

GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: 17 September 2021
Subject: Metrolink Service Performance
Report of: Daniel Vaughan, Head of Metrolink, TfGM

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

This report provides an update on Metrolink operation and performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Daniel Vaughan	Head of Metrolink	0161 244 1519 daniel.vaughan@tfgm.com
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Victoria Mercer	Metrolink Service Delivery Manager	0161 244 1737 victoria.mercer@tfgm.com
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Equalities Implications: n/a

Climate Change Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures – n/a

Risk Management: n/a

Legal Considerations: n/a

Financial Consequences – Revenue: n/a

Financial Consequences – Capital: n/a

Number of attachments to the report:2

- Appendix 1: Period date listing.
- Appendix 2: Face covering compliance by line.

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

BACKGROUND PAPERS: Metrolink Service Performance report of 16 July 2021

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
GM Transport Committee	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
n/a	n/a	

1. ABOUT METROLINK

- 1.1 Metrolink is the largest urban light rail network in the UK. It provides a fast, frequent service which is fully accessible to all, running 7 days a week, 364 days of the year.
- 1.2 The Metrolink network is owned by TfGM and is operated on TfGM's behalf through a contract with KeolisAmey Metrolink (KAM).
- 1.3 The network uses high-floor trams with raised platform stops and had reached patronage of over 45 million passengers each year prior to the covid pandemic.
- 1.4 There are currently 127 operational trams serviced from two depots.
- 1.5 Trams serve 99 stops covering routes totalling just over 100km. Metrolink is the most accessible of the public transport networks in Greater Manchester, providing step free access across the entire network.

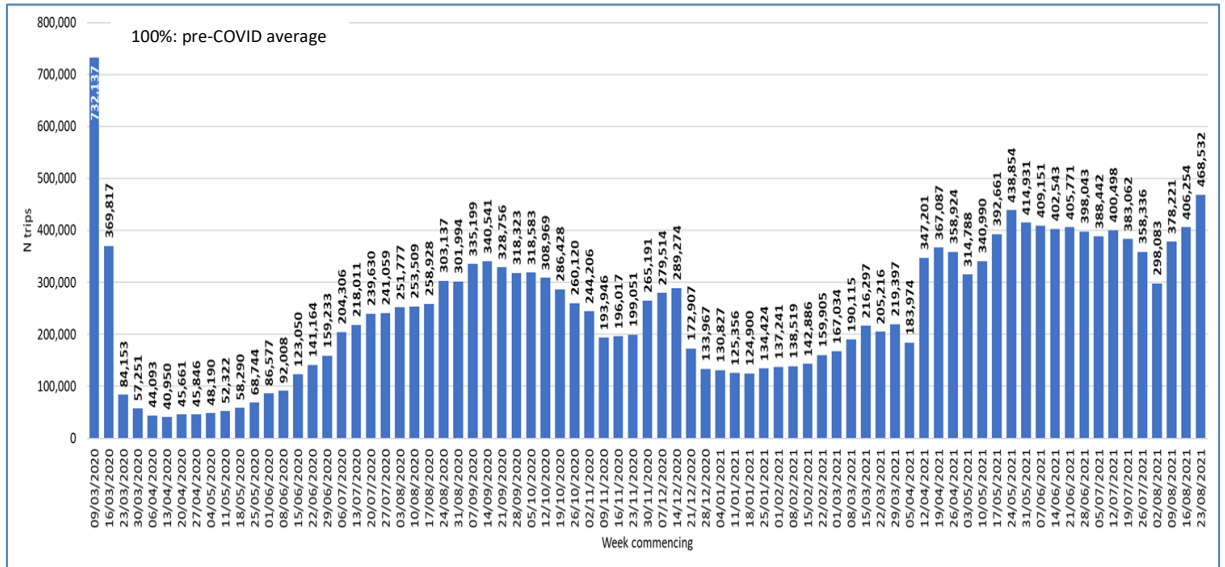
2. PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Metrolink Quarterly Performance Report provides a performance summary for the rolling 12-month period.
- 2.2 Operational performance during July 2021 was significantly affected by staff shortages, especially those in front line operational positions, due to track and trace isolation notifications.
- 2.3 As a result of staff shortages and the disruption experienced in July, tram frequencies were reduced on 9 August to ensure a more reliable service could be operated, with an improved customer experience. The number of doubles was increased and targeted to busier lines. Additional services operated where possible.
- 2.4 Patronage has reached circa 50% of pre-COVID levels during the week and between 60% to 70% at weekends. Patronage is expected to increase from September as schools return and more people return to offices.
- 2.5 Eccles track renewals were extended by 15 days as a result of the degraded condition of the concrete which only became visible once the old track was removed. Services which were originally scheduled to reopen on the 1 August, finally opened on the 16 August.
- 2.6 There were 196 recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour on the network during July 2021. TravelSafe Days of Action have continued during June and July 2021 with a continued focus on locations where anti-social behaviour has been reported.

