

# Bee Network Rail

## Improving stations, accessibility and customer experience

June 2026



## Summary

The Bee Network is Greater Manchester's joined-up transport network. It aims to transform local rail services so that they offer a much-improved journey experience. That includes train stations, trains, services, improving step-free access, customer information, and paying for travel, as well as better links with bus, tram, walking, wheeling and cycling.

Phase 1 of Bee Network Rail focuses on the first changes passengers will see and feel. From December 2026, the Manchester Victoria–Stalybridge line and the Manchester Piccadilly–Glossop/Hadfield/Rose Hill Marple (via Guide Bridge) services will be brought into the Bee Network. The goal is to make journeys simpler—clearer to understand, easier to use, and easier to connect with buses and trams. Key elements include:

- » Station improvements at 22 stations on the first two lines from summer 2026 (signage and wayfinding, information screens, help points, CCTV and joint branding).
- » Better rail information on the Bee Network app, including live departure boards, train tracking and clearer disruption updates.
- » New fares and ticketing options, including a bus–tram–train ticket and contactless rail 'tap and go' at 17 stations from December 2026.

In Phase 2 (end 2027) and Phase 3 (end 2028), more lines join and the improvements roll out further across the city region. These later phases will also integrate tap and go across trains, buses and trams, so customers can tap across different transport modes and automatically get the best fare, including daily and weekly caps.

We are working in close partnership with Network Rail, the Department for Transport and Train Operating Companies to deliver our phased plans. The aim is to bring improvements to as many local rail customers as soon as possible, boost passenger numbers, help drive growth and deliver new homes.

We continue to work closely with government as it establishes Great British Railways to help reform the railways, enabling city regions like Greater Manchester to have more influence over rail services.



# Why this matters for Greater Manchester

Bee Network Rail Integration is a core component of the Greater Manchester Strategy's vision for **a thriving city region where everyone can live a good life** and is a key step toward Greater Manchester's long-term transport goals:

**A more inclusive network**, with better accessibility and clearer information

**A better customer experience**, with consistent standards across train, tram and bus

**Better connections**, supporting jobs, regeneration and greener travel



## BEE NETWORK

The Bee Network is Greater Manchester's joined-up transport network. It helps you get where you need to go. Local buses and trams are already included.

We can already see the benefits. More people are using Metrolink trams than ever before. Bus journeys are up by 14% in the first two franchised areas. Buses are also more on time: punctuality is now above 80%, up from under 70% before franchising.

Rail is next. We are working with government and the rail industry to bring eight commuter rail lines into the Bee Network. Fares will be fairer and simpler. Customers will be able to pay by tapping your card. We will also support new projects at and around stations. The first two lines join in 2026. Eight lines will be included by 2028, with all local Greater Manchester stations by 2030.

These changes are bringing **real, visible improvements** for passengers now. We are focusing on better station accessibility, clearer customer information, and smoother links with buses and trams. We are also building the foundation for a fully connected Bee Network for buses, trams, trains, and active travel.

We are investing more than **£100 million** in local rail stations. We are also making changes to fares, information, and customer support. This will help rail become a key part of a simpler, more inclusive, and more reliable transport system for Greater Manchester.

We've also worked with the rail industry to develop a new vision for what rail could look like in Greater Manchester by 2050. We want to see a reliable rail network that works for everybody, from residents and communities to businesses and visitors. So that our city region can keep on growing and benefiting us all.



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## What has been delivered so far

We have already made important steps to improve rail for customers:

### Step-free access improvements

- » Completed step-free accessibility schemes at Daisy Hill and Irlam stations in 2025.
- » Work is underway at Hindley, Reddish North and Bryn to make these stations step-free.

### Simpler, better value fares

- » In December 2025, the biggest rail fares reform in 30 years was delivered in the city region. Day-of-travel tickets between any two Greater Manchester stations now have two options: Anytime and Off-Peak (Single or Return).
  - This removed confusing operator-specific fares. For example, the Stockport–Manchester Piccadilly choice **reduced from 14 options to 4**.
  - Average fares are down **5.6%**. **This makes 4.8 million** journeys a year better value. It also sets up the move to **contactless 'tap and go' payment on train** and Bee Network integration from **December 2026**.

### Better disruption support

- » We have introduced cross-mode ticket acceptance for planned and unplanned disruption. This helps people travel by bus, tram, and train when services are disrupted.

### Clearer, joined-up information

- » In April 2026, we added rail station information to the Bee Network website and app, so customers can find everything in one place. This includes accessibility information, station facilities, car parking and cycle storage.

These early changes show that rail integration is already delivering practical benefits, while we work closely with government to help reform the railways.

## What next: Improvements through to December 2026 (Phase 1)

Before the first two commuter lines join the Bee Network in December 2026, customers will see improvements rolled out in stages.

