TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE METROLINK AND RAIL NETWORKS SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 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 Michael Cordingley Trafford

IN ATTENDANCE:

Emma Stonier Governance & Scrutiny, GMCA
Daniel Vaughan Head of Metrolink, TfGM
Caroline Whittam Rail Programme Manager, TfGM
Aline Frantzen Managing Director, KAM
Daniel Coles Network Rail
Lucja Majewski Transpennine Express
Vicky Cropper Northern Rail

MR17/35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Lynne Holland (Wigan), Councillor June Reilly (Trafford) and Councillor Peter Robinson (Tameside).

MR17/36 CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

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

The Chair extended their thanks to Matthew Worman, Northern Rail, and noted that he had been an asset to the Committee. Vicky Cropper was welcomed to the meeting and it was hoped that the productive relationship would continue. It was highlighted that a recruitment process was underway for this post and that Vicky Cropper was carrying out this role until someone had been appointed to the position.
MR17/37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made in relation to any item on the agenda.

MR17/38 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2017

The minutes of the meeting of the TfGM Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub Committee, held on 8 December 2017 were submitted.

A Member requested an update regarding the incident of a bicycle on a tram which they had raised at the last meeting. TfGM confirmed they had investigated this issue but had been unable to find anything further. It was confirmed that TfGM’s policy was that bikes were not allowed on trams (unless they were foldable bikes) and that there was no exception to this.

A Member noted that Members had not received the May 2018 timetable. It was confirmed that this was still being worked on and that a formal update would be provided at the TfGMC meeting in March.

TfGM informed Members that the Excess Weight Time (EWT) data for Metrolink will be presented by stop at future meetings.

Resolved/-

That the minutes of the meeting of the TfGM Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub Committee on 8 December 2017 be approved as a correct record.

MR17/39 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 (15 October 2017 – 11 November 2017) and Period 9 (12 November 2017 – 9 December 2017).

The following items were highlighted:

1. The number of major disruptive incidents had increased on both periods; these included road traffic collisions, medical emergencies, blocked tracks and signaling infrastructure failures. Performance since December had improved. On 25th November there had been 3 signaling issues which had stopped services across the network for a short time. A lessons learnt exercise had been undertaken particularly around how this was communicated to passengers.

2. 40.8 million journeys had been made on Metrolink in 2017 and patronage had increased by 10.3% overall compared to 2016.
Passengers have made complaints about capacity and options regarding this were being considered. Patronage had increased on all lines, including Bury, in which significant growth had not been expected.

3. 2017 was the first festive period that Metrolink had operated through the Second City Crossing. Services had been impacted by heavy traffic and high pedestrian activity and had been diverted at times. Metrolink will work with Manchester City Council regarding reducing the impact on services for the 2018 festive period.

4. In December Metrolink had experienced a series of Ticket Vending Machines which resulted in a loss of cash and 29 machines being partially or completely out of service. Two people had been arrested and repairs were still ongoing. TfGM are working to reinforce machines and this was highlighted as being one of the biggest customer facing issues Metrolink experience.

5. Two extra double trams have been deployed to the Bury and Altrincham lines to ease over-crowding and stopper services are being used on the Altrincham line to clear confestion when it arises. It was highlighted that it is reaching a point where more trams will be needed.

6. On 28 January 2018 a slightly modified timetable had been introduced. The Airport Service will operate through the City Centre to Victoria, Altrincham trams will operate to Piccadilly and Media City trams to the Ethiad Campus. It is expected that the operation of the Airport Service to Victoria will help ease congestion on this line. Operating hours will be extended on Sundays and dual platform operation will begin at Altrincham.

7. Excess Wait Time (EWT) remained above target and performance had declined from period 8 to period 9. Work was ongoing between TfGM and KAM to improve infrastructure issues which lead to high EWT.

8. Operated mileage was not as high as it had been but remained at 98.5% in period 8 and 98.8% in period 9.

9. First and last compliance had increased from period 8 to period 9 and the increase was mainly due to signaling failures, an incident of tram failure and driver error.

10. Lift and escalator availability had fallen in period 9 to 86.5%. The Firswood inbound lift and Bury Escalator were both out of service for the whole period and remained out of service. The Firswood lift may need completely replacing and this was being looked into currently.

11. Vehicle reliability had dipped slightly at around 30,000 miles but still remained at a high level.
12. The number of complaints increased in period 9, with Service disruption accounting for the largest increase. Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) also increased but remained low compared to the same period last year.

13. The Customer Journey experience survey maintained high scores with overall satisfaction rates of 92% in period 8 and 94% in period 9. The next report to the Committee will present more comprehensive results as more meaningful analysis will be able to be undertaken with six periods of data.

14. Anti-Social Behaviour continued to be a significant problem and TfGM was working with Travel Safe and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to reduce this. The worst affected lines were the Oldham, Airport and Ashton lines.

