

GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

METROLINK AND RAIL NETWORKS SUB-COMMITTEE

Date: 14 January 2022

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.

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Danny Vaughan Head of Metrolink

daniel.vaughan@tfgm.com

Victoria Mercer

Metrolink Service Delivery Manager

victoria.mercer@tfgm.com

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: 3

- Appendix 1: Period date listing
- Appendix 2: Patronage by line
- Appendix 3: Face covering compliance

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee: n/a

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 n/a

Overview & Scrutiny Committee n/a

1. ABOUT METROLINK

- 1.0 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.
- 1.1 The Metrolink network is owned by TfGM and is operated on TfGM's behalf through a contract with KeolisAmey Metrolink (KAM).
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 There are currently 132 operational trams serviced from two depots.
- 1.4 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

- 2.0 The Metrolink Quarterly Performance Report provides a performance summary for the rolling 12-month period.
- 2.1 Patronage continued to increase and by early December patronage levels had reached circa 76% of pre-pandemic levels. Though this was prior to the implementation of the "plan B" government guidelines, which ask people to work from home where possible.
- 2.2 Face covering once again became mandatory in most indoor public places and on public transport. Following the commencement of this change in guidelines compliance saw a significant increase from 23% to 62% (Appendix 3).
- 2.3 Operational performance during October and November 2021 held steady compared with recent periods, though it remained under target, primarily due to staff availability, which has been a problem across all public transport operations.
- 2.4 There were two fatal accidents in December. In one case a male fell from the platform into the path of a double tram as it departed Deansgate Castlefield. In the

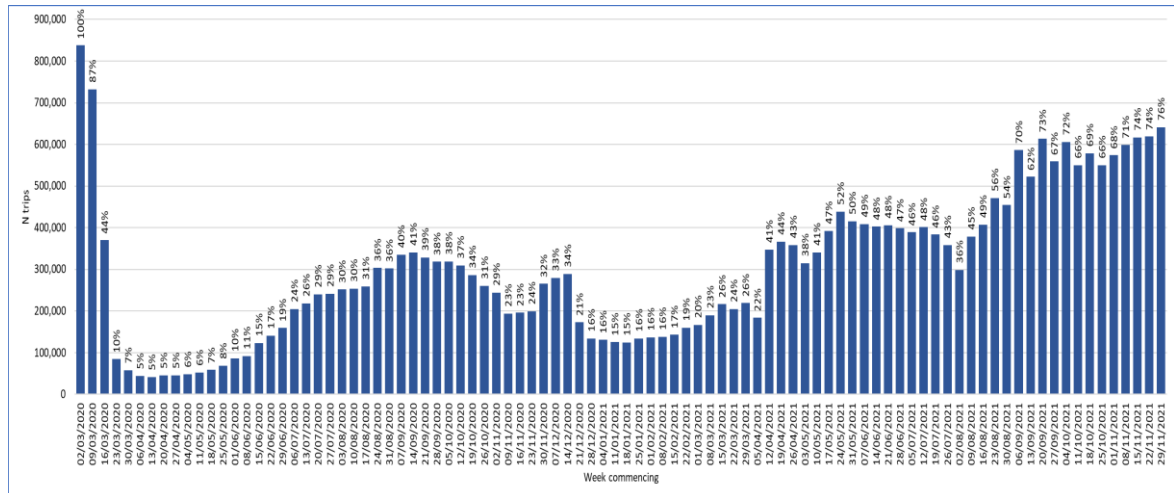
other a female fell from the auto-coupler while climbing between the trams from the street side at Droylsden tram stop.

- 2.5 During the period a significant amount of work with Greater Manchester Police took place targeting hot spot locations as well as mobile operations across the entire network. This was underpinned by a TravelSafe anti-social behaviour communications campaign which included the public launch of the Greater Manchester Police 'LiveChat' across public transport. LiveChat provides the public with a discreet method for reporting incidents directly to the police.
- 2.6 The launch of various initiatives through the Safer Streets funding has commenced with staff from Oldham Council's Youth Service, volunteers for Oldham Street Angels and dedicated Metrolink TravelSafe Officers working together. Work is also underway to roll out vulnerability and harassment training/awareness to all KAM frontline staff. Early 2022 will also see the launch of a public transport dedicated GMP drone to increase surveillance capabilities.
- 2.7 Short notice service changes were necessary on New Year's Eve due to COVID related driver availability issues. On New Year's Eve, the Airport, Ashton and Eccles routes were withdrawn from 5pm until the end of service, with bus replacement operating between Ashton and Piccadilly. Customer Service Representatives were deployed to best advantage to ensure up to date information was available to customers. Minimal customer feedback was observed.
- 2.8 Following the seasonal pause, planned engineering and renewals works commenced in January and were communicated to customers in advance of the Christmas break. This also includes works by 3rd parties such as Network Rail at Victoria station, with the first weekend works by Network Rail and Metrolink track renewal successfully completed between the 1-3 January.

3. PATRONAGE

- 3.0 Patronage measures the number of single journeys that are being made on the network.

- 3.1 Covid significantly impacted patronage on the Metrolink network as can be seen in the chart below, with patronage levels reaching circa. 76% of pre-Covid levels by the first week in December. That was prior to enhanced government “Plan B” restrictions.



- 3.2 Patronage was recovering steadily following half-term week (25/10/21), with strong performance of leisure trips. Several weekends have recorded above pre-Covid levels of demand due to football matches and the City Centre Christmas markets. Thursday 02/12/21 (MUFC vs Arsenal) recorded the highest number of journeys on a single weekday since March 2020 - 117,000 journeys, 86% of pre-Covid trips. Patronage has been declining since the Plan B measures were announced by government.
- 3.3 Crowding issues on the network continue to be closely correlated with events taking place across the region, and performance related impacts primarily resulting from Covid related driver absence. These issues are being managed dynamically on a day-to-day basis to minimise the impact on passengers and provide supplemented capacity where the service is being affected, subject to staffing levels.
- 3.4 The breakdown of patronage by line can be found in Appendix2.

4. FUNDING

- 4.0 A package of support from central government covering most of, but not all, of Metrolink's costs has been agreed for the remainder of the 2021/22 financial year. The projected 21/22 deficit is currently being reviewed considering the drop in patronage with Omicron and ongoing inflationary pressures on the Metrolink cost base.
- 4.1 Discussions are ongoing with DfT about funding for Metrolink beyond March 2022. However, ongoing support remains uncertain and any decision is unlikely until early 2022. Following similar discussions, TfL have agreed in principle with Government that they will achieve operational financial sustainability by March 2023, and this will require significant changes in their operation.

5. OPERATIONAL AND CUSTOMER PERFORMANCE

- 5.0 Operational performance during periods 7 and 8 continued to be affected by staff shortages, especially within the driver cohort.
- 5.1 Having subsequently reinstated almost all pre-Covid capacity in September, Metrolink has been not able to achieve pre-pandemic service levels. On average, on non-event days, 97% of scheduled miles are operated. Most cancellations are due to driver availability.
- 5.2 The current establishment of fully qualified drivers is lower than that required for the full service due to normal attrition rates being higher than the rate at which drivers could be recruited and trained under social distancing constraints during the pandemic.
- 5.3 A combination of seasonal absences and Covid related absences on top of this means that not all duties can be filled, even with record levels of overtime. As mid-December, 56 drivers were absent due to illness (13% - although this fluctuates daily with an overall increasing trend). The pre-Covid, or "normal" absence rate was 4.5% by comparison.
- 5.4 Due to the ongoing resource constraints, and the implementation of "Plan B" measures, service levels may need to be reduced in order to provide a more stable

