



CPT Proposal for Reinstatement of off Street Coach Parking off Sheffield Street

The Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (CPT) is recognised by the Government as the UK trade body for bus and coach operators with in excess of 90% of bus fleet, and 55% of coach fleet within its membership numbering around a thousand business members.

The Role of Coach

Understanding the volume of coach travel (irregular services or visits) into and around Manchester, and knowledge of the economic benefits they bring is an important aspect of considering the positive economic benefit of quality coach parking facilities. The Government's Air Quality Plan makes specific reference to regional coach operators and the benefits they can offer in reducing congestion and associated emissions and this is especially relevant when Greater Manchester is considering the implementation of a clean air zone.

Coach travel plays a vital and often underappreciated role in transporting people around the country every day. Coaches provide a comfortable, environmentally sustainable way of transporting huge numbers of visitors around the country. They support our tourism industry, with domestic and international visitors who travel by coach contributing over £6 billion to the UK economy each year. They transport hundreds of thousands of children to school each day, ensure people can still get where they need to go during rail engineering works, and provide those who might otherwise struggle to travel with a safe and easy door-to-door travel option.

The coach is one of the most environmentally friendly ways of travelling, with average carbon dioxide emissions per passenger per journey being around 1.5 times higher for rail, 5 times higher for air and 6 times higher for car travel.

The role of the Coach cannot be underestimated to the regional economy and to improving air quality. Examples include:

- Day trips and Holidays (both incoming and outgoing) providing a valuable means of preventing isolation to typically older members of society. Relatively inexpensive day trips and holidays can be threatened by non-compliance charges or short term investment in newer vehicles in which the market cannot sustain.
- Scheduled services such as Megabus and National Express provide an attractive low cost means of travel particularly to price sensitive markets such as young people, students and people on low incomes. Again, incoming passengers are important to the local visitor economy.
- Educational trips involving schools, colleges and universities are an important means of fulfilling specific curriculum requirements which may include swimming, visiting cultural places of interest and study visits.

- Sporting trips can include transporting sporting teams (including professional and college/university teams) as well as transporting fans for major events. This element is important for the safe transport of fans during periods of significantly increased footfall and traffic and is a means the Police and football clubs often promote.
- The private hire section of the market is often underestimated by transport planners but provides capacity benefits to a guaranteed number of passengers, and reduce multiple duplicated car journeys.
- Replacement for other modes such as rail and diverted flights often required a quick response.

All too often local authorities are failing to properly consider provision for coach travel as a sustainable form of transport that can ease congestion and air pollution by reducing traffic. Coach travel to visitor attractions is frequently hampered by poor access, lack of suitable drop-off/pick up points, lack of coach parking and general coach facilities.

This can lead to increased car use, with associated congestion, car parking and air pollution issues, and in some cases can even restrict visitor numbers. When coaches have to travel considerable distances away from their destination to park, vehicle emissions and driver hours are increased and driver rest time is curtailed. These factors sometimes result in coaches parking in residential areas with a negative impact on the relationship between coach operators and local people.

Current Coach Parking Provision

Current coach parking provision in Manchester is sub optimal and does not provide sufficient facilities befitting the stature of the City, its ambitious plans or recognising the benefits and uses of coaches as listed above. Presently, coach drivers have to make the most of opportunities and spaces available and relying on local knowledge which incoming drivers will not always have.

In looking through the current provision operators have advised us:

Store Street has a negative reputation and image which can be negative for operators; as such in this area a double crewed vehicle or a coach with a driver and tour guide or tour manager has been known to provide the wrong impression given the alleged reputation of the area.

Cheetham Hill Road provides good access to the Manchester Arena but does suffer from taxis and delivery vehicles impeding coach parking.

Overnight and late night safe and secure parking is recognised as an issue. Whilst overnight facilities are available at the Imperial War Museum North and other venues, this requires a trip to Trafford Park which is not attractive for City Centre based groups or uses. We are aware, that some local operators provide parking and facilities to visiting coaches due to the overnight concerns.

Proposal for Sheffield Street Coach Park

Off street, secure provision at Sheffield Street would provide parking close to Piccadilly Station and good for near interchange as well as a short walk to the Centre for staff.

