

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED  
AUTHORITY HELD ON FRIDAY 7TH FEBRUARY 2025 AT TRAFFORD TOWN  
HALL**

**PRESENT:**

|                 |                             |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| GM Mayor        | Andy Burnham (in the Chair) |
| GM Deputy Mayor | Kate Green                  |
| Bolton          | Councillor Nicholas Peel    |
| Bury            | Councillor Eamonn O'Brien   |
| Manchester      | Councillor Bev Craig        |
| Oldham          | Councillor Elaine Taylor    |
| Rochdale        | Councillor Neil Emmott      |
| Salford         | City Mayor Paul Dennett     |
| Stockport       | Councillor Mark Hunter      |
| Tameside        | Councillor Eleanor Wills    |
| Trafford        | Councillor Tom Ross         |
| Wigan           | Councillor David Molyneux   |

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Group Chief Executive Officer,<br>GMCA, GMFRS & TfGM | Caroline Simpson  |
| Group Deputy Chief Executive                         | Andrew Lightfoot  |
| Group Monitoring Officer                             | Gillian Duckworth |
| Group Treasurer                                      | Steve Wilson      |
| Bolton   | Sue Johnson       |
| Bury   | Lynne Ridsdale    |
| Manchester   | Tom Stannard      |
| Oldham   | Mike Barker       |
| Rochdale   | Stephen Rumbelow  |
| Salford  | Melissa Caslake   |
| Stockport  | Michael Cullen    |
| Tameside   | Ashley Hughes     |

Trafford  
Wigan  
Managing Director, TfGM  
GMCA  
GMCA  
GMCA

Sara Todd  
Alison McKenzie-Folan  
Steve Warrener  
Julie Connor  
Sylvia Welsh  
Lee Teasdale

**GMCA 28/25          APOLOGIES**

**RESOLVED /-**

That apologies be received and noted from Councillor Arooj Shah (Oldham), Shelley Kipling (Oldham) & Harry Catherall (Tameside).

**GMCA 29/25          CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS**

The Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, opened by welcoming Tom Stannard in his first meeting as the new Chief Executive of Manchester City Council, and welcoming Melissa Caslake to the meeting in her role as the Interim Chief Executive of Salford City Council.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That Tom Stannard be welcomed to the meeting in his new role as Chief Executive of Manchester City Council.
2. That Melissa Caslake be welcomed to the meeting as the Interim Chief Executive of Salford City Council.

**GMCA 30/25          DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**RESOLVED /-**

There were no declarations of interests received.

**GMCA 31/25                    MINUTES OF THE GMCA MEETING HELD ON 31 JANUARY  
2025**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the minutes of the GMCA meeting held on 31 January 2025 be approved.

**GMCA 32/25                    MINUTES OF THE GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2025**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the proceedings of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 29 January 2025 be noted.

**GMCA 33/25                    MINUTES OF THE GMCA BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE HELD  
ON 30 JANUARY 2025**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the proceedings of the Bee Network Committee meeting held on 30 January 2025 be noted.

**GMCA 34/25                    BUDGET REPORTS**

**A. GMCA Revenue and Capital Budgets 2025/6 Overview**

Councillor David Molyneux, Portfolio Lead for Resources, was invited to introduce the overarching report on the GMCA budget proposals for 2025/26. The report summarised the position on the Mayoral General Budget and Precept Proposals, The GMCA General Budget, GMCA Transport budgets including Transport Levy and Statutory Charge and the GM Waste Services Levy. It also set out the implications of the proposed budgets and the resultant charges on districts and the Mayoral Precept.

**RESOLVED /-**

That the contents of the summary report be noted.

## **B. Mayoral General Budget & Precept Proposals 2025/26**

City Mayor Paul Dennett, GMCA Deputy Mayor, took the Chair for this item of business.

