TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE METROLINK AND RAIL NETWORKS SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 APRIL 2017 AT MANCHESTER TOWN HALL

Councillor David Chadwick Bolton
Councillor Stuart Haslam Bolton
Councillor Dzidra Noor Manchester
Councillor Norman Briggs Oldham
Councillor Ian Duckworth Rochdale
Councillor Roger Jones Salford
Councillor Geoff Abell Stockport
Councillor Doreen Dickinson Tameside (in the Chair)
Councillor Peter Robinson Tameside
Councillor Michael Cordingley Trafford
Councillor Lynne Holland Wigan

IN ATTENDANCE:

Peter Cushing Metrolink Director, TfGM
Victoria Mercer Metrolink Team, TfGM
Amanda White Rail Team, TfGM
Emma Stonier GMIST

ALSO PRESENT:

Lucja Majewski Trans Pennine Express
Rory Kingdon Network Rail
Karen Hornby Network Rail
Adam Timewell Rail North

MR16/40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Azra Ali, Councillor Norman Briggs and Councillor Tom Grundy.

MR16/41 CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

a.) Director of Metrolink’s final Committee meeting
The Chair extended the Committee’s thanks and warm well wishes for the future to Peter Cushing, the Director of Metrolink, who will be moving on from this role after four years of being in post.

b.) Welcome to Operators

The Chair extended a welcome to representatives from the train operators and thanked them for their continued attendance at Sub Committee meetings.

Apologies were received from Northern Rail and MRDL.

MR16/42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made in relation to any item on the agenda.

MR16/43 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub Committee, held on 3 February 2017 were submitted.

Resolved/-

That the minutes of the meeting of the Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub Committee on 3 February 2017 be approved as an accurate record subject.

MR16/44 METROLINK SERVICE PERFORMANCE

Members received a report which informed them of the service performance and developments that had affected the Metrolink system during monitoring Periods 10 and 11 of Metrolink operations (2 January 2017 – 26 February 2017 inclusive). The report provided an overview of performance and highlighted the following:

a) Metrolink was celebrating its 25 year anniversary.

b) KeolisAmey has been appointed to run the Metrolink network from July 2017. Key features of the new contract included; the creation of more than 300 jobs and a commitment to upskill, enhance training and qualifications for staff; a major focus on improving operational reliability, customer service and security with an increased staff presence on the network and a commitment to source 40% of supplier contracts within 25 miles of Greater Manchester,

c) The second city crossing successfully launched on 26 February 2017. The new line offers new links and more frequent trams through Manchester City Centre as well as improved service reliability and greater operational flexibility.

d) Work has started on the £350m Metrolink Trafford Park line. This will see a new six stop line to key business and leisure destinations.

e) In period 10 and 11 the following incidents which caused severe delays on the network were highlighted; adverse weather conditions; water
leak at Bury interchange and a pedestrian injured in the tunnel at Monsall.

f) Vehicle reliability was above target; the overall availability of trams for service in the morning peak during period 10 was 100% and period 11 was 99.98%.

g) The drop in cleaning performance which was linked to the time of year and the weather. Metrolink was working with the operator on this to improve performance.

h) There were 648 complaints in Period 10 compared to 758 in the previous year and 1045 complaints in Period 11 compared to 1446 in the previous year. Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) remained the primary cause of complaints. Metrolink were looking into trialling clear ticket doors which enable passengers to see any visible obstructions.

i) In period 10 2679 standard fares were issued and in period 11 2930 were issued; over the combined periods over 500,000 passengers were checked and gateway checks were resumed at St Peter's Square.

j) An increase in anti-social behaviour continued during period 10 and 11 with the Airport Line experiencing the most reported incidents. Greater Manchester Police's (GMP) divisional resources in Wythenshawe have provided some patrols along the Metrolink corridor to support front line CSRs. In Oldham as part of a partnership approach to tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, representatives from TfGM and Oldham MBC have developed an action plan specifically targeting youth crime and disorder which is expected to reduce and deter anti-social behaviour on the Metrolink Network.

k) Patronage was estimated at 3.1m in January which was 180,000 below forecast but 264,000 ahead of January 2016. In February it was estimated at 3.1m which was 226,000 below forecast but 141,000 ahead of February 2016. Year on year growth showed particular increases on the Oldham Rochdale line, the Airport line and the East Manchester line.

l) Network Rail will be undertaking the electrification of lines at Victoria Station and some of the works will require the isolation of Metrolink overhead lines. Operational plans were being put in place to ensure that alternative travel was available and that there was minimal disruption as possible for customers.

