

GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY
REPORT FOR INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Bus Network and GMPTE Services Committee
DATE: 7th January 2011
SUBJECT: Metroshuttle Patronage and Performance
REPORT OF: Bus/Rail Director, GMPTE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the Metroshuttle bus network patronage and performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Committee are recommended to note the contents of this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

'Metroshuttle Patronage and Service Performance Monitoring' report to the 6th August 2010 Bus Network and GMPTE Services Committee.

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1 Introduction & Executive Summary

- 1.1 There are currently five Metroshuttle routes in operation in Greater Manchester – three in Manchester city centre, one in Bolton town centre and one in Stockport town centre. The purpose of this report is to update Members on the performance and patronage levels on the Metroshuttle free bus network.
- 1.2 The new contract for the Manchester Metroshuttle services commenced on 7th November 2010 and contains additional measures designed to improve service quality. It also saw the introduction of 20 new hybrid electric buses and new branding. See section 3.2 for further details about the new buses.
- 1.3 Patronage is measured each day by the bus operators, mostly using electronic ticket machines on the buses. The performance of the services is also regularly monitored by GMPTE.
- 1.4 Patronage on the Manchester Metroshuttles has been static since November 2009 but services 2 and 3 showed some brief signs of improvement in September and October 2010.
- 1.5 Major road works continued to affect the performance of the Manchester Metroshuttle services during Quarters 1 and 2.
- 1.6 Patronage on the Bolton Metroshuttle recorded a 25% increase between April and September 2010 in comparison to the same period in 2009. A new route and timetable is to be introduced on the service from Monday 31st January 2011.
- 1.7 Patronage on the Stockport Metroshuttle increased by 4% during summer 2010. A change of operator occurred on 1st October when Swans Travel transferred the contract to Bluebird Bus & Coach.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Manchester Metroshuttle services 1, 2 and 3 are operated by First Manchester through a contract with GMPTE, and supported by ongoing funding from GMITA, Manchester City Council, NCP Manchester and Allied London Properties. A new contract was awarded to First in November 2010 which also saw the introduction of 20 new hybrid electric buses owned by GMITA/E and new branding for the services. See section 3.4 for further details.
- 2.2 The Bolton Metroshuttle (service 500) was introduced in November 2008. It has been operated by Maytree Travel since January 2010 through a contract with GMPTE and supported by funding from Bolton Council and GMITA. Service 500 links the bus station and rail interchange with the shops and markets in the town.
- 2.3 The Stockport Metroshuttle (service 300) was also launched in November 2008 and adopted the Metroshuttle brand in August 2009. The service has been operated by Bluebird Bus & Coach since 1st October 2010. It is funded by Stockport Council and GMITA and links Stockport Rail Station with the bus station, shops and leisure facilities in the town centre.

3 Manchester Metroshuttle

3.1 Manchester Metroshuttle Service Contract Renewal

3.1.1 Members may recall that the Manchester Metroshuttle contract was extended in September 2009 to enable GMPTE to prepare a new contract model based on the introduction of a fleet of diesel-electric hybrid buses. The inclusion of the new buses followed a successful bid for £1.4m of funding through the Department for Transport's Green Bus Fund.

3.1.2 Additional requirements have also been included in the new contract that places greater emphasis on service quality and better management of the service. These additional measures include:

- Ensuring only drivers with the right skills and attitude are selected and provided with appropriate customer service training, and that they maintain high standards of presentation in their uniform.
- Implementation of a service quality management system to monitor and maintain high standards on a consistent basis, including the use of Mystery Shoppers to independently monitor and report on services.
- Improved levels of supervision and more robust measures to remedy any issues that may arise, particularly during times of peak demand.
- Introduction of targets and standards for customer satisfaction; with a minimum initial target for users of at least 85% satisfaction, working towards 90% over the first two years of the contract.
- Increased emphasis on accurate and timely provision of all contractually required data being delivered to GMPTE. Future Metroshuttle reports to this Committee shall therefore be able to provide more information regarding customer satisfaction levels, accident statistics and lost mileage.

3.1.3 First Manchester was awarded the five year operating contract, effective from Sunday 7th November 2010.

3.2 New Vehicles and Branding

3.2.1 Twenty low-carbon vehicles have been introduced on the services consisting of twelve 9.7m Optare Versas and eight 8.8m Optare Solo SRs. (The latter are required for Metroshuttle 2 to serve the tight turning circle at Oxford Road Station.) These new environmentally friendly buses will use up to 30% less fuel than the Optare Solos they replace. They will also reduce carbon emissions by an estimated 140 tonnes a year across the three services.

