

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT METROLINK & RAIL COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT MANCHESTER TOWN HALL

PRESENT:

Councillor Mohammed Ayub	Bolton Council
Councillor Stuart Haslam	Bolton Council
Councillor Dzidra Noor	Manchester Council
Councillor Naeem Hassan	Manchester Council
Councillor Aasim Rashid	Rochdale Council
Councillor Steve Gribbon	Stockport Council
Councillor Doreen Dickinson	Tameside Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lindsay Dunn	Senior Governance Officer, GMCA
Gwynne Williams	Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA
Mark Angelucci	Rail Officer, TfGM
Simon Elliott	Head of Rail Programme, TfGM
Danny Vaughan	Head of Metrolink, TfGM
Steve Warrener	Finance and Corporate Services Director, TfGM

OPERATORS IN ATTENDANCE:

Charlie French	Avanti
Guillaume Chanussot	Keolis Amey Metrolink (KAM)
Chris Jackson	Northern
Claire Rowland	Northern
Melissa Farmer	TransPennine Express (TPE)

GMTMRC 21/22 APOLOGIES

Resolved /-

That apologies be noted and received from Councillor's Kevin Peel (Bury), Angie Clark (Stockport), Andrew Western (Trafford) and John Vickers (Wigan).

GMTMRC 22/22 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2022/23

Resolved /-

That it be noted that Councillor Doreen Dickinson be appointed as Chair and Councillor Dzidra Noor be appointed as Vice Chair of the GM Transport Metrolink & Rail Sub Committee for 2022/23.

GMTMRC 23/22 MEMBERSHIP FOR 2022/23

Resolved /-

That the membership of the GM Transport Metrolink & Rail Sub Committee for 2023/23 be noted as follows.

Members	Representing	Political Party
Councillor Kevin Peel	Bury Council	Labour
Councillor Mohammed Ayub	Bolton Council	Labour
Councillor Dzidra Noor	Manchester City Council	Labour
Councillor Naeem Hassan	Manchester City Council	Labour
Councillor Aasim Rashid	Rochdale Council	Labour
Councillor Damian Bailey	Salford City Council	Labour
Councillor Andrew Western	GMCA	Labour
Councillor John Vickers	Wigan Council	Labour
Councillor Stuart Haslam	Bolton Council	Conservative
Councillor Doreen Dickinson	Tameside MBC	Conservative
Councillor Angie Clark	Stockport Council	Liberal Democrat

GMTMRC 24/22 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

Resolved /-

There were no chairs announcements or items of urgent business.

GMTMRC 25/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Resolved /-

There were no declarations of interest.

GMTMRC 26/22 MINUTES OF THE METROLINK & RAIL SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 11 MARCH 2022

Resolved /-

That the minutes of the GM Transport Metrolink & Rail Sub Committee meeting held 11 March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

GMTMRC 27/22 METROLINK SERVICE PERFORMANCE

Danny Vaughan, Head of Metrolink, TfGM, introduced a report which provided an update on

Metrolink services and a performance summary for the rolling 12-month period.

Members were advised that there were 146 trams in operation across the Metrolink network with the final one becoming operational the following day. This would complete the 27 additional trams which had been ordered pre pandemic to deal with capacity issues at the time.

It was reported that patronage had increased to 75% of pre pandemic levels with strong underlying growth on some lines with commuter numbers returning to pre Covid levels.

Operational performance during periods 3 and 4 deteriorated due to extreme high temperatures experienced on 18th and 19th July which significantly impacted overhead line equipment and required temporary speed restrictions and service cancellations. Significant hot weather impacts continued to be experienced through period 4 and into period 5 with temporary speed restrictions applied in various locations across the network between the 10th and 14th August. This has resulted in infrastructure improvements including track renewal and modifications to overhead lines on the Bury line.

Regarding Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), it was reported that compared to July 2019 there had been an increase. However more targeted specialist operations were carried out across the network by TravelSafe and GMP throughout periods 3 and 4 focusing on crime and ASB hotspots and these would continue. Statistics from joint operations including arrests and prosecutions would be publicised where possible.

A forward look of planned network renewals was provided. Most of the essential works during 2022 were to replace sections of track at key locations on the network of which some would require longer duration closures which mainly impacted the city centre, Bury and Eccles lines. It was reported that the Eccles Line track renewals would be completed by 21 October 2022.