Aline Frantzen, Managing Director, KAM introduced herself to Members and gave an overview of KAM’s priorities and work they were undertaking. KAM have committed to significant improvements across the network over a period of 18-24 months. The first 6 months of operation had, at times, presented some challenge but KAM had learnt lessons from this. Priorities outlined included:

1. Impact of communications failures;
2. Understanding points failures and working to get these under control. It was noted that periods 10 and 11 had seen improvements;
3. Introduction of a new service pattern which included Airport service running through to Victoria and the introduction of 2 platforms at Altrincham to help reduce the number of shortened services. The next service change is planned for July;
4. Improving Excess Wait Times;
5. Improving communications across the network when services are impacted;
6. Tackling anti-social behaviour and working with local communities on this; and
7. Improving customer facing aspects of the network, for example lift accessibility and ensuring the network is accessible to all.

The creation of 100 jobs since the start of KAM’s contract was highlighted as was the Social Value Charter has committed to get under-represented communities in the workforce and to procure supplier within a 25 mile radius of Greater Manchester. KAM will attend Committee meetings on a quarterly basis.

A Member asked how much cash had been lost through the Ticket Vending Machine (TVMS) break ins. TfGM noted that this had been a significant figure that they would confirm the exact amount to Members. The financial impact of the £20k cost of replacing the machines was also highlighted to Members as was the time taken by staff in assisting with catching the offenders. Members also commented that contactless payment methods being made available on
trams and a move away from cash payments may assist in reducing the impact of vandalism on TVMs. A Member also noted that the TVM at Dane Road remained out of order although not due to vandalism and asked what was being done to resolve this. TfGM confirmed that they were aware of this. Prior to the spate of vandalism stops without working machines had been prioritised; this has been set back slightly but this has been escalated with the contractor and TfGM would prioritise stops where this was having the most impact on customers. Members requested that where TVMS were out of order that there was clear guidance for customers about how they could purchase tickets.

A Member noted the driver error figure of 33% for first and last tram compliance in period 9 and requested more information regarding what this meant. KAM confirmed that this was when a driver left early or late before the first and/or last tram. This was highlighted as being a tight measure with a ‘First’ departure of the day taking place no later than 30 seconds earlier or 3 minutes later than timetabled and a ‘Last’ departure of the day taking place no more than 30 seconds earlier or 12 minutes later than timetabled.

Members commented on the length of time that it was taking to replace the Firswood lift as this had been out of order for 9 months. Officers informed Members that it was expected that the lift would be repaired within the next few weeks. It was also commented that the lift would need completely replacing in time due to water damage. TfGM confirmed they would update the Member regarding a date when it would be back in service outside of the meeting. TfGM also confirmed they would provide an update on when the lift at Failsworth was expected back in service.

A Member welcomed the number of trams in service during recent football matches but highlighted ongoing concerns about the number of double trams in and out of the city centre during events. Members were informed that this would help inform future work planned around events. Members also noted that the safety of tram stops during events needed to be considered.

Members discussed the instances of anti-social behavior and supported work underway to tackle this. It was commented that this should be a priority for TfGM and KAM to ensure passengers felt safe when travelling by tram. A Member highlighted the instances of anti-social behavior at South Chadderton and Hollinwood. Joint working between KAM and the local Council to implement measures to help reduce this was discussed and KAM welcomed this support.

A Member enquired whether there was any way of enforcing use of Metrolink Park and Ride carparks for Metrolink customers only. It was commented that routine checks did take place. KAM also confirmed that some of the areas where instances of this were higher needed to be looked at in more detail.

A Member highlighted complaints received from constituents about the change in the last tram time to Altrincham and an impact on their employment. TfGM confirmed they would look at timetable changes further and KAM also
confirmed that this had been picked up and they were looking into options to mitigate this.

Resolved/-

That the performance of Metrolink services be noted.

**MR17/40 LOCAL RAIL SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND STATIONS UPDATE**

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 period 9 (12 November 2017 – 9 December 2017).

The Rail Programme Manager (Ops) presented the item to Members and drew out the following points from the report:

1. Overall performance in period 9 had been poor with periodic declines for the three largest operators in Greater Manchester: Northern, Transpennine Express and Virgin. Year on year performance for all six operators within Greater Manchester also declined with performance declining more significantly for Northern.

2. Northern continued to suffer lack of unit availability due to a combination of wheelset damage and unit refurbishment; short formations in North Manchester reached 7.1% and frequent overcrowding was reported on Bolton and Calder Valley services.

3. Period 9 infrastructure delays were down but other delays had been caused by overhead electric line damage, trespass, fatalities and signal failures. Incidents outside Greater Manchester continued to have significant impact on both longer distance and local train services in this period.

