

# Stockport Rail Strategy

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

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ATKINS

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# Notice

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Study Background

Both regionally and nationally there are significant changes planned for the rail network and its operators over the coming years, including:

- Franchise renewals – including the Northern and Trans-Pennine franchises (the new franchise commencing in early 2016). Both the West Coast Mainline and Cross Country franchises are due for renewal during the next five years.
- Completion of the Northern Hub works in 2019 – a package of rail infrastructure works designed to assist with more efficient train running in the north of England.
- The planned introduction of HS2, with services between London and Birmingham forecast to begin operating in 2026, and the expansion to Manchester and Leeds planned for 2033.
- The TransNorth rail proposals which include the improved connectivity of Manchester and Leeds by 2030. A feasibility report on this is expected in March 2015.

These key changes to the rail network and its operators present new opportunities and challenges for the rail industry. A clear direction is essential if the borough is to fully capitalise on its rail network, by providing an efficient, sustainable mode of transport that links its residents to the key employment and educational centres.

## 1.2. The Commission

Atkins was appointed by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) in December 2013 to develop a Rail Strategy for Stockport, with input from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM). The objective for the study is to set the overall strategic direction that the Council should be working towards with regards to rail. This includes the identification and prioritisation of proposals for strategic rail (including tram-train) investment that the Council and the relevant working partners, can work towards.

## 1.3. This Report

This document is the Stockport Rail Strategy Report, the main deliverable from the study.

In line with SMBC's requirements the Strategy provides guidance to enable SMBC to:

- Have an informed view on the strategic direction of rail investment over the next 15-20 years
- Support and promote the development of rail travel in key transport corridors within Stockport
- Be better placed to respond to consultations (e.g. rail franchises)
- Contribute to the Greater Manchester Combined Authorities and One North's efforts to influence national rail policy and planning
- Support the wider economic regeneration work within Stockport.

This document is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** outlines the strategic context for the Rail Strategy;
- The Existing Situation is summarised in **Section 3**, including an analysis of the local economy and its associated travel to work patterns, a review of existing rail services – including its current demand and historical growth.
- **Section 4** highlights the key rail timeline events that will be occurring over the next 15-20 years.
- **Section 5** outlines options for Metrolink extensions, involving the use of tram-train.
- **Section 6** summarises an overview of the study objectives.
- **Section 7** outlines the recommended Strategy, including its associated priorities.
- **Section 8** summarises the conclusions and recommendations.

## 2. Context for Rail Strategy

### 2.1. Introduction

A successful rail system and network is a vital component of the economic ambitions for Stockport and for Greater Manchester as a whole. If rail is to play its full part in both driving and supporting growth, the future development of the rail network must be designed in line with changing passenger demand arising from changing patterns of economic activity. A number of policy and strategy documents recognise this requirement and have made recommendations to invest in the rail network to enhance local, national and international connectivity which will drive growth.

At present, Stockport's 19 stations account for almost one quarter of all rail demand within Greater Manchester (excluding the central Manchester station demand). Combined with the regional and national connectivity that Stockport station offers, this demonstrates the importance and reliance that Stockport places on rail. Any consideration of future network provision in the borough needs to take into account the extensive investment programme currently underway in Stockport which will improve linkages between the station and the wider town centre as well as generate additional demand as a result of growth.

As summarised in the Stockport Strategy 2020, like many Councils, Stockport is facing an unprecedented challenge to continue to deliver effective and responsive services to the public with significantly reduced resources and, in many service areas, increasing demand. To continue to deliver public services and to provide the support needed across the borough, Stockport is focusing on developing:

- ***A Safe and Strong Stockport – a place that promotes respect for all its citizens by all its citizens***
- ***A Thriving Stockport – building on a strong and sustainable economy and high levels of educational attainment and skills***
- ***A Green Stockport – leading the way in creating a sustainable future for our environment and our economy***
- ***A Healthy Stockport – improving the health of people in Stockport by increasing choice, control, independence and the adoption of healthy lifestyles as well as excellent services that offer value for money***

These overriding principles have been at the forefront of the development of the Rail Strategy.

### 2.2. Strategy Review

The Stockport Rail Strategy takes its place within the strategic context of an increasingly interdependent economy and public service provision across Greater Manchester which is reflected in its labour, housing, and retail markets. This interconnectivity was described in the economic analysis provided by the Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER) in 2009, which provided a credible assessment of Greater Manchester's economic potential and concluded that GM has the highest growth potential of any city region outside London.

Greater Manchester's response to the opportunities and challenges identified in MIER was set out in the first Greater Manchester Strategy which was refreshed in 2013 to take into account the rapidly changing economic and political circumstances that Greater Manchester faces in the aftermath of the global economic downturn. The refreshed Greater Manchester Strategy, *Stronger Together*<sup>1</sup>, is built around the strategic priorities of both delivering sustainable economic growth and reforming public services to build independence.

In terms of driving growth, *Stronger Together* proposes developing a coherent investment strategy to guide the use of public resources, revitalising local town centres, taking an integrated approach to infrastructure planning, improving connectivity, placing Greater Manchester at the leading edge of scientific and technological innovation, supporting business growth, and improving international competitiveness.

<sup>1</sup> Stronger Together: Greater Manchester Strategy 2013. GMCA.  
[http://www.agma.gov.uk/cms\\_media/files/gm\\_strategy\\_stronger\\_together\\_full\\_report2.pdf](http://www.agma.gov.uk/cms_media/files/gm_strategy_stronger_together_full_report2.pdf)

In parallel with the development of *Stronger Together*, Greater Manchester has placed itself at the forefront of the debate for greater devolution from government to city regions. In 2012 the Combined Authority secured a City Deal with government which included a range of bespoke agreements relating to skills, the creation of a low carbon hub, business support, transport, trade and investment, and housing. The City Deal was augmented by the 2014 Growth and Reform Plan which seeks to create a new relationship with government that enables local authorities to create attractive, high-quality places while reforming the way public services are delivered.

The compelling arguments made by Greater Manchester and government over recent years have secured devolution of transport budgets to GMCA in order to support the closer alignment of infrastructure investment with local economic priorities to drive growth. This process was reinforced in the Devolution Agreement (November 2014) which will give GM further control over transport policy and funding.

The Devolution Agreement provides a multi-year transport settlement which will complement the GM Transport Fund and enable the delivery of a long-term sustainable programme for transport investment across the sub-region. Strategic planning at sub-regional level is therefore a key component of the wider Greater Manchester growth agenda and links devolved transport funding with current and future economic opportunities across the conurbation.

Stockport's significance as a key driver of the Greater Manchester economy derives from its strong local business base, its highly-qualified residents, and its exceptional connectivity with the conurbation core. The Stockport Local Economic Assessment<sup>2</sup> makes clear, however, that public interventions are required to enable the Town Centre to play a stronger role in driving local economic growth and to maximise the economic benefits of Stockport's proximity to Manchester Airport.

For the heavy rail network to fulfil its full potential in the development of the economy of Greater Manchester and beyond, it must balance the needs of both local and longer distance travellers whilst still offering a service people consider value for money. As stated within the GM Rail Policy 2012-2024, this involves a mix of elements that all contribute to people's overall perception of the rail service; the quality standards of stations and trains, fare levels and tickets, service frequency, punctuality, reliability and journey times.

Furthermore, the Rail North: Long Term Rail Strategy also stresses the importance of providing a better customer experience and the delivery of a more efficient railway. Following a review of relevant policies, it can be summarised that the key themes to be considered in the development of Stockport's Rail Strategy are as follows:

- **Enhanced connectivity** - In the first instance this should focus on maintaining the existing connectivity and service levels, at a local, regional and national level. Where feasible, improvements to journey times, service frequencies and availability of connections to make end-to-end journey times quicker. Where warranted, new stations should be assessed to increase the catchment areas of rail, thereby improving its connectivity.
- **Capacity improvements** – the provision of services and rolling stock which meet passenger demand without compromising the quality of the journey experience (typically observed through overcrowding).
- **Cost effectiveness** – fares need to ensure good value for money whilst providing a revenue stream which can support the running costs of services as well as on-going development of the network.
- **Network coherence** – networks should be simplified both through visual representation and unified fare structures and ticketing to provide a user-friendly system that is attractive to existing and new users. Multi-modal interchange arrangements at rail stations should be simplified and better managed to allow for ease of transition between rail-bus, rail-tram, rail-walk and rail-cycle modes.
- **Accessible stations with appropriate well maintained facilities**– maintaining and improving station facilities including parking and accessibility improvements will encourage usage. It is also important to improve access to stations by all modes to increase the attractiveness of rail travel as a mode of choice and developing Station Travel Plans will facilitate this. There are also active Community Rail Partnerships and Station Adoptions Groups with whom it is important to maintain engagement and support / promote their activities.

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<sup>2</sup> Greater Manchester Local Economic Assessment: Stockport, (Nov 2010) Association of Greater Manchester Authorities.

- **Planning for future growth** – the focus of rail improvements must support wider economic, environmental and social policy goals to connect people to jobs and businesses to markets. Track improvements should be targeted towards accommodating economically worthwhile passenger and freight movements.

The final point has much wider implications than those related directly to train and track improvements, most notably in its potential impact on the Greater Manchester Strategy priorities of revitalising town centres and creating high quality places that will nurture success.

## 2.3. Planned Interventions

A number of existing policy and strategy documents have listed proposed and potential interventions which are relevant as context for the production of Stockport's Rail Strategy. These have been summarised in the following sections.

### 2.3.1. Rail North: Long Term Rail Strategy

In the short term (to 2019) the focus is to maximise the value of committed investment, particularly the Northern Hub and associated electrification schemes, which will bring considerable benefits across the North of England. This will be accompanied in the medium term (2019-2024) with the replacement of rolling stock resulting from electrification with further opportunities for extending the electrified network.

### 2.3.2. TfGM Tram-Train Strategy

In November 2013, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) issued a Committee Report for Resolution which outlined the initial study results of the proposed tram-train strategy. This built on previous work, initially undertaken as part of the rapid-transit work for LTP3. Subsequently the *City Deal: Future Transport Prioritisation* (June 2012) outlined a number of tram-train routes which would be investigated.

Of particular note within the Stockport Borough, the November 2013 Committee Report made the following conclusions regarding the proposed tram-train route alignments:

- **Manchester - Bredbury - Marple** - The evaluations concluded this route to have the strongest potential business case and it was recommended to be developed as the region's first tram-train route. The route would be subject to an acceptable and achievable alignment between Piccadilly and Ashburys, with the vehicles being accommodated within the city centre without creating delays;
- **Manchester - East Didsbury - Hazel Grove** - This route was recommended to be considered as a part of Phase 2 of the tram-train strategy. The freight line between Sharston and Hazel Grove would need to be retained to help make this possible; and
- **Stockport - Altrincham** – Although the initial work undertaken by TfGM indicated that this scheme performed poorly in the value for money assessment. It noted that it may have potential as a component of a rapid-transit network serving the expanding Manchester Airport area and the associated Enterprise Zone, and the proposed Manchester Airport HS2 Station – under the HS2 Phase Two.

### 2.3.3. The SEMMMS

The South East Manchester Multi-Modal Strategy (SEMMMS) is a 20 year strategy covering an area to the south east of Manchester including parts of Cheshire East, Derbyshire, Stockport and Tameside where existing and predicted transport problems require addressing. The Strategy evolved following the de-trunking of the A523 and A6 roads, and recommends a range of road and other transport schemes including rail.

It was identified that the South East Manchester rail network is an underutilised asset but the principal constraints are within the Northern Hub. Short term measures were recommended which account for this constraint with longer term measures outlined which could come forward once further Northern Hub capacity is available.

**Short to Medium Term** - The short term measures recommended that:

- the frequency of study area rail services be enhanced as much as the Manchester Hub capacity constraints allow;
- services move towards a clock-face timetable;
- rolling stock be upgraded, and in particular the Class 101 rolling stock be replaced as a matter of some urgency;
- station environments be enhanced through the provision of real-time information, lighting, CCTV, passenger help points and a general improvement to their ambience and setting; and
- the standard and quality of parking at existing stations be extended where appropriate and justified.

Service franchising was seen to be a mechanism for delivering these improvements.

The need for a whole route approach was noted, including the need to look at the rail fare discontinuity that occurs at the GM boundary which causes a distortion of rail trip making patterns.

Enhancing orbital rail services was also identified as offering benefits. Developing east-west links to/from the Airport offers a significant opportunity for longer distance services through the study area and would enable trains serving the Airport to bypass the Manchester Hub. The possible reintroduction of passenger services between Stalybridge, Guide Bridge and Stockport was also identified as worthy of a further study.

**Medium to Long Term** - In the longer term, it was considered that Northern Hub capacity enhancement works would enable greater capacity which would allow the development of an “urban metro” service. This would offer four trains per hour operating on each radial line at a clock face timetable. The Strategy also acknowledged the potential for tram-train running to help deliver some part of this level of service.

Other fixed track infrastructure schemes which were identified in the SEMMMS Strategy, and subsequently adopted as part of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD (March 2011) include the following:

- Metrolink extension to Stockport Town Centre from East Didsbury.
- Provision of an eastern rail link into Manchester Airport from the West Coast Mainline south of Cheadle Hulme.
- Off-road fixed track link between Marple and Stockport Town Centre.
- New rail stations at Cheadle, Adswood, Stepping Hill Hospital and Simpsons Corner/ High Lane.
- Improvements to facilitate a regular service from Reddish South station.

### **2.3.4. A6 Corridor Study**

This study which was completed in August 2014, considered the potential impact of predicted traffic growth and demands on public transport within the A6 Corridor (Buxton to Stockport / Manchester) over the next twenty years. Mindful of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road proposals, the study provided an action plan with the ultimate aim of influencing future travel choices along the A6 corridor.

With respect to rail, the following short term recommendations, capable of being delivered within the next five years were made:

Increased rail service frequency between Manchester and New Mills Newtown rail & Buxton rail stations. As part of the ‘Northern Hub’ planning process, the rail industry developed a specimen timetable that seeks to make best use of the planned infrastructure enhancements across the North West. On the Buxton line, this specimen timetable included the following:

- a half-hourly off-peak service between Manchester and Buxton. Following completion of the current electrification programme, for operational reasons the Buxton line services are likely to operate across Manchester to Liverpool via Warrington.
- half-hourly service from Hazel Grove to Preston that would be operated by electric rolling stock following the electrification of the route from Manchester to Preston via Bolton under the North West Electrification project.

The combination of these two services has the potential to give Hazel Grove a 15-minute frequency service to Manchester throughout the day with additional services in the peaks if required.

The following medium term measures were recommended, which are considered capable of delivery within five to ten years:

- Increased peak hour train capacity and platform length for all stations between Buxton and Stockport. This is because peak services on the Buxton line will need to be lengthened beyond 4-car length at some point before 2032 to cater for demand from Hazel Grove and stations to Manchester.
- Consideration of a new rail station at High Lane: Trip-rate forecasts suggest that a new rail station at High Lane would provide a provisional BCR of 1.3. Whilst a new station at High Lane supports the Stockport Core Strategy DPD (March 2011), further work is required to establish the full benefits of the proposed station and to develop a business case for it.

The following longer term measures were recommended, which are considered unlikely to be deliverable within 10 years:

- Increased line speed between Buxton and Hazel Grove and Electrification of Buxton Line: There are potentially significant operating cost savings and efficiencies that would arise from electrification, and coupled with the potential journey time reductions electric rolling stock could offer, there could be a strong case for electrification of the Buxton route once frequencies are enhanced to an all-day half-hourly service.

## 2.4. Key Stakeholders

At the onset of the study, Atkins met with a number of key stakeholders to discuss the existing rail issues within Stockport. These included:

- Policy officers at TfGM to facilitate the handover of data/ previous studies
- Key Councillors
- Director of Public Health for Stockport, Chair of the Transport & Health Study Group
- Policy officers at Stockport Council.

A number of issues were highlighted, including:

- Discussion around the fact that less money is likely to be available for rail subsidy in the future. It is hoped that operational cost savings result as part of the Northern Hub line electrification works
- Anecdotally felt that the stations/ local services within Stockport Borough that are on the WCML suffer due to the longer distance services having priority
- Absence of an orbital rapid transit route
- Noted the excellent work the four Community Rail Partnerships have undertaken

The more detailed minutes of these meeting are recorded in a separate document.

## 3. Existing Situation

### 3.1. Stockport and the Local Economy

Stockport is home to a total population of 283,300 of which 63% are of working age. (ONS, MYPE, 2011) Of the working age population, 78.6% (141,800) are economically active (APS, Jan-Dec 2012). The tables below summarise Stockport's population and employment statistics.

**Table 1. Population - Age and Gender Breakdown**

	Stockport Numbers	Stockport %	North West %	UK %
Total	283,300			
Males	138,400	48.85%	49.15%	49.14%
Females	144,800	51.11%	50.85%	50.86%
0-15	53,400	18.85%	18.76%	18.79%
Working Age (16-64)	178,400	62.97%	64.52%	64.67%
65+	51,400	18.14%	16.71%	16.53%

Source: ONS, Mid Year Population Estimates (2011)

**Table 2. Population - Age and Gender Breakdown**

	Stockport Numbers	Stockport %	North West %	UK %
Economically Active	141,800	78.6%	75.4%	76.8%
Employment Rate	133,800	74.1%	68.8%	70.6%
% of working age population who are employees	115,100	63.7%	59.9%	60.5%
% of working age who are self employed	17,700	9.8%	8.3%	9.5%

Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan 12- Dec 12

Stockport is a key economic player in the Manchester City Region. Its strength as a business location is demonstrated in many ways:

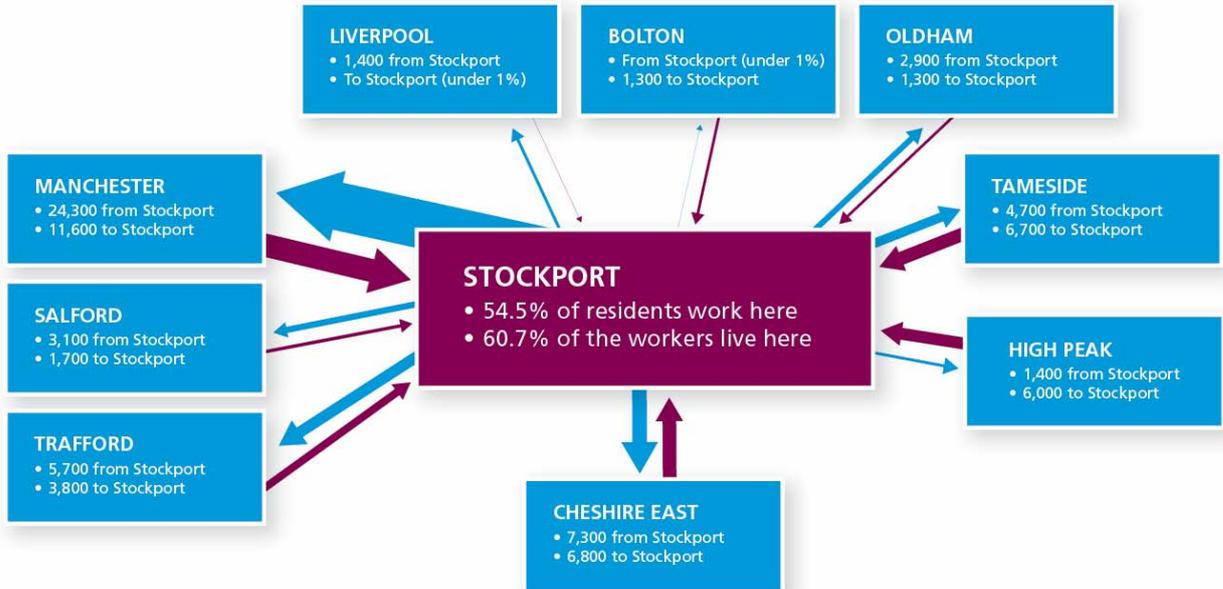
- Stockport is able to sustain a higher than average rate of employment
- Economic activity rates are markedly higher than both the regional and national averages showing that Stockport supports high levels of employment and enterprise.
- Stockport's knowledge driven economy combined with its high quality of life offer, has helped to attract above average numbers of managers and professionals to the borough.
- Almost one third of working age residents is qualified to degree level, or equivalent. This results in the resident wage rate being higher than both the Greater Manchester and national average. The workplace wage rates follow a similar pattern.
- Stockport's economy supports the third largest workforce in Greater Manchester with 121,200 people employed within the borough.
- Stockport is home to a productive workforce and is one of only four local authorities within Greater Manchester with higher productivity than the North West average.
- Stockport is estimated to be the third largest contributor in terms of GVA to the Greater Manchester Economy, with almost 11% of the City Region's Value Added generated in Stockport. Stockport is therefore a key contributor to the sub-regional economy.

- Stockport currently has the second lowest rate of unemployment in Greater Manchester and is significantly lower than the regional and national rate.
- Easy access to Stockport by road means that there are around 835,000 people living within a 45 minute peak hour journey distance to Stockport, with 540,000 of these being people of working age.

### 3.2. Travel to Work within Stockport

The previous section highlighted that Stockport is home to a well-educated, highly skilled and productive workforce, enabling the borough to play a significant role in supporting the economy of Greater Manchester. The following diagram summarises the travel to work flows in and out of Stockport.

Figure 1. Travel to Work within Stockport



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey 2010/ 11

This highlights that more than half of Stockport’s residents work within Stockport, demonstrating that travel across the borough is just as important as connections to other local employment centres. Other key employment centres for Stockport residents include Manchester, Cheshire East, Tameside and Trafford.

However 40% of all workers within Stockport commute from other areas, with Manchester, Cheshire East, Tameside and High Peak being home to the largest inward flow of workers.

Efficient and reliable transport linkages are therefore important across the borough, as well as to neighbouring authorities and regional centres if Stockport is to continue to contribute the regions GVA.

### 3.3. Stockport Town Centre

Stockport Town Centre has been identified as the principal focus for development within the borough. The GM Town Centres Study highlighted Stockport’s unique combination of historic built-environment and transport connectivity as factors which put Stockport in a strong position to increase both its appeal and its overall economic significance.

In 2011 the Council commissioned a first Stockport Town Centre Development Prospectus with an updated Second Edition of the document produced in July 2014. This document sets out a number of priority projects which the Council has identified as major opportunities for new investment. The successful delivery of these projects will realise Stockport’s potential as the pre-eminent town centre in the southern part of Greater Manchester.

- **Stockport Exchange** - is a pivotal strategic site that links Stockport Railway Station and the town centre. The aim of the scheme is to create a new commercial office quarter which makes the most of the Station's significance as a transport hub to effectively act as the gateway to Stockport Town Centre. The Stockport Exchange master plan envisages around 400,000 sq/ft of offices in half-a-dozen buildings, a hotel, multi-storey car park, active ground floor spaces, a swimming pool and gym, and a high quality public space.

Phase One of the development saw a £22m investment to create a 1,000 space multi- storey car park which opened in February 2014. The construction of Phase Two is due to start later in early 2015 and is expected to comprise office building, retail space, the hotel, public realm and drop off area. There are a further six phases of the development due over the coming years.

- **Red Rock** – this scheme is intended to complement and diversify the existing town centre retail offer with a flagship leisure development which will provide a 10-screen cinema, food and drink outlets, shops, and a new 320+ space multi-story car park. Red Rock is scheduled to open to the public by 2016/ 17.
- **Merseyway** shopping centre remains a vital part of Stockport's town centre offer. In order to maintain its viability and ensure that it is sustainable and integrated with the rest of the town, the Council is committed to working with the owners and partners to achieve common objectives and a holistic approach.
- **Town Centre Access Package and Stockport Interchange** - the Prospectus acknowledges the need for greater transport investment in the town centre in support of the Council's strategic priorities. The Town Centre Access Package is a £73m programme of measures to improve navigation through and around the town centre. The £41.7m Stockport Interchange scheme will replace the current bus station with a facility which will improve the passenger experience as well as support the interchange between bus and rail.

