

ECCLES STATION NEWS

March 2019

Welcome to the latest Eccles Station News.

It's that time of year again, folks. Our annual meeting and AGM.

Friends of Eccles Station

**REVIEW of the YEAR
&
Annual General Meeting**

**To be held in Eccles Community Hall (ECHO)
Eccles Town Hall, Church Street, Eccles, M30 0LH**

Tuesday 2nd April 2019

7:30pm

(public entry from 7pm, licensed bar and refreshments available)

Keynote address:

Northern's Service and the Community

Rebecca Styles

*Community and Sustainability Manager,
Central Region, Northern Railway*

All welcome

For further information, contact FRECCLES
0161 -789 5016 or freccles@btinternet.com

Miscellany.

The editor of Eccles Station News wishes to remind readers that in September the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), chaired by Stephen Glaister, published its interim Inquiry report into what caused the May 2018 timetable disruption.

In particular the three-month Inquiry found that Network Rail, Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), Northern, the Department for Transport (DfT), and the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) all made mistakes, which contributed to the collapse of services, particularly on the GTR and Northern routes. In other words, blame all round and not just the railway itself. Well that seems to have shut up the former backbiting, doesn't it? The MPs report on the fiasco was none too complimentary about Chris Grayling's failure to act either.

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmtrans/1163/116302.htm> See the articles section for amplification

The bodywork of one of the proposed new Merseyrail trains was on display at Liverpool Lime Street for part of November. Sited beneath the old mail part of the station it was an exercise in gathering the public's views on the proposed interiors and accessibility.





The cost of a whole fleet of new trains was financed on the basis of reduced costs of Driver Only Operation, but Merseyrail has now acceded to RMT demands that a guard (or second safety critical person) must always be on board when they are in operation. As a result, the fleet will need financing from increased fares and /or service cost reductions.

Although work has now finished at Liverpool Lime Street platform 0 remains trackless as on this photo but platform 1 is now in use.



This sign may have two meanings, both of which will require some enforcement.....



Lime Street is a very busy city centre station with partying throngs and overhead power wires. Apparently there have been problems of unleashed helium balloons tangling with the catenary. The resulting work to remove them disrupts operation of the trains.



Zoom in to study the above photograph in more detail. This is the bronze plaque from Patricroft Steam Shed in honour of those who served and those who fell in the First World War. 128 fought and 27 were killed. Notice too, the Welsh names. Railway promotion was offered 'on the line' not at the place you worked, so many Welshmen who would have remained cleaners for most of their days at small Welsh sheds took the offered post of fireman or driver at the larger sheds on the London and North Western Railway.

It was thought by many that the plaque was lost but it has been retrieved from the Salford Museum Collection store and is now installed in the porch of the Carnegie Library Building in Eccles.

"Transpennine Express' new trains intended for service between Liverpool and Scarborough/Middlesbrough have been calling regularly at Eccles Station during test and crew training runs. The new trains which should have been in service in May 2018 will not now enter service until May 2019. The trainsets, built in Spain by CAF and known as Nova 3, comprise 13 sets of five car Mk5A coaches pushed or pulled by a single class 68 locomotive owned by Beacon Rail and leased from Direct Rail Services.

The pictures below show Class 68 locomotive 68020 named 'Reliance' at one end of the train with driving trailer TP02 at the other end whilst laying over in the loop at Eccles Station. Note that the nose of the locomotive and driving trailer is no longer painted yellow for safety reasons due to the use of new high intensity lights."

Photographs and article are courtesy of Pete Malone





The runs are to Longsight depot and take place as required under an FRGT code. One is from Carlisle (stopover at Eccles 1204 to 1249) and the alternative one from Bletchley (stopover at Eccles 1226 to 1249).

See www.realtimetrains.co.uk and enter ECCLES then click on the particular train for full details.

