

**MINUTES OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT METROLINK & RAIL  
COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2022 AT  
THE FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE, MOUNT STREET, MANCHESTER M2 5NS**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Doreen Dickinson	Tameside Council (Chair)
Councillor Stuart Haslam	Bolton Council
Councillor Noel Bayley	Bury Council
Councillor Dzidra Noor	Manchester City Council
Councillor Naeem Hassan	Manchester City Council
Councillor Angie Clark	Stockport Council
Councillor John Vickers	Wigan Council

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mark Angelucci	Rail Officer, TfGM
Jenny Hollamby	Governance & Scrutiny Officer, GMCA
Vicky Mercer	Metrolink Service Delivery Manager, TfGM
Cat Morris	Rail Programme Sponsor, TfGM
Daniel Vaughan	Head of Metrolink, TfGM
Caroline Whittam	Head of Rail Services, TfGM

**OPERATORS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Guillaume Chanussot	Keolis Amey Metrolink (KAM)
Melissa Farmer	TransPennine Express
Chris Jackson	Northern
Chloe Jamieson	TransPennine Express
Kara Wood	Network Rail

## **GMTMRC/23/22 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and noted from Councillors Kevin Peel (Bury), Mohammed Ayub (Bolton) and Aasim Rashid (Rochdale).

Apologies were also received from Simon Elliott (TfGM) and Charlie French (Avanti).

## **GMTMRC/24/22 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS OR URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair advised there would be a two-minute silence at 11.00 am to recognise Armistice Day.

Members heard that this was Caroline Whittham's last meeting as the Head of Rail Services at TfGM as she was moving to Rail North in January 2023. The Chair thanked Caroline on behalf of the Metrolink and Rail Sub Committee for the help, advice, and excellent reports she had given Members and for her dedication to advocating for the rail passenger over a number of years. Although she was moving on from TfGM it was great to know she was taking on a role which allowed her to continue that influence and passion.

## **GMTMRC/25/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **GMTMRC/26/22 MINUTES OF THE METROLINK AND RAIL SERVICES SUB COMMITTEE 23 SEPTEMBER 2022**

### **Resolved/-**

1. That the minutes of the annual meeting held on 23 September 2022 be approved.
2. That reports about the dogs on trams, vandalism costs and anti-social behaviour be considered at the next meeting on 13 January 2023.

## **GMTMRC/27/22      METROLINK SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Head of Metrolink, TfGM provided an update on Metrolink Services and performance.

The main points referred to:

- Patronage had continued to recover but had been punctuated by holiday periods, engineering works, heat during the summer months and strikes. From September 2022, commuter trips were starting to recover. 80% of pre-Covid patronage had returned.
- Operational performance had improved during Periods 5 and 6. However, exceptional heat during the summer months had led to speed restrictions.
- There had been a reduction in Covid related absence, but driver recruitment was still a priority to recover services.
- There had been increased customer contacts predominantly related to heat related issues and planned engineering works.
- The dogs on trams pilot concluded on 30 October 2022, further information would be provided at the next meeting.
- There would be an increased TravelSafe focus on the Oldham/Rochdale line due to criminal damage. Every stop had experienced one incident over the last period. There had also been damage to infrastructure, the financial impacts would be reported.
- There had been a spike in youth related incidents on the Manchester Airport line, which would be a target for operations moving forward.
- Engagement work was taking place with schools and colleges across the network in light of the return to school in September 2022.
- Operation Avro took place in September 2022. 400 Greater Manchester Police (GMP) police officers were out in force alongside the TravelSafe Partnership Officers. Police officers made 41 arrests, carried out 69 stop searches, and recorded 406 traffic offences and 530 speed offences. Around 1.5k Metrolink fines were also issued for fare evasion as part of targeted deployments across the tram network.
- The Eccles rail renewal was complete, and the line reopened between Eccles and MediaCityUK on 23 October 2022. Work was due to start at Piccadilly but had been delayed due to supplier issues, therefore it was scheduled to commence on 26

November 2022, with normal service resuming on 30 November 2022 but there would be restrictions.

- There had been improved customer information following planned engineering works, which had resulted in lower average levels of customer feedback.
- On strike days, it was reported that a services between Timplerley – Altrincham could only be provided from 7.00 am to 7.00 pm.
- There would be service changes this weekend due to Remembrance Sunday.
- A safety campaign had been launched for the festive period; Officers agreed to provide Members with copies.
- A Member asked if there were any special arrangements for Remembrance Sunday. Members were informed that drivers put a wreath in a carriage.
- A Member welcomed the engagement with young people and asked if there was any way the impact of the Crucial Crew could be measured. It was explained that it was a challenge to capture the effectiveness of the crew, but further thought would be given to how it could be reported.
- A Member asked about the increase in vaping on the Metrolink. Members heard that it was difficult to police. However, it was a by law and the Travelsafe Officers did enforce it by issuing fines. The problem was taken seriously, there was messaging on platforms and patrolling by staff.

