

Bee Network – One month to go

Media Briefing Note

(Embargoed in line with media release - for use from 24 August 2023)

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24 August 2023 is a landmark day for Greater Manchester, with only one month to go until buses in some parts of the city-region are brought back under local control through franchising.

The first Bee Network bus services will start operating in Bolton, Wigan, and parts of Manchester, Salford and Bury on 24 September 2023.

Other elements of the Bee Network are also going live, as Greater Manchester begins the process of delivering an integrated transport network, joining together journeys by bus, tram and active travel – walking, cycling or wheeling, if you are a wheelchair or mobility aid user.

What is franchising?

Franchising is the system used to procure and co-ordinate bus services in London and many cities across the world. Under a franchised system, a transport authority contracts with bus operators to deliver services it specifies.

This is different to the deregulated system currently in place outside of London, where bus operators determine the fares and service frequency.

Franchising will allow our bus network to be managed as a whole system, alongside other forms of transport, creating the opportunity for integrated timetabling, ticketing and information and allowing fares to be set by our Combined Authority.

Where will the Zero-Emission Buses operate and what improvements do they offer?

50 new zero-emission electric buses (ZEBs) will be carrying passengers in parts of Greater Manchester from 24 September 2023, when the first Bee Network bus services come under local control in Bolton, Wigan and parts of Manchester, Salford and Bury.

Fully branded as part of the Bee Network fleet from day one, each of the BYD-Alexander Dennis Eviro400EV zero-emission buses will seat 62 passengers.

The ZEBs are:

- Sustainable: Powered by 382kWh batteries and an electric motor, ZEBs do not produce exhaust gases.
- Fully inclusive: With two wheelchair bays, hearing induction loops, audio and visual announcement systems, USB ports and anti-slip flooring.
- 10.8 metres long, 2.5 metres wide, 4.4 metres tall.

The first 50 ZEBs will be running from the Bolton bus depot.

50 more ZEBs will be delivered in March 2024. This is to support the ongoing roll-out of bus franchising, with services in Bury, Rochdale and Oldham and parts of Manchester, Salford and Tameside coming under local control from 24 March 2024.

The 100 new buses are being funded from the government's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), with more being delivered from 2024 to 2027 through CRSTS.

A further 170 electric buses – jointly funded by Stagecoach and local and national government through the Zero Emission Buses Regional Area scheme – have also been ordered and will be run in Stockport.

Greater Manchester aims to have an all zero-emission bus fleet by 2032.

What us service improvements will be delivered?

Following the introduction of franchised bus services on 24 September, improvements are planned in Bolton, Wigan and parts of Bury, Salford and Manchester – the first to be brought under local control – that will see them better integrated with first and last train services.

Services set to be improved, as soon as possible, include the 471 Bolton-Bury-Rochdale service and 362 Standish to Wigan buses, linking up with the last trams and trains to and from Manchester city centre. This approach will be reflected in other areas of Greater Manchester as franchised services roll out across the region.

The daytime frequency on the V1 and V2 services on the Leigh Guided Busway is also set to be increased, with eight buses in each direction every hour. In addition, V2 services from Atherton to Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI) will be reinstated as soon as possible.

What new fares and tickets will be available?

We're committed to keeping fares as low as possible. New low bus fares have now been extended to September 2024, meaning that people in Greater Manchester will pay no more than:

- £2 for an adult single fare, £1 for a child.
- £5 to travel all-day by any bus, £2.50 for a child.
- £21 to travel by any bus for seven days, £10.50 for a child.

A new range of bus and Metrolink tram tickets (Bee AnyBus + Tram) will be available from 24 September and will be up to 20% cheaper compared to paying separately for bus and tram journeys.

There will be no changes to existing travel passes for younger people, older people, disabled people and care leavers. This includes the igo, Our Pass, ENCTS older personals, disabled and disabled plus pass.

What will the new TravelSafe Support and Engagement Officers be doing?

Thirty new TravelSafe Support and Enforcement Officers (TSEOs) will be joining the Bee Network from 24 September 2023.

