

## GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE METROLINK AND RAIL NETWORKS SUB-COMMITTEE

Date: 23 September 2022  
Subject: Metrolink Service Performance  
Report of: Danny Vaughan, Head of Metrolink, TfGM

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### PURPOSE OF REPORT:

This report provides an update on Metrolink services and performance.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

### 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: 3**

- Appendix 1: Period date listing
- Appendix 2: Patronage by line
- Appendix 3: Dogs on trams pilot

**Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee: n/a**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** Metrolink Service Performance report of 15 July 2022

### **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 & Scrutiny Committee n/a**

## **1. ABOUT METROLINK**

- 1.1 Metrolink is the largest urban light rail network in the UK. It provides a fast, frequent service which is fully accessible to all, running 7 days a week, 364 days of the year.
- 1.2 The Metrolink network is owned by TfGM and is operated and maintained on TfGM's behalf through a contract with KeolisAmey Metrolink (KAM).
- 1.3 The network uses high-floor trams with raised platform stops and had reached patronage of over 45 million passengers each year prior to the covid pandemic.
- 1.4 There are currently 145 trams serviced from two depots.
- 1.5 Trams serve 99 stops covering routes totalling just over 100km. Metrolink is the most accessible of the public transport networks in Greater Manchester, providing step free access across the entire network.

## **2. PERFORMANCE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Metrolink Quarterly Performance Report provides a performance summary for the rolling 12-month period.
- 2.2 Patronage continues to increase, punctuated by impacts of national events, holiday periods and planned engineering work on the network. However, patronage recovery remains well below pre-covid levels.
- 2.3 Operational performance during periods 3 and 4 deteriorated due to the extreme high temperatures experienced on 18 and 19 July which significantly impacted overhead line equipment and required temporary speed restrictions and service cancellations. Significant hot weather impacts continued to be experienced through period 4 and into period 5 with temporary speed restrictions applied in various locations across the network between 10 and 14 August due to the temperatures exceeding 30°C.
- 2.4 Engineering and renewals works continue in summer/autumn which will see planned changes to the Eccles and city centre lines throughout September and October.
- 2.5 A three month pilot of carriage of dogs on Metrolink began on 1 August 2022 to fulfil a mayoral manifesto commitment. The pilot allows passengers to take two non-assistance dogs on Metrolink at any time of the day for no charge, subject to following guidance regarding behaviour. An online survey has been set up on the TfGM website to collate feedback from all customers, whether travelling with a dog or not. The survey closes on 31 October and the data will be used to help determine whether dogs can continue to be allowed on trams after the pilot has ended. More detail can be found in appendix 3.

### 3. PATRONAGE

3.1 Patronage measures the number of single journeys that are made on the network.

3.2 As can be seen in the chart below, patronage has been steadily recovering since the low of circa 41% of pre-covid levels during the Christmas period following the Government imposing Plan B restrictions at a national level.



3.3 Patronage has continued recovering, punctuated by impacts of national events, holiday periods, planned engineering work on the network, rail strikes and most recently national weather warnings of extreme heat.

3.4 Taking in to account the factors referenced above in 3.4, journeys on the network have recovered to between 70% - 75% of pre-Covid average patronage on a regular basis.

3.5 Increases in patronage continues to be correlated to football matches and large concerts across the city. For example, journey numbers carried during the weekend of the Parklife festival (11 June – 12 June 2022) are estimated to have been the highest number carried in 30 years of Metrolink operations (151% of a pre-Covid average weekend).

3.6 Commuter trip numbers, although still suppressed, have also begun to recover on an upward trajectory. Estimates suggest that approximately 70% of pre-Covid average commuter patronage has returned to the network with some pressure on peak capacities between Tuesdays and Thursdays on Altrincham, Bury, East Didsbury and Eccles lines.

3.7 A breakdown of patronage by line can be found in Appendix 2.

## **4. FUNDING**

- 4.1 A package of funding support from central government has been agreed up to the beginning of October 2022. DfT / HMT have indicated that no further recovery funding will be provided beyond this point. TfGM is engaged in ongoing dialogue with DfT. As a last resort, GMCA has sufficient reserves available to temporarily fund Metrolink's forecast net deficit for the remainder of 2022/23 and it is recommended that provision is made for this to continue in 2023/24, noting that these Reserves would subsequently need to be replenished. In parallel, a Financial Sustainability Plan is being prepared, which will include a strategy for Metrolink to cover its operating, renewals and financing costs in the medium to long term, including replenishing the reserves.

## **5. OPERATIONAL AND CUSTOMER PERFORMANCE**

- 5.1 Operational performance during periods 3 and 4 deteriorated due to the extreme high temperatures experienced on 18 and 19 July which significantly impacted overhead line equipment and required temporary speed restrictions and service cancellations. This deterioration continued through period 5 as high temperatures returned and impacted operations during week commencing 08 August.
- 5.2 Driver availability is impacting on performance. Some covid related absence is still being recorded, however, the number of instances is currently minimal. The focus is now recruitment and route training throughout 2022 and 2023 to increase the number of drivers available for service and stabilise operational performance.

### **Reliability**

- 5.3 Reliability is measured by operated mileage. Operated mileage is the number of tram vehicle miles operated compared with the number of scheduled miles, with a target of 99.4% before the pandemic.

