

GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

Date: 26th March 2021

Subject: Metrolink Phase 3 monitoring and evaluation – publication of second report

Report of: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Portfolio Lead for Transport and Eamonn Boylan, Chief Executive Officer, GMCA & TfGM.

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

The purpose of this report is to highlight key findings from recent pre-covid monitoring and evaluation activity for Metrolink Phase 3, explain their implications and to mark the publication of a second report on this subject.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The GMCA is requested to:

- 1. Note the evidence presented in this summary report, the publication of the full report and its value in shaping future scheme planning and transport strategy development activity.**

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Simon Warburton, Transport Strategy Director, TfGM - Simon.Warburton@tfgm.com

Ian Palmer, Head of Modelling and Analysis, TfGM – Ian.Palmer@tfgm.com

Equalities Implications:

Since Metrolink Phase 3 serves a number of deprived communities in the conurbation, the report notes that these communities have experienced a greater increase in access to key destinations – such as employment, further education and health care - relative to the overall Greater Manchester population.

Climate Change Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures –

The report notes that Phase 3 services are powered by wind, solar and some nuclear power, so that modal shift from private vehicles to Metrolink services results in a significant reduction in carbon emissions. Further opportunities for renewable energy sources to have a far greater role in Greater Manchester's transport system are being actively explored.

Risk Management:

As well as learning for future Greater Manchester transport system development, the report's publication fulfils a funding condition associated with the Department for Transport's grant support to Phase 3.

Legal Considerations:

No direct legal implications of the report's content have been identified.

Financial Consequences – Revenue:

The report's content does not have any direct revenue consequences.

Financial Consequences – Capital:

The report's content does not have any direct capital consequences.

Number of attachments to the report: None. This summary report references the publication of a full report on TfGM's website.

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Metrolink Phase 3: Monitoring and Evaluation Early Findings Report

TRACKING/PROCESS		
Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution		No
EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN		
Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?		No
GM Transport Committee	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
Not applicable	Not applicable	

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To provide evidence on the extent of achievements of Metrolink Phase 3¹ and to learn lessons for future infrastructure planning and delivery, TfGM has overseen a series of monitoring and evaluation activities. As well as demonstrating what Phase 3 has achieved for the benefit of accountability and future planning, the evaluation also provides insight to the Department for Transport, fulfilling a funding condition associated with central government's grant contribution to the programme.
- 1.2 Initial findings were presented in the Metrolink Phase 3: Monitoring and Evaluation Early Findings Report that was published in 2016. The purpose of this report to GMCA is to provide the main findings from the second report on Metrolink Phase 3 monitoring and evaluation, which is now available on the TfGM website at <https://tfgm.com/corporate/metrolink-phase-3> [To be posted, provided as a supporting document to WLT].
- 1.3 The evidence presented in the second report was collected in the period up to and including mid 2019. It therefore pre-dates the impact of COVID-19 on the transport system in Greater Manchester.

2 METROLINK'S ROLE IN GREATER MANCHESTER

- 2.1 This section provides information on the contribution of Metrolink makes towards the outcomes within the Greater Manchester Strategy. Key features of the Metrolink system are that it:
 - provides essential connectivity between the residential areas of Greater Manchester and the concentration of 200,000 jobs in the regional centre, where 1 in 2 financial/insurance jobs and 1 in 3 information/ communication/ profession/ scientific/ technical roles in Greater Manchester are located.
 - allows for clustering of economic activity in the conurbation allowing for increased productivity in Greater Manchester via the concentration of activity within sectors and across sectors
 - enables Metrolink passengers without access to a car, over half (52%) of whom do not have such access, to rapidly access opportunities across much of Greater Manchester.

¹ Comprising the extensions to Ashton-under-Lyne, East Didsbury, Oldham and Rochdale, and Manchester Airport.

- supports Metrolink passengers with access to a car in their choice of travel by Metrolink, helping tackle congestion on the road network while also reducing environmental pollution and carbon emissions.
- provides high capacity access to the city centre, accommodating 1 in 6 passenger movements in the weekday morning peak into the heart of the conurbation.

2.2 While the above statistics relate to the pre-pandemic situation, the ongoing and future contribution that Metrolink makes and will make to access to opportunities around Greater Manchester will nevertheless remain highly significant.

3 SECOND REPORT ON METROLINK PHASE 3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

3.1 In contrast to the Early Findings Report, which focused on the programme's context, lessons learnt re delivery and initial findings on outcomes, the second report referenced in Paragraph 1.2 focuses on progress in the achievement of transport objectives and economic and social objectives. Findings in relation to this progress, alongside implications for future planning work, are reported here in relation to research questions that were used to structure the monitoring and evaluation activity.

3.2 What travel patterns are being fulfilled using the new extensions?

- Some lines have a bigger share of commuting travel and lower share of leisure and other markets: **The nature of some lines, with some offering faster journey times than others, means that different markets are attracted. Depending on transport and wider objectives, this has important implications for planning future infrastructure based on the objectives for the corridor to be served.**
- There is a clear network effect from an integrated system, meaning that there is a significant proportion of Metrolink users that travel from one line to another: **Need to ensure that this type of travel between transport corridors is fully taken account of in future network planning in relation to Our Network, so that the range of travel options and usage is fully catered for.**

3.3 How would people behave if Metrolink was not available?

- Metrolink is attractive to those who have cars available and this will differ by the demographics of areas served and the competitiveness of Metrolink in different corridors: **Key assumptions about modal shift and competitiveness of rail-based services can be drawn from**

these findings and used in understanding the likely mode shift performance of different types of public transport provision.

