

**GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE  
METROLINK AND RAIL NETWORKS SUB-COMMITTEE**

Date: 18 September 2020  
Subject: Local Rail Service Performance  
Report of: Caroline Whittam, Head of Rail Franchising, TfGM

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**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides an update on local rail service operation and performance across Greater Manchester.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

GMTC report of 14 August, 2020

**CONTACT OFFICERS:**

Caroline Whittam                      Head of Rail Franchising                      07748 112707  
[caroline.whittam@tfgm.com](mailto:caroline.whittam@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:** n/a

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** n/a

<b>TRACKING/PROCESS</b>		
Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution		No
<b>EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN</b>		
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?		n/a
GM Transport Committee	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
n/a	n/a	

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report aims to provide an overview to Members of local rail service operation and performance since 23 March, 2020, when emergency measures and train plans were introduced as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 1.2 The report is structured under subject headings aligned with the following key areas of focus for TfGM in relation to rail service delivery.
- 1.3 Periods 01 - 04 overview, including:
- Details of revised train plans and service provision;
  - Network Rail performance and updates;
  - Route crime, trespass and fatality;
  - Train operator performance and updates;
  - Patronage and footfall updates;
  - Monitoring of face covering compliance;
  - Revised train plans for September and December 2020.
- 1.4 A list of rail period dates for 2020/21 can be found in Appendix A.
- 1.5 A geographic map showing all Greater Manchester rail lines and stations can be found in Appendix B.
- 1.6 Individual Line of Route performance for Northern and Service Group performance for TPE can be found in Appendix C.
- 1.7 Appendix D contains a summary of the Rose Hill line closure and customer mitigation plans, whilst appendix E is a copy of the Ministerial response to the letter sent by GMTC Chair, Cllr. Aldred.
- 1.8 Appendix F lists interventions by TOCs and TfGM which have resulted in making travel easier for key workers.
- 1.9 Appendix G lists Northern's Greater Manchester routes which have reduced services and/or will benefit from uplifts in December 2020.

## **2. OVERVIEW**

- 2.1 As a direct result of the Coronavirus pandemic, emergency train plans were introduced nationally on 23 March, 2020. These represented around 60% of the normal timetable, in

order to maintain essential travel for key workers only. At the same time, the government placed Train Operating Companies (TOCs) into Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs), suspending franchise arrangements and transferring revenue and cost risks to the government for a period of six months.

2.2 Earlier in the month, on 01 March, 2020, the previous Northern franchise was terminated and transferred to the Department for Transport, under an Operator of Last Resort (OLR) arrangement, effectively putting its operation into public ownership. Management was instructed to provide a significant plan on improvements to be presented within 100 days.

2.3 Details on significant dates and changes in train plans have already been produced in previous GMTC reports, although key ones to note are:

- 23 March – National lockdown imposed and emergency train plans introduced, patronage falls to around 10%
- 18 May – Enhanced train plans introduced, services at around 65% of pre-Covid levels.
- 15 June – Non-food retail re-opens and other restrictions relaxed
- 04 July – Hospitality sector re-opens, face coverings mandatory on public transport.
- 06 July – Enhanced train plans, services at around 75% of pre-Covid levels (68% for Northern)
- 14 September – Further enhancements to train plans to cater for return to work and education, services at around 85% of pre-Covid. Northern to suspend services on Rose Hill/Hyde Loop line.
- 13 December – December timetable, as part of operators' long-term plans, will feature a return to almost pre-Covid service levels (95% for Northern), including the reinstatement of Rose Hill services.

2.4 Extensive industry and stakeholder collaboration has resulted in key services being enhanced and multi-operator ticket acceptance arranged, specifically to cater for essential workers. Details of these can be found in Appendix F.

