

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED
AUTHORITY HELD ON FRIDAY 30th JANUARY 2026 AT STOCKPORT TOWN
HALL**

PRESENT

| | |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| GMCA Mayor | Andy Burnham (In the Chair) |
| GMCA | Deputy Mayor Kate Green |
| Bolton | Councillor Nicholas Peel |
| Bury | Councillor Lucy Smith |
| Manchester | Councillor Bev Craig |
| Oldham | Councillor Arooj Shah |
| Rochdale | Councillor Neil Emmott |
| Salford | City Mayor Paul Dennett |
| Stockport | Councillor Mark Roberts |
| Tameside | Councillor Eleanor Wills |
| Trafford | Councillor Tom Ross |
| Wigan | Councillor Nazia Rehman |

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Chair of GM Overview & Scrutiny | Councillor John Walsh |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Group Chief Executive Officer | Caroline Simpson |
| Group Deputy Chief Executive | Andrew Lightfoot |
| Group Monitoring Officer | Gill Duckworth |
| Group Chief Finance Officer | Steve Wilson |
| GMCA Secretary | Sarah Horseman |
| Bolton | Sue Johnson |
| Bury | Lynne Ridsdale |
| Manchester | Tom Stannard |
| Oldham | Shelley Kipling |
| Rochdale | Julie Murphy |

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|------------------------|--------------------|
| Salford | Stephen Young |
| Stockport | Michael Cullen |
| Tameside | Emma Alexander |
| Trafford | Sara Todd |
| Wigan | Lewis Greenwood |
| Office of the GM Mayor | Kevin Lee |
| TfGM | Martin Lax |
| TfGM | Danny Vaughan |
| GMFRS | DCFO Carlos Meakin |
| GMCA | Nicola Ward |
| GMCA | Lee Teasdale |

GMCA 01/26 APOLOGIES

That apologies be received and noted from Councillor Eamonn O'Brien (Bury), Councillor David Molyneux (Wigan) Alison McKenzie-Folan (Wigan) & Steve Warrener (TfGM).

GMCA 02/26 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, opened by expressing congratulations to Councillor Bev Craig, and Transport Commissioner Vernon Everitt, who had been awarded an OBE and a CBE respectively in the King's New Years Honours list.

An update was provided on the government announcement around Northern Powerhouse Rail. This was a significant achievement for the city region to receive this firm commitment to a new line to the west of the Pennines, which Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and partners had worked hard to secure through a team effort. An underground station was now a possibility at Piccadilly Station and the Transport Commissioner together with TfGM officers was working on a feasibility study to take this to the next stage. This all underpins the growth work taking place throughout the region.

An update was provided on the work taking place to support hackney carriages and private hire vehicle operators in the region transition to cleaner vehicles. The £8m hackney funding provided by government had opened up to applications before Christmas, 190 applications had been received to date with 150 of these approved to date. However, there was still a challenge around private hire vehicles in the region, particularly around vehicles licensed outside of the region. With this in mind, Leaders had agreed an additional £4.45m, subject to approval within the budget, to provide an extra fund for transition to cleaner vehicles, exclusively to private hire vehicle operators licensed within GM. The funding would come either via a £5000 interest free loan or a £1000 grant to support the necessary upgrades.

RESOLVED /-

1. That GMCA representatives awarded in the King's New Years Honours be congratulated, including Cllr Bev Craig (OBE) and Transport Commissioner Vernon Everitt (CBE).
2. That the update on the Northern Powerhouse Rail bill and the associated growth opportunities be received.
3. That the update on the £4.45m fund to support Greater Manchester registered private hire vehicle operators in bringing their vehicles to compliance be received, and it be noted that the fund will be subject to approval within the budget process.

GMCA 03/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED /-

There were none.

GMCA 04/26 GMCA MINUTES 12 DECEMBER 2025

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the GMCA held on 12 December 2025 be approved.

GMCA 05/26 BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE MINUTES 11 DECEMBER 2025

RESOLVED /-

That the proceedings of the meeting of the Bee Network Committee held on 11 December 2025 be noted.

**GMCA 06/26 MINUTES OF THE GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2025**

RESOLVED /-

That the proceedings of the meeting of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10 December 2025 be noted.

