

**MINUTES OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2020 AT THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE**

PRESENT:

Councillor Mark Aldred (in the Chair)	Wigan Council
Councillor Stuart Haslam	Bolton Council
Councillor Roy Walker	Bury Council
Councillor Sean Fielding	GMCA
Councillor Angeliki Stogia	Manchester City Council
Councillor Ateeque Ur-Rehman	Oldham Council
Councillor Shah Wazir	Rochdale Council
Councillor Phil Burke	Rochdale Council
Councillor Mike McCusker	Salford City Council
Councillor David Meller	Stockport MBC
Councillor Angie Clark	Stockport MBC
Councillor Matt Wynne	Stockport MBC
Councillor Peter Robinson	Tameside Council
Councillor Doreen Dickinson	Tameside Council
Councillor Warren Bray	Tameside Council
Councillor Steve Adshead	Trafford Council
Councillor Nathan Evans	Trafford Council
Councillor Joanne Marshall	Wigan Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Eamonn Boylan	Chief Executive GMCA & TfGM
Bob Morris	Chief Operating Officer, TfGM
Alison Chew	Interim Head of Bus Services, TfGM
Kate Brown	Director of Corporate Affairs, TfGM
Caroline Whittam	Head of Rail Franchising, TfGM
Alex Cropper	Head of Operations, TfGM
James Baldwin	Policy Officer, TfGM
Danny Vaughan	Head of Metrolink, TfGM
Guillaume Chanussot	Keolis Amey Metrolink (KAM)
Stephen Rhodes	Customer Director, TfGM
Helen Humble	Head of Ticketing, TfGM
James Lewis	Section Manager, Services Planning, TfGM
Gwynne Williams	Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA
Lee Teasdale	Governance Officer, GMCA

GMTC 14/20 APOLOGIES

Resolved /-

That apologies were received and noted from Councillor Howard Sykes (substituted by Councillor Angie Clark), Councillor Naeem Hassan, Councillor Beth Mortenson, Councillor John Leech, Councillor Dzidra Noor, Councillor Roger Jones and Councillor Barry Warner.

GMTC 15/20 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

Resolved /-

1. Passing of Councillor Christine Wild

That it be noted that the Members of the GM Transport Committee express their condolences to the family of Councillor Christine Wild, who had been an active member of the previous Transport for Greater Manchester Committee for many years until 2012, and had recently passed away.

2. Leaders in Diversity

That congratulations be passed on to Muhammad Karim for the recent 'Leaders in Diversity' accreditation and the winning of the 'Transportation Organisation of the Year 2020' award for TfGM.

GMTC 16/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Resolved /-

1. That Councillor Phil Burke declared a personal interest in relation to Item 9 (Metrolink Performance Update) and to Item 10 (Metrolink Ticketing) in his role as an employee of Metrolink.

GMTC 17/20 MINUTES

Members referenced item 10/20 'Transport and Climate Change' – asking that the follow up report on the climate change agenda be made available as soon as possible after the Mayoral Elections.

It was noted that Northern had not yet responded to Cllr Nathan Evans as had been resolved in item 07/20 'Rail Performance Report' – it was advised that this would be chased up with Northern.

Resolved /-

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2020 be approved as a correct record.
2. That in relation to minute GMTC 10/20 it be requested that a report on how TfGM are moving forward on the climate change agenda be brought to the Committee following the mayoral elections; and
3. That in relation to minute GMTC 07/20 it be noted that Cllr Nathan Evans was yet to receive a response from Northern on the recent platform access improvements at Hale Station, and that this was to be chased up.

GMTC 18/20 GM TRANSPORT COMMITTEE DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

Gwynne Williams, Deputy Monitoring Officer for the GMCA took Members through the latest version of the GM Transport Committee Work Programme. Members were advised that the April 2020 meeting would receive an additional bus performance update.

Resolved /-

That the Work Programme for the GM Transport Committee be noted.

GMTC 19/20 TRANSPORT NETWORK PERFORMANCE

Alex Cropper, Head of Operations TfGM, introduced the latest Network Performance report which covered the performance of all modes during December 2019.

It was advised that there had been seasonal impacts on performance across the network. With periods of inclement weather (including flooding issues which had continued into early 2020); increased traffic volume resulting from seasonal shopping and the festive markets; and a large number of evening football fixtures all resulting in increased pressures upon the network.

