

The future of the TransPennine Express and Northern rail franchises

1. **Name:** Friends of Eccles Station (FRECCLES)

2. **Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?**

Organisation

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6 (TO3). What are your views on allowing some reduction in the hours ticket offices are open and staffed if this is accompanied by the ability for passengers to have widespread access to ticket buying opportunities (e.g. through new and improved approaches such as smart ticketing, increased advance purchase ticketing or via mobile phones), adequate measures to ensure vulnerable passengers are not disadvantaged and more effective customer service by both station and on-train staff? Do you have any evidence to support your views?

This may be acceptable at stations with a simple service pattern where local ticket sales predominate and can be offered by ticket machines.

However, at interchanges or where intermodal services are being promoted it is essential that ticket offices remain open so that staff can offer potential customers bespoke journey planning services.

7 (COM1). How can local communities, local businesses and other organisations can be further stimulated to play an active part in the running of Northern and TPE rail services, including at stations?

By ensuring that they are represented as “users” on the transport planning and train operator committee structures at a senior level and by an industry-wide commitment to devolution and local decision-making.

8 (COM2). What opportunities are there for Community Rail Partnerships to expand their role and range of activities?

CRPs and Station Friends' groups should have statutory representation on local authority transport committees. By engaging local communities, CRPs and Friends groups can raise the profile of stations and encourage imaginative roles for stations and their buildings. They can also provide useful information to railway planners about new developments that may represent fresh markets for train services.

9 (TPF1). Are you aware of any proposals for third party funded changes not already indicated? Please provide details.

Alliance Rail (now GNWR) propose to run a service from West Yorkshire through Manchester to London, stopping at Eccles, since this station is recognized by them as an important interchange.

10 (FID1). What factors may impact on demand for travel on the new Northern and TPE franchises? Please provide evidence.

1. By 2025 Transport for Greater Manchester is planning for 10% of all journeys in the city region to be by bike. It has already received £20M through the Cycle City Ambition grant and £23M from the Local Sustainable Transport fund. This massive funding will impact on rail cycle hubs such as the one being installed at Eccles - where National Cycle Route 55 runs right past the station entrance.
2. MediaCityUK is a rapidly developing national centre with digital creativity, learning and leisure at its heart. More than 200 businesses are already in MediaCityUK, including the BBC and ITV. It has one of the biggest HD studio developments in Europe. The University of Salford and other training providers are already in situ. MediaCityUK aspires to be a new seat of learning for Manchester and the North West of England and is complemented by over 350 apartments, restaurants, bars and a large shopping mall. The Metrolink tram links MediaCityUK with Eccles Station and is already proving popular with people travelling from the West of the Manchester City region to Salford Quays (see Appendices 2 and 3).
3. Life expectancy in the North West is poor in comparison to other parts of the country. Much work is being done to increase the health of residents by encouraging use of green options such as cycling and walking to the local railway station.

4. The reconfiguration of NHS services is resulting in the establishment of highly specialised hospitals. Patients are now receiving care at sites some distance from their homes. Car parking at all hospitals is a major problem. Patients' relatives and friends are increasingly using train services to access these specialist hospitals. The neuroscience centre for Greater Manchester at Salford Royal Hospital is about half a mile from Eccles station.
5. Sustainability and environmental issues, especially the need to reduce carbon emissions, will impact on future transport planning. Roads into Manchester from Eccles are some of the most congested in the region, leading to high carbon emissions and an adverse impact on health
6. Proposals to link Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds Sheffield and Newcastle, in the One North report promise to regenerate prosperity in the north but it will be essential that these important hubs are served by good services from local stations.

11 (DTD1). What are your proposals for providing passengers better and safer access to different modes of transport at stations (including bus, tram, cycling and walking?)

Greatly improved information systems are required, particularly at interchanges, which provide details of local walking and cycling routes as well as bus and tram services. These should include large scale simple maps indicating routes to local hospitals and educational establishments. Lifts are essential to provide safe access. Their provision should be prioritised where local use is likely to include those attending hospitals.

There needs to be better coordination of train, bus and tram timetables – particularly during periods of timetable disruption.

12 (DTD2). How do you suggest your proposals to improve the door-to-door journey experience might be funded?

By sharing funding across all transport sectors, not just rail.

By improved revenue collection across the franchise.

13 (TPE1). What are your views on the degree of flexibility proposed for the train service specification for the new TPE franchise? Do you have any evidence to support your views?

