TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUS NETWORK AND TfGM SERVICES SUB COMMITTEE, HELD ON 9 MARCH 2018 AT THE MECHANICS INSTITUTE, MANCHESTER

PRESENT:

Councillor David Chadwick  Bolton
Councillor Guy Harkin  Bolton
Councillor Noel Bayley  Bury
Councillor Naeem Hassan  Manchester
Councillor Phil Burke  Rochdale
Councillor Patricia Sullivan  Rochdale
Councillor Robin Garrido  Salford
Councillor Barry Warner  Salford
Councillor Christine Corris  Stockport
Councillor Tom Grundy  Stockport
Councillor Warren Bray  Tameside
Councillor Rob Chilton  Trafford
Councillor Mark Aldred  Wigan (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Alistair Nuttall  Arriva
Bob Dunn  Diamond
Dave Alexander  First
Ian Humphreys  First
Phil Medlicott  First
Adam Clark  Stagecoach
Sachin Duggal  Stagecoach
Ben Jarvis  Stagecoach
Nigel McKinney  MCT

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TfGM OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Laurence Bouguechiche  
Jenny Coates  
Michael Del Rosso  
Andrew Heggie  
Steve Gilholme  
Michael Moore  
Nick O'Neill  
Alan Reynolds  
Sam Tysoe

OTHER ATTENDEES:

Charlotte Dobson (Manchester Evening News)  
S Dutson (Member of the public)

BN/18/55 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Fender, Councillor Chris Paul and Councillor Howard Sykes.

An apology for absence was also received from Phil Cummins (Arriva).

BN/18/56 URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Members and representatives from bus operators.

At the suggestion of Members, the Chair had agreed, as urgent business, to allow Members questions to First about their performance. Confidential and commercial discussions would be covered in Part B of the agenda Item 10 – Presentation by First.

Councillor Noel Bayley, following a statement read out at the meeting regarding Firsts’ performance, proposed the following motion.

That the Committee:

1. Believes the performance and reliability of Firsts' bus service across Greater Manchester was inadequate.

2. Demands that First formally apologises to passengers.

3. Calls on First to make significant and demonstrable improvements in its performance and reliability.

4. Requests First to attend the TfGMC Bus Network & TfGM Services Sub Committee in six months’ time to update the Committee on the above.
5. Invites the North West Traffic Commissioner to attend this meeting to discuss how they can best influence operators to deliver the standard of service required.

Some Members suggested it was not the correct forum to question First and proposed that work should have taken place with TfGM Senior Officers and the Chair of the Sub Committee beforehand. Several Members pointed out that First attending the meeting was a culmination of many complaints and various ways had been tried to resolve the issue before this point. Many Officer, Chair and TfGM meetings had taken place, today was a result of many months work. The Chair added that certain issues did need to be answered in public and there would be a further opportunity in Part B of the agenda for commercially sensitive questions. Following the discussion, Members were comfortable with the situation and agreed to support the motion suggested by Councillor Noel Bayley.

Councillor Phil Burke seconded the proposal, it was put to the vote and unanimously agreed by Members.

A question and answer session followed and the main points raised by Members were noted as follows:

- There had been no investment in the fleet or staff. The fleet was shabby and in need of repair.
- Fares went up in January 2018 with little publicity.
- Patronage had decreased, people only used the bus whey they 'had' to.
- The service was poor in comparison with other cities, especially those abroad and compared to other operators in the conurbation.
- Services routes were poor, routes had been cut and services run late, which was unacceptable.
- There was a shortage of drivers.
- First lacked commitment and ambition.
- Firsts’ attendance by Greater Manchester MD at this meeting was poor.
- There were issues with the app and social media.
- Members had been left to deal with resident’s complaints about service. First were not accountable to their customers.
- The company was not fit for purpose.
In response, the First Greater Manchester MD explained that he had attended a number of meetings over the last 12 months but admittedly not all. They were not aware of the motion proposed today but reassured Members that a number of meetings had taken place with TfGM Officers, the Chair and they had spoken to a number of Members. They refuted the comments about their commitment, they felt they had been open and transparent throughout the process. Some of the issues raised would be answered in the commercially confidential section of the agenda. In terms of the fare increase, First advised that it was advertised but accepted lessons had been learned about their marketing and public relation methods. First was unaware of problems with the app or social media and would report that back to their team. They believed it was working correctly but did have the odd glitch. First was in the process of developing their customer services team, some had moved to a centralised team but issues had been eradicated. There had been driver and engineering shortages, they had admitted that. They were 25 drivers short in a single location – Bolton, out of 1,600 posts in Greater Manchester.

Regarding the service changes, there had been some but no significant changes had been made. First had put their house in order and this would become apparent from 8 April 2018. Further discussions would take place in Part B of the agenda.

Resolved/-

1. Believes the performance and reliability of Firsts' bus service across Greater Manchester was inadequate.

2. Demands that First formally apologies to passengers.

3. Calls on First to make significant and demonstrable improvements in its performance and reliability.

4. Requests First to attend the TfGMC Bus Network & TfGM Services Sub Committee in six months' time to update the Committee on the above.