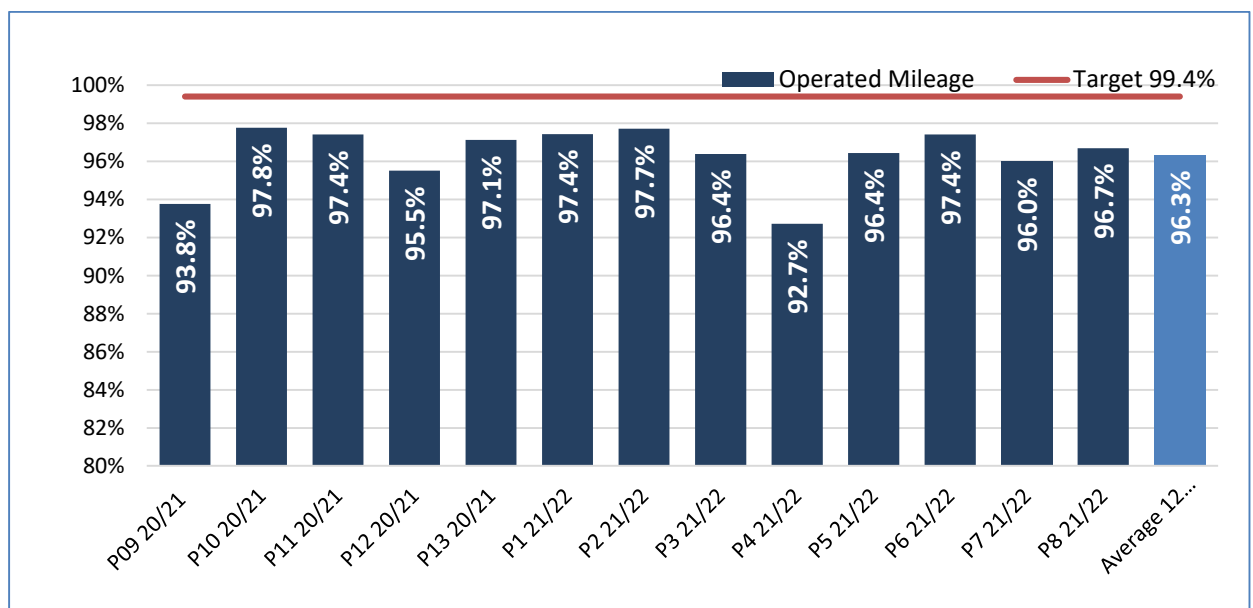
service. The situation is under daily monitoring, together with passenger demand, and any changes will be tailored to demand and advertised to passengers.

Reliability

5.5 Reliability is measured by operated mileage. Operated mileage is the number of tram vehicle miles operated verses the number of scheduled miles with a target of 99.4% before the pandemic.

Reliability has been between 96% and 97% in recent periods. Aside from staffing issues, the incidents which most influenced performance in recent periods were:

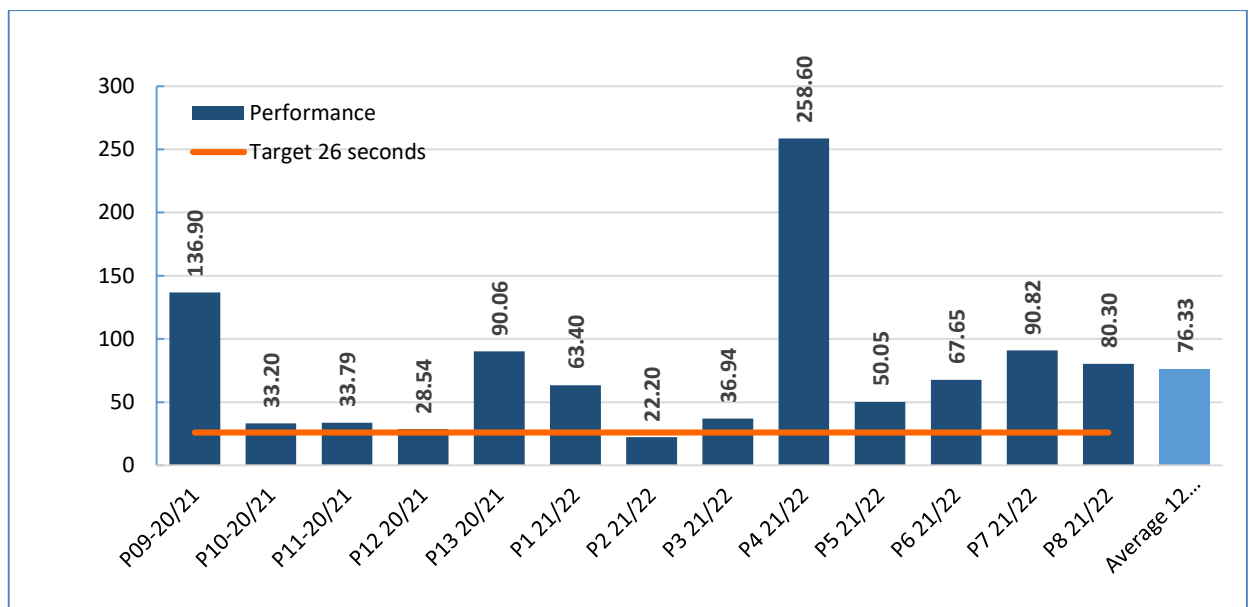
- Period 7: on 9 October, emergency engineering works took place at Deansgate-Castlefield to repair a cracked rail.
- Period 8: on 3 November, a road traffic collision took place near Market Street stop and this impacted all services crossing the city centre.



Excess Wait Time

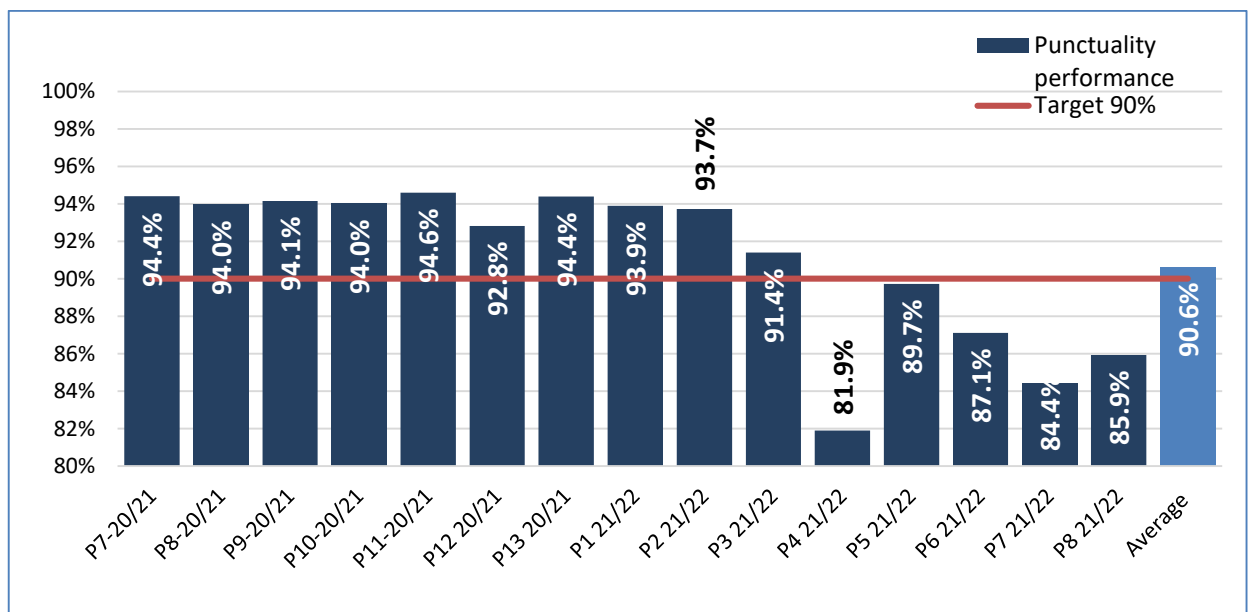
5.6 Excess Wait Time (EWT) is a measure of punctuality. It is the average time passengers wait over what would have been expected if the service was running exactly as scheduled.

- 5.7 The average EWT performance for the 12 months to November 2021 was 76.3 seconds against a pre-pandemic target of 26 seconds. Once again staff shortages are the main reason for missing long run targets.
- 5.8 Performance in periods 7 and 8 was impacted by the incidents described above in 3.5, as well as an overhead line fault at Pomona stop on 8 October and a minor derailment at Rochdale Railway Station stop on 5/6 November.
- 5.9 The chart below shows EWT performance over the year. In this case a lower number is better performance for our passengers. Note that Period 4 performance (summer 2021) was significantly affected by Covid related staff absences arising from test and trace notifications.



