

GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

COMMITTEE: Transport Network
DATE: 20 February 2009
SUBJECT: December 2008 Timetable Changes - Review of Implementation
REPORT OF: Interim Service Delivery Director, GMPTE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of issues surrounding the implementation of the December 2008 timetable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Committee are recommended to note the contents of the report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

'Development of the December 2009 Rail timetable' report to the 23 January 2009 Policy Committee.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will be aware that major train service timetable alterations were introduced on 14 December 2008. This report provides Members with an initial assessment of the impact of these changes on passengers and the operation of services to the beginning of February.

2 Outline of Major Changes

- 2.1 The timetable alterations introduced in December 2008 were the most extensive and far reaching in the Greater Manchester area for almost 20 years. They affected all train operators and were driven by the need to accommodate extra Manchester/London Virgin Trains services at Manchester Piccadilly. This reduced the amount of track capacity available to other operators and there was a need to rearrange and, in some instances curtail other operators' services. However, where appropriate, the opportunity was taken to introduce improvements to services provided by local and inter-urban operators.
- 2.2 The major changes can be summarised as follows;
- Virgin Trains Manchester/London service frequency increased from two to three trains per hour on weekdays, Sunday service level also increased.
 - Arriva Trains Cross Country trains restructured service via Birmingham
 - Journey times on First TransPennine Express services improved by reduction of local stops on the Airport line and between Piccadilly and Preston.
 - Calder Valley services restructured and Manchester/Bradford journey times reduced.
 - Airport line service restructured to give a regular half hourly interval local service provided by Northern Rail rather than stops in longer distance trains.
 - Manchester/Hazel Grove/Buxton service restructured. Buxton/Blackpool trains were terminated at Manchester and a new Hazel Grove/Manchester/Preston service introduced.
 - Manchester/Bolton/Preston/Blackpool services restructured to provide an extra train each hour on the corridor and a split of local services between Piccadilly and Victoria. Local stops in TransPennine Express trains were reduced and replaced with stops in the additional Northern Rail operated trains.

3 Implementation

- 3.1 The new service timetable was implemented as planned and the first weekday of operation was Monday 15 December. The only exception to this was the peak morning Manchester/London service where the 0815 and 0835 departures were not operated. This remains the case and will apply until further notice. The 0835 starts from Stockport until capacity issues at Piccadilly can be resolved. The 0815 departure was scheduled to be introduced on 26 January but will not now be introduced until Network Rail and Virgin Trains are confident that the new timetable can be reliably operated south of Rugby.
- 3.2 Whilst the new local and inter-urban timetable was fully brought into use on 15 December, it was marred by a number of major incidents and a high level of cancellations because of Northern Rail crew shortages and the poor reliability of some trains. These issues are covered fully in the next section of this report and the accompanying Train Service Performance report on the agenda of this meeting.

4 Operational Difficulties

- 4.1 The operational challenge of introducing a new timetable with many major service revisions is significant in itself. However, Northern Rail also needed to introduce extra trains to operate the revised and expanded services. Small numbers of trains which were of a different type to those already being operated had to be brought into use in the Greater Manchester area.
- 4.2 These factors brought about the need for an intensive programme of maintenance staff and traincrew staff training. The time available to do this was limited as the new types of train were only delivered shortly before commencement of the new timetable.
- 4.3 To compound matters, the availability of traincrew was limited because of a ban on rest day working which meant that it was difficult to release crews for training without an adverse impact on delivery of the service. The training programme was not completed by the first weekday (15 December) of the new timetable.
- 4.4 On 15 December, 123 trains were cancelled by Northern Rail in the GMPTA area, largely because of crew shortage. In addition, services were disrupted on a number of routes because of train failure incidents.
- 4.5 Appendix A to this report shows the trend of train cancellations since the beginning of the new timetable and the effect on the Public Performance Measure (PPM), including a weekday AM and PM PPM result.
- 4.6 The charts in Appendix A show that in recent weeks the rate of cancellations has returned to a level comparable with levels being achieved earlier in 2008.
- 4.7 The disruption caused by the situation outlined above has also led to a poor level of services strengthen to provide extra accommodation on the busiest trains. Whilst normally this would create overcrowding, with the new timetable, many services depended on larger capacity trains being provided to give a credible level of service on routes where service frequencies had been reduced.
- 4.8 The record of strengthening from 15 December 2008 to 3 January 2009 is shown in charts attached as Appendix B to this report. The consequence of the poor availability of units and reduced strengthening performance not only to caused severe overcrowding on some services but also to undermined the credibility of the new train service timetable.
- 4.9 It was particularly unfortunate that the reliability of the large capacity, 5 coach Class 180 trains, which Northern Rail planned to use on the Victoria and Hazel Grove – Blackpool trains was particularly poor. Northern Rail planned to have two out of the three trains in traffic with the third at Newton Heath depot being maintained. The chart at Appendix C to this report shows that on many days this has not been achieved and only one train has been in use. When these trains are not available it is necessary to use two normal two-car trains to provide the equivalent level of capacity. This in turn means that the services on which these substitute trains would normally be used are cancelled or operate with trains smaller than needed.
- 4.10 As a temporary measure Northern rail suspended their training programme and non-essential crew activities to ensure that the maximum number of crew were available for operating trains.

