TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE METROLINK AND RAIL NETWORKS SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 APRIL 2018 AT MANCHESTER TOWN HALL

Councillor David Chadwick Bolton
Councillor Stuart Haslam Bolton
Councillor Azra Ali Manchester
Councillor Dzidra Noor Manchester
Councillor Chris Goodwin Oldham
Councillor Roger Jones Salford
Councillor Christine Corris Stockport
Councillor Tom Grundy Stockport
Councillor Doreen Dickinson Tameside (in the Chair)
Councillor Peter Robinson Tameside
Councillor Michael Cordingley Trafford
Councillor June Reilly Trafford

IN ATTENDANCE:

Emma Stonier Governance & Scrutiny, GMCA
Daniel Vaughan Head of Metrolink, TfGM
Mark Angelucci Rail Performance Officer, TfGM
Robert Fickling Rail Team, TfGM
Owain Roberts Rail Team, TfGM
Daniel Coles Network Rail
Lucja Majewski Transpennine Express
Vicky Cropper Northern Rail

MR17/43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Lynne Holland (Wigan).

MR17/44 CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

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

MR17/45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
There were no declarations of interest made in relation to any item on the agenda.

**MR17/46 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2018**

The minutes of the meeting of the TfGM Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub Committee, held on 2 February 2018 were submitted.

**Resolved/-**

That the minutes of the meeting of the TfGM Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub Committee on 2 February 2018 be approved as a correct record.

**MR17/47 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 10 (10 December 2017 – 6 January 2018) and Period 11 (7 January 2018 – 3 February 2017).

The following items were highlighted:

- TfGM had made a commitment to the Mayor to publish performance data and periods 10, 11 and 12 were available on their website. This was in a slightly different format to the data received by the sub-Committee; and
- The Firswood and Failsworth lifts had been returned to service in period 12. The Bury escalator remained out of service and repairs were expected to be completed in May 2018. Additionally the lift at Besses o’th Barn was out of service due to storm damage and TfGM hoped this would be back in service within the next couple of weeks. Alternative plans had been put in place for those with mobility issues.

The Head of Metrolink also provided a verbal update on performance in Period 12 as performance in this period had been particularly challenging. Key items highlighted were;

- On 19/20th February Overhead Line Equipment (OHLE) had failed at Bury and most of the network had been badly affected. This occurred during the evening peak and continued to effect the Bury line until the following morning;
- The Oldham and Rochdale line had been out of service for two days due to the bad weather and snow affecting the ability to get trams through;
- A spate of signalling problems at Victoria had caused problems across the network;
- A lineside fire at the Anchorage stop had caused the Eccles line to be suspended and had affected services;
• KAM was committed to improving passenger communications following incidents and plans were being implemented regarding this;

• The incidences of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) particularly the recent serious incident at Freehold on the Oldham and Rochdale Line. Members were informed that GMP had now apprehended some of the offenders. Extra security staff and PCSOs had been put on the network and lots of work was underway with the Travel Safe Partnership about safety on the network. GMP was also supporting this with community police officers;

• Funding for up to 27 new trams had recently been announced and this should improve capacity on the network and enable more doubles to be run across the network.

Members hoped that lessons had been learnt from the performance issues experienced in period 12.

The Chair highlighted incidences of ASB on the network and noted they supported the need for guards on the trams. Members of the sub-Committee also supported this. The public perception of the safety of Metrolink and the need to reassure the public about action being taken to tackle ASB was also highlighted by Members. TfGM stated that Metrolink was intended to be an open, light rail network. Work was underway to tackle ASB and more was being done to deploy customer services representatives, security staff and policing support to the most appropriate places and locations. Analysts have also been recruited to assist with informing intelligence led deployment. It was further noted that over the last few weeks staff had begun to be deployed across the network in the evening and that improvements in the number of incidences of ASB had begun to be seen.

Members discussed the possibility of raising a motion with regards to staffing on trams if the levels of ASB on the network did not further improve. TfGM stated that anecdotal feedback from operators across the UK suggested that this was being experiences across other light railway networks and was a national issue. TfGM and the operator were also committed to tackling this issue and reducing ASB through a joined up, community approach, working with all relevant organisations and local communities.

