



## Bee Network Committee

Date: Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024  
Subject: Delivering the Bee Network Update  
Report of: Steve Warrener, Managing Director, TfGM

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### Purpose of Report

To advise members on the progress of delivering the Bee Network, our plan for a high-quality, affordable and fully integrated public transport and active travel system for the people and businesses of Greater Manchester.

### Recommendations

Bee Network Committee is requested to note and comment on delivery of the Bee Network; and

### Contact Officers

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## **Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:**

N/A

## **Risk Management**

N/A

## **Legal Considerations**

N/A

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

N/A

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

N/A

**Number of attachments to the report: 0**

## **Background Papers**

N/A

## **Tracking/Process**

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution?

No

## **Exemption from call in**

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

No

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Bee Network is our plan for a high-quality, affordable and fully integrated public transport and active travel system for the people and businesses of Greater Manchester.
- 1.2. The Bee Network is pivotal to delivering sustainable economic growth and the city region's objectives, set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy, by connecting people with education, jobs and opportunity, unlocking development, enabling housing growth, acting as a catalyst for regeneration, reducing carbon emissions and supporting social inclusion and active and healthy lifestyles.
- 1.3. Greater Manchester has led the way in reforming and improving its transport network. As pioneers of bus franchising, we now have local control of our most-used form of public transport, in addition to the largest light rail network in the country – Metrolink, and we are delivering a world-class walking, wheeling and cycling network as part of a wider infrastructure investment programme with an aggregate value of up to ~£3.5bn. Work is also underway to bring eight local commuter train services into the Bee Network by 2028.
- 1.4. We are now in the transition phase with some elements of the Bee Network already starting to change the way in which people travel across the city-region. This paper reports on progress so far and looks ahead to further delivery in the coming months.
- 1.5. Overall demand for public transport is increasing across Greater Manchester. Following a new record of 4.1 million in May 2024 for monthly Metrolink patronage, the highest since the network opened in 1992, record-breaking patronage figures were set in September on Bee Network buses, with 305,000 journeys recorded on a single day (6th September). Bus patronage is also now the closest to the pre-pandemic level we've seen, and Metrolink is above it. Notwithstanding the lost growth resulting from the pandemic, both bus and Metrolink are showing year on year growth, and demand for travel is strong.

# 2. Bus Franchising Operation and Implementation

## Bus Franchising Operation

- 2.1. As the most used form of public transport in Greater Manchester, buses are the cornerstone of the Bee Network and since the historic launch of bus franchising a

year ago, more than 58 million bus journeys have been made on cheaper, cleaner, more reliable bus services.

- 2.2. Since the launch of bus franchising in Bolton, Wigan and parts of Salford and Bury, in September 2023 followed by Oldham, Rochdale and parts of Bury, Salford and North Manchester in March 2024, nearly seven million more journeys<sup>1</sup> have been made on the city region's buses compared with the previous year (a 5% increase).
- 2.3. Buses in the first areas to come under local control are consistently more reliable than before franchising, with services in the Tranche 1 areas now consistently above the target of 80% punctuality. Between June and August 2024, punctuality of Tranche 1 services was 86.5% compared to 70.5% for the equivalent pre-franchising period. TfGM continues to work closely with operators to continuously improve service performance. In the Tranche 2 area buses are consistently on time more often than both current non-Bee Network services and when compared with those services in the Tranche 2 area in the same period last year.
- 2.4. More people are travelling by bus, with 58.6 million passenger journeys made on the Bee Network (between 24/9/23 and 14/9/24). Record-breaking patronage figures were set on two consecutive days in September, with 305,000 journeys recorded on a single day (6th September).
- 2.5. The recently launched trial of night buses on the V1 and 36 is proving popular with people working in, and those enjoying, the night-time economy. The pilot is providing 24-hour connectivity for around 135,000 people living within a five-minute walk of the two routes, including students and people working in the hospitality, healthcare and logistics sectors. Over 50,000 journeys were made across the two services, between 22:00 and 07:00 in the first month with over 7,000 journeys made on the additional trips that are now provided (around 14% of over-night journeys).
- 2.6. The first new Bee Network service is also set to be introduced at the end of October. A new 615 service will connect Wigan with Middlebrook retail park. The hourly service restores a link for people in the borough to the popular retail park, giving them access to a wide range of stores and eateries. The 576 service will also be rerouted to serve Middlebrook once a new spine road providing a link between Horwich and Middlebrook opens in Spring 2025. In addition, and in relation to

