

5.2 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

5.2.1 Issues

Both consultation days produced similar concerns and priorities from the residents about Public Transport issues. We discovered from the questionnaire that Public Transport issues generally could be divided into two areas - one concerning residents who are commuters and another concerning residents who use public transport during the day and after work. There were, however, areas of common agreement.

TRAINS

At present the main train service is a Northern Rail stopping train between Sheffield and Manchester bypassing Stockport, which is the nearest very large commercial and shopping centre. Three further trains in the early morning go into Manchester via Stockport and two further trains in the early evening return from Manchester via Stockport. These are long distance trains operated by Transpennine (from Cleethorpes to Manchester Airport) and Central Trains (from Norwich to Liverpool) both going via Sheffield.

Outside the rush hour one of each of these services passes through Chinley Station hourly but neither stops. This means, for example, that people wishing to go to Manchester Airport have to travel to Manchester Piccadilly and then change trains, even though there is a train going through the station to the airport once an hour.

Common suggestions were that there should be more trains to Stockport and more trains stopping at Chinley. In particular the cross country trains operated by Transpennine and Central Trains through Sheffield and Stockport should stop regularly. 38% of replies revealed that this and the requirement for more trains to Stockport were the main considerations.

As Stockport station is a hub for train services this would enable passengers to access trains to the local surrounding areas, and also further afield throughout England. Stopping trains departing Manchester and Sheffield later than those currently timetabled were wanted to enable residents to visit theatres and concerts in both cities in 14% of the replies. At present the last train to Chinley departs from Manchester at 22:27. Many residents go to Manchester in the evening by car as they cannot get home after plays and concerts.

During the day trains run to Manchester approximately every hour until 10:55 and then two-hourly until 17:55. Trains to Sheffield run two-hourly until 15:19 and then hourly until 17:53. 32% of those surveyed, wanted an increased service in the middle of the day. An increased service at the weekend was also wanted, not only for residents, but also for visitors to the area, particularly hikers. Adverse comments were also received about dirty trains and that newer rolling stock is needed on Northern trains.

29% wanted more trains at the rush hour in both directions, particularly to Stockport, and more carriages on the trains. The last "commuter" train from Manchester is at 17:20 and then there is an 85 minutes gap until 18:45. 14% wanted trains to start earlier in the morning to enable shift workers to get to and from work easily.

Ticket Pricing

Commuters to Manchester from Chinley encounter problems with anomalies in ticket pricing by the train operators.

Regular commuters to Manchester usually have a Greater Manchester train card which is valid as far as New Mills. To have a valid ticket into Manchester they then have to buy the 'add-on' from Chinley to New Mills. A single to New Mills costs £1.25 and a return costs £2.05, which is reasonable.

However, this fare is only applicable on Northern Trains services. Central and Transpennine services have different rules. Passengers on these services from Chinley are supposed to buy

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tickets to Hazel Grove as the 'add on' because the train does not actually pass through a station in New Mills. The problem with this is the cost:

Single to Hazel Grove: £4.40	Return to Hazel Grove: £6.80
Single to Manchester: £5.85	Return to Manchester: £7.45

The cost of the 'add on' is totally out of proportion to the distance covered. It only costs an extra 65 pence return to travel all the way into Manchester at peak times as opposed to just Hazel Grove.

A further factor in the equation is that Northern Trains does not run an early commuter train into Manchester. The 07:55 is their first train each day from Chinley. They do, however, operate four earlier trains to Manchester each morning from New Mills. The only earlier commuter train is run by Central Trains at 07:04. Commuters have, therefore, no option but to pay the higher ticket prices if they wish to get to work early from Chinley.

Some commuters travel from Whaley Bridge and not Chinley into Manchester in order to go through New Mills. Not only is this a cheaper option for them but the first train of the day leaves Whaley Bridge at 06:10, making it easier to get to work early if necessary.

CHINLEY STATION AND CAR PARK



The Station

Overwhelmingly, 62% of replies concerned an urgent need for disabled access to the station. At present there are 26 steps up to the bridge in one direction and 27 in the other. The steps are very steep and get very slippery in the winter as the bridge and steps are completely exposed to the elements. It is impossible for disabled people to gain access to the platform and extremely difficult for the elderly, mothers with young children and babies in buggies and travellers with suitcases to get over the bridge. It is also very difficult to take bicycles onto the platform.



