

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY 10 DECEMBER 2021 AT EXCHANGE HALL,
MANCHESTER CENTRAL CONFERENCE CENTRE**

PRESENT:

Councillor Mark Aldred (in the Chair)	Wigan Council
Councillor Stuart Haslam	Bolton Council
Councillor Mohammed Ayub	Bolton Council
Councillor Jackie Harris	Bury Council
Councillor Kevin Peel	Bury Council
Councillor Naeem Hassan	Manchester City Council
Councillor Howard Sykes	Oldham Council
Councillor Phil Burke	Rochdale MBC
Councillor Shah Wazir	Rochdale Council
Councillor Warren Bray	Tameside MBC
Councillor Roger Jones	Salford Council
Councillor Angie Clark	Stockport MBC
Councillor David Meller	Stockport MBC
Councillor Steve Adshead	Trafford Council
Councillor Nathan Evans	Trafford Council
Councillor Andrew Western	GMCA

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Bob Morris	TfGM
Nicola Kane	TfGM
Simon Warburton	TfGM
Richard Nickson	TfGM
Kate Brown	TfGM
Gwynne Williams	Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA
Eve Holt	GM Moving
Nicola Ward	Senior Governance Officer, GMCA

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Nigel Featham	Go North West
Charlie French	Avanti
Chris Jackson	Northern
Daniel Coles	Network Rail

GMTC 58/21 APOLOGIES

That apologies be received and noted from Councillors Emma Taylor, Dzidra Noor, Joanne Marshall, Paul Prescott, Norman Briggs, Doreen Dickinson, Tom McGee, John Leech, Barry Warner and Gary Nolan (One Bus).

GMTC 59/21 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

There were no chairs announcements or urgent business.

GMTC 60/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Resolved /-

1. That it be noted that Councillor Phil Burke declared a personal interest in relation to item 9, Transport Network Performance.
2. That it be noted that Councillor Jackie Harris declared a personal interest in relation to item 7, Integrated Rail Plan.

GMTC 61/21 MINUTES OF THE GM TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 15 OCTOBER 2021

Resolved /-

That the minutes of the GM Transport Committee meeting held 15 October 2021 be approved as a correct record.

GMTC 62/21 MINUTES OF THE GM TRANSPORT COMMITTEE SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Resolved /-

1. That the minutes of the GMTC Sub Committees as below be noted.
 - Metrolink & Rail Sub Committee – 12 November 2021
 - Bus Services Sub Committee – 19 November 2021
2. That Bob Morris, Chief Operating Officer (TfGM) would be available to discuss Bury Council's proposal for free weekend bus travel further with Councillor Kevin Peel at the end of the meeting.

GMTC 63/21 2040 DELIVERY PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Nicola Kane, Head of Strategic Planning and Research (TfGM) introduced a report which updated Members on the development and future publication of the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 Progress Report. The Committee were reminded that the Transport Strategy was published in January 2021 and of their role in monitoring its delivery. Members were given the opportunity to review what would be included within the progress report in February 2022 and determine whether the proposed sections were sufficient. There was support for the outlined sections and the Committee welcomed an opportunity to review the progress report at their next meeting.

Resolved /-

1. That the proposed content for the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040

progress report be noted.

2. That the Annual Progress Report of the 2040 Greater Manchester Transport Strategy be brought to the meeting of the GM Transport Committee in February 2022.

GMTC 64/21 INTEGRATED RAIL PLAN UPDATE

Simon Warburton, Transport Strategy Director (TfGM) took Members through a report which provided information on the content of the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) for the North and the Midlands. The Plan, initially anticipated for 2020, was a critical piece of national policy that set out Government's priorities against the delivery of HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail both of which were critical components of Greater Manchester's Transport Plan and the Northern Transport Strategy. With reference to HS2, the IRP confirmed Government's intention to put forward a Hybrid Bill in 2022 that would enable the delivery of Phase 2b – the western leg from Crewe, through Manchester Airport to Manchester Piccadilly.

It was also anticipated that the Bill would include provision for the Golbourne link, which had also been referenced in the recently published Union Connectivity Review and alternative options offered. As there had been no response from Government on this review it was expected that the initial plans for the Golbourne link would still be progressed.

