Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 27th January 2022

Subject: Our Pass Evaluation

Report of: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Portfolio Lead for Transport and Eamonn Boylan, Chief Executive Officer, GMCA & TfGM.

Purpose of Report

To provide GMCA with the findings of the Our Pass evidence review carried out against the original strategic key objectives for the Our Pass Pilot.

Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Note the findings of the Our Pass pilot evaluation.
2. Approve the funding of Our Pass on a continuing basis; and
3. Agree that the scheme should be subject to an annual review of its performance, to be completed at the end of each academic year.
4. Continue to develop the range of Our Pass “Exclusives” that are made available to cardholders.

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

An EQIA was carried out in August 2019 which showed a high positive impact on young people aged 16-18 with access to bus travel across GM and the evaluation evidences the positive impact.

Risk Management

N/A

Legal Considerations

N/A

Financial Consequences – Revenue

Expenditure budget for 2022/23 costs approved by GMCA at £16.2 million. The risk of any costs in excess of that to be funded from the Concessionary Reserve held by TfGM.

Financial Consequences – Capital

N/A

Number of attachments to the report: 0

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background Papers

GMCA 29 July 2022: Extension of the Our Pass Pilot Scheme
GMCA 11 February 2022: Mayoral General Budget and Precept Proposals 2022/23
GMCA 18 December 2020: Young Person's Guarantee
GMCA 29 March 2019: Opportunity Pass including 16-18 Free Bus Travel

Tracking/ Process

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

Yes

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?

No

GM Transport Committee

N/A

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This paper will be considered by the GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 25th January. Any comments or recommendations will be reported verbally by the Chair of GMCA Overview & Scrutiny at the Combined Authority meeting.

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Our Pass was originally introduced to give young people greater access to educational, leisure, social and cultural activities, providing free bus travel, discounted Metrolink travel and access to a host of opportunities (now referred to as ‘Exclusives’), to all 16 – 18 year-olds across Greater Manchester (GM). It aimed to broaden their horizons and enable them to take advantage of all that GM has to offer.

1.2. At the outset of the work on Our Pass we heard from many young people who described how the effectively live in a “10 minute world”, never travelling more than 10 minutes from their homes for education, work or social activities. If the cost of travel is removed as a barrier, young people will be able to broaden their horizons, access a wider range of educational opportunities and feel more empowered to explore all that the city region has to offer. The report also noted that encouraging young people to use public transport could help habit-forming for the future, so that in adulthood they may be more inclined to choose public transport over private vehicles, reducing the city region’s carbon footprint in the future.

1.3. In its first year (2019) it was estimated that the scheme would cost around £15.9 million per annum, predominantly to cover the costs of reimbursing bus operators for Our Pass journeys made and the additional bus capacity costs necessitated by the pilot. The GMCA approved funding, which was mainly provided from the Mayoral Precept with a smaller portion being diverted from the Further Education (FE) College Discretionary Bursary fund. The pass was approved as a 2-year pilot and has subsequently been extended for a further 2 years during and following the pandemic.

1.4. £0.4m of funding from colleges was received in 20/21 however colleges indicated at the time that they saw this as a ‘one off’ contribution. Discussions led by GMCA are continuing with colleges with respect to further funding to support the scheme and continued alignment with GMCA objectives.

1.5. The following key outcomes for the pass were agreed at the outset:

- Increased bus usage amongst the 16-18 cohort and a greater number of overall trips on the bus network.
- More young people able to access their educational course or apprenticeship of choice without the cost of travel being a barrier.
- Increased aspiration and hope amongst young people.
- Equal access to ‘opportunities’ across the city region for 16–18-year-olds.
- A contribution towards the Combined Authority’s wider strategic transport objectives including reduced congestion, improved air quality and supporting young people to choose public transport over cars in future.

2. Key Findings

2.1. Since the scheme launched in September of 2019, more than 31 million bus journeys have been made by Our Pass card holders, with almost 800,000 bus journeys per month being made. Outside of the Covid ‘lockdown’ periods this number increases to 1 million journeys per month. Although we did not have equivalent data about young people’s trips pre the introduction of Our Pass, based on other sources (survey results) an assumption of a minimum increase of 13% has been made.

2.2. Since Our Pass went live in September 2019, there has been very strong take-up. As of December 2022, there are c.48,817 active Our Pass cards in circulation out of an eligible cohort population of c.69,000, equating to an uptake of two thirds of eligible young people.

2.3. Between 80% – 90% of young people said Our Pass has had a positive impact on their ease of taking part in education and training; and on how they feel about further education. These results came from a survey carried out covering the 2021 cohort 2,185 young people responded to this survey.

2.4. 91% of young people said Our Pass has increased their levels of personal freedom; 86% said it has helped them take part in new experiences; and 85% said it had helped them to feel like they are a part of Greater Manchester. From the survey carried out covering the 2021 cohort, 2,185 young people responded to this survey.

2.5. 29% of all journeys taken using Our Pass are taken outside of school/college hours. This can be assumed as social travel or travel to work, demonstrating young people are using Our Pass for more than just travel to further education. This is also demonstrated by the fact the average usage per pass is 21 times a week.

2.6. The report also highlights a few areas for improvement, including:

- Between September 2019 and December 2022, a range of Our Pass "Exclusives" were made available to cardholders. During that time uptake of those offers was 16,823 individual offers. Uptake and awareness of the Exclusive offers is relatively low. Additional work will be progressed to ensure that offers are attractive to young people; and to improve communication of the available offers. This could include the development of an Our Pass App and a communications campaign to raise awareness. However, an Our Pass App would only be introduced when we can include the travel pass on the app as a tap in/tap out. That is anticipated to be in 2025, however this is dependent on technological developments. An App to promote the 'exclusives' will be separately commissioned and will not branded as Our Pass.
- Further work is needed with Oldham and Trafford to increase uptake. The uptake currently is Oldham 50% and Trafford 55% which has seen a slight increase since improvements have been implemented. The average across GM for take up is currently at 63%
- Whilst young people have told us through surveys that Our Pass has had a positive effect on their ease of taking part in education/training (88% agree) a detailed analysis of learner locations compared to education establishment locations conducted last year was not able to identify any clear statistical evidence as yet to suggest Our Pass has altered young people's behaviour and choice of further education. Further work is needed

to better understand the role Our Pass (and other factors play) in travel-to-learn mobility among 16–18-year-olds in GM.

3. Background

3.1. Applications for Our Pass opened on 1 July 2019 and continue to be available to eligible individuals on an ongoing basis. For a one-off administration fee, that is currently set at £10, young people who are resident in Greater Manchester have been able to access free bus travel and other benefits across the city-region since the start of September 2019.

