



Bee Network Committee

Date: Thursday 26th March 2026
Subject: Delivering Transport for a Global City Region
Report of: Danny Vaughan, Chief Network Officer, TfGM

Purpose of Report

To provide members with an update on the performance of Greater Manchester's transport network and delivery of network and customer improvements for the period September 2025 – February 2026. The report also looks ahead to further improvements planned for later in 2026 as we continue to deliver on the Greater Manchester Strategy ambition to make the Bee Network a transport network for a global city region.

Recommendation:

The Committee is requested to note and comment on the performance and delivery of the Bee Network.

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Equalities Impact, Carbon, and Sustainability Assessment:

N/A

Risk Management

N/A

Legal Considerations

N/A

Financial Consequences – Revenue

N/A

Financial Consequences – Capital

N/A

Number of attachments to the report: 0

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background Papers

N/A

Tracking/ Process

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

No

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

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

N/A

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Bee Network is fundamental to delivering the Greater Manchester Strategy's ambition for a 'thriving, inclusive and productive global city region', providing a safe, reliable, affordable and integrated transport system that connects people to opportunity, supports sustainable economic growth and improves everyday journeys. By bringing buses, Metrolink, active travel and highways management under local control, the Bee Network is enabling a transport system that supports growth, reduces inequality, improves safety and underpins Greater Manchester's role as a globally competitive city region.
- 1.2. This report provides an update on the performance of Greater Manchester's transport network between September 2025 and February 2026, and highlights continued progress in delivering network and customer improvements while looking ahead to further enhancements planned for later in 2026.
- 1.3. Patronage across the Bee Network continues to grow, with particularly strong performance on buses. In areas where franchising has been in place longest, growth has been sustained and significant, with passenger journeys up 8% year-on-year in Tranche 1 and 10% year-on-year in Tranche 2. Early trends in Tranche 3 services, franchised from January 2025, are showing 2%-3% year-on-year growth. These lower growth rates are expected given the relatively higher service and patronage levels prior to franchising beginning in the Tranche 3 area.
- 1.4. Service performance and reliability have continued to strengthen. Bus punctuality has improved, with 82.7% of buses running on time during January 2026. This is a substantial improvement in punctuality during January 2025, when 71.9% of services were on time, an increase of more than 15% in the proportion of services operating on time. All franchise areas are showing improvement. Metrolink has continued to set new records for passenger journeys, with December 2025 and January 2026 the busiest ever, while maintaining strong reliability despite winter weather and a major programme of infrastructure renewals.
- 1.5. Further improvements to the bus network are being progressed, including new and enhanced services designed to improve connectivity, capacity and access to key destinations. These proposals, detailed in a separate report on this meeting's agenda, form part of a wider programme to deliver a more attractive, resilient and comprehensive bus network across all Greater Manchester local authority areas.

- 1.6. Safety and security remain a priority across the network. Serious incidents continue to be rare, and the TravelSafe partnership is delivering tangible benefits through enhanced enforcement, faster response to incidents, expanded education programmes and improved collaboration with partners, supporting confidence in the network for passengers and staff alike. TravelSafe LiveChat continues to perform well, with over 500 chats taking place between the launch in mid-October and January.
- 1.7. The Bee Network continues to play a key role in improving affordability and inclusion. From March 2026, older and disabled residents benefit from free, round-the-clock travel on Bee Network buses, following the permanent removal of the 9.30am restriction. In addition, proposals are being developed to provide children living in temporary accommodation with free school bus travel, helping families during periods of significant disruption and supporting wider Greater Manchester Strategy commitments to reduce inequality.
- 1.8. Customer experience indicators are improving strongly. Customer satisfaction has increased significantly, alongside rising Net Promoter Scores and improved perceptions of communication and customer care. The Bee Network app now has around 525,000 average monthly users, with the equivalent of around one in five adults in Greater Manchester actively using the app to plan and manage their journeys, supporting integration and a more seamless travel experience.
- 1.9. Operationally, the network has successfully supported an exceptionally busy period, including the Christmas markets, major sporting fixtures and concerts, and most recently the BRIT Awards, which was hosted in Manchester for the first time in February. Effective planning, partnership working and real-time network management ensured reliable services, clear communication and a positive experience for residents, visitors and event organisers.
- 1.10. Finally, the report highlights continued progress in delivering infrastructure that underpins network performance and improves the customer experience. This includes investment in more zero emission buses, the electrification of bus depots, highways technology, active travel schemes, Metrolink renewals and interchange improvements, supporting long-term resilience, decarbonisation and growth across the city region.

2. Network Patronage and Revenue

2.1. All Bee Network modes continue to experience growth, with particularly encouraging progress seen across the bus network and in active travel.

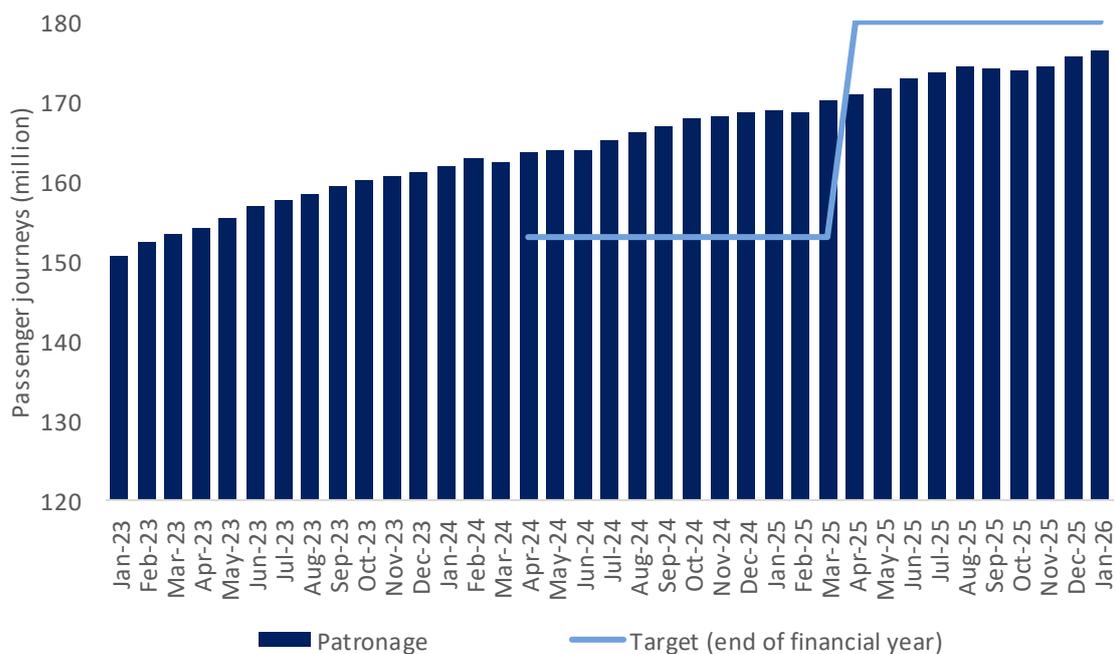
Bus

2.2. While growth in bus patronage slowed through the autumn, in part due to industrial action at Bee Network operators, recent months have seen a substantial increase in passenger numbers. Bus patronage in December 2025 was 10% higher than December 2024 representing an additional 1.2 million passenger journeys. Similar growth was seen in January with patronage 6% higher than during January 2025.

2.3. Where Franchising has been in place for more than a year, passenger journeys on Bee Network bus services have grown significantly and consistently. Passenger numbers are 8% up year on year in Tranche 1 (Feb 25 to Jan 26) and 10% up year on year in Tranche 2 Apr 25 to Jan 26).

