

## **GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY**

**DATE: Friday, 25th October, 2024**

**TIME: 10.30 am**

**VENUE: Council Chamber, Bury Town Hall, Knowsley Street,  
Bury, BL9 0SW**

### **AGENDA**

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Chairs Announcements and Urgent Business**
- 3. Declarations of Interest** 1 - 8

To receive declarations of interest in any item for discussion at the meeting. A blank form for declaring interests has been circulated with the agenda; please ensure that this is returned to the Governance & Scrutiny Officer at the start of the meeting.

- 4. Minutes of the GMCA meeting held on 27 September 2024** 9 - 30

To consider the approval of the minutes of the GMCA meeting held on 27 September 2024.

- 5. GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2024** 31 - 46

To note the minutes of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee

<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>MANCHESTER</b>	<b>ROCHDALE</b>	<b>STOCKPORT</b>	<b>TRAFFORD</b>
<b>BURY</b>	<b>OLDHAM</b>	<b>SALFORD</b>	<b>TAMESIDE</b>	<b>WIGAN</b>

held on 25 September 2024.

**6. Bee Network Committee - Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2024** 47 - 60

To note the minutes of the Bee Network Committee held on 26 September 2024.

**7. GM Air Quality Administration Committee - Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2024** 61 - 68

To note the minutes of the GM Air Quality Administration Committee held on 1 October 2024.

**8. GMCA Waste & Recycling Committee - Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2024 - To Follow**

To note the minutes of the GMCA Waste & Recycling Committee held on 16 October 2024.

**9. GM Appointments**

1. To approve the appointment of Councillor Basat Sheikh (MCC) as a member of to the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee for 2024/25.
2. To note the appointment of Councillor Anthony McCaul (MCC) as a substitute member on the GM Clean Air Committee for 2024/25.
3. To note the appointment of Councillor Anthony McCaul (MCC) as a substitute member on the Air Quality Administration Committee for 2024/25.

- 10. Equality Panels - Annual Reports** 69 - 154
- Report of Councillor Arooj Shah, Portfolio Lead for Equalities & Communities.
- 11. Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy - Draft for Consultation** 155 - 254
- Report of Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Lead for Green City Region.
- 12. Greater Manchester One Network Connectivity Partner Procurement** 255 - 264
- Report of Councillor Nick Peel, Portfolio Lead for Digital City Region.
- 13. GM Investment Framework - Conditional Project Approval** 265 - 270
- Report of Councillor David Molyneux, Portfolio Lead for Resources & Investment.
- 14. Draft School Travel Strategy - Our Vision for School Travel in Greater Manchester** 271 - 322
- Report of Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester.
- 15. Delivering the Bee Network Update** 323 - 342
- Report of Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester.
- 16. Bus Franchising Fleet - To Follow**
- Report of Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester.

**17. 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.

**PART B**

- |   |          |                  |
|---|----------|------------------|
| <b>18. Bus Franchising Fleet -To Follow</b>                                     | <b>3</b> |                  |
| Report of Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester.                            |          |                  |
| <b>19. GM Investment Framework Recommendations</b>                              | <b>3</b> | <b>343 - 348</b> |
| Report of Councillor David Molyneux, Portfolio Lead for Resources & Investment. |          |                  |

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Political Party</b>
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 Gerald Cooney	Tameside Council	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](http://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk). Alternatively, contact the following

Governance & Scrutiny Officer: Governance and Scrutiny

✉ [sylvia.welsh@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:sylvia.welsh@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

This agenda was issued on 17 October 2024 on behalf of Julie Connor, Secretary to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester M1 6EU

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## Declaration of Councillors' Interests in Items Appearing on the Agenda

Name and Date of Committee.....>

Agenda Item Number	Type of Interest - PERSONAL AND NON PREJUDICIAL Reason for declaration of interest	NON PREJUDICIAL Reason for declaration of interest Type of Interest – PREJUDICIAL Reason for declaration of interest	Type of Interest – DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST Reason for declaration of interest

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Please see overleaf for a quick guide to declaring interests at GMCA meetings.

## Quick Guide to Declaring Interests at GMCA Meetings

Please Note: should you have a personal interest that is prejudicial in an item on the agenda, you should leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and the voting thereon.

This is a summary of the rules around declaring interests at meetings. It does not replace the Member's Code of Conduct, the full description can be found in the GMCA's constitution Part 7A.

Your personal interests must be registered on the GMCA's Annual Register within 28 days of your appointment onto a GMCA committee and any changes to these interests must be notified within 28 days. Personal interests that should be on the register include:

1. Bodies to which you have been appointed by the GMCA
2. Your membership of bodies exercising functions of a public nature, including charities, societies, political parties or trade unions.

**You are also legally bound to disclose the following information called Disclosable Personal Interests which includes:**

1. You, and your partner's business interests (eg employment, trade, profession, contracts, or any company with which you are associated).
2. You and your partner's wider financial interests (eg trust funds, investments, and assets including land and property).
3. Any sponsorship you receive.

**Failure to disclose this information is a criminal offence**

**Step One: Establish whether you have an interest in the business of the agenda**

1. If the answer to that question is 'No' then that is the end of the matter.
2. If the answer is 'Yes' or 'Very Likely' then you must go on to consider if that personal interest can be construed as being a prejudicial interest.



## Step Two: Determining if your interest is prejudicial

A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest:

1. where the wellbeing, or financial position of you, your partner, members of your family, or people with whom you have a close association (people who are more than just an acquaintance) are likely to be affected by the business of the meeting more than it would affect most people in the area.
2. the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

### For a non-prejudicial interest, you must:

1. Notify the governance officer for the meeting as soon as you realise you have an interest.
2. Inform the meeting that you have a personal interest and the nature of the interest.
3. Fill in the declarations of interest form.

### To note:

1. You may remain in the room and speak and vote on the matter  
If your interest relates to a body to which the GMCA has appointed you to, you only have to inform the meeting of that interest if you speak on the matter.

### For prejudicial interests, you must:

1. Notify the governance officer for the meeting as soon as you realise you have a prejudicial interest (before or during the meeting).
2. Inform the meeting that you have a prejudicial interest and the nature of the interest.
3. Fill in the declarations of interest form.
4. Leave the meeting while that item of business is discussed.
5. Make sure the interest is recorded on your annual register of interests form if it relates to you or your partner's business or financial affairs. If it is not on the Register update it within 28 days of the interest becoming apparent.

### You must not:

Participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, or if you become aware of your disclosable pecuniary interest during the meeting participate further in any discussion of the business,  
participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

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## **SHORT GUIDE**

### **GMCA CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS**

#### **1. WHO**

Mandatory for

The Mayor

Members of GMCA

Substitute Members of GMCA

Voting Co-opted Members of GMCA's committees

Appointed Members of Joint Committees

Voluntary for

Non-voting Co-opted Members of GMCA's committees

Elected members from GM districts when they represent GMCA

#### **2. WHEN**

Acting in your official capacity, and

In meetings of:

- GMCA; or
- GMCA's Committees or Sub-Committees, Joint Committees or Joint Sub-Committees

#### **3. CONDUCT**

##### **General Principles**

Selflessness: the public interest not personal gain

Integrity: avoid undue influences

Objectivity: decisions made on merit

Accountability: scrutiny is the norm

Openness: transparent decisions with reasons

Honesty: declare interests and avoid conflicts

Leadership: lead by example.

## **DO NOT**

- Unlawfully discriminate
- Bully or be abusive
- Intimidate a complainant, a witness, or an investigator under the Code of Conduct
- Compromise the impartiality of GMCA's officers
- Disclose confidential information without authority
- Deny lawful access to information
- Bring GMCA into disrepute
- Abuse your position
- Use GMCA's resources improperly

## **DO**

- Pay due regard to the advice of the Treasurer and Monitoring Officer
- Register your interests
- Declare your interests

## **INTERESTS**

### **A. Pecuniary interests (you, your spouse or your partner)**

#### **Register within 28 days**

- Employment or other paid office
- Sponsorship – payment in respect of expenses as a Member of GMCA, or election expenses.
- Contracts – between you/your partner (or a body in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest) and GMCA:

- Land you have an interest in within Greater Manchester
- Corporate Tenancies – where GMCA is the landlord you/your partner (or a body in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest) is the tenant
- Securities – you have a beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the area of the GMCA

**Do not speak or vote at a meeting on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest**

**Disclose the interest at the meeting**

**Withdraw from the meeting**

**It is a criminal offence to fail to register disclosable pecuniary interests and to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.**

## **B. Other Interests**

### **Personal Interests**

You have a personal interest -

- If your well-being or financial position would be affected (i.e. more so than other ratepayers)
- If the well-being or financial position of somebody close to you would be affected or the organisations in which they are employed
- If the well-being or financial position of body referred to below would be affected
  - A body of which you are in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by GMCA;
  - A body of which you are in a position of general control or management which
    - i. exercises functions of a public nature;

- ii. is directed to charitable purposes; or
- iii. one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union),
- the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £100.

**Disclose the interest at the meeting**

**You may speak and vote**

**C Prejudicial Interests**

You have a prejudicial interest -

Where your personal interest is one which a member of the public would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest and it:

- affects your financial position (or those persons or bodies referred to in section B above); or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration

**Do not speak or vote at a meeting on a matter in which you have a prejudicial interest**

**Disclose the interest at the meeting**

**Withdraw from the meeting**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED  
AUTHORITY HELD ON FRIDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER 2024 AT LEIGH SPORTS  
VILLAGE**

**PRESENT**

Mayor of Greater Manchester	Andy Burnham (in the Chair)
Deputy Mayor (Police, Crime & Fire)	Kate Green
Bolton	Councillor Nicholas Peel
Manchester	Councillor Bev Craig
Oldham	Councillor Arooj Shah
Rochdale	Councillor Neil Emmott
Salford	City Mayor Paul Dennett
Stockport	Councillor Mark Hunter
Tameside	Councillor Jacqueline North
Trafford	Councillor Tom Ross
Wigan	Councillor David Molyneux

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Bolton	Councillor Nadim Muslim
Environment Agency	Ian Crewe
United Utilities	Jo Harrison
South Manchester Credit Union	Sheenagh Young
Unify	Owen Roberts

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Group Chief Executive Officer, GMCA, GMFRS & TfGM	Caroline Simpson
GMCA Deputy Chief Executive	Andrew Lightfoot
GMCA Monitoring Officer	Gillian Duckworth
GMCA Treasurer	Steve Wilson
GMCA Director of Governance & Scrutiny	Julie Connor
Bolton	Sue Johnson

Bury	Lynne Ridsdale
Manchester	Paul Marshall
Oldham	Harry Catherall
Rochdale	Julie Murphy
Salford	Tom Stannard
Stockport	Michael Cullen
Trafford	Sara Todd
Wigan	James Winterbottom
Office of the GM Mayor	Kevin Lee
TfGM	Martin Lax
GMCA	Sylvia Welsh
GMCA	Lee Teasdale

#### **GMCA 118/24      APOLOGIES**

That apologies be received from Councillor Eamonn O'Brien (Bury), Councillor Gerald Cooney (Tameside), Steve Rumbelow (Rochdale) & Alison McKenzie-Folan (Wigan).

#### **GMCA 119/24      CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, opened the meeting by welcoming all to Leigh Sports Village and invited City Mayor Paul Dennett and Deputy Mayor Kate Green to provide an update on work taking place in Greater Manchester following the recent publication of the Grenfell Tower Report.

Mayor Dennett stated that the report was appropriately substantive, covering some 2000 pages and 59 recommendations. It would take time to work through the detail and legislative change would be required. There were actions that would need to be taken on by all parts of the system – including all levels of government and housing associations. Greater Manchester would be taking the 59 actions very seriously and discussions would be taking place on an appropriate implementation plan to create a regulatory environment locally that reflects the one that will be required at the national level. The swiftness with which the government was now responding to the report was



welcomed, as it was known that many thousands of people would still be living in homes that had cladding that could be deemed unsafe and that this was intolerable.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester provided an update following the Labour Party Conference held in Liverpool earlier in the week. At the Conference the second meeting of the Liverpool Manchester Railway Board had taken place. During the meeting the announcement was made that former Railways Minister Huw Merriman would be the first chair of the Partnership Board. Mayor Burnham stated that in his roles with the former government Mr Merriman had always been a great friend of the region and had sought to advocate for funding high-speed rail in the region following the HS2 cancellation announcements. Long-term infrastructure projects such as this always benefit from a cross-party approach and Mr Merriman would also bring this to the table.

The Old Trafford Regeneration Task Force had also been in attendance at the Conference. This had been the first big opportunity to put forward the coherent vision of the opportunities for growth that Old Trafford regeneration represented. This vision would include the relocation of freight from behind Old Trafford, if successful this would take freight away from the West Coast Main Line and free up capacity within the city of Manchester region, particularly the bottlenecks seen in Stockport. This would also create a growth opportunity in Port Salford, which was proposed as one of the alternative freight locations.

Mayor of Greater Manchester advised members of the amendments to leaders portfolios, including Mayor Burnham himself taking on the Health & Care portfolio, Mayor Dennett taking the Housing First portfolio, and the introduction of a new portfolio focusing on reform of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund.

Members welcomed a strengthening of the governance arrangements for the Greater Manchester Pension Fund. There were some concerns expressed regarding changes to the appointments process to the Pension Fund Board introduced with no local authority consultation. The Mayor of Greater Manchester noted these concerns and asked officers to liaise with Tameside Council to gain further clarity on the changes.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That an update following the publication of the Grenfell Tower Report, including the plans for addressing the 59 actions within it be received and that an implementation plan be submitted to a future meeting of the GMCA for consideration.
2. That the appointment of Huw Merriman, as the Chair of the Liverpool Manchester Railway Partnership Board be noted.
3. That the update on the Old Trafford Regeneration Task Force and the opportunities that lie within it be received.
4. That update on the amendments to Leaders Portfolios be received.
5. That the GMCA will liaise with Tameside to ask for further clarity around recent changes to the Pension Fund's appointments process.

**GMCA 120/24      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**RESOLVED /-**

That Mayor Andy Burnham registers an interest on Item 20 (Q1 Capital Funding) in relation to LEVI funding.

**GMCA 121/24      MINUTES OF THE GMCA MEETING HELD ON 12 JULY 2024**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the minutes of the GMCA meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**GMCA 122/24      GMCA WASTE & RECYCLING COMMITTEE MINUTES – 17<sup>TH</sup>  
JULY 2024**

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the minutes of the GMCA Waste & Recycling Committee held on 17 July 2024 be approved.
2. That the appointment of Councillor Alan Quinn as the Chair of the Waste & Recycling Committee for 2024/25 year be approved.
3. That the appointment of Councillor Steve Adshead as Vice Chair of the Greater Manchester Waste and Recycling Committee for 2024/25 be approved.

**GMCA 123/24      GMCA RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES – 22 MARCH &  
12 JULY 2024**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the minutes of the GMCA Resources Committee meetings held on 22 March & 12 July 2024 be approved.

**GMCA 124/24      GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MINUTES – 24 JULY & 14  
AUGUST 2024**

Councillor Nadim Muslim, Chair of the GM Overview & Scrutiny Committee was invited to address the GMCA and present the committee's annual report. The report detailed some of the key pieces of work undertaken over the last municipal year, but also guided the Committee in the strongest direction for the forthcoming year to ensure that its work continued to add value, create an impact and be in line with the things that matter most to local residents.

Highlights in the previous year included the ability to have real oversight of the priorities and focus of the Combined Authority whilst scrutinising in more detail those issues that mattered most, including the cost of public transport, waste contractual arrangements and the benefit of business rate retention.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester welcomed the report and reflected upon the continued improvements being seen through the Combined Authority's scrutiny

processes, and as the single settlement arrangements became further embedded, the need for strong and robust scrutiny would become even more vital.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the minutes of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 24 July & 14 August 2024 be noted.
2. That the update from Councillor Nadim Muslim, Chair of Overview & Scrutiny, be received.
3. That the contents of the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report be noted.

**GMCA 125/24      GMCA AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES – 31 JULY 2024**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the minutes of the GMCA Audit Committee held on 31 July 2024 be noted.

**GMCA 126/24      BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE MINUTES – 27 JUNE & 25 JULY 2024**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the minutes of the Bee Network Committee held on 27 June & 25 July 2024 be noted.

**GMCA 127/24      GREATER MANCHESTER APPOINTMENTS AND NOMINATIONS 2024/25**

Gillian Duckworth, GMCA Solicitor & Monitoring Officer, presented a report setting out appointments and nominations to various Committees and other bodies within Greater Manchester.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the nomination to the Integrated Care Partnership Board be withdrawn from the agenda.
2. That the appointment of Councillor Paul Heilbron (Salford) as the member and Councillor Jonathan Moore (Salford) as the substitute member on the GMCA Waste & Recycling Committee for 2024/25 be approved.
3. That the appointment of Councillor Nathan Evans (Trafford), Councillor David Tilbrook (Tameside) and Councillor Diane Williamson (Oldham) as substitute members on the Bee Network Committee for 2024/25 be approved.
4. That the appointment of Councillor Tony Davies (Salford), to the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee replacing Councillor Joshua Brooks (Salford) be approved.
5. That the appointment of Councillor Martin Donaghy (Bolton) to the GMCA Homelessness Board be approved.
6. That the appointment of Councillor Jake Austin (Stockport) as a member and Councillor Joshua Charters (Oldham) as a substitute member on the Police, Crime & Fire Panel be noted.
7. That the appointment of Councillor David Chadwick (Bolton), Councillor Jake Austin (Stockport) as members of the Police, Crime & Fire Steering Group and the appointment of Councillor Steve Gribbon as a substitute member of the Police, Crime & Fire Steering Group be noted.

**GMCA 128/24      BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE INTEGRATED WATER  
MANAGEMENT PLAN TO 31 MARCH 2025**

Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio Lead for Housing, and Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Lead for the Green City Region, presented a report seeking approval for the Business Plan for the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP) to 31 March 2025 to deliver

the objectives outlined in the full plan and provide an update on the resources that were being deployed to enable the plan to be progressed and delivered.

The report drew attention to funding that was being deployed to reduce flooding across the region. This would require collaborative working across the system. Investment plans from United Utilities were also welcomed. Early engagement around plans and working across organisational boundaries would be critical to progressing the agenda.

Ian Crewe was invited to address the GMCA on behalf of the Environment Agency. He stated that as the nation and the world faced a climate and biodiversity emergency, no one could sit back anymore as urgent action was required. Adaption was required at scale and at pace. The cost of mitigating climate impacts was likely to reach £10bn to the UK economy by 2050, so the plans within the IWMP would be hugely helpful. There were concerns highlighted that ever growing pressures placed upon public funding meant that ever greater levels of traditional partner funding contributions, whilst vital, would not be sufficient. Therefore, innovative and collaborative investment as planned within the IWMP was necessary and the region was leading the way in this field.

Jo Harrison was invited to address the GMCA on behalf of United Utilities. It was highlighted that public expectations had changed, and UU sought to meet that aspiration around cleaner rivers and more resilient water quality and flooding protection for the future. The Water Act was driving the opportunity to increase investment across the North West. It was anticipated that there would be £3bn investment in GM alone over the next five years investment period to change the way that water was managed in the region.

In response to concerns regarding sewage overflow and United Utilities plan to tackle this issue as soon as possible, Members were advised that 54% of GM's sewers were 'combined sewers' and Victorian infrastructure, and it was noted that over 1300 overflows had been seen in the region. Therefore, an extraordinary level of investment was required to completely change the sewage system. In the shorter term there would be prioritisation of investment into changing the overflow levels. Significant levels of investment were also being placed into modernising the region's wastewater treatment works, which would provide huge improvements in the quality of water.

Members sought to highlight in the building of partnership working, the role of blue light services. These services were shouldering significant costs at the moment in addressing flooding and related events, and improvements in the protection of the natural environment would see a reduction in the impact upon them.

Reference was made to the potential breach of the Toddbrook Reservoir. Despite this being beyond the boundaries of the region, this would have a significant impact upon Stockport and had resulted in heightened concerns. This would be an issue for a number of GM Local Authorities who had reservoirs in neighbouring areas. Members were advised that the responsibilities for reservoirs was often a complex environment with a range of different types of ownership but the sheer risks involved meant that a strong reservoir strategy was being heavily invested into. Local resilience forums also had integrated working across regions in place, and it was hoped that the increase in combined authority regions would further increase levels of collaboration.

#### **RESOLVED /-**

1. That the Business Plan for the Integrated Water Management Plan to 31 March 25 (Annex A) be approved.
2. That the existing budget allocation 2024-2026 be noted.
3. That the national announcements be noted, as contained with paragraph 1.12-1.13 of the report be noted.
4. That the progress and outputs from the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Business Plan, as contained within paragraphs 2.1–2.2 of the report be noted.
5. That the verbal update received from the Environment Agency be received.
6. That the verbal update received from United Utilities on the Integrated Water Management Plan and the work taking place to address ongoing sewage overflow issues be received.
7. That closer integration of blue light services into the Integrated Water Management Plans be progressed.

8. That closer integration with neighbouring authorities be progressed on cross boundary issues, including the future management of assets such as reservoirs, which have a direct impact on Greater Manchester.
9. That a report on the potential pipeline for investment be submitted to a future meeting of the GMCA.

## **GMCA 129/24      BEE NETWORK FARES & TICKETING**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report proposing a number of changes to Bee Network fares and ticketing products to increase access to public transport through affordable and simpler fares and ticketing.

The continuing success of Bee Network franchising and how that was now allowing for the introduction of an annual ticket, and the multi-modal pay as you go system which it was confirmed would be within a launch window of either March 16<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> 2025.

The Annual Bee Bus Ticket offer was set to offer considerable savings to those who took it up. However, it was fully understood that the initial cost of £800 made it too expensive for most people as a one-off purchase, and that those who would benefit most from this were the least likely to be able to afford it. Therefore a partnership with local credit unions to create a manageable payment system opens up access to a much wider range of residents. This scheme also sought to highlight the great work that credit unions undertook in the region and would hopefully encourage more residents to make use of what they could offer.

Sheenagh Young (South Manchester Credit Union) and Owen Roberts (Unify) were invited to further expand upon the role of credit unions in supporting residents. It was advised that the region contained a consortium of 14 different credit unions who collaborated to ensure that all residents had access to affordable loans, including loans to local social enterprises. The credit unions collectively had £200m of savings held with them from customers in GM. Feedback from members was that they wanted



credit unions rooted within their communities, and this is what the consortium all sought to offer.

Sheenagh and Owen were thanked for their contributions and asked that all Leaders actively promote the Annual Bus Ticket Credit Scheme and information relating to local credit unions to all of their staff members.

Members asked about funding for capped bus fares going forward, in particular the continuation of BSIP funding which was introduced by the previous government, or if there was a need for 'Plan B' to ensure financial sustainability. Concern was raised that if the fund was not to continue, then Local Authorities may be asked to contribute funding they could not afford. The Mayor of Greater Manchester acknowledged the concerns and stated that the system from commencement had been established upon the need to increase patronage. Figures showed that these increased levels of patronage were encouragingly building. The increases seen in the north and west of the region since franchising was established were strong, and it was hoped that this would be replicated in the south of the region after January. It was also hoped that the multi-modal fare introduction would also have a similar impact upon user numbers. Obviously at the present time there were still unknowns, and by the middle of 2025 there should be a real picture of how strong the patronage had become. In terms of a 'Plan B' there would need to be consideration of increases to the Mayoral precept.

#### **RESOLVED /-**

1. That the introduction of an Annual Bee Bus Ticket priced at £800 be approved.
2. That the introduction of a TfGM scheme with local Credit Unions, from January 2025, to improve access to annual bus tickets be endorsed.
3. That the continuation of the Bee Network Recompense Scheme for Tranche 3 bus customers be approved.
4. That the introduction of multi modal 'pay as you go' (PAYG) contactless ticketing and capped fares across bus and tram in March 2025 be approved.

5. That the potential go live dates for the 'pay as you go' scheme of either 16<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 be acknowledged.
6. That the plans to provide an update on the annual review of the Capped Fares Scheme and proposed next steps be noted.
7. That the potential extension of the Care Leavers scheme, from aged 21 to aged 25, from April 2025 be noted.
8. That the GMCA acknowledges the achievements of the Bee Network bus integration following the first anniversary of the tranche 1 go live date.
9. That the verbal updates provided by SM Credit Union and Unify on the work of GM's 14 credit unions be received.
10. That GM Leaders be requested to actively promote the Annual Bus Ticket Credit Scheme and information relating to local credit unions to all of their staff members.

## **GMCA 130/24      HOUSING FIRST GREATER MANCHESTER**

Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio Lead for Housing, presented a report confirming the launch of the Housing First Unit, setting out the Housing First vision for Greater Manchester, the challenges of the current housing crisis, the headline measures to build a new system and the potential for GM Housing Investment Loan Fund surpluses to support delivery of the Housing First vision.

Ambitions for the unit included the delivery of 75,000 new homes within the period of the current parliament, a target that would include 10,000 Truly Affordable Net Zero homes.

These plans would require considerable levels of collaboration, including with the region's growth locations partners and agencies across sectors.

## **RESOLVED /-**

1. That the launch of the Housing First Unit be welcomed, that the proposed Housing First vision for Greater Manchester be approved, and that support be given for a programme of engagement with the government, private sector and broader stakeholders to gain support and contribution to the necessary radical actions.
2. That commitment be given to an ambition to drive forward growth and increase housing supply by delivering 75,000 new homes in the current Parliament, including 10,000 Truly Affordable Net Zero (TANZ) homes, subject to necessary support from Government.
3. That the potential for GM Housing Investment Loan Fund surpluses to significantly assist in work to deliver the Housing First vision be noted.

## **GMCA 131/24      TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION: VALUE FOR MONEY IN GREATER MANCHESTER**

Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio Lead for Housing First, presented an overview of the current temporary accommodation landscape in GM and described the emerging work to collaborate across the region to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation, with a particular emphasis on the worst quality and highest cost housing – particularly ad hoc and Bed and Breakfast accommodation. The report presented, for the first time, a regional action plan on Temporary Accommodation, and summarises the work progressed to date, seeking endorsement from Leaders.

Mayor Dennett asked that his thanks be put on the record to the GMCA officers for the work they had undertaken to provide the evidence base and their proactive work to inform the development of the regional action plan. This evidence base allowed for meaningful and proactive work to now take place.

Over 100,000 households in the country were in temporary accommodation, and within those, over 150,000 children. This was of huge concern and given local authorities statutory duties to provide this temporary accommodation, created an

existential crisis where the risks of council bankruptcy was increased by the burden of these costs.

It was proposed that the initial focus would be on the worst quality housing first and foremost and the highest cost temporary accommodation (such as bed and breakfast housing).

The Mayor of Greater Manchester stated that post budget, when it was known what levers the region would have, he planned to work with the Housing First team and the GMCA Treasurer to establish when the £75m pressures currently faced on temporary accommodation could be reduced to zero.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the 6-point GM Temporary Accommodation Action Plan be approved.
2. That the financial outputs of the data analysis exercise be noted.
3. That the Influencing Priorities, described in section 4 of the report, as a starting point for dialogue with government be endorsed.
4. That the GM Out of Borough Protocol be approved.
5. That the GMCA record its thanks to the GMCA team for the work undertaken on providing the evidence base and proactive work to inform the development of the regional action plan.
6. That the GMCA Treasurer be requested to undertake analysis of the potential for reducing, through government support, the £75m pressure currently faced by GM authorities on temporary accommodation.

**GMCA 132/24      GREATER MANCHESTER BROWNFIELD HOUSING  
REALLOCATIONS**

Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio Lead for Housing First, presented a report seeking approval for the reallocation of £21.3m of funding from the GMCA Brownfield Housing

Fund. There had been slippage in some schemes, so this reallocation was vital in order to meet the timelines for spend as set out by central government.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the £11.1m allocations to projects identified in the “2024/25 Reallocations” schedule be approved.
2. That approval be given to the £10.2m allocations to projects identified in the “2024/25 in-principle Reallocations” schedule, subject to successful due diligence being completed.
3. That the variations to projects detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, be approved.

**GMCA 133/24      ATOM VALLEY MAYORAL DEVELOPMENT ZONE BUSINESS PLAN 2024/25**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report seeking seek approval from GMCA for the Atom Valley MDZ Business Plan 2024 – 2025.

It was important to hold an in-depth discussion on the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone at a forthcoming meeting of the GMCA and that this would be arranged to take place following the spending review. The strategic importance and potential of Atom Valley would be raised as a key part of the agenda at the Global Investment Summit taking place on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the draft Atom Valley MDZ Business Plan 2024 - 2025 be approved.
2. That a further report be submitted to the GMCA on the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone following the outcome of the Spending Review.

**GMCA 134/24      RAIL INTEGRATION AND REFORM PROGRAMME:  
EMERGING RAIL REFORM POLICY POSITION & NEXT STEPS**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report that advised the GMCA on the progress of the emerging Rail Integration and Reform proposition and to seek approval to progress the work further.

Once the franchised bus network was fully established on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2025, the focus would be fully onto the integration of 8 nominated rail lines into the wider Bee Network. Work would be undertaken with TfGM to draft a series of milestones and timelines for this integration process. These 8 lines would immediately increase the attractiveness of the areas around them due to the increased connectivity options.

Councillor Nadim Muslim was invited to feed back following the Overview & Scrutiny consideration of this item. There was significant support from the Committee on the direction of travel and the opportunities for regeneration that this potentially offered. Members recognised that some of greatest benefits, rather than just accessing the city centre easier, could be improved access to the jobs and amenities within their local towns.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the importance of the rail network for GM and unlocking future economic growth be noted.
2. That the government's plans for rail reform and ongoing GM engagement with Shadow Great British Railways.
3. That further engagement with HMG, rail partners and others to explore and influence legislative and structural options that would achieve GM ambitions be approved.
4. That the update received following the consideration of this item at the GM Overview & Scrutiny Committee be received.
5. That TfGM be requested to consider provisional timelines for the integration of the eight nominated rail lines into the wider Bee Network.

## **GMCA 135/24      GOLBOURNE STATION LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGY**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report setting out the proposed strategy for acquiring land interests required to deliver the Golborne New Station Project and sought approval to make offers for those interests and secure those land interests whilst also commencing the drafting of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and supporting documentation and progressing the planning consents.

Members emphasised the importance of access for all and ensuring that there was a strategic piece demonstrating that all stations would be fully accessible.

### **RESOLVED /-**

1. That the update from the DfT Outline Business Case review and associated risks highlighted be noted.
2. That the proposals for securing the land interests required to deliver the scheme as set out within this report be noted.
3. That TfGM securing the required land interests in accordance with the agreed programme budgets be approved.
4. That the submission of a planning application for the scheme and the preparation of the CPO and supporting documentation including issuing Land Interest Questionnaires to affected landowners be approved.
5. That the entering into of any ancillary agreements required to achieve the scheme objectives be approved.
6. That the importance of ensuring all railway stations on the 8 rail lines, identified for integration within the wider Bee Network, be fully accessible be endorsed.

**GMCA 136/24      WORKING WELL: WORK AND HEALTH PROGRAMME  
DIRECT AWARD AND CONTRACT EXTENSION OF THE  
INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT IN PRIMARY CARE**

Sara Todd, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for Education, Skills & Work, presented a report seeking delegated authority to award a contract for the Working Well: Work and Health Programme (WHP) under regulation 32 (2)(c) and to seek approval for a contract extension to Working Well: Individual Placement Support in Primary Care (IPSPC).

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the proposed award of the Working Well: Work and Health Programme contract on the basis set out in the report be approved.
2. That the proposed Working Well: Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care 12-month contract extension and increase in value on the basis set out in this Report be approved.

**GMCA 137/24      Q1 CAPITAL UPDATE 2024-2025**

Steve Wilson (GMCA Treasurer) presented a report providing an update in relation to the GMCA's 2024/25 capital expenditure programme.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the current 2024/25 forecast of £636.3m compared to the 2024/25 budget of £685.2m and approve changes to the capital programme as set out in the report be noted.
2. That the addition of £3.8m to the 2024/25 GMCA Capital Programme from an extension to the fourth round of the Active Travel Fund (ATF4) award as outlined in section 2.6.1 be approved.
3. That the addition to the capital programme of £16.2m of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding to deliver local, on-street charging infrastructure



across Greater Manchester and to accelerate the commercialisation of, and investment in, the local charging infrastructure sector be approved.

4. That the addition to the capital programme of £4.8m of Investment Zone grant funding to support the development of high-potential clusters identified as Investment Zones with a focus on developing Advanced Manufacturing & Materials be approved.

#### **GMCA 138/24      Q1 REVENUE UPDATE 2024-2025**

Steve Wilson (GMCA Treasurer) presented a report informing members of the financial position at the end of June 2024 (Quarter 1) and forecast revenue outturn position for the 2024/25 financial year.

#### **RESOLVED /-**

1. That the forecast position at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024 be noted.
2. That an increase to the Mayoral budget of £357k funded from Mayoral reserves towards spend on mayoral priorities (para 3.2) be approved
3. That an increase to the revenue grant to Transport for Greater Manchester of £3m funded from DfT devolved BSOG grant for tendered services (para. 6.5) be approved.

#### **GMCA 139/24      ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2023/24**

Steve Wilson (GMCA Treasurer) presented a report that confirmed that the GMCA had complied with the requirement under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2023/24, and to give prior scrutiny to all of the treasury management reports by the Audit Committee before they were reported to the Full Authority.

#### **RESOLVED /-**

That the annual treasury management report for 2023/24 be noted.

**GMCA 140/24      GREATER MANCHESTER HOUSING INVESTMENT LOANS  
FUND – INVESTMENT VARIATION RECOMMENDATION**

Mayor Paul Dennett (Portfolio Lead for Housing) presented a report that sought approval to a variation of the terms for the GM Housing Investment Loans Fund loan detailed in the recommendations.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That a variation to the terms of the GM Housing Investment Loans Fund loan detailed in the table below, as detailed further in this and the accompanying Part B report be approved.

BORROWER	SCHEME	DISTRICT	LOAN
Manchester New Square Limited Partnership	Manchester New Square	Manchester	£26.700m

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

**GMCA 141/24      GREATER MANCHESTER INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK,  
CONDITIONAL PROJECT APPROVAL**

Steve Wilson, GMCA Treasurer, presented a report that sought approval for three investments through GMCA's new Advanced Manufacturing and Materials Investment Fund, GM Advance, to agree the update on its loan to Holiferm Ltd, and note that an equity investment of up to £750k to Watercycle Technologies Limited and an update on an existing loan to Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce have been approved under delegation.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester welcomed the investments into advanced manufacturing and materials, stating that he would welcome a fuller discussion of the potentials around the fund at a future meeting of the GMCA.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That an equity investment of £50,000 to NeuWave Technologies Limited be approved.
2. That an equity investment of £50,000 to Verciti Ltd be approved.
3. That an equity investment of £50,000 to H2Origin Ltd be approved.
4. That the changes to the terms of the existing loan to Holiform Ltd in line with the update provided in the confidential part of the agenda be approved.
5. That an equity investment of up to £750k to Watercycle Technologies Limited, approved under delegation be noted.
6. That amendments to the terms of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce loan in line with the update provided in the confidential part of the agenda be noted.
7. That authority be delegated to the GMCA Treasurer and GMCA Monitoring Officer to review the due diligence information in respect of the above loans, and, subject to their satisfactory review and agreement of the due diligence information and the overall detailed commercial terms of the investments, to sign off any outstanding conditions, issue final approvals and complete any necessary related documentation in respect of the investments and loans noted above.
8. That a fuller discussion of the potential of the Advanced Manufacturing and Materials Investment Loans Fund be held at a future meeting of the GMCA.

**GMCA 142/24      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 143/24      GREATER MANCHESTER HOUSING LOANS INVESTMENT  
FUND – INVESTMENT VARIATION RECOMMENDATION**

**Clerk’s Note:** This item was considered in support of the report considered in Part A of the agenda (GMCA 140/24)

**RESOLVED /-**

That the report be noted.

**GMCA 117/24      GM INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK APPROVALS**

**Clerk’s Note:** This item was considered in support of the report considered in Part A of the agenda (GMCA 141/24).

**RESOLVED /-**

That the report be noted.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD WEDNESDAY, 25  
SEPTEMBER 2024 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 Basil Curley	Manchester City Council
Councillor John Leech	Manchester City Council
Councillor Anthony McCaul	Manchester City Council
Councillor Colin McLaren	Oldham Council
Councillor Terry Smith	Rochdale Council
Councillor Dylan Williams	Rochdale Council
Councillor Lewis Nelson	Salford City Council
Councillor Helen Hibbert	Stockport Council
Councillor Rachel Wise	Stockport Council
Councillor Naila Sharif	Tameside Council
Councillor Jill Axford	Trafford Council
Councillor Shaun Ennis	Trafford Council
Councillor Joanne Marshall	Wigan Council
Councillor Fred Walker	Wigan Council

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Andy Burnham	GM Mayor
Councillor Tom Ross	Portfolio Lead for Green City Region

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mark Atherton	GMCA
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Karen Chambers	GMCA
Simon Elliott	Transport for Greater Manchester
Caroline Simpson	GMCA
Nicola Ward	GMCA
Steve Warrener	Transport for Greater Manchester

**O&SC 24/24                      APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Imran Rizvi (Bury), Councillor Mandie Shilton - Godwin (Manchester), Councillor Joshua Brooks (Salford), Councillor Claire Reid (Tameside), Councillor Ged Carter (Trafford) Cllr George Devlin (Trafford) and Vernon Everitt, Transport Commissioner for Greater Manchester,

**O&SC 25/24                      CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair welcomed Caroline Simpson to her first GM Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in her new role as Group Chief Executive for the GMCA, GMFRS and TfGM.

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 advised that the report to the Committee regarding GM Mayoral Advisors has been deferred to a future meeting once the Arts Council have reported on their enquiries.

It was noted that in order to enable attendance, the order of the main substantive items on the agenda be amended, therefore taking item 6, GM Five Year Environment Plan, first.

## **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 the report to the Committee regarding GM Mayoral Advisors be deferred to a future meeting.

## **O&SC 26/24**

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

## **RESOLVED /-**

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

## **O&SC 27/24**

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 14 AUGUST 2024**

## **RESOLVED /-**

That the minutes of the GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14 August 2024 be approved as a correct and accurate record.

## **O&SC 28/24**

## **DRAFT FIVE YEAR ENVIRONMENT PLAN 2025 - 2030**

The Chair invited Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Lead for Green City Region and GMCA Environment Director, Mark Atherton to present this item.

Councillor Tom Ross introduced the report. The first Five Year Environment Plan (5YEP) was published in 2019. It set out the ambition for Greater Manchester to become a carbon neutral city region by 2038. In the same year a climate emergency was declared by GMCA and the ten Local Authorities and, in 2021, a biodiversity emergency was also declared.

5YEP ran from 2019 – 2024 and focused on five key priority areas: energy supply, transport and travel, homes and buildings, production and consumption, and the natural environment. Since 2019 there has been significant progress made against the targets in the 5YEP, however achieving the carbon targets remain challenging. To stay on track to achieve carbon neutrality by 2038 there will need to be an acceleration and scaling up of current activities.

The new 5YEP will run from 2025-2030 and builds on the previous ambitions and progress against the first plan. This new plan has eight key aims, which are, energy, buildings, transport and travel, natural environment, circular economy and waste, resilience and adaptation, plus a new addition of air quality and sustainable growth.

After internal development, initial engagement with external partners had begun to further develop the new vision, aims and objectives for the new plan. External engagement has continued throughout the development process and a key focus has been developing those actions outside of Local Authority control. External organisations have been encouraged to feedback on the specific actions for their sector/organisation. In addition to this, the plan has been presented to the equalities panel, the Youth Combined Authority, GM Bee Net Zero Board and the Sustainable Energy Association.

The version members have received is the first full draft which is currently out for consultation.

Officers shared a presentation with the Committee which highlighted the following;

- The structure of the plan
- The aims and objectives of the plan

Officers drew attention to the actions in the plan which had been split into direct and enabling actions. Direct Actions were aimed at decision makers that own homes and



cars as this was the group that really need to take action . Enabling actions were the actions required by local authorities and other organisations.

There were eight aims, each of which had four of five objectives. Draft targets had been made challenging but achievable within the next 5 years.

The plan will be presented to the GMCA in November with a view to launching the plan at this year's Green Summit.

Members asked how the impact of this work would be measured to ensure that pollution and emissions were reduced and were advised that there has been an increase in EV buses coming through via the Bee Network which will help to reduce pollution and emissions caused by public transport however, private transport, HGV's and vans used by businesses present more of a challenge. In addition to this, there was a lot of work ongoing to help residents to make the decision to use public transport, walk or cycle and use electric vehicles. The Committee agreed, it was vitally important for residents and businesses to understand what options were available in terms of transport and also how they can save money on energy bills over the longer term.

Members asked what opportunities devolution may bring to help with climate resilience funding, and if there will be any scope to simplify retrofit funding streams for residents to better understand what options they have. Members added that a positive narrative around the benefits to the public needed to be considered, such as car free streets and cleaner air. It was also noted that it was important to ensure the language used was clear and that education and awareness was a barrier for some residents and that trust in our ambitions needed to be strengthened. Officers advised that devolution does bring flexibility and could cut out potential blockages in relation to retrofitting. It is hoped that the new Government would lead the way with enthusiasm in this sphere of work. It was also confirmed that a version of the plan, aimed at the public, and other key partners will be produced to ensure they can be incentivised. There was data available which could be used to create bespoke

communications fitted around the aspirations of communities. Members suggested the use of clearer terms, such as 'adding' rather than 'enhancing' and 'reducing energy consumption' rather than 'sustainable growth' to more clearly articulate the plan's ambitions and ensure the public can come along.

Members reported that in some areas, bus services were not reliable or regular enough to encourage residents to use them. It was noted that it was vital to ensure that bus routes meet the needs of residents, as this helps improve social mobility within the population. Members were advised that the GM Mayors plan for an integrated transport network aims to ensure that all residents have access to transport to enable them to access work and healthcare.

Members asked if there was any monitoring in place within Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN) to check if pollution and emissions had been reduced by the changes put in place. Officers advised that there are live air quality monitors online that can be checked but it is not known whether these are in low traffic neighbourhoods; although in relation to the LTN scheme at Deansgate, it was confirmed that monitoring was in place and available via officers at the council. It was noted that there was nothing in place to measure if the low traffic neighbourhoods were causing residents to take longer journeys.

Members enquired whether the use of Green Hydrogen had been investigated and it was confirmed that this needs to be explored further as this was an area of real opportunity for growth to support those industries that cannot electrify.

Members requested more inclusion in the plan on the subject of enhancing nature. Officers advised that the GMCA has a Nature Recovery Plan, and this will be incorporated into this work. The recent State of Nature report outlines what work is needed in terms of our natural environment, and these should be intersectional as one shared issue

Members noted that in order encourage more people to convert to electric vehicles, more needed to be done to make EV charging more accessible. Officers advised

that TfGM are examining the availability of EV charging stations in each locality to ensure that there is a fair coverage of EV charging points and access to charging points throughout the conurbation.

It was noted that invasive plants continue to pose challenges within our waterways. While local authorities have enforcement powers to address invasive plants, it was ultimately the responsibility of landowners to resolve the issue, but this was complex and expensive.

Officers advised that the Integrated Water Management Plan has been implemented with the aim of managing flood risk and advised that it was very important to ensure that developers were given correct information regarding flood risk when planning new developments. This was something that would be picked up within the work of the Integrated Water Management Plan, to ensure all parties address risk.

Members commented that more could be done locally to ensure that the city-region were better adapted and more resilient to the increasing impacts of climate change and were advised that learning from other sectors and other areas of the country will be a continuous part of the plan. The learning from the first iteration of the plan should also be reflected in the new version.

Members noted that in some areas, the public attitude towards climate change has shifted, and the plan needed to ensure that the public continue to be engaged. Officers advised that from the behavioural insights work that has taken place, we know that our residents are passionate about conserving nature so maybe we can do more to link this to climate change. Residents need to be encouraged to take action and this was reflected in the tone of the report. Officers advised that a separate informal briefing session would be arranged in order to share this behavioural insight data with Committee members.

Members commented that more could be mentioned in the report in relation to carbon capture, such as peat bog restorations and this will be taken on board.

Officers advised that a climate change adaptation plan would be an annex to this report and will contain more on this.

The Committee were advised that the GM Mayor and GM Leaders had been working with colleges to enhance future learning opportunities in green trades. A Green Skills Hub has been launched in Trafford for young people which also provides opportunities for residents to retrain in order to develop the skilled labour to carry out the work that is anticipated for the future.

Members asked what more could be done to help schools become more energy efficient. Officers advised that work was ongoing to ensure that the public estate was fit for the future. Many public buildings and schools had benefitted from solar panels and public sector decarbonisation grants. Another area for development was how heat waste from data centres could be used to provide energy for leisure centres. Officers advised that there were 2700 public buildings in GM, and 10% have been decarbonised in the last 5 years. Devolution will allow us to do more in this space. In November 2023, GM were successful in a bid to receive £7m Net Zero Accelerator funding which provided 2 years revenue funding to bring investable projects to the market.

Members raised concerns in relation to costs residents may incur to fund the aims of the plan and specifically our ambitions around clean air, officers advised that the GM Mayor was leading the way in talks with Government about an investment led approach to the Clean Air Plan, so residents were not expected to be charged. A national incentive scheme would be welcomed to help larger vehicles make a change to cleaner emissions. In GM, incentives were being investigated in order to increase the use of electric vehicles.

Members enquired what plans were in place to manage that change to EV buses and asked if the possibility of having an EV car club for people to use to take short journeys could be explored. In relation to zero emission buses, officers reassured the Committee that the modelling work around the depot electrification and hence how to

deploy the fleet onto the routes was being completed. Officers also confirmed that they would further investigate future plans for EV car clubs.

Officers confirmed that the plan and the metrics do make some assumptions about the devolution deal and funding the GM will receive from the Government. What was not included in the plan was the national measures the Government were starting to announce as they have not quantified these measures as yet. This information will be added to the plan before November if we can get a better understanding from Government of what the devolution deal might include.

The Committee were keen to highlight aim 6 as of significance as the need for adaptation and resilience had increased due to more incidences of extreme weather.

#### **RESOLVED /-**

1. That the development process and next steps for the new 5 Year Environment Plan be noted.
2. That it be noted that a sustainability and equality assessment will be conducted on the final draft document.
3. That the comments and feedback of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be considered when further developing the new 5 Year Environment Plan.
4. That an information briefing be arranged to enable the behavioural insights data to be shared with members of the Committee.

**O&SC 29/24**

**RAIL INTEGRATION AND REFORM PROGRAMME:  
EMERGING RAIL REFORM POLICY POSITION & NEXT  
STEPS**

The Chair invited GM Mayor, Andy Burnham, and TfGM Managing Director, Steve Warrener to present this item.

The report provided Members with an update on progress of the emerging Rail Integration and Reform proposition ahead of consideration by the Bee Network Committee and GMCA.

The GM Mayor advised that the next phase of the Bee Network was to bring rail into the system and apply Bee Network standards. The Committee were advised that the new Government have stated that as part of their rail reform legislation, Regional Mayor's and Combined Authorities will be able to specify service standards which would relate to access and frequency of services. It was reported that engagement with the new Government was going well; Sir Peter Hendy, a previous member of Network Rail, was now in a Ministerial position which was having a positive impact on talks. Work was on track to have an integrated bus and tram system by 5 January 2025, with the Paygo system coming into place mid-March to give Greater Manchester a London style transport system for bus and tram travel.

The GM Mayor advised that the aim was to increase the frequency on the eight rails lines as identified in the report and have a Metrolink style service; an example given was improvements the Airport line which would in turn improve the visitor offer to GM. There were many other opportunities to improve services outside our borders such as Glossop and Buxton, therefore, GM were making a case as part of the spending review to support this. The current Government subsidy for the eight rail lines was £100m as some of the eight rail lines were very underused. Although some lines are operating at 90%, there were other lines such Glossop which had patronage of 46% to 56%, therefore once the technology and payment structure was in place patronage would likely increase. Improving these lines had wider benefits such as access to employment and unlock greater investment into rail assets. More work was needed to look at how the GM cap could be applied for these journeys.

The GM Mayor advised that the GM Land Commission had now been set up and its objective was to free up public land for housing growth. Members were advised that

the Commission was currently looking at issues such as how land owned by Network Rail at Castleton could be released to provide housing. The GM Mayor advised that this would improve regeneration opportunities and breathe more life into these areas. Other potential localities for development were Stalybridge and Golborne. The GM Mayor commented that local authorities need to start to think about the opportunities this plan could bring.

The GM Mayor advised that the plan would be submitted to Government in January. Financing the plan was critical, and our starting point was that we would bid for the same funding as London and that we should be afforded an ongoing revenue stream that London has benefited from for many years.

Members enquired how this plan would work with the renationalised rail service as Northern Rail would be one of the first services to come under the nationalised rail system. The GM Mayor advised that our intention was to offer up a vision to the Government as to how we think it would work. The key was to isolate the lines that were commuter lines first, noting to the potential to add more as we progress.. The GM Mayor advised that initially we would envisage there being a joint board, and we would work in partnership to manage these lines and stations with the national board but there were opportunities to shape this governance proposal ahead of the submission to Government in January.

Members asked when an indication of long term transport funding would be available. The GM Mayor advised that in part, we would find out more on 30 October 2024 and this spending review would deal with the immediate issues relating to bus funding. It was essential that GM gets a good deal for buses. From there, colleagues at TfGM would start work on what the fare structure and cap would be. Officers confirmed that the detail on the fare structure was to follow but a broad outline was in a report going to the Combined Authority meeting later this week.

Members asked if there was a danger that the £100m Government subsidy would be withdrawn or reduced, and if our success improving services, increasing patronage

and revenue, would mean we would receive less funding. The GM Mayor stated it would be unacceptable to take a cut in subsidies and, if needed, other options, may need to be considered, but this would only be pursued if there were no other ways to raise the funding needed for the Bee Network vision.

Members advised that with regards to disability access at stations, Levenshulme station had been identified as needing improvements, and asked if there was a danger that once we take control that there would not be Government funding for this. Officers advised that this station was part of an Access for All Bid, but disappointingly, the funding was not awarded to this station. It was expected that once this line was part of the Bee Network, there would be an increase in patronage and any revenue could then be reinvested into improving the accessibility of the station. It was important to ensure that all our stations meet Bee Network standards.

The GM Mayor confirmed that he had met with Nathaniel Yates to discuss station accessibility, and he will endeavour to keep him, and the Disabled Peoples Panel engaged in discussion as this work develops.

In relation to capital funding, officers advised that GM has had an indicative that the CRSTS 2 allocation will be £1.5b with a further £900m following the cancellation of HS2 totalling £2.4b. This figure was not confirmed and was unlikely to be confirmed before the March statement. However, we have had confirmation of the CRSTS1 allocation which is up until to March 2027.

Members enquired as to how the regeneration work taking place at Old Trafford might impact on the ambitions for GM rail. The GM Mayor confirmed that there were opportunities to change the two freight terminals located there. These lines currently go through stations such as Stockport and Piccadilly and were contributors to the high levels of congestion on the Castlefield Corridor. There was potential to change the location of the two freight terminals and this could enhance our ambitions around frequency in this area. There was a proposal to have a terminal at Parkside (ILP North), in St Helens, near Wigan, which would present huge opportunities for growth



for Wigan. There was also a potential site at Port Salford, which has huge potential to take traffic from Liverpool off the road.

Caroline Simpson, who was a member of the Old Trafford Regeneration Task Force, stated that the task force was looking at how they could optimise the huge private investment into the new stadium and the economic and regeneration benefit of this for Old Trafford and beyond. In relation to freight growth, this was an opportunity not only to allow freight to move more easily but to also increase capacity on the rail lines as a benefit to the whole of the Northwest economy. The GM Mayor advised that the disused station at Old Trafford would be developed and this line was possibly something that could be looked at in phase 2 jointly with the Liverpool/Manchester Partnership Board.

Members asked for clarification regarding ticketing in relation to boundary issues and lines that were outside the Bee Network and officers confirmed that there would be a significant amount of communication to mitigate any confusion. Officers also advised that the Paygo payments would be rolled out to the rest of the network by 2030. Transport for London have had similar issues in relation to cross boundaries and the GM Mayor confirmed that we would look to their experience and other learning to address this.

Members advised that the north of the conurbation (areas such as Moston) would benefit from a more reliable service and the electrification of the rail line to Leeds would also be beneficial. Officers advised that the rail industry was now beginning to work with GM on this and that they would be happy to meet with members outside of the meeting to discuss frequency at specific localities further.

Members commented that travel in both directions and not just to journey into Manchester should be considered so that all ten districts benefit from these rail ambitions. The GM Mayor advised that the stations on these lines have the potential to become even better places to live and we need to look at the regeneration possibilities which in turn would help provide revenue for the improvement and accessibility of stations. The success of the city is opening out opportunities to other

areas that will be on the Bee Network lines. Members were urged to consider which areas around these stations in their localities could benefit from further regeneration.

The GM Mayor stated that all this work would lead to GM having a London style public transport system by the end of this decade.

#### **RESOLVED /-**

1. That the comments and feedback of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Government's plans for rail reform and ongoing GM engagement with Shadow Great British Railways be noted.
2. That the comments and feedback of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposal for further engagement with Government, rail partners and others to explore and influence legislative and structural options that would achieve GM ambitions be noted.
3. That Members are given the opportunity to meet with Officers in relation to specific rail frequency issues in the north of the conurbation.

**O&SC 30/24**

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

The Chair advised the Committee that due to time constraints, this item could not be discussed, therefore this item will be put to a vote electronically.

The possible areas for future Task and Finish approach were;

- Social cohesion
- Homelessness
- Safety of Women and Girls and the extent to which this is considered in GM policy design and implementation

- The development of Co-operatives
- The regeneration of Greater Manchester's high streets
- The influence on GM schools especially regarding SEND provision
- Digital inclusion
- Communication/interaction between GMCA and LAs at a councillor and resident level and how this might change with the single settlement, looking at issues we could centralise, how LAs maintain their own autonomy while working closely with GMCA, so we can work together and make the best use of our resources
- Review the recommendations made by the School readiness Task & Finish in 2022

The Chair confirmed that Governance and Scrutiny Officers would email the Committee on this matter.

#### **RESOLVED /-**

1. That the proposed Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme for September to November 2024 be noted.
2. That Members use the Forward Plan of Key Decisions to identify any potential areas for further scrutiny.
3. That members note the areas of interest highlighted by members of the Committee for inclusion in the Work Programme for 2024-25.
4. That members consider which area would be best suited to a task and finish review and respond to the communication from Governance and Scrutiny Officers that will be sent out.

**O&SC 31/24**

**FUTURE MEETING DATES**

**RESOLVED /-**

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

- 23 October 2024 – 1pm to 3.30pm
- 27 November 2024 – 1pm to 3.30pm
- 11 December 2024 – 1pm to 3.30pm
- 29 January 2025 – 1pm to 3.30pm
- 5 or 12 February 2025 – 1pm to 3.30pm
- 26 February 2025 – 1pm to 3.30pm
- 26 March 2025 – 1pm to 3.30pm

# Agenda Item 6

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE HELD THURSDAY, 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024 AT BOARDROOM, GMCA OFFICES

### PRESENT:

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien (Chair)	Bury
GM Mayor Andy Burnham	GMCA
Councillor Hamid Khurram	Bolton
Councillor Toby Hewitt	Bolton
Councillor Alan Quinn	Bury
Councillor Luis McBriar	Bury
Councillor Tracey Rawlins	Manchester
Councillor Josh Charters	Oldham
Councillor Phil Burke	Rochdale
Councillor Mike McCusker	Salford
Councillor Grace Baynham	Stockport
Councillor David Meller	Stockport
Councillor Laura Boyle	Tameside
Councillor Aidan Williams	Trafford

### ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Diane Williamson	Oldham
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### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard Banks	TfGM
Chris Barnes	TfGM
Megan Black	TfGM
Melinda Edwards	GMCA
Simon Elliott	TfGM
Liz Goldsby	TfGM
Martin Lax	TfGM
Richard Nickson	TfGM
Lee Teasdale	GMCA
Daniel Vaughan	TfGM
Fran Wilkinson	TfGM

### **BNC/23/24 Welcome & Apologies**

Apologies were received and noted from Cllr John Vickers (Wigan), Cllr Howard Sykes (Oldham) & Steve Warrener (TfGM).

## **BNC/24/24 Declarations of Interest**

There Councillor Phil Burke noted an interest in relation to his employment at Metrolink.

## **BNC/25/24 Chairs Announcements & Urgent Business**

The Chair opened by welcoming members of the Panel in attendance for the first time, noting that in an update since the last meeting, Cllr Toby Hewitt would now take the place of Cllr Martyn Cox as a Conservative Mayoral Appointee.

The Chair invited the Chief Operating Officer of Transport for Greater Manchester, Danny Vaughan, to provide an update on works that had taken place across the network over the late summer period, including:

- The night bus pilot had launched on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 on the V1 and 37 bus routes. Feedback so far had been very positive, with patronage growing week of week and particular spikes of popularity as expected at weekends. An overall evaluation of the success of the pilot would be brought to the Committee in due course.
- The final bus network tenders had been awarded for tranche 3 school bus services to Diamond and Go North West. This now completed the picture for all franchise operators for the next few years.
- The first anniversary of the commencement of Bee Network Bus Franchising had recently passed with events held to celebrate this achievement.
- Metrolink engineering works had been successful from a project management perspective over the summer, as all were delivered in time and under budget. There had been some issues with the works at Piccadilly Gardens due to protests and riots that had taken place there during the summer, meaning that material had to be removed from site for a period. Whilst the works had been somewhat disruptive, there had been remarkably few complaints due to a strong communications and marketing campaign making clear the impacts of the works and the alternative options available.
- Following the disruption caused by a landslip, Metrolink services had now been restored between Oldham and Rochdale. Passenger numbers were now returning strongly. Due to further works required there was a speed restriction on the section at present, however this would be rectified as soon as possible.

The Chair reminded members of the importance of setting up local authority Bee Network committees as a useful tool to ensure that local bus franchising arrangements meet the requirements of local residents.

**RESOLVED/-**

1. That it be noted that Cllr Toby Hewitt (Conservatives, Bolton) has replaced Cllr Martyn Cox (Conservatives, Bolton) as a Mayoral Appointee.
2. That the update on the launch of the 24 hours bus pilot be received.
3. That the update on events held to mark 12 months since the launch of Bee Network bus franchising be received.
4. That the update following the Metrolink summer engineering works be received.
5. That the update on the restoration of Rochdale Metrolink services following the recent landslide be received.

**BNC/26/24 Minutes of the Meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

**RESOLVED/-**

That the minutes of the meeting of the meeting of 25 July 2024 be agreed as a true and correct record.

**BNC/27/24 Electromobility: Zero Emission Travel**

Martin Lax (Transport Strategy Director, TfGM), Megan Black (Head of Logistics & Environment, TfGM) and Richard Banks (Senior Manager EV & Freight, TfGM) presented a report updating the Committee on the current situation relating to Electromobility in Greater Manchester. Progress was set out in relation to all modes of transport across the region and set out the details of the power purchase agreements. There was also an update on the EV charging programme and how TfGM proposed to monitor and measure the progress of this.

Endorsement was sought on two new indicators. The first of these would track GM's progress in facilitating charging for households without off-street parking and the second around the introduction of a zero-emissions journey planner.

### **Comments and Questions**

- Members referenced the difficulties inherent in the local housing infrastructure, with many streets of terraced housing with no off-street parking. Until a solution could be found to this issue a large part of the potential purchasers of EVs were effectively locked out. Could the further introduction of street lighting as a charging method as seen in other parts of the country be a start in working towards the necessary solutions? It was advised that researched had shown there were a number of barriers in the uptake of EV ownership, including the cost of the vehicles and anxiety about charging ranges. It was fully accepted that without the infrastructure in place there would be limits to the levels of uptake and this would be addressed directly in the next stage of strategic planning.
- Members referenced a footnote indicating that figures from Stockport had been removed due to the figures being skewed by the presence of a national leasing company who had their fleet registered in the borough. Members asked if all Stockport figures were removed or just those directly associated with the leasing company. It was advised that all of Stockport's figures within the leasing category had been removed as it was not possible to disaggregate these figures. Work was taking place with the leasing company to seek to address this.
- Members asked about electric charging facilities for residents with disabilities – particularly in terms of those available that directly address their extra requirements. It was advised that the government had set out a new standard for electric charging infrastructure and this would be fully addressed through the next phase of work.
- Reference was made to the availability of apps in London that would point EV vehicle users to their nearest available lamp-based charging point, and that this helped in improving levels of uptake. Members were advised of LEVI (Local EV Infrastructure) Funding being made available by the government to support local authorities in England to plan and deliver charging infrastructure for residents without off-street parking. Work was taking place with the 10 GM



authorities to identify suitable sites for this type of infrastructure. The details of the officers leading on this within each authority could be circulated to members.

- Members referenced electric private hire vehicles across the region. Were taxi firms being incentivised at all to expedite the conversion of their fleets? It was advised that 60 taxi trade specific charging points were now in place in GM. There was also an anticipated clean taxi fund being worked up.
- It was noted that Motability customers were now offered an extremely limited petrol and/or hybrid range of vehicles, but many Motability users were not able to use EV vehicles at the moment due to lack of infrastructure.
- Reference was made to infrastructure assets that were owned by GM and managed by Iduna under the BEV brand. These were at a set pay as you go rate with a reduced rate for members – the tariff numbers would be circulated to members.

#### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the current progress relating to electromobility in the GM region be noted.
2. That it be noted that forecast growth and demand for charging infrastructure will be used to inform the emerging Local Transport Plan.
3. That the introduction of an indicator which will track GM's progress in facilitating charging for households without off-street parking be endorsed.
4. That the introduction of a zero-emission journey tracker be endorsed.
5. That the update on the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure programmes of work be noted.
6. That committee members be provided with details of contacts within their own authorities collating site details for potential LEVI funding.
7. That the rates for GM owned charging assets be shared with members.

#### **BNC/28/24 Transport Infrastructure Timeline**

Chris Barnes (Network Director Infrastructure, TfGM) presented a report providing 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. Points highlighted included:

- Proposals for the second round of CRSTS funding were continuing to be developed alongside the refresh of the local transport plan.
- On CRSTS round one and the wider capital programme – there were a number of requests requiring financial approval to enable a range of schemes to continue their development and delivery including bus infrastructure; high speed rail; the integrated customer travel information programme; active travel works; and the rail station enhancement programme.

### **Comments and Questions**

- Members referenced the cycling infrastructure being put into place in Bury. Was evidence now available regarding increased uptake following the instalment of these as they had so far resulted in a number of complaints from residents. It was advised that the Active Travel Programme being brought to the Committee in December would provide further detail on this front, including specific detail on the overall impact and contributions from each of the individual LAs.
- Members accepted the recommendations, but Councillor Luis McBriar asked that it be noted on the record that he felt he could not support recommendation 6 at this time until further clarity could be provided on the effectiveness of the programme.

### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the current position, recent progress and key milestones on the transport infrastructure pipeline be noted.
2. That the CRSTS releases as approved by the GMCA Group Chief Executive under delegated authority be noted.

3. That the drawdown of CRSTS funding and associated scheme progression be approved as follows:
  - Bus Pinch Points and Maintenance: £1.0m;
  - Sale West to North Altrincham Network Improvements (SCOOT Upgrades, Firsway Crossing and Bus Stop Upgrades): £0.6m and Final Business Case;
  - High Speed / Northern Powerhouse Rail: £1.31m;
  - Integrated Measures Customer Travel Information Digital Improvements: £5.3m and Final Business Case;
4. That drawdown of £4.444m capital funding and Final Business Case for the Salford Central Enhancements scheme be approved.
5. That the drawdown of £3.83m for GM's Active Travel Fund (ATF) Tranche 4 Extension subject to this award being added to the GMCA Capital Programme.
6. That the drawdown of Active Travel programme funding be approved as follows:
  - Bury Fishpool Phase 2: £3.83m (CRSTS funding through the MCF programme);
  - Bury Pimhole: £1.91m (CRSTS funding through the MCF programme);
7. That the MCF scheme budget variations for Bury Council be agreed as set out in sections 6.7 & 6.8; and
8. That the allocation of Capability Fund, Tranche 4, (Revenue Grant) as set out in sections 6.9 & 6.10 be approved.

### **BNC/29/24 Bee Network Fares & Ticketing Products**

Fran Wilkinson (Customer & Growth Director, TfGM) presented a report that proposed a number of changes to Bee Network fares and ticketing products to increase access to public transport through affordable and simpler fares and ticketing.

- The proposals within the paper included the introduction of an Annual Bus Ticket to be priced at £800. This would offer significant savings of circa £240 per annum to those who used to the bus on a regular basis.

- There was a full awareness that most people would not have the disposable income to be able to pay the £800 fee up front. Therefore, work was taking place with local credit unions to provide a scheme that would allow access to the annual product and the savings within it.
- There was a commitment to keeping the ticketing scheme simple, but that did require the removal of some of the single operator products. Therefore, the Bee Network Recompense Scheme was being continued to run alongside the commencement of tranche 3 in January 2025, so that no customers will be worse off financially following its introduction. The scheme would be advertised across tranche 3 areas from December.
- It was intended that an annual review of the capped fares scheme would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.
- The potential extension of the care leavers scheme concession age from 21 to 25 was going to be subject to approval by the GMCA as part of the annual budget process.

### **Comments and Questions**

- Members welcomed the developments with thanks being expressed for the inclusion of the care leaver extension proposals and hoped that it would see approval in due course.
- Members asked if future reports could include information pertaining to the uptake levels of the various passes available for bus transportation. It was advised that this information could be provided as part of the wider Bee Network Committee progress report due to be brought to the Committee.
- Reference was made to BSIP funding and its continuation. Were contingency plans in place should this funding scheme cease? It was advised that an announcement was expected on BSIP as part of the Government's October budget. An assortment of options was being considered at the current time and once a definitive position was established this would be brought to the Committee.
- Members asked that the concessionary fare review for carers be brought before the Committee at the earliest opportunity. It was advised that the draft report was now in place and it was expected that the final draft would be in place by December. Members emphasised that they would wish to see the final report in

advance of any budgetary decisions that would need to be taken in the new year.

- It was asked if a cost analysis had been undertaken on free school travel for students. It was advised that thinking had been done on this, but that the costs involved would be very significant at the current time. Whilst it was appreciated that there were a number of benefits that would arise from this, the sheer level of costs could not cover this. Instead the current approach was to ensure lower cost travel for all users, including school commuters.
- Members referenced the credit union scheme. If a participant within the scheme was to default on payments would the credit unions cover this or would TfGM cover the costs? It was advised that discussions were ongoing with credit unions around softer credit checks and what would happen when a customer defaults, so that tickets were not immediately taken away from a customer who may be in need.

#### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the introduction of an Annual Bee Bus Ticket priced at £800 be noted.
2. That the introduction of a TfGM scheme with local Credit Unions, from January 2025, to improve access to annual bus tickets be noted.
3. That the continuation of the Bee Network Recompense Scheme for Tranche 3 bus customers be noted.
4. That the introduction of multi modal 'pay as you go' (PAYG) contactless ticketing and capped fares across bus and tram in March 2025 be noted.
5. That the plans to provide an update on the annual review of the Capped Fares Scheme and proposed next steps be noted.
6. That the potential extension of the Care Leavers scheme, from aged 21 to aged 25, from April 2025 be noted.
7. That the outcomes of the concessions review scheme for carers be brought to the earliest available meeting of the Committee.

## **BNC/30/24 High Speed Rail Update**

Martin Lax (Transport Strategy Director, TfGM) & Liz Goldsby (Head of HS2 NPR Programme, TfGM) presented a report providing a progress update on high-speed rail and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR). Points highlighted included:

- It was advised that since the previous updates the proposed adaption of the High-Speed Rail (Crewe-Manchester) Bill to deliver Northern Powerhouse Rail between Manchester Piccadilly and Millington was approved in the House of Commons on 21 May with revised instructions.
- These revised instructions would be taken up by a Select Committee that would be formed this autumn with the potential for hearing petitioners early in the new year.
- The Mayors of Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region had announced their intention to deliver a Liverpool Manchester Railway Partnership Board. The first meeting of this board had taken place on 23<sup>rd</sup> July and featured a mix of board members from the private and public sectors.
- The second meeting of the Board had taken place during the Labour Conference on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September. At that meeting the final composition of the Board was agreed, including the proposal that Huw Merriman, former Railways Minister take the position of the Chair of the Partnership Board.
- An initial growth report brochure had been produced in collaboration with all partners. This set out the vision for the Liverpool-Manchester route including the terminology around a growth zone.
- In terms of London-Birmingham-Manchester connectivity. Work had been taking place with a private consortium to establish the future of these links following the HS2 cancellation. The consortium had considered three options going forward, coming to the conclusion that a segregated line following a similar alignment to the HS2 proposals but with a different specification which is likely to reduce cost while driving wider benefits, would be the ideal alternative.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, was then invited to give his thoughts on the current plans. He stated that Huw Merriman becoming the Chair of the Liverpool Manchester Railway Board was a significant coup as it was vital that the Board was seen as place-based and cross-party in its approach. Huw had been instrumental in

helping to procure the monies that allowed these developments to take place following the issues around the HS2 northern leg removal.

The Mayor also emphasised the importance of the land that had been procured for HS2 plans not being sold off. It was vital that this land was protected for the GM high speed rail plans.

### **Comments and Questions**

- Members asked about the potential impact of the plans outlined above on the existing West Coast Mainline – particularly given that the line was now at absolute capacity in parts of the region. The Mayor stated that the plans around the Mainline linked directly into wider regeneration work taking place. The Old Trafford Regeneration Plan was highlighted, as this would involve moving the two freight terminals currently behind Old Trafford to alternative locations at Intermodal Logistics Park North and Port Salford. This was significant as the two lines were currently reached via the West Coast Mainline Stockport branch. This plan would get the freight out of the city area and free up capacity on the line.
- Members welcomed the appointment of Huw Merriman to the Chair of the Liverpool Manchester Railway Board and the commitment to cross-party working that this showed. The Mayor thanked members for these comments and stated that Mr Merriman could be invited to a future meeting of the Committee.
- Members welcomed the depth of the information that had been provided, stating that they would welcome similar levels of insight to be brought back to future meetings.
- Members expressed concern that the new government's re-budgeting will hamper some of the plans around high-speed rail. The Mayor stated that the government was now working towards its first budget where infrastructure funding would be made clearer. He assured members that he would be making the strongest possible case for better 21<sup>st</sup> century rail services for residents of the region.
- Members welcomed the plans around Old Trafford regeneration, particularly in terms of how it could improve orbital travel across south Manchester, freeing up further capacity in the city centre.

## **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the current position in relation to the High-Speed Rail Programme in Greater Manchester, the future areas of development and current Government timeframes be noted.

### **BNC/31/24 GM Rail Integration & Reform Programme**

Simon Elliot (Head of Rail, TfGM) presented a report advising the Committee of the progress made on the emerging Rail Integration and Reform proposition ahead of consideration by the GMCA. Points highlighted included:

- The signing of the Trailblazer deal in early 2023 had allowed for the commencement of this work. The deal included agreement that the region would be able to work with the rail industry and government on how rail could be integrated into the Bee Network. Including considerations of services, station standards, ticketing, accessibility and regeneration & development.
- Priority had now been given to eight key corridors within GM, which represented most of the larger-scale commuter lines within the region's conurbations.
- There had been significant step-change in the culture and behaviour of the relationship with the rail industry, who were now taking a real interest in delivering improved place-based experiences.
- Whilst the Committee had previously had the ability to act as an influencer in tackling some of the challenges with rail, the new government through the devolution and rail reform agendas seek to put combined authorities at the heart of rail outputs and outcomes through a statutory mechanism.
- Ahead of the planned Rail Reform Bill in 2025 it was imperative to investigate the right mechanisms to deliver on these outcomes. The report therefore sought endorsement to start engaging with the government on the process, but also to start working up what this reform would look as a decision making body.

The Mayor stated that following the commencement of the final Bee Network bus network tranche in January 2025, it was vital to quickly move on to the next chapter of public transport improvements with the integration of the local rail network. It would be



vital to develop publicly understood dates, to help take residents on this journey in a clear and coherent way in terms of the proposals. The delivery of the bus reform had shown a good map for how to bring clarity to the plans. The opportunities for districts were also highlighted. All authorities would be given a list of the stations that would be included within the integration – as the areas around these would immediately become more attractive prospects once embedded within the network.

### **Comments and Questions**

- Members asked if Greater British Railways would be considering setting up regional boards to help in spreading risk. The Mayor stated that these elements would have to be worked up, but he could envisage the inauguration of a joint board for Greater Manchester and Greater British Railways to operate the system.
- Members stated that this presented the opportunity to provide step free access at all stations within the plans. The Mayor agreed that stations would need to be lifted to Metrolink standards, and the plans included devolved funding for station access improvements to allow the region to budget for its own priorities.
- Members asked if there were plans to introduce one touch ticketing onto the integrated lines. The Mayor stated that he absolutely hoped that the forthcoming integrated pay as you go services would be made available on the integrated rail services to ensure added value for users. There would be complications around how the payments would be distributed with rail operators but these plans would be worked up.

### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the importance of the rail network for Greater Manchester and unlocking future economic growth be noted.
2. That the Government's plans for rail reform and ongoing GM engagement with Shadow Great British Railways be noted.
3. That the proposal for further engagement with HMG, rail partners and others to explore and influence legislative and structural options that would achieve GM ambitions be noted.

4. That there be a commitment to cascading all relevant updates to local authority officers to ensure that it is captured within their local plans.

**Minutes of the GM Air Quality Administration Committee, held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 at GMCA Offices, Tootal Buildings, Oxford Street, Manchester.**

**Present:**

GMCA	Councillor Eamonn O'Brien
Bolton	Councillor Richard Silvester
Bury	Councillor Alan Quinn
Manchester	Councillor Tracey Rawlins
Oldham	Councillor Abdul Jabbar
Rochdale	Councillor Tricia Ayrtton
Salford	Councillor Mike McCusker
Stockport	Councillor Mark Roberts
Tameside	Councillor Andrew McClaren
Wigan	Councillor Paul Prescott

**Officers in Attendance:**

Megan Black	Head of Logistics & Environment, TfGM
Gillian Duckworth	GMCA Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Nigel Bellamy	Air Quality Consultant, TfGM
Kate Jackson	Senior Legal Officer, TfGM
Martin Lax	Transport Strategy Director, TfGM
Frank Tudor	Deputy Director Corporate Services, TfGM
Paul Harris	Governance & Scrutiny Officer, GMCA

**AQAC 24/01            Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Councillors Denise Ward (Tameside), Aidan Williams (Trafford)

**AQAC 24/02            Appointment of Chair of the Committee**

The GMCA Solicitor and Monitoring Officer sought nominations for the appointment of Chair of the Committee for the 2024/2025 municipal year.

A nomination of Councillor Eamonn O'Brien was moved and seconded. There were no other nominations moved.

**Resolved/-**

That Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, GM Lead Member for Clean Air, be appointed as Chair of the committee for 2024/25.

**Councillor Eamonn O'Brien in the Chair**

**AQAC 24/03            Chair's Announcements and Urgent Business**

**AQAC 24/04 Membership of the Committee 2024-2025**

**Resolved/-**

The Membership of the Committee for the 2024-2025 municipal year as follows, noting also that Tameside has made a change to their representative, with Councillor Denise Ward replacing Councillor Jacqueline North:-

<b>District</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Substitute</b>
GMCA	Eamonn O'Brien (Lab)	
Bolton	Richard Silvester (Labour Co-operative)	Hamid Khurram (Lab)
Bury	Alan Quinn (Lab)	Gareth Staple-Jones (Lab)
Manchester	Tracey Rawlins (Lab)	To be confirmed
Oldham	Abdul Jabbar (Lab)	Josh Charters (Lab)
Rochdale	Tricia Ayrton (Lab)	To be confirmed
Salford	Mike McCusker (Lab)	Jane Hamilton (Lab)
Stockport	Mark Roberts (Lib Dem)	Grace Bayham (Lib Dem)
Tameside	Denise Ward (Lab)	Andrew McClaren (Lab)
Trafford	Aiden Williams (Lab)	Steve Adshead (Lab)
Wigan	Paul Prescott (Lab)	Joanne Marshall (Lab)

**AQAC 24/05      Terms of Reference**

**Resolved/-**

That the Terms of Reference of the GM Air Quality Administration Committee be noted.

**Ordinary Meeting Business**

**AQAC 24/05      Declarations of Interest**

There were no declamations made by any member of the committee in respect of any interests regarding any item on the agenda.

#### **AQAC 24/06            Minutes**

To consider the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

#### **AQAC 24/07            Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan - September 2024 Update**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, GM Lead Member for Clean Air introduced a report which provided Committee members with an update on the Case for a new Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan.

The update confirmed that an updated appraisal of GM's proposed Investment-led Plan has been undertaken against a benchmark charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ) in the centre of Manchester and Salford.

The report set out significant investment in cleaner buses including an increase in Euro 6 type buses in response to the challenges with electrical charging infrastructure at Stockport and Queens Road depots.

The request for the provision of a clean taxi fund is part of the GM commitment to increase standards within the taxi trade to achieve a common standard of age and emissions of vehicles.

Practical improvements to the road network in Salford and Manchester were highlighted. The National Highways decision to change the speed limits on the M602 from 60 mph to 70 mph has been included in the modelling within the Plan.

The Chair explained that this investment-led plan will enable clean air compliance by 2026, in a way that will be cheaper, quicker and fairer than a charging plan.

In welcoming the report and the proposed way forward, a Member thanked the Chair for a recent meeting regarding the delays to the electrification of Stockport depot and the assurances that electric bus fleet will be deployed in Stockport once this issue had been rectified.

A Member sought clarification in respect of the use of retrofit buses instead of Euro 6 vehicles. In response, it was noted that a study by Government concluded that the retrofit approach was of limited benefit. In response to this, TfGM had undertaken a modelling exercise which identified air quality exceedance in Stockport. The Plan asks for seventy seven Euro 6 buses to operate within Stockport to address exceedance points.

A Member highlighted the campaigns to further improve clean air going forward but the introduction of green walls close to highways and wider tree planting to help decarbonisation. In response, it was noted that DEFRA funding has been provided to support a local government campaign advising residents of air quality issues associated with burning at home. Consideration of nature-based measures were to be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

A Member enquired when a Taxi Fund would be available in order for vehicles to be upgraded. A conclusion is needed quickly in order to enable promote this scheme.

A Member highlighted that GM had to spend significant funding to invest in retrofitting buses, where recent analysis had shown that such investment only made an 11% difference.

A Member commented on the lack of investment by private bus operators in the GM bus fleet. GM is now introducing electric and cleaner diesel buses. In addition, work is taking place to try and address those barriers for providing charging points for electric vehicles.

It was suggested that if air quality is improved in reducing motorway speed limits to 60 mph, then this approach should be explored further.

In respect of wider tree planting to address carbon, a Member highlighted the cost of introducing street trees in localities.

A Member highlighted that the investment-led plan will give the best outcomes in the shortest period of time and was hopeful that the Government would view the submission of the Plan positively and hopefully the signs within districts can be removed.

In respect of timing, it was noted that work is continuing with JAQU regarding GM evidence base. It is hoped that a decision will be made by then of 2024. In terms of signage, should a direction be received from Government a meeting of the committee will be convened to review the decision. A Member suggested that although a decision is yet to be received, preparatory work be undertaken in respect of the potential removal of information signs.

It was suggested that it may be helpful to put dates in diaries for the committee to be convened in November and December.

In hoping for a positive outcome, a Member asked if there was confidence that the market can support the investment-led Plan. It was also suggested that clear messaging is developed to inform residents. In response, discussions are taking place with district partners regarding their respective capacity for the possible removal of signs and the distribution funding for the delivery of local measures. There were no concerns currently regarding market supply. Part of the provisions of the Plan is to have regular performance reviews. A communications plan will be an important aspect of the Plan, however it is only when the decision from Government on the proposed was forward is received that any communication or engagement can be undertaken.

A Member highlighted how industry can impact on air quality and consideration of how such impacts can be addressed as part of any future improvements to the Clean Air Plan.

**Resolved/-**

1. That the factors which have resulted in material updates to baseline modelling scenarios and the need to re-submit an appraisal of GM Investment-led Clean Air Plan, as set out in the report, be noted.



2. That it be noted that the update to the modelling does not alter the conclusion of GM's December 2023 Submission that GM's Investment-led Plan performs better than the CAZ Benchmark.
  
3. That it be noted that the revised Investment-led Plan, given the delay to the electrification of Queens Road depot and the removal of the temporary speed limit on the M602, will deliver compliance in the shortest possible time and by 2026 at the latest.
  
4. That the update to GM's proposed bus measures that are grounded in the ability of GM to control the emissions standards of vehicles operating on key routes, having introduced a bus franchising scheme, be noted.
  
5. That taxi measures remain unchanged be noted.
  
6. That the progress to put an emission standard in place for licensed taxis, be noted.
  
7. That the progress to determine highway measures to ensure compliance at Regent Road, Salford and Quay Street, Manchester, as set out in the report, be noted.
  
8. That from an equality impacts perspective, the Investment-led Plan would deliver an air quality improvement that benefits individuals with protected characteristics, be noted. And also noted that an air quality improvement is likely to be faster for the Investment led Plan than a CAZ Benchmark due to the former achieving compliance earlier.
  
9. That it be noted that that the government be requested to give urgent consideration to agreement to the removal of the 1309 signs installed for a GM-

wide category C charging Clean Air Zone across GM and its boundary Authorities, as the appraisal shows that only the Investment-led Plan meets the legal requirement to deliver compliance in the shortest possible time and by 2026 at the latest and therefore the signs are no longer required.

10. That the Investment-led Plan would require an estimated additional £15.2 million of funding versus £61.9 million for a CAZ Benchmark when considering whole life costs, be noted.

11. That it be noted that Local Partnerships have been asked by JAQU to review the Investment led Plan aspects of the GM Appraisal Report (and relevant annexes), focusing on the commercial, financial and management elements.

12. That the Committee agrees to grant delegated authority to the Group Chief Executive, GMCA, GMFRS and TfGM, in consultation with the GM Clean Air Lead, to approve the final submission of material to the Government's Joint Air Quality Unit and deal with any supplementary requests from the Joint Air Quality Unit in support of the appraisal.

13. That the 2023 GM Clean Air Plan monitoring data indicates that nitrogen dioxide air pollution has seen an overall reduction in nitrogen dioxide exceedances compared to 2022, and a significant improvement to 2019 levels, as set out in the report, be noted.

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 25 October 2024

Subject: Greater Manchester Equality Panels Annual Report

Report of: Councilor Arooj Shah, Portfolio Lead for Equalities and Communities

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### Purpose of Report

This report summarises the activity and impact of the Greater Manchester Equality Panels through their individual Annual Reports 2023-24.

### Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Note the Annual Reports provided by the Disabled People's Panel, Youth Combined Authority, Women and Girls Equality Panel, Race Equality Panel, Faith and Belief Panel Advisory Panel, Older Peoples Equality Panel and LGBTQ+ Equality Panel
2. Endorse commitment of all Portfolios to proactively engage with Equality Panels (individually or collectively) on issues that impact communities-of-identity.

Contact Officers

Adrian Bates, Head of Equalities Strategy, GMCA

[adrian.bates@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:adrian.bates@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

# Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

## Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

1. Note the Annual Reports provided by the Disabled People’s Panel, Youth Combined Authority, Women and Girls Equality Panel, Race Equality Panel, Faith and Belief Panel Advisory Panel, Older Peoples Equality Panel and LGBTQ+ Equality Panel
2. Endorse commitment of all Portfolios to proactively engage with Equality Panels (individually or collectively) on issues that impact communities-of-identity.

## Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation	
Equality and Inclusion	G	<p>There are seven Equality Panels, focused on improving outcomes and reducing discrimination faced by people from communities-of-identity (protected characteristics); Faith, Race, Women and Girls, Older People, Young People, Disabled People, LGBTQ+ People experiencing inequality often face multiple issues, including social and economic disadvantage. The Panels focus on those communities often most disadvantaged and discriminated in society</p> <p>The Panels provide insight into the access, experience and outcomes of diverse communities. This should help public services develop more effective policies and deliver more efficient services.</p> <p>Membership of the Panels are residents with lived-experience, or representatives of voluntary organisations that support residents. Engaging the Panels in decisions and services that affect them at the earliest stage leads to better outcomes and value for money</p> <p>The Panels bring together diverse community voices, strengthening understanding and collaborating to celebrate Greater Manchester’s culture of social inclusion</p>	
Health	G	The Panels cover a range of topics across Health and Wellbeing, enabling communication, codesign and collaboration between public services, voluntary sector and residents. For example influencing social care, mental health and womens health.	
Resilience and Adaptation	G	The Panels enable public services to communicate and enage with diverse communities. Reducing inequality in these communities builds resilience. Tackling discrimination will enable public services to become more representative of their communities, building trust and confidence.	
Housing	G	The Panels contribute to the Homelessness Action Network, Places for Everyone consultation, racial inequalities in social housing, Good Landlord Charter and the Mayors commitment to Housing First	
Economy	G	The Panels cover a range of topics across Economy and Employment, enabling communication, codesign and collaboration between public services, voluntary sector and residents. For example, the Panels are informing the Good Employment Charter and Workforce Equality Strategies	
Mobility and Connectivity	G	There is a specific focus in the new Digital Taskforce on Older People and Disabled People. The Older Peoples Panel and Disabled Peoples Panel are directly supporting this activity, providing professional expertise and connectivity into their communities. This will ensure solutions meet the needs of target groups	
Carbon, Nature and Environment			
Consumption and Production			
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		The Equality Panels cover a range of topics across Environment, enabling communication, codesign and collaboration between public services, voluntary sector and residents. For example, the Youth Combined Authority contribution to the Green Summit.	
Further Assessment(s):		Equalities Impact Assessment and Carbon Assessment	
<b>G</b> Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	<b>A</b> Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	<b>R</b> Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	<b>RR</b> Negative impacts overall.

Carbon Assessment		
Overall Score		
Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation
New Build residential	N/A	
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A	
New build non-residential (including public) buildings	N/A	
Transport		
Active travel and public transport		The Equality Panels have championed approaches to ensure public transport is accessible and safer to all residents, for example challenging closures to ticket offices
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access	N/A	
Access to amenities		The Equality Panels have championed approaches to ensure transport is accessible and safer to all residents, for example supporting womens safety on trams
Vehicle procurement	N/A	
Land Use		
Land use	N/A	
No associated carbon impacts expected.		High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.
		Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.
		Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.
		Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

## Risk Management

This paper describes work to manage risk relating to services for people with a protected characteristic.

## Legal Considerations

As set out in section 149 Equality Act 2010, a public authority (which includes the GMCA within its definition) must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This legislation is more commonly known as the Public Sector Equality Duty and is informed, amongst other things, in GM, by the work of the Equality Panels.

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

The £385,875 annual investment enables the GMCA and partners to engage people experiencing inequality through the Equality Panels, facilitated by commissioned culturally appropriate organisations. Effective Equality Panels support public service resources to be invested in ways that are more targeted to those most at risk, reducing costs and achieving better outcomes. There is no additional financial ask relating to this paper.

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

N/A

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

## **Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

## **Background Papers**

N/A

## **Tracking/ Process**

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

No

## **Exemption from call in**

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

No

## **Bee Network Committee**

N/A

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

# 1. Introduction

1.1 The Greater Manchester Equality Panels have been established to advise, proactively support and constructively challenge political leaders and policymakers to tackle the discrimination and disadvantage that cause injustice and inequality in society, and champion Greater Manchester as an inclusive city-region.

1.2 They do this by working together with the GMCA and partners to:

- Provide insight into Greater Manchester's diverse communities, enabling political leaders and public bodies to listen and engage in a more targeted and effective way
- Communicate key messages to our communities as trusted sources
- Codesign policies, programmes and strategies to ensure they work effectively for communities
- Support an asset-based approach, highlighting new opportunities (and challenges) for positive collaboration that build on the resources and strengths within our communities

1.3 The panels are independent advisory bodies, informing and influencing political and policy leads through dialogue and ensuring credibility with communities. They are not part of the statutory legal governance framework and do not have any decision-making authority. However, their position within the Equalities and Communities Portfolio ensures they retain a high profile, can influence positive change, and overcome any barriers they face.

1.4 There are seven panels – Race Equality Panel, Disabled People's Panel, Faith and Belief Advisory Panel, LGBTQ+ Equality Panel, Women and Girls Equality Panel, Youth Combined Authority and Older People's Equality Panel. Further information on the Panels can be found at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/equalities/>

1.5 Membership reflects diversity, across different demographics, districts, sectors and other interests. Recruitment is transparent, the Chairs selected by panel members and membership is publicised.

1.6 The Chairs of the Equality Panels meet regularly with the Portfolio Leads to explore opportunities for collaboration on intersectional issues and share common challenges to delivering impact. In addition, the Chairs are members of the Tackling Inequalities

Board, ensuring a strategic connection between the Panels and political and organisational leaders. These structures and connectivity enable the panels to have greater clarity of purpose; influencing the strategic agenda, mandate to work with public services (and challenge where necessary) and empowered to deliver impactful activity.

1.7 Each panel is facilitated by a culturally appropriate voluntary sector organisation, commissioned by GMCA using the same specification to ensure consistency of approach. This strengthens the support to panel members, creating strong foundations that enable greater flexibility within the panel to focus on the issues that are most important to their communities. Panel facilitators work in partnership with GMCA officers to ensure the panel can engage policymakers effectively, acting as a bridge between public services and the wider community. They meet regularly, sharing resources and practice, to deliver greater impact and value-for-money.

## **2. Equality Panels and the Greater Manchester Strategy**

2.1 In Greater Manchester, the pandemic exacerbated longstanding inequalities, as well as highlighting new ones. From access to good jobs, to transport, health and housing, the impact has been unequal and unfair, affecting different people, places and communities across Greater Manchester in very different ways.

2.2 A strong message from the Independent Inequalities Commission was that a deep understanding of the issues, and the solutions to those, can only come from working in and with those communities, being informed and guided by their voices and experiences. The Greater Manchester Strategy has a clear commitment to ensure policies and services support all diverse communities appropriately, and actively target resource at the people and places facing the greatest obstacles in life

2.3 Panel members give their time voluntarily and can often be sharing traumatic experiences of discrimination and disadvantage. It is crucial their time is used effectively and for maximum impact. The responsibility is on policymakers to engage early and genuinely with the Equality Panels and take proactive action to address the inequalities they have heard.



### 3. Activity and impact

3.1 The panels continue to strengthen their position and impact in the system, proactively supporting and constructively challenging leaders and officers to take action to address the stark inequalities too many people and communities face in this city-region. Over the last year, panel chairs have presented alongside the Portfolio Lead at four GMCA meetings:

- October 2023 – Elizabeth Cameron, (former) Race Equality Panel Chair, on the Race Equity Framework
- November 2023 – Melvin Bradley, Disabled Peoples Panel Co-Chair, on the Big Disability Survey
- February 2024 – Nakib Narat, Older Peoples Panel Chair, on the Greater Manchester Age-Friendly Strategy
- March 2024 – Rabbi Warren Elf, (former) Faith and Belief Advisory Panel Co-Chair, on the Faith, Belief and Interfaith Covenant

3.2 Their participation has always been warmly received by GMCA, giving them recognition for their voluntary time and commitment, and the importance of the issues being addressed. In addition, panel chairs have issued statements alongside the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and spoken at a range of strategy launches and other public events.

3.3 The panels work together on common issues, bilaterally and all together, for example on the Greater than Violence Strategy, Hate Crime Plan and most recently on Good Employment Week, ensuring intersectionality retains a strong focus. Below summarises the panels individual annual reports attached as appendices.

#### 3.4 Disabled People's Panel (Appendix 1)

- The Disabled Peoples Panel is a pan-impairment panel, made up of 17 Disabled People's Organisations from the ten districts, and facilitated by the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People. The panel and members operate from the perspective of the Social Model of Disability.
- Throughout the year, the panel have engaged with policymakers across a wide range of areas, highlighting the stark challenges for disabled people as reported in the panels two Big Disability Surveys. In addition, the panel contributes to Greater Manchester groups including digital inclusion, hate crime and cost-of-living. The panel also lobby

nationally for change, providing insight and challenge to Government Departments and the UK Covid-19 Inquiry.

- Following a meeting with the Mayor of Greater Manchester, the panel were pleased to see commitments in his Manifesto on two of the biggest challenges for disabled people, social care and benefits. The panel look forward to supporting these, ensuring the voice of disabled people is at the heart of the Social Care Commission and shaping proposals for devolution of benefits.

### 3.5 Faith and Belief Advisory Panel (Appendix 2)

- The panel acts as a 'network of networks', bringing together representatives from 40 single and mixed Faith, Belief and Interfaith networks, facilitated by Pulse Regeneration. The aims of the panel are to optimise the Faith and Belief contribution to the Greater Manchester Strategy and ensure that the role of Faith and Belief in society is recognised and valued.
- Building on last year's panel statement on the positive contribution of the Faith and Belief Sector to public services and society, in March 2024 GMCA endorsed the Greater Manchester Faith, Belief and Interfaith Covenant, a set of principles and commitments that will guide engagement, collaboration and delivery between the sector and GMCA. Thriving local Interfaith Networks are crucial and locality conversations have commenced to explore how the Covenant can bolster local relationships and infrastructure.
- The Panel have collaborated with the LGBTQ+ Equality Panel to develop a Faith and Belief Pledge to End Conversion Therapy, demonstrating the positive impact panels can have in enabling constructive dialogue on challenging themes.
- In addition, members of the panel continue to be actively involved in a range of Action Networks, including homelessness, digital inclusion, net zero, real living wage and food security. The panel will host an event during Good Employment Week and are engaged in Live Well and GM Networks Connect, as well as continuing to strengthen the recognition of Faith in the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Accord.

### 3.6 LGBTQ+ Equality Panel (Appendix 3)

- The LGBTQ+ Advisory Panel aims to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people across the city region by championing inclusion and ensuring that the needs of our diverse

communities are fully considered across Greater Manchester. The panel is facilitated by the LGBT Foundation.

- The panel has three primary work areas:
  - o End LGBTQ+ hate crime in GM, by assisting with the accurate collection of hate crime data across GM, through a new Hate Crime Survey in partnership with the GM Hate Crime Working Group.
  - o Make spaces safer for LGBTQ+ people in GM, through the formation of an LGBTQ+ inclusion accreditation scheme for GM services, which was included by the Mayor of Greater Manchester in his recent Manifesto.
  - o End LGBTQ+ conversion therapy in GM, by increasing the number of signatories of the Greater Manchester Pledge to End Conversion Therapy, improving awareness of the pledge and supporting its implementation. This has included collaborating with the Faith and Belief Advisory Panel on endorsing the pledge.
- Aligned with the panel is an LGBTQ+ Sector Engagement Group, which brings together public, private and voluntary sector professionals working with communities. The panel has also been attending Pride events across the city-region, promoting and engaging people in the work of the panel, in preparation for recruitment of new members later this year.

### 3.7 Older Peoples Equality Panel (Appendix 4)

- The Older Peoples Panel supports political leaders and public bodies to be more informed about how their decision-making impacts older people, enabling more effective policy and services, as well as aiming to build positive relationships with communities and neighbourhood groups in each borough to identify strengths, listen to older people and share key messages. The panel works in partnership with the Greater Manchester Ageing Hub and is facilitated by Macc.
- The panel has prioritised three issues within the Age Friendly Strategy.
  - o Financial hardship for older people – highlighting the extreme pressure on advice services which is common across all boroughs, impacts for older people in the workplace and how the housing crisis is impacting older people.
  - o Care settings – engaging with the Greater Manchester Adult Social Care Transformation Team and involved in two governance groups: Enhanced Health at Home/ Proactive Care and Carers Programme Delivery.

- Digitalisation – the panel recruited a test team to conduct an age friendly audit of Council websites. The subsequent report made a series of recommendations, with collaboration between Councils and the panel continuing.
- Running throughout the panel is the theme of “Valuable not Vulnerable”. Older people play a key role in society and are a diverse group, in both age and experiences, which was highlighted in their ‘Living it up in later life’ event. The panel provides the opportunity for older people to promote and share a positive perspective on ageing in Greater Manchester.

### 3.8 Race Equality Panel (Appendix 5)

- The Race Equality Panel work to promote racial equality, tackle racial discrimination and foster positive relationships between ethnically diverse communities, and embed the Public Sector Equality Duty in policies, processes, procedures, practices and people development. Over the last year, the panel has focused its efforts on Policing, Employment and Housing In addition, after three years the panel has renewed its membership, and a new facilitating organisation, Black Beetle Health, have been appointed.
- Examples of the positive impact of the panel include
  - Working closely with key stakeholders, including the Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, and officers within GMP and GMCA, addressing community concerns including building trust through community engagement, recruitment and retention of diverse officers, and the cultural competency training and skills within the force. The Deputy Mayor is committed to working collaboratively with the panel, supporting her in holding GMP to account for achieving racial equity in policing.
  - Engaging senior leaders across the public and private sectors, including GMCA and Good Employment Charter, to strengthen approaches to workforce equity and inclusion. Building on the success of the panel’s annual employment events, raising awareness and sharing good practice across organisations and sectors, the Panel will be delivering a session during this year’s Good Employment Week
  - Throughout the year the panel have continued to play a key role in shaping the new Greater Manchester Race Equity Framework, now being implemented by GMCA, Councils and other public services. The panel has also proactively supported the Civic Leadership Programme.

- Looking forward the panel will continue the hard work and progress of the previous membership, striving forward on building confidence in policing, improving employment access, experience and outcomes, and tackling racial inequalities in housing. In addition, there will be a greater focus on health and wellbeing, in collaboration with Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board.

### 3.9 Women and Girls Equality Panel (Appendix 6)

- The Women and Girls Equality Panel aims to address the inequalities facing women and girls in GM. This year has been a period of significant growth and development for the panel, welcoming 18 new members and appointing new co-chairs. In addition, the Panel has made concerted efforts to be more reflective of the views of young women and through their partnership with RECLAIM welcomed their first under-18 panel member.
- The Panel is facilitated by the Pankhurst Trust and utilises its partnership with GM4Women 2028 to enable strong engagement with women and girls across the city-region, as well as data from the annual Pankhurst-Fawcett Scorecard, which highlights that over the first five years there has hardly been any sustained positive change for Women and Girls across the ten indicators. This reinforces the need for gender mainstreaming in policymaking, an approach embedded throughout the panel's work.
- This year the panel have continued to focus on ending violence against Women and Girls, providing insight into the #IsThisOkay? Campaign and the Baird Enquiry on experiences of arrest and custody. In addition, the panel submitted recommendations to the Integrated Care Board on barriers to women's health, contributed to the development of the Local Transport Plan around safety on public transport. Looking forward the panel will continue to contribute to Greater Manchester's Gender Based Violence Strategy Delivery Plan and deliver a session during Good Employment Week.

### 3.10 Youth Combined Authority (Appendix 7)

- The Youth Combined Authority (YCA) brings together young people from 26 youth organisations across Greater Manchester, including locality Youth Parliaments and groups that support diverse young people, ensuring the membership is rich in lived experience and inclusivity. The YCA has a strategic role advising, supporting and challenging the Children and Young Peoples Board, as well as a range of other Portfolio areas, and is facilitated by Youth Focus North West.

- The YCA has four priority areas: Education, Employment and Skills, Equity, Equality and Inclusion, Transport and Active Travel, and the Environment, exploring topics with policymakers at meetings and in Task and Finish Groups. Positive impact includes
  - o Presenting the views of young people at the Big Active Conversation in June 2023
  - o Contributing to the development of the Greater than Violence Strategy, with the YCA Chair speaking strategy's launch in December 2023
  - o Working in partnership with GMCA to help shape the new Greater Manchester Baccalaureate, producing a report of their recommendations
  - o Delivering a workshop on food waste and hidden hunger at the Green Summit in October 2023
  - o Testing the new toolkit developed by the Youth Steering Group of the Civic Leadership Programme
- In total, young people have given over 600 hours of voluntary time to the YCA, reporting increased levels of confidence, leadership skills, communication and teamwork because of their engagement within the YCA. The YCA membership changed in April 2024, with the new group keen to continue work on the MBacc, Bee Network and the other priority areas set out in their 2024-2026 Vision document.

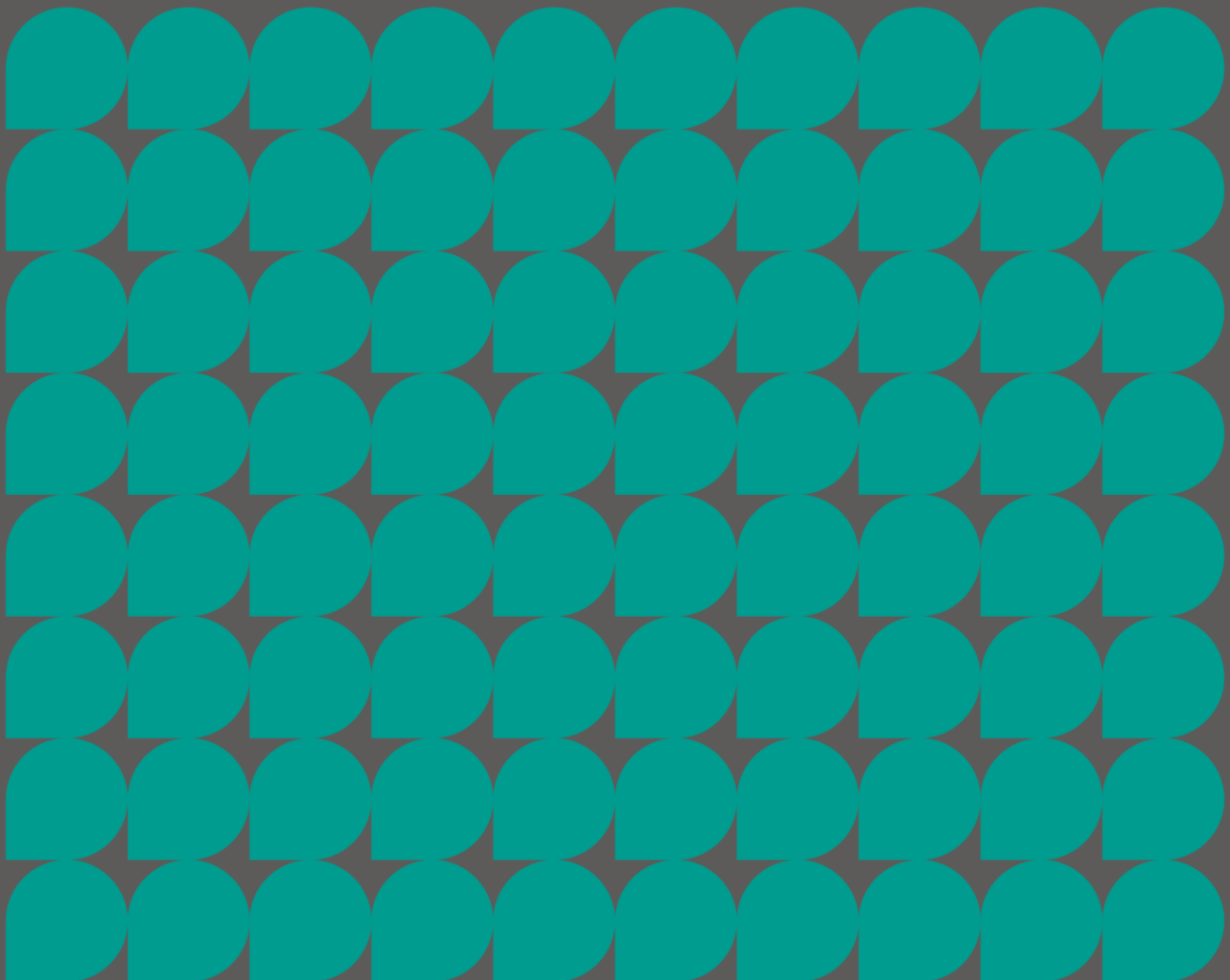
## **4. Recommendations**

4.1 Recommendations appear at the front of this report.



## Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel

Year 5 Annual Report 2023 - 2024





Embrace  
Wigan & Leigh



‘Nothing About Us Without Us’

- Disabled People everywhere demanding their rights and inclusion in society.



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## 1. Co-Chairs' foreword

I am pleased and proud to present this report, highlighting the remarkable work the Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel has been able to achieve during the past year.

During the past year the Panel has gone from strength to strength. The amount of work we are doing seems to have increased. For an organisation that meets eleven times per year our output is prodigious. Of course, our main output is our contribution to Greater Manchester Disabled Peoples strategy, and we are often forced to make difficult choices in relation to what we support. There genuinely is too much to do.

I am well aware that in the past people have looked to the Greater Manchester Big Disability Survey as 'the output', but really the work is far deeper than that. The survey simply helps to highlight where the problems are and gives us a steer regarding what to work on.

Over the past year I think that the main achievements, of which much more later, of the Panel have been:

1. All of the ten GM councils have agreed to nominate a disability ally with whom our panel members can communicate regarding all things disability related. All ten of them have done and things are moving on well.
2. The Disabled People's Organisation conference at the People's History Museum where the Mayor Andy Burnham gave a keynote address.
3. And it would be remiss of me not to mention the huge victory of the Panel in its collective work with key partners to stop the closure of railway station ticket offices.

I know that our work plan for the ensuing year 2024 / 25 is at least as challenging as it has been for this year.

As the work of the panel is co-produced aspects of it have become increasingly apparent. Panel members feel empowered to take control, they feel that they belong, and they are coming up with ideas about how they want to make their own differences. I know that our disabled peoples Panel is starting to help to build stronger, more connected communities as we intended. After all, collectively the Panel represents over 24,000 disabled people in the GM city region and are regularly in contact with a further 24,000 other local people via our communication networks.

In closing I would like to thank the other co-chairs and members of the Panel for their ongoing and diligent support.

Melvin Bradley – Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel Co-Chair

## 2. Introduction to the panel and our priorities

The Panel is convened by the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) in partnership with the Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). There are 17 Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), organisations that are majority or wholly led and run by disabled people as distinct from charities, on the panel drawn from across the city region. They are:

Beyond Empower • Breakthrough UK • Bury People First • Disability Stockport • Embrace Wigan & Leigh • GM Autism Consortium Advisory Committee • GMCDP (Convenor) • George House Trust • Manchester Deaf Centre • Manchester Disabled People's Access Group • Manchester Disabled People Against Cuts • Mental Health Independent Support Team • Manchester People First • People First Tameside • Rochdale And District Disability Action Group • Salford Disability Forum • Stand Up Sisters

In 2023-2024 we had three Co-Chairs: Sara Crookdake (Disability Stockport), Chris Hamnett (Embrace Wigan & Leigh), Melvin Bradley (Mental Health Independent Support Team). The Panel Steering Group meets weekly and comprises: the three Co-chairs, GMCDP manager, two panel officers, and officers from GMCA.

We pay each member organisation £800 per year to help cover their costs for the extra work they do plus we cover any access needs members have and providing information in accessible formats. The Co-Chairs receive an additional £500 annually as a reflection of the extra work they do. This is how we operate ethically in line with the disabled people's movement principles and valuing disabled people's lived expertise and labour.

We also have a wider associate network of interested stakeholders, who do not attend meetings, with whom we share information.

The panel and members operate from the perspective of the Social Model of Disability. The panel meetings in 2023/24 were prioritised according to the issues identified in the Greater Manchester Big Disability Survey 2022. For 2023/2024 we prioritised Money, Benefits, and Energy Costs, Housing and Physical Access. In the survey the panel identified five immediate actions and structural recommendations which we used as progress measurement indicators.

## 3. Activities and highlights

### 3.1 Activities

The Disabled People's Panel held monthly meetings and easy meetings, focussing on welfare benefits, accessible information, built environment and night-time economy, changes to voting requirements, Greater Manchester Good Landlord Charter and housing, transport, work planning for 24/25 and the Greater Manchester response to the panel's Big Disability Survey. The latter highlighted issues with housing, transport, social care charging, a lack of choice and control, and difficulties accessing healthcare and improving involvement of disabled people.

The panel continued to work with policy leads to highlight problems relating to debt, access to advice, benefits, social care and transport (including new buses, Bee Network journey planning, on-demand transport and concessionary passes). The panel completed its research project on advice services for disabled people and presented this to British Gas Energy Trust, who funded the project. The panel also worked with GMCA to review the information contained on the GM Elects website to assess how it met the needs of disabled people.

On behalf of the panel Manchester Disabled People's Access Group (MDPAG) created guidance on lobbying Local Authorities on wheelchair accessible standard (M4(3)) for 10% of new builds in Local Plans. GMCDP's Housing Working Group spoke at the Housing 2023 Conference and included quotes from the panel's survey to highlight issues in Greater Manchester. We undertook work with Greater Manchester planning leads to ask the ten authorities a series of questions about how planning authorities currently engage with disabled people and DPO's.

The Panel shared opportunities for disabled people to be involved in local and national consultations and met regularly with the Equality and Human Rights Commission .

Panel representatives attended:

- the GM Cost of Living Response Group – Panel continued to focus on the impact of poverty and the cost-of-living crisis on disabled people. we continued to shape the Greater Manchester Residents Survey to capture the lived experience of disabled people living in poverty

- Mayor's Energy Providers Working Group - we reported that disabled people are experiencing increasing energy poverty and raised concerns about disabled energy consumers receiving communications from energy retail suppliers referencing warrants to force-fit, after the voluntary agreement to cease warrant-seeking. We helped to draft the priority services register letter which was sent out by the Integrated Care Partnership to disabled people using medical devices
- Digital Inclusion Action Network – we co-produced a [new digital support resource](#) for disabled residents
- The Panel attended the meeting of the Greater Manchester Association of Directors of Adult Social Services to highlight barriers to independent living. Panel representatives also continued to meet the Government's Disability Unit and the Minister for Disabled People.
- The Panel also attended the Greater Manchester Hate Crime Partnership

In addition, the Panel also attend the DPO Forum England. Our co-chair participated in the selection process of the new Group Chief Executive (GMCA & TfGM). Panel co-chairs met weekly and attended Panel Chairs meeting as well as the Tackling Inequalities Board. Panel officers also met weekly and attended GMCA Panel Facilitators meetings.

## 3.2 Highlights

At the February panel meeting, the Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham, outlined his vision for devolving control of benefits from Westminster to Greater Manchester to better support disabled residents through personalised, community-based assistance. Panel members agreed to work with the Mayor on any future proposals.

The panel co-chair attended the Greater Manchester Combined Authority meeting in November to address the Greater Manchester response to the Disabled People's Panel Big Disability Survey. You can watch the GMCA meeting [here](#) (starts around 26min30sec). The panel helped the huge victory for collective working in stopping the closure of railway station ticket offices.

The panel held the national Disabled People's Organisation conference at the People's History Museum with Andy Burnham giving keynote address.

The panel welcomed the extension of the textline by 10 councils / GMCA for deaf and hearing impairment and to be included in number in all GMCA letters

The panel continued to enjoy a high media and political profile receiving requests from local councillors, Members of Parliament, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and Government Departments (Department for Work and Pensions, Ministry of Justice and Minister for Disabled people) for information on the impact of policy on disabled people, for example the impact of the Household Support Fund, social care charging, pre-payment metres, adequacy of welfare benefits, Work Capability Assessments (the Mayor wrote to the Government to communicate our concerns), benefit fraud investigations and administration. We have submitted our findings to select committees such as poverty, housing and benefits select committees. We have also submitted our findings to the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People. Our work has been mentioned in the Mirror, Disability News Service, Manchester Evening News, the Guardian, BBC National news, ITV Granada & national news.

Our project with the British Gas Energy Trust has led to a greater understanding across the GM system about the lack of accessible advice for disabled people and may lead to additional future funding. The project also provided added-value benefits of strengthening closer working between Panel members in terms of management of GM DPO's and support of disabled advice workers. It also led to a successful bid for extra advice funding for advice for disabled people with Greater Manchester Law Centre.

The panel also contributed to local and national policy on care charging and institutional abuse (working with the international disability arm of Human Rights Watch) and the UK Covid Inquiry. Work from previous years also highlighted lasting impacts for example in the allocation of Mental Health and Well-being Grants to improve access to talking therapies for disabled people and to the use of our Big Survey by DPO's in other areas of the country, for example Disability Cornwall. The Panel attended both GM Networks Connect events combining Social and Climate Justice. We also identified a need for disability specialist Independent Domestic Violence Advisors in GM.

And finally, one of our Co-Chairs, Sara Crookdake received an MBE.

## 4. Plans for 2024/25

The panel have developed a new workplan for 2024/25. The priorities are intended to dovetail with the priorities of partners, especially the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). It should be noted that the number of urgent priorities facing disabled people outstrips the capacity of the panel. Our Thematic Priorities for 2024 to 2025 are:

- 1) Disabled people and Work
- 2) Poverty
- 3) Social Care
- 4) Strengthening the Panel

The panel has learnt from the Covid-19 Pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis that we need to be flexible in our approach as new opportunities and challenges arise. For example, we know that the new Government may bring new opportunities and challenges.

We have also identified a list of potential priority project areas that we would work on, should sufficient funding, resource and capacity exist in to undertake them effectively, these include Devolution of Benefits (to make recommendations on a potential Greater Manchester devolved benefits model), Access to Health Care, Education, Housing and the Built Environment, Elections and Political Participation, engagement with Great British Railways, Domestic Abuse and disabled people, and a “Know Your Rights” event.

## 5. Thanks and further information

We would like to offer a special thank you to our outgoing co-chair Sara Crookdake of Disability Stockport, who has been a strategic voice for disabled people in Greater Manchester. We are grateful for the continuing support from the Mayor of Greater Manchester, GMCA and its officers. Special thanks to Mahmuda, Elaine, Adrian, Rachel, Halima, Ellen and Anne at the GMCA.

For further information on the panel Disabled People’s Panel please visit

[www.gmdisabledpeoplespanel.com](http://www.gmdisabledpeoplespanel.com) or email: [Panel@gmcdp.com](mailto:Panel@gmcdp.com)

Jane Bevan, Strategic Lead, email: [Jane@gmcdp.com](mailto:Jane@gmcdp.com) Call/Text: 07940 797 363

Rick Burgess, Outreach and Development Lead, email: [Rick@gmcdp.com](mailto:Rick@gmcdp.com) Call/Text: 07367 754 595

The panel is facilitated by GM Coalition of Disabled People [www.gmcdp.com](http://www.gmcdp.com)

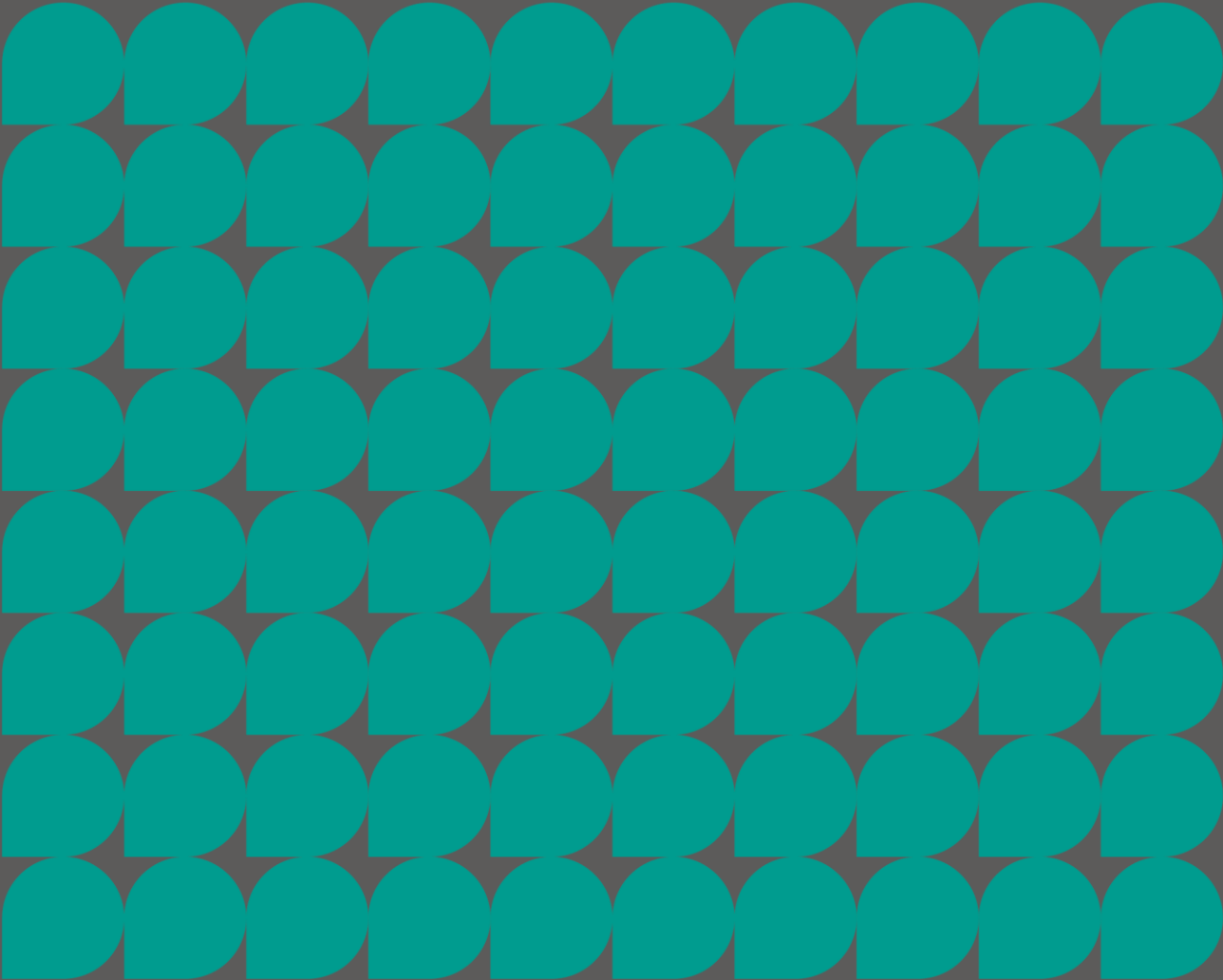
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**FAITH &  
BELIEF  
ADVISORY  
PANEL**

**DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY  
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER**

# Annual Report 2024



# 1. Message from the Co-Chairs

The Greater Manchester Faith & Belief Advisory Panel, launched in March 2021, has had a busy and productive year, engaging with other Greater Manchester Equality Panels and groups, and developing the way we contribute to the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS).

We were both re-elected for our third year as Co-Chairs by our colleagues on the Panel and have continued to work together, along with our Facilitator, Chris Hart of Pulse Regeneration, and Adrian Bates of Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), ensuring that we have continued to work effectively to achieve the Panel's aims and objectives. These include representing the voice of Faith and Belief communities at a Greater Manchester level, in the work of GMCA and within the GMS.

As a Panel we have ensured that the concerns and key issues for people of faith and belief and their communities are communicated to Greater Manchester leaders and structures and at a local borough level too. We have liaised and met with GMCA officers and the VCSE Leadership Group to ensure that the contribution of faith communities is also recognised and that our voice is heard at all levels. As a result, it has been re-named the VCFSE Leadership Group to acknowledge the vital contribution of communities of Faith and Belief in this sector.

Along with our bimonthly meetings, we and other Panel members have continued to be involved in the Action Networks, the Tackling Inequalities Board and the Equality Panel Chairs meetings, among others. There are regular reports at our meetings on the work of these Action Networks and groups.

It has been another exciting year and we can be proud of our achievements as a Panel. The work of Panel members and their support in a variety of areas demonstrates the importance of the Faith & Belief Advisory Panel.

The acceptance and adoption of a Faith, Belief and Interfaith Covenant by GMCA has been one success; the proposal for a Model of a Good Local Interfaith Network is another. There is still work to do on the delivery of the Covenant and the development of the local model and we are keen to continue this work together.

The adoption of a Faith and Belief Advisory Panel Ending Conversion Therapy Pledge, in liaison with the LGBTQ+ Panel has been another positive development this year.

We have had more in-person Panel meetings this year (most have been online) and continue to strengthen our engagement with the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, who occasionally joins a Panel meeting in person.

Our faith and belief communities and members continue to play such a significant role in the life of our city region and we commit to develop the connections further and to ensure a true partnership in the way we live, work and share together.

We are indebted to the hard work of many Panel members and other members of our faith and belief communities and we know that this important work will be in good hands in the coming year as we hand over to the new co-chairs, Revd Ian Rutherford and Manjari Patel.

It has been a pleasure and privilege to help ensure that this Panel has started well and developed into a significant player for Greater Manchester. There is still much to do.

**Co-Chairs, Rabbi Warren Elf MBE and Dr Jill Brennan**

## 2. About the Panel

The Faith and Belief Advisory Panel acts as a 'network of networks' bringing together representatives from the 10 Greater Manchester borough Interfaith bodies with key individuals from single and mixed faith networks. The Panel currently has 45 members representing 40 networks from across Greater Manchester and aims to reflect the city-region's diverse faiths and beliefs. Gender balance is important to the Panel, and each network is encouraged to nominate a male and female representative.

The Panel aims to strengthen the partnership between public services, Faith and Belief organisations and wider society, through collaboration on shared missions, unlocking assets and resources in Greater Manchester communities and the powers available through devolution.

## Faith and Belief Advisory Panel – Aims

- Optimise the Faith and Belief contribution to The Greater Manchester Strategy
- Ensure that the role of Faith and Belief in society is recognised and valued
- Foster good relations and dialogue between people of Faith and Belief (who share a protected characteristic) and people who do not share it
- Advance equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation (and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty) between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not

## 3. Highlights of the Last Year

### 3.1 Faith & Belief Contribution Statement

The **Faith and Belief in Greater Manchester** contribution statement was developed by the Panel to affirm the significant role of Faith and Belief in society and the support faith organisations provide, often to the most disadvantaged, both in terms of spiritual wellbeing and practical services. The statement was signed by the Panel Co-Chairs and Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, in July 2023.

### 3.2 Faith, Belief and Interfaith Covenant

The Panel has developed a **Faith, Belief and Interfaith Covenant** which builds on the Contribution statement by setting out how this can be maximised through

working in partnership, empowered through a joint commitment between Faith and Belief communities and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to a set of principles and commitments that guide engagement, collaboration and delivery.

### **3.3 Local Interfaith Networks**

The Panel undertook research into Greater Manchester local interfaith networks as part of a GM VCSE Accord Ecosystem Investment Fund project supported by Voluntary Sector North West. This included mapping existing networks and support, and engagement with a wide range of local stakeholders including Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIOs), Panel Interfaith Representatives, and GM borough local authority officers. The research identified gaps and included development of a Model of a Good Local Interfaith Network which can be used to help discussions locally, including developing and forming new interfaith networks.