3.2. The purpose of the two-year pilot was to test the outcomes for young people against the strategic objectives at the outset. This 2-year pilot was extended due to the pandemic for a further 2 years. The data gathered during the pilot has been used to evaluate the success of the pilot.

3.3. This report sets out the take-up of the scheme and use so far. The report also documents the various evaluation research activities carried out during the 4-year period against the strategic objectives of the pilot.

3.4. Young people and community groups were engaged through the Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority to co-create the pilot. This included choosing the name, designing the card, and contributing to how the scheme operates. This relationship has continued to inform the development of the initiative with an ongoing dialogue to discuss the usage and any improvements.

3.5. At 16 years of age, young people face decisions that will shape the rest of their lives, but they often also lack the skills and means they need to travel, explore, and navigate the world beyond their doorstep. Our Pass is designed to help rectify that as they start college, apprenticeships, jobs, and the transition into adult life. The pilot over the 4 years had the potential to reach c.60,000 in the first year (i.e. two ‘year groups’) and c.33,000 in subsequent years.

3.6. A number of research exercises have been carried out across the lifetime of the pilot. This has been done with input from GMCA, TfGM, The Growth Company and direct consultation with young people via workshops, focus groups and social media.

3.7. Part way through the pilot and in time for the second eligible cohort in September 2020, the ‘Exclusives’ portion of the website, was transferred from TfGM to the Growth Company. Work has been undertaken to improve the flexibility and responsiveness of the offers; and to ensure they meet the needs of young people.

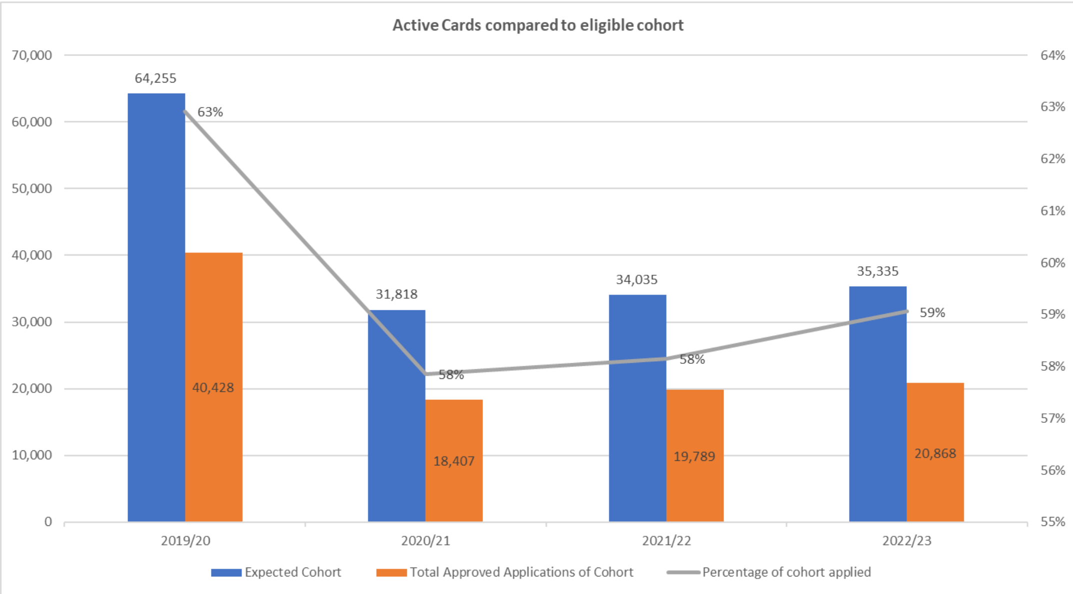
4. Active Cards

4.1. Since Our Pass went live in September 2019, there has been strong take-up for the card. In 2019 there were c.40,000 active cards, 2020 c.46,000, 2021 c.48,000 and as of 23 December 2022, there were c. 48,817 active Our Pass cards in circulation out of an eligible cohort population of c.69,000. The first year was a double year and then each year following brings on a new cohort so as one group drops off another takes its place.

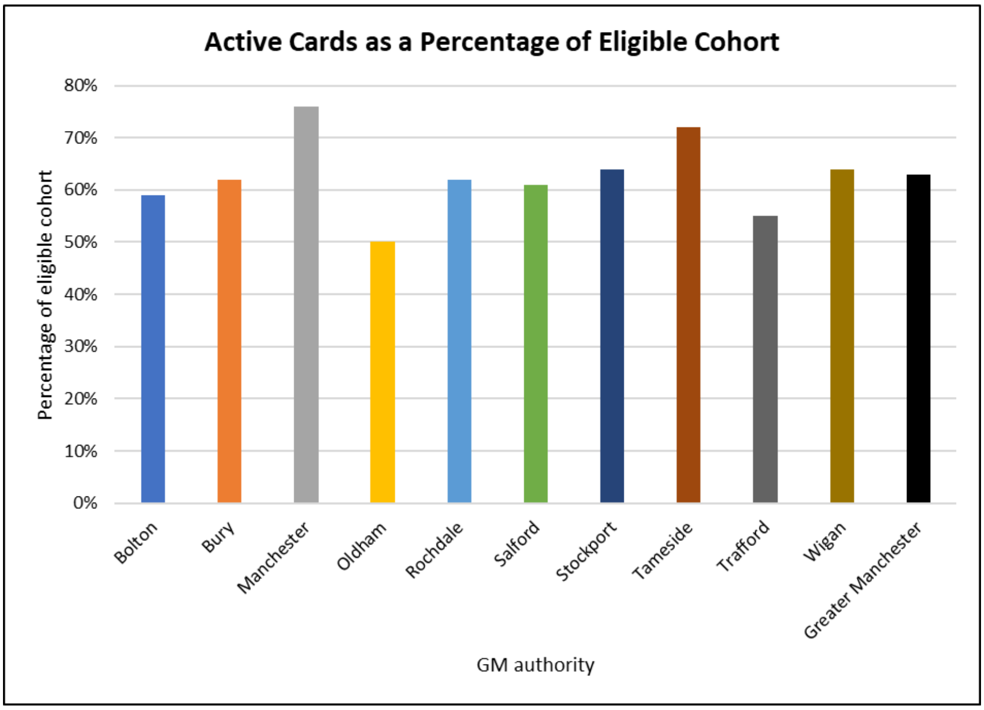
4.2. Following feedback from Local Authorities, schools, and young people, it was agreed to open the applications portal in early May 2022 rather than July as had been the case in previous years) to encourage more applications and to give young people the opportunity to obtain support with applications through schools and colleges. This was for the latest cohort. Numbers were steady through May and June and began to rise as with previous years during late July and August and then again in early September once schools and colleges were due to open.

