

GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE METROLINK AND RAIL NETWORKS SUB-COMMITTEE

Date: Friday 13 January 2023
Subject: Evaluation of the Carriage of Dogs on Metrolink Pilot
Report of: Danny Vaughan, Head of Metrolink, TfGM

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To set out the findings of the pilot of the carriage of non-assistance dogs on Metrolink and seek endorsement of the recommendation that non-assistance dogs continue to be carried on Metrolink.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members are requested to:

- i. Note the findings of the pilot of the carriage of non-assistance dogs on Metrolink;
- ii. Consider the proposal to continue to allow non-assistance dogs on the Metrolink Network, subject to the conditions of carriage.

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Impacts Questionnaire		
Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion	G	Through consultation with older people and disabled people's forums we completed the EQIA and implemented mitigation measures to address concerns - Conditions of Carriage, guidance and staff briefings.
Health	G	Responses to our survey indicated that social isolation could be reduced and people stated they were more likely to use Metrolink if dogs were allowed.
Resilience and Adaptation		
Housing		
Economy		
Mobility and Connectivity	G	Responses to the survey indicate that by allowing dogs we are making travel by public transport easier for them.
Carbon, Nature and Environment		
Consumption and Production		
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		In the on-line survey a number of people reported that they would now use Metrolink instead of the car or taxis. Therefore there may be a minor contribution to reducing car use.
Further Assessment(s):	Carbon Assessment	
G Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	A Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	R Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.
		RR Negative impacts overall.

Risk Management

Health and Safety risks have been assessed and managed via the operator's risk assessment.

Legal Considerations

The Metrolink Conditions of Carriage were updated to allow non-assistance dogs ahead of the pilot.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

A small amount of revenue funding will be required to update tram stickers on the doors.

Financial Consequences – Capital

No capital expenditure is required.

Number of attachments to the report:

None.

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background Papers

N/A

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?

N/A

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Non-assistance dogs are currently not permitted to travel on Metrolink. This report provides the background to the current position and seeks to address the outstanding matters.
- 1.2 The Mayor of Greater Manchester included a commitment to pilot allowing non-assistance dogs on trams in his May 2021 manifesto. TfGM and the Metrolink operator, Keolis Amey Metrolink (KAM) worked together to deliver this pilot between 1st August and 31st October 2022. The methodology and results of this pilot are presented in this paper.
- 1.3 Analysis of feedback from the pilot showed a largely positive response to continuing to allow dogs on trams and confirmed that the main benefit of allowing dogs on trams is to better integrate public transport by allowing easier transition between modes.
- 1.4 Some concerns remain regarding the control of dogs, allergies and use of space. These have been mitigated through the changes to the Conditions of Carriage, publication of guidance and the future reminders via passenger information.
- 1.5 It is therefore proposed that the carriage of non-assistance dogs on Metrolink continues, subject to adherence to the Conditions of Carriage.

2. Background

- 2.1 Allowing non-assistance dogs on the Metrolink Network was last considered by the GMCA Capital Projects and Policy Committee in November 2015, when it was decided not to proceed with a pilot.
- 2.2 It is estimated that there are approximately 12 million pet dogs in the UK, with 34% of households housing at least 1 dog in 2022. From 2010 to 2020, around 25% of households were dog-owning. This shows a significant increase since the last time the matter of dogs on trams was considered by TfGM and the Transport Committee.
- 2.3 In late 2021, as part of the “Destination Bee Network” consultation, TfGM asked respondents: *To what extent do you agree or disagree that ALL dogs should be allowed on trams?* 45% of respondents were in favour, 33% against with 22% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. A total of 3,100 people made comments regarding dogs on trams, and these were analysed to inform the pilot.

- 2.4 The Mayor of Greater Manchester included delivery of a pilot of dogs on trams in his May 2021 manifesto. TfGM and the Metrolink operator, Keolis Amey Metrolink (KAM) worked together to deliver this pilot between 1st August and 31st October 2022. The methodology and results of this pilot are presented in this paper.
- 2.5 Metrolink is currently something of an outlier in not allowing the carriage of non-assistance dogs. Other modes of public transport in the UK and in Greater Manchester generally do allow the carriage of non-assistance dogs, with varying conditions attached. The pilot of the carriage of non-assistance dogs on trams has allowed TfGM to improve the integration of public transport modes.