3.2.2 The new buses are also equipped with the latest technology that combines automatic passenger counting, on-board information, CCTV, and vehicle location and diagnostics in a single integrated system.

3.2.3 In addition, the buses carry updated branding and a new silver colour scheme that retains the familiar colours of orange, green and purple that have been associated with the Manchester Metroshuttle since their launch in 2002. The

picture below shows the new Optare Versa in use on Metroshuttle 1 and 3.

Picture 1 – New Optare Versas on Metroshuttle 1 and Metroshuttle 3



3.2.4 The new buses have been proving very reliable with only a few reported minor teething problems. There have been 3 reported accidents since the new contract started, all caused by a third party, that resulted in only minor damage to the vehicles and injuries to customers or staff. Fuel optimisation appears to be as good as predicted, with up to 9.2mpg being achieved by the Solos and 7.3mpg by the Versas.

3.2.5 Patronage on Metroshuttle 1 increased by 3.4% increase during November to an average of 22,500 passengers a week. The rise in demand on services 2 and 3 in September/October reduced to levels similar to that experienced in the previous months (see Graph 1 on page 5). Average weekly usage on service 2 in November was 15,400 passengers a week and service 3 was 11,500 passengers.

3.3 Patronage

3.3.1 Patronage data is provided to GMPTC by Metroshuttle operators from information entered onto their Electronic Ticket Machines by the bus drivers.

3.3.2 Table 1 below summarises the patronage and cost per passenger on the Manchester Metroshuttle contract by route.

Table 1 Annual Patronage & Cost Trends for Manchester Metroshuttle

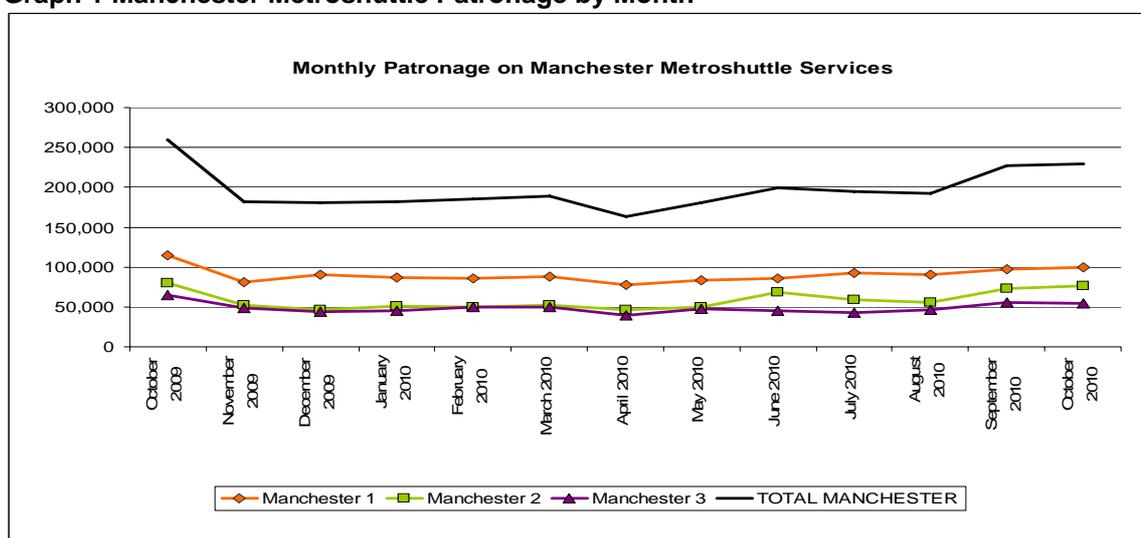
Service	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/2010	% Change Since 2006	2010/1	2010/1
	(Apr-Mar)	(Apr-Mar)	(Apr-Mar)	(Apr-Mar)		Apr-Sep	Projected full year
Manchester 1	1,070,020	1,110,633	1,215,887	1,141,364	7%	527,137	1,054,274
Manchester 2	661,056	671,242	737,778	708,977	7%	349,400	698,800
Manchester 3	428,933	520,074	620,430	681,040	59%	276,983	553,966
Total	2,160,009	2,301,948	2,584,451	2,597,555	17%	1,153,520	2,307,040
Annual Cost	£1,253,358	£1,284,470	£1,539,005	£1,556,143	24%		
Cost Per Passenger	£0.58	£0.55	£0.60	£0.61	6%		

3.3.3 Since 2006 the total Manchester Metroshuttle patronage has increased by 17%, In particular Metroshuttle 3 patronage has seen an increase of 59%, from 428,933 in 2006/7 to 681,430 in 2009/10.

