



## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

# AGENDA INCLUDING PAPERS PREVIOUSLY MARKED 'TO FOLLOW' FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday, 22 January 2025

Time: 6.30 pm

Place: Committee Rooms 2 & 3, Trafford Town Hall, Talbot Road, Stretford  
M32 0TH

<b>A G E N D A</b>	<b>PART I</b>	<b>Pages</b>
1. <b>ATTENDANCES</b>		
To note attendances, including Officers, and any apologies for absence.		
2. <b>MINUTES</b>		1 - 8
To receive and, if so determined, to agree as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 <sup>th</sup> November 2024.		
3. <b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>		
Members to give notice of any interest and the nature of that interest relating to any item on the agenda in accordance with the adopted Code of Conduct.		
4. <b>QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC</b>		
A maximum of 15 minutes will be allocated to public questions submitted in writing to Democratic Services ( <a href="mailto:democratic.services@trafford.gov.uk">democratic.services@trafford.gov.uk</a> ) by 4p.m. on the working day prior to the meeting. Questions must be relevant to items appearing on the agenda and will be submitted in the order in which they were received.		

**5. DAMP AND MOULD, HOUSING REPAIRS, AND MAINTENANCE WITHIN TRAFFORD HOUSING STOCK**

To receive an update and information from the following Housing Associations operating within Trafford on issues of damp and mould raised in a previous meeting in September 2023, and on repairs and maintenance more widely.

- (a) INFORMATION FROM L&Q 9 - 16
- (b) INFORMATION FROM GREAT PLACES 17 - 50
- (c) INFORMATION FROM YOUR HOUSING GROUP 51 - 60  
[Note: Your Housing Group provided the information for agenda items five and six together. As such the information can be found on this item]
- (d) INFORMATION FROM IRWELL VALLEY 61 - 70

**6. MAXIMISING EXISTING SOCIAL HOUSING IN TRAFFORD**

To receive information from the following Housing Associations operating within Trafford.

- (a) INFORMATION FROM L&Q 71 - 82
- (b) INFORMATION FROM GREAT PLACES 83 - 88
- (c) INFORMATION FROM YOUR HOUSING GROUP  
[Note: Your Housing Group provided a single document with the information for agenda items five and six. As such the information from this provider can be found in agenda item five]
- (d) INFORMATION FOR IRWELL VALLEY 89 - 98

**7. EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK & FINISH GROUP - REDUCING CAR DEPENDENCY 99 - 126**

To receive the Executive response to the Scrutiny Task and Finish group report on Reducing Car Dependency submitted to the Executive on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**8. BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT 127 - 134**

To consider and agree a report of the Chair of the Committee.

**9. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 135 - 140**

To discuss the agenda for the final meeting of the Municipal Year.

**10. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)**

Any other item or items which, by reason of special circumstances (to be specified), the Chair of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency.

**11. EXCLUSION RESOLUTION (REMAINING ITEMS)**

Motion (Which may be amended as Members think fit):

That the public be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the remaining items on the agenda, because of the likelihood of disclosure of "exempt information" which falls within one or more descriptive category or categories of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, and specified on the agenda item or report relating to each such item respectively.

**SARA TODD**

Chief Executive

Membership of the Committee

Councillors F. Hornby (Chair), J. Holden (Vice-Chair), J.M. Axford, G. Coggins, F. Cosby, W. Frass, K Glenton, B. Hartley, D. Jarman, W. Jones, S. Thomas, D. Butt (ex-Officio) and D. Western (ex-Officio).

Further Information

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact:

Harry Callaghan, Senior Democratic Support Officer,

Tel: 07977 717252

Email: [harry.callaghan@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:harry.callaghan@trafford.gov.uk)

This agenda was issued on **Friday, 17 January 2025** by the Legal and Democratic Services Section, Trafford Council, Trafford Town Hall; Talbot Road, Stretford, Manchester, M32 0TH

**WEBCASTING**

This meeting will be filmed for live and / or subsequent broadcast on the Council's YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjwbIOW5x0NSe38sgFU8bKg>

The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items.

Members of the public may also film or record this meeting. Any person wishing to photograph, film or audio-record a public meeting is requested to inform Democratic Services in order that necessary arrangements can be made for the meeting. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer 48 hours in advance of the meeting if you intend to do this or have any other queries.

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## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**6 NOVEMBER 2024**

### **PRESENT**

Councillor F. Hornby (in the Chair).

Councillors J. Holden (Vice-Chair), J.M. Axford, G. Coggins, F. Cosby, W. Frass, K Glenton and D. Butt (ex-Officio)

#### In attendance

Councillor Tom Ross	Leader of the Council
Councillor Rose Thompson	Executive Member for Communities and Safety
Maria Bota	Director of Cultural Transformation
Adrian Fisher	Director of Growth and Regulatory Services
Graeme Bentley	Director of Finance
Harry Callaghan	Senior Democratic Support Officer

### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B. Hartley, D. Jarman, W. Jones, S. Thomas and D. Western

### **50. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024, be agreed as an accurate record.

### **51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were received.

### **52. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No questions were received.

### **53. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair gave an overview of the Work Programme for the final two meetings of the year, with January focussing on housing association in the Borough. In the Scrutiny pre-meeting, the agenda item – Damp and Mould Response – had been amended to include repairs and maintenance more widely. Also, on void / empty homes, this had been changed to include how housing providers were maximising the social housing stock in Trafford.

The final meeting in March was to focus on highways, which was to be discussed at the next pre-meeting. Councillor Frass wanted this to touch on the priority matrix.

**Scrutiny Committee  
6 November 2024**

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RESOLVED:

- 1) That the work programme be noted.
- 2) That the plans for the final meeting of the year be discussed in the next pre-meeting meeting.

**54. DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS**

The Director of Finance had provided a presentation for the Draft Budget proposals for the year 2025/26 and gave an introduction beginning with the headline numbers and the budget gap, which had increased to £25.59m. The presentation detailed the main areas of the Executive's draft budget proposals and the Director of Finance highlighted the key assumptions within those proposals. The presentation also touched on the budget approach and the draft savings programme for 2025/26. Like previous years, two further sessions were to come in November.

The Chair thanked the Director for the presentation, recognising the sobering reality of the situation.

Councillor Coggins asked about the reserves of the Council. A recent Manchester Evening News article had suggested Trafford had healthy reserves available (£53m), however, the Councillor had previously understood that Trafford had relatively low reserves. Councillor Coggins asked whether the Director could provide more detail on this. The Director of Finance highlighted the difficulty in comparing different districts positions, as different treasurers announce their accounts differently. Referring to the article, Salford stood out to the Director as when they had considered Salford's statement of accounts, there equivalent to Trafford's £53m was around a quarter of a billion. Concluding, the Director informed Members that Trafford was a relatively low reserve funded Council, not with the same resilience as the Council's neighbours.

Councillor Axford, on National Insurance, asked what the extent of the impact would be on employees. The Member also asked about the savings identified by CIPFA from work done by other authorities, and what this referred to. A further question on a possible Council tax referendum was also asked.

On the Council Tax referendum level, the Director confirmed this would be announced as part of the provisional settlement in December, with the Council discretion then to decide whether it goes up to that level or not.

As part of the CIPFA review, a list of considerations was provided to Trafford on what could be done, and this was being considered as part of finance and change, which was being worked on currently.

On National Insurance, the Director outlined the current and future positions, which will see it come in at a lower pay and be charged at a higher rate. For the

**Scrutiny Committee  
6 November 2024**

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Council's direct staff, a new burdens funding would support this, but the Director was concerned about what it could mean for the Council's providers such as Amey and those in social care. As such, the budget set it out with provisional estimates, which could significantly exceed any additional funding.

Councillor Axford asked further whether there were any predictions the Council had on the level of Council tax. The Leader of the Council recognised that it could go up or down, but they felt it would stay at 4.99%, with national government being mindful of the cost of living. The Leader asked Members to be mindful of the positive financial impact for the Council, every percentage point Council tax goes up, so if it does stay the same, savings would need to found from elsewhere.

Councillor Glenton asked whether there had been any progress on recovering any of the funds owed to the Council by Manchester Airport, following the support provided during COVID. The Director of Finance remarked that the Council was a shareholder in the airport, and up to the pandemic did received dividends from the airport, which were hit when the pandemic began. A number of shareholder loans had also been supplied to the airport to support regeneration activity, for which the Council earns interest returns on. The Director did however mention that the airport does not owe shareholder dividends until they are profitable, with forecasts suggesting that this will begin towards the end of the decade.

The Chair asked if there was any information on how lobbying for additional government support had been going. The Director referenced elements of positivity, however, suggested that it could never be enough. It had previously been expected that non-essential departments would experience cuts, but the Autumn statement had proved to not be to the extent as expected. The Leader referenced significant engagement undertaken with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on Trafford's specific financial situation. The Leader suggested that a lot of information still needed to be digested and understood, however, they felt areas were improving.

Councillor Butt asked whether the Government raising passenger duty on short and long-haul flights would affect the performance of the airport, and as such the rate at which the airport begins to pay back the Council. The Leader suggested that this would be unlikely to have an impact on the profitability of the Manchester Airport Group, as it was a tax more aimed at the flights themselves. The Director of Finance confirmed that any future impact would be considered at future meetings with the airport group.

Councillor Frass referred to the recent increase on what could be recycled in black bins, which would lead to a lower usage of the grey bin. The Member asked whether the Executive was aware of any savings possible which might be made from levies which could exist on landfill sites. The Director of Finance put the waste disposal levy at around £16m and suggested that he would take this away to consider. The Leader felt it could have a positive impact in the future,

**Scrutiny Committee  
6 November 2024**

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highlighting the good working relationship between waste authorities and local authorities.

The Chair thanked both the Director of Finance and the Leader of the Council for the detailed presentations and responses.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the draft budget proposals for 2025/26 be noted.
- 2) That the Director of Finance consider the future possible impacts increased recycling could have on the waste disposal levy.

## **55. CULTURE, SPORT AND HERITAGE STRATEGY**

The Director of Cultural Transformation, who had arrived in post in December 2023 to lead the Cultural Strategy activation spoke through the report and slides which had been provided in the agenda. The Director introduced the different ways culture impacts residents with the strategy focusing on it in the broadest sense.

The Director touched on the existing provision in Trafford and highlighted the increased leadership in the space, with the cultural transformation hub contributing to the work which was ongoing.

On talent in the Borough, the Director raised the four key group set out in the report, which brought people in culture together to improve the space. The Director also referenced the 'Trafford is...' platform which positioned the Council to promote the Borough's cultural offer. Awareness was also given to the ten creative clusters established in the Borough, which enabled the Council to focus and engage with areas specifically.

The two key funding streams for the strategy – Arts Council's Place Partnership Funding and the National Lottery Heritage Fund – were mentioned which had been designed to support future funding bids.

Concluding, the Director of Cultural Transformation highlighted the challenges to the strategy, most notably, the small team aiming to deliver a large programme. However, the Director spoke positively of what success could look like in 2025.

Councillor Axford referred to the strategic aims included within the report and, noting the work ongoing with mental health in the borough, asked how high-profile health was in the culture strategy, recognising that it had been in discussions. The Director of Cultural Transformation informed Members that the Cultural Transformation Hub in December would be focussing on health and wellbeing, referencing work ongoing with colleagues in Public Health, as well as knowledge sitting within Trafford and at the Combined Authority level more widely.



**Scrutiny Committee  
6 November 2024**

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Councillor Coggins asked about a possible Year of Culture bid and asked whether that could support the other aims of the Council, especially in relation to the environmental impacts of any events. The Director reassured the Members that there was a range of ideas that could be associated with events, such as encouraging active travel and green transport when residents attend. The Director also emphasised the power of arts and culture to build a nature connection which could change residents' day to day practice.

Councillor Holden complimented the report and the plans within it.

Councillor Frass was pleased with the 'Trafford is...' platform but asked how residents will be informed that the platform is available. The Director underlined the importance of creating a strong brand identity, which would be embedded within communities and across the Council.

Councillor Frass felt it was important the Council reached out to residents who did not feel culture was for them. The Director agreed, citing the need for an inclusive approach, with work commencing with partners early to encourage this activity. The Leader of the Council had attended a creative cluster session and remarked on how helpful it had been to map out the places within wards which needed to be targeted. Members were also reassured that there was Corporate level support provided to the promotion of the strategy.

Councillor Butt asked whether there was any collaborative work ongoing with other local authorities. The Director of Cultural Transformation assured Members that regular work was ongoing with culture directors at Manchester and Salford Council, with leaders across all of Greater Manchester spoken with to understand what works well.

Councillor Axford asked how the strategy could be made more visual and accessible. The Director was considering every art form as part of the strategy, conducting listening exercises to understand what stakeholders wanted from the strategy.

Councillor Cosby asked how the strategy was being managed, noting the strategic board with a range of Members. The Director informed Members that they personally reported into the Corporate Director for Strategy and Resources, with the strategy physically sitting within the Communications team. The Cultural Transformation Hub was also raised, which included the Executive Member for Leisure, Arts, Culture and Heritage, which met every month.

Councillor Cosby asked if there were any private partners. The Director spoke of Imperial War Museum North, Bruntwood, and Lancashire County Cricket Club, who were all engaged.

**Scrutiny Committee**  
**6 November 2024**

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The Chair thanked the Director of Cultural Transformation for their attendance.

RESOLVED: That the progress in respect of activation of the Cultural Strategy, be noted.

**56. TRAVELLERS UPDATE**

The Scrutiny Committee requested an update on visits by the Traveller Community in Trafford. The Committee presented a task and finish group report to the Executive in March 2022 following a number of temporary encampments in the Summer of 2021. It had been agreed it was now an appropriate time to receive an update.

The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services had provided a set of slides with the agenda which outlined the number of encampments over the years 2022, 2023 and 2024. The Committee were informed that 2022 was a busy year which involved interference from the Council. Of the five encampments in 2023, two needed to be referred to the Magistrates and two others needed interference from Bailiffs. Positively, in 2024 no intervention was required with the three encampments.

The presentation also updated Members on the provision of sites and any implications for the planning system. During the Summer of 2024, a temporary stopping facility was trialled, which hoped to encourage travellers to visit a specific area which would include the provision of bins and basic sanitary facilities. The site was Boyer Street in Old Trafford. However, this was not used with the future operation of sites such as this to be trialled.

The Director referred Scrutiny to the Council's Local Plan which had ensured that the Council make appropriate provision for travellers, with such sites normally being of two kinds. The first of these was residential, which would be a site of permanent residence, which might be the base from which families then move around the Country. The second of these was transit, which was a site for temporary residence intended for occupation for a few days or weeks.

The Executive Member for Communities Safety reminded Members of the numbers in 2021 which sparked the Task and Finish group, reassuring Members that these levels had since decreased to levels seen prior to COVID.

The Chair thanked the Officers and Executive Member, asking what the visits looked like on the ground and in the community. The Director responded that those that visit tend to be different each time, with the idea of providing temporary stopping facilities receiving good feedback from representative organisations yet went unused. Scrutiny was made aware that consultation on the site being used did receive negative feedback from residents.

**Scrutiny Committee  
6 November 2024**

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Councillor Coggins asked whether temporary stopping zones would continue, with 2024 being a quieter year for visit. The Member also enquired as to how the Council communicates the use of Boyer Street. The Member raised concern over some of the language used on the report such as gypsy and encampment and asked that this be considered in the future. The Director responded that the service was happy with how the stopping facility was communicated. However, when it was to be reviewed, the Director reassured that feedback would be gathered from all parties.

Councillor Axford asked if the Council understood the reason behind the reduction in numbers, asking whether the Police Crime Act might have had an impact. The Director affirmed that it was not so much a reduction, rather a return to normal. The Director added that increased police powers had not made a huge difference as the threshold for intervention was set at a high bar.

Councillor Butt asked whether the Boyer Street location was chosen due to the hard surface of the area. The Director confirmed this was the case, with other Boroughs who had provided stopping facilities, often operating them in quieter cul-de-sac areas. The Director admitted that the location travellers stopped in Trafford were not of the characteristic of Boyer Street, rather opting for parks, which was an issue for Trafford as the Borough does not have the rural land available compared to other areas.

Councillor Butt also enquired as to where Travellers tended to be heading when stopping in Trafford. The Director raised difficulties in generalising, however, associated it with traditional patterns of movement and availability of seasonal work.

Councillor Axford referred to recommendations from the task and finish group report, including the purchase of mobile facilities for rapid deployment and a rollout of cultural awareness training, which had been omitted from the presentation. The Director highlighted the modestly priced and quick opportunities to hire facilities meant that it was fiscally more sensible not to purchase the Council's own facilities.

RESOLVED: That the Travellers update be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and finished at 8.32 pm

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# L&Q - Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee

**Sarah Willcox-Jones, Repairs Service Change Specialist**

**L&Q**



# Stock Overview

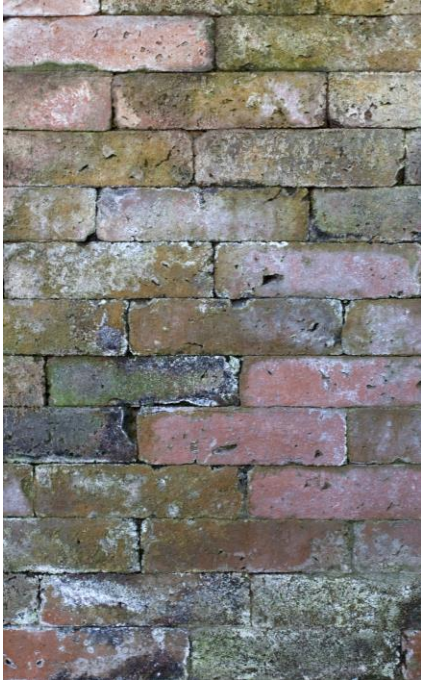
## About L&Q

We house around 250,000 people in more than 107,000 homes primarily across London, the South East and the North West. In Trafford, we currently have 8,712 homes, 768 are Shared Ownership, Leasehold or non-social rent.