4.3. Lessons learned from each cohort have been incorporated into changes to how the scheme is administered, including how updates to information, advice and guidance is provided across all channels, and refresher training has been provided to the TfGM Contact Centre to ensure that they are able to support young people with their applications. Videos have also been developed to walk young people through the application process including in relation to eligibility documentation so that their applications are accepted first time. This has resulted in a marked improvement in application quality.

4.4. The following chart shows the number of approved Our Pass applications for each cohort from 1 September 2019 through to 1 September 2022 compared with the expected number of eligible applicants of the cohort.



4.5. Regarding card take-up by district, the following chart shows the percentage of eligible 16 to 18-year-olds in each area that had an Our Pass card as of 23 December 2022. At that time, card take-up was above or around the GM average (63%) in seven of the ten districts, with notable exceptions in Oldham (50%) and Trafford (55%). Further work has been carried out at a local level with Oldham and Trafford to identify specific interventions to increase take up. These interventions have been implemented and early indications this year have seen an increase of applications for the 2022 cohort from Oldham from 48% last year to 51% and from Trafford 52% last year to 55%.



5. Bus Travel

5.1. As one of the central manifesto commitments, the introduction of Our Pass to help young people with the cost of using public transport and to help to reverse the decline in public transport use amongst the 16-18 age group was announced. The pilot scheme aimed to help increase the number of young people in education, employment, or training. At the same time, one of the key objectives was to help form lifelong habits of increased public transport use, thereby reducing congestion on Greater Manchester's roads, reducing transport related carbon emissions and improving air quality.

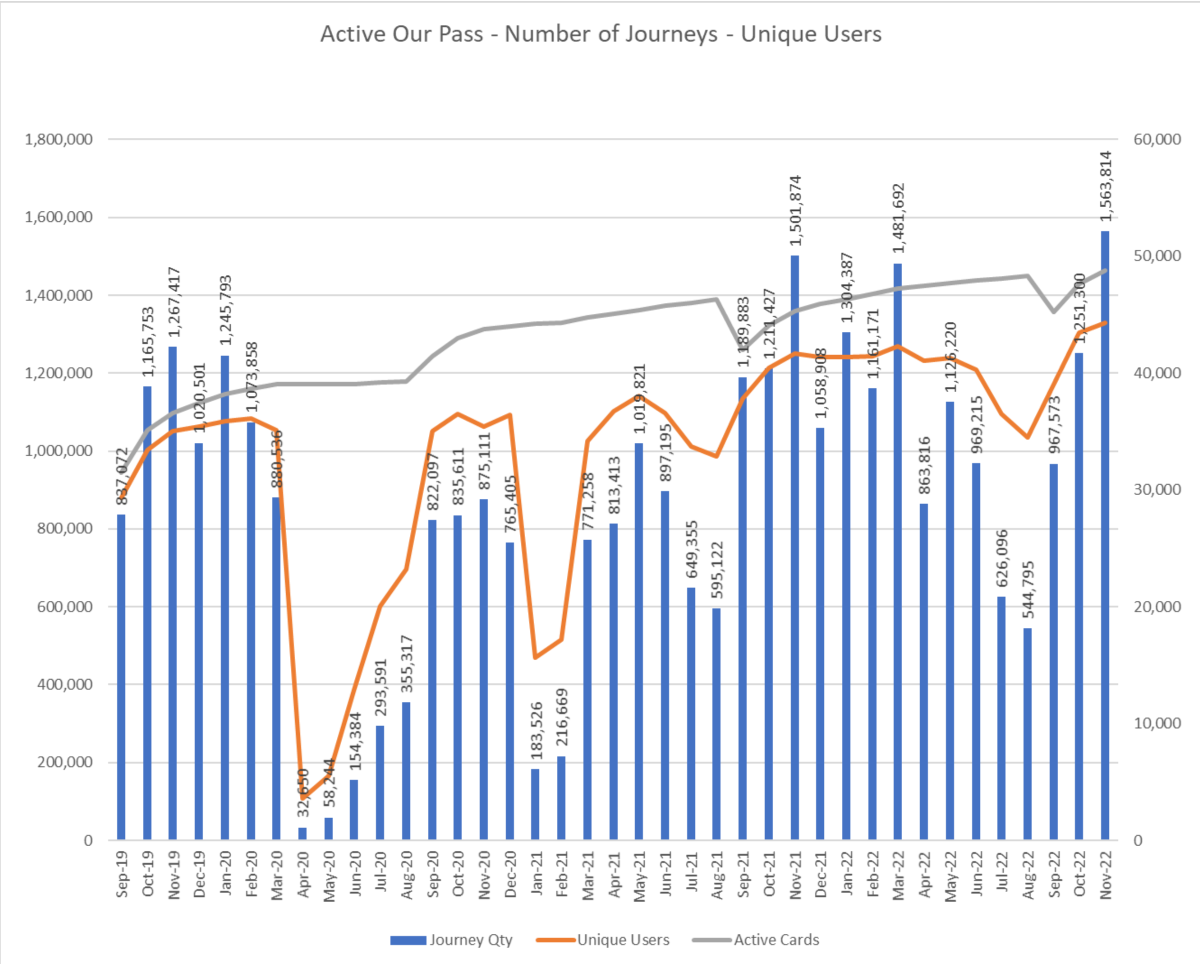
5.2. Free bus travel throughout GM has been available to Our Pass holders since 1 September 2019. Since the scheme launched in September of 2019, more than 31 million bus journeys have been made by Our Pass card holders, with almost 800,000 bus journeys per month being made. Outside of the Covid 'lockdown' periods this number increases to 1 million journeys per month.

5.3. The following chart presents a monthly breakdown of the total bus journey numbers and shows the number of unique Our Pass holders making journeys each month, along with the numbers of active cards.

5.4. It is clear that whilst journeys reduced during the lockdown periods, as schools and colleges opened young people were actively using their passes to travel across Greater Manchester at higher than pre-Covid levels.

