

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY HELD WEDNESDAY 29 OCTOBER 2025 AT
TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER, 2 PICCADILLY PLACE,
MANCHESTER, M1 3BG**

PRESENT:

Councillor John Walsh	Bolton Council (Chair)
Councillor Peter Wright	Bolton Council
Councillor Imran Rizvi	Bury Council
Councillor John Leech	Manchester City Council
Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin	Manchester City Council
Councillor Ken Rustidge	Oldham Council
Councillor Ashley Dearnley	Rochdale Council
Councillor Terry Smith	Rochdale Council
Councillor Dylan Williams	Rochdale Council
Councillor Tony Davies	Salford City Council
Councillor Lewis Nelson	Salford City Council
Councillor Sangita Patel	Tameside Council
Councillor David Sweeton	Tameside Council
Councillor Shaun Ennis	Trafford Council
Councillor Will Jones	Trafford Council
Councillor Mary Callaghan	Wigan Council
Councillor Debra Wailes	Wigan Council

ALSO PRESENT:

Andy Burnham	Mayor of Greater Manchester
Councillor Tom Ross	Portfolio Lead for Green Cities

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Karen Chambers	Senior Governance and Scrutiny Officer, GMCA
Kate Davies	Acting Head of Strategy & Performance Management, GMCA
Gillian Duckworth	GMCA Group Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
David Taylor	Executive Director, Waste, GMCA
Steve Wilson	GMCA Group Chief Finance Officer

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Basil Curley (Manchester), Councillor Colin McLaren (Oldham), Councillor Helen Hibbert (Stockport) Councillor Nathan Evans (Trafford) and Councillor Joanne Marshall (Wigan).

Apologies were also received from Caroline Simpson, Group Chief Executive and Nicola Ward, Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

O&SC 30/25

CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

To ensure all members had the opportunity to contribute, the Chair advised that questions should be limited to one or two per agenda item, with additional questions to be taken at the end of the meeting if time permitted.

The Chair welcomed Jamie Chong as an observer to the meeting. Jamie was attending as a student shadowing Councillor Lewis Nelson.

The Chair thanked Members who had volunteered to join the Task and Finish Group and welcomed Councillor Mary Callaghan as the Chair of that group. It was noted that the group's remit was wide-ranging and covered several key issues in relation to Workforce Retention and Quality in Early Years. The progress made to date was recognised, and thanks were extended to all who had taken part and contributed to the work so far.

RESOLVED /-

That the Chair's announcements be noted.

O&SC 31/25

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED /-

No declarations were received in relation to any item on the agenda.

O&SC 32/25

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 24 SEPTEMBER
2025**

The Chair advised that a response had been received in relation to the Members question raised at the last meeting regarding a deep dive into the Clean Air Zone, including its costs, contractual obligations, and impact on boroughs, which was raised due to ongoing public speculation. Members were advised that the Air Quality Administration Joint Committee and the Clean Air Scrutiny Joint Committee were still in operation and had the remit to consider a deep dive into the Clean Air Zone, including its costs, contractual obligations, and impact on boroughs. It was the Air Quality Charging Joint Committee that was disbanded as it was no longer necessary once the updated Clean Air Plan had been agreed by Government accepting that GM would not be required to create a charging zone within the city region. Therefore it would not be appropriate to add such a deep dive to the Committees work programme.

The concerns raised by Members regarding the recent bankruptcy and reformation of the GM Chamber of Commerce, particularly in relation to funds owed to GMCA would be responded to by officers at the earliest opportunity.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the minutes of the GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 September 2025 be approved as a correct and accurate record.
2. That the update regarding the Clean Air Zone be noted.
3. That an update regarding the Chamber of Commerce would be provided.

O&SC 33/25

**GREATER MANCHESTER INTERIM RECYCLING
AND WASTE PLAN**

Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Lead for Green Cities, introduced the report which provided the Committee with an overview of English waste policy and the proposed Greater Manchester Interim Recycling and Waste Plan that sets out actions to be taken to enable the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to develop a long-term waste strategy in the future.

Councillor Ross advised that Greater Manchester's (GM's) waste management arrangements, which covered nine districts were among the most advanced in England. It was noted that GM had one of the highest recycling rates of any city region and diverts over 99.7% of municipal waste from landfill.

Members were informed of the long-standing partnership with SUEZ, which had delivered significant social value through initiatives such as the Renew Hub in Trafford Park, which refurbishes preloved items at scale, supports employment and training, and generated proceeds were reinvested into the Mayor's Charity and the Renew Community Fund.

Councillor Ross also noted recent national policy developments, including the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging and the forthcoming Deposit Return Scheme. These changes were expected to impact waste composition and collection practices across GM.

Given the evolving national landscape, Members were advised that GMCA had opted not to launch a 25-year strategy at this stage. Instead, a four-year Interim Recycling and Waste Plan was presented, with strategic objectives focused on service innovation, decarbonisation, social value delivery, and continued policy engagement. The Plan was scheduled for consideration by the GMCA in January 2026.

Officers provided an overview of the forthcoming Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), due to be introduced in October 2027. Members were informed that the scheme would allow consumers to return eligible aluminium and PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate) plastic drinks containers in exchange for a deposit refund, with the aim of reducing litter and increasing recycling rates. It was noted that Defra's modelling anticipated that up to 90% of eligible materials may be captured through the scheme, which could result in a 1–2% reduction in household recycling rates across GM. This was due to a shift in the collection route, as materials currently captured via kerbside recycling may instead be returned directly through DRS. Officers advised that the impact of the scheme remained uncertain and would depend on household behaviour. Reference was made to Ireland's experience, where approximately 80% of eligible materials were captured via DRS, although differences in waste service funding models may affect outcomes in England. Officers noted that the introduction of DRS may affect the quantity and composition of waste collected by districts and processed by GM, with potential implications for contractual arrangements and revenue from recyclables.

Officers also briefed Members on the forthcoming inclusion of Energy from Waste (EfW) incineration within the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), due to take effect from January 2028. It was noted that the scheme would introduce tradeable carbon allowances for fossil-based carbon emissions resulting from waste incineration. It was reported that GM processes approximately 500,000 tonnes of waste annually through EfW, with around 50% of the resulting carbon emissions classified as fossil-based. This could result in GM being liable for allowances covering approximately 250,000 tonnes of carbon per year. Officers added that the financial impact of the scheme remained uncertain due to fluctuating market prices

for carbon allowances. Modelling indicated that costs could range from £9 million per year at £40 per tonne to £22 million per year at £100 per tonne. It was noted that Government consultation on the scheme was ongoing, and further clarity was awaited regarding its implementation and financial implications for local authorities.