Patronage

2.7 Patronage measures the number of trips that are being made on the network.

2.8 COVID has significantly impacted patronage on the Metrolink network as can be seen in the chart below.



2.9 Patronage currently stands at circa 50% of pre-covid levels. Growth has been sustained in leisure market, with weekends continuing to return between 60% to 70% of pre-covid demand. The removal of social distancing requirements has alleviated some of the crowding issues experienced across most lines, however the evening peaks remain busy on Altrincham, Bury, Oldham/Rochdale and East Didsbury lines as commuting and leisure trips are being made at the same time.

2.10 The fall off in patronage towards the end of July and start of August is due to a combination of seasonal factors, engineering works on the network, and poor performance arising from “pingdemic” staff absences.

Funding

2.11 A package of support from central government covered operating costs in full up to 19 July 2021, subject to an ongoing reconciliation process.

2.12 Additional support beyond 19 July 2021 was announced during the summer, to cover the remainder of the 2021/22 financial year.

3. OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

3.1 Operational performance during July 2021 was significantly affected by staff shortages, especially within the driver cohort due to track and trace notifications. This can be seen in the operational performance charts in the section below, in particular during period 4. Driver unavailability in July was approximately 10 times greater than the average across the pandemic. This situation had an adverse impact on passenger services. In order to provide a reliable service and reduce pressure on the remaining staff, a short term service change was introduced on 9 August. This change saw a network-wide 12 minute service, with increased doubles on the busier lines and additional services operated where possible.

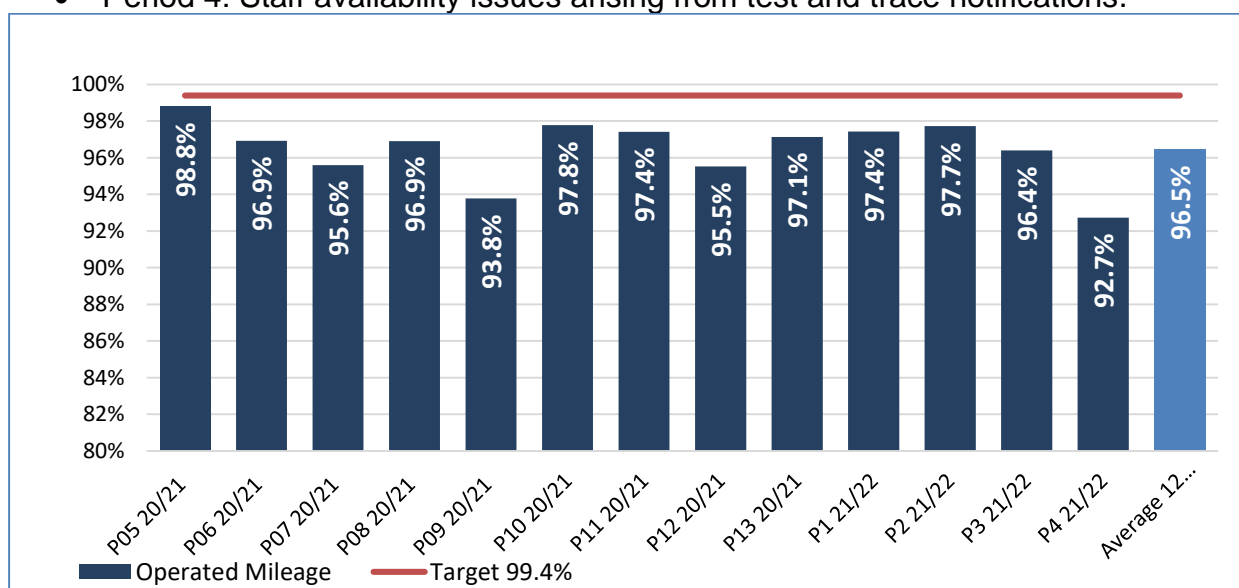
3.2 A phased re-introduction of the “peak” services is planned. These services boost the busiest lines between 07:00 – 20:00 Mon to Fri and 09:00 – 18:30 on Saturdays. The Altrincham to Bury route will be reintroduced from 31 August and the East Didsbury to Shaw route will be reintroduced on 6 September.

