

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Subject: Delivering the Bee Network – Network Performance

Report of: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Portfolio Lead for Transport and Caroline Simpson, Group Chief Executive

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### Purpose of Report

To provide GMCA with an overview of the performance of Greater Manchester's transport network for the period December 2024 – February 2025.

### Recommendations:

GMCA is requested to note and comment on the performance of Greater Manchester's Transport Network.

### Contact Officers

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## **Equalities Impact, Carbon, and Sustainability Assessment:**

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

## **Bee Network Committee**

The Bee Network Committee will consider this report on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

# 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an overview of the latest achievements in delivering Greater Manchester's (GM) Bee Network, including an update on performance for the period from December 2024 to the end of February 2025. This period saw the completion of bus franchising across GM, a historic moment and one of the biggest changes to the city-region's public transport network in decades.
- 1.2. Control of the city-region's bus network has enabled significant improvements to be made across GM, including better integration with other modes of transport. This report summarises both the proactive steps being taken to deliver further benefits for GM's passengers, as well as some of the challenges experienced by TfGM and steps being taken to continually improve performance.
- 1.3. It highlights some of the interventions taken to ensure GM's residents benefit from more reliable, cleaner, safer and more affordable public transport, and looks ahead to the major milestones ahead across bus, tram, train and active travel.

## **Delivering the Bee Network**

- 1.4. On Sunday 05 January the final phase of bus franchising was delivered with all bus services in Greater Manchester (577 routes and 1600 buses) back under local control.
- 1.5. The milestone put GM on the national stage, marked with a launch event at Wythenshawe Interchange – attended by the Secretary of State for Transport – covered widely on social and traditional media.
- 1.6. The launch saw GM make history as the first area in the country to do this in 40 years, with significant steps taken to reverse decades-long decline to deliver improved services, better buses and more affordable fares.
- 1.7. Despite being delivered during a period of severe weather (before, during and post go live) the launch was a success and operations went well, with few issues, the most serious of which related to a small number of school services, which have been addressed. This was the result of extensive lessons learnt from the rollout of franchised services in the previous tranche 1 and tranche 2 areas.

1.8. TfGM is committed to continuously improving the Bee Network experience by:

- **Creating better connections for communities:** Changes have already been made to around 75 different routes to provide earlier, later, more frequent and better-connected services, in many cases aligning to tram and train times to join-up onward journeys.
- **Delivering a step-change in the standard of the bus fleet:** The overall age and standard of the fleet continues to improve. By the end of January 14.3% of the bus fleet were Zero Emission Buses (ZEBs), up from 11.7% in December. The increase is due to the arrival of new buses with T3 and some of the older fleet being taken out of service. With more ZEBs scheduled to arrive in the coming weeks nearly 400 new buses will be operating across the Tranche 3 area by the end of March 2025. By April, 21% of the operating fleet will be zero emission, subject to ongoing depot electrification work, with 25% of the GM fleet zero emission by the end of the year. Plans have also been approved to invest £71 million to further expand and bolster the fleet, delivering a step change in the experience for passengers with new, cleaner, and accessible buses.
- **Increasing the reliability of services:** Punctuality of the first buses to come under local control (Wigan and Bolton) is now consistently above 80% (up from c.69% on the pre-franchised network). Reliability in the second area (Oldham, Rochdale, Bury, Salford, and north Manchester) is also better than before, with work ongoing to replicate the improvements seen in phase one areas across the whole network.
- **Bringing all information together in the Bee Network app:** Improvements to the Bee Network App continue to be rolled out including better real time information such as push notifications and alerts in the app and journey planner during periods of disruption or severe weather. More personalised and targeted messaging is being developed for future releases.  
Since launch, the Bee Network App has been downloaded more than 850,000 times and over 1.8 million app tickets have been purchased. TfGM continue to take customer feedback on board and have plans for continual improvements to the app over the coming year.
- **Using passenger feedback to improve services:** Work continues to improve services and customer experience with feedback from passengers through social media, the contact centre and Rate Your Journey survey all

used to help direct improvements in the on-bus experience and interventions to improve the reliability of the service.

- **Integrating bus and tram travel:** The next big milestone in the Bee Network is the introduction of multi modal Pay As You Go (or 'Tap and Go' as it will be referred to GM's passengers) which will be live on 23 March. It will enable seamless travel between tram and bus, with complete flexibility to travel knowing that TfGM will calculate the best daily or weekly fare in the background. Work is progressing at pace on this with a full marketing and communications plan to support, full staff training and colleagues on the network to support customers.
- **Making fares more affordable:** Average ticket costs reduced by 15% with the £2 fare that will remain in place throughout 2025. A cheaper, simpler fare structure is now in place across all Bee Network buses – with new products including a 'hopper' fare, reduced weekly and monthly ticket, and passengers able to spread the cost of an unlimited annual ticket with participating Credit Unions.

In addition to the existing annual bus ticket, that is available through Credit Unions, annual tram, and new multi-modal annual tickets for travel across tram and bus which will launch on 23 March, will also be available through Credit Unions to support people to benefit from the savings these products provide, without having to make a significant up-front payment.

- **Expanding the passenger offer by integrating rail into the Bee Network:** A staged approach to the next phase of the Bee Network - which will bring rail services and stations into the Bee Network by 2028 - have been set out. Developed in partnership with the rail industry, Department for Transport (DfT) and Shadow Great British Railways, the plan is aimed at not only improving transport (by improving the passenger experience and integrating with GM's buses and trams) but enabling major regeneration and unlocking housing opportunities on land around the city-region's stations.

## **Safety**

- 1.9. We were extremely saddened to hear of the tragic death of 3-year-old Lulu Palmisano in Manchester City Centre on the morning of 22 February following a collision between a van and a tram at the junction of Mosely Street and Nicholas Street. The van driver fled the scene but was subsequently arrested and charged for causing death by dangerous driving. There is nothing more important than the

safety of our network and TfGM will work with GMP, Manchester City Council and KAM (the tram operator) to review the operation of this junction.