The emphasis on centre to centre express services can conflict with provision of essential local commuter services. Consideration should be

given to using passing loops wherever possible to provide flexibility in the timetabling of both express and local services. It should be recognised that people will need good service provision to get to inter-city hubs, so that total journey times are shortened: not just inter-city times.

Flexibility in service provision should be based on passenger needs, not operational convenience.

16 (NTP1). *What factors do you consider should be taken into account in the assessment of the North TransPennine route options, in particular in the balance of crowding, frequency, journey time and connectivity benefits? What evidence do you have in relation to any of these options?*

See answer to question 13. Local stations should not be penalised in the pursuit of faster journey times as this will reduce connectivity and travel opportunities. In many instances it is local stations that generate the passengers for express trains.

17 (NTP2). *Are there other options for any additional North TransPennine services that you would put forward for consideration? What evidence do you have in relation to any of these options?*

We suggest that some TPE trains crossing Chat Moss should stop at Eccles to provide a service to Media City UK and the western belt of the city region.

30 (NTSR1). *Please indicate, with evidence where available, where passengers would be better served, and revenue increased, by:*

a) Increasing frequency on busier sections. This increases passenger recruitment particularly at interchanges because of the potential to use connecting rail, bus, tram or cycle storage services, as at Eccles.

b) Improving connections with other services - for the same reasons as apply at 'a'.

c) Adjusting the times of the first/last train. Earlier trains will assist those starting work on early shifts. Later trains will cater for the increasing number of visitors to evening events in the City Centre which often finish after the last trains have departed.

31 (NTSR2). Please set out, with evidence where available, any other approaches that might improve route utilisation and make better use of existing resources on the Northern franchise.

Specifically for Eccles, the proposals in 30 (a) could be achieved by bringing the up goods passing loop into passenger use and by using this loop also as a turn back facility for trains coming in to Manchester from the east, thereby freeing up platform use at Victoria (and possibly Piccadilly).

35 (OTH1). Do you have any other views on the future of the Northern and TPE franchises that you would like to set out?

This submission has been prepared by the Friends of Eccles Station (FRECCLES www.freccles.org.uk). Our aims are two-fold - to improve the environment at the station and to improve the passenger services at the station. We aspire to establish Eccles as the intermodal hub for the west of the city region. We work in partnership with Northern Rail, ACoRP, TfGM, and Salford City Council.

Eccles is four miles from Manchester city centre and has a population of 40,000. The station is in the middle of the town, 300 metres from the Metrolink tram terminus and bus station, is within 200m of a motorway junction, lies directly adjacent to national cycle route 55 and is currently being equipped with a secure storage facility for 50 cycles. It is on the Chat Moss line, the world's first main line passenger railway (See Appendix 1).

Currently Eccles is served by 1 train per hour (outside rush hours) in each direction. The number of passengers using the station in 2012-13 was 147,582. The percentage growth at Eccles over 2004-5 to 2012-13 far exceeds that for Greater Manchester as a whole.

Our case for improved rail services and facilities at Eccles station are summarised as follows:

1. Develop Eccles as a Rail - Metrolink - Bus - Cycle hub.

The North West Route Utilisation Strategy made the case for Eccles as an interchange in 2007. The case has been greatly strengthened since then by the growth of employment and tourist facilities at Salford Quays and MediaCityUK (which are connected to Eccles by Metrolink) and by the steady growth in rail passenger numbers at Eccles (by a factor of 2.3 since 2004-5). A survey by FRECCLES at Eccles station in 2013 showed that 20% of passengers already used ECCLES as an interchange to reach Salford Quays/MediaCityUK (see Appendix 3)

Eccles is ideally placed geographically to act as an interchange hub for West Manchester: this would reduce the number of passengers using congested central Manchester stations, as passengers could travel from the west of Manchester to Salford Quays/MediaCityUK via Eccles.

The NW RUS also stated “*The option is to make Eccles a better interchange, with DDA access, improved facilities and improved signage and advertising to the Metrolink stop at Eccles. In addition more trains need to stop at Eccles.*”

Such a development would have a regenerative effect in respect of the Eccles area - which Salford City Council has identified as a key focus for redevelopment.

