

GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

METROLINK AND RAIL NETWORKS SUB-COMMITTEE

Date: 12 November 2021

Subject: Metrolink Service Performance

Report of: Danny Vaughan, Head of Metrolink, TfGM

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

This report provides an update on Metrolink services and performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

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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: Patronage by line

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

BACKGROUND PAPERS: Metrolink Service Performance report of 17 September 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?		No
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 130 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.

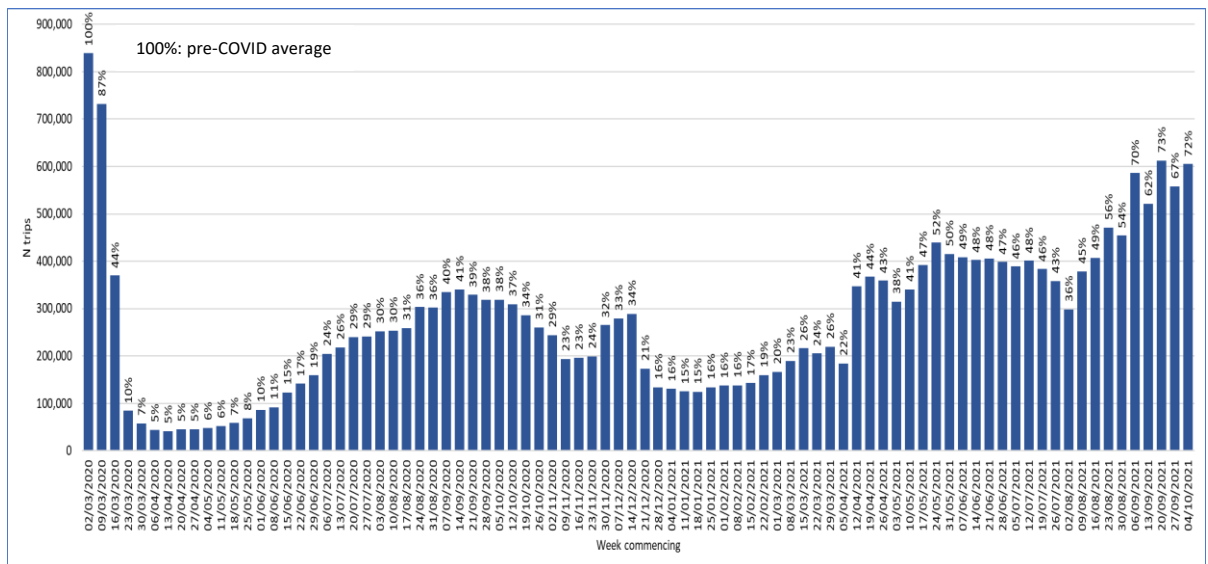
2. PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Metrolink Quarterly Performance Report provides a performance summary for the rolling 12-month period.
- 2.2 Operational performance during August and September improved compared to July as a result of the short term service change, which was introduced on 9 August, to mitigate the impact of staff shortages from covid test and trace notifications.
- 2.3 Tram frequencies were reduced on 9 August to ensure a more reliable service was operated, with an improved customer experience. The number of doubles was increased and targeted to busiest lines with additional services operated by KAM where possible, targeted at the morning and evening peaks.
- 2.4 Most peak services were reintroduced in September. However, covid related absences have been increasing in recent weeks and is impacting the service, albeit to a more limited extent to that experienced in July. This situation is being closely monitored.
- 2.5 Following a period during covid pandemic when driver recruitment and training was substantially reduced because of social distancing restrictions, KAM is now recruiting more front line staff, which will over time deliver improvements in performance.
- 2.6 During September Metrolink drivers threatened strike action over pay on several weekends which would have impacted on major events such as the marathon. The strike action was averted following a two-year pay deal.
- 2.7 Patronage has continued to increase during September, due to the return to schools and increased commuting. The return of special events also resulted in a busy September for our network, with patronage levels at circa 70% of pre-pandemic levels

- 2.8 Period 5 and 6 had seen an increase in youth related anti-social behaviour on the network and in particular affecting Rochdale Town centre.
- 2.9 Greater Manchester has secured c £0.5m from the Home Office to launch a series of 'Safer Streets' schemes aimed at helping women and girls feel safer when out and about in the city-region.
- 2.10 The Global Light Rail awards took place on 6 October 2021. KAM were highly commended in the following categories: Operator of the Year, Significant Safety Initiative and in the Rising Star Award category.

Patronage

- 2.11 Patronage measures the number of trips that are being made on the network.
- 2.12 Covid significantly impacted patronage on the Metrolink network as can be seen in the chart below, with patronage levels now at circa. 70% of pre-covid levels.



- 2.13 Patronage recovered steadily following significant engineering works on the network during August. Growth was sustained for leisure trips with several weekends having above pre-covid levels of demand due to big events such as Parklife and the marathon. The number of trips recorded on the network on the day of the marathon (Sunday 10 October), saw the highest number of trips made on Metrolink on a Sunday in almost 30 years of service.
- 2.14 Crowding issues on the network are closely correlated with events taking place across the region, with the biggest impact being seen on the Altrincham, Bury and Ashton lines. Some peak services are becoming busier, specifically Altrincham, Bury, East Didsbury and Oldham peak services.
- 2.15 Patronage breakdown by line can be found in Appendix 2 at the back of this report.

Funding

- 2.16 A package of support from central government covering Metrolink's operating costs has been agreed for the remainder of the 2021/22 financial year. Talks are continuing with the Department for Transport in relation to continued funding requirements beyond April 2022, however ongoing support remains uncertain.

3. OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

- 3.1 Operational performance during periods 3 and 4 was significantly affected by staff shortages, especially within the driver cohort due to track and trace notifications. 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 took place in late August - early September. 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 was reintroduced from 31 August and the East Didsbury to Shaw route was reintroduced on 6 September.
- 3.3 Due to ongoing resource availability constraints any further uplifts in services remain under review. With demand at circa. 70% of pre-covid levels, TfGM is keeping patronage under constant review to ensure that available capacity is targeted in the right areas and at the right times across the network.

