

**Minutes of the meeting of the Bee Network Committee
held on Thursday, 24th July, 2025 at Transport for Greater Manchester, 2 Piccadilly
Place, Manchester, M1 3BG**

PRESENT:

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien (in the Chair)	GMCA
Councillor Alan Quinn	Bury Council
Councillor Tracey Rawlins	Manchester
Councillor Joshua Charters	Oldham
Councillor Max Woodvine	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:

Dame Sarah Storey	GM Active Travel Commissioner
City Mayor Paul Dennett	Salford Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chris Barnes	TfGM
Melinda Edwards	GMCA
Nick Fairclough	TfGM
Martin Lax	TfGM
Stephen Rhodes	TfGM
Lee Teasdale	GMCA
Danny Vaughan	TfGM

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Steve Warrener	TfGM
Frank Wilkinson	TfGM

BNC/45/25 Appointment of a Chair

1. That the GM Mayor, Andy Burnham be appointed as Chair for the 2024/2025 municipal year.

BNC/46/25 Appointment of a Vice-Chair

1. That Councillor Eamonn O'Brien be appointed as Vice Chair for the 2024/25 municipal year.

BNC/47/25 Welcome and Apologies

1. That apologies be received from Mayor Andy Burnham, Councillor Hamid Khurram (Bolton), Caroline Simpson and Vernon Everitt.

BNC/48/25 Mayoral Appointments to the Committee

1. That it be noted that the following Bee Network Committee mayoral appointments have been made for the municipal year 2025/26:

Party	Member	Substitute
Con	Petter Crossen	TBC
Con	Max Woodvine	TBC
Labour	Jon Byrne	TBC
Lib Dem	Howard Sykes	Julian Newgrosh

BNC/49/25 Members Code of Conduct

1. That the GMCA Members Code of Conduct be noted.

BNC/50/25 Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure

1. That the Committee's Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure be noted.

BNC/51/25 Appointments to Outside Bodies

1. That Councillor Tracey Rawlins, Councillor Phil Burke, Councillor Joshua Charters, Councillor Jaqueline Owen, and Councillor Aidan Williams be appointed to the Greater Manchester Accessible Transport Board.
2. That the appointment of Councillor Mike McCusker to the GM Green City Region Partnership be confirmed.
3. That Councillor Mike McCusker be appointed to the Vision Zero Advisory & Scrutiny Board

BNC/52/25 Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED/-

1. That Councillor Phil Burke declared a standing interest as an employee of Keolis Amey Metrolink Ltd.

BNC/53/25 Chairs Announcements and Urgent Business

Bus Bridge Collisions

The Chair opened by inviting Steve Warrener to read a prepared statement from Vernon Everitt, GM Transport Commissioner following a incident on Monday 21st July in which a double-decker Bee Network bus collided with an aqueduct bridge on Barton Lane in Eccles, resulting in a number of injuries, some of which were serious.

TfGM was working closely with GMP to ensure that everyone involved in this traumatic event was receiving the support they needed. The driver of the bus was arrested on suspicion of causing serious injury by careless driving and had now been bailed pending further investigation. GMP's Serious Collisions Investigation Unit was leading

the investigation and all CCTV from the bus had now been recovered by the operator, Stagecoach, and provided to GMP to assist in this investigation.

More than 40 actions had been identified following the incident, a number of which had already been done, or were already underway. These actions included:

- TfGM, Salford City Council and Peel (owners of the bridge) agreeing to several short-term measures to be implemented as soon as possible, including additional signage and mobile variable messaging signs on the approach to Barton Lane, and vegetation work to ensure all signage is fully visible.
- Senior leaders at each bus operator being contacted to seek reassurances on their operating practices and sharing best practice on mitigating against bridge strikes.
- Stagecoach had issued a safety notice to other areas where they operated services and a low bridge reminder notice has been put up at the Trafford Centre and Eccles for drivers of the 100 bus route.
- All 10 GM LA's had been written to, and contact had been made with other partners with responsibility for managing and maintaining low bridges to ask them to satisfy themselves and TfGM that the measures in place were fit for purpose. This would be managed through an existing forum.
- Road markings warning of the low bridge (and repainting of existing road markings) was currently being done. A contractor had also assessed and measured the gantry to wrap it with illuminous vinyl which would be done on the evening of 24th July.
- Peel had committed to replacing the timber bridge protection beams on the aqueduct and signs would be updated to carry both imperial and metric height information.
- Options for the permanent replacement of the advanced warning system were now being explored.
- Work was also underway to examine the potential re-routing of services away from the Barton Lane bridge.

