TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE METROLINK AND RAIL NETWORKS SUB-COMMITTEE
HELD ON 1 FEBRUARY 2019

PRESENT

Bolton
  David Chadwick (LAB)
Bolton
  Stuart Haslam (CON)
Manchester
  Eddy Newman (LAB)
Manchester
  Dzidra Noor (LAB)
Stockport
  Steve Gribbon (LIB DEM)
Stockport
  John Taylor (LAB)
Tameside
  Warren Bray (LAB)
Tameside
  Doreen Dickinson (CON)
Trafford
  Michael Cordingley (LAB)
Trafford
  David Hopps (CON)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Danny Vaughan
  Head of Metrolink, TfGM
Victoria Mercer
  Metrolink Service Delivery Manager, TfGM
Caroline Whittam
  Acting Head of Rail, TfGM
Mark Angelucci
  Rail Officer, TfGM
Emma Stonier
  Governance & Scrutiny, GMCA

ALSO PRESENT

Lucja Majewski
  Transpennine Express (TPE)
Gervase Vallely
  Transpennine Express (TPE)
Aline Frantzen
  KAM
Raj Chandarana
  Northern
Daniel Coles
  Network Rail

MR19/01    APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Councillor Adrian Alexander (Oldham) and Councillor Lynne Holland (Wigan).

MR19/02    CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair welcomed representatives from TfGM and the train operators to the meeting.
### MR19/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

### MR19/04 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2018 were submitted for approval.

A Member highlighted that the assurance received from Northern around gaps in service to Heaton Chapel at the last meeting appeared not to have been resolved as these still remained in the service pattern.

Members stated that as far as they were aware announcements on Metrolink about priority seating had not been introduced and asked when they were expected to begin. TfGM will look into this and report back regarding timescales.

A Member thanked TfGM for the series of meetings which had taken place around the increase in frequency of the Ashton Metrolink service and asked whether an extra camera could be installed to monitor the junction at Market St, Droylsden. TfGM stated currently there were mobile cameras in place and they were working to identify funding, which could be used to install a permanent camera.

Members asked what progress had been made in relation to resolving issues arising from the introduction of the penalty fare regime, as they were aware of cases where customers had been unfairly treated. Northern had been made aware of issues and stated that customers were able to appeal the fine. They were aiming to respond sympathetically when there were genuine cases of people unable to purchase a ticket before travelling. The need for better wayfaring and signposting to ticket machines was also highlighted.

Members asked whether driver training for new trains had commenced. Northern confirmed that training had begun this week and that this would be rolled out in phases over the coming months.

**RESOLVED/-**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2018 be approved as a correct record.

### MR19/05 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 8 (14 October 2018 - 10 November 2018) and period 9 (11 November 2018 – 8 December 2018).

Victoria Mercer, Metrolink Service Manager, TfGM introduced the report and highlighted key aspects including;
Patronage continued to rise in November and December with annual rolling patronage to the end of December 2018 reaching 42.8 million. The Airport and East Didsbury lines have shown the highest growth in patronage over the last 12 months.

Operational performance remained strong. There had been a couple of incidents including a van on the tracks at Brooklands and the barrier at Navigation Road. The second city crossing had been closed multiple times over the Christmas period due to congested roads and heavy pedestrian traffic around the Christmas Markets. TfGM were meeting with Manchester City Council to look at next year’s planning to identify improvements to reduce these incidents.

The number of complaints about ticket vending machines continued to decrease following the introduction of the Tamper Prevention trial and a programme to fit anti-tamper measures to the entire TVM estate has been developed, and will be rolled out, over the coming months.

15,000 ‘Early Bird’ and ‘Early Bird Plus’ tickets had been sold during the scheme, with a significant increase in the number of passengers using the app. TfGM were analysing customer feedback and considering proposals around launching a long-term version of this scheme/initiative.

Three men were jailed for a total of more than 10 years for their part in a series of thefts from Metrolink ticket machines in December 2017.

The launch of the ‘zonal’ ticket machine had been successful and Metrolink/TfGM have received positive feedback from customers regarding this.

Services on the Ashton Line had doubled from 28 January and TfGM will continue to monitor the impact of this increase in services.

Byelaw powers will come in on 4th February 2019 with consideration of how best to use these taking place currently. This also included work with partner organisations about implementation of these.

Event planning was being reviewed and a more detailed report will be considered at the TfGM meeting in March.

On New Year’s Eve a vicious attack in Victoria station resulted in two Metrolink passengers and a British Transport Police officer being stabbed. Metrolink Travel Safe Officers acted bravely in restraining the attacker who was then arrested by BTP.