Other routes in and out of Manchester remained equally as critical and featured in the IRP, including the construction of a new line along the Fiddlers Ferry route to Liverpool via Warrington. The proposals further referenced an upgrade to the Trans Pennine Route to the east of the conurbation with new tracks from Manchester Piccadilly to Marsden and then a re-connection back to the current Trans Pennine line. However, this proposal was counter to that preferred by Transport for the North which included a new route from Manchester to Leeds via Bradford, and TfGM had requested sight of the evidence base as to why this line had been discounted.

With regards to Manchester Piccadilly Train Station, specifically the IRP plans included a six-platform surface station, with additional track to the east towards Marsden, potential tunnels were yet to be confirmed.

For the other northern areas, there was deep dissatisfaction that the eastern leg of HS2 was no longer part of HS2, which would likely have an indirect negative impact on Greater Manchester. Furthermore, the Plan gave indication of a delayed delivery phase for the western leg, clarity on which was still being sought from the Department of Transport, however, would prove fundamental in relation to local planning.

Although Members were pleased to see the plans to extend HS2 to Manchester, concerns were raised as to the significant negative impact to economic growth for towns on the east coast as a result of Government not fulfilling their promise to deliver HS2 to Leeds and its potential impact to GM.

Members were further concerned as to why Government proposals for Manchester Piccadilly did not include underground platforms as put forward by GM. Officers confirmed that further clarity was being sought from DfT as to why these elements were not included within the IRP but following this, further consideration could be given as to how best to advise the GMCA on taking this issue forward again with Government.

The cross-party support for the initial proposals for HS2 in 2009 was reflected on and Members were reminded that without HS2 there would be no way to alleviate congestion on local lines. Taking the high-speed trains off the currently highly pressured network would help to improve services for local people to travel in and around Greater Manchester with less delays and more frequent services.

The current consultation on the May 2022 rail timetable was due to close at the end of December, and Members requested further advice and information as to how best to respond to this consultation as soon as possible.

With regards to Stockport Train Station, it was recognised that there were already significant congestion issues that needed addressing before the introduction of HS2, and Members questioned as to whether the plans for a stopping service as part of phase 2a was still proposed. Officers confirmed that it seemed Government's intention remained to have a stopping station at Stockport throughout this phase although from Crewe trains would be required to re-join the West Coast Mainline. Further clarity as to the long-term service pattern for the west coast operation was currently being sought from DfT, however it was anticipated that proposals for tram/train from Stockport-Altrincham and a link from Stockport to Manchester Airport had the potential to further alleviate the congestion issue.

The electrification of the Trans Pennine line was noted by Members as having the potential to cause significant periods of disruption and further details of a timeline of delivery were welcomed. Officers confirmed that these were currently being sought, along with the specific impact on GM boroughs.

Members were frustrated that although HS1 had seen significant costs supported, savings were now being transferred to HS2 at the expense of northern towns. The scaled down proposals as detailed in IRP would not enable the full economic growth potential and Members wished to convey that this was not an acceptable solution. Officers confirmed that the necessary clarity on specifics was expected from DfT in advance of the Transport for the North meeting in January, and once received would be circulated to the Committee. However in anticipation of this, there was ongoing liaison with all GM Local Authorities as to the implications for their specific elements of the system.

Furthermore, the Committee recognised that transport was an enabler that allowed Greater Manchester to grow. There was much that the GMCA did for itself, but when it came to transport infrastructure development it was imperative to receive Government support. The consequences of the offer contained within the IRP could be severe in relation to levelling up communities of GM and across the North, especially those areas along the Trans Pennine line.

Resolved /-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the GM Transport Committee be kept up to date as the implications for Greater Manchester as a result of the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) are more fully understood.
3. That TfGM provide a briefing to Members on the proposed new rail timetable for May 2022 currently in consultation.
4. That feedback in relation to the conversation on the IRP at the TfN Board Meeting in January be shared with Members of the Committee.

5. That the position of Trafford Council be noted in relation to the potential negative impact to the Warburton area as a result of the Golbourne link and that they had put forward alternative ways to increase the capacity on the West Coast Mainline.

