

GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

DATE: Friday, 7th February, 2025

TIME: 10.00 am

**VENUE: Council Chamber, Talbot Road, Trafford Town Hall,
M32 0TH (Sat-nav post code M16 0QQ)**

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA

4. GMCA Minutes - 31 January 2025 1 - 22

To consider the approval of the minute of the meeting held on 31 January 2025.

5. GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 29 January 2025 23 - 40

To note the minutes of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 29 January 2025.

6. Bee Network Committee - 30 January 2025 41 - 52

To note the minutes of the Bee Network Committee held on 30 January 2025.

BOLTON	MANCHESTER	ROCHDALE	STOCKPORT	TRAFFORD
BURY	OLDHAM	SALFORD	TAMESIDE	WIGAN

Name	Organisation	Political Party
Councillor Eleanor Wills	Tameside MBC	Labour
GM Mayor Andy Burnham	GMCA	Labour
Councillor Arooj Shah	Oldham Council	Labour
Councillor Tom Ross	Trafford	Labour
Councillor Mark Hunter	Stockport	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Neil Emmott	Rochdale	Labour
Councillor Nicholas Peel	Bolton Council	Labour
Councillor Eamonn O'Brien	Bury Council	Labour
City Mayor Paul Dennett	Salford City Council	Labour
Councillor David Molyneux	Wigan Council	Labour
Councillor Bev Craig	Manchester CC	Labour

For copies of papers and further information on this meeting please refer to the website

www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk. Alternatively, contact the following

Governance & Scrutiny Officer: Governance and Scrutiny

✉ sylvia.welsh@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

This agenda was issued on 6 February 2025 on behalf of Julie Connor, Secretary to the
Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street,
Manchester M1 6EU

Agenda Item 4

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY HELD ON FRIDAY 31TH JANUARY 2025 AT STOCKPORT TOWN HALL

PRESENT

Mayor of Greater Manchester	Andy Burnham (in the Chair)
Deputy Mayor (Police, Crime & Fire)	Kate Green
Bolton	Councillor Nicholas Peel
Bury	Councillor Eamonn O'Brien
Manchester	Councillor Bev Craig
Oldham	Councillor Arooj Shah
Rochdale	Councillor Neil Emmott
Salford	City Mayor Paul Dennett
Stockport	Councillor Mark Hunter
Tameside	Councillor Eleanor Wills
Trafford	Councillor Tom Ross

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Chair of GM Overview & Scrutiny	Councillor Nadim Muslim
GM Active Travel Commissioner	Dame Sarah Storey

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Group Chief Executive Officer, GMCA, GMFRS & TfGM	Caroline Simpson
Group Deputy Chief Executive	Andrew Lightfoot
Group Monitoring Officer	Gillian Duckworth
Group Treasurer	Steve Wilson
GMCA Director of Governance & Scrutiny	Julie Connor
Bolton	Sue Johnson
Bury	Lynne Ridsdale
Manchester	Paul Marshall
Oldham	Shelley Kipling

Rochdale	Steve Rumbelow
Salford	Melissa Caslake
Stockport	Paul Richards
Tameside	Harry Catherall
Trafford	Sara Todd
Wigan	Alison McKenzie-Folan
Office of the GM Mayor	Kevin Lee
TfGM	Martin Lax
TfGM	Danny Vaughan
TfGM	Fran Wilkinson
GMCA	Nicola Ward
GMCA	Lee Teasdale

GMCA 01/25 APOLOGIES

That apologies be received and noted from Cllr David Molyneux (Wigan), Tom Stannard (Manchester) & Michael Cullen (Stockport).

GMCA 02/24 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, opened the meeting by noting the welcome announcement that a new North Manchester General Hospital would be built during phase 1 of the new hospital building programme. The importance of this hospital for the north of the city region could not be underestimated. The existing estate was of Victorian origin and the residents of North Manchester deserved a much improved fit for purpose 21st century world class hospital. It was agreed that this was only a first step and that further investment was needed to modernise other hospitals in the region such as Wythenshawe and Stepping Hill.

There had also been a welcome announcement that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had now given in-principle support for the Old Trafford Regeneration Scheme as part of the pipeline of investment being brought forward. This would bring a wide array of benefits for the region, not least of which would be the removal of freight from the

Castlefield corridor, as well as the sports, leisure and entertainment development possibilities.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester stated that the Stockport MDC had provided a good model for development in the region, with Councillor Hunter stating that Stockport would be more than happy to provide learning and advice from their development work.

Some caution was expressed about the investment of public money towards schemes that could be funded by private investment. The Mayor of Greater Manchester stated that he fully understood these concerns and provided assurance that there would be maximum transparency and clarity around the use of all public monies on the regeneration scheme.

Caroline Simpson, Group Chief Executive Officer, GMCA, GMFRS & TfGM, provided an update on the announcement of £630m of integrated settlement monies for the region as part of the devolution trailblazer. Reports would be brought back to the GMCA on the next phase and the flexibilities around the funding.

A first cross-Whitehall task and finish group had been held on 30th January. This group sought to see how the devolution journey could go even deeper and further. Updates from the group would be reported back to the GMCA as appropriate.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the announcement made by the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care of Phase 1 of a new North Manchester General Hospital, and the benefits that this will bring to residents of the area be welcomed.
2. That the Chancellor of the Exchequer's in-principle support for the Old Trafford regeneration scheme, and the multiple benefits for the whole region that would arise from this be noted.
3. That the update on the announcement of £630m integrated settlement monies for Greater Manchester be received and welcomed.

4. That updates from the cross-Whitehall trailblazer task and finish group will be reported back to the GMCA as appropriate.

GMCA 03/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED /-

There were none.

**GMCA 04/25 MINUTES OF THE GMCA MEETING HELD ON 13 DECEMBER
2024**

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the GMCA meeting held on 13 December 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**GMCA 05/25 MINUTES OF THE GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2024**

RESOLVED /-

1. That the minutes of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 11 December 2024 be noted.

**GMCA 06/25 GMCA BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE MINUTES – 12
DECEMBER 2024**

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the GMCA Bee Network Committee held on 12 December 2024 be noted.

**GMCA 07/25 GMCA STANDARDS COMMITTEE – MINUTES OF THE
MEETING HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2024**

RESOLVED /-

1. That the proceedings of the meeting of the GMCA Standards Committee held on 13 December 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**GMCA 08/25 GMCA WASTE & RECYCLING COMMITTEE – MINUTES OF
THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2025**

RESOLVED /-

1. That the proceedings of the meeting of the GMCA Waste & Recycling Committee held on 22 January 2025 be noted.

**GMCA 09/25 GMCA AUDIT COMMITTEE – MINUTES OF THE MEETING
HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2025**

RESOLVED /-

1. That the proceedings of the meeting of the GMCA Audit Committee held on 22 January 2025 be noted.

**GMCA 10/25 PROPOSED COMBINED AUTHORITIES (ADULT EDUCATION
FUNCTIONS) ORDER 2025**

Gillian Duckworth, GMCA Group Solicitor & Monitoring Officer, presented a report seeking consent to the making of a proposed Order by the Secretary of State to grant a further funding power in relation to Adult Education to the GMCA.

The Department for Education (DfE) transferred statutory adult education functions to combined authorities via statutory instrument so they could decide, at a local level, which qualifications they wished to fund to support skills development in their areas. The DfE were now proposing to make a new Order to amend existing delegated functions to add a further education funding power.

RESOLVED /-

1. That consent be given to the making of the proposed Order Combined Authorities (Adult Education Functions) (Amendment) Order 2025.

**GMCA 11/25 STRENGTHENING THE STANDARDS AND CONDUCT
FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND –
MHCLG OPEN CONSULTATION**

Gillian Duckworth, GMCA Group Solicitor & Monitoring Officer, presented a report informing of the current open consultation being undertaken by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) addressing possible changes to the ethical framework for elected members and to seek agreement as to whether to provide a formal response on behalf of the GMCA and if so, to agree the content of that response.