2.4. Tranche 3 services were only franchised in January 2025 however; early trends are showing 2%-3% year-on-year growth. These lower growth rates are expected given the relatively higher service and patronage levels prior to franchising beginning in the Tranche 3 area.

Chart 1: Rolling 12-month bus passenger journeys (millions)*

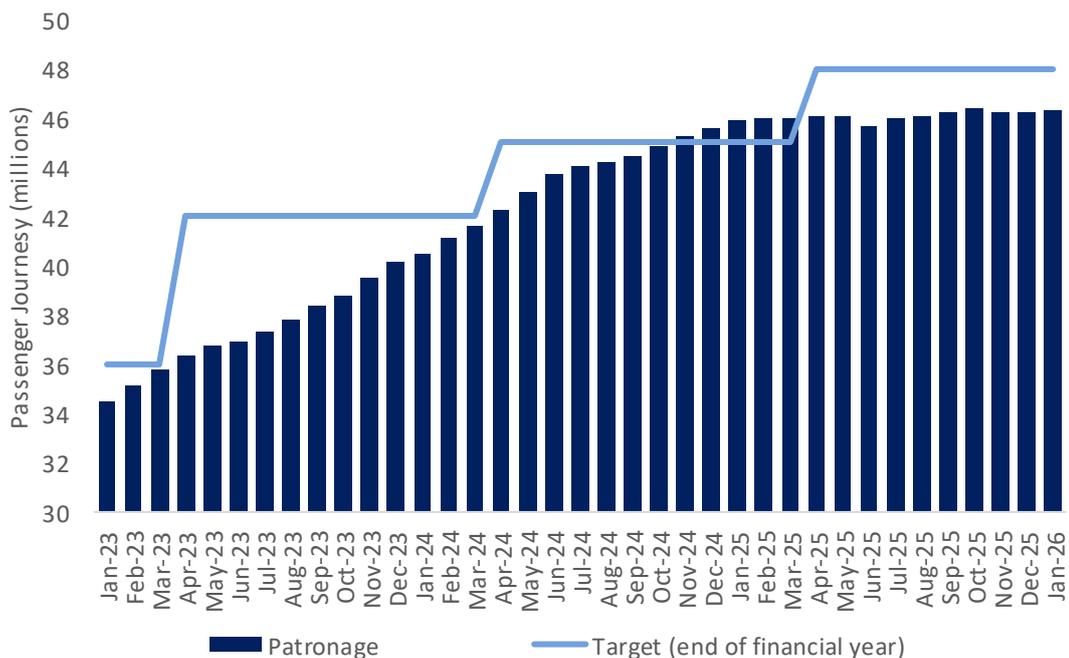


*Data is a combination of pre- and post-franchising data from different sources (including operator submissions).

Metrolink

- 2.5. Metrolink continues to set new records for passenger journeys. December 2025 and January 2026 were the busiest December and January on record. During the latest 12-month period Metrolink carried 46.3 million passenger journeys. This is 2% more than during 2019 and 1% more than the same period last year.
- 2.6. Capacity at peak times is a challenge with customer feedback referencing overcrowding. TfGM is working with the tram operator, KAM, to consider capacity improvements through maintenance changes, bringing line speeds back up to design following the track renewal programme, and potential amendments to service patterns to better suit demand such as targeting double trams for the busiest periods. Development of the next generation of Metrolink vehicles as well as options for tram-train are also progressing.
- 2.7. As detailed later in the report, significant engineering works are planned across the Metrolink network in 2026 and beyond which will have an impact on passenger numbers and service delivery. Changes to service patterns from April through to September are being developed to provide resilience to the network. Work will be done during this time to recruit over 60 additional drivers, undertake training for all drivers on new Light Rail Security Programme regulations and make modifications to trams to fix several long standing issues.

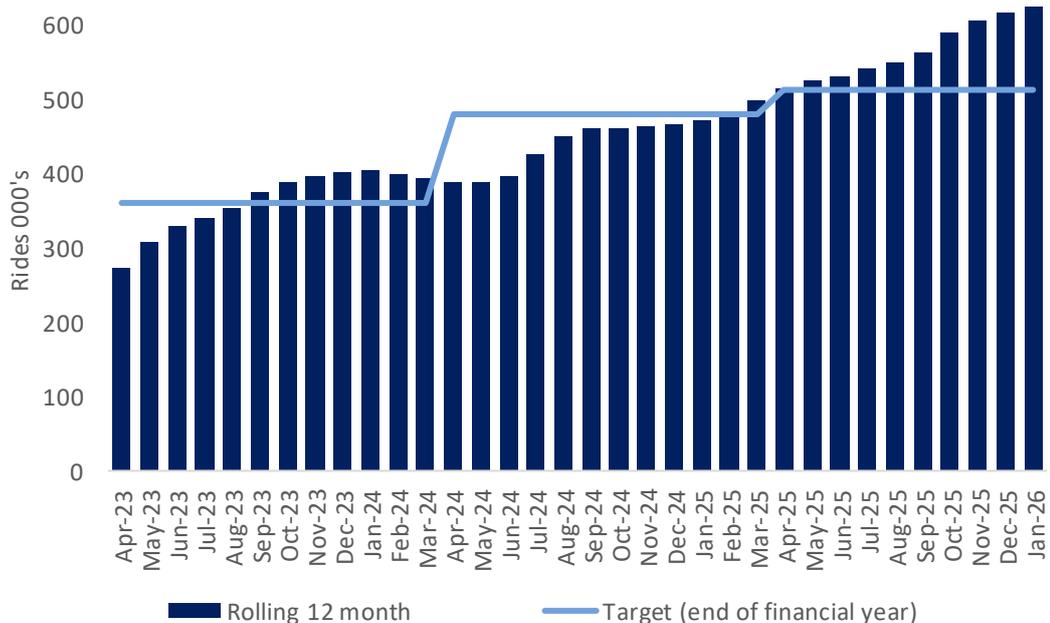
Chart 2: Rolling 12-month Metrolink passenger journeys (millions)



Cycle Hire

- 2.8. The Starling Bank bike hire scheme continues to set new records for usage. During the 12 months to February 2026, the scheme saw 624,000 rides, 33% up on the same time last year.
- 2.9. Bike availability has remained relatively stable during the latter part of 2025 and early 2026 at between 730 and 800 bikes. While a persistent supply chain issue has now been resolved, high levels of theft and vandalism and subsequent complex repair jobs remain a challenge. Despite these operational challenges usage has remained high, and bike distribution has been good.
- 2.10. Following the introduction of the new, more popular e-bikes through the second half of 2025 the average yield per ride has increased by 20%.

Chart 3: Rolling 12 month Cycle hire trips (thousands)



3. Network Reliability

- 3.1. Seasonal factors were a challenge to service delivery through the autumn and winter. However, the transport network performed well overall.
- 3.2. The Manchester Christmas markets coincide with the busiest time of the year for the transport network. Operational and Travel Demand Management plans were developed and delivered a range of new as well as tried and tested interventions across all modes and customer information. Further details are provided below however key insights are:

- Traffic levels were broadly similar to 2024. However, highway performance improved with the periods of most severe delays being less frequent and shorter than in previous years; and
- Partner feedback also indicated an improvement compared to 2024, with business liaison groups reporting positive comments from their members. Media coverage was reduced and more balanced, reflecting improved briefings and clearer messaging.

- 3.3. Adverse weather impacted operations in early January. Snow and sub-freezing conditions affected the return to work on Monday 5 and Tuesday 6 January. Storm Goretti brought high winds and further wintry weather to parts of GM on Thursday 8 and Friday 9 January. Gritting and winter preparations ensured the network operated with only minor disruption, except on some higher cross-Pennine routes.
- 3.4. Bus performance continued to improve through the period, with 82.7% of buses running on time during January 2026. This marks a substantial improvement in punctuality compared to January 2025, when 71.9% of services were on time meaning, more than 15% more buses are now on time. All franchise areas are showing improvement.