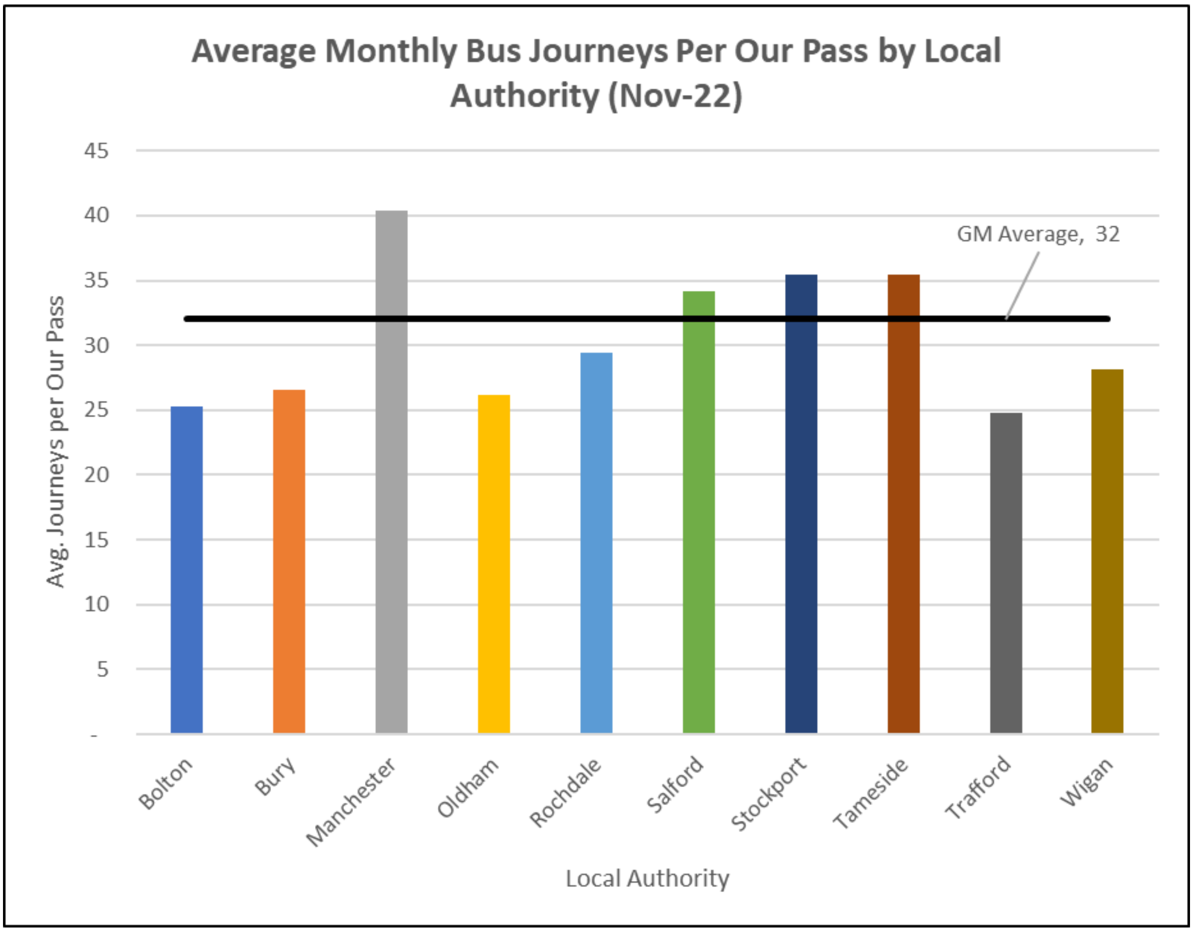
5.5. Journeys during college/school hours are on average 71% of all Our Pass journeys taken, with 29% outside of these school / college hours proving that Our Pass is used for more than just travel to further education. This is also demonstrated by the fact the average usage per pass is 21 times a week.

5.6. From the latest research carried out in October 2022, of the respondents who previously held an Our Pass, 91% said they had used it for free bus travel. Of the 91%, 82.5% stated that they still use the bus now (despite no longer having an Our Pass).



5.7. The following chart shows an analysis of the average number of bus journeys made per active card holder according to their Local Authority of residence in GM, as December 2022. The chart also shows that bus use is higher than average amongst Our Pass holders' resident in Manchester, Salford, Stockport, and Tameside.

5.8. The analysis of average number of bus journeys made per active card holder according to their Local Authority of residence in GM broadly matches analysis of the frequency of bus use by all residents in each Local Authority (Source: GMTRADS). For example, Manchester residents are the most likely to use the bus frequently and residents in Trafford are least likely to use the bus frequently. The only notable exception is Stockport, which has a higher frequency of Our Pass use than we would expect given the overall frequency of bus use by Stockport residents.



6. Cost of Living Update

6.1. A key objective of Our Pass was to remove the cost of travel as a barrier to education and opportunities. With the cost of living crisis putting pressure on family budgets this central objective is more important than ever.

6.2. With the average cost of weekly bus ticket during an academic year of 38 weeks standing at around £570, Our Pass represents a saving of around £546 per household (after taking account of the £10 cost of the pass and the average household Mayoral Precept contribution to Our Pass of c£14). This saving rises to around £650 for a young person undertaking an apprenticeship, with apprentices more likely to be required to travel to multiple locations for work and study and to have fewer holidays.

6.3. Feedback through social media has been collated from parents and guardians who have commented on how Our Pass has helped them with the cost of living. This feedback is shown in Appendix 2.

7. Exclusives Update

7.1. Between September 2019 and December 2022, a range of Our Pass “Exclusives” were made available to cardholders. During that time uptake of those offers was c.16,823 (9% of active cards). The offers available have included free access to swimming and leisure centres for all card holders across the ten local authorities. They have also included free, sponsored “Our Pass” branded lanyards available to all card holders. In addition, there have been discounts and giveaways from Manchester City and Manchester United football clubs, theatre and concert tickets, free family meals as well as shopping, cinema and activity vouchers alongside a range of careers “tasters” from BBC, ITV, and the Royal Exchange Theatre.

7.2. A new Our Pass website was launched in early August 2020, with the aim of increasing uptake of those ‘Exclusives’. The new website is administered by The

Growth Company and new Exclusives are added to the site on an ongoing basis. As of 20 October 2022, 39,650 (23% of active cards) people have registered accounts on the new Our Pass website since September 2019. A review of the Exclusives on offer is currently underway including how young people will access the Exclusives in the future.

7.3. The current Exclusives include a backstage tour of the Manchester Opera House, 2-4-1 tickets to the MET 'Emerging Showcase' gigs, free Halle Orchestra tickets, and the opportunity to win tickets for The Stoller Hall. Also available are Get Active with Our Pass for Yoga, Boxing, Team Karting, Summit up Clip & Climb, Football pitch hire, gym passes, and leisure centre passes along with food discount offers.

