

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

Date: 22 January 2021
Subject: Metrolink Service Performance
Report of: Danny Vaughan, Head of Metrolink, TfGM

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update on Metrolink operation and performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

GMTC report of 23 December 2020

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: 1

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

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

BACKGROUND PAPERS: n/a

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?		n/a
GM Transport Committee	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
n/a	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 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, pre Covid.
- 1.4 There are currently 121 operational trams serviced from two depots. All available trams run in service on weekdays, with as many doubles as possible to facilitate social distancing.
- 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.

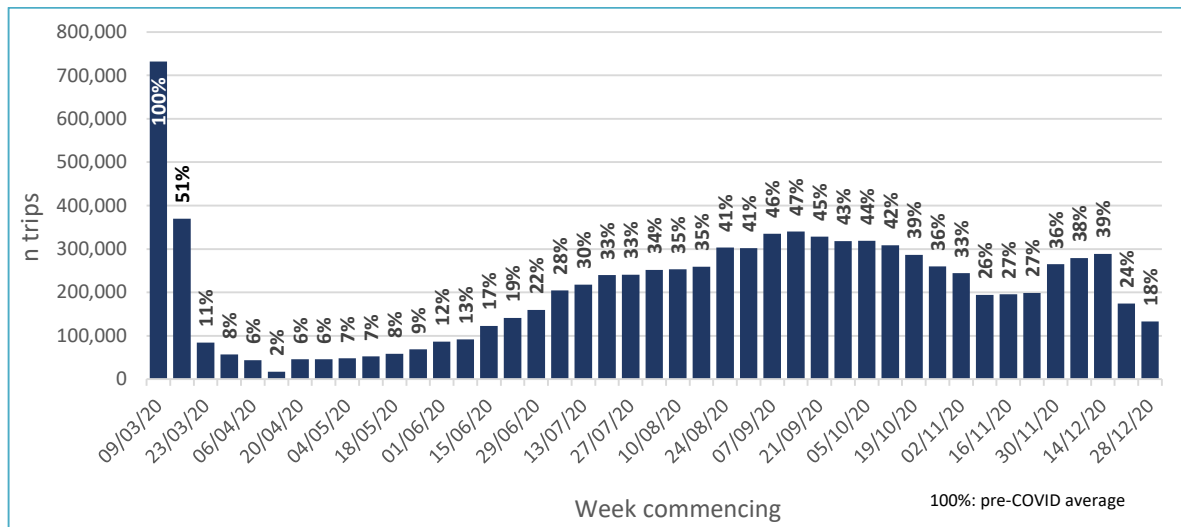
2. PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Metrolink Quarterly Performance Report provides a performance summary for the rolling 12-month period.
- 2.2 98.1% of scheduled miles were operated during the 12 months to December 2020 against a performance target of 99.4%. Performance was impacted by two significant overhead line equipment (OHLE) failures, a serious road traffic collision and the ongoing influence of short notice staff unavailability due to COVID.
- 2.3 Recorded incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour on the network have risen following the increase in patronage post first lockdown but overall remain lower than levels recorded in 2019. However, reported criminal damage has escalated across the network (platform shelters, TVMs, ticket validators, saloon windows, tram seats and cycle hubs) and is notably higher than those reported in 2019.
- 2.4 Issues relating to ticketing remain consistently the top reason for customer contact.
- 2.5 Additional COVID measures were implemented in December to include increased resourcing to support customers travelling safely. This included an additional 500 hours per week of touch point cleaning, teams of 'Trambassadors' engaging with customers on the requirements for safe travel as well as the installation of hand sanitiser units on high footfall stops.
- 2.6 KAM's Customer Compliance Plan resulted in improved fare and face covering compliance. Strategic deployment of Customer Service Representatives to check tickets and issue standard fares, planned days of action with TfGM and GMP, and effective school engagement were key enablers.

- 2.7 Vehicle availability was reduced for two weeks during the November lockdown to facilitate fleet inspections and maintenance following an identified fault on the track brake suspension brackets. This work was completed before the end of lockdown 2.
- 2.8 Metrolink have implemented several national recommendations from the RAIB investigation into the Sandilands incident with further work continuing.

Patronage

- 2.9 Patronage measures the number of trips that are being made on the network.
- 2.10 COVID has significantly impacted patronage on the Metrolink network as can be seen in the chart below.



- 2.11 Patronage decreased to approximately 5% of pre COVID levels during the first lockdown of the pandemic.
- 2.12 Patronage increased again as schools, colleges and universities returned following the summer holidays, but began to fall again from 21 September, as Greater Manchester entered tier 2 then tier 3 restrictions, and curfews were placed upon the hospitality sector.
- 2.13 Patronage fell week commencing 26 October to 30% of pre-COVID average, affected in part by GM schools’ half term holidays, the closure of licensed premises (not serving meals) and a week of inclement weather.
- 2.14 A national lockdown was announced on 31 October covering the period from 4 November to 2 December where leisure facilities and hospitality sectors closed in full.
- 2.15 Pre-Christmas, Tier 4 restrictions were introduced followed by a national lockdown from the 5 January. Patronage is currently averaging 15% of pre-COVID levels.