It was noted that each authority could additionally make their own individual submissions, and it was advised that any additional submissions for the GMCA led response could be sent to the Group Monitoring Officer ahead of the final submission date.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the submission of a consultation response on the government consultation entitled “Consultation: Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England”, to MHCLG be agreed.
2. That the contents of the consultation response on behalf of the GMCA be agreed.
3. That any additional submissions for the GMCA led response can be sent to the Group Monitoring Officer ahead of the final submission date.

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report setting out the proposals for the Mayoral General Budget and precept for 2025-26 for consideration by the members of the GMCA. The proposals being made included the budget for the Fire Service which had previously fallen to the GM Fire and Rescue Authority to determine.

The Mayor noted the disappointing settlement figure received for the Fire Service and advised that he and Deputy Mayor Kate Green would make the argument to government that there would need to be consideration around vital funding for fire services under increasing demands as part of the spending review.

Councillor Nadim Muslim, Chair of the GM Overview & Scrutiny Committee, was invited to feedback on the Committee's comments following their consideration of the budget and precept proposals. The Committee had highlighted their concerns that the report had arrived late reducing their ability to fully scrutinise the report, and sought a minimum time frame for the receipt of the report in future. Other matters highlighted by the Committee included the importance of residents being able to see the improvements in their bus services, that further scrutiny of A Bed Every Night would be welcomed given increasing demands, and that overall that the Committee would like to see an evident culture of efficiency, highlighting where savings and cost minimisation had been sought across the GMCA in each future budget report. The Mayor of Greater Manchester expressed apologies for the lateness of the paper and committed to establishing a minimum time for budget scrutiny papers in future.

Discussion took place regarding the lack of system warnings ahead of the flooding that took place in the region on New Year's Day. A review group had now been established under the leadership of CFO Dave Russel to see how the system could collectively learn lessons from the incident, with a particular focus on data sharing and flood awareness.

Members highlighted the increasing frequency of flooding incidents in South Manchester related to the River Mersey. Events that had previously been considered once in a 100 years, had now happened 3 to 4 times in a 5 year period. Work would

need to take place with the Environment Agency and United Utilities to look at flood mitigation in much greater detail, with different kinds of modelling to those seen before. Consideration of this would be a key part of ongoing work on the Integrated Water Management Plan. The Mayor advised that similar work was also taking place following flooding incidents at Platt Bridge.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester advised those present that he had been in discussion with Sir John Cunliffe who was leading a review of the regulation of the water industry for the government. The plan was to hold a major stakeholder session in Manchester, and details around this would be circulated to GMCA members.

RESOLVED /-

1. That it be noted that the Mayor proposed to increase the Mayoral General Precept by £16 to £128.95 (for a Band D property), comprising of:
 - Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Services - precept of £86.20 **(£5 increase)**;
 - Other Mayoral General functions - precept of £42.75 **(£11 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 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 on 7 February 2025 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 concerns raised about the disappointing fire budget settlement figure and the need for further Fire & Rescue Service funding solutions appropriate to the increasing scale of demand be noted.
8. That the comments raised through the GM Overview & Scrutiny Committee be received.
9. That it be noted that a review group has been instigated on data sharing amongst partners following the new year's days flooding incidents.
10. That as part of the Integrated Water Management Plan, a review take place of the frequent flooding incidents along the River Mersey in the south of the region.
11. That details will be circulated ahead of the launch of the Sir John Cunliffe led review of the regulation of the water industry with a stakeholder event in Manchester.

GMCA 13/25 ACTIVE TRAVEL ANNUAL UPDATE

Dame Sarah Storey, Active Travel Commissioner, presented a report seeking the approval of the the 2024 Annual Active Travel Report and agreement around the Active Travel Priorities for 2025.

Thanks were expressed at all involved in the successes to date and particular areas of focus for the next year were highlighted. These included a renewed focus on funding the schemes that enabled greater numbers of people to do their business actively, addressing the quality of pavements for walking, developing a strategic cycle network properly linking up centres and residential areas, delivering 100 school streets by

2028, and publishing an expansion plan for cycle hire, including incorporating the payments into the wider Bee Network multi-modal ticketing.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the Greater Manchester Annual Active Travel Report be approved.
2. That the Commissioner's Mission Priorities as laid out in the report and in the Greater Manchester Annual Active Travel Report be endorsed.

GMCA 14/25 GM CLEAN AIR PLAN – JANUARY 2025 UPDATE

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, Portfolio Lead for GM Clean Air, presented a report that provided an update on the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan following the government's acceptance that the assessment that an investment-led, non-charging Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan would achieve compliance with nitrogen dioxide levels on the local road network in the shortest possible time and Greater Manchester would not need to implement a charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ).

In terms of the taxi trade. Whilst not the full amount sought, some funding had been secured for cleaner taxis. Officers had been tasked with looking more comprehensively at the taxi trade on this issue, looking at ways in which they could be further support to transition to electric vehicles and be further attracted to registering their vehicles with locally licensed vehicles. It was made clear that support would only be provided to locally licensed taxis.

Concerns were raised around the planned alternative usage of existing signage and ANPR cameras. Given the rationale for the signage no longer existed, did this signage not now simply add to 'street clutter' and was removal not the best option? On ANPR cameras, was there a risk that if they were taken over by GMP that this would create issues around civil liberties, and any alternative usage needed to be weighed carefully in the balance with such issues.

It was advised that GMP had already been in an agreed position to make use of the cameras for investigative purposes and the detection of crime and had already assisted in the solving of some serious crimes. This would allow a continued usage by

them rather than any full-scale change of use – there would of course be a full consultation around this, GMP would be asked to fully evidence their case, and the GM Ethics Committee would fully consider all issues around civil liberty concerns. In terms of signage, the signs were in strategic locations, and it was considered that they could be used by TfGM to promote clear air initiatives such as local park and ride schemes for example, but again a full consultation process would take place.

RESOLVED /-

1. That it be noted that the government confirmed it has accepted the assessment that an investment-led, non-charging Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan will achieve compliance with nitrogen dioxide levels on the local road network in the shortest possible time and by 2026 and Greater Manchester will not need to implement a charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ).
2. That it be noted that the investment-led package of £86m confirmed by government consists of:
 - £51.1m towards bus investment, including 40 zero emission buses, 77 Euro VI standard buses and charging infrastructure;
 - £5m for local traffic management measures;
 - £8 million to support moving Greater Manchester's taxi fleet to cleaner vehicles;
 - Up to £21.9m for administration, delivery, monitoring and other associated costs.
3. That it be noted that a new direction from the government is expected to be issued to the Greater Manchester authorities imminently which will allow TfGM to understand the detailed breakdown of the funding awarded for Development, Administration, Risk & Contingency.
4. That it be noted that proposals on funding to support Greater Manchester's taxi fleet move to cleaner vehicles, including timelines for next steps, such as fund opening, will be presented at a future meeting.

5. That it be noted that TfGM and the GM Authorities are working together to assess the potential alternative use of signage, timelines for next steps will be presented at a future meeting.
6. That it be noted that a public consultation on the use of the cameras for potential law enforcement activity related to the detection of crime is anticipated for the summer of 2025, subject to a review of the financial, technological and legal options available to facilitate a change of use.
7. That it be noted that the GM Air Quality Administration Committee will consider a report at its meeting on 5 February 2025.

**GMCA 15/25 GREATER MANCHESTER'S APPROACH TO DELIVERING
OUR GROWTH AMBITION**

Councillor Bev Craig, Portfolio Lead for Economy, presented a report setting out our approach to driving forward ambitious plans for growth in GM over the next 10 years.

GM was gearing up for a new decade of growth and would use its distinctive collaborative approach to deliver on massive ambitions for the city-region – so that all residents could thrive.

The ambitions were backed up by credible plans and a proven track record in delivery. The region would build on the strength of existing public private partnerships in GM to further develop innovative investment models, unlocking pension fund and institutional capital to derisk projects and unlock private investment. To maximise the productivity of the GM economy, it would require bravery, innovation and the taking of risks. This required a long-term view and for the CA and Local Authorities to back and invest in the city region, taking a 'patient capital' approach to investment.

