

**Minutes of the meeting of the Bee Network Committee
held on Thursday, 27th November 2025 at Manchester City Council Chamber**

PRESENT:

Councillor Alan Quinn (in the Chair)	Bury
Councillor Hamid Khurram	Bolton
Councillor Tracey Rawlins	Manchester
Councillor Joshua Charters	Oldham
Councillor Phil Burke	Rochdale
Councillor Mike McCusker	Salford
Councillor Grace Baynham	Stockport
Councillor Jon Byrne	Stockport
Councillor Peter Crossen	Stockport
Councillor Jacqueline Owen	Tameside
Councillor Julian Newgrosh	Trafford
Councillor Aidan Williams	Trafford
Councillor John Vickers	Wigan

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Andy Burnham	GMCA
Dame Sarah Storey	GMCA

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

James Baldwin	TfGM
Chris Barnes	TfGM
Melinda Edwards	GMCA
Martin Lax	TfGM
Jonathan Marsh	TfGM
Lee Teasdale	GMCA
Steve Warrener	TfGM
Fran Wilkinson	TfGM

BNC/74/25 Welcome and Apologies

Members were advised that Councillor Eamonn O'Brien was unable to attend the meeting and Mayor Andy Burnham was unable to attend the first half of the meeting, therefore in accordance with the terms of reference for the Committee, a nomination was taken from the floor for the meeting. A nomination and seconder were taken for Councillor Alan Quinn (Bury) – there were no objections to the nomination and Councillor Quinn subsequently took the Chair for the meeting.

Apologies were received from Councillor Eamonn O'Brien (Bury), Councillor Howard Sykes (Oldham), Councillor Max Woodvine (Oldham), City Mayor Paul Dennett (Salford), Councillor Stephen Homer (Tameside), Councillor Paul Prescott (Wigan) & Danny Vaughan (TfGM).

BNC/75/25 Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED/-

1. That Councillor Phil Burke declared a standing interest as an employee of Keolis Amey Metrolink Ltd.
2. That Councillor Jacqueline Owen declared a general interest by virtue of a family member being an employee of Transport for Greater Manchester.

BNC/76/25 Chairs Announcements and Urgent Business

The Chair opened by inviting TfGM officers to provide an update on works taking place to ease congestion in Manchester city centre over the festival period. Partners including TfGM, Manchester City Council, Salford City Council, Greater Manchester Police and other partners, have implemented a robust data driven plan using knowledge accrued from similar events, last year's data and ongoing information from known hotspots. The plan included enhanced public transport services, pop-up park and ride sites, proactive traffic management, targeted enforcement and marketing & communications programmes. These mitigations were designed to keep the city moving safely and efficiently throughout the period despite the pressures of the season.

Steve Warrener, Managing Director, TfGM advised that discussions were still currently ongoing with unions representing TfGM staff around pay awards.

Comments and Questions

Members stated that they felt it important to be kept informed of developments around industrial relations with staff as the overarching scrutiny body for Transport for Greater Manchester.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the update on work being undertaken to address congestion issues over the Christmas period be received.
2. That it be noted that discussions remained ongoing with unions regarding TfGM staff pay awards.

BNC/77/25 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 25 September 2025

Councillor John Vickers asked if detail was now available around the commencement of the Hindley scheme. It was advised that this was expected towards the end of the 2026 subject to the conclusion of the placement contract for the works.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the minutes of the meeting of 25 September 2025 be approved as a true and correct record.

BNC/78/25 Delivering the Bee Network – Performance Update

Steve Warrener, Managing Director, TfGM and Fran Wilkinson, Customer & Growth Director, TfGM, presented a report providing the Committee with an overview of the performance of Greater Manchester's transport network for the period March 2025 – August 2025. Points highlighted included:

- Bus patronage figures continued to go in a positive direction . The Department for Transport had recently released some national statistics that showed a national average increase in patronage of around 1% (inc. London), as a comparator tranche 1 of the Bee Network was showing an increase of 14%.
- Metrolink continued to hit new record levels of patronage as did the bike hire scheme.
- Customer satisfaction levels in general sat at 85%, with bus satisfaction in tranches 1&2 seeing particularly high levels.
- The integrated ticketing system had proved to be a great success to date, and the simplification of Our Pass had delivered efficiencies and enhanced the customer experience.
- The trial held in August removing the 9.30am restriction of concessionary bus passes was being held again throughout November, upon conclusion of this trial on Sunday 30th November, a report would be prepared for the Mayor and GMCA to consider the next steps.
- The running of the transport logistics around the Oasis concert series held at Heaton Park in the summer had proved to be a great example of the way that TfGM worked with colleagues from local authorities and the emergency services to deliver on behalf of the region.
- Following on from some high-profile collisions earlier in the year, such as the Barton Bridge collision in the summer, work was now almost complete on the Bee Network Safety Plan, and this would be a component part of the work being undertaken by Dame Sarah Storey and her team around Vision Zero.