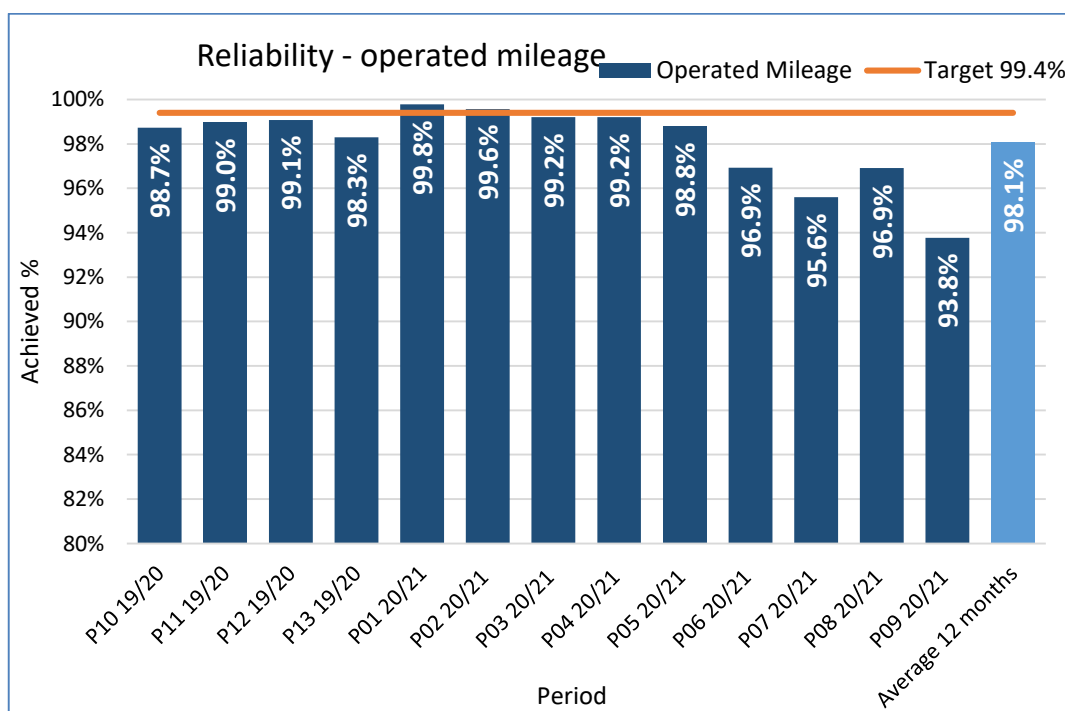
Financial Update

- 2.16 Following the national lockdown announcement on 4 January, the total shortfall for 2020/21 is forecast to be circa £64m. A package of support from central government has been agreed which will cover these costs in full, subject to a reconciliation exercise and the submission of a 'Recovery Plan' on 8 January 2021.
- 2.17 However long-term funding remains uncertain. Even in the most optimistic of scenarios, as restrictions on public transport are eased, Metrolink patronage and therefore revenue is unlikely to return to pre-COVID levels for several years.

3. OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

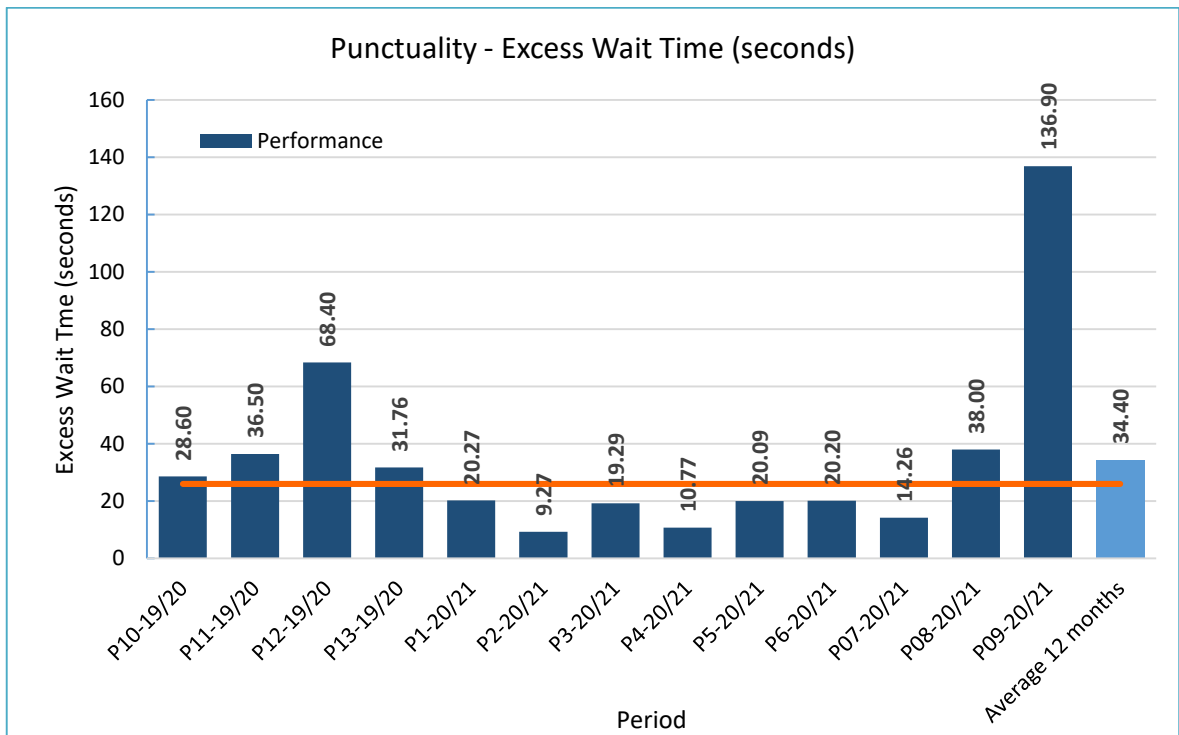
Reliability

- 3.1 Reliability is measured by operated mileage. Operated mileage is the number of tram vehicle miles operated verses the number of scheduled miles. A miles operated target of 99.4% was set for the year 2020/21.
- 3.2 Reliability performance has deteriorated over recent periods due to several significant incidents. A burst water main in the Oldham Mumps area affected service delivery in period 8. Two overhead line equipment failures occurred in period 9 at Chorlton and Cornbrook, as well as a serious road traffic collision where a van struck a tram in Ashton.
- 3.3 During the November lockdown when patronage reduced Metrolink took the opportunity to conduct additional fleet maintenance by reducing the number of doubles from the 16 – 29 November.



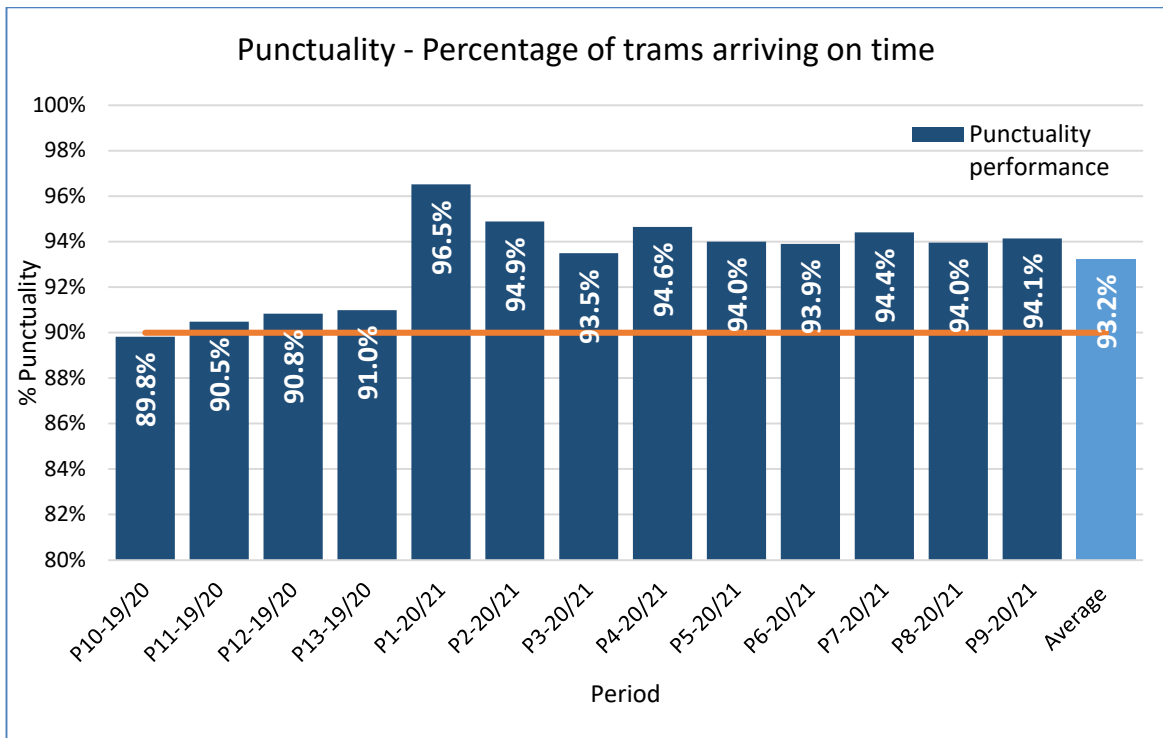
Excess Wait Time

- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 The EWT average performance for the 12 months to December 2020 was 34 seconds against a target of 26 seconds. Recent performance was negatively impacted in periods 8 and 9 due to the above mentioned incidents. However, the EWT target of 26 seconds was met on all but 7 days in period 8 and all but 5 days in period 9.
- 3.6 The chart below shows EWT performance over the year. In this case a lower number is better performance for our passengers.