48% of our properties in Trafford have had a stock condition survey in the last 5 years – with an aim of 70% by April 2025



## L&Q's approach to Damp and Mould



### Updates :

- Delivered enhanced damp and mould detection and prevention training
- Commissioned internal audit on damp and mould management
- Carried out bespoke H&S training on identifying hazards under (HHSRS – Health and Safety Rating System)
- Re-designed and launched ‘Supporting Resident’s with Additional Needs’ policy

# L&Q's damp, mould and condensation cases (Trafford)

## Updates :

- ✓ **2024:** 2,242 damp and mould reports
- ✓ **Driver for remedial work :** Cavity clearance, increased ventilation
- ✓ **January 2025:** 68 reports, 22 outstanding jobs
- ✓ **Wait on Inspection:** 48 hours for Emergency inspection, 10 working days for non-urgent inspection



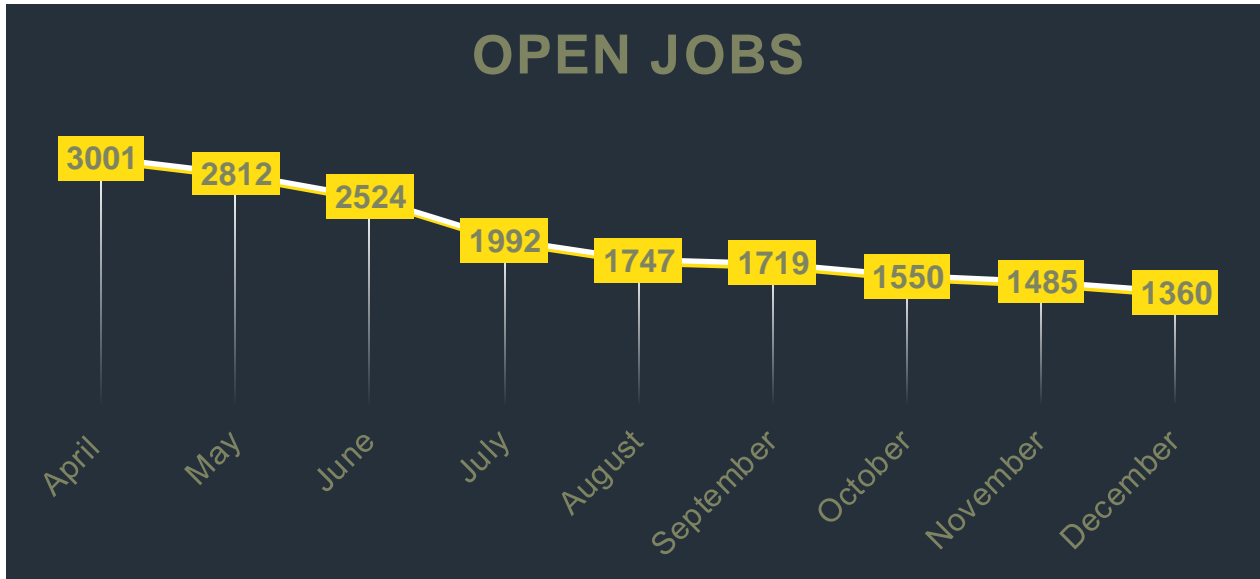
## Repairs Improvements

- ✓ Operative Engagement Sessions – Helping us form the service
- ✓ Growing our workforce (7 new operatives employed in North West, c.20 Apprentices year on year for five years across all repairs teams)
- ✓ Invested in new vehicles – a more reliable service
- ✓ Focus on clearing aged jobs



## Clearing Aged Jobs

Ensuring we're attending jobs as quickly as possible has been a focus of the teams in 2024



The logo consists of the letters 'L' and 'Q' in a bold, sans-serif font, with an ampersand between them. The letters are white and are set against a dark blue rectangular background.

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# Great Homes

**Trafford Scrutiny Committee**

Mike Glennon – Head of Neighbourhoods


Robert Collier – Head of Asset Delivery

# Great Places in Trafford

- Stock Profile
  - 518 Apartments
  - 293 Houses
  - 56% General Needs
  - 6% Supported Housing
  - 38% Plumlife (Leasehold, Shared Ownership, Market Rent)
- Local Management
  - Housing Management – Areas Services Manager & 2 x Neighbourhood Service Managers
  - Repairs – Property Services Manager



# Tackling Damp & Mould

- Living Conditions Board & Task Force established
  - Damp training delivered to all frontline colleagues
  - Property Services Managers all HHSRS trained
  - New Damp & Mould Policy
  - Priority Damp & Mould triage, action and review procedures
  - Damp First Aid Packs issued during triage inspections
  - Data-led tenancy inspection programme developed
  - No-access procedures expanded to include living condition issues
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# Supporting Customers

- 'Managing Moisture' education campaign
- New Inclusive Services Team created
- FCA Registered Financial & Debt Advice
- Hardship Fund & Energy Trust Vouchers
- Winter Warmth project
- Targeted 'rent freeze' in low EPC homes



# Maintaining Homes

- 24/7 Service Coverage
- First Time Fix approach
- Internal Trades Teams & Materials Distribution Centre
- Emergency Repairs – 24hr target
- Routine Repairs – 20-day target
- Additional customer & property vulnerability priority
- Revised Property & Void Standards
- Asset Management Department & Investment Strategy
- Building Safety & Compliance Department

# Thank you



great  
places  
HOUSING GROUP

# Damp and Mould Policy



## Introduction

This policy tells you how Great Places, aims to deal with reports damp and mould in your home, it also explains how we will provide you with a high quality customer experience. We want customers to feel safe, listened to, and for them to live in good quality homes.

Our damp and mould policy forms a part of our overall repairs service. This wider offer is explained in our Repairs Policy which can be found on our website.

## Context

This Policy outlines our response to damp and mould in all Great Places owned or managed homes. The service is delivered using a combination of Great Places operatives and external contracts for:

- general needs homes.
- supported housing.
- care and extra care.
- shared ownership (see below).
- leaseholders (as written in the lease).
- emergency accommodation.

The Regulator of Social Housing issued specific reports in relation to damp and mould in social housing. These call for a strengthened approach to understanding and dealing with damp and mould across the sector. In response:

- We are taking damp and mould seriously.
- We will identify the cause of damp and mould quickly following contact from customers.
- We will remedy cases of damp and mould in customers' homes promptly.
- We will plan works in an informed way to improve the quality of homes.
- Our annual report will include information about how we are doing.

## Aims and objectives

- to manage damp and mould in an effective way
- to achieve high standards of customer service.

# Damp and Mould Policy



- to ensure vulnerable customers get a service which is suitable for their needs.
- to make sure all Great Places homes are kept to a high standard and that our customers live in safety, comfort and warmth.
- to be open with customers, and listen to them through customer feedback and involvement.
- to meet the standards set out in our tenancy agreements.
- to give value for money.

## Damp definitions

Rising Damp is the movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure of the building. Rising damp can be caused by missing or faulty damp proof course. .

Penetrating Damp occurs when water penetrates the external structure of the building causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure. The cause of penetrating damp is often linked to faulty guttering, defective brickwork or windows, or problems with roofing. Penetrating damp can also be caused by internal leaks.

Condensation Damp occurs when moisture in warm air comes into contact with a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets. Factors increasing condensation can include; lack of ventilation, inadequate heating, poor insulation, high humidity and overcrowding.

## Our response to damp and mould

We understand that damp and mould could create a potential hazard for our customers and we treat these instances as a priority. We follow a damp and mould process to make sure we take the correct action for damp and mould in a timely manner, to protect the safety of our customers.

Our approach to damp and mould may include repairs to your home or major works. We may also provide detailed guidance, advice and support to help you keep damp and mould away. If we feel this would benefit customers, we can refer our customers to other organisations for support.

We aim to respond to reports of Damp and Mould within 10 working days.

## Reporting damp and mould

# Damp and Mould Policy



There are many ways to report Damp and Mould:

- Using the website Live Chat (during working hours Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm).
- Online on the Tenant Portal
- Email
- [Facebook Messenger](#) (during working hours Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm).
- Phone
- Letter
- Telling us in person when we visit your home or neighbourhood

Upon receiving a request, we will arrange an appointment for as soon as possible, at a time that suits the customer. We offer full day, morning, or afternoon time slots and can take the school run into account. An appointment to assess the cause of the damp and mould may be needed before works can begin.

## What we will do

To ensure opportunities are not missed, all reports of damp and mould will be dealt with on an individual basis with no assumptions being made about the cause.

Following a report, we will investigate to determine the cause of damp and mould and carry out repairs in accordance with the tenancy agreement and repairs standard.

We will diagnose the cause of damp correctly and deliver effective solutions based on cause of the damp not just the symptom.

We will keep customers' informed about any investigation findings including being clear about the possible causes of damp, any recommended solutions, necessary remedial works, or actions and the estimated timescales to complete.

For planned works, we will take a risk based approach, using the knowledge we hold about properties of concern to inform our programme going forward. We will learn from customer feedback and complaints, to ensure we strengthen our approach when things go wrong.

We will promote and provide general advice and guidance on how to manage damp and mould.

If it is unsafe for the customer to remain in a property while the works are carried out, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made using our Decant Policy and procedure.

# Damp and Mould Policy



## Access

We take health and wellbeing seriously and expect our customers to allow access to properties so that we can resolve issues that pose a risk to them. It is important that customers allow our operatives to access to properties in order to rectify damp and mould. If we are unable to access a home to carry out works, we will implement our No Access - Enforcement Policy which can be found on our website.

## Performance Measures and Customer Voice

Our response to damp and mould sits within our repairs service. We measure our response times for damp and mould requests and report this performance to Great Places executive team and our Board along with the following:

- overall customer satisfaction with the service.
- appointments made and kept.
- jobs completed, right first time.
- emergency and routine job completion times.

Customers are at the heart of our service. The quality of our services will be assessed through tenant satisfaction measures which include repairs, safety checks, and complaints information. The Regulator requires us to collect this information and make the results available to our customers.

We also monitor customer satisfaction through customer feedback, complaints, compliments, the customer scrutiny panel, customer satisfaction surveys and by sending all customers who have a repair a text inviting feedback. This feedback is used to improve our services.

## Decoration of the home

Customers are responsible for decorating inside the property and keeping it in good order. Some damp and mould repairs may affect the decoration of the home. If this happens the area will be made good following the repair. This does not apply to access panels, hatches, or ducting covered with wallpaper, tiles, carpet, wood, laminate or other finishes. In these circumstances customers will be advised before work is started.

# Damp and Mould Policy



## Responsibility of this policy

The Director of Repairs is responsible for this policy. Our in house repairs service will deliver in line with this policy supported by a number of partners who will help us with specialist skills. These include, damp proof works, major structural issues and drainage work, and also to provide support in times of increased demand.

## Equality & Diversity

We are committed to making sure our services are open and clear to everyone and treat everyone with dignity respect and fairness. We will give appropriate consideration of the needs of specific customers’ including any vulnerabilities and support they may need.

We can also help customers who are experiencing difficulties managing the cost of living, to find the right support for them.

## Conduct

Customer service is important to us. Our operatives will be skilled and trained to deliver work of an excellent quality in a friendly, helpful and professional way. We will make sure our operatives have the right tools and equipment to do the job. To give you the right service, we ask that our operatives are able to work safely, in line with our Service with Respect Policy which can be found on our website.

## Links to related policies, strategies, and procedures

- Repairs Strategy
- Repairs Policy
- Procurement Strategy
- Customer Voice Strategy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy
- Service with Respect Policy
- Access Policy Statement

<b>Policy approval date:</b>	27/07/23
<b>Equality impact assessment date:</b>	05/05/2023
<b>Policy review date:</b>	27/07/26 Annual light touch review

# Damp and Mould Policy



<b>Lead team:</b>	Sustainable Assets – Repairs Team
<b>Level of authorisation required:</b>	Directors
<b>Please record all authorisation meetings, with dates and details</b>	Initial draft circulated to HoS V1 27/04/23



# Repairs Policy



## Introduction

This policy explains how our repairs service works, and sets out our responsibility to keep our customers' homes in good repair.

The policy also describes how we will provide our customers (where we have repair obligations) with a high-quality customer experience and tailor our support to their individual needs. We want customers to feel safe, listened to, and for them to live in good quality homes.

## What do we mean by responsive repair?

A responsive repair is day-to-day maintenance work following a request from a customer and can include internal works, external works, or repairs to communal areas. This work maintains our homes to a good standard, until the next set of planned investment works.

So, for example, it might be a repair to a kitchen drawer (responsive) rather than the replacement of a whole kitchen (planned).

We have responsibility for the majority of repairs we undertake in our rented homes, but our customers also have a responsibility to look after our properties. Tenancy agreements and leases explain to customers who is responsible for which parts of home maintenance. Some customers may have an enhanced service based on their needs, this support will be explained in their agreement and will include how to contact us.

Early identification and reporting of repairs, supports the longevity of our properties and reduces the impact on customers. It is a cost effective way to prevent the impact of building defects.

We will always look to complete a repair rather than a full replacement as these works will usually be included in future planned investment programmes.

## Our aims are

- to achieve high standards of customer experience;
- to ensure all customers get a service which is suitable for their needs;

# Repairs Policy



- to make sure all our homes are kept to a high standard and that our customers live in safety, comfort and warmth;
- to be open with customers, and listen to them through customer feedback and involvement;
- to meet the standards set out in our tenancy agreements and leases;
- to provide value for money in the repairs service and for service charges

## What is involved?

This policy includes responsive repairs for all our owned or managed homes. The service is delivered using a combination of Great Places colleagues and external contracts for:

- general needs homes;
- supported or specialist housing;
- care and extra care;
- shared ownership (see below);
- leaseholders (as written in the lease);
- emergency accommodation.

For shared ownership and leasehold properties, where the lease says that we have responsibility for the fabric of the building or communal areas, we will work with homeowners to address any repairs, with the costs being met through the service charge for the building.

For leaseholders and shared owners, service provision and response times may vary, depending on the individual terms of their ownership agreement. Similarly, new homes less than 12 months old may have different contracts affecting repair response times.

In line with the guidelines set by the Regulator of Social Housing:

- we will complete repairs and improvements in a way that is safe;
- we will provide value for money;
- we aim to get it right first time;
- we will plan works for the home and communal areas, so that we can be open with our customers;

# Repairs Policy



- we will make our service easy to use and provide a number of different ways to report a repair, make a complaint or get involved;
- our annual report will include information about how we are doing.

## Reporting a repair

There are lots of ways customers can report a repair:

- Using our website “Live Chat” during working hours (Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm);
- online via the Customer Portal;
- by email to [customerhub@greatplaces.org.uk](mailto:customerhub@greatplaces.org.uk)
- [Facebook Messenger](#) during working hours Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm;
- phone 0300 123 1966 during working hours Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm;
- letter to Great Places Housing Group, 2a Derwent Avenue, Manchester, M21 7QP;
- telling us in person when we visit a home or neighbourhood.

## Repairs commitment

We will:

- confirm an appointment with the customer, for a time that is convenient to them and meets their individual needs;
- aim to complete the repair in one visit, or explain why we haven't and what will happen next;
- prioritise urgency based on both the customers' needs and the risk to the property and agree this with the customer;
- if it's an emergency, we will visit to make things safe within 24 hours;
- where possible, text customers to let them know when we are on our way to the repair;
- let customers know once we have completed the repair and allow them to confirm that it is completed to a good standard;
- communicate clearly with customers from reporting to completion.

## Emergency repairs, routine repairs and major repairs

We monitor our repairs service performance in three areas:

# Repairs Policy



- Emergency repairs
- Routine repairs and
- Major repairs

## Emergency repairs include

- Total loss of water or electricity;
- unsafe electrical fittings but not customers own fittings;
- blocked main sewer drain that is backing up into the property;
- unusable toilet facilities, if there is only one facility in the property or the available toilet is inaccessible;
- insecure doors and windows to the home;
- heating and/or hot water loss for elderly or vulnerable tenants;
- out of service lifts;
- warden alarm or call system not working;
- total loss of gas supply (gas leaks will be dealt with through the gas emergency line and the gas emergency process will be used);
- failure of door entry system for elderly or vulnerable tenants needing daily assistance.

These are examples and not a list of every case.

**We will aim to carry out works to make emergencies safe within 24 hours of the customer contact.**

Sometimes other repairs and additional appointments may be needed to complete the job. If this is the case we will arrange this with the customer as soon as possible, at a time to suit them. In exceptional circumstances, such as during bad weather, we may need to lengthen the time for emergency repairs. We will tell customers if this is the case.

## Routine repairs

The majority of other repairs are classed as routine and will be attended within **20 working days**.

Routine repairs include;

- general joinery repairs internally and externally;

# Repairs Policy



- minor plumbing repairs e.g. dripping taps, leaks to sinks or baths and faulty pipework;
- repairs to kitchen fittings e.g. cupboard doors, drawers, worktops and handles;
- repairs to leaking gutters and downspouts;
- easing of external doors and windows, replacement handles and faulty mechanisms;
- partial loss of electrical power where the fault is inside the home;
- partial loss of water supply where the fault is inside the home or boundary;
- heating and hot water faults or breakdowns;
- blocked sink, bath, toilet or basin that a customer has been unable to unblock themselves;
- damage to stair treads, handrails or banisters;
- insecure doors and windows in communal areas;
- TV aerials.

