

**Minutes of the meeting of the Bee Network Committee
held on Tuesday, 19th August, 2025 at GMCA Boardroom**

PRESENT:

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien (in the Chair)	GMCA
Councillor Alan Quinn	Bury
Councillor Tracey Rawlins	Manchester
Councillor Joshua Charters	Oldham
Councillor Howard Sykes	Oldham
Councillor Max Woodvine	Oldham
Councillor Phil Burke	Rochdale
City Mayor Paul Dennett	Salford
Councillor Mike McCusker	Salford
Councillor Grace Baynham	Stockport
Councillor Jon Byrne	Stockport
Councillor Peter Crosson	Stockport
Councillor Jacqueline Owen	Tameside
Councillor Aidan Williams	Trafford
Councillor John Vickers	Wigan

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chris Barnes	TfGM
Luke Bramwell	TfGM
Melinda Edwards	GMCA
Martin Lax	TfGM
Richard Nickson	TfGM
Lee Teasdale	GMCA
Danny Vaughan	TfGM
Steve Warrener	TfGM

BNC/60/25 Welcome and Apologies

1. That apologies be received from Mayor Andy Burnham, Councillor Hamid Khurram, Councillor Stephen Homer, Caroline Simpson & Fran Wilkinson.

BNC/61/25 Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED/-

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

BNC/62/25 Chairs Announcements and Urgent Business

Bus Bridge Collisions

The Chair opened by inviting Steve Warrener to provide the Committee with an update on the latest position following the ongoing work responding to the Salford Barton Bridge bus collision in July. Firstly, work continued to take place to support the victims in the crash, and to ensure that they, and their families, were provided with all support and care that they needed.

Immediately following the collision, Mayor Burnham had asked that the GM Transport Commissioner urgently prepare an initial report setting out the circumstances around the accident, immediate action, and putting forward recommendations for further work. This had now been done and further works were being taken forward accordingly.

TfGM was also undertaking a structured piece of work to review bus operators' safety procedures and policies, with results to be published by the end of September. TfGM would work with operators, trade unions, and authorities to produce an overall safety plan for publication by the end of October.

Members welcomed the update and suggested that TfGM design its own in-house training package for drivers that could be used universally? It was advised that there had been a recent agreement to develop a continuous training package for operators, based on the wish to constantly improve safety and customer service standards. This had been proposed to unions and welcomed.

The City Mayor of Salford stated that he welcomed the quick and appropriate response, meaningful engagement and assurances from officials following the crash.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the update received on the collaborative response work following the bus collision at Barton Bridge be noted.

BNC/63/25 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 24 July 2025

RESOLVED/-

1. That the minutes of the meeting of 24 July 2025 be approved as a true and correct record.

BNC/64/25 Business Case Development for Rapid Transit Lines in GM

Martin Lax (Transport Strategy Director, TfGM) and Luke Bramwell (Head of Rapid Transit Development, TfGM), presented a report setting out the next steps for potential major fixed track investments in support of GM's growth ambition, and as part of the GM Integrated Pipeline. Further to the July 2024 Draft GM Rapid Transit Strategy, the report set out development progress for new, extended and/or converted rapid transit lines in Greater Manchester. Emerging priorities for other lines/extensions for consideration were also identified.

The recently published Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) setting out the strategic growth ambitions for the region, which ran in parallel with the Places for Everyone spatial plan, had identified that GM was expected to add around 280k new residents, 75k new homes and 100k new jobs across the region, and the transport network needed to grow alongside that.

Additionally, a policy approach was in place, as set out in the Local Transport Plan, called 'Right Mix' which aimed to move more people onto using public transport, as presently around 60% of journeys in the region were still taken by car and 40% by

public transport and/or active travel. The aim of the policy was for this to reach a 50/50 split between the two.

Members were provided with the detail on the candidate areas for new lines and extensions and invited to ask questions in relation to these.