A three month pilot of carriage of dogs on Metrolink began on 1 August 2022 to fulfil a mayoral manifesto commitment. The pilot allowed passengers to take two non-assistance dogs on Metrolink at any time of the day for no charge, subject to guidance regarding behaviour. An online survey has been set up on the TfGM website to collate feedback from all customers. The survey closes on 31 October and the data would be used to help determine whether dogs can continue to be allowed on trams after the pilot has ended, an update would be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

In welcoming the update, Members requested further details with regards to the estimated cost of vehicle and infrastructure repairs due to criminal damage and ASB. It was agreed that where possible, further analysis would be undertaken by TfGM Officers and the estimated cost reported to the Committee.

In discussion the Committee considered preventative measures to combat the anti-social misuse of emergency activation features on tram doors. Further information of the targeted solutions that had been adopted along with future design considerations was provided.

Concern was raised regarding ASB at the Abraham Moss tram stop on the Bury line and it was proposed and agreed that the TravelSafe Partnership Team be requested to partner with the neighbourhood policing team to target the issues raised. Monitoring of CCTV was discussed and the Committee were advised that further work to improve the CCTV specification across the network is being undertaken.

The Committee requested an update regarding the extension of services on the Bury line to the Trafford Centre. It was proposed that plans to extend Trafford Centre services to Crumpsall

would be reviewed for implementation once there is both the availability of drivers and demand for the service.

An update regarding recruitment was provided and members were assured that workforce equality and diversity was a clear priority for the operator. An overview of the positive changes made in the advertisement for roles along with policies to capture a diverse workforce were provided.

Resolved /-

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That the estimated cost of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in terms of vehicle and infrastructure repairs be further analysed by TfGM Officers and reported to the Committee.
3. That it be noted that the emergency door activation feature is a necessary safety requirement on Metrolink trams. However, targeted solutions would continue to be introduced to combat the anti-social misuse of emergency door activation.
4. That it be noted that further work to improve the CCTV specification across the network was being undertaken.
5. That the TravelSafe Partnership Team be requested to partner with the neighbourhood policing team to target ASB at the Abraham Moss Metrolink stop.
6. That it be advised that plans to extend Trafford Centre services to Crumpsall would be reviewed for implementation once there was both the availability of drivers and demand for the service.

GMTMRC 28/22 METROLINK OPERATOR UPDATE

Guillaume Chanussot, Managing Director, KeolisAmey Metrolink provided a verbal update to the Committee, which complemented the information already shared in the Metrolink Service Performance Report.

The recent operational issues highlighted in the performance report were acknowledged and the Committee were assured that many of the lessons learned would be considered when embarking on winter planning.

The impact of driver availability and levels of anti-social behaviour remained a challenge for the organisation. However, more positively, the arrival of new trams across the network would provide increased services, capacity and availability for passengers. Furthermore, greater consideration of communication and advertising to attract more passengers would receive further focus with colleagues from TfGM.

Members were advised that Metrolink had been shortlisted in a number of categories in the Global Light Rail Awards. This included nominations for Operator of the Year, Rising Star for Community Engagement and Team of the Year for the management of the Parklife Festival.

In welcoming the update, Members highlighted the concerns and pressure from residents regarding ASB on the Rochdale line particularly in the borough of Rochdale. The impact of the adverse behaviour was acknowledged and it was proposed that further details of the upcoming targeted operations would be provided by TfGM officers to Councillor Aasim Rashid (Rochdale Council).

Resolved /-

1. That the update be noted.
2. That the concerns and pressure from residents regarding ASB on the Rochdale line particularly in the borough of Rochdale be acknowledged and that further details of targeted operations be provided by TfGM officers to Councillor Aasim Rashid (Rochdale).

GMTMRC 29/22 LOCAL RAIL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Simon Elliott, Head of Rail Programme, TfGM provided an update to Members on local rail service performance and operations between rail periods 3 and 4 2022/23 (29 May – 23 July 2022).

The Committee were advised that operational performance saw continued declines with only Transport for Wales Rail (TfW) services registering a slight improvement during period 4. Service cancellations across GM had increased across TOCs mainly due to unprecedented weather temperatures during the summer period, resource availability, along with sickness and Covid related absence. Disruption due to strike action also had a significant impact on patronage throughout the period with further disruptive action planned for 1, 5 and 8 October 2022. The support provided by Network Rail to operate signalling to enable Metrolink services to operate between 7am-7pm on strike days on the Altrincham line was acknowledged.

It was reported that rail services in the north have recovered faster than the national average with patronage at around 75% of pre-Covid figures. Furthermore, TfW has reported some leisure routes at 140% of pre-Covid levels, with discretionary leisure travel also leading the recovery for Northern and TPE.

An update regarding the Manchester Recovery Task Force to improve rail performance was provided and it was advised that there would be significant changes to train services from 11 December 2022 with some additional services on certain routes.