It wouldn't happen at Eccles: in early November a freight train in Western Australia ran away after its driver got off to inspect a wagon in the train. It went for over fifty miles at quite some speed and could only be stopped by derailling it at Turner Sidings, wrecking most of the wagons and locomotives and blocking the BHP line to port Hedland. The train was 268 wagons long, carrying nearly 35,000 tonnes of iron ore worth about \$2,000,000, most of which is now scattered around the kilometre or so of damaged trackwork. The line would normally carry about 20 of these trains a day so the blockage is expected to cost the company over a hundred million dollars a week in lost

revenue. **For videos and further details see:**

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=australia+train+crash&qvvt=australia+train+crash&view=detail&mid=9B3FC694B638FDC8ED1A9B3FC694B638FDC8ED1A&rvsmid=89C20332DAE4A7F8398789C20332DAE4A7F83987&FORM=VDQVAP>

There is much else of interest at this reference.

The benefits of having a common enemy can be surprising. Israel has proposed to the Gulf States that the railway between the Mediterranean port of Haifa and the port of Muscat (Oman) on the Arabian Gulf be reinstated. The idea was suggested by Binyamin Netanyahu, and in early November the Israeli Transport Minister attended a railway conference in Oman to discuss the idea further. There is much railway development in the Arab states but like this country it seems to be very slow to produce concrete results. **For more detail see:**

<https://www.msn.com/en-ae/news/other/peace-train-to-oman-how-a-rail-could-link-tel-aviv-to-oman/ar-BBPdICT>

<https://www.railombudsman.org/about-us/our-process/>



On Sunday 18th November, members of the **Friends of Patricroft Station** unveiled their new artwork around their station boards.

The wall is much improved in appearance. The artist, Mark Mennel used a stencil to produce striking wheel images as background. Above (L to R) are Ann Taverner, Steve Lawton, Vicky Mennel, Mark Mennel (artist), Ian Stewart and Nina Keshishian (secretary)

Left is the chairman Steve Lawton describing the project and below is the board with the history of Patricroft Eng9ine Sheds.



ORR Review of timetable meltdown.

Here is the press release issued by the Office of Rail and Road when they published their interim findings on May's timetable disaster:

20 September 2018

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR), chaired by Stephen Glaister, has today published its interim Inquiry report into what caused the May 2018 timetable disruption, which led to passengers

enduring delays and cancellations as they could not predict how long a journey may take, or even if it was possible to travel.

The three-month [Inquiry](#) has found that Network Rail, Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), Northern, the Department for Transport (DfT), and the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) all made mistakes, which contributed to the collapse of services, particularly on the GTR and Northern routes.

On 20 May this year, the rail industry attempted to introduce the biggest timetable change in a generation. The £1bn plus Great North Rail Project, which includes the North West Electrification Programme (NWEPP), and the £7bn Thameslink programme should have added more services to new destinations, introduced new rolling stock, provided more seats for passengers and improved reliability.

The Inquiry found problems caused by delays to completing NWEPP were worsened by Network Rail, which wrongly believed it could make up the time. It also found that the DfT's decision to agree to phase the introduction of Thameslink stretched resources at Network Rail's timetabling department (System Operator) and that the industry, as a whole, failed to foresee that these combined factors created a serious risk that the revised timetable could fail.

The Inquiry has determined that during the planning stages the industry placed engineering and planning concerns ahead of serving its passengers, and that was made worse by the poor information train operators provided when disruption happened.

A key issue, found by the Inquiry, is that there is an apparent gap in industry responsibility and accountability for managing systemic risks, and that needs to change.

Other key findings are:

- The System Operator (SO) function within Network Rail was in the best position to understand and manage the risks, but did not take sufficient action, especially in the critical period of autumn 2017
- Neither GTR nor Northern were properly aware of or prepared for the problems in delivering the timetable and they did not do enough to provide accurate information to passengers when disruption occurred
- Both DfT and ORR are responsible for overseeing aspects of the industry, but neither sufficiently questioned assurances they received from the industry about the risk of disruption.

The ORR's report into its role in the timetabling issues is published separately.

The final stage of the Inquiry will analyse what actions the industry, DfT and ORR must take to ensure that a similar breakdown of services cannot happen. Recommendations will be published in the Final Report in December.