### Station improvements

From summer 2026, work will begin at 22 stations on these routes:

- » Manchester Victoria – Stalybridge
- » Manchester Piccadilly – Glossop, Hadfield and Rose Hill Marple (via Guide Bridge)

Planned upgrades include:

- » New Bee Network joint branding
- » Clearer signs and easier wayfinding
- » Upgraded CCTV
- » Upgraded help points
- » Better customer information screens and announcements
- » New customer information points
- » Better information for onward journeys across train, tram and bus, including upgrades at nearby bus and tram stops to show up-to-date travel information

By the end of 2030, all 96 stations in Greater Manchester will have had customer-focused improvements. We will carry out detailed reviews and create upgrade plans, so every station meets a consistent Bee Network standard.

### Service improvements

- » From May 2026, TransPennine Express will run new night trains to Manchester Airport. This will support Greater Manchester's visitor and night-time economy.
- » From 2027, we will trial extra services and later trains to the Airport, Alderley Edge and Rochdale.



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## Digital and customer information

The **Bee Network app** is becoming the **single, trusted source of rail information**.

In 2026, the app will get new features for rail, such as:

- » Station facilities and accessibility information
- » Live rail departure boards
- » Train tracking
- » Clearer disruption information
- » Better support and reassurance for customers during disruption

This will help passengers plan trips with confidence and make it easier to connect between train, tram, bus, cycling and walking.

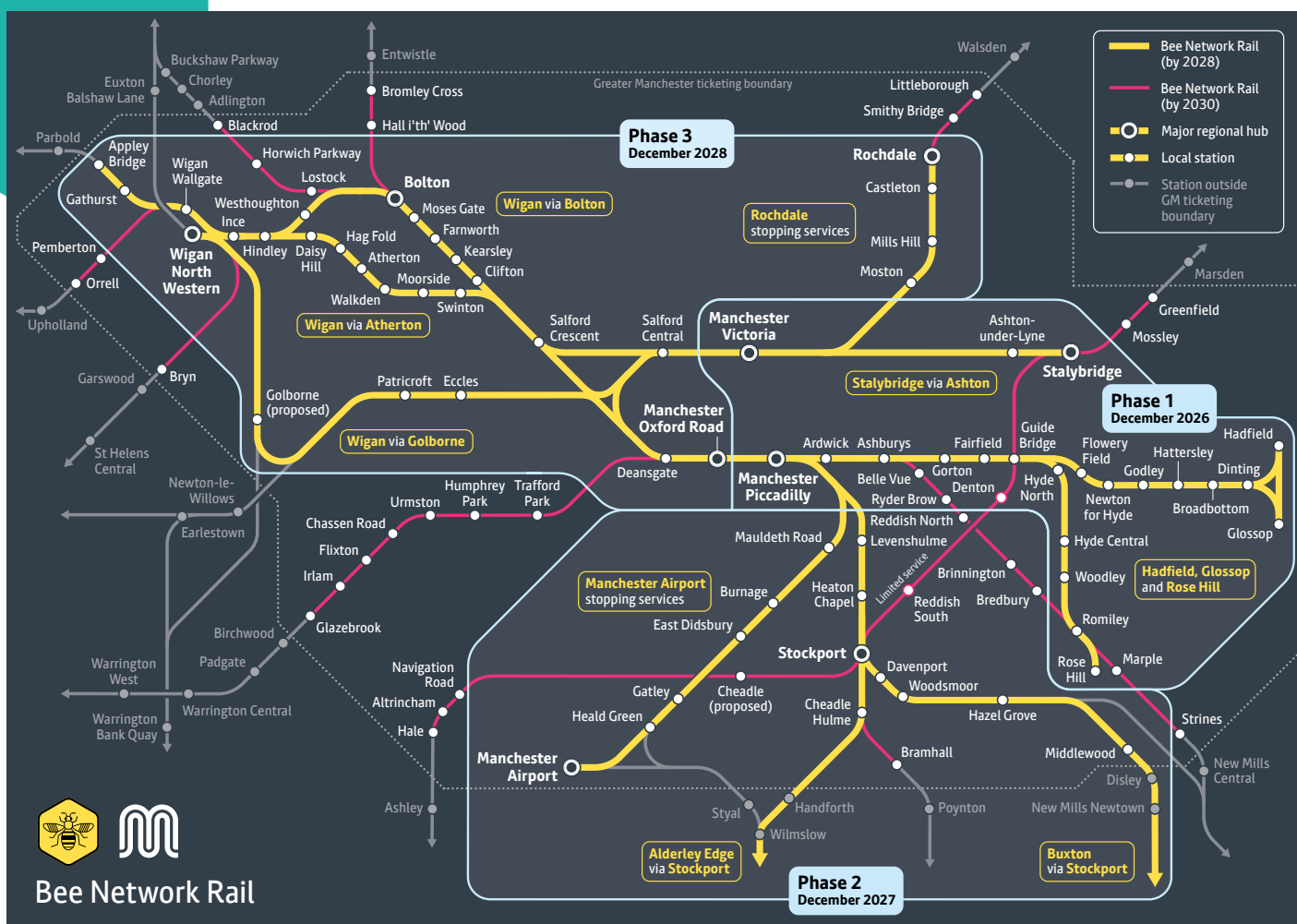
## Fares and ticketing: Changes customers will feel

