

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 AUGUST 2022 AT
THE GMCA OFFICES, TOOTAL BUILDINGS, OXFORD STREET, MANCHESTER**

PRESENT:

Bolton	John Walsh (Chair)
Bolton	Marie Brady
Bolton	Nicolas Peel
Bolton	Hamid Khurram
Bury	Nathan Boroda
Manchester	Greg Stanton
Manchester	Paula Sadler
Manchester	Mandie Shilton Godwin
Manchester	John Leech
Oldham	Colin McLaren
Oldham	Umar Nasheen
Rochdale	Patricia Dale
Salford	John Mullen
Salford	Jim King
Salford	Alex Warren
Tameside	Naila Sharif
Trafford	Barry Brotherton
Trafford	Jacqueline Owen
Wigan	Joanne Marshall

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

GMCA Portfolio Lead for Green City Region Martyn Cox

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

GMCA	Eamonn Boylan
GMCA	Julie Connor
GMCA	John Wrathmell

GMCA	Mark Atherton
GMCA	Ninoshka Martins
GMCA	Simon Nokes
GMCA	Steve Wilson
TfGM	Ian Palmer
TfGM	Megan Black
TfGM	Nicola Kane
TfGM	Steve Warrener
TfGM	Simon Warburton

O&SC 12/22 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tom Besford (Rochdale), Champak Mistry (Bolton), Elise Wilson (Stockport), Amanda Peers (Stockport), Kath Houlton (Wigan) and Mike Hurleston (Stockport).

O&SC 13/22 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

There were no Chair's announcements or urgent business.

O&SC 14/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

O&SC 15/22 GREATER MANCHESTER STRATEGY - GREENER FOCUS

Councillor Martyn Cox, GMCA Portfolio Lead for the Green City Region and Mark Atherton, Director of Environment, GMCA introduced a presentation that provided an overarching view of Greater Manchester's ambitions, next steps and the systemic issues that should be given due consideration, to drive change and actions in all parts of the system in order for Greater Manchester to successfully deliver on its net zero targets by 2038.

The Committee thanked Mark Atherton for his presentation and Councillor Martyn Cox for his attendance as the Green City Region as portfolio lead.

Members welcomed the presentation and noted that a systemic change was crucial for GM to successfully deliver on its net zero targets.

It was noted that were some areas where GMCA had little or no jurisdiction over delivery, however, to move forward with the ambitions of the Greater Manchester Strategy, GM had begun to do some work looking at the barriers to move into carbon neutrality by influencing stakeholders through creative incentives and new leadership structure investments. Members therefore felt that it would be useful for the Committee to be sighted on this work to be able to identify future areas for Scrutiny.

The complexity of the communications around Climate Change and lack of awareness on this subject were highlighted as key deterrents to driving behavioural change. Officers explained that work was being done with Local Authorities to develop a collective narrative that would seek to guide and support residents when considering low carbon alternatives. Members were assured that their concerns raised around the messaging would be raised at the next Green City Region Partnership Board meeting and a planned campaign information would be shared with the Committee in due course.

A member queried whether there were any plans to support small and medium enterprises to move to low carbon alternatives. Officers advised of the feasibility funding available to social enterprises and the partnership with Green Finance Institutes that look at developing models to support community groups to finance investment in energy generation infrastructure in local communities.

Members felt that there was a need to look at the sustainable management of the waterways as part of the overall mix of initiatives. Officers explained the infrastructure challenges faced by utility companies and informed the Committee of the planned programme of improvement activity. Members were also assured that as part of Place for Everyone, a robust spatial framework had been developed looking at sustainable urban drainage and water management for the conurbation.

To identify future areas of consideration by the Committee, it was suggested that it would be useful for a further information session to be arranged to allow members to

identify gaps in current schemes that have been developed to deliver on GM's carbon reduction ambitions. Officers welcomed the suggestion and highlighted the co-benefits appraisal tool that the committee could use to understand the wider socio-economic benefits and environmental impacts of each piece of work across GM.

The overall view of the Committee was that an information session on key topics would be welcomed in advance of each meeting, where appropriate, for members to be able to effectively support scrutiny activity.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the update on how the current work aligns with the GMS priority to create a carbon neutral Greater Manchester by 2038, with better air quality and natural environment be noted.
2. That following the meeting a further information session be scheduled for members to identify gaps in current schemes to deliver on our carbon reduction ambitions and future areas for Scrutiny.
3. That the need to simplify the messaging around Climate Change be raised at the next Green City Region Partnership meeting and suggestions be fed back to the Committee.

O&SC 16/22

BEE NETWORK AND LOW CARBON AMBITIONS

Megan Black, Interim Head of Logistics & Environment, TfGM introduced a report that set out how aspirations of the Bee Network were aligned with GM's low carbon ambitions. Through the 2040 Transport Strategy, much focus had been on improving and integrating public transport to encourage active travel. Therefore, looking at delivery, a Five-Year Transport Delivery Plan had been developed that set out the practical actions that had been planned to achieve the ambitions of GMCA and the GM Mayor.