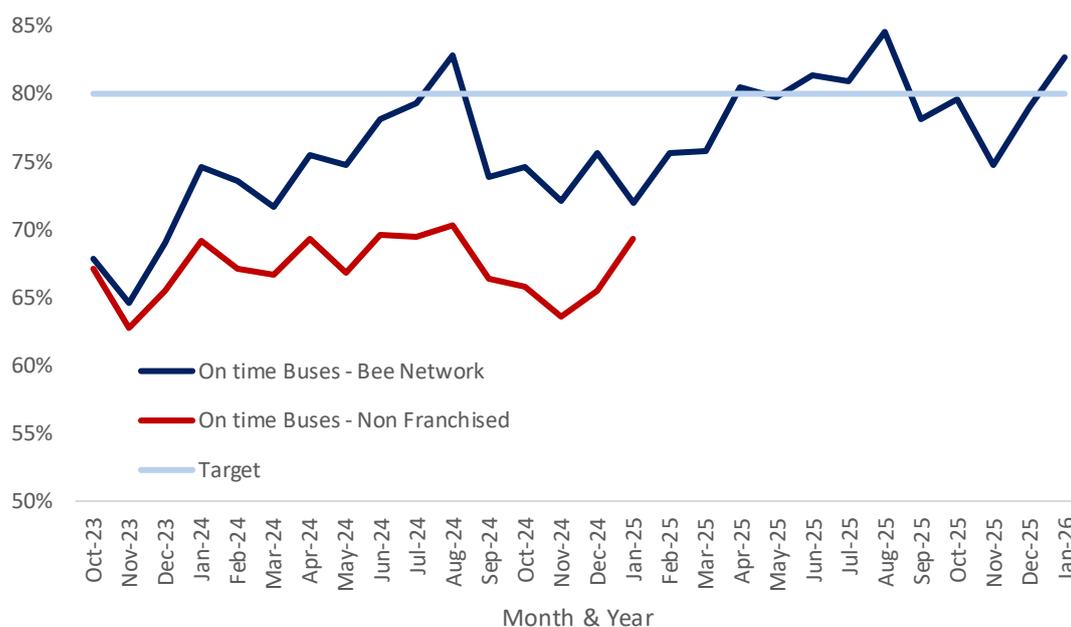
Bus

- 3.5. A range of initiatives to improve the performance of Bee Network bus services are being delivered including service improvement measures, priority for late running buses at traffic signals and tackling the impact of roadworks through closer working with local authorities and roadwork promoters.
- 3.6. Performance across all three franchised tranches has improved. From September to February (to date), the bus network weekly average on-time performance was 79%, and it exceeded the 80% target in a third of the weeks. This compared to a network average of around 70% in the previous 12 months.
- 3.7. In Tranche 1, on time punctuality continues to be consistently above 80% since September, with the average on-time performance at 85% compared with 81% 12 months previously. This followed a detailed review of services and the introduction of additional buses to improve performance.
- 3.8. Reliability in Tranche 2 is also better than before, following similar investment in improving services. On-time weekly punctuality in Tranche 2 has averaged 76% over the three months to February (to date) and exceeded the 80% target at the

beginning of January. This represents further improvement for passengers compared with 12 months previously, when on-time performance averaged 70%.

- 3.9. Tranche 3 services are also performing well, with average weekly punctuality at 78% between September and February (to date) whilst exceeding the 80% target in a third of the weeks. This compared to an average of around 65%, 12 months previously. Early interventions have already been made to improve performance, including retiming some school services following some initial challenges. Work continues to identify and implement other initiatives that are needed to make service levels more resilient.
- 3.10. Delivering on our commitment to transparency and accountability, weekly reporting of bus performance continues to be published. Performance figures are posted on social media and linked to a more detailed report on the TfGM website.

Chart 1: Bus Punctuality



Metrolink

- 3.11. Cold weather plans and the network worked well during sub-freezing temperatures in early January and February. Weather related cracked rails were primarily repaired outside of operational hours, with some larger repairs being undertaken during existing planned engineering works to minimise disruption.
- 3.12. Rolling stock issues continue to be the biggest contributor to lost mileage with 50% of recent failures caused by sand pipe and track brake detachments. Planned Fleet

modifications will improve reliability (and capacity). Sand pipe and brake module fixes will be completed in Summer 2026.

3.13. Cars on tracks has been a recurrent theme in recent weeks with Holt Town a known hotspot for this type of incident. Following a review of this site a programme of measures, including improved signage and markings are being delivered soon.

3.14. Despite the extensive renewals programme delivered during 2025 and weather-related speed restriction performance remains good and customer contact about tram delays is relatively low.

Chart 4: Metrolink Reliability

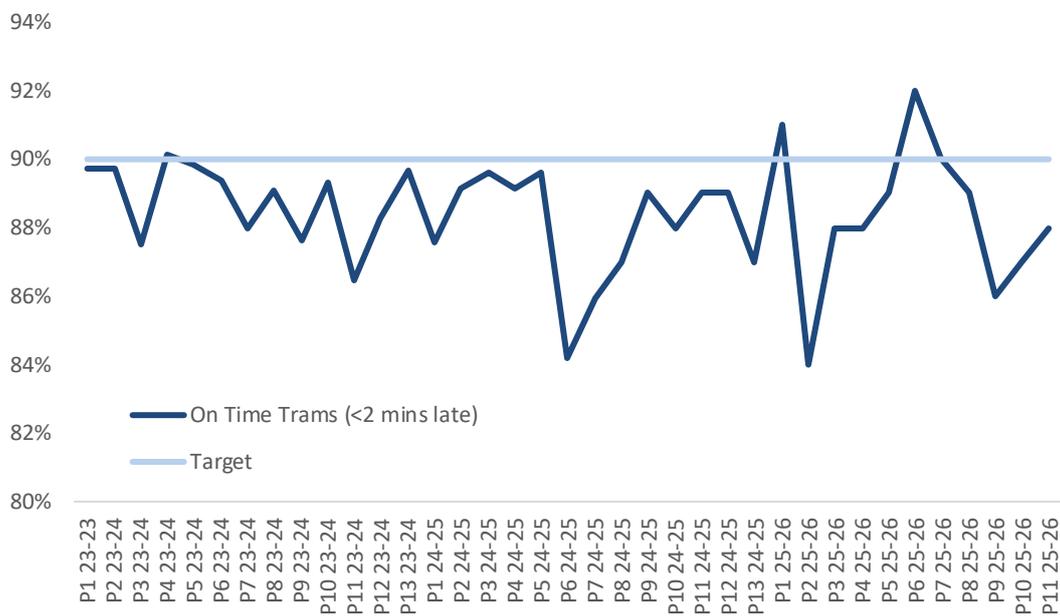
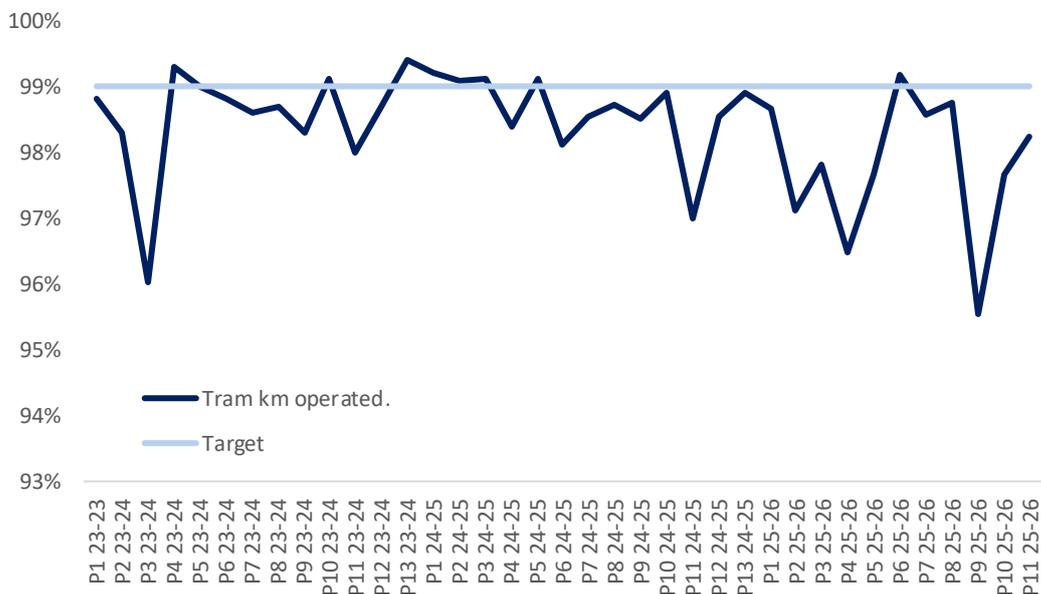