These schemes represent a significant volume of investment in the economic potential of the town centre. They will collectively enable Stockport to increase the benefits it can realise for residents through growth. However, further improvements in transport connectivity will be critical to Stockport's success and to the contribution that the town centre makes to the city region's economy.

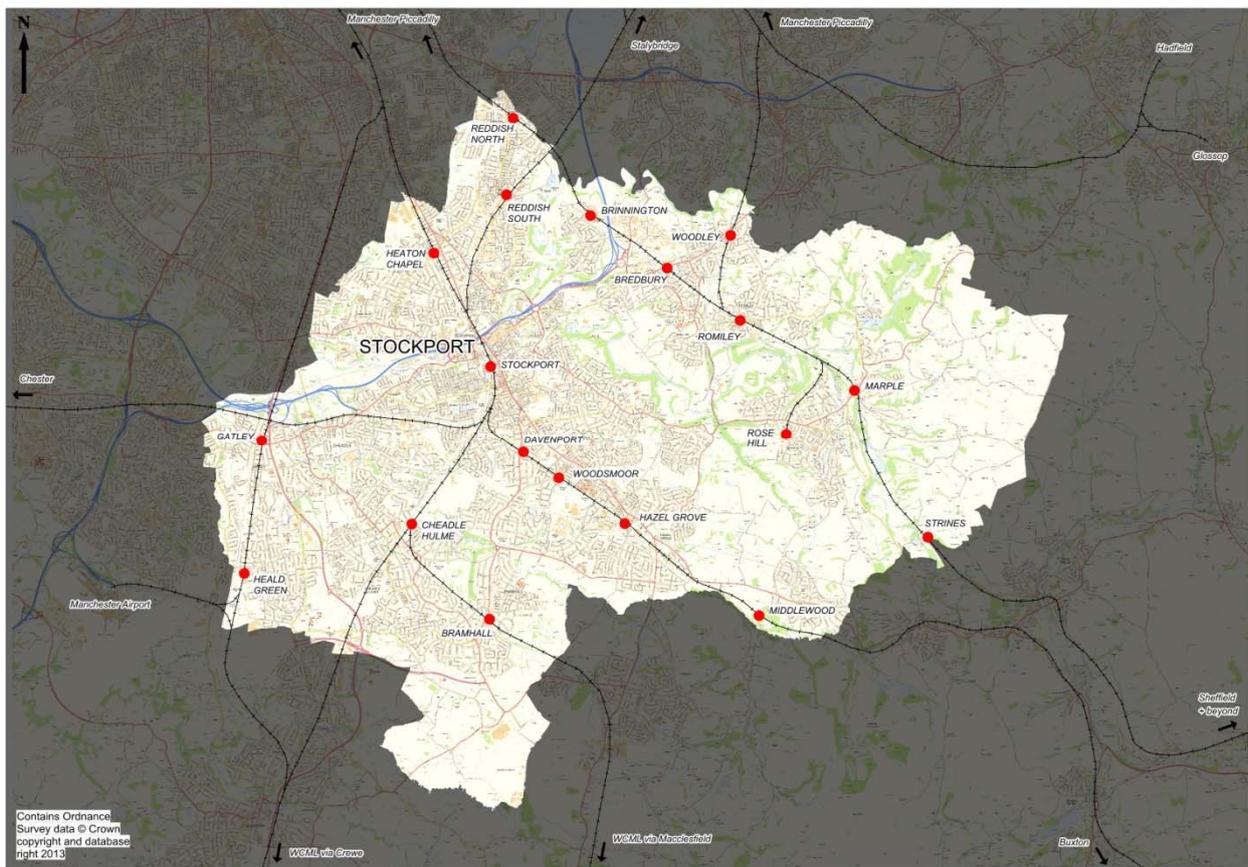
### 3.4. Existing Rail Network

Heavy rail is the sole rapid transit mode in the borough. It is a hub and spoke network centred on Piccadilly. Suburban stations offer access along six lines to opportunities in the Regional Centre and outside GM to principal employment locations. Manchester Airport however can only be accessed by rail via Piccadilly. The rail network is shown in Figure 2.

Of the eight District Centres - including Bramhall, Cheadle, Cheadle Hulme, Edgeley, Hazel Grove, Houldsworth Square (Reddish), Marple and Romiley – only three have a direct rail link with Stockport town centre as an alternative to congested roads. There is no direct rail link with Tameside and onwards to West Yorkshire.

Stockport Station has services that provide direct access to many regional and national destinations, via the West Coast Mainline (WCML) services and the Trans-Pennine routes. As a stopping station for services operating along both of these corridors, Stockport's rail network provides a vital link to key national economic centres including London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds. The Station is classified by Network Rail as a 'Category B' station which is a '*large station providing a gateway to the rail network from a large area*'. Almost all of the principal destinations south of Manchester Piccadilly are routed via Stockport and thus Stockport is for many people from the borough and its hinterland (estimated at 1.3 million people) a more convenient station.

**Figure 2. The Existing Rail Network within Stockport Borough Council**



There are currently 19 railway stations within the Stockport MBC boundary. Analysis of passenger data indicates that these stations account for almost 12% of entry and exit passenger numbers travelling within Greater Manchester.<sup>3</sup> This rises to 17% if Manchester Piccadilly is excluded from the total, and 24% if Manchester Piccadilly, Oxford Road and Victoria are excluded. It is noted that Manchester Piccadilly station alone accounts for almost 33% of entry/ exit passenger numbers.

Figure 3 shows the existing train service plan for services currently passing through the Metropolitan boundary of Stockport.

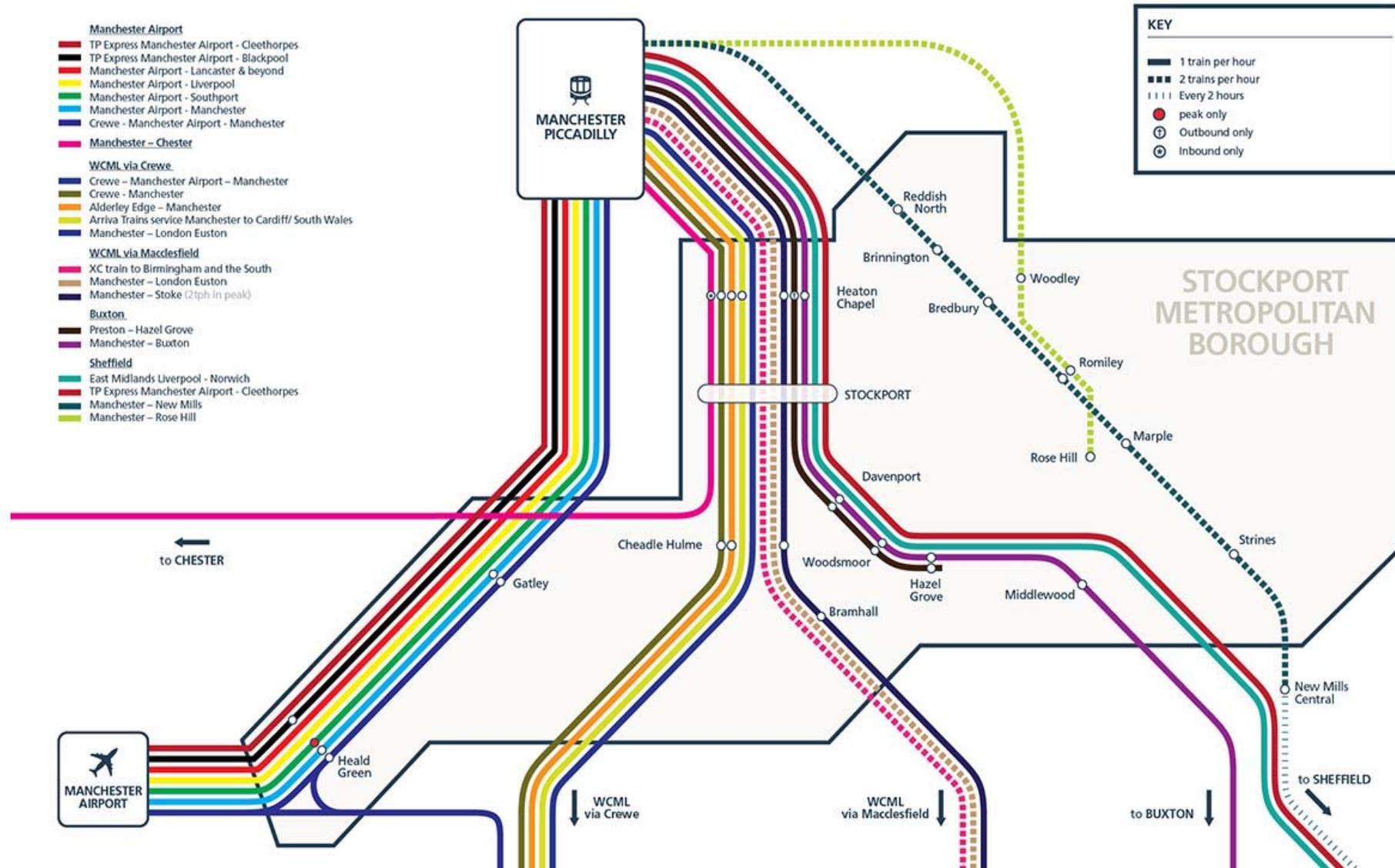
The train operators that currently run services on these lines are Northern Rail and First TransPennine Express. In recent years both train operators have been awarded franchise extensions by the DfT, resulting in both franchises now expiring in early 2016.

### 3.4.1. Existing Timetable

Service patterns in the study area were last modified as a result of the West Coast Mainline (WCML) upgrade and the introduction of Virgin West Coast's VHF timetable. This enhanced long-distance timetable came into effect in December 2008 and resulted in Virgin trains operating three trains per hour between Manchester/ Stockport and London (this was previously 2tp), and thus providing a faster and more frequent strategic rail service. However, in order to accommodate the additional strategic services, some local services experienced a reduced service pattern, particularly in the PM peak. For example, Cheadle Hulme and Bramhall lost some PM peak services, and there was also a reduction in peak services on the route to Hazel Grove.

<sup>3</sup> Office of Rail Regulator, 2010/ 11 Entry & Exit Passenger Analysis

Figure 3. Existing Train Service Pattern for services within the Stockport boundary



### 3.4.2. Station Facilities

All of the stations within the Stockport MBC boundary are operated by Northern Rail, with the exception of Stockport station, which is operated by Virgin trains.

As summarised in the TfGM document, *Greater Manchester Rail Policy 2012-2024*, this means that for the stations within the study area, Northern Rail and Virgin trains (at Stockport station) are responsible for the day to day cleaning and maintenance, the fitting out and maintaining of facilities such as ticket offices, shelters and waiting rooms, the provision of passenger facilities and the safety of passengers. Network Rail is responsible for maintaining the structure of the station and its buildings and certain other networked facilities on the station.

The following tables summarise the station facilities and accessibility arrangements at eighteen of the stations within Stockport MBC. Reddish South was not included in the table as it currently has no facilities at all.

The following was noted:

- Eight of the stations do not currently have bicycle storage facilities. With the exception of Gatley (which is due to be implementing cycle storage facilities in 2014/15 as part of the Cycle City Ambition Grant), the remaining seven stations are all along the Buxton and Sheffield lines.
- Four of the stations do not currently have any official car parking facilities, including Heaton Chapel, Middlewood, Bramhall and Brinnington.
- Middlewood, Strines and Woodley do not have staffed ticket offices (although it is noted that these stations also have significantly less footfall than the other stations). A further seven stations have staffed ticket offices open part time, with the remaining stations having a full time ticket office.
- Only two of the stations, Stockport and Hazel Grove have accessible toilets within the station.
- Less than half of the stations have a heated waiting room.
- Seven of the stations do not have step free access to platforms.
- Six of the stations suffer from either poor lighting, or do not have CCTV coverage at the stations.

Furthermore, it was noted in the *Greater Manchester Rail Policy 2012-2024* that:

- Woodsmoor is one of the top ten stations in terms of footfall without a customer information system
- Bredbury is one of the top ten stations in terms of footfall without a public announcement system
- Cheadle Hulme, Heaton Chapel and Heald Green are top ten stations in terms of footfall without toilets
- Heaton Chapel and Bramhall are top ten stations in terms of footfall with less than ten parking spaces

With the exception of Cheadle Hulme, each of the stations listed in the TfGM document, as summarised above, are Category E stations – which are defined by Network Rail as small staffed stations. Cheadle Hulme is a Category D ‘medium sized’ station.

**Table 3. Station Infrastructure Summary (1/3)**

Station Facilities	Station Name							
	Heaton Chapel	Stockport	Davenport	Woodsmoor	Hazel Grove	Middlewood	Strines	Marple
Cycle storage	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Cycle storage type	5 lockers & 20 stands	20 Stands & wheel racks	N/A	N/A	11 lockers & 12 stands	10 stands	N/A	N/A
Car parking (& number)	No	Yes	Yes (50)	Yes (6)	Yes (389)	No	Yes (30)	Yes (150)
Disabled parking	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Taxi rank	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Bus services	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Drop off point	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Staffed ticket office	Part time	Full time	Part time	Part time	Part time	No	No	Full time
Self-service ticket machines	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Ticket collection from machine	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Customer help point	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Public address system	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
On screen customer information	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Ramp for train access	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Accessible toilets	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Step free access to platforms	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Passenger waiting shelters	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Heated waiting room	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Full CCTV coverage	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adequate lighting	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

Source: National Rail Enquiries supplemented by TfGM Stations Facility Matrix

## Station Infrastructure Summary (2/3)

Station Facilities	Station Name							
	Rose Hill (Marple)	Romiley	Woodley	Bredbury	Brinnington	Reddish North	Bramhall	Cheadle Hulme
Cycle storage	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Cycle storage type	3 lockers	5 lockers	N/A	5 lockers	N/A	N/A	5 lockers	5 lockers & 10 stands
Car parking (& number)	Yes (50)	Yes (87)	Yes (5)	Yes (100)	No	Yes (20)	No	Yes (100)
Disabled parking	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Taxi rank	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Bus services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Drop off point	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Staffed ticket office	Part time	Full time	No	Full time	Full time	Full time	Part time	Full time
Self-service ticket machines	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Ticket collection from machine	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Customer help point	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Public address system	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
On screen customer information	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ramp for train access	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Accessible toilets	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Step free access to platforms	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Passenger waiting shelters	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Heated waiting room	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Full CCTV coverage	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adequate lighting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Source: National Rail Enquiries supplemented by TfGM Stations Facility Matrix

### Station Infrastructure Summary (3/3)

Station Facilities	Station Name	
	Gatley	Heald Green
Cycle storage	No <sup>4</sup>	Yes
Cycle storage type	N/A	4 lockers & 8 stands
Car parking (& number)	Yes (50)	Yes (14)
Disabled parking	No	No
Taxi rank	No	No
Bus services	Yes	Yes
Drop off point	No	No
Staffed ticket office	Part time	Full time
Self-service ticket machines	No	No
Ticket collection from machine	No	No
Customer help point	Yes	Yes
Public address system	Yes	Yes
On screen customer information	Yes	Yes
Ramp for train access	Yes	Yes
Accessible toilets	No	No
Step free access to platforms	Yes	Yes
Passenger waiting shelters	Yes	Yes
Heated waiting room	No	No
Full CCTV coverage	Yes	Yes
Adequate lighting	No	Yes

Source: National Rail Enquiries supplemented by TfGM Stations Facility Matrix

<sup>4</sup> Gatley is due to be implementing cycle storage facilities in 2014/15 as part of the Cycle City Ambition Grant.

### 3.4.3. Train Performance

In line with the rail industry's standard Public Performance Measures (PPM), the percentage of trains which arrive at their destination on time are monitored. The performance monitoring units (PMUs) for Northern Rail (Manchester and Liverpool) for March 2014 were 89.7% for trains and 91.8% for stations. During this time, 95.3% of all of Northern's trains arrived on time (within five or ten minutes of the times shown on the timetable, or as defined in the passenger charter). At 94.5%, trains arriving on time in South Manchester were slightly lower than Northern's average.

## 3.5. Committed Rail Infrastructure Works

### 3.5.1. Northern Route Utilisation Strategy

The Northern Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) sets out the priorities for rail improvements and investments in the North of England for the next 30 years and focuses on improving capacity to support increased passenger and freight demand. The RUS predicts increases in peak passenger demand into the major cities of the North as high as 52% by 2024. To accommodate such growth, the Northern RUS aims to improve connectivity between the cities and major towns of the North, and also between other national key destinations including Manchester Airport.

Local service improvements include train lengthening and additional peak hour shuttles and the conversion of routes to electric traction. These include improvements between Sheffield and Manchester such as lengthening of peak services between Cleethorpes and Manchester Airport. Improvements to track capacity which are of relevance to Stockport are primarily set out in the Northern Hub project which allows for more commuter services and reduced journey times around Manchester and other northern cities.

Enhancing interurban capacity is part of the vision and improved journey times will be noted particularly between Manchester and the three cities of Leeds, Liverpool and Sheffield. This will aid capacity improvements for services into Manchester central and may provide positive knock on benefits for services between Stockport and Manchester.

### 3.5.2. CP5 Enhancements Delivery Plan

Network Rail's CP5 Enhancements Delivery Plan sets out the outputs, scope and milestones which are committed to deliver in CP5.

Projects of relevance to Stockport are as follows:

- Stations – National Stations Improvement Programme (NSIP) – The Secretary of State wishes the industry to improve the passenger experience at stations including better passenger information and to provide easier access for older or disabled passengers and passengers with small children. At this stage all stations are in the scope but this will be refined at a later date.
- Stations – Access for All (AfA) – Each station should achieve an unobstructed and obstacle free 'accessible route' within Network Rail controlled infrastructure from at least one station entrance (usually the main entrance) and all drop-off points associated with that entrance, to each platform and between platforms served by passenger trains. The list of stations nominated for CP5 funding was announced by the Minister on 29 April 2014. An additional 42 stations were awarded funding, three of which are located in the NW of England, Liverpool Central, Penrith and Leyland. Therefore no stations within our study area were awarded CP5 funding to undertake station improvement works.
- Strategic Freight Network (SFN) – The objective is to enhance the network used by freight trains and reduce conflict between freight and passenger traffic on a number of routes including the Southampton to WCML capacity scheme.
- Passenger Journey Improvement Fund (PJIF) – to improve passengers journey experiences. The £206m fund is for schemes where the primary benefits accrue to Network Rail but relate to improvements in passenger journey times and/or train service reliability.
- High Speed Two (HS2) – To increase capacity on the national railway network to relieve forecast constraints, most immediately on the WCML and to provide better connectivity for the cities of the North

and the Midlands. Phase 2 will extend Phase 1 (London to Birmingham) up to Manchester and Leeds. See further detail below.

- As part of the supporting infrastructure for HS2, the CP5 Enhancement Plan notes that enhancements which could be needed on the WCML north to support the future timetable, once HS2 Phase One opens are under consideration through a cross industry process.
- CP4 Station Commercial Project Facility (SCPF) – To deliver station improvements which generate a financial return to DfT. Stockport MSCP was identified as a scheme to be delivered by Stockport MBC which aims to achieve a higher value for Stockport when the new franchise is let.
- Northern Hub – Service improvements to facilitate economic growth in the North of England through improved services on key commuter corridors; fast and more frequent inter-regional services with increased direct links between Northern cities. See further detail below.
- North West Electrification – Operation of electric traction between key cities including between Manchester and WCML, Liverpool and Manchester and further afield including Preston to Blackpool and Preston to Manchester.
- North West Train Lengthening – Platform lengthening is required at a number of stations in the North West to meet capacity improvements and forecast demand. The stations identified for this scheme within the Stockport Borough include: Middlewood and Woodsmoor (4 x 23m car length). Furthermore, Hadfield-Dinting-Glossop-Manchester rail capacity improvements have been proposed but the detailed scope is to be identified.

### 3.5.3. Northern Hub

The Northern Hub is a programme of targeted upgrades to the railway in the North of England. Scheduled for completion in 2019, it will allow up to 700 more trains to run each day and provide space for 44 million more passengers a year. The Hub is about the whole of the North of England and the programme consists of the interventions shown in the table below.

**Table 4. Northern Hub Interventions**

Intervention	Description
Ordsall Chord	New railway line in west Manchester providing a direct route between Manchester Victoria and Manchester Piccadilly allowing for new direct services through Manchester city centre to Manchester Airport
Manchester Victoria	Contribution towards the Manchester Victoria redevelopment project to address the increase in passenger numbers and provide a transformed gateway to the city
Huyton and Roby capacity	Four tracking at this location to increase capacity and provide an overtaking facility on the Chat Moss route
Chat Moss capacity	Headway improvements to provide additional capacity between Liverpool to Manchester via Newton-le-Willows
Preston JTI	Infrastructure improvements between Salford Crescent and Euxton Junction via Bolton to provide journey time savings
Calder Valley JTI	Infrastructure improvements between Manchester and Bradford to provide journey time savings
Manchester Airport station	Additional platform to accommodate extra services from Manchester city centre in CP5
Manchester Victoria capacity	Layout alterations either side of the station to provide capacity and flexibility
Rochdale capacity	Provision of a turnback facility towards Manchester
Core Manchester performance	Castlefield corridor and Ordsall Lane junction capacity and performance improvements
Chinley capacity	Provision of overtaking and turnback facilities
Dore and Grindleford capacity	Doubling of the single line between Dore West and Dore Station junction and provision of freight recessing facilities

Intervention	Description
Hope Valley JTI	Infrastructure improvements between Dore and Stockport to provide journey time savings
Manchester Oxford Road station	Remodelling to provide capacity to accommodate longer, more frequent trains
Manchester Piccadilly station	Provision of two additional through platforms (15 and 16) to allow more trains to run through rather than terminate in Manchester – providing more direct train services across the North
Manchester Victoria to Stalybridge JTI	Infrastructure improvements between Victoria and Stalybridge to provide journey time savings

It is estimated that between 20,000 and 30,000 private sector jobs could be created across the North of England as a result of the Northern Hub. Employees will be able to get to work more quickly and easily and businesses on both sides of the Pennines will be able to recruit from a wider pool of talent as well enjoying access to bigger markets. It is anticipated that the journey time reductions will allow rail to compete with road to provide quicker and more efficient journeys between city centres, as well as improving freight connections for delivering goods to markets efficiently – thus enhancing the economic competitiveness of the Northern Hub area.

Following the implementation of the Northern Hub’s infrastructure improvements, one of the critical constraints on the local rail network will be the platform capacity at Manchester Piccadilly station. It is noted that if train lengths are increased on local and semi-fast services in a bid to help accommodate the growth in demand, the following constraints become critical:

- Fewer trains will be able to be stacked at the existing longer bay platforms (1 to 8)
- Fewer trains will be short enough to be accommodated at the shorter bay platforms (9 to 12).

Platform lengthening works are likely to be very expensive, due to the major point-works that would be necessary, along with likely engineering challenges such as viaduct widening.

### 3.5.4. HS2

The High Speed Two (HS2) project is the largest expansion of Britain’s rail network since the Victorian era. It is of national importance and will affect travel patterns in both England and Scotland through the provision of additional rail capacity, substantially reducing journey times and improving connectivity between markets. The prime output objectives for HS2 are:

- Increased capacity on the national rail network to relieve forecast constraints, most immediately on the West Coast Main Line
- Better connectivity for the cities of the North and the Midlands; and
- Delivery of the associated economic benefits

The delivery of HS2 is currently proposed to occur in two stages, as follows:

- HS2 Phase 1 London Euston to Birmingham Curzon Street, connecting into the WCML at Lichfield/ Crewe
- HS2 Phase 2 connecting Birmingham to Manchester and Leeds

In March 2014 the (then new) chairman of HS2 Sir David Higgins published his review of the project. This recommended that the HS2 connection to the WCML is at Crewe, and not Lichfield. The government has expressed its support for this, and further work is currently underway examining this proposal in more detail.

