

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY 11 DECEMBER 2020 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT:

Councillor Mark Aldred (in the Chair)	Wigan Council
Councillor Stuart Haslam	Bolton Council
Councillor Richard Gold	Bury Council
Councillor Sean Fielding	GMCA
Councillor John Leech	Manchester City Council
Councillor Angeliki Stogia	Manchester City Council
Councillor Dzidra Noor	Manchester City Council
Councillor Naeem Hassan	Manchester City Council
Councillor Howard Sykes	Oldham Council
Councillor Phil Burke	Rochdale Council
Councillor Shah Wazir	Rochdale Council
Councillor Roger Jones	Salford Council
Councillor Barry Warner	Salford Council
Councillor David Meller	Stockport MBC
Councillor Doreen Dickinson	Tameside MBC
Councillor Warren Bray	Tameside MBC
Councillor Peter Robinson	Tameside MBC
Councillor Nathan Evans	Trafford Council
Councillor Steve Adshead	Trafford Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Bob Morris	Chief Operating Officer, TfGM
Alison Chew	Interim Head of Bus Services, TfGM
Kate Brown	Director of Corporate Affairs, TfGM
Richard Nickson	Programme Director for Cycling & Walking, TfGM
David Sidebottom	Transport Focus
Qulzam Bhatti	BAME Connect
Stephen Rhodes	Customer Director, TfGM
Rachel Hutchins	Senior Travel Information Manager, TfGM
Chris Cordwell	Delivery Officer, TfGM
Gwynne Williams	Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA
Nicola Ward	Governance Officer, GMCA

GMTC 79/20 APOLOGIES

1. That apologies be received and noted from Cllr Joanne Marshall (Wigan), Councillor Atteque UrRehman (Oldham) and Eamonn Boylan (Chief Executive Officer GMCA & TfGM).
2. That it be noted that Councillor Roy Walker could not join the meeting due to technical difficulties.

GMTC 80/20 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

Resolved /-

1. That future dates of the GMTC and sub committees be shared again with all members.
2. That thanks be expressed to the Transport Operators in attendance including Northern, Arriva, Go North West, Nexus Move, Diamond, One Bus and Stagecoach.
3. That it be noted that the procedure for petitions has been shared with Members.

GMTC 81/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Resolved /-

That Councillor Phil Burke declared an interest in relation to item 7 (Transport Network Performance) as an employee of Metrolink.

GMTC 82/20 MINUTES OF THE GM TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 9 OCTOBER 2020

Resolved /-

That the minutes of the meeting held 9 October 2020 be approved.

GMTC 83/20 MINUTES OF THE GMTC SUB COMMITTEES HELD IN NOVEMBER

Resolved /-

That the minutes of the following sub committees be noted –

- Bus Services – 13 November 2020
- Metrolink and Rail – 20 November 2020

GMTC 84/20 GMTC WORK PROGRAMME

Resolved /-

That the GM Transport Committee Work Programme be noted.

GMTC 85/20 TRANSPORT NETWORK PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Bob Morris, Chief Operating Officer TfGM, updated the Committee on the latest performance information for the public transport network in GM. The general decline of passenger numbers had continued, however since the end of lockdown 2, there had been a slight increase in patronage, with the strongest recovery being experienced on the bus network.

Trambassadors had recently been employed to work across the Metrolink network, providing advice and encouragement to passengers in relation to social distancing measures and general travel information. Thanks were expressed to operators for their support in ensuring passengers had access to alternative transport when a road traffic collision affected the Metrolink Ashton line recently. In relation to this incident, Members questioned as to why it took so long to re-instate the line. Officers confirmed that this was a significantly serious incident in which the driver of a van was trapped and had to be freed from the vehicle. There was damage caused to the Metrolink infrastructure above and below ground which had to be thoroughly checked and temporarily repaired before the line could re-open.