Chart 5: Metrolink Planned Operated Mileage

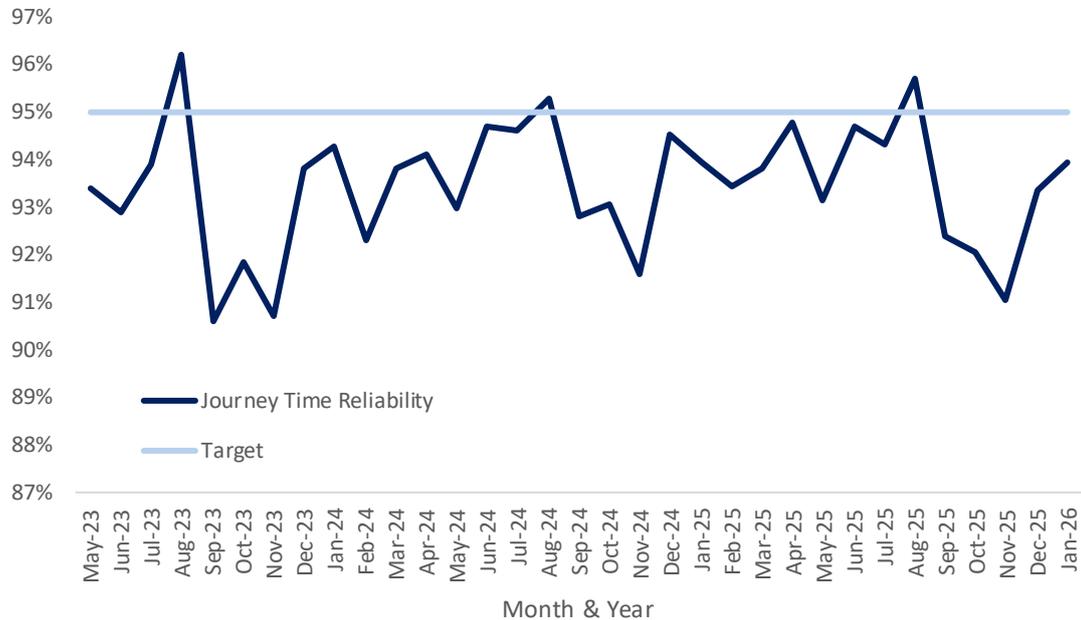


Highways

- 3.15. The Christmas market season places exceptional pressure on the highway network, with the Regional Centre traffic flows increasing by an average of 9% on weekdays and 12% at weekends, on a network that is already operating at or close to capacity.
- 3.16. The city centre's vibrant retail, hospitality and leisure offer also increases demand on public transport, footfall as well as taxi and delivery movements. This compounds known congestion hotspots and creates additional challenges in safely managing interactions between private vehicles, public transport and pedestrians.
- 3.17. To manage and limit disruption, a Winter plan was delivered and performed well during its implementation. Traffic levels were broadly similar to 2024. However, the highway network remained stable for longer, and the periods with the most severe delays were shorter, than in previous years. Further detail on the Winter plan is included in Section 6.
- 3.18. Partner feedback also improved compared to 2024, with business liaison groups reporting positive comments from their members. Media coverage was reduced and more balanced, reflecting improved briefings and clearer messaging.
- 3.19. The traffic signal network remains a key tool for managing journeys across all modes. Over half the network (around 1,400 signals) operates using adaptive control, with timings varying according to demand. Signals are also used to provide priority to trams where Metrolink intersects the highway, and to late-running buses at more than 250 junctions, meaning public transport now receives priority at more than one in four junctions. In addition, a programme of signal timing reviews has improved pedestrian wait times at 436 crossings across Greater Manchester, with no reported impact on general traffic.
- 3.20. Greater Manchester is a growing city region, and traffic levels are increasing at a faster rate than the England and UK averages. Department for Transport data shows that traffic volumes in Greater Manchester are 1.6% above pre-pandemic (2019) levels.
- 3.21. The introduction of FUSION adaptive traffic signal technology provides an opportunity to make more effective use of existing road space, delivering efficiencies of up to 25% compared to traditional adaptive control. Five of the first wave of 40 junctions already have FUSION running; and all locations in the first

wave are on busy bus routes. These sites have been selected to support skills development and learning, while also reducing congestion and improving journey times and reliability for bus users.

Chart 6: Highway Journey Time Reliability



- 3.22. A programme of activity continues to enhance the capability of the Operational Control Centre (OCC). New traffic cameras have improved the visibility at strategic locations, and the use of drones is also being developed, including a “drone in a box” pilot, which has seen flights launched from the roof of 2PP. The development of a single network view is a key priority for the year ahead, bringing together systems data and functionality within a single user interface to improve response times and operational efficiency.
- 3.23. The OCC has also grown their safety and security capability, including investing in further radio deployment for Facility Operations staff, upgrading CCTV at interchanges and enhancing CCTV monitoring operations to further support Live Chat and GMP collaborative working. Further information is included in Section 4 Network Safety and Security.
- 3.24. Collaboration between the Urban Traffic Control (UTC) team and the OCC has led to the development of additional signal strategies. These strategies can be deployed by the OCC 24/7 and were used on multiple occasions during the past 12 months.

- 3.25. The performance of the motorway network in Greater Manchester directly impacts congestion levels, bus reliability, and the overall resilience of local roads. This is because the GM motorway network is characterised by high junction density, numerous short weaving sections, a local radial network that feeds directly onto motorway junctions, and limited physical scope for expansion. This combination means that the impact on local roads caused by SRN incidents can be and usually is substantial.
- 3.26. The Devolution White Paper committed National Highways to formalise and strengthen their relationship with Mayoral Strategic Authorities, ensuring a more cohesive approach to the management and development of England's strategic road network alongside local roads. TfGM and National Highways have been working together to develop the arrangements and governance structure to ensure that this commitment is realised and arrangements are put in place.
- 3.27. A Highways Network Management Review commenced in December. This is a critical piece of work for the future of highways management in GM and the working group, chaired by Cllr O'Brien, has representation from a number of local authorities at Chief Executive and Highways Director level. The review is focused on network management, road safety, and the highways capital programme and will bring forward recommendations later in the year as to how we can collectively deliver more efficiently.