5 Passenger Reaction

- 5.1 Introduction of the new timetable and the service reliability generated a large number of comments from passengers. 1944 written complaints were received locally by Northern Rail in the four weeks ending 3 January. This compares with 430 in the comparable period last year and 843 in the four week period ending 6 December. Most of this increase arose from a greater number of complaints about poor performance. GMPTE received 59 letters relating specifically to the new timetable and 12 relating to train service performance, this approximately double the usual level.
- 5.2 The majority of comments related to the services north of Bolton and on the Hazel Grove / Buxton route. However, it has been difficult to assess whether the root cause of comments and complaints arose from unfamiliarity with the new timetable structure, the impact of unreliability and overcrowding, or unsuitability of the service for individual passengers.
- 5.3 Initial surveys of usage levels have been conducted to assess how passengers have adapted to the new timetable structure. Bearing in mind that at the time of writing this report service reliability had only recently reached acceptable levels, it is probably too early to take a valid view of how passengers have reacted on the basis of these figures.
- 5.4 As stated in section 7 of this report, further monitoring will be undertaken and the results reported to Members in due course.

6 Review of Timetable and Modifications

- 6.1 A report was submitted to the 23 January meeting of the Passenger Transport Authority's Policy Committee regarding the December 2009 timetable development process.
- 6.2 It was accepted that the basic structure of the December 2008 timetable would remain but that minor changes would be taken forward to address specific deficiencies where these could be accommodated.
- 6.3 In the short term it has been possible to implement a number of minor changes, as follows;

- **Salford Crescent – Oxford Road/Piccadilly service**

Immediately before the implementation of the new timetable it was identified that there was a gap between 0825 and 0909 in services between Salford Crescent and Oxford Road/Piccadilly. TPE agreed to an additional Salford Crescent stop at 0847, in the following services.

0536 SX Edinburgh - Manchester Airport and
0744 SO Blackpool - Manchester Airport

The change was implemented from 15 December, and has been publicised as an amendment to the timetable.

- In reviewing the very early morning services from Salford Crescent, and being aware that the hours of staffing were to be revised to provide an earlier opening of the booking office, a minor improvement was identified. TPEor that the 0450 Blackpool to Manchester Airport service should call at Salford Crescent at about 0555. This will provide a very early service to the Airport - useful for some shift workers as it gives an arrival time of 0616. The additional stop will be implemented as soon as possible, subject to Network Rail arrangements, but the change will definitely operate from May 2009.

- **Hazel Grove and Buxton Line**

0752 Manchester to Buxton ('Buxton School Train').

The 0752 Manchester to Buxton service is used by approximately 70 to 80 pupils attending Buxton High School. Following a joint review of this service with Northern Rail and Derbyshire County Council it has been found possible to remove the Levenshulme call in this train and give a slightly earlier arrival time into Buxton at 0844. To maintain the level of service at Levenshulme, the 0807 Manchester Piccadilly to Crewe train will be retimed to depart at 0804 and call at Levenshulme as well as Heaton Chapel.

0724 Buxton to Manchester Piccadilly.

When the December 2008 timetable was implemented, the 0748 Buxton to Manchester Piccadilly train was scheduled to run with four carriages and the 0724 Buxton - Piccadilly with 2 carriages. However, having reviewed initial passenger loadings on both services, it was found that the 0724 loadings were greater than the 0748. Therefore, Northern Rail has amended the 0724 train to be run with 4 carriages and the 0748 will run with 2 carriages. The change was implemented from Monday, 26th January.

1623 Preston – Buxton

To provide an additional evening peak service for Hazel Grove passengers, the 1623 Preston – Buxton (1723 departure from Piccadilly), now calls additionally at Hazel Grove.

