

Transport Update for GM Health Sector 24/03/23

Bus franchising: Bee Network bus branding launch

The Mayor of Greater Manchester and local authority leaders unveiled the first Bee Network co-branded buses at Bolton Interchange on 24 March as part of the latest step towards bus franchising, exactly six months ahead of the first franchised services running in Bolton, Wigan, and parts of Salford, Bury, and Manchester from September.

Bus franchising is the biggest step on Greater Manchester's journey to delivering the Bee Network, a joined-up transport system which supports safe, seamless, and affordable end-to-end journeys across public transport and active travel. TfGM, on behalf of GMCA, will plan and co-ordinate services in what is the biggest change to public transport in the city-region in nearly 40 years.

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.

A programme to upgrade much of the existing fleet will also take place, including changing the livery of vehicles to bring them into the Bee Network brand from March 2023 before franchising is introduced, 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. The first yellow branded buses will start to operate on some services, with Diamond's number 8 service running between Bolton and Manchester via Farnworth and Salford from 24 March.

A supporting press release can be found [here](#) and further information is provided on the briefing note attached to the email accompanying this update and at our dedicated webpage:

<https://tfgm.com/our-buses>.

We will continue to provide further updates on bus franchising in due course.

Please feel free to share TfGM's social media posts about the bus franchising branding launch event to help amplify the messaging:

- A twitter post that can be re-tweeted/shared is here:
<https://twitter.com/OfficialTfGM/status/1639190333471993857?s=20>
- An Instagram reel that can be shared is here:
<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CqK7r8Yprzk/?igshid=Mzc1MmZhNjY=>

TfGM's twitter and Facebook channels can be found here:

- Twitter: @OfficialTfGM
- Facebook: facebook.com/OfficialTfGM

Trailblazer Devolution Deal and Spring Budget Headlines

On 15 March a new Trailblazer deeper devolution deal between Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the Government was [announced](#). This is the seventh devolution deal for

Greater Manchester, the first since 2017, and builds on existing responsibilities over transport, business support, employment and skills support, policing, spatial planning, housing investment, and health.

Building on existing plans for transport integration between trams and buses through bus franchising, the Deal commits to activity to enable the delivery of full integration of local rail services into the Bee Network by 2030. This includes London-style touch-in/touch-out integrated fares and ticketing across bus, Metrolink and rail, as well as Bee Network co-branding across the public transport network. This will be taken forward by a new Rail Partnership with Great British Railways, with the first pilots on integrated fares and ticketing agreed by the end of the year.

The deal lays the foundation for greater input into our stations, services and strategic infrastructure investment with the creation of the North West Regional Business Unit and GM Rail Board. This will enable GMCA to improve local scrutiny of performance, help shape future service integration with the Bee Network and support the best possible public transport experience for the people and businesses of Greater Manchester.

Further information about the deal can be found [here](#).

Other headlines from the Spring Budget 2023 related to transport included:

Announcement of City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Round Two

- £8.8 billion of funding for city-regions covering the period 2027-28 to 2031-32.
- Any Greater Manchester allocations would be provided under the new multi-year single source funding settlement for Greater Manchester, which is part of the Trailblazer devolution deal. This single settlement would be designed in the mould of government department budgets and set at Spending Reviews.

Greater Manchester will be the location of one of 12 new Investment Zones.

- Each of the 12 zones would drive growth for at least one future key sector: green industries, digital technologies, life sciences, creative industries, or advance manufacturing.
- The Investment Zones will have access to interventions worth £80bn over five years and grant funding to address local productivity including improving local infrastructure.
- Plans will be developed collaboratively by Mayoral Combined Authorities working in partnership with local universities, councils, businesses, and central government.
- Plans will need to demonstrate how the Investment Zone will support the UK reaching net zero by 2050 and the government's new long-term targets to protect and enhance the natural environment and be resilient to the effects of climate change.

Levelling Up Partnerships

- Over £400 million available for new bespoke place-based regeneration in 20 of England's areas most in need of levelling up over 2023-24 and 2024-25, including Oldham and Rochdale.
- Distribution of the investment will be made on a case-by-case basis and in each of these places the government will work with local leaders and mayors, local businesses, community organisations and residents to identify and address the biggest barriers to levelling up.

