TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE METROLINK AND RAIL NETWORKS SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2017 AT MANCHESTER TOWN HALL

Councillor David Chadwick Bolton
Councillor Stuart Haslam Bolton
Councillor Dzidra Noor Manchester
Councillor Christine Corris Stockport
Councillor Tom Grundy Stockport
Councillor Doreen Dickinson Tameside (in the Chair)
Councillor Michael Cordingley Trafford
Councillor Lynne Holland Wigan

IN ATTENDANCE:

Alex Bray Cross Country
John Fryer Head of TravelSafe & Demand Management, TfGM
Chief Inspector Andrea Graham British Transport Police (BTP)
Jenny Hollamby Governance & Scrutiny, GMCA
Victoria Mercer Metrolink Team, TfGM
Colin Parr TravelSafe Manager, TfGM
Amanda White Head of Rail, TfGM
Caroline Whittam Rail Programme Manager, TfGM
Matthew Worman Northern Rail

MR17/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Azra Ali (Manchester), Councillor Chris Goodwin (Oldham), Councillor Roger Jones (Salford), Councillor Peter Robinson (Tameside) and Councillor Julie Reilly (Trafford).

An apology was also received from Daniel Vaughan (TfGM).

MR17/26 CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair welcomed representatives from TfGM and the train operators to the meeting.

There were no items of urgent business for the Sub Committee to consider.
MR17/27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

MR17/28 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 27 OCTOBER 2017

The minutes of the meeting of the TfGM Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub Committee, held on 27 October 2017 were submitted.

Arising from minute MR17/16 Local Rail Service Performance and Stations Update bullet point 8, a Member reported that the toilets at Bolton station where still out of use. The operator advised that that they had been repaired but unfortunately they were broken again. The estates team was going back out tonight. The Member was reassured that they would be repaired as soon as possible. Post meeting note: following the recent Network Rail assessment of the proposed May 18 timetable a further cycle of service development is required. This will be complete at the end of January 2018. Following this TfGM officers will be able to provide a full update to Members on the final agreed May 2018 timetable. Further to this, corridor by corridor travel plan advice will be prepared in collaboration with the operators.

Arising from minute MR17/16 Local Rail Service Performance and Stations Update bullet point 17, a Member asked when the briefing note to show what services would look like for passengers and the changes within each local authority would be available. It was advised that a service change would be provided at the next TfGM Committee on 12 January 2018.

Resolved/-

That the minutes of the meeting of the TfGM Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub Committee on 27 October 2017 be approved as a correct record.

MR17/29 METROLINK SERVICE PERFORMANCE

The TfGM Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub Committee considered the report of the Head of Metrolink that set out the operational performance summary for Period 7 (17 September 2017 – 14 October 2017).

The following items were highlighted:

1. In response to overcrowding experienced by passengers, two additional double trams had been deployed in the busy morning peak on the Altrincham line. This was a permanent addition to the Altrincham to Etihad service. An additional two doubles would be deployed to the Bury to Piccadilly service by the end of the year.
2. On 10 November 2017 a low speed collision occurred between two trams at St Peter’s Square stop. There were no injuries reported and only minor damage was caused to both vehicles. An initial investigation indicated that this could have been as a result of the wet weather affecting tram braking distances. An investigation into the cause of the collision was underway, the results of would be referred to the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB). All services were halted for 26 minutes. This action was taken to ensure even headways across the network when services were reinstated.

3. Patronage and revenue continued to grow. October 2017 patronage was 3.8m, a 14 per cent rise since October 2016.

4. The Second City Crossing received awards in the Environment and Sustainability and also the Construction and Engineering categories at the Light Rail Awards. Metrolink’s response to the Manchester Arena attack was also recognised at the awards. The Second City crossing also won the Construction and Engineering Project of the Year at the National Transport Awards.

5. Ahead of the fare increase in January 2018, an online ticket pricing tool was currently live on the TfGM website.

6. A campaign to encourage passengers to travel in quieter times was launched on 13 November 2017. It was hoped this would help ease capacity issues during the festive periods, traditionally the busiest time of the year.

7. Following the Mayor’s commitment to increase the presence of security staff on Metrolink, the TravelSafe unit operating hours had been extended. Extra resources would be deployed at evenings and at the weekends. Details would be presented by the TravelSafe team later in this session.

8. The Ticket Machine back office infrastructure had been successfully upgraded, increasing the capacity to process card payments.