The rail network had been below target throughout the period, with numerous issues resulting in delayed and cancelled services. However, positive news had been received concerning the resolution of Sunday service staffing issues.

Alison Chew, Interim Head of Bus Services TfGM, advised Members that Manchester Community Transport (MCT) had recently announced that, due to financial sustainability issues, they would cease to operate in April 2020. MCT currently operated 35 contracts for TfGM; though 21 of these had been due to expire in April 2020. TfGM would seek to manage the transition of the remaining contracts to other operators. TfGM officers were due to meet with the Local Managing Director of MCT to discuss the matter further and get more information, including the potential impacts on staff. A re-tendering exercise would commence in due course.

Comments and Questions

Members asked that a review of the MCT service, where appropriate, form part of the re-tendering process.

Members asked that councillors for relevant wards that would require a transition of services previously run by MCT, be kept informed of the developments taking place. They also asked that emergency measures be put in place until the tender issues were resolved.

Members made reference to a recent regional news item which had indicated that new trains replacing the previous Pacer stock required even more regular maintenance – was this the case? It was advised that the rail team would look into this and provide feedback.

Resolved /-

1. That the Transport Network Performance Report be noted.

2. That TfGM be asked to review the Manchester Community Transport offer where appropriate as part of the re-tendering process.
3. That relevant Members be kept informed of transition arrangements related to Manchester Community Transport within their wards; and
4. That officers be asked to respond directly to Councillor Steve Adshead regarding reliability issues with new trains replacing discontinued Pacer train services.

GMTC 20/20 A BETTER DEAL FOR BUS USERS

Alison Chew, Interim Head of Bus Services TfGM, took Members through a report that provided further detail following the announcement by the Department for Transport (DfT) in the autumn of 2019 that £220m would be committed to transform bus services, including mechanisms for local and combined authorities to bid for funds.

It was advised that the fund was to be divided up into four separate workstreams:

- £30m revenue funding for supported bus services for local authorities/mayoral combined authorities, of which GM had been allocated up to £1,589,849, dependent upon the need to complete a statement of intent.
- £50m fund for the first all-electric bus town or city.
- Up to £70m for 'Superbus' networks.
- £20m Rural Mobility Fund for on-demand services.

It was agreed at the meeting of the GMCA held on 14 February 2020 that GM would submit its statement of intent for funding as soon as possible, as continued commercial de-registrations meant that this additional funding was more vital than ever. The statement of intent would outline how GM intends to use the funding and demonstrate how it would meet the needs of local people and stakeholders. This would include engagement with local MPs, residents, local bus users (and non-bus users) and bus operators.

To effectively manage the process and ensure that the routes/service interventions with the best outcomes were included in the submission, weighted assessment criteria had been developed to inform the bid. These criteria fitted into within four broad categories: commercial sustainability; strategic fit; social inclusion, and alignment with network planning principles.

Comments and Questions

Members made reference to the 'Superbus' networks. The aim of these pilots was to increase bus patronage, particularly in areas that suffered significant levels of deprivation. It was queried whether this could be extended to places where residents needed to be encourage to use buses rather than cars, and in turn see benefits in relation to the Clean Air Plan. It was advised that the guidance stressed areas of deprivation as a priority – however, this would be taken away and considered further.

Resolved /-

1. That Greater Manchester's intention to submit a statement of intent to the Department for Transport for £1,589,489 for supported bus services be noted by the Committee;
2. That the approach and bidding criteria which have been developed to inform the Statement of Intent to the Department for Transport, which is planned for submission subject to approval by the Chief Executive of the GMCA and TfGM, in consultation with the GM Mayor, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Chair of the Greater Manchester Transport Committee (GMTC), in accordance with the timescales set out by Government be noted by the Committee.
3. That it be noted that a further report will be submitted to a future GMTC meeting on other opportunities for Greater Manchester to apply for funding as part of the Better Deal for Bus Users programme; and
4. That officers be asked to consider the feasibility of including areas that would benefit through the Clean Air Plan as part of the 'Superbus' network criteria.

GMTC 21/20 CHANGES TO THE BUS NETWORK AND REVIEW OF SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES

Alison Chew, Interim Head of Bus Services TfGM, and James Lewis, Section Manager, Services Planning TfGM, introduced a report informing Members of changes that had taken place to the bus network since the last meeting of the Committee. Particular attention was drawn to Annex C of the report, which listed the proposed changes to general subsidised services and the reasoning for proposing those changes.