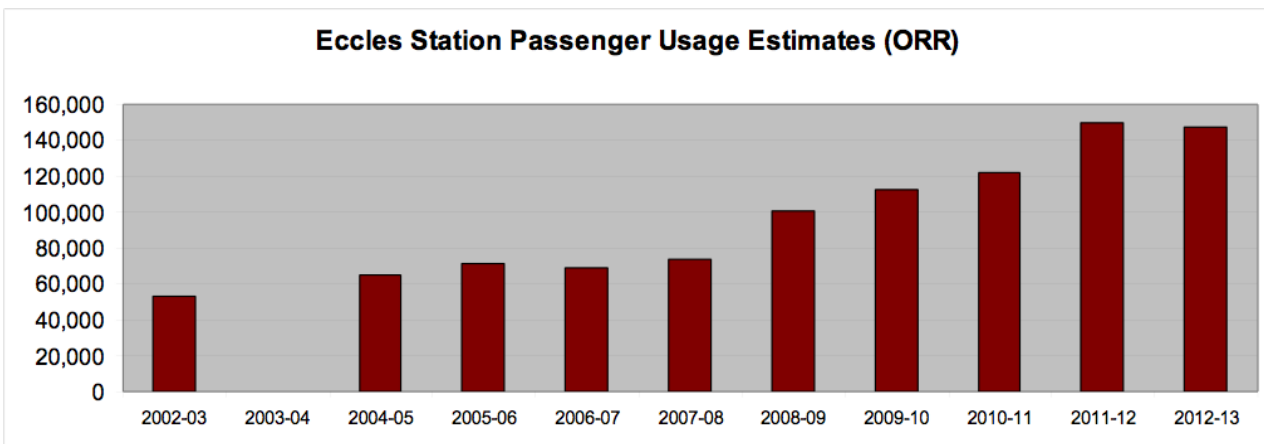
For these reasons, we propose there should be a minimum of three trains per hour in each direction at Eccles Station. These points are expanded in the following sections.

2. Provide disabled access at Eccles station.

The use of Eccles station is greatly hindered by the long flights of stairs to the platforms (35 steps). FRECCLES calls for the provision of fully disabled access during the period of the new franchise, e.g. by means of lifts. Installation of lifts could be linked with a new entrance to the station from St Mary's Car Park.

3 More frequent trains at Eccles.

According to the Greater Manchester Rail Policy 2012 – 2024, the passenger usage of almost three times the 50,000 pa threshold at Eccles justifies an off-peak service frequency of 2 trains per hour – (see figure below.)