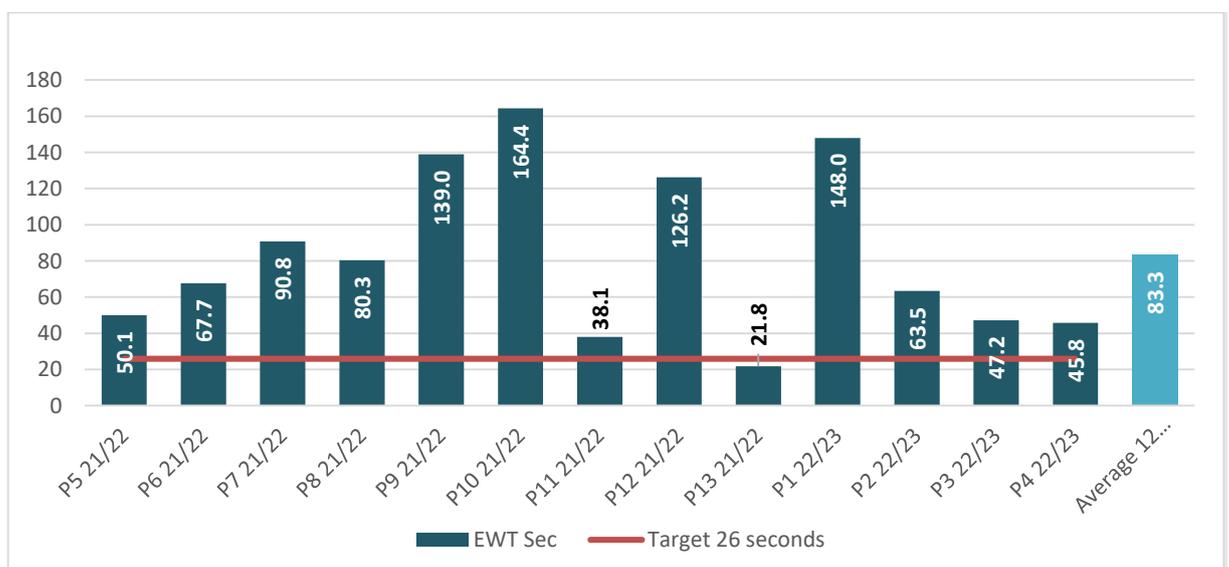
Reliability declined in periods 3 and 4. The incidents which most influenced performance in recent periods were:

- Period 3: on 15 June, an overhead line fault impacted the Bury line during the evening until the end of service. The fault was repaired overnight, and service operated as normal the next day.
- Period 4: the extreme temperatures experienced on 18 and 19 July impacted the full network and required temporary speed restrictions network wide. Service cancellations on the Bury and Oldham Rochdale lines were necessary due to heat related damage to multiple assets which were operating beyond their specified tolerances.



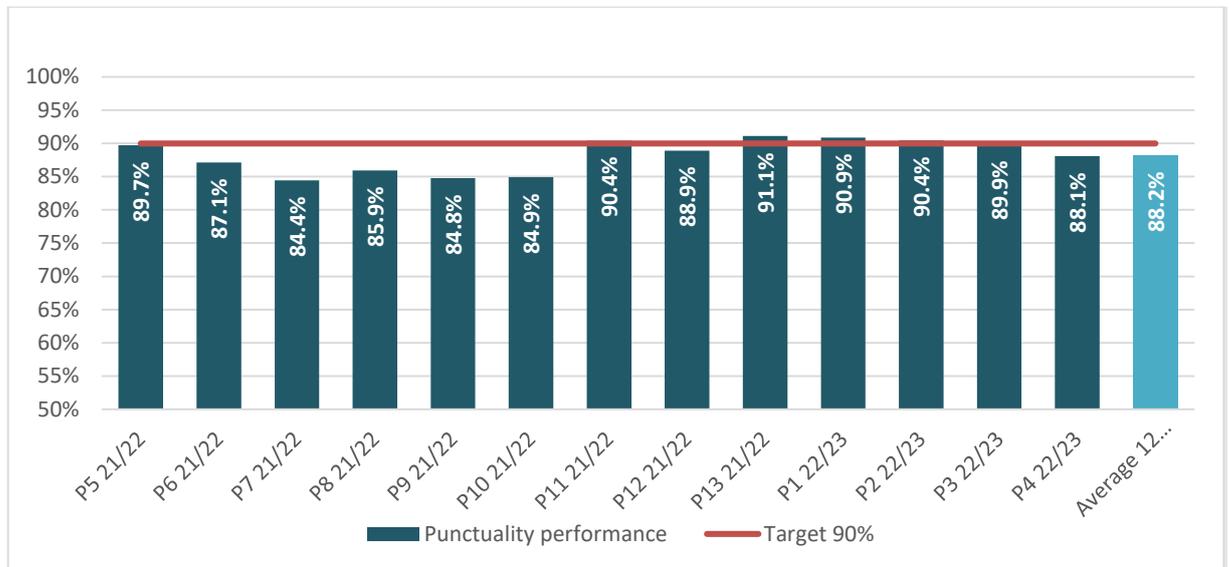
## Excess Wait Time

- 5.4 Excess Wait Time (EWT) is a measure of punctuality. It is the average time passengers wait over what would have been expected if the service were running exactly as scheduled.
- 5.5 The average EWT performance for the 12 months to July 2022 was 83.3 seconds against a pre-pandemic target of 26 seconds.
- 5.6 Performance in periods 3 and 4 was impacted by the incidents described above in 5.2 but held steady, albeit slightly above target.
- 5.7 The chart below shows EWT performance over the year. In this case a lower number is better performance for our passengers.



## Punctuality - Percentage of services operating to time.

5.8 Punctuality performance covering the previous 12 months (13 periods) is shown below. Performance dipped below target in period 4 due to the extreme weather events outlined above.