### **3.4 Action Networks and GMNetworksConnect**

The Panel continued to support priorities within the Greater Manchester Strategy and GM VCSE Accord through the Panel's work in the Action Networks and Taskforces. These include the Greater Manchester Food Security Action Network (GMFSAN); GM Homeless Action Network (GMHAN); GM Climate Interfaith Action Network; Real Living Wage City-Region; GM VCSE Accord Delivery Group; Preventing Hate Crime in GM; GM Digital Inclusion Taskforce, and support for the GM Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs).

Panel members have increased their engagement and contribution to these networks, including a follow up event to the Connecting our Social Justice and Climate Justice Missions Across GM Summit and creation of GMNetworksConnect which will bring all of the networks together through a digital platform and Community of Practice to increase impact.

### **3.4 GM Women of Faith and Belief Group**

The GM Women of Faith & Belief Group was established to help promote different ways of working and improve gender balance on the Panel. The Group has provided

an opportunity to come together, discuss barriers, increase the voice of women in male structures, and develop partnerships. The Group now provides a mechanism for engagement in relevant issues, for example joint working with the Women and Girls Equality Panel.

### 3.5 Religious Spaces Supporting Older People

The Panel has collaborated with the University of Manchester to support an 18-month study into how faith spaces in Greater Manchester support different groups of older people, mapping out their existing and potential contributions to the World Health Organization's framework of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. The **report** recommends more strategic involvement of faith-based groups in public health and age-friendly agendas and longer term funding is now being sought.

#### 2023/24 Impacts

Embedding and further increasing the recognition of the role and contribution of Faith and Belief in Greater Manchester

Development of shared principles/ commitments for partnership working between GMCA and Faith and Belief communities

Increased Faith and Belief engagement in the Action Networks and increased impact through collaboration

Increased involvement and voice of Women of Faith & Belief

Increased connections with the other GM Equality Panels

## 4. Planning for the Year Ahead

The Panel has developed a comprehensive Action Plan 2024/25 set against the Panel's aims. The overall strategic direction for the Panel is to stay focused and go

deeper with its existing actions, and to further develop its partnerships and representation and support for Action Networks, Task Forces and Local Interfaith Networks. Some of the key action areas for the next year are provided below.

## **4.1 Faith, Belief & Interfaith Covenant Delivery Plan**

The Covenant was approved by GMCA in March 2024 and will enable mutually beneficial relationships to thrive, achieving our shared ambitions for Greater Manchester. Whilst in the first instance the Covenant will be adopted by GMCA, it is envisaged that Councils and local Faith, Belief and Interfaith organisations will use the Covenant to strengthen their relationships, ensuring they reflect the different challenges being faced by public services and communities, and exploring the positive impact investment of support and resources could achieve. The next year will see the development and implementation of a Covenant Delivery Plan and formation of a Working Group of local authority officers to foster joint working to help ensure the Covenant is aligned with GM borough Council's local strategies.

## **4.2 Inclusion of the 'F' in VCFSE**

The Panel has been working jointly with representatives of the GM VCSE Leadership Group including progressing a 9 point Action Plan to ensure integration with the GM VCSE Accord and greater recognition of the role and contribution that faith and belief makes as part of the wider voluntary sector. An update has been presented to the GM VCSE Leadership Group which has now officially included the 'F' within its acronym and has invited one of our new Panel Co-Chairs, Revd Ian Rutherford, as an additional Panel representative onto the Group. The next year will see progress in fully engaging with the Panel and faith and belief communities within what is now known as the GM VCFSE Accord to strengthen the role of faith and belief within this.

## **4.3 Developing Local Interfaith Networks**

As part of developing the Covenant, the Panel recognises that Local Interfaith Networks in the GM boroughs is where a great deal of impact can be made especially in terms of social cohesion and the Panel would like to see a consistent

model of well resourced networks developed across all 10 boroughs. A key priority will be to use the Covenant commitments and Delivery Plan as a 'driver' to support the development and investment into these networks with the GM boroughs to help maximise their local impact.

## **4.4 GMNetworksConnect and Action Networks**

The Panel will continue to increase its involvement and contribution, and of those within Panel member's faith and belief networks, in the Action Networks and Task Forces. The GMNetworksConnect digital platform and a Community of Practice will be progressed following the approval of its branding, the extension of its connections, and obtaining a mayoral commitment to provide resources.

A key area to explore over the next year will be the Panel's role in supporting health and wellbeing and helping all people in our communities to Live Well.

## **4.5 Engaging Across Equality Panels**

The Panel will continue its partnership working with the other Greater Manchester Equality Panels, including with the LGBTQ+ Equality Panel following development and approval by the Panel of a Faith and Belief Advisory Panel, Ending Conversion Therapy Pledge. The Panel will use this over the next year as the basis for developing longer term relationships and exploring wider issues and attitudes between our two communities.

The Panel will continue to develop its relationships with the other Equality Panels including the Youth Combined Authority to take forward youth engagement and interfaith working, and with the Disabled Peoples Panel to consider issues and priorities relating to disabled people.

## **4.5 Good Employment Week**

The Panel will support **Good Employment Week** in October as part of the Greater Manchester **Good Employment Charter** which aims to raise employment standards. The Panel will organise an event between faith leaders and employers to



explore issues in employing people of faith and belief, share their experiences, and discuss good practice.

The aim will be for the Panel to identify its top three issues for sharing at a wider Greater Manchester event planned for the end of the week with businesses and the other Equality Panels, which can then be considered as part of the Good Employment Charter.

## 4.6 Supporting Research and Development

The University of Manchester will be looking to build on the learning from the Religious Places Supporting Older People research and the panel will continue to work in partnership to embed the research recommendations.

# 5. How to Get Involved

For more information about the Greater Manchester Faith & Belief Advisory Panel please visit the [GMCA website](#).

Or to find out how you can get involved or provide support please contact the Facilitating Organisation by getting in touch with Chris Hart, Pulse Regeneration – [chris@pulseregeneration.co.uk](mailto:chris@pulseregeneration.co.uk)

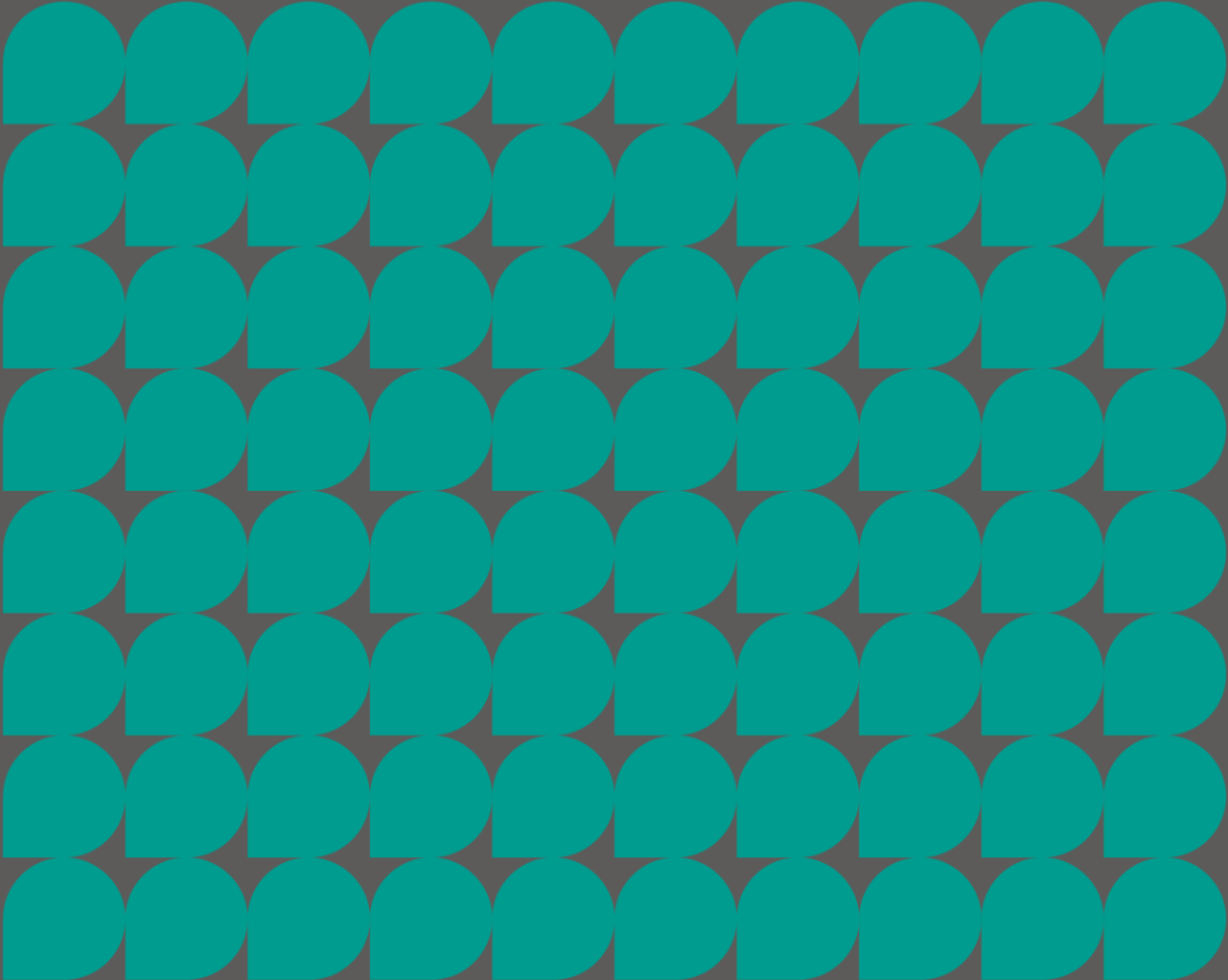
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**LGBTQ+  
EQUALITY  
PANEL**

**DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY  
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER**

# Annual Report 2023/24

June 2024



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## 2. Foreword

As representatives of the LGBTQ+ Equality Panel, we are incredibly proud to support the GMCA to improve the inclusion and safety of LGBTQ+ residents and communities across Greater Manchester.

We look forward to expanding our reach throughout this year and into 2025, by engaging consistently with our communities and policy makers, and partnering closely with the other Equality Panels to foster beneficial changes.

The year ahead holds many exciting opportunities for Greater Manchester and our LGBTQ+ residents, and we hope the panel can be a tool for positive action as we enter what is sure to be an incredibly busy and productive period of change.

*Alex Townley (They/She) & Laura Thomas (She/Her)*  
*LGBTQ+ Equality Panel Co-Leads – 2024/5*

## 3. About the Panel

### 3.1 Introduction

The Greater Manchester LGBTQ+ Equality Panel is one of seven panels established by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to tackle inequality and injustice in the region. Its aim is to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people across the city region by championing LGBTQ+ inclusion and ensuring that the needs of our diverse LGBTQ+ communities are fully considered across Greater Manchester.

LGBT Foundation is proud to be facilitating the GMCA LGBTQ+ Equality Panel, following its re-establishment in January 2022.

### 3.2 Membership

The Panel is currently made up of nine LGBTQ+ volunteers from across Greater Manchester.

- Alex Townley (they/she) — Co-Lead 2024–5
- Laura Thomas (she/her) — Co-Lead 2024–5
- Gáibhin McGranaghan (he/they)
- Jake Campbell (they/he)
- Karl Robson (he/him)
- Keisha Tomlinson (she/her)
- Majojo Kuss (he/him)
- Natalie Craig (she/her)
- Conor Nixon-Herd (they/them)

We will be increasing Panel membership throughout 2024 through an active recruitment period. More information on this is detailed below (see 4.3 Recruitment).

### 3.3 Core objectives and workgroups

Following the re-establishment of the Panel in January 2022 and informed by the results of community research carried out by LGBT Foundation, Panel members co-produced a work strategy to outline its priorities. These are:

### Primary work areas:

- Places & Spaces: working to ensure that all parts of Greater Manchester are accessible, safe and welcoming for LGBTQ+ people of all identities, backgrounds and communities.
- Counting us in: working to ensure that all publicly funded services in Greater Manchester consistently and appropriately record sexual orientation and trans status, and use this data to improve services for LGBTQ+ people, and evidence need.
- Inclusion as standard: working to ensure that all new and existing public policy in Greater Manchester is LGBTQ+ inclusive, and, where appropriate, there are specific policies in place to protect LGBTQ+ people.

The Panel's current focus is on the first of these work areas, Places & Spaces.

To do this, the Panel is split into three **workgroups** with the following objectives:

**Workgroup 1:** End LGBTQ+ hate crime in GM, through assisting with the accurate collection of hate crime data across GM.

**Workgroup 2:** Make spaces safer for LGBTQ+ people in GM, through the formation of an LGBTQ+ inclusion accreditation scheme for GM services.

**Workgroup 3:** End LGBTQ+ conversion therapy in GM, by increasing the number of signatories of the Greater Manchester Pledge to End Conversion Therapy, improving awareness of the pledge and supporting its implementation.

## 4. Highlights of Activity in 2023/24

### 4.1 Intersectional Work and the Greater Manchester

#### Pledge to End Conversion Therapy

The Greater Manchester Pledge to End Conversion Therapy was launched by the Panel in 2022 and is signed by Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, on behalf of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Combined Authority, alongside other Greater Manchester leaders and policymakers. Workgroup 3 is

currently focused on increasing the number of signatories of the Pledge and improving awareness and implementation of the initiative.

In 2024, the Panel met with the Greater Manchester Faith and Belief Equality Panel to discuss signing the Pledge. After multiple productive meetings, the Faith and Belief Panel have redrafted the Pledge into a form that works for them and their communities. The Faith and Belief Panel can now share the Pledge amongst their communities to increase awareness of the dangers of conversion therapy and encourage community leaders to campaign against it.

Workgroup 3 recently met with the Women and Girls' Equality Panel to discuss the Pledge, with the intention that this Panel can similarly adapt the Pledge to meet their communities' needs. Workgroup 3 gave a presentation to Panel members about their work on the Pledge, its intended aims, and how it may be adapted to meet the needs of community members represented by the Women and Girls' Panel.

## **4.2 Work with GMCA policymakers**

In their meetings, the Panel has had useful conversations with Greater Manchester policymakers and leaders, including Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Kate Green, Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester and Bev Craig, Leader of Manchester City Council.

In its meeting with Andy Burnham in February, the Panel asked the Mayor about his commitment to tackling transphobia in Greater Manchester and ensuring LGBTQ+ spaces in GM are safeguarded. Members were grateful for the opportunity to discuss these issues directly with the Mayor, and following this, the Panel wrote to the Mayor's office to discuss these priorities further.

The Panel also suggested that the Mayor should include a specific pledge to support the Panel and LGBTQ+ rights in GM in his (then upcoming) manifesto. The Panel were pleased that this suggestion was taken up, with the following statement in Andy Burnham's re-election manifesto:



“We will support our LGBTQ+ Panel in their work to safeguard LGBTQ+ protected spaces and will continue to back the LGBT Foundation’s Extra Care Housing Scheme.”

The panel has found meeting with policymakers across GMCA to be productive and intends to expand its reach by speaking to significantly more policy makers in the coming year.

### **4.3 LGBTQ+ Sector Engagement Group**

The LGBTQ+ Sector Engagement group met in February for a day of activities and sessions aimed at building a comprehensive network of LGBTQ+ inclusion professionals across Greater Manchester. Session topics included Hate Crime and Safety, an LGBT Veterans Review and an introduction to the Equality Panels.

This event was well attended, with around 50 attendees across the day, and feedback indicated that those present found value and community in the space. Focus will be placed on re-building momentum for the Sector Engagement Group, as this is an incredibly valuable space for professionals in GM, and one that will undoubtedly support the work of the panel more broadly.

### **4.4 Pride Attendance**

In August 2023, panel members attended six local Prides across three Manchester boroughs (Manchester, Stockport and Bolton) alongside Manchester Pride, to discuss their work with LGBTQ+ residents, and gain insight from community members about the direction of the Panel, and what it should prioritise. In addition, two Panel members spoke on the Sackville Gardens stage during Sparkle Weekend.

These conversations were productive, and it was determined that more work can be done to advertise the Panel to GM residents. A communications plan has also been developed based on feedback from community members, to ensure that the Panel is effectively advertising its work. This will be implemented fully throughout the second half of 2024.

## 4.5 Laying Foundations

The LGBTQ+ Equality Panel has undergone a period of significant redevelopment since June 2023. The frequency of Panel and workgroup meetings have been reduced, to meet the needs of members, and allow more time for the progression of workplan related tasks. This reflects the fact that many Panel members work full time, have childcare or other caring commitments, and may have other accessibility needs (such as remote access or evening meetings) that impact their ability to fully contribute. Needs of Panel members in relation to accessibility reflect wider trends amongst LGBTQ+ communities in Greater Manchester; therefore, including these members as far as possible is essential to ensure the Panel is representative of the communities it aims to serve.

Members have been involved in drafting a new set of governance documents that better meet the needs of the Panel, and cover, in detail, processes to support productive meetings, assignment of tasks, use of communication channels and complaints, amongst other areas of need.

Panel members have focused on refining their workplans and structure during this time, to create a strategy for the delivery of upcoming work. These have been adapted to meet the new structure of the Panel and the accessibility needs of members.

## 5. Planning for 2024/5

### 5.1 Workgroup Action Plans

All three workgroups have established tangible goals to achieve their objectives.

#### **Workgroup 1 — End LGBTQ+ Hate Crime in GM**

Workgroup 1 aims to collect data about the number of hate crimes experienced by LGBTQ+ people in GM. They have produced a hate crime survey for community members to complete, which they will be sharing widely using LGBT Foundation and GMCA comms channels.

The aim of the survey is to provide another source of data that organisations and services across GMCA can use to study and reduce LGBTQ+ hate crime in GM, alongside increasing awareness of hate crime as an issue in Greater Manchester. At time of writing, the workgroup is ready to publish the survey, and will be advertising this throughout GM prides during summer 2024.

## **Workgroup 2 — Make Spaces Safer for LGBTQ+ People in GM**

Workgroup 2 will create and implement a safer spaces accreditation scheme across Greater Manchester for venues and organisations that allows them to demonstrate their LGBTQ+ inclusivity. It is hoped this scheme will ensure venues think further about how they can be safer and more inclusive for LGBTQ+ people and be examples of Greater Manchester's proactive approach to inclusivity.

Throughout 2024, Workgroup 2 is mapping out the details of this scheme and aim to have pilot venues and organisations ready for enrolment in late 2024/early 2025. Members will also meet with representatives from Transport for Greater Manchester to discuss how the scheme should be adapted for their use.

## **Workgroup 3 — End Conversion Therapy in GM**

In May 2022 the Panel announced the Greater Manchester Pledge to End Conversion Therapy which commits to making Greater Manchester a conversion-therapy-free city-region. Current signatories include Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester and Cllr. Bev Craig, Leader, Manchester City Council.

Workgroup 3 ensures that progress continues to be made by increasing sign-ups and adoption of the Pledge. They aim to have all Equality Panels and community leaders across GM signed onto it, and to champion the Pledge by increasing awareness and conversation around the prevalence of conversion therapy within Greater Manchester.

It is hoped that, in lieu of a nation ban, the Pledge will help to prevent conversion therapy in GM, and act as a best practice example for the city-region, creating pressure for a national ban.

## **5.2 Community Engagement**

Community engagement is a vital part of the panel's activities. Moving into the second half of 2024/5, communication and engagement will be embedded within the panel's work with renewed significance, with outputs planned across LGBT Foundation's and GMCA's websites, social media, and email distribution lists, with the overall goal of increasing awareness of the LGBTQ+ Equality Panel across a number of different areas and audiences, including policy makers, residents, other Equality Panels and VSCE sector organisations

## **5.3 Recruitment**

Retention of Panel members has been a significant issue since June 2023, with many members leaving or becoming inactive. This is partially reflective of the challenges listed above, but also speaks to the difficulty facing LGBTQ+ communities in engaging with GMCA policy work more broadly. Disability, inaccessibility and financial commitments all affect the ability of LGBTQ+ residents to fully engage with the Panel. This is additionally hampered by low Panel membership, as members must contribute more time, expertise and capacity than they would be expected to if Panel membership increased.

Alongside a renewed focus on comms output, the Panel will be entering a period of active recruitment during the second half of 2024. This will focus on increasing overall membership, while also ensuring diversity of lived experience and geographical representation. Several open recruitment days are planned to allow interested residents to engage with current Panel members, learn more about the functions of the Panel and how it works with GMCA as an advisory body. This approach will allow mass recruitment on a scale previously unattainable and meet the accessibility requirements of residents who may be unable to engage with a traditional interview format.

## 5. Looking forward and further information

While the Panel has faced challenges during the last year, a renewed focus on communications, re-focused engagement with policy makers and an active recruitment period will allow the Panel to go from strength to strength throughout the latter half of 2024 and 2025.

LGBT Foundation and the current LGBTQ+ Equality Panel members have worked hard to establish a solid foundation on which important outputs can be built, and we are confident that we will begin to see the benefits of this emphasis on internal restructuring throughout the coming year.

If you have any questions about the Panel or would like to share your thoughts on what can be done to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Greater Manchester, please follow this link: [Greater Manchester LGBTQ+ Equality Panel - Outreach Form](#)

Or email us at: [lgbtequalitypanel@lgbt.foundation](mailto:lgbtequalitypanel@lgbt.foundation)

For more information on the GMCA and its relationship with the LGBTQ+ Equality Panel please visit

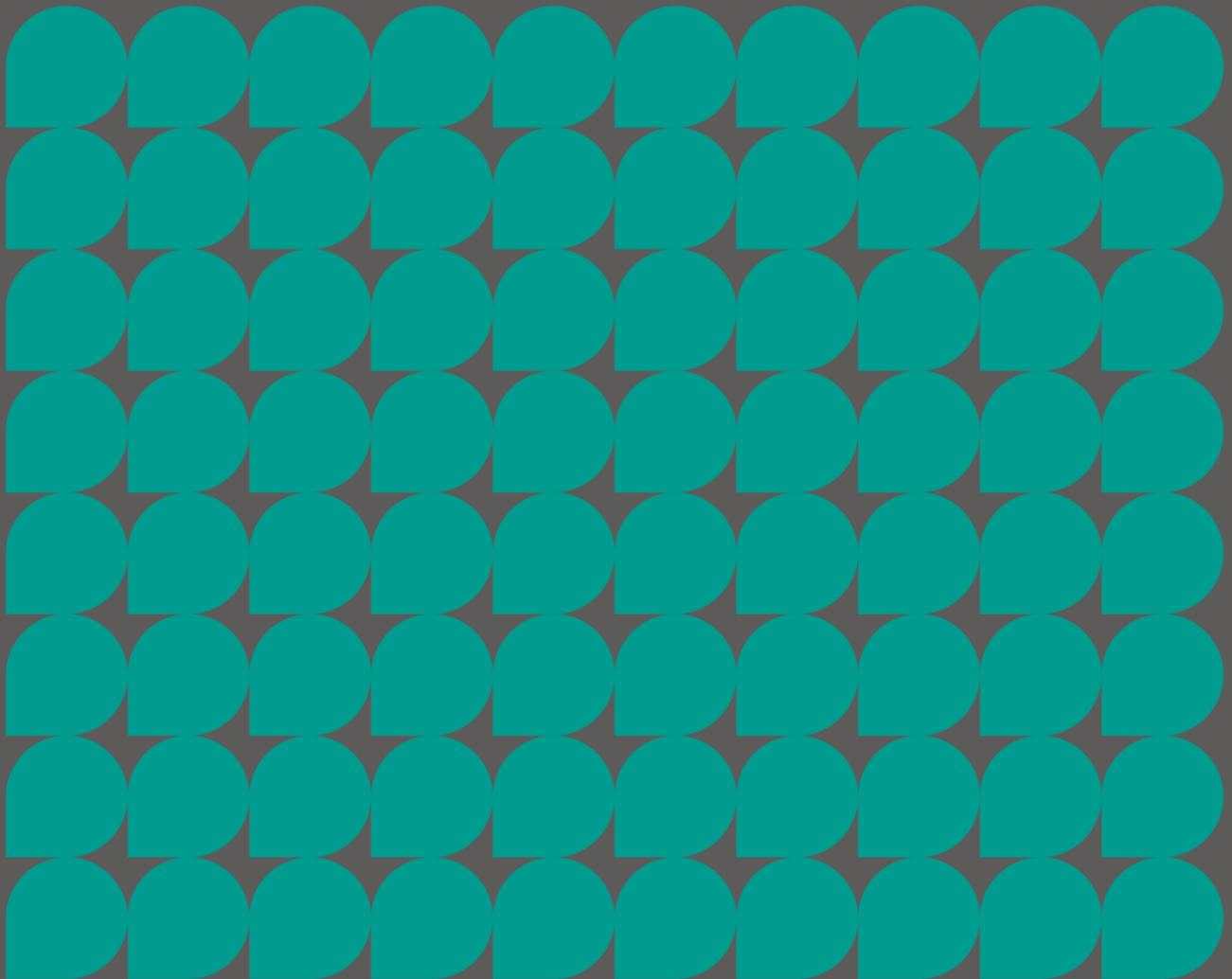
<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/equalities/lgbtqplus-panel/>

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# OLDER PEOPLE'S EQUALITY PANEL

DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY  
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER

ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024



## 1. Co-Chair's introduction

Over the last 12 months the Greater Manchester Older People's Equality Panel has continued to be involved in the work being done to transform how services work across Greater Manchester. It contributed to the review of the GM Age Friendly Strategy and in February I was proud to attend the GMCA full committee to recommend the updated version.

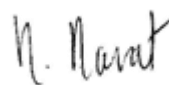
As our older population grows and becomes more diverse, it is essential that this strategy addresses ageing in a complete way. The new strategy recognises that the way we live in later life is changing and has put the many voices of older people at its heart.

We are keen to focus on the big issues older people are facing and will do this by collaborating with existing networks at neighbourhood, borough and GM level; listening and learning from people who feel at risk of being left behind and attempting to influence how change happens.

In October we partnered with the GM Older People's Network to organise an event "Living it up in Later Life". It was an opportunity for older people from across Greater Manchester to come together in person and talk about what they had achieved, what they wanted to achieve, what challenges existed and what was needed to overcome barriers.

We will be informed by the priorities identified and attempt to reflect the diverse lives, experiences, and needs of older people.

Greater Manchester already leads the way on age-friendly initiatives. Let's continue working together to make our city-region a great place for everyone to grow older.



Nakib Narat (Co-chair)



## 2. Membership and objectives

The Panel is comprised of older people (aged 50 and over) and organisational representatives who have an interest in or focus on working with older people. The membership includes people from across Greater Manchester and aims to be a representative voice for older people in the city region.

Over this year membership has solidified and currently stands at 18 members representing 9 of the 10 boroughs. The current members are:

Jan Kitching (Stockport) Co-Chair	Lucette Tucker (Bury)
Nakib Narat (Manchester) Co- Chair	Damy Patel (Tameside)
Erica Woods (Salford)	Steve Sherry (Bolton)
Samantha Days (Manchester)	Amy Muthra Shah (Manchester)
Dorretta Maynard (Trafford)	Gita Conn (Manchester)
Elizabeth Lynskey (Rochdale)	Joy Watson (Salford)
Jackie Corr (Manchester)	John Armstrong (Manchester)
Yuen Megson (Stockport)	Bernadette Ashcroft (Bury)
Hazel Roy (Manchester)	Anna Hughes (Oldham)

The panel will continue to have two co-chairs and will elect new co-chairs in July.

The Equality Panels have been established to advise, support and challenge Greater Manchester's political leaders and policy makers to tackle the discrimination and disadvantage that cause injustice and inequality in society, and champion Greater Manchester as an inclusive city-region.

The Older People's Equality Panel does this by working together with the GMCA and partners to:

- Ensure that Greater Manchester's political leaders and public bodies are more informed about how their decision-making impacts older people in different communities or circumstances, allowing for more effective policy and services.
- Build positive relationships with communities and neighbourhood groups in each borough to identify strengths, listen to older people and share key messages.

- Make key contributions to the development of GM wide policies, programmes and services so that they can work successfully for older people within different communities.

## **2.1 Objectives:**

- To identify and consider the diverse issues of concern to older people within Greater Manchester.
- To engage with Greater Manchester strategies, so that older people can influence policies that support the creation of age-friendly neighbourhoods.
- To provide the opportunity for older people to promote and share a positive perspective on ageing in Greater Manchester.

## **3. Addressing priorities**

The panel agreed the existing three priorities should continue to be the main focus

- Financial Hardship for older people
- Care Settings
- Digital Participation

The three subgroups will continue, building on the work completed over the previous 12 months.

### **3.1 Care settings**

There is a recognition that this theme is wide-ranging, and it is difficult to prioritise. Provision and quality of care continues to be varied across the city region. Input to the GM Adult Social Care Transformation process continues with the panel attending two governance groups: Enhanced Health at Home/ Proactive Care and Carers Programme Delivery.

The subgroup is liaising with the Programme Lead for Urgent and Emergency Care, aiming to influence how the hospital discharge experience can be improved for older people. This work will be part of the panel's collaboration work with the Greater Manchester Older Peoples Network (GMOPN) Health & Social Care Working Group.

Over the previous year the most common issue discussed in meetings and communities was access to a GP or dentist. In August there was an opportunity for panel members to hear how the situation might be improved when Rob Bellingham (Integrated Care Board lead on Primary Care) presented their Primary Care Plan for the next five years. This will be an ongoing dialogue with the panel hoping to see positive changes and a continuing flexible approach.

### **3.2 Digital participation**

The move to create a digital city region is key to the Greater Manchester Strategy and, key to achieving this, is ensuring that action is taken to minimise impact on groups at risk of exclusion and isolation.

Working with GM Ageing Hub and GM Digital, the panel recruited a test team to conduct an age friendly audit of the websites of each borough. The subsequent report (available [here](#)) made a series of recommendations

- Recognition of the need not to discourage older people who want to participate.
- Recognition that some people do not want to participate and will require non-digital means to access services and information easily.
- Information needs to be concise, and a balance struck between quantity and clarity.
- More engagement with user groups, especially if major changes are to be made.

The response from the GM Digital locality leads was positive and it is hoped there can be a continued dialogue with more boroughs. Currently three boroughs are in discussion.

In addition, the panel will seek to promote greater awareness of the digital switchover and focus on the impact of how digital solutions intended to reduce barriers can introduce more barriers, an obvious example being the proliferation of apps needed to access primary and secondary care.

### **3.3 Financial Hardship and its impact on older people.**

The panel recognises that financial hardship and deprivation is the common thread through all the panels and any tackling inequality initiatives.

The subgroup has highlighted the extreme pressure on advice services which is common across all boroughs. It welcomed the commitment to develop services as part of the Live Well initiative and to attempt to create a less hostile environment. The panel supports the work of the Financial Hardship and Older People Steering Group.

Other issues that have been a focus for the subgroup are older people in the work place and how the housing crisis impacts older people.

## **4. Collaborations**

The panel will continue to work alongside the Greater Manchester Older People's Network (GMOPN) which brings together over 450 members to campaign for better outcomes for older residents. Four panel members are also members of the GMOPN steering group and report back to the panel as required. Similarly, there is a regular update from the panel to the steering group. This allows both bodies to work effectively together and avoid duplication.

We have worked with GM Ageing Hub in a range of ways and to support the work being done to update the GM Age Friendly Strategy. All panel members representing a particular borough are encouraged to develop a good working relationship with the relevant locality lead for ageing. Elizabeth Lynskey is a member of the Financial Hardship and Older People Steering Group, Sam Days is the panel representative on the GM Equality Alliance Working Group and Gita Conn is the panel representative on the GM Hate Crime Working Group.

The panel has also been involved in a series of initiatives, studies and consultations with University of Manchester, Easology, GM Integrated Care Partnership, Transport for Greater Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University and Gretaer Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisations, ProAge, Ageing Better, Dementia United, Macmillan and GM Healthwatch.

## 5. Challenges

The panel currently has 18 members, and each member is supported to ensure that they are able to continue and feel confident to contribute to the panel and present as a panel member within their own networks. All the panel members' work is voluntary and can sometimes prove difficult. Many panel members are already involved in other voluntary work which is also time consuming. Some members juggle their time with a paid job.

All of this can be a challenge and panel members are encouraged to speak to the facilitator about any issues of time commitment or any other difficulty.

Over the lifetime of the panel several members have had to withdraw due to a change in circumstances. The need for fresh recruitment is reviewed on a four monthly basis.

Macc has a policy on participation and gratuities for how the work contributed by people involved in co-production work, focus groups, research studies and advisory panels can be valued in an appropriate way. Panel members are able to participate in a range of projects run by partners who are encouraged to provide a gratuity appropriately.

## 6. Support and Training

Macc is the facilitating organisation for the panel. John Mulvenna is the panel facilitator and is part of a team of five people.

All panel members are offered one to one support as required. This is an opportunity to discuss any issues or identify a training need.

Subgroup meetings are bi-monthly, though sometimes they can be more frequent. Panel meetings are bi-monthly; the theme of the meeting is rotated to match the work of each subgroup unless there is a specific issue to be addressed.

## 7. Forward planning

### 7.1. Action plan 2024 – 2025

The panel will be meeting in July to agree an action plan for the next 12 months.

The panel will continue to focus on current priorities:

#### Digital Participation

- Continue to engage with localities to improve digital offer for older people.
- Collaborate with VCSE organisations to raise awareness of the Digital Switchover and its potential impact

#### Care Settings

- Continue to influence the GM Adult Social Care transformation process, providing lived experience input.
- Challenge the disparities in provision of residential and domiciliary care across the city region.

#### Financial Hardship

- Support initiatives to improve take up of benefit/ entitlement
- Collaborate with partners on Age Inclusivity in the Workplace, including organising an in-person event as part of Good Employment Week 24.

### 7.2. Consultation and engagement

In October the panel worked with GMOPN to organise an event “Living it up in Later Life”. It was an opportunity to ask a diverse range of older people “How do we make Greater Manchester a greater place for everyone to grow older”.

The responses highlighted some important issues for older people that the panel and GMOPN will seek to address. Priorities included:

- Support for the establishment of a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing, both nationally (in England) and for Greater Manchester
- Promoting better ways to share information, whether digital or non-digital.
- Challenging ageism positively in a range of different ways
- Promoting good examples of intergenerational work which demonstrates learning for each generation
- Moving towards a more level playing field across the city region in all aspects of Adult Social Care, Housing, Health options, advice and physical activity.

### **7.3. Chairs and recruitment**

Election of the co-chairs will take place in July 2024. At this time there will also be a review of membership and possible further recruitment.

### **7.4. Engage at local levels and build new networks.**

The panel will support GMOPN to link in with existing older people's networks and appropriate community group. Supported by Macc, the panel will continue to conduct outreach work and identify marginalised groups not being adequately engaged with across the city region, to ensure their overall voice is representative, inclusive and include the perspectives of those who are marginalised.

The panel will be working more closely with the Ageing in Place Pathfinder Programme as each locality-based project develops.

Building good working relationships with community groups, GMCA partners, Locality Leads and local older people's networks is a key part of the panel's work. Panel members are supported to attend appropriate events and build on their existing networks.

### **7.5. Collaborating with other panels**

The Panel will seek opportunities to work with the other GM equality panels. There have been initial discussions with the Disabled People's Panel to explore areas of collaboration.

## **8. Further information**

If you want to find out more or speak to someone about the panel on any issue, please contact John Mulvenna

Email: [gmo pep@macc.org.uk](mailto:gmo pep@macc.org.uk)

Tel: 0161 834 9823 / Mob: 07502233182

Website: [www.gmopn.org.uk/gmo pep](http://www.gmopn.org.uk/gmo pep)

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**RACE  
EQUALITY  
PANEL**

**DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY  
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER**

**Greater Manchester  
Race Equality Panel  
Annual Report 2023-2024**



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## 1. Chair Team's Foreword

As the new Co-Chairs and Vice Chairs, we are happy to introduce this year's Greater Manchester Race Equality Panel Annual Report. The report is a summary of the work that has happened over the past year highlighting the enthusiasm of the previous and new panel members to make a difference to the racial inequalities evident in Greater Manchester.

This report will specifically highlight the work completed around the panel's priority areas of Employment, Crime and Policing, and Housing. While we are still very new to role, we have already seen the dedication and commitment from our panel members to address the systemic inequalities evident in public services and outcomes for our communities.

We would like to use this opportunity to thank our panel members for hearing the Call to Action and dedicating their time to the cause. We are looking forward to collaborating with our partners, various organisations and facilitating organisations as we embrace the challenge ahead to create a Greater Manchester where Race is no longer a barrier but is embraced as a representation of unity and strength.

Paula Watt, Race Equality Panel Co-Chair

David Mutai, Race Equality Panel Co-Chair

Leala Yewdall, Race Equality Panel Vice-Chair

Martina Witter, Race Equality Panel Vice Chair

## 2. Executive Summary

The Race Equality Panel has been leading the way in promoting race equality in Greater Manchester, influencing policies to create a fair and inclusive city-region. This annual report provides an overview of the panel's activities, achievements, challenges, impact on policy development in the region, and recommendations for the future.

During the past year, the Panel engaged in various initiatives to drive meaningful change across different systems, focusing on three priority areas:

- **Employment**
- **Criminal Justice & Policing**
- **Housing**

The panel's engagements have not been exclusively limited to these areas, also providing input in other areas such as Education, Transport and Fire and Rescue, exploring the impact of new and existing policies on race equality and providing constructive feedback to improve services and address systemic inequities.

The ongoing work of the Race Equality Panel to influence policy development in Greater Manchester has the potential to be highly significant. This collective action offers a tangible influence on policymakers, leading to positive policy changes that directly address race-related concerns.

The panel recognises and values collaborative partnerships with organisations, community groups, and governmental bodies that are dedicated to its work. These partnerships showcase the effectiveness of collective action in bringing about change and have also enhanced the panel's advocacy efforts.

Looking ahead, the Race Equality Panel remains committed to its vision of a truly inclusive Greater Manchester. The panel's plans encompass continued listening to communities and the development of evidence-based policy recommendations by advocating for policies that dismantle systemic barriers and promote racial equity, creating a more just and equal society for all residents of Greater Manchester.

## 3. About the Panel

### 3.1 Background and introduction

The Race Equality Panel is one of seven Equality Panels established to advise, support, and challenge Greater Manchester's political leaders and policymakers to tackle discrimination and disadvantage that cause injustice and inequality in society. The panel was launched in March 2021 and has continued to develop its operations and engagement with various cross-sector stakeholders in Greater Manchester. Our commitment remains to promoting race equality and influencing policies that create a fair and inclusive society for all.

Promoting race equality involves actively working to eliminate discrimination and prejudice based on race. This includes striving to ensure that people of all races have equal access to opportunities and resources. It involves advocating for policies that address systemic racism and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of society. Additionally, it involves working to combat biases, stereotypes, and creating a culture of respect, understanding, and acceptance for people of all racial backgrounds.

### 3.2 Panel Aims, Objectives and Priorities

The aims and objectives are to:

#### **1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation (and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty)**

- Public agencies tackle all forms of racism and discrimination within their organisation and the structure they contribute to.
- Public sector bodies are proactive in their approaches to meet their Public Sector Equality Duty

#### **2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it**

- The Greater Manchester Strategy tackles inequality and increases equity for ethnic communities.
- The diversity of the public service workforce, including volunteers and senior leadership, is increased.

- Positive role models, particularly in leadership positions, public services, civic society and with the business community are promoted.

### **3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.**

- Greater Manchester's cultural heritage and history of community inclusion and social justice is championed.

Furthermore, it is felt that most issues are the consequences of institutional racism, and this is a focus for the Panel throughout its work.

### **3.3 Panel Membership**

In the third quarter of 2023, the Panel underwent a membership renewal. Following a rigorous selection process, the Panel welcomed 23 new members.

Representing diverse backgrounds across Greater Manchester, the panel strives to serve as a representative advocate for racially minoritised individuals in the city region. The members bring substantial community and professional expertise spanning public, private, and voluntary sectors, along with extensive personal involvement in advocating for equality and combatting discrimination over many years.

Panel members are dedicated to championing the cause of equality across Greater Manchester. Their meetings provide members with an opportunity to openly discuss their concerns and aspirations in a safe, inclusive and supportive space. They eagerly embrace the opportunity to directly engage with policymakers to drive change. Despite the challenges of securing consensus and balancing community expectations, the panel remains steadfast in their commitment. While discussions with policymakers may be demanding, the panel members are resolute in their support for public services to initiate positive changes.

## 4. Summary of activities (2023/24)

### 4.1 Greater Manchester Race Equity Framework 2024

Over the last two years, the panel have played a leading and ongoing role in shaping the new Greater Manchester Race Equity Framework. The framework sets out the importance of

- clear and effective leadership in race equity,
- accountability to the communities served,
- commitment and resources from public, private, and voluntary services,
- transparent and agreed-upon performance measures, and the
- removal of employment barriers to fair recruitment from local communities and supportive workplace environments.

Panel members have attended stakeholder engagement workshops and provided direct feedback during their meetings. In October the Panel Chair attended the Greater Manchester Combined Authority meeting to present the framework. Through powerful words, the Chair challenged the leaders to do more to tackle racial inequalities and secured their commitment to implanting the framework within GMCA and all ten Councils.

Looking forward they will continue to advise, support and challenge progress in implementing the framework, including informing the development of a Race Equity dashboard and an inclusive workforce programme.

### 4.2 Employment

Through the experiences of its members and engagement with wider communities in Greater Manchester, the panel recognises that the employment sector frequently neglects communities facing racial inequality. Their priority is to encourage diversity in the public service workforce and ensure that there is increased representation in senior leadership positions. Engagement meetings with senior leaders were strategically organised to provide panel members with a deeper understanding of the current key issues and responses, across the public and private sectors, including GMCA and the Good Employment Charter.

The Panel will be delivering a session during this year's Good Employment Week in October 2024 and supporting the ongoing implementation of the Workforce Inclusion Programme

### **4.3 Criminal Justice and Policing**

Throughout the year, the panel supported and challenged the criminal justice and policing systems to review policy and practice from an anti-racist perspective.

The panel have worked closely with key stakeholders, including the Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, and officers within GMP and GMCA, addressing community concerns

- Building trust through community engagement
- Police recruitment and retention of diverse communities
- Cultural competency training and skills

The Deputy Mayor is committed to working collaboratively with the panel, supporting her in holding GMP to account for achieving racial equity in policing. In addition, the Panel are represented at the Greater Manchester Hate Crime Working Group.

### **4.4 Housing**

Following the death of Awaab Ishak as a result of poor-quality housing, the Mayor of Greater Manchester committed to greater understanding of racial inequalities and discrimination within housing. A research project was launched, led by the Chair of the Race Equality Panel in partnership with the Greater Manchester Housing Partnership. The project will inform the Good Landlord Charter and other housing programmes, ensuring race is an essential focus on these interventions, with the panel at the heart of this work.

### **4.5 Civic Leadership Programme**

The Panel have supported development and delivery of both years of the Civic Leadership Programme, with panel members attending the launch and graduation ceremonies, and the stakeholder group. This includes two participants from the first year, who have gone on to become panel members.



## 4.6 Other Activities

Panel members have contributed to a range of other activity, including the Greater than Violence Strategy, Bee Well and the recruitment of the new GMCA Chief Executive. In addition, the panel have been represented at community events including Africa Day, Windrush and International Women's Day.

## 5. Priorities for next year (2024/25)

The panel will continue the hard work and progress of the previous membership, striving forward on building confidence in policing, improving employment access, experience and outcomes, tackling racial inequalities in housing. In addition, there will be a greater focus on health and wellbeing, in collaboration with Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board.

## 6. Conclusion and further information

The Greater Manchester Race Equality Panel is seeing progress in race equality across various domains in the region. Through rigorous policy advocacy and stakeholder engagements, the panel is successfully highlighting racial disparities and pushing for positive changes in policies and practices.

The panel remains committed to its vision of a Greater Manchester where every individual, regardless of their racial background, has equal opportunities and experiences fair treatment in all aspects of life. By continuing to dialogue with stakeholders, advocate for change, and push for the implementation of innovative strategies, it is hoped the panel can contribute to a Greater Manchester that truly reflects the needs of its communities.

If you have any questions about the Greater Manchester Race Equality Panel or would like to remain aware of the panel's engagements, please visit

<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/equalities/race-equality-panel/>

Or contact the panel by email at [gmracepanel@blackbeetlehealth.co.uk](mailto:gmracepanel@blackbeetlehealth.co.uk)

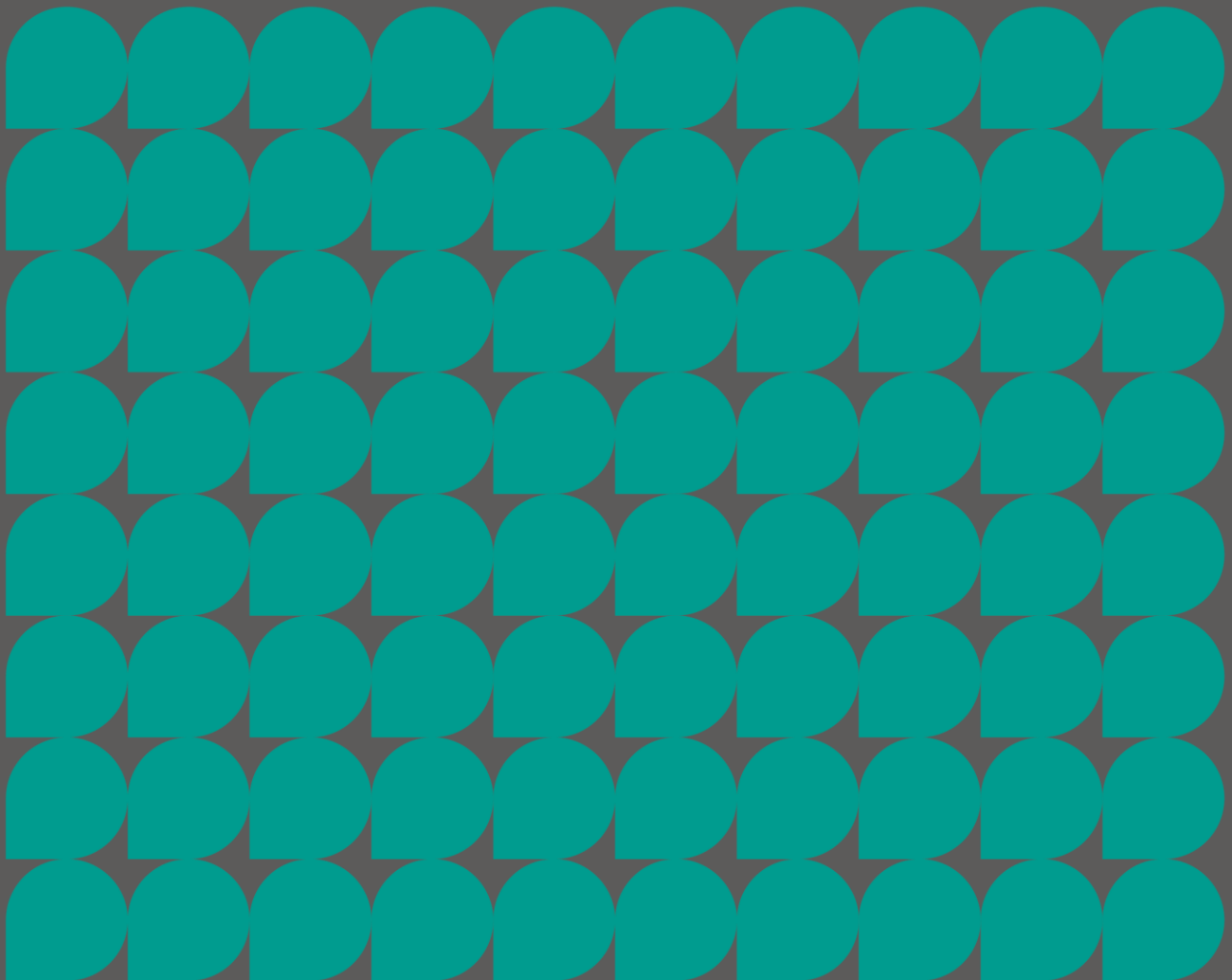
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**WOMEN  
& GIRLS  
EQUALITY  
PANEL**

**DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY  
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER**

# Greater Manchester Women and Girls Equality Panel

## Annual Report 2023-2024



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## 1. Message from the Chairs

**It has been an honour during our first year to serve as co-chairs for the Greater Manchester Women and Girls Equality Panel. We recognise that globally and locally, in Greater Manchester, the lives of girls and women are impacted daily through violence, poverty, and discrimination, and our panel of incredible volunteers and community representatives ensure that these voices are integral to our discussions and decision making.**

We recognised that we needed to represent all ages across the life course, and in preparation for this, we have enabled all Panel members to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service for safeguarding compliance to enable younger women to join the panel. This is important, as younger voices bring a lived experience of the realities of being a girl or young woman in Greater Manchester today and the joys and challenges this brings that can better inform our decision-making for the future. We are delighted to report that we recruited an under-18 member, and we will seek to advance this over the coming year. We have centred a trauma-informed approach in our work because we are all human, and the ‘felt’ experiences of oppression are as important as the quantitative metrics and case studies we use to inform our decisions. To support this, we have adopted the Prof. Laura Lundy Model of participation. Using this model enables us to consciously make space for intersectional voices and views and identify the relevant audience to listen. This supports the strategic and policy decision-makers to consider experiences and specific needs; and feed back to the Panel on the outcome and impact our collective voices have made to improve the lives of girls, young women, and women in Greater Manchester.

Gender mainstreaming as an approach to our work is a key feature of our future planning. We support the need to educate boys, young men, and men as allies in supporting tackling misogyny, alongside enabling girls, young women and women to raise their voices, access opportunities and participate in public and political life.

This has been the case regarding the Women’s Health Strategy, Transport for Greater Manchester’s (TfGM) Local Transport Strategy, the Greater Than Violence Strategy and the Good Employment Charter, where we have infused a Gender Mainstreaming approach in our responses.

We are grateful to our Panel members for the time and energy they give, often in the context of adversity within their own lives.

We give thanks to our panel members who have stepped down over the last 12 months: Halyma Begum, Sharon Maginn, Lynne Stafford, Brenda Warrington, and Neha Sareen.

*Emma Persand RGN QN and Sally Carr MBE, Panel Co-Chairs*

## 2. Welcome to the Panel

The Women and Girls' Equality Panel was established in December 2020 to address gender inequality in Greater Manchester. The role of the Panel is to constructively challenge political and system leaders, namely the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), to tackle prejudice and discrimination against women and girls. The Panel works alongside GMCA and the wider Greater Manchester (GM) system to ensure that equality, as well as the unique needs and risks of women and girls is actively considered in decision making to help make the city a better place for women and girls to live, work and study and do business.

The Panel is convened by the Pankhurst Trust (Incorporating Manchester Women's Aid), in partnership with GM4Women2028, a charity focused on promoting equality and diversity for the benefit of the community in Greater Manchester. The Panel meets every two months. It has four main priority areas: Employment, ending Violence Against Women and Girls, Health, and Gender Mainstreaming.

The Panel is made up of a diverse group of individuals and organisations from a range of sectors and backgrounds who are committed to ensuring that the viewpoints of women and girls from a cross-section of society are represented. It also benefits from the support of an Allies' Network, who promote the Panel's work, share the Panel's mission, and stand in solidarity with women and girls.

This year has been a period of significant growth and development for our panel. We are delighted to welcome 18 new members, as well as appointing our new Co Chairs Sally Carr MBE and Emma Persand RGN QN. This year the Panel has made concerted efforts to be more reflective of the views of young women and through our partnership with RECLAIM we welcomed our first under-18 Panel member. Our diverse and dynamic team brings a wealth of experience and fresh perspectives to our mission. To find out more about the Panel and its members, please visit: <https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/equalities/women-and-girls-equality-panel/>

“I put myself forward to join the Panel’s meeting with Andy Burnham last year, not knowing what to expect. I assumed it would be similar council meetings I’ve attended, which I’ve found quite boring! However, the amazing women on the panel created such a lovely and comfortable environment, and as a young person, it was refreshing to be taken seriously and see my input valued and acted upon.

My favourite experience since becoming a Panel member was receiving training on Theatre of Oppressed which gave me insight into creatively solving social problems. Being on the panel, I’ve met strong, inspiring women who continually fight against patriarchy while uplifting others, ensuring that future generations won’t endure the same struggles.

To any young girl reading this, especially if you feel lost or controlled by fear, this is for you. Join us—strong, passionate women—and contribute to making a positive change. Together, we can create a better tomorrow for everyone.”

*Binish Syed Qureshi – our youngest Panel member*

## 2.1 GM4Women2028

The Panel continued to work with GM4Women2028 this last year. Panel members ran a listening workshop at the Dialogue, Deeds and Determination event held in Oldham to learn about local women’s barriers to good health. This insight fed into the development of the GM Integrated Care Partnership Health Strategy. Many of the newly recruited members learned about the GMCA Women and Girls’ Panel through attending the GM4Women events and hearing about the work the Panel does. Similarly, the Panel gets many expressions of interest throughout the year and channels this towards GM4Women membership and participation in their five working groups on Employment, Safety, Participation, Education, and Culture & Active Lives.

## 2.2 Creating an ecosystem

GM4Women has become an umbrella organisation who membership now stands at over 500 representing a broad range of activists including academics and activists, policy makers and community organisations, and charities and businesses. Their activities across the ten boroughs are helping to bring women’s organisations and male allies together to challenge and tackle the persistent inequalities reflected across all thematic areas.

By July 2024, they had run events in six of the ten GM boroughs (Manchester, Trafford, Wigan, Oldham, Salford and Tameside). Stockport, Bolton, Bury, and Rochdale will be next. Through the Dialogue, Deeds and Determination events alone they have delivered 20 workshops reaching over 200 participants.

## 2.3 Data and insight

GM4Women2028 has a strong focus on data and produces an annual Pankhurst-Fawcett Scorecard which monitors progress (or lack thereof) on gender equality across the ten boroughs according to metrics that cover their five subgroups. As a Panel we utilise this data to inform our own priorities and encourage policy makers to recognise and address problem areas in their decision making, such as where the least progress is being made.

### **Key Insights from the latest Gender Scorecard:**

- It continues to be very difficult to find data at GM level and even harder to find data showing differences within GM boroughs and neighbourhoods. It is also difficult to get intersectional data.
- In one case, regionally disaggregated data is not available without charge at the time of publication.
- The indicators measuring women's safety and physical activity show a worsening situation, and the gender pay between men and women is increasing.
- Over the first five years there has hardly been any sustained positive change across the 10 indicators.

As a coalition, GM4Women and the Panel has also begun to support primary research, for example, into the impact of the pandemic on women, including identifying further inequalities amongst women experiencing racial inequalities. With the University of Manchester, Rosalind Shorrocks and Anna Sanders, conducted primary data generation to see 'What Women Want' in the current socioeconomic landscape. Their study is a representative survey of 1500 women in Greater Manchester which explored GM4Women's 5 thematic areas: Employment, Transport and Active Travel, Safety, and Participation, as well as Care. The Panel has promoted these findings for consideration in meetings with key policy leads across GMCA. Some examples key findings are summarised below:

- A plurality of women in Greater Manchester do not feel their pay reflects their skill level, experience, and qualifications. Overall, 34% of women in Greater Manchester agreed that they were paid appropriately, while 46% disagreed.
- On the topic of public transport and active travel, the main barrier women gave when asked what stopped them walking more was that common distances they needed to travel to were too far (49%). However, a sizeable proportion of women (28%) said safety concerns were a barrier to walking more, with poor lighting and poor-quality pavements standing out as key issues.

This study has been valuable to the Panel's advocacy for women and girls and in showing the gendered aspect to all areas of life which needs to be considered by policymakers.



### 3. Internal developments

We held our first Strategy Day in February 2023 at the Alliance Manchester Business School to plan our work programme for 2024 and beyond. We welcomed our new Panel members, heard the latest gender equality data from GM4Women2028, and hosted representatives from the Violence Reduction Unit, TfGM, GMCA, the Good Employment Charter, GMP, and the Women's Health Strategy. Two Pankhurst Trust Manchester Women's Aid (PTMWA) volunteers supported us on the day

"Volunteering for the Women and Girls' Equality Panel has been a fulfilling journey, allowing me to engage with diverse perspectives and delve into the pressing issues affecting women in Manchester. Through constructive dialogue, we brainstormed actionable steps towards empowerment, touching upon various sectors, including my personal interest in healthcare. Interacting with passionate and knowledgeable women has been enriching, fostering personal growth and learning. Beyond the discussions, the experience has provided networking opportunities and a sense of community. I am eager to continue contributing to the Panel's mission and further fortify our organisation's impact." *Afia Javed PTMWA volunteer*

"Volunteering at the Women and Girls' Equality panel was a very insightful and inspiring experience. Not only did we get to listen in on the talks, we were also encouraged and welcomed to participate in discussions and share our experiences/opinions which was very exciting. Though some of the topics and statistics discussed were disheartening at times, the workshop didn't dwell on this and instead it focused on coming together and discussing what plans and strategies we can put in place in order to tackle the most pressing challenges women and girls face in Greater Manchester. It was very encouraging to be surrounded by such driven and determined women and it was a very enriching experience as a new volunteer." – *Lucy Kelly PTMWA volunteer*

#### 3.1 Communication and information sharing

We have improved our internal communication systems by utilising Basecamp to store minutes, research, and other documents which members can access for themselves at any time and allows time for processing and feedback after the meeting. We also use this platform to share with our Allies Network news and research, as well as upcoming events and opportunities in the equalities sphere in Greater Manchester and beyond. We also now have Panel member bios on our website for our Panel members and we continue to post regularly on social media about Panel meetings and activities.

#### 3.2 Strengthening internal governance

We have worked hard to strengthen our internal governance including by updating our Terms of Reference to reflect our mission and purpose, developing a Code of Conduct, providing DBS checks for members, and providing all members with a formal induction.

We have also written meeting guidelines with an emphasis on inclusivity, accessibility and maximising engagement, enabling our members to contribute effectively, whilst considering that they are giving us their valuable time and have other responsibilities to balance.

### **3.3 Training**

One of our Co-Chairs is completing a Certificate Course on Gender Mainstreaming from Human Rights and Justice Group International. This will be a powerful asset for the Panel as we focus on bringing an intersectional gendered lens into policymaking in our city-region. In April 2024 Panel members and facilitators attended a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop ran by Julian Boal of Escola de Teatro Popular (ETP). Thank you to all 44 people who joined us, and to Odd Arts for co-hosting. It was a great opportunity to bring together activists from various groups (Reclaim, HOME, GMCA Women and Girls Equality Panel) interested in integrating Theatre of the Oppressed into their work. Julian emphasised the importance of shifting the traditional forum theatre storyline from 'good vs evil' to a focus on community organising and strategic alliances. As we strive to be more trauma informed, this type of approach enables a deeper understanding of the lived experience of women and girls and is a way to really value of voice and the felt experiences of women.

We are excited to have upcoming training on Neurodiversity delivered by Autism Uncovered this summer and continue to provide our members with valuable development opportunities that align with the Panel's work of empowering women and girls in all their diversity.

Our Co-Chair Emma Persand has completed the Health Inequalities Education Programme course as part of the Greater Manchester Equalities Education Advancement Programme, in partnership with Salford University. Her project focused on using a gender mainstreaming framework to identify specific health needs of women and girls to develop interventions.

## **4. Influencing Policymakers: The Past Year's Highlights**

**In November 2023, we held our annual in-person meeting with Andy Burnham where we reiterated our strong desire to be more deeply integrated into GMCA's decision-making processes and to support gender mainstreaming initiatives. We discussed our concerns with regards to childcare, women's health and employment, and access to business support for female entrepreneurs. Significant outcomes from this meeting include stronger links with TfGM, the #IsThisOkay Campaign, and securing support for a refresh of the Good Employment Charter. We also gained backing for a survey of female business owners to help determine what is preventing growth at crucial stages so that we can then implement focused change.**

## **4.1 Health**

Our Panel was actively involved in the development of the Greater Manchester's Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) Strategy, providing insight on the key concerns facing women's health from lived and professional experience. We provided written submissions, held a Panel meeting and organised a 'Barriers to Women's Health' outreach workshop to ensure a wide spread of women's voices were considered. Panel members advocated for removing barriers that women and girls often face in accessing healthcare, to avoid worsening outcomes and more advanced (and costly) care in the future. Our members also highlighted the importance of trauma informed practice and pointed to a lack of this being a contributor to women and girls disengaging from services.

As a result of our engagement, the Strategy makes explicit mention of the unequal distribution of unpaid labour, the impact of women's health and employment, and the differentiated needs and barriers to good health of women and girls. We have subsequently established a feedback-accountability loop with the GM Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) with regular meeting and updates to review how the concerns we raised are being addressed in the delivery of the Strategy. In addition to this, Panel member Gail Heath is the co-chair of GM Women's Health Strategy Steering Group, ensuring the active input of lived experience. An early win for the Strategy has been securing funding to develop Women's health hub services in GM.

In October 2023, Co-Chair Emma Persand attended a pivotal GM Women's Health Strategy Workshop which set out a collective vision and organisation of the group and established the key issues. Emma advocated for collaborative working amongst the attendees and their organisations, emphasising how vital the voice of the VCFSE sector is in advocating for a holistic and intersectional approach to women and girls' health.

