

GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday 24 March 2022
Subject: Update on the Delivery of the Bee Network
Report of: Eamonn Boylan, Chief Executive Officer, GMCA & TfGM.

Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on a number of important developments in relation to delivery of the Bee Network.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to note and comment on the contents of the report

Contact Officers

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Equalities Implications

N/A

Climate Change Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures

N/A

Risk Management

N/A

Legal Considerations

N/A

Financial Consequences – Revenue

N/A

Financial Consequences – Capital

N/A

Number of attachments to the report: 0

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background Papers

N/A

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

GM Transport Committee

N/A

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

N/A

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Bee Network is GMCA's vision for a London-style transport system which will join together buses, trams, cycling and walking by 2024, with commuter rail incorporated by 2030. It will transform how people travel in Greater Manchester: accessible, affordable, equitable and easy to use, with a daily fare cap and multi-modal ticketing to facilitate seamless end-to-end journeys within the city region.
- 1.2. This report is to update the Committee on a number of key developments in relation to the delivery of the Bee Network.

2. BUS FRANCHISING, FARES AND INVESTMENT

- 2.1. Last year a Judicial Review process was brought by Rotala and Stagecoach against GMCA on the grounds that GMCA had been unlawful and irrational in its consultation and implementation of the bus franchising process.
- 2.2. On Wednesday 9th March 2022 the judge found all claims by Rotala and Stagecoach to be unsuccessful and dismissed all aspects of the Judicial Review case, concluding that GMCA and the Mayor had followed all correct legal processes and that the Mayoral decision to implement franchising was lawful and rational.
- 2.3. The judgement means that the next stage of franchising bus services is now able to commence and invitations to negotiate will be issued shortly to prospective providers of bus services in Bolton and Wigan, as well as in parts of Salford and west Manchester.
- 2.4. The Mayor of Greater Manchester welcomed the judgement and at an event on Monday 14th March 2022 he set out a revised timetable for the introduction of bus franchising, which will see the first tranche of franchised buses introduced in Bolton and Wigan as well as parts of Salford and west Manchester from Autumn 2023; Bury, Rochdale, Oldham and areas of north Manchester to follow in Spring 2024; and the final tranche covering Stockport, Trafford, Tameside, south Manchester and remaining parts of Salford to run by end of 2024.

- 2.5. In addition, the Mayor announced that under a franchised bus network, adult single journeys will cost no more than £2, and single child journeys no more than £1. Currently, there are many different adult single bus fares, some costing as much as £4. This was described as the first step towards people in Greater Manchester being able to access a more affordable public transport network.
- 2.6. Improving public transport connectivity into and between Greater Manchester's major centres and other growth locations is a key part of proposals contained within the Bee Network vision – which will, subject to agreement with government, be supported by an initial £1.2bn five-year programme of investment, with £438m worth of investment to improve buses, routes and services, including:
- £205m for new electric buses and infrastructure, supporting a move to a cleaner, greener city-region;
 - £202m to improve bus services, with new quality bus lanes, corridors, and junctions to improve connectivity between our towns and cities; and
 - £30m to improve bus passenger information, fares and ticketing.

3. FUNDING

- 3.1. At the GMTTC meeting on Friday 18 February 2022 the Committee made a statement urging the government to extend recovery funding support for bus and tram services.
- 3.2. The statement made reference to a recent report published by the Urban Transport Group and noted that following discussions with local bus operators, without further funding, around one third of local bus services would be affected, with a wide-scale reduction in frequencies and around 30 routes withdrawn completely.
- 3.3. On the 1 March 2022 Government announced a further recovery funding package for bus and light rail of 'over £150m' covering the six months to early October. Government have indicated that this would be the final transport recovery funding package. One of the conditions of the funding is that both local transport authorities and operators work closely together to ensure that 'effective and financially sustainable networks which cater for the needs of the local public are implemented once recovery funding ends'.

- 3.4. Following the government announcement, the Mayor of Greater Manchester plans to write to the Transport Secretary to ask what Greater Manchester's allocation of this funding will be, and to raise concerns about the impact that an abrupt cessation of recovery funding in October is likely to have on services.
- 3.5. There has also been ongoing dialogue between TfGM and government with regard to the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) and Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding submissions.
- 3.6. At the time of writing, it is unclear whether Mayoral Combined Authorities will receive the full awards before the pre-election period commences, or whether an interim CRSTS award will be made this month. However, the Department for Transport are keen to ensure that CRSTS implementation delivery is not unnecessarily delayed, particularly where capital project delivery could be taking place from April 2022.
- 3.7. GMCA will consider a report at its meeting on Friday 25 March seeking a delegation to the Chief Executive of GMCA and TfGM, in consultation with the Mayor of GM, to agree and release any interim CRSTS Programme Case award to ensure that delivery can commence upon confirmation of the award.

4. TRANSPORT COMMISSIONERS

- 4.1. The Mayor announced the appointment of a new Transport Commissioner and Active Travel Commissioner for Greater Manchester, who will take leading roles in the delivery of the Bee Network vision.
- 4.2. Vernon Everitt, former Transport for London (TfL) Managing Director of Customers, Communication and Technology will take on the role of Transport Commissioner. Mr Everitt spent 14 years as a Managing Director at Transport for London, leading on London's integration of public transport through simple and intuitive fares, ticketing and customer information.

- 4.3. Dame Sarah Storey will be taking on the role of Active Travel Commissioner; having previously been Active Travel Commissioner for South Yorkshire Combined Authority since 2019. Dame Sarah is the most successful Paralympian of all time; having won 28 medals at eight Paralympic Games, including three at Tokyo 2020. She began her Paralympic career as a swimmer, later switching to para-cycling and is a committed advocate for active travel.
- 4.4. Subject to formal appointment of the commissioners and approval by the GMCA Resources Committee, the commissioners will be invited to attend a future meeting of GMTC.