A Member noted Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) performance and the possibility if this did not improve there could be a negative impact on customers using the Metrolink. A Member asked about whether there were litter bins at Metrolink stops. It was confirmed that with the exception of Manchester Victoria and Manchester Piccadilly these are in place at all other stops on the network.

A Member asked about security of the public on trams when incidents occurred and noted that they felt a staff presence on trams would assist with tackling anti-social behaviour incidents. Members were informed that there was a call button on trams, which goes directly to the driver, which can be used to notify the driver when incidents occur. It was also highlighted that anti-
social behaviour occurred on a small percentage of journeys and that incidences took place on, for example platforms, TVMs, and shelters as well as on the tram. The driver call button enables the driver to contact the control room and if necessary request the police to attend at the next stop to deal with the incident. Metrolink is working with GMP and local area teams to tackle anti-social behaviour and under the new contract the amount of Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) on the network will be increased.

A Member noted the success of the partnership work taking place in Oldham with Youth Offending Teams and youth services working together to tackle anti-social behaviour and emphasised this should take place in other areas, for example Clayton and Ashton, where incidences of anti-social behaviour were higher. The role of the incoming Greater Manchester Mayor’s office in promoting joined up, partnership-working was also highlighted as being important.

A Member informed the Committee that they had received an email from the organisers of the Warehouse Project regarding plans to create additional employment in the night-time economy. They noted that Manchester had a thriving leisure industry and that 24/7 transport links would assist in the growth of this.

A Member highlighted that 25 year anniversary of Metrolink and the success of officers in embedding Metrolink into the way Greater Manchester works. They also asked what had happened to the older Metrolink units. Officers informed Members that the old units had been scrapped as the risk in selling them would have been too great due to long term reliability. There were still a couple of units at the Trafford depot and it is planned that these will be going to the Heaton park tram museum once appropriate storage is in place.

A Member informed the Committee that Tameside were lobbying for a fare review, as travel from Eccles was cheaper than travel from Tameside. It was felt that with the incoming Buses Bill that this would be an appropriate time for a planning review.

Resolved/-

To note the update on Metrolink Services.

MR16/45 LOCAL RAIL SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND STATION UPDATE

Members considered a report which informed them of local rail service performance and station matters within Greater Manchester and the surrounding area for heavy rail in Periods 11 and 12 (8 January 2017 to 4 March 2017 inclusive). The report included updates on; timetable changes, Network Rail performance, Rail in the Community, managing events and disruption in GM and engineering and project updates. The report provided an overview of performance and highlighted the following;
a) Operational performance has improved since period 10, however period 12 saw a decline in performance from period 11 which was mostly attributed to Storm Doris on 23 February and the wall collapse at Edge Hill. Both events had a significant impact on customers but the multi-agency response to these events was highlighted as a positive.
b) The Ordsall Chord Arch was successfully lifted into position on 21 February which was a major milestone for the project.
c) Rail

d) Engineering works related to the Northern Hub were planned over the Easter weekend and over some dates in May, and would result in some changes in services for customers.
e) The strike taking place on 8 April. TfGM had worked with Rail North, Northern Rail and other operators to ensure contingency plans were in place and expected to serve 50% of customers who usually travelled.

A Member requested an update on the Northern Hub and the proposed two new platforms at Manchester Piccadilly. Network Rail informed Members that they were awaiting the outcome of the Transport and Works Act and once they had received this a full update would be provided. A Member also asked about funding for the extension of Manchester Piccadilly. The Committee were informed that, dependent on the outcome of the Transport and Works Act, funding for the Manchester Piccadilly extension would be sought then.

A Member asked when a decision would be taken regarding the electrification of the Lostock-Wigan North Western line whether Church Street would be able to accommodate this. Network Rail requested that the details about the Church Street Bridge were sent to them and they would provide a response.

A Member asked whether the list of Northern Route performance data in appendix D was complete as regular travellers had indicated that performance was still low on some lines. Officers informed Members that the Line of Route data should start to flow better and that more analysis will be provided in the next report.

