


<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>The Council</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>11 September 2024</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<p><b>Update on Greater Manchester Joint Authorities Activity</b></p> 
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Decision type:</b>	<b>Non key decision</b>
<b>Ward(s) to which the report relates:</b>	All
<b>Summary:</b>	This report provides an update on the activity at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

## 1. Background

- 1.1. This report provides an update on work undertaken by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and other Greater Manchester joint authorities since the last Council meeting.
- 1.2. Since the last update there has been one meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
- 1.3. As agreed, each report will focus on a particular area, this month's update report, focusses on the work of the Greater Manchester Scrutiny Committees.

## 2. Spotlight FOR September – GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

### Background GMCA Overview and Scrutiny

The GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee checks that decisions made by the GMCA, the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) executive board, the Greater Manchester Transport committee and Transport for Greater Manchester, help make the region a better place to live, work, study and do business.

In January 2022, the Combined Authority commissioned the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) to review the current scrutiny function. A members' task group (across all political parties) was established from existing GMCA scrutiny members which was Chaired by Clive Memmott OBE, Chief Executive of GM Chamber of Commerce and supported by Ed Hammond, Deputy Chief Executive, Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and Officers from the Combined Authority.

The significant independent review of its scrutiny function resulted in moving from three Overview & Scrutiny Committees to a singular committee model that has now been in place for two years.

The role of the Scrutiny Committee is to:

- contribute to the early policy development of complex issues affecting the whole of GM
- review and evaluate the performance of the Mayor and GMCA, and the way it works with its partners to deliver for local people,
- investigate more complex cross-cutting issues

The Independent review produced several recommendations which have shaped the current single Committee model, including the appointment of members based on skills and interest for more than one year – to ensure there is some continuity, the establishment and implementation of task and finish groups, in addition regular information briefings.

The work undertaken by the Committee included a review of Greater Manchester Strategy and its priorities, which has been used as the basis of the development of a draft work programme for the Committee to add through throughout the year, including reviewing forthcoming key

decisions and requesting officers to attend meeting to discuss those issues which most effect residents. The work programme remains fluid and is reviewed at every meeting.

The Committee has played a major role in the development of the trailblazer devolution deal for Greater Manchester, with the Deal including the reference to the GMCA's commitment to building a culture of greater scrutiny and accountability. The Committee has also had the opportunity to scrutinise the proposed implementation of the deal. The trailblazer deal also helpfully recognised the need for continuity of membership of the Scrutiny Committee. Although there has been a mix of newly appointed and more experienced elected members, this has enabled Committee to consider fresh new insights into the work of the Committee.

In ensuring Scrutiny remains a priority for the GMCA, the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee is invited to attend every GMCA meeting and provided with the opportunity to speak to reports which the Scrutiny Committee have been actively involved in and feeding back those comments direct to members of the GMCA.

One the strengths of the Scrutiny Committee is the ability to be involved in the early policy development, including Violence Reduction Strategy, race Equality Strategy amongst other major policy areas.

GMCA Portfolio leaders, including the Mayor, together with officers are requested to attend Scrutiny Committee meetings, providing members with the opportunity to comment and influence policy development and ensure the Greater Manchester Strategy is at the forefront of policy development.

Informal member information briefings also help Scrutiny Committee members build their knowledge base. The sessions cover all portfolio areas across the GMCA and enables members to effectively scrutinise the performance of the GMCA and the Mayor.

The committee also has the opportunity to scrutinise the financial performance of the organisation as part of the annual budget setting process, including opportunity to consider the mayoral precept.

As part of the establishment of the new model the GMCA committed to review how it was working at the 6 month stage.

The work of the Scrutiny committee has included:

- potential implications of a National Waste Strategy

- Bus franchising - phase one
- GM Investment Fund are assessed
- Housing
- School readiness

A task & finish group was established to review affordable housing and in recognition of the wider determinants affecting affordable living for residents the scope was changed in recognition of the national housing crisis, from a reduction on social rental properties, to increased rental costs driven by demand and the rise in fuel prices.