7.4. Despite ongoing social messaging and marketing, recent feedback from young people indicates a lack of knowledge around the opportunities available with Our Pass, outside of the travel offer. Following focus groups pre-pandemic and attendance at college open events post-pandemic, we are aware that very few young people read the instructions on the carrier letter that accompanies the card. The perception is that websites are old fashioned and the preference is to use an app to log in to an account once and receive push notifications of new offers or developments as they happen. Digital poverty remains a concern and app development would need to run alongside the existing website (accessible in educational settings and libraries with free IT facilities) and be targeted through partner agencies with strong relationships with young people for maximum impact.

7.5. Our Pass is a strong brand name in GM, 72% of eligible young people across the region hold an active card. Initially the app will exclusively share Our Pass offers, with plans to extend to GMACs, Meet Your Future, Curriculum for Life etc and travel provision in the future.

7.6. Opportunities available to card holders are diverse, reflecting the diversity of young people across GM. Online feedback from a recent poll of young people shows the continued popularity of live events, specifically music gigs, festivals and theatre tickets (45% of requests). Our Pass offers free O2 gig tickets, Lightopia tickets, backstage theatre tours, workshops delivered by Disney and Lion King tickets. In the summer there were Parklife tickets available and family friendly festivals including Geronimo and Dinotopia. Other participating venues include The Met in Bury, Bridgewater Hall, Stoller Hall, Oldham Coliseum. There are also generic One 4 All vouchers that allows access to cinemas, restaurants and shopping across the region.

7.7. Access to food and shopping offers hold joint second place in the poll of young people, with 25% asking for each of these. Our Pass offers free family meals at restaurants in Oldham and Rochdale, breakfast in Dishoom and generic vouchers for shopping and dining across the region. Dining pods at Lightopia will be available over the festive period and other venues are coming soon.

7.8. Live sport accounted for 5% of requests in our online poll. MUFC and MCFC will be returning shortly, local clubs such as Radcliffe FC, Curzon Ashton, Oldham FC and FC United are making or updating their offers and leisure including Salford Community Leisure and Water Sport Centre, Bolton Arena, Life Leisure Stockport. There are seasonal offers from Manchester Originals that include tours of Old Trafford Emirates and tickets to watch Lancashire County Cricket. We previously offered tickets to ice hockey, basketball and rugby venues and we continue to negotiate with providers to activate these offers again.

8. Financial Update

8.1. As noted above, GMCA originally approved an annual budget of £15.9 million for the costs of Our Pass in 2019. This amount was 'ringfenced' within the Mayoral budget, with the risk of higher than budgeted expenditure underwritten from the Concessionary Travel Reserve held by TfGM. After reducing significantly during the pandemic 'lockdowns', usage volumes for Our Pass have since recovered very strongly and are now higher than pre-Covid levels.

8.2. In 2021/22 academic year GMCA approved a budget of £16.2 million for the costs of Our Pass, with the outturn cost being c. £16.5 million. The funding for these costs was from a combination of the Mayoral Precept, BSOG and underspends on concessionary travel in previous years.

8.3. In 2022/23 GMCA approved a budget of £16.2 million for Our Pass costs with funding from the same sources as noted above. Due to the continuing strong growth in volumes the annual cost is currently forecast to be c. £17 million which can be funded in line with the agreed financing strategy as set out above. Reimbursement rates have largely been static since the scheme was introduced, as operator fares were not able to be increased whilst they were in receipt of government financial assistance. However, on an ongoing basis, it is very likely that there will be pressure on reimbursement rates to increase due to the wind down of government financial assistance, wider Inflationary pressures and where operators are able to demonstrate that their costs and / or revenue foregone have increased.

8.4. When bus franchising is fully introduced, the agreed funding will be available to fund the wider Bus franchising financial model. Under bus franchising GMCA/TfGM will be taking revenue risk and therefore the 'cost' of the Our Pass scheme will relate to revenue forgone rather than the cost of payments to bus operators as is currently the case. It is anticipated that this will enable some efficiencies in the costs of delivering the scheme, whilst still contributing to the generation of additional patronage for bus services in the future.

9. Conclusions

9.1. The evidence presented in this report demonstrates that Our Pass has achieved the strategic objectives of the pilot. It is therefore recommended that the Our Pass scheme be made permanent.

9.2. This report does highlight a few areas for improvement for the Our Pass scheme, which should be the primary focus for improvement in the next academic year. These are:

- The uptake and awareness of the Exclusives is still relatively low. Additional work should be done to ensure offers are attractive to young people and to improve communication of offers. This may include the development of an Our Pass App and a communications campaign to raise awareness. However, an Our Pass App would only come in when we can include the travel pass on the app as a tap in/tap out c. 2025. An app to promote the 'exclusives' will be separate and not branded as Our Pass.

- Further work is needed with Oldham and Trafford to deliver the specific interventions which have been identified to increase take up of Our Pass in these districts.
- Further work is needed to better understand the role Our Pass (and other factors play) in travel-to-learn mobility among 16–18-year-olds in GM. This should be reflected in TfGM's Home to School Transport Policy Review, which is underway.

9.3. To ensure continuous improvement, it is therefore also recommended that Our Pass should be subject to an annual review of its performance going forward, to be completed at the end of each academic year.

APPENDIX 1

1. Evaluation and Outputs

1.1. The evaluation to date for the Our Pass scheme has been a joint effort between TfGM, GMCA, and the Growth Company. This has included:

- An initial baseline survey between April and May 2019 distributed via emails from gatekeeper educational/other bodies which achieved 3,289 responses from 16–18-year-olds, and 236 17–20-year-olds as a control sample.
- First evaluation between July and August 2020, about 10 months after introduction of Our Pass, distributed via emails from gatekeepers and obtained 1,157 responses from 16–18-year-olds, and 264 for the control sample. Also included some in-depth qualitative interviews.
- Second evaluation ran between December 2021 and January 2022. This was an online survey, distributed to a database of current and expired Our Pass holders covering the 2021 cohort. 2,185 responses were received.
- Third evaluation ran through October 2022. This was an online survey distributed to a database of more than 20,000 expired Our Pass holders, 1,770 responses were received.
- Literature review around the social and economic situation for young people, other forms of youth investment.
- Workshops and focus groups with young people, social media polls and direct surveys to current and ex users of Our Pass.

1.2. The surveys were designed to capture the following information:

- Travel behaviour, including current bus and tram travel, ticket types used and access to opportunities;
- The impacts of bus service frequency, availability, and costs on access to opportunities;

- The Our Pass application process and awareness of what Our Pass can offer;
- The impact of Our Pass on access to opportunities; and
- Demographic information.

