

# GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

## METROLINK AND RAIL NETWORKS SUB-COMMITTEE

Date: 11 March 2022

Subject: Metrolink Service Performance

Report of: Danny Vaughan, Head of Metrolink, TfGM

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### 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:

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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: 3**

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

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

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** Metrolink Service Performance report of 14 January 2022

## **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**

- 1.1 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 and maintained 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 134 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 Enhanced government "Plan B" restrictions had a significant impact upon patronage levels in mid-December. Patronage reduced to circa 41% of pre-Covid levels during the final week before Christmas.
- 2.3 Plan B restrictions, including the requirement to wear face coverings, ceased to be mandatory in indoor public places and on public transport on 27 January 2022. Following the commencement of this change in guidelines, we have subsequently seen a decrease in face covering usage (Appendix 3).
- 2.4 Operational performance during December 2021 and January 2022 held steady compared with recent periods and it remained under target, primarily due to ongoing staff availability issues, which had been a problem across all public transport operations.

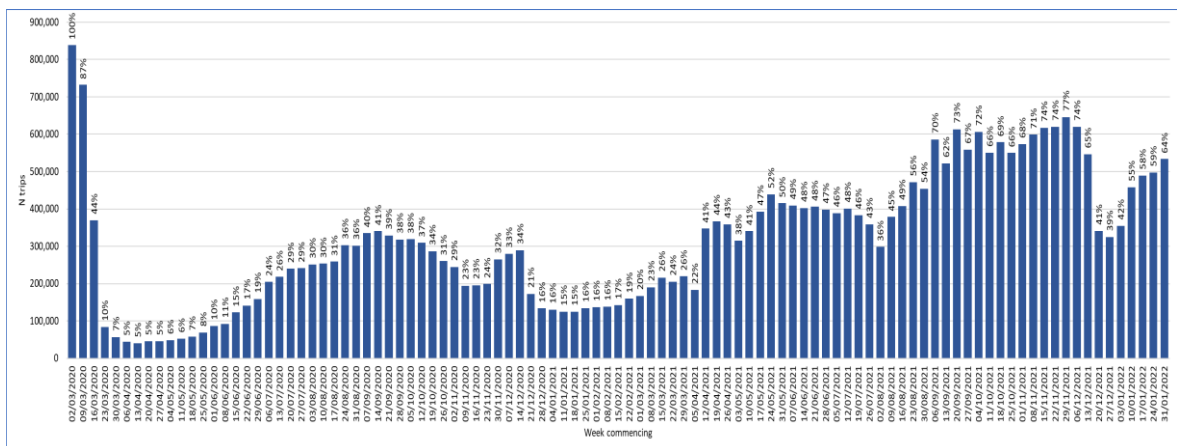
2.5 From late January 2022 onwards, Metrolink started to see staff availability return towards pre-Covid levels following the reduction in Omicron cases and the removal of government restrictions. As a result, performance has significantly improved in period 11 (9 January to 5 February 2022).

2.6 Planned engineering and renewals works continue in February and March. This includes works by 3<sup>rd</sup> parties such as Network Rail at Victoria station which impact on Metrolink services.

### 3. PATRONAGE

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

3.2 Enhanced government “Plan B” restrictions had a significant impact upon patronage levels from week commencing 13 December 2021, which can be seen in the chart below. Patronage reduced to circa 41% of pre-Covid levels during the final week before Christmas, a week which historically would have been one of the busiest weeks of the year on the network.



3.3 Post-Christmas, patronage has begun to recover slowly as education returns and the relaxation of work from home guidance on 19 January 2022 brings a phased return to workplaces for financial and professional services employees, within the context of seasonality impacts suppressing non-food shopping and leisure demand.

- 3.4 Journeys correlated to football matches and large concerts in the city centre continues to contribute to patronage on the network, and although overall, patronage has recovered to 64% of pre-pandemic levels, this can increase to 70% - 80% of pre-pandemic patronage levels on matchdays.
- 3.5 Consequently, crowding issues on the network continue to be closely related to events taking place across the region, and performance related impacts primarily having resulted from Covid related driver absence. These issues continue to be managed dynamically on a day-to-day basis to minimise the impact on passengers.
- 3.6 The breakdown of patronage by line can be found in Appendix 2.

## **4. FUNDING**

- 4.1 A package of support from central government covering most of Metrolink's costs has been agreed for the remainder of the 2021/22 financial year. Discussions are ongoing with DfT about funding for Metrolink beyond March 2022.

## **5. OPERATIONAL AND CUSTOMER PERFORMANCE**

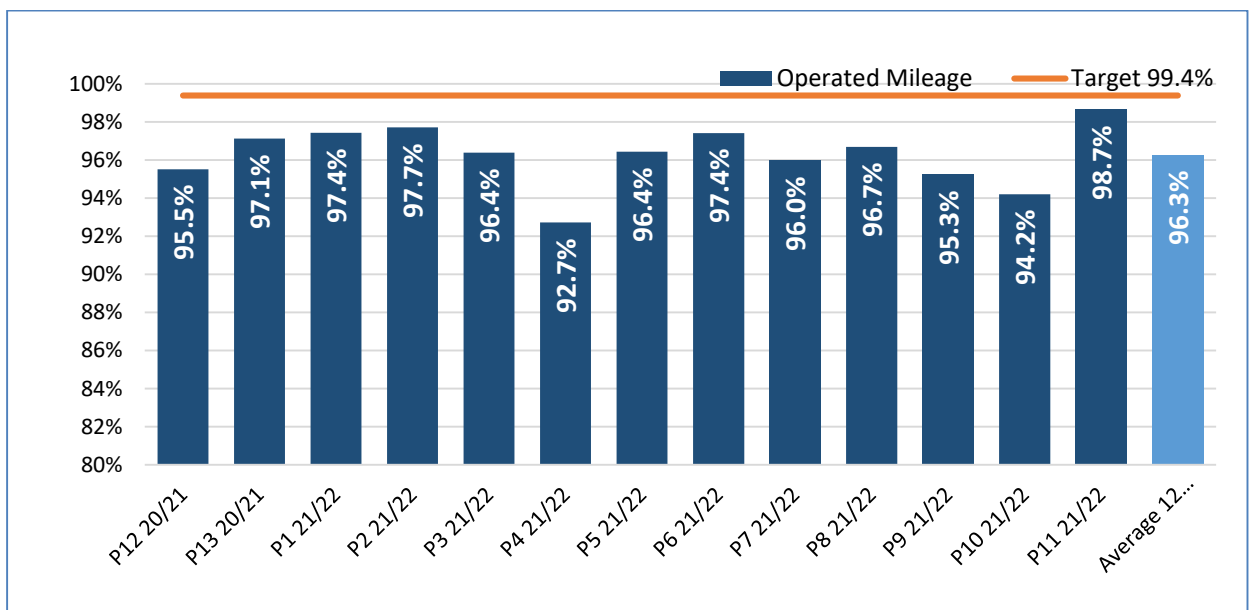
- 5.1 Operational performance during periods 9 and 10 continued to be affected by staff shortages, especially within the driver cohort.
- 5.2 Driver availability issues were ongoing throughout the festive period and resulted in the requirement to terminate services early (5pm) on New Year's Eve, on the Airport, Ashton and Eccles lines. This reduction was necessary to ensure a stable service across as much of the network as possible.
- 5.3 Period 11 saw a return to much more normal levels of staff availability, which was underlined by a significant improvement in overall performance in that period.

### **Reliability**

- 5.4 Reliability is measured by operated mileage. Operated mileage is the number of tram vehicle miles operated compared with the number of scheduled miles, with a target of 99.4% before the pandemic.