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<sup>1</sup> Bus patronage has increased from 155.5 million in 2022/23, to 162.3 million during 2023/24

access to large shopping and leisure destinations, there will be twice as many 132 services connecting Wigan with the Trafford Centre from 27 October, with buses running every 30 minutes instead of once an hour.

- 2.7. Revenues from buses in the Tranche 1 of the Bee Network exceeded £20m. That's £3m higher than budgeted (between 24/9/23 and 31/3/24). Franchising is also costing a third less per km than services that were being tendered before franchising began. This strong performance has helped, in part, to mitigate wider financial pressures across transport operations, as the transport sector continues to face structural funding challenges due to residual impact of recent external shocks including lost growth in patronage and revenues as a result of the pandemic and rapid increases in the cost base due to unprecedented levels of inflation.
- 2.8. The average age of buses in Bolton, Wigan and parts of Salford and Bury is 4.7 years, compared with an average age of 8.6 for the Greater Manchester bus fleet in 2018. 10% of buses are now electric across the Bee Network – up from less than 1% before franchising. This is expected to increase to more than 20% during 2025.
- 2.9. An extra 20 buses were introduced to the Tranche 1 area to improve punctuality, reliability and provide extra capacity – leading to rising passenger numbers. Improvements to punctuality and reliability are planned for the Tranche 2 area later this year and in early 2025.
- 2.10. Jobs are also being created through franchised contracts. Bus operators have hired 179 apprentices and Rochdale firm Mellors is one of three UK manufacturers building Bee Network buses, with orders helping to fund the creation of 15 new apprentice roles there too. TfGM continues to work with the GMCA Skills Team to develop Bee Network Careers pathways, including through the GM MBacc, to provide the future skills and workforce that are integral to the success of the Bee Network.

### **Franchising Implementation**

- 2.11. At the end of March, contracts were awarded to operate the final round of Bee Network bus services in Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and remaining parts of Manchester and Salford from 5 January 2025 – at which point all buses across Greater Manchester will be franchised and under local control.
- 2.12. Metroline has been awarded contracts to operate four of the five large franchises, Hyde Road, Sharston, and Wythenshawe (all in Manchester), and Tameside, with

Stagecoach awarded the contract to operate the fifth, in Stockport. Diamond Bus has been awarded contracts to run three of the four small franchises and Go North West the remaining one. For school services, Diamond Bus (North West) Limited has been awarded 7 contracts and Go North West Limited 2 contracts, covering a total of 37 schools.

- 2.13. Representing approximately half of the GM bus network, the third and final tranche of bus franchising represents the biggest challenge yet. Mobilisation is at an advanced stage to ensure that buses, onboard technology, drivers, engineers, dispatchers, buses and depots are ready for the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

### **3. Metrolink**

- 3.1. Over 44.5 million annual journeys took place across the Metrolink network to the end of September 2024, representing 98% of the total number of journeys carried at the equivalent point in 2019, which was Metrolink's best year for patronage.
- 3.2. In May 2024, 4.1 million people travelled on Metrolink across Greater Manchester, setting a new record for monthly patronage since the network opened in 1992. This was thanks in part to a significant number of events in May including the Great Manchester Run, Manchester City's Premier League title-winning parade and high-profile concerts at the Co-Op Live.
- 3.3. Revenue protection activities continue to reduce fare evasion across the network. Evasion rates have reduced from a high of 16.6% in August 2023 to 10.2% in August 2024, with the additional revenue more than covering the costs of increasing staff numbers to conduct additional enforcement activity across the network.
- 3.4. Several closures took place over the summer for essential track renewal works in and around the city centre and the Rochdale line was partially closed following a land slip at Derker. Despite this, Metrolink revenue is 13% up year on year, helping to mitigate the financial pressures across Bee Network operations.
- 3.5. Further renewal works are planned for next summer with additional engineering work required at Derker in 2025 to strengthen the resilience of the network and safeguard continued good performance.
- 3.6. Work continues to assess options and to propose a recommendation for the future management and maintenance of Metrolink. The current operation and maintenance contract with KeolisAmey Metrolink (KAM) is due to expire in 2027.