3 Pilot design

- 3.1 Before designing the pilot, TfGM analysed other public transport operations' conditions of carriage to determine whether non-assistance dogs are allowed. This determined that the main benefit of allowing dogs on trams is to better integrate public transport by allowing easier transition between modes.
- 3.2 TfGM consulted with the Metrolink operator, Keolis Amey Metrolink (KAM), and its staff to enable a hazard identification and risk assessment process to be undertaken. This process is described in more detail below.
- 3.3 TfGM undertook an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) to consider and assess the impacts of allowing dogs to be carried on Metrolink. This process is described in more detail below.
- 3.4 Following the initial risk assessment and EQIA, TfGM determined that some conditions would need to be attached to the carriage of non-assistance dogs and therefore the Conditions of Carriage would need to be changed for the period of the pilot. These conditions are detailed below.

4 Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

- 4.1 The operator, KAM, began the hazard identification process by consulting with its cleaning sub-contractors and front-line staff, who provided valuable insights into the current operations relating to dogs. For although non-assistance dogs are currently not allowed, occasionally this rule is flouted, and KAM staff have to deal with this.
- 4.2 The operator also consulted other Keolis operated networks for experience with the carriage of dogs.

4.3 Identified risks were categorised and then populated with scenarios, examples of these scenarios are highlighted.

- biological hazards;
- human injury / illness;
- non-assistance dog and assistance dog injury/illness;
- allergies;
- phobias/perceptions; and
- Metrolink operations.

4.4 Through the risk assessment, officers identified a number of risks that could be potentially managed through control measures. These measures were then included in the amended Conditions of Carriage and a further document Guidance for Dog Owners, which are published on the TfGM website.

5 Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA)

5.1 TfGM conducted a draft EQIA and from this initial assessment, identified a number of representative groups to be asked for their assistance with designing the pilot. These groups included older people, disabled people, minority and religious groups and younger people.

5.2 The following organisations kindly assisted TfGM with the design of the pilot by attending meetings and providing feedback:

- TfGM Disability Design Reference Group (DDRG);
- GM Disabled People's Panel;
- GM Transport Older People's Working Group;
- Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB); and
- Guide Dogs UK

5.3 TfGM also received and considered written feedback from the Salford Deaf Association.

5.4 TfGM approached the GM Race Equality Panel, Faith and Belief Advisory Panel and the Youth Combined Authority but unfortunately these groups could not accommodate the matter within required timescales.

- 5.5 Generally, members of all groups understood the rationale for allowing pet dogs on trams and were not opposed to the idea itself provided it is carefully managed and pet dogs do not disrupt assistance dogs or get in the way of wheelchair spaces.
- 5.6 All groups requested, if the pilot is made permanent, that a communication campaign on the rules for, and responsibilities of, pet dog owners when taking their pet dog on the tram takes place.
- 5.7 Further suggestions were made to improve the experience of their members when using Metrolink, especially if pet dogs continue to be permitted, and these will be followed up with the operator.

6 Pilot methodology

- 6.1 The pilot ran for 3 months from 1st August to 31st October 2022. Dogs continue to be allowed on trams in the interim period until a decision is made.
- 6.2 An online survey was used to gather feedback from Metrolink users and potential customers. The survey was advertised widely on social media and via posters on Metrolink stops. A paper version and a visually enhanced version were provided on request.
- 6.3 Other sources of feedback were identified by TfGM as being potentially insightful for the pilot, including:
- the operator's staff;
 - operational logs;
 - customer complaints/compliments;
 - contacts via elected members;
 - feedback from the equalities groups which helped with designing the pilot and understanding the impacts after the initial pilot period had ended (listed in section 5 of this report); and
 - social media sentiment.
- 6.4 The Metrolink Conditions of Carriage were amended to include the following:
- Limit of 2 dogs per passenger;
 - Dogs must be properly controlled, on a lead, and wearing a muzzle if necessary;

- Dogs are not allowed on the seats and should not obstruct the wheel chair spaces on the tram;
- Dogs do not require a ticket;
- Passengers travelling with dogs are solely responsible for their behaviour;
- Passengers must ensure that their dog does not attack an assistance dog;
- Any mess made by the dog must be cleared up by the dog owner and the control room informed;
- Busy services must be avoided;
- In addition, passengers must read "[Guidance for taking your dog on Metrolink](#)" and follow all applicable guidance contained therein.

6.5 Enforcement of the Conditions of Carriage is undertaken by KAM Customer Services Representatives (CSR) staff as they patrol the network.

