

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Economy Scrutiny 11 October 2017

Subject: Evidence of the Impacts of Recent Transport Investments

Report of: Strategic Director, Development, Deputy Chief Executive, People, Policy and Reform and the Director of Highways, Transportation and Engineering

Summary

The report summarises the strategic context within which transport policy in the city has been developed, identifies some of the key transport investments that have been made in the city over recent years and reviews the evidence on the implications of this investment.

Recommendations

That Members:

1. Note and comment as appropriate on the content of the report.
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Wards Affected:

All

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Greater Manchester Strategy - www.manchesterclimate.com/plan
- Transport 2040 - www.manchesterclimate.com/plan
- City Centre Transport Strategy 2010 – 2015
 - http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/1871/transport_strategy_for_manchester_city_centre

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report reviews the strategic context within which transport policy for the city is set, it identifies some of the key transport investments that have taken place over recent years in the city and looks at the evidence regarding the impacts of these investments on the city's transport network and on the wider economy of the city.

2.0 Strategic Context

- 2.1 Greater Manchester's strategic aims are clearly set out in the emerging refresh of the Greater Manchester Strategy. Within Manchester, the Our Manchester Strategy ensures that there are well-established complementary aims at the city-level. Whilst the aims for Manchester and Greater Manchester are broad, across both documents it is clear that a priority is supporting economic growth, ensuring that there are good opportunities for people to access employment and a solid tax base across the City Region.
- 2.2 There are locations that can play a significant role in supporting economic growth, and within Manchester the City Centre and the airport both have the potential to support a scale of economic growth with benefits which extend well beyond the City's boundaries. It has, therefore, been an established aspect of policy in Greater Manchester to promote the economic role of these locations. Public investment and policy decisions have sought to ensure that their economic potential is fully exploited.
- 2.3 The transport strategy for Greater Manchester has this aim at its core, too. GM2040 recognises that that it is an absolute requirement that the Regional Centre and airport grow. The principal aim from a transport perspective is that the transport network is able to support the planned levels of growth. It is also important that this level of access promotes inclusivity both geographically and by income (by ensuring that all parts of the city and wider region have good connections to employment centres and the other key facilities and that income level does not substantially limit travel choices). Environmental responsibility is also promoted through the reduction of carbon emissions and air pollution by investing in and promoting the use of sustainable forms of transport. The City Centre Transport Strategy which was approved in 2010 also places emphasis on supporting growth while also improving environmental quality
- 2.4 As the City Centre has grown more pressure has been placed on infrastructure. As the number of journeys across the city increases, the ability of the transport infrastructure to comfortably accommodate traffic decreases. An objective of transport strategy is therefore to encourage travel onto more space-efficient and environmentally sustainable modes. Overall, this means that emphasis has been given to strengthening the city's public transport network and also investing in new cycling infrastructure and in public realm improvements. Although car journeys are important, the focus of interventions has been on supporting a shift to alternative modes, both to ensure that the transport network as a whole can be efficient and also so that the remaining car journeys are not stymied by excessive congestion.

- 2.5 Overall, the City Centre has seen considerable growth over the last fifteen years. Whilst this reflects the efforts of the Council and its partners to promote investment, it is also due to the transport investments that have facilitated access by more people. During the same period Manchester Airport has seen significant growth in both the level of employment both on site and in the wider area and a large increase in the numbers of passengers using the airport on an annual basis with patronage increasing from 18.5 million in 2000 to 27 million today. Just as Manchester's economic and regeneration success over the last three decades has been underpinned by strategic transport investment, so the ongoing growth of the city will not be possible unless its the capacity of its transport infrastructure also grows.

Governance Arrangements

- 2.6 Not all elements of the local transport system are, of course under the direct control of the Greater Manchester authorities. The Motorway network is managed on behalf of the Government by Highways England. Since privatisation the responsibility for the rail network has been split between the operators of the track, currently Network Rail, and the various train operating companies. Since deregulation in 1986, bus operations have been the responsibilities of individual operators operating most routes on a commercial basis , with GMPTE and latterly Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), being responsible for the subsidising those services that are deemed to be socially necessary but are not operated commercially. The ten Greater Manchester district councils over the local road network as Highway Authorities and also, through TfGM, provide oversight of the Metrolink network.
- 2.7 Devolution is bringing greater influence over key elements of the network and over funding: Rail North now provides oversight, jointly with the Department for Transport, for the letting of the key rail franchises in the North; a new Joint Board has been established to enable greater dialogue over the Highways England network; and the devolution agreement, and subsequent legislation and Parliamentary Orders will provide the new elected Mayor of Greater Manchester with new powers over the local bus network, should he decide to exercise them. Greater Manchester now has greater freedoms over the allocation of local transport capital budgets, with some key decisions over approval of detailed spending programmes delegated to the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Combined Authority. It is against this complex background that key transport projects have been delivered and are being operated.

