Since GMITS was published, further work on implementation has identified Corridor Partnerships as the preferred method of achieving improvements to the bus network

	<p>problems away from Regional Centre, including limited public transport access to some new housing developments and northwards towards Standish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leigh has relatively poor connectivity with the Regional Centre</li> <li>• Poor public transport accessibility between Wigan and Warrington.</li> <li>• The high percentage of school children who undertake the school journey by car</li> </ul>	<p>potential for additional segregated busways to improve local accessibility and access to the Regional Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved interchanges at Wigan and Bolton</li> </ul>
<p><b>South-west</b> (Trafford, Manchester Airport)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic with slow speeds causing congestion, air quality and road safety problems particularly in town centres, around motorway junctions and on major roads - delays buses</li> <li>• Poor quality of Altrincham Interchange</li> <li>• Local accessibility problems in some inner-city and regeneration areas; and poor public transport access to Trafford Park and Carrington industrial estates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved public transport interchange facilities</li> <li>• Investigation for the need for Bus Quality Contracts<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Quality Bus Corridors and segregated busways to improve local accessibility</li> </ul>
<p><b>North East</b> (Oldham, Rochdale + parts of Bury, Manchester and Tameside)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Traffic with slow speeds causing congestion, air quality and road safety problems in town centres, on major roads and around motorway junctions causing delays to buses.</li> <li>▪ Need for higher quality public transport alternatives in order to achieve modal shift targets</li> <li>▪ Poor quality, unreliable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved public transport interchange facilities at Rochdale and Ashton-under-Lyne</li> <li>• Investigation of the need for Bus Quality Contracts to maximise utilisation of the investment in Metrolink investment and address poor service reliability<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• Additional Quality Bus</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 2

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 2

	<p>local bus network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need for better integration between transport modes</li> <li>▪ Major regeneration priority areas based around Housing Market Renewal and New Deal for Communities initiatives with relatively poor public transport connections</li> <li>▪ Through traffic in town centres resulting in a poor environment and problems of congestion and delay, especially for buses</li> <li>▪ Unattractive environments at some bus stations.</li> <li>▪ Local accessibility problems in Pennine area and some regeneration areas</li> </ul>	<p>Corridors (including JETTS) and segregated busways to improve local accessibility on non–Metrolink corridors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Package of travel change initiatives to add value to improved public transport investment</li> </ul>
<p><b>South East</b> (Stockport + parts of Tameside and Manchester)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High levels of slow moving traffic causing congestion, air quality and road safety problems in town centres, on major roads and around motorway junctions – causes delays to buses</li> <li>▪ Demands of the growth of Manchester Airport as identified in the Airports White Paper and poor local public transport connectivity</li> <li>▪ High car dependency for trips to growing airport.</li> <li>▪ Unattractive environments at and around some bus stations</li> <li>▪ Poor links between the bus and rail stations in Stockport</li> </ul> <p>• Local accessibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved public transport interchange facilities at Stockport</li> <li>• Investigation into the need for Bus Quality Contracts particularly with respect to linkage to Metrolink<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Additional Quality Bus Corridors (including SEMMMS) and investigation into segregated busways to improve local accessibility</li> </ul>

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<sup>5</sup> See footnote 2

	problems in inner city and some other regeneration areas	
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We are continuing to develop and refine the Integrated Transport Strategy, particularly the way in which it will be implemented in partnership with a range of stakeholders. Our preferred approach, based on developing Corridor Partnerships, is described in Section 17.

### 3. Vision and Objectives

Our vision for public transport (set out in 'GMPTE's 2020 Public Transport Vision') is 'to deliver a safe, comprehensive, sustainable and integrated public transport network complemented by excellent information, ticketing, waiting and interchange facilities and supported by high quality and reliable services'.

Our objectives, which will help us move towards the vision, and to deliver the wider LTP objectives are shown in Table 2 alongside the LTP objectives to which they relate.

**Table 2: Objectives**

LTP Objective	Bus Strategy Objectives
1. To support increased levels of activity in the Regional Centre, town and district centres and key employment areas and improve their environment, attractiveness and accessibility	1a. Ensure that the key centres of economic activity are supported by a high frequency, high quality bus network which provides connections and interchange  1b. Ensure that bus users have easy access to town centre facilities
2. To improve road and community safety, particularly for the most vulnerable users of the transport network and those in deprived areas, and to improve the safety of town and local centres	2a. Improve safety and security for people travelling on, or waiting for, buses and for operational staff
3. To minimise the environmental damage caused by transport, particularly in terms of air quality, thereby improving the quality of life and health of the population	3a. Minimise the environmental damage caused by buses and bus related schemes
4. To develop complementary land use and transport policies which increase the proportion of trips by non car modes by: providing a high quality integrated public transport network; providing safe pedestrian and cycle facilities; ensuring new development can be served by public transport and by reducing the number of trips to non central locations	4a. Develop a bus network that is: stable; reliable; high quality and safe; which complements other modes; integrates effectively with other modes; meets the needs of passengers and delivers the Accessibility Strategy  4b. Raise awareness of bus as a sustainable travel option

	4c. Ensure that accessibility by bus is a key consideration in land use planning decisions
5. To improve accessibility by ensuring that the county's transport system meets the needs of all sections of the community, promotes social inclusion and widens choice	5a Maximise the extent to which the network reflects travel patterns  5b Improve accessibility by bus, particularly for those who are socially disadvantaged, of facilities that affect people's life chances, ie employment, healthcare, learning and fresh food  5c Improve the accessibility of the bus network for people with mobility difficulties
6. To manage all traffic so as to reduce congestion, improve reliability, and reduce the overall proportion of trips by car without detriment to the regeneration of centres	6a Improve the consistency of bus journey times and improve reliability
7. To improve links with the wider Greater Manchester travel to work area, the rest of the country and the rest of the world, both for passengers and freight, in ways which are consistent with other objectives	7a Improve interchange between the local bus network and the regional and national rail and coach networks and with air travel
8. To maintain, improve and make the best use of the existing transportation infrastructure and ensure all schemes offer longterm value for money	8a. To maintain, improve and make the best use of the existing bus related infrastructure and ensure all schemes offer long-term value for money

### ***Shared Priorities***

The achievement of the bus strategy objectives will contribute to the Shared Priorities of the Government and the Local Government Association in the following ways:

#### Accessibility:

- By ensuring a good fit between the network and travel patterns (5a)
- By improving the accessibility of key facilities (5b, 1b)
- By improving the physical accessibility of infrastructure (5c)
- By widening the scope of the network through better integration with other modes (4a, 7a)
- By ensuring new development is accessible by bus (4c)
- Maintaining and improving existing infrastructure (8a)

#### Air Quality

- By minimising the environmental impact of buses and bus schemes (3a)
- By improving the quality and reliability of services and raising awareness of bus as a travel option we will achieve modal shift and hence reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (4a, 4b).

#### Safety

- By improving safety and security for bus users and staff (2a)

- By improving the quality and reliability of services and promoting the bus as a travel option we will achieve modal shift and hence reduce road accidents (4a, 4b)
- Maintaining and improving existing infrastructure (8a)

#### Congestion

- By achieving a modal shift away from car use through:
  - increasing reliability and reducing journey times (6a)
  - improving accessibility ( 5a, 5b, 5c)
  - improving safety (2a)
  - improving quality, stability and integration (4a, 7)
  - promoting the bus as a travel option (4b)
  - providing high frequency, high quality services to support key centres of activity (1a)
  - maintaining and improving existing infrastructure (8a).

The achievement of these objectives and the overall transport vision requires improvements in 6 general policy areas:

- Comprehensive network development (objectives 1,4,5,6, )
- Improving service delivery and performance (objectives 6,8)
- Integration to allow seamless journeys (objectives 4,5,7)
- High quality and accessible information (objectives 4,5)
- Making journeys safe and secure (objectives 2,4)
- Sustainable transport (objectives 3,4).

Our policies in each of these areas are given in Part 3 of this document.

#### **4. Existing Bus Strategy**

The current strategy defined the type of network needed in Greater Manchester, namely one that maximises access to high frequency services but also maximises the number of people who live within walking distance of a service to their local centre. The main elements of the strategy were:

- Expanding the network of Quality Bus Corridors along major routes as a first step to improving the quality and reliability of bus services throughout the area.
- Improving network coverage to give access to key facilities
- Improving bus stations and bus stops to improve the waiting environment
- Improving the scope and range of information provided to passengers
- Maintaining a range of tickets which allow travel throughout the network or can be used on trams and trains
- Making it easier to change between services and modes by providing better information, simplifying ticketing and improving waiting areas
- Improving safety and security by increasing staff presence on and around buses, improving waiting areas and tackling anti-social behaviour
- Improving the physical accessibility of ordinary services by raising kerbs and introducing low floor vehicles, whilst improving access to specialist services like Ring and Ride
- Introducing measures to reduce the contribution of buses to air pollution
- Introducing pilot schemes to provide dedicated school buses.

## 5. Achievements

Since the first LTP was produced in 2000 we have targeted a high level of investment at maintaining and improving the bus network. Table 3 shows the investment by GMPTA/E and the District Councils 2001-2005. The table breaks the spending down into capital spending, funded from the Local Transport Plan settlement, and revenue spending, funded through the Council Tax. The total investment in 2004/05 was in excess of £85 million. This is in addition to investment by operators.

**Table 3 Public Sector Investment**

	Type	Expenditure (£ M)			
		2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Capital Spending	Quality Bus Corridors	5.77	8.53	9.54	13.28
	Bus stations	1.15	2.63	4.56	6.77
	Real time information	1.29	0.63	1.06	0.86
	Leigh-Salford-Manchester QBC	0.50	1.16	0.23	0.52
	Ring and Ride	0.39	0.33	0.46	0.39
	Other Capital *	0.83	0.37	0.99	0.57
	Revenue Spending	Bus Services (General)	8.53	9.50	12.78
	Bus Services (Schools)	7.98	8.30	8.70	8.64
	Concessionary Fares	33.62	37.51	37.21	39.50
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>60.06</b>	<b>68.96</b>	<b>75.53</b>	<b>85.80</b>

\*'other' includes bus stops, information, yellow school buses and scheme development.

This investment has enabled us to introduce a number of schemes and programmes to improve the bus network. Our key achievements are described below.

- Through the Integration Project, joint working with the operators has led to progress in reducing the number of changes to the network, and led to the introduction of multi-operator and multi-modal tickets and the establishment of a jointly funded Information Bureau and call centre.
- The QBC programme has raised the quality of bus travel and reduced delays caused by other traffic, with a resulting increase in patronage and customer satisfaction. The total programme includes thirty three routes, of which two have been fully completed, with a further three due to be largely complete by March 2006. Patronage growth on QBCs has been 15-20% between 1998 and 2003.
- The waiting environment has been improved, with new bus stations at Oldham, Eccles, Hyde, Middleton and Manchester Airport. These feature passenger focused, shared concourse facilities and have been built to a high standard of design, complementing urban regeneration schemes. At the same time improvements have been made to the safety and accessibility of existing bus stations. This has been complemented by improved monitoring, increased evening staffing and improved local management. A start has been made on a programme of installing additional bus shelters.
- Successful Urban Bus Challenge bids have resulted in the introduction of demand responsive services, branded as 'Local Link' in Hulme' Gorton and Wythenshawe, providing access to local health and education facilities and to

employment. Four further schemes are also being developed. A further scheme in Salford, funded by GMPTE, has recently been extended because of growing demand. Rural Bus Challenge(RBC) led to the establishment of a co-operative (Partington And Cadishead Transport) to provide services in Partington and Cadishead, linking isolated communities to a local rail station and to education, health and employment facilities. RBC funding also allowed the introduction of demand responsive services using shared taxis in Uppermill, Mossley and Hattersley, also providing links to rail, shopping, health, education and employment. Shared taxi services, initially branded as Arranged Passenger Transport (APT), have also been introduced on routes in areas where demand is too low for a bus service, funded by GMPTE. In 2004/05 the total patronage on Demand Responsive services was in excess of 109,000.

- Rural Bus Subsidy Grant has provided funding for 16 services that operate in and around the rural areas of Greater Manchester. These have been a mixture of mainstream bus services and demand responsive schemes, including shared taxis. These services carried 74,500 passengers between April and December 2004.
- Revenue and partnership funding has been used to provide two Metroshuttle free services to improve linkages across the Regional Centre and a third route will be introduced in 2005.
- 16 Yellow school buses have been introduced, bringing a dramatic 40% reduction in anti-social behaviour, reducing car use (with an average modal shift of 28%) and giving the next generation of public transport users a positive experience of bus travel
- Nightbus services have been introduced in Manchester, Wigan and Bolton to serve the night time economy at weekends. These help to reduce late night crime and disorder by speeding up the dispersal of people from centres at pub and club closing time. Greater Manchester Police indicate that in 2003, serious assaults in the centre of Manchester fell by 2.1% and less serious assaults by 1.8%. A number of the Manchester routes are now being run commercially after initial subsidy and the subsidised services are carrying an average of 1,800 passengers each weekend. The amount of revenue funding available for such innovative schemes has been increased by transferring funding from the concessionary fares budget (whilst continuing to provide for the same categories of concession).
- A revised network of services has been designed and started to be introduced in the Wigan area in partnership with operators. This 'Quality Network' has included improvements to evening and Sunday services, better penetration of some areas and a simplification of some service patterns. Further work with local operators is continuing to enhance day time services. Similar, but less comprehensive, improvements have been made in the Rochdale area.
- Safety and security measures have been piloted, including free concessionary travel for Police, the use of bus escorts, a mobile policing unit and a mobile security unit, the setting up of dedicated Public Transport Crime Task Groups in 5 Districts and the improvement of incident reporting procedures. Bus 'Safer Travel Officers' have been present on 1715 bus journeys and GMPTE noticed a 34% decrease in the number of reported incidents compared to the same period the previous year. Following the introduction of Bus Station Rapid Response, the number of staff who felt vulnerable between 18:00 and 23:00 decreased from 66% to 36%.