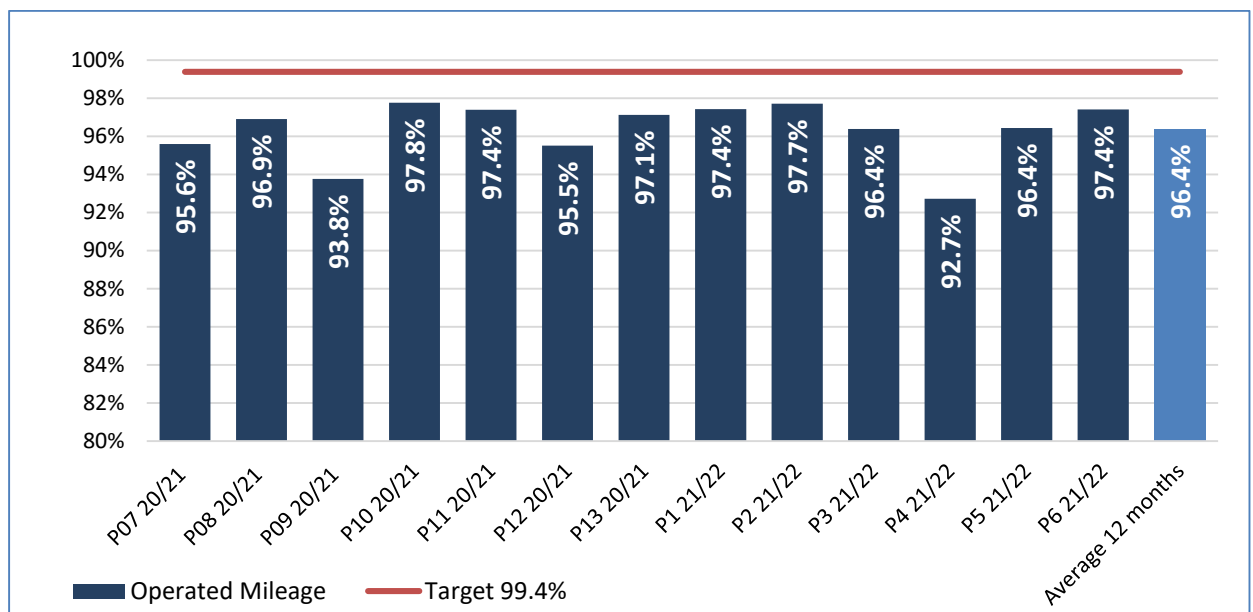
Reliability

- 3.4 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%.

During periods 3 and 4, reliability performance dipped due to the driver availability issues described above. Periods 5 and 6 saw performance recover to levels seen prior to period 3, demonstrating the effectiveness of the short term service change which was introduced. However, reliability performance has not met the target in the previous 13 periods due to the prolonged impact of the pandemic on staffing levels.

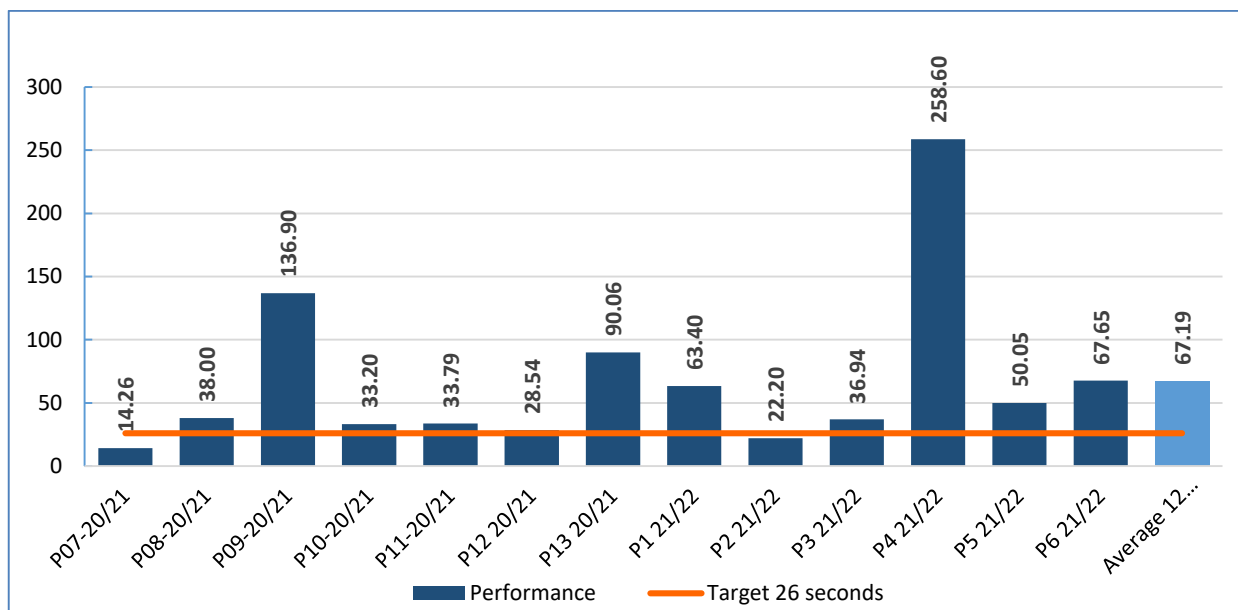
The incidents which most influenced performance are outlined below:

- Period 5: Vehicle availability issues caused by the discovery of damaged pantographs on multiple vehicles on 26 July 2021.
- Period 6: Collision on Ashton New Road on 1 September 2021.



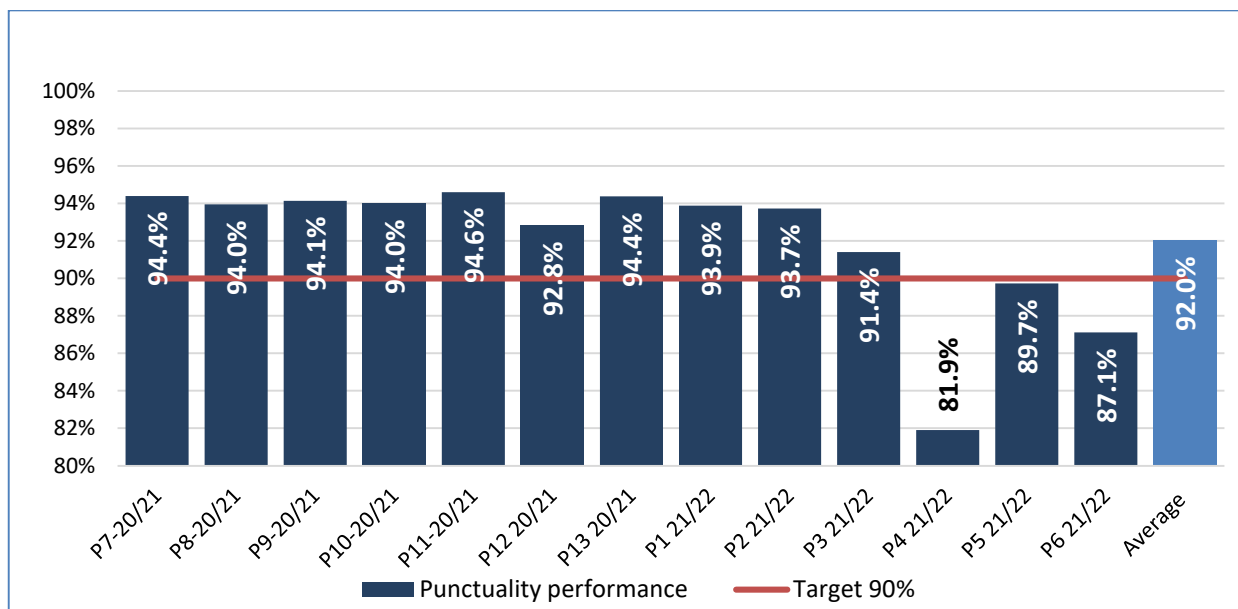
Excess Wait Time

- 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 67.2 seconds against a target of 26 seconds.
- 3.7 Performance in periods 5 and 6 was impacted by the incidents described above in 3.2, as well as a lightning strike at Village on 3 August and a knife incident at East Didsbury on 27 August.
- 3.8 The chart below shows EWT performance over the year. In this case a lower number is better performance for our passengers.