- 1.10. Work to deliver the GM Vision Zero Strategy and Action Plan is underway following its approval by GM leaders at the end of 2024. This has included a focus on tackling drink and drug driving through the festive period and the release of a £1m fund for schemes supporting the reduction of deaths and life-changing injuries on Greater Manchester's roads.
- 1.11. A second Safety Summit took place at the beginning of February with all operators and unions present. The outline Bee Network Safety Plan was discussed and next steps proposed to complete the work.
- 1.12. The Bee Network Safety Plan will align to the Vision Zero Strategy and Action Plan.

### **Focusing on events**

- 1.13. Delivering better, greener event travel remains a focus of activity. The matchday bus network for Manchester City Football Club fans has grown after proving popular with fans. To cater for the growing level of demand, five extra buses have now been added to five of the busiest routes. The network serves areas with poor public transport options for the Etihad. The additional buses take the total number for weekend matchdays to 20 and the number of locations served to 82. The introduction of the Manchester City FC shuttles has driven a 2% mode shift out of cars and on to public transport.
- 1.14. Running competitions and events are a mainstay of the GM events calendar. The Media City Half Marathon and Hale 10k have both been delivered in 2025 without any major impact on the network. The next run in the schedule is the Manchester Marathon which will take place on Sunday 27 April (the same weekend at the London Marathon). With 32,000 runners the event is the UK's second largest and Europe's fifth largest marathon. Changes to the course will see a new finish line on Oxford Road. This will have a substantial impact on the bus network and residents not accustomed to closures associated with the marathon. Diversion routes are being planned, and course organisers are undertaking a letter drop ahead of the event.
- 1.15. The summer will see a busy events schedule with concerts and other events across GM. 350,000 are expected to watch Oasis over five nights at Heaton Park alone.

- 1.16. TfGM is working with event promoters, Local Authorities and GMP to manage the transport network for all users during these events, while also maximising the revenue opportunities.

### **Growing Patronage and Revenue**

- 1.17. 2024 saw record passenger numbers on the Metrolink network in a calendar year. The record-breaking number of 45.6 million passenger journeys beat the previous record set in 2019.
- 1.18. Just weeks after the third and final stage of bus franchising was delivered, the Bee Network passed the milestone of 100 million bus journeys since services were taken back under local control. The number was reached ahead of forecast.
- 1.19. Across Metrolink and Bus, the Bee Network is now carrying more than 4.5 million passenger journeys during a typical week. GM is also making more use of the Bee Network's active travel options. Starling Bank bike hire trips are up 16% year on year (2024 v 2023).
- 1.20. Revenue from bus, Metrolink and cycle hire fares amounts to £152m in the period April 2024 to January 2025 - 4% above the budget target for farebox revenue. All revenue generated is used to run and improve transport services for GM.

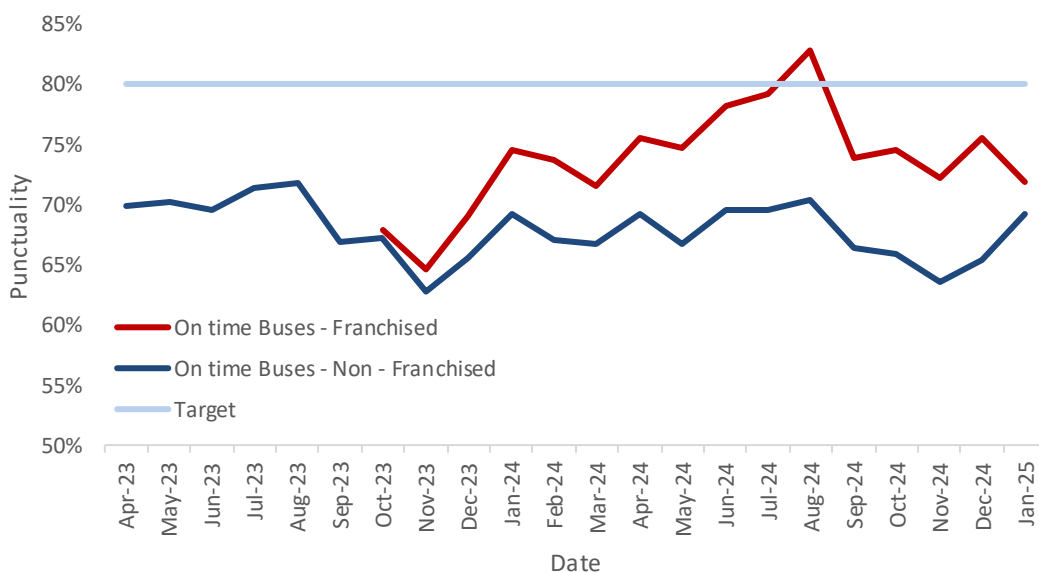
## **2. Reliability**

### **Bus**

- 2.1. Until the final tranche of franchised services was delivered on 5 January, punctuality for the franchised network consistently tracked above the non-franchised network.
- 2.2. A range of initiatives to improve the performance of franchised bus services are being delivered including service improvement measures, priority for late running buses at traffic signals and tackling the impact of roadworks through closer working relationships with districts and roadwork promoters.
- 2.3. Performance in Tranche 1, the first area to come under local control (Wigan and Bolton) has improved significantly and is now consistently above 80%. This followed a detailed review of services and the introduction of additional buses to enable improved performance. Tranche 1 communities are also benefiting from the 24/7 'night bus' pilot that has been operating since September 2024 on Services 36 and V1.

- 2.4. Reliability in the Tranche 2 area (Oldham, Rochdale, Bury, Salford, and north Manchester) is also better than before. As with Tranche 1, additional buses have been introduced and are leading to significantly improved punctuality of several services across the Tranche 2 area. There are now 27 more peak vehicles, improving performance for passengers. On 2<sup>nd</sup> February we also introduced more buses to services 52, 53 and 135 from Queens Road depot and then from Sunday 23 February, more buses were introduced on services 17, 18, 181/2 and 409 running from Oldham depot.
- 2.5. More recently, services in Tranche 3 (south Manchester, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford) have joined the Bee Network. These are performing well at this early stage, with punctuality exceeding pre franchise levels on all but 5 days in February. Early interventions have already been made to improved performance, in particular retiming some school services to ensure the expectation of schools across this part of Greater Manchester are met, following initial challenges. Work continues to identify and implement other initiatives that are needed to make service levels more resilient.
- 2.6. We are also examining the case for the wider introduction of 24/7 (Night Bus) services across GM.
- 2.7. Delivering on our commitment to transparency and accountability, weekly reporting of bus performance continues to be published, now including tranche 3 service data. Performance figures are posted on X (formerly Twitter) and linked to a more detailed report on the TfGM website.