Reliability dipped in periods 9 and 10, but improved to the best performance in the past year during period 11. Aside from staffing issues, the incidents which most influenced performance in recent periods were:

- Period 9: on 27 November, a tree fell on the line near Newhey during Storm Arwen.
- Period 10: on 30 December, a signalling fault at Cornbrook impacted multiple routes for several hours.
- Period 11: on 10 January, several services operated as single trams rather than doubles. This contributed to the most significant loss of mileage in the period.



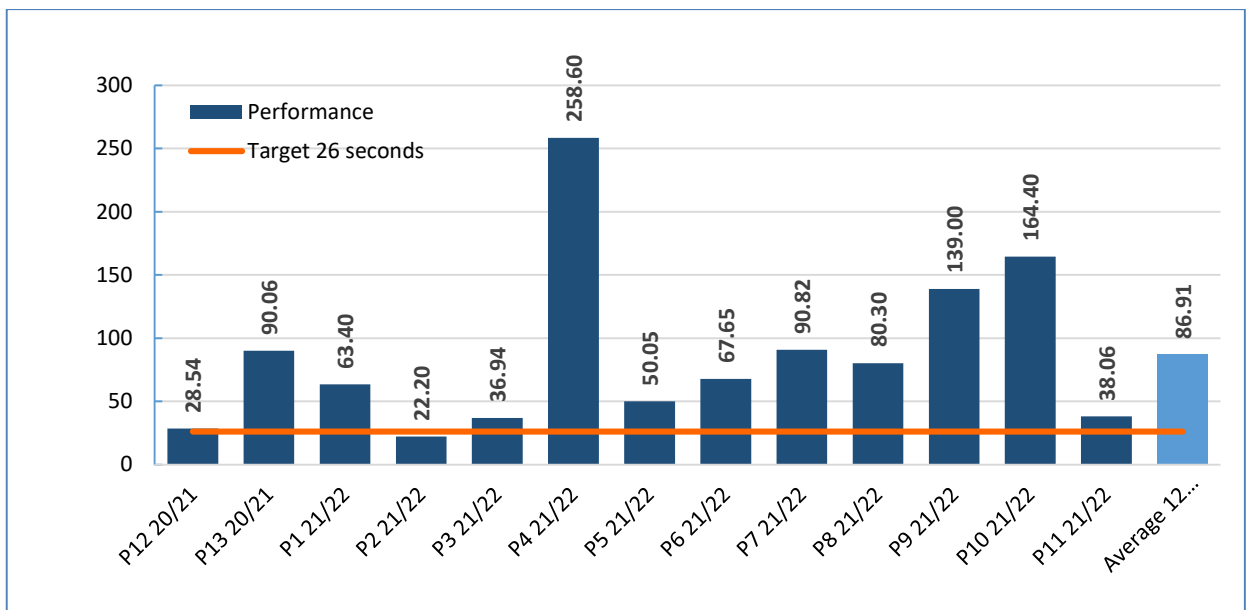
## Excess Wait Time

- 5.5 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.

5.6 The average EWT performance for the 12 months to February 2022 was 86.91 seconds against a pre-pandemic target of 26 seconds. Once again staff shortages are the main reason for missing long run targets.

5.7 Performance in periods 9,10 and 11 was impacted by the incidents described above in 5.4, as well as a collision with a pedestrian at Ashton Moss stop on 9 December. Period 11 shows a significantly improved performance, with the best result since summer 2021.

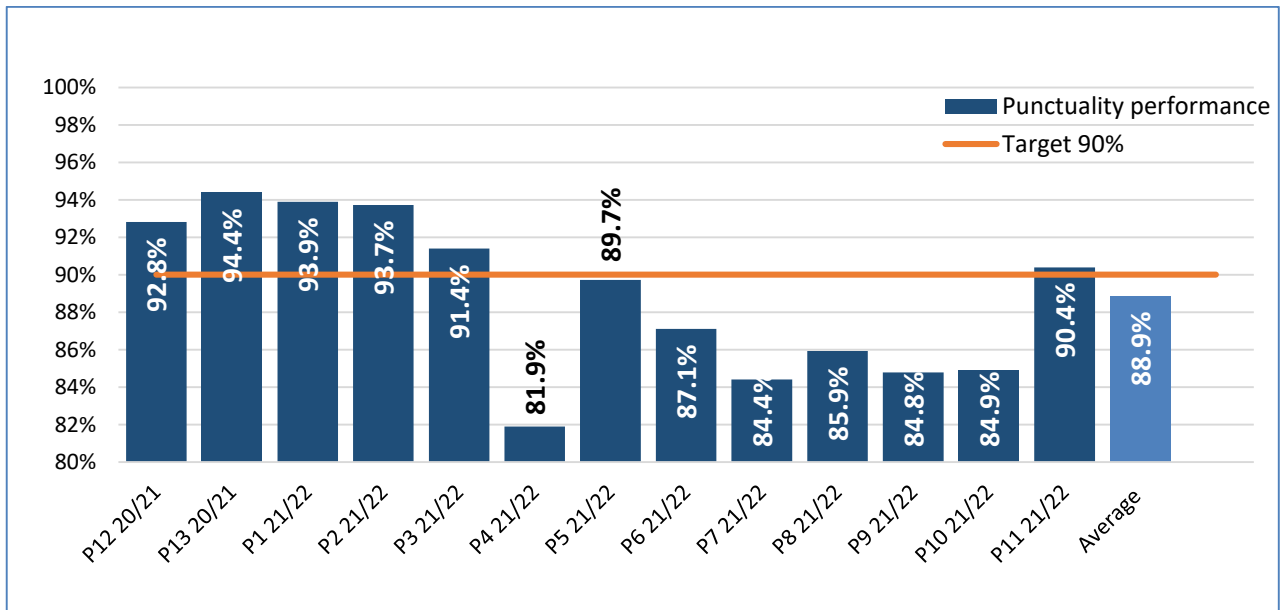
5.8 The chart below shows EWT performance over the year. In this case a lower number is better performance for our passengers. Note that Period 4 performance (summer 2021) was significantly affected by Covid related staff absences arising from test and trace notifications.



### **Punctuality - Percentage of services operating to time.**

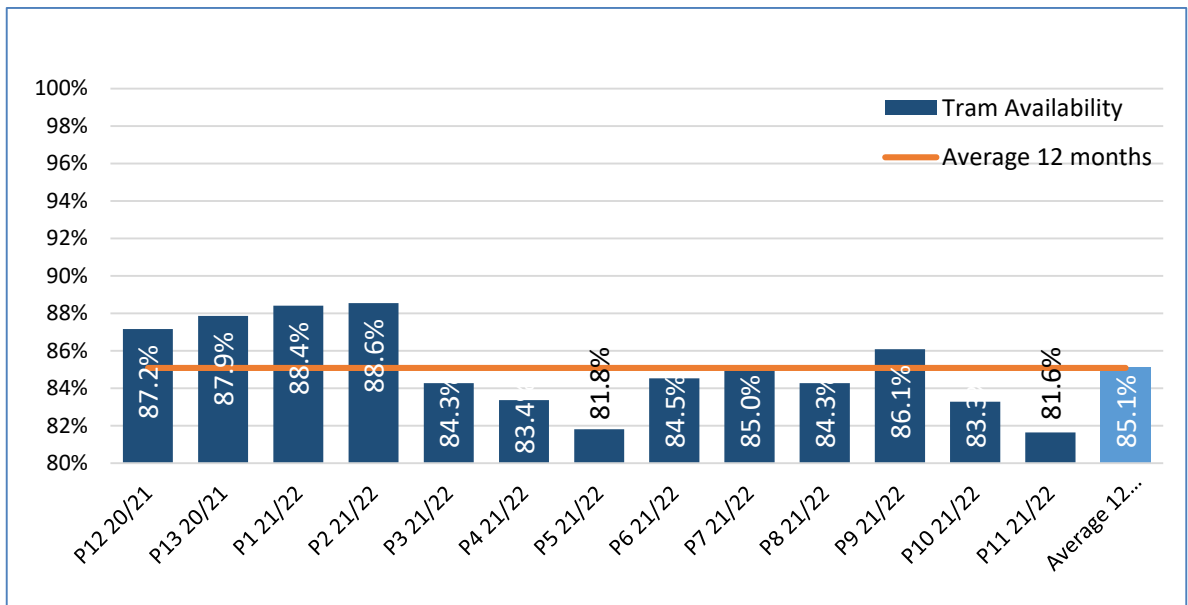
5.9 Punctuality performance covering the previous 12 months (13 periods) is shown below. Performance dipped below target for the first time from period 4 (summer 2021) due to the ongoing issues experienced with staff unavailability, as outlined previously. Performance in period 11 showed a return to above target punctuality.