## **4. GM Rail Network**

- 4.1. Section 10 of this report provides an overview of the GM Rail Reform and Integration programme which is taking forward proposals to integrate rail services into the Bee Network.
- 4.2. In the meantime, TfGM continues to work with rail operators and Network Rail to improve GM rail services, the performance of which has been very poor in recent months. Crew availability continues impact on Northern services, with Northern issuing a number of “Do No Travel” notices on multiple GM routes on consecutive Sundays. Northern are not operating up to 1 in 3 services, with Sundays being the most affected day.
- 4.3. Members of the ASLEF union have voted to accept a multi-year pay offer, ending a two-year dispute at 16 rail companies including Northern and TransPennine Express. However this deal did not address “rest day working” which is why Sundays remain a problem.

## **5. Active Travel**

- 5.1. Providing people with the opportunity to walk, wheel or cycle is fundamental to the Bee Network, enabling people to move around Greater Manchester in different ways, particularly for short trips or giving barrier free access to public transport stops. Our long term goal (2040) is for 95% of the population in Greater Manchester to live 400m from a safe route.
- 5.2. Active Travel is the 'glue' that brings together the wider travel network. There are virtually no journeys that do not start and end with an active element.
- 5.3. One million rides were recorded on the Oxford Road corridor between January and late September of this year – earlier in the year than ever previously recorded. This demonstrates the long term benefits of GM’s investment in high quality infrastructure and segregated cycle ways, several years on from completion of the scheme.
- 5.4. Active travel accounted for around 33% of all trips by Greater Manchester residents in 2023. However, we aim to double walking, and double, then double again the number of trips made by bike. Walking and cycling have increased in GM by 20% and 21% respectively between 2021 and 2023 (source: TRADS). This is in line with the increase in all journeys post pandemic.

- 5.5. GM's active travel capital programme comprises over £275m of investment, and since its commencement in 2018/19 the Active Travel Programme has delivered more than 120km of safe, segregated routes to date, opened up hundreds of kilometres of quieter routes, delivered tens of improved junctions, and built numerous new crossings. We are on track to deliver nearly 140km of Bee Active Network routes by March 2025.
- 5.6. A programme of 'activation measures' is also being delivered, including cycle training and the Starling Bank Bikes cycle hire scheme. An annual report on the Active Travel Programme will be considered by the Bee Network Committee in December.

### **Active Travel Infrastructure**

- 5.7. Delivery of infrastructure to support cycling, walking and wheeling continues with the commencement on site of Manchester City Council's Active Travel England (ATE) funded scheme on Deansgate which will deliver a series of significant junction safety upgrades and segregated cycle lanes; and Wigan Council's Whelley Loopline scheme, which will extend the popular, multi-user path through suburban Wigan.
- 5.8. Other works include the completion in July of Trafford Borough Council's Talbot Road scheme – a series of junction upgrades linked to a wider set of improvements for the A56 corridor. These wider improvements include the A56 Phase 2 scheme, where Trafford are currently on site constructing light segregation cycle lanes to replace the cones introduced during the pandemic, and the Seymour Grove junction upgrade scheme, which received Bee Network Committee approval in July and is due to commence on site in November. Manchester City Council's Northern and Eastern Gateway scheme is progressing through a phased delivery, with a number of early phases complete, and a new bridge over the Ashton Canal is due to be installed before the end of the year.
- 5.9. As well as dedicated active travel schemes, inclusion of active travel in the wider infrastructure programme being delivered is embedded through the Streets for All design guide and the infrastructure design assurance process.