Under Phase One the current proposals indicate that the service frequency between Manchester (and Stockport) to London Euston will improve, with the current three trains per hour (tph) increasing to four tph. One ‘classic’ rail service will continue to operate as well as three High Speed trains (HS between London and Crewe/ Lichfield and then continuing on the existing conventional rail line north of Crewe/ Lichfield). It is noted that these HS services are likely to have lower capacity than the current 11 car Pendilinos.

With the proposed Phase Two extension of the High Speed rail network to Manchester and Leeds, proposals indicate that Manchester to London will have three HS tph, two of which will stop at the proposed Manchester Airport station. One classic rail service per hour will continue to operate between Manchester and London, calling at Stockport. It is noted that this is forecast to stop at a number of key stations en-route to London, so journey times on this service are likely to increase. HS2 Phase Two will see the service between Stockport and London reduced from 4tph (post HS2 Phase One) to 1tph, and the journey time for this service is likely to be longer than that of the present day service (due to increased stopping).

Initial conceptual analysis work undertaken by Network Rail<sup>5</sup> on the potential options to utilise the capacity that is released as a result of HS2 Phase Two Euston – Manchester route, includes the following:

- An inter-urban semi-fast service between Birmingham and Manchester, via Walsall and Rugeley
- A fast long distance service between SE Midlands via Trent Valley to Manchester.

A third new service – defined below – was also cited as a means of utilising capacity released by HS2 Phase 2. However this service has been separately proposed for introduction in the early 2020's.

- A fast Cross Country service between Manchester and the South Coast (via the WCML Stoke and EWR).

A number of 'aspirational journey opportunities' were also identified, including:

- Improved airport connectivity
- Aspiration to connect south Manchester stations to HS2
- Increase intermediate calling patterns
- Rail connection from Stockport to Manchester Airport.

The Economic Case for HS2<sup>6</sup> summarises the released capacity assumptions that have been assumed as part of the HS2 Phase Two (PFMv4.3) business case development. This document highlights that there are many other potential combinations of released capacity. It continues stating that the assumptions have been developed for demand modelling purposes and acknowledges that this may not be the ultimate specification that is implemented. The West Coast Mainline (WCML) and Cross Country assumptions that are directly relevant to Stockport are outlined below:

The WCML Phase One and Phase Two timetable assumes the following services to/from London Euston, which are relevant to Stockport:

- one train per hour to Scotland via Manchester (alternating between Glasgow and Edinburgh)
- one train per peak hour in the peak direction to/from Manchester.

The Cross Country service specification has been assumed to be as per the do-minimum in HS2 Phase One. Under Phase Two, additional calling points at Congleton and Macclesfield are assumed on services to Manchester.

This then provides a service pattern as follows:

- one train per hour between Manchester and Bournemouth via Milton Keynes
- one train per hour between Manchester and Bristol via Birmingham (with some services continuing on to Cardiff or Paignton)
- one train per hour between Manchester and Birmingham International.

The GMCA: Response to HS2 Phase Two Consultation (January 2014) argued that the existing limited platform capacity at Manchester Piccadilly and the associated service improvement constraints that this results in provides justification for the early opening of HS2 platforms at Piccadilly Station.

When Sir David Higgins became chairman of HS2, he undertook a comprehensive review of the work undertaken to date, and subsequently published a number of documents, most recently the Rebalancing

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<sup>5</sup> Better Connections: Options for the Integration of HS2, (July 2013), Network Rail.

<sup>6</sup> Economic Case for HS2: PFMv4.3 Assumptions Report (October 2013), HS2 Ltd.

Britain report.<sup>7</sup> This report confirms the recommendation that the Phase 1 route should extend beyond Lichfield to a new hub station at Crewe. The recommended delivery date for this scheme is 2027, such that the benefits of HS2 are delivered to the North and Scotland as early as possible.

The Higgins report goes on to recommend further investigation into both the improved connectivity of Manchester and Leeds, and the possibility of running classic compatible services to Stoke-on-Trent, Macclesfield, Stockport and Manchester. This would link to the WCML at the Handsacre link.

### 3.6. Access to Rail Services

The Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT) document 'Guidelines for Planning for Public Transport in Development' refers to research showing that people are prepared to walk up to ten minutes or 800 metres to a rail station. In order to understand the walking catchments of stations within Stockport, analysis using Map Info GIS has been undertaken to identify the existing catchment of rail stations within the Stockport boundary. Crow fly distance buffers have been drawn around the centre point all heavy rail stations and those intersecting the Stockport Borough boundary have been included in the analysis. Buffering the station shows that in some cases adjacent area stations capture populations that partially reside in the Stockport boundary – as an example, Burnage station.

2011 Census data providing estimates of usual residents (headcount) for each unit postcode has been plotted, and the total headcount within an 800m buffer of each station has been calculated. The table below highlights the numbers of people within each station boundary. It should be noted that where postcodes fall within two station catchments, the population have been included in both.

**Table 5. Population within 800m of Stockport Borough rail stations**

Station	Population within an 800m buffer	Station	Population within an 800m buffer
Bramhall	6,326	Middlewood	1,003
Bredbury	7,550	<i>Poynton (E. Cheshire)</i>	<i>4,210</i>
Brinnington	5,645	Reddish North	12,016
<i>Burnage (Manchester)</i>	<i>12,279</i>	Reddish South	8,904
Cheadle Hulme	6,691	Romiley	5,387
Davenport	9,948	Rose Hill	6,725
<i>East Didsbury (Manchester)</i>	<i>14,310</i>	<i>Ryder Brow (Manchester)</i>	<i>11,057</i>
Gatley	6,573	Stockport	7,452
Hazel Grove	7,538	Strines	239
Heald Green	4,890	Woodley	5,460
Heaton Chapel	9,954	Woodsmoor	7,462
Marple	3,640	TOTAL	165,259

The population data is based on 2011 census data, and does not include proposed new developments, such as the new housing (approximately 400 dwellings) in Strines.

The analysis shows that for the stations which have an 800m buffer falling within the Stockport boundary there are 165,259 residents captured by these rail stations. Whilst this does include some residents outside of the Stockport boundary (e.g. the catchment of Burnage station), this total number represents a figure of over 58% of the population of the Stockport Borough.

The same methodology has also been applied to a buffer of 1000m, and the table below provides an indication of the total residents within a 1,000m buffer. Using this assumption, four additional stations intersect the Stockport boundary including Didsbury Village, Handforth, Levenshulme and Mauldeth Road. The Manchester

<sup>7</sup> Rebalancing Britain: From HS2 towards a national transport strategy, (Oct 2014), HS2 Ltd.

stations add in very high population catchments which are partly responsible in the almost doubling of population numbers when comparing a 1,000m catchment with the original 800m catchment.

**Table 6. Population within 1,000m of Stockport Borough rail stations**

Station	Population within an 1,000m buffer	Station	Population within an 1,000m buffer
Bramhall	9,393	Marple	5,871
Bredbury	10,502	<i>Mauldeth Road (Manchester)</i>	24,660
Brinnington	6,578	Middlewood	1,781
<i>Burnage (Manchester)</i>	18,986	<i>Poynton (E. Cheshire)</i>	5,662
Cheadle Hulme	10,374	Reddish North	18,440
Davenport	15,512	Reddish South	13,250
<i>Didsbury Village (Manchester)</i>	15,331	Romiley	7,021
<i>East Didsbury (Manchester)</i>	23,244	Rose Hill	8,319
Gatley	9,245	<i>Ryder Brow (Manchester)</i>	15,370
<i>Handforth (E. Cheshire)</i>	7,922	Stockport	11,647
Hazel Grove	11,391	Strines	537
Heald Green	8,163	Woodley	7,083
Heaton Chapel	13,898	Woodsmoor	12,615
<i>Levenshulme (Manchester)</i>	25,343	TOTAL	318,138

When analysing the catchment of the Stockport Borough stations only, a direct comparison of the 800m and 1,000m catchment yields the results as shown in the table below. This highlights that 123,403 are within an 800m of a rail station in Stockport, or 181,620 people are within 1km of a rail station in Stockport (crow-fly distances).

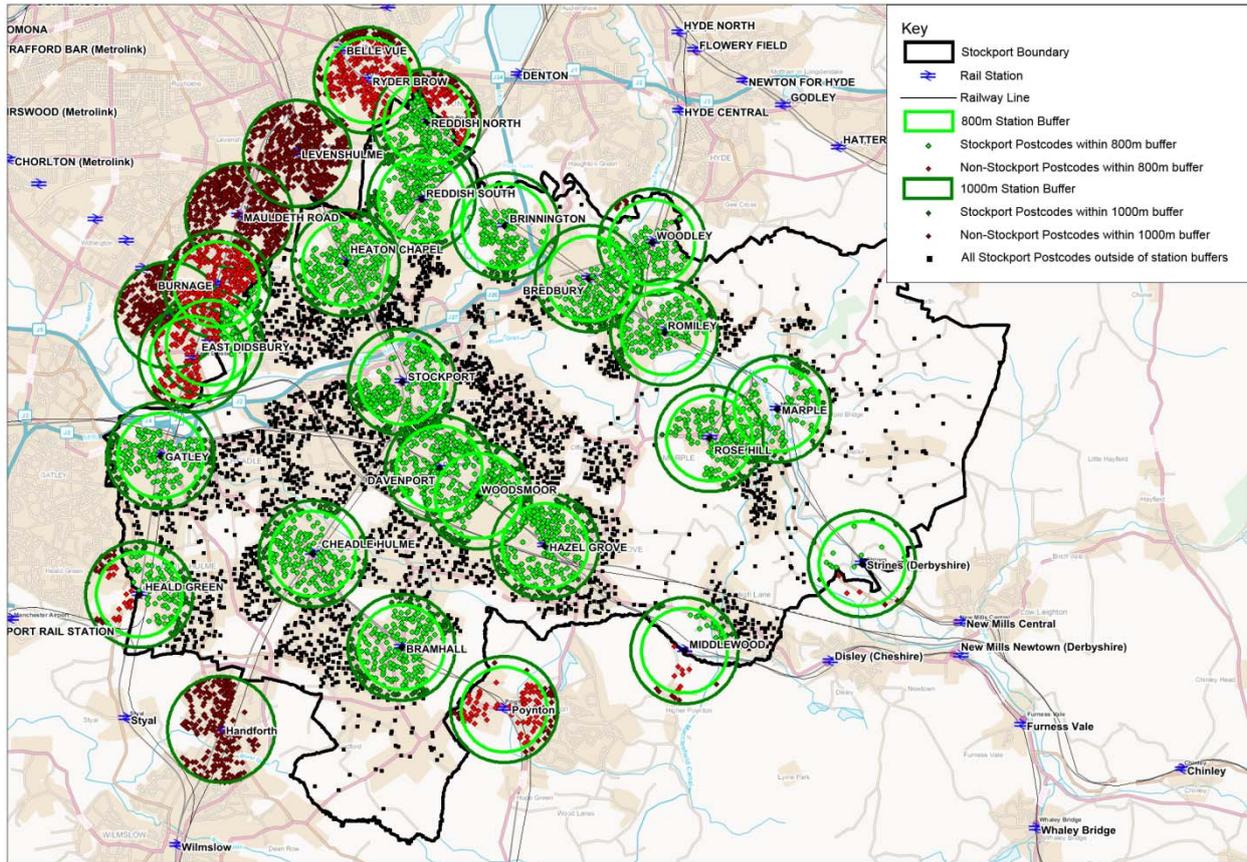
**Table 7. Population within Stockport Borough Stations (800m and 1,000m catchment)**

Station	Population within an 800m buffer	Population within an 1,000m buffer
Bramhall	6,326	9,393
Bredbury	7,550	10,502
Brinnington	5,645	6,578
Cheadle Hulme	6,691	10,374
Davenport	9,948	15,512
Gatley	6,573	9,245
Hazel Grove	7,538	11,391
Heald Green	4,890	8,163
Heaton Chapel	9,954	13,898
Marple	3,640	5,871
Middlewood	1,003	1,781
Reddish North	12,016	18,440
Reddish South	8,904	13,250
Romiley	5,387	7,021
Rose Hill	6,725	8,319
Stockport	7,452	11,647
Strines	239	537
Woodley	5,460	7,083

Station	Population within an 800m buffer	Population within an 1,000m buffer
Woodsmoor	7,462	12,615
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>123,403</b>	<b>181,620</b>

The catchment of postcodes for the different buffers around the rail stations are shown in the figure below. It is clear from the figure that a significant number of residents are located outside of station catchment areas, particularly around Cheadle and Offerton.

**Figure 4. Postcode catchment of rail stations within and around Stockport**



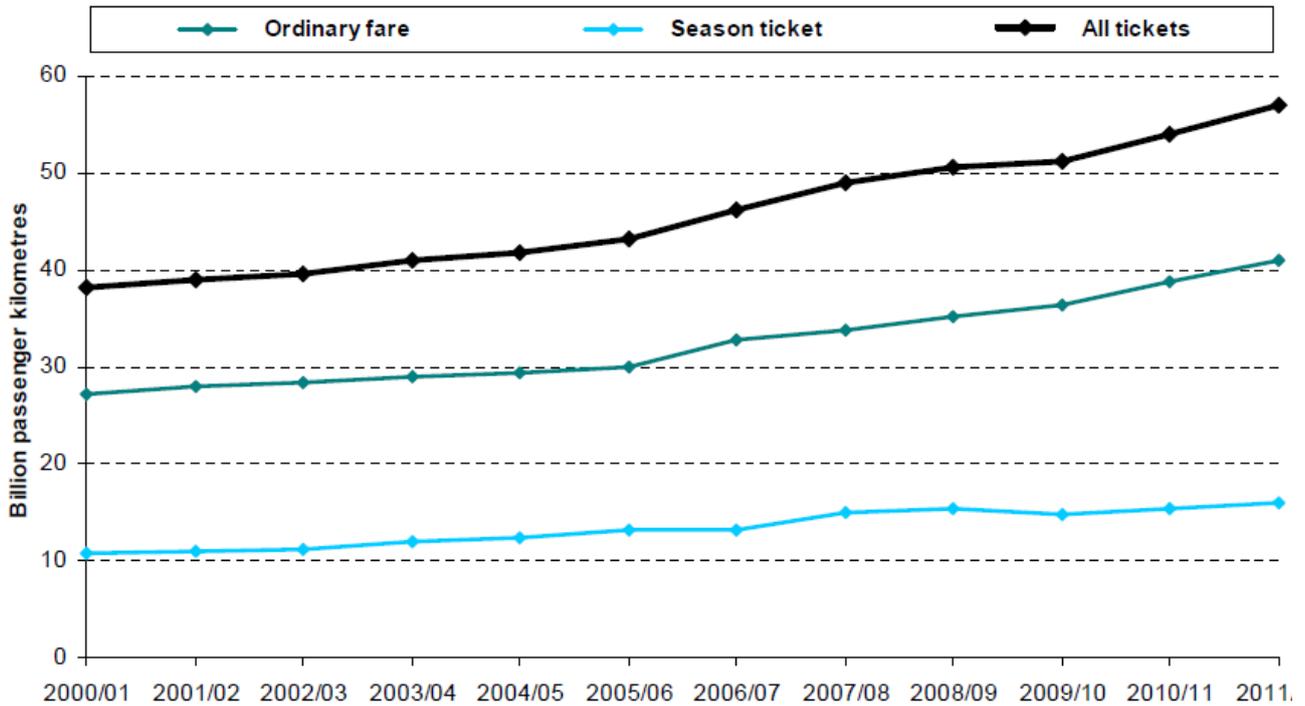
### 3.7. Rail Demand

#### 3.7.1. National Context

Since 2001/02 the number of rail journeys made in the UK has increased from more than 950 million to almost 1.5 billion. Throughout this time, the number of journeys has risen every year apart from a slight reduction between 2008/09 and 2009/10, which was likely to be as a result of the recession. Between 2010/11 and 2011/12 the number of journeys increased again, by almost 8 per cent.

The passenger kilometres travelled by rail follow a similar trend to the passenger journeys, and have increased from 38 billion in 2000/01 to 57 billion passenger kilometres in 2011/12. The passenger kilometre growth is depicted on the following page.

Figure 5. Passenger kilometres made by rail from 2000/01



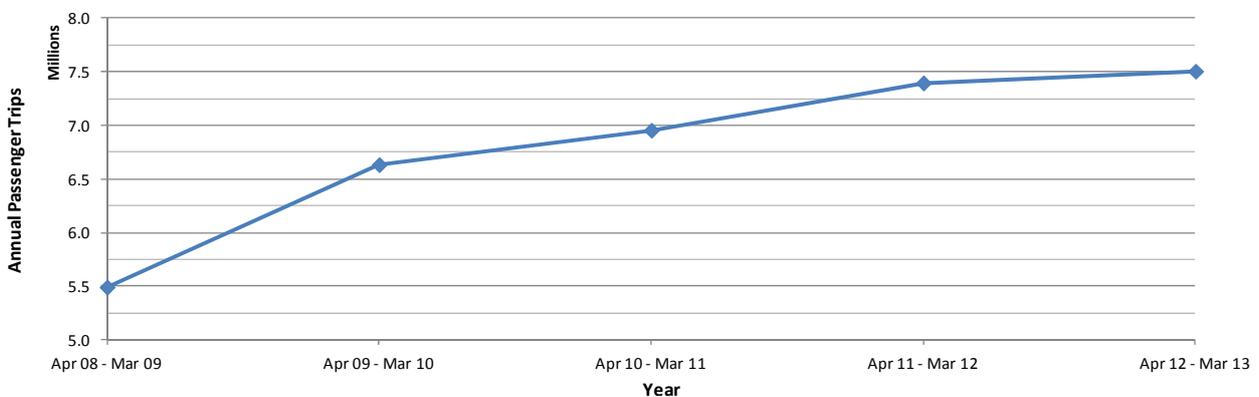
Source: Transport Statistics Great Britain 2012 (Table RAI0103)

### 3.7.2. Stockport

The Office of Rail Regulation ticketing data has been interrogated to understand the existing rail travel patterns to/ from stations within Stockport MBC. This data is contained within a bespoke software package called MOIRA, and the Northern Rail’s May 2013 database has been utilised to assess the existing use of the Stockport rail network, and how the usage has changed over the past five years.

More than 7.5 million rail trips were made to/ from a station within the Stockport MBC during 2012/13. This is more than one million additional trips when compared to those undertaken in 2009/10; an increase of 16%. The growth profile of trips with an origin/ destination in Stockport MBC is plotted in Figure 6. It should be noted that during 2008/ 09 travel card sales data was included within MOIRA for the first time, explaining the large increase in growth between 2008/ 09 and 2009/ 10.

Figure 6. Annual Rail Passenger Trips made to/from a station within Stockport Borough (2008/09 to 2012/13)



The (provisional) national growth rate between 2009/ 10 and 2011/ 12 shows that rail trips grew at approximately 16% during this time, compared with an 11% growth rate in Stockport MBC. This indicates that rail growth in Stockport is growing at a slightly lower rate than the national average.

Passenger entries/ exits at eighteen of the stations within Stockport MBC, and their respective annual change in growth are summarised in the following table.

**Table 8. 2013 Annual Rail Passenger Trips to/ from individual stations within Stockport and associated growth from 2010**

Station	2013 Annual Rail Trips	% Growth from 2010
Stockport	3,310,400	13%
Cheadle Hulme	678,900	23%
Heaton Chapel	648,300	31%
Hazel Grove	591,100	12%
Heald Green	425,200	12%
Marple	414,200	2%
Gatley	294,400	24%
Romiley	281,100	11%
Bramhall	245,700	9%
Davenport	228,900	13%
Bredbury	195,700	23%
Woodsmoor	184,400	24%
Reddish North	165,700	38%
Rose Hill Marple	129,700	33%
Brinnington	76,500	8%
Woodley	37,500	5%
Middlewood	19,500	3%
Strines	13,800	46%

The following points are noted:

- As the only category 'B' station within the Stockport boundary, Stockport station has the highest footfall, with growth rates between 2010 and 2013 that are broadly consistent with the national average.
- With Stockport station experiencing in excess of 3.3 million passengers per year (excluding interchange passengers), this makes it the busiest station in Greater Manchester outside of Manchester City Centre. However, it is widely accepted that the ticketing data does not accurately represent the Stockport – London passenger numbers. A significant proportion of the Manchester – London rail market reside within the Stockport station catchment, and choose to board/ alight at Stockport instead of Manchester Piccadilly for convenience reasons. Historically survey data has highlighted that the actual number of journeys from Stockport station to/ from London is 35% higher than ticket data suggests.
- Cheadle Hulme and Heaton Chapel have an annual footfall in excess of 0.5 million trips and an above average growth rate between 2010 and 2013.
- Stations with lower than the national average growth rates include Marple, Bramhall, Brinnington, Woodley and Middlewood.
- Strines has the lowest footfall of the listed stations (note that Reddish South has approximately 50 annual trips), but despite the lower number of annual trips, it has the highest growth rate between 2010 and 2013 at 46%.

Stockport's close ties with the rest of the Greater Manchester area are evident as more than 65% of the annual trips to/ from a Stockport station are to another station in Greater Manchester.

Within Greater Manchester, almost 90% of all current rail trips in 2012/ 13 are between a station with Stockport Borough and the Manchester District. This is not surprising given the existing radial rail service pattern and the key employment/ trip attractor of Manchester CBD.

Since 2009/ 10, all rail passenger trip movements to/ from a station within Stockport and Greater Manchester have broadly grown in line with national forecasts. However the growth rates for rail trips to some of the Greater Manchester districts have exceeded the national average – notably Bolton, Oldham, Rochdale and Wigan – all of which have a growth rate in excess of 30%.

**Table 9. 2012/ 13 Rail Passenger Trips made to/from a Station within Stockport MBC and Greater Manchester**

Greater Manchester District	Annual Rail Trips (% Growth from 2009/ 10)
Bolton	98,000 (35%)
Manchester	4,419,600 (15%)
Oldham	1,800 (39%)
Rochdale	19,000 (31%)
Salford	122,300 (19%)
Stockport	266,400 (14%)
Tameside	55,300 (24%)
Trafford	105,900 (14%)
Wigan	21,500 (38%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,109,700 (15%)</b>

Note: Numbers have been subjected to rounding

Movements to key destination stations in the region have also been assessed, considering those trips which are most commonly made. These have been summarised on Figure 7. Some key points include:

- Over 4.1 million trips are made between Stockport stations and the stations in Central Manchester (Piccadilly, Victoria, Oxford Road and Deansgate);
- Other major trip patterns are between Stockport stations and stations at Macclesfield (184k), Wilmslow (156k), Sheffield (134k) and Salford Crescent (103k).

MOIRA analysis indicated that of the 7.5 million trip movements between stations in Stockport in 2012/ 13, almost 80% of them were to/ from another station in the North West region. London is the next largest movement, with 8% of trip movements from a Stockport station going to/ from London. Rail demand to Scotland and the North-East is the smallest and accounted for less than 30,000 journeys in 2012/13. These movements are shown on Figure 8.