### **GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Task and Finish Review: Affordable Homes**

In July it was agreed by the GMCA that the full list of recommendations within the report be endorsed and that opportunities be sought where the GMCA can support the delivery of the recommendations, specifically:

- to influence the development of the next Affordable Homes Programme through strengthened partnership arrangements within the latest devolution deal to ensure it is flexible enough to meet the needs of our residents (Recommendation 1).
- to continue to support Local Authorities to seek out potential schemes through innovative approaches and bold actions.
- to support Local Authorities and Housing Providers to ensure tenants have full access to welfare and other hardship funds through every interaction.
- to co-design the next GM Housing Strategy with other key stakeholders that builds on what is already being done, but also confidently pushes the boundaries as to what can potentially be done, setting the standard as zero carbon.
- to ensure that advice on cost-of-living support provided through registered providers is also available via private landlords.
- to ensure that being an accredited member of the Good Landlord Charter is universally recognised, with its unique benefits clearly identified.
- As a first step, GMCA to organise an event to discuss the findings of this review and actions which can be taken to remove barriers for the delivery of viable schemes.
- That it be noted that the report will now be shared with GM Local Authority Councillors, Cabinet Members for Housing, and Scrutiny Committees, for their information and appropriate action.

- That the GMCA record its thanks to the Task and Finish Group for their contributions to a timely report on the housing issues impacting the region and the wider country.
- That the information provided on the establishment of the GM Housing First Unit and the plans for how it would contribute towards addressing the housing crisis in the region be received.

### **Other areas of focus:**

- Devolution Deal

Throughout the previous year, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee was engaged with the development of the trailblazer devolution deal for Greater Manchester, recognising that this would be a significant opportunity to better align resources with the needs of our residents. In light of the specific new powers being agreed in this Trailblazer Devolution Deal, including the single settlement, and in the spirit of greater power requiring greater accountability, GMCA commits to building a culture of greater scrutiny and accountability.

1 Throughout this year, the Committee has been able to provide further scrutiny to the proposed implementation of the deal and have been given the opportunity to recognise its role in ensuring greater accountability for the devolved responsibilities. The trailblazer deal called for continuity across the membership of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee which was helpful in ensuring continued growth alongside the wider organisation. This year there were a mix of newly appointed and elected members who had previously been appointed to the Committee, which brought together new perspectives, fresh conversations and a strong knowledge base from which to undertake mature scrutiny activity. Membership on committees and in particular the role of chair should be prized and competed for. Retention of members for several years should be common. Members should be able to devote the time to the role. The committees should have the profile and cache to ensure that their findings are brought to the attention of the public wherever necessary.

2 Evidencing the outcome of scrutiny work has been assisted by the continued presence of the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny being provided with the opportunity to report back to the GMCA on their findings against the reports that have sought the engagement of the Committee.

- Pre-policy scrutiny of high profile and complex issues

The benefits of engaging the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in the early development stages of a policy has been further evidenced throughout this year through their input into the development of the Race Equality Strategy, Violence Reduction Strategy, Vision Zero Strategy and Local Transport Plan. In each of these instances, portfolio leaders and officers brought their initial thoughts to the committee for robust challenge well in advance of the policy being prepared for publication. As recommended by the independent review, this approach enables members to ensure that its ambitions are in line with those of the Greater Manchester Strategy and has the opportunity to develop political debate on matters which are complex and important.

Due to a strong relationship of trust between the GMCA and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee there have been several occasions throughout the year where members have been asked to review highly sensitive policy decisions of a commercial nature, including the options

for a future GM waste contract and the indicative preferred bidder for the final tranche of bus franchising.

- Reviewing the performance of the Mayor and the GMCA

Members of the Committee were provided with an overview of the Greater Manchester Strategy at the beginning of the year to provide a framework for their scrutiny activity. Building from this knowledge base the Committee has been offered a range of overview sessions on all portfolio areas across the GMCA, from digital to the green city region. With this foundation, they are able to more effectively scrutinise the performance of the organisation.

