

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: Friday 31st January 2025
Subject: Active Travel Annual Report
Report of: Dame Sarah Storey, Active Travel Commissioner

Purpose of Report

To adopt the 2024 Annual Active Travel Report and agree Active Travel Priorities for 2025.

Recommendations:

GMCA is requested to:

1. Approve the Greater Manchester Annual Active Travel Report; and
2. Endorse the Commissioner's Mission Priorities as laid out in this report and in the Greater Manchester Annual Active Travel Report.

Contact Officer

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

The schemes, which are developed and delivered through Greater Manchester's Active Travel Capital Programme, are subject to detailed local engagement and consultation to ensure that the needs of all users are considered in producing designs which provide equity of access. All scheme proposals also undergo a detailed design assurance process which takes into account national design guidance as well as Greater Manchester's own interim cycling and walking design guidance, which itself has been the subject of discussion with TfGM's Disability Design Reference Group.

Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion	G	
Health	G	
Resilience and Adaptation	G	
Housing		
Economy	G	
Mobility and Connectivity	G	
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	
Consumption and Production	G	
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		

Further Assessment(s):

Equalities Impact Assessment and Carbon Assessment

G Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	A Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	R Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	RR Negative impacts overall.
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Carbon Assessment

Overall Score		
Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation
New Build residential	N/A	
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A	
New build non-residential (including public) buildings	N/A	
Transport		
Active travel and public transport		
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access		
Access to amenities		
Vehicle procurement	N/A	
Land Use		
Land use		

No associated carbon impacts expected.	High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.	Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.	Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.	Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

Risk Management

Risk management is carried out at a programme and project level within the Active Travel Programme in accordance with Transport for Greater Manchester’s Risk Management policy.

Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal implications with regards to this report.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

There are no specific financial consequences resulting from this report. Any future revenue financial consequences will be brought to the attention of the Bee Network Committee and GMCA in due course.

Financial Consequences – Capital

There are no specific financial consequences resulting from this report. Any future capital financial consequences will be brought to the attention of the Bee Network Committee and GMCA in due course.

Number of attachments to the report: 1 – Active Travel Annual Report 2024

Background Papers

0

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution?

No.

Exemption from call in

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

N/A

Bee Network Committee

This report will be considered by BNC on Thursday 30th January 2025.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

N/A

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Greater Manchester is a growing city region of almost three million residents and over 124,000 businesses, generating around two billion trips on our transport network each year. To promote and sustain our growth, Greater Manchester is well underway with delivering the Bee Network, our plan for a high-quality, affordable and fully integrated public transport and active travel system for the people and businesses of Greater Manchester.
- 1.2. The Bee Network is pivotal to delivering sustainable economic growth and the city region's objectives, set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy, by connecting people with education, jobs and opportunity, unlocking development, reducing carbon emissions and supporting social inclusion and active and healthy lifestyles.
- 1.3. Active Travel is the 'glue' that brings together the Bee Network as there are virtually no journeys which do not start and end with an active element.
- 1.4. Enabling people to move more actively around the city region, particularly for short trips and improving access to public transport is fundamental to the Bee Network and delivery of wider outcomes, particularly health.
- 1.5. The long-term goal (2040) is for 95% of the population in Greater Manchester to live within 400m of a safe walking, wheeling and cycling route.
- 1.6. This report accompanies the *Active Travel in Greater Manchester Annual Report 2024*, which is included in Appendix 1. It is structured around the six priority areas which form Greater Manchester's Active Travel Mission:
 - Infrastructure Delivery
 - Travel to School
 - Access to Active Travel
 - Integration with Public Transport
 - Road Danger Reduction
 - Providing Access to Everyone (the overarching priority)
- 1.7. This report contains a short summary of the key insights from the Annual Report in Section 2, and in Section 3 sets out recommendations for how we intend to focus our work in 2025.