Additionally the GM Mayor had commissioned the GM Transport Commissioner to personally oversee the delivery of an urgent report, to be returned to him in the following week to look into the full circumstances around the bridge strike and make recommendations about wider implications for safety on the network. Given concerns raised about other collisions at this location, a meeting had also been arranged for the Commissioner to meet with and listen to councillors and officers from Salford City Council to receive the views of the local community.

Regrettably, another incident had taken place on Tuesday, where a training bus, driven by a trainee driver was also in collision with a low bridge at Ten Acres Lane, Newton Heath. No passengers were onboard and nobody was injured. This incident would also be thoroughly investigated and form part of the commissioner's report.

The Chair welcomed the update and invited City Mayor Paul Dennett, in his role as the Leader of Salford City Council to make further comments on the incident.

Mayor Dennett welcomed the comprehensive response from TfGM, confirming that he had spoken with the GM Transport Commissioner directly. Assurance was sought that all double-decker buses within the Bee Network had the latest low bridge technology installed within them, and that drivers were given relevant training on this technology. Reference was also made to an incident in 2023 at the same bridge, in which the wooden baulk hanging boards at the bridge had been destroyed, there was concern that Peel had not yet reinstated these hanging boards. It was not known if these were required under legislation, but given the nature of this hotspot, it would appear wise to reinstate these as soon as possible.

Assurance was provided that all buses on the network had low bridge technology installed, and work was taking place to ensure these were fully working on every single bus across the region. Training and operational procedures were also in the process of being reviewed with all operators. Discussion was also taking place with Peel around mitigation measures at the bridge.

Members highlighted concerns around the other incident at Ten Acres Lane – could training routes in future be planned to ensure that they do not go near low bridges? It was advised that this formed part of the discussions taking place with operators.

Greater Manchester Strategy

The Chair invited Steve Warrener to provide an update on the transport related aspirations arising from the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) launch.

There were seven overarching workstreams within the GSM, one of which was Developing the Bee Network as a Transport System for a Global City Region. There were a number of pledges contained within, including that by 2030, 90% of people living in GM would be within a five minute walk of a bus or tram that arrives every 30 minutes; that the cost of travel on the network would be kept as low as possible; that we will only charge what it costs to run a safe, comfortable service that is reinvested in to continue to improve; that by 2030 we will have the UK's first fully electric transport system across active travel; that by 2030 all local rail lines will be integrated into the Bee Network as part of a fully joined up transport system; and that by 2040 the aim was for no one to be killed or seriously injured on the region's roads. A fuller report on the work to address these aspirations would be brought to the Committee in due course.

Members asked if level boarding will be achievable for the rail stations entering the Bee Network. It was advised that further access for all stations were being brought into the network, level boarding would be an issue that would be looked at and addressed as well going forward.

Concerns were raised about expediency in replacing lost Our Passes and other bus concessionary documents. It was advised that the customer services team was undertaking work to address this, there were 'pinch points' at certain times of year but the move towards digitalisation would gradually lessen this issue.

Members welcomed the changes already been seen in clean air levels in the region as the transport fleet moved further in its adoption of hybrid and electric technologies.

Members stated the importance of ensuring strong links with major conurbations to the east of Greater Manchester as well as the west and south.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the statement read on behalf of the GM Transport Commissioner on low bridge bus collisions following recent incidents and the actions arising from these be received.
2. That the concerns raised by members, including calls for the reinstatement of wooden hanging boards at the Barton Lane bridge be noted.
3. That it be noted that an urgent update report was due to be delivered to the Mayor of Greater Manchester in the following week.
4. That it be noted that it will be ensured that all low bridge technology on the region's buses is fully operational.
5. That the update on the transport elements of the new Greater Manchester Strategy be received.
6. That a further report on the commitments arising from the Greater Manchester Strategy will be brought to the Committee in due course.