Members highlighted that in order to drive behavioural change in GM it was crucial to have an integrated infrastructure that was 'fit for purpose'. It was therefore vital to be

creative in this space and look at alternate options such as the use e-scooters, officer confirmed that trials were underway looking at whether e-scooters could be included in the wider travel mix. On the point made on integration of the network, officers explained why franchising of the bus network was step in the right direction and advised of plans to procure real-time information kits on buses, that would be a standard through the bus franchising model.

Members of the Committee sought to understand how overall progress on the Five-Year Delivery plan was being measured and whether the Bee Bike Scheme had been successful. Officers advised that there had been significant uptick in usage and recommended that the performance data would be shared with the Committee at an appropriate opportunity. members were directed to the annual monitoring report that was considered at the February meeting of the Greater Manchester Transport Committee that outlined the progress on the five-year Transport Delivery Plan.

In discussing the effectiveness of biofuels, a member questioned the standing of Hydrogen fuelled vehicles in improving carbon emissions. Officers explained that by focusing on zero emissions as opposed to electric buses, added an element of flexibility to the bus franchising procurement strategy and recommended that the issue on the effectiveness of biofuels would be picked up with Councillor Jim King after the meeting.

A member queried whether there was an option to explore local authority toolkits for active travel, officers recommended that it could be shared with members as appropriately.

Concerns were raised around the lack of suitable infrastructure in semi-rural areas and therefore a member queried whether there were any plans to meet the transport needs of residents. Officers advised of plans to introduce electric car club, demand response bus service and bike hire schemes to complement the public transport network and improve connectivity for residents especially in outlying areas of GM.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the contents and the scale of the shared challenge to reduce carbon emissions from transport, in order for GM to meet its ambition to be a carbon neutral city-region by 2038, recognising the contributions that all agencies, public and private, and all communities will need to make be noted.
2. That officers would respond to Councillor Jim King's question around the effectiveness of biofuels outside the meeting.
3. That the performance data on the Bee Bike Scheme be shared with members at an appropriate opportunity.
4. That the Local Authority Toolkit on active travel be shared with members in due course.

O&SC 17/22 GM BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - BUS FARES

Eamonn Boylan, Chief Executive Officer GMCA & TfGM introduced the item and advised members of the rationale behind the move towards introducing lower bus fares and touched on the progress made with Bus Operators and Government to date.

Steve Warrener, Director of Finance, TfGM advised members that at the 24th June meeting of GMCA it was agreed that the one-year fares reduction plan would be funded through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) at an estimated cost of £68m. Members were advised that final Ministerial confirmation of GM's BSIP allocation was expected to be received in advance of the implementation of the fares proposals on 4th September 2022.

It was clarified that the original guidance was to bid for capital and revenue, and mid-way through the process DfT had changed the guidance indicating that the BSIP allocation would be revenue funding only and any capital should be funded from GM's CRSTS (City Region Sustainable Transport Scheme) allocation.

The move towards subsidised bus fares without services reductions, was welcomed, and the franchising of the bus network was noted as a crucial step in achieving better integration of services and control over the bus network.

Members also sought to understand whether there was a possibility for previously reduced or withdrawn bus services to be re-introduced. Officers advised that the ability to reintroduce services would be contingent upon GM's ability to invest in the network. It is intended that through such measures bus patronage and revenue would grow allowing a greater degree of overall control over the network.

It was noted that the scheme would be reviewed after the first year given that there were a number of uncertainties impacting transport. The risk of operators choosing not to continue with commercially viable options was highlighted as a potential issue. Members were assured that TfGM would continue to monitor any further planned service changes ahead of the introduction of bus franchising.

A member questioned how bus companies would be subsidised and how avoiding the increase in prices would be justified given the current rate of inflation. Officers explained that the level of fare changes that would have been made in the absence of the scheme ('shadow fares') would be used as the basis of reimbursement, which would need to be evidenced, via a published benchmark or other locally available data.

In relation to the ticketing technology that would be used on buses, members queried whether if there were any fall-back measures should there be any system failures. Officers advised that the supplier would have to comply with the stringent performance metrics or would risk losing the contract and as a fall-back measure TfGM would look to deploy staff with handheld machine. It was noted that the details of any additional fall-back measure were yet to be worked out. However, members were assured that a further report would be shared with the Committee in due course.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the indicative award of £94.8m for the Bus Service Improvement Plan and the proposal to use a proportion of those funds for bus fare reductions in response to the cost-of-living crisis; and to grow patronage be noted.

2. That the proposal for lower bus fares via maximum £2 single fares (£1 for children), and a maximum £5 (£2.50 for children) all operator day ticket, from September 2022, subject to final agreement with Government and bus operators be noted.
3. That the progress that has been made towards the implementation of lower bus fares be noted.
4. That details on any fall-back measures, should the ticketing system fail, be circulated to the Committee once details have been agreed.

O&SC 18/22

DEVOLUTION TRAILBLAZER UPDATE

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

RESOLVED /-

O&SC 19/22

FUTURE MEETING DATES

RESOLVED /-

That the following dates for the rest of the municipal year be noted:

- Wednesday 28 Sept 1-3pm
- Wednesday 26 Oct 1-3pm
- Wednesday 23 Nov 1-3pm
- Wednesday 14 Dec 1-3pm
- Wednesday 25 Jan 1-3pm
- Wednesday 22 Feb 1-3pm
- Wednesday 29 Mar 1-3pm