

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE
HELD THURSDAY, 14TH DECEMBER, 2023 AT GMCA OFFICES, 56 OXFORD STREET,
M1 6EU**

PRESENT:

GM Mayor Andy Burnham (Chair)	GMCA
Councillor Eamonn O'Brien	Bury
Councillor David Meller	Stockport
Councillor Dan Costello	Tameside
Councillor John Walsh	Bolton
Councillor Hamid Khurram	Bolton
Councillor Alan Quinn	Bury
Councillor Tracey Rawlins	Manchester
Councillor Chris Goodwin	Oldham
Councillor Phil Burke	Rochdale
Councillor Mike McCusker	Salford
Councillor Grace Baynham	Stockport
Councillor Warren Bray	Tameside
Councillor Aidan Williams	Trafford
Councillor Julian Newgrosh	Trafford
Councillor John Vickers	Wigan

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Eamonn Boylan	GMCA
Ninoshka Martins	GMCA
Gillian Duckworth	GMCA
Dame Sarah Storey	GMCA
Lucy Prince	GMCA
Alison Chew	TfGM
Chris Barnes	TfGM
Nick Fairclough	TfGM
Richard Nickson	TfGM

BOLTON

MANCHESTER

ROCHDALE

STOCKPORT

TRAFFORD

BURY

OLDHAM

SALFORD

TAMESIDE

WIGAN

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Alex Cropper	TfGM
James Baldwin	TfGM
Stephen Rhodes	TfGM
Martin Lax	TfGM
Steve Warrener	TfGM

BNC/47/23 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Prescott, Paul Dennett, Howard Sykes, James Gartside and Elaine Taylor.

BNC/48/23 Declarations of Interest

None received.

BNC/49/23 Chair's announcements and Urgent Business

1. Retirement of Bob Morris, Chief Operating Officer, TfGM

Members were notified that Bob Morris, would be retiring from his role as Chief Operating Officer at TfGM. The Committee used this opportunity to record their thanks for everything he has done to further the transport agenda in GM and wished him well as he starts his well-earned retirement.

Following Bob's departure, Alex Cropper will retain his current interim leadership role across all of the Operations teams and Project Groups.

2. Bee Network Update

Members were advised that the first buses came under local control in September – serving Bolton, Wigan, parts of Salford, Bury and Manchester. Preparations were now underway for the second area of bus franchising – Rochdale and Oldham.

Despite higher volumes of road traffic year-on-year, the performance of franchised bus services is as good as, if not better, than before. Patronage had grown across franchised areas, with an average of c105k journeys made per day.

Bringing bus services under local control has ensured the accountability of franchised operators to local people allowing Greater Manchester to respond quickly to improve services.

As part of improving the offer to GM residents, the launch of the Bee Network family bus ticket has been brought forward that now allows a family one day's unlimited travel on Bee Network buses after 9.30am on weekdays and all day at weekends and bank holidays which would also be available for purchase through the Bee Network application from early 2024.

3. Rail

The recent poor performance across all train operating companies was highlighted but Avanti West Coast, had continued to perform badly, with cancellations and severe delays as a result of traincrew shortages. This no doubt was seen to affect patronage.

Members raised their concerns stating that the rail industry had repeatedly failed to deliver on promises and would contribute to lower patronage levels therefore members supported the Mayor in calling for the de-classification of 1st class services particularly during periods of cancellations.

4. GM Clean Air Plan Update

In noting the interconnectivity of the delivery of the Bee Network and to achieving Clean Air targets an update was provided on the recently issued Clean Air press release stating that through the use of zero emission buses GM had the potential to achieve its Clean Air targets.

A full report and accompanying recommendations would be considered at the GM's Air Quality Administration Committee on Wednesday 20 December.

Having a long-term vision was welcomed noting that this would allow manufactures sufficient notice to be able to stock order thus ensuring targets are met.

Members felt that public transport would allow better control and was a reliable route to meeting Government's directives. However, it was felt that the operations of out of area Taxi would pose a significant risk to achieving Clean Air targets therefore members were advised that within the recommendations there was a clear ask to ban out of area taxi operations in GM.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the update in relation to improvement in performance and punctuality of Tranche 1 services be noted.
2. That the launch of the Bee Network family bus ticket that allows a family one day's unlimited travel on Bee Network buses after 9.30am on weekdays and all day at weekends and bank holidays which would also be available for purchase on the Bee Network application from early 2024 be noted.
3. In noting the recent poor performance across all train operating companies, but particularly Avanti West Coast, members supported the Mayor in calling for the de-classification of 1st class services on train services during periods of cancellations.
4. That the update in relation to the Clean Air Plan be noted; and the interconnectivity of the delivery of the Bee Network to achieving Clean Air targets be noted.

