

# THE BEE NETWORK & Your Buses



BEE NETWORK



Transport for  
Greater Manchester

## What's happening?

Greater Manchester is embarking on its biggest change to public transport in the city-region in nearly 40 years.

Buses are being brought under local control and will be planned and coordinated by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), on behalf of Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), under a system called franchising.

This change is the biggest step on Greater Manchester's journey to delivering a joined-up transport system which supports safe, seamless and affordable end-to-end journeys across public transport and active travel – the Bee Network.

## What is franchising?

Franchising is the system used to procure and co-ordinate bus services in many cities across Europe and the rest of the world, but until now has only been permitted in London in the UK.

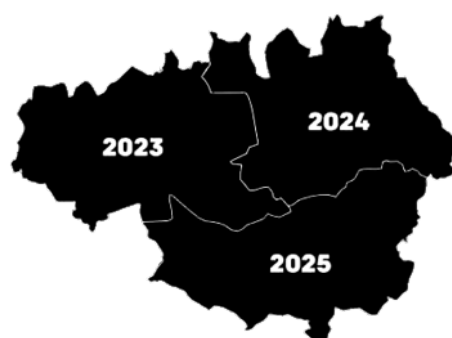
Franchising provides the mechanism for greater local control of services, which will enable us to better integrate buses with other modes of transport, with simpler fares and ticketing, a price cap so no one pays more than they need to, better customer service, and a single brand identity for the whole network.

In practice, this will see TfGM, as the transport authority, enter contracts with transport operators to deliver specified routes and services, with revenue risk and public accountability remaining with us. Given the importance of buses to the people and places they serve, customer focused performance targets, including punctuality and reliability of services and levels of customer complaints, will be central to operators' contracts and help us to deliver continuous improvements to the bus network.

## When will this happen?

To ensure a smooth transition, the roll out of franchising is taking place in three phases, which will go live as follows:

	Areas	Start date
Phase 1	Bolton, Wigan, and parts of Salford, Bury and Manchester	24 September 2023
Phase 2	Oldham, Rochdale, and parts of Bury, Salford and north Manchester	24 March 2024
Phase 3	Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, and the remaining parts of Manchester and Salford	5 January 2025



In December 2022, the contracts to run the first locally controlled services were signed. Go North West was awarded the two large franchises in Bolton and Wigan and Diamond was awarded seven smaller franchises within the phase one area. The procurement phase for services in phase two is well underway.

## What will the buses look like?

### New vehicles

Ahead of the first two phases, 100 new, electric vehicles have already been ordered from a UK-based manufacturer and will feature the distinctive yellow and black colours and symbolic logo of the new Bee Network brand – which will eventually be consistent across bus, tram and cycle hire.



The new vehicles will meet the 'best in class' specification set by TfGM following engagement with the public and lived experience groups. Facilities will include audio-visual announcements and USB-charging provision, as well as accessible ramps and wheelchair spaces.

### Existing vehicles

A programme to upgrade much of the existing fleet will also take place, including to the livery of vehicles to bring them into the Bee Network brand. This process will be gradual.

From March 2023, some buses will start to look different and people will start to see some buses turning yellow before franchising comes in, to help people get used to the change. In these cases, vehicles will temporarily carry the brand of both the Bee Network and the existing operator – but nothing else will have changed (yet!). Customers should continue to get in touch with their bus operator in the usual way.

### What will happen to my bus route on day one?

On day one of franchising, routes and timetables will closely resemble the existing network, providing clarity and continuity for customers during a period of significant change to the way bus services are planned and delivered.

In the coming months, we will develop a Greater Manchester Bus Plan. This will set out a path for the delivery of our ambitious vision for bus, including how future decision making, network planning and development of priorities will be undertaken in line with Bee Network principles.

### Is franchising the only change?

The transition to bus franchising from September 2023 is an opportunity to deliver transformational changes to the way bus services are run, but the work to unlock the full potential of our bus network goes beyond franchising:

#### Fares

Greater Manchester has taken steps to simplify and lower bus fares – in order to support residents during the current cost of living pressures, while attracting more people to use buses. Costs are currently capped as follows:

	Single	1-Day AnyBus Travelcard	7-Day AnyBus Travelcard
Adults	£2	£5	£21
Children	£1	£2.50	£10.50

These fares are subject to an annual review, while work continues around how they will eventually sit as part of a network-wide, integrated ticketing offer.

#### Customer experience

When franchised services start in September, there will be a new Bee Network Customer Contact Centre providing an accessible and integrated single point of contact for customers travelling in Greater Manchester. This will be underpinned by the development of a Customer Charter, which will set out what customers can expect when using the network.

A Bee Network App is currently in development and will support customers in making seamless journeys, by enabling them to buy bus and tram tickets and access real time information on services – as well as allowing them to rate their service and give feedback to the Bee Network Customer Contact Centre.

#### Infrastructure

We are developing exciting proposals for major infrastructure enhancements to deliver faster, more reliable journeys and an improved waiting environment. There will be a particular focus on providing better orbital routes around Greater Manchester and faster journeys between our key towns, with this likely to include investments into bus priority measures and enhanced stops, crossings and customer information screens.

Keep in the loop with the latest updates: [tfgm.com/our-buses](https://tfgm.com/our-buses)

