ACTION STATIONS

Places where the community comes together
This vision is the opportunity to transform local communities from the inside out through regeneration of stations. The beauty of this plan is that it focuses on station assets as a means to regenerate people as well as place. We know that if people aren’t the centre of regeneration, then regenerating place becomes impossible.”

Lord Victor Adebowale
CEO, Turning Point
INTRODUCTION

This document sets out Transport for Greater Manchester’s (TfGM) bold vision to develop a partnership approach with Social Businesses at Greater Manchester’s rail stations. It is a high level strategic approach to transform 96 stations – currently seen as largely ‘railway assets’ – into multi-purpose community hubs that make a real difference to the people who live in their vicinity or use them; as well as contributing to the wider economic regeneration of the local and GM area. TfGM believes that this innovative approach can enhance the value of the station estate and stimulate the local community, by increasing employment opportunity and creating a sense of ownership at stations.

Our GM-wide strategic approach will support social business initiatives, including but not limited to:

- Health & well-being
  - Community gym
  - Healthy cafe
  - Health Centre
  - Child care
- Culture
  - Art gallery
  - Concerts and performing arts
  - Festivals
- Enterprise, skills and employment
  - Training and development
  - Conference facilities
  - Office and meeting space
  - Pop-up businesses
  - Local weekend markets.

We believe social businesses can support and even enhance our vision for stations. This document provides a brief introduction to our prospective partners, as well as showcasing how our vision can become reality as it has at the restored Irlam station. This demonstrates what can happen when stations realise their full potential, releasing both economic and social benefits to:

- provide better facilities to rail users and the wider community – We want stations that are used and enjoyed by rail users and the local community. Working in partnership around the station locations can create new opportunities for development that benefit local communities including enhanced provision of housing and community services;
- create opportunity and employment – New jobs will be created through enterprise and service provision in and around stations, with a specific focus on creating opportunity for all, increasing productivity and confronting deprivation and social exclusion in GM;
- support health and wellbeing – contribute to health benefits of employment, a wide range of health and wellbeing services for the community and users can be run from the sites
- improve quality of life – helping stations realise their full potential unlocking benefits such as the provision of cultural and leisure activities.

“Social enterprises are businesses that trade for a social purpose. They reinvest the majority of the profits in furthering their social aims and have clear and transparent legal and governance structures that protect their social mission.”

Jonathan Bland
Director, Social Business International Ltd
TFGM has been working with established industry experts who have worked in large scale social enterprises to develop an approach that will enable us to realise our vision for Greater Manchester’s stations.

TFGM are committed to delivering a community vision that enhances the economic and social welfare of the people and communities across Greater Manchester, through the innovative and flexible use of the stations. This will include maximising opportunities to support local projects.

Underpinning this approach will be a plan for each station that engages with the local community to identify and meet their needs. By creating this ‘contract’ with our communities and working closely with them to create a plan, we will show how stations can become important flexible assets for local residents; building stronger, safer and more inclusive environments.
OUR STATIONS – A COMMUNITY HUB: HEALTH & WELLBEING

Our stations will be community hubs that support physical, mental and social health in order to provide for the holistic well-being of the community.

Community gym facilities
TfGM would explore the priorities for accessible and convenient exercise centres in a number of the 96 stations; providing a gym facility and exercise classes and the opportunity to bring together as wide a community of people in and around the station as possible.

One of the many advantages of providing a gym facility at some of our stations would be their convenience. A locker facility or even bike park facility could be provided to allow people to drop off their kit if training in the morning or after work, or store their used kit while completing their journey.

Exercise is not just good for the body but also for spiritual and mental wellbeing. Physical changes are not only seen in the loss of fat and increase in muscle and bone density from long term exercise programmes but, immediate improvements can be made in mood and attitude through the hormonal and chemical reaction in our body to exercise. Classes would also provide opportunities to share experiences and build friendships and with the attitude and approach described above will have a tangible and sustainable impact on a community. The facility could include:

• exercise programmes for those commuting who don’t usually exercise due to time/travel restrictions;
• exercise programmes targeting specific groups within the community including: children and young people, older people and the elderly, those with physical disabilities and special needs, new mums;
• doctor referrals from onsite doctor for those with Syndrome X or with the onset of Type 2 Diabetes;
• confidence, self-awareness and positive body image programmes;
• nutrition clinics to provide dietary advice and programmes; and
• physical therapy clinics to improve posture, address injuries and work-related problems such as RSI.

