

## **Item 7 - Joint Authority Questions**

- 1      *There are improvements taking place at Crumpsall Metrolink Station. Is this investment to continue on the Bury line as some of the stations are in need of modernisation, especially Heaton Park Station where the lifts are unreliable, affecting disabled people/mums with buggies and the infirm and there is only one way in and one way out? Cllr Quinn***

**Answered by Councillor Bayley.....**

As part of the Renewals and Enhancements programme, improvements to the Bury line stops are currently being considered. To date, an architect has carried out a preliminary assessment of the improvement works which could be carried out at each of the stops. This is in addition to the current works being undertaken at the Crumpsall stop. The assessment will be used to further develop the proposals and business cases to secure funding for works to each of the stops.

The proposals will consider improvements to the passenger waiting areas and also accesses to the stops i.e. current lift provisions and the possible introduction of at-grade track crossings. The potential implementation of these works will be subject to securing funding. It is worth noting that a separate project is currently being progressed to secure the additional funding required to introduce an at-grade crossing to the Bury tram stop.

- 2      *Given the non-attendance of FIRST BUS officers at Bury West Area Board meetings nowadays and the declining performance standards of buses operating the 471 and 98 services through Church Ward, with cancellations, delays and long waits being regular occurrences, can I ask whether the closure of the Bury bus depot has had an effect on staffing and could the new GM regulatory powers be used to improve provision offered by companies, even possibly including a condition that a firm providing the bulk of services maintains a base in such a major centre of population as Bury ? Councillor R Walker***

**Answered by Councillor Bayley.....**

The bus network across Greater Manchester is predominantly operated on a commercial basis whereby privately owned bus operators bus operators are free to determine their own routes, timetables, level of fares and retain overall control of the day-to-day operation of their services

TfGM does, however, work closely with operators where problems occur and has discussed the recent service issues in Bury with First Manchester. TfGM understands that First has experienced significant problems with staffing levels and short term absenteeism. This has affected services across their network, with some services being cancelled at short notice.

The Greater Manchester Mayor is working with TfGM to explore the new mechanisms and opportunities for the reform of bus services provided by the Bus Services Act. The Act gives the elected Mayor of Greater Manchester, the option to introduce bus franchising, subject to public consultation. Bus franchising has the potential to bring significant benefits for residents and passengers, allowing for greater local control over routes, frequencies, timetables, fares and service standards for all buses across the Greater Manchester network.

On behalf of the Mayor and the GMCA, TfGM is now preparing an assessment of a franchising scheme for the whole of Greater Manchester. It is too early to say what contractual obligations might be specified in any franchising scheme, but franchising would allow for TfGM to set minimum service standards with mechanisms to address poor performance.

**3      *Could the Council's spokesperson on the Transport for Greater Manchester Committee inform members what the estimated level of unpaid fares is on the Metrolink network? Cllr Pickstone***

**Answered by Cllr Bayley.....**

Fare Evasion is currently believed to be at around 12% across our sample of the whole network. To help tackle fare evasion and antisocial behaviour an additional 23 TravelSafe Officers have recently been deployed. They will be supported by an additional 50 Police Community Support Officers, 28 of which have been deployed, with a further tranche of 14 to join the TravelSafe Unit in January 2018.

**4.      *Could the Council's representative to the Police and Crime Panel inform members what measures are being taken to improve the performance of the 101 non emergency police number? Cllr D'Albert***

**Answered by Cllr Tariq...**

I am pleased to report that at the September Police and Crime Panel we discussed the issue at length and were able to secure some commitments for the future.

I would first of all like to provide you with some performance data and some context to the data:

The call handling team comprises a switchboard to screen 101 calls and then a call handling team (the same call handling team manage 999 calls).

The team receives on average 5000 calls per day. The average speed of answer for each area in September was as follows:

Switchboard	1 min. 20 sec
101	13 mins 24 seconds
999	12 seconds

Call handling is a relentless area of work and consequently suffers from a high level of staff churn and sickness which impacts capacity and consequently performance.

In the last 6 months they have been on a recruitment drive which reassuringly is starting to bear fruit with average speed of answer times for October dropping across the board:

Switchboard	36 sec - a 55% drop
101	2 mins 48 seconds - an 80% reduction
999	10 seconds - a 17% drop

Whilst there are fluctuations from one month to the next this is clearly moving in the right direction.

The recruitment drive will continue into next year to get the team back to full capacity.

In addition and pleased to say that the team are undertaking the following work:

- They need to educate the public on what is a police matter, they get a large number of calls that are not for the Police but for other agencies such as the Local Authority, NSPCA, Parking Tickets, etc , they have started this process and this will continue.
- They are about to go live with 'live chat' a web based way to contact them
- Problem solving training for their staff so they understand better certain legislation (abandoned vehicles, fraud, civil matters)
- Sickness management support
- Better working with partners (mental health and Ambulance service)

The Police & Crime Panel will continue to scrutinise the work of the Call centre and I will provide further updates to Council as appropriate.