

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE HELD ON
9 DECEMBER 2022 AT MANCHESTER TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

Wigan	Mark Aldred (Chair)
Bolton	Stuart Haslam
Bolton	Mohammed Ayub
Bury	Jo Lancaster
Manchester	Naeem Hassan
Manchester	Dzidra Noor
Oldham	George Hulme
Oldham	Howard Sykes
Rochdale	Phil Burke
Salford	Roger Jones
Stockport	Angie Clarke
Stockport	David Meller
Tameside	Doreen Dickinson
Tameside	Warren Bray
Trafford	Aidan Williams
Trafford	Linda Blackburn
Wigan	John Vickers

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

GMCA	Eamonn Boylan
GMCA	Gwynne Williams
GMCA	Nicola Ward
GMCA	Elaine Mottershead
TfGM	Simon Warburton
TfGM	Steven Rhodes
TfGM	James Baldwin
TfGM	Dave Abdy
TfGM	Emma Flynn

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

TransPennine Express

George Thomas

GMTC 49/22 APOLOGIES

RESOLVED /-

Apologies were received and noted from Mayor Andy Burnham, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien and Councillor Tracey Rawlins.

**GMTC 50/22 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF THE GREATER
MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE AND CHAIR OF
BUS SERVICES COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED /-

1. That the GM Mayor's appointment of Councillor Mark Aldred as Chair of the Committee for the remainder of this municipal year be noted.
2. That Roger Jones be appointed to the Chair of Bus Services Sub Committee from amongst its membership, noting that he would also become a Vice chair of the GM Transport Committee.

GMTC 51/22 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair read a statement provided by Mayor Andy Burnham:

- As Committee members are all aware, the current performance across the rail operators serving Greater Manchester is unacceptable and currently worse than following the May 2018 timetable fiasco.
- The performance of Avanti, TransPennine Express and, to a lesser degree, Northern, continues to inflict huge damage on the people, economy and businesses of Greater Manchester and beyond.

- As a result, people are understandably losing faith in rail travel and have been forced into using their cars or into not travelling at all.
- On Avanti, we have now suffered over four months of a severely degraded timetable, including just one train an hour from London to Manchester. Whilst on TPE, the reduced timetable is still failing to provide frequency and reliability for passengers.
- Along with other Northern Mayors, last Wednesday I met with the new Secretary of State, Mark Harper, to discuss current rail performance and industrial action and I have since had a further meeting with the new Rail Minister, Huw Merriman.
- Both meetings have been constructive, and I welcomed the Secretary of State's commitment to get a grip on this crisis. During the meeting with the Secretary of State, all Mayors made it clear that an urgent agreement on rest day working is required in the short term to move things forward.
- We are approaching a critical period with the new rail timetable coming in on 11 December, so it is time to set a clear test for the train companies.
- On Avanti, unless they restore three trains an hour by the end of December, I will be calling for the cancellation of their franchise and for the Government to bring in an operator of last resort.
- As Committee members know, on 7 October the Government put Avanti on 6-months' notice and challenged them to deliver an urgent increase in the services required. However, given the poor and deteriorating picture, customers simply cannot wait until April to see the drastic improvements needed.
- On TransPennine Express, we need the Government to issue the same explicit warning to the operator by putting them on notice with clear, measurable expectations for how they must perform. Unless there has been a major reduction in cancellations by February next year, I will also be asking for their contract to be terminated when it expires in May and made that clear to the Secretary of State when we met.

In response, TransPennine Express (TPE), apologised for the poor standard of performance and reassured members that urgent improvement measures were being

taken including increased levels of recruitment and training of drivers and work to address high levels of sickness absence and staff turnover.

Members highlighted their lack of confidence in the new timetable change (scheduled for 11 December 2022), but TPE asked that members acknowledge that this interim period would remain challenging whilst the new measures and timetable take effect. The revised was based on lessons learnt over recent months and should provide better resilience and improved contingency planning.