**GMCA 07/26 MAYORAL GENERAL BUDGET AND PRECEPT PROPOSALS
– 2026/27**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester presented a report setting out the proposals for the Mayoral General Budget and precept for 2026-27 for consideration by the members of the GMCA. The proposals being made included the budget for the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service which was a mayoral responsibility in Greater Manchester.

The ask for 2026-27 was to increase the Mayoral General Precept by £25 a year to £153.95 for a Band D property, less for lower bands, under which the vast majority of GM housing fell. This would comprise a £6 increase in the precept for Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Services (GMFRS), and a £19 increase for other Mayoral general functions.

The Mayor highlighted the achievements of GMFRS in recent years and how the service had improved over his tenure. A wholesale culture change had been seen in GMFRS, and this had recently been demonstrated on 2nd October 2025, where Operation Plato had been called upon in response to the Heaton Park Synagogue Attack. GMFRS was one of only two Fire & Rescue Services in the country fully trained to respond to a marauding terrorist attack and a crew at that time on the way to another job took the decision to divert to Heaton Park synagogue and had supported the utterly critical situation. It was vital to sustain the progress that had been made to date, in what was the only fire service in the country currently adding

fire pumps with operation capability to its fleet, and the highest number of firefighters seen in the last decade.

Deputy Mayor for Safer & Stronger Communities Kate Green added that GMFRS was now in a stronger position after a considerable effort by Fire Service leads and staff following a difficult funding settlement the previous year. The multi-year funding settlement for the coming year was more encouraging and would provide the service with a more stable base. Allowing them to plan over the longer term and providing scope for more investment into an aging fire estate.

Mayor Andy Burnham highlighted the progress of the Bee Network to date, which had seen all developments so far delivered on time and to budget. Reference was made to the contribution of local authorities and the deferment of these contributions in recent years due to difficult financial constraints. It was advised that this precept, if passed, based on individual circumstances, could allow scope for them to be released from these obligations in a way that was also manageable for the Bee Network. Reference was also made to plans around removing the time restrictions on concessionary passes, retaining the £2 fare cap for the remainder of 2026 and the further embedding and enhancement of TravelSafe Live Chat and other safety measures ensuring that the transport network becomes the '11th district' of GM.

Councillor John Walsh, Chair of the GM Overview & Scrutiny Committee was then invited to feedback following the Committee's recent consideration of the Mayor's budget proposals. The Committee made a number of observations and recommendations including the warm welcoming of the fire budgetary proposals, the continuation of the Bed Every Night scheme and the removal of the current 9.30am concessionary cap. The Committee also fully welcomed the work being undertaken to enhance TravelSafe and the aspiration to go further with night bus services was encouraged, with the suggestion that a dynamic pricing model might make a wider roll out more financially viable. The Committee would also welcome the unfreezing of the reserve transitional cost monies currently committed to the Bee Network to help local authorities to meet some of their budgetary shortfalls.

The Mayor welcomed the comments of the Committee and stated that further consideration would be given to the prospect of a dynamic pricing model or a more demand led service on night buses. In relation to the Bee Network transitional costs

and the releasing of some of these funds, the Mayor would ask that the Group Chief Executive and Group Treasurer liaise with GM Local Authority leads on the best use of earmarked reserves following the Fair Funding Review.

Comments and Questions

Members welcomed the funding being invested into the Bee Network stating that residents felt real tangible benefits from the enhancements being put in place, particularly people in the region with fewer financial resources.

Reference was made to the Bed Every Night scheme, with it being highlighted that the current government had made significant changes with regards to tackling the housing and homelessness crisis, with the introduction of the Renters Rights Act and the significant reduction of discounts in the Right to Buy model which had taken a lot of social housing out of the system. 60% of the Affordable Homes Programme would also be used to fund social housing. The Bed Every Night scheme within GM had invested £33m over the past five years and rough sleeper numbers had significantly reduced as a consequence.

RESOLVED /-

1. That consideration be given to Mayor's proposal to increase the Mayoral General Precept by £25 to £153.95 (for a Band D property), comprising of:
 - i) Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Services - precept of £92.20 (**£6 increase**);
 - ii) Other Mayoral General functions - precept of £61.75 (**£19 increase**).

