

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: Friday 31st January 2025

Subject: GM Rail Reform and Devolution – The Vision and Delivery Programme for Rail in Greater Manchester

Report of: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Portfolio Lead for Transport and Caroline Simpson, Group Chief Executive, GMCA, GMFRS & TfGM

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the strategic context for rail reform, the case for change, the vision for GM Rail, and the outline programme of activity and milestones to deliver GM's ambitions for rail as part of the Bee Network.

Recommendations

GMCA is requested to note the contents of this report; and endorse:

1. The development of a robust, evidence-based GM Rail Vision and programme for the future of rail across Greater Manchester in conjunction with GM Local Authorities.
2. The ambition and tranche based approach to the integration of the 8 priority rail corridors in to the Bee Network Rail by 2028.
3. The development of an Outline Business Case for Rail Reform, to assess and develop a preferred way forward for meeting the objectives set out in this paper, and identify the legislative and funding reforms, required to deliver GM's growth agenda.
4. The proactive engagement with Government in relation to the English Devolution and Rail Reform Bills, with particular regard to finalising the statutory role for the Combined Authority in the specification of services, fares and customer standards.
5. The development of further work to unlock the benefits of the Old Trafford Regeneration scheme through the relocation of the freight terminal at Trafford Depot.

6. The development of the Spending Review submission, working with Government, to ensure the opportunities set out in this report are prioritised and delivered.

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Not applicable at this stage. A detailed EQIA, Carbon and Sustainability assessment will be undertaken as part of the Rail Integration and Reform business case.

Risk Management

Risks will be considered as detailed proposals and plans are further developed and considered. However, the opportunities afforded by rail reform and integration are set out within the report.

Legal Considerations

Not specifically applicable at this stage but the TfGM Head of Legal is considering legal and legislative considerations with the GMCA Group Solicitor.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

GM's emerging Rail Reform and Integration proposition does not, at this stage, result in any material revenue (income and / or expenditure) implications. Current and subsequent year financial consequences are, at this stage, limited to development costs which will be managed within existing, and future year, budgets. Any subsequent revenue consequences will be detailed in future reports to GMCA.

Financial Consequences – Capital

The capital funding requirements to develop and deliver the emerging proposals for integrating an initial eight rail corridors (comprising 64 stations) into the Bee Network by 2028 amount to c£114m in the period to FY 2028/29. The estimated expenditure in the period to March 2027 is £34m. The separate Transport Infrastructure Pipeline report on the agenda for this meeting requests approval for an allocation of £34m from CRSTS1 to support development and approval an indicative allocation of £80m from CRSTS2 to enable the full programme of works to be developed.

Number of attachments to the report: N/A

Background Papers

- Rail Integration and Reform Programme: Emerging Rail Reform Policy Position and Next Steps report to GMCA, 27th September 2024
- Transport Infrastructure Pipeline report to GMCA, 31st January 2025

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

Bee Network Committee

This report will be considered by the Bee Network Committee on Thursday 30th January 2025. Any feedback from the Committee will be reported to GMCA verbally.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Further reports on the proposals for GM Rail Reform and Devolution will be to GMCA Overview and Scrutiny later in 2025.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The report to the September 2024 Combined Authority set out the Government's plan for Rail Reform; and our plans to work with them on improving rail services in Greater Manchester.
- 1.2. As outlined in that report, work has commenced on the emerging proposition around Rail Reform, Devolution and Integration, including to set out the case for change, our vision for rail as part of the Bee Network, and how this will be accomplished. This work is ongoing and will continue through engagement with DfT (including in relation to the progression of the English Devolution White Paper, and the forthcoming Rail Reform Bill) and with other rail industry partners.
- 1.3. This report provides an overview of the strategic context for rail reform and next steps.