**Chart 1: Bus Punctuality**

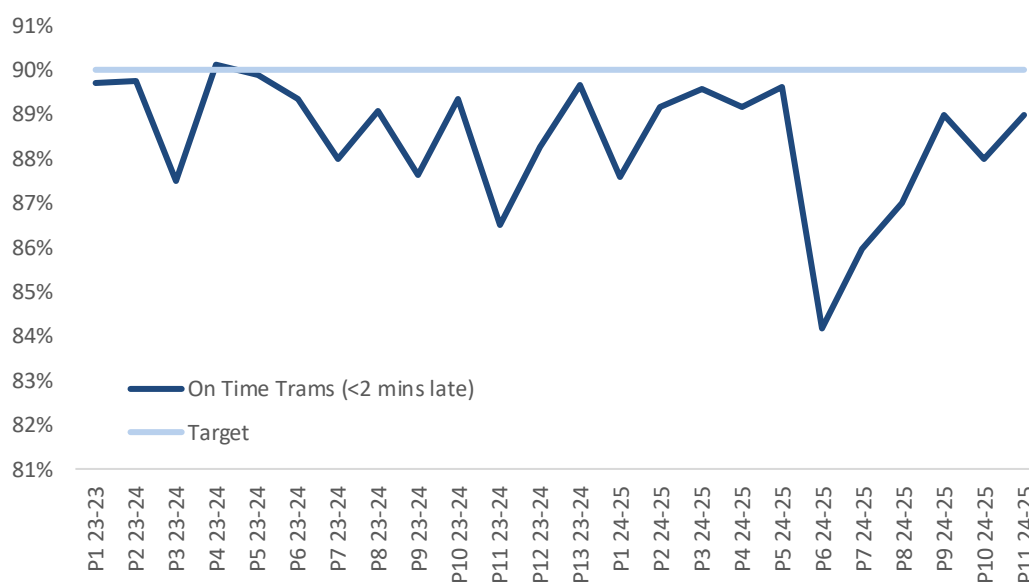




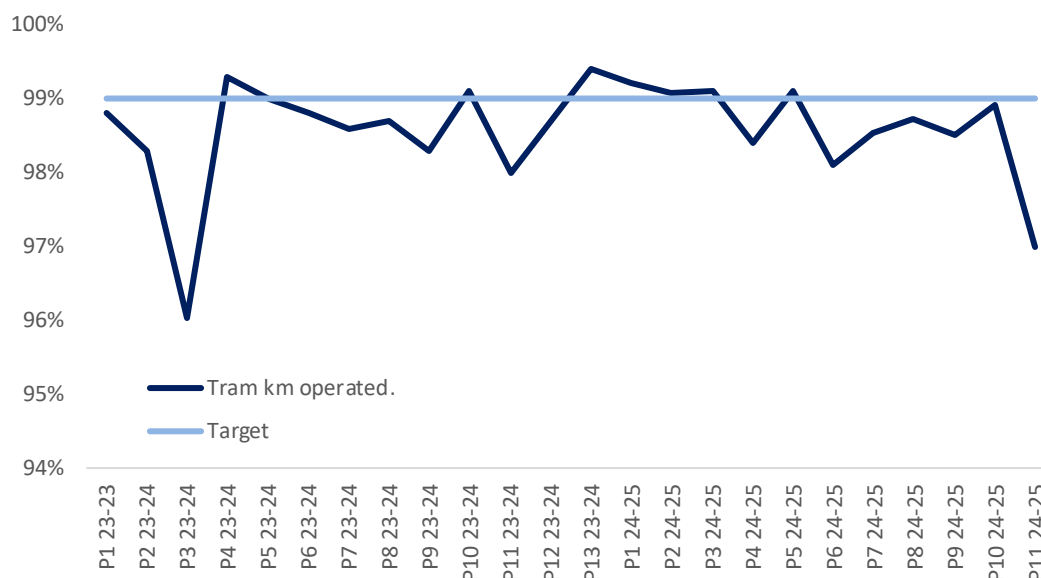
## Metrolink

- 2.8. January was a challenging month for Metrolink performance with punctuality and reliability affected by significant weather-related issues. Adverse weather was responsible for 30% of lost mileage during the period including flooding at multiple locations including Trafford Bar, Newhey and Shadowmoss, damage to rails due to freezing temperatures and damage to overhead lines cause by high winds and falling trees.
- 2.9. Away from these one-off incidents performance remains good with customer contact about tram delays comparatively low.
- 2.10. The 2025 Metrolink renewals programme is underway. Works on the Airport line, Eccles Line and Victoria were all delivered during February and improvements at several locations in the Regional Centre being delivered during March and April. The programme will see more than £20 million invested to improve the Metrolink network over the year and is part of a planned £147 million package to maintain and upgrade the network up to 2027. These works will deliver improvements in punctuality, reliability, and safety. The work is supported by customer communications and a travel demand management plan to ensure customers know how to continue their onward journey.

**Chart 2: Metrolink Reliability**



**Chart 3: Metrolink Planned Operated Mileage**



2.11. An enhanced approach to tackling fare evasion was launched 12 months ago with an increase in the fine for travelling without a ticket, more staff checking tickets and new inspection devices. Since these measures were introduced, fare evasion has fallen (and continues to track down) by more than a third – and now stands at less than 10%.

### Highways

2.12. The traffic signal estate continues to be used as a key tool for managing journeys across all modes. Including priority across the Metrolink network and for late running buses, more than 1 in 4 junctions (around half of the locations feasible) are now providing priority for public transport.

