

GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: Friday 9th December 2022

Subject: Transport Network Accessibility and Inclusion

Report of: Emma Flinn, Head of Partnerships, Engagement and Inclusion,
TfGM

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

This report provides an update on TfGM activity relating to designing an Inclusive and Accessible Bee Network.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

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Equalities Implications

This report outlines how accessibility and inclusion is being embedded throughout the Bee Network.

Climate Change Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures

Not applicable.

Risk Management

Not applicable.

Legal Considerations

Not applicable.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

Not applicable.

Financial Consequences – Capital

Not applicable.

Number of attachments to the report:

Nil.

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Not applicable.

Background Papers

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.

GM Transport Committee

Not applicable.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Not applicable.

1. Strategic context

- 1.0 The Bee Network is Greater Manchester's bold vision to deliver a joined-up London-style transport system which is simple and accessible, supporting seamless end-to-end journeys whether walking, wheeling, travelling by bike or on public transport.
- 1.1 The Bee Network vision articulates an end-to-end passenger experience based on the foundations of inclusivity, accessibility, affordability, reliability sustainability and accountability. The Bee Network will be a high-quality passenger focused experience developed around strong values by and for the people of Greater Manchester (GM) that will offer increased opportunities to embed equalities into planning and decision making and tackle systemic inequalities. Meeting the transport needs of residents, businesses and visitors is at the heart of the GM 2040 Transport Strategy with one of the network principles being inclusivity and an ambition to develop a fully inclusive and affordable sustainable transport system for all.
- 1.2 In recent years, GM has committed to building a world-class walking, wheeling and cycling network, a commitment that was restated at the launch of the new Greater Manchester Strategy in March 2022. Most recently, Active Travel Commissioner, Dame Sarah Storey, has unveiled a refreshed active travel mission for the city-region which highlights that active travel in GM must be inclusive, universally accessible and built to consistent standards that meet and exceed local and national standards.
- 1.3 Through the delivery of the Bee Network, Transport for Greater Manchester's role is changing. TfGM will move from being a principally infrastructure focussed organisation to one that is a more inclusive and customer focussed. TfGM will develop and deliver a network which puts people and places at its heart informed by a deep understanding of GM's residents and communities and their different transport needs. Bus franchising in particular provides the opportunity to create a truly inclusive network that addresses inequality.

- 1.4 Taking a codesign approach with delivering these things will provide a meaningful opportunity for GM's diverse communities to influence planning and decision making through participation – a 'nothing about us without us' approach – this is core to the ongoing development of the Bee Network.
- 1.5 Launched in October 2020, the Independent Inequalities Commission had a six-month mission to examine inequalities across the city-region, consider how they should be tackled and outline specific, ambitious recommendations.
- 1.6 [The Commission's findings](#) were published in March 2021 with a [one year on report](#) published July 2022. They recognised transport as a key enabler in the delivery of economic, environmental and quality of life goals, and accessible and affordable transport as a pre-requisite to ensuring other wider policy programmes are successful.
- 1.7 Creating a truly inclusive and accessible Bee Network means ensuring people can use transport to access the services beyond it. It also means recognising the differences in the way people use and experience transport. Robust, systematic engagement and data segmentation, embedded alongside a partnership approach working with other public service providers, enables a more nuanced approach to transport planning that looks beyond the transport demands and patterns that have traditionally dominated.

2. Embedding inclusion and accessibility

Inclusion and Equalities Strategy

- 2.0 In response to the IIC report, TfGM commissioned an independent equalities audit, delivered by New Economics Foundation (NEF) which considered TfGM's role as a transport provider, anchor institution and employer.
- 2.1 The findings from the review were used to inform a refreshed [Inclusion and Equalities Strategy](#) including organisational equality objectives and

associated actions. This new Inclusion and Equalities Strategy sets out a commitment to ensuring the development of the Bee Network is inclusive and customer focussed. Within this, equality objectives have been designed to support TfGM to contribute to this goal in its role as a transport provider, anchor institution and employer.

Equality Impact Assessments

2.2 Those subject to the public sector equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

2.3 These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty. The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

2.4 The public sector equality duty covers the nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status.

- 2.5 Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 introduces a socioeconomic duty on public bodies that requires them: “when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions” to “have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage”.
- 2.6 The way that TfGM shows ‘due regard’ to advancing equality for all is through the completion of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs). TfGM has reviewed and updated its approach to EqIAs to ensure it is effective in highlighting any required mitigation against disproportionate impacts on those with protected characteristics.
- 2.7 TfGM already considers socio-economic status within Equality Impact Assessments as it is good practice to do so, and because GM has a diverse population with a mix of socio-economic status. However, in August 2022 the socioeconomic duty was formally adopted to ensure this is considered throughout equality impact assessments as well as through the development of decisions and policies.