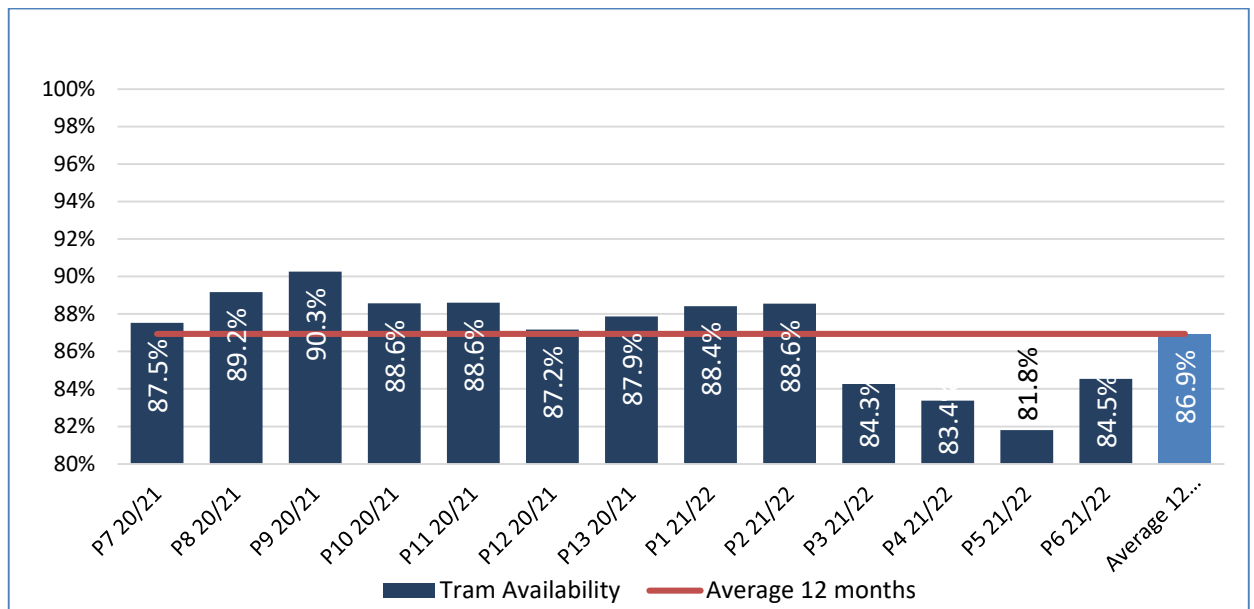
Punctuality - Percentage of services operating to time.

3.9 Punctuality performance covering the previous 12 months (13 periods) is shown below. Performance dipped below target for the first time in the past year during periods 4, 5 and 6 due to the issues experienced with staff unavailability, as outlined previously. However, the average for the previous 12 months remains above target.



Asset reliability - Trams

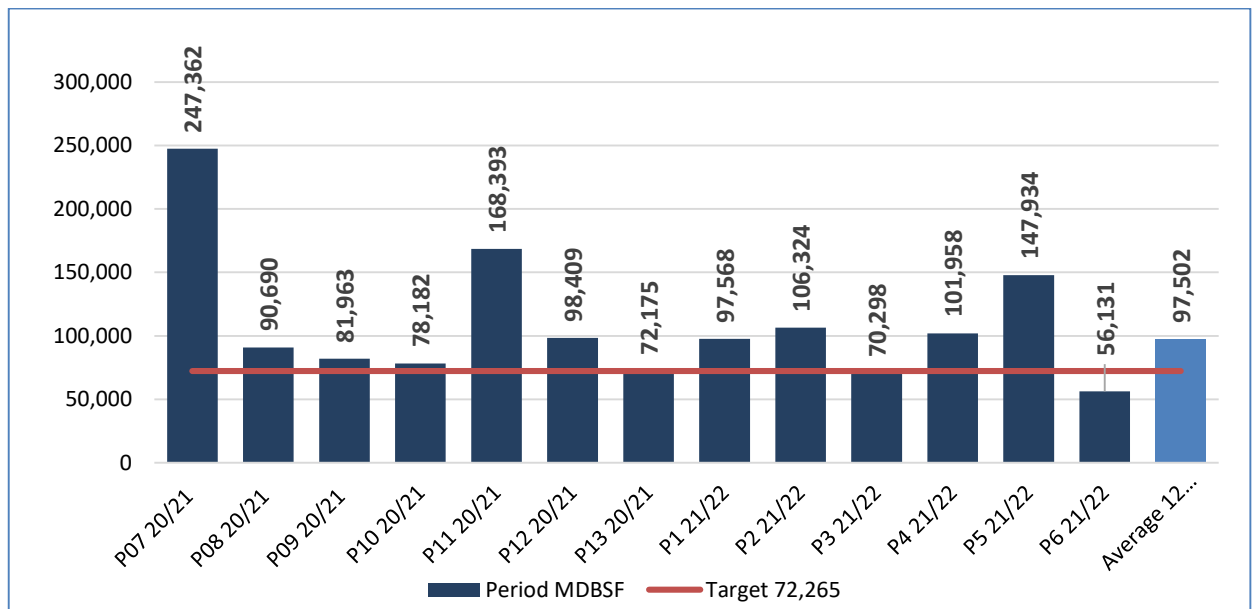
- 3.10 Tram availability shows percentage of the fleet that has been available during each period.



- 3.11 Driver cab air conditioning failures were a significant issue impacting vehicle availability during a very warm week in early September. Supply chain issues exacerbated these problems with the availability of replacement parts. Supply chain problems have also resulted in repairs taking longer following incidents of vandalism.
- 3.12 Staffing levels in the engineering department were also impacted by the pandemic.