Health Centres
TfGM are eager to have health centres in a number of the 96 stations. The station health centres would provide mainstream NHS GP and Walk In Centre services but also integrate complementary therapies and healing arts. The Centres could provide a treatment and advice service for a range of minor illness and injuries, long term conditions and sexual health concerns to commuters and the local communities that live near the station. They may also provide a range of primary care services including immunisations, minor surgery and women’s health. The Centres may well be open every day 8am to 8pm, including bank holidays to maximise accessibility to services for all sectors of the community.
Cafe/Restaurant
There is also scope for additional café facilities at rail stations which we envisage including healthier options, offering affordable, satisfying, enjoyable and nutritious choices.

The opportunity to grab a ready-made lunch or dinner that was all these things plus fresh and not processed would add convenience to eating well. The cafés would provide a hub for people to socialise in before or after training sessions at the stations community gym or any other time.

From here, we could run nutrition and cookery sessions to dispel ‘healthy eating’ myths and educate people about how to improve their diets and still enjoy food. We would also encourage other groups to meet here and use facilities e.g. parent and child groups, support groups, craft and art sessions.
Culture and arts help us make sense of our world. They can inspire, entertain and bring people together. Culture makes our communities, towns and cities rich and exciting places to be.

**Stations as cultural venues**
TfGM stations present a unique opportunity to put inspirational cultural experiences and opportunities into the heart of every community across Greater Manchester. By envisioning our stations as a community-owned network of cultural venues, we could create a sustainable model for uniquely accessible arts and culture which is open to everyone – not enclosed within a gallery or concert hall. In doing so, we could change the conversation around what culture is; who makes it; and who it is for.

As well as creating new opportunities for artists and boosting the cultural economy, a cultural programme in stations would provide established arts organisations with new ways to reach their current and future audiences – a priority for Greater Manchester arts organisations and their funders.

**Visual arts, public art, installations**
By joining together current expertise and experience of public art commissioning, and taking a coordinated approach, we could improve the scale, quality and ambition of art works in stations across Greater Manchester. Our stations will become beautiful spaces, with a rolling programme of themed and one-off exhibitions by regional, national and international artists.

TfGM aims to help develop artistic leadership at a local level, whilst offering the capacity and expertise for exceptionally ambitious city-region wide initiatives.

Investment from TfGM and our partners will help to lever other local investment and sponsorship, generating funding directly into the region’s artistic workforce.

**Concerts and performing arts**
Stations represent one of the very few genuinely public, community spaces available. They offer unique opportunities for acoustic performances, chamber music, contemporary dance, street theatre, which respond to the architecture and people. The offer to commuters would not be just the enjoyment of quality art, but an opportunity to experience something new, to pause, to listen, to reflect – and through that shared experience to connect with the people around them. TfGM would look to work with organisations in Greater Manchester (e.g. Manchester Camerata) that have a track record of creating positive social and health impacts of musical participation on socially isolated older people, and on people experiencing dementia.

**Festivals**
TfGM will also look at using the larger stations and their car parks for larger scale festivals, including carnivals and participatory projects, in which local people make art works to celebrate their communities and assets.
Training & Development
TfGM intends to seek to support training opportunities for local residents across Greater Manchester, targeting people from some of the most deprived areas. This may include apprenticeships in construction, retail, health and leisure. We would intend to work closely with social businesses and embed this aspiration within our procurement policies for new opportunities in and around Greater Manchester’s stations.

Business Development & Support – Incubator, Office spaces/Meetings space/Conference facilities
As part of its strategic commitment to local economic and social development TfGM would seek to undertake refurbishment and development of stations to support the creation of new social and locally owned private businesses. This could include incubator units, serviced office spaces, meeting and conference facilities.

For new business start-ups there could be access to business support and to the common services provided to the network of social business being supported by TfGM.

