

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Subject: Draft Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy –  
Trains, Trams, Busways and Beyond for the Bee Network

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

This report seeks approval of the draft Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy, a sub-strategy of the 2040 Transport Strategy, and summarises its contents – including how fast and frequent mass transit will support the integrated Bee Network.

### Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Consider the draft Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy;
2. Approve the draft Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy, subject to any feedback from the Bee Network Committee, for wider engagement.

### Contact Officers

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# Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

## Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

The GMCA is requested to, noting the positive impacts for equalities, carbon and sustainability:









1. Approve the draft of the Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy and the commencement of a period of engagement as part of the wider engagement on refreshing our Local Transport Plan.
2. Note any recommendations or feedback from the Bee Network Committee.

## Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion	G	Includes improving safety & security and their perception (an issue for women and girls esp. at night) and accessibility (an issue for disabled people). Metrolink Phase 3, an exemplar of rapid transit, provided the following >10% door-to-door improvement in public transport access for the following proportions of the GM population: 18.2% for employment (rising 30.5% of the 10% most deprived communities); 18.8% further education (27.7%); 19.8% for healthcare (29.5%). Publishing the draft strategy is intended to allow a period of engagement on its contents (timescales to be set by the wider timescales for preparing the next statutory GM Local Transport Plan). There is not yet a discernible community cohesion aspect.
Health	G	Metrolink Phase 3 was estimated for the financial year 2019/20 to have removed 3.2 million car trips and 38.8 million car kilometres from the roads, equating to the removal of 12.8 tonnes of NOx nitrous oxides. The greatest mode share for accessing rapid transit stops and stations is for walking, wheeling and cycling: rapid transit promotes regular active travel. The draft strategy includes a section on considering how active travel infrastructure and services could be co-delivered with rapid transit. Evidence from the Wythenshawe-specific evaluation showed strong evidence that Metrolink Phase 3 had enhanced the social experiences of residents and Metrolink has had strong off-peak (shopping, leisure) traffic from day one and has Concessionary arrangements in place - all contributing to lessening social isolation. Rapid transit has less relevance than (say) deliveries, local provision, or bus and active travel to access food services. Draft strategy covers reopening disused spaces at stations for community hubs.
Resilience and Adaptation	G	The draft strategy contains sections on asset resilience, safety & security, healthy travel and environmental commitments. Overall, the draft strategy aims at the 2040 'Right Mix' and 2038 carbon neutral target. Whilst the draft strategy has proposals for new and improved infrastructure, which would consider resilience and adaptation in relation to disruption in its design, this would come through at a plan or individual scheme level. Measures on NOx and CO2 for Metrolink Phase 3 are given above in 'Health' and below in 'Carbon, Nature and Environment' respectively. The draft strategy sets out TfGM's commitment to PAS 2080. The draft strategy contains a section on the TravelSafe Partnership and overall safety and security including crime and antisocial behaviour. Whilst green and blue infrastructure would be addressed in plans and individual schemes, the draft strategy has no discernible impact at this stage.
Housing	G	Whilst the strategy emphasises the importance of land use planning and bringing forward residential density around rapid transit stops and stations, there is no discernible impact directly on homelessness at this stage. The draft strategy contains sections on density, and statistics on Metrolink Phase 3's contribution to door-to-door improvements in accessibility have been given in sections above. However, house price increases around rapid transit stops and stations have been recorded. The draft strategy contains a section on community uses for underused rapid transit buildings (e.g. parts of stations) and housing around stops and stations, including a new vehicle to make use of underused rail land, and density targets. The draft strategy contains sections on new stops and stations to serve new-build residential developments including those as part of Places for Everyone.

