TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER COMMITTEE
REPORT FOR INFORMATION

Sub Committee: Bus Networks and TfGM Services
Date: 24 August 2018
Subject: Metroshuttle Performance (2017/18)
Report of: Interim Head of Bus Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform members of the performance of the Manchester, Stockport and Bolton Metroshuttle services during 2017/18 financial year (Apr 17 to Mar 18).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to note the contents of this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Metroshuttle Patronage & Service Performance (2017) 09 Mar 2018
Metroshuttle Patronage & Service Performance 06 Oct 2017

CONTACT OFFICERS

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1. **Manchester Metroshuttle**

1.1 The Manchester Metroshuttle services 1, 2 and 3 are operated by First Manchester through a contract with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM). The services are operated with three electric and seventeen low carbon diesel-electric hybrid vehicles, provided by TfGM with the assistance of Department for Transport (DfT) green bus funding.

### Manchester Metroshuttle Service Contract

1.2 Requirements are included in the contract that place greater emphasis on service quality and provision. These additional measures include:

- Ensuring only drivers with the right skills and attitude are selected and provided with appropriate customer service training;
- Improved levels of supervision and more robust measures to remedy any issues that may arise, particularly during times of peak demand; and
- Introduction of targets and standards for customer satisfaction.

### Customer Satisfaction Survey (Jun 18)

1.3 On behalf of First Manchester, Illuma Research undertake a twice yearly satisfaction survey of the Manchester Metroshuttle service. A total of 1,200 interviews were undertaken (400 interviews on each service) during Jun 18.

1.4 The overall level of satisfaction (Figure 1) with the Manchester Metroshuttle service was recorded at 91.3% (Jun 18) which had slightly increased from the level achieved in Jan 18 (90.6%). There was no significant difference in satisfaction between the three routes. The latest survey indicated that 36% of customers were 'very satisfied' with the service compared to 31% in Jan 17. Only 4% of customers classified themselves as 'dissatisfied' with the existing level of service provision.
Figure 1: Customer Satisfaction (Jun 18)

Figure 2 provides an overview of the level of satisfaction with regards to 22 service provision attributes.

Figure 2: Customer Satisfaction by Attribute (Jun 18)
1.6 The service attributes showing the highest levels of satisfaction (Jun 18) were: -

- Driver attitude (96.0%)
- Safety of driving (95.5%)
- Security on board (93.5%)

1.7 The attributes showing lowest levels of satisfaction (Jun 18) were: -

- Temperature ventilation (75.3%) *(note: High temperature Jun 18)*
- Legroom (74.4%)
- Space for bags, buggies etc. (71.7%)

1.8 Although satisfaction with temperature/ventilation had declined, the majority of service elements (16 of the 22) had experienced an improvement in this survey wave (Jun 18), however some of the changes may have been weather/season-related. Since Sept 10, 18 of the 22 attributes had improved and only three had declined. The biggest deterioration in the level of satisfaction was associated with the upkeep and condition of the vehicles deployed on the service. Most improved areas since 2010 are:

- On-board information (+5.9%)
- Destination display (+5.2%)
- Temperature / ventilation (+4.3%)
- Service punctuality (+3.7%)
- Driver appearance (+3.5%)
- Comfort of seating (+3.4%)
- Driver attitude (+2.9%)

**Patronage**

1.9 The ten year trend in Metroshuttle patronage is presented in Figure 3. Overall Metroshuttle patronage for the 2017/18 (Apr 17 – Mar 18) period was 1,333,626. This represented a slight reduction of 1.9% (25,704) from the 2017 figure (1,359,330) and continued the declining trend in passenger numbers experienced since the 2013 peak, although significantly less pronounced in recent years. It is worth noting however, that the overall passengers per journey has remained relatively stable at 18.8 (2017/18).
At the service level, all three Manchester shuttles have experienced a slight decline in their respective patronage levels (Figure 3 and Figure 4). However, the reduction in passenger numbers was a little more pronounced on Service 1 with a decline of 3.5% (-18,669) from 526,276 during 2017 to 507,607 in the 2017/18 financial year. However, it is worth noting that patronage for Service 1 between 2016 and 2017 declined by 15.6%. In the case of Service 3, usage level had remained relatively stable, with an average passenger loading of 12.8 (2017/18). This has stabilised following completion of the major transformation works within the Regional Centre, such as the Second City Crossing and Bus Priority Package, and the introduction of route revisions in Nov 16.

The Metroshuttle service changes implemented in Nov 16, which involved re-modelling the network and enhancing the attractiveness of Service 3 by re-routing it to serve a number of key trip attractors/generators in the regional centre, has facilitated the stabilisation of the Metroshuttle service patronage following a marked decline in usage between 2014 and 2016, when major city centre works were underway.
1.12 The monthly patronage profile for 2017/18 financial year is presented in Figure 5 along with a comparison with the equivalent figures for 2016/17.