BNC/50/23 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023

RESOLVED/-

That the minutes of the Bee Network Committee held on 23 November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

BNC/51/23 Active Travel in Greater Manchester

Consideration was given to a report that provided a progress update on the Active Travel programme a year on from the publication of the 'Refresh the Mission' document which forms a position statement on the way forward for active travel in GM.

The report restates the ambition to deliver an integrated transport network with active travel fully embedded and reveals a refreshed, walking, wheeling, and cycling 'vision' map, alongside revised costs and timeframe for delivery of the network.

Members welcomed the report and thanked officers for their close working with district officers in promoting and delivering active neighbourhood schemes.

There was broad consensus around the need for an invigorated school travel policy and a plan to support more sustainable travel choices through Vision Zero to provide safer environments for young people whilst also supporting parents and children to enable independent journeys. It was agreed that a report on the school travel policy for GM would be brought to a future meeting.

The issue with pavement parking was highlighted stating that this could be a hinderance for those seeking to use active travel modes. In addition, members also felt the need for improved signage.

In noting the correlation between health and active travel modes, members encouraged officers to rebalance figures in areas with higher dependency on cars through targeted interventions.

In discussing the expansion and integration of the Cycle Hire scheme with public transport and other high touch point areas, it was felt that there was a need to invest in the infrastructure including to provide that 'first mile/last mile' connectivity and encourage active travel. Officers were also reminded of the need to ensure that accessibility needs were considered when developing schemes.

The utilisation of announcements to inform passengers of available facilities was highlighted as an essential tool to supporting journeys. A member raised that it would be beneficial if the Metrolink blue line notified tram users on when to get off for Wythenshawe hospital. Officers noted the comments and agreed to get this issue sorted following the meeting.

A member raised a number of safety issues around travelling with bikes on trams. Officers noted the concerns and provided assurance stating that their comments would be considered as part of the risk assessment and findings would inform the work of the pilot. It was noted that the policy was in the developmental phase with an initial report due to be received by Committee in January. It was therefore requested that officers contact Edinburgh for an assessment of issues faced and gather operator views on their recently introduced cycle access trail.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That the updated Bee Active Network be approved and adopted.
3. That the publication of the potential future Greater Manchester Cycle Hire footprint plan be approved.
4. That it be agreed that the Committee would approve proposals to review the delivery of Bikeability in Greater Manchester and bring the findings and any proposals to a future Committee meeting.
5. That the closure of and removal of the Bicycle Locker Users Club (BLUC) locker scheme be approved and plans to seek to renew, replace, and upgrade cycle parking offer across the public transport network, including the existing Cycle Hubs, subject to available funding be noted.
6. That the publication of the Greater Manchester Active Travel Annual report, attached at Appendix 2 be approved.
7. That it be agreed that the announcement on the Metrolink blue line would be altered to notify tram users on when to get off for Wythenshawe hospital.
8. That it be noted that a further report outlining the policy for Bikes on Trams would be brought to a future meeting.
9. That it be agreed that ahead of the Bikes on Trams policy report that was due to be received by the Bee Network Committee, officers would contact Edinburgh for an assessment of issues faced and gather operator views on their recently introduced cycle access trail.
10. That it be noted that a report on the school travel policy for GM would be brought to a future meeting.

BNC/52/23 Local Transport Plan - Refreshing Our Vision

Consideration was given to a report that introduced an engagement document, 'Renewing Our Vision' which set out how GM was proposing to update the Local Transport Plan vision. The report was a high-level document which would be used to engage with stakeholders as the refreshed Local Transport Plan is developed.

Members welcomed the report and the update on plans to create a further 500 more accessible bus stops as well as the CRSTS capital funding allocated to deliver further Access for All schemes to rail stations as it was seen as part of developing a fully inclusive and affordable sustainable transport system for all. Officers advised that details of the scheme would be shared with Committee once made available.

Given the scale of the overall rail station development, it was felt that the funding allocated would be insufficient and therefore as part of plans to bring rail under local control there should be an ask for additional funding to improve both accessibility and infrastructure at all rail stations in GM.

Achieving the Right Mix targets across GM would be a differing picture given that there were already established modes of travel in the regional centres however would not be applicable to rural areas. Therefore, it was suggested that GM might want to consider utilising Park & Ride schemes to support the system and to look at adopting zonal targets as opposed to a blanket Right Mix target for GM.

It was agreed that future iterations of the report would include route performance data and would be utilised to inform future network planning.

With regards to the comments raised around the funding available to cover cost of safety scheme officers advised that a further report on Vision Zero had been scheduled for January where members would be allowed the opportunity to raise further comments.

Officers explained that plans were underway to engage with a range of stakeholders including different planning authorities in Greater Manchester various different transport operators, business partners, as well as neighbouring authorities to consider those cross-boundary links.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the development of a Greater Manchester's transport vision as part of a refreshed Local Transport Plan be noted.
2. That the attached 'Renewing Our Vision' stakeholder engagement document for approval by the GMCA be endorsed.
3. That it be noted that future reports would include route performance data and would be utilised to inform future network planning.