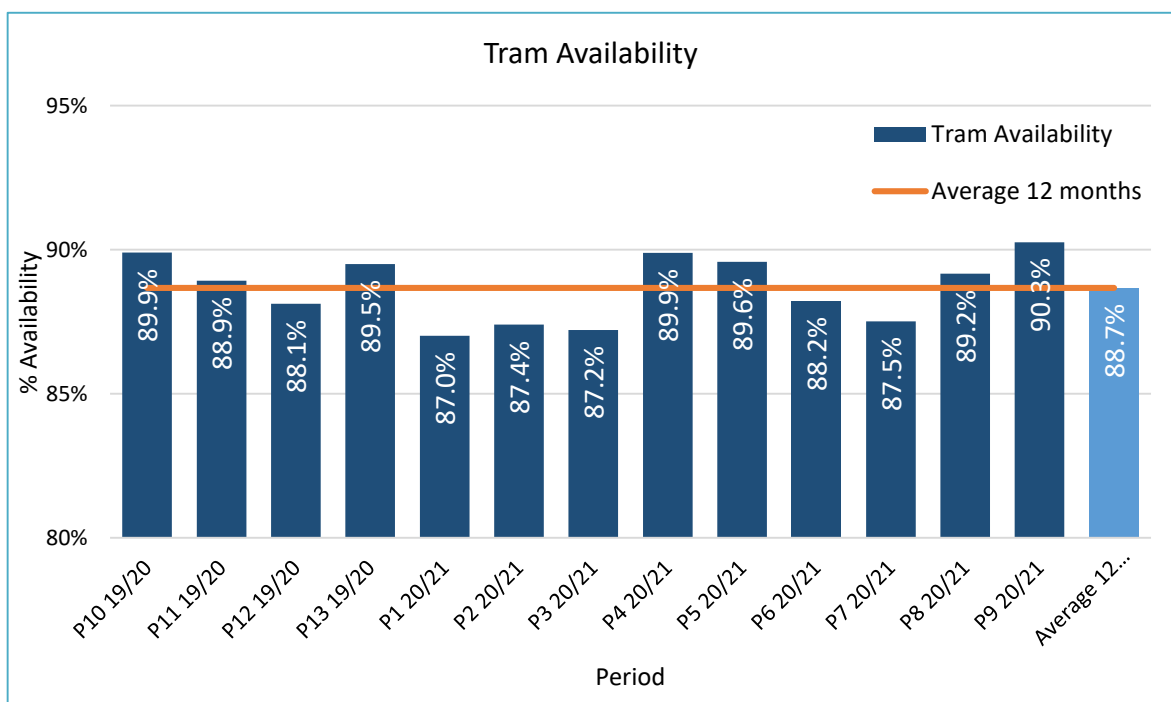
Punctuality - Percentage of services operating to time.

3.7 Punctuality performance covering the previous 12 months (13 periods) is shown below.



Asset reliability - Trams

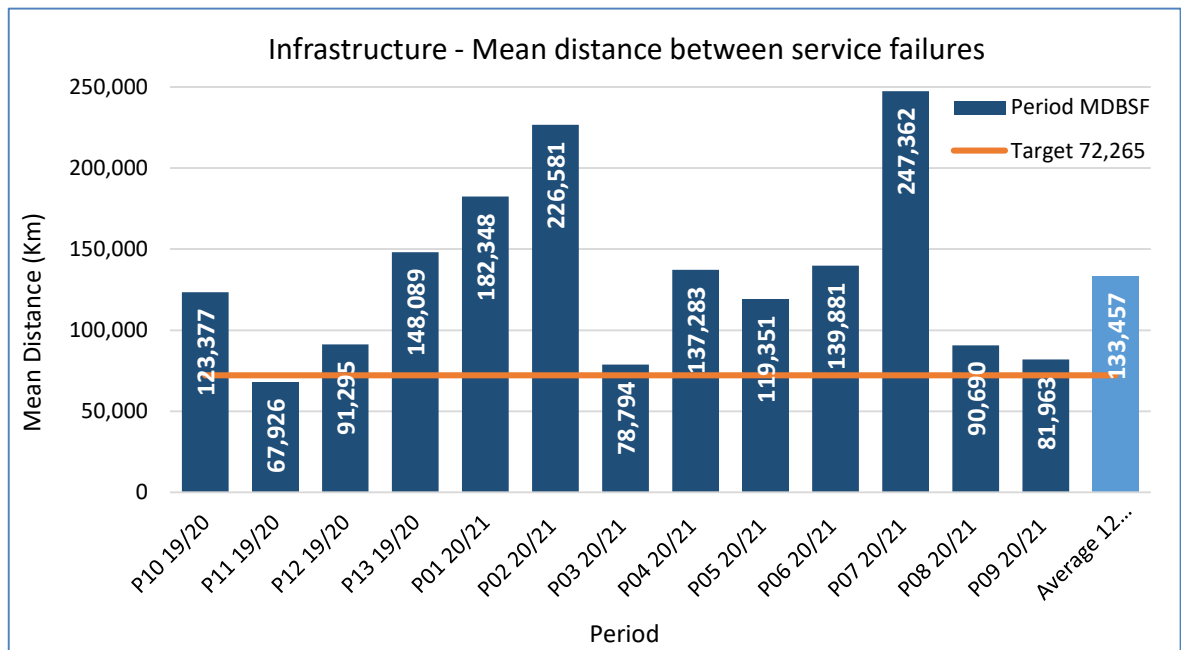
3.8 Tram availability shows percentage of the fleet that has been available during each period.



3.9 Tram availability increased to above 90% in period 9, reflecting the amount of work undertaken to improve this measure and boost the number of double trams able to operate.

Asset reliability – Infrastructure

Infrastructure reliability performance, in terms of service distance travelled between failures.