Cycle Hubs
At appropriate locations, a range of activities designed to promote personal well-being, both physical and mental, may form part of a TfGM community hub station, creating popular roles for volunteers, with a minimal amount of paid staff support required.

Create links with local cycle clubs and Sky Ride to promote cycle tours based from Rail Station car parks that are underutilized at weekends particularly at rural locations that can easily access the regions outstanding countryside.

Space for DIY bike maintenance and repair shops, with a volunteer and/or paid experienced mechanic on hand at set times of the week, access to discounted spare parts through ventures such as Manchester Bike Hire (see LocoBike Manchester);

A range of cycles could be stored, and would be available for hire or loan to different users:

• ‘exercise on prescription’, for instance for patients recovering from stroke or other heart disease, with rides lead by suitably-trained local volunteers;

• cycle trainers running Bikeability training courses;

• a range of tagalong bike trailers, balance bikes for toddlers and early years, through to full ‘bakfiets’ cargo bikes suitable for up to 4 children that encourage family and group participation.
Coin Street Community Builders

www.coinstreet.org

Coin Street Community Builders is an excellent and long established example of a Social Enterprise structure. It is one that TfGM and the wider Greater Manchester network may consider partnering with to achieve its growth aspirations and objectives (i.e. 10,000 dwellings per annum development aspirations) supporting the delivery of regeneration in the area.

Coin Street Community Builders was set up to make the area a better one in which to live, to work, and to visit. All members of the company are required to live locally and so understand the needs and opportunities of the area.

Coin Street Community Builders have transformed a largely derelict 13 acre site into a thriving mixed use neighbourhood by creating new co-operative homes; shops galleries, restaurants, cafés and bars; a park and riverside walkway; sports facilities; by organising festivals and events; and by providing childcare, family support, training and employment opportunities. Income is generated from a variety of sources including the hire of retail and catering spaces, exhibition, event and conference spaces.

They also work closely with neighbouring businesses and arts organisations through another ‘not-for-profit’ company, South Bank Employers’ Group, and with other stakeholders through the South Bank Partnership.
The Big Life group  
– Manchester  
www.thebiglifegroup.com

TfGM have approached The Big Life Group who are based in Manchester to understand how their existing business could be expanded across the Greater Manchester rail stations to provide childcare, health, education and employment services.

Big Life is in the business of changing lives, creating opportunities for people who have the least. They offer education and childcare services and support the whole family from birth onwards offering volunteering, training and work opportunities; and programmes to develop health and wellbeing.

They work with people to improve their physical or mental health. They help people look at all aspects of their wellbeing – from employment and housing to family and money issues.

Big Life support people to look at everything that will enable them to find and stay in a job – from family, relationships and money issues to health and skills.

“We are excited about the opportunities afforded to organisations like ours if the 96 stations in Greater Manchester are opened up by GMCA ownership. Social businesses have long led the way in finding innovative solutions to entrenched problems, building on community assets and maximising value to local communities. The stations are an underutilised resource which, based in the heart of communities, could make a huge contribution to improving economies, health and wellbeing.”

Fay Selvan
– CEO of the Big Life Group
Social adVentures – Manchester

www.socialadventures.org.uk

The TfGM proposal for stations is built on putting stations back at the heart of communities, engaging locally and giving people a real say in the activities and opportunities available. A key part of healthcare promotion is empowering people to take control of their own health and wellbeing.

Social adVentures is a wellbeing social enterprise specialising in public health and social care contracts that run alongside social businesses – such as garden centres, community cafés and, childcare nurseries – which could support our aspirations.

Since established, they have increased turnover fourfold, increased employee numbers from ten to 40 and they now offer 3 times as many services to over 1000 local members.

They are a social organisation, employee owned and led by business minded entrepreneurs, they are active in constantly improving the way in which public services are delivered.

They recognise the difficulties and changes that commissioners are facing and they are pioneering new ways to address this that both meets budgetary constraints and improves the lives of the people they work with.

