

Southport-Manchester Rail Travel Census Autumn 2015

Background and Purpose

The survey was carried out by the Ormskirk, Preston and Southport Travellers' Association (OPSTA) and the Southport Rail Transport Forum (SRTF).

Its purpose is to produce a comprehensive and objective analysis of passenger numbers, travel patterns and travellers' destination requirements on morning peak time services to Manchester, in order to inform decisions and design of services and timetables that will meet customer need.

Following the survey conducted in November 2014, positive feedback was received from transport authorities and rail companies on the value of the information produced and a steer given that the data could be enriched through repetition.

With this and further encouragement from the West of Lancashire Community Rail Partnership, a brief was produced with scope extended to Gathurst which meant all stations on the Southport line west of Wigan Wallgate were covered except for New Lane and Hoscarr.

Method and Approach

The research entailed completion of a 3 question survey prefixed with 'on today's journey':

- What is your destination station?
- What is your reason for travelling?
- What is the first part of your home post code?

Full passenger counts were taken on the day with verification counts also taken on other days at Southport, Meols Cop, Burscough Bridge and Gathurst. A sample rate of above 75% was achieved.

Summary of Key Findings

Every weekday 1000 passengers are taking one of the morning commuter services towards Manchester from stations between Southport and Gathurst.

Over 70% will remain on the train until they reach one of the 5 city centre stations¹.

There is an overall 60:40 split between those disembarking at Piccadilly and Victoria line stations; it was exactly this split at Appley Bridge and an equal ratio at Gathurst (ie 1:1).

10% disembark at Wigan Wallgate and 5% at Salford Crescent.

Despite the service constraints when the survey was conducted 5% used the train to get to Bolton.

Less than 2% go the airport, some to get flights and others for work.

Comments were not sought as part of the survey but many were made and captured in passing. Priorities expressed by travellers from all stations are for a direct service to their destination and larger, more comfortable trains with certainty they will be able to board a return service in the evening.

At Burscough Bridge there were strong comments on the need to retain a Booking Office.

¹ Deansgate, Oxford Rd and Piccadilly on the 'Piccadilly line', Salford Central and Victoria on the 'Victoria line'