

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER
METROLINK AND RAIL SUB COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY 12 NOVEMBER, 2021 AT THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE,
MANCHESTER**

PRESENT:

Councillor Stuart Haslam	Bolton Council
Councillor Mohammed Ayub	Bolton Council
Councillor Emma Taylor	Manchester City Council
Councillor Norman Briggs	Oldham Council
Councillor Howard Sykes	Oldham Council
Councillor Shah Wazir	Rochdale Council
Councillor Tom McGee	Stockport MBC
Councillor Angie Clark	Stockport MBC
Councillor Doreen Dickinson (Chair)	Tameside Council
Councillor Steve Adshead	Trafford Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lindsay Dunn	Governance Officer, GMCA
Simon Elliott	Head of Rail Programme, TfGM
Danny Vaughan	Head of Metrolink, TfGM
Gwynne Williams	Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA

OPERATORS IN ATTENDANCE:

Gary Bogan	Transport for the North (TfN)
Charlie French	Avanti
Chris Jackson	Northern
Lucja Majewski	TransPennine Express (TPE)

GMTMRC 43/21 APOLOGIES

Resolved /-

That apologies be noted and received from Councillor Andrew Western (GMCA), Mark Angelucci (TfGM), Guillaume Chanussot (Keolis Amey) Victoria Mercer (TfGM) and Caroline Whittam (TfGM).

GMTMRC 44/21 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

Resolved /-

There were no chairs announcements or items of urgent business.

GMTMRC 45/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Resolved /-

There were no declarations of interest.

GMTMRC 46/21 MINUTES OF THE GM TRANSPORT METROLINK & RAIL SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 12 SEPTEMBER 2021

Resolved /-

That the minutes of the GM Transport Metrolink & Rail Sub Committee meeting held 17 September 2021 be approved as a correct record.

GMTMRC 47/21 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. In doing so, he advised Members that Guillaume Chanussot, Keolis Amey Metrolink, had sent late apologies and he would therefore address any issues relating to the Metrolink operator update.

The Committee were advised that operational performance had improved during August and September 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.

Members were provided with a further update on emerging issues since the publication of the report and most notably and positively, it was reported that patronage had increased since operational issues had stabilised in September to circa 70% pre-Covid levels. The current week had recorded the highest passenger numbers since March 2020 in the absence of any special events, which highlighted passengers were feeling more confident in travelling across the network.

It was advised that operational performance had been significantly impacted by driver availability including test and trace isolation, increased cases of Covid absence and the inability to undertake driver training due to social distancing requirements. However, the position had begun to stabilise and driver training had resumed.

With regards to crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), it was noted at the last meeting that there had been an increase in ASB throughout the summer related to incidents involving youths. As a result, there had been some success with joint targeted operations across the network including the Bury, Rochdale and Ashton lines with the full support of GMP officers which had resulted in arrests. At the same time, Metrolink staff had taken the opportunity to engage with passengers and reinforce messages of revenue protection.

On behalf of KAM, an update was provided regarding a pioneering new approach to develop and implement a custom-made mental health awareness training programme to 120 Customer Service front line staff partnered with the Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (GMMH). The training had 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 had been received who reported feeling more confident and empowered to make the right decisions at the right time potentially saving lives.

Members welcomed the informative update along with the positive action to address ASB and were reassured that the work of the TravelSafe Partnership would continue to ensure that the network was attractive, safe for everyone to use and responded to the serious nature relating to crime in particular hotspots.

Whilst it was noted that crime and ASB remained an issue, appreciation and recognition for the ongoing targeted partnership work to tackle crime and Anti-Social Behaviour across the network, in particular the Oldham/Rochdale line was offered on behalf of the Committee. It was further requested that publication of convictions for matters relating to crime and ASB across the Metrolink network be considered and investigated to provide greater reassurance.

Members reflected on the seriousness of recent incidents which included knife crime with the continued pressures on policing and it was suggested that a uniform presence akin to the British Transport Police may become necessary as the network continues to develop.

The Committee welcomed the recent request to provide a breakdown of patronage by line and noted that the Oldham/Rochdale line had the third highest level across the network. Further information to clarify the number of carriages used for journeys across Oldham/Rochdale line was requested.

The recent and continued increase in patronage was welcomed and Members requested that future reports include data relating to face covering compliance which had featured in previous updates.

