

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE
HELD THURSDAY, 21ST MARCH, 2024 AT MAIN HALL, FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE,
MOUNT STREET, MANCHESTER, M2 5NS**

PRESENT:

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien (in the Chair)	Bury
GM Mayor Andy Burnham	GMCA
Councillor Howard Sykes	Oldham
Councillor James Gartside	Rochdale
Councillor Tracey Rawlins	Manchester
Councillor Alan Quinn	Bury
Councillor Phil Burke	Rochdale
Councillor Grace Baynham	Stockport
Councillor Warren Bray	Tameside
Councillor Aidan Williams	Trafford
Councillor Mike McCusker	Salford
Councillor John Vickers	Wigan

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Eamonn Boylan	GMCA
Sacha Lord	GMCA
Dame Sarah Storey	GMCA
Ninoshka Martins	GMCA
Sylvia Welsh	GMCA
Lucy Prince	GMCA
Richard Nickson	TfGM
Stephen Rhodes	TfGM
Danny Vaughan	TfGM
Anne Marie-Purcell	TfGM
Peter Boulton	TfGM
Martin Lax	TfGM
Liz Goldsby	TfGM

BOLTON

MANCHESTER

ROCHDALE

STOCKPORT

TRAFFORD

BURY

OLDHAM

SALFORD

TAMESIDE

WIGAN

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Steve Warrener	TfGM
Chris Barnes	TfGM
Nick Fairclough	TfGM
Mark Thomas	TfGM
James Baldwin	TfGM

BNC/75/23 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Elaine Taylor, Paul Dennett, Hamid Khurram and David Meller.

BNC/76/23 Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED/-

That it be noted that Councillor Phil Burke, as an employee of Keolis Amy declared a prejudicial interest in item 5 – Bee Network Performance.

BNC/77/23 Chair's announcements and Urgent Business

Appointment to Vision Zero Advisory and Scrutiny Board

A nomination to the Vision Zero Advisory and Scrutiny Board to support and oversee the development of the final Vision Zero Strategy was sought. However, it was felt that it would appropriate to differ the appointment to the Annual General Meeting of the Bee Network Committee.

Bee Network Committee

As it was the final BNC meeting of the municipal year, the Chair used the opportunity to reflect on the committee's work since its inception last year in July 2023 and thanked all involved in delivering the Transport agenda for their contribution.

Officer Retirements

The Chair advised that the following officers were due to retire in the near future and thanked them for their contribution:

- Deputy Monitoring Officer, Gwynne Williams and welcomed Melinda Edwards as the newly appointed Deputy Monitoring Officer.
- Chief Executive TfGM and GMCA, Eamonn Boylan OBE who is retiring after 42 years of service in local government.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the Committee appointment to the Vision Zero Advisory and Scrutiny Board be deferred to the Annual General Meeting of the Bee Network Committee.
2. That the considerable amount of work done by the Bee Network Committee during its initial year be noted.
3. That the retirement of the Deputy Monitoring Officer, Gwynne Williams and the appointment of Melinda Edwards as the newly appointed Deputy Monitoring Officer be noted.
4. That the retirement of the Chief Executive TfGM and GMCA, Eamonn Boylan OBE be noted.

BNC/78/23 Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2024

RESOLVED/-

That the minutes of the Bee Network Committee held on 22 February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

BNC/79/23 Bee Network Performance

Consideration was given to a report that highlighted the positive performance of the franchised bus network and improvements being made to improve performance further.

Members reviewed the performance of the transport network, discussed potential enhancements, and a focused discussion took place on advancing the Bee Network's development in Greater Manchester.

Given that the second phase of the Bee Network was set to go live on 24 March, officers used the opportunity to update members on progress and plans for deployment of services in Tranche 2 areas.

It was planned that in Tranche 2 areas agency drivers would not be utilised and that work was underway to ensure new drivers were trained to ensure smooth running of services.

With regards to the Bee Network Application, it was noted that Journey Planning and Bus tracking were now live. Members sought to understand how upgrades to the application would be communicated. Officers explained that this would depend on the phone operating company. However, if the phone was set to automatically update this would be automated if not, users would have to physically update via their app store.

Members sought to understand if there was a maintenance plan in place for the new buses. Officers advised that operators have a statutory requirement to deliver maintenance and it was intended that at regular intervals fraction of the buses would be taken off road for maintenance.

With regards to maintenance Metrolink, members were assured that renewal works were currently being delivered to maintain, renew, and improve the Metrolink network as part of a coordinated package of planned maintenance and upgrades.