3.0 Key Recent Transport Investments

- 3.1 Greater Manchester made strategic decisions during the last decade to invest heavily in modernising and increasing the capacity of its transport networks. Key projects have been completed over the last year including the Second City Metrolink Crossing that has added much needed extra capacity and resilience to the Metrolink Network across Greater Manchester. This followed the completion of lines to Ashton Via East Manchester, Oldham and Rochdale, East Didsbury and Manchester Airport via Wythenshawe. These lines will be followed by a further Metrolink Extension to the Trafford Centre via Trafford

Park which is currently under construction and is scheduled for completion in the winter of 2020/21.

- 3.2 A further strategic project that has been completed recently is the Cross City Bus scheme that has provided a package of bus priority facilities linking the Guided Busway to Leigh with the corridors along Rochdale Road to Middleton and Rochdale in the north and the Oxford Road Corridor in the South. The scheme has been designed to make bus travel across the city easier and more attractive by reducing journey times for bus passengers and to improving overall levels of reliability and resilience.
- 3.3 The Second City Crossing and the Bus Priority Package have been accompanied by a package of traffic management measures that have facilitated their introduction, both in the heart of the City Centre and on the Oxford Road corridor. These have included limiting access for general traffic to some key parts of city centre streets including Portland Street, Princess Street and Oxford Road through the creation of bus gates through which access is limited to buses and taxis. The introduction of these measures is consistent with a long term strategy, set out in the City Centre Transport Strategy, published in 2010, which sought to encourage traffic which is travelling from one side of the city centre to the other to use the Inner Ring Road rather than traveling through the centre, while at the same time enabling those people who need to drive into the centre for work, shopping, leisure or other purposes to continue to do so.
- 3.4 The Oxford Road corridor scheme comprises a comprehensive package of measures designed to increase the attractiveness of bus travel, make significant improvements to conditions for cyclists and improve public realm along the corridor. Segregated cycle lanes have been provided with “Dutch Style” bus stop bypasses at a number of locations. Bus gates have been introduced during the daytime to restrict through traffic. The Oxford Road scheme links to the Wilmslow Road cycle scheme which provides a continuous element of cycle way from the city centre to Didsbury in the South.
- 3.5 In addition to these schemes delivered by the Council and TfGM, other investments which are under construction include the Ordsall Chord, the first key element of a wider package of measures designed to increase connectivity and capacity of the rail network in Manchester and Salford through the creation of a direct link from Victoria to Oxford Road and Piccadilly Stations. Further elements of the overall package, including additional platforms at Piccadilly Station and capacity improvements at Oxford Road have been the subject of a public inquiry, the result of which is still awaited.
- 3.6 Two highway schemes are currently scheduled for delivery in the coming years. The A6 to Manchester Airport link road will provide an improved link to the Airport from the east. In addition work is planned to improve a key junction on the Inner Relief Road at Water Street/Regent Road by providing additional capacity.

4.0 Recent Trends and Evidence of Impacts

- 4.1 It was understood that the recent period of work on City Centre infrastructure would cause disruption during its implementation, At the time, the Leader of the Council was clear that the work was nevertheless vital:

"I recognise that this will inevitably cause some inconvenience in the short term. Some journeys into and out of the city centre may take slightly longer and some parts might not look their best while pavements are dug up. However, the ongoing benefits of this co-ordinated work will far outweigh any short term frustrations and we would ask people to bear with us."

- 4.2 During the period that the construction of the second city crossing and the Cross City Bus Scheme were taking place between 2014 and 2017 there was significant construction activity in the city centre and a number of key streets were affected. This work was accompanied by a significant level of engagement with city centre residents and businesses and a pro - active communications campaign designed to raise awareness of the long term benefit of the work. Bus operators reported difficult operating conditions during this period and there were times of significant congestion on key streets. Bus operators reported a loss of patronage on some services during this period although there is little evidence of enduring impacts and since the conclusion of the works bus operators report much improved operating conditions.
- 4.3 However, more important than the fact that travel conditions recover after periods of roadworks is the longer term trends that this investment supports. Figure 1 below provides details of the trips made across a cordon at the Inner Relief Route between 7.30 and 9.30 am. The total number of trips has increased by around 15% during this period but the share of journeys across modes has changed quite significantly. The most significant detail of this change is that the overall number of car trips has reduced and the number of trips made by rail, by Metrolink, on foot and by bike have all increased. The key changes to the city, in terms of jobs, economic growth and a dramatic increase in vibrancy, have only been possible because of the improvements made to transport infrastructure and a policy to support mode shift. If car journeys had not reduced as a proportion of overall trips since 2006, there would currently be 12,500 more cars entering the City Centre each morning.
- 4.4 The two bars to the right of the figure show the expected future growth with the proportion of car trips declining further with other modes all forecast to increase. These shifts are essential to enable growth, and will only be possible due to investment that increases capacity on other modes.

