

# **School Travel Strategy**

Our vision for school travel in Greater Manchester

Draft - October 2024

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# **Executive summary**

**We want more young people to choose to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to get to school and access further education.**

Greater Manchester is transforming its transport system through the creation of the Bee Network, bringing walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport together as part of one transport network. The Bee Network will provide young people with a more accessible, reliable, and affordable transport network that will allow more of them to travel sustainably to school and to access further education.

We - the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and the ten GM local authorities (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan) - want more young people to travel sustainably to school and to access further education:

**To improve physical and mental health** → 22% of reception aged children and 39% of Year 6 children are overweight or obese in Greater Manchester<sup>1</sup>

**To reduce pollution in the air** → Children are more affected by air pollution because their organs and immune systems are still developing<sup>2</sup>

**To help with the cost-of-living crisis** → For families experiencing poverty and hardship, the cost of sending a child to school can add additional financial stress<sup>3</sup>

**To reduce congestion** → Taking children to school currently accounts for approximately 31% of traffic on GM roads during peak hours<sup>4</sup>

**To help the environment** → Transport accounts for 31% of Greater Manchester's carbon emissions<sup>5</sup>

**To create safer and more attractive streets** → 74% of GM residents think that their streets are currently dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles<sup>6</sup>

**To reduce the stress and challenge of having to do the school run**

**To enable young people to travel independently throughout their life** → giving young people greater access to future learning opportunities and careers

**And because it is what young people want** → When surveyed, 75% of primary school pupils said they would travel actively to school if they had the chance to do so<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [National Child Measurement Programme, England, 2022/23 School Year - NHS England Digital](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Schools | Clean Air Greater Manchester \(cleanairgm.com\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [School sums what does going to school really cost families.pdf \(cpag.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2023

<sup>5</sup> [2005-21-uk-local-authority-ghg-emissions-update-060723.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Walking and Cycling Index 2023: Greater Manchester \(sustrans.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> TfGM School Travel Choices Pilot Paper by Mott MacDonald (2018)

This document sets out our vision and approach for how we will enable more young people to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to get to school and access further education. It is not a funded delivery plan, and the priorities and ambitions set out here are anticipated to require some additional funding to be delivered in full.

## **Prioritising sustainable travel**

Historically, driving has been prioritised over walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, resulting in fewer young people being able to travel sustainably to school<sup>8</sup>. We want young people, parents, guardians and carers to use the most appropriate travel option for their journey. Encouraging them to travel in a way that provides the greatest individual and societal benefits, as shown in the hierarchy below.

### **Hierarchy of School Travel Options**

As the healthiest and most inexpensive forms of travel, walking, wheeling, scooting, or cycling should be the first choice for travelling to school or accessing further education for those who live a short distance away.

For those who live a little further away, 'general' public transport services should be chosen, with school bus services providing a supportive role where public transport is not a viable option. Supporting existing public transport routes helps the whole community and is therefore preferable to dedicated school bus routes that need significant subsidy and only support school journeys.

In some cases, being driven may be the only practical way for pupils to travel to school or access further education, but this should be the last resort and only in a minority of cases.

## **Our Vision**

We want more young people to choose to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to get to school and access further education

## **Our Ambition**

By 2030 our goal is for 70% of primary school students in Greater Manchester to walk, wheel, scoot, or cycle to school, up from 63% (GMTRADS, 2021-23)

By 2030 our goal is for 80% of secondary school students in Greater Manchester to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to travel to school, up from 74% (GMTRADS, 2021-23)

By 2030 our goal is for 80% of further education students in Greater Manchester to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to access education, up from 66% (GMTRADS, 2021-23)

## **Our Activities**

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<sup>8</sup> [Made to move.pdf \(ctfassets.net\)](#)

Create safer streets around schools

Continue to deliver walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure

Increase access to cycles and secure cycle storage

Support young people to become travel champions

Improve the customer experience on public transport

Make our network safe and secure

Create an integrated network

Engage schools and local communities

DRAFT

# Introduction

How young people travel to school and to access further education matters. Every day approximately 460,000 pupils travel to over 1,200 schools and further education establishments across our city region<sup>9</sup>. 15% of all trips in Greater Manchester are to access education, and in the periods between 08:00-08:59 and 15:00-15:59 almost 48% of trips are education related<sup>10</sup>.

Safely and reliably taking young people to and from places of education is a key function of transport networks across the world. Done correctly, it can support greater inclusion, enhanced access to opportunities and better health for students. In our 2040 Transport Strategy<sup>11</sup> we identified the need to encourage more young people to walk and cycle to school in Greater Manchester, along with the need to better integrate school services into the wider transport network.

## Who is responsible for school travel?

Local authorities' relationship with schools has changed significantly in the last two decades. The transition towards schools increasingly being run by multi academy trusts or independent governing bodies has meant local authorities increasingly coordinate rather than directly provide education in their area<sup>12</sup>.

Most schools now set their own admissions policy, independent of local authorities. This means that local authorities have less influence over which school a young person attends than they did in the past. While parental choice has grown, so too have school catchment areas, meaning pupils are travelling further to get to school<sup>13</sup>. This has made it more challenging for young people to travel sustainably to school.

In certain limited circumstances local authorities must provide travel assistance. The Department for Education provides detailed guidance<sup>14</sup> about when local authorities have a statutory duty to provide free school transport for children of compulsory school age:

- ➔ All children between 5 and 16 qualify for free school transport if they go to their nearest suitable school and live further than:
  - 2 miles (≈ 3.2km) from their school if they are under 8 years old
  - 3 miles (≈ 4.8km) from their school if they are 8 years old or older
- ➔ Families on low income (defined as in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit or entitled to free school meals) if they are:

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<sup>9</sup> [Search for schools, colleges and multi-academy trusts - Find school and college performance data in England - GOV.UK \(find-school-performance-data.service.gov.uk\)](#); [Schools, pupils and their characteristics, Academic year 2022/23 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2023

<sup>11</sup> [Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 | Bee Network | Powered by TfGM](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Opportunity for all - Strong schools with great teachers for your child \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> [National Travel Survey: Travel to School factsheet \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#); [Children's travel to school—the interaction of individual, neighbourhood and school factors \(sciencedirectassets.com\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Travel to school for children of compulsory school age \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

- Aged 8 to 10 years old and attend their nearest school which is at least 2 miles away ( $\approx 3.2\text{km}$ )
- Aged 11 to 16 years old and attend one of their three nearest schools that are between 2 to 6 miles away ( $\approx 3.2\text{km} - 9.7\text{km}$ )
- Aged 11 to 16 years old and attend their nearest preferred school on the ground of religion or belief, that is between 2 to 15 miles away ( $\approx 3.2\text{km} - 24.1\text{km}$ )

➔ Children who attend their nearest suitable school and cannot be reasonably expected to walk there because of their special education needs, disability, or mobility problem.

