

## Report of the Director of Place Management

### Cabinet Response - Financial Impact of Bus Franchising Scrutiny Review

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 As part of the Scrutiny Work Programme approved by the Council for the municipal year 2023/24, the Corporate, Resource Management & Governance Scrutiny Committee requested a scrutiny review to consider the current funding of transport in Greater Manchester and the impact on Stockport MBC, the current approach to fares and ticketing and key risks identified. The review also explored the current budget, medium term financial plan for franchising alongside patronage, revenue and growth plans as well as current and future plans to manage the franchised network including performance measures and network area reviews.

#### **2. Purpose of report**

- 2.1 This report is the response to the four recommendations in the original scrutiny review.

#### **3. Original Recommendations**

- 3.1 The following recommendations were made:

1. Support the establishment of a local authority level group, comprised of cross-party representation and officer support, to effectively feed into the development of the Bee Network agenda in Stockport's interests as we prepare for the start of the south GM franchise in 2025.
2. Note that short and medium term financial and patronage performance indicators will be reported via a combination of GMCA financial monitoring reports and regular service delivery updates to the Bee Network committee. TfGM be requested to provide suitable information to give assurance about the resourcing of newly franchised service, such as the overall Peak Vehicle Requirement and this information should be shared with relevant committees and local authority level groups within Stockport. Page 791
3. An annual monitoring report be provided to CRMG Scrutiny Committee that provides assurance on the financial, quality, performance and risk management of bus franchising and transport provision funded by the transport and statutory charge.
4. The Cabinet alongside TfGM and the GMCA continue to lobby for a fairer transport settlement for Greater Manchester and Stockport.

#### **4. Agreed Response**

##### **4.1 Resolved Establish a Local Authority level group**

- 4.2 A local authority level Bee Network Steering Group has been established, and met for the first time on 16th December. The relevant Portfolio member is the Chair and there is cross-party representation on the Steering Group, with accepted Terms of Reference and a commitment to quarterly meetings. The remit of the group is 'to gather information from TfGM useful to the Steering Group, and collate and escalate Stockport's views on the emerging franchising bus network to TfGM'.

### **4.3 Resolved TfGM to Provide Bus Information**

4.4 Since the CRMG review, Tranche 3 of the franchised bus network was officially launched on 6th January 2025. Officers are in contact with colleagues at TfGM who produce an annual bus monitoring report. It is the intention of the Bee Network Steering Group to invite TfGM officers to provide updates on various aspects of bus operations in Stockport.

### **4.5 Resolved Provide an Annual Monitoring Report**

4.6 Following the publication of TfGM annual monitoring report, we can commit to bringing the relevant elements of this analysis, in conjunction with updates on the bus supporting highways development work, to scrutiny committee.

### **4.7 Resolved Fairer Funding Settlement**

4.8 The council commits to continue to lobby for the best funding package that can be obtained to support bus operations in Greater Manchester and Stockport. The council will utilise the newly established Local Bee Network Steering Group to collate information on bus operations and possible improvements in Stockport and, through the district S151 Officer, make representations to TfGM regarding bus franchising changes and support.

## **5. Recommendations**

5.1 This Cabinet response be noted and endorsed by the Corporate, Resource Management and Governance Scrutiny Committee.

### **Officer Contact**

Please contact Jamie Birtles [jamie.birtles@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:jamie.birtles@stockport.gov.uk)