Figure 7. 2012/13 Rail Passenger Trips made between stations in Stockport and other key destinations

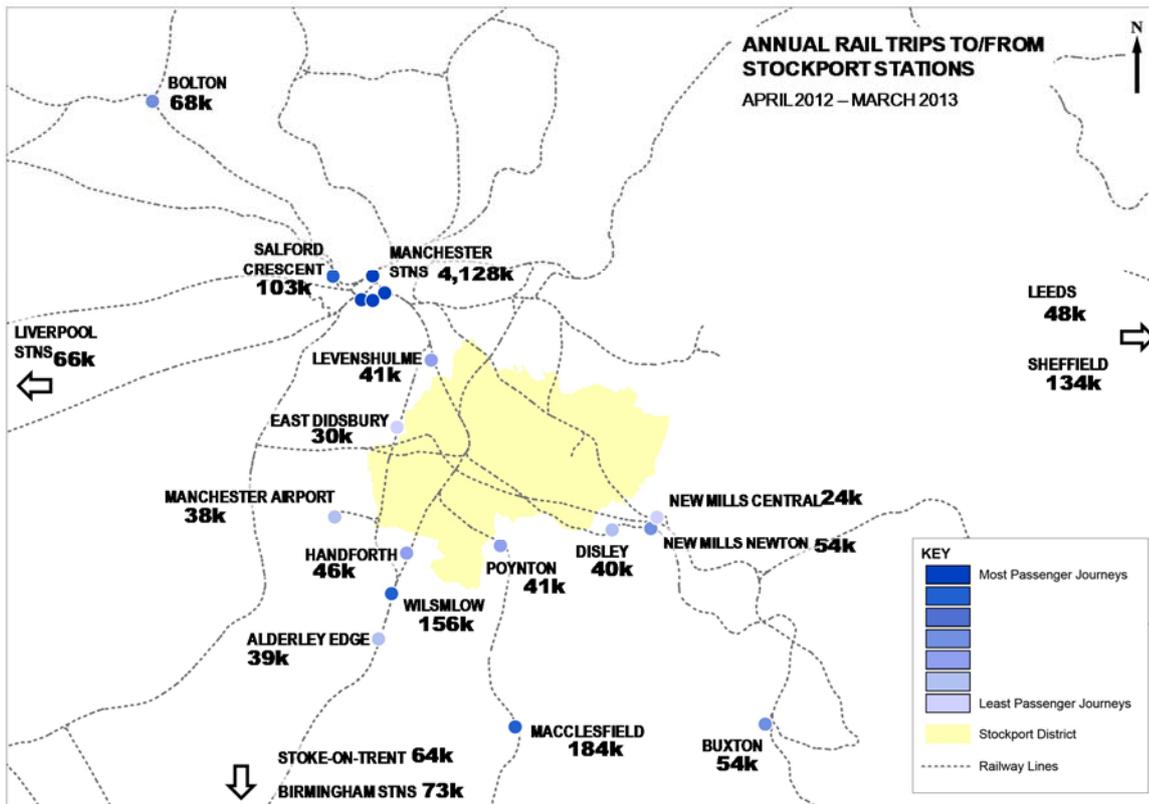


Figure 8. 2012/13 Rail Passenger Trips made to/from a station within Stockport Borough (National)

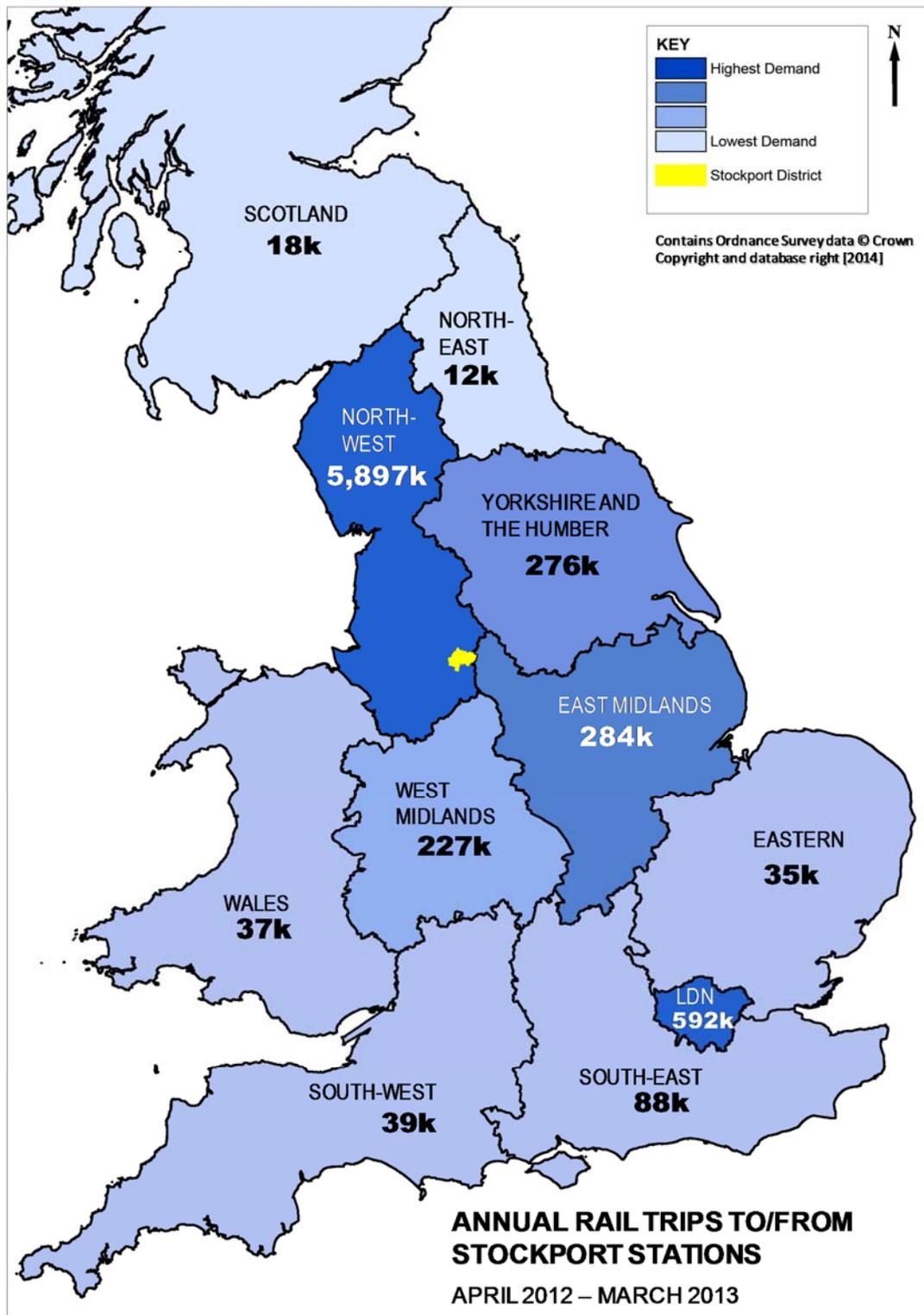
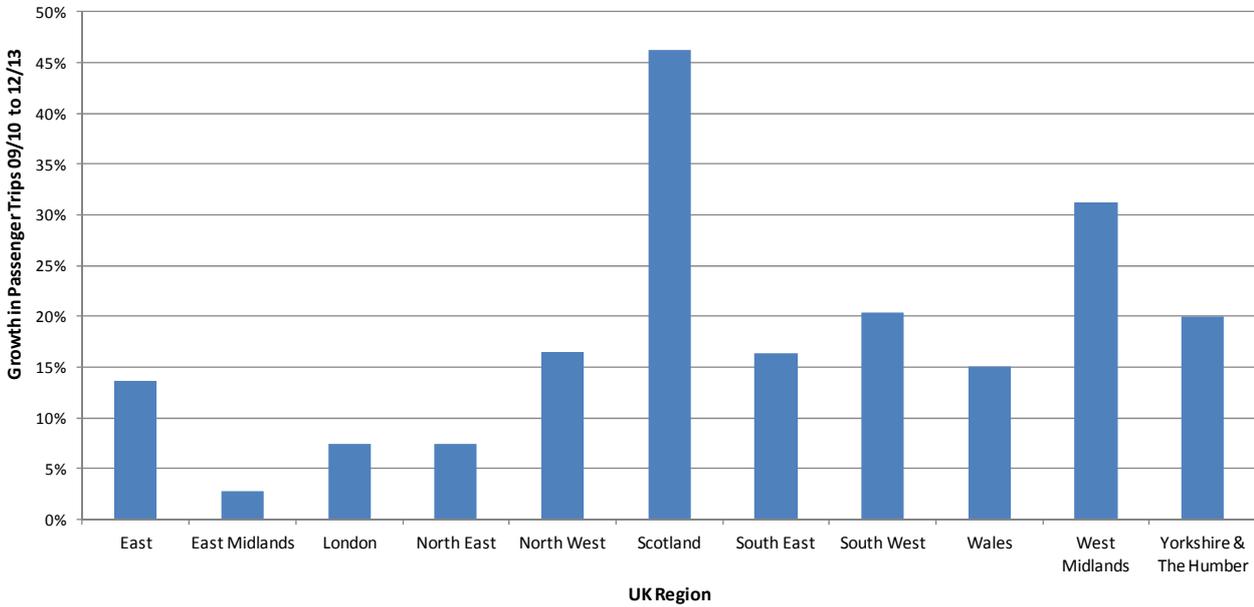


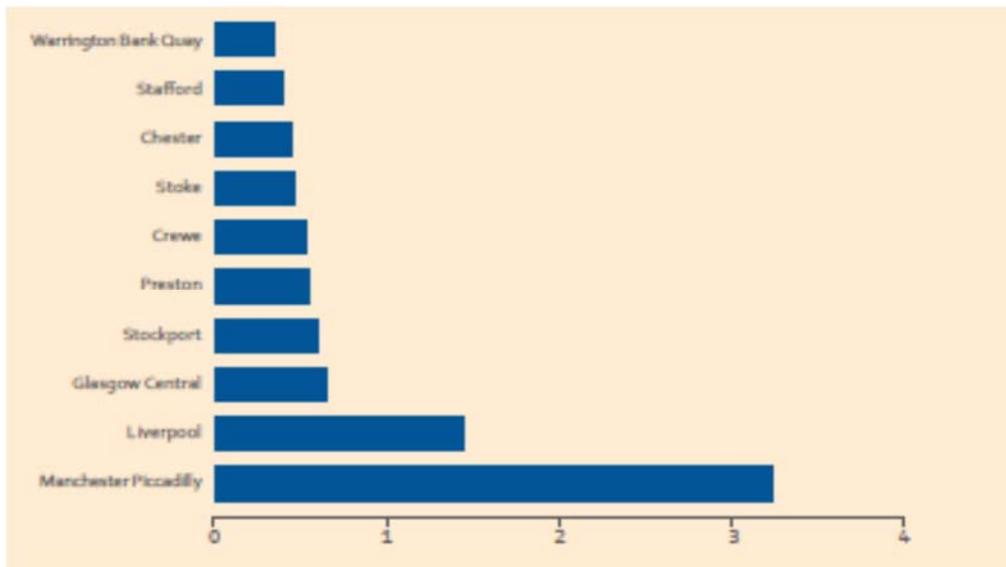
Figure 9 shows how regional rail trips to/from within Stockport MBC have grown in recent years. This demonstrates that although the market to Scotland is currently one of the smallest markets, it has experienced the highest growth rate, in excess of 40% between 2009/ 10 and 2012/ 13.

**Figure 9. Growth in Rail Passenger Trips made to/from a station in Stockport Borough (2008/09 to 2012/13) (National)**



As highlighted in the Rebalancing Britain<sup>8</sup>, data from 2013/ 14 shows the importance of Stockport to the London market. Stockport station represents the fourth highest demand for travel to London in the North West, with only Liverpool and Manchester Piccadilly in England having higher demand.

**Figure 10. Number of NW Rail Journeys (million) to/ from London in 2013/ 14**



<sup>8</sup> Rebalancing Britain: From HS2 towards a national transport strategy, (Oct 2014), HS2 Ltd.

### 3.7.3. Forecast Rail Growth

The rail industry uses the Passenger Demand Forecasting Handbook (PDFH) to assist with its demand forecasting when considering potential investment. PDFH has been widely regarded within the rail industry as underestimating commuter demand growth rates in regional cities.

In recognition of some of the weaknesses with the standard PDFH assumptions the Department for Transport, in conjunction with the northern Passenger Transport Executives, commissioned research in 2009 to develop assumptions that are more applicable to commuting in the northern conurbations. This work was completed in 2010 and subsequently enhanced by Network Rail to cover inter-urban trips as well; and then used in the development of the Northern and West Coast Main Line Route Utilisation Strategies (both published in 2011). The work recognised the importance of housing growth as well as relative cost per trip and cost of car parking in the city centre for car drivers as key inputs into demand for rail services.

Table 10 below summarises the forecasts average growth in demand for each Greater Manchester corridor based on the underlying economic growth and the general assumptions on changing land use and train service attributes. These forecasts are based on a steady state railway with no changes in service pattern or frequency, and assume that growth is accommodated by lengthening trains rather than providing additional services.

**Table 10. Average Compound Annual Growth in Peak Passenger Numbers (%)**

Corridor / Route	DFT / RUS average compound annual growth rate in peak passenger numbers (%)		
	Up to 2014	2015 – 2019	After 2020
Rochdale and Calder Valley	2.5	3.0	1.6
Stalybridge / Huddersfield	2.8	3.7	2.7
Leeds and beyond	2.5	2.5	2.1
Glossop and Hadfield	3.5	3.7	2.7
Marple via Hyde	2.8	3.7	2.7
Marple via Bredbury and Hope Valley	2.7	3.7	2.7
Sheffield and South Humberside	2.8	2.8	2.3
Sheffield and East Midlands	2.5	3.7	2.7
Hazel Grove, Buxton, Macclesfield, Stoke-on-Trent and Crewe local services and Manchester Airport	2.5	3.7	2.7
Crewe express and South Wales	2.5	2.5	2.0
Chester via Altrincham	2.5	3.7	2.7
Liverpool via Warrington	2.5	2.8	1.5
Chester and North Wales via Newton-le-Willows	2.6	2.6	2.0
Liverpool via Newton-le-Willows	2.5	2.5	2.1
Wigan and Kirkby via Atherton	3.4	3.7	2.7
Wigan and Southport via Bolton	2.7	3.7	2.7
Bolton and Preston	2.5	2.5	2.0
Blackpool, Cumbria, Scotland	2.3	3.4	2.0
Blackburn and Clitheroe	2.7	3.7	2.7

These forecasts indicate that with the exception of the Sheffield – South Humberside corridor (2.8%), growth in each of the remaining corridors that pass through Stockport MBC boundary are at the upper end of predictions from 2015 onwards.

### 3.8. Level of Service Analysis

The Greater Manchester Rail Policy 2012-2024 document highlighted that overcrowding on rail services in Greater Manchester is a serious problem throughout the whole morning peak period. An overcrowded train is where the load factor is in excess of the total (seating + standing) capacity for the train as detailed in franchise agreements.

In 2009 it was estimated that the costs of overcrowding to the end of 2014 to the northern economy GVA will be at least £0.5 billion.

The GM Rail Policy document included analysis of the loading data in the AM peak hour for services arriving into Manchester Piccadilly station. The key findings of this for the rail lines within Stockport Borough are summarised in the following table. For services passing through Stockport station, this shows that train services have an existing passenger loading of over 70%. This is forecast to increase to over 95% by 2024. The proportion of services at capacity is forecast to double from 20% to 40% by 2024.

**Table 11. One Hour AM Peak Arrival Data into Manchester Piccadilly**

Rail Line	2011 Actual Capacity	2024 Forecast Capacity *
<b>Stockport</b>		
Average load factor of trains (%)	73	96
Proportion of services over total capacity (%)	20	40
<b>Styal</b>		
Average load factor of trains (%)	41	55
Proportion of services over total capacity (%)	0	10
<b>Marple (via Bredbury)</b>		
Average load factor of trains (%)	59	80
Proportion of services over total capacity (%)	0	20
<b>Marple (via Hyde)</b>		
Average load factor of trains (%)	67	91
Proportion of services over total capacity (%)	0	20

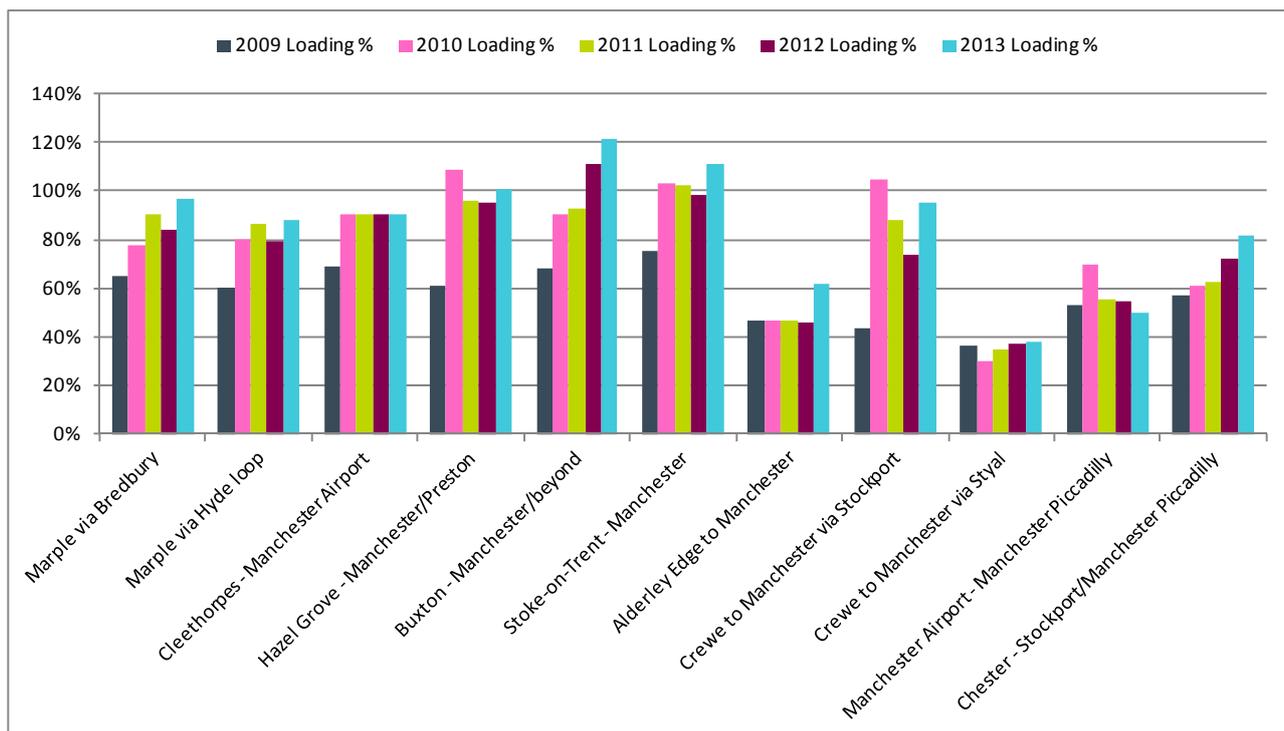
Source: Greater Manchester Rail Policy 2012-2024, TfGM.

\*Note: Forecast capacity in 2024 assumes no change in service pattern and rolling stock type

This analysis was undertaken on a corridor basis, whereby a number of services have been effectively grouped together. To further inform this study, analysis was undertaken on the level of service in the AM peak on individual train services. Loading data provided by TfGM which shows the level of services for those services passing through the Stockport Borough has been analysed to look at line loading demands and capacities. The data provides passenger loading numbers for services operating towards Manchester between 7-10am.

The loading data has been provided for a five year period: 2009-2013 and has been cross-referenced against the 2013 rolling stock capacity for the line to provide an indication of % capacity (and thus overcrowding where above 100%). For each service, the maximum loadings 'achieved' are plotted.

**Figure 11. AM Peak (3 hr) Peak Loading for services within Stockport Borough 2009-2013**



On a line by line basis this indicates how crowding has changed over the past five years and which services are the most crowded. The analysis highlighted the following:

- The majority of services are achieving passenger loadings in excess of 80%
- The Hazel Grove-Preston, Buxton-Manchester and Stoke-Manchester were all experiencing load factors of 100% or more, and as such are defined as being ‘overcrowded’.
- The services that appear to be the least crowded are the Alderley Edge and Crewe to Manchester (via Styal) service.

### 3.9. Railway Special Interest Groups

Across the UK rail network there are a number of special interest groups. Whilst some of these are more ad-hoc/ short term and relate to a particular project/ scheme, others are more permanent and its members may include local authorities.

**Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs)** are organisations whose members may include local authorities, community groups, rail user groups, Train Operating Companies (TOCs) and sometimes Network Rail. They are usually constituted as some form of community interest company or not-for-dividend partnership. Established by mutual agreement, they are typically supported by a paid officer supported by a committee of stakeholders.

CRPs are members of the national Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP), which is a federation of over 50 CRPs and rail promotion groups. Each partnership/ group focuses on practical initiatives which add up to a better, more sustainable local railway. Improved station facilities, better train services and improved integration with other forms of transport are central to the work undertaken. The Government’s Community Rail Development Strategy provides a framework for partnerships to improve the effectiveness of local railways in meeting social, environmental and economic objectives.

CRPs are funded by a number of different sources, including the Department for Transport (DfT). In addition, County and District Councils as well as Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) and Train Operating Companies in their areas all contribute to CRPs.

**Rail User Groups (RUGs)** are voluntary groups, which are generally campaign groups with an interest in a particular line and the associated services that operate along that line.

**Friends of Groups** are station specific groups, whose activities often include practical initiatives including gardening, decorating and campaigning for services to stop at the station in question. As it is the Train Operating Companies (TOCs) that are responsible for the day to day maintenance and facilities provided at stations, these groups work closely with the TOCs, and may be supported by local organisations and businesses.

Stockport MBC directly supports two CRPs by hosting a Community Rail Coordinator. These and other groups that operate within the study area include the following:

- South East Manchester Community Rail Partnership
- Crewe to Manchester Community Rail Partnership
- Goyt Valley Rail Users' Association
- Friends of Reddish South and Denton Stations

Neighbouring CRPs and Rail User Groups that impact upon Stockport and therefore have a close working relationship with the Council include The Mid Cheshire CRP (supported by Cheshire West Council and Chester Council), The High Peak and Hope Valley CRP (supported by Derbyshire County Council, High Peak Borough Council and The Peak District National Park).

These partnerships have a wealth of knowledge about local rail issues. A review of the latest publications and the associated issues/ concerns that were identified have been summarised in the following sections.

### 3.9.1. South East Manchester Community Rail Partnership

The South East Manchester CRP (SEMCORP) is supported by a wide range of friends groups and Rail User Groups, including the Goyt Valley Users' Association. For this reason the aspirations and key concerns have been summarised together, as follows:

- *Timetabling* – ensure a no skip-stopping pattern, regular intervals/ clock face departure times, enhanced Saturday services, introduce and/or enhance Sunday services, later evening services
- *New Services/ Extended Services* - Stockport- Reddish South- Denton- Droylsden- Victoria, and Stockport- Guide Bridge- West Yorkshire. An orbital rail route: Tameside to Manchester Airport
- *New stations* at Droylsden and Gamesly
- *Accessibility* - improved accessibility to stations by physical measures
- *Operations* - improve existing stations to minimum standards – safety, security, passenger access and passenger information. Ensure all stations have ticket machines (or alternative means of payment). Revenue protection – reduction in numbers of 'free-riders'
- *Customer Information* - provision of timely and correct information to customers in advance of journey and during the journey
- *Promotion* of key destinations on the railway network, including the leisure opportunities in and around Marple

The CRP's aspirations by line are summarised as follows:

- Hyde Loop (to Rose Hill)
  - retain the existing frequency
  - oppose any skip-stopping
  - aspire to later weekday and Saturday services
  - Saturday service timetable to match Mon-Fri off peak timetable
  - introduce Sunday services. In particular to recognise the leisure potential of Rose Hill with its key position on NCN55 and links with other walking and cycling routes.
  - Concerns regarding 57min gap from 09:04 to 10:01 from New Mills Central to Piccadilly during morning peak, also 40 min gap between the 08:24 and 09:04.
  - Concerns regarding 2 hour gap from Piccadilly (18:35 departure to last train 20:35).