**Figure 5: Metroshuttle Patronage (2017/18 Vs 2016/17)**

1.13 The overall Metroshuttle service patronage (2017/18), on a monthly basis, was of a similar magnitude to the level achieved in the 2016/17 period with the exception of Apr 17, May 17, Jun 17 and Mar 18 where overall passenger numbers had markedly declined. Service 3 passenger growth had contributed to stabilising the overall level of Metroshuttle patronage by outstripping the monthly usage levels recorded in 2016/17 for Service 3 and offsetting the decline in Service 1 and Service 2 passenger numbers. It is also worth noting that the peaks and troughs on each service’s monthly patronage were less pronounced than in 2016/17.

1.14 On average, Service 2 carried the highest number of average passengers per journey of 22.2 (2017/18). The weekday profile of average patronage per journey (2017/18) for each service is outlined in Figure 6. Peak loadings occurred during the 08-09:00hrs period with Service 1 carrying an average of 40 people per journey during this time bracket. Service 3’s passenger loadings exceeded Service 2 during the am peak period, but for all other time periods it carried a significantly lower number.
The 2017/18 annualised contract cost for the Metroshuttle services was £1.813 million. The marked decline in patronage between 2015 and 2017 had resulted in the cost per passenger increasing from £0.89 (2015) to £1.36 (2017/18) as outlined in Figure 7. This represented the highest cost per passenger since the inception of the Metroshuttle contract and reiterated the upward trend in this KPI over recent years. Prior to 2015, the cost per passenger averaged £0.60.

The estimated cost per passenger on a service basis for 2017/18 period was:

- Service 1 - £1.03;
- Service 2 – £1.64; and
- Service 3 - £1.44.
Operational Performance

1.17 TfGM monitors the performance of the three Manchester Metroshuttle services as part of the Punctuality & Reliability Monitoring System (PRMS). The Manchester Metroshuttle observations are undertaken at Shudehill Interchange and Piccadilly Railway Station, where services are sampled during specific time bands throughout the day.

1.18 The Manchester Metroshuttle services are operated as ‘frequent services’. The DfT definition of a frequent service is a service that does not operate to a scheduled timetable, however the operator is expected to provide a minimum of six buses an hour.

1.19 TfGM utilises a service regularity performance measure to monitor frequent services where no timetable is provided and customers are looking for their service to have even intervals between buses. The regularity performance indicator measures buses whose gaps exceed twice the working headway. Consequently, the service regularity indicator encapsulates both the reliability and punctuality aspects of a frequent service.

1.20 The operational performance of the Metroshuttle contract / service, determined through the in-house Punctuality & Reliability Monitoring System (PRMS), is outlined in Figure 8.
The overall regularity performance for all three Metroshuttle services was observed at 98.9% (2017/18) which was broadly stable compared to the performance level attained in 2017 (99.1%). Service 3 was the worst performing Manchester Metroshuttle service in 2017/18 with an observed performance level of 98.6%, but it had significantly improved from the level observed in 2017 (98.0%). All three services continue to operate over one percentage point above the Code of Conduct minimum standard (97%) and significantly higher than the equivalent network wide average for frequent services.

In terms of the four quarters which represent 2017/18 financial year, quarter 4 (Jan 18 – Mar 18) demonstrated the worst performance of 98.2%, but does reflect the impact of seasonal/weather trends (i.e. snow) on operational performance which was also mirrored by the network wide performance statistics.

Ongoing events in Manchester city centre continue to directly impact on the Manchester Metroshuttle services, often resulting in lengthy diversions or suspension of service. These include high profile events such as Parklife, Manchester Day, Chinese New Year and Pride, but other events such as political marches or sporting events can also impact on service delivery performance.

Customer Comments

TfGM received seven comments from customers about the Manchester Metroshuttle during 2017/18 financial period compared to five in 2017 and eight in 2015. Service 2 and Service 3 received 3 comments each and predominantly related to quality of service provision and staff performance. One comment was logged against Service 1. Overall, this equates to one complaint/comment for every 10,138 journeys undertaken on the Manchester Metroshuttle service.

TfGM is in regular contact with First Manchester to ensure that positive action is taken by the operator with regards to both service performance standards and customer comments.
2. Bolton and Stockport Metroshuttle Services

2.1 The Stockport Metroshuttle (service 300) was launched in Nov 08 and adopted the Metroshuttle brand in Aug 09. It is jointly funded by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council and TfGM, and links Stockport Rail Station with the bus station, shops and leisure facilities in the town centre. The service operates a 15-minute frequency from 8am until 6pm, Mondays to Saturdays, and from 10:30 until 17:00 on Sundays. The service is currently operated by Manchester Community Transport, who were awarded the tender in July 2014. The service is operated with TfGM hybrid vehicles.

