

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 SEPTEMBER 2024

PRESENT

Councillor F. Hornby (in the Chair).

Councillors M.J. Taylor (Vice-Chair), J.M. Axford, G. Coggins, F. Cosby, W. Frass, K Glenton, B. Hartley, D. Jarman, W. Jones and S. Thomas.

In attendance

Councillor Aidan Williams	Executive Member for Climate Change
Chris Morris	Director of Highways, Transport and Environment
James Lomax	Head of Highways and Transport
Alan Whitfield	Project Delivery Manager
Danny Vaughan	Chief Network Officer, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM)
Anne Marie Purcell	Chief Transformation Officer, TfGM
Stephen Rhodes	Network Director for Buses, TfGM
Richard Nickson	Network Director Active, TfGM
John Addison	Governance Manager
Harry Callaghan	Senior Democratic Support Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. Butt and D. Western

43. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 10th July 2024 be agreed as an accurate record.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

45. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

One question had been submitted for the meeting by Ms. Stanley as follows:

What consideration has been given to the impact of the charging points on people who are disabled, have reduced mobility or those with visual or other impairments. What consideration has been given to positioning public charging point at a suitable height for wheelchair users to access?

The Head of Highways and Transport provided the following response:

Charging infrastructure, inclusive or cable connectors, can cause a tripping hazard and an obstruction. For the existing installs, in car parks, they

[charging infrastructure] have been located by our supplier to help ensure no trip obstructions / trip hazards are created.

A new public standard, (PAS:1899) has been published. This [the standard] provides guidance for charger accessibility – inclusive of the charging device and public realm. Existing install design, pre-date the standard. Installs safely made the best space allocated in existing car parks.

All future charge points will be PAS:1899 compliant and our supplier will work with us to specify requirements on a site basis. For any future installs within a car park at least 1 bay will be fully accessible [as advised by our existing supplier].

46. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING PROVISION

[Contrary to the Agenda, due to Officer availability, it was agreed at the outset of the meeting to consider this item earlier]

The Director of Highways, Transport and Environment was in attendance to respond to any questions on the report which was circulated with the agenda. Prior to questions, the Director outlined key areas of work ongoing within Trafford on Electric Vehicle (EV) charging. Statistics on the current numbers (outlined on slide thirteen in the agenda), as well as a need of upwards of 900 in the future to ensure there were no barriers to entry, was also shared.

The Director added the next stages in EV Charging across the Borough, which included future funding applications, trials of column chargers, increasing gully and streetlamp charging, and the concerns associated with these. Concluding, the Director highlighted the positive position Trafford was in when it came to EV Charging, being ahead of all other Boroughs in Greater Manchester (GM)

The Chair opened to the Committee for questions.

Councillor Axford asked what the Council's position was on encouraging employers to offer free chargers at work. The Director responded that all employers were being encouraged but highlighted the Council focus to fill gaps itself.

[Note – Councillors Hartley and Taylor entered the meeting at 18:45]

Councillor Jones referred to point four in the introduction of the report on mass adoption of EV and low emission vehicles, asking the Director the risks involved with EV take up and how it might be mitigated with Trafford's active travel strategy. The Director responded that whilst EV charging was central to ongoing work, it was only part of a wider strategy, specifically in Active Travel, aiming to have a greater network so that shorter journeys were easier and quicker by walking, wheeling, or cycling.

Councillor Coggins raised observations from the report. On the Amey proposal, Councillor Coggins asked about the procurement associated with this, raising a

company which did this work. Furthermore, Councillor Coggins asked about the funding of the proposal. Finally, the Member asked if less economically viable areas would get slower chargers. Regarding the proposal, the Director stressed it was more a trial, with the work being joint between the Council and Amey, also stressing that it was a trial as it stood. The Director added that it was right that less economically viable sites be considered, and that it was the Council's responsibility to make sure that there was equal distribution across the Borough.