Reliability

3.3 Reliability is measured by operated mileage. Operated mileage is the number of tram vehicle miles operated verses the number of scheduled miles with an operated target of 99.4%.

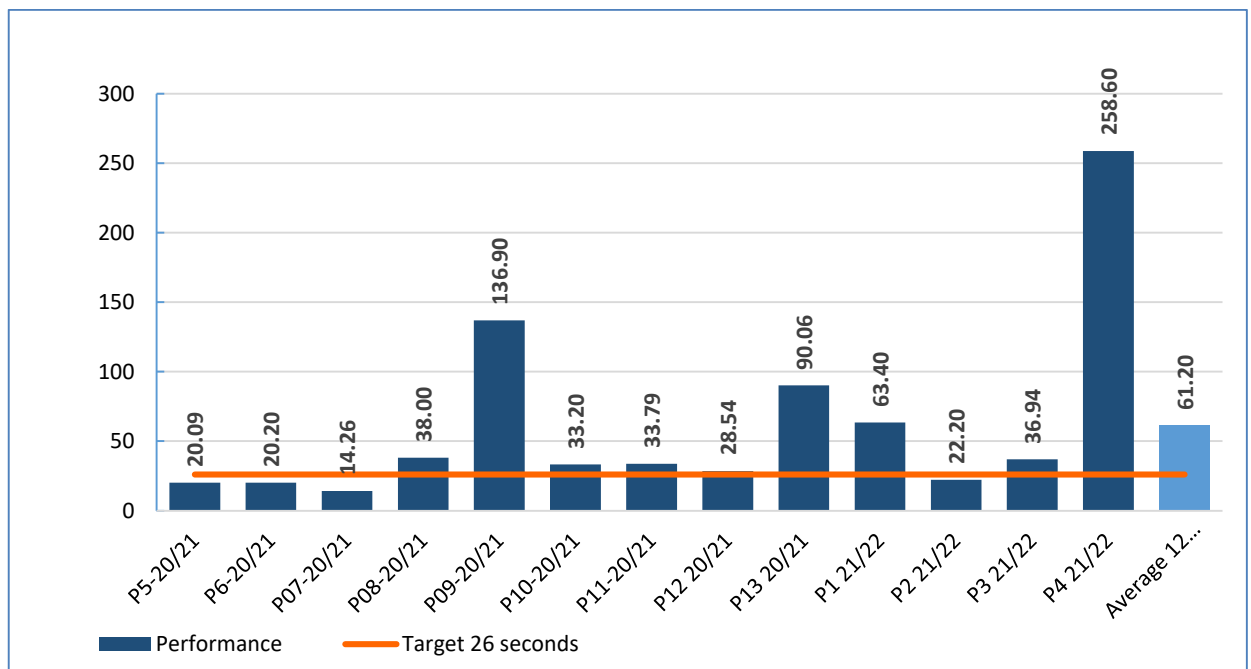
3.4 Prior to periods 3 and 4, reliability performance had been holding steady at an average of just above 97%. As outlined above, staff unavailability impacted operational delivery and this can be clearly seen in the chart below, in particular in relation to period 4 which ended with a performance result of 92.7%. The incidents which most influenced performance are outlined below:

- Period 3: An underground fire in electrical ducts at Balloon Street in Manchester city centre and signalling fault at Timperley on the Altrincham line.
- Period 4: Staff availability issues arising from test and trace notifications.