One example of this was a Business Board update, which not only provided the Committee with an overview of the priorities of the Business Board, but an opportunity to review how these priorities were delivering against the priorities of the Greater Manchester Strategy.

Reviewing the financial performance of the organisation was also further supported by a series of informal briefings and a separate opportunity to consider the mayoral precept proposals ahead of the wider budget proposals. These were significant opportunities for budget scrutiny but were alongside regular financial considerations on each of the reports brought to the Committee.

A six-monthly review was also an opportunity for the Committee to consider how the recommendations from its task and finish report in March 2021 were being implemented across the organisation and with partners. This provided a check-in on previous work to ensure that outcomes were being delivered.

In line with the GMCA's commitment to an effective scrutiny function, the relevant portfolio lead has been in attendance for their own reports, this includes the GM Mayor for transport related items to his portfolio or other mayoral items. Over the last year the Mayor has been present to respond to questions from the Committee on issues such as Greater Manchester's bus fare initiative, a cycle hire recovery plan and the proposals for the allocations within the forthcoming mayoral precept.

- Investigating cross-cutting issues

Empowering members through a strong knowledge base and a clear role and remit for the Committee has enabled them to engage in a number of complex and cross-cutting reviews, including the potential implications of a National Waste Strategy, initial reflections on the implementation of phase one of the franchised bus network and the process by which applications to the GM Investment Fund are assessed.

The central threads of the Greater Manchester Strategy for a greener, fairer and more prosperous Greater Manchester ran through the entire work programme for 2023/24 with this lens being applied to a range of cross cutting policies and initiatives, such as the consideration as to how a capped fare proposal would reduce carbon emissions.

The Committee also requested several portfolio overviews on topics of interest this year including housing and school readiness. The housing session was a helpful contributor to this year's task and finish review for which members of the Committee selected the topic of affordable housing. As the review began, they were minded to change the scope in recognition of the wider determinants affecting affordable living for residents in Greater Manchester. This task and finish approach provided the opportunity for a small group of members to take a closer

look at the many facets that have resulted in a national housing crisis, from a reduction on social rental properties, to increased rental costs driven by demand and the exponential rise in fuel prices.

## Wider work of the GM Combined Authority - July meeting

- 3.1 A refreshed **GM Moving MoU Refresh** with Sport England and wider GM Moving Partnership Board
- 3.2 **The GM Good Landlord Charter** including the proposal not to charge a fee to landlords for participation in the Charter be approved; the utilisation of £250,000 from retained business rates in 2024/25 to procure an independent implementation unit for the charter; Government be lobbied on the repeal of Section 21 and introduction of the Renters Reform Bill be pursued.
- 3.3 **Delivering the Bee Network** that the fully integrated ticketing system, PayGo, is expected to go 'live' in March 2025.
- 3.4 **Approval of the Draft Rapid Transit Strategy including a** commitment to a full assessment of the case for expanding Metrolink to Leigh.
- 3.5 **Agreed Bee Network Fares and Ticketing**
  - reduce the price of 7-day Bus Travel on Bee Network Services from £21 Adult/£10.50 Child to £20 Adult/£10 Child
  - reduce the price of 28-day Bus Travel on Bee Network Services from £85.40 Adult/£42.70 Child to £80 Adult/£40 Child
  - That the introduction of a paper 'Hopper' single ticket for Bee Network bus users from 5th January 2025 be approved.
  - That the proposal to introduce a scheme, with local Credit Unions, from January 2025 to improve access to annual bus tickets be approved, in principle.
  - That a further report on Bee Network fares and ticketing products be submitted to GMCA in September 2024.
- 3.6 **Received and update on the Cost of Living and Economic Resilience**
- 3.7 **GMCA Sustainability Strategy: Annual Report**
- 3.8 **Low Carbon Skills Fund Opportunity**
- 3.9 **Greater Manchester Culture Strategy**
- 3.10 **GM Armed Forces Covenant Roadmap and** That the 5-year Roadmap, as a framework to enhance cohesive delivery across the City Region, be endorsed.

