

**Minutes of the meeting of the Bee Network Committee
held on Thursday, 11th December 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 Tracey Rawlins	Manchester
Councillor Joshua Charters	Oldham
Councillor Phil Burke	Rochdale
Councillor Mike McCusker	Salford
Councillor Grace Baynham	Stockport
Councillor Jon Byrne	Stockport
Councillor Jacqueline Owen	Tameside
Councillor Aidan Williams	Trafford
Councillor John Vickers	Wigan

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Andy Burnham	GMCA
Dame Sarah Storey	GMCA
Vernon Everitt	GMCA

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

James Baldwin	TfGM
Chris Barnes	TfGM
Melinda Edwards	GMCA
Simon Elliott	TfGM
Martin Lax	TfGM
Lee Teasdale	GMCA
Danny Vaughan	TfGM
Steve Warrener	TfGM
Fran Wilkinson	TfGM

BNC/83/25 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received and noted from Councillor Paul Prescott (Wigan), Councillor Howard Sykes (Oldham), Councillor Max Woodvine (Oldham), Councillor Peter Crossen (Stockport), Councillor Stephen Homer (Tameside), City Mayor Paul Dennett (Salford) and Caroline Simpson (GMCA).

BNC/84/25 Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED/-

1. That Councillor Phil Burke declared a standing interest as an employee of Keolis Amey Metrolink Ltd.
2. That Councillor Jacqueline Owen declared a general interest by virtue of a family member being an employee of Transport for Greater Manchester.
3. That Mayor Andy Burnham declared an interest in Item 5 decision 2 related to Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure by virtue of his wife being an employee of Be.Ev.

BNC/85/25 Chairs Announcements and Urgent Business

The Chair opened by asking that an interim update be given on the current position in regard to industrial relations. It was advised that two disputes remained live at the current time. Firstly, Metrolink tram drivers still had planned strike action for the 19th/20th December weekend. TfGM was in the process of facilitating talks between KAM as the operator and the drivers' union to see if a resolution could be brokered. Secondly, talks remained ongoing with TfGM staff but constructive dialogue was underway and it was hoped that a resolution would be found soon.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the update on industrial relations and potential forthcoming strike action be received.

BNC/86/25 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 27 November 2025

RESOLVED/-

1. That the minutes of the meeting of 27 November 2025 be agreed as a true and correct record.

BNC/87/25 Transport Infrastructure Pipeline

Chris Barnes (TfGM) presented a report providing an update on the progress made delivering a pipeline of transport infrastructure improvements to support the Bee Network.

Work was underway on the future capital programme for the period 2027-2032. Consultation work was taking place, with the Local Transport Plan and Delivery Plan forming a key part of this preparation. The consultation was now fully underway and would run into March 2026.

Notable achievements in the previous month had included improvements to the Queens Road Metrolink depot, the commencement of Access for All upgrades at Bryn railway station, and the submission of a planning application by Stockport Council for a temporary bus depot in the town centre ahead of the new fully electrified permanent depot opening in 2029.

Approvals being sought this month included works across the electric vehicle charging infrastructure programme, the Metrolink renewals and enhancements programme, and the Active Travel programme.

Comments and Questions

Members expressed concern about the trend of 'tram surfing' and the need to allocate significant levels of funding towards the combatting of this. Officers advised that trends towards 'surfing' on public transport had become an increasing concern. Fatalities that had taken place in 2021 had led the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to express some concern over the operation of double unit trams. If the network could not provided

assurances around mitigation of risks to the ORR to ensure the ability to keep running double units which were vital to the smooth running of the network. It was also noted that it was important to reduce the risk of trauma to drivers as much as possible.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the current position, recent progress and key milestones on the transport infrastructure pipeline be noted;
2. That the drawdown of £0.146m of Integrated Settlement (CRSTS) funding Salford: Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure: and Full Business Case be approved;
3. That the release of £4.633m capital funds for the Metrolink Renewals and Enhancements Programme be noted;
4. That the drawdown of £0.71m of Active Travel funding and associated scheme progression to Full Business Case for Wigan: A49 to Ashton Junction Improvements be approved; and
5. That reallocation of £0.22m Mayor's Challenge Funding (MCF) from the Wigan: Smithy Brook Road scheme to the Wigan: A49 to Ashton Junction Improvements scheme be noted.

BNC/88/25 On the Right Track for Growth: The Greater Manchester Rail Vision to 2050

Simon Elliott, Network Director Rail, introduced a report setting out "On the Right Track for Growth: The Greater Manchester Rail Vision to 2050" – a bold strategy for transforming rail in the city region and underpinning our next decade of growth. This vision positioned Greater Manchester as the driver of rail-led growth for the North, with Manchester Piccadilly at its heart, and set out the steps needed in the short, medium and long term to set out the blocks required to deliver a modern, integrated, and high-capacity rail network by 2050.

The shorter term plans up to 2030 included the integration of rail and building the capacity needed on infrastructure interventions. For 2030-2040 the grow narrative was

set out, building upon the incremental infrastructure improvements and investments, including improvements in the regional centre and out towards the airport. It also set out the ambitious targets that would allow for the delivery of transformational growth for decades to come.