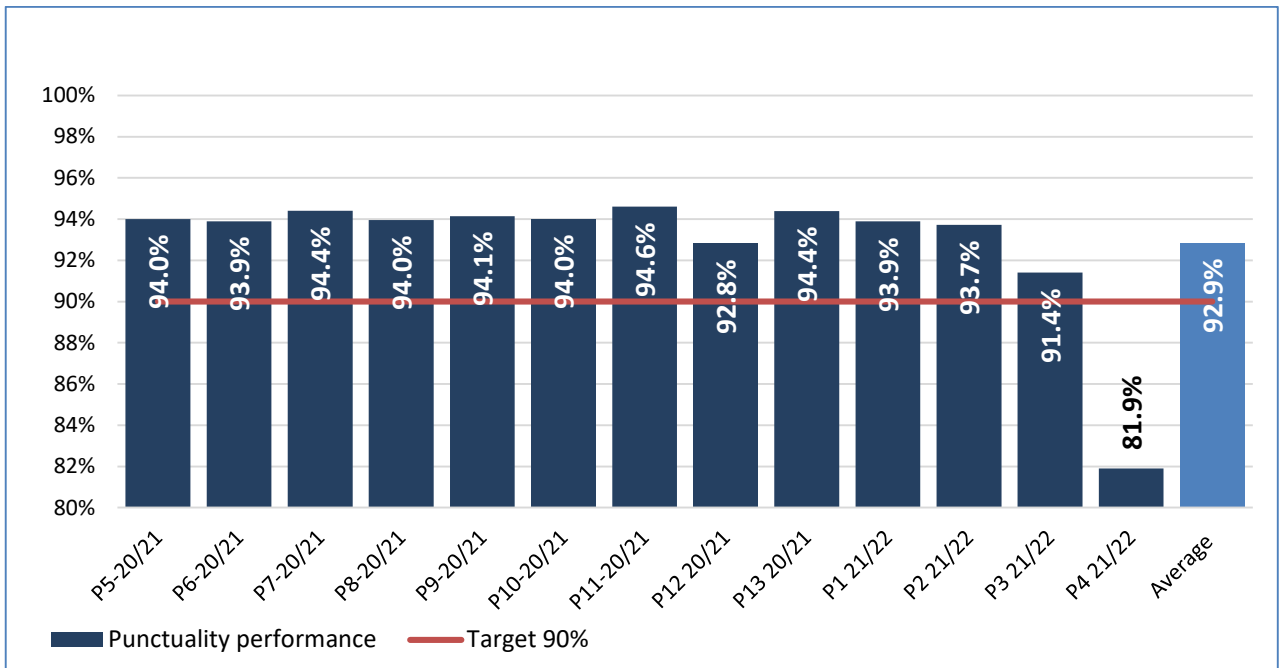
Excess Wait Time

- 3.5 Excess Wait Time (EWT) is a measure of punctuality. It is the average time passengers wait over what would have been expected if the service was running exactly as scheduled.
- 3.6 The average EWT performance for the 12 months to July 2021 was 61.2 seconds against a target of 26 seconds.
- 3.7 Performance in periods 3 and 4 was impacted by the incidents described above in 3.2. Note that Period 9 performance was affected by two significant overhead line equipment failures, as well as a significant road traffic collision where a van struck a tram on the Ashton Line as reported in the January committee paper.
- 3.8 The chart below shows EWT performance over the year. In this case a lower number is better performance for our passengers.



Punctuality - Percentage of services operating to time.

- 3.9 Punctuality performance covering the previous 12 months (13 periods) is shown below. Punctuality performance dipped below target for the first time in the past year during period 4 due to the issues experienced with staff unavailability, as outlined previously.



