



More people than ever before can now include Metrolink as part of their commute thanks to a historic £1.5 billion investment in creating new lines that, together, will treble the size of the original 1992 network

# Transport for Greater Manchester



Jon Lamonte FCILT, Chief Executive at Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) delivered this speech to the CILT Greater Manchester Group in 2014. He discussed the latest transport developments and achievements in the North West of England and looks toward what will be a challenging yet exciting year for TfGM.

For those of us interested in cities and the transport systems that make them work, we are at a pivotal time that is likely to shape the direction for the next decade. At the heart of the debate is the question of how we can sustain the immense economic power of London, whilst also unleashing the great potential of the other great cities of the north; and as every piece of analysis has shown, right up to the BBC's series: *Mind The Gap*, two key ingredients are consistently brought to the fore: the power of connectivity to expand economies and the unique potential on offer here in Manchester.

This is our business now as Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), drawing together all strands of the connectivity picture – from cycling to freight and from highways management – to truly integrated public transport. We need it all to work for our vision of growth in Greater Manchester to come about. Of course, this isn't new for us. We have long focused our efforts on getting public transport connections right for the local economy. As a result, more people than ever before can now include Metrolink as part of their commute thanks to a historic £1.5 billion investment in creating new lines that, together, will treble the size of the original 1992 network.

Earlier this year, we opened the line through Oldham town centre to great celebration, as well as opened Rochdale's town centre line in. The Metrolink expansion has been the biggest transport project in the country outside London and, yes, it has presented several challenges, but we need only look at patronage to measure its success: more people than ever before are using the tram – more than 28 million journeys a year.

That's thousands of car journeys off our roads each day; and it's a similar story on the trains, with year-on-year growth in patronage recorded over the past decade. But what we want to secure is greater control over our railways – local knowledge being used to oversee local services – and that's where Rail in the North comes in.

## AUTHOR

Jon Lamonte FCILT

## FURTHER INFORMATION

See page 34

## SECTOR HIGHLIGHTS

Transport  
Planning

Rail

Active  
Travel & Travel  
Planning

Bus &  
Coach



We're working with our counterparts at city and town halls across the north to devolve decision-making down from Whitehall so that we can make the very best use of our railways. It's an ambitious proposal, but the timing is absolutely right if we're going to maximise the benefits of the Northern Hub programme: a programme that's bringing more capacity, more services and shorter journey times, thanks to the electrification of key routes.

What we need now, of course, are the electric trains to run on them and, as part of Rail in the North, we're in discussions with the DfT regarding the wider rolling stock deployment plan. It is vital that a decision on this issue is made soon if the network is going to successfully meet the continued growth in demand, which will only increase further as the Northern Hub and electrification projects are finished.

Our bus network has a crucial role to play in keeping the economy moving in the right direction, and we are continuing our commitment to giving real priority to good commuter services through the Cross City Bus and Leigh Busway projects that are now in delivery. However, there is a bigger challenge for us to develop new ways of supporting the bus network at a time when our ability to fund subsidised services is under huge pressure.

Our focus has to be on working closely and collaboratively with the commercial operators, who run 80% of the network themselves, as the financial landscape changes, and, fundamentally, that's a great example of what we do, where we fit in; we connect the dots. Our transport network is multimodal, multi-agency,

*Above: Transport for Greater Manchester's bus network has a crucial role to play in keeping the economy moving in the right direction*

*Below: John Lamonte says: 'As Transport for Greater Manchester, we know that local transport is only part of the picture. On our highways network, the congestion challenge has not gone away.'*

multi-operator and multi-million. Our job is to make all those disparate elements work together as one: what you as our customer simply sees as your A to B.

There's no better example of that than *get me there*, our smart ticketing programme. We're making good progress on delivering what will be one of the most complex back office systems of its kind the world, but one of the simplest to use for customers. At the same time, we're progressing with plans for a multimodal, real-time information system, capitalising on the increasing prevalence of mobile technology and ongoing investment in broadband and wi-fi.

Our approach to connecting the dots is already having some success, but we need to go much further if the technology is not going to expose shortcomings in the current extent of integration across our public transport system. This will need the sustained commitment of many partners to ensure





that our commuters can access the same flexibility of travel that they will have enjoyed in the capital.

As Transport for Greater Manchester, we know that local transport is only part of the picture. On our highways network, the congestion challenge has not gone away. You may have seen headlines stating that Greater Manchester was the most congested region outside London. We came second to London on congestion, but then we have the fastest growing economy in the UK outside London. Indeed, the President and Chief Executive of traffic information suppliers Inrix was quoted as saying: 'So goes traffic, so goes the economy.'

One of the knock-on effects of the pace of our economic growth has been busier roads, with more people living, working and travelling in and around the region. That's a trend we need to break: transport conditions that don't stifle the economy, but that let it thrive. We're meeting that challenge head on through a



Above: TfGM now manages more than 2,200 sets of traffic signals, of which around 1,200 are at junctions and more than 900 are at pedestrian crossings



Left: 'I mention that because safer roads are vital to progressing our ambitious active travel agenda, which is delivering fantastic new cycling facilities, including dedicated routes and high-quality hubs for parking, and promoting the health benefits of making cycling and walking part of the daily commute'

combination of improved public transport and road-based measures. We're investing billions in our transport network, more than anywhere outside London.