## Asset reliability - Trams

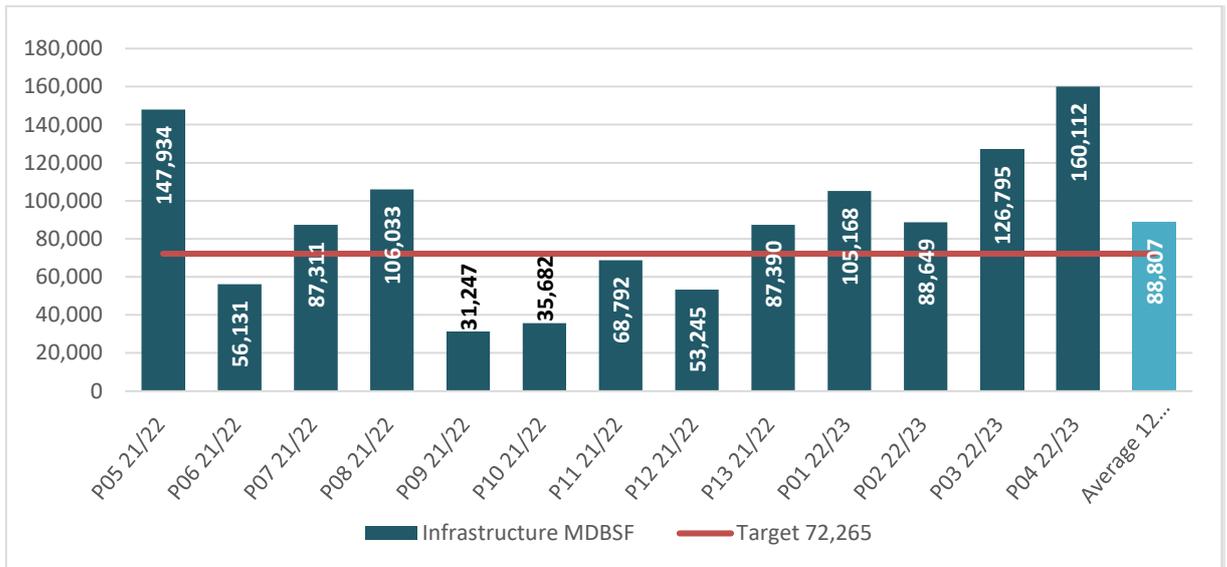
5.9 Tram availability shows percentage of the fleet that has been available during each period.



Recent periods have seen a sharp increase in anti-social behaviour. This results in smashed glazing and doors, damage to ceiling panels, damaged seating, graffiti and etching. This high level of damage impacts on vehicle availability which is then exacerbated by supply chain issues.

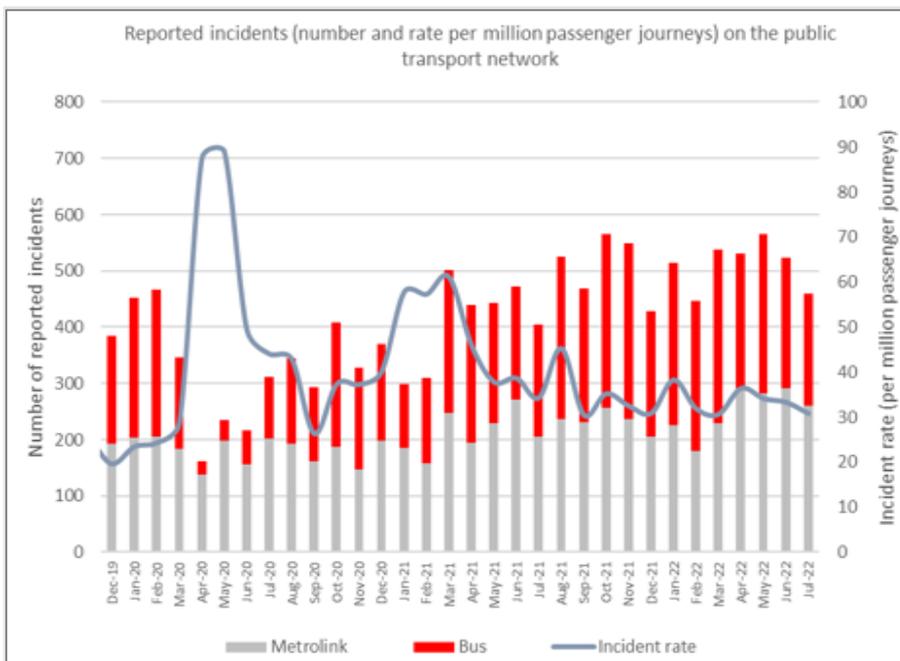
## Asset reliability – Infrastructure

- 5.10 Infrastructure reliability performance is measured in terms of service distance travelled between failures. Examples of some of the infrastructure equipment covered by this category are signalling systems, overhead line, track and traction substations.
- 5.11 Infrastructure assets have maintained well above target performance in the last five periods. The average 12 month rolling performance is also above target.



## Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour

- 5.12 On average, 242 incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour per month were reported to Metrolink over last 12 months.