These are examples and not a list of every case. We will consider the impact of this approach on individual customers' needs and adjust our approach when necessary.

## Major repairs

In a small number of cases following the initial routine or emergency repair appointment we may identify that more extensive remedial work is needed to resolve a property related issue. This may include replacing rather than repairing some major components or carrying out significant remedial works potentially including structural works. In these instances a responsive repair becomes a major repair.

We would then arrange an appointment with the customer to do an inspection, agree the full scope of works and update the customer on the estimated timescales and next steps.

Depending on the issue we may need to carry the workout at the earliest opportunity or where possible, include the repair/replacement at a later date, with other scheduled planned investment works. We will tell the customer the timescales involved.

In exceptional circumstances we may need to arrange to move customers to an alternative accommodation to minimise disruption and for their safety.

# Repairs Policy



## Appointments

Emergency repairs can be reported 24 hours a day, 365 days a year directly by telephone.

If an emergency repair is reported outside of our normal working hours or during bank holidays this will be registered by our third party out of hours provider who will assign the works to the relevant contractor or inhouse operative.

Where the emergency is related to a major incident, we have a clear escalation process and business continuity plan which will be mobilised in this event.

In an emergency, where there is a Health and Safety issue or there's likely to be considerable damage to the property we may gain access in line with our Access Policy.

If the repair is not an emergency, we will arrange an appointment, at a time that suits the customer and meets their individual needs. We offer full day, morning, or afternoon time slots and can take the school run into account.

We will confirm the customers appointment time by text message, with a further confirmation sent the day before we are due to attend. We will send a final confirmation text message on the day and telephone the customer to let them know we are on our way.

If the customer is not at home when we attend, we will try to reach them by phone and text. We will try other numbers on our records and will only contact a third party if we have permission to speak to someone other than the customer named on the tenancy. If we are still unable to reach the customer, we will leave a card asking them to contact us or the contractor. If we do not hear from them, we will cancel the repair, but continue with the works when we are contacted.

## Performance measures and customer voice

Our service will be measured against the timeframes above. We report performance to our Executive team and our Board.

We measure:

- overall customer satisfaction with the service;
- jobs completed within the customer commitments timescales;

# Repairs Policy



- jobs completed, right first time;
- emergency and routine job completion times.

## Learning from complaints and feedback

Customers are at the heart of our services. We analyse complaints received, their outcome and proposed changes as part of our reporting and planning process. We share feedback with our service managers to ensure we learn from cases. Our Customer Feedback team produce regular reports shared with Managers, Senior Management, Directors, formally involved customers, and our Executive team and Board.

Reports highlight themes and trends which allow Senior Management to review and identify any systemic issues, serious risks or areas for organisational improvement. Annual reporting to Board includes the Housing Ombudsman's annual Landlord performance report. We tell our customers how they have influenced change to policy and improvements to services by publishing findings from complaints on our website, in customer communications and annually in our Annual Report.

## Value for money

As a major expense for the organisation we manage our commitment to providing value for money in a range of ways including;

- comparing cost and performance information;
- reviewing how we run our services and systems;
- looking at past repairs to identify things that happen repeatedly, which informs our future planned works;
- carefully considering our contracts with outside companies.

## Further guidance

The repairs policy is linked to a number of other property related policies and guidance. These are detailed below.

# Repairs Policy



## Damp, mould and condensation

We understand that damp, mould and condensation could create a potential hazard for our customers and we treat these instances as a priority.

We follow a separate damp, mould and condensation policy and process to make sure we take the correct action and responsive repairs to address damp, mould and condensation, in a timely manner to protect the safety of our customers.

Our approach to damp, mould and condensation may include emergency, routine and/or major repair works and full details of our approach are outlined in the damp, mould and condensation policy.

We provide detailed guidance, advice and support to help customers manage condensation in their homes to avoid damp and mould occurring. We also refer our customers to other organisations for additional support, if we feel this is appropriate and would benefit customers.

## Adaptations

We will work with organisations to provide an adaptations service that meets customers' needs and changing circumstances. Major and minor adaptation works will be carried out in line with the our Adaptations Policy

Minor adaptations such as grab rails and banister stair rails will be reported to repairs using our normal channels and managed by the repairs service with no occupational therapy assessment needed.

Details of our approach can be found in our Aids and Adaptations policy.

## Decoration of the home

Customers are responsible for decorating inside the property and keeping it in good order. Some repairs may affect the decoration of the home. If this happens the area will be made good following the repair. This does not apply to access panels, hatches, or ducting covered with wallpaper, tiles, carpet, wood, laminate or other finishes. In these circumstances customers will be advised before work is started.



# Repairs Policy



## Customers alterations

If a customer wants to make changes or improvements to the property they must get our written permission. We will only say no if we have good reason to do so. If we refuse permission, we will tell you why in writing. If we grant permission, we may ask that the work is done in a certain way, or to a standard, or apply other reasonable conditions. All works must be carried out to our satisfaction.

## Insurance

We have property and public liability insurance for properties we are responsible for. In the event of a major incident e.g. a fire or flood, our insurance will cover damage to the structure of the building and resulting repairs. It will not cover damage to contents. Contents insurance is the responsibility of the customer. It is strongly recommended that customers take out suitable cover to protect their personal belongings.

## Responsibility of this policy

The Director of Repairs is responsible for this policy. Our in house repairs service will be supported by a number of partners who will help us deliver this policy. These include repairs, specialist repairs, damp proof works, major structural issues and drainage work, and also to provide support in times of increased demand.

## Equality and diversity

We are committed to making sure our services are open and clear to everyone. We will support customers to use our services in a way that is tailored to them.

## Legal references

We will repair and maintain homes in line with the following legislation:

- tenancy agreements;
- lease agreements;
- the Decent Homes Standard;
- Housing Acts 1988,1996,1998 and 2004;
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985;

# Repairs Policy



- Right to Repair Regulations 1994 (for secure tenants of Local Housing Authorities);
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- The Defective Premises Act 1972;
- Building Regulation;
- Environmental Protection Act 1990;
- Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Care Act 2014.

## **Related Policies, Procedures and Plans**

- Repairs Strategy
- Asset Management Policy
- Damp and Mould Policy
- Access Policy Statement
- Allocations Policy
- Procurement Strategy
- Customer Voice Strategy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy
- Service with Respect Policy

# Repairs Policy



## Appendix 1 – General needs, repair obligations

Repair Issue	Great Places responsibility	Customers responsibility
<b>EXTERNAL STRUCTURE</b>		
Drains, gutters and external pipes (except where the drains are the responsibility of the water authority, when we will report the defects to that authority)	x	
The roof, covering, tiles, fascias, soffits and gutters.	x	
Outside walls, outside doors, windowsills, window catches, sash and window frames (including painting and decorating outside).	x	
Chimneys, chimney stacks and flues but not including sweeping them except (if necessary) for the annual service by us.	x	
Balconies, walkways, hallways, steps or other means of access, including disabled access which we have provided or for which we have accepted responsibility.	x	
External and internal plaster work where full skim coats are required.	x	
Garages, carports, outbuildings and stores that form part of the home. if they exist at the start of the tenancy or are later erected by us.	x	
Boundary walls, gates and fences, if they exist at the start of the tenancy or are later erected by us.	x	
Pathways, steps and other means of access owned by us.	x	
Maintenance of gardens and landscaped areas where they are provided for exclusive use by one household.		X
Garden timber sheds (Unless noted specifically on the tenancy).		X
Decorative paving, patios and hard landscaping that was fitted at previous tenancy.		X
Storage and placement for collection by the local Authority of all domestic refuse.		X
The erection/removal and making good after the installation of satellite dishes.		X
The repair or replacement of clothes lines, including posts, where they are provided for exclusive use by one household		X
Repair or replacement of refuse bins or bin holders.		X
Taking and recording of utility meter readings e.g. gas, electric, water.		X
Repairs to equipment in common parts.	x	

# Repairs Policy



<b>INTERNAL STRUCTURE</b>		
Repairing and maintaining any equipment we have provided for heating, hot water and sanitation including basins, sinks, baths, toilets, flushing systems and waste pipes.	x	
Electric wiring including sockets, light fittings and switches; but excluding plugs, bulbs, fluorescent tubes and starters.	x	
Water heaters, fireplaces, fitted fires and central-heating systems (if they are fitted by us) and gas pipes.	x	
Internal door handles.		X
Plug and chains to sink, bath, wash hand basin		X
Curtain battens, hat and coat hooks and rails.		X
Internal cupboards door catches, handles and hinges.		X
Electrical faults arising from the use of faulty appliances.		X
Minor plaster cracks and internal decorations.		X
Any appliance (other than gas flued appliances), structure or installation which was not supplied by us.		X
Electrical plugs (not socket outlets), fuses, flexible gas tubes, light bulbs and external lights customers have fitted.		X
Internal decorations and all soft furnishings provided by our customers including all flooring e.g. carpets, laminated flooring etc. This includes the removal to a recognised tip of all unwanted items. - All white goods e.g. cookers, fridges, washing machines provided by customers.		X
Replacement of door keys (both interior and exterior doors).		X
Replacement of broken or cracked glass if caused by tenant damage (e.g. in an accident).		X
Renewal of fluorescent strip light tubes and starters.		X
Toilet seats.		X
Minimising the cause of airborne condensation.		X
T.V. or radio aerials installed by customers and the repair to damage caused in their erection or removal.		X
Cleansing of sink, baths, wash hand basin and lavatory, basin wash pipes Flexible pipe / hose connections for washing machines;		X
Battery powered door bells and Door security chains installed by customers.		X

# Repairs Policy



<b>Policy approval date:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> August 2023
<b>Equality impact assessment date:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> May 2023
<b>Safeguarding</b>	No implications identified
<b>Policy review date:</b>	August 2026 Yearly light touch review
<b>Lead team:</b>	Director of Repairs and Facilities Management
<b>Level of authorisation required:</b>	Directors
<b>Please record all authorisation meetings, with dates and details</b>	Final approval at Directors 21 <sup>st</sup> August 2023

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# Adaptations Policy



## Introduction

Great Places Housing Group is committed to ensuring that all customers can live safely and independently within their homes. In addition to refurbishing and developing properties that are designed to be accessible, modifying home environments to be more accessible is a key part in allowing people to gain and maintain independence.

Adaptations form a key part of Great Places' approach to promoting independence, wellbeing and improving the quality of life of customers through recognising the essential role of housing in achieving health outcomes. In addition to this, Great Places' role in providing adaptations also supports partners across the wider health and social care sector, reducing trips and falls, preventing hospital and care admissions and supporting effective hospital discharge.

## Context

Great Places is regulated by the Regulator for Social Housing. The Home Standard (from April 1, 2024, the Consumer Standards, Safety and Quality Standard) sets out expectations for registered providers of housing. As such Great Places is committed to working proactively with Local Authority partners who have a statutory responsibility to deliver access to, assessment for and financial support for adaptations. However, as Great Places works within 44 Local Authority areas, this policy acknowledges the need for Great Places to have a consistent approach to ensure equal access to adaptations for all customers.

This policy focuses on meeting the individual needs of customers and their family members living in the home who need assistance via an adaptation due to a health need or disability that has had significant impact on their ability to live independently or receive care within the home and that are of a long term nature that is substantial enough to require adaptations to the home. Adaptations may be requested by the customer or an agency on their behalf or identified by a colleague of Great Places to support a customer.

Reference to adaptations in this policy includes minor adaptations up to £1000 (including equipment to make life around the home easier day to day) or major adaptations over £1000 within the home (including access requirements). The terms minor and major will be used where distinction is needed.

## Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the policy are:

- To provide a service that focuses on the individual needs of customers, their families and carers, whilst effectively managing investment in the housing stock/assets.

# Adaptations Policy



- To ensure adequate budget for major adaptations that meets the needs of customers, whilst investing in stock in a planned and proactive way to limit the need for major adaptations in future.
- We will take a 'right first time' approach in assessing requests for adaptations that demonstrates respect for customers
- We will work with partners to ensure that our approach is innovative and adaptable to future demand.

## Principles:

- We will work within the principles of our Service Delivery Framework.
- We will provide customers with easy access to minor adaptations via the Customer Hub, without requirement for assessment or approval, unless required to provide a suitable adaptation.
- We will provide clear information about our approach to assessing requests for major adaptations to ensure these can be processed quickly and efficiently.
- We will work within the principle of reasonable adjustment in assessing requests for major adaptations.
- We will work in a person-centred way with customers where requests are not approved, providing clear feedback to ensure needs continue to be met and to limit risk to the customer.

## What is involved?

### Partnership Working

- We will adopt a partnership approach with Local Authorities to deliver appropriate adaptations which best meet the needs of customers, whilst effectively managing investment in the housing stock/assets.
- We will work in partnership across teams within Great Places to ensure that the customer experience of the adaptations process is positive: from making a request to the Customer Hub, accessing advice and support from front line colleagues, assessing the feasibility of the property for adaptation and providing feedback.
- We will seek out external partnerships to ensure that support for customers is maximised, acknowledging that the support needed may be greater than the property can provide.

### Promoting the service

Great Places will proactively support customers and promote adaptations through:

- Training colleagues across Customer Services, Repairs and Assets to understand the role of adaptations and proactively seek opportunities to support customers by providing a 'front line' service for adaptations.



# Adaptations Policy



- Taking a professional curiosity approach in speaking to customers to understand their requirements.
- Providing clear information to inform customers of the process for adaptations and campaigns to highlight the service.

## **Funding**

Great Places will make appropriate resources available for adaptations via an annual budget, considering previous spend, investment through planned works and customer profile information.

### *Minor adaptations:*

Budget for minor adaptations up to £1000 will be provided via the Adaptations Budget overseen by the Sustainable Assets and Repairs Directorate. The budget will be made available across all Customer Services regions and expenditure will be recorded and monitored to ensure effective spending.

Minor adaptations are those that are easily installed and do not require structural changes to the home. They include things like grab rails, stair rails, bath/shower rails and shower seats that are fixed to the wall.

No Occupational Therapist referral is required for minor adaptations.

### *Major adaptations:*

Great Places will provide information for customers in accessing Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) via their Local Authority to fund major adaptations. An Occupational Therapist assessment will be required for all major adaptations. We will work closely with Occupational Therapists to ensure that major adaptations meet customers' needs in a sustainable way, especially where DFG is accessed by the customer.

Examples of major adaptations include access ramps, stairlifts, level access bathing facilities, through floor lifts and extensions to accommodate these or additional facilities. Major adaptations may be carried out for customers with a physical disability or health condition, but can also include adaptations due to sensory needs, learning difficulties, cognitive impairment or a mental health condition.

The amount of contribution made by Great Places is the same across all Local Authority areas to ensure fairness and consistency for customers and to make best use of the Great Places adaptations budget and Local Authority Disabled Facilities Grant budgets.

### *Tier 1*

# Adaptations Policy



Great Places will provide up to 40% of funding for major adaptations up to £10,000 (a maximum of £4000), with the remaining cost to be met by Disabled Facilities Grant.

## *Tier 2*

Great Places will take a panel approach to decisions for the contribution (including percentage) towards major adaptations:

- Where the total cost is more than £10,000, including major adaptations that will be permanent and improve the property in the longer term and adaptations where the above limit would prevent the adaptation taking place and all alternative options have been explored.
- Where a lack of Local Authority Disabled Facilities Grant funding would mean the adaptation not being carried out, including where customers are unsuccessful in obtaining a Disabled Facilities Grant following means testing or Local Authorities do not provide funding, Great Places will consider each individual case and in exceptional circumstances may provide funding under Tier 2. However, this will not replace the Local Authority duty to provide DFG and all other options will have been exhausted. All decisions will be dependent upon the level of investment required.

An assessment by an Occupational Therapist will be required for all Major Adaptations (Tier 1 and Tier 2).

## **Maintenance and servicing**

Great Places will work in partnership with Local Authorities to identify and record responsibilities for servicing and maintenance of adaptations. Where Great Places is responsible, adequate records will be made to ensure that servicing and maintenance is carried out in order to ensure customer wellbeing and safety is maintained.

## **Alternative accommodation**

Where the major adaptation cannot be carried out due to the building structure or would not promote best use of the property (for example under-occupation), we will work with the customer to advise on and support a move to accommodation that meets their needs. Great Places acknowledges the restrictions on available suitable accommodation and delays that occur with Choice Based Letting systems. Great Places will work proactively with Local Authority partners to establish adapted property lists in local areas and to support priority moves for customers requiring this. Any decision to not carry out an adaptation and to ask a customer to relocate will be taken in the context of managing any residual risk to the customer from continuing to live in the property.

## **Transfers and mutual exchanges**

# Adaptations Policy



If a customer for whom an adaptation has been carried out wishes to transfer or undertake mutual exchange to another Great Places property, we will use discretion to determine whether such a move can take place, reviewing each case individually.

## **Leasehold and Shared Ownership Customers**

Customers living in leasehold properties (including shared ownership) are required to ask for permission from Great Places before carrying out any major adaptations in their property. Great Places will not unreasonably withhold permission. Great Places is not responsible for making a financial contribution to major adaptations in leasehold properties and is not responsible for providing minor adaptations.

Great Places will provide advice and guidance where required on accessing Disabled Facilities Grant and support from the Local Authority where required.

## **Removal of adaptations**

When a property with a major adaptation becomes void, Great Places will work with the Local Authority to identify the most appropriate allocation. If the adaptation was provided to meet a specific customer's requirements and cannot be used by another customer, it will be removed. New customers will be asked if they want to retain minor adaptations in the property and if not, these will be removed and reused or recycled where possible. If a customer wishes to retain minor adaptations, these will be checked and serviced where needed.

