

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED  
AUTHORITY HELD ON FRIDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2024 AT BURY TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT**

Mayor of Greater Manchester	Andy Burnham (in the Chair)
Deputy Mayor (Police, Crime & Fire)	Kate Green
Bolton	Councillor Susan Haworth
Bury	Councillor Eamonn O'Brien
Manchester	Councillor Joanna Midgley
Oldham	Councillor Arooj Shah
Rochdale	Councillor Neil Emmott
Salford	City Mayor Paul Dennett
Stockport	Councillor Mark Roberts
Tameside	Councillor Eleanor Wills
Trafford	Councillor Tom Ross
Wigan	Councillor David Molyneux

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Local Nature Partnership	Anne Selby
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**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Group Chief Executive Officer, GMCA, GMFRS & TfGM	Caroline Simpson
Group Deputy Chief Executive	Andrew Lightfoot
Group Monitoring Officer	Gillian Duckworth
Group Treasurer	Steve Wilson
GMCA Director of Governance & Scrutiny	Julie Connor
Bolton	Sue Johnson
Bury	Lynne Ridsdale
Manchester	Becca Heron
Oldham	Harry Catherall
Rochdale	Julie Murphy

Salford	Tom Stannard
Stockport	Michael Cullen
Tameside	Steph Butterworth
Tameside	Julian Jackson
Trafford	Sara Todd
Wigan	Aidan Thatcher
Office of the GM Mayor	Kevin Lee
TfGM	Martin Lax
TfGM	Steve Warrener
GMCA	Sylvia Welsh
GMCA	Lee Teasdale

#### **GMCA 145/24      APOLOGIES**

That apologies be received from Councillor Nicholas Peel (Bolton), Councillor Bev Craig (Manchester) & Councillor Mark Hunter (Stockport).

#### **GMCA 146/24      CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, opened the meeting by welcoming Councillor Eleanor Wills to the meeting following her appointment as the Leader of Tameside Council and to the GMCA. The Mayor also expressed the thanks of the GMCA to Councillor Gerald Cooney for his valuable contributions to the housing portfolio during his tenure as the member of the GMCA.

The Mayor highlighted the continuing concerning performance of Northern Rail, with the current level of service unacceptable for a city region of Greater Manchester's size. He advised that an emergency meeting of the Rail North Committee had been arranged to discuss these concerns as a matter of urgency.

Ahead of the Autumn Budget/Spending Review, the Mayor confirmed that direct representations were being made to Whitehall on easing the financial burdens and pressures currently placed upon Local Government. The case for a full integrated London style public transport system continued to be made, and an offer of 75,000

new homes in the region had been made to support the new Government's housebuilding ambitions.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the appointment of Councillor Eleanor Wills (Tameside) as a member of the GMCA be noted.
2. That Councillor Gerald Cooney be thanked for his service as the previous Tameside member of the GMCA.
3. That it be noted that Mayor Andy Burnham has called for an urgent meeting of the Rail North Committee to discuss the ongoing concerns about the performance of Northern Rail.
4. That the Mayor will continue to make direct representations to government ahead of the Autumn Budget.

**GMCA 147/24      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**RESOLVED /-**

There were none.

**GMCA 148/24      MINUTES OF THE GMCA MEETING HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER  
2024**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the minutes of the GMCA meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**GMCA 149/24      GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES – 25<sup>TH</sup>  
SEPTEMBER 2024**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the minutes of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be noted.

**GMCA 150/24      GM BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE MINUTES – 26<sup>TH</sup>  
SEPTEMBER 2024**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the minutes of the GM Bee Network Committee meetings held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be noted.

**GMCA 151/24      GMCA AIR QUALITY ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE  
MINUTES – 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2024**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, Portfolio Lead for Clean Air, introduced a report which provided the GMCA with an update on the current work of the Committee. Good progress had been made on the adoption of the Air Quality Action Plan with the submission of the non-charging investment led approach. It had been evidenced that this the quickest, cheapest and the fairest way of compliance. The Plan could be looked at in three parts, firstly to support the Bee Network in provision of a cleaner bus fleet; secondly a fund for cleaner taxis which met a common set of principles; and thirdly a smaller pot for specific junction interventions at air quality hotspots.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the minutes of the GMCA Air Quality Administration Committee held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 be noted.

2. That update received from the Chair of the GM Air Quality Administration Committee be noted.

**GMCA 152/24      GMCA WASTE & RECYCLING COMMITTEE MINUTES – 16<sup>TH</sup>  
OCTOBER 2024**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the minutes of the GMCA Waste & Recycling Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024 be noted.

**GMCA 153/24      GREATER MANCHESTER APPOINTMENTS**

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

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the appointment of Councillor Basat Sheikh (MCC) as a substitute member of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee for 2024/25 be approved.
2. That the appointment of Councillor Anthony McCaul (MCC) as a substitute member of the GM Clean Air Committee for 2024/25 be noted.
3. That the appointment of Councillor Anthony McCaul (MCC) as a substitute member of the Air Quality Administration Committee for 2024/25 be noted.