- A third round of the Levelling Up Fund will proceed as planned, later in 2023, with a further £1bn
- Budget announced over £200m for 16 specific regeneration projects, assessed as high quality with delivery commencing this year, including £6.6m in Wigan.
- £58m will be invested in three levelling up capital projects in the North West, including a new community hub in Stockport and transport connectivity improvements in Rossendale.

Infrastructure Investment and Delivery

- The government will invest a further £200 million in 2023-24 to maintain and improve local roads. This increase aims to enable English local authorities to fix more potholes, complete resurfacing, and invest in major repairs and renewals, such as keeping bridges and major structures open.
- The UK Infrastructure Bank Bill, now in its final stages in Parliament, will give the UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) the powers to deliver on its mandate to accelerate investment into ambitious infrastructure projects that tackle climate change and support levelling up.

Business Investment and Tax

- Vehicle Excise Duty for cars, vans, and motorcycles will be uprated in line with RPI from 1 April 2023, whereas it will remain frozen for HGVs for 2023-24
- The government will introduce a new HGV levy from August 2023, a further step toward reflecting the environmental performance of the vehicle.

Testing of new digital real-time bus information displays

TfGM is exploring new ways to provide bus passengers with real-time information, including NHS patients, staff and visitors leading up to delivering the integrated Bee Network. New digital passenger information displays are currently being tested in Manchester city centre as part of a pilot, with two further sites due to be added as part of a six-month evaluation.

TfGM is working alongside three industry-leading suppliers of digital technology to test hardware and software. Customers and accessibility groups will be engaged at the test sites so that passengers can have their say on what they feel is the best solution, and to allow for a better understanding of their requirements. Through Greater Manchester's £1.2bn City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) in partnership with the government, funding has been allocated to deliver live information displays at key locations across the bus network.

Further information can be found in the TfGM [press release](#).

#GetOnBoard Campaign

TfGM are highlighting the benefits of travelling sustainably through the real stories of GM residents in our #GetOnBoard Spring campaign, which follows on from September's original #GetOnBoard campaign. Amid growing concern about the cost-of-living crisis and the impact of car journeys on the environment, residents are taking advantage of capped bus fares, Metrolink's flexible travel options, and the city-region's expanding active travel network to save money on vehicle fuel and parking, reduce time spent in traffic jams, and cut carbon emissions.

A press release has been [issued](#) and we have created a partner toolkit with newsletter text, social media posts, graphics and videos which is available [here](#) with materials that can be used across partner platforms, channels, and networks if you think it may be of benefit or interest to your audience.

Rochdale – Oldham - Ashton Transport Experience Survey

TfGM, alongside Rochdale, Oldham, and Tameside councils, have launched a survey seeking feedback from bus passengers, pedestrians, cyclists and other road users about their experiences of travelling to, or between, Rochdale, Oldham, Royton, and Ashton town centres.

The survey, which will be open until 28 April 2023, focuses on understanding the barriers and challenges people face on their journeys between these key places, as well as seeking to identify opportunities for improvements which could include making bus journeys quicker and more reliable and facilities such as bus stops safer, more accessible, and more comfortable. Feedback will also help with potential plans for new and improved routes for walking, cycling and wheeling.

Buses and bus infrastructure will form the single largest component of the Bee Network, and last year Greater Manchester received more than £1bn from the government's City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement – with significant funding set to be invested in buses, routes and services to improve the quality of these journeys across the city-region.

The potential highway infrastructure improvements between Rochdale, Oldham, and Ashton, proposed to go ahead between now and Spring 2027, will complement other key transport projects being developed in Greater Manchester, including the start of bus franchising, delivering ultra-low emission and accessible buses, simplifying the purchase of tickets, and making fares more affordable.

The public feedback survey, open to individuals aged 16 and over, can be accessed [here](#). There is also a stakeholder [survey](#) that can be completed on behalf of organisations who are based in, or on the routes between, Rochdale, Oldham, Royton, and Ashton town centres. Both surveys will be open until 28 April 2023. If people need to complete this survey in an alternative format they can email customer.relations@tfgm.com or call 0161 244 1000.

A press release has been [issued](#) and TfGM, along with Rochdale, Oldham, and Tameside council are sharing the survey link with transport users, local stakeholders, and residents.