## **Data Sharing Arrangements**

Great Places will maintain data sharing arrangements with Local Authorities to facilitate the sharing of information to support our customers. This will be managed with each Local Authority on an individual basis. Support on determining appropriate data security measures is provided by the Data Protection Team.

## **Customer Involvement**

To understand how customers use our services and ask for support, Great Places talked to customers to understand their perspective.

We used what customers told us was important to them to make this policy clear and provide a simpler decision-making process when considering adaptation requests. We have also improved our systems so that every adaptation is recorded, and we build greater knowledge about our customers' needs.

This will help us to provide a service that focuses on the individual needs of our customers, their families and carers, whilst taking a 'best use' approach to the provision of housing.

## **Identifying Needs and Accessibility**

# Adaptations Policy



The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy sets out our commitment to improving the lives of all our customers and making our society a better place for everyone. We want to ensure that all our customers have a meaningful voice, and that we provide them with the best customer experience. In line with our legal and regulatory duties we must ensure that the services we provide are accessible, and where possible are tailored to the individual needs of our customers.

This includes identifying barriers and adjusting the way we deliver services. For example, we may need to change the way we communicate with customers, how we deliver a service to make sure it does not adversely affect a customer group, or in the context of adaptations, identify necessary changes to customers' homes to make them more accessible or support customers to live independently.

Colleagues can contact our EDI Specialist for more guidance on how we ensure we consider reasonable adjustment and the needs of our customers through adaptations.

## Monitoring

We will monitor our performance around the delivery of adaptations in line with the policy to ensure we meet the needs of our customers and deal with requests within appropriate timescales.

## Who will be involved?

All Customer Services, Repairs and Assets colleagues have knowledge of the policy and accompanying procedure to ensure they can identify customers who may benefit from adaptations.

## Links to related policies, strategies, and procedures

Guidance Notes – Adaptations

Adaptations Case Management User Guide

<b>Policy approval date:</b>	December 2023
<b>Equality impact assessment date:</b>	August 2023
<b>Reducing carbon impact assessment date:</b>	N/A
<b>Safeguarding/Modern Slavery impact:</b>	August 2023
<b>Policy review date:</b>	December 2024
<b>Lead team:</b>	Sustainable Assets and Repairs
<b>Level of authorisation required:</b>	Directors

# Adaptations Policy



<p><b>Please record all authorisation meetings, with dates and details</b></p>	<p>Approved at Directors August 2023</p>
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**1. Report title: Your Housing Group Update Report**

**2. Action:**

For information and noting

**3. Recommendation(s)**

It is recommended that content of this report is discussed, and actions agreed at the meeting.

**4. Report of:**

Dave Woods - Director of Repairs and Maintenance

Ian Hines – Operations Manager Maintenance

**5. Contact details of author:**

**Dave Woods - Director of Repairs and Maintenance**

dave.woods@yourhousinggroup.co.uk

**6. Confidential report:**

No

**7. Additional Contact:**

**Paula Marshall – Exec Director of Housing & Customer Service**

Paula.marshall@yourhousinggroup.co.uk

**Aaron Hammersley – Director of Housing & Customer Service**

Aaron.hammersley@yourhousinggroup.co.uk

## 8. Introduction

At the last meeting of the Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee, a report on social housing was requested for the January 2025 meeting.

The Committee requested information on the points below and invited Registered Providers to attend the meeting to provide an update.

- Damp and mould – update from last meeting, plus housing repairs – what waiting times etc
- Void and empty homes – how can we maximise social homes – why are social homes empty – what can be done to re-invest in homes? What is the policy for adaptations?

This report provides an update in relation to the housing stock within the borough owned and managed by Your Housing Group (YHG).

## 9. Damp and Mould

### Volumes

- Between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, we received 201 new reports of D&M across our Trafford housing stock.
- We hold 1,998 properties in Trafford, this equates to 10% of our properties reporting D&M issues.

### Actions Taken to Resolve

- We have increased resource in all areas of the D&M task force team (triage, surveying, scheduling and trade operatives).
- Cases triaged within 72 hours has consistently been running at over 99% during the last calendar year even during periods of increased volumes during the colder months.
- We have undertaken training and development with our operatives to be able to complete more complex and specialist work internally reducing reliance on subcontractors.
- Provided training to our triage team through an external body to deepen their knowledge on determining the most appropriate approach when triaging cases. This has also been supported by shadowing and pairing with our surveyors.
- We have introduced our aftercare process and are returning to customers' homes between 6 -12 weeks after completion of all works to confirm if the situation has been fully resolved.

### Challenges

- We have faced the same issue as other providers in terms of the difficulty in recruiting and retaining operatives in an increasingly competitive market. This in turn has impacted our ability to complete some repairs as quickly as we would have expected. We have success in combatting this through benchmarking and improving



our offer, specific targeted advertising and holding open evenings with a view to an easier and shorter recruitment process.

- We are increasingly finding that rising utility bills are placing greater demand on support services such as our money advice team.

### **Future Activity**

- We are looking to further develop our case management system for improved functionality.
- Introduction of a fabric first asset strategy to ensure homes are free from any water penetration.
- Use of data from the case management system to inform our wider asset strategy on how we may be able to address some cases occurring.
- We are reviewing our categorisation of reports of D&M to be more closely aligned to those of the HHSRS.
- We are reviewing both our D&M policy and associated repair timescales in conjunction with our engaged customers.

## **10. Housing Repairs**

For the period of January 2024 to December 2024 we received 6,626 repairs for our homes in Trafford broken down as below.

- 3,617 Responsive Repairs
- 2,218 Emergency Repairs
- 791 Minor Works

The average time to complete these repairs was 32.5 days. We aim to attend emergency repairs within 24hrs, a significant increase in reported emergencies was impacting overall response times. We have implemented an emergency only team to address this and initial results are positive.

We always look to appoint repairs received as quickly as possible, however recruitment of operatives to carry out repairs continues to be a challenge and has impacted our ability to meet target timescales. Whilst from time to time we utilise sub-contracted resources this has not provided sufficient capacity to meet current demand. We will be carrying out more focused recruitment drives / open days through early 2025 across our operating areas to address the shortfall in resources.

## **11. Empty Homes**

During the past year we have encountered some delays in our turn around timescales, several factors have contributed to this such as, extent of repairs required, tenant damage, as well as the difficulties in recruitment and retention of operatives. We aim to have our turnaround performance back to business-as-usual levels during Q1 2025/26, through pursuing the following actions.

- Recruitment initiatives
- Securing of additional budget for high value works
- Mobilisation of a new subcontractor framework

- Review and streamlining of internal systems and processes (pre termination inspections, prioritisation, property clearance/fly tipping, productivity management)

As of 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025, YHG had 29 empty general needs homes in Trafford (1.45% of available stock). Of these 3 homes are ready to let with sign up's pending and 26 homes are in maintenance with works underway to make them available to let over the coming weeks.

## **12. Planned Maintenance**

Each year we carry out planned investment works to occupied properties, to replace elements that are beyond economic repair, this includes replacement kitchens, bathrooms, roofs, windows and doors.

These programmes are determined by our stock condition data, insight from repairs data, complaint trends and other property related data. We are currently moving towards a fabric first approach which will see a focus on ensuring our homes are weather tight and free from water ingress.

We are also looking to increase the efficiency of all homes by investing in energy projects that aim to ensure they meet SAP band C by 2030. We will be working with GMCA to apply for funding from WAVE 3 of the Governments Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) to address the SAP rating of homes across our Greater Manchester stock.

## **13. Policy For Adaptations**

When a property with an existing major adaptation becomes empty, we will always try to allocate the property to a customer that can make use of that adaptation, e.g. wet room. We will work with the relevant Local Authority (LA) to identify the most appropriate allocation, or we will allocate based upon a YHG management move.

YHG may request that an LA Occupational Therapist (OT) assesses the potential new customer by attending a joint viewing of the property, to ensure it meets their needs. If the adaptation was provided to meet a specific customers' requirement and cannot be used by another customer, it may have to be removed.

If an existing customer needs a major adaptation, we will initially try to find an empty property that suits their needs. If this is not possible, they will be referred to the LA to apply for Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) funding. If they are eligible for DFG support the LA will contact us for landlord permission to proceed. Our current arrangement with Trafford Council is that YHG will pay for 40% of the adaptation, with the work managed and delivered by Trafford Council. We do also offer a minor adaptations service to all our customers, which is fully funded by YHG.

## **14. Recommendation**

It is recommended that the content of this report is discussed, and any associated actions agreed.

# YHG Repairs update

January 2025

Ian Hines

Dave Woods

Through our passion for housing, more people have a safe place to call home.

# Damp and Mould

- We hold 1,998 properties in Trafford,
- During the 2024 Calendar year we received 201 Damp and Mould enquires
- This is around 10% of the YHG homes across Trafford
- Our process has been developed to meet the requirements of Awabb's law
- Cases are triaged within 72 hours of the report and then follow a specific process depending on the initial findings

# Housing Repairs

- We received 6,626 reported repairs during the 2024 calendar year
- 3,617 Responsive Repairs
- 2,218 Emergency Repairs
- 791 Minor Works
- The average time to complete these repairs was 32.5 days.

# Empty Homes

- We currently have 29 empty homes across Trafford, 1.45% of YHG stock in this area
- 3 homes are ready to let
- 26 homes are with our maintenance team
- Actions are being taken to reduce turnaround time across the business

# Planned Maintenance Approach

- Fabric first approach to ensure watertight
- Meeting SAP band C by 2030
- Delivering planned programmes across Partington

# Adaptations Policy

- Make best use of existing adapted properties
- Work with Council to deliver major adaptations to our homes
- YHG contribute 40% of major adaptation cost
- YHG fully fund minor adaptations for its tenants

# Thank you

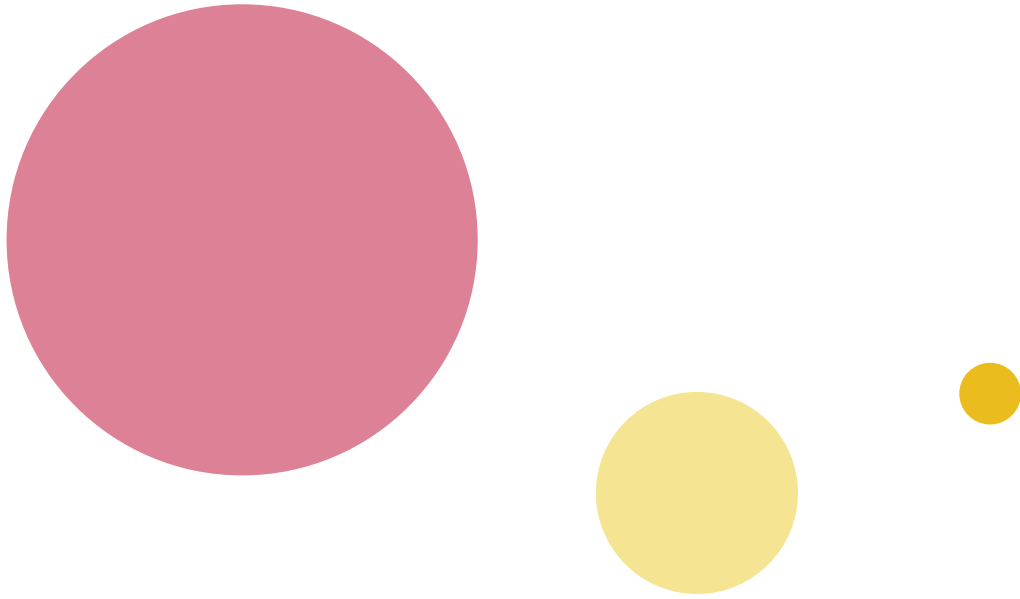
[www.yourhousinggroup.co.uk](http://www.yourhousinggroup.co.uk)



Through our passion for housing, more people have a safe place to call home.

Your Housing Group  
A charitable registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 no. 30666R, registered with the Regulator of Social Housing no. L4203. Registered Office: Youngle House, 130 Birchwood Boulevard, Birchwood, Warrington WA3 7QH





# Irwell Valley Homes update

Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee  
22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025.

Ceris Esplen, Executive Director (Customers)

Helen Nicolson, Executive Director (Finance and Assets)





Agenda  
discussion  
points

## An update on damp and mould - what has progressed since September 2023?

- Current overview
- Resident Scrutiny Panel Review
- Data-driven decisions
- Social Housing Quality Fund and other improvement works
- Support for customers
- Training and policies

# Current overview

- 127 property inspections completed in Trafford since 1st April 2024.
- Of these 110 were following reports of damp, mould or condensation (DMC).
- Category level determined via robust reporting and triage system, using questionnaire and photographs/videos.
- 70% of cases attended to within 10 days – where serious concerns highlighted, often attend next day.
- Reasons why 30% were more than 10 days, include no access to home given; appointment rearranged; works combined with other jobs in progress. Normally only 1-2 days over 10 days.
- Ventilation/humidity or leaks are the main root causes – in particular between flats, with a high percentage starting in the bathroom.
- Remediation works completed include new extractor fans; PIVs; leak repairs plus mould wash, stain block and decorating.
- Irwell Valley Homes operates across Greater Manchester. Levels of DMC cases in Trafford are lower than other local authority areas due to recent investment works.



# Resident Scrutiny Panel Review into DMC

Concluded December 2023 - 14 recommendations, implemented by March 2024.

These include:

- Developing triage to diagnose and understand DMC issues more effectively and consistently leading to quicker response times and efficient prioritisation.
- Further training for colleagues around customers' personal circumstances and medical conditions when prioritising and planning works.
- Empowering customers with further information and guidance about how to manage condensation and moisture in the home, including through engaging materials like videos and graphics.

## Improving our data through stock condition surveys

Rolling programme of stock condition surveys – target that 100% homes will have had a survey within the last 5 years by the end of March 2026.

685 stock condition surveys in Trafford (116 in Timperley and 568 in Sale West) completed within last two years.

Homes found to have a lower EPC rating (D or below) brought into asset management strategy for investment e.g. Fontwell Close in Old Trafford.

# Social Housing Quality Fund

- IVH secured Social Housing Quality Fund grant of just over £1m; 70% from GMCA matched by 30% of IVH investment.
- Targeted 991 homes across Greater Manchester, including 253 on Sale West estate.
- Total GM spend of £1,010,623 with £305,195 on Sale West.
- Works mainly centred on improving ventilation (extractor fans and Positive Input Ventilation PIV units) and insulation.
- Also included a small number of heating system improvements.

# Regeneration and improvement programmes

Continued progress with Sale West regeneration which includes more than 600 new roofs and loft insulation.

Improvements to the heating systems at Fontwell Close in Old Trafford – replacing panel heaters with a modern storage heating system. Plus, photovoltaic panels on the roof to help offset energy costs further.

Possible similar works at Langham Court, Stretford.

# Support for customers

- Support for customers with high cost of living to help with heating costs which support a healthy home.
- Cost of Living Support Fund – issued £30,846 vouchers to 515 customers in 2023/24.
- Dedicated Tenancy Sustainment Team – helped customers maximise income and unlocked more than £500,000 in extra financial support last year.
- Our charitable investment fund – the Irwell Valley Foundation – has funded Citizens Advice at Sale West community centre.
- Updated website and customer communications with information and advice about DMC and sought customer feedback around language, tone and content.



## Policy, process and and training

On-going colleague training – inclusivity, language, reducing stigma, technology, process.

New housing management system, new repair data tracking system, new mould products.

Recruited two mould repair specialists.

Developed and embedded new damp and mould policy with robust triage system and timescales.

New Access Policy to help tackle issues around not being able to gain entry to complete necessary works.

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# Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee

Ben Townsend – New Business Director NW

22nd January 2025

L&Q



# Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee

## Maximising social housing

- Existing social housing
- Adaptations
- Disposals
- Development
- Regeneration



# Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee

## Existing Social Housing

- 9,500 residential properties in Trafford, almost 20,000 householders
  - 81% general needs
  - 10% sheltered accommodation
  - 7% leaseholders/freeholders/shared owners
  - 2% other tenures (non-social, rent to buy, social services)
- 51% flats (including maisonettes), 49% houses (including bungalows)
- 3 extra cares (including Limelight community hub)

# Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee

## Adaptations

- Minor
- Major – Disabled Facilities Grant
- Homes Moves
- Temporary accommodation
- Foster carer programme



# Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee

## Disposals

- Good asset management
- Efficiency and value for money investment
- Sales to Trafford Council
- Empty homes
- Right to buy / Right to acquire
- Surplus reinvested in Trafford

# Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee

## Development

- Provide quality new homes across our operational area
- Commitment to Greater London and Greater Manchester
- Averaged 3,000 new homes per year
- Mixed tenure affordable and market homes
- Using financial capacity and external funding
- Partnerships and joint ventures





# Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee

## Development

- 108 homes completed in last 24-months in Trafford
- 218 new homes on-site currently in Trafford
- 235 new homes approved to start on site in Trafford
- 3-year pipeline (potential sites identified) 979 homes

## Partnerships

- Homes for Trafford LLP – with Trafford Council
- Heath Farm Lane LLP – with Vistry



# Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee

## Development



# Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee

## Development



# Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee

## Regeneration



# Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee

## Any questions?

The logo consists of the letters 'L' and 'Q' in a bold, sans-serif font, with an ampersand between them. The letters are white and are set against a dark blue rectangular background.

# Maximising Social Housing

**Trafford Scrutiny Committee**

Mike Glennon – Head of Neighbourhoods


Robert Collier – Head of Asset Delivery

# Allocations – Right Home Right Person

- Aligned to the Tenancy Standard (Regulator of Social Housing)
- Majority of homes let via Trafford Homesearch
- Maximise occupancy inline with benefit bedroom entitlement
- Households with a child prioritised for homes with 2+ bedrooms
- Medical need prioritised for ground floor homes
- Adapted homes prioritised for those with specific needs
- Promote mutual exchange for non-priority moves
- Person centred decisions on debt, ASB, dependencies, etc.