## Dedicated school services

At present, TfGM provides dedicated school bus services to a number of schools across Greater Manchester even though there is no legal obligation to do so<sup>15</sup>. School services have existed in Greater Manchester for many years, filling gaps in the public transport network where private operators have not provided a 'general' bus service. Using ticketing data, it is estimated that approximately 5% of the secondary school population uses a dedicated school service to travel to school.

Although technically TfGM-provided school buses can be used by any member of the public, in practice they are only used by students to travel to and from school. This means they exist as their own separate network. The introduction of bus franchising means we can now take a network wide approach to public transport, adjusting 'general' services to better connect schools. There is therefore an opportunity to review how school services could be better integrated into the wider Bee Network, allowing us to make the best use of available resources.

## Travel for Children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) travel requires a bespoke approach, tailored to individuals' unique needs and circumstances. Some local authorities do provide travel training to help those who may struggle to travel independently on public transport to do so<sup>16</sup>.

Each of the ten Greater Manchester local authorities are responsible for the procurement and delivery of SEND transport for those students in their area who are eligible for travel assistance. Although SEND travel is outside the scope of this strategy, local authorities are separately exploring what opportunities there are to better coordinate the provision of SEND transport in Greater Manchester.

<sup>15</sup> Some schools do provide their own private school buses separately of TfGM.

<sup>16</sup> [Travel training in Greater Manchester | Bee Network | Powered by TfGM](#)

# **Why now?**

## **The Bee Network**

Greater Manchester is transforming its transport system through the creation of the Bee Network, bringing walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport together. This means that there are new opportunities to create a joined up transport network which can better connect young people (and the people who work there) with their place of education and other key destinations.

## **A Refreshed Mission for Active Travel**

Walking, wheeling, scooting, and cycling are central to our vision for the future of transport in Greater Manchester, forming a key part of the Bee Network. Dame Sarah Storey, Greater Manchester's Active Travel Commissioner, produced a Refreshed Mission for Active Travel in Autumn 2022<sup>17</sup>. A key priority identified in this document was making it safer and easier for pupils to travel actively to school.

## **Vision Zero**

Greater Manchester has declared its ambition to achieve Vision Zero, meaning we aim to eliminate all road fatalities and life changing injuries on Greater Manchester's roads by 2040<sup>18</sup>. Making it safe for pupils to travel to school each day is a priority, and crucial to more young people traveling to school actively or on public transport. Fewer vehicles taking young people to school also makes our roads and streets safer for everyone.

## **The Greater Manchester Baccalaureate (MBacc)**

The Greater Manchester Baccalaureate, also known as MBacc, celebrates the technical pathways into employment at age 14, 16 and 18, providing an antidote to the education system being shaped around the needs of those pursuing the University route. It is designed to make the key decision points simple and reduce confusion for young people and parents and carers. It shows young people the subjects and qualifications that employers value, helping them access high quality jobs in our growing economy. Our transport network can support the MBacc by ensuring that transport isn't a barrier to young people taking advantage of the opportunities available to them.

**We have an opportunity to create a transport system that better serves young people and makes travelling sustainably the first choice.**

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<sup>17</sup> [Greater Manchester's Active Travel Mission | TfGM Bee Active](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Vision Zero Strategy - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#)



# **The case for change**

## **To improve physical and mental health**

22% of reception aged children and 39% of Year 6 aged children in Greater Manchester were overweight or obese in 2022/23, higher than the national average, and just over a third of children are active for the recommended minimum of at least 60 minutes a day<sup>19</sup>. As well as providing physical health benefits, travelling actively can help improve pupil's behaviour, concentration, and mental health<sup>20</sup>.

## **To help with the cost-of-living crisis**

For families experiencing poverty and financial hardship, school travel costs can add additional financial stress<sup>21</sup>. Attractive and affordable alternatives must therefore be available. The need to drop off and collect children from school can limit economic opportunities; giving young people the ability to travel independently gives parents greater freedom to work or fulfil other caring duties.

## **To reduce congestion**

Driving to school has a significant impact on congestion. Taking children to school accounts for approximately 31% of traffic on GM roads between 08:00-08:59 and 15:00-15:59<sup>22</sup>. With congestion costing Greater Manchester businesses £1.65bn per year<sup>23</sup>, promoting alternative ways to travel to school can help make journeys for all road users quicker and more reliable, stimulating economic growth through improved connectivity.

## **To create safer and more attractive streets**

Reducing the number of young people being driven to school would help make our streets safer. Cars are the largest contributor to vulnerable road users being killed or seriously injured on Greater Manchester's roads<sup>24</sup>. Making our streets safer also helps make our communities and neighbourhoods more pleasant and liveable places. 74% of GM residents think that their streets are currently dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles<sup>25</sup>.

## **To reduce pollution in the air**

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<sup>19</sup> [National Child Measurement Programme, England, 2022/23 School Year - NHS England Digital; Greater Manchester - #BeeWell \(beewellprogramme.org\)](#)

<sup>20</sup> [HT\\_briefing\\_layoutvFINALvii.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\); Investigation of the associations between physical activity, self-regulation and educational outcomes in childhood | PLOS ONE](#)

<sup>21</sup> [School sums what does going to school really cost families.pdf \(cpag.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2023](#)

<sup>23</sup> [Made to move.pdf \(ctfassets.net\)](#) (figure adjusted for inflation, 2024)

<sup>24</sup> [Vision Zero Strategy - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Walking and Cycling Index 2023: Greater Manchester \(sustrans.org.uk\)](#)

Children are more affected by air pollution because their organs and immune systems are still developing<sup>26</sup>. Reducing the number of private vehicle journeys taken to and from schools would therefore help reduce air pollution and improve children's health.

## **To help the environment**

Transport is responsible for 31% of Greater Manchester's carbon emissions<sup>27</sup>. If we can support more young people to travel by active and zero emission modes it will contribute to Greater Manchester's target to be a carbon-neutral city region by 2038.

## **To better support care responsibilities**

The school run can often cause additional stress and challenge for parents who face competing demands on their time<sup>28</sup>. Parents want to get their children to school quickly and efficiently, often as part of a longer journey into work, but our transport network has traditionally not been designed for these types of trips<sup>29</sup>.

## **To enable future travel choices**

Providing the option to travel to school actively or on public transport gives young people independence and helps develop a lifelong habit of travelling sustainably. Being able to travel independently enables young people to access future learning opportunities and careers, helping more young people to get high quality jobs across Greater Manchester.