2. Evaluation Findings

2.1. Findings have shown that there has been good take up of the new pass amongst respondents, with on average 63% of eligible young people now in possession of one.

2.2. There has been increased bus usage amongst young people. In the baseline survey in 2019, 75% of young people reported using the bus for at least some of their journeys compared with 86% in 2020. In 2022, young people with a valid Our Pass were more likely than those with an expired pass to travel by bus at least once a week (95% compared with 77%). Our Pass holders are at least twice as likely to use the bus as non-Our Pass holders due to both Price/Cost and speed compared to active travel.

2.3. Young people with an Our Pass reported Our Pass as impacting a range of quality of life factors. Specifically, three quarters or more of young people perceived Our Pass as having a positive impact on:

- Level of personal freedom (91%);
- Feeling invested in by Greater Manchester (87%);
- Taking part in new experiences (86%)
- Feeling part of Greater Manchester (85%);
- Feeling invested in their own future (76%);
- Confidence in their own future (74%);
- Ease of decisions about their own future (73%); and
- Feeling worried or anxious (70%).

2.4. Awareness of access to discounted opportunities is relatively low. The least likely option to attract them to obtain an Our Pass was access to discounted Exclusives. A third of current Our Pass holders reported being unaware of the Exclusives and offers it provides. 44% of those surveyed reported being aware but not yet accessing these Exclusives.

2.5. Our Pass customers tend to find out about Our Pass through their school or college and the main reason for getting an Our Pass was the incentive of free bus travel.

2.6. The extent to which Our Pass impacts hopes, and aspirations differs by age, gender, district, ACORN Group, occupation and ethnicity. The following were more likely to state that Our Pass has impacted:

- 16-year-olds: ‘how confident I feel about my future’
- Females: on all hopes and aspirations
- Financially Stretched Acorn Group: ‘how easy it is for me to make decisions about my future’
- Urban Adversity Acorn Group: ‘how easy it is for me to be invested in my future’ and ‘how worried or anxious I feel’
- Ethnic Minorities ‘how easy it is for me to be invested in my future’ and ‘the extent to which I feel part of Greater Manchester’.

3. Bus Services Findings

3.1. Bus service is heavily relied upon by young people, and the majority report they will continue to use the bus in future (even if they have to pay).

3.2. According to an evaluation survey conducted with current and former Our Pass holders, between 17 December 2021 and 04 January 2022, **7 out of 10** (69%) of those surveyed felt they would be likely to continue bus travel in the future, now that they have used Our Pass, even if they have to pay. Differences were seen between the following demographic groups:

- Young people who currently have an Our Pass were more likely to than those who had an expired Our Pass (71% cf. 58%)
- Young people who have no access to a car/motorbike were more likely those who do (70%, compared with 63%)
- Young people who are classified as Urban Adversity and Rising Prosperity Acorn Groups were most likely and those classified as Affluent Achievers least likely (74% and 74% cf. with 64%)

3.3. Most respondents use the bus five or more days a week with differences seen between the following groups.

- 23% of all trips made by 16–18-year-olds are made by bus
- 16–18-year-olds make 11% of all bus trips in Greater Manchester
- 16–18-year-olds make around 16 million bus trips a year
- 69% are using the bus to get to their place of education
- 41% of all bus trips made by 16-18 year olds are made by those categorised as Urban Adversity

3.4. Fewer young people use the tram regularly and of these, very few make use of the Our Pass discount.

3.5. Praise for Our Pass stresses impact on finances, independence, broadening their access to education, opportunities, and socialisation. Some of the feedback from Our Pass young people is shown below:

- *“It makes me more likely to go and socialise with my friends”*
- *“Our Pass has really helped me travel around Manchester before I found a job. It really opened up more opportunities for me”*
- *“My bus tickets to get to school costs a ridiculous amount per week but now I can get to school for free”*
- *“Sometimes our age group is overlooked and so I feel very invested in and cared for”*

- *“The Our Pass gives me the freedom to travel in GM and because I have epilepsy and can not drive, it is the only way for me to travel”*
- *“It’s been invaluable. Not having to worry about the cost of bus fare each week has been such a relief for our family”*
- *“The Our Pass makes it easy for me to be able to travel around Manchester easily and make it so I can get to college and receive my education”*

4. Education Findings

4.1. Our Pass has a resounding positive impact on their ease of taking part in and completing education/training, particularly for those from the Urban Adversity Acorn Group. A very high proportion of respondents have said Our Pass has had a positive impact on:

- their ease of taking part in education/training (88%)
- ease of completing qualifications (88%)
- Has a **positive impact on how they feel about further education**, particularly felt amongst those in their 1st year (92%). More pronounced for:
    - **Urban Adversity** and Financially Stretched Acorn Groups
    - Those without a drivers’ license or without a car

5. Travel to Learn

5.1. Travel to learn patterns are highly complex, fluctuate year-to-year and are potentially motivated by multiple considerations. The cost of travel is one element of a multi-dimensional set of factors impinging on trends. The analysis of learner data can therefore only ever be seen as provisional and indicative. To undertake this analysis three research questions were posed, and these offer a means of breaking down the analysis into three parts.

- Has Our Pass led to greater travel-to-learn mobility among 16–18-year-olds in GM at the district level?

- Among principal learning institutions is there evidence of an impact on travel to learn patterns in the wake of Our Pass?
- Is there evidence of greater travel-to-learn movement between wards in GM?

5.2. Methodology – ESFA Datacube Analysis

5.3. The source for the analysis is the Education and Skills Funding Agency Datacube. The purpose of the data cubes is to provide Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) with data from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) for their area. This provides information about the training in their area funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The Datacubes consist of two sets of data - one cube includes residents living in the area and the other training delivered in the area.

5.4. The analysis presented below found that there are currently no discernible changes in travel-to-learn mobility among 16–18-year-olds in GM at the ward or district level, or changes to travel to learn patterns at an institution level as a result of the introduction of Our Pass. However, anecdotal evidence from The Growth Company when speaking to young people and colleges is that choosing to go to further education was influenced by the ease of getting to college and this is something they may not have chosen to do if the Our Pass was not available.

Findings

Question 1: Districts

5.5. As provisional analysis, district level travel-to-learn patterns were explored with a view to understanding whether greater cross-district border movements were evident. To do this percentages of learners who live and learn in the same district were calculated for each year. Of course, this may indicate little: it could be argued that local authority boundaries are not necessarily fundamentally relevant to choices regarding where to undertake Level 3 education. However, although broad brush, it may point to greater mobility in general, possibly spurred by the introduction of Our Pass.

