

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER
METROLINK AND RAIL SUB COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY, 16 JULY 2021 AT 10:30AM FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE**

PRESENT:

Councillor Stuart Haslam	Bolton Council
Councillor Mohammed Ayub	Bolton Council
Councillor Emma Taylor	Manchester City Council
Councillor Doreen Dickinson (Chair)	Tameside MBC
Councillor Tom McGee	Stockport MBC
Councillor Angie Clark	Stockport MBC
Councillor Steve Adshead	Trafford Council
Councillor Joanne Marshall	Wigan Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mark Angelucci	Rail Officer, TfGM
Jamie Fallon	Governance Officer, GMCA
Victoria Mercer	Metrolink Service Delivery Manager, TfGM
Danny Vaughan	Head of Metrolink, TfGM
Caroline Whitham	Head of Rail Services, TfGM
Gwynne Williams	Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA

OPERATORS IN ATTENDANCE:

Guillaume Chanussot	KAM
Dan Coles	Network Rail
Charlie French	Avanti
Chris Jackson	Northern

GMTMRC 21/21 APOLOGIES

Resolved /-

That apologies be noted and received from Councillors Norman Briggs, Howard Sykes (Councillor Angie Clark substituting), Shah Wazir, Andrew Western and Lucja Majewski (TransPennine Express).

GMTMRC 22/21 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2021/22

Resolved /-

That it be noted that Councillors Doreen Dickinson be appointed as Chair and Emma Taylor be appointed as Vice Chair of the GM Transport Metrolink & Rail Sub Committee for 2021/22 as approved at the meeting of the GM Transport Committee on 18 June 2021.

GMTMRC 23/21 MEMBERSHIP FOR 2021/22

Resolved /-

That the membership of the GM Transport Metrolink & Rail Sub Committee for 2021/22 be noted as follows.

Members	Representing	Political Party
Councillor Emma Taylor	Manchester CC	Labour
Councillor Norman Briggs	Oldham Council	Labour
Councillor Shah Wazir	Rochdale Council	Labour
Councillor Joanne Marshall	Wigan Council	Labour
Councillor Mohammed Ayub	Bolton Council	Labour
Councillor Andrew Western	GMCA	Labour
Councillor Tom McGee	Stockport MBC	Labour
Councillor Steve Adshead	Trafford Council	Labour
Councillor Doreen Dickinson	Tameside MBC	Conservative
Councillor Stuart Haslam	Bolton Council	Conservative
Councillor Howard Sykes	Oldham Council	Liberal Democrat

GMTMRC 24/21 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

Resolved /-

1. That all new members be welcomed and an extended thanks on behalf of the Committee to those previous members during the last municipal year.
2. That Members be reminded to complete the annual declaration of interest.

GMTMRC 25/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Resolved /-

There were no declarations of interest.

GMTMRC 26/21 MINUTES OF THE GM TRANSPORT METROLINK & RAIL SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 19 MARCH 2021

Resolved /-

That the minutes of the GM Transport Metrolink & Rail Sub Committee meeting held 19 March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

GMTMRC 27/21 LOCAL RAIL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Caroline Whittam (Head of Rail Services, TfGM) provided an update to members on rail service and operation across Greater Manchester over rail periods 12/13, 2020/21 and 01/02, 2021/22.

It was reported that operational performance had remained consistently strong over the four periods covered by the report for all six train operating companies serving Greater Manchester. Service uplifts had been undertaken by TPE and TfW on 29 March 2021, with

some routes seeing earlier enhancements to cater for school flows. Nationally, train timetables changed on Sunday 16 May, which saw further additions to services across Greater Manchester to around 82% of pre-Covid levels. Furthermore, Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements had been superseded by National Rail Contracts, which had replaced the previous revenue risk-based franchising system.