Councillor Frass raised ownership issues of gully chargers, especially on a main carriageway. The Member asked if they would be financed by Trafford should a resident request it. The Director highlighted at least three models currently ongoing in GM, with some Councils reporting gully charging to be too difficult. Committee members were informed that there was not a solution at the time, but a consensus on the most sensible option was being sought.

Councillor Thomas asked whether the cost impact of accessible chargers, was so great that there could not be accessible units at all sites. The Head of Highways and Transport responded that ideally all units would be accessible, adding that it would be advantageous to have accessible chargers at all sites if not cost permitting. Concluding, it was highlighted that all bays were in line with the guidance in PAS1899 which covered accessibility.

Councillor Hartley shared similar thoughts on the Amey proposal, asking what due diligence was being done to know this was the best proposal and what mechanisms the Council would have to review the consequences. The Director responded that the Council was inundated with different suppliers approaching daily, with the major issue of EV chargers being maintenance. The Council had installed a mix of chargers, both faster and slower, but trial limits had been set to make sure the service was viable after a year. The Director confirmed that any larger procurement would need to go through a full process, and as such would not be automatically given.

The Executive Member for Climate Change provided reassurance that no decision had yet been made, with interest in the Amey proposal present partly due to them having interest in filling gaps that private companies might not be willing to undertake.

The Chair asked for a timeline and the known barriers on on-street charging via lampposts. The Director confirmed barriers to these, but highlighted ongoing work for a proposal. Committee were informed that go ahead for this was way off.

Councillor Axford was unsure about predicting the future need of EV chargers, asking whether the Council had a balanced approach on the solutions to climate issues. Asking further, the Member asked whether the Council was aware if residents were being discouraged from buying EVs if they could not charge at home. The Director stressed that current EV charging coverage was a trial, with several faster chargers and less slow chargers. It was felt that the Council had not yet found the answer to how people used electric cars, whether charging it once a week or plugging in every night. The Director added that the EV charging process

was being managed, research based, to understand resident demand, agreeing with the Member that EVs were not the panacea. Councillor Axford highlighted the fine balance in EV ownership and encouraging active travel.

Councillor Jones highlighted successful implementation of lamppost chargers across the UK and encouraged the Council to look at these in a focused way. Councillor Jones also asked whether charging points, either lamppost or gulley, would be finite or on demand. The Director confirmed that the numbers of chargers would be dependent on the ongoing study, which would then be subject to a review, with commercial companies looking at usage. The Director added that there was a need to make chargers revenue effective so less popular areas could also be served. On lampposts, the Director highlighted the number of lampposts set to the back of the footway, making the areas being trialled easier to source. The Council was also monitoring its success in other areas.

Councillor Hartley asked if being able to install a charge point at home was the cheapest way to charge, which was confirmed. The Member noted issues in his ward with installation of the electricity supply at home and subsequent roadworks to provide the electricity supply, asking whether this was always needed and if the Council had a process of managing the disruption. The Director confirmed that not all installations require changes to the electricity supply. It was confirmed that disruption had only happened on minimal occasions, but if it became an issue in the future the street works team would look at it.

Councillor Coggins had raised car clubs in the past and asked whether this had been moved forward, highlighting benefits seen from them in Chorlton. The Director confirmed that the Council was behind other areas on car clubs, with the need to work with other Local Authorities (Salford and Manchester) required if it was to move forward. Committee were reassured that it was being looked at.

The Chair thanked Officers for the report.

The Executive Member for Climate Change raised the desire of GM Mayor Andy Burnham for the LAs of GM to have local Bee Network Committees / Working Groups and asked whether there would be interest from Members to discuss this outside of the meeting. The Chair asked that Councillor Williams contact them via email to be circulated with the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Chair of Scrutiny, Executive Member for Climate Change, and other relevant Officer discuss how best to scrutinise the Bee Network in Trafford moving forward.

47. TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER BEE NETWORK - BUS FRANCHISING IMPLEMENTATION IN TRAFFORD

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Officers from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) attended Committee, presenting first on Bus Franchising in Trafford, coming in the third and final tranche in January 2025.

The Chief Network Officer, TfGM, outlined the vision in Greater Manchester (GM) for the Bee Network, namely for reliable affordable transport for the people of GM and the sustainable growth and opportunities that could be provided through a strong public transport system.

The Chief Transformation Officer outlined her role in leading on the transformation of the network, with the Network Director for Buses responsible for the network once set up. The Chief Transformation Officer highlighted the accountability that was to come through the franchising, improvements seen during the first two tranches across GM, and an overview of the new buses which were to be seen in Trafford on the 5th January, covering the routes currently in existence. Other areas raised by the Officer included the Bee Network App, the travel safe partnership, and ongoing work with credit unions.

The Network Director for Buses outlined the six commitments of the Bee Network – Safe, Sustainable, Accessible, Affordable, Accountable, Reliable – and shared the exciting time to work in public transport. The Director pointed the Committee to the performance table seen within the report from tranche one and two and outlined the target for 2030 accepting the work to be done to get there. The Director finally spoke through the stages and indicative timelines, with the GM Mayor hoping they would be moved forward quicker, whilst accepting the long journey involved.

The Chair was glad to see the buses coming back into control. The Chair was also pleased to see the agreement with credit unions and asked how as elected Members they could encourage take up of the offer. The Chief Network Officer highlighted how annual public transport products were available to everyone, with the credit union an option to fund the tickets. It was planned to market the option heavily in 2025, and hoped Members could encourage their communities to explore.

Councillor Axford felt a stigma remained regarding travelling on bus compared to Metrolink, asking how this could be changed. The Network Director for Buses agreed that the image needed improving through resetting how the bus system looked and felt, with a need to talk up bus usage and the additional safety measures coming to the network.

The Member also raised congestion caused by cars on the road and how this deterred people from using the bus, asking how TfGM was encouraging bus usage. The Network Director for Buses highlighted the need for cooperation with Councils to encourage bus priority, which would involve tough decisions by Local Authorities to encourage bus usage.

Councillor Hartley welcomed the encouraging progress. The Member asked what the ambitions for school bus services was, suggesting that expanding the number of services would increase patronage. The Network Director for Buses responded

that franchising did not change procurement of bus services yet, with TfGM not necessarily looking to expand school services, in part due to linking in with wider school travel through active travel, and due to the cost associated with services running with limited service. Instead, the target of TfGM would be to get the main network of buses to a greater extent to ensure school children can travel to school efficiently.

Prompting a further question, Councillor Hartley referred to the aim by 2030 to have 90% of the population within 400M of a 30-minute frequency bus service, and asked whether there was ambition to reduce this further in the future. The Network Director for Buses referred to a large plan for a proportion of 12-minute frequency buses or better but suspected there might have to be choices in the future as to either upping the frequency or putting other low frequency routes into estates, noting the 192 the only GM bus currently running on a sub-12-minute frequency.

Councillor Jones asked what the growth and strategic reviews might look like for neighbourhoods, such as Partington, who have less provision. The Network Director for Buses referred to reviews undertaken in the first two tranches which involved looking at estate services and had no reason that this would not be the same in Trafford. The Director was excited that the new buses would also be going on local bus routes.

Councillor Coggins referred to the wider improvements, including what was being considered for extra functionality within the Bee Network App, where TfGM was on getting a unified payment system for buses and metrolink, and whether bus on demand was being considered. The Chief Network Officer felt the app had improved since its launch including integrated products for bus and tram. The Officer confirmed that integrated touch-in and touch-out on buses was being looked at for March 2025, highlighting the good progress in a tricky setting. The Network Director for Buses confirmed ongoing work with Local Link and Ring and Ride Services, and how these could fit into the Bee Network. The network review process would consider this.

