

Current and future bus services in Greater Manchester

GMCA, Housing, Planning & Environment
Overview & Scrutiny Committee
18 October 2017



Bus services in Greater Manchester

- Since October 1986, Greater Manchester has had a deregulated bus market
 - Around 81% of current mileage is operated on a commercial basis
 - For these services, bus operators set the routes, timetables, fares, frequencies and quality standards
 - The remaining 19% of services are financially supported by TfGM. These are services or journeys where there is a social need, but which aren't provided by the commercial market
 - This means the bus system is not planned or marketed in an integrated manner, with a focus on competition between services (bus and other public transport), rather than with car
 - While TfGM currently has no direct control over the commercial bus network we do monitor commercial services to assess performance which in turn helps inform our discussions with operators regarding poor performance to bring about positive change
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Tendering process

- TfGM puts out to tender the vast majority of subsidised services
 - Subsidised services are designed in-house to fill the gaps left by the commercial services including those which are withdrawn
 - TfGM also subsidise some school buses and have acquired 93 yellow school buses which have pupil, school and parent contracts
 - TfGM also procure Demand Responsive Transport services for areas of low demand or where transport provision is “challenging”, using community transport operators under special provisions in the 1985 Act
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Legal and political structure

- Services usually need to be registered with the Traffic Commissioner giving 56 days notice
 - The Traffic Commissioner for the North-West, Simon Evans, retains responsibility for granting operating licences and subsequently ensuring operator compliance in standards of maintenance and punctuality
 - Where necessary, he is able to take punitive measures following a public inquiry against operators who fail to comply ranging from financial penalties to reductions in the number of vehicles they can operate up to revocation of operating licences in serious cases.
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TfGM bus statistics

- Bus journeys represent 80% of all public transport trips
 - 19% of mileage operated in Greater Manchester is subsidised, carrying around 20m passengers
 - Contracts:-
 - approx. 263 ordinary bus services
 - approx. 349 school services
 - Metroshuttle (Manchester, Bolton and Stockport)
 - 93 Yellow School Buses
 - Other services include the provision of flexible transport including Demand Responsive and Community Transport
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Service performance & monitoring

Contracted services are subject to an intensive monitoring programme to ensure value for money:

- a. **Bus Stations** – bus Station Supervisors carry out subsidised monitoring
 - b. **Punctuality, Reliability & Monitoring Surveys (PRMS)** – provides a further 100,000 subsidised observations per year
 - c. **Revenue Monitoring** – revenue checks are carried out on contracts where TfGM takes the revenue risk
 - d. **Custom Monitoring** – a wide range of monitoring is used to investigate problem contracts and customer comments
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Service performance & contract management

- Financial deductions are made when service delivery is not at the required level
- Should standards not be improved, further action up to and including termination can be taken
- Furthermore, the performance of all operators is now being monitored in order to provide a supplier rating score
- This is a ranking process which aims to improve quality levels across the network. Some operators who fail to meet the minimum criteria will be unable to tender for new contracts until their performance improves



Working with highway authorities

- As part of the Network Management Duties under the Traffic Management Act the 10 Highway Authorities within Greater Manchester have an obligation to properly secure the expeditious movement of traffic and improve reliability.
 - Where necessary they should work with the Traffic Commissioner and bus operators to formulate and implement improvement plans for bus punctuality
 - TfGM works with districts and bus operators to minimise the impact of disruption on the highway network
 - This involves:
 - Reviewing the impact of traffic management proposals on the operation of the bus network
 - Working with Districts to address operational ‘Hotspots’ and develop proposals to enhance bus performance
 - Seeking to mitigate the impact of roadworks where possible
 - Seeking to secure appropriate gritting to keep buses moving during periods of severe weather
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Further roles and responsibilities of TfGM (Bus)

- Provision of a local concessionary fare scheme and reimbursement to operators for this and the national concessionary scheme, resulting in a spend in the order of £60m
- Provision of high quality bus stations across Greater Manchester for which departure charges are collected from operators, used by around 80m passengers annually
- Provision of publicity and information to promote bus travel across the network via leaflets, bus stop publicity and 15 TfGM Travelshops which sell £14m in ticket sales
- Provide 12,200 stops and over 4,400 shelters and other appropriate infrastructure to promote access and security for passengers and operators
- Monitoring and promoting public transport across the area



