

GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

BUS SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE

Date: Friday 7th October 2022
Subject: Bus Performance Report
Report of: Stephen Rhodes, Director of Bus, TfGM

Purpose of Report

To inform members of the performance of the Greater Manchester bus network during the February 2022 to July 2022 period, with particular focus on the subsidised bus network.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to note and comment on the performance of the Greater Manchester bus network.

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: 0

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

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 and Scrutiny Committee

N/A

1 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Greater Manchester has an extensive bus network covering approximately 51.6 million miles between August 2021 and July 2022 (a decrease of 2% compared with the financial year of 2021/2022) and supporting an annual ridership of 149.3 million passengers (an increase of 12.5 million passengers compared with the financial year of 2021/22). The network (573 services) is provided on both a commercial and subsidised basis by 39 operators (as of July 2022).
- 1.2 Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), financially supports and manages the subsidised bus network on behalf of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). The subsidised network (17.8% of the overall network mileage) is provided utilising a budget of £29.7m (2022/23). The funding level supports areas of the network which are not deemed commercially viable by operators, but are considered socially necessary, and also delivers an extensive network of school bus services.
- 1.3 Bus service provision represents a vital element of the Greater Manchester public transport network. Currently, three out of every four public transport journeys in Greater Manchester are undertaken by bus services. It is therefore essential that the performance of the bus network is closely monitored and understood, ensuring that not only is the quality of provision and customer journey experience maintained and enhanced, but the subsidised services budget is effectively and efficiently deployed.
- 1.4 Transport Focus surveys have consistently indicated that key customer priorities are value for money, driver behaviour, punctuality, and journey time.
- 1.5 This report covers the period of February 2022 – July 2022 which includes the ongoing recovery following the impact of the pandemic, industrial strike actions and national driver shortage affecting the industry.
- 1.6 Comparisons within the report are made to the period February 2021 – July 2021 which included the direct impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a period of national lockdown along with subsequent government support measures, including advising

where possible for people to work at home, essential travel only messaging and social distancing on buses. Various local lockdowns were also in place throughout this period. This had an impact on traffic conditions with reduced traffic on roads, capacity, mileage, and patronage.

- 1.7 Patronage and mileage reporting continued throughout the pandemic period but both measures were significantly impacted and a return to pre-Covid patterns of travel have yet to become clear.
- 1.8 Commercial network – this has patronage at around 80-90% of pre-Covid levels during the period of the report.
- 1.9 Subsidised network – General subsidised bus services operated at 100% of pre-Covid mileage throughout the reporting period. In addition, school service mileage was also at 100% of pre-Covid levels with patronage at 96% and 95% of pre-Covid levels respectively.

2 OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

- 2.1 This section of the report presents network wide bus operational performance statistics for the Greater Manchester region, extracted from TfGM's in-house Punctuality Reliability Monitoring System (PRMS). Performance levels are tracked against internal and Traffic Commissioner targets.
- 2.2 Figure 1 provides a comparison of the months February – July in 2021 and 2022 of the key bus services operational performance indicators, split between those registered to adhere to a timetable with specific departure times (scheduled services) and those registered to operate six buses an hour or more, with the associated timetable stating the service frequency (frequent services).
- 2.3 PRMS manual observations were suspended between April 2020 and September 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. Estimates for these months have been generated using the previous 3 years of data (17/18, 18/18 and 19/20) for reliability,

punctuality, and regularity. The 2020/2021 results include these estimates along with actual survey observations for the period of October 2020 – March 2021.

Figure 1: Bus Service Operational Performance

Indicator	Standard	February 2021 – July 2021		February 2022 – July 2022		Direction Change
		Number of Observations	%	Number of Observations	%	
Scheduled Services						
Reliability	97.00%	34,124	98.16%	26,397	95.99%	↓
Start Point Punctuality	90.00%	15,778	91.72%	11,738	86.58%	↓
Mid-Point Punctuality	70.00%	18,346	86.21%	14,659	77.58%	↓
Overall Punctuality	80.00%	34,124	88.80%	26,397	81.58%	↓
Frequent Services						
Regularity	97.00%	11,137	97.93%	6,256	95.64%	↓

Scheduled Service Performance

- 2.4 The reliability of scheduled services (Figure 1) at the network level was 95.99% for the 6-monthly period between February 2022 – July 2022, representing a declining position from the level achieved for the 6-monthly period between February 2021 – July 2021 (98.16%). The level of performance has fallen below the Traffic Commissioner’s minimum standard of 97.00%.
- 2.5 Over the last 5 years, the reliability of scheduled services (Figure 2) at the network level has remained above the CoC VPA standard of 97.00%. Reliability of scheduled services between April 2022 and July 2022 has fallen below the Traffic Commissioner’s standard of 97.00% at 96.30%.
- 2.6 Start-point punctuality of scheduled services is an area where TfGM has sought more action on the part of the operator, as it is incumbent on them to provide reasonable recovery time and develop contingency plans to enable journeys to start

punctually. Traffic congestion in the Regional Centre has historically hampered the increased recovery times put in place by some operators, particularly given the limited space available for vehicle layover.

