

COUNCIL

17 OCTOBER 2012

JOINT AUTHORITY QUESTIONS

Councillor Pickstone – Committee for Greater Manchester Transport

Following on from my question at the last meeting about the new cycle storage facilities at Metrolink stations on the Bury line, how does Transport for Greater Manchester view the suitability of the lockers, given that so many have already been vandalised within a few months of being installed? Is it not time for review of the policy for the carriage of cycles, particularly during off peak hours?

A. The significant issue with cycle storage facilities on the Bury line is at Radcliffe Metrolink stop, where the initial doors on the lockers were vandalised shortly after installation. The vandalised doors have been removed to ensure that they do not pose a hazard. TfGM is now preparing an order for reinforced doors that will enable passengers to use this important facility again in due course.

It is also worth noting that the innovative Cycle Hub facility at Bury Interchange, funded through a successful TfGM bid to the Local Sustainable Fund, will be open in the next few days. This will provide a secure and attractive way for people to store their cycles at an ideal location for both town centre workers and those travelling onward by tram or bus.

With regard to the safe carriage of cycles on Metrolink, GMCA and TfGMC have maintained this as a long-term policy aspiration, whilst recognising the importance of safeguarding against the health and safety issues associated with cycle carriage that have been identified by TfGM, their independent advisors and the railway authorities. However, the current levels of passenger demand, which extend beyond the traditional commuter peak period, and the capacity limitations of the system mean that cycles cannot be safely accommodated in the current circumstances.

Councillor Pickstone – Committee for Greater Manchester Transport

Could the Authority's representative on TfGMC inform and update members on the experience for Bury residents on the transfer to a centralised and computerised booking system for 'Ring and Ride' this June? Has there been an increase in the number of complaints received from Bury residents?

A. The new Ring & Ride booking system now in operation in Bury provides:

- **An extended booking window up to 7 days in advance (day before travel prior to transfer);**
- **An extended booking period 0800am to 1600pm Mon to Sun - (0930am to 1245pm prior to transfer);**
- **One telephone number for Cross Boundary and Ring and Ride bookings - (different numbers prior to transfer);**
- **Able to book more than one journey during one telephone call e.g. one for each of next seven days - (only one journey booked prior to transfer); and**
- **Able to book Cross Boundary and R&R journey in same call - (two separate calls prior to transfer).**

The system will also allow text and web bookings which we will trial once all depots have transferred onto the system. All depots should be transferred by the end of 2013/14 (potentially by November 2013).

For 3 months prior to the change-over to the new system GMATL contacted all customers and local councillors, as well as visiting a number of groups in the Bury area, to explain the changes to the booking procedures. As a result, there has been a small increase in the volume of correspondence since the transfer to the new system, albeit that the number of complaints is still very low overall.

In the three months prior to the introduction, GMATL received 1 letter regarding a personal injury and 1 relating to block booking timings. In the three months since the transfer, they have received 3 complaints from passengers, who had become used to the shorter booking windows under the previous system.

Councillor Pickstone has contacted GMATL regarding the changes. He referred to a problem being experienced in delivering passengers to Prestwich Methodist Church but did not give any passenger details. One of the three complaints received relates to travel to Prestwich Methodist Church – the relevant customer is being helped by GMATL to manage their trip requests in advance through the new system.

Councillor Bevan – Committee for Greater Manchester Transport

Once again, Transdev are proposing to cancel a much needed bus service through Ramsbottom (Shuttleworth) - the X8 service from Burnley to Manchester. Transdev wish to cancel the service from 27th October despite the fact that the X8 offers a fast convenient service to and from Manchester for Ramsbottom commuters. The route used is similar to Transdev's X43 route, apart from a short detour through Ramsbottom (Shuttleworth and Edenfield) to collect extra passengers before rejoining the X43 route. In view of the fact that using the route through Ramsbottom uses less diesel, only take a few minutes longer than the X43 route and may generate some additional revenue, the fact that Transdev are proposing to withdraw these services seems completely illogical. Could the TfGM representative write to Transdev to urge them to maintain some form of commuter service for people living in Ramsbottom, and at the very least engage in some form of dialogue before the route is cancelled? Could the TfGM representative also clarify TfGM's intentions for the route in question if the service is cancelled?

A. This was reported to TfGMC Bus Network Committee on 5 October. With effect from 28 October Transdev have decided to withdraw their wholly commercially operated X8 express journeys which operated Monday to Saturday every 120 minutes Burnley to Manchester.

TfGM examined the alternatives for travellers and found that

- there are alternatives available with service X43 operating a similar route to service X8, thereby maintaining an express link through the corridor to Manchester;**
- services 482 and 483 providing links between Burnley and Bury via Edenfield and Shuttleworth;**
- for commuters travelling between Ramsbottom and Manchester, there are a range of frequent services to Bury, and a peak-time X35 service to Manchester;**
- for all passengers, Metrolink or bus services are available in Bury for onward travel to Manchester.**

Therefore, whilst it is regrettable to see the operator reducing its commercial services, TfGM officers recommended no replacement for the service, reflecting the need for the Committee to carefully manage its budget for socially necessary services.

TfGM has no powers to deter bus operators from determining revisions to their own commercial operation but do liaise with bus operators in order to minimise the impact on passengers whenever possible. However, officers have

passed on the concerns expressed by Members to Transdev, so as to further explore the reasoning behind the changes and to the points that have been raised.