Comments and Questions

Members expressed concern that some outer suburbs of the region continued to be serviced by relatively 'threadbare' services. Tranche 3 services had also seen some poor service reliability statistics in comparison to the other tranches. Officers advised that the areas of particular concern on service reliability had been subject to a number of highways disruptions in recent times, and there would be difficulty in introducing any sweeping changes that could improve intermediate service reliability. This issue was

being taken very seriously however and the issue would be kept under frequent review.

Members noted a lack of detail within the report in terms of access and reliability around services to schools. It was highlighted that in the case of Bramhall High School, students were heavily dependent on the 852 school service which did not currently have the capacity to take all students who wished to use the service, leaving some students to have to make use of other busy public transport services. It was noted that a further meeting had been arranged between the school and TfGM officers on 8th December and it was asked that relevant officer work with Cllr Crossen and the head teacher of the High School to find an appropriate solution to this issue. Officers advised that they were aware of this issue and that conversations had taken place with the Head of Education at Stockport MBC. The comments raised would be addressed with the Director of Bus Services who would ensure appropriate representation at the meeting on 8th December.

Members highlighted concerning statistics within Vision Zero, with a number of the figures seeing increases rather than the sought reductions. It was appreciated that there may be some data anomalies within these figures, but were there any short-term measures that could be taken to reverse these trends? Officers advised that in some cases the data was being reported in a different way to previously, but this did not lessen the understandable concern around the figures. It was proposed that a report be brought to the Committee with more context and discussion around the work taking place to suitably respond to the figures, and where work was taking place to bring about reductions at a faster pace.

It was asked if more granular detail was available to break service figures down by districts within each tranche to give a clearer picture of where less punctual services existed. It was advised that these breakdowns could be provided where sought.

Members welcomed the November extension of the concessionary bus pass trial and hoped that the outcomes of the pilot would see it put in place on a permanent basis. It was advised that the evaluation of the qualitative and quantitative data would be swift to allow the Mayor and Leaders to take an expedited decision on this.

Members raised concern that some bus stops were still placed within grass verges, and that such stops could prove difficult to navigate for people in a wheelchair or with limited mobility. It was asked there were examples of this were known to be causing issues, to please email Steve Warrener who would ensure that access was improved accordingly.

Members noted that Sunday services on rail were still lacking, with references to Northern reducing services further due to the lack of rolling stock being a concern. It was advised that a broader update on rail would be brought to the Committee in the near future, which would consider issues such as this and the work taking place on rail integration on fares and ticketing, accessibility and pilot service enhancements.

Members asked if there had been any progress with national legislation around pavement parking. Dame Sarah Storey advised that she had raised the pavement parking consultation with the Department for Transport, the response so far had appeared non-committal, so this would be followed up with the Department to secure a more detailed response.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the performance of the transport network be noted.
2. That it be noted that a report will be brought to the Committee detailing work being undertaken to address Vision Zero figures.
3. That it be noted that a rail update would be brought to the Committee, including an update on rail integration on fares and ticketing, accessibility and pilot service enhancements

BNC/79/25 Metrolink Trafford Park Line Evaluation

Martin Lax, Transport Strategy Director, TfGM, presenting a summary of key evidence from the early years of the operation of the Trafford Park line and implications for broad areas of action. Points highlighted included:

- Three key scheme objectives had been identified for the line – reducing car dependency; increasing connectivity; and regeneration/growth. The report confirmed the attractiveness of Metrolink as part of the transport offer and delivering upon the objectives.
- Evidence within the report highlighted various benefits brought about by the scheme. It had proved to be an attractive service, with 57% of people who switched from alternative modes citing an easier journey, and 90% stating that it provided an attractive alternative to cars. It was estimated that the line had seen a reduction in 700,000 car journeys from its opening up to 2024/2025.
- A number of planning applications had been received for business investment along the route, and business feedback to date had indicated that 80% of businesses along the route saying staff access had improved and 76% saying they had increased productivity.