The approach to investment sought to ensure GM remained the best place for the private sector to invest with confidence in the future and with a clear vision driven forward by strong leadership by the public sector.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the preparation of the rewritten GMS and underpinning Delivery Plan for Spring 2025 be endorsed.
2. That endorsement be given to preparing Greater Manchester's Spending Review submissions to Government, setting out our asks for Government to work alongside us in delivery of our collective ambition.
3. That endorsement be given to establishing a Place Advisory Panel, involving national experts, to support the progress of development proposals from our integrated pipeline, ensuring that these support delivery of the outcomes in the GMS and push the boundaries of what has previously been possible.
4. That endorsement be given to establishing partner forums in early 2025 from across the developer, construction and investor community to set out our plans and call the industry to action.
5. That endorsement be given to progressing plans to strengthen our delivery capacity through the development of a GM Delivery Vehicle and GM Academy.
6. That endorsement be given to developing the approach to the GM Investment Pot to maximise what can be delivered through public sector support and intervention and maximise the private capital that can be leveraged into Greater Manchester.
7. That endorsement be given to establishing the appropriate programme governance to oversee and direct our overall plans for growth, ensuring accountability and transparency of our approach.

GMCA 16/25 GREATER MANCHESTER FIRE PLAN

Kate Green, Deputy Mayor for Safer and Stronger Communities presented a report that provided an update on the production of the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) Fire Plan for 2025-29. This plan outlined the strategic priorities and commitments of GMFRS over the next four years. The report provided an overview of

the engagement activities that had already shaped the draft and would continue to shape the final version of the Fire Plan, ensuring it met the needs of the city region's communities and helped to deliver the city-region's wider plans.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the contents of the draft plan found at Appendix A be noted.
2. That the consultation and the presentation slide pack found at Appendix B be shared with interested stakeholders and encouragement be given to them to share their views / feedback.

GMCA 17/25 PUBLIC SWITCHED TELEPHONE NETWORK (PSTN) UPDATE

Councillor Nick Peel, Portfolio Lead for Digital, presented a report providing an update on the risks of the implementation of the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) Switchover and their mitigating activities, following incidents and concerns impacting vulnerable residents across the city region.

The significant importance of all districts entering into the Data Sharing Agreements was highlighted, and an offer of support was made to any district that required it ahead of sharing the Agreements.

RESOLVED /-

1. That encouragement be given to GM Local Authorities to sign Data Sharing Agreements with telecom providers (using the agreed LGA national template) to mitigate risks for vulnerable people, including those in receipt of private telecare services; and to review PSTN switchover readiness drawing upon the Guidance published by Government on 18th November 2025.
2. That monitoring take place of incidents of frauds related to the digital switchover to inform and influence the national communications campaign launched next year and understand the scale of the problem.

3. That the GMCA will maintain oversight of the risks associated with the PSTN switchover at least until January 2027 when switchover will be completed.
4. That it be noted that the GMCA can offer assistance wherever it is needed to the local authorities yet to sign the Data Sharing Agreements.

**GMCA 18/25 GM RAIL REFORM & DEVOLUTION – THE VISION AND
DELIVERY PROGRAMME FOR RAIL IN GREATER
MANCHESTER**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, provided an overview of the strategic context for rail reform, the case for change, the vision for GM Rail, and the outline programme of activity and milestones to deliver GM's ambitions for rail as part of the Bee Network.

RESOLVED /-

1. That endorsement be given to the development of a robust, evidence-based GM Rail Vision and programme for the future of rail across Greater Manchester in conjunction with GM Local Authorities.
2. That endorsement be given to the ambition and tranche-based approach to the integration of the 8 priority rail corridors into the Bee Network Rail by 2028.
3. That endorsement be given to the development of an Outline Business Case for Rail Reform, to assess and develop a preferred way forward for meeting the objectives set out in this paper, and identify the legislative and funding reforms, required to deliver GM's growth agenda.
4. That endorsement be given to the proactive engagement with Government in relation to the English Devolution and Rail Reform Bills, with particular regard to finalising the statutory role for the Combined Authority in the specification of services, fares and customer standards.

5. That endorsement be given to the development of further work to unlock the benefits of the Old Trafford Regeneration scheme through the relocation of the freight terminal at Trafford Depot.
6. That endorsement be given to the development of the Spending Review submission, working with Government, to ensure the opportunities set out in this report are prioritised and delivered.
7. That it be noted that the HM Treasury has now signed off the business case for tranche 1 of rail reform.

GMCA 19/25 TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE PIPELINE

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report updating on progress in delivering a pipeline of transport infrastructure improvements to support the Bee Network: a high-quality, affordable and fully integrated public transport and active travel system which can support sustainable economic growth.

The report included an update on the ongoing work that is taking place between TfGM, GMCA and GM Local Authorities in relation to the potential reprioritisation of CRSTS1 funding, with a particular focus on strengthening the alignment between transport infrastructure and growth in the context of the GM Growth Plan and the opportunities afforded by the inclusion of CRSTS1 in the GM Integrated Settlement. The report also made a number of recommendations to support the continued development and delivery of the transport infrastructure pipeline.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the current position, recent progress and key milestones on the transport infrastructure pipeline be noted.
2. That the emerging proposals for the reprioritisation of CRSTS1 funding as detailed within section 2 be noted.

3. That approval be given to the allocation of CRSTS1 funding to enable a number of time-critical priorities to be advanced, subject to DfT approval, as follows:
 - Bee Network Rail Integration and Accessibility: up to £34m;
 - Acquisition of the existing GM Bus Shelter estate and related activity to develop a renewal programme for the estate: up to £15m;
 - Rochdale: Castleton Phase 2 Active Travel scheme: up to £12.66m; and
 - Capital & revenue switch applied to the revenue budget for Bus Franchising IS and Ticketing System Assets: up to £15.0m.

4. That approval be given to the allocation of CRSTS2 funding (estimated at £80m and awaiting approval from DfT) to fund the Bee Network Rail Integration Programme.

GMCA 20/25 BEE NETWORK FARES & TICKETING PRODUCTS

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report which proposed that new ticketing products be added to the Bee Network fares and ticketing proposition to increase access to public transport through improved affordability.

RESOLVED /-

1. That approval be given to the introduction of a suite of Annual Multi Modal Tickets, from March 2025.

2. That approval be given to the addition of these Annual Multi Modal Tickets to the TfGM scheme with local Credit Unions, from March 2025, to improve access to affordable annual products.

3. That approval be given to the addition of the existing Annual Tram Tickets to the TfGM scheme with local Credit Unions, from March 2025, to improve access to affordable annual products.

GMCA 21/25**METROLINK 2027**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report which presented the findings of the review and assessment of options when the current Metrolink Operations and Maintenance Agreement (MOMA) with Keolis Amey Metrolink Ltd (KAM) expires in July 2027. The report outlined the review undertaken, the options identified, the findings, and provided a recommendation as to how Metrolink should be operated from mid-2027.

RESOLVED /-

1. That endorsement be given to the procurement of a Metrolink franchise agreement with adjusted scope from the current Metrolink Operations and Maintenance Agreement, to commence from July 2027 when the current Agreement expires.
2. That the intention for TfGM to deliver a number of customer experience elements of the current Agreement from mid-2027, to increase TfGM's control and oversight over service delivery and asset management through the new Agreement be noted.
3. That the potential for a unified GM transport operation in the 2030's be noted.
4. That it be noted that, subject to GMCA feedback, procurement of the successor Franchise arrangements will commence.
5. That it be noted that a further report will be brought to GMCA before the award of any contract which is anticipated in the second half of 2026.

GMCA 22/25**GREATER MANCHESTER BROWNFIELD HOUSING
REALLOCATIONS**

City Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio Lead for Housing First, presented a report seeking GMCA approval to delegate authority to the GMCA Treasurer acting in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for housing. The purpose of the delegation was to approve new

projects for funding, urgent variations to existing funding from the Brownfield Housing Fund (BHF) and to switch funding sources from other funds to the Brownfield Housing Fund, if required, to manage the year end programme position.