Members of the Committee asked for further information regarding face covering compliance on Metrolink, as anecdotal reports had indicated that compliance remained low on some routes. There were concerns raised that through the distribution of face coverings that members of the public were not taking responsibility for following the rules and were therefore not being prosecuted for breaking them. Officers reported that a higher presence of Travel Safe staff on the network had improved compliance, and that an inform, educate and advise approach was sufficient to deal with most cases, however enforcement would continue to be used where a person failed to comply.

Traffic flows on the highways were reported as c. 86% and cycling levels remained significantly higher than pre-covid levels at c. 76%.

Train operators reported that performance remained strong, but patronage levels were still low at c. 26% pre covid levels, equating to c. 45 persons per train. 11 additional Travelsafe officers had been appointed to the GM train network, which was hoped to further enhance customer insight. Northern informed the Committee that there had been a series of planned cancellations on the Manchester-Liverpool line due to driver shortages, however as resource levels had improved there were no further foreseen cancellations. TransPennine Express reported that over the last 48 hours they had been in discussions with Trade Unions regarding a potential industrial action. It had been informally reported that negotiations had been successful and there would be no strike action, however this was yet to be formally advised.

Members questioned the continued poor performance of the Liverpool – Trafford Park rail line which had experienced a number of issues, and whether there had been improvements recently. Northern confirmed that over the last three days there had been a number of planned cancellations, however alternative routes had been provided in every case. These cancellations were necessary due to a spike in covid related absence in the Liverpool depot, with an unprecedented 35% of staff non-attendance.

The progress on the Rose Hill line was welcomed by Members, however it had been noted that some of the units on this line did not have the facility to display detailed messages on screen. Northern were asked whether there were plans to improve this function. It was confirmed that the legacy fleet were going through a refurbishment programme which was 90% complete, but

comments and suggestions for further improvements would be welcomed. Members added that this function would also be useful to enhance social distancing messaging.

In relation to current works at Hyde Central and Hyde North rail stations, members questioned as to why the current platform was not being reinstated. Northern agreed to take this query away and report back directly.

Resolved /-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That it be noted that Northern would speak to Cllr Meller with regards to the display screens on its older fleet vehicles.
3. That it be noted that Northern would bring an update on the work being undertaken to make vehicles fully accessible to a future meeting of the committee.
4. That it be noted that Northern would speak directly to Cllr Robinson with regards to proposals for the platform extensions at Hyde North and Hyde Central.

GMTC 86/20 TRAVEL AND JOURNEY SATISFACTION DURING COVID RESEARCH

David Sidebottom, Transport Focus took the Committee through the latest research in relation to travel and journey satisfaction undertaken with 2000 people across England to provide a source of intelligence to transport providers.

The research had highlighted that the number of journeys following lockdown 2 had increased more rapidly than following the initial lockdown, the use of cars had stabilised both in GM and across the UK and there were continued peaks for cycling and walking in good weather periods.

With regards to public confidence in the public transport system, ¼ of respondents had reported that they were avoiding or had no reason to use public transport. However, satisfaction amongst users was higher, with some regional variations. This had indicated a clear perception gap between current users and non-users that needed to be addressed.

Members expressed concern that there should be stronger enforcement in relation to face covering compliance but were aware of previous confrontation to operator staff in cases where they have approached passengers who were not complying. The Committee recognised the importance of the right levels of enforcement when attempting to build back public confidence in the public transport network and welcomed the fact that there were now between 50-60 Travelsafe officers working across Greater Manchester. Officers reported that there had been 18 fixed penalty notices issued as a result of non-compliance (in comparison there have been 154 fixed penalty notices issued across the whole of the UK Rail network). In addition, on Metrolink there had been over 4500 interventions including refused travel, asking people to wear a face covering, etc. In comparison circa 70,000 interventions had been made for the remainder of the UK Rail Network.

In relation to Spring 2021, Members questioned as to how the network would manage with an

increase in passenger numbers as people began to be vaccinated, but social distancing measures remained. Transport Focus had recently undertaken some additional research on the potential impact of the vaccine on passenger travel choices, which would be shared with the Committee.

