
Active Travel Update (11 December 2023)

1. Introduction

Greater Manchester (GM) is building the Bee Network, a world-class, integrated transport system which brings together walking, wheeling and cycling (active travel), bus, Metrolink and rail into an accessible, affordable, and easy-to-use system that will transform how people travel in, around and to Greater Manchester.

In November 2022, Active Travel Commissioner, Dame Sarah Storey launched a refreshed Active Travel Mission for GM - building on what Chris Boardman started during his time as Cycling and Walking Commissioner for the region. The refreshed mission brings renewed focus to GM's active travel ambitions, prioritising infrastructure delivery, home to school travel, access to cycles, integration with public transport and road danger reduction. These are all central to the successful delivery of the Bee Network.

Today (11 December 2023) Active Travel Commissioner, Dame Sarah Storey and Transport Commissioner, Vernon Everitt, attended Stockport Interchange to set out an updated roadmap for the delivery of an expanded walking, wheeling and cycling offer at the heart of the Bee Network.

This announcement precedes the Bee Network Committee on 14 December, where a full report on the Active Travel programme for GM – including the first annual report - will be presented. The papers provide a comprehensive update on the walking wheeling and cycling programme in GM as part of the progress towards a new Active Travel Strategy, which will be included in the development of the new Local Transport Plan in 2024. The committee papers are [available here](#).

This briefing provides a summary of the report and planned next steps and sets out some of the changes you will see in Greater Manchester in the coming years. The maps in this briefing can also be [downloaded here](#).

2. Delivering transformed travel across an entire region - a long-term mission

Accessible, well-connected cycling, walking, and wheeling infrastructure enables people to maximise their active travel options and make easy connections to other modes of transport when travelling for work or leisure.

Since the vision for the walking and cycling elements of the Bee Network was first funded in 2020, we have delivered:

- 100km of Bee Network standard infrastructure.
- Over 320,000 people (11% of GM's population) live within 400m of a completed Bee Active Network route.

- 19km of major road corridors into Manchester/Salford centres now have protected facilities for cycling.
- 20 new protected junctions, which provide safe facilities for those walking, wheeling, and cycling.

