



Longsight
Transport
Project



Better buses and safer streets for Longsight

Update
January
2006

লংসাইটের বাস আরও উন্নত করা এবং
রাস্তাঘাট নিরাপদ করা

لانگ سائٹ کیلئے بہتر بسیں اور محفوظ سڑکیں

Two years after the launch of our report *Better Buses and Safer Streets* we are continuing to work with Longsight communities to develop solutions to issues in the area.

Warm Reception for our Consultation

At the launch of the report in October 2003, Gerald Kaufman MP, Councillor Aftab Ahmed, Barry Johnson of Hamilton Road Area Community Association and Roger Jones of GMPTE gave their approval. Since then the report has been distributed widely and well received.

"The execution of this operation is of exceptionally high quality. I don't see how it could be bettered. It's a model of how a local consultation should be done."

- Gerald Kaufman MP, October '03



Still Waiting for the 53 Bus



The 53 was one of the stars (or villains) of our consultation. One Iraqi refugee at Longsight Library could find only one good thing to say about it: "It's better than Iraq." When these two boys from a local school came to one of our Longsight Transport Working Group meetings to tell us their experiences, we were reminded how bad the service is. They were getting detention at school because the 53 bus was

often getting them to school late. In 2004, we took the issue to the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE), who agreed to provide a school bus on that route - an early success for the project. The school bus is still running, but we're not sitting still; we are working with relevant agencies to make sure that the route is improved for everyone who uses it. It is no coincidence that First, the company that run the route, are carrying out a punctuality improvement plan, starting in January 2006. This involves changes to avoid congested areas, along with enhancements to the management of the service. Our report helped to push the 53 up the company's priority list.

Longsight Transport Working Group

This group is the engine behind the work of the project. A group of volunteers with one paid worker, is taking forward issues from the report *Better Buses and Safer Streets*, keeping track of key developments and aiming to empower the community to demand better buses and safer streets. It is represented on key transport policy making committees in Longsight and Manchester. Though still relatively small, the group is establishing its name. New volunteers are always welcome to come and get stuck in. We have also been working with other community groups. For example, we obtained funding for walking equipment for Himmat, a local group of Asian women. We are currently preparing our own radio show on local station ALL FM, to begin early this year.

One Change at a Time

It's always hard to say: "That was us!" Some changes come about because many people and groups have been demanding them for a long time. We have been influential over:

- ✓ the 192 quality bus corridor and real-time information,
- ✓ the increase in visible policing since start of 2005,
- ✓ street lighting improvements.

On your Marks, Get Set, Go! Triathlon



In July 2005 the Longsight Transport Project helped to organise a Community Triathlon for women in the area. The idea was to make exercise inclusive to people of all abilities and to encourage the use of public transport. We worked in partnership with Health First Longsight and Victoria Swimming Club. The event spread over one week and began with 50 people taking a walk in Tatton Park. The rain did not

deter a number making their way to Debdale Park with public transport to enjoy a bike ride, including cycle training. The third part was a swim in Levenshulme, with Active Life for All.

Being Heard, Where it Matters

Over the last two years we've been a regular feature at key meetings. For example, we played a very active role in suggesting how the Transport Thematic Partnership (part of the Local Strategic Partnership, or LSP) could spend its funding. We have been to many Ward Support Service meetings and placed our concerns on its action plan. One or more of our members take part in Manchester's monthly Transport Pool meeting, which brings together the concerns of the community sector and feeds them into the LSP.

Making Sure That People Have a Voice

The project is about not only making getting around in Longsight easier. It is also about making sure that people are listened to in decisions that affect them. We are confident that the main reason *Better Buses and Safer Streets for Longsight* was so well received was that it was so clear that the concerns expressed in it were the views of local people. We spoke with a wide range of people of all ages and from many ethnic groups, and we went to their meetings – we did not expect them to come to us. Moreover, we involved local people in the team that carried out the consultation itself.

- ✓ In 2003 we were featured in a guide to community consultation, published by Manchester City Council. (right)
- ✓ A funding bid drawn up by us was successful and meant that someone has been employed to do similar consultation and community involvement work in other parts of Manchester, a major achievement in terms of strengthening the links between communities and those who make decisions.
- ✓ In 2004, a review was carried out by Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Organisations (GMCVO), identifying the ways that other consultations could learn from what we did. It showed us in a very positive light.



Our website is a resource for local residents to use. It contains advice on how to report problems concerning transport, as well as the opportunity to see what other issues are being raised in Longsight.

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