# Tenancy Sustainment, Voids & Disposals

- Neighbourhood Services Manager the key customer relationship
  - Internal Tenancy Coach service
  - FCA Regulated Money Advice Team
  - New Inclusive Services Team
  - Homes for Cathy Alliance Member – 9 commitments
  - Void Relet Standard – Target 24-day turnaround
  - Disposal considered in extreme exceptional circumstances
  - Conversions of some tenure (Rent To Homebuy to Shared Ownership)
- 

# Adaptations

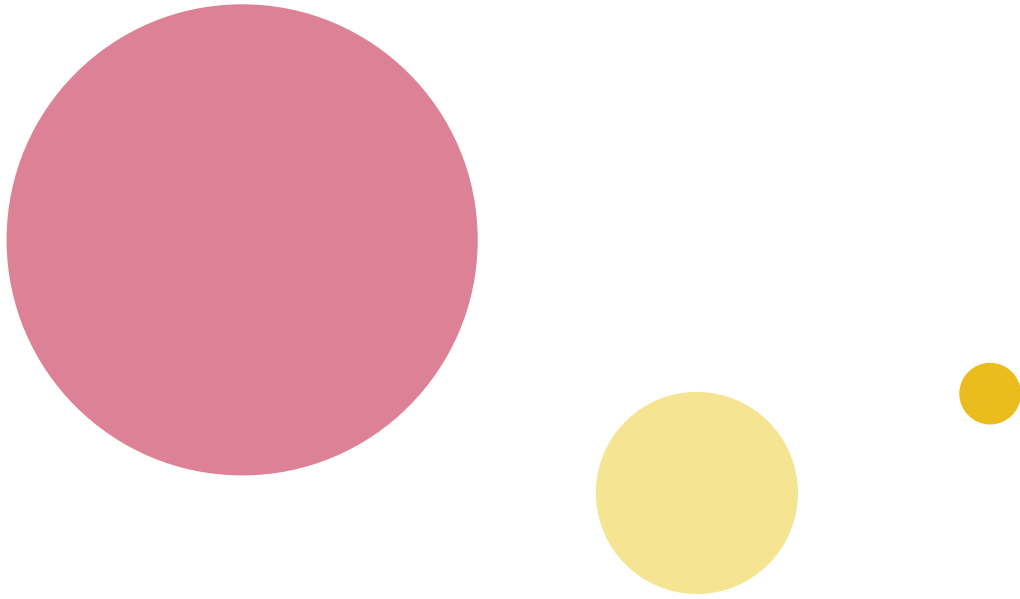
- Independence, Quality of life & Safety; key drivers
- Balances effective asset management & best use of stock
- Minor Adaptations
  - Completed in-house & OT assessment not required
  - £1k per home
  - Quality of life adaptations – grab rails, shower seats, etc.
- Major adaptations
  - OT assessment required
  - DFG application support
  - Up to £4k GPHG contribution
- Adaptable homes delivered via our development pipeline

# Thank you



great  
places  
HOUSING GROUP

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# Irwell Valley Homes update

Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee  
22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025.

Ceris Esplen, Executive Director (Customers)

Helen Nicolson, Executive Director (Finance and Assets)





Agenda  
discussion  
points

- **How we can we maximise the supply of social housing?**
- Adapting homes
- Selling social homes.
- Empty social homes.
- New social homes.

# Rightsizing and Mutual Exchange

Rightsizing project targeting customers on our internal transfer list. Currently 169 people on this list in Trafford.

Encouraging mutual exchange of homes between customers to help people into a home which better meets their needs.

Organised House Exchange Roadshows in three of our neighbourhoods last year including Sale West in Trafford – offering support to get customers signed up to the national social housing swap database.

More events planned for 2025.

24 mutual exchanges completed in Trafford since April 2024 as part of the initiative.

## Home adaptations

Aids and adaptations policy which helps people stay in their home by making changes to ensure it meets their needs.

Low-level adjustments such as grab rails and tap openers are carried out by our in-house repairs team following requests from customers.

Larger jobs such as an adjusted kitchen and or wet room go through an application with the local authority and involve a detailed OT assessment to determine the best solutions.

Funding provided through a means-tested Disabled Facilities Grant and Irwell Valley Homes also contributes - £100,111 spent in 2023/24 when 35 homes underwent major adaptations.



## When do we sell social homes?

- In a local, regional and national housing crisis, this is never a decision we take lightly.
- Is a rare course of action – only 1 home in Trafford sold last year.
- This was a period property rented by one of our supported partner agencies that was no longer fit for purpose, requiring extensive investment to bring up to standard. Only housed two residents so ROI not value for money.
- Instead, investment being prioritized to build 22 new supported homes:
  - A nine-bed home in Stretford Road for people with learning disabilities in partnership with Trafford Council.
  - Phase 3 of Sale West regeneration which includes 13 new supported housing homes.
- So net increase of 21 new supported homes.

## Voids process

Robust voids process which aims to have all homes re-let within 25 days.

Condition of homes can vary hugely when they are returned to us and the amount of work needed to bring up to re-let standard determines how long process takes. Also budget considerations of paying for necessary works.

New Home Standard produced as part of Repairs Transformation Project sets out clearly the standards customers can expect when they move into one of our homes.

17 empty homes currently in Trafford – includes 10 major and 7 minor. Tenancy turnover in Trafford in 2023/24 – 103 homes.

Our Resident Scrutiny Panel is currently completing a review into Voids and Lettings and this will help us to work on improvements to the process.



Sale West regeneration – building more social homes

# New homes in Sale West

- 79 homes for social rent delivered (phase 1). Includes two, three and four-bedroom houses, plus some 2-bedroom apartments.
- Arrangement with Trafford Council to let a proportion to customers already living on the estate who had outgrown their existing home – making best use of homes.
- 22 homes for affordable rent (phase 2), including ‘adaptable ready’ homes for people with disabilities which are in high demand in Trafford.
- Work on phase 3 started this month – beginning with a block of 39 homes for social rent.
- Block 2 will be 14 independent living homes for those aged 50 and over; block 3 will be 13 supported homes for adults with additional needs.

# Sale West regeneration

The multi-million pound masterplan also includes significant investment in existing social homes and the estate.

## *Highlights so far include:*

- 607 homes and have had a new roof, improving insulation and boosting energy efficiency.
- 640 homes received a new kitchen, with customers able to choose colours, tiles and finishes.
- 12 parking bays resurfaced and relined making better use of the space.
- 235 homes have had new ventilation or heating systems, to help deal more effectively with condensation, damp and mould.
- 4 new natural play areas have been created, giving young people a new space to enjoy.
- 1 new road – Hamilton Avenue - has been opened to connect the estate together more easily.
- 300 new trees have been planted to enhance the environment and boost local drainage.

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## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 22 January 2025  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Executive Members for Highways, Environmental & Traded Services & Climate Change

### Report Title

**Response to Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group – Reducing Car Dependency – Executive Response**

### Summary

On the 18<sup>th</sup> December the Executive considered and responded to the Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group findings as detailed in the report dated 10 July 2024. This Report sets out the Executives response to the issue.

### Recommendation(s)

1. That the Scrutiny Committee notes the Executive's response to the Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group report – as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

### Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name:	Adrian Fisher	Director of Growth & Regulatory Services adrian.fisher@trafford.gov.uk
	Chris Morris	Director of Highways & Environment chris.morris@trafford.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 - Report to the Executive 18 December 2024

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**TRAFFORD COUNCIL**

**Report to:** Executive  
**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Executive Members for Highways, Environmental & Traded Services and Climate Change

**Report Title**

**Response to Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group – Reducing Car Dependency**

**Summary**

This report has been prepared following consideration of, and in response to, the Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group findings as detailed in the report dated 10 July 2024 in respect of making Trafford a place that is less dependent on private car transport. Investigation by the Scrutiny Committee produced a series of recommendations relating to safety, a greener environment, modal shift, communications, car parking and young people.

**Recommendation(s)**

1. That the Executive welcomes the Scrutiny Task & Finish Report on Reducing Car Dependency dated 10 July 2024 and supports the principle of widening transport choices and reducing reliance on the private car for journeys in Trafford.
2. That the Executive endorses the response to the Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group report set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

**Contact person for access to background papers and further information:**

Name:	Adrian Fisher	Director of Growth & Regulatory Services adrian.fisher@trafford.gov.uk
	Chris Morris	Director of Highways & Environment chris.morris@trafford.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None

Relationship to Policy Framework /Corporate Priorities	The desire to rely less on individual cars aligns with the corporate objective to address our climate crisis.
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	The TFGM 2040 Transport Strategy supports modal shift away from reliance on private cars. There are a number of supporting strategies that also align with the

	Scrutiny Committee's ambition to reduce car dependency and support other transport modes.
Financial Implications	The specific financial implications of recommendations, where applicable, are addressed within the detailed responses in section 3 and Appendix 2 of the report. Many of the recommendations have significant financial implications – either in terms of capital cost or ongoing maintenance – which present a a serious barrier to implementation. In such cases, the Executive can only be recommended to agree to the Scrutiny Committee conclusions should resources become available at some point in the future.
Legal Implications	The regulation and management of Highways is governed by the Highways Act 1980 and Traffic Management act 2004. Related Traffic Regulation Orders then govern how individual sections of road space are utilised.
Equality/Diversity Implications	Improving transport choice and reducing car dependency has social benefits in promoting opportunity for those unable to run a car. However, it must also be acknowledged that for many people with mobility difficulties, access to a car is essential in order to travel in safety in comfort. It should also be noted that an important part of the rise of car use during the second half of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century can be attributed to increasing numbers of women driving – and that the safety and independence afforded by car travel has had a role in promoting gender opportunity and equality.
Sustainability Implications	The Report considers how sustainable travel could be better promoted throughout the Borough.
Carbon Reduction Implications	Better use of public transport and less reliance on the private car will also assist in meeting Carbon reduction ambitions. Whilst in time, virtually all cars will become fully powered by electricity – which can be generated by renewable means, it will be the middle of the century before that position is likely to be reached.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	Staffing implications, where they arise, are addressed within the individual responses.
Risk Management Implications	None directly arising.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	The issues highlighted by the scrutiny committee link to the health and well-being of the local community – these are addressed within the report.
Health and Safety Implications	Improving safety for non-motorised road users is addressed within the report.

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In July 2024 the Scrutiny Committee published the findings of its Task & Finish Group on Reducing Car Dependency. As described in the supporting documentation, the Group met with a wide variety of Council officers in considering this issue. They also met with a number of 'good practice' Councils, alongside TFGM and Dame Sarah Storey the GM Active Travel Commissioner
- 1.2 These issues were set out in a report by the Task and Finish group which was presented at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 10 July 2024. This Report provides a detailed response to the matters raised.

## **2.0 COMMENTARY & ANALYSIS**

### **The rise of the motor car & National transport policy**

- 2.1** The modern motor car was invented in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century but remained a rare luxury until after the First World War with the introduction of the first mass-produced vehicles. As a consequence, car ownership grew rapidly through the 1930s, with an estimated 2 million vehicles on the road by the end of the decade. As a consequence, the car began to influence the forms of development from this point forward.
- 2.2** The second world war, with the rationing of petrol and other severe restrictions interrupted this trend for growth – such that it is in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that car ownership and travel began to grow very significantly. Graph A at Appendix 1 shows that whilst other transport modes remained relatively static, passenger journeys by car grew by both percentage and volume. The flexibility of the motor car and the availability of road space meant that people were able to undertake more frequent, complex and longer journeys than was previously the case.
- 2.3** The implications for the form and character of towns and cities rapidly became apparent in this post-war era – culminating in the highly influential report “Traffic in Towns” by Sir Colin Buchanan, published in 1963. This Report recognised the potential adverse consequences of the use of the private motor vehicle –and the need for changes to be made to towns and cities to better segregate road users. The redevelopment of Stretford, with the pedestrianisation of King Street, the building of the Arndale Shopping Centre and the urban ‘bypass’ of Kingsway are a classic example of this approach to traffic management and urbanism that remained prevalent for much of the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
- 2.4** Despite the Oil Crisis of 1973 and the recognition by the 1980s that motor vehicles had an impact on the local and global environment, National policy remained resolutely in favour of a ‘predict and provide’ approach to traffic management. As late as 1989 the White Paper “Roads for Prosperity” proposed a very significant expansion of road building. In and around Trafford this would have included the M56/M62 link west of Sale (which was never built) and the Airport – Bredbury A6(M) which was later modified and finally constructed as the A555 east of Hale Barns.
- 2.5** As a result, passenger journeys using cars or vans continued to increase until mid 2000s – and as Graph B at Appendix 1 shows, many households taking on a second family vehicle. Consequently, the context the starting point for reducing car dependency is a century of expansion of the motor vehicles – and a policy framework favourable towards their expanded use and accommodation within the urban form.

### **Transport Policy in Greater Manchester**

- 2.6** Integrated transport planning in Greater Manchester has a fairly long genesis – commencing with the 1968 Transport Act and the establishment of a Passenger Transport Executive for the region to coordinate public transport. With the creation of Greater Manchester in 1974 this became GMPTE – and since 2011 Transport for Greater Manchester, answerable to the GM Mayor and Combined Authority since 2017.
- 2.7** This history means that local efforts have been made over successive decades to reduce dependency on the private car. There have however been set backs – notably the abolition of the Greater Manchester County Council in 1986 and the de-regulation of buses in the same year. Whilst the latter generated innovation and competition on some routes, it reduced frequency and capacity on others. As a consequence the patronage of buses (which has some of the best potential to drive down car use in a city region) remained on the decline across Greater Manchester

- 2.8** However, the continued operation of the GMPTE has enabled other city-wide projects to flourish – most notably the Metrolink network – first opened in 1992 and now extending over 63 miles with 99 tram stops. The network now enables some 36 million passenger transport journeys per year and is the largest of its kind in the UK.
- 2.9** With the creation of the GMCA and TFGM in 2011 and a GM mayor from 2015, there have been further significant developments in Transport Policy over the past decade. The 2017 bus services act enabled bus services to once again be subject to local regulation – leading to the development of the Bee Network – an integration of Metrolink, active travel, bus services and hire bikes into a single coordinated transport system. This will be joined by suburban rail after 2028.
- 2.10** The strategic Transport body has long been responsible for preparing a Statutory Local Transport Plan – and its current embodiment, The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 was first published in February 2017. An updated version was published in January 2021, along with a new Five-Year Transport Delivery Plan (2021-2026). A third iteration of the strategy is now being prepared and will be the subject of public consultation next year.
- 2.11** The 2040 strategy seeks to establish the ‘right mix’ of travel between different transport modes. At the Strategy’s inception, car travel represented 61% of daily trips in the conurbation – and the ambition of Strategy is to sift this to 50% by 2040 an estimated 3.4M trips. With an overall increase in journeys across the City region, the intention is that daily car trips decrease by 0.3M but that active travel & public transport increase by 1M trips each day.
- 2.12** The Strategy sets out a series of interventions to stimulate and accomplish this change – including a comprehensive active travel network, improved public transport and changes to ticketing. Many of these have become evident within Trafford since 2021 – notably a significant increase in Active Travel projects and the rolling out of bus franchising.
- 2.13** Alongside this lies a suite of other policy documents. Of particular relevance is the Streets for All Strategy and its related design guide, launched earlier this year. The Strategy aims to create streets are welcoming, green, and safe spaces for all people, enabling more travel by walking, cycling and using public transport.
- 2.14** Consequently with the establishment of the Bee Network the prospect of a truly integrated transport network is now within sight. This will not remove cars from the Transport mix within Trafford, but it establishes favourable conditions for fewer car journeys to be made. This provides the context for the recommendations made by the Scrutiny committee to the Councils Executive.

### **3.0 Response to Recommendations**

- 3.1** Following their investigations, the Task & Finish group identified 34 principal recommendations. A recommended response to each of these is set out in Appendix 2.
- 3.2** The Scrutiny recommendations cut across a number of policy and operational areas of the Council – but highlight that a comprehensive approach is needed on matters of Transportation. Whilst the Council has a key role to play, it must be recognised that Transport for Greater Manchester has specific responsibilities around transport policy and the operation of the wider transport network in the City Region.
- 3.3** In many cases the responses to recommendations reference strategies or other initiatives which are led by TFGM. The emerging Local Transport Plan and continued role out of the integrated Bee Network provide an opportunity for further engagement. Accordingly it is vital that the Council works positively and collaboratively with TFGM to achieve the best outcomes for Trafford and the conurbation as a whole. The Responses cite several examples of where this has taken place or is ongoing.

- 3.4 The work of the Scrutiny Committee also highlights that transportation cuts widely across different Council functions. There is a clear role for local Strategies to support different transport modes – especially the forthcoming Local Plan. The Adopted Places for Everyone and Trafford Design Code will also foster changes to design, the use of road space and accessibility. In addition to this there is continued work that needs to be done at the operational and community level to support modal shift. The recent expansion of active travel projects and fresh initiatives around parking enforcement exemplify this. Meanwhile the work of the Walking, Wheeling and Cycling team demonstrates how working with people and communities can promote behavioural change and healthier lifestyles. The use of the car has been popular because it has enabled travel that is generally safe, flexible and affordable. Reducing car dependency therefore needs a comprehensive approach to ensure other modes are similarly convenient and cost effective.
- 3.5 As the introduction to the report highlights our urban fabric has been extensively shaped by the widespread use and ownership of the private car. This has been the bedrock of national policy and transport trends over many decades – and the Trafford that we see today is reflective of that history and culture. It will similarly take many years to achieve a different balance of transport opportunity and choice. However with the combination of the right policies supported by practical initiatives, there is now a genuine opportunity to broaden transport options and reduce car dependency in the Borough.