Tackling congestion on our roads is an obvious starting point. TfGM now manages more than 2,200 sets of traffic signals, of which around 1,200 are at junctions and more than 900 are at pedestrian crossings. Making sure they are able to manage demand as efficiently as possible is essential to supporting the flow of traffic.

In several instances, we use smart systems that optimise and vary signal timings based on the amount of traffic that is actually using them. This can improve a junction's capacity by up to 15%, and we'll upgrade more junctions to this level as funding becomes available. We've had success in securing funding from the Government's Pinch Point Fund scheme to help districts to deliver several new and improved junctions across Greater Manchester. That's ensured, for example, how traffic will flow into and out of major, strategic development sites has already been considered and, indeed, has been built in from the start. We are also working with the Highways Agency to look at how we can manage the overall highway network better.

Let's look at the Inrix statistics that fed media coverage: six of the eight Greater Manchester routes highlighted were just off motorway junctions, so there is a major interaction between the Strategic



Above: Another factor that influences congestion is road works. One of the key aims of the Greater Manchester Road Activity Permit Scheme, which launched in April 2013, is to reduce delays and congestion caused by road works, ensure more reliable journey times and to give greater visibility of planned works to all.

Route Network and the local road network at all motorway junctions. Up to 80–90% of traffic is using our motorway to access the city centre and other local economic centres. That’s why we are working closely with the agency to develop its route-based strategies, such as on the Trans Pennine corridors to Sheffield and Leeds.

Another factor that influences congestion is road works. One of the key aims of the Greater Manchester Road Activity Permit Scheme, which launched in April 2013, is to reduce delays and congestion caused by road works, ensure more reliable journey times and to give greater visibility of planned works to all.

A major Local Sustainable Transport Fund programme is also now underway to improve journey times for all road-users while also giving buses priority at key junctions. Over the next 18 months, we will be making improvements to signalling at 650 key junctions of the 1,000 plus junctions in Greater Manchester. This will make journeys more reliable for all road-users, and will benefit those bus operators who are signed up to fitting more of their buses with automatic vehicle location (AVL) technology to let the signalling system know when to give them a green light.

I’m also pleased to say that the fantastic work being done by the Greater Manchester Road Safety Partnership means that our roads are getting safer. Draft results for the year ending October 2013 show that there has been a 14% reduction in reported injury accidents and a 13% reduction in reported casualties of any severity. I mention that because safer roads are vital to progressing our ambitious active travel agenda, which is delivering fantastic new cycling facilities, including dedicated routes and high-quality hubs for parking, and promoting the health benefits of making cycling and walking part of the daily commute.

If we look a little further into the future, the role of transport grows all the more. Of course, the dominant feature on our planning horizon is HS2, which has a unique potential to address the economic geography of the country, establish our city region as a continental growth pole and provide the catalyst for the next level of connectivity standards here. HS2 is essential for freeing up the conventional rail network for both passengers and freight, easing congestion on our trains and motorways and, in turn, boosting economic growth. Of course, at national, regional and local levels, it supports growth by helping businesses to connect with one another and improving access to major commercial opportunities, helping the north to prosper and reach its full economic potential.

Our focus now is on ensuring that the right conditions are put into place to maximise the impact of HS2. This will require new models of working across the rail sector to accelerate delivery wherever possible and, crucially, to ensure that we secure a rail facility at Piccadilly that remains fit for purpose into the second half of the century. It also provides the focus for determining our local connectivity priorities, shaping our views on mass transit and integration priorities that we aim to set out in a new Local Transport Plan later in the year.

Freight is the other potential beneficiary of HS2. We see enormous potential for the logistics sector through the advent of Atlantic Gateway and the development of the Airport City World Logistics Hub, alongside the continued growth of our major business parks. We have commissioned a cross-agency review of this potential to establish a clear view on how it can best be realised in partnership with the private sector and government.

The challenge ahead of us is significant, but the prizes could be transformational. To meet this challenge, we need professionals in transport, well qualified, well trained, capable of understanding and solving tomorrow’s transport problems, across all sectors. That’s where CILT can really add value, by blending the very best of the talent around us and developing the next generation to come. Potentially, even in the face of austerity, this is a great time for the Institute in the north-west, where challenges will exist for you.

**About the author**

Jon Lamonte FCILT is Chief Executive, Transport for Greater Manchester.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

Jon Lamonte’s speech was first delivered at the CILT Greater Manchester Group Dinner in March 2014.

**SAVE THE DATE**

Jon Lamonte FCILT will be speaking at the 2015 CILT Annual Logistics Conference on 18th June 2015, for further information, see website: <http://ciltuk.org.uk/Events/NationalEvents/AnnualLogisticsConference.aspx>