

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 27 January 2023

Subject: Delivering the Bee Network: Bus Franchising, Fares and Local Bus Strategy

Report of: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Portfolio Lead for Transport and Eamonn Boylan, Chief Executive Officer, GMCA & TfGM.

Purpose of Report

This report provides an update to GMCA on progress to deliver a number of key elements of the Bee Network.

Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Note the update on the implementation of bus franchising and a weekly bus fare cap.
2. Note proposals to develop the Greater Manchester Bus Plan, a local bus strategy for the city region.

Contact Officers

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Impacts Questionnaire			
Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation	
Equality and Inclusion	G		
Health	G		
Resilience and Adaptation	G		
Housing	G		
Economy	G		
Mobility and Connectivity	G		
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G		
Consumption and Production			
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target			
Further Assessment(s):		Equalities Impact Assessment and Carbon Assessment	
	Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.
			Negative impacts overall.

The Bee Network is a critical enabler of Greater Manchester's Net Zero ambitions; a truly integrated transport network across active travel and public transport will provide excellent public transport and active travel choices for all, promoting sustainable travel behavioural change through integrated spatial, digital and transport planning; and supporting the electrification of vehicles and public transport fleets.

Risk Management

N/A

Legal Considerations

N/A

Financial Considerations – Revenue

N/A

Financial Considerations – 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 Greater Manchester Mayor and Combined Authority have set out a clear vision for the GM Bee Network: an integrated 'London-style' transport system, bringing together public transport and active travel modes to promote a real alternative to travel by car, changing over time the way people travel across the city region and ensuring the very best access to opportunity for all. By defining this clear vision, GMCA and the Mayor have set the endpoint for a pipeline of transport investment and reform programmes, against which progress can be tracked and secured.
- 1.2. This report provides the latest update on progress made towards delivering the future network for GM.

2. Bus Franchising and Fares

Bus Franchising

- 2.1. On Friday 23rd December 2023, contracts were signed for Tranche 1 of Bus Franchising. Due to the legal requirement for a 9-month mobilisation period, the Operational Commencement Date has been confirmed as the 24th September 2023 for Wigan, Bolton and parts of Salford and Bury.
- 2.2. The successful operators are Go North West for the Wigan and Bolton Large Franchises and Diamond (Rotala) for seven of the nine small franchises. The remaining two small franchises will be incorporated into the Wigan Large Franchise following contract award due to the restriction on the number of small franchises that could be awarded to one operator.
- 2.3. Initial mobilisation meetings have taken place with both operators, and mobilisation plans will be provided to the TfGM Programme Team before the end of January.
- 2.4. Tranche 1 School Services are currently out to tender, with a deadline for bid submission of 18th January 2023.
- 2.5. Bidder negotiation meetings for Tranche 2 of Bus Franchising took place in December as planned. Bidder Submissions are scheduled to be received by Friday 10th March 2023.

Weekly Fare Cap

- 2.6. At the 16 December meeting of GMCA, authority was delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, GMCA & TfGM to cap weekly bus fares in Greater Manchester,

subject to agreement with bus operators and Greater Manchester Travelcards Limited (GMTL).

- 2.7. Following agreement with bus operators and GMTL a weekly cap on bus fares went live on Sunday 8th January 2023. The weekly cap extends the existing bus fare cap scheme to include a cap on weekly AnyBus products of £21 for the adult weekly product and £10.50 for the child product.
- 2.8. The launch of the weekly fares cap was promoted as part of the ongoing #Get On Board campaign, including social media posts, posters at interchanges and bus stops and updated website copy with updated fares information.

3. Local Bus Strategy

- 3.1. The process of franchising the local bus network is a central policy reform, alongside investment in bus passenger facilities, information, ticketing, highway priority and a zero-emission fleet, to transform the bus offer in GM as the single largest component of our future integrated public transport system. Through franchising, the GMCA, via TfGM, will have the mechanism to plan and coordinate the bus network in a way that best improves the experience of existing customers and attracts new passengers, within the scope of available resources.
- 3.2. Many aspects of the city region's vision for bus services have already been articulated through the original franchising case and Greater Manchester's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). To move the vision forward into clear and consistent delivery, it is proposed that a new local bus strategy – the 'Greater Manchester Bus Plan' – is drawn up, that sets out how we will undertake future decision making and network planning in line with Greater Manchester's economic, social and carbon targets.
- 3.3. The Greater Manchester Bus Plan will:
 - Set out a clear vision for the city region's bus network and set out the actions that will be taken to achieve this ambition;
 - Establish a governance model for network planning and review, with an appropriate scheme of delegation, ensuring that franchising delivers significantly enhanced accountability, as well as improved services.

- Communicate Greater Manchester's priorities for bus services to Government, their expected outcomes and the positive returns that can be generated through investment in the network.
- Provide an opportunity to communicate the transformation of Greater Manchester's bus network to a wider external audience.
- Guide future priorities (for example, for additional rounds of BSIP funding) and support development of business cases for local bus interventions.

3.4. Consultation will be a key part of the development of the plan and TfGM will work closely with the Greater Manchester Transport Committee, other elected members and officers from all districts, as well as other key stakeholders, to create an ambitious plan for the future that is usable and useful for day-to-day decision-making.

3.5. In particular, the plan will help to inform and support decision making around:

- External engagement, influence and governance
- Service planning (network and performance)
- Demand / Revenue / Fares
- Fleet
- Customer Information
- Bus Priority / Infrastructure
- Demand Responsive Transport
- School transport

3.6. The completed plan will be brought to the Combined Authority for agreement in advance of the first phase of franchised services entering operation in September 2023.

4. Recommendations

4.1. See front sheet for recommendations.