

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER  
METROLINK AND RAIL SUB COMMITTEE  
HELD ON FRIDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 10:30AM MANCHESTER TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Stuart Haslam	Bolton Council
Councillor Mohammed Ayub	Bolton Council
Councillor Emma Taylor (Chair)	Manchester City Council
Councillor Norman Briggs	Oldham Council
Councillor Susan Emmott	Rochdale Council
Councillor Shah Wazir	Rochdale Council
Councillor Tom McGee	Stockport MBC
Councillor Angie Clark	Stockport MBC
Councillor Steve Adshead	Trafford Council
Councillor Andrew Western	GMCA

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mark Angelucci	Rail Officer, TfGM
Lindsay Dunn	Governance Officer, GMCA
Simon Elliott	Head of Rail Programme, TfGM
Victoria Mercer	Metrolink Service Delivery Manager, TfGM
Caroline Whittam	Head of Rail Services, TfGM
Gwynne Williams	Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA

**OPERATORS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Jody Ball	Cross Country Trains
Dan Coles	Network Rail
Charlie French	Avanti
Chris Jackson	Northern
Claire Sprotson	Keolis Amey

**GMTMRC 32/21 APOLOGIES**

**Resolved /-**

That apologies be noted and received from Councillors Doreen Dickinson, Joanne Marshall, Howard Sykes (Councillor Angie Clark substituting), Guillaume Chanussot (Keolis Amey) and Lucja Majewski(TransPennine Express).

**GMTMRC 33/21 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS**

**Resolved /-**

There were no chairs announcements or items of urgent business.

## **GMTMRC 34/21    DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

### **Resolved /-**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **GMTMRC 35/21    MINUTES OF THE GM TRANSPORT METROLINK & RAIL SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 16 JULY 2021**

### **Resolved /-**

That the minutes of the GM Transport Metrolink & Rail Sub Committee meeting held 16 July 2021 be approved as a correct record.

## **GMTMRC 36/21    METROLINK SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

Victoria Mercer, Metrolink Service Delivery Manager, TfGM introduced the Metrolink quarterly performance report which provided a performance summary for the rolling 12-month period.

In doing so she provided the Committee with a further update on emerging issues since the publication of the report. Members were advised that the Unite union had confirmed that Metrolink staff, when balloted, had recently voted in favour of industrial action in a dispute over pay. The proposed dates, 25 and 26 September, 10 and 24 October coincided with significant events that would be taking place across the City and subsequently impact on services for passengers. TfGM officers would continue to work closely with KAM on contingency provision for the proposed days of industrial action along with measures across the transport network with other providers to mitigate, where possible, the impact on passengers.

Members were provided with information in relation to two recent safety incidents in Audenshaw and at Exchange Square. It was confirmed that formal investigations had been initiated for both incidents.

It was reported that there had been an increase in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) throughout the summer related to incidents involving youths. Work was ongoing with the TravelSafe Partnership, GMP and Local Authorities to tackle increased reports of ASB and assaults across the Metrolink network. As a result, TfGM had received a formal request at the last meeting of Greater Manchester Transport Committee (GMTC), from Councillor Phil Burke for all Metrolink staff to have access to body cameras due to increased assaults to staff. It was reported that this would be considered and reviewed in conjunction with KeolisAmey and further feedback would be provided to all relevant parties.

Operational performance during July 2021 was significantly affected by staff shortages and as a result and the disruption experienced during July, tram frequencies were reduced on 9 August to ensure a more reliable service could be operated. The Altrincham to Bury route was reintroduced from 31 August and the East Didsbury to Shaw route on 6 September.

Patronage had risen above 50% and had reached circa 69% of pre-COVID levels during the current week with a significant uplift of 118% the previous weekend due to events held across the City.

An update relating to engineering works on the network was provided. Services on the Eccles line which were originally scheduled to reopen on the 1 August, reopened on the 16 August as a result of the degraded condition of the concrete which had become visible once the old track was removed. Resources for bus replacement services were restrained throughout the fifteen day delay, the outcome and impact of which had been reviewed to improve services to customers going forward.

It was reported that seven day capping for contactless services had been introduced on 6 September to provide customers with improved value for money offer on fares and flexibility when travelling.

It was reported that robust services had been successfully and safely planned collaboratively to mobilise passengers to events across the transport network including Parklife at Heaton Park, a football match at Old Trafford along with a scheduled cricket match which had been subsequently cancelled.