#### 4 Reasons for Recommendation

In order to address the matters highlighted by the Scrutiny Task & Finish Group.

**Key Decision** No

**If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given?** n/a

**Finance Officer Clearance** ...PC.....

**Legal Officer Clearance** ...EM.....

#### **[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE**



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Corporate Director has cleared the report prior to issuing to the Executive Member for decision.

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - Graphs illustrating national transport trends

Appendix 2 – Responses to Scrutiny Recommendations

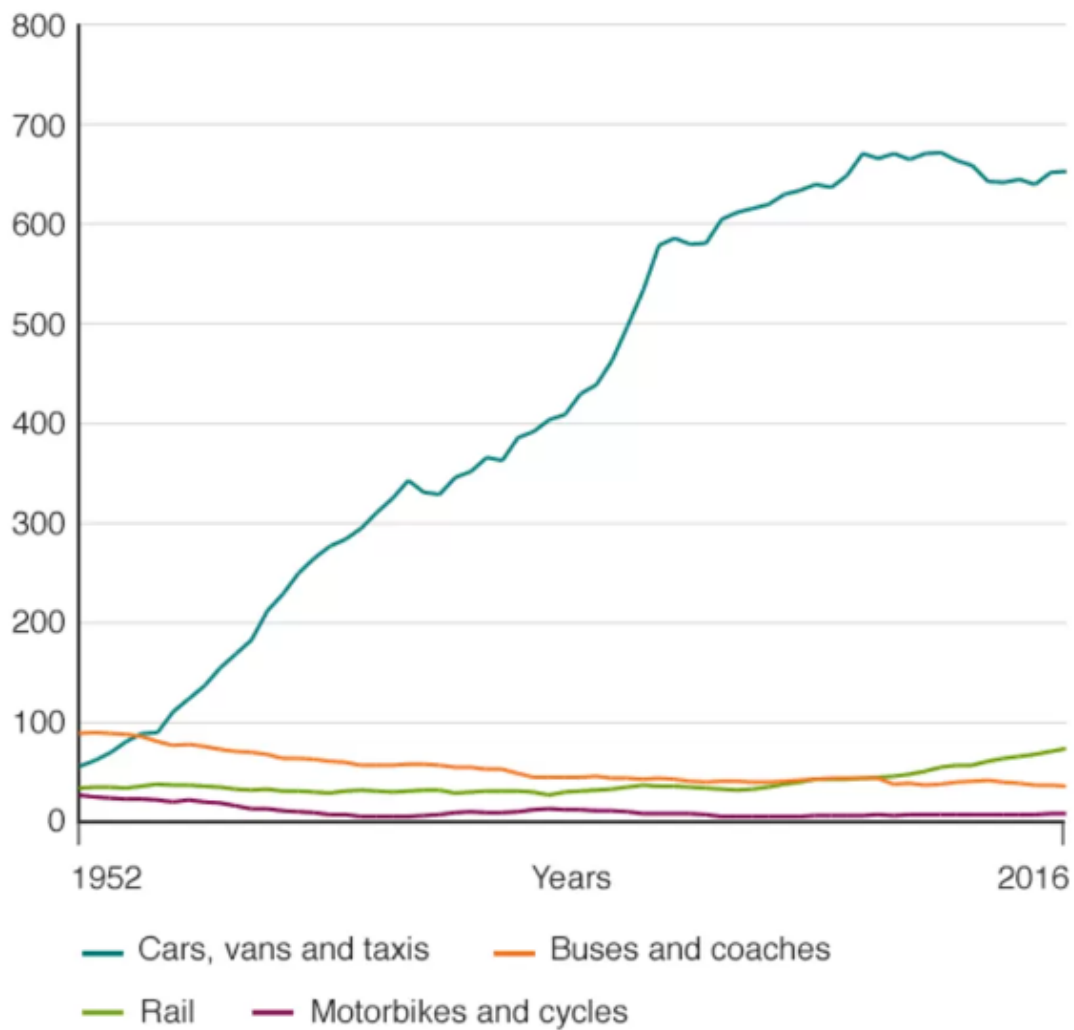
## APPENDIX 1

### GRAPHS ILLUSTRATING NATIONAL TRANSPORT TRENDS

#### GRAPH A

#### Road and rail travel since 1952

billion passenger km per year



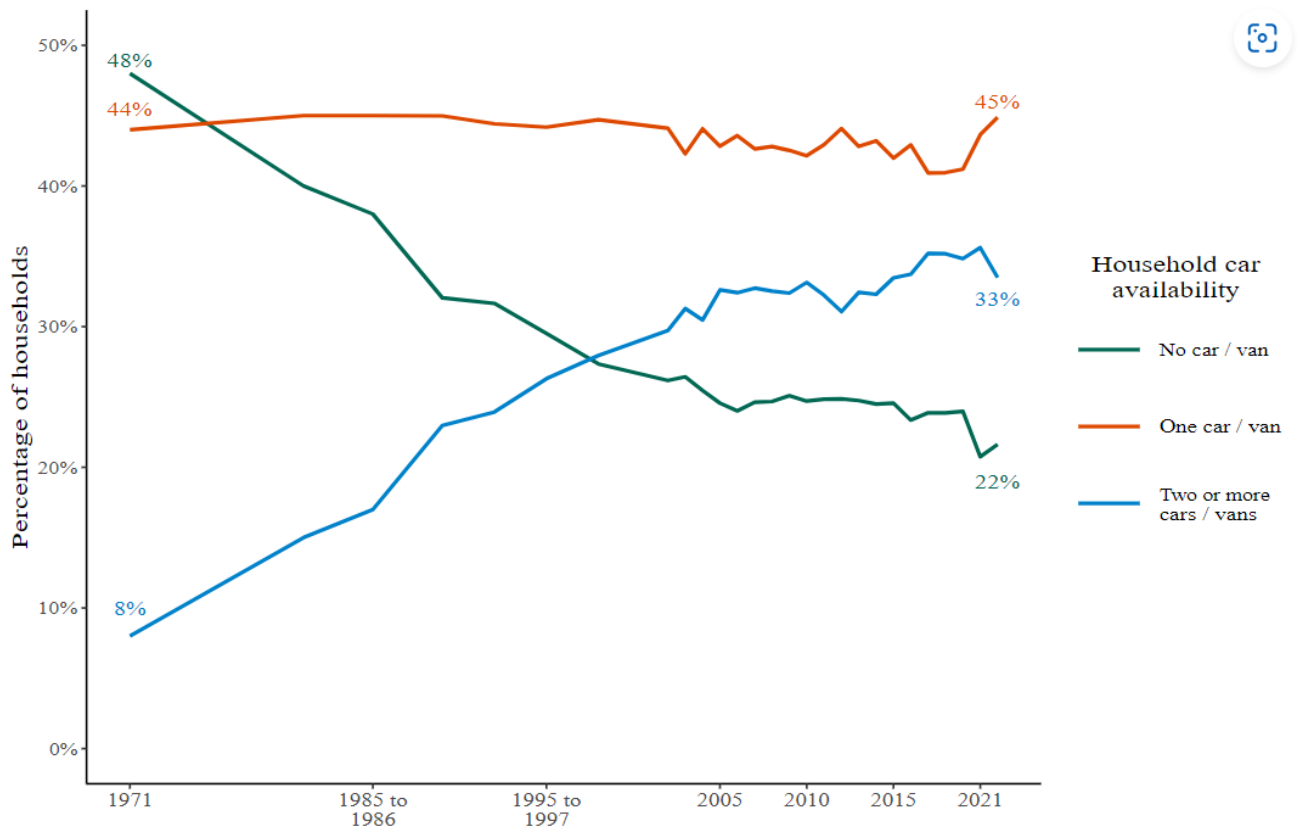
Source: Department for Transport

BBC

[10 charts that tell the story of Britain's roads - BBC News](#)

**GRAPH B**

**Percentage of households by car access: Great Britain (1971 to 1988) and England (1989 to 2021)**



Source HM Government

[National Travel Survey 2021: Household car availability and trends in car trips - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/national-travel-survey-2021-household-car-availability-and-trends-in-car-trips)

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## APPENDIX 2

### DETAILED RESPONSES TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Scrutiny Committee considered the issue of Car Dependency in considerable detail and made wide ranging recommendations as a result. For ease of reference, the original numbering has been retained but with a letter prefix to make clear which section the recommendation relates to. In each case the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations are set out in full and beneath that is the recommended response of the Executive.

The Executive were asked to consider the following recommendations:

#### A. Overarching Recommendations

*A1. That an overarching strategy is implemented to link up the active travel and public health initiatives already happening, and to provide a cohesive, integrated and visionary approach of what Trafford could look like with streets free from cars.*

The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 sets out Greater Manchester's long-term ambition for Transport. The overall vision is for:

*'World-class connections that support long-term sustainable economic growth and access to opportunity for all'.*

A key corresponding implementable strategy is Streets for All, which provides guidance and direction on how every authority in GM should aim to make their streets suitable for everyone.

The Trafford Local Plan which is being prepared will take the implementation and delivery plans which are part of the 2040 Strategy and Streets for All and apply them to Trafford's localities and communities. This will aim to link together all the related spatial initiatives taking place and/or planned in the borough, including those outlined by public health where appropriate.

The Local Plan will cover the whole of the borough and as such will be able to provide a holistic and integrated vision of the future of Trafford. More importantly, it will provide the framework from which plans and initiatives of more granular detail will be able to be prepared and supported in the future.

*A2. That the strategy is shown to be effective by strong leadership with a clear positive vision of what life could be like in Trafford with less traffic and*

*congestion, and increased safe road and pavement space for pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists. We recommend working closely with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), and other Greater Manchester (GM) Councils, and learning from other Councils who are demonstrating good practice, while maintaining autonomy in our decision making.*

The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 sets out Greater Manchester's long-term ambition for Transport. The overall vision is to promote sustainability and equality – as set out above.

It sets out a strong commitment to provide a transport system which: supports sustainable economic growth and the efficient and effective movement of people and goods; improves the quality of life for all by being integrated, affordable and reliable; protects our environment and supports our target to be net zero carbon by 2038 as well as improving air quality; and capitalises on new technology and innovation.

The 2040 Strategy is also supported by the Transport Delivery Plan 2021-2026 which identifies a programme of interventions and infrastructure projects.

The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy is currently being reviewed and a consultation on the revised / updated document is expected in 2025.

In addition to the 2040 Strategy, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) Streets for All Strategy and accompanying Streets for All Design Guide will help to ensure that our streets are welcoming, green, and safe spaces for all people, enabling more travel by walking, cycling and using public transport while creating thriving places that support local communities and businesses. Both have been co-developed by TfGM together with the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities, with input from a wide range of stakeholders.

The Guide will help deliver the Streets for All Essentials set out in the Strategy. These relate to the challenges, opportunities and ambitions for Greater Manchester's streets.

In applying the Streets for All approach, we aim to achieve:

- Green, vibrant streets that are welcoming and safe places to spend time in
- An attractive and inclusive walking and wheeling environment;
- A safe and connected cycling experience;
- A reliable, integrated and accessible public transport network;
- A network where goods are delivered on time with minimal impacts on local communities;
- Streets that enable people to drive less;
- A future proofed street network.

Along with the Streets for All Essentials five 'street types' have been developed, to help us frame and structure our approach to streets, and what change could – and should - look like. In line with the context sensitive approach, a 'real' street may have elements of each.

The five Greater Manchester street types are:

- Neighbourhood streets, which give access to our homes and link up with public transport and community facilities.

- Connector Streets, which are part of, and join up, our Neighbourhoods.
- High Streets, which are at the heart of our communities and are important places for shopping, leisure and work.
- Destination Places and Gateways, which come in many shapes and sizes, and are places where people come together or pass through; and
- Strategic Roads, enabling people and goods to move reliably over long distances.

The street types recognise the many roles of our streets, as places we live, socialise, spend time, play, visit, wait for a bus, park vehicles, as well as travel through. Streets for All is about how we achieve a better balance between these roles.

In addition to the overarching GM Plans and strategies, the Trafford Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy was adopted by Trafford Council in March 2023. This document was prepared with input from a range of teams across the Council including, Strategic Planning, Highways, Leisure and Public Health, as well as input from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM).

The Strategy seeks to enable more people to take up walking, wheeling or cycling and drive a shift in behaviour change towards active travel. The Strategy sets out a 10 year vision for active travel in the Borough, with many actions underway.

The overarching vision of the Trafford Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy is:

*Trafford is a green and connected borough where more people choose active travel every day*

The Strategy identifies three overarching objectives which are each accompanied by key actions.

- Objective 1 – Leadership and Inspiration
- Objective 2 – Enabling Change
- Objective 3 – Improving Access – the physical infrastructure

A new web page could be created on the Trafford Council website for the Strategy to help increase awareness. This could also link to current schemes which are being planned / delivered which will help to deliver the Strategy.

**That the following recommendations are included in the strategy:**

**B. Make our streets and pavements safer:**

That the Executive:

*B1. Develop a Trafford wide strategic approach to introducing 20 mph speed limits, which, unlike 20 mph zones, do not require traffic calming measures (using models such as Wirral Council's which set up a working group on road safety and recommended focusing on all residential, retail and education areas, divided up appropriate 20 mph roads into areas and time phases, based on ability to complete and costings, and prepared for when money becomes*

*available).*

Implementing a Trafford wide 20mph limit without an application and prioritisation process is not affordable given current financial constraints and would be unsustainable to implement, enforce and maintain.

Trafford residents can request 20 mph schemes on their streets, using existing mechanisms like the one to request parking schemes, and waiting restrictions etc. to support the favouring and implementation of 20 mph zones in residential areas, and other appropriate locations like schools. Any request is prioritised using a priority matrix. The matrix consists of a number of questions that are weighted. It ensures that all requests are treated in a fair and equitable manner. The matrix is also used to generate a cost estimate of the scheme, as cost will vary depending on the size of the area etc. We have 26 20mph schemes (not including any new developments). The Council's policy can be found using this link: <https://democratic.trafford.gov.uk/documents/s39569/20mph%20zones%20streets%20report.pdf>

*B2. Look at options for bringing the speed limit down to 40mph on rural roads and enforcing speed limits on the A56.*

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) enforce speed limits across our highways. The locations and frequency of speed checks is resource and capacity dependent. There are a number of permanent speed cameras located along the corridor and average speed enforcement cameras will soon be deployed on a section of the A56. The project is funded through the Mayor's Challenge Fund and is being delivered by TfGM on behalf of the Safer Roads Greater Manchester Partnership. An update will be provided once we have a programme for installation.

There is no current workstream focussed on bringing the speed limit down to 40mph on rural roads. Any workstream would require funding to be allocated within the significant constraints on the existing highways capital programme. The Council awaits the publication of the Vision Zero strategy on 19 November which will inform our approach to road safety.

*B3. Liaise with GM Police to increase the use of enforcement measures to ensure that drivers obey the speed limit – this will form part of the GM Zero Vision Strategy.*

We work with GMP, and other stakeholders including TfGM to help ensure compliance to road speeds. Our partnership includes:

- Data sharing and analysis to inform the development of our projects which include traffic calming measures and targeted enforcement (e.g. A56 average speed camera project).

- Implementation of temporary traffic calming measure such as visual speed displays and mobile speed enforcement cameras.

Exceeding speed limits is illegal. The police enforce speed limit and locations and frequency of speed checks is resource and capacity dependent.

*B4. Prepare for future grants and funding bids to retrofit our roads, transforming our streetscape, making pavements wider, changing the infrastructure to reduce speed at junctions, narrowing road lanes to ensure drivers drive more carefully, creating blended crossings where the pedestrian and wheeler are prioritised, and improving access for those restricted by disability or mobility.*

The Council's funding bids are reflective of the objectives of the awarding organisation and guided by local, regional and national policy. Recent funding has been focussed on active travel schemes, and less so highways improvements.

The recent £17.6m Trafford Council public realm scheme in Stretford has made the area safer and greener for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. Works included, resurfacing Kingsway, reducing lanes, widening footpaths and installing cycle junctions and play areas.

The recent Altrincham town centre project included providing new footpaths and crossing points, paving seating and cycle lanes. The project also planted trees and installed planters – and recent works have extended across Stamford Road, Regent Road and Market Street.

Budget constraints often mean that the Council relies on funding competitions to make improvements, however our Trafford funded projects are informed by the same guidance – the New Carrington and Davenport Green communities allocated within the Places for Everyone Plan will be based around these principles wherever possible.

*B5. Consider proceeding the identified Trafford Council transport strategy officer post, to provide a more joined up, strategic approach and improve communication between Council Officers and Councillors.*

The Council is seeking to expand the Transport Strategy team and a new Senior Transport Policy Officer role was recently advertised and the recruitment process is currently underway. This fixed two-year post is anticipated to accelerate Trafford's transport strategy capabilities and it is hoped that the role can be made permanent in the long run, to provide long-term benefits to the residents of Trafford.

In addition, the new 'Place' communications role will help to raise the profile of sustainable transport schemes and initiatives which are currently being developed / delivered.

*B6. Be proactive in working with TfGM to request more pedestrian and wheeler*

*prioritisation at pedestrian crossings, suggesting gradually reducing all timings to 10 seconds where safe.*

The Strategic Planning and Highways teams of the Council work closely with TfGM on transport matters in Trafford. The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 states that while the movement of traffic needs to be accommodated, attention should be given to prioritising pedestrians, cyclists and bus passengers through crossing facilities.