## **4.2 Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)**

The VAWG group met frequently, exploring important topics such as the Domestic Abuse, Stalking, and Honour-Based Abuse (DASH) risk assessment tool, and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's report on the family court's treatment of domestic abuse victims. In addition, an important focus for the VAWG group over the last year has been to strengthen relationships with GMP's lead on VAWG, the Gender Based Violence Board (GBV Board), GMCA's Victims and Vulnerability Principal, and the Deputy Mayor for Policing, Crime, Criminal Justice and Fire, recognising the important roles these play in ending VAWG. There have since been several positive developments including:

- We continued to provide feedback and guidance to GMCA on #IsThisOkay Campaign, which aims to raise awareness about inappropriate and harmful behaviour towards women and girls and encourage bystander intervention. We have reviewed campaign outputs and gave suggestions for the focus of its second phase.
- We provided key feedback on GMCA's response to the National Public Consultation on the Police Code of Ethics which provides a framework for understanding expectations of professional and ethical behaviour and ensuring that the police service provides an ethical environment in the workplace.
- Our members participated in the Baird Enquiry as representatives of women's organisations with direct experience of working with women who have experience of custody. This independent inquiry into their experience of being arrested and taken into custody by Greater Manchester Police led by Dame Vera Baird.
- We have called for mandatory, sufficiently funded domestic abuse training for all officers, delivered by an external expert organisation with GMP resources.

"It has been quite the year for the Panel's VAWG working group as the world continues to be an unsafe place for women and girls. With the national domestic abuse numbers being at their highest recorded by Women's Aid, misogyny continuing to have impacts on and offline for our children and young people, shocking birth trauma report findings, and no improvement for women and girls trying to access the justice system, our group is passionate about making changes for the women and girls of Greater Manchester. The working group has grown in the last year with new members joining it. A wide range of women working on the front line, who have diverse experiences and skills to bring to our work are advocating for the women and girls of Greater Manchester with institutions, professionals, and public figures. This year the GMCA VAWG working group will be working on campaigning for sufficient, long-term funding for the VAWG sector, because we know the safety of our women and girls is worth investing in."

*Gemma Aitchison, Chair of the VAWG working group*

### 4.3 Transport

In 2023, we continued to strengthen our relationships with key stakeholders in the transport sector, contributing to the Greater Manchester (GM) Bus Strategy and TfGM's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Digital Campaign. We also held an engagement session with TfGM to provide input into Phase 1 of the Local Transport Plan update. During this session, our members identified areas where high-level language could be revised to better acknowledge the real dangers that women and girls face in public spaces, emphasising the importance of public transport reliability for enhancing safety, particularly by minimising wait times at bus or tram stops, which can be critical in unfamiliar areas at night.

Over the next 12 months, we will continue to support TfGM with Phase 2 of the Local Transport Plan.

“As the Bee Network rolls out, we are committed to enabling Greater Manchester’s diverse communities to influence and shape the transport system. Our work with the Women and Girls’ Equality Panel is an important part of that. Over the last 12 months we’ve heard from members about their experiences travelling on buses in Greater Manchester (GM) which has informed the development of the GM Bus Strategy. We’ve also engaged with the Panel about the refresh of GM’s Local Transport Plan (LTP). The LTP sets the strategic direction for transport in GM and provides the foundation for policies that will help get us there. Ensuring that insights from the panel are being heard as the LTP is updated over the coming months is key.

Safety has been a key theme coming out of our work with the panel over the last year. As well as strategy and policy discussions, the Panel’s feedback has also been central to shaping campaign activity targeting unacceptable behaviours on the transport network.

We were also delighted to join the Panel’s recent Strategy Day where we met with members and heard about their priorities for transport in GM.

We’re delighted to have strengthened our working relationship with the Panel this year and are excited to continue our joint working in support of the Bee Network and the women and girls who rely on it.”

*Emma Flinn, Head of Partnerships, Engagement and Inclusion, TfGM*

#### **4.4 Education, Skills and Employment**

We would like to thank Panel members for their work on the Education, Skills and Employment working group. This task and finish group has come to a natural full term and after three years the time has come to broaden and shift our priorities. The Panel has taken forward topics from the group into 2023/24 such as refreshing the Good Employment Charter and integrating Gender Mainstreaming into GMCA policy development.

Since its inception, the Panel has been working with the Good Employment Charter. This year we pushed for a gender and sex lens on employment, to consider the specific experiences of women and girls in the workplace such as the impact of childcare, menopause, and sexual health (amongst many other issues) and how employers can mitigate these experiences. The Panel simultaneously acknowledges the limitations of ‘employment’ and the importance of also advocating for self-employed women and women who undertake unpaid work, and that many women will carry out a combination of these different forms of work.

We also continue to work with the Greater Manchester Apprenticeship & Careers Service (GMACS) and Curriculum for Life to support the development of content around confidence levels for teenage girls and women in STEM, as well as digital skills for women and girls.

We are keen for the GMACS to assess and respond to the structural barriers that prevent girls and women's participation in employment and work together in the future to address these inequalities through a trauma informed lens.

## 4.5 Doing strategic engagement better

A key focus for this year has been the need for more systematic consultation with not just the Women and Girls' Equality Panel but all the GMCA Equality Panels. We led the collective design of a framework for engagement which aims to ensure that intersectional perspectives are integrated from the initial stages of policy development. The framework requires speakers to outline the data they are using in designing their policies or projects, as well as a commitment to feeding back on how our input is being taken on board.

Additionally, it raises awareness of the Panels' existing data collection capabilities and the opportunity to gain further insights through case studies or direct engagement. We warmly thank the Youth Combined Authority for their practice and our use of the Lundy Model in this form, to ensure more meaningful inputs and participation in our meetings.

## 5. Community Engagement

**This year, our panel has actively engaged in numerous collaborative initiatives and advocacy efforts to enhance community well-being and support various causes. Our work included issuing a joint statement with the LGBTQ+ and Disabled People's Panels on central government's proposal to close 1000 ticket offices and supporting the National Autistic Society in creating resources for autistic teenage girls by connecting them with Women's Aid, the Violence Reduction Unit, and GMCA.**

Our members provided valuable case studies and contacts to the Disabled People's Panel to advocate for an improved benefits framework. We also collaborated with Manchester City Council to promote anonymous voting access for domestic abuse victims through training sessions and social media promotion for both the local and mayoral, and general elections.

In September, we formed part of the policy team for the innovative Right to the Streets' Legislative Theatre event, alongside Trafford Council, TfGM, and Greater Manchester Police. Additionally, we proudly participated in the International Women's Day walk alongside Pankhurst Trust Manchester Women's Aid staff and volunteers.

Looking ahead, our Panel members will be running two public workshops at GM4Women2028's public Dialogues, Deeds and Determination July event, focusing on capacity building for girls and young women in politics, advocacy, and campaigning, and moving from ideas into action.

## 6. Looking forward

The GMCA Women and Girls' Equality Panel remains dedicated to reducing gender inequality in Greater Manchester through strategic initiatives, public engagement, policy advocacy, and collaborative efforts. Our work is driven by a commitment to real change and the pursuit of equality for all women and girls in the city-region and beyond. We are establishing stronger connections across the 10 boroughs and are being increasingly recognised as an important fountain of data and insight, **funnelling experiences and voices from communities to policy makers.**

In the next 12 months we will continue to develop our profile as a key stakeholder in GM decision making. A key focus will be firming up the framework for engagement across the equality panels to make participatory and evidence-based policy making the standard across GMCA. We will pilot this framework with panel wide engagement on the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Plan Refresh.

The panel is also dedicated to furthering our collaboration with our fellow GMCA equality panels, ensuring that the intersectionality of women and girls' lives is embedded in our work, as well as voicing our solidarity with other marginalised communities. We are particularly keen to ensure the work of the equality panels influence a more gender-conscious distribution of GMCA resources under the 2025 Single Settlement, and would warmly welcome an additional strand to this investment that addresses multiple deprivation, and inequalities specifically.

As part of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Week in October 2024, we are organising an innovative event with employers, employees, trade unions, advocates, and policymakers focusing on practical solutions to improve the experiences of women and girls in the workplace. Taking common workplace challenges that women face as a starting point, we will use dynamic and interactive forum theatre tools to explore solutions in real-time. Together, we will come up with actionable recommendations for the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.

We will continue to collaborate with GM4Women to advance gender equality in Manchester by 2028. This partnership includes building our Allies' Network, gathering data on women's needs, and participating in engagement workshops such as Dialogue, Deeds, and Determination events.

In November 2024, we will meet again with Andy Burnham to influence, advise, and challenge his manifesto commitments. We will use our position of influence to ensure that the implementation of the Greater Manchester Strategy Refresh provides further opportunities for advancing gender equality.

Going forward, the VAWG working group will continue to function as a 'critical friend' to GMP and will serve as an accountability function for the improved treatment of all victims and survivors, as well as promoting the implementation of the Baird inquiry's recommendations.

Using our members and their networks' expertise, we will be inputting into the combined authority's Gender Based Violence Strategy Delivery Plan 24-26 as it is implemented, ensuring that the voices of lived experience are embedded in the plan's priorities.

We are also looking into campaigning for more maternity and hospital based Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs), as the panel has identified this as a significant gap in provision.

We will be advocating for sustained long term investment into the VAWG sector, which has been underfunded and undervalued for years, so that specialist organisations can continue to support victims and survivors, work with perpetrators, as well as conducting vital wider prevention work, campaigning, and training statutory services.

## **7. Further information**

More information on the Women and Girl's Equality Panel can be found here

[www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/equalities/women-and-girls-equality-panel/](http://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/equalities/women-and-girls-equality-panel/)

If you would like to keep up to date on the work of the Panel and subgroups, you can join our Allies Network. Just email [womenandgirls@pankhursttrust.org](mailto:womenandgirls@pankhursttrust.org) and ask to sign up to our Basecamp. Through Basecamp we will share useful information about topics that affect women and girls in Manchester and ask you for your input.

You can also keep up to date and get involved with the Women and Girl's Equality Panel by following GM 4 Women 2028 [www.gm4women2028.org](http://www.gm4women2028.org) or on

[www.twitter.com/GM4Women2028](https://www.twitter.com/GM4Women2028)

The Women and Girls Panel is facilitated by The Pankhurst Trust

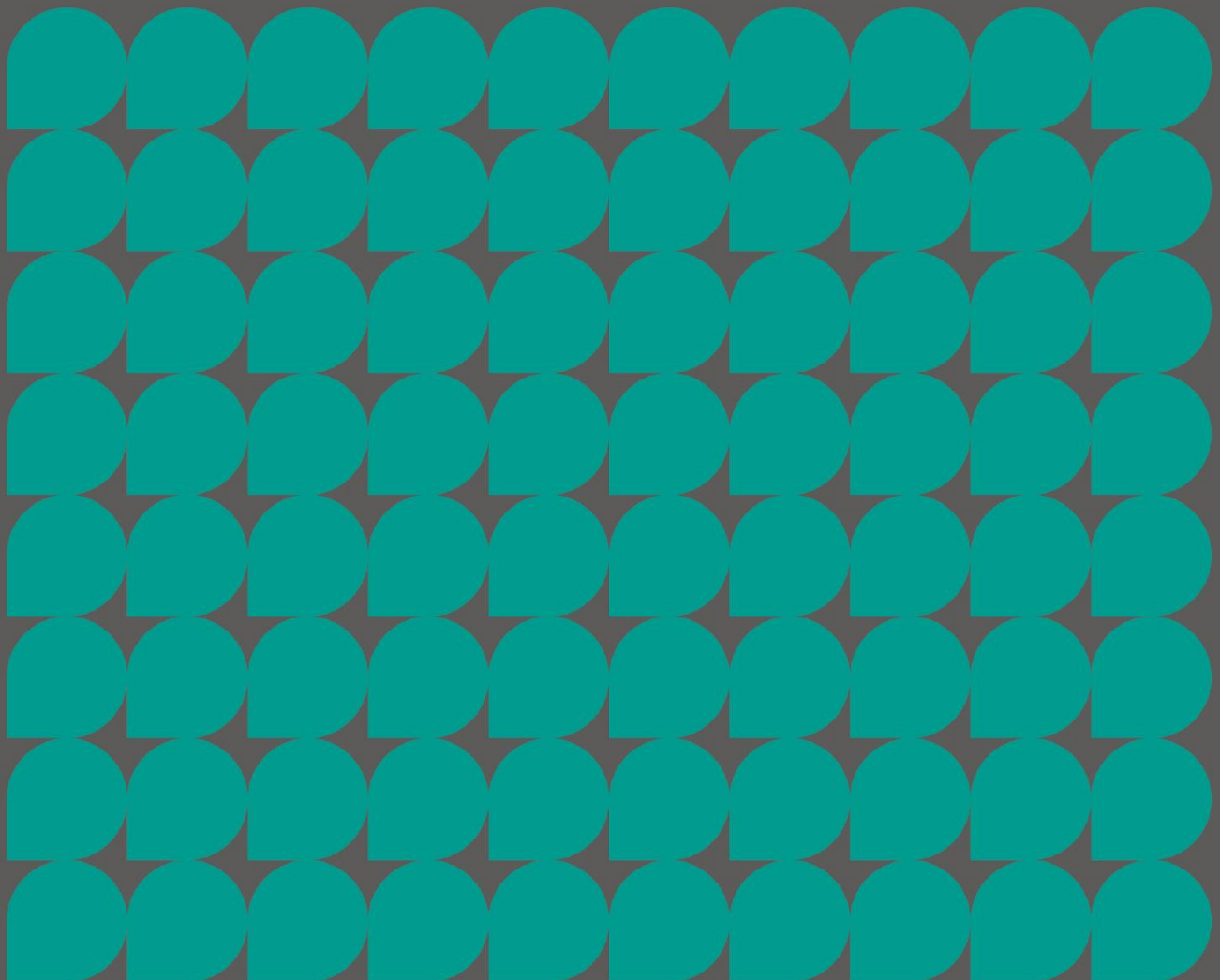
[www.manchesterwomensaid.org/](http://www.manchesterwomensaid.org/)



# **YOUTH COMBINED AUTHORITY**

**DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY  
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER**

## **Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority Annual Report 2023-2024**



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# 1. Introduction to the Youth Combined Authority

The Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority (YCA) was formed in 2018. It is an integral part of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the Mayor of Greater Manchester's Office. It is one of the organisation's seven Equality Panels (a full list of the [Equality Panels](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/equalities/) can be found at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/equalities/>)

The purpose of the YCA is to:

- Advise the Mayor of Greater Manchester and GMCA Portfolio Leaders, including the Portfolio Lead for Equalities and Communities and Portfolio Lead for Children and Young People, of the challenges and opportunities faced by young people.
- Proactively support the GMCA and its public, private, and voluntary sector partners to develop effective policy and practices for young people.
- Constructively challenge political and system leaders on progress to improve outcomes for all young people, including those that face discrimination and disadvantage because of their identity.

The term for this group of young people ran from April 2022-March 2024; this report covers the April 2023-March 2024 period. The membership has grown from previous cohorts to 52 young people representing 26 organisations from across Greater Manchester. Each organisation nominates two young people to be YCA members (with the option to nominate two deputies.)

Youth Focus North West (YFNW) is the YCA's facilitating organisation, organising the group day-to-day. YFNW supports organisations to participate in YCA activities where needed and draws together a 'community of practice' up to three times a year for the staff supporting young people from their organisation.

From April 2023- March 2024, members took part in 10 main meeting sessions, focusing on the themes outlined in their [vision document](#); The Environment, Education, Employment and Skills, Equity, Equality and Inclusion, and Transport and Active Travel, as well as additional topics such as violence reduction and the new Manchester Baccalaureate. March 2024 marked the final session for this cohort, where they held a celebration of their term, as well as launching the [2024-2026 cohort vision document](#).

## 2. Meetings and work highlights

Since April 2023, the YCA has met in person monthly ten times and held two Development Days, in May and September. These have enabled young people to forge relationships with each other and to understand their role and responsibilities in relation to the YCA.

### 2.1 Work highlights

- The YCA engaged with Transport for Greater Manchester around the Bee Network launch, including presenting their work at the Big Active Conversation in June 2023 and attending smaller focused sessions around developing the Bee Network app.
- The group engaged with the Violence Reduction Unit and Deputy Mayor Kate Green on the new '[Greater than Violence' strategy](#). Young people shared their input on the content of the strategy and their experiences, which the Violence Reduction Unit included in the new strategy. The YCA Chair also gave a keynote speech at the strategy launch, sharing the input of the YCA in this process.
- The group worked with the GMCA Education and Skills team on the new Greater Manchester Baccalaureate, creating a report of their recommendations and helping to shape the branding of the new MBacc.

### 2.2 Task and Finish groups

During this year, members of the YCA took part in thematic Task and Finish groups.

#### Environmental Working Group (EWG)

The EWG is made up of young people from the wider YCA organisational membership. It had its first meeting in January 2023 to identify key goals and tasks that the young people wanted to achieve. The group met weekly throughout September to design their workshop for the Green Summit 2023. The EWG developed a workshop exploring food waste solutions and highlighted the hidden hunger crisis.

The group did independent research as part of the process and collaborated with University of Manchester's Social Responsibility Officer and the GMCA's Waste Team to develop the workshop, which was delivered to 30 people at the Green Summit. Young people from the EWG also contributed to the North West Net Zero Youth Network conference in November 2023, identifying recommendations for Net Zero actions in the Northwest.

### MBacc report group

As requested by the Mayor when he met with the YCA in December 2023, a group of YCA members worked alongside Sharon Weetman, Education, Skills and Work, GMCA, to review the emerging Greater Manchester Baccalaureate, bringing their findings together into a report on the [Greater Manchester Baccalaureate](#) (MBacc). This report was then shared with the Mayor and GMCA, as well as being designed into a social media post to share.

## **2.3 Development of members**

Young people have given over 600 hours of voluntary time to the project, showing ongoing engagement and commitment to the YCA (aggregate contact hours at all sessions from April 2023- March 2024).

Members have also had the opportunity to develop their social, emotional and personal skills through our development days, external activities and events, and other opportunities presented to the group. In the end of term feedback, young people self-reported increased levels of confidence, leadership skills, communication and teamwork as a result of their engagement within the YCA.

Young people have rightly questioned which adults come to the YCA to ask for the YCA's input. They have implemented a process based on the [GM Children and Young People's Participation and Voice Framework](#) and Lundy Model. This process means that adults who wish to come into the YCA need to explain how doing so will enable young people to have the right conditions of space, voice, audience and influence to have their views heard and acted upon, in line with the UNCRC Rights of the Child.

“I have learnt so much that it’s hard to list one, but the main thing is the importance of having our voices heard. We made such a difference this term working on important projects and talking to many different people. I understood just how impactful a space like the YCA is and how necessary it is for improving GM for young people.” - **Feedback from a YCA representative.**

### **3. Case Study - YCA and Greater than Violence Strategy**

The YCA worked with the Violence Reduction Unit on their new strategy, ‘Greater than Violence’. The aim of this work was to engage young people in the creation of the new strategy, by attending one of the YCA meetings (June 2023) to ask the group about their experiences of youth violence and what would need to change.

Young people were shown the influence of their work when Deputy Mayor Kate Green and VRU staff attended a follow up YCA meeting (September 2023) to share their ‘You said we did’ work. In this, they shared a summary of the previous discussions of the YCA, and what they had done with their thoughts in the formation of the new strategy.

The influence of this work is also evident in the final [Greater than Violence strategy](#), which refers to the engagement done with the YCA; at the launch event for the strategy in December 2023, the YCA Chair spoke about their involvement.

“When reading the strategy, it seemed so familiar; and I soon realised why. Our suggestions were not merely heard, but actively incorporated into the strategy. In my experience within this sector, instances where young people’s opinions are genuinely considered and acted upon are very rare; this is one of those instances”

**Maisha Lorgat, Chair of the YCA, speaking at the strategy launch.**

## 4. Future planning

The next cohort of the YCA began their term in April 2024. They will continue the work of the YCA in championing youth voice in all aspects of policy and practice in Greater Manchester. They will elect their own Leadership Team in July 2024, who will help guide the work of the panel in their two-year term.

Themes that the group will explore will be drawn from the vision document, as well as other pertinent topics identified by the members. The group will seek to work with external partners such as Our Pass, MBacc, Curriculum for Life, Bee Network and others to continue to work with the YCA on these important topic areas.

In addition, the group will work to strengthen relationships with existing structures, such as the Children's Board, to help elevate the work of the YCA. The group will also continue to engage with key decision makers such as the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Portfolio Lead for Children and Young People.

## 5. Thanks and further information

We would like to offer a special thank you to all our members from 2022-2024, along with their youth workers and services. In particular, we wish to highlight the incredible work of the Leadership Team members, who have worked diligently throughout their term to ensure youth voice is active and represented in all areas of policy in Greater Manchester.

Also, special thanks to Adrian and Ellie within the GMCA for their continued support to the delivery of this work.

For further information on the YCA visit the [YCA's webpage on the GMCA website](#). Or contact the Youth Combined Authority (Youth Focus North West) by emailing [youth.gmca@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:youth.gmca@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk) or [h.mcmullan@youthfocusnw.org.uk](mailto:h.mcmullan@youthfocusnw.org.uk).



## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 25 October 2024

Subject: Endorsement of the Draft-for-Consultation of a Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Report of: Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Lead for Green City Region and Sue Johnson, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for the Greater Manchester Green City Region

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### Purpose of Report

This report presents Greater Manchester's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft for consultation). The strategy has been developed over the last 18 months with our Local Authorities and wider stakeholders. The strategy is now ready to progress to public consultation.

### Recommendations:

The Mayor is requested to:

1. Approve the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft for consultation) to proceed to public consultation and delegate authority (as the responsible authority) to Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Lead for Green city Region to approve any minor changes to be made to the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft-for-consultation) prior to the public consultation.

GMCA is requested to:

2. Endorse the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft-for-consultation) to proceed to public consultation
3. Note its contents, including the vision, aims, targets, priorities and actions to help respond locally to the biodiversity emergency
4. Note that the sustainability assessment of these proposals is positive.

## Contact Officers

Name of key contact Officer and email address to be included

Rachel Morrison: [Rachel.Morrison@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:Rachel.Morrison@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

Samuel Evans: [Samuel.Evans@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:Samuel.Evans@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

Mark Atherton: [Mark.Atherton@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Atherton@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

Report authors must identify which paragraph relating to the following issues:

# Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

## Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

The GMCA is recommended to note that the co-benefits decision tool is positive for the draft strategy. There are particular positives for health, resilience and adaptation, carbon, nature and the environment.

## Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion	G	<p>Everyone benefits from nature – and when all this is added together, Greater Manchester gets £1bn of essential benefits from the natural environment each year</p> <p>GM's natural environment provides £56m in physical health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment. GM's natural environment provides £372m in mental health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment.</p> <p>Public greenspaces are one of our most frequently used public services. GM's natural environment provides £56m in physical health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment. GM's natural environment provides £372m in mental health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment.</p> <p>This draft-strategy sets out targets, priorities and actions to help nature recovery that communities can take and support in shaping decisions that affect them.</p> <p>Public access to greenspace often helps to support community cohesion. The priorities and actions set out in the draft strategy are likely to encourage greater community cohesion.</p>
Health	G	<p>GM's natural environment provides £56m in physical health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment.</p> <p>GM's natural environment provides £372m in mental health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment.</p> <p>GM's natural environment provides £56m in physical health benefits each year, further enhancement to the natural environment could encourage greater levels of physical activity.</p> <p>The draft strategy promotes the right-to-grow and encourage community food growing which could encourage and enhance the accessibility and provision of locally grown produce in GM.</p>
Resilience and Adaptation	G	<p>GM's natural environment provides £11m in flood risk reduction and urban cooling benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment.</p> <p>GM's natural environment provides £11m in flood risk reduction and urban cooling benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment.</p> <p>The draft strategy encourages the enhancement of the quality and provision of green and blue infrastructure across Greater Manchester</p>
Housing		
Economy	G	<p>Greater Manchester's natural assets provide over £1bn of benefits each year to Greater Manchester, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment</p> <p>Further enhancement in the natural environment is likely to result job opportunities within the sector in the longer term</p> <p>Further enhancement in the natural environment is likely to result in job opportunities within the sector in the longer term, by providing an attractive and high-quality city-region where businesses want to invest and attractive place to live and work for employees.</p> <p>Greater knowledge and integration into decision making of the economic benefits of GM's natural assets will result in more sustainable use of these assets in the future</p> <p>Enhancing our natural environment will provide an attractive and high-quality city-region where businesses want to invest and attractive place to live and work for employees.</p>

Mobility and Connectivity		
Carbon, Nature and Environment	<b>G</b>	<p>GM's natural environment provides £38m in air quality benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment</p> <p>GM's natural environment provides £19m in water quality benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment</p> <p>GM's natural environment reduces noise pollution, benefiting communities.</p> <p>GM's natural environment provides £3m in carbon storage each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment</p> <p>GM's natural environment provides £174m in amenity benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment</p> <p>This draft strategy sets out targets, priorities and actions to help everyone in the city-region to respond to the biodiversity emergency.</p> <p>This draft strategy sets out targets, priorities and actions which would help increase local community's access to greenspace.</p> <p>GM's natural environment provides £3m in carbon storage each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment</p>
Consumption and Production		
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		This proposal will have a positive contribution to achieving the Greater Manchester carbon Neutral 2038 target by encouraging actions that would help sequester carbon, including peatland restoration and tree planting.
<b>Further Assessment(s):</b>		Carbon Assessment
<b>G</b> Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	<b>A</b> Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	<b>R</b> Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.
		<b>RR</b> Negative impacts overall.

### Carbon Assessment

<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>G</b>	
<b>Buildings</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Justification/Mitigation</b>
New Build residential	N/A	
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A	
New build non-residential (including public) buildings	N/A	
<b>Transport</b>		
Active travel and public transport	N/A	
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access	N/A	
Access to amenities	N/A	
Vehicle procurement	N/A	
<b>Land Use</b>		
Land use	<b>G</b>	<p>This strategy aims to enhance biodiversity and respond locally to the biodiversity emergency.</p> <p>The creation of new habitat and enhancement of existing habitats are encouraged through the strategy.</p> <p>The strategy encourages the conservation of particularly vulnerable local species.</p>
No associated carbon impacts expected.	High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.	Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.
		Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.
		Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

## Risk Management

These proposals have been informed by both national and local actors and or policies. National statutory regulations and guidance have been followed in preparing the GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

## Legal Considerations

Sections 104 – 108 of the Environment Act 2021 (the 2021 Act) introduce requirements to create local nature recovery strategies ('LNRSs').

In that regard, a LNRS for an area is to be prepared and published by the 'responsible authority'. The 'responsible authority' is appointed by the Secretary of State and for a combined authority established under section 103 of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the 'responsible authority' is the Mayor.

The Secretary of State has made regulations on the preparation, review and publication of LNRSs (the *Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023* ('the 2023 Regulations')).

Each local authority in Greater Manchester (amongst other bodies) is a "supporting authority" in respect of the LNRS under Article 3 of the 2023 Regulations.

Regulation 12 of the 2023 Regulations requires a responsible body to consult on its LNRS (which must include the matters set out in section 106 of the 2021 Act). However, it cannot do so unless it has complied with regulations 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the 2023 Regulations. This includes:

- a) providing all supporting authorities with the consultation draft of its LNRS and requesting their comments (regulation 7)
- b) Within a reasonable time of providing the consultation draft of its local nature recovery strategy to all supporting authorities, a responsible authority must provide a copy of the consultation draft to all neighbouring responsible authorities for the local nature recovery strategy (regulation 8).

Under Article 9 of the 2023 regulations, a supporting authority can raise objections at the pre-consultation stage on the draft LNRS itself or the responsible authority's preparation of the strategy (including the extent to which the responsible authority has involved the supporting authority in that preparation).

In addition, a responsible body may not consult unless—

(a) 28 days have expired, beginning with the date on which all supporting authorities for the local nature recovery strategy had been provided with the consultation draft under regulation 7: or

(b) all of the supporting authorities for the local nature recovery strategy confirm in writing that they are content for the consultation to proceed.

A responsible authority must publish all responses to the consultation within a reasonable time of the consultation concluding.

The 2023 regulations also require responsible authorities to provide all supporting authorities with the final LNRS (and the intended date for publication) before it can be published. There is also a requirement to provide a copy of the LNRS to neighbouring authorities.

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

There are no financial consequences for GMCA revenue budgets. Preparation of the strategy has been cost neutral, as additional burdens funding has been made available to the GMCA to prepare the strategy. The strategy has been produced within the budget provided.

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

There are no financial consequences for GMCA capital budgets.

## **Number of attachments to the report: 2**

- A: Draft-for-Consultation GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Full Strategy
- B: Draft-for-Consultation GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Executive Summary

## **Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **Background Papers**

- [Greater Manchester State of Nature Report 2024](#)

### **Previous CA papers**

- [GMCA Paper March 2022 – Biodiversity Emergency](#)
- [GMCA Paper March 2023 – Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#)
- [GMCA Paper March 2024 - Progress in tackling the Biodiversity Emergency in Greater Manchester](#)

## **Tracking/ Process**

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

No

## **Exemption from call in**

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

No

## **Bee Network Committee**

N/A

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

# 1. Background

- 1.1 Greater Manchester Combined Authority declared a biodiversity emergency in March 2022. This reflected the need for more urgent and ambitious action to tackle the decline in the diversity and abundance of key species and habitats across the city-region.
- 1.2 The extent of this decline is set out in our first “State of Nature in Greater Manchester” report, published in March 2024. Bringing together available local evidence, it set out the declining trends in local wildlife populations, the challenges in growing and managing our most important spaces for nature, the use of land and pressures this puts on nature and the varying degrees of access to which people across the city-region have to nature. This all puts the benefits we receive from the natural environment under increasing pressure, particularly for health and wellbeing, flood risk reduction and carbon sequestration and storage.
- 1.3 There have been efforts across Greater Manchester, across the private, public and third sectors, to try to halt this decline. Despite these, the decline continues, reflecting the broader picture across England.
- 1.4 Over the past 18 months, GMCA has developed a draft Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) to respond to the biodiversity emergency and set out how and where everyone can work together to help nature recover across the city-region. A total of 48 individual LNRS strategies will cover all of England, collectively forming a National Nature Recovery Network.

## 2 Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy

### What are Local Nature Recovery Strategies?

- 2.1 The Environment Act 2021 introduced a range of measures to seek to halt and reverse biodiversity decline. This included the requirement for Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) to cover the whole of England, to set out where and how efforts should be focussed locally to contribute to halting and reversing the decline in biodiversity.
- 2.2 The Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy sets out how and where we should focus action to try to reverse biodiversity decline and work towards better access to nature for all.



2.3 The strategy is aimed at encouraging all organisations, communities and residents to take action to support nature’s recovery. It will be of particular importance for landowners and, once adopted, will incentivise investment, particularly through Biodiversity Net Gain and environmental land management schemes.

2.4 In preparing the strategy to meet local needs as well as the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, underpinning regulations and statutory guidance, GMCA (on behalf of the Mayor), has been working in consultation with the ten local authorities and stakeholders across the city-region over the past 18 months to develop a draft strategy for public consultation.

2.5 GMCA also ran a public survey in early 2024, which received over 800 responses, and has held a wide range of workshops, events and other engagement sessions with public, private and VCSFE organisations over the past year.

### **3. What does the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy contain?**

3.1 In alignment with the requirements under the Environment Act 2021, regulations thereunder and the statutory guidance issued to responsible authorities, the strategy covers the following:

3.1.1 **Vision:** The strategy sets out a shared vision for nature recovery - “to work together to deliver a resilient network for nature across the city-region, connecting and enhancing wild spaces so that people and nature can thrive”;

3.1.2 **Aims:** The strategy sets out a series of high-level aims to help deliver on this vision, including:

- Safeguarding, enhancing and restoring our nature rich sites;
- Creating more wildlife-rich resilient spaces, where they will expand and connect spaces for wildlife and people;
- Managing and reducing pressure on our environment and waterways, maximising nature’s role in adapting the city-region climate change;
- Working together to take action for nature and embed space for nature and people to thrive across all our communities;

- Improving local access to nature and ensure there are more opportunities to enjoy nature, in those areas which need it the most; and
- Improving engagement with nature and better understanding of its value in our lives.

3.1.3 **Targets** – New quantitative targets to help track progress towards nature recovery are set. These include:

- Increase the number of GM residents living within 15mins of a decent green space.
- Increase the amount of Greater Manchester protected for nature from 11% to 15% of the city-region.
- Work towards the restoration and creation of 1,800ha of wildlife-rich land and to expand tree canopy cover from 16.5% to 18.5%.
- Bring 50% of our Local Wildlife Sites into active management for nature conservation.

3.1.4 A mapped **Nature Network** across GM to help drive forward nature recovery, including:

- Core local nature sites - existing valuable areas for nature
- Nature recovery opportunity areas – areas where action and investment should be focused across the city-region to build better connect greenspaces for nature and people, alongside other land uses.

3.1.5 **Priorities and actions** - the strategy sets out specific priorities and actions for a series of different broad habitats found across GM, including urban greenspaces and buildings, and for particularly vulnerable local species.

3.2 The draft-for-consultation (Annex A) and Executive Summary (Annex B) of the GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy accompany this report.

## 4. Next steps

4.1 Now that the LNRS (draft-for-consultation) has been prepared, the next step of the process is to undertake a public consultation on the strategy. The consultation will run from mid-November for around 8 weeks.

4.2 Responses to the consultation will be considered ahead of approval of a final strategy in the first half of 2025.

## **5. Recommendations**

The Mayor is requested to:

1. Approve the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft for consultation) to proceed to public consultation and delegate authority (as the responsible authority) to Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Lead for Green city Region to approve any minor changes to be made to the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft-for-consultation) prior to the public consultation.

GMCA is requested to:

2. Endorse the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft-for-consultation) to proceed to public consultation
3. Note its contents, including the vision, aims, targets, priorities and actions to help respond locally to the biodiversity emergency
4. Note that the sustainability assessment of these proposals is positive.

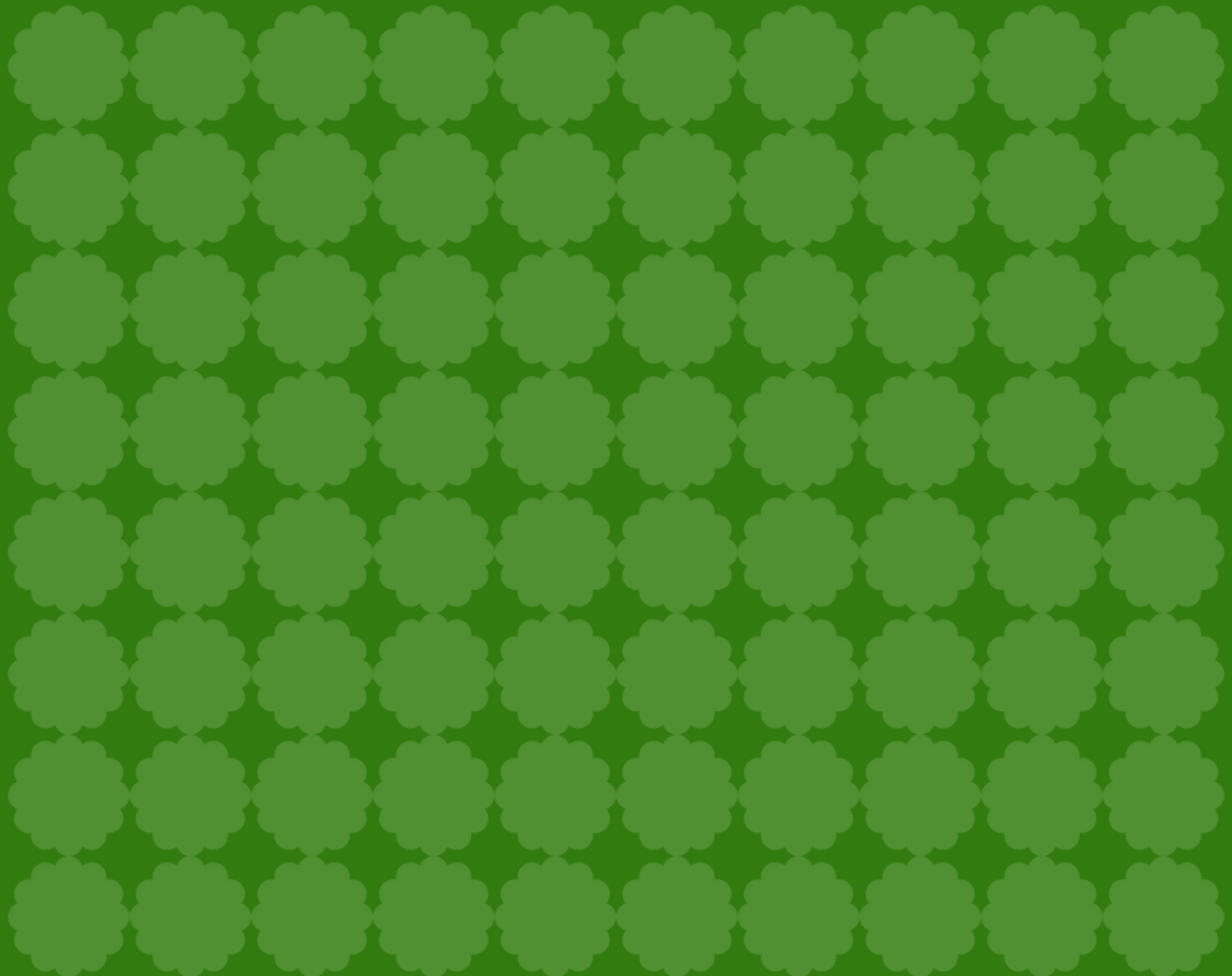
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# Nature for All

## A new plan for nature recovery for Greater Manchester

Draft-for-Consultation - Greater Manchester - Local Nature Recover Strategy

2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024



## Supporting organisations

This plan was written in collaboration with organisations and partnerships from across Greater Manchester, including:

- Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
- Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
- Canals and Rivers Trust
- Cheshire Wildlife Trust
- City of Trees
- Forestry Commission
- Greater Manchester Ecology Unit
- Groundwork Greater Manchester
- Irwell Catchment Partnership
- Lancashire Wildlife Trust
- Manchester City Council
- National Farmers Union
- National Trust
- Natural England
- NHS Greater Manchester
- Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Peak District National Park
- Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
- Royal Horticultural Society
- Salford City Council
- Southway Housing
- Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
- The Environment Agency
- Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
- Transport for Greater Manchester
- United Utilities
- University of Manchester
- Upper Mersey Catchment Partnership
- Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) would like to thank all the organisations that helped create the strategy, as well as the many other organisations and people who contributed via events, workshops or surveys.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Why do we need a plan for nature recovery?**

Greater Manchester is a growing, vibrant, dynamic and diverse city-region. In and around our homes, offices and businesses there are a variety of green spaces – from urban parks, community gardens and local playing fields to windswept upland moorlands and lowland mosslands, ancient woodlands, farmlands and historic parklands. Crossing these is a network of canals, rivers, lakes, wetlands and reservoirs, stretching from the peaks to the Mersey estuary and Cheshire plain.

All these spaces can play a role in supporting local wildlife. They are equally important to our local communities, residents and businesses. Our parks, urban rivers and canals provide crucial spaces for relaxation in our busy urban spaces, helping to improve our mental health and wellbeing<sup>1</sup>. Our woodlands, grasslands, wetlands and uplands help to store and absorb rainwater and carbon, reduce flood risk and air pollution, and help supply local food and water<sup>2</sup>.

We all understand the importance of nature, but globally<sup>3</sup>, nationally<sup>4</sup> and locally<sup>5</sup> we are witnessing continued decline in our wildlife. Our wildlife is struggling locally, with current and historic reports of falling wildlife populations caused by factors such as habitat loss, fragmentation, intensification of land use and pollution. Access to natural green spaces across the city-region is unequal and many people do not have access to green spaces near to where they live and work<sup>5</sup>.

The loss and decline of nature impacts the essential benefits we currently enjoy. It reduces the nature's ability to support our health and wellbeing, to help capture air pollutants and store carbon, support food production and supply water, and can increase our risk of flooding. The loss of these benefits impacts on our everyday lives, the liveability and resilience of the city-region<sup>6</sup>.

In recognition of the severity of this issue, Greater Manchester declared a biodiversity emergency in 2022. We know there is huge potential for nature to thrive alongside where we live and work, and we have already witnessed examples of the remarkable potential of nature to return. Former industrial sites, such as the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh, are now national nature reserves, and derelict railway bridges, such as Castlefield Viaduct, converted into vibrant gardens. As Greater Manchester continues to evolve, we all need a strategy that sets us on a pathway towards a city-region where nature can return and thrive, and our residents and businesses can enjoy the benefits of a vibrant and resilient environment.

This Local Nature Recovery Strategy sets out a long-term vision to work towards a resilient network for nature across Greater Manchester, by connecting and enhancing wild spaces so that people and nature can thrive. To drive action, we set out high level targets to help track progress, alongside priorities and actions for different habitats and species. We all need to work towards these targets, priorities and actions, to set us all on the right pathway to help realise this vision.

Over the next decade this will be the guiding strategy for nature across the city-region. Everyone has a role to play in realising this vision and creating a Greater Manchester that is resilient, greener, and more liveable for all.



## The Biodiversity Emergency

Our natural world contains a huge variety of life - the plants, animals, insects and microorganisms that live on our planet - which is collectively referred to as 'biodiversity'. Nature is important for its own sake, the unique outcome of millions of years of evolution and natural processes. Nature is also essential for many aspects of our lives. We depend on nature to provide us with clean and plentiful water, produce food and pollinate crops, for medicines and mental health benefits, for the clothes we wear and the homes we build<sup>2,6</sup>. It also holds huge cultural value as part of the places we live and enjoy, as well as for both spiritual and religious reasons.

However, globally, nationally and locally we are seeing the loss and decline of our planet's biodiversity. At the global level, the [Living Planet Index](#)<sup>3</sup>, a measure of wildlife population size, shows that over the last 50 years we have lost 68% of our global wildlife populations. A quarter of all species are now threatened with extinction and the current rate of global extinction is estimated to be between 100 to 1,000 times higher than natural background extinction rates<sup>7,8</sup>.

At the national level, 1 in 6 UK species are now threatened with extinction and over the past 500 years an estimated 200 species have likely been lost<sup>4</sup>. For mammals the threat is higher, with 1 in 4 land mammals in the UK now facing extinction<sup>4</sup>. UK populations of species of greatest conservation concern have also declined by 37% since the 1970s and 25% of all species in England are at historically low levels<sup>8,9</sup>. The UK is now considered one of the world's most nature-depleted countries and is at the very bottom in terms of how much wildlife survives<sup>10</sup>.

There have also been declines in key indicator species of wider ecosystem health – including a 16% decline in the average abundance in butterflies over the past 25 years and 44% in breeding birds over the past 45 years<sup>11</sup>. Mammals like hedgehogs are facing serious declines, with surveys in 2011 showing declines of between 25-40% over the previous decade<sup>11</sup>.

The decline in nature we are seeing has been caused by habitats and wild spaces being lost, destroyed, fragmented or degraded, by pollution or invasive species, or overused for industry or agriculture. In turn, these changes impact on the ability of the natural environment to provide essential services and put the benefits that we receive from nature, that underpin our economy and society, at risk.

## 1.2. What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

As Greater Manchester (GM) grows, we need a guiding strategy to set a pathway towards a city-region where nature and people are thriving - a **Local Nature Recovery Strategy**.

To respond to the biodiversity emergency and to meet local aspirations for a greener, more nature friendly, future



We need a long-term vision for what a nature-friendly city-region should look like

---

To help us all drive action for nature and people



We need to set out how we can all work together to help nature recover

---

To help us all focus our efforts for nature



We need to set out the best places we can boost action for nature, a Nature Network

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To track our progress



We need to set out clear targets for nature recovery and monitor these

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The Environment Act provides GMCA, as Responsible Authority, the statutory basis to co-produce a locally led, evidence-based **Local Nature Recovery Strategy**, to drive more collaborative action for nature. This document is our Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Greater Manchester and will be in place from 2025-2035.

To drive action for nature, this strategy sets out how and where across the city-region we should be taking steps to protect and enhance our natural environment. Over the next ten years, this will be the guiding strategy on the most effective actions for nature recovery and set out the best locations for nature recovery across the city-region. Everyone can play a positive role in delivering on this strategy, whether that is via small scale actions in communities, streets and gardens or large-scale actions, such as the designation of new nature reserve, new parks or as part of the development of an area.

The strategy covers the whole of Greater Manchester - all ten of our Local Authorities (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) and those areas within them that are part of the Peak District National Park. This strategy sits alongside a wider set of Greater Manchester policies and strategies (see appendix 1).

The LNRS is not a delivery plan – this will be produced to sit alongside the strategy in 2025. It does not override existing plans, policies, processes, best practice and protections that are already in place

for nature, nationally or locally, nor is it binding for landowners. Its preparation has been limited by the GM scale data, resources and capacity available to the GMCA.

### 1.3. What does this strategy contain?

This strategy is made up of key components that come together to set out how and where across our communities we should all be taking action for nature.

These components include: an overarching vision, individual priorities and targets for both habitats and species, alongside a mapped Nature Network for Greater Manchester. These key components are each shown and explained below.

**State of nature:** An overview and description of our natural environment and current trends in our local wildlife and environment.

**Vision:** An overarching vision for what Greater Manchester could look like when the strategy is delivered.

**Aims:** The high-level results required to achieve that vision across the city-region.

**Targets:** Greater Manchester specific targets, set to help us to track progress towards the overarching vision and aim.

**Priorities:** These are the long-term end results that the strategy is seeking to achieve in terms of habitats and species. Our habitat priorities are divided into different broad habitat types. Our species priorities cover some of the most vulnerable species across Greater Manchester.

**Practical actions:** The practical actions that would make a positive contribution towards delivering our priorities (*the term actions is used throughout this strategy in place of the statutory measures*).

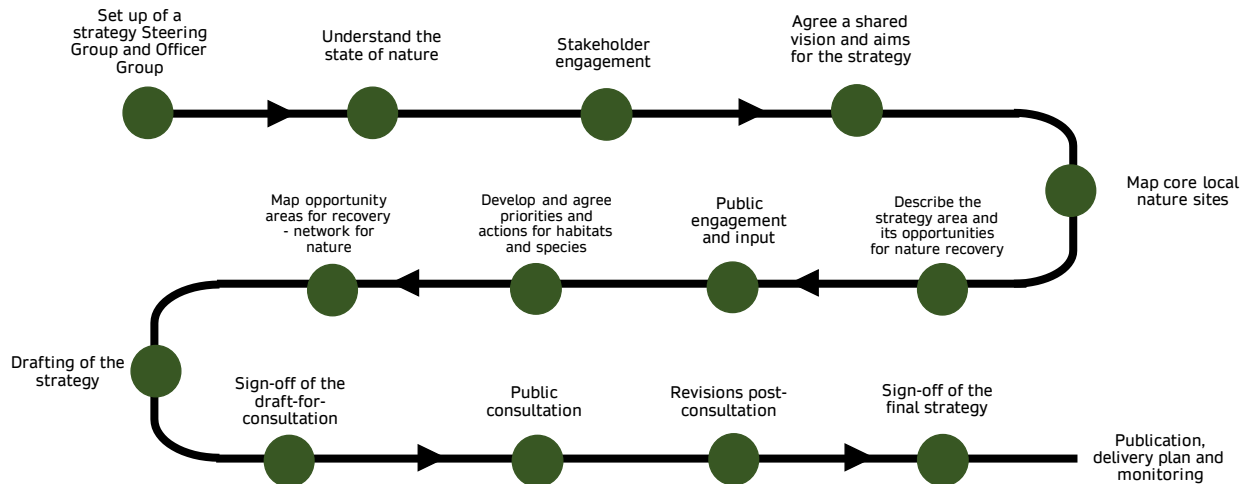
**A Nature Network: Consisting of our core local nature areas and nature recovery opportunity areas.**

- **Core Local Nature Sites** are our best remaining areas for nature across the city region, including all our designated sites and irreplaceable habitats (*these form our areas of particular importance of biodiversity*).
- **Local Nature Recovery Opportunity Areas** where the creation and restoration of habitat could have the greatest impact on nature's recovery. They represent areas where we should be more ambitious for nature alongside other land uses (*these form our areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity*).

Together the Nature Network shows how we can connect our best remaining spaces for nature across the city region and specific practical actions within these areas (*these two components together form the Local Habitat Map for the GM LNRS*).

## 1.4. How has this strategy been produced?

GMCA has led the preparation of this strategy, supported by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Natural England, the ten Local Authorities, the Peak District National Park and our steering group.



To help us get this strategy right for the local people who know and understand Greater Manchester, in preparing this strategy GMCA has:

- **Co-produced** the strategy with representatives from local environmental charities, infrastructure providers and local partner organisations (see section 8 and appendix 2), who have been involved in all stages of the strategy development through our GM LNRS Steering Group.
- Adopted an **evidence-based approach** by developing Greater Manchester's first [State of Nature report](#) to inform the strategy (appendix 3). The report brings together available open-access local environmental data to report on some of the major trends in nature.
- **Involved the public** and different sectors to ensure the strategy is **locally led**. The strategy has been shaped not just by expert organisations but also by the public, via a public survey and events, and by engagement with farmers and landowners, developers, infrastructure providers, environmental professionals, businesses, community groups and residents.

### Who's has been involved?

- For farmers and landowners, we held dedicated in-person workshops, farm visits and worked with local nature champions in the agricultural sector.
- For businesses we held dedicated in-person workshops and roundtables to hear views.
- For residents and community groups we ran a large public survey with over 800 responses, collected views and feedback at local festivals, local events and conferences.
- For local councillors we ran webinars and developed dedicated information packs.
- For developers, social housing providers and urban regeneration experts we ran webinars.
- For the NHS, our partners ran conferences and local events to gather views.
- For nature experts and environmental charities, we set up workshops, online meetings, surveys and events to hear views and gather feedback.

Throughout the development of the strategy, we have sought to inform and engage residents and local organisations through regular newsletters, project blogs and social media activity, amplified by our partners and green communications challenge group - see appendix 4 for further information.

## 1.5. Who is it for and how should it be used?

Everyone can take action for nature and play a part in local nature recovery. This strategy is for everyone, whether you are a local business owner or landowner, an environmental charity, developer or planner, a local resident, parks managers or a community group.

This strategy should be used to understand how and where action should be taken to help nature recover across the city-region. It can be used to guide and inspire action by communities, residents, charities, businesses, farmers and landowners. It sets out the most effective actions and a network for nature recovery for local authorities, developers, policy makers, planners and institutions. You can read more about how you can deliver on this strategy in section 7.

This strategy should be used to:

- **Drive collaborative action:** Encourage more joined-up collaborative action.
- **Direct investment:** Set out the best places to focus action and resources and strategically significant sites for the delivery of off-site Biodiversity Net Gain.
- **Deliver multiple benefits:** Deliver benefits for society and economy, alongside boosting nature, such as reduced flood risk, improved health, local food growth and increased visitors.
- **Inform and evidence:** Understand the local state of nature and the best actions we can all take to help nature recover, alongside other land use and development.
- **Connect with nature:** Encourage people to understand, engage and get involved with local nature recovery.
- **Track progress:** Better monitor how we are tackling the biodiversity emergency.

Different organisations and groups of people will be able to use this strategy in different ways:

- **Land managers and owners** can use this strategy as a resource to plan the best actions for nature on their land and estate and show how these actions contribute towards wider nature recovery efforts.
- **Environmental organisations** can use this strategy to drive coordinated action and focus action for nature in the places it could be most effective.
- **Residents and community groups** can use this strategy to inspire local action, understand how their projects can help wider nature recovery and create more liveable spaces.
- **Local authorities** can use this strategy to plan and act on public land and estates, to meet the enhanced biodiversity duty under the Environment Act. It can also inform their local plans and identify where improving nature can support other council services and meet cross-departmental targets.
- **Businesses** can use this strategy to consider how to benefit nature, and their business, during day-to-day operation, extreme events, renovations and start up.
- **Planners and elected representatives** can use this strategy in the preparation of planning documents and inform planning decisions.
- **Developers** should have regard for this strategy in planning how they can work towards development that embraces a nature centric approach to raising building standards and values.

A detailed overview of how this strategy can be used by different audiences will follow this strategy.

## **2. Why nature matters for Greater Manchester**

Nature is important for its own sake, the unique product of a millions of years of evolution and natural processes. For many people, connecting with nature is a source of inspiration and a meaningful reminder that they are part of something bigger, that enriches their daily lives. Nature is also essential for many aspects of our lives. Natural spaces play a vital role in making the city-region an enjoyable place to live and work, providing crucial spaces for relaxation, leisure and tranquillity – helping to boost our health and wellbeing<sup>6</sup>. At the same time, they provide us with vital services: storing water, reducing flooding and air pollution, storing carbon and providing us with water and local food.

### **2.1. What does nature do for us?**

Being in nature is good for you. A huge, and growing, body of evidence tells us that spending time in nature is vital for our mental and physical health<sup>1</sup>.

Every year, Greater Manchester residents benefit from an estimated £1bn<sup>6</sup> in essential services from our natural environment. Some of these services include mental health benefits (with an avoided healthcare costs for the NHS estimated at £264m) and improved physical health (£56m); opportunities for leisure, sport and recreation (£372m) and increased amenities and property values (£174m uplift for house prices). These essential benefits are particularly important for our vulnerable groups and can help reducing critical issues across the city-region, such as health inequalities and improve the lives of people with chronic illness or mental health conditions.

However, the benefits that we receive from nature are under threat given the array of challenges facing nature and the continued decline in biodiversity we are seeing. If we do not continue to protect maintain and enhance nature, we will not continue to receive these benefits, with knock-on effects for society and the economy - such as possible additional costs for the NHS.

Helping nature to recover can deliver a range of benefits and help the city-region to thrive:

#### **The benefits for people:**

- A green and healthy environment to grow up, get on and grow old
- More recreation and leisure opportunities
- Improved air quality and less noise pollution
- Improved physical health, including better heart health and healthy lifestyles
- Improved mental health, including reduce stress and reduce mental health conditions
- More resilience and adaptation to climate change, including flooding, droughts and extreme heat
- Less water pollution and safer opportunities for water-based recreation
- Greater connection to our natural and historic environment
- Stronger communities, proud of where they live and work
- Healthier soils, ensuring long term sustainability of food supplies

#### **The benefits for businesses:**

- A more attractive place to work, visit and do business, encouraging local economic growth
- Increased resilience through reduced risk of, and better adaptation to, environmental hazards
- A healthier, happier and more productive workforce
- Higher land and property values
- Increased green jobs and skills
- More visitors and sustainable tourism opportunities
- More productive land for food security and other resources that can be grown locally

#### **The ecological benefits**

- Protection of rare and threatened species and habitats
- Repaired natural cycles and natural processes
- A greater abundance and diversity of wildlife and healthier ecosystems, reversing biodiversity decline
- Capture and sequestration of carbon dioxide, helping tackle climate change
- More resilience to future changes in climate
- Greater resilience of species to pests and diseases

## 2.2. How do we access nature?

We know that people like to spend time in nature.

- On average **93%** residents surveyed over a 10-year period think that having open greenspace close to where they live is important to them<sup>5,12</sup>.
- **Over half residents** (53%) surveyed report that they visit the outdoors for leisure at least once a week<sup>12</sup>.
- When spending time in nature, residents reported they enjoyed exercising (70%), peace and quiet (73%), spotting wildlife (87%) and improving their wellbeing (77%)<sup>13</sup>.

People from all walks of life value spending time outdoors in nature, but not everyone benefits to the same extent. With nearly three million people now calling the city-region home, our public green spaces are increasingly under pressure.

We know that access to nature looks very different across the city-region. Access to nature is unequal and many people do not have access to nature near to where they live or work. This means that the health and wellbeing benefits that we all get from our natural environment are not shared equally.

- An estimated third of Greater Manchester's population do not live within 15 minutes of a decent sized green space<sup>14</sup> (as set out in national standards<sup>15</sup>).
- Only an estimated 40% of our population live close (within 200m) of a small greenspace (0.5ha or bigger)<sup>14</sup>.
- Echoing national trends<sup>16</sup>, people experiencing multiple inequalities in Greater Manchester tend to live in areas with less green space, compared to more affluent areas<sup>17</sup>.
- Communities experiencing racial inequalities are nearly twice as likely to live in areas with the least green space<sup>14</sup>.

## 2.3. What action do people want?

Over 800 residents, community groups, charities, businesses, farmers and landowners across the city-region have engaged with us during the preparation of this strategy (see appendix 4 and 5.)

In our survey on developing a [Greater Manchester Plan for Nature](#) one of the most common responses was a desire for a greener, cleaner and wilder city-region – with many respondents prioritising the maintenance, protection and enhancement of our existing green and blue spaces for nature as the top action they would like to see included in this strategy.

For the future, residents envision a greener, more wooded, cleaner, more biodiverse, more natural and more accessible Greater Manchester.

### Views on the state of nature

Through surveys, workshops, events and webinars, we have heard what people think about the state of our natural environment.

- Although most Greater Manchester residents (69%) are proud of their local area<sup>18</sup>, 55% of survey respondents think that the natural environment where they live is getting worse<sup>13</sup>.
- Almost half of survey respondents said they currently think the state of nature in Greater Manchester is poor (41%) and a further third thought it was in moderate condition (37%)<sup>19</sup>.
- Residents stated that they are put off spending time in nature due to a lack of accessible quality green space (14%), a lack of biodiversity (16%), increasing need for land for housing and employment (16%) and green spaces in poor condition (18%)<sup>19</sup>.

These responses indicate a strong concern about the state of Greater Manchester's natural environment and its decline.

### **Views on the local actions that are already helping to support nature**

- Nearly a quarter of survey respondents (24%) identified community action, projects, and volunteering as the most common actions already working to support local wildlife, followed by tree planting (9%), parks and public green and blue spaces (8%), and environmental NGOs and partnerships (7%)<sup>19</sup>.

### **Views on what we all need to do to best improve nature locally**

- Residents expressed a desire to see action for our most vulnerable wildlife, specifically mentioning the need for action for hedgehogs, birds, bees and otters, as well as the reintroduction of lost species such as beavers<sup>19</sup>.
- The top actions residents want to be taken across the city-region include:
  - Creation and restoration of more green spaces for nature and people
  - More wildlife-friendly development or less development
  - Maintenance, protection, and enhancement of existing green and blue spaces
  - Education and awareness raising
  - More tree planting and new woodlands
  - Improved water quality and reduced pollution
  - More wildflower meadows and verges
  - More support for community projects and volunteering
  - Less litter and cleaner areas
  - Increased habitat diversity

### **I would like a more nature friendly Greater Manchester to have:**

- *"Opportunities for communities to meet together to look after nature"*
- *"Greener - creating valuable habitats and pockets for wildlife in an urban concrete jungle"*
- *"Wild accessible green spaces"*
- *"More green and blue environments with a diverse mix of species"*
- *"Lower air and water pollution levels"*
- *"Green architecture, with more green roofs"*

See appendix 5 for the full results of our survey.



### **3. Nature in Greater Manchester: Where are we now?**

We know nature is struggling across the city-region. In this section, we describe the existing land and habitats in Greater Manchester and the state of these habitats (detailed descriptions of our landscapes and habitats can also be found in appendix 6), along with the main trends in our species, best sites for nature and the key pressures on nature across the city region. This section of the strategy is drawn from our [Greater Manchester State of Nature Report](#) (appendix 3).

#### **3.1 Our habitats and species**

In total, Greater Manchester extends over 127,600 hectares (ha) of land. The city-region is dominated by its urban and suburban areas, which cover around nearly half of Greater Manchester. Across the city-region, nature reserves and protected wildlife sites provide some of our best spaces for nature and act as vital refuges for wildlife. 11% of land in Greater Manchester, over 14,000 ha, is safeguarded in some way for nature through a variety of designations. These sites are often isolated or fragmented by urban areas and infrastructure, meaning that species can struggle to move between them.

Nature is not just confined to our protected sites and nature reserves. Within and around our built-up areas, Great Manchester hosts a range of different habitats including woodlands, upland heath and moorlands, grasslands, lowland mosslands and other wetlands. Rivers, waterways and waterbodies, including the River Mersey and River Irwell, canals, reservoirs, lakes and ponds, cross the city region. An estimated 30% of our land is used for agriculture, although the uptake of grants for nature-friendly farming is thought to be lower than in surrounding areas<sup>5</sup>.

In our urban and suburban areas our ten Local Authorities are custodians of a huge array of different green spaces from public parks, local nature reserves to civic squares, cemeteries and riverbanks. Amenity and leisure spaces, such as public parks, school grounds, and sports pitches provide key urban green spaces.

Despite the biodiversity emergency we are facing, there are many reasons for optimism and stories of the successful return of nature across Greater Manchester. Many of these successes are due to the hard work and dedication of a committed network of local people, organisations and partnerships working across the city region.