Resolved /-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That on behalf of the Committee, appreciation and recognition of the ongoing targeted partnership work to tackle crime and Anti-Social Behaviour across the network, in particular the Oldham/Rochdale line be received.
3. That further investigation and consideration be provided to the publication of convictions for matters relating to crime and ASB across the Metrolink network.
4. That the breakdown of patronage across the network on a line-by-line basis continue to be received and that further information to clarify the number of carriages used for journeys across Oldham/Rochdale line be provided by TfGM to Councillor Norman Briggs (Oldham Council).
5. That information relating to face covering compliance across the network be included in future updates to the Committee if available.

GMTMRC 48/21 METROLINK OPERATOR UPDATE

Resolved /-

That the update provided by TfGM on behalf of KAM as part of the Metrolink Service Performance report be noted.

GMTMRC 49/21 LOCAL RAIL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Simon Elliott, Head of Rail Programme, TfGM provided an update to members on rail service and operation across Greater Manchester over rail periods five and six for 2021/22 (25 July – 18 September 2021) following the removal of all remaining Covid restrictions in England on 19 July 2021.

Operational performance during the period for all train operating companies serving Greater Manchester was reported to be good and remained consistent. Reported PPM for Northern and TPE was above 90% and Right Time at Destination figures of around 70%. Cancellations stayed relatively low, at between 3% - 4% for Northern and TPE, although higher for the longer distance operators, notably East Midlands Railway.

Train services in the period were reduced at the end of July/beginning of August by Avanti West Coast and Northern, as a direct result of exponential rises in Covid isolation alerts and crew availability. Services were subsequently re-introduced on 16 August for Avanti and 6 September for Northern. Following the re-instatement, overall service levels were currently at around 82% of pre-Covid, reflecting those last seen, albeit briefly in December 2020, before the third national lockdown was introduced.

Nationally, patronage was reported between 65-70% of pre-Covid which indicated that rail services in the Northwest were recovering more notably than other areas driven mainly by the leisure market.

It was advised that face covering compliance on services had significantly decreased since the last report from approximately 35% to 10-15% and observance was higher in the morning peak of the City Centre and on longer distance services.

Plans for Christmas services had not been finalised, but it was anticipated they were likely to follow a similar pattern to previous years; with earlier finishes on Christmas and New Year's Eves, no GM services on Christmas Day or Boxing Day and some later starts during the interim period and New Year's Day, followed by a normal service. Bank holidays Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 would see a standard service, albeit with some early morning services not running.

The Committee were informed that from 1 October until 12 December, a fleet of seven Network Rail vehicles would be deployed across the network clearing leaves and treating tracks to reduce adhesion problems caused by compacted leaf-mulch.

The response to the Manchester Recovery Task Force consultation which took place between 14 January and 10 March 2021 had been published by government and the next stage of this process would be a detailed operator timetable consultation for the timetable to be operated in 2022 and was due to be launched imminently.

Members were advised that TfGM were continuing to work with local communities and station groups on various projects in the region. Furthermore, TfGM were supporting the creation of a Community Rail Partnership on Manchester to Liverpool routes to fully exploit the leisure, economic and social opportunities which exist along the lines. TfGM were hoping to be able to hold its regular 'Thank-You' event on behalf of the Chair for station volunteer groups in January 2022.

Resolved /-

That the report be noted.

GMTMRC 50/21 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 performance had remained strong but recent severe delays were due to adverse weather conditions and work was underway with Network Rail to mitigate for the future.

Demand was currently 65% of pre-Covid levels across the network with much of the split for leisure and the remainder for business which was reported to be increasing particularly on the Manchester to London route. The introduction of three different classes had increased popularity with standard premium being a popular product.

Timetable changes would see an uplift in services from December to three trains per hour on the Manchester to London service recognising the increased demand.

Members were informed that the Pendolino fleet were due to be refurbished which would include seating, wi-fi and carpeting. The first of the upgraded fleet would be in operation by the end of the year or early 2022 with the remainder programmed for completion by 2024. Alongside this, procurement for the new detached fleet was ongoing and would arrive in service in 2023/24 replacing Voyagers.

An overview of the work being undertaken at Stockport along with the community rail partnership project at Wigan station was provided.

- Northern Rail – further detail on timetable changes to come into effect on 12 December were provided which included the addition of Sunday services which reflected the increase in demand.

Members were informed of operational decisions that would come into effect to manage increased demand around the Christmas period.