**GMCA 154/24      EQUALITY PANELS – ANNUAL REPORTS**

Councillor Arooj Shah, Portfolio Lead for Equalities & Communities, presented a report summarising the activity and impact of the Greater Manchester Equality Panels through their individual Annual Reports 2023-24.

Councillor Shah praised the individual volunteers who give up so much of their time and put so much work into making each of these individual panels a resounding success and forming key stepping stones towards ensuring resilience in all of GM's communities.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That 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 be noted.
2. That the commitment of all Portfolios to proactively engage with Equality Panels (individually or collectively) on issues that impact communities-of-identity be endorsed.
3. That the GMC be requested to seek to further communicate the brilliant work of community volunteers in fostering community cohesion and equalities throughout the region.

**GMCA 155/24      GREATER MANCHESTER LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY  
STRATEGY – DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION**

Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Lead for Green City Region, provided a report that presented Greater Manchester's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft for consultation). The strategy had been developed over the last 18 month with Local Authorities and wider stakeholders and was ready to progress to public consultation.

This strategy was part of a new system of spatial biodiversity strategies required by law under the Environment Act 2021. The purpose was to set out the actions required to over the forthcoming years to appropriately respond to the ongoing biodiversity emergency. The Strategy would provide a roadmap for how and where people could work together to help nature heal across the city region. Work had taken place with all Greater Manchester Local Authorities and relevant partners to fully develop the draft,

together with consultation with experts before now going on to a public consultation process to ensure the most comprehensive strategy possible.

Anne Selby, Chair of the Local Nature Partnership, was invited to address the GMCA. She stated that the current year had been disastrous for pollinators, with a wet spring causing significant difficulties, and this was compounded by an estimated 90-95% loss of insects over the past century. As well as painful environmental consequences, based on current projections the loss of biodiversity could have a 12% financial impact on GDP by 2050 as well. The Strategy was welcomed as it set out the first steps required in order to halt these declines.

## **RESOLVED /-**

### **MAYORAL APPROVAL**

1. That the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft for consultation) to proceed to public consultation and that the authority be delegated 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 APPROVALS**

2. That the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft-for-consultation) be endorsed for public consultation.
3. That the contents, including the vision, aims, targets, priorities and actions to help respond locally to the biodiversity emergency, be noted.
4. That it be noted that the sustainability assessment of these proposals was positive.
5. That the points highlighted by Anne Selby, Chair of the Local Nature Partnership, be noted.

6. That it be noted that the consultation process will take place from November 15<sup>th</sup> to January 31<sup>st</sup> 2025 and that GM Local Authorities be requested to disseminate the consultation through their communications channels.

**GMCA 156/24      GREATER MANCHESTER ONE NETWORK CONNECTIVITY  
PARTNER PROCUREMENT**

Councillor Susan Haworth, of behalf of Councillor Nicholas Peel, Portfolio Lead for Digital City Region, presented a report setting out the progress made on Greater Manchester One Network implementation and summarising the outcome of a tender process to extend One Network to include connectivity for sites that are not served by the Greater Manchester Local Full Fibre Network.

Greater Manchester One Network was needed as Greater Manchester local full fibre network had digital legacy issues that needed solving. The spending of £2m to address this was cost effective, as it avoided up to £6.6m of alternative option costs over 10 years, with £3.7m of social value gained as referenced within the report.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That 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, be noted.
2. That 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, be noted.
3. That approval be given for the GMCA to enter 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, as set out in the report and decisions in accordance with the Constitution.



**GMCA 157/24      GM INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK – CONDITIONAL PROJECT APPROVAL**

Councillor David Molyneux, Portfolio Lead for Resources & Investment, presented a report seeking approval for a loan to Sustainable Ventures (North) Ltd. A loan which would be made from recycled funds.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That approval be given for a loan of £500k to Sustainable Ventures (North) Ltd
2. That authority be delegated 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.

**GMCA 158/24      DRAFT SCHOOL STRATEGY – OUR VISION FOR SCHOOL TRAVEL IN MANCHESTER**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report asking members to note and comment on the draft School Travel Strategy, a sub-strategy of the 2040 Transport Strategy.

It was stated that the introduction of yellow school buses in the region in the mid-2000s had been a necessity at that time as the bus network in its deregulated form was reducing services and leaving many schools without any form of dedicated service. This system had now been in place for close to 20 years and the introduction of the franchised Bee Network allowed for the opportunity to undertake a review and introduce a more integrated and sustainable alternative.

Nearly half a million students travelled to Greater Manchester's schools and education establishments every single day, and these students needed to be able to travel in a

safe and an affordable way. In terms of safety, the Vision Zero Strategy and Schools Streets Strategies would continue to be developed to support children who were able to walk and cycle to school, and work would continue to be undertaken with GMP and TfGM on the TravelSafe Partnership for those who travel via public transport.