- **Manchester Victoria – Rochdale – Bradford – Leeds line (Calder Valley).**

The 22.21 Manchester Victoria to Leeds (SX) has been retimed to depart at 22.28. The change was implemented from Monday 26 January. This minor change provides a more suitable service for those attending events at the MEN Arena.

- **Manchester - Wigan – Southport line**

With the implementation of the new timetable it was found that students who attend St John Rigby College (near Gathurst Station) were unable to travel directly from Ince. Northern Rail agreed to insert an additional Ince stop in the 0811 Manchester Victoria to Southport service (due at Gathurst at 0850).

7 Continued Monitoring

- 7.1 Operation and use of train services will continue to be monitored and results reported to members at regular intervals.
- 7.2 Northern Rail has implemented a system of automatic passenger counting and the results of this will be used as the basis of reporting to Members supplemented by other relevant data.

8 Conclusion

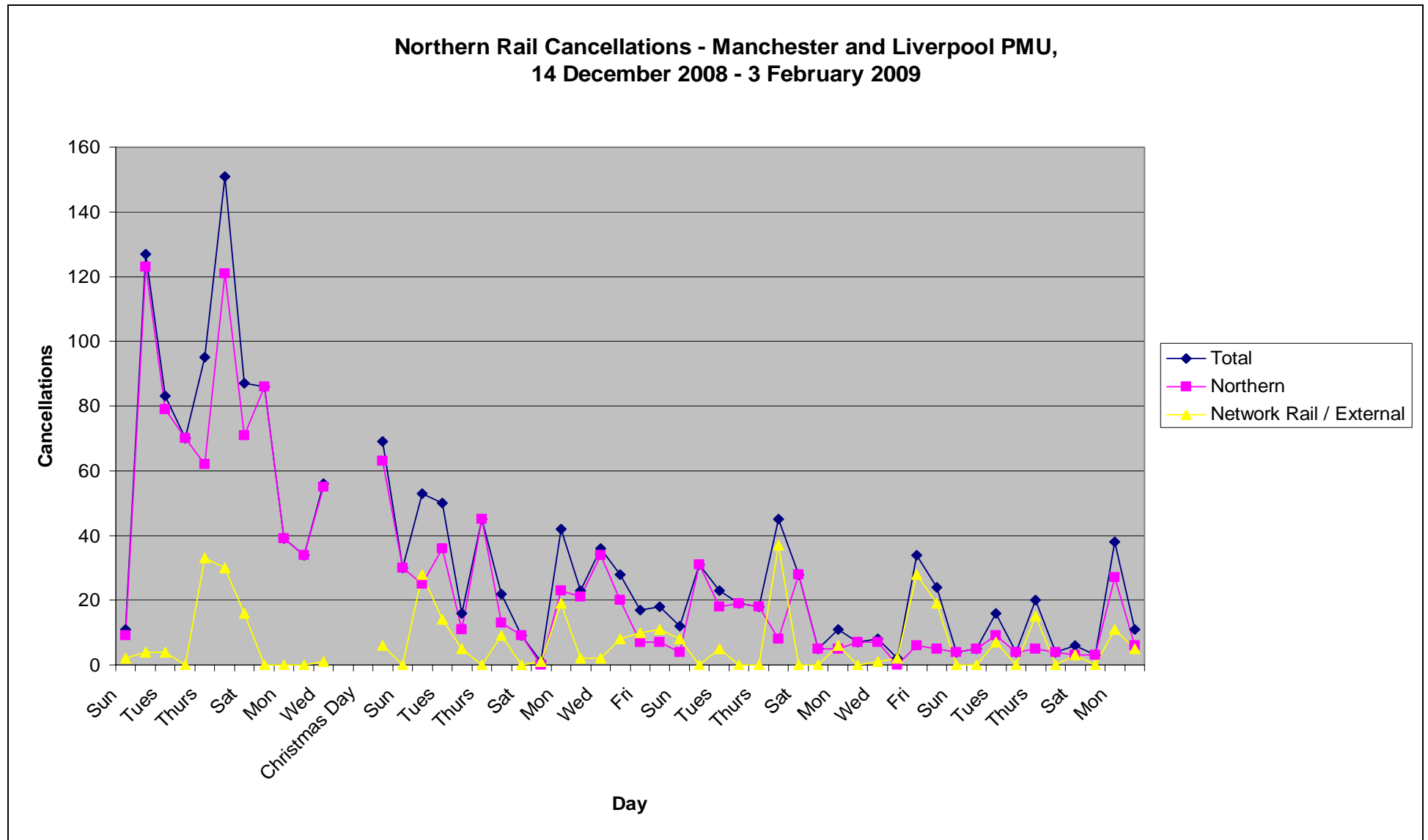
- 8.1 The December 2008 timetable changes were the most comprehensive and wide ranging which have been made to the local rail system in 20 years.
- 8.2 Introduction of the new timetable was accompanied by serious operational deficiencies which have made it very difficult to judge whether or not the timetable has been successful.
- 8.3 The situation will continue to be monitored and reported to Members at regular intervals.

