

Improving Greater Manchester's Transport Governance

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The creation of Greater Manchester's (GM's) integrated transport system, the Bee Network, will require a more coordinated and integrated approach to transport governance, that places accountability to local people at its heart.
- 1.2 Local control of our transport network, and bus franchising in particular, will change the type and number of decisions being made, therefore we need to change the make-up of our decision making bodies so that we can ensure GM's new responsibilities are discharged in an effective and transparent way.

2.0 Current arrangements

- 2.1 GMCA and the 10 Authorities have delegated some of their functions to the GM Transport Committee (GMTC) The functions delegated provide limited opportunities for GMTC to influence strategic decision making and therefore transport policy. Its role combines elements of both decision making around relatively minor issues and performance monitoring which is usually considered to be a scrutiny committee function. This has led to a lack of clarity both within and outside of the GM system.

3.0 Principles for future governance

- 3.1 To help shape our future governance, we have established seven principles that set out the requirements of any new structures. They should:
 - Support shared ownership of the transport agenda across GM, informed by local priorities and driven by consensus.
 - Support an integrated approach to policy development to support the delivery of an integrated network.
 - Separate decision making and policy development from oversight and scrutiny.
 - Strengthen decision making, scrutiny and local involvement.
 - Be simplified and transparent.
 - Support enhanced member and public engagement.
 - Ensure delegation to officers to enable operational flexibility, as appropriate.

4.0 The Way Forward

- 4.1 In alignment with these principles, we propose:
 - A new, smaller, and more strategically focussed 'Bee Network Committee' (BNC), which would lead transport decision making at a regional level, taking greater ownership and responsibility for the GM integrated transport network.
 - Strengthened local engagement by increasing opportunities for local councillors and members of the public to contribute to and influence transport policy and services in their area.
 - Formal scrutiny of the Bee Network Committee being part of the work programme of the newly strengthened GM Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

4.2 The Bee Network Committee

As with the present GMTC, the BNC would be structured as a joint committee, able to exercise decision making powers and develop policy on behalf of the CA, the Mayor and local authorities.

- 4.3 It is anticipated that the new committee would have no more than 15 members, as set out below:
- GM local authorities appoint one member each to ten places (expected to be the transport portfolio holder – see below).
 - GMCA appoints to one place.
 - The Mayor
 - Additional members appointed by Mayor for political balance (up to a maximum committee size of 15). Political balance will need to be reviewed following the local elections.
- 4.4 Local authorities would be expected to nominate their cabinet member with transport responsibility to the committee, or another councillor with decision making responsibility where more appropriate.
- 4.5 By bringing together executive members from across the city region, the BNC will be able to take a holistic and integrated view of transport in GM, and can better support and co-ordinate activity across district boundaries e.g. coordination of road works.
- 4.6 Functions of the new committee could include:
- Network Decisions – ‘Significant changes’ to franchised bus services or Metrolink services as part of regular multi-modal network reviews within an area e.g. introduction of a new service, withdrawal of a service, significant changes to service frequencies or connectivity, and changes to subsidised bus services before franchising is introduced in an area.
 - Funding Approvals – Draw downs for GM’s CRSTS Programme or Mayor’s Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund.
 - Policy and Strategy Development – e.g. GM Bus Plan, GM Rail ambitions, Bee Network Policy Review.
 - Reviewing fares, tariffs, charges and concessions in line with GMCA policy.
 - Supporting coordination between local authorities – e.g. Road Safety (inc. Vision Zero), Traffic and Works Management, Key Route Network management, Active Travel infrastructure delivery and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure delivery.
 - Reviewing programmes – e.g. Active Travel, Customer Growth Strategy.
 - Ownership of pilots, consultation responses etc.
 - Other functions delegated by districts, GMCA and Mayor as appropriate.
- 4.7 The GMCA, would continue to approve:
- Transport Budgets.
 - The Local Transport Plan and any sub-strategies.
 - Metrolink and Bus Franchise contract awards and variations.
 - TfGM Exec and Non-Exec Appointments.
- 4.8 TfGM would make day-to-day operational decisions within agreed parameters and policies.

4.9 The TfGM Executive Board would retain responsibility for ensuring TfGM is set up to deliver the transport strategies, policies and interventions of the Transport Authority as directed by the Mayor, the GMCA, districts and BNC.

5.0 Strengthened member and public engagement

5.1 A key part of these new governance arrangements will be an increased number of opportunities for local councillors and members of the public to influence transport policy and services in their area, in addition to existing channels. These will include:

- Opportunities for local members to inform reviews of the transport network, including regular reviews of the franchised bus network, through direct engagement and consultation.
- Virtual and in-person drop-ins established for local members to raise issues/concerns directly with TfGM officers.
- Opportunities for local members to input via Transport Exec Members represented on GMTC/Bee Network Committee.
- Opportunities for Districts to refer petitions regarding the transport network to the Bee Network Committee, providing they comply with the requirements of that District's petitions scheme.

6.0 Clear scrutiny arrangements

6.1 As GM takes on new responsibilities and functions, it is important that scrutiny arrangements are appropriately strong. Under these proposals, the GMCA's single, integrated Overview & Scrutiny Committee will consider transport matters in one place, alongside other policy areas, allowing for integrated consideration of issues. This approach has been highlighted within the Government's recently published English Devolution Accountability Framework as an example of good practice.

7.0 Implementation

7.1 Subject to Leaders' views, we intend to put forward these proposals and an updated terms of reference (currently in development) at the May meeting of the GMCA for approval.

7.2 If agreed, each GM authority will then need to approve the new terms of reference at its full council meeting and appoint an appropriate representative.

7.3 On conclusion of this process, we aim to hold the first meeting of the new Bee Network Committee in July 2023, prior to the first franchised bus services entering operation in September 2023.