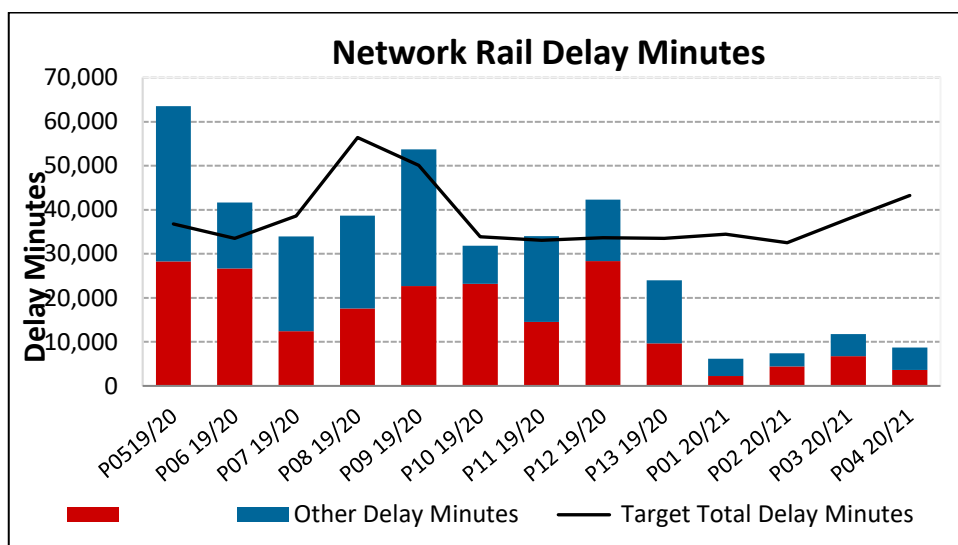
### **3. OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

3.1 Train Operating Company (TOC) performance across all measures, including punctuality, reliability, cancellations and short formations has improved significantly from the start of Period 01, 2020/21 (01 April 2020). This has coincided with revised train plans and a huge fall in passenger demand.

3.2 Network Rail performance is measured against overall delay minutes across its network. These include track and non-track infrastructure failures and external delays, which are attributed to it, such as trespass and weather-related events.

- 3.3 Delays have fallen dramatically and performance improved due to the rail network being far less congested; both primary and reactionary delay have fallen considerably. Dwell times at stations have improved as a result of far fewer passengers, infrastructure has performed well and the summer has seen relatively stable weather conditions.
- 3.4 The most significant infrastructure incidents affecting performance have included a signal failure at Heaton Norris on 10 June, power failure affecting points at Romiley on 23 July and OHLE issues at Agecroft on 28 July.

Network Rail Delay Minutes, Manchester Delivery Unit (DU)



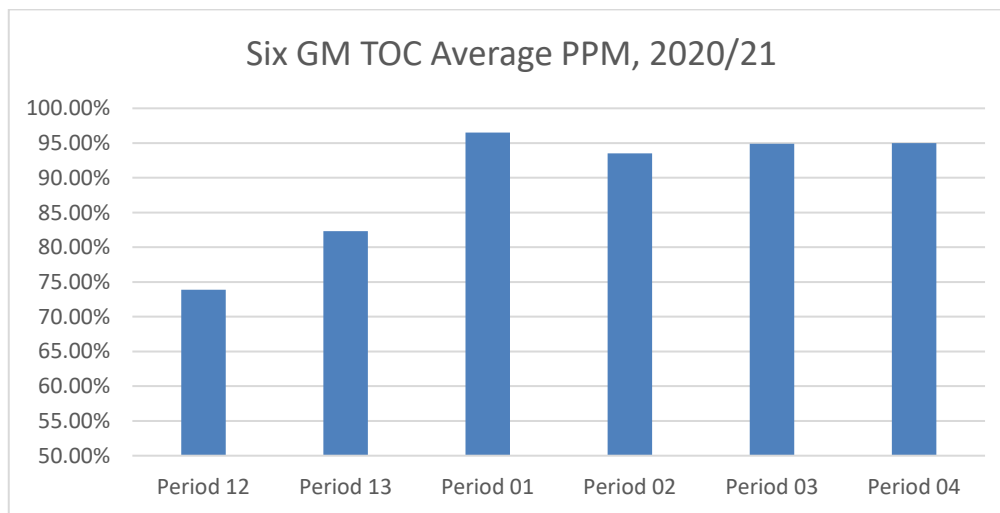
- 3.5 Trespass, fatality and threatened suicide all impact upon performance and Network Rail continues its work with BTP and other agencies to mitigate against this. Six fatalities have been recorded within Greater Manchester since the end of March 2020, with incidents at Eccles, Middlewood, Urmston and Salford Crescent.