RESOLVED /-

1. That authority be delegated to the GMCA Treasurer acting in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for housing to approve new funding and urgent variations to existing funding from BHF, 31st January 2025 to 31st March 2025 to manage the BHF pipeline.
2. That authority be delegated to the GMCA Treasurer to switch funding sources from other funds to the Brownfield Housing Fund in advance of 31 March 2025.
3. That it be noted that any recommendations that are approved under the delegation will be reported to the meeting of the GMCA in May 2025.

**GMCA 23/25 GREATER MANCHESTER HOUSING INVESTMENT LOANS
FUND – INVESTMENT APPROVAL RECOMMENDATION**

City Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio Lead for Housing First, presented a report seeking approval to the GM Housing Investment Loans Fund loan detailed in the recommendation below.

RESOLVED /-

1. That approval be given to GM Housing Investment Loans Fund loan detailed in the table below, as detailed further in this and the accompanying Part B report;

Borrower	Scheme	District	Loan
Apsley Street Development Ltd	Apsley Street	Stockport	£5.399m

2. That authority be delegated to the GMCA Chief Executive acting in conjunction with the Portfolio Lead for Housing to approve new funding and urgent variations

to existing funding from the GM Housing Investment Loans Fund in the period 8 February 2025 to 27 March 2025.

3. That authority be delegated to the GMCA Treasurer acting in conjunction with the GMCA Monitoring Officer to prepare and effect the necessary legal agreements.

GMCA 24/25 GREATER MANCHESTER INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

Steve Wilson, GMCA Group Treasurer, presented a report seeking the approval of two investments through GMCA' Advanced Manufacturing and Materials Investment Fund, GM Advance.

RESOLVED /-

1. That approval be given for a loan facility of up to £395,000 to Molygran & Co. Ltd.
2. That approval be given for an investment of up to £150,000 to THEIA Guidance Systems Ltd.
3. That approval be given for an update to the Neuwave Technologies Limited investment.
4. That authority be delegated to the Combined Authority Treasurer in consultation with the Combined Authority 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 the investments noted above.
5. 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 8 February 2025 to 27 March 2025.

6. That it be noted that any recommendations that are approved under the delegation will be reported to the next available meeting of the Combined Authority

GMCA 25/25 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public should be excluded from the meeting for the following items on business on the grounds that this involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as set out in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

**GMCA 26/25 GREATER MANCHESTER HOUSING INVESTMENT LOANS
FUND – INVESTMENT APPROVAL RECOMMENDATION**

Clerk’s Note: This item was considered in support of the report considered in Part A of the agenda (GMCA 23/25).

RESOLVED /-

That the report be noted.

GMCA 27/25 GREATER MANCHESTER INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

Clerk’s Note: This item was considered in support of the report considered in Part A of the agenda (GMCA 24/25).

RESOLVED /-

That the report be noted.

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD WEDNESDAY, 29
JANUARY 2025 AT THE TOOTAL BUILDINGS - BROADHURST HOUSE, 1ST
FLOOR, 56 OXFORD STREET, MANCHESTER, M1 6EU**

PRESENT:

Councillor Nadim Muslim	Bolton Council (Chair)
Councillor Peter Wright	Bolton Council
Councillor Russell Bernstein	Bury Council
Councillor Imran Rizvi	Bury Council
Councillor Basil Curley	Manchester City Council
Councillor John Leech	Manchester City Council
Councillor Basat Sheikh	Manchester City Council
Councillor Mandie Shilton – Godwin	Manchester City Council
Councillor Colin McLaren	Oldham Council
Councillor Terry Smith	Rochdale Council
Councillor Dylan Williams	Rochdale Council
Councillor Tony Davies	Salford City Council
Councillor Lewis Nelson	Salford City Council
Councillor Rachel Wise	Stockport Council
Councillor David Sweeton	Tameside Council
Councillor Brenda Warrington	Tameside Council
Councillor Jill Axford	Trafford Council
Councillor Ged Carter	Trafford Council
Councillor Shaun Ennis	Trafford Council
Councillor Fred Walker	Wigan Council

ALSO PRESENT:

Andy Burnham	Mayor of Greater Manchester
Councillor Nick Peel	Portfolio Lead Leader for Digital City Region

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Karen Chambers	GMCA
Gillian Duckworth	GMCA
Beena Puri	GMCA
Caroline Simpson	GMCA
Phil Swan	GMCA
Nicola Ward	GMCA
Steve Wilson	GMCA

O&SC 55/25

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Joanne Marshall (Wigan).

The Chair welcomed new members, Councillor Brenda Warrington and Councillor David Sweeton (Tameside) to the meeting.

O&SC 56/25

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

Members were reminded of their obligations under the GMCA Members' Code of Conduct and were requested to complete an annual declaration of interest form, which had been emailed to them by the Governance & Scrutiny Officer.

The Chair reminded members to keep questions to a maximum of 1 or 2 per agenda item, to ensure there was time for everyone to ask a question.

The Chair raised concerns regarding the lateness of the report pertaining to item 6 on the agenda, Mayoral General Budget and Precept Proposals, as this would impact on the Committee's ability to scrutinise the report, giving them limited time to read, seek clarification and consider its content.

Officers advised that steps would be taken to ensure that any future reports were provided in a timely manner.

Members understood that there was a further budget meeting scheduled for Wednesday 5 February to discuss the total GM budget and asked officers to confirm if this discussion would include the report being discussed today and suggested it may be more productive to have a comprehensive discussion at the meeting on 5 February. Officers advised that the Mayoral budget proposals must be submitted to the Combined Authority by the end of January, ahead of the rest of the budget proposals, hence why the paper was being presented today. These proposals may be updated and presented again alongside the rest of the budget papers at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for 5 February. The reason was that, by law, the CA must be given the opportunity to reject the mayoral proposals. If they did, they would have to propose their own budget, which would then be reviewed at the February CA meeting. Consequently, the proposals would be submitted to the CA again in updated form and included in the papers for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting taking place next week.

The Chair advised the Committee that Sacha Lord had resigned from his role as the GM Nighttime Economy Adviser following an investigation by the Arts Council. The Chair requested a report on Mayoral Advisors be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on February 26th.

RESOLVED /-

1. That members as per their obligation stated in the Code of Conduct would complete their Annual Declaration of Interest form and return it to the Governance & Scrutiny Officer.
2. That a report on Mayoral Advisors be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on February 26th.

O&SC 57/25

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED /-

No declarations were received in relation to any item on the agenda.

O&SC 58/25

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 11 DECEMBER
2024**

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 December 2024 be approved as a correct and accurate record.

O&SC 59/25

**ADDRESSING DIGITAL INEQUITY IN GREATER
MANCHESTER**

Councillor Nick Peel, Portfolio Lead for Digital City Region introduced the report that provided the Committee with an overview of the progress towards delivery of the Greater Manchester Digital Inclusion Agenda for Change programme. He stated that his portfolio focused on empowering communities and preparing the city region for the ongoing digital and economic growth in Greater Manchester. He added that digitalisation in public services should not just be driven by austerity, but also driven by the need to improve services. As Greater Manchester continued to expand, it was important to ensure that everyone could access services and not be left behind. He stated that there was evidence that people were being excluded already, as demonstrated in the report.

Officers advised that digital inclusion was one of the priorities of the Digital Blueprint which was launched in 2023. It was noted that this was important because GM's

digital economy is growing at pace. It was stated that Greater Manchester was a world-class digital city region, with economic and social opportunities for all at the heart of these aspirations. However, these goals could not be achieved if people were digitally excluded.

Officers reported that a recent All Party Parliamentary Group on Digital Inclusion highlighted a 20% increase in GP demand and a shift towards using the NHS app. Consequently, individuals unable to access the NHS app faced increasing challenges in accessing GP services and records, illustrating how digital exclusion can limit access to essential services.

Officers reported that the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) estimated the total cost of not improving basic digital skills over the next ten years in Greater Manchester to be approximately £700M. Other statistics indicated that;

- 73% of those aged 75+ now say they had experienced one or more aspect of digital exclusion, compared to 70% in previous surveys
- 59% of disabled respondents reported experiencing at least one form of digital exclusion, compared to 56% in previous surveys
- 32% of 16–24-year-olds said they had experienced one or more aspect of digital exclusion, higher than the 27% reported in previous surveys.