Rail

- 3.28. Crew availability continues to be a challenge for Northern & Cross Country. Sickness levels across the industry spiked in early December as a result of seasonal illness but have returned to normal levels. TPE have also seen some crew availability impacted by engineering plans and restrictive terms and conditions.
- 3.29. Northern are continuing to run a Short-Term Train Plan on Sundays with around 200 trains removed across GM. The plan is likely to remain in place while negotiations continue around the modernisation of guards' pay and conditions and incorporating Sunday into the working week.
- 3.30. In the December 2025 timetable change, an additional 44 Northern services have seen capacity reductions due to rolling stock availability and to allow for repairs to take place to units. This reduction has seen services reduced from 4 car to 2 car.

3.31. Despite the performance challenges the latest ORR performance data (July to September 2025) showed an 11% increase in passenger journeys in Greater Manchester compared to 8% nationally.

Chart 7: Trains arriving On Time to 3 minutes late.

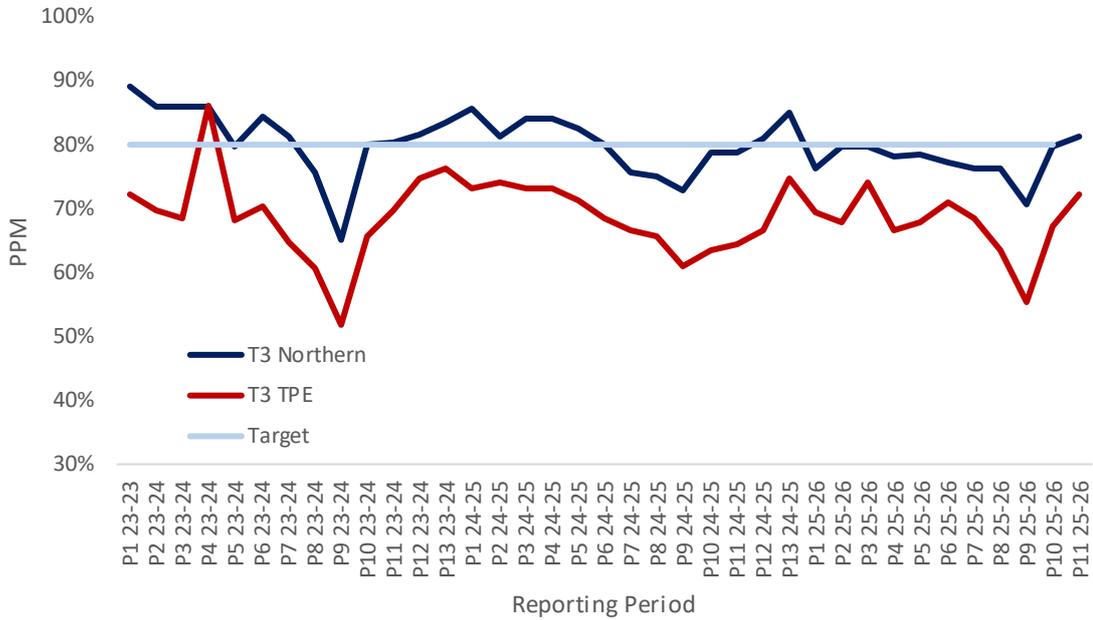
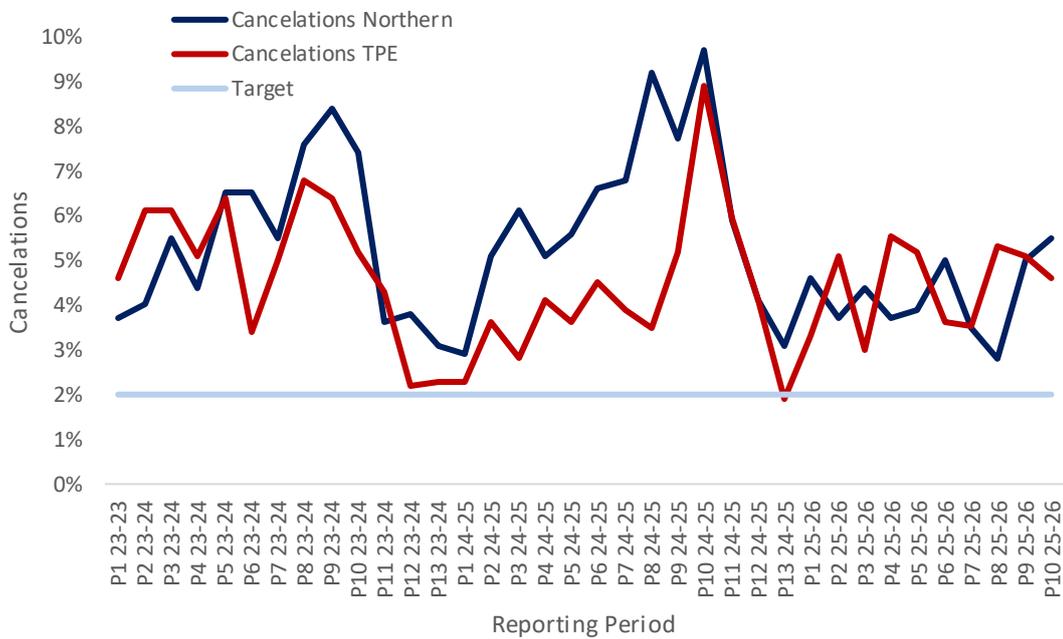


Chart 8: Percentage Cancellations



3.32. Major engineering works (Ardwick Blockade) took place between Saturday 14 and Sunday 22 February. The works had a significant impact on Piccadilly station, with no trains running from the south or east of the city. Platforms 13 and 14 operated a reduced train service. The station and concourse remained open during the works.

- 3.33. The operation was largely a success especially given its scale and the number of significant events throughout the blockade. Issues were reported around demand exceeding capacity on the airport route however the industry worked quickly to mitigate and re-deploy additional buses.
- 3.34. TPE has announced additional all-night services between Piccadilly and beyond to Manchester Airport effectively creating an hourly service. These will be introduced in the May 2026 timetable.
- 3.35. A plan to remove Northern calls at various GM stations for a 12-week period in Autumn 2026 has been rejected by Rail North Partnership following feedback from members including TfGM. The industry is working on alternative measures including amending some sectional running times and earlier originating trains on some lines.