9 Recommendations

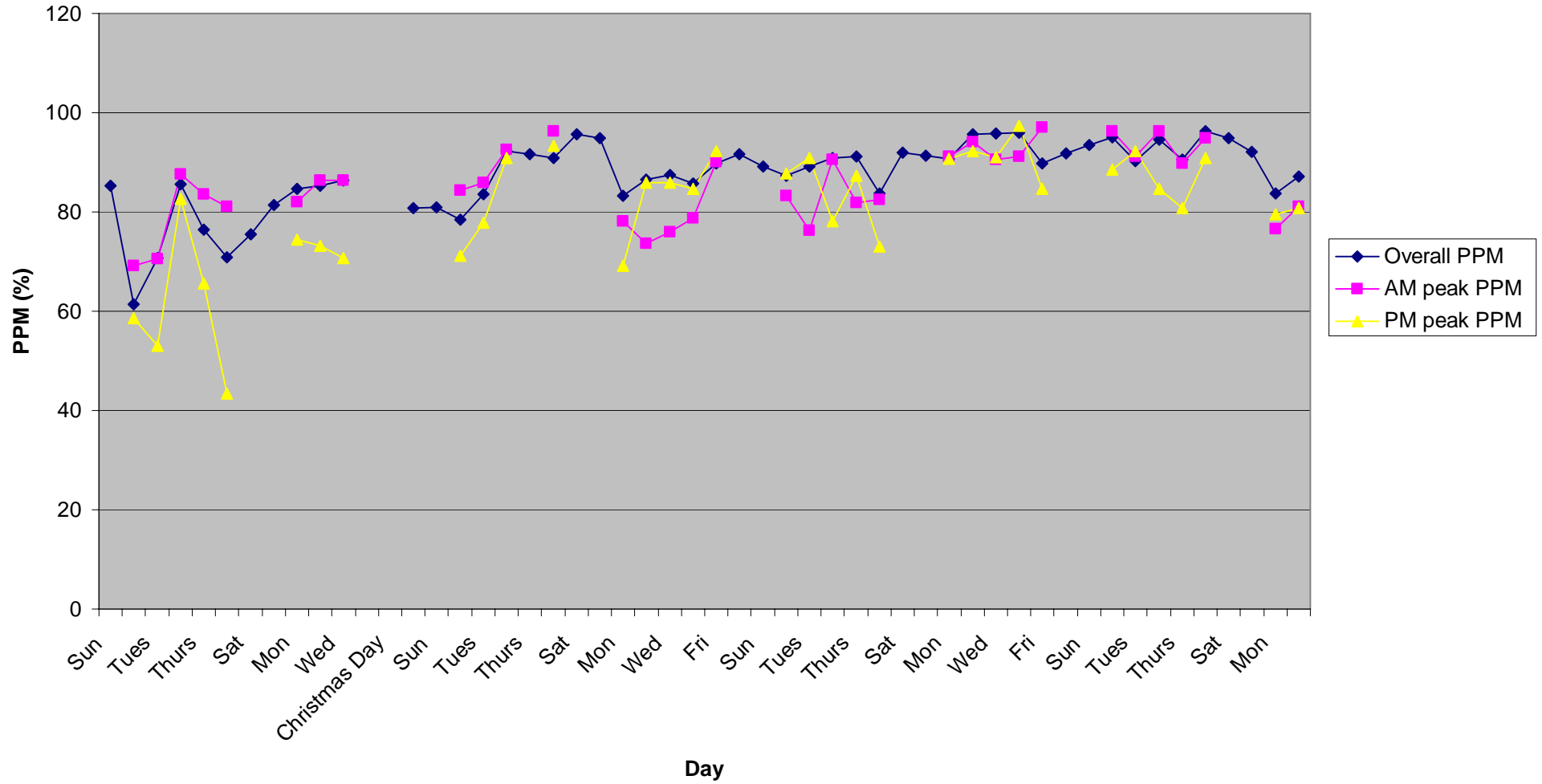
- 9.1 Recommendations appear at the front of this report.

