



## Bee Network Committee

Date: Thursday 14 December 2023  
Subject: Greater Manchester Transport Network Performance  
Report of: Alex Cropper, Chief Operating Officer, TfGM

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### **Purpose of Report**

To provide the Committee with an overview of the performance of Greater Manchester's transport network for the period August 2023 – October 2023.

### **Recommendations:**

The Committee is requested to:

1. Note and comment on the format and contents of the first transport network performance report to the Committee; and
2. Note and comment on the performance of Greater Manchester's Transport Network.

### **Contact Officers**

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## **Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:**

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**

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?

No

# 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This is the first Bee Network performance report prepared for the Bee Network Committee. It provides an overview of the performance of the transport network for the period August 2023 – October 2023 focusing on a number of key elements including reliability, safety and security.
- 1.2. It summarises some of the key challenges and incidents which have impacted on network performance over the last quarter and provides overall patronage and reliability by mode.

## **Bus**

- 1.3. Notably, this period saw the first franchised bus services enter operation in the northwest of the conurbation. The first Bee Network bus service left Farnworth Bus Station at 4.30am on 24 September on route 521. The first few days brought operational challenges as the new arrangements bedded in but TfGM has worked closely with franchised operators to quickly identify and resolve issues.
- 1.4. Franchised services are now regularly outperforming those on the non-franchised network. Performance of the franchised network is also better than it was at the same time last year, in particular, performance of the popular V1 service between Leigh and Manchester.
- 1.5. Work continues to improve the performance of franchised bus services and a 'Bee Network Operational Excellence Plan' is being developed to build towards the high standards set for the Bee Network.
- 1.6. Patronage on franchise services has grown steadily since the start of Tranche 1 operations with an average of almost 100,000 passengers being carried by Tranche 1 services each weekday, and over 120,000 on some days.
- 1.7. Revenue for franchised services is exceeding forecasts by between 10-15% which will help mitigate against increased cost risks that remain.
- 1.8. Ahead of the first franchised services, the Bee Network app and rate my journey functionality for customers were launched. Key themes from the first five weeks of customer feedback include:
  - **Bus Reliability & Punctuality.** Consistent with the pre-franchising baseline, reliability is the number one expectation for customers.

- Real-Time Travel Information. In the first two weeks of franchised operation issues with the availability and accuracy of information compounded the reliability issues being experienced by passengers. Since then this has improved significantly. Enhancements continue to be made to the app with additional functions planned for introduction in the near future.
- Introducing a large number of new bus drivers has caused challenges, particularly in route familiarisation, use of ticketing machines and these contributed to customer frustration in the first few weeks. The recruitment of drivers is however helping to ensure performance levels continue to improve. TfGM is continuing to work with franchise operators to minimise familiarity issues.
- Safety continues to be a key customer theme mainly focused on anti-social behaviour. Although customers and staff are very positive about the introduction of TSEOs (TravelSafe Support and Enforcement Officers) onto the network.
- Ticketing changes, whilst positive, have taken time to 'bed in' as customers became more familiar with the new options available. This includes the new multi-modal Any Bus + Tram product which saves customers 20% on buying products individually and has seen reasonable sales volume for a new product.

### **Cycle Hire**

- 1.9. The cycle hire recovery plan remains on track with bike availability improving from fewer than 200 bikes in July to 640 in early November. Usage remains positive. The next milestone is to increase availability to 750 bikes in circulation which will enable a further review of suspended stations.

### **Metrolink**

- 1.10. Metrolink patronage has grown in September and October in line with expectations and is expected to grow further in the run-up to Christmas. Patronage is tracking targeted levels, with capacity problems starting to impact customer satisfaction in the morning and evening peaks.
- 1.11. Track renewal works, which had closed two stops on the Eccles Line, concluded successfully in September. The line reopened fully with a timetable change that saw the reintroduction of the Piccadilly to MediaCity peak service and the reinstatement of later running trams, up to 1am on Friday and Saturday nights.

- 1.12. During the period there were some high impact disruptions, with the Bury and Oldham and Rochdale Lines most impacted. Cable theft was the predominant problem, and this resulted in a number of actions involving changing materials and working with security firms and the police.

### **Highways**

- 1.13. Delivery of traffic signal and highway interventions has continued to deliver benefits for all road users including signal prioritisation for late running buses, enhanced pedestrian facilities at over 10 locations across GM, and the Chorlton CYCLOPS junction scheme.
- 1.14. Recent protests related to events in the Middle East have had an impact on the transport network. TfGM is working with GMP on Operation Wildflower which seeks to protect the right to peaceful protest and manage the impact on the city centre and transport network. The Operational Control Centre (OCC) works closely with GMP and provides a link to UTC and customer colleagues to ensure customers are aware of the impact to public transport and signal timings are adjusted to ease congestion as general traffic and bus services are diverted.
- 1.15. Greater Manchester's first Moving Traffic Contravention site on Stockport Road in Longsight came into force on 20th November. The site is the first of an initial ten identified across GM where moving traffic offences (e.g. entering a yellow box junction when the exit is not clear) will be camera-enforced, based on areas with the greatest opportunity to improve congestion, public transport operations and safety. During the first six month a warning letter will be issued for a first offence.
- 1.16. A range of safety campaigns for drivers and public transport passengers have been delivered aligned to seasonal changes in conditions and travel behaviour for Highways and Public transport.

### **Rail**

- 1.17. Train performance continues to be adversely affected by Network Rail infrastructure and external delay, crew availability and seasonal railhead conditions. A succession of recent severe weather events have further added to overall declines in punctuality and increases in the number of cancellations.
- 1.18. Industrial action continues to affect services, with strike action taken by ASLEF between 30th September and 4th October. Further ASLEF strikes and action short

of a strike (ASoS) will take place between 01 – 09 December. A memorandum of understanding has been signed by the RMT and RDG on progressing pay talks and strike action by guards has therefore been suspended.

- 1.19. Crew availability remains a major challenge for rail operators, with on-going industrial action and higher than usual sickness rates and driver attrition across the industry.

### **Communications**

- 1.20. Campaigns have also been run to support the launch of the Bee Network and to drive patronage through our integrated public transport campaign 'Get on Board' which promotes the benefits of travelling by tram and bus as well as walking and cycling.