Resolved /-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the slides shared at the meeting be circulated to Members.
3. That further information on the enforcement of face coverings on the Metrolink and the wider network be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.
4. That it be noted that Transport Focus would share the latest research on the impact of the imminent vaccine on passenger perceptions with the Committee once it was published.

GMTC 87/20 WALKING PROGRAMME UPDATE

Richard Nickson, Programme Director for Cycling & Walking TfGM introduced a report which explored the range of activities and measures being taken across GM to support the ambition of the 2040 Transport Strategy to increase walking trips by one third to over 2 million trips a day. Qulzam Bhatti from the BAME Connect Programme presented information to the Committee on her scheme that has connected people in Oldham through walking.

Members welcomed the presentation and report and recognised the importance of walking for mental health and social interaction especially during this pandemic, however, were concerned that in some of the most deprived areas of GM walking was not easy due to a high number of cars parked on the pavement and concerns regarding traffic safety.

It was suggested that the lessons learnt and the outcomes of the BAME Connect programme be shared across GM to encourage other areas to set up similar schemes and give equal opportunities to communities across the city region. Members further suggested a short promotional video may be made that could be distributed to interested parties, with a specific focus on those communities who are often difficult to reach.

The Committee were pleased to see a report that focussed on walking, and that there were champions like Qulzam taking the lead on such schemes across GM. In relation to the Mayor's Challenge Fund, Members asked whether this funding had been used within walking schemes, and if so, how many of such projects had been delivered and who were their target audience. Officers reported a range of consultation exercises being undertaken with communities to establish their challenges when walking locally and identify projects that would improve connectivity or journey experience. Members added that often there was no need for brand new routes, just small improvements to the routes already in place to improve access, safety and encourage more people to walk. In relation to crossing schemes funded through the Mayor's Challenge Fund, there had been 18 completed within phase 1, and further schemes being delivered within phase 2.

Members urged for future schemes to look to prioritise walking routes for older people, ensuring their safety and feeling of being safe through provisions that protect pavement space and mitigate

the risks of speeding vehicles etc. Such schemes were envisaged to have minimal costs, but significant benefits, especially in relation to mental and physical health.

Resolved /-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That information as to how the Mayors Challenge Fund had benefitted walking schemes be shared with the Committee.
3. That further information on the Mode Shift Stars scheme be shared directly with Cllr Adshead.
4. That it be noted that Qulzam Bhatti would be willing to share further information about the BAME Connect Walking Programme with any interested parties.

GMTC 88/20 WINTER SERVICE PLAN 2020/21

Stephen Rhodes, Customer Director TfGM introduced the Winter Service Plan and Rachel Hutchins Senior Travel Information Manager, TfGM gave further details on transport provision during the 2020/21 winter period, including over Christmas and the New Year. In particular, the use of data to indicate current behaviours, the anticipated hotspots on the network and planned interventions to mitigate any issues that may arise.

There were no significant changes anticipated to public transport services over the Christmas and New Year period, and any alteration of tier allocation was also not expected to have any significant effect.

Members expressed their concerns in relation to shopping hotspots and increased footfall in these areas. Furthermore, if Greater Manchester were to move to tier 2 whether this would encourage further shopping and socialising and cause issues on the public transport network. Officers confirmed that there were multi-disciplinary teams in place to review any changes to Government guidelines and ensure a prompt appropriate response. It was anticipated that there would be a review of the tiering levels on the 16 December, and TfGM would continually update their communications to ensure that they were inline with the latest Government messaging.

The Committee recognised that there would inevitably be a spike in cases following the Christmas period, and therefore stronger enforcement, increased communications and a greater visibility of Travelsafe officers would be particularly important during this time. Officers confirmed that there would be a range of initiatives taking place in early 2021 to support Greater Manchester to build back, support people to live with Covid and encourage people to travel again at an appropriate time.

Resolved /-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That specific data in relation to transport interventions around the Rock at Bury be shared with Councillor Gold.

GMTC 89/20 DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved /-

That the date of future meetings be noted.