That the enduring and sustained effort to go even further and make GM the best place in the UK for members of the Armed Forces Community to live be recognised and the re-signing of the GM Armed Forces Covenant be approved.

3.11 **Investment Zone Update** including the Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation's Strategic Business Plan

3.12 **Mayoral Development Corporation for Northern Gateway - In Principle Decision**

That the creation of an MDC for the Northern Gateway project be approved, in principle. That it be agreed that GMCA officers explore with Bury, Oldham, and Rochdale Councils, detailed options for an MDC to be created for the Northern Gateway, with these matters to be decided upon by GMCA and the Local Authorities in due course.

3.13 **Approval of the Ashton Mayoral Development Zone - Business Plan**

3.14 **UKSPF Proposal for the Management of Potential Underspend 2024/5**

3.15 **Revenue Outturn Report - Quarter 4 agreed:**

That it be noted that the Mayoral General Budget provisional revenue outturn position for 2023/24 was breakeven, after planned transfer to earmarked reserves.

That it be noted that the GMCA General Budget provisional revenue outturn position for 2023/24 is £2.1m, which will be transferred to earmarked reserves.

That it be noted that the Mayoral General – GM Fire & Rescue provisional outturn position for 2023/24 was breakeven, after a transfer of revenue funding to capital.

That it be noted that the Waste and Resourcing provisional revenue outturn position for 2023/24 was breakeven, after a transfer from reserve of £18.7m.

That it be noted that the GMCA Transport and TfGM provisional revenue outturn positions for 2023/24 were breakeven, after transfers between earmarked reserves.

That it be noted that the final position was subject to the submission of the audited accounts to be submitted to the GMCA Audit Committee.

3.16 **Capital Outturn Report - Quarter 4 agreed:**

That it be noted that the 2023/24 actual outturn capital expenditure of £541.1m, compared to the forecast position presented to GMCA on 9 February 2024 of £579.1m.



That the update on property acquisitions for Project Skyline be noted and the additions to the capital programme in 2024/25 be approved.

**3.17 GM Housing Investment Loans Fund and Brownfield Housing Fund agreed:**

That authority be delegated to the GMCA Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for Housing, to approve new funding and urgent variations to existing funding from the GM Housing Investment Loans Fund and Brownfield Housing Fund, 13 July 2024 to 26 September 2024.

That authority be delegated to the GMCA Treasurer, in consultation with the GMCA Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, to prepare and effect the necessary legal agreements. That it be noted that any recommendations approved under the delegation will be reported to the next available meeting of the GMCA.

**3.18 GM Investment Framework, Conditional Project Agreed**

That a £2m increase in the loan facility to Romaco Limited, from £3m to £5m be noted. That the consolidation of two existing loans into a single facility with Broughton House, totalling £4.1m be noted.

That authority be delegated to the GMCA Treasurer and GMCA Solicitor and Monitoring Officer to review the due diligence information in respect of the above loans, and, subject to their satisfactory review and agreement of the due diligence information and the overall detailed commercial terms of the loans, to sign off any outstanding conditions, issue final approvals and complete any necessary related documentation in respect of the loans noted above.

That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, GMCA & TfGM and the GMCA Treasurer, in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for investment and Resources, to approve projects for funding and agree urgent variations to the terms of funding in the period 13 July 2024 to 26 September 2024.

That it be noted that any recommendations approved under the delegations will be reported to the next available meeting of the GMCA.

**3.19 Independent Remuneration Panel Review of GM Mayoral Remuneration agreed**

That the remuneration of the GM Mayor remains at £118,267, subject to any indexation going forward.

That the remuneration of the GM Mayor continues to be indexed at the NJC annual percentage salary increase, specifically with reference to Spinal Column Point 43.