## **It's what young people want**

Young people want to walk, cycle, wheel, and scoot to school. A study of six primary schools in Greater Manchester found that although cycling and scooting only accounted for 10% of all journeys at the studied primary schools, 50% of pupils wanted to cycle or scoot to school. When walking was included, this rose to 75% of pupils wanting to travel actively to school<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> [Schools | Clean Air Greater Manchester \(cleanairgm.com\)](https://cleanairgm.com/schools/)

<sup>27</sup> [2005-21-uk-local-authority-ghg-emissions-update-060723.xlsx \(live.com\)](https://live.com/2005-21-uk-local-authority-ghg-emissions-update-060723.xlsx)

<sup>28</sup> Access and inclusion in Greater Manchester by Steer (2020)

<sup>29</sup> [What-women-want-report-1.pdf \(gm4women2028.org\)](https://gm4women2028.org/what-women-want-report-1.pdf); Invisible Women by Caroline Criado Perez (2020)

<sup>30</sup> TfGM School Travel Choices Pilot Paper by Mott MacDonald (2018)

# **Barriers to travelling sustainably to school**

## **Road Safety**

Only 50% of GM residents say it is safe for children to walk to school and just 42% believe it is safe for children to cycle to school<sup>31</sup>. Approximately a fifth of young people who use active travel “infrequently” say this is partly due to a lack of safe infrastructure<sup>32</sup>. Until more parents and young people feel it is safe to walk, wheel, scoot or cycle to school, children will continue to be driven to school. This leads to a vicious circle of more traffic and less safe roads.

If more parents drive their children to school, there is more traffic leading to it being less safe to walk, wheel, scoot and cycle to school. More parents will therefore drive their children to school as they see it as unsafe for them to walk, wheel, scoot or cycle. This negative cycle then continues.

The positive cycle is when more children walk, wheel, scoot and cycle to school this leads to less traffic, meaning it is safer to walk, wheel, scoot and cycle to school. And the cycle continues.

## **Accessibility**

11% of children are disabled in the UK<sup>33</sup>. Young people, particularly those with a disability, say poor accessibility has prevented them using active travel and public transport<sup>34</sup>. Disabled people report having difficulties travelling two and a half times more often than non-disabled people<sup>35</sup>, and 10% of disabled people say that inaccessible transport is a key barrier to their education, limiting their life opportunities<sup>36</sup>.

## **Cost**

Travelling to school can be one of the most significant costs of attending secondary school, along with buying uniform, shoes and bags<sup>37</sup>. Around a fifth of young people who use active travel “infrequently” cite cost and not having access to a bike (which may also be associated with cost) as reasons for not being able to travel actively. When surveyed the majority of young people did however feel that public transport was either very affordable or somewhat affordable<sup>38</sup>. This does not mean that cost is not a barrier, for some families the cost of travelling to school will be a significant proportion of their household budget.

According to the National Youth Combined Authority Young Persons Transport Survey from October 2022, when asked to what extent do you think public transport is affordable, 11% said not affordable at all, 66% said somewhat affordable and 23% said very affordable.

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<sup>31</sup> National Highways and Transport Network (NHT) Survey 2022

<sup>32</sup> NYCA Young Persons Transport Survey October 2022

<sup>33</sup> [UK disability statistics: Prevalence and life experiences - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/library/research-and-factsheets/information/uk-disability-statistics-prevalence-and-life-experiences)

<sup>34</sup> NYCA Young Persons Transport Survey October 2022

<sup>35</sup> [Disabled people's travel behaviour and attitudes to travel \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/84444/disabled-people-travel-behaviour-and-attitudes-to-travel)

<sup>36</sup> [The Transport Accessibility Gap \(motabilityfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.motabilityfoundation.org.uk/the-transport-accessibility-gap)

<sup>37</sup> [School sums what does going to school really cost families.pdf \(cpag.org.uk\)](https://www.cpag.org.uk/school-sums-what-does-going-to-school-really-cost-families.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> NYCA Young Persons Transport Survey October 2022

## Reliability

The reliability of public transport in Greater Manchester has been identified as the third biggest barrier to using public transport by young people (after safety and cost)<sup>39</sup>. 80% of 16 – 18-year-olds perceived bus frequency and availability as having an impact on their access to opportunities<sup>40</sup>.

## Safety on public transport

For under 16's in Greater Manchester who don't use public transport frequently, not feeling safe (while waiting at stops and when on public transport) is the key issue preventing them using public transport. Greater Manchester's Youth Combined Authority<sup>41</sup> has highlighted the need to improve security on public transport, including having better lighting and more security or youth workers on hand.

## Skills

Some young people are unable to travel sustainably as they do not have the knowledge or skills to do so. Just under a sixth of young people who use public transport "infrequently" said that they didn't really know how to use public transport. 1 in 10 of those who said they use active travel "infrequently" said that they could not ride a bike<sup>42</sup>.

## Parents, guardians and carers having to travel to work afterwards

Taking children to school as part of a longer journey into work or to other care responsibilities means driving is often more convenient than using public transport or travelling actively. Research focused on women's caring experiences by the University of Manchester and GM4Women2028<sup>43</sup> found that 29% of women who commute in Manchester make one or more stops on their way to work. This rises to 55% of those with children under 12. Women who trip-chain (make multiple stops) are less likely to use active travel, with 19% saying they are unable to walk children to school and then continue to work.

## Higher car ownership

More households in Greater Manchester now own a car, with low-income communities having seen the largest growth in car ownership. Between 2011 and 2021, the number of cars available for household use in Greater Manchester grew by 13%. If a household owns a car, it is more likely that a young person will be driven to school. The Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2022 found that 30% of education trips are as a car passenger if a household owns at least one car. This figure drops to 4% for households without a car.

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<sup>39</sup> Presentation by Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority on National Travel Survey (2023)

<sup>40</sup> [GMCA 20230127 Our Pass Evaluation \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>41</sup> Presentation by Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority on National Travel Survey (2023)

<sup>42</sup> NYCA Young Persons Transport Survey October 2022

<sup>43</sup> [What-women-want-report-1.pdf \(gm4women2028.org\)](#)

# **Current travel patterns**

Using the Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey (TRADS), we have estimated how children and young people travel to and from education. Due to yearly cohort changes, travel patterns vary more for education trips between years than other journey types, we have therefore averaged three years of data together to provide a more stable baseline.

## **Primary school**

The results from TRADS show a positive year on year trend of more young people choosing to travel actively to school. Despite this progress a third of primary school pupils are still being driven to school.

Greater Manchester does already meet the national target for 55% of 5 to 10 year olds to walk to school by 2025<sup>44</sup>, but this is a national target which also accounts for more rural areas where children might be expected to travel further to school. In Greater Manchester 87% of primary aged pupils travel less than 2 km (≈1.2 miles) to school, a distance for which we would expect active travel to be the first choice.

The Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey researched how 5 to 10 year olds travelled to school. It found that in the period 2016 to 2018, 54% went by active travel, 2% by public transport, 42% by car, van or motorcycle and 2% by taxi. From 2017 to 2019, 58% went by active travel, 2% by public transport, 38% by car, van or motorcycle and 1% by taxi. From 2021 to 2023, 64% went by active travel, 4% by public transport, 33% by car, van or motorcycle and 1% by taxi.

According to the Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey in the period 2021 to 2023 the distance travelled to school by primary age pupils was, 87% travelled up to 2km, 10% travelled 2km to 5km and 3% travelled 5km or more.

To build on the progress we have made to date, we have set an ambitious goal of:

**70% of primary school students in Greater Manchester walking, wheeling, scooting, or cycling to school by 2030**

## **Secondary school**

According to TRADS there appears to have been little progress in increasing the number of sustainable trips taken to secondary schools. There has been a slight increase in the number of young people travelling actively, but at the same time there has been a slight reduction in the number using public transport.

