

Bee Network Equalities Newsletter – October 2025

Hello and welcome to the October 2025 Bee Network Equalities Update, prepared for you by Transport for Greater Manchester's (TfGM) Partnerships, Engagement and Inclusion (PEI) team. In this newsletter you will find key transport-related updates and relevant news stories for anyone with an interest in our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

We send out periodic Equalities newsletter updates. This edition covers the period July – October 2025. You're receiving this newsletter as you've been identified as a key stakeholder to the PEI team, with a vested interest in promoting accessibility and inclusion.

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Opportunities to have your say or get involved

Update on concessionary pass trial and upcoming November trial

From 1 – 31 August, around 400,000 older and disabled people in Greater Manchester benefited from a trial of concessionary pass holders being able to access the network for free before 9.30 am. The pilot enabled concessionary pass holders in Greater Manchester to benefit from round-the-clock bus travel, helping better connect them to healthcare, leisure, and retail opportunities. Usually, those with a TfGM-issued concessionary travel pass have free bus travel between 9.30am and midnight during the week and all day on weekends and public holidays.

A second trial period will be taking place in November and, like the first trial, will be taking place on bus services only. This will allow anyone who holds a TfGM-issued older person's or disabled person's travel pass to access unlimited, free bus travel from 1 – 30 November. At the end of the further trial period, findings will be assessed to understand whether the move can be made permanent. Full details about the upcoming trial, as well as further information regarding concessionary passes, [can be found on TfGM's website](#). The webpage will be updated with details of how to provide any feedback.

Neighbourhood Transport Review

TfGM is reviewing how neighbourhood transport services (Ring and Ride & Local Link) can better meet the needs of communities. This is part of a wider plan to make travel across Greater Manchester more joined-up, inclusive, and efficient.

The Neighbourhood Transport Review is looking at how these services can connect more smoothly with the Bee Network and support the goals of the [Live Well](#) public service reform. That means making sure transport works better for everyone especially older people, disabled passengers, and those who rely on flexible, door-to-door travel.

We'll be engaging throughout the remainder of this year and into 2026 to understand what what's working well or what the current challenges of these services are. A survey will be available via gmconsult.org from November 2025.

Transport Strategy 2050

TfGM is preparing to launch a public consultation on the GM Transport Strategy 2050; a long-term strategy and supporting 10-year delivery plan that will shape how we travel across Greater Manchester in the years ahead.

Equalities groups have previously fed into the development of the GM Transport Strategy 2050 through Local Transport Plan (LTP) engagement sessions which were held between January 2024 and February 2025. Feedback from this period of pre-consultation engagement has influenced the draft strategy that we will be launching a consultation on before the end of the year.

This consultation is your chance to help influence decisions on everything from buses, trams and trains to walking, cycling and road safety. The plan will guide how we make transport more reliable, inclusive, affordable and better for the environment.

Whether you're a regular commuter, a parent, a carer, a business owner or someone who just wants safer streets and better connections, your voice matters.

What is the consultation about?

- Improving public transport and active travel options
- Making transport more accessible for everyone
- Reducing congestion and carbon emissions
- Supporting local communities and the economy

The consultation will open later this year and include online surveys, drop-in events, and opportunities to speak directly with TfGM. [You will be able to access the latest information on the GM Consult web page.](#)

GMCA Consultation on Clean Air ANPR camera use

GMCA are considering repurposing Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras, originally installed across Greater Manchester for a previously proposed charging Clean Air Zone that will no longer proceed, to support crime prevention and community safety. GMCA are currently seeking views on a proposal to transfer ownership of these ANPR cameras to Greater Manchester Police (GMP), changing their primary function.

This proposal aims to maximise the value of existing infrastructure to enhance safety across Greater Manchester. Feedback will help shape the final recommendation, ensuring GM remains a safe place to live, work, and travel. The consultation and supporting information can be found [on GM Consult](#). The deadline for responses is Thursday 6

November. Please feel free to share this consultation across your own networks, platforms, and channels.

Refreshing our Mobility Scooter Policy for greater accessibility

TfGM is currently in the process of updating its Mobility Scooter Policy to help make the Bee Network more inclusive and accessible for everyone. This refresh is part of our ongoing commitment to removing barriers and ensuring that people with mobility needs can travel safely and confidently across the network.

To support this work, we'll be holding a targeted engagement session to hear directly from users and communities about their experiences and needs.

Staying informed

Disability Design Reference Group (DDRG) activity

The Disability Design Reference Group (DDRG) is our pan-impairment advisory group, who provide advice based on their personal experience of travelling on the Bee Network. The DDRG work collaboratively with us in designing an integrated, accessible public and active travel network. The group meet formally every three months, and their focus is primarily on projects and workstreams which are particularly strategic or significant. A summary of current work is included below.

Latest formal meeting:

- DDRG feedback was sought on the initial pilot allowing people with a concessionary pass to travel at any time for free. This will be used to inform the further pilot in November as well as its wider assessment.
- As we start to work towards incorporating the first rail lines into the Bee Network, the Rail Integration team came to introduce their work to DDRG. Members were asked for initial insights into key areas of focus covering fares and ticketing, stations and place, service development, performance and reliability.
- The group is refreshing the guidance it provides to TfGM colleagues who come to present projects to DDRG. Members were asked for their input and ideas about what should be included and how best to present the information.