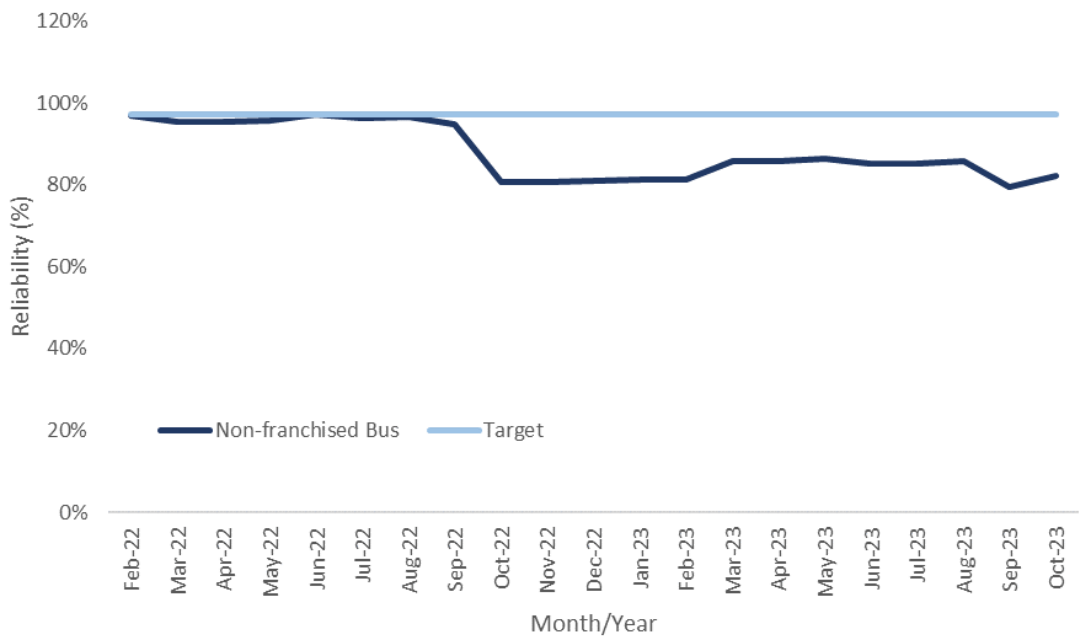
## **2. Reliability**

### **Bus**

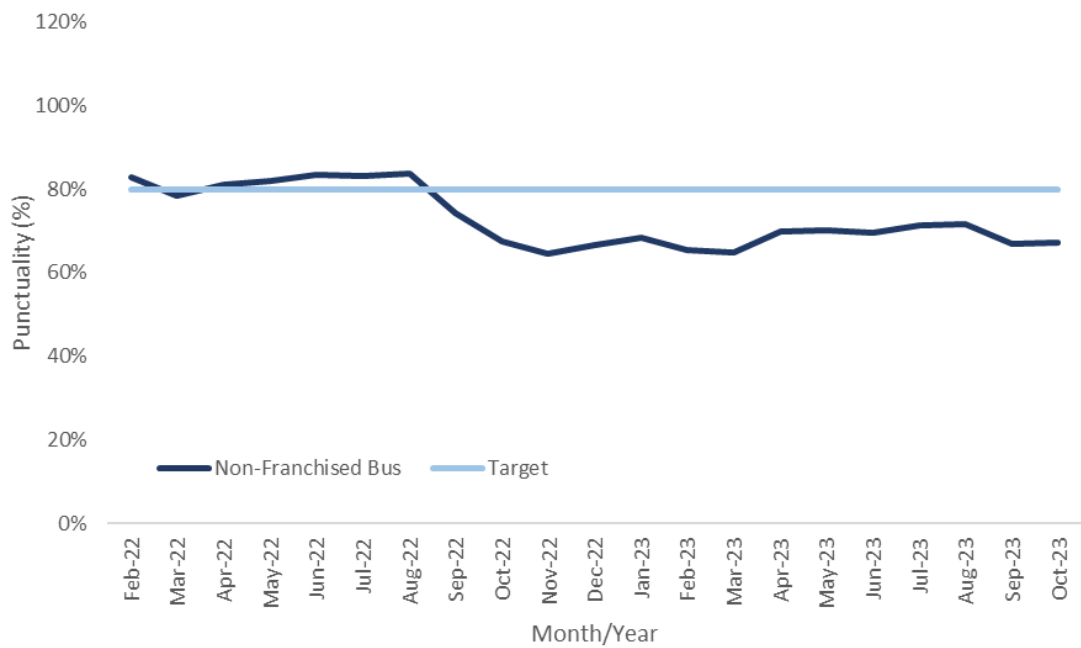
- 2.1. Punctuality remains below target, though performance overall was better for franchised services.
- 2.2. Congestion caused by traffic volumes and roadworks, continue to be the main factor affecting performance, noting the early driver familiarity challenges also had an impact.
- 2.3. Initial reporting on franchised services was affected by issues with ticket machines. Driver training and adjustment to the new systems has now resulted in improvements to the quality of data collected. Access to this data is vital to inform the interventions required to drive up performance.
- 2.4. In addition, large numbers of people are also providing feedback on the new services, and having local control and accountability has enabled TfGM to respond much more quickly and effectively than before.
- 2.5. For example, following complaints that the 575 (Wigan to Bolton) service was being impacted by roadworks, TfGM worked with the local council to provide a dedicated bus lane, keeping passengers connected and services moving.

- 2.6. TfGM has also been able to adapt signal timings to help late services make up time and worked with the operator to increase capacity on the Ramsbottom local 472/474 services, in a way that we would not have been possible before.
- 2.7. Work continues to improve the performance of franchised bus services through the delivery of a 'Bee Network Excellence Plan'.

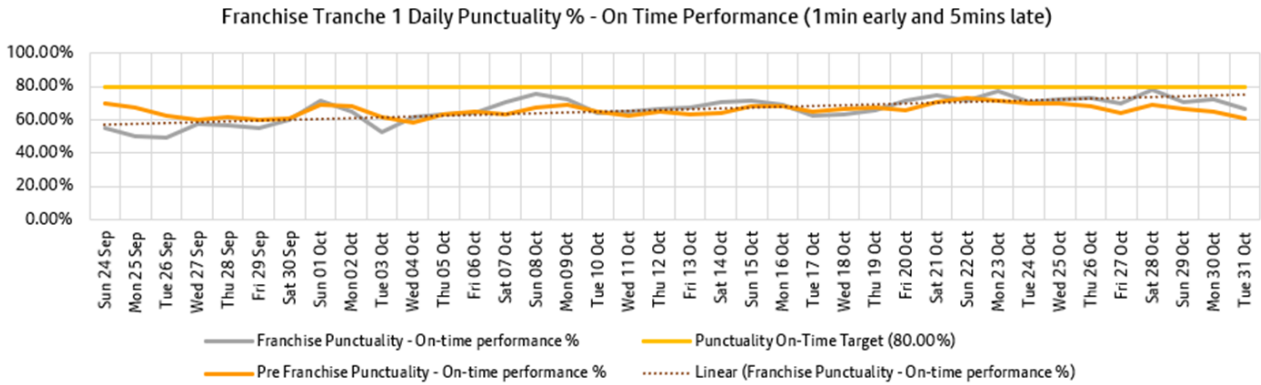
**Chart 1: Non-Franchised Bus Reliability**