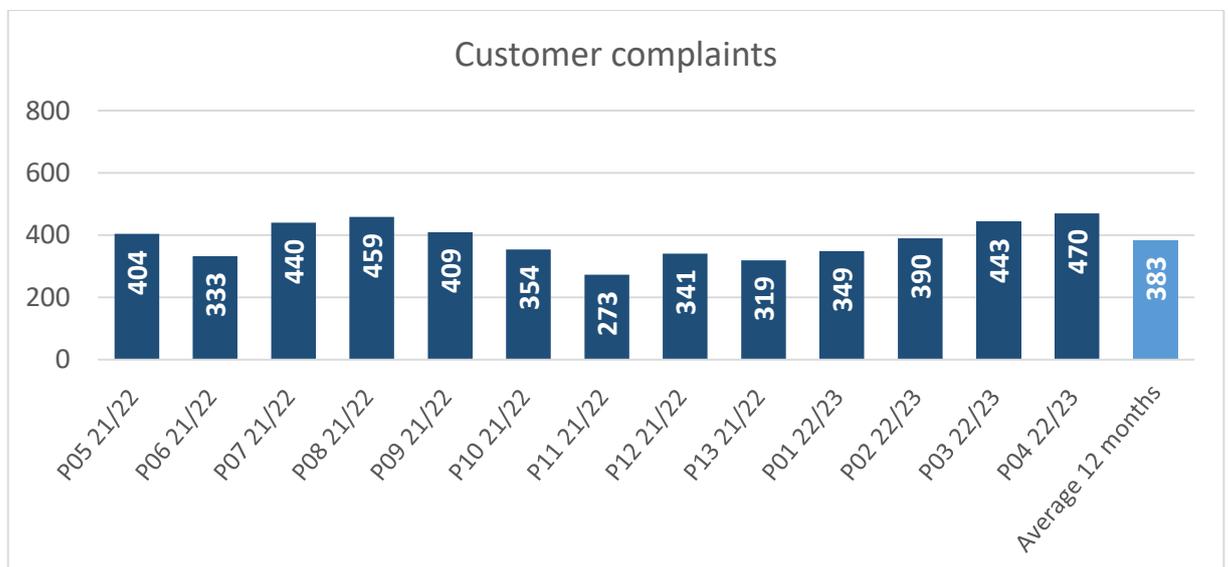
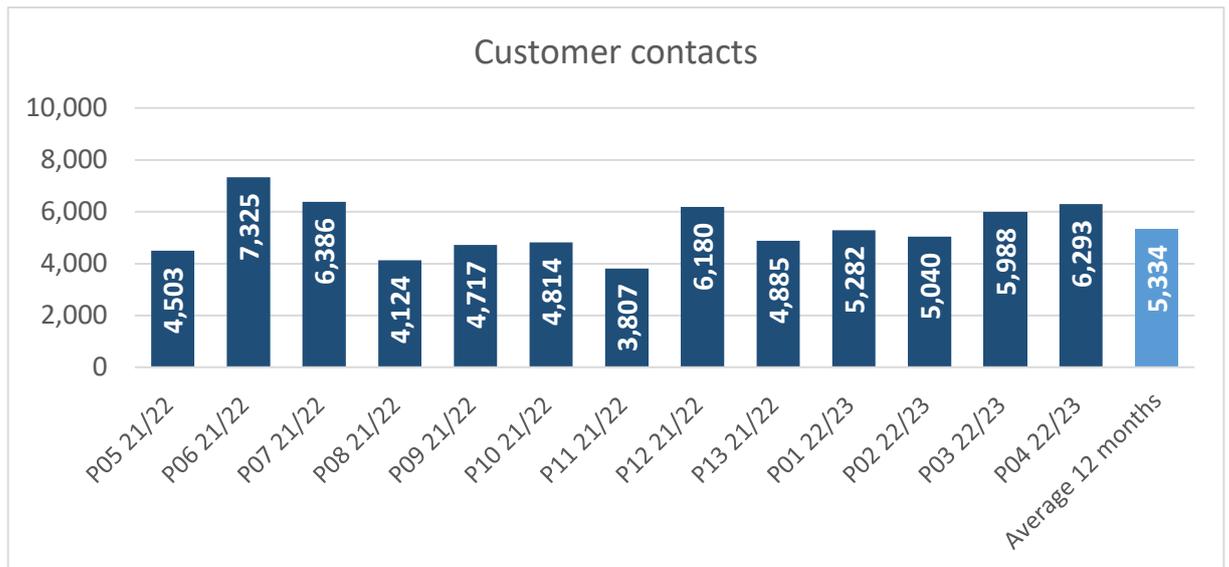


Crime & ASB Category	July 2019	July 2022
	Reported Incidents	Reported incidents
ASB	5	28
Assault (inc. domestic incidents)	22	22
Damage to Property	28	50
Drink and Drug Related Incidents	7	16
Harassment & Intimidation	52	58
Obstruct/Interfere with Network Operations	23	31
Other Public Order	14	10
Robbery & Thefts	27	21
Sexual Assault/Sexual Incident	3	7
Tram Surfing	1	10
Weapons Incident	4	8
Grand Total	186	261

- 5.13 Criminal damage continues to be an issue on the network and periods 3 and 4 continue to see more incidents on the Oldham Rochdale line than any other line. The incidents of damage were dispersed along the line in July 2022.
- 5.14 The most common incident type is smashed station furniture, followed by damage to trams. TfGM is exploring the potential installation of materials other than glass in shelters to mitigate the impact of this damage. This line remains a current TravelSafe tactical priority and TravelSafe Officers (TSO) deployments are prioritised for this line especially during evenings.
- 5.15 Periods 3 and 4 saw continued youth related anti-social behaviour on the network, especially on the Airport line. The incidents primarily involve youths engaging in anti-social behaviour and activating door handles, resulting in delays on the network and distress to passengers.
- 5.16 TravelSafe specialist operations were carried out across the network throughout periods 3 and 4 focusing on crime and ASB hotspots. Deployments were supported by Trafford Council, Rochdale Council, district policing teams and British Transport Police. Dates and locations of deployments in July include:
- Bury: 7 July
  - Rochdale & Newbold: 13 July
  - East Didsbury line: 20 July
  - Altrincham: 28 July

## Customer contacts and complaints

- 5.17 Just over 69,000 customer contacts were dealt with during the year, averaging at 5,334 customer contacts per period (excluding twitter).
- 5.18 Customer contacts and complaints have been increasing slightly period on period in the past six months. However, neither contacts nor complaints have returned to pre Covid levels.



## Customer Experience and Engagement

- 5.19 KAM's School Engagement team continue to engage with the local community. Engagement days recently took place as part of the Safer Streets initiative. Oldham College's Open day was a joint effort between the TravelSafe team and KAM's engagement team to promote security and safety patrols as well as Greater Manchester Police joint operations, as part of Safer Streets Week.

- 5.20 In period 4, students from Waterhead Academy in Oldham were given assembly talks on safety and anti-social behaviour, as well as a reminder about the risks of fare evasion. Over 200 students attended.
- 5.21 The school engagement team also attended Manchester's Crucial Crew alongside the TravelSafe Partnership. The Crucial Crew is a multi-agency safety event aimed at 10-11 year olds. These sessions reached over 700 students from 15 primary schools in East Didsbury.
- 5.22 Students from Phillips High School in Bury attended a depot visit during period 4 whereby they were able to visit the control room, the engineering department and attend a Q&A session with Customer Service Representatives.
- 5.23 Since the launch of the Manchester Youth Zone partnership in period 2, outreach workers continued to be deployed two nights per week on the Oldham Rochdale line. Deployment is planned along the Airport line in period 5. In the first six weeks outreach workers have engaged with over 130 youths. Key challenges have been youths using the Newton Heath & Moston and Monsall stops as meeting points. Workers have engaged with these groups and successfully involved them in nearby sport sessions such as football matches.
- 5.24 A customer information stall was positioned at Manchester Piccadilly to provide reassurance and support to regular passengers and visitors to the area. KAM's Metrolink Ambassadors handed out leaflets and hand sanitiser whilst offering travel advice and answering customer enquiries.