2.2 The Bolton Metroshuttle (service 500) was introduced in Nov 08. It was operated by Cumfybus up until 3 Jan 18, but is now provided by Vision Bus Limited on a one year contract. The service is provided using TfGM hybrid vehicles, through a contract with TfGM and supported by funding from Bolton Council and TfGM. This service links the bus and rail interchange and Bolton town centre and, during the period covered by this report, operated a 15 minute frequency from 9:00 until 17:00, Mondays to Saturdays.

Patronage

2.3 The recent trend in patronage for the Stockport (300) and Bolton (500) Metroshuttles is presented in Figure 9. In the case of the former, patronage for 2017/18 had fractionally increased (0.5%; 1,475) to 272,279 (2017/18) compared to 270,804 (2017). In contrast, the Bolton Metroshuttle’s patronage had fractionally decreased by 1.4% (1,062) from 73,265 (2017) to 72,203 (2017/18). Average patronage per journey was 18.7 and 6.4 for Stockport and Bolton Metroshuttle services respectively.

Figure 9: Stockport and Bolton Metroshuttle Service Patronage
patronage for the Stockport service (300) exceeded the 2016/17 level for nine of the 12 months, particularly in the month of Oct 17. For the equivalent Bolton service, monthly patronage in 2017/18 was predominantly operating below the levels achieved in 2016/17, with the exception of Mar 18.

Figure 10: Bolton & Stockport Metroshuttle Patronage (2017/18 Vs 2016/17)

2.5 On the basis of the electronic ticket machine data submitted by the operators, around 3.2% of Stockport Metroshuttle journeys (410) operated during the current appraisal period were carrying no passengers, compared to a significantly higher proportion (14.0%; 1,564) on the equivalent Bolton service.

2.6 TfGM officers are in regular dialogue with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council regarding service quality and provision, patronage levels and the introduction of ‘Next Stop’ technology.

2.7 For 2017/18, the cost per passenger for the Stockport Metroshuttle was £0.90, comparable with the equivalent figure for 2017. Similarly, the cost per passenger for the Bolton Metroshuttle had stabilised at £1.66 (2017/18). The cost per passenger profiles for the two services are outlined in Figure 11.
2.8 Operational performance of the Bolton and Stockport Metroshuttle services is measured through the Punctuality and Reliability Monitoring System where each service is sampled during specific time bands throughout the day and over three days during a quarter. An overview of the performance during 2017/18 compared to 2016/17 financial year is provided in Figure 12.

2.9 Both services performing exceeded both the Greater Manchester network average and the Code of Conduct standards with regards to the key operational performance indicators (e.g. punctuality and reliability) for scheduled services.

Figure 12: Operational Performance (2017/18 Vs 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Start Point Punctuality</th>
<th>Mid-Point Punctuality</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>change from 2017</td>
<td>2017/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockport Metroshuttle</td>
<td>96.2%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>99.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolton Metroshuttle</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>98.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Customer Comments

2.10 During 2017/18, four customer comments were received regarding the Stockport Metroshuttle service and were related to staff performance issues. This equated to one complaint/comment for every 3,641 journeys undertaken on the service. No customer comments were raised about the Bolton Metroshuttle service. TfGM continues to work in partnership with operators to identify areas of concern and ensure operators work towards addressing performance issues.

3. Current Procurement Activity

3.1 In terms of the Manchester Metroshuttle, the current contract with First Manchester is due to expire in November 2018 and the contract has subsequently re-tendered during June and July. This is the subject of a separate report to this Sub Committee.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this report.

Alison Chew
Interim Head of Bus Services
Free Metroshuttle buses link the city's train stations, shops and businesses. With three circular routes to choose from, they are easy to use. Just hop on and off as often as you like.

Services from January 2017

**Metroshuttle 1**
- Monday to Friday 7am-7pm. Every ten minutes.
- Saturday 8.30am-6.30pm. Every ten minutes.
- Sunday and public holidays 9.30am-5.55pm.

**Metroshuttle 2**
- Monday to Friday 6.30am-6.30pm. Every ten minutes.
- Saturday 8.30am-6.30pm. Every ten minutes.
- Sunday and public holidays 9.35am-6pm. Every twelve mins.

**Metroshuttle 3**
- Monday to Friday 7.25am-7.20pm. Every ten minutes.
- Saturday 8.35am-6.25pm. Every ten minutes.
- Sunday and public holidays 9.40am-6.05pm. Every twelve minutes.