

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE
HELD THURSDAY, 26TH 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 1st 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 25th 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 research 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 23rd 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 23rd 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 21st 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.