The nearest station with disabled access is Buxton, which provides no access to Sheffield services. 41% of replies indicated that residents would use the train service more if they could get easy access to the platform.

The other major area of concern is the waiting room on the platform and the general state of the station. The waiting room is inadequate to provide proper shelter from the elements. It is not windproof, floods during rainfall, is unheated, appears to be rarely cleaned and regularly vandalised. Repairs are not immediately carried out. The seating consists of metal benches fastened to the walls. There are no toilets, no litter bins, so rubbish is thrown on the ground, and no effort has been made to enhance the appearance of the station at all. It is unmanned.



30% wanted major improvements to the waiting room to provide proper shelter from the elements and for regular cleaning and repairs to be put in place. 23% also requested the provision of litter bins and toilets. It was strongly felt that some effort should be made to make the platform appear less stark and more acceptable by providing flowers.

15% considered that CCTV would be of benefit to limit the vandalism and that better lighting is needed at night. Also timetables are needed on the platform together with a telephone for information on late running of trains.

THE STATION CAR PARK

The car park is usually full during the day. There are thirty-two parking spaces.



Many commuters park on the nearby roads, causing traffic and access problems and, following complaints, the County Council is about to impose waiting restrictions on these roads, which will make parking even more difficult for users of the station.

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Many people using the station do not live in the immediate vicinity and have no option other than to get to the station by car.

The parking problems are increased by recycling bins taking up four parking spaces in the car park and the fact that there are two disabled parking spaces, which are invariably empty because there is no disabled access to the station.



The situation is also not helped by residents of new houses on Station Road parking on the road instead of using their parking spaces at the rear of their houses.

There is no secure bicycle rack in the car park or on the station platform.

12% of respondents thought that the car park was inadequate for the amount of people using the station.

Other points raised included the need for the car park to be cleaned regularly to remove the glass near the recycling bins, for the bins to be re-sited and for CCTV cameras to be installed for security and to help prevent vandalism.

BUSES



There is very little incentive for residents wishing to travel any distance to use the bus service as it is extremely limited. There are buses once an hour to Whaley Bridge and Chapel en le Frith via each of the supermarkets and on to Buxton. However there is no direct service to Stockport or Manchester. It is necessary to change buses in Whaley Bridge or Chapel en le Frith to travel to either place. There is a half-hourly direct bus service, run by Trent Barton, which by-passes the villages and goes to Stockport and Manchester Airport. 20% wanted a direct bus service to Stockport

The last direct bus service from Buxton to both Chinley and Buxworth is at 1700. There is also a bus to Chinley only at 1850. The last direct bus to Buxton from Buxworth and Chinley is at 1450. This means that travelling to the theatres or other activities in either Buxton or Manchester is impossible by bus. The local children cannot attend activities out of the villages in the evenings unless they travel by car. 12% wanted later buses to enable school children to take part in activities at Chapel High School after school and for residents to be able to go into Buxton and out of the immediate area.

For commuters there is one direct bus from Buxworth and Chinley to Buxton at 0755 each day, arriving at 0835. The only other available bus for commuters is at 0712 from Buxworth to Chapel en le Frith with a 28 minutes wait for a connection to Buxton. 16% wanted more buses in the mornings to Buxton to arrive at times more convenient for work.

60% wanted bus services to Glossop and Hayfield to go through the centres of the villages and 12% wanted a more frequent service to Chapel en le Frith to attend the doctors' and dentists' surgeries, particularly in the afternoons.

5.2.2 Proposals

Our proposals are in two parts, those relating to the provision of public transport in general and those specific to particular modes of transport.

General Proposals.

To counter the issue of lack of consultation between transport users and providers, we propose that a parish wide transport user group is established which will be consulted by each of the transport providers when reviews or changes to service are proposed. We believe that this will provide a sense of ownership to transport users and ensure that the market for such services drives changes. This group would be charged with marketing public transport services within the parish using methods specifically tuned to their end use.

Mode Specific Proposals.

RAIL

The use of train services from the station in Chinley is a significant success. The growth of commuter demand in the parish has increased significantly over recent decades with travellers to Sheffield, Manchester and Stockport. There is also a considerable demand from shoppers travelling to Sheffield, Manchester and Marple and from walkers commencing their hobbies in Chinley and the Hope Valley stations. There has been significant success with the "Folk Trains" which combine travel and entertainment. There remain some major barriers to further usage of the rail facility. Our proposals to counter these are as follows.