## **6. FORWARD LOOK**

### **Planned network renewals 2022**

- 6.1 The programme of disruptive access to deliver 2022 asset renewals is a rolling schedule. While the disruption has an impact on customers, early planning of these works has allowed the impact to be mitigated through well planned and early communication to customers, staff and stakeholders and allow the production of robust timetables and the procurement of replacement buses where required.
- 6.2 Most of the essential works during 2022 are to replace sections of track at key locations on the network of which some will require longer duration closures.
- 1.1 The lengthier closures mainly impact the city centre, Bury and Eccles lines, targeted around the quieter school holiday periods where possible. Other works will be shorter durations over weekends, evenings and overnight.

Works programme:

- Eccles Line track renewals 16 July – 21 October 2022. This is a continuation of works which were completed earlier this year and these works have resulted in the partial closure of the line from MediaCityUK to Eccles with a bus replacement serving those stops.

- Piccadilly Gardens rail renewal in October for approx. 1 week. Services in the city centre will be diverted to new termini during this time. Service provision is currently in the planning phase.
- Victoria track works early November for 1 day. This will require a bus replacement to link the Bury, Rochdale and Airport services across the city during this day.

1.2 The work to repair the damaged beam in Whitefield tunnel continues. The site is complicated having several utilities running directly above the beams. It is expected that the main repairs will be undertaken next spring with mitigations in place to keep the tunnel safe for operations.

**Danny Vaughan**  
**Head of Metrolink, TfGM**

## Appendix 1 - Period date listing

This report details the highlighted Period/s

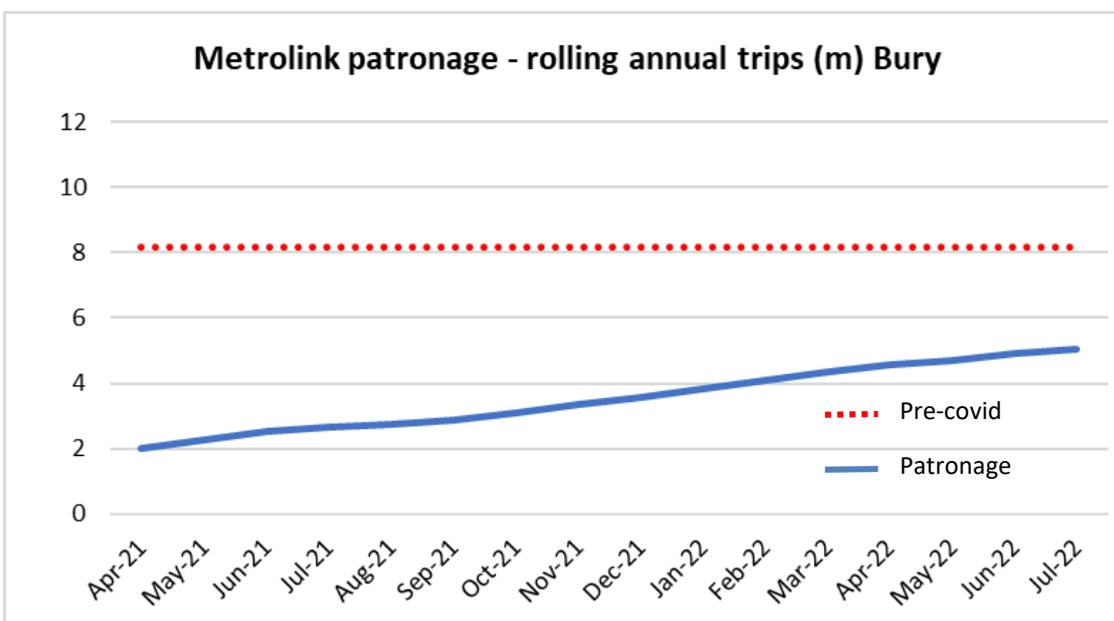
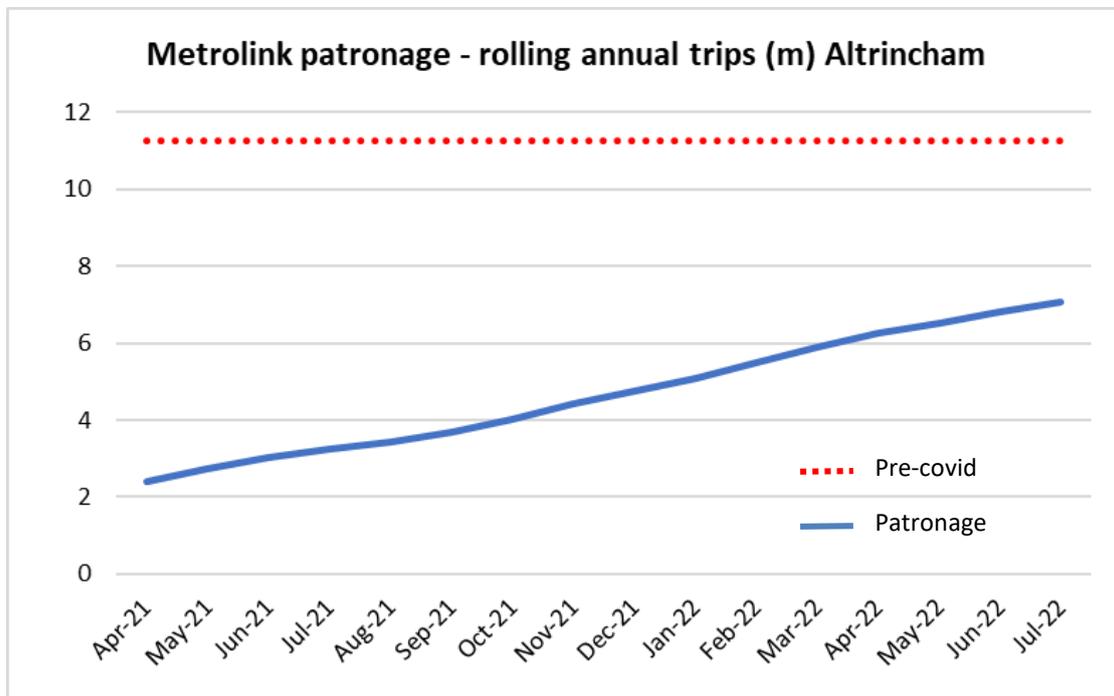
2021/22

