

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE  
GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 MARCH 2021 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Mark Aldred (in the Chair)	Wigan Council
Councillor Richard Gold	Bury Council
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 David Meller	Stockport MBC
Councillor Doreen Dickinson	Tameside MBC
Councillor Warren Bray	Tameside MBC
Councillor Nathan Evans	Trafford Council
Councillor Steve Adshead	Trafford Council
Councillor Joanne Marshall	Wigan Council

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Bob Morris	Chief Operating Officer, TfGM
Eamonn Boylan	Chief Executive, GMCA & TfGM
Kate Brown	Director of Corporate Affairs, TfGM
Richard Nickson	Programme Director for Cycling & Walking, TfGM
Simon Warburton	Transport Strategy Director, TfGM
Caroline Whittam	Head of Rail Franchising, TfGM
Gwynne Williams	Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA
Nicola Ward	Governance Officer, GMCA

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Nigel Featham	Go North West
Sinead Griffin	Network Rail
Chris Jackson	Northern
Alistair Nuttall	Arriva
Matthew Rawlinson	Diamond
Lesley Adshead	Nexus Move
Lucja Majewski	Transpennine Express

**GMTC 11/21 APOLOGIES**

1. That apologies be received and noted from Cllr Stuart Haslam (Bolton), Cllr Roy Walker (Bury), Cllr Sean Fielding (GMCA) and Barry Warner (Salford).

2. That it be noted that Councillor Peter Robinson (Tameside) and Gary Nolan (One Bus) were unable to attend due to technical difficulties.

#### **GMTC 12/21 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS**

##### **Resolved /-**

That there were no Chairs announcements or items of urgent business.

#### **GMTC 13/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

##### **Resolved /-**

Councillor Phil Burke declared a personal interest in relation to item 6 – Transport Network Performance as an employee of Metrolink.

#### **GMTC 14/21 MINUTES OF THE GM TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 19 FEBRUARY 2021**

##### **Resolved /-**

That the minutes of the meeting held 19 February 2021 be approved.

#### **GMTC 15/21 MINUTES OF THE GMTC SUB COMMITTEES HELD IN MARCH 2021**

##### **Resolved /-**

1. That the minutes of the Bus Services sub-committee held on 12 March 2021 be noted.
2. That the minutes of the Metrolink and Rail sub-committee held on 19 March 2021 would be sent to the Committee by email for noting.

#### **GMTC 16/21 TRANSPORT NETWORK PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

Bob Morris, Chief Operating Officer TfGM gave an update on performance across all the GM transport network, noting the significant increase in patronage of 11% on average in March 2021 compared to figures from February 2021. This had specifically been seen in the over 65+ age group which could potentially be attributed to an increase in confidence post vaccination. Broken down, passenger levels had increased by 25% for bus services, 26% on Metrolink, 16% on rail, 8.6% on the highway, 18% for cycling and 11% for walking over the past month.

Northern had begun to prepare for a timetable uplift on the 17 May 2021, however with staff absence at 11.5% (due to shielding and isolating predominately) there were concerns that unless this changed, there may be resourcing issues. Patronage levels were currently c. 26% and significant work was underway in relation to station improvements including the carpark at Mills Hill, the gate line at Oxford Road, the subway at Romiley and the continued

roll out of the LED replacement and painting programme. There had been some concerns raised by local stakeholders in relation to service changes in the Smithy Bridge area and there had been a meeting scheduled with Northern to address these.

The Manchester Recovery Task Force consultation had concluded, and findings were now being reviewed before an update would be provided to the Transport Committee in due course.

Trans Pennine Express had undertaken a service uplift on the 29 March, which had brought the timetable to 82% of pre-covid coverage. Patronage continued to increase steadily, with current levels reported at c. 17%. The “We’re ready when you are” campaign was due to be launched over the coming week, with aspirations to further build passenger confidence in returning to the train network through reassurance messaging about the measures put in place to reduce the risk of Covid.

Network Rail reported current patronage levels of c. 25% which was a significant increase from the start of the year (17%) and was felt to be a positive indicator of passengers returning to the network. There had been some impact to operational and control departments as a result of covid cases amongst staff and staff being required to isolate, however this had been managed successfully. There would be a joint industry approach to encouraging passengers back onto the network, ensuring passenger safety was foremost but emphasising the benefits of re-connecting with other people and enjoying the opportunity for staycations. In light of the restriction easing roadmap, there had been some changes to planned engineering works over the bank holiday period and an overarching review of the approach to planning such works.

