BEE NETWORK

Bee Network Committee

Date: Thursday 27th November 2025

Subject: Transport Infrastructure Pipeline

Report of: Chris Barnes, Network Director Infrastructure, TfGM

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on delivery of a pipeline of transport infrastructure improvements to support the Bee Network: a high-quality, affordable and fully integrated public transport and active travel system which can support sustainable economic growth and the wider GM Integrated Pipeline. The report makes a number of recommendations for members to support the continued development and delivery of the pipeline programme.

Recommendation:

The Committee is requested to:

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

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

Contact Officers

Chris Barnes, Network Director Infrastructure, TfGM chris.barnes@tfgm.com

Richard Nickson, Network Director Active Travel, TfGM richard.nickson@tfgm.com

Equalities Impact, Carbon, and Sustainability Assessment:

Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

Insert text

Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion	G	
Health	G	
Resilience and Adaptation	G	
Housing		
Economy		
Mobility and Connectivity	G	
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	
Consumption and Production		
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		

Further Assessment(s): Equalities Impact Assessment and Carbon Assessment

G	Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	A	Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	R	Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	RR	Negative impacts overall.

Carbon Assessment

Overall Score

Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation
New Build residential	N/A	
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A	
New build non-residential (including public) buildings	N/A	
Transport		
Active travel and public transport		
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access	N/A	
Access to amenities		
Vehicle procurement		
Land Use		
Land use		

No associated carbon impacts expected.	High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.	Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.	Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.	Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

Risk Management

The recommendations of this report will enable the continued development and delivery of the Bee Network infrastructure pipeline and prioritised infrastructure expenditure. A programme risk register is maintained, updated and reviewed regularly.

Legal Considerations

There is a significant contract workstream supporting the delivery of the Capital Programme which is being supported and delivered by both internal and external legal teams. The Legal Delivery/Funding Agreements in respect of the allocation of MCF, Active Travel and CRSTS funding will be produced and implemented for full scheme and development costs approvals as appropriate using the template agreements agreed with GMCA.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

Referenced throughout the report.

Financial Consequences – Capital

Referenced throughout the report.

Number of attachments to the report: 0

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background Papers

- 24 June 2022 – City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement – Final Scheme list
- 30 September 2022 – GMCA CRSTS Governance and Assurance
- 26 May 2023 – GMCA Transport Capital Programme (re-baselined Scheme List)
- 30 June 2023 – GMCA CRSTS Assurance (Outline and Full Business Case stages)
- 26 October 2023 – BNC CRSTS Assurance Updates (Outline and Full Business Case stages)
- 25 July 2024 – BNC CRSTS Annual Report 2023-24 and updated Delivery Plan
- 31 January 2025 – GMCA Transport Infrastructure Pipeline
- 30 May 2025 – GMCA Integrated Pipeline
- 27 June 2025 – GMCA CRSTS1 Reprioritisation
- 22 August 2025 – GMCA Active Travel Funding
- 22 August 2025 - Business Case Development for Rapid Transit Lines in GM

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution?

Yes.

Exemption from call in

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

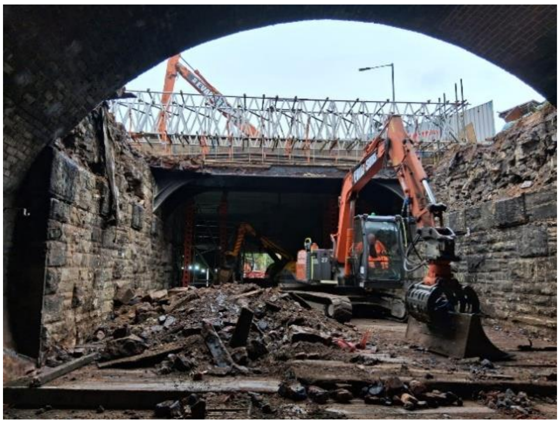
No.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Bee Network is Greater Manchester’s plan for a high-quality, affordable and fully integrated public transport and active travel system for the people and businesses of Greater Manchester. It is fundamental to delivering sustainable economic growth, increased productivity and the city region’s objectives, set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy, by connecting people with education, jobs and opportunity, unlocking development, enabling housing growth, acting as a catalyst for regeneration, reducing carbon emissions and supporting social inclusion and active and healthy lifestyles.