3.3.4 Since 2006 the cost per passenger has risen form £0.58 to £0.61, an increase of 6%, as a result of annual RPI increases and the introduction of evening journeys on Metroshuttle 1.

3.3.5 Patronage on Manchester Metroshuttles flat lined between November 2009 and August 2010, as Graph 1 below shows, before rising 18% in September 2010. This was largely due to increased patronage on Metroshuttle 2 (which rose 31% in comparison to August) and Metroshuttle 3 (up 21%). This has been attributed by the operator, First, to a notable increase in usage following the cessation of the road closures, which had entailed buses following multiple and often lengthy diversions.

Graph 1 Manchester Metroshuttle Patronage by Month



3.3.6 There were 82 events and road works in Manchester City Centre logged between April and September 2010 that affected the Manchester Metroshuttle services. The most significant were:

- The Labour Party Conference, with road closures around Manchester Central between 23/09/2010 and 30/09/2010
- United Utility works at junction of Newton Street / Portland Street and Piccadilly between 01/06/2010 and 10/07/2010

3.4 Performance

3.4.1 GMPTe monitors the performance of the five Metroshuttle services as part of the Punctuality & Reliability Monitoring System (PRMS).

3.4.2 Observations are undertaken at Shudehill Interchange and Piccadilly Rail Station Manchester; Services are sampled during specific time bands throughout the day and over 3 days during the quarter.

- 3.4.3 The measures used by the Department for Transport and the bus industry to assess bus service performance depend on whether the service is meant to run at frequent intervals (every 10 minutes or greater) or is a timed service running less frequently.
- 3.4.4 Frequent interval services are measured in terms of Excess Wait Time (EWT). This is the time passengers have to wait in excess of half the service interval. The DfT's minimum standard EWT is 1.25 minutes, meaning that the average Actual Wait Time (AWT) for customers of a 10 minute service should be no more than 6.25 minutes.
- 3.4.5 The table below provides a summary of the average Excess Wait Time for the high frequency Metroshuttle services during Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2010: All three services had an overall EWT within the minimum standard but road works caused Metroshuttle 1 to undertake significant diversions during Quarter 1 and 2 that resulted in intermittent increases in service gaps, particularly at peak times as a result of various road closures and diversions.

Table 2 EWT for Manchester Metroshuttle Services 2009/2010

Service	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total	Quarter 1	Quarter 2
	Apr-Jun 09	Jul-Sep 09	Oct-Dec 09	Jan-Mar 10	2009/2010	Apr-Jun 10	Jul-Sep 10
Manchester 1	0.76	-0.53	-1.06	-0.77	-0.11	-1.01	-1.19
Manchester 2	0.95	1.04	0.26	1.12	0.83	0.35	0.50
Manchester 3	1.89	0.11	0.72	0.09	0.82	0.15	0.04
Grand Total	1.20	0.20	0.02	0.15	0.51	0.17	0.21

Source: GMPTE PRMS Monitoring. Note: Figures assume a minimum frequency of 10 minute intervals. Service 1 is contracted to provide a higher (6 minute) frequency on weekdays and service 3 is contracted to run at 8 minute intervals in the morning peak. EWT for both routes should therefore always be substantially less than 1.25.

- 3.4.6 Despite the disruptions, Metroshuttle 1 and 2 have managed to perform within the Traffic Commissioner standard. Only Metroshuttle 3 exceeded the Traffic Commissioner standard during Quarter 1 2009 with an EWT of 1.89. This coincided with the commencement of utility work along Deansgate.

