Integrated Appraisal of the Draft GM Transport Strategy 2050 and Delivery Plan

Integrated Appraisal Report: Non-Technical Summary

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Quality information

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1. Introduction

1.1 This is a Non-Technical Summary document which summarises the Integrated Appraisal (IA) for a new GM Local Transport Plan (LTP) which is comprised of the GM Transport Strategy 2050 and GM Transport Delivery Plan (2027-2037). Together we refer to these documents as 'the draft Plan'

1.2 The draft Plan sets out a strategic framework for transport to 2037. It prioritises active travel, high-quality public transport and decarbonisation, while supporting inclusive growth and place-making across the Greater Manchester Combined Authority area.

1.3 The Integrated Appraisal (IA) combines Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), with SEA as the overarching structure. The framework covers ten topics: biodiversity; water, soil and land; historic environment; landscape; air quality and noise; climate change; healthy and safe communities; material assets; equalities; and transport.

2. Scoping

2.1 A scoping exercise was carried out in order to establish the key sustainability issues and objectives for the plan area. The issues and objectives were collated to establish a framework to provide a consistent and structured approach and methodology to appraise the sustainability effects of the LTP update. The IA framework themes and objectives are set out below.

Biodiversity

- Protect, restore and enhance habitats and species in Greater Manchester, including designated sites, locally important features and links between habitats.

Water, soil and land resources

- Seek to deliver neutral, or where possible positive, impacts of transport, and transport infrastructure on water quality, associated biodiversity, and on the physical state of water bodies.
- Promote the efficient use of land.
- Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste during construction.

Historic environment

- Preserve and enhance Greater Manchester's historic environment, including designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting.

Landscape

- Protect and enhance the character and quality of Greater Manchester's landscapes, townscapes and villagescapes.

Air quality and noise

- Deliver improvements in air quality in Greater Manchester

- Reduce the impact on environmental noise from transportation sources

Climate change

- Support climate change mitigation across Greater Manchester through limiting the contribution of transport to greenhouse gas emissions.

- Support the resilience of Greater Manchester's transport networks to the potential effects of climate change

Healthy and safe communities

- Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel
- Improve the health and well-being of Greater Manchester's residents
- Support the vitality of communities, including through improving community and road safety

Material assets

- Promote coordinated land use and transport planning across Greater Manchester
- Promote economic growth and job creation across the sub-region, and improve access to jobs for all

Equalities

Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.

Transport

Reduce the need to travel throughout Greater Manchester by car, or move goods by road, and promote sustainable modes of transport.

2.2 The IA framework provides a means to ascertain whether and how specific sustainability issues (established through scoping) are being addressed, and to understand the social, economic and environmental implications of options, policies and proposals

2.3 A draft Scoping Report was shared with TfGM, GM authorities, and statutory bodies (Natural England, Environment Agency, Historic England) for a 5-week consultation between April and May 2024. Feedback was incorporated before finalising the report in June 2025

3. Identifying Alternatives

Introduction

3.1 The Integrated Appraisal process requires consideration of reasonable alternatives to ensure strategic choices are tested for significant effects. TfGM and GM authorities have proactively explored alternatives to shape policy development. It is not necessary to appraise every element of the plan; instead, the focus is on options for key strategic issues.

3.2 Many elements of the existing transport strategy remain valid, so the update does not seek to radically change its vision or goals. Instead, it responds to new evidence and policy drivers, while retaining key targets such as reducing car use to 50% of daily trips by 2040.

3.3 The update introduces growth locations aligned with the Greater Manchester Strategy and Places for Everyone Plan, creating an opportunity to explore how transport can support these areas. Options were developed through TfGM workshops with AECOM, ensuring they were realistic, distinct, and deliverable, with the baseline (“do nothing”) used for comparison.

Options for spatial strategy

3.4 Growth locations identified in the Places for Everyone Plan and Greater Manchester Strategy are key areas for transformational change and investment. They aim to support sustainable growth, rebalance population, and tackle spatial inequalities.

3.5 The Local Transport Plan update prioritises investment in growth locations because they are key areas for housing, employment, and infrastructure development. While this approach addresses major pressures, it could be argued that additional funding could be better directed to dense urban areas where improvements may deliver greater value for money. This alternative would focus on enhancing connectivity within existing built-up areas rather than concentrating resources on lower-density growth locations.