5.6. A summary of the information is presented below. In general, there appears to be little in the way of obvious patterns at the district level – just year-to-year fluctuations, probably driven by trends around individual institutions. It is noticeable that learners in Trafford and Oldham were slightly more prone to travel beyond their district's boundaries to learn in 2020/21 than in 2019/20, but the shift is very modest; and, in the other direction, learners in Wigan, Salford and Rochdale are more likely to learn within the district in which they live. Overall, at the GM level there is virtually no change between the two years.

Table 1: 16-18 year old learners living and learning in the same district, 2018/19-2020/21

Area	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	PPT diff 2019/20 vs 2020/21
Bolton	64.4%	66.2%	66.1%	-0.1%
Bury	84.3%	79.4%	78.1%	-1.3%
Manchester	69.8%	69.8%	69.3%	-0.5%
Oldham	76.4%	76.1%	72.7%	-3.5%
Rochdale	61.8%	64.0%	67.2%	3.3%
Salford	59.4%	59.6%	63.5%	3.9%
Stockport	66.7%	67.9%	64.7%	-3.2%
Tameside	78.8%	78.2%	78.9%	0.7%
Trafford		49.9%	42.2%	-7.7%
Wigan	69.7%	65.1%	74.9%	9.8%
GM district average	70.1%	67.6%	67.8%	0.1%

Question 2: Institutions

5.7. The second question turns the focus of the analysis to institutions. It explored whether learners at individual institutions appear to be more or less prone to cross district boundaries in order to learn since the introduction of Our Pass. As with the district analysis in question 1 above, there are few patterns of significant change. Some movement is discernible year-to-year. For example, in the Oldham Sixth Form College data below, there has been a slight rise in the proportion of learners from Rochdale; similarly, at Winstanley College, learners from Salford account for 10% of learners, up from 7.3% two years before.

Table 2: Proportions of learners by district in selected 16-18 learning providers

LTE Group (GFC; Manchester)			
Learners from…	**2018/19**	**2019/2**	**2020/21**
Bolton	0.7%	1.0%	0.7%
Bury	1.7%	1.9%	1.8%
Manchester	69.6%	71.1%	70.6%
Oldham	3.0%	2.9%	3.1%
Rochdale	2.2%	2.3%	2.1%
Salford	5.7%	5.3%	5.4%
Stockport	6.6%	5.4%	5.8%
Tameside	4.8%	4.7%	4.6%
Trafford	5.0%	5.0%	5.7%
Wigan	0.7%	0.4%	0.4%
Loreto College (SFC; Manchester)			
Bolton	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Bury	2.3%	1.9%	1.9%
Manchester	56.4%	54.8%	56.6%
Oldham	1.3%	1.4%	2.0%
Rochdale	0.7%	0.8%	1.3%
Salford	12.3%	11.5%	10.2%
Stockport	8.2%	8.8%	7.7%
Tameside	3.6%	3.4%	3.2%
Trafford	14.6%	16.8%	16.8%
Wigan	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
Oldham Sixth Form College (SFC, Oldham)			
Bury	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Manchester	2.1%	2.3%	2.7%
Oldham	88.8%	87.3%	85.6%
Rochdale	7.1%	8.0%	9.2%
Stockport	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Tameside	2.0%	2.3%	2.3%
Wigan	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%

Wigan and Leigh College (GFC; Wigan)			
Bolton	5.8%	5.8%	5.7%
Bury	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Manchester	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%
Oldham	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Rochdale	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Salford	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Stockport	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Tameside	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Trafford	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Wigan	93.4%	93.1%	93.2%
Winstanley College (SFC, Wigan)			
Bolton	7.8%	6.7%	6.4%
Manchester	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%
Oldham	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Rochdale	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%
Salford	7.3%	10.0%	10.7%
Stockport	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Wigan	84.2%	82.8%	82.8%

Question 3: wards

5.8. For the third question, the analysis turned to analysing patterns by local authority, institution, and ward across the three academic years in question. There are 287 wards in Greater Manchester and numbers are likely to vary between years for many reasons (including population demographics). To explore whether there is evidence of greater learner mobility the analysis investigated whether there was a greater degree of change among institutions and ward domiciles after the introduction of Our Pass than before.

5.9. Although some wards and some institutions experienced large differences in learner numbers year to year (over 100 learners in some cases) this was the case in both 2018/19-2019/20 and between 2019/20-2020/21. The mean change in total learners among wards between 2018/19 and 2019/20 was -2 and between 2019/20 and 2020/21 it was -1. Standard deviations were 32.05 for 2018/19-

2019/20 and 18.58 for 2019/20-2020/21. There appears, therefore, to be little obvious evidence of greater variation in mobility patterns. However, while this may be the case generally, there will be institutional variance with greater ward level mobility. Further research would be needed to analyse these in depth.

6. Employment Horizons Findings

6.1. Our Pass has positively impacted employment horizons, access, and retention for three quarters of respondents.

- Ease of finding a job (75%)
- Ease of keeping a job (75%)
- Their choice of job (77%)

7. Quality of Life Findings

7.1. Our Pass seemingly strengthens their sense of autonomy, their sense of being invested in by GM and ultimately their confidence in their own future. Young people perceived Our Pass as having an impact on:

- Level of personal freedom (91%) (more likely to be in education *and* paid work)
- Feeling invested in by Greater Manchester (87%) (more likely to be from Rochdale)
- Taking part in new experiences (86%)
- Feeling part of Greater Manchester (85%) (more likely to be from Rochdale)
- Feeling invested in their own future (76%) (more likely to be from Bolton, Urban Adversity or Financially Stretched Acorn Groups)
- Confidence in their own future (74%) (more likely to be from Bolton, Urban Adversity or Financially Stretched Acorn Groups)
- Ease of decisions about their own future (73%) (more likely to be from Bolton, Urban Adversity or Financially Stretched)

- Feeling worried or anxious (70%) (more likely to be from Rochdale, women, those with a disability)

