

6 TRANSPORT STRATEGY: BUS



Introduction

The Borough has one bus interchange in Bury town centre and one bus station in Radcliffe. These provide public transport connections to destinations within the Borough as well as across the Greater Manchester area including to Rochdale, Bolton and Manchester.

Bury Interchange is one of the busiest in Greater Manchester. There were 49,288 bus departures from the Interchange in September 2021. Most bus services use Manchester Road, Rochdale Road, Angouleme Way and Walmersley Road to access the town centre.

The Borough currently has 1.95km of bus lanes, the least of all the GM local authorities (GM BSIP). Inbound bus lanes operate in the morning and evening peaks on the A58 Bolton Road approach to Bury town centre, offering some priority to buses, but they are not continuous along the Bolton-Bury-Rochdale corridor. Buses using the A58 at Bury Bridge can get caught up in congestion at this busy junction which has been identified by recent GM Clean Air Plan modelling as a problem area for meeting nitrogen dioxide targets.

Radcliffe also has a busy bus station with 8,030 bus departures in September 2021. The main bus movements in Radcliffe town centre are along A665 Pilkington Way, Church Street West and Dale Street where the bus interchange is located.

In June 2021, there were 290,353 bus miles operated in Bury, that's just 6.4% of total bus miles across Greater Manchester, (the lowest across the ten GM local authorities (source GM BSIP).



Bury Interchange



Radcliffe Bus Station

National bus policy and ambition

Bus Back Better

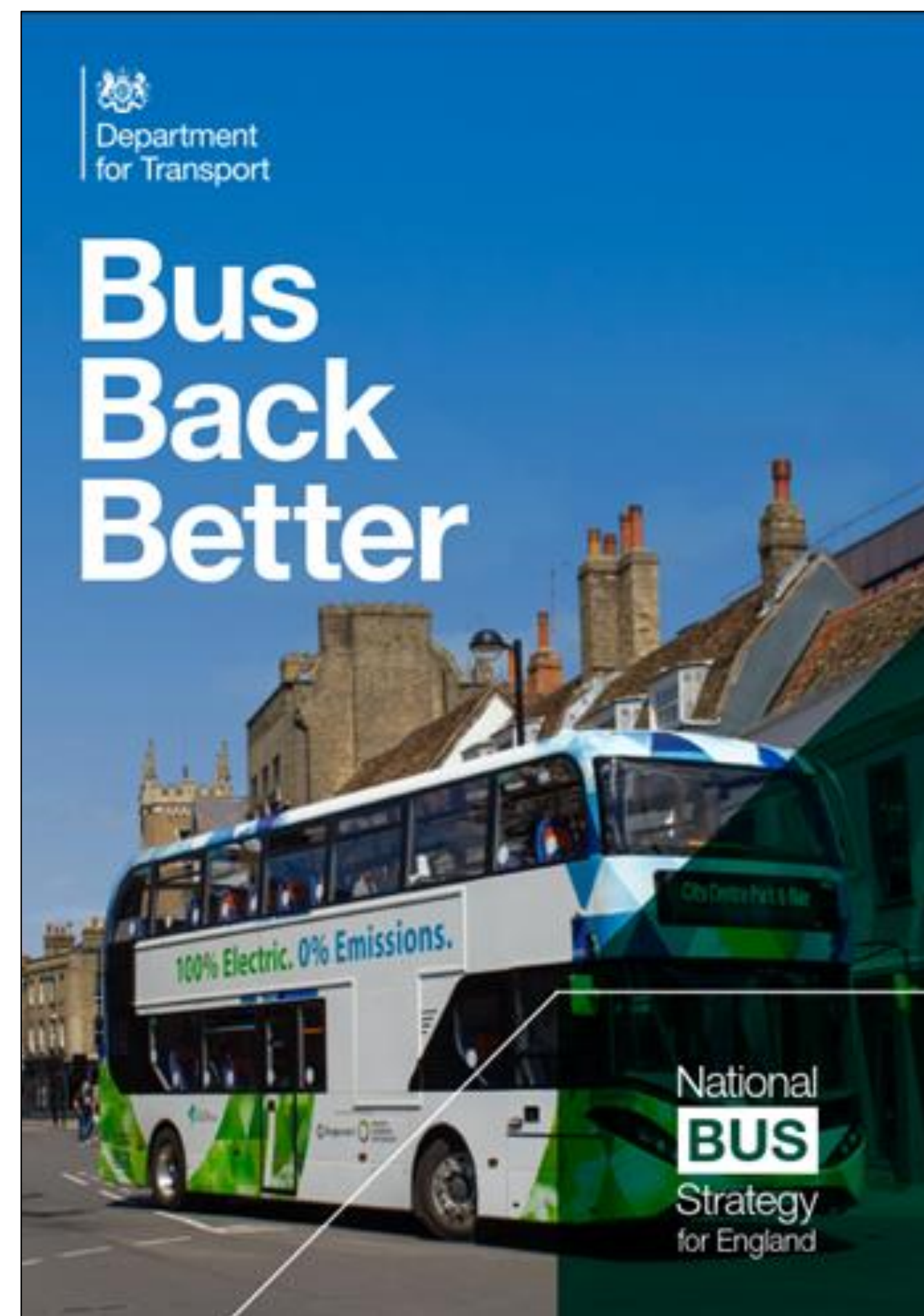
In March 2021 the Department for Transport (DfT) published a new national strategy for buses in England outside of London, the aim of which is to get more people using buses by making them more attractive. This means making buses faster and more reliable.

Bus Back Better required local transport authorities to produce a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) by October 2021. In Greater Manchester, Government required one Plan covering all ten local authority areas, including Bury. Government used these plans to allocate £1.4 billion of funding to those it considered ambitious enough.

In *Bus Back Better*, Government also said it expects local authorities to develop plans for bus lanes on any roads where there is a frequent bus service, congestion, and physical space to install one. It expects these bus lanes to be full-time and as continuous as possible and be part of a whole corridor approach, with physical measures such as:

- Traffic signal priority;
- Bus gates, which allow buses to enter a road that prohibits access to other traffic; and
- Clear and consistent signage.

Bus Back Better sets out ambitious goals for simpler fares, integrated ticketing, integration of buses with other forms of transport, digital information, zero emission vehicles and for more services to operate in the evenings, weekends, and at night, and to smaller towns and villages. In lower-density, often rural areas, not served by conventional buses, the government suggests that new forms of provision, such as demand responsive travel in smaller vehicles, may be more appropriate.