**Chart 2: Non-Franchised Bus Punctuality**



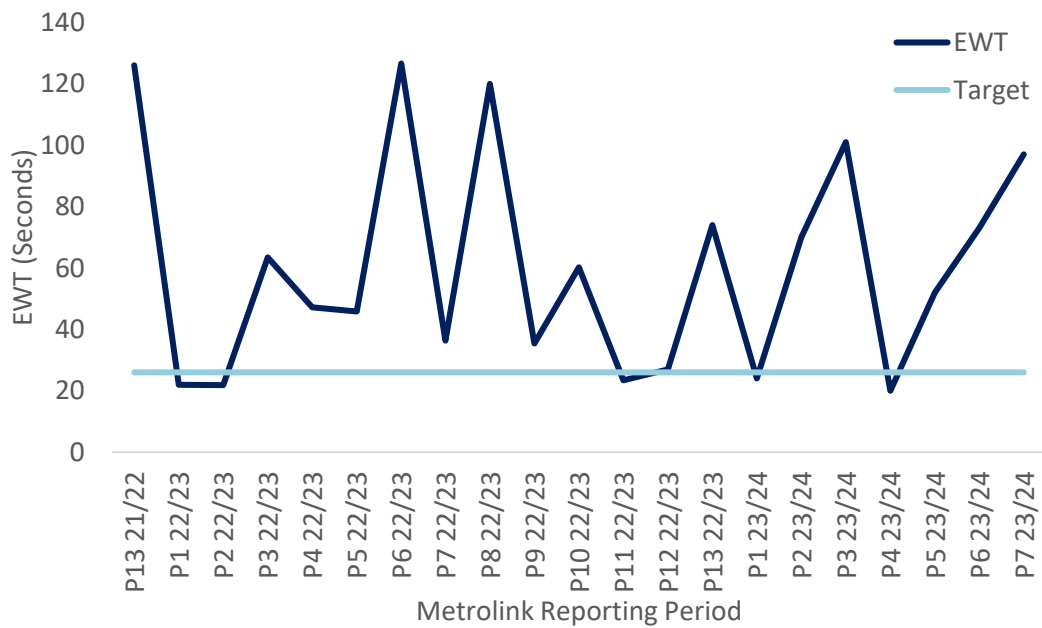
### Chart 3: Franchised Bus Service Punctuality



### Metrolink

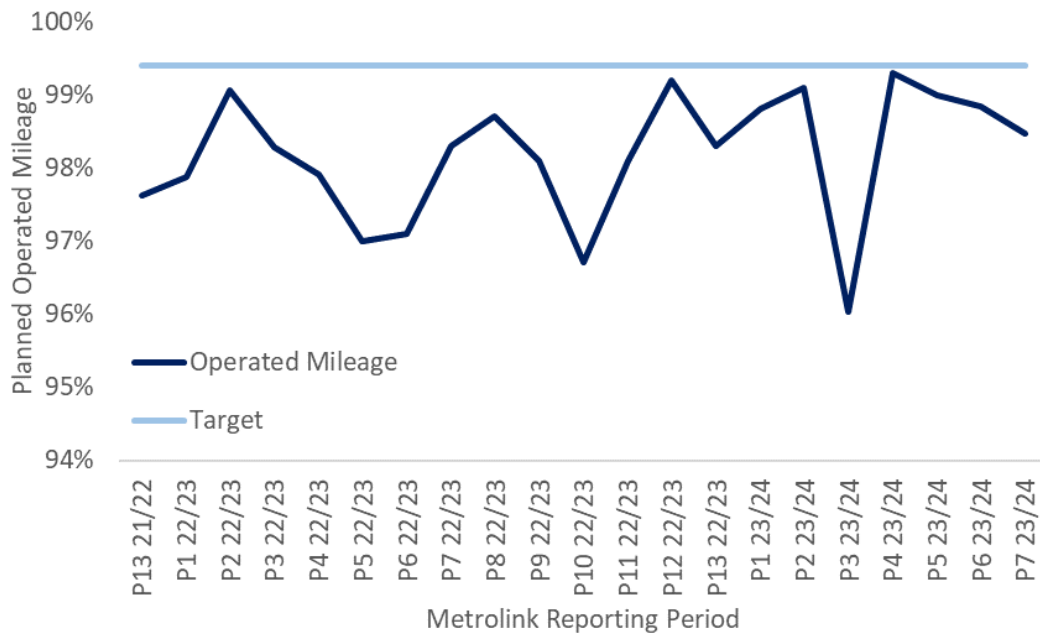
2.8. Metrolink reliability is largely on target. The previously referenced cable thefts and the Eccles track renewal works had the biggest impact. Metrolink continues to invest in the network to improve customer experience and more information about future works will be brought to the Committee at a later date.