Members welcomed the informative update along with crime and ASB data within the report. It was advised that residents in Rochdale had contacted Councillor's in relation to ASB at Rochdale Town Centre, Newbold and Milnrow Metrolink stops where youths had been fighting and intimidating passengers and Metrolink staff. The provision of body cameras for all staff was supported along with an increased presence of Travelsafe officers. An increase in police operations across the Rochdale line to include other stops such as Hollinwood and Newton Heath to increase the safety for passengers and staff was requested.

The Committee were reassured that presence was being increased particularly at known hot spots based on data collated and work was ongoing with the TravelSafe Partnership, GMP and Local Authorities to tackle increased reports of Anti-Social Behaviour and assaults across the Metrolink network. Furthermore, every reported incident would be passed to GMP along with evidence to investigate and progress. It was advised that a further update on matters relating to crime and Anti-Social Behaviour along with details of ongoing targeted work and next steps would be reported to the next GMTTC meeting by TFGM and GMP.

Members questioned if data was available on the wearing of face coverings across the network. It was reported that compliance had fallen steadily since the change to national legislation despite it being a condition of carriage on Metrolink. This however was not easily enforceable in practice and current compliance was approximately 50%.

A breakdown of patronage by line was requested and it was agreed that future update reports to the Committee could accommodate this request.

Members highlighted and discussed concerns regarding the planned industrial action and asked what mitigation and additional measures were being considered given the planned events which would attract many visitors over the proposed dates. TfGM reiterated that they would continue to work with KAM on options and proposals for the days of industrial action along with other providers to alleviate, where possible, the effect on passengers and would provide specific communication in advance.

### **Resolved /-**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Sub-Committee be advised that the Unite union had confirmed that Metrolink drivers, when balloted, had voted in favour of industrial action in a

dispute over pay.

3. That it be noted that KeolisAmey would continue to work towards an agreement with Unite to prevent strike action on 25 and 26 September, 10 and 24 October, and mitigate any subsequent impact on services to passengers which coincided with a number of significant events in GM.
4. That TfGM officers would continue to work closely with KAM on contingency provision for the proposed days of industrial action along with measures across the transport network with other providers to mitigate, where possible, the impact on passengers and provide specific communication.
5. That the detail in relation to two safety incidents which had occurred since the publication of the report in Audenshaw and at Exchange Tram stop be noted and Members be advised that formal investigations had been initiated.
6. That Members be advised that work was ongoing with the TravelSafe Partnership, GMP and Local Authorities to tackle increased reports of Anti-Social Behaviour and assaults across the Metrolink network.
7. That it be confirmed that TfGM had received a formal request at the last meeting of Greater Manchester Transport Committee (GMTC), from Councillor Phil Burke for all Metrolink staff to have access to body cameras as a result of increased assaults to staff. This would be considered and reviewed in conjunction with KeolisAmey and further feedback would be provided to all relevant parties.
8. That the comments from Members regarding crime, ASB and intimidation be noted on the Oldham/Rochdale and East Didsbury line and an increase in operations to combat incidents be requested for the safety of passengers.
9. That a further update on matters relating to crime and Anti-Social Behaviour along with details of ongoing targeted work and next steps be reported to the next GMTC meeting.
10. That a breakdown of patronage across the network on a line-by-line basis be included in future updates to the Sub-Committee.

## **GMTMRC 37/21 METROLINK OPERATOR UPDATE**

The Committee invited Claire Sprotson, HR Director, KeolisAmey to provide feedback on Metrolink services in GM over the recent period.

- KeolisAmey were aligned to work in partnership to help tackle crime and ASB and encouraged staff to report activity and incidents across the network to support customers.
- Talks would continue with Unite regarding the pay offer and the planning process alongside TfGM in the event of industrial action.
- Patronage increases and the stabilisation of Covid absences due to the 'pingdemic' were described as encouraging.
- As a result of Covid, there had been a reported increase in staff absence due to mental health issues and long Covid symptoms. Support was being provided to employees across the business.
- Driver recruitment had recommenced and there were an encouragingly high number of reported applicants for positions.
- Staff morale and engagement had been positively affected as a result of successfully mobilising the network to manage Parklife.
- Improving internal communications to engage staff to provide a customer enhanced Metrolink service continued.

## **Resolved /-**

1. That the update be noted.
2. That Members be advised that KAM were aligned with colleagues and organisations to work in partnership to tackle incidents of crime and ASB and encourage staff to report incidents to support customer safety across the network.

## **GMTMRC 38/21 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 03 and 04, 2021/22 (30 May – 24 July 2021).

Although operational performance declined slightly during the period for all six train operating companies serving Greater Manchester performance was reported to be good.