3.6 Three reasonable alternatives have been identified.

1. **Growth Locations Focus**
    - Prioritises transport investment in designated growth areas identified in the Places for Everyone Plan.
    - Aims to support housing and employment development with improved connectivity and sustainable modes.
2. **Urban/Town Centre Focus**
    - Concentrates on enhancing existing infrastructure and services in dense urban areas and town centres.
    - Seeks to improve reliability, affordability, and integration of public transport where demand is highest.
3. **Hybrid Approach (Preferred)**
    - Balances investment between growth locations and urban centres.
    - Offers flexibility to target areas of greatest need while avoiding polarised effects.

Options for other policy issues

3.7 Two further strategic alternatives have been identified and appraised in the Integrated Appraisal. Both options were included to explore strategic choices beyond the baseline "balanced" approach and assess their implications for sustainability, equity, and economic growth.

Climate Change Focus: Emphasises decarbonisation, resilience, and nature-based solutions, prioritising schemes that reduce emissions. Greater Manchester has declared a climate emergency and committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2038. This option responds to urgent environmental targets by prioritising measures that cut emissions, promote modal shift, and integrate nature-based solutions. It tests whether accelerating decarbonisation should take precedence over other objectives.

Deprivation Focus: Directs funding to deprived communities to tackle social inequalities and improve accessibility. Significant social inequalities exist across Greater Manchester. This option examines whether transport investment should be directed primarily to deprived communities to improve accessibility, affordability, and health outcomes. It tests the potential benefits and trade-offs of prioritising social equity over a balanced approach.

4. Appraisal of strategic spatial options

Introduction

4.1 This assessment looks at broad options and uses high-level assumptions about what each option might include. The results should be seen as indicative, because actual impacts could change once detailed policies and projects are in place and mitigation measures are applied.

4.2 The three options share some similarities because certain areas overlap, but the main difference is how investment would be spread across growth locations and urban centres.

- **Growth Location Focus**: Could have some small negative environmental impacts where new infrastructure affects green spaces, but these can be managed. It would bring big social and economic benefits by linking new homes and jobs and improving transport in less connected areas. However, some communities outside these locations might miss out, which could increase inequalities or see them persist.

- **Urban/Town Centre Focus**: This option would have less impact on rural areas and more chance to improve town centres through greening and regeneration. It would help deprived communities, support economic growth, and improve air quality and climate resilience. The downside is that growth locations might not get enough investment, leading to more car use and weaker integration of public transport (with negative implications for climate change objectives).

- **Hybrid Approach**: Spreads investment across both growth locations and urban centres. This reduces the significance of negative impacts and avoids widening inequalities, but positive effects may be less concentrated than in the other two options. It still supports sustainable transport and cost-effective improvements.

Table 4.1 Summary of the spatial options appraisal

SA Topic	1.Growth location focus	2. Town centres and urban focus	3.Hybrid approach
Biodiversity	Minor -ve	Minor -ve	Neutral
Water, soil and land resources	Minor -ve	Neutral	Minor -ve
Historic environment	Minor +ve Minor -ve	Major +ve Minor -ve	Moderate +ve Minor -ve
Landscape	Minor +ve Minor -ve	Moderate +ve Minor -ve	Minor +ve Minor -ve
Air quality and noise	Neutral	Moderate +ve Minor -ve	Minor +ve
Climate change	Minor +ve	Moderate +ve	Moderate +ve
Healthy and safe communities	Moderate +ve	Moderate +ve	Moderate +ve
Material assets	Major +ve Moderate -ve	Major +ve Moderate -ve	Moderate +ve Minor -ve
Equalities	Moderate +ve Minor -ve	Major +ve Moderate -ve	Moderate +ve
Transport	Major +ve Minor -ve	Major +ve Moderate -ve	Major +ve Minor -ve

Policy option for climate change

4.3 By clearly prioritising climate change mitigation and resilience, the set of actions and measures that followed would have significant, but polarised effects.

4.4 On one hand, such an approach would clearly have major positive effects on climate change mitigation and resilience objectives. This would also create knock on positive effects in terms of wider environmental quality as a reduction in emissions and promotion of resilience measures would likely involve urban greening measures. By supporting sustainable transport, active travel and more resilient transport networks there will also be positive effects on transport objectives, healthy communities and equalities for some locations.

4.5 Conversely, this approach could see less of a focus on the expansion and improvement of transport networks (unless they achieved carbon reductions), which would have major negative effects in the short to medium term with regards to economic growth, mobility and accessibility.