Members were advised that rail patronage had largely been driven by the tightening and relaxation of Covid restrictions over the past 16 months. Patronage increased after the second lockdown in November 2020, reaching almost 30% of pre-Covid levels by December but then fell back to around 15% in the third national lockdown from January 2021. Patronage had steadily increased since the spring and was currently at around 55-60% of pre-Covid levels for Northern, 45% for TPE and around 30% for the longer distance operators. The most significant increases in patronage had been recorded on local services, It was reported that leisure journeys continued to drive demand, with seaside and Hope Valley services being very popular. Northern reported over Spring Bank Holiday around 90 – 95% of pre-Covid patronage on some of its services.

Face covering compliance had remained consistent on-board trains and at stations and was currently estimated to be at around 80 – 85%.

Nationally, new timetables came into operation from Sunday 16 May, for Greater Manchester this heralded around 82% of pre-Covid services being re-introduced and a full list of current Northern service provision was appended to the report. The May 2021 timetable saw the introduction of bi-mode Class 769 trains on Southport – Alderley Edge and Southport – Stalybridge routes. The services operate under both diesel and electric power and provide enhanced capacity using four car units.

Throughout the pandemic, Northern has instigated a programme of station re-painting and repairs at Wigan, Bolton, Reddish North, Brinnington, Romiley and Hale. Station car park refurbishment had taken place at Newton for Hyde.

It was reported that from the 31 July until 15 August 2021, Network Rail would be working to renew key sections of track and upgrade railway bridges to improve reliability as part of the Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade. This work would take place east of Manchester Victoria station, impacting services to/from Stalybridge and Rochdale. This would also impact on longer distance journeys along the Calder Valley line into/out of Manchester.

Members were informed that TPE was the first UK train company to introduce brand new help points and video calling at stations. The new help points allow customers to use their mobile phones to instantly connect with a member of staff even when at an unstaffed station.

An update on the Williams-Shapps Review, commissioned by government in September 2018 in response to widespread timetable chaos and a failing commercial model for delivering passenger services was provided. The plan had been published as a White Paper on 20 May 2021 and TfGM would look to build on plans for further rail reform and welcomed the announcement of the formation of the new rail body Great British Railways.

The latest update on the Manchester Recovery Task Force Consultation was provided to the Committee. They were also advised that Station Friends groups had been allowed back onto stations since 29 March and been hard at work catching up on clearing, weeding and restoring local stations and gardens to their former glory. Cheshire's Best Kept Station Awards had finally been presented in person to Hale, Altrincham, Heaton Chapel, Rose Hill, Romiley, Marple and Reddish South stations.

In thanking officers for the informative update, the Chair proposed that a letter be sent to the Station Friend groups offering congratulations on behalf of the Committee. Furthermore, it was suggested and agreed that a Community Day event would be arranged by TfGM for Community Rail Groups in December 2021.

Members asked for further clarification on projections for patronage over the summer holiday period particularly for leisure purposes and reassurance that the rail industry was able to cope with increased demand. It was advised that train operators had demonstrated throughout the pandemic the ability to make changes and various timetable iterations had proven their flexibility to react to demand. Northern had increased capacity on popular routes including Southport and Blackpool South. It was noted that there had been a clear lack of direction from DfT regarding long distance operators and reduced services were operating across the network to popular locations including Reading and Bournemouth with 40% reservation capacity availability for advanced bookings.

Charlie French, Regional Growth Manager, Avanti West Coast Partnership informed the Committee that due to Covid, capacity had been reduced to 40% to take into consideration social distancing requirements. Following review, capacity had increased to 50% and would further increase the following week with the removal of social distancing requirements. Relief services had been in operation to manage the increase in demand particularly recently throughout the European Championships and there was further opportunity to provide additional services to cater for increased demand ahead of the next review in September.

Members expressed concern regarding no future significant changes or uplifts in December 2021 timetables being planned for Northern routes which had not returned to pre-Covid levels of service. Northern advised that unfortunately significant challenges to the driver training programme which had been considerably impacted by Covid, meant some off peak services would not return to those of December 2019. However, if resource availability increased, a further review would be undertaken which had been articulated in a letter to the Head of Rail, TfGM, a copy of which would be provided to members of the Committee.

The Committee considered the position on face coverings and it was confirmed that Northern would adopt the same message as other operators to ensure consistency across the network. The final position had not yet been declared, however, this would be communicated appropriately following confirmation being agreed.