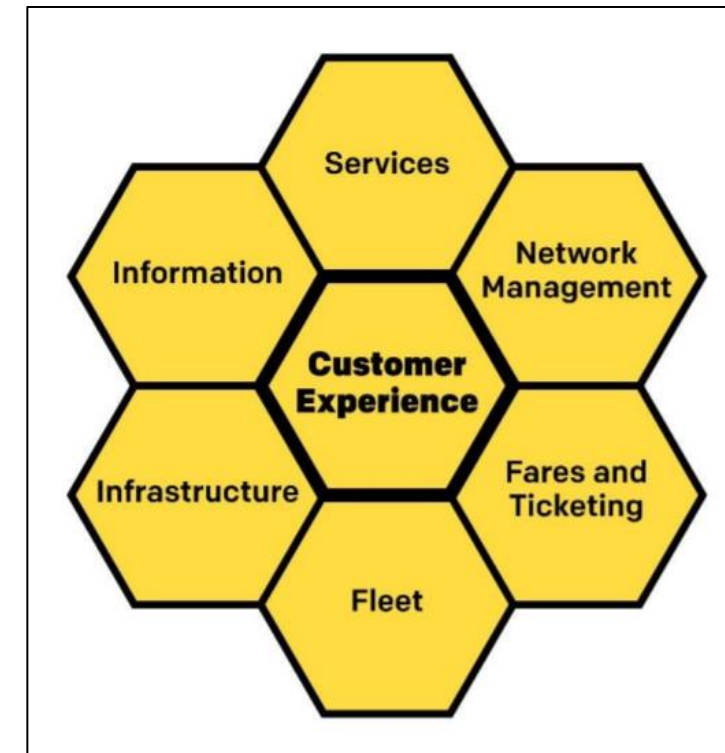
Greater Manchester Bus Service Improvement Plan

In response to the requirements of the National Bus Strategy, Greater Manchester submitted a Bus Service Improvement Plan to Government in October 2021 setting out ambitious plans to transform the bus market and to be the first to use new Government powers to introduce a bus franchising scheme.

Greater Manchester’s ambition for bus is “to develop a modern low emission accessible bus system, fully integrated with the wider Greater Manchester transport network on which everyone will be willing to travel regardless of their background or mobility level.”

The ambition for bus in the Greater Manchester BSIP is summarised around the seven themes in the adjacent table, which will support a central ‘customer experience’ ambition and have been developed to address customer priorities and align with the government’s National Bus Strategy.

Greater Manchester’s BSIP was one of 31 successful plans. There were 48 Plans that received nothing. At £94.8 million, Greater Manchester’s award was the third largest funding allocation. Most of this funding was used to support the introduction of cheaper bus fares.



BSIP Themes	GM Ambitions for Bus
Customer Experience	Providing customers with a safe and seamless travel experience
Services	Turn up and go frequencies on major routes
Information	Readily available, easy to use, live, and up-to-date
Network Management	Improvements to journey times and reliability
Infrastructure	Significant increases in bus priority and improvements to waiting environments
Fares and Ticket	More affordable journeys, integrated with other modes
Fleet	Zero emissions, high quality buses

Greater Manchester Bus Strategy: Better Buses for the Bee Network

The Greater Manchester Bus Strategy is a sub-strategy of the GM2040 Transport Strategy. Published in July 2023, it sets out Greater Manchester's vision for the future bus network: namely, to make the bus the first choice for more journeys, as part of the Bee Network: the city region's integrated transport system.

The Strategy sets an initial target for a 30% increase in bus patronage by 2030 from 2022/23 levels. This would mean almost 50 million more journeys being taken by bus each year in Greater Manchester.

If buses are to be the first choice for more journeys in Bury, we need to provide:

- More reliable and quicker bus journeys.
- Safe and secure journeys.
- An accessible bus network.
- Comprehensive and frequent bus services.
- An environmentally friendly bus system.
- An affordable and attractively priced bus system.
- A fully integrated public transport system.
- A high-quality passenger experience.
- More travel options in the day and night.

Through franchising and the GM Bus Plan will aim to deliver all these things and more, including a new Bee network app, where customers can get live departure times for nearby bus and tram stops and buy bus and Metrolink tickets, and a new Bee Network website.



Greater Manchester Bus Strategy
Better buses for the Bee Network



Investment priorities for Bus

Bus travel is central to the delivery of Greater Manchester's ambitions to provide a sustainable transport network which is reliable, accessible to all, affordable, high quality and high frequency. We want all Bury's residents to have access to a modern, low-emission, accessible bus system.

Investment in bus services and infrastructure is needed if we are to make travelling by bus more attractive and support Greater Manchester's Bus Strategy target for a 30% increase in bus patronage by 2030 and the 'Right Mix' vision to reduce car trips to no more than half of all journeys by 2040.

1. Bus reform and the introduction of bus franchising in Bury

2. Better and more reliable bus services in all parts of the Borough

3. A new Bury Town Centre Interchange

4. Bus priority measures on key routes

5. Better bus stops and stations

6. Bus services to new developments

Bus

Investment priority 1: Bus reform and franchising

Major reform of the bus market is a key part of the GM2040 Transport Strategy.

In March 2021, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) announced plans to use new Government powers and bring buses back under local control for the first time since they were deregulated in 1986 under a system called *franchising*. The bus franchising scheme is a key part of Greater Manchester's wider plans to reform the bus market.

Under franchising, TfGM will coordinate the bus network and contract bus companies to run services based on what passengers need, with any profit being reinvested in buses. Franchising will bring significant benefits to bus users; buses will be run as part of an integrated public transport network; allowing people to change easily between different modes of transport; with simple, affordable price-capped tickets; and a single attractive identity which will be easy to recognise and understand.

Franchising will be delivered across Greater Manchester in three phases, which are shown on the adjacent maps. School bus services will also join the Bee Network as franchising is rolled out. Some bus services in Bury, including some school services, were franchised in September 2023, including the 471 Bolton-Bury-Rochdale service. Bury's remaining bus services will be brought under local control from March 2024. All buses in Greater Manchester will be under public control by 2025.

In most cases, Bee Network buses will run on the same routes as existing services, and at the same times but with some improvements such as linking services up to better connect with first and last trams to the Manchester city centre, including on the 471 Bolton-Bury-Rochdale service.

Buses are a vital part of Greater Manchester's public transport system, particularly for those who do not have access to a car. That's the case for almost a quarter (24%) of Bury households.



Bus

Investment priority 1: Bus reform and franchising

In Bury, we need buses to provide attractive, accessible and affordable services to all communities to allow everyone to access jobs, essential services, and other opportunities, particularly for those people who don't have access to a car. To achieve this, we are working with Transport for Greater Manchester to support their bus reform plans and the roll-out of bus franchising in Bury.