Network Rail Route Crime, Manchester DU

	<i>Period 01</i>	<i>Period 2</i>	<i>Period 3</i>	<i>Period 4</i>
Trespass	1,372 mins – 33 incidents	1,108 mins – 37 incidents	1,244 mins – 53 incidents	862 mins – 43 incidents
Theft/Vandalism	57 mins – 2 incidents	54 mins - 2 incidents	125 mins – 4 incidents	4 mins – 1 incident
Fatality	405 mins – 2 incidents	0/0	0/0	1,105 mins – 4 incidents

- 3.6 For the six TOCs that operate in Greater Manchester, current PPM is averaging around 94%, with Right Time figures above 70%. Cancellations, both full and part, remain very low with CaSL figures of approximately 2%. Train operators have worked hard to ensure that services have operated as scheduled in order to guarantee essential workers travel. As part of December’s timetable plans, the DfT has instructed train operators that current high levels of performance must be maintained.
- 3.7 TOC related delay has decreased significantly, although there have been some issues with both older fleet and the introduction of new units onto the network. Train plans have been specifically designed to be resilient and, despite illness and shielding/self-isolation due to Covid, crew availability has not been a serious issue to date. This, however, is expected to impact operations in the autumn, with potential increases in unavailability due to both Covid and other, seasonal sickness.
- 3.8 Cancellations in the past quarter have averaged below 1% across Northern’s North and South Manchester groups. TPE cancellations have increased recently on its Scottish services due a combination of infrastructure, fleet and weather-related issues but remain low across the rest of its business.
- 3.9 Freight company performance has also improved markedly over the past six months, with fewer unit failures and late presentation/turn-rounds at freight depots.

Average PPM Across Greater Manchester TOCs



#### 4. TIMETABLES AND INTERVENTIONS

- 4.1 Since the implementation of emergency timetables, TfGM has worked with TOCs to look at improvements to services in order to provide earlier trains, additional calls or capacity. These have included, but are not limited to, earlier trains from Marple/New Mills, re-

routing of TfW Sunday timetabled trains to provide additional capacity through Stockport, re-routing of Southport trains to terminate at Oxford Rd, and additional calls at various stations for other services. Both Northern and TPE have been receptive to consultation and feedback on various issues and their help has been greatly appreciated.

- 4.2 TfGM has been proactive in ensuring public transport has been available for essential workers and has sought to maximise transport integration through rail ticket acceptance across Metrolink city services for all passengers, plus on Metrolink Ashton services and on V1/V2 bus services for NHS staff working at Oxford Rd/Nightingale hospitals.
- 4.3 TfGM has worked with other authorities to ensure that key connections are maintained and has successfully helped in the retention of EMR services between Edale, Hazel Grove and Stockport. TfGM has also worked with Merseytravel to address the omission of calls by TfW at Earlestown station and these are expected to be restored by the beginning of September.
- 4.4 Crowding issues raised by TfGM have been addressed by Northern on some of its leisure routes, as hot weather and summer holidays have led to surges in demand for seaside and Hope Valley services. All Hope Valley services at weekends are now operating in 4 car formation and Northern has diagrammed some 4 car services on its Airport – Windermere route instead of 3 car. Additionally, in mid-June, Northern introduced unscheduled ‘sweeper’ trains to cope with demand on its Southport and Blackpool routes. A full list of interventions can be found in Appendix F.
- 4.5 Timetables have been enhanced at various stages through the summer to provide additional capacity on key routes. New electric, diesel and bi-mode units are now in operation and most services are operating fully strengthened to cope with social distancing requirements. Avanti is now operating its full London – Manchester service and Cross Country, whilst not currently operating directly to the south-west, is operating with 8 or 9 car units instead of the usual 4 or 5.
- 4.6 September 14<sup>th</sup> will feature a further service uplift across the industry, with an expected 85% of pre-Covid services re-instated. The focus of this will be to provide capacity where it is needed most for people returning to work and education, whilst maintaining current levels of performance. A list of routes in GM that will see service uplifts can be found in Appendix G.
- 4.7 The December 2020 timetable will build further on uplifting capacity and frequency and should see around 95% of pre-Covid services restored. TfGM is currently in consultation with Northern, TPE and Rail North Partnership about service provision in Greater Manchester.