The ethos at Social adVentures is to inspire people to live healthier and happier lives. This spans all the work they do as they aim to help communities to “Start Well”, “Live Well” and, “Age Well”.
TfGM - POTENTIAL SOCIAL BUSINESS PARTNERS

**Fighting Fit – Manchester**

www.fightingfitmartialarts.co.uk

TfGM would like to explore opportunities to utilise redundant station buildings to host social enterprise ventures focused on providing fitness activity and health services. Fighting Fit demonstrate the types of benefits to improve the quality of life and benefits to health that can be achieved.

Fighting Fit is a social enterprise established in 2008 that provides fitness, activity and health services to the community. After 5 years of teaching a martial arts group from a variety of gyms and community centres, they settled in a 1200sqft railway arch owned by Network Rail, and in two years expanded to another archway unit of over 6000sqft with a membership of around 200.

Their aim is to help people be the best they can be; this might be doing one press up, shedding excess weight, recovering from a physical or mental illness, running a half marathon or winning a strongman competition. Around 44% of members at commercial gyms will drop out after 6 months. Fighting Fits retention rate is around 90% which is significantly higher than at commercial gyms.

They have run projects with Manchester City FC youth team where they were able to try out martial arts in order to improve their resilience and perseverance; they have provided the opportunity for teenagers at school who were in danger of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) to have work experience placements with them. They took on an apprentice and trained him through an NVQ in Activity Leadership, a personal training qualification and Level 1 and 2 achievement through the Ricky Hatton Boxing Trainer Academy. He is now a full-time member of staff, teaching boxing and delivering personal training sessions. Fighting Fit is also currently supporting a visually impaired judo athlete on her path to the Paralympics.
Turning Point – Manchester
www.turning-point.co.uk

Turning Point is a social enterprise, focused on improving lives and communities. As with all social enterprises, any surplus profit is used to provide the best services in the right locations for those that need it most, across mental health, learning disability, substance misuse and employment.

They have been working hard to support people to turn their lives around for 50 years, with highly experienced teams providing exceptional care that delivers excellent value for money. They offer multiple services and are experts, in helping people with the most complex needs.

Turning Point tailors their services by targeting a person’s personal challenges and supporting them to get their life back on track. They provide high quality services that focus on each and every individual - investing in the best care, for the people that need it most.

Opportunities like this need a convenient, well connected space to operate and as rail stations sit in the heart of the community, TfGM will, endeavour to identify redundant space where these services can be offered.
Global Grooves
– Manchester

Global Grooves began in 2001 as a small collective of percussionists and workshop leaders in the Northwest, responding to an obvious demand in the area for more advanced and expert training in every arts discipline from Brazilian drumming to Afro-Cuban song. Established as a registered charity, Global Grooves continues to go from strength to strength delivering authentic courses and development work for participants and professionals alike.

Global Grooves inspires passion and respect for international community arts by offering excellent, high-energy, inspiring arts opportunities open to the wider community.

They work to build relationships and partnerships with artists, groups and organisations that share their goals to build a confident, progressive and grassroots arts culture in the UK and beyond.

The organisation believes that healthy and happy communities need diverse, quality art experiences that they can create and be involved with. They provide opportunities for discovery, exploration and innovation, and support artists in collaboration.

This Manchester-based creative arts team prides itself on offering affordable and accessible training in a variety of formats, including short courses, master class weekends, one-off performances, and special events.

Through their courses and commissions any surplus they generate goes straight back in to support arts based social action projects. By training with them, not only can clients develop their own skills but they are provided access to high quality community engagement programmes.

Photo credit: Christian Dyson
LocoBike – Manchester
www.manchesterbikehire.co.uk
www.novus.ac.uk
LocoBike is a new social enterprise venture launching in Spring 2017. Many of its component parts are already in operation in a number of locations. LocoBike’s vision is to locate their facilities in railway stations.

LocoBike will be a ‘portfolio’ bike hub social enterprise, offering a mix of services and activities, some fully commercial, some voluntary or community-based and including:

• traditional bike services, with a wide range of high quality bikes and tandems, with accessories (e.g. trailers, child tagalongs, and paniers);
• domestic cargo bike loan scheme;
• guided bike tours;
• high grade bike repair services, with a hire bike offered whilst repairs are undertaken;
• providing a base for scooter and bike activities with local schools; and
• changing rooms, showers, and lockers.