1.2. Key to the delivery of the Bee Network is a programme of investment in transport infrastructure. The transport infrastructure pipeline is delivering a wide range of schemes to improve the performance, resilience and customer experience of using the Bee Network, including new stations, stops and interchanges; bus priority measures; highways maintenance; a world-class walking, wheeling and cycling network; expanded cycle hire; loan services to support integrated ticketing; and asset renewal to maintain and improve network safety and resilience.

1.3. Circa £987.5m of the £1.27bn allocated to the transport infrastructure pipeline has been released to date and works continue to be delivered across Greater Manchester. Recent progress includes the continuation of Metrolink renewal activity with completion of the structural renewal of Whitefield Tunnel on the Bury Line; completion of pedestrian safety improvements at two junctions on the A56 in Trafford as part of the Bus Infrastructure Programme; completion of the main contract works for the Salford Central Rail Station Improvements and the granting of full planning consent for Tyldesley Travel Hub, which is located adjacent to the Leigh Guided Busway.



Whitefield Tunnel Renewal during the demolition work

1.4. In June 2025, the Spending Review confirmed GM's Transport for City Regions (TCR) funding allocation of £2.47bn for the period April 2027 to March 2032, which will form part of Greater Manchester's Integrated Settlement. Work to develop a detailed Delivery Plan for this funding is being progressed in conjunction with the ongoing work that is taking place in relation to Greater Manchester's new Local Transport Plan (GM Transport Strategy 2050 and Delivery Plan). The Draft GM Transport Strategy 2050 and Delivery Plan is also on the agenda for this meeting and will be considered by the GMCA. Subject to GMCA approval, consultation on the Draft GM Transport Strategy 2050 and Delivery Plan is planned to commence on 1st December 2025.

2. Integrated Settlement (CRSTS) Funding Drawdown Requests and Scheme Progression

Metrolink Next Generation Vehicles and Oldham–Rochdale–Heywood–Bury Tram-Train 'Pathfinder'

2.1. In August 2025, the Committee considered a report ("Business Case Development for Rapid Transit Lines in GM") recommending the continued development of the Oldham–Rochdale–Heywood–Bury Tram-Train 'Pathfinder' Outline Business Case (OBC). The same report also highlighted the importance of providing additional capacity for the Metrolink network and set out the intention to specify and procure – subject to approvals and funding – a fleet of 'Next Generation Vehicles' for Metrolink with both tram and tram-train variants.

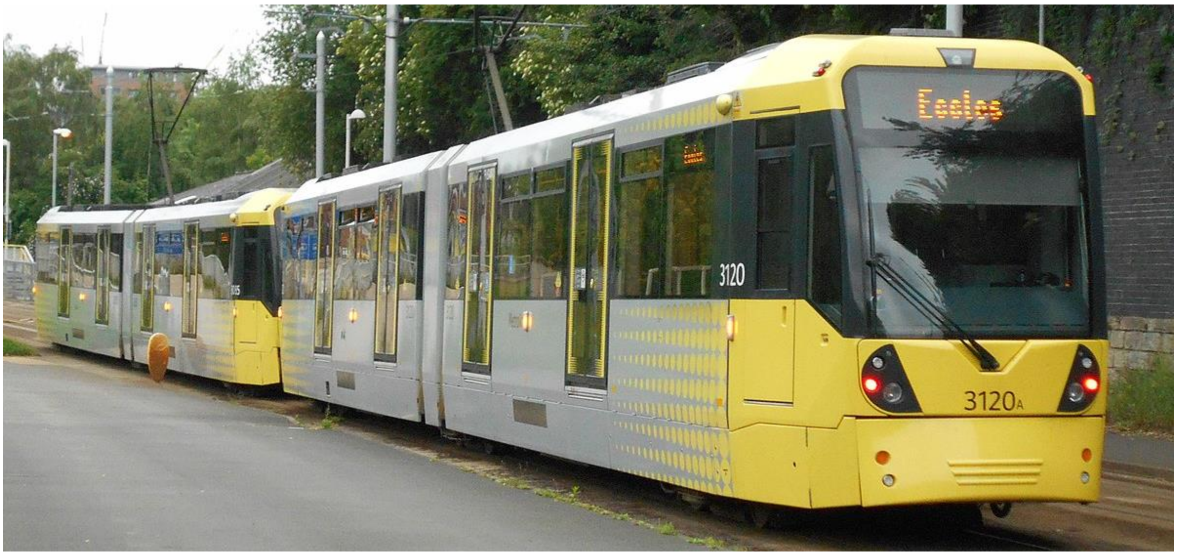
2.2. Alongside this report, a funding drawdown to support the development of the wider pipeline of new Metrolink lines and extensions was included in the August 2025 'Transport Infrastructure Pipeline' report. Following the conclusion of planning for the next stages of work, the drawdown request for continuing development of the Tram-Train 'Pathfinder' and the Metrolink 'Next Generation Vehicle' fleet is now included in this report as detailed below.