Network reviews were now beginning to take shape in individual Local Authorities, with a strong focus on links to the network of vital infrastructure such as hospitals and educational establishments. Where network coverage was not feasible, specialist services would continue to be provided.

Some concern was expressed by members about the impact of any changes to services, highlighting infrastructural capacity issues and parents perception of the safety of their children, which could result in an uptick in parents driving children to school. Reassurance was sought that route changes would only be implemented if clearly fully supported through the public consultation process. The Mayor advised that these concerns were fully understood and requested TfGM officers develop transparent criteria, that clearly defined where levels of coverage would support any proposals for bus route changes.

#### **RESOLVED /-**

1. That the draft School Travel Strategy be approved for consultation.
2. That approval be given to 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.
3. That it be noted that the Mayor of Greater Manchester and the Greater Manchester Active Travel Commissioner have written to all Greater Manchester primary schools in the region seeking expressions of interest around integrating permanent Schools Streets schemes.
4. That the update on the Bee Network Committee's consideration of this item be received.

5. That transport for Greater Manchester officers be requested to develop transparent criteria, which clearly defines where levels of coverage supported proposals for bus route changes.
6. That it be noted that the consultation will commence from November 2024 for a period of ten weeks and that Local Authorities be requested to disseminate the consultation through their communications channels.
7. That the final strategy be submitted to the GMCA in spring 2025 for consideration.

#### **GMCA 159/24 DELIVERING THE BEE NETWORK UPDATE**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report advising on the progress of delivering the Bee Network, the region's plan for a high-quality, affordable and fully integrated public transport and active travel system for the people and businesses of Greater Manchester.

The GMCA was advised that the update had been considered by the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and that the Committee had been encouraged by the data received in terms of the increased patronage and farebox seen in Tranches 1 & 2 and the success of the night bus pilot, but also addressed a number of issues such as continuing perceptions around safety that the TravelSafe Partnership needed to address and the need for more accessibility at stations.

The Mayor also highlighted the need for active promotion of the new Bee Network fare structures and the opportunities to fund passes through credit unions; the continuing work around rail integration into the Network; and the forthcoming introduction of multi-modal fares.

Members addressed issues faced with rail services within the region around Bolton. The Mayor confirmed that issues around Middlebrook were being alleviated with the introduction of the Bee Network's first new route, the 615 service.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the delivering the Bee Network update be noted
2. That the comments raised through the GM Overview & Scrutiny Committee be received.
3. That the update on the cost effectiveness of bus franchising to date be noted.
4. That the introduction of simpler flatter fares and that availability of credit unions for purchasing yearly passes be actively promoted.
5. That it be noted that the Mayor will continue to work with Transport for Greater Manchester to develop a plan for rail integration that was as robust and clear as the plan developed for bus franchising.
6. That the introduction of multi-modal fares with effect from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 be noted and that the communications campaign proposals be submitted to the GMCA for consideration.
7. That the issues highlighted around Bolton South rail services be noted.
8. That the introduction of the Bee Network's first new bus service, the 615 from Wigan to Middlebrook, be welcomed.
9. That Leaders be requested to consider where they have land development ambitions in areas adjacent to the eight lines planned for GM rail integration

#### **GMCA 160/24      BUS FRANCHISING FLEET**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report that detailed a number of bus franchising fleet related proposals in preparation for the introduction of the third and final tranche of bus franchising on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2025; and to support bus services across the rest of the Bee Network.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the following bus fleet transactions be approved, and approval be given to borrowings of up to £71.2m to fund those transactions:
  - a. Purchase of 72 Euro VI diesel buses from Greater Manchester Buses South Limited (Stagecoach) to replace 'life expired' and other older vehicles and to strengthen services;
  - b. Purchase, and novation of up to 94 zero emission electric buses (ZEBs) from Stagecoach and Go North West in order to reduce operational costs in future years, via a reduction in the service fee payable to franchise operators;
  - c. Short term grant funding to Greater Manchester Buses South Limited (Stagecoach) for 'ZEBRA' ZEBs that were procured initially by Stagecoach prior to the award of contract for Tranche 3 for reallocation across franchises.
  
2. That the continued use the GMCA financial contribution from grant funding of up to £12.5m for the Volvo 'ZEBRA' fleet, to support the proposed revised allocation of the ZEBRA fleet be approved.
  
3. That the GMCA record its congratulations to Steve Warrener following his permanent appointment to the role of Managing Director of Transport for Greater Manchester, as agreed at the GM Resources Committee held earlier in the day.

#### **GMCA 161/24      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 162/24      BUS FRANCHISING FLEET**

**Clerk's Note:** This item was considered in support of the report considered in Part A of the agenda (GMCA 160/24)

**RESOLVED /-**

That the report be noted.

**GMCA 163/24      GREATER MANCHESTER INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK –  
CONDITIONAL PROJECT APPROVAL**

**Clerk's Note:** This item was considered in support of the report considered in Part A of the agenda (GMCA 157/24).

**RESOLVED /-**

That the report be noted.