



## ***Manchester Recovery Task Force***

### ***CILT Response to the DfT/NR/TfN Consultation published 14 January 2021***

#### **Introduction**

- 1 The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) is a professional institution embracing all transport modes whose members are engaged in the provision of transport services for both passengers and freight, the management of logistics and the supply chain, transport planning, government and administration. Our principal concern is that transport policies and procedures should be effective and efficient, based on objective analysis of the issues and practical experience, and that good practice should be widely disseminated and adopted. The Institute has a number of specialist forums, a nationwide structure of locally based groups and a Public Policies Committee which considers the broad canvass of transport policy. This submission draws on contributions principally by the Aviation and Strategic Rail Policy Groups and also from the North East and Wales Regional Groups. CILT's North West Policy Group is also submitting a response from a more local perspective.
- 2 This is the response of the CILT to the DfT/Network Rail/Transport for the North consultation on Manchester area rail timetabling options published on 14 January 2021. Our response is aimed at the principle of the proposals rather than the details, which are a matter for local consideration. We set out the principles in the next section and then answer the applicable questions.

#### **Principles**

- 3 We recognise the need to reduce the number of services attempting to use the Castlefield Corridor and acknowledge the extensive work that has been undertaken. Clearly some services will have to be removed but we believe this would best be done by reducing some frequencies rather than removing entire services. Reducing from half-hourly to hourly for instance (particularly for the less time sensitive airport users) would share the disadvantages between different passenger markets and judicious use of splitting and joining away from Manchester could help reduce the call on paths. This approach works well south of London, and the North West has many new trains that are more robust to this sort of operation.
- 4 Rail freight use of the Castlefield corridor and the Trans-Pennine route is already significant and is set to grow. Adequate provision of paths must be retained for this activity.
- 5 The rail mode share at Manchester Airport has increased from 7% to 17% in a decade and now amounts to more than 2.5 million passengers a year. Nearly two-thirds of the Airport's rail passengers come from beyond the city. The rail mode share of air passengers is highest where the origin or destination is North Yorkshire, Cumbria and South Yorkshire. Local air passengers are much more likely to use taxi or car.

- 6 Air passengers choose the airport primarily on the basis of the flights available. Manchester has an unparalleled range of destinations, in particular long haul, which are not available from other airports in the North of England. The loss of air passengers from rail has a particular adverse financial effect as they generally provide a higher than average yield.
- 7 As a generalisation, air passengers are more reluctant to change trains than other passengers. This has several causes. First, unlike daily commuters, they are unfamiliar with the route. They may only make the trip once or twice a year. Crossing Piccadilly ( a station inconveniently situated on a split site), for example, or changing stations in Manchester can be a challenge. Second, they are concerned about reliability. Arriving late at the airport can have serious consequences – more so than with other trips. Two trains, and the need to change between them, introduces more uncertainty and concerns about missing flights. This is especially the case since many air passengers will be leisure passengers, on an infrequent holiday destination flight or a non-refundable ticket. Third, holidaymakers in particular are more likely to have luggage and be travelling in small groups. Both add to the difficulty of changing trains. The higher interchange penalty used for long distance passengers partly reflects this, and air passengers should be considered specifically, which does not appear to be the case in this study.
- 8 It follows from these principles that, if rail access is made more difficult for passengers with O&Ds at some distance from Manchester Airport, they will choose to travel by road instead of rail. This would be contrary to many policies that have been established over many years to improve rail access to and from Manchester Airport.

### **Responses to Questions**

- 9 *Question 1: Do you support the aim of standardising and simplifying service patterns if this will significantly improve overall train performance?*  
In principle yes, but it depends on the impact on passengers.
- 10 *Question 2: Do you support the approach of measuring the service level and performance impacts across all passengers to allow fair trade-offs between options?*  
No, because it assumes all passengers have the same characteristics. Passengers going to an airport, especially a predominantly leisure airport like Manchester, do not like changing trains – because of unfamiliarity with the route, the inconvenience involved (notably in changing between Platforms 13/14 and the rest of Piccadilly Station), concerns about reliability and because they are more likely to have luggage than other passengers. These points should be factored in, especially when considering removal (as opposed to the thinning-out) of direct services.
- 11 *Question 3: On the basis of these results, which is your preferred option?*  
We do not support any of the options, but Option A is the least worst in terms of retaining direct airport services. From a Welsh perspective, Option B is better.
- 12 *Question 4: Please provide your views on the details of the proposed changes which are detailed by route in the Appendix.*  
The removal of direct services to Manchester airport is not supported. The report shows how much they are valued: the figures show that nearly 2/3 of all passengers travelling by train to the airport come from beyond Manchester itself. In 2019, over 17% of the airport's passengers used rail to reach the airport (more than 2.5 million annually) – a steady growth from the 7% a decade before. If the number of direct services to the airport has to be reduced, then two

concepts need to be kept in mind. First, where possible direct services should be thinned rather than eliminated (cut from half-hourly to hourly or hourly to two-hourly, for example). Second, the number of passengers from the places affected (Liverpool, Warrington, Sheffield, Lincolnshire, North Wales, Chester, Blackpool, Barrow) should be an important consideration. Clearly, same-platform or cross-platform interchange (as at Deansgate, Oxford Road or platforms 13/14 at Piccadilly) is preferable to a more complex interchange (between low-numbered platforms and 13/14 at Piccadilly) – another factor to be taken into account. The absence of any plan to improve the interchange experience for passengers, not just at the Manchester stations, but also at Huddersfield or Warrington Bank Quay or Newton-le-Willows for trains from North Wales, makes the options even less palatable for longer distance journeys.

13 *Question 5: Where do you usually travel from and to? Please include your origin and destination station*

n/a

*Question 6: How often do you make this journey?*

n/a

*Question 7: What is the reason for your journey? For example, work, business, education, leisure*

n/a

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