Members considered the impact and cost of fly-tipping as detailed in the report and requested further information on what preventative measures were being adopted. Examples of the partnership work being undertaken to combat fly tipping in hot spot areas was provided and it was agreed that future reports would include numbers of investigations and prosecutions for fly tipping on and around railway land.

Councillor Adshead requested further information on developing redundant station buildings into thriving community assets. Dan Coles, Customer Account Manager, Network Rail agreed to directly discuss the work which would progress the site at Trafford to development stage.

Members welcomed the introduction of brand new help points and video calling at stations and it was advised that the ticket vending machines operated by Northern had the functionality. It was agreed that a future update would be provided to the Committee on the aspiration by Northern to allow customers to use their mobile phones to instantly connect with a member of staff even when at an unstaffed station.

The work to develop intelligent CCTV monitoring at known hot-spots, train staff to notice unusual behaviour and improve physical deterrents and mitigation in relation to suicide were recognised. It was proposed and agreed that the training programme being provided to rail staff by the industry in relation to suicide prevention be offered to Station Friends Groups.

Resolved /-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a letter of congratulations be sent on behalf of the Committee to the Community Rail Groups at the following stations: Hale, Altrincham, Heaton Chapel, Rose Hill, Romiley, Marple and Reddish South for recent success at Cheshire's Best Kept Station Awards.
3. That a copy of the letter from Northern to TfGM regarding proposed December 2021 timetable changes be circulated to Members of the Committee.
4. That the position on face coverings for passengers travelling by Northern be communicated appropriately following confirmation being agreed.
5. That further information with regards to numbers of investigations and prosecutions for fly tipping on and around railway land be provided in future updates to the Committee.
6. That further information regarding Station Project Update for Trafford Park be communicated to Councillor Steve Adshead as agreed by Network Rail.
7. That the training programme being provided to rail staff by the industry in relation to suicide prevention be offered to Station Friends Groups.
8. That a Community Day event be arranged by TfGM for Community Rail Groups in December 2021.

GMTMRC 28/21 METROLINK SERVICE PERFORMANCE

Danny Vaughan, Head of Metrolink, TfGM introduced the Metrolink quarterly performance report which provided a performance summary for the rolling 12-month period. He provided the Committee with an update on the impact of test, trace and isolate on Metrolink services and advised that since the timetable changes on 5 July 2021, Metrolink staff had been severely more affected than previously during the pandemic. Furthermore, some peak services had been removed to alleviate pressure. It was advised that weekend engineering improvement works would be carried out over the summer period and the public were encouraged to refer to the website for further details.

Members were advised that the GM Mayor had announced that face coverings would remain mandatory on Metrolink services which was widely supported to improve confidence for customers and staff and increase patronage across the network.

It was anticipated that there would be an imminent announcement regarding central Government funding to cover the operating costs, hopefully up to the end of the current financial year which would provide greater stability.

Victoria Mercer (Metrolink Service Delivery Manager) provided an overview on Metrolink operation and performance. It was reported that patronage stood at 48% of pre-covid levels and demand had increased in response to leisure. The pre-pandemic patterns of demand had returned, with the busiest times still the traditional morning and evening peaks, which

posed a problem for social distancing, especially on the busiest lines. The significant challenges highlighted regarding staff absence on the timetable uplift would be kept under review and would be mobilised as soon as capacity was available.

Further challenges over the previous four periods and a number of incidents which significantly impacted reliability were highlighted to the Committee.

There had been an average of 186 incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour per month reported to Metrolink. Reduced patronage had resulted in the substantial increase in the rate of reported incidents and there had been an increase in criminal damage on the network to the infrastructure. This had affected tram availability along with the perception of security.

It was advised that KAM had continued with covid-related measures across the network with additional cleaning with anti-viral products, hand sanitiser units across the city centre and a team of Trambassadors to support customers returning to the network and helping them to follow the guidelines for safe travelling. Front line staff had undertaken training in collaboration with colleagues from the NHS to assist customers with vulnerabilities which had been hugely successful.