Officers advised that digital exclusion impacts on all demographics and was increasingly being recognised as a national issue.

Officers also informed the Committee that digital exclusion encompasses social exclusion, where individuals were unable to stay in touch with family, and digital poverty, where residents were choosing between buying food and accessing the internet.

It was recognised that residents that attended other services, such as warm spaces, often have additional needs and therefore the Digital Inclusion Action Network was set up to lead targeted action with a specific focus on supporting under-25s, over-75s and disabled people. The Digital Inclusion Taskforce, made up of 250 members,

works collaboratively to join up activity across the region, maximise capabilities, identify need and target action to address the interrelated barriers to digital inclusion, and ensure no one was left behind.

Schemes provided to support this work further were;

- Greater Manchester Databank
- Digital inclusion pilot for social housing residents
- Care leavers digital inclusion initiative
- Doing digital in later life
- Digital Champion Volunteer Network

The Committee were invited to watch a video which provided an insight into the work completed by the Digital Wigan team when they visited Wigan Athletic Community Trust's over 55's Extra Time group.

Members asked if more funding would be made available to local authorities for device lending libraries, to enable them to do more. Officers advised that there had been no previous national funding for that service and stated that recently each of the ten local authorities had been provided with funding from the Strengthening Communities Digital Inclusion Fund. Some local authorities used this funding to provide device lending libraries whilst others used it fund other services such as training.

Officers highlighted that the Get Online GM Digital Skills and Support Finder map showcased digital skills activities, databanks, and online centres in community spaces across each local borough. This tool empowered residents, sectors, and services by connecting people to essential digital skills activities and support. It also helped identify gaps to address inequity. Officers noted the ambition for place-based support was to have it within a 15-minute walk for residents, and the Strengthening Communities Digital Inclusion Fund would help achieve this progress.

In relation to the Social Housing Pilot, members asked where the 495 residents that benefited were located, which housing associations were involved and whether this work would be taken forward. Officers advised the ambition of the project was to work with 5 housing providers to engage with 5000 people but due to a number of factors, the biggest being affordability, the numbers were nearer 500. There was a benefit impact study produced about the project by Professor Simeon Yates for the University of Liverpool which could be shared with members.

Members enquired whether it would be possible to look at a project to provide a service for immobile or older people who are unable to visit hubs. Officers advised that there were a variety of projects taking place across the city region but as the support required varied in each area it was difficult to map but it was something that could be considered with the local leads. It was noted that it was incredibly important for people to have to face to face digital support, for instance, if they were a victim of online fraud. Members asked where this support would be provided. Officers recognised that this was a real gap in support and therefore would be an area of focus going forward.

Members were interested in exploring the reasons behind digital exclusion among younger people. Officers explained that this issue was largely due to affordability and access mechanisms. For example, young people often face difficulties applying for apprenticeships on mobile phones, which presented significant barriers. Additionally, parents struggling to afford internet connectivity contributed to this problem. It was also noted that while some young people were adept at using mobile phones for communication and social media, they lacked the necessary skills to write emails, excluding them from certain skilled jobs.

Cllr Peel advised that the other aspect of digital exclusion was voluntary digital exclusion, where people choose not to access online banking perhaps due to fear of online fraud.

Cllr Peel further advised that Digital Inclusion cuts across all portfolio areas, all of which could be assisted by further progress. He stated that the new Government had

digital exclusion firmly on the agenda with a new team established at Westminster and that Greater Manchester was in a position to become a trailblazer as a national example as to how improvements can be made.

Members pointed out issues with apps like the Bee in the Loop app run by GMP, noting it was reported to be very confusing to use. They enquired about what the GMCA could do to ensure partners were part of the inclusion strategy. Officers explained that this was linked to the Live Well initiative. There was a broader expectation that when creating online services, support must be provided to help users get online. This approach was becoming more integrated and embedded within other strategies.

Members were keen to understand if there was any correlation between areas under economic pressure and the number of young people that couldn't access the materials they wanted to whether that was education or training. They asked if there were any statistics to show how digital exclusion had impacted on education and health. Officers advised that work was underway to identify the areas of deprivation to look at where our most excluded people were located, working with local authorities to identify areas with most need. Officers advised that the GMCA did not hold any statistics in relation to the impact on education and health, but NHS England had produced a paper which examined digital inequalities and health inequalities. It was hoped that data on how this links into access would become available via the Strengthening Communities Digital Inclusion Fund.

Members were encouraged by the research in France that suggested using refurbished rather than new smartphones could save up to 90% of CO2 emissions from smartphone production and enquired if local authority and GMCA devices get reused in the community. They also asked how easy it was for companies to refurbish hardware via the local authority or GMCA. Officers advised that all GMCA kit was refurbished. The scheme works by swapping old hardware for a cash value, which in turn converted into new kit which in the case of the GMCA, was given to schools. Officers advised that local authorities had access to a similar scheme. It

was noted that the scheme in Trafford provided 3500 young people with devices during the pandemic. It was recognised that this was a key asset in terms of sustainable digital inclusion.

Members expressed concerns for residents trying to bid for housing or exchanges. The system currently relies on people being able to go online. They asked what further partnerships we being explored to help people in need of housing know how to bid on properties. Officers advised that GMCA were working closely with Nick Horne, Chief Executive of Wythenshawe Housing, and other housing providers to find ways to do more in this space.

It was noted that there was a need to continue to support and invest in local community groups and volunteers to help address the needs of residents experiencing digital exclusion. Cllr Peel agreed that there were many assets in the community that could be accessed for this support which could be offered by volunteers that residents know and trust. Officers added that there was a Digital Champions programme which aimed to upskill volunteers to enable them to support residents with a digital need or question. It was reported that a similar training scheme was in place for front line workers, such as GP receptionists, to learn how to support someone with digital needs. Members noted that elderly people might also need someone to do tasks for them, rather than teach them. Officers advised that this was at the heart of the Strengthening Communities Digital Inclusion Fund and recognised that face to face interactions with people you can trust was crucial.

Members asked what difference the funding from the new Government would make. Councillor Peel advised that the current Government were putting digital inclusion at the heart of its science and tech agenda and so it did provide hope for the future that something so important was going to get a national spotlight, he added that he was optimistic that this would bring funding. He stated that digital skills were clearly a huge part of growing the economy. Officers advised that current activity was funded via retained business rates, but also by accessing funding from other areas such as the adult education budget. In addition to this, officers had highlighted with the

Government that broadband should be taxed at 5%, the same as other utilities, rather than 20% as this impacted on affordability. It was also noted that broadband should also be included with utilities when looking at benefits such as universal credit.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress, risks and opportunities on Greater Manchester's Digital Inclusion Agenda for Change.
2. That the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Addressing Digital Inequity in Greater Manchester be noted.
3. That the benefit impact study produced about the social housing project by Professor Simeon Yates for the University of Liverpool be shared with members.

O&SC 60/25

MAYORAL GENERAL BUDGET AND PRECEPT PROPOSALS - 2025/26

The GM Mayor introduced the report which set out the proposals for the Mayoral General Budget and precept for 2025-26 for consideration by the members of the GMCA. The proposals being made included the budget for the GM Fire Service which had previously fallen to the GM Fire and Rescue Authority to determine.

The GM Mayor advised that the proposals were to increase the Mayoral General Precept by £16 to £128.95 per year (for a Band D property), comprising of:

- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Services - precept of £86.20 (£5 increase);
- Other Mayoral General functions - precept of £42.75 (£11 increase).

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Services – the GM Mayor advised that the proposed increase in the precept was required as year on year reductions in the budget had seen pump numbers go from 60plus to 48. Events such as the new years day flooding, where 1000 people were evacuated from their homes via boat by the fire and rescue service, and the fire at Bolton University in November 2019, which all pumps were in use for, reinforced the need to ensure that the cuts could not continue. The proposed increase in precept would allow GM to restore pumps to allow the service to provide the best response for the residents of Greater Manchester.

The GM Mayor advised that he was surprised by the reduction in the recent settlement from the Government, therefore he needed to look at alternative ways to maintain the Fire Plan. The proposals put forward allowed for a budget that supports the high level service without dipping into reserves.