The Strategy also sets out a desire to invest in innovative junctions which support different modes in and around local centres, such as pedestrian count-down technology and pedestrian and cycle 'SCOOT' (Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique). 'Pedestrian Scoot' enables the adjustment of traffic signal timings automatically to extend the green pedestrian phase when large numbers of people are waiting, allowing more people to cross the road. 'Cycle SCOOT' detects the numbers of cyclists travelling along a route. This enables the traffic signal timings to be adjusted to give more green time when there are high numbers of cyclists at key junctions during peak times.

Currently, SCOOT is delivered as part of new junctions, but there is a need to update existing junctions over the coming years. While this is an ambition, future upgrades will be subject to sufficient resources and funding being identified by TfGM and Trafford Council.

*B7. Ensure EV points and infrastructure do not clutter the pavement, acknowledging that electric cars are only one part of the solution.*

The recently adopted Places for Everyone (PfE) development plan (Policy JP-S1) requires consideration to be given to the physical location and design of EV charge points within a development to ensure that they are sensitively located and do not negatively affect the street scene, pedestrian and cyclist amenity or access, particularly for people with a disability.

This is also reflected in the Trafford Design Code which states that electric vehicle spaces and charging points need to be suitably located, sited and designed to avoid street clutter (LNRP 1). There is also the potential to expand on this policy position in the emerging Trafford Local Plan. In particular, there is an opportunity for a policy position on use of the pavement and kerbside for EV charging infrastructure.

Charging infrastructure, inclusive of cable connectors, can cause a tripping hazard and an obstruction. For the existing installs, in car parks, they have been located by our supplier to help ensure no trip obstructions / trip hazards are created.

A new public standard, (PAS:1899) has been published. This [the standard] provides guidance for charger accessibility – inclusive of the charging device and public realm. Existing install design, pre-date the standard. Installs safely made the best space allocated in existing car parks. All future charge points will be PAS:1899 compliant and our supplier will work with us to specify requirements on a site basis. For any future installs within a car park at least 1 bay will be fully accessible [as advised by our existing supplier].

*B8. Campaign and raise awareness for drivers who have no alternative but to park on pavements to allow enough space for pedestrians and wheelers.*

The Council has enforcement powers against motorists who park on footways or grass verges which form part of the adopted highway, where there are waiting restrictions in place such as yellow lines. We have no enforcement powers against pavement or grass verge parking where there are no parking restrictions. Where there are no waiting restrictions, and a vehicle is parked causing an obstruction it can be reported to GMP, who retain enforcement powers in these instances.

The Highway Team primarily focus its enforcements in areas that have been raised by local residents and councillors and within the catchment area of large event venues. Wider enforcement is limited by the capacity and cost of the resource required. The Council provides Civil Enforcement Officer Patrols at our identified schools on a rotational basis and our Community Development Officers and volunteers have acted as a deterrent at some schools.

The 'pavements are for people', leaflet is often posted on cars and positioned on car windscreens in problem areas. Key messages include be a considerate motorist and raising awareness of the obstructions and damaged cause by illegal parking.

Trafford also applies the approved Design Codes for new developments, which stipulate/encourage place making elements of the streetscape. During the development of our projects, we work with stakeholders, including TfGM and internal planning teams with the purpose of ensuring our projects align with the TfGM Streets for all policy, this includes positioning signs and posts that can be seen as clutter. Recent projects include our red routes and red route clearway project which regulate where vehicles can park and stop on the highway – enforcement is through our Civil Enforcement Officers. Our Talbot Road Scheme has also delivered three junctions that fully segregate cyclists from general traffic, providing priority for those walking, wheeling and cycling and reducing severance. Both projects aim to meet our objectives to safely improve the whole journey experience for our residents, visitors and commuters.

The Highways Team has also contributed to the national consultation on managing pavement parking and await the government publication providing guidance for local authorities.

### **C. Make our streets greener and more pleasant to walk along:**

**That the Executive look to:**

*C1. Increase shade and prevent flooding by aiming to plant a tree every 25metres on the kerbside as Lambeth Council have done in their plan for trees to provide 25% canopy cover (the UK average is currently 16%) – this will make Trafford's*

*pavements safer and more pleasant to walk, wheel and cycle along, and also reduce traffic noise (see Appendix B [of the Task & Finish Report]).*

The Trafford Design Code states that street trees should be planted on all new streets, and on existing streets where services permit (LNT 3; SPSD 4). This guidance also notes that trees should normally be planted 12m-20m apart at even intervals on both sides of the street. The GM Streets for All Design guide also notes that trees can be incorporated into kerbside space (6.d).

The Council applies the Code for relevant new developments, which stipulate/encourage place making elements of the streetscape. During the development of the Council's own projects, we work with stakeholders, including TfGM and internal planning teams with the purpose of ensuring our projects align with the TFGM Streets for all policy, which has been adopted GM wide. The GM Transport Strategy 2040 states a desire to look for opportunities to enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure through transport schemes. The emerging Trafford local plan will likely feature policy on urban greening. Any greening will have to be balanced with the future requirement for maintenance and impact upon any existing infrastructure. Key opportunity areas could include Trafford Park, or A56 corridor, for example.

*C2. Increase the planting of wildflowers along road verges and roundabout borders, exploring the options for creating raingardens, looking at good practice such as in Salford Council.*

The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 notes a desire to look for opportunities to enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure through transport schemes. Policy 12 of the Strategy states a goal is to deliver environmental enhancements and biodiversity net gain where possible.

The Trafford Design Code and Streets for All Design Guide support landscape and public realm enhancements as part of the design and delivery of new transport schemes. There could also be an opportunity to include policy on greening the roadside / public realm in emerging Trafford Local Plan.

As part of the Regent Road improvement scheme in Altrincham and the Kingsway scheme in Stretford, SUDS have been an integral part of both projects to deliver sustainable approaches to help prevent flooding. A further SUDS project on Groby Road in Altrincham is also being developed. In delivering the Greening Trafford Park Study, UKSPF monies are being used to create wildflower verges and a 'bee-highway' through planting native species to provide linear habitat for bees and butterflies. The focus of these works is along a section of Barton Dock Road in Trafford Park

*C3. Engage with businesses to provide funding to enhance our streets, for example sponsoring benches as resting places for those walking.*



A sponsorship package could be developed to support this but there would be resource implications in terms of its administration and financial management that would need to be considered. In addition, the current economic climate could mean that businesses will be more focused on their own costs and profitability/sustainability and more averse to considering sponsorship opportunities.

**D. Enable residents to make the modal shift from car use to public transport and active travel:**

That the Executive:

*D1. Support the establishment of a Trafford Car Club, aiming for electric car hire within walking distance of all residents, with access in allocated car parks and bays on the kerbside.*

The PfE development plan contains policy regarding use of car clubs (JP-S1 5.24; JP-C8) and they are also supported in the GM Transport Strategy 2040 (Policy 1). There is also an opportunity to develop a clear Trafford Council position in the emerging Local Plan.

The provision of a Car Club at a GM level has been considered previously, however it is highly complex, and to date a GM-wide solution has not been identified that satisfies the requirements of each of the 10 councils. However, Trafford is continuing to explore potential options with TfGM and other private companies, such as Enterprise.

The introduction of any Car Club will need to be supported by sufficient infrastructure and funding, including scarce revenue funding initially. Car Clubs are commercial and are therefore not wholly within control of the Council.

*D2. Continue to work with community groups, engaging with those who may be less likely to cycle.*

The Walking, Wheeling & Cycling Lead and School Streets Officer do significant work with residents and community groups identifying barriers and challenges and supporting solutions to these. Examples include the celebration event in Gorse Hill Park in summer 2024 and Beat the Street. These are possible due to securing external funding to deliver these. The two officers also support community groups to apply for funding for e.g. walking and cycling activities, cycle storage, bike libraries. We take a targeted approach to this, and also try to reach those people who are most ready to make changes first, in order to build momentum. More widely, the development of the Bee Network with its integration of transport modes should also assist with this aim.

*D3. Increase access to bicycle libraries and look to offer mobile bicycle repair services.*

Bike libraries are operational in Sale, Woodsend and Sale West, funding for new libraries secured for Partington and Broomwood. Stretford Public Hall hosts Cycling UK's Making Cycling Easier loan scheme for e-bikes. Woodsend Bike Library is using the library service to borrow a bike in the same way as borrowing books, with an aspiration to roll this out to other libraries where space and volunteers are available.

There is an emerging partnership with the Renew Hub to offer low-cost refurbished bikes, including children's bikes, which can be used to support greater participation in Bikeability.

Cycle maintenance courses are provided by TfGM for a low cost, and there are some cycle repair facilities in communities, but mobile cycle repairs have not yet been investigated.

*D4. Identify locations to install cycle hangars which offer secure bicycle storage so that bicycle and cargo bike owners can park their vehicles safely on the street, as well as offering a registration form on our website to allow for residents to register their interest in cycle hangar storage.*

The Greater Manchester Streets for All Design Guide considers cycle parking requirements in relation to street types and identifies cycle hangars as a potential solution on 'Neighbourhood Streets', alongside other cycle parking options, which would help to support more journeys by walking and cycling.

Identifying suitable locations for cycle hangars would be a time intensive task for which there is no resource currently identified. In addition, there would need to be funding available to deliver, manage and maintain the facilities. The maintenance of such facilities is not included in the Amey contract.

Linked to cycle hangars, TfGM currently operate a number of Cycle Hubs across Greater Manchester. A Cycle Hub is a safe and secure place to lock your bike under cover, protected by CCTV and accessed via a swipe-card entry system. A Cycle Hub is currently available at Altrincham Interchange in Trafford, there are also hubs at other town centre / public transport hubs across the city region ([Cycle hubs | TfGM Bee Active](#)).

In addition, there are emerging proposals for a new Cycle Hub at Stretford Leisure Centre. This is expected to operate in a similar way to the facility in Altrincham and could benefit from UKSPF funding.

*D5. Ensure there are cycle stands outside all major public services, green areas, and along residential streets.*

The Greater Manchester Streets for All Design Guide considers cycle parking requirements in relation to street types and identifies a range of options depending on location, including secure cycle parking, cycle hangars and cycle / Sheffield stands. These will help to support more journeys by walking and cycling.

Identifying suitable locations for cycle stands would be a time intensive task for which there is no resource currently identified. In addition, there would need to be funding available to deliver, manage and maintain the facilities. However, the provision of cycle stands is

considered as part of new development proposals and any applications will have regard to the Streets for All Design Guide and the Trafford Design Guide which set out cycle parking requirements.

*D6. Explore the feasibility of introducing car free days and pedestrian high streets on Sundays.*

We actively support national schemes to reduce car use, public transport and active travel campaigns. Any work to consider car free days and pedestrian high streets would require consultation with residents premises owners and other stakeholders to understand the impact and costs associated with implementation.

## **E. Communications:**

That the Executive:

*E1. Develop a coordinated Communications Strategy highlighting the positive benefits of reducing car reliance, and the reasons for these, ensuring consistent, clear and positive messaging on readdressing the balance towards alternative forms of travel and walking.*

TfGM already undertakes considerable communications and engagement activity on active travel. Trafford Council should seek to support this work where possible and bring in all relevant services to ensure joined-up messaging. There is an opportunity for the Place Communications lead to coordinate this work.

*E2. Aim to gain a consensus on the policies before introducing them by reaching out and engaging with a broad and diverse cross section of our community including those with disabilities, to gain a balanced range of views from a wide range of demographics.*

The Trafford Local Plan will be an opportunity to review current local policies in relation to transport – including active travel. The development of the Local Plan will involve significant community engagement, from the earliest plan making stages, as set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The SCI sets out requirements for community engagement on Council planning policy, ensuring the planning system is as transparent, accountable and socially inclusive as possible. In particular, the Council will make every effort to engage with hard-to-reach groups, such as those with disabilities, and encourage them to get involved in the preparation of plans and supporting documents.

It is also expected that a review will take place in the future of the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040. As part of this process, GM will consult extensively with residents and stakeholders in all Boroughs on transport-related matters.

There could also be an opportunity to utilise the Trafford Cycle Forum to receive feedback on transport policy and strategies.

*E3. Use the Trafford Council website and social media to display more positive images of residents cycling and walking and cargo bikes to present this as a norm.*

As part of plans to update the Trafford Council website, there are plans to improve access to key planning/transport policies and strategies. In connection with this, there is an opportunity to improve the appearance of relevant planning / transport related web pages, including the use of active travel imagery.

There could also be an opportunity to utilise recently completed active travel schemes such as the Stretford Kingsway scheme to build up a recent bank of photos/collateral for use online/promotional materials.

*E4. Promote bus journeys as an attractive, appealing mode of transport and fully prepare for an increased uptake of bus journeys when franchising takes place in Trafford in January 2025, in liaison with TfGM.*

The final stage of TfGM bus franchising (Tranche 3) will come online in Trafford on 5 January 2024. This will be a significant opportunity for Trafford Council to promote bus travel through local/regional media and social media, in joint collaboration with TfGM. TfGM undertook media engagement associated with the launch of Tranche 2 in March 2024, with a launch event held with representatives from TfGM and Borough Councils. It is likely that Network reviews will follow in due course, with potential for further transport integration.

*E5. Promote the economic benefits to local businesses of people using active travel to get to town centres.*

Research on the economic benefits of active travel will be carried out with TfGM and how this can be promoted in a coordinated way, along with the support TfGM / the Growth Company can provide to businesses to support active travel for their employees. Making access to town centres easier and safer through these improvements will have a benefit in terms of health and wellbeing, business sustainability and the viability of the town centres as

a whole. Further active travel schemes will be investigated subject to the availability of external funding.

Messaging on this subject could be incorporated into wider communications/engagement on active travel (or as part of the Trafford Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy). Local businesses should be directed to the TfGM business portal, which offers advice and resources, such as information on producing travel plans and corporate offers and incentives for Metrolink.

*E6. Ensure the Walking, Wheeling and Cycling forum provides a safe forum to express views and make suggestions and is representative of Trafford's demographics, with representatives from all communities.*

First forum took place on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and was positively received and well attended. The Public Health team will review attendance to ensure representation from all communities and agree how to target under-represented groups. There has been initial agreement to move the forum around to different community venues to try and reduce transport barriers to attendance.

The first meeting provided an opportunity to share the intended approach of the forum which is a partnership between Trafford Council, residents, community groups and volunteers.

An update of what has been delivered to date through the Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy was given.

Attendees were also given the opportunity to share their views on what is being done well, what could be improved, how they can help deliver the WWC Strategy and what they would like the forum to achieve.

## **F. Review parking policy:**

That the Executive:

*F1. Ensures the current parking policy review looks at the feasibility of introducing variable parking charges in car parks, pay and display and resident parking schemes, including increasing charges according to engine and car size, and reviewing the number of streets under resident parking schemes.*

It is anticipated that Greater Manchester authorities, alongside others, will be looking to introduce engine and car size when considering pricing models for resident parking schemes in the near future. We will look to benchmark and review smarter ways of pricing to tackle larger vehicles – some of which are EV, alongside weight of vehicles due to the potential damage to highways and future investment needed to maintain roads.

The uptake of residents in the current permit schemes will be reviewed and proposals will follow from that review to help ensure schemes are operating in the interests of the residents and can be suitably managed for enforcement monitoring.

*F2. Explore the possibility to free up appropriate car parking space, exploring adopting a social justice approach around the use of kerb space that works for all residents, setting a target of repurposing street parking spaces for alternative uses as modal shift takes place, such as trees, green spaces, pocket parks, car club spaces, rental bikes, and EV chargers.*

### *Highways*

The GM Streets for All Strategy notes that kerbside space could be used more efficiently for walking, cycling, seating, planting, play space, landscaping, bus stops, loading areas or cycling parking instead of long-term car parking. The Strategy states that GM, in consultation with local communities, 'will review use of the road space next to the kerb to identify ways it can be better used.' The GM Transport Strategy 2040 also notes an ambition to 'explore technologies that support more efficient use of kerbside space and improve the management of deliveries and servicing.'

While there is no kerbside policy, Trafford does apply the recently approved Design Codes for new developments, which stipulate/encourage place making elements of the streetscape. During the development of our projects, we work with stakeholders, including TfGM and internal planning teams with the purpose of ensuring our projects align with the TFGM Streets for all policy, which has been adopted GM wide. Current projects, including those from MCF and CRSTS, include prioritising pedestrian safety, reallocating road-space to improve our active travel offer and to ensure place based design incorporating, SUDs rain gardens and pocket parks.

We're developing our approach to on-street EV charging and have made enquiries into working with private entities to provide a car club. We're also exploring the deployment of e-scooters, having attended a recent meeting on the rollout across some districts. Any repurposing of street spaces would be considered as part of any new project and any changes would be subject to public engagement, consultation and funding. Key reference documents: <https://trafforddesigncode.uk/> <https://tfgm.com/strategy/streets-for-all>.

*F3. Explore the feasibility of more effective parking enforcement, including the use of ANPR.*

As part of the new contract with NSL, our parking enforcement supplier, a review to introduce the use of a CCTV car to help at football matches and other high use problem areas is being undertaken and will be introduced as soon as trials have been fully completed.

In addition to this, surveys have been carried out for the introduction of ANPR cameras to keep yellow boxes and other moving traffic offence areas clear and safe for other road users. It is anticipated that this will start to be introduced in the spring of next year, with the Council continuing to look at longer term plans across the borough.

**G. Enable more children/young people to walk, wheel or cycle to school:**

That the Executive:

*G1. Fully engage with GMCA and TfGM in their plans to encourage and facilitate more children to walk to school and to expand School Streets across Trafford and GM.*

The cross-Council Walking Wheeling & Cycling (WWC) team are engaging with TfGM and trying to understand plans for future funding for school streets following press release and visit to Seymour Park from Andy Burnham and Dame Sarah Storey in October. Trafford now seen in GM as best practice for delivery of school streets, in no small part down to the work of the Walking, Wheeling & Cycling Lead and School Streets Officer. Initiatives such as walking buses and bikes buses are also being investigated to support existing school streets or where a school street would not be able to be implemented.