- GMPTE has been working with Community Transport organisations to help them gain the expertise to bid for tenders and gain funding through the establishment of a charitable trust
- The number of accessible vehicles in operation has increased (although there is still a long way to go in providing an accessible network), complemented by improved accessibility at bus stops.
- A statutory Scheme of Information has been adopted and improvements include electronic information points, an improved online journey planner and better information at interchange points. Real Time Passenger Information is currently being rolled out on selected routes
- A statutory Ticketing scheme has been introduced, including a range of all operator tickets introduced through the Integration Project, and a smartcard scheme is under development
- The fitting of particulate traps to older buses has been grant aided, attracting an additional £1m in government grant aid, and a dual powered vehicle piloted on Metroshuttle.
- Operators have bought new vehicles which are wheelchair accessible and have cleaner engines.

## 6. Performance

Performance against targets set in the Bus Strategy and LTP is reported in the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report. More detailed reporting of aspects of bus performance is contained in the GMPTA Annual Performance Plan. Table 4 below summarises the position for the key indicators. The areas shaded in green are those where performance has met, or exceeded targets, whereas the areas in red are where targets have not been met.

**Table 4: Performance against targets**

Ref	Indicator	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
BV102	No. bus journeys	217.0m	217.0m	223.3m	229.0m	226.5m	218.0m
	Target				229.0m	231.0m	229.0m
PTEG6	Scheduled subsidised bus services operated		95.0%	95.0%	91.9%	93.3%	94.2%
	Target				96.0%	95.0%	95.0%
PTEG7	Scheduled subsidised bus services operated to time			75.0%	81.2%	80.9%	87.5%
	Target				90.0%	90.0%	90.0%
BVPP32	% children travelling to school by non-car modes					64.3%	62.3%
	Target						65%
BVPP4	No. concessionary trips	92.48m	90.23m	86.38m	87.86m	86m	80.2m
	Target				88.0m	91.0m	86m
BVPPBRS1	% of GM with access to bus network				86.8%	87.6%	87.8%
	Target						87.8%
BVPP18	% of total bus fleet wheelchair accessible			28.0%	32.6%	40.3%	41.8%
	Target				30.0%	32.0%	47.0%
BVPP15	% of stops with shelters	30.2%	30.4%	30.3%	30.5%	30.0%	31.8%
	Target			31.1%	36.0%	32.0%	32.0%
BVPP24	Outlets with timetable leaflets	600	1200	1605	1960	2297	2670
	Target		900	1500	1850	2250	2400

BVPP25	Bus stops with timetables	19.8%	25.0%	31.1%	35.5%	40.0%	50.9%
	Target		25%	30%	36%	40%	50%

Table 4 shows success in a number of areas:

- the number of outlets where timetables are available has increased considerably
- the number of bus stops with timetables has increased
- the percentage of the population with access to the bus network has been maintained, although not improved, reflecting the subsidy of non commercial services by GMPTE
- the satisfaction of disabled residents with local bus services has risen
- patronage on demand responsive services has risen

Areas where performance is not meeting targets are:

- the percentage of scheduled subsidised bus services operating is lower in Greater Manchester than in any of the other PTE areas, although there was an improvement in 2004/05.
- the percentage of scheduled buses operating to time has improved, but not sufficiently.
- the percentage of children travelling to school by non-car modes has fallen, reflecting a decline in walking and cycling as well as bus use
- the number of concessionary trips has fallen
- the percentage of stops with shelters has increased, although the target was not met
- the percentage of the bus fleet that is wheelchair accessible has risen, reflecting the investment in new vehicles by a number of operators, but is not meeting targets
- whilst bus patronage increased slightly between 2001/02 and the early part of 2003/04, it has subsequently fallen back (this is discussed in more detail in section 8)

In terms of passenger priorities, some of these targets are more important than others and it is a particular concern that reliability has not improved sufficiently. GMPTE is developing a new performance measurement framework which will enable us to focus on performance in key areas. This will be reflected in the final version of this strategy. The work being done to address areas of poor performance is described in Part 3.

## 7. Passenger Requirements

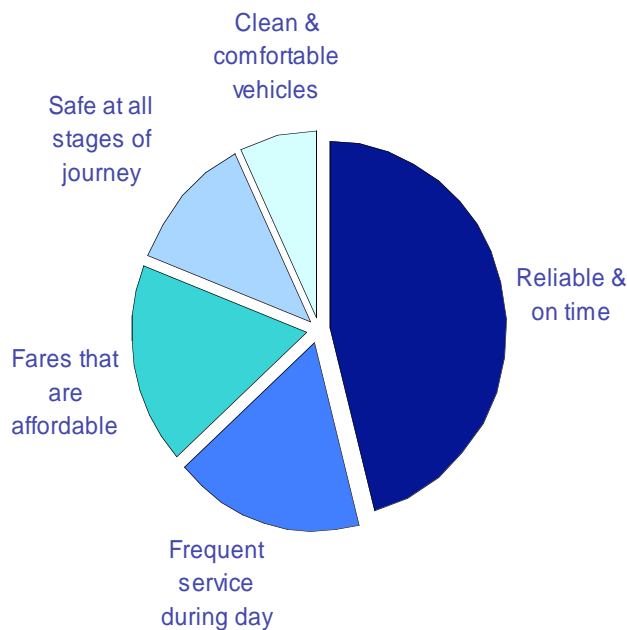
A survey of Greater Manchester residents showed that, in 2003/04, only 55% were satisfied with local bus services. Clearly, this suggests that the current regime is not delivering what people want. Whilst this is an improvement on the 2000/01 figure of 53% and higher than the national average of 54%, it is lower than the average for all Metropolitan areas, which was 57%. Some of the reasons for this are clear from Section 6, which highlighted key aspects of bus performance: reliability, the accessibility of vehicles and provision of shelter are not improving as fast as we would like, some areas do not have good access to bus services and the fact that fewer children are travelling to school by bus partly reflects parental concerns over

anti social behaviour. This view is supported by surveys (see below) that highlight in particular the importance attached to reliability.

As might be expected, bus users (using the bus at least once a month) are more satisfied with services than residents in general (since these include non users). Figures from GMPTE's Multi-Modal Tracking Survey show that in 2003/04 bus users' satisfaction was 67% (compared to 47% for residents), but this figure is markedly lower than the user satisfaction levels for either rail (82%) or Metrolink (86%).

Ongoing consultation with both bus users and non users has given us a clear view of how they would like to see improvements made over the next 5 years. As part of GMPTE's Multi Modal Tracking Survey, Greater Manchester residents, both users and non users of public transport, are asked to rate the importance and current performance of various features of bus services. The highest priority for improvement is having services that are reliable and run on time. This is shown clearly in Figure 1.. The evidence from LTP1 suggests that we still have some way to go to secure lasting improvements in this area and we may be forced to explore innovative policy approaches in order to do so.

**Figure 1: Relative importance of passenger priorities**



Similar themes emerged from a survey of passengers using specific QBC and non QBC services. The features most important to passengers were: reliability (80%), frequency (72%), stops with shelter from the weather (56%) and feeling of safety at bus stops (52%). Compared to equivalent 'control' high frequency bus corridors, QBC passengers were significantly more satisfied than other passengers with reliability, vehicle quality, pedestrian crossing facilities near stops, speed of journey, frequency of buses, feeling of safety at bus stops and having stops with shelter.

To highlight some of the problems of bus travel away from the main radial bus routes, residents of five housing estates were surveyed. Reliability and frequency were the two major concerns, followed by the timetabling of the first and last bus and the cost of the journey.

Passenger priorities at interchanges include: a safe and secure environment, protection from the weather and information about delays.

Stakeholder consultation for the LTP has told us that there is great support for building a reliable public transport network, including Quality Bus Corridors and other bus priority measures as a way of combating congestion. However there is a need to improve quality, safety and security (including the perception of safety) and integration in terms of ticketing and interchange facilities. There is also concern about the lack of services in some parts of the county, resulting in poor accessibility.

Based on this research, the key improvements needed are:

- Increased reliability of services
- Better shelter from the weather
- More frequent services
- Increased personal safety at bus stops and stations
- Better access to key facilities
- Affordable, integrated ticketing.

In addition to improving key aspects of bus travel, there is a need to improve the image and perception of bus services. The fact that residents' satisfaction with bus services is markedly lower than that of regular users suggests that we need to make significant improvements not only to the reality of bus services but also to their image.

Our policies, aimed at delivering these improvements, are described in sections 10 – 16. In many cases, significant improvement can only be delivered through partnership working. For example, unreliability can be partly addressed through bus priority measures, which we have been working to introduce on Quality Bus Corridors, but also requires improvements that only operators can deliver eg in terms of fares /ticketing (to reduce boarding times), vehicle reliability and driver availability. Our proposals for partnership working are set out in Section 17.

## 8. Patronage Trends

Across the UK, patronage on local buses has been falling for the last 50 years, from 8700 million passenger journeys in 1970, to 4200 million in 2000. London is the exception to the national trend, having seen an increase in patronage since the mid 90s. The decline is not because there are fewer services, in fact the number of bus kilometres run on the commercial network has remained fairly static

Between 1986 and 2001, the decline in bus patronage was most marked in metropolitan areas, which saw a 45% reduction in passenger trips compared to 23% in the shires. All the Passenger Transport Executive areas adopted policies and set targets in LTPs to reverse this trend and increase patronage. Table 5 shows that all have faced challenges in trying to do this, with patronage continuing to decline in most areas. In 2003/04, Greater Manchester was alone in recording an increase in patronage against base levels, but this has since been reversed, as indicated by Table 4. Patronage trends in Greater Manchester are shown in Figure 2.

**Table 5: Bus Patronage and targets, PTE areas**

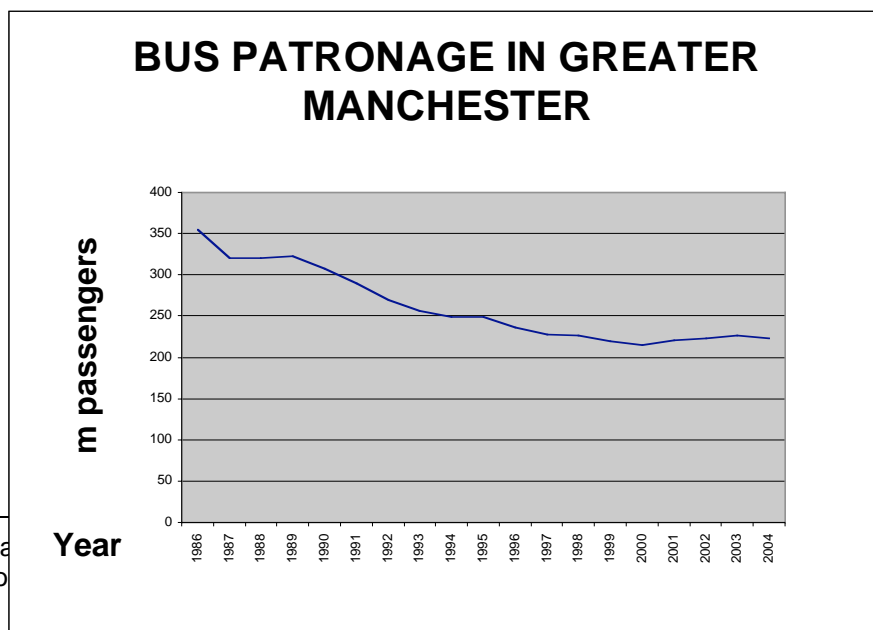
PTE	Base		Target			2003/4	
	Year	Patronage	Year	Patronage	% inc	Patronage	% inc

<b>Merseytravel</b>	1996	167m	2005	176m	5%	165.9m	-ve
<b>S Yorks</b>	99/00	130m	05/06	136.5m	5%	121m	-ve
<b>Nexus</b>	02/03	139m	05/06	123.3m	-ve	136.7m	-ve
<b>Centro</b>	00/01	345.7m	05/06	366.4m	5.9%	325m	-ve
			10/11	387.2m	12%		
<b>Metro</b>	99/00	199.4m	06/07	209.4m	5%	199.1m	0
<b>GMPTE</b>	00/01	221m	05/06	232m	4.9%	227m	<b>2.7%</b>
			10/11	243m	10%		

In Greater Manchester, Table 5 shows that there was a small growth in patronage between 2000/01 and 2003/04. Since 2000 the revitalisation of many centres (notably the Regional Centre), which are well served by frequent bus services, along with the introduction of measures such as Quality Bus Corridors, have arrested the major long-term decline in patronage. However, the most significant growth coincided with major operators introducing cheaper weekly tickets and, in the case of First Manchester, introducing simplified high frequency services. The growth was not at the expense of either Metrolink or rail, both of which showed patronage growth over the same period<sup>6</sup>.

The growth in patronage has come from passengers paying full fares. Concessionary travel did not show an increase and has shown consistent decline of about 2% per year as a result of more older people holding driving licences, factors such as more pupils travelling to school by car, and to the rise in concessionary fares for the first time in four years .. The Chancellor's announcement on free concessionary travel for elderly and disabled people in the 2005 budget is likely to reverse this trend to some extent. We are studying the implications of this and will report our findings in the final version of the strategy.

**Figure 2: Graph of bus patronage trends in GM**



<sup>6</sup> Rail patronage increased from

The growth in patronage between 2000/01 and 2003/04 has not been sustained: patronage falls have levelled off, with only a small amount of growth. Against underlying trends working against bus patronage (described in the following section), the measures introduced by GMPTE, highway authorities and bus operators appear to have stabilised patronage levels.

The overall patronage figures mask geographical differences. Broadly speaking between 1997 and 2003 the number of bus passenger journeys starting in the north of the conurbation fell but rose in the south. There are also differences between market segments, whilst overall patronage has been stable between 2000/01 and 2004/05, concessionary trips fell by 10%. Non concessionary patronage has grown by about 7%.