A Member noted driver availability in relation to lack of service in section 3.6 and asked whether there were particular issues relating to this and whether any further action had been taken. TfGM confirmed that there was not a staffing issue with drivers and that this availability had predominantly been in period 10 due to Christmas leave and that in the most recent period this had not been an issue. It was also asked what ‘third party’ incident meant. This was confirmed as covering a number of issues, such as cars on track and roadworks near Metrolink lines.

Resolved/-

That the performance of Metrolink services be noted.
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 10 and 11 2017/18 (10 December 2017 – 3 February 2018).

The Rail Programme Officer presented the item to Members and drew out the following points from the report:

- Periods 10 and 11 had seen an improvement in performance but performance remained below that of the corresponding period in 2016/17 and for all six operators the moving annual average (MAA) had dropped over the two reporting periods;

- Network Rail were investigating whether any action could be taken to reduce the effects of external factors on services. Work was underway with the Samaritans and mental health services regarding reducing the of fatalities across the network;

- Delays due to ongoing emergency speed restrictions at Northenden Junction (5mph) continued but it was expected that speed restrictions would be lifted shortly. Network Rail confirmed they would find out when these should come to an end;

- Short-forming of services continued to be an issue in GM. Northern continued to experience unit availability issues resulting in short-formations in 4.8% of its North Manchester services. This was continuing in period 12;

- An independent audit had recently been undertaken of Northern’s service quality self-audits and Rail North was currently analysing the results of this;

- Electrification work will continue to take place across weekends throughout the spring and summer. Replacement bus services will be in operation on Bolton/Preston/Wigan, Ashton/Stalybridge and Rochdale services and a four day blockade was due to take place over Easter at Manchester Victoria;

- A blockade will take place at Stalybridge station from 14th – 29th April. Replacement buses will be in place and tickets accepted on Metrolink services;

- Industrial action over Driver Controlled Operation continued by Northern Conductors and strikes took place on 26 and 29 March;
• TfGM continued to support the Cheshire’s Best Kept Station Awards. The most recent awards were held on 23rd January and winning GM stations included Stalybridge for the ‘TravelWatch North West Award’; and

• Line of Route Data was included in appendix C, some of the worst performing routes were; Southport/Bolton/Airport, Blackpool/Victoria and the Liverpool/Warrington/Manchester Oxford Road stopping service.

A Member asked for more detail with regards to the incident in section 3.2 of the report and asked whether this was due to aging signalling. Network Rail confirmed this incident had been due to a failed locomotion at the Heaton Norris junction and a signaler error allowing a train to go through the junction following this. This was currently under internal investigation. It was also confirmed that the type of freight train involved would not routinely use this route.

Members noted the 69% benchmark for cleanliness in the Northern Performance: Service Quality audit and stated that this figure was not particularly high for an issue which could have a potentially negative impact on passenger satisfaction. Members were informed that Northern had reached this benchmark and the station audit result for period 11 for cleaning was 97.5%. An independent audit had been carried out recently and Rail North were analysing these results currently. It was also noted that Northern were fulfilling their franchise obligation in relation to this.

A Member asked when the retail units at Bolton Station were expected to be open. Northern confirmed that these should be open towards the end of June and that clarity over timescales would be provided. Additionally it was queried whether there was retail opportunity for units on platforms 14/15. Members were informed that the commercial opportunity of these had been reviewed but it was felt that this space was not viable for a retail unit. Discussions were taking place about opening this up as a community space presently.

Members raised the delay in electrification on the Bolton-Preston line and whether there was a date for the completion of these works. Network Rail apologised for the delay in these works. The Sub-Committee had previously been updated on the construction/ground delays, additionally the liquidation of Carillion had also delayed these works. A revised work programme was in development and Network Rail would update the Sub-Committee once more information regarding timescales was available. Network Rail would also let Members know when it was expected weekend works on this line would be completed.

A Member stressed concerns about the reduction in services from Bolton – Manchester Airport and queried what this meant for passengers. In the interim period there will be one an hour plus the Barrow service. TfGM was also engaging with key stakeholders regarding individual service specification and co-ordinating a cross industry Bolton corridor capacity and connectivity
working group. It was asked whether elected Members would be on this group and confirmed that at present they were not.