- 2.7 The start-point punctuality of scheduled services (Figure 1) at the network level was 86.58% for the 6-monthly period between February 2022 – July 2022, representing a declining position from the level achieved for the 6-monthly period between February 2021 – July 2021 (91.72%). The level of performance has fallen below the Traffic Commissioner's minimum standard of 90.00%.
- 2.8 Over the last 5 years, start-point punctuality of scheduled services (Figure 2) at the network level has generally been below the minimum standard of 90.00%. Performance fell between 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, improved between 2019/2020 and 2020/2021, before falling during 2021/2022. The fall in performance between 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 reflected the scale and intensity of the infrastructure works in the Regional Centre and on the key radial corridors, and the level of planned and unplanned roadworks and events during that time. Start-point punctuality of scheduled services between April 2022 and July 2022 has fallen below the Traffic Commissioner's standard of 90.00% at 86.72%.
- 2.9 The mid-point punctuality of scheduled services (Figure 1) at the network level was 77.58% for the 6-monthly period between February 2022 – July 2022, representing a declining position from the level achieved for the 6-monthly period between February 2021 – July 2021 (86.21%). The level of performance remains above the Traffic Commissioner's minimum standard of 70.00%.
- 2.10 Over the last 5 years, mid-point punctuality of scheduled services (Figure 2) at the network level has remained above the minimum standard of 70.00%. Mid-point punctuality of scheduled services between April 2022 and July 2022 has remained above the Traffic Commissioner's standard of 70.00% at 78.62%.
- 2.11 Overall punctuality for scheduled services (Figure 1) at the network level was 81.58% for the 6-monthly period between February 2022 – July 2022, representing a declining position from the level achieved for the 6-monthly period between

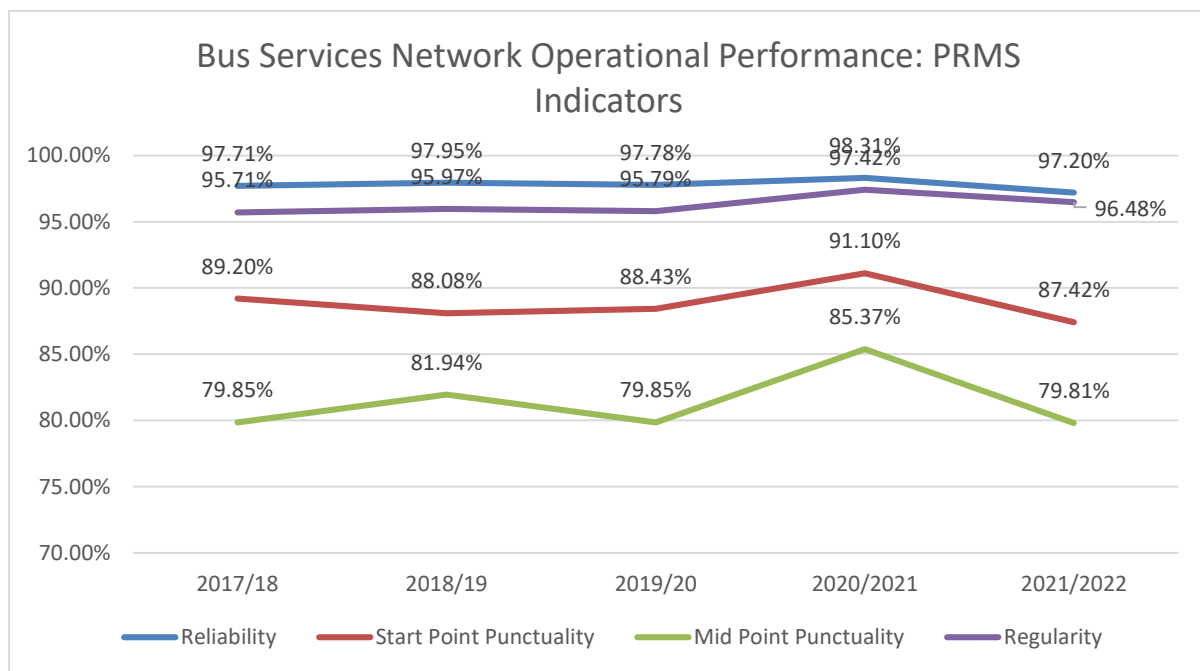
February 2021 – July 2021 (88.80%). The level of performance remains above the Traffic Commissioner’s standard of 80.00%.