Officers advised that, due to ongoing national policy developments and uncertainty surrounding future impacts, particularly the Emissions Trading Scheme, GM was not in a position to commit to a long-term waste strategy. It was acknowledged that investment decisions in new treatment infrastructure would be premature without greater clarity. The rationale for adopting a shorter-term, four-year Interim Recycling and Waste Plan was therefore based on the need to gather and analyse data to inform more robust, long-term decisions by 2030.

Members asked for clarification regarding the Government's recycling scheme. They welcomed the Government's confirmation that the previously suggested requirement for households to have seven bins had been reconsidered, acknowledging that such a proposal would have been impractical. However, the adoption of a comprehensive bin system as the default raised further questions, specifically, whether this would result in all households being required to have four bins. Members highlighted that several local authorities had already introduced charges for the collection of green waste. At that time, residents had the option to opt out of receiving a green bin, thereby avoiding the associated charge, although this meant green waste would not be collected. Members queried whether, under a mandated system, the Government would prohibit local authorities from charging for green waste collection, or whether residents would be required to pay the charge due to the compulsory provision of a green bin. Councillor Ross advised that garden waste was not a statutory service and therefore did not require free provision by local authorities. He added that authorities such as Trafford and Stockport had introduced charges for green bin collections, and that approximately 75% of local authorities across England had implemented similar fees. It was further noted that food waste collection remained a statutory service and would continue to be provided free of charge, with households required to separate food waste for collection. Garden waste, however, remained discretionary, and local

authorities retained the ability to charge for its collection should they choose to do so.

Members sought clarification regarding the financial implications of the Emissions Trading Scheme. It was noted that, as referenced on page 33 of the report, the Government had not yet issued a formal response on the financial impact of the scheme. However, Members acknowledged that the Government had made statements recognising the potential financial burden on local authorities and that work to understand and develop solutions was underway. Members queried whether there was any indication as to whether the Government would require local authorities to absorb the associated costs, or whether funding would be provided to support implementation. Concern was expressed that there may be limited additional financial support forthcoming, and that local authorities could ultimately be instructed to proceed without dedicated funding. Officers advised that the Government was expected to release the second part of the consultation on the Emissions Trading Scheme towards the end of the following year. It was noted that the Government had indicated extended producer responsibility (EPR) payments would be increased to cover packaging materials found in residual waste processed through energy-from-waste facilities, potentially covering around 30% of associated costs. However, it was noted that no formal documentation had been issued outlining how the remaining costs would be met. It was reported that lobbying efforts had focused on securing further EPR measures for materials such as textiles and absorbent hygiene products, which contain high levels of fossil carbon. These discussions were ongoing.

Members asked whether consideration was being given to harnessing the energy generated from waste disposal processes. It was noted that certain sectors, such as data centres, were particularly energy-intensive and Members queried whether there would be a review in collaboration with digital industries and other relevant sectors to explore opportunities for utilising energy produced from waste. Councillor Ross advised that the issue of harnessing energy generated from waste disposal was being considered. It was acknowledged that certain sectors, such as digital industries and data centres, were particularly energy-intensive and he confirmed

that discussions were underway to explore potential collaboration with these industries to utilise energy produced from waste more effectively. Officers advised that, currently, approximately 420,000 tonnes of the half a million tonnes of waste generated was being processed at the energy-from-waste facility in Runcorn. This formed part of existing contractual arrangements, under which all heat and energy produced were supplied to the adjacent Inovyn chemical production site. It was noted that this site was the only chlorine-producing facility in the UK, playing a critical role in water purification. Officers further advised that the facility met 100% of Inovyn's daily electricity and steam requirements.

Members enquired about the scope and flexibility of the proposed Deposit Return Scheme and expressed concern that the policy may be outdated, noting that while countries such as Denmark had introduced similar schemes as early as 2002, the full benefits and cost neutrality had only become evident in recent years. Members questioned whether the UK had been overtaken in its approach and whether the scheme might now result in unintended consequences for consumers. Members also raised concerns that the scheme could create barriers for certain groups, such as older, disabled, or vulnerable individuals, who may face difficulties accessing return points. They also asked whether the scope of the scheme could be reconsidered to include items such as vapes and outdated home IT equipment, both of which were increasing in prevalence. Officers advised that if a resident chooses not to return their drinks container to a designated vending machine, they could still place it in their kerbside recycling collection. It was explained that, where such containers were extracted through the waste stream, the deposit could be reclaimed by the waste authority. This process was noted to work effectively with items such as cans. However, Officers highlighted that reclaiming deposits for bottles with paper labels was more complex, as it relied on the label remaining intact and the QR code being scannable. In such cases, GM could still claim the deposit if the resident opted not to do so themselves. It was further noted that while there was some scope for expansion, the parameters of the Deposit Return Scheme had already been set out in legislation. Officers confirmed that lobbying had taken place, but the scheme's material coverage, most notably the exclusion of glass, was now fixed within the legislative framework. Councillor Ross stated that

the management of waste electrical items remained a significant challenge. It was reported that such items were often discarded either accidentally or intentionally, resulting in additional costs for the waste authority. He expressed a desire to explore this issue further, recognising opportunities to improve the handling and recycling of electrical waste, including old IT equipment, batteries, and vapes. He added that as part of the emerging strategy, further work would be undertaken to identify practical solutions in this area. It was acknowledged that, while progress had been made in other aspects of waste management, electrical waste remained a persistent issue. Officers added that vapes were already legally subject to a take-back scheme, under which retailers selling them were obliged to accept returned items. However, it was noted that compliance among retailers was currently low. Members' suggestion of including vapes within a Deposit Return Scheme was supported as a potential means of improving recovery rates and encouraging recycling. Officers highlighted that improper disposal of vapes posed significant risks, including the loss of valuable materials such as lithium and an increased risk of fires. It was agreed that further consideration should be given to enhancing the system for managing waste electricals, particularly vapes.

Members asked how the market for plastic films was developing. They noted that, in the past, the lack of a proper market for this material had caused problems, especially when different types of waste were mixed together incorrectly. Members wanted to know if there had been any progress in creating better recycling options for plastic films. Officers advised that soft plastics, including plastic films, were expected to become part of mandatory collections from 2027. While plans were in place to begin recycling these materials, concerns remained about the availability of suitable outlets. Officers noted that the UK had seen the closure of at least five plastic processing plants in the past year due to economic pressures, with plastic remaining cheaper to produce than recycled alternatives. It was reported that discussions were ongoing with a facility in GM that may be able to process some of the material, and a new plant had recently been announced in the North East. Officers cautioned, however, that the market for soft plastics was still developing and likely to take several years to become viable. They emphasised that the

economics of plastic recycling were closely tied to oil prices and suggested that further legislation may be needed to support the use of recycled materials.