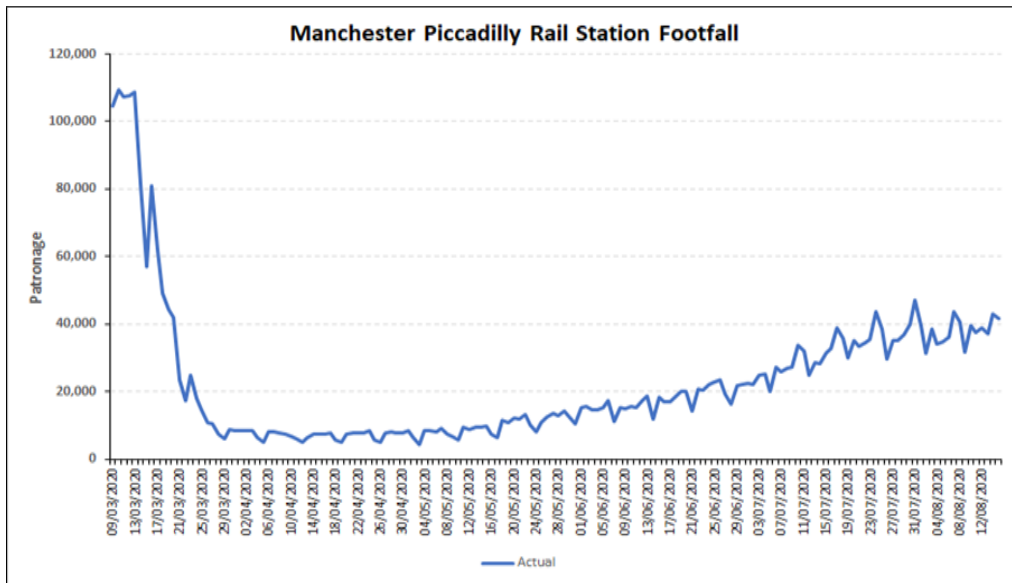
## **5. ROSE HILL SERVICE WITHDRAWAL**

- 5.1 Northern informed stakeholders that as a direct result of Covid, it has a significant proportion of drivers at its Central depots off sick and shielding. Along with expected seasonal, non-Covid sickness, retirement and industry attrition, this has combined with delays in driver training and is limiting availability. Therefore, Northern will suspend services temporarily from the Rose Hill/Hyde Loop line in order to provide additional capacity on its busiest routes and focus on service reliability across its network. This will affect the following stations: Rose Hill, Woodley, Hyde Central, Hyde North, and Fairfield and will take effect from 14 September for three months.
- 5.2 Details of this proposal, TfGM suggestions which could have maintained a service and mitigation plans can be found in Appendix D. TfGM remains opposed to the line closure and is disappointed that a skeleton service for workers and school users could not have been operated.

## **6. PATRONAGE AND FOOTFALL**

- 6.1 Passenger demand across public transport fell to less than 10% of normal following the introduction of emergency measures at the end of March 2020. It has steadily increased since the incremental relaxation of restrictions and is now at around 30% of pre-Covid levels on rail. TfGM has been working with TOCs to measure patronage and footfall across services and ensure adequate provision, allowing for social distance requirements.
- 6.2 Generally, the busiest routes across Greater Manchester have been on Northern's Blackpool North – Manchester, Liverpool – Manchester Airport, Liverpool – Oxford Rd, Liverpool – Wigan and Rochdale – Bolton – Manchester services. Passenger numbers have risen faster in the north and west of the region than in the south. Increases in patronage appear largely driven by off peak and leisure travellers, rather than a return of commuters.
- 6.3 Footfall at stations continues to grow, with Piccadilly now recording around 45,000 – 50,000 people per day. This remains, however, 65% lower than during the same period in 2019. Passenger numbers at Manchester Victoria have also grown and are now at around 4,500 per day. Social distancing signage, controlled access and additional staff deployment have been implemented at all major stations.