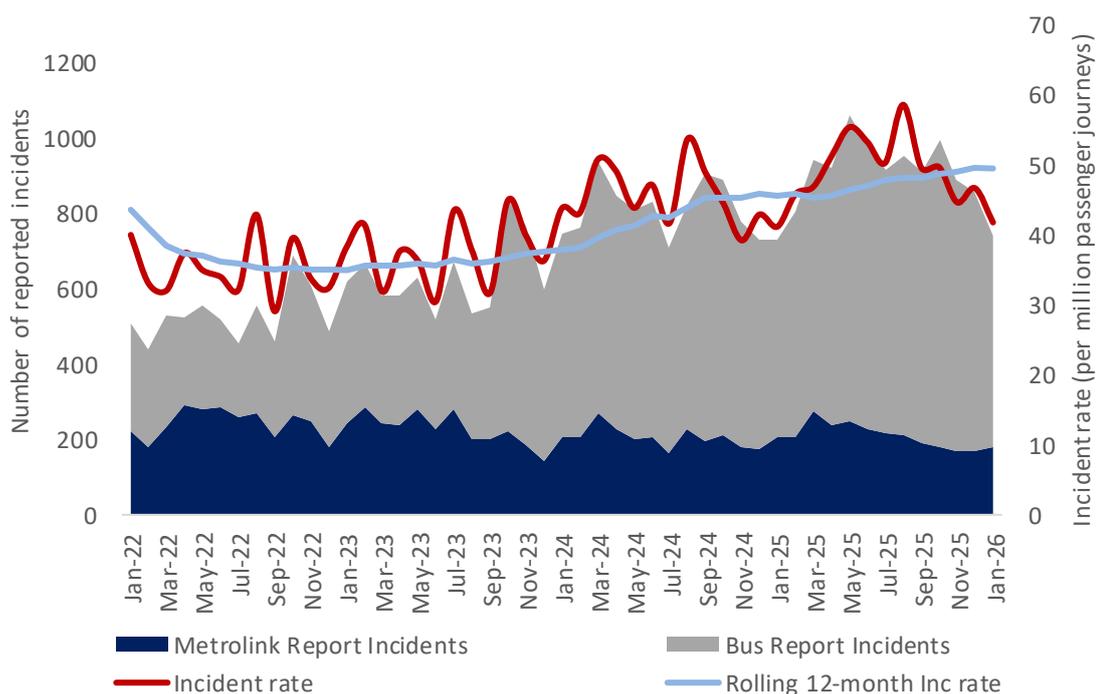
4. Network Safety and Security

- 4.1. Serious incidents on the network are rare with a passenger injury rate of 0.5 per 100,000 km and a reported incident of crime and ASB for every 20,500 passenger journeys. However, when incidents do occur, TfGM works with partners to review operations and infrastructure and take appropriate actions.
- 4.2. The TravelSafe incident rate (per million passenger journeys across bus and tram) has remained static at 49 across the period.
- 4.3. Bus surfing continues to be a concerning trend, particularly in the Salford area. Joint work with Salford City Council and GMP to identify individuals is having a positive impact. Local schools are also receiving TravelSafe educational inputs to highlight the dangers of this behaviour and discourage future issues.
- 4.4. TravelSafe LiveChat continues to perform well, with over 500 chats taking place between the launch in mid-October and January. Some of the cases, demonstrating the value of the new system and in particular the enhanced partnership working between TfGM and GMP it facilitates, include:
- A drunk male was reported for aggressive behaviour on a bus, frightening young girls resulting in a GMP arrest within an hour of reporting.
 - A drunk male reported for harassing females on the Bury Metrolink line resulting in a tram being held at Prestwich so that the male could be arrested. The alleged offender was subsequently charged with being drunk and disorderly and will appear in court in due course.

- A witness reporting two older males for stealing a mobile phone from an 11-year-old boy at Anchorage Quay. The offenders fled, while the victim approached his mother, who also called GMP. Patrols attended nearby tram stops, liaised with the victim, and conducted an area search. Officers intercepted the tram carrying the suspects and detained two males for robbery - all within 15 minutes of the offence. The original LiveChat witness was later contacted by investigating officers to provide a statement.

- 4.5. TravelSafe LiveChat QR codes are now installed across the entire Bus and Metrolink fleet. The launch campaign was aimed towards women and girls, and the next campaign, aimed at young people, will run across the school Easter holiday period.
- 4.6. A new TravelSafe Virtual Reality film was launched on 02 December 2025. The film titled 'No Excuse for Abuse', which was funded by KAM and the Light Rail Safety and Standards Board illustrates the impact of verbal and physical abuse towards frontline staff. The film has already been shown to over 500 young people.
- 4.7. As part of the Home Office 'Winter of Action' programme (GMP's Operation NorthStar), a transport centric day of action took place on 19 December 2025. This used visible patrols and community engagement across the transport network in the regional centre. This also included use of GMP's Live Facial Recognition capability to identify persons of interest.
- 4.8. In January, TransPennine Express (TPE) joined the TravelSafe Partnership strengthening TPE's commitment to protecting passengers and staff.
- 4.9. Between September 2025 and January 2026, 19,106 young people have been engaged with through the TravelSafe educational programme.
- 4.10. Between September 2025 and January 2026, TravelSafe ticketing enforcement activity saw 106 bus tickets and passes removed. 11 people were also served exclusion notices (removing the implied permission of entry). GMP continue to support this process by conducting follow-up home visits to those excluded to ensure compliance.
- 4.11. 739 young people have been engaged by Foundation 92 and the mobile youth hub between September 2025 and January 2026.

Chart 10: TravelSafe rate of reported incidents of Crime and ASB per million passenger journeys.



Vision Zero

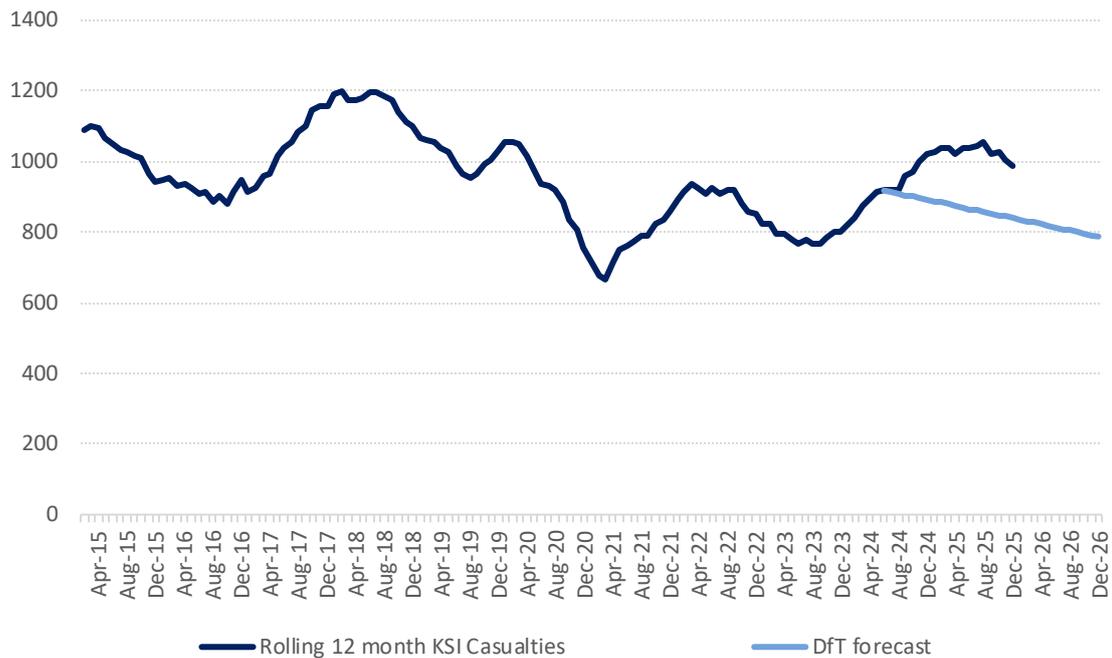
4.12. The Committee received a report on Vision Zero in January including implementation of the strategy, progress on the Vision Zero Action Plan, the Department for Transport (DfT) road casualty figures for 2024 in Greater Manchester and the Bee Network Safety Plan which complements the Vision Zero Strategy, putting safety at the heart of everything we do and enabling safe journeys across all modes of travel.

4.13. During the twelve months ending December 2025, 990 people were killed or seriously injured (KSI) on GM's roads. This is:

- 3.4% below the previous 12-month rolling period (Jan 2024 to Dec 2024)
- 11.0% above the 36-month average period ending December 2024
- 17.8% above the forecast for December 2025

4.14. It should be noted the DfT have introduced a new target of 65% reduction in KSIs by 2035 from a baseline of the average annual KSIs from 2022 to 2024. The average number of KSIs from 2022 to 2024 was 892 and the target for 2035 is 312.