Asset reliability – Infrastructure

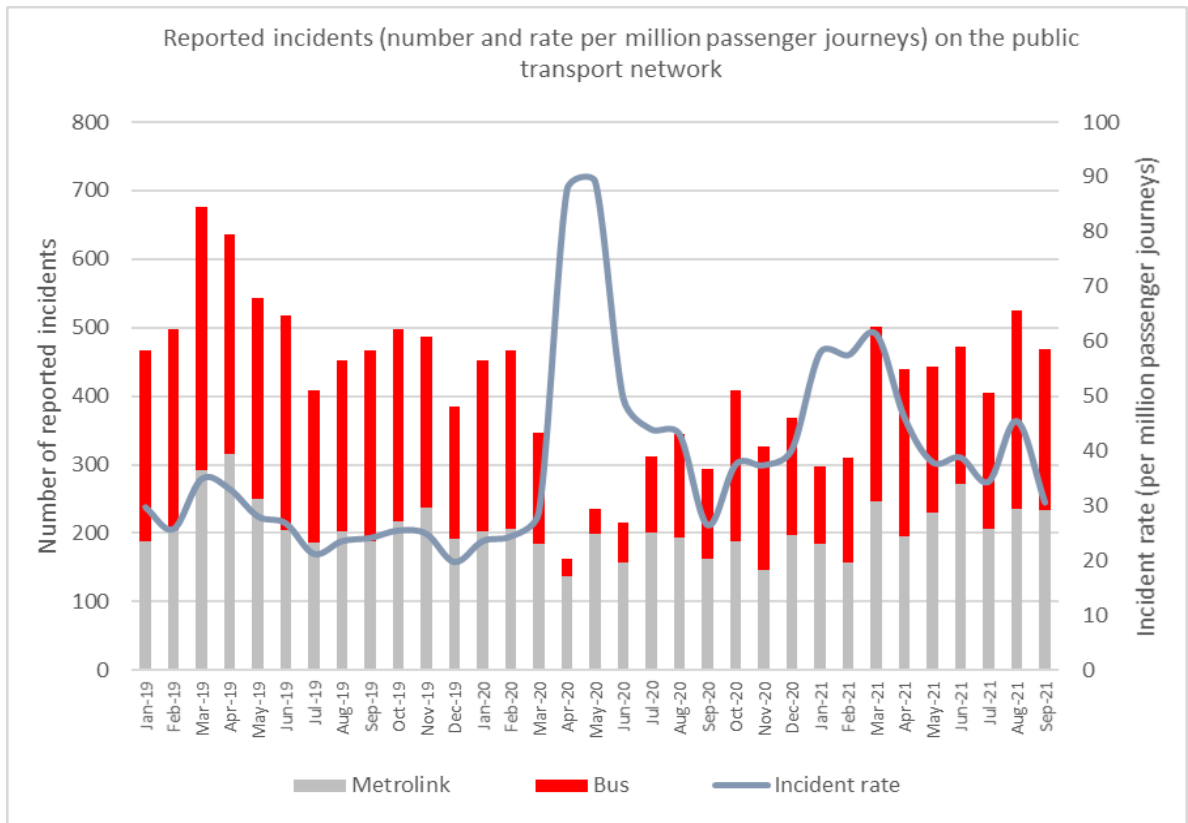
- 3.13 Infrastructure reliability performance, in terms of service distance travelled between failures.



- 3.14 Infrastructure assets are largely performing well. In period 5 several trams were removed from service as a result of suspected damage to pantographs arising from an overhead line problem. Additionally, a spell of very hot weather at the beginning of September caused some points control failures which impacted reliability. This has since been rectified. The average 12 month rolling performance remains positive.

Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour

- 3.15 On average, 205 incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour per month were reported to Metrolink over last 12 months.



Crime & ASB Category	Sep 2019	Sep 2021	Change
	Reported Incidents	Reported incidents	
ASB	12	19	58%
Assault (inc domestic incidents)	34	28	-18%
Damage to Property	19	46	142%
Drink and Drug Related Incidents	7	4	-43%
Harrasment & Intimidation	48	35	-27%
Obstruction/Interfere with Network Operations	19	55	189%
Other Public Order	17	8	-53%
Robbery & Thefts	24	14	-42%
Sexual Assault/Sexual Incident	4	4	0%
Tram Surfing	1	10	900%
Weapons Incident	4	10	150%
Grand Total	189	233	23%

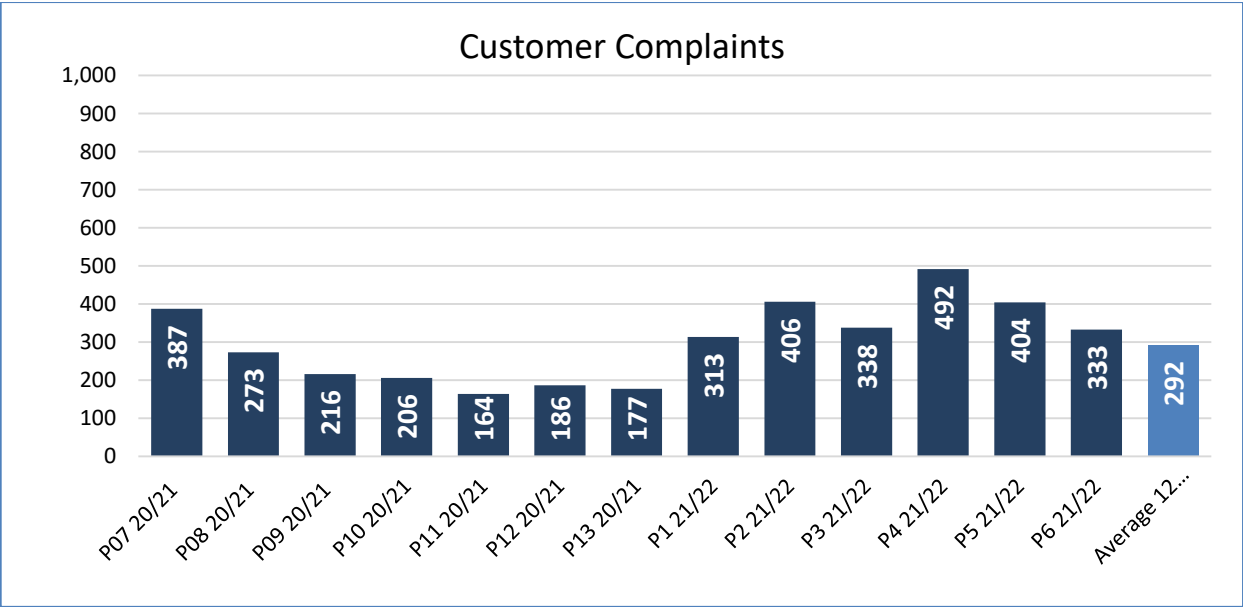
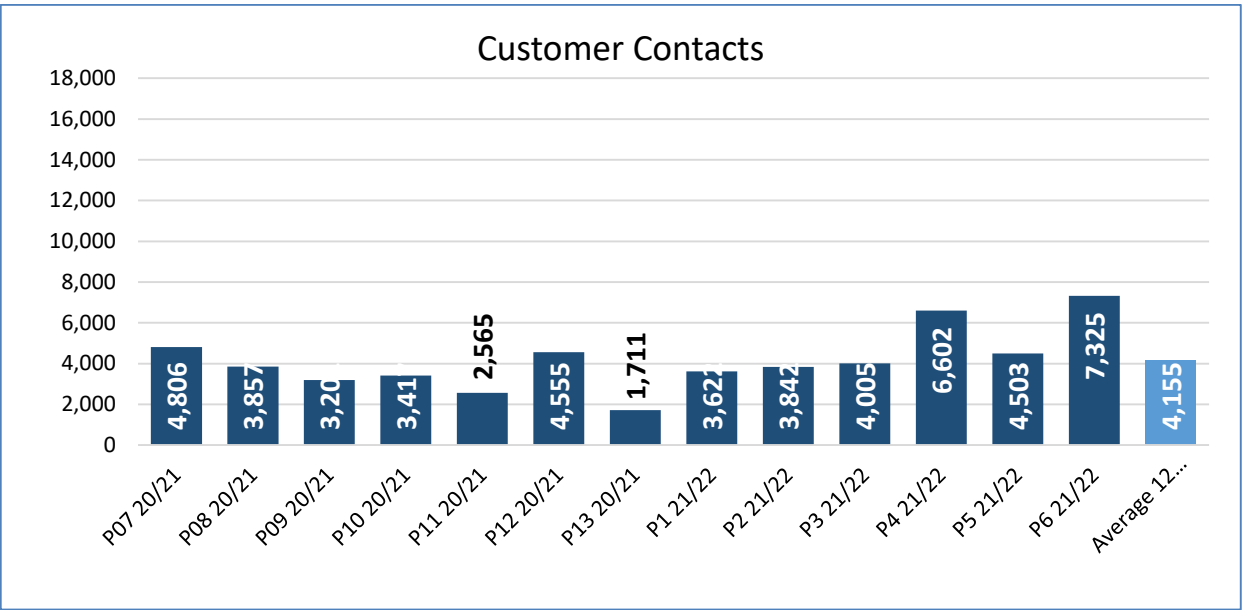
- 3.16 During period 5 there was an increase in criminal damage in the Radcliffe area. This affected tram availability and the perception of security. Multiagency site visit was

conducted which identified where youths were congregating and throwing missiles. The area has been fenced off to prevent entry and this has stopped incidents in the area.