### ***Future Patronage***

In setting targets for future patronage, a number of factors need to be taken into account. Firstly, because the demand for public transport is a 'derived demand', where passengers travel not for the sake of travelling but to reach particular places and carry out particular activities, patronage is partly determined by factors outside the transport system. The most important of these are car ownership, the price of car use, demographic and locational changes.

Secondly, many factors that influence patronage are beyond the control of GMPTA. Without control of the following key factors the power of public authorities to influence bus patronage is limited.

- Setting fare levels on most services (apart from the concessionary fare)
- Determining service levels (including timetables, frequencies and periods of operation) for the approximately 85% of the bus services that are run commercially
- Determining key aspects of service quality

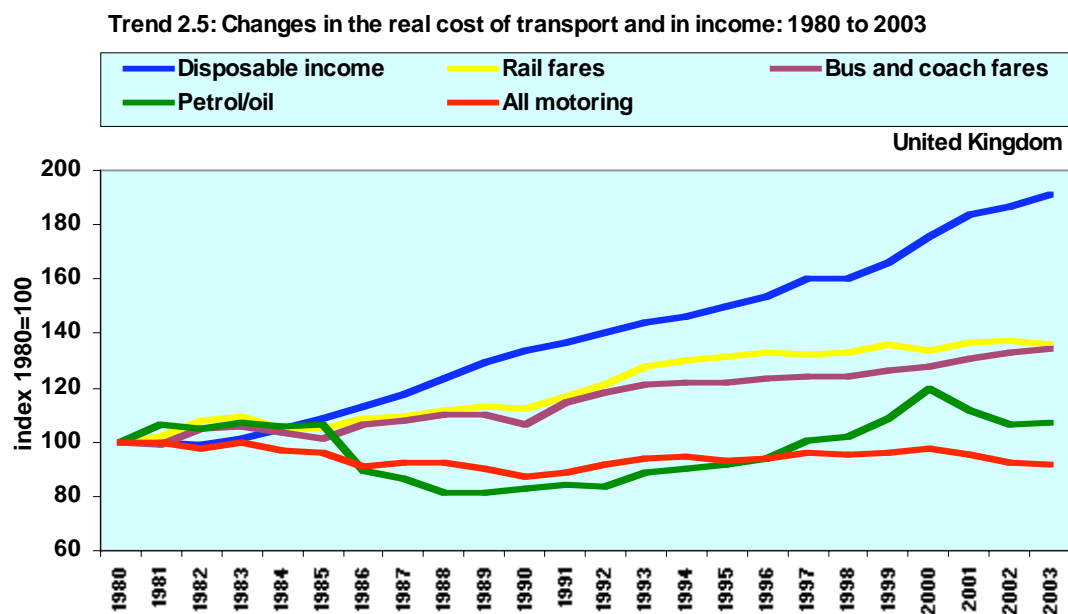
Finally, the effects of policy changes on patronage take time to work through. For example, the impact of fare changes on patronage increases over time (whilst a 10% fare increase may reduce patronage by 3% in the first year, the patronage loss may be double this at the end of 5 years). In sectors of the market that are particularly price sensitive, fare increases may be self defeating over this timescale. Patronage in the early years of the second Bus Strategy will be affected by fare decisions already made during the life of the existing Bus Strategy.

In general, the external factors affecting patronage have had, and will continue to have, a negative impact. Demographic and social trends are tending to reduce the traditional market for bus travel: rapidly rising car ownership in areas where it is still relatively low (such as the north of the county); an increase in households with more than one car; and an increase in the proportion of women holding driving licenses. The latter is particularly serious, as women over 60 have always been a significant group of bus users. In the future, this group are more likely to be car drivers than in the past and will need to be persuaded of the benefits of bus travel. The number of cars in Greater Manchester is predicted to grow by 26% between 2001 and 2021, from 1 million to around 1.3 million.

Nationally, the overall cost of motoring (including purchase, maintenance, petrol and oil, and tax and insurance) has remained at or below its 1980 level in real terms, although the real cost of fuel is now 7 per cent higher than in 1980, despite falling by 11 per cent since 2000. In contrast to overall motoring costs, public transport fares have risen in real terms since 1980. In 2003, bus and coach fares were 34 per cent higher and rail fares 36 per cent higher than in 1980. Over the same period, average disposable income has gone up more than 90 per cent in real terms. Transport by any mode has therefore become more affordable, but with a greater improvement in the affordability of car use than that of public transport. This is shown graphically in Figure 3.

Since 1982, the real value of bus fares in the PTE areas has risen by nearly 60%. Over the same period the real cost of motoring has fallen by just under 5%.

**Figure 3 Transport Costs**



Source: Office for National Statistics<sup>7</sup>

A report commissioned by GMPTE examined patronage trends in some depth<sup>8</sup>. One of its conclusions was that observed patronage in 2003 was actually 22 million higher than could have been expected, given car ownership levels and socio-demographic factors. The difference was due to interventions aimed at increasing patronage. This shows the success of the actions taken to date by both the public sector and bus operators: we have gained 10% of patronage relative to what would have happened if we had done nothing.

In setting a patronage target it is therefore misleading to simply base a target on existing patronage levels. It is necessary to take into account the underlying trends ie

<sup>7</sup> Transport Statistics Great Britain 2004

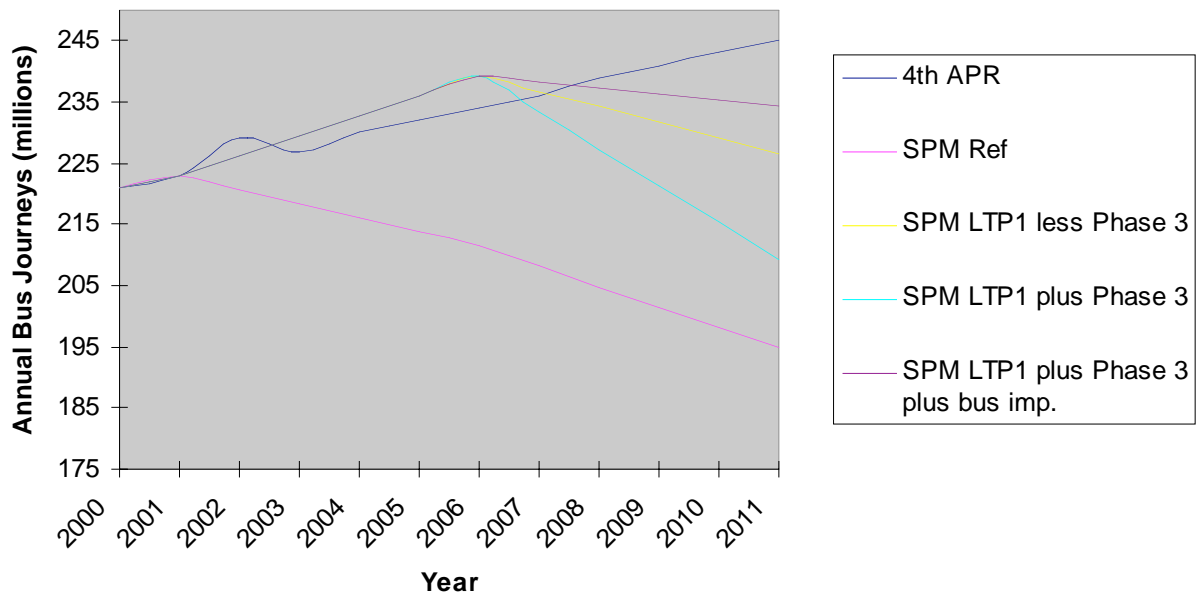
<sup>8</sup> *Public Transport Trends Technical Report*, Steer Davies Gleave, 2004

what would have happened without any policy intervention. To this 'base' patronage estimate can then be added.

- Assumptions about factors in control of the operators
- Estimates of the impacts of Bus Strategy policies

The Strategy Planning Model (SPM) was used to show the likely change in bus patronage between 2001 and 2011 under various scenarios with different levels of policy intervention. These included the bus measures included in LTP1 and the effect of implementing the Phase 3 Metrolink expansion. The model assumed that there would be no real change in bus or Metrolink fares and that rail fares would rise by 1% above the Retail Price Index after 2003. It also assumed that operators would adjust service levels to maintain profitability<sup>9</sup>. The results are shown graphically in Figure 4. The reference case (SPM Ref) was a 'do nothing' scenario, ie without any of the measures implemented through the first LTP, such as Quality Bus Corridors. The model predicted a 5.2% decline to 2006 and a 13% decline by 2011 if there was no intervention. The LTP1 measures were forecast to deliver a growth of 7.3% by 2006 over 2001 figures: a 13% improvement on what would have happened without them (4<sup>th</sup> APR). However by 2011, these improvements would be eroded by the effects of demographic change and rising car ownership even without the effect of Phase 3 Metrolink (SPM LTP1 less Phase 3). This indicates that significant additional interventions are needed to produce sustained growth in bus patronage. The Bus Strategy therefore needs to bring forward measures above and beyond those proposed in the first Local Transport Plan.

**Figure 4 – Bus Patronage Trajectories (Strategy Planning Model)**



<sup>9</sup> SPM simulates the response of private operators to maintain profitability as patronage changes. Faced with rising (falling) patronage, bus operators can increase (decrease) service frequencies, while train / tram operators can increase (decrease) the number of carriages of existing services.

The introduction of Phase 3 Metrolink will impact on bus patronage on the relevant corridors. The model suggests that if Phase 3 is introduced in 2011 (SPM LTP1 plus Phase 3) without additional interventions to improve the attractiveness of the bus network (such as additional bus priority, integrated ticketing and buses acting as feeder services), bus patronage could be 6% lower in 2011 than in 2001. However the final scenario (SPM LTP1 plus Phase 3 plus bus improvements), shows that if additional measures such as QBCs, integrated ticketing and feeder services are introduced through LTP2, patronage could grow by 5% when Metrolink Phase 3 is introduced. Higher levels of patronage growth on QBCs could be achieved if measures included a greater degree of bus priority, for example through off road busways or greater re-allocation of highway capacity. The role of the Bus Strategy is to set out policies and programmes to improve all aspects of bus travel, including its integration with other modes, in order to achieve this required growth in patronage.

## **9. Key Challenges Over the Next Five Years**

The bus is the most heavily used mode of public transport in Greater Manchester carrying about 85% of the passengers and about 70% of the distance travelled by public transport. However, our forecasts show that significant growth in patronage will be needed over the next 5-10 years if the bus network is to play its part in persuading motorists to switch from their cars and so help reduce congestion and air pollution, improving road safety and increasing accessibility.

As referred to in Section 8, demographic and market trends tend to suggest that bus travel in Greater Manchester should now be around 200m passengers per year<sup>10</sup>. However, interventions by GMPTE, highway authorities and operators have resulted in an increased market share of at least 10% higher at around 220m. Nevertheless, further growth is still needed simply to maintain the mode share of public transport in general and buses in particular in the face of rising car use (compounded by locational decisions which tend to encourage this) and demographic trends which are acting to reduce patronage. In addition, further growth is required to achieve mode shift away from the car if predicted economic growth in Greater Manchester is to be accommodated without increasing congestion.

Furthermore, the effects of rising car ownership could tend to leave those without access to a car facing increasing isolation and exclusion unless the public transport product improves market share.

In order to achieve our objectives, we need a bus network and bus services that better meet people's travel needs. There are several challenges ahead, including;

### ***Growing bus patronage***

Our target for future patronage growth is 243m passenger journeys by 2011, an increase of 10% over the 2001 figure. This will be extremely challenging in the light of the forecast demographic and social trends. However, CfIT have estimated that a 1% mode shift from car will grow the public transport market by 13%. There is therefore, a huge prize to be gained by developing a quality network and quality services that will get people out of their cars and on to public transport.

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<sup>10</sup> *Public Transport Trends Technical Report*, Steer Davies Gleave, 2004

### ***Developing a comprehensive network and improving integration***

We need to deliver a comprehensive network of public transport services that offer the opportunity for everyone to travel where they want, when they need to. "Bus", in all its formats from double-deckers and articulated buses through to Local Link and shared taxis, has a key role to play. We need to develop a network of services that are based on local demand and give everyone the opportunity to get where they want to be by public transport. Such networks need to reflect the varied locations and the often dispersed nature of many of the facilities that people need to reach. This may require the shape of the current bus network to be reviewed.

These reviews will need to ensure the provision of public transport services that support local regeneration initiatives and social inclusion objectives by allowing people, especially those who do not have access to a car or do not live on a high frequency corridor, to access a range of services over most of the working day. They will also need to ensure that public transport services complement rather than compete with one another by providing connecting services and allowing people to complete their journey by transferring from one bus to another, or one mode to another without paying a fare penalty. At the moment if this occurs it is generally fortuitous. Whilst we are keen to see integrated services wherever possible, the fact that operators have no obligation to devise complementary timetables (and indeed have always been wary of falling foul of the Office of Fair Trading by working together) has made it very difficult to deliver a fully integrated network during the lifetime of the first LTP.

To do this we will need to address, in an imaginative way, the structure of the current bus network and its various sub-networks and its relationship to other modes. The split between commercial and subsidised services can result in a more complex and fragmented network where services are difficult to understand and may not meet passenger needs. For example, the fact that different operators may run morning and evening services can mean that a return ticket bought on an outbound journey is not actually valid on the return leg. Unlike the situation in London, this is a major barrier to bus use in Greater Manchester as there are over 20 different operators and few options for cheap integrated ticketing for occasional travellers. Passengers are currently forced to wait for the same operator for their return journey or are penalised by having to buy another ticket from a rival operator.

Through the Wigan Quality Bus Network, GMPTE has been working with Wigan MBC and local bus operators on developing a pilot exercise to simplify the bus network and improve the level of service provision. Consultants were engaged to work alongside officers with local knowledge to design a new, simplified network that rationalised services and brought about opportunities for efficiency savings that, potentially could be reinvested in additional services elsewhere on the network. Of course, it will be essential to consult with local people to ensure that the redesigned network does meet people's aspirations of a local transport network. The next stage will be to work with the individual operators to see how this simplified network could be implemented and funded. Great care will be needed so as not to breach competition legislation. GMPTE has consulted with the Office of Fair Trading and is now reasonably hopeful that a way can be found to enter into a series of voluntary agreements with individual operators.