3.4 What impact has there been on changes in carbon emitted?

- Due to its non-fossil fuel power source, Metrolink has resulted in a significant reductions in carbon emissions: **Future provision of a similar nature can make a major contribution to the challenge of reducing carbon emissions.**

3.5 How does patronage compare with forecast levels?

- Pre-covid patronage performance was lower than patronage as anticipated when the original demand forecasts were drawn up over a decade ago. This was due to a range of external and Metrolink-specific factors but, pre-covid at least, the patronage position was steadily improving: **To take account of wide range of influencing factors and the uncertainty surrounding these, a wider range of scenarios in relation to factors such as those specific to Metrolink performance and external economic conditions should be used in future demand forecasting.**

3.6 Has park and ride provision been effective in securing reductions in car mileage?

- The limited evidence shared in this report indicates that not all park and ride users come from travellers who would otherwise drive all the way to their destination: **Future strategy and business case planning should take this finding into consideration and the exploration should be encouraged of a wider array of means of access beyond car access to Metrolink, rail and guided bus-based stops.**

3.7 How has Usage of the Oldham and Rochdale Line changed relative to the former Heavy Rail Line?

- A major uplift in usage is possible when moving from a largely-neglected and low service level rail service to a much more attractive new light rail service: **This major growth in usage, and associated benefits, should be taken account of in future planning.**

3.8 What change in public transport network accessibility has been achieved through the system's expansion?

- There has been a significant improvement in public transport access to employment, further education and healthcare, an improvement that is particularly noticeable for the more deprived communities of Greater Manchester: **Particularly with the advent of new technology, there is the potential to build upon access improvements from future infrastructure provision to ensure that people have a better**

awareness of the wider range of opportunities now available to them.

- 3.9 How have businesses on Metrolink corridors outside the city centre been affected?
- Benefits have been identified by businesses in terms of improved customer and labour force catchments, as well as opportunities for business travel, although some businesses also have the perception that new lines have opened up their businesses to greater competition to the benefit of other Greater Manchester businesses: **There is an opportunity to better understand the unique characteristics of different areas to be served by future transport infrastructure improvements, and reflect on how businesses in these areas can be best supported.**
- 3.10 What economic impacts across Greater Manchester have the infrastructure investment brought about?
- Statistical modelling has demonstrated a positive association between improved public transport accessibility due to Phase 3 and economic growth, but the work has yet to separate out cause and effect: **There is scope for further analysis of the economic impacts of Phase 3 and other investment programmes in the future.**
- 3.11 What has been the Impact of Proximity to Metrolink stops on House Prices in Greater Manchester?
- Due to increased attractiveness of residential areas, results from house price studies generally show a strong relationship between house price changes and proximity to Metrolink: **House price changes are a good indication of the strength of economic benefits brought about by increases in public transport accessibility.**
- 3.12 What impact on communities in Wythenshawe has been observed?
- Survey work and in-depth interviews in the Wythenshawe area have revealed positive impacts on the communities in the area, with a particular expansion of travel horizons within the area, to other parts of south Manchester and beyond to the regional centre: **The wider social and economic impacts of a step-change in transport provision should be considered in the development of future business cases and evaluation programmes.**
- 3.13 The second report contains further detail on each of these topics and also includes supporting technical appendices.

4 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

- 4.1 The publication of the second report of findings marks the conclusion of research work that solely focuses on Metrolink Phase 3. Future research supporting Greater Manchester's ambitions for transport is now envisaged. This will draw on some of the issues raised in the second report but will be much broader in scope.
- 4.2 Likely coverage of future research will include issues relating to: development of the market for Metrolink; ways of handling uncertainty in forecasting for future infrastructure schemes; passenger perspectives in relation to investment programmes; and, further analysis to understand the relationship between transport investment and local economic performance.
- 4.3 This work will support the implementation of the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and the associated delivery plans (www.tfgm.com/2040-transport-strategy).
- 4.4 Following submission of the Metrolink Recovery Plan to DfT in January 2021, TfGM will seek to work with central government to address the challenges that COVID-19 has given rise to in relation to the Metrolink system, with a view to returning to a financially sustainable footing. The Recovery Plan also stipulates a desire to work closely with central government to develop a shared set of assumptions and a monitoring / evaluation framework to help develop a medium term financial strategy, as well as to seek dialogue on optimal local & national funding policy (including fiscal devolution), future rail and bus policy to drive towards a truly integrated transport network and the broader 'levelling up' agenda, including an economic recovery plan for town and city centres. In taking forward this work, the evidence from the Phase 3 monitoring and evaluation presented in this report will be drawn upon, alongside other data related to research projects and operational data relevant to the Metrolink system.
- 4.5 As well as contributing to national government's strategic objectives, Metrolink has a key role in achieving Greater Manchester's 2040 Right Mix target. This is especially in the case of achieving regional centre growth without increasing car travel, and for securing a step-change in rapid transit mode share for trips across the wider city region.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 GMCA is recommended to note the evidence presented in this summary report, the publication of the full report and its value in shaping future scheme planning and transport strategy development activity.