The report sought approval for the Mayoral General Precept for 2025/26 and recommended the setting of the Revenue Budget for 2025/26 as required under section 42A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (updated in the Localism Act 2011) and the precepts and relevant levels of Council Tax required under sections 40, 42B and 47 of the Act.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, was invited to comment on his budget and proposals. He stated that these remained difficult times in terms of budgetary pressures on residents, and across Greater Manchester there had been a conscious effort to minimise extra pressures as much as possible. However, there were vital areas that required an element of extra funding. This included putting further investment into neighbourhood policing across the region, reversing the decade of cuts faced by GMFRS, and following the successful reregulation of bus services in the region, the need to secure the financial base of the system going forward.

The Mayor reaffirmed his commitment to retaining the £2 bus fare cap for the remainder of 2025, in addition to the impending commencement of the hopper fare scheme. Discussion took place around the future of the Integrated Settlement Transport System and the importance of continuing to drive up patronage through the extension of fare capping schemes. Commitment to regular network reviews and the expansion of night bus pilot services was reaffirmed.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee's discussion of the budget and proposals was reported back to the GMCA. It was advised that the Committee had considered the suite of reports and provided a number of comments. The cost minimisation culture across the group was welcomed and the opportunities for increased sharing of resources through the integrated settlement. It was asked that consideration be given to how the integrated settlement would be scrutinised through the single assurance framework. There was concern that some precept increase looked to be higher than inflation and that the reasoning behind this needed to be clearly explained to the

public. Benchmarked on the value for money provided by GMFRS would also be welcomed.

The GMCA recorded its thanks to the Group Treasurer Steve Wilson supported by the GMCA finance team for the significant work put into managing the overall budget process.

Steve Wilson was invited to comment, expressing his thanks to the local authority treasurers of the ten Greater Manchester authorities who supported his team throughout the budget setting process.

The meeting was advised that a named vote was required to approve the proposals for The GM Mayoral General Budget. Members voted on the recommendations as follows:

| <b>District</b> | <b>GMCA Member</b>      |               |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Bolton          | Cllr Nicholas Peel      | <b>Agreed</b> |
| Bury            | Cllr Eamonn O'Brien     | <b>Agreed</b> |
| Manchester      | Cllr Bev Craig          | <b>Agreed</b> |
| Oldham          | Cllr Elaine Taylor      | <b>Agreed</b> |
| Rochdale        | Cllr Neil Emmott        | <b>Agreed</b> |
| Salford         | City Mayor Paul Dennett | <b>Agreed</b> |
| Stockport       | Cllr Mark Hunter        | <b>Agreed</b> |
| Tameside        | Cllr Eleanor Wills      | <b>Agreed</b> |
| Trafford        | Cllr Tom Ross           | <b>Agreed</b> |
| Wigan           | Cllr David Molyneux     | <b>Agreed</b> |

## **RESOLVED /-**

1. That the Mayor's General budget for 2025/26, as set out in this report together with the calculation of the precepts and Council Tax rates set out in Appendix 2, be approved.
2. That the Mayoral General Precept to £128.95 (Band D) comprising of £86.20 for functions previously covered by the Fire and Rescue Authority precept and £42.75 for other Mayoral General functions be approved.
3. That the following be approved:
  - i. the overall budget for the Fire and Rescue Service for 2025/26 covered by the Mayoral precept.
  - ii. the medium-term financial position for the Fire and Rescue Service.
4. That approval be given to the use of reserves, as set out in section 3 of the report, and the assessment by the Treasurer that the reserves as at March 2026 were adequate.
5. That it be noted that in accordance with legal requirements, the minutes will record the names of those Members voting for or against the Mayor's budget and precept proposals.
6. That the feedback from the GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee be received and noted.
7. That the thanks for the GMCA was expressed to the Group Treasurer and his team, as well as the financial leads in each individual districts for their considerable work during the budget process.

Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham retook the Chair from this point in the meeting.

### **C. GMCA Transport Revenue Budget 2025/26**

Steve Wilson, Group Treasurer, advised that the paper requested an increase in the levy including the statutory charge paid by the 10 GM authorities of 3% recurrently, as well as the continuation of the non-recurrent 1% contribution of £2m to the budget. There was some use of reserves as set out in section 5 of the paper, however this use of reserves was expected to be temporary in supporting the delivery of the new operating model.