In priority corridors (see Section 17), network reviews will become a key part of the corridor transport plan preparation process and bus operators will have a key role to play if these partnerships are to succeed.

However, for some people, even this process will not fully meet their needs. To this end, GMPTE has been working with key stakeholders to develop an Integrated Social Needs Transport product delivered in a cost-effective and co-ordinated way by a series of key providers. The agencies involved in this demanding project include Local Authority transport services departments, the Greater Manchester Ambulance Service and providers in the not-for-profit sector. The aim is to provide effective door-to-door services for those people unable to use conventional public transport, and for those with specific medical or social needs, by a collaborative provision using existing resources in a more efficient and co-ordinated way.

### ***Service reliability and performance***

Another challenge is to ensure consistent service quality and reliability across Greater Manchester. In many areas, particularly the north of the conurbation, there is very poor reliability resulting in large volumes of complaints, a poor press and a damaging image of bus travel generally. The largest company operating in the north has now brought in new management and is in the process of introducing a considerable number of new vehicles so as to alleviate the problems they were encountering with the reliability of some older vehicles. Other improvements are also being introduced. It remains to be seen whether this infrastructure investment will address the serious reliability failures witnessed in this part of the conurbation. This strategy outlines other new interventions which should complement this investment and improve reliability.

These concerns about reliability also extend to GMPTE's subsidised services. Last year, only 94.2% of scheduled subsidised bus services operated. Whilst this was up on the previous year's figure (93.3%) it was still below the target of 95%. Even this figure is modest compared to some other PTEs who achieve figures of 98% and 99%.

We have therefore, following extensive negotiation with operators, strengthened the arrangements for monitoring bus operators' performance and implemented a series of measures which resulted in improved performance last year. However, further intervention is clearly still required to make sure that we improve these figures.

As part of this ongoing work, GMPTE and the operators have also jointly funded a study on the causes of bus unreliability. This has yielded some extremely useful information (see section 12) and we have now secured the commitment of operators to work with us to develop plans to tackle some of these causes of unreliability.

### ***Service stability***

Frequent service deregistrations or changes are a significant deterrent to bus use. When this occurs on the subsidised network, vulnerable groups are the most likely to suffer. As part of our emerging Accessibility Strategy we are committed to addressing social exclusion which is compounded by a lack of access to public transport. Greater Manchester has a voluntary agreement with operators to limit the number of dates when services can be altered to six per year. Unfortunately, a small number of operators do not adhere to this agreement and this has caused network instability and caused confusion for passengers. In the next five years we need to secure greater compliance on this issue and will look to implement mechanisms that seek to reduce the number of service change dates still further so as to improve the stability of the Greater Manchester Bus network.

### ***Vehicle quality***

The image of the bus is an all important factor in seeking to persuade motorists to abandon the comfort of their cars. It has been a considerable boost to see the larger operators introducing significant numbers of new buses onto the streets of Greater Manchester in recent months. And, while many operators do have fleets of largely modern, comfortable and fully accessible vehicles, this is not yet a universal picture and there remain a large number of older, unkempt vehicle in circulation. With poor paintwork and bodywork, faded livery, dated interiors with poor lighting and seating that has been, at best, patch-repaired and no provision for wheelchair users or parents with buggies, these vehicles present a poor image (as well as providing a poor service) to the travelling public.

Many local authorities see these older vehicles and their older diesel engines as part of the problem in their campaigns to improve local air quality whereas public transport should be seen as part of the solution. Also, many operators find it difficult to guarantee that, for example, a wheelchair accessible bus, can be made available on a route at a given time. This presents problems for people with disabilities, and others who would benefit from accessible buses, as they cannot travel with confidence.

We have no hard information about the actual number of either “clean”-engined buses or low floor / wheelchair accessible buses on the Greater Manchester network. Operators have stated that 72% of their fleet are Euro II or better. However, GMPTE roadside observations<sup>11</sup> suggest that at any one time only 46% of buses in the county have Euro II engines or better. Clearly, we need to establish the real numbers and an agreed baseline and then to set targets for further improvement over the 5 year period of this strategy.

Furthermore, in order to present a credible alternative to the private car, modern buses need to equal the modern car’s comfort and sophistication levels, and be driven in a way which does not detract from the quality of the service. To this end GMPTE has begun talks with key manufacturers to examine how the bus product can be improved, and is working with some operators to encourage greater attention to driving standards in service delivery. This work will continue over the next 5 years.

### ***Ticketing***

Ticketing in Greater Manchester is extremely complex with a huge range of single journey, period, one-operator only and multi-operator tickets available. This can present an extremely confusing picture even to regular travellers. Some of these single operator period or network tickets offer good value for money, but there is a premium to be paid for all operator tickets. “Walk on” bus fares are high, deterring occasional travellers. This position has been compounded by a number of price increases during late 2004 / early 2005.

At the same time, we would like to introduce additional ticket types to meet niche market demands, such as a City Centre Visitor Card or a “carnet” type card that could give the benefit of discounted fares to occasional users. The challenge will be to simplify tickets and fare structures across the board whilst at the same time examining the case for these specialist tickets. We also want to see greater availability of off-bus ticket sales as the purchase of tickets on-bus was one of the causes of unreliability identified in the recent study referred to above.

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<sup>11</sup> Registration numbers observed in a survey of 3,000 vehicles were cross referenced to operator fleet lists, which record details of the vehicle, including the age. This does not take account of deliveries of new vehicles in 2004/05

### **Safety and security**

There are also safety and security problems associated with bus travel, including vandalism, violence against drivers and fear of waiting for the bus in isolated locations, particularly at night. Table 6 shows the levels of crime and disorder associated with the bus network.

GMPTE's Tracking Survey shows that these levels of crime and disorder have a major effect on perceptions of safety and ultimately bus use. In 2004/05, 90% of people felt safe on the bus during the day, 89% felt safe on bus stations and 93% at their local bus stop. However during darkness these figures fell to just 54% on the bus, 36% at the bus station and 46% at the local bus stop. This is of particular importance to vulnerable groups. As well as impacting on patronage, crime and the fear of crime also affect staff recruitment and morale. In some areas services have been withdrawn at night partly because of the difficulty in recruiting staff to operate them.

**Table 6 Crime and Disorder on the Bus Network, 2004**

District	Number of incidents reported			
	Bus (General & School Services)	Bus Stations	Bus Shelter Vandalism	Totals:
<b>Bolton</b>	271	63	649	<b>983</b>
<b>Bury</b>	109	269	442	<b>820</b>
<b>Manchester</b>	793	20	1357	<b>2170</b>
<b>Oldham</b>	214	37	554	<b>805</b>
<b>Rochdale</b>	247	45	536	<b>828</b>
<b>Salford</b>	355	8	806	<b>1169</b>
<b>Stockport</b>	211	47	574	<b>832</b>
<b>Tameside</b>	179	23	581	<b>783</b>
<b>Trafford</b>	92	27	419	<b>538</b>
<b>Wigan</b>	299	484	603	<b>1386</b>
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>2770</b>	<b>1023</b>	<b>6521</b>	<b>10314</b>

Source: Bus, Bus Stations: Incident report forms (Operators and Staff). Shelters: JC Decaux

These issues need to be addressed by the Bus Strategy, but significant change will require enhanced partnership working. Part 4 describes how we will deliver the Strategy in partnership with operators and others.

## **PART 3: POLICIES**

## 10. Introduction

The following sections, 11 – 16, set out our policies in relation to :

- Comprehensive network development
- Improving service delivery and performance
- Integration to allow seamless journeys
- High quality and accessible information
- Making journeys safe and secure
- Sustainable transport

The way in which we will implement these policies will be set out in an Action Plan, to accompany this document. The Action Plan, and the spending programme that will deliver it, will be developed as part of the final version of the Bus Strategy, to be submitted in March 2005.

## 11. Comprehensive Network Development

### ***Coverage of the Network***

Whilst frequent services run along the key radial routes, other parts of the county are less well served, particularly peripheral housing areas, inner urban estates and rural areas. In addition, many areas with adequate daytime services are poorly served in the evenings or on Sundays. In some cases the lack of routes across the urban area means that people have to travel into town centres and out again to reach nearby facilities. GMPTE spending on subsidising services that operators do not provide commercially has risen from £7.1m in 2001/02 to £12.78m in 2003/04. Unfortunately even with this level of spending, there are still areas that are not served by bus, or have a poor service, particularly in the evenings and on Sundays. The situation is made worse by the fact that tender prices are rising, which makes it difficult to improve the provision of tendered services. We intend to review the criteria currently used for supporting bus services, including the scope for rationalising the supported network, to ensure that subsidy is being used to the best effect.

The commercial network has continued to contract over the last five years both in overall coverage and access to high frequency services. This reflects the focus on those routes and times of day that yield the most profit and is a consequence of a market led approach to public transport provision. In response to the move towards a smaller number of profitable routes we have introduced a number of demand responsive services, using small vehicles and taxis, in areas of low demand. However we are still concerned that for many people, particularly in disadvantaged areas, the network is not serving peoples' needs. We have diverted funding from the concessionary fares budget (without reducing the entitlement of any groups) to pay for more services, although sadly we think that this has had an inflationary impact on fare levels on the commercial network.

We will work towards agreeing performance standards for network coverage for the network as a whole and for individual corridors. In terms of the high frequency network, (with a weekday daytime frequency of 10 minutes and buses operating at least every 30 minutes in the early morning and evening and every 20 minutes on Sunday daytimes), the percentage of people living within 400 metres has fallen from 61% in 2001/02 to 51.2% in 2004/05. We would like to reverse this trend, as high

frequency routes play an important role in attracting people out of their cars, but we will not lose sight of the fact that many communities cannot easily access these routes. Services that penetrate areas away from these corridors are equally important and we will implement measures to serve these excluded communities.

Certain corridors, which are not served by rail or Metrolink, have potential for express bus services. Limited stop services can speed up journeys, but the greatest potential for express buses is on corridors where a shorter journey time can be obtained by using a direct, faster route using a frequent service (a lower frequency express service would not generate sufficient demand unless there was a substantial journey time saving). We intend to investigate the feasibility of express bus services which link poorly served communities with popular destinations such as town centres. This approach may be the best way of marrying operator objectives for high demand services with the public sector desire to provide buses for socially excluded groups.

In order to make the bus an attractive alternative to the car and to ensure that people without access to a car can still travel to health, education, employment and other facilities, Greater Manchester needs a network that provides the following:

- A high frequency network within walking distance of as many people as possible. This will make bus travel more attractive to car users (and hence reduce congestion) by reducing waiting times and the need to consult timetables and will improve reliability.
- A network of local services within walking distance of as many people as possible linking to local centres or interchanges and to specific key facilities such as healthcare, education and employment.
- Services that complement rail and Metrolink services, to give an integrated public transport network without wasteful competition
- Adequate evening and Sunday services to key destinations such as town centres and hospitals
- Demand Responsive services such as Local Link or Community Transport services operating where demand is too low for a conventional bus service
- Social Needs services, to provide for people who are unable to use buses
- Support for the economic activity focused in town and city centres. This means linking them by high frequency services, providing the larger centres with cross town or distributor services to improve internal connectivity and, where appropriate, night services linking them with suburbs to support the evening economy.
- Services to Manchester Airport from key residential areas, starting early in the morning and ending late at night, to enable people to access jobs there

### *Policies*

In the next 5 years we will:

- seek to extend the percentage of the population with access to high frequency services where practicable and affordable (*meeting objectives 1a, 4a*)
- continue to provide subsidised services (subject to revised value for money criteria) where operators consider that commercial services are not viable (*meeting objectives 1a, 4a*)
- provide demand responsive services (again subject to value for money criteria) in areas where low demand would not justify conventional subsidised services (*meeting objectives 4a, 5a, 5b*)
- procure small vehicles to allow Community Transport organisations to operate services in areas of low demand (*meeting objectives 4a, 5a, 5b*)

- procure vehicles for use on wholly subsidised services, to reduce tender prices and improve quality (*meeting objective 8a*)
- work with operators to establish express services on suitable corridors where this would complement the rail and Metrolink networks (*meeting objectives 1a, 4a*)
- use Rural Bus Subsidy Grant to support both mainstream services and demand responsive services in rural areas (*meeting objectives 4a, 5a, 5b*)
- establish a third Metroshuttle service in the Regional Centre and extend the concept to other areas (subject to value for money criteria) (*meeting objective 1b*)

### **Quality Bus Corridors**

In partnership with bus operators, a programme of Quality Bus Corridors was started in 2000 to reduce journey times, reduce the variability of journey times and therefore improve reliability and to provide a high consistent standard of services. These schemes, shown on Figure 6, combine bus priority measures with improvements to waiting facilities and the provision of high quality vehicles.

QBCs are bringing real benefits for passengers and the completed schemes have been successful in increasing patronage.<sup>12</sup> However, the bus priority measures also play an important role in demand management, through the reallocation of road space and the use of priorities at signals.

At the same time we are improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, in particular in local centres along the routes. By providing additional crossing facilities for the most vulnerable road users, we accept that there will be additional delays to all traffic along the route, including buses. However, because bus journey times are still being reduced by the bus priority measures, the impact is mainly on motorists. It is also likely that by making the local area safer and more attractive for pedestrians, the walk to the bus stop will be less of a deterrent to bus use.

Bus operators cite congestion as a cause of unreliability and unattractive journey times. This view has been supported by a major study into the causes of unreliability<sup>13</sup> (referred to in more detail in section 11). The role of local highway authorities is critical in delivering effective QBC schemes: if the scheme does not bring significant improvements in reliability and journey time savings through bus priority or traffic management, operators are less likely to be prepared to make a matching investment in new vehicles. Problems can also result if adjacent authorities fail to adopt a consistent approach to traffic management. The Transport White Paper<sup>14</sup> has recognised the critical role of Traffic Management and emphasises the importance of metropolitan district councils working with Passenger Transport Authorities to give effect to their bus strategies.