2.13. Delivery of bus priority has been focussed on routes in Tranche 1 and 2. Now data is available for Tranche 3 services priority can be rolled out at adaptive signals across GM. Funding is available through CRSTS for priority at an additional 200 junctions.

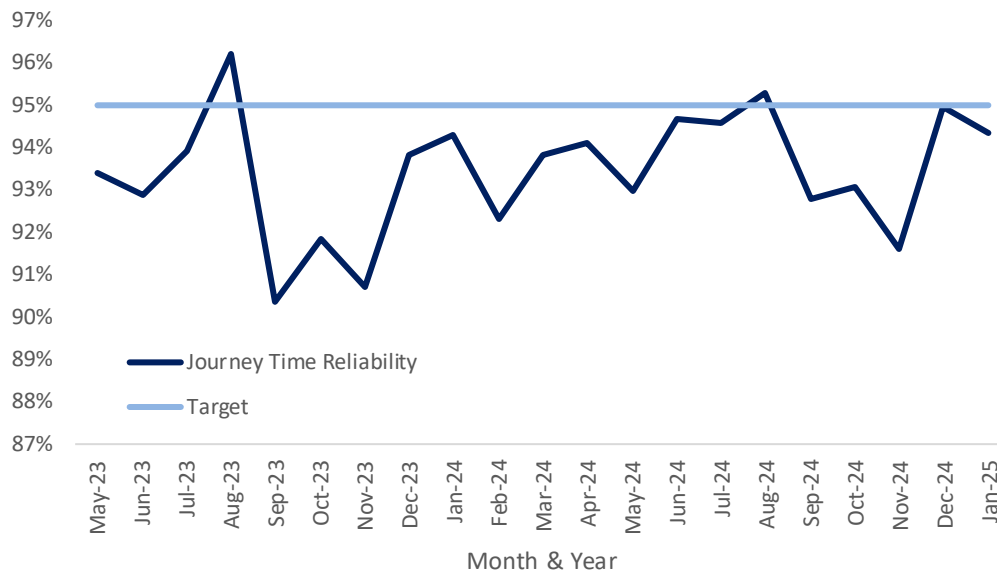
2.14. Additionally, to complement the ongoing upgrade of junctions to improve active travel facilities which has seen new or enhanced pedestrian facilities commissioned in districts across GM, a review of pedestrian facilities saw a reduction in pedestrian wait times at 206 crossings across GM during 2024. The review continues into 2025.

2.15. January was an extremely challenging month for on-street infrastructure. The region was hit by heavy rain and flooding at the start of the month, followed by long periods

of freezing weather and then high winds towards the end of the month. The weather led to a high number of reported signal faults, with double the incidents reported in December. TfGM worked with suppliers to ensure faults were resolved quickly, minimising the impact on the network. The efforts of all sides ensured Traffic Signal availability remained above target (at 98.4%).

- 2.16. In February the Government announced GM will receive £20.8 million to build more walking, wheeling and cycling routes. The funding is yet to be allocated, but will focus on a range of walking and wheeling projects, the strategic cycle network, travel to school, access to cycles and integration with public transport.
- 2.17. A Congestion Plan is being developed, to improve the flow of traffic around the city centre, and to work even more collaboratively with MCC, Salford and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) on days when the combination of events and issues on the transport network combine to cause significant delays.
- 2.18. Traffic engineers continue to work within TfGM's Operational Control Centre (OCC) to monitor the network, making changes to the signal timings when necessary. In addition, there are a growing number of signal strategies for known or recurrent issues. These signal strategies can be deployed instantly by the OCC 24/7.
- 2.19. TfGM's work with Google on an artificial intelligence (AI) project to ensure signal timings are optimised is to be featured in an international news report. The initiative, to reduce stop-start traffic and associated vehicle emissions, has delivered a range of benefits. At junctions where signal timings were adjusted there has been up to a 16% reduction in the number of vehicles stopping saving idle engine time. Additionally, having the performance and operation of GM's signal asset reviewed by an independent third party provides assurance that the signal network is working well with the development of the asset and day to day operation delivering benefits.

**Chart 4: Highway Journey Time Reliability**



2.20. Works to enhance TfGM's Operational Control Centre are delivering benefits. The new space enables bus franchise operators, TravelSafe, GM Police as well as Customer Communications and Control Centre colleagues from TfGM to be co-located, delivering a coordinated approach to managing the Bee Network.

### **Rail**

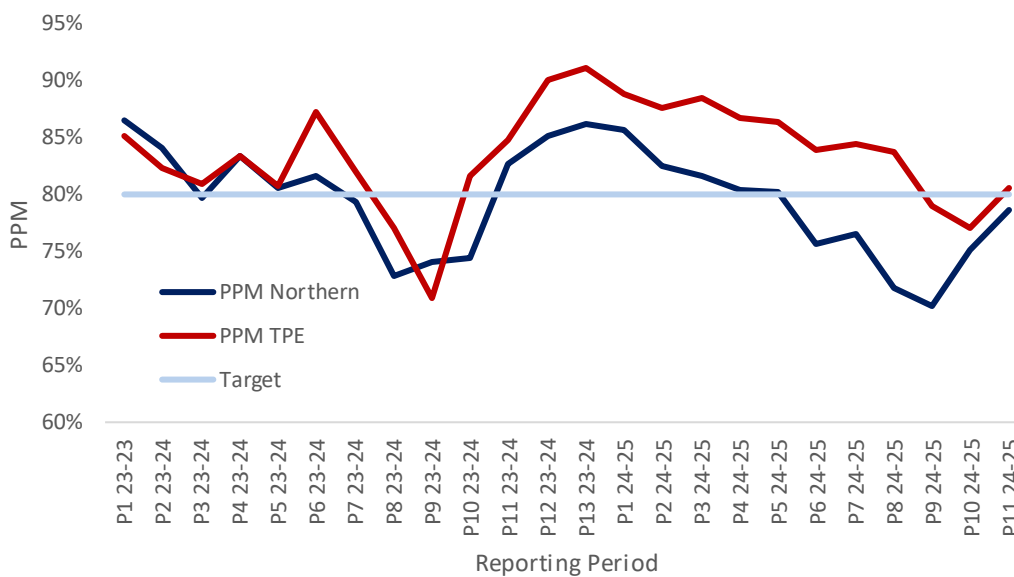
2.21. Industrial action resumed on the rail network in the new year with train managers at Avanti West Coast announcing they will strike every Sunday until the 25<sup>th</sup> May in a long running dispute over rest day working. A reduced timetable will be in operation on strike days, with fewer services running during limited operating hours, and trains which will run are expected to be busy.

