

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER  
BUS SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE  
HELD ON FRIDAY 12 MARCH 2021 AT 10:30AM VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Roy Walker  
Councillor John Leech  
Councillor Angeliki Stogia  
Councillor Phil Burke  
Councillor Roger Jones  
Councillor David Meller  
Councillor Warren Bray  
Councillor Nathan Evans

Bury Council  
Manchester City Council  
Manchester City Council  
Rochdale Council  
Salford City Council  
Stockport MBC  
Tameside MBC  
Trafford Council

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Alison Chew  
Stephen Rhodes  
James Lewis  
Nick Roberts

Martin Shier  
Gwynne Williams  
Nicola Ward

Interim Head of Bus Services, TfGM  
Customer Director, TfGM  
Section Manager, Services Planning, TfGM  
Head of Services & Commercial Development,  
TfGM  
Bus Partnerships Delivery Manager, TfGM  
Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA  
Senior Governance & Scrutiny Officer, GMCA

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Adam Clark  
Alistair Nuttall  
Ben Jarvis  
Matthew Rawlinson  
Ian Humphreys  
Lesley Adshead  
Nigel Featham

Stagecoach  
Arriva  
Stagecoach  
Diamond  
First  
Nexus Move  
Go North West

**GMTBSC 34/20    APOLOGIES**

**Resolved /-**

That apologies be received and noted from Cllr Sean Fielding, GMCA.

**GMTBSC 35/20    CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS**

**Resolved /-**

1. That it be noted that there would be an additional meeting of the GM Transport Committee on Wednesday 24 March 2021.
2. That the Committee express its best wishes to Alison Chew, Head of Bus at TfGM as she

begins her maternity leave.

## **GMTBSC 36/20    DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

### **Resolved /-**

That there were no declarations of interest.

## **GMTBSC 37/20    MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE BUS SERVICES SUB COMMITTEE HELD 15 JANUARY 2021**

### **Resolved /-**

That the minutes of the meeting held 15 January 2021 be approved.

## **GMTBSC 38/20    UPDATE FROM OPERATORS**

The Chair invited all bus operators to provide a verbal update on the key issues and developments over the past two months.

Comments included –

- Patronage had increased steadily over recent weeks and was currently c. 43-50% of pre-covid levels. During lockdown 3, passenger numbers were as low as 30% however, a further increase was anticipated after the easter period.
- Most operators were now operating c. 80-90% mileage.
- Uptake of services following the return of schools had been patchy.
- There were concerns regarding resourcing levels should those classified as clinically extremely vulnerable be required to remain at home post the end of March.
- Further timetable increases were planned by a number of operators in April as further lockdown eases were introduced.
- Performance remained good across the majority of the network and where there had been issues of congestion, duplicate services had been deployed.
- The union strike by Unite had commenced at the Go North West depot. Essential services were being maintained through sub contracted services to eleven local companies, all of which were covid secure and wheelchair accessible. A £1 standard fare was currently in place, with all concession passes still accepted. Work was underway with ACAS to find a solution to the dispute as soon as possible and ensure that there were no disruptions to passengers.

Members expressed concern as to the lack of information available at Bury Interchange regarding recent service changes, specifically in relation to new coloured buses provided by Go North West.

### **Resolved /-**

1. That the updates from bus operators be noted by the Committee.
2. That the request for further signage regarding services at Bury Interchange be noted by

## **GMTBSC 39/20 RING AND RIDE PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

Nick Roberts, Head of Services & Commercial Development, TfGM introduced a report which updated Members on the progress in relation to the delivery of Ring and Ride services by Greater Manchester Accessible Transport Ltd (GMATL), particularly regarding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the targeted client group, this service had seen a significant reduction in trips taken over the past year and had never recovered past 22% of normal levels. To support access to vaccination sites specifically, some of the conditions of use had been relaxed, expanding the radius of coverage and allowing anyone with a concessionary pass to request a journey.

As the country were coming out of lockdown, it was felt a timely opportunity for the service to be reviewed to determine what type of future demand would there be. Members felt that there was some anxiety in relation to leaving home especially within elderly and vulnerable communities which may result in a slow recovery for the Ring and Ride Service. It was suggested that potentially there were excess vehicles within the fleet which could be re-deployed. Officers informed the Committee that the procurement of additional vehicles had been on hold throughout the pandemic and would now be re-modelled as to the type and size of fleet required for the future service.

Looking at the wider picture, Members felt that the return of demand led services such as Ring and Ride should be considered within the context of public transport recovery and it would be imperative to have the right campaign messaging to encourage users back to the network at the appropriate time.