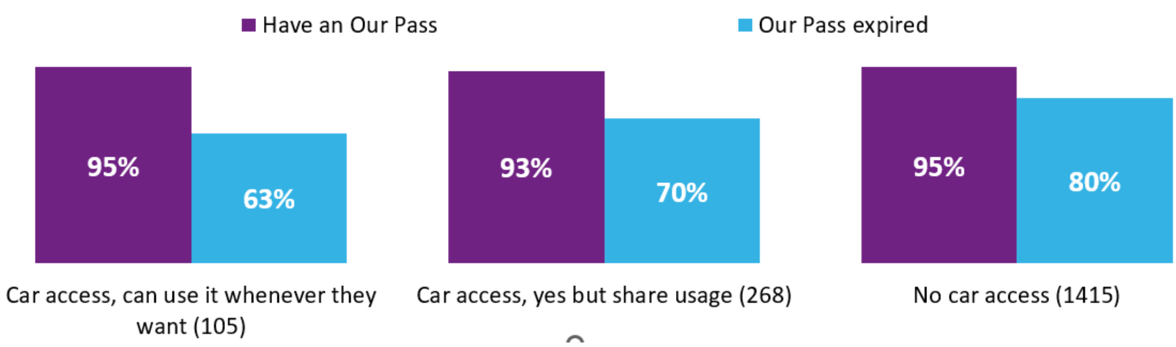
8. Leisure/Activity Findings

8.1. The majority of young people felt that Our Pass had an impact on the following:

- Ease of going to events (84%) (more likely to have a disability)
- Amount of leisure activities available (82%) (more likely to be from Bolton)
- Types of leisure activities available (81%) (more likely to have a disability, from Bolton)
- Ease of visiting family and friends (80%) (more likely to have a disability, Urban Adversity Acorn Group)
- Frequency of attending events (80%)
- 71% of trips are made during Peak times when schools/colleges are open with 29% outside of these times which is assumed to be classed as social time or these young people could be travelling to work.

8.2. Regardless of their access to a car, the vast majority - around 95% - of those with a valid Our Pass use the bus at least once a week.

Proportion who use the bus once a week or more, according to car access and Our Pass ownership



9. Key Findings Against Objectives

9.1. This report has set out the evaluation carried out against the strategic objectives of the pilot over the 4-year lifecycle. Key findings against each of these objectives is shown below:

Increase of bus usage amongst the 16-18 cohort and a greater number of overall trips on the bus network overall

- In 2019, 75% of young people reported using bus for at least some of their journeys compared 86% in 2020, an increase of 11%.
- There have been 31 million trips since the start of the pilot in September 2019 averaging 800k per month.
- Since Our Pass went live in September 2019, there has been strong take-up for the card. In 2019 there were c.40,000 active cards, 2020 c.46,000, 2021 c.48,000 and as of 19 October 2022, there are c.45,000 active Our Pass cards in circulation out of an eligible population of c.69,000 per cohort.
- In 2022, young people with a valid Our Pass were more likely than those with an expired pass to travel by bus at least once a week (95% compared with 77%). Our Pass holders are at least twice as likely to use the bus as non-Our Pass holders due to both Price/Cost and speed compared to active travel.
- Most respondents to our survey use the bus five or more days a week. 23% of all trips made by 16–18-year-olds are made by bus and this makes up 11% of all bus trips in Greater Manchester.
- 41% of all bus trips made by 16–18-year-olds are made by those categorised as Urban Adversity Acorn Group.

More young people travelling to access their educational course or apprenticeship of choice without travel costs being a barrier or factor into these costs

- Our Pass has had a resounding positive impact on young people’s ease of taking part in and completing education/training, particularly for those from the Urban Adversity Acorn Group. A high proportion (around 80%-90% depending on demographics) of respondents to the surveys have said Our Pass has had a positive impact on their ease of taking part in education/training and has a positive impact on how they feel about further education (around 70-80%).

- Card take-up by district is above or around the GM average (63%) in seven of the ten districts, with notable exceptions in Oldham (50%) and Trafford (55%). Further work has been carried out at a local level with Oldham and Trafford which has identified specific interventions to increase take up. These interventions have been implemented and monitoring has been put in place to measure success.
- 69% are using the bus to get to their place of education and 71% of all journeys using Our Pass are during peak times.
- However, the analysis carried out using the Education and Skills Funding Agency Datacube database, based on the data available, is that there are currently no discernible changes in travel-to-learn mobility among 16–18-year-olds in GM at the ward or district level, or changes to travel to learn patterns at an institution level as a result of the introduction of Our Pass. However, anecdotal evidence from The Growth Company when speaking to young people and colleges is that choosing to go to further education was influenced by the ease of getting to college and this is something they may not have chosen to do if the Our Pass was not available.

Increased aspiration and hope amongst young people in the target group

- Young people have fed back that Our Pass has positively impacted employment horizons, access, and retention for the ease of finding, keeping and their choice of jobs.
- Our Pass seemingly strengthens their sense of autonomy, their sense of being invested in by GM and ultimately their confidence in their own future
- In particular, they feel more positive about their future, like that they are invested in and part of Greater Manchester, and that they are able to access new experiences.

- Praise for Our Pass stresses impact on finances, independence, broadening their access to education, opportunities, and socialisation.

Equal access to ‘opportunities’ across the city region for 16-18 year olds

- 29% of all journeys are taken outside of peak hours which could be assumed as social travel or these young people could be traveling to work, opening opportunities for them.
- The majority of young people felt that Our Pass had an impact on their ease of going to events and the frequency, the amount and type of leisure activities available and their ease of visiting family and friends.
- Circa 40k young people have created an Exclusives account since the start of the pilot with circa. 16k taking advantage of these exclusive offers.

A contribution is made towards the Combined Authority’s wider strategic transport objectives including reduced congestion, improved air quality and supporting young people to choose public transport over cars in future.

- There has been increased bus usage amongst young people – at least twice as likely to use the bus as non-Our Pass holders due to both Price/Cost and speed compared to active travel.
- 7 out of 10 (69%) of those surveyed felt they would be likely to continue bus travel in the future, now that they have used Our Pass, even if they have to pay regardless of their access to a car, with the following demographic differences:
  - Young people who have no access to a car/motorbike were more likely than those who do (70%, compared with 63%).
  - Young people who are classified as Urban Adversity and Rising Prosperity Acorn Groups were most likely and those classified as Affluent Achievers least likely (74% and 74% cf. with 64%).
- Half of young people (55%) have regularly chosen the bus instead of cycling or walking, with: 64% citing this is because it is free, 59% quicker journey and 51% bad weather.

- From the latest research carried out in October 2022, of the respondents who previously held an Our Pass, 91% said they had used it for free bus travel. Of the 91%, 82.5% stated that they still use the bus now (despite no longer having an Our Pass)

10. References

Systra for TfGM Insight: Our Pass Evaluation 2022 Follow-up Survey (unpublished) Our Pass evaluation 2021-22 report.pdf

Our Pass – Travel to Learn Trends – GMCA

202010002 Our Pass Evaluation Main Report – GMCA

TfGM SRAD Snap Survey October 2022

Growth Company Insight, 2021, 2022