2. Strategic Context

- 2.1. Greater Manchester will play a key role in delivering the UK Government's ambitions for greater productivity and economic growth. In recent years, the city region has had the highest rate of productivity growth of any part of the UK whilst generating an estimated c. £79b GVA per annum for the country. Despite this success, there is potential to deliver more.
- 2.2. The rail network plays a key role in supporting growth, helping people and businesses in and around Greater Manchester to access the economic opportunities of the city region. Rail is the most efficient way of moving large numbers of people to and between the city and regional centres, supporting over 20.8m rail trips to Manchester Central Stations in 2022/23 and facilitating GM's large travel to work area.
- 2.3. Having a modern, fit-for-purpose rail network is crucial to delivering economic growth, prosperity and opportunities. Rail also plays a key part in reducing road congestion and supporting GM's 2038 net zero ambition.
- 2.4. Whilst rail cannot achieve these outcomes alone, it can contribute even more value when integrated with other transport modes as part of an integrated Bee Network, alongside bus, tram and active travel.

- 2.5. Greater Manchester's growth, and wider, ambitions, coupled with transport being one of the five key areas of the Trailblazer Deeper Devolution Deal, sets the strategic context for the Rail Reform and Integration Programme.
- 2.6. Significant progress has been made with the development of the Bee Network. The resurgence in Metrolink patronage, the successful delivery of bus franchising, including the go live of the final tranche on 5 January 2025, and increases in active travel provision are transforming the City Region's transport service. However, this success has exposed GM rail services as the Bee Network's missing link in this vision for a fully integrated and local transport system. It is, therefore, now vital to focus on rail as the next chapter and to define a clear delivery programme to make it all happen.
- 2.7. To ensure rail industry focus and pace of delivery, GM has identified eight priority rail corridors which will see early integration into the Bee Network by 2028. This will significantly enhance the rail services for customers, greater modal integration with bus, tram and active travel, station accessibility and enhancements in performance. Our evaluation suggests that through this plan we can increase annual patronage on eight core Bee Network rail lines by up to 1.3 million journeys within four years, increasing revenue and decreasing the overall subsidy of the railway. The eight priority rail corridors are:-
- Wigan via Atherton;
 - Wigan via Bolton;
 - Wigan via Golborne;
 - Manchester Airport;
 - Alderley Edge and Buxton via Stockport;
 - Glossop, Hadfield and Rose Hill Marple via Guide Bridge;
 - Ashton-under-Lyne and Stalybridge; and
 - Rochdale.
- 2.8. The priority rail corridors are also aligned to established Mayoral Development Corporations (MDC) and Mayoral Development Zones (MDZ) at Atom Valley, Ashton and Stockport, along with planned MDC/ MDZ's at Bolton town Centre, Old Trafford and the Western Gateway.
- 2.9. When these rail corridors are overlaid with the strategic growth locations, (large housing and employment sites identified across the GM's Places for Everyone and

Local Industrial Strategy), GMCA's eight priority rail corridors will together unlock the delivery and density of housing in these locations.

3. The Case for Change

3.1. There are many issues with the rail system in Greater Manchester – and across the whole country, as documented in the Williams review which cited infrastructure, planning and performance as key issues that needed to be addressing if the rail network is to improve and support growth. This review formed the basis of establishing Great British Railway and the forthcoming Rail Reform Bill.

3.2. At a local level there are a range of challenges that drive the case for change for rail:

- The rail network that serves Greater Manchester does not currently realise its full potential and is not integrated with other modes within the Bee Network, including from a customer experience, fares and ticketing, information and branding perspective;
- Fares and ticketing propositions are complex with a lack of information on products and limited multi modal options;
- Stations are not meeting customer's expectations in areas such as accessibility, safety, security and service provision due to years of underinvestment. They have inconsistent facilities and are not integrated into local places and communities;
- To date the opportunities to use land around stations to unlock economic growth and housing schemes have not been fully exploited nor fully integrated into GM's growth plan;
- Rail does not offer a consistent, reliable or high quality service. Operational performance levels are currently significantly below the expected standard and lag some way behind the national average. Business sentiment is that this has a significant impact on their ability to recruit and retain staff and attract investment into the region;
- Service frequency, journey times and hours of operation are still below pre-COVID standards, limiting the potential to meet the needs of passengers, local communities and GM's growth ambitions;
- Despite some investment in fleet, there are still areas with old rolling stock impacting customer satisfaction and air quality; and

- Improving the GM rail service and increasing mode share as part of a seamlessly integrated Bee Network would deliver additional societal and environmental outcomes.

