TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUS NETWORK AND TFMC SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2018 AT THE MECHANICS INSTITUTE, MANCHESTER

PRESENT:

Bolton
David Chadwick (LAB)

Bury
Noel Bayley (LAB)

Manchester
Naeem Hassan (LAB)

Manchester
John Leech (LIB DEM)

Rochdale
Phil Burke (LAB)

Rochdale
Patricia Sullivan (CON)

Salford
Robin Garrido (CON)

Salford
Roger Jones (LAB) (in the Chair)

Salford
Barry Warner (LAB)

Stockport
Annette Finnie (CON)

Tameside
Peter Robinson (LAB)

Trafford
Steve Adshead (LAB)

Wigan
Mark Aldred (LAB)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Alison Chew
Interim Head of Bus, TfGM

Nick Roberts
Head of Service and Commercial Development, TfGM

Mike Evans
Management Accountant, TfGM

Allan Sparrow
Governance & Scrutiny, GMCA

ALSO PRESENT

Guy Warren
First

Ben Jarvis
Stagecoach

Adam Clark
Stagecoach

Bob Dunn
Diamond

Nigel McKinney
MCT
BN/18/122   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

BN/18/123   CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

There were no Chair’s announcements or urgent business.

BN/18/124   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

BN/18/125   MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2018

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2018 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED/-

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2018 were approved.

BN/18/126   FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO THE BUS NETWORK PART A

Nick Roberts, Head of Service and Commercial Development, TfGM, presented a report which informed Members of the changes that had taken place to the bus network since the last Sub-Committee meeting. In addition to reporting on consequential action taken or proposed by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM). The report sought guidance from Members on proposed TfGM action.

Members were informed that a report would be submitted in January concerning the tenders to be released in April.

A member welcomed the proposed changes to the V1 Service which would see additional services to the Monday to Friday peak periods to mitigate congestion. He added that these changes were needed and once the major road works affecting the Manchester & Salford IRR were complete that these additional services remained. The member also informed the Sub Committee that the Ellenbrook Estate was still facing problems with commuters parking on local roads and causing difficulties for local residents.

A member commented that at the last meeting consideration had been given to the possibility of sharing the costs associated with maintaining bus services during highway improvement schemes to the contractor and TfGM undertook to examine this possibility. TfGM responded that they would be happy to provide a response on this question under Part B of the agenda.

Members welcomed the decision to introduce additional services on the 451 and 462 from 9 December 2018.
RESOLVED/-

1. That the changes to the commercial network and the proposals not to replace the de-registered commercial services as set out in Annex A be noted.

2. That no action be proposed in respect of changes or de-registered commercial services as set out in Annex A.

3. That the emergency action taken as set out in Annex B and Annex C be noted.

4. That the proposed changes to existing general subsidised services 451, 462 and 590 as set out in Annex C be approved.

BN/18/127 BUS NETWORK PERFORMANCE 2018/19 MID-YEAR

Alison Chew, Interim Head of Bus, TfGM introduced a report that informed members of the observed operational performance of the GM bus network during the 2018/19 mid-year period (October 17 to September 18) and compared it against the level achieved in the previous financial year (2017/18).

The following matters were raised on the report:

- A member asked if operators were planning to improve fleet profiles as the report was suggesting that while GM awaited the outcome of a bid to central government for funding for new vehicles the network fleet profile would remain relatively static.

  TfGM responded that page 52 of the report outlined individual operator performance which included break-down figures.

- A member referred to paragraph 2.12 of the report regarding the frequency of services and passenger expectations. The member added that passengers more than anything else just wanted services to arrive even if they were late. A member commented that the table produced in the report to reflect network performance 2018/19 Mid-Year was confusing. More analysis was needed and the figures broken-down further. This should include detail on the start time of those bus services that do not get back in time to restart the journey. A member also asked if operators had spare vehicles they could use to manage these issues. A comment was made that the punctuality figures from operators were 3% to 4% higher that TfGM’s figures and what was the reason for this.

The Sub Committee was informed that major highway schemes such as the Manchester/Salford intermediate ring road had a significant impact on punctuality. Therefore operators needed to get the start point for journeys right and then look to slow down journey times.
• A member referred to the fact that often service 18 to Rochdale was often curtailed without notice to passengers at Middleton and could the operator provide a reason for this

First reported that they would look into this issue but felt it was not a regular issue and it should be borne in mind that some services were scheduled that way.

• Reference was made to paragraph 2.12 of the report on frequent services and the regularity of services in comparison to their expectations. A member asked what was meant by highway management interventions to achieve minimum standards.

• A member asked if the age of bus fleets impacted on bus breakdown figures and were GM’s figures similar to national figures

• The Sub Committee discussed start point and intermediate point punctuality figures and asked how accurate these figures were and how they were compiled

• Members asked what TfGM were doing to encourage operators to bring vehicles up to the latest engine emission standards

Stagecoach responded that although they had made no new investment they were aware of the new air quality standards soon to be in place and older vehicles that did not meet new carbon dioxide standards would be removed. A member highlighted the fact that it was essential to get people out of cars and on to public transport and it would require everyone to work together to achieve this. There was now a need to build confidence in the public’s perception of public transport.

Stagecoach added that it now had low carbon certified vehicles which addressed Nitrogen Oxide pollutants to Euro VI standard.

