



Greater Manchester Bus Strategy

Better buses for the Bee Network

Executive Summary



BEE NETWORK



Transport for Greater Manchester

Executive Summary

Delivering a better bus system for everyone in Greater Manchester

Buses are at the heart of Greater Manchester's plans for our transport network and carry three quarters of all public transport journeys here. They can deliver significant benefits for the environment, health, traffic congestion and the economy.

Currently, buses here are not delivering to their full potential. Bus travel is often seen as a 'choice of last resort' and car use is rising. We need to take action. We are taking our bus system into public control through bus franchising. For the first time, we can plan routes, set affordable fares and integrate buses into Greater Manchester's transport system, the Bee Network.

By 2030, Greater Manchester will seek to deliver a bus network that provides an improved experience for bus users, much greater accountability for elected representatives and the wider public, and greatly increased bus patronage with the social, economic, and environmental benefits that brings.

We want buses to be the first choice for more journeys in Greater Manchester

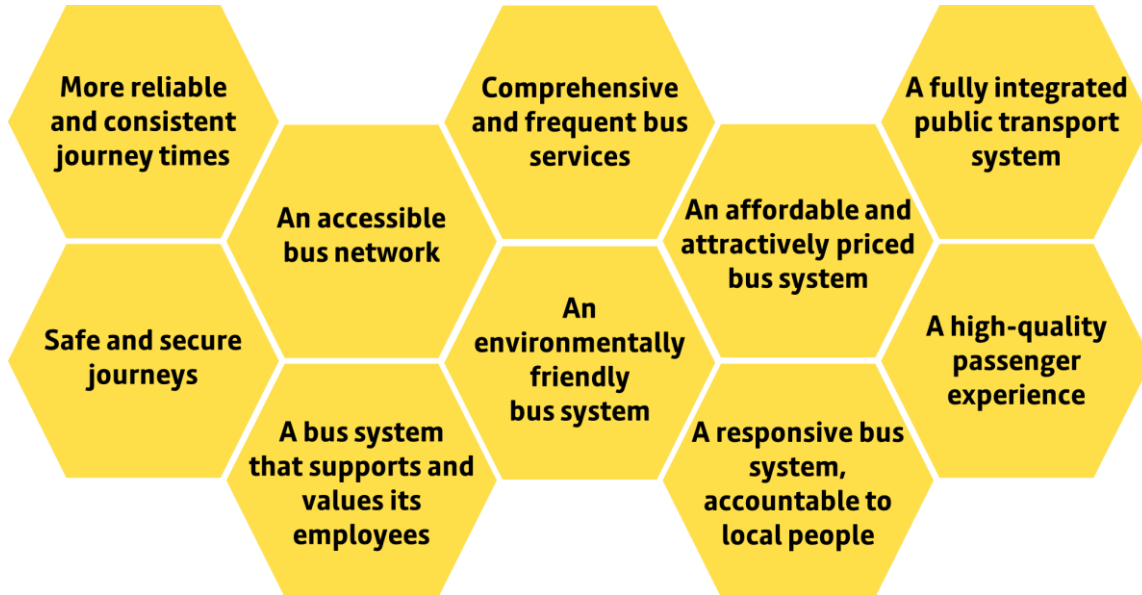
By 2030:

- We aim to **grow bus patronage by 30% by 2030**. This will mean almost 50 million more journeys being taken by bus each year.
- By 2030, we will aim to run buses at least **every 12 minutes on key radial and orbital routes**. Subject to demand, people in the most built-up areas will have at least five buses per hour within 400m of their front door. **We will aim to provide 90% of the entire Greater Manchester population with a 30-minute frequency bus or Metrolink service** on weekdays within 400m of their home. Where this is not possible, we will ensure demand responsive services are available as part of the Bee Network.
- We intend to **deliver on-street bus improvements across 70km** of high frequency, strategic bus routes across Greater Manchester by 2030.
- We will **keep fares as low as possible and reinvest any surplus** back into the transport system.



What we need to do

To reach these ambitious targets, we need to improve people’s experience of getting the bus. We want to deliver:



Governing the network

When planning bus routes and timetables, profit will no longer be the main focus. Instead, the network will be designed so that services arrive on time, at convenient locations and offer the best value for money.

Following the arrival of franchised services, we will begin a programme of rolling ‘Network Reviews’. Network reviews will consider how different areas’ transport needs can be better met by amending the bus, Metrolink, rail, demand responsive transport and active travel networks.

Rolling programme and overarching aims of network reviews are agreed by Bee Network Committee.



c. 12 months

Following the process set out in the diagram, we will work with local people and elected representatives to understand the needs of their area, the best use of available funding and how the bus system can support a better quality of life.

When carrying out network reviews, we will apply seven planning guidelines to deliver on the bus's potential:

- 🚌 **Integrated** - because people need to find the network easy to understand and use.
- 🚌 **Comprehensive** - because people need access to convenient transport at all times.
- 🚌 **Reliable** - because people need to be able to depend on their buses.
- 🚌 **Frequent** - because keeping waiting times low makes the bus more attractive.
- 🚌 **Direct** - because bus users value low journey times.
- 🚌 **Simple** - because people need to find the network easy to understand and use.
- 🚌 **Cost-effective** - because our bus network needs to be financially sustainable.