As each tranche is implemented, we will have access to improved data, which will help us plan a better bus network. TfGM will start to undertake Bee Network reviews once franchising has been introduced. These reviews will play a key part in achieving the ambitions of the newly approved Bus Strategy and will allow the bus network to run in a coordinated, planned and efficient manner. The franchised area will be broken down into smaller area-based networks or themes for network review purposes. The new Greater Manchester Bee Network Committee will agree a rolling programme of network reviews. The review process will need to take local community and stakeholder views into account. In Bury, we will establish a Local Bee Network Forum as a means of engaging with the review process and ensuring that the future bus network develops in a way that best meet the needs of Bury's residents, business and visitors.

Greater Manchester's bus reform proposals include a better fleet of buses, with over 100 new UK made, electric buses coming into service across the first two franchise areas. Clean buses will support our ambitions for clean air and a carbon neutral transport system by 2038. These new vehicles meet the 'best in class' specification set by TfGM following engagement with the public. Facilities include audio-visual announcements and USB-charging provision, as well as accessible ramps and two wheelchair spaces. They also feature the distinctive yellow and black colours and symbolic logo of the new Bee Network brand – which will eventually be consistent across bus, tram and cycle hire. Over time, the existing bus fleet will also be upgraded to bring them into the Bee Network brand.

Cheaper bus fares are another part of bus reform. In Greater Manchester, TfGM has already introduced a capped fares scheme in response to the cost of living crisis. Under franchising, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority will be able to set fares and will further develop the integrated ticketing and pricing offer available to customers.

To provide passengers with reassurance and help tackle anti-social-behaviour, 30 new TravelSafe Support and Enforcement Officers (TSEOs) will be patrolling franchised bus services, interchanges and bus stations from September 2023.



Buses

Investment priority 2: Better bus services

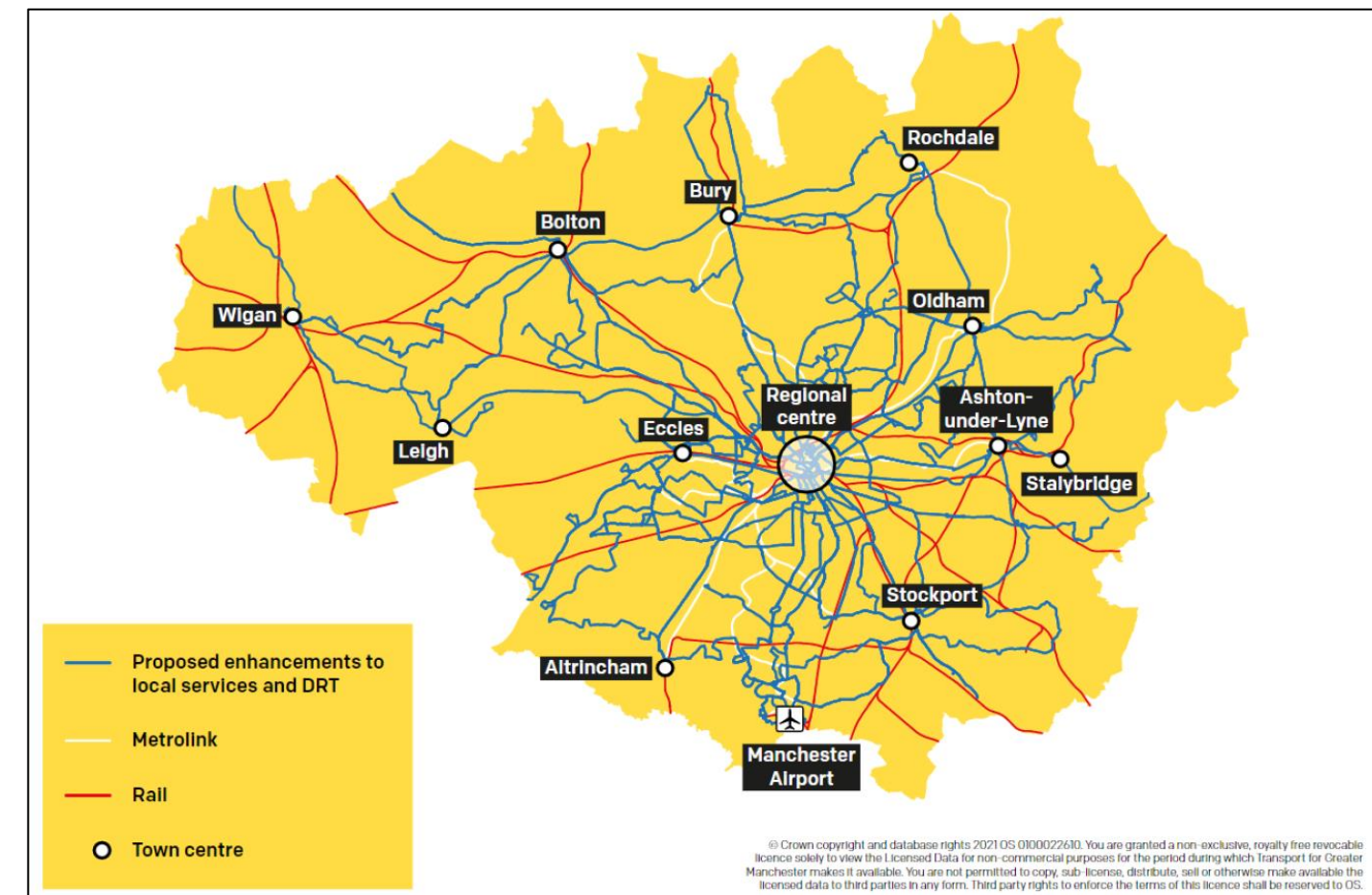
As set out in Greater Manchester's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), under TfGM's aim is to stabilise and then strengthen services and routes to a minimum 'turn up and go' frequency (at least every 10 minutes per hour on Monday to Saturday daytimes) on major routes to form a 'London-style network'.

BSIP contains a target for 70 additional routes across the GM bus network to be brought up to a high frequency standard by March 2025, with a particular focus on linking key towns and district centres. The adjacent map shows Greater Manchester's proposed high frequency bus network. Some of these routes already benefit from high frequency services (high frequency currently refers to operating a bus every 12 minutes or better), including on some Bury routes.

All the existing and proposed high frequency routes in Bury are shown in the adjacent table and on the map on the next page. They include routes connecting :

- Ramsbottom and Tottington to Bury;
- Bury to Manchester city centre; and
- Bury to Bolton and Rochdale.

Two of the main bus routes serving Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, the 467 and the 468 Bury to Rochdale services, are also included in the proposed high frequency network.