Economy	G	<p>The draft strategy's core aims and objectives involve improving economic development, including improving transport connectivity to growth locations, and contains many possible options that would lead to direct employment (e.g. construction) and then better access to employment. It is anticipated that any jobs eventually created (particularly in any rapid transit construction) would be 'good jobs' and that better rapid transit would attract 'good jobs'. GM's growth locations themselves embody an industrial strategy regarding innovation, R&amp;D and the knowledge economy. Metrolink is thought to have played a part in inward investment in GM, but as acknowledged by the Phase 3 evaluation, direct evidence / linkages are difficult - statistics on employment and education accessibility have been given above. The draft strategy contains a section on underused land and buildings at stations.</p>
Mobility and Connectivity	G	<p>Whilst the rapid transit network can be used to route digital connectivity trunk cabling, and the draft strategy covers fares and ticketing, the actions here are largely in hand through existing activity including the Bee Network. The draft strategy reflects the Bee Network customer commitment to affordability but is not specific regarding this. The draft strategy's core aims and objectives cover provision of new transport links (Metrolink's statistics regarding removal of car-kilometres from roads have been given above) to improve connectivity (inc. Regional Centre, wider city-region, and growth locations) and provide an attractive alternative to driving in pursuit of the 'Right Mix' vision of accommodating GM's growth with zero net growth in motor vehicle traffic. The draft strategy outlines improving availability and access to trains, trams and busway, with supporting active travel and TfGM's 'Travel Hubs' approach for rapid transit stops and stations which involves wider consideration of the first and last mile including shared transport. Whilst some potential proposals for new/extended/converted rapid transit lines could involve roadspace, the draft strategy places its main emphasis on making better use of existing infrastructure (including extending and joining it), limiting the potential impacts. The draft strategy sets out the aim to develop and procure 'Next Generation Vehicles' for Metrolink, as well as working with the rail industry on de-carbonising rolling stock and replacing the busway fleet with zero emission buses.</p>
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	<p>Metrolink Phase 3 estimates in regard to NOx are given above under the Health section, as an example of what rapid transit expansion can achieve. Rapid transit schemes may produce emissions, run-off, light pollutants, noise pollutants, impacts on natural carbon sinks and visual amenity - but the draft strategy is at a high level and any schemes brought forward would be expected to be designed to relevant environmental standards (and subject to EIA in some cases) to mitigate these impacts. Standards in place for Biodiversity Net Gain mean that the overall impact of any infrastructure schemes that eventually flow from the draft strategy would be expected to be positive. It is anticipated that given the door-to-door public transport accessibility improvements described above for Metrolink Phase 3, that rapid transit proposals would improve the local community's access to greenspace. Measures such as dogs on trams have further improved this situation. Metrolink Phase 3 was estimated for the financial year 2019/20 to have removed 3.2 million car trips and 38.8 million car kilometres from the roads (6,700 tonnes of CO2 equivalent) as an example of rapid transit's potential. The draft strategy sets out TfGM's commitment to PAS 2080.</p>
Consumption and Production	G	<p>Building more rapid transit infrastructure would result in construction waste, however the draft strategy is a not a plan or scheme proposal. No discernible impact at this stage. There are no discernible impacts on current or future reuse or recycling rates at this stage. With regard to resource efficiency, the draft strategy sets out an approach to making the best use of our existing infrastructure and states TfGM's commitment to PAS 2080 (as a proxy). No discernible impact on level of single-use plastics and packaging.</p>

<p>Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target</p>	<p>The draft Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy has as part of its core aims (see "Our vision for rapid transit" and "Why there's a case for change") both the Right Mix vision and the 2038 Carbon Neutral target itself. The potential for carbon emission reductions achievable by rapid transit is illustrated in statistics given for Metrolink Phase 3 above in 'Carbon, Nature and Environment) - estimated for the financial year 2019/20 to have removed 3.2 million car trips and 38.8 million car kilometres from the roads (6,700 tonnes of CO2 equivalent). The draft strategy acknowledges embodied carbon and sets out TfGM's commitment to PAS 2080. Climate change mitigation measures held in asset plans (i.e. at a plan level rather than the draft strategy level).</p>		
<p><b>Further Assessment(s):</b></p>	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment and Carbon Assessment</p>		
<p><b>G</b> Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.</p>	<p><b>A</b> Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.</p>	<p><b>R</b> Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.</p>	<p><b>RR</b> Negative impacts overall.</p>

<h2>Carbon Assessment</h2>				
<p><b>Overall Score</b></p>				
Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation		
<p>New Build residential</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A - the draft strategy contains sections on new stops and stations to serve new-build residential developments (including those as part of Places for Everyone) and a section regarding housing around stops and stations (including a new vehicle to make use of underused rail land, and density targets) - but these are at a high level.</p>		
<p>Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance</p>	<p>N/A</p>			
<p>New build non-residential (including public) buildings</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The draft strategy contains a section on community uses for underused rapid transit buildings (e.g. parts of stations) - but this is at a high level.</p>		
<h3>Transport</h3>				
<p>Active travel and public transport</p>		<p>See Impacts Questionnaire, particularly the sections 'Health' for active travel in relation to rapid transit and 'Mobility and Connectivity' for public transport and shared transport in relation to rapid transit.</p>		
<p>Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access</p>	<p>N/A</p>			
<p>Access to amenities</p>		<p>See Impacts Questionnaire, particularly the sections 'Health' for active travel in relation to rapid transit and 'Mobility and Connectivity' for public transport and shared transport in relation to rapid transit.</p>		
<p>Vehicle procurement</p>		<p>The draft strategy sets out the intention to develop and procure Metrolink 'Next Generation Vehicles' with tram-train capability, to work with the rail industry on rolling stock replacement and to replace the busway fleet with zero-emission buses.</p>		
<h3>Land Use</h3>				
<p>Land use</p>	<p>N/A</p>			
<p>No associated carbon impacts expected.</p>	 <p>High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.</p>	 <p>Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.</p>	 <p>Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.</p>	 <p>Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.</p>