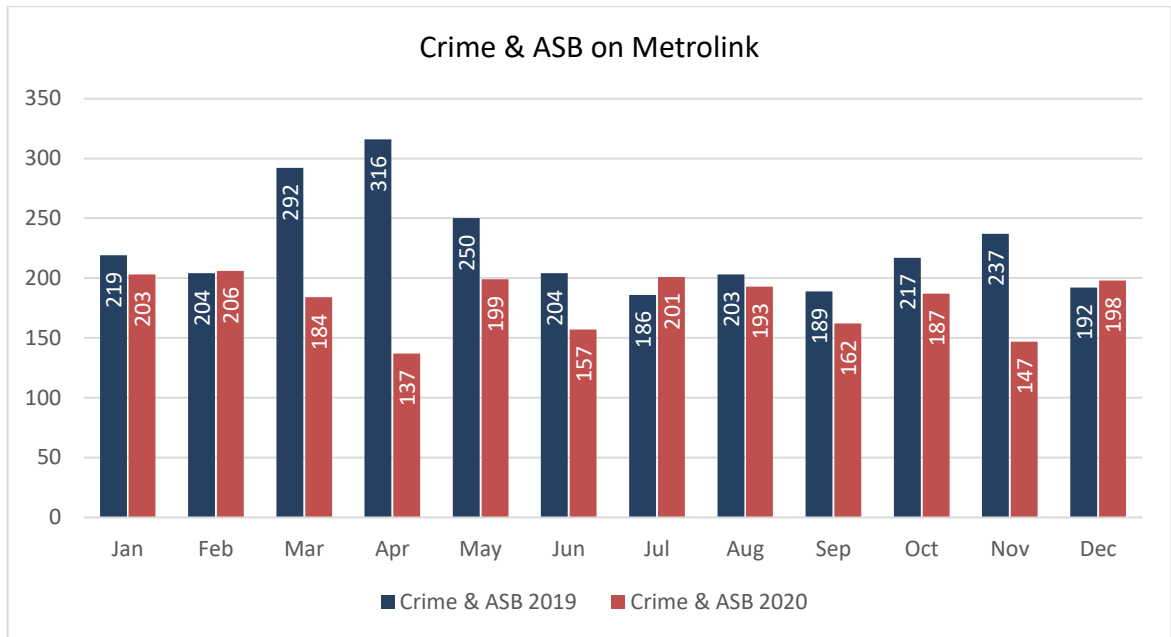


3.10 Infrastructure performance has continued above target now for the past 11 periods. The tram management system has performed particularly well.

Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour

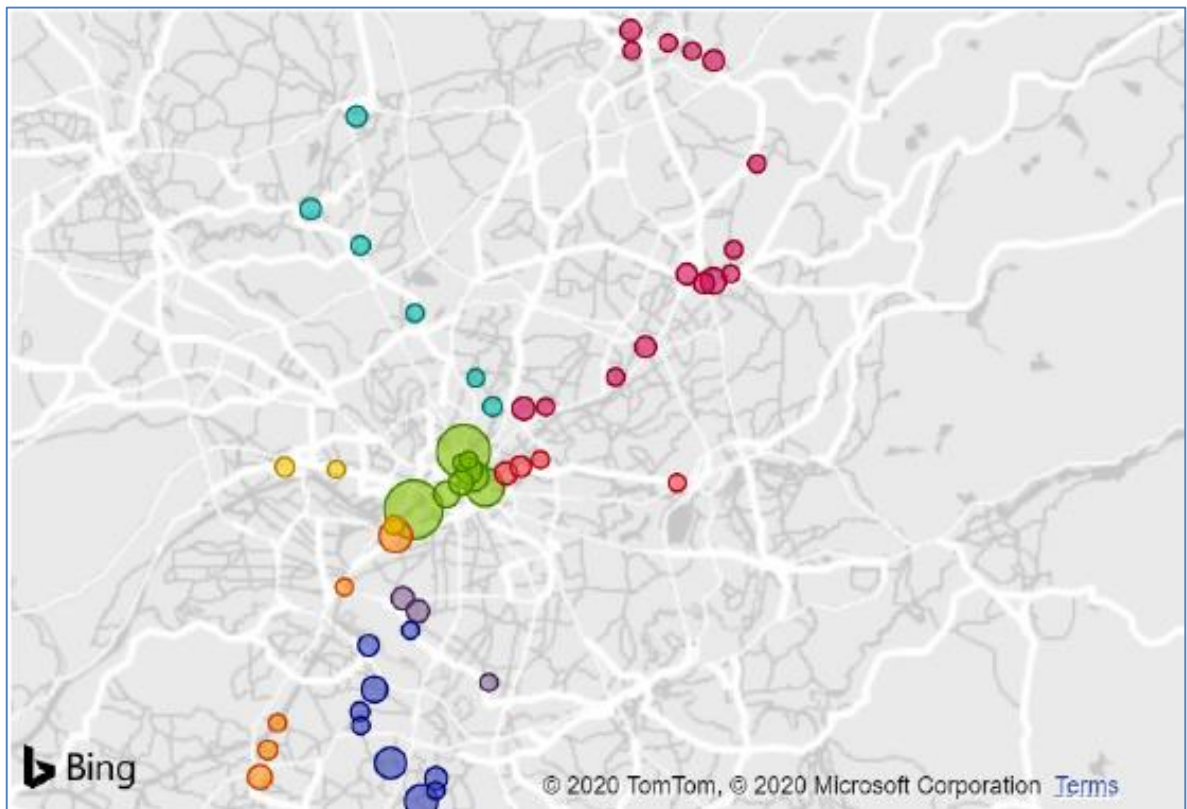
3.11 On average, 181 incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour per month were reported to Metrolink across the duration of the year.