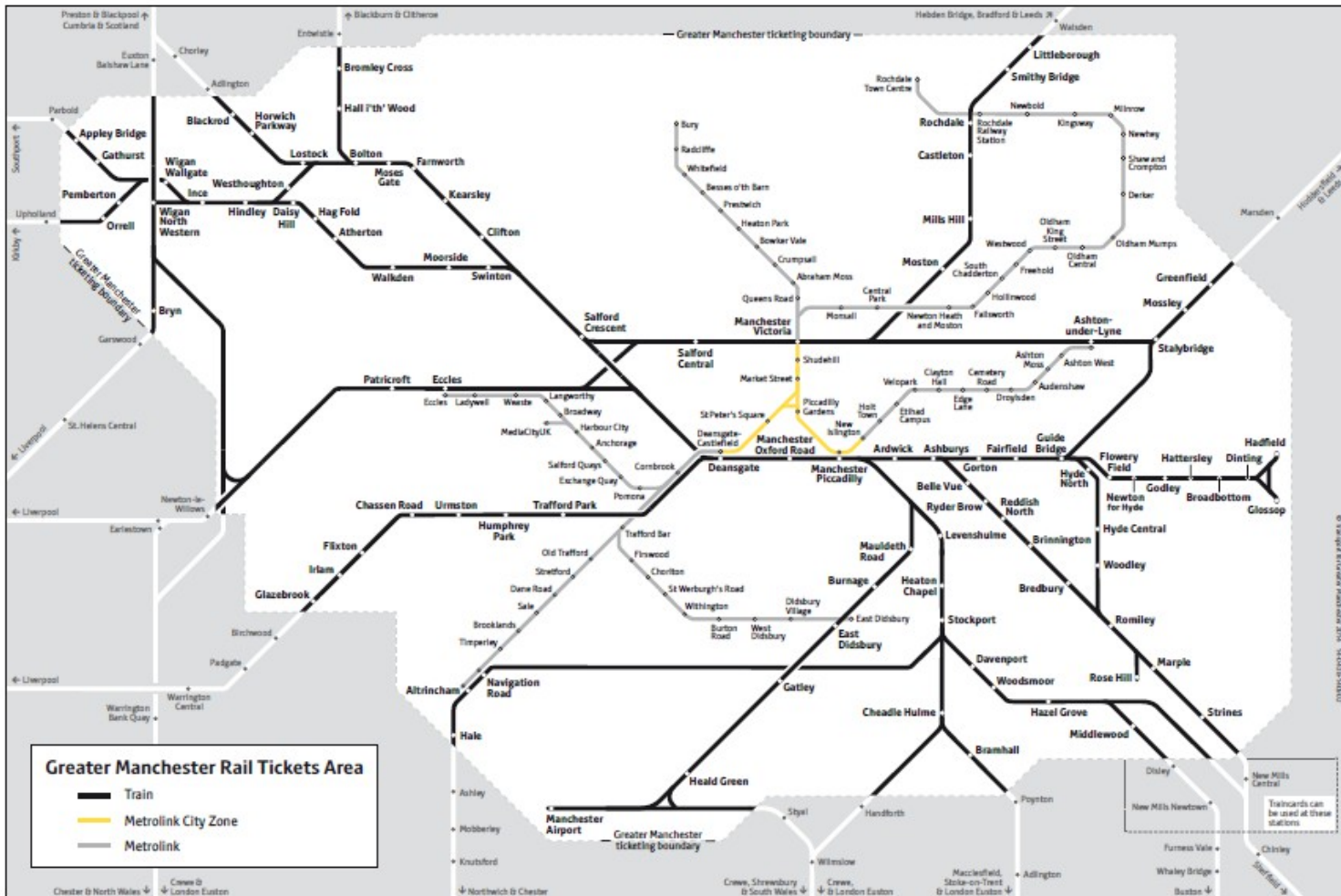


Greater Manchester Rail Policy also states: “Stations that provide important interchanges with bus services, Metrolink and other rail services need higher frequencies to reduce the time passengers wait for their onward connection, thus making travel by public transport more attractive”. We list below possible ways to increase frequency at Eccles in line with TfGM aspirations:

- A Introduce a service to Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport. FRECCLES has for a long time been aware of a demand for an hourly direct service from Eccles to Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport. This would provide a fast and convenient service to Piccadilly for onward connections, a connection to south Manchester, and a fast and convenient service to the airport for air passengers as well as aiding workforce development at the airport and Airport City.**
- B Divert the Liverpool – Warrington Bank Quay service. A FRECCLES survey shows that the current hourly Liverpool – Warrington BQ service is very lightly used between Earlestown and Warrington BQ, and therefore this service could beneficially be diverted to run as Liverpool – Earlestown – Manchester Victoria, thus providing an extra hourly service calling at Eccles.**
- C Stop a semi-fast TPE service at Eccles. Development of Eccles as an interchange hub for West Manchester would justify adding a call at Eccles to one of the semi-fast Liverpool trans-pennine services. The switch to electric traction from December 2018 will enable an additional stop to be inserted to this service with minimum effect on overall journey time.**
- D Confirm the proposed introduction of the Chester - Leeds semi-fast service calling at Eccles that is included in the 2018 Northern Hub ITSS (referenced in the Network Rail Stage 3 Capacity and Performance Report published by the ORR on 23rd Oct 2013).**
- E Use the Eccles up goods passing loop. There is an electrified track loop at Eccles, used occasionally by freight trains, which could be used by trains from the east of Manchester to terminate at Eccles instead of at Manchester Victoria. This would only require re-instatement of the adjoining platform edge at Eccles. As well as providing an additional service at Eccles, this would again reduce congestion caused by terminating trains at Victoria. The loop could also be used for local stopping services to be overtaken by express trains.**

In conclusion, FRECCLES has no doubts that provision of increased train services and disabled access at Eccles, as described above, would greatly increase the number of rail passengers using Eccles, and would make good use of the investment put into the electrification of the Chat Moss line. We hope that our proposals will be included in the specification for the new Northern and TPE franchises to start in 2016.