- 3.17 Period 5 and 6 had seen an increase in youth related anti-social behaviour on the network and in particular affecting Rochdale Town centre. A Criminal Behaviour Order has been served on one individual who was responsible for a number of incidents. Incidents of traveling on the outside of vehicles, misuse of door handles and intimidation in the area have reduced significantly since then.
- 3.18 There has been a significant increase in assaults from 9 during August to 28 in September, 7 of which were against staff. Of the 21 assaults against the public 4 appear to be domestic incidents, 2 involved school children, 3 involved groups of youths with the remaining 12 altercations between passengers.
- 3.19 With rising incidents of anti-social behaviour on the Bury line, special operations were organised through the district policing team and Special Constabulary and took place at Bury Interchange at the end of August.
- 3.20 A traveller encampment formed at Ashton Moss Park & Ride in August. Using a procedure developed following similar trespass at Ladywell, notice was served the same evening, with full eviction concluding the following day. As a result of the swift action, damage at the site (litter/criminal damage/disruption to passengers) was minimised.
- 3.21 During Parklife, there was a significant amount of damage to tram windows caused by youths throwing missiles in the Crumpsall area. This caused disruption to service during one of busiest days of the year. Changes have since been made to prevent trespass.
- 3.22 Security issues have been a significant focus in September and October with several high profile incidents reported in the media, including knife crime and a media story concerning comments from Metrolink staff. TfGM and KAM have been working with GMP in response and as structural changes take place in GMP there is a renewed focus on safety and security on public transport.

Customer contacts and complaints

- 3.23 Just over 54,000 customer contacts were dealt with during the year, averaging at 4,155 customer contacts per period (excludes twitter contact).
- 3.24 The number of queries and complaints has started to rise with increasing numbers of customers returning to the network. Though the number of complaints has reduced in periods 5 and 6, compared with period 4, following improved stability as a result of the August service change.



Customer Experience and Engagement

- 3.25 Greater Manchester has secured circa £0.5m from the Home Office to launch a series of schemes aimed at helping women and girls feel safer when out and about in the city-region. The 'Safer Streets' fund, launched in 2020, allows local authorities to apply for funding for crime prevention. Greater Manchester's successful partnership bid, submitted by GMCA, TfGM, and Oldham Council, will be used to deploy and test several interventions on the tram network and at key stops to respond to the issues raised by women and girls. If proved successful, the schemes could be rolled out more widely, including beyond transport.

The funding will cover pilot interventions including:

- A reporting campaign led by TfGM to educate passengers on reporting mechanisms and to increase reporting of incidents via the Greater Manchester Police (GMP) Live Chat System.
- Working with women and girls to understand what training and campaigns they would like to see and developing a bespoke package to deliver to boys and men.
- The presence of trusted adults and trained staff to increase security to prevent serious incidents, as well as test more informal approaches to educate and engage people and increase safety and reporting.
- A safe hub and safe places scheme, which will enable increased security to prevent serious incidents using a detached youth team and Street Angels to educate and engage people and increase safety and reporting.
- Integration and upgrades to the CCTV system in key locations so that images can be instantly shared between TfGM and Council systems, increasing facial recognition and coverage, and better enabling tracking of routes to car parks.
- 570 staff – including Customer Service Representatives, TravelSafe officers and tram drivers – will be trained to spot and appropriately respond to incidents and to encourage increased reporting.
- A poster campaign designed by students on acceptable/unacceptable behaviours such as catcalling. The posters will be displayed across the tram network to educate the public.

- 3.26 KAM continues to be active with school engagement across the communities of Greater Manchester and welcomed students back to the Network in September. As such, they have delivered assemblies to help support and encourage public transport health & safety and deter anti-social behaviour on the Network. There were visits to Manchester Heath Academy, Moor Road and Future Skills, Media City and a virtual assembly to St Monica's High School, Prestwich. Over 11,000 children have been engaged with this year following the monthly activity with schools, colleges and universities.

- 3.27 Throughout the period, KAMs School Engagement team also attended Manchester University, Manchester College, Future Skills, Salford University & Oldham College's Fresher's Stalls with a successful joint collaborative approach with other members of the Travel Safe partnership.

- 3.28 KAM Customer Service Representatives joined up with Barnabus's outreach team navigating city centre Metrolink stops, to further identify those who are homeless or may require extra support. The team travelled on hotspot tram routes, with a focus on the Ashton Line. The aim was to support the outreach programme and offer further information to KAM's frontline staff to better equip them on how to identify individuals who may be homeless, under the influence of drugs/alcohol or individuals who appear vulnerable on where they can seek further help.
- 3.29 In a pioneering new approach, KAM partnered with the Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (GMMH) to develop and implement a custom made mental health awareness training programme to 120 Customer Service front line staff. The training covered a range of topics including understanding and recognising emotional distress, engagement skills and de-escalation techniques designed to support staff who may encounter vulnerable people on the network. Positive feedback from staff was received who reported feeling more confident and empowered to make the right decisions at the right time and potentially save lives.
- 3.30 Global Light Rail Awards
- 3.31 The Global Light Rail awards took place on 6 October 2021. These awards take place annually to celebrate the achievements of the light rail industry in a number of categories. The focus of this year's awards focused on how networks managed through the pandemic with operational restrictions and reduced passenger numbers. KAM was highly commended in the following categories: Operator of the Year, Significant Safety Initiative and in the Rising Star Award category.

FORWARD LOOK

Planned network renewals 2022

- 3.32 The programme of disruptive access to deliver 2022 asset renewals is in development. While the disruption will have an impact on customers, early planning of these works will allow the impact to be mitigated through well planned and early communication to customers, staff and stakeholders and allow the production of robust timetables and the procurement of replacement buses where required.
- 3.33 The majority of these essential works are to replace sections of track at key locations on the network of which some will require longer closures to enable the completion.
- 3.34 The lengthier closures will be mainly impacting the city centre and Eccles lines where some works may take several weeks to complete and will be targeted around the quieter school holiday periods where possible. Other works will be shorter durations over weekends, evenings and overnight.