### Chart 4: Metrolink Excess Wait Time (EWT)





**Chart 5: Metrolink Planned Operated Mileage**

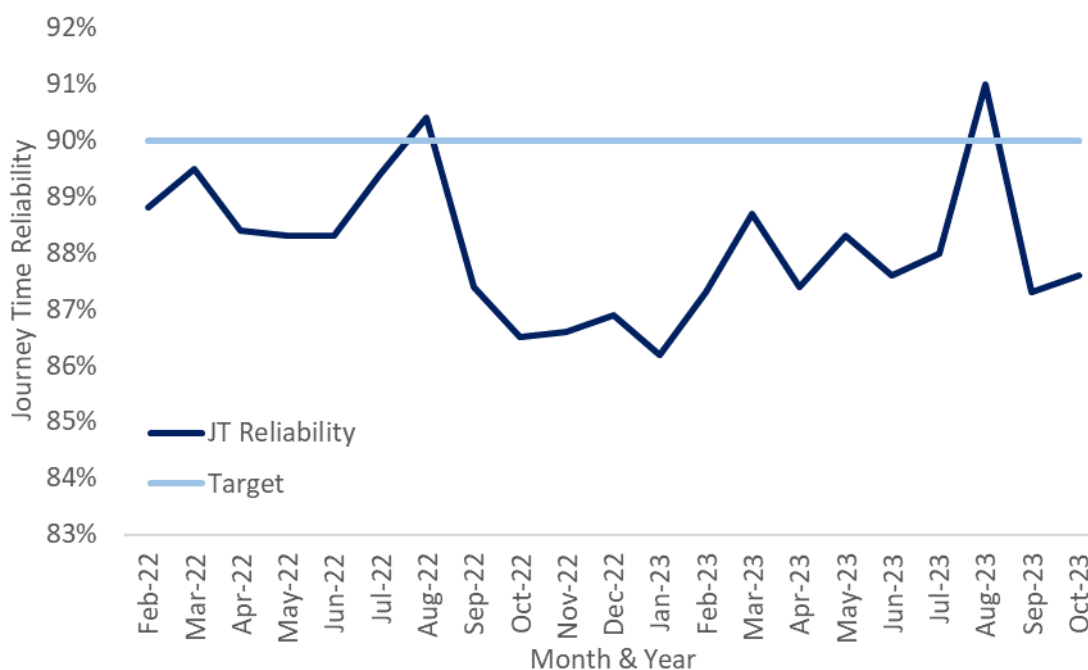


**Highways**

- 2.9. In line with the seasonal trend journey time reliability is below target. After recurrent traffic, roadworks remain the main cause of delay and the biggest challenge to delivering reliable journeys across the network. In comparison to the same period last year, the amount of major works taking place are up by 12%, and standard works up by 8%.
- 2.10. A seasonal increase in average journey times is also affecting performance. The darker mornings and nights together with the impact of the weather (wetter conditions and storms) have seen average journey times increase by 5%.
- 2.11. Work to improve traffic signals (to deliver benefits across all modes including bus priority for late running buses) continues. TfGM is also developing signal strategies for use in TfGM’s Operational Control Centre and TfGM is the first organisation in the UK to work with Google on an AI project ensure signal timings are optimised to reduce stop-start traffic and emissions. This initiative delivered local benefits where signal timings were adjusted. Additionally, having the performance and operation of GM’s signal asset reviewed by an independent third party provided assurance that the signal network was working well with the development of the asset and day to day operation delivering benefits.

2.12. In the lead up to the launch of franchising signal timings were reviewed at locations where data showed delays to both buses and general traffic. Post launch, TfGM highways officers have worked with local authorities to manage the impact of roadwork activity in the T1 area, influencing traffic management and works duration. TfGM are working closely with colleagues in the Local Highway Authorities to deliver a step change in network management and deliver operational excellence across the network.

**Chart 6: Highway Journey Time Reliability**



**Rail**

2.13. Rail performance across Greater Manchester continues to decline. Three successive severe storms over autumn have had a significant impact, with trees and debris blown onto tracks and OHLE, landslips, emergency speed restrictions and flooding. Half-term week at the end of October saw further cancellations due to crew availability.

2.14. Northern has signed a new rest day working (RDW) agreement in November. This should see some reductions in late notice cancellations, particularly on Sundays. Additionally, sickness levels continue to be high at some depots, notably Barrow, where sickness levels of 20% have been reported.

2.15. TransPennine Trains will temporarily reduce cross-Pennine services from its December 23 timetable change, with 4 instead of 5 trains per hour (tph) operating.

Additionally, a small sub-fleet of trains will be removed. This has been agreed as part of TPT’s stabilisation plan, which should ensure greater reliability of service delivery, significantly enhanced driver training and reductions in cancellations.

- 2.16. Avanti West Coast continues to experience crew availability issues which are impacting service delivery. These will result in a temporary reduction of services from 09 December. Weekday services on Manchester – London route will reduce by around 10% to 20%, with Saturday trains reduced from 3tph to 2tph. TfGM is concerned that further service changes may be required in the new year, at a time when passenger demand continues to grow.
- 2.17. Crew availability remains constrained due to a number of factors, including current industrial action, action short of a strike, high sickness levels and higher than usual numbers of drivers leaving the business. Historic leave agreements have also led to excess demand for leave over school and other holidays. For Avanti West Coast, performance has also been impacted by significant Network Rail delay caused by failed infrastructure and signalling systems throughout the autumn.

**Chart 7: Rail Public Performance Measure (PPM)**

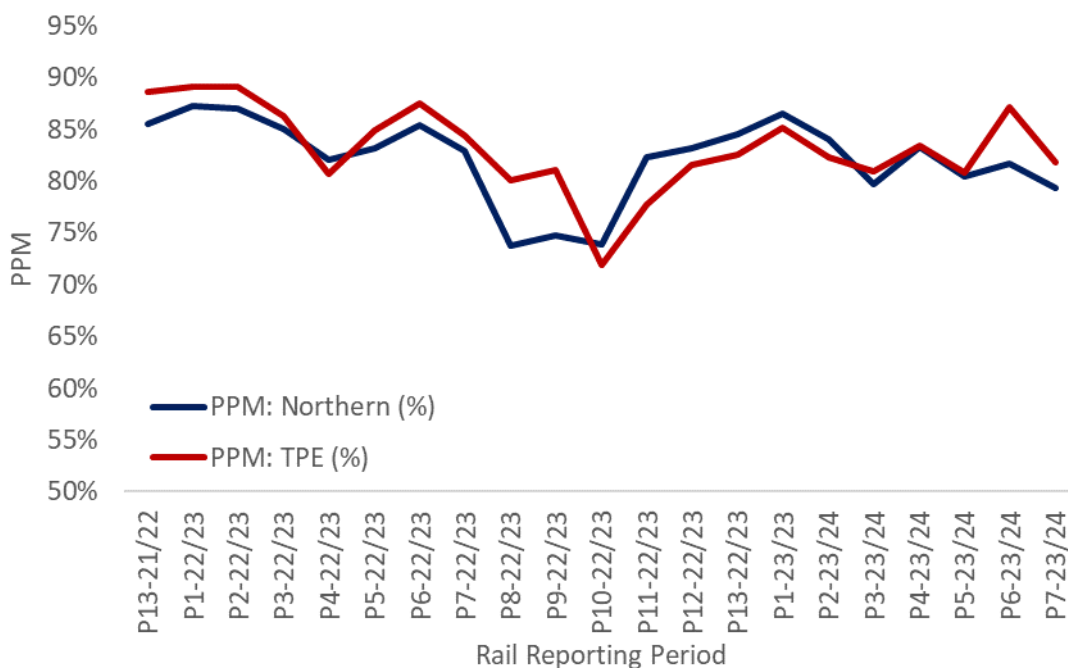
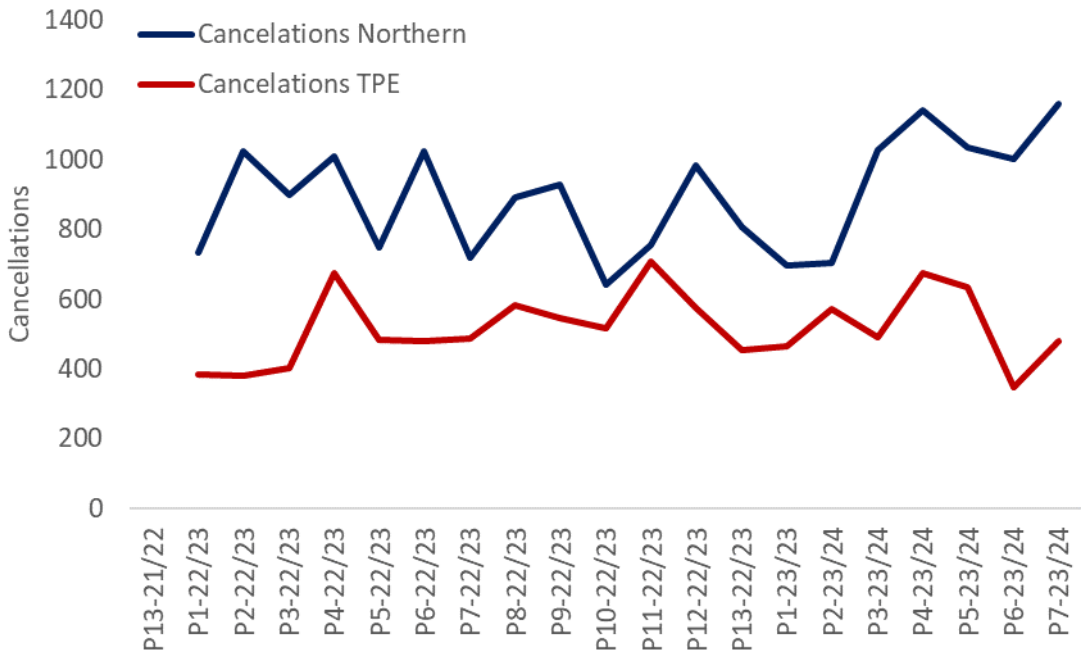