Although we cannot judge our progress against just one year's worth of results, in 2023 we did see a large increase in the number of young people being driven to school. In 2022 we saw a large jump in the number of young people travelling actively which subsequently reduced the following

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<sup>44</sup> [Cycling and walking investment strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/90444/cycling_and_walking_investment_strategy.pdf)

year, so this may just be a fluctuation in this year's data. It does though suggest that, unlike with primary schools, we are not seeing a trend of consistent growth in the number of sustainable trips to school.

The Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey researched how 11 to 16 year olds travelled to school. It found that in the period from 2016 to 2018, 45% went by active travel, 29% by public transport, 25% by car, van or motorcycle and 2% by taxi. From 2017 to 2019, 45% went by active travel, 27% by public transport, 26% by car, van or motorcycle and 2% by taxi. From 2021 to 2023, 47% went by active travel, 27% by public transport, 25% by car, van or motorcycle and 1% by taxi.

There is the potential for many more young people to travel actively to school. 59% of GM secondary school pupils live within 2km ( $\approx 1.2$  miles) distance of their school, and a further 29% live within 5km ( $\approx 3.1$  miles). As secondary school pupils tend to live further away from their school compared to primary school pupils, public transport has a greater role to play in helping young people travel to school sustainably. With nearly 9 in 10 pupils living within 5km of their school, public transport should be an attractive option for those who live too far away to travel actively.

According to the Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey in the period from 2021 to 2023 the distance travelled to school by secondary age was, 59% travelled up to 2km, 29% travelled 2km to 5km and 13% travelled 5km or more.

Given the limited progress to date, we believe that an enhanced focus on secondary school travel is needed. Therefore, we are setting ourselves the ambitious goal of:

**80% of secondary school students in Greater Manchester to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to travel to school by 2030**

## **Further education (16 – 18)**

As there are fewer young people in further education compared to those at primary and secondary schools, the TRADS sample sizes are much smaller. Therefore, it is harder to provide a consistent story of how travel patterns have evolved as there is a greater variation in the results from year to year.

Our data suggests that post-pandemic there has been a growth in the number of young people driving or being driven to access further education, alongside a large reduction in the numbers travelling actively. This could be linked to the increasing distances that young people are travelling to access further education, as shown below.

The Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey researched how 16 to 18-year-olds travel to access further education. It found that in the period from 2016 to 2018 24% went by active travel, 52% by public transport and 24% by car, van or motorcycle. From 2017 to 2019, 25% went by active

travel, 50% by public transport and 25% by car, van or motorcycle. From 2021 to 2023, 13% went by active travel, 54% by public transport and 24% by car, van or motorcycle.

According to the Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey the distance travelled to access further education from 2016 to 2018 was, 27% travelled up to 2km, 39 travelled 2km to 5km and 34% travelled 5km or more. From 2017 to 2019 it was, 29% travelled up to 2km, 37 travelled 2km to 5km and 34% travelled 5km or more. From 2021 to 2023 it was, 15% travelled up to 2km, 51 travelled 2km to 5km and 34% travelled 5km or more.

If young people are now travelling further to access further education, we need more young people to use public transport to ensure that these journeys are being made in a sustainable way.

In 2019 Our Pass was introduced, meaning that 16- to 18-year-olds could travel for free on buses and half price on Metrolink. We would therefore have expected a larger increase in public transport usage than is shown in the graph above. The TRADS figures from 2021 and 2022 do suggest that there was indeed a large increase in public transport usage, with around 60% of 16- to 18-year-olds using public transport to access further education. This increase was not however continued in the 2023 figures, where only 40% of 16- to 18-year-olds said they used public transport to access further education.

However, a separate survey asking how often Our Pass members made use of free and discounted public transport found that 48% used it daily and 30% used it 3 or more times a week. Given that 72% of 16- to 18-year-olds have an Our Pass membership, this would suggest that as a minimum over half of 16 to 18 year olds are using public transport either daily or frequently.

Therefore, we have set an ambitious goal of:

**80% of further education students in Greater Manchester to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to access education by 2030**

# **How we will improve school travel**

We want more young people to choose to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to get to school and access further education. However, for many young people this is not currently possible. If we are to achieve our ambitious goals, we must remove the barriers that are currently preventing young people travelling in a sustainable way.

We have identified eight overarching activities on which to focus our efforts. These eight activities are not the only solutions that exist and delivering them will require close collaboration with young people, parents, guardians, carers, schools, partner organisations, and communities.

## **Our activities**

Create safer streets around schools

Continue to deliver walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure

Increase access to cycles and secure cycle storage

Support young people to become travel champions

Improve the customer experience on public transport

Make our network safe and secure

Create an integrated network

Engage schools and local communities

## **1. Create safer streets around schools**

For parents to allow their children to walk, wheel, scoot, or cycle to school, they must feel that it is safe. We have published a draft Vision Zero Strategy that sets the ambitious goal of eliminating all fatal and life changing injuries on Greater Manchester's roads by 2040<sup>45</sup>. This will not just make our streets safer but make it more attractive for people to travel and spend time on them.

Every school faces unique challenges; therefore, we need to have a range of measures that can be tailored to address a school's specific safety needs.

Measures to make it safer to walk, wheel, scoot or cycle to school could include:

- School Streets
- Crossing points
- Travel training
- 20 mph speed limits
- Park & Stride
- Walk to School Challenge

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<sup>45</sup> [Vision Zero Strategy - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/vision-zero-strategy)



- Traffic calming
- Road markings
- Parking restrictions
- Playful routes<sup>46</sup>
- School crossing patrols
- Traffic enforcement
- Bollards
- Urban realm improvements

Experiences across the country have shown that interventions that introduce physical road safety improvements alongside behaviour change programmes that engage with the school community have more chance of succeeding. **TfGM will therefore develop a pilot "Safer Routes to School" project to examine how physical and behavioural interventions can be introduced together as part of future interventions around schools and the wider area.**

## School Streets

School Streets involve closing the road outside a school during drop off and pick up time to reduce vehicle traffic, creating a pleasant, child-friendly environment. Essential access for residents and blue badge holders is maintained, but through traffic is restricted. Research has shown that School Streets can reduce the number of people driving to school by a third and reduce the risk of injury<sup>47</sup>. **TfGM will work with local authorities, schools and local communities to deliver, subject to funding, 100 School Streets by 2028.**

It has been through the dedicated work of schools, parents and volunteers that School Streets have been created. Having a safe space for children to travel to school should not however be reliant on a few dedicated people to enforce it and staff the barriers<sup>48</sup>. Some local authorities in GM now have the power to enforce moving traffic offences using ANPR cameras. **TfGM and local authorities will look to increasingly use cameras to enforce school streets where it is appropriate to do so**, but being aware that other measures, such as physical barriers or paying volunteers, may be a more suitable alternative for some streets.