Councillor Cosby asked what training drivers would be receiving to improve passenger safety. The Chief Transformation Officer confirmed that all new buses which had been purchased, included several safety standards, with drivers to go through training on how to use those standards, and receive training on passenger vulnerability. New buses included greater levels of CCTV, two disabled bays, and increased hearing loop access. The number of partners present in the travel control room had increased, with a travel safe officer available to drivers if required. The Chief Network officer added that 60 new travel safe bus network officers had been hired, with similar numbers on the tram, noting that the partnership between TfGM and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) had never been better.

Councillor Frass was unimpressed by the response on school buses, especially considering schools in more rural areas such as Hale Barns, where a school bus arriving to a specific location would be safer than a child waiting on the streets.

The Chief Network Officer felt it was worth noting that TfGM was to publish a School Travel Document in the next month, with the service was not saying that school buses would not be considered, rather TfGM needing to ensure services were equitable across the network.

Councillor Thomas was worried by the archaic bus services on the network, which missed out several changes across Trafford, such as no bus connecting Flixton / Urmston to Manchester Royal Infirmary. The Chief Transformation Officer replied the reason for routes remaining the same at launch was due to the complex work undertaken on the night leading into the 5th January, which will have teething issues. As such, the Officer added that changes to services would increase the complexity and any potential issues. The Network Director for Buses added that there was desire to change routes but stressed the need to undertake this in an orderly manner.

Councillor Jarman highlighted the cost of a 7-day Bee Any Bus day ticket being £20 and a 28-day at £80, not adding any incentive and asked whether this could be considered to have the public commit to longer term use. The Chief Network Officer confirmed that the current commitments were set to early 2025, with fares constantly being under review.

The Executive Member for Climate Change reassured Members that Tranche Three was to come, and as such Trafford was at the start of its journey. Councillor Williams informed Members that the Council had no adopted local plan at present, but this was something the Executive was working on and would happily work with Scrutiny as a possible pre-decision Scrutiny item, when the time came.

The Chair finished by agreeing that this would be considered in the future and thanked Officers from TfGM for the presentation.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update on Bus Franchising in Trafford be noted.
- 2) That any future Local Bee Network Plan for Trafford, be considered as a possible item for the Scrutiny Committee.

48. TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER BEE NETWORK - METROLINK OPERATION AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

The Chief Network Officer, TfGM opened by speaking to the improving patronage figures on Metrolink post-Covid, with performance in Trafford being good, and the Borough including the most travelled line. The Chief Network Officer also highlighted the Trafford Park line, which had increasing patronage.

The Network Director for Active alerted Committee that Active Travel on the Bee Network was at the beginning of its journey, emphasising the progress made since 2020 in Trafford, with over 140Km of Bee Network standard routes available. The Director highlighted how Active Travel work was collaborative between Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and Local Authorities on how schemes were delivered. Bee Network branding was desired to bring transport across Greater

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Manchester (GM) under one umbrella. The Director provided detail on the transformative journey, which was hoped for, with a vision of total GM coverage of over 2700Km of walking, wheeling and cycling routes being three times the road length in the whole of Trafford.

The Chair thanked the Officers and asked what could be done in Trafford to support residents with the storage of bikes. The Network Director for Active highlighted trials across GM of residents' cycle hangers, with Members able to support on planning policies for these types of residential options. However, the Director added that despite there being a range of solutions, there was not yet a consistent GM policy for this.

Councillor Hartley was disappointed by the lack of investment and progress in walking as part of the Active Travel network, asking what the ambition was for improving the proportion of active travel spend on walking. The Network Director for Active responded that TfGM agreed with the Member, with the mission shifting since the appointment of Dame Sarah Storey as Active Travel Commissioner, who had been successful in a bid for funding from Active Travel England. The Director referred to the School Travel Strategy which would include plans for school streets, and other exploration into how TfGM can up the rate of investment in crossings.

