

Minutes of: BURY LOCAL BEE NETWORK FORUM

Date of Meeting: 17th March 2026

Present: Councillor G Staples-Jones (in the Chair)
Councillors J Harris and J Southworth

Also in attendance: Bury Council Officers:-
Natalie Blackston
Lee Buggie
Michael Cunliffe

Two representatives from TfGM
Noah Cashmore- Youth Council Representative

Public Attendance: There was one member of the public present, Joanna Maudsley
(Chair of Bury Older People's Network)

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair made introductions and welcomed all present to the meeting.
Apologies were submitted by Councillor U Farooq and Joanne Betts.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were submitted.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on the 4th December 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

It was agreed:

That the minutes be approved.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair reported that no public questions had been submitted in advance of the agenda pack being published for this meeting.

5 YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE

The Chair introduced Noah Cashmore who was the nominated youth representative from the Youth Council to attend the Bury Bee Network Forum.

Noah presented an update on the Circles of Influence report that has been published since the last meeting.

This was something that had been entirely aimed at young people wanting to make an impact in development of organisations with one of the categories being transport.

A conference took place in November with 75 young people in attendance from 13 different secondary schools across the Bury area. A number of statistics were provided on transport in Bury and if young people agreed or disagreed about topics such as it being safe, affordable, reliability and bus or tram preference.

Other items mentioned were overcrowding issues on buses and trams and what can be done to help young people feel more safer when using the network. Transport apps were not up to date and would any improvements be made to this facility.

Joanna Maudsley added that concessionary passes were not available on the app via a mobile phone and had previously asked this question. Officers present would provide an answer to the question.

The Chair thanked Noah for his input at the meeting which was important to gauge a young person's perspective.

It was agreed:

That the verbal update be noted.

6 ACTIVE TRAVEL, HEALTH, SCHOOLS AND OBESITY

Lee Buggie, Public Health Specialist, Live Well & Healthy Place attended the meeting. He provided the forum with a presentation on the Bury Bee Forum for walking, wheeling and cycling for health.

The report also advised the Forum on the progress of delivering Bury Public Health's – LETS Get Bury Moving Framework's ambition around integrating physical activity into everyone's daily routines, thus local Bee Network infrastructure was pivotal in achieving the Chief Medical Officers activity levels for good health across the life course.

Active travel—primarily walking, wheeling and cycling plays a major role in improving population health by embedding physical activity into daily routines. National *Active Lives* data consistently shows that physically active adults have significantly lower rates of long-term conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and poor mental wellbeing. Yet levels of inactivity remain highest in deprived communities, where health outcomes are poorest. Increasing active travel is therefore a key lever for reducing health inequalities.

For children and young people, active travel to and from school creates reliable, built-in daily activity that supports healthy growth and development. Schools with higher active travel rates generally report better pupil concentration, mental wellbeing, and lower absenteeism. Obesity rates remain high particularly in Year 6 showing a strong association with low physical activity and potentially car-dependent travel patterns.

Active travel contributes to obesity prevention by increasing energy expenditure, reducing sedentary behaviour, improving cardiorespiratory fitness and supporting long-term healthy habits. Environments that enable safe walking and cycling such as school streets, connected routes, and reduced traffic are proven to increase activity levels across whole communities. When scaled, active travel interventions can therefore deliver measurable impacts on childhood obesity, adult chronic disease and overall population wellbeing, while supporting wider goals around clean air, climate resilience and healthy places.

J Harris and J Southworth asked if the playing in the street idea was safe for children and Lee Buggie reported that a traffic closure was put in place to restrict vehicles for around an hour in duration. Bollards and cones were also used and GMP along with local PCSO's were aware of the dates and times.

Joanna Maudsley questioned how you get people to exercise in an older age bracket if they have never done this before in their life. Lee Buggie explained that for someone aged over 65, one hour a day was gold standard but having someone standing and doing load bearing activities was better than nothing.

It was agreed:

That the Forum noted the Bee Network Update around active travel, health, schools and obesity.