4. The Ordsall Chord has opened and passenger services began operating along this line on 10 December 2017. December 2017 saw the introduction of additional Sunday services from Manchester – Wigan via Atherton and an hourly stopping service between Manchester and Sheffield. The Manchester – Blackburn via Bolton services were also enhanced to two trains per hour Monday – Saturday.

5. Industrial action had continued by Northern Conductors and further action had taken place on 8, 10 and 12 January 2018. Industrial action had taken place by Cross Country guards on 19, 26 and 31 December. Virgin had cancelled action planned for December.

6. Members will receive a full update on the May 2018 timetable at the next full TfGMC meeting on 16 March 2018.
7. Network have announced delays to the electrification of the Manchester – Preston line due to poor ground conditions. Network Rail will be carrying out additional works at weekends until the end of April. The Preston – Blackpool electrification is expected to finish as planned in May 2018. More details was found in section 5 of the report.

8. TfGM had hosted a Community Rail Event at Manchester Town Hall on 4 December 2017 to recognise the work of Community Volunteers and Stations Friends groups.

9. The Transpennine Express Stalybridge Community room has opened and hosted a series of events in the lead up to Christmas, including activities for families and children and mental and physical health workshops. The Chair noted that there needed to be a signpost to Stalybridge Town Centre from the room. TPE confirmed that they were currently chasing this and it should be in place soon.

10. TfGM undertook rail surveys at the five Manchester City Centre stations during 2017 to assess how well used rail services and stations are, where people travel to and from and for what purposes at different times. This data will be used to inform future planning.

Members enquired about the reporting of failing assets in Northern’s service quality performance audits following the collapse of Carillion. TfGM had asked this question and have been informed that this currently remained the same. TfGM were awaiting information about the longer term impact.

A Member welcomed the introduction of ‘buy on board’ authorisation cards at Manchester Airport. They also highlighted issues with platform signage not being clear for passengers. Members were informed that there was an ongoing wayfinder project taking place at the Airport. Additionally TPE were in the process of changing the platform information screens and signage at platforms and would provide Members with an update regarding timescales.

A Member welcomed the introduction of more trains between Blackburn and Bolton and Atherton. The 7.1% for shortfall formations in North Manchester was highlighted and it was enquired what were the reasons this part of the network was suffering more. TfGM confirmed that they would like this data for other stations across the network but at present the data received did not enable them to provide this. This figure was known due to the problems and issues taking place in these areas.

A Member queried why autumn leaf fall was still impacting performance despite the introduction of the autumn timetable. It was stated that Autumn had started earlier and that consideration was being given to introducing the Autumn timetable a week earlier.

A Member noted that people in Bolton had expressed their concerns about train services in Bolton and also requested an update about when the Moses Gate works would be completed. Network Rail informed Members they would be provided with an update on expected timescale and completion date.
Members asked what was been done to tackle platform dwell times. Northern stated that there was a team looking at this and that they would request more detail for Members.

A Member asked what action was being taken to tackle the worst performing lines. Northern stated they would look into this and provide more information to Members.

A Member commented that the new franchise was two years old and prices had increased for customers yet performance was decreasing. The franchise had committed to improvements at 72 out of 100 stations and it was asked for confirmation as to where station improvements had taken place. Members were informed that a list of station improvement works would be provided. TfGM included current enhancements they are carrying out in appendix D and it was requested that this was also included for Network Rail in the next report to the Committee.

Members highlighted the positive refurbishments carried out at Ashton Station but noted that more seating was required on the platform.

A Member requested information regarding what rolling stock was expected in 2020 compared to 2016 and asked for a timetable of works. TfGM confirmed they would provide this information outside of the meeting.

Members requested an update on the current position relating to rail station refurbishment across Greater Manchester. Further conversations were taking place to assess options and a report was in the process of being compiled by TfGM.

Members highlighted poor performance and noted there were mitigating factors; however it was stressed that action needed to be taken to improve performance across the network. Members were informed that performance summits were taking place with each Train Operating Company on a regular basis. TfGM monitored performance weekly also.

Resolved/-

That the report be noted.

MR17/41 NORTHERN UPDATE ON REFURBISHED TRAINS

Vicky Cropper, Northern Rail, gave a short presentation to Members on new and refurbished trains. 98 new and refurbished trains will start to be introduced on the network from December 2018. New trains will have wifi and be fully accessible. Refurbished trains will have new seats fitted and have fully accessible toilets.
It was agreed that Members would receive a full update regarding the new and refurbished trains, including an outline of the features of the digital train, which was under development in Crewe.

A Member asked about the specification for disabled toilets. Northern confirmed that the team had been developing facilities which conformed to national standards and conversations and consultation had also taken place with disability charities.

Resolved/-

That the report be noted.

MR17/42 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 6 April 2018 at 10.30 am, Mechanics Institute