

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE  
HELD THURSDAY, 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025 AT BOARDROOM, GMCA OFFICES**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien (in the Chair)	GMCA
Councillor Toby Hewitt	Bolton
Councillor Alan Quinn	Bury
Councillor Tracey Rawlins	Manchester
Councillor Grace Baynham	Stockport
Councillor David Meller	Stockport
Councillor Jacqueline Owen	Tameside
Councillor Aidan Williams	Trafford
Councillor John Vickers	Wigan

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Dame Sarah Storey	GM Active Travel Commissioner
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**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chris Barnes	TfGM
Melinda Edwards	GMCA
Simon Elliott	TfGM
Martin Lax	TfGM
Richard Nickson	TfGM
Caroline Simpson	GMCA
Lee Teasdale	GMCA
Danny Vaughan	TfGM
Fran Wilkinson	TfGM

## **BNC/01/25 Welcome & Apologies**

Apologies were received and noted from Mayor Andy Burnham, Councillor Hamid Khurram (Bolton), Councillor Josh Charters (Oldham), Councillor Howard Sykes (Oldham), Councillor Phil Burke (Rochdale), Councillor Stephen Homer (Tameside) and GM Transport Commissioner Vernon Everitt.

## **BNC/02/25 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

## **BNC/03/25 Chairs Announcements & Urgent Business**

The Chair opened by inviting Danny Vaughan, Chief Network Officer, TfGM to provide a number of updates to the Committee.

On the pay deal and industrial relations, union members of both Unite and Unison voted to accept the pay deal put to them before Christmas. The pay deal was being implemented and staff would receive their backdated pay in February. The deal included a commitment to further review family friendly policies. Said review was now underway in discussion with union representatives. Members welcomed the ability of TfGM and the unions to come together and amicably resolve the issues.

It was advised that tranche 3 had been implemented successfully in early January and current operation was going well. There were issues on some services, including school services, but these were in the process of being addressed. Members expressed concern that one of the issues which had made the Manchester Evening News had resulted in the press receiving a response before local members. It was asked that members be prioritised in communications so that they could inform local residents more quickly. Members expressed their thanks for the phenomenal job that staff involved in the successful launch of tranche 3, particularly given the significant weather issues they had to contend with on the day of the launch.

It was advised that the programme of Metrolink renewal works for 2025 was due to start in the next week. There would be some disruption, with some temporary line closures being in place throughout the year.

As had been requested by the Committee, a GM response had been submitted on the Street Works Consultation. The response had been developed in discussion with local authority officers who attended the GM Highways Group. The response would be circulated to members.

Reference was made to the New Year's Day flooding incidents and the impact of these. Thanks were expressed to all agencies (including TfGM) involved in mitigating the impact of the flooding issues faced at Platt Bridge near Wigan.

The Chair advised the Committee that the GM Clean Air Plan now had the support of the Government, which was a positive step for the region in being able to go about the right approach in a way that did not overburden the region's residents. The support given also highlighted the important role of the Bee Network, as the approach taken would not have been possible without the level of control the Network has allowed.

The Chair highlighted that the Secretary of State for Transport, Heidi Alexander, had attended the tranche 3 launch event. This had provided the opportunity to discuss plans for rail reform and other key transport plans for the region. GM's submission to the Government's spending review was being finalised, making the case for the funding and powers GM would need to deliver on its ambitious plans for growth.

## **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the update received on the pay deal and associated industrial relations be noted.
2. That the update received on the successful launch of Tranche 3 of bus franchising be noted.
3. That members acknowledged the hard work of TfGM staff in ensuring a successful launch of Tranche 3 despite the inclement weather around the launch date.
4. That the update received on Metrolink renewal works commencing in early 2025 be noted.
5. That the update received on the GM response to the Street Works Consultation be noted.

6. That the update on the Secretary of State for Transport's visit to Greater Manchester be received.
7. That thanks were expressed to all agencies who worked together to manage flooding issues at Platt Bridge.
8. That the update on the government's support for the GM Clean Air Plan be received.

#### **BNC/04/25 Minutes of the Meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

#### **RESOLVED/-**

That the minutes of the meeting of the meeting of 12 December 2024 be agreed as a true and correct record.

#### **BNC/05/25 GM Rail Reform and Devolution – The Vision and Delivery Programme for Rail in Greater Manchester**

Simon Elliott, Head of Rail TfGM, presented a report that provided 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. Points highlighted included:

- The vision would set out clearly the need to maintain the rail network, and how existing services would be delivered efficiently, effectively and safely.
- The vision would also make clear how reform would enhance and improve the customer experience. Including the enhancement of the stations themselves and improving accessibility across the network.
- The vision would also set out the necessary growth of the network to meet the needs of a growing city region.
- In terms of shorter-term integration. The paper set out the delivery of pay-go ticketing fares, how stations would be improved, and where there were regeneration opportunities. It also provided clarity on the planned three phase approach to integrating the eight lines across the region.