2.12 Performance, as shown by the key bus services operational performance indicators, has fallen in the 6 month period comparison. There continues to be a general driver shortage impacting the bus industry and the ability for operators to provide services as planned, as well as increased congestion and roadworks taking place on the network, affecting performance.

2.13 An Operational Performance Reporting system is being introduced which uses both automated vehicle location (AVL) and timetable information to determine punctuality and reliability performance and will supersede the PRMS process. Data is collected for all services and journeys covering the Greater Manchester network, for the commercial and subsidised network, including the school services.

2.14 All of Greater Manchester operators have been integrated into the Operational Performance Reporting system, with full performance reporting expected from the system by October 2022.

Figure 2: Bus Services Network Operational Performance and Trend



Frequent Service Performance

- 2.15 In the case of frequent services, the key issue for passengers is not the adherence to a specific set of timetabled departures, but the regularity of the service compared to their expectations. Performance is measured at intermediate timing points of a journey therefore this is another area where internal targets acknowledge there may be a need for highways management interventions to achieve the minimum standards.
- 2.16 The mid-point regularity of frequent services (Figure 1) at the network level was 95.64% for the 6-monthly period between February 2022 – July 2022, representing a declining position from the level achieved for the 6-monthly period between February 2021 – July 2021 (97.93%). The level of performance has fallen below the Traffic Commissioner's standard of 97.00%.
- 2.17 Over the last 5 years, regularity of frequent services (Figure 2) at the network level has been below the minimum standard of 95%, with the exception of the 2020/2021 financial year. Regularity of frequent services between April 2022 and July 2022 has fallen below the Traffic Commissioner's standard of 97.00% at 95.22%.

Fleet Profile

- 2.18 Since 1992, European Union (EU) regulations have been imposed on new engines, with the aim of improving air quality - meaning an engine must meet certain Euro emissions standard when it is made. The aim of Euro emissions standards is to reduce the levels of harmful exhaust emissions, chiefly:
- Nitrogen oxides
 - Carbon monoxide
 - Hydrocarbons
 - Particulate matter

- 2.19 The first Euro emission standard (Euro 1) was introduced in 1992 and the latest Euro 6 emission standard in 2015. It is believed that the EU is planning to introduce a new Euro 7 emission standard in the coming years.
- 2.20 A hybrid engine combines a petrol or diesel engine with an electric motor powered by a battery. The battery is charged by capturing energy from braking and, under certain conditions, from the engine.
- 2.21 Figure 3 highlights the observed profile of the network bus fleet, in terms of vehicle age and the engine emissions standard. The vehicle fleet profile is based upon the fleet data collated as part of the Clean Air programme.

Figure 3: Vehicle Fleet Profile

Vehicle Type	30/09/2021	31/03/2022	Direction Change
Euro IV+ (E4, E5, E6 & Electric vehicles)	97.57%	98.99%	Improving
Euro VI (Incl Electric vehicles)	53.35%	71.71%	Improving
Hybrid Diesel	11.33%	11.85%	Improving
Electric Only	1.51%	1.53%	Improving
Vehicle Age (Average)	9.2 years	9.4 years	Worsening

- 2.22 At the end of March 2022, 98.99% of vehicle engines were of an emission standard of 4 and above and 71.71% of these vehicle engines were of an emission standard of 6 and/or an electric vehicle, an increase compared with the end of September 2021, with the aim of improving air quality. The usage of hybrid diesel engines has improved slightly between the 30/09/2021 and 31/03/2022 from 11.33% to 11.85%.
- 2.23 GM's Clean Air Zone (CAZ) will be introduced in due course following the ongoing review of the scheme. In recognition of the need to support operators with upgrading

their vehicles to meet the emissions standards and avoid paying CAZ penalties which could threaten the sustainability of the network, TfGM secured funding from central government to enable operators to retrofit or replace their buses to Euro VI standard. The Clean Bus Technology Fund which was available during 2018 and 2019 resulted in 280 vehicles being retrofitted. The Clean Bus Fund which has been live since November 2020 enabled all operators to apply for retrofit funding for eligible vehicles. Of the 1013 vehicles identified as being eligible, there have been 877 vehicles accepted for the scheme from 22 different operators and fitment of the retrofit equipment has been completed or claimed for 366 vehicles. The Department for Transport's (DfT) most recent annually reported average vehicle fleet age for England was 8.5 years in 2020/2021*. The national average vehicle age (excluding London) for the same period was 9.5 years*, comparable with the TfGM figure.