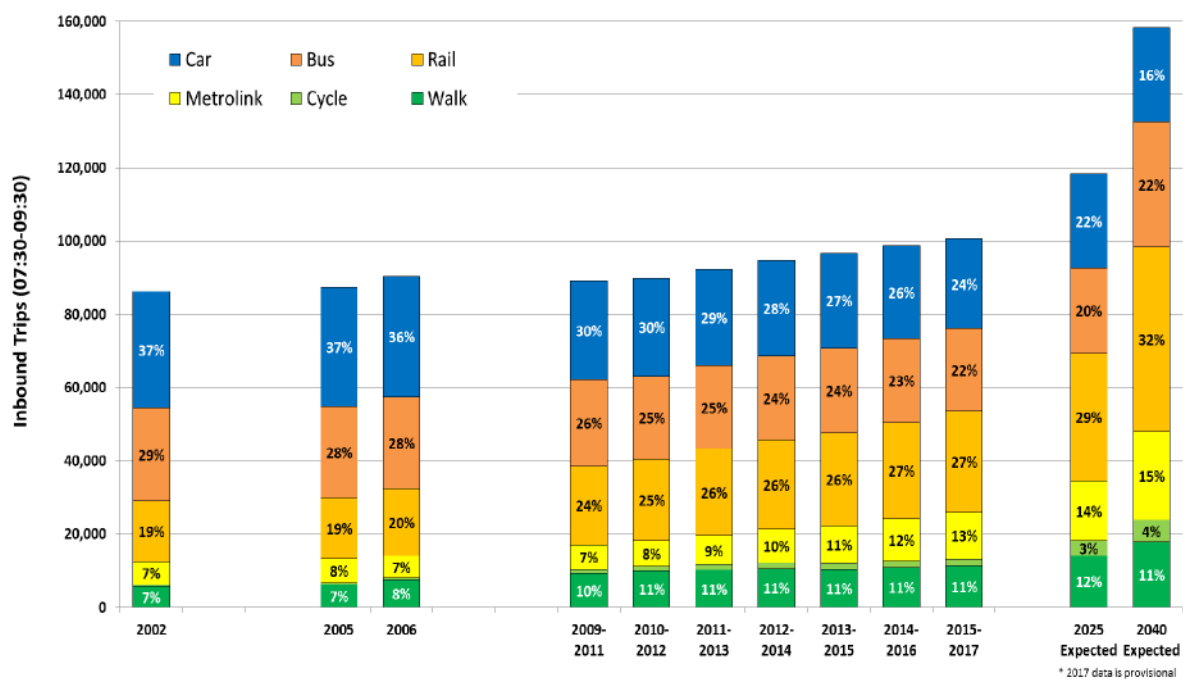


Figure 1: AM Peak (07:30-09:30) Inbound Trips across City Centre cordon

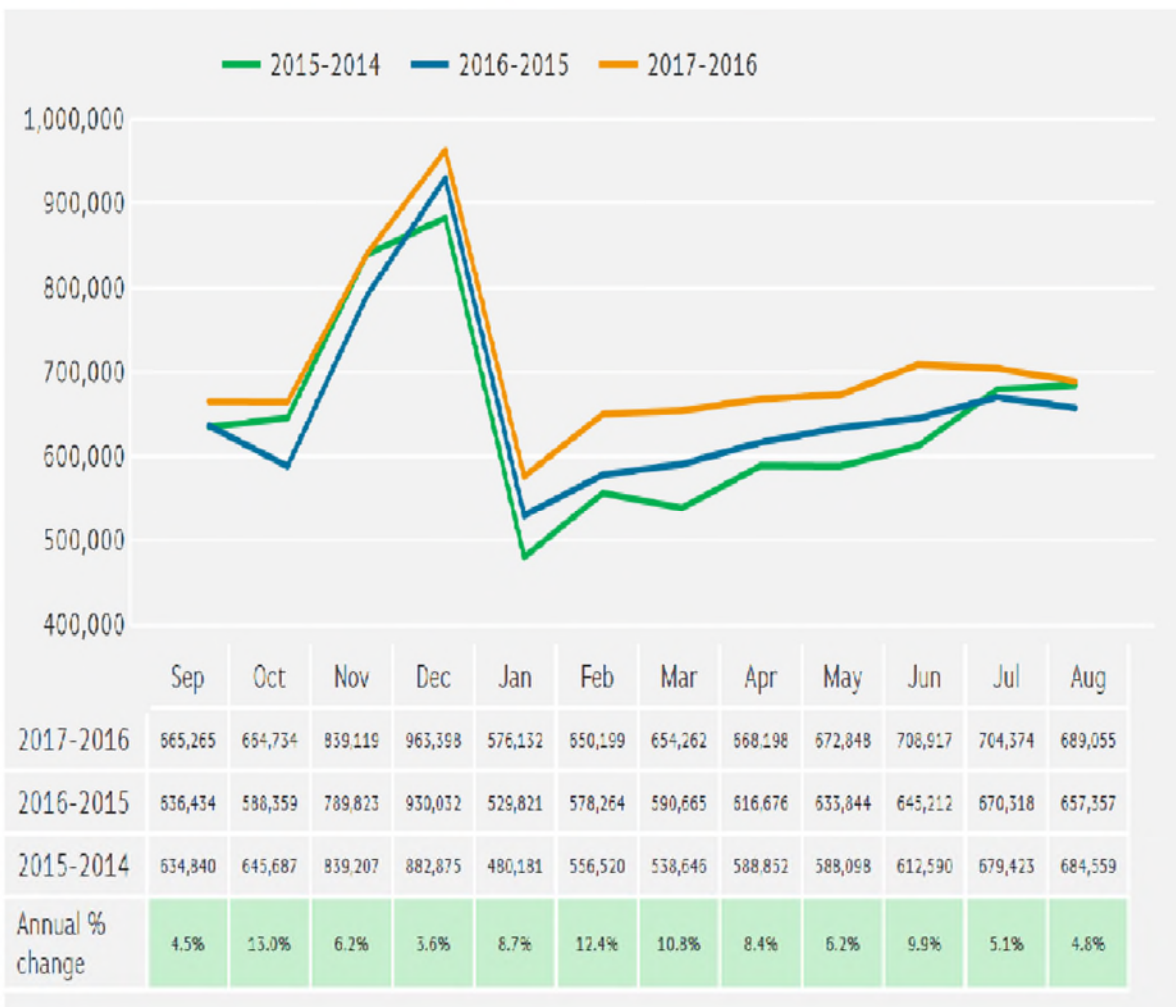
4.4 In summary the cordon count data demonstrates the following:

- **Overall growth in demand** - 15% increase in the total volume of AM Peak inbound trips since 2009, rising from c. 89,000 to c. 102,000 (provisional 2017 data).
- **Reduced reliance on car** - absolute numbers of car trips have steadily reduced from c. 33,000 in 2006, to c. 24,000 (provisional 2017 data).
- **Rail as the dominant mode** - rail overtook car as the dominant mode in 2015 and has continued to strengthen its share to 2017. In 2009, there were c. 20,000 inbound rail trips, rising to 29,000 (provisional 2017 data).
- **Metrolink growth** - expansion of the Metrolink network has led to a doubling of inbound trips, rising from c. 7,000 in 2009, to c. 14,000 (provisional 2017 data).
- **Cycling rising from a low base** - in 2002 there were just 500 inbound trips recorded, with this now having risen to 1,900 (provisional 2017 data).
- **Rise in walking associated with a growing residential population** - a doubling of inbound walking trips, with c. 6,000 recorded in 2002, rising to c. 12,000 (provisional 2017 data).
- **Bus demand falling** - over 10% reduction in the number of inbound bus trips since 2002, falling from c. 25,000 to c. 22,000. However, operators have suggested that journeys are becoming increasingly reliable, which should encourage greater patronage in future.

- 4.5 Although the rush hour is the period when the City Centre transport network is busiest, as the diversity of activity expands, particularly for leisure, access throughout the day increasingly important, In order to try to establish trends in overall numbers of people using the city centre, particularly for retail purposes the Manchester Business Improvement District tracks footfall trends in the city centre shopping district, providing weekly and monthly updates. The footfall counts are taken from four cameras located on Market Street, Exchange Square, St Ann’s Square and King Street. The data is collected and analysed by Springboard UK.
- 4.6 Figure 2 below is an extract from the latest August 2017 Monthly Footfall Report. The graph shows that footfall in the main city centre shopping district area is higher across the year than it has been in the previous 2 years. Footfall for the year to date is 8.3% up on the previous year.