#### **Comments and Questions**

- Members made clear the absolute importance of accessibility in stations – without this, many members of the community would be locked out of the improved services. Officers highlighted the acceleration of accessibility work now taking place, with thanks expressed to Nathaniel Yates, whose tireless campaigning around accessibility was aiding in highlighting the areas of most concern on the network.
- Members asked if the work taking place on rail reform and growth would link into local growth plans. It was advised that close working was taking place with growth leads, including Stockport MDC and the plans around Old Trafford regeneration.
- Members sought information on how tram/train could fit into the picture in due course. Officers referenced the Draft Rapid Transit Strategy which set out the proposals around fixed track opportunities, in which tram/train would play a key part. The Strategic Outline Business Plan was underway around these plans.
- Members highlighted the importance of cross-town radial links as well as links into Manchester. Members advised that the rail reform work would not cease with the completion of tranche 3. Once the eight priority corridors had been rolled out, the next phase would move on to consideration of these radial links.
- Members highlighted the importance of creating extra capacity on the network, particularly in the Stockport corridor.
- Members expressed concern about Middlewood Station, which was currently rated Category C in terms of accessibility. Similar accessibility issues were also raised around Hattersley Station. Officers would take these concerns away to fully establish the work taking place ahead of responding.

## **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the contents of the paper be noted.
2. That endorsement be given to 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.
3. That endorsement be given to the ambition and tranche-based approach to the integration of the 8 priority rail corridors into the Bee Network Rail by 2028.
4. That endorsement be given to 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.

5. That endorsement be given to 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.
6. That endorsement be given to 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.
7. That endorsement be given to the development of the Spending Review submission, working with Government, to ensure the opportunities set out in this report are prioritised and delivered.
8. That concerns around access issues at stations such as Hattersley would be taken away and addressed appropriately.
9. That thanks be expressed to Nathaniel Yates for his contributions to TfGM in working towards full accessibility at all rail stations.
10. That future updates on rail reform also include progress around the unlocking of land for homes.

## **BNC/06/25 Active Travel Mission Annual Report**

Dame Sarah Storey, Active Travel Commissioner & Richard Nickson, Network Director Active Travel TfGM, presented a report seeking the approval of the 2024 Annual Active Travel Report and agreement around the Active Travel Priorities for 2025.

Thanks were expressed to all involved in the successes to date and particular areas of focus for the next year were highlighted. These included a renewed focus on funding the schemes that enabled greater numbers of people to do their business actively, addressing the quality of pavements for walking, developing a strategic cycle network properly linking up centres and residential areas, delivering 100 school streets by 2028, and publishing an expansion plan for cycle hire, including incorporating the payments into the wider Bee Network multi-modal ticketing.

## **Comments and Questions**

- Members welcomed the walking and cycling infrastructure newly installed but expressed concern around the longer-term maintenance of the schemes. Officers advised that discussions were being developed around 'sustain, grow and transform'. Substantial assets were being developed in the active travel sphere and these would always need to be kept fit for purpose.
- Members welcomed the plans around zebra crossings on side roads, with members expressing concerns around overly wide side roads that were difficult for people with limited mobility.
- Members sought the ability to mark out some of their walking routes more clearly but were still awaiting the appropriate signage templates from TfGM. It was asked that this be provided.
- Members welcomed the work of school streets but highlighted that there had been some difficulties in keeping volunteers engaged – were there possibilities around a pot of recurrent funding to develop a longer-term view. Officers advised that work was taking place around the broader funding pipeline going forward, with the Committee being updated as the future funding plans were further developed.
- Members welcomed the development of a walking action plan and strategic cycling plan.
- Members stated that that they would welcome a future session on the funding mechanisms for future projects and what they might look like.
- Members expressed concern about the current status of many pavements in the region, which had the potential to hamper the well intention work around getting more people walking. Officers advised that all local authorities had the outcome of TfGM network review audits, which could advise and support on maintenance and bringing paving up to minimum standards. Broader consideration could be given to the use of active travel monies on paving issues that directly impede active travel plans. TfGM were in direct contact with all relevant local authority teams on these issues. The Chair suggested that Members could take away a recommendation to ask their own highway authorities to undertake an analysis of local pavement qualities to build up a case for relevant investment.
- Members condemned those who abused the people running the school streets campaigns in some areas and welcomed the potential for CCTV to combat this in future.

- Members welcomed any move towards bringing in legislation around pavement parking issues.

#### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That approval be given to the Greater Manchester Annual Active Travel Report.
2. That the Commissioner's Mission Priorities as laid out in this report and in the Greater Manchester Annual Active Travel Report be endorsed.
3. That walking route TfGM signage templates be made available to local authorities.
4. That updates will be brought on the funding pipeline as appropriate.
5. That Committee Members seek to ask their own highway authorities, in conjunction with TfGM, to undertake an analysis of pavement qualities, making cases for investment where required.