Danny Vaughan
Head of Metrolink, TfGM

Appendix 1 - Period date listing

This report details the highlighted Period/s

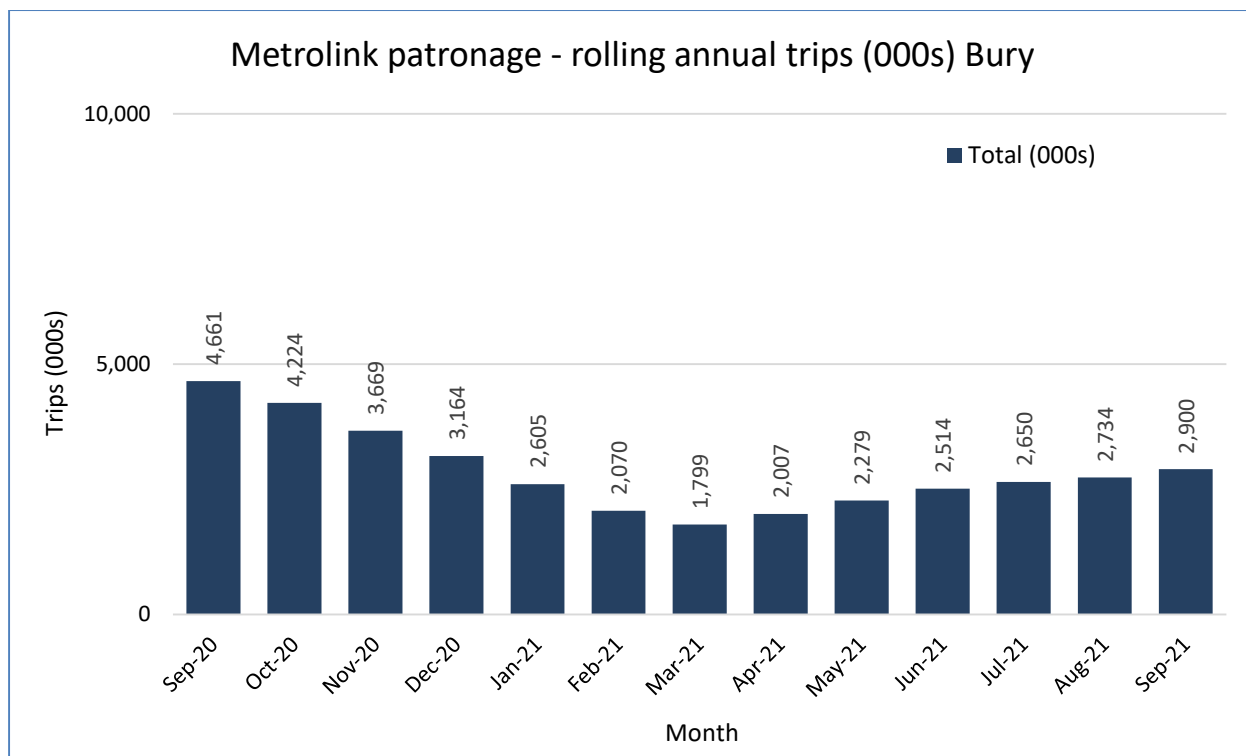
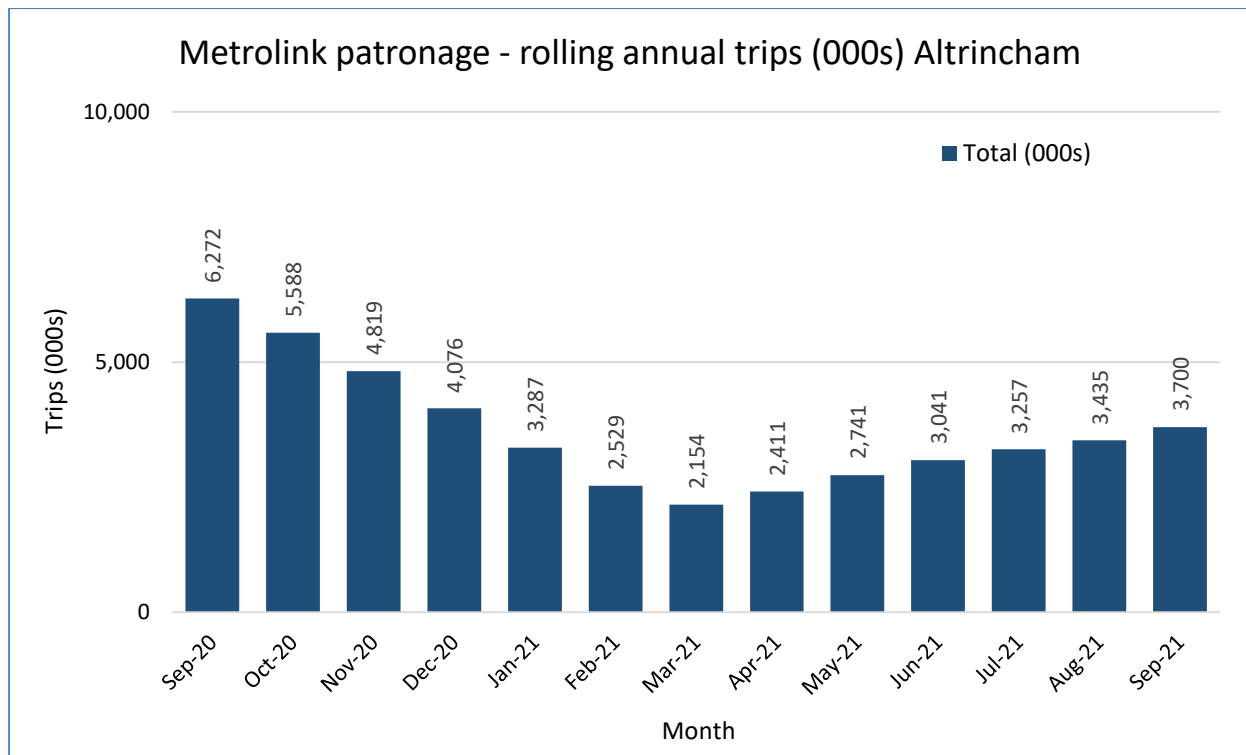
2020/21