Asset reliability - Trams

3.10 Tram availability shows percentage of the fleet that has been available during each period.

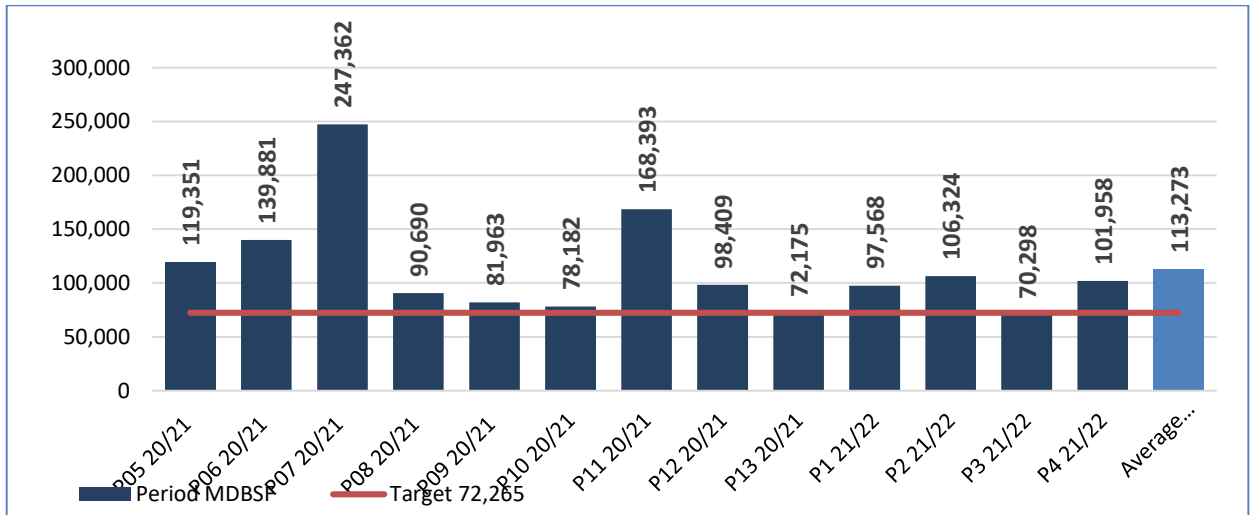


3.11 During both periods, criminal damage was a considerable problem. Smashed saloon windows, damaged seats and interior graffiti all required multiple vehicles to be removed from service for repair. This was a particular problem during the Euro 20 football screenings at Event City, where a total of 19 trams were damaged, resulting in the need to implement operational mitigations to protect the vehicles and infrastructure.

3.12 Staffing levels in the engineering department were also impacted by track and trace.

Asset reliability – Infrastructure

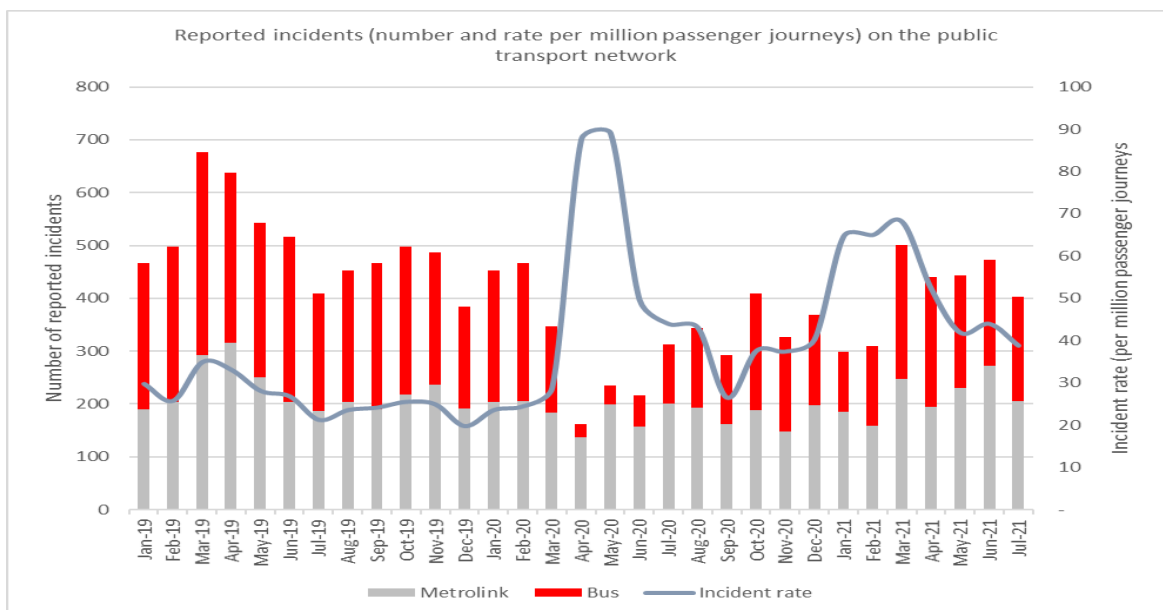
3.13 Infrastructure reliability performance, in terms of service distance travelled between failures.



