

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER
METROLINK AND RAIL SUB COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER AT 10:30AM VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT:

Councillor Richard Gold	Bury Council
Councillor Stuart Haslam	Bolton Council
Councillor Naeem Hassan	Manchester City Council
Councillor Dzidra Noor (in the Chair)	Manchester City Council
Councillor Atteque Ur-Rehman	Oldham Council
Councillor Howard Sykes	Oldham Council
Councillor Shah Wazir	Rochdale Council
Councillor Doreen Dickinson	Tameside Council (from agenda item 6)
Councillor Steve Adshead	Trafford Council
Councillor Joanne Marshall	Wigan Council

OFFICERS AND OPERATORS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mark Angelucci	Rail Officer, TfGM
Guillaume Chanussot	Managing Director, KeolisAmey Metrolink
Lindsay Dunn	Governance & Scrutiny, GMCA
Lucja Majewski	Transpennie Express
Victoria Mercer	Metrolink Service Delivery Manager, TfGM
Lee Teasdale	Governance & Scrutiny, GMCA
Daniel Vaughan	Head of Metrolink, TfGM
Nicola Ward	Governance & Scrutiny, GMCA
Caroline Whittam	Head of Rail Franchising, TfGM
Gwynne Williams	Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA

GMTMRC 11/20 APOLOGIES

Resolved /-

1. That apologies be noted and received from Bob Morris, TfGM and Chris Jackson, Northern.
2. That it be noted that Councillor Peter Robinson (Tameside) was unable to join the meeting due to technical difficulties.

GMTMRC 12/20 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

There were no Chair's announcements or urgent business.

GMTMRC 13/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Resolved /-

That there were no declarations of interest.

GMTMRC 14/20 MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE METROLINK & RAIL SUB COMMITTEE HELD 18 SEPTEMBER 2020

Resolved /-

That the minutes of the meeting held 18 September 2020 be approved.

GMTMRC 15/20 LOCAL RAIL SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND OPERATIONS UPDATE

Caroline Whittam, Head of Rail Franchising TfGM took Members through a report which provided an update on local rail service operations and performance across Greater Manchester for rail periods 05 – 07, 2020/21 (26 July – 17 October 2020). It was advised that there had been strong consistent performance by all operators in the area with both Northern and Transpennine Express recording Right Time performance above 70% and the Public Performance Measure above 90%. Network Rail delay minutes continued to perform well and had remained considerably favourable to targets across its Manchester area.

Members were advised there had also been an uplift in services from 14 September 2020 to approximately 85% of pre Covid provision. The Rose Hill line had returned to a 90-minute service frequency being re-instated from 26 October (with some additional peak services) and an hourly service was scheduled to return from 14 December.

Patronage increased steadily in July and August to between 35 – 40% of pre-Covid levels, largely as a result of more leisure journeys. This however decreased in September as schools returned and further Covid restrictions were imposed locally across the region. The current national lockdown was anticipated to result in a further decrease.

New Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements (ERMAs) were brought in for train operators on 20 September, the new agreements featured additional payments to operators for good performance. Face covering compliance, Christmas and New Year Services and a Community Rail update were also detailed in the report.

Members acknowledged the challenging position for operators and requested that further information regarding contingency planning ahead of the roll out of the Covid-19 vaccine and any changes to the guidelines be included in future reports to the Committee.

It was advised that currently patronage was low and provision was relatively high (up to 85% pre Covid levels), therefore there were no current issues regarding social distancing. However, the changing environment ensured that contingency planning was being undertaken ahead of any further increase in patronage to make certain guidelines could be adhered to.

On behalf of Northern, Owain Roberts, reported that recent patronage figures had decreased to as low as 21% for the same period the previous year. The timetable uplift commencing on 14 December

had been developed based on resource assumptions, taking into account staff currently self-isolating and sickness levels. Further service uplifts would be provided when there was confidence that a reliable service could be provided.

Lucja Majewski, Regional development Manager, TPE, explained that the timetables implemented were based on current demand and the availability of resources mainly due to the delays in driver training due to social distancing measures. TPE had invested £1.7m in additional cleaning and highlighted that further reassurance messages needed to be communicated to the public to encourage confidence in the use of public transport.

Mark Angelucci, Rail Officer, TfGM provided an updated presentation on forthcoming timetable changes which would be shared with the Committee. It was advised that train service provision would increase from approximately 85 to 90%. The main timetable changes for Northern and TPE services were summarised for Members. Avanti West Coast and East Midlands Railway changes were outlined and there were no reported changes from Transport for Wales and Cross Country.