ORR and Inquiry Chairman, Professor Stephen Glaister said:

"The May 2018 timetable was meant to offer more services and reliability, but in reality it led to major disruption for passengers. Today's report uncovers the issues that Network Rail, GTR, Northern, ORR and the DfT together need to address to stop this disruption happening again.

"Central to the issues were that good intentions and over-optimism within the rail industry about its ability to recover missed deadlines left no time to uncover and fix problems. When problems arose, timetable planners were stretched and train operators were ill-equipped to help passengers. This meant that staff worked in very difficult circumstances to do as good a job as possible and I thank them for their efforts."

That is a decent but very brief summary. For those who want to see the full details check the links below (control +click). For a speedier read look especially at the paragraphs in light blue print in the first one.

Inquiry findings – September 2018

- [Independent review of timetable disruption in May 2018](#)
- [ORR Prior role review](#)
- [Annex B: Terms of Reference](#)
- [Annex C: Complete reference timeline](#)
- [Annex D: ORR customer research](#)
- [Annex E: ORR service performance data](#)
- [Annex F: Record of evidence](#)

Publications

- [Terms of Reference](#)
- [Letter from DfT commissioning the Inquiry](#)

127.A key lesson from the May 2018 timetable change is that a significant proportion of rail users do not feel the industry is listening to them and taking proper account of their needs. If trust in the railway is to be restored the rail industry must substantially improve its engagement with passengers, including through ongoing and meaningful consultation on proposed service changes. Good practice, such as Govia Thameslink Railway's active engagement with Rail User Groups on the design of some its services, exists but the broader approach

to passenger consultation is patchy at best and perfunctory at worse. *The Department for Transport's rail franchising teams must more actively ensure that all passenger rail franchisees adopt best practice and innovative approaches and adhere to their contractual obligations to consult on all significant service changes.*

The governance and decision-making structures overseen by the Secretary of State and the Department of Transport were inadequate: lines of accountability failed; were not sufficiently clear; or simply did not exist. The Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for the structure of the system that controls and runs our railways. He is at the apex of this system. Some of the problems caused by timetabling changes arose from the structure of the railways. It is therefore not reasonable for the Secretary of State to absolve himself of all responsibility. We acknowledge that the Secretary of State was not fully informed of serious problems, but he should have been more proactive. The Office of Rail and Road missed chances to sound the alarm; a more confident, independent and effective Regulator may have been able to avert the crisis. (Paragraph 64)

<http://data.parliament.uk/WrittenEvidence/CommitteeEvidence.svc/EvidenceDocument/Transport/Rail%20timetable%20changes/Written/87332.html>

Eccles Station News has already given its views on the affair and we were not too far out. This has been hugely damaging to passengers who have lost their jobs, and to the reputation of the railways.

Fair Fares (III).

In the last article ESN considered some mini networks on a single line in some detail. It is possible to model other mini networks and consider the arguments for fare setting. For example a triangle of lines with three stations at the corners; vary the nature of the towns, add a station along each side; see how this affects your thinking. The reader will find it is complex. The key point is that the actual rail network is a whole host of such mini networks linked together with longer distance network journeys overlaid. The complexity is magnified many times so it seems folly to expect a simple uniform pricing system to work.

Another 'objection' that has been raised about the current fares system is that passengers paying peak fares are often on the same trains as those paying off peak fares. When a train is on a long distance route this is bound to happen. London – Aberdeen passengers may set off on an off peak early afternoon train and arrive in Aberdeen off peak in the evening. Not surprisingly they are sold an off peak ticket. However passengers joining the train at Darlington and Newcastle will be joining the train at peak times and pay peak fares to do so. Peak fares are there to encourage people away from peak period and boarding is the only manageable part of the journey. One cannot ask the London Aberdeen passengers to get off at York and wait a few hours before travelling on to Aberdeen, whereas peak fares at Darlington and Newcastle will discourage the overcrowding of this train. Hardly unreasonable: it is the boarding of the train that is the key moment.

