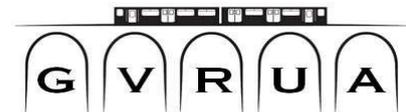


# **Building Back Better: Restoring and Enhancing the Train Service between Manchester and Rose Hill via Hyde**

October 2020

A paper by Friends of Rose Hill Station and Goyt Valley Rail Users'  
Association



## Summary

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the rail service from Manchester Piccadilly to Rose Hill Marple via Hyde operated at a half hourly frequency on Mondays to Saturdays. The first train left Rose Hill at 06.20 (07.13 on Saturday) and the last train back from Manchester departed at 21.09. There was no Sunday service.

The service is currently reduced to a minimal service of three trains per day in each direction, only stopping at some stations. We understand that Northern Trains propose to increase the daytime service to a train every 90 minutes from 26<sup>th</sup> October and hourly from 14<sup>th</sup> December. No date has been set for the resumption of the full half hourly service, but we have been told that this will not be before May 2021 “at the earliest”. Friends of Rose Hill Station and Goyt Valley Rail Users’ Association are very concerned that the reduced service will be maintained indefinitely and this will hinder efforts to rebuild ridership as Britain recovers from the pandemic. This will reduce the value of the line and make it vulnerable to total closure as a cost saving measure. Northern Trains and others deny that this is an objective, but it could be an unintended consequence of their actions.

While the long term travel implications of the pandemic are not yet clear it seems very probable that there will be a reduction in daily commuting and shopping, so that a service which only operates over limited hours to meet these needs will not meet its potential. We have reviewed services on the route over the past 50 years and this shows that it has never had a Sunday service and the evening provision has been limited, apart from a short period between 1977 and 1982. Recent timetable changes have improved the daytime service provision and the latest change, in 2018, provided a better service in the early evening. These changes have led to strong ridership growth with usage of the stations only served by Rose Hill trains more than doubling in the past decade. There has not been significant diversion from other stations, which would have occurred if they provided a good alternative. This demonstrates that the rail market on the route is responsive to service improvements.

Assessment of the socio-demographic characteristics of the areas served shows a marked contrast between them. In the relatively wealthy areas of Rose Hill and Woodley, rail is competing with car for a range of work and leisure related journeys. Increasing rail use is important to meeting Transport for Greater Manchester’s target that 50% of journeys should be made by modes other than car by 2040. In contrast, the Hyde area experiences high levels of deprivation and low car ownership. Good public transport links are important in improving the socio-economic conditions in the area. In both areas, a service operating over longer hours, seven days a week is needed.

We consider that the full timetable needs to be restored as soon as possible. Beyond this, we have identified three specific gaps in service provision that need to be addressed to grow rail use and meet economic and environmental needs:

1. Fairfield and Hyde North stations only have an hourly service, while all the other stations are served half hourly, meaning these stations are not realising their full potential despite significant recent ridership growth at Fairfield. While Rose Hill trains are largely suspended, a service to Gorton is being provided by stopping Glossop/ Hadfield bound trains there. We believe this should continue, allowing all Rose Hill trains to stop at both Hyde North and Fairfield, while maintaining current overall journey times.
2. The last train to Rose Hill departs at 21.09. This is much earlier than other routes in Greater Manchester. As a result, people working late in Manchester, connecting from long distance services in the evening, or taking part in evening activities in the city do not have a rail

service available. We consider that extra trains from Manchester should operate at 22.09 and 23.09 and from Rose Hill at 22.13 from December 2021. This could be introduced initially for a three year trial period to confirm the demand potential.

3. There is no Sunday service on the route. We believe an hourly service between 08.00 and 23.00 should be introduced, again for a trial period, from December 2021.