

**Minutes of the meeting of the Bee Network Committee
held on Thursday, 25th September 2025 at Transport for Greater Manchester, 2
Piccadilly Place, Manchester**

PRESENT:

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien (in the Chair)	GMCA
Councillor Hamid Khurram	Bolton
Councillor Alan Quinn	Bury
Councillor Anthony McCaul	Manchester
Councillor Chris Goodwin	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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chris Barnes	TfGM
Melinda Edwards	GMCA
Martin Lax	TfGM
Richard Nickson	TfGM
Lee Teasdale	GMCA
Danny Vaughan	TfGM

BNC/68/25 Welcome and Apologies

1. That apologies be received from Mayor Andy Burnham, Councillor Tracy Rawlins, Councillor Josh Charters, Councillor Howard Sykes, Councillor Max

Woodvine, Councillor Stephen Homer, Councillor Paul Prescott, Caroline Simpson, Vernon Everitt, Steve Warrener & Fran Wilkinson.

BNC/69/25 Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED/-

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

BNC/70/25 Chairs Announcements and Urgent Business

Bee Network Bus Strike Action

The Chair opened by inviting Danny Vaughan, Chief Network Officer of TfGM, to provide the Committee with an update on the current bus strikes taking place and the actions taken to mitigate the impacts upon residents.

A first ever round of strike action on the Bee Network had taken place over the weekend of 20-21 September and had proved to be disruptive. The strike action had been undertaken by drivers of three of the franchised operators and impacted around two thirds of the full network. Ticket acceptance was put in place on the tram network and for the first time, the train network. However, this did result in an intensely busy transport network over the weekend with a number of large-scale sporting and entertainment events having taken place.

It was likely that there would be further disruption entering October, with further strike days currently planned. Work was taking place to ensure that passengers were fully informed of alternative arrangements being put in place. Given that the next strike action was due to take place during the working week, this could have a particular impact on tram services during peak commute times.

Resolving the disputes was currently the direct responsibility of the operators, and it was understood that talks with the unions continued to take place with a view to coming

to an agreement as soon as possible. TfGM, together with the GM Mayor, were prepared to look at the longer-term approach to ensuring that there were no outliers on pay grading.

Comments and Questions

Members emphasised the need to find a resolution as soon as possible. Many impacted areas were not served by Metrolink services or train stations, which meant that they were unable to attend work without paying for taxis. Which in some cases were alleged to be taking advantage with particularly high fares. It was advised that as much pressure as possible was being put on both sides to find the 'common ground' to resolve the disputes as quickly as possible, and the taxi price rises were a very unfortunate consequence of the additional demand for taxis seen, particularly over the weekend.

Members noted that the grievances raised by bus drivers expanded beyond merely pay issues, with concerns around current terms and conditions being a key factor for many. Was there a direct forum to hear these bus driver concerns and undertake work around cab design, routing and rest breaks without purely relying on the goodwill of the franchise operators? Members also expressed concern that drivers operating under the 'Bee Network' were on different pay scales and differing terms of conditions for the same roles depending on which operator they worked for.

It was advised that the Mayor had established a Transport Workforce Engagement Board (TWEB) which was in effect a 'social partnership' between TfGM as the representative of the public sector, the relevant trade unions and the operators representing the private sector. TWEB had proved to be an effective forum for allowing TfGM to broker in a number of areas such as the 'License for Greater Manchester' which now allowed drivers to move from one operator to another without having to restart at the base scale of pay. Work was also taking place to develop a collective pension scheme. There was also agreement to ensure the provision of extra toilet facilities all over the network, something that is unlikely to have happened under the deregulated system.

It was noted that some residents, particularly older residents, had been found waiting at bus stops on strikes routes unaware of the action taking place. How were these demographics being reached to ensure that they were fully informed? It was advised that TfGM's Operational Control Centre had been monitoring stops, and this issue was picked up quickly on the first day of strike action. Staff were sent to drive around some of the key routes to spot and help people wherever possible. The same would be done for any further strike action.

Members expressed concern that a number of students had been unable to attend schools and colleges. It was advised that work had taken place to try and ensure that as many school services as possible were kept running but this had not been possible for as many as would have been liked, as unfortunately 75% of children used the general network rather than the dedicated school services.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the update on the current status of planned bus strikes across the region be received.

BNC/71/25 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 19 August 2025

RESOLVED/-

1. That the minutes of the meeting of 19 August 2025 be approved as a true and correct record.

BNC/72/25 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. Key points highlighted included:

- The Spending Review had confirmed a £2.74bn Transport for City Regions allocation for Greater Manchester for the period 2027-2032, and this would form

part of Greater Manchester's Integrated Settlement. Work continued to take place to develop the programme for this period, in conjunction with the development of the new Local Transport Plan.

- In relation to the current period, notable recent achievements included the completion of the extensive programme of Metrolink track renewal works in Manchester city centre; completion of work to introduce a new communications system across the Metrolink network; and the granting of planning consent for the first phase of the redevelopment of the Bury Interchange Scheme.
- There were a number of requests for the granting of approvals and funding drawdowns across the bus infrastructure; interchanges; rail; school travel; streets for all; and active travel programmes.

Comments and Questions

Members asked if the scheme for Grimshaw Lane in Middleton had been given careful consideration following its submission. It was advised that the strategic importance of this scheme was understood, and assessment of the proposals submitted was currently taking place.

Members stated that it would be helpful if a recurrent funding source could be found for School Streets so that more support could be given to schools in running these. It was advised that longer term recurrent funding would be ideal and one of the benefits of the future single settlement would be the ability to plan over the longer term.

Members referenced the Access for All scheme at Hindley Station, stating that the schemes were due to go live in the early new year – was there a definite date now in place? It was advised that a definitive timescale would be provided to Cllr Vickers.

Members noted that trials had recently taken place for ANPR controlled School Streets and it was asked if feedback had been received from these trials with a view to further rollouts? It was advised that a local guide had been produced and shared with all local authority officers, the 'jury remained out' on the purpose of ANPR within GM and there remained questions around how to best manage and deploy the technology in terms

of a local or centralised approach. These would be debates that would take place as part of School Streets learning.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the current position, recent progress and key milestones on the transport infrastructure pipeline be noted.
2. That the drawdown of Integrated Settlement (CRSTS) and Active Travel funding and associated scheme progression be approved as follows:
 - Bus Pinch Points and Maintenance: £4.67m;
 - City Centre Radials: A6 Wellington Road North (Early Interventions Package): Full Business Case;
 - Improving Journeys: Rochdale – Oldham – Ashton: Royton Town Centre: £4.4m and Full Business Case;
 - Bury Interchange: £2.3m;
 - Access for All Improvements Tranche 3: £2.10m;
 - School Travel Programme: £4m and Full Business Case (Pelican to Puffin Crossings);
 - Wigan: A580 Lane Head Improvements Phase 1: £0.56m and Full Business Case;
 - Manchester: Cycleway / Wilmslow Road Junction Improvements: £1.91m (£1.36m Integrated Settlement funding and £0.55m Active Travel Funding 4 funding) and Full Business Case;
 - Manchester: Levenshulme Active Neighbourhood: £0.2m; and
 - Stockport: Bramhall Park to A6: £0.5m.

BNC/73/25 Date of Next Meeting

Members were advised that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Thursday 30th October 2025 at TfGM Offices, 2 Piccadilly Place.