Michael Renshaw
Interim Service Delivery Director

Appendix A



Northern Rail PPM - Manchester and Liverpool PMU,
14 December 2008 - 3 February 2009

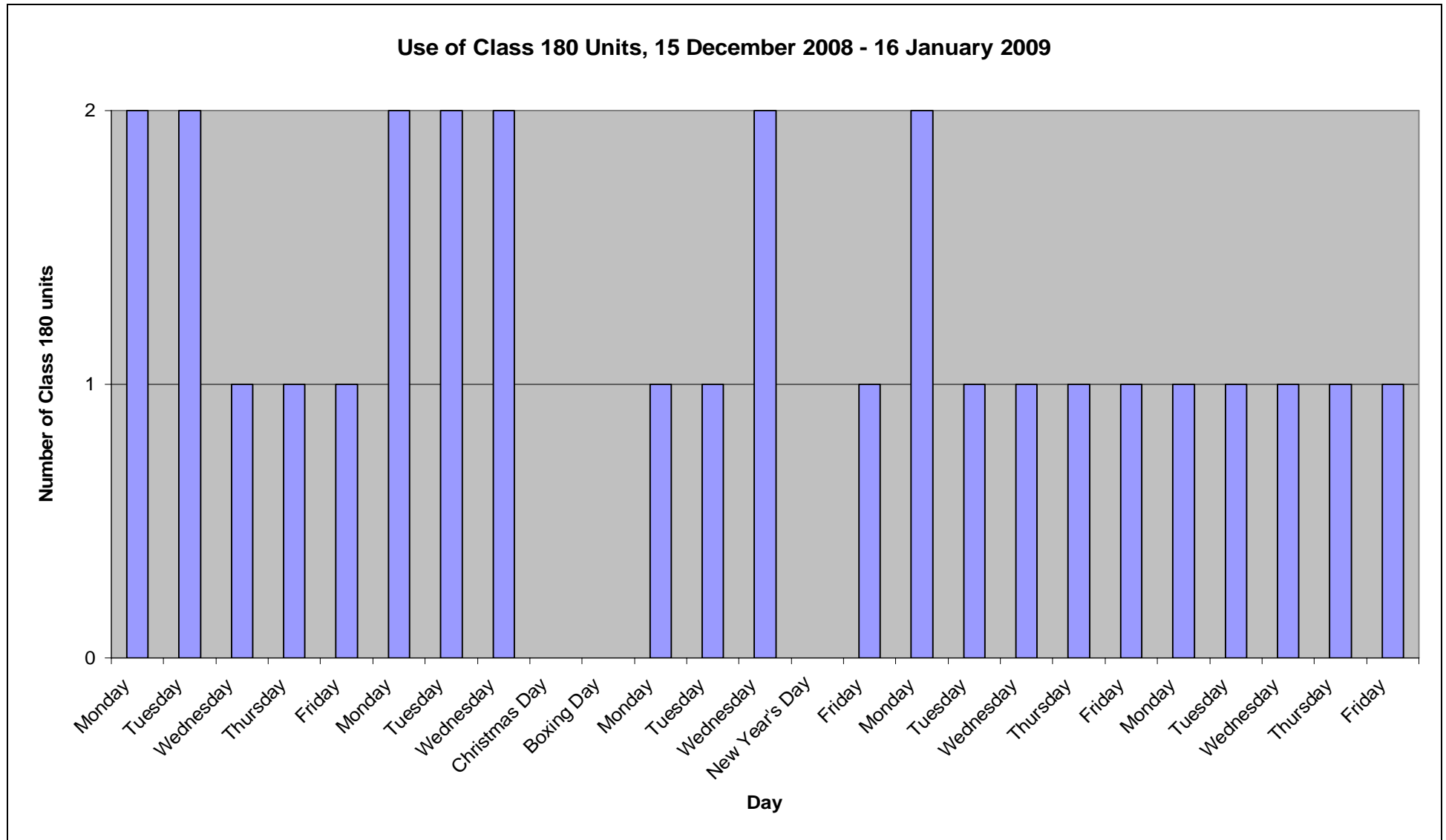


Note: No service on Christmas Day and Boxing Day

Appendix B: Strengthening of Peak Trains from 15 Dec 2008

				Week 1							Week 2								
	Description	Formation		Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
	AM Unit Availability / Balance											94/-7	101/+0	96/-5	99/-2	98/-3			
2A00	06:23 Southport - Manchester Airport	142 150	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
1J01	06:53 Southport - Manchester Victoria	156 150	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2W62	07:12 Kirkby - Manchester Victoria	142 142	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2A02	07:22 Southport - Manchester Airport	156 150	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H04	06:53 Blackpool North - Hazel Grove	180	N/A							N/A	N/A			cancelled	cancelled		N/A		
2J54	07:07 Clitheroe - Manchester Victoria	153 150	N/A							N/A	N/A	cancelled					N/A		
2J42	07:18 Blackpool North - Manchester Victoria	180	N/A							N/A	N/A			cancelled			N/A		
2M57	07:33 Huddersfield - Manchester Victoria	150 150	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2M59	08:02 Huddersfield - Liverpool Lime Street	150 156	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H09	07:48 Buxton - Manchester Piccadilly	150 156	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2N22	08:32 Hazel Grove - Preston	150 150	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H46	07:26 Liverpool Lime St - Manchester Ox Road	142 150	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H15	07:15 Macclesfield - Manchester Piccadilly	142 142	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H29	07:22 Crewe - Manchester Oxford Road	142 142	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
	PM Unit Availability / Balance											100/-1	100/-1	101/+0	101	104/+3			
1F01	17:06 Manchester Victoria - Southport	150 142	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2F87	17:03 Manchester Airport - Southport	150 142	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
1F02	17:40 Manchester Victoria - Southport	150 142	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2N20	16:33 Hazel Grove - Preston	180	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2N97	17:19 Manchester Victoria - Blackpool North	180	N/A							N/A	N/A		cancelled		cancelled		N/A		
2H90	15:23 Preston - Buxton	156 150	N/A							N/A	N/A				cancelled		N/A		
2H92	16:51 Manchester Piccadilly - Buxton	150 150	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H94	16:23 Preston - Buxton	150 150	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H02	17:23 Manchester Piccadilly - Hazel Grove	142 142	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H96	17:52 Manchester Piccadilly - Buxton	150 150	N/A							N/A	N/A						N/A		
				Week 3							Week 4								