### **Resolved/-**

1. That the content of the report be received and noted.
2. That TfGM would share campaign material targeted for the festive period around tram safety with Members of the Committee.
3. That TfGM be asked to give further thought as to how the effectiveness and impact of the Crucial Crew be measured and reported.

### **GMTMRC/28/22 METROLINK OPERATOR REPORT**

A verbal update was provided by Kelio Amey Metrolink (KAM), which supplemented the information shared in the Metrolink Service Performance Report.

The main points referred to:

- It was reported that work was taking place with TfGM to improve the customer experience by KAM.
- The challenges were noted as antisocial behaviour, vandalism, driver recruitment across the industry and absenteeism.
- A Member asked about the areas of Greater Manchester that did not have access to Metrolink and what work was taking place. TfGM colleagues explained that there were plans and would provide the Member with further information.

### **Resolved/-**

1. That the verbal update be noted.
2. That TfGM provide the Member from Wigan Council with further information.

### **GMTMRC/29/22 LOCAL RAIL SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Head of Rail Services, TfGM presented a report that updated Members on local rail service performance and operations between rail Periods 5 and 6, 2022/23 (24 July to 17 September 2022).

The main points referred to:

- The most significant issues were regarding performance and the number of late cancellations which affected passengers. Whilst performance had improved it was worse than the pre-Covid figure of the same period, which did not include P coded trains (temporary timetable in place).
- Northern' s performance was better than some Operators at 7% (Public Performance Measure (PPM)). Problems were persisting for TransPennine Express (TPE) and Avanti. Avanti was providing 95% of their temporary timetable. TfGM were pressuring Operators, but it was still resulting in poor performance for passengers.
- Attention was drawn to the timetable changes in December 2022 (section 6 of the report).
- Salford Central would be closed next year to complete the stepping height works, which would make it a completely accessible station.

- Members were asked to read section 10 of the report (Community Rail), which highlighted the work with community partners to fund and facilitate community projects at stations. The Chair asked, and Officers agreed to provide the winners of the Community Rail Network Awards with congratulatory letters.
- A Member raised the customer experience, train reliability and uploading of timetables the night before. The pay deal/strike action was also raised. It was acknowledged that timetables being uploaded late was not satisfactory, but some information could be seen as better than no information for the customer. Customers were not entitled to a time delay payment due to the short-term timetable change. The issue had been raised at the North West Rail Partnership. In terms of the pay deal, it was reported that Secretary of State approval was needed for rest day negotiations.
- A Member was concerned that there were no main line services in Bury. Services were being cancelled the night before. Customer information was reliance on smart technology, which not everybody had. The Member asked about keeping the customer informed. The Committee echoed the Members comments; it was not satisfactory.
- A Member enquired about running empty stock on the Anglo-Scottish route. Trains were being cancelled but customers could see empty trains going to Glasgow. TPE was disappointed with the feedback and suggested that the empty trains may be being used for training, which could not take passengers.
- A Member asked about the services running through Wigan and traffic congestion. All aspects had been considered when decisions had been taken. Wigan did not have a Piccadilly service, but a direct line would run through Oxford Road from December 2022.

### **Resolved/-**

1. That the content of the report be noted.
2. That TfGM send congratulatory letters to the winners of the Community Rail Network Awards and the schools involved in collaborative projects.
3. That it be noted that Northern offered to provide information on the costs associated with compensatory payments for cancellations.

## **GMTMRC/30/22 RAIL OPERATOR REPORT**

Rail Operators in attendance were invited to provide a verbal update.

### **Northern**

- Performance had been unsatisfactory. Reporting cancellations did include P coding. From the May 2022 timetable change, 6.8% of trains had been cancelled, which had been caused by train driver dispute. Relationships were strained and emergency rotas had been implemented. However, there had been a break through, and cancellations had been reduced dramatically. When emergency rotas were used, P coding was needed, or services could not run. For the best customer experience, this was done 48 hours in advance, where possible. Members were reassured that the cancellation rate was true and reflected the current picture.
- Sickness levels were higher than pre-Covid at 3%. A rest day working agreement was needed. Work was taking place with the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Secretary of State. Some days were challenging; 95% of train crew that covered Manchester had some days out of the working week. Volunteers for Sunday working was down by 90%.
- Members were reassured that Northern was actively recruiting drivers and building their workforce. It was hoped that Sundays would be brought into the working week.
- In terms of the December 2022 timetable change, there would be a 25% uplift in services. The fleet was ready, trains were in a good condition and infrastructure was in good shape. Northern provided reassurance that they could deliver, however, rota negotiations were needed and there was an element of risk.
- Northern shared their December 2022 timetable change booklet with Members.
- An update was received about pay negotiations and strike action. Northern reiterated that it was important that there was a centralised mandate to open discussions. There was another planned strike day on 26 November 2022. For strikes that were called off at the last minute, the industry needed to be more flexible and needed a different approach.
- Attention was drawn to the good news story about the toilets at Guide Bridge station. A Member asked if all stations would get an upgrade. It was explained that all existing

facilities would be upgraded and those without toilets would get new. It was about providing facilities for the community as well as passengers.