There is a need to ensure that all parties deliver agreed investment and maintain agreed services on the QBCs. Quality Partnerships provide a way of achieving this, but can only be implemented once a QBC scheme is completed. We have drawn up a draft Quality Partnership agreement for the Leigh-Bolton corridor and this will be advertised at the end of 2005. This approach will then be rolled out to the Eccles Old Road corridor and then to other completed corridors.

Monitoring of the existing QBCs will identify the scope for further improvements to assist buses. However, it can be difficult to provide a significant level of bus priority on-street and the provision of off road routes for Busways (or short sections thereof)

<sup>12</sup> Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan: Fourth Annual Progress Report, July 2004, Table 2.3

<sup>13</sup> Causes of Bus Unreliability, TAS, 2004

<sup>14</sup> The Future of Transport: A Network for 2030, DfT, 2004

would be of great benefit. The Leigh Salford Manchester QBC includes a stretch of busway between Leigh and Ellenbrook. Our aim is to explore the application of the busway concept to other corridors not suitable for Metrolink and a major scheme bid is being submitted through the Local Transport Plan to develop the first phase in a core network of busways.

**Figure 5: Quality Bus Corridor and Busway Network**

### *Policies*

In the next 5 years we will:

- complete the QBC network schemes shown on Figure 5 (*meeting objectives 1a, 4a, 5c, 6a*)
- implement Quality Partnership schemes for all completed QBCs (*meeting objectives 1a, 4a, 5c, 6a, 8a*)
- carry out further studies into off road busways, complementing the Metrolink and rail networks. (*meeting objectives 1a, 4a, 6a*)
- identify whether additional QBC schemes would be beneficial (*meeting objectives 1a, 4a, 5c, 6a*)
- start to identify further improvements to existing QBCs, such as site specific bus priority measures or rebranding to maximise the impact. (*meeting objective 6a*)

Disused rail alignments can offer potential for busways, or sections of busway. Although specific schemes have not been identified for all of them, those which are considered to have potential should be protected from development pending further investigation unless the local planning authority considers that there is an overriding need for that development. Appropriate policies will be included in Local Development Frameworks as these are developed.

### **Accessibility Planning**

In Greater Manchester, 33% of the population do not have access to a car. As a result providing bus services in areas where operators do not run services commercially is a high priority. We have used a mix of subsidised conventional services and demand responsive services, including shared taxi schemes. These tend to have been provided either in response to the withdrawal of commercial services or on an ad hoc basis as funding has become available through Urban or Rural Bus Challenge or through Rural Bus Grant. As part of the LTP, however, Transport Authorities are now required to produce Accessibility Strategies, which offer a way of addressing accessibility issues in a more systematic and objective way. This involves much more than just physical access and includes both improving integration with land use planning and changing the way key services like education and health are provided.

The strategy will be based on an assessment of the accessibility needs and problems of Greater Manchester, including the problems of the rural areas. It will set out the priorities for the next five years and identify a range of interventions to address those priorities. Although work has begun, completion of the Accessibility strategy is not required until March 2006, and the Bus Strategy will be reviewed at that time to incorporate its final conclusions. Initial work has involved :

- identifying areas where accessibility of key facilities by public transport is poor, based on a Strategic Accessibility Assessment.
- holding a conference to launch three strategic partnerships, in education, employment and health and food access, to oversee the development of accessibility planning in Greater Manchester
- setting up pilot schemes in Leigh, Oldham and Stockport to gain experience in dealing with a range of problems.

### *Policies*

During the next 5 years we will:

- continue to provide a network of local services within walking distance of as many people as possible linking to local centres or interchanges and to specific key facilities such as healthcare, education and employment. (*meeting objectives 1a, 4a*)
- review GMPTE's criteria for subsidised bus services to ensure that these reflect the priorities identified in the Accessibility Strategy (*meeting objectives 4a, 5a, 5b, 5c*)
- develop a strategy for the use of demand responsive transport in areas or at times of low demand. This will include the contribution of community transport organisations (*meeting objectives 4a, 5a, 5b, 5c*)
- develop more detailed local accessibility plans to tackle the problems identified in the strategic assessment (*meeting objectives 4a, 5a, 5b, 5c*)

### **Accessibility of new development**

We need to make sure that new developments can be reached by bus and that major trip generating developments are in locations with the best public transport access. All the Unitary Development Plans in Greater Manchester have been reviewed since the publication of the Government's Planning Policy Guidance note 13 on transport and therefore seek to achieve better integration between land use and transport by focusing development so as to support the regeneration of town and city centres.

#### *Policies*

During the next 5 years we will:

- ensure that policies to maximise accessibility by public transport are included in Local Development Frameworks, which will replace UDPs. (*meeting objective 4a*)
- ensure that where a development site is not accessible by public transport, contributions are sought from developers to improve accessibility (*meeting objectives 4a, 5a, 5b*)
- ensure that significant new development proposals include a travel plan to improve access by non car modes, including bus (*meeting objective 4b*)

### **Access for people with mobility problems**

Measures to increase the accessibility of the bus network have been introduced progressively and are continuing to be introduced in line with the Disability Discrimination Act. These include facilities at bus stations such as ramps, dropped kerbs at crossings, automatic doors, 'talking' signs, tactile paving and improvements in signage and information. The Scheme of Information specifies what information must be provided in specific formats for people with mobility problems. The number of low floor buses in use has increased, following an early GMPTE grant aid scheme to kick start their purchase. A programme of raising kerbs to 160mm complements these buses by reducing the gap between the bus and the kerb, giving almost level access. However, a major barrier to movement is that in many cases operators are unable to guarantee that a particular service will be low floor. This, reduces significantly peoples' confidence in using the network. The provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act will not require all buses to be fully accessible until 2015. Illegal parking at bus stops also prevents the bus from pulling up at the kerb which totally negates the benefits of the raised kerb.

#### *Policies*

During the next 5 years we will:

- work with operators to increase the number of low floor buses in operation (*meeting objective 5c*)

- work with operators to ensure that timetabled accessible buses do operate
- increase the number of kerbs raised to 160mm, both through the QBC programme and as part of routine footway maintenance (*meeting objective 5c*)
- introduce more 'bus boxes' and make use of powers to enforce parking restrictions at bus stops (*meeting objectives 5c, 6a*)
- work with operators to ensure appropriate driver training and behaviours (*meeting objective 5c*)

### **Social Needs Transport**

The Ring and Ride service provides fully accessible demand responsive transport but whilst popular, is unable to meet all the needs of its users. Infrequent users are often unable to make individual journeys at short notice because capacity has been taken up by regular trips or block bookings. At the same time, various other agencies providing a specific service (eg non emergency ambulance, social services or community transport operations) may have spare capacity. GMPTA/E has carried out a Best Value Review of Integrated Social Needs Transport which has identified the scope for co-operation between agencies and inter-operability of work streams across agency boundaries. A fully integrated system will take time to achieve and will need to be developed incrementally through a series of trials which demonstrate success so that others wish to join. To this end, two pilot projects, one in Manchester and one in Salford, have already been established.

### *Policies*

During the next 5 years we will:

- improve the operational planning of Ring & Ride to reduce the rate at which passenger journey requests are refused and to control against un-notified cancellations (*meeting objectives 5b, 5c*)
- create a single call centre to manage booking and dispatch for the various agencies (*meeting objectives 5b, 5c*)
- improve the efficiency of operations through the provision of real time information and smartcard ticketing (*meeting objectives 5b, 5c*)
- establish with provider agencies a common financial model for service provision (*meeting objectives 5b, 5c*)
- work with agencies to clarify user eligibility criteria (*meeting objectives 5b, 5c*)
- encourage the adoption of "best in class" operating practices across the conurbation to include high quality staff training (*meeting objectives 5b, 5c*)
- engage with end users in a variety of media including a users' forum (*meeting objectives 5b, 5c*)
- develop good information supply for users and commissioners of services so that pre-, during, and post- travel information is provided accurately and punctually. (*meeting objectives 5b, 5c*)

### **Waiting Facilities**

GMPTA/E has a rolling programme of bus station improvement, improving comfort and safety and security and ensuring that DDA standards are met. However, many date from a time when bus stations were designed around the needs of bus operation, rather than those of the passenger. In addition to the need to upgrade outdated facilities, some bus station sites need to be redeveloped as part of wider regeneration schemes. The newest facilities, at Oldham, Eccles, Hyde and Middleton and Shudehill (which is under construction) are designed with a central passenger concourse which provides better shelter, access to information and a greater sense of safety and security. As far as possible, allowance is also made for interchange

with other modes, or with non conventional bus services such as Local Link. We have also adopted high profile designs for buildings, which complement local regeneration initiatives. Improved local management of bus stations and increased staffing in the evenings has improved safety and security for staff and passengers and improved their customer focus.

The improvement of bus stops, including the provision of shelters, raised kerbs (which allow virtually level access to low floor buses) and improved information is a feature of the QBC programme, but has also been carried out at other locations as an enhancement to planned maintenance work. We also need to broaden this work to other locations, particularly to improve access for people with disabilities. This will also improve accessibility for all passengers, especially those with buggies.

Most bus shelters are provided and maintained by a private company in return for the advertising rights at a proportion of them. However, of the 12,700 bus stops in the county, only 30% currently have shelters (in many cases there is no room to accommodate one). GMPTE has recently signed a contract to provide additional shelters, allowing the replacement of the remaining older style shelters and the provision of facilities at more stops, where space allows. These shelters will be maintained by GMPTE. Whilst the size of bus shelter is adequate for most locations, there are problems at some busy stops where there is insufficient shelter for the number of passengers, or where they obstruct the pavement, causing problems for pedestrians. Larger shelters have been provided at Piccadilly station, and in Atherton, Eccles and Stockport town centre.

### *Policies*

In the next 5 years we will:

- bring forward schemes to redevelop bus stations/interchanges at Altrincham, Rochdale, Bolton, Stockport, Ashton, Wythenshawe, Piccadilly Gardens and Radcliffe (*meeting objectives 1b, 2a, 4a, 7a*)
- develop new bus stations to high design standards to complement town centre regeneration and to provide a passenger focused environment in locations that provide good access to town centre facilities (*meeting objectives 1a, 1b*)
- ensure that new or upgraded bus station facilities include cycle parking, taxi ranks and stands for specialist Ring and Ride or Community Transport vehicles, which may have rear loading for wheelchairs (*meeting objectives 4a, 5a*)
- upgrade existing bus stations to improve safety and security, passenger comfort and to ensure that DDA standards are met (*meeting objectives 2a, 4a, 5c*)
- continue to provide an increased staff presence on bus stations (*meeting objective 2a*)
- carry out a programme of raising kerbs at bus stops (*meeting objective 5c*)
- provide new bus shelters, including larger shelters at the busiest locations (*meeting objectives 2a, 4a*)
- ensure that all bus stations and bus stops at important locations on the QBC's as well as at interchange points have RTPI provided.

### **Vehicles**

The standard of vehicles in use in Greater Manchester varies greatly. Some operators have introduced high quality, accessible vehicles with 'cleaner' engines, particularly on the QBCs, but there are still a large number of older vehicles on the road. This is discussed in more detail in section 15, which deals specifically with the air quality issues. Standards set by GMPTE ensure that buses used on subsidised services are less than 15 years old but many ageing vehicles offered on routes in

Greater Manchester do little to enhance the image of the bus. Vehicle quality is a particular issue on school services where older vehicles are often brought in to meet the heavy peak time demand. Consultation has shown that poor quality vehicles are a factor in parental decisions to drive children to school. This undermines work by schools and local authorities seeking to promote sustainable travel, adds to car use and increases congestion around schools. School vehicles are discussed in more detail in section 11.

#### *Policies*

In the next 5 years we will:

- introduce more high quality vehicles on school services (see 14.4) (*meeting objectives 2a, 4a, 8a*)
- consider the procurement of vehicles for use on subsidised services (*meeting objective 8a*)
- set standards, jointly with operators, for improving vehicle quality \* (*meeting objectives 3a, 4a*)

\* *requires partnership with operators*

## **12. Improving Service Delivery and Performance**

There is a wide variation in the quality of bus services in terms of reliability and quality of the journey experience. This is clearly reflected in low levels of customer satisfaction. There is therefore a need to raise quality to that of the best services in order to compete with the car.

#### ***Stability***

Over the last 5 years, GMPTE have recorded, on average, just over 1,000 service changes per year (made up of new services, cancellations and variations). These figures include changes to the subsidised network, for which GMPTE is responsible. The rate of change is both confusing and disheartening for passengers. Major reductions in service have and do occur, as was experienced in the north of the conurbation in 2004. There is a need to ensure that the network is sustainable in the longer term.

#### *Policies*

In the next 5 years we will:

- reduce the number of dates when services change to 4 per year and then to 3\* (*meeting objective 4a*)
- ensure that service change dates are adhered to\* (*meeting objective 4a*)
- agree with the operators a sustainable long term network of services\*

\* *requires partnership with operators*

#### ***Reliability and Punctuality***

Reliability is consistently identified by bus users as their highest priority. The operation of reliable services in current traffic conditions is a major challenge for operators. However, a study<sup>15</sup> has identified the major causes of unreliability as being: delay at traffic signals; passengers boarding and alighting (where the more

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<sup>15</sup> *Causes of Bus Unreliability*, TAS, 2004

successful the service is in attracting passengers, the greater the delay from this source); traffic volumes and rejoining traffic flows from laybys. As might be expected, the most significant deviation from schedule occurs at peaks. However variability over the route is a worsening problem and the afternoon school peak is a major cause of unreliability. The non running of services has also been a significant problem in some areas, and the above survey estimated that 7% of all mileage was 'lost'. The actual figure is disputed by operators, but between July and September 2004 the percentage of services subsidised by GMPTE that actually ran was 91.7%.