2. That the following be noted:
 - i) the overall budget proposed for the Fire and Rescue Service,
 - ii) the use of the reserves to support the revenue and capital budgets, and the assessment by the Treasurer that the reserves as at March 2026 are adequate,
 - iii) the proposed Fire Service capital programme and proposals for funding,
 - iv) the medium-term financial position for the Fire and Rescue Service covered by the Mayoral precept

3. That the detailed budget proposals for other Mayoral general functions be noted.
4. That the use of reserves as set out in Paragraph 3.3 of the report be noted.
5. That consideration be given to the submission of any written comments to the Mayor in line with the legal process and timetable described in this report.
6. That it be noted that at its meeting at its meeting on 13th February 2026 there will be an updated budget submitted, consistent with the precept proposals, to reflect final tax base and collection fund calculations and the final baseline funding settlement.
7. That the comments raised through the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee be received and noted.
8. That the Mayor would ask the Group Chief Executive and Group Treasurer to liaise with GM Local Authorities on the best use of earmarked reserves following the Fair Funding Review.

GMCA 08/26 CREATION OF OLDHAM MAYORAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION: IN PRINCIPLE DECISION

Councillor Bev Craig, Portfolio Lead for Economy, Business and Inclusive Growth, presented a report seeking approval in principle to the creation of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) for Oldham, with further details and decisions to follow as set out in this paper.

Councillor Arooj Shah, as Leader of Oldham Council, was invited to provide her thoughts on the MDC. It was stated that there was huge positivity and excitement around the proposals, which had been clear at the launch of SportsTown Oldham earlier that week. There had been a perception in recent years that Oldham had been 'on its knees' and had needed to go cap in hand for investment, but the MDC felt like a true partnership.

The MDC would see the development of SportsTown, Northern Roots green space and the town centre regeneration plans. All were driven by a singular ambition to make a difference to the lives of the residents of Oldham borough. Together these projects would shape a new Oldham that would regenerate the area and in the case of SportsTown, put Oldham firmly on the sporting map.

The Mayor welcomed the comments and referenced Frank Rothwell the Chairman of Oldham Athletic and the work he had done to regenerate the club and act as a driving force behind SportsTown.

RESOLVED /-

1. That agreement be given in principle to the creation of a Mayoral Development Corporation for Oldham.
2. That it be agreed that GMCA officers can explore with Oldham Council detailed options for a Mayoral Development Corporation to be created for Oldham, with these matters to be decided upon by GMCA and the Council in due course.

**GMCA 09/26 CREATION OF BOLTON TOWN CENTRE MAYORAL
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION: IN PRINCIPLE DECISION**

Councillor Bev Craig, Portfolio Lead for Economy, Business and Inclusive Growth, presented a report seeking approval in principle to the creation of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) for Bolton Town Centre, with further details and decisions to follow as set out in this paper.

Councillor Nicholas Peel, as Leader of Bolton Council, was invited to provide his thoughts on the MDC. He stated that this was part of the wider Bolton to Wigan growth corridor strategy known as NorthFold. Transformational changes were now developing at pace within Bolton Town Centre and a new major development partner was due to be announced on the following Monday with a £200m redevelopment scheme, which the MDC would wrap around with additional stability and focus.

The Mayor welcomed the comments, reflecting on how Bolton had been a major shopping destination in previous years, with grand architecture. However, given the national economy moving away from a town centre retail focus, Bolton had been hit particularly hard, and the developments pointed the way to a brighter future.

Councillor John Walsh was invited to comment. Stating the vital importance of ensuring an appropriate scrutiny function was put in place to ensure that the Mayoral Development Corporations had appropriate checks and balances in place. The Mayor agreed with the importance of this, and stated that the Group Monitoring

Officer would be asked to establish a best way forward on this as the constitutions for the MDCs were developed.

RESOLVED /-

1. That agreement be given in principle to the creation of a Mayoral Development Corporation for Bolton Town Centre.
2. That it be agreed that GMCA officers can explore with Bolton Council detailed options for a Mayoral Development Corporation to be created for Bolton Town Centre, with these matters to be decided upon by GMCA and the Council in due course.
3. That the Group Monitoring Officer will establish the best approach for the future scrutiny of Mayoral Development Corporations.