#### **BNC/07/25 Metrolink 2027**

Danny Vaughan, Chief Network Officer, TfGM, presented the findings of the review and assessment of options when the current Metrolink Operations and Maintenance Agreement (MOMA) with Keolis Amey Metrolink Ltd (KAM) expires in July 2027. The report outlined the review undertaken, the options identified, the findings, and provided a recommendation as to how Metrolink should be operated from mid-2027.

Following the in-depth analysis – the possible future options were narrowed down to two ways forward. Firstly, was an arm's length municipal option with some changes to bring Metrolink more in line with the Bee Network. The other option was to continue with the existing model. Despite being run by a private company Metrolink has always had full accountability through TfGM, who made all decisions around timetabling, fares etc – and that would always remain.

#### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That endorsement be given to the procurement of a Metrolink franchise agreement with adjusted scope from the current Metrolink Operations and



Maintenance Agreement, to commence from July 2027 when the current Agreement expires.

2. That it be noted that the intention for TfGM to deliver a number of customer experience elements of the current Agreement from mid-2027, to increase TfGM's control and oversight over service delivery and asset management through the new Agreement.
3. That the potential for a unified GM transport operation in the 2030's be noted
4. That it be noted that, subject to feedback, procurement of the successor Franchise arrangements will commence; and
5. That it be noted that a further report will be brought to BNC and GMCA before the award of any contract which is anticipated in the second half of 2026.

### **BNC/08/25 Transport Infrastructure Pipeline**

Chris Barnes (Network Director Infrastructure, TfGM) presented 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.

### **Comments and Questions**

- Members welcomed the announcement around improvement works to bus shelters, as these were an important part of the infrastructure. If you can get this right, then that would have the potential to further drive-up patronage. It would also show 'at the street level' how the Bee Network was improving local infrastructure.
- Members also asked if there was scope for bringing in green roofing onto bus shelters, which were attractive and had environmental benefits.
- Members made reference to re-prioritising £210m of funding in CRSTS1 – it was asked how this re-prioritising had been explored and delivered, and was there sufficient oversight of this? Officers made clear that the re-prioritisation did not mean that some work streams would stop, but rather that they could not

be completed within the initially planned period and had to be placed within another phase of works, and freeing up some headroom to support priorities.

## **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the current position, recent progress and key milestones on the transport infrastructure pipeline be noted.
2. That the drawdown of CRSTS funding and associated scheme progression be approved as follows:
  - Manchester: Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure: £0.89m and Full Business Case;
  - City Centre Bus and Streets for All Connectivity Programme: £2.786m;
  - Integrated Measures: Account Based Ticketing: £4.2m and Full Business Case;
  - Integrated Measures: Travel Information (Passenger Information Displays and Printed Information): £0.67m;
3. That the Metrolink Renewals Programme:
  - Approve the drawdown of £1.0m of CRSTS funding for Whitefield Tunnel Renewals; and
  - Note the release of £1.55m from existing capital budgets for the infrastructure drainage repairs.
4. That subject to DfT approval and GMCA approval of the allocation of CRSTS1 funding at the meeting to be held on 31 January 2025, approve the associated drawdown of funding to enable a number of time-critical priorities to be advanced as follows:
  - Acquisition of the existing GM Bus Shelter estate and related activity to develop a renewal programme for the estate: up to £15m;
  - Rochdale: Castleton Phase 2 Active Travel scheme: up to £12.66m; and

- Capital & revenue switch applied to the revenue budget for Bus Franchising IS and Ticketing System Assets: up to £15m.
5. That it be noted that the allocation of funding to support the Bee Network Rail Integration Programme, was subject to DfT approval and GMCA approval at the meeting to be held on 31 January 2025 and as follows;
- Bee Network Rail Integration and Accessibility: up to £34m of CRSTS1 funding; and
  - Bee Network Rail Integration Programme; estimated at £80m of CRSTS2 funding.

### **BNC/09/25 Bee Network Annual Products**

Fran Wilkinson, Customer & Growth Director, TfGM, presented a proposal that new ticketing products be added to the Bee Network fares and ticketing proposition to increase access to public transport throughout the region and improve affordability for all.

### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the updated introduction of a suite of Annual Multi Modal Tickets, from March 2025 be endorsed.
2. That the addition of these Annual Multi Modal Tickets to the TfGM scheme with local Credit Unions, from March 2025, to improve access to affordable annual products be endorsed.
3. That the addition of the existing Annual Tram Tickets to the TfGM scheme with local Credit Unions, from March 2025, to improve access to affordable annual products be endorsed.

### **BNC/49/24 Date of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Bee Network Committee would take place on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025.