3.3. Overall, the GM rail service is not delivering for local people or businesses and does not take account of local need or GM's ambitions. In turn, this means the city region is missing out on the opportunity for rail to further contribute to growth across Greater Manchester.

4. Delivering the GM Rail Vision

4.1. As set out above, in the short-term GM will start to deliver this programme by working with industry partners within current industry structures. In particular the initial integration of the eight priority rail corridors, including provision of PAYGO, will be delivered in collaboration with Network Rail, the local train operating companies and Shadow Great British Rail. This is somewhat different from the bus franchising programme where the Combined Authority had more direct control over all levers for change.

4.2. In parallel to this initial activity, GM will progress the rail reform needed to then fully realise the vision. This will include working with other Mayoral Combined Authorities to improve connectivity across regions.

4.3. The vision for rail services in Greater Manchester is one that:

- Ensures that the GM rail network and assets are fully supporting GM economic growth and place-making;
- Is fully integrated into the Bee Network;
- Offers an improved and consistent customer experience;
- Increases local agency, bringing decision-making and accountability closer to customers and GM residents; especially in relation to service specification, fares (as part of a Bee Network Cap) station standards and performance management;
- Offers improved value for money through local control over fares, budgets and the supply chain;
- Improves inclusion and quality of life by providing access to opportunity for all; and
- Protects our environment through modal shift and decarbonisation.

4.4. GM has a unique opportunity to re-define the regional approach to rail, building on its track record of public transport delivery (from Metrolink to Bus Franchising) and the successful devolution of powers and funding.

4.5. The realisation of GM Rail's vision will encompass the following:

- **Maintaining:** delivering existing services safely, efficiently and effectively;
- **Improving:** making things better for passengers: better performance, service quality, stations and integration;
- **Growing:** expanding the network and customer offering, increasing service frequency and capacity where appropriate, and integrating rail service planning with the wider Bee Network; and
- **Transforming:** developing a clear, purposeful long-term plan that harnesses the national rail reform and devolution agendas to provide stability of funding and local agency over governance and planning over a sustained period which will drive and support growth, prosperity, and safety for our customers.

4.6. The vision is proposed to be delivered as follows:

Bee Network Rail Integration

4.7. The core focus of integrating rail into the Bee Network is to put customers back at the heart of rail, spanning an initial eight rail corridors (comprising 64 stations) by 2028 and the GM wide rail network by 2030.

Reform and Devolution

4.8. The Government has recently published the English Devolution White Paper, which sets out a number of additional proposals to the way rail is run in partnership between local and national government which will enable collaboration and decision making to be brought closer to local communities and decision makers. These include:

- a) Strategic rail engagement and Mayoral partnerships with Great British Railways;
- b) a Statutory role for Mayoral Combined Authorities in governing, managing, planning, and developing the rail network;
- c) Options for greater control over local rail stations; and
- d) a 'right to request' further rail devolution

- 4.9. It is anticipated that proposals will be brought forward in a Rail Reform Bill, and would enable GMCA to jointly procure and specify local rail outputs alongside the Department for Transport and Great British Railways. It is not expected that this will fully devolve rail services to MCAs as it is anticipated that the infrastructure assets, rolling stock and revenue risk will still be owned by HMG.
- 4.10. Further detail is provided in section 6.