There had been reported spikes of ASB around Manchester Oxford Rd, Brinnington and Bredbury stations. Resources were being targeted and support from BTP and GMP to address the issues was acknowledged.

An update on the progress of the accessibility taskforce was provided and Members were informed that a 3D street view of stations along with virtual reality technology had been launched to enhance the experience for those with accessibility needs.

It was noted that thirty out of ninety train stations across GM were currently without a station adopter scheme and members of the Committee were encouraged to signpost any suitable community groups to Northern to become station adopters.

Leisure patronage at the weekends was reported to be at similar levels pre pandemic, however demand for commuting was still somewhat suppressed at 75% pre-Covid levels further adding to the financial challenges across the industry.

Members welcomed the update and requested that further consideration to the re-introduction of Sunday services to and from Rose Hill train station in future timetable changes be provided should there be a clear achievable balance between demand/resource and cost effectiveness.

Concern was raised with regards to complaints that had been received from the public by Members of the Committee in relation to train cancellations that had resulted in last train connection issues at Manchester Piccadilly station. Members were advised that Northern had received direct customer complaints in relation to last train cancellations and the subsequent approach of station staff at Piccadilly. It was agreed that direct complaint details be provided to Chris Jackson to ensure the significant issue was investigated further and direct feedback provided to customers. Furthermore, it was determined that assurance would be sought by TfGM from Network Rail on behalf of passengers requiring support at Piccadilly Train station on final train cancellations.

- Trans Pennine Express (TPE) – patronage was reported to be 68-70% pre-Covid levels during the week with increased demand over the weekends. Going forward, 99% of bookings on Anglo/Scottish routes were at pre-Covid levels and Christmas booking were also reported to be strong across the network. There was also an increased demand in commuter routes between Leeds and Manchester.

Timetable changes would be on the whole rolled over apart from the reinstatement of services between Manchester airport and Glasgow in December and Manchester to Hull services would see an increase in carriages.

Members requested that TPE provide further consideration to the suggestion that services to Glasgow and Edinburgh stop more regularly at Carstairs station. Furthermore, that future timetable changes take into consideration the request for all services between Manchester airport to Glasgow and Edinburgh stop at Bolton train station should capacity allow.

Resolved /-

1. That the update be noted.
2. That it be noted that thirty out of ninety train stations across GM were currently without a station adopter scheme and members of the Committee be encouraged to signpost any suitable community groups to Northern to become station adopters.

3. That Northern provide further consideration to the re-introduction of Sunday services to and from Rose Hill train station in future timetable changes should there be a clear achievable balance between demand/resource and cost effectiveness.
4. That further assurance be requested from the Committee and sought by TfGM from Network Rail on behalf of passengers requiring support at Piccadilly Train station on final train cancellations.
5. That it be noted that Northern had received direct customer complaints in relation to last train cancellations and the subsequent approach of station staff at Piccadilly and it be agreed that Councillor Emma Taylor (Manchester) to provide direct complaint details to Chris Jackson (Northern) to ensure the significant issue was investigated further and direct feedback provided to customers.
6. That TPE provide further consideration to the suggestion by Councillor Clarke (Stockport) to the possibility of Anglo/Scottish services to Glasgow and Edinburgh stopping more regularly at Carstairs station.
7. That future timetable changes by TPE take into consideration the request raised by Councillor Haslam (Bolton) for all services between Manchester airport to Glasgow and Edinburgh to stop at Bolton train station should there be adequate capacity.

GMTMRC 51/21 MANCHESTER RECOVERY TASKFORCE UPDATE

Gary Bogan, Director of the Rail North Partnership, TfN provided an overview of the partnership role of the organisation and in doing so acknowledged the work of operators, throughout the pandemic, to manage disruption and provide an achievable level of service and timetable for passengers.

An overview of the issues that had resulted in the development of the Manchester Recovery Taskforce and those organisations working in partnership to address the unacceptable levels of performance was provided.

Members were reminded that the initial consultation with regards to timetable changes ran between 14 January and 10 March 2021. The findings of the consultation had been published in October 2021 and the next stage of the process was a detailed operator timetable consultation for the timetable to be operated in 2022 which was due to be launched imminently.

Lesson learned from the previous round of consultation had been implemented and it was advised that funding would continue for the Manchester Recovery Taskforce on a more permanent basis.

Resolved /-

That the update be noted.

GMTMRC 52/21 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 53/21 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved /-

Friday 14 January 2022

Friday 11 March 2022

All Meetings to commence at 10:30am