GMTC 65/21 ACTIVE TRAVEL UPDATE WITH SPECIFIC FOCUS ON OVER 50'S AND CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE INITIATIVES

Richard Nickson, Programme Director for Walking and Cycling (TfGM) introduced a report which provided Members with an update of the TfGM active travel programme with specific focus on over 50's and children and young people initiatives. In relation to active travel for the over 50's it was reported that a large proportion of this demographic group walk regularly, however require safe routes with good quality pavements, sufficient lighting etc. There were a number of initiatives detailed in the report that support children and young people to be active, including cycle hire projects, bike loan schemes and school streets initiatives which give priority to other modes than the car around a school location for certain periods of the day.

Eve Holt, Strategic Director (GM Moving) offered further supporting information and a reflection on the previous report to the GM Transport Committee within which a commitment was made by GM Moving to identify further opportunities for tackling the unequal access to active travel through increased levels of engagement with key organisations, community groups and targeted projects. This subsequent report provided a deep dive into the provision for older people, children and young people and created a platform by which this work could be further promoted.

Members welcomed the report, specifically details on those interventions designed to create a new generation of active travel users in children and young people. However, asked whether local schemes were able to assist them in their knowledge, awareness and confidence around new road junctions or other infrastructure developments. Further to this, Members also reflected on the barriers to active travel, including affordability of bikes and urged for more areas to be supported to establish their own bike library. Officers agreed that financial barriers could often prevent people from cycling, especially young people, but reported that there was work underway at a national level to address the cost of bikes and potential for social prescribing projects to further assist with this provision.

In relation to the school streets initiatives, there were mixed responses across communities as to the desire for such schemes around their local schools. Officers confirmed that any school streets initiative would only be implemented with local support and initial engagement would not only take place with the relevant local authority, but with the school and parents. It was reported that where schemes had been introduced, they had been very popular and had assisted with breaking the cycle of reliance on the car. Often schemes were introduced with the support of other initiatives including 'Bikeability' etc in recognition that there were different approaches required for each school as each community had its own specific needs. However, what was clearly shared was a need for a holistic approach to create the cultural shift required to see active modes being predominately used. Officers reported that in the new year there would be a reinvigoration of the Behaviour Change Group across Local Authorities and TfGM to enable best practice to be shared and a strong focus to be given to this approach.

Members endorsed all efforts towards an active travel first approach, that enabled people to see themselves as multi-modal and create the level of cultural shift required to get the full

potential from a transformed public transport network in Greater Manchester. Officers acknowledged that there was a significant challenge ahead but that the GM Transport Strategy was geared around changing behaviours which allowed GM to speak with one voice on this agenda. Further support had been produced and was available through the active travel website to assist Local Authorities with designing their active travel schemes in line with best practice.

The Committee were reminded that all people were partners in places and all advocates for active travel, recognising that everyone receives messaging differently. However, the key was equipping people with a range of relevant information that they could share through their networks as appropriately.

Resolved /-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That feedback as to whether cycling proficiency courses now include training on specific local junctions (especially those newly installed) be provided through the next report to Committee.
3. That TfGM would provide a progress update to Councillor Meller in relation to the delay in light installation for a new zebra crossing.

GMTC 66/21 TRANSPORT NETWORK PERFORMANCE

Bob Morris, Chief Operating Officer (TfGM) took Members through the latest transport network performance report which highlighted that overall trips in October were lower than those in September, however public transport trips had seen an increase of 6% over the same period. Metrolink performance had been impacted by driver availability, as had performance of the bus network. However more positively, Northern had experienced the highest commuter increase on rail services across the UK.

Operators in attendance were invited to provide an update to the Committee.

Northern reported that there would be a slight timetable change from Sunday 12 December to assist with the resourcing issues as a result of staff unavailability. Face covering compliance was mixed, however following Government's announcement there had been a reduction in patronage resulting in a higher percentage of compliance. It was anticipated that this would increase further following the change to legislation from 16 December. Staff at Northern had been providing additional support for the Christmas markets and evening economy in Manchester which was greatly welcomed, however this had not not helped by the significant disruptions as a result of recent stormy weather. Across the industry there were reported pockets of industrial unrest, therefore contingency planning was underway in the event of this further affecting the workforce.