## Asset reliability - Trams

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

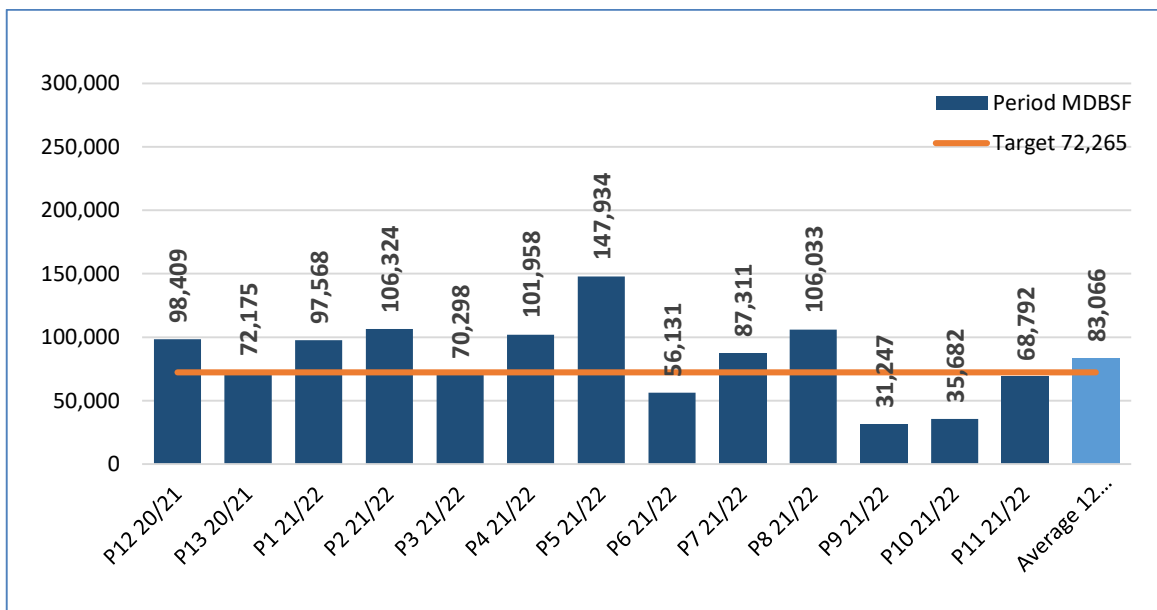


5.11 Vandalism continues to be a significant issue, resulting in smashed glazing and damage to ceiling panels. Supply chain problems continue to delay repairs to vehicles which then impacts vehicle availability on a day to day basis. Supply chain

problems vary from Covid related impacts with suppliers and longer lead times on spare parts arising from Brexit.

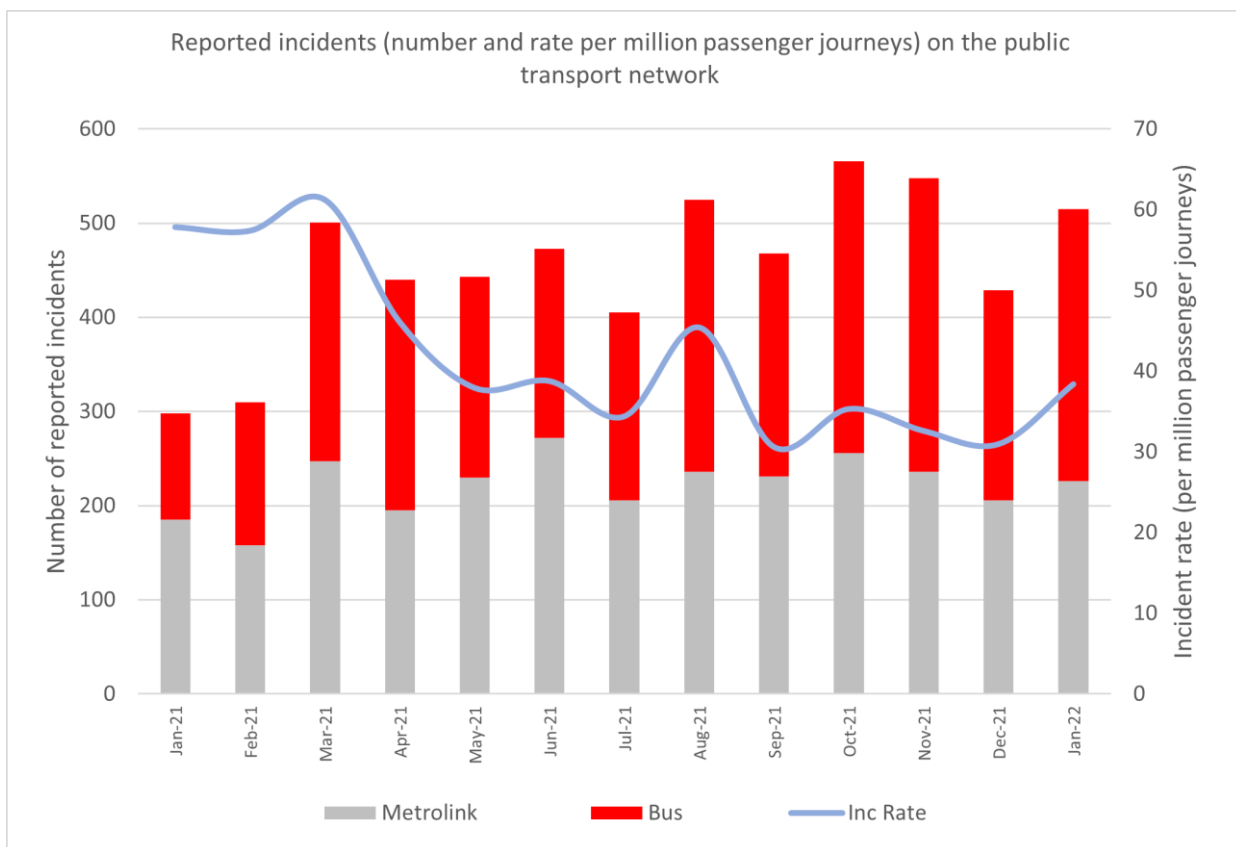
## Asset reliability – Infrastructure

- 5.12 Infrastructure reliability performance is measured 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.
- 5.13 Infrastructure asset performance deteriorated during periods 9 and 10, but subsequently improved to just under target in period 11. Period 9 especially saw sustained harsh weather which made rectification of faults extremely challenging. The average 12 month rolling performance remains positive.



## Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour

- 5.14 On average, 223 incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour per month were reported to Metrolink over last 12 months.



Crime & ASB Category	Jan 2019	Jan 2022
	Reported Incidents	Reported incidents
ASB	14	29
Assault (inc. domestic incidents)	25	16
Damage to Property	42	46
Drink and Drug Related Incidents	9	9
Harassment & Intimidation	55	52
Obstruct/Interfere with Network Operations	28	50
Other Public Order	12	4
Robbery & Thefts	23	11
Sexual Assault/Sexual Incident	3	4
Tram Surfing	4	1
Weapons Incident	5	4
Grand Total	220	226

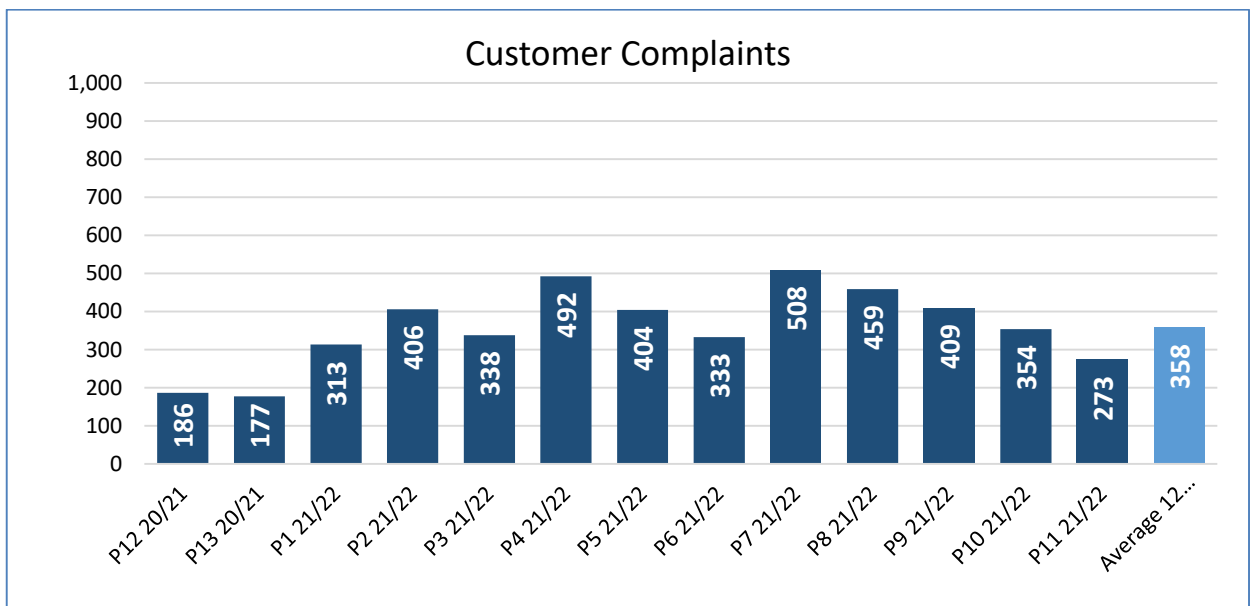
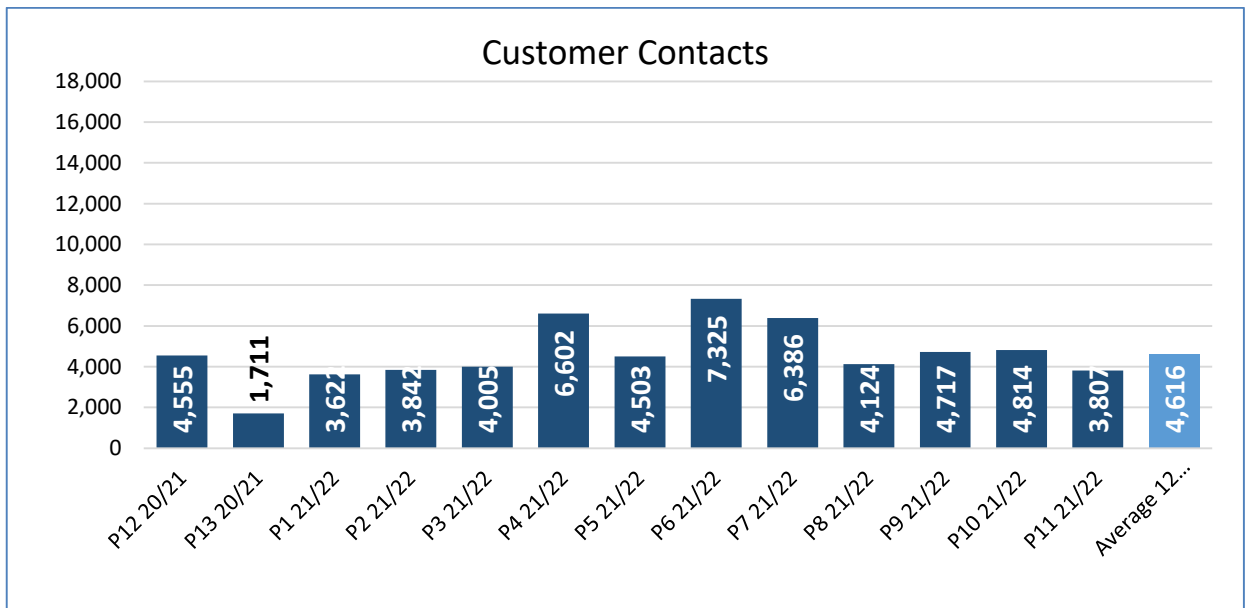
- 5.15 Criminal damage continues to be an issue on the network and periods 9, 10 and 11 saw more incidents on Oldham Rochdale line than any other lines. Failsworth continues to be a hotspot location where the most significant issue remains criminal damage to shelters. This line is a current TravelSafe tactical priority and TSO deployments are prioritised for this line especially during evenings.
- 5.16 Periods 10 and 11 saw an increase in youth related anti-social behaviour on the network especially on Oldham Rochdale and Airport lines. The incidents primarily involve youths engaging in anti-social behaviour and activating door handles, resulting in delays on the network and distress to passengers. Incidents of misuse of the door handles on the Airport line have decreased since period 9, however it is still an ongoing issue. Rochdale Town Centre stop saw an increase in youth related incidents with eight incidents of door handle activations on this stop alone.
- 5.17 TravelSafe specialist operations were carried out across the network throughout December and January
- 5.18 The specialist operation on 17 December at Victoria yielded positive results including: 3,200 passenger checks, two arrests, 22 stop/searches, 190 standard fares, three children being removed to safety and two care plans created. The GM Mayor also visited the operation and engaged with partnership staff which led positive media coverage (Manchester Evening News) as well as public sentiment on social media.

During period 9, a pilot of Safer Street was launched across five Metrolink stops in the Oldham area. Dedicated TravelSafe officers patrolled, working alongside Oldham Council Youth Team and Street Angels to help women and girls feel safer when travelling. Other initiatives include an increase in reporting of incidents via GMP Live Chat, training for 570 Metrolink staff, integration and upgrades to the CCTV system in key locations and a poster campaign across the tram network to educate the public.

## **Customer contacts and complaints**

5.19 Just over 60,000 customer contacts were dealt with during the year, averaging at 4,616 customer contacts per period (excluding twitter).

5.20 The number of customer queries has held steady for the past few periods and the number of complaints has reduced period on period since period 7. Both overall contacts and complaints remain well below the levels seen pre-Covid.