2. Summary of the Annual Report

- 2.1. The Active Travel in Greater Manchester Annual Report provides an overview of Active Travel in the region and the full report is in Appendix 1 below.
- 2.2. In Greater Manchester, the total number of both walking and cycling trips made by Greater Manchester residents increased between 2022 and 2023, a 20% increase for walking and a 21% increase for cycling.¹
- 2.3. Only walking has increased from pre-pandemic levels, with an increase from 28% to 31% of all trips. Despite the increase in walking, satisfaction with pavements remains low and has decreased from 53% in 2019 to 45% in 2023².
- 2.4. Available scheme-level data also suggests that where we have built segregated infrastructure, cycling has increased locally, for example along the Oxford Road and Chorlton cycleways in Manchester.³ One million rides were recorded on the Oxford Road Corridor between January and late September of 2024, earlier in the year than ever previously recorded, demonstrating the long term benefits of GM's investment in high quality infrastructure and segregated cycle ways, and that it takes several years to realise the full benefits of such schemes.
- 2.5. Active travel accounts for around a third of trips made by Greater Manchester residents⁴ and its use is unlikely to increase spontaneously unless we address the key barriers. There has been an increase in walking which correlates to our work to improve crossings, footways and junctions, although our infrastructure audit shows the scale of the task to be completed. The increase in walking also accompanies an increase in public transport patronage. Private car ownership is high in Greater Manchester and has been increasing⁵. Between 2011 and 2021 the number of licenced private cars in Greater Manchester grew by 13%, exceeding the 7% growth in the Greater Manchester population.⁶ A total of 58% of all trips by residents are still made by car or van (this 2023 figure is slightly higher than the 57% made by car or van in the years pre-pandemic).⁷

¹ TRADS travel diary data

² Active Travel in Greater Manchester Annual Report p. 93

³ [Bus priority programme early findings report \(ctfassets.net\)](#) (pp. 85-86); [Active Travel in Greater Manchester 2023 \(ctfassets.net\)](#) (p. 27)

⁴ TRADS travel diary data

⁵ TRADS 2023 Summary Report

⁶ Sources: DfT Tables VEH0105 and VEH0125, Census 2011, Census 2021

⁷ TRADS travel diary data

- 2.6. Whilst there have been national targets for increasing cycling for some time, data shows that the average number of cycling trips travelled per person per year has remained relatively static nationally over the past two decades, with an average of between 14 and 20 trips per person per year since 2002.⁸ The average distance travelled has increased slightly in that same time, although following a spike in 2020, it then fell in 2023 to levels last seen in 2013.⁹
- 2.7. Considering typical trip distances (which is one of a number of factors that drive mode choice), there is great potential for shifting many car trips to a ‘cycle all the way’ trip or a multimodal trip of public transport supported by active travel. For example, around four in five car journeys made by GM residents are under 10km (around 6 miles), with three in five car trips being under 5km (around 3 miles).¹⁰ Significant mode shift of this nature is required for Greater Manchester to meet the ambitions set out in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the GM Transport Strategy 2040 (originally published in 2017 and currently being updated).

3. Key Findings and Opportunities from Annual Report

Walking is increasing and we need to respond accordingly

- 3.1. People are walking more – but the level of satisfaction with pavements has gradually declined from 61% in 2022 to 53% in 2024¹¹. It is important to note that improving walking infrastructure improves people’s experiences of their neighbourhood.
- 3.2. More than half of all trips (52%) by Greater Manchester residents are under 2km – and the majority of these are walked (57%), with 38% taken by car, 2% by public transport and 3% by bike¹². These trips are short enough to be walked (or cycled) by most people, if better infrastructure was available and routes were more accessible.
- 3.3. There is some evidence we are beginning to enable more people to choose to walk rather than drive short journeys. In the last five years we have seen the proportion

⁸ [NTS 2023: Active travel - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

⁹ [NTS 2023: Active travel - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

¹⁰ TRADS travel diary data

¹¹ Multi-Modal Network Principles survey

¹² TRADS travel diary data

of people walking short journeys rise from 52% to 57%, while the proportion of journeys being taken by car is down from 41% to 36%¹³.