## Case Study of Guardian Angels Primary School

Guardian Angels Primary School, in partnership with Bury Council, Living Streets and TfGM has introduced a school street to keep its pupils safe and encourage them to walk or cycle to school. As well as having a school street, the school takes part in WOW – the walk to school challenge from Living Streets. Since starting WOW, Guardian Angels Primary School active journey rates have increased by 15%.

## Parking

Illegal and inconsiderate parking on the road and pavement can make it unsafe for young people to walk to school. It can also negatively affect local communities and block access for emergency vehicles, making it unsafe for all. Central government has been considering granting local

<sup>46</sup> For further information on Stockport's playful routes see [On The Way Play - An idea in progress by Civic and Social](#).

<sup>47</sup> [Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>48</sup> [PowerPoint Presentation \(walkridegm.org.uk\)](#)

authorities new powers to tackle pavement parking. We will **continue to lobby central government for these powers** and depending on their decision, explore how we can use any new powers to tackle pavement parking around schools. Until then, **we will explore how existing powers can be used to discourage poor parking around schools and take steps to increase public awareness of the harm pavement parking causes.**

Park & Stride can provide a safer alternative. Instead of parking on the road or pavement near the school, parents drop off their children a short walk away in a designated and agreed parking place e.g. a supermarket car park or a local community centre. Park & Stride should be used in conjunction with other school road safety measures and behaviour change initiatives, as on its own it is unlikely to result in a change in travel habits. Ultimately, the most effective way to make it safer to travel actively to school is for fewer parents to drive their children to school.

### **Case study of Shevington High School**

Pupils at Shevington High School wished to make it safer to walk to school by reducing the number of cars being parked outside the school gate. Working with a local pub the school created a park and stride scheme and asked parents and carers to take a parking pledge. To raise awareness pupils created posters, promoted it in school assemblies and gave out mock parking tickets to cars that continued to park outside the school gate. 38% of pupils now travel actively to school and 11% of pupils travel by park and stride regularly.

## **2. Continue to deliver walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure**

Greater Manchester has committed to building a world-class walking, wheeling, and cycling network that will link up communities and provide safe routes to schools and further education establishments. Creating a safe space to travel actively is one of the most effective ways to encourage more children and parents to travel actively.

Greater Manchester is leading the way in creating safe spaces to walk, wheel, scoot and cycle. TfGM and the ten local authorities have plans to build nearly 2,734 km of connected cycling and walking routes by 2038<sup>49</sup>. This includes delivering new crossings, safer junctions, more dropped kerbs, wider pavements and creating segregated spaces for vulnerable road users on busier roads. More is needed though. Only 50% of GM residents are currently satisfied that it is safe for children to walk to school, and just 42% believe it is safe for children to cycle to school<sup>50</sup>.

### **More accessible neighbourhoods**

Nearly two-thirds of all education trips are within or between local neighbourhoods<sup>51</sup>. To encourage more young people to walk, wheel, scoot or cycle we therefore need to create neighbourhoods that are safer and more attractive places to be in.

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<sup>49</sup> (Public Pack) 14.12.2023 Bee Network Committee - Complete Pack Agenda Supplement for Bee Network Committee, 14/12/2023 14:00 ([greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk))

<sup>50</sup> National Highways and Transport Network (NHT) Survey 2022

<sup>51</sup> Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2023

Alongside improving walking and wheeling routes, this means we need to create quieter and therefore safer streets. We will do this by **setting speed limits that reflect the risk and purpose of a road**, in line with the Streets for All approach<sup>52</sup> and the Safe System approach as set out in the Vision Zero Strategy<sup>53</sup>.

Making local areas more accessible will include, where possible, the installation of segregated infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists along busier roads. Installing new cycle lanes or crossings on busier sections means people can use the quiet streets that lead up to it, creating even more safe walking and cycling routes

## **Safer crossing points and junctions**

Having to cross a busy junction or main road can stop young people walking, wheeling, or cycling to school. At present, there are over 80 junctions within 500m of a school that do not currently have a green man or dedicated pedestrian phases; instead, pedestrians must look for gaps in the traffic. This situation needs to be resolved as soon as possible. Our aim is therefore that **every busy junction or main road within 500m of a school will have pedestrian facilities installed by 2032.**

Alongside installing new crossings, we have been adjusting the timings of existing crossings so that pedestrians do not have to wait as long to cross the road. We are also giving pedestrians longer to cross the road, reducing the worry that the lights will turn to green while picking up a dropped water bottle or toy.

## **Case Study of Bowker Vale Primary School**

TfGM traffic engineers worked with Bowker Vale Primary School and Walk Ride Blackley to make it easier for children and parents to cross the road. The crossing outside the school was reprogrammed to reduce the maximum pedestrian waiting time. A TfGM traffic engineer joined the school's "Walk into the Weekend" event to explain the changes and show how the crossing works.

## **Identifying where to invest next**

Given the limited budgets available for new infrastructure, TfGM and the ten local authorities must identify where investing our limited funds would have the greatest impact. To assist in doing this we have undertaken an audit of our current active travel network to find out what existing infrastructure meets Bee Network standards<sup>54</sup>. Some local authorities have also carried out or are planning to carry out their own assessments of how they can improve active travel access to schools<sup>55</sup>. These and the "Safer Routes to School" pilot will be used to **develop a future school travel infrastructure programme**, consisting of a combination of interventions that will make

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<sup>52</sup> [Streets for All | Bee Network | Powered by TfGM](#)

<sup>53</sup> [Vision Zero Strategy - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>54</sup> [\(Public Pack\) 14.12.2023 Bee Network Committee - Complete Pack Agenda Supplement for Bee Network Committee, 14/12/2023 14:00 \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\); Active Travel in Greater Manchester 2023 \(ctfassets.net\)](#)

<sup>55</sup> [Oldham Active Schools | Oldham Council](#)

the streets immediately surrounding a school safer and the wider area more attractive for walking, wheeling, scooting, and cycling.

### 3. Increase access to cycles and secure cycle storage

To give young people the opportunity to cycle to school we need to help them, and their parents, guardians and carers, have access to a bike and have a secure place to store it. Just over a fifth of households in Greater Manchester currently have access to a bike<sup>56</sup>.

#### Access to cycles

**We will provide greater access to cycles, adapted bikes and scooters by supporting schools to either set up their own bike library or work closely with their nearest bike library.** A bike library allows people to borrow a bicycle and try it out for a short loan period, either for free or for a small fee. Bike libraries are generally based in places such as community centres, schools, village halls or local business premises.

Refurbished bikes are a cheaper and more environmentally friendly alternative to buying a new bike. **We will therefore continue to work with charities and cycle shops to promote places that sell refurbished bikes on the TfGM Bee Active Website**<sup>57</sup>.

#### Secure cycle storage

Alongside providing access to cycles there is a need to provide secure storage at schools and colleges to give students the confidence that their bike is safe and secure. Since 2021 TfGM has provided grant funding to 77 schools and committed funding to a further 51 to enable them to install cycle parking provisions. Many houses and flats however lack space to store cycles. **We will investigate how developer contributions and other funding streams can be used to install more cycle storage at schools and in the wider community.**

### 4. Support young people to become travel champions

People form travel habits and then stick to them. If we want young people to travel in a more active and sustainable way, we need to encourage and enable new travel habits throughout their school career. We want to give young people the ability to not only travel to school sustainably, but to become lifelong users and advocates for sustainable travel.