As regards the timeliness of the services that do run, countywide, surveys in August 2004 and January 2005 showed 61% of timetabled buses (ie excluding very frequent services with more than 6 buses per hour) were 'on time' (ie between 1 minute early and 5 minutes late). In stark terms this means that over a third of buses are not running on time. This is perhaps the most disappointing statistic relating to public transport in Greater Manchester during the lifetime of the first LTP. At present we have few tools to encourage good reliability and discourage poor performance. During the lifetime of LTP2 we will seek to secure a mechanism which will enable us to boost reliability across the conurbation. Variation does exist between operators (ranging from 38% to 79%) and between local authority areas (ranging from 54% to 73%). This is partly due to differences in traffic levels, but the situation is complicated because not all operators operate countywide, and the presence of a lower performing operator will affect punctuality in a particular district. As part of our corridor partnership approach we aim to develop clearer performance standards in terms of punctuality and reliability and to relate revenue support more closely to the achievement of outcomes.

#### *Policies*

In the next 5 years we will:

- develop a cashless/changeless fare strategy involving the development of off-bus ticket purchase (exploiting the potential of the Paypoint network), on-street ticket machines, and simplification of fares. The introduction of Readycard for concessionary fares will provide the catalyst for further measures\* (*meeting objectives 4a, 6a*)
- reduce the impact of school generated traffic on the network, by providing additional bus capacity during peak times and by encouraging modal shift away from car trips to reduce traffic congestion. The provision of high quality dedicated vehicles ('yellow buses') is central to achieving this objective (*meeting objectives 4a, 6a*)
- remove bus laybys, except where these are considered necessary for safety, to reduce delays in buses rejoining traffic flows (*meeting objective 6a*)
- use Real Time Passenger Information to assist operators in managing bus operations (*meeting objective 6a*)
- improve the monitoring and management of punctuality. We will agree both the method of measurement and the intervention procedures with operators. The latter will include operator specific monitoring with trigger points for call in meetings, production of Performance Improvement Plans and reporting to the Traffic Commissioner. We will also agree with operators a programme for driver training to deal with the issues that cause unreliability (*meeting objectives 6a, 8a*)
- Develop performance standards as part of our work to deliver corridor partnerships (*meeting objectives 6a, 8a*)
- carry out further research to establish: which measures have the most impact on journey time variability on Quality Bus Corridors; the potential for combined bus/traffic control facilities; the potential for additional layover facilities to reduce

bunching on frequent services; the effect bus design has on boarding and alighting times and the impact of GMPTA bus station rules and management arrangements. (*meeting objective 6a*)

- manage bus contracts so as to attract greater competition and to incentivise operators to meet and exceed performance standards (*meeting objective 4a, 6a*)

*\* requires partnership with operators*

### **Schools Services**

The school journey affects the bus network in three ways: additional car trips on the 'school run' cause congestion for buses; operators remove buses from the general network to provide school buses; and the general network comes under pressure from increased customer demand at school times. The lack of vehicles available at peak times means that tender prices for school vehicles are high. At present, the problem is mainly in the morning peak, but the introduction of free concessionary travel in 2006 is likely to increase travel by pensioners in the afternoon, reducing capacity at school times. The problem is made worse by the standardisation of school start and finish times, parental choice of schools and school mergers which increase the length or complexity of journeys. GMPTA/E has carried out a Best Value Review of School Services which concluded that additional vehicles were needed to reduce the impact of school journeys on the bus network and that a significant improvement in the quality of schools services (particularly measures to combat anti-social behaviour) was needed to encourage their use and consequently reduce the number of car trips. Pilot schemes to introduce Yellow School Buses (which also involve Contracts of Behaviour) and to improve safety and security on conventional buses used for school services are in operation and proving successful both in increasing bus use and improving behaviour. In addition, the yellow buses are used for other school contract work such as trips to swimming baths which maximises vehicle usage, reduces costs and allows the provision of additional services eg for breakfast or after school clubs. A major scheme bid to increase significantly the number of yellow buses was made in July 2004, but along with other major schemes, has been remitted for consideration at the regional level.

### *Policies*

In the next 5 years we will:

- work with schools and education authorities to ensure that schools services are meeting the changing needs of the education system (*meeting objectives 4a, 5b*).
- introduce additional new yellow school buses (*meeting objectives 2a, 4a*)
- work to optimise the schools network provision, alongside the planning of mainstream bus services (*meeting objective 4a*).
- work with operators to provide yellow bus features such as CCTV on vehicles used for school services (*meeting objective 2a*)
- increase the number of school travel plans so as to discourage car use (*meeting objective 4b*)
- work with schools and operators to reduce anti social behaviour (*meeting objective 2a*)
- promote the availability and quality of schools services effectively in partnership with schools and through all available channels (*meeting objective 4b*)
- introduce new ticketing arrangements so that pupils who have to use more than one bus to travel to school are not penalised financially \* (*meeting objective 4a*)
- work with schools and education authorities through the Accessibility Strategy to ensure that transport issues are a factor in decision making (*meeting objective 4c*)

*\* requires partnership with operators*

### ***Service Quality and Maintenance***

GMPTE's contract conditions for subsidised bus services specify service quality standards (over and above standards relating to punctuality and reliability). The standards primarily relate to vehicle specification and age, and a code of conduct for bus drivers. Breaches of contract are identified through regular inspections and these lead to deductions in contract payments to operators. Higher standards apply on QBCs, where operators agree to maintain standards in terms of infrastructure, bus stop information, vehicle cleanliness, destination blinds, driving standards, customer care (including use of the 'kneeling mechanism') and internal vehicle condition, while Districts and GMPTE maintain infrastructure and bus stop information. In order to improve the image of bus travel and achieve modal shift, there is a need both to ensure that these standards are maintained and to raise standards on the general network where the quality of vehicles is often lower.

Maintaining buses and bus stations/stops to a high standard is essential in building and retaining passenger confidence. A quality monitoring regime is in place for bus stations and the maintenance of shelters to agreed standards forms part of the contract with the provider. The fabric of the bus stations is maintained in accordance with a 5 year maintenance schedule.

Since buses use the road network, highway maintenance is an important factor not only in terms of maintaining ride quality but in terms of ensuring that road markings denoting bus lanes, bus stops and parking restrictions are renewed. The QBC network depends on these for its success and through the LTP Maintenance strategy, Highway Authorities and GMPTE have agreed to adopt higher and consistent standards of maintenance on the QBC network, including surface ride quality, signs and lines, surface colour and passenger information. Road works can, however, disrupt bus operations and we endeavour to give operators as much warning as possible of these. The Traffic Management Act will give highway authorities much greater powers to minimise unnecessary disruption caused by poorly planned works and more control over where and when works can and cannot take place, as well as a more effective enforcement regime for these works

### ***Enforcement***

The benefits of bus lanes are reduced if they are used by other vehicles. The Traffic Management Act aims to extend the powers, already available in London, for highway authorities to enforce against the offence of driving in a bus lane. The cost of enforcement can be funded from the fixed penalty charges. However, we are , awaiting Guidance and consultation on the regulations, due in Autumn 2005, before these new powers can be used. Parking at bus stops also not only causes delays to buses, but also causes passengers to walk out into the carriageway to board the bus. This means that the benefits of kerbs raised to provide level access are lost, which is a particular problem for disabled people. All the local authorities in Greater Manchester have, or will shortly have, powers for Decriminalised Parking Enforcement, which gives greater scope to take action on bus stop parking.

### ***Policies***

In the next 5 years we will:

- agree QBC monitoring standards with operators so that performance as measured can be compared to these standards. This would enable areas for attention/improvement to be clearly identified (*meeting objective 4a*)

- extend quality monitoring to the general bus network to improve standards on non QBC routes (*meeting objective 4a*)
- review GMPTE contract conditions to improve vehicle standards (funding permitted) (*meeting objective 4a*)
- develop customer-focused driver training schemes which will help make bus driving a more attractive career \* (*meeting objectives 4a, 6a*)
- agree maintenance obligations for QBC operators (*meeting objectives 4a, 8a*)
- agree with Districts a common procedure for notifying and consulting operators about roadworks (*meeting objectives 4a, 6a, 8a*)
- make use of the powers in the Traffic Management Act to enforce against the misuse of bus lanes (*meeting objectives 4a, 6a*)
- enforce against parking at bus stops (*meeting objectives 4a, 5c, 6a*)

\* *requires partnership with operators*

### **13. Integration to Allow Seamless Journeys**

In order to compete with the car, public transport needs to function as an integrated network. Timetables which do not allow connections to be made, tickets that are only valid for a single operator or a single mode and fare structures that increase the cost of a journey involving interchange, are all barriers to creating a 'Seamless' network. We need to present to the passenger a unified system, with common standards of appearance, operation and delivery, working to a shared ticketing and information strategy. There needs to be a common basis for timetabling, a system wide ticketing and fares strategy and a common standard of service for all operators.

#### ***Extending the range of the network***

Interchange is important in extending the range of the network. Passengers prefer direct services, but this is often impossible without either very circuitous routes or at great cost. In providing supported services, GMPTE ensures that journeys to hospitals can either be made direct or with a single interchange. The Accessibility Strategy will identify other key locations and enable an assessment (using GMPTE's Journey Planner) to be made of whether interchange is needed to reach them from certain areas and whether improvements could be made. GMPTE has used Rural Bus Challenge funding to improve facilities for rail-bus interchange at stations in rural areas and to provide demand responsive services linking the rural areas with the rail network.

Better integration of routes and timetables is essential to extend the range of the bus network by providing connecting services and by allowing buses to act as effective feeders to rail and Metrolink without wasteful competition between modes. However, GMPTE only has control over subsidised services and at present can not require commercial operators to plan their services in an integrated way. This severely limits our ability to integrate services across modes and instead we are sometimes presented with modes in competition, which would ideally be complementary. In the future we would like to fully integrate timetables between operators and across modes. So far we have been unable to do this, as bus operators are not under any obligation to set their timetables in conjunction with other transport providers. Integrated timetables would aid our ability to deliver the Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Strategy based on key corridors of movement, and promotion of better integration within and between modes will be one of the tasks of the proposed corridor partnerships.

### ***Ticketing***

All operator and all mode tickets have been introduced through the Integrate initiative, but these are more expensive than single operator period tickets (the cost of a System 1 adult Bus Saver, which can be used on all buses, is £13 compared to £10 for a First Group adult weekly and £8.50 for Stagecoach). This extra cost is a barrier to interchange. The introduction of Readycard, Greater Manchester's 'smartcard' should reduce this problem, as it will be possible to reimburse operators more accurately for journeys made. However, there is no guarantee that prices will be reduced sufficiently. The complexity of existing ticketing is partly due to the way operators are reimbursed for providing concessionary fares. This payment is based on the difference between the adult equivalent single fare and the concessionary fare. This has provided a strong incentive for operators to increase adult single fares because there is a mechanical relationship between those fares and concessionary reimbursement. In recent years the logic of basing payments on adult single fares has been blurred by increasing sales of operator and GMTL period tickets, often at significant discount. Simple flat fares are seen as attractive by passengers, as they remove one element of uncertainty from bus travel.

Countywide integrated tickets can be expensive for passengers travelling only in one part of the area. Local area tickets, which would offer integrated ticketing more cheaply than countywide cards, are included in the Ticketing Scheme but implementation has been deferred until Readycard is universally available. Should the implementation of Readycard be further delayed we will reopen discussions on ways to introduce innovative ticketing measures. There is also a need, in the meantime, for a simple system such as zoning fares into central and outer areas. Integration could also be improved by including Local Link services on integrated tickets.

The delays to buses caused by fare payment have been described in section 11 above, and our future ticketing strategy must include increasing off bus ticket sales

### ***Places of Interchange***

Our policies for bus stations are described in section 10 above. In addition to bus stations, we have identified more than 220 sites across the county where interchange could potentially take place on the bus network. In some cases this is at a rail station or Metrolink stop, but in others it is a grouping of on-street bus stops. An initial audit of these locations has been carried out and potential improvements identified. We have made information about interchange services available at rail stations and have a programme of rolling out this information at all other interchange locations. This should be complete by 2006.

### ***Walking Routes***

Good quality, well signed walking routes to bus stations and stops are essential to encouraging bus use. The improvement of the pedestrian environment, including crossings, is an important part of the QBC programme, but there is a need to make improvements throughout the network. The Greater Manchester Walking Strategy sets out policies in this area.

### ***Policies***

In the next 5 years we will:

- identify journeys to key locations that cannot be made without interchange and develop a programme of improvement (*meeting objectives 4a, 5a*)
- prioritise the provision of shelters at stops forming part of on-street interchanges (*meeting objective 4a*)

- relocate bus stops forming part of on street interchanges to reduce the walking distance between them (and therefore make the potential for interchange more obvious) where it is feasible to do so and the work can be carried out as part of other streetworks eg QBCs. *(meeting objective 4a)*
- introduce smartcards, initially for the payment of concessionary fares *(to be updated with latest position) (meeting objective 4a)*
- include demand responsive services on integrated tickets \* *(meeting objective 4a)*
- simplify the fares system and introduce flat or zonal fares \* *(meeting objective 4a)*
- introduce a simple through ticketing system \* *(meeting objective 4a)*
- introduce small area travel cards \* *(meeting objective 4a)*
- increase dramatically the proportion of off bus ticket sales so as to reduce cash transactions \* *(meeting objectives 4a, 6a)*
- to introduce affordable, all operator, all mode tickets so as to achieve integration \* *(meeting objectives 4a, 7a)*
- review tickets for young people to help reverse the decline in patronage *(meeting objectives 4a, 5a)*
- agree a network standard branding philosophy\* *(meeting objectives 4a, 4b)*

\* requires partnership with operators

### **Park and Ride**

In some towns, particularly historic ones, park and ride has provided an attractive alternative to driving all the way into centres. The situation in conurbations is often different and large scale, strategic park and ride sites need to be situated towards the edge of the conurbation if they are to combine public transport benefits with reduced pollution and congestion. However, as distance from the city increases, vehicle mileage (hence cost) increases and potential catchment (hence revenue) decreases. As a result, the main focus of park and ride in Greater Manchester is on rail and Metrolink, which are not dependent on park and ride passengers for revenue but are nonetheless attractive to car-users because of their high speed.