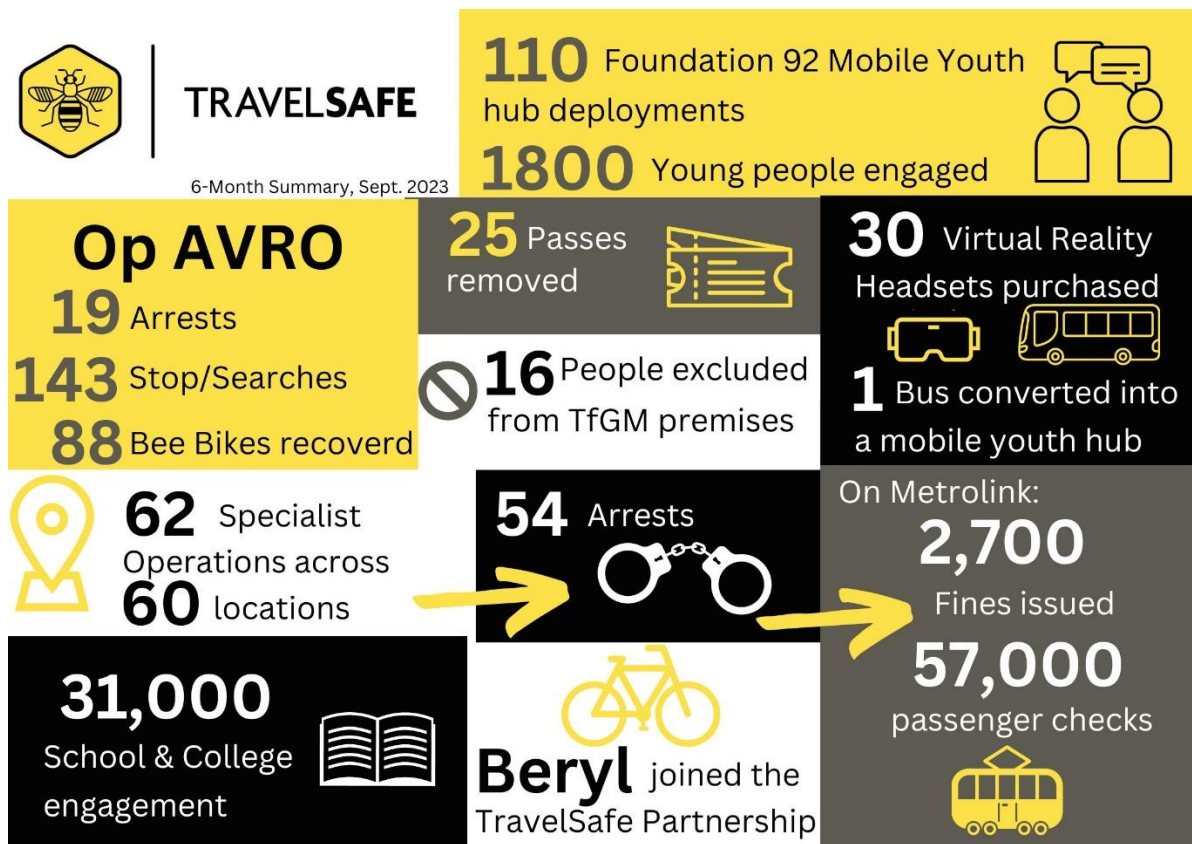
Chart 8: Rail Cancelations



### 3. Safety and Security

#### TravelSafe

- 3.1. Between July and September, there was an increase in the number and rate of incidents reported to the TravelSafe Partnership (TSP). Of note this includes an increase in incidents related to homelessness and young people. Increased front-line resource across the network are likely to lead to greater incident reporting.
- 3.2. The infographic below provides an overview of partnership outcomes for the six-month period to September 2023.



- 3.3. Over the past year to date, TravelSafe enforcement activity has seen 36 exclusion notices (removing the implied permission of entry) to our sites have been issued to prolific offenders, as well as 34 travel passes removed.
- 3.4. Routine partnership deployments continue at least weekly across the network, alongside larger operations such as Operation AVRO designed to target criminality and provide reassurance to passengers.
- 3.5. TravelSafe educational engagement recommenced from the start of the academic year, with 4,789 young people having received the input to-date. In addition to this the Foundation 92 partnership has further matured, with routine front-line