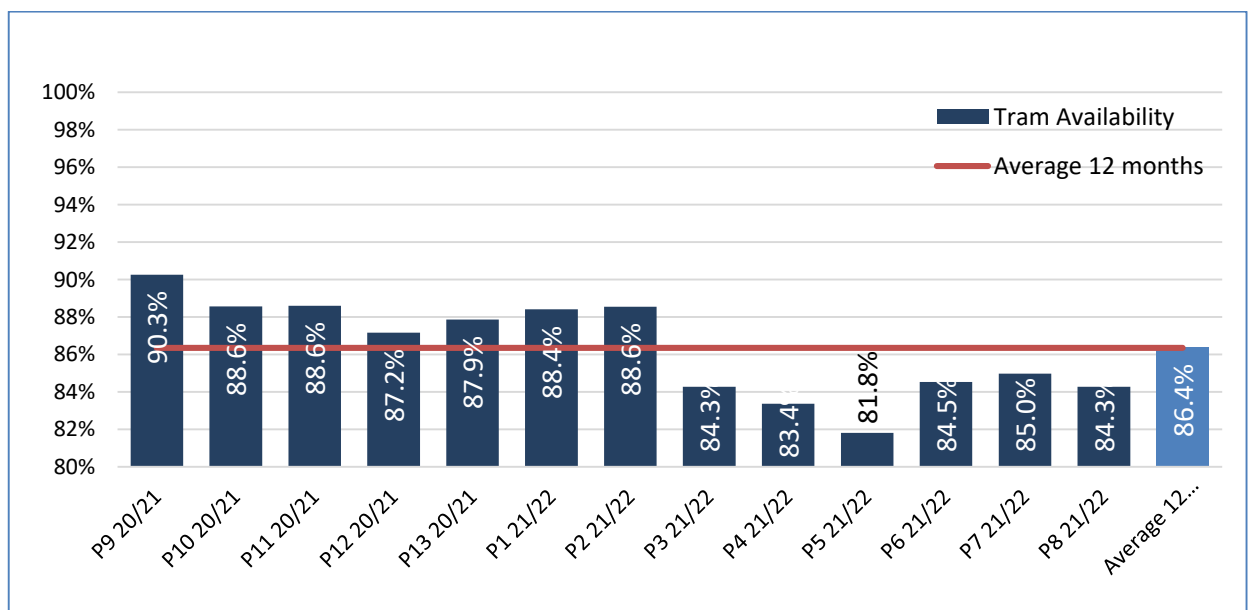
Punctuality - Percentage of services operating to time.

- 5.10 Punctuality performance covering the previous 12 months (13 periods) is shown below. Performance dipped below target for the first time from period 4 due to the ongoing issues experienced with staff unavailability, as outlined previously. However, the average for the previous 12 months remains above target.



Asset reliability - Trams

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



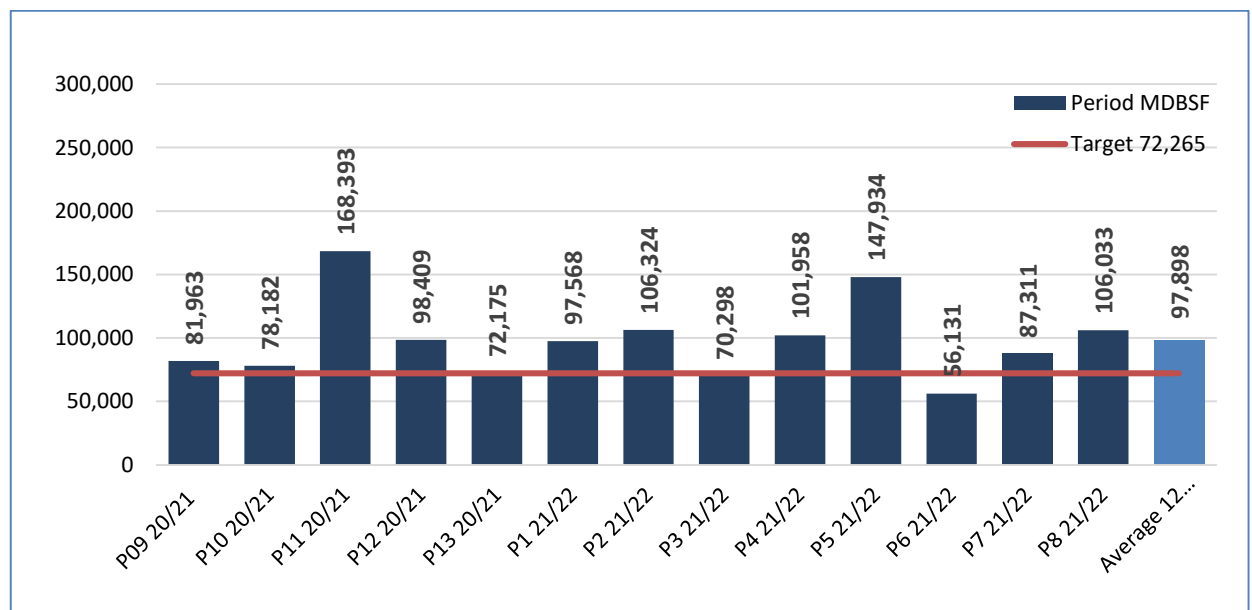
- 5.12 Vandalism continues to be a significant issue, resulting in smashed glazing and damage to ceiling panels. Supply chain problems continue to delay repairs to

vehicles which then impacts vehicle availability on a day to day basis. Supply chain problems vary from covid related impacts with suppliers and longer lead times on spare parts arising from Brexit.

- 5.13 Staffing levels in the KAM engineering department continue to be impacted by the pandemic.

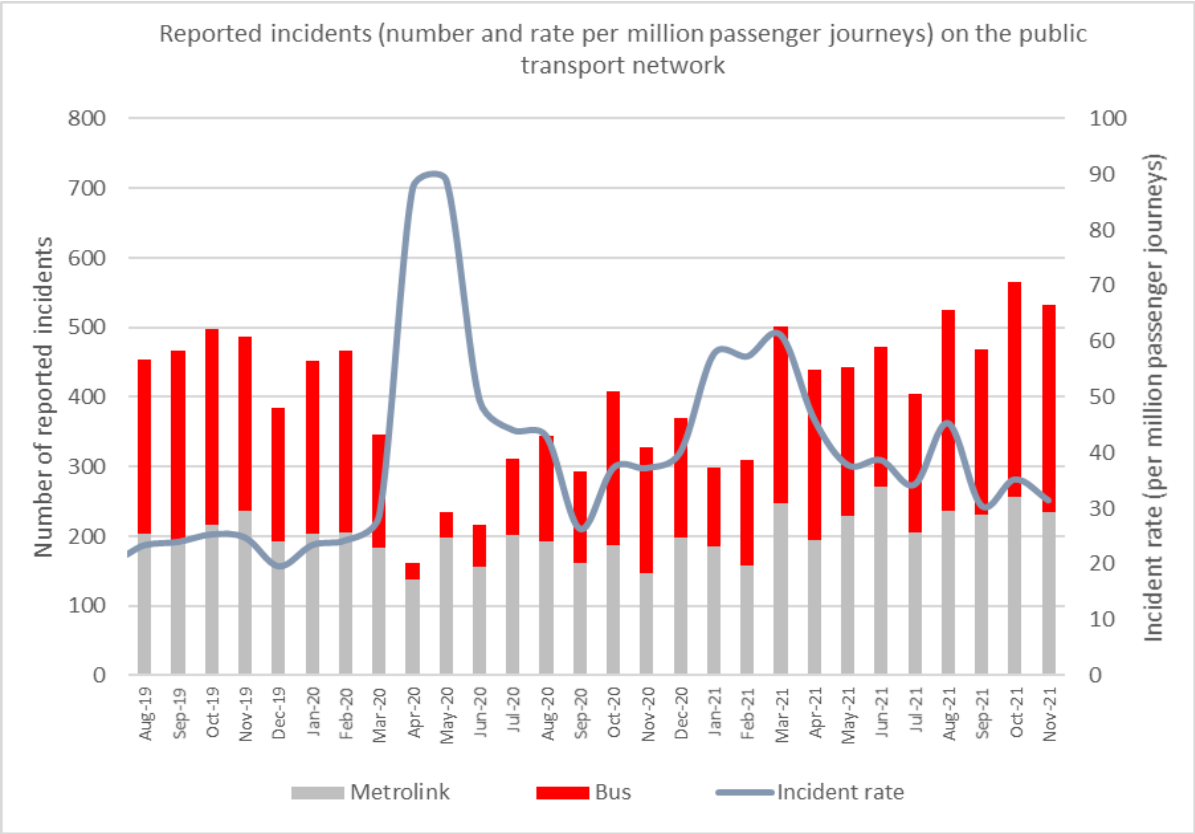
Asset reliability – Infrastructure

- 5.14 Infrastructure reliability performance, in terms of service distance travelled between failures. Examples of some of the infrastructure equipment covered by this category are signalling systems, overhead line, track and traction substations.
- 5.15 Infrastructure assets performed well in periods 7 and 8, returning to well above target. The average 12 month rolling performance remains positive.



Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour

- 5.16 On average, 219 incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour per month were reported to Metrolink over last 12 months.



Crime & ASB Category	Nov 2019	Nov 2021	Change in incident s
	Reported Incidents	Reported incidents	
ASB	11	22	100%
Assault (inc. domestic incidents)	39	26	-33%
Damage to Property	25	55	120%
Drink and Drug Related Incidents	10	4	-60%
Harassment & Intimidation	67	65	-3%
Obstruction/Interfere with Network Operations	23	30	30%
Other Public Order	12	7	-42%
Robbery & Thefts	25	11	-56%
Sexual Assault/Sexual Incident	16	7	-56%
Tram Surfing	2	2	0%
Weapons Incident	7	5	-29%
Grand Total	237	234	-1%

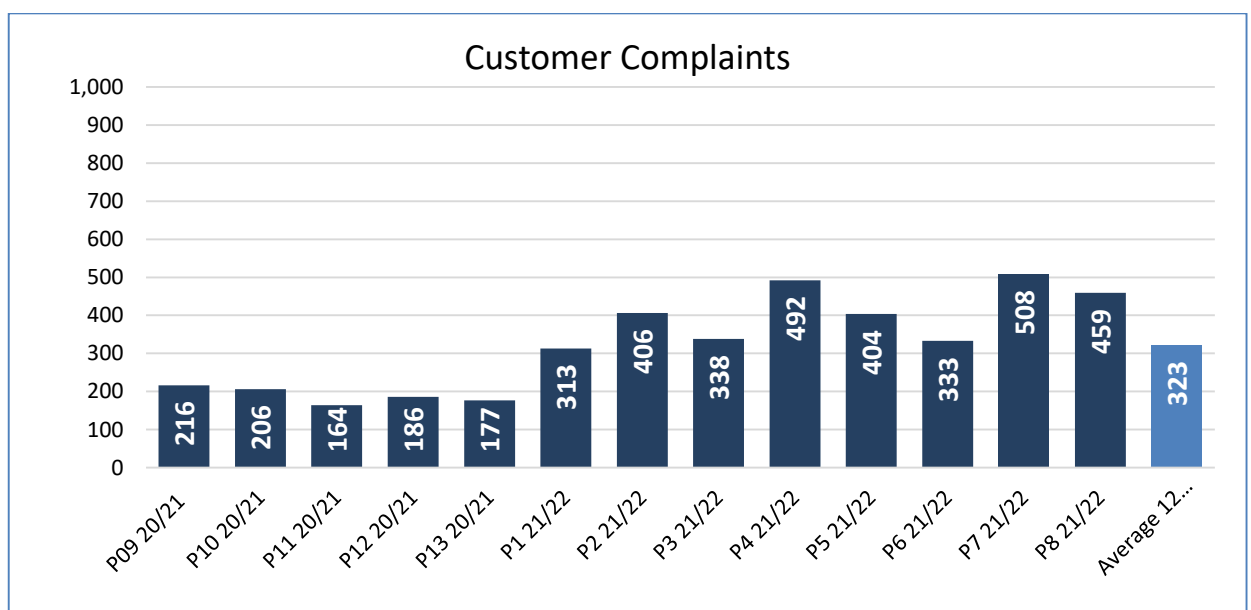
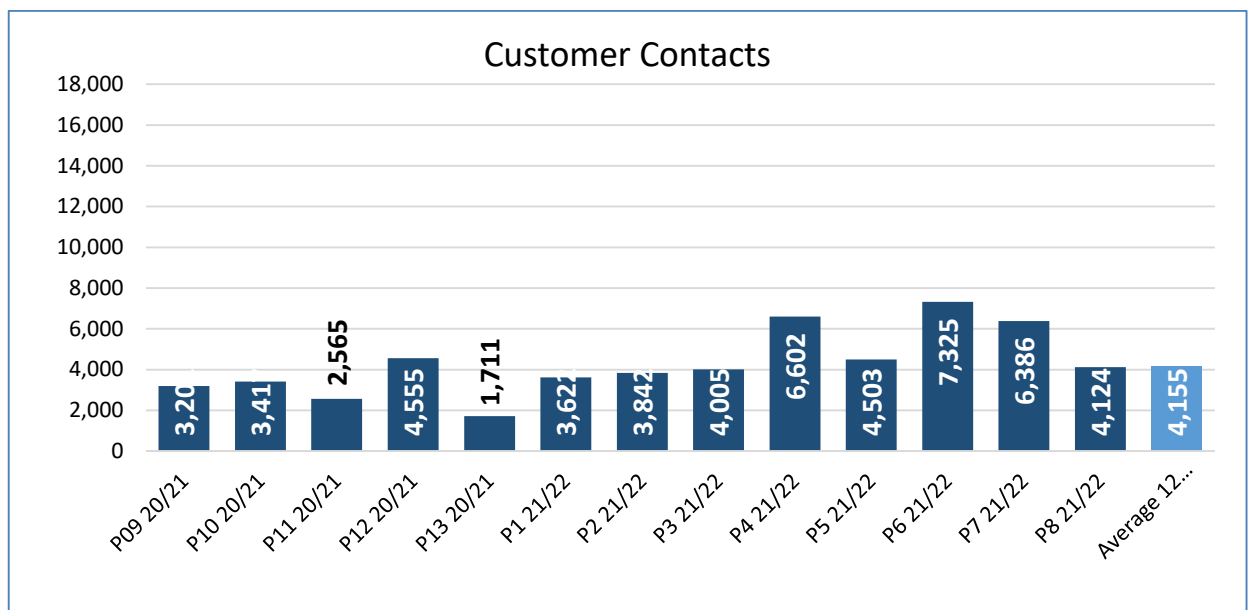
- 5.17 Criminal damage continues to be an issue on the network and periods 7 and 8 saw more incidents on Oldham Rochdale line than any other line. Failsworth was a hotspot location where the most significant issue was criminal damage to shelters. This location was a priority for deployment of staff with an increased presence from the Transport Unit, local police and TravelSafe Officers.
- 5.18 Period 7 and 8 saw an increase in youth related anti-social behaviour on the network, especially on the Airport line. The incidents primarily involve youths engaging in anti-social behaviour and activating door handles, which results in delays on the network and distress to passengers. Out of 27 incidents reported in October 2021, 25 were on the section of line between Wythenshawe Town Centre and Wythenshawe Park. However, from mid-November this type of incident on the Airport line has seen a reduction.
- 5.19 In comparison with October and November 2019, there has been a decrease in assaults with 18 in October and 26 in November 2021. Of the 26 assaults reported

in November, 10 were against staff and 16 involved members of the public, eight were reported on a Saturday and all took place between 17:00 and midnight.

- 5.20 On 10 October, an incident took place involving approximately 30 youths at Radcliffe Park and Ride. Several weapons were involved including machetes, however, no serious injuries were incurred. Seven juveniles have since been arrested, and an investigation into the incident is ongoing. The Bury line was a priority prior to this incident and an increased presence by the Greater Manchester Police and TravelSafe Officers continued to reassure the public.
- 5.21 TravelSafe specialist operations were carried out across the network throughout October and November on the following dates: 8 October (Bury-Whitefield), 15 October (Victoria), 21 October (Rochdale-Newbold), 25 October (Bury-Radcliffe), 28 October (Piccadilly Gardens), 03,15 and 22 November (Bury Interchange and Bury line), 10 November (Ashton), 14 and 18 November (City Centre) and 23 November (Altrincham Interchange).
- 5.22 As part of the Safer Streets pilot, but also linked to wider TravelSafe Partnership aims, a discreet method of reporting has been launched and publicised across public transport using the GMP LiveChat service. Since its launch at the beginning of November, traffic to the page has been growing week on week, jumping from an average of four to 103 in the week commencing 13 December. This has led to an increase in reporting of issues, including harassment which would have previously likely gone unreported. The campaign will also focus on highlighting the network's safety features (including CCTV and help points) as well as how to report incidents.