A Member asked whether journey times from Bolton to Manchester will decrease once the line is electrified. Network Rail informed Members that journey times should be quicker but that currently there were no plans to increase the number of services. More information would be known regarding this after the implementation of the December 2017 timetable.

A Member asked which model of train Northern would be using for their new rolling stock; the latest plans indicated that this would be a hybrid of three potential models. Rail North informed Members that they would request an official comment from Northern Rail regarding this and update the Committee.

A Member asked the Operators whether they expected an increase in performance when new rolling stock was in place. Officers informed the Committee that performance was affected by different variables and that work was underway to improve performance overall. TfGM have established
performance working groups and are working with Network Rail, operators and Rail North to achieve this. Network Rail were working with Train Operating Companies and had established performance sub-groups to target key performance improvement areas. It was also noted that reliability and incidents performance was improving, for example in rates of trespass and service recovery.

A Member asked whether trespassers on the line were prosecuted. They also asked how the message against trespassing was communicated to the public. Network Rail informed Members that there are Community Safety Officers who go into communities, including schools, to talk about trespassing. The possibility of undertaking joint work with Metrolink at main stations was also highlighted. Network Rail will ask British Transport Police for the answer regarding prosecution of trespassers and inform the Committee at the next meeting.

A Member asked about the height of the new bridge at Henrietta Street, Ashton and the fact that this was possibly too low to meet legal requirements. Network Rail informed Members that they would look into this and provide a response.

A Member requested that the commitment of staff to customers at Farleyfield station, throughout the winter months, be noted. A Member also noted thanks to Network Rail for the work undertaken to resurface the station platform and make it safer for customers.

Resolved/-

To note the update on Local Rail Service Performance as set out in the report.

MR16/46 RAIL NORTH PRESENTATION – NORTHERN’S NEW SERVICE QUALITY ASSESSMENT REGIME

Rail North provided a presentation which gave an overview of Northern’s new Service Quality Assessment Regime. The main areas highlighted were;

- The Service Quality regime began in January 2017 as a requirement of the new franchise agreement;
- There are four Northern Service Quality Assessor’s (SQA’s) (one per region) who form part of the Customer Experience
- Service Quality Assessors will travel on trains and visit stations to carry out audits using Northern’s purpose built Service Quality app;
- Each station will be inspected at least four times in a Service Quality year;
- In each reporting period a minimum of 550 Train Service Quality Inspections will take place, inspections will be distributed between different routes, trains, stations and time of day;
- If the pass rate is below any SQS benchmark for that Service Quality Area for any three consecutive reporting periods or any four reporting periods within thirteen consecutive reporting periods the operator has
28 days to notify Rail North about its proposals for ensuring that the Service Quality Area is at a level equal to or above the SQS Benchmark;

- Any Service Quality failures identified must be rectified within 30 days of the failure being reported and a re-audit will take place to make sure it has been put right;
- Pass rates have to be published on the Northern website and included in subsequent Customer Reports;
- Service Quality payments are calculated against targets set; if these are not reached then it will result in financial penalties; and
- A Service Quality Working Group will be established and held quarterly to assist in assessing Northern’s service quality performance.

A Member asked how Rail North will communicate information regarding outcomes of assessments to interested parties, such as Local Authorities, customers and friends of the rail groups. Rail North informed Members that through the Working Group reports will be submitted to Rail Quadrant Groups who have representatives from relevant organisations within the Northern Region. It is expected this will then be disseminated as appropriate. Rail North is also looking at how they can improve the flow of information through the system to ensure that the right information is getting to the right places.

A Member asked who performed the Service Quality Assessment. It was confirmed that the operator performed these and that these audits will also be audited by Rail North to ensure independent verification.

**MR16/47 BOLTON STATION AND THE PROPOSED AUGUST BLOCKADE – VERBAL UPDATE**

Network Rail provided a verbal update on the proposed August blockade at Bolton. There will be a closure of Bolton station 12 – 28 August as part of Network Rail’s ongoing electrification project. Work is being carried out to adjust the platforms, canopies and track alignment through the station.

During the closure, Northern will operate rail replacement buses on all affected routes.

Network Rail and Northern will be informing passengers about changes to train services in the coming weeks.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

TBC