*Department for Transport Annual Bus Statistics for England 2020/2021, Bus Indicator 0605. Next update of the indicator will be in Autumn 2022.

3 SUBSIDISED BUS NETWORK PERFORMANCE

Overview

- 3.1 Over the 6-month period February 2022 – July 2022, the total estimated bus network mileage within Greater Manchester was 24,917,140 miles. Commercial services provided 79.93% (19,915,091 miles) of the total estimated bus network mileage and TfGM subsidised the remaining 20.07% (5,001,689 miles), supporting socially necessary and school bus services.
- 3.2 In July 2022, there were 445 subsidised service contracts in operation, compared with 477 in July 2021. In July 2022, there were 255 school subsidised service contracts and 190 general (normal) subsidised service contracts, provided by a total of 20 operators. The largest 3 operators of subsidised service contracts in July 2022 were Stagecoach Manchester (117 contracts/26.29% market share), Vision Bus Ltd

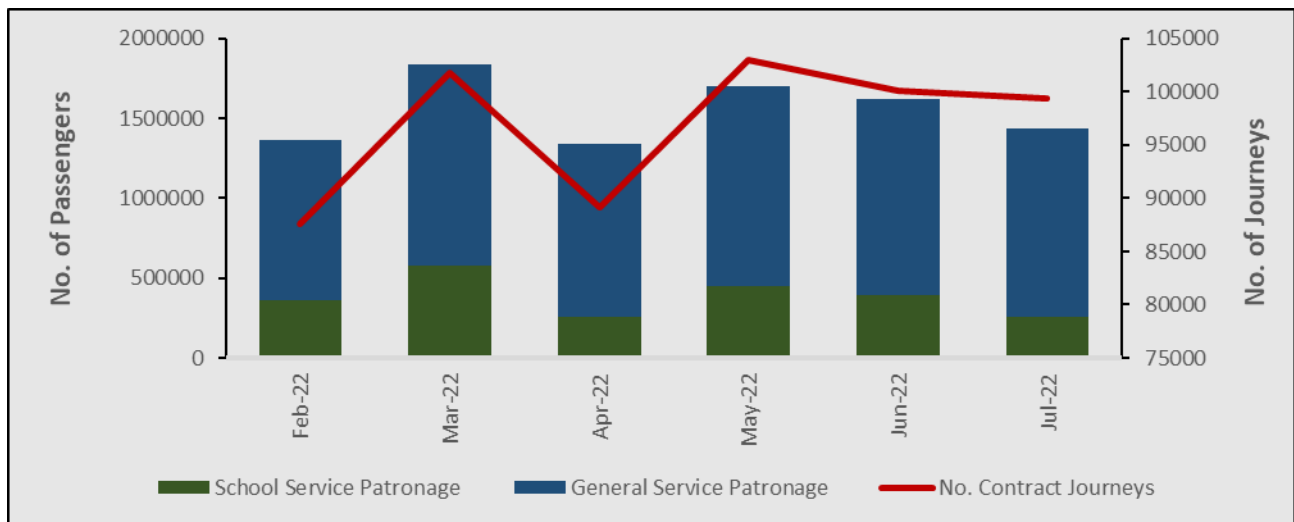
(54 contracts/12.13% market share) and R.S. Tyrer and Sons (39 contracts/8.76% market share).

3.3 In July 2022, subsidised bus mileage was estimated to be 872,350 miles, compared with 905,320 miles in July 2021, a decrease of 4%. The largest 3 operators of subsidised bus mileage in July 2022 were Stagecoach Manchester (283,835 miles/32.54% mileage share), Vision Bus Ltd (94,360 miles/10.82% mileage share) and Diamond Bus (92,139 miles/10.56% mileage share).

Patronage

3.4 Patronage information is collated and analysed each month to identify trends, increase our understanding of passenger demand across the subsidised bus network and facilitate contract management. Figure 4 presents the monthly patronage profile on subsidised bus services, along with the number of contracted journeys for the February 2022 – July 2022 period.

Figure 4: Subsidised Bus Service Patronage (February 2022 – July 2022)



3.5 Overall subsidised service patronage, including the school and general services for the period of February 2022 – July 2022 was 9,307,607 passengers, on 581,072 journeys, with an average of 16 passengers per journey. The level of patronage has

increased by 52% (3,190,146 passengers) compared with the patronage level recorded between February 2021 – July 2021 of 6,117,461 passengers and reflects the change and recovery in bus travel following the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of journeys has increased by 0.27% compared with the number of journeys recorded between February 2021 – July 2021 of 579, 484 journeys. Average passengers per journey between February 2021 – July 2021 was 11.

