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City:

Manchester

Country:

United Kingdom

Topic:

Collective passenger transport

Urban mobility planning

Archive

Description

The case study provides an overview of the introduction and development of a light rail system in Manchester, UK

Background

Manchester is a large industrial city in the centre of the UK. The city has an extensive network of heavy rail and bus services but, all city centre stations were on the edge of the business district and also, there was no north-south link across the city. This inhibited large use of the rail network. To address these issues the [Metrolink](#) was chosen primarily because of its lower costs and fewer infrastructure requirements. The Metrolink is thus an example of transport (the Metrolink) integrated with land use.

Implementation

Phase 1 of Manchester's light rail system opened in April 1992, taking over the former 'British Rail' line between Bury and Victoria, approximately 16km. In June another ex-British Rail line to Altrincham opened, 11km in length. All stations on the heavy rail line were converted to light rail stations and a further six have been built. There are 26 vehicles allowing trains to run 6 minutes

apart during the day and 12 minutes apart in the evenings and Sundays.

The primary objective of the Metrolink can be summarized as:

- To increase rail access to the city centre
- To provide a north-south link across the city centre
- To link both main line city centre rail stations
- To redevelop old uneconomical urban heavy rail lines

Phase 1 of the Manchester Metrolink was built using a unique form of contract- Design, Build, Operate and Maintain (DBOM). The winning consortium (GEC/Mowlem/AMEC) chose to carry out all the detailed design work itself. The consortium formed an operating company called Greater Manchester Metro Limited (GMML). In recent years Serco Metrolink have taken over from GMML.

Since the implementation of Phase 1 further extensions to the network have been developed (Phase 2). One of these extensions is the Salford to Manchester City Centre line. This is considered to be the most appropriate example of an extension where there has been full integration between transport and land use. As Salford Quays area was being redeveloped, planners safeguarded land for the development of the Metrolink line. Developers negotiated to ensure the route was directed through the most beneficial areas of the Salford Quays development (most beneficial for residents and businesses).

There are now three lines which run from Bury, Altrincham and Eccles into Manchester city centre. The Bury and Altrincham lines opened in 1992 followed by the Eccles line in 2000 creating a network of 37 stops covering 37 km (23 miles). A fleet of 32 trams served the existing network until December 2009 when the first of new trams was introduced.

Results: Lessons learned

The Metrolink extension Phase 2 benefited from several positive aspects. Greater Manchester's Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) learned from their initial consultations (with members of the public in Phase 1) and have applied this knowledge for later extensions. Further, effective planning in partnership between a local authority and a private company only operates when the local authority has enthusiasm for the scheme and the scheme is seen to be compatible with the local authority's wider area plan.

[Metrolink homepage](#)

[Final Report](#)

Keywords

planning - service integration

sustainable urban design

transport master plan

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