



LGA Annual Conference The Route to Better Buses in Greater Manchester

23 October 2024

Paul Dennett, City Mayor of Salford and Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester



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.

Integrating fares, ticketing and customer information under a single, trusted brand.

- **By 2025** - bus, tram and active travel integrated
- **By 2028** - local rail integrated



What does the Bee Network mean for Greater Manchester?

An integrated transport system that connects people in Greater Manchester to new opportunities, essential services and each other.

- **More reliable journeys** - better management of operator performance, increased customer satisfaction, higher patronage
- **More affordable tickets** – standard fare, reduced weekly, monthly and annual tickets and hopper fare
- **Tackling carbon emissions and clean air** - zero emission buses and reducing the need for car travel
- **More accountable** – ability to enhance services and connectivity, shaped with local residents and Members





Importance of Buses in Greater Manchester

Buses are the cornerstone of the Bee Network – accounting for around 75% of all public transport trips.

The bus network provides a vital link to jobs and essential services, particularly for the 27% of GM households without access to a private car.

The bus market has experienced a significant period of decline over recent decades – particularly in terms of patronage and mileage operated.

This is why GM is undertaking the biggest reform to buses in nearly 40 years – bringing buses back under local control through franchising.

Shaping the Bee Network

- **Franchising** has made it possible to drive up reliability through timetable changes and adding extra buses where performance had previously not been good enough – this remains our top priority
- **24/7 night bus services.** Pilot introduced on two routes at the start of this month
- **Bee Network Reviews** – Review of service coverage and frequency. Currently underway in Wigan, Bolton and Bury
- **Engagement** with local authorities, customers and communities is a key part of this



Future of bus in the Bee Network

Our vision is to make the bus the first choice for more journeys, as part of the Bee Network.

Better buses are central to delivering the Bee Network and with it a fairer, greener and more prosperous city region.

By 2030, we aim to:

- Grow bus patronage by 30% by 2030. This will mean almost 50 million more journeys being taken by bus each year.
- Run buses at least every 12 minutes on key radial and orbital routes and provide 90% of GM with a 30-minute service or better.
- Keep fares as low as possible and reinvest any surplus back into the transport system.



Initial roll-out of GM Bus Franchising

T1 – 24 September 2023

(NOW LIVE): covering Bolton, Wigan, and parts of Salford and Bury.



T2 – 24 March 2024 (NOW LIVE): covering Oldham, Rochdale, and parts of Bury, Salford and north Manchester.



T3 – 5 January 2025: covering Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, and the remaining parts of Manchester and Salford.



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 reliability 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 the 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 looking to move forward with Bury.

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



Lessons from GM's experience

1. We are growing bus patronage and revenue across a large, complex urban bus network
2. Driving up on-road performance is vital as a platform for growth
3. Making things clearer, simpler and more joined up is key
4. Ongoing investment is critical to sustaining the network and driving growth
5. Bold and ambitious decisions are needed to kickstart meaningful improvements
6. Long term political support and advocacy for bus services is crucial – but needs to be backed up by financial support



THANK
YOU

