

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: Friday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Subject: Greater Manchester Bus Strategy: Better Buses for the Bee Network

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

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### Purpose of Report

This report seeks approval of the draft Greater Manchester Bus Strategy, a sub-strategy of the 2040 Transport Strategy, and provides a summary of its contents, including how the bus network will support the creation of the integrated Bee Network.

### Recommendations:

1. The GMCA is requested to approve the draft Greater Manchester Bus Strategy.
2. Note any recommendations or feedback from the Bee Network Committee.

### Contact Officers

Martin Lax	Transport Strategy Director	Martin.Lax@tfgm.com
Rosalind O'Driscoll	Head of Policy, Insight & Public Affairs	Rosalind.O'Driscoll@tfgm.com
Nick Fairclough	Senior Policy Manager	Nick.Fairclough@tfgm.com

# Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

## Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

The GMCA is requested to approve the GM Bus Plan noting its positive impacts for sustainability, carbon and equalities.

## Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion	G	Women, young people and Black or Black British people are disproportionately more likely to travel by bus. Many people with caring responsibilities and from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds use the bus. It covers access to bus stops and services, and one of its areas of focus is connecting people to other public services e.g. health and leisure trips. It sets out details of how TfGM will engage with communities to make sure they are involved in decision-making. N/A
Health	G	We will plan the bus network in ways that improve air quality and promote regular active travel through journeys to and from the bus stop. We will plan the bus network in a way that encourages physical activity and reduces social isolation, which are good for mental health. It will help to increase levels of physical activity, as buses promote regular active travel through the journey to and from the bus stop, encouraging activity amongst groups who might otherwise be inactive. In future, our bus network will better support people who are socially isolated due to age or living in rural communities.
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		The GM Bus Plan aims to help clean up our air by enabling people to leave the car at home for short journeys. This includes: 1) Accelerating the roll out of Euro VI certified and electric buses to reduce carbon emissions 2) Working with operators to monitor services' fuel efficiency and support more economical driving styles 3) Supporting land use changes which bring bus services closer to where people live.
Further Assessment(s):	Equalities Impact Assessment and Carbon Assessment	
<b>G</b> Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	<b>A</b> Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	<b>R</b> Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.
		<b>RR</b> Negative impacts overall.

## Carbon Assessment

Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation		
New Build residential	N/A			
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A			
New build non-residential (including public) buildings	N/A			
<b>Transport</b>				
Active travel and public transport				
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access				
Access to amenities				
Vehicle procurement	N/A			
<b>Land Use</b>				
Land use	N/A			
No associated carbon impacts expected.	High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.	Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.	Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.	Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

## **Risk Management**

N/A

## **Legal Considerations**

N/A

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

The Bus Strategy is not a funded delivery plan. The document contains a section dealing with financial considerations.

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

The Bus Strategy is not a funded delivery plan. The document contains a section dealing with financial considerations.

## **Number of attachments to the report: 1**

## **Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

## **Background Papers**

The GM Bus Strategy is a sub-strategy to the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 (the 2040 Strategy) and is aligned with our Right Mix targets; the Five-Year Transport Delivery Plan (2021-2026) and other sub-strategies. It is also closely aligned with the BSIP (and other work to articulate our future requirements for the bus network to Government).

## **Tracking/ Process**

N/A

## **Exemption from call in**

N/A

## **Bee Network Committee**

This Greater Manchester Bus Strategy will be considered by the Bee Network Committee on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

# 1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 Greater Manchester is building the Bee Network, an integrated transport system that will support sustainable travel across the city region. Better buses are central to delivering the Bee Network and with it a fairer, greener and more prosperous city region.
- 1.2 The first phase of bus franchising in Greater Manchester will begin in September 2023, when Bee Network services start running in the north-west of the city-region.
- 1.3 Franchising provides many of the tools required to start improving bus services and is the first step to transforming our bus system as part of an integrated, affordable transport system.
- 1.4 The Greater Manchester Bus Strategy (GM Bus Strategy) (Appendix 1) builds on the original [franchising case](#) and [Greater Manchester's Bus Service Improvement Plan](#) (BSIP). It sets out a holistic vision for better buses for Greater Manchester and will help people understand how the bus system will develop under franchising to 2030 and support TfGM to plan its work and make the case for additional support and funding.
- 1.5 The document sets out:
  - Our vision for buses
  - The case for change in Greater Manchester
  - The actions we need to take
  - How we'll deliver better buses for the city region
- 1.6 The Bus Strategy is not a funded delivery plan and the priorities and ambitions it sets out are anticipated to require additional funding to be delivered in full.