Ways of working

- 2.8 TfGM’s Disability Design Reference Group (DDRG) involves working closely with a variety of disabled people (mobility, hearing, visually impaired and learning disabled) to support the design and delivery of a variety of services – focusing on an inclusive, integrated transport network. Members of the DDRG represent the views of disabled people from across GM, including people with different impairments, from different ethnic backgrounds, men and women and people of different ages. They provide advice which helps to ensure an appropriate level of access to TfGM infrastructure, campaigns and services for disabled people.
- 2.9 Through a codesign approach TfGM is building on meaningful opportunities for DDRG to influence wider decision making and planning that goes beyond accessibility around infrastructure and asset projects specifically, although this will remain an important focus particularly linked to the implementation of Bus Franchising. The DDRG will also have a considerable focus on

infrastructure design and development linked to confirmed schemes funded through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS).

- 2.10 Through a recent refresh of the group the DDRG will be made up of members that reflect the requirements coming from the delivery of an integrated, inclusive transport system which are wide-ranging across services and products alongside infrastructure and assets. Therefore, moving to a model of professional as well as lived experience will better reflect that scope whilst retaining a breadth of representation.
- 2.11 Stronger links will be made between DDRG and the GM Equality Panels, including any relevant Local Authority groups but specifically the Disabled People's Panel which is made up of disabled people organisations and is involved in all aspects of running and planning for the future of the city region. TfGM will enable two-way collaboration between these groups to ensure a more co-ordinated and joined up approach to disability within service planning.

Model of Community Engagement

- 2.12 TfGM are currently designing a Model of Community Engagement to set out best practice engagement in the full lifecycle of GM infrastructure and assets projects from design through to delivery and beyond. The model will be scalable and mode and funding agnostic. This will set out how the needs and interests of different communities are considered through these projects to ensure no one is left behind.
- 2.13 Within this, the model will draw on existing and developing strategy and guidance relating to Inclusion and Accessibility including the GM Transport Strategy 2040, Bee Network Vision, Streets for All Design Guide, Highway Code hierarchy of user and mobility pyramid and DfT Guidance.

3. Examples in practice

- 3.0 In designing a Bee Network for GM by GM, there is an opportunity through Bus Franchising to ensure that various groups with different lived experience are able to feed into the design of infrastructure and services.
- 3.1 **Groups representing people with disabilities have so far been involved the design of the 'on the bus' offer.** Groups have informed the design of the first 50 zero emission buses, the outcome of which has included changing the design of the bus to allow for two wheelchair bays, informing the procurement specification for Audio Visual Announcement (AVA) equipment to be used on bus as well as the internal look and feel of the bus interior (accessible colour contrast, brand etc).
- 3.2 Additional engagement is planned in the new year to ensure that TfGM is taking a collaborative approach to designing our customer services, contact centre and customer information.
- 3.3 It is important to recognise that good engagement must be two-way and that TfGM is open to listening to and acting upon experiences across the network. **Responding to feedback on difficulties with the application process for concessionary passes, TfGM has commenced a review.** The review has been working with groups of people from different backgrounds, ages and abilities to design a new, accessible application process that removes barriers to accessing public transport.
- 3.4 GM is taking a **proactive approach to improving accessibility in rail stations** across the conurbation by developing a pipeline of prioritised schemes to receive an accessible route into the station and to and between each platform. Working with Network Rail and operators, schemes are being delivered through the Department of Transport's (DfT) Access For All programme and other funding opportunities as available. Scheme development and delivery is supported through ongoing engagement with local disability groups and TfGM's DDRG.

White Ribbon UK Accreditation

- 3.5 White Ribbon UK works to prevent all forms of male violence against women, including domestic abuse, harassment, and assault, by raising awareness and engaging with men and boys to prevent violence through changing culture. White Ribbon UK is recognised by over a hundred organisations including local authorities, emergency services and universities.
- 3.6 TfGM has recently been successful in achieving White Ribbon accreditation and work is now underway to develop and implement a three-year action plan which will include the following core criteria:
- Strategic leadership: senior buy-in and embedding accreditation throughout the organisation.
 - Engaging men and boys: recruitment of at least four White Ribbon ambassadors from as many levels and departments within the organisation as possible.
 - Changing culture: create opportunities to encourage and develop a positive culture to thrive where men are allies and women feel empowered and where staff and employees feel supported and enabled to disclose any issues they are facing.
 - Raising awareness: built into our action plan will be ways in which we plan to raise awareness of White Ribbon.
- 3.7 A White Ribbon working group has been established to develop and deliver the action plan, linking into TfGM's wider Inequalities Steering Group to ensure this aligns and contributes to the objectives set out in TfGM's Inclusion and Equalities Strategy.