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| Briefing | |
| Title | Response to GMPON Feedback - Salford |
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Contact **Sophie Clare**

0161 244 1244 [sophie.clare@tfgm.com](mailto:sophie.clare@tfgm.com)

1. ***“I am very much aware that the bus services operating in all boroughs of the Greater Manchester Region are mainly linking each borough to the Manchester City Centre whilst the buses connecting areas within each of the boroughs are far from adequate. Concerned that bus users often have to use 2 or more services to cross the city. This can often mean that they are using buses operated by different operators and the fares can vary widely. When older people are forced to use buses before 9.30 a.m. to reach hospitals, it can turn out to be quite an expensive journey and of course this also applies to fare-paying passengers not eligible for any kind of bus pass.***

***Can we have any reassurance from our Metro City Mayor that he will be able to resolve this problem once he has organised the provision of a bus service operated under one umbrella and then people will surely be able to purchase a single ticket for any journey. Does he think this matter will be resolved by 2020?”***

* 1. In Greater Manchester the bus market is deregulated unlike London. 80% of the network is provided on a commercial basis by privately owned and operated bus companies who are free to determine their own services, routes and fares. In practice, this means that the bus operators serve routes that they believe to be commercially viable.
  2. Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) does provide financial support to provide routes where there is no commercially available service, but have a limited budget to do so.
  3. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has asked Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to explore new opportunities for the reform of the bus market provided to combined mayoral authorities by the Bus Services Act 2017, which was introduced into law last year. This includes preparing an assessment of a proposed franchising scheme (the system used in London and other cities globally), as well as new engaging with bus operators about partnership options. The Act gives the elected Mayor of Greater Manchester the option to reform the bus market, subject to public consultation.
  4. This could bring significant benefits for residents and passengers, allowing for greater local control over routes, frequencies, timetables, fares and quality standards for all buses across the Greater Manchester network. It would also allow for a more integrated transport network, for example allowing passengers to use one ticket across all buses and across different modes of transport.
  5. TfGM are continuing to explore ways in which we can develop the smart ticketing offering in Greater Manchester which is currently available on ITSO smart card and the mobile app under the getmethere brand; this will include an upgrade of the on-stop ticket vending machines to allow the purchase and fulfilment of smart products on ITSO smart cards in the first half of 2018.
  6. TfGM are investing in a fully “smart” ticketing system that will include a “back office” capable of more complex and powerful processing (rather than storing information on the card itself). This will allow for pay-as-you-go and price capping, using either a contactless bankcard or another form of “token” to travel – which could be a smartcard, or a mobile phone, watch etc. This will allow us to deliver a “fair price promise” - a guarantee that customers will be sold the best value ticket for the journeys they’ve made, without having to pre-plan, and however many trips you make in a day/week you won’t be charged more than if you had purchased a day/week saver in advance.

1. *“Having discussed the problems regarding bus travel with many people in recent times within the Swinton & Pendlebury area of the City of Salford, I find that the majority of people of all ages are disappointed by the fact that there are no buses that link the A666 to the A6 and on to the A580.”*
   1. It is difficult to respond to this point without knowing the specific sections of these roads the concerns refer to, however the No. 2 bus connects Bolton – Trafford Centre via Station Road and Partington Lane. It connects the A666 to the A6 and crosses the A580. Details of this service can be found here: <https://tfgm.com/public-transport/bus/routes/2-bolton>. The No.2 bus is a half hourly service.

*“The Vantage Bus Service linking the townships of Leigh and Atherton to the City Centre Hospitals is fantastic, but it is not easily accessible for people who do not live on or close to the A580. Since both the V1 and V2 buses began to go to the hospitals, the route for the 38 Stagecoach bus serving the A6 no longer reaches the hospitals and this is causing passengers to be greatly inconvenienced.”*

* 1. The 38 service is fully commercial so, unfortunately, TfGM has no input into the route that the operator (Stagecoach) chooses to run. TfGM has limited funds to fill gaps in the bus network so, unfortunately, is not able to run direct journeys that cover all areas that are not served by the commercial network.

*“Access to reach the Metro Trams from Eccles is restricted from Swinton & Pendlebury and in recent times, the most regular bus service linking the two areas is limited to the First Bus No 2 service, which is often unreliable when coming from Bolton in particular…*

* 1. If bus services are regularly not running in accordance with their published timetable TfGM can take this up with the Traffic Commissioner (for commercial journeys) or TfGM’S network performance committee for those services TfGM pays for. However, to do this we will need specific details of the times and dates when this happens and the number of the service concerned. TfGM would welcome information on instances when the No.2 service did not run to its timetable.

*…and in any event passengers residing on to close to the A666 would have to use 2 buses or travel a long way round on the 484 and 66 bus services ( which don’t operate in the evenings ).”*

* 1. Unfortunately, it is not always possible for Transport for Greater Manchester or operators to provide direct bus links and it may be necessary for passengers to interchange between services. TfGM has a limited budget to fill gaps in the commercial market and commercial operators are free to make route decisions based on what they think will be the most commercially viable routes.
  2. For similar reasons, TfGM cannot fund all services into the evenings. It is true that, unfortunately, some journeys that people want to make may require interchanging and in this case an evening journey to the Metrolink service from Swinton or Pendlebury would require interchanging.

1. *“Speaking to people from different boroughs across the region, I have concluded that the quickest way to reach central Manchester is by train. The biggest snag to rail travel is the poor access to the majority of our train stations. Is something going to be done soon about the provision of ramped entrance to the platforms and better still lifts in the near future? This is a factor which I consider to be of equal importance to faster train services. There is of course a great need for train operators to provide more carriages so that all passengers can be seated and feel safer. Over the years, more and more ballast has been laid beneath rail tracks and this has resulted in platforms being far too low to enable safe access when boarding trains. Can the Mayor give us any hope that these problems can be solved reasonably soon.”*
   1. Responsibility for station accessibility improvements rests with the station operator. Over the past five years, renovations have been carried out to improve access at a number of stations, however there are still many across Greater Manchester without adequate provisions. Unfortunately Greater Manchester has not been selected for recent rounds of government funding to address this lack of accessibility at stations. TfGM will continue to pursue this matter.