## 7. FACE COVERING COMPLIANCE

- 7.1 TfGM has worked with TOCs, British Transport Police (BTP) and Travel Safe Officers (TSOs) to raise awareness of the mandatory requirement to wear face coverings whilst at stations and on-board public transport. The policy has been one of education and engagement, rather than direct enforcement. For rail, face covering compliance is at around 75% – 80%, slightly lower on some Northern services and with increases in leisure travellers during hot weather. For TPE and the longer distance operators, compliance is higher at around 90%, especially during the morning peak and on journeys into Piccadilly.
- 7.2 As social distancing requirements have been reduced from 2m to 1m+ and rail demand is expected to grow from the return to work and schools in September, it is more important than ever that passengers are wearing some kind of face covering. A week of action has recently been undertaken to reinforce messaging and improve compliance across all modes of public transport in GM.
- 7.3 In the week commencing 14 August, BTP intervened on 4,970 occasions across the country, resulting in 554 instructions to leave and 6 fixed penalty notices being issued for non-compliance.

## 8. FORWARD LOOK

- 8.1 The industry remains concerned over longer term social and economic change as a result of Coronavirus. The virus has acted as a catalyst for upheaval in working patterns, work from home and high street retailing. It is expected that the reduction in overall demand and ticket revenue will continue, particularly as season ticket sales reduce. New, more

flexible ticketing, such as the Metrolink 'Clipper' or carnet tickets look set to replace traditional commuter season tickets.

- 8.2 The current Emergency Measures Agreements for TOCs are due to expire at the end of September 2020 and an expected announcement on their extension was not released by the end of the last parliamentary session on 22 July 2020.
- 8.3 The current model of rail franchising is being re-evaluated as part of a wider review of the rail industry and an announcement on when this will be published is expected shortly.