### **Starling Bikes**

- 5.10. Starling Bank Bikes continues to operate well with over 970,000 rides having taken place and 2.4 million km ridden using the scheme. The recovery plan put in place



last year has now completed with 1,200 bikes now available. We still have 30 stations suspended from the Recovery Period which are being reviewed with the Operator and Local Authorities to re-open or permanently close and relocate. Sept 24 and the beginning of Oct 24 have seen an increase in stolen bikes which has affected availability. This is something we are working on with the operator and GMP using the trackers on the bikes. In future we remain committed to expanding the scheme and will be exploring phase 2 expansion options including funding.

### **Bikes on Metrolink**

- 5.11. The bikes on Metrolink pilot concluded successfully in April following 6 weeks of supervised trials to test whether bikes and non-standard cycles can be taken on trams safely in a variety of operational settings.
- 5.12. The trial took place on off-peak services on different lines, routes and stops across the Metrolink network. Testing included the carriage of adapted bikes used as mobility aids, scooters and a broader range of mobility scooters that are not currently permitted.
- 5.13. Feedback from passengers was recorded as a part of the pilot along with feedback from the volunteers taking part and any other participants involved. A report on the pilot results will be brought to the Bee Network Committee in December 2024 with recommendations on next steps.

### **School Streets and Crossings**

- 5.14. The Mayor of Greater Manchester and GM Active Travel Commissioner set out their ambitions earlier this year to develop up to 100 School Streets and create new and / or upgraded road crossings near schools.
- 5.15. School Streets consist of a range of measures which limit traffic during drop off and pick up time to make walking, wheeling and scooting to school safer and encourage healthier lifestyles - helping tackle high-levels of childhood obesity in the city region.
- 5.16. Currently only 50% of GM residents say it is safe for children to walk to school and just 42% believe it is safe for children to cycle to school.
- 5.17. On the agenda for this meeting are proposals to invest £1.3m in the next phase of School Streets ambition, building on the current pilots at 30 schools across the city region. This investment in School Streets and Crossings is part of a wider School

Travel Programme to help deliver the emerging School Travel Strategy which will be considered by GMCA this month.

## **6. Highways Management**

- 6.1. With an estimated 2.5 billion trips made on the Greater Manchester (GM) road network (with an origin and/or destination inside GM) each year, Greater Manchester's road network is an essential part of the region's transport infrastructure and critical to the delivery of a safe, reliable and efficient Bee Network.
- 6.2. Traffic volumes across GM have returned to pre-pandemic levels. However, there has been some changes in travel behaviour, with fewer trips during the weekday AM peak and more trips during the PM peak into the evenings and at the weekend.
- 6.3. Car ownership in GM has also increased. Data from the DfT shows the number of licenced private cars in GM is 6% up on 5 years ago and 16% up on 10 years ago.
- 6.4. Journey time reliability on the highway network is over 90% i.e. less than one in ten journeys will take longer than would be expected given the time of the day on that day of the week.

### **Winter Preparedness**

- 6.5. The next three months are traditionally the most challenging with respect to highways performance. Darker nights, inclement weather, an increase in events and associated trips, Christmas markets and shopping activity, more breakdowns and an increase in road traffic collisions all impact on the operational capacity of the Highway network. Based on previous years data the network slows down with average speeds being more than 20% slower during the PM peak.
- 6.6. TfGM are working with Local Highway Authorities, National Highways, event organisers and transport operators to provide a co-ordinated approach and response to help to minimise the impact of the winter months on the Bee Network. This also includes a communications plan to encourage people to travel using public transport. Safer Roads GM are also planning two campaigns to complement partner activities and GMP enforcement programmes. The first campaign is 'Darker Nights' which will focus on pedestrian safety. This will be followed by the seasonal 'Don't Drink/Drug Drive' campaign.