2.22. Crew availability continues to be a challenge at Northern and Cross Country. Northern are continuing to run a Short-Term Plan on Sunday's with 200 fewer trains. The reduced timetable has seen a reduction in cancellations (to 5.9% in P11). However, including pre and on the day cancellations the overall level of cancelations still remains high (at 8.3% in P11).

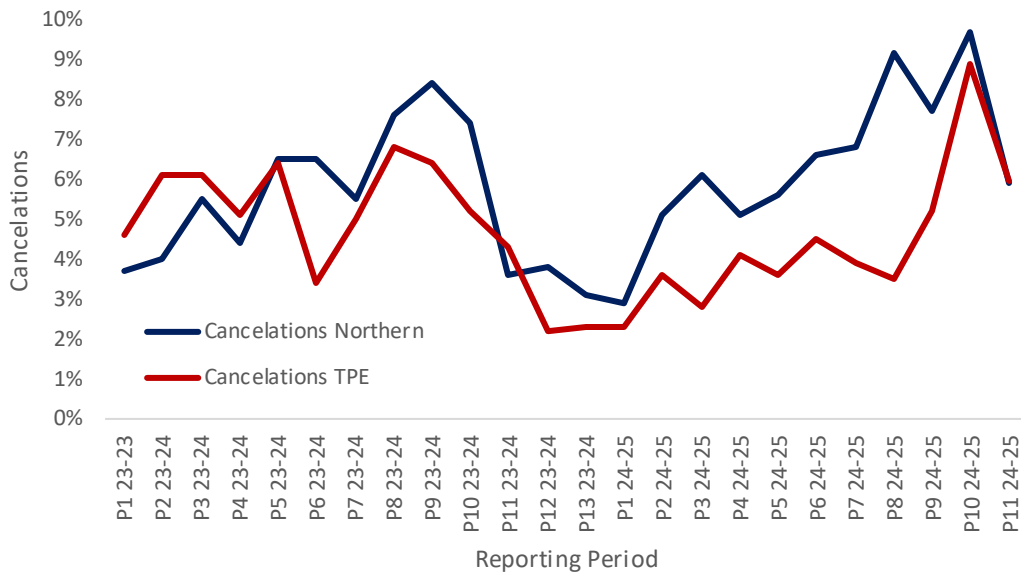
2.23. Latest period (Period 11) saw operational performance slightly improve compared to a very poor Period 10. However, this period has seen operational challenges from a lack of crew availability, cold weather and storm Eowyn. Worst operator on the Right Time metric continues to be Avanti West Coast, which recorded 20.9%. Avanti continues to be heavily impacted by poor Network Rail Infrastructure performance and external delay particularly on their Anglo – Scot route.

- 2.24. The latest ORR quarterly figures (July – September 2024) show Avanti was the worst operator across Great Britain (GB) in terms of ‘on time trains’, achieving just 41.1% in the latest quarter (this was 5.5 % points down on the same time the previous year), with the latest GB average at 67.7% (down 1.6 % points the same time the previous year).
- 2.25. The ORR performance data (July – September 2024) shows a continuing increase in the total number of trains operated in GM. The latest data shows increases for all GM operators including TransPennine (+11.2%), Northern (+7.3%) and Avanti (+15.1%). The significant increases in trains planned reflect the strike action which affected train operators in the same quarter the previous year.
- 2.26. Nationally, there have been declines in both punctuality and reliability, with more trains operating late and increases in cancellations compared to the previous year.

**Chart 5: Public Performance Measure (PPM)**



**Chart 6: Percentage Cancellations**



2.27. A programme of major rail upgrades in GM continues. Work has begun on the modernisation of Salford Central (which will be closed from Mon 10 February until the end of April) and at Salford Crescent to add a third platform (numerous weekend closures).

2.28. Network Rail also plan to install a new railway bridge over Greek Street. This will significantly impact rail, bus and highways in Stockport. In advance of the scheme works are taking place on adjacent, diversion routes to make them accessible to larger vehicles. During the works cross ticket acceptance will be in place on Bee Network Bus Services.

### 3. Safety and Security

#### TravelSafe

3.1. During the 12 Months to January 2025, there has been an increase in the number of reported incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) to the TravelSafe Partnership (TSP). In part, this is a result of the increase in the number of TravelSafe Support and Enforcement Officers (TSEOs) deployed across the Bee Network increasing the number of front-line staff and making it easier for passengers to report incidents.

3.2. The combined (bus and Metrolink) rolling 12-month rate of incidents has remained static, at 46 per million passenger journeys. This rate has remained stable since September 2024 and remains just above the current baseline (45).

- 3.3. Key themes remain youth related incidents and incidents associated with homelessness. Together these account for more than half of all reported incidents of crime and ASB on the public transport network.
- 3.4. During 2024 TravelSafe enforcement activity saw 79 exclusion notices (removing the implied permission of entry to our sites) issued to prolific offenders, as well as removing 415 tickets and travel passes.
- 3.5. The second Operation AVRO (Transport) of 2024 took place on 20 December during which a mix of resources and partners deployed across the regional centre in tandem with Operation North Star (festive night-time economy). A new tactic was trialled by GMP, using an out of service Bee Network Bus to identify poor driver behaviours (seatbelt, mobile phone use etc) supporting work on 'fatal 4'. This worked well and further operations of this nature are now being planned.