## **Risk Management**

At a strategic level, to not have a published Rapid Transit Strategy would risk constraining the future growth of Greater Manchester by failing to articulate the overall case for investment in the rapid transit system – both to provide adequate capacity for background growth and to stimulate further growth through improved connectivity.

## **Legal Considerations**

There are no legal considerations specifically arising from this Report. In due course, if adopted, the realisation of the Strategy will require detailed proposals to be brought forward, at which time there will be specific legal considerations.

The original Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 was the subject of an Integrated Assessment, covering matters such as Strategic Environmental Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment. It is anticipated that the contents of the draft Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy will ultimately form part of a refreshed 2040 Transport Strategy and a refreshed Integrated Assessment.

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

The draft Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy is not a costed or funded delivery plan. The document contains sections dealing with financial and funding considerations in broad terms. Financial consequences in terms of revenue for the ongoing work programme in support of the draft strategy's aims are managed through annual budgets.

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

The draft Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy is not a costed or funded delivery plan. The document contains sections dealing with financial and funding considerations in broad terms. Financial consequences in terms of capital for the ongoing work programme in support of the draft strategy's aims are managed through Transport Capital Programme submissions.

## **Number of attachments to the report: 1**

The draft Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy

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

N/A

## **Background Papers**

The draft Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy is a sub-strategy to the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 (the 2040 Strategy) and is aligned with our Right Mix vision; Our Five-Year Transport Delivery Plan (2021-26) and other sub-strategies including the Greater Manchester Bus Strategy. It is also closely aligned with the Bee Network vision, the Greater Manchester Strategy and our growth locations.

## **Tracking / Process**

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

Yes

## **Exemption from call in**

N/A

## **Bee Network Committee**

This draft Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy will be considered by the Bee Network Committee on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Greater Manchester is building the Bee Network, an integrated transport system that will support delivery of sustainable growth across the city-region.
- 1.2 With the buses being brought under local control and into the [Bee Network](#) from September 2023, this first phase of the Bee Network will be complete in 2025. Local train services are then to be brought into the Bee Network in a second phase by 2028. Looking beyond this to 2040, the [Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040](#) sets out how transport is an enabler of sustainable economic and housing growth in support of the [Greater Manchester Strategy](#).
- 1.3 Rapid transit (fast and frequent mass transit, that today in GM includes suburban train services, tram services, and busway services) must play its role alongside other public transport services and active travel as a key part of the Bee Network.
- 1.4 Some scheme development work, including that on prioritisation of expansion options (new, extended and/or converted rapid transit lines) is shaped by the draft strategy. Publishing the draft strategy is therefore an important step towards our City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement 1 (CRSTS 1) Delivery Plan commitment of “Development of a Powers application for one scheme and pre-Powers development for two schemes” (i.e. 3 schemes proposed to be taken forward, with one of these to Powers, in addition to the tram-train Pathfinder) with CRSTS1 funding allocated for this development activity to March 2027.
- 1.5 As part of the ongoing work to prepare the next statutory GM Local Transport Plan, the draft strategy will also play a key role in shaping the rapid transit elements of the refreshed 2040 Strategy and the next Five Year Delivery Plan (2027-32).
- 1.6 Publishing the draft strategy now therefore provides the strongest foundation to move rapid transit policy, strategy, development and delivery work on forward at pace in line with our statutory commitments for the GM Local Transport Plan and our CRSTS1 Delivery Plan commitments.
- 1.7 Publishing the draft strategy now provides a full and transparent update to a wider audience, with both the progress made to date and the next steps – including engagement on the draft strategy – set out.

## 2. Structure, purpose and content of the draft strategy

2.1 The structure of the draft Greater Manchester Rapid Transit 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;
- c.15 emerging priorities for expansion of the rapid transit system;
- next steps.