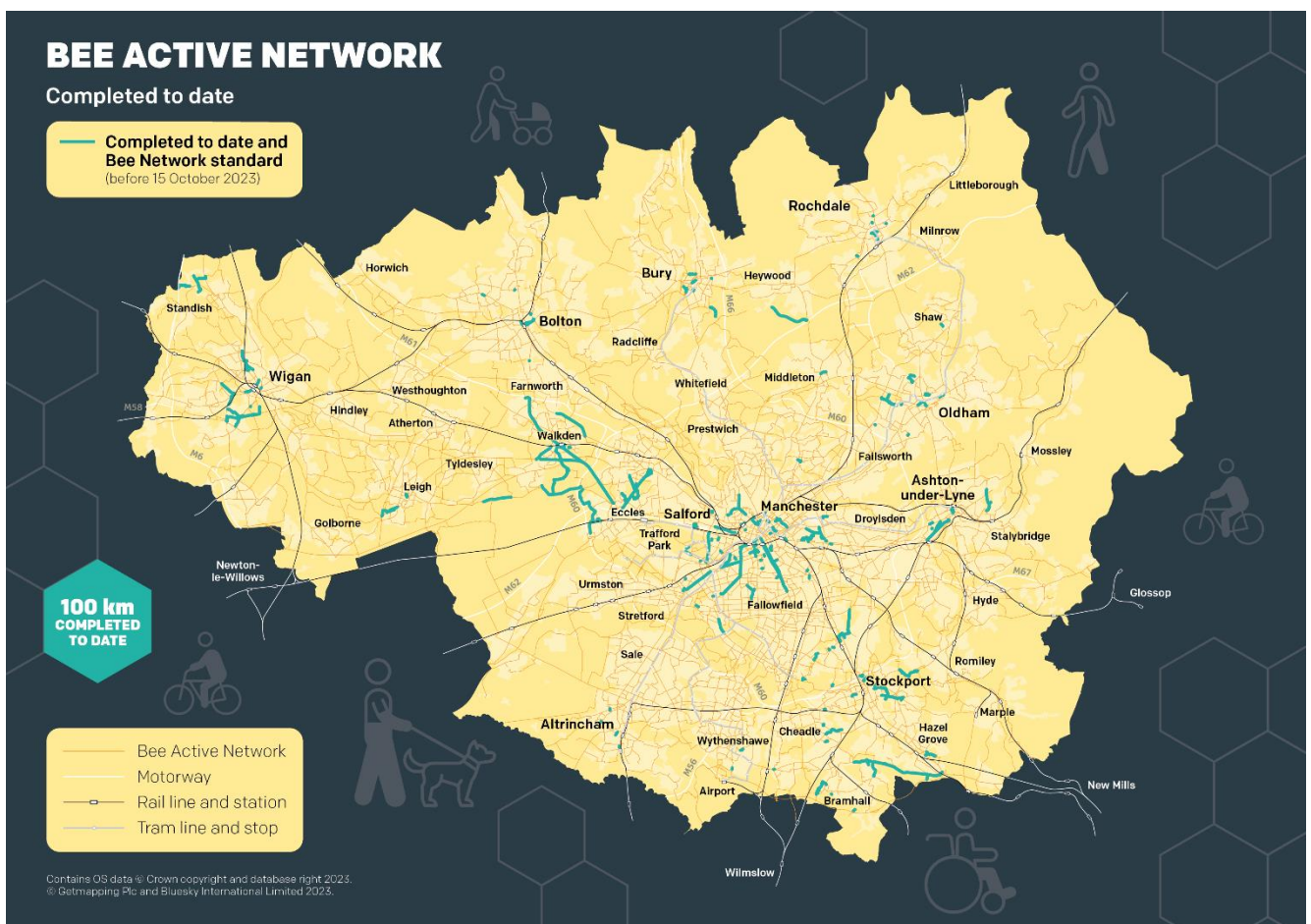


Figure 1: The Bee Active network map provides a visual representation of 100km of walking and cycling infrastructure completed to date.

Specifically in the financial year 2022/23, 14 schemes were completed on site, delivering 24.6km of network.

The papers outline that there are a set of significant schemes in delivery or development that will add to that tally in the coming 12-18 months and recommends that active travel continues to be funded at least at the current level for future years.

It sets out a future proposed pipeline of priorities - which includes significant measures to enhance pedestrian facilities and 'quick fixes' as part of regular maintenance.

3. Revealing a refreshed walking wheeling and cycling network map - the Bee Active network

A comprehensive review of the active travel network has been undertaken during 2023. This review comprises two main elements:

- A network audit focused on existing infrastructure on proposed active travel Bee Network routes to understand whether the existing infrastructure meets the Bee Network standards.
- Updated mapping of GM's funded active travel programmes which will be combined with information on scheme delivery progress to show what is going to be delivered where and when.

The audit has been used to inform future network planning, particularly in highlighting areas where significant lengths of network have the potential to be brought up to standard.

The updated Bee Active Network vision map shows the updated aspirational walking wheeling and cycling network that will link our neighbourhoods, centres, and public transport, over the coming decades. The updated network plan proposes a slight change in the length of the overall network from the original network plan that was released in 2018 and then updated in 2019 following phase of public engagement.