Major infrastructure Projects

- 4.11. There is significant investment underway or required in strategic infrastructure across the local, regional and national rail network, which includes:
- New stations at Golborne and Cheadle due to be delivered in the next three years, becoming the first new rail stations in GM for over 20 years. This is an example of the type of local transport schemes and devolution is delivering, ensuring benefits are maximised and realised;
 - TransPennine Route Upgrade improving links between Manchester and Leeds which will be fully completed by 2034, delivering improved links and capacity across the Pennines;
 - Further work is being undertaken to consider the broader network requirements to deliver capacity for freight. A catalyst to drive the strategic need to deliver future freight growth and wider network benefits is the relocation of the freight terminal at Trafford Depot. Key advantages of this strategy include:
 - The removal of freight from the congested Castlefield rail corridor, resulting in significant performance and passenger service improvements.
 - Addressing the requirements for additional freight capacity on the West Coast Mainline, especially in light of the recent HS2 announcement.
 - The current capacity constraints at Trafford Depot, necessitating the relocation to two future-proofed freight terminals (ILP North and Port Salford) to meet the government's freight growth targets.
 - Proposals being developed for rail links between Manchester and Liverpool as part of the evolution of Northern Powerhouse Rail creating transformational growth for the city region and the North; and

- Proposals for Birmingham to Manchester connectivity, allowing us to close the productivity gap with London to that of comparable second cities in Europe.

4.12. To bring all the components of the GM Rail Vision together, TfGM is developing a wider North West Rail Plan. (“NWRP”), which combines the Bee Network Rail Integration and Rail Reform programmes with these strategic enhancements to support wider growth opportunities, including through unlocking land and housing development.

5. Bee Network Rail Integration

- 5.1. TfGM, in collaboration with industry partners Network Rail, Great British Railways and GM’s Train Operating Companies have developed a delivery strategy and an emerging plan to meet the ambition to integrate rail into the Bee Network.
- 5.2. Bee Network Rail Integration will deliver the integration of eight priority rail corridors into the wider Bee Network by 2028, including progressing PayGo ticketing on rail (and integrating that with other modes), delivering station improvements and enhancements aligned with Bee Network principles, regeneration opportunities around rail stations; and delivering service improvements.

PayGo Ticketing and Fares

- 5.3. PayGo and rail fares reform will make rail a more attractive prospect for passengers in Greater Manchester which, taken alongside wider HMG investments and reforms to their local transport network, can encourage increased public transport use.
- 5.4. GM and the DfT have recently submitted a business case for the rollout of Phase 1 of the rail PayGo initiative across two of the eight priority rail corridors: Glossop - Hadfield , as well as the Ashton-under-Lyne - Stalybridge lines. Pending final business case approval, this initial phase is expected to be operational by December 2026, enabling rail contactless payment options at 17 rail stations. Phases 2 and 3 will expand this initiative across the remaining eight priority rail corridors by 2028, and a full rollout across Greater Manchester by 2030, also subject to business case approvals. In addition to facilitating contactless payments on rail, it is essential to ensure multimodal integration and fare capping with bus and Metrolink services. To support this, GM will concurrently develop a business case in 2025 for the eight rail corridors and a GM-wide approach, facilitating the delivery of integrated fares and ticketing by 2028 for the 8 priority rail corridors and by 2030

across Greater Manchester. As part of the business case, we will explore the option of rolling out multimodal fares and capping in parallel with the rollout of the PAYGO phases across the 8 lines and GM wide.