Comments and Questions

Members welcomed the success of the Trafford Park line and asked if the line could be extended, as developers were now on site at Trafford Waters developing thousands of new homes and similar developments were taking place on the Salford side of the water. It was advised that the line had been developed in anticipation of these lines coming forward.

Members asked if further work could take place to improve the active travel offer towards the Trafford Centre around Barton Dock Road which now had an aging cycling infrastructure. It was advised that a lot of work around active travel had been taking place within the A56 corridor and was now an exemplar scheme for the region. TfGM would look to continue to deliver improvements on the connecting routes, particularly in line with the Old Trafford Regeneration plans.

Members asked if there was an ambition to extend the eastern end of the line into Crumpsall from its current end point of Deansgate/Castlefield. It was advised that

officers were actively looking at how best the line could be extended through the centre of Manchester and bring more connectivity to Crumpsall.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the post-implementation evaluation headline findings and broad areas for action be noted.
2. That the publication on TfGM's website of the supporting summary and detailed reports be noted.

BNC/80/25 Transport Infrastructure Pipeline

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester and Chris Barnes, Network Director Infrastructure, TfGM, provided an update on the delivery of the pipeline of transport infrastructure improvements to support the Bee Network. The report made a number of recommendations for members to support the continued development and delivery of the pipeline programme.

Mayor Burnham highlighted how the work taking place around the pipeline directly linked into the Good Growth Plan which had been recently launched. It was vital that the next decade of growth in the region was felt within the whole city region and not just concentrated to the centre. The work in Stockport around the Mayoral Development Corporation and Stockport Interchange embodied the work that was sought for the wider region. The first Good Growth funds were due to be agreed at the GMCA meeting on 28th November, and a robust fit for purpose transport infrastructure would be vital to the success of the projects funded.

The receipt of £2.5bn of funding as part of the next transport allocation from the government would allow the region to proceed with many of its key transport infrastructure ambitions, such as the Oldham–Rochdale–Heywood–Bury Tram-Train 'Pathfinder'. This project symbolises the next stage of regeneration for the region, combating the region's own existing 'north-south divide' and making the most of the opportunities afforded by developments such as Atom Valley.

The Rapid Transit Extensions Package was also highlighted. This included further developing the strategic outline case for the Stockport Metrolink extension, and also the Manchester airport western leg development and other work around prioritising links to the North West of the region around Wigan and Bolton and linking Salford Media City to Salford Crescent.

Comments and Questions

Members welcomed the emphasis on helping those within the region who needed the most support due to previously entrenched deprivation and neglect. The region could only be truly successful if those in most need were included in that success.

Members welcomed the emphasis being placed upon orbital interconnectivity between the outer boroughs of the region – of which the Oldham–Rochdale–Heywood–Bury Tram-Train ‘Pathfinder’ could prove as an exemplar. The Mayor agreed strongly with this, stating that there were many opportunities to better link up these outlying regions to each other without a dependence on going via the centre of the region.

Members expressed concern about capacity issues on the mainline rail through Stockport and the impact HS2 could have on worsening this. Officers agreed that the continuing policy vacuum around the cancelation of HS2 into Manchester left many questions that needed to be answered around the infrastructure improvements needed to future proof the line.

Members emphasised the need for accessibility to be front and centre in future developments around tram-trains and the wider future rail network. The rolling stock needed to be appropriate to disability and the needs of the most vulnerable in the region, but also stations had to be accessible – for example eight lifts throughout the network were out of order recently at the same time, which was not acceptable. The Mayor agreed, stating that escalators and lifts were often out of action for way too long, and action was needed to address this. Existing rail standards of accessibility were not appropriate and vigilance was required to keep the pressure on around this issue.

Officers sought to provide reassurance that the design and development of schemes always involved the Disability Reference Group and this would continue to be the case with the development of Tram-Trains. There would be some differences around the level of control over the actual stations on the network even if the Rail Devolution Bill will provide more than previously.