3.12 Recorded incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour on the network remain lower than those recorded in 2019. Criminal damage has escalated across the network through November and December affecting platform shelters, TVMs, ticket validators, saloon windows, tram seats and cycle hubs. This correlates to second lockdown, the lead up to the festive period, bonfire/halloween events and school holidays.



Data source: Travel Safe Partnership consolidated dataset

The locations of hot spots for crime and anti-social behavior during December are shown on the map below. The size of the circle relates to the scales of reported incidents.



Data Source: KAM ASB and Crime

3.13 TravelSafe Days of Action have continued during December, with a focus on city centre locations to support the student travel window and return to retail. Engagement took place at Victoria (04 Dec), Piccadilly (05 Dec), Velopark (17 Dec) and Victoria (23 Dec). Below shows an infographic to showcase these activities since they commenced in July;



3.14 15 Partnership letters have been sent to schools at which rates of compliance with face coverings had been noted as low, this approach appears to have had a positive impact.

3.15 A series of ‘staff impact videos’ have been developed for use across social media to support engagement with young people around safe travel behaviours.

3.16 The hot spot for ASB remains Manchester City Centre. The top five hot spot areas are Victoria, Cornbrook, St Peter’s Square, Piccadilly Gardens and Piccadilly undercroft.

3.17 Tram ‘surfing’ remains an issue and recent hot spot locations for “boarding” trams have been identified. These are being closely monitored. One identified youth will enter a restorative justice process, once this can be safely facilitated at Queens Road Depot.

3.18 During period 9, TravelSafe officers reported over 700 face covering interventions and since 15 June 2020 when face coverings on public transport became compulsory there were over 5200 face covering interventions by TravelSafe officers. Through the Transport Unit activity on the network 18 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) have been issued to date by Greater

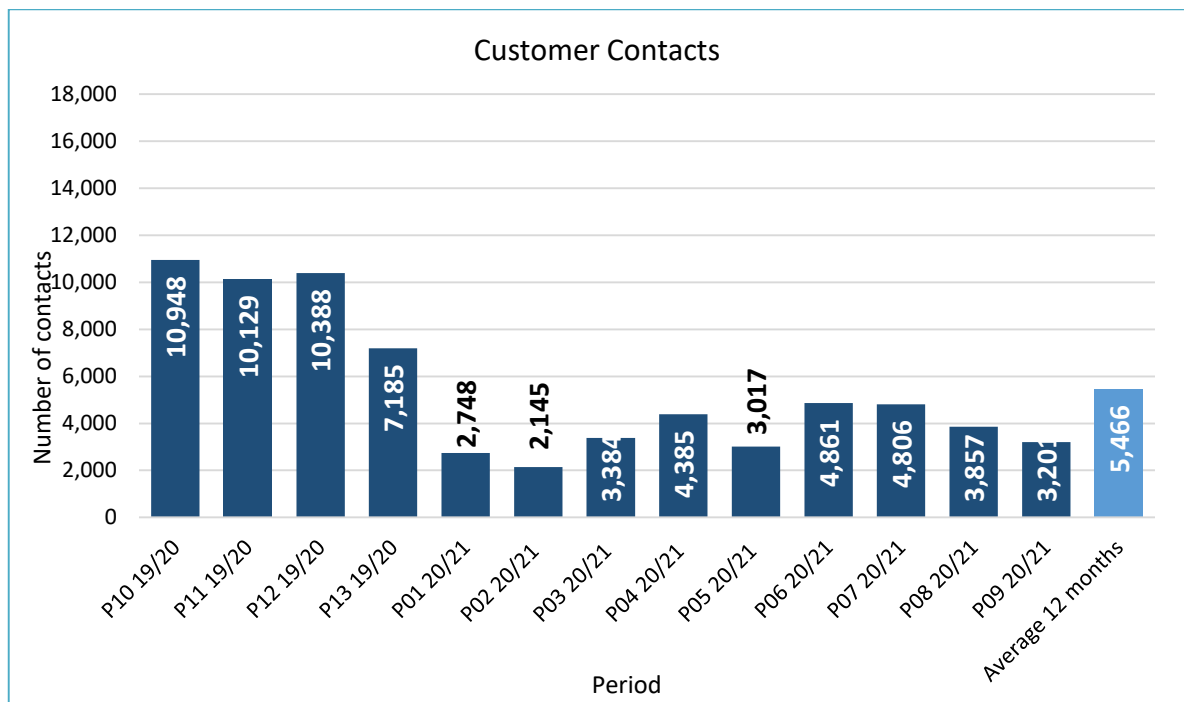
Manchester Police. Also, during period 9 there was introduction of Trambassadors, and their role is to encourage people to wear face coverings, hand out hand sanitisers and promote COVID safe travel.