## **Vision Zero**

- 6.7. The DfT published the 2023 Road Safety Statistics for Great Britain at the end of September 2024. In Greater Manchester there were 799 people Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI's) of which 45 of those were fatalities. Compared to 2022 statistics this is a 6.2% reduction in KSI's and a 29.7% reduction in fatalities. Whilst this is a positive trend, the numbers are still far too high and the human consequences of this level of road harm is unacceptable. The people who live in, work in or who visit Greater Manchester deserve better.
- 6.8. In order to seek to put an end to this unacceptable level of people being killed or harmed on our roads we have been developing a Vision Zero Strategy and Action Plan. Vision Zero represents Greater Manchester's ambition for zero fatalities and life changing injuries (FLCI) on our roads by 2040, whilst increasing safe, healthy and equitable mobility for all.
- 6.9. It is proposed to take the Vision Zero Strategy and Action Plan for approval and subsequent adoption to the Bee Network Committee and Greater Manchester Combined Authority at the end of November.

## **Network Management**

- 6.10. Greater Manchester's roads are changing. To support the ambitions set out in Made to Move, Streets for All, the Clean Air Plan, Bus Franchising, the GM Bus Strategy, and the Bee Network, we are optimising the use of limited street space to deliver better and more space for walking, wheeling, and cycling; to give more priority for public transport; and to make our streets better places to live, spend time in, and travel along. This is essential in achieving the aspirations set out in the 2040 Transport Strategy and ensuring the transport network keeps pace with population growth and supports sustainable economic growth throughout the city-region by moving our residents and visitors more cleanly and efficiently.
- 6.11. How Greater Manchester manages the highway network is critical to the success of bus franchising, the Bee Network and economic growth. Working in collaboration, with our Local Authority partners and National Highways to further develop the strategic model of network management for Greater Manchester's highway network is essential. This would help support a number of benefits including, helping the delivery of Local Transport Plans, consistent delivery standards, effective network

management, improved bus services and active travel network and exploiting regional procurement opportunities.

- 6.12. In November, this Committee will receive a report on the performance of the GM highways network, asset management performance, how we are improving the management of the highways network, what more could be done and the challenges in achieving that.

## **7. Safety and Security**

- 7.1. Tackling network anti-social behaviour, crime and fare evasion remains a key focus for the GM TravelSafe Partnership (TSP). Work is underway to review the TSP Strategy which will step up efforts to tackle Gender Based Violence and Hate Crime.
- 7.2. The TSP is committed to working with colleagues to ensure the network is as safe as possible and has supported Operation AVRO for Tameside in September, will be supporting Operation AVRO for Bolton in October and will be delivering Operation AVRO for Transport in December.
- 7.3. Joint working through Operation Vulcan (Transport) has yielded good results across Piccadilly and Victoria Stations. September results include 9 arrests, 37 Stop/Searches (10 positive), 75 Stop/Accounts and over 2,000 passenger interactions.
- 7.4. More measures to increase safety, including 69 new TravelSafe Support and Enforcement Officers (TSEOs) have been introduced across the franchised network to provide a reassuring, visible presence for the travelling public.
- 7.5. TfGM and GMP are working closely together to refresh the TravelSafe plans with a view to bringing GMP's strategic problem-solving capability across the entire transport network.
- 7.6. Recruitment well underway for additional officers to support the roll out of Tranche 3. This will include a new TSEO office located at Stockport Interchange, providing a total of three hubs to deploy from.
- 7.7. September marked 12-months of having TSEOs on bus. Across the year they have:
- Attended over 2,700 incidents,
  - Safeguarded over 360 customers,

- Submitted over 820 pieces of intelligence,
- Dealt with over 600 people vaping,
- Refused travel to over 750 people,
- Withdrawn over 360 passes,
- Boarded over 19,680 buses and,
- Interacted with more than 310,400 customers.

- 7.8. The TSEO 24/7 support to Night Bus also commenced in September and has been well received by drivers and customers. 1,648 patrol hours have been delivered, with 38 incidents attended and 7 people safeguarded.
- 7.9. The overall rolling 12-month rate of incidents for September has risen slightly to 46 per million passenger journeys, this remains just within the current baseline (of expected levels) and continues to be driven by increased reporting primarily relating to Bus.
- 7.10. However, the rate of incidents on bus has reduced this month, following the start of the academic year and re-commencement of the TravelSafe educational programme, with over 4,000 students engaged to-date.
- 7.11. A joint operation was undertaken in September between Beryl and GMP, during which over 50 Starling Bikes were recovered; some of which are believed to be from addresses linked to wider criminality. Beryl are working with GMP to share tracking information to support the evidential case file.