Rail Patronage continued to increase steadily to circa. 60% nationally of pre-Covid levels and Northern had reported that their figures had increased to 65%. It was advised that Northern had brought in amended train plans to reflect their ability to deliver services because of unprecedented numbers of train crew contracting Covid or receiving isolation alerts. Services had been temporarily suspended to preserve service delivery on key routes and avoid late-notification service cancellations.

Whilst face coverings were made non-mandatory on 19 July, usage remained relatively high at around 50 – 60% on rail initially. It had since declined to around 35%, although it was higher on longer distance, city centre and morning peak services.

Regarding timetable changes in December 2021, it was advised that both Northern and TPE had not planned to feature any significant changes or uplifts. However, Northern had prioritised enhancements to some Greater Manchester routes on Sundays which were detailed in the report.

Detail on major improvement on the Hadfield and Glossop lines and key sections of track and railway bridge upgrades to improve reliability as part of the Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade carried out by Network Rail were outlined. It was noted that no negative feedback had been received by TfGM from customers during the period of disruption,

In welcoming the report Members positively acknowledged that there had been no negative feedback received from passengers during the period of disruption. Concern was raised however regarding Sunday services across the network in mid Cheshire, West Houghton and services from Rose Hill in particular and the impact on leisure given the recent uptake in leisure rail services.

It was acknowledged that the provision of Sunday services was linked to historic issues regarding terms and conditions for drivers and the industry were working hard to address as referenced in the Enabling Framework Agreement. It was suggested that the progress of the rail industry to address concerns impacting on Sunday services would be provided at a future meeting by Train Operating Companies (TOCs).

Further detail on the ransomware cyber-attack which had targeted Northern's new self-service ticket machines was requested and provided. It was noted that leniency to customers

that were impacted and unable to purchase tickets in that way had been adopted by train staff during the period.

It was suggested that customers had encountered technical issues when purchasing tickets as part of the launch of Northern's £1 flash sale deal. It was agreed that any specific issues relating to the Northern website or app regarding customers being unable to access the £1 ticket sale be reported directly to Chris Jackson.

### **Resolved /-**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That an update on the progress of the rail industry to address concerns impacting on Sunday services raised by Councillor Angie Clark be provided at a future meeting by Train Operating Companies (TOCs).
3. That any specific issues relating to the Northern website or app regarding customers being unable to access the £1 ticket sale launched by Northern be reported directly to Chris Jackson.

## **GMTMRC 39/21      RAIL OPERATOR UPDATE**

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

Comments raised by operators included the following:

- Avanti West Coast – reported that West Coast services had reduced from 2 to 1 per hour during August as the result of increased isolation alerts. Services had now resumed and there had been a reported increase in demand across routes and business routes into Manchester were growing at a strong rate with a 17% increase in growth week on week aligned to the return of schools. It was recognised demand would continue and from December 2021 a third train per hour would be introduced between Manchester to London.

Timetable consultation would be launched over the forthcoming weeks ahead of December 2022. A new marketing campaign had recently been launched which had positively impacted on increased ticket purchases. Operating hours of ticket gates lines had been extended across the network which would result in increased revenue protection. Staffing levels of front line staff were reported to be volatile which had resulted in ticket gates being open during periods of the weekend of Parklife, however alternative methods of fare protection had been adopted.

- Cross Country – reported passenger numbers were between 50-60% pre pandemic. There would be no timetable changes across the Manchester region in December 2021, however the re-introduction of Manchester to Southwest services was being considered for future iterations. There had been some infrastructure failures across the network and work was underway in collaboration with Network Rail to understand the impact. There had been issues in relation to ASB and trespass in Stockport and work was ongoing with British Transport Police (BTP) to address the issue. Double trains were

operating across the network in particular Birmingham to Manchester routes. Enhanced cleaning as a result of Covid remained across the fleet and the organisation continued to support community events where possible.

- Network Rail – the risk impact of track and trace self-isolation across the network had stabilised although the position regarding Covid continued to be monitored.

Footfall at Manchester Piccadilly was reported at 60-80k per day during the week, rising to 80-90k at weekends. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the highest figure had been reached the previous weekend due to events such as Parklife of circa. 115k.

The mobility assistance service at Piccadilly had also increased which was a positive reflection that potentially vulnerable passengers were beginning to return to train travel.

Academic studies had been carried out at Network Rail managed stations which had confirmed there was no prevalence of Covid-19 during the assessment of handrails, ticket machines and infrastructure etc. Furthermore, an industry marketing campaign had been launched to welcome passengers back onto the network.