2.3. As described in the August 2025 reports, the Oldham–Rochdale–Heywood–Bury Tram-Train 'Pathfinder' (comprising both the infrastructure and the vehicles needed to run the service) was prioritised for CRSTS funding and is now midway through its Outline Business Case (OBC stage). Business case approvals for this scheme are 'retained' by the Department for Transport due to the scheme's overall value, time-span across multiple investment periods, and requirement for integration with the national rail network. The next Government investment decision point will be the OBC ‘Conditional Approval’ gateway.

2.4. The ‘Pathfinder’ scheme is intended to unlock tram-train technology for GM, as well as providing a valuable rapid transit service across Atom Valley in its own right. Careful consideration will be needed as to how tram-train services would share the corridor via Heywood with the East Lancashire Railway, and the technical work to support this is a key part of the work on the OBC.

2.5. As also described in the August 2025 reports, the Metrolink fleet currently comprises 147 M5000 trams, however new vehicles will be required to provide additional capacity to accommodate and enable growth on the existing Metrolink network, and to allow new lines and extensions to be added. The design life of the M5000s was assumed to be around 30 years, and they could therefore start to require replacement in the late 2030s. Despite a programme of ongoing maintenance, the existing fleet will also become less reliable as it ages. Whilst in the near-term there will be a focus on maximising vehicle availability and service patterns, there is a limit to this. Acquisition of a ‘Next Generation Vehicle’ fleet for Metrolink (and the associated stabling and depot arrangements) is therefore critical.

2.6. Development work is therefore progressing to specify a Metrolink ‘Next Generation Vehicle’ fleet and to prepare to procure it, subject to approvals and funding. The intention is that this new fleet would complement the existing M5000 fleet. The new fleet would differ from the existing fleet in terms of all Next Generation Vehicles being ‘double’ length (c.60m) and fully walkthrough. This would offer additional capacity compared to the existing ‘double’ M5000 tram formations, which have space at the centre of the formation that is not available to passengers as it is occupied by driving cabs and couplers.



'Double' M5000 tram formation, with space at the centre unavailable to passengers

2.7. The Metrolink Next Generation Vehicle fleet is anticipated to be specified and procured with both tram and tram-train variants. This means that some vehicles would be equipped solely for tram operations within the existing Metrolink network, whilst other vehicles would be equipped for tram-train operations that run off the existing Metrolink onto the National Rail network (the tram-train variants could, for example, have on-board batteries for where they run on unelectrified lines).

2.8. Approval is now sought to drawdown £5.7m into these schemes' respective development budgets to complete the OBC work described above. Completion of the 'Pathfinder' OBC is anticipated in late 2026, with submission to Government anticipated in early 2027 and a target date for starting construction in 2028, in line with the announcement made as part of the Greater Manchester Strategy launch earlier this year. Completion of the OBC for the Metrolink 'Next Generation Vehicle' fleet (and its stabling and depot arrangements, etc.) is also anticipated in late 2026, to support a decision on proceeding to procurement.

Tyldesley Travel Hub including Park & Ride

2.9. The Travel Hubs approach is an evolution of GM's existing Park & Ride (P&R) concept, which promotes Bee Network integration by improving connecting journeys to and from our rapid transit stops and stations. This allows our existing and prospective customers to reach our tram, train and guided busway services more easily, resulting in fewer medium-length car journeys on trips to the regional centre, often on some of our most congested highways, and in turn reducing carbon emissions.