## **Customer Experience and Engagement**

- 5.21 KAM's School Engagement team continue to engage with the local community. Manchester Communication Academy were welcomed to Queens Road and Trafford depots whereby teachers and students were given the opportunity to have a go on the tram simulator and experience what it is like to be a tram driver.
- 5.22 The team also attended face to face and virtual assemblies with schools during periods 10 and 11, to promote safe travel on public transport and deter anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviours such as tram surfing, criminal damage and trespass were highlighted, as well as the need to be mindful of other passengers.
- 5.23 During period 11, KAM carried out its first restorative justice session with identified youths who caused anti-social behaviour issues on the Airport line. The session was held in conjunction with hotspot schools, focusing on specific issues such as pulling the emergency door handle and the consequences of these actions.
- 5.24 KAM Customer Service Representatives continued to work with Barnabus's outreach team during periods 9, 10 and 11. A series of outreach sessions took place in Manchester city centre during period 9. During period 10, Barnabus delivered homelessness awareness training to customer team managers and KAM staff also helped with the annual Christmas dinner; helping to set up the room and serve food. The training sessions continued in period 11.
- 5.25 During period 10, KAM conducted six depot visits for customers who had individually contacted KAM's engagement team. The events saw some of Metrolink's more vulnerable passengers receive a tour of different departments as well as being offered the opportunity to experience the driver simulator. The events were designed to demonstrate Metrolink's commitment to customer safety and security, as well as strengthen KAM's relationship with the local community.
- 5.26 Further customer community events were held in Altrincham, Bury and Manchester city centre. Staff distributed hand sanitiser, face masks and offered advice and information on the current Covid restrictions via customer information stalls.

## **6. FORWARD LOOK**

### **Planned network renewals 2022**

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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.

February/ March 2022 works:

- February 2022: Network Rail TransPennine Route Upgrade at Victoria and Eccles track renewals to coincide with school half term.
- March 2022: Deansgate points replacement, Piccadilly Gardens and Piccadilly track renewals.

Information is 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

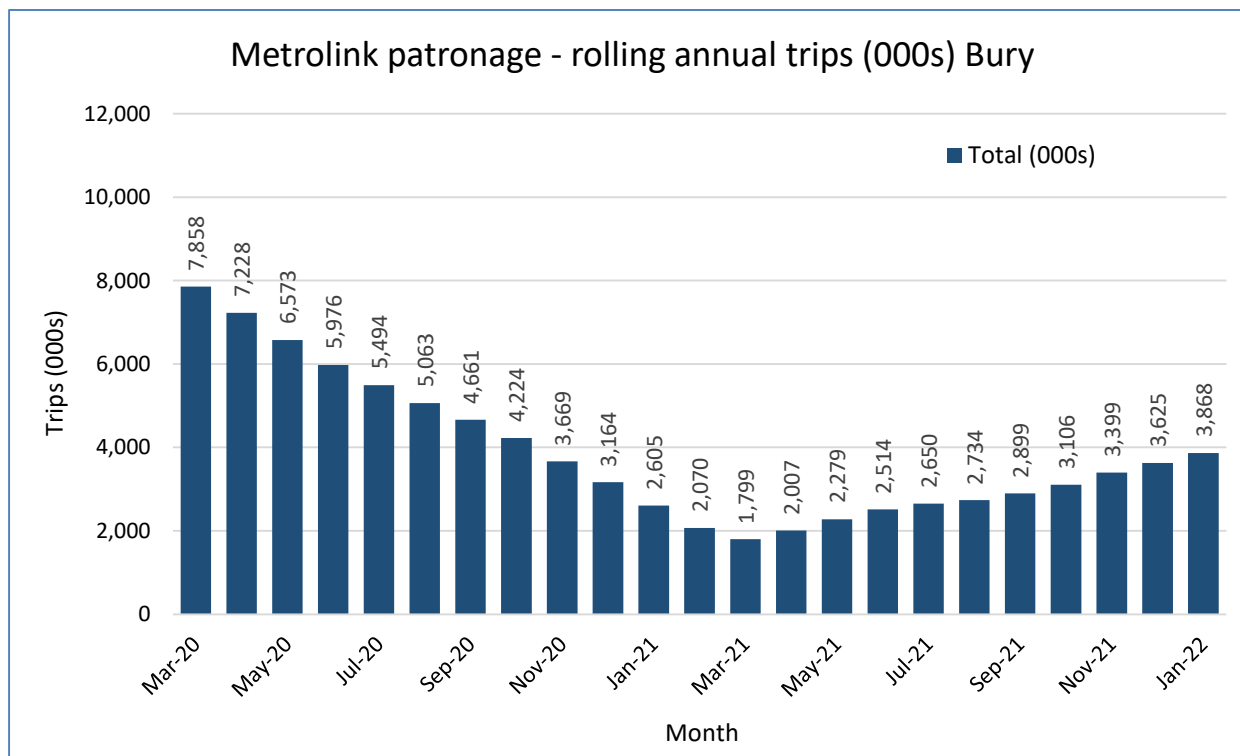
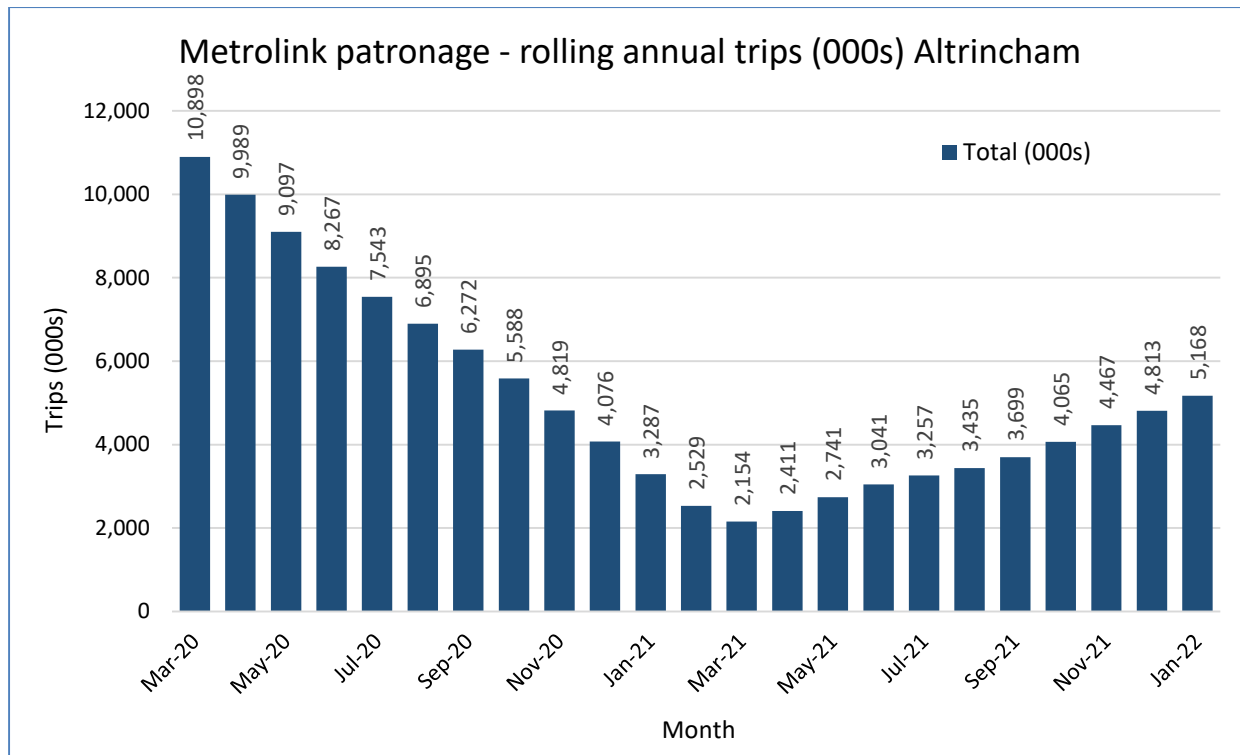
Period	Start Date	End Date
1	01/04/2020	02/05/2020
2	03/05/2020	30/05/2020
3	31/05/2020	27/06/2020
4	28/06/2020	25/07/2020
5	26/07/2020	22/08/2020
6	23/08/2020	19/09/2020
7	20/09/2020	17/10/2020
8	18/10/2020	14/11/2020
9	15/11/2020	12/12/2020
10	13/12/2020	09/01/2021
11	10/01/2021	06/02/2021
12	07/02/2021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