Chart 9: Killed and Seriously Injured Casualties (KSI) (Rolling 12 Months)



- 4.15. The road safety campaign programme continues throughout the year. A Seat Belt campaign was launched on 9 February with further campaigns for motorcycles in March and pedal cycles in May being developed.
- 4.16. “Operation Top Deck” is a new road policing initiative developed enabling officers to identify mobile phone and seatbelt offences from the vantage point of a Bee Network bus. This will help tackle two of the “Fatal 4” offences contributing to deadly crashes, the other two being speeding and drink (or drug) driving.
- 4.17. An ongoing national issue affecting motorway speed-enforcement cases has resulted in the cancellation of some offences. To date, more than 3,700 National Motorway Awareness Course (NMAC) courses have been cancelled. DriveSafe has been able to diversify revenue streams by switching from NMAC to other course types. However, if not resolved, this issue will have a long-term impact on DriveSafe / Safer Roads GM income to support road safety interventions and initiatives across GM.
- 4.18. The Safer Roads Partnership is co-ordinating a response to the consultation on proposals to mandate a range of advanced vehicle safety technologies for mass-produced vehicles including advanced emergency braking systems capable of detecting vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists, emergency lane-keeping, intelligent speed assistance that detects speed limits and systems for monitoring driver drowsiness and distraction.

5. Customer Experience

- 5.1. TfGM's customer insight programme provides a comprehensive and representative picture of customer sentiment across the Bee Network including satisfaction, likelihood to recommend, perceptions of the brand and customers' lived experiences across all modes.
- 5.2. Customer satisfaction has improved significantly, rising from 75% in December 2025 to 84% in March 2026. Over the same period, Net Promoter Score increased from +20 to +26, alongside improved perceptions of our customer care and the clarity of our communication. While these trends are encouraging, ongoing feedback highlights several areas where continued focus will help us maintain momentum, including around reliability, safety and accessibility. Mystery Shopping findings additionally indicate opportunities to improve the accuracy of real time customer information, especially in periods of disruption and the visibility of customer feedback channels. These areas are key themes in our Operational Excellence Plan with tangible actions in place to address.

6. Network and Customer Improvements

Delivering an Integrated and Affordable Network

- 6.1. From March 2026, older and disabled people in Greater Manchester now benefit from free, round-the-clock travel on Bee Network buses, thanks to the permanent removal of the 9.30am restriction on concessionary passes. This follows two successful pilots in August and November 2025, during which around 400,000 older and disabled residents were able to use their passes 24/7.
- 6.2. In February the Mayor announced extra support for families living in temporary housing with free school travel for children on Bee Network buses. The measure supports the commitments set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy to support and reduce the number of families and children in temporary accommodation and ensures children are kept with friends and teachers they know and trust at what can be a time of massive upheaval.
- 6.3. After a record year for Our Pass applications, more than 58,000 young people across Greater Manchester are saving money and benefitting free bus travel, half price travel on Metrolink and other discounted and free experiences and offers to

support them to learn, earn and enjoy opportunities. Over 200,000 young people have accessed Our Pass since 2019.

- 6.4. Following customer feedback from 16-18 year-olds a digital Our Pass has been introduced via the Bee Network app for the first time in September. The digital pass has been hugely popular with just over 27,000 young people (94% of the current Our Pass cohort) using the digital Our Pass for travel. A physical pass is still available for those that want one.
- 6.5. In December 2025, the GM Mayor, Andy Burnham announced a further freeze of Bee Network bus and Metrolink fares for 2026. This, along with the concessions detailed above, play an important part in offering value for money and support with the cost of living for those travelling in GM.
- 6.6. Also in December, DfT supported by TfGM, launched a new, simpler rail fare structure, removing on the day operator own products and having a single and return, off peak and on peak only. Advance products can still be purchased up to the night before a journey is made. This makes it much simpler for people to choose the right product to use and reduced the price for 52% of passengers, with the remaining people who saw a price increase, it was primarily around 20 pence, and brought with it the flexibility of being able to use any train service. This supports the visitor economy with those arriving at Manchester airport and wishing to travel to the city centre, no longer risking a penalty notice for travelling on the wrong operator service.
- 6.7. This change is the first step towards the integration of rail in the Bee Network, which will start with rail PAYG on the first 17 stations in December 2026.
- 6.8. Whilst traditional payment and ticketing options remain available, Contactless Tap & Go is now the method of payment for 20% of adult bus journeys and 70% of tram journeys. This supports integration, making it easier to move between modes and enables people to access more of the network.
- 6.9. The Bee Network is used by the equivalent of around 1 in 5 adults in Greater Manchester and their customer satisfaction is now 15% higher than those who do not have the app.

Delivering Improved Bus Services

- 6.10. A new bus route launched in Salford on 4 January. The new 30 service now operates from the Trafford Centre through Trafford Park to MediaCity. The 30 is the

fourth new service introduced since bringing buses under local control, following the 629 (Golborne to Platt Bridge), 615 (Wigan to Middlebrook Retail Park), and 631 (Wigan to Standish).

- 6.11. A new approach to development of the bus network is set out in another report on the agenda for this meeting. An early iteration of the new process has been used to develop a package of interventions announced by the Mayor earlier this month. These interventions touch every GM local authority area and are planned to be implemented during the 2026/27 financial year. This first package of Network Development interventions seeks to enhance connectivity at key employment, retail and leisure destinations, implement night bus services in every local authority area providing all-day connectivity for a 24-hour city region; improve performance, scheduling and capacity improvements, delivering a more attractive bus network that will support our targets to carry 200m passengers a year by 2030, and for over 80% of buses to run on time consistently.
- 6.12. The proposed changes will bring an additional 33,000 people across the city region within a 400m walk of a twice-hourly bus or tram service, increasing the proportion of residents within this catchment from 83.9% to 85.1%. This supports the GMS target for 90% of residents to be within 400m of a twice-hourly service by 2030.

Delivering for Events

- 6.13. Across the autumn and winter period, the Bee Network continued to support a high-volume events programme including concerts at Co-op Live and the AO Arena, major exhibitions at Manchester Central, festive city centre activities and football fixtures at the Etihad Stadium, Old Trafford and The Toughsheet Community Stadium. Transport operations focused on reliability and providing targeted capacity boosts during peak event dispersal.
- 6.14. The busy winter period also included the delivery of the Christmas Travel Demand Management (TDM) campaign, aimed at helping residents, visitors and workers move around the city centre smoothly during peak shopping, hospitality and event periods. The campaign provided real-time travel advice, highlighted sustainable travel choices, and offered guidance on the best times to travel. The TDM work was supported by enhanced staff presence at key interchanges and targeted messaging across the Bee Network to help customers make informed travel decisions.

- 6.15. To support expected seasonal demand, TfGM introduced pop-up Park & Ride sites on key radial routes on selected weekends in November and December. These temporary sites offered free parking, with connecting services intercepting over 600 car trips that would otherwise have driven into the Regional Centre. Customer feedback highlighted the convenience and reduced journey stress. Other measures implemented during the festive period included increasing staffing in the Operational Control Centre (OCC); targeted traffic management at known pinch points, including Swan Street, Liverpool Road and around the Manchester Arndale; the introduction of blackout zones for ride-hailing operators at conflict locations; targeted travel information for the public, businesses, members and partners, highlighting periods when the Regional Centre was likely to be busiest, alongside travel options and planned interventions.
- 6.16. February 2026 marked two years since the launch of the MCFC Matchday Shuttle Buses for Manchester City home games. Since first operating on 17 February 2024, ridership has increased by 134% by the most recent fixture on 21 February 2026, reflecting strong customer demand and the service's impact on reducing localised congestion.
- 6.17. On 28 February, Manchester successfully hosted the BRIT awards for the first time ever outside of London at Co-op Live. Event transport ran effectively with a good multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach. In addition, TfGM supported in creating a 'city takeover' which we did including posters, tram and bus wraps, tram announcements, a music campaign and BRIT traffic lights.
- 6.18. Forward planning is now underway for spring and early-summer 2026, including the Manchester Marathon, Wythenshawe Park concerts, Parklife 2026 and high-demand Premier League fixtures during the end of season run-in. Early engagement with organisers is ensuring efficient resource planning and consistent customer experience across Bee Network modes.