Members asked if the restoration of Sunday services from Moses Gate, Farnworth and Kearsley would be reinstated in future timetable changes. It was advised that pre Covid, the most favourable business case option was to restore services at Farnworth. Due the pandemic this had been stalled, however once recovery begins, services would be reviewed and commuter demand and railway revenue would be evaluated in order to consider the re-introduction of services.

Resolved /-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That as a result of the imminent roll out of the Covid-19 vaccine, contingency planning, taking into account government advice, be undertaken in advance of any planned reliable service uplift and detailed in future reports to the Committee.
3. That emphasis on safe contingency planning and any planned service uplifts be reassuringly communicated to the public to encourage confidence in the use of public transport.
4. That an updated presentation on forthcoming timetable changes (non-GM services removed) be shared with the Committee.
5. That the business case for the restoration of Sunday service from Moses Gate, Farnworth and Kearsley be reviewed and considered in future timetable changes.

GMTMRC 16/20 METROLINK PERFORMANCE REPORT

Victoria Mercer, Metrolink Service Delivery Manager, TfGM introduced a report which provided a performance summary for the rolling 12-month period through to 17 October 2020.

Since the start of the Covid pandemic, there had been a considerable impact to patronage and since the last meeting of the Committee, patronage peaked but had steadily declined due to evening curfews as part of the tier system and moving into national lockdown. This had decreased from levels of c. 40 to 23% pre Covid levels.

The latest funding package available to Metrolink had been confirmed by the DfT at the end of October of up to £33.58 million. This would be available in two tranches to include recovery planning up to 31 March 2021 and would be subject to Ministerial review in January 2021.

Tram reliability for the period remained below 90% and had been impacted by problems with a mounting bracket becoming loose and even detached. This had led to a fleet check being carried out very rapidly with additional in-service monitoring resulting in eight trams being taken out of service to have suspension units repaired or adjusted with a consequential impact on fleet reliability. Bombardier have supported the ongoing investigation.

Despite a reduction in capacity to enable the use of doubles to support social distancing, network performance in relation to punctuality had been robust with the average Excess Wait Time (EWT) below 26 seconds. Furthermore, infrastructure performance had continued to be well above target.

The Trafford Park Line Metrolink extension has been accredited as “CEEQUAL Excellent”. On 5 November the Trafford Park Line contractor, MPT, won 3 prestigious awards at the annual British Construction Industry Awards. These were “Transport Project of the Year”, “Health, Safety and Wellbeing Initiative of the Year” and overall “Project of the Year”.

Recorded incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour on the network had risen and the current hotspot for crime and ASB was reported to be the city centre, mainly Victoria Station. Criminal damage had escalated across the network to platform shelters, ticket vending machines (TVMs), ticket validators, saloon windows, tram seats and cycle hubs. From the end of September onwards the TravelSafe Partnership carried out 15 days of action on the Metrolink network predominantly focusing on the Bury, Ashton, Altrincham and Oldham lines.

Tram surfing had increased on the network across various locations in September, but more recently in the city centre and a juvenile sustained a minor injury whilst surfing. The Transport Unit and KAM were keen to explore a restorative justice approach and work was ongoing to determine whether the juvenile would be willing to partake in some media activity to deter others from doing the same. More encouragingly, after serving a “Community Protection Notice” on the organiser of car cruises, there had been a drop in these types of events over last couple of months.

Members were informed that the first new tram had arrived at Queen’s Road Depot the previous weekend and the commissioning process had begun. Long term service pattern was in development with KeolisAmey Metrolink for 2021 and demand was being reviewed alongside remodelling for the anticipated recovery and growth. The current service pattern delivered a good spread of capacity across the network and through deployment of double trams the capacity could be mobilised to support social distancing and respond to changes in line demand. Services over the Christmas period had been finalised but remained under review as the country emerged from lockdown.

There were no plans for further engineering work for the remainder of the year, however significant maintenance and renewal works were planned for 2021 as per the annual programme and would be detailed for presentation to the Committee once the full scope and customer impact was known.

Metrolink had implemented several national recommendations from the RAIB investigation into the Sandilands incident with further work continuing. Metrolink would launch a Customer Policy which would provide oversight on how the services operate, what to expect from the journey experience and what is also expected from customers when travelling with Metrolink.

Additional resource would be brought onto the network in December to support the Covid response and support customers throughout their journeys. A team of 'Trambassadors' would be introduced to support customers using the network providing information on travelling safely and responsibly and handing out face coverings and hand sanitizers as required. Daily stop cleans would be increased and on-board cleaning of touch points across the network by providing up to 500 additional hours per week. Hand sanitizer units would also be installed at high footfall stops along the network. A campaign refresh highlighting the enhanced activities as well as promoting safety guidelines whilst using the network, would be delivered.