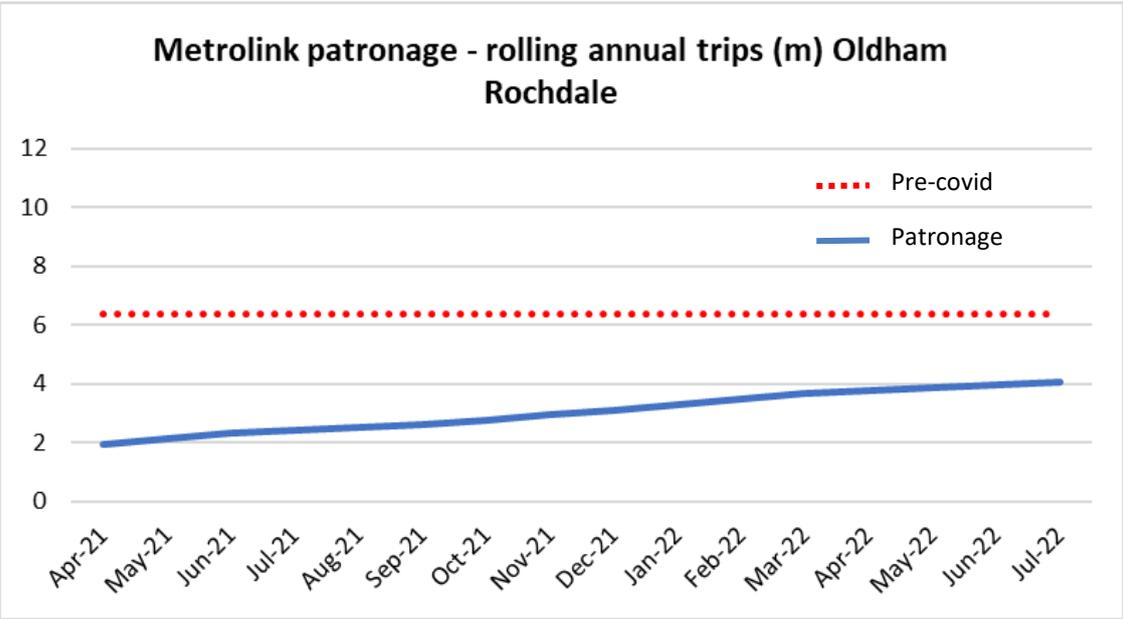
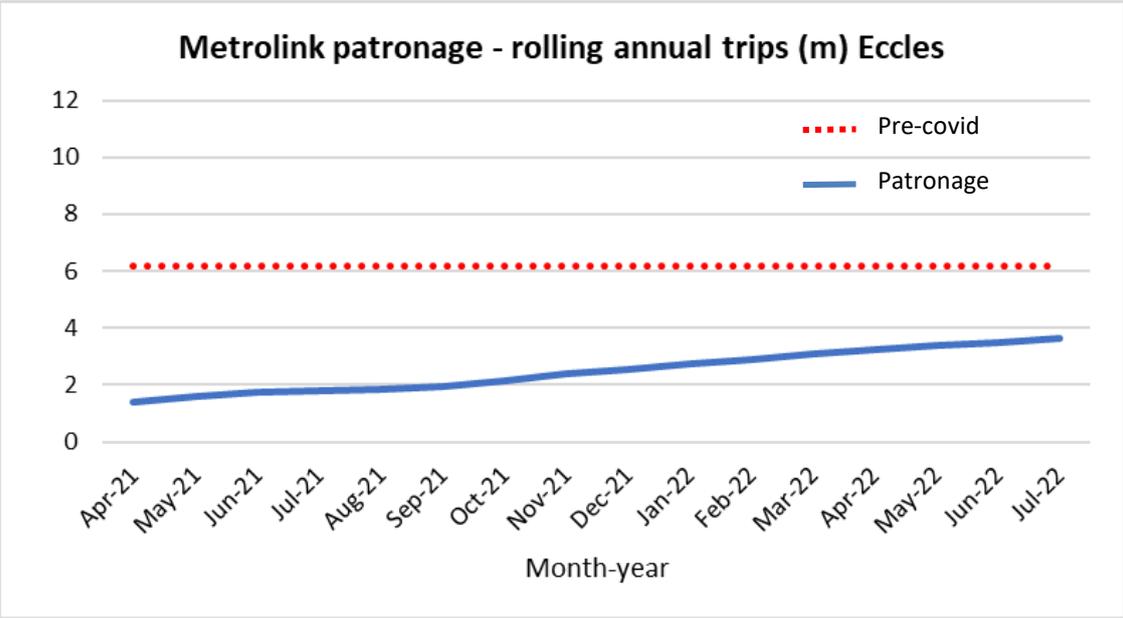
Period	Start Date	End Date
1	01/04/2021	01/05/2021
2	02/05/2021	29/05/2021
3	30/05/2021	26/06/2021
4	27/06/2021	24/07/2021
5	25/07/2021	21/08/2021
6	22/08/2021	18/09/2021
7	19/09/2021	16/10/2021
8	17/10/2021	13/11/2021
9	14/11/2021	11/12/2021
10	12/12/2021	08/01/2022
11	09/01/2022	05/02/2022
12	06/02/2022	05/03/2022
13	06/03/2022	31/03/2022