ESN wonders if season ticket holders would welcome a radical decision on season ticket pricing. There is an interesting conundrum here. Question One: Do season ticket holders largely travel at very peak periods which require the provision of more trains and tracks for those couple of hours a day. Answer: Yes. Perhaps they should not get discounts then.

Question Two: Are season ticket holders largely loyal customers who bulk buy the services of the railway. Answer: Yes. Perhaps they should get discounts on their tickets.

Whatever we shall see what the fares review comes up with, if anything.

FROPS 2018 PASSENGER COUNT.

The Friends of Patricroft Station group has carried out its study of passenger numbers at the station. As at Eccles Station this is a one day count of the numbers boarding and alighting from each train on a (hopefully) typical weekday. Comparisons are then made with previous years' data and with the Office of Rail and Road official figures. The figures show remarkable growth in passenger numbers using Patricroft Station. The new housing on Green Lane

must have contributed to this but on a simple count, the origins and ultimate destinations of passengers are not logged, so there is no comment on this.

Passengers have been treated very badly by the railways this past year, being inconvenienced (a rather mild word to use) by the RMT strikes and the failure of the new timetable from May onwards, so such a growth in numbers is remarkable. The report warns that the railway does not seem to be planning to cater for this success – so the situation is here in a microcosm.

Eccles Stations News was particularly impressed with the professional presentation of the report: the data is summed up with simple, very clear graphical representations. As a result the editor has decided to present the report in full for our readers. Our thanks are due to Peter Brown of FROPS for permission to do this.

2018 Passenger Count - Headlines

- A **27% increase** in overall passenger numbers from 2017 to 2018
- This follows a 31% and 19% increase in the two previous years
- Passenger numbers have doubled in three years
- A predicted annual passenger figure of around 100,000
- Lack of any improvements in train capacity or frequency could now curtail future increases, due to overcrowding suppressing demand.

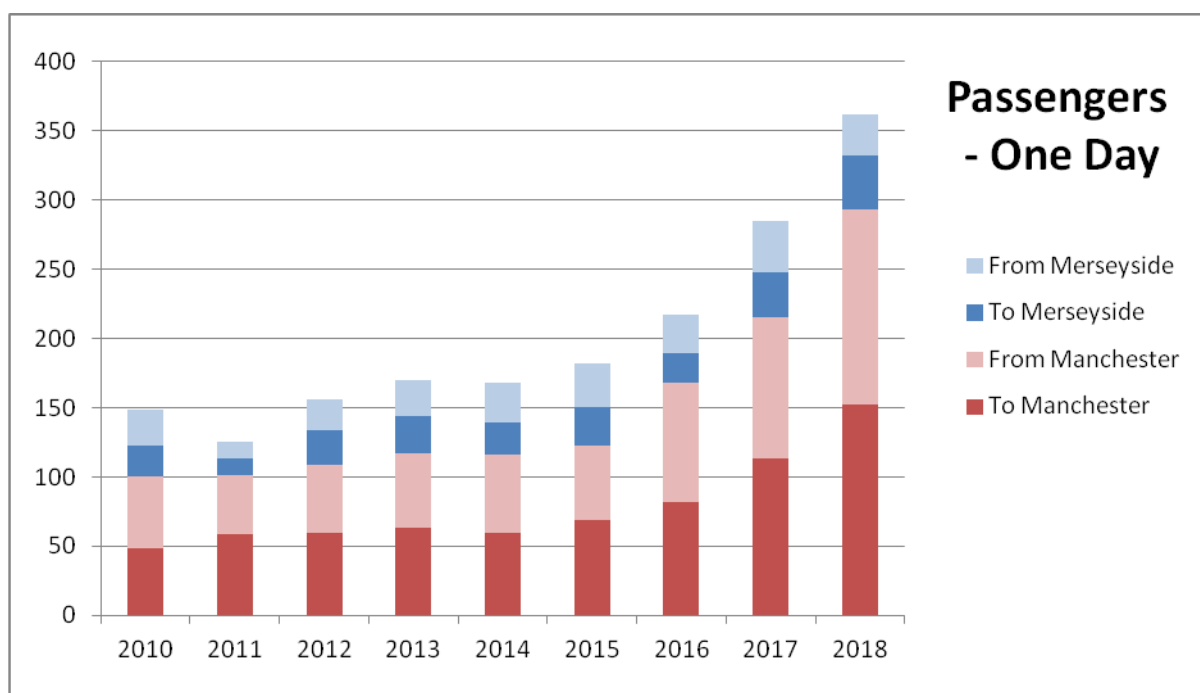
Report Contents

- Passenger Count by Direction
- Annual Passenger Totals
- Service Types and Performance
- Service Patterns
- Passenger Patterns