Members raised further concerns regarding cancellations and service changes that happen at the very last minute or mid-journey, why extra carriages are not included on those trains that precede or follow a cancellation and why additional bus services are not offered to relieve the pressure. TPE responded that they try to make the cancellation announcements as soon as they are known. If this is the day before, they can make carriage changes but often the reason for cancellation will occur on the day. Bus alternatives are often not used because it is quicker for the passenger to reach their destination by waiting for the next available train than it would be to offer a bus alternative.

The high levels of sickness absence were discussed with TPE highlighting that there are long-term implications linked to the unprecedented NHS backlogs, particularly around musculoskeletal and mental health illnesses. Members suggested that links should be made with the Integrated Care Partnership Board to explore possible mitigations.

Members thanked TPE for attending and questioned why other operators were also not present today. It was noted that they had not been invited on this occasion but would be to the next meeting, along with another invitation to TPE to update on progress.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the Mayoral update on the current significant rail issues relating to Avanti and TransPennine Express be noted.

2. That TransPennine Express be requested to open discussions with the Integrated Care Partnership Board regarding ways to mitigate the impact of NHS delays on staff sickness absences.
3. That TransPennine Express (and other operators as required) be invited to the next meeting of the GM Transport Committee.

GMTC 52/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED /-

There were no declarations of interest received.

**GMTC 53/22 MINUTES OF THE GM TRANSPORT COMMITTEE HELD ON
THE 14 OCTOBER**

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the GM Transport Committee meeting held on 14 October 2022 be approved as a correct record.

GMTC 54/22 MINUTES OF THE GMTC SUB COMMITTEES

RESOLVED/-

1. That the minutes of the Active Travel Sub Committee held on 28 October 2022 be noted.
2. That the minutes of the Metrolink & Rail Sub Committee held on 11 November 2022 be noted.
3. That the minutes of the Bus Services Sub Committee held on 18 November 2022 be noted.
4. That it be noted that the Chair and Councillor Vickers have requested a meeting with TfGM and operators regarding the ongoing issues with the Vantage Services.
5. That TfGM would provide information directly to Councillor Burke on the formation of Metrolink services along the Rochdale line.

A report was presented by Emma Flinn, Head of Partnerships, Engagement and Inclusion, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) on the vision for accessibility and inclusion across the Bee Network.

Members noted that there was an omission in section 3 on active travel and TfGM offered to address this in a future report to the Active Travel Sub Committee.

There was a question relating to the membership of the White Ribbon Group. It was confirmed that this was currently an internal officer group for the purpose of drawing up the strategy, but TfGM would eventually run focus groups of open membership across the region. The demographics of engagement would be considered, and any gaps addressed.

Councillor Bray quoted paragraph 1.4 (on page 53) of the report and gave an example of how the co-design approach is not being delivered locally around the implementation of a cycle lane. TfGM officers offered to investigate and respond separately. However, officers further clarified that some of the funding criteria for active travel schemes may dictate certain approaches and outcomes and it might be helpful to members if further information was given on this at an appropriate opportunity.

A member referred to paragraph 3.4 (on page 57) relating to improving accessibility in rail stations and whether Mayor Burnham's aspiration of making 40% of Greater Manchester stations fully accessible by 2025 was still feasible. TfGM responded that it would not be impossible to meet that target with the current levels of funding and powers. However, they were seeking to prioritise and make improvements where possible. In the meantime, officers and members were keen to explore where the negotiations on ownership of rail services might be revisited.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the contents of the report be noted.

2. That the omission of Active Travel in section 3 be acknowledged and that future examples and reassurances of inclusion are shared with the Active Travel Sub Committee.
3. That Emma Flynn responds directly to Councillor Bray on a local issue in Tameside regarding consultation with elected Members on the layout of a cycle lane.
4. That Eamonn Boylan requested that TfGM provide further clarity around the conditions attached to some of the funding for active travel schemes which might help elected Members understand why some decisions are required to be taken.
5. That in light of the delay for the implementation of Great British Railways, Simon Elliott be requested to provide further information to Leading Members as to any further potential negotiations on the devolved ownership of GM rail stations.