## **8. Bee Network Fares, Ticketing and Customer Experience**

### **Fares and Ticketing**

- 8.1. Key to the success of the Bee Network are integrated, affordable and simple fares and ticketing products, aimed at supporting more people to travel for less, with back-office systems that do the hard work to make life easier for customers.
- 8.2. Following the implementation of the final phase of bus franchising on 5 January 2025, GMCA will be able to set fares and introduce and amend ticketing products across the Bee Network, without the need to negotiate with commercial operators. Importantly, it also allows GMCA to integrate fares and ticketing so that passengers can move seamlessly between Bee Network buses and trams, with an ambition to integrate cycle hire and GM rail in future.

- 8.3. At its meeting in July 2024, GMCA approved a reduction to the price of a number of Bee Network bus fares, from 5 January 2025, as follows:
- A reduction to the price of 7-day Bus Travel on Bee Network Services from £21 Adult/£10.50 Child to £20 Adult /£10 Child; and
  - A reduction to the price of 28-day Bus Travel on Bee Network Services from £85.40 Adult/£42.70 Child to £80 Adult /£40 Child.
  - And also approved the introduction of a paper 'Hopper' single ticket for Bee Network bus users.
- 8.4. In September, GMCA approved the introduction of 'pay as you go' (PAYG) contactless ticketing and multi-modal capped fares across bus and Metrolink from March 2025. PAYG will provide greater flexibility for customers who will not need to plan and purchase travel in advance and will simply be able to touch-on / touch in and out (on bus and Metrolink) with their contactless bank card or device and know they will be charged the appropriate capped fare.
- 8.5. PAYG on bus will also include the benefits of the Hopper Fares, so anyone travelling on multiple buses within an hour will only be charged the single Hopper fare, mirroring the paper version that will be introduced in January 2025.
- 8.6. The bus and multi modal PAYG will operate initially with adult fares only (as is the case currently for Metrolink and other schemes, including Transport for London's).
- 8.7. The scheme will be introduced alongside a detailed engagement and training programme, and extensive customer communications to ensure that customers understand how to benefit from this new, easier way to travel.
- 8.8. Further improvements were approved by the GMCA in September 2024 including:
- An Adult Bee Bus Annual ticket, priced at £800, (which equates to the cost of 10, rather than 13, 28 day tickets) will be introduced from January 2025;
  - An innovative scheme with Credit Unions to enable those who may not be able to afford the initial outlay of an annual product to benefit from the value that the annual ticket offers;
  - Extension of the recompense scheme to Tranche 3 passenger to mitigate any negative impact of the transition to Bee Network fares; and
- 8.9. Work continues with Shadow Great British Railways to develop the first phase of pay-as-you-go contactless payments on the parts of the GM network.

## **Customer Experience**

- 8.10. The Bee Network app has been downloaded 628k times and has 178k weekly active weekly users. The app allows users to plan their journeys, track buses across Greater Manchester, access live departure times, find their nearest bus or tram stop and leave feedback via Rate My Journey. Since launch 12.9m buses have been tracked and 1.3m journeys planned.
- 8.11. Work continues to improve the app in response to customer feedback and to incorporate additional functionality.
- 8.12. Satisfaction with fares has jumped from 63% in 2022 to a record high of 82% (based on TfGM fares survey and since the inception of the survey in 2016).
- 8.13. Customer satisfaction overall is at 78% and 'very satisfied' has been steadily rising since franchising. Nearly ¾ of people think the Bee Network is something to be proud of and 3 in 4 people think that it's run in the interest of the people of Greater Manchester.
- 8.14. A Customer Experience Strategy is currently being developed to encourage more people to use the Bee Network. The Strategy aims to put customers at the heart of everything we do by listening to customers, ensuring that decisions are based on customer need and impact, and by striving for excellence at all points of the customer journey.