- A Member asked what would be done differently should a rail strike be called off at the last minute to ensure trains could run the next day. Further thought would be given to how services could be run more effectively given this circumstance in future.
- A Member encouraged colleagues to attend the Station Adoption Group on-line course on suicide prevention.
- A Member raised Sundays and rest days. Whilst Northern suggested it was growth opportunity, some staff saw it as a day of rest or a family day. Staff had worked on Sundays as a matter of good will and the industry needed to acknowledge that. Members were reminded that staff did not work seven days a week and they got days off. The Operator explained drivers were expected to work a 35-hour week. East drivers had Sunday in the working week, but the West did not. Work was underway on rotas that had Sunday in the week along with 35 hours. Northern offered to share the rotas the Member. There were enough drivers in Northern not to require a working rest day. A rest day agreement would be beneficial, but it was not a requirement.
- A Member asked about P coding and why trains could not be run even though strike action had been cancelled. It was advised that the planning system was very complicated, and it was often too difficult to change the arrangements at the last minute due to the locations of units. Restrictive terms and conditions also played a part. Different arrangements and processes could be adopted next time, however Northern added that was very rare for strike action to be called off so late.
- Members frustration was recognised. A group had been set up to understand how the rail industry could be more agile when faced with such scenarios in the future. An understanding of what could be done within the time restraints and how that might be communicated was needed. The industry needed to be able to communicate more effectively regarding operational services and plan to offer the best possible service.

### **TransPennine Express**

- For Period 7, performance was below target although it had improved. Cancellations did not include the P code. A report was presented to stakeholders and the partnership about P coding on a daily basis. It was not ideal but created a little more certainty about what was happening the day next for customers.

- Other incidents that had impacted services during this period had included flooding in the Fairfield area in September 2022, a signalling failure at Slade Lane, freight delays and trees on lines.
- In line with previous data, it was recognised that there would be an increase in fatalities during the winter months, Members were encouraged to attend the suicide training. Customer awareness would be raised.
- The factors impacting on service delivery were high levels of short and long-term illness, strike action and the pay deal. An Occupational Health Nurse had been appointed to help staff back into the workplace. Unfortunately, there was no flexibility to respond when the strike action was cancelled. In terms of the pay deal, a rest working day agreement was necessary and agreement from the Secretary of State to negotiated was awaited.
- Members were reassured there were enough drivers to deliver the December 2022 timetable change. A summary of changes was described, which differed to what was offered during the pandemic. Connectivity was being improved from city to city.
- There was a reduction on the West Coast mainline on 12 September 2022 to stabilise the service. Consultation and agreement did take place with stakeholders. Whilst it did resolve the problem, it did not eliminate it. There would be a step change increase in services from December 2022. The Edinburgh to Manchester Airport and Glasgow to Manchester Airport services would also see an increase.
- The Operator endeavoured to resource replacement bus services, to discourage people from using their car but it was unfortunately not available for all services. Work was taking place with colleagues to resource replacement bus services and further thought would be given to passenger messaging. Having staff at stations fully trained to explain about replacement bus services could be the way forward.
- Lessons were being learned from the previous strike disruptions and an internal review was taking place to provide a better passenger experience.
- A Member asked when would Greater Manchester get the TPE service it was promised. Members heard that because the way the rotas worked, the same services were not impacted on the same day at the same time then Operators tried to bridge the gaps. It was complicated and not an ideal situation. Edinburgh, Leeds, and Huddersfield, saw no change. However, the challenge was to make services reliable.
- A Member asked about the number of learner drivers. There were 74 drivers undertaking training, which would take 18 months.

- A Member asked for further information about reducing services on the West Coast mainline to reduce cancellations. On 12 September 2022 services were reduced, which was agreed with the (DfT). December 2022 would see services reinstated.
- In response to a question about why Operators were anxious about cancelling trains, it was explained that it was about trying to avoid passengers turning up at a station to find their train had been cancelled. Further consideration would be given to increasing passenger awareness.
- In terms of the December 2022 timetable change, a Member asked if capacity had been considered as there were still a significant number of cancellations even in the reduced timetable. Work was continuing with the driver training programme. Some recruits would be used for future schemes such as the TransPennine route upgrade so diversionary routes could be delivered. Training would ensure future routes were not impacted. The key was to have diversionary routes in place.

