TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER (TfGM) COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUS NETWORK AND TfGM
SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2019 AT THE
FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, 6 MOUNT STREET, MANCHESTER M2 5NS

PRESENT:

Councillor David Chadwick    Bolton
Councillor Noel Bayley      Bury
Councillor Naeem Hassan    Manchester
Councillor Howard Sykes    Oldham
Councillor Phil Burke      Rochdale
Councillor Patricia Sullivan   Rochdale
Councillor Roger Jones    Salford (Chair)
Councillor Barry Warner   Salford
Councillor Annette Finnie  Stockport
Councillor Peter Robinson  Tameside
Councillor Mark Aldred    Wigan

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Alison Chew               Interim Head of Bus, TfGM
Nick Roberts             Head of Service and Commercial Development, TfGM
Mike Evans               Management Accountant, TfGM
Martin Shier             Bus Partnerships Delivery Manager, TfGM
Nicola Ward              Governance & Scrutiny, GMCA

ALSO PRESENT:

Alistair Nuttall        Arriva
Guy Warren              First
Ben Jarvis              Stagecoach
Adam Clark              Stagecoach
Matt Rawlinson         Diamond
Paul Turner            Rosso
BN/19/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Robin Garrido, Steve Adshead and John Leech. Apologies were also received from Nigel McKinney (MCT).

BN/19/02 CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

RESOLVED /-

That officers from the GMCA and TfGM discuss how notification of forthcoming changes can be communicated more effectively to Local Authorities.

BN/19/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

BN/19/04 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2018 were submitted for approval.

Members discussed a number of issues arising from the minutes, including the issues with the First Bus app, the discounted tickets purchased through the app and the need for early discussions in relation to potential fare increases.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2018 be approved.

2. That it be noted that First Bus agreed arrange to meet with Councillor Noel Bayley to discuss how their app can be further improved.

BN/19/05 FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO THE BUS NETWORK PART A

Members considered the report of Alison Chew, the Interim Head of Bus, which informed Members of the changes that had taken place to the bus network since the last meeting, in addition to reporting on consequential action taken or proposed by TfGM. The report also sought guidance from Members on proposed TfGM action.

At its annual meeting on 15 June 2018, the TfGM Committee agreed that the Bus Networks and TfGM Services Sub-Committee was to consider all matters relating to the operation and service performance of the bus network in GM, including commercially registered and subsidised service, demand responsive services, bus stations and bus stops, passenger
information services, contract monitoring; vehicle standards, and passenger safety for the subsidised bus network.

Acting under delegated authority, the Sub-Committee was tasked to review closely and approve all proposed changes to the subsidised bus network and ensure that the cost of the subsidised general services was kept within the appropriate budget or any cash limits. This was achieved through:

- Rationalisation of existing services whilst maintaining key links on the network.
- Engaging with operators with the objective of them taking on ‘marginal commercial’ services.
- Continuing to redesign and restructure grouped services to ensure that maximum value was obtained from subsidy.

In general, withdrawals, reductions or amendments to services were currently only planned at the date of next renewal of the contract concerned and proposed changes would be reported to this Sub-Committee.

The governance process that led up to the reporting to the Bus Network & TfGM Services Sub-Committee involved the scrutiny of all tendered services by TfGM’s Tender Panel, which consisted of representatives from legal, procurement and finance as well as operational service planning and network performance.

The following comments were noted:

- Members requested that the earlier route for the 38 service to Logistics North be brought in as soon as possible and promoted as widely as possible.
- Members were informed that the diversion of the 415 to avoid a low bridge is serviced by another service to ensure minimal impact to passengers.
- Members were informed that the removal of the 9.16am service on the 458 route was removed due to no passengers before 9.56am.
- Changes to the 482/483 services had been mitigated through better coordination of the 479/487 and 483 service, but these changes will be monitored by TfGM.
- A member raised concern about passengers being missed by the 593 service.
- Concern was also raised in relation to the system announcements on the V1/V2 services.
- Members requested that the changes planned to the 168 service be reviewed as these changes effect a number of wards in multiple boroughs. It was confirmed that the frequency of the 168 service had been increased to mitigate the withdrawal of the 169 service. Stagecoach were aware that communications need to be clear to ensure a successful patronage increase and ensure plenty of lead time for discussion on future significant commercial changes.
- Members raised the confusion caused by re-numbering the 540 service to number 7. It was confirmed that this was due to a re-brand of the Stagecoach Wigan network and that any changes would be strongly communicated through a range of channels including leaflets, the travel app, and twitter.
• Officers reported that Diamond bus would be taking on the new tender for the 575 service.
• Concern was raised over the re-routing of the number 12 service. However Stagecoach confirmed that this was as a result of declining patronage and a reduction in service was viewed as the best option. TfGM confirmed that they had tried to mitigate against a service withdrawal, but would review these changes.
• A member expressed thanks for the extra 312 service.
• Members were informed that the cost per passenger of the 129 service on an evening and weekend had resulted in withdrawal. However, TfGM would further review.
• Thanks were expressed in relation to additional peak time services for the number 412.
• A member informed the committee that there had been a number of complaints in relation to the withdrawal of the 538 service, however Rosso commented that this was due to route clashing on the timetable and low levels of patronage. TfGM offered to further discuss this service change, and review with Rosso.
• Changes to the 408/412 services were welcomed.