Members enquired about the growing issue of textile waste, referencing analysis which had shown an increase in the volume of textiles entering the waste stream. It was noted that traditional disposal routes, such as charity shops, had become less viable due to an oversupply of poor-quality items, often made from synthetic materials like polyester. Members expressed concern about the environmental impact of such materials, particularly when exported overseas. While acknowledging that the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme currently focused on packaging, Members questioned whether similar measures could be applied to clothing retailers, particularly those selling low-quality garments, to help cover the public costs of managing and recycling textile waste. Officers agreed that fast fashion had become a significant issue in recent years, contributing to the growing volume of textile waste. They acknowledged that the weight and type of fabrics being disposed of presented a real challenge and that further work was needed to reduce this impact. In the short term, officers had explored initiatives focused on repair and reuse, recognising that many people no longer had the skills to mend clothing, skills that were more common in previous generations. Some funded projects had supported this agenda, including work under the Renew Hub initiative. Officers also noted that academic research, including work by local universities, had highlighted the environmental impact of textile waste. They agreed that there was scope for the Government to explore further action, particularly in relation to the role of retailers selling low-quality clothing. It was acknowledged that changes in shopping habits over the past decade had placed increasing pressure on the waste system.

Members enquired how GM was working with Government on the strategic placement of Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) return points. Concerns were raised about the accessibility of return sites, particularly in geographically isolated and deprived communities, where residents may face challenges reaching large supermarkets or designated return locations. It was noted that in such areas, residents may need to rely on public transport or private vehicles, potentially

undermining the environmental benefits of the scheme. Members also highlighted the variation in retail infrastructure across GM, noting that areas such as South Manchester had a high number of smaller supermarkets, which may lack the space to accommodate return facilities. Members sought reassurance that these geographical and logistical challenges were being considered in the planning and implementation of the scheme. Councillor Ross advised that the implementation of the Deposit Return Scheme would present logistical challenges, particularly in relation to the equipment required at return points. He reiterated that residents would still have the option to use kerbside collections, which would remain available for those unable to access designated return sites, such as supermarkets. It was noted that this flexibility was one of the reasons for the four-year implementation plan, as the full impact of the scheme on collection rates across GM remained uncertain and he emphasised the importance of monitoring how the scheme would affect existing waste systems and resident participation.

Members enquired whether there was potential to support a more coordinated approach to bulky waste collection across GM. It was noted that bulky waste services varied significantly between local authorities, and that this inconsistency could contribute to increased incidents of fly-tipping, particularly in areas where access to disposal services was limited. Members asked whether funding or strategic alignment at a GM level could be considered to help address this issue. They highlighted the importance of linking bulky waste services with the wider renew and repair agenda, recognising the opportunity to reduce waste and improve environmental outcomes through more consistent and accessible services. Councillor Ross stated that bulky waste collection remained the responsibility of individual local authorities. However, he acknowledged that there may be potential to explore a more coordinated approach across the nine districts within the GM Waste Authority. He suggested that, if feasible, reusable bulky items could be redirected to the Renew Hub, but this would require further discussion around logistics and the development of a viable business case. He noted that such an approach could help address issues faced in residential areas, including those where landlords frequently replace furniture, contributing to increased waste.

Councillor Ross advised that they would be open to exploring options in collaboration with local authorities, where appropriate.

Members asked what further action could be taken to encourage a culture of repair and reuse among residents. They reflected on past generations' habits of mending clothing and household items, noting that such practices had become less common. Reference was made to local initiatives, including a school in the Member's ward that actively promoted the recycling of school uniforms to help families manage costs and reduce waste. Councillor Ross advised that every opportunity was taken to showcase the Renew Hub and its wider impact, particularly during Ministerial visits and discussions. It was noted that the Renew Hub remained the largest of its kind in England and continued to attract national interest. In terms of education and behaviour change, Councillor Ross emphasised the importance of supporting grassroots initiatives that promote repair and reuse skills. He referenced local projects where residents had learned basic mending techniques, helping to extend the life of clothing and reduce waste. It was acknowledged that many people no longer possessed those skills, and that further education and awareness-raising could help shift attitudes towards sustainability and resourcefulness. Examples were given of school uniform recycling schemes operating across GM, including in Trafford, which helped families manage costs while reducing textile waste. It was noted that while national Government was beginning to address issues such as branding and uniform standards, there remained scope for further action, particularly in tackling the environmental impact of fast fashion and poor-quality textiles. It was agreed that ongoing dialogue with Government would be important in exploring legislative options to reduce textile waste and support circular economy principles.

The Chair thanked Councillor Ross and Officers for the report and noted that one of the previously raised issues related to cross-boundary use of Household Waste Recycling Centres and asked if they had any comments to offer on this matter.

Officers presented an update on the potential cross-boundary use of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), following the closure of three Cheshire East

Council sites in March 2024, including Poynton and Bollington. These closures were implemented in August 2024. Four GM sites located near the Cheshire East border, Adswold, Bredbury, Rose Hill (Marple), and Longley Lane (Sharston), were monitored for changes in usage. Of these, Adswold showed a notable increase in visits, with numbers rising by approximately 27% following the closures. That equated to an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 additional vehicles per month. Vehicle visits were tracked using number plate recognition technology; however, due to data limitations, the system did not link to DVLA records, meaning the origin of vehicles could not be confirmed. Despite the increase in visitor numbers, Officers reported a decrease in overall waste tonnage, with more recycling material and less residual waste being received which presented a complex picture. Discussions had taken place with Cheshire East Council regarding the potential for cross-boundary usage. However, Cheshire East maintained that the increased usage was not attributable to their residents. The GM Waste Committee agreed to continue monitoring the situation over the next six months. Should residual waste levels rise and associated costs increase, Officers advised that GM may need to consider introducing access controls to restrict use to GM residents which could involve requiring visitors to present a council tax bill or driving licence, or implementing a booking or permit system. It was noted that such measures could slow down site throughput and potentially lead to increased fly-tipping. In addition, it was reported that Stockport Council had introduced charges for garden waste collections in April 2024. This had led to an increase in visits and garden waste volumes at Stockport sites, further complicating the interpretation of usage data. The current recommendation was to continue monitoring and tracking site usage. If necessary, proposals for access controls would be developed and brought back to the GM Waste Committee for review.

Members stated that they could see no reason why Cheshire East Council should not contribute financially towards the cost of waste disposal if their residents were using GM facilities and expressed hope that this issue would be pursued further with Cheshire East Council. Members also questioned the basis on which Cheshire East had denied that their residents were crossing the border to use GM sites, and requested further detail on any evidence that had been provided to support that

position. Members asked whether the issue of Cheshire East Council's HWRC closures could be raised at Ministerial level. They expressed concern about the impact on GM residents and questioned how Cheshire East had arrived at the decision to close its sites, particularly given the apparent increase in usage at GM border sites.