## **Network Rail**

- The industrial relations climate was challenging. Discussions were continuing to support the service for key route strategies.
- Train performance and infrastructure was good. However, the heat experienced during the summer was a problem and an industry wide group was investigating.
- An external issue causing impacts was noted as societal and a triage unit for Greater Manchester and beyond had been introduced, which included a mental health nurse for interventions. The results were positive.
- There were significant works re-platforming at Piccadilly programmed.
- A Member asked about Irlam Station and the December 2022 timetable implementation. Officers agreed to share information with the Member from Manchester City Council, following the meeting.
- A Member asked about Carlisle and travel to Scotland. It was reported there were renewal schemes and work would be staggered. TPE would operate from platform six during the works. Information would be shared in due course.
- In response to a question about contingency staff, Members heard that when employees went on strike other employees could take over their roles to enable a skeleton service to be delivered. The Member further asked if the contingency staff

were in a union. It was clarified that the contingency staff were on management grades and not included in strike action.

The Chair thanked all Operators for their attendance.

### **Resolved/-**

- That the verbal updates be received and noted.
- That Members noted the reassurance from Operators about their readiness to implement the December 2022 timetable.
- That it be noted that Northern offered to share information on the roll out of accessible toilets with the Committee.
- That it be noted that all Operators were asked to consider how learning from recent industrial action around flexibility, temporary timetabling (P code use) and introduced service changes be applied should any future action arise.
- That it be noted that Northern offered to share their booklet around the December 2022 timetable changes with the Committee.
- That the Station Adoption Group on-line course on suicide prevention be emailed to Members by the Governance and Scrutiny Team.
- That it be noted that Northern offered to share their driver rotas with the Member from Bury outside of the meeting.
- That TfGM would share information about Irlam Station with the Member from Manchester City Council, following the meeting.

### **GMTMRC/31/22 RAIL PROGRAMME AND INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT**

Members considered a report that provided an update on the rail programme including the status of TfGM's rail station projects across Greater Manchester.

The main points referred to:

- DfT Access for All programme for CP6 (2019-24) would deliver 3 schemes; Daisy Hill, Irlam and Walkden by 2024; work was underway.

- A nomination CP7 for the next 11 stations in Greater Manchester to be step free working with Northern and the GMCA had been made. A result from the (DfT) was expected in April 2023.
- Four additional schemes were in development using the local allocation of CRSTS funding. Funding had been secured to deliver Swindon, Reddish North, Hindley, and Bryn. That would leave the top seven stations fully funded for access for all.
- Mosley Hill and Greenfield would be part of TransPennine route upgrade.
- Work was underway with Stockport Council to develop Cheadle. TfGM would project manage and provide details at a future meeting.
- The challenges had been identified at Golborne and options were being explored.
- Regarding rail reform, work was taking place with industry partners on governance arrangements. Terms of reference were being developed for a Rail Board, which would meet early in 2023. A regional business unit was being prepared and would be mobilised in mid-2023.
- A Member asked about Walken and the water filling station timetable. Northern offered to provide a response outside of the meeting.
- A Member asked about Golborne station and when the construction phase would start. TfGM agreed to keep the Member apprised on this matter.
- A Member asked why the bridge lift option was chosen at Hindley. Network Rail offered to contact the Member following the meeting. However, the Member was reassured that any option went through a robust process to make sure the best solution was chosen.
- A Member enquired about work at Romiley. It was advised that the work was being delivered by Northern, but TfGM had agreed to part fund the access improvements from the car park to the platform, which would go ahead next year.

### **Resolved/-**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That it be noted that Northern offered to respond to the Member from Manchester City Council about the scheme at Walken (section 2.6 of the report) and provide the water filling station timetable outside of the meeting.
3. That TfGM would ensure the Member from Wigan Council was kept apprised about Golborne Station.

4. That it be noted that Network Rail offered to provide reasoning behind why the bridge lift option was chosen at Hindley to the Member from Wigan Council.
5. That a future report on the proposed development of Cheadle station would be shared with the Committee in due course.

#### **GMTMRC/32/22    WORK PROGRAMME**

##### **Resolved/-**

That the GM Transport Committee Work Programme be noted subject dogs on trams, vandalism costs and anti-social behaviour be considered at the next meeting on 13 January 2023.

#### **GMTMRC/33/22    DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was noted that meetings would take place on the following dates at 10.30 am.

- Friday 13 January 2023
- Friday 3 March 2023