Arriva were now delivering 80% of their pre-covid network coverage and despite some staff shielding, isolating or suffering from long covid symptoms there had been no impact to service levels. Patronage had dropped slightly this week, with current levels reported as c. 50%. Revenue had also fallen this Tuesday, potentially attributed to people choosing to buy weekly tickets as they had returned to work.

Nexus Move also reported an increase in patronage, especially notable in relation to the elderly population.

Go Ahead reported that the industrial action was ongoing, however as a result of sub-contracting some services there had been no impact to network coverage. Dialogue with the union was good and it was hoped that there would be a resolution shortly to allow for further uplifts in the timetable.

Members were concerned that as lockdown restrictions were eased and more people begin to travel, that the network would not be prepared for such an increase in patronage. Officers confirmed that there was ongoing dialogue with Government and DfT in relation to how to manage capacity on the public transport network as restrictions ease, however current guidance was to work from home where possible which would mitigate peak travel issues for the next phase. There was work underway across all sectors to further spread peak travel as we approach the milestones on the 12 April and 17 May and ensure that those who are required to travel feel safe. However, it was recognised that under current guidelines, social distancing remained a challenge for the public transport sector.

In relation to the Manchester Recovery Task Force consultation, Members reported that Local Authorities had also submitted their own response in addition to the GMCA response. However, it was unclear as to whether there would be any impact to the timetable from now

until the chosen proposal was implemented. There had also been questions raised by local MPs on the matter, and it was suggested that they be updated more regularly. A report on the proposed response including TfGM's alternative proposal had been considered by the GMCA at their meeting on the 12 February and DfT had attended a meeting of the GMTC Metrolink & Rail Sub Committee on the 19 February to explain the work further. The Task Force would now consider TfGM's alternative proposal and undertake modelling exercises to determine whether it could be delivered. The options would be considered further at the Rail North Committee mid-April and then it was anticipated that DfT would make a final decision on the preferred option by the end of April, this would be further consulted on during May and finally reported to Network Rail by 6 August. The GM Transport Committee would be updated as appropriately.

#### **Resolved /-**

1. That the performance update be noted.
2. That the updates provided by operators be noted.
3. That an update on the work of the Manchester Recovery Task Force would be brought back to the Committee at a timely opportunity,
4. That a future report to the Committee would include an update on the effectiveness of funding for road safety schemes.

#### **GMTC 17/21 GOVERNMENT BUDGET 2021 AND NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY**

Simon Warburton, Transport Strategy Director TfGM, introduced a report which informed Members of the transport headlines from the Government's Budget announced on the 3 March and highlighted some of the national transport strategies, policies and reviews which were expected to be published in the near future.

There were a number of funding streams that would enable the delivery of the Transport Development Plan, including the Intracity Transport Fund and the Levelling Up Fund. Work was underway across Local Authorities to deploy guidance for the Levelling Up Fund; however, officers were awaiting further guidance in relation to the Intracity Transport Fund.

Members questioned the criteria for the Levelling Up Fund, in that it placed GM within Category 1, but some GM Authorities in category 2. Officers reported that the fund's criteria did not include a metric on levels of deprivation, which was not in line with similar previous funds, and in fact, one of the dominant factors was the average journey time to access work which was not equitable across GM due to varying levels of urban density. Members were confused by Government's criteria assessment as it did not echo the ambition of the fund to 'level up' and urged that representation needed to be made to local MPs as to the disproportionate impact to urban areas. Officers further confirmed that this was the first in a series of rounds for the fund and that they were working to influence future rounds to ensure all GM Local Authorities were able to access the fund.

In relation to the Intracity Transport Fund, Members asked whether there would just be one bid, who would sponsor this and how it would work. Officers confirmed that a pipeline of investment from the Transport Delivery Plan was being looked at to be included in a package of measures to put forward on behalf of the GMCA. Further conversations with

DfT were also underway as to how use both funds in tandem as strategically as possible for the benefit of the whole of Greater Manchester.

**Resolved /-**

1. That the transport headlines from the Government's Budget and the implications for Greater Manchester be noted.
2. That the forthcoming national transport strategies be noted.
3. That it be noted that TfGM were working with DfT to ensure the metrics used in future rounds of the Levelling Up Fund do not create barriers to access investment.

**GMTC 18/21 GM MOVING**

That it be agreed to defer this item to a future meeting of the Committee.