Station Improvements, Enhancements and Accessibility

- 5.5. The core focus of integrating rail into the Bee Network is to put customers back at the heart of heavy rail, spanning an initial eight rail corridors (comprising 64 stations) by 2028 and underpinned by a range of capital interventions in addition to the rail industry's investment proposals for the period to 2028.
- 5.6. The ambitious plan will see stations enhanced to provide a modern, fit for purpose and consistent environment, encompassing Bee Network brand and station standards, upgraded facilities and security, to encourage more journeys by rail and attract new customers.
- 5.7. Deliverables will include:
 - Station accessibility asset improvements along with improved wayfinding and station standards across all customer touchpoints;
 - New cycling facilities, secure CCTV, help points, automatic doors, hearing loops, handrails, braille station maps, tactile surfaces, car park pick up/drop off points;
 - Station toilet and waiting facility refurbishments delivered to new Bee Network standards;
 - New / improved customer information services and public announcement systems at stations with tailored multi-modal Bee Network information integrated with bus & tram; and
 - Integration of rail retailing and customer services into the Bee Network App that provides a seamless multi modal customer experience.
- 5.8. In relation to station accessibility, TfGM has an established Access for All (AfA) Programme which is supporting the ambition to make all stations in Greater Manchester step free. GM has prioritised these stations for funding based on the agreed station accessibility list, presented at a previous committee in 2018, which placed stations needing accessibility into a priority order based on several assessment criteria such as access to nearest accessible mode of transport, footfall and deprivation.

- 5.9. To date, funding has been secured from a number of sources to make seven GM priority stations step free, with all schemes at various stages of development / delivery. However, there are still 28 'stepped' stations which remain outside of the AfA Programme. There is the opportunity to progress step free access at a minimum of five further stations (Levenshulme, Davenport, Hall i'th Wood, Moorside and Woodley) during the CRSTS1 funding period through the delivery of improvements at Levenshulme (GM's next priority station) and option selection at the remaining stations up to detailed design in order to ensure that, when delivery funding is established, these additional stations are ready to deliver at pace.
- 5.10. The above work would be undertaken alongside scheme development at Flowery Field, Newton for Hyde and Bredbury, which are to be delivered with DfT Access for All (2024-29) funding.
- 5.11. In addition to the enhancements to the station assets, the work above would result in 63% of GM stations being fully accessible by March 2028, compared to the current 43%. This represents a significant step change in the acceleration of making our stations accessible when you compare the previous decade which has only saw a handful of station made accessible.

Regeneration Opportunities

- 5.12. Rail is a key enabler to economic growth, connecting people to opportunities and unlocking homes around our rail stations. Together with the rail industry, Greater Manchester will identify where land can be made available for housing development and where further opportunities for regeneration align to Greater Manchester's strategic growth locations.
- 5.13. To deliver this, we will need to strengthen the established collaboration agreement between Network Rail and TfGM, which was established to bringing together both land and infrastructure to create a better-connected Greater Manchester. The partnership allows us to focus on transport upgrades and regeneration opportunities at stations, to meet the needs of future population growth and further support the regional economy. Proposals are under development for seven stations: Manchester Piccadilly, Manchester Victoria, Manchester Oxford Road, Deansgate, Salford Central, Salford Crescent and Stockport. These proposals include the development opportunity in and around stations, including for commercial and community use, as well as housing development, this supporting the governments mission to deliver more homes.

5.14. Using the collaboration agreement, we will expand the focus to encompass a review and the development of proposals across all GM rail land assets to maximise the amount of housing we may be able to unlock.

Enhanced train services

5.15. Greater Manchester with industry partners are developing proposals to introduce improvements which enhance the rail service, focused on supporting the growing rail leisure and night time economy markets. This includes later running services and additional weekend services along the eight priority corridors. However, there is still a need to develop an approach to service enhancements that links to long term growth and connectivity.

5.16. The integration of rail into the Bee Network applies to the entire Greater Manchester area, the scale of change required to introduce rail integration inevitably presents operational complexity. To manage this and put customers at the heart of the transition to the future state, rail integration will be introduced in three tranches, similar to the approach taken for bus franchising.