**GMCA 10/26 CREATION OF ASHTON & STALYBRIDGE MAYORAL
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION: IN PRINCIPLE DECISION**

Councillor Bev Craig, Portfolio Lead for Economy, Business and Inclusive Growth, presented a report seeking approval in principle to the creation of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) for Ashton & Stalybridge, with further details and decisions to follow as set out in this paper.

Councillor Eleanor Wills, as Leader of Tameside Council, was invited to provide her thoughts on the MDC. This was an important moment in Tameside's ambition to deliver transport led regeneration. Major progressive change was being seen through Levelling Up investment and the transport led MDC would drive the vision of rail connectivity as a key driver in this regeneration.

The Mayor welcomed the comments, noting that the Ashton line would be the first rail line to move to GM Rail and enter the Bee Network in 2027.

RESOLVED /-

1. That agreement be given in principle to the creation of a Mayoral Development Corporation for Ashton and Stalybridge.
2. That it be agreed that GMCA officers can explore with Tameside Council detailed options to set up a Mayoral Development Corporation for Ashton

and Stalybridge, with these matters to be decided upon by GMCA and the Council in due course.

GMCA 11/26 GREATER MANCHESTER HOUSING INVESTMENT – GRANT VARIATIONS

City Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio Lead for Housing First, presented a report seeks GMCA approval to vary the amount of or other terms of various grants being provided from the GM Brownfield Housing Fund.

The Mayor welcomed the report stating that this tied into the work taking place around the Good Growth Fund.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the increased grants and/or change to grant recipient for the schemes previously approved by GMCA for funding set out in the table below be approved:

| SCHEME | GRANT RECIPIENT | DISTRICT | GRANT |
|---------------------------------|---|----------|----------|
| Grant increases | | | |
| Adelphi - Farmer Norton Phase 1 | English Cities Fund | Salford | £2.370 m |
| Adelphi - Willohaus 2 | Legal & General Affordable Homes | Salford | £4.420 m |
| Adelphi - Plot A1 New Bailey | English Cities Fund / a Registered Provider | Salford | £5.670 m |
| Change in Grant Recipient | | | |
| Prince's Gate Phase 1 | Legal & General Affordable Homes | Oldham | £9.930 m |

2. That authority be delegated to the Combined Authority Group Chief Finance Officer and GMCA Monitoring Officer to review the due diligence information in respect of the above investments, and, subject to their satisfactory review and agreement of the due diligence information and the overall detailed

commercial terms of the investments, to sign off any outstanding conditions, issue final approvals and complete any necessary related documentation in respect of these.

GMCA 12/26 GREATER MANCHESTER DIGITAL BLUEPRINT

Councillor Nicholas Peel, Portfolio Lead for Digital, presented a report seeking support for the overall approach to refreshing the GM Digital Blueprint 2023-2026, including endorsement for the proposed co-design of an updated Blueprint with localities and other public sector partners, reflecting the ambitions set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the progress made against the GM Digital Blueprint 2023-26 ambitions be noted.
2. That the changes in local and national context that have implications for the Blueprint refresh be noted
3. That support be given to the proposal for the Blueprint refresh and its scope and approach.
4. That support be given to the Digital Portfolio Lead Chief Executive acting as Senior Responsible Owner, and the Digital Portfolio Leader, acting as Sponsor.
5. That support be given to the refresh process to ensure the Digital Blueprint remains reflective of locality, partner and portfolio priorities.

GMCA 13/26 GREATER MANCHESTER INTERIM RECYCLING AND WASTE PLAN

Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Leader for Green City Region, provided an overview of English waste policy and the Greater Manchester Interim Recycling and Waste Plan that set out actions to be taken to enable GMCA to develop a long-term waste strategy in the future.

Councillor John Walsh was invited to feedback on comments raised by the GM Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Members had expressed some concerns around the

viability of the deposit return scheme; concerns were also expressed around the cost of the emissions training scheme and the lack of funding currently available; and green waste being dealt with in differing ways across the region. Cross boundary pressures due to closure of waste facilities were also highlighted as a concern for residents – and that a resident check policy could help in addressing these issues.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That the Greater Manchester Interim Recycling and Waste Plan 2026 – 2030 be approved.
3. That the comments of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee be received and noted.