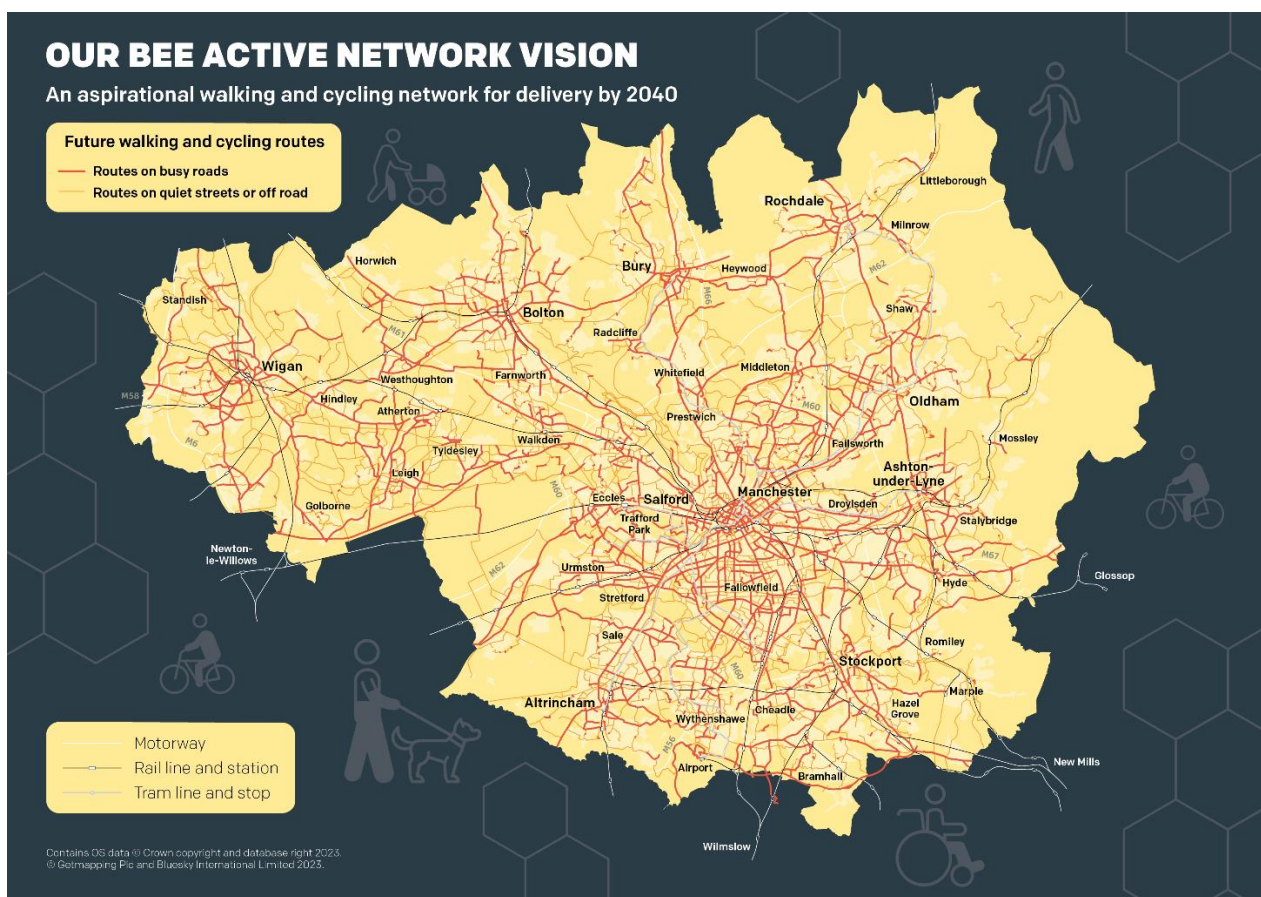


Figure 2: The Bee Active Network vision map provides a visual representation of the aspirational walking and cycling network for delivery by 2040.

The overall length of the new proposed network is 2,734km, opposed to 2,900km - due to the removal of duplicate sections of network.

The proportion of the network which we expect to require physical protection for those riding bikes has substantially increased from 25% to over 40% – now 1170km of segregated network (as opposed to c725km).

The proposed 2734km network includes:

- 1,170km on busy roads
- 932km on quiet roads
- 631km off road

Once the network is completed, over 95% of Greater Manchester residents will live within 400m of a Bee Network route.