That the index continues to be applied to the same year that it applies to officers. This is normally from 1st April to 31st March. Where the index is applicable to officers for more than 1 year it should also be applicable to the GM Mayor for the same period.

That the recommendations contained in the report be implemented with effect from the date of the GM Mayor taking up the new term of office in May 2024.

That the IRP's views be noted that the GM Mayor should have access to an appropriate pension scheme that provides for an employer's contribution equivalent to that made to the pension scheme for Police and Crimes Commissioners

That it be agreed that lobbying would take place on behalf of the Mayor to ensure that Metro Mayors were given fair access to appropriate pensions schemes.

#### 4 Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) Update

- **TfGM's Business Portal Refresh**

The TfGM [Business Portal](#) is our 'one-stop shop' for businesses, containing a wide range of advice and resources to help employers and their businesses. We've refreshed the content on the Portal to ensure it is fully up to date, including: Information on the Bee Network, and what that means for business; Practical tools and resources such as the business commuter toolkit, an employee travel guide and simple materials that can be used to keep your colleagues informed; Active travel provision and support, such as information on GM's Starling Bank Bike hire scheme and Information on public transport services and flexible ticket offers.

- **Caroline Simpson starts new role as Group Chief Executive**
- **Business Transport Advisory Council (BTAC) meeting**

TfGM's regular Business Transport Advisory Council (BTAC) meeting took place on 17 June. BTAC brings together a panel of business leaders which represent a range of sectors, come from various locations across the city-region and range from micro to large to help us develop a Bee Network that works well for the GM business community. Discussions focused on the need for reliability, frequency and capacity improvements on rail commuter lines, with priority placed on travel outside of GM boundary and orbital

routes. Panel members also shared positive feedback towards Mayoral manifesto ticketing and safety plans.

- **Disability Design Reference Group Meeting**

TfGM's Disability Design Reference Group (DDRG) held its second quarterly meeting of the year on 27th June. DDRG is our advisory group made up of individuals with a range of different disabilities who provide advice based on their personal experience of traveling on the Bee Network. They work collaboratively with TfGM in designing an integrated, accessible public and active travel network.

During the meeting, panel members gave their perspectives on road safety to inform the Vision Zero action plan. They discussed the findings of the Bikes on Trams guided pilot which took place earlier this year and gave feedback on proposals for Pay As You Go (PAYG) contactless on buses and a forthcoming Rail PAYG contactless pilot. The group also recently undertook a site visit to Bury Interchange to give their input into proposals for its redevelopment.

- **Planned Metrolink engineering works**

Heaton Park, Hagside and Collyhurst Substations: TfGM are constructing three new substations at Heaton Park, Hagside, and Collyhurst to help improve capacity on the Bury line. Intermittent phased work is ongoing at all three locations. The majority of work is taking place during normal working hours. These substation works will take place within normal working hours and Metrolink services will not be impacted unless otherwise advised.

- **Free Safer Driving course for 55+: Additional dates added**

Safer Roads Greater Manchester Partnership are encouraging drivers to join the FREE Safer Driving for Longer course. Additional course dates have been added to the programme, with dates available up until end of September. The course helps drivers to reflect on their own driving, increase confidence in their ability and to consider efficient alternatives to driving. It is available to Greater Manchester residents aged 55+. ([website](#))

- **Update: Network Reviews including programme timings**

The Bee Network's ongoing programme of Network Reviews is designed to enhance public transportation across Greater Manchester by building on the benefits of bringing

buses under local control. TfGM is working closely with local authorities to collect feedback from communities, elected officials, businesses, and other stakeholders. In Bury, begins in August.

All bus services in Greater Manchester will be integrated into the Bee Network by January 5, 2025. Reviews for other areas will commence in spring 2025. Although direct engagement and promotion of each review will match the timeline above from a place perspective, the survey is open to all across GM –even in those areas not currently under review. This is to ensure comments can be provided on cross boundary services Starting in 2025, thematic reviews will also potentially focus on specific themes such as night time services, orbital services, or priority routes. ([link to survey](#)).