Delivering an Inclusive Customer Experience

- 6.19. Dementia awareness training, developed with the Alzheimer's Society, has now been delivered to front line staff working in the TfGM Contact Centre, Transport Safety and Enforcement Officers, Metrolink Customer Service Representatives, and other staff working in Facilities and Operations. Operators Metrolink and First Bus have also begun to roll out training.

- 6.20. Dementia training will help frontline transport staff better understand the needs of people living with the condition and respond with confidence, empathy and practical awareness.
- 6.21. An immersive training programme is being developed to improve how frontline Bee Network staff understand and respond to the experiences of women, girls, LGBTQIA+ passengers, and other vulnerable individuals. With virtual-reality technology, staff will experience realistic scenarios based on real community experiences, enabling empathetic, confident, and victim-centred responses. This programme aligns with the Greater Manchester Gender-Based Violence Strategy and the GMCA Oversight and Scrutiny Committee's 'In Her Shoes' review. The training will commence in October 2026 and will be delivered to around 5,500 Bee Network staff across TfGM and operators.
- 6.22. All of this training forms a key part of the Bee Network's commitment to delivering an inclusive and accessible transport network for everyone, helping to remove barriers to travel and improve confidence in the network.

7. Infrastructure Delivery

- 7.1. Delivery of the transport infrastructure pipeline continues at pace with a range of schemes to improve performance, customer experience and network safety and resilience.

Bus Infrastructure

- 7.2. Middleton depot electrification works were completed on time, making it the second fully electrified depot in GM. Ahead of a new, permanent, fully electric bus depot in Stockport, a planning application was submitted in December for a temporary bus depot with works due to start on site in Summer 2026.
- 7.3. A contract award for the construction of Tyldesley Travel Hub and P&R has recently been awarded, with works to start on site towards the end of March 2026. The scheme will deliver additional parking spaces including accessible bays and EV charging spaces.
- 7.4. From a highways improvement perspective, the Hindley Town Centre scheme, in Wigan, as part of the Wigan to Leigh corridor has been successfully completed and the Royton Town Centre scheme has recently started on site, which is part of improvement works on the Rochdale – Oldham – Ashton corridor. Other

interventions being brought forward include highway improvements in Stockport including junction upgrades, a segregated cycle track and new crossings, and junction upgrades in Sale West, as part of the Improving Journeys (Quality Bus Transit) Programme planned for Spring 2026.

- 7.5. To date, 46 schemes have been delivered as part of the Bus Pinch Points & Maintenance Programme, with a further 26 schemes on site for delivery which include CCTV installations, new and / or improved pedestrian crossings, bus lane enforcement cameras and improved signage and lining.

Active Travel and Streets for All

- 7.6. Several Local Authority (LA) led schemes have been completed which have improved access to public transport and will support more active travel. Schemes completed include Salford City Council's Chapel Street scheme, Trafford Council's Seymour Grove Phase 1 scheme, Wigan Council's Leigh Neighbours scheme, and Stockport Council's Woodley to Bredbury Parkway. Bury Council has installed a new bridge for pedestrians and cyclists over the river Irwell in Radcliffe to support their active travel ambitions.
- 7.7. There are also a number of schemes due to start on site over the coming months, such as [Manchester Wilmslow Road Cyclops, Stockport Town Centre West, Bury Prestwich Travel Hubs, Bolton DeHavilland Way, Oldham Mumps and Broadway to Canal Link, Tameside's Ashton and Stalybridge schemes, Rochdale Littleborough and Northern Western Gateway schemes and Trafford's A56 Key Route Network scheme.]

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

- 7.8. The rollout of Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) across GM continues and council led pilots are underway in Bolton, Manchester and Salford, with further LA proposals to be brought forward. GM has recently been awarded additional grant funding to help support development and delivery of EV pavement channel proposals.

Rail

- 7.9. The second phase of Access for All schemes continues, with works on site at both Bryn and Hindley rail stations to deliver access upgrades. Further improvements are to follow at Hindley including improved active travel, bus stop and drop off facilities

and additional and improved parking facilities, as part of the Travel Hubs and Park & Ride (P&R) Programme.

- 7.10. The Full Business Case (FBC) for Golborne New Station is being finalised and is due to be submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in Spring 2026. Following approval, the project will move into construction, with work planned to start on site in Summer 2026.
- 7.11. The government has set out a major growth plan for the North, placing Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) at the centre of a programme of investment in transport, skills, and housing.
- 7.12. The Chancellor announced £1.1 billion has been committed over this Spending Review period to support delivery of NPR, enabling progress on planning, development, and design work to begin. The funding will pave the way for construction and wider benefits to begin in the 2030s, with a firm funding cap of £45bn set for the scheme's lifetime. NPR will be delivered in phases:
- The first phase focuses on upgrades to lines between Leeds, York, Bradford, and Sheffield.
 - The second phase will deliver a new line between Liverpool and Manchester via Warrington and Manchester Airport.
 - The third phase will improve connections between Manchester and cities in Yorkshire.
- 7.13. The government also launched its [Northern Growth Strategy: Case for change](#). This sets out the Government's vision for a stronger more dynamic northern economy, including the delivery of NPR.
- 7.14. On the 22 January the Secretary of State for Transport, Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government signed compact agreements with 6 mayors across the North, with the aim of working together to deliver NPR.
- 7.15. The [Greater Manchester Combined Authority: NPR compact agreement](#) also sets out that "An underground solution at Manchester Piccadilly could be a catalyst and enabler for major regeneration and economic growth for Greater Manchester and the wider North by unlocking land for redevelopment and additional connectivity. We agree that the option needs testing further in terms of value for money and delivering the right pan northern growth and transport objectives and a joint process

with full transparency between all parties will analyse this further against alternative options. We acknowledge that local funding would be required to contribute to the final package, in addition to contributions towards Manchester Airport Station which would include third party contributions.”

Interchanges

- 7.16. The Full Business Case for Phase 1 Metrolink Access & Platform Improvement works associated with Bury Interchange are due to be submitted in Summer 2026, ahead of start on site later in the year.

Metrolink

- 7.17. All Metrolink track renewals planned in 2025 / 26 were completed on time and within budget, including embedded track renewals in the City Centre and the renewal of roof beams and associated works at Whitefield Tunnel.
- 7.18. Significant engineering works will take place at critical points across the Metrolink network in 2026 to renew aging infrastructure and bring improvements to safety and passenger journey times. To minimise disruption to passengers, works have been combined where possible avoiding major events and works elsewhere on the transport network. Works include:
- Rochdale track repairs towards the end of March and on the Ashton line in April. Various track repairs are planned at Victoria in late March, towards the end of April and early May;
 - Safety critical track renewals planned across the network which will involve temporary line closures, with bus replacement services. These include works between Newton Heath to Moston and between Monsall to Central Park, and works at Derker in May, between GMex and Cornbrook in July/August, and in a second phase in October/November, and Cornbrook and Trafford Bar in three phases in July/August, October/November, and then in early 2027. Further works at Derker are planned to take place in August;
 - The work to replace infrastructure between Cornbrook and Trafford Bar will be particularly disruptive with no services on the Altrincham, Trafford Park or Eccles lines with services on the Airport and East Didsbury lines terminating at Firswood during the works;
 - Alongside these renewals, we will also be upgrading Points Controllers in Piccadilly Gardens in Summer 2026.

7.19. A communication and engagement plan is already being implemented to notify customers, businesses, schools, and key stakeholders to spread awareness of the works and the potential for disruption so that people can plan accordingly.