Comments and Questions

Members expressed concern about the proposed withdrawal of the subsidised 375 bus service (Mellor-Marple-Hawk Green-Stockport) and its partial replacement by a new Local Link service from Sunday 19th April 2020. The Chair was presented with two petitions asking for the retention of the service received via William Wragg MP and the Stockport Liberal Democrats Group.

Members expressed concern that there was a significant elderly population who used the 375 service to go from Mellor to Marple in particular, and that the Local Link offer was not a solution as the service would be oversubscribed, and would also need to be booked in advance, requiring prior planning every time someone without a car wanted to travel. It was stated that whilst the 375 service was not heavily used, it did provide vitally important social links to those who relied on it. It was also suggested that the withdrawal of the service could have an impact upon local businesses, such as award winning pubs in Mellor. With all of this in mind, some members of the Committee sought a postponement of the withdrawal decision until alternative funding could be found for the service.

Other members stated that whilst they understood the strength of feeling around this service – it was not possible to sustain the 375 route whilst reliant on a dwindling subsidy year upon year. Therefore as an alternative, it was suggested that a bid be considered via the government's Better Deal for Bus Users funding opportunities. Members stated that it was unfortunate, but the significantly reduced funding pot meant that when the cost per passenger for a service became so high, continued funding on the current basis could not be justified.

The Chair then moved to a Member vote. The first proposal by Councillor Doreen Dickinson was to postpone any decision on the withdrawal of 375 bus route services until alternative funding was secured for the route. The second proposal was by the Chair of the Committee, to accept the recommendations in the paper on the proviso that as part of the Better Deal for Bus Users bidding process, any representations made regarding the continuation of the 375 bus service be assessed against the appropriate criteria – with the findings to be reported back to the Committee. Following a Member vote, the Chair's proposal carried.

A Member also raised concerns regarding the Bolton Combined Local Link, and its importance to local people employed by the Royal Bolton Hospital. It was proposed that any decision on the withdrawal of the service be postponed. Following a vote, this proposal did not carry. The relevant Member would converse directly with officers on arrangements following the withdrawal of the service.

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 of the report, be noted.
2. That Members agree that no action be taken in respect of changes or de-registered commercial services, as set out in Annex A of the report.
3. That Members agree that no proposed action be taken in respect of changes or de-registered commercial services, as set out in Annex B of the report.
4. That the proposed changes to general subsidised services set out in Annex C of the report, be approved; and
5. That as part of the Better Deal for Bus Users process, the representations made regarding the continuation of the 375 bus service be assessed against the appropriate criteria. With the findings to be reported back to the Committee.

GMTC 22/20 METROLINK PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Danny Vaughan, Head of Metrolink TfGM, was invited to provide an overview to Members of the recent operational performance of Metrolink services.

It was advised that the Metrolink service continued to grow in size, and had seen over 45.5 million passengers in the previous year, an increase of 2.7 million trips over the 2018 period. There had been some issues with punctuality and reliability over the period. Punctuality had fallen below target during periods 9 and 10 – these had resulted from road traffic collisions, signal failures and driver availability.

The road traffic collisions had adversely affected vehicle availability, and had continued to have an impact on longer-term vehicle availability. Work was continuing through a vehicle availability improvement plan to review the processes regarding vehicle repair and to implement and identify efficiencies. A system wide network control failure for 30 minutes on 23rd October 2019 had also caused significant disruption to services on the network.

It was advised that work continued at pace to ensure the Trafford Park line was ready to open to passengers in April 2020. The line would initially operate between Cornbrook and the Trafford Centre – extending fully to Crumpsall by the end of 2020.

Comments and Questions

A member expressed concern that anti-social behaviour remained an issue on public transport, with serious issues on the Rochdale and Oldham tramline being highlighted. There was a public perception that the TravelSafe unit were rarely seen, allowing ASB issues such as aggressive begging on trams and platforms to continue to take place.

It was advised that a lot of positive feedback had been received following the introduction of the TravelSafe unit, and that the forthcoming tactical priorities for the unit were to take place on the Bury and Rochdale/Oldham lines. Danny Vaughan would liaise with the Member directly to address his concerns.

