

Doing buses differently

Have your say on the impact of **Covid-19** on our proposals for the future of your buses

Consultation runs from
Wednesday 2 December 2020 to
Friday 29 January 2021

gmconsult.org

0161 244 1100

#GMBusConsultation



Buses are important

Greater Manchester has an ambition for a truly integrated public transport system, Our Network, to make getting around the city-region easy, accessible and affordable.

Buses will be central to Our Network – they're vital to Greater Manchester and have become even more essential during Covid-19.

75% of public transport journeys made in Greater Manchester before and during the pandemic are by bus and they continue to be a critical link to jobs and essential services for some of our poorer communities.

How buses are run now

Since 1986 bus services in Greater Manchester have been deregulated. This means the buses are run by commercial bus companies who decide the routes, timetables, fares and standards. The bus companies receive the revenue from fares and retain the profits.

Greater Manchester's current bus services



Fares and ticketing are complex. There are more than 150 types of ticket.



There is no single brand or source of travel information.



Customer standards vary.



Bus companies decide which routes to run based on commercial reasons meaning some routes are well served and others less so.



Difficult to plan a network that meets the future needs of the city region.

Our Network

Launched in June 2019 and aligned to the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, Our Network is Greater Manchester's vision for public transport in 2029.

To keep Greater Manchester moving, we need a truly integrated public transport system so that getting around our city-region is easy, accessible and affordable. This means having the right connections in the right places, simple ticketing that works across different modes of transport and the necessary powers to ensure our transport network works together for the benefit of Greater Manchester's people and businesses.

**OUR
PEOPLE
OUR
PLACE
OUR
NETWORK**

Reforming the bus market

Between October 2019 and January 2020, Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) held a consultation on a proposed franchising scheme for the city-region's buses.

Franchising means bus services would be brought under local control. GMCA would coordinate both the bus network and investment, based on what passengers need, with operators contracted to run the services.

Over 8,500 respondents gave their views, with four out-of-five respondents supporting the proposed franchising scheme.

In June 2020, GMCA received the results of the consultation but decided, before a final decision could be made, that the longer-term impact that the Covid-19 pandemic may have on the bus market and the proposed scheme should be considered.

Reform and Covid-19

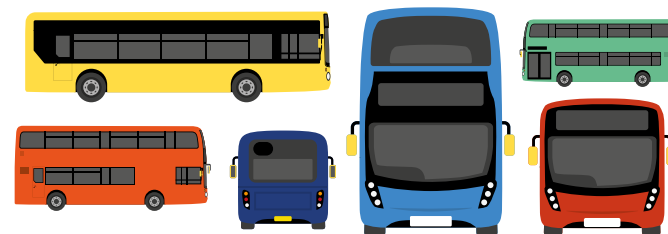
Covid-19 has caused a lot of uncertainty over how people will travel in future. So, TFGM has used four scenarios in a report which looks at potential future travel demand in Greater Manchester and what it could mean for GMCA's proposals to change how buses are run.

Under all scenarios, franchising is still the best option to achieve Greater Manchester's long-term ambition for a fully integrated public transport system and GMCA still has funding available to pay for the transition to franchising.

Under franchising, GMCA would be responsible for the bus network and that means it would have more of the financial responsibility and the risks. So depending on the impacts of Covid-19, GMCA might have to make difficult choices about the bus network in the future to manage these financial risks - such as by providing further funding or by making reductions to the network.

But even under the other options available – such as entering into a partnership with bus operators or making no change to the bus market – there would still be difficult choices as GMCA would need to pay to fill more of the gaps in the commercial bus network. But GMCA would have to do this with no overall coordination and none of the other benefits of franchising.

Despite the additional financial risks, the net benefits of franchising for Greater Manchester are still likely to be higher and more deliverable than other options, such as a partnership with bus operators and so will provide value for money.



Why proceed now?

The impact and effect of Covid-19 remains uncertain. Delaying a decision on franchising reduces the uncertainty about the impacts of Covid-19 and what partnerships operators may offer as time goes by. But there are reasons why a decision about how buses should be run should be made sooner rather than later, as the challenges facing the bus market have not disappeared. Even before Covid-19, bus use was falling and the public sector was providing significant subsidy to operators through payments for subsidised services and concessionary fares. During the pandemic, operators have also received emergency funding from government.

Public subsidy of the GM bus market



£33.6m in emergency funding provided by central government (Mar to end Sept 2020)



£86m funding per year for subsidised services and concessionary fares



£16m fuel duty funding per year

If bus usage remains low in the future and central government stops or reduces its emergency funding, bus operators may reduce services or increase ticket prices. This may mean the public sector having to provide additional funding to keep essential services running, especially for key workers and the poor and vulnerable who depend on the bus network. Fewer bus routes or more expensive tickets could also mean more people driving, increasing congestion and pollution.

GMCA is consulting on the proposed franchising scheme in the light of the findings of the Covid-19 Impact Report.

Your responses will help inform a future decision on how Greater Manchester's buses should be run. The outcome of both consultations will be considered as part of the final decision on whether to implement a franchising scheme.

Who can take part?

Anyone can take part in the consultation. You don't have to have taken part in the previous consultation, live in Greater Manchester or be a regular bus user. In fact, we would like to hear from people who don't currently travel by bus.

Where do I get more information?

You can find more information, including the Consultation Document and the Covid-19 Impact Report, on gmconsult.org

If you need to respond in a different way, or require the consultation materials in a different format or want hard copies of any documents, please contact info@gmbusconsultation.com or call [0161 244 1100](tel:01612441100) to discuss how we can help you.

Support for non-English speakers is also available on [0161 244 1100](tel:01612441100).

How do I take part?

Responses will be accepted through the following channels:



Complete and submit a questionnaire at gmconsult.org



Email a completed questionnaire or your comments to gmbusconsultation@ipsos-mori.com



Post a completed questionnaire or your comments to: **Freepost GM BUS CONSULTATION** (You do not need a stamp and can write this address on any envelope)



Via telephone on [0161 244 1100](tel:01612441100) (you will be forwarded through to our independent research organisation Ipsos MORI to verbally record your response)



Paper copies of the questionnaire are available in **Travelshops** across Greater Manchester. Locations of Travelshops can be found at tfgm.com/public-transport/travelshops