### **3.1.1. Designated sites**

#### **Overview**

Many of Greater Manchester's best sites for nature are designated as protected sites and their active management supports a diverse array of wildlife. Greater Manchester has 23 nationally significant Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) covering our particularly significant areas of semi-natural grasslands, woodlands and heath, as well as some of our wetlands of lowland raised bogs, flashes and lakes. Greater Manchester hosts six Special Protected Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas for Conservation (SACs). These range from expansive upland moorland of the South Pennines to the Rochdale Canal. Alongside these are 531 Local Wildlife Sites (also called Sites of Biological Importance), as well as 78 local nature reserves and one national nature reserve. Irreplaceable habitats<sup>20</sup> are also found in Greater Manchester, including ancient woodlands and veteran trees, blanket bog and lowland fens.

#### **State**

##### **Extent**

Since the 1980s, the areas of land safeguarded for nature in Greater Manchester have increased, from around 5,000ha to over 14,000ha through the work of the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Local Authorities, Natural England, environmental charities and local communities.

Our designated sites now cover 11% of Greater Manchester, a lower proportion than achieved in Liverpool (14%) and Lancashire (24%). Over the last decade our positive trend of increasing the amount of our land designated for nature has plateaued. Although new sites have been celebrated and designated, such as the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh National Nature Reserve and Local Nature Reserves at Springwater Park in Bury – some sites, or parts of sites, are also being lost due to lack of appropriate management and land use change.

When looked at as a network, these sites are now isolated and fragmented, meaning there are large distances between them, and they are not well-connected. Many sites are small, with habitat loss the area remaining under protection is not enough to support species recovery. To enable nature to recover these sites need to not only be bigger but crucially more joined up, allowing species to move between them.

##### **Condition**

Many of our best sites for nature are not in as good condition as they could be, this impacts on their potential to support nature recovery.

At present only 5% of our SSSI (less than 300ha) are in "favourable" condition, with a further 75% in "unfavourable – recovering" condition. Since 2000, most of our SSSI sites have improved and have moved towards being managed for recovery rather than remaining "unfavourable – no change". Compared to the rest of the Northwest and nationally, Greater Manchester has significantly fewer SSSIs in "favourable" condition, but more sites recovering<sup>5</sup>.

Due to several factors, there is variance in data availability on the condition of our designated sites. These are the key building blocks for nature recovery, we need to know more about how many are in active conservation management and work with landowners and managers to bring more into active management to improve their condition.

### 3.1.2. Species

Despite its predominantly urban landscape, Greater Manchester has a diverse array of wildlife, including species protected by legislation like great crested newts, water voles and badgers. Even in the heart of the city peregrine falcons, swifts and swallows are known to make their homes. Six different species of bats can be found along our urban canals and rivers, while foxes use our urban gardens and tram embankments to feed and raise their cubs.

**Amphibians and reptiles**, newts, as well as common frog and common toad, slow worm, grass snake and common lizard, live and breed in our ponds and grasslands.

Grassland and brownfield sites are strongholds for declining insect populations, while **damsel fly and dragonfly** are found across the city-region, including the banded demoiselle on many of our rivers and canals.

**Mammals** seen in our different districts include badger, hedgehog, bats, as well stoat and weasel, foxes, otter and rabbits, brown hare and mountain hare. Roe deer are also an increasingly common in many of our woodlands , whilst water voles are under threat.

Rare **plant** species can also be found in the city-region, such as carline thistle, hemp nettle and oak fern, aquatic plants like floating water plantain and several species of bog moss.

**Fungi** are found in all habitats, from woodland to grassland to gardens. Some of our upland sites hold nationally significant grassland fungi populations.

**Birds** such as herons and kingfishers are seen along our rivers. Woodpeckers in some of our urban woods and parks. Our uplands support specialist moorland birds, such as curlew, golden plover and twite. Our farmlands, particularly areas of Bury, Wigan, Trafford and Stockport, support skylark, tree sparrow and barn owl. Wigan is a stronghold for the nationally rare willow tit.

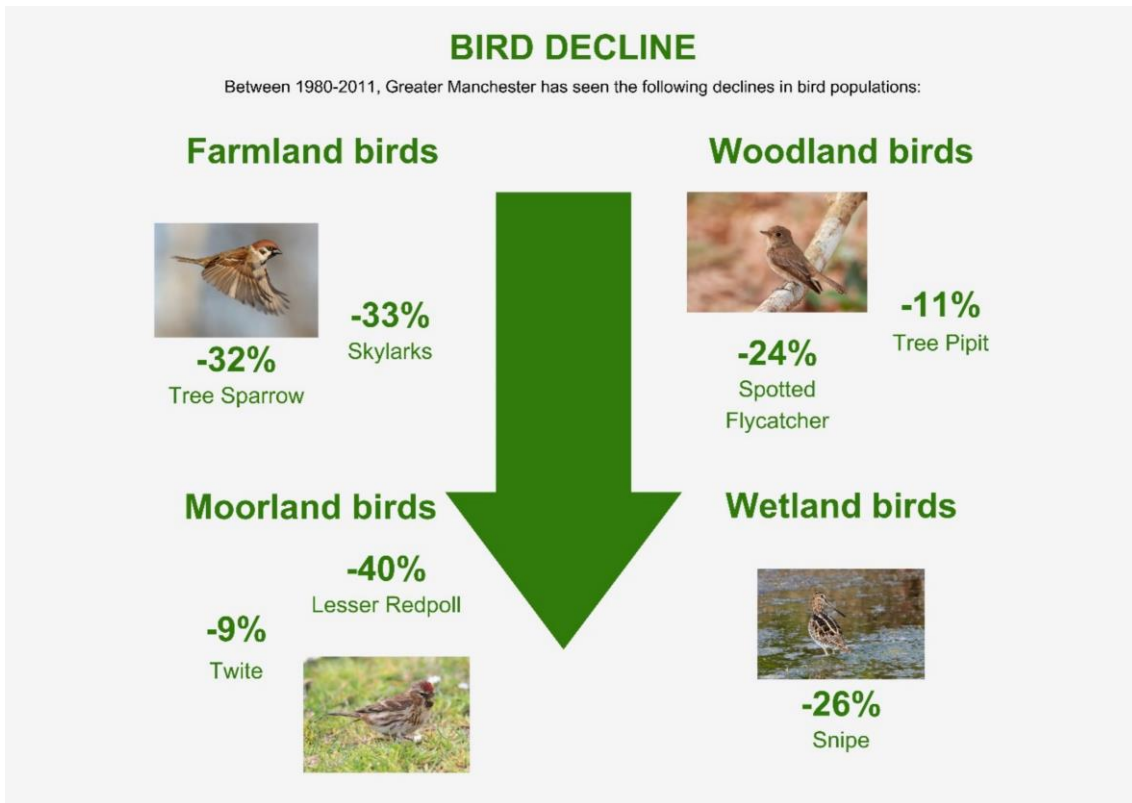
We have limited data on population trends of our local species. The data that we do have available for key species of birds and mammals, echoes the wider national picture of species decline:

- Bird populations are used to provide a good indication of the broad state of wildlife across the UK. Mirroring national trends, we have seen some worrying declines in our bird species. Between 1980-2011 individual bird species populations across a range of habitat types have shown declines of between 9-40%<sup>5,21</sup>.
- Trends in population for our mammals are relatively poorly known in Greater Manchester and we are reliant on data for the whole of Northwest England. 25-year trends show us that Greater Manchester and its surrounding areas are losing not just rare but once common species, with reported declines in red foxes of -44%, rabbits -64%, brown hare -8% and hedgehog -24%<sup>5,22</sup>.

These population declines are driven by a range of different factors including habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, pressure from pollution, invasive species and urbanisation, as well as new threats like climate change.

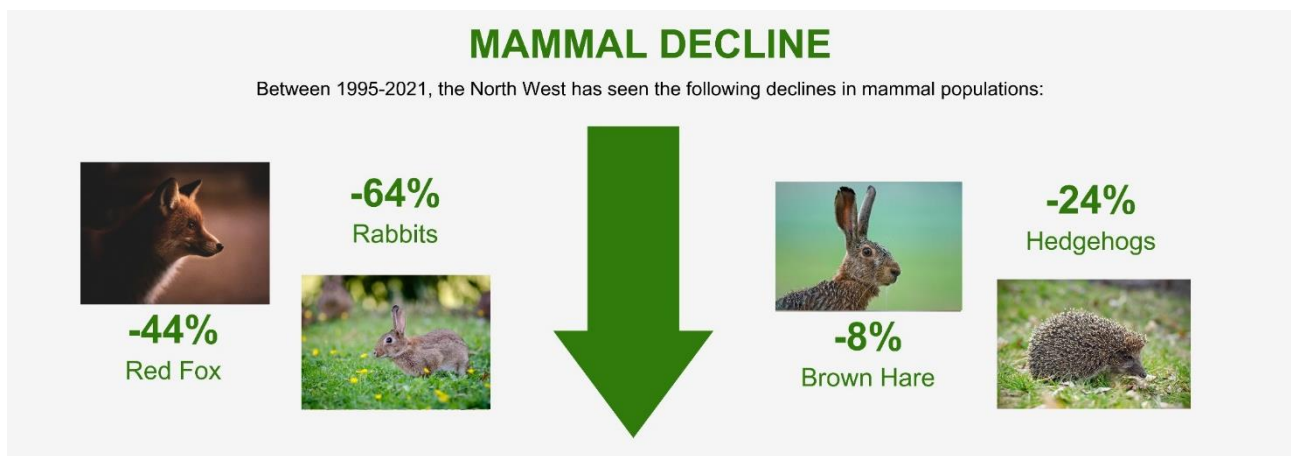
## Our birds

Bird populations are used to provide a good indication of the broad state of wildlife in the UK. Greater Manchester is home to many populations of birds. Mirroring national trends, we have seen some worrying declines in our bird populations.



## Our mammals

The population trends for mammals are relatively poorly known in Greater Manchester and we are reliant on data for the whole of the North West. 25-year trends for the North West show us that we are losing once common species



### 3.1.3. Urban and suburban green spaces

#### ***Overview***

Urban and suburban areas dominate much of our city-region, from the dense city centres of Manchester and Salford to the many towns across Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan.

Across our urban areas are a variety of well-loved parks, gardens, rivers and playing fields, golf courses, canals and allotments, that all provide valuable open green spaces for people and refuges for wildlife. Traversing through these areas are rivers, brooks and canals, many of which have been modified and built over.

Our ten Local Authorities, schools and institutions including the NHS, are custodians of a huge array of green spaces. Even incidental public urban green spaces, found on road verges or cemeteries are managed by our local authorities and can form valuable space for wildlife across the city region. Commercial land also provides green space for businesses and their staff to operate, ranging from the large-scale office spaces and smaller scale retail and leisure spaces.

Our residential gardens account for 15% of our land. These can be fantastic urban refuges for nature, and home to species like swifts, sparrows and hedgehogs and support pollinators like bees, wasps and hoverflies.

These spaces are hugely important for local communities, providing spaces for social interaction, relaxation and leisure. They also encourage active lifestyles, helping improve our mental and physical health and reducing the burden on the NHS. They are essential to the liveability of urban areas, improve the quality of our places. At the same time, they help manage rainwater and reduce air pollution, and reduce overheating. They also provide critical transport routes for pedestrians and cyclists for commuting and leisure.

#### ***State***

Our urban green spaces are of huge significance to many residents on a day-to-day basis. However, the distribution of urban green spaces across Greater Manchester is by no means equal.

Our dense urban areas often host very few parks and those that do exist are often small and serve large local populations, a legacy of historic and current growth of Greater Manchester. Those urban green spaces that we do have are often under pressure from multiple competing demands on urban land, as well restricted management due to vastly reduced public estate and park service budgets.

Access to green spaces in Greater Manchester does not currently meet [national standards recommended by Natural England](#).

- An estimated third of Greater Manchester's population do not live within 15 minutes of a decent sized green space, as defined by national standards<sup>5</sup>.
- Only an estimated 40% of our population live close (within 200m) of a small greenspace (0.5ha or bigger)<sup>23</sup>.

This lack of good access to green spaces compounds health inequalities across Greater Manchester and reduces the potential for these communities to benefit from these spaces.

In denser urban areas, like Manchester, 1 in 5 (20%) of all properties do not have access to a private or shared garden. Those that do have gardens are also thought to be becoming less green. Research by the Manchester Metropolitan University has revealed that, in Manchester, only 50% of the average garden is greenspace<sup>24</sup>.

## **Successes**

The importance of green spaces in our urban and suburban areas is being recognised more and more and integrated into new development and regeneration schemes.

- Opened in 2022, **Mayfield Park** in Manchester was the first new city park for 100 years. The 6.5-acre parkland and new neighbourhood, brought the River Medlock back to life, removing it from its concrete culverts and daylighting it for the first time in over 50 years.
- Opened in 2024, the 2-acre **Viaduct Park** is a key part of the regeneration of Stockport town centre. The park sits above the town centre's new bus station, providing a new greenspace for residents, alongside 200 new apartments and a new cycling and walking route.
- There are many smaller scale examples of green space being made a central part of new development and infrastructure. They include the opening of **Elizabeth Park** in Bolton and **Jubilee Park** and **Chadderton Park** in Oldham, both at the heart of areas of the town centres that are being extensively regenerated. In Manchester, the **Castlefield Viaduct**, redundant for 50 years has been transformed into an urban park. In Salford, Europe's largest living wall has been built at the 12-storey **Eden Building**. Salford has also championed the addition of raingardens in their streets, at places like Liverpool Road, while Trafford has retrofitted raingardens into Altrincham high street.
- Communities and environmental charities have worked to add green spaces into our urban areas. There are some fantastic examples of **alleyway greening in Manchester's Moss Side** neighbourhood, the **Ginnel Garden project in Edgeley**, Stockport. The GMCA Green Spaces Fund has supported 86 new or improved community green spaces, including projects like the **Northern Lily GROWE Community Garden in Oldham** and the **community orchard being delivered by SNUG in Longsight**. New accessible green spaces are being developed around NHS sites in Oldham and Wythenshawe.

### **3.1.4. Rivers, canals and waterbodies**

#### **Overview**

Greater Manchester boasts an extensive network of rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs and other water bodies, that weave through our communities and are deeply connected to our industrial heritage. Emerging from the Pennines and Peak District, they connect our urban centres with open countryside and our uplands and lowlands, acting as vital highways for wildlife.

Totalling over 884km of rivers, 160km of canals and 400ha of lakes, our waterways not only define the landscape but provide critical habitats supporting our wildlife. While rivers like the Irwell and Mersey are well known, countless others cross the region. Like much of the rest of Greater Manchester's environment, our rivers and waterways have been extensively modified.

People across Greater Manchester still seek out rivers, reservoirs, lakes and canals to connect with the natural environment. They play a key role in local identity, culture and heritage, and many of our canals, such as the Manchester Ship Canal and Rochdale Canal, have played important roles in our industrial past and now support nature.

#### **State**

Across the city region an estimated 80% of our water bodies have been heavily modified by human activities and 112km of our rivers now lie buried or piped below our streets and buildings. There are over 1,000 obstacles and barriers to species movement in our rivers. Many of our riverbanks have been modified or canalised making them less valuable as species habitats. Invasives species are also

increasingly problematic, our riverbanks are often impacted by species such as Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam.

While our industrial heritage left many of our rivers and waterways heavily polluted, clean-up efforts beginning in the 1980s have significantly improved our river water quality, enabling fish, otters and aquatic invertebrates to return. Despite improvements over the last 40 years, none of our rivers are classed as in good ecological condition and 11% remain in poor or bad condition. As well as being a threat to aquatic wildlife, the pollution of our waterways can affect public health.

Pollution, from rural areas, towns and cities, transportation, as well as the wastewater network are all drivers of poor water quality. Built in the Victorian era our sewerage system cannot always cope with the intensity and volume of rainwater runoff our changing climate and increasing urbanisation is creating, leading to polluted water spilling directly into our waterways via storm overflows. Overflows were developed to reduce the risk of sewage backing up during heavy rainfall. Greater Manchester has 793 storm overflows, roughly 30% of all storm overflows in Northwest England. These overflows spilt an estimated 21,391 times in 2022 for an average of 4.5 hours per spill.

In Greater Manchester, between 2025-2030 United Utilities are proposing to invest to improve 100 storm overflows, to protect more of the Upper Mersey and Irwell rivers and improve water quality. Further investment is proposed for sustainable rainwater management to provide more space for rainwater in our public spaces, to further reduce spills.

### **Successes**

Despite still facing challenges, our waterbodies have improved dramatically over the past 40 years. In the 1970s and 1980s for example, aquatic life was virtually absent from the River Mersey whereas today an increasing proportion of our rivers are moving to moderate condition. Key successes include:

- **Otters** have been sighted in over half of Greater Manchester's catchment after having dwindled to near extinction – this is a strong indication they are now resident here and increasing.
- **Fish** were equally absent from the **River Mersey** in the **1980s**, whereas they have now returned, along with mayflies, to all areas of the river.
- The **restoration of major canal routes**, including the **Rochdale canal**, have created popular recreation routes from derelict under used spaces.
- The **Medlock Valley Nature Partnership**, led by Groundwork Greater Manchester, is working towards habitat improvements along 30ha of the Medlock River valley.
- Work to install natural flood management measures including leaky dams, used to slow the flow of water and reduce flood risk, have recently been undertaken at **Moston Brook, Crompton Moor, Brownley Brook and Smithills**.

### **3.1.5. Woodlands, trees and hedgerows**

#### **Overview**

There are estimated to be over 11.3 million trees across Greater Manchester, with a combined tree canopy covering just over 16% of city region - equivalent to 22,260 hectares<sup>25</sup>. Our woodlands include broadleaved mixed woodlands, ancient woodlands, clough woodlands and wet woodlands, upland oak woodlands and wood pasture, alongside veteran and notable trees, newly planted trees and plantations.

Some important woodlands have been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Sites, such as Sunbank Wood, but many more woodlands are unprotected. Almost 850ha is

designated as ancient and, along with a large number ancient and veteran trees, is considered irreplaceable habitat<sup>20</sup>.

Our woodlands are mainly broadleaved – with species such as oak, sycamore, ash, birch, willow, hawthorn, hazel and holly. We have 13 commercial woodlands, covering an area of 313 ha across the city region. Smaller areas of evergreen conifers are also found – often planted on old industrial, ex-agricultural and mineral sites.

In urban areas, trees play a vital role in greening our streets. The city-region is also home to one of the UK's rarest native trees, the Manchester Black Poplar - its association originates from the industrial revolution, where it was found to be one the few trees that could cope with the high levels of pollution. Alongside providing habitat, some of our woods, hedgerows and trees are open to public access provide a wide range of other benefits, such as providing shade and shelter on streets and public spaces, sequestering and storing carbon, reducing flood risk, stabilising riverbanks and reducing soil erosion.

### **State**

At 16% Greater Manchester's tree canopy is above the national average, but below that of other cities like London. Our tree canopy cover is not evenly distributed, and our most densely populated areas often have very low tree cover. Generally, our woodlands are fragmented, with greater concentrations along river valleys in the northwest and southeast of the city-region. There is much lower tree cover in the uplands of the South Pennines and Dark Peak, where it is generally restricted to cloughs.

Some woodlands are in good or recovering condition, however the vast majority generally remain in poor condition and funding for their long-term management is lacking. We also know that Greater Manchester has a high proportion (66%) of unmanaged woodlands. There is potential to improve the management of these woodlands to better support biodiversity and reduce the impact of key issues including disease (such as ash dieback) and high impact invasive plants (such as himalayan balsam).

Hedgerows in both our urban and rural areas can act as corridors for species – allowing wildlife to move across landscapes and providing food, shelter and homes for species such as birds, bats and small mammals. Over recent decades more and more of our hedgerows have been removed and replaced with fencing.

Significant efforts are being made to increase the number of trees and hedgerows being planted across the city-region. An estimated 917,000 trees have been planted in Greater Manchester since 2017, coordinated by City of Trees, as part of a landscape scale ambition for a northern forest<sup>26</sup>.

### **Successes**

- **Between 1991 and 2016, Red Rose Forest<sup>27</sup> and its six local authority partners, delivered over 1200 hectares of new planting totalling more than 2.4 million trees.** These schemes now provide habitats for a wide range of birds, insects, mammals and have provided urban communities with the opportunity to experience wildlife on their doorsteps.
- The schemes included projects such as: **Dainewell Woods in Trafford** where a 40ha planting scheme was delivered in 1995; a 25ha woodland at **Giants Hall in Standish Wigan** and a 15-hectare woodland planted as part of the new **Cutacre Country Park in Bolton**. **New woodlands were also planted on former landfill sites** in Salford, Bolton, Bury, Manchester and Trafford, which have adapted well to the tough site conditions and are now important places for wildlife.
- Red Rose Forest became City of Trees, expanding across the rest of Greater Manchester and building on this legacy and working towards a target to plant 3 million more trees.



### 3.1.6. Lowland wetlands and mosslands

#### **Overview**

Western areas of the city-region (parts of western Salford, Trafford and parts of south-eastern Wigan) are home to much of our remaining lowland wetlands and mosslands. Together with neighbouring areas, these form part of the Great Manchester Wetlands Nature Improvement Area<sup>28</sup>.

'Mossland' is a local term for lowland raised bogs and areas that were formerly bogs, much of which have now been converted to farmland due to the highly productive underlying peat soils. They are distinctive flat, boggy, open landscapes, with remnant pockets of ecologically important lowland raised bog, alongside fen, wet woodland, wet grassland and freshwater habitats. They support a range of species, such as common lizard, brown hare, black darter dragonfly and rare sundew plants

Greater Manchester is also home to unique wetland habitats called flashes, a result of the industrial legacy of ground subsidence following mining. These former mines, along with spoil heaps have often been reclaimed by nature, creating a network of open water and lowland wetland habitats. This mosaic of wetland habitats supports an array of rare wetland species such as bittern, willow tit, water vole, as well as great crested newts and invertebrates. A variety of other habitats are also found outside of these areas, such as wet woodlands, wet heath and grasslands, former floodplain meadows, reedbeds, ponds.

Together our lowlands wetlands and mosslands form a unique and diverse landscape of water, fen, wet grassland, wet woodland and lowland raised bog and offer a rich mosaic of semi-natural landscape for wildlife.

#### **State**

These habitats were once much more extensive, however much of our original lowland raised bog (an estimated 95-97%), fens and other wetland habitats have been lost or drained for conversion to agriculture, peat extraction and development.

Now only fragments of a once extensive area remain and lowland raised bog is one of Western Europe's most threatened habitats. The significance of these remaining habitats is recognised in designations, such as the Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation. These designated areas are often poorly connected and there are large parts where the landscape is degraded.

Around 5,000ha of peat soils are estimated to lie underneath lowland, largely agricultural areas and remaining lowland raised bogs and wetlands<sup>29</sup>. Agricultural use (such as turf production, cropland, intensive grassland), on these peat soils, means that these areas are estimated to be emitting around 130,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent per year, contributing to the climate emergency<sup>29</sup>.

#### **Successes**

After years of degradation, including by heavy industry and the mineral extraction, work to restore areas of our lowland wetlands and mosslands is demonstrating the power of nature to recover.

- The **Flashes of Wigan and Leigh** were formed on land that had subsided after coal mining activities. Previously a former industrial wasteland, the area is now a mosaic of wetland habitats for people to enjoy, supporting rare species such as **Bitterns** and **Willow Tits**, and declared in 2022 as an 1800-acre National Nature Reserve.
- On **Chat Moss** which spans Salford and Wigan, an area that was originally lowland raised bog (a rare and threatened habitat) has been degraded by agriculture and peat extraction. However, restoration efforts have seen nature recover in these areas, such as **Astley and Bedford Mosses**, **Cadishead Moss** and **Little Woolden Moss**. Species such as Nightjar, the Large Heath Butterfly and Sundew (one of the UK's few carnivorous plants) can now be found on the mosslands.

### 3.1.7. Upland moorlands

#### **Overview**

Upland areas extend along the northern and eastern edges of the city-region and form part of a much larger expanse of upland moorlands, stretching into the Peak District and Lancashire.

Our upland moorlands have been shaped not just by the underlying geology and location but also by centuries of historical clearance, industrial pollution and contemporary management practices, which has created a unique blend of habitats. Characterised by deep valleys and open moorland plateaus, our upland habitats include expanses of blanket bog and heath, clough woodlands, alongside acid grassland and freshwater areas. The importance of these habitats is reflected in a range of international, national and local designations.

The intense rural character and isolation of the uplands stand in striking contrast to our urban areas, offering panoramic vistas and a sense of remoteness. They are crucial spaces not just for nature but also for outdoor recreation, offering long-distance trails and popular reservoirs. They also remain working landscapes and managed places used for raising livestock or grouse and supplying water.

#### **State**

Our uplands have been subject to drainage, pollution, grazing, burning and management over the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In a healthy state, many of moors surrounding Greater Manchester would be much wetter than they are now. A high-water table is critical for blanket bog habitat to become active, and grow peat rather than losing it, this helps reduce fire risk and sequester more carbon.

At present only 10% of upland moorlands, over deep peat, are thought to be in good condition, 66% needs improvement and 24% is in poor condition<sup>29</sup>. As a result, peat soils in our uplands are emitting an estimated 60,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year, rather than locking more carbon away.

Concerted efforts are being made to restore blanket bog and a diverse mosaic of other upland habitats (including upland clough and oak woodlands), not only as space for nature but also to reduce carbon emissions, improve the quality of our water supply and reduce flood risk downstream. However, the scale of the challenge is significant and there is potential to scale up efforts to deliver better habitats for nature and vital public services for people.

Our upland habitats are particularly vulnerable to climate change and more extreme weather. With our changing climate, increased risk of wildfire will put these habitats and species, like mountain hare, under more pressure.

#### **Successes**

Some upland areas were damaged by acidification during the industrial revolution. Efforts to restore them can provide spaces for nature and people to enjoy, as well as storing more carbon and water to reduce flood risk downstream.

- At **Dovestone Reservoir**, conservation work has been carried out to make the bog wetter again, blocking the gullies and revegetating the bare peat by planting sphagnum mosses with the help of local volunteers. This prevents peat being washed out into our drinking water, helps lock in carbon to tackle climate change, and also provides habitat for upland birds.
- On **Saddleworth Moor**, conservation efforts have helped bring degraded moorlands back to life by blocking gullies and re-vegetating bare peat to benefit wildlife and reduce flood risk in urban areas. Over 2,000 dams have been installed to stabilise the peat and help establish growing conditions for moorland plants including heather, bilberry and cross leaved heath and sphagnum.

- On **Crompton**, 4,000 trees have been planted covering an area of 2 hectares and nearly 4,000 sphagnum plugs which will hold water back on the moor and help reduce flooding.
- On **Holcombe Moor**, local communities, upland farmers, environmental charities and universities are working together on innovative methods of peatland restoration. 3,500 bunds have been constructed, rewetting the deep peat plateau and creating favourable conditions to plant over 500,000 sphagnum plants. Benefits including increasing carbon and water storage.

### 3.1.8. Grasslands and farmland

#### ***Overview***

Grasslands and farmland, including pasture for livestock and croplands, cover almost 30% of the total land in the city-region. The vast majority of this land has been altered, or modified, for other uses and could support more wildlife. Historically our agricultural land has been largely for livestock rearing and arable uses. Livestock farming still dominates the northern and eastern edges of Greater Manchester and maintains large areas of more pasture and upland acid grassland. Arable areas and croplands are largely found along the western edges of the city-region.

There are now very few remaining species-rich semi-natural grasslands (such as neutral grasslands and marshy grassland) in Greater Manchester. Species rich grasslands<sup>30</sup> have been less altered through reseeded, application of fertiliser or drainage and tend to have more flowers and wildlife. Those that do remain are often restricted to nature reserves, designated sites, and are found in areas like road verges, recreational sites, churchyards, and urban brownfield sites, often forming mosaics with other habitats. Despite this, those species-rich grasslands that do remain, such as former flood meadows along the Mersey, still support rare species such as orchids, wildflowers and fungi.

#### ***State***

Our semi-natural grassland habitats and lowland heaths are considered some of the most threatened habitats in Greater Manchester. Despite their increasing scarcity, these remaining semi-natural grasslands are of high ecological value, hosting a variety of plant and animal species. They are often highly fragmented, making it difficult for species to move between them. Pressures from urbanisation, land-use or land management change, can also threaten these remaining habitats.

Most of our agricultural grasslands have been modified for livestock farming or crop production due to national policy and financial incentives over the last 70 years. As a result, these spaces have the potential to support more wildlife than they currently do. Greater Manchester is also known to be a historically 'cold spot' for the uptake of agricultural environment grant schemes – which pay farmers for wildlife-friendly actions. Greater uptake of these schemes could help reward farmers for more wildlife-friendly food-production.

#### ***Successes***

- The **South Pennines Grasslands Project**, covering Greater Manchester and Lancashire, created 50ha of new species-rich grassland and brought 200ha into positive management.
- At the **Roch Valley**, Rochdale Council and Groundwork Greater Manchester have established 8 ha of new lowland hay meadows and new native hedgerows.
- Our Local Authorities are increasingly championing '**No Mow May**', leaving more areas of public grasslands as urban meadows. Rochdale has created ten annual wildflower verges to attract bees. Trafford Council has introduced better habitats for insects and pollinators by creating wildlife corridors, meadows and beds in seven parks. Stockport Council has introduced differential mowing in several urban sites to increase areas for nature.

## **3.2. Pressures on nature**

Across the city-region there are several major pressures on our natural environment.

### **3.2.1 Urbanisation**

Land in Greater Manchester is limited and is under increasing demand to meet the variety of needs of those that live and work here. These include: to provide new affordable homes and commercial space, transport and utilities, to support energy generation, for food growing and recreation. If these activities are not carefully planned and designed with nature at their heart, they will act to further restrict space for nature. Without careful planning and decision making our remaining natural spaces will progressively become smaller and more isolated, preventing nature from adapting to changes in our climate. Making space for nature alongside other uses of our land is critical to reducing the pressure on wildlife.

### **3.2.2. Pollution and litter**

Pollution from urban areas and agricultural land, including runoff from roads and other forms of contamination such as micro and macro plastics and phosphates, is a key problem for our water quality. An extensive network of combined sewer overflows also impacts our water quality. The 793 overflows in the city-region spilt an estimated 21,391 times in 2022. Poor water quality in turn impacts aquatic wildlife and can affect public health. Providing more space for water, through features like raingardens, can help capture and filter polluted water. Greater Manchester also has a significant legacy of land contamination and has large areas of land used as waste tips and issues around littering in our green spaces. Air and light pollution also have an adverse effect on sensitive wildlife, particularly nocturnal wildlife, such as bats and badgers.

### **3.2.3. Agricultural intensification**

Food production is a key part of rural identity. As stewards of more than 30% of Greater Manchester's land, the agricultural sector can have a significant influence over nature recovery across the city region. Agricultural policies, subsidies and incentives, as well as low profit margins, have encouraged the intensification of agriculture, reducing space for wildlife across many of our remaining agricultural areas. Changes to these policies and the introduction of new incentives are providing new opportunities for farmers to further enhance their land for nature.

### **3.2.4. Climate change**

Rising temperatures will impact sensitive habitats and increase the vulnerability of species, whilst more unpredictable weather and increased wildfire risk may force wildlife to move. Our upland species, adapted to cool conditions, are particularly at risk<sup>31</sup>. Climate change may also reduce the ability of our natural environment to provide us with benefits such as carbon storage - by reducing the area and sustainability of peat-forming bog systems. Across Greater Manchester, increased drought could also impact calcareous grasslands, especially on thin soils and may result in rivers, streams and ponds becoming more seasonal and at risk of drying up. With changing temperatures, we will also see the increasing arrival of new species.

### **3.2.5. Diseases and high-impact invasive species**

High-impact invasive species, such as himalayan balsam, japanese knotweed and giant hogweed, and disease, such as ash dieback, are found across Greater Manchester<sup>32</sup> and impact upon the quality of our remaining habitats and their ability to support wildlife.

## 4. Vision and targets: Where do we need to get to?

Despite some progress over past decades, when looked at as a network we know that our best remaining spaces for nature are now often highly isolated and fragmented. This means that wildlife currently struggles to move between these sites, as there are often large distances between them. Many sites are also small and with habitat loss the area remaining is not enough to reverse the decline of local species. To enable nature to recover our remaining spaces for nature need to be not only bigger but crucially more joined up, allowing wildlife to move between them.

Given the continued pressures facing nature, we need to plan proactively to ensure that the city-region has resilient spaces for wildlife and people to thrive. This will help nature to bounce back and at the same time providing spaces that improve our health and well-being, reduce flood risk, improve water quality and better adapt the city-region to climate change. One of the best ways we can do this is by not just expanding those areas we have for nature but also by creating more connections between these often isolated and fragmented sites. As Greater Manchester grows, we can also grow a better network for nature, in and around our homes, offices and businesses.

### The Lawton Review

This approach echoes that set out in the 2010 Lawton Review, called ‘Making Space for Nature’<sup>33</sup>. The Lawton Review concluded that England’s wildlife sites, despite their diversity, did not comprise a coherent and resilient ecological network, let alone one capable of coping with the challenge of climate change and other pressures. To address this, the Lawton Review called for the creation of a healthy ecological network operating across the landscape as a whole, not in isolated sites. To do this, Lawton says, we need to make our network of sites bigger, better and more joined up.

This means:

- Protecting and enhancing what we have, with better management
- Increasing the size of wildlife sites
- Enhancing connection by creating new wildlife corridors or stepping stones
- Creating new sites
- Reducing pressure on wildlife by improving the wider environment

The recommendations of the Lawton Review are now being taken forward across the UK, and elsewhere in the world. It is integral to the Environment Act and has shaped current national policy government ambitions for the national nature recovery network, which this strategy will form part of.

### 4.1. Vision

To halt, and in time, reverse local biodiversity loss and to help nature recover, we need everyone to work together and play their part. Nature needs space to be able to recover – this means enhancing and protecting our best nature rich sites and creating and restoring sites where there is opportunity. By reconnecting these sites, we can all create a network for nature and, at the same time, green spaces and recreational routes for people to enjoy.

**Our collective vision for nature recovery in Greater Manchester is to work together to deliver a resilient network for nature across the city-region, connecting and enhancing wild spaces so that people and nature can thrive.**

#### What is a nature network?

Nature recovery is about enhancing and protecting our best nature rich sites and creating and restoring sites where there is opportunity. Across the city-region many of our best remaining sites

for nature are fragmented and isolated. By connecting these sites, we can all work towards corridors for nature and new green recreational routes for people to enjoy – a Nature Network.

## 4.2. Aims

This vision can only be achieved by working together across our city-region, with communities, developers, local authorities, businesses, charities and institutions all playing a part. To deliver on this vision we need Greater Manchester to be a place where we are all:

- **Enhance and protect:** Safeguarding, enhancing and restoring wildlife-rich spaces
- **Create and connect:** Creating more wildlife-rich resilient spaces, where they will expand and connect spaces for wildlife and people
- **Build resilience:** Managing and reducing pressures on our environment and waterways, and maximising nature's role in adapting the city-region to climate change
- **Act together:** Working together to take action for nature and embed space for nature and people to thrive across all our communities
- **Improve access:** Improving local access to nature and ensure there are more opportunities to enjoy nature, in those areas which need it the most
- **Engage and value:** Improving engagement with nature and better understanding of its value in our lives

## 4.3. Targets

To track progress towards our vision and aims, we need to set clear and monitorable targets.

Working with partners we have selected some headline targets for our key aims, to drive forward nature recovery over the decade and be monitored regularly. Action beyond these targets is crucial but these targets will be used to focus action and report regularly and accurately on progress.

**By 2035:**

### **Protect:**

To increase the amount of land designated for nature from 11% to 15% of the city-region

### **Enhance:**

To bring 50% of our Local Wildlife Sites into active management for nature conservation

### **Create:**

To work towards the restoration and creation of 1,800ha of wildlife-rich land

To expand our tree canopy cover from 16.5% to 18.5%

### **Connect:**

To target the delivery of new wildlife-rich land and tree planting within the Nature Network

### **Improve access:**

To increase the number of residents living within 15mins of a decent green space

These are the headline targets for the strategy – a list of all the targets and monitoring framework for the strategy will be published in 2025.

## **5. Nature Network: Where is best for nature?**

### **5.1. A spatial strategy for nature's recovery**

To drive nature recovery, we need to set out the best places to act for nature across Greater Manchester. A key purpose of this Local Nature Recovery Strategy is to identify locations to create or improve habitats, where it is most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature, communities and the wider environment. This is to enable effort and resource to be targeted where it will have greatest impact and to encourage more coordination in habitat creation and improvement.

This section outlines a long-term spatial vision for nature's recovery, showing those areas already important for nature and areas where there are opportunities to work towards a network for nature across Greater Manchester – one that connects with areas beyond our boundaries as part of the National Nature Recovery Network. Working towards the national nature recovery network is central to the government's goal for improving nature by joining up our remaining natural spaces across England (as outlined in the Environment Act) and achieving the biodiversity duty.

The Greater Manchester Nature Network is based on established evidence and thinking on nature recovery in the UK, in particular the Lawton principles of “bigger, better, more and joined”. This involves recognising our best remaining wildlife sites as the building blocks for our Nature Network and taking action to:

1. Improve their quality by better habitat management.
2. Increase their size.
3. Enhance the connections between them – through corridors or stepping stones.
4. Create new sites altogether.
5. Reduce pressures on nature by improving the wider environment.

The Nature Network aims to have a positive influence on the growth and development of the city-region, targeting efforts by charities and partnership and helping planners and developers to understand and contribute towards nature recovery, alongside the delivery of new neighbourhoods, offices and commercial spaces.

Action outside of this Nature Network is just as crucially important to reduce pressures on nature by creating a more wildlife-friendly city region. Alongside the Nature Network action can take place anywhere across the city region to help nature recovery. There are many opportunities to do this in every community and everyone can play a part in delivering action.

You can read more about how our Nature Network was developed in appendix 2.

## 5.2. The Greater Manchester Nature Network

### 5.2.1. What makes up the Greater Manchester Nature Network?

To put these principles into practice across Greater Manchester, our Nature Network is made up of our core local nature sites and opportunity areas for nature recovery, which are described in more detail below<sup>34</sup>. Our Nature Network shows our best areas to boost ecological connectivity – where action for nature will have the biggest impact and where funding for nature recovery should be concentrated. Targeting action within the Nature Network can help build resilient spaces for wildlife and deliver new better connected green spaces for people.

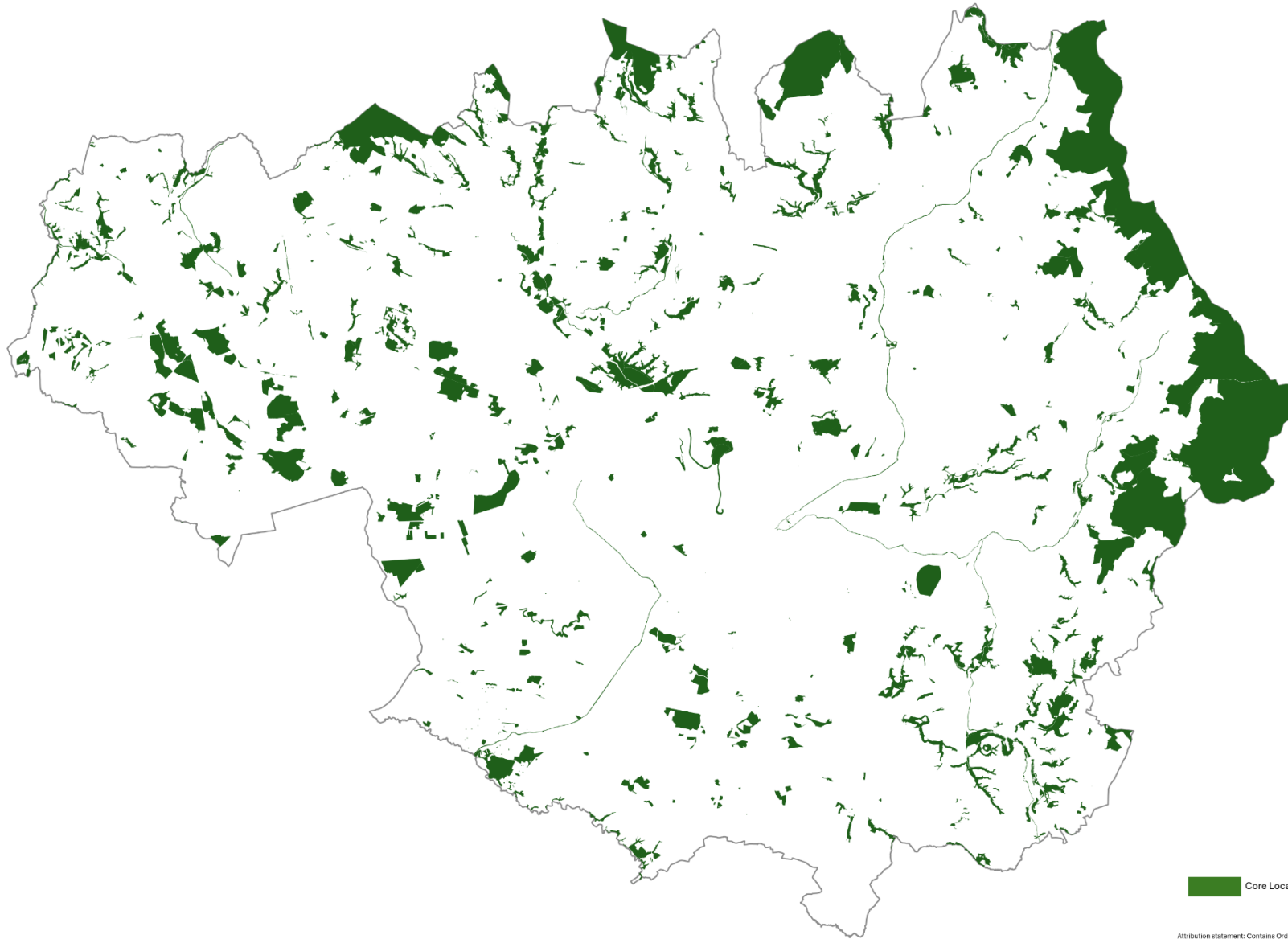
#### ***Core local nature sites:***

**What are they?** These are our best remaining wildlife sites across the city-region (our “areas of particular importance for biodiversity”). They are sites that are already designated to some degree for their value for nature. For Greater Manchester they include nationally designated sites for their value to nature, including: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); Special Protected Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), National Nature Reserves (NNRS), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), locally designated Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs), Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) and irreplaceable habitats<sup>20</sup>.

**What we need to do?** These sites cover 11% of Greater Manchester and are fragmented, poorly connected and often not in as good condition as they could be. We need to improve their condition through better management. At the same time, we need to identify opportunities to expand and better connect these sites.



## GM Core local nature sites



Core Local Nature Recovery Sites

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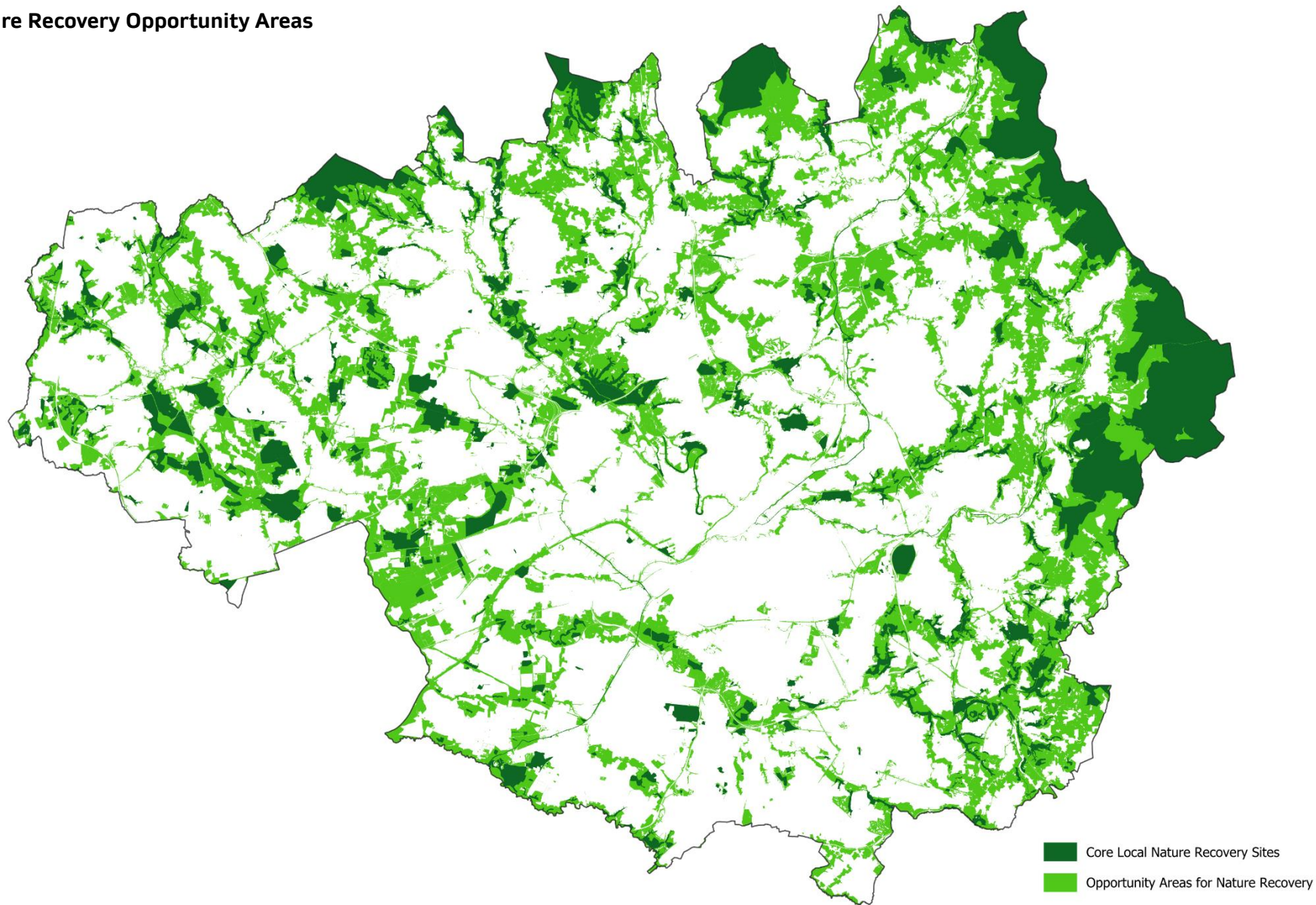
### **Nature Recovery Opportunity Areas:**

**What are they?** These are areas where action to enhance, restore or create different types of habitats (i.e. woodlands, grasslands, moorlands, waterbodies and wetlands) would expand and better connect our core local nature sites (our “areas which could become of particular importance for biodiversity”). These are our opportunity areas for nature recovery, where more ambitious action for nature should be prioritised and are where we can have the greatest impact by planning, coordinating and focusing efforts and resources. Our opportunity areas set out specific mapped locations that are potentially suitable for carrying out different habitat actions to help achieve the priorities set out in this strategy. Only certain actions have been mapped within the Nature Network (see appendix 2), as many actions are not geographically specific and are possible and beneficial across much of the city region.

**What we need to do?** These are areas where the creation and restoration of habitat could have the greatest impact on nature’s recovery. They are spaces that are often used and managed in a range of different ways and for different purposes (e.g. for food production or recreation). They are also strategically important for the Nature Network, and we need to deliver for nature alongside these other land uses. These areas are not designated or protected, nor are they barriers to development. Development within these opportunity areas (or where it could have an impact on these areas) should seek to support and deliver on the priorities set out for these areas and help to work towards the wider ambitions of the Nature Network. Some of these opportunity areas might eventually, with landowner permission and if conditions are met, become core local nature recovery areas.

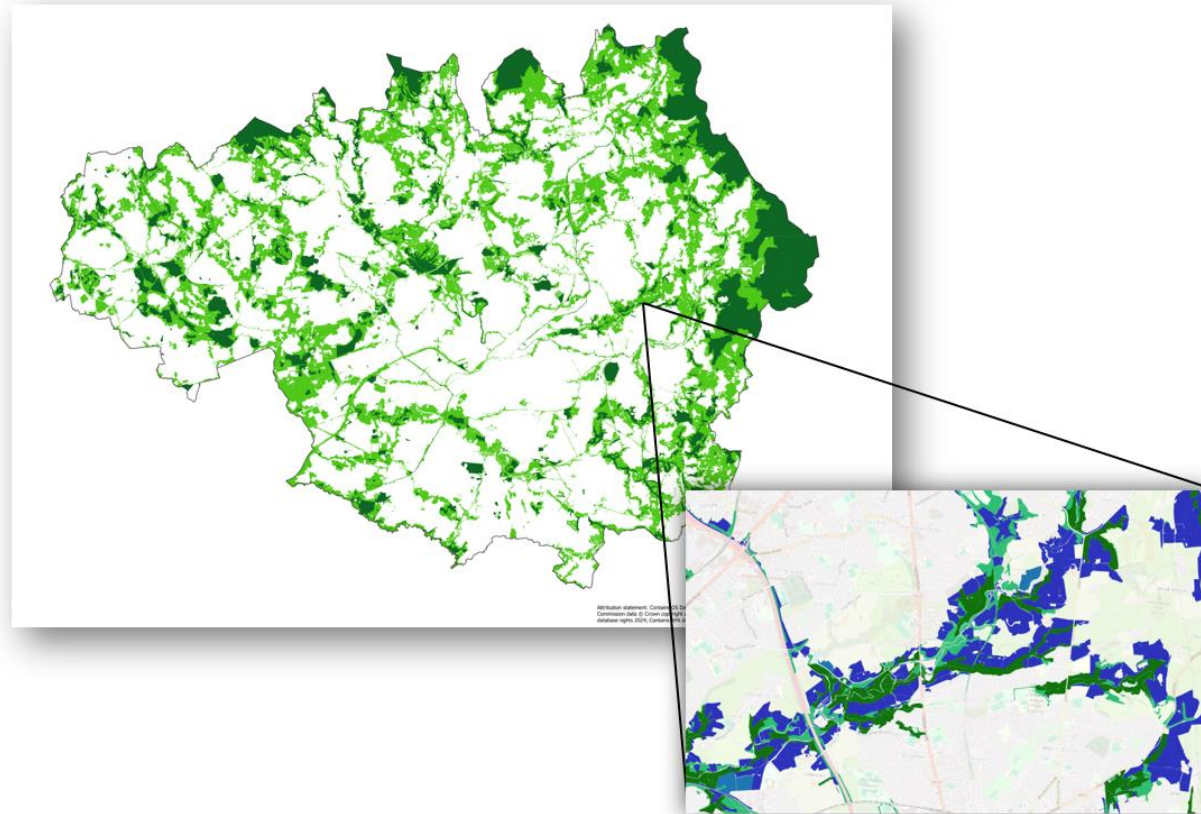
For nature to recover, action is also still hugely important outside of the Nature Network, to make our wider urban and rural landscapes more wildlife friendly and to boost access to nature across the city-region.

## GM Nature Recovery Opportunity Areas



Across the opportunity areas different locations have been mapped that are potentially suitable for carrying out different habitat actions to help achieve the priorities set out in this strategy

The image below shows an example of some of detail available within the nature recovery opportunity maps for different mapped actions, using some of our woodland actions as an example. Each of the different colours shown on image denote a different mapped action, such as action to 'safeguard, enhance and celebrate ancient, long-established and designated woodlands, veteran and notable trees' or locations to 'target native woodland, hedgerow, and scrub creation, where it will connect existing woodlands across urban and rural landscapes'.



### **5.2.2. Taking action within the Nature Network**

To help guide delivery of the Nature Network we have identified and mapped where action to enhance, restore or create different types of habitats (for example woodlands, grasslands, moorlands, waterbodies and wetlands), might be possible and most beneficial.

#### **Understanding and using our opportunity areas**

- Our opportunity areas set out mapped locations that are potentially suitable for carrying out different habitat actions to help achieve the priorities set out in this strategy. For example, areas have been identified for woodland habitat creation and species-rich grassland habitat enhancement. Targeting action in this way is crucial for effort and resources to be focused where they will have the greatest impact and to encourage more coordinated action.
- When using our opportunity areas, it is still important to follow our overarching principles of habitat enhancement, creation and restoration (set out in section 6.1).
- As space is limited in the city-region, many of our opportunity areas have the potential for the delivery of actions for multiple habitat types. This means that opportunity areas for the different habitats (i.e. woodlands, wetlands and grasslands) often overlap. Where multiple mapped actions overlap, each of actions should be treated as equally needed in this location. In locations that are good for multiple habitats, follow our habitat principles (section 6.1); undertake local site assessment; involve local ecological experts, communities and landowners; consider patchworks (or mosaics) of different habitats rather than pursuing one to the detriment of another.
- For nature to recover, action is also still hugely important outside of the Nature Network (see section 5.3), to make our wider urban and rural landscapes more wildlife friendly. Only certain actions have been mapped within the Nature Network – this is because many actions are not geographically specific, being possible and just as beneficial across much of the city region<sup>35</sup>.
- Areas mapped for action within the Nature Network, including both the opportunity areas and the core local nature sites, are particularly suitable for the delivery of offsite biodiversity net gain and are classed as strategically significant in terms of the Defra Biodiversity Metric. For the purposes of the Statutory Guidance on Local Nature Recovery Strategies they form the Local Habitat Map for the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

#### **5.2.3. Permissions, consultation and licences**

- The opportunity areas mapped within the Nature Network do not confer permission to create or restore habitat without following appropriate existing decision-making frameworks, consultation, permissions, permits or licenses, or to in any way circumvent standard pre-existing procedures or good practice around habitat creation, restoration or enhancement.
- The opportunity areas mapped within the Nature Network are not binding for the landowner or land manager. They do not require the owners and managers of the land identified to make any changes.
- The Nature Network is not a barrier to development. The network highlights those areas where we all need to be more ambitious for nature and take steps to connect spaces for nature to deliver resilience for our wildlife. Development within these opportunity areas (or where it could have an impact on these areas) should seek to support and deliver on the priorities set out for these areas and help to work towards the wider ambitions of the Nature Network.

#### **5.2.4. Planning status**

The Environment Act sets out that local planning authorities and decision-makers must have regard to this LNRS in their policies, including those in their local plans. The Levelling up and Regeneration Act requires all relevant plan-makers and tiers of planning to take account of LNRS. All of this is designed to support development plans and provide closer alignment with the planning system and environmental outcomes.

Opportunity areas are not designated or protected, nor are they barriers to development. Development within these opportunity areas (or where it could have an impact on these areas) should seek to support and deliver on the priorities set out for these areas and help to work towards the wider ambitions of the Nature Network.

Areas mapped for action within the Nature Network are key target areas for the delivery of offsite biodiversity net gain sites across Greater Manchester. They are classed as strategically significant in terms of the Defra Biodiversity Metric.

### **5.3. Beyond the Nature Network**

The Nature Network indicates where habitat enhancement, creation or restoration could be particularly beneficial or possible. However, that does not mean that taking this action should not be pursued in many other locations across Greater Manchester.

Action can take place anywhere across the city region to help realise the priorities in this strategy and help work towards nature recovery. There are many opportunities to do this in every community.

Everyone can play a part in delivering action whether it is via the creation of new nature reserves or pocket parks, wildlife-friendly gardening or the development of an area.

#### **The wider environment:**

**What is it?** These are areas that are not mapped as part of the Nature Network. However, this does not mean action there is not just as important. In the areas that are not mapped, action is still crucial for local people and wildlife and can make a huge contribution towards delivering a more sustainable and wildlife-friendly city region.

**What we need to do?** In the wider environment, we can still take action by making these areas more wildlife friendly and nature rich. Even small areas like gardens and streets can be made more wildlife friendly through planting street trees, creating ponds and or new community growing spaces.

## **6. Priorities and Actions: What do we need to do?**

The priorities set out in this section are the long-term end results of the strategy that we all need to work towards. Delivering on these priorities will help us to achieve the overarching vision and aims for local nature recovery.

Each priority is an outcome (i.e. what is to be achieved). Each priority is accompanied by several practical actions– these are the activities that if taken would make a positive contribution towards delivering on this priority. Each priority may have several practical actions linked to it – working towards one or a number of these actions can help achieve a priority. The word actions is used throughout the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy to refer to the statutory measures set out in the LNRS National Guidance. To help cover the different types of places and spaces across Greater Manchester, we have divided priorities by broad habitat types and priority species. We have also included priorities for the urban buildings and urban green spaces which make up nearly 50% of the city region<sup>36</sup>.

Our habitat priorities will be of huge benefit to many species, as well as delivering wider social and economic benefits. Some species, or groups of species, are particularly at risk locally and need bespoke action beyond wider habitat priorities set out in this strategy. It is these particularly vulnerable local species that require focused attention and have been selected as priority species for this Local Nature Recovery Strategy in section 6.2.

For some priorities, we have included further technical details in appendix 7 that may be more informative for some users of this strategy.

## 6.1. Habitat priorities and actions

### Principles for habitat enhancement, restoration and creation

Across all our habitat priorities there are several common principles that should be followed. These principles apply to all priorities and actions.

<b>Right habitat in the right place</b>	Ensure that habitat restoration and creation proposals occupy suitable sites and are not to the detriment of existing or other quality habitats, by following existing principles (example: 'right tree, right place, right reason'). Ultimately, this requires using this strategy as a starting point and then undertaking site-specific assessment for what works best on the land.
<b>Follow best practice and standards</b>	Ensure that you use and comply with legal requirements, standards, guidance, decision frameworks and best practice, as well as any permits and licences when creating and restoring habitats (example: 'Decision Support Framework for Peatland Protection').
<b>Think long term</b>	Plan proactively for long term habitat management, maintenance and funding.
<b>Aim high</b>	When creating or restoring habitats work towards achieving good condition, well-functioning habitats that support a greater abundance of species.
<b>Build resilience</b>	Work proactively to build resilience against climate change, future pests and diseases.
<b>Maximise multiple benefits</b>	Deliver wider benefits wherever possible, such as improving health and wellbeing, storing carbon or reducing flood risk.
<b>Involve residents and communities</b>	Work collaboratively from the outset with local residents, communities, partnerships and business towards nature recovery.
<b>Improve access</b>	Support and work toward better access for residents and communities, wherever possible and appropriate.
<b>Monitor success</b>	Monitoring or tracking progress is crucial to understand success of efforts, this can be aided by involving communities and residents.
<b>Support landowners and manager</b>	Support, and work in partnership with, landowner and managers, for example on the uptake of agricultural environment schemes.



### 6.1.1. Urban green spaces and buildings

#### ***Opportunity***

There are huge opportunities to make the urban areas where we live and work greener and more wildlife friendly. Creating space for nature has knock-on benefits in our everyday lives, improving our health and wellbeing, as well as helping to adapt the city region to climate change. Our urban green spaces already provide vital refuges for wildlife and spaces for people to relax. These spaces have significant potential to become more nature-rich and at the same time better adapted to climate change.

Over recent years we have seen some inspiring examples of the greening of disused spaces for nature and people, such as Castlefield Viaduct in Manchester, Elizabeth Park in Bolton and Jubilee Park in Oldham, helping us to better meet [national green space standards](#). There are many more unused and unloved spaces that could be converted to new community gardens, allotments or pocket parks through community-led action, creating healthier urban spaces for our future. Installing new green spaces in our streets and public spaces will help tackle inequalities in access to green space and better adapt the city-region to climate change. As we create new infrastructure and regenerate different parts of the city-region there is potential at the same time to better connect our existing green spaces using green, resilient, active travel routes.

Actions at any scale, whether it's a street tree, swift box, community garden or a new pocket park, can make a difference for both nature and local people. Supporting and involving communities is vital to ensure the success of any newly enhanced or created green spaces.

#### ***Priorities***

- More schools, hospitals, public, commercial and community buildings have nature-rich accessible spaces, better for wildlife and people
- Better parks and open spaces, enhanced and managed to be nature-rich and climate-adapted, with a range of habitats for wildlife supported by local communities
- More streets, roads, pedestrian and cycle routes are greener and tree-lined, acting as corridors for nature and adapted to climate change
- Town and city regeneration and development driving new and enhanced nature-rich green space creation, building more biodiverse, accessible and climate-adapted places
- More nature-friendly and climate-adapted gardens, balconies, yards and driveways
- More community-led creation of new nature-rich green spaces and increased opportunities for local food growing

These priorities cover a range of urban habitats and land including parks, gardens, playing fields and spaces, sports groups, urban trees, allotments, incidental urban green spaces like road verges and other urban green spaces including cemeteries, golf courses and civic spaces, that can all form

valuable space for wildlife across the city region. Many of rivers, canals and waterbodies pass through urban areas, these are covered by separate priorities on rivers, waterbodies and canals.