Green Bus Fund

- DfT funding has supported the purchase of 101 environmentally-friendly, diesel-electric hybrid vehicles which fall into 3 categories:
 - General Network Buses – 27 vehicles to be used on contracts providing Monday-Sunday subsidised services
 - Yellow School Bus – 52 vehicles
 - Metroshuttle – 22 vehicles operating on the 3 routes which comprise the free Manchester city centre service
 - The above fleet is supplemented by 3 fully electric vehicles that operate on the Manchester Metroshuttle.
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Transport for
Greater Manchester

Devolution and the future of bus services in GM



'Our Vision for Bus'

Transport Strategy 2040 Principles and Themes

ONE NETWORK - *an integrated multi-modal public transport system*

SIMPLE FARES AND TICKETING - *a simplified and integrated fares system across all modes*

CUSTOMER FIRST - *a great passenger experience*

VALUE FOR MONEY - *efficiency to enable further investment*

The case for change

- An effective GM growth strategy needs certainty and integration across local transport offer to widen labour markets and maximise labour market participation
 - Bus travel needs to attract greater patronage and play a key role at the heart of a fully integrated, efficient and effective wider transport system
 - A single coherent identity for transport in GM would ensure simplicity for commuters and improve the visitor experience
 - A model is needed to achieve these outcomes, combining the best of the public and private sectors, in-keeping with the GM growth and reform agenda
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The Bus Services Act

- On 27 June 2017, a new law, the Bus Services Act, commenced
- The Act provides Greater Manchester with new powers to reform the bus market, to help achieve the transport objectives in the 2040 Transport Strategy
- The powers include new types of partnership and the option to franchise bus services
- On 30 June, Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) instructed TfGM to prepare an assessment of a proposed franchising scheme and compare it to other options



Enhanced Partnership

This includes new options for creating partnerships with operators.

A Local Transport Authority (LTA) could work with bus operators to set standards for local bus services such as:

- Ticketing
- Branding
- Services frequencies
- Vehicle specifications

Enhanced partnership schemes are voluntary and go ahead with sufficient support from bus operators, in agreement with an LTA.

They cannot specify ticket prices or compel operators to provide services.

Bus Franchising

- The Bus Services Act grants the newly elected Mayor of GM the power to franchise bus services, should he choose to do so and subject to public consultation
 - This is the system that is currently used in London
 - Services would be run by private operators under contract to TfGM
 - TfGM, on behalf of the Mayor, would determine the routes, fares, frequencies and set the quality standards for all services
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Customer information

- The Act requires bus operators to make information about local services available in audio and visual displays while on board
 - This could mean electronic signage and audio announcements about next stop and onward travel
 - This is designed to improve accessibility
 - This will bring buses in-line with Metrolink and the Metroshuttle buses
 - The Act requires data on routes, timetables, punctuality and fares to be made 'open'
 - This creates new opportunities for tech companies to bring innovative products, improving customer information
 - *NB* – DfT have yet to undertake a consultation on the details, such as the implementation timescales, associated with this
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Next steps

- The GMCA has instructed TfGM to prepare an assessment of the franchising scheme that can be compared with options that include both partnership and franchising options
 - TfGM has now requested a range of information from bus operators who run local services within and into Greater Manchester
 - The information requested includes such things as the number of journeys run, passenger numbers and fare structures
 - As we prepare the assessment, we'll also be engaging with bus operators to consider and assess other realistic options available to improve bus services, including new types of partnerships
 - This will give us a more detailed understanding of the local bus market to enable us to prepare the assessment of a proposed bus franchising scheme
 - The outcome of this will provide the elected Mayor with the information to make an informed decision on future reform of the bus market
 - We are still awaiting publication of further statutory regulations and guidance. The regulations will allow TfGM to ask operators for additional information to inform the assessment process.
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