

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER BUS SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY 13 NOVEMBER AT 10:30AM VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:

Councillor John Leech	Manchester City Council
Councillor Sean Fielding	Oldham Council
Councillor Phil Burke	Rochdale Council
Councillor Barry Warner	Salford City Council
Councillor David Meller	Stockport MBC
Councillor Warren Bray (in the Chair)	Tameside MBC
Councillor Nathan Evans	Trafford Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Alison Chew	Interim Head of Bus Services, TfGM
James Lewis	Section Manager, Services Planning, TfGM
Michael Moore	Bus Planning Officer, TfGM
Nick Roberts	Head of Services & Commercial Development, TfGM
Martin Shier	Bus Partnerships Delivery Manager, TfGM
Gwynne Williams	Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA
Nicola Ward	Senior Governance & Scrutiny Officer, GMCA

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Alistair Nuttall	Arriva
Bob Dunn	Diamond
Matt Rawlinson	Diamond
Ian Humphreys	First
Nigel Featham	Go Ahead
Lesley Adshead	Nexus Move
Gary Nolan	One Bus
Ben Jarvis	Stagecoach

GMTBSC 13/20 APOLOGIES

Resolved /-

That apologies be received from Councillors Roger Jones, Mark Aldred and Roy Walker.

GMTBSC 14/20 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

Resolved /-

There were no chairs announcements or urgent business.

GMTBSC 15/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Resolved /-

That there were no declarations of interest.

GMTBSC 16/20 MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE BUS SERVICES SUB COMMITTEE HELD 11 SEPTEMBER 2020

Resolved /-

That the minutes of the GMTBSC Bus Services Sub Committee meeting held 11 September 2020 be approved as a correct record.

GMTBSC 17/20 BUS OPERATOR COMMENTS ABOUT BUS SERVICES IN GM BETWEEN MARCH AND SEPTEMBER 2020

Bus operators were invited by the Committee to provide feedback on bus services in GM over the last three months.

Comments raised by bus operators included the following:

- This had been a challenging period, and thanks were expressed to staff on the frontline for adapting and continuing to provide a public transport network in an ever changing landscape.
- There had been an increased level of collaboration between operators and TfGM and all were keen to see this continue to ensure the widest, but most efficient, joined up service provision for the future.
- Overall reliability across the network had been good with many operators delivering close to 100% of services.
- Passenger numbers remained significantly lower than pre-covid levels (c 40-45%), and therefore running times were shorter than normal. Some timetables would be reviewed to reduce the amount of time waiting at stops.
- There were increasing levels of staff sickness and isolation which had begun to put pressure on available resources and as a result, some operators were looking to review some daytime frequencies. Concerns were raised that some other areas of the UK were seeing a greater impact on public transport services as a result of staff sickness/absence.
- Operators continued to update their communications on a frequent basis in line with current Government guidance.
- Diamond had recently experienced some vandalism to new vehicles, which had led to vehicle down time whilst repairs were underway. Furthermore, if this persisted it could have an impact service provision.
- Thanks were expressed to Trafford Council for their engagement regarding the challenges to bus operators as a result of the temporary cycle lane on the A56, which had now been resolved.
- 60 vehicles had been added to the network to provide additional schools services and

would be continuing to do so until at least the end of 2020.

Members thanked all operators for their continued cooperation and strong relationship with TfGM and praised continuing efforts during this difficult period. Specifically, operators were congratulated on maintaining minimal service reduction, however, Members were concerned as to the longer term Government funding available to the sector. Operators confirmed that current Government guidance indicated that funding would continue for the foreseeable future and if any changes were to be made there would be a significant lead in period and no changes made without consultation.

Resolved /-

1. That the updates from bus operators be noted by the Committee.
2. That the significant cooperation between operators, and with TfGM during this period be noted.
3. That thanks be expressed to all operators for the services levels that they have continued to provide through these unprecedented times, with particular thanks to staff on the front line.

GMTBSC 18/20 BUS PERFORMANCE REPORT

Alison Chew, Head of Bus TfGM introduced the latest bus performance report which provided details of the Greater Manchester bus network during the September 19 to August 20 period, with particular focus on the subsidised bus network. The report specifically gave information as to how performance had been influenced at the start of the pandemic, during the first lockdown where patronage levels dipped as low as 10% and the impact of the tier 3 and latest lockdown restrictions.

In relation to the number of Euro 6 vehicles currently on the network, Members expressed concern that the percentage of compliant vehicles would not be sufficient to support GM's Clean Air ambitions. Officers reported that many operators had already accessed funding to retro-fit their vehicles through the Clean Bus Technology Fund and further consultation was also underway for additional funding to support the purchase of replacement carbon efficient vehicles.