The GM Mayor added that there does need to be a cross party conversation with Government about incidents such as the floods which were occurring more frequently and becoming more severe as there needed to be a national resource in place to assist. He added that it could not be the case going forward that flooding remains considered as a non-statutory responsibility, with local areas expected to fund all the costs of responding. He advised that he and the Deputy Mayor had begun these conversations with Government.

Other Mayoral General functions – The GM Mayor advised that the increase represents the final element of the Bus Reform business case (November 2020) which had been delivered on time and on budget across Greater Manchester with the final tranche of franchising being delivered on 5th January 2025. The increase was slightly below the original funding proposals. The existing precept of £31.75 would therefore rise to £42.75. Alongside bus reform, the precept would continue to be used to support:

- The ‘A Bed Every Night’ emergency response scheme to reduce rough sleeping in Greater Manchester and continue to support local schemes and homelessness partnerships to end rough sleeping. This scheme was

supplemented by financial support from the Greater Manchester Integrated Health and Care Partnership, Probation Service and other partners across Greater Manchester.

- The 'Our Pass' scheme, providing free bus travel within Greater Manchester for 16-18 year olds.
- Care Leavers concessionary pass providing free bus travel in Greater Manchester for young people who have been in care.

The GM Mayor advised that the proposed increase in the precept was lower than what was proposed last year as part of a 2 year phased increase of £12. He explained that this was in order to fund the bus franchising plan. It was postponed as it was not thought to be fair for all residents to pay for a new service that was not in place across the whole of Greater Manchester. However, now that the bus franchising plan had been delivered, the proposed increase could be reduced to £11.

The GM Mayor advised that it was his intention to continue the £2 capped bus fare until the end of the year. This, along with the proposals to have a London style capped daily rate by 28 March 2025, was to continue to encourage people to leave their cars at home.

The Chair thanked the GM Mayor for his introduction and reiterated the Committee's frustrations in receiving the report so late, giving them limited time to consider the report and seek clarification. The GM Mayor advised that the annual budget allocation process was challenging and that a move to a three year budget allocation would mitigate many of these issues. The Committee advised that they would welcome a maximum timeframe for any future late reports.

Members were keen to understand the use of reserves, as over the period March 24 to March 26 there had been a 23% use of reserves. They asked How realistic were the levels of reserves that would be left over, as the A bed Every Night reserves were detailed as zero by end of this year and Mayoral reserve halved between March 24 and March 26. Officers confirmed that the movement in the reserves were

all planned. The only area which was being used to fill a financial gap was the £1.4m to manage pressures on the fire budget. Officers confirmed that they were content with the level of reserves and confirmed that there were no plans to use the General Reserves in 2025/ 2026.

Concerns were raised about the National Insurance contributions increase for the Fire Service, as this was not going to be fully funded by the Government, therefore it appeared that the costs were being passed to the taxpayer. The GM Mayor advised that discussions were ongoing in relation to the recovery of the National Insurance position and what the share of the GM Fire Service would be.

Members spoke about the response times in relation to 999 and 111 calls that had improved but commented on the reduction in the number of PCSO's and asked what plans were in place to address this. The GM Mayor advised that the Chief Constable had implemented a new structure for Neighbourhood Policing which had reduced the number PCSO's in order to create a higher number of fully warranted officers. The GM Mayor stated that PCSO's had a very valued role, and they were included in each ward. He added that police numbers are almost back to 2010 levels with 2,000 extra police officers in situ. Overall crime and neighbourhood crime is down, and response times had improved.

In relation to the Bee Network, although improvements had been noted, members stated that there were still gaps in services particularly in Alkington and some areas of Salford. The GM Mayor advised that officers would explore the reasons for the service reductions in Alkington and arrange for Mayor Dennett and Salford Councillors to complete a Salford borough wide review to look at service coverage. He encouraged members to pursue reviews of any local bus services which remained inefficient.

Members requested further scrutiny on A Bed Every Night to consider the increasing demand, current provision and impact of the scheme in each GM borough as there were gaps in what was provided which needs to be constructively challenged. Given the increased need, the GM Mayor advised that the number of ABEN places

available would increase from 550 to 600 from April 2025. The Chair advised that this would be added to the Overview & Scrutiny work programme for an update in the coming months.

Members asked for clarity in relation to Other Mayoral Priorities section within the budget, and how this was made up. The GM Mayor advised that this included the Green Spaces Fund, which he was committed to keeping as although a modest amount, its impact was widespread with near to 100 schemes. Members also noted that there were a number of budgets, such as Mayors Transport, that looked to have remained static. The GM Mayor stated that this was not the full picture, transport was included in the wider budget which would be reported at the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, but that this was an agreed contribution to specific projects.

Members commented that following the work of the recent Task and Finish Group on Integrated Water Management they were alarmed to see that flood support was not a statutory responsibility for the fire service. They added that in order to give residents reassurance, this would need to change. The GM Mayor advised that there does need to be a look back at our preparedness for these events. Caroline Simpson advised that a GM wide review into our preparedness and response was underway, adding that each local authority affected would also be completing their own review which would feed into the GM system. It was noted that it was important to understand the lessons learnt and use investment to increase our resilience. The GM Mayor suggested that the Task and Finish Group relook at the recommendations of their report to gauge progress.

Members were supportive of the Fire Service and their recent support of the flooding incidents was praised, however it was acknowledged that flood prevention data was not sufficient, members asked the GMCA if there was a way for the CA to help fund the flood gages. The GM Mayor noted the comments regarding the flood gages and advised that this would be looked at as part of the GM wide look back at our preparedness.

Members asked if GM were making modifications needed in the urban environment to ensure communities were protected and greater prepared for the climate that we have now and in the future. The GM Mayor advised that Sir John Cunliffe was completing a review into water regulation which would be launched in February in Manchester and encouraged members to get involved in order to influence the regulatory regime to ensure that residents see the benefits of the increase in their utility bills. The GM Mayor advised that multi disciplinary meetings had been arranged in areas which had seen a number of flood incidents, such as Platt Bridge, and offered a meeting in Flixton, if necessary to escalate concerns.

Members were keen to understand to what extent the capacity on public transport, particularly trams, especially at rush hour could be increased, by providing double trams. The GM Mayor advised that as patronage on the Metrolink system was increasing, he would like to see more double trams in situ, but these needed to be in the right place. He advised that he may also consider introducing a modest Tourist Levy for Greater Manchester to help the city to react more dynamically to demand.

Caroline Simpson informed the Committee that a report would be presented to the CA on Friday about Greater Manchester's ambitious 10-year Growth Plan. The report would cover investments in highways maintenance, active travel, and environmental infrastructure. She added that this integrated plan would help the GMCA understand where to direct investments and how to link them to our growth strategy. By thinking long-term and creatively, as GM does, we could effectively use public funds and leverage private investment to maximise our resources.

The GM Mayor mentioned that the plan to integrate 8 commuter lines into the Bee Network would be implemented in 3 phases. This included removing freight lines from Old Trafford and the city centre, allowing for a Metrolink-style service on the new lines which in turn would increase capacity.

Members advised that they would like to see an evident culture of efficiency, highlighting where savings and cost minimisation had been sought across the GMCA in each budget report. Members welcomed the opportunity to consider the Mayoral General Precept report alongside the other GM budget papers at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting next week.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Mayoral General Budget and Precept Proposals be noted and shared with the GMCA at their meeting on the 31 January 2025.

2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the recommendations which will be considered by the GMCA at its meeting on the 31 January 2025 as below. The GMCA is requested:
 1. To consider my proposal to increase the Mayoral General Precept by £16 to £128.95 (for a Band D property), comprising of:
 - i) Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Services - precept of £86.20 (**£5 increase**);
 - ii) Other Mayoral General functions - precept of £42.75 (**£11 increase**).
 2. To note and comment on:
 - 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. To note and comment on the detailed budget proposals for other Mayoral functions;

4. To note and comment on the use of reserves as set out in Paragraph 3.3 of the report;
 5. To consider whether they would wish to submit any written comments to the Mayor in line with the legal process and timetable described in this report; and
 6. To note that at its meeting on 7 February 2025 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.
-
3. That officers would explore the reasons for the service reductions in Alkington and feedback to Councillor Williams.
 4. That officers would arrange for Mayor Dennett and Salford Councillors to complete a Salford borough wide review.
 5. That information regarding the review on water regulation being conducted by Sir John Cunliffe be shared with the Committee.