**GMTC 56/22 CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SETTLEMENT
PROGRAMME**

Steve Warrener from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) presented the report. In 2021, Greater Manchester were successful in securing the largest capital allocation of £1.07 billion from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) which set out a clear five-year programme. 14 schemes had been allocated approval including the Zero Emissions Bus programme. There were additional challenges impacting this funding with the unusually high inflation and energy costs. TfGM recommended that this Committee receive periodic reports on the implementation of the CRSTS Programme in 2023.

A member asked about funding on zero emissions for taxi drivers. TfGM has submitted a Clean Air Zone investment led proposal which included allocations to support taxi drivers including the changeover to electric power and they were still awaiting Government response on this. In the interim, there was GM investment in EV charging points that offered attractive rates for taxi drivers that were already driving electric vehicles.

There was a separate discussion on making changes to bus stops that were particularly vulnerable to vandalism. TfGM confirmed that they have an arrangement in place to action this where required although the impact of doing so needs to be

carefully considered each time. TfGM were happy to look at particular examples if Members wish to make recommendations.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the background, intended outcomes and key interdependencies in relation to GM's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funded programme be noted.
2. That the progress that has been made in relation to the development and delivery of the programme to date and the key challenges be noted.
3. That a further report providing an update on progress be brought to the Committee in Spring 2023 and periodically thereafter.

GMTC 57/22 DELIVERING THE BEE NETWORK

Steve Warrener from Transport from Greater Manchester (TfGM) introduced the report, highlighting the recent daily capping of bus fares that has been introduced and the proposed next stage of capping weekly tickets which was being submitted to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Committee on 16 December 2022. Passenger rail would also be incorporated into the proposals for the next phases of the Bee Network. The Bee Network brand has been launched along with 'Get on Board' campaign and alongside capped fares these initiatives had seen a growth in patronage.

A member gave an example of a resident being unable to buy a System One Ticket from a ticket machine at an unstaffed rail station to highlight that multi-modal transport needed to be more widely accessible. TfGM would respond separately on this issue.

Members asked about the procurement process for the bus franchising and what criteria had and would be applied. Officers responded that the contracts were being awarded and documents would be publicly available from Friday 16 December 2022 for the first tranche.

The daily cap on bus fares has been welcomed in the current economic climate and there was a discussion around the free off-peak bus passes with a view to reverting the qualifying age back to 65 years old along with extending the offer to include tram

and rail travel passes. A report on bus passes would be submitted to a future meeting of the Bus Sub Committee, however it was recognised that the cost of reversing this policy would be significant.

A member referred to School Streets in paragraph 5.11 (page 84) and asked for further information on the number of schemes implemented, the criteria and any problems encountered. Officers agreed to submit this information to the Active Travel Sub Committee.

A member gave an example of residents purchasing day tickets without understanding they were being given operator products and therefore could only use them with that operator rather than System One tickets for more flexible travel. Officers confirmed that there had been some specific advertising campaigns around this and that operators had been told to ensure that customers were aware of the choices available. Officers would welcome specific details from members so these incidences could be investigated further.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the content of the report and comment on progress toward delivering the Bee Network be noted.
2. That officers respond to Councillor Vickers separately regarding the demolition of a bridge in Hindley that local councillors were not informed about.
3. That it be noted that the Committee wish to consider the following elements of Bee Network delivery at future meetings: ticketing, bus passes eligibility criteria and take up (Bus Services Sub), Metrolink fares, School Streets (Active Travel Sub).
4. That officers would respond directly to the issues raised by Councillor Clarke regarding the System One ticket and some operators only offering their product to passengers.

GMTC 58/22 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED /-

That the proposed Work Programme for the GM Transport Committee and its Sub Committees be noted.

RESOLVED /-

That the dates and times of the Full Committee and the Sub Committees for the forthcoming year be noted.

Metrolink & Rail	13-Jan-23
Bus Services	20-Jan-23
Full committee	17-Feb-23
Metrolink & Rail	03-Mar-23
Bus Services	10-Mar-23
Full committee	17-Mar-23

Signed by the Chair: (to be printed off and signed by the Chair at the next meeting)