Members referred to the data presented, which they felt clearly demonstrated a link between the closures and increased pressure on GM facilities. They queried how Cheshire East had justified its position and what evidence had been provided to support its claim that the increased usage was not attributable to its residents. It was noted that areas such as Macclesfield and Alsager are relatively affluent and comparable to many parts of GM, raising further questions about the rationale behind the closures. Members emphasised the importance of fairness and collaboration across boundaries and suggested that further engagement with national Government may be necessary to address the issue.

Members were concerned about the potential introduction of a booking system for access to Household Waste Recycling Centres. They expressed strong opposition to the idea, noting that residents valued the flexibility of being able to visit sites spontaneously, particularly when undertaking household clear-outs. Members highlighted that GM's HWRCs were currently accessible during extended hours, including weekends, and that this convenience was highly appreciated by the public. While they acknowledged the need for some form of proof of residency, such as presenting a document at the gate, they felt this would be more acceptable than requiring advance bookings. It was noted that similar booking systems in other areas, such as Birmingham, had received negative feedback from residents, including complaints on social media. Members felt that introducing such a system in GM would likely be unpopular and could discourage responsible waste disposal.

Members asked whether any consideration had been given to making a case for access to vehicle registration data, in order to identify the origin of visitors to Household Waste Recycling Centres. They noted that verifying addresses manually at site entrances could be costly and labour-intensive, and suggested that access to

number plate data would offer a more efficient and cost-effective solution. Officers advised that access to vehicle registration data was restricted due to data protection regulations.

The Chair noted that there was some time available to consider the report further, as it was not scheduled to go to the GMCA meeting until January. Members were encouraged to reflect on the report and submit any additional comments or observations following the meeting. Officers requested that any further feedback be directed through them for consideration.

Members asked that their opposition to the introduction of an appointment booking system for Household Waste Recycling Centres be formally recorded. It was clarified that Members did not object to reasonable evidence being provided to confirm residency.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the Greater Manchester Interim Recycling and Waste Plan report.
2. That the comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the Greater Manchester Interim Recycling and Waste Plan are noted.
3. That the slides presented at the meeting regarding the cross-boundary use of Household Waste Recycling Centres are shared with Members.
4. That the Members opposition to the introduction of an appointment booking system for Household Waste Recycling Centres be formally recorded.

O&SC 34/25

GREATER MANCHESTER STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN

The GM Mayor, Andy Burnham, introduced the report which provided an update for Members on the development of the draft Greater Manchester Strategy Delivery Plan and the work that was underway to re-engage Greater Manchester (GM) partners and stakeholders.

The GM Mayor reflected on the broader strategic vision for Greater Manchester emphasising the importance of understanding how all elements fit together to shape the future. He posed the question of how the region could make the next decade (2025–2035) even more successful than the previous one, reminding attendees of the journey undertaken since 2015.

He noted that the starting point in 2015 involved working with communities that had previously been overlooked. Despite the lack of sophisticated planning tools at that time, the progress made over the past ten years had been substantial. The GM Mayor acknowledged the collective effort of all local authorities and partners around the table, describing it as a significant collaborative endeavour. He expressed pride in the fact that GM had likely advanced further than anticipated back in 2015.

While recognising that not everything had gone as hoped, the GM Mayor highlighted the region's achievement in becoming the UK's fastest-growing city region, with productivity growth at levels not seen for decades. He stated that this success provided a strong foundation for increased ambition in the coming decade. He stressed the importance of clarity in setting those ambitions and in the delivery mechanisms that would support them. The GM Mayor explained that this strategic thinking had been central to the work of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), with Caroline Simpson, Group Chief Executive, playing a key role in ensuring the plan was clear, widely owned across the system, and focused on delivery and accountability. He emphasised that the plan was a whole-system approach, not solely the GMCA's plan. While each local authority would retain its own priorities and local approaches, the plan outlined shared actions and a collective GM vision. He concluded by stating that accountability for the plan would rest with himself, the ten Leaders, the Deputy Mayor, and the GMCA. However, he hoped that it would also be embraced within local council chambers, where local accountability could be maintained against agreed measures. He noted that many of the plan's goals were broadly supported across political lines, focusing on improving residents' lives, enhancing community liveability, and increasing opportunities for young people.

The GM Mayor welcomed the Committee's involvement at this early stage of the Delivery Plan's development, noting that the plan was scheduled for adoption by the GMCA in December. He encouraged members to use the time available to provide feedback and strengthen the plan. He explained that the Delivery Plan followed a one-, five-, and ten-year framework to monitor progress over time. It was structured around seven workstreams, five of which form the core vision for people and places:

- Healthy Homes for All
- Safe and Strong Communities
- A Transport System for a Global City Region
- Clear Line of Sight to High-Quality Jobs
- Everyday Support in Every Neighbourhood (Live Well model)

The remaining two workstreams were:

- A Great Place to Do Business
- Digitally Connected Places and People

The GM Mayor emphasised that the plan was a whole-system endeavour, requiring collaboration across GM. He noted that strengthening the region's economic base would be key to delivering the ambitions for its people and places.

The GM Mayor informed the Committee that the GM Performance Framework, previously a standalone document, had now been incorporated into the GMS Delivery Plan, which was signed off by the GMCA in June. He confirmed that the Delivery Plan would be updated quarterly, making it a live document that reflected ongoing progress. Supporting data would also be refreshed quarterly to track delivery against strategic ambitions. In addition, the Performance Framework would be published annually, providing a summary of key indicators and assessing whether GM remained on track to meet its 2035 vision. This would serve as a form of annual reporting against the long-term goals. The GM Mayor noted that the GM Tackling Inequalities Board would play an enhanced role in overseeing progress.

The GM Mayor emphasised the importance of strong stakeholder engagement in ensuring the success of the GMS Delivery Plan. He noted that the extent to which the plan was felt to be owned by partners across the private, voluntary, community, and faith sectors would significantly influence its impact. He highlighted GM's reputation for cross-sector collaboration and stressed the need to maintain that shared direction. To support this, a comprehensive programme of stakeholder engagement was planned throughout October and November, aimed at building wider ownership and buy-in across the system.