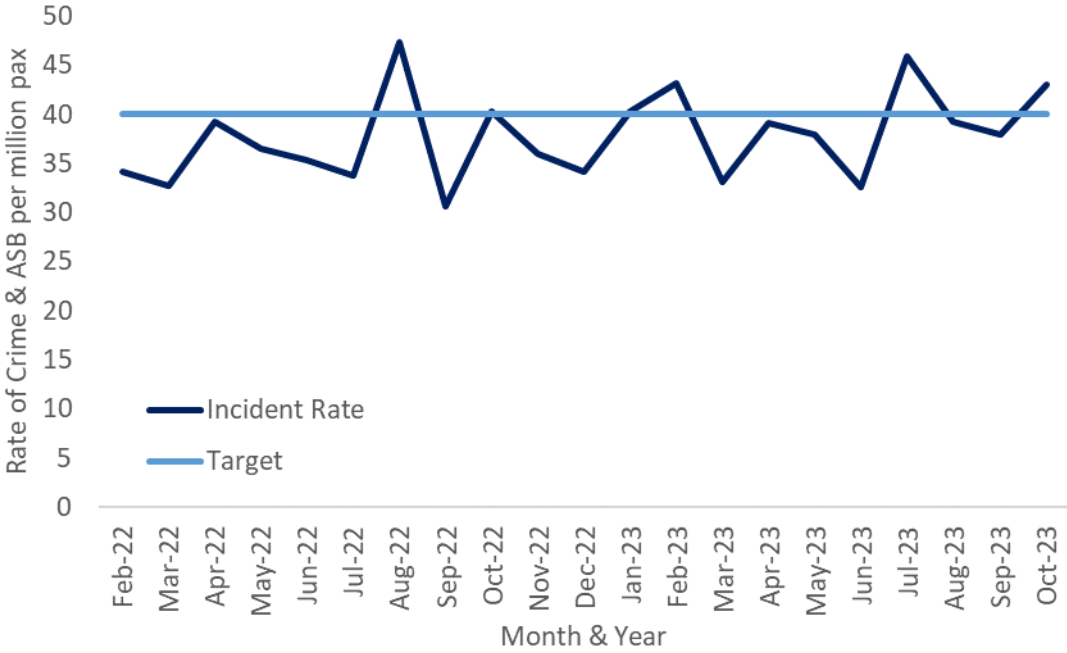
deployments to hotspot locations across the network, as well as trialling different approaches, including static youth provision at Ashton interchange during the summer in response to anticipated increase in youth ASB, and the launch of 30 new Virtual Reality headsets to bring the issue of ASB to life.

- 3.6. 30 new TravelSafe Support and Enforcement Officers (TSEOs) were introduced onto the Bee Network, as the start of bus franchising. Officers are conducting patrols across the network to support staff and customers and challenge anti-social behaviours. Patrol sites and patterns are driven by data, targeting locations including Bolton Interchange, Wigan Bus Station, Leigh Bus Station, Leigh Guided Busway, Bury Interchange and Middleton Bus Station.
- 3.7. The infographic draws together a snapshot of TSEO outcomes across their first month of operation.



- 3.8. TSEOs are due to commence Revenue Inspection activity imminently across Bee Network services, as well as support women's safety during the darker nights and across the regional centre, through dedicated TSEO provision, funded through the Home Office Safer Streets Round 5 fund.

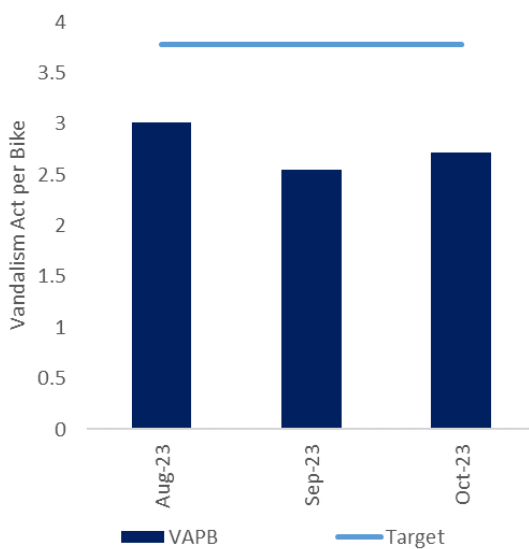
**Chart 9: TravelSafe rate of reported incidents of Crime and ASB per million passenger journeys.**



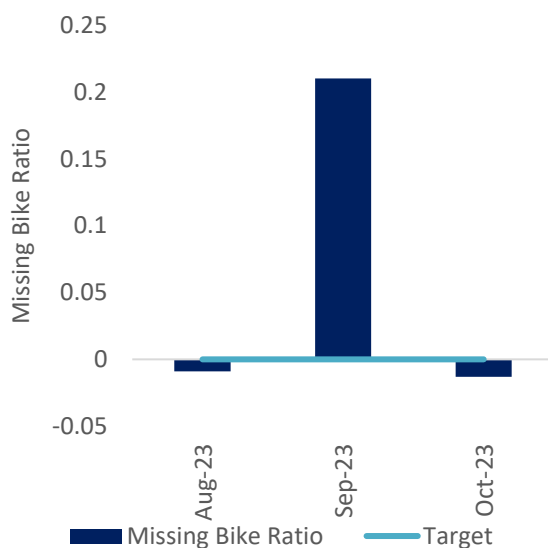
## Cycle Hire

3.9. The cycle hire recovery plan remains on track with bike availability now at 640. We are still seeing relatively high levels of vandalism with over 300 repair jobs per week over the last 4 weeks. Beryl is managing this with the extra staff and increasing the number of bikes on street every week. Since 1<sup>st</sup> November, it has been mandatory for people using the bike hire scheme to apply front locks (as well as back locks) when returning bikes to cycle hire stands – compliance has increased by 10% to over 50%. TfGM is hoping to see even more people comply with this following the introduction of fines for not doing so on 29<sup>th</sup> November.

**Chart 10: Bike Hire Vandalism Act per Bike**



**Chart 11: Bike Hire Missing Bike Ratio**

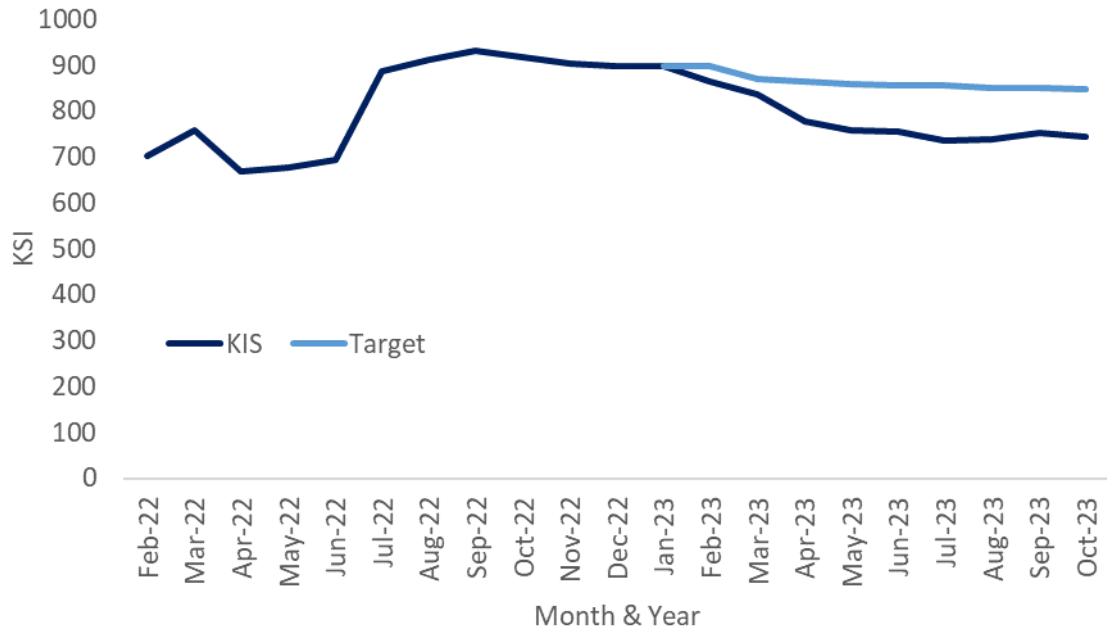




## Highways

- 3.10. Continuing to develop and launch GM's Vision Zero strategy. The strategy will be presented to GMCA on 26th January 2024 for approval and adoption.