Members expressed concern that the systems wide failure of 23rd October 2019 showed that the core network control infrastructure needed replacing; yet there appeared to be no visible timetable in place for addressing this. It was advised that a timetable was in place, and that progress was being made, with a procurement exercise having taken place and that the bids had been received back for the contract to renew the whole of the fibre optic network. This was a significant task and would take around a year to complete – however to mitigate issues, a lot of resilience work had taken place on the existing network.

Members expressed concern that Cornbrook, noted as the busiest point of any light rail service in Europe, would become even more congested with the introduction of the Trafford Park link. Were there long-term plans in place to alleviate these pressures? It was agreed that this was a significant challenge, an order of 27 trams were due in the summer that would help to alleviate capacity issues later in the year. Longer-term capacity options were being considered as part of the 2040 plan, including possibilities such as longer vehicles, alternative routes and underground metro systems.

Members asked about increasing the number of Metrolink routes to Piccadilly Station. It was advised that HS2 plans would require extensive remodelling of the Station – this would have a significant impact for Metrolink and provide the opportunity to look at the possibility of increasing the number of Metrolink platforms at the station and increasing capacity.

Members welcomed and congratulated the commitment to apprentices within the local community – following the good news that 28 new apprentices and trainees from underprivileged backgrounds across GM had been hired in the past year.

Resolved /-

1. That the performance of Metrolink services be noted; and
2. That Danny Vaughan will liaise directly with Councillor Phil Burke to understand more of Rochdale's concerns, noting that a senior GMP officer will be present when an update on Travelsafe is presented to Members at the March meeting

GMTC 23/20 METROLINK TICKETING

Stephen Rhodes, Customer Director TfGM and Helen Humble, Head of Ticketing TfGM, were invited to provide an update on ticketing changes across the transport network.

Highlights included the introduction of Metrolink Zonal Fares, which meant that 78.5% of individual fares were cheaper than they had been previously. The introduction of contactless travel, which had seen 380,000 individual uses to date and was particularly popular on event days. The introduction of Our Pass for 16-18 year olds, which provided opportunities for the over 60,000 young people who were in the pilot at any one time, and the new 'Early Bird' scheme would allow customers who touched-in before 7am on weekdays to benefit from off-peak daily caps.

Other initiatives included the introduction of an annual £10 charge for off-peak travel on Tram and Train across GM for concessionary pass holders; the extension of eligibility of the Women's Concessionary Travel Scheme and the extension of free bus travel to care leavers in the region.

A point of clarification was raised that the slides had incorrectly indicated that the Women's Concessionary Travel Scheme had extended to those born before and up to November 1955. It was confirmed that this extension was actually before and up to April 1955.

Comments and Questions

Members stated that the combined ticket trial in Rochdale had been very well received and would be welcomed on a permanent basis. It was also asked whether family ticket purchases could be made available through the phone app to allow for ease of purchase when at busy stations. It was advised that whilst there was fair evasion concerns, options around family ticketing availability were being actively looked at as part of new procurement work.

Members noted that some residents were still concerned that the £10 concessionary charge included the use of buses, and that more communication work was still needed to reassure the public that buses remained free and that this was a tram/train add-on. It was also asked whether there was capacity to allow residents to pay this £10 charge at train stations and not just travel shops. It was advised that further work had taken place on communications around the £10 charge, making best use of the media's most likely to be used by this customer group. With regards to paying at stations – unfortunately at present, the technology was not in place to allow for the purchase to be made at train stations, but as technology developed it was hoped that this could be introduced.

Members expressed concern about the cost per head of the Our Pass scheme, which at present worked out at over £300 per registered user. Was a review to be undertaken to consider the success of the scheme, and had there not been a consideration of what would constitute value for money at the outset of the project?

It was advised that an independent review of Our Pass had recently been commissioned, and that the resulting evaluations would be reported back to both the Mayor and the GM Transport Committee. The GM Mayor would also be present at the next GM Transport Committee and could provide further information on his targets for Our Pass.

Members referenced contactless and phone app payments – and whether it was possible to

encourage tap on/off price reduction offers that would make bus use for attractive to casual users. Bus operators present at the meeting advised that this was technically possible, but work would need to be undertaken to establish whether an increase in bus users through offers would offset the revenue lost.

Members expressed concern around continuing instances of card clash – for example, where residents are using a pensioner pass, when kept by a debit card it was charging that card in addition. It was advised that communications work around this had been done previously, and a new set of communications would further remind users of the need to keep cards separate to avoid this issue.