- 3.4. Improving walking and wheeling benefits those with greater accessibility needs – older people or those using mobility aids – and children (13% of walking trips are by 5-10 year-olds). Almost a quarter of the population (24%) has a disability¹⁴.

Cycling as a share of journeys is not increasing and satisfaction remains low.

- 3.5. While more people are cycling, this is part of an overall increase in trips. We are not progressing on our target to increase cycling as a share of trips, although where there are new segregated facilities there is evidence for a sustained increase in cycling trips.
- 3.6. The satisfaction with cycling facilities remains low overall and the key barrier is the lack of a network of safe infrastructure that covers trips that people want to make. Therefore, this report recommends that there is a greater focus on extending and connecting the routes that we already have and building a network that enables the choice of cycling for those shorter trips that are taken by car.
- 3.7. While the majority of up to 2km trips are walked (see item 3.1), the picture is very different for journeys from 2-5km, where 80% of these journeys are driven, 10% taken via public transport, and 9% via active travel¹⁵.
- 3.8. The GM cycle hire scheme offers some further encouraging data – the scheme has over 110,000 active users and nearly 120,000 registered users. The most common reason for using a hired bike (55%) is that the journey is quicker, and the second is to not have to worry about bike theft or vandalism (52%)¹⁶. Cycle hire is a key enabler for people who do not currently cycle, or cycle infrequently, to increase their cycling.

Active Travel is the Bee Network glue

- 3.9. Walking, wheeling and cycling have a symbiotic relationship with public transport and extend choice to current car users. Although walking and wheeling to bus and tram have fluctuated in the last year, a key to increasing public transport is to make the journey to our stops, stations and interchanges easy and safe. It is important to

¹³ TRADS travel diary data

¹⁴ [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁵ TRADS travel diary data

¹⁶ Evaluation of the Starling Bank bike hire scheme

note that much of the expenditure on walking and wheeling comes from schemes to enable bus and tram use.

- 3.10. Active Travel is part of the Bee Network, and we are delivering more and more integrated schemes. This includes the integration of rail, which as the annual report shows, while fewer people now walk or wheel to their rail station, down from 44% to 37%, those arriving by bus have increased from 27% to 32%¹⁷. A journey by bus and train inevitably includes walking and wheeling.

Children and young people benefit from active travel options

- 3.11. Another key Mission priority is making it safer for children to walk or cycle to school and the data underpins the challenge and opportunity here. Almost half of all education trips are walked (47%, which is up from 42% in 2018) – and 7% are cycled¹⁸.
- 3.12. In the last year, almost 24,000 Bikeability places were taken up across schools in Greater Manchester – up 25% on the previous year, showing a growing appetite for learning to cycle, but we must deliver safer options to enable parents or careers to choose that as a way for their child to get to school.
- 3.13. TfGM currently funds the Modeshift STARS licence on behalf of the ten local authorities. This is a platform which schools can use to identify transport issues, monitor methods of transport to and from school, and therefore use to help increase walking, wheeling and cycling. Last year, with our support, the number of schools in Greater Manchester accredited in Modeshift increased from 12 to 25, with more than 180 teachers now signed up to find out more.

4. Recommended priorities for future funding

- 4.1. The renewed Local Transport Plan (LTP) will consolidate how active travel is integrated into the Bee Network and include a walking and wheeling policy and a cycling policy. An updated delivery plan and programme for active travel will be developed as part of the LTP Delivery Plan.
- 4.2. Investment to date has been crucial to building the active travel network, and this programme has demonstrated that infrastructure can be delivered at pace, and

¹⁷ Network Principles Survey, 2024

¹⁸ TRADS travel diary data

scale. The existing pipeline of funded schemes will deliver an estimated additional 60km of active travel network to Bee Network standard, we expect the total delivered to exceed 176km by 2027. However, at only 6.5% of the potential network, a lot remains to be done.