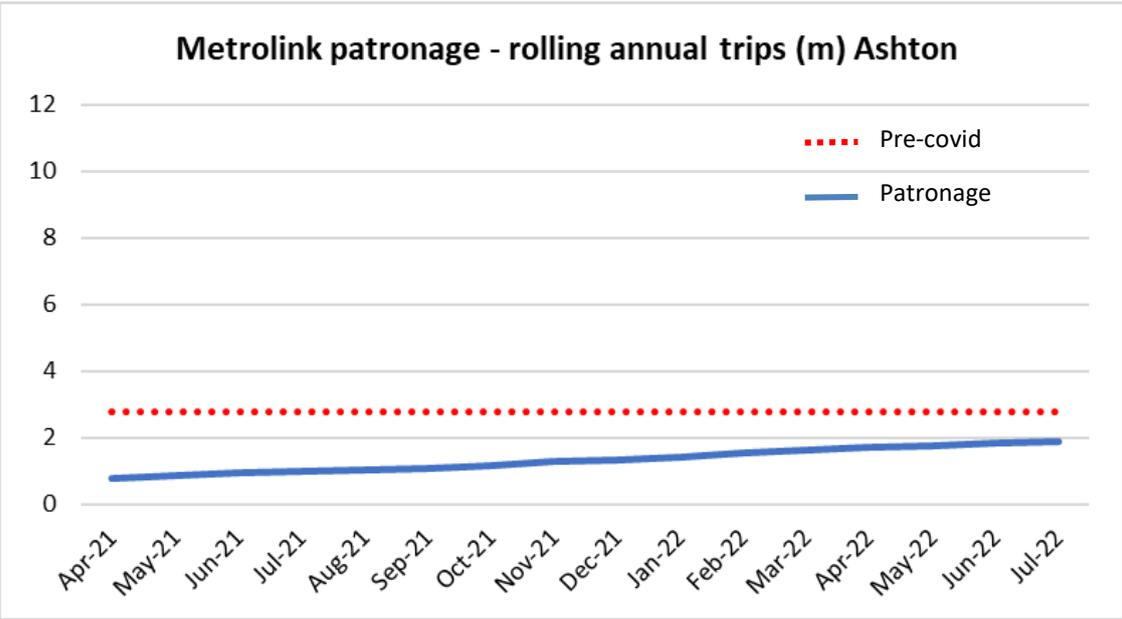
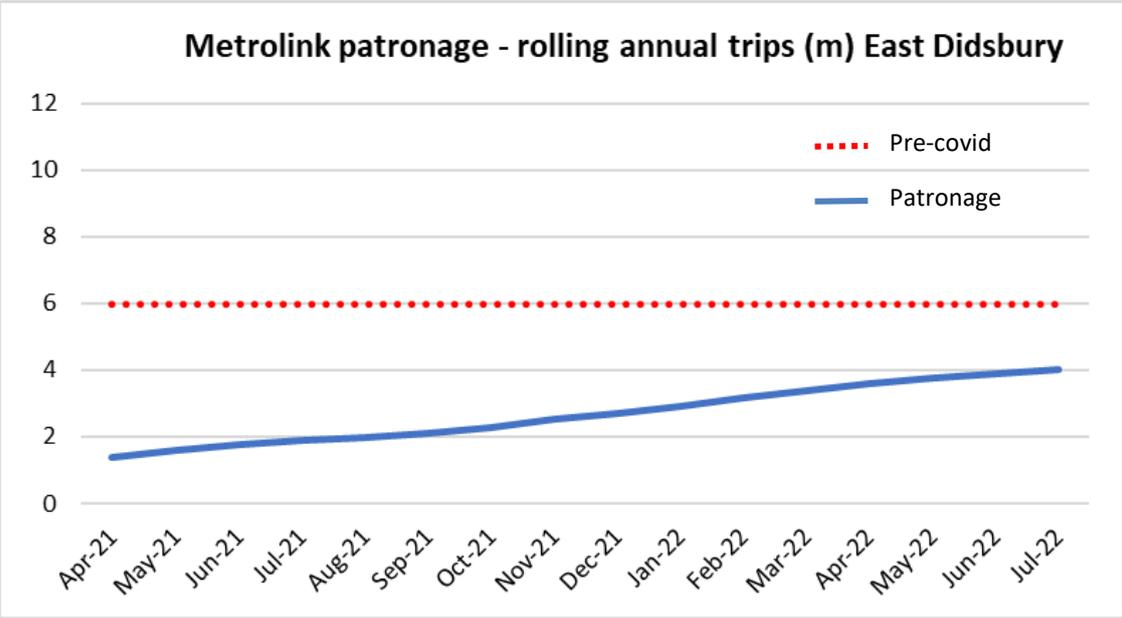
2022/23