Proposed high frequency ('Turn up and go') bus routes across Greater Manchester

Service	Route
163*	Manchester - Middleton - Heywood
93	Bury - Prestwich - Agecroft - Manchester
97	Bury - Unsworth - Prestwich - Manchester
98	Bury - Radcliffe - Whitefield - Manchester
135*	Bury - Whitefield - Cheetham Hill - Manchester
471*	Rochdale - Bury - Bolton
524*	Bolton - Radcliffe - Bury
472	Bury - Ramsbottom circulars
474	Bury - Ramsbottom circulars
467	Rochdale - Daniel Fold - Bamford - Bury
468	Rochdale - Greave - Bamford - Jericho - Bury
*	Indicates an existing high frequency service

Existing and TfGM proposed high frequency ('Turn up and go') bus routes in Bury

Buses

Investment priority 2: Better bus services

Away from these high frequency main routes, we want all our residents to have access to a good bus service that provides an attractive alternative to the car. and we will work with to provide a stable and reliable a bus service that serves as much of the community as possible.

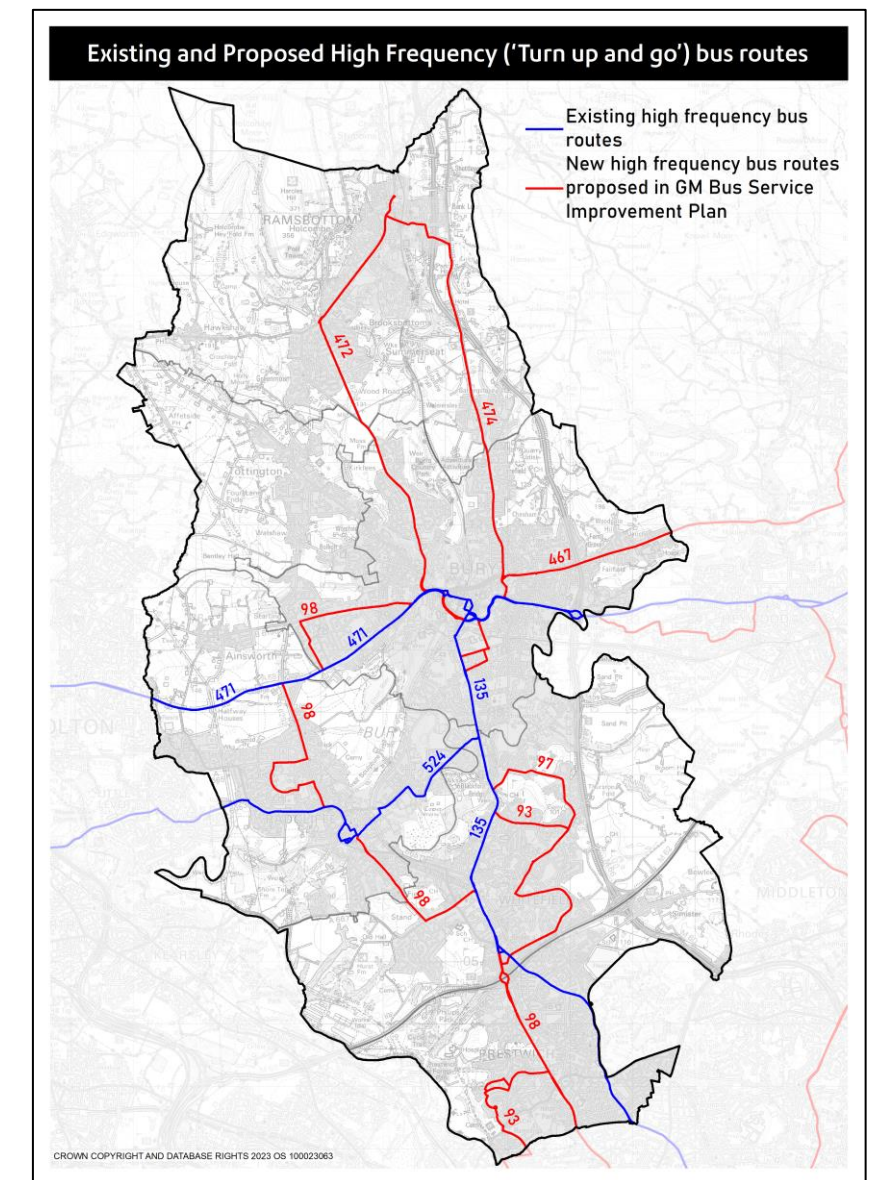
Not all our communities will be served by frequent, regular bus services and there will need to be additional services that complement the high frequency network. This could include Demand Responsive Transport, a form of shared mobility, in more rural parts of the borough where passenger demand doesn't meet the level needed to support fixed route public transport services.

In Greater Manchester demand responsive '*Local Link*' services support some communities, including a very limited offer in Bury with the Heywood Local Link providing journeys to/from Fairfield General Hospital from the Pilsworth area. There could be potential for this service to be extended to better serve Fairfield and to connect residents to job opportunities at Pilsworth Industrial Estate, which is not currently well served by bus.

Greater Manchester's Bus Service Improvement Plan identifies the need to provide additional Local Link type services to residents in more rural areas of Bury so they have a car-free alternative for accessing work, leisure opportunities, education and health services. This could include expansion of existing services or new ones and could incorporate new technology so that journeys could be booked by a mobile phone app, as well as by telephone (Digital Demand Responsive Transport).

Ring and Ride is another form of demand responsive service, in this case providing door-to-door transport to Greater Manchester residents who find it difficult to use conventional public transport due to disability or limited mobility. The Ring and Ride service operates boroughwide, including to Fairfield General Hospital. There are also community transport services, such as the Prestwich Circle Volunteer Drivers Service, that provide transport to people who are unable or find it difficult to use conventional public transport.

Our aim is to ensure that all residents have good access to conventional bus services or to alternative demand responsive forms of transport for those who experience barriers to accessing the wider network due to where they live, due to disability or to mobility impairment.



Buses

Investment priority 3: Bury Interchange

Bury's town centre bus station is part of Bury Interchange. The Interchange has around twenty bus stands with services that go to destinations such as Radcliffe, Ramsbottom, Fairfield General Hospital, Manchester, Rochdale, Bolton, Rawtenstall, Burnley and Accrington. The current experience of bus passengers using Bury Interchange is poor:

- The Interchange was built in 1980 and is now in poor condition, with leaking roofs and inefficient heating and lighting systems.
- The current arrangement of bus stands creates passenger waiting areas that are long and partly tunnel-like, creating the perception of isolation and fear of crime. Reported anti-social behaviour incidents indicate that Bury interchange was one of the worst performing interchanges in Greater Manchester during June to December 2021.
- There are many pedestrian crossing points and two-way bus movements resulting in numerous conflict points and creating confusion for pedestrians. Of the 200 incidents reported at the Interchange in the last 5 years, 20% were at crossing points with a further 13% occurring on carriageways. Given the large volumes of movements through the site, including those using the facility as a thoroughfare to access the town centre, the number of crossing points is a contributing factor to the volume of these incidents.