In addition, LocoBike in partnership with Novus (a social enterprise who deliver education, training and employment opportunities to adults and young people in prisons) are also looking to provide opportunities at rail stations:

• day time work experience for Category D prisoners in a range of occupations, including retail (bike hire), bike maintenance and repair, and barista (in the onsite café); and
• opportunities for ex-offenders, through Novus and charities like the Margaret Carey Foundation.
TfGM PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE HAMILTON DAVIES TRUST

The Hamilton Davies Trust
The Hamilton Davies Trust (HDT) is a local charity based in Irlam, Manchester and the sponsor of the Regeneration Group. Hamilton Davies Trust has been operating in Irlam and Cadishead for over ten years and works with a number of partners. It is a grant-giving charity with four major work streams including Regeneration.

Irlam Station
Irlam station is located just off Liverpool Road and lies at the heart of one of Salford City Council’s key regeneration priorities in Salford West. The station is well placed, within walking distance of just over 1,000 homes and close to Irlam and Cadishead College, Lower Irlam Neighbourhood Centre and Northbank Industrial Estate. Irlam and Cadishead have a growing population which is likely to result in more people using Irlam station, not just to catch a train, but for the great facilities on offer.

26 March 2015 marked the re-launch of Irlam Station House, 122 years to the day since it first opened its doors to the public. This project saw the restoration of the derelict Station House, bringing it back into the community. It followed years of planning and consultation between TfGM, Hamilton Davies Trust, Salford City Council, local councillors, the Community Committee, the rail industry and the community at large.

The station now offers:

- free parking for over 60 cars (including disabled bays), motorcycles and a cycle hub;
- enhanced lighting, security cameras and pedestrian footpaths to ensure a safe environment;
- extensive landscaping including shrubs and trees, providing a peaceful area for both people and wildlife;
- a child friendly area known as ‘Platform 9 ¾’ adjacent the station building; and
- a large scale piece of art featured on the Liverpool Bound platform.

Station Road which leads to the complex has also seen improvements with re-surfacing work and the creation of a new parking bays and pedestrian crossing. The railway embankments have been cleared, tidied and re-planted.

Could the approach be replicated elsewhere in Greater Manchester?
The socio-economic profile of Irlam and Cadishead is similar to many other neighbourhoods within Greater Manchester – long-established localities located around arterial routes into Manchester/Salford where the retail and industrial base has withered leaving vacant units/sites and low quality infill.

These are neighbourhoods which do not face serious enough challenges to warrant large scale public sector intervention but are not affluent enough to attract significant, high quality private sector intervention.

Through public sector reform, councils and other agencies in Greater Manchester are recognising the need to move beyond silo-based delivery and work in partnership to deliver multi-faceted interventions.

At Irlam station, the partnership approach between Hamilton Davies Trust, Salford City Council, NC Developments, Transport for Greater Manchester, Network Rail, Northern Rail, Irlam and Cadishead History Society and the Friends of Irlam Station is an exemplar case study which demonstrates the types of benefits that can be achieved for the community by combining ideas and resources; and provides the evidence to suggest further partnerships can be successfully replicated elsewhere across Greater Manchester.
Replicating the model will not be without challenges. The presence of some kind of endowment; be that from an individual benefactor or a Trust, which can be invested over time and not necessarily channeled solely towards profit making activity, is a vital ingredient that is not currently present in other Greater Manchester neighbourhoods.

Identifying individuals who would be willing to play such a role would be one policy response. Alternatively, innovative approaches such as public asset transfers or asset backed vehicles could endow local organisations with a capital base from which to make regular regeneration investments and with which to leverage further funding.

TfGM aims to replicate the Irlam and Cadishead model. It is important to acknowledge the likely need for a different approach in different areas and stations; staff secondments from councils and the private sector to community groups/trusts, and the establishment of mentoring relationships to ensure the right skills are harnessed.

“This has been our biggest project to date and we are so proud to have been involved in creating such a wonderful landmark within our community.”

Neil McArthur
Trustee, The Hamilton Davies Trust
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