3.19 Most reported bylaw offences during period 9 were for smoking, verbal abuse of staff, trespass, loitering and alcohol. 28 bylaw offences were reported for prosecution through the court.

3.20 The recent rise COVID cases is impacting on staff and teams of the TravelSafe Partnership members through illness or staff self-isolating, including GMP. Adjustments to rosters and tasking are being made, however we are determined that the positive momentum on face covering enforcement will continue.

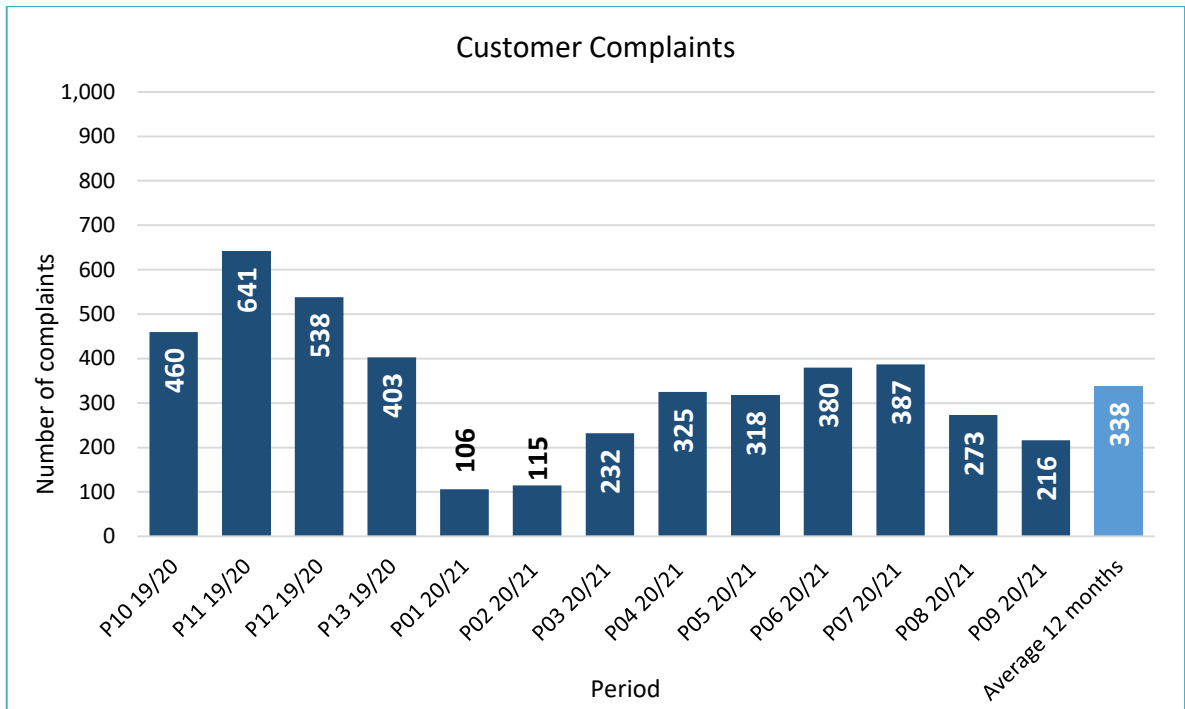
Customer contacts and complaints

3.21 Just over 71,000 customer contacts were dealt with over the duration of the year, averaging at just under 5,500 customer contacts per period (excludes twitter contact).



The charts above and below show clearly how the number of customer contacts and complaints dropped significantly at the outset of COVID. They have subsequently increased but not to the levels seen pre COVID.

3.22 The category of contacts varies by period. Ticketing related contacts dominate customer feedback channels, particularly in respect of incomplete journeys arising from an unregistered tap out using contactless and how to see journeys and get receipts online. This also correlates to the increased use of contactless during the pandemic with new customers familiarising themselves with the service. A new campaign was launched for contactless to further promote the service and how to use it.



4. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

New trams

- 4.1 The delivery of the first new tram was 14 November with the second tram arriving before Christmas. Testing and commissioning of these vehicles is underway with the first tram entering passenger service before Christmas. Other trams will continue to arrive throughout the course of this year which will increase capacity on the network by enabling the use of more doubles to support social distancing in the short term and support the delivery of patronage growth in the longer term. The delivery schedule will be impacted by the latest lockdown in the UK and Europe and will therefore remain under constant review.

Tram Management System (TMS)

- 4.2 TMS programme continued with the completion of the Bury Line conversion to line of sight operations in November.
- 4.3 Work continues this year with the conversion at Timperley planned.

5. FORWARD PLAN

Service

- 5.1 The current service pattern delivers a good spread of capacity across the network and through deployment of double trams the capacity can be mobilised to support social distancing and respond to changes in line demand. A longer-term service pattern is in development with KeolisAmey Metrolink.
- 5.2 Due to the changes in the COVID response following the introduction of the Tier system, Greater Manchester moving into Tier 4 followed by national lockdown from 5 January, it is not proposed to make any significant changes to the service until later this year.
- 5.3 The recovery service options in development aim to optimise capacity and target to meet demand.