**We want to develop a new education programme in partnership with schools and external organisations that will support young people throughout their school career, providing them with the skills and motivation to become lifelong travel champions.**

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<sup>56</sup> Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2022

<sup>57</sup> [Get a bike - Access to bikes | TfGM Bee Active](#)

This will build on the current Modeshift STARS platform that is available to schools but will be enhanced to bring together all current programmes under one umbrella, like Transport for London have done with their Travel for Life education programme<sup>58</sup>.

Young people and schools are currently approached by many organisations who wish to talk to them about how to travel sustainably. However, often the training is focused on just one aspect of travelling sustainably and fails to link up with previous training courses or talks. It is also difficult for schools to identify who offers what and how they can apply. **We will work with our partners to put all our available resources, information, and funding opportunities in one place**, allowing schools to easily find and select the activities and training that they think would best suit their pupils needs.

### **Giving young people travel skills and knowledge**

Knowing how to safely cross the road and navigate around your local area are the first steps to being able to travel independently later in life. We will therefore **ensure that every young person has learnt about road safety and has basic navigation skills before they go to secondary school**.

We want all young people to be able to ride a bike. Together TfGM, local authorities and partner organisations, such as Bikeability, Cycling UK and BikeRight provide training that covers a range of age groups and different skills, from how to ride a bike to how to fix it. Going forward we will better coordinate our efforts to **enable every primary school student in Greater Manchester who wishes to do so, to learn how to ride and fix a bike**.

Currently there are limited resources on how to use public transport, even though for many young people the first time they may have travelled on a bus is when they go to school. Some guidance is provided on the TfGM website and through the TravelSafe Partnership, but this tends to focus on how to behave rather than how to purchase a ticket or plan a journey for example. It is our aim that **every young person in Greater Manchester will know how to travel by bus, tram, and train by the time they start their GCSEs**.

### **Using the opportunity of fresh starts**

It is difficult to break habits, but a change in circumstance forces us to actively consider how we travel, providing an opportunity to suggest alternatives and create new travel habits. Moving from primary to secondary school is a perfect example of a fresh start. Habits are quickly formed, so how a young person travels to school in their first few weeks will become their default travel behaviour. **We will work with schools and colleges to support young people during the transition between schools**, supporting young people to choose the most appropriate travel option for their journey.

### **Inspiring young people to travel differently**

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<sup>58</sup> [TfL STARS - Getting young London moving](#)

The best advocates for sustainable travel to school are young people themselves. Therefore, a key part of our future education programme will be working with young people to give them greater ownership over what activities or incentives their school provides to encourage more young people to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport.

We have already been working with young people to help them create and deliver their own campaigns to promote active travel and public transport. Primary school pupils have helped promote road safety through becoming Road Safety Champions and secondary school pupils have been championing sustainable travel through acting as Youth Travel Ambassadors for their school. We want to build on these programmes and encourage even more young people to become travel champions.

### **Case study of Stretford High School**

Stretford High School's Youth Travel Ambassadors ran a point based travel competition in school. Students who scored the most points for walking, wheeling, cycling, or using public transport to school won prizes. To celebrate the completion of the term long competition, they also organised a no car day with an official road closure to reduce congestion directly outside of the school gates. They have seen a 4% increase in students walking to school and a 6% decrease in car use.

## **5. Improve the customer experience on public transport**

Accessing education is the most common purpose for bus trips, meaning students are a vital customer group<sup>59</sup>. Encouraging more young people to use public transport is therefore essential for achieving growth in patronage.

Public transport in Greater Manchester is changing. Through the Bee Network, we are bringing buses, trams, trains, and active travel together. This will mean a more reliable, affordable, accessible and accountable public transport system that better serves young people.

### **Reliable**

Young people and their parents must be able to trust public transport to get them to and from school every day, on time. This means sticking to timetables or, on busier routes and Metrolink, running so frequently that you can turn up to a stop and get on a bus or tram without checking a timetable. Our aim is for **80% of buses to depart on time** (less than one minute early and five minutes late).

To achieve this, we will:

- Expect and require bus operators to meet high performance standards with contractual penalties if they fail to meet them.
- Maintain and increase bus priority infrastructure so that buses can quickly get to their destination without getting stuck in traffic.

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<sup>59</sup> Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2023

- Put in place systems to share road works information between highways authorities, TfGM and operators to minimise disruption and ensure pupils still arrive at school on time.

To offer young people greater certainty, the Bee Network app now includes real-time bus tracking, and we have plans to install information screens at 300 bus stops to display real-time departure information.

## **Affordable**

We will provide a simpler and fairer ticketing system for young people. To make it as easy as possible for young people to use our network, we will remove the additional cost of having to change buses to get to school by **introducing a new bus hopper fare**. This means that young people will be able to travel on multiple buses within an hour for the cost of a single ticket. We will also make it easier for more young people to have access to affordable travel by exploring how we can **improve the application process for the igo card** (5–16-years old).

We will encourage more young people to use the Bee Network app as not only does it allow young people to see live departure times, track their bus and plan their journey, it also allows young people aged over 13 to purchase their tickets in advance of travelling. This provides parents with the certainty that their child has brought their ticket and can't lose it as it's saved on their phone.

## **Our Pass**

Our Pass is a concession for young people aged 16 to 18, making all buses in Greater Manchester free and halving the price of Metrolink. This has resulted in a phenomenal growth in the number of young people using public transport in a relatively short period of time. Research into the impact of Our Pass has shown that 88% of young people felt that Our Pass has made it easier for them to take part in education and training. Young people also said it has helped them find and keep a job, supporting them in their transition from education to employment.

## **Accessible**

To allow everyone to travel to school and college on public transport we are making our vehicles and stops more accessible. We are upgrading our buses, so that they have two spaces onboard for wheelchair users, hearing induction loops and audio-visual announcements as standard. In addition, we are creating a further 500 more accessible stops with raised kerbs and providing places to rest while waiting. Through driver training we are ensuring that drivers are aware of the different needs of their passengers and can assist where necessary.

## **Accountable**

The Bee Network is run for the people of Greater Manchester, and we will be held to account by them. We are actively encouraging customers to rate their journey, so that they can let us know when we provide a good experience and when there have been issues. This can be done by rating a journey on the Bee Network app, website or by calling the Bee Network Contact Centre. This feedback will be used to help identify issues and judge performance, with operators facing

financial penalties if they fail to provide a high-quality service. Over time this will help improve our network and provide a better customer experience.

## **6. Make our network safe and secure**

Improving safety and perceptions of safety for all our passengers is a priority. Through our TravelSafe Partnership, led by TfGM and GMP, we are addressing crime and anti-social behaviour on our network. Greater Manchester Police (GMP) has made policing transport a priority for the force, treating the network as the conceptual 'eleventh district' of Greater Manchester. If more young people and their families are to use public transport it must feel and be safe.