The Chair passed on their appreciation to TfGM and Metrolink staff for the successful introduction of zonal ticketing. Members had also received positive feedback about the new zonal system.

Members commended the Travel Safe Officers for their response to the attack at Victoria station. Members also asked whether there could be a gesture from Metrolink to the injured passengers, whilst recognising that they wanted to remain anonymous. Metrolink were hosting a small event, to which the victims had been invited, and the relevant officers. Metrolink will also pass on the Committee’s commendations and thanks to the Travel Safe Officer’s.

A Member highlighted the network problems on 30th January 2019 and asked what contingency plans Metrolink had in place for incidents of cold weather which impact the network. The incident referred to was a points failure at Navigation Road, shared with Network Rail who had advised that trams could not pass through. It was stated that Metrolink
needed to work better with Network Rail to ensure a swifter response time. Additionally, there had been a points failure at Timperley and this was being investigated further as the failures occurred at the same time. Response time had also been impacted by traffic congestion resulting from the bad weather.

Members asked how often TVM machines were emptied and how regularly they were monitored to identify whether they had been vandalised/broken into. TVM's were emptied on a regular basis. Technology monitors the TVMs constantly and all are covered by CCTV and trigger an alarm system if they are broken into.

Members queried how it was intended to police the behaviours outlined in the ‘Metrolink Monsters’ campaign. The primary targets of the campaign initially were stated as being smoking, alcohol, activating the emergency handle and swearing. Since the 1st January Metrolink had fined approximately 50 people, the majority for smoking. Customer Service Representatives and Travel Safe Officers will be responsible for reinforcement as part of their fare evasion work. The Committee stated it was important that there was visible signage outlining what was acceptable behaviour. This was being worked on currently alongside conditions of carriage to ensure that the changes were properly implemented. Metrolink will step up reinforcement of the byelaws after 4th February.

A Member asked for an update on progression towards the rollout of cashless ticket vending machines (TVMs). The cashless trial was going to be rolled out across more TVMs over the coming months. Additionally, the technology for contactless payments on trams was currently in test mode and it was expected that this would be rolled out by the end of 2019.

A Member asked what possession meant in relation to complaints categories. The Committee were informed that this referred to when the network was shut down for maintenance/engineering works.

A Member queried whether there was a concessionary/group pass for Metrolink which could be used for school trips. TfGM informed Members that there was a ticket available for school trips and that organisations needed to contact TfGM directly, through customer services, to apply for this.

Members asked whether the possibility of monthly tickets, bought through the ‘get me there’ app, renewing on an automatic basis, had been considered. TfGM had looked at this but currently it was not a priority. It was recognised that the app was the most flexible way to buy tickets and a suite of options to enhance it were being explored.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the Metrolink Service Performance update be noted.

2. That a letter was sent to the TSO's involved from the MRN Committee.
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 8 and 9 (14 October, 2018 – 08 December, 2018).

Mark Angelucci, Rail Officer, TfGM, introduced the report and highlighted key aspects including;

- Period 10 was not included within the report but this saw the reintroduction of timetables and an improvement in train performance. TPE had split the Leeds – Manchester stopping service at Huddersfield and had increased turn-around times at Manchester Airport, both of which had positively impacted performance.
- Performance in periods 8 and 9 had also been impacted by Autumnal track conditions.
- Northern Industrial Action was set to continue until Saturday 16th February 2019. Driver availability on Sunday’s also continued to impact on services.
- The most significant infrastructure failure to affect GM was weather related speed restrictions and 9 out of the top ten delay causing incidents were attributable to Network Rail in period 9.
- Route crime increased from period 8 to 9 including trespass incidents.
- Work was continuing around interventions and improvements to the method of working on platforms 13 and 14 at Manchester Piccadilly.
- The Moving Annual Average (MAA) for all train operating companies in GM had decreased, with TPE being the worst performing operator.
- In period 9 the total number of full and part cancellations in North and South Manchester by Northern had been 701 (10% services). 491 of these had been in North Manchester. Additionally, 1322 Northern services were short-formed in the North Manchester Service Group in this period (26% services). Most of the short-forming was caused by vehicle availability issues. Routes in North Manchester experienced some of the worst leaf fall and rail head conditions and are also served by the units most susceptible to wheel damage.
- TPE performance had declined from a MAA of 86% at the start of the franchise to 75.2% currently. TPE had also witnessed high numbers of cancellations in these periods. Timetable robustness was being reviewed as a significant amount of TPE delay was caused by other train operators.