Passenger Count by Direction

These figures are the actual counts recorded by the Friends of Patricroft Station, each year, on one Thursday.

Year	Passengers				Total
	To Manchester	From Manchester	To Merseyside	From Merseyside	
2010	48	52	23	26	149
2011	59	42	12	12	125
2012	60	49	25	22	156
2013	63	54	27	26	170
2014	60	56	23	29	168
2015	69	54	27	32	182
2016	82	86	21	28	217
2017	113	102	33	37	285
2018	152	141	39	30	362



- The counts are normally done in June or July. In 2018 the count was done in September, due to the service collapse in May and temporary timetable in June/July meaning no valid count could be performed then.
- The 2011 figures are low and seem to be incomplete.

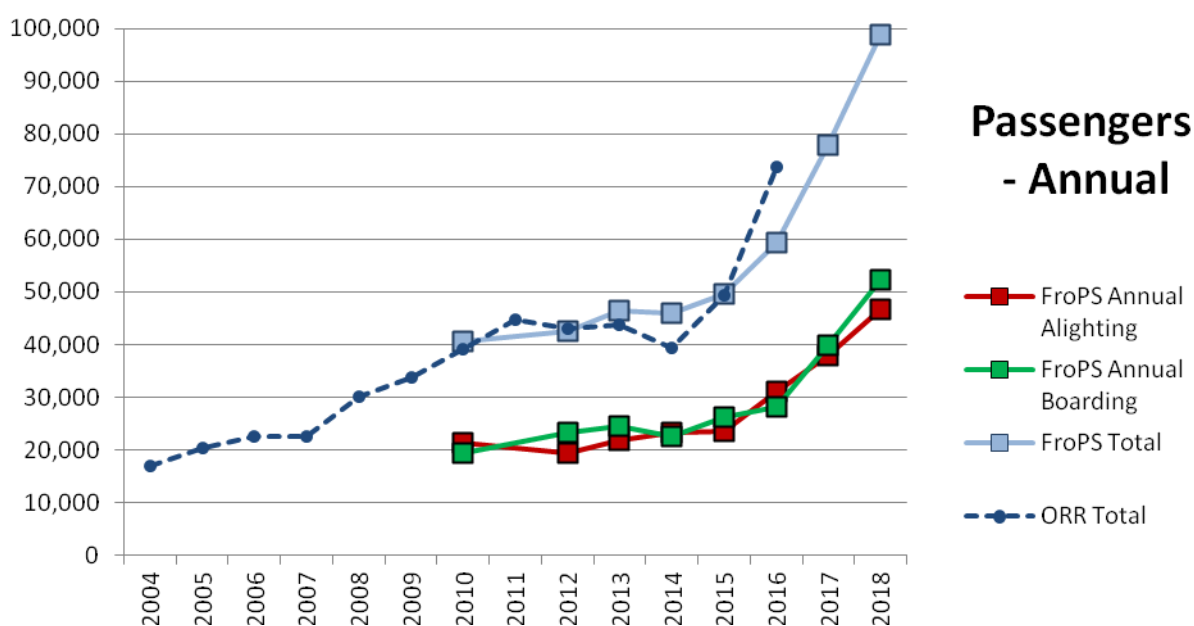
Annual Passenger Totals

The one-day counts can be scaled up to give projected annual totals. Also shown for comparison are the official figures compiled by the **Office of Rail and Road**:

<http://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/station-usage-estimates>

The FRoPS annual figures have been scaled to 'best-fit' the previous ORR figures.