2.10. The Tyldesley Astley Street busway stop is the first pilot site for this approach, with a second pilot site set to follow at Hindley. Meeting a longstanding commitment to improve access to the Bee Network and address parking concerns in the town of Tyldesley, the P&R will roughly treble the current capacity of c.50 spaces and will include additional accessible bays and electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Features such as improved pedestrian access, covered cycle parking, improved street lighting, additional CCTV, new delivery lockers, a designated pick-up and drop-off area and a site office for staff working on the guided busway round out the Travel Hubs approach at Tyldesley, supporting our customers' travel whether during the day or on the night-time V1 service.

2.11. The Tyldesley scheme has now developed to a stage where the detailed design has been completed, planning permission has been granted and a contractor has been procured to construct the works. The budget envelope for the scheme is £4.861m, following appropriate value engineering.

2.12. £1.025m has been drawn down to date, comprising £0.1m of TCF2 funding (approved in August 2021) and Integrated Settlement (CRSTS) funding approved in February 2023 (£0.2m), May 2023 (£0.25m) and March 2024 (£0.475m).

2.13. In line with the local assurance framework, the Full Business Case (FBC) has been reviewed by an independent TfGM officer review panel. Following the conclusion of this review the proposals are deemed to demonstrate the appropriate strategic case, value for money and deliverability required and have been approved in line with the relevant delegated authorities.

2.14. The Bee Network Committee is therefore requested to approve the FBC and drawdown of the remaining £3.836m Integrated Settlement (CRSTS) funding to deliver the scheme and facilitate a start on site in January 2026.

V1 guided busway service to Leigh via Tyldesley Astley Street

Next Phase of Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) Investment

2.15. The Committee is requested to approve, in line with the current plan for the deployment of ZEBs, the drawdown of £59.1m of Integrated Settlement (CRSTS) ZEB funding to enable the procurement of circa 220 Zero Emission Buses that will replace diesel buses predominantly to be deployed in the Oldham and Hyde Road Large Franchises.

2.16. The £59.1m will fund the incremental cost difference between a new zero emission bus and a new Euro VI diesel vehicle.

2.17. These ZEBs will have a significantly positive impact on the environment and air quality, and they will contribute to both the ambition to fully decarbonise the bus fleet and support GM’s ambition to become carbon neutral by 2038. Passengers will also benefit from a modern fleet of buses that incorporate improved standards of passenger ambience and accessibility.

2.18. These ZEBs will represent c.13% of GM’s franchised bus fleet and, alongside other ZEBs currently in delivery/commissioning and those funded by JAQU Clean Air Plan funding, are anticipated to support an increase in ZEBs as a proportion of the GM franchised bus fleet to c.40% compared to the current level of 19%.

Rapid Transit Extensions Package

2.19. The Draft GM Rapid Transit Strategy, considered by Bee Network Committee in July 2024, set out the c.15 emerging priorities for new, extended or converted lines. Following endorsement at this meeting work is progressing on the first formal Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for Stockport-focussed rapid transit expansion.

2.20. A further report to the Bee Network Committee in August 2025 provided an update on the proposed selection and prioritisation of the next two candidate schemes for new lines and extensions. This meeting endorsed the next two business cases proposed to commence as SOC's at stage 1 of the DfT business case process as:

- A Metrolink Airport Western Leg focussed SOC; and
- A North-West Metrolink focussed SOC.

2.21. To date a total of £11.642m has been drawn down to support work on all aspects of the Rapid Transit Extensions Package.

2.22. Bee Network Committee is now requested to approve a further drawdown of £1.305m from the "Powers for 1 Scheme and Development of 2 Schemes" item within the Package to support the commencement of the second SOC focused on the Metrolink Airport Western Leg. This will cover key planned activities in line with the CRSTS1 Delivery Plan, as outlined below:

- Development of an SOC focused on the Metrolink Airport Western Leg, but to also include consideration of wider rapid transit expansion utilising tram-train from the Airport to Stockport and Altrincham / links to the Mid Cheshire Line.
- As part of this work, modelling and appraisal activity, initial design work and the development of cost and carbon estimates commensurate with the SOC stage will be undertaken.