5.17. The three rail tranches enable Greater Manchester to communicate to customers the change that is taking place in a clear and simple manner, whilst also enabling the industry to work together to deliver an improved customer proposition as efficiently and effectively as possible. The three tranches are broken down as follows:

Tranche	Milestones
<p><u>Tranche 1</u></p> <p>Ashton and Stalybridge Glossop - Hadfield</p>	<p>By December 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flagship stations at Manchester Piccadilly and Stalybridge showcasing a fully integrated travel hub, acting as the gateway to the regional centre – delivery of BN branding / signage decluttered, wayfinding reviewed / improved, One Team – travel shop selling all Public Transport ticketing products ○ Stations along these corridors brought up to Bee Network standard ○ Bee Network branded train(s)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rail PAYGO launched at 17 stations allowing customer to seamlessly touch in, touch out ○ Targeting delivery of later running services to support the nighttime economy, and additional Sunday services to support growth in leisure journeys.
<p><u>Tranche 2</u></p> <p>Manchester Airport Alderley Edge and Buxton via Stockport</p>	<p>By December 2027</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flagship stations delivered at Manchester airport showcase a full integrated international travel hub acting as the gateway to the city region and the North ○ Stations on these corridors brought up to Bee Network standard ○ Targeting delivery of later running services to support the nighttime economy, and additional Sunday services to support growth in leisure journeys.
<p><u>Tranche 3</u></p> <p>Rochdale Wigan via Atherton Wigan via Bolton Wigan via Golborne</p>	<p>March - December 2028</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remaining Stations on the 8 rail corridors brought up to Bee Network standard ○ Rail PAYGO launched allowing customer to seamlessly touch in, touch out ○ Targeting delivery of later running services to support the nighttime economy, and additional Sunday services to support growth in leisure journeys.

5.18. A map of the tranches can be found in Appendix A.

5.19. In parallel to the discrete tranches above, several additional customer outcomes will be delivered across the corridors at various stages between 2026 and 2028:

- PayGo tap in and out ticketing across all modes with customers trusting the system to calculate affordable multimodal fares with daily and weekly capping, pending final business case approval;
- station enhancements which meet our Bee Network principles, branded stations and a step change in the number of accessibility step free stations delivered

- an enhanced train service offer which delivers growth and supports the night time economy, unlocking homes around stations and connecting people to opportunities;
- development of a delivery plan, unlocking circa 750 homes;
- consistent customer support and information across all modes including rail stations, on train announcements, contact centre, digital channels
- integrated Bee Network TravelSafe team across all modes – ensuring safety on public transport is at the heart of what we do; and
- improved performance and reliability so that Greater Manchester has a railway residents and businesses it can trust.

5.20. With these improvements and government support, it is expected that after four years, annual patronage could increase by up to 1.3 million journeys on the eight core lines, which currently deliver 14.6m journeys each year. Through investing in growing patronage, the subsidy required to support local rail services could be reduced, helping to deliver a better service. The increased patronage would support the railway's financial sustainability and, in the long term, could make transport more affordable for users and public bodies alike whilst supporting wider objectives, such as economic growth, housing delivery, improved health and environmental outcomes.

5.21. Following the integration of the eight rail lines into the Bee Network, totalling 64 stations the remaining Greater Manchester stations totalling 33 will be integrated into the Bee Network by December 2030 (see Appendix B).

5.22. The combined costs of the above interventions on the 8 priority rail corridors is estimated to be in the order of £114m in the period to FY 2028/29. The Transport Infrastructure Pipeline report that is on the agenda for this meeting includes proposals and recommendations to approve an allocation of CRSTS1 funding – and to an indicative allocate from CRSTS2 funding - to enable the interventions set out able to be delivered.

5.23. In addition to funding, there are a number of dependencies with the delivery timescales as set out above, particularly in relation to train service improvements. For example, any potential timetable changes for December 2025 need to be approved by the end of February 2025, Network Rail need to confirm engineering access as well as operational and infrastructure logistics, Sunday conductor availability requires a resolution, and rostering amendments need to be agreed.