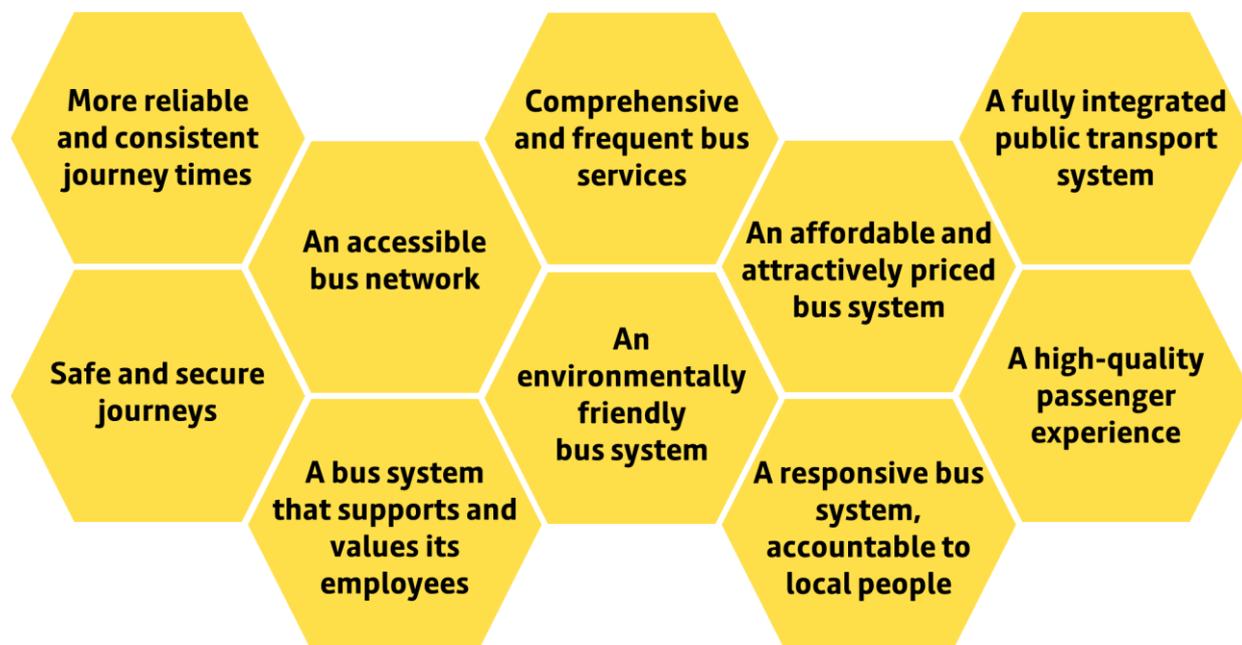
## 2. The Bus Strategy

- 2.1 The GM Bus Strategy sets out Greater Manchester's vision for the future bus network, namely, to make the bus the first choice for more journeys, as part of the Bee Network, the city region's integrated transport system.
- 2.2 Better buses are central to delivering the Bee Network and with it a fairer, greener and more prosperous city region. Subject to funding, the Bus Strategy sets out the

role of the bus in delivering our Bee Network ambition and will help to inform Greater Manchester's refreshed local transport vision and plans.

- 2.3 Our initial target is for a 30% increase in bus patronage by 2030 from 2022/23 levels. This would mean almost 50 million more journeys being taken by bus each year. Final patronage targets for the whole Bee Network will be confirmed through the Local Transport Plan refresh process.
- 2.4 The Bus Strategy sets out how this growth can be driven by improvements, including affordable fares, a more integrated, user-friendly and frequent network, and better infrastructure to provide more reliable bus journeys. This growth will require additional investment and careful prioritisation of existing resources, enabled by bus franchising.
- 2.5 The strategy sets an ambition for buses to run at least every 12 minutes on key orbital and radial routes. It also aims for 90% of the entire Greater Manchester population to be within 400m of a 30-minute frequency bus or Metrolink service on weekdays. Where this is not possible, we will look to put in place other options to provide connectivity as part of the Bee Network e.g. demand responsive transport (like Local Link).
- 2.6 The GM Bus Strategy states that, subject to funding, we will make improvements so that bus services reach their potential and deliver more for Greater Manchester. We want buses to:
  - Provide consistent and attractive car-free connectivity for all.
  - Connect to other parts of the Bee Network and longer distance public transport.
  - Support attractive urban places, including town centres and new developments.
  - Have a positive impact on public health and the environment.
  - Provide people with more travel options in the day and night.
  - Be accountable and a source of shared local pride.