- 3.6 General subsidised service patronage for February 2022 – July 2022 was 7,008,294. The level of patronage has increased by 56% (2,503,971 passengers) compared with the patronage level recorded between February 2021 – July 2021 of 4,504,323 passengers.
- 3.7 Between February 2022 – July 2022, the main 3 operators carrying general services subsidised patronage were Stagecoach Manchester (53.92% and 3,778,738 passengers), Go North West (9.50% and 665,771 passengers) and Diamond Bus (8.20% and 574,545 passengers).
- 3.8 Schools subsidised service patronage for February 2022 – July 2022 was 2,299,313. This represents an increase of 43% (686,175 passengers) compared with 1,613,138 passengers between February 2021 – July 2021. This reflects the impact of the school closures and suspended services during February 2021.
- 3.9 Between February 2022 – July 2022, the main 3 operators carrying schools subsidised patronage were: Stagecoach Manchester (20.39% and 468,928 passengers), R.S. Tyrer and Sons (14.51% and 333,600 passengers) and Belle Vue Coaches (13.07% and 300,512 passengers)
- 3.10 Subsidised service patronage is recovering. Patronage for the rolling 12-month period of August 2021 – July 2022 was 17,812,712 passengers and though remains 9% lower compared with the 2019/2020 financial year (19,675,699 passengers).

Contract Cost

- 3.11 Contract payments for the subsidised services totalled £14,890,816 for the period of February 2022 – July 2022. This is a 4.94% (£736,321) reduction in the expenditure for contract payments in the period between February 2021 – July 2021 (£15,627,137)
- 3.12 The cost per passenger for the period of February 2022 – July 2022 was £1.60, a decrease of 37.37% compared with the cost per passenger for the 6-month period between February 2021 – July 2021 of £2.55. This reduction in Cost per Passenger actually reflects the reduced patronage levels in the comparative period due to the lockdown measures still in place at the time including various local restrictions which were also in place throughout this period. As a further indicator of this measure, the cost per passenger for the pre-pandemic period of February 2019 to July 2019 was £1.31.

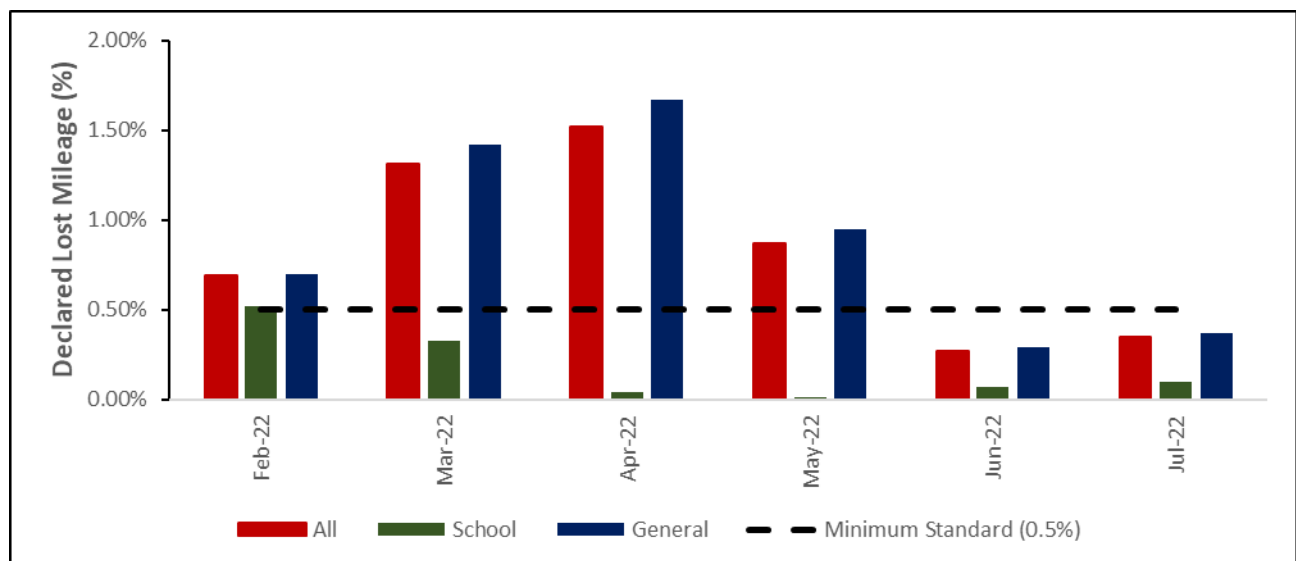
Declared Lost Mileage

- 3.13 Operators are contractually obliged to declare any lost mileage that occurs on TfGM contracts each month and these declarations are subsequently verified through analysis of their electronic ticket machine data. The proportion of declared lost mileage incurred on the subsidised service network between February 2022 and July 2022, broken down by contract type is presented in Figure 5.
- 3.14 Between February 2022 and July 2022, the declared lost mileage for all subsidised services was 39,427 miles, which represented 0.82% of the subsidised scheduled mileage. The significant service delivery issues relating to the national driver shortage must be acknowledged as a significant impact in the period under review. This is a significant increase compared with the period between February 2021 and July 2021 declared lost mileage for all subsidised services of 7,000 miles, representing 0.15% of the subsidised scheduled mileage. Declared lost mileage is above the industry standard of 0.5%.