Appendix 1 Greater Manchester Rail Map



Appendix 2 Passenger Count Results

FRECCLES – FRIENDS OF ECCLES STATION

ANALYSIS OF ECCLES STATION PASSENGER COUNT 11th NOVEMBER 2013

1) Total Passenger Numbers Recorded (2012 figures in brackets)

Manchester Bound	Alight	147(84)
	Board	177(191)
Liverpool Bound	Alight	182(172)
	Board	118(85)
	TOTAL	624(532)

At 624, the total number of passengers recorded shows an increase of 17.3% on the previous year!

2) Trends

Passengers travelling to and from Manchester were static with virtually identical returns from last year.

b) Passengers travelling to and from Liverpool show a massive 56.8% increase

This links with the results of the Passenger Survey which indicated the increased number of passengers are using the station as an interchange for the Quays and Media City and. as most of these journeys were recorded during the rush-hour periods, the figures suggest that such travel is employment-related and has been generated by the growth in employment opportunities in the catchment area of the station.

Appendix 3 Passenger Survey Results

FRECCLES-Friends of Eccles Station

Passenger Survey undertaken 9th April 2013

Survey Method

The survey interviewed passengers at Eccles Station who had visited Eccles that day in order to look at their travel patterns and the forms of transport used. Members of FRECCLES interviewed 70 passengers during the evening rush-hour between 4pm and 7pm using a prepared questionnaire. The results are as follows;

1) Frequency of use of Eccles Station?

58 passengers reported using the station 3 or more times per week which, as expected, indicates mainly business or regular use in the time period sampled.

4 passengers used the station weekly and 8 less frequently

2) Where had passengers travelled from to visit Eccles?

Passengers had visited Eccles from 37 different locations a sample of which are as follows

Manchester – 7

Stalybridge - 5 (+ 5 from stations beyond Stalybridge)

St Helens/Earlstown - 6

Newton-le Willows – 4

Rainhill – 4

Lea Green – 4

Altogether there were 29 passengers from Greater Manchester and 27 from Merseyside.

The most distant visitor was from Lancaster – visiting friends.

3) How had passengers reached their originating station?

The majority (32) had walked to their station of origin.

4 had used the Metrolink.

11 had used the bus and 4 had cycled.

19 had travelled to the station by car which suggests that the early starts required to reach work in Eccles, may lead people to seek lifts from family or friends (which several mentioned) or use car parks near stations.

A. Purpose of visit to Eccles?

**Business/Work - 59
Visiting family/friends – 6
Hospital/Medical Reasons – 2
Education – 2
Shopping – 1**

B. Final Destination of passenger journeys?

**Eccles and local area – 36
Salford Quays/Media City – 14
Salford Royal Hospital – 11
Trafford Centre – 2
Colleges – 4
Salford - 2
Trafford Park – 1**

C. Forms of transport used for onward journey from Eccles

To reach local destinations in Eccles, 34 walked, 1 had a lift by car and one used the bus.

To reach Salford Quays and Media City, 12 used the tram and 2 cycled.

To reach Salford Royal Hospital, all passengers walked and the same applied to the education colleges.

Of the 2 passengers travelling to the Trafford Centre, 1 used the bus and the other taxi. The single traveller to Trafford Park also cycled.

D. Passenger Views on Facilities at the Station

From a list of possible infrastructure improvements, passengers were asked to say which they thought were a priority

**56 named Real Time Information 33 named Disabled Access
25 named CCTV
13 named improved shelters and seating.**

Other requests mentioned included

**Longer ticket office hours (5) and Waiting Room (1)
Better Lighting (2) and Emergency Phone (1)
Better Access (2) Raising of M/Cr Platform (1) Bike Access (1)**

E. Conclusions

The key implications raised by the survey are as follows:

- A. Passengers are travelling to Eccles from all over the Greater Manchester conurbation and beyond, including a sizeable number from Merseyside. This emphasises the need for an integrated transport system and frequent local services to support these developing travel patterns and to maximise the growing employment opportunities being developed in the area.**
- B. 20% of passengers surveyed use Eccles Station as an interchange to reach Salford Quays and Media City which demonstrates the potential for Eccles Station to act as a transport interchange for the west side of the conurbation.**
- C. 16% of passengers were employed at Salford Royal Hospital showing that the station has become a key point for accessing the hospital. There is potential for promoting the station for use by visitors and patients to the hospital and looking at a local bus link to the hospital site.**
- D. In terms of infrastructure at the station, passengers clearly voiced the need for facilities that one would expect at any modern station – Real Time Information, Disabled Access and CCTV.**