3.5 Customer Comments

- 3.5.1 GMPTE received 17 comments from customers about the Manchester Metroshuttle between 1st April 2010 and 31st October 2010.
- 3.5.2 12 (70.5%) related to the conduct of the driver, 3 about service quality and the remaining 2 were compliments about the services.
- 3.5.3 Driver conduct comments include the driver being rude or abusive to passengers and other road users or being unhelpful.
- 3.5.4 GMPTE meets with First on a regular basis to discuss performance and action has been taken by the company to address the concerns about driver conduct to ensure that Metroshuttle remains a quality service.
- 3.5.5 First Manchester take customer comments regarding driver conduct seriously. If a customer comment is upheld the driver receives further training or is dealt with through their internal disciplinary procedure and removed from the service.
- 3.5.6 At times customer comments do not have enough specific detail that allows First

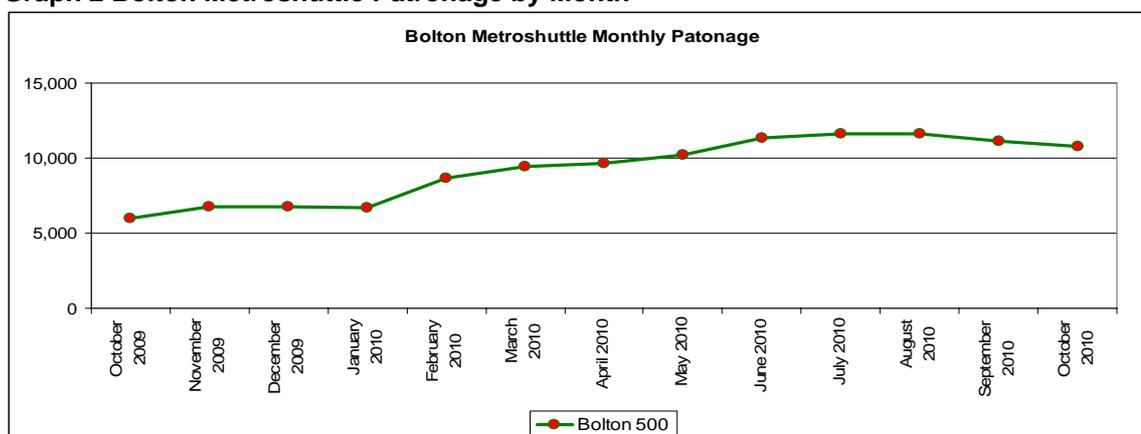
Manchester to fully investigate the comment, or allow them to trace the driver. This is exasperated by the high frequency “load up and go” policy which can make indentifying individual drivers difficult unless details of the bus fleet or registration number have been included with the complaint.

4.0 Bolton Metroshuttle

4.1 Patronage

4.1.1 The graph below shows the patronage on the Bolton Metroshuttle.

Graph 2 Bolton Metroshuttle Patronage by Month



4.1.2 Bolton Metroshuttle patronage has increased dramatically over an 18 month period. Bolton Metroshuttle patronage has significantly increased since the change of operator in January 2010. A 25% increase in patronage was recorded between April and September 2010 in comparison to the same 6 months in 2009.

4.2 Performance

4.2.1 Observations are undertaken in Bolton Bus Station. Services are sampled during specific time bands throughout the day and over 3 days during the quarter.

Table 3 EWT for Bolton Metroshuttle Service 2009/2010

Service	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total 2009/2010	Quarter 1	Quarter 2
	Apr-Jun 09	Jul-Sep 09	Oct-Dec 09	Jan-Mar 10		Apr-Jun 10	Jul-Sep 10
Bolton 500	0.19	0.34	0.81	0.26	0.44	0.20	0.22

Source: GMPTE PRMS Monitoring. Note: Figures assume a minimum frequency of 10 minute intervals. Service 1 is contracted to provide a higher (6 minute) frequency on weekdays and service 3 is contracted to run at 8 minute intervals in the morning peak. EWT for both routes should therefore always be substantially less than 1.25.