SA Topic	Summary of effects
Biodiversity	**Moderate positive**
Water, soil and land resources	**Minor positive**
Historic environment	**Minor positive**
Landscape	**Minor positive**
Air quality and noise	**Moderate positive**
Climate change	**Major positive**
Healthy and safe communities	**Moderate positive / Minor negative**
Material assets	**Minor positive / Major negative**
Equalities	**? Minor positive / Minor negative ?**
Transport	**Major positive / Moderate negative**

Policy option for Deprivation

4.6 By focusing on deprived locations as a priority, this approach would likely have significant benefits in terms of equalities and health. By directly focusing on social value, measures could help to improve affordability, reliability and safety on existing networks that support communities. Whilst this approach would also help to improve transport networks and support economic growth, there could be a lack of investment in areas that are not deprived but are in need of investment to ensure sustainable patterns of growth. This could mean that some growth locations are less well served by sustainable modes of transport, there could be a reliance on car travel, and some people with protected characteristics could be further excluded.

4.7 With regards to environmental factors, the effects are predicted to be neutral or minor. Most deprived locations overlap with urbanised environments; therefore, measures that help to support active and sustainable travel could also help to improve air quality, water quality and encourage the efficient use of land. Investment that overlaps with urban areas / centres could also help to support regeneration activities with knock on benefits for the historic environment.

SA Topic	Summary of effects
Biodiversity	**Neutral**
Water, soil and land resources	**Minor positive / minor negative**
Historic environment	**Minor positive**
Landscape	**Neutral effects**
Air quality and noise	**Minor positive / minor negative**
Climate change	**Neutral**
Healthy and safe communities	**Moderate positive / Minor negative**
Material assets	**Moderate positive / Moderate negative**
Equalities	**Major positive / Minor negative**
Transport	**Moderate positive / Moderate negative**

The preferred approach

4.8 The Local Transport Plan focuses on nine main town centres and six growth locations, following a balanced “hybrid” approach. This mix avoids the drawbacks of concentrating only on growth areas or only on urban centres, helping to spread benefits across Greater Manchester. The plan also sets out broad transport principles to achieve sustainable growth and improve connectivity. While options like prioritising climate change or social inclusion were considered, they were not chosen because focusing on one issue could create other problems, such as slowing development or leaving gaps in the transport network. The hybrid approach is seen as the best way to deliver growth fairly and effectively.

5. Appraisal of the draft Plan

Methods

5.1 The draft plan has been assessed as a whole rather than looking at each element separately, because policies work together and their combined effects matter. To recap, the draft Plan is comprised of the GM Transport Strategy 2050 and GM Transport Delivery Plan (2027-2037).

5.2 The appraisal considered the vision, ambitions, network policies, and delivery measures, including how actions to “sustain,” “grow,” and “transform” interact. It looked at likely impacts across all sustainability topics, considering factors like scale, duration, and whether effects are short or long term. Both positive and negative effects were assessed, along with cumulative and combined impacts, to give an overall picture of how the plan performs.

Appraisal findings

5.3 The appraisal of the whole plan shows a generally positive picture, with benefits spread across most sustainability themes. The strongest effects are in **Transport**, **Equalities**, and **Material Assets**, where the plan is expected to deliver major improvements in connectivity, fairness, and economic growth. These outcomes reflect the emphasis on integrated networks, good access to jobs and services, and strategic land use planning linked to transport.

5.4 **Healthy and Safe Communities** and **Air Quality** also perform well, with moderate positive effects. This is largely due to measures that encourage active travel, improve public transport, and reduce emissions, which together support cleaner air and healthier lifestyles.

5.5 For **Biodiversity**, and the **Historic Environment**, the effects are more modest but still positive. Opportunities for urban greening, habitat creation, and heritage-led regeneration contribute to these gains, although the scale of benefits depends on how enhancements are implemented alongside infrastructure projects.

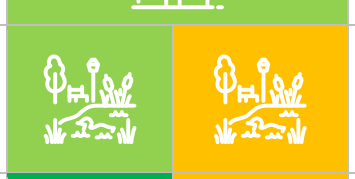
5.6 For **Climate Change**, there is the potential for moderate positive effects with regards to carbon emissions reductions and climate resilience, but earlier action is required to meet the challenging carbon budget that has been established for Greater Manchester.

5.7 Topics such as **Landscape** and **Water, Soil and Land Resources** show neutral or mixed effects. While improvements to public spaces and drainage systems are expected, some localised negative impacts from new roads and development could offset these benefits. These will need careful mitigation to avoid harm. Some residual minor negative effects are likely to remain where new roads overlap with soil resources, heritage assets and landscape features.

5.8 Importantly, no moderate or major negative effects have been identified for any sustainability topics. Where minor negatives are predicted—such as local noise or land take—they are expected to be managed through design and mitigation measures (and this will be explored at project level).

5.9 Overall, the plan demonstrates a balanced approach, achieving significant positives in social and economic areas while supporting modest environmental improvements, but importantly avoiding significant negative effects.

