

Joint Authority Questions

1. Could the Authority's spokesperson on the Transport for Greater Manchester Committee inform members what the regular costs are of replacing the 'anti-pigeon' netting on the bridge over Fairfax Road? What would the cost be of a more durable solution such as angled edges? **Councillor S Wright**

(To be answered by Cllr Mortenson)

I am aware that TfGM have been in contact with Cllr Wright to discuss this matter. The bridge netting is currently not providing an adequate deterrent and so TfGM has now instructed the Metrolink contractor, Keolis Amey Metrolink (KAM) to assess the site and propose a more permanent solution.

2. Could the Council's representative to the Transport for Greater Manchester Committee inform members what the estimated one-off and ongoing costs of introducing a regulated bus network in Greater Manchester and what options are being considered to meet these costs should such a scheme be introduced? **Councillor Pickstone**

(To be answered by Cllr Mortenson)

Decisions regarding bus reform, including setting the budget, are the responsibility of the GMCA and therefore procedurally this question should be addressed to, and answered by, Bury's representative on the GMCA.

The GMCA's transport budget for 2019/2020 was approved at the meeting that took place on 15 February 2019 and this included costs associated with bus reform.

Further information on costs are included in the assessment of a proposed bus franchising scheme, which was prepared by Transport for Greater Manchester on behalf of the GMCA. The assessment's recommended option was franchising, which is why the GMCA decided to follow the next step in the Bus Services Act by requesting a report from an auditor in an attempt to obtain the assurance of an independent third party on the assessment.

After the auditor's report is complete the GMCA will review the report and the assessment and then decide whether to proceed.

The next step, as specified by the Bus Services Act, would be to hold a public consultation at which point further information would be provided to outline the GMCA's proposed funding sources for meeting costs to make and operate scheme. That would give the public greater clarity of how the GMCA proposes to fund the scheme should it be introduced.

3. Could the Council's representative to the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Panel inform members how many calls are made the 101 non-emergency police number in Greater Manchester? How many go unanswered and what the average waiting time is? **Councillor Powell**

(To be answered by Cllr Briggs)

I am pleased to report the performance at answering calls via the 101 number has improved. Members will be aware that previously there were some issues with this service, but I am pleased to report an improved delivery of services to the public.

In August, the 101 service received approximately 2,000 calls per day. These calls were answered on average in 1 minute 16 seconds which is down from over 3 minutes for the same period last year.

The Police Switchboard was able to resolve 44% of these calls, the remaining calls were transferred to a call handler for further work, with an average answer time of 4 minutes and 1 second. About 28% of these callers disconnected at this stage (i.e. they abandoned their call before it was answered).

Approximately 5% of these calls were transferred for a crime report over the phone, the average answer time was 1 minute 30 seconds.

The volume of people that disconnect is clearly still too high. Callers who waited an hour and abandoned their call (without calling back) are having their call assessed and if the caller is believed to be vulnerable they are being contacted. The assessment involves listening to the original call (as it was received in the Switchboard), assessing the needs of the caller and re-calling.

Greater Manchester Police are trying to encourage more people to use their web-based Livechat facility, an online tool which is answered in about 16 seconds. This option seems to be gathering momentum with 40% more people using it in August compared to last year.

They are also promoting their call-back service at peak times, where call-handlers will return calls for those assessed as low-risk to avoid people queuing - about half of the calls received and resolved at Switchboard relate to requests for updates on previously reported crimes.

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

4. Could the Council's representative to the Combined Authority inform members what call on reserves is necessary to undertaken the Mayor of Greater Manchester's commitment of no loss of fire fighter numbers in 2019-20 and 2020-21? **Councillor Pickstone**

(To be answered by the Leader)

The 19/20 revenue budget approved the use of £3.5m from reserves to support the revenue budget .The latest reported monitoring to

GMCA in July reported an underspend of £1.8m ie a reduced use from reserves in 2019/20 of £1.7m .

The budget for next year has not been determined not least as there are major uncertainties regarding Government funding and particularly whether the £5m of Fire pension grant continues. The medium term plan reported to the GMCA in February 2019 had an indicative use of reserves in 2020/21 to support the budget of £12m but this assumed no savings through Programme for Change and no continuation of the pensions grant ` `

- 5. Following the recent take over by Diamond to some bus services in Bury, many of their buses have failed to turn up or arrived late causing misery to commuters. Could the leader tell us what action TfGM will be taking to ensure Diamond Bus deliver this vital public service? Cllr Walmsley**

(To be answered by Cllr Mortenson)

TfGM worked extensively with Diamond in the run-up to the date on which they took responsibility for the operation of the former First depot in Oldham, in particular reviewing their planning and resourcing as well as ensuring that they were familiar with any processes and requirements that they may not have been exposed to previously as a Greater Manchester operator.

TfGM is aware that there have been some service delivery issues subsequent to the start of the Diamond operation. As a result, TfGM remain in close dialogue with the operator to review the position, and to try and ensure any further problems will be minimised.

It is important to acknowledge that most bus services are commercially operated, and in the current de-regulated environment, TfGM has little ability to influence them. However, with regard to those provided under contract, TfGM will ensure that such services meet the specification.

- 6. Can the Council's representative update us on how many 16-18 years olds in Bury have signed up to "our pass" which offers free bus travel and other benefits? Cllr Quinn**

(To be answered by Cllr Mortenson)

In relation to accounts created and accounts paid, Bury averages around 7% of all current applications and payments .

I'm afraid I don't have the relative to population figures, but considering Bury has 30,000-40,000 less residents than places like Trafford, Bolton, Salford, its relative uptake will be higher than other boroughs

I am happy to arrange for the exact figures, which I have in table form, to be put on the Council's website.

Figures for info:

Accounts Created

Authority	Count	Percentage
Bolton	3620	9%
Bury	2573	7%
Manchester	8609	22%
Oldham	2984	8%
Rochdale	3073	8%
Salford	3099	8%
Stockport	4063	10%
Tameside	3673	9%
Trafford	2965	8%
Wigan	4405	11%
Grand Total	39064	100%

Accounts Paid

Authority	Payments	Percentage
Bolton	2364	9%
Bury	1793	7%
Manchester	5535	21%
Oldham	1948	7%
Rochdale	2025	8%
Salford	2028	8%

Stockport	3040	11%
Tameside	2544	10%
Trafford	1984	7%
Wigan	3223	12%
Grand Total	26484	100%