- Bredbury/ Marple/ New Mills
  - retain the existing frequency
  - improve the Saturday service to the frequency of the weekday (Monday-Friday) service
  - oppose skip-stopping
  - later Sunday evening service.

Notes from the South East Manchester Community Rail Partnership and Goyt Valley Rail Users' Association

- Hope Valley and Sheffield Connections
  - the last train from Sheffield and Hope Valley (dep Sheffield at 22:24) goes via Stockport into Manchester. This means that the last train for the Goyt Valley line leaves Sheffield at 20:35. There is a latent demand for a later train for walkers and to support attendance at evening activities in Sheffield. Suggestion for the 22:24 ex-Sheffield to be diverted to run via Goyt Valley or extended New Mills train to Chinley to connect with Sheffield train.
- Aspire to good connections on Sunday.

### 3.9.2. Crewe to Manchester Community Rail Partnership

This partnership was established in 2007 following the disruption to train services during the engineering works associated with the upgrading of the WCML. During the works, the extended closure of services resulted in a significant reduction in patronage, at a time when there was overall growth on the rail network. The Partnership was established with the aim of promoting the line and its associated services, improving station facilities, involving the community in the railway and promoting its use by tourists. In support of improvements to the lines, the Partnership notes:

- Evidence from Passenger Focus shows that passengers are more concerned with a reliable and punctual service, rather than shorter journey times.
- The current level of service provision along the line should be maintained to encourage and grow patronage. Skip stopping (stopping at fewer stations) to reduce journey times is not supported and may result in the increased isolation of communities.
- Time saving could be made by improved rolling stock/ increases in speeds, allowing drivers to open/ close doors and improved signalling.
- The Partnership notes the Passenger Focus research that highlights the security and vulnerability issues for passengers using stations in the evening and/ or at relatively isolated stations. In view of this it supports an increased staff presence at stations. This includes the use of disused station buildings by other businesses (which could allow for additional options for ticket purchasing).
- Highlights concern over who will be responsible for assisting those with additional needs if trains are operated by drivers only.

Specific improvements to existing services include the following:

- Last evening stopping service to Crewe on Saturday night to depart later (to depart at the same time as during the week). During the week the last train departs at 23.38 however at the weekend the last train departs at 23.04)
- Timings of early evening trains from Handforth to Manchester could be altered to enable people to travel by train to get to entertainment venues by performance start times. The Friends of Group state that this is only possible by car at present.
- As the demand for employees to start work before 'normal' office hours increases, services need to adapt accordingly – in particular the Crewe- Manchester-Manchester Airport services.
- The Partnership supports the restoration of regular services from Stockport to Stalybridge (and beyond) to improve connectivity to Yorkshire and beyond. Currently there is only one service operates each week.
- Additional demand will be generated by significant housing developments near Holmes Chapel, Sandbach, Woodford and Heaton Chapel. Furthermore the site of the Chelford Market (which is currently uncertain) will impact on the demand for travel.
- The provision of a set of minimum standards for station facilities is desired, which should include information provision – a customer information system and public address system, ticket machines, shelter facilities, a help point and CCTV, disabled access and cycle storage facilities at all stations.

### 3.9.3. Friends of Reddish South and Denton Stations

The Friends of Reddish South aspire to see some of the services which currently terminate on the through platforms at Manchester Victoria be extended via Denton and Reddish South to at least Stockport/ or beyond, rather than sending all services from Victoria to Rochdale or Stalybridge. Stockport MBC is supportive of this aspiration.

In recognition of this aspiration, the group notes:

- This option will free up platform capacity at Victoria prior to the opening of Ordsall Chord
- A core objective of TfGM's LTP is that all parts of Greater Manchester have good access to central Manchester stations, which act as gateways to the national rail network. Presently the Stockport corridor does not have access to Salford Central or Victoria.
- Calder Valley services do not currently reach Manchester Piccadilly, all others do.
- There is currently no direct link between Stockport and Metrolink services to Oldham/Rochdale – this service would fulfil this requirement.
- There is currently no south facing bay platform at Stockport station so it is difficult to terminate services from the south at Stockport. One suggestion is to divert services at Heaton Norris junction via Reddish South and Denton stations into Victoria (and possibly beyond) to free up paths to Piccadilly and to support an increase in services (3-4tph to London).
- Diverted services between Stockport and Victoria can ease rail congestion at Piccadilly south and the Castlefield corridor.
- Better connectivity between Calder Valley and South Manchester.
- Park and ride option available at Denton.

## 4. Significant Impacts

### 4.1. Introduction

Over the next 15 – 20 years there are known to be a number of significant changes to the local and national rail network. These are potentially both physical infrastructure schemes and changes to the service provision/ train operators via the re-franchising process. It is important to understand these changes, and the potential impacts they may have on rail travel to/ from Stockport MBC.

These have been summarised in the following table.

**Table 12. Significant Rail Changes and the Associated Key Issues on Stockport Borough**

Potential/ Known Change	Year	Key Issues in Stockport
TfGM Committee Report for Resolution – Tram-train Strategy <sup>9</sup>	Strategy recommendations issued Nov 2013.	<p>The findings of the existing Tram-train Strategy indicate that there are two potential routes within Stockport MBC that warrant further investigation:</p> <p><b>Rose Hill/ Marple</b> – recommended as part of the Phase 1 tram-train strategy as feasibility work indicated a high value for money.</p> <p><b>Hazel Grove</b> – recommended as part of the Phase 2 tram-train strategy as the appraisal work to date indicates it is a low value for money scheme.</p> <p>Both of these routes would improve service frequency between to/ from Manchester Piccadilly &amp; the City Centre. They would also potentially free up platform space at Manchester Piccadilly.</p> <p>Feasibility work indicated that the <b>Stockport – Altrincham</b> link was low value for money. It recommends that this route is considered as part of a possible future separate study of transport to the Manchester Airport area – taking into account HS2 and the Airport City Enterprise Zone.</p> <p>As it currently stands, the strategy does not include a direct connection to Stockport Town Centre, or seek to address the lack of orbital routes.</p>
Northern and TransPennine Franchise	Early 2016	<p>Provides the opportunity to amend current service patterns As a minimum It is assumed that a level of service comparable to that operating at present be retained and built upon. Ensure that a consistent approach to Sunday services is applied – for example there are currently no Sunday services on the Rose Hill/ Marple line.</p> <p>The consultation document to this franchise was issued in June 2014, with the closing date for responses in mid-August. One of the key messages to come out of the consultation document was that the Northern subsidy is still the highest, per passenger mile, of any franchise managed by the Rail Executive. As a result of this, the document expressed a desire to deliver ‘more for less’ across the franchise.</p>
WCML franchise	Early 2017	<p>Provides the opportunity to amend current service patterns, especially with the construction of HS2. Ensure that Stockport station is still a key regional station, with all longer distance services stopping there.</p> <p>Provides the opportunity to work with Network Rail and the new franchisee to redevelop Stockport Station/ provide an integrated transport hub which supports the Station Gateway. This is building on</p>

<sup>9</sup> TfGM Committee Report for Resolution – Sub Committee Capital Projects and Policy (8 Nov 2013)

Potential/ Known Change	Year	Key Issues in Stockport
		the DfT Better Station Report (2009), and although the car parking provision issue has recently been addressed, a Masterplan for the Stockport Station area is still required.
Cross Country franchise	Late 2019	Provides the opportunity to amend current service patterns. Ensure that Stockport station is still a key regional station, with all Cross Country services stopping there. It is noted that the Norton Bridge grade separation works will be completed prior to the franchise start date. This permits an extra hourly service between Birmingham and Manchester to operate. Any such new services should include a stop at Stockport.
Northern Hub Infrastructure works	2019	<p>This package of infrastructure works aims to reduce the current rail bottleneck that occurs within Manchester. It has the potential to allow an additional 700 tpd to operate across Northern England. However, the actual operation of additional services will be an outcome of the new franchise arrangements and at this stage there are no formal commitments to the number of new services.</p> <p>One further constraint of Northern Hub is the limited platform capacity at Manchester Piccadilly.</p> <p>Network Rail has undertaken feasibility work examining the maximum service frequencies following the completion of the works. For services within our study area, this assumed the following:</p> <p><b><u>Buxton Line</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 additional train per hour Preston/ Hazel Grove</li> <li>• 1 additional train per hour to Buxton</li> </ul> <p><b><u>WCML to Stoke-on-Trent</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the existing Crewe-Manchester Airport-Manchester Piccadilly to Stoke-on-Trent</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Hope Valley line to Sheffield</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The journey time improvements on this line may provide the potential for fast/ slow services</li> </ul> <p>Through the franchising process, it is important to ensure that on each of these lines all stations should retain, as a minimum, the current service pattern. This should be built upon, incorporating the above additional services which as a minimum should stop at stations that are currently served, and where possible including additional stations.</p>
HS2 Phase One – London to Birmingham	2026	Strategic train services to London are proposed to increase from the current day 3tph to 4tph. The impact of this additional service places more stress on the network between Manchester/ Stockport and Cheadle Hulme, which already suffers from capacity constraints. Although the impact is likely to be more significant in the PM peak, this may result in reduced punctuality and reliability of stopping services at local Stockport MBC stations.

Potential/ Known Change	Year	Key Issues in Stockport
		<p>In March 2014 the new chairman of HS2 Sir David Higgins published his review of the project. This recommends that the HS2 connection to the existing WCML is at Crewe (as opposed to Lichfield). The government strongly supports this and further work is currently underway examining this proposal in more detail.</p> <p>The connection to the WCML could result in the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In order to capitalise on travel time savings, it is possible that the three Manchester-London high speed services would operate via Crewe. If this does occur, this could result in Stoke having a reduced connectivity to Stockport.</li> <li>• Given the platform capacity constraints at Manchester Piccadilly and the track and signalling constraints between Cheadle Hulme and Manchester, it is unlikely additional services could operate between Stoke and Manchester to compensate for the connectivity lost if Manchester – London services operate via Crewe.</li> <li>• The operation of the Manchester-London services via Crewe is likely to have a detrimental impact on local stopping services currently serving Crewe. It is possible that some of the current stopping services will need to be truncated at Wilmslow/ Alderley Edge due to track capacity issues.</li> </ul> <p>As a minimum Stockport should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and support the strongest case for the construction of the HS terminal at Manchester Piccadilly to be bought forward. This is required to retain the present service pattern between 2026 – 2032, and not doing so may result in the loss of existing local and regional train services in order to provide the platform capacity to accommodate the London-Manchester services.</li> <li>• Seek clarification on the impact of HS2 connecting into Crewe.</li> <li>• Develop and promote the strongest case for the track and signalling works between Cheadle Hulme and Manchester to be undertaken as soon as possible (not currently programmed in CP5). At the moment this is likely to be completed by 2025, but there is no funding commitment to undertake the works. By not undertaking the works prior to HS2 Phase One, local services are likely to suffer reduced punctuality and reliability.</li> </ul>

Potential/ Known Change	Year	Key Issues in Stockport
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Masterplan for Stockport station that considers its connectivity to Stockport Town Centre, movement through the station and the station facilities. Improvements to Stockport station are necessary prior to 2026.</li> </ul>
<p>HS2 Phase Two – Extension to Manchester &amp; Leeds</p>	<p>2033</p>	<p>With the extension of HS rail to Manchester/ Manchester Airport, Stockport station will experience a reduction in direct train services to London, from the current day 3tph (4tph with HS2 Phase1) to 1tph.</p> <p>This could be regarded as contradicting one of the key HS2 strategic policies, whereby all places with a direct London service today retain a broadly comparable, or better service after HS2 opens. The new HS platforms at Piccadilly which will accommodate the HS services, will free up some of the existing platform space.</p> <p>The Network Rail concept document which initially outlined proposals for the usage of the released capacity indicate the following new journey opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South Coast to Manchester via EWR, WCML, Stoke (fast) <i>Potential stopping points: Southampton, Winchester, Reading, Oxford, Milton Keynes, Stoke, Macclesfield, Stockport<sup>10</sup></i></li> <li>Birmingham to Manchester via Rugeley, Stoke (semi-fast) <i>Potential stopping points: Walsall, Cannock, Rugeley TV, Stoke, Macclesfield, Stockport</i></li> <li>SE Midlands/ Trent Valley to Manchester (fast) <i>Potential stopping points: Milton Keynes, Nuneaton, Tamworth/ Lichfield, Stafford, Crewe, Wilmslow</i></li> </ul> <p>All of the above proposals need, where feasible to stop at Stockport. There is currently no mention of Stockport in the SE Midlands/ Trent Valley service.</p> <p>The three proposed new long distance services mean there is no released capacity for improved local services.</p> <p>The Economic Case for HS2 summarises the released capacity assumptions that have been assumed as part of the HS2 Phase Two (PFMv4.3) business case development. The WCML Phase One and Phase Two timetable assumes the following services to/from London Euston, which are relevant to Stockport:</p>

<sup>10</sup> This service has been separately proposed for introduction in the early 2020's.

Potential/ Known Change	Year	Key Issues in Stockport
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one train per hour to Scotland via Manchester (alternating between Glasgow and Edinburgh)</li> <li>• one train per peak hour in the peak direction to/ from Manchester.</li> </ul> <p>The Cross Country service specification has been assumed to be as per the do-minimum in HS2 Phase One. Under Phase Two, additional calling points at Congleton and Macclesfield are assumed on services to Manchester.</p> <p>This then provides a service pattern as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one train per hour between Manchester and Bournemouth via Milton Keynes</li> <li>• one train per hour between Manchester and Bristol via Birmingham (with some services continuing on to Cardiff or Paignton)</li> <li>• one train per hour between Manchester and Birmingham International.</li> </ul> <p>As a minimum Stockport should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As it currently stands the classic rail service between Manchester – London is part of Scotland – London service. This has the potential to be unreliable, however it does provide a direct connection to Scotland. Due to potential reliability issues it is recommended that Stockport continue to support the GMCA proposal to split the service.</li> <li>• Potential mitigation measures for the loss in the level of Stockport-London services include the construction of a Metrolink Line between Manchester Airport and Stockport Town Centre.</li> <li>• Whilst the Government conditionally supports the proposed HS2 station at Manchester Airport, it is subject to agreeing a suitable funding package with the airport and the wider region. It is recommended that Stockport continue to work with the GMCA to support the inclusion of the station at the Airport.</li> <li>• The recent Higgins Report <i>Rebalancing Britain</i> recommends investigating the possibility of operating a classic compatible service to Stoke-on-Trent, Macclesfield, Stockport and Manchester via the Handsacre link. Stockport are supportive of this and should work with the GMCA to support further investigation into this.</li> </ul> <p>In his report, “Rebalancing Britain”, Sir David Higgins recommended that the government ask HS2 to look at the possibility of running classic-compatible services to Stoke-on-Trent, Macclesfield, and Stockport to Manchester via the Handsacre Link from HS2 to the West Coast Main Line. That would offer a service</p>

Potential/ Known Change	Year	Key Issues in Stockport
		from Stockport to London that would in some important respects be superior to that available from accessing HS2 via stations at either Manchester Airport or Manchester Piccadilly.
One North – A Proposition for an Interconnected North	2030	<p>This document, issued in July 2014, outlines a set of proposals led by the city regions of Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield. This is in response to the Higgins Report, HS2 Plus, which identified the need for city regions in the north to come together to develop a strategic transport plan integrating HS2 with the existing rail network.</p> <p>One North proposed a new east-west high-speed rail link for the North – essentially a new Trans-Pennine route and a faster route to Newcastle, providing additional capacity and better connectivity. Stockport to continue to support this initiative.</p>
New Stations		<p>Stockport's Core Strategy DPD lists the following potential new stations - Cheadle, Adswold, Stepping Hill Hospital and Simpsons Corner/ High Lane. Most recently further work has been undertaken on the potential for a new station at High Lane as part of the A6 Corridor Study. Cheshire East has aspirations for a new village at Handforth East. The A34 Corridor Study identified a long list of potential interventions for further investigation – including a new station between Handforth and Cheadle Hulme.</p> <p>Stockport to continue to support these new stations.</p>
Airport City		<p>In 2011 Manchester Airport was confirmed as one of the Government's Enterprise Zones – namely – one of 21 sites across the UK identified as a hub for economic growth and employment.</p> <p>The Airport is a major contributor to the region's economy. It is vital for Stockport to ensure that there are adequate public transport linkages between the Airport/ Airport City, to promote access to both the international market and the development area at the Airport.</p>

## 5. Metrolink and Tram-train

### 5.1. Introduction

Stockport Council has a long held ambition and vision to bring Metrolink/ tram-train to Stockport, both to the town centre and to other destinations within Stockport. Connecting Stockport Town Centre to the Metrolink network would complement the existing rail and public transport connections, whilst providing new and improved connectivity to other areas in Greater Manchester including Media City and Trafford.

Stockport already has strong economic ties with its neighbouring authorities including Trafford, Tameside and Manchester, providing employment opportunities within Stockport but also with Stockport residents being employed in adjoining authorities. Further improvements to transport connectivity between these areas will improve economic opportunities for residents and businesses in Stockport.

Similarly, connecting the Stockport Town Centre to other District Centres within Stockport would provide an enhanced connectivity to the town centre, across the borough, and to neighbouring authorities including Manchester City. This provides improved accessibility to employment and educational opportunities and could be a driver for further economic growth.

### 5.2. SEMMMS

The South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy (SEMMMS) recommended the proposed extension of Metrolink from the Phase 3 Airport Line (a recently completed scheme) at Hough End to Stockport Bus Station.

A number of other Metrolink proposals were examined within the study, with it recommending that TfGM, working with Stockport MBC, the City of Manchester, Network Rail and other stakeholders, to undertake feasibility assessments of:

- an extension of Metrolink beyond Stockport to serve Portwood, Bredbury, Romiley and Rose Hill. Such an extension would require shared running with heavy rail services beyond Romiley and the interoperability of Metrolink and conventional rail services (potentially passenger and freight) will need to be demonstrated.
- a link between Stockport and the Wythenshawe Loop (which forms part of the Metrolink Phase 3 Airport extension). Such a route would utilise the operational New Mills to Heaton Mersey freight line through the Mersey Valley and shared running with heavy rail services will be required. In this case interoperability between Metrolink and rail freight traffic will be required.

The SEMMMS Strategy envisaged that the above network extensions would facilitate services to operate from Rose Hill via Stockport to the Airport, and Rose Hill via Stockport to Manchester City Centre and potentially beyond.

### 5.3. Metrolink and Tram-Train

In Greater Manchester, Metrolink has been developed by converting existing railway lines and disused rail alignments and building new on-street embedded rails. Metrolink therefore currently runs on a separate network to heavy rail, with an operating system managed on behalf of TfGM. The concept of a Metrolink type service utilising currently active heavy rail lines, which would continue to be used by trains as well as a Metrolink service that could also use the on-street rails, has been discussed for a number of years. This type of operation is referred to as 'tram-train'.

Tram-train is currently used in several locations in mainland Europe, and a pilot project in Sheffield was commissioned by the Department of Transport to consider the potential of adopting this approach in the United Kingdom. The pilot project is considering the technical issues but the actual running of a tram on a railway has been delayed several times. The most recent timescale is to start running sometime in 2016.

The Greater Manchester Metrolink is of a different design to the Sheffield trams and as such it is anticipated there may be fewer technical issues. The outcome of the pilot is expected to influence the prospects for tram-train elsewhere in the UK.

In the Stockport area the introduction of the tram-train concept would enable the use of underutilised rail lines, thereby potentially reducing the capital cost of transport schemes. It would potentially enable existing rail networks to be expanded by creating new on-street sections, which connect into the existing Metrolink network and improving transport connectivity across Greater Manchester.

## 5.4. Strategic Opportunities

The provision of new Metrolink / tram-train lines provides the opportunity to improve connectivity both radially into the City Centre, and orbitally around the southern parts of Greater Manchester. There are significant economic linkages between Stockport, Trafford and Tameside, with residents in these areas seeking employment opportunities in the adjacent authorities. At the present time there are strong road connections via the M60 but very weak public transport opportunities.

Manchester Airport is already a key employment site for Stockport residents and the opportunities with the development of Airport City and the growth of the airport emphasise the need for enhanced connectivity. The opportunities provided by the Airport/ Airport City's economic growth need to be supported by enhanced public transport links from the surrounding area, and a potential link from East Manchester and/ or Tameside via Stockport to the airport will support their growth ambitions. In the longer term a similar link from Marple to Stockport and the airport and onto Altrincham would also enhance connectivity and accessibility within the area.

The opportunity exists to develop a Southern Manchester network for tram-train to link East Manchester and/ or Tameside, Trafford and Manchester Airport with Stockport as its hub. This network could be enhanced by additional links to/ from Marple and Hazel Grove, all utilising existing railway lines where capacity exists, but diverting onto new or existing on-street running to create the connectivity and bypass capacity pinchpoints.

This network would support the growth ambitions for Stockport town centre, which wants to enhance its employment, leisure and retail facilities and it would also provide a link between Stockport's rail and bus stations creating significant interchange opportunities for Southern Manchester.

## 5.5. Route Opportunities

There are many opportunities for Metrolink in the Stockport area to address the issues outlined in this report. These issues include the over-reliance on heavy rail as the sole rapid transport mode into the Regional Centre, limited connectivity between Stockport and its district centres, lack of direct rail connectivity between Stockport – Manchester Airport and into Tameside and West Yorkshire. Metrolink investment in Stockport has the potential to maximise the borough's economic potential and unique characteristics which include:

- A rail-served Manchester radial corridor in the north of the borough with potential for substantial improvement in frequency and city-centre access.
- Under-utilised railway lines radiating north-eastwards and westwards from the town centre running through well-populated residential areas.
- A major inter-urban railway station located on the fringe of the town centre, well away from major roads, and hence difficult to serve well by bus.
- Major redevelopment works planned within Stockport Town Centre, generating additional jobs and thus demand for transport.
- Proximity to the busiest UK airport outside the London area, which has plans to transform its surrounding area into a multi-purpose regional hub, and which is the location of the Greater Manchester Enterprise Zone. That transformation will require a corresponding transformation in the modes of transport used to access Manchester Airport and its surrounding area.

Metrolink in Stockport has the potential to utilise several existing (but under-utilised) railway lines. Most of those routes will need to continue in use by heavy-rail trains, either passenger or freight or both. Therefore Metrolink in Stockport will require tram-train operation which, in the context of Greater Manchester, means Metrolink services sharing track with heavy-rail trains. It is expected that tram-train services in Greater Manchester would provide an identical service to the customer to those involving exclusive operation by Metrolink vehicles. Therefore in this report the term "Metrolink" will be used to include those Metrolink services involving tram-train operation.

The following sections provide a narrative on each of the Metrolink options considered by TfGM to date in Stockport. A plan indicating the alignments of each of these options is provided in **Figure 11**.

### **5.5.1. Manchester to Marple and Stockport Town Centre via Belle Vue**

Manchester – Marple Metrolink would replace local rail services on the Manchester – Marple via Bredbury line with a more frequent service that would access the heart of Manchester City Centre. A further benefit of the scheme is that it contributes to relieving platform capacity constraints to Manchester Piccadilly, since the scheme would enter Piccadilly via the Metrolink platforms.

The route from Manchester to Marple would not serve Stockport Town Centre. There is however potential for a Stockport Town Centre branch of the Manchester – Marple line to be created utilising the Stockport – Stalybridge line south of Reddish. A high-level feasibility study has previously been carried out for that section of route and a provisional alignment identified.