- Chinley station has no disabled access. An approach should be made to Network Rail to define the reasons why this has not been provided particularly with reference to the Disability Discrimination Act. Consideration should be given to seeking out grant aid to resolve the problem.
- There are few services to Stockport. There is a considerable demand for such a service and all Transpennine and Central Train services which pass through Chinley (two per hour) actually call at Stockport. Whilst accepting that there may be little justification by the train operators for scheduled stops, the provision of request stops should be considered such as exists on the Manchester to Chester service. An approach to Northern Rail and the train operating companies should be made to examine the possibility.
- Northern Rail should be requested start their early morning train service from Chinley instead of New Mills, which would give commuters several earlier trains each morning to Manchester.
- A lack of later services: Trans Pennine Express train at 0015 from Manchester could include a request stop at Chinley.
- The question of ticket pricing should be referred to the Rail Consultative Group.
- Central Trains should be requested at the very least to allow commuters on the 0704 service to buy an 'add on' at the New Mills price in order to get into Manchester early.
- Car parking is at a premium. The existing car park is full to capacity on weekdays with the overflow causing significant problems on Station Road. Anticipated parking restrictions being implemented by DCC will only exacerbate the problem. Some improvement could be achieved by re-siting the recycling containers, but this would have a limited effect. To resolve the problem, spare land in the vicinity should be scheduled as not available for house building, which would effectively reduce its value to a level at which purchase for car parking may be feasible. The Planning department of HPBC should be approached to clarify the situation. First Group, the operators of the permanent way depot in the village, should also be approached to define if part of that site could be made available.

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- The state of Chinley station does not encourage passengers. Northern Rail should be requested to provide rubbish bins and regular cleaning and maintenance of the station and car park.
- Northern Rail should be requested to make the waiting room more weather proof and amenable to passengers.
- The possibility of establishing Friends of Chinley Station group should be actively considered.

BUS

Bus services in the parish have improved significantly in recent years, but the service is limited to a circular service serving the local parishes of Whaley Bridge and Chapel-en-le-Frith, with a few services to Buxton following a circuitous route. We believe that there are a number of opportunities to increase utilisation of these services.

- Approaches should be made to the present bus operator to investigate the possibility of buses being provided in the evening to Buxton and the surrounding areas. The possibility of funding for this should also be investigated.
- Equally improvements to the early morning timetable to Buxton should be sought to provide greater flexibility for commuters and also to the afternoon service to Chapel-en-le-Frith. This would reduce the number of cars on the road both locally and to Buxton.
- Approaches should be made to persuade Trent Barton to divert their bus to Stockport and Manchester Airport through the villages at, perhaps, hourly intervals. This would also help to reduce the number of cars travelling from the parish down the A6 into Stockport and Manchester.
- Funding should be sought for a bus service to Hayfield and Glossop.
- Negotiations with the bus operator should be sought to try to improve the integration of their service with other bus services in the area and also the train service, to try to minimise waiting times for passengers.

TAXI

The parish is made up of fairly narrow roads and steep hills. The taxi is often the most convenient and in many cases the only practical approach particularly for our elder citizens, although always the most expensive. We have noted that such a mode of transport is rarely, if ever, included in public transport strategy. We believe this to be wrong and would propose a change.

- Future transport strategy should include the provision of taxi/minibus services, specifically considering that subsidy, as applied to train and bus, is considered as a valid use of public monies.

PRIVATE CAR

In a semi rural area the private car will always be the first choice for many people. However we consider that the number of single user vehicles using the road is not only an inefficient use of resources, but damaging to the environment. To this end we wish to propose that investment should be applied to encourage car sharing.

- A web site already exists within Derbyshire to promote car sharing. The address is: http://www.shareacar.com/derbyshire_carshare_index.php. Derbyshire Car Share is

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focused on providing commuters living and working within Derbyshire, the opportunity to meet with others travelling similar journeys to promote taking a single vehicle between them, rather than one each. Derbyshire Car Share is part of the National, shareAcar.com group and promotes a safer environment for car sharing. This site should be promoted throughout the parish.