3.14 Infrastructure performance was slightly below target in period 3 but has since recovered. The average 12 month rolling performance remains positive, despite the significant service affecting incidents described above.

Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour

3.15 On average, 196 incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour per month were reported to Metrolink. Due to higher patronage numbers during July 2021 the incident rate per million passenger journeys is lower.

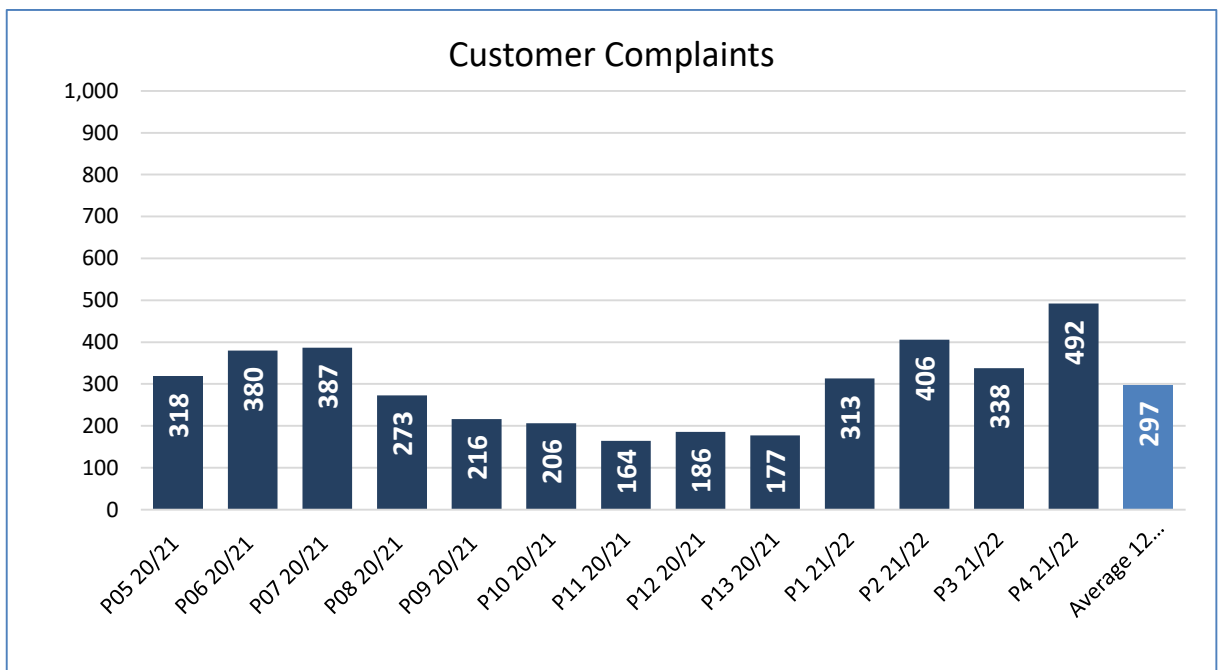
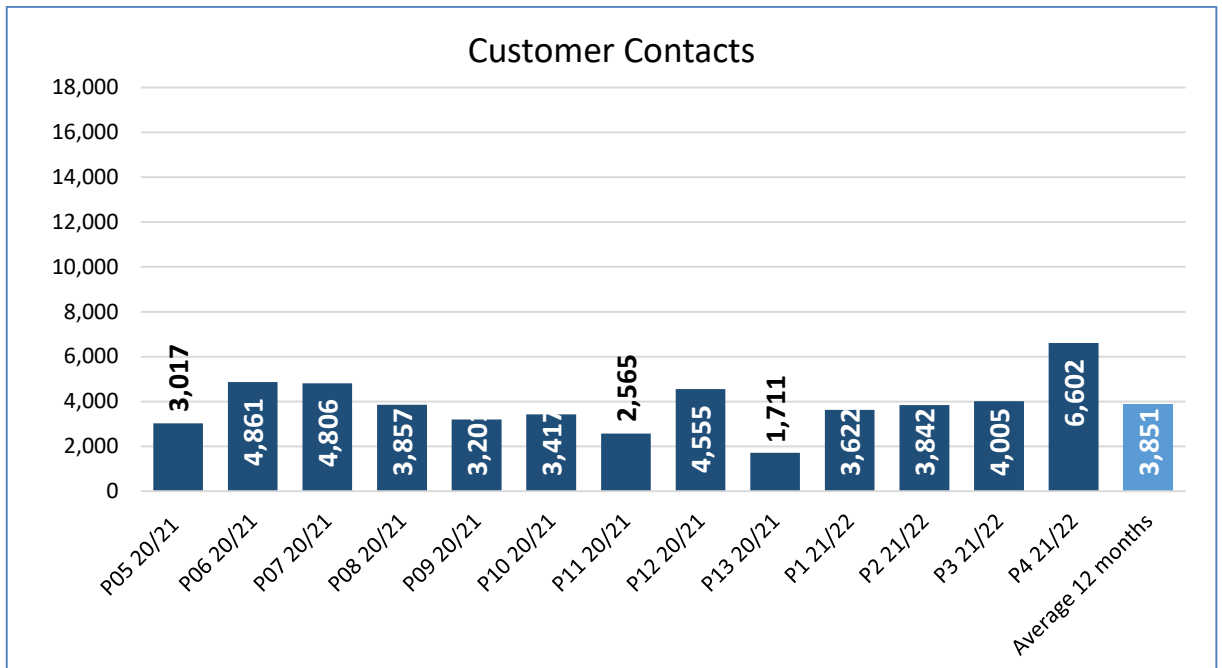


