Thank you Mr Mayor for the opportunity to report to the Council the latest developments on various matters relating to the Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) Committee.

**New Metrolink timetable and routes**

Metrolink’s Second City Crossing (2CC) will open early next year, and passengers will benefit from more trams running through the city centre and from the greater operational flexibility and improved service reliability that 2CC will offer. TfGM have planned that Rochdale services will operate through to and from East Didsbury, via Shudehill and Market Street, while the Shaw and Oldham service will operate through to and from East Didsbury via Exchange Square. Passengers would be able to connect to other services at Victoria or St Peter’s Square.

In response to this proposal I and colleagues addressed the TfGM Committee in November in support of the campaign for the Oldham/Rochdale line to go through to Piccadilly. While there are supportive words throughout GM in support of Oldham/Rochdale/Tameside demands for more investment and priority to our areas to promote growth and redress the economic imbalance that exists across GM, TfGM has failed to respond with this proposal.

Oldham and Rochdale should be linked with a direct tram route to the most important transport hub in the city region. This will give us an important edge and an incentive to businesses to invest here. TfGM argue there isn't the demand compared to other areas - but we will never be able to match the demand from more prosperous areas when decisions like this are made. A direct link to Piccadilly now will promote economic growth and create future demand. Without the link, the prospect of future growth will be so much harder. GM has to invest in the future prospects for Rochdale and Oldham more than other more prosperous areas, and our areas should be prioritised to help us accelerate economic growth.

Unfortunately, the TfGM Committee did not listen to our representations, and approved a Metrolink network for the opening of 2CC as I indicated above. I am pleased to note that the TfGM Committee decision has been called in by GMCA Scrutiny Pool members, and that our case for a direct link to Piccadilly will receive a fresh consideration.

**Onto other Metrolink matters.**

**Accessibility** - Metrolink has been held up as a beacon of accessibility in a new film launched by the prestigious Design Council Cabe on international “World Cities Day” on 31st October 2016.

The film features TfGM’s inclusive approach to the planning, design and management of the Metrolink network, shining a spotlight on its award-winning Disability Design Reference Group which includes people with a range of impairments that has had a hands-on role in the design process for access-related aspects of the expanded Metrolink network to make sure they meet the needs of disabled people. Using Metrolink as a real life best practice example, the film is now set to be used in a government-funded training programme that is estimated to reach more than 600,000 highly skilled professionals across the UK.

**Anti-social behaviour and fare evasion** – A special youth court was held at Bury Magistrates Court in late October to clampdown on under-18’s caught fare-dodging on the Metrolink network. This resulted in 16 youths, taken to court after failing to pay the
standard fare charge issued to anyone caught travelling without a valid ticket, being fined a total of £2,629.20.

Progressing cases to court, particularly young people, is not a decision that TfGM takes lightly, but the mindset among some people that it is acceptable to try and ride the tram for free must be challenged, particularly those who fail to engage with TfGM or that fail to pay if caught fare dodging.

‘Clean Air for Schools’ Programme

At the National Air Quality Awards in November, TfGM won the Local Authority and Public Sector Air Quality Initiative of the Year title for its ‘Clean Air for Schools’ programme.

‘Clean Air for Schools’ targets emissions from 41 of TfGM’s fleet of 93 Yellow School Buses, delivering significant environmental benefits and reducing children’s exposure to harmful air pollutants. Funded through the Department for Transport’s (DFT’s) Clean Bus Technology Fund, the programme involves retro-fitting innovative air pollution control equipment to diesel Yellow School Buses. Emission tests were carried out on buses before the equipment was fitted and after they had been on the road for at least a year. The results showed a 99% reduction in nitrogen oxide levels, far higher than the 50% minimum target set by the DFT, with a 93% reduction in particulates, 99% in hydrocarbons and more than 97% in carbon monoxide.

Transport Links to Hospitals

I recently forwarded a briefing note to members providing an update on the TfGM response to concerns raised over the lack of direct public transport links to North Manchester General Hospital and Royal Oldham Hospital. TfGM officers will continue to work with operators and to review the subsidised network for efficiencies, and respond with finding and recommendations in late December. Can I ask that any Member with concerns in relation to this or any other TfGM issue, to please contact me.

Local Link

I am providing an update on the Local Link services that offer a demand responsive transport service which allows people to travel within defined areas that have a particular gap in the transport provision, such as irregular transport services or low accessibility to employment, education, health and leisure opportunities. We recently received a report on performance of the 27 services across Greater Manchester, three of which are in the Borough -

Heywood service commenced: July 2005 - Heywood’s patronage has continued to grow over the past year and has increased by 10% compared to the previous 12 months. The number of work trips increased due to work done by TfGM to encourage workers at Pilsworth Industrial estate to use the service. There is a significant amount of seasonal demand on this service.

Kingsway, Newbold, Deeplish and Rochdale Evening service commenced: September 2008 - Kingsway Local Link covers four different Local Link operations (Kingsway, Rochdale Evening, Deeplish and Newbold). October and November are the busiest months with over 2,000 passenger trips being performed at this time last year. This is due to the employment of a high number of seasonal staff at Kingsway Business Park.

Middleton service commenced: July 2005 - Service performance saw an increase of 8% compared to the previous 12 months. Officers have reviewed the service as it has been operating at a higher cost than others; savings have been identified by reducing the hours of operation on one vehicle and changing the service pattern of the link between Kingsway Business Park and Middleton.
Christmas and New Year Services

The TfGM Committee received a report in November as to the intentions of bus and rail operators for the Christmas and New Year period. In some cases the statutory deadline for notification of service changes had not passed, but I can advise as follows.

In general terms, the pattern of bus services follows previous years, whereby there will be earlier finishes from around 7pm on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve; no services on Christmas Day; limited services on Boxing Day and New Year’s Day; and generally Sunday services on other Bank Holiday days. Last services on Metrolink will leave the city centre around 9pm on Christmas Eve; no services on Christmas Day; Sunday services on Boxing Day, New Year’s Day and on other Bank Holiday days; and on New Year’s Eve the last trams are scheduled to depart the city centre from 1am on New Year’s Day morning. In general terms the pattern of rail services follows previous years. There will be no service on Christmas Day or Boxing Day, and earlier finishes on Christmas Eve. Northern Rail services will also finish earlier on New Year’s Eve.

Travellers should check with www.tfgm.com for buses and trams, and with the National Rail website (nationalrail.co.uk) for rail services, for full details before travelling over the festive period.

It only remains for me, on behalf of myself and colleagues on the Transport for Greater Manchester Committee, to wish all Members of the Council all the best for the festive season.

Thank you Mr Mayor, I will be pleased to answer any questions from Members of the Council about these or any other matter relating to the Transport for Greater Manchester Committee

Councillor Phil Burke
Councillor Shah Wazir
Councillor Ian Duckworth

Transport for Greater Manchester Committee