Sites for bus-based park and ride schemes therefore need to be chosen with care. Ill-conceived schemes have the potential to increase air pollution, overall car mileage and to undermine existing public transport services. For bus schemes to be viable whilst reducing car mileage they need to be: fast, with good bus priority (ideally segregated); not dependent solely on park-and-riders for passengers and with a limited number of stops, only one of which might be a park and ride stop. To attract people out of their cars, the cost of using park and ride also needs to be competitive relative to the cost of driving and parking.

Cycle park and ride can also extend the range of the bus network. Cycle parking is now provided when bus stations and interchanges are redeveloped or remodelled, provided that a suitable location, with adequate security, can be found.

### **Policies**

In the next 5 years we will:

- provide the park and ride sites included in the provisionally approved Leigh-Salford-Manchester QBC scheme *(meeting objectives 1a, 1b, 4a)*
- consider the provision of bus park and ride as an integral part of other schemes that offer a significant level of bus priority eg through off-road sections of busway *(meeting objectives 1a, 1b, 4a)*
- consider bus park and ride as part of the planning for special events, as it was for the Commonwealth Games *(meeting objective 4a)*

- assess potential potential park and ride schemes in Greater Manchester according to a range of criteria including transport, environmental, social and economic effects, user benefits and financial implications (*meeting objective 4a*)

## 14. High Quality and Accessible Information

### **Service Information**

If public transport is to compete with the car, people need to be able to travel whenever and wherever they want. However as car ownership and use has become more widespread, people's knowledge of what destinations can be reached by bus has deteriorated through lack of use. A very high proportion of bus users travel on just one or two services, between a selected few stops. There is a need for information about the bus network to be reliable and more widely available, for example in shopping centres rather than just at interchanges. It also needs to be integrated with information about the full range of non car options, including rail, Metrolink, Demand Responsive Transport, walking and cycling.

We aim to increase the electronic delivery of information, to supplement paper based systems, to increase the delivery of personalised information to individuals at home or at work (eg a journey planning system delivered to mobile phones) and to maximise the potential of real time information (eg by passengers registering their journey and being kept up to date in real time, via their mobile phones)

We already have in place a Scheme of Information (specifying the type of locations for information provision), an online journey planner, also available via electronic information kiosks, providing information on journeys throughout the north west and have started to introduce real time passenger information (RTPI) on a number of vehicles and routes as well as SMS text messaging.

### *Policies*

In the next five years we will:

- increase the number of bus stops with timetables \* (*meeting objectives 4a, 4b*)
- continue to roll out RTPI to more routes and locations (*meeting objective 4a*)
- further develop electronic information systems (*meeting objective 4a*)
- introduce more electronic information kiosks and develop them to offer more services, such as ticket purchase (*meeting objective 4a*)
- extend the network of Travelshops (*meeting objective 4a*)
- further develop the journey planner to provide a 'virtual travel brokerage service' able to recommend alternatives such as demand responsive transport, community transport or shared taxi if there is no scheduled public transport available (*meeting objective 4a, 4b*)
- fully integrate GMPTIL (Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Information Ltd) into a regional service as part of Traveline (*meeting objective 4a*)
- develop the potential of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) to improve information provision (*meeting objective 4a, 8a*)
- review the Scheme of Information (*meeting objective 4a*)

\* requires partnership with operators

### **Growing the market**

As well as providing information to people who are considering making a journey by bus, we need to raise awareness of the bus as a travel option and promote its use. Our policies will make bus travel more attractive, but there is also a need to change

negative perceptions of bus travel. Traditionally marketing and promotion is largely a matter for the commercial operators (involving marketing campaigns such as 'Kids for a Quid'), although GMPTE has carried out various campaigns to encourage bus use. Research with the public has shown that global campaigns which simply raise awareness of buses may not be effective because many people no longer have experience of using them and are put off trying. As a first step a simple guide to using public transport, 'Connecting People with Places' has been produced. However, this needs to be supplemented by targeted initiatives, such as providing information at specific destinations or promoting a particular service. Both the major operators in Greater Manchester have piloted this approach. First have used a mixture of promotion and personalised journey planning on the 501 service (an initiative branded as the 'Bolton Perfect Journey') whilst Stagecoach have used targeted mailshots on the 256 service. They have also worked with GMPTE to promote the 192 service, sharing the cost of a health based campaign aimed at persuading non users living close to the route to catch the bus. In addition to co-funding the campaign, the operator provided free promotional tickets.

Encouraging people to travel by bus for some of their journeys is part of the 'Smarter Choices' strategy described in the LTP. Through travel plans, employers can be encouraged to purchase tickets in bulk at discounted prices to sell on to their staff and to make information available in the workplace. Similarly school travel plans can promote the use of the bus for longer distance journeys as part of a policy of discouraging car journeys and encouraging pupils to walk, cycle or use public transport.

#### *Policies*

Our future strategy needs to be fluid to react to trends, in the next 5 years it will be based on:

- supplementing the 'Connecting People with Places' with destination based material, encouraging people to visit town centres, local attractions or the countryside by bus (*meeting objective 4b*)
- promoting particular services \* (*meeting objective 4b*)
- increasing web based communication. A first step is the redesign of the GMPTE website to make it more accessible to users (*meeting objective 4b*)
- using travel plans to promote bus services to employers and schools (*meeting objective 4b*)
- promoting bus travel through events such as 'In Town Without My Car Day' (*meeting objective 4b*)
- promoting bus travel in schools (*meeting objective 4b*)

\* *requires partnership with operators*

## **15. Making Journeys Safe and Secure**

Safety and security are key concerns for people who are considering using public transport, particularly vulnerable groups such as elderly people and women, and also for drivers and bus station staff. Safety fears deter many people from using buses, particularly in the evening. It can make it difficult for operators to recruit and retain drivers and can result in social exclusion if services are withdrawn as a result. Safety, or the perception of safety, needs to be considered at all stages of the journey: walking to/from the stop, waiting for the bus and travelling on the bus.

Safety concerns over walking routes can be a deterrent to bus use. The LTP Walking Strategy aims to improve the quality of pedestrian routes and highway authorities will bring forward specific schemes. The Quality Bus Corridor schemes include improvements to the pedestrian environment, particularly in local centres along the routes. By improving pavements, lighting and crossing facilities, more people will be encouraged to walk, which will, in turn increase personal security.

The removal of visual obstructions, provision of CCTV and the presence of staff are all deterrents to criminal activity and improve feelings of safety. CCTV now covers all the main bus stations and some bus stops are covered by town centre schemes. However, a further source of insecurity arises from not knowing how long the wait will be. The provision of Real Time Passenger Information will be important in providing reassurance. GMPTE has increased staffing at bus stations in the evening and concentrates night services in a smaller area to improve surveillance. A pilot scheme is providing a mobile unit of security staff covering Rochdale, Oldham, Bolton and Bury bus stations from afternoon until 11pm. Some operators are now installing CCTV on vehicles, and this can reduce insurance premiums.

High levels of anti social behaviour are associated with school buses. GMPTE has carried out a Best Value Review of Schools Transport which recommended both physical improvements to the vehicles used and educational measures to improve behaviour. Where pilot dedicated yellow school bus schemes have been introduced, there has been a marked improvement in behaviour. These cannot be introduced universally because of the impact on the bus network (some operators intermix schools work with other, often tendered, services and the cost of providing those other services would rise if the interworking was lost) as well as the cost. However, the introduction of some of the features of yellow buses, including CCTV, dedicated drivers and dedicated seats, has also shown to be beneficial in improving behaviour. On the general bus network, a pilot scheme has introduced Safer Travel Officers on a specific bus route between Middleton and Manchester.

### ***Priorities***

Work is well underway at GMPTE on developing a Safety and Security Strategy to provide the focus for future work in the is area. Analysis has shown that 57% of incidents on the bus network relate to criminal damage and 20% to anti-social behaviour. Both of these have a significant effect on perceptions of safety. The Safety and Security Strategy will therefore focus on:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Criminal damage
- Perceptions

### ***Partnership Working***

Partnership working between operators, GMPTE, local authorities and the police is essential, eg through Crime and Disorder Partnerships. GMPTE also provides a mechanism for operators to report incidents, enabling them to target hotspots, raise the profile of problems and target them in partnership with the police and local Crime and Disorder teams. A pilot scheme providing a dedicated mobile policing unit in Wigan has proved successful. The development of Local Strategic Partnerships provides an additional helpful forum where bus operators can discuss issues with District Councils and GMPTA/E. Such partnerships can also particularly represent a source of additional funding in some districts through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

The growth of the night time economy in the Regional Centre and main town centres has led to an increase in crime. In particular there is anti social behaviour associated with closing time and the wait for transport home. Following a successful pilot in the centre of Manchester, GMPTE has introduced Nightbuses in two other centres with the aim of dispersing revellers more quickly. Due to the fact that these are supported by CCTV and an increased Police presence, crime has been reduced, both around the city centre and the public transport interchanges within it.

#### *Policies*

In the next 5 years we will:

- develop a Safety and Security Strategy (*meeting objective 2a*)
- carry out a safety and security audit of all bus stations (*meeting objective 2a*)
- increase GMPTE resources for dealing with crime and disorder incidents , utilising local Customer Service Managers (*meeting objective 2a*)
- design and maintain all transport infrastructure with a view to crime reduction (*meeting objective 2a*)
- wherever possible deploy a visible professional staff presence to reassure the public and deter offenders (*meeting objective 2a*)
- encourage the general public to take more responsibility for the public transport network (*meeting objective 2a*)
- further develop partnerships to tackle crime and disorder Encourage the general public to take more responsibility for the public transport network (*meeting objective 2a*)
- increase the number of yellow school buses and improve school waiting facilities and turnrounds (*meeting objectives 2a, 4a*)
- introduce key features of yellow buses, such as CCTV on buses used for school contracts \* (*meeting objectives 2a, 4a*)
- work with schools to introduce packages of measures, including contracts of behaviour (*meeting objective 2a*)
- improve walking routes to bus stations and stops through the Greater Manchester Walking Strategy (*meeting objectives 2a, 4a*)
- roll out of RTP1 at more stops (*meeting objectives 2a, 4a*)
- introduce additional pilot night bus schemes as appropriate (*meeting objective 2a*)

\* requires partnership with operators

## **16. Sustainable Transport**

### ***Air Quality***

Particulates and nitrogen dioxide are both predicted to be above target levels for parts of Greater Manchester, including the Regional Centre, most town centres, all motorways and some major roads. As a result, all ten Greater Manchester authorities have declared Air Quality Management Areas. Diesel engines are one of the main sources of both pollutants, and whilst goods vehicles are the most significant contributors, buses are significant producers in some parts of the county.

We have already started to take action to reduce emissions from buses. GMPTE's conditions of contract have been changed to require buses on subsidised services (about 10% of the total mileage) to have particulate traps. We have grant aided operators to fit particulate traps on older buses and supported the development of an

innovative trap. However, despite considerable efforts, operators have no obligation to invest substantially in clean vehicles/ technology for routes in Greater Manchester.

Since October 2001, new buses have had to meet strict Euro III engine requirements. Operators have stated that 72% of their fleet are Euro II or better. However, GMPTE observations<sup>16</sup> from 2004 suggest that at any one time that only 46% are Euro II or better, and only 8% have particulate traps. Clearly, we need to establish the real numbers and an agreed baseline and then set targets for further improvement over the 5 year period of this strategy. Even 72% is a lower proportion than in London where 95% of London buses are now Euro II or better and 75% have particulate traps. There all buses run on contracts and Transport for London are able to specify higher standards (albeit at higher cost). The result is that operators provide new buses, with clean vehicle technology, in order to comply with the regulatory regime.

### ***Climate Change***

As regards climate change, the transport sector is both a major source of greenhouse gases, and the fastest growing. Our objective of increasing bus patronage as part of a modal shift away from car use will help to reduce the greenhouse gases produced per passenger mile. Electric vehicles can also help, provided the electricity is produced from renewable resources. We are testing a diesel-electric hybrid Metroshuttle bus in central Manchester.

### ***Policies***

In the next 5 years we will:

- Increase the proportion of buses in use in Greater Manchester with Euro II engines or better (*meeting objective 3a*)
- Increase the proportion of older vehicles in use in Greater Manchester which have particulate traps (*meeting objective 3a*)
- Reduce energy consumption at bus stations and stops (*meeting objective 3a*)
- Explore, through joint working between GMPTE, District Councils and operators, measures to control emissions from buses entering sensitive areas in town and city centres (*meeting objectives 1a,3a*)
- Carry out Environmental Assessment of all major bus related schemes (*meeting objective 3a*)

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<sup>16</sup> Registration numbers observed in a survey of 3,000 vehicles were cross referenced to operator fleet lists, which record details of the vehicle, including the age. This does not take account of deliveries of new vehicles in 2004/05

## **PART 4: DELIVERY**

## 17. Partnership Working

The Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Strategy identified the need for a system of partnership working to deliver a fully integrated transport strategy across Greater Manchester.

- There is a need to ensure that transport strategies are aligned with regeneration strategies and programmes, to achieve a wider set of outcomes than has historically been the case
- Key aspects of transport strategy cannot be implemented without co-operation and accountability between GMPTA/E, bus operators, Highway Authorities, other public sector agencies (eg the health and education sectors), major employers and developers
- There is a need to ensure that major investment in public transport is not undermined by wasteful competition from other modes

The approach being developed is to establish corridor partnerships where key stakeholders enter into agreements for the delivery of agreed outcomes. These partnerships, which could take the form of Local Area Agreements, would include GMPTA/E, highway authorities, key bus operators, regeneration agencies, local private sector agencies and companies. Initially, the approach is being piloted on four corridors where major public transport investment is planned, and the aim is to have these partnerships in place by the time of the Full LTP submission in March 2006. Further partnerships will be set up during early part of the LTP period.