The Chair stated that the performance figures outlined in appendix D were disappointing. The Chair also thanked Mark Angelucci for organising the recent Community Rail event which recognised the amount of work volunteers carried out to make improvements at stations.

Members highlighted the reputational risks that the rail industry was suffering in GM due to poor performance and asked whether this was having an effect on patronage. TfGM continued to survey city centre stations around patronage. TfGM used to receive data on patronage but this is now submitted to the Rail North Partnership. TfGM continued to request access to this data. Northern stated that patronage data was currently being reviewed and that it was hoped they would be able to report back on patronage at the next Committee meeting. Promotional work around usage of the railways will also be considered once the system was in a more robust position.
Members asked whether there was any progress towards resolution of industrial action between Northern and the unions. Northern stated that discussions were needed with the RMT around the safety critical offer. Work was also underway with ASLEF around a deal for train drivers.

A Member questioned what the response demographics for the Transport Focus survey were. The full report was available on the website which had the detail of people surveyed. The sample was fairly small and measured a passenger’s journey on that day. The survey took into account different demographics and journey types to get a representative sample.

The need for additional platforms at Manchester Piccadilly to ease congestion on that link was highlighted.

A Member queried the reasons why short-forming of services was higher on the North side of Manchester than the South side. The negative impact on passengers and later services was also emphasised. Concerns about the number of these services operating through Bolton were also stressed and it was hoped that the introduction of electric trains would impact positively on services.

It was noted that the PPM target for Northern and Transpennine Express had reduced from 90% to 80% and it was asked which organisations set these targets. Members were informed that some of the targets were contractual, set by the Rail North Partnership, and others were set for operators by Network Rail. It was also highlighted that targets were cyclical and changed throughout the year.

A Member asked for assurance around ending the use of bus replacement services for night train services to Bolton, once new timetables were introduced. Network Rail will always need access to the railway for maintenance but did want to reduce the amount of bus replacement services in future. Furthermore, Network Rail still had work to complete in Bolton and once these had been completed, the use of buses in the evening should reduce.

The timetable changes in Mossley were highlighted as being confusing and constituents had complained about changes to services. It was asked whether TfGM could provide a timetable which showed future train times from Mossley to Huddersfield and Manchester. It was confirmed that a timetable could be provided which showed services from now until May 2019, when the next timetable change will be introduced. The 2 services per hour is compliant with the TSR and the May 2019 timetable was also now in the public domain. The split TPE Leeds-Manchester service was also highlighted as having a positive impact on capacity at Mossley.

A Member asked for reassurance that Heaton Chapel would see the reinstatement of services in the next timetable change. Northern had put forward a bid into the system operator regarding this, but it had been felt that at this time the reintroduction of services to the timetable would not be robust enough, due to other timetable routes in that area. The Williams Review will be looking at how train operating companies and Network Rail can be more collegiate in timetable planning to try and ensure a better balance between inner-city
services and stopping services. It was also stated that options were being looked at regarding the reintroduction of services at Heaton Chapel in the December 2019 timetable.

A Member stated that the rail screen/tannoy had not been working at Heaton Chapel. Northern would investigate this issue and report back. The Member also stated that better signage was required for the ticket machine at Heaton Chapel, as customers needed easy access to the promise to pay fund when required.

A Member highlighted the support the Airport Trust Fund had provided for funding a ‘Men in Sheds’ project to produce replica signage for train stations. TfGM had also part funded this.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the Local Rail Service Performance and Station update be noted.

2. That Northern report back on patronage data at the next meeting.

3. That the out of service rail screen/tannoy at Heaton Chapel be investigated.

MR19/07 TPE PERFORMANCE

Gervase Vallely, TPE, provided a presentation to Members on TPE Performance. This provided the Committee with information about actions TPE was taking to improve their performance.

Members asked who was responsible for making the decision to use platforms A and B on platform 13/14 at Manchester Piccadilly. The control officer/signallers make this decision and communicate this to station staff. Network Rail had also been undertaking a lot of work around the management of platforms 13/14, working with Northern and TPE, and this had resulted in improvements in platform management over the last six months.

Members asked what the timescales were for new TPE rolling stock being in service. It was expected that new rolling stock would be introduced from May 2019 onwards and training plans for staff were currently being worked through.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the presentation be noted.

2. That the slides be circulated to the Committee.

MR19/08 FUTURE MEETING DATES

The next meeting of the Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub Committee would be held Friday 5 April 2019.