## **9. Transport Infrastructure Pipeline**

- 9.1. Based on the indicative allocations advised by the previous Government, the Transport Infrastructure Pipeline has an anticipated aggregate financial value of between £3.5bn and £4bn to the end of the financial year 2031/32. The Pipeline will deliver a wide range of infrastructure schemes to improve the performance, resilience and customer experience of using the Bee Network, including a world-class walking, wheeling and cycling network; expanded cycle hire and loan services, new stations, stops and interchanges; bus priority measures, systems to support integrated ticketing; and asset renewal to maintain and improve network safety and resilience.
- 9.2. Work to develop and deliver transport infrastructure pipeline schemes continues at pace. To date, CRSTS funding has contributed to the delivery of the new Stockport Mixed Use scheme (comprising the Transport Interchange, cycle ramp, bridgescape

link to the rail station, 196 residential apartments and a 2 acre public park), zero emission electric buses, customer and ticketing improvements, a range of ongoing active travel improvements and a range of Bus Infrastructure schemes across GM, including over 100 traffic signal and junction upgrades, improvements to pedestrian facilities at 11 locations across GM and a range of minor pinch point schemes and bus stop upgrades to support more reliable bus journeys and better access to bus services.

- 9.3. In addition, CRSTS funding is also playing an important role in sustaining the current network, to ensure that it remains safe, efficient and reliable for customers. This has seen significant highways maintenance work and Metrolink renewals activity in recent months, in particular in Manchester City Centre, and this remains an ongoing programme of work.
- 9.4. Works are also currently on site to deliver a Streets for All scheme in Ancoats, Access for All schemes at Daisy Hill and Irlam rail stations, and further Bus Infrastructure improvements across the city region, including a new red route and red route clearway in Trafford.
- 9.5. Further updates on the Transport Infrastructure Pipeline will be brought to the Committee on a regular basis.

## **10. Strategy and Reform**

- 10.1. Delivery of the Bee Network will require ambitious strategy, innovative policy and careful, long-term planning, driven by insight and engagement with key stakeholders.

### **Local Transport Plan Refresh**

- 10.2. The city region's transport ambitions are articulated in our Local Transport Plan (LTP), the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040. Working closely with the ten GM authorities, GMCA and other key partners, TfGM is leading a refresh of this important document. The updated LTP will reflect the creation of the Bee Network as an integrated public transport and active travel system, and will reflect its role in supporting wider city region ambitions e.g. in support of Greater Manchester's 2038 net zero carbon target. A draft, refreshed LTP is expected to be completed by Summer 2025.



## **Rapid Transit Strategy**

- 10.3. At its meeting in July 2024, the GMCA approved the draft Rapid Transit Strategy, which sets out how fast and frequent mass transit will support the integrated Bee Network. The Strategy sets out:
- our vision for rapid transit and why there's a case for change;
  - what we need in broad terms, and how we'll seek to deliver it in more detail;
  - the 8 rail corridors to be integrated into the Bee Network by 2028; and
  - c.15 emerging priorities for expansion of the rapid transit system.
- 10.4. The strategy focuses on sustaining, growing and transforming the city region's rapid transit system. Its contents are expected to be formally adopted via the process to create the updated LTP.

## **GM Rail Integration and Reform**

- 10.5. The rail network plays a key role in supporting growth as the most efficient way of moving large numbers of people to and between the city and regional centres.
- 10.6. Having a modern, fit-for-purpose rail network is crucial to delivering economic growth, prosperity and opportunities. By integrating and embedding rail into the Bee Network, we can make the GM public transport system more than the sum of its parts.
- 10.7. GMCA's 'Trailblazer' deeper devolution deal with central government commits the government to support the development of a new partnership between Greater Manchester and Great British Railways (GBR), "to support the delivery of the Bee Network by 2030, which will see:
- full multi-modal fares and ticketing integration;
  - co-branding and common customer information;
  - 'pay as you go' ticketing;
  - better integration of local stations;
  - identification of opportunities for regeneration and development,
  - greater access to local rail data; and
  - giving GMCA the opportunity to sponsor infrastructure and service enhancement schemes.
- 10.8. In line with the Trailblazer Devolution Deal, TfGM has been working with railway partners to achieve preliminary integration of the '8-priority corridors' into the Bee

Network by 2028. This will significantly enhance the current customer rail offering through greater modal integration, accessibility, enhancements in performance, with an ambition to increase annual patronage on eight core Bee Network rail lines by up to 1.2 million journeys within four years, leading to increased revenue and reduced subsidy.