BNC/54/25 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 26 June 2025

Members asked if the Vision Zero Strategy developments could incorporate work around safety of, and education around e-scooters and e-bikes after a number of incidents involving young people in the region. Members also highlighted other issues around unlawful usage and it was agreed that a future report would be brought to the Committee to consider policies around e-bikes and e-scooters.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the minutes of the meeting of 26 June 2025 be approved as a true and correct record.
2. That a future report will be brought to the Committee considering policies around e-bikes and e-scooters in further depth.

BNC/55/25 Our Pass Digitisation 18-21 Fare

Fran Wilkinson, Customer and Growth Director, TfGM, provided an update on the delivery of Digital Our Pass and the proposal for the introduction of a new product for 18-21 year olds to increase access to public transport through affordable and simpler fares and ticketing.

Conversations with younger people in the region had made clear that they wished to move to the convenience of having a digital Our Pass on their phones. The digital application process had been developed and 90% of new applications had been for the digital version. This would be an immediate digital card on their phones with no need to wait for the printing and posting of a traditional card. However, the option of a plastic physical card would remain available.

Comments and Questions

Members welcomed this development stating that it would not only encourage more younger people onto public transport but would also have wider benefits around getting more young people connected with wider work and educational opportunities.

Members asked that TfGM work with schools and colleges to ensure that they are helping to promote transport products.

Members asked about how best to work with employers and youth services to broaden out the offers to young people even further. Officers agreed stating that this all sat within the GMS 'Live Well' approach, and work would take place to ensure that TfGM were looped into developments such as the Salford 'Youth Zone'.

RESOLVED/-

1. That endorsement be given to the introduction of a half price 28-day Bee Bus ticket for 18-21 year olds living in Greater Manchester.
2. That the delivery of Digital Our Pass be noted.

BNC/56/25 24 Hour Bus Pilot Evaluation and Proposals

Steve Warrener, Managing Director TfGM, presented the results of the evaluation of the 24-hour operation on the V1 and 36 bus services pilot; seeking approval for an extension of this original pilot; and proposes additional night service pilots in other parts of Greater Manchester. The new proposed pilot services would be in Bury and Rochdale on the 135 and 17 routes – these would be introduced on an initial 3 day weekend trial basis.

Comments and Questions

Members noted that the likely usage of the night bus services by gender balance skewed to 70% men. Did more need to be done to ensure equal safe access to transport – including more work on ensuring that women's voices were heard. Members also referenced access for other people with protected characteristics and how this could play a role in the GMS and operationalising of Housing First and Live Well. It was confirmed that work taking place around this topic, such as the Overview & Scrutiny 'In Her Shoes' review of safety for women and girls on the transport network would be embedded into the transport plan.

Members emphasised the importance of providing 24-hour access to hospitals across the region – and any assessment of connectivity needed to include key public service sites.

Reference was made to how the V1 had less patronage than the 36 service. Could usage of the V1 be increased by incorporating Wigan into the nighttime version of the service when there was less traffic? It was advised that considerations such as this would play a key part in the forthcoming network reviews.

Members sought further details on how the viability of Monday-Thursday night services were being assessed. Studies from the initial pilot had shown considerably higher levels of demand towards the end of the week and into the weekend, and so the latest

trial would service the times of highest demand. However, feedback had shown on the initial pilot that the people who did use them earlier in the week appreciated the help in getting them to work, and so those pilots would continue to operate seven days a week. All services were being constantly monitored and updates on data would be brought back as they became available.

It was stated that transport connectivity needed to be looked at 'in the round' and that access to other forms of connectivity in particular areas such as trains and trams needed to be taken into account.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the results of the pilot evaluation and their implications be noted.
2. That approval be given to an extension of the 24/7 service on the V1 and the 36 until at least the end of the 2025/26 financial year, on a 7-day a week schedule.
3. That approval be given to the introduction of new pilot 24-hour bus services to Bury and Rochdale on the 135 and 17 routes, on a 3-day weekend schedule.

BNC/57/25 GM Lane Rental Scheme

Danny Vaughan, Chief Network Officer, TfGM, provided information about the development of the existing Greater Manchester Road Activities Permit Scheme (GMRAPS) to include a proposed Lane Rental element and set out the proposed next steps accordingly.