A potential service pattern for a Manchester to Marple and Stockport via Belle Vue service would be:

- 5tph Manchester – Belle Vue - Bredbury – Marple Rose Hill
- 5tph Manchester – Belle Vue – Reddish South – Stockport.

Services could alternate so that a six minute headway service would be operational on the busiest inner-urban section of route between Reddish North and Manchester City Centre. The additional capacity provided by Manchester - Stockport services is expected to avoid the need to increase service-frequency on the Manchester – Marple service beyond 5tph. Remaining heavy-rail services via Marple to Manchester would route via the Hyde Loop.

The Manchester – Belle Vue – Stockport route would provide the following links not presently served by Metrolink:

- Manchester City Centre to South Reddish, eastern Heaton Chapel, and Heaton Norris
- Stockport Town Centre to Reddish and Belle Vue.

A further possibility utilising the proposed section of Metrolink route between Stockport and Reddish would be a direct link from Stockport to Tameside, possibly terminating in Ashton Town Centre.

### **5.5.2. Stockport West**

This group of routes would utilise the Stockport – Altrincham railway line west of Stockport Town Centre, which would be restored to a double-track formation with new stops being added in residential areas. A new section of Metrolink route would be created from Stockport Interchange to the start of the Stockport – Altrincham railway line immediately south of Edgeley Junction. That would include a new stop adjacent to Stockport Station, fulfilling a long-held aspiration to provide a direct public transport link between Stockport Station and Stockport Interchange.

Stockport West comprises the following group of routes:

- Stockport to Manchester Airport via Baguley
- Stockport to Altrincham via Baguley
- Stockport to East Didsbury (connecting into the existing Metrolink network and continuing to Manchester City Centre)

The main driver for the Stockport – Airport route is the expected transformation of Manchester Airport and its surrounding area into a multi-purpose regional economic hub. That will require a step-change in the proportion of trips to/from the area using non-car modes. A high proportion of trips travel to the area is from distances greater than 8km, for which stopping bus services cannot usually provide an attractive alternative to car travel, even with ambitious bus priority measures. TfGM indicated that there are many trips to the Airport that currently originate in or near Stockport.

The route to the Airport would be achieved by a new curve at Baguley linking the Stockport – Altrincham line with the planned Manchester Airport Western Loop Metrolink line. TfGM has indicated that it expects many trips accessing the Manchester Airport area would interchange onto Metrolink from bus and heavy rail in

Stockport Town Centre. The route would also facilitate access from its residential catchment to the national rail network at Stockport Station and at the proposed HS2 Station near Manchester Airport.

A Stockport – Altrincham service would connect residential areas on the Stockport – Altrincham corridor with both of their main local centres. The residential areas expected to benefit from new stops include Adswold, Cheadle Heath, Cheadle, and Gatley. The service would also improve the link between Altrincham and Stockport and its onward inter-urban rail connections.

In the short term, prior to the provision of Metrolink services, it is recommended that improved rail services along the Chester – Stockport line (increase to 2tph) are investigated. If those service improvements are implemented, there will be an opportunity to prepare business cases for potential new stations at both Cheadle and Baguley.

Plans for a Metrolink route from Stockport to East Didsbury, and onwards to Manchester City Centre have existed since the late 1990s. Following the same alignment from Stockport Town Centre as the proposed Stockport – Airport service provides construction cost savings. This southern route from Stockport to East Didsbury would join the Hazel Grove to Sharston freight line via a new junction at Cheadle Heath, and then cross the River Mersey via a new alignment to East Didsbury. This has the potential to provide a new stop at Gorseley Bank, providing sustainable transport access to the proposed new development site. This route would provide Metrolink services to Manchester City Centre from the Edgeley and Adswold areas, and would provide much-improved connections from Stockport to Didsbury, Chorlton and Salford Quays and Trafford Park.

An earlier Metrolink route between Stockport and East Didsbury followed an alignment close to the River Mersey, terminating at Stockport Interchange. More recent work has indicated that the southern route offers better value for money than the Mersey route, not least because of the cost-savings from sharing the alignment of other Stockport West routes. The case for the southern route compared with the Mersey route has become stronger as plans for development of the Airport area have evolved.

With both the Manchester – Belle Vue – Marple/ Stockport and Stockport West routes built, a Manchester – Belle Vue – Stockport – Airport service could operate. This route would combine radial and orbital elements and could potentially be developed in the longer term into a more extensive orbital Metrolink system, for example by extending northwards beyond Reddish to Ashton-under-Lyne.

### 5.5.3. Hazel Grove to East Didsbury

The Hazel Grove to East Didsbury tram-train route would form an extension to the Manchester to East Didsbury Metrolink line, and would result in a Manchester – Hazel Grove Metrolink service. It would utilise the following rail/ Metrolink lines:

- New Metrolink line from East Didsbury to Gorseley Bank, crossing the river Mersey to join the rail (presently freight only) line at a point north of the M60; and
- Existing rail (presently freight only Sharston to Hazel Grove line) redoubled from Gorseley Bank to Hazel Grove.

It is envisaged that new stops would be provided at Gorseley Bank, Edgeley Lane, Davenport and Woodsmoor. The section of the scheme between East Didsbury and the existing Stockport-Altrincham rail line is identical to that proposed in the Stockport West group of routes, offering cost savings if both schemes were progressed.

This service would not replace the existing heavy rail service but further work would be needed to define the appropriate mix of Metrolink and local rail services between Manchester and Hazel Grove.

### 5.5.4. Stockport to Marple

Three corridors have previously been assessed between Stockport and Marple, all of which utilised the existing Marple (via Bredbury) rail line. Two options broadly followed the existing M60 alignment towards Stockport and the third option used the existing rail corridor via Reddish South.

Previous work has indicated that each of the Stockport to Marple options offered low value for money. However this option remains a long term aspiration of Stockport's.

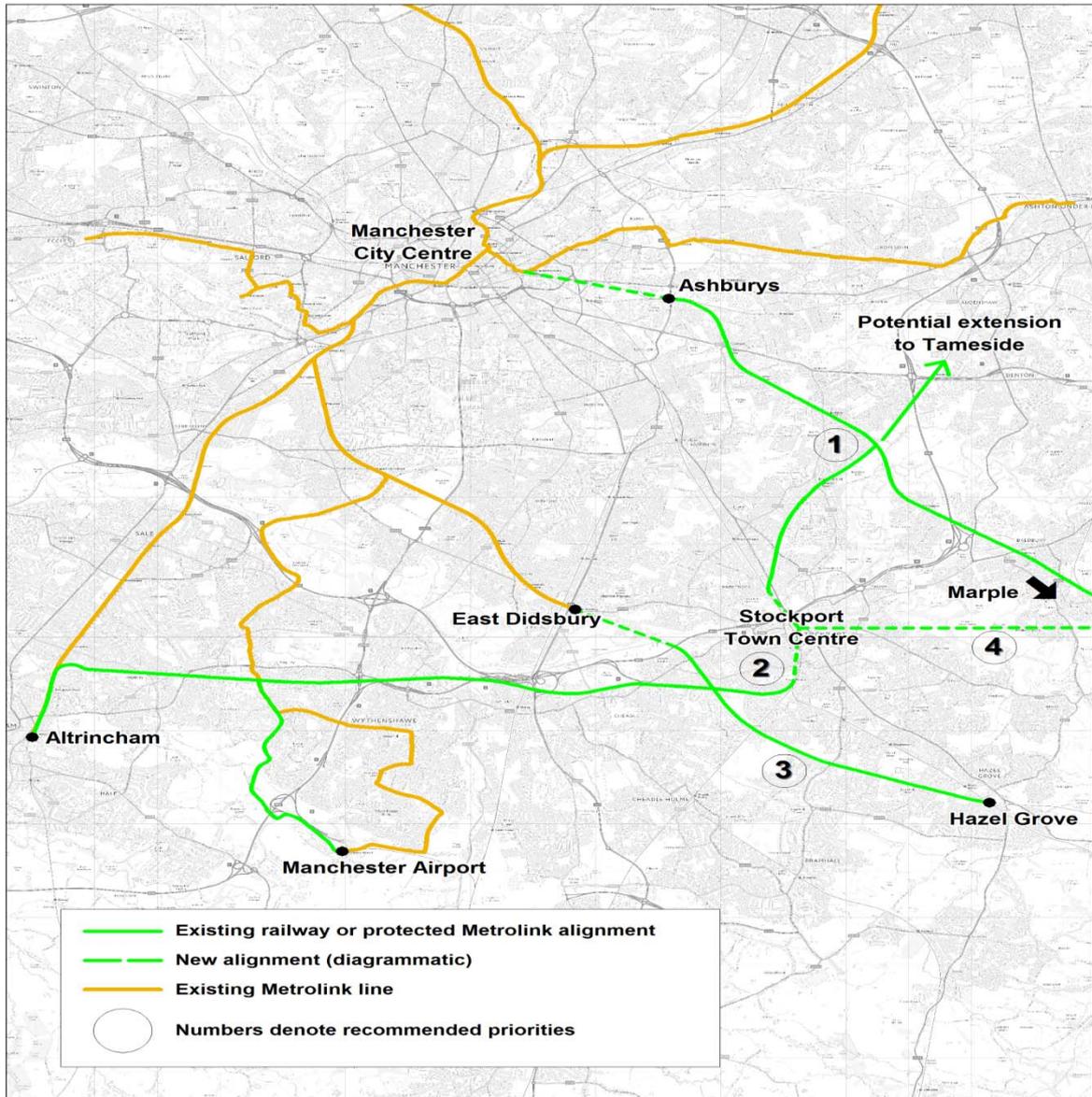
The potential Metrolink route alignments are shown in **Figure 12**.

## 5.6. Metrolink: The Way Ahead

As documented in a separate technical note, since 2011 various options for expanding Metrolink to Stockport have been assessed. However, the value for money assessment only provides part of the picture when preparing a case for new transport infrastructure. Wider, more contextual factors need to be considered, including whether the scheme facilitates development/ the regeneration of an area, or if it provides improved connectivity to an area by creating a new transport corridor.

In order to provide greater insight into the merits of each of the options, further work is recommended to estimate feasibility, costs, and benefits on all proposed Metrolink routes serving the Stockport Borough.

**Figure 12. The Potential Metrolink Route Alignments**



## 6. Development of Study Objectives

The collation of the Evidence Base highlighted that Stockport supports a population with an above average level of economic activity. Its residents are well educated and this, combined with the economic activity rates result in an above average wage rate for its residents. These factors mean that Stockport is an important contributor to the regional economy. If Stockport is to have sustained economic growth and continue to contribute at this level, it needs to build upon the regeneration work that is currently being undertaken in the town centre. Improving the levels of accessibility to the town centre, and the A6 corridor will facilitate economic growth via the agglomeration benefits of improved access to labour markets and associated cost savings to businesses.

The existing rail services provide linkages into Manchester City Centre, with Stockport station offering a variety of services to key regional and national cities. However, across Stockport itself, a number of the District Centres do not have a direct rail connection to Stockport station. Census data indicates that more than 50% of Stockport's residents work within Stockport, highlighting that travel within the borough is just as important as connections to other key employment centres.

One of the key themes of this strategy is planning for future growth via the connection of people to jobs and business markets. Given the town centre developments and the Manchester Airport Enterprise Zone, the town centre and Stockport station, as well as improved linkages to the airport should arguably be the focal point for its Rail Strategy. Improvements to Stockport station and connectivity enhancements via new orbital transport corridors that link the town centre and the station to its District Centres and neighbouring key employment centres (e.g. Manchester Airport) would support and encourage sustained economic growth.

Following the collation of the data that forms the Evidence Base, in line with Stockport's overarching development principles from the Stockport Strategy 2020 and the key strategy themes, development objectives for the Stockport Rail Strategy were developed. These are summarised as follows:

- **Promote economic growth and prosperity** – contribute to Stockport MBC's economic priorities, notably the creation of new jobs via improved rail connectivity to local employment centres and key development/regeneration areas, such as Stockport Town Centre and the Manchester Airport Enterprise Zone. Improved linkages to the airport provide increased accessibility to a key international gateway, which is one of the regions significant generators of economic growth.
- **Support and encourage sustainable travel patterns** – improve the attractiveness of public transport by building upon the existing rail services and station facilities. This can be achieved via increased reliability of services and accessibility to stations, thereby reducing the reliance on car travel. This supports the use of lower carbon travel, and has associated societal impacts such as improved air quality and road safety, along with a reduction in congestion.
- **Maintain and promote effective regional and national connectivity** – Central to Stockport's economic success is its proximity to both Manchester City Centre and Manchester Airport, and the current high levels of connectivity to the wider region, namely regional centres in the north, Birmingham and London. The existing level of connectivity needs to be maintained, and built upon to facilitate connecting people to jobs and business markets, thereby promoting and driving economic growth.

These objectives were used to develop the Rail Strategy, which is summarised in the following section.

# 7. Strategy

## 7.1. Introduction

Rail is a key component to the economic vitality of the Borough of Stockport, its centres and its communities. The high proportion of rail commuting in and around the borough reflects the fact that its economic fortunes have been heavily shaped by its rail network:

- Stockport town centre benefits from a position on the national rail network, offering frequent connections to key national and regional destinations across the country, providing it with a highly competitive offer compared to similar centres across England;
- The borough developed a 20th century network of densely populated neighbourhoods along key radial rail corridors from Manchester city centre, establishing a strong rail-based commuter relationship with the city centre that remains today; and
- The dense nature of neighbourhoods across the borough presents a strong potential market base for future rail network development.

This understanding forms the basis of this strategy. The strategy aims to secure resilience around the borough's current rail network, recognising that its prominence on that network also brings challenges in managing the balance of demand for local rail travel and longer distance travel through the borough. The strategy also seeks to build the case for further network development looking forwards over the next 10-20 years, as part of the establishment of Greater Manchester at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse.

The **Greater Manchester Local Economic Assessment: Stockport** report produced for the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities in November 2010 indicated that Stockport is one of Greater Manchester's strongest districts with a robust economy and strong quality of life offer. The economy within Stockport has enjoyed a sustained period of growth over recent years and has a high employment rate with over a third of the population qualified to degree level or above.

Whilst Stockport has seen sustained economic growth it remains vital to ensure that Stockport's residents, and in particular those from more deprived areas, have access to employment and education opportunities within the borough and across to adjacent authorities. Given the extensive rail network that exists in the borough, clearly rail can and does play a vital role in providing such access.

Stockport Town Centre was ranked fifth in the North West in Experian's 2004 Retail Centre Report. The town centre is an area of significant importance to the sustainability of the borough. The focal point for commercial, cultural and civic activities, the area also is an important sub-regional retail and commercial centre. In addition, the town centre forms an important transportation interchange and a focus for leisure, educational and increasingly residential uses. The importance of the town centre is further reinforced with the Regeneration Strategy, which identified it as being the focal point for the local economy with a package of improvement measures scheduled to start in 2015. The development plans aim to improve access to the Town Centre, providing direct access to some key development sites. It is envisaged that an additional 5,000 jobs will be created within the town centre due to the overall package of improvements.

### Key Strategic Objectives and Delivery Themes

A successful rail system and network is vital to both the success of Stockport and the wider Greater Manchester conurbation. There are presently 19 of the Greater Manchester stations which fall within the borough of Stockport. These stations account for almost one quarter of all rail demand within Greater Manchester, excluding the central Manchester station demand. Combined with the regional and national connectivity that Stockport station offers, this demonstrates the importance and reliance that Stockport places on rail. As redevelopment plans within Stockport Town Centre are progressed, improving linkages between the station and the town centre, this reliance is likely to increase.

The Rail Strategy for Stockport has identified three over-arching objectives that it seeks to deliver to support Stockport Councils priorities for the borough.

- **Promote economic growth and prosperity** – contribute to Stockport MBC’s economic priorities, notably the creation of new jobs via improved rail connectivity to local employment centres and key development/regeneration areas, such as Stockport Town Centre, Manchester City Centre, Media City and the Manchester Airport Enterprise Zone. Improved linkages to the airport provide increased accessibility to a key international gateway, which is one of the regions significant generators of economic growth.
- **Support and encourage sustainable travel patterns** – improve the attractiveness of public transport by building upon the existing rail services and station facilities. This can be achieved via increased reliability of services and accessibility to stations, thereby reducing the reliance on car travel. This supports the use of lower carbon travel, and has associated societal impacts such as improved air quality and road safety, along with a reduction in congestion.
- **Maintain and promote effective regional and national connectivity** – Central to Stockport’s economic success is its proximity to both Manchester City Centre and Manchester Airport, and the current high levels of connectivity to the wider region, namely regional centres in the north, Birmingham and London. The existing level of connectivity needs to be maintained, and built upon to facilitate connecting people to jobs and business markets, thereby promoting and driving economic growth

In support of the over-arching objectives, the strategy has developed six key delivery themes to guide the ongoing rail development work in Stockport and future responses to consultation.

- **Enhanced connectivity** - In the first instance this should focus on maintaining the existing connectivity and service levels, at a local, regional and national level. Where feasible, improvements to journey times, service frequencies and availability of connections to make end-to-end journey times quicker. Where warranted, new stations should be assessed to increase the catchment areas of rail, thereby improving its connectivity.
- **Capacity improvements** – the provision of services and rolling stock which meet passenger demand without compromising the quality of the journey experience (typically observed through overcrowding).
- **Cost effectiveness** – fares need to ensure good value for money whilst providing a revenue stream which can support the running costs of services as well as on-going development of the network.
- **Network coherence** – networks should be simplified both through visual representation and unified fare structures and ticketing to provide a user-friendly system that is attractive to existing and new users. Multi-modal interchange arrangements at rail stations should be simplified and better managed to allow for ease of transition between rail-bus, rail-tram, rail-walk and rail-cycle modes.
- **Accessible stations with appropriate well maintained facilities**– maintaining and improving station facilities including parking and accessibility improvements will encourage usage. It is also important to improve access to stations by all modes to increase the attractiveness of rail travel as a mode of choice and developing Station Travel Plans will facilitate this. There are also active Community Rail Partnerships and Station Adoptions Groups with whom it is important to maintain engagement and support / promote their activities.
- **Planning for future growth** – the focus of rail improvements must support wider economic, environmental and social policy goals to connect people to jobs and businesses to markets. Track improvements should be targeted towards accommodating economically worthwhile passenger and freight movements.

The rail network in Stockport will be subject to a number of changes in future years and the following sections identify these opportunities and the priority activities which would assist Stockport to influence these changes in a beneficial manner, in accordance with overarching objectives and key themes.

## 7.2. Rail Commuting in Stockport: Our Priorities for the 2015/ 16 Franchise Process

### 7.2.1. Introduction

Both the existing rail service provision, and the facilities provided at stations are the responsibility of train operating companies (TOCs). All of the existing train services that operate within Stockport Borough currently form part of the one of the three franchises that are being renewed over the next five years.

The consultation document for the TransPennine Express (TPE) and Northern Rail Franchises was published on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014 with the closing date for responses by the 18<sup>th</sup> August 2014. The main purpose of the consultation was to:

- Inform stakeholders of the planned process and timescales for awarding the TPE and Northern franchises;
- Provide stakeholders with background information about the current TPE and Northern services and the strategic planning and transport context of the new franchises;
- Advise stakeholders and potential funders of the objectives and expectations for the franchises;
- Give stakeholders an opportunity to comment on the requirements that might be included in the base case specifications and the options that might be considered; and
- Invite potential funders to formally notify Rail Executive of any changes they may wish to purchase.

In terms of the Northern Franchise the consultation document states that whilst the subsidy has been falling since 2008/09 the Northern subsidy is still the highest, per passenger mile, of any franchise managed by the Rail Executive. Revenues only represent 36% of turnover and in 2012/13 the franchise received financial support to the value of £324 million.

As a result of the high subsidy levels on Northern a key message coming out of the consultation is that there is a desire to deliver 'more for less' across the franchise. Therefore a number of trade-offs are proposed in the document including improving rolling stock at the expense of reducing lightly used services and reducing ticket office hours and station staffing levels. In addition the document proposes potentially reducing service frequencies where demand is low and reducing the number of station stops at stations with low patronage.

In terms of the South TransPennine service the consultation document states that the improvements delivered by the Northern Hub investment programme will facilitate the introduction of an additional train per hour between Manchester and Sheffield, via Stockport, resulting in three trains per hour. This new service could either operate to/ from Manchester Airport or Liverpool and the question is asked within the document as to whether the ultimate destination should be specified or left as a commercial decision by the operator.

### 7.2.2. Existing Rail Services

The new franchises provide the opportunity for service pattern amendments. However there is pressure to reduce the rail subsidy – particularly for the Northern & TransPennine franchise. The opportunity to amend service patterns also includes challenges to ensure that the existing service and stopping pattern is retained. Where feasible, new or improved services may be implemented, in particular following the completion of the Northern Hub infrastructure works. These could include additional services to Buxton and Hazel Grove, both of which were recommendations of the A6 Corridor Study.

Not all train lines currently serving Stockport stations have Sunday services. This inconsistency seems to be due to historical reasons and a review of the level of Sunday service provision is required.

Stockport aspires to retain the existing service pattern and associated stopping patterns, and to improve/ build upon these where feasible – including extended evening and weekend services, and additional services where the infrastructure permits.

The re-opening of the Reddish South line remains an aspiration of Stockport MBC. However feasibility work that has been undertaken to date by TfGM concluded that an increased provision of heavy rail services at Reddish South is not currently viable. Stockport aspire to see an improved service along this line, whether it be a Metrolink service as part of the Marple/ Rose Hill package, or an extension of the services which currently terminate on the through platforms at Manchester Victoria to continue via Denton and Reddish South to at least Stockport/ or beyond.

### 7.2.3. Station Facilities

All of the stations within the Stockport MBC boundary are operated by Northern Rail, with the exception of Stockport station, which is operated by Virgin trains. As outlined in **Section 3**, this means that for the stations within the study area, Northern Rail and Virgin trains (at Stockport station) are responsible for the day to day maintenance and the provision of passenger facilities to ensure the safety of passengers.

A desk top review of the station facilities identified that many of the stations do not conform to a minimum set of standards, whereby it is recommended that all stations have the following facilities:

- Cycle storage
- CCTV/ lighting
- Step free access
- On screen customer information
- Public Address System
- Self-service ticket machine

A summary of the stations which conform to these minimum standards is provided in **Appendix A**. This identifies the stations where investment is required in order to ensure that a set of key station standards – including access by cyclists, personal security, DDA access, customer information and ticket machines – are conformed to.

### 7.2.4. Priorities

The Northern & TransPennine franchise provides the opportunity to engage in debate over the service provision. As a minimum it is assumed that a level of service comparable to that operating at present be retained and built upon to expand service provision.. A consistent approach to Sunday services is required to develop the potential for off-peak rail travel.

Stockport aspire to see an improved service along the Reddish South line, as either a Metrolink service as part of the Marple/ Rose Hill package, or in the short term as an extension of the existing heavy rail services.

The West Coast Mainline (WCML) franchise provides the opportunity to ensure Stockport is still a key regional station with all longer distance services stopping there. The continued development of Stockport station, and its surrounds, through a Masterplanning exercise should be supported by the new franchisee.

The Cross Country franchise is being renewed in 2019. Like the WCML franchise, this provides the opportunity to ensure that Stockport is still a key regional station, with all relevant Cross Country services stopping there. Any new services that may commence as they become feasible due to engineering works, e.g. the Stafford Norton Bridge works, should where feasible, stop at Stockport.

It is the responsibility of the TOCs to ensure that station facilities conform to appropriate levels of accessibility and safety. The up and coming franchise processes offer the opportunity to ensure that all of the stations within Stockport undertake an appropriate level of maintenance and conform to a basic set of standards associated with passenger security, customer information, DDA access and so on.