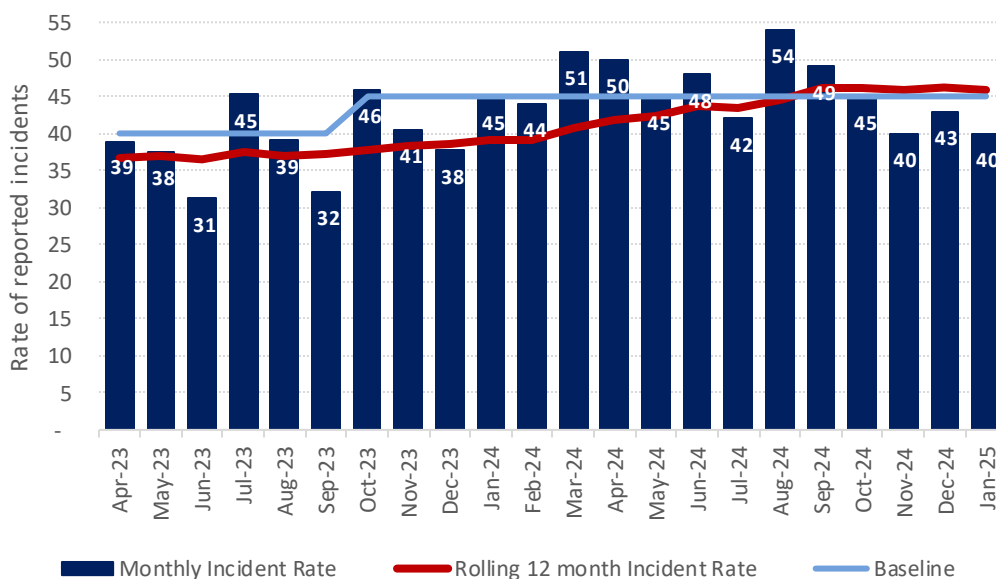


- 3.6. The TravelSafe education and engagement programme delivered sessions to 16,100 young people during the academic year 2024/25 to date. This includes students from primary school age through to those attending University. A range of materials and collateral are used including virtual reality headsets which have been well received by both staff and pupils.
- 3.7. TravelSafe commissioned deployments by Foundation 92 detached youth workers have continued to take place across the network, targeting youth ASB hotspot areas and ensuring referrals back into local authorities. Each month the youth workers engage with around 400 young people providing both safeguarding support,

providing advice on safe behaviours and educating on how even low level ASB can be perceived as intimidating by other passengers.

- 3.8. TSEOs are now undertaking revenue inspection activities across the Bus network. In January alone 8,555 Buses were boarded, 132,015 passenger tickets were checked, and 46 passes or tickets were withdrawn.
- 3.9. January also saw several positive results including: the arrest and charging of a male who assaulted a CSR; the arrest and prison sentencing of a male who tampers with TVMs; and the culmination of an investigation into a male who allegedly committed a series of sexual assaults on the Bury Metrolink line, leading to their arrest.
- 3.10. An upward trend of ‘bus surfing’ has been noted. However, ‘tram surfing’ incidents have decreased by 50% compared to December. Work with local authorities has helped identify young people involved, leading to home visits from the Transport Unit and the provision of advice on safe behaviour to them and their parents.
- 3.11. Work is underway with GMP to review the TravelSafe Partnership approach to place-based problem-solving and will look to apply best practice from the Operation VULCAN model, which has been utilised to good effect elsewhere in tackling complex problems which require a multi-agency coordinated effort. This forms part of our ongoing commitment to improving safety and perceptions of safety for passengers and staff.

**Chart 7: TravelSafe rate of reported incidents of Crime and ASB per million passenger journeys.**



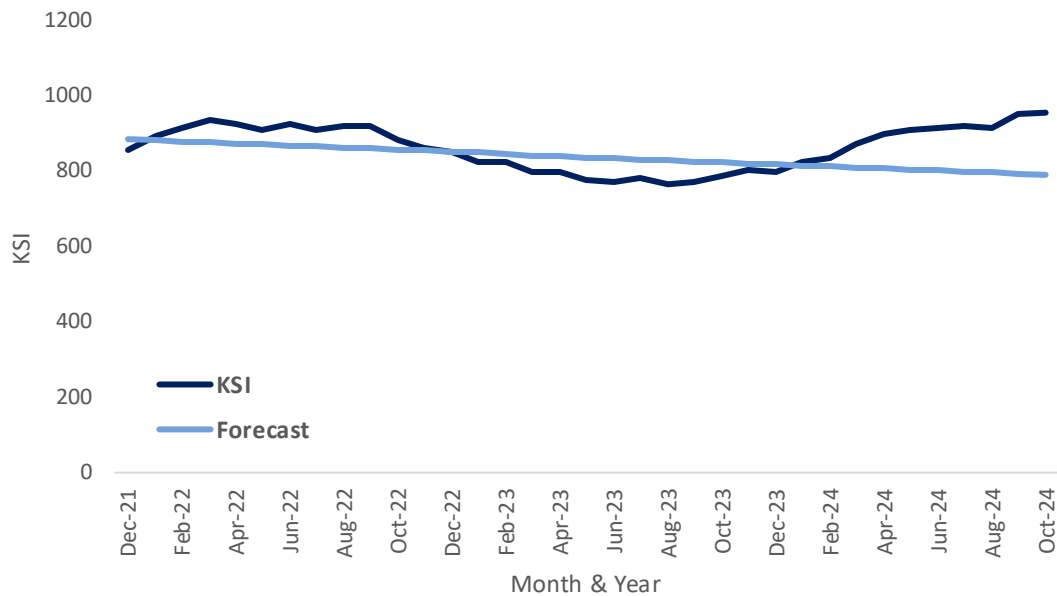


3.12. The baseline was adjusted from September 2023 to reflect the increase in reporting due to the deployment of TSEOs. This baseline will be reviewed again in early 2025, reflecting the fact the full bus network is now franchised as part of the Bee Network and there have been increased levels of front-line staff deployed. Additionally, reflecting the plans to incorporate rail into the Bee Network options for including incidents at rail stations in GM reported to British Transport Police (BTP) are being pursued.