Members requested that details of electric and hybrid vehicles be included in future reports so that the Committee could have a full understanding as to the percentage of low carbon vehicles in the current fleet.

Resolved /-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That data on the number of electric and hybrid vehicles be included in future Bus Performance reports.

GMTBSC 19/20 FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO THE BUS NETWORK

Nick Roberts, Head of Services & Commercial Development TfGM, took the Committee through the Forthcoming Changes to Bus Services report that informed Members of the changes that had

taken place to the bus network and reported on consequential action taken or proposed by Transport for Greater Manchester.

Following the last meeting, officers had reviewed the proposed changes to service 396 and as a result a procurement exercise in relation to service 397 would commence from 8 November 2020. Members expressed their thanks for the resolution to the gap in the network that the proposed changes to this service would have created, as this was a well used route and imperative to ensuring access to local amenities.

In relation to service 335, Members questioned why the service was no longer running to Dane Bank during the weekend period. Officers confirmed that this was as a result of lower patronage levels at evening and weekends, however weekday services would remain stable to ensure residents could still access key services.

Members asked that future reports detail the first and last bus service for all proposed route/frequency changes, as this information would have been useful in contextualising the changes to services 342 and 387.

Resolved /-

1. That it be noted that no changes are being reported in Annex A or B.
2. That the proposed changes to general subsidised services set out in Annex C be approved.
3. That TfGM would monitor the impact of the reduction of evening/weekend provision of the 335 service and report back to Cllr Bray/Cllr Jones.
4. That future 'Forthcoming Changes to the Bus Network' reports would detail timings of the first and last buses on routes for planned changes to give further context to Members.

GMTBSC 20/20 REVIEW AND PLANNING OF GENERAL SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES

James Lewis, Network Development Manager TfGM introduced a report which identified a series of improvements to TfGM's approach for reviewing and replanning supported general bus services in Greater Manchester. The report set out the rationale for making these changes and provided detail on the application of Service Planning Principles, the use of specific data sources to inform the various types of analyses, potential opportunities to undertake procurement in different ways and improved arrangements for engagement with elected members and other stakeholders. Finally, some examples were given of recent planning exercises in which some of these techniques had been introduced.

In relation to the current passenger data collection undertaken by TfGM, Members asked whether this could include the demographic of people returning or not to the bus network to assist future campaigns to support people back to the network. Officers agreed that this would be useful information, but that the current stability of the network was too variable to make any concrete analysis, however this would continue to be monitored going forward.

The Committee welcomed the challenge of proposed lengthy services that passed through multiple areas, as it was clear that reliability was significantly impacted on this type of service.

In relation to air quality, Members urged that when commissioning future bus contracts, TfGM

ensure that vehicle standards were paramount in these decisions and contracts be awarded to operators who have Euro6 standard vehicles.

Members requested that as much notice be given as possible to local councillors in relation to any planned service changes within their locality. This would ensure time for local consultation and engagement with other elected Members before consideration by the GM Transport Committee.

Regarding bus reform, Members asked when the next update would be received. Officers confirmed that an update would be brought to the Committee at a timely opportunity.

Members reported that as a result of recent timetable changes to services in the Salford area there was some confusion amongst local residents, and suggested that drivers could be better equipped to advise passengers of the current timetables. Officers agreed to discuss this matter directly with Councillor Warner.

Resolved /-

1. That the revised approach being taken to the review and re-planning of supported general bus services be endorsed.
2. That the proposals for further development of the methodology to expand the scope of the analyses undertaken be noted, ensuring consistency of approach and providing a clearer process for engagement with elected members and other key stakeholders.
3. That TfGM would continue to monitor whether there were any user group finding barriers to return to the public transport network.
4. That it be noted that an operators commitment to reducing carbon emissions will be built into future service tendering processes.
5. That concerns regarding the lack of passenger information available to Salford residents be picked up with Councillor Warner offline.

GMTBSC 21/20 GMTC TRANSPORT WORK PROGRAMME

Gwynne Williams (Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA) updated the Committee on the current work programme.

Members requested that there would be an opportunity for the GMTC Committee to review the proposals included within the City Centre Transport Strategy before a final draft is reached.

In relation to the Clean Air Plan, officers confirmed that this decision resided with the Local Authority, and therefore should be scrutinised by their local Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved /-

1. That the updated GMTC Transport Work Programme be received by the Committee.
2. That Members be given a timely opportunity to actively input to the City Centre Transport Strategy.

GMTBSC 22/20 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved /-

That the future meeting dates be noted by the Committee.

GMTBSC 23/20 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 24/20 FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO BUS SERVICES – PART B

Resolved /-

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