The current window of opportunity to allow for an application to the government for the development of a lane rental scheme opened twice per year (April and October). The plan if the Committee agreed to a public consultation on this was to aim for a lane rental application in the October window.

Lane rental was intended to complement the operation of a permit scheme, by providing a financial incentive, as a daily lane rental charge, to encourage organisations to work outside of specified times on specified streets. i.e. the busiest sections of the network at the busiest times (peak hours) to avoid charges.

The report also outlined where lane rentals had been successfully implemented in areas in London and the south east of the country.

Despite effective coordination through the GMRAPS (Greater Manchester Road Activity Permit Scheme), currently 47% of planned works and 69% of unplanned works on the carriageway involved some occupation at peak times, thereby impacting traffic on the busiest streets at the busiest times in the region.

Comments and Questions

Members expressed concern about a single entity having effective control over highways works and that the relevant local authorities highway teams needed to be the leads, and there needed to be full consultation with these teams before moving on to the next stage of public consultation. Officers made clear that whilst there would be a central administration of the scheme on behalf of the local teams. The administering would be the only element and there would be no attempt to undermine the role of local highway authorities.

Discussion took place around contractors being refunded for early completion of works, with many expressing that they would not be in favour of any refund on this basis.

Concerns were expressed about local authorities having to pay out to maintain their own road network and effectively charging themselves. Officers stated that unfortunately the legislation was framed in such a way that it had to be 'equitable' in terms of charging policies when applied to local authorities or utility companies.

Concerns were expressed that this would push up costs to the general public, as utilities networks would pass on any extra charges they were subject to onto their customer base.

Members questioned the last time that charges related to GMRAPS had increased and asked if there was scope for 'variable' charges related to GMRAPS and the times

at which works were undertaken to avoid the lane rental administration scheme. Officers welcomed the possibilities of working through further potentials around GMRAPS.

Members stated that the low quality of the state of the roads after utility companies had undertaken works was as large an area of concern as the temporary traffic delays caused by the works. This would be vital to address with utility companies going forward as it was unsustainable for local authorities to keep footing the bills for repair works.

The Chair stated that following comments from members it was clear that a deferment at the current time was the best way forward, however this would be a deferment with a clear purpose that members agree in principle that they would like to look at the potential of the scheme but that discussion really needed to take place with local highways network teams about the best approach to implementing any future scheme. He asked that a further report be brought back no later than September.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the development of proposals for a Lane Rental Scheme in Greater Manchester be deferred to allow for further consideration of the concerns highlighted by Committee Members.

BNC/58/25 Transport Infrastructure Pipeline

Chris Barnes, Network Director Infrastructure, TfGM, presented a report making a number of recommendations for members to support the continued development and delivery of the pipeline programme.

Comments and Questions

Members referenced PIDS (Passenger Information Display Systems) at bus stops, asking if there were plans for audio announcements in addition for users with vision impairments. Officers would pick this up to discuss further thinking on this.

Members requested that a presentation be arranged on the electric vehicle charging infrastructure scheme taking place in Bolton as members frequently took questions from residents seeking engineering solutions to trailing cables across streets when people lived in terraced properties. Officers stated that this could be provided as there was some innovative work being undertaken in this area.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the current position, recent progress and key milestones on the transport infrastructure pipeline be noted.
2. That approval be given to the drawdown of Integrated Settlement funding and associated scheme progression as follows:
 - Improving Journeys: Sale West to Altrincham Network Interventions: £2.2m.
 - Improving Journeys: Bus Stop Upgrades: £4.5m;
 - Integrated Measures: Passenger Information Displays: £2.73m and Full Business Case;
 - Travel Hubs Access Programme: £0.47m.
 - Access for All Next Tranche: £16.80m and Full Business Case;
 - Stockport: A6 / Heaton Chapel Improvements Streets for All: £2.241m and Full Business Case;
 - Bolton: Topp Way / Higher Bridge Streets for All: £2.5m and Full Business Case; and
 - Bolton: Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure: £0.692m and Full Business Case.
3. That concerns raised around accessibility of Passenger Information Display Systems at bus stops will be given further consideration.
4. That a presentation will be arranged for members on the Bolton Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure scheme.

BNC/59/25 Date of Next Meeting

Members were advised that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Tuesday 19th August 2025.