City Centre Radials – A6 Wellington Road North

2.23. The A6 Wellington Road North (WRN) scheme is a key element of Greater Manchester's City Centre Radials Programme, designed to improve public transport and active travel links between Stockport and Manchester City Centre. The scheme supports regional priorities such as decarbonisation, economic growth, and a shift towards sustainable transport modes.

2.24. The Outline Business Case (OBC) was submitted in mid-October and was approved in line with agreed officer delegations. The Committee is requested to approve a drawdown of £2.312m of Integrated Settlement (CRSTS) funding to enable the development of phased Full Business Cases (FBCs) for the scheme.

2.25. The scheme will be delivered in five phases to manage disruption and accelerate benefits. Key risks identified include resource constraints, project dependencies, funding uncertainties, and governance-related delays. Stakeholder engagement and risk management are prioritised to support successful delivery.

2.26. The project is expected to deliver significant benefits, including improved bus journey times, enhanced accessibility, and positive social and environmental impacts. Approval of the requested funding will facilitate the next stage of scheme development and delivery. The first package of work was approved at BNC in September with a planned construction start of January 2026. An additional and more substantial Full Business Case (FBC) work package is anticipated to be submitted to the BNC for approval in late Summer 2026.

3. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

3.1. The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) funded Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) programme is currently in progress, aiming to deploy a minimum of 3,000 low-powered, primarily on-street public electric vehicle (EV) chargers across the city region. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has secured £16.158m of LEVI funding, supplemented by an additional £1.751m from the GM Integrated Settlement (CRSTS) allocation. The first phase of tendering commenced in July 2025, with the contract award expected in Spring 2026.

3.2. The Committee are requested to approve the release of £16.158m LEVI funding and £1.751m Integrated Settlement (CRSTS) funding to enable the LEVI contract to be awarded.

4. Active Travel Funding Requests

Wigan – Atherton & Tyldesley Strategic Links North Phase 1

4.1. The Atherton & Tyldesley Strategic Links North scheme is part of Tranche 4 of Wigan's MCF Active Travel Programme, which focuses on the connections between Leigh, Atherton and Tyldesley town centres. Wigan's Tranche 4 network proposal gained programme entry in March 2019 and was subsequently awarded development funding in June 2020.

4.2. The Phase 1 scheme will utilise quiet streets, local paths and bridleways to link through the green belt from Atherton Railway Station in the north to the Tyldesley Travel hub on the guided busway in the South. The scheme will also provide connections to and through the community of Shakerley and onward links to and through the Logistics North employment site.

4.3. Works include path surfacing/re-surfacing, widening, lighting and gradient easing, in addition to two new crossings and one improved crossing of busy roads and wayfinding.

4.4. The scheme includes for the provision of a self-closing, 2-way bridleway gate. This will allow all users to use the path but will also create an enforcement point where GMP can tackle anti-social behaviour, for example by individuals using off-road motorcycles.

4.5. The Phase 1 scheme has a total delivery cost of £1.56m of which £0.33m initial scheme development costs were funded from TCF and £0.93m is to be funded from the additional £20.7m Active Travel allocation recently confirmed by Government, with the allocation for this scheme being approved by the GMCA in August 2025.

4.6. The balance of £0.3m is proposed to be funded from a reallocation of Mayors' Challenge Fund (MCF) from Leigh St Helen's Road, a Wigan scheme which has realised savings against its approved budget. In line with the local assurance framework, following a review of the Full Business Case (FBC) by an independent TfGM officer review panel the proposals are deemed to demonstrate the appropriate strategic case, value for money and deliverability and have been endorsed by TfGM's Active Travel Programme Board.

4.7. The Committee is therefore requested to approve the FBC and drawdown of £0.93m and to note the reallocation of £0.3m MCF funding to enable Wigan Council to appoint a contractor to deliver the scheme. Subject to approval of the FBC and requested drawdown by this Committee, Wigan Council plan to commence works on site in January 2026, with completion of the scheme currently scheduled for Summer 2026.