They will be patrolling Bee Network bus services, interchanges and bus stations, supporting passengers and staff, providing reassurance and helping to address anti-social behaviour. TSEOs will also provide customer support and carry out ticket inspections.

The team will expand their operations as the Bee Network rolls out and will be patrolling all bus services, stations and interchanges by 2025.

The new TSEOs are being introduced as part of a broader strategy to tackle fare evasion across all modes of public transport in Greater Manchester, with financial penalties – known as the Standard Fare – set to increase in the Autumn.

Details of the new Bee Network App

The new Bee Network app will be available to download from 18 September via the Google Play Store and the Apple App store.

Passengers will be able to:

- Get live departure times for nearby bus, tram and train stops and stations.
- View the location of the nearest bus or tram stops.
- Buy Metrolink tickets.
- Buy BeeAny Bus and Bee AnyBus + Tram tickets from 24 September.
- Rate their journey on completion.

In time we will roll out more features onto the app, including journey planning and disruption information, making the Bee Network app the one-stop shop for public transport in Greater Manchester.

Details of the new Bee Network website

The new Bee Network website – www.beenetwork.com – launches on 18 September 2023.

Passengers will be able to:

- Easily find the bus or tram ticket for you on the Bee Network website.
- Check travel alerts and see any affected bus and tram journeys.
- Use the site more easily, with a fresh Bee Network look.
- Find timetables and live departure times for the Bee Network and all Greater Manchester buses.

What are the Customer Commitments?

New Customer Commitments have been developed with the people of Greater Manchester to ensure that passengers know what they can expect from the Bee Network. We're also making it easy for people to provide feedback so that we can deliver the best possible Bee Network.

We're committed to delivering a Bee Network that is:

- **Safe:** We will create a safe and secure network.
- **Accessible:** Everyone can use.
- **Affordable:** We will keep the cost of travel as low as possible.
- **Reliable:** We will deliver a reliable network.
- **Sustainable:** We will take the lead in creating a greener, healthier Greater Manchester.
- **Accountable:** We will use your feedback to shape the Bee Network.

From 18 September 2023, people will start to see the Customer Commitments across the Bee Network.

When customers scan the QR code on Customer Commitments signage using their smartphone, they will be taken to the Rate Your Journey Service on the Bee Network website.

People will also be able to get in touch with the Bee Network Customer Contact Centre at hello@beenetwork.com or call us on 0161 244 1000.

The Customer Commitments will be hosted online at www.beenetwork.com/commitments from 18 September 2023.

Rate Your Journey

Rate Your Journey is a new service for customers to share their experiences of the Bee Network. Feedback gathered through a simple online survey will be used to ensure delivery of the best possible Bee Network.

Rate Your Journey will formally launch on 18 September 2023. Customers will be able to access a simple survey in a way that best suits them:

- Using the new Bee Network app
- Using the new Bee Network website
- By scanning a QR code on the new Bee Network Customer Commitments
- People will also be able to get in touch with the Bee Network Customer Services team at hello@beenetwork.com or call us on 0161 244 1000.

What's happening with school services?

From 4 September 2023, 31 school services across Bolton, Wigan, and parts of Manchester, Salford and Bury will form part of the Bee Network.

There will be no changes to the schools served or the numbers of buses used on these services, and pupils can continue to use these services as normal.

Customers can get ready for [back to school here](#).

[Customers can find the right ticket for their child here.](#)

How will lost property be managed?

From 24 September 2023, TfGM will be responsible for any lost property found on franchised bus services, as well as at Bee Network interchanges, bus stations, and cycle hubs.

Passengers on franchised bus services will therefore need to get in touch with our Bee Network Customer Contact Centre at hello@beenetwork.com or 0161 244 1000.

Passengers on non-franchised bus services will still need to contact the relevant operator.

For lost property found on Metrolink trams and tram stops, customers will need to continue to contact Metrolink on 0161 205 2000 or customerservices@metrolink.co.uk.

For anyone who wants to find out more

More information can be found on the TfGM Bee Network customer information hub at tfgm.com/the-bee-network