### **Highways**

- 3.13. Latest data shows that during the 12-months to October 2024 there were 955 people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on GM's roads. This is a 15% increase in KSIs from the average of the 3 years ending October 2023 (830) and is 21% above the DfT Forecast of 790.1.
- 3.14. Over the same period, there has been a reduction in motorcyclists (-3.9%) and other vehicles (-1.5%), and an increase in car occupants (20.7%), pedestrians (17.9%) and cyclists (18.5%) either killed or seriously injured on our roads.
- 3.15. It should be noted that a 12-month rolling trend is more susceptible to short-term variations. Over the longer term the latest data shows a 33% reduction in KSI on the DfT baseline 2005-2009 average (1426).
- 3.16. Work to deliver the Vision Zero Strategy continues. The Vision Zero Innovation Fund applications closed on 31 January. The fund received 20 applications from 13 partners. The fund makes £1m available for schemes supporting the reduction of deaths and life-changing injuries on Greater Manchester's roads.
- 3.17. Attacks on Safety Cameras continues to be an issue. Vandalised cameras in Manchester and Wigan have been reinstalled and fitted with anti-vandal equipment. A site in Wigan has also been relocated to a more visible position. A man in his 60s was found guilty of damaging the spot speed camera on Warrington Road in Wigan. He received 12 months of community service and was fined £2,000.

**Chart 8: Killed and Seriously Injured Casualties (KSI) (Rolling 12 Months)**



- 3.18. The latest 12-month number of people who have sadly lost their lives on GM highways is 64. This is an increase of 4.9% from the average of the 36-month period ending October 2023 (61).
- 3.19. An evaluation of the offer to young drivers delivered through Safe Drive Stay Alive (SDSA) is underway. TfGM are working with GMFRS on a proposal to use the funding for SDSA to establish a safety team focused on educating young people across GM.

### **Communications**

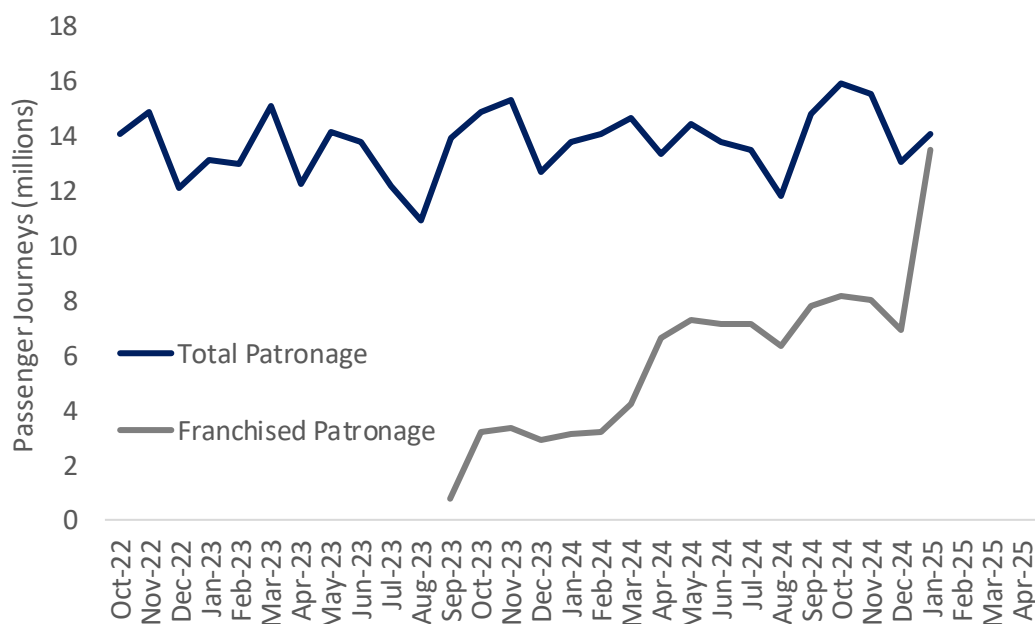
- 3.20. Travel demand management (TDM) plays an important role in managing the network and delivering customer information during periods of exceptional demand and/or disruption. A TDM plan was delivered throughout the Christmas market period including pop-up park and rides on the busiest weekends, travel advice and comms highlighting the public transport and active travel options available as well as encouraging people not to drive into the Regional Centre at peak times.

## 4. Passenger Journeys and Revenue

### Bus

- 4.1. Following the launch of the third and final phase of bus franchising on 5<sup>th</sup> January all services are now under local control.
- 4.2. Patronage on the bus network continues to grow. Passenger journeys are 4% up year on year. Despite significant periods of severe weather during January 2025 bus passenger journeys were 2.2% above January 2023.
- 4.3. FY 2023/24 to date patronage is 12% above the baseline target.