Councillor Glenton asked for an update on the progress following a trial on bikes on trams earlier in the year. The Network Director for Active highlighted a strong commitment to this, with a report surrounding this expected to be published later in 2024. The Chief Network Officer added that it was a likely proposition, with the trial being successful. The Officer did highlight some concerns around provision and possible need to change layout of trams for greater space. It was highlighted that disabled / wheelchair users were the most against the trial, but reassured Members that spaces for those residents would not be compromised.

Councillor Axford echoed Councillor Hartley on walking and crossing, feeling as though pedestrian prioritisation at traffic light could be a straightforward change in the future to increase usage. The Network Director for Active highlighted timings being modified on 160 crossings so far, with further changes ongoing.

Councillor Coggins referred to a study done by the GM Cycle campaign which had looked at the very tram being used in Trafford elsewhere (Cologne, Minneapolis), and being able to take bikes, so asked what was delaying this. The Chief Network Officer responded that TfGM had consulted Edinburgh on their approach, who had faced challenges and did not allow bikes on trams during festival season and at peak time. The Officer added that many areas which did allow bikes on trams were much more well-staffed than in GM. Concluding, the Officer added that safety was a big concern, but Members should expect the report to come later in the year to be much more positive.

Councillor Thomas thanked Officers for the work and funding from TfGM, and highlighted heartwarming responses heard to community led schemes in his ward.

The Executive Member for Climate Change thanked Flixton ward Members, Councillors G. Carter and Thomas for being fantastic advocates for the schemes.

Councillor Hartley asked whether TfGM had any plans to make sure footways were more accessible for those residents who need it. The Network Director for Active responded that there were currently no plans. However, funds had been made available for maintenance which could be invested into things such as dropped curbs. The Director highlighted responses he was awaiting from Government on possible legislation changes, with growing awareness of the role that active lives had on health. The Director concluded that promising noises were being heard from the new Transport Secretary on regulations.

Councillor Taylor asked whether there were any plans to increase the number of double trams at peak times, having often experienced busy services at peak times in Stretford. The Chief Network Officer responded that there were no plans for increased numbers of trams, with the service purchasing new trams recently, which were already out on the network. The Officer confirmed that the busiest lines (of which Altrincham was the busiest) were being targeted. The Officer also highlighted network wide improvements, including work ongoing on the section of track between Altrincham and Timperley to take it into TfGM ownership, which would take journey time off the line.

Councillor Coggins asked three brief questions at the end on scooters, a walking and cycling forum with Walk Ride GM which was to be rearranged, and an update on the Bee Network in Altrincham. The Executive Member for Climate Change needed to speak with a Trafford Officer regarding this.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

49. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair had received an email for an update on Travellers in Trafford, which would be considered for a space later in the year.

Councillor Axford on the permit parking for November currently, asked whether this could look more widely at the parking review. The Member also raised possibility for a Task and Finish group. This was to be discussed after the meeting.

Councillor Hartley referring to the damp and mould response in January, asked whether a more general update from housing providers on maintenance work could be included.

The Senior Democratic Support Officer responded that he would need to contact the Corporate Director for Place to consider the parking item and get a scope for what the item may look like.

The Chair asked whether the Senior Democratic Support Officer could find out from the Executive Member for Climate Change when the local Bee Network plan might be coming, so the Committee could undertake pre-decision Scrutiny.

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RESOLVED:

- 1) That the work programme be noted.
- 2) That an update on travellers be considered for the Work Programme later in the year.
- 3) That possible Task and Finish group topics be discussed outside of the meeting.
- 4) That the items on housing be considered to include general housing maintenance.
- 5) That the Senior Democratic Support Officer contact the Corporate Director for Place to gauge a scope for the parking item in November.
- 6) That the Senior Democratic Support Officer contact the Executive to understand when the local Bee Network Plan for Trafford may be ready for Scrutiny.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and finished at 9.10 pm