9. There were six major disruptions lasting 30 minutes or more in period 7. These incidents included four infrastructure faults and one medical emergency. On the 1 October 2017 a protest in St Peter’s Square inhibited the operation of tram services during the Conservative Party conference.

10. Excess wait time (EWT) for period 7 was 116 seconds. Work was underway with TfGM and KeolisAmey Metrolink (KAM) officers to improve infrastructure issues which lead to high EWT. KAM was implementing a new timetable in January 2018. This would increase operational efficiency and lead to a lower EWT. A piece of work was being undertaken on customer facing data.
11. In Period 7 operated mileage was 99.40%.

12. 98.2% first and last compliance was achieved in period 7. Although this was slightly less than in period 6, it still represented a very high level of performance.

13. Lift and escalator availability remained stable at 96% for period 7. It was reported that the lift at Piccadilly was back in service and a behavioural change campaign would be undertaken. The lift at Bury was still out of service, extensive work was required and a longer term plan was being considered.

14. Although dipping slightly this period, vehicle reliability remained at a high level.

15. Ticketing queries accounted for over a quarter of all customer contacts in period 7. A high number of complaints regarding the on stop ticket machines were received but the overall trend remained positive.

16. The customer journey experience survey was a newly introduced mystery shopper style survey. The survey which had been ongoing since period 2, was being undertaken by an independent contractor. Member feedback was requested.

17. In period 7 across the network the proportion of TravelSafe Operators (TSO) deployed by line mostly exceeded the proportion of anti-social behaviour (ASB) observed by line. The Oldham - Rochdale and Airport lines continued to have the highest incidence of ASB reports.

Members raised the following questions and comments:

1. A Member asked what adverse weather preventative measures were in place. Officers explained that a full winterisation plan was in place, which included looking at the forecast to direct resources, keeping overhead lines free of ice and daily conference calls to the operator. Members were reassured that TfGM were prepared.

2. A discussion took place about capacity, overcrowding and what plans were in place to accommodate usage. It was reported that services were under continuous review, increased frequencies and timetabling were being considered and a business case for additions trams to increase capacity was being worked up. In addition, the timetable change in 2018 would bring the airport service into the city and both platforms at Altrincham would be used.

3. Bicycles were not allowed on trams. However, this morning a Member said a passenger on her tram had written permission to allow him to take his bicycle on the tram. Officers advised that this was unusual and agreed to look into the matter and email all Members with the outcome.
4. A Member asked and Officers agreed, to provide him with information about delays by Metrolink stop as he wanted to compare Stretford with other stops.

Resolved/-

That the performance of Metrolink services be noted.

MR17/30 LOCAL RAIL SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND STATIONS UPDATE

The TfGM Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub Committee considered the report of the Head of Rail that informed Members of local rail service performance and station matters within Greater Manchester and its travel to work area for heavy rail in periods 7 and 8 (17 September – 11 November 2017).

The Head of Rail presented the item to Members and drew out the following points from the report:

1. Network Rail delay minutes across its Manchester Delivery Unit (MDU) increased significantly in period 7, both for infrastructure and other delay. Total delay minutes fell in period 8 and were marginally favorable to target.

2. The earlier onset of autumn than in recent years and arrival of Storm Aileen on 12/13 September 2017 contributed to increased leaf-fall and associated delay minutes due to poor rail conditions. Further disruption was caused by Hurricane Ophelia on 16/17 October 2017 and Storm Brian on 21 October 2017.

3. Train operating companies’ performance in Greater Manchester declined over the two periods. Averaged across the six TOCs, PPM in period 7 declined by 4.4% on period 6 and was 6.4% worse than recorded in period 7, 2016. Further declines in performance were recorded in period 8.

4. Work was almost complete on the Ordsall Chord, with services expected to be operational from December 2017. An official opening of the infrastructure took place on 9 November 2017.

5. On-going North-West Electrification works were taking place over the autumn, entailing weekend and late night bus replacement on some routes. A blockade of the line between Preston and Blackpool North/South would result in Manchester and Manchester airport services starting/terminating at Preston, with onward replacement bus.

6. Industrial action by Northern conductors over its proposed Driver Controlled Operation (DCO) plans took place on 8 November 2017. Northern managed to deliver over 52% of its usual services on these
days. TfGM continued to work with stakeholders to mitigate the effects of this action by ensuring contingency plans are in place across all modes.

7. Clarifications had been made to the services to be delivered in the December 17 timetable, following delayed construction of works for Phase 4 Electrification (Manchester to Preston).