It was further advised that resource challenges for TOC's persist across the network operating in GM which has included the removal of rest day working, driver training, staff retention and sickness resulting in both Avanti and TPE recently amending the current operating timetable. Subsequently, services operated by TPE had been reduced on the Anglo/Scotland routes between Manchester Airport to Glasgow and Manchester to Edinburgh. Since August, Avanti has significantly reduced Manchester to London services from three to one train per hour. However, the increase in additional services by Avanti as part of Operation London Bridge was acknowledged.

An update regarding the scheduled essential platform work to be carried out between 2 January 2023 to 21 May 2023 at Salford Central train station was provided and it was agreed that stakeholder engagement would take place to communicate the mitigations to manage the impact of the disruption.

It was reported that Bramhall, Davenport, Romiley and Heaton Chapel stations had all benefitted from accessibility improvements, as part of the mid-tier funding bid. It was further advised that a further Access for All funding bid has been submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) to unlock significant investment to enable a further eleven stations to be accessible and inclusive. An update would be provided to the next meeting of the sub-committee.

An update on the work of TfGM with industry partners to fund and facilitate community projects

at stations was provided. It was reported that new station Friends groups were in place at Bramhall and Hag Fold and these now total 50 groups, having doubled over five years. TfGM would be co-sponsoring the Community Rail Network Awards, along with Northern Trains. The awards would now take place at Manchester Central on 6 October 2022 due to the train strike instead of the proposed date of the 5 October 2022. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair wished all the shortlisted nominees the very best of luck and thanked all station Friends groups for their continued commitment and hard work.

In welcoming the update, Members considered the challenging picture regarding recruitment and retention of train staff and the restoration plan developed by Avanti to mitigate the impact on service delivery.

Regarding the unfortunate fatalities reported near Wigan North-Western and at Alderley Edge, TfGM officers agreed to provide further information directly to Councillor Stuart Haslam (Bolton Council).

In discussion, the Sub-Committee considered what encouragement and support could be provided to individuals to get a Friends group into operation. It was suggested and agreed that Mark Angelucci, Rail Performance Officer, TfGM or Rebecca Styles, Northern could be contacted regarding any support required by individuals wanting to start a Local Friends of Train Station groups.

Resolved /-

1. That the update be noted.
2. That it be noted that resource challenges continue to affect service delivery of Train Operators across the GM rail network.
3. That an update and commitment be provided to the Committee by both Avanti and Trans Pennine Express (TPE) in relation to service restoration.
4. That the Committee be advised that essential platform work to both platform 1 and 2 at Salford Central Rail Station would be carried out between 2 January 2023 to 21 May 2023.
5. That the Committee be reassured that significant communication and stakeholder engagement would take place to mitigate the impact of the disruption as a result of the necessary platform alterations at Salford Central Rail Station.
6. That it be noted that a further Access for All funding bid has been submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) to unlock significant investment to enable a further eleven stations to be accessible and inclusive.
7. That an update on infrastructure including the Access for All Programme be provided at the next meeting of the Metrolink & Rail Sub-Committee.
8. That it be advised that the Community Rail Network Awards would no longer take place on 5 October 2022 due to the train strike and would instead take place on 6 October 2022.
9. That further information be provided by TfGM officers to Councillor Stuart Haslam (Bolton Council) regarding recorded fatalities near Wigan North Western and at Alderley Edge.
10. That Mark Angelucci, Rail Performance Officer, TfGM or Rebecca Styles, Northern be contacted regarding any further support required by Local Friends of Train Station groups.

GMTMRC 30/22 RAIL OPERATOR UPDATE

Rail operators in attendance were invited to provide a verbal update to the Committee and both Avanti and TPE were requested to provide an update and commitment to service restoration.

Avanti

It was acknowledged that the reduced level of services being provided were of a vast inconvenience and an apology was offered for the frustration felt by the public and passengers. It was advised that intensive analysis of resources to determine what level of service could be reliably timetabled had been undertaken. This analysis had determined that some services could be re-introduced and these would be implemented as part of a two stage process commencing on 27 September 2022. From that date, 10 additional trains would operate between Manchester and London on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays with an additional 6 on Wednesdays. Additional services would be introduced as resources become available, however it was reported that engineering works would have an impact on service delivery at weekends.

It was advised that the second phase of restoration would be implemented in December when services would return to three trains per hour between Manchester and London. The factors for the restoration which included a commitment to no further reliance on rest day working or overtime were outlined. It was highlighted that the restoration plan would be subject to the impact of industrial action and the plan would be shared with stakeholders.