#### **RESOLVED /-**

1. That the risks and issues which were affecting the 2025/26 transport budgets, as detailed in the report, be noted.
2. That the GMCA budget relating to transport functions funded through the Levy, as set out in this report, for 2025/26 be approved.
3. That a Transport Levy on the District Councils in 2025/26 of £125.657m, apportioned on the basis of mid-year population 2023, be approved.
4. That a Statutory Charge of £86.7m to District Councils in 2025/26, as set out in Part 4 of the Transport Order, apportioned on the basis of mid-year population 2023, be approved.
5. That the proposal to increase fees and charges, as noted in the report, including the increases proposed Departure Charges and Bus stop closure charges, as set out in paragraphs 4.24 and 4.25, be endorsed.
6. That the use of Transport reserves in 2024/25 and 2025/26, as detailed in section 5, be approved.

### **D. GMCA Revenue General Budget 2025/26**

Steve Wilson, Group Treasurer, highlighted two areas of note that would be brought back for further discussion. Firstly, the impact of the Integrated Settlement, which had

been felt most acutely against this budget. Secondly, was the commitment being made to investing proceeds from the retained business rates scheme. In good news for authorities, it was proposed that the general GMCA levy would be phased out, and would instead be delivered through efficiencies.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the budget relating to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority functions, excluding transport and waste in 2025/26, as set out in section 2 of the report, be approved.
2. That approval be given to local authority contributions of £7.95 million as set out in section 5 of the report including the recurrent reduction of £650,000 to be delivered through group efficiencies in 2025/26 ahead of further reductions in future years.
3. That the use of reserves, as set out in section 6 of the report, be approved.
4. That approval be given to the establishment of a two-year fixed term group Chief Transformation Officer at a grade up to SM3 and the establishment of seven fixed-term senior programme director posts, up to grade SM3, to support the delivery of growth location programmes.

**E. GM Waste Budget and Resources - Budget and Levy 2025/26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan to 2027/28**

The increase in the levy for 2025/26 was an average increase of 2.8% and a total of £4.9m. This was a differential rate across the authorities relating to tonnage across the system. Underspend in the previous year would result in returns to districts.

It was noted that 2025/26 would be the first year of the Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme which was expected to deliver £1.1bn nationally to support public authorities in dealing with waste from packaging.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the forecast outturn for 2024/25 be noted, and a return of £10m of reserves to districts from the forecast in-year underspend be approved.
2. That the proposed 2026/27 Trade Waste rate of £141.94, to allow forward planning by Greater Manchester Local Authorities, be approved.
3. That the capital programme for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A of the report be approved.
4. That the budget and levy for 2025/26 of £179.2m (2.8% increase) be approved.
5. That the risk position set out in the Balances Strategy be noted, and approval be given to a further reduction of £20m of reserves to districts in 2025/26.
6. That approval be given to the proposal of a partial return of funds to districts from the packaging Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme (EPR) and responsibility be delegated to the Group Chief Financial Officer to finalise the amount, estimated to be £17.7m, once the final notice as assessment is received from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

#### **F. GMCA Capital Programme -2024/25 - 2027/8**

These figures set out the latest position for 2024/25 capital expenditure forecasts and the medium term financial plan up to 2027/28.

#### **RESOLVED /-**

1. That the current 2024/25 forecast of £631.6m compared to the previous forecast of £581.8m be noted.
2. That approval be given to the addition to the 2024/25 capital programme of £4.4m for 2024/25 local highways maintenance and £14.8m (£11.1m to be

paid to local authorities and £3.7m retained by the Department for Transport (DfT) as a new incentive element) for 2025/26 local highways maintenance, as outlined in sections 2.9.8 and 2.9.9 of the report.

3. That the addition to the 2024/25 capital programme of £0.3m, funded by borrowing, for the replacement of end-user networking hardware at Tootal Buildings as per section 3.17.1 of the report be approved.
4. That approval be given to the capital programme budget for 2025/26 of £598.3m and the forward plan as detailed in the report and in Appendix A.