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 it be noted that Stagecoach agreed to investigate the 593 service which failed to stop for passengers at Wigan Town Hall, and provide feedback to Councillor Mark Aldred.

4. That it be noted that First Bus agreed to investigate the issues with failing service announcements on the V1 and V2 buses and feedback to Councillor Mark Aldred.

5. That the proposed action is taken in respect of changes or de-registered commercial services as set out in Annex B.

6. That it be noted that Stagecoach agreed to provide copies of communications regarding the changes to the 168/169 service to Councillor Peter Robinson and Councillor Naeem Hassan.

7. That it be noted that TfGM agreed to ensure all changes to the bus services as agreed by the committee are published on their website as soon as possible.

8. That it be noted that Stagecoach agreed to provide a set of maps on the Wigan network (specifically changes to the 540 service) to Councillor David Chadwick.
9. That the proposed changes to existing general subsidised services as set out in Annex C be approved.

10. That it be noted that Stagecoach agreed to provide information on changes to the 7 service to Councillor Peter Robinson.

11. That it be noted that Stagecoach agreed to take on board comments that local Councillors would like increased consultation on significant changes.

12. That it be noted that members would request that TfGM review the planned changes to the route of the number 12.

13. That it be noted that TfGM would monitor the impact of the changes to the 129 service and review if further action is required.

14. That it be noted that Rosso agreed to review whether changes could be made to Lancashire United Service number 1.

BN/19/06 SUPPLIER RATING UPDATE

A report was presented by Martin Shier, Bus Partnership Delivery Manager that provided an update on the most recent supplier rating rank.

TfGM’s supplier rating came into effect on 1st February 2012 and introduced a quality threshold to the tendering process for subsidised bus services with the aim of improving service delivery to the customer and improving the attractiveness and perception of bus travel.

The rating was calculated using criteria centred on service delivery, which accounted for 60% of the available score, as well as other indicators of professional competence and the provision of contractual data to TfGM.

The performance of TfGM’s school and general bus network contracts were recorded separately each quarter, with scores in each of the 13 measures weighted to reflect their relative importance to the customer and TfGM.

The results were then aggregated with those of the three previous quarters to produce a moving annual average for each operator which, in turn, enabled operators to be ranked in terms of their overall performance.

Since its inception, supplier rating had influenced operators to make changes to improve their service quality and delivery and, in turn, their supplier rating.

The results for quarter 2 for the general network operators were detailed in Appendix A of the report and those for TfGM’s school operators were in Appendix B of the report.
Further details around individual operator results would be provided in Part B of the meeting.

The Chair of the sub-committee asked operators how they felt we could improve the quality of bus services in GM. Rosso commented that they had felt held to account through the performance management framework, but appreciated the feedback and were confident they were improving. Diamond added that the last 12 months had been difficult but performance had improved following the investment of additional vehicles and they would be challenged by the supplier rating report to improve further.

Another member of the committee asked bus operators what plans they were implementing in support of the aspirations of the Clean Air Plan and 2040 Transport Strategy. Rosso reported that they had been making investments into Euro-6 compliant new vehicles, and were retro-fitting through supporting funding.

The Chair further added that it would be useful for all Operators and members of the TfGMC Bus Network Sub Committee to meet in February/March to ensure everyone was fully briefed on the Clean Air Plan and could actively contribute to its development.

**RESOLVED/-**

1. That the report be noted.

2. That it be noted that TfGM would invite all members of the Bus Network and TfGM Services Sub Committee to a briefing on the Clean Air Plan in February/March 2019.

BN/19/07 REVIEW OF SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES BUDGET

Mike Evans, Management Accountant at TfGM updated Members on the current position on the 2018/19 subsidised bus services budget.

The report informed the Committee on the annualised cost of the general subsidised services network as at 30 November 2018, summarised changes in costs over the previous two, eight and 12 month periods to November 2018 and the current position against the 2018/19 subsidised services budget.

The following observations were noted:

- That the current budget was on target.
- A member asked for a breakdown of General Bus Service Costs, and it was reported that the majority of this budget was in relation to contract costs and subsidised service costs.
- If any member had further questions that these could be sent direct by email to TfGM.

**RESOLVED/-**
1. That the update on the current position on the 2018/19 subsidised bus services budget be noted.

2. That it be noted that TfGM agreed to provide information to Councillor Annette Finnie as to the proportion of the General Network Costs that support staff costs at TfGM.

BN/19/08    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 paragraphs 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule of 12A of the Act.

It would not be, on balance, in the public interest to disclose this information to the public and press.

BN/19/09    FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO THE BUS NETWORK PART B

Consideration was given to the report of Nick Roberts, Head of Service and Commercial Development that provided further detail to Members on the commercial information relating to the proposed changes to the general subsidised service.

RESOLVED/-

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

BN/19/10    SUPPLIER RATING UPDATE

Members considered the report from Martin Shier, Bus Partnership Delivery Manager that provided an update on the most recent supplier ratings ranking.

RESOLVED/-

That the report be noted.
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