2021/22

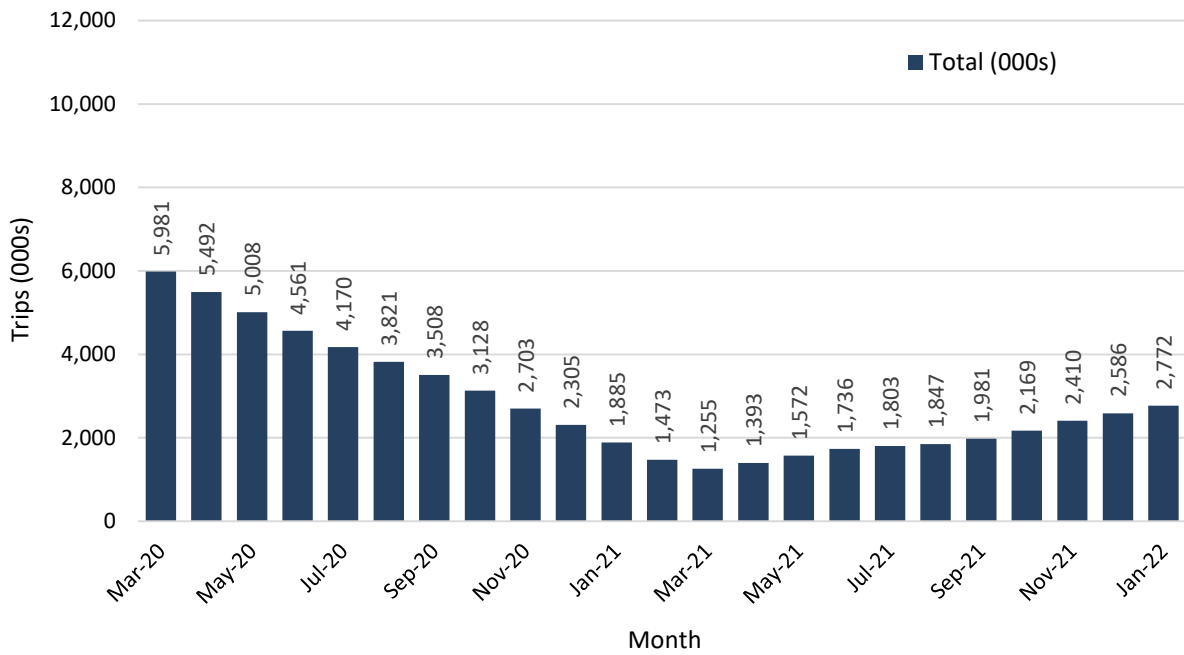
Period	Start Date	End Date
1	01/04/2021	01/05/2021
2	02/05/2021	29/05/2021
3	30/05/2021	26/06/2021
4	27/06/2021	24/07/2021
5	25/07/2021	21/08/2021
6	22/08/2021	18/09/2021
7	19/09/2021	16/10/2021
8	17/10/2021	13/11/2021
9	14/11/2021	11/12/2021
10	12/12/2021	08/01/2022
11	09/01/2022	05/02/2022
12	06/02/2022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



