

**Proposed closure of passenger services at Woodlands Road
Metrolink station, Manchester**

(DFT-2010 -37)

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Executive Summary

The Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive wishes to open two new stations and close passenger services at another on the Bury line of the Manchester Metrolink light rail system. The Department has agreed in principle to the closure and in accordance with the law is conducting a public consultation exercise on the proposal.

How to Respond

The consultation period began on (date) and will run until (date). Please ensure that your response reaches us by that date. If you would like further copies of this consultation document it can be found at (web address) or you can contact (name) if you would like alternative formats (Braille, audio CD, etc).

Please send consultation responses to

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When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of a larger organisation please make it clear who the organisation represents, and where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.

Freedom of Information

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.

In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Consultation Questions

Do you agree with the closure of passenger services at Woodlands Road station?

If you do not agree, please provide reasons for your view. Do you have any other comments on the proposals?

The proposals

Background

The Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) is the owner of the Metrolink light rail network in Manchester. As part of its plans to expand and upgrade the network, GMPTE wishes to open new stations at Abraham Moss and Queen's Road

and discontinue passenger services at Woodlands Road station in the north of the city. GMPTE is obliged to carry out closure procedures under the Railways Act 2005 in respect of Woodlands Road. As part of those procedures the Department must conduct a public consultation.

Woodlands Road

GMPTE states that the current station has the lowest patronage levels on the Bury line and one of the lowest on the entire network. They say that between August 2007 and October 2009 there was a significant level of crime, with many incidents of vandalism and assaults on staff and a passenger. There are safety concerns about children playing unsupervised close to the tracks and drug dealing has taken place. GMPTE adds that there have been complaints from residents, local agencies and emergency services.

New stations

GMPTE has obtained funding from the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) to open two new stations on the Bury line, at Queen's Road and Abraham Moss. CIF is a UK government initiative to fund transport schemes that would promote new housing and community growth.

Queen's Road is an existing stop for staff and most trams call there already. The new stop will be adjacent to the Housing Growth Point redevelopment site at Collyhurst. This and the nearby Lower Irk Valley and central Harpurhey sites will deliver a net increase of 4,300 houses, which will help north Manchester contribute to the overall Greater Manchester New Growth Point Programme targets.

Abraham Moss will better serve a number of major destinations including the educational facilities at the Abraham Moss Centre, such as a school, a leisure centre and a district library. The CIF funding will provide a better environment for passengers than those at Woodlands Road, including improved lighting, CCTV and a Passenger Emergency Call point. One of the existing routes for pedestrians across the line at this location is via a narrow, high-walled ill-lit subway. This will be replaced by 'ramping up' pedestrian access to the track level and a lit crossing. There is

existing access from the leisure centre on the other side of the track and this will be lit and have CCTV coverage.

The closure proposal

In addition to the factors mentioned above, GMPTE believes that:

replacing Woodlands Road with Abraham Moss will provide a better spacing of stops south of Crumpsall;

retaining Woodlands road while also opening Abraham Moss will result in time disbenefits to through passengers;

there is poor value for money in retaining a stop with low patronage while opening a new one just 250 yards along the track.

The likely effects on existing passengers

Passengers that use Woodlands Road will be inconvenienced by having to travel a little further to access the Metrolink at Abraham Moss or Queen's Road. They will benefit from the improved environment at these stations. There are also alternatives (see below).

Existing public transport in the area

There are existing bus routes from Cheetham Hill Rd and Hazelbottom Rd near Woodlands Road station. These run into Manchester city centre with journey times varying from 10 to 16 minutes.

The Department's consideration of the proposal

Our judgement is that retaining passenger services at Woodlands Road is poor value for money, in view of the opening of stations with better facilities nearby. Retaining services here while also opening the new stops at Abraham Moss and Queen's Road would also result in an increase of 30 seconds in journey time for through passengers.

Therefore the Department supports the proposal to close the passenger services at this station but would welcome comments on the proposal before making its final recommendation.

What will happen next

A summary of responses, including the next steps will be published by (date) on (web address). Paper copies will be available on request. The Department will then decide whether the closure of passenger services should be allowed. If it does so, we will seek ratification of the closure from the Office for Rail Regulation.

The Consultation criteria

The consultation is being conducted in line with the Government's Code of Practice on Consultation. The criteria are listed at Annex B, a full version of the Code of Practice on Consultation is available on the Better Regulation Executive web-site at:

<http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file47158.pdf>

If you consider that this consultation does not comply with the criteria or have comments about the **consultation process** please contact:

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