**Chart 9: Bus passenger journeys (millions)**

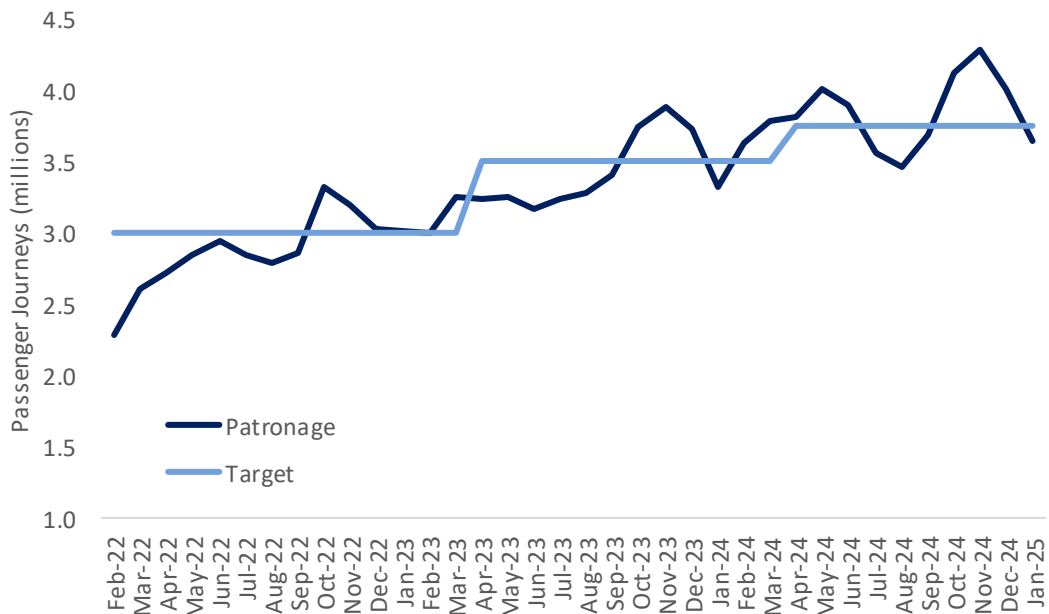


- 4.4. In the 10 months of 2024/25 to date, bus revenue totalled £86m. Since January when the whole network was franchised, more than £2.5m of revenue is taken each week on buses (card and cash payments), with additional revenue taken on the Bee Network app and at TravelShops. This amounts to a net cost recovery rate (after accounting for recurrent funding such as the Transport Levy and Precept) of 74% with the balance of cost being met through central government funding (e.g. BSIP and BSOG) and a limited use of Reserves.
- 4.5. Comparing revenue for tranche 1 services for October-December 2023 with October-December 2024, there has been a 20% increase in revenue (which is in line with a 20% growth in boardings), driven by maintaining lower fares, service improvements and the marketing effort in promoting the Bee Network.

## Metrolink

- 4.6. 2024 saw record passenger numbers on the Metrolink network in a calendar year. The record-breaking number of 45.6 million passenger journeys beat the previous record set in 2019 and represents 13% growth on 2023. The network regularly carried more than 4 million passengers each month.
- 4.7. Strong patronage continued into 2025. Rolling annual patronage (February 2024 to January 2025) is at its highest ever recorded, 0.6% higher than the previous best recorded between March 2019 and February 2020 and 13% higher than the same period a year ago. Growing patronage continues to test capacity with very busy trams at peak times a common theme in customer feedback (around 30% of negative Metrolink comments are on this theme).
- 4.8. TfGM is reviewing the network to see if more tram capacity can be provided at peak times, through maintenance changes, speeding up parts of the network following the track renewal programme, or making amendments to service patterns to better suit demand.
- 4.9. Metrolink revenue from fares in the year to date is £66m, which is 10% higher than last year, representing a net cost recovery rate (after accounting for recurrent funding) of 79% in the year to date.

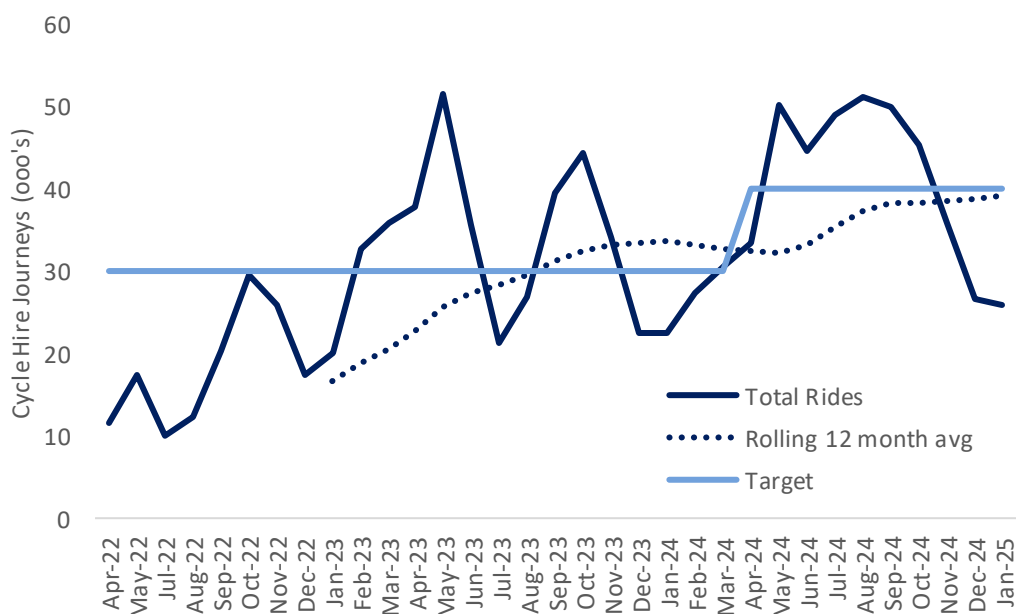
**Chart 10: Metrolink passenger journeys (millions)**



## Cycle Hire

- 4.10. The Starling Bank bike hire scheme continues to be popular with usage 16% up on year on year. The scheme has seen a reduction in usage during the winter. This is seasonal and mirrors the trend in total cycle activity.
- 4.11. Ridership continues to grow, the number of rides during January 2025 was 16% up on January 2024.
- 4.12. Bike availability is stable with consistently over 1,000 bikes available across the network.
- 4.13. Revenue from rides is up 18% year on year, with £480,000 generated in the year so far. Each ride on average generates just over £1.

**Chart 11: Cycle hire trips per month thousands**



## 5. Customer Experience

- 5.1. Customer satisfaction, our 'net promoter' score and our 'care' metric have all increased from October to December. Customer satisfaction for those who have used the Bee Network is at 90% and almost three quarters of people asked said that the Bee Network is investing in improving journeys and the Bee Network is an organisation they can trust.
- 5.2. Satisfaction is higher in the T1 and T2 areas than T3. However, this was from November and December data so before franchising launched in that area. Bolton is the area with the highest customer satisfaction at 95%.
- 5.3. Net promoter score is a measure of growth as it is based on the question of if you would recommend the service to a friend or family member. This is the third quarter where we have seen growth in this metric.
- 5.4. Over half of the people we spoke to said that the Bee Network is something GM should be proud of.
- 5.5. All of the Bee Network Customer Commitments (safe, accessible, reliable, affordable, accountable, sustainable) saw improved customer satisfaction.