It was confirmed that on 5th November, the Railway Bill was deposited into parliament. This allowed now for the ability to engagement with the government on the long-term relationship and role in delivering the right rail service for the city region. The second reading of the bill had passed, and it would now be going to the committee stage, which would allow for GM to set out its case. The bill set out that the combined authority would have a statutory role, however there were still some gaps at present and work was taking place to ensure that these were addressed during this stage of the bill.

Mayor Andy Burnham was invited to comment on the strategy. Referring to the growth possibilities, he stated that there needed to be thought around the maximum growth that could be achieved and what would the infrastructure need to look like to support this, rather than thinking the other way round. It was felt that this vision refocussed the discussion on the focus needed – with people and places put first.

Vernon Everitt, Transport Commissioner, commented that even in the short term, by 2028 the city region would have an integrated public transport and active travel network. It would no longer be an aspiration; it would be a reality. This would then be a platform for building the essential infrastructure for future growth.

Comments and Questions

Members expressed concern that further links within the city centre, such as the proposed underground system, were being prioritised over outer boroughs, underserved, or not served at all, by the Metrolink system. The Mayor stated that the ambitions around growth in the city centre and expanding the network to the outer areas must not be seen as two elements in conflict. The case would have to be made for big infrastructure funding, additional to the ongoing development of the city region network, which was subject to devolved funding. The ambition was for the region to

be able to do both of these elements together, as was seen in the Greater London region.

Members welcomed the opportunities the Vision opened up for North Trafford and Salford/Manchester. A rail hub at Old Trafford would activate the regeneration of Trafford Wharfside, Trafford Park and Gorse Hill and the potential delivery of thousands of new homes and providing solutions around the carbon footprint of Trafford Park.

Concerns were raised around Hindley Station and the continuing lack of progress around lift access and the wider Bee Network hub scheme, it was now estimated that this would be delayed into 2027, five years after the plans had been announced. There was increasing annoyance in the borough of Wigan around these delays. Concern was also raised about the lack of accessibility at Orrell Station. A situation that meant passengers with mobility issues had to use numerous steep steps to reach the platform making it largely inaccessible for disabled users, and assurance was sought that it would be brought into the accessibility funding scheme.

The Mayor stated that he shared these frustrations. The rail industry had not been progressing at a pace that would be considered acceptable in terms of accessibility for all. There had been calls on the industry to move quicker, but it was the fact that the right arrangements were not in place for accessibility funding, and on behalf of Mayors and Leaders across the North, Mayor Burnham had recently written to the Secretary of State for Transport asking for the devolution of Access for All funding. That request had been refused and the department continued to manage a separate pot of funding at the national level that often did not represent the needs of the region.

Simon Elliott stated that this had been an ongoing issue, with the rail industry only having made two further stations in the region accessible in the past five years. The proposed programme set out over the next four years the delivery of ten accessible stations. The reason for this was that they would be delivered directly by TfGM. It had taken time to build this capacity, but the ten stations that were set out would be delivered within that four-year timetable. The delivery of these ten would set the amount of accessible stations in the region at 70%, it was then vital to roll that

remaining 30% into the next programme for delivery. It was stated that a list of the planned stations and the stations that would then remain would be made available to the Committee.

Members referenced the importance of co-production and co-design and customers being absolutely at the centre of everything that was developed. The investment that was about to be made into a more inclusive and accessible digital information package which would enhance customer journeys was welcomed. The Mayor welcomed the comments and a further discussion took place around accessibility. The Mayor acknowledged that broken lifts on the network were sometimes not repaired as quickly as they should be. Due to the age of some of the oldest parts of the Metrolink, lift parts could often be difficult to procure but it was asked that TfGM look to find solutions to this to ensure the process is expedited going forward.

Concerns were raised that a decision from the Department for Transport on Cheadle Railway Station continued to be held up. The Mayor agreed, stating that Golborne Station was well underway now, and a decision was needed as soon as possible to allow this work to commence as well.

Members noted that on 11th February 2026, the powers would lapse on the land to take HS2 past Birmingham. The High-Speed Rail Group had stated that allowing these land powers to lapse would lock in a permanent bottleneck north of Birmingham, the very problem that HS2 had originally been earmarked to resolve. The Mayor welcomed these comments, stating that if a plan was not in place for a level of West Midlands to North West connectivity better than the current West Coast mainline and the M6, then that would amount to an 'anti-growth' policy, as this was already acting as a drag upon productivity.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the 'On the Right Track for Growth - Greater Manchester Rail Vision', which has been developed in partnership with GM Local Authorities, the GM business community (CBI, BTAC & Chamber of Commerce) and rail industry

partners; and the subsequent next steps to develop a joint investment and delivery plan be noted and endorsed;

2. That the update on the Railways Bill legislation be noted;
3. That the ongoing work to deliver Bee Network Rail Integration by 2030, including development work underway with Northern Trains Ltd to assess and scope the case for GM part-funding additional rail services in GM as part of a Bee Network Rail Integration pilot for the 24-month trial period between December 2027 and December 2029 (i.e. From 2027/28 onwards) be noted; and it be further noted that a future update will follow, to include details of the service enhancements and a proposed funding mechanism, including any implications on the GMCA Transport Revenue budget.
4. That a list of the ten stations within GM due to receive accessibility funding be sent on to the Committee.

BNC/89/25 Date of Next Meeting

Members were advised that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Thursday 29th January 2026.