Planned engineering works

- 5.4 This year essential maintenance and renewal works will continue to be planned as per the annual programme.
- 5.5 There will be track works in the city centre including Victoria and Piccadilly as well as Trafford Bar, Cornbrook, Rochdale and Eccles.
- 5.6 Continuation of infrastructure enhancements to prepare for the 27 new trams. One depot has already had minor works completed, while the other will require more substantial upgrades next year. The depot works is unlikely to affect passengers. Three new substations on the Bury line are also required to provide additional power for the trams. It is not yet known what the impact of these works will be on passengers, though it is likely to be minimal.
- 5.7 Network Rail planned bridge works at Victoria will also impact upon Metrolink services and we have been working closely with Network Rail to plan these works and minimise the impact on services as much as possible.

Customer Experience

- 5.8 On the 3 December additional cleaning resource was introduced onto the network to increase the number of daily touch point cleans along each line and onboard the trams, this is an increase of approx. 500 hours per week of touch point cleaning activity.
- 5.9 On the same week a team of 'Trambassadors' were introduced to support customers using the network by informing them of the safety information when using the network and requirements to wear face coverings, using contactless ticket purchase options where possible and keeping a safe distance from other customers. They are proactively handing out travel size hand sanitisers and face masks to customers who have not come prepared as part of a campaign to encourage and educate customers returning to the service.

- 5.10 Hand sanitisers were introduced on all city centre stops which have the highest footfall traffic. These assets have been a challenge for Metrolink to introduce due to the outdoor exposed stops with no static staff presence. The introduction in the city centre will be closely monitored and reviewed.
- 5.11 Face covering compliance has been monitored across the network Monday-Friday in the AM and PM peaks. The levels have remained consistently high on Metrolink at circa 85% compliance, with higher compliance in the AM peak and slightly lower compliance levels in the PM peak due to increased leisure activity.
- 5.12 Exemptions to wearing a face covering is expected to be over 10% which means that our compliance of circa 85% is significantly high and consistent with other modes of public transport.
- 5.13 Several measures have been taken to ensure customers are aware that they must wear a face covering unless exempt including but not limited to; media and marketing campaigns of travelling safely when using public transport, highly visible signage across all stops and trams, journey planning information, regular announcements on stops, staff support in educating, engaging and encouraging the use of face coverings which included proactive handouts of face covers to encourage the right behaviours in the early days/weeks.
- 5.14 Metrolink Travel Safe Officers have conducted dedicated activities around educating and encouraging the use of face coverings as well as collaborating with the Transport Unit to conduct targeted operations at key locations where compliance is lower and support the enforcement activities.
- 5.15 A significant amount of work has been done with local schools and colleges near the network which has included support from teachers attending operations which has been highly successful. The most recent compliance by line data can be found in Appendix 2.

Wi-Fi

- 5.16 Wi-Fi equipment was installed on trams following funding secured through the Super-Connected Cities programme in 2015. Metrolink and Free Bus had been providing free at the point of use Wi-Fi to passengers since then, with the costs of operating the service largely covered by commercial sponsorship from March 2018 to October 2019. Whilst there could be potential for a new sponsorship deal to replace the previous arrangement, commercial advice is that this is unlikely, at least in the short-term, as patronage and therefore advertising reach is significantly depressed by the COVID pandemic.
- 5.17 Usage levels had declined year on year since 2017, in line with the increased availability of cheaper, and in some cases unlimited personal data allowances, with this trend expected to continue in the future. The service allowance was limited on the Wi-Fi (to ensure fair usage and control costs) which meant users could not use excessive amounts of data by streaming music or videos.

- 5.18 During 2019/20 there were approximately 7,000 customers accessing the Wi-Fi on an average day. When compared to the average number of trips per day (c.134,000) pre-COVID, that equates to circa 5% of users.
- 5.19 Following the loss of a sponsorship deal to fund the WiFi provision followed by a significant reduction in Metrolink patronage, the free Wi-Fi on trams (and on the city centre Free Bus service) was switched off at the start of lockdown, on 24 March. Due to the financial challenges faced by TfGM and Metrolink during the pandemic the Wi-Fi service was placed under review.
- 5.20 Since the switch-off there has been very little customer feedback around the service and of those received none of those customers commented further when an explanation was provided.

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	24/04/2021
2	25/04/2021	22/05/2021
3	23/05/2021	19/06/2021
4	20/06/2021	17/07/2021
5	18/07/2021	14/08/2021
6	15/08/2021	11/09/2021
7	12/09/2021	09/10/2021
8	10/10/2021	06/11/2021
9	07/11/2021	04/12/2021
10	05/12/2021	01/01/2022
11	02/01/2022	29/01/2022
12	30/01/2022	26/02/2022
13	27/02/2022	31/03/2022

Appendix 2 – Face Covering Compliance by line

Face covering compliance data is based on ad hoc sampling on each line during the AM and PM peaks Monday-Friday.

The below table provides the latest data set from December;

Compliance Level	Altrincham	Bury	City Centre	East Didsbury	East Manchester	Eccles	Manchester Airport	Oldham-Rochdale
60 – 70%							✓	✓
70 – 80%		✓						
80 – 90%	✓		✓	✓	✓			
90%+						✓		