

Ms C Wilkins
Chief Executive
Oldham MBC
Level 3 Civic Centre
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24 December 2018

Dear Carolyn

Oldham Council Resolution – Conductors on Trams

Thank you for the letter dated 7 November 2018 in relation to the above resolution.

As detailed within your letter, the Oldham - Rochdale line continues to experience issues with anti-social behaviour and fare evasion.

TfGM takes these issues very seriously and has worked closely with GMP, Oldham and Rochdale Councils, TfGM and KeolisAmey Metrolink over the last few months through the TravelSafe partnership to tackle these issues together, including intensive activity through Operation Infinity in the summer which is referenced in the resolution. Building on this activity, KeolisAmey Metrolink are introducing dedicated route teams to be deployed from January 2019. These teams will be led by a named manager responsible for each line/route with a dedicated team of Customer Service Representatives, (CSR), who will be deployed on each route or to specific hotspot areas when required. The objective is for these staff to gain valuable insight into the specific issues affecting each route and deploy staff to tackle these issues and deter offenders as required. They will get to know the passengers, including the minority causing anti-social behaviour on the Rochdale – Oldham line, and feed intelligence into the TravelSafe Partnership where required.

Clearly, it will be important to evaluate the impact of the introduction of the dedicated CSR route teams to see if this is successful in reducing incidents of anti-social behaviour and fare evasion before any decision is made to trial the Conductors on Trams proposal. I will ensure that these outcomes are brought forward to Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub-Committee in due course.

However, at this stage I think it is important at this stage to highlight some of the complexities and very real challenges that a pilot programme of Conductors on Trams would present.

Firstly, in terms of comparisons with other light rail systems, Nottingham's on-board presence primarily served as a ticket selling function and was phased out in 2014 upon introduction of their 'buy before you board' policy. Birmingham does operate with on tram conductors, although they are often unable to make their way through the carriages to sell or check tickets on trams which are very busy. The conductors themselves have become a target for anti-social behaviour.

We have previously undertaken some high level analysis to assess the feasibility of deploying an on-board presence on each and every tram 'set' across the network (i.e. one conductor per service, regardless of whether the service is operating as a 'single' or a 'double'). The cost of providing this solution would be circa £8 million, which would be significantly in excess of the revenue we might expect to recover from the conductors helping to tackle fare evasion on the network. This significant net cost would have a material adverse impact on Metrolink's net revenues, which are critical.

In relation to the Oldham - Rochdale Line specifically, initial high level calculations suggested that the annualised staffing cost of implementing any trial would require around 115 additional staff to cover each weekday service, at a cost of circa £4.5m, with a need to double the amount of staff in the cases of a double tram unit, given that there is no direct access between tram carriages. If the number of double trams increased to meet a growth in demand then staffing requirements would increase proportionately. These costs exclude any recruitment, training and other ancillary costs, e.g. revenue protection devices, welfare facilities, uniform etc. Also, it is highly likely that Metrolink staff and their unions would oppose any on-tram lone working arrangements, and, therefore, two members of staff would be required on any of tram/set, potentially doubling the anticipated staffing costs.

Subject to your views, it may be helpful for Oldham MBC staff to meet the Metrolink dedicated Route Manager to discuss how the route team will be deployed and outline the initial work plan and methods to tackle anti-social behaviour and fare evasion. If you are in agreement, we will make suitable arrangements.

In the meantime, please give me a call if you would like to discuss further.

Yours sincerely

Bob

Bob Morris
Chief Operating Officer