Crime & ASB Category	Jul 2020	Jul 2021	Change in incidents
	Reported Incident	Reported incidents	
Anti-social behaviour	18	19	6%
Assault	13	29	123%
Damage to property	26	30	15%
Drink and drug related incidents	28	7	-75%
Harassment and intimidation	65	45	-31%
Obstruction/ interference with network operations	31	27	-13%
Other public order	12	8	-33%
Robbery and thefts	5	13	160%
Sexual assault	3	4	33%
Tram riding on couplers	0	22	-
Weapons Incident	2	3	50%
Grand Total	203	207	2%

- 3.16 During periods 3 and 4 there was an increase in criminal damage on the network. This affected tram availability and the perception of security. The main contributing factor to this increase were the Euro 2020 screening events at Event City. In total 19 trams were severely damaged throughout the running of this event.
- 3.17 There was also an increase in incidents of youths travelling on the outside of vehicles, which is subject to ongoing focus of the TravelSafe Partnership.
- 3.18 There were 29 reported assaults across the Metrolink network during July, which is the highest monthly total since 35 assaults were recorded at the start of pandemic in March 2020. There were 9 assaults on the Oldham Rochdale line and five of these involved assaults by groups of youths on fellow passengers. As a consequence, the Oldham Rochdale line has been prioritised by the TravelSafe Partnership.
- 3.19 TravelSafe Days of Action have continued during periods 3 and 4 with a continued focus on locations where antisocial behaviour has been reported and low face covering compliance noted.

Customer contacts and complaints

- 3.20 Just over 50,000 customer contacts were dealt with during the year, averaging at 3,851 customer contacts per period (excludes twitter contact).
- 3.21 The number of queries and complaints has started to rise with increasing numbers of customers returning to the network, and the disruption in period 4 described above.



Customer Experience and Engagement

- 3.22 KAM has continued with covid-related measures across the network. The enhanced visible touch point cleaning and refilling of hand sanitiser units is ongoing. A further 10 units are being installed throughout period 5.
- 3.23 Face covering compliance has fallen steadily since the change to national legislation. Although wearing face covering is a condition of carriage on Metrolink, it is not easily enforceable in practice. Compliance now stands at approximately 50%.