Our network planning guidelines will support connectivity across our city region, including orbital links and routes to support the trips people make to access hospitals, schools and shops.



Our roadmap for buses

September 2023

- First Bee Network bus services in Bolton, Wigan and parts of Bury and Salford.
- Bus fares across Greater Manchester capped at £2 for a single ticket, £5 for a day ticket and £21 for a week ticket. New integrated bus and tram tickets launched.
- Bee Network app launched for live, integrated travel information and ticket sales.
- New zero emission buses in use on routes in the west of Greater Manchester.
- Ongoing programme of bus pinch point removal across the network.

March 2024

- Second phase of bus franchising begins with Bee Network services operating in Rochdale, Oldham and parts of Bury and Manchester.
- New zero emission buses in use on routes in the north east of Greater Manchester.

By 2025

- All Greater Manchester buses operating as part of the integrated Bee Network.
- Contactless payment with automatic capping and integrated ticketing with Metrolink.
- New zero emission buses in use on routes in the south of the city region.
- Extended our programme of bus stop access improvements to cover more stops.

By 2026

- New bus priority measures delivered between Salford Crescent and MediaCityUK will improve bus speed and reliability.

By 2027

- New orbital bus priority measures delivered between Bury and Rochdale, Ashton and Stockport, Wigan and Bolton and Rochdale-Oldham-Ashton to improve bus speed and reliability.

By 2030

- Buses will run at least every 12 minutes on key radial and orbital routes.
- 90% of the entire Greater Manchester population will be within a 30-minute frequency bus or Metrolink service on weekdays within 400m of their home.
- 500 more accessible stops are provided through measures such as raised kerbs and places to rest while waiting.
- The UK's first operationally carbon neutral transport interchange in Bury town centre opens, integrating bus, cycle parking and Metrolink.

The Greater Manchester Bus Strategy is not a funded delivery plan and the priorities and ambitions set out here are anticipated to require some additional funding to be delivered in full.

What we will achieve

By delivering these improvements, we will create a bus system that:

Provides consistent and attractive car-free connectivity for all.

Connects to other parts of the Bee Network and longer distance public transport.

Supports attractive urban places, including town centres and new developments.

Has a positive impact on public health and the environment.

Provides people with more travel options in the day and night.

Is accountable and a source of shared local pride.

The trip described overleaf shows how people's bus journeys will improve in the coming years.



A trip on our future bus network

1

Most Greater Manchester residents live a short walk from their nearest bus route.



2

Bus stops are easy to access for everyone. They are tidy and well-lit, with clear information and the busiest stops have shelters too.



3

Bee Network cycle hire stands are located at key bus stops, and bikes can be hired as part of the same integrated ticketing system. Cycle parking facilities are provided at bus stations and interchanges.



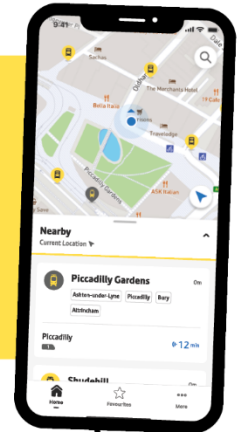
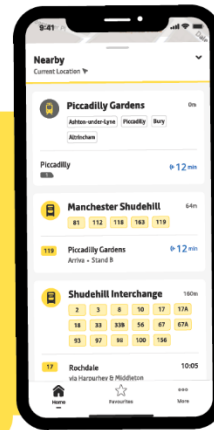
4

Investment in Greater Manchester's buses has improved their reliability and frequency. Many services are so frequent that checking a timetable beforehand is unnecessary.



5

People can plan their journey and follow their bus in real time using the Bee Network app and other journey planners. They can also purchase tickets for bus, Metrolink and train services before boarding.



6

The bus arrives on time and is easy to board for everyone, with ramps fitted on all vehicles. Fares are simple and affordable, with a hopper fare for single trips, day and week tickets, and integrated fare caps across the Bee Network.



Cont. on next page.

A trip on our future bus network

7

Everyone has a safe and comfortable journey, with spaces for two wheelchair users, hearing induction loops, high back seating, non-slip flooring and USB charging points on every bus.



8

A trip on a Bee Network bus feels safe at any time of day or night. TravelSafe Support and Enforcement Officers are on hand to help across the network, while CCTV and audio-visual announcements mean everyone can use the bus with confidence.

10

In the background, the Operational Control Centre is monitoring the network and working to keep services on time and passengers informed.



9

The bus makes swift progress on its route, thanks to bus lanes and other infrastructure that separates it from general traffic.



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11

All buses are either electric or the cleanest emission standard, limiting their impact on local air quality. By 2032, all buses in Greater Manchester will be zero-emission.



12

The bus arrives at its destination on time and passengers are able to change seamlessly to other buses, trains, trams, or cycle hire. Using the Bee Network app, bus users can also rate their journey and provide immediate feedback on their experience.



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