### **Encourage positive travel behaviour**

We are working with schools through TravelSafe's Educational Outreach Programme to engage with young people about their behaviour on public transport. We also collaborate with other agencies, such as Foundation 92, to reach groups we may otherwise not be able to reach. Together we seek to promote good travel behaviour and warn young people who are taking part in crime or anti-social behaviour about the consequences of doing so.

### **Case Study of Foundation 92**

Foundation 92 uses a sports-based outreach programme to address some of the underlying and complex reasons for why a young person may misbehave. As part of their wider programme they have been using a converted bus with a tv and games console to engage with young people who have been misbehaving in transport interchanges. By talking to them in a non-confrontational manner they can help the young person think about why they are behaving the way they are.

### **Deter and prevent unwanted behaviour**

The TravelSafe Partnership is focused on addressing and deterring any instances of crime or anti-social behaviour on our network. TravelSafe Support and Enforcement Officers are deployed across GM to support passengers, deter anti-social behaviour, conduct ticket checks and answer customer queries. This is in addition to uniformed and plain clothes police officers who regularly patrol the network.

If passengers do come across anti-social or unsafe behaviour, they can quickly and discreetly report it via Greater Manchester Police's LiveChat on their website or by calling 101 – or 999 in an emergency. To make it easier to report incidents **we will introduce a new TravelSafe Live chat feature on the Bee Network app and include it as part of our travel training to young people.**

## **7. Create an integrated network**

To provide young people with a reliable and convenient transport system we need to create an integrated network that better connects buses, trams, trains, active travel and school services together. A more integrated network will give young people greater flexibility about where and



when they travel (allowing them to go to after school clubs, for example) and improve the resilience of the network, by providing alternatives if things go wrong.

Before the creation of the Bee Network and the start of bus franchising Greater Manchester was unable to plan its transport network in an integrated way. The introduction of a dedicated school service was often the only way we could ensure young people could travel to school, given our inability to alter the wider network.

School services are subsidised bus services, paid for by local authorities through TfGM. Whilst technically open to the public, in practice TfGM provided school services are used only by school pupils to travel to and from school.

Whilst filling gaps in this way provided an immediate solution to a school's connectivity problems, this case-by-case approach did not allow planners to take a strategic view of the whole network. This meant that, over time, an uneven patchwork of services developed, with limited interaction with the wider public transport network and outcomes that could be perceived as unfair.

School services require scarce driver and vehicle resource, which could be more efficiently utilised on services that run throughout the day for the whole community. By creating one, joined-up network we will be able to better serve schools and further education establishments, alongside improving transport connections for everyone.

Schools with more pupils receiving free school meals are less likely to have a dedicated school service. Schools with school buses = **28%** of pupils receive free school meals. Schools with no school buses = **35%** of pupils receive free school meals. All schools = **31%** of pupils receive free school meals

## Network planning guidelines

To create an integrated network, we are undertaking a rolling programme of area-based network reviews. These will consider how our transport services can together form an easy to use, simple and joined up system. Our preference will always be to make any adjustments to specific services or the wider network through the network review process. This is because if it is not possible for a young person to travel to school actively or by public transport, others may also face limited transport options.

These reviews will be guided by the following principles. Our transport network should be:

- **Comprehensive** – because people need access to convenient transport at all times.
- **Simple** – because people need to find the network easy to understand and use.
- **Frequent** – because keeping waiting times low makes public transport more attractive.
- **Direct** – because public transport users value low journey times.
- **Reliable** – because people need to be able to depend on public transport.
- **Integrated** – because users need access to multiple journey choices.
- **Cost-effective** – because our network needs to be financially sustainable.

## The future role of dedicated school services

As part of our work to create a simpler and more integrated network we will look to gradually incorporate existing school services into the general network through the network review process. As a general principle our transport network should be available to all users, and therefore not consist of special services that only certain people can use.

Where school services do exist, they should enhance and support the wider transport network. This could mean for example that rather than running a bespoke school service with its own special route, a general daytime service could be diverted to serve a nearby school at the start and end of the school day. Or an extra bus that starts or ends at a school could be added to an existing route to provide additional capacity.

Going forward, new school services will only be provided when there is an exceptional need to do so. This will be judged against the Department for Education's guidance on walking distances and maximum journey times<sup>60</sup>. The provision of new services must also provide value for money and be consistent with our network principles. Schools will continue to be able to procure their own private school bus services separate of TfGM if they wish to do so.

Where changes occur, we will align them where possible with the new academic year and with wider timetable change dates, although there may be situations where adjustments are made at shorter notice due to operational issues. We will work closely with affected schools, parents, and elected representatives to raise awareness of their travel options and what the changes will mean for them.

If a school has a dedicated school service, it is expected that they will support us in our aim to create an integrated network and promote sustainable travel. Therefore, **from September 2028 we will expect all schools with dedicated school services to be accredited by Modeshift STARS or in the process of gaining accreditation**<sup>61</sup>. We will support schools in doing this, but the provision of school services must form part of a wider package of initiatives that are encouraging young people to travel sustainably to school.

## 8. Engage Schools and Local Communities

If we are to encourage more young people to travel sustainably, we must work in partnership with schools, pupils, parents, guardians, carers, and local communities.

### Schools and further education establishments

Schools and further education establishments play a crucial role in encouraging more young people to travel sustainably and would be one of the main beneficiaries. Travelling actively can help improve students' behaviour, concentration, and mental health, all of which have been linked

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<sup>60</sup> [Travel to school for children of compulsory school age \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/671111/Travel_to_school_for_children_of_compulsory_school_age.pdf)

<sup>61</sup> Where a pupil is eligible for statutory assistance, they will continue to receive support regardless of whether their school is accredited with Modeshift STARS or not.

to higher academic success<sup>62</sup>. Additionally, championing walking, wheeling, scooting, cycling and public transport can help schools and further education establishments be better neighbours by reducing parking-related complaints from residents. This all helps to make schools and further education establishments more attractive to prospective students and parents.

Many schools and further education establishments want to help but face significant competing pressures, therefore **we will work with our partners to put all our available resources, advice, and funding opportunities in one easily accessible place.**

Modeshift STARS is an accreditation programme that helps schools develop travel plans and promote sustainable travel<sup>63</sup>. All schools in Greater Manchester can access Modeshift STARS for free, but few schools are currently taking advantage. We will therefore **identify what improvements can be made to make Modeshift STARS more attractive and provide additional guidance.**

## **Parents, guardians, carers and local communities**

Travelling to school to drop off or pick up a child is often only one part of a parent or guardian's journey. This means that even if it is possible to travel sustainably to school, if there are limited onward options for the rest of their journey, driving to school may be the only option. Through the network review process, we will therefore **consider how the transport network can better facilitate onward travel for parents, guardians and carers.** We will also explore whether **providing individualised journey plans for parents, guardians and carers** could help them plan how to make their onward journey using active travel or public transport.