O&SC 61/25

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME &
FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

RESOLVED /-

1. That the proposed Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme for January 2025 to March 2025 be noted.
2. That Members use the Forward Plan of Key Decisions to identify any potential areas for further scrutiny.

O&SC 62/25

FUTURE MEETING DATES

RESOLVED /-

That the following dates for the rest of the municipal year be noted:

- 5 February 2025 – 1pm to 3.30pm
- 26 February 2025 – 1pm to 3.30pm
- 26 March 2025 – 1pm to 3.30pm
- 9 April 2025 – 1pm to 3.30pm
- 25 June 2025 - 1pm to 3.30pm

Agenda Item 6

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE HELD THURSDAY, 30TH JANUARY 2025 AT BOARDROOM, GMCA OFFICES

PRESENT:

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien (in the Chair)	GMCA
Councillor Toby Hewitt	Bolton
Councillor Alan Quinn	Bury
Councillor Tracey Rawlins	Manchester
Councillor Grace Baynham	Stockport
Councillor David Meller	Stockport
Councillor Jacqueline Owen	Tameside
Councillor Aidan Williams	Trafford
Councillor John Vickers	Wigan

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Dame Sarah Storey	GM Active Travel Commissioner
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OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chris Barnes	TfGM
Melinda Edwards	GMCA
Simon Elliott	TfGM
Martin Lax	TfGM
Richard Nickson	TfGM
Caroline Simpson	GMCA
Lee Teasdale	GMCA
Danny Vaughan	TfGM
Fran Wilkinson	TfGM

BNC/01/25 Welcome & Apologies

Apologies were received and noted from Mayor Andy Burnham, Councillor Hamid Khurram (Bolton), Councillor Josh Charters (Oldham), Councillor Howard Sykes (Oldham), Councillor Phil Burke (Rochdale), Councillor Stephen Homer (Tameside) and GM Transport Commissioner Vernon Everitt.

BNC/02/25 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

BNC/03/25 Chairs Announcements & Urgent Business

The Chair opened by inviting Danny Vaughan, Chief Network Officer, TfGM to provide a number of updates to the Committee.

On the pay deal and industrial relations, union members of both Unite and Unison voted to accept the pay deal put to them before Christmas. The pay deal was being implemented and staff would receive their backdated pay in February. The deal included a commitment to further review family friendly policies. Said review was now underway in discussion with union representatives. Members welcomed the ability of TfGM and the unions to come together and amicably resolve the issues.

It was advised that tranche 3 had been implemented successfully in early January and current operation was going well. There were issues on some services, including school services, but these were in the process of being addressed. Members expressed concern that one of the issues which had made the Manchester Evening News had resulted in the press receiving a response before local members. It was asked that members be prioritised in communications so that they could inform local residents more quickly. Members expressed their thanks for the phenomenal job that staff involved in the successful launch of tranche 3, particularly given the significant weather issues they had to contend with on the day of the launch.

It was advised that the programme of Metrolink renewal works for 2025 was due to start in the next week. There would be some disruption, with some temporary line closures being in place throughout the year.

As had been requested by the Committee, a GM response had been submitted on the Street Works Consultation. The response had been developed in discussion with local authority officers who attended the GM Highways Group. The response would be circulated to members.

Reference was made to the New Year's Day flooding incidents and the impact of these. Thanks were expressed to all agencies (including TfGM) involved in mitigating the impact of the flooding issues faced at Platt Bridge near Wigan.

The Chair advised the Committee that the GM Clean Air Plan now had the support of the Government, which was a positive step for the region in being able to go about the right approach in a way that did not overburden the region's residents. The support given also highlighted the important role of the Bee Network, as the approach taken would not have been possible without the level of control the Network has allowed.

The Chair highlighted that the Secretary of State for Transport, Heidi Alexander, had attended the tranche 3 launch event. This had provided the opportunity to discuss plans for rail reform and other key transport plans for the region. GM's submission to the Government's spending review was being finalised, making the case for the funding and powers GM would need to deliver on its ambitious plans for growth.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the update received on the pay deal and associated industrial relations be noted.
2. That the update received on the successful launch of Tranche 3 of bus franchising be noted.
3. That members acknowledged the hard work of TfGM staff in ensuring a successful launch of Tranche 3 despite the inclement weather around the launch date.
4. That the update received on Metrolink renewal works commencing in early 2025 be noted.
5. That the update received on the GM response to the Street Works Consultation be noted.

6. That the update on the Secretary of State for Transport's visit to Greater Manchester be received.
7. That thanks were expressed to all agencies who worked together to manage flooding issues at Platt Bridge.
8. That the update on the government's support for the GM Clean Air Plan be received.

BNC/04/25 Minutes of the Meeting of 12th December 2024

RESOLVED/-

That the minutes of the meeting of the meeting of 12 December 2024 be agreed as a true and correct record.

BNC/05/25 GM Rail Reform and Devolution – The Vision and Delivery Programme for Rail in Greater Manchester

Simon Elliott, Head of Rail TfGM, presented a report that provided an overview of the strategic context for rail reform, the case for change, the vision for GM Rail, and the outline programme of activity and milestones to deliver GM's ambitions for rail as part of the Bee Network. Points highlighted included:

- The vision would set out clearly the need to maintain the rail network, and how existing services would be delivered efficiently, effectively and safely.
- The vision would also make clear how reform would enhance and improve the customer experience. Including the enhancement of the stations themselves and improving accessibility across the network.
- The vision would also set out the necessary growth of the network to meet the needs of a growing city region.
- In terms of shorter-term integration. The paper set out the delivery of pay-go ticketing fares, how stations would be improved, and where there were regeneration opportunities. It also provided clarity on the planned three phase approach to integrating the eight lines across the region.

Comments and Questions

- Members made clear the absolute importance of accessibility in stations – without this, many members of the community would be locked out of the improved services. Officers highlighted the acceleration of accessibility work now taking place, with thanks expressed to Nathaniel Yates, whose tireless campaigning around accessibility was aiding in highlighting the areas of most concern on the network.
- Members asked if the work taking place on rail reform and growth would link into local growth plans. It was advised that close working was taking place with growth leads, including Stockport MDC and the plans around Old Trafford regeneration.
- Members sought information on how tram/train could fit into the picture in due course. Officers referenced the Draft Rapid Transit Strategy which set out the proposals around fixed track opportunities, in which tram/train would play a key part. The Strategic Outline Business Plan was underway around these plans.
- Members highlighted the importance of cross-town radial links as well as links into Manchester. Members advised that the rail reform work would not cease with the completion of tranche 3. Once the eight priority corridors had been rolled out, the next phase would move on to consideration of these radial links.
- Members highlighted the importance of creating extra capacity on the network, particularly in the Stockport corridor.
- Members expressed concern about Middlewood Station, which was currently rated Category C in terms of accessibility. Similar accessibility issues were also raised around Hattersley Station. Officers would take these concerns away to fully establish the work taking place ahead of responding.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the contents of the paper be noted.
2. That endorsement be given to the development of a robust, evidence-based GM Rail Vision and programme for the future of rail across Greater Manchester in conjunction with GM Local Authorities.
3. That endorsement be given to the ambition and tranche-based approach to the integration of the 8 priority rail corridors into the Bee Network Rail by 2028.
4. That endorsement be given to the development of an Outline Business Case for Rail Reform, to assess and develop a preferred way forward for meeting the

objectives set out in this paper, and identify the legislative and funding reforms, required to deliver GM's growth agenda.