10.9. In the long-term Greater Manchester's statutory role remains to be defined and different options will bring different levels of control, flexibility and risk. TfGM is currently developing these options with the Shadow GBR on the basis that statutory powers and, importantly, associated funding is required to specify, commission and deliver railway services.

10.10. Following consideration by this Committee in September 2024, GMCA approved further engagement with HMG, rail partners and others to explore and influence legislative and structural options that would achieve GM ambitions for rail integration. TfGM is also in detailed discussions with DfT and GBR regarding the roll out of 'pay as you go' across GM, which would see rail passengers benefit from integration with the Bee Network.

### **School Travel Strategy**

10.11. Work is currently underway to develop a School Travel Strategy, setting out Greater Manchester's ambition to support more young people to travel to school by active travel and public transport, building on the benefits of the integrated Bee Network. The Combined Authority is due to receive a report on the draft strategy at its October meeting and a period of consultation and engagement is planned for later in 2024. The draft strategy will support GM's wider education and skills ambitions, including creation of the MBacc, the Greater Manchester Baccalaureate.

## **11. Beyond the Bee Network**

### **GM Integrated Settlement**

11.1. TfGM and GMCA officers are working together to shape the outcomes framework that will govern the Integrated Settlement, a single funding settlement to GM along the lines of those received by government departments, which will allow GM to target funding better to support local priorities. Transport funding is a key part of the settlement, which will be critical in supporting delivery of the Bee Network and other

transport ambitions. Further information about the Integrated Settlement is anticipated alongside the Autumn Budget on 30<sup>th</sup> October.

### **GM Growth Programme**

- 11.2. Close, joint working is also in place to support the delivery of the city region's six growth locations. Over the coming years, investment in transport – and the Bee Network – will play an important role in unlocking the opportunity of these sites and realising the benefits for Greater Manchester residents and businesses.

### **High Speed Rail and Rail Infrastructure**

- 11.3. GM partner authorities, including Manchester Airports Group, are working with the DfT to take forward the Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) programme.
- 11.4. A new Liverpool - Manchester Railway Board, chaired by the Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region Mayors has now been established to maximise the economic and social benefits of that part of NPR between the Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester. The Board has already held its first two meetings and launched an initial Growth Report “A new Liverpool-Manchester Railway – Building a route to prosperity” which identifies the initial scope of the growth opportunities presented by the Liverpool Manchester Railway (LMR). A Partnership Board of industry and stakeholder leaders has also been established, chaired by former Rail Minister Huw Merriman, which will support the work of the main Railway Board.
- 11.5. Authorities along the new Liverpool Manchester railway continue to pursue enhanced engagement, joint working and information sharing with DfT and their agents to drive a place-based, collaborative approach to all aspects of development for this railway.
- 11.6. A private consortium commissioned by the Mayors of Greater Manchester and the West Midlands to review the role of enhanced connectivity in catalysing growth, skills, and jobs across their city-regions, has completed its study and published its final report (Midlands-North West Rail Link ([midlandsnorthwestrailink.co.uk](http://midlandsnorthwestrailink.co.uk))). The report concludes that a new Midlands-North West Rail Link (MNWRL) should be built, in stages and in partnership with private investors. The consortium identified a solution which still provides a substantial proportion of the economic benefits for passengers and rail freight of HS2, but at circa 60-75% of the cost, achieved through a reconsideration of the design, engineering specification and delivery model. The consortium are seeking to work with the combined authorities, the

private sector and central Government to establish a Steering Group to develop a feasibility study 'at pace' over the next six months.

- 11.7. Finally, officers continue to engage with Government and the Department for Transport to address some of the long standing issues with rail infrastructure impacting GM including capacity challenges on the West Coast Mainline and in central Manchester, and reviewing freight opportunities to unlock capacity for passenger services and improve access to free ports and support regeneration.