**Chart 12: Killed and Seriously Injured Casualties (KSI) (Rolling 12 Months)**



**Chart 13: Fatal Casualties (Rolling 12 Months)**



## Communications

- 3.11. Safety campaigns for both Highways and Metrolink have been launched for the winter period. The Metrolink campaign urges passengers to stay safe and take extra

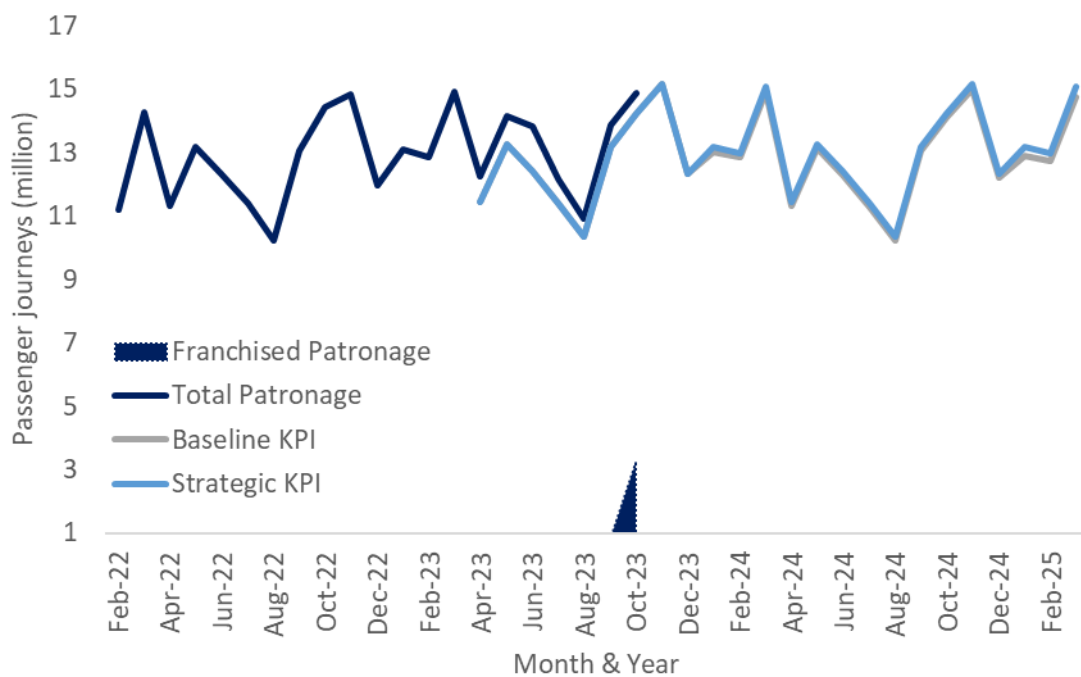
care on the tram network in the lead-up to and over the festive period. In addition, new linings on the platform notify passengers to keep clear of the area where a double unit would be. The Road Safety ‘Last Steps’ campaign urges people driving to take more care on darker nights and reduce the harm caused to those walking on Greater Manchester’s roads.

## 4. Passenger Journeys and Revenue

### Bus

- 4.1. Total bus network patronage during October (the first full month of franchising) was 14.9m. The patronage split is: Commercial 62%, Supported/Subsidised 17% and Franchised 22%.
- 4.2. This was above the target for October of 14.2m. Patronage in October 2023 was 7% higher compared with September 2023.
- 4.3. Two sets of targets have been developed for Bus patronage. A ‘baseline target’ is based on the estimated patronage trends with the current levels of funding. A ‘strategic target’ is derived from the estimated patronage increase required to meet the ambitions of the Greater Manchester Bus Strategy (30% increase by 2030).
- 4.4. Initial farebox revenue for Bee Network services was above budget.

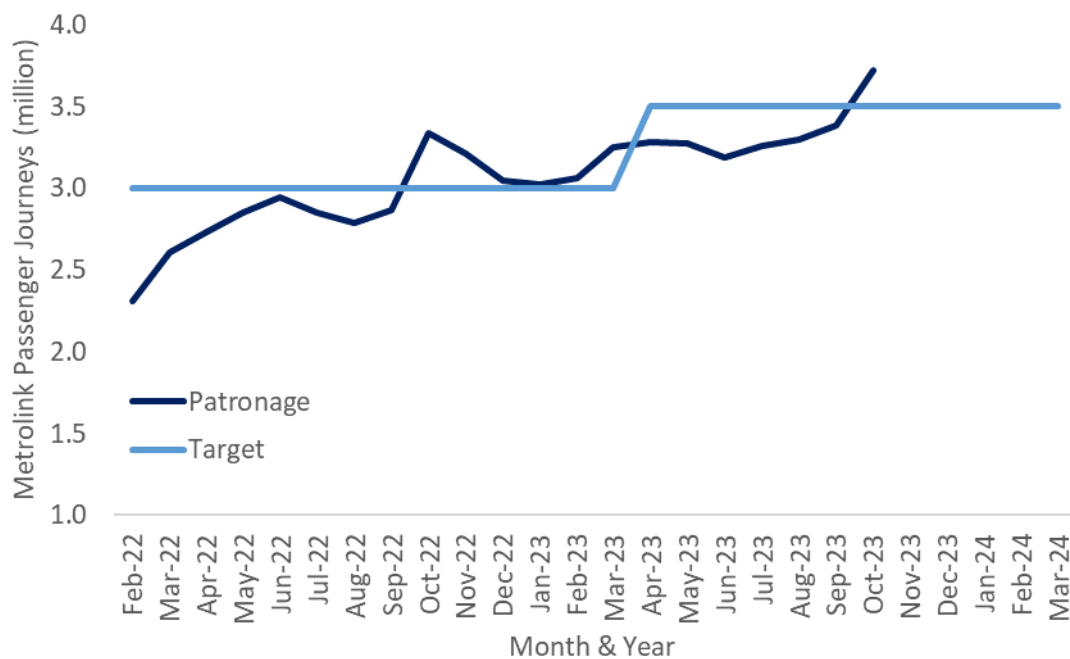
**Chart 14: Bus passenger journeys (millions)**