A member highlighted the fact that many bus drivers while waiting at stops kept their engines running and asked if operators could remind drivers not to do this. Stagecoach responded that systems on their buses monitored idle time and drivers were offered bonuses if they brought idle figures down.

• A member asked operators if they had experience blocked bus lanes due to illegal parking when entering Bolton town centre. He informed operators that Bolton MBC was looking to investigate the use of traffic enforcement cameras on bus lanes and it would be useful if operators could keep the Council informed of any difficulties drivers encounter

First responded that they were experiencing problems on the bus lane on St Anne’s Road in Bolton chiefly due to vehicles loading and undertook to record future issues. TfGM added that TfGM would work with district councils that were experiencing bus lane issues.

• A comment was made that in recent times there had been an increase in anti-social behaviour towards bus drivers and what help would TfGM offer to operators. There had also been assaults on passengers and work was needed to ensure people felt safe when...
they travel. Members were informed that work on addressing anti-social behaviour was taking place through the Travel Safe Partnership. Regular discussions were taking place with operators to report such instances and TfGM would be working with GMP to identify “hot spot” areas and monthly health and safety meetings were also taking place with operators.

- A matter highlighted problems passengers were having with the FirstBus app. He reported that often when buses were running very late they disappeared off the app. Furthermore the app did not indicate if a bus was running late and how long it would be to reach the bus stop. The member asked why the operator did not show that a service was delayed.

First responded that app times were best estimates and it was reliant on the driver reaching a number of specified bus stops at the correct time. The issue of buses falling off the app should not happen and First undertook to investigate this. A further comment was made that bus operator apps do not say a bus was running late as it operated on real time information. The app would only give a time for the bus to reach the stop. However the issues with app needed further consideration as it had an impact on TfGM’s app.

- A member asked if operators intended to increase fares from January 2019. Operators confirmed that there would be a fares review in January 2019. Members asked that operators provide information on any proposed fares increase as soon as possible and in writing.

The Chair informed the Board that improvement to the public transport network was a priority for the GM Mayor and working closely with TfGM improvements needed to be made. TfGMC wanted a good relationship with bus operators particularly regarding the major issues to be faced going forward i.e. the GM Clean Air Plan. The Chair appealed to bus operators to communicate with members when they felt strongly about an issue. It was the role of members to develop public transport across GM but TfGMC needed the views of operators. He highlighted the fact that members would like to know operator views on major issues and encouraged operators to communicate to members the Sub Committee could then influence decision-makers i.e. the GM Mayor and ten District Leaders.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the report be noted.

2. That operators be requested to provide the January 2019 meeting of the Sub Committee information regarding their proposals for introducing increased fares in 2019 (and if possible in advance and in writing).

BN/18/128 SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICE PERFORMANCE 2018/19 MID-YEAR

Alison Chew, Interim Head of Bus, TfGM submitted a report informing members of the performance of the subsidised bus and Local Link network for the mid-year 2018/19 period (October 17 – September 18), drawing comparisons with the performance levels achieved in the 2017/18 financial year.
A member referred to the impact on cost per mile and the number of passengers per mile when a subsidised service goes from every 10 to every 30 minutes and in particular if such changes had made a positive impact.

Consideration was given to the lost mileage and contract breaches table and a member asked in terms of lost mileage what was acceptable. Comments were also made about the number of contract breaches as this meant services had not been provided. In response it was reported that this could be down to issues of timetabling, road works etc. Regular contract meetings were held with operators regarding these problems.

A member referred to the impact a change in operator and timetable changes and how were such changes communicated to the public. TfGM responded that this required bespoke communications and this was something that members could get involved with. MCT felt it would be helpful if publicity was used to announce when a new operator was taking on a subsidised service. MCT always operated a week of grace when taking on a new contract and honoured tickets bought on other operator vehicles.

A member highlighted a number of issues with the subsidised services operated by Rosso in the north of the conurbation. Transdev outlined a number of operational issues they had been facing and these issues were now being resolved and since August services had improved.

**RESOLVED/-**

1. That it be noted that the subsidised bus network patronage for the 2018/19 Mid-Year period had slightly decreased to 20.04 million, however average patronage loadings had increased due the disproportionally larger fall in the number of scheduled departures.

2. That the high operational performance and environmental standards of the subsidised bus network, compared to equivalent network wide levels be noted.

3. That it be noted that the subsidised bus declared lost mileage performance (0.51%) has marginally exceeded the industry minimum standard (0.5%) for the 2018/19 Mid-Year period.

4. That it be noted that the performance of Local Link remains stable, but patronage has decreased in proportion to reductions made to the services.

**BN/18/129 REVIEW OF SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES BUDGET**

Members received a report which provided an update on the current position of the 2018/19 subsidised bus services budget.

**RESOLVED/-**

That the update on the current position on the 2018/19 subsidised bus services budget be noted.
BN/18/130 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED/-

That in accordance with Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting at this juncture for the following business on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule of 12A of the Act.

BN/18/131 FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO THE BUS NETWORK

Members’ received a report which provided further details about the commercial information relating to the proposed changes to the existing general subsidised services and the emergency action taken by TfGM.

RESOLVED/-

That the financial implications of forthcoming changes to the bus network be noted.