Further conversation took place highlighting concerns around the length of time it often took for lifts and escalators to be repaired on the Metrolink Network. The Mayor stated that when contracts came up for tender again, there should be a clear expected level of service put in place stating what was an acceptable length of time for repairs of these vital pieces of accessibility infrastructure.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the current position, recent progress and key milestones on the transport infrastructure pipeline be noted.
2. That the drawdown of Integrated Settlement (CRSTS) funding and associated scheme progression be approved as follows:
 - Metrolink Next Generation Vehicles and Oldham–Rochdale–Heywood–Bury Tram-Train ‘Pathfinder’: £5.7m;
 - Tyldesley Travel Hub / Park & Ride: Full Business Case and £3.84m;
 - Next Phase of Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) Investment: £59.1m;
 - Rapid Transit Extensions Package: £1.305m; and
 - City Centre Radials – A6 Wellington Road North: £2.312m.
3. That the drawdown of funding for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure be approved as follows:
 - Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure: £16.158m; and
 - Integrated Settlement (CRSTS): £1.751m.
4. That the drawdown of Active Travel funding and associated scheme progression be approved as follows:
 - Wigan: Atherton & Tyldesley Strategic Links North Phase 1: Full Business Case and £0.93m; and

- To note the reallocation of £0.3m Mayor's Challenge Funding (MCF) from the Wigan: Leigh St Helen's Road scheme to the Wigan: Atherton & Tyldesley Strategic Links North scheme.

BNC/81/25 Draft Local Transport Plan – Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2050 and Delivery Plan

Martin Lax, Transport Strategy Director, TfGM, presented a report including the final drafts of the GM Transport Strategy 2050 and the Delivery Plan, seeking formal approval to consult on them. Points highlighted included:

- The Plan set out clear delivery priorities and investment that TfGM looked to take forward within the City Region. The Draft Strategy set out the vision and ambition and policies for delivery across the region, and the Delivery Plan which would run from 2027-2037 in line with government funding settlements and would form a key part of the integrated pipeline being developed with colleagues across GM to align with transport and land use plans and integrate investment going forward.
- Key areas included the right mix target (retained at 50/50 public transport/car to the year 2040); refreshed policies around the use of streets and roads; and the integration of rail into the Bee Network.
- Next steps included taking the plans into full public consultation during December lasting 12 weeks, with the final plan being brought back to all 10 authorities and the GMCA in the summer of 2026.
- The Draft LTP had been taken to the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee for discussion on 26th November, and it had been highlighted during that meeting that there had been a lack of reference to personal safety within the plans, particularly the safety of women and girls, which had been the subject of a recent task and finish group. TfGM was absolutely committed to a safe operational network for all users and this would be drawn out further forward within a redraft of the document that goes to consultation.

Comments and Questions

Members referenced bringing rail into the Bee Network and further expanded upon their concerns around poor Sunday services on the Network. What could be done in the short term to address these concerns with Northern Rail whilst Sunday services remained under their control. Mayor Burnham stated that as the Chair of the Rail North Committee he was regularly holding Northern Rail to account on issues around Sunday services. The current situation for the North West was not acceptable and a negotiating mandate was being sought to agree a seven-day railway, particularly with conductor staff. The latest update to the Rail North Committee was that this was progressing, and it was hoped that a deal could be struck in the new year.

Members welcomed the further emphasis on safety within the Plan but stated that it was also vital to have infrastructure that enabled people to get all the way home safely, particularly when travelling late in the evening, and were organisations who could assist with this such as Strut Safe being engaged? The Mayor agreed with the concerns, stating that on surveys safety came out as the top reason for people not wanting to make use of public transport. TravelSafe life chat was a vital part of addressing this, Strut Safe formed part of this and could be accessed through the TravelSafe app.

Members asked how the safety ambitions within the plan aligned with the Victorian infrastructure still in place in a number of areas within the Network – would this mean continual compromises in the approach taken to safety. Dame Sarah Storey responded that it was important to use all levers available, such as reducing speeds of vehicle traffic to enable the narrowing of road widths, which in turn would enable the widening of aging Victorian walkways and pavements, and allow for further cycling infrastructure.

Some concerns were highlighted by members in reference to the possibility of an A6 to M60 link road. A proposal that had previously been dismissed as an ‘old world’ solution.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the Draft GM Transport Strategy 2050 and the Draft GM Transport Delivery Plan (2027-2037) be endorsed.
2. That it be noted that subject to GMCA approval on 28th November, a public consultation exercise on the Draft GM Transport Strategy 2050 and the Draft GM Transport Delivery Plan (2027-2037) will commence for a period of 12 weeks.
3. That it be noted that the Draft Transport Strategy and Draft Delivery Plan are supported by an Evidence Base, Policy Documents and an Integrated Assessment that will also be publicly available as part of the public consultation.
4. That it be noted that the comments raised through the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be reflected in the final version of the Plan.

BNC/82/25 Date of Next Meeting

Members were advised that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Thursday 11th December 2025.