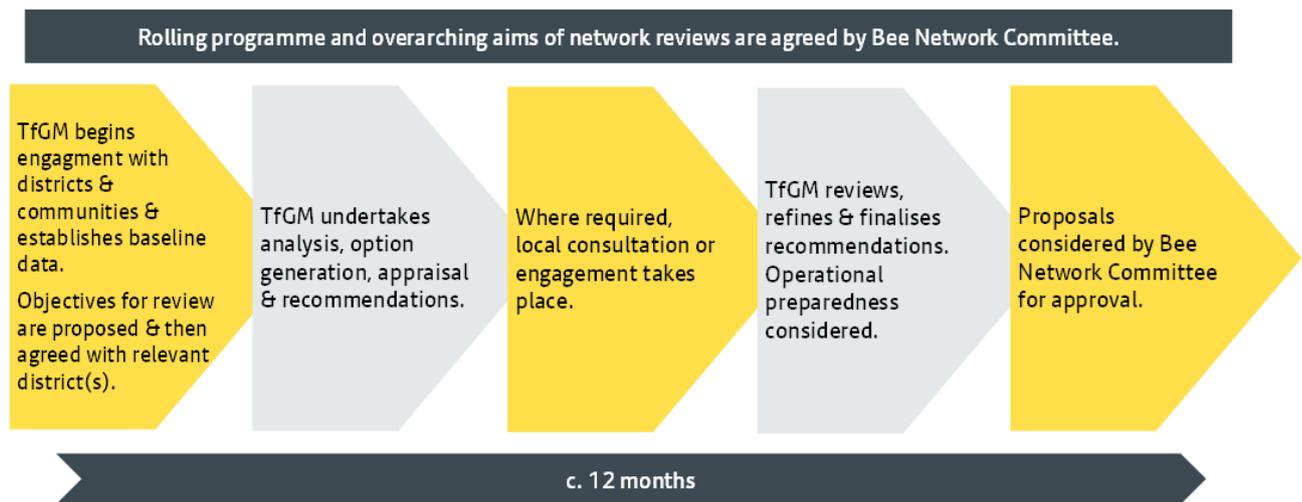
2.7 Alongside stabilisation of the existing bus network during the transition to franchising, we will prioritise delivering:



**Figure 1: Delivery Priorities**

2.8 The strategy also sets out how the GM bus network will be governed in future in a responsive and accountable way. It describes a rolling programme of integrated, area-based ‘Network Reviews’, which will commence a few months after franchising is implemented.

2.9 Network Reviews will consider how different areas’ transport needs (e.g. orbital routes between towns) can be better met by amending the bus, Metrolink, rail, and active travel networks. Demand responsive transport (e.g. Local Link) may also represent the most convenient and viable public transport option in some parts of the conurbation.



**Figure 2: Proposed Network Review Process**

2.10 Following the process set out in the diagram above, we will work with local people and elected representatives (e.g. through local Bee Network committees or similar) to understand the needs of their area, the best use of available funding and how the bus system can support a better quality of life. Customer feedback will also be used to shape the network through comments provided via the Bee Network app.

2.11 As part of these network reviews, we will apply seven network planning guidelines to help us deliver on the bus's potential. These guidelines will support new connectivity including orbital links and routes to support trips for health, education and employment.

- Integrated - because people need to find the network easy to understand and use.
- Comprehensive - because people need access to convenient transport at all times.
- Reliable - because people need to be able to depend on their buses.
- Frequent - because keeping waiting times low makes the bus more attractive.
- Direct - because bus users value low journey times.
- Simple - because people need to find the network easy to understand and use.
- Cost effective - because our bus network needs to be financially sustainable.

### **3. Engagement**

- 3.1 Throughout the process of developing the GM Bus Strategy, we have benefited from hearing a wide range of opinions on what our future bus network should look like.
- 3.2 In its development, officers have utilised the wide range of responses to recent consultations on the development of the bus network (including the original franchising consultation) and organised targeted engagement sessions, including with groups for whom the bus is particularly important.
- 3.3 Engagement sessions have taken place with or are planned to take place with:
- Disability Design Reference Group
  - GM Older People's Network
  - LGBT Foundation
  - Trafford Poverty Truth Commission
  - GM Race Equality Panel
  - A women's focus group
  - GM Youth Combined Authority
  - GM Bus Operators Association (One Bus)
- 3.4 This engagement process will continue over the coming years as our plans evolve. We will ensure that we speak to people we don't always hear from, as well as regular bus users.

### **4. Next Steps**

- 4.1 The Bus Strategy will form part of a wider suite of policy and strategy documents setting out future plans for an integrated network, including a Bee Network vision document, refreshed Local Transport Plan and development of a sustainable funding model for the transport system. It will continue to develop over the coming years as Greater Manchester's experience of managing a franchised bus network increases.
- 4.2 The newly established Bee Network Committee will receive regular updates on progress towards the targets set out in the Bus Strategy in order to monitor delivery of its aims.