We will seek to create more opportunities and make it easier for local communities and voluntary groups to work with schools and young people. Local communities are leading the way in promoting walking, wheeling, scooting, and cycling to school. Whether that be installing a school street, running a bike bus, or helping schools engage with children and their families. Without their help we cannot achieve our vision. **TfGM will provide guidance on how local groups can work in partnership with their local schools, covering subjects such as the process for creating a school street, and how to better promote the initiatives local groups are undertaking.**

## **Case Study of Manley Park Primary School's Bike Train<sup>64</sup>**

In partnership with Walkey Ride GM and Manchester City Council, Manley Park Primary School has implemented a school street creating a safe space outside the school. Alongside marshalling the barriers, parents and volunteers have come together to start a weekly bike train to school along two separate routes, with up to 50 parents and children taking part.

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<sup>62</sup> [HT\\_briefing\\_layoutvFINALvii.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#); [Investigation of the associations between physical activity, self-regulation and educational outcomes in childhood | PLOS ONE](#); [Being Active Helps Students in School - Association for Physical Education - Association For Physical Education | P.E. \(afpe.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>63</sup> [Education - Modeshift STARS](#)

<sup>64</sup> [Supporting School Streets in Whalley Range – Walk Ride GM](#)

We want to support those who are best placed to talk to and work with their local communities to do so. Advocates and groups that are embedded in their local area are better placed to provide the support that some people will need to start travelling actively. They can reach people that TfGM and local authorities would struggle to engage with and better identify what barriers may exist for specific communities.

Through implementing the activities set out in this strategy we aim to provide the foundations for communities and groups to build on. Only by working together can we hope to encourage more young people to choose to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to travel to school and access further education.

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## **Next steps**

We want more young people to choose to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to get to school and access further education. This document has set out our vision for school travel in Greater Manchester, outlining why we need more young people to travel sustainably and how we will support more young people to do this.

It is our ambition that by 2030:

- **70% of primary school students in Greater Manchester** will walk, wheel, scoot, or cycle to school, up from 63% (GMTRADS, 2021-23)
- **80% of secondary school students in Greater Manchester** will walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to travel to school, up from 74% (GMTRADS, 2021-23)
- **80% of further education students in Greater Manchester** will walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use public transport to access education, up from 66% (GMTRADS, 2021-23)

Subject to securing the appropriate funding and resources, we aim to do this by:

### **Creating safer streets around schools**

- TfGM will develop a pilot "Safer Routes to School" project to examine how physical and behavioural interventions can be introduced together as part of future interventions around schools and the wider area.
- TfGM will work with local authorities, schools and local communities to deliver 100 School Streets by 2028.
- TfGM and local authorities will look to increasingly use cameras to enforce school streets where it is appropriate to do so, but being aware that other measures, such as physical barriers or paying volunteers, may be a more suitable alternative for some streets.
- TfGM will continue to lobby central government for powers to tackle pavement parking.
- TfGM and local authorities to explore how existing powers can be used to discourage poor parking around schools and take steps to increase public awareness of the harm pavement parking causes.

### **Continuing to deliver more walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure**

- Local authorities and TfGM to create safer streets by setting speed limits that reflect the risk and purpose of a road, in line with the Streets for All approach and Safe System approach as set out in the Vision Zero Strategy.
- Local authorities and TfGM to aim for every busy junction or main road within 500m of a school to have pedestrian facilities by 2032.
- Local authorities with support from TfGM to use the results from boroughwide and neighbourhood audits to develop a school travel infrastructure programme to make the

streets immediately surrounding a school and the wider local area more attractive for walking, wheeling, scooting, and cycling.

### **Increasing access to cycles and secure cycle storage**

- TfGM will support schools to either set up their own bike library or work closely with their nearest bike library to provide more cycles, adapted bikes and scooters for young people.
- TfGM will continue to work with charities and cycle shops to promote places that sell refurbished bikes on the TfGM Bee Active Website.
- Local authorities and TfGM to investigate how developer contributions and other funding streams can be used to install more cycle storage at schools and in the wider community.

### **Supporting young people to become travel champions**

- TfGM, the GMCA and local authorities to work on developing a new education programme in partnership with schools and external organisations that will support young people throughout their school career, providing them with the skills and motivation to become lifelong travel champions.
- Our new education programme aims to:
  - Ensure that every young person has learnt about road safety and has basic navigation skills before they go to secondary school.
  - Better coordinate our efforts to enable every primary school student in Greater Manchester who wishes to do so, to learn how to ride and fix a bike.
  - Provide every young person in Greater Manchester with the skills and knowledge to travel by bus, tram, and train by the time they start their GCSEs.
  - Support young people during the transition between primary to secondary school, and secondary school to further education.
  - Work with young people to give them greater ownership over what activities or incentives their school carries out to encourage more young people to travel sustainably.

### **Improving the customer experience on public transport**

- TfGM, bus operators, and local authorities (through their role as highway authorities), to work towards 80% of buses departing on time by 2030.
- TfGM to install information screens at 300 bus stops to provide real time information to passengers.
- TfGM to introduce a new bus hopper fare by January 2025.
- TfGM to explore how the application process for the igo card can be improved.
- TfGM and bus operators to carry out an upgrade programme of the bus fleet to make them more accessible.

### **Making our network safe and secure**

- Travel Safe Partnership to continue working with schools through their educational outreach programme and in partnership with agencies, such as Foundation 92, to encourage positive travel behaviour.
- Travel Safe Partnership to continue deploying TravelSafe Support and Enforcement Officers during school commuting hours to address and deter unwanted behaviour.
- TfGM to introduce a new TravelSafe Live chat feature on the Bee Network app and include it as part of our travel training to young people.

## **Creating an integrated network**

- TfGM will, through a process of ongoing area-based network reviews, consider how the network could be adjusted to better serve schools and gradually integrate school services into the wider network.
- Schools that receive school services will from September 2028 be expected to be accredited by Modeshift STARS or be in the process of gaining accreditation, this is to ensure that school services form part of a wider package of sustainable travel measures.

## **Engaging schools and local communities**

- TfGM and the GMCA will work together to publicise what resources, advice, and available funding is available to schools in one place, so it is easier for schools to keep track of what is available to them.
- TfGM will identify what improvements can be made to make Modeshift STARS more attractive to schools and provide additional guidance on how to use Modeshift STARS.
- TfGM will consider through the network review process how the transport network can better facilitate parents and guardians onwards travel.
- TfGM will explore whether providing individualised journey plans for parents and guardian could encourage them to make their onward journey using active travel or public transport.
- TfGM and local authorities will seek to create more opportunities for local communities and voluntary groups to work with schools and young people to promote sustainable travel.
- TfGM will provide guidance on how local groups can work in partnership with their local school, such as the process for creating a school street and how to better promote the initiatives local groups are already undertaking

## **Measuring our progress**

Over the coming years, we will work with our partners to deliver our ambitious school travel strategy for Greater Manchester. Our vision will not be delivered over night, but through the activities that we have listed above we aim to show a measurable increase in the number of young people travelling sustainably every year. We will publish our progress against our objectives and actions through our annual travel reports.

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