With regards to customer experience, engagement with other TOCs outside of Department for Transport Organisation (DfTO – the new operator of last resort organisation) needs to commence, as does the work to progress the opportunity for multimodal fares.

6. Reform and Devolution

- 6.1. There are limits to the benefits which can be delivered through existing industry structures and existing legislation. Integration of the eight lines will deliver some material benefits, through tactical interventions, however, without more fundamental strategic reform this will not provide Greater Manchester with the levers and accountability it needs to fully realise its vision and plan for rail.
- 6.2. As set out in section 4 above, legislation being laid for rail reform and devolution presents an opportunity to create a more expanded, accountable role for GMCA under the reformed industry structure via a formal statutory role for Mayoral Combined Authorities. This will provide the levers needed to shape GM rail service delivery to meet local needs and ambitions. Without these levers Greater Manchester risks having all the perceived accountability with minimal ability to affect any real change.
- 6.3. To do this GM needs to define its preferred delivery model for rail devolution in order to influence the final shape of the Rail Reform Bill and finalised legislation. Any future delivery models must include the following:
 - **Rail Funding and Commercial Arrangements** – where greater local accountability and prioritisation would facilitate a place-based approach tailored to GM’s objectives, and scope to drive value for money through the supply chain
 - **Rail Governance Arrangements** – where devolving decision-making to GM levels would provide local agency over, and accountability for, GM rail service provision
 - **Rail Services, fares and Network Specification Arrangements** - where bringing together the planning and provision of rail with other modes, coupled with GM playing a role in regional and national rail planning would enable a more joined-up proposition for customers, fares model that considers the place based approach and delivers benefits offered by major infrastructure projects