- 4.3. The insight from the Annual Report indicates that we should focus our future funding to enable more active travel trips and address the satisfaction issues highlighted with the quality, connectedness and safety of our infrastructure.

Walking and wheeling

- 4.4. Although there has been an increase in walking, the satisfaction with pavement quality has decreased. At the same time the network audit has shown quick wins such as dropped kerbs, or tactile paving could be installed to increase access to public transport.
- 4.5. Installation of side road zebra crossings would also support this and we are seeking a change to regulations from national government to enable these to be implemented. A recommendation is that Greater Manchester seeks ways to commit funding to remedy these small improvements that will help those walking and wheeling.
- 4.6. At present, the only funding for remedial work is maintenance funding, which is typically associated with fixing potholes in the road. Although this is important, a third of trips are on footways and cycleways, and we need to bring these up to standard, where they are currently falling short.
- 4.7. With this focus, we can accelerate progress on bringing routes up to Bee Network standard, in addition to infrastructure expenditure on creating new routes. This will continue to enhance walking and wheeling to public transport as this has a symbiotic relationship with active travel.

Cycling

- 4.8. We need to have a network of connected routes to convince new or lapsed cyclists to cycle more, and an easy place to start is to connect the routes that we already have. However, with only 4.4% of the network created, we need to prioritise a clearly defined strategic cycle network that will make the main connections between neighbourhoods and regional centres.

4.9. To deliver a London-style transport system, it is essential that we emulate the early work that created a network of cycle superhighways in the capital. Lessons from other cycling cities shows that the point that the cycle network links up is where additional potential for cycling is released (Groningen in the Netherlands now has 61% of trips by cycle). In 2025, we intend to work with our local authority partners to agree this strategic cycle network which is illustrated in Figure 1 – Strategic Cycle Network concept. This is a conceptual map, and the actual route alignment will be agreed with our partner authorities.