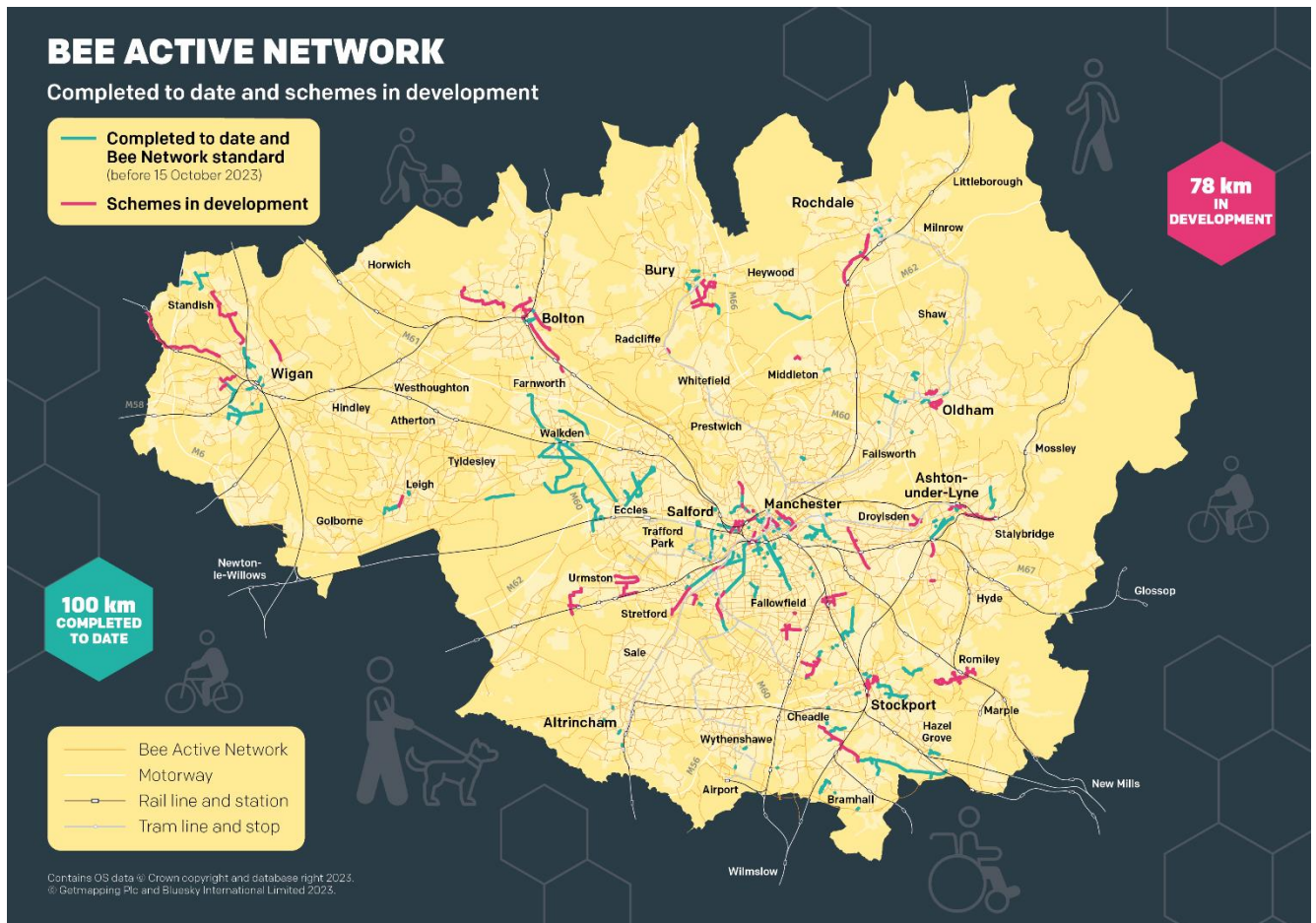


Figure 3: The Bee Active Network map provides a visual representation of the network, showing all the completed infrastructure and infrastructure which is in development and funded for delivery from current programmes.

- **Schemes delivered in green (100km):** these are Bee Network standard active travel infrastructure schemes completed on site by 15 October 2023. Over 320,000 GM residents live within 400m of these schemes.
- **Schemes in development in red (78km):** these are schemes which are funded for delivery but are not yet completed, but some of which are already on site.

There is a future pipeline of schemes that will deliver 110km -180km by 2027.

4. GM Streets for All Design Guide – ensuring quality

All this network would be expected to meet the 'Bee Network' standards set out in the Streets for All Design Guide which is currently in development.

The Guide brings together existing national and local standards and guidance to set out design and infrastructure options and showcase best practice. The Guide supports the delivery of buildable, maintainable and value for money highway and street schemes across the region that are attractive, safe and welcoming places for anyone and everyone. The Guide will underpin work on all streets, centres and neighbourhoods in GM in the coming years - supporting designers to make best use of limited street space and balance competing demands.

5. Integration with public transport - prioritisation of safer and easier walking and wheeling

Integration of active travel with public transport is key for GM realising its Bee Network ambitions.

Walking or wheeling makes up the first and last portion of any journey - especially when using public transport for work and leisure. Data shows that 95% of public transport journeys involve walking **as some part** of the journey (95% train 96% bus 97% tram) and the 'first mile' is especially important walking to tram and train stations. And the economic potential of active travel infrastructure is clear, with businesses benefitting from the use of e-bikes and cargo bikes.

The network audit has informed where new and improved measures to enhance the experience of pedestrians in GM should be prioritised. Over the coming years we plan to:

- Add pedestrian facilities to 189 traffic junctions.
- Make upgrades to 282 existing crossings.
- Tackle 2,000 further crossing points at 'points of severance' on quieter roads.
- Improve pedestrian experience over the next 10 years by:
 - Tackling pavement pinch points
 - Adding dropped kerbs or tactile paving at side roads

6. Cycle Hire expansion

The Bee Network Cycle Hire scheme was rolled out in three discrete sub-phases from November 2021 to Easter 2023, culminating in over 1,000 bikes, more than 200 'stations' and over 2,500 stands, in a service area spanning parts of Manchester, Salford and Trafford. This area has a catchment of circa 200,000 residents. To date, more than 60,000 users have registered to use the service and a series of measure have been introduced to address issues with abuse of the scheme.

The papers submitted to the Bee Network Committee propose that a business plan is developed to expand the scheme, and that over-time it is widened to more areas across GM to include up to 8,000 cycles at 1,000-1,500 stations - enabling more people to access a bike, more easily.

7. Further opportunities

Discussions are also ongoing with local equalities groups, user groups, the TfGM Safety Review Committee and the Metrolink operator in relation to establishing a pilot for allowing bikes on trams.

Meanwhile discussions are taking place on how to establish an integrated ticketing system for the Bee Network that incorporates Cycle Hire, allowing customers to complete end-to-end, multi-modal journeys with a single fare.