Customer contacts and complaints

- 5.23 Just under 56,000 customer contacts were dealt with during the year, averaging at 4,297 customer contacts per period (excluding twitter).
- 5.24 The number of queries and complaints has risen in periods 7 and 8 compared with periods 5 and 6, though complaints remain well below the levels seen pre-covid.



Customer Experience and Engagement

- 5.25 The 'Trusted People' element of the Oldham Safer Streets Pilot has now launched to help women and girls feel safe and confident when using the tram network. Staff from Oldham Council's Youth Service, volunteers for Oldham Street Angels and dedicated Metrolink TravelSafe Officers are working together, riding on Metrolink, visiting tram stops, and the areas around them and talking with residents of all ages. The teams are offering a friendly face around the Oldham tram stops in case residents are feeling uneasy, especially as the winter nights draw in.

- 5.26 From November 2021 to March 2022, the Youth Service are covering the stops between Freehold and Oldham Mumps at times when they are busy with school pupils and college students, with the Street Angels covering the later hours and dedicated TravelSafe Officers are covering the full period.
- 5.27 Funding for Trusted People comes after Greater Manchester secured £550k from the Home Office to launch a series of schemes as part of the Greater Manchester-wide Safer Streets campaign, which aims to help helping women and girls feel safer when out and about in the city-region. It follows the launch of Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA) Gender-Based Violence Strategy, which outlines how GMCA and its partners will tackle the many forms of gender-based violence through a whole-system approach over the next 10 years.
- 5.28 Work is also underway to commission and begin the roll out of vulnerability and harassment training/awareness to all KAM frontline staff. This work will include a 'train the trainer' package to ensure long term sustainability.
- 5.29 Early 2022 will also see the launch of a public transport dedicated (GMP piloted) drone to increase surveillance capabilities, and in particular more remote areas.
- 5.30 Throughout periods 7 and 8, KAM also continued to engage with schools and colleges with the support of TravelSafe colleagues. During period 8, staff attended an assembly at Chorlton High school to engage with the new intake of year 7 students. Safety and security were key themes of the assembly. KAM also attended Oldham college in the period to help deter anti-social behaviour. Some of the sessions were supported by PCSOs.
- 5.31 KAM's School Engagement team supported visits for students at Queens Road and Trafford depots. As part of this the team gave insights into the role of the tram driver, as well as letting the students have a go on the tram simulator.
- 5.32 KAM Customer Service Representatives continued to work with Barnabus's outreach team during period 7 and 8, navigating city centre Metrolink stops, to identify those who are homeless or may require extra support. They engage with those in need and provide assistance where appropriate. During period 8, KAM's Community Engagement team also attended the Barnabus Beacon Centre in

Manchester city centre. This session was open to members of the public who were able to ask questions about how to use the Metrolink network. The Beacon Centre is a vital support for vulnerable people in the community, providing medical check-ups, clean clothes and a place to shower.

- 5.33 KAM's Community Engagement team carried out a series of roadshows during period 8. These took place on the Altrincham and Trafford Park lines to offer reassurance to customers travelling within the Trafford area where COVID-19 infection rates had significantly increased. The team handed out hand gels and face coverings and offered advice to those travelling. 237 customers engaged with the team and the overriding message was that majority of customers felt confident travelling on Metrolink given the measures which are in place to regularly clean the trams and infrastructure.
- 5.34 The Community Engagement team also worked closely with TfGM, supporting local communities in the Trafford area in relation to the delivery of a poetry trail funded by the Arts Council. This entailed a free creative writing adventure for children and families in the M16 postcode area.

6. FORWARD LOOK

Planned network renewals 2022

- 6.0 The programme of disruptive access to deliver 2022 asset renewals is a rolling schedule. 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.
- 6.1 Most of these essential works during 2022 are to replace sections of track at key locations on the network of which some will require longer closures to enable the completion.
- 6.2 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.

Upcoming works, January to March 2022:

- January 2022: Network Rail Transpennine Upgrade (TRU) works at Victoria, Piccadilly track works, and Altrincham and Bury signalling renewal works. *The first scheduled works at Victoria for TRU and Metrolink rail renewals from 1st – 3rd January were completed successfully and handed back to service on schedule.*
- February 2022: Network Rail TRU at Victoria and Eccles track renewals to coincide with school half term.
- March 2022: Deansgate points replacement, Piccadilly Gardens and Piccadilly track renewals.

Information will be available online at [tfgm.com](https://www.tfgm.com).

Danny Vaughan

Head of Metrolink, TfGM

Appendix 1 - Period date listing

This report details the highlighted Period/s

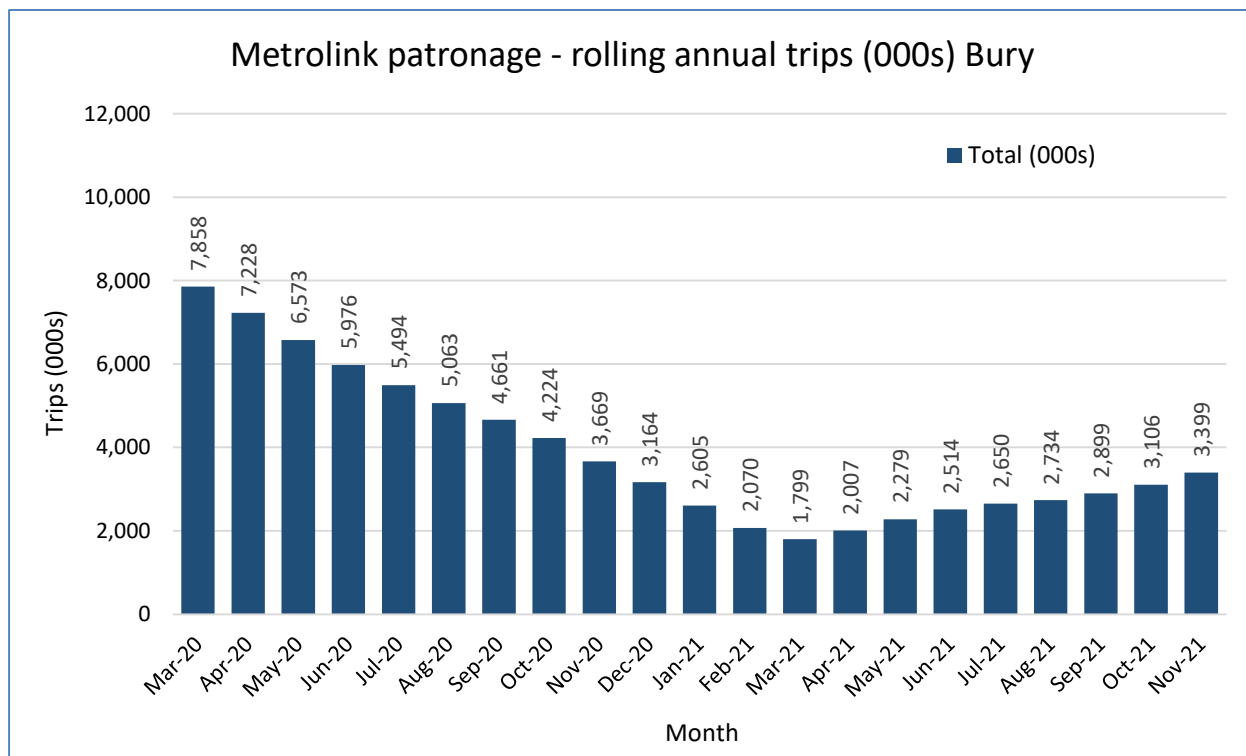
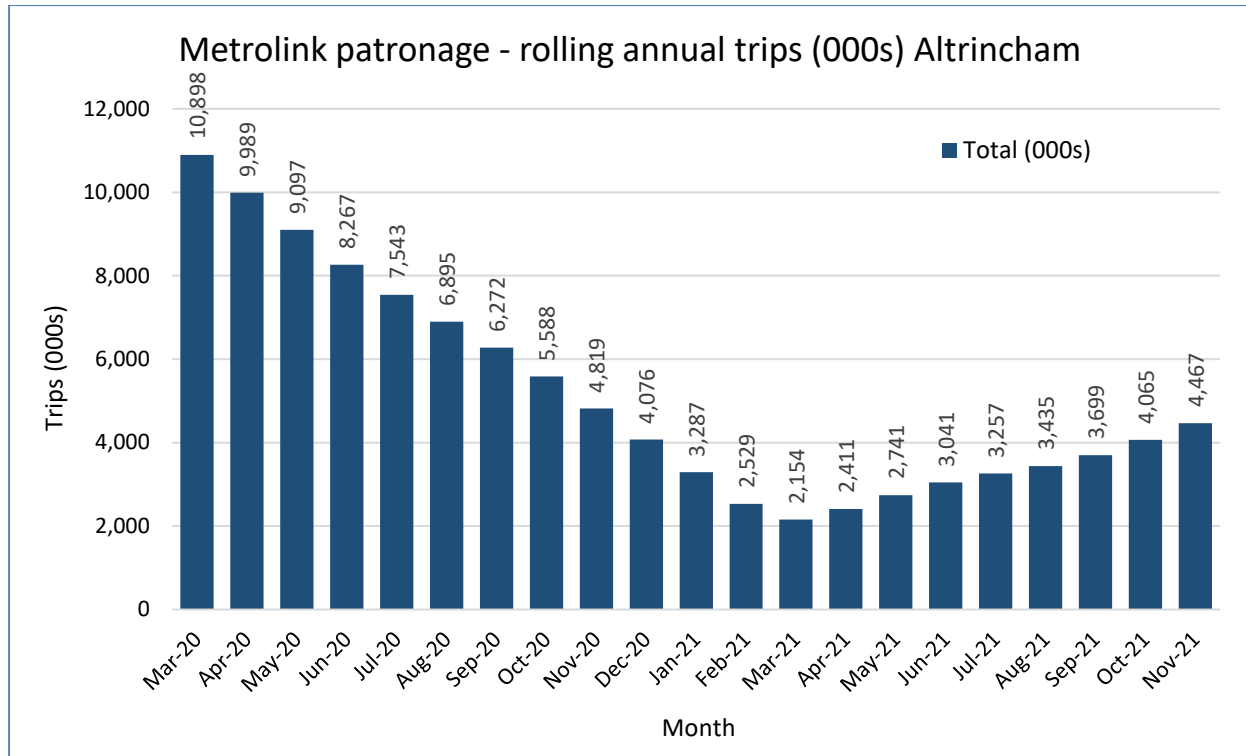
2020/21