3.15 General subsidised declared lost mileage for the period between February 2022 and July 2022 was 38,664 miles, representing 0.89% of the general subsidised scheduled mileage. This is a significant increase compared with the period between February 2021 and July 2021 declared lost mileage for all subsidised services of 6,622 miles, representing 0.15% of the subsidised scheduled mileage. Declared lost mileage is above the industry standard of 0.5%.

3.16 Schools subsidised declared lost mileage for the period between February 2022 and July 2022 was 762 miles, representing 0.18% of the school subsidised scheduled mileage. This is an increase compared with the period between February 2021 and July 2021 declared lost mileage for all subsidised services of 378 miles, representing 0.08% of the subsidised scheduled mileage. Declared lost mileage is below the industry standard of 0.5%.





Figure 5: Declared Lost Mileage (February 2022 – July 2022)



3.17 The main 3 reasons for declared lost mileage for all subsidised services as identified by operators during the period between February 2022 and July 2022 were: staff shortage (63.86% affecting 25,177 miles), bus breakdowns (17.68% affecting 6,970 miles) and traffic congestion and enforcement (8.38% affecting 3,305 miles).

Operational Performance

Figure 6: Subsidised Bus Network Operational Performance

Indicator	Standard	February 2021 – July 2021		February 2022 – July 2022		Direction Change
		Number of Observations	%	Number of Observations	%	
Scheduled Services						
Reliability	97.00%	6,065	99.06%	4,162	97.88%	
Start Point Punctuality	90.00%	4,503	93.57%	3,124	88.86%	
Mid-Point Punctuality	70.00%	1,562	90.65%	1,038	78.13%	
Overall Punctuality	80.00%	6,065	92.83%	4,162	86.18%	

- 3.18 The reliability of subsidised scheduled services (Figure 6) was 97.88% for the 6-month period between February 2022 – July 2022, representing a fall compared with the 6-month period between February 2021 – July 2021 (99.06%). The level of performance remains above the Traffic Commissioner's standard of 97.00%.
- 3.19 The start-point punctuality of subsidised scheduled services (Figure 6) was 86.58% for the 6-month period between February 2022 – July 2022, representing a decline in performance from the level achieved within the 6-month period between February 2021 – July 2021 (93.57%). The level of performance is below the Traffic Commissioner's standard of 90.00%.
- 3.20 The mid-point punctuality of subsidised scheduled services (Figure 6) was 78.13% for the 6-month period between February 2022 – July 2022, representing a decline in performance from the level achieved within the 6-month period between February 2021 – July 2021 (90.65%). The level of performance remains above the Traffic Commissioner's standard of 70.00%.
- 3.21 Overall punctuality for subsidised scheduled services (Figure 6) was 86.18% for the 6-month period between February 2022 – July 2022, representing a decline in performance from the level achieved within the 6-month period between February

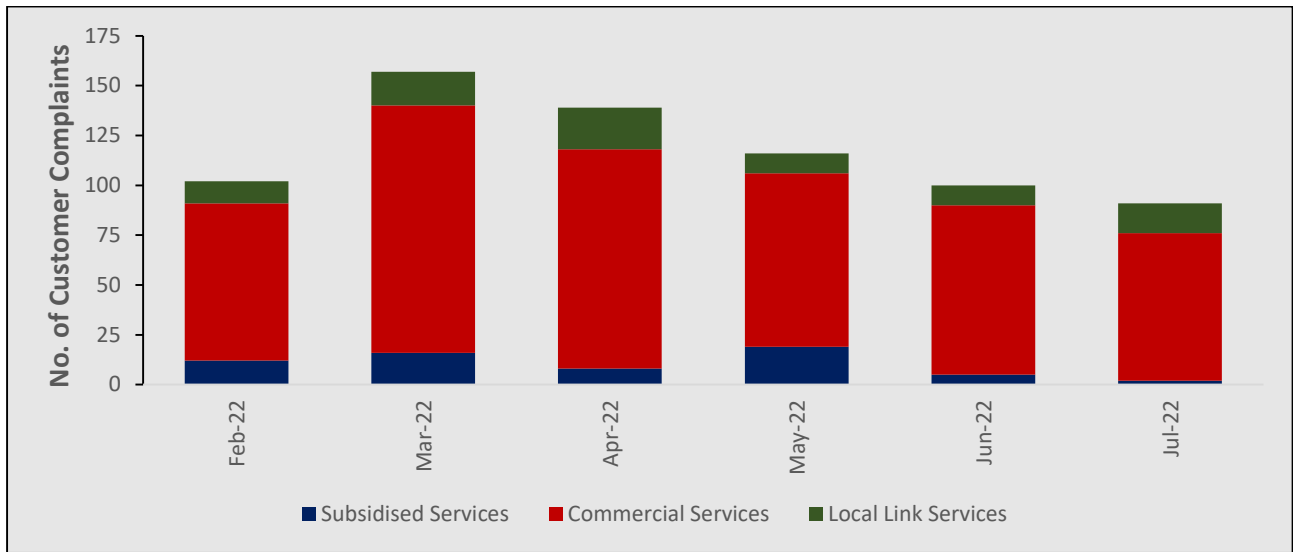
2021 – July 2021 (92.83%). The level of performance remains above the Traffic Commissioner's standard of 80.00%.

