

TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUS NETWORK AND TfGM SERVICES SUB COMMITTEE, HELD ON 25 AUGUST 2017 AT MANCHESTER TOWN HALL

PRESENT:

Councillor David Chadwick	Bolton
Councillor Noel Bayley	Bury
Councillor Chris Paul	Manchester
Councillor Phil Burke	Rochdale
Councillor Barry Warner	Salford
Councillor Annette Finnie (Substitute for Councillor Robin Garrido)	Salford
Councillor Tom Grundy	Stockport
Councillor Rob Chilton	Trafford
Councillor Mark Aldred	Wigan (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Guy Harkin	Chair of the Capital Programme & Policy Sub Committee
Howard Hartley	Head of Bus, TfGM
Alison Chew	TfGM
Jenny Coates	TfGM
Sam Tysoe	TfGM
Steve Annette	GMCA
Jenny Hollamby	GMCA

ALSO PRESENT:

Alastair Nuttall	Arriva
Adam Clark	Stagecoach Manchester
Ian Humphreys	First Manchester
Bob Dunn	Diamond

BN/18/17 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Warren Bray (Tameside) and Patricia Sullivan (Rochdale).

BN/18/18 URGENT BUSINESS AND CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Members and representatives from Bus Operators. All attendees were thanked for their attendance at this additional meeting during recess.

A Councillor thanked the Bus Operator Diamond for a quick response to a query raised at the last meeting.

There were no items of urgent business received.

BN/18/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

BN/18/20 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Bus Network and TfGM Services Sub Committee meeting held on 7 July 2017 were submitted.

Resolved/-

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Bus Network and TfGM Services Sub Committee, held on 7 July 2017, be agreed as a correct record.

BN/18/21 FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO THE BUS NETWORK

Consideration was given to a report which advised of forthcoming changes to the bus network.

The Head of Bus, TfGM introduced the item and highlighted an error in the report regarding the 130 service (Manchester – East Didsbury – Macclesfield services detailed in Annex A of the report). It was advised that the second paragraph should read there would be an extension to the service on Saturdays not a removal of the first two Saturday inbound journeys.

A Member thanked Bus Operator First Manchester and TfGM Officers for the productive meetings that had taken place in relation to changes affecting Rochdale.

The following queries were raised by Members in relation to Annex A of the report:

- a) A Member expressed his concern regarding the X35 service and the suggested alternative route. The Member advised that residents had raised concerns about costs, increased journey times and unreliability of the service. The Member had also received representations from an MP about the withdrawal of the unique service. In response, Bus Operator First Manchester advised that the alternative route via bus and Metrolink was not unusual and interchange services were a Metrolink ambition.

However, after considering all options over a period of time, it was uneconomical to continue the service even if customers were willing to pay more. The Head of Bus, TfGM advised that financially it was not possible for TfGM to subsidise the service. Customers were being encouraged to use interchange services and TfGM was trying to make this as easy as possible. In respect of fares, a reduced price ticket for 16 to 18 year olds had being introduce by the GM Mayor, however in respect of multi operator tickets, System One remains the only option until other solutions/options are available.

- b) A Member raised concerns about the 501 First Manchester and 125 Stagecoach service. It was suggested that access to vital services such as doctors' surgeries, schools and supermarkets were now out of bounds for some residents. Concerns were also expressed about ticket prices, reliability, busses running in convey and the Ring and Ride service. In response to residents' issues, the Member suggested that the subsidy used on the night service be used to provide a one bus an hour day service. In response, Bus Operator First Manchester advised that there was only a small amount of people being affected by the change in route, however, more people were benefitting from the high frequency service. TfGM added that alternatives were still be considered and issues with the Ring and Ride services would be addressed through the appropriate channels. In terms of performance, it was highlighted that Dave Alexander had been invited to the next meeting to address Members concerns. It was noted that the 125 service was provided by Bus Operator Stagecoach Merseyside and South Lancashire. Bus Operator Stagecoach Manchester advised that they were aware of the change, however, they had no plans to change their service. The Head of Bus, TfGM agreed to discuss the problem with Bus Operator Stagecoach Merseyside and South Lancashire outside of the meeting.
- c) In terms of the 85a service, a Member was worried about the limited service and the cost of supported services. In response, Bus Operator Stagecoach Manchester advised that following a trial the 85a service had been withdrawn as data had identified a decline in usage compared to the 85 service, which had been explained to residents.
- d) Members further raised their concerns about the Bury depot closure and its affects. A Member also enquired if a bus did not arrive, was the Bus Operator fined. Practicalities such as people being late for school and work were raised and how gaps in service on a daily basis would be addressed. In response, Bus Operator First Manchester explained that staffing issues were not attributable to the closure of Bury depot. All drivers were offered work at other depots. However, a number did leave following the closure, which was not unexpected. The number of drivers had not reduced. The Bus Operator did acknowledge the impact of the closure as a large employer in the area. The closure was to drive efficiencies, there were too many depots for the size of business. Head of Bus, TfGM explained that increased monitoring at bus stations had been undertaken to identify gaps and cancelled services. Messages about

services were shared with passengers. The situation was not ideal and the Bus Operator had been asked to help improve and manage the situation. TfGM acknowledged the Members concerns and reassured the Member that weekly meetings were taking place to address the issues. In terms of fines, it was reported that fines were issued if the service was subsidised.

The following queries were raised by Members in relation to Annex B of the report:

- e) Concerns were raised about the reduction in the direct route 18 service to Manchester Airport and the alternatives suggested, which were not a direct and had increased cost for customers. The Member asked that an extended 19 service or an increased service be provided. Bus Operator Arriva, advised that the section of the 18 service they were withdrawing had lost a significant amount of money. The busiest section was from Sale to the Trafford Centre, from sale the service would continue to Altrincham. Regarding the link to the airport, whilst it was accepted there was no direct route except from the Metrolink, their data did not suggest a bus link was required. TfGM was not seeking to reinstate the route. The Member asked that data was monitored as it might identify a need for an airport link. It was highlighted that the A56 was already congested and Bus Operator Arriva was asked how confident they were they could get services through. Bus Operator Arriva was a confident as they would ever be about running corridor services.
- f) A Member also expressed concerns about the 18 service in terms of affordability of the Metrolink and the potential ticketing costs and issues. Bus Operators were asked to consider that some bus users were not wealthy. TfGM acknowledged the Members comments but advised that TfGM had to work with the services available at the present time.
- g) TfGM was thanked on their work on the Bolton interchange, the Metro Shuttle service was praised. A Member asked when signage would be introduced. It was reported that orders had been placed and a date would be confirmed outside of the meeting.

The following queries were raised by Members in relation to Annex C of the report:

- h) Members had no objection to the rationalisation of services but the alternatives were not acceptable. In response to a request by Members, TfGM agreed to consider the data and report back at a future meeting.

Resolved/-

1. To note the comments raised and approve the changes to the commercial network and the proposals not to replace the de-registered commercial services as set out in Annex A of the report.

2. To note the comments raised and approve the actions in respect of the de-registered commercial services set out in Annex B of the report.
3. To note the comments raised and approve changes to existing general subsidised services set out in Annex C of the report.

BN/18/22 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved/-

To agree that, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public should be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that this involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as set out in paragraph 3, Part 1, Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

BN/18/23 FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO THE BUS NETWORK

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Bus which provided commercial information relating to changes that had taken place to the bus network since the last TfGMC Bus Network and TfGM Services Sub-Committee meeting, or were proposed. In addition, to report on consequential action taken, or proposed, by Transport for Greater Manchester.

Resolved/-

To approve the proposals detailed in paragraph 1 of the report.