8. Confirmation of Network Rail pathing approvals for various May 2018 timetable enhancements was expected on 17 November 2017. This included services along the Bolton corridor, which TfGM had been instrumental in seeking to protect and enhance.

9. TfGM staff attended the ACoRP Community Rail Awards in Derby on 5 October 2017, in which there were wins for Hindley and Heaton Chapel stations. TfGM’s Small Grant Fund for station ‘Friends Of’ groups and Community Rail Partnerships were now up and running and helping with various station improvement projects across the area.

Members raised the following questions and comments:

1. A Member asked in terms of the Wales and borders franchising, would the service to North Wales be compromised and had Arriva submitted a bid. It was explained that the service would be discussed as part of the 2026 picture. The operator advised that after analysis, it was not commercially viable to continue with their bid.

2. A Member requested that they were provided with regular updates about the Bolton/Preston electrification. The Member also asked if the foundations problem been solved. Officers advised that a briefing about the new process for the foundations had been circulated. A new technique had been found. The root cause of the problem, would be shared with Members.

3. A Member stated that communication with council officers and the public was poor at Moses Gate. It was explained that work was in hand, a notification to residents had been distributed. Members would be provided with a briefing.

4. A discussion took place about leaf fall and the impact on services. It was reported that a seasonal delivery specialist was available. However, the problem was predictions as autumn came early this year. Preparations and planning would improve next year.

5. It was clarified that there would be 13 extra new TransPennine Express services between Manchester and Edinburgh/Glasgow per week.

6. Regarding the West Coast Partnership, it was explained that this was the renewal of the franchise, Virgin was a bidder and the Blackpool service would be considered.
7. Members raised their concerns about poor performance and asked Officers and operators to unpack the issues. Officers explained that performance monitoring initiatives and how performance could be improved was an area that could be refocused. A deep dive of the issues would be undertaken. Operators acknowledged that performance needed to improve across Greater Manchester and agreed to present plans at a future meeting.

8. A Member asked what was being done to prevent future fatalities. A recent incident had left passengers at an unknown stop with no travel planning information. Officers explained that they had requested a review of the system.

9. Members asked why some stations received a better service than others. Officers reported that work was underway with partners to address the issues. In terms of the data in the report, operators acknowledged that it was unhelpful and a deep dive would be undertaken on how the scores were produced.

Resolved/-

That the report be noted.

MR17/31 TRAVELSAFE PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Resolved/-

That the report be noted.

MR17/32 TRAVELSAFE PARTNERSHIP PRESENTATION

Members received a presentation from the Head of TravelSafe & Demand Management and TravelSafe Manager, TfGM, which covered:

1. Context – active travel and travel choices.
2. Active travel and travel choices - what we do.
3. A developing area over the last seven years.
4. Progress to date.
5. Who we work with.

The Chair thanked officers for an excellent presentation and suggested that work be undertaken in schools should be reported more widely. Another Member recommended that some school children were ashamed of the way a small number of children behaved on public transport. The Member suggested that exemplar pupils be used to instigate behavioural change.
A discussion took place about people using the trams who were inebriated. Members were advised that it was best to get these people home safely and at high risk times, more security would be provided.

Resolved/-

That the presentation be noted.

MR17/33 BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE PRESENTATION

Members received a presentation from the BTP detailing their work.

1. It was explained that in light of tragic recent events, project Servator had been launched, which detailed how the police work covertly and overtly to reduce terrorism. Specialist response units had been increased and would be based in Manchester and Birmingham in 2018.

2. A Member enquired about emergency telephone numbers at stations. It was reported that a freephone number was available but the more useful tool was the text number as there was somebody responding to texts 24 hours a day. The number could be used for a response or report intelligence. Numbers were visible at category A main line stations.

3. A Member raised a concern about how relationships with community groups would be built on a mobile transport network. It was explained that the traditional policing framework would be used as a bed rock and then introducing it in a new neighbourhood situation. Team Leaders had been designated an area, which would link with the local area and schools.

4. A Member asked what a dry station was. It was noted that this was a train that did not permit alcohol.

The Chair and Members thanked the Chief Inspector for an informative presentation and welcomed the work in this area.

Resolved/-

That the presentation be noted.

MR17/34 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 2 February 2018 at 10.30 am, Manchester Town Hall.

The Chair closed the meeting, thanking all for their attendance and wished everybody at Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.