### ***Wider benefits***

These priorities will have benefits beyond just helping nature recover including:

- Improving our health and wellbeing
- More opportunities for social interaction and community building
- Reducing health inequalities and creating healthy resilient places to live and work
- Encouraging more visitors and supporting businesses
- Better managing extreme weather events including heavier intense rainfall
- Increasing property values and providing quality places
- Reducing air pollution

### ***Species supported***

These priorities will benefit many urban species including:

- Hedgehog
- Peregrine falcon
- Wild Cherry
- Robin
- Common Pipistrelle Bat
- Starling
- Blue Tit
- Fox

## Actions

Priority	Practical actions
<p>More schools, hospitals, public, commercial and community buildings have nature-rich accessible spaces, better for wildlife and people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance and increase the diversity of existing green spaces and create dedicated wilder set-aside areas for nature.</li> <li>• Create more nature-friendly multiple-use spaces, such as wellbeing gardens, community grow spaces or orchards, that provide habitats for urban species and benefit people.</li> <li>• Support species by installing homes for wildlife and reducing barriers to species movements across and between green spaces.</li> <li>• Create or allow more space for water and install sustainable drainage, providing water for wildlife and adaptation to climate change.</li> <li>• Support and involve local communities in the creation and maintenance of spaces for nature.</li> </ul>
<p>Better parks and open spaces, enhanced and managed to be nature-rich and climate-adapted, with a range of habitats for wildlife supported by local communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance and increase the diversity of existing green spaces and create dedicated wilder set-aside areas for nature.</li> <li>• Create and maintain longer grasses and wildflower strips.</li> <li>• Support species by installing homes for wildlife and reducing barriers to species movements across and between green spaces.</li> <li>• Create or allow more space for water and install sustainable drainage, providing water for wildlife and adaptation to climate change.</li> <li>• Create more nature-friendly multi-use spaces, with improved access for all, such as pocket parks and community grow spaces that benefit urban species and people.</li> <li>• Support and involve local communities in the creation and maintenance of spaces for nature and improve public awareness of the benefits of nature recovery.</li> </ul>
<p>More streets, roads, pedestrian and cycle routes are greener and tree-lined, acting as corridors for nature and climate-adapted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance and increase the diversity of streets and highways verges, with longer grasses, native wildflower strips and meadows and more dedicated spaces for nature.</li> <li>• Create greener spaces, and more connected habitats, along existing and new streets, highways and cycleways (our Bee Network).</li> <li>• Create or allow more space for water and install sustainable drainage along our existing and new streets, highways and cycle paths (our Bee Network).</li> <li>• Reduce key barriers to wildlife movement across our major highways</li> <li>• Support and encourage more community involvement and more community adoption of unused green spaces</li> </ul>

<p>Town and city regeneration and development driving new and enhanced nature-rich greenspace creation, building more biodiverse, accessible and climate-adapted places</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguard and enhance important local habitats and green spaces.</li> <li>• Restore, expand and connect existing local habitats and green spaces.</li> <li>• Create dedicated new multifunctional and inclusive green spaces as part of new development and regeneration, to meet the national Urban Greening Factors of 0.3 on commercial and 0.4 on residential development or the local authority set Urban Greening Factor<sup>37</sup>.</li> <li>• Support species by installing homes for wildlife on buildings and reducing barriers to species movements across and between green spaces.</li> <li>• Create dedicated space for water and wetter habitats by installing sustainable drainage and providing sufficient space for river corridors.</li> <li>• Support and involve communities in the design and creation of new or regenerated green spaces.</li> </ul>
<p>More nature-friendly and climate-adapted gardens, balconies, yards and driveways</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant gardens, yards and balconies that support local wildlife, using pollinator-friendly planting or planting size appropriate shrubs or trees</li> <li>• Support species by installing homes for wildlife and reduce barriers to species movements across and between gardens.</li> <li>• Manage spaces in a wildlife-friendly way by leaving areas of longer grass for wildlife in gardens or reduce mowing, reducing use of pesticides and herbicides.</li> <li>• Create more space for water in gardens and encourage more sustainable water use.</li> <li>• Boost awareness of the need for wildlife friendly gardening.</li> </ul>
<p>More community-led creation of new nature-rich green spaces and increased opportunities for local food growing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage or enable the creation of new community-led green spaces in our least green areas.</li> <li>• Enable more opportunities for community-led action and community adoption of local green spaces.</li> <li>• Support more opportunities for local food growing and the 'right to grow'.</li> <li>• Boost awareness and skills in nature recovery and connection to nature.</li> </ul>

## 6.1.2. Woodlands, trees, scrub and hedgerows

### ***Opportunities***

Woodlands, trees and hedgerows across Greater Manchester could better support biodiversity. There are opportunities to enhance and better manage existing woodlands, orchards, hedgerows, veteran and ancient trees, so they are more resilient and in better condition. Well-managed, healthier, woodlands can deliver more benefits to people and better deal with pests, disease, invasive species and climate change.

The remaining woodlands across Greater Manchester could also be better connected. Many existing woodlands and trees are fragmented; reconnecting these by creating corridors or stepping stone of new woodlands, trees, hedgerows or scrub, between them, would benefit the movement of woodland wildlife and at the same time create new green routes for people. More trees and woodlands along our river valleys are a particularly crucial way we could enhance connectivity for woodland species. Healthy well-managed and connected hedgerows can also play a key role as wildlife corridors. In rural areas, more trees across farmed land, whether through agroforestry, low density in-field planting or more small woodlands, could help make farmed areas better for woodland species, and at the same time improve animal welfare and support climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Our existing woodlands could also be more accessible, with better paths, signs and less high-impact invasive species, enabling more people to engage with nature nearby to where they live. Where more street trees can be introduced these can play a significant role in greening some of our dense urban neighbourhoods and at the same time improving air quality and regulating climate change by helping to better manage rainwater<sup>38</sup>. Community orchards can provide great habitats for local wildlife as well as multiuse, accessible, communal spaces for growing local food.

### ***Priorities***

- More existing woodlands, hedgerows, trees and scrub are safeguarded, restored and resilient
- Bigger and better-connected woodlands, trees and scrub, integrated with patchworks of other habitats
- New urban street trees, urban community orchards and woodlands, improving access to nature and climate adaptation
- More native hedgerows created and maintained, linking together spaces for wildlife
- More varied trees, scrub, parkland and woodland habitats incorporated into our farmlands and more productive woodlands delivering nature recovery.

These priorities cover trees, woodlands and forests, hedgerows, scrub and parkland, wood pasture and agroforestry.

### ***Wider benefits***

Our trees, woodlands, hedgerow and scrub play a particularly critical role in not just providing habitat, but also:

- Storing carbon

- Managing rainwater
- Regulating temperatures
- Reducing air and water pollution
- Improving our health and wellbeing
- Providing local sources of food and timber
- Improving livestock welfare by providing shelter and shade

***Species supported***

Delivering on these priorities will benefit many woodland species including:

- Bluebell
- Badger
- Tawny Owl
- Woodpecker
- Wood anemone
- Hawthorn
- Oak
- Birch
- Fly agaric

## ***Actions***

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>More existing woodlands, hedgerows, trees and scrub are safeguarded, restored and resilient</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguard, enhance and celebrate ancient, long-established and designated woodlands, veteran and notable trees.</li> <li>• Enhance existing woodlands, scrub, and hedgerows and diversify, where appropriate, to increase resilience to pests, disease and climate change.</li> <li>• Promote better understanding of the value of woodland, scrub, trees, hedgerow, wood pasture and agroforestry habitats.</li> <li>• Encourage wildlife-friendly recreational use of woodlands.</li> </ul>
<b>Bigger and better-connected woodlands, trees and scrub, integrated with patchworks of other habitats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target native woodland and scrub creation where it will connect existing woodlands and scrub.</li> <li>• Expand existing woodland, scrub and other woodland fringe habitats.</li> <li>• Encourage the planting of trees, woodland and scrub where they will play a role in natural flood management, control of pollution or reduce soil erosion.</li> <li>• Ensure new woodlands are well managed to optimise biodiversity, accessibility and support a variety of locally appropriate woodland types, mixes and scrub.</li> <li>• Involve local communities in new tree planting, woodland and scrub creation.</li> </ul>
<b>New urban street trees, urban community orchards and woodlands, improving access to nature and adaptation to climate change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target urban tree and woodland planting where it will increase connectivity, climate adaptation and accessibility.</li> <li>• Create new and enhance old or traditional orchards and urban community woodlands, and work to ensure better access for communities.</li> <li>• Improve woodland path networks to diversify access for all users.</li> <li>• Support and engage diverse local groups with local woodlands, orchards and trees and encourage positive recreational use of woodlands.</li> </ul>
<b>More native hedgerows and scrub created and maintained, linking together spaces for wildlife</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguard, manage, and restore the species diversity and structure of existing hedgerows.</li> <li>• Create more native hedgerows, particularly, where they act as corridors between existing trees and woodlands, or where they could intercept diffuse pollution or reduce soil erosion.</li> <li>• Encourage more mature trees in hedgerows</li> </ul>

**More varied trees, parkland, scrub and woodland habitats incorporated into our farmlands and more productive woodlands delivering nature recovery**

- Enhance productive woodlands, parklands, scrub and orchards to maximise benefits to biodiversity alongside the production of timber, food and environmental benefits, such as flood risk reduction.
- Encourage wildlife-friendly farm diversification opportunities which will enable more woodland, tree and hedgerow planting as well as agroforestry.



### 6.1.3. Rivers, canals and waterbodies

#### ***Opportunities***

Improving our extensive network of rivers, canals, brooks, streams, reservoirs and ponds could help nature recover across the city-region. Our waterways and waterbodies are our remaining key nature corridors, enhancing and creating habitats along these corridors will play a crucial role in developing a local nature network. There are a range of opportunities to improve our rivers and waterbodies and better integrate them into our urban areas, to reduce flood risk and increase their value as community assets, but the scale of the challenge is significant.

Our waterbodies have been heavily modified to accommodate urban infrastructure, there are multiple barriers across them, many are also buried under roads or buildings. Uncovering or opening-up our rivers, naturalising them where feasible and removing high impact invasives would significantly help the movement of aquatic species, giving our rivers space to cope with climate change and at the same time deliver social benefits. The opening up of access to the River Medlock at Mayfield Park and the River Mersey at Stockport Interchange has provided new visitor attractions and spaces for leisure and recreation.

Improving our water quality is one of the biggest opportunities for nature recovery but also the most challenging. Multiple significant issues impact our water quality, including microplastics and litter, diffuse agricultural, urban and industrial pollution, as well as pollution from the many combined sewer overflows and landfills. Creating more spaces for water and better managing our rainwater, using natural flood management and sustainable drainage, can also play a big role in improving the quality of water entering our waterways and at the same time reducing the risk of flooding of homes and businesses.

#### ***Priorities***

- More accessible and visible rivers, canals and waterbodies, with fewer barriers to species movement
- Cleaner, more natural and resilient rivers and waterbodies, that are well protected, maintained and biodiverse
- Increased habitat connectivity along our river corridors, canals and waterbodies
- More space for water and natural flood management in our communities and across catchments
- Cleaner canals, restored for nature and people

These priorities cover a range of different water bodies including rivers, streams, brooks, canals, lakes and reservoirs.

#### ***Wider benefits***

Our rivers and waterbodies play a significant role in:

- Managing our rainwater and flood risk
- Opportunities for leisure and recreation
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Regulating temperatures
- Supplying our water

***Species supported***

Delivering on these priorities will benefit many aquatic and waterside species including:

- Otter
- Kingfisher
- Daubenton's bat
- Grey wagtail
- Marsh marigold
- Common frog
- Great crested grebe
- Hawker dragonflies
- Yellow flag iris
- Salmon

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***Actions***

Priority	Practical actions
<p><b>More accessible and visible rivers, canals, and waterbodies, with fewer barriers to species movement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unblock, improve, and extend rights of way along waterbodies and improve connections between these networks and our wider ecological corridors and recreational routes.</li> <li>• Expansion, creation or restoration of a variety of waterside habitats, including woodlands, wetlands and grasslands, where it will better connect up existing habitats along our rivers, supporting species movement.</li> <li>• Improve mobility for aquatic creatures by removing barriers, daylighting buried or covered waterbodies or installing by-pass structures, where feasible.</li> <li>• Celebrate rivers, canals, and waterbodies as part of the local identity and increase understanding of their value and management.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Cleaner, more natural and resilient rivers and waterbodies, that are well protected, maintained and biodiverse</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make water channels more natural and complex, re-meander channels and reconnect to floodplains where feasible.</li> <li>• Enhance existing habitats within our waterbodies and adjacent grassland, wetland and woodland habitats to increase species richness.</li> <li>• Restore more natural riverbanks, in appropriate locations, and reduce invasive species.</li> <li>• Reduce point source pollution by identifying and tackling critical locations.</li> <li>• Reduce urban diffuse pollution using sustainable drainage and tackling litter and plastic pollution.</li> <li>• Encourage agricultural, industrial and land management practices that deliver water quality improvements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Increased habitat connectivity along our river corridors, canals and waterbodies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion, creation or restoration of a variety of waterside habitats, including woodlands, wetlands and meadows, where they will better connect existing habitats.</li> <li>• Improve mobility for aquatic creatures by removing barriers, daylighting buried or covered waterbodies or installing by-pass structures, where feasible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>More space for water and natural flood management in our communities and across catchments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install more sustainable drainage schemes, natural flood management schemes and permeable surfaces, in areas that will benefit nature and are most at risk of surface water flooding.</li> <li>• Increase awareness and understanding of sustainable drainage and natural flood management schemes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cleaner canals, restored for nature and people</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restoration and reconnection of habitats alongside canals, including targeted woodland creation and tree planting.</li> <li>• Softening manmade canal banks using natural materials and native plants.</li> <li>• Reduce litter and pollution in canals.</li> <li>• Encourage responsible recreational use of canals and maintain a good balance between more natural and diverse vegetation and keeping canals clear for recreation.</li> </ul>

#### **6.1.4. Lowland mosslands and wetlands**

##### ***Opportunities***

Lowland mosslands and wetlands form a unique and diverse landscape of water, fen, wet grassland, wet woodland and lowland raised bog and other wetland habitats.

Much of our original lowland raised bog habitat has been converted to agriculture or lost to peat extraction or development. In some post-industrial sites we have regained wetlands or flashes and wet woodlands. Working to restore more degraded areas of former lowland raised bog fens, reedbeds, bogs, wet woodland and heath, and ponds, where viable, will not only provide new spaces for people to enjoy and habitats for wildlife, but also act to reduce carbon emissions in areas with underlying peat soils and store more water.

As well as restoring lost habitats, we can also work to better connect our remaining habitats, by expanding (or buffering) existing sites, creating stepping stones and new corridors of habitats between them. This will enable the easier movement of species across these landscapes. Alongside habitat creation, there are also crucial opportunities to boost the resilience of these important habitats, by creating where possible more compatible land use surrounding them. Reducing land drainage in these surrounding areas, through the adoption of wetter farming or paludiculture, is particularly important to help maintain water levels. In turn, storing more water in these areas should help reduce flood risk to nearby communities.

Often isolated and hard to reach, our lowland mosslands are thought to be much less visited than our woodlands, rivers and uplands. Enabling more people to visit and enjoy these spaces will help encourage their management and restoration. There are opportunities to improve access to them, with new cycle ways and paths allowing more people to engage with the cultural and natural heritage of these areas.

##### ***Priorities***

- More lowland bogs, fens and other wetland habitats are restored and better managed for nature, able to store more water and emit less carbon
- Bigger mosslands and wetlands, with more habitat corridors and stepping stones reconnecting and expanding remaining habitats
- More of our historic wetlands and restorable peat are wet
- Reconnect local communities to mosslands and wetlands, and their heritage
- Better quality and better-connected ponds

These priorities cover a range of wetland habitats including lowland raised bog, fen, marsh, swamp, wet woodlands, wet grasslands and ponds.

##### ***Wider benefits***

- Rainwater storage and flood resilience

- Reduced carbon emission and increased storage of carbon
- Recreation and leisure
- Improved water, soil and air quality

**Species supported**

Delivering on these priorities will benefit many mossland and wetland species including:

- Sphagnum
- Willow tit
- Lapwing
- Curlew
- Meadowsweet
- Bitten
- Manchester Argus
- Nightjar
- Water vole
- Great crested newt

## ***Actions***

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Practical actions</b>
<b>More lowland bogs, fens and other wetland habitats are restored and better managed for nature, able to store more water and emit less carbon</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhance and manage existing and remnant areas of lowland raised bog, fens and other wetland habitats over the long term, to improve diversity.</li> <li>- Enhance patchworks of semi-natural habitats surrounding our remaining lowland raised bog, fens and other wetland habitats to improve resilience.</li> <li>- Reintroduce lost species across a range of mossland and wetland communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Bigger mosslands and wetlands, with more habitat corridors and stepping stones reconnecting and expanding remaining habitats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restore degraded wetland sites and areas of restorable deep peat, particularly where they will connect remaining wetland habitats.</li> <li>- Create more patchworks of wetland habitats and transitional habitats, particularly around remaining and restored lowland raised bog, fens and other wetland habitats.</li> <li>- Maintain and enhance restored sites and new corridors over the long term to maximise benefits for nature, carbon emissions reductions and water management.</li> </ul>
<b>More of our historic wetlands and restorable peat are wet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify former wetland habitats and investigate their potential for restoration to contribute to climate resilience and nature recovery.</li> <li>- Reduce land drainage and positively manage the hydrology of land adjacent to lowland raised bog, fens and other sensitive wetland habitats, to increase climate resilience</li> <li>- Encourage the uptake of wetter farming and commercial paludiculture.</li> </ul>
<b>Reconnect local communities to mosslands and wetlands, and their heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enable more well-managed recreational access to mosslands and wetlands.</li> <li>- Increase awareness of the importance and benefits of healthy mosslands and wetlands.</li> <li>- Enhance and extend networks and other access opportunities for walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and other outdoor recreational pursuits, in ways that are compatible with habitat enhancement.</li> </ul>
<b>Better quality and better-connected ponds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Safeguard, enhance and appropriately manage existing ponds and encourage good connectivity to surrounding habitats.</li> <li>- Create a variety of new ponds, in the right places to connect existing ponds.</li> </ul>

### 6.1.5. Grassland, farmland and lowland heath

#### ***Opportunities***

Grassland covers an estimated 30% of land in the city-region. The vast majority of this grassland has been altered and could support more wildlife through changes in land use and land management practices. Those species-rich grasslands that do remain are predominantly found outside of agricultural land in nature reserves and designated sites, but also in areas like road verges, churchyards, and urban brownfield sites.

To act for nature, we need to safeguard remaining semi-natural grasslands and lowland heaths before they are lost. We can then enhance or restore these habitats so they can support more species, such as lapwing, grasshoppers, barn owls and bees. In rural areas, with the right incentives and support, our farmers can be at the heart of creating healthier soils and more species-rich grasslands and croplands, alongside food production. Healthy populations of pollinators and healthy soils can in turn support food production. In our urban areas, many of our grasslands are closely mown and there are opportunities to allow areas of longer grass to flower and wilder areas, benefiting bumblebees and other pollinators and providing more food for urban birds such as swifts.

By creating or restoring grasslands, field margins or road verges, where they will connect remaining semi-natural grasslands across river valleys and between different landowners, we can create networks for grassland species alongside where we live and work.

#### ***Priorities***

- Species-rich and semi-natural grasslands and lowland heath are safeguarded, well-managed and restored
- More species-rich grasslands and lowland heath created, particularly where they will connect existing habitats
- More urban meadows, with native wildflower species and longer grasses
- More dedicated spaces for wildlife integrated into farmland and buildings, alongside food production
- More biodiverse farmland, with healthier soils, better water management and fewer intensively managed areas

These priorities cover a variety of grassland habitat types, as well as croplands, pasture and lowland dry heath.

#### ***Wider benefits***

- Opportunities for leisure and recreation
- Reduced carbon emission and increased storage of carbon
- Building community interaction through establishing or managing local grassland areas
- Short-term storing of rainwater and managing flood risk
- Wildlife-friendly food production, and healthier soils

### ***Species supported***

Delivering on these priorities will benefit many grassland and farmland species including:

- Orchid
- Barn owl
- Lapwing
- Kestrel
- Bumblebees
- Cinnabar
- Orange-tip (Cuckooflower)
- Grasshopper
- Waxcap fungi

### ***Actions***

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Practical actions</b>
<b>Species-rich and semi-natural grasslands and lowland heath are safeguarded, well-managed and restored</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identify and safeguard remaining notable semi-natural grasslands.</li><li>- Enhance and appropriately manage remaining semi-natural grasslands and lowland heath, including increasing species richness.</li><li>- Showcase successful grassland and heath management and encourage awareness of the value of these habitats.</li></ul>
<b>More species-rich grasslands and lowland heath created, particularly where they will connect existing habitats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Creation or restoration of species-rich grasslands and lowland heath, particularly where they will expand or act as stepping stones or corridors.</li><li>- Ensure appropriate long-term management of newly created grassland to achieve increased species-richness, and lowland heath.</li><li>- Enhance and manage improved or semi-improved grasslands to boost species richness.</li></ul>
<b>More urban meadows, with native wildflower</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Allow areas of urban grasslands to grow long and flower and increase species diversity through planting or other measures.</li><li>- Encourage greater understanding and acceptance of long grass and less intensively managed grasslands.</li></ul>



<b>species and longer grasses</b>	
<b>More dedicated spaces for wildlife integrated into farmland and buildings, alongside food production</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Install or enable more accessible homes for birds and bats on and around farms and rural buildings.</li> <li>- Set aside dedicated patches of unmanaged or uncropped areas, along field boundaries, margins, corners or less productive areas, particularly where they will connect.</li> <li>- Create and maintain forage areas and homes for species on farmland, alongside food production.</li> <li>- Grow and maintain multi-species cover crops, and cut later in the year, to provide food and cover for wildlife.</li> <li>- Support and collaborate with farmers, landowners and managers to enhance their land for nature, alongside food production, and involve farmers in targeted species conservation programmes.</li> </ul>
<b>More biodiverse farmland, with healthier soils, better water management and fewer intensively managed areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Manage grassland and cropland at lower intensity and with low inputs.</li> <li>- Reduce soil erosion, minimise bare ground and encourage soil recovery.</li> <li>- Support switch to diversified plant species for grazing livestock, establish and maintain herbal lays or species-rich hay meadows.</li> <li>- Improve water quality and pollution management on farmland, in farmyards and control livestock access to waterbodies.</li> </ul>

### 6.1.6. Upland moorlands

#### ***Opportunities***

Our upland moorlands, from the Peak District National Park to the West Pennine Moors, are where many residents across the city-region spend time in nature and hold significant cultural value for local communities and visitors. They are also ecologically significant, forming part of a much larger expansive upland moorland habitats stretching up to the Scottish borders. Our uplands often appear wild and untouched, but they have been subject to drainage and pollution for many decades, heavily managed and used for agriculture and sporting land uses.

As some of our biggest remaining natural spaces, our uplands could play a crucial role in large scale nature recovery. There is potential to enhance and restore more extensive areas of our uplands. Where areas of bare peat still remain, there is potential to work faster and on larger scale to revegetate, rewet and restore these areas towards active blanket bog. Greater diversity could also be encouraged by creating patchworks of different habitats, including trees, scrub and rare upland oak woodlands, in the right places.

Restoring and increasing the diversity of our upland moorlands will help deliver wider benefits and adapt the city-region to climate change. Restoring blanket bog reduces carbon emissions from peat soils and helps draw down more carbon, as well as encouraging higher water tables which reduces risk of wildfires. Areas of restored blanket bog also improve our drinking water quality and stores more water, reducing the risk of flooding downstream.

Upland communities, landowners, land managers and farmers, all of whom already shape these landscapes, have a critical role to play in the legacy of this landscape for nature. There are opportunities to support these communities to meet the multiple demands on their land, whether it is recreation, nature recovery, food production or other uses.

#### ***Priorities***

- Restore and rewet bare upland peat to active blanket bog and wet heath, to retain more carbon and hold more rainwater
- More varied and well-functioning upland habitats, with patchworks of restored bog, heath, trees, springs and flushes, reducing flood and wildfire risk
- More of our upland flushes are thriving, rich with sphagnum moss, rushes and sedges, supporting a diverse range of species
- More trees, small woods and scrub are naturally regenerating, across our uplands, helping slow and store water
- More upland communities, land managers and landowners are rewarded for helping nature recover

These priorities cover a range of moorland habitats, including blanket bog, upland heath, upland springs, flushes and fens, upland woodlands and grasslands.

### ***Wider benefits***

- Carbon storage
- Recreation and leisure
- Water storage
- Water quality
- Reduced wildfire risk

### ***Species***

Delivering on these priorities will benefit many upland species including:

- Red grouse
- Brown and Mountain Hare
- Heather
- Cotton grass
- Kestrel
- Meadow Pipit
- Sphagnum
- Bilberry

### ***Actions***

Priority	Practical actions
<b>More varied and well-functioning upland habitats, with patchworks of restored bog, heath, trees, springs and flushes, reducing flood and wildfire risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Stabilise, rewet and restore deep bare peat towards active blanket bog, where appropriate</li><li>- Encourage more diverse native vegetation and more flower-rich habitats, in appropriate places, on existing upland moorlands.</li><li>- Create transitional habitats or corridors to increase linkage between our uplands and lowland habitats, where conditions allow.</li><li>- Improve wildfire risk management by creating natural fire breaks and boost awareness.</li></ul>

<p><b>More of our upland flushes are thriving, rich with sphagnum moss, rushes and sedges, supporting a diverse range of species</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restore more naturalised wet areas, flushes and ponds.</li> <li>- Create rough, diverse grasslands around flushes and wetlands, wet in some areas with rushes around flushes and springs.</li> <li>- Reduce and slow land drainage and encourage natural flood management.</li> </ul>
<p><b>More trees, small woods and scrub are naturally regenerating, in appropriate places, across our uplands, helping slow and store water</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage the restoration and regeneration of existing upland woodlands and clough woodlands.</li> <li>- Increase woodland and tree regeneration and planting, in appropriate places, with varying density from closed canopy woodland in places to scattered trees in others.</li> <li>- Encourage moorland and clough edges to 'scrub up', in appropriate places, to improve diversity, securing soils and slowing water flow.</li> <li>- Target woodland creation, tree planting and the creation of leaky dams, where they will also contribute towards slowing water flow.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Restore and rewet bare peat to active blanket bog and wet heath, to retain more carbon and hold more rainwater</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stabilise, rewet and restore deep bare peat towards active blanket bog and wet heath, where appropriate.</li> <li>- Work at scale to restore larger areas of remaining blanket bog faster.</li> </ul>
<p><b>More upland communities, land managers and landowners are rewarded for helping nature recover</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support the switch to land management practices that will further enhance the diversity of upland habitats.</li> <li>- Encourage a reduction in the intensity of upland grazing and less intensive management of uplands.</li> <li>- Maintain, restore and increase upland hedgerows, hedgerow trees and field boundaries as important habitats.</li> <li>- Encourage sustainable recreation and reduce activities that damage upland habitats.</li> </ul>

## 6.2. Species priorities and actions

Working to enhance, create and connect habitats across Greater Manchester will be of huge benefit to many species. Some species and groups of species are particularly at risk locally, needing bespoke action beyond wider habitat priorities set out in this strategy. Focused attention can help these species bounce back and avoid local species loss.

To identify priority species for this strategy, we have focused on those local species particularly at risk that need targeted action beyond our habitat priorities. Guided by a national process set out by Natural England and working with local species experts (see appendix 2), 16 priority species and species groups have been selected for this first iteration of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The following factors were considered in the selection of these species from a long list of over 400 species:

- **Conservation status:** Particularly threatened, vulnerable or endangered species (according to International Union for Conservation of Nature red lists, national red lists of species at risk of extinction<sup>39</sup> or Biodiversity Action Plan Section 41 UK lists)
- **Bespoke requirements:** Specific action required to aid these species recovery beyond the habitat priorities
- **Urgency:** Urgent action needed to stabilise species loss
- **Deliverability:** Feasibility of actions that could be delivered within Greater Manchester to aid recovery
- **National Significance:** National significance of the population in Greater Manchester
- **Wider benefits:** Benefits for other species and wider ecosystem services, such as flood risk reduction or carbon sequestration
- **Climate change:** Vulnerability to current and future climate change
- **Local significance:** Species that are locally significant in Greater Manchester

There are of course many vulnerable species beyond those that we have been able to prioritise within this strategy. We hope that actions taken to help conserve these species mean that other species can be prioritised in future updates to this strategy.

### 6.2.1. Priority species and actions

Species and groups of species for prioritised local nature recovery are stated below. Where several species requiring similar actions have been identified then they have been collected into a group.

#### Individual priority species

- Mountain hare
- Water vole
- Willow tit
- Black-necked grebe
- Hedgehog
- European hornet
- Black poplar
- Slow worm

#### Priority species groups

- Upland bees, butterflies and moths: *Bilberry bumblebee, Tormentil mining bee, Small copper butterfly, Wall butterfly, Small Heath butterfly, Dark green fritillary butterfly, Gypsy bumblebee, Manchester treble-bar moth*
- Urban birds: *Swift, house martin, black redstart*
- Farmland birds: *Tree sparrow, Corn bunting, Linnet, Yellow wagtail and Yellow hammer*
- Grassland fungi: *Pink waxcap, Jubilee waxcap, Oliver earthtongue, Powdercap strangler, Violet coral*
- Migratory fish: *Atlantic salmon, European Eel*
- Grassland ground-nesting birds: *Curlew, Lapwing, Twite, Skylark, Golden plover, Dunlin, Snipe*
- Brownfield insects: *Dingy skipper, Common blue, Trifurcula cryptella*
- Mossland insects: *Large Heath, Crambus hamella, Gelechia cuneatella, Glyphipterix haworthana, Lampronia fuscata, Large red-belted clearwing, Monochroa suffusella, Phiaris schulziana, Purple-bordered gold*

Priority species or species groups	Practical actions
<b>Mountain hare</b>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection from predators and livestock using fencing or other exclusion methods</li> <li>• Identification and monitoring of population hotspots and breeding areas</li> <li>• Reduction in barriers to movement across key roads and railways near population hotspots</li> <li>• Landowner and land manager engagement and support</li> </ul> <p><i>General habitat actions that will support recovery:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stabilise, rewet and restore any remaining deep bare peat towards active blanket bog.</li> <li>• Encourage more diverse native vegetation and more flower-rich habitats, in appropriate places, on existing upland moorlands and heath</li> <li>• Improve wildfire risk management by creating natural fire breaks and boosting awareness.</li> </ul>
<b>Water vole</b>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification, monitoring and safeguarding of key remaining population strongholds and breeding areas</li> <li>• Protection from predators (Mink) and livestock</li> <li>• Carefully management of water bodies and water courses or ditches where water vole populations are present</li> </ul> <p><i>General habitat actions that will support recovery:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance existing habitats within our waterbodies and grassland, wetlands and woodlands habitats alongside waterbodies.</li> <li>• Restore more natural riverbanks, in appropriate locations, and reduce invasive species.</li> <li>• Improve water quality by reducing point source and diffuse pollution</li> </ul>
<b>Willow tit</b>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and safeguarding of key remaining nesting sites and population strongholds</li> <li>• Monitoring of key population strongholds, particularly for the impacts of competition or predation</li> <li>• Increase availability of specialist nest sites in key population strongholds</li> <li>• Creation and maintenance of young wet woodlands, with a dense under canopy and availability of dead wood</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement in connectivity of remaining populations through targeted creation of young wet woodlands</li> </ul>
<b>Black-necked grebe</b>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding of existing breeding sites</li> <li>• Bespoke wetland habitat creation and management, including management of water levels, creation of shallow water areas and reedbeds, removal of high-impact invasive species</li> <li>• Protection from disturbance, particularly from water sports or recreation at breeding sites</li> <li>• Protection from predation</li> <li>• Reduced litter at key breeding areas and population strongholds</li> </ul> <p><i>General habitat actions that will support recovery:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve water quality by reducing point source and diffuse pollution</li> </ul>
<b>Hedgehog</b>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of habitat piles or hedgehog homes</li> <li>• Reduced barriers to movement through the creation of hedgehog highways between gardens, with 13cm square gaps in fences to allow movement between gardens</li> <li>• Reduction in light pollution and litter in parks and gardens</li> <li>• Increased awareness and education</li> </ul> <p><i>General habitat actions that will support recovery:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage spaces in a wildlife-friendly way by leaving areas of longer grass for wildlife in gardens or reduce mowing, reducing use of pesticides and herbicides.</li> <li>• Create greener spaces, and more connected habitats, along existing and new streets, highways and cycleways</li> </ul>
<b>European hornet</b>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness raising and education</li> <li>• Increased monitoring and identification of population strongholds</li> <li>• Reduced nest disturbance or destruction</li> </ul>
<b>Manchester black poplar</b>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification, safeguarding and monitoring of existing trees</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good management of existing trees, including management of pests and diseases</li> <li>• Increased planting of black poplar in the right locations, using locally appropriate source stock</li> <li>• Improvement of genetic variability in newly planted trees</li> </ul>
<b>Slow worm</b>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness and education</li> <li>• Identification, monitoring and safeguarding of population hotspots</li> <li>• Creation of hibernation refuges or shelters</li> <li>• Creation of sunny shelter basking spots</li> <li>• Reduced light pollution in population hotspots</li> </ul>
<p><b>Upland bees, butterflies and moths:</b>  <i>Bilberry bumblebee, Tormentil mining bee, Small copper butterfly, Wall butterfly, Small Heath butterfly, Dark green fritillary butterfly, Gypsy bumblebee, Manchester treble-bar moth</i></p>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and monitoring of population hotspots</li> <li>• Specialist habitat creation and management to ensure forage areas and nesting sites (such as south facing embankments) and good variation in heath age and structure or hedgerows</li> <li>• Landowner and land manager engagement and support to avoid use of pesticides, herbicides and nitrates</li> <li>• Avoidance of overgrazing and recreational pressures in population hotspots</li> <li>• Prevention of wildfires</li> </ul> <p><i>General habitat actions that will support recovery:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage more diverse native vegetation and more flower-rich habitats, in appropriate places, on existing upland moorlands and heath</li> </ul>
<p><b>Urban birds:</b> <i>Swift, house martin, black redstart</i></p>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness and education</li> <li>• Identification, monitoring and safeguarding of nesting sites</li> <li>• Installation of species-appropriate nesting boxes, such as swift bricks or boxes, house martin nesting cups</li> <li>• Creation of bog gardens and areas of long grass</li> </ul> <p><i>General habitat interventions that will support recovery:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage spaces in a wildlife-friendly way by leaving areas of longer grass for wildlife in gardens or reduce mowing, reducing use of pesticides and herbicides.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support species by installing homes for wildlife on buildings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Farmland birds:</b> <i>Tree sparrow, corn bunting, linnet, yellow wagtail and yellow hammer</i></p>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplementary feeding stations over the winter</li> <li>• Sow winter bird seed crops</li> <li>• Avoid mowing or crop harvesting during periods where nests will be impacted</li> </ul> <p><i>General habitat interventions that will support recovery:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow and maintain multi-species cover crops, and cut later in the year, to provide food and cover over the winter.</li> <li>• Set aside dedicated patches of unmanaged or uncropped areas with tall grasses, along field boundaries and margins, field corners or less productive areas, particularly where they will connect.</li> <li>• Install homes for birds on and around farms and rural buildings, to improve farmland species diversity.</li> <li>• Safeguard, manage, and restore the species diversity and structure of existing hedgerows.</li> <li>• Create more native hedgerows</li> </ul>
<p><b>Migratory fish:</b> <i>Atlantic salmon, european eel</i></p>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and encourage in river plant communities and remove high-impact invasive species</li> <li>• Encourage more natural river geomorphology that will deliver a mixture of water speeds (areas of slower and faster flow) and riverbed substrates</li> <li>• Avoid impacting White Clawed Crayfish</li> </ul> <p><i>General habitat interventions that will support recovery</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve mobility (restoring migratory pathways upstream) by removing barriers such as weirs, daylighting buried or covered waterbodies or installing by-pass structures, where feasible.</li> <li>• Improve water quality by reducing point source and diffuse pollution</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grassland fungi:</b> <i>Pink waxcap, jubilee waxcap, oliver earthtongue, powdercap strangler, violet coral</i></p>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification, safeguarding and monitoring of important remaining sites</li> <li>• Landowner and land manager engagement and support</li> </ul> <p><i>General habitat interventions that will support recovery</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance and appropriately manage remaining semi-natural grasslands to good condition, including avoiding use of pesticides, herbicides and nitrates and appropriate grazing and livestock management</li> <li>• Showcase successful grassland management and encourage awareness of the value of our remaining semi-natural grassland</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grassland ground nesting birds:</b> <i>Curlew, lapwing, twite, skylark, golden plover, dunlin, snipe</i></p>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification, safeguarding and monitoring of nesting sites</li> <li>• Protection of nesting sites from predators, livestock and human disturbance using fencing, signage or other exclusion methods</li> <li>• Landowner, land manager and public awareness, engagement and support</li> </ul> <p><i>General habitat interventions that will support recovery</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage more diverse native vegetation and more flower-rich habitats, in appropriate places</li> <li>• Improve wildfire risk management by creating natural fire breaks and boosting awareness.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Brownfield insects:</b> <i>Dingy skipper, common blue, trifurcula cryptella</i></p>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and monitoring of important sites</li> <li>• Landowner and land manager engagement and support</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mossland insects:</b> <i>Large heath, crambus hamella, gelechia cuneatella, glyphipterix haworthana, lampronia fuscata, large red-belted clearwing, monochroa suffusella, phiaris schulziana, purple-bordered gold</i></p>	<p><i>Bespoke actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification, safeguarding and monitoring of important remaining sites</li> <li>• Specialist habitat creation and management to ensure good availability of flower-rich areas as pollen and nectar sources, forage areas and nesting sites</li> <li>• Landowner and land manager engagement and support</li> <li>• Appropriate grazing and livestock management</li> </ul> <p><i>General habitat interventions that will support recovery</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage more diverse native vegetation and more flower-rich habitats, in appropriate places</li> <li>• Manage land at lower intensity and with low inputs, reduce herbicide, pesticide use and minimise use of nutrients.</li> </ul>

### 6.2.2. Reintroductions

Alongside prioritising action to help vulnerable species, there is public interest in the reintroduction of lost species. In a public survey of priorities for this strategy, the reintroduction of lost species was the second most requested action for species (see appendix 5).

Reintroductions are possible in urban areas. For example, over the last decade the Greater Manchester Wetland Partnership have successfully reintroduced the Manchester Argus Butterfly (Large Heath Butterfly) at Astley Moss in Wigan and are working towards further species reintroductions. Based on responses to the public survey the most popular species for local reintroduction is the Beaver. Alongside Beavers, other popular candidates for reintroduction included the Red Squirrel, Pine Marten and large birds of prey such as the Red Kite or Hen Harrier.

- **Beaver:** Successful reintroductions of Beavers have taken place in several locations nearby to Greater Manchester, including at the Hatchmere Nature Reserve in Cheshire, Willington Wetland Nature Reserve in Derbyshire, and Cors Dyfi Nature Reserve in Montgomeryshire. The development of a reintroduction group, concerted landowner engagement and the identification of viable reintroduction sites would all be key actions on the journey to reintroduce this species.
- **Birds of prey:** The reintroduction of large birds of prey species such as the Red Kite have been successfully undertaken in Leeds, Oxfordshire, Gateshead and Cumbria over the last 20 years. Based on records of Red Kite sightings since the initial reintroductions in Yorkshire, Cumbria and Gateshead populations of Red Kite have successfully expanded across northern England and should eventually reach Greater Manchester. The development of a supportive reintroduction group for large birds of prey to track and monitor progress, as well as public and landowner engagement and education, could help to ensure the successful return of this species to Greater Manchester.
- **Pine marten:** Pine martens are not currently thought to be present in Greater Manchester. Initial translocation and release projects are underway in the UK to boost remaining remnant population in Wales and the creation of a new population nearby in the Forest of Dean. Pine martens are thought to be slowly naturally recolonising northern England from existing Scottish populations, with sightings in Kielder Forest, Northumberland and the North York Moors over recent years. Action now to boost the size, condition and connection between our woodlands will help future recovery efforts, either through reintroduction or natural recolonisation.
- **Red squirrel:** Significant populations of grey squirrel across the city-region mean that a reintroduction of red squirrels would be unlikely to be successful due to the high risk of squirrel pox transfer from grey to red squirrels. For a reintroduction to be considered in the future, grey squirrel populations would have to undergo significant population management.

## **7. Delivery: How you can deliver on the strategy**

### **7.1. Who can do what?**

We want this strategy to inspire everyone across Greater Manchester to take action to help nature's recovery. The smallest actions – at home and in our local communities – can add up to make a big difference and make space for nature in every community. Larger initiatives can also have a transformational impact, providing space at a landscape-scale for nature to recover.

What each of us can do will vary – we all have different ways we can support the implementation of the strategy. Below, we cover the following:

- Those who own or manage land;
- Those who are involved in developing land for new homes or commercial spaces;
- Those who run or manage businesses or other organisations;
- Those who are involved in community-led groups and action;
- Those who run or manage environmental charities or partnerships; and
- Those of us who live, study or work in Greater Manchester.

The actions set out and the areas for which they are identified are not intended to be prescriptive; instead, they can help guide existing or planned nature recovery activities.

#### **7.1.1. Landowners and land managers:**

##### ***Why?***

Those who own and/or manage land in Greater Manchester can make a significant contribution to implementing the strategy, particularly those responsible for agricultural land (32% of GM's land use), amenity spaces (19% of GM's land use) and transport infrastructure, like roads and railways (13% of GM's land use). This land might be used for another primary purpose – such as growing food, providing transport routes or providing space for leisure activities or for people to enjoy – but with opportunity to provide more space for nature alongside this.

##### ***How?***

Landowners and land managers can use the strategy to:

- Understand how their land fits within the Nature Network;
- Inform the actions they could carry out on their land; and
- Inform and support applications for funding and delivery of projects on their land.

#### **7.1.2. Developers and planners:**

##### ***Why?***

There are plans to build over 175,000<sup>40</sup> homes over the next decade and a half within the nine local authorities<sup>41</sup> part of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, as part of a wider strategy to bring forward development at a scale which can drive transformational change across the city-region and play a role in delivering on the ambitions for a Nature Network<sup>42</sup>. Future growth and development of the city-region will rely on a healthy natural environment and provides an opportunity to fully integrate nature into plans for how we grow and develop the city-region.

### ***How?***

Developers and planners can use the strategy to:

- Support the integration of nature into the planning and development process;
- Understand how development sites fit within the Nature Network;
- Deliver for nature alongside the development of the land;
- Inform the selection of on-site and off-site Biodiversity Net Gain sites; and
- Inform the selection, master planning and design of development sites.

Under the Environment Act 2021, local planning authorities and decision-makers must have regard to this Local Nature Recovery Strategy in their policies, including those in their local plans (see section 5.2.4 for further details). Taking account of the LNRS proposed developments can help developers move more smoothly through planning process.

### **7.1.3. Businesses:**

#### ***Why?***

There is substantial evidence of the multiple benefits a healthy natural environment can have on for businesses and other organisations. Premises can benefit from features such as green walls and green roofs (e.g. in reducing energy use and providing natural cooling), employee retention, wellbeing and productivity, as well as beneficial marketability if nature is incorporated into the workplace. Installing SuDS such as raingardens near businesses can reduce the risk of flooding<sup>43</sup>.

#### ***How?***

Businesses and other organisations can use the strategy to:

- Inform their own corporate plans for their contribution to nature recovery;
- Create or enhance green space or raingardens on their premises, involving the local community; and
- Support community-led projects in the local area that deliver nature recovery.

### **7.1.4. Community groups:**

#### ***Why?***

Community groups across Greater Manchester are at the forefront of action to help nature recover. In coming together to improve their local natural environment, they bring people together to help them connect with nature, gain new skills, strengthen the community and improve the places where they live. This has wider benefits for people's health and wellbeing, as well as providing spaces for nature in people's communities.

#### ***How?***

Community groups can use the strategy to:

- Understand how their local natural environment (e.g. green spaces) fit within the Nature Network;
- Inform the actions they could carry out in their local community; and
- Support applications for funding and delivery of projects.

### **7.1.5. Environmental charities and partnerships:**

#### ***Why?***

Environmental charities and partnerships, such as the Greater Manchester Wetlands Partnership, the Great North Bog Partnership or the Irwell Catchment Partnership, are already undertaking crucial work to help wildlife bounce back and empower communities and landowners to take action. These organisations are at the forefront of driving forward action for nature across the city-region, helping to bring forward new projects and initiatives to restore habitats, reintroduce species and work with communities. Many of these charities have been closely involved in development of this strategy.

#### ***How?***

Environmental charities can use this strategy to:

- To target funding and investment towards the Nature Network;
- To build collaborative projects and coordinate action;
- To inform their priorities and actions; and
- To work with and engage communities, businesses, local authorities and landowners.

### **7.1.6. The NHS, schools and other local institutions:**

#### ***Why?***

Organisations and institutions like the NHS, local schools and other local institutions such as universities are often significant land owners and managers, with large estates and campuses which could become assets for nature and people to enjoy. For organisations like the NHS, schools and universities, promoting the health benefits of spending time in nature and integrating nature in estates can help to boost the wellbeing of patients and students, improve recovery times and learning outcomes, as well as wider mental health and wellbeing benefits.

#### ***How?***

The NHS, schools and other local institutions can use this strategy to:

- To inform how they create or enhance green space or gardens on their premises, such as a therapeutic or sensory gardens;
- To build and inspire nature based educational or health programmes, such as green social prescribing programmes;
- To inform how they could change the management of their green estate to benefit nature; and
- To engage local communities with action for nature on their estates.

### **7.1.7. Residents:**

#### ***Why?***

With a population of nearly three million people, Greater Manchester's residents carry huge potential to contribute to nature recovery. Private gardens - which make up around 15% of total land use in the city-region - are ideal spaces to take action. Yards, balconies and alleyways can also be greened and act as valuable space for nature, particularly pollinators. Working together with neighbours and the local community can help improve bigger areas and support initiatives to improve a variety of spaces for nature across neighbourhoods.

#### ***How?***

Residents can use the strategy to:

- Understand how their local natural environment (e.g. green spaces) fit within the Nature Network;
- Understand what they can do to take action or expand on existing activities.; and
- Inspire them to get involved in local community initiatives to support nature's recovery.

## **7.2. What more do we need to be successful?**

There are several key factors that will enable successful implementation of the strategy. These include the need for funding, skills and capacity and partnerships to deliver.

### **7.2.1. Funding**

Delivering the priorities in this strategy will require funding. To do this, we need to maximise the extent and impact of any public funding in the city-region. However, given the scale of action required, nature recovery cannot be achieved through public funding alone (such as agricultural environment schemes and grant funding), and accessing private finance will be crucial. Integrated approaches for ambitions like water quality improvement, flood risk reduction and benefits for nature and people, will need to make the most effective use of public money. To maximise private funding, we need to:

- Develop business models to facilitate other sources of funding, focussing on initiatives such as on-site and off-site Biodiversity Net Gain, carbon offsetting particularly through private finance;
- Continue to develop and implement policies locally that incentivise funding into the natural environment; and
- Put in place the right governance arrangements to facilitate the involvement of different funders and provide evidence and confidence in delivery on the ground.

### **7.2.2. Skills and capacity**

Delivering the strategy will require a range of skills and capacity across a range of sectors, including:

- Practical habitat creation, restoration and management work;
- Integrating the natural environment into a range of other sectors, including housing development, infrastructure planning, engineering, development and healthcare; and
- Developing knowledge of the natural environment in other supporting sectors to support delivery, such as financial and legal.

### **7.1.3. Partnerships**

There is a strong record of private, public and voluntary/community (VCSFE) sectors working together to deliver improvements to the natural environment. This spans from the strategic city-region wide partnerships like the Greater Manchester Local Nature Partnership, to partnerships on specific projects and in particular locations. We need to continue to deepen and strengthen these partnerships to deliver this strategy.



### **7.3. How will we know if we're successful?**

Over the next ten years, monitoring the delivery of the targets and ambitions in this strategy will be crucial in understanding our progress in tackling the biodiversity emergency. To track progress a monitoring framework will enable us to track progress towards some of the most important elements of this strategy

GMCA will set up a monitoring group on the delivery of the strategy as part of the Natural Capital Group (Local Nature Partnership) and work with the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit and partner organisations to monitor progress on this strategy. This group will monitor and track progress on the main targets set out in the strategy and monitoring framework. Annual updates will be produced to report on progress against the targets and delivery of the strategy.

## 8. Acknowledgements

GMCA would like to thank all those who contributed their time and effort to help co-produce this strategy for Greater Manchester.

We would particularly like to thank the contributions made by those in our -

Steering Group:

- Canals and Rivers Trust
- City of Trees
- Envance
- Greater Manchester Ecology Unit
- Groundwork Greater Manchester
- Irwell Catchment Partnership
- Lancashire Wildlife Trust
- National Farmers Union
- National Trust
- Natural England
- NHS Greater Manchester
- Peak District National Park
- Royal Horticultural Society
- Southway Housing
- The Environment Agency
- The Forestry Commission
- Transport for Greater Manchester
- United Utilities
- University of Manchester
- Upper Mersey Catchment Partnership
- Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

Officers Group:

- Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
- Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
- Manchester City Council
- Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
- Salford City Council
- Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
- Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
- Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
- Greater Manchester Ecology Unit
- Natural England

Species Expert Advisory Group:

- David Earl, GM, Lancashire and North Merseyside County Recorder, BSBI
- Gary Hedges, Liverpool Museum
- John Harrison, Assistant Vice County Recorder, South Lancashire Bat Group
- Steve Hindle, National Trust Grassland Fungi Project Officer
- Karen McCartney, County Recorder for aculeate Hymenoptera for Greater Manchester, BWARS
- Kevin Nash, the Environment Agency

- Lorna Drake, Species Recovery and Reintroductions Higher Officer for Cheshire to Lancashire, Natural England
- Martyn Walker, Lancashire Wildlife Trust
- Paul Barrington, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit
- Stephen Palmer, Lancashire Vice County Recorder, Lancashire Moths
- Steve Atkins, County Bird Recorder Greater Manchester
- Stuart Fraser, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit
- Tony Parker, Cheshire, Merseyside, Lancashire, Greater Manchester Mammal Recorder, Mammal Society

## **9. List of Appendices**

**Appendix 1.** Relationship between the GM LNRS and other GM policies and strategies

**Appendix 2.** Evidence and processes used in preparing the GM LNRS

- Appendix 2a. Process and evidence used to develop priorities and actions for the GM LNRS
- Appendix 2b. Outline of key inputs and process involved in developing the species priorities and actions
- Appendix 2c. Processes and key steps in mapping opportunity areas for the GM LNRS
- Appendix 2d. List of mapped actions in the GM LNRS opportunity areas
- Appendix 2e. List of existing strategies and plans used to inform the priorities and actions in the GM LNRS

**Appendix 3.** Greater Manchester State of Nature Report

**Appendix 4.** Stakeholder Engagement undertaken for the GM LNRS

**Appendix 5.** Greater Manchester Plan for Nature Public Survey Results

**Appendix 6.** Detailed Description of Greater Manchester landscapes and habitats.

**Appendix 7.** Greater Manchester Habitat Priorities and Actions, including technical details

## References and notes

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- <sup>1</sup> **Lamont and Hinson. (2024).** A narrative review of reviews of nature exposure and human health and well-being in the UK. Natural England. Available on the [Natural England Access to Evidence website \(external link\)](#).
- <sup>2</sup> **Natural England. (2020).** Managing Ecosystem Services Evidence Review (Formerly Ecosystem Services Transfer Toolkit). Available on the [Natural England Access to Evidence website \(external link\)](#).
- <sup>3</sup> The **Living Planet Index (LPI)** is a measure of the state of the world's biological diversity, based on average percentage change in population sizes of vertebrate species from terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats. The LPI is adopted by the UN Convention of Biological Diversity as an indicator of progress. The Living Planet Index is one indicator among many which demonstrates the global decline in our biodiversity. Available on the [Living Planet Index website \(external link\)](#).
- <sup>4</sup> **The State of Nature Partnership. (2023).** State of Nature 2023. Available on the [State of Nature Partnership website \(external link\)](#).
- <sup>5</sup> **GMCA. (2024).** Greater Manchester State of Nature Report, Available on the [GMCA website \(external link\) and appendix 3](#).
- <sup>6</sup> **GMCA and the Environment Agency. (2021).** The natural capital approach in Greater Manchester, Available on [the GM Green City Region website \(external link\)](#).
- <sup>7</sup> **Pimm et al. (1995).** The Future of Biodiversity. Science, 269, 5222. Available on the [Science.org website \(external link\)](#).
- <sup>8</sup> **De Vos et al. (2015).** Estimating the normal background rate of species extinction. Conservation Biology. 29, 2. Available on the [pubmed website \(external link\)](#).
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- <sup>10</sup> The **Biodiversity Intactness Index** is produced by the National History Museum. Available on the [National History Museum \(external link\)](#).
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- <sup>13</sup> **GMCA. (2021).** Nature Recovery Survey, GM Consult. [Available on the GM Consult website](#).
- <sup>14</sup> **Greater Manchester Combined Authority** internal analysis completed using data from [Natural England ANGST standard maps \(external link\)](#) and [Office for National Statistics population estimates \(external link\)](#).
- <sup>15</sup> **Natural England. (2023).** Green Infrastructure Standards for England Summary. Available on the [Natural England website \(external link\)](#).

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<sup>16</sup> **The Ramblers' Association (2021)**. The grass isn't greener for everyone: Why access to green space matters, Ramblers. [Available on the Ramblers' Association website \(external link\)](#).

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<sup>18</sup> **GMCA. (2023)**. Greater Manchester residents' survey main report. Available on the [GMCA website \(external link\)](#).

<sup>19</sup> **GMCA. (2024)**. Plan for Nature Survey. GM Consult. Available on [GMConsult website \(external link\)](#). For a review of the results of the survey please see appendix 4.

<sup>20</sup> **Irreplaceable habitats for the LNRS** are those set out in the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024. Available on the [Legislation.gov website \(external link\)](#).

<sup>21</sup> **British Trust for Ornithology. (c1980 and c2010)**. Breeding Bird Survey (Bird Atlas) c1980 & c2010 Data. [Available on the British Trust for Ornithology website \(external link\)](#).

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<sup>27</sup> **Red Rose Forest (RRF)** was one of twelve community forests established in England in 1991 as part of the then government's drive to support the regeneration of urban areas by increasing tree cover and enhancing degraded landscapes.

<sup>28</sup> **Lancashire Wildlife Trust (2021)** Briefing note: Great Manchester Wetlands NIA Partnership. Available on the [Lancashire Wildlife Trust website \(external link\)](#).

<sup>29</sup> **Smart et al. (2020)**. England Peat Strategy: Greater Manchester Peat Pilot Report for Defra. Natural England. Available on the [GM Green City Region website \(external link\)](#).

<sup>30</sup> Explanations about different types of semi-natural grasslands. Available on the [Wildlife Trust website \(external link\)](#).

<sup>31</sup> **GMCA (2024)** Greater Manchester Climate Change Risk Assessment. Available on the [GMCA website \(external link\)](#).

<sup>32</sup> **Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2023)**. River Tame INNS Survey 2023. [Available on the Natural Course Website \(external link\)](#). **Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2022)** River Irwell INNS Survey (2022). [Available on the Natural Course Website \(external link\)](#).

<sup>33</sup> **Lawton et al. (2010)**. Making Space for Nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network. Report to Defra. [Available on the National Archives website \(external link\)](#).

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- <sup>34</sup> These core local nature sites and the nature recovery opportunity areas together form the Local Habitat Map for the GM LNRS in relation to the national LNRS statutory guidance and regulations.
- <sup>35</sup> The criteria used to select actions to be mapped are set out in appendix 2 and mapped measures listed.
- <sup>36</sup> **IGNITION. (2023).** The IGNITION Project: A baseline for nature-based solutions. The IGNITION Project. Available on the [GM Green City website \(external link\)](#).
- <sup>37</sup> National guidance on the urban greening factor is available from the National Green Infrastructure Standards. This guidance includes a calculative approach to identifying and assessing whether developments have achieved the national standards. Available on the [Natural England Green Infrastructure Standards website \(external link\)](#).
- <sup>38</sup> **Defra. (2021).** The England Trees Action Plan (2021-2024). Available on the [gov.uk website \(external link\)](#).
- <sup>39</sup> More information about national red listed species is available on the [JNCC website \(external link\)](#).
- <sup>40</sup> **GMCA. (2023).** Places for Everyone, as adopted in March 2024. Available on the [GMCA website \(external link\)](#).
- <sup>41</sup> For Stockport further growth aspirations will be outlined through a separate Local Plan for Stockport.
- <sup>42</sup> **GMCA. (2023).** Greater Manchester Growth Locations. Available on the [GMCA website \(external link\)](#).
- <sup>43</sup> **GMCA, UKGBC and Business for the Community. (2020).** Nature-based solutions to the climate emergency. The benefits to business and society. Available on the [UKGBC website \(external link\)](#).

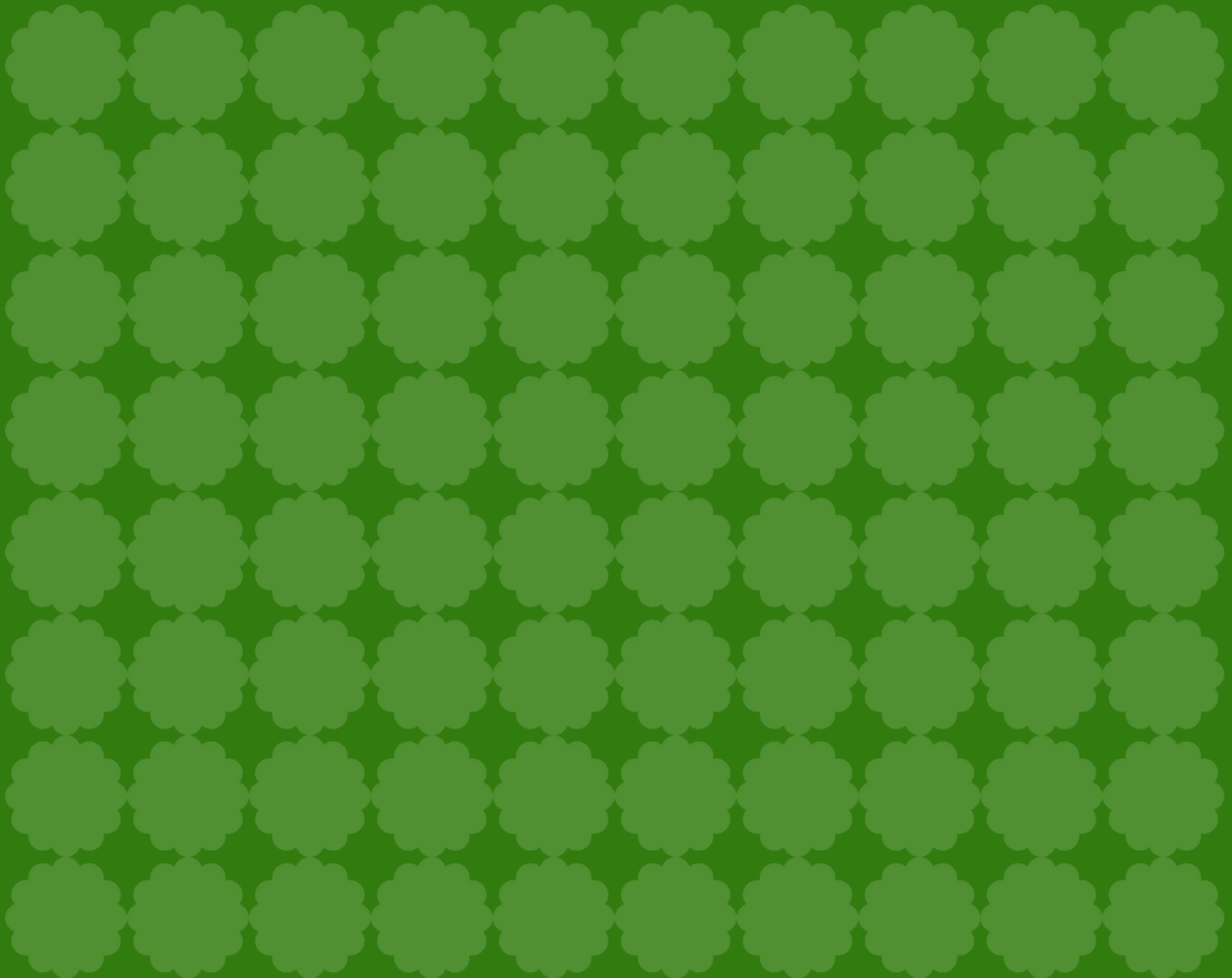
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# Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Consultation Draft - Executive Summary

30<sup>th</sup> August 2024



## What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

England is currently one of the most nature-depleted countries globally – and the situation in Greater Manchester is no different. To address this decline, Local Nature Recovery Strategies were made mandatory in 2021 under the Environment Act.

Greater Manchester's Local Nature Recovery Strategy will act as a roadmap for how we tackle the biodiversity emergency across the city-region over the next decade. It is a statutory, locally-led and evidence-based strategy that sets out how and where we should focus action to achieve this.

The strategy outlines a long-term vision, aims and targets that will help make Greater Manchester a place where people and nature to thrive. It sets out what we need to do - priorities and practical actions. It tells us where we need to focus action - how we can create a nature network across Greater Manchester, supporting biodiversity and delivering better local access to green spaces.

It covers the ten local authorities within Greater Manchester – Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan – and will be in place from 2025-2035.

The strategy has been developed collaboratively, led by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), and involved representatives from all ten local authorities, local environmental charities, infrastructure providers and other partner organisations. Public engagement has ensured that our strategy is locally driven.

## Why do we need a Local Nature Recovery Strategy in Greater Manchester?

Greater Manchester continues to grow and evolve rapidly around us, meaning the respite provided by our green spaces is ever more important. Access to nature is vital for Greater Manchester's residents, with 93% of them stating that having open green space close to their home is important and over half saying that they access the outdoors for leisure at least once a week.