Footfall - Rolling 12 Months

The figures shown below are calculated using weekly averages.



Year to Date % Change is the annual % change in footfall from January of this year compared to the same period last year.
 Year on Year % Change is the % change in footfall for this week compared to the same week in the previous year.
 Week on Week % Change is the % change in footfall for this week from the previous week.

4.7 Figure 3 provides data from the Greater Manchester Travel Diary (GMTRADS) Survey to estimate the journey purpose and mode share splits for trips with a trip-attraction end in the city centre. It is estimated that a total of c. 260,000 daily trips currently have a trip-attraction end in the city centre. The chart shows the wide range of purposes for which people access the city centre. It is important to recognise that these purposes vary throughout the day and week and the characteristics.

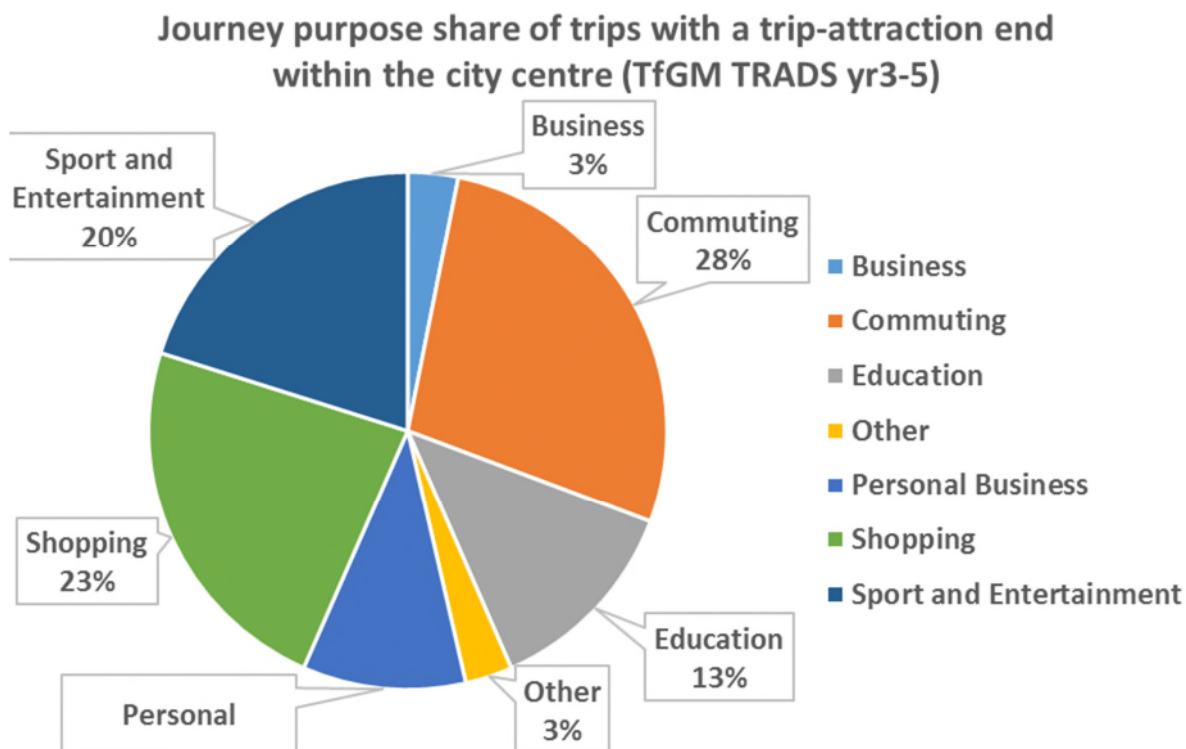


Figure 3: City Centre Journey Purpose Split

4.8 Commuting remains the most important purpose for journeys, but shopping, sport and entertainment and education are also important. Trends in business, retail and lifestyles suggest that non-rush hour journeys will grow in number, and the Council will work to ensure that the transport network can respond to this. Through the process to retender Northern and Transpennine rail services, for example, improved weekend services to the City Centre have been secured, particularly important to support retail and City Centre events.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The city has recently seen major investment in elements of its public transport infrastructure. These investments have been part of a consistent strategy to support the growth of the city's economy and to improve the connections between the places where people live and where they work, shop and spend their leisure time.

- 5.2 Identifying the economic impact of transport investments is a complex task. The city's and the wider Greater Manchester Transport Strategy seeks to accommodate growth while minimising environmental and other impacts. The evidence that we have suggests that following the period of disruption during the period of major construction in the heart of the city centre the new traffic management arrangements are bedding in well and the investments have provided the capacity and resilience to support future growth.