Table 5.1: Summary of overall effects of the draft Plan

IA Topic		Overall effects
Biodiversity		Minor positive effects
Water, soil and land resources		Neutral effects
Historic environment		Potential positive effects
Landscape		Minor effects – positive and negative (depending on location)
Air quality and noise		Moderate positive effects for air quality Minor negative effects for noise
Climate change		Potential moderate positive effects
Healthy and safe communities		Moderate positive long-term effects
Material assets		Major positive effects
Equalities		Major positive effects
Transport		Major positive effects

6. Mitigation and Monitoring

Mitigation

6.1 The integrated appraisal has been an iterative process, in which mitigation and enhancement measures have been proposed at several stages as follows:

Early policy development

6.2 As a first step, a range of broad recommendations were made at an early stage of policy development. TfGM took these into consideration to influence policies as they were being refined where possible.

Strategic options stage

6.3 Following consideration of early draft policies, mitigation and enhancement measures were considered further through the appraisal of strategic options. The findings were highlighted to TfGM to help influence further refinement of policies.

Appraisal of the draft Plan

6.4 Finally, as part of the draft Plan appraisal process further consideration has been given to measures that can enhance the positive effects of the final version of the Plan and minimise the negative effects.

6.5 It is important to note that the draft Plan appraisal considers all the policies and delivery schemes in combination and addresses how effects arising from one element of the Plan will be influenced others. The measures listed below are focused on 'residual effects' where it is considered that the Plan could be amended to enhance positives. **These residual measures will be considered by TfGM alongside any comments received during the consultation period before the final version of the Plan is prepared.**

- It is recommended that a greater emphasis could be placed upon enhancement with regards to the historic environment. Transport schemes could provide opportunities to improve the built environment and support regeneration of heritage assets and their surroundings. This can be reflected through policies to reinforce this focus when schemes are delivered.
- It is recommended that the pollution policy also seeks to address air quality where it is a threat to European habitats. A policy clause could be added to NP11 such as 'manage the impact of air pollution upon European Designated Habitats'.
- It is recommended that a scheme be explored that seeks to upskill / reskill those that might be affected by increasing use of Artificial Intelligence.
- To achieve a more significant positive effect with regards to climate change, it is recommended that longer-term schemes that enable modal shift and sustainable freight could be accelerated / brought forward (though acknowledging that this is heavily dependent upon resources and funding). This would allow carbon emissions to be 'baked in' earlier in

Plan period which will be necessary if transports contribution to the Tyndall Budget is to decrease significantly.

Monitoring

6.6 It is important to monitor the predicted effects in an integrated appraisal as it provides a check on the accuracy of predicted effects and allow for unforeseen effects to be identified. Identifying a framework of monitoring measures is a requirement of the SEA Regulations. At this stage, a range of indicators have been drafted, and these will be finalised once the LTP is adopted.

6.7 The draft monitoring measures are set out in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Proposed potential monitoring measures

SA Objective	Potential monitoring measures
 **Biodiversity**	Gross area of new habitat created from the application of biodiversity net gain in transport related schemes. Number of trees planted annually (as a result of transport schemes).
 **Water, soil and land resources**	25-year Environment Plan: Indicator B1 – Pollution loads entering waters.
 **Historic Environment**	Effects are not anticipated to be significant and would be more appropriately monitored for individual projects and schemes.
 **Landscape**	G1a – Changes in the landscape characteristics of National Character Areas (NCAs).

SA Objective	Potential monitoring measures
  **Air quality and noise**	Exceedances of the legal level of NO2 (as an Annual Mean) in local AQMA and Clean Air Plan Monitoring. % of the GM bus fleet that is zero emission (at tailpipe). H5: Exposure to transport noise.
 **Climate change**	Facilitation of GM logistics move to zero emissions fleets. Carbon emissions per capita associated with transportation.
 **Healthy and safe communities**	Incidents of crime and antisocial behaviour per million passenger journeys. Rates of road accidents.
 **Material assets**	% of housing within 800m of good public transport accessibility. Funding secured towards strategic infrastructure in growth locations.
 **Equalities**	% who find it easy or very easy to travel to key services (by any form of transport). % who agree or strongly agree they get a fair deal for the fares they pay.
 **Transport**	% of journeys made by active travel and public transport.

7. Next Steps

7.1 The IA Report and this Non-Technical Summary of the IA Report has been prepared to accompany consultation on the Draft GM Transport Strategy 2050 and Delivery Plan.

7.2 The report draws together all the SA outputs that have been prepared to date. The IA Report will be updated if necessary following public consultation to reflect any changes to the draft Plan.

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