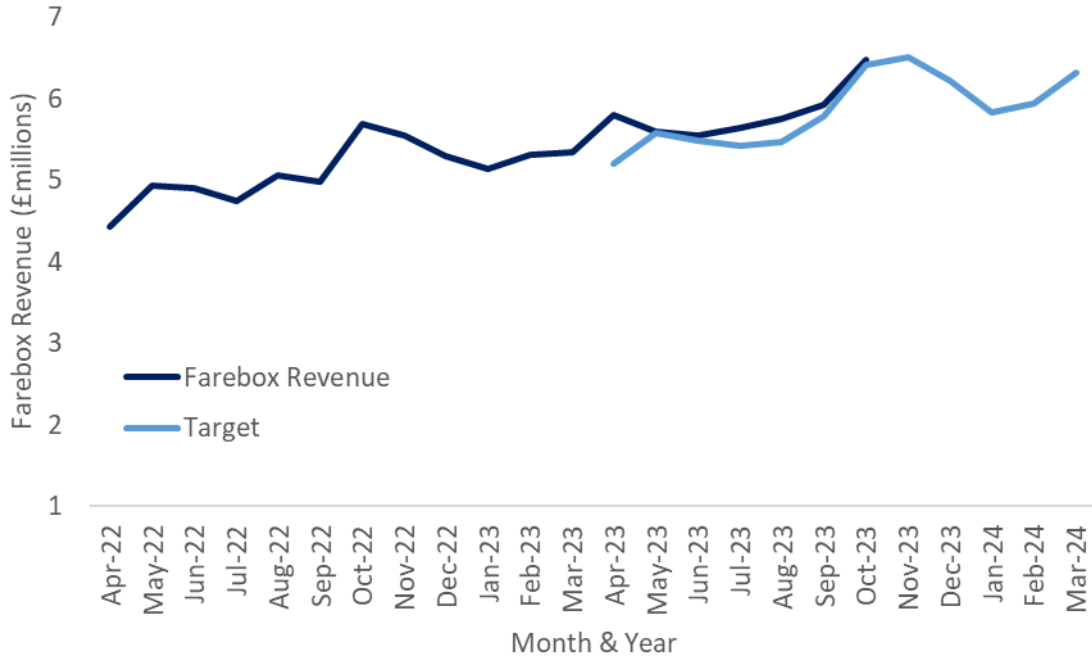
## Metrolink

- 4.5. Metrolink patronage increased in September and October. Patronage is expected to grow further in the run up to Christmas. Farebox revenue throughout this the period has been in line with budget.
- 4.6. September also saw the launch of Metrolink’s crack down on fare evasion with additional staff, new tactics such as plain clothes operations and an increase to the penalty fare. This has been very positively received by passengers and is likely to be supporting growth in passenger journey numbers.

**Chart 15: Metrolink passenger journeys (millions)**



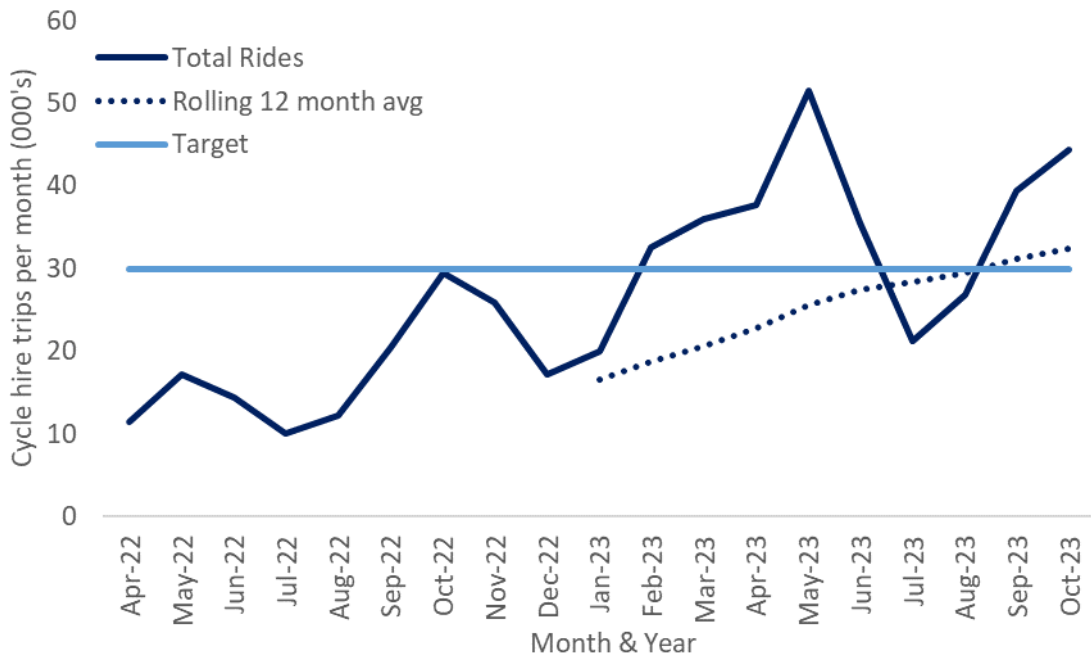
**Chart 16: Metrolink Farebox Revenue (£millions)**



**Cycle Hire**

4.7. Cycle hire usage remains above target. The return of students from September and improved availability of bikes have both driven the increase in daily rides. As usual, seasonal factors - including poor weather - are likely to see a reduction in rides during the winter months.

**Chart 17: Cycle hire trips per month thousands**



## Communications

- 4.8. To support the increased forecast for passenger numbers coming out of summer, marketing activity has been running across poster sites, social media, radio and digital advertising, as well as our ongoing business and community engagement. The campaign uses our popular Get on Board strapline and promotes products like the £2 bus fare, contactless and the new Bus + Tram multi modal ticket, using price as well as other benefits to promote public transport.
- 4.9. This is supported with an educational campaign on stop and on social media, which explains the 'ways to pay' including how to use contactless on the tram which can be a barrier to new customers.
- 4.10. Throughout the festive period, Metrolink operating hours will be extended (until 1am on Friday and Saturday night). This is being supported with enhanced marketing activity. Capacity will also be increased by uplifting the number of doubles on weekends (on the Altrincham, Bury, East Didsbury lines). On NYE the final Metrolink services will depart from the city centre at 1am. There will also be increased comms activity over this period.
- 4.11. A full winter resilience/preparedness plan has been developed. This draws together in one place:
- A snapshot of the issues/challenges and pinch points on the network associated with the festive season;
  - A tool-box of interventions alongside customer messaging;
  - A summary of the Bee Network festive service; and
  - An overlay of TfGM's preparedness, response, safety and security arrangements.