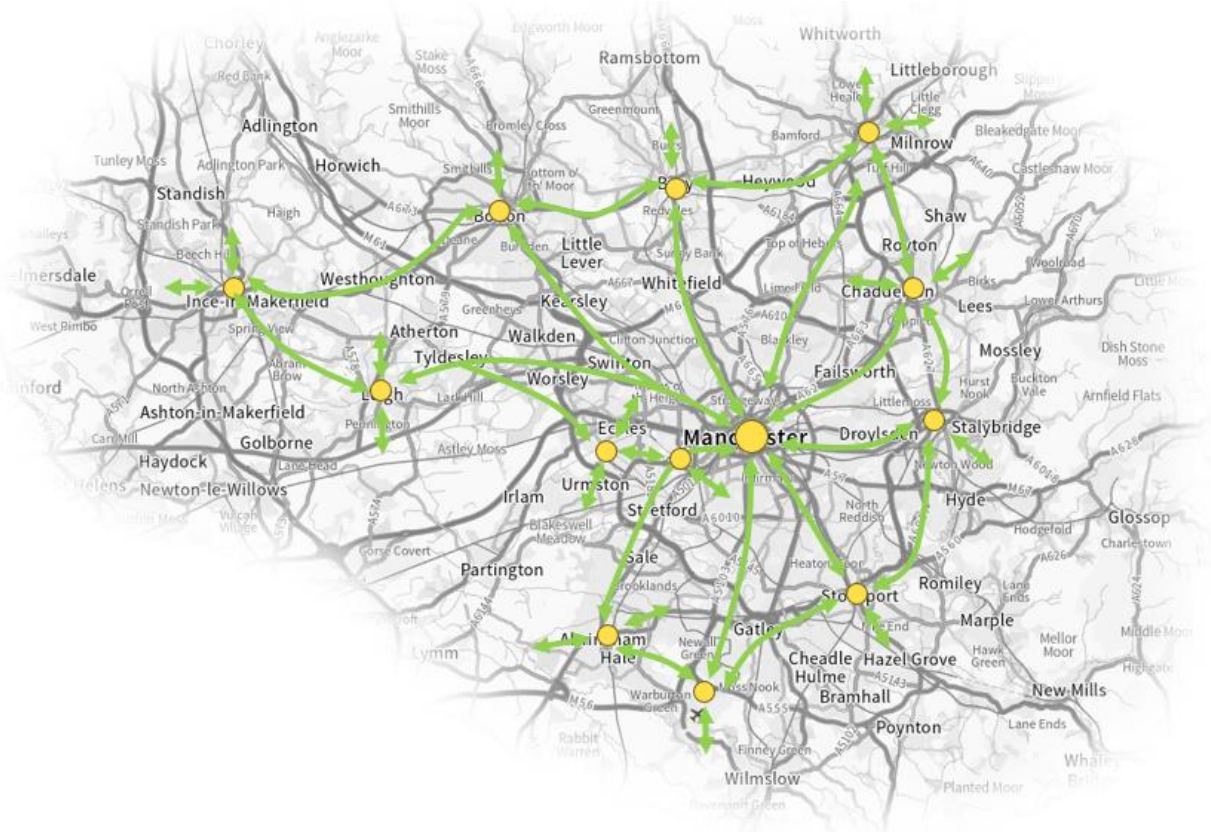


Figure 1 – Strategic Cycle Network concept

4.10. This work will include working with all local authority partners to overlay our bus and tram networks and look at how our key corridors can support cycling and link the network into our district and city centres.

4.11. We intend to prioritise future investment to either create new sections, link up or extend existing sections of the Strategic Cycle Network. This will be in tandem with the neighbourhood improvements that connect local communities and destinations to this network.

4.12. As with walking and wheeling above, there are also some simple measures that will bring some sections of our cycling network up to standard. We will also allocate remedial funding to do this.

Active Travel and public transport

4.13. To enable the success of the Bee Network, GM needs to deliver integrated transport solutions. Our devolved settlement should enable a move away from the stop/start funding that has hampered active travel delivery over the past decade or more and the work on the LTP provides integrated strategic planning for all journey types.

Travel to school

4.14. GMCA has already approved the work to develop a School Travel Strategy.

Appendix 1 – Closing Commissioner Recommendations from 2022

Recommendation	Detail	Current status
1. Renew the commitment for every part of the Bee Active Network to be universally accessible.	<p>The Greater Manchester Streets for All Design Guide was adopted by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in December 2023. The guide informs design, with the aim of ensuring they are safe and accessible for all, as well as greener and more comfortable places to be.</p> <p>Further work to progress through the refreshed Local Transport Plan and guidance.</p>	Completed and part of ongoing programme
2. Deliver a pilot for trialling the carriage of bikes and non-standard cycles on trams.	A guided pilot of bikes on trams took place during March and April 2024. A report summarising the pilot and next steps was considered by the Bee Network Committee in December.	Completed and part of ongoing programme
3. Adopt Vision Zero, clearly stating a timescale and plan for all people in Greater Manchester to commit to.	A final Vision Zero Strategy and Vision Zero Action Plan was published November 2024.	Completed and part of ongoing programme
4. Publish a plan for expansion of our Cycle Hire scheme to additional areas of Greater Manchester.	Feasibility studies for a Phase 2 expansion are being progressed between November 2024 and January 2025.	<p>Started and part of ongoing programme</p> <p>Plan to be published in 2025</p>