Year	FroPS Annual Alighting	FroPS Annual Boarding	FroPS Total	FroPS Change	ORR Total	ORR Change
2004					16,945	
2005					20,471	+21%
2006					22,440	+10%
2007					22,516	+0%
2008					30,160	+34%
2009					33,766	+12%
2010	21,298	19,387	40,685		39,092	+16%
2011				+2%	44,684	+14%
2012	19,387	23,209	42,596	+2%	42,946	-4%
2013	21,844	24,575	46,419	+9%	43,852	+2%
2014	23,209	22,663	45,873	-1%	39,298	-10%
2015	23,482	26,213	49,695	+8%	49,468	+26%
2016	31,128	28,124	59,252	+19%	73,596	+49%
2017	37,954	39,865	77,820	+31%		
2018	46,692	52,153	98,845	+27%		



- The FroPS 2011 count seems to be an anomaly, so has been removed from the trend.
- The ORR has yet to publish statistics for the years including June 2017 and September 2018.

Service Types and Performance

Of the **40** train services due to run on the 27th September 2018:

- 40 were Electric
- 0 were Diesel
- 0 were cancelled or substituted

This compares with the previous attempted count in May, when there were 24 cancellations.

Since 2015, the electric service at Patricroft has been run entirely using 4-car Class 319 trains. Recently however, 3-car Class 323 trains have appeared on some services – this class had previously always been used on the lines east and south of Piccadilly, and never at Liverpool. It is not clear why this is happening, and what the future plans are. Originally the Northern franchise was due to lose all the 323 trains soon, but there is now confusion over what will happen to them.

Class 323 trains are newer and have better acceleration, but Class 319s have more seats and a higher top speed. The main effect of using 323 trains is therefore a small reduction in passenger capacity on the line.

Northern will shortly be receiving new Class 331 trains too (some 3-car, some 4-car), but it is unknown if they will be used on this line.

Lateness

Live train timing can be obtained using the rail industry's own records of the services through Patricroft. Of the trains that ran:

- Trains from Liverpool were on average 3 minutes late, with the worst being 23 minutes late
- Trains from Manchester were on average 5 minutes late, with the worst being 14 minutes late

Using the industry standard allowances, which state that delays of up to 5 minutes are regarded as being "on-time":

- 2 trains left **early**
- 24 trains were **on time**
- 14 trains were **late**

Overall, the figures do not seem so bad now, as they are so much better than earlier in the year when the whole timetable collapsed. However the lateness is worse than the previous year, for the second year running. Although there was general late running throughout the day, most of the problems occurred from 4pm onwards.

Service Patterns

The whole Northern timetable was changed between 2017 and 2018. The main effects of this on Patricroft were:

- Each hourly Liverpool-bound train moving back about half-an-hour
- The removal of 2 Liverpool-bound trains in the morning peak, and 2 Manchester-bound trains in the evening peak
- Most trains to and from Manchester not serving Victoria, instead calling at Deansgate, Oxford Road, Piccadilly and all stations to the Airport, Wilmslow and Crewe.

So despite -

a) the large amount of publicity from Arriva about the new Northern franchise, promising extra services and extra peak-capacity, and

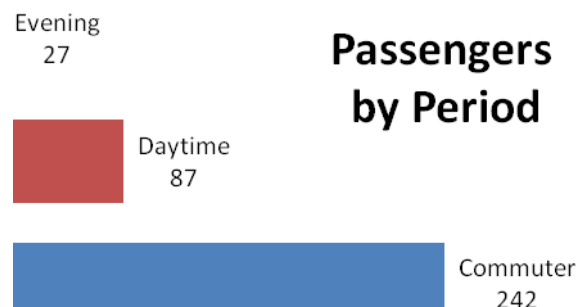
b) the repeated comments from other industry bodies over the years that service improvements at Patricroft would have to wait for electrification, the new franchise, and the new timetable (all now in place) -

there have been no improvements in either service numbers or capacity for Manchester travellers, and a reduction in the Liverpool services.