Resolved /-

1. That the presentation on Metrolink ticketing be received.
2. That comments from Members on future ticketing opportunities be noted; and
3. That further communications around the risk of ‘card clash’ in contactless payment be sought by Members.

GMTC 24/20 SOCIAL VALUE

Kate Brown, Director of Corporate Affairs, TfGM, introduced an item updating Members on TfGM’s contribution to wider social value through all of its activities. It was advised that the delivery of social value was predicated on six key policy objectives:

- Objective 1: Promote employment and economic sustainability
- Objective 2: Raise the living standards of local residents
- Objective 3: Promote participation and citizen engagement
- Objective 4: Build the capacity and sustainability of the voluntary and community sector
- Objective 5: Promote equity and fairness
- Objective 6: Promote environmental sustainability

Comments and Questions

Members asked whether TfGM was considering further refreshing its progressive procurement policy in light of increasing climate change concerns – and also sought more information on the collective impact of the social value work being undertaken through the TfGM budget.

It was advised that the Committee had taken a report on climate change at its previous meeting, and that a piece of work had been commissioned to help ensure that TfGM and its partners were meeting the green agenda through procurement and projects. As agreed in GMTC 17/20 a further report would be brought to the Committee on this in the new municipal year. In regards to collective impact frameworks, close work was taking place with the Combined Authority to align policies and ensure consistency throughout GM.

Members referenced the Good Employment Charter for GM, and that this and other levers should be used to reward companies that had proven records of good employment practice.

Resolved /-

1. That the report on TfGM's contribution to social value be noted; and
2. That comments received from Members identifying further opportunities/areas of focus for TfGM to deliver social value in future, be noted.

GMTC 25/20 AGE FRIENDLY TRANSPORT

Kate Brown, Director of Corporate Affairs, TfGM and James Baldwin, Policy Officer, TfGM, introduced a report updating Members on transport initiatives to support the GM Ageing Strategy, developed in response to the opportunities and challenges presented by GM's ageing population.

Three areas of work currently seeing a lot of activity were highlighted:

- Community Transport was making excellent use of voluntary lift services, and looking at models to increase the existing provision.
- A city centre pedestrians crossing trial was in place to look at reducing the amount of time pedestrians have to wait to cross the road whilst also increasing the green man times allowing longer for people with mobility issues to cross. The trial would allow further understand of how to do this whilst also minimising the impact on traffic.
- Support for older drivers continued with 'Safer Driving for Longer' courses continuing to be promoted, and the arrangement of a large-scale seminar for older drivers in April.

Comments and Questions

Members expressed concern about the ability to communicate messages to more vulnerable members of society who may not have access to app technology, regarding network delays for example. Could more effective messaging be relayed on screens at stations, as some found communications through speakers at platforms hard to understand.

It was advised that in terms of engagement, different channels were employed to ensure that the differing needs of communities were met. The comments on effective messaging at stations would be reported back to the Disability Design Reference Group (DDRG) for their consideration.

A Member advised that officers working on pedestrians schemes should consider a new report from social scientists and architects linked to the Manchester Urban Ageing Research Group (MUARG) titled 'Developing Age-Friendly Communities in the Northern Gateway Urban Regeneration Project' which provided insight into how older people experienced walking within the urban realm. The Member also referenced the need to make the urban realm more convenient for older residents to walk to bus and Metrolink stops, by providing more rest facilities such as benches within close proximity of the amenities.

Members raised the continuing issues around pavement parking across GM – which was a key factor in making walking difficult for many older residents. It was advised that TfGM were working closely with highways officers across the 10 GM boroughs on work that could be done to combat this in the absence of existing legislation. GM would continue to push for further enforcement powers.

Resolved /-

1. That the update report on age friendly transport be noted.
2. That concerns raised about signposting of network issues at stations be forwarded to the Disability Design Reference Group (DDRG) for consideration; and
3. That officers be asked to consider a new report from social scientists and architects linked to the Manchester Urban Ageing Research Group (MUARG) titled 'Developing Age-Friendly Communities in the Northern Gateway Urban Regeneration Project' which provides insight into how older people experience walking within the urban realm.

GMTC 26/20 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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 item of 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.

GMTC 26/20 FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO BUS SERVICES - PART B

Resolved /-

1. That the report be noted.