Comments and Questions

Members emphasised the potential for creating job opportunities within the UK through social value by getting new trams and trains required built within the UK. It was advised that when the point of procurement for the building of the schemes was reached, consideration would be given to the market and the right approach to take in terms of social value. It was highlighted that a large number of buses now entering the fleet had been built in the UK. There were hurdles in that the construction of trams was a more specialist area than buses, but wherever possible UK construction would be prioritised.

Members welcomed proposals around tram-trains coming into the Wigan borough, which would open up the wider opportunities and ambitions for the region into the further western parts of the region often left behind.

Members welcomed the plans for the Metrolink to be expanded into Stockport, but emphasised the importance of other parts of the borough such as Reddish receiving better connections through the potential of tram-trains. Officers agreed that it would be ideal to look at these wider plans at the same time as the Stockport tram business case to ensure a holistic approach.

Members welcomed the strategic regional benefits of a Stockport link to Manchester Airport and asked if broader benefits could also be found through this link. Officers advised that the wider vision was that this would not just be a Stockport to Airport scheme, but potentially the foundation for an orbital link around the south eastern corridor of the region.

Members asked if service patterns were being looked at for the Oldham-Rochdale-Heywood-Bury tram-train proposed route to ensure that it would be able to meet capacity demands. It was advised that the plan was to ensure a broad pattern of between two and four tram-trains per hour per direction. These would however have to fit in with national rail timetables in certain parts of the corridor.

Members welcomed the increasing emphasis on orbital links between areas of GM, such as the proposed Oldham to Bury link – as a lot of focus in the past had been on connecting areas solely to the centre of Manchester.

Members asked if the Reddish South – Denton line would be considered as part of the Stockport Tram business case. It was advised that it would be necessary to see the results of the strategic outline business case before any commitment could be made. It was hoped that the strategic outline business case would allow for the core infrastructure to be resolved, allowing for a clear view on how the Reddish South – Denton line could then plug in. The line had historically had issues as due to capacity constraints in the area through freight usage of the line.

Members asked that the preparatory work for the proposed expansion of the Trafford Centre tramline into Trafford Waters and Port Salford be advanced as quickly as possible as housing developers were already onsite at Trafford Waters, and Port Salford developments were expected to be realised in the near future.

Members emphasised the importance of ensuring better links for Partington and Carrington to the wider region, given plans for building thousands of new homes in these areas.

Members referenced the Mayor's wish for an underground station in central Manchester. How would this tie into the existing Metrolink setup and was work being undertaken to futureproof Metrolink accordingly? It was advised that this would be designed carefully to relieve pressure on some Metrolink services facing capacity constraints to maximise the ability to draw people away from using cars.

Members sought assurance that any future procurement of trams would put an emphasis on accessibility for all, particularly given the addition of bikes on trams. Concern was also expressed about the amount of time that tram doors remained open at present. It was advised that a member of the team within the Light Rail & Metro development department was a former organiser of the Disability Design Reference Group and that it was being absolutely ensured that accessibility formed a key part of the procurement process.

Members expressed concern that Middleton appeared to be slipping down the list in terms of new links. Was there a timeframe for when Middleton would receive new connections? It was advised that further working was taking place into the autumn to conclude the pre-feasibility studies on Middleton expansion, all possible options and developments would be factored. The impact of the Northern Gateway being incorporated into the feasibility works, and this was a project of such scale that it required a bespoke approach rather than a standard feasibility assessment.

Members enquired as to the number of kilometres of Metrolink track that there was at present in each GM local authority and the number of residents who lived within accessible distance of Metrolink stations in each authority as part of ongoing equity considerations. It was advised that this analysis could be undertaken and fed back to the Committee.

Members asked if a strategic approach was being taken to land acquisition to get upstream in terms of what may be needed going forward. It was advised that an active approach was being taken towards this in terms of space saving and safeguarding and that the works around Trafford Waters represented a good example of this.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That the next steps be endorsed.
3. That information will be provided to the Committee on the number of kilometres of Metrolink track that there is at present in each GM local authority and the number

of residents who lived within accessible distance of Metrolink stations in each authority as part of ongoing equity considerations.