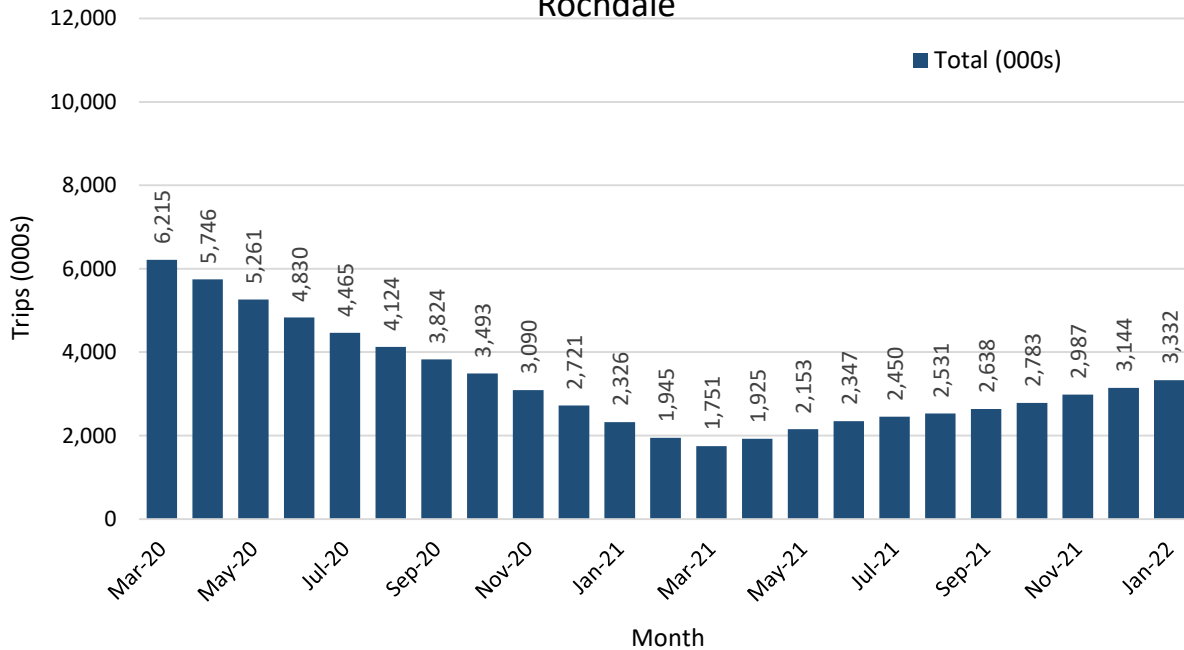
## Appendix 2 – Patronage by line



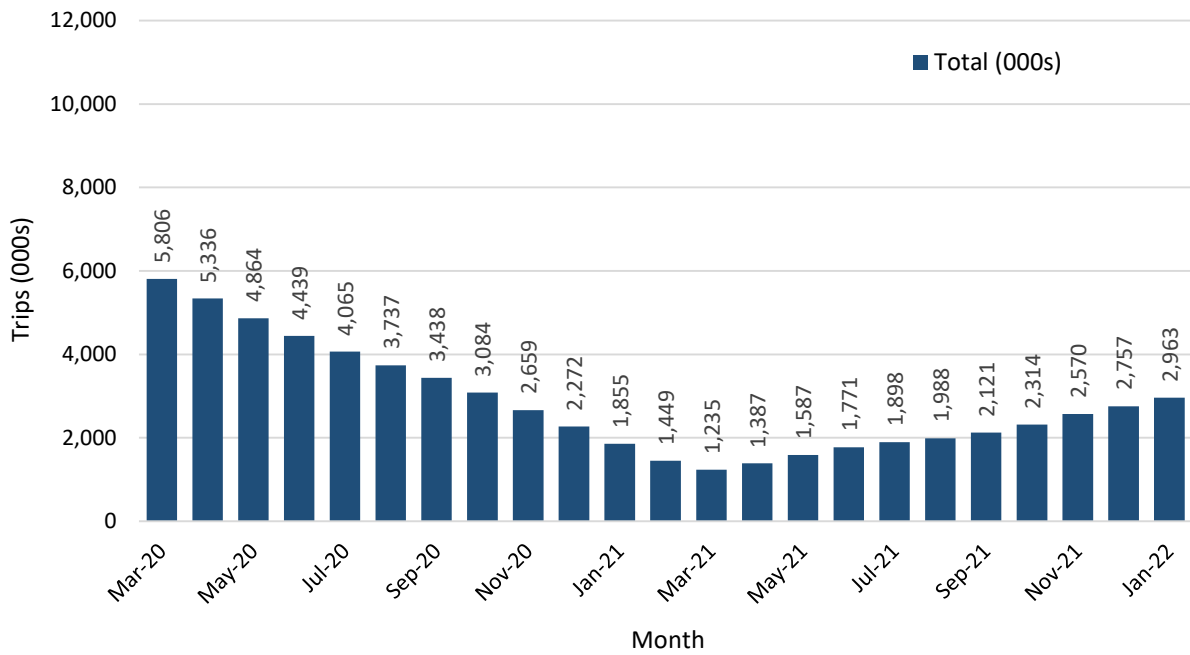
Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) Eccles



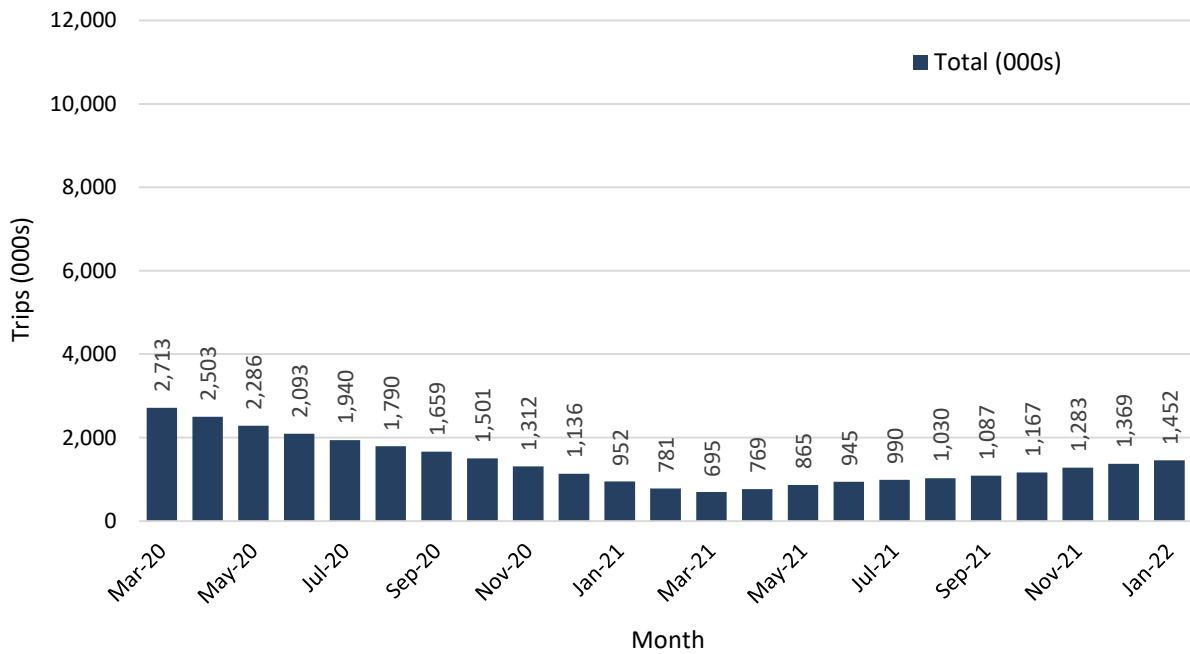
Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) Oldham  
Rochdale



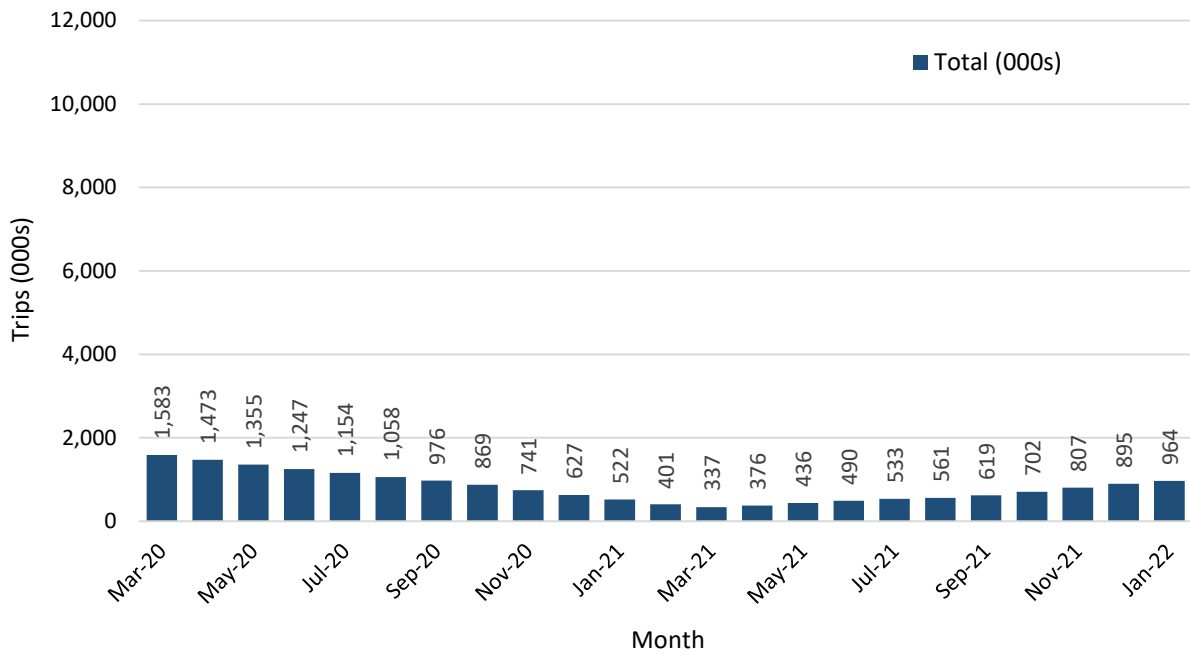
Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) East Didsbury