International Women's Day 2023

Earlier this month TfGM celebrated the successes of our female colleagues across our social channels in support of this year's International Women's Day (IWD). As a [White Ribbon Accredited Organisation](#) we've also highlighted the measures we have in place to help keep all women and girls safe when travelling on our network.

Transport Commissioners, [Vernon Everitt](#) and [Dame Sarah Storey](#) supported messaging and shared videos on their LinkedIn accounts to help promote the importance of tackling gender-based violence on the transport network to ensure that the network is accessible for everyone, including women and girls

Stockport Interchange Update

A 90 tonne bridge connecting the Stockport Interchange development to the town's train station was recently lifted into place, marking a key step in the construction of the new transport [interchange](#). The Interchange project began in August 2021 and is being delivered by TfGM, Stockport Council, and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in conjunction with contractor Willmott Dixon.

Construction of the new transport interchange will support the wider regeneration of Stockport town centre, which will include a new two-acre podium park on the roof of the building and 196 high-quality residential apartments. The 40m-long bridge is due to open alongside the new park and interchange in Spring 2024 and will provide a traffic-free, accessible route connecting the new interchange to Station Road and onward to the rail station. The bridge will merge into a cycling and walking path with two seated rest areas along the route, providing a seamless and dedicated link for users to walk, wheel, or cycle along.

New Park & Ride in Walkden

A new Park & Ride facility at Walkden rail station is set to open in April 2023. The facility, built in partnership with Salford City Council, TfGM and the Friends of Walkden Station, will be managed and operated by Salford City Council, provides 107 car parking spaces and include electric vehicle charging points, motorcycle bays and cycle storage for up to 32 bikes. Registered members will be provided with secure storage with access via a smart app and the car park will be covered by CCTV and street lighting.

Members can register for access to the Hub online at www.salford.gov.uk/Walkden-cycle-hub. Further information is available on the Salford City Council [website](#).

Look Closer Campaign

On 6 March Safer Roads Greater Manchester launched a new [campaign](#) which calls on drivers to "look closer" to help keep motorcyclists and cyclists safer on our roads. The new campaign aims to equip motorists with the information they need to drive safely in and around junctions. When driving and turning at junctions, drivers should look three times – firstly all the way down the road, then halfway down, and then closer to the vehicle.

By pausing to 'Look Far, Look Near and Look Closer', drivers are more likely to see motorcyclists, cyclists and other road users who can be harder to see. Dame Sarah Storey demonstrated her support for the campaign and spoke to media about the campaign and her experience of being involved in a collision with a car turning right at a junction. Drivers not looking properly is one of the main contributing factors for serious road collisions.

More than 1,200 motorcyclists and cyclists were killed or seriously injured on Greater Manchester's roads between 2017 and 2021 – a third of them as a result of a collision involving a vehicle that was turning right. A communications toolkit containing social media copy and assets is available [here](#) with materials that can be used across partner platforms, channels, and networks if you think it may be of benefit or interest to your audience.

More information about the campaign and tips on how to 'Look Far, Look Near and Look Closer' is available at tfgm.com/look-closer

Metrolink improvement works

A summary of upcoming Metrolink engineering works and service disruptions planned to take place over the next few months can be found below:

Passengers travelling on any of the dates listed below which include Metrolink service disruption are encouraged to plan ahead and allow plenty of time.

- Sunday 26 March, there will be a **network-wide shutdown** to complete essential works on the Metrolink systems. On this day, no tram services will operate until after 9am.
- Sunday 26 March, work will also take place on the **Rochdale line**. On this day, there will be no tram service between Rochdale Town Centre and Freehold. Replacement bus services will operate from 9am until the end of service.
- Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 April, work will take place on the **Rochdale line**. On this day, there will be no tram service between Rochdale Town Centre and Freehold. Replacement bus services will be in operation.
- Sunday 23 April, work will take place on the **Manchester Airport line**. On this day, there will be no tram service between Manchester Airport and Wythenshawe Town Centre. A bus replacement service will be in operation.
- Sunday 7 May, work will take place on the **Bury line**. On this day, there will be no tram service between Bury and Crumpsall. A replacement bus service will be in operation.
- Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 June, work will take place on the **Ashton line**. On this day, there will be no tram service between Ashton and Cornbrook. A replacement bus service will be in operation.

Further information is available on [TfGM's dedicated webpage](#) and live updates will be shared across [Twitter](#).