BNC/65/25 Active Travel Funding

Steve Warrener, Managing Director TfGM, introduced a report seeking endorsement for Active Travel England funding allocations.

TfGM had worked directly with local authority officers on proposals to allocate remaining Active Travel funding. As under normal circumstances, a broad interpretation had been taken of the funding conditions to be able to apply the funding to improve the condition of pavements, highways, pathways and broader rights of way.

Comments and Questions

Members sought assurance that this broader interpretation for the use of funding was still solely benefitting active travel and not purely the highways pot to the benefit of cars. Officers advised that all funding from this pot would only ever be used to support Active Travel measures, and that this was a strict requirement from the Department for Transport.

Members asked if there was funding for Bikeability in primary schools through the Active Travel monies. It was advised that Bikeability was funded directly by Active Travel England, through the Bikeability Trust who then liaised with all schools. This was a complex arrangement, so conversations were taking place around the possibility of simplifying the approach.

Members welcomed monies being made available to improve the condition of pavements which were often seen as of secondary importance, even though accessible paving was vital to getting people out walking.

Members asked if further work could be done on the enhancement of secure cycling storage provision. It was advised that an earlier set of funding was currently being

utilised in Bolton and Manchester to install residential parking hangers. There were further possibilities to be explored with authorities around community based residential parking hangers.

Members expressed concern about the churn of volunteers for school streets initiatives. It was considered that guarantees of recurrent funding could go some way to providing a more consistent volunteer base. It was advised that a business case for drawdown of the school streets package was planned to come to the next meeting of the Committee.

Members referenced concerns around enforcement of illegal parking around school streets. It was advised that the forthcoming package would provide guidance on measures to combat issues such as this, with a full understanding that this could not be resolved through a one size fits all approach.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the allocation of £5.2m revenue funding, consisting of Active Travel Fund 4, Active Travel Fund 5 and the Consolidated Active Travel Fund be endorsed as follows:

- Bee Network scheme Development (Local Authority led): £2.22m;
- Behaviour Change: £1.74m;
- Cycle Hire: £1m; and
- Programme Management and Network Monitoring: £0.201m

2. That the allocation of £15.2m capital funding, consisting of Active Travel Fund 5 and the Consolidated Active Travel Fund be endorsed as follows, noting there is a further £1.5m capital funding to be allocated by GMCA at a later date:

- Active Travel Infrastructure Pipeline Delivery: £8.6m;
- School Streets: £2m;
- Bee Network Crossings: £2m;
- Remedial Works: £1.1m;

- Cycle Hire: £0.5m;
 - Secure Cycle Parking: £0.5m; and
 - Wayfinding: £0.5m
3. That it be noted that the approval of the allocations will be considered by the GMCA at the meeting held on Friday 22nd August 2025.

BNC/66/25 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.

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:
 - Rapid Transit Extensions Package: £6.190m; and
 - Salford Rise: £3.4m and Full Business Case.
3. That proposed allocations of capital funding from Active Travel Fund 4, Active Travel Fund 5 and the Consolidated Active Travel Fund, to be considered for approval by GMCA on 22nd August 2025 be noted.
4. That the drawdown of active travel capital fund, subject to GMCA approval of the overall allocations on 22nd August 2025, be approved as follows:
 - Active Travel Remedial Works: £1.1m;
 - Cycle Hire: £0.5m;
 - Secure Cycle Parking: £0.5m; and
 - Wayfinding: £0.5m.
5. That the proposed allocations of revenue funding from Active Travel Fund 4, Active Travel Fund 5 and the Consolidated Active Travel Fund, to be considered for approval by GMCA on 22nd August 2025 be noted.

BNC/67/25 Date of Next Meeting

Members were advised that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Thursday 25th September 2025 at TfGM Offices, 2 Piccadilly Place.