The redevelopment of Bury Interchange is essential in supporting future movement in and around Bury by public transport modes.



Buses

Investment priority 4: Bus priority measures

To successfully deliver the Greater Manchester Bee Network and Right Mix ambitions and encourage greater bus patronage, Bury Council will consider the implementation of bus priority measures to improve the reliability and speed of existing and proposed bus services. These could include a number of physical measures along key routes such as:

- Bus lanes;
- Traffic signal priority;
- Bus gates, which allow buses to enter a road that prohibits access to other traffic; and
- Clear and consistent signage.

Greater Manchester has received significant funding as part of its CRSTS settlement for a number of programmes which include bus priority measures ranging from:

- Quality Bus Transit corridors and whole route bus priority to improve orbital and radial bus route corridors such as the A58 to Rochdale and Bolton and the A56 from Bury to Manchester: to
- tackling local pinch points on the network where buses experience delay, such as at the Hollins Brow/Manchester Road junction, to reduce congestion and improve bus reliability.

Greater Manchester's Bus Corridor Investment Programme can be seen on the map on the next page.



Bus Priority Junctions



Bus Gate- Oxford Road, Manchester

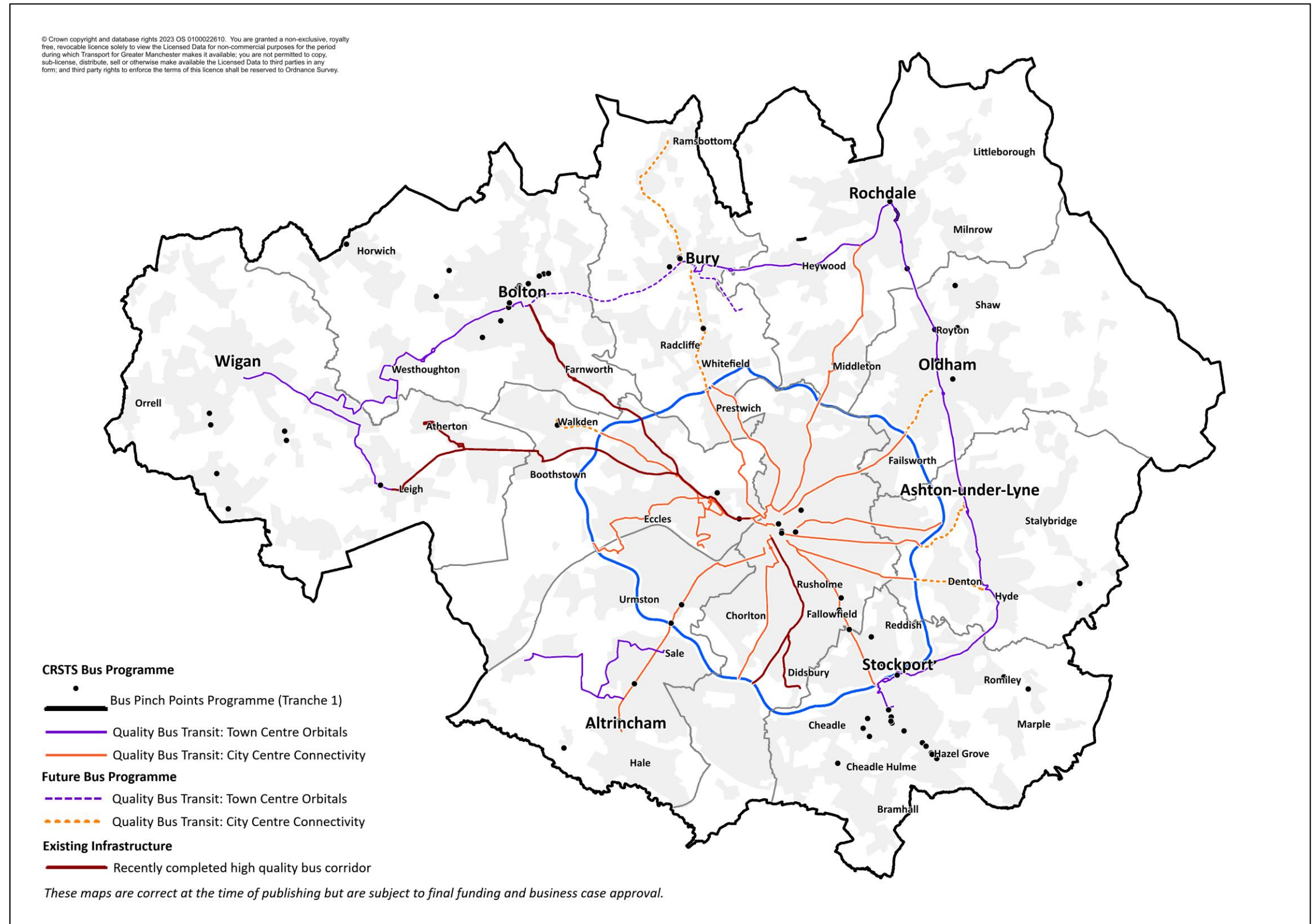
Buses

Investment priority 4: Bus priority measures

Greater Manchester's Bus Corridor Investment Programme

This map shows Greater Manchester's ambition to develop and deliver transformative bus improvements on 15 strategic, high frequency corridors through the Quality Bus Transit and Bus Corridor Upgrade programmes.

CRSTS funding will deliver the first phase of improvements on Quality Bus Transit (QBT) corridors, many of which focus on areas not served by Metrolink.



Buses

Investment priority 4: Bus priority measures Greater Manchester Bus Corridor Investment Programme: Bury routes

Orbital QBT corridors in Bury are:

- A58 Bury – Rochdale
- A58 Bury – Bolton

Radial QBT corridors in Bury are:

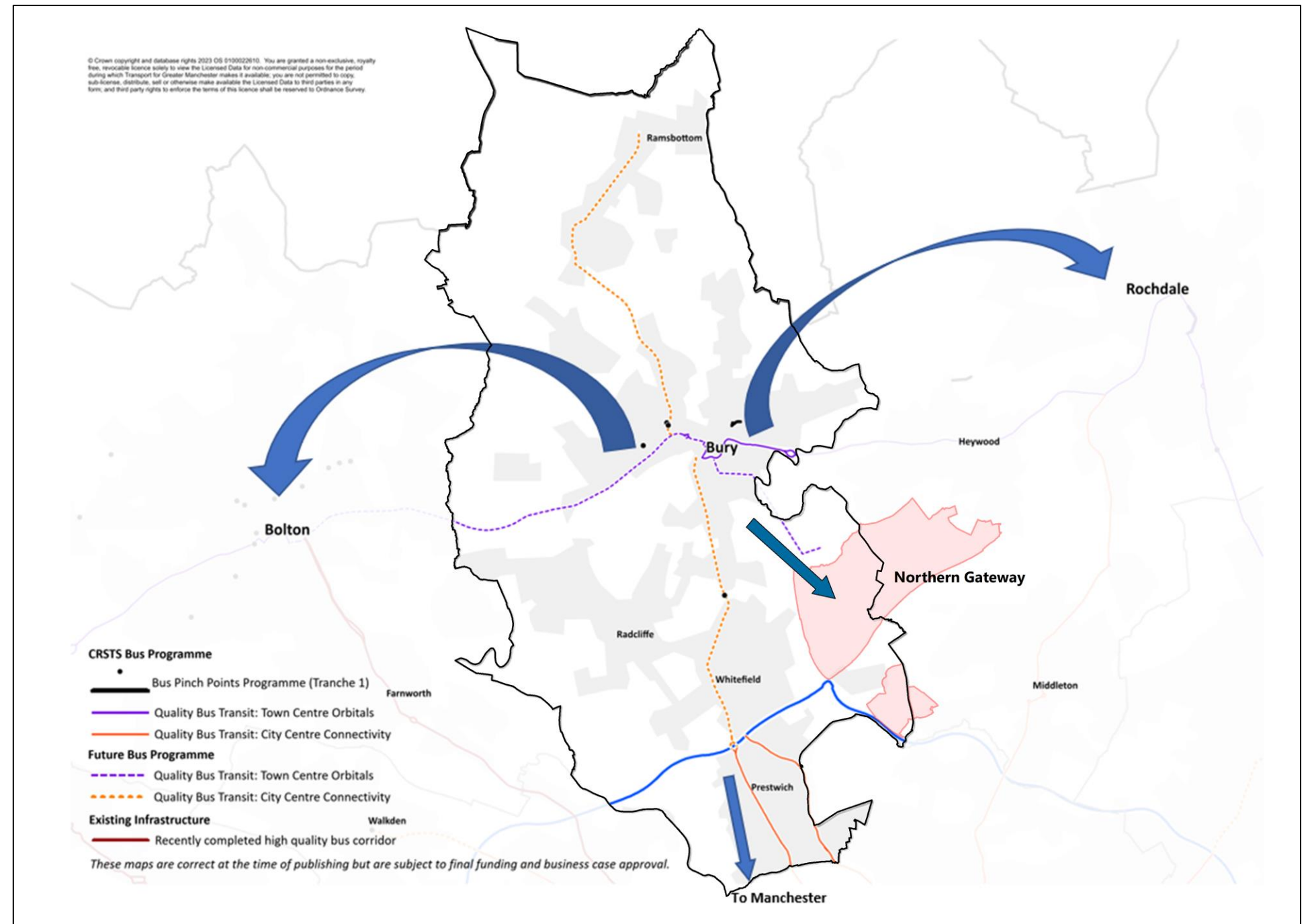
- A56 Bury to Manchester
- A56 Bury to Ramsbottom

These are the corridors where we will work with Transport for Greater Manchester to develop proposals to improve bus reliability.

The QBT corridors in Bury will connect to the new Bury Interchange and will also help to improve bus access for Bury's residents to the proposed Atom Valley and Northern Gateway developments.

Improving bus services is an essential step in improving the quality of life for people who live in some of Bury's most deprived communities, where many people do not have access to private cars or local connections to Metrolink services.

Improvements delivered in Bury through QBT will improve connectivity for communities that fall within the 10% and 20% most deprived areas in England.



Buses

Investment priority 4: Bus priority measures

Quality Bus Transit Corridors in Bury: The A58 Bury - Rochdale

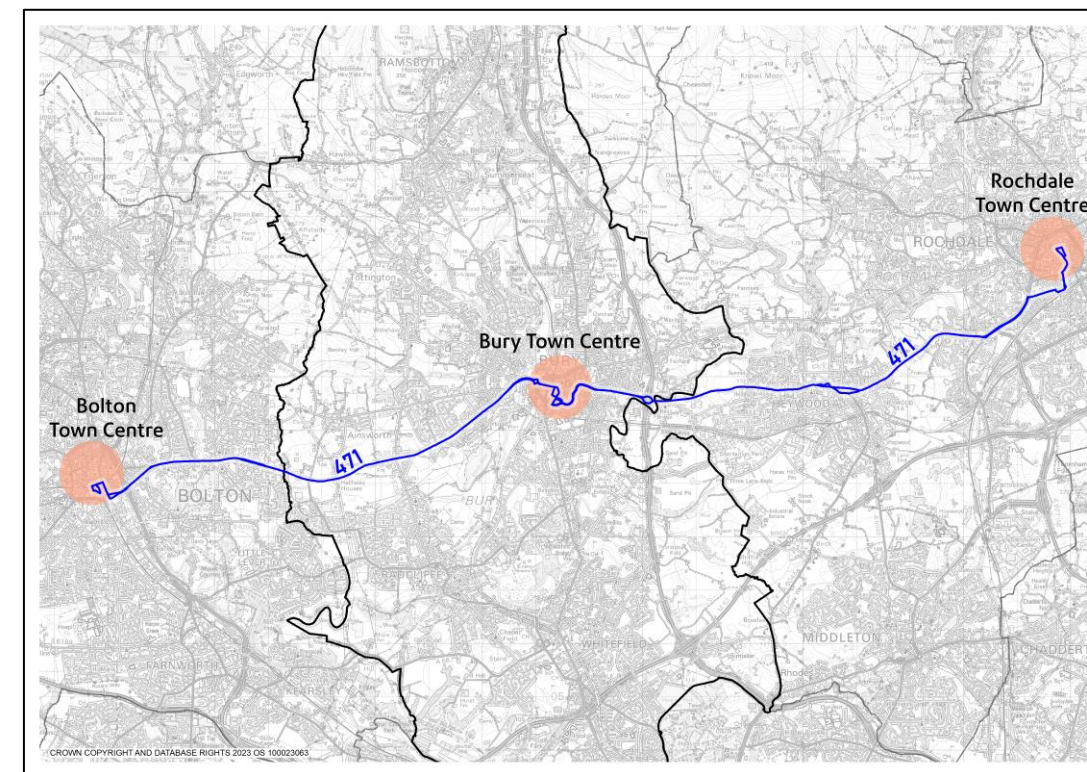
There is funding available in the CRSTS programme for QBT corridor proposals to be developed for some routes, and in some cases for delivery. We will work with TfGM to develop proposals for all Bury's QBT corridors, and to identify and address local pinch points.

The investigation of the A58 Bury to Rochdale corridor for QBT is already underway, with the investigation of the A58 Bury to Bolton for QBT due to commence later this year.

The QBT scheme between Bury and Rochdale will enhance bus services between two major regional towns along the 471 bus route as shown on the adjacent plan. It will improve connectivity for people in areas of deprivation to access existing jobs and future employment opportunities and will also connect to new homes.