Increasing patronage was key to sustaining services, therefore much work had been done to improve safety and the need for the views of women and girls to be utilised when developing future strategy was noted. The Mayor advised of plans to introduce the TravelSafe Live Chat function through the Bee Network app, that would allow users to discreetly report a crime or antisocial behaviour and connect them with Greater Manchester Police in real time. In addition, it was felt that it would be beneficial to link central watch suite to TfGM's control room to allow for targeted action on the network.

In response to the query raised to re-instate the airport express service, officers assured members that this being considered with the view to ensuring services were sustained.

It was reported that a state-of-the-art facility and community park had opened in Stockport which would serve as a model of GM integration - with active travel links,

Metrolink capacity and connections to the rail station. This is part of a £1billion pound Stockport town centre regeneration.

It was noted that the CRSTS provision allowed further investment into public transport and that a future report on the Rapid Transit Strategy would be brought to Committee. As part of plans to integrate services there was a role for Taxis which was needed to be explored. In addition, officers might want to consider where possible the use of enforcement powers to prevent obstructions of active travel routes.

With regards to rail, it was reported that an outline business case for a new rail station at Golborne had been submitted to DfT - This follows a public consultation on proposals for the station, which received almost 3,000 responses, with 93% in support.

In discussing the performance of rail, members noted the need for rail companies to take responsibility to improve services. The Mayor fed back on the discussion held at the recent TfN Board and advised that a motion had been agreed to issue statutory advice to the Secretary of State to cancel Avanti's contract at the earliest possible opportunity, with state-owned operator of last resort (OLR) taking on responsibility in the short term. The Committee were supportive of calling for the withdrawal of Avanti's contract.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the performance of Greater Manchester's Transport Network be noted.
2. That the additional vehicles being introduced to strengthen and improve the performance of services in the Tranche 1 area be noted.
3. That the improvements being made to the Bee Network App be noted.
4. That the Metrolink maintenance and renewals works planned to take place over the next quarter be noted.
5. That plans to introduce the TravelSafe Live Chat function through the Bee Network app, that would allow users to discreetly report a crime or antisocial behaviour and connect them with Greater Manchester Police in real time be noted.
6. That the opening of Stockport Interchange – a state-of-the-art facility and community park that serves as a model of GM integration - with active travel links, Metrolink capacity and connections to the rail station be noted.

7. That it be noted that the outline business case to DfT on the proposals for a new rail station at Golborne had been submitted. This follows a public consultation on proposals for the station, which received almost 3,000 responses, with 93% in support.
8. That it be noted that the Committee were supportive of the motion agreed at TfN Board held on 20.03.2024 to issue statutory advice to the Secretary of State to cancel Avanti's contract at the earliest possible opportunity, with the state-owned operator of last resort (OLR) taking on responsibility in the short term.
9. That it be noted that the Rapid Transit Strategy would be brought to a future meeting.

BNC/80/23 Greater Manchester HS2 and NPR Programme - Network North

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on the progress of high-speed rail and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) in GM since the Network North announcement last year that cancelled HS2 Phase 2a and 2b.

The report highlighted that Government was looking to reach consensus with Regional Partners, including GMCA and the GM Partners, on the strategic route of the Manchester to Liverpool NPR connection and highlighted GM's priorities for NPR including new stations at Piccadilly and Manchester Airport.

The Mayor updated the Committee on the emerging recommendations of the Private Consortium led by Sir David Higgins which you and Mayor Street have convened. The Consortium has confirmed that, based on work done to date, the best option for improving rail links between the Midlands and the North is a new line between Handsacre Junction and Manchester Airport, using the same route as HS2 but with different specification to make it more affordable.

In noting the impact to GM's economy, members expressed their frustration and therefore welcomed plans to improve connectivity to the city region.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the current position in relation to the HS2 and NPR programme in Greater Manchester including the future areas of development and current Government timeframes be noted.

2. That the update in relation to the emerging recommendations of the Private Consortium led by Sir David Higgins be noted for the Consortium has confirmed that, based on work done to date, the best option for improving rail links between the Midlands and the North was a new line between Handsacre Junction and Manchester Airport, using the same route as HS2 but with different specification to make it more affordable be noted.

BNC/81/23 24-hour Transport Pilot

Consideration was given to a report that proposed the introduction of a 12-month pilot of 24-hour bus services on two routes in the Tranche 1 area.

The pilot would run on the busy V1 and 36 bus routes and would launch later this year. Pilot would provide 24hr transport for around 135,000 residents (living within 400m – or about five-minute walk – from the V1 and 36) and serve key civic and employment sites, (Salford Uni, Logistics North, MRI). Night buses will have the same capped bus fares first introduced in 2022 to provide a simplified ticket offer consistent across GM. Further details on the pilot will be brought to committee prior to implementation.