7 BEE NETWORK QUARTERLY UPDATE

Representatives from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) presented a report to update on progress in delivering the Bee Network, Greater Manchester's plan for a high-quality, affordable and fully integrated public transport and active travel system for the people and businesses of Greater Manchester.

The update between February and March included information on:-

- Major programme to boost capacity, reliability and resilience of tram network
- 9.30am rule for free bus travel lifted for older and disabled people
- Bus Network Development Engagement
- Metrolink improvement works
- Bury Interchange Redevelopment
- Elton Reservoir New Metrolink Stop and Travel Hub/Park and Ride
- Metrolink Stop Improvements
- Network Patronage and Performance

It was mentioned that a significant recruitment drive was underway to take on and train up new tram drivers, building extra capacity and resilience in the workforce.

The Chair enquired if the Elton project would see a multistorey care park built and it was reported that there would be consulting events in relation to travel hubs.

Members of the forum also enquired about new bus links to the Elton site and tram stops to support new homes and employment sites.

It was agreed:

That the Forum noted and commented on the Bee Network quarterly update.

8 BURY BEE NETWORK BUS NETWORK DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Representatives from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) presented a report on a Bus Network Development update. TfGM were moving to a more strategic, GM-wide approach to network development, supported by a rolling pipeline of potential interventions. This would allow them to prioritise proposals more consistently, coordinate them with wider planning and investment cycles, and deliver improvements across Greater Manchester more dynamically.

It had been year since all of Greater Manchester's buses joined the Bee Network and this was a natural point to pause and reflect on how to develop the network.

The new Greater Manchester Strategy gives an opportunity to look at the network and ensure it supports the seven key workstreams (listed below), wider growth pipeline and local priorities.

- A healthy home for all
- Safe and strong communities
- A transport system for a global city region
- A clear line of sight to high quality jobs
- Everyday support in every neighbourhood
- A great place to do business
- Digitally connected places and people

Issues to still address are routes that haven't been designed as part of a single, integrated network and haven't fully adapted to modern needs e.g. poorly serving industrial parks and retail parks. Along with the areas of Greater Manchester that have seen much greater decline in their local networks than others.

From the original engagement conducted during the early network review process with Bury Council Members, officers and local communities they have recorded a number of priorities for stakeholders in Bury, which included:-

- Improving frequency of services north of the borough in late afternoons/ evenings.
- Improving connectivity in the west and north of the borough.
- Improving the reliability of the 471, including running later in the evenings and more often on a Sunday, supporting connections to shopping, health services and employment.
- Night bus services
- Greater cross-boundary connectivity, inc south of the borough/ towards Salford.

Later in March, the GM Mayor will be announcing a package of interventions across Greater Manchester. These proposals will be implemented over the next 12 months and will be the first of a number of rolling announcements each year.

Later in the year there will be another opportunity for highlighting community priorities, long-standing issues, and any gaps or opportunities in your area which will help inform. We'll also be widening our engagement to speak to local communities.

Feedback would be used to shape the initial pipeline of Network Development interventions, alongside data on performance, demand and demographic trends.

Each proposal would be assessed against criteria such as:-

- Connectivity and local priorities
- Customer impact
- City region-wide impact
- Affordability and value for money
- Deliverability and alignment with long-term ambitions

Insight from councillors helps to understand community needs, long-standing issues, new developments and emerging opportunities.

This supports an evidence-led and transparent approach with all feedback reviewed and helps inform where improvements can offer the greatest benefit.

A Member questioned if the precept charge would increase to fund the extension of services.

Noah Cashmore spoke about a number of bus services in different parts of the borough and Officers from TfGM were happy to be emailed the queries and provide feedback.

Joanna Maudsley commented that the new cycle path along Market Street on the way to the college was now the same colour as the walkway and this was of great concern to the Blind Society. Natalie Blackston would ask highways to look into the matter and provide a response.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed:

That the next meeting was provisionally arranged for 6.00pm on Thursday the 4th June 2026 at Bury Town Hall.

COUNCILLOR G STAPLES-JONES
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 7.20pm)

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