Members asked for clarification on the frequency of updates to the GMS Delivery Plan, asking whether "quarterly" referred to every three months. More broadly, concern was expressed about the balance between ambition and delivery capacity. Members noted that in areas of personal expertise, some indicators suggested slow progress. It was questioned whether this was due to local delivery constraints or delays from central Government departments, such as the Department for Transport or Defra. Specific reference was made to the transport workstream, where the 50% modal shift target was considered insufficiently ambitious. Members called for more detailed breakdowns and faster action to reduce car dependency. Concerns were also raised about the active travel targets, noting that without a baseline, it was difficult to assess progress. The planned delivery of 160km over five years was seen as lacking ambition. However, Members welcomed proposals for improved road safety, particularly the introduction of bi-directional safety cameras and full enforcement, which were expected to be positively received by residents. The GM Mayor advised the Committee that the Delivery Plan aimed to strike a balance between ambition and realism. He acknowledged that while the plan was designed to be credible, it was important to test whether the level of ambition was sufficient. He invited Committee members to share their views, noting that ambition may vary across workstreams depending on existing momentum and delivery capacity. In relation to transport, the GM Mayor suggested that GM may have more momentum than in other areas, and committed to seeking further clarity from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) on whether the current target, 50% of journeys by walking, cycling, and public transport by 2040, was sufficiently ambitious. The GM Mayor highlighted the upcoming integration of rail into the Bee

Network, which could significantly reshape the transport system. He advised that all rail stations in GM would eventually be part of the Bee Network, and that this transition, expected to occur midway through the plan period, could have a substantial impact on modal shift and patronage. He also informed the Committee of a forthcoming announcement regarding a simplified rail fare structure, due to be introduced in December. This change would move GM towards a single fare model, supporting future pay-as-you-go systems and potentially increasing public transport usage. He referenced the success of the regulated bus system, which had seen patronage grow by approximately 15% annually since its introduction. The GM Mayor acknowledged concerns raised about the active travel targets, particularly the delivery of 160km of Bee Active routes. He agreed that benchmarking was essential and committed to reviewing whether the plan provided sufficient reference points to assess progress. He concluded by reiterating the importance of ensuring that targets were both ambitious and achievable, and committed to returning to the Committee with further information on transport targets and benchmarking.

Officers advised that the GMS Delivery Plan would be published by the end of the year, incorporating feedback received during the engagement period. Following publication, the plan would be updated quarterly, meaning every three months, to reflect progress and delivery against Year 1 actions. The first review was expected around March or April 2026. It was noted that the quarterly updates would help keep the strategy active and relevant throughout the ten-year period, avoiding the risk of it becoming outdated. Officers emphasised that the delivery plan would be a live document, allowing for adjustments based on performance, ambition, and external factors. Each quarterly update would include input from delivery partners, highlighting areas of success, challenges, and opportunities to be more ambitious. In addition, an annual performance report would be published to assess overall progress against the GMS vision, showing the distance travelled from the baseline and identifying areas for improvement. Officers confirmed that the performance framework and delivery plan had now been integrated into a single document to improve clarity. Targets within the plan could be amended over time, subject to system-wide agreement, ensuring the plan remained responsive to changing circumstances and emerging priorities.

Members raised questions regarding the delivery of social rent housing as outlined in the Delivery Plan. It was noted that the plan committed to delivering at least 10,000 energy-efficient homes for social rent across all ten GM local authority areas by 2030. Members queried whether individual targets would be set for each local authority to ensure equitable contribution and accountability. Further concerns were expressed about the role of private developers in meeting affordable housing obligations through the planning system. Members highlighted ongoing issues with developers failing to deliver the affordable homes they committed to during the planning process and asked what measures were in place to ensure compliance. Specifically, Members requested clarification on how many of the 10,000 homes would be delivered via private development and how many would be provided directly by local authorities. They also asked what steps were being taken to ensure that all local authorities contribute fairly to the overall target. The GM Mayor responded to the question regarding the delivery of 10,000 energy-efficient homes for social rent by 2030. He advised that the current approach was based on a GM-wide ambition rather than setting specific targets for each local authority. This was intended to allow flexibility at the district level, similar to the approach taken in the Spatial Framework. He clarified that while the overall target was set at the GM level, individual local authorities were not prevented from setting their own ambitions or exceeding the shared target. The GM Mayor emphasised that GMCA would seek to bring in resources to support delivery across the system, which could supplement existing local plans. He confirmed that a bid had been submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (formerly MHCLG) under the £39 billion programme agreed in the Spending Review, with 60% of funding earmarked for social housing. This bid would be the primary mechanism for delivering the 10,000 homes. The GM Mayor explained that maintaining flexibility was important to avoid limiting delivery. He noted that setting fixed targets per authority could risk capping progress if some areas reached their allocation early. Instead, the current approach encouraged districts to go further if they had the capacity and delivery plans in place. He acknowledged concerns about uneven delivery and suggested that the Committee may wish to consider whether a minimum contribution from each authority should be established. However, he reiterated that the GMCA's current

position was to work with those districts most ready and willing to deliver, which could also foster a healthy level of local ambition and momentum. The GM Mayor responded to concerns raised about private developers meeting their affordable housing obligations through the planning system. He acknowledged that the Delivery Plan did not currently include a specific commitment relating to developer contributions. However, he agreed with the principle that planning obligations should be met in full. He noted that planning decisions and enforcement sat primarily with local planning authorities, and the Delivery Plan was focused on actions that could be delivered collectively at the GM level. While GMCA could not directly influence all aspects of developer compliance through the plan, the GM Mayor suggested that there may be scope to develop a joint lobbying approach to strengthen national planning legislation and improve delivery outcomes. He emphasised that the Delivery Plan was intended to reflect what GMCA and partners could actively deliver together, while recognising the importance of ensuring developers met their responsibilities.

Members asked for clarification regarding the status of existing night bus services, such as the 36 and V1 routes. It was noted that these services were originally introduced as part of a pilot scheme, and members queried whether they had now been confirmed as permanent fixtures within the network. Members sought confirmation on whether an outcome had been reached regarding their long-term continuation. The GM Mayor confirmed that existing night bus services, including the 36 and V1 routes, were still operating under pilot status. These services had been running for approximately a year, with additional pilots introduced in autumn, including routes via Prestwich to Bury and Middleton to Rochdale. These newer services operated primarily over the weekend, reflecting higher demand on Friday to Sunday compared to weekdays. The GM Mayor reiterated his ambition for every borough in GM to have access to a night bus service, ideally connecting main towns. He acknowledged that while weekday usage was lower, such services remained important for workers in key sectors. He emphasised that all transport initiatives, including night buses, were part of a broader effort to build patronage across the Bee Network and establish a financially sustainable public transport system. The introduction of rail fare capping from next year is expected to

encourage modal shift from private cars to public transport. The GM Mayor noted that current funding from central Government was insufficient to meet GM's transport ambitions. He highlighted the potential for new revenue-raising mechanisms, such as a tourist levy, which was currently being explored.

