



# The Bee Network Delivering transformational change

Simon Elliott and Stephen Rhodes

TfN Board

9th December 2024



**BEE NETWORK**



Transport for  
Greater Manchester

# We're building the Bee Network

Driving economic and productivity growth; enabling housing and job creation.

Connecting people to new opportunities, essential services and each other.

We're integrating fares, ticketing and customer information under a single, trusted brand.

**By 5 January 2025** - bus, tram and active travel integrated - programmes of activity are well underway in each.

**By March 2025** - multi modal fares and ticketing for bus and tram.

**By 2028** - local rail integrated.





# Our buses

Half of our bus network is now franchised, with the process to be **completed on 5th January 2025.**

We're targeting a **30% increase in bus patronage by 2030.**

The needs of our customers and staff are central to our plans:

- **Safe**
- **Reliable**
- **Frequent**
- **Affordable**
- **Zero emission with electrified depots**
- **Delivering high employment standards through the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.**



# One year on we've:

**Increased patronage** nearly seven million more journeys have been made on the city region's buses compared with the previous year - a 5% increase

**Reduced average ticket costs** by 15% with the £2 fare

**Improved performance** with services in the tranche one area now consistently above 80% punctuality (up from c.69% on the pre-franchised network)

**Invested in growing the network** with more frequent bus services, longer operating hours and launch of a 24hr bus pilot

**Increased the number of zero emission buses** with 10% of buses now electric, and approx. 25% by April 2025 – up from less than 1% before franchising

**Unlocked housing and development** e.g. Stockport Interchange complete and moving forward now with Bury Interchange

**Reduced the per-km cost of operating Bee Network buses** by ~ a third compared to having to intervene in the private deregulated market



# Improvements planned for 2025:

- A range of **customer focused improvements** are planned for the new year, to coincide with the launch of Tranche 3 including:
  - The cost of a **7-day adult Bee Any Bus ticket to reduce to £20**, and the **28 day version to £80**
  - Launch of a new **hopper ticket**
  - Additional **TravelSafe Enforcement Officers**
- TfGM is working with local **Credit Unions** to allow customers to spread the payment of an annual bus ticket, at no extra cost, throughout the year with a Credit Union loan - saving up to £240 a year.
- Implementation of the first area based **Network Review** - an important way to help deliver longer-term changes to the franchised bus network.



# Reflections:

- **Bus franchising currently takes a long time to deliver** –over seven years in GM. New legislation should improve this.
- **Electrification of depots and vehicles is challenging** – manufacturer capacity is limited, capital requirements are significant, and an ageing estate presents issues.
- **Mobilisation is challenging** – even with a nine-month period to mobilise, the need to hand over in a single night means outgoing and incoming operators need to transfer hundreds of employees and vehicles in a matter of hours.
- **New technology and systems** – TfGM commissioned some itself (e.g. on bus equipment). Delivery of these has varied, even where an early start was made with design and procurement activities.



# Next phase of the Bee Network – Rail Integration

Eight priority lines by 2028; full GM Network by 2030

## Benefits for passengers:



More frequent services



New rolling stock



More accessible stations,  
working towards a fully  
accessible estate



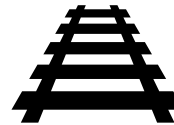
Full integration with the Bee  
Network, including branding and  
customer experience



Tap and go ticketing,  
starting from 2025



Multi-modal fares  
simplification



New stations at Golborne  
and Cheadle



Housing and regeneration  
opportunities at stations

By delivering increased patronage through these improvements, we could reduce the subsidy required to support local rail services.



# GM's Bee Network approach: opening up opportunities

- GM's Bee Network demonstrates how a joined-up transport system can support local, regional and national objectives around growth, housing, energy, decarbonisation - helping to break down barriers to opportunities.
- We are improving outcomes through significant programmes of activity across tram, bus and active travel - integrating commuter rail lines through an incremental approach and providing simplified 'tap and go' ticketing.
- This approach could be suitable for wider application across the North. Key considerations include the challenges of:
  - Legislative changes - to significantly improve the practicality and timescale of delivery.
  - Funding certainty (revenue and capital) from Government, alongside money raised locally - pivotal to initial delivery and ongoing development.