Rail integration supports a clear fares journey:

- » **December 2025** – simpler on-the-day rail fares across Greater Manchester stations.
- » **December 2026** – a multi-modal ticket covering bus, tram and train across Greater Manchester.
- » **December 2026** – contactless rail '**tap and go**' introduced at **17 stations** (between Manchester Victoria and Stalybridge and Manchester Piccadilly and Glossop and Hadfield).

In 2028, we plan to extend tap and go across local rail services and integrate it with Bee Network buses and trams, with daily and weekly caps.

Together, these changes make travel **easier, more flexible and better value**, and help more people use public transport.



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# Bee Network Rail phases 2 and 3

## Phase 2 (End 2027)

More local rail lines will join the Bee Network in 2027:

- » Manchester to Cheadle Hulme and Middlewood via Stockport
- » Airport stopping services (local trains that call at stations between Manchester and Manchester Airport)

## Phase 3 (End 2028)

More services will follow in 2028, including:

- » Rochdale stopping services (local trains that call at stations between Manchester and Rochdale)
- » Wigan via Golborne
- » Wigan via Atherton (local trains continuing on to Southport)
- » Wigan via Bolton (local trains continuing on to Southport)

**2030:** All local Greater Manchester stations are part of the Bee Network.

All timings are subject to ongoing work between Greater Manchester leaders and the Department for Transport, Network Rail and Train Operating Companies to deliver the plan.

## Accessibility: A step-change across the network

Making rail stations in Greater Manchester easier to use is a key part of the Bee Network Rail Integration plan and Rail Vision. By 2029, the percentage of step-free stations will rise from 58% to about 70%. We will upgrade twice as many stations in three years as in the previous decade.

Major step-free work is underway at Bryn, Hindley and Reddish North. This is part of an ongoing £100 million investment in accessibility upgrades. Work will begin at Swinton this summer.

In early 2027, we plan further upgrades at Flowery Field, Newton for Hyde, and Levenshulme.

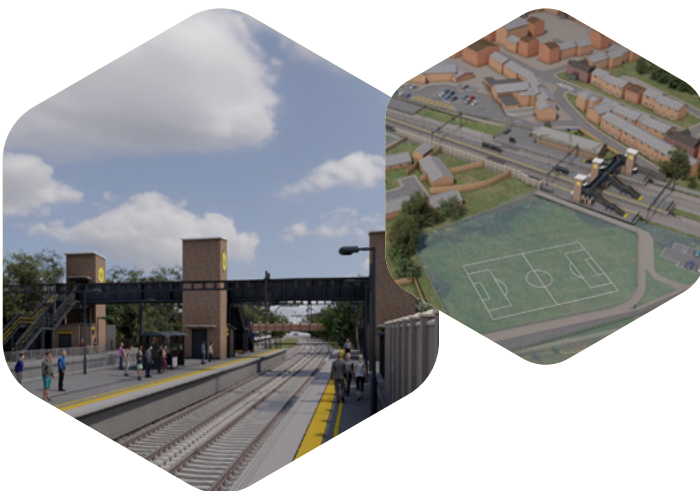
This builds on recent improvements, including step-free schemes at Daisy Hill and Irlam stations, and will help more people travel independently.



## New stations

Greater Manchester will build its first new railway station in more than 20 years at Golborne in Wigan. After strong public support in 2024, the project received planning approval in April 2025. Subject to final government approval, construction will start in late summer 2026.

Stockport Council also has a plan for a new station at Cheadle, with government funding in place. Work will begin once the rail industry approvals are complete.



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## What happens next...



Station upgrades and branding will continue through 2026.



The first two rail lines will join the Bee Network from December 2026.



App and customer information improvements will be rolled out in stages.



Further phases will follow in 2027 and 2028, bringing rail together with buses, trams, and active travel.

## Find out more and get in touch

For the latest on Bee Network Rail Integration, visit: [tfgm.com/the-bee-network](https://tfgm.com/the-bee-network)

You can send general questions to [hello@beenetwork.com](mailto:hello@beenetwork.com) or call 0161 244 1000

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