A Member asked whether there was a strategy in place to improve performance on the Liverpool-Warrington Central-Manchester Oxford Road line. It was confirmed that work was taking place to identify a preferred service option on this line; once this had been agreed a proposal would be submitted to the Department of Transport (DfT). This work was being undertaken in partnership with Mersey travel and Warrington. TfGM officers advised they would meet with the relevant Member to discuss this further.

Members highlighted that the number of short-formations on the North Manchester corridor was not acceptable. TfGM were currently looking into the possibility of compensation for Bolton Season Ticket holders, alongside Transport Focus and the Mayor’s Office.

Members raised the issue of accessible stations; out of 96 stations across Greater Manchester approximately a third were accessible. Members were notified that the Mayor had asked the Capital Projects Group to review the list of proposed stations to be made accessible. The Northern policy to book taxis for customers to the nearest accessible station was also highlighted. Members also asked which stations would receive investment under this franchise. Northern stated that the station improvement fund focused on those stations with low football which had not undergone improvements during the last franchise. The accessibility review was welcomed by Members.

A Member highlighted train capacity at Levenshulme station. More capacity was expected at this station later this year once the new electric were in service.

A Member asked whether there was an alternate car park at Mills Hill station whilst works were underway. There wasn’t currently an alternative in place but TfGM were in discussions with Oldham and Rochdale Councils regarding temporary arrangements.

A Member asked about the detail of Network Rail’s spending priorities over the next 12 months. Network Rail release high level output statements and then allocate this accordingly. For older infrastructure there is a renewals process in which priorities for GM are looked at.

Members noted TPE performance remained adverse to target and asked when they expected to hit target. TPE targets are set either by Rail North/Network Rail and some are included in the franchise. TPE aim to hit this target and it is set high in order to assist with increasing performance. During the last periods there had been a lot of issues impacting performance, including severe weather, and TPE were working with Network Rail regarding major incidents to assess what could be put in place to improve performance.

Members stated that further information was required regarding the timescales for and routes of the new rolling stock being introduced across the
network by TPE. Members were informed that new trains were currently being tested and expected to be in service at the end of this year/early next year. Electric services will operate additionally on Macclesfield – Preston/Blackpool and Wigan – Alderley Edge services. Members noted the need for new trains to be put into service on the lines which most required more capacity.

A Member thanked Network Rail and Northern for the work to put planters in at Levenshulme on 10th October. There had been 30 people involved including Councillors and this had been welcomed in the neighbourhood and had helped improve the ambience of the station.

A Member raised the issue of the waste transfer facility proximate to Newton Station and asked whether any further action had been taken regarding this. Network Rail informed Members that a meeting was due to be held about ways to resolve this issue. Network Rail would write a letter to the Member with further detail.

A Member noted that the CCTV cameras at Flowery Field station were not directed towards the ticket machines. It was confirmed that card only machines were going to be introduced at this station and it was hoped that this would reduce costs incurred due to vandalism.

Members passed on their congratulations to the stations in Greater Manchester which had received awards at Cheshire’s Best Kept Station Awards.

Resolved/-

That the report be noted.

MR17/49 MAY 2018 TIMETABLE UPDATE

Members received a presentation from Owain Roberts, TfGM, which provided an update on the May 2018 timetable. The timetable was expected to be published six weeks before it came into effect. Members were informed that TfGM would also be happy to answer any follow up questions outside of this meeting. These changes will be in place until the electrification works are completed on the Bolton corridor. Members thanked officers for updates they had received via formal meetings and offline relating to the May 2018 timetable.

Comments and questions from Members included the following;

- The loss of connectivity at Bolton, especially to Southport, and how passengers were disappointed at this timetable. It was noted that this was an interim timetable change and capacity at Bolton would be maintained. Additionally a lot of work had been undertaken to try and maintain capacity along the core Bolton-Manchester corridor;
• The decrease in services at Heaton Chapel and Levenshulme, at stations which were already experiencing a lack of capacity, and the gap between services was highlighted. Work needed to be done to advise passengers about alternative travel arrangements. Officers highlighted that these were interim measures and that capacity should increase on this line later this year; (December 18 TT change)

• The uneven service patterns of the Manchester Piccadilly-Buxton line were highlighted and it was asked whether this would mean less high peak trains at Davenport and Woodsmoor. It was confirmed that this was the case;

• That members of the public may be put off travelling via train due to the nature of some of the timetable changes.

Resolved/-

That the presentation be noted.