5. That endorsement be given to the proactive engagement with Government in relation to the English Devolution and Rail Reform Bills, with particular regard to finalising the statutory role for the Combined Authority in the specification of services, fares and customer standards.
6. That endorsement be given to the development of further work to unlock the benefits of the Old Trafford Regeneration scheme through the relocation of the freight terminal at Trafford Depot.
7. That endorsement be given to the development of the Spending Review submission, working with Government, to ensure the opportunities set out in this report are prioritised and delivered.
8. That concerns around access issues at stations such as Hattersley would be taken away and addressed appropriately.
9. That thanks be expressed to Nathaniel Yates for his contributions to TfGM in working towards full accessibility at all rail stations.
10. That future updates on rail reform also include progress around the unlocking of land for homes.

BNC/06/25 Active Travel Mission Annual Report

Dame Sarah Storey, Active Travel Commissioner & Richard Nickson, Network Director Active Travel TfGM, presented a report seeking the approval of the 2024 Annual Active Travel Report and agreement around the Active Travel Priorities for 2025.

Thanks were expressed to all involved in the successes to date and particular areas of focus for the next year were highlighted. These included a renewed focus on funding the schemes that enabled greater numbers of people to do their business actively, addressing the quality of pavements for walking, developing a strategic cycle network properly linking up centres and residential areas, delivering 100 school streets by 2028, and publishing an expansion plan for cycle hire, including incorporating the payments into the wider Bee Network multi-modal ticketing.

Comments and Questions

- Members welcomed the walking and cycling infrastructure newly installed but expressed concern around the longer-term maintenance of the schemes. Officers advised that discussions were being developed around 'sustain, grow and transform'. Substantial assets were being developed in the active travel sphere and these would always need to be kept fit for purpose.
- Members welcomed the plans around zebra crossings on side roads, with members expressing concerns around overly wide side roads that were difficult for people with limited mobility.
- Members sought the ability to mark out some of their walking routes more clearly but were still awaiting the appropriate signage templates from TfGM. It was asked that this be provided.
- Members welcomed the work of school streets but highlighted that there had been some difficulties in keeping volunteers engaged – were there possibilities around a pot of recurrent funding to develop a longer-term view. Officers advised that work was taking place around the broader funding pipeline going forward, with the Committee being updated as the future funding plans were further developed.
- Members welcomed the development of a walking action plan and strategic cycling plan.
- Members stated that that they would welcome a future session on the funding mechanisms for future projects and what they might look like.
- Members expressed concern about the current status of many pavements in the region, which had the potential to hamper the well intention work around getting more people walking. Officers advised that all local authorities had the outcome of TfGM network review audits, which could advise and support on maintenance and bringing paving up to minimum standards. Broader consideration could be given to the use of active travel monies on paving issues that directly impede active travel plans. TfGM were in direct contact with all relevant local authority teams on these issues. The Chair suggested that Members could take away a recommendation to ask their own highway authorities to undertake an analysis of local pavement qualities to build up a case for relevant investment.
- Members condemned those who abused the people running the school streets campaigns in some areas and welcomed the potential for CCTV to combat this in future.

- Members welcomed any move towards bringing in legislation around pavement parking issues.

RESOLVED/-

1. That approval be given to the Greater Manchester Annual Active Travel Report.
2. That the Commissioner's Mission Priorities as laid out in this report and in the Greater Manchester Annual Active Travel Report be endorsed.
3. That walking route TfGM signage templates be made available to local authorities.
4. That updates will be brought on the funding pipeline as appropriate.
5. That Committee Members seek to ask their own highway authorities, in conjunction with TfGM, to undertake an analysis of pavement qualities, making cases for investment where required.

BNC/07/25 Metrolink 2027

Danny Vaughan, Chief Network Officer, TfGM, presented the findings of the review and assessment of options when the current Metrolink Operations and Maintenance Agreement (MOMA) with Keolis Amey Metrolink Ltd (KAM) expires in July 2027. The report outlined the review undertaken, the options identified, the findings, and provided a recommendation as to how Metrolink should be operated from mid-2027.

Following the in-depth analysis – the possible future options were narrowed down to two ways forward. Firstly, was an arm's length municipal option with some changes to bring Metrolink more in line with the Bee Network. The other option was to continue with the existing model. Despite being run by a private company Metrolink has always had full accountability through TfGM, who made all decisions around timetabling, fares etc – and that would always remain.

RESOLVED/-

1. That endorsement be given to the procurement of a Metrolink franchise agreement with adjusted scope from the current Metrolink Operations and

Maintenance Agreement, to commence from July 2027 when the current Agreement expires.

2. That it be noted that the intention for TfGM to deliver a number of customer experience elements of the current Agreement from mid-2027, to increase TfGM's control and oversight over service delivery and asset management through the new Agreement.
3. That the potential for a unified GM transport operation in the 2030's be noted
4. That it be noted that, subject to feedback, procurement of the successor Franchise arrangements will commence; and
5. That it be noted that a further report will be brought to BNC and GMCA before the award of any contract which is anticipated in the second half of 2026.

BNC/08/25 Transport Infrastructure Pipeline

Chris Barnes (Network Director Infrastructure, TfGM) presented an update on progress delivering a pipeline of transport infrastructure improvements to support the operation of the Bee Network. The report made a number of recommendations for members to support the continued development and delivery of the pipeline programme.

Comments and Questions

- Members welcomed the announcement around improvement works to bus shelters, as these were an important part of the infrastructure. If you can get this right, then that would have the potential to further drive-up patronage. It would also show 'at the street level' how the Bee Network was improving local infrastructure.
- Members also asked if there was scope for bringing in green roofing onto bus shelters, which were attractive and had environmental benefits.
- Members made reference to re-prioritising £210m of funding in CRSTS1 – it was asked how this re-prioritising had been explored and delivered, and was there sufficient oversight of this? Officers made clear that the re-prioritisation did not mean that some work streams would stop, but rather that they could not

be completed within the initially planned period and had to be placed within another phase of works, and freeing up some headroom to support priorities.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the current position, recent progress and key milestones on the transport infrastructure pipeline be noted.
2. That the drawdown of CRSTS funding and associated scheme progression be approved as follows:
 - Manchester: Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure: £0.89m and Full Business Case;
 - City Centre Bus and Streets for All Connectivity Programme: £2.786m;
 - Integrated Measures: Account Based Ticketing: £4.2m and Full Business Case;
 - Integrated Measures: Travel Information (Passenger Information Displays and Printed Information): £0.67m;
3. That the Metrolink Renewals Programme:
 - Approve the drawdown of £1.0m of CRSTS funding for Whitefield Tunnel Renewals; and
 - Note the release of £1.55m from existing capital budgets for the infrastructure drainage repairs.
4. That subject to DfT approval and GMCA approval of the allocation of CRSTS1 funding at the meeting to be held on 31 January 2025, approve the associated drawdown of funding to enable a number of time-critical priorities to be advanced as follows:
 - Acquisition of the existing GM Bus Shelter estate and related activity to develop a renewal programme for the estate: up to £15m;
 - Rochdale: Castleton Phase 2 Active Travel scheme: up to £12.66m; and

- Capital & revenue switch applied to the revenue budget for Bus Franchising IS and Ticketing System Assets: up to £15m.
5. That it be noted that the allocation of funding to support the Bee Network Rail Integration Programme, was subject to DfT approval and GMCA approval at the meeting to be held on 31 January 2025 and as follows;
- Bee Network Rail Integration and Accessibility: up to £34m of CRSTS1 funding; and
 - Bee Network Rail Integration Programme; estimated at £80m of CRSTS2 funding.

BNC/09/25 Bee Network Annual Products

Fran Wilkinson, Customer & Growth Director, TfGM, presented a proposal that new ticketing products be added to the Bee Network fares and ticketing proposition to increase access to public transport throughout the region and improve affordability for all.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the updated introduction of a suite of Annual Multi Modal Tickets, from March 2025 be endorsed.
2. That the addition of these Annual Multi Modal Tickets to the TfGM scheme with local Credit Unions, from March 2025, to improve access to affordable annual products be endorsed.
3. That the addition of the existing Annual Tram Tickets to the TfGM scheme with local Credit Unions, from March 2025, to improve access to affordable annual products be endorsed.

BNC/49/24 Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Bee Network Committee would take place on Thursday 27th February 2025.

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