An overview of the planned engineering works over the summer months to minimise disruption was provided which would coincide with works being undertaken by Network Rail at Victoria Station.

Members requested further information regarding the capability to deploy double trams once demand increased across the network. It was advised that new additional vehicles were now in service and would be deployed to provide double capacity as patronage and demand increased. Furthermore, capacity and demand data would be published to assist customers to time their journeys where possible.

Resolved /-

That the contents of the report be noted.

GMTMRC 29/21 OPERATOR UPDATE

The Committee invited operators to provide feedback on train and Metrolink services in GM over the recent period.

Comments raised by operators included the following:

- KeolisAmey Metrolink –acknowledging the significant challenges raised by TfGM colleagues, other areas of focus for the organisation included crime and Anti-Social Behaviour along with community engagement. Furthermore, there would be a fundamental focus on safety of passengers, the health and well being of staff, the environment and customer satisfaction. It was confirmed that all staff, not just those on the frontline would partake in the two-day collaborative NHS training to assist more vulnerable passengers. There had been a further focus on improving the workings of both management and information systems for the organisation. KeolisAmey was the first transport company to become a member of the United Nations global network working towards sustainable development goals.

- Northern Rail – it had been a significant period for the industry particularly with the announcement of the Williams-Shapps Review. An overview of the Framework Agreement was provided and it was highlighted that industry revenue was down by 80% and government support was an unsustainable circa £800m per month with a £2bn gap in industry finances. There had been a recognised requirement for urgent reform. It was advised that currently none of the Northern service groups were achieving a profit which was of concern and growth was needed with current rates of patronage at 55%. An overview of the proposed additional services to be introduced in December 2021 to meet increased leisure demand was provided. It was advised that a return to Sunday services for Rose Hill was not planned for December 2021 and unfortunately possibly not for the foreseeable future. Appreciation was placed on record for the services that were due to return at Wigan and West Houghton with an acknowledgment of the difficulties experienced.
- Avanti West Coast – an overview of current initiatives was provided which included the introduction of standard premium class from May for a fixed price upgrade cost of £25 for services between Manchester and London. This had been complemented by a new seat ordering service via an app which allowed customers to purchase food and beverages on board whilst connected to Wi-Fi. As part of £117m investment, all Pendolino trains would undergo refurbishment throughout the year with the first upgrade due to take place the following week. Station improvements were also underway which included cycle parking, ticket vending machines and energy efficient redevelopment schemes.
- Network Rail – an update on work at Piccadilly Train Station to welcome passengers returning in anticipation of the relaxation of Covid restrictions was provided. Covid management plans were still in place and signage would remain over the forthcoming weeks. Travel ambassadors would be deployed to reassure passengers that it was safe for those less confident who were required to travel. A campaign had been launched on slips, trips, falls and intoxication for safety at the station. Footfall was reported to be around 50k per day which was 50% of pre Covid levels at Piccadilly, but this was anticipated to increase as restrictions were relaxed the following week. Options were being considered to deal effectively with the increases in track, trace and isolate cases amongst staff. Across Network Rail and Train Operators, a campaign had been launched in Partnership with Shelter using Manchester Piccadilly as a trial site to identify homeless and rough sleepers using the station. Since the initiative had begun, a number of individuals had been referred and some had been placed in permanent and temporary accommodation. An overview of the collaborative work underway between the route crime team and the BTP was provided. Further details on the breakdown of forthcoming engineering work was outlined. Further details on the platform lengthening programme was requested and it was agreed that an update would be provided directly to Councillor Angie Clarke.

Resolved /-

1. That the report be noted.

2. That an update on platform lengthening projects be provided by Network Rail to Councillor Angie Clark.

GMTMRC 30/21 GMTC TRANSPORT WORK PROGRAMME

The latest work programme for the GM Transport Committee was presented for approval.

Resolved /-

That the Work Programme be noted.

GMTMRC 31/21 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved /-

Friday 17 September 2021

Friday 12 November 2021

Friday 14 January 2022

Friday 11 March 2022

All Meetings will commence at 10:30am