Northern

An update was provided regarding current service delivery, a forward look to December 2022 timetable changes and ridership along with plans to stimulate demand.

It was reported that performance had decreased with an increase in cancellations since the implementation of timetable changes in May 2022. The factors impacting performance and reliability were outlined which included higher instances and rates of staff absence compared to pre Covid levels. It was confirmed however that there were enough drivers and conductors to operate services as recruitment and training had continued throughout the pandemic. Assurance was provided that there were adequate resources to implement December 2022 timetable changes with a further aspiration to introduce Sunday working as part of the working week.

An update on negotiations with ASLEF regarding roster agreements was also provided and it was noted further discussions would take place on 6 October 2022.

The significant steps being taken to implement December 2022 timetable changes with a 24% increase in services were outlined to the Committee. It was advised that a phased approach would be adopted due to major engineering work across the network with full implementation on 3 January 2023.

Regarding demand recovery, it was reported that levels were at 86% of pre Covid rates with commuter demand remaining suppressed. Leisure market demand was however continuing to increase particularly at weekends. Steps to stimulate demand including flash sales and the use of digital platforms were outlined.

Concern was raised by Councillor Stuart Haslam regarding disruption and cancellation of several consecutive journeys on the route between Bolton and Manchester Victoria the previous week. It was agreed that further consideration and feedback on the reported issues would be undertaken.

Members welcomed the introduction of water refill points at some stations operated by Northern

and it was reported that an additional £3m of station investment had been secured in partnership by Northern, TfGM and Network Rail. It was suggested that water re-filling stations at additional train stations could be considered as part of the prioritisation of the additional investment.

TransPennine Express

It was reported that the three challenges affecting recent performance and train crew availability included the removal of rest day working, the backlog of driver training due to Covid and high levels of staff sickness absence.

The mitigations being implemented to address the challenges of train crew availability were outlined to the Committee.

Short notice cancellations over the summer months on West Coast services had resulted in recent implementation of timetable changes in consultation with the Rail North Partnership to provide greater stability for customers. Within the short period since implementation, it was reported that the impact had seen a significant reduction in short term cancellations and an improvement in stability.

Assurance was provided that the recently implemented changes were temporary and there was a commitment to reinstate some services from December 2022 with full reinstatement in May 2023.

An overview of the work to take place at Irlam station was provided and it was advised that Network Rail would contact Salford Council to provide a clear update on the proposed works required to enable the restoration of TPE services.

In recognising the comments regarding implementation of service reductions to improve reliability, TfGM officers provided reassurance to the Committee that they would be assessing performance and reliability as a result of timetable changes introduced by operators.

Furthermore, in accepting that December 2022 was the new base line for contracted services provided by Northern. The Committee advised that the ambition for growth and connectivity as detailed in the original franchise agreement remains a priority for Greater Manchester as a city region.

Resolved /-

1. That update from operators be noted.
2. That the Committee be advised of the detailed restoration of services proposed by Avanti noting that plans would be subject to industrial action and would be shared with stakeholders.
3. That the Committee be reassured of the commitment by Northern to deliver the significant uplift in services as part of the December 2022 timetable changes.
4. That it be noted that further work was planned at Ashton Rail Station and the Committee would be engaged and advised appropriately.
5. That following explanation, further consideration be provided by Northern to the concern raised by Councillor Stuart Haslam regarding disruption and cancellation of several consecutive journeys on the route between Bolton and Manchester Victoria the previous week.
6. That it be noted that an additional £3m of station investment had been secured in partnership by Northern, TfGM and Network Rail and that water re-filling stations at

additional train stations would be considered as part of the prioritisation of the additional investment.

7. That the Committee be advised of the recent services changes implemented by TPE and the proposed phased re-instatement.
8. That the Committee be reassured that TfGM would be assessing the delivery in improvement of rail reliability as a result of service reductions that had been introduced by operators.
9. That it be noted in accepting that December 2022 was the new base line for contracted services provided by Northern, the GM ambition for growth and connectivity as detailed in the original franchise agreement remains pertinent.
10. That it be advised that Network Rail would contact Salford Council to provide a clear update on the proposed works required to enable the restoration of TPE services at Irlam Rail Station.

GMTMRC 31/22 WORK PROGRAMME

Resolved /-

That the GM Transport Committee Work Programme be noted.

GMTMRC 32/22 DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved /-

That future meeting dates for the next municipal year of the Committee be noted.

Friday 11 November 2022

Friday 13 January 2023

Friday 3 March 2023

All Meetings would commence at 10:30am