More generally the development of station travel plans are recommended, whereby the overall accessibility of each station is considered with recommendations for improvement. This should be undertaken in conjunction with SMBC, the train operator, CRPs, Station Adoption Groups and other passenger groups along with bus and taxi operators, cycling groups and other interested parties to develop and agree a coordinated approach to delivering the station travel plan and its associated objectives.

The A6 Corridor Study identified a range of short, medium and long term recommendations to progress. These included the provision of half hourly services throughout the day to Hazel Grove and Buxton, following the completion of the Northern Hub works. It highlighted that peak hour capacity increases will be necessary on the Buxton line, and recommended that in the long term feasibility work is undertaken into the electrification of the Buxton line.

Station Adoption Groups have evolved from the Community Rail Partnerships, and are the process by which individuals or organisations from outside the railway industry are involved in the management and/or operation of a station. Typically a key aim of the group is to improve the ambience of the station and its environs, thereby

making it safer, more secure and more attractive and thereby encouraging more people to use it. These groups have been very successful in transforming station environments, a good example in Stockport is the work undertaken by the Friends of Heaton Chapel Station since 2011. It is recommended that Stockport continue to support and promote all of the work undertaken by Station Adoption Groups, where appropriate increasing the number of 'adopted stations' within the borough.

The Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) have a wealth of knowledge about local rail issues and play an important role in focussing on practical initiatives with the aim of contributing to a better, more sustainable local railway. It is recommended that Stockport continue to support and promote the CRPs in the area.

### **Existing Rail Services & Station Facilities**

#### **Support and work with TfGM to:**

- **As a minimum it is assumed that a level of service comparable to that operating at present be retained and built upon; where feasible build upon this to expand the existing provision, particularly where the Northern Hub infrastructure works permits new/ improved service opportunities.**
- **Ensure a consistent approach is adopted to the provision of Sunday services.**
- **Continue to support and promote the strongest case for an increased utilisation of the Reddish South line.**
- **Develop and promote the strongest case through the franchise process to ensure that a minimum set of station standards are adhered to, including appropriate levels of maintenance.**
- **Support and promote the development of station travel plans for each of the stations within Stockport.**
- **Continue to support and progress the A6 Corridor Study recommendations for half hourly services to Hazel Grove and Buxton, and ultimately feasibility work into the electrification of the Buxton line.**
- **Continue to support and promote 'Station Adoption Groups' across the borough.**
- **Continue to support and promote the Community Rail Partnerships in the area including the South East Manchester, Crewe to Manchester, Mid Cheshire and High Peak to Hope Valley Community Rail Partnerships.**

## 7.3. Stockport Railway Station

### 7.3.1. Background

Stockport Station is located within Stockport's Town Centre, and currently forms part of the Town Centre's redevelopment, which is focussing on access to both the town centre and the wider A6 corridor. The station connects local residents and businesses to the rail network, including the national network via the West Coast Mainline (WCML) services. The rail network provides a vital link to key national economic centres including London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds. Accessibility to the Town Centre and its associated linkages to other major centres assists Stockport in the vital role it plays when contributing to the Greater Manchester economy.

The importance of Stockport Station is further enhanced by the fact that it has a wider than average catchment area (estimated at over 1.5 million people), including the north of the Greater Manchester conurbation and West Yorkshire, as well as its traditional hinterland of north Cheshire East and parts of Derbyshire. The proximity to the M60 and the effective connectivity that the station offers play a significant role in the station catchment size.

The role of the station is demonstrated by the number of passengers using it. Official ticket sales data as supplied by the Office of Rail Regulator (ORR) indicates that the patronage levels at Stockport station are in excess of 3.3 million (excluding interchange passengers) for the year ending April 2013. This makes it the busiest station in Greater Manchester outside of Manchester City Centre. Passenger figures at Stockport station grew at approximately 13% over the previous three years, on par with the national growth in rail passengers. However, anecdotally it is recognised that a significant proportion of the Manchester – London rail market reside within the Stockport station catchment, and choose to board/ alight at Stockport instead of Manchester Piccadilly for convenience reasons. This is not necessarily reflected in the ticketing data as passengers may board at Stockport, despite purchasing a ticket from Manchester Piccadilly. Historically survey data has highlighted that the actual number of journeys from Stockport station to/ from London is 35% higher than that suggested by the ticket data.

Stockport Station is the rail passenger's first impression of Stockport and possibly of Greater Manchester. Overall, the passenger facilities at Stockport station and the general appearance of the infrastructure are significantly below the quality which should be expected at a (Network Rail) classified 'Category B' station, which is '*large station providing a gateway to the rail network from a large area*'. This observation is further reinforced when the facilities and legibility of Stockport and Crewe stations are compared. Crewe station performs a similar function to Stockport station, however it has superior waiting and refreshment facilities, as well as enhanced legibility.

Station improvements and its linkages with the Town Centre/ wider A6 corridor and the bus station will enhance the role of Stockport Station as a key stop for all regional rail services; thereby providing one of the foundations to enable the borough to continue to grow and to play a key role in the region's economic wellbeing.

Some of these improvements are already underway. As part of the Stockport Exchange development, the opening of the 1,000 space multi-storey car park in February 2014 has substantially improved the quality and accessibility of car parking adjacent to Stockport station.

### 7.3.2. Priorities

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) recognises the importance of Stockport Station, and has long understood the need to capitalise on this important asset. It is essential that the Council continues to work with Network Rail and the franchise operator to redevelop the station, with the aim of providing an integrated transport hub that supports the Station Gateway. A Master-planning exercise is required to develop and upgrade Stockport Station holistically, such that all implemented measures complement each other. As a minimum this should consider the following potential station improvements:

- Replacement of lifts/ investigate the feasibility of implementing escalators to platforms
- Improved information & signage on platforms and around the station
- Refurbished platform 1 & 2 waiting area with key facilities – waiting area, retail, refreshment and toilets located around a central concourse. First class/ business waiting area
- Refurbished platforms 3 & 4 with improved retail and refreshment facilities, waiting rooms and toilets

- Refurbished tunnel linking booking office and platforms, including self-service ticket machines for passengers entering from the west of the station.

Furthermore, many of the passenger facilities, including refreshment and ticketing facilities close down whilst train services are still operating. Given the role that Stockport station plays, it is considered important to ensure that passenger facilities opening times are extended to reflect service provision to the station. As well as providing essential services for passengers, it promotes the station as a transport hub and improves the public's perception of safety.

At the wider level, there is a desire to improve the connectivity, particularly for pedestrians, between the station, the Town Centre and the Stockport Interchange (bus station). Improved pedestrian links between Stockport Station and the bus station are proposed to be constructed as part of the Interchange project, and there are public realm improvements directly outside the station as part of the Stockport Exchange redevelopment.

#### **Key Priorities at Stockport Station**

- **Undertake a Master-planning exercise to develop a holistic approach to Stockport Station's development and to its linkages to the Town Centre/ wider A6 corridor and the bus station.**
- **Undertake Stockport Station improvements including as a minimum improved retail, refreshment and waiting facilities. Refurbishment of the tunnel, with appropriate self-service ticket machines appropriately located as well as considering the implementation of escalators to platforms and/ or improved lifts.**
- **Ensure that essential station facilities, such as ticketing and refreshment facilities, extend their opening hours with appropriate staffing levels, to match the daily operation of train services at the station.**
- **Undertake appropriate station improvements (outlined above) to assist with the promotion of Stockport station, thereby encouraging all longer distance services to continue to regard it as a key national and regional stopping station.**
- **Improved connectivity between Stockport Station, the Town Centre and Stockport Interchange**

## **7.4. New Stations**

### **7.4.1. Background**

Historically there has been much work undertaken on the identification of new stations within Stockport. The SEMMMS Strategy, which was subsequently adopted as part of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD (March 2011) identified the following potential new stations - Cheadle, Adswold, Stepping Hill Hospital and Simpsons Corner/ High Lane. Most recently further work has been undertaken on the potential for a new station at High Lane as part of the A6 Corridor Study.

### **7.4.2. A6 Corridor Study**

As part of the A6 Corridor Study which considered the potential impact of predicted traffic growth and demands on public transport within the A6 corridor (Buxton to Stockport/Manchester) over the next twenty years two new rail stations were proposed.

In the medium term (5 to 10 years) it was recommended that a new station at High Lane should be investigated further. Whilst the results were sensitive to the assumed level of potential abstraction from adjacent stations it was established that such a station could attract similar levels of patronage as those experienced at Disley.

Whilst it was not directly aligned to the A6 Corridor Study objectives the study also identified a potential new station at Simpsons Corner. It was identified that such a station could potentially capture some rail users who currently use Hazel Grove to take advantage of discounted fares.

### **7.4.3. Priorities**

It is recommended that the two stations identified in the A6 Corridor Study, i.e. High Lane and Simpsons Corner should be evaluated in more detail in order to establish the full benefits of the proposed new stations and to develop full business cases for each.

It is also recommended that Stockport Council should engage with stakeholders in order to establish the case for providing a new station at Baguley (Trafford) in order to enhance accessibility to/from Stockport and Manchester Airport, via interchange with the new Metrolink Airport line.

The Altrincham – Stockport Metrolink service offers the opportunity to develop a new station at Cheadle, which is a long held aspiration of Stockport's. In the short term, prior to the provision of Metrolink services, it is recommended that improved rail services along the Chester – Stockport line (increase to 2tph) are investigated. Stockport would support the implementation of the new station at Cheadle to occur at the same time.

Given Cheshire East Council's aspiration for a new village at Handforth East, whereby approximately 2,000 houses with associated supporting amenities such as schools, shops and leisure facilities are planned, investigation into a potential new station between Handforth and Cheadle Hulme may be warranted. This has been identified as part of the existing work being undertaken on the A34 Corridor Study. Stockport MBC should work with Cheshire East to further investigate the feasibility of this.

### **New Stations – Key Priorities**

- **Work with TfGM to appraise potential new stations, as outlined in the A6 Corridor Study, at:**
  - (1) High Lane.**
  - (2) Simpsons Corner**
- **In the short term work with Manchester, Trafford and TfGM to develop and promote the strongest case for a new station at Baguley to promote the link to Manchester Airport, with an increased service frequency on the existing Chester – Stockport service and the new station at Cheadle.**
- **Work with Manchester, Trafford and TfGM to develop the case for the Stockport West Metrolink, and the opportunity for new stations at Adswold, Cheadle and Cheadle Heath.**
- **Continue to work with TfGM, supporting the case for the Metrolink proposals along the Reddish South line.**
- **Work with Cheshire East to investigate the feasibility of a new station between Handforth and Cheadle Hulme to support the proposed new village development at Handforth East.**

## 7.5. Metrolink

### 7.5.1. The future role of Metrolink in Stockport District

The Manchester Metrolink network is the most significant element of urban rail development outside London in the past 20 years. In other Greater Manchester Districts, the Metrolink network provides a segregated public-transport link between a key centre and a densely populated commuter corridor into Manchester City Centre – e.g. Bury, Oldham and Trafford. Stockport Borough benefits from a fast and very frequent heavy-rail link between Stockport Town Centre and Manchester City Centre. That link will remain and there is little scope (or need) for any improvement along this corridor.

However, Stockport has a unique combination of characteristics that offer substantial potential for Metrolink to perform a different role. These characteristics comprise:

- Densely developed neighbourhoods that could offer, in principle, strong markets of demand for Metrolink commuting.
- Under-utilised railway lines radiating north-eastwards and westwards from the town centre running through well-populated residential areas, leading in particular to Manchester Airport – the busiest UK airport outside the London area – which is the location of the Greater Manchester Enterprise Zone that will offer significant employment opportunities over the next 10-20 years.
- A major inter-urban railway station, which holds the potential to act as a sub-regional point of interchange for communities to the south and east of Greater Manchester, located on the fringe of the town centre;
- Major redevelopment potential within Stockport Town Centre, offering the scope to generate additional jobs if supported by strong connectivity to adjacent growth points.

There are a number of benefits to Stockport from developing Metrolink/ tram train options for existing rail lines. These benefits include the potential for increased frequency of services and capacity for passengers. The increased frequency changes the nature of the service from a timetable to a turn up and travel attitude for users, which encourages usage. The improved frequency and capacity also provides the opportunity for new stations along the routes e.g. reopening Reddish South and at Cheadle for example that will open up sustainable travel options to a significant economically active population.

The mixture of heavy rail and on street running allows deeper penetration into Manchester City Centre and Stockport Town Centre, further encouraging modal shift by providing journey options that avoid interchange and increase convenience for passengers.

Whilst much of the existing heavy and light rail networks are focussed on catering for radial movements into Manchester city centre, there is a significant body of travel along orbital corridors, and much of this is undertaken by car at present. The strategy set out here provides a real opportunity for mode shift and for Stockport to begin to develop as the centre of a southern Manchester orbital and radial fixed-track network which provides new opportunities – routes and stations, to link key residential and economically active areas. These linkages could be developed between Manchester City Centre, Manchester Airport and Airport City, Tameside, Trafford and Stockport. Within Stockport this could provide opportunities for Marple, Bredbury, Brinnington, Reddish and the Heaton, Adswold, Edgeley, Cheadle and Gatley and in the longer term for Hazel Grove, Davenport and Bramhall to benefit from improved connectivity. This improved connectivity would also provide increased access to Stockport Town Centre and enhanced interchange opportunities.

In the longer term new Metrolink lines, in combination with the existing Metrolink lines and proposed tram-train options, may provide opportunities to provide alternative fixed track routes to avoid the congested rail: Hazel Grove or road: Marple/ Stockport networks.

### 7.5.2. Priorities

In developing this strategy we remain mindful of the fact that Manchester City Centre will continue to be a major centre of employment for Stockport residents. Crucially in this regard, the Council and its partners are anxious to ensure that the growth of the borough is not constrained by its access to opportunity from those communities, such as the area to the south east of the borough, which if not addressed will result in excessive traffic congestion.

Within Stockport, the Town Centre is already a key driver for the borough's economic activity and employment. The proposed works as outlined in the Stockport Town Centre Development Prospectus will further reinforce

it as the focal point for the local economy. Indeed, the development plans indicate that in the order of 5,000 full time jobs are forecast to be created as a result of the development work due to be undertaken in the Town Centre.

Stockport already has strong economic ties with its neighbouring authorities including Trafford, Tameside and Manchester, providing employment opportunities within Stockport but also with Stockport residents being employed in adjoining authorities. Further improvements to transport connectivity between these areas will improve economic opportunities for residents and businesses in Stockport.

Similarly, connecting Stockport Town Centre to other District Centres within Stockport would provide an enhanced connectivity to the town centre, across the borough, and to neighbouring authorities and key employment sites including Manchester City Centre and the airport. This provides improved accessibility to employment and educational opportunities and could be a driver for further economic growth.

However, further connectivity will be critical to the Town Centre's success and to the continuing contribution that Stockport makes to the City Region's GVA. At the present time there are strong road connections to/ from the Town Centre and adjacent municipalities via the M60, but very weak public transport opportunities. Linking the Town Centre into the Metrolink network and improving the Centre's linkages both across the borough and to adjacent authorities as well as key regional destinations/ employment centres such as Manchester Airport will significantly assist with this process via the effective expansion of labour market catchments and the reduction in travel times to the Town Centre. Improved connectivity with the Airport and nearby employment opportunities will also support economic growth.

Critically, Stockport is adjacent to Greater Manchester's Airport City Enterprise Zone, which will provide a combination of high-skilled employment in business services and medical science sectors in addition to access to new global markets, as demonstrated by the recent launch of the Cathay Pacific routes from Manchester to Hong Kong. Collectively, the assets at Airport City will offer both new employment opportunities for the skilled residents of the borough and new trade routes for Stockport businesses and future investors in the borough. However, effective connectivity will be essential if this potential is to be realised.

Against this backdrop, in order to enable Metrolink to fulfil the role as outlined above, the following priorities are proposed:

- 1) Manchester to Marple and Stockport Town Centre via Belle Vue.
- 2) Stockport West - with a primary focus on supporting a significant corridor of growth between Stockport, Manchester Airport and Altrincham, which could also support the case for the completion of the Stockport-East Didsbury link.
- 3) Hazel Grove to East Didsbury, continuing to Manchester City Centre.
- 4) Stockport to Marple.

These proposed routes are described in outline in Section 5 above. Overall this network would support the growth ambitions for Stockport town centre, which wants to enhance its employment, leisure and retail facilities and it would also provide a link between Stockport's rail and bus stations creating significant interchange opportunities for Southern Manchester.

The rationale for the No. 1 priority, Manchester to Marple/ Stockport is as follows:

- Previous work by TfGM over a number of years has promoted the route from Manchester to Marple as offering the strongest potential as the first full tram-train line in Greater Manchester, thereby safeguarding capacity for both commuter travel and longer distance rail travel to Sheffield through this corridor via the Hyde Loop. TfGM's value for money assessments to date have indicated that this route offers a "high" value for money in DfT terms. Its fundability is also enhanced by generating a forecast net saving in rail subsidy, allowing for both costs saved from replacing national rail services and the lost fares revenue from those services.
- The route delivers a fast and frequent service from the Marple corridor into the heart of Manchester City Centre.
- It will go some way towards alleviating the platform capacity constraints within Manchester Piccadilly Station, thereby assisting with the delivery of the GM Rail Strategy.

The proposed branch to Stockport Town Centre via Reddish South provides an opportunity to serve Stockport Town Centre, benefiting from the high fundability of the Manchester to Marple route. It is recommended that

as the scheme move forwards, detailed strategic and businesses cases are prepared which include the Stockport Town Centre – via Reddish South – branch. However it is noted this route may take longer to develop than the Marple route, and so implementation might take place at a later date, depending on feasibility and funding. The inclusion of this branch provides the following benefits:

- The option opens up the Reddish South corridor, fulfilling a long held aspiration of Stockport's to provide more regular services along this corridor, which improves the connectivity of both Heaton Norris and the east of Heaton Chapel. In addition northern Reddish and Belle Vue would have improved linkages with both Manchester City Centre and Stockport Town Centre. Overall this would improve transport options to access employment and educational opportunities from areas that are relatively deprived, such as Reddish, within the borough.
- The Stockport – Reddish – Manchester Metrolink corridor would provide a new north-east transport corridor from Stockport Town Centre, providing new links to the east of Manchester/ Media City to Stockport Town Centre.

This line could be extended into Tameside to provide an orbital route from Tameside via Stockport to the airport and Stockport Council would wish to work with Tameside Council and Transport for Greater Manchester to explore this opportunity.

The Stockport West group of routes benefit from construction cost sharing opportunities as there is potential for individual options to share route alignments. The Airport link is driven by the development and transformation of the Manchester Airport area. There is the potential for high growth in public transport demand along this corridor, but it will not happen quickly, and implementation of Stockport West is expected to take place over a longer timescale than Manchester – Belle Vue – Marple / Stockport. The Stockport – East Didsbury link facilitates a connection to the proposed new development site at Gorseley Bank. It would provide Metrolink services to Manchester City Centre from the Edgeley and Adwood areas and would provide much-improved connections from Stockport to Media City.

Hazel Grove to East Didsbury does not meet such high-priority transport requirements as the first two priority routes. However, it could offer good value for money, especially since it shares infrastructure with the Stockport to East Didsbury route.

Based on the work undertaken to date, Stockport to Marple is expected to be more difficult to fund, owing to the limited size of the market. However it would serve a corridor which is badly affected by traffic congestion and as such it remains a long term aspiration of Stockport.

These priorities can be seen as a set of building blocks for developing a full network in an incremental manner. Some of the construction work required for each stage of the network would also be utilised for the next stages, thus improving the business case for each subsequent stage of the network. For example, the Manchester – Marple route would provide much of the infrastructure needed for Manchester – Belle Vue – Reddish – Stockport. That route would require construction of a Metrolink stop at Stockport Interchange which would be utilised by the Stockport West extensions, which themselves have scope for being developed incrementally, since they share much of the same infrastructure.

The development of the Metrolink network into Stockport therefore provides the opportunity to develop a Southern Manchester network linking East Manchester and/ or Tameside, Trafford and Manchester Airport with Stockport as its hub. This network could be enhanced by additional links between Marple and Hazel Grove, all utilising existing railway lines where capacity exists, but diverting onto new or existing on-street running to maximise connectivity.

### **7.5.3. Metrolink and Tram-Train – potential constraints**

In Greater Manchester Metrolink has been developed by converting existing railway lines and disused rail alignments and building new on-street embedded rails. Metrolink therefore currently runs on a separate network to heavy rail, with an operating system managed on behalf of TfGM. The concept of a Metrolink type service utilising currently active heavy rail lines, which would continue to be used by trains as well as a Metrolink service, has been discussed for a number of years. This type of operation is referred to as 'tram-train'.

Tram-train is currently used in several locations in mainland Europe, and a pilot project in Sheffield was commissioned by the Department of Transport to consider the potential of adopting this approach in the United Kingdom. The pilot project is considering the technical issues but the actual running of a tram on a rail way has been delayed several times. The most recent timescale is to start running sometime in 2016.

The Greater Manchester Metrolink vehicles are of a different design to the Sheffield trams as they were designed to operate on converted heavy rail lines. As such, it is anticipated there may be fewer technical issues associated with tram-train operation in Greater Manchester. The outcome of the pilot is expected to influence the prospects for tram-train elsewhere in the UK.

In the Stockport area the introduction of the tram-train concept would enable the use of underutilised rail lines, thereby potentially reducing the capital cost of transport schemes. It would potentially enable existing rail networks to be expanded by creating new on-street sections, which connect into the existing Metrolink network and improving transport connectivity across Greater Manchester.

**Key Priorities for Metrolink:**

Evaluate on a common basis all options that appear to offer the prospect of demonstrating a good business case.

**Priorities:**

1. **Marple/ Rose Hill – Manchester and Stockport – Reddish – Manchester**
2. **Stockport West – connection to Manchester Airport/ Altrincham and East Didsbury**
3. **East Didsbury to Hazel Grove**
4. **Marple to Stockport**

## 7.6. Inter-urban Rail and HS2

### 7.6.1. Background

The delivery of HS2 is currently proposed to occur in two stages, as follows:

- HS2 Phase 1 London Euston to Birmingham Curzon Street and with a connection to the WCML at Lichfield/ Crewe, due to open in 2026/ 2027
- HS2 Phase 2 connecting Birmingham to Manchester and Leeds, due to open 2033.

### 7.6.2. HS2 Phase 1

Under Phase 1, strategic train services to London are proposed to increase from 3tph to 4tph. The impact of this additional service places more stress on the network between Manchester/ Stockport and Cheadle Hulme, which already suffers from capacity constraints. Although the impact is likely to be more significant in the PM peak, this may result in reduced punctuality and reliability of all stopping services at local Stockport stations.

The platform availability at Manchester Piccadilly station is forecast to be a capacity constraint in the foreseeable future. This will become an issue as trains become longer in order to accommodate increasing passenger demand, as follows:

- fewer trains will be able to be stacked at the longer bay-platforms (1 to 8)
- fewer trains will be sufficiently short to be accommodated at the shorter bay- platforms (9 to 12)

Without additional platform capacity, longer trains could only be accommodated at Piccadilly by reducing the turnaround times of services in general, which is likely to adversely affect the punctuality/ reliability of services. The lack of platform capacity could ultimately result in the loss of local rail services. The additional hourly service to London will require platform capacity in the longer bays, and place additional pressures on an already constrained station.

In March 2014 the new chairman of HS2 Sir David Higgins published his review of the project. This recommended that the HS2 connection to the existing WCML be at Crewe (as opposed to Lichfield). This recommendation was confirmed in the latest Higgins report *Rebalancing Britain*. The government strongly supports this and further work is currently underway examining this proposal in more detail.