Bus connectivity along the A58 corridor is currently hindered by congestion, particularly in Bury and Rochdale town centres at either end of the route. Bus journey times vary significantly throughout the day, correlating with the congestion and delay hotspots on the route. With no existing bus priority, an inconsistent bus stop offer and the lack of any Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) on the corridor, these conditions reduce confidence in the existing bus service and impact the bus user experience, the public perception of the bus and its ability to attract new users.

QBT improvements on the Bury to Rochdale route will aim to deliver a step-change in the experience of using the bus for local journeys by providing a reliable and attractive bus service. QBT will focus on improving reliability, accessibility, and the attractiveness of the local bus by tackling the reasons why people don't get on bus.



471 Bury – Rochdale bus route



Bus gate – Oxford Road, Manchester

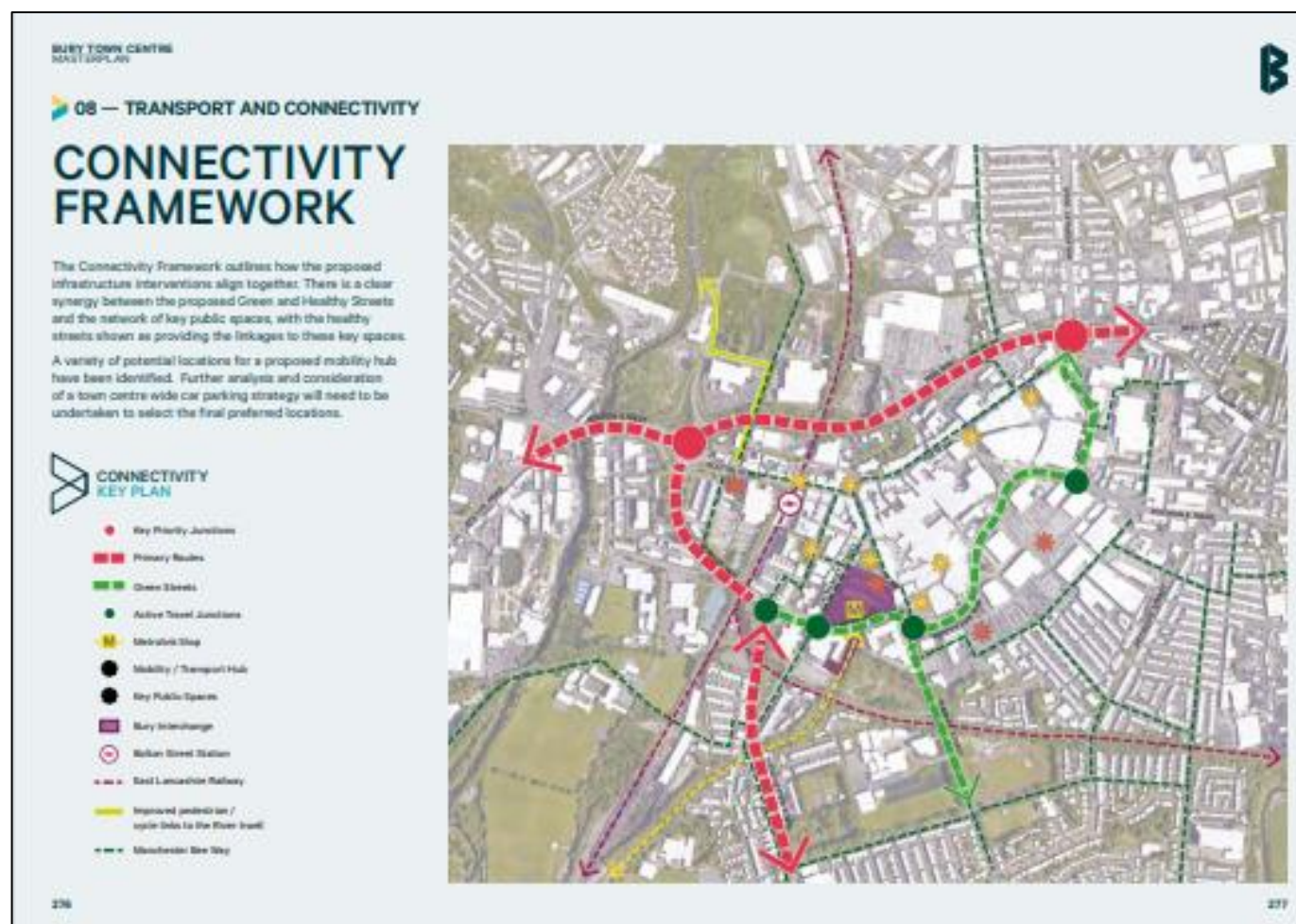
Buses

Investment priority 4: Bus priority measures

QBT and the Bury Town Centre Masterplan

The development of QBT and 'Streets for All' proposals along the A58 corridor in Bury will support the delivery of the Connectivity Framework in the Bury Town Centre Masterplan.

The QBT proposals align well with the potential Masterplan proposal to prioritise active travel and bus movements around the south of the town centre, with Peel Way being the main traffic route on the north side of Bury town centre. This is one of the longer-term Town Centre Masterplan proposals which would need further investigation and studies to determine if it is feasible. The new Bury Interchange is also part of the Town Centre Masterplan.



The Town Centre Masterplan Connectivity Framework also includes short and medium-term proposals, including new crossings, some of which have now been delivered with funding from the GM Mayor's Cycling and Walking Fund, with others to come potentially through CRSTS funding available to Bury Council for active travel schemes.

Buses

Investment priority 5: Better bus stops and stations

Better bus stops

Alongside improvements to bus services and quicker bus journey times, our bus stops need to be fully accessible, provide a comfortable, attractive, and safe waiting environment for passengers, and be well connected to homes and destinations.

We will work with TfGM to ensure that bus stops improvements are delivered in Bury including new shelters (where practical and required), raised kerbs to facilitate level boarding and alighting for all, and access to digital real-time journey information.

We will also ensure that bus stops are easy and safe for people to walk to and from through with, for example, conveniently located crossings.

The Quality Bus Corridor programme will include improvements to stops on the corridor and better access to stops at town centres and key destinations along bus routes.

Better bus stations

We will also work with TfGM to improve other bus facilities in the Borough such as Radcliffe Bus Station, which is not well connected to the wider town centre or to the Metrolink Stop and would benefit from improved public realm and pedestrian links to give more a sense of arrival to the town.

In the longer-term changes may also be needed to the size and even the location of Radcliffe Bus Station to accommodate an increase in passenger numbers and bus movements. It may be possible, for example, to integrate the bus station with the Radcliffe Metrolink Stop and Park and Ride to form a new Travel Hub.