**Caroline Whittam**

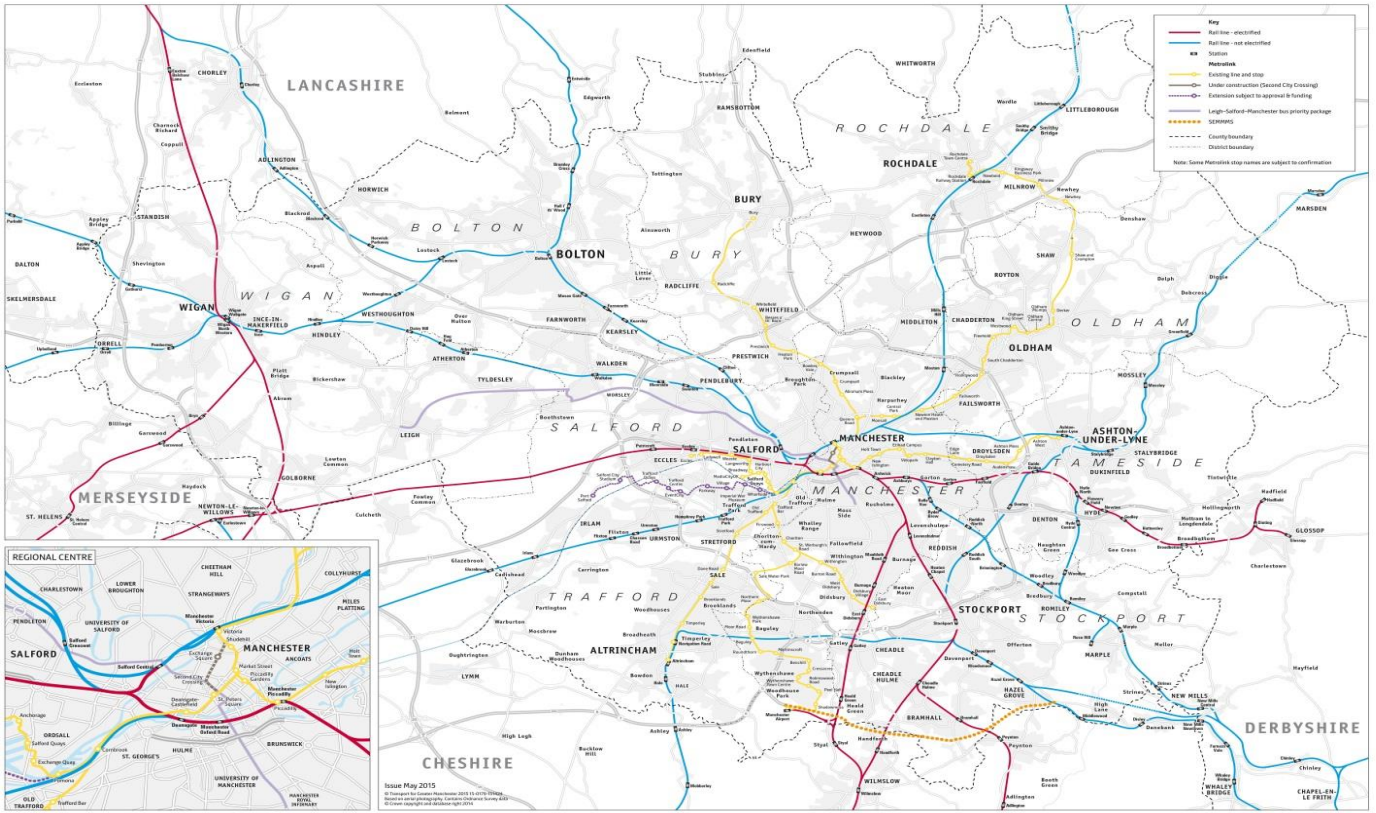
**Head of Rail Franchising, TfGM**

## Appendix A – Period Dates

<b>P01 – 20/21</b>	<b>P02 – 20/21</b>	<b>P03 – 20/21</b>	<b>P04 – 20/21</b>	<b>P05 – 20/21</b>
01 April – 02 May 20	03 May – 30 May 20	31 May – 27 June 20	28 June – 25 July 20	26 July – 22 August 20

<b>P06 – 20/21</b>	<b>P07 – 20/21</b>
23 August – 19 September20	20 September – 17 October

# Appendix B – Train Services in Greater Manchester



### Appendix C – Line of Route Right Time

Northern Line of Route 2020/21 Right Time	P01	P02	P03	P04	YTD
CLITHEROE - BOLTON - VICTORIA	94.7	92.7	90.4	90	92
LEEDS - WIGAN	92.8	90.7	93	90.9	91.9
PICCADILLY - STOCKPORT - CREWE	85.8	95.1	93.7	91.6	91.6
PICCADILLY - BUXTON	92.6	89.6	88.3	89	89.9
PICCADILLY - AIRPORT - CREWE	N/A	N/A	N/A	89	89
VICTORIA - STALYBRIDGE	90.3	86.4	89.3	85.4	87.9
PICCADILLY - NEW MILLS CENTRAL	93.0	85.8	87.1	84.7	87.7
PICCADILLY - HADFIELD/GLOSSOP	86.8	89.1	86.5	88.2	87.7
PICCADILLY - CHESTER	92.9	86.5	87.6	83.4	87.6
PICCADILLY - STOKE	89.6	87.3	88.1	83.2	87.1
LIVERPOOL - NEWTON - AIRPORT	89.8	86.5	86.6	82.6	86.4
LIVERPOOL - MANCHESTER OXFORD RD	86.7	87.7	86.4	84.6	86.4
BLACKPOOL Nth - BOLTON - AIRPORT	N/A	N/A	N/A	86	86
KIRKBY - VICTORIA	82.8	87.5	86.7	85.9	85.7
SOUTHPORT - OXFORD RD	88.7	85.1	82.9	84.4	85.3
MANCHESTER - PRESTON	87.9	88.9	80.7	83.4	85.2
BLACKPOOL - WIGAN - LIVERPOOL*	90.8	81.5	83.8	80.8	84.2
HAZEL GROVE - BLACKPOOL	89.0	82.8	81.2	81	83.5
PICCADILLY - SHEFFIELD	90.6	84.2	78.2	76.4	82.4
PICCADILLY - ROSE HILL/MARPLE	92.0	83.3	70.6	73.9	80
CLITHEROE/BLACKBURN - TODMORDEN - VICTORIA	88.8	77.2	74.6	76.5	79.3
LIVERPOOL - WARRINGTON - AIRPORT	N/A	N/A	N/A	75.1	75.1
AIRPORT - WIGAN NW - BARROW/WINDERMERE	76.4	73.2	72.9	72.1	73.7
MANCHESTER VICTORIA - LEEDS	74.0	69.6	69.3	69.1	70.5
LEEDS - CHESTER	72.3	63	68.4	67.1	67.7
BLACKBURN - VICTORIA - ROCHDALE (stopper)	48.5	66.6	69.5	79.2	66