Members expressed their concern and asked for further detail on the decision-making process regarding the continued suspension of wi-fi access on the Metrolink network. It was clarified that prior to Covid, usage on the wi-fi network had been reviewed ahead of renewal and there had been a reduction in use. As lockdown was entered, usage continued to decline, however for those still accessing the wi-fi, there had been a correlation that it had created congregation and ASB across the tram network. The initial decision taken early during lockdown to remove the function to deter anti-social behaviour continued to be reviewed and it was decided that due to declining usage and in light of the significant loss in revenue and financial constraints an estimated £300k would be saved by not providing the service. Furthermore, upgrading the infrastructure would cost in excess of £1m. Hence, the service continued to be suspended. It was proposed and agreed that a report detailing the full rationale and transparency of the decision-making process would be provided to the Committee at the next meeting.

Further detail regarding compliance of face coverings was requested and Members asked for information on the number of enforcement actions taken for non-compliance. It was reported that general compliance was between 80-90% but did differ at peak times during the morning and afternoon. It was agreed that further information would be obtained from the TravelSafe Partnership and provided in future updates including data by line to inform more targeted enforcement action and ultimately encourage public confidence to return to the network. Members offered their support and appreciation for the recent TravelSafe Partnership enforcement programme.

Along with the restorative justice approach considered for tram surfing, Members asked if other physical measures had been considered to deter young people from danger. TfGM officers confirmed it was a big concern and safety measures to deter tram surfing, including proposals to introduce infra-red technology along with a publicity campaign were being investigated.

Guillaume Chanussot, Managing Director, KeolisAmey (KAM) provided the Committee with a presentation on the overall performance and achievements of KAM and focussed response to Covid. Furthermore, the next steps in supporting and strengthening the roadmap to recovery with TfGM were outlined. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Guillaume for the reassuring work being undertaken to protect employees and public transport users.

Members asked what measures to address concerns of overcrowding on the network experienced pre-pandemic were being considered. The Committee were reminded about the twenty-seven new trams which would be added to the network enabling the spread of capacity and deployment of double trams to address demand and support social distancing. Options were being considered with TfGM and frequency and capacity planning would be reviewed.

The provision of anti-viral coatings on high use touch points on trams was discussed and it was

confirmed that as safety was of primary importance, frequent speciality cleaning of trams was taking place. Furthermore, at the end of each line, the main touch points of the trams were being cleaned which was considered more effective than anti-viral coating alone.

It was noted that Councillor Doreen Dickinson joined the meeting during the presentation of the report. She explained the technical issues experienced and offered appreciation to Councillor Dzidra Noor for chairing the meeting.

Resolved /-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That it be noted that services over Christmas had been finalised but remain under review as the country emerges from lockdown.
3. That it be noted that significant maintenance and renewal works are planned for 2021 as per the annual programme and would be detailed for presentation to the Committee once the full scope and customer impact is known.
4. That further detail on the decision-making process regarding the continued suspension of wi-fi access on Metrolink be provided to Councillor Howard Sykes (Oldham).
5. That a report on the rationale on the suspension of provision of wi-fi access on Metrolink be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.
6. That further detail regarding the number of enforcement actions taken for non-compliance of face coverings on the Metrolink be obtained from the TravelSafe Partnership and provided to Councillor Richard Gold (Bury).
7. That compliance of face covering data be provided by line and time in future reports to inform more targeted enforcement action and ultimately encourage public confidence to return to the network.
8. That support and appreciation of the Committee for the recent TravelSafe Partnership enforcement programme be noted.
9. That it be noted that safety measures to deter tram surfing, including proposals to introduce infra-red technology and a publicity campaign were being investigated.
10. That the presentation provided by Guillaume Chanussot, Managing Director, KeolisAmey Metrolink be circulated to Members of the Committee.
11. That work undertaken to ensure the safety of passengers and staff across Metrolink to further encourage patronage be acknowledged.
12. That frequency, demand and capacity planning to ensure social distancing can be adhered to on the tram network be further addressed during recovery, further supported by the deployment of twenty-seven new trams.

13. That it be noted that safety of passengers was the priority and frequent speciality cleaning of trams takes place.

GMTMRC 17/20 GMTC TRANSPORT WORK PROGRAMME

Gwynne Williams, Deputy Monitoring Officer GMCA introduced the latest work programme for the GM Transport Committee and agreed to ensure that the report requested by Councillor Howard Sykes (Oldham) regarding the rationale for the suspension of wi-fi service across the Metrolink network be included for presentation at the next meeting in January 2021.

Resolved /-

1. That the Work Programme be noted.
2. That a report on the rationale on the suspension of provision of wi-fi access on Metrolink be added to the work programme and presented at the next meeting of the Committee in January 2021.

GMTMRC 18/20 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved /-

That the future meeting dates be noted by the Committee.