BNC/53/23 Greater Manchester Transport Network Performance

Consideration was given to a report that provided the first quarterly performance update covering the period August 2023 to October 2023.

- Franchised bus services are now outperforming the non-franchised network, with an improvement plan in place to driver up performance further.
- Metrolink performed very well during the period with patronage continuing to grow.
- Train performance continues to be adversely affected by Network Rail infrastructure and external delay, crew availability and seasonal railhead conditions. A succession of recent severe weather events further added to overall declines in punctuality and increases in the number of cancellations.
- The cycle hire scheme continues to be well used with bike availability increasing each month as a result of the recovery plan introduced in response to high levels of bike damage and theft.
- A range of safety campaigns for drivers and public transport passengers have been delivered aligned to seasonal changes in conditions and travel behaviour.

In terms of reducing the number of casualties, it was reported that GM had a higher success rate in comparison to the rest of the UK however members urged officers to continue working towards aiming for zero casualties on the network.

Cycle hire usage continues to remain above target. The return of students from September and improved availability of bikes has both driven the increase in daily rides.

With regards to Metrolink, it was noted that there had been an increase in patronage in September and October. Officers added that patronage was expected to grow further in the run up to festive period and that farebox revenue throughout this period has been in line with budgets. September also saw the launch of Metrolink's crack down on fare evasion with additional staff, new tactics such as plain clothes operations and an increase to the penalty fare. This has been very positively received by passengers and was likely to be supporting growth in passenger journey numbers.

There had been a drop in the reliability and punctuality of non-franchised services therefore officers were urged to continue monitoring services to avoid further slippage. Officers welcomed the comments and advised members of the interventions in place to support non franchised areas including the work being done with Highways Authorities to improve service performance. It was felt that it would be appropriate for future reports would include route performance data and would be utilised to inform future network planning.

Safety was seen as an essential factor to increasing patronage on the network. Officers advised that as plans of improving safety on the network, through operation AVRO there had been increased stop and search activity with the view to deterring knife crime on the network. Further work was also being done with education institutes to influence behaviours.

RESOLVED/-

That the contents of the Greater Manchester Transport Network Performance report be noted.

This report seeks approval for Active Travel funding for improvements for walking and wheeling at signalised junctions, and three Stockport MBC schemes in Romiley, Ladybrook and Heatons Link. Members are also asked to note the current CRSTS1 and 2 position.

Members welcomed the funding towards active travel schemes as it was seen essential to improving the overall connectivity of the network.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the current position in relation to CRSTS1 and CRSTS2 be noted.
2. That the drawdown of Active Travel Fund (ATF) funding be approved as follows:
 - £1.51m of additional ATF4 funding to enable full approval and delivery of the GM walking and wheeling at signalised junctions scheme;
 - £0.18m of ATF4 funding to enable the development of the Stockport, Romiley to Stockport Route scheme;
 - £0.33m of ATF4 funding to enable the development of the Stockport, Ladybrook Valley scheme;
 - £0.23m of ATF4 funding to enable the development of the Stockport, Heatons Link Phase 2 scheme.

BNC/55/23 Network Planning and Review Process - Part A

Consideration was given to a report that set out the proposed process for future reviews of the franchised bus network. TfGM has been responsible for the day-to-day management of franchised services and has been already working with Tranche 1 operators to improve services for passengers by making changes to timetables, frequencies or adding extra buses where needed, with a number of changes to be introduced from January 2024. More significant changes such as the introduction of new routes, withdrawal of routes, or major changes to routes or frequencies would be considered as part of a network review process.

Members welcomed the report and requested that the Committee be kept informed of changes through regular updates.

Sought clarity on the position of Oldham to Huddersfield services beyond March 2024. Officers explained that post March 2024 this area would be managed by a cross boundary franchised service.

It was noted that work was needed to be done to turn around decades' worth of decline therefore members welcomed a separate training session to understand the costs involved to establishing services and an understanding of how the network is managed.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the proposed approach to reviewing and evolving the franchised bus network through a programme of Network Reviews be endorsed.
2. That the proposed Network Planning Guidelines be approved.
3. That the 12-month programme of Network Reviews be approved.
4. That the changes to the non-franchised network set out in Appendix 3 be noted.
5. That the proposed changes to subsidised services as set out in Appendix 3 be approved.

BNC/56/23 Dates & Times of Future Meetings

- 25 January; 2 - 4 PM
- 22 February; 2 - 4 PM
- 21 March; 2 - 4 PM

BNC/57/23 Exclusion of the press and public

That, under section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public should be excluded from the meeting for the following items on business on the grounds that this involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as set out in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

BNC/58/23 Network Planning and Review Process (Non-Franchised Bus Services) - Part B

RESOLVED/-

That the contents of the report be noted.

Clerk's Note: This item was considered in support of the report considered in Part A of the agenda (Item 9 above refers).