TPE	RT P01	RT P02	RT P03	RT P04	YTD
North	84.8	82	88.8	80.5	84
South	90.8	80.7	73.5	71.8	79.2
Scottish	72.2	74.7	77.1	78.1	75.5

## Appendix D – Rose Hill – Hyde Loop Service Briefing Note

### Northern Withdrawal of Rose Hill and Hyde Loop Services

Northern will uplift its train services from 14 September 2020, in line with DfT guidance, prioritising its busiest routes for commuter and educational flows, whilst maintaining its current record of performance and reliability.

Northern has informed stakeholders that as a direct result of Covid, it has a significant proportion of drivers at its Central depots off sick and shielding. Along with expected seasonal, non-Covid sickness, retirement and industry attrition has combined with a backlog in training on new rolling stock and is limiting driver availability. Therefore, Northern is removing services temporarily from the Rose Hill/Hyde Loop line in order to provide additional capacity on its busiest routes and guarantee service reliability. This will affect the following stations: Rose Hill, Woodley, Hyde Central, Hyde North, and Fairfield.

Services on the adjacent Manchester – New Mills Central route will be enhanced to two trains per hour (tph) from September. Official passenger figures indicate footfall between 2 – 3 times higher at stations between Manchester – New Mills Central via Bredbury.

The withdrawal will take effect from 14 September 2020, with services expected to return from the start of December's timetable on 13 December 2020. Northern has stated that this is the 'least-worst option' and that its decision is based on the proximity of the Bredbury line and other available public transport nearby (most stations are around 1.5 – 2km from alternatives). TfGM has strongly opposed the temporary closure of this line and has worked with Northern to explore options around maintaining a service. These suggestions are detailed below:

- Operation of 1 tph from Rose Hill and 1 tph from New Mills sourced from drivers by reducing other route frequency off-peak, potentially Hadfield and/or Buxton.
- Operation of both trains from New Mills Central, with 1 tph via the Hyde Loop and 1 tph via Bredbury; this would leave Rose Hill without a service but cover the remaining five stations. A shuttle bus would link Rose Hill station with Marple station.
- Operation of 3 morning and 3 evening peak services via Bredbury but starting/terminating at Rose Hill. This would mean loss of service for the loop stations and additionally impact Marple, Strines and New Mills Central, leaving them with just 1 tph in the peaks.
- Operation of 2 AM/PM peak services on usual route to maintain schools and intermediate station demand.

These suggestions have been discounted on operational and resource grounds and Northern has pointed to the higher patronage on the adjacent line. Notwithstanding, TfGM has been working with Northern to agree a contingency plan for passengers, which includes the following:

- *A replacement circular shuttle bus service operating hourly between Rose Hill – Marple – Romiley – Rose Hill stations, extended to Woodley in the peaks to cater for school children at Marple Hall*
- *An additional, fully accessible 'on-demand' service (pre-booked) linking other stations*
- *Gorton calls to be picked up by Hadfield services*
- *Rail ticket acceptance on Stagecoach services (383/384/330) – to be confirmed*
- *Rail ticket acceptance on Metrolink services from Droylsden (to cover loss of Fairfield)*
- *Retention of staffed booking office at Rose Hill and parking facilities at affected stations*
- *Full communications plan to advise passengers of closure of stations, rationale, alternative transport – this to be print/vinyl at stations and locally, with additional on-line and social media campaigns. Engagement with local RUGs/CRPs/Friends groups/MPs and councillors.*

## Appendix E - Rose Hill – Hyde Loop Service Ministerial Response



Department  
for Transport

From the Minister of State  
**Chris Heaton-Harris MP**  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR

Our Ref: MC/306166

25 August 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of 19 August about the suspension of Northern services on the Rose Hill Marple Line.