Nature is good for us. It is key to us leading healthy lives and underpins the resilience of our city-region. Every year, the city-region benefits from around £1bn in essential benefits and services from our natural environment – including mental and

physical health benefits, opportunities for recreation, reduced flood risk and air pollution, supporting local food production and water supplies.

But our nature is struggling. We are in the throes of a biodiversity emergency that puts these vital benefits – and the resilience of our city-region – under threat. There will be knock-on effects if nature continues to decline, including greater pressure on public services like the National Health Service.

Access to nature already looks very different across our 2.8 million residents. Many people are not able to enjoy access to nature at home or near where they live or work, meaning the benefits of being in and close to nature are not shared equally. A third of residents do not live within 15 minutes of a decent sized green space and communities experiencing inequalities tend to live in areas with less green space.

But nature can recover and thrive alongside a growing city-region, particularly where communities and partnerships come together to help reconnect spaces for nature and people. This strategy sets out a pathway for nature to recover, to reverse biodiversity decline and benefit our residents and our economy.

## **The State of Nature in Greater Manchester**

Greater Manchester is home to an array of wildlife, some of which can be found in even the most urban parts of the city-region. The [Greater Manchester State of Nature report](#) sets out the urgency of the biodiversity emergency locally, but also the opportunities to support nature's recovery.

Echoing national trends, the State of Nature Report tells us that key species of birds and mammals in Greater Manchester and the North West of England are declining. Individual bird species population show declines of up to 40% over the last 40 years and the abundance of once common mammals (such as foxes, hedgehogs and rabbits) has dropped by between 20-40% since 1995.

Our protected sites provide valuable refuges for nature, but they cover just 11% of Greater Manchester and are highly fragmented, rather than forming a connected network for nature. Although recovering at present, they are not in as good condition as they could be. These sites have become increasingly fragmented and isolated from one another – they are too disjointed for wildlife to thrive and move between

them, meaning they do not provide a good enough foundation from which nature can recover.

We have also witnessed examples of the remarkable potential of nature to return. Nature has flourished on former industrial sites such as the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh, now a national nature reserve. Species such as otters and the Manchester Argus butterfly have returned. Woodlands have been planted on former landfill sites.

However, nature – and the successes we have seen over recent years – are under threat from a variety of sources. This includes pollution and litter, urbanisation, agriculture and climate change. These pressures make action to tackle the biodiversity emergency even more important.

## Where do we need to get to?

### Vision and Aims

Given the continued pressures facing nature, we need to plan proactively to ensure that the city-region has resilient spaces for wildlife and people to thrive. This will help nature to bounce back and at the same time provide spaces that improve our health and wellbeing, reduce flood risk, improve water quality and better adapt the city-region to climate change.

The fragmented and isolated nature of our best remaining sites, coupled with them not being in as good a condition as they could be, means that they do not currently provide the foundation from which nature can recover. To allow nature to recover our remaining spaces for nature need to not only be bigger and better, but crucially more joined up, allowing wildlife to move between them.

#### Vision:

To halt – and in time reverse – local biodiversity loss and to help nature recover, we need everyone to work together and play their part.

**Our vision for nature recovery in Greater Manchester is for everyone to work together to deliver a resilient network for nature across the city-region, connecting and enhancing wild spaces so that people and nature can thrive.**

#### Aims:

This vision can only be achieved by working together across our city-region, with communities, developers, local authorities, businesses, charities and institutions all playing a part.

To deliver on this vision we need Greater Manchester to be a place where we are all:

<b>Enhance and protect</b>	Safeguarding, enhancing and restoring our nature rich sites.
<b>Create and connect:</b>	Creating more wildlife-rich resilient spaces, where they will expand and connect spaces for wildlife and people.
<b>Build resilience</b>	Managing and reducing pressure on our environment and waterways, maximising nature's role in adapting the city-region climate change.
<b>Act together</b>	Working together to take action for nature and embed space for nature and people to thrive across all our communities.
<b>Improve access</b>	Improving local access to nature and ensure there are more opportunities to enjoy nature, in those areas which need it the most.
<b>Engage and value</b>	Improving engagement with nature and better understanding of its value in our lives.

## Targets

To track action on progress towards this vision and aims we need to set clear focused targets and monitor everyone's progress against these.

Working with partners we have selected some headline targets for our key aims. Action beyond these targets is crucial, but they will be used focus action and report on progress.

Our ambitions, by 2035, are to:

<b>Protect</b>	Increase the amount of Greater Manchester protected for nature from 11% to 15% of the city-region.
<b>Enhance</b>	Bring 50% of our Local Wildlife Sites into active management for nature conservation.
<b>Create</b>	Work towards the restoration and creation of 1,800ha of wildlife-rich land and to expand tree canopy cover from 16.5% to 18.5%.
<b>Connect</b>	Target the delivery of new wildlife-rich land and tree planting within the GM Nature Network.
<b>Improve access</b>	Increase the number of GM residents living within 15mins of a decent green space.

These are the headline targets for the strategy – a list of all the targets and monitoring framework will be published in 2025.

## Nature Network

### A spatial strategy for nature's recovery

To drive nature recovery, we need to set out a long-term spatial vision for nature recovery and focus delivery efforts on the places that will make the biggest difference for nature and the wider environment. This is to enable the targeting of effort and resources, encouraging collaboration and coordination where it will have the most impact.

This is our Nature Network for Greater Manchester, based on the established principles of “bigger, better and more joined up” set out in the Lawton review (2010).

Action outside of this Nature Network is still vitally important to reduce pressures on nature by creating a more wildlife-friendly city region.

### **The Greater Manchester Nature Network**

The Greater Manchester Nature Network is made up of the following:

- **Core local nature sites** – sites that are already protected to some degree but are fragmented, isolated and poorly connected. We need to prioritise improvements in the condition and management of these sites.
- **Nature recovery opportunity areas** – areas where there are opportunities to expand and better connect our core local nature sites. We need to prioritise efforts in these locations for the creation and restoration of habitat, alongside other land uses.

### **Taking action in the nature network**

To help guide action on nature recovery, our opportunity areas identify and map where action to enhance, restore or create different types of habitats might be possible and most beneficial. For example, areas are mapped where woodland enhancement should be encouraged or where woodland creation would be beneficial. These actions are not binding for landowners and managers but identify the areas, and types of action, that could be particularly beneficial in creating a Nature Network.

Areas mapped within our Nature Network are particularly suitable for the delivery of offsite biodiversity net gain and are classed as strategically significant in terms of the Defra Biodiversity Metric. The Nature Network does not introduce any new designations or protections, nor does it create any barriers to development. Development within these opportunity areas (or where it could have an impact on these areas) should seek to support and deliver on the priorities set out for these areas and help to work towards the wider ambitions of the Nature Network.

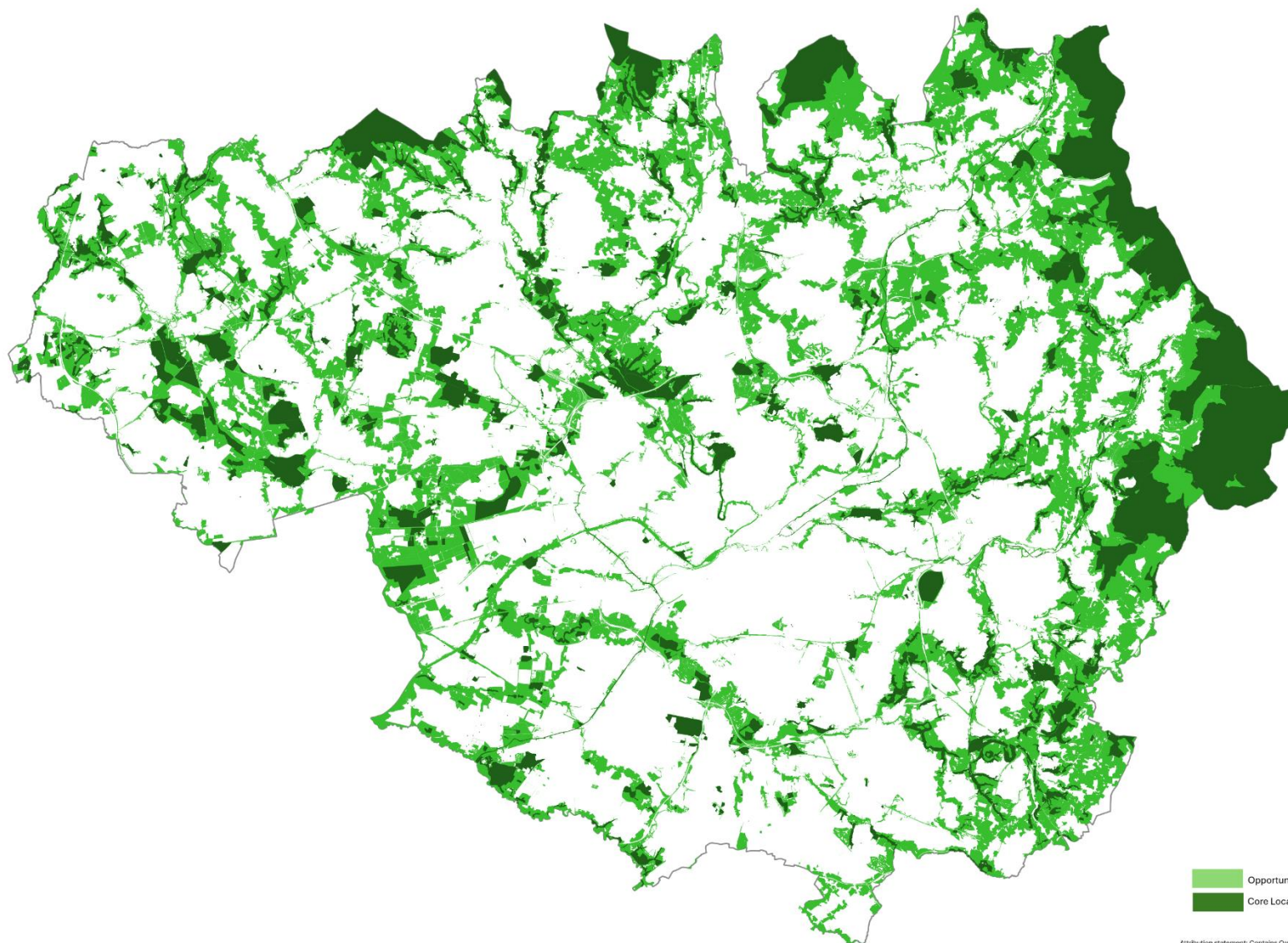
### **Taking action outside the Greater Manchester Nature Network**

Identifying a Nature Network does not mean that taking action should not be pursued in other locations across the city-region. Action can take place anywhere across the

city-region to help realise the priorities in this strategy. There are many opportunities to do this in every community. Everyone can play a part, whether it is via the creation of pocket parks, wildlife-friendly gardens or new community growing spaces.



# Greater Manchester Nature Network



Opportunity areas for nature recovery  
Core Local Nature Recovery Sites

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## Priorities and actions

### **Our approach to priorities and actions:**

To deliver our vision, aims and targets, and focus action in the Nature Network, the strategy sets out priorities – the end results that we all need to work towards. Each priority is accompanied by several practical actions, or measures – the activities that would make a positive contribution towards delivering on each priority. Each priority may have several practical actions linked to it – working towards one or a number of these actions can help achieve a priority.

### **Habitat priorities:**

To help cover the different types of places and spaces across Greater Manchester, we have developed priorities covering each of the major habitat types found in the city-region:

- Grasslands, farmland and lowland heath
- Lowland mosslands and wetlands
- Rivers, canals and waterbodies
- Upland moorlands
- Urban green spaces and buildings
- Woodlands, trees, scrub and hedgerows

### **Species priorities**

Our habitat priorities will be of huge benefit to many species. Some species, and groups of species, are particularly at risk locally and need bespoke action beyond these wider habitat priorities. It is these particularly vulnerable local species that require focused attention.

Working with local experts, 16 priority species and groups of species have been identified as priorities for this strategy. This list includes species like the willow tit,

water vole and bilberry bumblebee, swift and mountain hare, hedgehog and black poplar.

## Delivery

Mapping out a network for nature and identify priorities and actions is just the first step — the real prize is bringing the maps to life by delivering on nature recovery alongside how we grow nature across the city-region.

We want this strategy to inspire everyone across Greater Manchester to take action to help nature's recovery. The smallest actions – at home and in our local communities – can add up to make a big difference and make space for nature in every community. Larger initiatives can also have a transformational impact, providing space at a landscape-scale for nature to recover.

We all have different ways we can support the implementation of the strategy and in what capacity we can do so. The strategy is particularly important for:

- Those who own or manage land
- Those who are involved in developing land for new homes or commercial spaces
- Those who run or manage businesses or other organisations
- Those who are involved in community-led groups or environmental charities
- Those who live, study or work in Greater Manchester

Across these groups, there are several key factors that will enable successful implementation of the strategy. This includes:

- Funding – maximising its impact and accessing public and private finance.
- Skills and capacity – across a range of sectors.
- Collaboration – to bring people together to deliver projects and partnerships

### **How will we know if we're successful?**

Over the next ten years monitoring the delivery of the targets and actions in this strategy will be crucial in understanding our progress in tackling the biodiversity emergency. To track progress towards some of the most important elements of this strategy a monitoring framework, for the headline targets for this strategy, will be published in 2025. GMCA will report on progress of the strategy and its main targets annually.

## GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

Date: 25 October 2024

Subject: Greater Manchester One Network Connectivity Partner Procurement

Report of: Councillor Nick Peel, Portfolio Lead for GM Digital;  
Tom Stannard, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for GM Digital

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### PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report sets out progress on GM One Network implementation and summarises the outcome of a tender process to extend One Network to include connectivity for sites that are not served by the GM Local Full Fibre Network.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

GMCA is requested to:

1. Note the completion of the migration of c 1200 sites from legacy networks to the GM One Network across six organisations and the efforts of officers and commercial partners in its delivery.
2. Note the potential to leverage GM One Network to improve services and reduce costs across Greater Manchester's public sector including for connectivity, internet access, and other cloud services, and cyber security.
3. Approve the GMCA entering into the contract with Vodafone for GM One Network Connectivity Partner services valued at up to £2m to enable connectivity to more sites, creating an agreement that can be drawn on for the benefit of partners in GM One Network (at their cost); noting that orders under the contract will be subject to the governance set out in the report and decisions in accordance with the Constitution.

## CONTACT OFFICERS:

Phil Swan (GMCA), [phil.swan@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:phil.swan@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

## Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

### Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

Insert text

### Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion		
Health		
Resilience and Adaptation	G	Having reliable and resilient connectivity in place ensures access to digital services in the even of a risk Having reliable and resilient connectivity will allow businesses to re locate or work from alternative locations
Housing		
Economy		
Mobility and Connectivity	G	Improves digital infrastructure whilst providing the potential to reduce duplication and cost across the GM Public Sector Improved connectivity to Traffic signals (circa 150) allows for improved SMART services at Traffic Signals Connectivity supports Urban Traffic Control equipment and provides access to manage and control traffic congestion Reduces on-going cost when compared to current services provided Provides connectivity to circa 150 Transport sites with potential to be expanded to other sites
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	Equipment and capabilities that are more energy efficient than at present
Consumption and Production		

Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target  
Newer equipment is more efficient than existing equipment.

### Further Assessment(s):

Carbon Assessment

<b>G</b>	Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	<b>A</b>	Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	<b>R</b>	Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	<b>RR</b>	Negative impacts overall.
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## **Risk Management:**

See section 6

## **Legal Considerations:**

See sections 3, 4 and 5

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue and Capital**

The overall cost of the initial financial commitment in this contract will be met from financial contributions from local authority partners including TfGM and Rochdale Council based on a cost apportionment model agreed with TfGM and Rochdale.

Any capital expenditure made by TfGM will be added to the Transport Capital Programme and the associated borrowing costs met by GMCA.

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

## **Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

## **Background papers**

- GM Digital Blueprint. GMCA Report March 2023.
- Greater Manchester Local Full Fibre Network Programme – GMCA Report January 2020.
- Greater Manchester LFFN Programme – Public Sector Building Upgrade – GMCA report December 2020.
- GM One Network Part A and Part B Report including the GM One Network Collaboration Agreement March 2022

## **Tracking/ Process**

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

Yes

## **Exemption from call in**

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

No.

## **Bee Network Committee**

n/a



# 1 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Over recent years GMCA has worked with localities and TFGM to roll out fibre connectivity to c.1,600 sites used by the public sector across the city region. This programme was called the GM Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) and it will provide fibre connections to these sites until 2050, supported by Virgin Media O2. The programme was implemented successfully throughout the pandemic and has pushed fibre connectivity into new parts of Greater Manchester as well as to those sites. The work contributed to the city region moving from 5% gigabit connectivity in 2017 to over 90% in 2024, in line with Greater Manchester's strategic objectives.
- 1.2 GM One Network is an aligned initiative through which four localities plus GMCA and TFGM jointly procured services to utilise the LFFN fibre to create a shared next-generation wide area network. This programme is 98% complete with c. 1,200 sites connected in a 10 year commitment to a resilient shared service that is governed through a Collaboration Agreement approved by GMCA and supported by TFGM and Stockport, Oldham, Rochdale and Bury Councils.
- 1.3 Together, speeds to schools, community centres, fire stations, council's offices and many other facilities are being increased, often ten or even a hundred-fold, and placed on a more resilient footing; with £6.6M of savings or avoided alternative cost over a 10 year period, plus a £3.7M of social value that is benefitting communities and businesses across Greater Manchester. With UK data consumption estimated to increase by up to 8 fold by 2030 from today's figures, One Network has the ability to scale up to meet demand.
- 1.4 Importantly, One Network is expandable to other public sector user partners in with potential for further efficiency gains across Greater Manchester given that the core infrastructure is in place. The tender outlined in this report supports expansion and is part of ongoing work to enable both existing and potential new public sector partners in GM to connect additional sites that are not part of the LFFN.

## **2 COLLABORATIVE NETWORK PROCUREMENT**

- 2.1 Every public sector organisation operates a “Wide Area Network” (WAN) so that users and computers in one location can communicate with users and computers in other locations.
- 2.2 These WAN services are often procured from major telecoms companies and include both infrastructure and services. Whilst the partners in One Network have migrated c.1200 sites from their individual networks onto One Network, there are a further 163 TfGM and 7 Rochdale Council sites that were not part of the LFFN programme and remain on legacy contracts that are due to expire. In addition, there are a further 1,415 TfGM Urban Traffic Control Sites that require 4G/5G connectivity, with a downstream need to extend this by a further 5000+ connections to support for Bus Reform.
- 2.3 Potential additional partners that wish to join One Network may also have sites that are not on the LFFN and would require connectivity.
- 2.4 To address this a procurement was carried out to deliver Non-LFFN Connectivity Partner services and establish a contract that would enable further sites to be connected. Its scope includes a range of connection types including fibre to 4G/5G wireless which can be drawn on depending on site requirements. All Greater Manchester councils, GMP and health services were named in the tender documents to create provision for scaling.
- 2.5 Importantly, the procurement did not restrict partners with non-LFFN sites from joining in the future. If other public organisations were to join, this would be on an equitable basis with the original partners, with either a financial return to those partners or further investment as determined appropriate by the partners. This is defined in the GM One Network Collaboration Agreement signed by the current partners and endorsed by GMCA.

## **3 PROCUREMENT OUTCOME**

- 3.1 Following a Public Contracting Regulations 2015 compliant procurement process, Vodafone has been selected as preferred bidder to deliver Non-LFFN Connectivity Partner services. The overall value of the contract is £2M and services can be drawn

down for the benefit of any of the organisations named in the tender as part of work to extend One Network.

- 3.2 GMCA would be the contract holders and would be responsible for commissioning services under it, but the relevant beneficiaries of each commission would then be recharged so that there is no cost to GMCA (unless and to the extent that GMCA are a beneficiary). Use of the contract would be governed via the GM One Network Collaboration Agreement which is managed by the GM One Network Collaboration Board, chaired by Stockport Council and including representatives from each of the partners in One Network.
- 3.3 An initial draw against the contract would be on behalf of TFGM and Rochdale Council for the 170 fixed connectivity sites and 1,415 wireless connectivity sites, as described above, at a combined value of £842,000, the costs of which will be met by those organisations through a recharge from GMCA.
- 3.4 The initial contract will be for 3 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years.

## **4 OVERALL BENEFITS**

4.1 The summary benefits from this procurement are that:

- Together with linked work, it enables TfGM and Rochdale to migrate from legacy contracts for connectivity that is due to expire.
- It creates a flexible mechanism against which further sites can be added and supports potential One Network expansion to benefit more public services including by standardising connectivity infrastructure across the GM Public Sector community making it easier to layer on other shared Digital services in the future.
- It reduces duplication in procurement, migration of services and provision and management of services and 3rd party contracts relating to site connectivity.
- It supports effective digitalisation of public sector services, in particular significant improvements in user experience via service speed and quality, particularly for those partners migrating sites from copper infrastructure to fibre through this process.

- It improves resilience by leveraging the GM One Network.
- It extends use of GM One Network's shared internet connections and expands the ability to consume other relevant digital services jointly in the future.
- Enhances the GM One Network advanced network platform which will give partners more flexibility to connect sites to the GM One Network that are not served by GM LFFN Fibre.
- Note there is a second Lot linked to this procurement that is still being finalised and will further enhance the GM One Network platform by providing the partners with the ability to deploy, configure and install network infrastructure, using automation to reduce the amount of engineering costs.
- Progresses GM's ambition to become a globally recognised digital city region – there is potential to showcase Greater Manchester's involvement in Digital and Smart City developments through preferred bidder's global network of Partners and industry commentators.

## **5 GOVERNANCE FOR PROGRAMME DELIVERY**

- 5.1 Rochdale Council and TFGM are taking these proposals through their own organisational governance in line with their own formal decision-making processes with the intention that each partner has internal support for this procurement ahead of the GMCA meeting on 25th October 2025.
- 5.2 This activity is supported by the GM One Network Collaboration Board that is chaired by Stockport Council with attendance from GMCA(FRS), TfGM and Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Stockport Councils. This reports into the GMCA Digital Portfolio governance which reports to the GMCA. It is supported by the GMCA Digital Services team. The oversight of this connectivity infrastructure for these services would be via the existing route into GMCA that supports One Network.

## **6 KEY RISKS**

- 6.1 The risks set out in Table 4 below relate to the procurement and migration of these sites to the GM One Network

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Existing contracts expire before the new service is available	High	Medium	Secure commitment from preferred bidder to migrate sites with contract end dates before contracts end, secure short-term extension of contract where this isn't possible
Existing contract end dates may result in dual running costs for some sites	Medium	High	Plan migrations to minimize impact, with each partner looking to offset any transition costs through optimum timing.

*Table 4: Key Risks*

## **7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 Please refer to the to the Recommendations section at the top of this document.

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## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024  
Subject: GM Investment Framework, Conditional Project Approval  
Report of: Councillor David Molyneux, Portfolio Lead for Investment and Resources and Steve Wilson, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for Investment

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### Purpose of Report

This report seeks Greater Manchester Combined Authority (“Combined Authority” and “GMCA”) approval for a loan to Sustainable Ventures (North) Ltd. The loan will be made from recycled funds.

Further details regarding the investments are included in the accompanying Part B report to be considered in the confidential part of the agenda due to the commercially sensitive nature of the information.

### Recommendations

The GMCA is requested to:

1. approve a loan of £500k to Sustainable Ventures (North) Ltd
2. delegate authority to the Combined Authority Treasurer and Combined Authority Monitoring Officer to review the due diligence information in respect of the above loans, and, subject to their satisfactory review and agreement of the due diligence information and the overall detailed commercial terms of the investments, to sign off any outstanding conditions, issue final approvals and complete any necessary related documentation in respect of the investments and loans noted above.

### Contact Officers

Steve Wilson: [steve.wilson@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:steve.wilson@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

Laura Blakey: [laura.blakey@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:laura.blakey@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

Robert Edwards: [robert.edwards@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:robert.edwards@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

### Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment

#### A) Sustainable Ventures (North) Ltd

## Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

### Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion		
Health		
Resilience and Adaptation		
Housing		
Economy	G	<p>The company has a proven track record in developing climate-tech ecosystems, providing growth opportunities for startups and supporting job creation. On its first year, the Company will have created 10 FTEs, during the first 3 years of operations the local workforce is expected to be c. 25 people directly employed. The Company has a proven track record of supporting job creation within their target companies. e.g. since its inception they supported the creation of over 6,000 jobs from their London HQ.</p> <p>Yes, Sustainable Ventures operate in the innovation and technology space, focused on the carbon agenda, sectors that foster the upskilling of people, and normally offer good conditions given the need for talent.</p> <p>Yes, the Company offers comprehensive business support routes for the enterprises engaging with them.</p> <p>Yes, Sustainable Ventures operate in the innovation and technology space, developing new products and services.</p> <p>Yes, the Company has an active pipeline of companies looking to relocate to GM ahead of their site being operational.</p> <p>Yes, Sustainable Ventures operate in the innovation and technology space, focused on the carbon agenda, sectors that foster the upskilling of people.</p> <p>The investment will support the refurbishment of several floors within the Renold Building, at the heart of ID Manchester/Sister district.</p>
Mobility and Connectivity		
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	The company is focused on supporting the adoption and roll out of green technologies to accelerate the transition to net zero.
Consumption and Production		
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		The proposal is focused on accelerating the development and expansion of climate-tech companies in GM. The purpose of Sustainable Ventures intervention is to help achieve a carbon neutral economy.
Further Assessment(s):	N/A	
<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>
Positive Impacts overall, whether long or short term.	Mix of positive and negative Impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.
		<b>RR</b> Negative Impacts overall.



## Carbon Assessment

Overall Score #DIV/0!

Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation
New Build residential	N/A	
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A	
New build non-residential (including public) buildings	N/A	
<b>Transport</b>		
Active travel and public transport	N/A	
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access	N/A	
Access to amenities	N/A	
Vehicle procurement	N/A	
<b>Land Use</b>		
Land use	N/A	

No associated carbon impacts expected.

High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.

Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.

Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.

Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

## **Risk Management**

The investments recommended in this paper will be governed under the existing investment framework which includes several levels of review and ongoing monitoring of performance.

## **Legal Considerations**

The legal agreements will be based upon the existing templates for the GM Investment Fund, amended for the specific requirements of the individual funding arrangements.

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

The proposed loan will be made from recycled funds.

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

The proposed loan to Sustainable Ventures will be made from recycled funds

## **Number of attachments to the report**

None.

## **Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Not applicable.

## **Background Papers**

None.

## **Tracking/ Process**

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

Yes

## **Exemption from call in**

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

No.

## **Bee Network Committee**

N/A

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

# 1. Introduction/Background

## 1.1. Background:

1.1.1. The Combined Authority maintains and develops a pipeline of projects submitted by applicants seeking funding from the Combined Authority's Investment Funds allocation. These projects are assessed against criteria based on the GM Investment Strategy, developed to underpin the economic growth of Greater Manchester. A condition of investment is that the companies sign up as (at a minimum) a supporter of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.

1.1.2. Recommendations in this report follow on from:

- an appraisal by the GM Investment Team; and
- a review by an investment sub-group which includes independent, expert advisors.

## 2. Investments Recommended for Approval in Principle

### 2.1. Sustainable Ventures (North) Ltd, Manchester

#### **Sector: Low Carbon**

2.1.1. The business case in respect of a loan of up to £500k to Sustainable Ventures (North) Limited ("the Company" and "SVN") has been submitted to and appraised by the Investment Team and is recommended to the Combined Authority for conditional approval.

2.1.1. The loan will support the expansion of Sustainable Ventures ("the Group") operations into the region. The Group specialises in developing and managing climate-tech collaborative workspace alongside business services dedicated to supporting and scaling startups focused on sustainability.

2.1.2. SVN will deliver its Manchester workspace within the ID Manchester (now 'Sister') site, being the first regional expansion the Group has planned for the UK. This builds on the success they have seen in London, where they have provided support for over 700 start-ups, invested in over 50 companies, and contributed to the creation of over 6,000 jobs.

- 2.1.3. The loan from GMCA will fund the refurbishment and fit-out of the workspace, providing access to flexible office solutions for early-stage sustainability businesses which will foster the innovation ecosystem within GM and actively promote the transition to net zero.
- 2.1.4. Further details regarding this loan are included in the accompanying Part B report to be considered in the confidential part of the agenda due to the commercially sensitive nature of the information.

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Subject: Draft School Travel Strategy – Our Vision for School Travel in Greater Manchester

Report of: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Portfolio Lead for Transport and Caroline Simpson, Group Chief Executive, GMCA, GMFRS & TfGM

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### Purpose of Report

This report asks members to note and comment on the draft School Travel Strategy, a sub-strategy of the 2040 Transport Strategy, and summarises its contents.

### Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Approve the draft School Travel Strategy for consultation; and
2. Approve the launch of public engagement on the strategy, comprising a ten week online consultation and meetings with stakeholders affected by or involved in school travel.

### Contact Officers

Martin Lax, Transport Strategy Director, TfGM

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Nick Fairclough, Senior Policy Manager, TfGM

[nick.fairclough@tfgm.com](mailto:nick.fairclough@tfgm.com)

# Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

## Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

Note and comment on the draft School Travel Strategy. Approve the commencement of public engagement on the strategy.

### Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation	
Equality and Inclusion	G	<p>Draft Strategy includes proposals to improve access to education via sustainable transport options. This will disproportionately benefit young people by increasing their transport options, but the wider community would benefit from the reduction in private vehicles taking young people to school and the investment into improved transport connections would benefit those making other journeys.</p> <p>Families from socially and economically disadvantaged households are likely to have fewer transport options, so improving the ability to travel actively or on public transport will provide them with greater access to education.</p> <p>If implemented the proposals would improve access to education facilities for students in primary, secondary and further education.</p> <p>The draft strategy includes proposals to give communities more opportunities to become involved in promoting sustainable travel to school.</p> <p>Large numbers of cars picking up and dropping off at school harms local communities, by increasing the number of sustainable journeys to school local communities would benefit.</p>	
Health	G	<p>Making it easier to travel actively to school would improve the physical and mental health of young people. The draft strategy includes multiple actions to encourage more young people to travel actively to school, alongside making it easier to access education facilities. The proposed actions would not only improve transport access for younger people, but the wider community.</p>	
Resilience and Adaptation			
Housing			
Economy	G	<p>The draft strategy seeks to improve access to education and remove barriers to young people accessing opportunities due to limited transport options. Fewer young people being driven to school will have a positive impact in reducing congestion which negatively impacts economic development. Through improving access to education and giving young people travel skills, more young people in Greater Manchester will have the opportunities later in life to have a 'good job'.</p>	
Mobility and Connectivity	G	<p>The draft strategy proposes providing new active travel facilities to schools and adjusting the general transport network to better serve schools. There are likely to be some adjustments made to dedicated schools which may result in short term disruption to existing travel patterns.</p> <p>By increasing the number of sustainable trips taken to school and reducing the number of trips taken in private vehicles there will be a positive impact on congestion as sustainable modes of transport are more space efficient.</p> <p>The draft strategy includes actions relating to making public transport more affordable and providing alternatives ways to access a cycle which avoid the high up front cost of buying a bike from new.</p> <p>Young people over 16 are able to access Starling Bank Bikes. Due to the age limit and limited operational area few young people will be able to use these bikes to access education, but some will.</p> <p>The draft strategy seeks to improve transport connections to education facilities by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. The actions relating to making it safer to travel actively to school and delivering more walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure will involve modifications to roads.</p>	
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	<p>Greater use of active travel and public transport to travel to school will help improve local air quality due to the large number of trips made to access education, meaning a growth in sustainable trips would have an impact on overall air pollution levels.</p> <p>Reducing the number of private vehicles will help reduce noise pollution, particularly if these trips are made by active modes. As many schools are located in residential areas the reduction in noise levels will have a positive effect on local communities.</p> <p>Transport is the largest emitting sector in GM, by increasing the number of education trips made by sustainable modes there will be a positive impact on carbon emissions.</p>	
Consumption and Production			
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		<p>The proposals in the draft school travel strategy seek to encourage more young people to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to travel to school. By increasing the number of sustainable trips made to school and thereby reducing the number of trips made in private vehicles there would be a positive contribution towards achieving carbon neutrality.</p>	
Further Assessment(s):		Equalities Impact Assessment and Carbon Assessment	
<b>G</b> Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	<b>A</b> Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	<b>R</b> Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	<b>RR</b> Negative impacts overall.

## Carbon Assessment

Overall Score				
Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation		
New Build residential	N/A			
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A			
New build non-residential (including public) buildings	N/A			
Transport				
Active travel and public transport		The draft strategy includes actions that would improve and extend active travel routes but as this is not a funded delivery plan it is not possible to confirm this impact at the present time. The draft strategy includes actions that would improve access to education facilities by public transport but this would be done via the network review process so it is not possible to confirm this impact at the present time.		
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access		The draft strategy includes actions that would improve and extend active travel provisions but as this is not a funded delivery plan it is not possible to confirm this impact at the present time. The draft strategy includes actions that seek to make travelling either actively or by public transport more attractive. The proposals to gradually integrate school services into the general network would help improve services and make public transport more attractive in the longer term but it could lead to short term growth in personal vehicle travel as existing travel patterns are disrupted.		
Access to amenities		The draft strategy includes actions that if implemented would increase access to shops and services by improving active travel facilities, but as this is not a funded delivery plan it is not possible to confirm this impact at the present time. The draft strategy includes actions that if implemented would increase access to shops and services by improving public transport services, but as this is not a funded delivery plan it is not possible to confirm this impact at the present time.		
Vehicle procurement	N/A			
Land Use				
Land use	N/A			
No associated carbon impacts expected.	High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.	Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.	Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.	Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

## Risk Management

N/A

## Legal Considerations

Legal support will be obtained as required when finalising the consultant/engagement process. The legal implications of the proposals set out within the strategy will require further consideration as the proposals are developed including any impact on the Bus Franchising network

## Financial Consequences – Revenue

The draft School Travel Strategy is not a funded delivery plan, and the priorities and ambitions set out are anticipated to require additional funding to be delivered in full.

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

The draft School Travel Strategy is not a funded delivery plan, and the priorities and ambitions set out are anticipated to require additional funding to be delivered in full.

**Number of attachments to the report: 1**

## **Background Papers**

Draft Vision Zero Strategy, January 2024

Greater Manchester Bus Strategy, July 2023

Active Travel in Greater Manchester - Bee Network Committee, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Refreshing Greater Manchester's Active Travel Mission, November 2022

Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, January 2021

## **Tracking/ Process**

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

No

## **Exemption from call in**

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

No

## **Bee Network Committee**

This report will be considered by the Bee Network Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> October.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

N/A



# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Safely and reliably taking young people to and from places of education is a key function of transport networks across the world. Done correctly, it can support greater inclusion, enhanced access to opportunities and better health outcomes.
- 1.2. Every day approximately 460,000 pupils travel to over 1,200 schools and further education establishments across Greater Manchester. 15% of all trips in Greater Manchester are to access education, and in the peak periods between 08:00-08:59 and 15:00-15:59 almost half of trips are education related.
- 1.3. Greater Manchester is transforming its transport system through the creation of the Bee Network, bringing walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport together. This means that there are new opportunities to create a joined up transport network which can better connect young people (and the people that work there) with their place of education and other key destinations.
- 1.4. The draft School Travel Strategy sets out the vision and approach for how the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and the ten local authorities will enable more young people to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to get to school and access further education.
- 1.5. This strategy supports the ambition for Greater Manchester to achieve Vision Zero by 2040 and fulfils the recommendation from Refreshing Greater Manchester's Active Travel Mission for a home to school travel plan to be developed. In addition, by improving the ability to access post-16 courses and careers it seeks to support the Mayoral ambition of creating two educational pathways (one technical, and one academic) for young people.
- 1.6. The draft School Travel Strategy will, once adopted, be a sub strategy of the Greater Manchester 2040 Strategy, GM's statutory Local Transport Plan. It is not a funded delivery plan, and the priorities and ambitions set out are anticipated to require some additional funding to be delivered in full.
- 1.7. Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) travel is outside the scope of this strategy. TfGM is separately assisting local authorities in exploring what opportunities there are to better coordinate the provision of SEND transport in Greater Manchester.

## 2. Structure, purpose and content of the draft strategy

2.1. The draft School Travel Strategy sets out:

- Our vision for school travel and why there's a case for change;
- Current travel patterns for primary school, secondary school and further education;
- The activities we are proposing to encourage more young people to travel sustainably;
- Next steps.

2.2. Using the Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey (TRADS), we have estimated how children and young people currently travel to and from education. Using the averaged travel patterns for the years 2021-2023 we have proposed three ambitious targets for how we can support young people to travel by 2030. These targets have deliberately been chosen to act as a bold statement of intent that will catalyse action and help inspire a cross-GM effort to achieve a common goal.

2.3. Our ambition is that by 2030:

- 70% of primary school students in Greater Manchester will walk, wheel, scoot or cycle to school, up from 63%<sup>1</sup>;
- 80% of secondary school students in Greater Manchester will walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to school, up from 74%<sup>1</sup>;
- 80% of further education students in Greater Manchester will walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to access education, up from 66%<sup>1</sup>.

2.4. If we are to achieve our ambitious goals, we must remove the barriers that are currently preventing young people travelling in a sustainable way. To achieve this, we have identified in the draft strategy eight overarching activities on which to focus our efforts. These eight activities are not the only solutions that exist and delivering them will require close collaboration with young people, parents, guardians, carers, schools, partner organisations, and communities.

2.5. The eight activities identified in the draft strategy are set out below.

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<sup>1</sup> GMTRADS, 2021-23

## **Create Safer Streets Around Schools**

- 2.6. For parents to allow their children to walk, wheel, scoot, or cycle to school, they must feel that it is safe. Every school faces unique challenges; therefore, we need to have a range of measures that can be tailored to address a school's specific safety needs.
- 2.7. One of these measures could be creating a school street to provide a safe, traffic-free space at drop off and pick up time. In line with the Mayor's ambition, we are committing, subject to funding, to creating 100 school streets by 2028.
- 2.8. Experiences across the country have shown that interventions that introduce physical road safety improvements alongside behaviour change programmes that engage with the school community have more chance of succeeding. It is therefore proposed that TfGM develop a pilot project to explore how this can be best achieved in Greater Manchester.

## **Continue to Deliver Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling Infrastructure**

- 2.9. Greater Manchester has committed to building a world-class walking, wheeling, and cycling network that will link up communities and provide safe routes to schools and further education establishments. A previous Bee Network Committee paper provided further information about our future network ([14<sup>th</sup> December 2023, Active Travel in Greater Manchester](#)).
- 2.10. Nearly two-thirds of all education trips are within or between local neighbourhoods. To encourage more young people to walk, wheel, scoot or cycle we therefore need to create neighbourhoods that are safer and more attractive places to be in. This means alongside improving walking and wheeling routes, we need to create quieter and therefore safer streets in line with the [Streets for All](#) approach and Safe System approach, as set out in the draft [Vision Zero Strategy](#).

## **Increase Access to Cycle and Cycle Storage**

- 2.11. To give young people the opportunity to cycle to school we need to help them, and their parents, guardians and carers, have access to a bike and have a secure place to store it at school and in the wider community.
- 2.12. One way we are proposing to provide greater access to cycles is by encouraging schools to either set up their own bike library or work closely with their nearest bike

library. Bike libraries allow people to borrow a bicycle and try it out for a short loan period, either for free or for a small fee.

### **Support Young People to Become Travel Champions**

- 2.13. If we want young people to travel in a more active and sustainable way, we need to encourage and enable new travel habits throughout their school career. We want to give young people the ability to not only travel to school sustainably, but to become lifelong users and advocates for sustainable travel.
- 2.14. It is proposed that a new education programme is developed in partnership with schools and external partners. The aims of the programme would be to:
- Ensure that every young person has learnt about road safety and has basic navigation skills before they go to secondary school.
  - Better coordinate our efforts to enable every primary school student in Greater Manchester who wishes to do so, to learn how to ride and fix a bike.
  - Provide every young person in Greater Manchester with the skills and knowledge to travel by bus, tram, and train by the time they start their GCSEs.
  - Support young people during the transition between primary to secondary school, and secondary school to further education.
  - Work with young people to give them greater ownership over what activities or incentives their school carries out to encourage more young people to travel sustainably.
- 2.15. To make it easier for schools and young people it is proposed that as a first step all our available resources, information and funding opportunities for schools should be brought together in one place.

### **Improve the Customer Experience on Public Transport**

- 2.16. If more young people are to use public transport to travel to school and access further education, we must have an attractive public transport network which is accessible, reliable and affordable.
- 2.17. The draft School Travel Strategy builds on the [Greater Manchester Bus Strategy](#), which set out our proposed actions to deliver more reliable, accessible and affordable bus services.

- 2.18. The introduction of the hopper fare in January 2025 will help make our ticketing system simpler and fairer for young people. In addition, it is proposed that TfGM will explore how the application process for the igo card (5–16-years old) can be improved to make it more user friendly. This will make it easier for more young people to access affordable public transport.

### **Make Our Network Safe and Secure**

- 2.19. Improving the perception of safety and security for all our passengers is a priority. Young people behaving in an anti-social manner on public transport makes other passengers, including other young people, feel unsafe and reluctant to travel on our transport network.
- 2.20. To deter and prevent unwanted behaviour TravelSafe Support and Enforcement Officers are regularly deployed across Greater Manchester to support passengers, deter anti-social behaviour, conduct ticket checks and answer customer queries. This is in addition to uniformed and plain clothes police officers who regularly patrol the network.
- 2.21. Through the TravelSafe's Educational Outreach Programme we will seek to encourage and promote positive travel behaviour, making young people aware of how they should behave on public transport and what the consequences are for being involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour.

### **Create an Integrated Network**

- 2.22. Before the creation of the Bee Network and the start of bus franchising Greater Manchester was unable to plan its transport network in an integrated way. This meant that when there were gaps in the commercial network the only way we could ensure young people could travel to school was to introduce a dedicated school bus service.
- 2.23. Whilst filling gaps in this way provided an immediate solution to a school's connectivity problems, this case-by-case approach did not allow planners to take a strategic view of the whole network. This meant that over time an uneven patchwork of services developed, with limited interaction with the wider public transport network and outcomes that could be perceived as unfair.
- 2.24. As a general principle our transport network should be available to all users, and therefore not consist of special services that only certain people can use. Therefore,

it is proposed that as part of our work to create a simpler and more integrated network we will look to gradually incorporate existing school services into the general network through the network review process, taking into account local circumstances and requirements.

- 2.25. This will give young people greater flexibility about where and when they travel (allowing them to go to after school clubs, for example) and improve the resilience of the network by enabling them to take alternative services if things go wrong. It will also give young people the life skills of being able to use public transport and support improved transport options for the whole community.
- 2.26. The network review process will consider how the transport network can be improved in line with our agreed planning principles (comprehensive, simple, frequent, direct, reliable, integrated, cost-effective). Our preference will always be to make any adjustments to specific services or the wider network through the network review process.
- 2.27. Going forward it is proposed that new school services will only be provided when there is an exceptional need to do so. This will be judged against the Department for Education's guidance on walking distances and maximum journey times. The provision of new services must also provide value for money and be consistent with our network principles.

### **Engage Schools and Local Communities**

- 2.28. If we are to encourage more young people to travel sustainably, we must work in partnership with schools, pupils, parents, guardians, carers, and local communities. Many schools and further education establishments want to help but face significant competing pressures.
- 2.29. It is proposed that Modeshift STARS, an accreditation programme that helps schools develop travel plans and carry out activities to promote sustainable travel, will be used to better support schools. However, despite being free for schools, few schools in GM have sought to become accredited. It is therefore proposed that improvements should be made to the service based off feedback from schools and councils. Additional guidance and support should also be provided for schools.
- 2.30. Local communities are leading the way in promoting walking, wheeling, scooting, and cycling to school. Whether that be installing a school street, running a bike bus, or helping schools engage with children and their families. Without their help we

cannot achieve our vision. The draft strategy therefore proposes that more opportunities should be created for local communities and voluntary groups to work with schools and young people.

### **3. Next steps**

- 3.1. This is a draft strategy, and its further development will benefit from hearing a wide range of opinions on how we can best enable more young people to choose to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to travel to school and access further education.
- 3.2. Following approval of this draft, a period of engagement will take place from November for ten weeks with the public and stakeholder groups. An online survey will be run to enable members of the public to share their insights and help shape the final strategy. Paper copies of the survey will be made available at key locations and by request.
- 3.3. It is proposed that the finalised School Travel Strategy will be reported to Bee Network Committee and then to the GMCA for formal adoption and approval in Spring 2025.

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# School Travel Strategy

Our vision for school travel in Greater Manchester

Draft - October 2024



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# Executive summary

**We want more young people to choose to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to get to school and access further education.**

Greater Manchester is transforming its transport system through the creation of the Bee Network, bringing walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport together as part of one transport network. The Bee Network will provide young people with a more accessible, reliable, and affordable transport network that will allow more of them to travel sustainably to school and to access further education.

We - the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and the ten GM local authorities (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan) - want more young people to travel sustainably to school and to access further education:



**To improve physical and mental health** → 22% of reception aged children and 39% of Year 6 children are overweight or obese in Greater Manchester<sup>1</sup>



**To reduce pollution in the air** → Children are more affected by air pollution because their organs and immune systems are still developing<sup>2</sup>



**To help with the cost-of-living crisis** → For families experiencing poverty and hardship, the cost of sending a child to school can add additional financial stress<sup>3</sup>



**To reduce congestion** → Taking children to school currently accounts for approximately 31% of traffic on GM roads during peak hours<sup>4</sup>



**To help the environment** → Transport accounts for 31% of Greater Manchester's carbon emissions<sup>5</sup>



**To create safer and more attractive streets** → 74% of GM residents think that their streets are currently dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles<sup>6</sup>



**To reduce the stress and challenge of having to do the school run**



**To enable young people to travel independently throughout their life** → giving young people greater access to future learning opportunities and careers



**And because it is what young people want** → When surveyed, 75% of primary school pupils said they would travel actively to school if they had the chance to do so<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [National Child Measurement Programme, England, 2022/23 School Year - NHS England Digital](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Schools | Clean Air Greater Manchester \(cleanairgm.com\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [School sums what does going to school really cost families.pdf \(cpag.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2023

<sup>5</sup> [2005-21-uk-local-authority-ghg-emissions-update-060723.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Walking and Cycling Index 2023: Greater Manchester \(sustrans.org.uk\)](#)

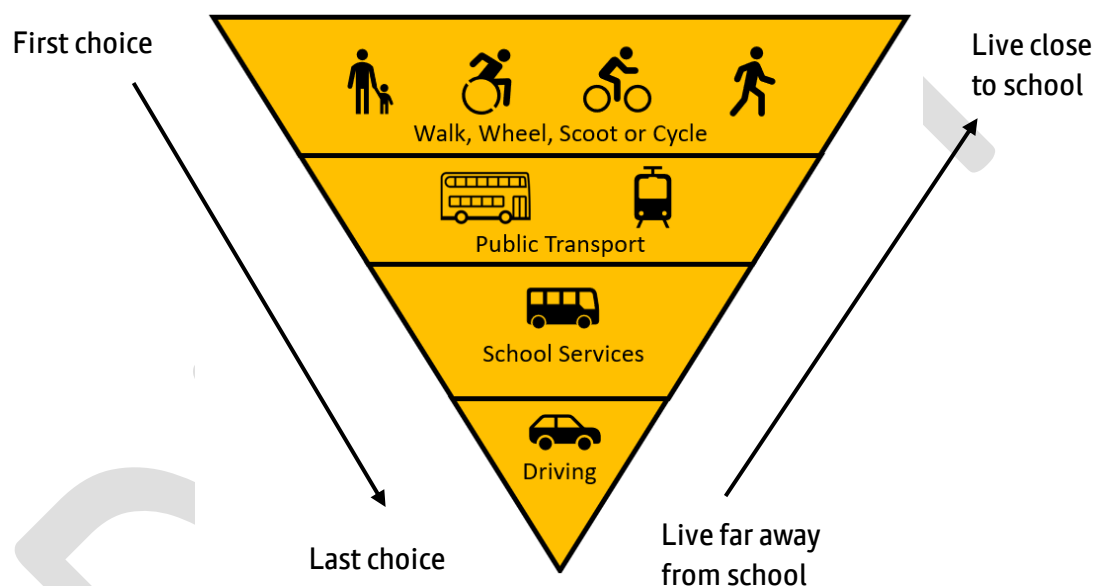
<sup>7</sup> TfGM School Travel Choices Pilot Paper by Mott MacDonald (2018)

This document sets out our vision and approach for how we will enable more young people to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to get to school and access further education. It is not a funded delivery plan, and the priorities and ambitions set out here are anticipated to require some additional funding to be delivered in full.

## Prioritising sustainable travel

Historically, driving has been prioritised over walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, resulting in fewer young people being able to travel sustainably to school<sup>8</sup>. We want young people, parents, guardians and carers to use the most appropriate travel option for their journey. Encouraging them to travel in a way that provides the greatest individual and societal benefits, as shown in the hierarchy below.

### Hierarchy of School Travel Options



As the healthiest and most inexpensive forms of travel, walking, wheeling, scooting, or cycling should be the first choice for travelling to school or accessing further education for those who live a short distance away.

For those who live a little further away, 'general' public transport services should be chosen, with school bus services providing a supportive role where public transport is not a viable option. Supporting existing public transport routes helps the whole community and is therefore preferable to dedicated school bus routes that need significant subsidy and only support school journeys.

In some cases, being driven may be the only practical way for pupils to travel to school or access further education, but this should be the last resort and only in a minority of cases.

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<sup>8</sup> [Made to move.pdf \(ctfassets.net\)](#)

## Our vision



We want more young people to choose to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to get to school and access further education

## Our ambition

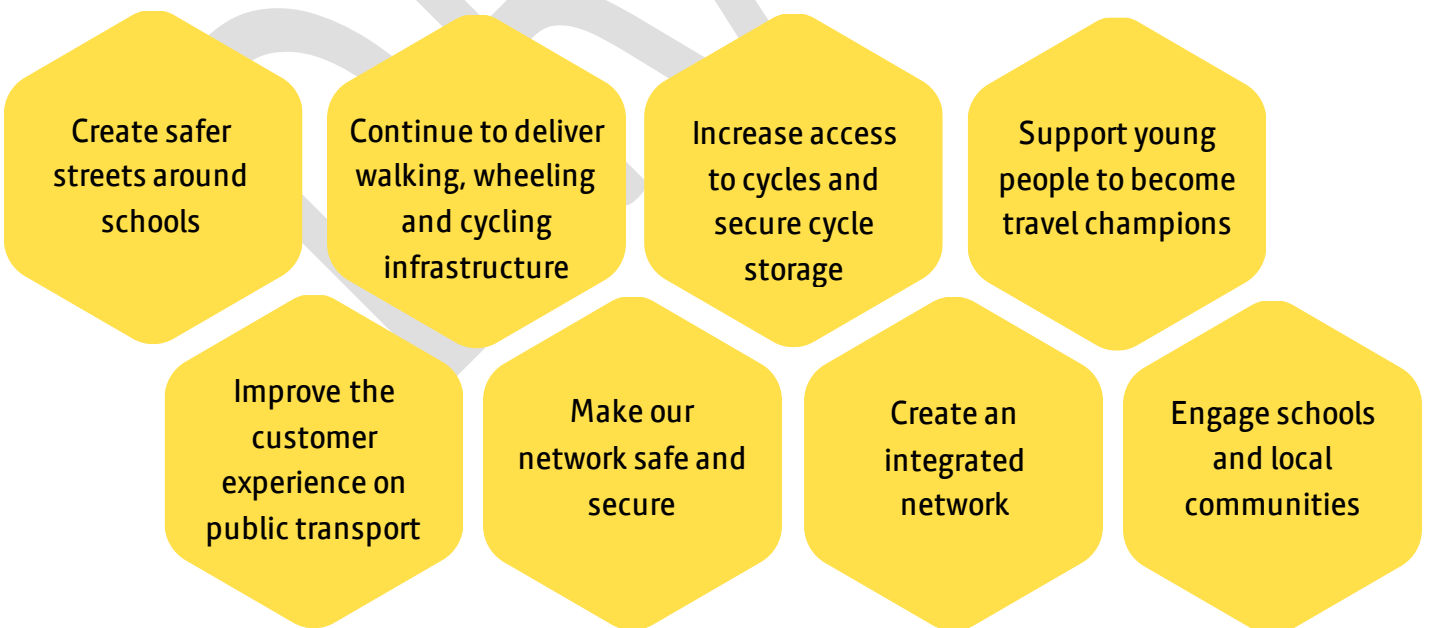


By 2030 our goal is for 70% of primary school students in Greater Manchester to walk, wheel, scoot, or cycle to school, up from 63% (GMTRADS, 2021-23)

By 2030 our goal is for 80% of secondary school students in Greater Manchester to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to travel to school, up from 74% (GMTRADS, 2021-23)

By 2030 our goal is for 80% of further education students in Greater Manchester to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to access education, up from 66% (GMTRADS, 2021-23)

## Our activities





# Introduction

How young people travel to school and to access further education matters. Every day approximately 460,000 pupils travel to over 1,200 schools and further education establishments across our city region<sup>9</sup>. 15% of all trips in Greater Manchester are to access education, and in the periods between 08:00-08:59 and 15:00-15:59 almost 48% of trips are education related<sup>10</sup>.

Safely and reliably taking young people to and from places of education is a key function of transport networks across the world. Done correctly, it can support greater inclusion, enhanced access to opportunities and better health for students. In our 2040 Transport Strategy<sup>11</sup> we identified the need to encourage more young people to walk and cycle to school in Greater Manchester, along with the need to better integrate school services into the wider transport network.

## Who is responsible for school travel?

Local authorities' relationship with schools has changed significantly in the last two decades. The transition towards schools increasingly being run by multi academy trusts or independent governing bodies has meant local authorities increasingly coordinate rather than directly provide education in their area<sup>12</sup>.

Most schools now set their own admissions policy, independent of local authorities. This means that local authorities have less influence over which school a young person attends than they did in the past. While parental choice has grown, so too have school catchment areas, meaning pupils are travelling further to get to school<sup>13</sup>. This has made it more challenging for young people to travel sustainably to school.

In certain limited circumstances local authorities must provide travel assistance. The Department for Education provides detailed guidance<sup>14</sup> about when local authorities have a statutory duty to provide free school transport for children of compulsory school age:

- ➔ All children between 5 and 16 qualify for free school transport if they go to their nearest suitable school and live further than:
  - 2 miles (≈ 3.2km) from their school if they are under 8 years old
  - 3 miles (≈ 4.8km) from their school if they are 8 years old or older
- ➔ Families on low income (defined as in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit or entitled to free school meals) if they are:

<sup>9</sup> [Search for schools, colleges and multi-academy trusts - Find school and college performance data in England - GOV.UK \(find-school-performance-data.service.gov.uk\)](#); [Schools, pupils and their characteristics, Academic year 2022/23 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2023

<sup>11</sup> [Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 | Bee Network | Powered by TfGM](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Opportunity for all - Strong schools with great teachers for your child \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> [National Travel Survey: Travel to School factsheet \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#); [Children's travel to school—the interaction of individual, neighbourhood and school factors \(sciencedirectassets.com\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Travel to school for children of compulsory school age \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

- Aged 8 to 10 years old and attend their nearest school which is at least 2 miles away ( $\approx 3.2\text{km}$ )
- Aged 11 to 16 years old and attend one of their three nearest schools that are between 2 to 6 miles away ( $\approx 3.2\text{km} - 9.7\text{km}$ )
- Aged 11 to 16 years old and attend their nearest preferred school on the ground of religion or belief, that is between 2 to 15 miles away ( $\approx 3.2\text{km} - 24.1\text{km}$ )

→ Children who attend their nearest suitable school and cannot be reasonably expected to walk there because of their special education needs, disability, or mobility problem.

## Dedicated school services

At present, TfGM provides dedicated school bus services to a number of schools across Greater Manchester even though there is no legal obligation to do so<sup>15</sup>. School services have existed in Greater Manchester for many years, filling gaps in the public transport network where private operators have not provided a 'general' bus service. Using ticketing data, it is estimated that approximately 5% of the secondary school population uses a dedicated school service to travel to school.

Although technically TfGM-provided school buses can be used by any member of the public, in practice they are only used by students to travel to and from school. This means they exist as their own separate network. The introduction of bus franchising means we can now take a network wide approach to public transport, adjusting 'general' services to better connect schools. There is therefore an opportunity to review how school services could be better integrated into the wider Bee Network, allowing us to make the best use of available resources.

## Travel for Children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) travel requires a bespoke approach, tailored to individuals' unique needs and circumstances. Some local authorities do provide travel training to help those who may struggle to travel independently on public transport to do so<sup>16</sup>.

Each of the ten Greater Manchester local authorities are responsible for the procurement and delivery of SEND transport for those students in their area who are eligible for travel assistance. Although SEND travel is outside the scope of this strategy, local authorities are separately exploring what opportunities there are to better coordinate the provision of SEND transport in Greater Manchester.

<sup>15</sup> Some schools do provide their own private school buses separately of TfGM.

<sup>16</sup> [Travel training in Greater Manchester | Bee Network | Powered by TfGM](#)



## **Why now?**

### **The Bee Network**

Greater Manchester is transforming its transport system through the creation of the Bee Network, bringing walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport together. This means that there are new opportunities to create a joined up transport network which can better connect young people (and the people who work there) with their place of education and other key destinations.

### **A Refreshed Mission for Active Travel**

Walking, wheeling, scooting, and cycling are central to our vision for the future of transport in Greater Manchester, forming a key part of the Bee Network. Dame Sarah Storey, Greater Manchester's Active Travel Commissioner, produced a Refreshed Mission for Active Travel in Autumn 2022<sup>17</sup>. A key priority identified in this document was making it safer and easier for pupils to travel actively to school.

### **Vision Zero**

Greater Manchester has declared its ambition to achieve Vision Zero, meaning we aim to eliminate all road fatalities and life changing injuries on Greater Manchester's roads by 2040<sup>18</sup>. Making it safe for pupils to travel to school each day is a priority, and crucial to more young people traveling to school actively or on public transport. Fewer vehicles taking young people to school also makes our roads and streets safer for everyone.

### **The Greater Manchester Baccalaureate (MBacc)**

The Greater Manchester Baccalaureate, also known as MBacc, celebrates the technical pathways into employment at age 14, 16 and 18, providing an antidote to the education system being shaped around the needs of those pursuing the University route. It is designed to make the key decision points simple and reduce confusion for young people and parents and carers. It shows young people the subjects and qualifications that employers value, helping them access high quality jobs in our growing economy. Our transport network can support the MBacc by ensuring that transport isn't a barrier to young people taking advantage of the opportunities available to them.

**We have an opportunity to create a transport system that better serves young people and makes travelling sustainably the first choice.**

<sup>17</sup> [Greater Manchester's Active Travel Mission | TfGM Bee Active](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Vision Zero Strategy - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#)



# The case for change

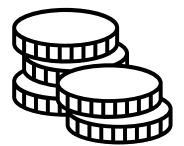
## To improve physical and mental health

22% of reception aged children and 39% of Year 6 aged children in Greater Manchester were overweight or obese in 2022/23, higher than the national average, and just over a third of children are active for the recommended minimum of at least 60 minutes a day<sup>19</sup>. As well as providing physical health benefits, travelling actively can help improve pupil's behaviour, concentration, and mental health<sup>20</sup>.



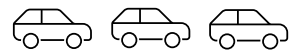
## To help with the cost-of-living crisis

For families experiencing poverty and financial hardship, school travel costs can add additional financial stress<sup>21</sup>. Attractive and affordable alternatives must therefore be available. The need to drop off and collect children from school can limit economic opportunities; giving young people the ability to travel independently gives parents greater freedom to work or fulfil other caring duties.



## To reduce congestion

Driving to school has a significant impact on congestion. Taking children to school accounts for approximately 31% of traffic on GM roads between 08:00-08:59 and 15:00-15:59<sup>22</sup>. With congestion costing Greater Manchester businesses £1.65bn per year<sup>23</sup>, promoting alternative ways to travel to school can help make journeys for all road users quicker and more reliable, stimulating economic growth through improved connectivity.



## To create safer and more attractive streets

Reducing the number of young people being driven to school would help make our streets safer. Cars are the largest contributor to vulnerable road users being killed or seriously injured on Greater Manchester's roads<sup>24</sup>. Making our streets safer also helps make our communities and neighbourhoods more pleasant and liveable places. 74% of GM residents think that their streets are currently dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles<sup>25</sup>.



<sup>19</sup> [National Child Measurement Programme, England, 2022/23 School Year - NHS England Digital; Greater Manchester - #BeeWell \(beewellprogramme.org\)](#)

<sup>20</sup> [HT\\_briefing\\_layoutvFINALvii.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\); Investigation of the associations between physical activity, self-regulation and educational outcomes in childhood | PLOS ONE](#)

<sup>21</sup> [School sums: what does going to school really cost families.pdf \(cpag.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2023](#)

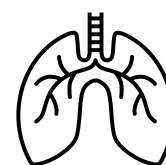
<sup>23</sup> [Made\\_to\\_move.pdf \(ctfassets.net\)](#) (figure adjusted for inflation, 2024)

<sup>24</sup> [Vision Zero Strategy - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Walking and Cycling Index 2023: Greater Manchester \(sustrans.org.uk\)](#)

## To reduce pollution in the air

Children are more affected by air pollution because their organs and immune systems are still developing<sup>26</sup>. Reducing the number of private vehicle journeys taken to and from schools would therefore help reduce air pollution and improve children's health.