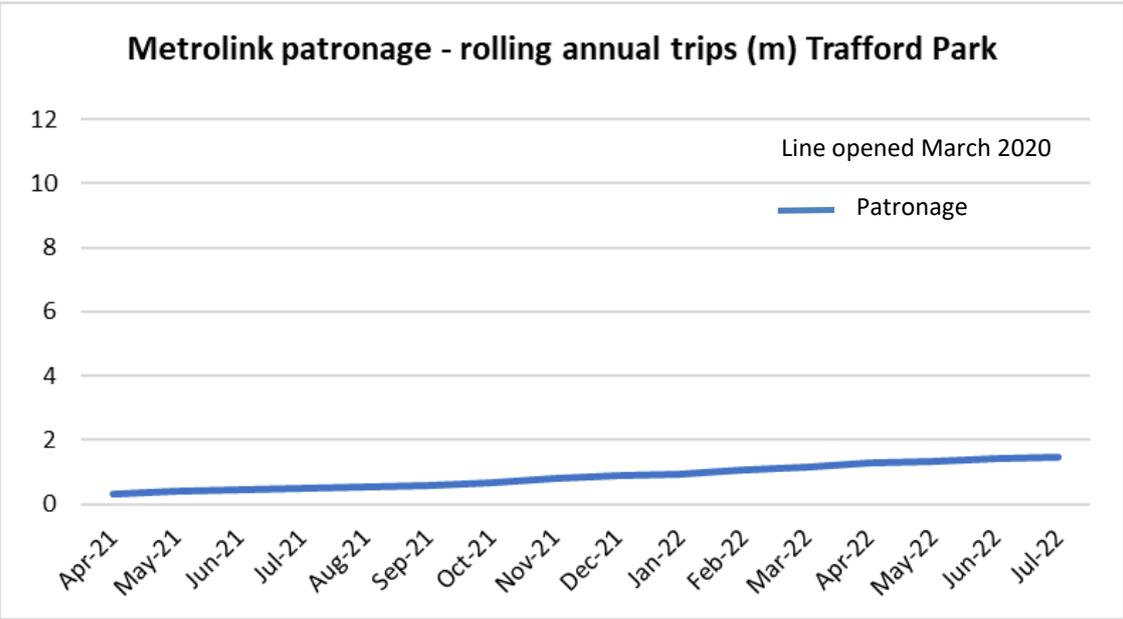
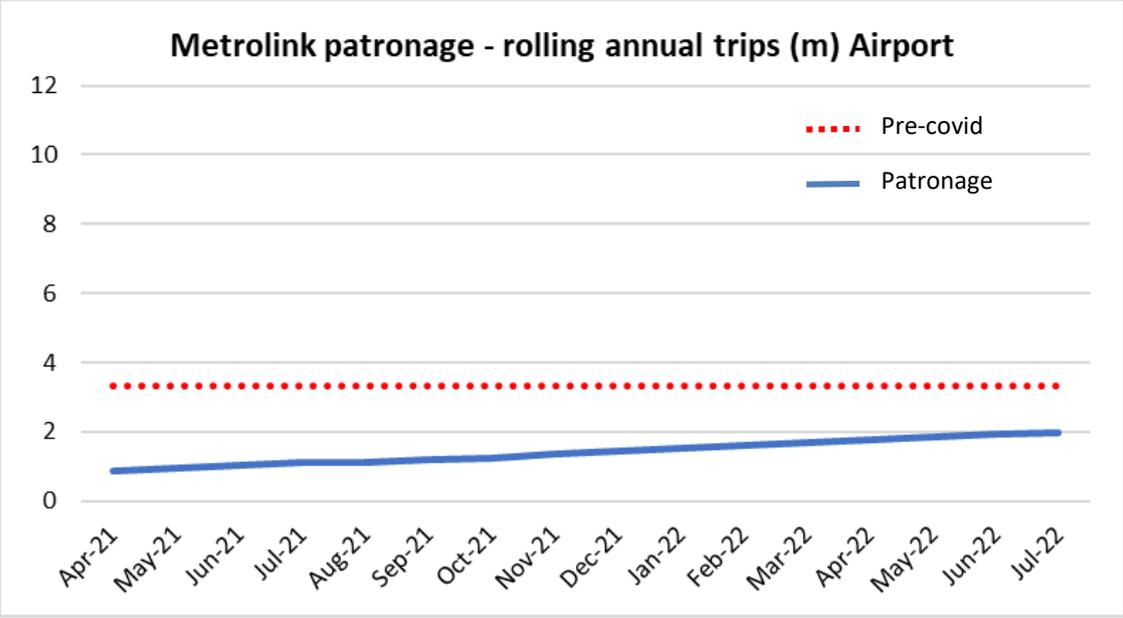
Period	Start Date	End Date
1	01/04/2022	30/04/2022
2	01/05/2022	28/05/2022
3	29/05/2022	25/06/2022
4	26/06/2022	23/07/2022
5	24/07/2022	20/08/2022
6	21/08/2022	17/09/2022
7	18/09/2022	15/10/2022
8	16/10/2022	12/11/2022
9	13/11/2022	10/12/2022
10	11/12/2022	07/01/2023
11	08/01/2023	04/02/2023
12	05/02/2023	04/03/2023
13	05/03/2023	31/03/2023

## Appendix 2 – Patronage by line









## Appendix 3 - Dogs on trams pilot

- From Monday 1 August pet dogs were allowed onto Metrolink as part of a three-month pilot. The pilot means all non-assistance dogs can travel on the network for free, but dog owners will need to follow rules on safety, cleanliness and the consideration of others, which includes keeping dogs on leads.
- To help decide if the scheme should be extended or made permanent, all Metrolink passengers – including those without dogs – are being urged to share their views and experiences during the pilot. A survey allowing all Metrolink users to have their say is available on the TfGM website and the outcome of the pilot depends on feedback received.
- Various groups have been involved in the pilot design to ensure a broad range of views is heard. We will continue this engagement during the pilot period to seek further feedback. Impacts on service reliability, cleaning requirements and operating costs are being monitored by TfGM and KAM.
- Overall, the survey has seen a positive response to allowing dogs on trams, but concerns around allergies, dog behaviour - including persistent barking, and dogs taking up seats and space on the tram have been reported.
- 80% of the people who have responded to the survey have not experienced or witnessed a problem with pet dogs during the pilot.
- The majority of media coverage has been positive in terms of sentiment at 51% positive, with 35% negative.
- 495 Tweets have been received by @MCRMetroLink with the majority positive. 488 Tweets have been received by @OfficialTfGM – these are split broadly 50/50 positive/negative.
- To date KAM have reported no incidents affecting service or safety. There have been a few reports of dog mess on the platforms and one onboard.
- An update will be provided at the end of the pilot period.