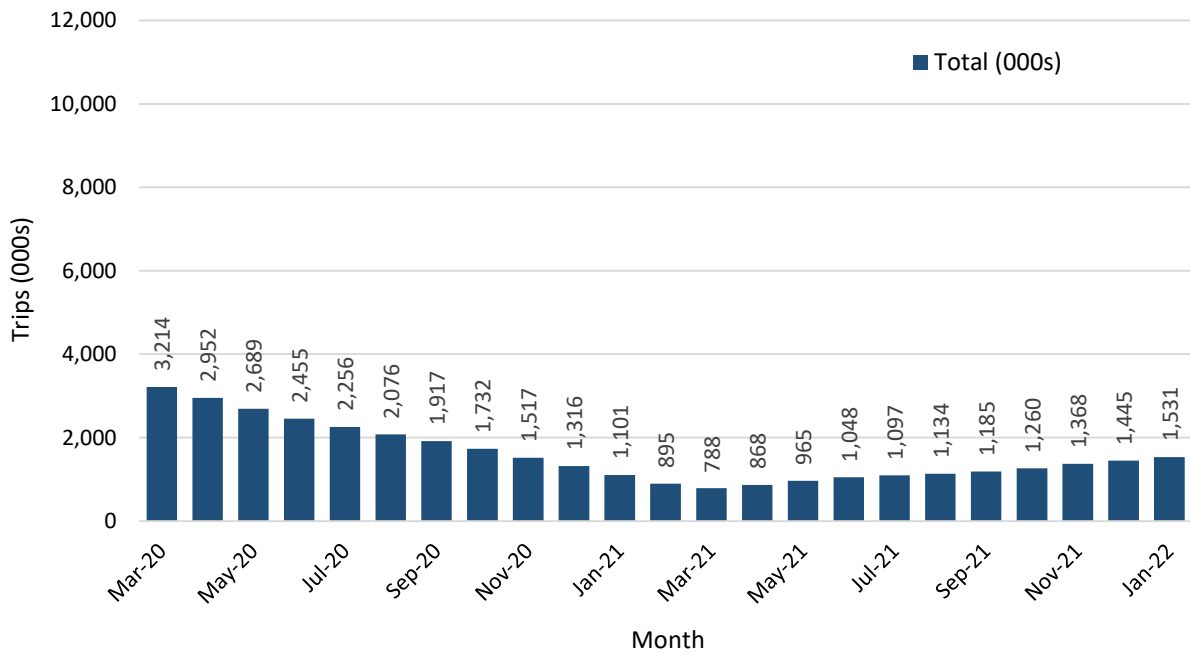
Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) Ashton

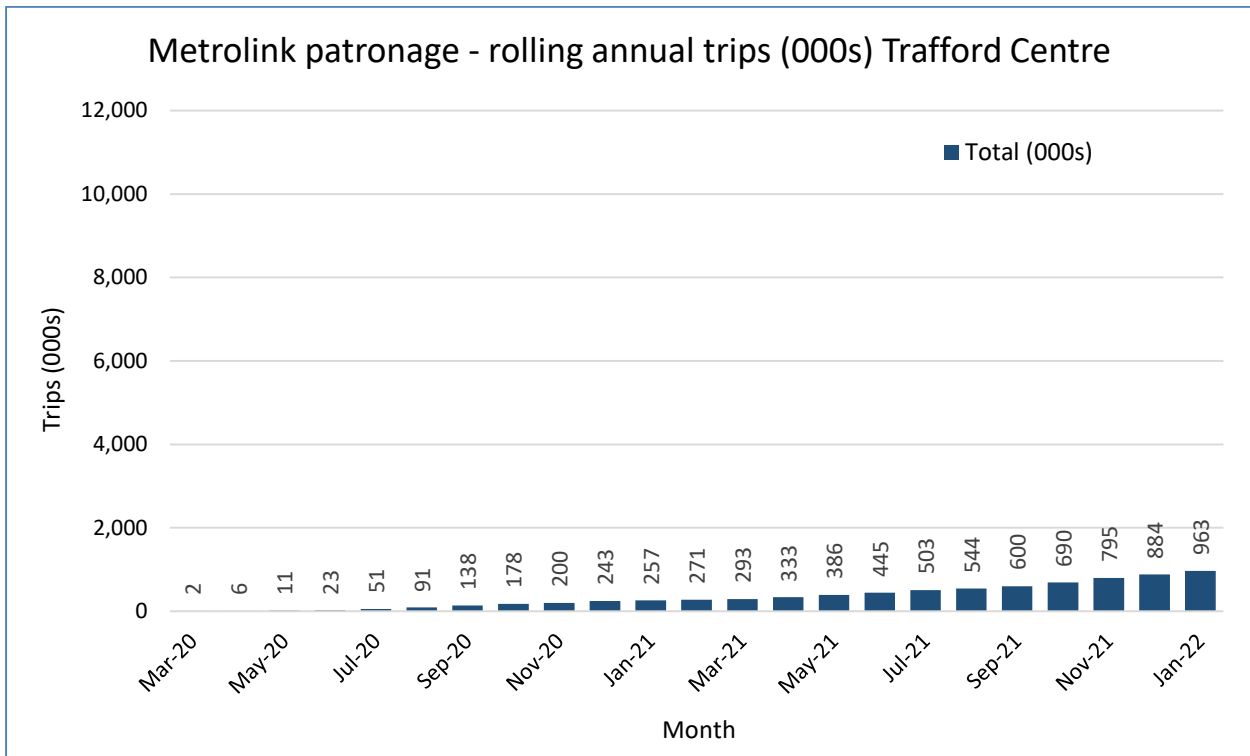


Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) City



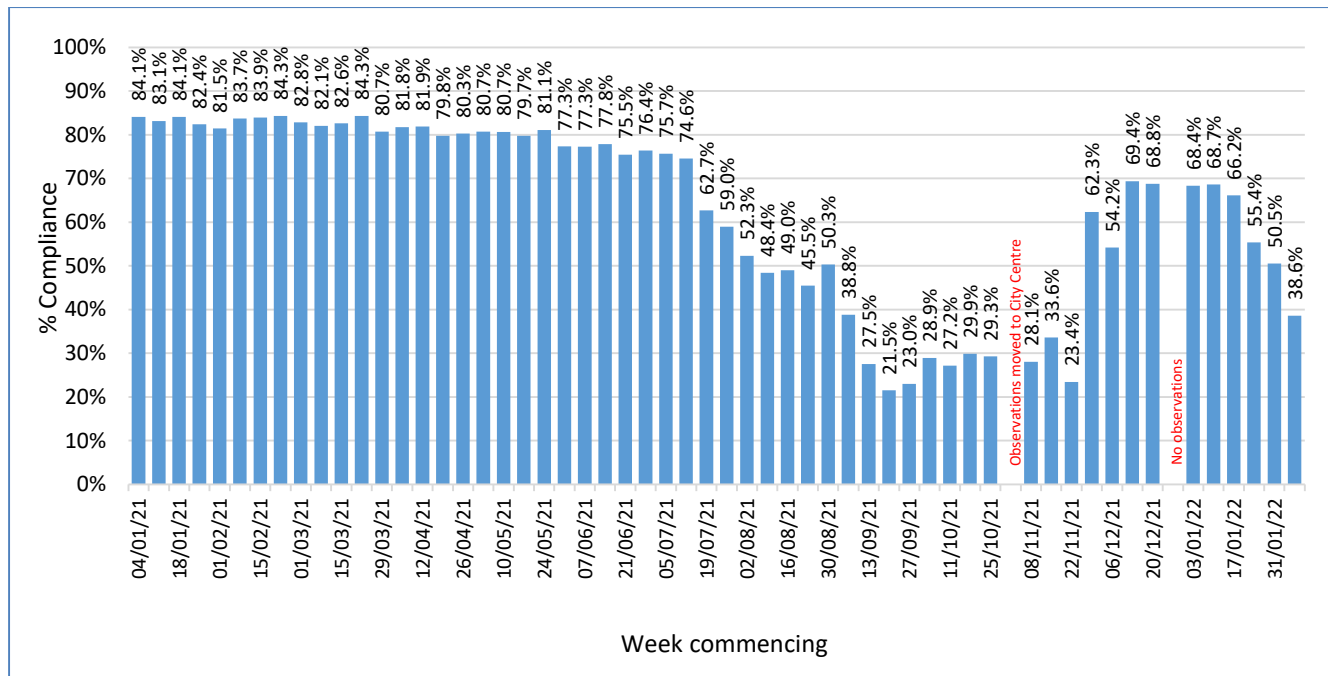
Metrolink patronage - rolling annual trips (000s) Airport





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

## Appendix 3 – Face covering usage



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