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

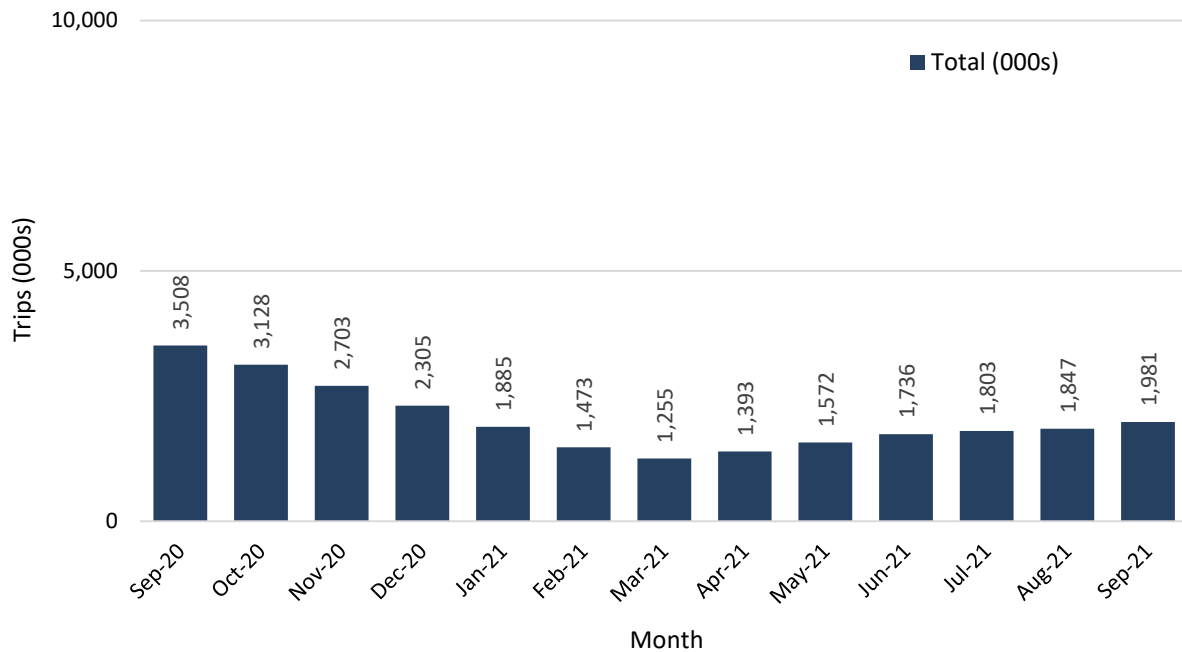
2021/22

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

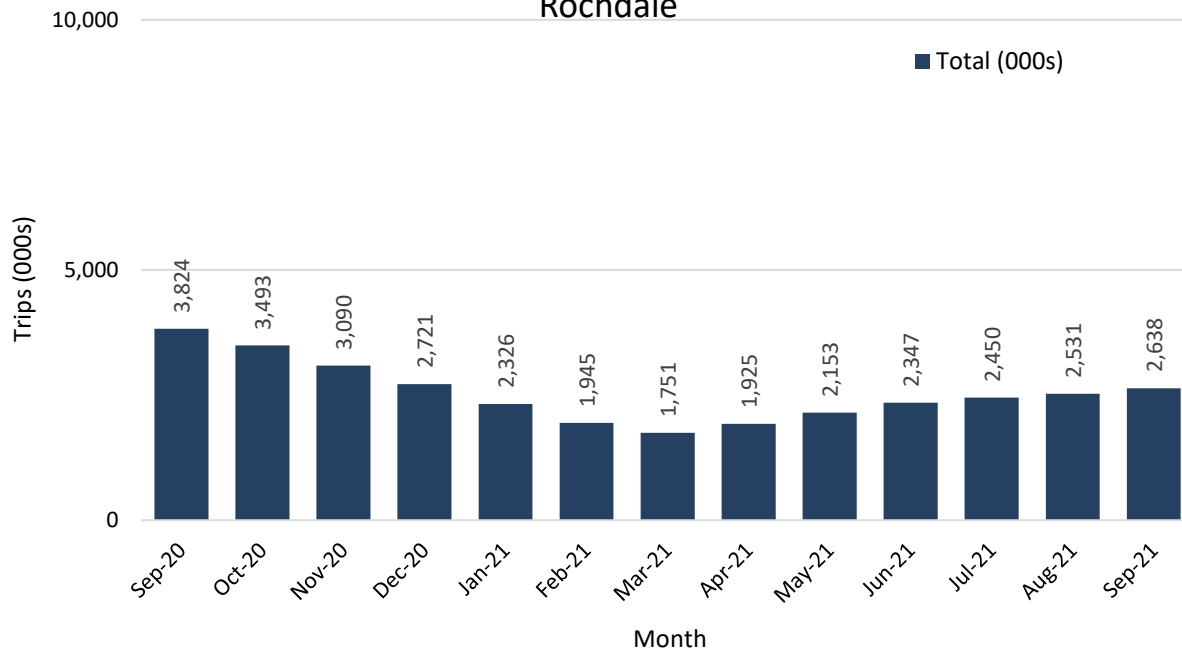
Appendix 2 – Patronage by line



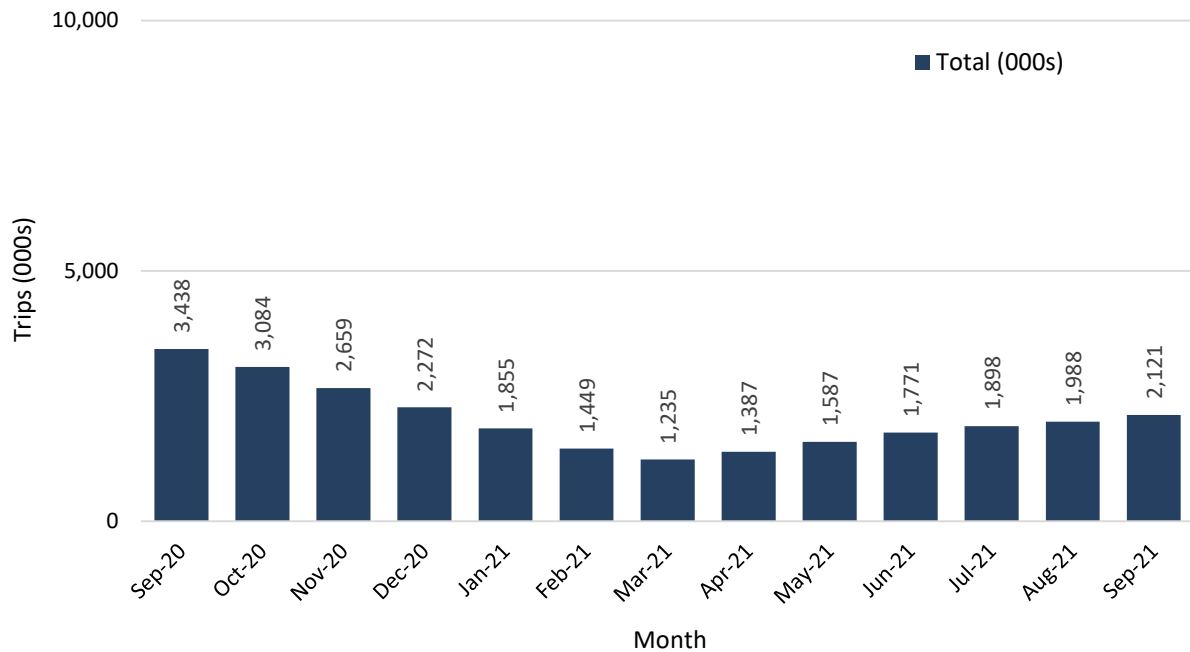
Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) Eccles