I am grateful to you for taking the time to raise this issue on behalf of Greater Manchester Transport Committee and I appreciate the importance of regular and reliable train frequency to passengers travelling from Rose Hill, Woodley, Hyde Central, Hyde North, and Fairfield stations.

My officials have been in contact with Northern Trains Ltd (NTL), which explains that it made the difficult decision to suspend this service because there is a lack of drivers available with knowledge of the route, due to the challenges presented by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Prior to the emergence of COVID-19, NTL was rolling out a major driver training programme, but delays caused by the pandemic combined with staff self-shielding at home, means that NTL had to take steps to prioritise its resource where it is most needed.

NTL assures us that it is working with Transport for Greater Manchester to put arrangements in place to ease any attendant issues for passengers and we would like to assure you that the Department is monitoring this situation closely, and will continue to hold NTL to account so that a service is restored for passengers travelling on the route between Manchester Piccadilly and Rose Hill Marple as quickly as possible.

Please be assured that the Department is working closely with NTL to ensure passengers across the Greater Manchester region receive the service they deserve, as the restrictions imposed on the railway during lockdown are eased.

Thank you again for your letter and for raising your and your fellow committee members' concerns. I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris". The signature is stylized with a large initial 'C' and a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Chris Heaton-Harris MP**

**Minister of State for Transport**



## Appendix F – TfGM and TOC Interventions

- V1/V2 bus acceptance for rail tickets for NHS staff from Salford Crescent to Manchester Hospitals to mitigate reduced rail services to Oxford Rd
- Rail ticket acceptance on Metrolink services across ALL city stops and for ALL rail passengers (to mitigate loss of TPE services around Ordsall Chord)
- Rail ticket acceptance on Metrolink Ashton trams to cover the loss of train service (temporary loss of Ashton service due to re-routing Southport trains to Oxford Rd)
- Re-routing of TFW Sunday diagrammed services to M-S route to provide additional capacity through Stockport
- Additional calls at Euxton and Leyland for early morning Northern Windermere/Barrow – Airport services
- Earlier New Mills/Marple – Manchester service
- Additional Bredbury call which had been omitted on pm Sheffield service
- Prioritised 4 car operation on Hope Valley services at weekends
- Diagramming of some 4 car (vc 3 car) on Airport – Windermere/Barrow services
- Additional early service on Buxton line for Woodsmoor (Stepping Hill hospital)
- Re-routing of Southport – Stalybridge services to Oxford Rd to provide links with South Manchester Hospitals/Nightingale
- Provision of earlier timed CLC services and additional calls at Glazebrook for NHS staff from Trafford General
- Deployment of additional ‘sweeper’ trains by Northern on busy coastal routes to cope with demand on hot days
- Withdrawal of EMR plans to omit Edale calls on its peak services, thereby severing the only link between Edale – Hazel Grove – Stockport. These calls will now continue after concerted pressure by TfGM, Derbyshire CC and Northern.
- Concerns and pressure raised by TfGM and Merseytravel over TfWs omission of Earlestown calls due to door operation, will see them re-instated on 01 September. These will ensure additional capacity for local stopping services at Patricroft and Eccles.

## Appendix G - September/December timetable route

### Routes which remain at reduced levels (West & Central) (compared to Pre-COVID Timetable assumptions)



Corridor	Service at reduced level in December 2020
Blackburn – Vic - Rochdale	Hourly service vice half hourly
Preston - Victoria	Two hourly vice hourly
Victoria - Stalybridge	Hourly service vice half hourly
Mid Cheshire Line	Peak additional service Stockport – Chester not resumed
Rose Hill – Piccadilly	Hourly vice half hourly
Buxton - Piccadilly	Hourly vice half hourly in the off peak
Liverpool - Wigan	Hourly vice half hourly
Liverpool - Warrington - Airport fast	10 vice 18 trains per day