5. Invites the North West Traffic Commissioner to attend this meeting to discuss how they can best influence operators to deliver the standard of service required.

BN/18/57 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

BN/18/58 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2018

The minutes of the Bus Network and TfGM Services Sub Committee meeting held on 19 January 2018 were submitted.
Resolved/-

That the minutes of the Bus Network and TfGM Services Sub Committee, held on 19 January 2018, be agreed as a correct record.

BN/18/59 FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO THE BUS NETWORK

Members considered a report that provided an update about the changes that had taken place to the bus network since the last TfGMC Bus Network and TfGM Services Sub Committee meeting and reported on consequential action taken or proposed by TfGM. The report also sought guidance from Members on proposed TfGM action.

It was highlighted that Annex A of the report outlined changes that the commercial operators made in Greater Manchester where TfGM considered there was no requirement to intervene. Whilst there had been significant withdrawals, some services had been picked up by other operations, which was welcomed. It was pointed out that services V1 and V2 had capacity issues and from 8 April 2018 additional services would be provided at peak times to help address this.

Annex B of the report was where there was a requirement for TfGM to step in as a result of de-registrations. In terms of the withdrawal of the 88 service, it was recognised whilst there were alternatives, there was nothing forthcoming from the market to fill all the gaps. A tender process was undertaken and the recommendation was to divert the 114. Stagecoach was also going to amend the 112 service. TfGM welcomed the opportunity to work with commercial services.

Members appreciated Diamond and Vision agreeing to take up services terminated on 8 April 2018.

The committee was asked to note or agree the changes to the commercial network and the proposals not to replace de-registered services. Questions in relation to the services contained within Annex A (significant changes to the commercial network) of the report, were noted as follows:

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<td><strong>370</strong></td>
<td>The 11a was a considerably longer journey than the direct 370 route. What were the impacts. The current 11a would be changed to run a direct route and the time would be comparable with the 370.</td>
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<td><strong>114</strong></td>
<td>Officers were thanked for their brilliant ideas around this service change. Members were pleased Arriva were listening to Members and had altered the 245 service. The Member requested figures from the operator on how many people use the 18 and 245 between Woodhouse and Ash Lane. Members were happy with the changes.</td>
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Clarification was sought about the 468 and if there were additional services. There were additional services provided by Rosso. Concerns about early morning and evening services had been addressed. A Member advised that he had received a letter from James Frith’s office (MP for Bury North). Hundreds of complaints had been received about First’s unreliable service. It was a vital service for Fairfield Hospital, which was withdrawn at short notice.

The committee was invited to agree the action that was taken regarding the following changed or de-registered services. Questions in relation to Annex B of the report, were noted as follows:

<table>
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<th>468</th>
<th>The Chair thanked all Officers for their work during an intensive time.</th>
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<tr>
<td>X5</td>
<td>A Member thanked officers to for rescuing this service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Service</td>
<td>A Member thanked Officers for work undertaken to address issues with a school bus service in Tameside</td>
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<tr>
<td>Logistics</td>
<td>Officers were thanked for the way they handled the Logistics North Link.</td>
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The Committee was invited to consider Officer’s proposals on the services detailed in Annex C the report. Questions and comments were noted as follows:

| 276 | The reasons for change were understood. However, a Member requested that a trial on the existing times was run to see if passenger numbers increased. |

**Resolved/-**

That Members:

1. Approved 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. Noted that no action was proposed regarding changed of de-registered commercial services set out in Annex B of the report.

3. Approved the proposed changes to existing general subsidised services set out in Annex C of the report.

**BN/18/49  METROSHUTTLE PATRONAGE**

Consideration was given to a report that provided information on performance of the Manchester, Stockport and Bolton, Metroshuttle services during 2017 (January to December 2017).
Resolved/-

That Members noted the report.

BN/18/51 REVIEW OF SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES BUDGET

A report was presented that updated Members about the current position on the 2017/18 subsidised bus services budget.

It was reported that the variance forecast for the year-end would be significantly lower than projected and was mainly to do with timing of expenditure. A Member asked what that variance would be and Officers would provide an estimated figure after the meeting.

Resolved/-

That the report be noted.

BN/18/52 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 involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in the respectively indicated paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

It would not be, on balance, in the public interest to disclose this information to the public and press for the reasons indicated within the reports.

BN/18/62 FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO THE BUS NETWORK

Members considered a report that 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 TfGM.

It was noted that the additional funding required for service provision was not available in the budget and further efficiencies would have to be made in the network.

Resolved/-

That Members approved the proposals detailed in the report.

BN/18/63 PRESENTATION BY FIRST MANCHESTER
A detailed discussion took place, which covered issues such as; commitment; fares; fleet investment; industrial action; service provision; the app and social media; driver issues; finances; patronage; improving performance; timescales and resources. Members were reassured by First that performance improvements would be seen from 8 April 2018 and Dave Alexander, Divisional Director, agreed to attend the meeting again in six months’ time.

Resolved/-

1. That Members noted the presentation.

2. First to attend a future meeting in six months’ time.