4.2.2 The Bolton Metroshuttle comfortably met the Traffic Commissioner’s standards on punctuality throughout.

4.3 Customer Comments

4.3.1 No complaints were received by GMPTE about the Bolton Metroshuttle between 1st April 2010 and 30th September 2010.

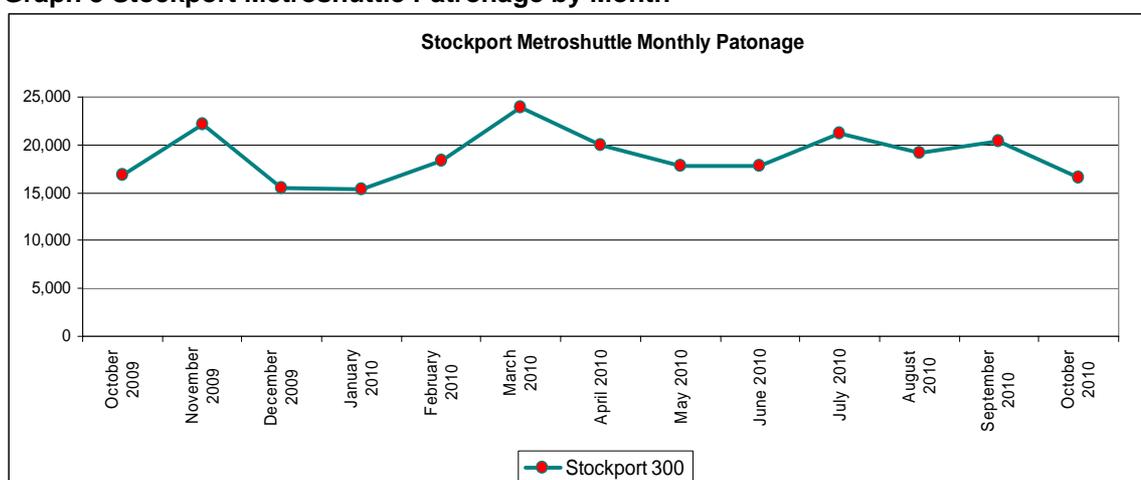
4.4 Proposed Changes to Bolton Metroshuttle

- 4.4.1 A revised route and timetable is to be introduced on the Bolton Metroshuttle with effect from Monday 31st January 2011 following requests via Bolton Council for the Bolton Metroshuttle to serve the multi storey car park adjacent to Bath Street and the University via Deane Road. The extensions to the route will require a reduction in frequency from every ten minutes to every fifteen minutes. The service will continue to operate Mondays to Saturdays between 0900 to 1700 hours.

5.0 Stockport Metroshuttle

5.1 Patronage

Graph 3 Stockport Metroshuttle Patronage by Month



- 5.1.1 After a period of significant increases during early 2010, patronage on the Stockport Metroshuttle peaked at a high of 23,918 passengers in March before fluctuating during the summer months to 20,417 in September. October's low patronage of 16,511 may have not been accurately recorded by Swans drivers in their last week of operations. GMPTE is working closely with the new operator Bluebird to ensure that the patronage is recorded accurately.

- 5.1.2 During the 6 month period April to September 2010, patronage rose by 4% to an average of 19,380 passengers a month in comparison with the 6 months prior and by 47% (an extra 6,160 passengers a month) in comparison to the same period in 2009.

5.2 Performance

- 5.2.1 Observations are undertaken in Stockport Bus Station. Services are sampled during specific time bands throughout the day and over 3 days during the quarter.

- 5.2.2 Less frequent services, such as the Stockport Metroshuttle, which is scheduled to operate every 12 minutes, are measured by their reliability and punctuality. Reliability of services is an indication of the number of journeys that do not run

and are not therefore observed, and punctuality is the number of journeys that ran on time within a window of tolerance of no more than 1 minute early and 5 minutes late.

5.2.3 The Traffic Commissioner's standard for timed services is a punctuality result within the scale of no less than 70% at an intermediate timing point and 95% at a start point. The minimum standard for punctuality is 90%.

5.2.4 Table 4 below shows the punctuality results for the Stockport service.

Table 4 Punctuality for Stockport Metroshuttle Service 2009/2010

Stockport 300	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total	Quarter 1	Quarter 2
	Apr-Jun 09	Jul-Sep 09	Oct-Dec 09	Jan-Mar 10	2009/2010	Apr-Jun 10	Jul-Sep 10
Reliability	N/A	96.6%	N/A	96.0%	96.2%	100.0%	94.8%
Punctuality	N/A	84.5%	N/A	56.9%	67.9%	53.4%	75.9%

Source: GMPTE PRMS Monitoring

5.2.4 Although the punctuality of the service improved by 22.5% from Quarter 1 2010/11 to Quarter 2, its reliability decreased. Swans Travel reported that the service was experiencing intermittent problems as a result of road works at Grand Central and from incidents and planned works on the M60 motorway.

5.2.5 GMPTE will continue to monitor this service and work with the operator to address any issues that arise.

5.3 Customer Comments

5.3.1 No complaints were received by GMPTE about the Stockport Metroshuttle between 1st April 2010 and 30th September 2010.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Recommendations appear at the front of this report.

Michael Renshaw
Bus & Rail Director