- 3.22 As with the overall network, operational performance indicators have fallen in the 6-month period comparison. There continues to be a general driver shortage impacting the bus industry and the ability to provide services as planned as well as increased congestion and roadworks taking place on the network, affecting performance.

Customer Comments

- 3.23 There were 62 subsidised bus service comments/complaints received by TfGM during the period of February 2022 to July 2022, which were within the operators control and their responsibility. This is an increase of 121% in the number of comments/complaints received, compared with the 6-month period between February 2021 – July 2021 of 28, which were also deemed within the operators control and their responsibility.
- 3.24 There were 84 local link comments/complaints received by TfGM during the period of February 2022 to July 2022. This is an increase of 121% in the number of comments/complaints received, compared with the 6-month period between February 2021 – July 2021 of 38.

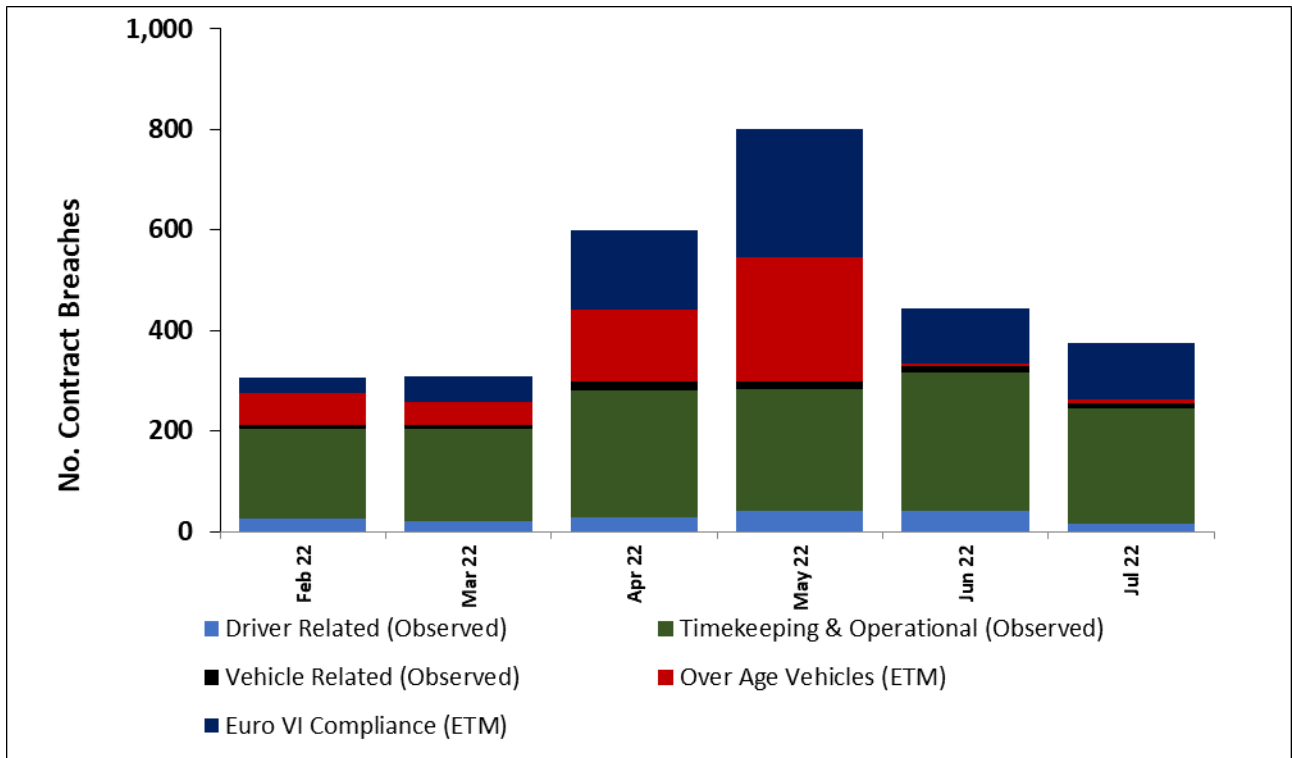
Figure 7: Customer complaints/comments (February 2022 – July 2022)