<p>5. Establish an integrated ticketing system to the Bee Network that incorporates Cycle Hire, allowing customers to complete end-to-end, multi-modal journeys with a single fare.</p>	<p>This is progressing through Customer Discovery.</p>	<p>Started and part of ongoing programme Integration Action Plan in development – to be published in 2025</p>
<p>6. Explore new offers – including for Our Pass holders – on Cycle Hire and in Greater Manchester’s cycle hubs to improve access and encourage use.</p>	<p>Completed – with mixed outcomes</p>	<p>Completed and part of ongoing programme</p>
<p>7. By the end of April 2023, publish a comprehensive network review.</p>	<p>A review of 700km of aspirational Bee Active Network was completed in 2023, with follow up work around a number of schools happening in 2024.</p>	<p>Completed and part of ongoing programme and informing future pipeline of schemes</p>
<p>8. Publish a comprehensive update to the future pipeline of active travel infrastructure, acknowledging the progress to date and including annual goals to enable progress to be tracked transparently and reported on year on year.</p>	<p>A major piece of work was undertaken during 2024 to establish a prioritised pipeline of over 250 active travel infrastructure projects,</p>	<p>Part of ongoing programme</p>
<p>9. Deliver a new plan for travel between home and school that reduces the number of children being driven less than 2km and helps support Greater Manchester’s ambitions for improving air quality.</p>	<p>Our draft school travel strategy has been developed, went out to public consultation in November 2024 and was presented to Bee Network Committee and GMCA. A School Travel programme is in development and will involve working with Local Authorities to prioritise works</p>	<p>Part of ongoing programme</p>

	for schools in their area, including a commitment to deliver 100 School Streets across the city region by 2028.	
<p>10. Work with Greater Manchester’s local authorities and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector to create a growing, accessible and varied range of training offers to suit local needs, which reaches all residents of Greater Manchester by 2025. Collaborate with Bikeability to assist them in achieving the ambition to ensure that every child can achieve level 2 Bikeability by 2025.</p>	<p>We continue to work with partners to further develop and expand the training offer and to promote awareness of this offer across Greater Manchester.</p> <p>Greater Manchester councils deliver Bikeability training in schools funded directly through Active Travel England. In 2023-24, 23,694 places were delivered on Bikeability training across the different levels in Greater Manchester, up from 18,990 in 2022-23.</p>	<p>Part of ongoing programme</p>

Appendix 2 Summary of 2025-26 work under the Mission Priorities

Mission priority	Summary of workstreams
Infrastructure Delivery	<p>The Active Travel capital programme –</p> <p>Pipeline of schemes and prioritisation for funding</p> <p>Starling Bank bike hire (investment – extension and expansion plan)</p> <p>Future pan Greater Manchester micromobility – post 2027</p>
Travel to School	<p>School Travel Programme including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commitment to deliver 100 School Streets in mayoral term 2. Delivering new and improved crossings (up to 30) 3. Behaviour change and activation including Youth Travel Ambassadors and other work to support the journey to school (Modeshift, mapping, Walk to School etc) 4. Bus service reviews
Access to Active Travel	<p>Starling Bank bike hire (Operation)</p> <p>Future pan-Greater Manchester micromobility</p> <p>Borrow an eBike, Bike libraries and other activity to support increased access to bikes</p> <p>Continued work on delivering cycle parking and potential additional grants</p> <p>Wheels for All and other accessible bike centres</p> <p>New support/grants programme for community groups (following on from Cycle & Stride)</p>

	<p>Enabling behaviour change programme including cycle training & Bikeability review, scheme activation and inclusive cycling</p>
<p>Integration with Public Transport</p>	<p>The wider capital programme for bus, tram and rail</p> <p>Travel hubs programme and cycle parking provision</p> <p>Customer integration Action Plan</p> <p>Network Reviews (post franchising)</p> <p><i>Bikes on Trams implementation (subject to approval)</i></p>
<p>Road Danger Reduction</p>	<p>Vision Zero Action Plan</p> <p>Including national asks of Government under new Road Safety Strategy</p> <p>Infrastructure pipeline</p> <p>Maintenance funding</p> <p>Remedial work and installation of side-road zebras</p>
<p>Providing Access to Everyone</p>	<p>Streets for All design guide new & updated standards for walking & cycling</p> <p>Policy on access controls for walking, wheeling and cycling network</p> <p>Bus bypass trials</p> <p>CA Accessibility champion appointed</p>