A breakdown of the completed sixteen day Trans Pennine engineering work programme was outlined. Further detail regarding trespass and vandalism figures were provided and it was reported that a national campaign called 'shattered lives' had been launched. It was confirmed that Network Rail worked alongside BTP undertaking security action days targeting trespass and vandalism. A holistic approach was adopted and prosecutions were undertaken where appropriate.

An update on the campaign launched in Partnership with Shelter using Manchester Piccadilly as a trial site to identify homeless and rough sleepers using the station including the numbers of those referred and placed in permanent and temporary accommodation was provided.

Members were advised of the lift renewal work that would take place at platforms 13 & 14 at Manchester Piccadilly between the period 3 January 2022 – 18 April 2022 and the alternatives available for passengers.

The opportunity to improve accessibility to the car park at Romiley train station at the same time as platform lengthening under the Access for All (AfA) programme was requested, and it was agreed that a site visit would be carried out to establish the possibility.

- Northern Rail – further detail on proposed timetable changes to come into effect in December 2022 was imminent. It was agreed that an update on the proposals and a report on the consultation exercise would be provided at a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

Working in Partnership with TfGM and other providers to support events across the City had been a recent key focus for Northern.

An update on the progress of the accessibility taskforce was provided and Members were made aware of the significant financial challenge of the aspiration to make all GM train stations accessible. It was advised that £4m of investment had been committed to install accessible toilets at most Greater Manchester train stations and an indicative timetable would be circulated by Northern to all Sub-Committee Members. Furthermore, comments regarding accessibility and footfall were noted and it was agreed to provide further information to Councillor Tom McGee on the criteria for prioritisation.

Improvements at Bolton train station were welcomed by Members and further detail regarding lift replacements at the station planned for April 2022 were provided.

### **Resolved /-**

1. That the update be noted.
2. That the opportunity to improve accessibility to the car park at Romiley train station be considered at the same time as platform lengthening under the Access for All (AfA) programme.
3. That an update on proposed timetable changes to be introduced in December 2022 and a report on the consultation exercise be provided at a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.
4. That Members be made aware of the significant financial challenge of the aspiration to make all GM train stations accessible.
5. That it be noted that £4m of investment had been committed to install accessible toilets at the majority of Greater Manchester train stations and an indicative timetable be circulated by Northern to Members.
6. That comments made regarding accessibility and footfall at train stations be considered and that it be noted that Chris Jackson would provide further information to Councillor Tom McGee on the criteria for prioritisation.

### **GMTMRC 40/21 RAIL PROGRAMME AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT UPDATE**

Simon Elliott, Head of Rail Programme, TfGM provided an update on the status of rail station schemes which TfGM and rail colleagues were currently working on across Greater Manchester.

An update on Access For All (afA) main programme schemes and a further twenty two mid-tier funding programmes was provided. The progress of rail based park and ride at Mills Hill, Walkden and Bromley Cross was outlined for Members along with platform enhancements at Salford Central rail station.

Members were reminded that the Rail Station Alliance had been successfully awarded £650k worth of funding to develop Altrincham, Broadbottom, Heaton Chapel and Trafford station buildings into thriving community assets. TfGM would continue to work closely with Network Rail, Northern and London Continental Railways (LCR), along with the Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation (GMCVO) to begin progressing plans at the sites to delivery stage. It was agreed that further information on the not-for-profit social enterprise organisations identified to operate at each location that would deliver a local community benefit to each area would be provided in future updates.

An update on the key themes of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail were outlined. It was



advised TfGM were continuing to work with the DfT and TfN to further establish its position and begin developing a partnership with Great British Railways (GBR) to help cement GM Rail and BEE network aspirations now the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail had been published.

In support of the informative update, Members asked if further consideration was being provided to the provision of Electric Vehicle Charging points (ECV) at rail-based Park and Ride locations. It was suggested and agreed that an update would be provided to the Sub-Committee at a future meeting on the adoption of a holistic approach to decarbonisation at rail-based Park and Ride locations including the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging points prior to GM becoming a Clean Air Zone on 30 May 2022.

**Resolved /-**

1. That the update be noted.
2. That a further update be provided to the Sub-Committee at a future meeting on the adoption of a holistic approach to decarbonisation at rail-based Park and Ride locations including the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging points prior to GM becoming a Clean Air Zone on 30 May 2022.
3. That further information be provided in future updates to the Sub-Committee on not-for-profit social enterprises which form the Greater Manchester rail station alliance.
4. That Members be advised that a progress update on the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail be provided to GMTC at a future meeting.

**GMTMRC 41/21      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 42/21      DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Resolved /-**

Friday 12 November 2021

Friday 14 January 2022

Friday 11 March 2022

All Meetings to commence at 10:30am