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Dear Andy,

Greater Manchester Bus Reform

Buses are a vital mode of transport for Greater Manchester and the evidence shows that they account for 75% of all public transport trips undertaken by our residents and visitors. In Salford we welcome the recent focus on buses and the implementation of the Bus Services Act 2017, although it is disappointing that the Act does not allow for publicly owned bus companies. As the workhorse of the public transport network we understand how important buses are in connecting our communities to economic growth opportunities, in a city where 40% of our households do not have access to a car the link between an effective and connected public transport and accessing employment opportunities is key.

We have seen how successful buses can be in connecting residents to key employment, health and leisure opportunities through the Leigh / Salford / Manchester Busway and the hugely successful Vantage Service which carries around 60,000 passengers per week. Given the right infrastructure, promotion and management, the decline in bus usage across Greater Manchester that we have seen in recent years could be reversed, and the successes we have seen in Vantage could be replicated more widely. This would benefit all commuters by tackling congestion, improving air quality and reducing carbon, which are 3 key issues for Salford and Greater Manchester.

Through the Mayors Challenge Fund programme Salford is working to deliver an ambitious £60 million package of walking and cycling improvements to connect our communities and transport interchanges sustainably. Salford is at the heart of the proposed Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone, which would cover 500 square miles and include a population of almost 3 million people, making it the largest outside London. The City of Salford is also central to the city region target to become carbon neutral by 2038. An integrated transport network is key to achieving the aims of these 3 key strands.

Salford City Council recognises the limitations of our existing bus provision, which has been brought about by the existing commercial arrangements. The existing situation where multiple operators compete for business is detrimental to the passenger experience. This focus on

From the office of the City Mayor



Salford City Council

commercial routing results in a dominance of services on key radial corridors leading to poor north / south connectivity across the city of Salford leaving some of our most important sites such as Salford Royal Hospital and MediaCityUK poorly served from many areas. This situation is common despite the fact that TfGM subsidises approximately 20% of the network that commercial operators deem unviable.

I believe that the franchised model for buses presented by TfGM offers the best opportunity to make a real change in improving connectivity across Greater Manchester. By co-ordinating the bus network we can integrate buses into the wider public transport offer and achieve a true multi modal network with cross ticketing, something that has not been possible to date. Taking a lead from London where bus use doubled between 1986 and 2018, a radical change is needed to halt Greater Manchester's decline in bus use, which has fallen by 45% since 1986. I believe the alternative option of a Partnership would not be able to deliver an integrated solution and be unable to realise the full range of benefits to the public.

Salford has long supported an alternative approach to bus services and since 2015 has worked with residents and businesses via an independent bus consultant to identify a new network of services and routes, building on the existing network to fully connect all areas of the city. Our Bus Network Review will be invaluable in planning a future GM network and we hope to work closely with TfGM to incorporate these plans into the future bus network.

Yours sincerely



Paul Dennett
City Mayor of Salford