Members reported that at a recent rail conference, operators had indicated that passenger numbers would not recover back to normal levels for four years. This was concerning, however also reflected potential new working patterns and reduced overall demand. Therefore it was acknowledged that encouraging passengers back to the public transport network would be a long process and would need a joined up approach across all operators, Local Authorities and the Department for Transport.

### **Resolved /-**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That it be noted that the procurement of additional fleet vehicles for Ring and Ride has been put on hold whilst further modelling is underway as to how the service may look in the future.
3. That a further report on the future of Ring and Ride be brought to a meeting of the GM Transport Committee in early 2021, however comments and suggestions from Members would be welcomed in advance of this.
4. That the Chair would raise the points made by Members at a meeting of the Ring and Ride Committee later today.

## **GMTBSC 40/20 FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO THE BUS NETWORK**

James Lewis, Section Manager, Services Planning, TfGM took Members through the latest forthcoming changes to the bus network report.

## **Annex A**

In addition to the commercial changes listed, there had been late notification of a change to the 130 service from Macclesfield to Handforth operated by D&G Buses who were extending their Monday-Friday daytime services to the Airport and Wythenshawe Hospital.

## **Annex B**

There were no items in Annex B.

## **Annex C**

There were proposed changes to services in the Standish area, services 640/641 operated by Stagecoach and supported by TfGM as a result of engagement with local councillors.

The Bolton Metroshuttle had been reviewed annually and due to a reduction in patronage had been requested to be withdrawn.

As a result of improvements to surrounding services, it had been requested that the Local Link service to Logistics North be removed, however this would be continually monitored.

In addition to those changes published, there were some further commercial adjustments anticipated for the Bolton area with no service reduction implications. However, local elected members would be briefed on these changes as appropriate.

Members suggested that alongside the review of the Ring and Ride service as discussed in the previous item, that a wider review of all demand-based services including Local Link and Metroshuttles be undertaken.

In relation to the changes proposed for the Rochdale area, Members thanked officers for advanced notice and the opportunity to discuss any implications. However, requested that further consideration be given to the first and last journeys of the 18 Service to ensure that the timings were in line with shift patterns at the Manchester Royal Infirmary.

On the issue of passenger confidence, Members questioned as to what actions were being undertaken by operators to address any concerns. The Committee were informed that there were ongoing conversations with the Department for Transport and other bodies regarding a concise post lockdown message to support people back to the public transport network. Future bus services funding announcements were anticipated over the next couple of weeks and therefore this conversation was anticipated to progress further following this and as restrictions begin to be lifted.

Many measures were already in place to ensure passenger safety when travelling on the bus network, including regular cleaning, social distancing, contactless payments etc and these would continue as lockdown was eased. It was anticipated that the Bus Strategy would now include elements in relation to covid that would offer a specific industry steer and some clarity on future funding.

Members expressed some concern as to the non-covid safe behaviour of pupils at Bury Interchange, specifically the use of face coverings and keeping a safe social distance and

urged for further interventions from TravelSafe officers.

**Resolved /-**

1. That the changes to the commercial network and the proposals not to replace the de-registered commercial services as set out in Annex A be noted;
2. That it be noted that in addition to the report, there had been a late notification received in relation to service 130 which was a commercial service run by D&G Buses which would now be extended Monday-Friday daytime to the Airport and Wythenshawe Hospital.
3. That it be agreed that no action is taken in respect of changes or de-registered commercial services as set out in Annex A;
4. That it be noted that there is no proposed action taken in respect of changes or de-registered commercial services as set out in Annex B; and
5. That it be noted that the Bolton Metroshuttle service had been withdrawn following annual reviews of patronage levels.
6. That TfGM would continue to review any impact of withdrawing the Local Link Service to Logistics North.
7. That it be noted that there was a further commercial adjustment anticipated in the Bolton area, which would not result in any service reduction. However, this would be consulted on with local members.
8. That the proposed changes to general subsidised services set out in Annex C be approved.
9. That a wider review of all demand responsive services be undertaken by TfGM in light of the recovery phases for the whole public transport network and reported back to the GM Transport Committee in due course.
10. That the GM Transport Committee receive a report as to the planned communications campaign to encourage people back onto the public transport network at a timely opportunity.
11. That the anticipated imminent publication of the Bus Strategy be noted and an update on future funding for the bus network be brought to a future meeting of the GM Transport Committee.
12. That Member's concerns regarding the lack of social distancing practice of school and college pupils at Bury Interchange be passed to TravelSafe officers.

**GMTBSC 41/20 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Resolved /-**

That, under section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public should be excluded from the meeting for the following items on business on the grounds

that this involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as set out in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

#### **GMTBSC 42/20 FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO THE BUS NETWORK**

##### **Resolved /-**

That the financial implications of forthcoming changes to the bus network be noted by the Committee.