The team are working on a comprehensive menu of support to offer to schools including WOW, Modeshift Stars, walking buses etc. Beat the Street was a huge success which saw a 9% decrease in driving to and from school during the game, a reduction of 3,307 car trips. The team are working with Intelligent Health (who own Beat the Street) to look at a longer-term strategic partnership to enable us to roll this out in other parts of Trafford in a cost-effective way.

*G2. Make the School Streets Officer post permanent.*

The School Streets Officer role is hosted by Trafford Community Collective, which has many benefits for the delivery of this work. The post is wholly reliant on TfGM funding for school streets and other Active Travel infrastructure work (e.g. activations budget for A56 works). The Council draws down funding from TfGM and commissions Trafford Community Collective to deliver this work via the School Streets Officer role. For the role to be made permanent, a recurrent source of funding needs to be identified, either via TfGM or Council budget (and this could not increase the Council's budget pressure in its Medium Term Financial Plan)).

*G3. Fully cost the installation of ANPR on all School Streets so that they can become permanent, taking into account the revenue.*

We're working with our parking enforcement supplier to determine the feasibility, inclusive of costs, for the deployment of a mobile CCTV enforcement vehicle. Once enforcement begins the CCTV vehicle can attend up to 4 schools per day, depending on the start times and proximity to each other.

Installing ANPR across all school streets is cost prohibitive. In addition, upon install, compliance generally increases and therefore any revenue through enforcement decreases, adding cost pressure to the council.

*G4. Encourage and enable schools to set up walking and bicycle buses as cost effective, community-based ways of enabling children to walk or cycle to school safely.*

The School Streets Officer role has worked with schools on this type of intervention through the TfGM activations work mentioned above. This is again reliant on TfGM funding and is restricted to working with schools in areas where there is associated walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure work undertaken. The Walking, Wheeling and Cycling workstream does not have an associated budget other than external funding through TfGM and Trafford Active Fund which is short-term and non-recurrent. It is hoped that the School Travel Policy funding (once secured) will provide a budget for this kind of intervention. In the short term, there is an offer of funding from TfGM for training ride leaders which could potentially support bike buses.

*G5. Promote Park and Stride and inform parents of where they can park safely when driving their children to school.*

Park and Stride (and similar schemes) have been considered alongside school streets, particularly in areas where schools might have a wider catchment area. As yet, this hasn't been trialled as resource has been focused on other initiatives such as walking and bike buses. There are additional considerations required when looking at Park & Stride such as volunteers, risk assessments, safe walking routes etc. (none of which are insurmountable) and this may form one of the school travel 'menu of options' once this has been finalised, particularly for schools where a school street may not be feasible.

*G6. Initiate communication with businesses to explore ways to incentivise employers to travel to work by active transport, including flexibility in working hours to facilitate parents walking their children to school.*

The support available to businesses from the Growth Hub and TfGM in terms of active travel schemes and public transport has and will continue to be promoted through the Business Bulletin, social media and via the Business Relationship Programme. This will also be



promoted through the business and investment facing 'window' on the Council's website which is in development.

For major developments which are likely to have a significant transport impact, submission of a travel plan as part of the planning process is required in accordance with Policy L4 of the Trafford Core Strategy. A Travel Plan is a way of managing and monitoring how users of a particular site or area travel to that location, with a particular emphasis on encouraging the use of sustainable modes, particularly walking, cycling and public transport. A range of suggested measures for workplace travel plans are included in DfT guidance, including car parking controls, cycle parking, promotional events, discounted public transport tickets, and home-working policies. Flexible working hours could be accommodated through the Travel Plan process to support sustainable travel.

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## **TRAFFORD COUNCIL**

**Report to:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Committee Chair

### **Report Title**

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE EXECUTIVE'S DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2025-26**

### **Summary**

The Executive's Draft Budget Proposals for 2025-2026 were agreed at its meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024.

Two Budget Scrutiny Working Group sessions were held on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024 with the relevant Executive Members and Senior Officers in attendance to address Members questions. Members were also provided with background information on the budget proposals.

This report reflects the outcome of those discussions, summarises areas, and provides recommendations for the Executive to consider in developing its final budget proposals and response to the Scrutiny Committee.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**The Scrutiny Committee are asked to approve the following recommendations for submission to the Executive:**

- 1. That the Executive provide Scrutiny with an update on the implementation of the garden waste collection charge, focusing on any unexpected challenges and any issues caused to residents.**
- 2. That the Executive works towards maximising revenue potential from its advertising option and provide Scrutiny with an update on any future financial benefit.**
- 3. That the Executive explores options to increase the uptake of parking across the Borough, in Council owned car parks, along with a greater diverse use of the Boroughs car parks to maximise income for the Council.**

4. That following the announcement of the Local Government Settlement announcement, the Executive and the Director of Finance provide all Members with a short briefing note, on its impact to Council Finances.
5. That the Executive Member for Finance, Governance and Change update Members on any issues in achieving the targets set within the Children's Budget, especially regarding the costs of EHCPs in the Borough.
6. That the Executive inform Members of any issues which might arise should the savings through the service vacancy factor be impacted.
7. That Scrutiny recommends that further work is undertaken to raise awareness to residents of support available regarding payment of Council Tax for any residents that are struggling to pay.
8. That Scrutiny acknowledge the difficult circumstances the Executive and Members are working in trying to set a balanced budget and commend the hard work of Officers, and the Executive in preparing the 2025-26 Budget, particularly in light of the financial challenges facing the Council and across the local Government sector as a whole.

**Background Papers:** None

Contact person for further information:

Name: Harry Callaghan

## **BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT – 2024/25**

### **Foreword by the Chair of Scrutiny Committee**

Trafford Council has to plug a budget gap of nearly £26m for the next financial year.

As a Council, we've suffered more than £300m of cuts over the last 15 years. In spite of our services being more in demand.

Our Council leader Tom Ross said setting next year's budget "has been one of the toughest challenges he has faced in his political career."

Balancing the books is getting harder every year. As Councillors and, as an authority, we've faced making tough and unpopular decisions.

I'm sure I speak for the majority of Councillors when I say no one takes up public office wanting to oversee cuts to our services or higher charges to residents or local businesses.

This huge financial strain is unsustainable, even for a well-run Council like Trafford.

Scrutiny reviewing and commenting on draft budget proposals is one of the most important pieces of work we do. I'd like to thank everyone who contributed to this vital work, your contributions were invaluable.

I'd also like to express my gratitude to the Executive, Corporate Leadership Team, and every Trafford Council employee. They continue to go above and beyond for our residents and businesses in difficult times. The dedication you show to our communities is nothing short of inspirational.

As one of the 20 worst funded councils in the country, with the second lowest in Greater Manchester, Trafford are in desperate need of fairer funding. Only this would enable us to give the right support to the most vulnerable in our society.

As I look to 2025, I am hopeful in our next budget review we will be able to tell a more positive story. One Trafford deserves.

**Councillor Fianna Hornby**

Chair, Scrutiny Committee.

January 2025

## **Background**

1.1 The draft Budget proposals were presented to the Scrutiny Committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 by the Director of Finance, covering the current budget, the latest 2024/25 Monitoring Position, forecasts for the years 2025/26 and 2026/27, the key budget assumptions, and the draft savings programme for 2025/26.

1.2 Similar to previous years, two further budget scrutiny sessions took place. The first of these sessions focused upon Children's and Adult's Services, whilst the second focused upon the Place directorate budget and the Council's Investment Strategy. The Corporate Director for Children's Services, Interim Corporate Director for Adults' Services, and Corporate Director for Place attended their relevant sessions.

1.3 A presentation was produced, covering information for both sessions, and circulated to Councillors on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024, which gave Scrutiny Members time to review the documents prior to the sessions and request additional information.

## **2. Key Messages**

2.1 Over the course of the Budget Scrutiny process several key themes, detailed below, emerged as being of particular interest to Scrutiny Members.

### **2.2 Garden Waste Collection Charge**

2.2.1 During the second session, several Members discussed the reintroduction of a garden waste collection charge for green bins across the Borough. Scrutiny raised several concerns with the charge including the risks behind its reintroduction; mitigation against any possible risks that could occur; the cost to residents; and possible inclusion issues.

2.2.2 The Corporate Director for Place recognised the risk associated with take up, however, reassured Members that the income target was based at 35,000 households, which was significantly lower than when the charge was in previously. The Corporate Director informed Members that there were not other options available to generate the level of income expected through the charge, with 73% of Local Authorities across the country already implementing a charge.

2.2.3 Some Members were concerned by the future if this charge is all that could be done to generate the level of income, questioning what could be done in the future to bridge the budget gap. The Corporate Director for Place recognised the challenging condition the Council found itself in. Members were reassured that there was several workstreams ongoing in other directorates to bridge the gap but accepted that more challenging proposals might need to be considered in the future.

**Recommendations:**

**That the Executive provide Scrutiny with an update on the implementation of the garden waste collection charge, focusing on any unexpected challenges and any issues caused to residents.**

**2.3 Advertising**

2.3.1 Several Members raised the financial gain obtained through highway advertising. One Member had not been aware of the Council's benefits from this and enquired about the locations of these. The Corporate Director for Place informed Members, that, for example, the arch over White City on Council land generated income for the Council.

2.3.2 Members asked further how the decision was made on what could be advertised and asked whether there was capacity for the level of advertisement to increase. The Corporate Director spoke of the possible increase, which included the move from paper screens to digital boards which can generate greater income.

**Recommendation:**

**That the Executive works towards maximising revenue potential from its advertising option and provide Scrutiny with an update on any future financial benefit.**

**2.4 Parking**

2.4.1 Income generated through parking was raised by Members. The Corporate Director for Place recognised that the income generated through Council owned car parks had reduced in recent year, recognising the work required in the area to increase its output.

**Recommendation –**

**That the Executive explores options to increase the uptake of parking across the Borough, in Council owned car parks, along with a greater diverse use of the Boroughs car parks to maximise income for the Council.**

**2.5 Local Government Settlement**

2.5.1 Members and Officers across all sessions recognised the possible impact the Local Government Settlement from central government might have on future budgets and the financial support and implications which could come through it.

2.5.2 Due to the turnaround of the sessions and the Budget being published, another session would be feasible, however, Councillors requested that the impact be shared with them.

**Recommendation –**

**That following the announcement of the Local Government Settlement announcement, the Executive and the Director of Finance provide all Members with a short briefing note, on its impact to Council Finances.**

**2.6 Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)**

2.6.1 Several Members recognised the rise in EHCP's in the Borough, with many asking how this compared with other Local Authorities. The Director of Education confirmed the growth was not dissimilar to other authorities currently. The Director informed Members that that level of EHCPs was higher than the national average in Trafford, with the proportion of children receiving SEN support being below the national average, recognising that this needed to be the other way round.

2.6.2 Recognising that Children's service is dealing with more complex needs than ever before, Members asked whether savings within the budget were achievable. The Corporate Director for Children's Services reassured Members that the Director for Finance only signs of achievable targets, with mitigations in place if needed.

**Recommendation –**

**That the Executive Member for Finance, Governance and Change update Members on any issues in achieving the targets set within the Children's Budget, especially regarding the costs of EHCPs in the Borough.**

**2.7 Service Vacancy Factor**

2.7.1 Some Members asked for clarification on the meaning behind the service vacancy factor within the Budget. The Corporate Director for Place informed Members that this was the saving made from a member of staff leaving their role at the Council and the post being filled.

2.7.2 The Corporate Director added that the saving included assumed that posts would remain unfilled for a period. Currently, Members were made aware that the vacancy factor was currently four weeks on average.

**Recommendation –**

**That the Executive inform Members of any issues which might arise should the savings through the service vacancy factor be impacted.**

**2.8 Council Tax**

2.8.1 Several Members discussed the level of Council Tax in the Borough in the first session and asked if the Leader of the Council had any predictions on any possible changes to its level. Members were concerned by the impact any rise might have on residents in the Borough, recognising the impact at the current level.



2.8.2 The Leader of the Council echoed those concerns, but also asked Members to be mindful of the budgetary impacts on any rise or fall, with savings required to found.

**Recommendation –**

**That Scrutiny recommends that further work is undertaken to raise awareness to residents of support available regarding payment of Council Tax for any residents that are struggling to pay.**

**2.9 Acknowledgement of Financial Circumstances**

2.9.1 Members across all three sessions, whilst providing Scrutiny to the Budget, recognised the significant financial pressures local authorities such as Trafford are under. Several Members identified the Director of Finance, their team, and the Executive Member for Finance, Change and Governance, for their hard work to produce the Budget.

**Recommendation –**

**That Scrutiny acknowledge the difficult circumstances the Executive and Members are working in trying to set a balanced budget and commend the hard work of Officers, and the Executive in preparing the 2025-26 Budget, particularly in light of the financial challenges facing the Council and across the local Government sector as a whole.**

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## Trafford Scrutiny Committee 2024/25 Work Programme

<b>Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 – 6:30pm, Committee Rooms 2&amp;3, Trafford Town Hall</b>				
<i>Report submission deadline – midday Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024</i>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Executive Member(s)</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Leaders Priorities 2024/25	To receive a report from the Leader of the Council's Priorities and the Corporate Plan 2024/27	The Leader	Sara Saleh	
Constitutional Working Group report	To receive a report of the Constitutional Working Group		Dominique Sykes	
Executive Response to Scrutiny T&F Group report on Old Trafford	To receive a response from the Executive following submission of the T&F group report from the Committee to the Executive meeting 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	Executive Member for Highways, Environmental & Traded Services	Adrian Fisher and Chris Morris	
Executive Response to Scrutiny Access to Council Services Report	To receive a response from the Executive following submission of the report from the Committee to the Executive meeting 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	Executive Member for Finance, Change & Governance	Simon Davis	
Reducing Car Dependency T&F Group report	To consider the interim T&F Group report for submission to the Executive			

Committee Work Programme 2024/25	To Agree the Committee work programme for the year.	N/A		
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**Wednesday 18 September 2024 – 6:30pm, Committee Rooms 2&3, Trafford Town Hall**

*Report submission deadline – midday on Tuesday 10 September 2024*

Item	Information	Executive Member(s)	Lead Officer(s)	Comments
Bee Network	To invite colleagues from the GMCA / TfGM to discuss tranche 3 of the Bee Network buses, specifically on its impact for Trafford. This will consider bus provision across the Borough, including coverage in rural areas.			
	To look at GMCA active travel schemes, including cycling provision			
	To look at Bee Network Tram Provision and any improvements and changes within the Borough			
EV Charging	To look at Electric Charging provision in the Borough and monitor its performance	Executive Member for Climate Change	Corporate Director of Place	

<b>Wednesday 6 November 2024 – 6:30pm, Committee Rooms 2&amp;3, Trafford Town Hall</b>				
<i>Report submission deadline – midday on Tuesday 29 October 2024</i>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Executive Member(s)</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Budget Presentation	To receive an outline of the budget position for 2024/25 to inform the Budget Scrutiny process	Executive Member for Finance, Change, and Governance	Director of Finance and Systems	
Culture, Sport and Heritage Strategy	To receive an update from the Director of Culture on her role and developments of the Culture Strategy since its launch	Executive Member for Culture, Sport and Heritage	Director of Culture	
Permit parking for key workers in the community	To look at key worker parking provision and how this could be improved		Corporate Director for Place	Postponed – this was due to no ongoing Parking Review and the topic being too narrow to discuss at this time. Possible for future rearrangement to involve a wider scope on parking.
Travellers	To receive an update on the issues around supporting the travelling communities in areas of Trafford	Executive Member for Communities and Safety	Corporate Director of Place	Added to the Work Programme from the priority list to replace the item on parking

## Budget Scrutiny

There are two Budget Scrutiny sessions scheduled for the 25 November and 27 November 2024. Discussions at these sessions, will help formulate the Scrutiny Committee's Budget Scrutiny report to the Executive (To be presented to Scrutiny at the 22 January 2025 meeting).

<b>Wednesday 22 January 2025 – 6:30pm, Committee Rooms 2&amp;3, Trafford Town Hall</b>				
<i>Report submission deadline – midday on Tuesday 14 January 2025</i>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Executive Member(s)</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
2024/25 Budget Scrutiny Report	A report produced by the Scrutiny Committee providing its recommendations on the 2025/26 Budget Proposals.	N/A – Report of the Scrutiny Committee		
Damp and Mould, Housing Repairs, and Maintenance in Trafford's housing stock	To invite back colleagues from housing providers who attended Scrutiny in September 2023 to discuss the enquiries and promises made	Member for Housing and Advice		Raised by Councillor Hartley in September that this could include a more general response on housing maintenance.
Maximising existing social housing in Trafford	To invite the colleagues from housing providers to discuss and scrutinise how they are maximising their housing stock.	Member for Housing and Advice		The Chair and Vice-Chair would like Members to provide further clarity into what they would like this to consider.

Executive Response to Reducing Car Dependency T&F Group	To receive the full response from the Executive.			
<b>Wednesday 12 March 2025 – 6:30pm, Committee Rooms 2&amp;3, Trafford Town Hall</b>				
<i>Report submission deadline – midday on Tuesday 4 March 2025</i>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Executive Member(s)</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>FOCUS ON HIGHWAYS – discuss further at the next Scrutiny meeting</b>	Highways Maintenance, duration and duplication of roadworks, and leaf clearing / streetscapes on the priority list to be scheduled.			
Task and Finish group report - tbc				

<b>Ongoing Task and Finish work</b>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Executive Member(s)</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Scrutiny Review				

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