- 3.24 During periods 3 and 4, KAM delivered face to face and virtual assemblies at 27 schools, reaching over 7,000 students. The sessions focussed on building engagement with students on themes such as anti-social behaviour and safety. The work was undertaken in conjunction with the TravelSafe partnership. Period 4 saw the reintroduction of the “Crucial Crew” on the Bury and Eccles lines. This activity prepares year six students for the transition to travelling to secondary school.
- 3.25 KAM staff have been volunteering with Manchester Youth Zone, undertaking various initiatives. This is to further outreach to young people who attend the Youth Zones within our communities along the Network to further educate around safe use of public transport and the impact their behaviour can have on others.

4. FORWARD LOOK

Service enhancement

- 4.1 From Monday 9 August, services reverted to a 12 minute frequency network wide, with standard finish time of midnight every day. This decision was taken with the intention of preserving a reliable service in response to the staff shortages previously outlined.
- 4.2 The following services will be reintroduced in a phased approach to ensure capacity is available for the return to school and the office after the summer holidays:
- From Tuesday 31 August, after the August bank holiday, the Altrincham to Bury direct service will be reintroduced, restoring a peak time 6 minute service
 - The East Didsbury to Shaw service will be reintroduced on Monday 6 September, restoring a peak time 6 minute service
- 4.3 These revised services will remain under continual review. The MediaCityUK to Etihad Campus service and the later running weekend trams will be reintroduced at the earliest opportunity, subject to staff availability.
- 4.4 With patronage growing at different rates across the region, the changes will be closely monitored, and a flexible approach to the use of double trams will be maintained to ensure they run where they are needed most. All available trams will be put into service, including the new ones as they are commissioned.

Return of planned events

- 4.5 Reintroduction of full capacity football stadiums and commencement of delayed summer events means it's a busy period on Metrolink supporting travel to the venues across Greater Manchester.
- 4.6 The return of special events welcomes customers and visitors back to the network following the series of government restrictions throughout the pandemic.

- 4.7 Staff will be supporting the key messages for travelling safely and asking customers to plan ahead by wearing face coverings on board, using the hand sanitisers provided, respecting other customers and staff and purchasing tickets in advance or using contactless to help make their journeys seamless.
- 4.8 Some of the key events relevant to the Metrolink network are;
- Manchester Pride – free city centre travel to wristband holders
 - Soccer Aid
 - Organised runs and marathons
 - Cycling events
 - Cricket
 - Football
 - Parklife weekend – Travel wristbands for event goers to Heaton Park across the weekend
 - Outdoor concerts
 - Party conferences
- 4.9 In addition, Metrolink is also working with GMP to respond to planned protests and other events which could cause delays to the transport network.
- 4.10 All events are supported with travel advice across all modes, and where appropriate, bespoke online travel pages.
- 4.11 TfGM work with and partner a number of venues/events to provide a seamless and coordinated journey experience.

Danny Vaughan
Head of Metrolink, TfGM

Appendix 1 - Period date listing

This report details the highlighted Period/s

2020/21

Period	Start Date	End Date
1	01/04/2020	02/05/2020
2	03/05/2020	30/05/2020
3	31/05/2020	27/06/2020
4	28/06/2020	25/07/2020
5	26/07/2020	22/08/2020
6	23/08/2020	19/09/2020
7	20/09/2020	17/10/2020
8	18/10/2020	14/11/2020
9	15/11/2020	12/12/2020
10	13/12/2020	09/01/2021
11	10/01/2021	06/02/2021
12	07/02/2021	06/03/2021
13	07/03/2021	31/03/2021

2021/22

Period	Start Date	End Date
1	01/04/2021	01/05/2021
2	02/05/2021	29/05/2021
3	30/05/2021	26/06/2021
4	27/06/2021	24/07/2021
5	25/07/2021	21/08/2021
6	22/08/2021	18/09/2021
7	19/09/2021	16/10/2021
8	17/10/2021	13/11/2021
9	14/11/2021	11/12/2021
10	12/12/2021	08/01/2022
11	09/01/2022	05/02/2022
12	06/02/2022	05/03/2022
13	06/03/2022	31/03/2022