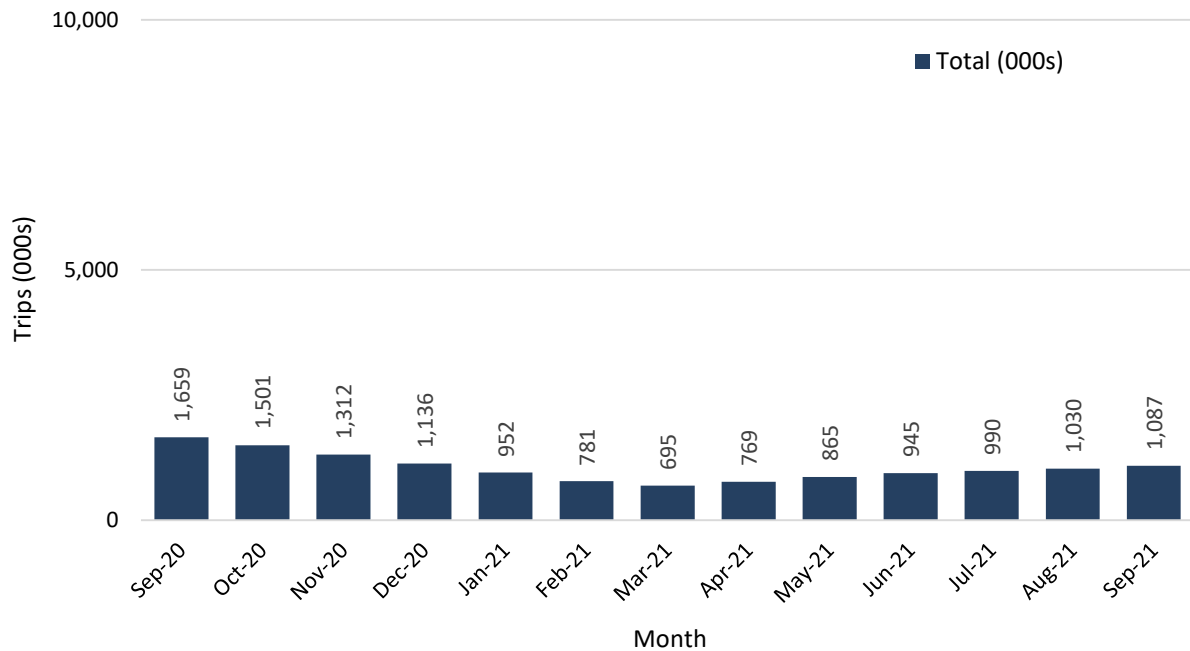
Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) Oldham
Rochdale



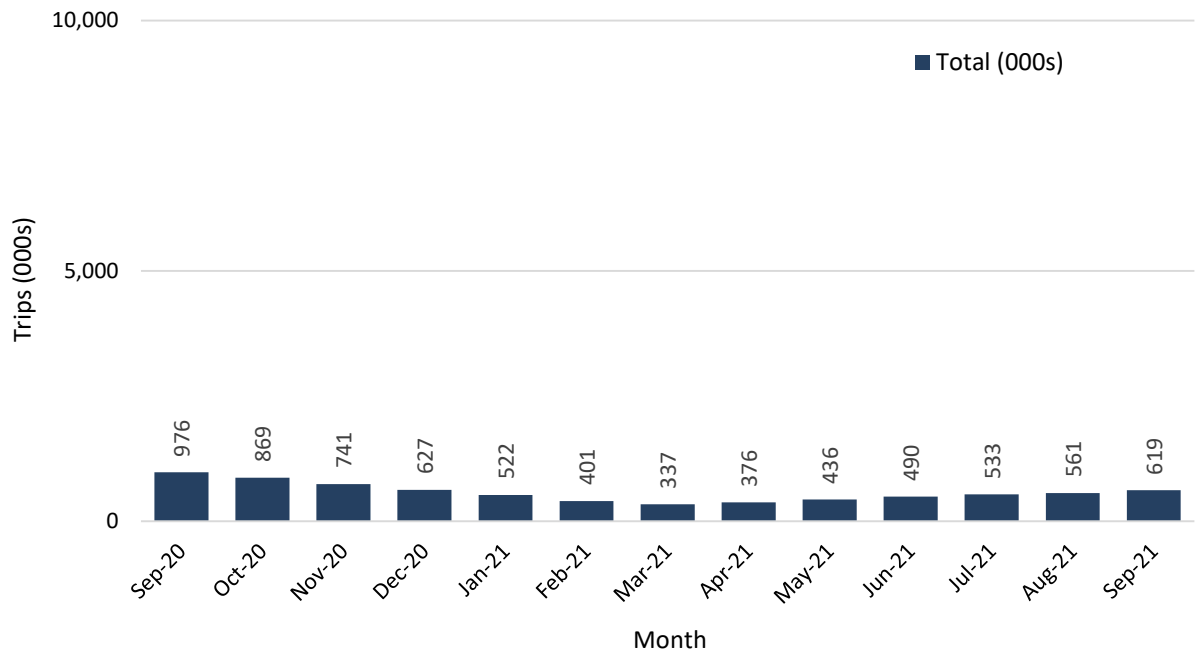
Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) East Didsbury



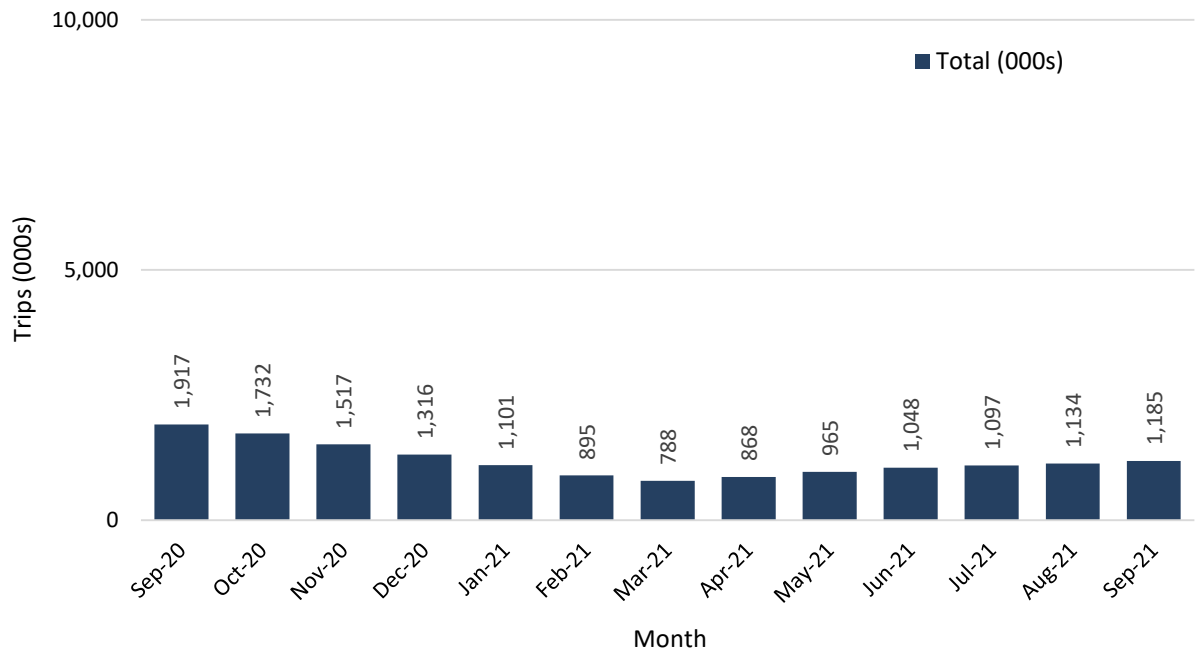
Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) Ashton



Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) City



Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) Airport



Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) Trafford Centre