The connection to the WCML at Crewe could have the following implications:

- In order to capitalise on travel time savings, it is possible that three of the Manchester-London services would operate via Crewe. If this does occur, this could result in Stoke having a reduced connectivity to Stockport.
- Running the additional long distance services on the WCML via Crewe may result in some of the existing local services to Crewe being truncated at Wilmslow/ Alderley Edge due to line capacity constraints.

#### 7.6.2.1. Priorities

As a result of the likely impacts of HS2 Phase One, it is recommended that as a minimum Stockport continue to play an active role in formulating the Greater Manchester Combined Authority response/ debate on HS2, considering the following:

- Develop and promote the strongest case for the track and signalling works between Cheadle Hulme and Manchester to be undertaken as soon as possible (these are not currently programmed in CP5). At the moment this is likely to be completed by 2025, but there is no funding commitment to undertake the works. By not undertaking the works prior to HS2 Phase One, local services are likely to suffer reduced punctuality and reliability.
- Develop and promote the strongest case for the HS terminal at Manchester Piccadilly to be bought forward. This is required to retain the present service pattern between 2026 and 2032. Not doing so may result in the loss of existing local and regional train services in order to provide the platform capacity to accommodate the London-Manchester services.
- Seek clarification on the impact of HS2 connecting into Crewe.

- Stockport station improvements (see 'Stockport Station' below) are required prior to the operation of HS2 Phase One. It is recommended that the masterplanning exercise is completed with the key recommendations implemented prior to 2026.

#### **Key Priorities prior to HS2 Phase One (2026)**

- **Stockport to continue playing an active role in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority response to HS2, in particular focussing on:**
  - **Develop and promote the strongest case for the track and signalling works between Cheadle Hulme and Manchester to be undertaken as soon as possible – before 2026.**
  - **Develop and promote the strongest case for the High Speed terminal at Manchester Piccadilly to open as part of HS2 Phase One.**
  - **Seek clarification on the local service patterns if HS2 connects to the WCML at Crewe.**
- **Ensure all London bound and existing services continue to stop at Stockport station.**
- **Ensure that the Stockport Station Masterplan is completed with the key recommendations implemented such that the station provides an improved passenger experience with improved connectivity to the immediate locality.**

### **7.6.3. HS2 Phase 2 and Transport for the North**

With the extension of High Speed rail to Manchester/ Manchester Airport, Stockport station will experience a reduction in the direct train services to London, from the current day 3tph (4tph with HS2 Phase One) to 1tph. This could be regarded as contradicting one of the key HS2 strategic policies, which states that all places with a direct London service today retain a broadly comparable, or better, service after HS2 opens. It will be important to ensure that post HS2 Phase Two rail travel between Stockport and London – expected to comprise of a mixture of services from Stockport Station and from the HS2 stations at Manchester Airport and Manchester Piccadilly – does indeed meet that standard.

According to currently stated proposals the classic rail service (1tph) between Manchester – London would be part of a Scotland – London service. Due to the long distances travelled by this proposed service, it has the potential to be unreliable. However it would provide a direct connection from Stockport to Scotland.

Whilst the Government conditionally supports the proposed HS2 Manchester Airport station, it is subject to agreeing a suitable funding package with the airport and the wider region.

The existing proposals for the usage of the released capacity indicate the following new journey opportunities:

- Birmingham to Manchester via Rugeley, Stoke (semi-fast)  
*Potential stopping points: Walsall, Cannock, Rugeley TV, Stoke, Macclesfield, Stockport*
- SE Midlands/ Trent Valley to Manchester (fast)  
*Potential stopping points: Milton Keynes, Nuneaton, Tamworth/ Lichfield, Stafford, Crewe, Wilmslow*

It is noted that the latter of these proposed services does not currently appear to have a scheduled stop in Stockport.

A third new service – defined below – has also been cited as a means of utilising capacity released by HS2 Phase 2. However, this service has been separately proposed for introduction in the early 2020's.

- South Coast to Manchester via EWR, WCML, Stoke (fast)  
*Potential stopping points: Southampton, Winchester, Reading, Oxford, Milton Keynes, Stoke, Macclesfield, Stockport*

The Economic Case for HS2 summarises the released capacity assumptions that have been assumed as part of the HS2 Phase Two (PFMv4.3) business case development. It does state within the document that there are many other potential combinations of released capacity, and that the assumptions have been developed for demand modelling purposes only. Furthermore it acknowledges that this may not be the ultimate specification that is implemented.

The WCML Phase One and Phase Two timetable assumes the following services to/from London Euston, which are relevant to Stockport:

- one train per hour to Scotland via Manchester (alternating between Glasgow and Edinburgh)
- one train per peak hour in the peak direction to Manchester.

The Cross Country service specification has been assumed to be as per the do-minimum in HS2 Phase One. Under Phase Two, additional calling points at Congleton and Macclesfield are assumed on services to Manchester.

This then provides a service pattern as follows:

- one train per hour between Manchester and Bournemouth via Milton Keynes
- one train per hour between Manchester and Bristol via Birmingham (with some services continuing on to Cardiff or Paignton)
- one train per hour between Manchester and Birmingham International.

The October 2014 Higgins report *Rebalancing Britain* confirms the earlier recommendation that the proposed North West hub should be delivered in 2027 and be located at Crewe. The report also recommends that investigation is undertaken into both the improved connectivity of Manchester and Leeds (this has been referred to in the media as HS3, but is more likely to take the form of enhanced/ segregated intercity train links between the two cities), and on the possibility of running classic compatible services to Stoke-on-Trent, Macclesfield, Stockport and Manchester, utilising the Handsacre link between the WCML and the HS network.

This reflects the work of One North. The One North Report<sup>11</sup> was in response to the Higgins Report, HS2 Plus, which identified the need for city regions in the north to come together to develop a strategic transport plan, integrating HS2 with the existing rail network. Led by the city regions of Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle, the document contained a set of proposals, including a new east-west high speed rail link for the north. This is a new Trans-Pennine route, which extends to Newcastle, providing additional rail capacity and better connectivity between the northern cities.

#### **7.6.3.1. Priorities**

In order to ensure that Stockport is able to maximise benefits of the introduction of HS2 Phase 2 there is a need for the authority to continue to play an active part in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) response to the proposals and any discussions or dialogue that may take place as the scheme develops. In particular there is a need to engage with HS2 to ensure that any potential mitigation measures associated with the reduction in connectivity between Stockport Town Centre and London are carried out in such a way as to maximise benefits within the borough.

The proposed hourly classic rail service would provide connections between Scotland and London via Stockport which could result in reliability issues given the length of the rail journey. It is therefore recommended that Stockport should work with GMCA to develop and promote the strongest case to split the proposed service into a Scotland – Manchester Airport service (as at present) and a Manchester – London service in order to ensure that journey time reliability is not compromised.

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<sup>11</sup> One North: A Proposition for an Interconnected North (July 2013)

Stockport should develop and promote the strongest case to ensure that where feasible, all of the released capacity services detailed above have a stop at Stockport. Furthermore that the strongest possible case is made for a peak stop to be included at Cheadle Hulme/ Bramhall on the proposed semi-fast service between Birmingham and Manchester.

In his report, “Rebalancing Britain”, Sir David Higgins recommended that the government ask HS2 to look at the possibility of running classic-compatible services to Stoke-on-Trent, Macclesfield, and Stockport to Manchester via the Handsacre Link from HS2 to the West Coast Main Line. That would offer a service from Stockport to London that would in some important respects be superior to that available from accessing HS2 via stations at either Manchester Airport or Manchester Piccadilly. The borough is strongly supportive of the recommendation and should work with the GMCA and other local authorities along the proposed route to support undertaking feasibility work into operating the service.

Sir David Higgins has also recommended investigating improved connectivity between Manchester and Leeds. That work is well underway with Transport for the North, and the borough should continue to work with Transport for Greater Manchester in developing those proposals.”

#### **Key Priorities prior to HS2 Phase Two (2033)**

- **Stockport to continue playing an active role in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority response to HS2, in particular focussing on:**
  - **Possible mitigation measures with respect to the potentially reduced connectivity of Stockport-London. Including a direct link between Stockport and the HS station at Manchester Airport.**
  - **Develop and promote the strongest case for splitting the proposed 1tph classic rail service between Scotland-Manchester-London into two services to minimise reliability issues.**
  - **Continue to support the proposed HS station at Manchester Airport.**
- **Ensure that where feasible the released capacity proposals all stop at Stockport.**
- **Develop and promote the strongest case to include a peak stop at Cheadle Hulme/ Bramhall on the proposed semi-fast Birmingham – Manchester service.**
- **Develop a strong business case and promote support for further investigation of a classic compatible service to Stoke-on-Trent, Macclesfield, Stockport and Manchester via the Handsacre link.**

#### **One North/ Transport for the North Rail Links:**

- **Stockport to continue to support this initiative, and to work with GMCA to further progress the case for enhanced Northern intercity rail links.**

## 8. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 8.1. Introduction

Both regionally and nationally there are significant changes planned for the rail network and its operators over the coming years. These changes present new opportunities and challenges for the rail industry. A successful rail system and network is a vital component of the economic ambitions for Stockport and for Greater Manchester as a whole. If rail is to play its full part in both driving and supporting growth by providing an efficient, sustainable mode of transport that links its residents to the key employment and educational centres, the future development of the rail network must be designed in line with changing passenger demand arising from changing patterns of economic activity. The Stockport Rail Strategy, with its objective led set of priorities, provides a set of recommendations that will set the strategic direction for rail investment within the borough for the next 15-20 years.

### 8.2. Stockport Station

There are currently 19 stations within the Metropolitan Borough of Stockport. Stockport Station is located within the town centre, connecting local residents and businesses to the rail network, including the national network via the West Coast Mainline (WCML) services. The rail network provides a vital link to key national economic centres. The role of Stockport's station is demonstrated by its passenger numbers, highlighting that it is the busiest station in Greater Manchester, outside of Manchester City Centre.

The accessibility by rail to the town centre and its associated linkages to other major centres assists Stockport in the vital role it plays when contributing to the Greater Manchester economy. The connectivity of the station to its immediate locality currently form part of the Town Centre's redevelopment plans, which are focussing on access to both the town centre and the wider A6 corridor. These improvements, along with the proposed bus station/ Interchange plans will enhance the role of Stockport Station as a stop for all regional rail services; thereby providing one of the foundations to enable the borough to continue to grow and to play a key role in the region's economic wellbeing. In order to complement these plans, it is recommended that Council continues to work with Network Rail and the franchise operator, and undertakes a station masterplanning exercise to ensure that it is developed and upgraded holistically, integrating with the proposed Town Centre Strategy works. As a minimum, it is recommended that the station Masterplan considers the following:

- Stockport Station improvements including as a minimum improved retail, refreshment and waiting facilities. Refurbishment of the tunnel, with appropriate self-service ticket machines appropriately located as well as considering the implementation of escalators to platforms and/ or improved lifts.
- Ensure that essential station facilities, such as ticketing and refreshment facilities, extend their opening hours with appropriate staffing levels, to match the daily operation of train services at the station.

These improvements will assist with the promotion of Stockport Station, thereby encouraging all longer distance services to continue to regard it as a key national and regional stopping station.

### 8.3. Existing Rail Services & Station Facilities

The remaining 18 stations with Stockport MBC boundary are currently operated by Northern Rail. A desk top review of these stations indicated that some of these do not conform to a set of minimum standards, which includes the provision of cycle storage facilities, CCTV/ lighting, step free access, on-screen customer information, a public address system and self-service ticket machines.

The Northern and TransPennine franchise process provides the opportunity to engage in debate over both a minimum set of station standards, and the service provision at the stations. The key strategy findings and recommendations include supporting and working with TfGM to ensure the following:

- As a minimum it is assumed that a level of service comparable to that operating at present be retained and built upon; to expand the existing provision, particularly where the Northern Hub infrastructure works permits new/ improved service opportunities.
- Ensure a consistent approach is adopted to the provision of Sunday services.
- Continue to support and develop the strongest case for an increased utilisation of the Reddish South line.
- Promote, via the franchise process, to ensure that a minimum set of station standards are adhered to.

- Continue to support and progress the A6 Corridor Study recommendations for half hourly services to Hazel Grove and Buxton, and ultimately feasibility work into the electrification of the Buxton line.
- Continue to support and promote 'Station Adoption Groups' across the borough.
- Continue to support and promote the Community Rail Partnerships.

## 8.4. New Stations

A number of new stations have historically been identified in previous studies, including the SEMMMS Strategy, the A6 Corridor Study and the A34 Corridor Study. It is recommended that Stockport work with TfGM to appraise the potential new stations, as follows:

- High Lane/ Simpsons Corner as identified in the A6 Corridor Study.
- Work with TfGM to develop the case for the Stockport West Metrolink, and the opportunity for new stations at Adswold, Cheadle and Cheadle Heath.
- Continue to work with TfGM, supporting the case for the Metrolink proposals along the Reddish South line.
- In the short term support the case for an increased service frequency on the existing Chester – Stockport line, including working with TfGM to develop the case for a new station at Cheadle. Work with TfGM, Manchester and Trafford to develop and promote the strongest case for a new station at Baguley to promote the link to Manchester Airport.
- Work with Cheshire East to investigate the feasibility of a new station between Handforth and Cheadle Hulme to support the proposed new village development at Handforth East.

## 8.5. Metrolink

Within Stockport, the Town Centre is already a key driver for the borough's economic activity and employment. The proposed works as outlined in the Stockport Town Centre Development Prospectus will further reinforce it as the focal point for the local economy. However, further connectivity will be critical to the Town Centre's success and to the continuing contribution that Stockport makes to the City Region's GVA. Linking the Town Centre into the Metrolink network and improving the Centre's linkages both across the borough and to adjacent authorities as well as key regional destinations/ employment centres such as Manchester Airport will significantly assist with this process via the effective expansion of labour market catchments and the reduction in travel times to the Town Centre. Improved connectivity with the Airport and nearby employment opportunities will also support economic growth.

Greater Manchester's Airport City Enterprise Zone is adjacent to Stockport and will provide significant employment opportunities for the skilled residents of the borough, along with new trade routes for Stockport businesses and future investors in the borough. However, effective connectivity will be essential if this potential is to be realised. The opportunity exists to develop a Southern Manchester Metrolink network linking East Manchester and/ or Tameside, Trafford and Manchester Airport with Stockport as its hub. This network could be enhanced by additional links to Marple and Hazel Grove, all utilising existing railway lines where capacity exists, and diverting onto new or existing on-street running to maximise connectivity.

The Metrolink network recommendations within this strategy would support the growth ambitions for Stockport town centre, which wants to enhance its employment, leisure and retail facilities and it would also provide a link between Stockport's rail and bus stations creating significant interchange opportunities for Southern Manchester.

In order to enable Metrolink to facilitate the improved connectivity of Stockport, the following priorities are proposed:

- 1) Manchester to Marple and Stockport Town Centre via Belle Vue.
- 2) Stockport West - with a primary focus on supporting a significant corridor of growth between Stockport, Manchester Airport and Altrincham, which could also support the case for the completion of the Stockport-East Didsbury link.
- 3) Hazel Grove to East Didsbury, continuing to Manchester City Centre.
- 4) Stockport to Marple.

The rationale for the No. 1 priority, Manchester to Marple/ Stockport is as follows:

- Previous work by TfGM over a number of years has promoted the route from Manchester to Marple as offering the strongest potential as the first full tram-train line in Greater Manchester, thereby safeguarding capacity for both commuter travel and longer distance rail travel to Sheffield through this corridor via the Hyde Loop. TfGM's value for money assessments to date have indicated that this route offers a "high" value for money in DfT terms. Its fundability is also enhanced by generating a forecast net saving in rail subsidy, allowing for both costs saved from replacing national rail services and the lost fares revenue from those services.
- The route delivers a fast and frequent service from the Marple corridor into the heart of Manchester City Centre.
- It will go some way towards alleviating the platform capacity constraints within Manchester Piccadilly Station, thereby assisting with the delivery of the GM Rail Strategy.

The proposed branch to Stockport Town Centre via Reddish South provides an opportunity to serve Stockport Town Centre, benefiting from the high fundability of the Manchester to Marple route. It is recommended that as the scheme move forwards, detailed strategic and businesses cases are prepared which include the Stockport Town Centre – via Reddish South – branch. The inclusion of this branch provides the following benefits:

- The option opens up the Reddish South corridor, fulfilling a long held aspiration of Stockport's to provide more regular services along this corridor, which improves the connectivity of both Heaton Norris and the east of Heaton Chapel. In addition northern Reddish and Belle Vue would have improved linkages with both Manchester City Centre and Stockport Town Centre. Overall this would improve transport options to access employment and educational opportunities from areas that are relatively deprived, such as Reddish, within the borough.
- The Stockport – Reddish - Manchester Metrolink corridor would provide a new north-east transport corridor from Stockport Town Centre, providing new links to the east of Manchester/ Media City to Stockport Town Centre.

The Stockport West group of routes benefit from construction cost sharing opportunities as there is potential for individual options to share route alignments. The Airport link is driven by the development and transformation of the Manchester Airport area. There is the potential for high growth in public transport demand along this corridor, supporting economic growth by the expansion of labour market catchment areas and opportunities to access key employment centres. Furthermore, this route would go some way towards providing improved transportation options to the relatively disconnected areas of Cheadle and Gatley.

The Stockport – East Didsbury link facilitates a connection to the proposed new development site at Gorseley Bank. It would provide Metrolink services to Manchester City Centre from the Edgeley and Adswold areas and would provide much-improved connections from Stockport to Media City.

Overall these priorities can be seen as a set of building blocks for developing a full network in an incremental manner. Some of the construction work required for each stage of the network would also be utilised for the next stages, thus improving the business case for each subsequent stage of the network.

## 8.6. Inter-urban rail & HS2

The planned introduction of HS2 offers both opportunities and challenges to the existing rail network. HS2 Phase One proposes to increase the strategic train services from London to Manchester to 4 tph. This additional service will place more stress on the existing capacity constrained network between Manchester/ Stockport and Cheadle Hulme. In addition the extra service will place further constraints on the platform availability at Manchester Piccadilly, which is forecast to suffer from capacity issues in the coming years.

It is recommended that Stockport continues to play an active role in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) response to HS2, focussing on the following key issues:

- Develop and promote the strongest case for the track and signalling works between Cheadle Hulme and Manchester to be undertaken as soon as possible – before 2026.

- Develop and promote the strongest case for the High Speed terminal at Manchester Piccadilly to open as part of HS2 Phase One.
- Seek clarification on the local service patterns if HS2 connects to the WCML at Crewe.

Furthermore, Stockport should continue to develop and promote the strongest case for ensuring that where feasible, all London bound and existing services continue to stop at Stockport station. It is recommended that the Stockport Station Masterplan be completed, with the key recommendations implemented such that the station provides an improved passenger experience with improved connectivity to the immediate locality.

HS2 Phase Two proposes further extensions to Manchester and Leeds, with services forecast to become operational in 2033. In order to ensure that Stockport realises the maximum benefits of HS2 Phase Two, there is a need for the authority to continue to play an active part in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) response to the proposals and any discussions or dialogue that may take place as the scheme develops. This includes the latest Higgins/ One North recommendations to both improve connectivity between Manchester and Leeds, and the possibility of running a classic compatible service via Stoke-on-Trent, Macclesfield, Stockport and Manchester, of which Stockport are strongly supportive.

With respect to HS2 Phase Two/ Three, it is recommended that Stockport, as part of the GMCA, key priorities are:

- The possible mitigation measures with respect to the potentially reduced connectivity of Stockport-London. Including a direct link between Stockport and the HS station at Manchester Airport.
- Develop and promote the strongest case for splitting the proposed 1tph classic rail service between Scotland-Manchester-London into two services to minimise reliability issues.
- Continue to support the proposed HS station at Manchester Airport.
- Ensure that where feasible the released capacity proposals all stop at Stockport.
- Develop and promote the strongest case to include a peak stop at Cheadle Hulme/ Bramhall on the proposed semi-fast Birmingham - Manchester service.
- Support the proposal for further investigation in the classic compatible service to Stoke-on-Trent, Macclesfield, Stockport and Manchester via the Handsacre link.
- Continue to support the One North initiatives and the need for further feasibility work to be undertaken.

# Appendices

# Appendix A. Station Infrastructure Summary

## Corridor: Buxton Line

Station	Patronage (2013)	Growth Rate (between 2010- 2013)	Service Level	Station Facilities						
				Cycle Storage	CCTV/ Lighting	Step Free Access	On Screen Customer Info	Public Address System	Staffed Ticket Office	Self Service Ticket Machine
Davenport	228,900	13%	2 tph	x	x	x	✓	✓	Part Time	x
Woodsmoor	184,400	24%	2 tph	x	x	x	✓	x	Part Time	x
Hazel Grove	591,100	12%	2 tph	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Part Time	✓
Middlewood	19,500	3%	1 tph	✓	x	x	x	✓	x	x
<b>Recently Completed Works</b>	Hazel Grove - a planning application was submitted in March 2014 for an additional 119 car parking spaces to be created by constructing a single storey decked structure above the existing car park east of Chester Road.									

## Corridor: West Coast Main Line (WCML)

Station	Patronage (2013)	Growth Rate (between 2010- 2013)	Service Level	Station Facilities						
				Cycle Storage	CCTV/ Lighting	Step Free Access	On Screen Customer Info	Public Address System	Staffed Ticket Office	Self Service Ticket Machine
Heaton Chapel	648,300	31%	6 tph	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Part Time	✓
Stockport	3,310,400	13%	14 tph	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Full Time	✓
Cheadle Hulme	678,900	23%	3 tph	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Full Time	✓
Bramhall	245,700	9%	1 tph	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Part Time	x
<b>Recently Completed Works</b>	<p>Bramhall Station – CCTV, Help Points, Customer Information Screens and Public Announcement System.</p> <p>Stockport Station – New 1,000 space MSCP (including cycle storage), new pedestrian access arrangements and Ticket Office</p> <p>Cheadle Hulme – new footbridge and lifts from drop off point at car park.</p>									

## Corridor: Marple Hope Valley Line (Sheffield)

Station	Patronage (2013)	Growth Rate (between 2010- 2013)	Service Level	Station Facilities						
				Cycle Storage	CCTV/ Lighting	Step Free Access	On Screen Customer Info	Public Address System	Staffed Ticket Office	Self Service Ticket Machine
Reddish North	165,700	38%	2 tph	x	✓	x	✓	✓	Full Time	x
Brinnington	76,500	8%	2 tph	x	✓	x	✓	✓	Full Time	x
Bredbury	195,700	23%	2 tph	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Full Time	x
Woodley (via Hyde loop)	37,500	5%	2 tph	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x
Romiley	281,100	11%	4 tph	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Full Time	✓
Marple	414,200	2%	2 tph	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	Full Time	✓
Rose Hill (Marple)	129,700	33%	2 tph	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Part Time	x
Strines	13,800	46%	2 tph	x	x	✓	x	✓	x	x
Reddish South	122	79%	1 tpw	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Recently Completed Works</b>	<p>Marple, Brinnington, Reddish North and Rose Hill Marple - CCTV, Help Points, Customer Information Screens and Public Announcement System. However lighting in the car park at Reddish North station is substandard.</p> <p>Strines – funding bid submitted for improvements to CCTV, Help Points, Customer Information Screens and Public Announcement System.</p> <p>Marple – New footbridge, lifts and accessible toilet.</p>									

## Corridor: Airport Line

Station	Patronage (2013)	Growth Rate (between 2010- 2013)	Service Level	Station Facilities						
				Cycle Storage	CCTV/ Lighting	Step Free Access	On Screen Customer Info	Public Address System	Staffed Ticket Office	Self Service Ticket Machine
Heald Green	425,200	12%	3 tph	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Full Time	x
Gatley	294,400	24%	2 tph	x	x	✓	✓	✓	Part Time	x
<b>Recently Completed Works</b>										

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