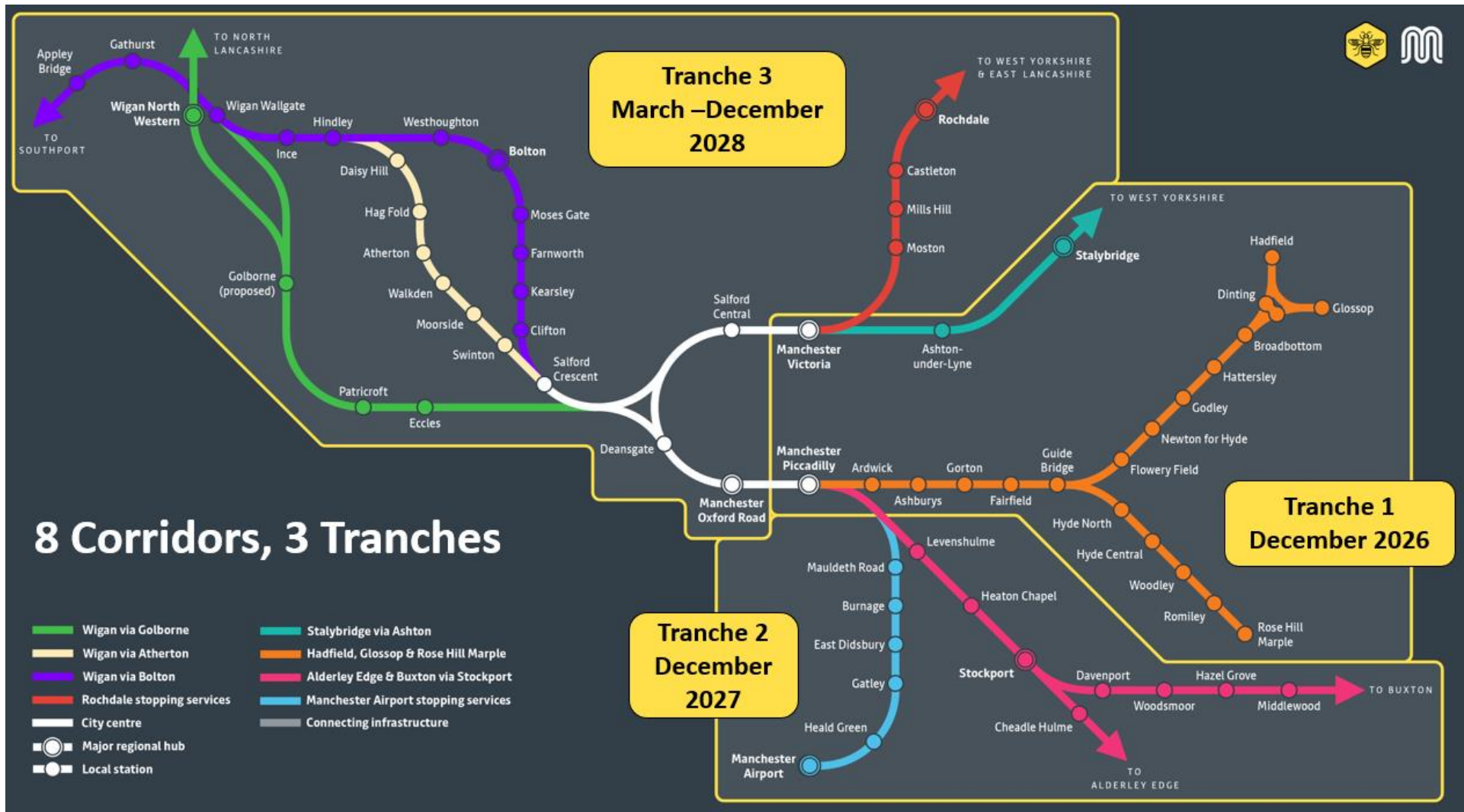
- 6.4. Work is continuing to define a clear vision and delivery plan for rail reform, which will include proactive engagement with Government and the rail industry around the Rail Reform Bill and subsequent legislative processes, with consultation on the rail reform bill expected in the first half of 2025 and progressing through parliament shortly thereafter.
- 6.5. Rail reform exists in a complex operational environment. Unlike the bus network, the rail network and services are not neatly geographically contained, with two thirds of journeys into the regional centre originating outside of the Greater Manchester boundary.
- 6.6. The wider regional connectivity of the rail network beyond Greater Manchester should not be underestimated. These services contribute to the Greater Manchester economy and support GM communities and businesses, as passengers travel to and from Greater Manchester itself to access employment, education, business and leisure opportunities. The physical connectedness of rail network means that a change to one particular part of the network often can have significant impacts elsewhere.
- 6.7. This makes the stakeholder landscape considerably more complicated to navigate. It is therefore imperative that Greater Manchester engages with neighbouring and regional partners, as well as DfT and wider industry, to pursue sensible solutions that achieve the best passenger outcomes for rail.

7. Next steps

- 7.1. TfGM proposes the following next steps:
 - Finalise the Delivery Plan for Bee Network Rail Integration of the eight priority rail corridors, to be delivered by May 2028. CRSTS1 funding approval has been sought in the 'Infrastructure Pipeline' report to enable BNRI delivery to commence;
 - By August 2025, develop a robust, evidence-based GM Rail Vision for the future of rail across GM with support from officers across the CA;
 - By December 2025, develop an Outline Business Case for Rail Integration and Reform, to assess and develop a preferred way forward for meeting the objectives set out in this paper, and identify the legislative and funding reforms, as well as the organisational transformations, required to make this happen;

- Proactively engage with Government in relation to the English Devolution and Rail Reform Bills, including formal and informal consultation, for the duration of their passage through Parliament:
- Progress the Old Trafford Regeneration scheme through the relocation of the freight terminal at Trafford Depot to unlock benefits including economic growth and release network capacity in the regional centre resulting in significant passenger performance improvements; and
- Develop the rail elements of the Spending Review submission to ensure the opportunities to deliver against Greater Manchester growth ambition are included and work with industry partners continues at pace.

Appendix A: Map of the 8 rail corridor tranches



Appendix B: Map of GM Corridors by 2030