Members expressed support for the aspirations of the Live Well model but raised concerns about its implementation within their local community. They reported that, since the last meeting, a staff member from Trafford South Live Well, who had been a valued presence, had been redeployed, resulting in significant local dissatisfaction. Members noted receiving numerous emails from partner organisations, including housing providers, expressing frustration and disappointment at the redeployment decision. They felt this reflected both the positive impact of the individual and the negative consequences of how the Live Well rollout had been experienced locally. Concerns were also raised about the fairness of the redeployment process, specifically regarding rumours that some coordinators were given more time than others to appeal decisions. Members asked whether the GM Mayor could engage with NHS England and the Integrated Care Board to review the fairness and consistency of the redeployment process and its impact on communities. The GM Mayor acknowledged concerns raised about inconsistencies in the Live Well programme and committed to investigating the specific case mentioned. He noted that some of the imbalance may be linked to wider challenges within the NHS, particularly the Integrated Care Board (ICB), which has faced staffing uncertainty due to required headcount reductions without a clear financial plan or pathway for voluntary redundancies. He recognised that this had created a difficult working environment and a sense of limbo for many staff. While not making excuses, the GM Mayor emphasised the need to protect the Live Well programme through these challenges. He also acknowledged broader concerns about discrepancies in how staff were being transferred and confirmed that these issues would be looked into further.

Members raised a follow-up question regarding the delivery of the 10,000 energy-efficient social rent homes target. It was suggested that, while the overall ambition

was set at the GM level, there may be a need for each local authority to confirm its minimum contribution to ensure fair and balanced delivery across the boroughs. Members proposed that the GM Mayor meet with housing leads to agree a timeline by which each local authority would commit to a baseline contribution. This would help prevent disparities in delivery and ensure that no borough is left behind, promoting fairness and shared responsibility across the city region. The GM Mayor reiterated that the Delivery Plan was a collective document and confirmed he would be open to amending it if the committee felt a clearer commitment was needed. He acknowledged that while the current approach allowed flexibility, there was a risk that some boroughs may not contribute equally. He noted that when the 10,000 target was first proposed, it was based on a notional figure of 1,000 homes per borough. If members were comfortable with that, it could be formalised in the plan. The GM Mayor suggested that a discussion with housing leads could help establish a minimum contribution from each authority and ensure fairness. He shared data showing that, since 2010, GM had been in deficit in terms of social housing delivery, with only two boroughs, Salford and Trafford, currently building more social homes than they were losing. He emphasised the importance of reversing this trend and getting all boroughs to a “tipping point” where they were building more homes than they were losing. He welcomed further proposals from the Committee on how housing targets could be revised to support this ambition. Officers advised that each local authority had included its minimum housing contribution within its own local strategy, collectively adding up to the GM -wide target of 10,000 homes. Officers offered to share a breakdown of those figures outside the meeting so members could see the specific allocations for each borough. It was also noted that the Committee’s November work programme included a review of the investment pipeline and integrated planning, which would cover key housing sites across the districts. Officers welcomed the opportunity to bring this information back to the Committee and acknowledged the importance of monitoring progress against targets. Regarding the format of the Delivery Plan, officers cautioned that breaking down targets by local authority across every delivery line could make the document overly complex. However, they were open to feedback and willing to explore ways to include more local-level detail if that would be helpful to Members.

The Chair noted that the Committee would be reviewing the investment pipeline in more detail at its next meeting. In light of the discussions held during this meeting, the Chair suggested that members note the points raised so they can be considered in the context of the investment pipeline and integrated planning related agenda items at future meetings. Members were asked to hold their thoughts for now and allow the current discussion to conclude before reaching a resolution on this item. The Chair acknowledged the validity of the points raised and confirmed they would be revisited as part of the Committee's ongoing work.

Members raised concerns about the level of stakeholder ownership in delivering the ambitions set out in the GMS. While the strategy included bold goals, such as becoming a top 10 European tourist destination, members questioned whether the right stakeholders were involved in shaping and owning those ambitions. It was suggested that key industry partners, such as representatives from the hospitality sector, hotel operators, and Manchester Airport, should be actively engaged. Members emphasised that achieving such ambitions would require serious conversations about infrastructure and service standards, including improvements to Manchester Airport's railway station. The discussion highlighted the need to move beyond general stakeholder engagement and focus on building genuine ownership across sectors to ensure realistic and effective delivery of the strategy. The GM Mayor advised that the ambition for GM to become a top 10 global tourist destination was both legitimate and achievable. He emphasised that once this ambition was formally agreed by the GMCA and its Committees, it should be actively promoted through partners such as Marketing Manchester. He suggested that this shared ambition could help galvanise the tourism sector, encouraging collaboration across hotels, hospitality, and cultural venues. The GM Mayor reflected on the growth of the city region over the past decade, noting the expansion of areas like the city centre and MediaCity, and the rise in public transport usage. He stressed the importance of setting bold but credible goals that stakeholders can rally behind, while avoiding targets that could be dismissed or ridiculed. He acknowledged that delivering on these ambitions would require mobilisation beyond Committee discussions, involving active engagement and

leadership across sectors. The GM Mayor added that while the ambition may be a stretch, it was necessary to inspire action and ensure GM continued to grow as a leading destination. The GM Mayor advised that while improvements to the physical condition of Manchester Airport station were needed, a key change was the upcoming fare simplification. This would introduce a flat fare between the airport and the city centre, replacing the current system where multiple fares apply depending on the service used, something that has been confusing for visitors. He noted that GM was evolving into a city comparable to major European destinations, and that simplification was part of a broader effort to modernise and accelerate progress.

Members raised a point regarding the system capacity within GMCA to lead the scale of change proposed in the Delivery Plan. It was noted that the plan involved significant system transformation and changes to the fabric of communities across GM. Members questioned whether the current committee-led model was sufficient to manage such a complex programme and suggested exploring alternative approaches, such as appointing a dedicated delivery partner, to support implementation in key areas. The GM Mayor highlighted the significance of the new 10-year investment pipeline, developed in collaboration with local authority leads. He noted that the Combined Authority would begin allocating funding from GM's own resources, including borrowing and contributions from partners such as the GM Pension Fund and the National Wealth Fund. He explained that allocations would be made quarterly or biannually to support local regeneration projects. Alongside this, new ways of working were being introduced, including the potential expansion of Mayoral Development Corporations with the GM Mayor citing Stockport as a successful example and suggested Middleton could benefit from a similar approach. He emphasised that the Delivery Plan reflected a wider shift in how GM operates, with GMCA building capacity to better support local regeneration efforts and ensure a steady flow of projects.

Members noted that the current Delivery Plan appeared to place full responsibility for delivery on GMCA, which did not reflect the reality of shared responsibilities across the system. It was suggested that the plan should clearly identify which

partners or organisations were responsible for delivering specific actions, so that accountability could be properly tracked and maintained. Officers acknowledged this feedback and agreed it was important to show who was responsible for each item to support accountability. They noted that this was the first time all activity across GM had been brought together in one place, making it a useful tool not only for committees but also for those delivering the work. The plan was helping to drive collaboration across public and private sectors, and stakeholders should be able to see their area of work reflected in it. Officers confirmed the plan would be published on the Together We Are GM website by the end of the year and updated regularly to ensure transparency.