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

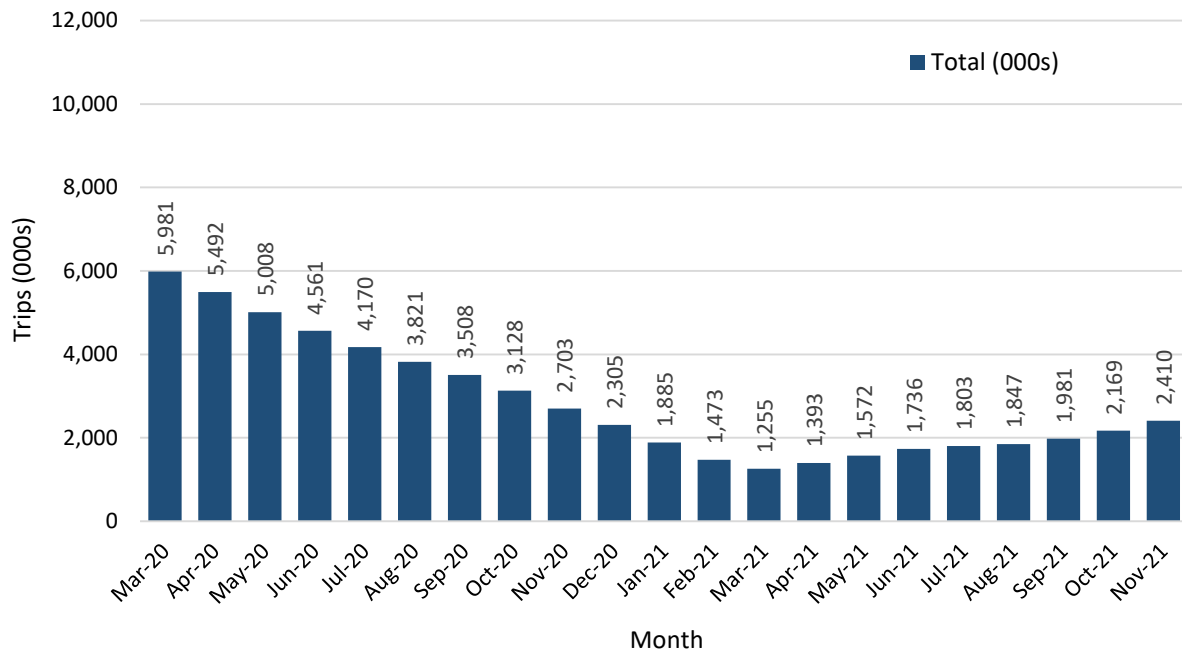
2021/22

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

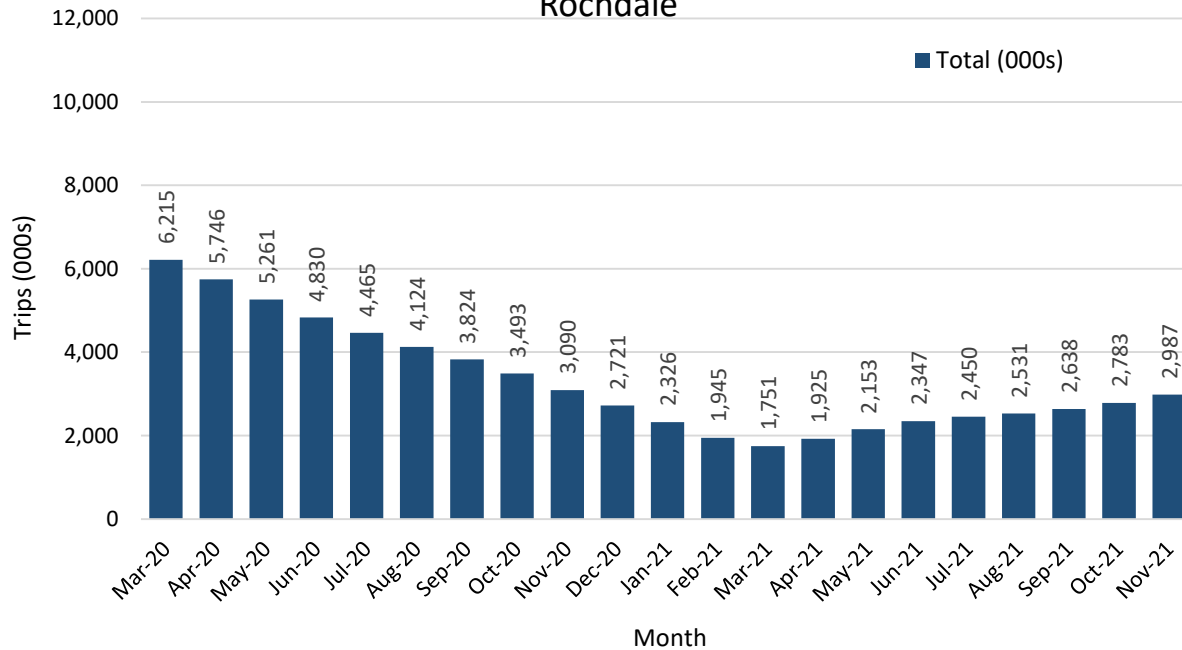
Appendix 2 – Patronage by line



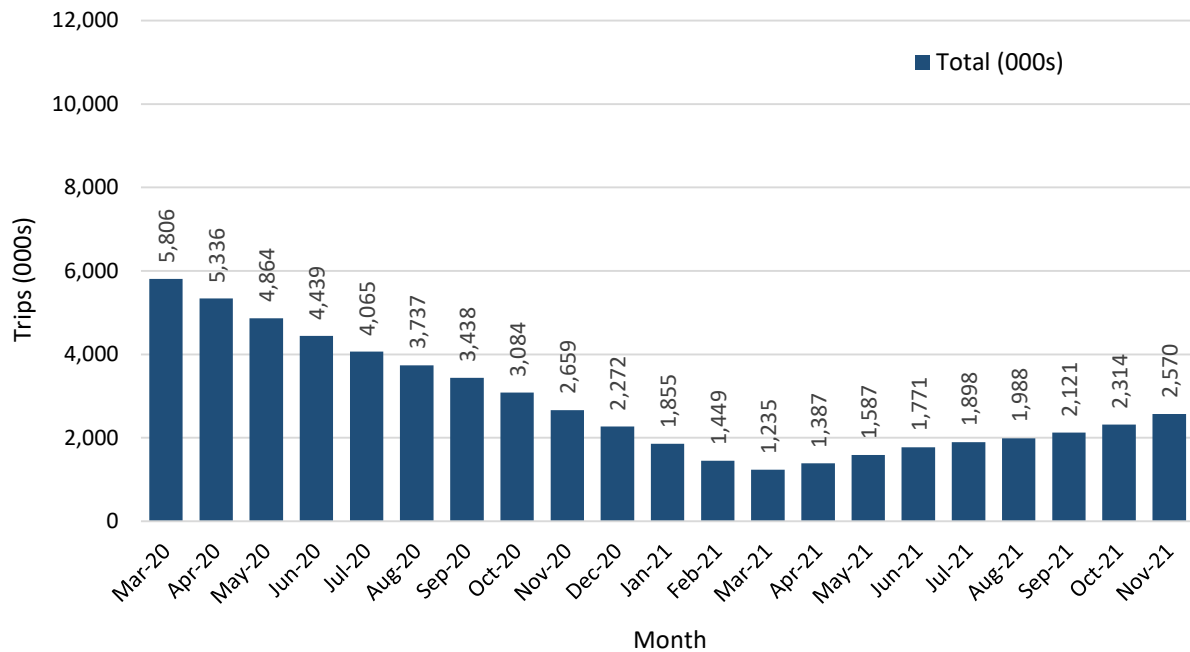
Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) Eccles



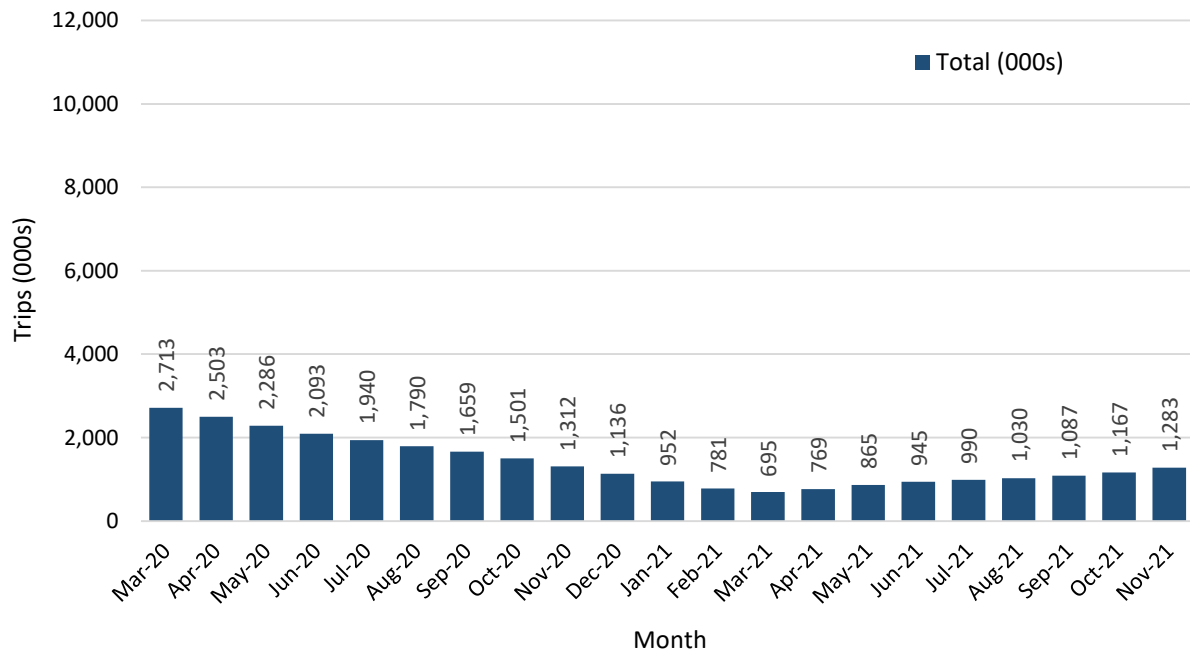
Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) Oldham
Rochdale



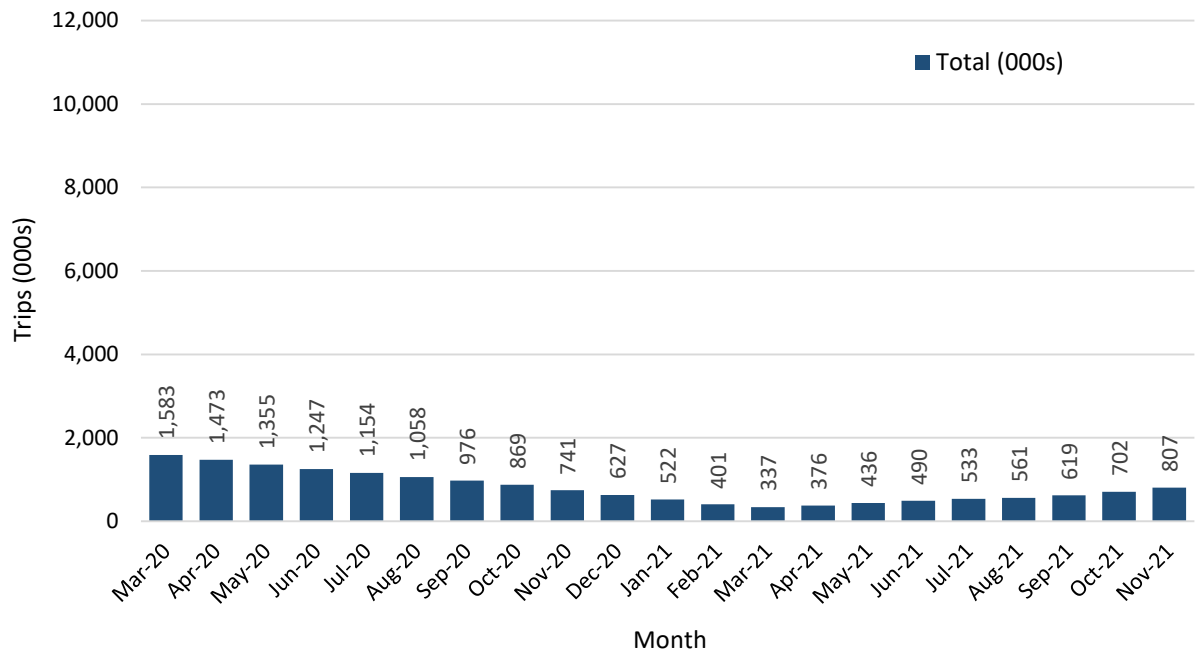
Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) East Didsbury