	Description	Formation		Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
	AM Unit Availability / Balance				103/+2	101/+0	100/-1					100/-1	93/-8	96/-5		96/-5			
2A00	06:23 Southport - Manchester Airport	142 150	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
1J01	06:53 Southport - Manchester Victoria	156 150	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2W62	07:12 Kirkby - Manchester Victoria	142 142	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A					cancelled	N/A		
2A02	07:22 Southport - Manchester Airport	156 150	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H04	06:53 Blackpool North - Hazel Grove	180	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A			cancelled			N/A		
2J54	07:07 Clitheroe - Manchester Victoria	153 150	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2J42	07:18 Blackpool North - Manchester Victoria	180	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2M57	07:33 Huddersfield - Manchester Victoria	150 150	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2M59	08:02 Huddersfield - Liverpool Lime Street	150 156	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H09	07:48 Buxton - Manchester Piccadilly	150 156	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2N22	08:32 Hazel Grove - Preston	150 150	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H46	07:26 Liverpool Lime St - Manchester Ox Road	142 150	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H15	07:15 Macclesfield - Manchester Piccadilly	142 142	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H29	07:22 Crewe - Manchester Oxford Road	142 142	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
	PM Unit Availability / Balance				104/+3	104/+3	103/+2					99/-2	96/-5	98/3		97/-4			
1F01	17:06 Manchester Victoria - Southport	150 142	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2F87	17:03 Manchester Airport - Southport	150 142	N/A				cancelled	BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
1F02	17:40 Manchester Victoria - Southport	150 142	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2N20	16:33 Hazel Grove - Preston	180	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2N97	17:19 Manchester Victoria - Blackpool North	180	N/A	cancelled				BH	BH	N/A	N/A	cancelled					N/A		
2H90	15:23 Preston - Buxton	156 150	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H92	16:51 Manchester Piccadilly - Buxton	150 150	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H94	16:23 Preston - Buxton	150 150	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H02	17:23 Manchester Piccadilly - Hazel Grove	142 142	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
2H96	17:52 Manchester Piccadilly - Buxton	150 150	N/A					BH	BH	N/A	N/A						N/A		
				KEY:				Full Compliance				Partial Compliance				Non Compliant			
								Strengthened but smaller seat capacity				Not strengthened (one unit only)							

Appendix C



Note: Chart does not include weekends or bank holidays
 No service on Christmas Day and Boxing Day