- **Media summary – GM and wider transport headlines**

Politicians in Bolton have given their reactions to the Chancellor’s announcement that the Restoring Your Railways Fund will be wound down, with one Labour MP suggesting that some of the schemes could be revisited in the future. TfGM made several bids for funding to the Department for Transport to support feasibility studies for several schemes, notably improving links between Bolton and Bury/Radcliffe (Metrolink extension), Stockport and Ashton, and Bury, Heywood and Rochdale.

The Bury Times reports that more fare evasion fines have been handed out on the Bury line than any other parts of the Metrolink network, according to figures obtained by FOI. A total of 4,512 penalty fares were handed out on the line between January and June – 508 more than the second highest line, Altrincham.

## **5 Recycle for Greater Manchester (R4GM)**

- **Community Fund**

The Recycle for Greater Manchester Community Fund recently announced the successful applicants in this year’s round of funding. Four groups were funded for programmes of work taking place in Bury. These include:

Cracking Good Food will set-up “drop-off bins” across Greater Manchester to collect pre-loved cooking equipment and utensils donated by the public and businesses. This is then sanitised, safety assured and redistributed to focus on supporting people 'setting up home' after homelessness or crisis, supported by cooking classes and reducing food waste.

Become United are running ten targeted waste management awareness sessions across Greater Manchester. These will aim to inspire positive behaviour change waste within communities across the city-region. They'll also be creating infographics in English, Arabic, Urdu, and Bangla to encourage local communities to recycle more and waste less.

The R4GM Community Fund comes from money that is raised via the Renew Shops and online store. Every year, £220,000 is available for community and voluntary projects.

- **Pots, tubs and trays**

We're busy preparing for an important collection change coming up this Autumn. Our Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) is being upgraded to accept plastic pots, tubs and trays from October. These will now be collected alongside plastic bottles, glass jars and aluminium and steel cans in the blue mixed recycling bin. Previously they were collected in the general waste bin.

Many residents already think pots, tubs and trays can be recycled in their mixed recycling bin, and we've done a lot of work over the years to bust this myth. There's now a big piece of work to update our communication materials like the Recycle for Greater Manchester website and our leaflets to ensure we display updated guidance for residents. We'll be working closely with Bury Council's Waste and Communications team, sharing accurate wording and images to help them communicate this change to residents. Initial comms will include a radio advert to promote the change across regional stations like Hits Radio and advertising on social media and in local publications like The Bury Times.

We anticipate this will be a positive change with residents and we'll be running a more substantial campaign in the new year.

- **Tree planting**

GMCA's Waste and Resources team recently undertook a joint piece of work with City of Trees, Greater Manchester's community forest charity, to help improve biodiversity across our city-region. We partnered with them to plant 765 trees at two of our closed landfill sites at Chichester Street in Rochdale and Bredbury Parkway in Stockport. Both areas are near existing wild spaces and, with continued management from City of Trees, the newly-planted trees will become nature corridors for wildlife, including badgers, foxes and roe deer. The closed landfill sites are already home to a wide variety of mammals, birds, insects and amphibians.

This work is part of a larger project to improve biodiversity at GMCA's waste sites. In partnership with contractor SUEZ, we've added bee hives and bird boxes to encourage a wide range of wildlife on site; our solar farm at our Salford Road site in Bolton has over 300,000 bees already. This feeds into GMCA's new Biodiversity Action Plan, which will set out how we can all make room for nature across the city-region.

- **Recycling Centre Rates**

<b>Site</b>	<b>June (%)</b>	<b>Year to date</b>
Cemetery Rd, Radcliffe	67	66
Every St, Fernhill	67	64

## **6 Recommendation**

- 6.1 That Council note the updates from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Transport for Greater Manchester, and Recycle for Greater Manchester, with further updates to be presented to future Council meetings.

### **Contact Details:-**

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