Any facility should ideally provide:

- Lighting should be sufficient to provide a level of perceived safety
- A good surface to ensure a smooth drive
- CCTV provision and occasional patrol
- Ideally additional provisions such as water supply and toilet drop

Relevant Policy References

The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 (Draft Delivery Plan 2020 – 2025) states:

‘By 2040 we want 50% of all journeys in Greater Manchester to be made by public transport, walking and cycling. To achieve our vision by 2040 we must: Ensure that new developments support sustainable transport, and that our town centres are pleasant, thriving and well connected. Make walking and cycling the natural choice for short journeys. Radically transform public transport capacity of the regional centre to benefit the whole of Greater Manchester.’

Page 57 of the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 recognises the benefits of coach:

‘Chartered coaches play a vital role in Greater Manchester’s visitor economy, bringing people in to visit shopping centres, leisure and cultural attractions and to attend a wide range of events. Visitor numbers are growing, and we will work with operators and local authorities to ensure that coaches can set down and pick up close to their destinations and that accessible coach parking locations, with appropriate facilities and hours of operation, are provided and well signed.’

Policy 24 States: ‘We will seek to ensure that accessible coach parking and set down/pick-up points are available at key locations. ‘(page 57). In addition, the Transformation of Piccadilly Hub refers to ‘Improved bus and coach access’ on page 87.

In referring to the evening and night time economy on page 90:

As well as providing public transport services that operate for all or much of the night, both during the week and at weekends, travel by all modes of transport must be safe and secure, and we must make the right provision, through e.g. the allocation of pickup/drop off zones and parking/waiting areas, for crucial supporting transport services, such as chartered coaches, hackney cabs and private hire vehicles, which play a really important role in supporting our leisure economy.

Interventions summarised on page 93 refers to ‘Improved coach and taxi facilities’ by 2020. We cannot see any clear evidence that this has been delivered.

Greater Manchester Strategy for the Visitor Economy 2014- 2020

Whilst it is pleasing to see that GM Transport Strategy recognises the benefits of coach to the visitor economy, the Strategy for the Visitor Economy does not mention ‘coach’ once. Recognising the link (from the transport strategy) the visitor economy strategy does say:

‘Tourism can help Greater Manchester achieve its priorities for sustainable economic growth and secure its place as one of Europe’s premier city regions. A strong visitor economy can play a key

role in improving the quality of life, strengthening the global distinctiveness and world ranking of Manchester as a place to live, invest and visit.’

On Page 12, the Strengths in the SWOT analysis all relate to group activities and activities serviced by coach:

- Manchester Airport
- Football/sport and the brand of Manchester United FC
- Home to BBC North and ITV/MediaCityUK
- Major venues including the Phones4u Arena and
- Manchester Central
- Size, profile and reputation of the universities
- Significant business tourism product
- Strong events programme with a national and
- international profile
- Ability to host major international events
- The city product – retail and nightlife

Clean Air

A consultation process is currently underway in Greater Manchester consulting on the introduction of a charging Clean Air Zone. If the plan is to proceed as outlined, bus and coach operators would have to (unfairly) pay a daily charge for non compliant vehicles at diesel EURO VI level with no charge levied for private motorists.

As the consultation outlines:

‘Dirty air makes a major contribution to ill health and early death in our communities. In towns and cities, road vehicles are the main source of air pollution. But we can be affected by poor indoor air quality too.

Everyone is at risk. Air pollution harms our health at every stage of life and is even linked to early deaths. In fact, the effects can start as early as a baby’s first few weeks in the womb.

The most vulnerable people in society are hit hardest – children, older people and those already in poor health.’

The Greater Manchester Air Quality Action Plan in its KPIs includes ‘Reduce Traffic’ and also indicates the private car is responsible for 51.6% of NOx (buses and coaches 14%) and 53.1% of PM10 emissions (bus and coach 12.2%).

Bus and coach provide significant capacity benefits using cleaner vehicles, reducing cars from the road especially for group travel purposes. Whilst there is a separate debate on the actual detail of the proposed Clean Air Zone, it is surely fair and equitable that coach operators paying to bring a coach (with its still significant lower emissions per passenger) into Manchester would have reasonable and safe means to park in the City Centre.

Investment in coach parking is a basic benefit in return for operators investing upwards of £250,000 on compliant, clean, accessible vehicles to then be expected to mark on street usually without any CCTV coverage or security patrols to support operators and drivers.

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