

THE BEE NETWORK - IMPROVING GREATER MANCHESTER'S TRANSPORT GOVERNANCE

Report of the Director of Place Management

1. Introduction/Background

- 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 the GM transport network, and bus franchising in particular, will change the type and number of decisions being made. GM therefore needs to change the make-up of its decision-making bodies so as to ensure GM's new responsibilities are discharged in an effective and transparent way.

2. Current Arrangements

- 2.1 GMCA, the Mayor and the 10 GM Constituent Councils 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. Principles for Future Governance

- 3.1 To help shape future governance, seven principles that set out the requirements of any new structures have been identified. 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. The Way Forward

- 4.1 In alignment with these principles, the proposal is:
 - 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 Although the new committee itself would have greater delegated powers, no additional constituent council functions are to be transferred or delegated to the GMCA.

4.3 The GMCA would delegate additional functions that are already conferred on or delegated to it, to TfGM. Such functions would be of a day-to-day operational nature, for example, local bus information, consultation procedures, transport and road safety studies. This will require corresponding amendments to the GMCA constitution which will be included in the annual review of the constitution.

5. The Bee Network Committee (BNC)

5.1 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 constituent councils.

5.2 It is anticipated that the new committee would have no more than 16 members, as set out below:

- GM constituent councils 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 16).

5.3 The constituent councils would be expected to nominate their cabinet member with transport responsibility to the committee, or another councillor with decision-making responsibility where more appropriate.

5.4 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. co-ordination of highways management.

- Functions of the new committee could include:
Decision-Making – Approving significant changes to transport network operations, and the drawdown of funding to invest in transport infrastructure and operations.
- Performance Monitoring – Oversight of the performance and financial sustainability of the transport network, holding transport operators and TfGM to account.
- Policy Development – Developing transport policy to support the delivery of the Local Transport Plan (Greater Manchester 2040 Transport Strategy) and the Greater Manchester Strategy, within the parameters of the budgets set by GMCA.
- Local Coordination – Facilitating coordination between the Constituent Councils to support effective highways management and infrastructure delivery. . For example, oversight of the coordination of road works through the Greater Manchester Road Activity Permit Scheme (GMRAPS).

5.5 The GMCA would continue to approve:

- Transport Budgets
- The Local Transport Plan and any sub-strategies
- Metrolink and Bus Franchise contract awards
- TfGM Executive and Non-Executive Appointments

5.6 TfGM would make day-to-day operational decisions within agreed parameters and policies.

5.7 The TfGM Executive Board would retain responsibility for ensuring TfGM has or develops the organisational capabilities and culture to deliver the transport strategies, policies and interventions of the Transport Authority as directed by the Mayor, the GMCA, GM constituent councils and BNC.

6. Strengthened Member and Public Engagement

6.1 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 and better hold TfGM and other agencies to account for the operational performance of the network (e.g. around safety and personal security). 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 Executive Members represented on Bee Network Committee.
- Opportunities for constituent councils to refer petitions regarding the transport network to the Bee Network Committee, providing they comply with the requirements of that constituent council's petitions scheme.

7. Clear Scrutiny Arrangements

7.1 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.

7.2 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee will scrutinise the decisions of the BNC and will be able to call in Decisions as it feels appropriate. It may also initiate task and finish groups, which can provide greater opportunity to focus on a particular issue.

8. Implementation

8.1 The attached draft Terms of Reference (Appendix 2) set out the proposed functions of and delegations to the Bee Network Committee. Appendix 3 sets out a draft of the proposed Rules of Procedure.

8.2 The GMCA and the Mayor at the GMCA meeting held on 26th May 2023 approved the new arrangements and the establishment of the Bee Network

Committee as set out in the appendices and recommended it on for approval by the GM district councils. Each GM constituent council will need to agree to the establishment of the new Bee Network Committee, approve the proposed terms of reference and rules of procedure and appoint an appropriate representative and substitute to the committee.

- 8.3 On conclusion of this process, it would be the intention 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.

9. Financial And Risk Assessment Considerations

- 9.1. Considered by GMCA

10. Legal Considerations

- 10.1. Considered by GMCA

11. Human Resources Impact

- 11.1. Considered by GMCA – not applicable to Stockport Council

12. Equalities Impact

- 12.1. Considered by GMCA

13. Environmental Impact

- 13.1. Considered by GMCA

14. Recommendations to Cabinet

- 14.1. The Cabinet is recommended to consider the proposed changes to the governance arrangements for transport in Greater Manchester and agree to the following in so far as they relate to the discharge of executive functions, and recommend to the Council Meeting that it approve the same in so far as they relate to non-executive functions:-

- Agree to the establishment of a new joint transport committee (the Bee Network Committee) of the GMCA, the Mayor and the ten Greater Manchester constituent councils.
- Approve the appointment of members to the Bee Network Committee as set out in Appendix 1 and appoint the Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways & Transport Services, and 1 substitute member to the Bee Network Committee.
- Approve the Terms of Reference of the Bee Network Committee as set out in Appendix 2.
- Note the delegation of the functions of the GMCA as set out in the Terms of Reference to the Bee Network Committee and note the delegation of Mayoral functions as set out in the Terms of Reference, attached at Appendix 2.
- Agree the delegation of the functions of the Local Authority Constituent Councils as set out in the Terms of Reference, attached at Appendix 2 (which for the avoidance of doubt are the same delegations given to the former Transport Committee).
- Approve the Rules of Procedure for the Bee Network Committee as set out in Appendix 3.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Vicki Bates, Sue Stevenson

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