## To help the environment

Transport is responsible for 31% of Greater Manchester's carbon emissions<sup>27</sup>. If we can support more young people to travel by active and zero emission modes it will contribute to Greater Manchester's target to be a carbon-neutral city region by 2038.



## To better support care responsibilities

The school run can often cause additional stress and challenge for parents who face competing demands on their time<sup>28</sup>. Parents want to get their children to school quickly and efficiently, often as part of a longer journey into work, but our transport network has traditionally not been designed for these types of trips<sup>29</sup>.



## To enable future travel choices

Providing the option to travel to school actively or on public transport gives young people independence and helps develop a lifelong habit of travelling sustainably. Being able to travel independently enables young people to access future learning opportunities and careers, helping more young people to get high quality jobs across Greater Manchester.



## It's what young people want

Young people want to walk, cycle, wheel, and scoot to school. A study of six primary schools in Greater Manchester found that although cycling and scooting only accounted for 10% of all journeys at the studied primary schools, 50% of pupils wanted to cycle or scoot to school. When walking was included, this rose to 75% of pupils wanting to travel actively to school<sup>30</sup>.



<sup>26</sup> [Schools | Clean Air Greater Manchester \(cleanairgm.com\)](https://www.cleanairgm.com)

<sup>27</sup> [2005-21-uk-local-authority-ghg-emissions-update-060723.xlsx \(live.com\)](https://www.greatermanchester.gov.uk/2005-21-uk-local-authority-ghg-emissions-update-060723.xlsx)

<sup>28</sup> Access and inclusion in Greater Manchester by Steer (2020)

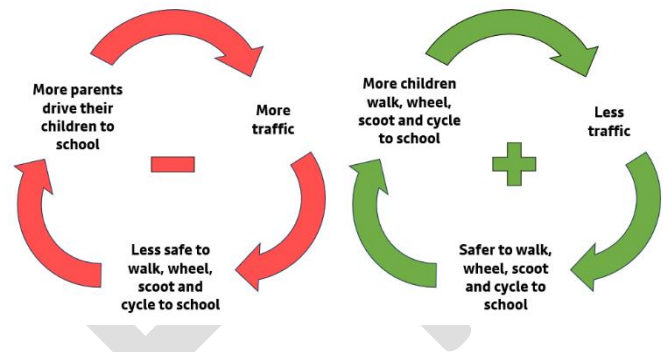
<sup>29</sup> [What-women-want-report-1.pdf \(gm4women2028.org\)](https://www.gm4women2028.org/); Invisible Women by Caroline Criado Perez (2020)

<sup>30</sup> TfGM School Travel Choices Pilot Paper by Mott MacDonald (2018)

# Barriers to travelling sustainably to school

## Road Safety

Only 50% of GM residents say it is safe for children to walk to school and just 42% believe it is safe for children to cycle to school<sup>31</sup>. Approximately a fifth of young people who use active travel “infrequently” say this is partly due to a lack of safe infrastructure<sup>32</sup>. Until more parents and young people feel it is safe to walk, wheel, scoot or cycle to school, children will continue to be driven to school. This leads to a vicious circle of more traffic and less safe roads.



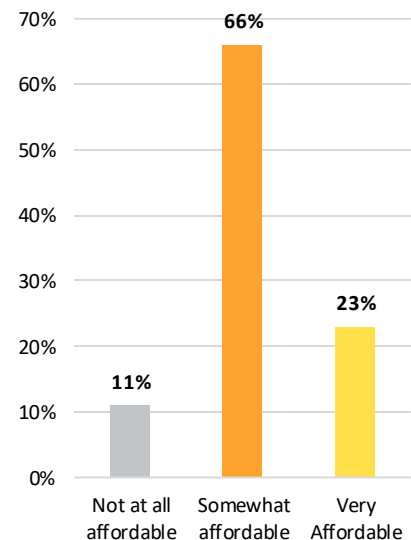
## Accessibility

11% of children are disabled in the UK<sup>33</sup>. Young people, particularly those with a disability, say poor accessibility has prevented them using active travel and public transport<sup>34</sup>. Disabled people report having difficulties travelling two and a half times more often than non-disabled people<sup>35</sup>, and 10% of disabled people say that inaccessible transport is a key barrier to their education, limiting their life opportunities<sup>36</sup>.

## Cost

Travelling to school can be one of the most significant costs of attending secondary school, along with buying uniform, shoes and bags<sup>37</sup>. Around a fifth of young people who use active travel “infrequently” cite cost and not having access to a bike (which may also be associated with cost) as reasons for not being able to travel actively. When surveyed the majority of young people did however feel that public transport was either very affordable or somewhat affordable<sup>38</sup>. This does not mean that cost is not a barrier, for some families the cost of travelling to school will be a significant proportion of their household budget.

To what extent do you think public transport is affordable?



National Youth Combined Authority Young Persons Transport Survey October 2022

<sup>31</sup> National Highways and Transport Network (NHT) Survey 2022

<sup>32</sup> NYCA Young Persons Transport Survey October 2022

<sup>33</sup> [UK disability statistics: Prevalence and life experiences](https://www.parliament.uk/library/research-and-factsheets/information/uk-disability-statistics-prevalence-and-life-experiences) - House of Commons Library (parliament.uk)

<sup>34</sup> NYCA Young Persons Transport Survey October 2022

<sup>35</sup> [Disabled people’s travel behaviour and attitudes to travel](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444444/disabled-people-s-travel-behaviour-and-attitudes-to-travel.pdf) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

<sup>36</sup> [The Transport Accessibility Gap](https://www.motabilityfoundation.org.uk/the-transport-accessibility-gap) (motabilityfoundation.org.uk)

<sup>37</sup> [School sums what does going to school really cost families.pdf](https://www.cpag.org.uk/school-sums-what-does-going-to-school-really-cost-families.pdf) (cpag.org.uk)

<sup>38</sup> NYCA Young Persons Transport Survey October 2022

## Reliability

The reliability of public transport in Greater Manchester has been identified as the third biggest barrier to using public transport by young people (after safety and cost)<sup>39</sup>. 80% of 16 – 18-year-olds perceived bus frequency and availability as having an impact on their access to opportunities<sup>40</sup>.

## Safety on public transport

For under 16's in Greater Manchester who don't use public transport frequently, not feeling safe (while waiting at stops and when on public transport) is the key issue preventing them using public transport. Greater Manchester's Youth Combined Authority<sup>41</sup> has highlighted the need to improve security on public transport, including having better lighting and more security or youth workers on hand.

## Skills

Some young people are unable to travel sustainably as they do not have the knowledge or skills to do so. Just under a sixth of young people who use public transport "infrequently" said that they didn't really know how to use public transport. 1 in 10 of those who said they use active travel "infrequently" said that they could not ride a bike<sup>42</sup>.

## Parents, guardians and carers having to travel to work afterwards

Taking children to school as part of a longer journey into work or to other care responsibilities means driving is often more convenient than using public transport or travelling actively. Research focused on women's caring experiences by the University of Manchester and GM4Women2028<sup>43</sup> found that 29% of women who commute in Manchester make one or more stops on their way to work. This rises to 55% of those with children under 12. Women who trip-chain (make multiple stops) are less likely to use active travel, with 19% saying they are unable to walk children to school and then continue to work.

## Higher car ownership

More households in Greater Manchester now own a car, with low-income communities having seen the largest growth in car ownership. Between 2011 and 2021, the number of cars available for household use in Greater Manchester grew by 13%. If a household owns a car, it is more likely that a young person will be driven to school. The Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2022 found that 30% of education trips are as a car passenger if a household owns at least one car. This figure drops to 4% for households without a car.

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<sup>39</sup> Presentation by Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority on National Travel Survey (2023)

<sup>40</sup> [GMCA 20230127 Our Pass Evaluation \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>41</sup> Presentation by Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority on National Travel Survey (2023)

<sup>42</sup> NYCA Young Persons Transport Survey October 2022

<sup>43</sup> [What-women-want-report-1.pdf \(gm4women2028.org\)](#)

# Current travel patterns

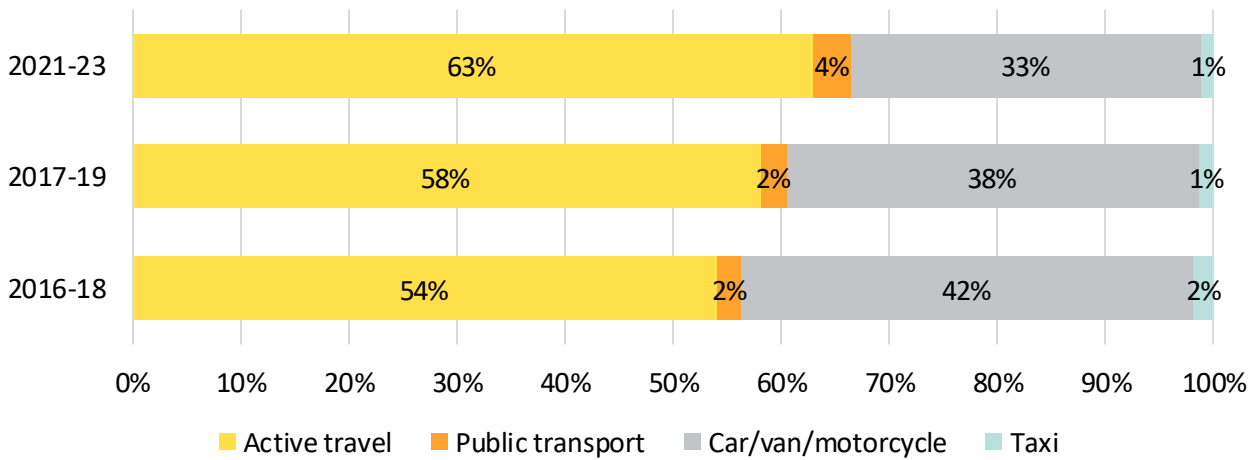
Using the Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey (TRADS), we have estimated how children and young people travel to and from education. Due to yearly cohort changes, travel patterns vary more for education trips between years than other journey types, we have therefore averaged three years of data together to provide a more stable baseline.

## Primary school

The results from TRADS show a positive year on year trend of more young people choosing to travel actively to school. Despite this progress a third of primary school pupils are still being driven to school.

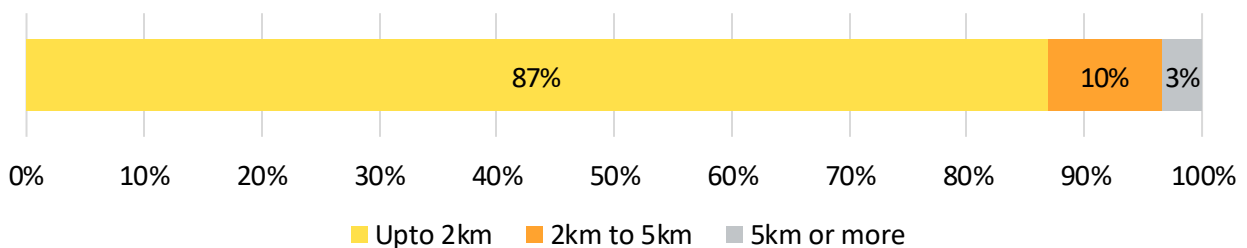
Greater Manchester does already meet the national target for 55% of 5 to 10 year olds to walk to school by 2025<sup>44</sup>, but this is a national target which also accounts for more rural areas where children might be expected to travel further to school. In Greater Manchester 87% of primary aged pupils travel less than 2 km (≈ 1.2 miles) to school, a distance for which we would expect active travel to be the first choice.

How do 5 to 10 year olds travel to school?



Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2016-23

Distance travelled to school by primary age pupils



Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2021-23

<sup>44</sup> [Cycling and walking investment strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy)

To build on the progress we have made to date, we have set an ambitious goal of:

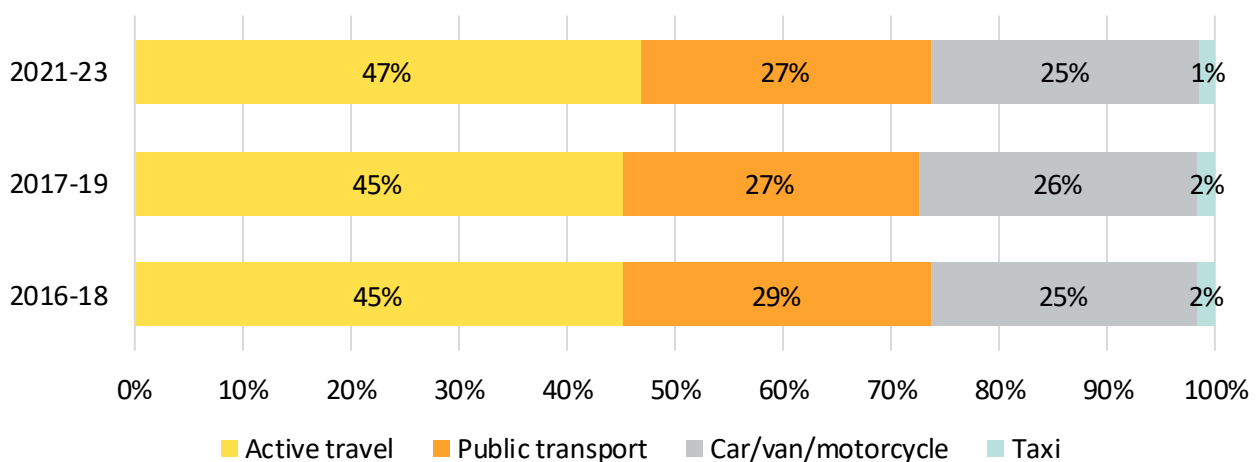
**70% of primary school students in Greater Manchester walking, wheeling, scooting, or cycling to school by 2030**

## Secondary school

According to TRADS there appears to have been little progress in increasing the number of sustainable trips taken to secondary schools. There has been a slight increase in the number of young people travelling actively, but at the same time there has been a slight reduction in the number using public transport.

Although we cannot judge our progress against just one year's worth of results, in 2023 we did see a large increase in the number of young people being driven to school. In 2022 we saw a large jump in the number of young people travelling actively which subsequently reduced the following year, so this may just be a fluctuation in this year's data. It does though suggest that, unlike with primary schools, we are not seeing a trend of consistent growth in the number of sustainable trips to school.

### How do 11 to 16 year olds travel to school?

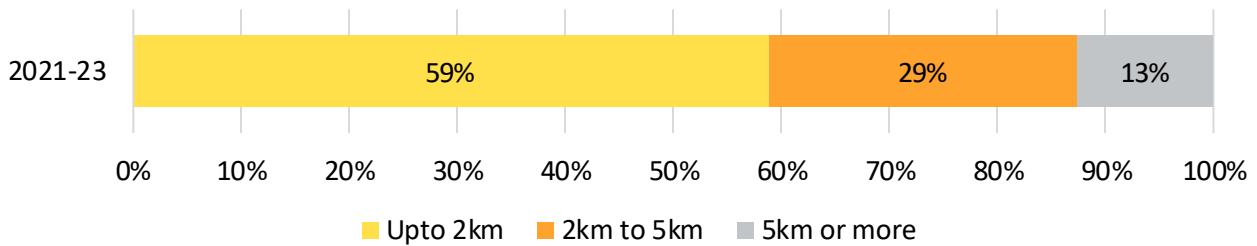


Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2016-23

There is the potential for many more young people to travel actively to school. 59% of GM secondary school pupils live within 2km ( $\approx$  1.2 miles) distance of their school, and a further 29% live within 5km ( $\approx$  3.1 miles). As secondary school pupils tend to live further away from their school compared to primary school pupils, public transport has a greater role to play in helping young people travel to school sustainably. With nearly 9 in 10 pupils living within 5km of their school, public transport should be an attractive option for those who live too far away to travel actively.



### Distance travelled to school by secondary age pupils



Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2021-23

Given the limited progress to date, we believe that an enhanced focus on secondary school travel is needed. Therefore, we are setting ourselves the ambitious goal of:

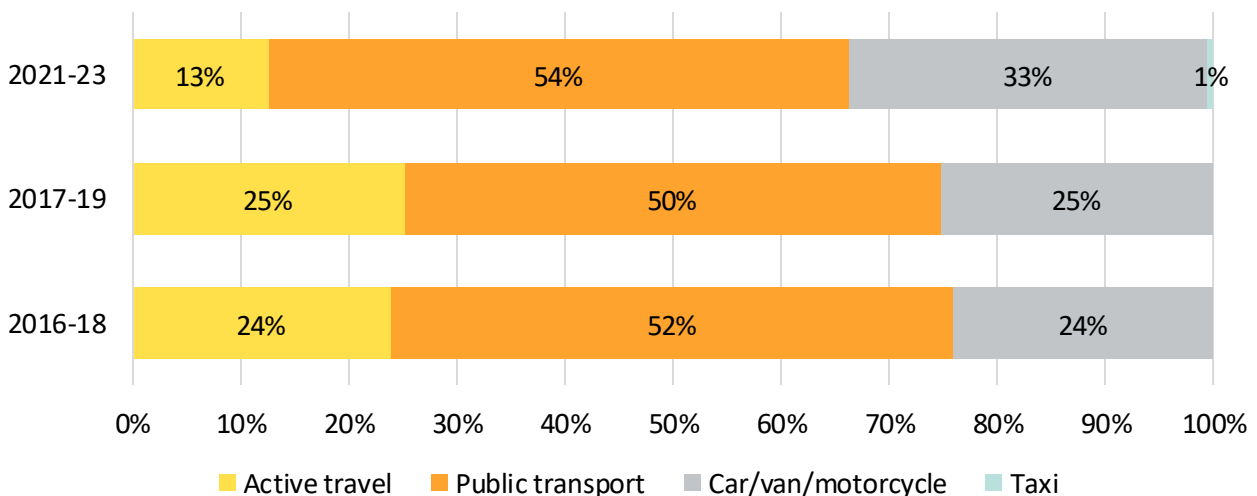
**80% of secondary school students in Greater Manchester to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to travel to school by 2030**

### Further education (16 – 18)

As there are fewer young people in further education compared to those at primary and secondary schools, the TRADS sample sizes are much smaller. Therefore, it is harder to provide a consistent story of how travel patterns have evolved as there is a greater variation in the results from year to year.

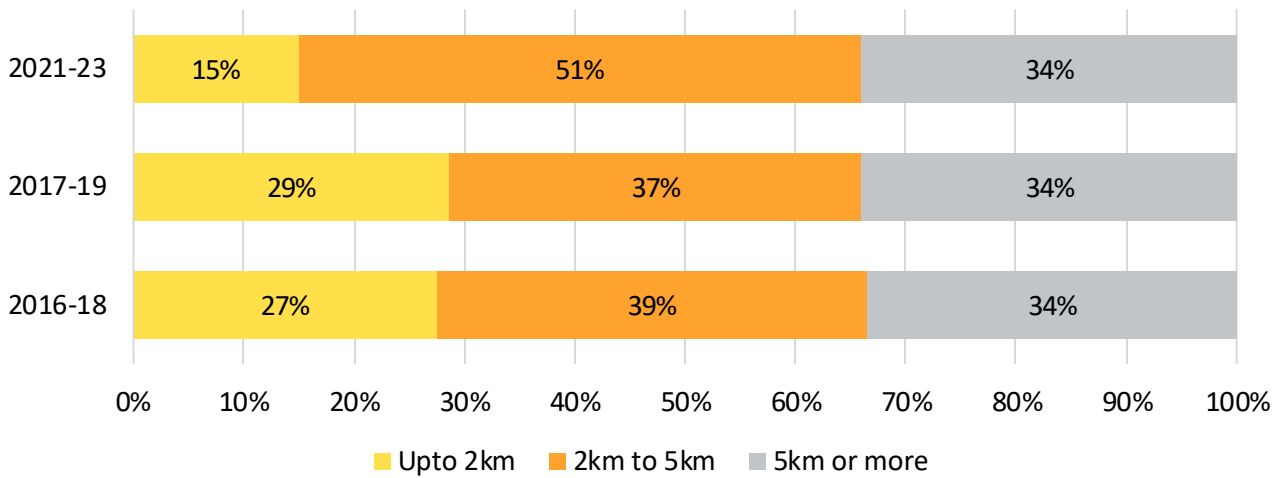
Our data suggests that post-pandemic there has been a growth in the number of young people driving or being driven to access further education, alongside a large reduction in the numbers travelling actively. This could be linked to the increasing distances that young people are travelling to access further education, as shown below.

### How do 16 to 18 year olds travel to access further education?



Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey

### Distance travelled to access further education



Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2016-23

If young people are now travelling further to access further education, we need more young people to use public transport to ensure that these journeys are being made in a sustainable way.

In 2019 Our Pass was introduced, meaning that 16 to 18 year olds could travel for free on buses and half price on Metrolink. We would therefore have expected a larger increase in public transport usage than is shown in the graph above. The TRADS figures from 2021 and 2022 do suggest that there was indeed a large increase in public transport usage, with around 60% of 16 to 18 year olds using public transport to access further education. This increase was not however continued in the 2023 figures, where only 40% of 16 to 18 year olds said they used public transport to access further education.

However, a separate survey asking how often Our Pass members made use of free and discounted public transport found that 48% used it daily and 30% used it 3 or more times a week. Given that 72% of 16 to 18 year olds have an Our Pass membership, this would suggest that as a minimum over half of 16 to 18 year olds are using public transport either daily or frequently.

Therefore, we have set an ambitious goal of:

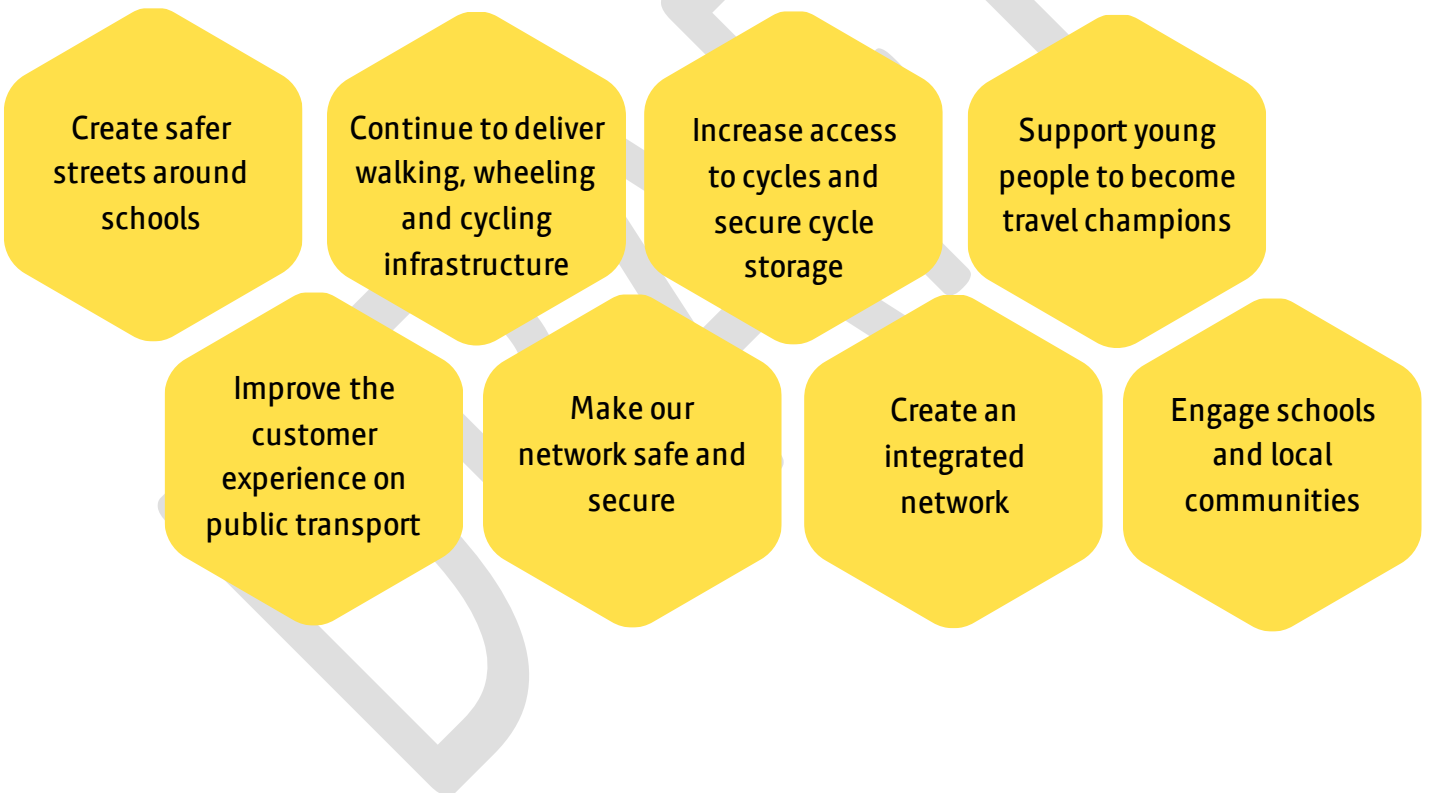
**80% of further education students in Greater Manchester to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to access education by 2030**

# How we will improve school travel

We want more young people to choose to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to get to school and access further education. However, for many young people this is not currently possible. If we are to achieve our ambitious goals, we must remove the barriers that are currently preventing young people travelling in a sustainable way.

We have identified eight overarching activities on which to focus our efforts. These eight activities are not the only solutions that exist and delivering them will require close collaboration with young people, parents, guardians, carers, schools, partner organisations, and communities.

## Our activities





# 1. Create safer streets around schools

For parents to allow their children to walk, wheel, scoot, or cycle to school, they must feel that it is safe. We have published a draft Vision Zero Strategy that sets the ambitious goal of eliminating all fatal and life changing injuries on Greater Manchester's roads by 2040<sup>45</sup>. This will not just make our streets safer but make it more attractive for people to travel and spend time on them.



Every school faces unique challenges; therefore, we need to have a range of measures that can be tailored to address a school's specific safety needs.

Measures to make it safer to walk, wheel, scoot or cycle to school could include:

- School Streets
- Crossing points
- Travel training
- Traffic calming
- Road markings
- Parking restrictions
- Playful routes<sup>46</sup>
- 20 mph speed limits
- Park & Stride
- Walk to School Challenge
- School crossing patrols
- Traffic enforcement
- Bollards
- Urban realm improvements

Experiences across the country have shown that interventions that introduce physical road safety improvements alongside behaviour change programmes that engage with the school community have more chance of succeeding. **TfGM will therefore develop a pilot "Safer Routes to School" project to examine how physical and behavioural interventions can be introduced together as part of future interventions around schools and the wider area.**

## School Streets

School Streets involve closing the road outside a school during drop off and pick up time to reduce vehicle traffic, creating a pleasant, child-friendly environment. Essential access for residents and blue badge holders is maintained, but through traffic is restricted. Research has shown that School Streets can reduce the number of people driving to school by a third and reduce the risk of injury<sup>47</sup>. **TfGM will work with local authorities, schools and local communities to deliver, subject to funding, 100 School Streets by 2028.**

It has been through the dedicated work of schools, parents and volunteers that School Streets have been created. Having a safe space for children to travel to school should not however be reliant on a few dedicated people to enforce it and staff the barriers<sup>48</sup>. Some local authorities in GM now have the power to enforce moving traffic offences using ANPR cameras. **TfGM and local**

<sup>45</sup> [Vision Zero Strategy - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

<sup>46</sup> For further information on Stockport's playful routes see [On The Way Play - An idea in progress by Civic and Social](#).

<sup>47</sup> [Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>48</sup> [PowerPoint Presentation \(walkridegm.org.uk\)](https://www.walkridegm.org.uk)

authorities will look to increasingly use cameras to enforce school streets where it is appropriate to do so, but being aware that other measures, such as physical barriers or paying volunteers, may be a more suitable alternative for some streets.



### Case Study of Guardian Angels Primary School

Guardian Angels Primary School, in partnership with Bury Council, Living Streets and TfGM has introduced a school street to keep its pupils safe and encourage them to walk or cycle to school. As well as having a school street, the school takes part in WOW – the walk to school challenge from Living Streets. Since starting WOW, Guardian Angels Primary School active journey rates have increased by 15%.

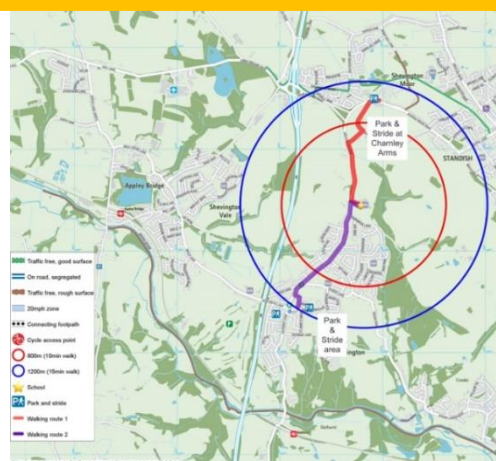
## Parking

Illegal and inconsiderate parking on the road and pavement can make it unsafe for young people to walk to school. It can also negatively affect local communities and block access for emergency vehicles, making it unsafe for all. Central government has been considering granting local authorities new powers to tackle pavement parking. We will **continue to lobby central government for these powers** and depending on their decision, explore how we can use any new powers to tackle pavement parking around schools. Until then, **we will explore how existing powers can be used to discourage poor parking around schools and take steps to increase public awareness of the harm pavement parking causes.**

Park & Stride can provide a safer alternative. Instead of parking on the road or pavement near the school, parents drop off their children a short walk away in a designated and agreed parking place e.g. a supermarket car park or a local community centre. Park & Stride should be used in conjunction with other school road safety measures and behaviour change initiatives, as on its own it is unlikely to result in a change in travel habits. Ultimately, the most effective way to make it safer to travel actively to school is for fewer parents to drive their children to school.

### Case study of Shevington High School

Pupils at Shevington High School wished to make it safer to walk to school by reducing the number of cars being parked outside the school gate. Working with a local pub the school created a park and stride scheme and asked parents and carers to take a parking pledge. To raise awareness pupils created posters, promoted it in school assemblies and gave out mock parking tickets to cars that continued to park outside the school gate. 38% of pupils now travel actively to school and 11% of pupils travel by park and stride regularly.



## 2. Continue to deliver walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure

Greater Manchester has committed to building a world-class walking, wheeling, and cycling network that will link up communities and provide safe routes to schools and further education establishments. Creating a safe space to travel actively is one of the most effective ways to encourage more children and parents to travel actively.

Greater Manchester is leading the way in creating safe spaces to walk, wheel, scoot and cycle. TfGM and the ten local authorities have plans to build nearly 2,734 km of connected cycling and walking routes by 2038<sup>49</sup>. This includes delivering new crossings, safer junctions, more dropped kerbs, wider pavements and creating segregated spaces for vulnerable road users on busier roads. More is needed though. Only 50% of GM residents are currently satisfied that it is safe for children to walk to school, and just 42% believe it is safe for children to cycle to school<sup>50</sup>.

### More accessible neighbourhoods

Nearly two-thirds of all education trips are within or between local neighbourhoods<sup>51</sup>. To encourage more young people to walk, wheel, scoot or cycle we therefore need to create neighbourhoods that are safer and more attractive places to be in.



The new Chorlton Cycleway is a new segregated cycle lane (shown in blue), but it has enabled a much larger network (shown by dashed line) by providing a safe way to cross Chorlton Road.

Alongside improving walking and wheeling routes, this means we need to create quieter and therefore safer streets. We will do this by **setting speed limits that reflect the risk and purpose of a road**, in line with the Streets for All approach<sup>52</sup> and the Safe System approach as set out in the Vision Zero Strategy<sup>53</sup>.

Making local areas more accessible will include, where possible, the installation of segregated infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists along busier roads. Installing new cycle lanes or crossings on busier sections means people can use the quiet streets that lead up to it, creating even more safe walking and cycling routes (see picture).

<sup>49</sup> (Public Pack) 14.12.2023 Bee Network Committee - Complete Pack Agenda Supplement for Bee Network Committee, 14/12/2023 14:00 ([greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk))

<sup>50</sup> National Highways and Transport Network (NHT) Survey 2022

<sup>51</sup> Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2023

<sup>52</sup> [Streets for All | Bee Network | Powered by TfGM](#)

<sup>53</sup> [Vision Zero Strategy - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

## Safer crossing points and junctions

Having to cross a busy junction or main road can stop young people walking, wheeling, or cycling to school. At present, there are over 80 junctions within 500m of a school that do not currently have a green man or dedicated pedestrian phases; instead, pedestrians must look for gaps in the traffic. This situation needs to be resolved as soon as possible. Our aim is therefore that **every busy junction or main road within 500m of a school will have pedestrian facilities installed by 2032.**

Alongside installing new crossings, we have been adjusting the timings of existing crossings so that pedestrians do not have to wait as long to cross the road. We are also giving pedestrians longer to cross the road, reducing the worry that the lights will turn to green while picking up a dropped water bottle or toy.



### Case Study of Bowker Vale Primary School

TfGM traffic engineers worked with Bowker Vale Primary School and Walk Ride Blackley to make it easier for children and parents to cross the road. The crossing outside the school was reprogrammed to reduce the maximum pedestrian waiting time. A TfGM traffic engineer joined the school's "Walk into the Weekend" event to explain the changes and show how the crossing works.

## Identifying where to invest next

Given the limited budgets available for new infrastructure, TfGM and the ten local authorities must identify where investing our limited funds would have the greatest impact. To assist in doing this we have undertaken an audit of our current active travel network to find out what existing infrastructure meets Bee Network standards<sup>54</sup>. Some local authorities have also carried out or are planning to carry out their own assessments of how they can improve active travel access to schools<sup>55</sup>. These and the "Safer Routes to School" pilot will be used to **develop a future school travel infrastructure programme**, consisting of a combination of interventions that will make the streets immediately surrounding a school safer and the wider area more attractive for walking, wheeling, scooting, and cycling.

<sup>54</sup> (Public Pack) 14.12.2023 Bee Network Committee - Complete Pack Agenda Supplement for Bee Network Committee, 14/12/2023 14:00 ([greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)); Active Travel in Greater Manchester 2023 ([ctfassets.net](https://ctfassets.net))

<sup>55</sup> [Oldham Active Schools | Oldham Council](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/active-schools)



### 3. Increase access to cycles and secure cycle storage

To give young people the opportunity to cycle to school we need to help them, and their parents, guardians and carers, have access to a bike and have a secure place to store it. Just over a fifth of households in Greater Manchester currently have access to a bike<sup>56</sup>.

#### Access to cycles

**We will provide greater access to cycles, adapted bikes and scooters by supporting schools to either set up their own bike library or work closely with their nearest bike library.** A bike library allows people to borrow a bicycle and try it out for a short loan period, either for free or for a small fee. Bike libraries are generally based in places such as community centres, schools, village halls or local business premises.

Refurbished bikes are a cheaper and more environmentally friendly alternative to buying a new bike. **We will therefore continue to work with charities and cycle shops to promote places that sell refurbished bikes on the TfGM Bee Active Website**<sup>57</sup>.

#### Secure cycle storage

Alongside providing access to cycles there is a need to provide secure storage at schools and colleges to give students the confidence that their bike is safe and secure. Since 2021 TfGM has provided grant funding to 77 schools and committed funding to a further 51 to enable them to install cycle parking provisions. Many houses and flats however lack space to store cycles. **We will investigate how developer contributions and other funding streams can be used to install more cycle storage at schools and in the wider community.**



<sup>56</sup> Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2022

<sup>57</sup> [Get a bike - Access to bikes | TfGM Bee Active](#)

## 4. Support young people to become travel champions

People form travel habits and then stick to them. If we want young people to travel in a more active and sustainable way, we need to encourage and enable new travel habits throughout their school career. We want to give young people the ability to not only travel to school sustainably, but to become lifelong users and advocates for sustainable travel.

**We want to develop a new education programme in partnership with schools and external organisations that will support young people throughout their school career, providing them with the skills and motivation to become lifelong travel champions.**

This will build on the current Modeshift STARS platform that is available to schools but will be enhanced to bring together all current programmes under one umbrella, like Transport for London have done with their Travel for Life education programme<sup>58</sup>.

Young people and schools are currently approached by many organisations who wish to talk to them about how to travel sustainably. However, often the training is focused on just one aspect of travelling sustainably and fails to link up with previous training courses or talks. It is also difficult for schools to identify who offers what and how they can apply. **We will work with our partners to put all our available resources, information, and funding opportunities in one place**, allowing schools to easily find and select the activities and training that they think would best suit their pupils needs.

### **Giving young people travel skills and knowledge**

Knowing how to safely cross the road and navigate around your local area are the first steps to being able to travel independently later in life. We will therefore **ensure that every young person has learnt about road safety and has basic navigation skills before they go to secondary school.**

We want all young people to be able to ride a bike. Together TfGM, local authorities and partner organisations, such as Bikeability, Cycling UK and BikeRight provide training that covers a range of age groups and different skills, from how to ride a bike to how to fix it. Going forward we will better coordinate our efforts to **enable every primary school student in Greater Manchester who wishes to do so, to learn how to ride and fix a bike.**



<sup>58</sup> [TfL STARS - Getting young London moving](#)

Currently there are limited resources on how to use public transport, even though for many young people the first time they may have travelled on a bus is when they go to school. Some guidance is provided on the TfGM website and through the TravelSafe Partnership, but this tends to focus on how to behave rather than how to purchase a ticket or plan a journey for example. It is our aim that **every young person in Greater Manchester will know how to travel by bus, tram, and train by the time they start their GCSEs.**

## Using the opportunity of fresh starts

It is difficult to break habits, but a change in circumstance forces us to actively consider how we travel, providing an opportunity to suggest alternatives and create new travel habits. Moving from primary to secondary school is a perfect example of a fresh start. Habits are quickly formed, so how a young person travels to school in their first few weeks will become their default travel behaviour. **We will work with schools and colleges to support young people during the transition between schools**, supporting young people to choose the most appropriate travel option for their journey.

## Inspiring young people to travel differently

The best advocates for sustainable travel to school are young people themselves. Therefore, a key part of our future education programme will be working with young people to give them greater ownership over what activities or incentives their school provides to encourage more young people to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport.

We have already been working with young people to help them create and deliver their own campaigns to promote active travel and public transport. Primary school pupils have helped promote road safety through becoming Road Safety Champions and secondary school pupils have been championing sustainable travel through acting as Youth Travel Ambassadors for their school (pictured below). We want to build on these programmes and encourage even more young people to become travel champions.



### Case study of Stretford High School

Stretford High School's Youth Travel Ambassadors ran a point based travel competition in school. Students who scored the most points for walking, wheeling, cycling, or using public transport to school won prizes. To celebrate the completion of the term long competition, they also organised a no car day with an official road closure to reduce congestion directly outside of the school gates. They have seen a 4% increase in students walking to school and a 6% decrease in car use.



## 5. Improve the customer experience on public transport

Accessing education is the most common purpose for bus trips, meaning students are a vital customer group<sup>59</sup>. Encouraging more young people to use public transport is therefore essential for achieving growth in patronage.

Public transport in Greater Manchester is changing. Through the Bee Network, we are bringing buses, trams, trains, and active travel together. This will mean a more reliable, affordable, accessible and accountable public transport system that better serves young people.

### Reliable

Young people and their parents must be able to trust public transport to get them to and from school every day, on time. This means sticking to timetables or, on busier routes and Metrolink, running so frequently that you can turn up to a stop and get on a bus or tram without checking a timetable. Our aim is for **80% of buses to depart on time** (less than one minute early and five minutes late).

To achieve this, we will:

- Expect and require bus operators to meet high performance standards with contractual penalties if they fail to meet them.
- Maintain and increase bus priority infrastructure so that buses can quickly get to their destination without getting stuck in traffic.
- Put in place systems to share road works information between highways authorities, TfGM and operators to minimise disruption and ensure pupils still arrive at school on time.

To offer young people greater certainty, the Bee Network app now includes real-time bus tracking, and we have plans to install information screens at 300 bus stops to display real-time departure information.

### Affordable


We will provide a simpler and fairer ticketing system for young people. To make it as easy as possible for young people to use our network, we will remove the additional cost of having to change buses to get to school by **introducing a new bus hopper fare**. This means that young people will be able to travel on multiple buses within an hour for the cost of a single ticket. We will



<sup>59</sup> Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2023

also make it easier for more young people to have access to affordable travel by exploring how we can **improve the application process for the igo card** (5–16-years old).

We will encourage more young people to use the Bee Network app as not only does it allow young people to see live departure times, track their bus and plan their journey, it also allows young people aged over 13 to purchase their tickets in advance of travelling. This provides parents with the certainty that their child has brought their ticket and can't lose it as its saved on their phone.



**Our Pass**

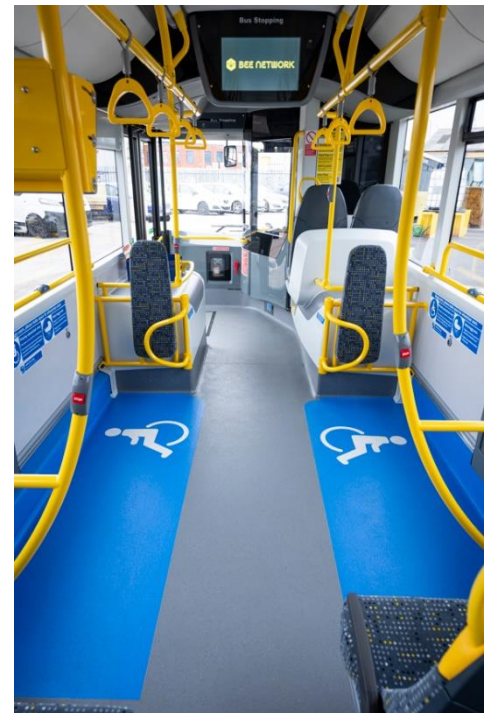
Our Pass is a concession for young people aged 16 to 18, making all buses in Greater Manchester free and halving the price of Metrolink. This has resulted in a phenomenal growth in the number of young people using public transport in a relatively short period of time. Research into the impact of Our Pass has shown that 88% of young people felt that Our Pass has made it easier for them to take part in education and training. Young people also said it has helped them find and keep a job, supporting them in their transition from education to employment.

## Accessible

To allow everyone to travel to school and college on public transport we are making our vehicles and stops more accessible. We are upgrading our buses, so that they have two spaces onboard for wheelchair users, hearing induction loops and audio-visual announcements as standard. In addition, we are creating a further 500 more accessible stops with raised kerbs and providing places to rest while waiting. Through driver training we are ensuring that drivers are aware of the different needs of their passengers and can assist where necessary.

## Accountable

The Bee Network is run for the people of Greater Manchester, and we will be held to account by them. We are actively encouraging customers to rate their journey, so that they can let us know when we provide a good experience and when there have been issues. This can be done by rating a journey on the Bee Network app, website or by calling the Bee Network Contact Centre. This feedback will be used to help identify issues and judge performance, with operators facing financial penalties if they fail to provide a high-quality service. Over time this will help improve our network and provide a better customer experience.



## 6. Make our network safe and secure

Improving safety and perceptions of safety for all our passengers is a priority. Through our TravelSafe Partnership, led by TfGM and GMP, we are addressing crime and anti-social behaviour on our network. Greater Manchester Police (GMP) has made policing transport a priority for the force, treating the network as the conceptual 'eleventh district' of Greater Manchester. If more young people and their families are to use public transport it must feel and be safe.



### Encourage positive travel behaviour

We are working with schools through TravelSafe's Educational Outreach Programme to engage with young people about their behaviour on public transport. We also collaborate with other agencies, such as Foundation 92, to reach groups we may otherwise not be able to reach. Together we seek to promote good travel behaviour and warn young people who are taking part in crime or anti-social behaviour about the consequences of doing so.



#### Case Study of Foundation 92

Foundation 92 uses a sports-based outreach programme to address some of the underlying and complex reasons for why a young person may misbehave. As part of their wider programme they have been using a converted bus with a tv and games console to engage with young people who have been misbehaving in transport interchanges. By talking to them in a non-confrontational manner they can help the young person think about why they are behaving the way they are .

### Deter and prevent unwanted behaviour

The TravelSafe Partnership is focused on addressing and deterring any instances of crime or anti-social behaviour on our network. TravelSafe Support and Enforcement Officers are deployed across GM to support passengers, deter anti-social behaviour, conduct ticket checks and answer customer queries. This is in addition to uniformed and plain clothes police officers who regularly patrol the network.

If passengers do come across anti-social or unsafe behaviour, they can quickly and discreetly report it via Greater Manchester Police's LiveChat on their website or by calling 101 – or 999 in an emergency. To make it easier to report incidents **we will introduce a new TravelSafe Live chat feature on the Bee Network app and include it as part of our travel training to young people.**

## 7. Create an integrated network

To provide young people with a reliable and convenient transport system we need to create an integrated network that better connects buses, trams, trains, active travel and school services together. A more integrated network will give young people greater flexibility about where and when they travel (allowing them to go to after school clubs, for example) and improve the resilience of the network, by providing alternatives if things go wrong.

Before the creation of the Bee Network and the start of bus franchising Greater Manchester was unable to plan its transport network in an integrated way. The introduction of a dedicated school service was often the only way we could ensure young people could travel to school, given our inability to alter the wider network.

School services are subsidised bus services, paid for by local authorities through TfGM. Whilst technically open to the public, in practice TfGM provided school services are used only by school pupils to travel to and from school.

Whilst filling gaps in this way provided an immediate solution to a school's connectivity problems, this case-by-case approach did not allow planners to take a strategic view of the whole network. This meant that, over time, an uneven patchwork of services developed, with limited interaction with the wider public transport network and outcomes that could be perceived as unfair.

Schools with more pupils receiving free school meals are less likely to have a dedicated school service.

Schools with school buses = **28%** of pupils receive free school meals

Schools with no school buses = **35%** of pupils receive free school meals

All schools = **31%** of pupils receive free school meals

School services require scarce driver and vehicle resource, which could be more efficiently utilised on services that run throughout the day for the whole community. By creating one, joined-up network we will be able to better serve schools and further education establishments, alongside improving transport connections for everyone.

### Network planning guidelines

To create an integrated network, we are undertaking a rolling programme of area-based network reviews. These will consider how our transport services can together form an easy to use, simple and joined up system. Our preference will always be to make any adjustments to specific services or the wider network through the network review process. This is because if it is not possible for a young person to travel to school actively or by public transport, others may also face limited transport options.

These reviews will be guided by the following principles. Our transport network should be:

- **Comprehensive** – because people need access to convenient transport at all times.
- **Simple** – because people need to find the network easy to understand and use.
- **Frequent** – because keeping waiting times low makes public transport more attractive.



- **Direct** – because public transport users value low journey times.
- **Reliable** – because people need to be able to depend on public transport.
- **Integrated** – because users need access to multiple journey choices.
- **Cost-effective** – because our network needs to be financially sustainable.

## The future role of dedicated school services

As part of our work to create a simpler and more integrated network we will look to gradually incorporate existing school services into the general network through the network review process, considering local circumstances and requirements. As a general principle our transport network should be available to all users, and therefore not consist of special services that only certain people can use.

Where school services do exist, they should enhance and support the wider transport network. This could mean for example that rather than running a bespoke school service with its own special route, a general daytime service could be diverted to serve a nearby school at the start and end of the school day. Or an extra bus that starts or ends at a school could be added to an existing route to provide additional capacity.

Going forward, new school services will only be provided when there is an exceptional need to do so. This will be judged against the Department for Education’s guidance on walking distances and maximum journey times<sup>60</sup>. The provision of new services must also provide value for money and be consistent with our network principles. Schools will continue to be able to procure their own private school bus services separate of TfGM if they wish to do so.

Where changes occur, we will align them where possible with the new academic year and with wider timetable change dates, although there may be situations where adjustments are made at shorter notice due to operational issues. We will work closely with affected schools, parents, and elected representatives to raise awareness of their travel options and what the changes will mean for them.

If a school has a dedicated school service, it is expected that they will support us in our aim to create an integrated network and promote sustainable travel. Therefore, **from September 2028 we will expect all schools with dedicated school services to be accredited by Modeshift STARS or in the process of gaining accreditation<sup>61</sup>**. We will support schools in doing this, but the provision of school services must form part of a wider package of initiatives that are encouraging young people to travel sustainably to school.

<sup>60</sup> [Travel to school for children of compulsory school age \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

<sup>61</sup> Where a pupil is eligible for statutory assistance, they will continue to receive support regardless of whether their school is accredited with Modeshift STARS or not.

## 8. Engage Schools and Local Communities

If we are to encourage more young people to travel sustainably, we must work in partnership with schools, pupils, parents, guardians, carers, and local communities.

### Schools and further education establishments

Schools and further education establishments play a crucial role in encouraging more young people to travel sustainably and would be one of the main beneficiaries. Travelling actively can help improve students' behaviour, concentration, and mental health, all of which have been linked to higher academic success<sup>62</sup>. Additionally, championing walking, wheeling, scooting, cycling and public transport can help schools and further education establishments be better neighbours by reducing parking-related complaints from residents. This all helps to make schools and further education establishments more attractive to prospective students and parents.



Many schools and further education establishments want to help but face significant competing pressures, therefore **we will work with our partners to put all our available resources, advice, and funding opportunities in one easily accessible place.**

Modeshift STARS is an accreditation programme that helps schools develop travel plans and promote sustainable travel<sup>63</sup>. All schools in Greater Manchester can access Modeshift STARS for free, but few schools are currently taking advantage. We will therefore **identify what improvements can be made to make Modeshift STARS more attractive and provide additional guidance.**

### Parents, guardians, carers and local communities

Travelling to school to drop off or pick up a child is often only one part of a parent or guardian's journey. This means that even if it is possible to travel sustainably to school, if there are limited onward options for the rest of their journey, driving to school may be the only option. Through the network review process, we will therefore **consider how the transport network can better facilitate onward travel for parents, guardians and carers.** We will also explore whether **providing individualised journey plans for parents, guardians and carers** could help them plan how to make their onward journey using active travel or public transport.

<sup>62</sup> [HT\\_briefing\\_layoutvFINALvii.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#); [Investigation of the associations between physical activity, self-regulation and educational outcomes in childhood | PLOS ONE](#); [Being Active Helps Students in School - Association for Physical Education - Association For Physical Education | P.E. \(afpe.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>63</sup> [Education - Modeshift STARS](#)

We will seek to create more opportunities and make it easier for local communities and voluntary groups to work with schools and young people. Local communities are leading the way in promoting walking, wheeling, scooting, and cycling to school. Whether that be installing a school street, running a bike bus, or helping schools engage with children and their families. Without their help we cannot achieve our vision. **TfGM will provide guidance on how local groups can work in partnership with their local schools, covering subjects such as the process for creating a school street, and how to better promote the initiatives local groups are undertaking.**



#### **Case Study of Manley Park Primary School's Bike Train<sup>64</sup>**

In partnership with Walkey Ride GM and Manchester City Council, Manley Park Primary School has implemented a school street creating a safe space outside the school. Alongside marshalling the barriers, parents and volunteers have come together to start a weekly bike train to school along two separate routes, with up to 50 parents and children taking part.

We want to support those who are best placed to talk to and work with their local communities to do so. Advocates and groups that are embedded in their local area are better placed to provide the support that some people will need to start travelling actively. They can reach people that TfGM and local authorities would struggle to engage with and better identify what barriers may exist for specific communities.

Through implementing the activities set out in this strategy we aim to provide the foundations for communities and groups to build on. Only by working together can we hope to encourage more young people to choose to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to travel to school and access further education.

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<sup>64</sup> [Supporting School Streets in Whalley Range – Walk Ride GM](#)

## Next steps

We want more young people to choose to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to get to school and access further education. This document has set out our vision for school travel in Greater Manchester, outlining why we need more young people to travel sustainably and how we will support more young people to do this.

It is our ambition that by 2030:

- **70% of primary school students in Greater Manchester** will walk, wheel, scoot, or cycle to school, up from 63% (GMTRADS, 2021-23)
- **80% of secondary school students in Greater Manchester** will walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to travel to school, up from 74% (GMTRADS, 2021-23)
- **80% of further education students in Greater Manchester** will walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to access education, up from 66% (GMTRADS, 2021-23)

Subject to securing the appropriate funding and resources, we aim to do this by:

### **Creating safer streets around schools**

- TfGM will develop a pilot "Safer Routes to School" project to examine how physical and behavioural interventions can be introduced together as part of future interventions around schools and the wider area.
- TfGM will work with local authorities, schools and local communities to deliver 100 School Streets by 2028.
- TfGM and local authorities will look to increasingly use cameras to enforce school streets where it is appropriate to do so, but being aware that other measures, such as physical barriers or paying volunteers, may be a more suitable alternative for some streets.
- TfGM will continue to lobby central government for powers to tackle pavement parking.
- TfGM and local authorities to explore how existing powers can be used to discourage poor parking around schools and take steps to increase public awareness of the harm pavement parking causes.

### **Continuing to deliver more walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure**

- Local authorities and TfGM to create safer streets by setting speed limits that reflect the risk and purpose of a road, in line with the Streets for All approach and Safe System approach as set out in the Vision Zero Strategy.
- Local authorities and TfGM to aim for every busy junction or main road within 500m of a school to have pedestrian facilities by 2032.
- Local authorities with support from TfGM to use the results from boroughwide and neighbourhood audits to develop a school travel infrastructure programme to make the

streets immediately surrounding a school and the wider local area more attractive for walking, wheeling, scooting, and cycling.

### **Increasing access to cycles and secure cycle storage**

- TfGM will support schools to either set up their own bike library or work closely with their nearest bike library to provide more cycles, adapted bikes and scooters for young people.
- TfGM will continue to work with charities and cycle shops to promote places that sell refurbished bikes on the TfGM Bee Active Website.
- Local authorities and TfGM to investigate how developer contributions and other funding streams can be used to install more cycle storage at schools and in the wider community.

### **Supporting young people to become travel champions**

- TfGM, the GMCA and local authorities to work on developing a new education programme in partnership with schools and external organisations that will support young people throughout their school career, providing them with the skills and motivation to become lifelong travel champions.
- Our new education programme aims to:
  - Ensure that every young person has learnt about road safety and has basic navigation skills before they go to secondary school.
  - Better coordinate our efforts to enable every primary school student in Greater Manchester who wishes to do so, to learn how to ride and fix a bike.
  - Provide every young person in Greater Manchester with the skills and knowledge to travel by bus, tram, and train by the time they start their GCSEs.
  - Support young people during the transition between primary to secondary school, and secondary school to further education.
  - Work with young people to give them greater ownership over what activities or incentives their school carries out to encourage more young people to travel sustainably.

### **Improving the customer experience on public transport**

- TfGM, bus operators, and local authorities (through their role as highway authorities), to work towards 80% of buses departing on time by 2030.
- TfGM to install information screens at 300 bus stops to provide real time information to passengers.
- TfGM to introduce a new bus hopper fare by January 2025.
- TfGM to explore how the application process for the igo card can be improved.
- TfGM and bus operators to carry out an upgrade programme of the bus fleet to make them more accessible.

## **Making our network safe and secure**

- Travel Safe Partnership to continue working with schools through their educational outreach programme and in partnership with agencies, such as Foundation 92, to encourage positive travel behaviour.
- Travel Safe Partnership to continue deploying TravelSafe Support and Enforcement Officers during school commuting hours to address and deter unwanted behaviour.
- TfGM to introduce a new TravelSafe Live chat feature on the Bee Network app and include it as part of our travel training to young people.

## **Creating an integrated network**

- TfGM will, through a process of ongoing area-based network reviews, consider how the network could be adjusted to better serve schools and gradually integrate school services into the wider network.
- Schools that receive school services will from September 2028 be expected to be accredited by Modeshift STARS or be in the process of gaining accreditation, this is to ensure that school services form part of a wider package of sustainable travel measures.

## **Engaging schools and local communities**

- TfGM and the GMCA will work together to publicise what resources, advice, and available funding is available to schools in one place, so it is easier for schools to keep track of what is available to them.
- TfGM will identify what improvements can be made to make Modeshift STARS more attractive to schools and provide additional guidance on how to use Modeshift STARS.
- TfGM will consider through the network review process how the transport network can better facilitate parents and guardians onwards travel.
- TfGM will explore whether providing individualised journey plans for parents and guardian could encourage them to make their onward journey using active travel or public transport.
- TfGM and local authorities will seek to create more opportunities for local communities and voluntary groups to work with schools and young people to promote sustainable travel.
- TfGM will provide guidance on how local groups can work in partnership with their local school, such as the process for creating a school street and how to better promote the initiatives local groups are already undertaking

## **Measuring our progress**

Over the coming years, we will work with our partners to deliver our ambitious school travel strategy for Greater Manchester. Our vision will not be delivered over night, but through the activities that we have listed above we aim to show a measurable increase in the number of young people travelling sustainably every year. We will publish our progress against our objectives and actions through our annual travel reports.



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## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Subject: Delivering the Bee Network Update

Report of: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Portfolio Lead for Transport and Caroline Simpson, Group Chief Executive, GMCA

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### Purpose of Report

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

### Recommendations

GMCA is requested to note and comment on delivery of the Bee Network.

### Contact Officers

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Danny Vaughan, Chief Network Officer, TfGM

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

N/A

## **Risk Management**

N/A

## **Legal Considerations**

N/A

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

N/A

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

N/A

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

## **Background Papers**

N/A

## **Tracking/ Process**

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

No

## **Exemption from call in**

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

No

## **Bee Network Committee**

This report is due to be considered by the Bee Network Committee on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

This report is due to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024.

# 1. Introduction

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

## 2. Bus Franchising Operation and Implementation

### Bus Franchising Operation

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Franchising Implementation**

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

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

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

### **3. Metrolink**

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

## **4. GM Rail Network**

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

## **5. Active Travel**

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

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

### **Active Travel Infrastructure**

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

### **Starling Bikes**

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



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

### **Bikes on Metrolink**

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

### **School Streets and Crossings**

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

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

## **6. Highways Management**

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

### **Winter Preparedness**

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

## **Vision Zero**

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

## **Network Management**

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

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

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

## **7. Safety and Security**

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

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

7.8. The TSEO 24/7 support to Night Bus also commenced in September and has been well received by drivers and customers. 1,648 patrol hours have been delivered, with 38 incidents attended and 7 people safeguarded.

7.9. The overall rolling 12-month rate of incidents for September has risen slightly to 46 per million passenger journeys, this remains just within the current baseline (of expected levels) and continues to be driven by increased reporting primarily relating to Bus.

7.10. However, the rate of incidents on bus has reduced this month, following the start of the academic year and re-commencement of the TravelSafe educational programme, with over 4,000 students engaged to-date.

7.11. A joint operation was undertaken in September between Beryl and GMP, during which over 50 Starling Bikes were recovered; some of which are believed to be from addresses linked to wider criminality. Beryl are working with GMP to share tracking information to support the evidential case file.

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

### **Fares and Ticketing**

8.1. Key to the success of the Bee Network are integrated, affordable and simple fares and ticketing products, aimed at supporting more people to travel for less, with back-office systems that do the hard work to make life easier for customers.

8.2. Following the implementation of the final phase of bus franchising on 5 January 2025, GMCA will be able to set fares and introduce and amend ticketing products across the Bee Network, without the need to negotiate with commercial operators. Importantly, it also allows GMCA to integrate fares and ticketing so that passengers can move seamlessly between Bee Network buses and trams, with an ambition to integrate cycle hire and GM rail in future.

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

## **Customer Experience**

- 8.10. The Bee Network app has been downloaded 680k times and has 178k weekly active weekly users. The app allows users to plan their journeys, track buses across Greater Manchester, access live departure times, find their nearest bus or tram stop and leave feedback via Rate My Journey. Since launch 12.9m buses have been tracked and 1.3m journeys planned.
- 8.11. Work continues to improve the app in response to customer feedback and to incorporate additional functionality.
- 8.12. Satisfaction with fares has jumped from 63% in 2022 to a record high of 82% (based on TfGM fares survey and since the inception of the survey in 2016).
- 8.13. Customer satisfaction overall is at 78% and 'very satisfied' has been steadily rising since franchising. Nearly ¾ of people think the Bee Network is something to be proud of and 3 in 4 people think that it's run in the interest of the people of Greater Manchester.
- 8.14. A Customer Experience Strategy is currently being developed to encourage more people to use the Bee Network. The Strategy aims to put customers at the heart of everything we do by listening to customers, ensuring that decisions are based on customer need and impact, and by striving for excellence at all points of the customer journey.

## **9. Transport Infrastructure Pipeline**

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

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

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

## **10. Strategy and Reform**

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

### **Local Transport Plan Refresh**

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



## **Rapid Transit Strategy**

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

## **GM Rail Integration and Reform**

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

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

- 10.9. In the long-term Greater Manchester's statutory role remains to be defined and different options will bring different levels of control, flexibility and risk. TfGM is currently developing these options with the Shadow GBR on the basis that statutory powers and, importantly, associated funding is required to specify, commission and deliver railway services.
- 10.10. Following consideration by this Committee in September 2024, GMCA approved further engagement with HMG, rail partners and others to explore and influence legislative and structural options that would achieve GM ambitions for rail integration. TfGM is also in detailed discussions with DfT and GBR regarding the roll out of 'pay as you go' across GM, which would see rail passengers benefit from integration with the Bee Network.

### **School Travel Strategy**

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

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

### **GM Integrated Settlement**

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

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

### **GM Growth Programme**

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

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

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

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

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

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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