Contract Breaches

- 3.25 Contract breaches are reported failures to deliver a subsidised service in accordance with the contract specification and result in a financial deduction being made from the operator's monthly payment. The level of financial penalty is dependent on the number and composition of breach types. Figure 8 shows the monthly number of contract breaches by type and source for the period of February 2022 – July 2022.
- 3.26 48.13% of contract breaches between February 2022 and July 2022 were attributed to timekeeping and operational breaches (1,363), 25.28% were due to Euro VI non-compliant vehicles (716), 18.04% were attributed to over age vehicles (511), 6.04% were driver related (171) and 2.51% were vehicle related (71).
- 3.27 Euro VI compliance monitoring was introduced in September 2021 and April 2022 for new tendered contracts, as part of the Clean Air programme.

Figure 8: Contract Breaches (February 2022 – July 2022)



Vehicle Profile

3.28 In July 2022, the average age of the vehicle fleet used on the subsidised network was 9.15 years. When compared by contract type, the average age of the vehicle fleet used on general services was 9.08 years and on the school network was 10.64 years. The average age of the vehicle fleet overall and on both the general and schools network remains below TfGM’s tendered age limit of 15 years.

Deductions from Operator Payments

3.29 Contract deductions are a financial deduction made from the operator’s monthly payment. Declared lost mileage and contract breaches, including employing overage vehicles on the network contribute towards the financial deductions made.

- 3.30 Contract deductions for the subsidised services totalled £235,997 for the period of February 2022 – July 2022. This is a 292% (£175,797) increase in the contract deductions made in the period between February 2021 – July 2021 (£60,200)
- 3.31 Contract deductions represented 1.58% of the total contract payments paid (£14,890,816) in the period of February 2022 – July 2022, compared with 0.39% of the total contract payments paid (£15,627,138) during the 6-month period between February 2021 – July 2021.

4 COVID BUS SERVICES SUPPORT GRANT (CBSSG) AND BUS RECOVERY GRANT (BRG)

- 4.1 The Bus Recovery Grant (BRG), a £226.5m fund which replaced CBSSG, began on 1 September 2021, to run initially to 5 April 2022. DfT agreed to pay operators (c£204m) in respect of eligible commercial services based on farebox revenue loss and mileage. A portion of this fund (c£25m) was reserved for LTAs to support tendered services affected by COVID and for enhanced cleaning at bus stations, interchanges and bus stops. To be eligible for BRG, operators must not run less than 90% of overall scheduled commercial mileage although where there has been scope for justification to operate below this (such as the significant driver shortage issues) payments have continued.
- 4.2 As with CBSSG, operators have worked closely with TfGM on BRG to consult and agree on aggregate service levels. Unlike CBSSG, the BRG scheme has allowed operators to return profits. If an operator is making a pre-tax profit “at a level that DfT believes is excessive,” then all bodies concerned will ensure that the excess is “reinvested into the ambitions of the National Bus Strategy.
- 4.3 The scheme was designed to be a reducing grant to operators as passenger numbers recovered, however projected recovery levels have not been achieved. The sector had been adversely impacted by the increased COVID restrictions connected with Omicron which had not been anticipated by the DfT. As such, on 31 January, the DfT announced increased funding support for operators of c£26m

nationally towards the original scheme ending 5th April. A further funding package was announced by the DfT to run for 6 months until October 2022 and a final extension to the scheme has recently been announced for a confirmed 3-month period until December 22, with the potential for a further 3 months from then on.

- 4.4 In Greater Manchester, the current BRG scheme is expected to pay commercial operators c£18m and from the LTA portion c£0.4m to be allocated to between tendered operators and TfGM's enhanced own cleaning regime.
- 4.5 The commercial portion of the October-December 2022 extension of the scheme will be provided to TfGM directly in order to support network stabilisation and respond to proposed reductions from commercial operators which were due to take effect at the end of the current round of funding.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Recommendations are set out at the front of this report.

Stephen Rhodes

Director of Bus