7 Results of the Pilot

Service impacts

7.1 During the 3 month pilot the operational logs were regularly checked and there was deemed to be a negligible effect on services. Only one service was withdrawn for cleaning and there were only a handful of reports of dog mess on platforms to be cleaned.

Online survey

7.2 TfGM received over 3500 responses to the online survey. This is deemed a good response and sufficient to provide insight into customer views on the pilot.

7.3 The online survey asked 15 questions, with 10 questions about the key topics of:

- benefits to dog owners;
- experience any issues with dogs on trams;
- changing use of trams if dogs remain post pilot;
- agree/disagree with dogs on trams;
- travelling with a dog; and
- owning a dog.

7.4 Of the respondents to the online survey:

- 63% owned a dog;
- 1% owned an assistance dog;
- just less than 50% travelled on Metrolink with a dog during the pilot;
- almost 80% agreed with continuing to allow dogs on Metrolink; and
- almost 85% reported that they did not experience a problem with a dog during the pilot.
- of those who do not own a dog, only 50% were in favour, compared with 84% of dog owners being in favour.
- more frequent travellers tended to be less in favour, with those travelling at least once a week being 72% in favour, twice a week being 67% in favour and more than 4 times a week being 60% in favour.

8 Responses from Representative/ Equality Groups

- 8.1 Opinions and experiences of people from Disabled Persons' Groups were sought prior to the pilot to inform the design, and during the pilot to understand any potential adverse impacts of allowing pet dogs on trams to disabled people, particularly those with assistance dogs.
- 8.2 Generally, members of all groups understood the rationale for allowing pet dogs on trams and were not opposed to the idea itself provided it is carefully managed and pet dogs do not disrupt assistance dogs or get in the way of wheelchair spaces.
- 8.3 All groups requested, if the pilot is made permanent, that an extensive communication campaign reminding pet dogs owners of the rules, and responsibilities when taking their pet dog on the tram takes place. They specified that this communication needed to be present onboard the trams as well on platforms.
- 8.4 There was also a suggestion to use the Audio-Visual announcement system (at least on a temporary basis) for ad-hoc reminders on rules on the basis this would reassure blind and partially sighted people that there are rules in place and support any requests they need to make of passengers with pet dogs to move from the accessible area or away from their guide dog.
- 8.5 Representatives from RNIB and Guide Dogs were concerned that there is not clear and easily accessible information on the processes and support for assistance dog owners who are travelling, including the procedures to follow in the worst-case

scenario of a dog attack on an assistance dog. They suggested that guidance be developed specifically for assistance dog owners to give them more confidence to travel on trams.

- What they should do in the event of a danger to their dog or themselves.
- Where the emergency button is located and how to use it (if you can't see it you don't necessarily know where it is located).
- What the response will be/what happens next after pushing the emergency button.

9 Media Coverage, Social Media Feedback & other contacts

- 9.1 During the pilot period, the scheme received 60 individual pieces of coverage from a range of local and regional outlets, across print, online and broadcast media.
- 9.2 Two press release were issued by TfGM during this time: the first announced the pilot in late July before the launch, the second was a call to action in mid-October for the public respond to the survey before it closed.
- 9.3 Notable outlets which covered the trial include the Manchester Evening News, BBC Radio Manchester, BBC Online, ITV Granada, The Manc and Hits Radio. According to media monitoring, 43% of coverage was rated as very positive, 38.61% of coverage was positive, 7.92% very negative and 8.91% neutral.
- 9.4 Social media feedback was largely positive. TfGM received 27 telephone calls people opposing the pilot. 25 emails were also received, largely negative.
- 9.5 Five executive queries were received from MPs which included concerns around safety, cleanliness and allergies.
- 9.6 There was one report from a customer of having their trousers chewed by another passenger's dog, however, officers were unable to obtain any further details when contacting the customer.

10 Conclusions

- 10.1 The pilot is adjudged to have been a success, evidenced by the good response to the online survey, the group engagement and the smooth operation of the pilot, underpinned by the risk assessment by the Metrolink operator, KAM.

- 10.2 The pilot demonstrated that the policy is operationally feasible with minimal impact on resources, and analysis of feedback showed a largely positive response to continuing to allow dogs on trams.
- 10.3 Some concerns remain regarding the control of dogs, allergies and use of space. These have been mitigated through the changes to the Conditions of Carriage, publication of guidance and the future reminders via passenger information.

11 Recommendations

- 11.1 Recommendations are included at the front of this report.

Danny Vaughan

Head of Metrolink, TfGM