A key objective of each partnership would be to develop an integrated transport plan for the corridor. This would designate the primary public transport mode for medium to long distance journeys on the corridor: either rail, Metrolink or busway. The aim would then be to ensure that any other public transport mode (primarily bus) underpins and supports the role played by the primary mode and to introduce appropriate complementary policy measures (including the whole range of soft measures) designed to support their future development and maximise the benefit of the public transport investment. The bus will remain the major public transport mode in the conurbation: indeed a number of the corridors will include Quality Bus Corridors for which we intend to introduce Quality Partnerships to guarantee standards and protect the investment made by both the public sector and the operators. The aim is to achieve better integration between all public transport modes, which will improve the offer to the travelling public and help to grow patronage on the bus network as well as on rail and Metrolink. The partnerships will also have a key role to play in ensuring that future transport, land use planning and regeneration policies and initiatives are effectively aligned. This will help to improve the market for bus travel by ensuring that new development is accessible by public transport.

The key components of each corridor plan will be :

- Behavioural change and smarter travel strategies for the corridor
- Demand congestion management measures for the corridor
- Public transport patronage targets and related accessibility targets
- Public transport improvements for the corridor
- Road safety and personal security plans for the corridor
- Sustainable development and air quality standards for the corridor
- A social needs transport strategy

The plans will also need to demonstrably contribute to -:

- Employment based targets
- Regeneration and competitiveness targets

The four pilots for Corridor Partnerships are shown below, along with the eleven further corridors identified to date.

### ***Pilot Corridors***

Manchester – Droylsden – Ashton – Stalybridge/Greenfield (*Metrolink/Rail*)

Manchester – Failsworth – Oldham – Shaw – Rochdale (*Metrolink*)

Manchester – Swinton – Leigh (*Busway*)

Manchester – Chorlton/Didsbury – Wythenshawe – Airport (*Metrolink*)

### ***Other Corridors***

Manchester – Stockport – Hazel Grove/Cheadle Hulme (*Rail*)

Manchester – Prestwich – Whitefield – Bury (*Metrolink*)

Manchester – Farnworth – Bolton – Lostock/Bromley Cross (*Blackburn*)  
(*Rail*)

Manchester – Salford – Eccles – Irlam (*Metrolink*)

Manchester – Sale – Altrincham, Hale (*Metrolink*)

Manchester – Reddish – Romiley – Marple (New Mills) (*Rail*)

Manchester – Audenshaw – Hyde – Hattersley (Glossop) (*Rail*)

Manchester – Middleton – Rochdale (*Rail*)

Manchester – Atherton- Hindley- Wigan (*Rail*)

Manchester – Trafford Park – Urmston – Flixton (*Rail*)

Manchester – Didsbury – Stockport/Airport/Heald Green (*Metrolink and Rail*)

The Full Local Transport Plan, to be submitted in March 2006, will identify priority corridors and key stakeholders to be represented, along with work programmes for each partnership to deliver the integrated strategy and identified outcomes.

### ***Partnership with Operators***

Bus operators clearly play a central role in delivering the Bus Strategy. GMPTE and the District Councils have worked with operators on a voluntary basis via the Integrate Project. This has brought a number of improvements, notably the introduction of Quality Bus Corridors, reduction in the number of changes to the network and improvements in information and ticketing. However, the performance of the bus network still falls short of passenger requirements in a number of respects and significant improvement is needed if the bus is to attract significant numbers of people away from their cars.

We have stated our intention to develop Quality Partnerships for each of the Quality Bus Corridors as they are completed, but there is a need to improve quality throughout the network in terms of network development; service mode and ticket integration; safety and security; reliability; punctuality; service consistency; value for money; information; accessibility and emissions.. Where the only practical way of delivering the required improvements is through either a statutory Quality Partnership or a Quality Contract we will seek the powers to introduce these.

Under Sections 124-134 of the Transport Act,2000, Quality Contracts enable a Transport Authority to:

- Determine what services are to be provided

- Specify in the contract the 'frequency, fares and standard of service'
- Prevent operators other than the contract holder from operating services in the area.

However, they can only be introduced if:

- It is the 'only practicable way' of implementing the policies set out in the bus strategy
- The scheme will implement those policies in a way that is economic, efficient and effective
- The Secretary of State finds that the proposed Quality Scheme is in the public interest

These requirements are amended by Section 39 of the Railways Act, 2005, which allows a PTA, or a PTA jointly with one or more other local transport authorities, to make a quality contract scheme covering the whole or part of their area if:

- It is an appropriate way of meeting transport needs where a relevant rail service is to be reduced or discontinued
- Making the scheme will contribute to meeting the transport needs of people living, working or studying in the affected areas
- The scheme is compatible with the LTP
- The scheme meets needs in a way which is economic, efficient and effective

The White Paper: 'The Future of Transport' (July 2004) specifically cites Quality Contracts as one of the tools available to local authorities to ensure that light rail schemes are complemented and enhanced by other modes. It states:

'Proposals for new light rail schemes require rigorous assessment. Authorities need to reassure themselves of the realism of forecasts of passenger numbers, and ensure that they are taking appropriate measures to attract people to use the new services. For example, schemes can be enhanced by better integration with other forms of transport - through integrated ticketing and bus Quality Contracts, and provision of park and ride facilities and complementary parking policies. The involvement of local transport planners and practitioners in the heavy rail system will also facilitate better integration and sensible decisions on the balance of funding between different forms of transport'.

We would prefer to implement the policies in the bus strategy by working with bus operators to agree and then ensure together that we deliver agreed performance standards for each corridor, starting with the four priority corridors. This partnership approach will be, and has always been, pursued in the first instance. We intend to introduce Quality Partnerships for the completed QBC schemes and have had discussions with the Office of Fair Trade to establish that some of our desired network improvements in particular areas can be achieved by agreement, without contravening the Competition Act. However, where the only practical way of delivering the required improvements is through either a statutory Quality Partnership or a Quality Contract, we will seek the powers to introduce these. We have identified the following (non exclusive) circumstances in which we consider that a Quality Contract may be necessary to implement one or more of the Bus Strategy policies. The objectives met are identified in brackets.

1. Where it may prove impossible to get operators to agree to a level of service quality, particularly reliability, that is necessary to achieve the objective of making the bus an attractive alternative to the car. Such a service level will be higher than

is necessary to meet demand from existing bus users and operators may be unable to provide it commercially (1a, 1b, 6).

2. Where there are benefits to passengers from co-ordination of services of different operators beyond the point that is acceptable within the Competition Act or where operators refuse to co-operate with GMPTE in co-ordination exercises (1a, 1b, 4)
3. Where the level of competition on part of the network leads to a provision of service that is far in excess of passenger demand and is driving down service quality (4a)
4. Where operators will not co-ordinate service timings with other modes and with connecting bus services (7)
5. Where GMPTA wants to provide a higher level of service than can be justified commercially in order to complement its investment in higher quality infrastructure, including Busways, and the tendering process cannot achieve this (1,2,3,4,6)
6. Where there is instability in the network that is deterring passengers from using the bus (4a)
7. Where specific feeder services are being operated that require protection from bus competition in order to minimise the call on GMPTA's resources (4c, 5b, 5c)
8. Where excessive bus competition is eroding the return on GMPTA's investment in infrastructure (8)

GMPTE is reviewing the way Quality Contracts might be applied in practice within the area and the extent to which they could play a role in meeting Bus Strategy objectives on particular routes or in particular areas. This investigation will help to shorten the time taken to prepare and submit Quality Contract Scheme applications.

## 18. Performance Indicators and Targets

The LTP performance indicators and targets adopted for the bus network are shown in Table 7. In accordance with Government guidance, these are what we hope to achieve with the indicative funding. If approval is granted for one or more major QBC or busway schemes we would expect to meet targets more quickly. However, we are aware that the bus patronage target, which amounts to a 10% increase over 2001 figures, will be extremely challenging, particularly in the light of recent falls in patronage and the demographic trends described in Section 6. Patronage targets may need to be reviewed when the impact of free concessionary fares (from 2006) is understood. All targets will be kept under review and revised if necessary in the LTP Annual Progress Report.

These are aspirational targets and our ability to meet them will depend not only on implementing the measures in the five year programme, but on joint working with the bus operators. The areas where the operators will have the greatest influence on the achievement of targets are:

- Improving the reliability of services (through fleet management and operation and driver training)
- Increasing the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles (through vehicle replacement programmes)
- Integration of bus services with other modes including timetables that facilitate interchange and fares and ticketing that do not penalise people with more than one bus or mode to make a journey
- Timetables at stops (through agreement on the funding of information provision)
- Satisfaction, through improving the journey experience throughout the network to match the standards already available on the best services
- Patronage, through a combination of the above measures as well as value for money

In addition to the mandatory LTP targets shown in Table 7, GMPTE monitors a number of aspects of the bus network and publishes the results in its Annual Performance Plan. These are shown in Table 8. However, following a review of performance measurement, GMPTE has adopted a Performance Management Framework, on which reporting will begin in Autumn 2005. This will allow a more detailed approach to monitoring performance in priority areas. For example, patronage will be disaggregated to allow an understanding of what is happening in different segments of the market. We also intend to develop standards and targets as part of our Corridor Partnership approach, to drive the delivery of agreed outcomes. The final version of the Bus Strategy, to be submitted in March 2006, will incorporate this new approach.

**Table 7: Mandatory Indicators and Targets for Bus**

\* Reliability refers to the % of timetabled services that are 'on time' ie up to 1 min early or 5 mins late

Headline Indicator	2001/02	2003/04	2004/05	Target 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2010/11	Comment
Bus patronage	221m	226.5m	218m	216m	226m	230m	243m	The rise in patronage 2001/02 – 2002/03 has not been sustained, due to a fall in concessionary trips. The introduction of free concessionary fares for elderly and disabled people should help to address this
Bus satisfaction (residents)	53%	55%	Survey carried out every 3 years		57%		60%	Satisfaction has improved, but is still below satisfaction with other modes. Satisfaction of regular bus users is higher than that of residents
Reliability*	n/a	73%	n/a	73%	75%	77%	85%	A steady improvement is expected as a result of joint action between GMPTE and operators.

**Table 8: Other Bus Indicators and Targets (Interim only)**

Ref.	Indicator	2004/05	Target 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Comment
<b>Patronage</b>						
BVPP AT1	No of bus journeys by disabled and senior citizen passengers	41.14m	39.9m	To be reviewed following assessment of impact of free concessionary fares	BVPP AT1	The fall in concessionary trips is partly due to demographic trends and partly due to a rise in the concessionary fare
BVPP31	Patronage on Demand Responsive services	108,378	114,500	138,500	142,000	This will continue to grow as more services are introduced
<b>Accessibility</b>						
BVPP BRS1	% of GM population with access to the bus network <sup>17</sup>	87.8%	87.8%	88.5%	88.5%	Accessibility has been maintained through expenditure on supported bus services, including demand responsive transport
BVPP18	% of total bus	41.8%	51%	59%	68%	This is increasing as

<sup>17</sup> Monday – Saturday daytime: % of population living within 400m of a bus stop with at least a 15 minute service or within 250m of a bus stop and have at least a 30 minute service to a centre with interchange facilities. Evenings and Sundays: % of the population living within 400m of a bus stop with at least a 15 minute service or within 250m of a bus stop with a 60 minute service to a centre with interchange facilities

	fleet that is wheelchair accessible					operators introduce new vehicles
BVPP 30	% of Ring & Ride registered users who regularly use service at least monthly	25.6%	48%	48%	48%	This should improve as a result of Integrated Social Needs Transport and measures to improve the efficiency of operation
BVPPAR2	Disabled residents' satisfaction with local bus services	57%	50.5%			Satisfaction in 2004/05 increased significantly, probably due to bus driver training programmes for disability awareness and various GMPTE initiatives to raise awareness.
BVPP19	Ring and Ride Users	51,552	To be reviewed			
BVPP 20	Ring and Ride journeys	1.268m	1.277m	1.277m	1.277m	Capacity is currently limited. The aim is to increase capacity on eg Community Transport through better integration.
<b>Reliability</b>						
PTEG6	Scheduled bus services operated	94.2%	95.4%	97%	98.7%	A steady improvement is expected as a result of joint action between GMPTE and operators
<b>School Journeys</b>						
BVPP 32	% of children travelling to	62.3%	65%	65.5%	66%	This should rise as a result of improved school transport and

	school by non car modes					school travel plan work
BVPP9	Journeys to school by subsidised bus	9.4m	9.46m	9.46m	9.46%	As above
BVPP10	Journeys to school by commercial bus	12.7m	Measure under review, no targets set			
BVPP11	Total journeys to school buy bus	22.1m	21.65m	20.94m	20.25m	As above
<b>Waiting Environment</b>						
BVPP14	Proportion of stops with shelters	31.8%	34%	36%	37%	A programme of introducing new shelters has already begun
<b>Information</b>						
BVPP24	Locations with timetable guides	2670	3000	3250	3500	This will improve due to increased investment in this area
BVPP 25	Bus stops with timetables	50.9%	60%	70%	80%	As above

## **19. Action Plan and Next Steps**

GMPTE and the District Councils will implement those aspects of the strategy for which they are responsible through their LTP funded capital programmes and through the GMPTE revenue budget. A five year programme will be drawn up as part of the final version of the strategy, to be submitted in March 2006. An Action Plan, with specified outputs, will be drawn up to drive the implementation of the strategy. This will be monitored by GMPTE and progress reported in the LTP Annual Progress Reports.

Some aspects of the strategy are still under development. In particular the March 2005 submission will need to reflect the Accessibility Strategy, GMPTE's developing Safety and Security Strategy and Performance Management Framework, and further work on supported services, demand responsive transport and Integrated Social Needs Transport.