On safety, members were assured that working closely with the TravelSafe Partnership, Greater Manchester Police and voluntary organisations TfGM would make sure the right level of support was available so people can travel at all times of day with confidence and advised that the TravelSafe Live Chat function would support this initiative.

Members welcomed the report and noted the benefits to residents that this late-night transport pilot would provide including access to work, health and leisure opportunities.

To allow a better understanding of costs involved for running of services should services be expanded to other areas, it was felt appropriate that once findings of the pilot had been gathered the Committee receives an overview of finances involved. In the meantime, a progress update on the development of the pilot would be welcomed in the summer of 2024.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the development of a pilot of 24-hour bus services in Greater Manchester be noted.
2. That the process followed to develop the pilot proposals be noted.

3. That the recommended routes (V1 and 36) to be taken forward as part of the pilot be endorsed.
4. That the next steps to be taken by TfGM in development of the proposed pilot be noted.
5. That it be noted that following endorsement of the outlined approach, TfGM would engage with Go North West (who operate both the V1 and 36) to establish the operational requirements, costs and timing of the pilot, and would continue to engage with the trade unions. The final proposal and timing for the pilot would be brought to the Bee Network Committee prior to mobilisation.
6. That it be noted that a financial overview would be provided to members during the next municipal year to allow a better understanding of costs involved for running of services.
7. That it be agreed that a progress update on the development of the pilot be brought to the Committee in the summer of 2024.

BNC/82/23 Transport Capital Programme

Consideration was given to a report that provided an overview of the current position of the Greater Manchester Transport Capital Programme as well as the funding requests to support the continued development and delivery of the programme.

Members raised concerns around the lack of progress in relation to the Access for All Funding. Officers explained that funding was expected early May. However, should no decision on next round of funding be forthcoming in the near future it was agreed that a letter be issued to Government on behalf of the Bee Network Committee requesting an update on progress.

It was brought to the Committee's attention that contact had been made in relation to Manchester's Levenshulme Active Travel Scheme and therefore members sought to understand whether adequate engagement had been carried out by the scheme promoter. In response, Councillor Rawlins assured members that the scheme had been subject to comprehensive scheme development over the past four years and members of the public and other stakeholders have had opportunities to inform the development of the scheme. The Bee Network Committee was therefore satisfied that the scheme had met the requirements of the Combined Authority and as such was approved for funding.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the current position in relation to CRSTS1 and CRSTS2 be noted.
2. That the drawdown and reallocation of CRSTS funding and associated scheme for progression be approved as follows:
 - Access for All: £4.71m CRSTS funding;
 - Rapid Transit Integration Programme:
Stop Improvements and New Stops Package. £1.28m CRSTS funding;
 - Future Rapid Transit Programme:
Extensions Package. £3.3m CRSTS funding;
 - Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI): £1.09m CRSTS funding;
 - Manchester: Ancoats Streets for All. Full Business Case approval and £1.36m CRSTS funding;
 - Manchester: Transforming Deansgate: £2.15m CRSTS funding;
 - Stockport: Queens Road Bridge (Strategic Maintenance). Reallocation of £0.5m and drawdown of a further £2.6m CRSTS funding;
 - Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) Programme: Depot Electrification: total of £37.8m CRSTS funding £25.3m and match funding £12.5m;
 - ZEB Programme: Reallocation of £1.57m of ZEB Programme Tranche 1 funding;
 - Improving Journeys – Orbital Bus Routes (QBT) – Traffic Signal Upgrades. Full Business Case approval and £0.21m CRSTS funding; and
 - Core Highways, Strategic Highways and Local Safety & Minor Works Maintenance funding for 2024/25, totalling £57.85m.
3. That the drawdown of and variations to Active Travel funding be approved as follows:
 - £1.025m of MCF funding for Tameside's Active Neighbourhoods, Phase 2;
 - £3.59m of MCF funding for Manchester's Levenshulme Active Neighbourhood;
 - £1.8m of Active Travel Fund Round 4 (ATF4) funding for Salford Chapel Street East, Phase 1; and
 - Agree formal MCF scheme budget variations for Manchester City Council as set out in paragraph 3.12.

4. That the release of £0.994m from previously approved funding to facilitate the replacement of the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) with a digital solution be noted.

5. That it be noted that a decision in relation to Access for All funding was expected early May. However, should no decision on next round of funding be forthcoming in the near future it was agreed that a letter be issued to Government on behalf of the Bee Network Committee requesting an update on progress.