There are currently no known plans from Northern, TfGM, RailNorth or any other operator or transport body for future changes to the service patterns at Patricroft. Although there are new services planned to run on the line through Eccles and Patricroft, none of them will stop.

Passenger Patterns

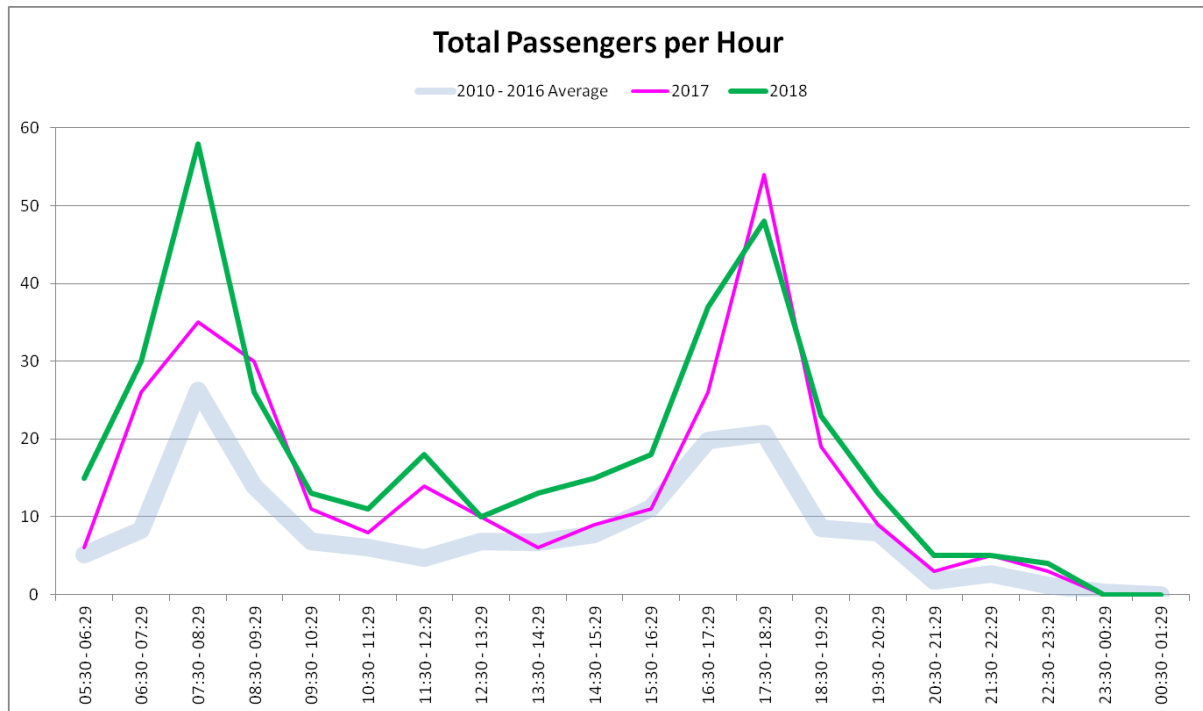
There was a 30% increase in morning commuter journeys in 2018 (defined as the morning peak from 6am to 9:15am) concentrated around 8am. By contrast, there was no similar sharp increase in the evening peak (4pm to 7:15pm) – instead these journeys have spread out across a wider period, from the afternoon onwards.



The increase in the morning journeys is now a problem. In 2014 when the peak service to Manchester consisted of one 2-car DMU, there was severe overcrowding which was suppressing demand. The subsequent move to 4-car EMUs from 2015 onwards has allowed the passenger numbers to increase. However, this capacity is now used – the 8:12 train to Manchester is now arriving from Newton-le-Willows already full-and-standing and commuters are struggling to get on.

If there are no further capacity increases it is unlikely that growth can continue for commuting at peak times. Lack of frequency improvements also makes the service less attractive for off-peak travel.

Passenger Patterns



The timetable at Oxford Road:

21

Eccles Station News welcomes feedback from readers. Please do not hesitate to send in your own views, photos or snippets of news to the e-mail address below.



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