Additionally, DDRG have been leading on a collaborative project to explore attitudinal barriers to inclusive travel and how we might address them:

- Members of the Disability Design Reference Group came together in a series of collaborative discussions earlier this year. Wider engagement sessions were held

throughout the summer to hear the views of other equality groups. The focus of discussions was based around the themes and ideas developed with DDRG. Each session was co-presented by one TfGM colleague and one member of DDRG, bringing their own lived experience perspective. We are now putting together a written summary of the outcomes to enable us to explore next steps.

Access for All engagement and Hindley TravelHub drop-in session

Throughout September, we have been out and about speaking with communities about improvements to their local travel infrastructure.

On 9th September, TfGM staff were in Hindley talking to groups and residents about plans to extend the car park at Hindley railway station. The plans include provision for a bus service, cycle parking, increased electric vehicle parking, and an improved pedestrian access between the car park and the railway station.

On 11th September we spoke with residents in Tameside about plans to make Flowery Field and Newton-for-Hyde railway stations step-free, and on 17th September we shared plans to make Levenshulme station step-free with the [Inspired Taskforce](#) (an older-person led organisation) and local residents.

Thank you to everyone who attended and shared their feedback. All comments are being collated and will help to shape the developing plans. Keep an eye on our [Consultation & Engagement web page](#) for the latest information on each of these projects.

Free safer driving course for 55+

The Safer Roads Greater Manchester Partnership are encouraging drivers to join a free Safer Driving for Longer course. The course helps drivers to reflect on their own driving, increase confidence in their ability and to consider efficient alternatives to driving. It is available to Greater Manchester residents aged 55+. The courses take place in Trafford and location details will be shared at the time of booking.

To book a place on the course, participants should call 0300 123 1518 (option 3). More information about the courses and how to book is available online [on TfGM's website](#). Please direct any questions to info@drivesafe.org.uk.

Museum of Transport – Inclusion Day

On 31st August, TfGM and the [Museum of Transport](#) hosted an accessibility-focused event that was warmly received. Visitors appreciated the relaxed atmosphere, thoughtful adjustments, and British Sign Language interpretation. Highlights included an accessible

Bee Network bus, a guided BSL tour, and a heritage bus offering free transport. The museum also created a quieter space in the afternoon for those needing a calmer environment. Attendees praised the event and called for more inclusive days like this in future. TfGM and the museum are now exploring how to build on the event's success.

Accessibility learning day

On 3rd of September, people with lived experience of spinal cord injury were invited to take part in a City Skills course in Manchester, organised by Back Up Trust in association with KeolisAmey Metrolink (KAM), TfGM, Avanti West Coast and Alstom Group. Back Up Trust's aim is to help people who have a spinal cord injury regain confidence, skills, and independence.

The focus of the day was to allow participants to navigate different forms of public transport to build confidence around travelling independently on the Bee Network.

Feedback from everyone involved has been overwhelmingly positive, with the day providing a great learning opportunity centred around accessibility for all involved. Further information about the City Skills courses, including any upcoming opportunities and details of how to be involved, can be found [on Back Up Trust's website](#).

Bee Network updates: better buses, cheaper travel and improved accessibility

To mark two years of locally controlled buses, Mayor Andy Burnham announced a series of Bee Network upgrades, including:

- **Cheaper and more frequent travel:** Half-price fares for 18–21-year-olds, more frequent buses in Bolton and Leigh, and new/improved cross-boundary services with Cheshire.
- **Digital and tech enhancements:** 'Our Pass' is now digital, and Apple Pay users can benefit from the new 'Express Mode'.

You can find out more about these announcements and [via the full press release on TfGM's website](#).

Industrial Action

We know industrial action affects some communities more than others, so equalities considerations have been central to planning and will continue to guide our response.

Some of the mitigations which have been put in place include:

- Bus customers with 7-day, 28-day, term-time or annual passes, and concessionary passes (including Our Pass), can travel on the entire Metrolink network, all Northern train services in affected areas, and TransPennine Express services between Greenfield and Manchester Piccadilly on strike days.
- TfGM Travel Safe Officers (TSEOs) will be deployed across the network to assist with journey planning and provide on-the-day support.
- Additional staff at interchanges and customer contact points to assist disabled passengers and those needing extra support.
- Increased non-digital notices at key locations for those without online access.
- Information translated into the top five community languages to reach diverse groups.
- Targeted communications to schools to support continuity for pupils and families.

We will continue to monitor key impacts and respond appropriately to ensure our communities are as supported as possible throughout industrial action.

If you have any questions, please contact hello@tfgm.com or call the Bee Network Contact Centre on **0161 244 1000**. The Contact Centre can provide translation services for non-English speakers.

National Centre for Accessible Transport (NCAT) roundtable

During the summer, Bee Network Committee Disability Advocate, Cllr Tracey Rawlins, joined Transport Commissioners Dame Sarah Storey and Vernon Everitt at a roundtable hosted by the National Centre for Accessible Transport (NCAT), ahead of their annual board meeting. The session brought together key voices from across the sector to reflect on progress made against the commitments set out in the [Accessible Transport Charter, which GM has signed up to](#). Discussions focused on how barriers to inclusive travel are being removed through collaborative action and lived experience leadership.

The roundtable provided an excellent opportunity to share insights and reaffirm the importance of working together to improve accessibility for disabled people.

Further information and updates

- For latest news see the [media section on the Bee Network website](#).
- Information about all upcoming events is available on our [dedicated webpage](#).
- The latest customer information related to planned Metrolink maintenance and improvements works can be found on the [TfGM website](#).