2.2 The draft strategy, with its contents ultimately being adopted via the process to create the next statutory GM Local Transport Plan, will support Transport for Greater Manchester in planning its work. This will be achieved by having a document that:

- informs decisions on prioritisation;
- underpins our case to government and external organisations, including those that make up the rail industry;
- can be referred to as part of the planning and policy case when promoting schemes.

2.3 The draft strategy is not a costed or funded delivery plan and its full ambitions would require significant funding to be delivered. Plans will come forward over time to support implementation of the strategy, for example, concerning integration of rail into the Bee Network.

2.4 The draft strategy is built upon the network principles of the 2040 Strategy and our Bee Network Customer Commitments.

2.5 The draft strategy addresses **sustaining**, **integrating** and **improving** rapid transit so that it is:

- well-maintained, resilient and reliable;
- environmentally responsible, healthy and sustainable;
- safe, secure, accessible and inclusive.

This includes steps already in hand as part of the Bee Network to 2025 – including the integration of information, fares, ticketing and operating hours between tram and bus. It also includes interim milestones towards bringing rail into the Bee Network, such as the pay-as-you-go contactless ticketing pilot in 2025.



2.6 **Growing** rapid transit coverage and patronage is described by the draft strategy:

- addressing mounting capacity challenges on Metrolink with a fleet of longer, walkthrough 'next generation vehicles' with tram-train capability;
- working with the rail industry on train and platform lengthening, and remaining responsive to demand on the busway;
- developing and delivering new stops and stations – and improving our existing ones, including with access for all and better first and last mile connections;
- working to improve key links that knit together the existing rapid transit system.

2.7 The draft strategy also looks to a future beyond this by **transforming** rapid transit:

- **Rail integration:** Significant progress is being made on rail integration. To facilitate the delivery of the 8 priority corridors by 2028 (Wigan via Bolton; Wigan via Atherton; Wigan via Golborne; Airport; Alderley Edge and Buxton via Stockport; Glossop, Hadfield and Rose Hill Marple via Guide Bridge; Ashton-under-Lyne and Stalybridge; Rochdale) we have developed with the rail industry a collective understanding of Bee Network rail integration. The proposition for this is included in the draft strategy, to facilitate further detailed implementation plans coming forward.
- **System expansion:** The draft strategy presents a principles-based prioritisation of options for new, extended and converted rapid transit lines, with c.15 emerging priorities identified for rapid transit system expansion. These include the Mayoral Manifesto prioritisation of plans for Heywood, Middleton, Stockport along with building a business case for Bolton working with government, and complementary priorities. These options include introduction of tram-train services to join up the light and heavy rail networks, and potential major new tunnelled capacity.

2.8 All of the above is in support of the current Right Mix vision which anticipates more than doubling rapid transit trips by 2040. This is within a context of 10% population growth in that period, our city-region's commitments to be carbon neutral by 2038 with improved air quality and biodiversity, and the need to transform opportunities for all and respond to our growth locations. Ultimately, the draft strategy's contents are in support of the Greater Manchester Strategy's vision.

### 3. Engagement

- 3.1 This is a draft strategy, and its further development will benefit from hearing a wide range of opinions on what our future rapid transit network should look like.
- 3.2 A key next step is therefore commencement of wider engagement on the contents of the draft strategy through 2024, including targeted engagement sessions to help shape its final contents. These sessions will be planned in consideration of the wider engagement work on the next GM Local Transport Plan. They will take place:
- with groups of people who could be affected in different ways by the contents of the draft strategy (for example, the Disability Design Reference Group);
  - with business (for example, the Business Transport Advisory Council);
  - with government (for example, the Department for Transport);
- 3.3 This engagement process will continue as our plans evolve in support of the strategy, including consideration of place-based and community approaches.

### 4. Next steps

- 4.1 Work as part of the CRSTS1 Delivery Plan in support of the draft strategy's aims will continue. Much of this work concerns schemes 'in flight' (such as Golborne Station, Access for All, Bury Interchange Redevelopment and Metrolink Next Generation Vehicles / Tram-Train Pathfinder); these schemes are reflected in the draft strategy and included in wider masterplanning activities.
- 4.2 With regard to **rail integration**, agreeing our long-term partnership with the rail industry which embeds local accountability for our rail network.
- 4.3 With regard to **system expansion**, further detailed prioritisation will take place during 2024 of the c.15 emerging priorities for new, extended and/or converted rapid transit lines to sequence a potential future expansion programme, alongside ongoing business case development, working with local authorities to space-save for potential future routes in Local Plans, and planning for capacity in the regional centre and network optimisation.