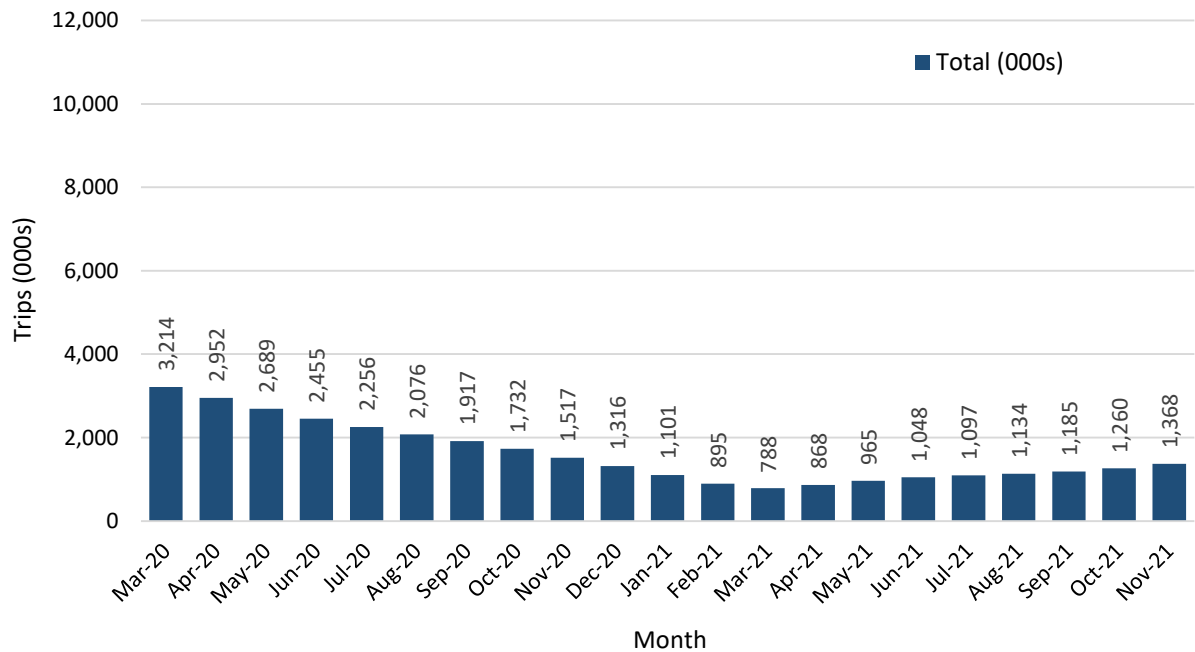
Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) Ashton

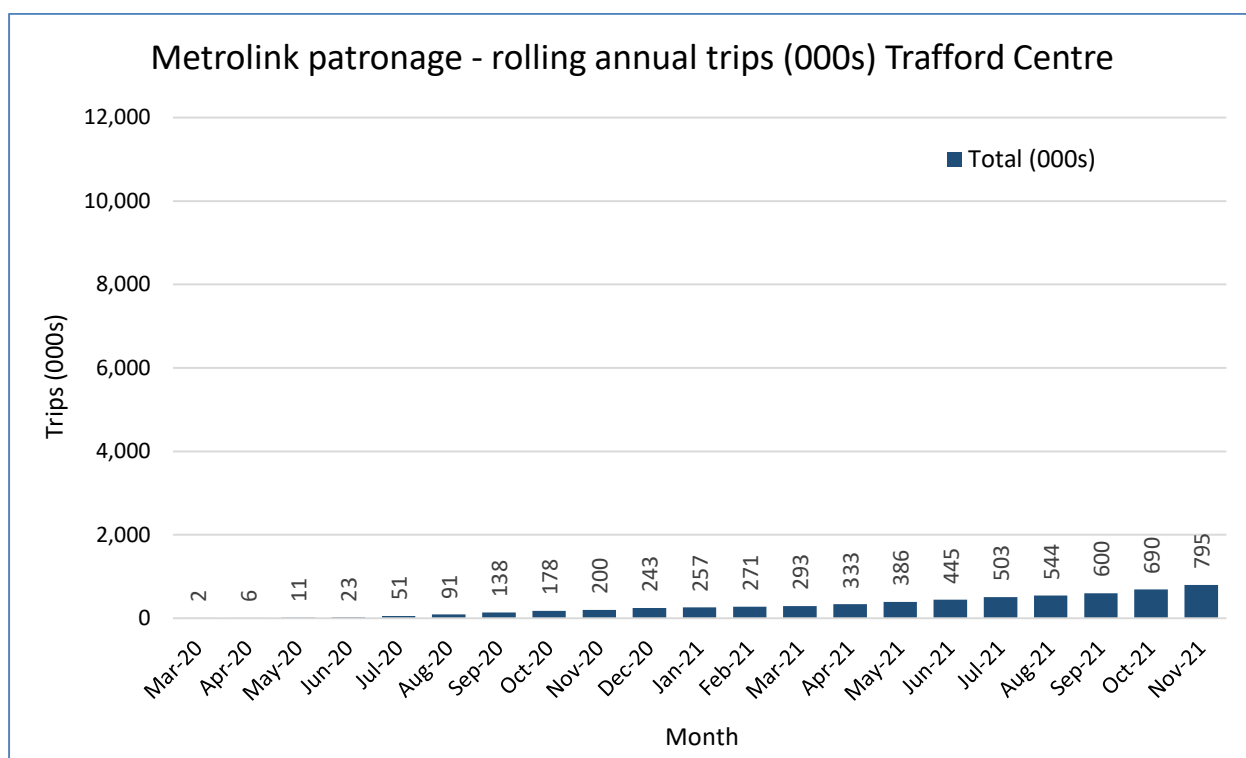


Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) City



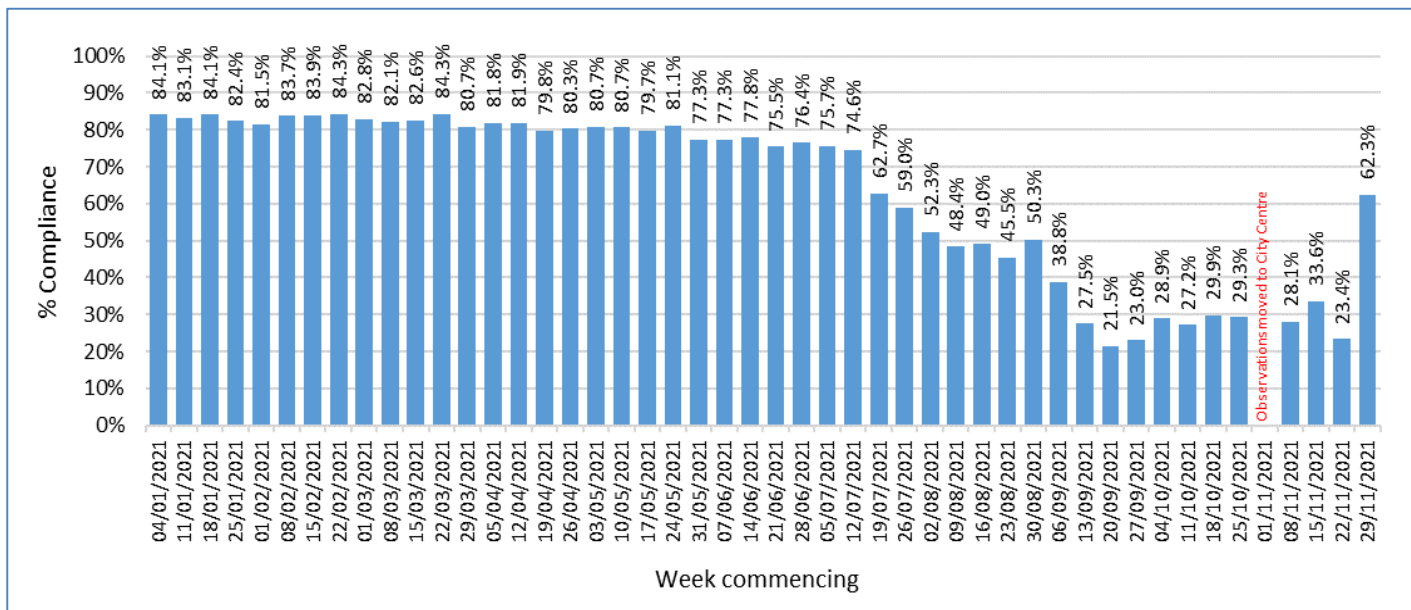
Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) Airport





Note that the Trafford Park Line opened on 22 March 2020 and government COVID-19 “Stay at home” restrictions commenced on 23 March 2020.

Appendix 3 – Face covering compliance



Note that compliance monitoring moved to the city centre only from 1 November 2021.