Member raised concerns about the ambition to approve 75,000 new homes by 2030, highlighting a specific issue in Rochdale. A forthcoming planning application for around 1,000 homes included a proposal for a new primary school, which was no longer needed due to falling pupil numbers and potential school closures. The member noted that the school was included in the original Places for Everyone plan over 15 years ago, and its continued presence in the application could cause confusion and public frustration. They warned that the lack of flexibility in the planning process may delay approval and could be a barrier to meeting housing targets if similar issues arise elsewhere. The GM Mayor responded to concerns about outdated infrastructure requirements in planning applications. While not commenting on specific cases, he emphasised the need for flexibility in planning, recognising how much GM had changed since work began on the Spatial Framework in 2015. He supported an adaptive, iterative approach to planning that reflects current needs, such as shifting from a primary school to a GP surgery if demographics had changed. He stressed that local authorities should assess what infrastructure was genuinely needed to support development and use the Delivery Plan to guide decisions in line with the region's evolving priorities. Members again raised concerns about the lack of flexibility in the planning process, particularly in relation to the issue raised in Rochdale. It was noted that some planning decisions appeared to be constrained by the Places for Everyone framework, despite changing local needs. The GM Mayor responded that while he was not familiar with the specific application mentioned, he did not believe the framework should prevent

necessary adjustments. He acknowledged the importance of exploring these concerns further and suggested that local officers and planning teams should be consulted to clarify the situation.

Members highlighted issues around school attendance, noting that there was a misconception that children were simply not engaging, when in fact many have unmet special educational needs. It was acknowledged that the special needs system was likely to face increased pressure in the coming years. Members appreciated that the plan under discussion offered inclusive pathways for young people, regardless of their individual needs, and stressed that ambition must be supported by accessible routes to success. The GM Mayor stated that the concerns raised were extremely valid and widely shared across GM leadership. It was noted that the strategy and delivery plan aimed to address these concerns by focusing on creating clear pathways for every young person in GM. The GM Mayor reflected on the metaphor of visible skyscrapers but invisible paths, suggesting that while change was evident, young people may not yet see their place within it.

The importance of young people engaging with and seeing themselves in a changing and potentially more prosperous future was emphasised. He felt that achieving this would significantly enhance the region's impact and success, aligning with the ambitions outlined in the plan. The GM Mayor provided the Committee with an update on a recent meeting with the GM SEND Board, which included directors of public health, secondary headteachers, and children's services leads. The Board had expressed concern about anticipated reforms to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), which were causing anxiety due to increasing costs and sustainability issues. It was suggested that current fragmented spending might be better utilised through integrated approaches, such as investing in school-based speech and language therapists or child psychologists. The discussion explored whether this would be a space for a GM-wide template. He advised that the ambition should be to challenge existing approaches and consider fundamentally different models, ideally driven by local districts rather than imposed from the GM level. The GM Mayor advised that he had a further meeting planned before the end of the year to look explore the possibilities. He added that the Live Well ambitions applied to early years as well as other stages of life and as discussions were

underway regarding GM's approach to SEND he suggested that a more coherent and consolidated outcome should be brought back to the Committee once those discussions had concluded.

Members asked about the implications of social housing targets, expressing support for the principle of setting specific targets at a local level. Reference was made to the situation in Rochdale, where recent news had highlighted the Seven Sisters development in the town centre. Members noted that nearly 750 social housing flats were affected, with over 550 currently empty and the remaining 229 tenants reportedly being asked to leave with little notice. Concern was raised about the significant impact that would have on the borough's housing crisis, particularly for those on the waiting list, given the limited availability of flats each year.

Members queried whether any action could be taken in response to this situation and invited comments due to the level of concern. The GM Mayor expressed surprise and concern at recent developments regarding College Bank in Rochdale. He noted that a task force had previously been established to explore options for addressing the challenges in the area, involving colleagues from Rochdale Council, senior representatives from Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, and the GMCA. He stated that the news had come unexpectedly and acknowledged that action was required to better understand the situation and explore available options. He emphasised the importance of transparency and the need to provide clarity for residents, both within College Bank and across Rochdale more broadly. The GM Mayor welcomed the forthcoming renters' reform legislation and stressed that the situation at College Bank must not be left unresolved. The GM Mayor advised that he would provide the Committee with an update once discussions had taken place with the Leader of Rochdale.

Members stated that the volume of traffic across GM, particularly on the M60 and surrounding areas, had become a significant concern due to increased congestion and a growing population. It was noted that this congestion was contributing to a rise in accidents. Members welcomed the strategic plans outlined in the Delivery Plan to address these issues, including the ambition that by 2040, no one would be killed or seriously injured on GM's roads and acknowledged the importance of these

safety improvements and supported the continued development of the Bee Network and associated infrastructure to enhance road safety and reduce traffic-related harm. The GM Mayor stated that while there were signs of improvement in the public transport system, concerns remained about the ability to deliver the major infrastructure required to support the city region's current and projected growth. It was noted that there had been a lack of clarity and progress on strategic rail infrastructure, particularly east-west and north-south connectivity, which had been unresolved for over two years following the cancellation of previous plans. The GM Mayor expressed frustration at the absence of a successor strategy, especially regarding the Manchester element, and highlighted the risks this posed to the successful delivery of the plan. He referenced specific areas of concern, including the M60 corridor, where recent serious incidents and persistent congestion, particularly around junctions such as Worsley and Prestwich, were cited as evidence of infrastructure under strain. While the planned improvements at Simister Island were welcomed, it was acknowledged that this represented only a small part of the wider need. He emphasised that without a clear infrastructure plan, the ambitions of the Delivery Plan, such as achieving the right mix of travel modes and the Vision Zero target for road deaths, were at risk. He added that continued lobbying beyond the scope of the current plan would be essential to secure the necessary national investment and strategic clarity.

Members stated that the region must continue to strive towards becoming fairer and more inclusive. It was acknowledged that significant inequalities existed across communities, with notable disparities between boroughs such as Manchester and Trafford, and Bury and Trafford. Members highlighted that in areas like Bury, issues such as child poverty and poor housing remained prevalent and required urgent attention. While the strategy was welcomed, members emphasised the need for it to actively address these inequalities by bringing boroughs together to tackle shared challenges. It was agreed that a more collaborative and targeted approach was essential to ensure that all communities across GM could benefit equally from future growth and development. The GM Mayor stated that while the growth experienced across GM over the past decade was welcomed, it was acknowledged that disparities between different areas may have widened, or at least the

perception of inequality had increased. He emphasised that the city centre's vibrancy benefits the wider region, but acknowledged the concerns raised about the concentration of employment in specific locations and the lack of progress in closing the gap between boroughs. He noted that the Delivery Plan had a clear objective to ensure growth was felt across all ten districts, with housing delivery and infrastructure investment being key indicators. The financial risk associated with the investment pipeline was recognised, particularly as GM was borrowing at a regional level to support development. It was stressed that focusing solely on safe bets in the city centre would replicate national patterns of unequal investment, and instead, the plan must include projects in areas such as Bury and Atom Valley, even if returns were longer-term. Specific projects such as Bury Interchange were cited as examples of local opportunities that needed to be realised to fulfil the plan's ambitions.