Metrolink also reported the impact on staff availability in delivering the current timetable, however noted thanks to all partner organisations for their support in the continued approach to tackling anti-social behaviour on the network which was seeing positive results. Despite the current challenges in the sector, KAM were pleased to report that Metrolink had achieved recent certifications for safety and environmental efforts.

Network Rail reported that key critical infrastructure points were currently in a strong state,

however risks had been identified where staffing levels were minimal and contingency planning was in place should any incidents occur. In relation to Manchester Piccadilly Train Station, footfall was stable c 80,000 people per day through the week, and at normal levels at weekends. Current passenger advice that was being given included, check timetable before travel, get an earlier train where possible as last trains were often busy and respect fellow passengers and staff. Work to platforms 13 & 14 lift was due to begin on the 31 January, with a temporary stair lift being installed over this period to further assist the mobility service at the station.

West Coast Partnership updated the Committee on the planned timetable change from Sunday 12 December, re-introducing the third train per hour on the Manchester to London route, taking the overall timetable across the network to 86% of pre-covid levels. Patronage demand had been continuing to grow and positively and business travel was now reported at 30-40% of pre-covid levels and continuing to climb.

Go North West reported that bus operators were also experiencing staffing issues, however were stable. Current patronage levels were c. 80% of pre-covid levels. Network coverage remained high but was planned to be reduced slightly in order to maintain high service levels. Government support post March 2022 was still uncertain, and timetabling was difficult to predict in light of the current covid situation.

Members recognised that in light of covid cases being on the rise and further restrictions being imposed that this would bring about additional pressures to transport operators and requested that TfGM specifically review the current Metrolink timetable to ensure that it could work within these parameters but still ensure safe capacity levels.

The report had highlighted comparably high number of anti-social behaviour incidents in Stockport, and Members urged that the Chief Superintendent from GMP be engaged with work to address this.

In relation to the new ticket machines installed at Stockport Train Station, it was reported that it was a significantly complicated process to purchase a return ticket. Network Rail informed the Committee that these were part of a suite of new machines across the network, currently operating on a base configuration, however the quick buy options would become localised through a forthcoming software update. In the meantime, additional staff had been deployed to support passengers who were having difficulties with this process.

Members were pleased to see an overall higher level in face covering compliance and an increase in leisure travel. Additional communications were felt to be a useful way to continue to build public confidence in using the public transport network despite recent government announcements.

The Hope Valley line had experienced a number of short forming trains over recent weeks, Northern reported that this was due to units being out of service due to wheel flats brought about by fallen leaves. However, most were now back on the network.

It was also reported that Members had experienced the barrier gates being open at Manchester Piccadilly, potentially impacting revenue protection.

Members noted the ongoing personal case for an employee of Go North West in relation to safe use of the mirrors when driving one of the new vehicles. An update on the outcome of these discussions would be shared with Committee in due course.

Resolved /-

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That it be noted that TfGM are reviewing timetable options for Metrolink whilst ensuring capacity is not compromised.
3. That it be noted that Network Rail offered to provide an update to Councillor David Meller on the status of the planned cleaning of Stockport Viaduct.
4. That Members continue to receive regular network performance reports, specifically detailing patronage projections and information on current and anticipated Government financial support.

GMTC 67/21 CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR PLANNING 2021-22

Bob Morris, Chief Operating Officer (TfGM) introduced a report which provided an update on transport provision during the 2021-22 winter period, including over Christmas and the New Year.

Members queried as to the timetable for Metrolink on New Years Eve, officers confirmed that this was yet to be proposed and confirmed with TfGM.

Resolved /-

That the ongoing planning and delivery of transport services and interventions over the winter period as detailed in the report, be noted.

GMTC 68/21 GM TRANSPORT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members were given the opportunity to review the forthcoming work programme for the Committee.

Resolved /-

That the Committee's Work Programme be noted.

GMTC 69/21 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved /-

That the Committee notes that it next meet on 18th February 2022.