An attractive bus shelter with green roof in Manchester



Ensuring stops provide information for customers

Buses

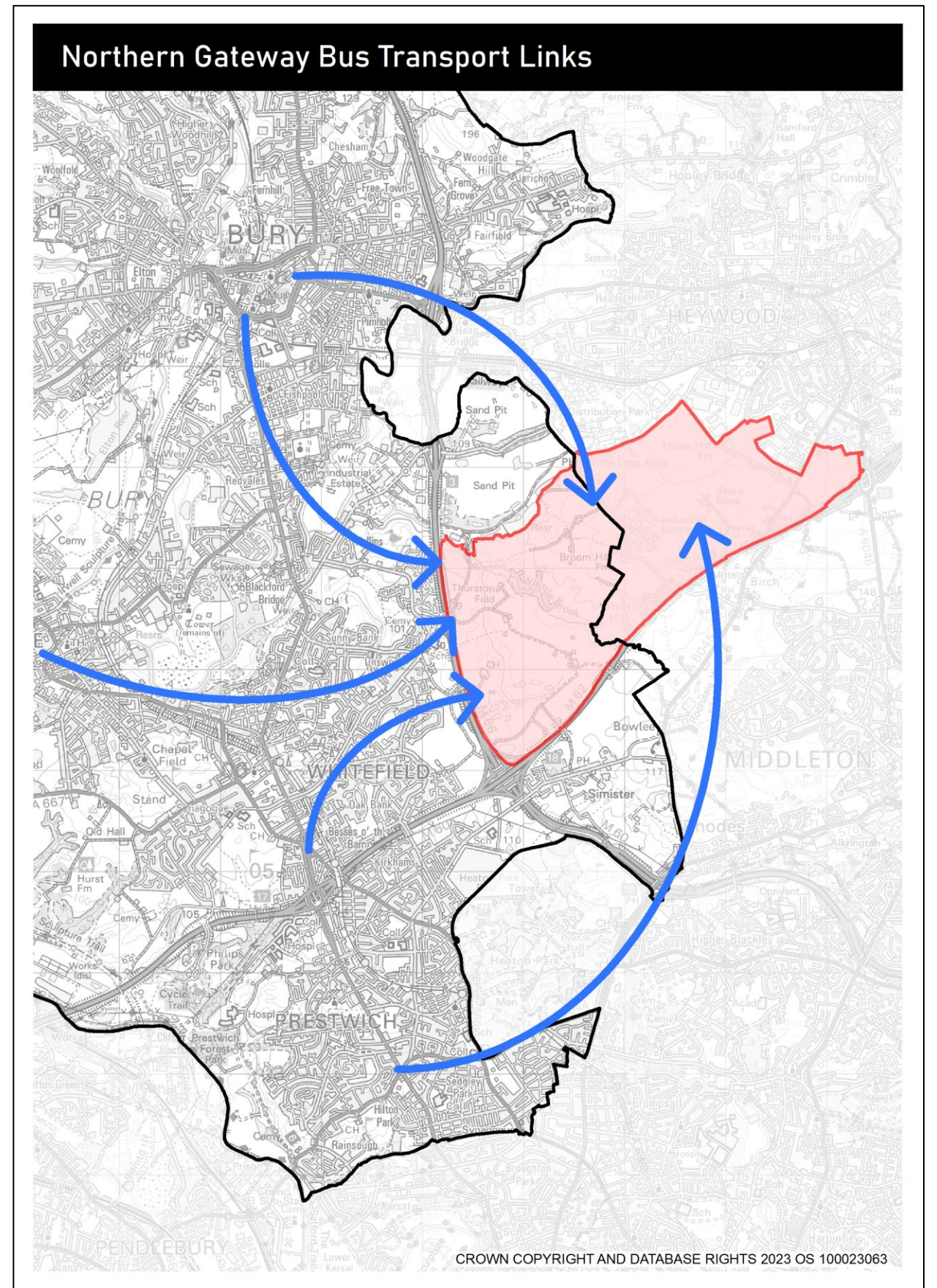
Investment priority 6: Bus services to new developments

A key priority for the Council is to ensure that new developments are well served by bus so that Bury residents can access new jobs at sites such as Northern Gateway and in town centres such as Bury and Prestwich where regeneration is underway.

Northern Gateway is a Places for Everyone allocation of regional and national significance that does not currently benefit from any direct rail or tram connections, which means that bus will be key to delivering public transport access to future employment opportunities here.

There will be opportunities to connect into and enhance existing bus networks to connect some parts of the Borough to new developments, but new bus services will also be needed, and we will work with TfGM to identify these.

The Greater Manchester bus corridor upgrade programme will also help to better connect people to existing employment opportunities as well as to new developments and growth sites. For Bury, delivery of bus improvements as part of the A58 QBT corridor upgrade will support the provision of frequent, reliable, high quality bus services to Northern Gateway.



Buses

Investment priority 6: Bus services to new developments

There will be a need for more direct services to Northern Gateway from areas of the borough such as Radcliffe, where unemployment rates are higher than the borough average and where some of the borough's most deprived communities can be found, particularly around Radcliffe town centre. Bury Council considers direct bus access from Radcliffe Bus Station to Northern Gateway as essential and will continue to make the case for this alongside fast, frequent and reliable bus services from as many of our communities as possible.

A Northern Gateway Transport Strategy has been prepared which outlines the significant strategic transport interventions needed to support the allocation, including new and/or amended bus services and potentially, in the longer term, investment in Rapid Bus Transit such as the Leigh-Salford-Manchester guided busway, which runs on segregated busway along part of the route.

Improving the connectivity of bus to other transport modes such as rail and Metrolink, as well as integration with active travel, will provide a further opportunity to create a truly multimodal transport network serving Northern Gateway.



Segregated Busway where opportunities exist

Linkages to the GM2040 Objectives and BLTS Objectives

The table below demonstrates how our Investment Priorities for bus contribute to the objectives of both the GM2040 and this Bury Local Transport Strategy.

LTS Investment Priorities	GMTS 2040 Objectives				BLTS Objectives					
	Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth	Improving Quality of Life for All	Protecting our Environment	Delivering an Innovative City-Region	Supporting sustainable & inclusive growth and regeneration	Reducing the impact of transport on the environment	Supporting healthy and active lifestyles	Improving connectivity	Providing a well-maintained, reliable and resilient transport system	Providing a transport system that is safe, secure and accessible to all
Bus										
1. Bus Reform and the Introduction of Bus Franchising in Bury	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Better bus services with more frequent and reliable bus services to all parts of the Borough	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. A new Bury Town Centre Interchange	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Bus Priority Measures on key routes to improve speed and reliability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. A better passenger waiting environment at bus stops and stations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Direct, frequent and reliable bus services to new developments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