Members stated that they had drawn inspiration from the Daresbury innovation model, which had successfully supported small, business-focused enterprises through early development stages. It was noted that this approach had been replicated in Tameside, where small businesses were supported under a shared umbrella, nurtured through growth, and retained within the borough as they expanded. This was highlighted as a local success story contributing to national business development. Members reflected on the strength of the Daresbury model, which had fostered global interest in local innovation, with international visitors regularly engaging with ideas generated just miles away. The question was raised as to whether GM was similarly capitalising on its innovation potential, particularly through institutions such as MIDAS and Marketing Manchester, and whether the region was effectively connected to innovation hubs like Daresbury to ensure that ideas were being translated into opportunities for local businesses, young people, and the wider workforce. The GM Mayor stated that significant efforts had been made to foster collaboration beyond GM, particularly with Warrington and Cheshire, recognising the shared economic ecosystem across the region. He highlighted the role of MIDAS as a long-standing institution that had delivered substantial inward investment, outperforming other city regions in attracting foreign direct investment over the past two decades. He also reflected on successful local initiatives, such as

the development of small business hubs in Tameside, and emphasised the importance of creating the right conditions for high-value sectors to thrive. Reference was made to Atom Valley as a key strategic site, where ambitious local authorities had resisted low-grade development in favour of high-value innovation. The recent ground-breaking of the University of Manchester's SMMC facility at Atom Valley was welcomed as an example of academic-business collaboration. It was noted that GM's productivity had steadily improved, with new figures expected to show performance at or above the UK average. Of the 238,000 jobs created in the last decade, 52% were in higher-value sectors likely to boost regional productivity. The GM Mayor added that continued focus on innovation, infrastructure, and talent development was essential to replicate models like Daresbury and ensure GM remained competitive and inclusive in the next phase of growth.

Members welcomed the standardisation of train fares, noting that it would encourage greater use of rail services and likely lead to increased passenger demand and asked whether there was a clear plan in place to expand services in line with rising demand and ensure sufficient capacity for future growth. The GM Mayor stated that current rail services remained inadequate, with reduced timetables still in place, particularly at weekends, due to ongoing disputes around conductor contracts. While some progress had been made, it was acknowledged that the quality and reliability of services continued to fall short of expectations. He welcomed the forthcoming integration of rail into the Bee Network, noting that the changes due to be introduced from December next year would represent the most significant shift in rail experience since privatisation. The first phase, including the Northern-operated Stalybridge to Manchester Victoria line (via Ashton), was expected to bring noticeable improvements, including unified branding and, eventually, contactless payment options across rail, tram, and bus services under a single fare cap. It was noted that this integrated system would enhance the attractiveness of areas such as Tameside for investment and improve connectivity across GM. However, he emphasised that further work was needed to increase service frequency, ideally to four trains per hour, and to ensure all stations were accessible and fit for purpose and plans were in place to begin upgrading stations.

He acknowledged that while the Bee Network rail integration was a major enabler, unresolved national issues, such as infrastructure constraints and workforce agreements, continued to pose challenges.

The Chair noted that the group had undertaken a comprehensive review of the draft Delivery Plan, recognising it as a work in progress that would require ongoing engagement. The importance of partner and stakeholder involvement was emphasised, with a request that the Committee be kept informed of the outcomes of that engagement, as referenced by the GM Mayor. It was highlighted that the Committee had a role both in supporting the Delivery Plan and in ensuring the plan contributed to the development of the Committee's own work. The Chair referred to the upcoming work programme, noting that while the next month's agenda was full, the following month had capacity for further items. Members were invited to suggest specific areas for deeper scrutiny, which could be fed into the planning process. The Chair proposed that the Committee consider a more structured and in-depth examination of selected strands of the Delivery Plan, rather than attempting to cover all aspects at once. This approach would allow the Committee to influence and investigate key areas more effectively. Members were content to take this forward as a way of shaping future scrutiny activity.

Members discussed the potential value of presenting both GM-wide and local-level data within the Delivery Plan. It was suggested that having a dual approach could enhance visibility and accountability around delivery, though members acknowledged the risk of becoming overly prescriptive, which could hinder implementation. It was noted that while the GMCA should not encroach on the autonomy of individual boroughs, a balanced approach, where districts take proactive responsibility for meeting shared ambitions, could be beneficial. Members agreed that any inclusion of localised data should be targeted and purposeful, rather than applied uniformly across all areas of the plan. Members expressed concern that introducing local comparisons could lead to uninformed criticism of individual authorities and emphasised the importance of maintaining the GMCA's collaborative structure, which respects the independence of boroughs. The

Committee agreed to reflect further on the concept and consider its implications for future reporting and delivery.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the Greater Manchester Strategy Delivery Plan.
2. That the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Greater Manchester Strategy Delivery Plan are noted.
3. That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee would receive an update on the outcomes of work that is underway to re-engage GM partners and stakeholders on the GMS & Delivery Plan.
4. That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider how the GMS Delivery Plan can support its work programme.
5. That clarity would be sought from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) on whether the current target, 50% of journeys by walking, cycling, and public transport by 2040, was sufficiently ambitious, and whether further measures were needed to accelerate progress.
6. That clarity would be sought on whether the Delivery Plan provided sufficient benchmarking to assess progress against active travel targets, including the delivery of 160km of Bee Active routes.
7. That clarity would be sought from NHS England and the ICB on the fairness of Live Well staff redeployment.
8. That Officers would share borough-level housing contribution figures outside the meeting.
9. That an update on the Live Well and SEND approach would be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
10. That an update on College Bank following discussions with the Leader of Rochdale would be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the proposed Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme for be noted.
2. That Members use the Forward Plan of Key Decisions to identify any potential areas for further scrutiny.

O&SC 36/25

FUTURE MEETING DATES

RESOLVED /-

That the following dates for the rest of the municipal year be noted:

- Wednesday 26 November 2025
- Wednesday 10 December 2025
- Wednesday 28 January 2026
- Wednesday 11 February 2026
- Wednesday 25 February 2026
- Wednesday 25 March 2026